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REPORT

From Prof. Dr. Yordanka Gesheva of the Institute for Historical Research at BAS for the presented works of Associate Professor D. Sc. Petar Stoyanovich for participation in the academic competition for the academic position of Professor announced by the Institute of Historical Research – BAS in professional field 2.2 History and Archeology, in the scientific specialty History of Bulgaria (The Monarchical Institution and the Third Bulgarian State), for the needs of the New Bulgarian History Section published in the State Gazette, issue 10, of 4 February 2022

Associate Professor D.Sc. Petar Stoyanovich is the only candidate in the announced competition for Professor for the needs of the New Bulgarian History Section at the Institute of Historical Research at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. To participate in the competition, the candidate submits three monographs and a series of articles that meet the requirements for scientific publications.

The main habilitation work that Stoyanovich presents is the book **“The Road to Sofia. Origin, education and motivation of Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and the mission in Bulgaria”**. Veliko Tarnovo, Faber: 2021, 254 pp. ISBN 978-619-00-1341-9. That, as well as three other books included in the list of publications of the Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Stoyanovich, are directly related to the personality, pedigree, family environment, education, state activities of the second Bulgarian Knyaz/Tzar Ferdinand Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. This issue is closely intertwined in most of the candidate's articles, which shows a deep, lasting, almost thirty years of professional interest of Peter Stoyanovich to the personality and role of the Bulgarian Knyaz/Tzar who ruled from 1887 to 1918, as well as a purely human bias to the person and deeds of the ruler.

The author successfully performs the tasks he sets to himself, tracks and analyzes the earliest information about the Saxe-Coburg genus; presents the years and results of the prince's

humanitarian and military training; studies the prince's preparations for his mission in Bulgaria in the last months before his departure; reveals the direct and indirect relations between Knyaz Alexander I (Prince Battenberg) and Knyaz Ferdinand I. Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Stojanovic showed a special interest in the period until the arrival of Prince Ferdinand in Bulgaria, because according to him this is crucial for his preparation and motivation as a Bulgarian ruler. The book examines both the family and education of Prince Ferdinand and the role of his mother, Princess Clementine. The personality and public image of the Prince, the preparation for the mission are shown. And all of this is based on extremely rich and almost not used by other authors archival materials.

The first chapter of the book develops the idea on the different levels of Europeanization of Bulgaria and its aspiration to join Europe after the liberation from Ottoman rule. I think this is a bit of a wasteful introduction. And while for the foreign reader it is to some extent justified, as little is known about the specifics of our way of life, culture, social environment, for Bulgarians it is rather a reminder of where society is on the eve of liberation and where the young state is starting on the road to Europe. It should be positively assessed that by building the portrait of the new Bulgarian head of state Stoyanovich made efforts on the basis of numerous facts and documents to refute superimposed untruths, provocative theses, even fabrications from the totalitarian period of Bulgaria. This reassessment is very useful and timely.

“The Interregnum, the Crisis and the Battle for the Bulgarian Throne (1886-1887): Soloists and Extras - from Battenberg to Coburg - Looking at Their Media Coverage”. Zahari Stoyanov Publishing House:2017, 224 pp. ISBN: 978-954-09-1161-8. The other book I would like to draw attention to is the political crisis of 1886–1887 and the struggle for the Bulgarian throne, published in 2017 by Zahari Stoyanov Publishing House. P. Stoyanovich examines a period of Bulgarian history, known both to specialists and to the

audience reading historical literature. It is commendable that the author has found a free niche, an opportunity to show unknown or little-known things, skillfully weave uncommon and unused foreign archives and research in our country, with what is already known and build his own original theses. At the same time presenting them academically and attractively.

It should be noted that by searching for and showing new and reassessing known evidence, Stojanovic confirmed the thesis that Prince Ferdinand became Bulgarian prince due to the fact that after a year of crisis he was the only candidate willing, ambitious and motivated to take the Bulgarian throne, thus ignoring the will of Russia and being unrecognized by the great powers.

An important point in the monograph is the new reading of the activities of the Bulgarian delegation in Europe, sent at the end of 1886 to seek opportunities for new candidacies for the Bulgarian throne. Attention is also drawn to a more side point in the governing process - this is Knyaz Ferdinand's relations with the widow and children of Knyaz Alexander after his death in 1893.

Zar Ferdinand I. (geb. Prinz von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha): Seine Herkunft, Bildung, Motivation und der Aufbau des modernen Bulgariens 1861 - 1887 – 1912. Wien, LIT Verlag: 2021. 400 Seiten. ISBN: 978-3-643-91215-2. Published in German, written by a Bulgarian, but using many German and Austrian archival sources, the book reflects the country's development, successes and failures; shows the aspirations, initiatives, the role of the Knyaz/Tzar for the rise and modernization of some areas and institutions of the state.

