

## OPINION

from Prof. Dr. Georgi Nikolov Nikolov, Faculty of History, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” with the academic position “Professor” in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology (History of Medieval Bulgaria – History of Samuil’s Bulgaria)

for competition for the academic post of Professor in higher education field 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, announced by New Bulgarian University in the State Gazette No. 65/12.08.2022 with the sole candidate Toma Ivanov Tomov, Full Associate Professor at New Bulgarian University, Department of Mediterranean and Eastern Studies.

The submitted documents show that the candidate Toma Ivanov Tomov fully meets the minimum national requirements and the requirements of New Bulgarian University (respectively Group A – 50 points; Group B – indicator 3 – 100 points; Group D – indicator 4 – 100 points, indicator 6 – 210 points; Group E – indicator 12 – 100 points; Group F – indicator 17 – 20 points, indicator 21 – 80 points; Group G – indicator 23 – 10 points, indicator 24 – 20 points, indicator 25 – 10 points, indicator 30 – 10 points, indicator 31 – 15 points, indicator 32 – points; Group H – indicator 36 – 10 points, indicator 37 – 40 points, indicator 39 – 20 points; Group I – indicator 45 – 10 points, indicator 47 – 20 points, indicator 48 – 15 points, indicator 49 – 25 points, indicator 50 – 10 points. Total of 885 points).

The presented book *The Unknown Temple “St. Sofia”. Part I. Inscriptions-graffiti in Cyrillic and Glagolitic. Second edition. Sofia, 2019, 332 p.* is the main monographic work in the competition. The book itself makes a significant contribution to Bulgarian historical science and its various branches such as political and ecclesiastical history, archaeology, epigraphy, paleography, toponymy, onomastics, etc. For the first time the Bulgarian reader is presented with a brief but informative history of the cathedral of the Patriarchate of Constantinople “St. Sofia”. In a critical spirit and objectivity, the previous research on the history of the church and the graffiti found in it so far are pointed out. The author has corrected a number of inaccuracies in the historiography on this subject. The analytical description of the inscriptions has been carried out with a very high level of professionalism, as T. Tomov has corrected and refined individual details from the first edition of his book. For the first time in

our epigraphy, the inscriptions of “St. Sofia” are compared with the graffiti inscriptions from the Bulgarian lands. This has made it possible to specify the chronology of some of the graffiti in the Patriarchal Cathedral. In many places an attempt has been made to identify persons and events attested by some graffiti in the western gallery: 1397 – the year of the Ottoman attack on the Byzantine capital (No. 2); Shishman – Bulgarian emigrant to Constantinople in 1341 (No. 3); Arzo and Tudor (No. 15), etc. The study also provides important information on Slavic homonymy and toponymy. Interesting and important is the observation of the number of graffiti according to the nationality of their authors: Russian (65), Balkan/Bulgarian (10), Vlach (1), Serbian (1), Glagolitic (1) – (10), neutral (19). Particularly valuable for scholarship are the author’s Historical Notes, which comment on many circumstances related to the inscriptions. The main contribution and merit of the author is that in one corpus all 94 Cyrillic and 1 Glagolitic graffiti from the Church of “St. Sofia”. Some of them are published for the first time and thus become available to scholarship. Undoubtedly, Tom Tomov’s long and hard work in Istanbul has resulted in an undisputed scholarly success.

The other publications in the competition are also of a contributory nature, including one monograph. Toma Tomov has published works, which are of the same nature as the other publications proposed by the candidate in the above-mentioned groups, which have brought into scientific circulation previously unknown historical sources (mainly epigraphic monuments). This is his main merit not only for the New Bulgarian University, but also for Bulgarian historical science. The five publications presented in Group D show that they have been cited seven times in recent years by the most prestigious foreign scholars and have been published in prestigious European journals.

Toma Tomov’s study and teaching activities are too rich. He has prepared with skill and professional experience the following curricula: Ancient Balkan Studies (Thracology) Programme, BA and BSc – 2011/12; Cultural Tourism Programme, Master’s degree – 2011/12; Archaeology Programme – ARHB 010 The History of a City – Constantinople from 2011/2012; Archaeology Programme – ARHB 607 Byzantium and its Culture (together with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boyan Dumanov), 14 hrs., from 2011/12; History Programme – HISB 004 Classical Antiquity, from 2011/12; Tourism Programme – BATB 507 Geography of Tourism, from 2012/13. APTM106D Historical Places as a Tourist Site; APTM205D Historical and Sacred Sites of the Balkans; APTM313D; Seminar; Photography Programme – PHOB 608 Visual Images of Byzantium, from 2012/2013; Photography Programme – PHOB 638 Visual

Images of History, from 2015/16. ; Film and Television Program, Photography, Fashion, Interior Design, Plastic Arts, Tourism, Music – General Education two-semester course in the major field of study at PHOB GENB 058 Introduction to Christianity, since 2013/2014: Tourism Program TO – BATB 504D Geography of Tourism, since 2015/16. In addition, T. Tomov was involved in the initiation, drafting, organization, conduct, renewal, supervision and preparation of the accreditation by the NAOA of all undergraduate programs in 2012.

The evaluation of the student surveys (Average score for the last ten semesters - excellent 4.53 out of a maximum of 5.00) shows that Toma Tomov enjoys a good reputation as a lecturer among students.

Toma Tomov has participated at various levels in the administrative and management bodies of New Bulgarian University. He has been a member of the Departmental Council of the Department of Mediterranean and Eastern Studies, NBU since 2006; Chairman of the Quality Committee of the Bachelor Faculty, NBU (2006–2012); Chairman of the Evaluation Committee of the Bachelor Faculty, (NBU 2006–2012); Member of the Academic Staff Development Committee of NBU (2006-2012); Member of the Academic Council of New Bulgarian University (December 2006 – October 2012). ); Member of the Faculty Council of the Undergraduate Faculty of the NBU (December 2006 – May 2010; 1 April 2011- 1 October 2012; 2016–2018); Member of the Program Council “History and Archaeology” of the NBU (since 2014); Vice-Rector for Academic and International Activities 1 May 2010 – 1 April 2011; Dean of the Undergraduate Faculty of the NBU (December 2006 – May 2010; 1 April 2011– 1 October 2012), etc.

Toma Tomov’s scientific biography shows that he is well known as a scientist not only among the scientific circles in Bulgaria, but also abroad. Special mention should be made of a rare quality he possesses. Toma Tomov was a researcher who not only used libraries and archives for his research, but was also a field worker. His tireless activity took him on the spot to the fortresses of the Struma valley, to the inaccessible mountain of Belasitsa, to the churches of Byzantine Constantinople. Overcoming many not only administrative and bureaucratic obstacles, he showed an enviable determination to reach scientific success. This deserves collegial admiration.

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Based on the above, I give a positive evaluation of the academic activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Toma Ivanov Tomov and propose that he be admitted for election to the Academic Council of New Bulgarian University for the academic position of Professor in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology at New Bulgarian University.

Sofia, 2 December 2022

  
Prof. Dr. Georgi N. Nikolov