

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ	
ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ	
Изходящ №	дата 201 г.
Входящ № <u>850</u>	дата <u>21.09.2026</u>
София 1113, бул. Шипченски проход № 52, бп. 17	
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REVIEW

~~Of the research and teaching~~ activities of Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Strahil **Valentinov Panayotov**, in connection with the competition for the academic position of **Associate Professor** in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, academic specialty “Documentation Studies, Archival Studies, Palaeography, including Historiography and Source Studies,” announced in the *State Gazette*, No. 53 of 9 June 2026, for the needs of the Section of Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Informatics, Institute for Historical Studies (IHS), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS).

Reviewer: Prof. DSc Pavel Veselinov Pavlovitch, Department of Arabic and Semitic Studies, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski,” appointed a member of the scientific jury by Order No. 64 of the Director of the IHS dated 6 August 2026.

Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Strahil Panayotov is a candidate in the announced competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, organized for the needs of the IHS, BAS. Dr. Panayotov has submitted all the required documentation in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its implementing regulations.

1. Biographical Information

Dr. Panayotov successfully defended his doctoral dissertation in 2014 in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology. The dissertation was entitled *Handled Tablets (Amuletic Tablets) from Mesopotamia: 2nd–1st Millennium BCE*.

From 2018 to 2022, Dr. Panayotov held the academic position of Assistant Professor, and since 2022 he has held the position of Senior Assistant Professor at the IHS, BAS.

From 2013 to 2018, Dr. Panayotov was a postdoctoral researcher on the “BabMed” project at Freie Universität Berlin, funded by the European Research Council. From 2020 to 2023, he served as Curator of Assyrian Medicine at the British Museum in London.

Dr. Panayotov has taught courses on the history of ancient Mesopotamia, the Akkadian language, and cuneiform writing at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski,” New Bulgarian University, and Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg.

2. Minimum National Requirements for the Academic Position

In accordance with the minimum national requirements stipulated by Article 26 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Strahil Panayotov meets the requirements for the field of Humanities (Field 2), professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor.

Dr. Panayotov holds Diploma No. SU 2014–17, issued on 01 April 2014, certifying the award of the doctoral degree in the field of Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology. The subject of his doctoral dissertation, *Handled Tablets (Amuletic Tablets) from Mesopotamia: 2nd–1st Millennium BCE*, is relevant to the announced competition for Associate Professor in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology. In 2016, his dissertation was published as a separate monograph.

3. Review of works submitted for the competition

In addition to his published dissertation, for the purposes of the competition Dr. Strahil Panayotov has submitted a list of two published scholarly monographs (in English and German), five studies (in English), and seven articles (in Bulgarian, English, and German).

Dr. Panayotov’s habilitation monograph, *Mesopotamian Eye Disease Texts*, was published jointly with Prof. Markham Geller by De Gruyter (now De Gruyter Brill). The monograph is a critical edition, accompanied by an English translation, of Mesopotamian texts on the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases. The authors investigate an area of Mesopotamian cultural and intellectual history that had previously received little scholarly attention.

The significance of this work lies not only in the absence of previous studies of the subject, but also in its detailed epigraphic, paleographic, and philological analysis of the written sources. In the course of their research, the authors have deciphered, reconstructed, and

comparatively analyzed ancient cuneiform texts in Akkadian and Sumerian relating to eye diseases (the so-called IGI corpus). In doing so, they have laid the foundations for a new field of research that will undoubtedly continue to develop. Sufficient evidence of this perspective is provided by the fact that the BabMed project, whose achievements are reflected in Geller and Panayotov's work, has already been followed by the NinMed project, led by John Taylor at the British Museum.

For the purposes of this research, Panayotov produced a detailed historiographical survey of cuneiform texts relating to eye diseases. Working closely with Geller, he prepared the translations and commentaries on the epigraphic sources, compiled the photographic material and glossary, and prepared the paleographic section dealing with the Sumerian logograms, which constitutes the first paleography of a Mesopotamian medical text of its kind. He also prepared the index and the philological notes (see the description in the Introduction to the monograph). Panayotov was responsible for the prepress preparation and transliteration of the texts. His contribution to the volume thus amounts to more than 400 pages.

In determining the meanings of terms used in the sources, Panayotov consulted specialists in paleobotany, ophthalmology, and psychiatry, further demonstrating the interdisciplinary character of the monograph. Each translation is underpinned by substantial research, which accounts for the scholarly importance and originality of the work.

