

EXAMINER'S ASSESSMENT

by Prof. Dobrinka Parusheva, PhD, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

on the documents submitted in application for the open position of Associate Professor at the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in the Sphere of HE 3. Social, Economic and Juridical Sciences, Area of professional qualification 3.1.Sociology, Anthropology, and Cultural studies (Methodology of Anthropological Research)

The sole applicant for the open position of an Associate Professor for the needs of the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (announced in the *State Gazette*, no 98, 19.11.2024) is Stoyan Antonov, PhD, Senior Assistant Professor in the same department. The portfolio submitted by the applicant includes all necessary documents in accordance with the Regulations for the development of the academic staff in the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. The applicant participates in the competition with the required habilitation monograph, another book published on the basis of his PhD thesis, and 14 major studies and articles. Ten of the latter texts are in Bulgarian language, published in Bulgaria, while the remaining four articles are published in other countries, in English. Most of the texts are included in edited thematic volumes. They are all the author's personal and independent achievement.

The habilitation monograph of Stoyan Antonov is titled *Synchronisations: transitions and transformations in the Bulgarian village* and is published by the Paisii Hilendarski University Press. As one of the authors of editorial reviews for the publication of the monograph, I would like to confirm also in this opinion my entirely positive assessment of Dr. Antonov's work. This book offers an anthropological insight into the way a village constructs itself as a community, living with its contradictory past. The author focuses our attention on the identity of this community – inherited, maintained, and passed on. The three chapters of the monograph discuss, respectively, the practices of naming, the relationship between memory and history (and its uses), and the updated tradition exemplified by one holiday (The day of the Grandfather). Stoyan Antonov manages to successfully intertwine his personal interest in the small place of the village of Chereshovo with the big issue of transformations in the Bulgarian village in the post-socialist period. He achieves this by combining methods of genealogy, microhistory, and ethnography and ethnology, but the unifying link remains the anthropological approach. The text of *Synchronisations* essentially “fits well” with the theme of the announced competition (Methodology of Anthropological Research).

As for the other submitted publications, I agree with their division into groups proposed by the candidate: epistemologically programmatic texts; ethnographic ones, based on field research; heraldic

works; and publications not belonging to the enumerated groups, which in no way reduces their weight from the academic point of view. I would like to emphasise that the author's *Statement of Contributions* is of the highest quality, in my opinion, and purposefully illustrates important aspects in the methodology of anthropological research developed by the author.

Part of Stoyan Antonov's research activity, including his habilitation monograph, is the result of participation in projects. He has indicated his participation in five international and ten national scientific and applied projects, among which I would like to single out the project "Together and Equal: the Rights of People Seeking Asylum and Protection" (2022-2023). This project is related to the war in Ukraine and the refugee crisis caused by it and testifies not only to the candidate's scientific interests, but also to his civic engagement. Dr. Antonov's research activities are documented also through his participation in academic conferences and congresses. Here I would like to highlight his participation in the international congresses of genealogy and heraldic sciences, where he is usually the only participant from Bulgaria with presentation. Along with the participations in international scientific forums a few invited lectures are mentioned too, in Macedonia and Turkey. These are a good marker of the candidate's recognition in the academia world. The numerous citations of his research, which exceed the minimum national requirements multiple times, are no less supportive.

The file *Documents of the educational work* immediately impresses with the large number of subjects on which Stoyan Antonov has developed and taught (and in most cases continues to teach) courses. Many of these are among the most basic in the teaching of ethnology and anthropology (History of Ethnology/History of Anthropology, Methods of Field Research, Theory of Research in the Social Sciences, etc.). Such a range of courses speaks to a broad professional and general intellectual capacity. The candidate teaches in undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as in doctoral-level training (in collaboration with habilitated colleagues). He has also lectured to foreign students at the University of Plovdiv and at some foreign universities (in Lyon, France and Eskisehir, Turkey) under the Erasmus+ programme. Dr. Antonov has participated in the organization of student scientific forums and has been the supervisor of 12 (twelve) bachelor and five master theses, which testifies to the trust of both the Department of Ethnology and the students. The latter is evidenced also by the thanks publicly expressed to him by former alumni.

This is the place to share my personal impressions of Stoyan. We have been colleagues in the Department of Ethnology since the autumn of 2010. He is at the centre of the debate when it comes to methodological issues, as well as when discussing issues related to communities and heritage. Conversations with him are always an enjoyable intellectual exercise, sometimes accompanied by challenges. One can definitely rely on his expertise in the field of methodology, but also in heraldry.

The latter has been demonstrated by the forensic expertise that Dr. Antonov has repeatedly been invited to prepare.

In conclusion, I'm firmly convinced that the candidate in this competition and the documents and materials submitted by him meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for implementation of ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. He has submitted a sufficient number of academic publications published after the defence of his PhD thesis and after he was appointed to the academic position of Senior Assistant Professor. All of them are his personal merit. The candidate's works are original scientific contributions, and a representative part of them have been published in reputable journals and thematic edited volumes published by academic publishing houses. Dr. Antonov's academic and teaching qualifications are unquestionable, and the results he has shown in education and research exceed the minimum national requirements.

All of the above gives me a reason to present my explicit positive assessment and to recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History for the election of the Senior Assist. Prof. Stoyan Hristov Antonov, PhD, to the academic position of Associate Professor at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies (Methodology of Anthropological Studies).

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Plovdiv

Author of the assessment:

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