

## STATEMENT

by Prof. Dr. Sc. Trendafil Mitev,

concerning the competition about academic position “Associate Professor” (half time employment) in professional field 2.2. History and archaeology, scientific specialty „Documentation Studies, Archival Studies, Paleography (incl. Historiography and Source Studies)“ (Visual Historical Sources) for the needs of the "Auxiliary historical sciences and informatics" section of the Institute of Historical Studies, announced in the State Gazette no. 97 of 21. 11. 2023.

The only candidate in the competition for the academic position “Associate Professor” is a Ch. Assistant Chavdar Vetov.

Dr. Vetov has been working in the "Ancillary Historical Sciences and Informatics" section since 2012. Then he permanently focused his attention on the research of the photographs as a historical source, their specificity as an information source, the scientific criteria related to the storage of the photographic material in the archives, its practical use in science, etc. His doctoral dissertation is dedicated to these particular aspects of the subject: "Photographic documents (XIX - mid-XX centuries) as historical sources and their preservation in archival institutions".

With his dissertation, he permanently joined the minority of Bulgarian scientists, /Hr. Yonkov, P. Boev, Z. Galibov/ who laid the foundations of scientific interest in photography as a historical source in Bulgaria. As a result, I would like to point out that Dr. Vetov imposed this important topic as an independent direction in the activity of the "Auxiliary historical sciences and informatics" section in the Institute for Historical Studies at the BAS. Prior to that, the problem was not systematically worked on in the mentioned substructure of the Institute for Historical Studies

So with the scientific researches of Dr. Chavdar Vetov, in general, an empty informational space was filled and the thematic diversity in the activity of the section, developing source studies, paleography, diplomacy, genealogy, metrology, epigraphy, archeography and etc. was enriched.

The participant in the competition has complied with all the mandatory requirements related to the layout of the legally required documentation, for participants in a scientific competition, to acquire the position of "associate professor". Its scientometric data is comprehensively presented. The list of citations is authentic. The author's self-assessment of the contributions made in science is objective. Therefore, Dr. Vetov meets the first basic requirement –

objectivity and completeness of the administratively required documentation, without which one cannot participate in an associate professor competition.

An important feature of the scientific work of Dr. Chavdar Vetov is the fact that he remained faithful to his initial scientific orientation during the next stage of his development as a researcher, after the defense of his doctoral dissertation. Since 2015, Dr. Vetov has focused his attention on photography as a documentary evidence of the national liberation movement of the Bulgarians during the Revival period.

As a result of the efforts made by the participant in the competition, during the last 7 years, /the period 2015 - 2023/, we already have a complete, in-depth and summarizing monographic study of the issue. For me, the scientific monograph presented to us by Dr. Vetov is the first complete - "Visual /illustrative/ scientific history of the Bulgarian National Revival". It is a worthy achievement for the author and would do honor to any scientist who has made it his life's goal to leave a lasting mark in that area of science that he has made his permanent occupation.

For the success of the author's endeavor - to create a habilitation work at a high academic level, two main groups of circumstances are of crucial importance. First of all, the conscious effort of the author to step on the maximum possible information array related to historical photography during the era that interests him. Therefore, he has touched everything that is available to date in the Bulgarian archives. Dr. Vetov has explored the photographic wealth of our most significant archives: The scientific archive of the Institute of Historical Studies at the BAS; The "Portraits and Photographs" collection at the Bulgarian Historical Archive - National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius"; The funds of the Central State Archives; As well as some important regional state archives such as those in Kyustendil, Vratsa, Ruse, Pleven.

As a result, his monograph is built on a vast, original documentary edifice that includes over 500 original historical photographs. A significant part of them are released for the first time in scientific circulation. So the next important circumstance that should be taken into account when evaluating Dr. Vetov's work is the maximum possible comprehensiveness of the source material that the author uses to develop his scientific research. This is an important criterion, because it depends on the chance to make true, generalizing conclusions about the era.

