

STANDPOINT

Regarding a competition announced by
Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski ”

for the academic position of professor in the field 2.2.

History and Archeology (“Bulgarian Historiography – Historical Periodicals”) for the needs
of the Faculty of History

published in the State Gazette no. 96 of November 19, 2021

Documents for participation in the competition were submitted by one candidate: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Todor Alexandrov Popnedelev. The Commission for Review of Documents has established that the submitted documents for the competition meet the regulatory requirements.

The candidate participated in the competition with 16 publications from the period 1989–2022 with original scientific contributions, which he described. The habilitation work (monograph) by the indicator **B** *The Bulgarian Middle Ages on the pages of the Yearbook of the Sofia University. Faculty of History and Philology (1905 – 1945)*. Sofia: University Press, 2022. 199 pp. ISBN 978-954-07-5381-2; pdf ISBN 978-954-07-5381-2 occupies a central place.

The book contains a preface, an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography and an appendix. In the Preface (pp. 7–17) the author defines the concept of historiography as “a science that explores understandings of the nature of the past, the benefits of knowing it, as well as ways to recreate and preserve it” and points out its three functions – epistemological, axeological and prognostic. He outlines the main direction in the Bulgarian post-liberation medieval studies, namely positivism, formed under the influence of the Russian and German schools in Byzantine and medieval studies. Here are the parameters of the study – medieval studies in the Yearbook of Sofia University (GSU) for the period 1905–1945 of 13 authors, in 45 publications. The author notes that the period of Ottoman rule is covered by four studies by three authors. Against the background of the total number of publications in GSU, the publications on the history of the Bulgarian Middle Ages occupy a priority place. The main goal of the research is stated here: “the methods of researchers’ work with sources, the use of the obtained information, the attitude to the scientific literature, their historical logic in

explaining events and processes, approaches to reconstructing the past and their position on its meaning” .

In the Introduction (pp. 19–29) the author traces the decisions and actions of the Academic Council of Sofia University for the issuance of GSU in the period 1895–1905.

In the First Chapter (First Bulgarian State), pp. 31–81, 19 publications are considered. They are divided into the following three parts. The first part presents two articles by Vasil Zlatarski (1866–1935) (History of the Bulgarians from their appearance in Europe to the founding of the Bulgarian Tsardom on the Balkan Peninsula. // GSU. IFF, 10 – 11, [1913 – 1914 – 1914 – 1915], 1915, pp. 1 – 112; Nationalization of the Bulgarian state and church in the IX century. // GSU. IFF, 22, 1926, pp. 1 – 32.), which represent a preparatory stage for his later publication History of the Bulgarian state in the Middle Ages, Vol. I, Part 1–2. In this part the author dwells on the article by Petăr Mutafchiev (1883–1943) The Magyars and the Bulgarian-Byzantine relations in the third quarter of the 10th century // GSU. IFF, 31, [1934 – 1935], 1935, pp. 1 – 35. The main positions of the Bulgarian medievalist are presented: the Bulgarian-Byzantine conflict of 967 and the Hungarian attacks; the beginning of the Hungarian invasions of the Balkan Peninsula dates back to 934; Mutafchiev also draws attention to the folk psychology of the Hungarians at that time: “for the Magyars of that era, war and plunder were occupations: they lived from it”.

In the second part of the First Chapter the author has examined seven publications of Veselin Beshevliev (1900–1992) and one of Yordan Ivanov (1872–1947). All of them are editions of sources on Bulgarian history. As expected, most of Beshevliev's publications are dedicated to the Proto-Bulgarian stone inscriptions. The Bulgarian epigraph sharply criticizes the linguistic arguments of the Hungarian scholar Géza Fehér (1890–1955) in his publication on the inscriptions around the Madara Horseman. He is also accused of “lack of method and language skills” in his work on Turkological issues and in the field of Slavic studies. At the end of his criticism of G. Fehér, Beshevliev reproached him with methodological inadequacy in supplementing and reading the text. Beshevliev also made critical remarks to his younger colleague Ivan Dujčev (1907–1986). In his article The New Source for the Defeat of Nicephorus I in Bulgaria in 811 // GSU. IFF, 33, [1936 – 1937], 1937, pp. 1 – 8 he dwells on some errors in the publication of the Anonymous Vatican Narrative.

