

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nikola Dylgerov

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of History,

Department of Ancient History, Thracology and Medieval History

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ	
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For a competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field of study 2.2. History and Archaeology, scientific specialty Documental Studies, Archival Science, Paleography (incl. Historiography and Historical Source Studies) for the needs of the "Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Informatics" Section at the Institute for Historical Studies – BAS, announced in the "State Gazette", issue 55 of June 16, 2026.

Upon announcing the competition, all deadlines and procedures stipulated in Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the respective regulations of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), were strictly observed. The sole candidate in the competition is Chief Assist. Prof. Dr. Konstantin Valeriev Golev. The scientometric indicators of the publications, submitted by the candidate, fulfill the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor", as evidenced by the documentation, attached to the competition.

Dr. Konstantin Golev is a graduate of the Faculty of History at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", where he earned his Bachelor's degree in Archival Science in 2007, followed two years later by a Master's degree in the same specialty and in History. In 2013, he obtained his doctoral dissertation in the scientific specialty 2.2 History and Archaeology (Medieval Balkan History) at the Department of History of Byzantium and the Balkan Peoples, Faculty of History, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski." The topic of his PhD thesis was "Causes of the Cuman Migrations to the Balkans." Between 2013 and 2017, he was a part-time assistant at the Center for Eastern Languages and Cultures at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," and from 2018 to 2020, he served as an assistant at the Institute for Historical Studies – BAS. Currently, he is a Chief Assistant Professor and Technical Secretary at the same institute.

In the period 2009–2025, Konstantin Golev was a frequent fellow at the "Collegium Historicum" of Sofia University, under the Erasmus program at the universities of Oxford, Athens, Thessaloniki, Istanbul, and Szeged, as well as a postdoctoral fellow at the American Research Center in Sofia, the Centre for Advanced Study in Sofia, the Department of History

at Uludağ University (Bursa), and the Faculty of Arts at Comenius University in Bratislava. In 2018, he received the Black Sea Scholars Fund award from the British Institute at Ankara.

Dr. Golev has organized and participated in numerous national and international academic conferences. His high level of linguistic proficiency is of great importance to his successful research activity. He is fluent in English, Russian, Turkish, and Persian, and works with Serbian, Latin, Ancient Greek, Ottoman Turkish, and Old Bulgarian.

To meet the minimum scientometric requirements for the competition, Dr. Golev has submitted a habilitation thesis, one monograph (doctoral dissertation), 3 articles, and 6 studies, along with an additional 8 studies and articles for his research work, as well as three edited volumes/ three volumes under his edition. I will begin with a review of the habilitation thesis, titled "Eurasian Nomads in Turbulent Times: The Cuman-Qipchaq and the Mongols in the Turmoil of the 13th Century". It was published in 2026 by the Prof. Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House with a volume of 412 pages and a main text of 343 pages. The monograph consists of an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, as well as explanatory notes related to transliteration and the geographical names used.

Before the introduction, Golev very aptly explains his arguments regarding the rendering of texts from sources, especially Persian ones, as well as the use of geographical names, specific to the subject matter. The introduction presents the characteristic historical, political, and social features of the Eurasian peoples, most notably the Cuman-Kipchaks and the Mongols, without omitting the environmental and geographical conditions that influenced the steppe nomads and semi-nomads. Here, the candidate specifies the geographical and chronological framework of his research and defines its goals, objectives, and main problems. Golev also briefly presents the structure of his work. One is struck by the absence of a discussion on sources and historiography on the topic, as well as methodology, which usually appear in this part of a habilitation thesis. However, the author has chosen a different place for their review.

The main body of the work is divided into five chapters of varying lengths, each consisting of several sections. It is precisely in the first chapter that the author devotes significant attention to the sources, scholarly research on the topic, and his working methods. Although not in their traditional place, his choice is logical and well-argued. The candidate impresses with a thorough review of a vast body of literature and sources, a good command of which aids him in his research. Introducing the reader to the terminology specific to the subject matter is also a successful approach.

In the second chapter, the author meticulously traces the seasonal character of warfare among the Cumans. He examines in detail the various aspects of the course of their campaigns, logistics, and tactics. Similarities and differences are shown, depending on the regions of combat operations and the opponents. A particularly valuable part is the clarification of the factors that lead to these results, with a clear explanation of the climatic and geographical factors in this regard, as well as the importance of pastures for horses. In this chapter, Golev demonstrates an excellent knowledge of military issues among the steppe peoples and their opponents.

The third chapter is dedicated to the consequences of the Mongol invasion and the refugee waves of the Cumans in the West. The circumstances surrounding the migrations, the behavior of the Kipchaks and their neighbors, and the attempts of central authorities to regulate relations with them and integrate them (at times successfully, at other times not) are meticulously examined. The text presents the Mongol invasion of Bulgaria, the subsequent tax dependency, and certain connections between the Cuman elite and the Tsars of Tarnovo. The Mongol invasion is revealed as the primary factor that caused the Cumans to act even more pragmatically and put an end to their traditional loyalty to the Bulgarian rulers. It also highlights the fragmentation of the migrating Kipchak communities and their varying fates within the host states. It makes a strong impression that every factual section is accompanied by reasoned analysis and corresponding conclusions by the author, although I disagree with some of his theses, such as the conquest of Tarnovo by the Mongols.

