REVIEW

For

Competition for the academic position of professor by specialty

2.2. History and Archeology / Bulgarian Historiography - Historical Periodicals, published in the State Gazette, issue 96. from 19.11.2021, with a single candidate

ASSOC. DR. TODOR ALEKSANDROV POPNEDELEV,

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The only candidate in the current competition, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Todor Alexandrov Popnedelev was born on March 16, 1957 in Sofia. He graduated with a degree in history, with a master's degree and a specialization in Balkan history, a second degree in philosophy, with a qualification as a teacher of history and philosophy (1979-1984), at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ”. In the period 1986-1990 he was a full-time doctoral student (then a post-graduate student) at the Faculty of History of Sofia University “Kliment Ohridski. In 1990 he defended his dissertation and received the scientific and educational degree "Candidate of Historical Sciences" (now "Doctor", PhD). From 1991 the candidate worked at Sofia University, until 1994 as a senior assistant, in the period 1994 - 2005 as a senior assistant. In 2005 he received his habilitation and became an associate professor.

In the period 2007 - 2015 he was Deputy Dean of the Faculty of History at Sofia University, and from 2015 to 2021 he was Dean of the same faculty. The administrative and organizational competencies of the candidate are confirmed by his work as chairman of the International Association of Bulgarian Studies, as well as by the chairmanship of the Third Congress of Bulgarian Studies, held in May 2013 (not in 1913, as according to the presented CV). . In addition, Assoc. Prof. Popnedelev also participates in the editorial board of the magazine Minalo.

For participation in the competition, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Todor Alexandrov Popnedelev presented a total of 16 scientific papers. Of these, 2 monographs (one published in electronic form) and 14 studies and articles. From the presented reference-table for fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under art. 2b of the ZRASRB it can be seen that the candidate scores enough points to be admitted to the competition.

The main monograph, which was presented for the competition, entitled: "The Bulgarian Middle Ages in the pages of the Yearbook of Sofia University. Faculty of History and Philology (1905 - 1945). Sofia, 2022, is dedicated to a very interesting issue. This is the first monograph known to me to study a whole course in a scientific journal of history. Usually, when there is a round anniversary of a scientific publication, one article is published in the anniversary issue, which briefly discusses its development over the years. This is not about anything like that, but about a full-blooded historiographical study of the first and for a long time the most permanent and serious scientific publication on history in Bulgaria. The author's attention is paid to the articles on medieval history and culture, which is justified insofar as this is the main part of the content of the researched magazine. Which is understandable, because our Revival begins with a history of medieval Bulgaria and then this period will be a major source of national pride!

In this monograph the candidate is not satisfied only with retelling the content, but also clarifies the main topics of the research published in the pages of the journal, draws attention to the research methods used by the authors. This question is particularly interesting, as it lacks the recent division of strict scientific disciplines, the authors are not strictly profiled historians according to Soviet beliefs imposed in our country after the war, but equally philologists, to some extent theologians, or from today's point of view - real interdisciplinary researchers.

This study shows the relatively small number of authors who write in the journal - seven with publications on Antiquity, thirteen with studies on the Middle Ages, only three for the Ottoman period. Eleven authors study the Renaissance (the other period that is emphasized during this time), four - the very close chronological post-liberation period, and also four study the general history. This small number of authors is normal, as so soon after the Liberation there were relatively few historians in Bulgaria. Another reason is the strict editing that the materials go through, as this is not only the first scientific historical journal, but also for a long time remains the most elite in the country.

The emphasis in the research of Assoc. Prof. Todor Popnedelev are the medievalist publications, 45 in number, from the mentioned 13 authors. In addition to the number of authors and research, a formal feature, although it also carries information, here are more important the names of researchers and relevant works published in the Yearbook. Reading these names, it immediately makes an impression that these are the most prominent Bulgarian medievalists, not only for this period of development of Bulgarian historiography, but in general throughout history. They are the authors who to this day, to some extent, give the appearance of our medievalism - VN Zlatarski, P. Mutafchiev, P. Nikov, V. Beshevliev, I. Duychev, St. Georgiev, B. Tsonev, A. Teodorov-Balan, G. Galabov, S. Romanski, M. Arnaudov (I deliberately do not divide them into historians and philologists). Therefore, his conclusion that:

"In a relatively short period of time, few Bulgarian scientists were able to make great progress in the development of the Bulgarian humanities." With their conscientiousness and objectivity, scientists seek to discover the truth about the Bulgarian past. Their responsibility to science and belief in its role as a tool for realistic knowledge of the world build the stable foundation of Bulgarian medieval studies. The authors write responsibly not only to their contemporaries, but also to future generations. The realized need for combining the efforts of scientists from different parts of the humanities in revealing the diversity in the life of Bulgarians in the Middle Ages is being realized ", can be fully supported. And he has well explained this kind of "explosion" of Bulgarian science after the Liberation. This explanation is contained in the biographies of the mentioned Bulgarian scientists - in their preparation, but also in the public atmosphere of the then Bulgarian society.