Striving to prove the thesis of modernization of the country and the contribution of Knyaz Ferdinand in this direction, the author systematizes the merits of the head of state for the development of education, science, art, charity. Represents the emergence and development of

key areas of state building such as post offices, telegraphs, telephones, infrastructure, roads, water and land transport, army and more. For me, however, the question of the personal contribution of the ruler remains open.

I would like to turn your attention to an article from the magazine "Lyuboslovie" from 2017, which raises an interesting question: When did Prince Ferdinand decide to become a Bulgarian Knyaz? An attempt was made to mark the time in which the prince accepted the offer to come to Bulgaria. Naturally, the question arises: when did Prince Ferdinand begin preparations for his future career. The author believes that such a detail as the purposeful teaching of Bulgarian language, history and modern politics with a supposed beginning in May 1887 can be considered the time when Prince Ferdinand had already accepted his future vocation as ruler. The second - and most certain, according to Stoyanovich, sign of the prince's decision is the presence of a completely unknown to readers reading historical works, and for specialists, commemorative medal, which the newly elected Knyaz probably brings with him to Bulgaria with the intention to be distributed to his liege and which is different from the later official medal for his ascension.

All three peer-reviewed books show Petar Stoyanovich's desire to present the Knyaz in a different light, than the praises until his abdication in October 1918 and even more different than the almost complete denial after, and especially after World War II until the end of the twentieth century.

Undoubtedly, the wide use of Bulgarian and foreign archival materials, periodicals, research should be noted. And one more thing, typical for the author - the ability to detect the blank spaces and fill them in skillfully, attractively, scientifically. I would especially like to emphasize the usefulness of Petar Stoyanovich's studies at the University of Vienna, where he defended his PhD in History in 1998; as well as several years of research work and his stay in Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Russia; work in a number of archives, cooperation with private

German scientific funds. As a result of these stays, Stoyanovich was able to collect many foreign documents, review scientific and popular research, as a result of which he introduced original, unknown or little-known information about the personalities under study.

I would also like to mention a small book published in 2021, titled “**Memories or something like that**”, authored by Petar Stoyanovich's grandmother - Bina Stoyanovich. Petar Stojanovich is the publisher, compiler, editor, author of the preface and notes. I mention the book because it shows how family memories should be collected and preserved, how they should be processed and presented to readers, how to store genealogical information. A book that, in addition to the genus, gives information about the era, the events, the vicissitudes of time, skillfully interpreted and clarified by P. Stoyanovich.

For all included in the list of Assoc. prof. D.Sc. Stoyanovich's books can be stated to have a very detailed and precisely prepared scientific apparatus, with data on persons and events, on palaces and landmarks, on contracts and agreements. Exquisite style with refreshing ideas and interesting insertions of words and expressions; original assumptions, sometimes only hinted at, other times presented and substantiated in more detail. Accidentally leaked facts are well woven into the exposition, but they do not burden it, they enrich it. Intriguing titles of books, individual chapters and paragraphs. Undoubtedly, another positive assessment should be added - great illustrations, ingeniously selected by the author and a good printing layout of the books. All this makes P. Stoyanovich's books interesting and fascinating, giving a lot of information, original ideas and at the same time offering topics for reflection, for debates, for expressing other opinions. I definitely think that the historical college will be provoked and challenged to express other views and considerations on the issues raised by Stoyanovich.

Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Stoyanovich has included two textbooks in his list of research, which present him in an unknown light as a media and PR specialist and as a connoisseur of political life in the country. Textbooks, needed in the training of election specialists, journalists and publicists, as well as in the preparation of candidates for political life.

The participation of Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Stoyanovich in scientific and publishing colleges should also be noted: Member of the Editorial Board of the journal Historical Review; Chairman of the Expert Board of Faber Publishing House, Veliko Tarnovo.

Based on the analysis and the noted contributions and positive qualities of the monographs, articles and textbooks presented by Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Petar Stojanovic, I believe that the candidate meets all the requirements and conditions for acquiring the academic position of Professor. Therefore, I would like to suggest to the esteemed members of the scientific jury, as well as to the Scientific Council of the Institute for Historical Research to support the academic growth of Assoc. Prof. D. Sc. P. Stojanovic, for which I will also vote.

Sofia,

May 26, 2022

Assessor:

Prof. Dr. Yordanka Gesheva