

STANDPOINT

By Assoc. Professor Dr. Zhenya Zhekova – RHM – Shumen

member of the scientific jury appointed by order of the Rector of

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", announced in State Gazette No 21/15.03.2022,
concerning a competition for the academic position of professor in the field of study

2.2. History and Archaeology (History of Medieval Bulgaria – History of Samuil's Bulgaria)
for the needs of the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Documents for participation in the competition were submitted by one candidate: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Nikolov Nikolov. The Commission has examined the documents and found that the documents submitted for the competition meet the legal requirements.

The applicant is entering the competition with 33 publications from the period 1981 – 2020 with original scientific contributions described by himself. The 178 citations attest to the active use of his scientific developments. He is the author of 9 monographs (five of them co-authored). The central place is occupied by the habilitation work (monograph) on the indicator *B From the History of Samuil Bulgaria. Sofia, 2022, 319 p.; ISBN 978-619-7377-25-5 (soft cover); ISBN 978-619-7377-26-2 (hard cover); ISBN 978-619-7377-27-9 (pdf).*

The book consists of a preface, four chapters, a bibliography and abbreviations. The author proposes new and original theses, commented and supported by evidence in the exposition itself.

Still in the preface (pp. 7 – 10) he marks the main lines of his elaboration, which are the basis of the monograph itself. The author's thesis that Samuil's Bulgaria was institutionally linked to the state-political tradition of the early medieval Bulgarian khanate, and that all the personalities directly associated with this period of our medieval history had Bulgarian affiliation, is the leading one, supported by source material.

The first chapter (pp. 11 – 22) examines in detail the genealogy of Samuel's family. It concludes that Samuel was blood-related to the dynasty of Khan Krum. Arguments are offered to support the thesis that it was Samuel who was the eldest of the four brothers. Parallels are used with biblical texts as well as sources from the period.

The second chapter (pp. 23 – 36) is devoted to an extremely sad part of our history, namely the blinding of 15,000 Bulgarian soldiers, blinded by the Byzantine emperor Basil II. Categorically rejected are the theories about the absence of such blinding and its reinterpretation in historical terms. Again, a number of Arabic sources describing just such organized, mass blinding have been drawn upon as evidence.

The third chapter (pp. 37 – 134) thoroughly examines and analyzes the deaths of the last Bulgarian rulers of the First Bulgarian Kingdom. Controversial points are examined in detail in an attempt to clarify the still existing ambiguities. Special attention is paid to the results of the archaeological excavations on the island of St. Achilles in the Lesser Prespa Lake. Without any doubt, the four graves discovered there belong to members of Samuel's family, including his own. A chronology of the burials and clarification of their affiliation is proposed.

The historical-geographical region of Macedonia and its role in the history of medieval Bulgaria forms the basis of chapter four (pp. 135 – 284). An overview is given of its historical demarcation and first settlement with Bulgarians as early as the Great Migration of Peoples (4th – 7th centuries). Its political, ecclesiastical and cultural history are examined. The author proves that during the period under consideration Macedonia was inhabited by a Bulgarian population with Bulgarian identity. Neither the Byzantine domination in the 11th – 12th centuries nor the Serbian domination in the second half of the 14th century changed the Bulgarian ethnic character of the area.

Alongside his academic commitments, Georgi Nikolov also develops a wide public activity, participating in the celebration of historical events, television and other media appearances, promoting and defending Bulgarian national values and memory. Since 2020 he has been Chairman of the Board of the Macedonian Scientific Institute in Sofia. His interest in Samuil's Bulgaria has determined the directions of his scientific interests in recent years.

The publications with which Assoc. Professor Georgi Nikolov participated in the current competition, convincingly present him as a serious scholar with in-depth knowledge in the field of Bulgarian medieval history. The scientific contributions stated in the candidate's CV are real and substantial. It should be noted that in addition to his active teaching activities, he has supervised two successfully defended doctoral students, participated in national and international scientific projects, symposia and exhibitions, and co-authored textbooks and teaching aids. He is a member of the editorial boards of established scientific journals and annuals.

There are no elements of plagiarism in the publications of Prof. Dr. Georgi Nikolov Nikolov. The minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the ZRASRB for the scientific field of History and Archaeology (History of Medieval Bulgaria – History of Samuil Bulgaria), professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Nikolov Nikolov – candidate for the academic position of Professor. The materials on the relevant indicators are documented. All procedural deadlines and legal requirements for the competition have been met.

In conclusion, I can say that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Georgi Nikolov Nikolov fully meets the legal requirements for acquiring the academic position of Professor. Therefore, I recommend that Assoc. Prof. Georgi Nikolov Nikolov be awarded the academic position of “Professor”.



Shumen, June 10, 2022

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zhenya Yordanova Zhekova