In the proposed work, T. Popnedelev presents and analyzes most of their research. He divided them into several parts, according to the chronology of the respective period: First and Second Bulgarian Kingdom. The least represented period of research is the time of the Byzantine rule in the Bulgarian lands, which is paradoxical, as far as we see among the authors famous connoisseurs of Byzantine history, incl. for the period XI-XII centuries.

Without noting all the authors and research analyzed in this part of the monograph, I will only mention that these are classic works in our science, as the first versions of Prof. V. Zlatarski's works on the initial history of the Bulgarians and the First Bulgarian a kingdom that then enters his famous History…; P. Mutafchiev's famous study of the role of the Magyars in Bulgarian-Byzantine relations in the third quarter of the tenth century; or no less influential study of P. Mutafchiev on Bulgarian-Russian relations under Prince Svetoslav; also the first publications of V. Beshevliev on the first Bulgarian inscriptions, which became the basis of his famous monograph, which remains to this day, the main study of this material so important for our medieval history; V. Beshevliev's study of the Bulgarian people's favorite story about making a cup from the skull of a slain enemy, as well as his article on the religion of the proto-Bulgarians; the study of Prof. Yordan Ivanov from 1936 in which he published and studied the biographies of St. Ivan Rilski, and which still remains one of the main studies of these biographies, despite the discovery of new texts and some corrections in chronology made in modern science ; Prof. Yanko Todorov's research on the astronomical knowledge of the proto-Bulgarians, a question that is very popular today, unlike the author of this study; The main Bulgarian study of such a controversial treasure by Nagy St. Miklos of Prof. S. Mladenov, etc. T. Popnedelev does not miss publications in the Yearbook, which are, to put it mildly, controversial. Such is e.g. D. Krundzhalov's study is dedicated to the old Bulgarian ramparts, with a hypothesis that has long been refuted, both historically and archaeologically. This gives Popnedelev the opportunity to demonstrate some of the discussions and debates in the science of that time, which have been forgotten from the distance of time.

The same applies to publications relating to the Second Bulgarian Kingdom. Here again we meet the names of today's legendary Bulgarian medievalists - VN Zlatarski, with his research on Bulgarian history from the beginning of the thirteenth century, as well as the Boyana inscription; P. Nikov with his classical studies of Tatar-Bulgarian relations in the Middle Ages and the history of the Vidin kingdom.

As for the published sources on the pages of the Yearbook, the monograph examines all four publications - two by Prof. Benyo Tsonev, Prof. Petar Nikov and Prof. Ivan Duychev. I would like to pay attention to the first of them in which B. Tsonev studies the so-called Vratsa Gospel, with traces of Russian orthography, and draws conclusions about the Bulgarian-Russian literary relations, which are now forgotten. In P. Nikov's article on the publication of some documents of Dimitri Homatian, a very important point is impressive - the proposal to establish a Bulgarian Historical Institute to deal with publishing sources (then it will be repeated in a lecture by the author ). Something that was realized after the Second World War. As for the text of I. Duychev, this is one of his most important studies in general - the publication of the famous correspondence of Tsar Kaloyan with Pope Innocent III. Apart from the text itself, which is the best translation of the file, here Duychev presents some of his ideas about the time of Tsar Kaloyan, which he will develop later in his later research.

In a separate part, publications of sources on the history of the Second Kingdom are considered - a medieval description of the Bulgarian lands, by Dimitar Dechev, by an anonymous French monk; as well as an inventory of Slavic manuscripts from Vienna, by Prof. Benyo Tsonev.

As for the part defined as research on specific facts and processes of the Bulgarian Middle Ages, here are only three studies, all three, however, very important and still in full scientific circulation: the study of Prof. Yordan Ivanov on the bishops of Bregalnishka and Velbuzhda, which later will find a continuation in his next research (which topic is again relevant in some neighboring countries); and for one of the least cited and used studies of VN Zlatarski - for Pincius / Pinchius and his son Plezo, a topic that modern medievalism avoids dealing with. In the monograph of T. Popnedelev we have a rare case to pay attention to this problem, although only informative!

