

OPPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lyudmil Vagalinski (National Archaeological Institute with Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) on the application of Chief Assist Prof. **Ivan Dimitrov Valchev** PhD (Sofia University) in the announced **competition for the academic position "Associate Professor"** in the professional field 2.2 "History and Archaeology" according to the order РД-38-461/26.07.22 of the Rector of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“

The opinion was prepared according to the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for its implementation.

The applicant acquired PhD in the same specialty in 2011.

The candidate holds the academic position "Chief Assistant" since the 2013 at the Department of Archaeology of the Faculty of History at Sofia University

Dr. Ivan Valchev participates in the competition with two monographs and nine papers. The monograph on the extra-urban sanctuaries (2015) presents the candidate's defended dissertation. His second book (2022) deals with the cult of Jupiter in Lower Moesia during Roman time. The subject of the study is justified in so far as it summarizes accumulated information for almost hundred years after the book of Yanko Todorov. AD 324 is chosen as the upper chronological limit. The beginning of the sole rule of Constantine the Great did not lead to the restriction of pagan cults. The Emperor himself was baptized only on his deathbed. It was the reign of Theodosius I (379-395) and his edicts against paganism that marked the victory of Christianity, formalized by *Edictum Thessalonicae* (380). Archaeological data reveal that pagan sanctuaries functioned until the end of the 4th century (Vagalinski, ArchBulg 1997, 2). Evidence of Christian attacks on pagan cult buildings date back to the same time (Valchev 2021 = No6 of the attached list). The applicant himself admits in his conclusion that "at least some of Jupiter's artefacts" may date back after AD 324 (p. 217). In this sense, a priori approval of the "traditional" date 2nd – the middle of the 3rd century for the reliefs included in the book (p. 216) disturbs. As for the territorial scope of the study, the province's borders from the first half of the 3rd century are envisaged (p. 8). The Black Sea cities (*Histria, Tomis, Callatis, Dionysopolis* and *Odessus*) as well as

Nicopolis ad Istrum and *Marcianopolis* are excluded because the former were "Greek poleis" and the second were "organized according to Greek model" (p. 59). The inability to distinguish by iconographic features Jupiter from Zeus (p. 59) is not the argument. The author demonstrates excellent competence regarding the cult of Jupiter. The well-argued conclusion that his adherents in the province were highly Romanized people (Chapters III and V) supports the opinion of Yanko Todorov. The book enriches the knowledge of the Eastern Roman provinces' culture. Two of the presented nine papers are published in indexed issues. All confirm the enduring research interest of Dr. Ivan Valchev in the religion of the territory south of the Lower Danube during Roman times.

The applicant indicate twenty citations to his publications.

Dr. Ivan Valchev is a member of five and a leader of one scientific project

The self-assessment provided by the applicant (in a table) and evidence for it shows that he meets the minimum national requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor".

I did not find data on plagiarism in his scientific publications.

In conclusion, I support Dr. Ivan Dimitrov Valchev's candidacy for the academic position "Associate Professor" at Sofia University.

Sofia, 23.10.2022