The second important circumstance that is related to the success of the scientific work with which one participates in a competition for an "associate professor" is the professionalism of the author's analysis. And from there the

logic of the text presentation and the thoroughness of the scientific conclusions that are formulated in the work. In this particular case, Dr. Vetov quite reasonably clarifies in the first chapter of his monograph the topic of the ways in which Bulgarians come into contact with such an important achievement of European civilization in the modern era – photography. The contribution of the photographers who worked in the neighboring Balkan countries and in the Ottoman Empire has been clarified, so that finally the image of the important historical figures of our people can also affect the feelings and emotions of the modernizing Bulgarian society.

The second chapter logically builds on the author's exposition. In it, the issues related to the creation, features and contribution of the photographs depicting the participants in all important manifestations of the national liberation movement during the Bulgarian Revival are brought out. As a result, the author creates a rich, collective "visual image" of the freedom fighters, which cannot be literally described by the means of verbal exposition.

Dr. Vetov clarifies in many details related to the making of the Chetnik uniforms, the details related to their decoration, the desire for the image to radiate what at that time excited the Bulgarians the most - the determination of the strong human character to fulfill the difficult task - the conquest of freedom.

The third chapter of the work examines the image of revolutionary activists in civilian clothes - before and after the Liberation. Starting with Vasil Levski and Hristo Botev and reaching participants in the squads (cheti). Here, the author has revealed a second, but no less important side of the visible image of the Revival Bulgarian elite. European clothing to give these people a visible, additional spiritual radiance. No longer as "fighters in uniform", but as civilized-looking leaders of a modern European nation that deserves respect from the rest of the world.

The impact of this image, in turn, further enriches the image of the Bulgarians /and of the Bulgarians/ who are fighting for freedom. And after the liberation, the image of the already elderly revolutionarists, dressed quite modestly, radiates a special but visible dignity of people who have fulfilled their national duty. Because they contributed to the birth of the free Bulgarian state. So these personalities, and in their new identity, really serve as an example for the younger generations.

In the fourth chapter, Dr. Vetov examines the photo documentation that illustrates the participation of Bulgarians in the militia during the War of Liberation, as well as the presence of militiamen in national celebrations and the creation of memorial sites to preserve the memory of the struggles for national liberation. Figuratively speaking, the last years of the lives and works of those

Bulgarian generations who carried the fight for freedom on their backs are represented here in illustrations.

The images of the former revolutionaries, filmed in close proximity to the newly built beautiful monuments, gives a unique and irreplaceable - visible majesty to the events covered. In this way, an important goal is achieved - the construction of the living visual connection between the past and the present, which was consciously sought by the photographers who left these indelible traces of the cultural history of the new Bulgaria. Nothing can connect past - present - and future more clearly and impactfully than this photographic, source material.

Logically, in the last fifth chapter, the author has traced the role of Bulgarian historical photography in reflecting memorials related to the national liberation movement, in celebrations related to anniversaries of significant historical events, the efforts to discover the grave of Hristo Botev, as well as initiatives to restore the living pictures of past events. In this way, the long, varied and extremely useful path that historical photography takes in the overall development of cultural life in Bulgaria - from the Liberation to the present day is shown.

#### CONCLUSION:

Before us is a professionally written visual "History of the great Bulgarian historical image from the Revival period". What's more, the monograph also reveals the logical efforts of our free society to preserve forever - the indelible visual traces of the lives of the freedom fighters, reflected in the photographs. The author's conclusions are independent, in-depth, documented and make an indisputable contribution to the scientific information array related to the understanding of the new history of the Bulgarian people.

Given all this, I am convinced that Dr. Chavdar Vetov's scientific work is a serious contribution to the field of historical science. He collected, studied and preserved in one place the visible dimension of that great historical antiquity to which nations owe their most significant achievements in history. Without it, we would only be guessing about the subject of the image of the Revival actor - as we do today, when we try to describe the appearance of the medieval Bulgarian state and spiritual elite!

However, without having any indisputable facts for our conclusions! Therefore, I recommend to the Scientific Jury of rl. assistant professor Dr. Chavdar Vetov to be awarded the academic position "associate professor" by profession, direction 2.2. "History and archeology", scientific specialty "Documentary studies, archival studies, paleography, historiography and source studies" (Visual historical sources) for the needs of the section " Auxiliary historical sciences and informatics". I will personally vote "FOR" the awarding of the scientific position of "associate professor" to Dr. Chavdar Vetov.

15.02.2024  
Sofia

Signature .....  
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