This part ends with the analysis of a classic study by Prof. Petar Mutafchiev ("Bulgarians and Romanians in the History of the Danube Lands") on Bulgarian-Romanian relations in the Middle Ages, written on the occasion of a newly published book by Nicolae Jorga on this issue. Here is one of the few places in the monograph where Popnedelev has allowed himself to express personal bias, noting that in some places P. Mutafchiev goes beyond the academic tone. The academic tone is very important, but when leaving the scientific sphere and entering some other (political, fantastic, etc.), this may be justified, as in this case the opponent's arguments are also not very academic. Popnedelen focused on some of Petar Mutafchiev's reflections on the craft of the historian, which sound more than relevant today, due to the extraordinary development of pseudo-historical "research" thriving on easy communication on social networks and the attempts of some countries and "nations" to seek ideological justification of its existence on the basis of imaginary "historical" grounds. After that, P. Mutafchiev will develop the "Romanian" theme in a number of his studies, some of which are published in the Yearbook. The paradox in this whole discussion is that, of course, there was no ethnic name for Romanians in the Middle Ages, and "Romania" is called a completely different part of the Balkan Peninsula. Such examples, of course, exist in the even more recent history of the Balkans and Europe.

In a special part Popnedelev has devoted research of Bulgarian philologists on the medieval development of Bulgarians. This division is made only for clarity, as here are three articles of different nature - a truly pure linguistic study of Benyo Tsonev on the classification of Bulgarian literary monuments, and two others that are difficult to determine - Dimitar Dechev on geographical concepts Hemus and the Rhodopes according to ancient and medieval sources, and Prof. Yanko Todorov on historical chronology.

The fourth part of this chapter presents research on issues in the field of historical knowledge, methods and methodology of historical research. Two articles by Petar Mutafchiev and Petar Nikov, and one each by Svetozar Georgiev and Rusi Rusev are reviewed here. The first of them is the brilliant study of Petar Nikov "The task of today's Bulgarian historiography", which shows his monstrous erudition. Popnedelev has well highlighted the main points in this study, the most important of which is P. Nikov's understanding of the historical process and the role of the historian in his understanding. However, this clarification should be based on positive facts and therefore the main attention should be paid to the sources and their search, collection and critical publication. Here again the idea of ​​creating a commission to publish a corpus of sources for Bulgarian history - Monumenta Bulgariae historica. On this basis Nikov considers the development of Bulgarian historiography since Paisii Hilendarski.

Prof. Svetozar Georgiev's study "Cultural and Historical Views of Karl Lamprecht" raises an issue that is very relevant (again) today, since there is no longer a mandatory "philosophy" - "the eternal struggle between philosophy and history", in this case based on specific German material (Lamprecht and Ranke). The observations of St. Georgiev are very interesting, Popnedelev highlighted the very important attempt to create a universal explanation for the development of human society of the German Professor Karl Lamprecht for the so-called cultural phases.

"East and West in the European Middle Ages" is another lecture by P. Mutafchiev, published in the Yearbook and studied by T. Popnedelev. This is one of the most significant works of P. Mutafchiev, which earned him the name not only of positivist (which has recently become almost a dirty word), but also of philosopher of history and essayist (in the classical French sense of the term) in Bulgarian historiography. In her analysis, T. Popnedelev quite reasonably emphasized the problem of the so-called Byzantine feudalism, one of the main issues in the lecture. This topic has not yet been seriously considered in Bulgarian historiography since 1989, when there was a mandatory decision on this issue. It is significant that in analyzing this issue, Popnedelev relied on the famous article by P. Petrov on the fascist views of P. Mutafchiev (from 1952), as well as an article by V. Gyuzelev in 1987, because (almost) nothing else (maybe except some research by I. Bozhilov)! Popnedelev highlights another important problem identified by Mutafchiev, this is the issue of so-called Byzantinism (Byzantine political and cultural influence) and its role in Bulgarian-Byzantine relations, which is also subject to further consideration.

Finally, this part contains an analysis of a review of P. Nikov, also very well known at the time, regarding three works by Prof. N. Blagoev, a candidate at that time for associate professor at the Faculty of Law at Sofia University. After this review, and after a review by P. Mutafchiev, N. Blagoev will never become an authority in serious medieval studies. From a historiographical point of view, it is important that Nikov and Mutafchiev in their critique of N. Blagoev reveal important points of their views on the methods of work of historians, something that T. Popnedelev draws attention to. Finally, the article by R. Rusev on the famous multi-volume book on the decline and decline of the Roman Empire by E. Gibbon is mentioned, in view of the moments of the Bulgarian past affected by him.

What I want to emphasize in the conclusion of the review of this book is that in the analysis of the studied works T. Popnedelev has managed to show the most important in each publication. This is how some well-known ideologues in Bulgarian science stand out, which are in fact hypotheses turned into those thanks to the authority of their authors (eg V. N. Zlatarski for the so-called Preslav Council).

The other monograph submitted for the competition is in electronic form only "The construction of Prof. Vasil Zlatarski as a historian and lecturer." Ed. Medical history. S. 2021, which is the candidate's dissertation, unpublished so far (Dissertation topic: "Formation of the historical views of Prof. Vasil Zlatarski").

