

STATEMENT

by Prof. Dr. Roumiana Il. Preshlenova

member of the Scientific Jury for conducting a competition for the academic position of "associate professor" in the sphere of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and archeology (Power and regionalism in the Balkans XII-XIII centuries) for the needs of the "Digital Cultural Heritage" section, announced in SN no. 55/ 15.07.2022

The only candidate in the competition for an associate professor in the sphere of higher education announced by IBSCT at BAS 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archeology (Power and Regionalism in the Balkans XII-XIII centuries) for the needs of the "Digital Cultural Heritage" section is Kalin Yordanov Kirilov, PhD. From the reference he submitted, it can be seen that he fulfills the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 of ZRASRB for occupying the academic position "associate professor".

For participation in the competition, Dr. Kalin Yordanov submitted a habilitation thesis "The Prince of Philippopolis: the unknown despot Alexius Slav in the light of new sources and discoveries", Sofia, 2022, Wunderkammer Publishing House, ISBN: 978-619-92254-0-0, ISBN: 978-619-7179-29-3; "The Crusades: Relics and Miracles. Pilgrimage, Adventure and Hunting of Relics in the Orient XI-XIII Centuries", Sofia, 2015, Iztok-Zapad Publishing House, ISBN: 978-619-152-613-0, which was published on the basis of a successful dissertation work for the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

Both books have scientific reviews and meet the requirements for a monographic work. Apart from them, Dr. Kalin Yordanov participated in the competition with a chapter from a collective monograph, 6 studies and 8 articles published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes. Sufficient citations of his publications are also indicated.

Dr. Kalin Yordanov has the necessary professional experience in the specialty as an honorary lecturer and an honorary assistant professor at SWU Neophyt Rilski and SU St. Kliment Ohridski", in the International High School "Prof. Vasil Zlatarski" - Sofia, manager of the "Boyana Church" museum, and since 2020 as a historian in the "Digital Cultural Heritage" section of the Institute of Balkan Studies with the Center for Tracology - BAS.

In my opinion, there is no plagiarism, illegal use of foreign publications or unreliability of the scientific data presented by Dr. Kalin Yordanov in his presented works.

Dr. Kalin Yordanov's earlier research was devoted to the cult of saints, blessed and martyrs during the Crusades (XI-XIII centuries), part of which were pilgrimages, the search for relics from Early Christianity (including the Holy Grail) and their transfer to Western Europe. Already in them, he outlines a second thematic circle - the history of the Philippopolis Duchy and Bulgarian-Latin relations after 1204. It is noteworthy that the author uses a rich source base and publications by many foreign authors, looking into the details of already established theses.

In his habilitation thesis "The Prince of Philippopolis: the unknown despot Alexius Slav in the light of new sources and discoveries", Dr. Kalin Yordanov developed the second line of his research by offering a new interpretation of the history of Thrace and the Rhodope Mountains at the beginning of the XIII century. Through a comparison of written sources and heraldic images, he further developed his studies on the Crusades and their impact on the Balkans. The subject of his research is medieval Bulgarian history at the beginning of the 13th century, a contribution to which is the prosopography of despot Alexius Slav. The goal stated in the title - the study of the unknown despot Alexius Slav in the light of new sources and discoveries - has been achieved on the basis of the documents and historical writings known up to that point, as well as letters of Pope Honorius III not used in Bulgarian historiography. Kalin Yordanov defends the thesis that despot Alexius Slav was probably the son of Ivanko-Aleksius and as such ruled the lands around Philippopolis.

Again, through the person of despot Alexius Slav, the author looks for Western European influence in the material culture of the Balkans, referring to a coat of arms on a cup from a tomb in the chapel of "St. Trinity" in the monastery "St. Virgin of Pantanasa" in Melnik. He interprets

it as a symbol of a knightly initiation, that took place after the marriage of despot Alexius Slav to the daughter of Emperor Henry. This relationship is further developed with the hypothesis that the founder of the Boyana church Desislava could be the daughter of despot Alexius Slav from his first marriage with the daughter of the Latin emperor of Constantinople. His starting point is a critical art analysis of the world-famous frescoes in the Boyana Church. Kalin Yordanov presents the bold assumptions expressed in the book in a reasoned and logical manner, in a style understandable to the uninitiated reader.

Outside the thematic center of his main research are two of the presented articles - on prostitution in the Latin Orient, as well as on magic in Byzantine political practice and the death of some Bulgarian rulers. These two "side" publications are touches to the same era and testify to his interest in poorly researched and little-known topics to the Bulgarian public.

Dr. Kalin Yordanov's research has an original and contributing character. Particularly valuable is the inclusion in scientific circulation of unused sources and their bold, but detailed, motivated interpretation based on an interdisciplinary approach.

Conclusion: Dr. Kalin Yordanov meets the requirements of the current ZRASRB for occupying the academic position "associate professor". His scientific output presents him as a researcher with scientific contributions and potential for development. All this gives me reason to recommend to the Scientific Council of IBSC at BAS to elect Dr. Kalin Yordanov as an associate professor in the sphere of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and archaeology.

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