

OPINION

of Prof. Dr. Dr.Sc. Dilyana Boteva-Boyanova (Faculty of History, Sofia University) – member of the scientific jury in accordance with Rector's order ПД-38-461/26.07.2022

on the candidacy of Chief Assistant Dr. Ivan Dimitrov Valchev for the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 2.2. „History and Archaeology“ (Archaeology – Classical Archaeology) for the needs of the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of History, Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski

At the competition, announced in the State Gazette issue 48/28.06.2022, only one candidate competes. This is Mr. Ivan Valchev, who acquired a PhD title in Archaeology back in 2011, and since 2013 has been a Chief Assistant at the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of History, Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski.

It is clear from the documents presented by the candidate that he meets the legal requirements for participation in the competition. In the competition he participates with a habilitation thesis and nine articles, all of them published in Bulgaria (one of them is in English – No. 6 in document 10b). Under No. 2 in this document is the monograph published on the basis of his PhD study.

The habilitation thesis is entitled "*The Cult of Jupiter in Lower Moesia in the Roman Age*" (392 p.), and is published by the University Publishing House in 2022. The decision of Ivan Valchev to dedicate a large-scale study to this cult is commendable, both in a general research aspect, as well as from the point of view of his own expertise. Following a PhD work on non-urban sanctuaries in the Roman province of Thrace, the candidate's new book is on the Roman province of Lower Moesia, thus allowing him to familiarize himself with aspects of religious life in both of the main Thracian Roman provinces. In the presented habilitation thesis, the analysis is based on 255 artifacts included in the catalog (pp. 219-310), which are over twice more numerous when compared with the ca. 120 respective monuments from the lands of present-day Northern Bulgaria, included in the catalog of Yanka Mladenova, prepared in the period of 1960s – mid-1980s, but published only in 2007. These 255 testimonies of the cult of Jupiter are also almost six times more than the 46 included in Yanko Todorov's 1928 monograph on Paganism in Lower Moesia, as well as the mere 42 in Oleg Alexandrov's published PhD thesis on religion in the Roman army in Lower Moesia (2010, pp. 267-275). The indication of these figures here aims to outline the development of the relevant studies in terms of the amount of available and/or

sought-after source evidence, which in turn will position historiographically the habilitation thesis presented. Ivan Valchev has placed the analysis in four of the total five chapters of the book (pp. 43-202), which unfortunately lacks a map and the corresponding mapping of the monuments – a mandatory element when working with archaeological artifacts. In my opinion, the geographical scope of the study formulated on p. 8 is also problematic, which requires refinement in several aspects. The analysis enables the author to draw a picture of the cult, which is chronologically stratified and therefore can be defined as a contribution. It is presented in a summarized form in the conclusion (pp. 202-218).

In the application for the competition, Dr. Valchev has indicated participation in six projects. Unfortunately, his participation in conferences is not given in the presented CV, in which the applicant is more laconic even than the Spartans who are proverbial with their laconicism. In the intricately organized application files and folders, I did not find a document, devoted to this important aspect of scientific life. However, Ivan Valchev has undoubtedly participated in scientific forums, not only in Bulgaria, but also abroad, as is clear from the articles listed in document 10a. There is no aggregated data on Valchev's participation in archaeological excavations either. The information about it is actually present in two formats: on the one hand, are the permits for excavations in the AR "Thracian and Ancient City of Kabyle" in which Dr. Valchev functioned as one of their leader in 2018 and 2021, and on the other hand, the list of publications in the series "*Archaeological Discoveries and Excavations*" in document 10a, attesting that since 2013 the applicant has been an active participant in the team studying annually this site. Prior to that, Ivan Valchev participated in the archaeological excavations at the village of Krepost, Dimitrovgrad municipality (2009-2010), as well as at the village of Koprivlen (Hadzhidimovo municipality) in 2008.

The candidate has attached a supplied the documentation with a list of known 20 references to three of his publications. Of these, one is actually a review of his published PhD study by a German expert on the subject (No. 1 in the relevant list), and four are in the research of a Romanian colleague, alone (No. 17 in the relevant list) or in co-authorship with a Bulgarian scholar (Nos. 11, 14, 19 in the relevant list). This fact testifies that the candidate's research is known by the Bulgarian experts and by foreign colleagues.

The requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and of the Regulations for its implementation are met. The candidate meets also the

additional requirements provided in the relevant Regulations of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" for holding the academic position for which the candidate participates in the competition. The above said allows me **to recommend the candidate Assist. Prof. Dr. Ivan Dimitrov Valchev for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Sofia University.**

Sofia, 04.11.2022

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Boteva-Boyanova', written over a faint circular stamp.

Prof. Dr. Dr. Sc. D. Boteva-Boyanova