Of great value is the article by J. Ivanov Lives of St. Ivan Rilski. // GSU. IFF, 32, [1935 – 1936], 1936, pp. 3 – 109. Among the reasons for the appearance of a large number of

biographies dedicated to this saint, J. Ivanov notes the transfer of his relics to Hungary in the twelfth century, which contributed to the widespread popularizing the cult of this Bulgarian saint. T. Popnedev praised the publication of the eight Lives of Ivan Rilski.

In the third part of the First Chapter T. Popnedev commented on publications of a linguistic nature, the work of five scholars – Stefan Mladenov (1880–1963), Veselin Beshevliev, Dimităr Dechev (1877–1958), Yanko Todorov (1893–1951) and Dimităr Krundzhalov (1907–1971). Here are considered some important issues in the history of the Bulgarian language such as the linguistic remains of Asparuh's Bulgarians, the origin of the name Bulgarians, the ancient Bulgarian calendar according to the List of Bulgarian Khans and others. Of interest is the publication of St. Mladenov *The first Bulgarian, not Pecheneg, is the so-called Attila's golden treasure from Nagy-Szent-Miklós*. // GSU. IFF, 31, [1934 – 1935], 1935, pp. 1 – 88. Popnedev points out that the Bulgarian linguist arguably rejects the opinion of the Hungarian scholar Gyula Németh (1890–1976) and proves that the inscriptions on the vessels of the treasure by Nagy Szent Miklós bear the marks of the Bulgarian or Turko-Bulgarian language. In this chapter T. Popnedev dwells on some other elements of the life of the early medieval Bulgarians: the faith of the Proto-Bulgarians, the earth's ramparts and others.

The second chapter of T. Popnedev's work is entitled “Second Bulgarian State” (pp. 83–129). It is also divided into three parts. The first part examines publications on facts and processes of history. These are three articles by Vasil Zlatarski and two by Petăr Nikov (1884–1938). The article by V. Zlatarski *Greek-Bulgarian Union in 1204 – 1205*. // GSU. IFF, 8 – 9, [1912 – 1913], 1914, pp. 1 – 23. T. Popnedev points out that this is one, although rare of successful experience of V. Zlatarski, not only to analyze historical events, but also to synthesize them. Zlatarski's second article on Ansbert's “county or satrap of Bulgaria” was not Dobromir Hriz. // GSU. IFF, 29, [1932 – 1933], 1933, pp. 1 – 20 is covered in detail by T. Popnedev, who concludes that the analysis of the Bulgarian medievalist enters directly into his *History of the Bulgarian state in the Middle Ages*. Volume III.

T. Popnedev notes that the article by V. Zlatarski *The Boyana Inscription*. // GSU. IFF, 31, [1934 – 1935], 1935, pp. 1 – 29. is his last work published in GSU. After presenting in detail the content of this work, the author concludes that “this study as a scope of research, which is based on a source, and considers a much larger and related period of history, shows the characteristic approach in the work of Zlatarski”.

In this part T. Popnedelev presented two of the publications of Petăr Nikov, which have remained as classics of Bulgarian medieval studies: Tatar-Bulgarian relations in the Middle Ages, in view of the reign of Smilets. // GSU. IFF, 15 – 16, 1919 – 1920, pp. 1 – 95 and History of the Vidin principality until 1323. // GSU. IFF, 18, 1922, pp. 1 – 124. The author has emphasized the exceptional precision of the text in Nikov and his strongly analytical approach in these studies.

In the second part of the Second Chapter of the book T. Popnedelev acquaints the readers with the publications of sources and commentary on them during the Second Bulgarian State. Successfully, this group of publications is divided into a separate part. These are two articles by Benyo Tsonev (1863–1926) (Bulgarian manuscript from the 13th century with traces of Russian influence. // GSU. IFF, 7, [1910 – 1911], 1913, pp. 89 – 90; from the 13th century BC – Kyustendil Four Gospels. // GSU. IFF, 27, [1930 – 1931], 1931, p., 18, 1922, pp. 1 – 22.) and Ivan Dujčev (The correspondence of Pope Innocent III with the Bulgarians. Introduction, text and notes. // GSU. IFF, 38, [1941 – 1942], 1942, p. 1 – 117.).

