

REVIEW

By Prof. Elka Bakalova DSc

(Associate Member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

FOR THE COMPETITION

for the academic position of *Professor*,

Specialty Art Studies and Fine Arts

(Medieval Art and Art of the National Revival Period)

Professional direction 8.1 (State Gazette 35/30.04.2019)

for the needs of RG *Mediaeval and Art of the Revival Period*, Department *Fine Arts*

Candidate Ass. Prof. PhD Emmanuel Stefanov Moutafov

For the competition announced by the Institute of Art Studies (Protocol No. 6, point 4 / 21.06.2019,) for the occupation of the academic rank of "Professor", for needs of RG *Mediaeval and Art of the Revival Period*, Department *Fine Arts* the only applicant to is Associate Professor, Dr. Emmanuel Stefanov Moutafov, whose academic work I have been following.

In 2001, Moutafov successfully defended his dissertation for acquiring the academic and educational degree "Doctor" on history on the topic *Europeanization on Paper: Treatises on Painting in Greek during the First Half of the 18th Century* at the Institute of Balkan Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. In the period 2001-2004 he was a Research Associate II in the Department of Fine Arts at the Institute of Art Studies and Sciences, BAS; from 2004-2010 - Research Associate I, and from 02.2010 - Senior Research Associate II ("associate professor" of the HAC) in the same unit.

He is currently Director of the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences - from 01.10.2014 to 30.09.2018, and again from 09.11.2018, the deadline for his second term is 09.11.2022.

To participate in the competition Emanuel Moutafov has submitted 16 publications that relate to the academic field announced in the competition and were printed after the author's habilitation, namely in the period from February 2010 to the present. A number of other publications have also been presented - book chapters and catalogs that we will not look at here.

Of those:

- Habilitation work entitled **“The Chora Monastery in Constantinople (Kariye Camii) “** (2019), a monograph study of one of the most famous monuments of Byzantine art, presented in English since it is intended for publication in England.

I take the liberty to note, that the monasteries in Constantinople during the reign of the dynasty of the Palaeologus continue to be important centers of education and culture, centers of revival of ancient humanism with influence on the entire Orthodox world. On the order of the great logothete

Theodoros Metochites, the mosaics of the monastery "Hora" (Kahri Jami) were created, which marked the peaks in Byzantine and European art in general.

Of course, there are in-depth studies and publications on this key monument that are known to Moutafov. I will mention just a few here: a four-volume study of Paul Underwood and some important publications by Robert Ousterhout¹.

Thus the task of the author is as difficult as it is attractive to modern science. The difficulties that arise in constructing such a summary work are enormous. Superficial and spectacular findings could only be avoided if there were serious factual arguments, with a thorough and comprehensive examination of the individual specific phenomena. And indeed the author successfully overcomes all these difficulties. Naturally, he relies on the research of his predecessors, teachers, and colleagues, but the academic results of this hard and consistent work are his personal achievement and merit.

Associate Professor Moutafov worked for a long time in the church itself, which allowed him to deal with the whole wall decoration as well as with existing inscriptions. The perfect knowledge of Greek provided him with the opportunity to identify and publish a large number of so far unpublished inscriptions that present interesting data for both the ktetor as well as for various events related to this important monument of late Byzantine art.

His first publication which came as a result of his study of the mural paintings of the monument is dated 2016. See E. Moutafov, E. (2016): On How to "Read" the Chora Monastery. – In: *Medioevo Greco*, 16, 199-212. The title of the researcher's specific orientation towards the study of the inscriptions in the monuments he deals with is evident in the title itself. But he continued to work on this monument and explore other aspects of its picturesque decoration.

Working with the source's original texts of the sources allows him to gather new data that, according to him, serves to "further explain the iconographic program." Thus, he even managed to explain the depictions of saints in medallions in the narthexes of the church with the help of information from a previously unused manuscript from the Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies "Prof. Ivan Duichev" collection.

Special attention is dedicated also to other inscriptions, which Moutafov interprets interprets in accordance with the specific historical context of the specific scenic decoration. The author naturally refers to the name of the monastery and its dedication. He offers an interesting theological interpretation of the Greek lexeme "people" (χώρα) and the possible correlation of the notion denoted by it of *space / receptacle* with it to the Holy Mother of God and to the Lord.

In addition to the epigraphic aspects, Moutafov deals with a number of other details of the decoration of the church interior.

