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OPINION

BY PROF. YORDANKA GESHEVA, PhD, INSTITUTE FOR HISTORICAL STUDIES AT BAS

ABOUT THE PUBLICATIONS OF ASSISTANT PROFESSOR KONSTANTIN GOLEV, PhD, PARTICIPANT IN THE COMPETITION FOR ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN PROFESSIONAL FIELD 2.2. HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY, SCIENTIFIC SPECIALTY "DOCUMENTATION, ARCHIVAL SCIENCE, PALEOGRAPHY, INCLUDING HISTORIOGRAPHY AND SOURCE CRITICISM" FOR THE NEEDS OF THE SECTION "AUXILIARY HISTORICAL SCIENCES AND INFORMATICS", PUBLISHED IN THE STATE GAZETTE, NO. 55 FROM 16.06.2026

Assist. Prof. Dr. Konstantin Golev is the sole candidate in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 55 of 16 June 2026. The monograph submitted by the candidate for the competition is entitled "*Eurasian Nomads in Turbulent Times: The Cuman-Qipchaq and the Mongols in the Turmoil of the 13th Century*", published by "Prof. Marin Drinov" Academic Publishing House in 2026, 412 pages. For the competition, Dr. Golev has also submitted two collections of memoirs by participants in the Second World War (Echoes of the War), as well as one collection of papers from an international conference; in all three publications, he is an editor together with other colleagues. In his list of publications, Dr. Golev has included 21 authored articles and studies, one of them co-authored. Twelve of the studies and articles have been published in Russian and English in various foreign peer-reviewed journals and collections. The completed scientometric table, as well as the attached lists of publications and citations, meet the requirements and reflect active scholarly work. More than 87 citations recorded over the past decade or so indicate that the author has attracted the attention of the scholarly community not only in Bulgaria, but also abroad.

The monograph "*Eurasian Nomads in Turbulent Times...*" is an original and well-executed work. It begins with an introduction, which may be considered to include the transliteration and explanations of geographical names; this is followed by five main chapters, developed in separate sections. The concluding pages, which do not in fact provide a summary, but rather present reflections that did not find a place in the study, raise the question of the idol of Chinggiz Khan, as well as the turning points and fault lines of the 13th century. The book concludes with a list of abbreviations and an exceptionally detailed bibliography.

In the preparation of the monograph, Dr. Konstantin Golev demonstrates an exceptionally thorough knowledge of the relevant bibliography. The book incorporates a large number of primary sources and an extensive body of literature in several languages. This indicates that the author has comprehensively examined and reflected upon the problems under consideration, familiarizing

himself with everything published to date that in any way relates to his research interests. Another merit of the book is the author's skillful handling of both sources and scholarship, solid argumentation, and careful consideration of each thesis, as well as his willingness to venture into related fields. The historiographical overview is very rich, and the presentation of the scholarship, particularly the foreign literature, is very good. Although, judging by its subject and title, the book's problems might appear to be far removed from Bulgarian history, it actually identifies and presents quite well a number of connections and interdependencies with the Bulgarian medieval state, its tsars, and its rulers during this highly dynamic 13th century.

In the preface to the monograph, Dr. Golev discusses the difficulties he encountered in the process of developing the problems under consideration and in collecting, organizing, and reflecting upon the text as a whole. These include problems arising from writing in a foreign language for foreign authors and readers, whose knowledge and information differ from those of the Bulgarian reader. There are also difficulties involved in writing for the Bulgarian reader, whose knowledge of the issues under consideration is oriented in a different direction. In this regard, it should be noted that in recent years Dr. Golev has presented his research primarily to foreign authors and readers, mainly in English and Russian. Since Dr. Golev is committed to presenting his research both to Bulgarian and to foreign scholars and readers, some of the studies and articles he has prepared over the past decade or so have been published both in Bulgarian and in English or Russian. This is precisely reflected in the author's list of publications.