The third part of the Second Chapter contains a short presentation of the article by Stefan Mladenov Significance of the Boyana inscription for the Bulgarian linguistic history. // GSU. IFF, 31, [1934 – 1935], 1935, pp. 1 – 10. It is considered here due to its linguistic nature.

The third chapter of T. Popnedelev's monograph is entitled Problems of the Bulgarian Middle Ages (pp. 131–176). The first part of this chapter discusses works on specific facts and processes from the Bulgarian Middle Ages. These are three publications by Petăr Mutafchiev, one by Yordan Ivanov and one by Vasil Zlatarski. The second part presents two articles by Dimităr Dechev and Benyo Tsonev, which are outside the established periodization – First and Second Bulgarian State. The third part describes three publications with the entire medieval development of the Bulgarians. They are the work of Benyo Tsonev, Dimităr Dechev and Yanko Todorov. The last fourth part of Chapter Three discusses the works of authors who comment on issues in the field of historical knowledge, methods and methodology in the work of the historian, understanding the past and history of science. Here are six publications of four scientists. With two studies each is the participation of Petăr Nikov and Petăr Mutafchiev, and with one – the participation of Svetozar Georgiev Primov and Associate Professor Rusi Rusev.

In the conclusion of his monograph (pp. 177–183). T. Popnedelev summarizes his observations on the publications on the medieval Bulgarian history on the pages of GSU. This

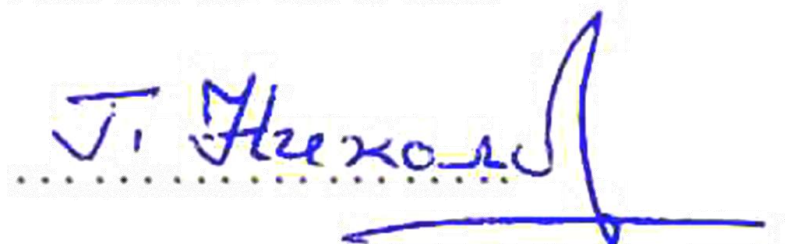
is the most meaningful part of the text of the monograph. The author reaches the following conclusions: In terms of foreign policy, the emphasis in the presented publications on the Early Middle Ages is placed on political and military relations, mainly with Byzantium and more peripherally – with the Hungarians; publications aimed at studying the history and culture of the proto-Bulgarians predominate; for the history of Bulgaria in the XIII–XIV centuries the researches on the foreign policy factors dominate; the precise research activity of the Bulgarian medievalists in the period 1905–1945 was largely due to their strict adherence to the facts of historical sources. The achievements of the Bulgarian historians presented in their publications on the pages of GSU are in fact a great achievement of the Bulgarian humanities in the first half of the twentieth century.

The publications cited by the author are correctly reflected in the Bibliography placed at the end of the monograph (pp. 185–192). The appendix presents biobibliographic information about the authors who were the subject of research (pp. 193–199).

There are no elements of plagiarism in the publications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Todor Alexandrov Popnedelev. The minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the ZRASRB for the scientific field of History and Archeology (Bulgarian Historiography – Historical Periodicals), professional field 2.2. History and Archeology by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Todor Alexandrov Popnedelev – Candidate for the academic position of Professor. The materials on the respective indicators are documented. All procedural deadlines and legal requirements for conducting the competition have been met.

The final conclusion is that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Todor Alexandrov Popnedelev fully meets the legal requirements for acquiring the academic position of professor. Based on the above, I recommend to the esteemed Scientific Council of the Faculty of History of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” to award Assoc. Prof. Dr. Todor Alexandrov Popnedelev the academic position of “Professor”.

Sofia, February 19, 2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "G. Nikolov", is written over a dotted line. The signature is stylized and includes a large, sweeping flourish that extends to the right and then loops back down.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi N. Nikolov

(Internal member of the Scientific Jury)