

## EVALUATION

of the scholarly works of Assoc. Prof. Toma Ivanov Tomov, PhD, only participant in the competition for PROFESSOR in professional direction no. 2.2. History and Archaeology, at the Faculty of Arts, Department of Mediterranean and Eastern Studies, NBU, as announced in the State Law Gazette no. 65 on 12.08.2022

by Prof. Dr. Ivayla Popova, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

### **I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University**

The procedure and the correlated requirements based on the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations of the NBU have been complied with, as can be seen from the presented documentation. During my review of its contents, I did not find any violations. I also emphasize that the minimum national requirements for the position of professor have been met.

### **II. Research activity and results**

Toma Tomov graduated with a degree in History from the University of St. Kliment Ohridski" specializing in the History of Byzantium and the Balkan Peoples at the Faculty of History of the SU. In the period 1998-2001, he was a full-time doctoral student at the Faculty of History of SU. Assoc. Dr. Toma Tomov began his scientific development as a scholarship holder of the Center for Slavic-Byzantine Studies "Prof. Ivan Duychev" in the period 1997 - 1998. His professional realization continued as a history teacher in the 88 "Dimitar Popnikolov" High School, Sofia. Since 2006, he has been working as a full-time teacher at the New Bulgarian University, where he leads numerous general education and specialized bachelor's and master's courses. In 2007, he became an associate professor of Medieval General History.

Assoc. Prof. Toma Tomov is the author of numerous scientific publications, of which 5 monographs (*Secrets of "St. Sophia". The Forgotten Graffiti Ships and Their Messages*, Veles Consult, Sofia, 2021; *The Unknown Church of "St. Sophia". Graffiti Inscriptions Cyrillic and*

*Glagolitic* (2016); (2019; second, revised and supplemented edition); *Klyuch 1014* (2015); *Byzantium - known and unknown* (2012); (2014; second, revised edition). *Constantinople and the Russian Colony to 1204* (2008).), 1 textbook (e-textbook *History of Ancient Rome* (2007), 2 study aids (Textbook on History and Civilization for grade 11, for profiled preparation, modules 1. Power and institutions, 2. Culture and spirituality, 3. Man and society, Prosveta, Sofia, 2020, co-author, 10 lessons); "The Romans" - an e-learning aid (2014) and almost 50 articles and reviews. In their entirety, they reveal not only the formation and confirmation of Prof. Tomov as a historian-medievalist, but also show his constant striving to deepen the subject of his research.

The main and most significant place among the works submitted for review is the second improved and supplemented edition of the monograph of Associate Professor T. Tomov *The Unknown Church of "St. Sofia". Inscriptions-graffiti in Cyrillic and Glagolitic*, 2019. Its writing is the result of a long and thorough research work, which started in 2005, with Tomov's first studies in Istanbul of St. Sofia until 2015, when the systematization, analysis and publication of the graffiti began.

The monograph consists of 332 pages and includes an introduction, an overview of the church of St. Sofia and its galleries, detailed analysis of the graffiti inscriptions, conclusion in two parts – "Paleography and orthography" and Historical notes, bibliography, summary in English", as well as an appendix with photos of the analyzed graffiti inscriptions.

The detailed study of the graffiti inscriptions allows the author to divide them depending on the content into several groups - prayer inscriptions, 25 in total, which follow the clichéd canonical formula *Lord, help your servant ...*; in the second group Tomov includes the inscriptions - autographs, according to the formula *name + wrote*, which group is the most numerous, a total of 48 (of these, the author separated 24 which follow the Old Russian formula *name + written*, 3 which follow the Bulgarian formula *name + wrote*, and the rest of the graffiti which contain only a name), inscriptions-chronicles and varia.

Based on the detailed paleographic and historical analysis, Tomov divided all 94 inscriptions into Russian – 65, Bulgarian/Balkan 10 (7 Bulgarian, 1 Wallachian, 1 Serbian, and 1 Glagolitic) and neutral, which can hardly be determined – 19 in number. According to the author, the numerous depictions of crosses also represent prayers of illiterate visitors. We can agree with T. Tomov that the graffiti provide extremely valuable material for the study of the history of writing.

Numerous inscriptions from the 12th century, belonging to various authors, testify to the wide spread of writing in Russia during this period. The discovery of the graffiti inscriptions makes it possible to resurrect the memory of a long-dead person, tells us the names of many people who visited the church and adds to our knowledge of different historical periods.

I am convinced that the monograph is an indisputable success not only for Assoc. Prof. Toma Tomov, but also for the Bulgarian medieval studies as a whole. This rare study of its kind can be evaluated as a solid basis for future studies that will fully reveal the enigma of the church of St. Sofia.

The candidate's studies and articles preceding and accompanying the writing of the monograph are characterized by a specific and detailed study of the various types of graffiti (ex voto, ships, crosses, inscriptions, etc.), the Christian relics kept in St. Sofia, columns in Constantinople, etc., all of them published in referenced and indexed scientific periodicals such as *Paleobulgarica*, *Byzantinoslavica*, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, etc., which speaks of the high value of T. Tomov's scientific research.

The quality of the candidate's scientific works is also proven by the numerous citations in refereed and indexed international scientific monographs and periodicals.

T. Tomov also participates in some scientific projects. In 2013, he was the head of the Byzantine Antiquities in Istanbul project, at the National Institute of Foreign Studies, NBU.

Also, Assoc. Prof. Tomov takes part as a lecturer in the "Training seminar for teachers and administrators from the Bulgarian schools abroad" (24-26.07.2013) within the framework of the Annual Meeting of the Association of the Bulgarian Schools Abroad, in the program project "Multimedia, informational and educational digital platform for Bulgarian language, geography and culture" and in Scientific Program no. 4 at Humanitarian University Complex "Alma Mater".

### **III. Learning and teaching activity**

The reference for the courses led by the candidate shows the possibilities of Assoc. Prof. Tomov to work qualitatively with students from different programs - Archaeology, History, Tourism, etc. The listed courses are largely connected to Tomov's creative pursuits - *The History of a City - Constantinople, Byzantium and its Culture*, *Introduction to Christianity*, *Historical and Holy Sites of the Balkans*, *Byzantine Constantinople* and many other both undergraduate and graduate

courses. Proof of the applicant's skills in working with students is the high score he received in student's opinion surveys – an average score of 4.53 out of a maximum of 5 over the last 5 academic years.

#### **IV. Administrative and public activity**

At NBU, in addition to his teaching activities, Assoc. Prof. Tomov also has expertise in administrative activities, he held the post of Dean of the Bachelor's Faculty (2006 - 2010, 2011 - 2012), Deputy Rector for Academic and International Activities (2010 - 2011), Chairman of the Faculty Council of the Undergraduate Faculty (2006 – 2012), chairman of the quality committee and the certification committee at the Bachelor's Faculty of NBU, etc.

Assoc. Prof. Tomov's scientific qualities allow him to be a part of the British Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies since 1996, as well as a member of the Association of Byzantinist and Medievalists in Bulgaria (since 2006); to carry out consulting work on medieval history for various printed publications; as well as being the author of a number of reviews. Assoc. Prof. Tomov participates in numerous national and international scientific forums with reports and scientific presentations.

#### **Conclusion**

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition and evaluating their scientific contributions, I find it reasonable to give my positive vote for the election of Assoc. Prof. Toma Ivanov Tomov to the academic position of "FULL PROFESSOR" at the New Bulgarian University, in the professional direction 2.2. History and archaeology. I think he totally deserves it.

11.11.2022

Prof. Ivayla Popova