

REVIEW

by Prof. Mira Nikolaeva Markova PhD, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

of the materials submitted for the competition

for the academic position of Associate Professor

at Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski University

field of higher education 3. Social, economic and

Legal Sciences

Professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Methodology of Anthropological Studies)

In the competition for the academic position 'Associate Professor' published in the Official Gazette

no. 98/19.11.2024 and in the internet page of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History, as a candidate participated Dr. Stoyan Hristov Antonov

1. General presentation of the materials received

Subject:

By Order No. P33-.22-433 dated 18. 02 2025 of the Rector of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski University (PU) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of the competition for the academic position of 'Associate Professor' at PU in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Methodology of Anthropological Research), announced for the needs of the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History

For participation in the announced competition has submitted documents only one candidate prof. asst. Dr. Stoyan Antonov from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

The submitted by Dr. Stoyan Hristov Antonov's set of materials are following the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv and includes the following documents:

- Application
- CV
- Diploma of higher education
- Diploma for educational and scientific degree "Doctor"
- List of scientific publications
- List of citations
- Reference for compliance with minimum national requirements

- Annotation in Bulgarian and English of the works for the competition
- Author's reference of the contributions of the scientific works submitted for the competition
- Declaration of originality and reliability
- Certificate of work experience in the specialty
- Evidence of the applicant's academic employment
- Document of the applicant's research work
- Note on the applicant's project activity
- Scientific works for participation in the competition

The candidate Assist. prof. Dr. Stoyan Hristov Antonov has submitted a total of 19 scientific works, 17 studies and 2 monographs (one on the topic of the dissertation). Documents (in the form of service notes) for participation in scientific research projects, both for the gender of the projects and data on the economic effect obtained are also presented.

2. Brief biographical details of the applicant

Stoyan Hristov Antonov graduated in History, with a specialization in Ethnology at Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski". He successfully defended the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" at the doctoral program "Ethnology" at the Faculty of History of the same University in 1999 with the topic of the dissertation "Tatars in Bulgaria" (Ethnological Study). Since 2005 he started his teaching work at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", where he currently holds the academic position of Senior Assistant Professor.

3. General description of the activity of the applicant

Assist. Prof. Dr. Stoyan Antonov is a holder of numerous ethnological and anthropological lecture courses and exercises, is a supervisor of field ethnological practices, successfully participates as a scientific supervisor and reviewer of theses of students in the Bachelor's degree - 14 graduates and Master's degree - 5 graduates, is actively involved in the academic life. Member of the Evaluation Committee of the Faculty of Philosophy and History, Paisii Hilendarski University (2015 - 2017); Member of the Committee for Management and Quality Control of the Educational Process of the Faculty of Philosophy and History, Paisii Hilendarski University (2012 - 2021); Member of the Commission for Educational Activities of the Faculty of Philosophy and History, Paisii Hilendarski University (2017 - 2021); Member of the Commission for Management and Quality Control of the Educational Process and Accreditation, Audits and Re-rating (from 2021).

The wide spectrum of the led by Dr. Antonov's lecture courses presupposes a complexity of knowledge, scientific erudition and creative approach to the application of the latest achievements in the dynamics of ethnological and anthropological studies.

Dr. Antonov maintains active communication with museums in the region, and his qualification for working with museum artefacts during his work at the Ethnographic Museum in Plovdiv

and the Historical Museum in Razgrad is particularly helpful. He has an active research and project activity, participation in a number of authoritative scientific forums. It is also worth mentioning the activity of Dr. Antonov as a curator of exhibitions that promote ethnological and historical heritage. This demonstrates the ability to work with the public, with museum values, and the skills for video recording of authentic elements of intangible and material cultural heritage.

Scientific activity of the candidate:

The monograph *Synchronisations: transitions and transformations in the Bulgarian village* ISBN 978-619-281-023-8 occupies a major place in the candidate's scientific production proposed for review and participation in the competition. The essay puts at the focus of the research the ways of formation and development of collective and individual local identity based on the strategies of survival and transformation of the small rural community. The author employs several research methods: field-ethnological analysis, reflexive, comparative-historical, qualitative, genealogical methods, in order to answer the question of the local intimacy and discreteness of the Bulgarian peasant put to the test. The author moves from the stage of "retrieving memories to observing practices" (Antonov 2025: 8). In this no-nonsense approach is one of the contributions of the reviewed monographic study, inasmuch as studies of the Bulgarian village by scholars of the social sciences and humanities are numerous, but Dr Antonov finds his unadulterated field of action, applying particularly successfully the reflexive approach to the methodology of his study. The skill of reflection and self-reflection, set on a historical basis, enables the author to orient memories (individual and group) to the realities of the present and to re-make the stories of bygone times sound in relation to the contemporary needs of social actors. The author focuses on transitions: from the traditional to the modern, from heritage to change, from traditional economic employment to the transforming economic reality of the village in the post-modern era. On the basis of the empirical material from the village. Chereshovo, Slivo Pole municipality, Ruse region, broader generalizations are made, which concern not only the concrete social reality of the studied community, but also raise theoretical-methodological questions about the dynamics of the methodology of anthropological research. These formulations correspond to the theme of the announced competition for the needs of the Department of Ethnology at the Paisii Hilendarski University.