The first chapter is devoted to the sources, terminology, and historiography, with an emphasis on more recent studies. Quite naturally, the author places particular emphasis on the sources, the main ones of which he presents competently. Undoubtedly, the written sources, especially those of a narrative nature, are of primary importance. According to the author, the chronicles of Kievan Rus' contain a wealth of diverse information about the Cuman-Qipchaq and the Mongols, and he therefore devotes particular attention to them. The Russian sources served to a considerable extent as the basis for the writing of the second chapter. Much information for this chapter was also drawn from Persian historiography. Information from medieval Persian historiography was also used in the writing of the second, third, and fourth chapters. In the development of the book, considerable importance is attached to sources of Latin, Arabic, Armenian, and Georgian origin, as well as to various materials of Far Eastern origin, among others. Dr. Golev pays particular attention to historiographical trends in research on the Cuman-Qipchaq and the Mongols.

The methodology of the study is well substantiated and presented. The second chapter, bearing the intriguing title "Ecology of War...", examines the seasonal campaigns of the Cuman-Qipchaq in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. A comparative analysis of the campaigns is carried out,

and the author's conclusions are thoroughly justified. At the end of this chapter, a table of the seasonal activity of the Cumans in their contacts with the Russian principalities is included by year, starting from 1061 and ending around 1245–1252. The third chapter focuses on the Cuman refugees, the passage of the Mongol army through Bulgaria, and the end of the so-called Cuman "Bulgarophilia." The author also takes a stance on issues considered part of Bulgarian history. Dr. Golev examines the Cuman refugee waves of 1237 and 1241, as well as the passage of the Mongol army through the Bulgarian lands in 1242. The fourth chapter analyzes the ethos, discipline, and fighting spirit in Mongol military culture. Issues regarding psychological attitudes and combat stress in the army, the behavior of combatants, army regulations of the conquerors, discipline, and the distribution of looted goods are presented in an engaging manner. In the fifth chapter, special attention is devoted to the issue of intra-Mongol diplomacy and the political use of witchcraft accusations at the court of the Mongol commander/leader Hulagu Khan (grandson of Genghis Khan) during the dissolution of the empire. The structure adopted in this manner allows for both thematic distinctness of the individual parts and, at the same time, suggests their unification into a broader interpretive group. Each chapter addresses specific individual issues that are largely the subject of international historical scholarship, yet undoubtedly of interest to the Bulgarian reader as well, since ultimately many of the problems examined touch upon or connect to our own history.

Formally speaking, the book goes beyond the boundaries of traditional structure, material organization, and development. In essence, these are four distinct studies (topics) which, when viewed as a whole, acquire the character of an engagingly presented read in which the individual issues seek out and complement one another. The approach chosen by the author is to examine several specific aspects of this period – so crucial to the history of Eurasia – rather than presenting a strictly chronologically constructed narrative of the dramatic 13th century.

The connections the author makes with certain adjacent fields of study – such as utilizing archaeological research findings as evidentiary material, incorporating insights from geography, climate, and climate change, as well as toponymy, among others – create a pleasant impression of a job well done. The research methods employed by the author are explicitly explained. These working methods have been carefully selected in accordance with the specifics of the subject matter: comparative and critical analysis, historical anthropology, textual criticism, holistic approach, and others.

I specifically highlight the attractive yet precise titles of the individual chapters and some of the paragraphs, which actually offer an intriguing preliminary idea of what the reader should expect. I would highlight one more thing – throughout the book, one finds both purposefully sought

terminological clarifications and proposals for new concepts; this is something that few young authors dare to undertake. In this case, Dr. K. Golev boldly offers terminological proposals and clarifications, providing well-reasoned arguments for them.

The analysis of the material and the conclusions drawn from it are logical and well connected. The numerous footnotes contain not only a wealth of scholarly literature, but also a considerable number of useful explanations, corrections, and explanatory notes. As a positive feature, I would like to note that each chapter concludes with findings or a conclusion, which enables the author to assess the material under consideration, summarize the results he has reached, and express disagreement with or preference for the concepts of other authors.

 **In conclusion:** While I hold the monograph, the studies and articles, as well as Assist. Prof. Dr. Konstantin V. Golev's participation in various scholarly events, in high regard, I consider that he meets all the requirements to be elected to the academic position of Associate Professor in the competition announced in the State Gazette, issue No. 55/2026, at the request of the "AUXILIARY HISTORICAL SCIENCES AND INFORMATICS" Section of the Institute for Historical Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and I will therefore vote for his election.

Sofia, September 23, 2026

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