In the fourth chapter Golev presents in detail the military affairs of the Mongols, uncovering the reasons for their successful expansion. The candidate draws his conclusions based on a detailed study of the source material and a precise knowledge of the scholarship on the subject. He correctly concludes that the military culture of Genghis Khan and his men was based not so much on new technologies as on the unification and refinement of older nomadic practices into a unified and effective system. Its superiority in the 13th century was due to discipline, psychological endurance, ferocity in battle instead of habitual opportunism, solidarity among soldiers, and their strong devotion to the ruler. Under Genghis Khan, traditional tribal loyalty was gradually replaced by personal allegiance to himself and the dynasty, which strengthened the Mongol state and army.

The final chapter is dedicated to the processes that led to the decline of Mongol military power and the disintegration of their empire. The author handles a rich array of primary sources and studies on the topic, especially regarding the contradictory versions of the death of the Jochid princes—from accusations of treason and witchcraft to death during a feast. The

candidate correctly accepts them as attempts to justify the executions and to present the actions of Hulagu and his men as lawful. A positive quality of his work here, as well as in the previous chapters, is that Golev does not blindly accept the claims of chroniclers and researchers, but compares different opinions (for example, the positions of Peter Jackson, V. Kostyukov, and Reuven Amitai), discussing the reliability of chronology and details. Along with this, a detailed analysis is provided both at the macro level (the clash between the two uluses of Hulagu and Juchi, caused by the vague distribution of spheres of influence) and at the micro level—for example, the fate of the Malik of Herat and the conflict surrounding his taxes. In his effort to clarify controversial datings and contradictions among the chroniclers, the author at times interrupts the main narrative, creating an impression of excessive fragmentation in the study.

In the conclusion, Dr. Golev synthesizes the core information of his study. He outlines his most important conclusions regarding the cardinal changes in the East European steppes in the 13th century, triggered by the clash and synthesis between the Cuman-Kipchaks and the Mongols. The latter imposed their political framework and cultural standards, but were ultimately assimilated linguistically and demographically. At the same time, they created a new political order associated with the Golden Horde, contributing to the formation of the Tatar community and the subsequent islamization of the nomads. The military and political power of the Mongols forced neighboring settled societies and envoys to conform to Mongol customs, rituals, and political practices. In the long run, however, once the military superiority of the nomads had passed, this cultural influence diminished significantly beyond their immediate neighbors.

The habilitation thesis creates an impression of expertise and accuracy in presenting the processes related to socio-political development, migrations, expansion, and cultural practices among the Cuman-Kipchaks and the Mongols. Various aspects of their combat organization and their relations with neighbors and the conquered are taken into account. The role of all important factors influencing the processes that shape the political, social, military, and religious conjuncture in steppe Eurasia has been examined. Among the strong points of the work is the candidate's in-depth knowledge of the specific subject matter. At the same time, in his effort to present the facts and his arguments as reliably and objectively as possible, the author interrupts the main narrative, which at times makes it difficult to follow logically. It would also be advisable to standardize the spelling of Genghis (Ghengis/Ghengiz), as well as to change "Southeast Asia" to "Southwest Asia" (in the text it is Southeast, p. 332) for the territory, where Hulagu Khan built his empire.

The remarks made do not diminish the significance of the monograph. I believe that Dr. Golev has put in considerable effort and has tracked down, analyzed, and synthesized a vast amount of historical sources and studies. The result is a high-quality academic study that presents a vivid picture of steppe Eurasia and the processes related to the development, rise, and fall of the political organizations of the Cumans and the Mongols.

The remaining studies and articles submitted for the competition examine topics related to the issues discussed in the habilitation thesis. In them, he conducts a detailed study of the data on the Cumans in the earliest sources of Kievan Rus. He examines the presence of the Kipchaks in the Crimea, comparing their behavior with that in other regions, such as the Balkans, and presents and analyzes their "Bulgarophilia." He clarifies the causes of their refugee waves, examines the Mongol invasion, and the military organizations of both Cumans and Mongols. He focuses his attention on the development of the urban centers of Jend and Syghnak along the Syr Darya River, using them to reveal the relations between the Cumans and the Aishtegnid dynasty. He brings clarity to the terminology related to the Mongols, their empire, the Golden Horde, the Tatars in Bulgarian historiography, and analyzes in detail the conflict between the Ilkhanids (Hulaguid state) and the Jochids. He also addresses the well-known case of the assassination of Chaka, where the author concludes that the Bulgarian ruler Theodore Svetoslav followed the traditional Mongol practice prohibiting the shedding of "royal" blood when eliminating descendants of Genghis Khan.

To the serious academic production presented so far, which has also been proven by the large number of citations by scholars from all over the world, one can add a number of visits and lectures at prestigious institutes and universities abroad, as well as his numerous media appearances. The candidate's research activity fully complies with the requirements for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" according to the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. In view of all of the above, I confidently propose to the esteemed jury to award the academic position of "Associate Professor" to Dr. Konstantin Valeriev Golev in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology, scientific specialty Documental Studies, Archival Science, Paleography (incl. Historiography and Historical Source Studies).

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Sofia

Prepared the statement:

/Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nikola Dyulgerov/