In the course of the presentation of his habilitation thesis, Dr. Stoyan Antonov also draws attention to the influence of the objective historical reality of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries on the development of more political oppositions and the formation of a new local social hierarchy. The genealogical approach applied here is interesting, as intergenerational interactions can be easily illustrated through genealogical charts and relationships between community members can be traced. As the author himself emphasizes, "data collection in this approach is often accompanied by narratives that thicken the schemas and give concrete human dimensions to the system of relationships" (Antonov 2025: 17). A survey of the clan nomenclature in the village of Chereshovo shows that identification with a clan also applies to relatives on the maternal side, although the registers formalize only the male line. This practice reaffirms the traditional kinship relationships characteristic of the Bulgarians, which show their persistence in modern times. The author skillfully uses empirical material to show the transformations of identity and the use of the past for the needs of contemporary survival. The family names derived from toponymy, for example, reveal the main indicator of local identity

- the Balkan origin, but the loss of the memory of their original meaning practically forms a new, already "Chereshovo" community.

In the three chapters of the monograph, the ideas of memory, naming and actualized tradition harmoniously merge. The exceptions to common practices presented focus attention on the fluctuations in the rhythm of the traditionally established social order. Ultimately, a synchronization of the individuals must be achieved for community to exist. On the basis of concrete examples, the author presents an original insight into the fate of the Bulgarian village in the 21st century. The style of the monograph is a precise statement that shows conviction in the theses proposed. The author has the necessary arguments to defend the conclusions drawn. We have before us an original work that brings new elements to the great topic of the study of the Bulgarian village. The application of different approaches, subordinated to the anthropological analysis, showing the transformation of the tradition, is beneficial. The unique festival of Dyadovden, for example, raises the question of old age, ageing and the evaluation of this part of life. The question of social roles, the change of social status and the role of pensioners in the active life of the small Bulgarian village is also called to the fore. Through this part of the monograph, new ethnographic information is also introduced into scholarly circulation. This is also a significant contribution of the study. Another interesting point is the attempt to define local festival culture, which raises the question of the relationship between the revitalization of tradition, its interpretation and the emergence of new ritual forms in the context of the reality of the 21st century.

For his participation in the competition for the academic position of associate professor, Dr. Stoyan Antonov submitted 17 articles. Among them, a special place is occupied by the problematic study of ta-tars and their identity. These studies build on Dr. Antonov's long-standing interest in these issues, already stated in his successfully defended dissertation, but are essentially new research and do not repeat the theses presented in the dissertation. The author establishes himself as an erudite in the study of the constructed Tatar identity in the post-socialist period, based on the new re-creation of the group, on the basis of traditional culture, realized in an urban environment (See publications under No. 1, 2, 4, 8, 12 from the list of the attached publications for participation in the competition).

The research on Bulgarian heraldry, placed in the context of the development of urban culture and the modernization of Bulgarian society, is interesting and contributory. In the process of modernization, the focus of Stoyan Antonov is also the modernization of science, seen through the prism of heraldry (See publications No. 3, 9, 10, 11, 13 in the list of the attached publications for participation in the competition).

In the presented publications the author's contribution on the topics of cultural heritage awareness, the mechanisms for measuring the significance of us-heritage, for assigning value to heritage, in this context the evaluation of the role of local government and the formation of new cultural (festival) realities (See publications No. 5, 14 and the three publications from section IV of the list of the attached publications for participation in the competition).

4. Evaluation of the personal contribution of the candidate

In all the proposed for review works by the head as. Dr. Stoyan Antonov is a precise researcher. Nowhere have I noticed incorrect citations and references to foreign works. I do not find plagiarism within the meaning of the HRARA. I find the works to be original, in the candidate's own handwriting. A complex analysis of the regional features of the identified images and cultural realities has been made. An anthropological and historical interpretation of the functional and symbolic characteristics of the studied phenomena is proposed.

I find that the proposed text exceeds the requirements for the academic position of associate professor. Particularly in the monographic essay the formation of peculiar cultural specificities that shape and support the local culture under study is shown.

Dr. Stoyan Antonov handles information with precision. He shows respect for those who have written before him on the problems under study and is very familiar with the scientific literature.

5. Critical comments and recommendations

I have no critical remarks to make about the applicant.

6. Personal impressions

I know Assist. Prof. Dr. Stoyan Antonov from my student years. He has established himself as a precise researcher, committed to truth in scientific research, showing integrity and respect for informants and colleagues. He enjoys authority among the ethnological and anthropological guild. He is a man of active citizenship, which is valuable in the formation of future generations of humanities scholars. He shows social commitment and humanity. Dr. Stoyan Antonov's affiliation to any academic college is a privilege because of his personal qualities and scientific abilities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to confirm that the documents and materials presented by Assist. Prof. Dr. Stoyan Antonov comply with all the requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the LADAB and the relevant Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University.

The candidate's works have original scientific and applied contributions. His theoretical developments have a practical orientation, some of them have been approbated in his teaching work. The scientific and teaching qualification of Assist. Dr. Stoyan Hristov Antonov is undoubted.

Analyzing the overall scientific activity of Assist. Prof. Dr. Stoyan Hristov Antonov and taking into account the undeniable merits of the proposed monographic essay, as well as other publications on the competition, I will vote positively for the award of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 3. 1 Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences, from the field of knowledge 3. Social, economic and legal sciences and I recommend that his candidature be proposed through a substantiated report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History for the election to the academic position of "Associate

Professor" at the Paisii Hilendarski University in. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3. 1. Sociology, Anthropology, Cultural Sciences (Methodology of Anthropological Research).

14.04.2025

Reviewer:

/prof. Mira Markova PhD/