With it the author completes a series of studies on the life and works of the famous Bulgarian medievalist, to whom he has dedicated many studies over the years. It is no exaggeration to say that T. Popnedelev is the best connoisseur of the life and works of VN Zlatarski! In it the author has traced in great detail the formation of the future great Bulgarian historian as a man and scientist. It reveals well the family environment of VN Zlatarski, his studies in St. Petersburg (V. Lamanski and V. Vasilevski!) And in Berlin. The second chapter is even more important - it examines the philosophical views and methodological principles of VN Zlatarski. His affiliation to the so-called positivist trend in historiography is substantiated.

Chapter two is devoted to "Philosophical views and methodological principles of Vasil Zlatarski". After noting that VN Zlatarski could be considered a positivist historian, Popnedelev shows it well in this chapter, mainly on the basis of research, but also in the lectures of the great Bulgarian historian (also published by Popnedelev). For this purpose the principles and the work of V. Zlatarski with the sources and the bibliography and the ways for restoration of processes and facts from the Bulgarian history are considered. The conclusion that Zlatarski makes positivism the dominant trend in Bulgarian historiography is quite correct, after S. Palauzov, M. Drinov, K. Irechek. Of course, the validation of this method (?) Is quite normal, as it reflects the state of research on Bulgarian history in the early twentieth century. time because of the unsuccessful attempts from a historiographical point of view to bring the historical process into some obligatory, imaginary framework.

The third chapter is entitled "The Problems of the Bulgarian Middle Ages in the Early Studies of Vasil Zlatarski". The first two paragraphs consider Zlatarski's contributions to the study of the First Bulgarian Kingdom and the Byzantine period, and the third - the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, which remains unexplored by him, mainly because of the new, that his time is not enough, as he devotes a lot of time to the earlier periods of Bulgarian history.

Chapter four examines the achievements of V. Zlatarski in the study of the Bulgarian Revival and the history of Bulgarian historical science. Issues of cultural history, church movement and political struggles of our people in the period XVIII - XIX century are thematically addressed. The second paragraph of the last chapter examines Zlatarski's contribution as a historian of Bulgarian history. V. Zlatarski gives the first periodization of the Bulgarian historical science. In conclusion, it is concluded that VN Zlatarski is the largest representative of Bulgarian historiography in the post-liberation period, which, of course, can be supported unconditionally.

The author has dedicated several more separate studies to VN Zlatarski - an article about his research on the Bulgarian Revival; article on his lecture courses at Sofia University, etc. Here I remind you that T. Popnedelev also published the lectures of VN Zlatarski.

In addition, a group of popular science articles about prominent personalities in Bulgarian history (in the publication "The most important personalities in Bulgaria") is presented, which I think is very important as there is a shortage of real popular science historical literature in Bulgarian public space. It cannot be replaced by the "research" of "specialists" on Facebook or YouTube!

The topic of the philosophy of history, the craft of the historian is considered not only in the monograph on the Yearbook and in the book on scientific work of VN Zlatarski, but also in some of the presented articles (eg "Moments in the thinking of the historian"! The study is also useful (co-authored) - "State policy towards cultural heritage in Bulgaria 1878-1989. Legislation, institutions, vocational education." Very interesting is the article "From" folk "to" state "history", which puts the issue of history textbooks after the Liberation, the beginning of higher education in Bulgaria (history of Sofia University), the growth of BCD in BAS, etc. Without dealing in detail with this issue, let me just remind you that the problem of history textbooks is one The foreword to the memoirs of Acad. D. Angelov, who is widely known in medievalist circles, is presented for the competition.

Here I would like to add the interviews with prominent Bulgarian historians (only from Sofia University), which T. Popnedelev takes. He is the only historian who deals with this genre. This is important because the views and questions of a professional historian are different from those of a journalist. Not that journalists kill themselves to interview historians, but it still happens.

In one group I would like to separate the proposed articles, which are general reviews of the development of Bulgarian historiography at the end of the XIX - beginning. of the twentieth century, and for the period from 1944 to the end of the twentieth century, as well as the articles placed under №№ 3 and 4, which examine the development of Bulgarian historical science in the twentieth century. I have already mentioned them, here I will only add that the exhibition could be more specific, with the names of both the scientists and lecturers removed from Sofia University (I. Duychev, V. Beshevliev, B. Primov) and the newcomers. Here, of course, other research centers could be mentioned, apart from Sofia University, insofar as other ones are being created, and the role of the first Bulgarian university is decreasing relatively, insofar as it will no longer be the only one.

In conclusion, I would like to state categorically that the works presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Todor Alexandrov Popnedelev testify to his competence to take a professorship at the Faculty of History of Sofia University, for which I will vote and call on the esteemed scientific jury and the Faculty Council!

 Plovdiv

20.02.2022 Prof. Dimo Chesmedjiev

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