The monograph *Die Lampe am Krankenbett. Untersuchungen zu altorientalischen Gebeten an den Lichtgott Nuska* makes several significant scholarly contributions to the study of Mesopotamian religion, Akkadian prayers, and magical-ritual practices. Its principal contribution is textual: the author offers a new comprehensive edition of the available textual evidence relating to tablet KAR 58 (= VAT 9030), incorporating parallel manuscripts and duplicates from Ashur, Nineveh, and Uruk. These are presented in transliteration, translation, and detailed commentary, supplemented by facsimile and graphic reproductions of the tablets, resulting in a dependable textual foundation for future research.

Particularly important is the contribution to reconstructing the transmission and dating of the texts. On the basis of paleographic analysis, Panayotov proposes dating KAR 58 to the early eighth, or perhaps even the late ninth, century BCE, making it the earliest known evidence for prayers addressed to Nuska, the god of light and fire.

The second major contribution is functional analysis. Rather than treating the five prayers as a single literary composition, Panayotov demonstrates that they were used in

different ritual contexts. KAR 58 therefore represents a kind of compendium of ritual “building blocks” that exorcists selected and combined according to the circumstances of a particular application.

Overall, the work offers a comprehensive understanding of Nuska and the oil lamp as interconnected manifestations of the god of light: the lamp functions as his presence, as a protector of the sick person, and as an intermediary between humans and the gods. Textual analysis is thus successfully integrated with a reconstruction of religious practice and the lived ritual context of the prayers.

The five studies focus on Mesopotamian medicine. Their analyses combine textual criticism, transmission of knowledge, ritual studies, and visual culture.

From Awe to Audacity (co-authored with Henry Stadhouders) provides the *editio princeps* of tablet A 373 from Istanbul, containing texts from the Egalkura incantation corpus. Its principal contribution is the reconstruction and interpretation of ritual strategies for successfully addressing high-ranking individuals. The edition also incorporates previously unpublished parallels, thereby expanding the Egalkura corpus.

Notes on the Assur Medical Catalogue refines our understanding of the structure and function of the *Assur Medical Catalogue* (AMC) through systematic comparison with the manuscripts from Nineveh. The study demonstrates that the first part of the AMC follows the sequence of the Nineveh medical encyclopedia, probably organized into twelve treatises and fifty standardized tablets. Particularly important is the conclusion that the differences between the Ashur and Nineveh versions reflect local traditions rather than simply different copies of a single corpus.

Eye Metaphors systematizes figurative language in Mesopotamian texts dealing with eye diseases. Dr. Panayotov demonstrates that metaphorical language serves to conceptualize anatomy, pathology, and therapy, sometimes through mechanisms comparable to those found in modern medical metaphors.

Healing in Images and Texts integrates representations of the sickbed found on amulets against Lamaštu-Hulbazizi with ritual and medical texts. The newly identified amulets, the identification of the figures depicted on them, and the reconstruction of the role of Nuska’s oil lamp enrich our understanding of healing rituals.

The First Medical Work on Phlegm presents IM.202652 as the earliest known systematic treatise on phlegm and respiratory diseases and traces its relationship to the later *Bronchia V*, thereby situating Mesopotamian therapies within the broader history of ancient medicine.

In the articles submitted for the competition, Dr. Panayotov examines various aspects of medical ritual and therapeutic practice as reflected in Mesopotamian tablets.

The candidate has also submitted a record of scholarly contributions, which shows that three of Dr. Panayotov's works are indexed in international bibliometric databases (SCOPUS and Web of Science). Between 2022 and 2024, Dr. Panayotov's publications were cited 32 times, including ten citations in publications indexed in international bibliometric databases. According to the SCOPUS record, Dr. Panayotov has an h-index of 5.

4. Absence of Plagiarism

An examination of the publications submitted by Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Strahil Panayotov reveals no evidence of plagiarism within the meaning of Article 4, paragraph 11 of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Conclusion

The materials submitted for the competition fully satisfy and, indeed, substantially exceed the bibliometric and scholarly requirements established by the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its implementing regulations.

Having reviewed the candidate's biography, publications, and professional experience, I give my unequivocally positive assessment. I recommend that the Scientific Jury submit a proposal to the Scientific Council of the Institute for Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, for the appointment of Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Strahil Valentinov Panayotov to the academic position of **Associate Professor** in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology.

Sofia

15 September 2026

**Pavel
Pavlovich**

Prof. DSc Pavel Pavlovitch

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