I must point out that despite the voluminous portion of the research that Moutafov devotes to all these images, and despite his good knowledge of research on the monument, there is an important, relatively new publication that might have escaped him. It is a study of the sculptural decoration in the church. For example, on page 96, the annotation to the reproduction in Moutafov's monograph reads: "Painted columns of the outer narthex with bays, 14th century, photo: author". But, in fact, these are not "colored columns", but columns with colored capitals from the 6th century, referred to in pp. 247 - 248 in the article of the researcher Ø. Hjort: *The Sculpture of Kariye Camii*. - DOP 33 (1979), 199-289. This is what the aforementioned researcher writes about them: "It is possible that they were taken from a Justinian tank that had fallen into disuse at the time; at all events, capitals of this type were reused in close relationship with Palaeologan constructions as exemplified by Kilisse Camii and Kariye Camii. " In other words, although he mentions the sculpture in the church, Moutafov does not cite the first and principal study of it.

The complex nature of Moutafov's research, which includes both art and historical, philological and theological issues, determines the specifics of his work. Of course, there are insufficiently substantiated identifications of images, which in our view are the identification of a fragmentarily preserved image of a saint such as St. John of Rila.

Without being able to elaborate on the habilitation work of Emmanuel Moutafov, I will emphasize the fact that we have a thorough historical study, which is the first of its kind to attempt to systematize significant phenomena of the spiritual life of Byzantium in the 14th century, to examine it as a projection and function of ideology, to view it in its natural and complete historical and cultural context.

I would also like to point out that the texts that will be published in the book perfectly represent the work of the author as a historian who seeks to articulate his views, applying an interdisciplinary approach by attracting different types and content of sources - hagiographical, hymnographic, iconographic, material, etc. From their reading it can be seen that in analyzing them with regard to the problem of interest E. Moutafov is guided by strictly scientific criticism, being alien to hypotheses and assumptions that cannot be substantiated by source data.

2. Emmanuel Moutafov is a scientist with an established profile and personality over the years. He has devoted himself to a systematic study of the cults prevalent in Bulgaria, a difficult research area that requires multilateral training and an interdisciplinary approach. In addition to his habilitation

work, Moutafov also presents a considerable number of private studies, which are primarily related to Christian monuments in Bulgaria and the Balkans (and some outside this territory) from the late Middle Ages and the Revival Period. I will here mention just a few of them: Moutafov, E. Some Aspects of the Development of Christian Orthodox Art in the 16th and 17th Centuries: The Testimony of Church Inscriptions and Artists' Signatures. In: *Revue Romaine d'Histoire de l'Art*, 2017-2018, 47-64; Moutafov, E. (2010): Cryptograms and Bilingualism in Paleological Art (Cryptograms and Bilingualism in Paleologian Art). - In: *Patrimonium* 3, Skopje, 2010, 251-261 (with summary in English); Jerusalem (cat. 38). - B: Christian Art of the 13th-19th Centuries from the Museums of Bulgaria, Moscow, State Tretyakov Gallery, 2018, ISBN 9785895802212, 114-115, etc.

When participating in collective research Moutafov engages himself mainly with the inscriptions of the examined monuments. It is worth mentioning here that he has participated in a number of collective editions of the Institute of Art Studies he runs and in others, dealing entirely with epigraphic issues. Such is his participation in a number of research projects of the Institute of Art Studies such as the published corpuses of nineteenth-century murals, such as: Moutafov, E. Greek ktetor's inscriptions. Church "St Nikola", village Raiovo. - In: *Corpus of Mural Paintings from the First Half of the 19th Century in Bulgaria*, Institute of Art Studies, 2018, ISBN 9789548594738, 1, 364; Moutafov, E. Greek Inscriptions. Church "St Nikola", city Elena. - In *Corpus of Mural Paintings from the First Half of the 19th Century in Bulgaria*, Institute of Art Studies, 2018, ISBN 9789548594738, 7, 104-111; Moutafov, E. Greek Inscriptions. Church "St Nikola", village Maritza. - In *Corpus of Mural Paintings from the First Half of the 19th Century in Bulgaria*, Institute of Art Studies, 2018, 2018, ISBN 9789548594738, 1, 238; Moutafov, E. Ktetor's Inscriptions. Church "St Georgy" (Metoshki), Assenovgrad. - In *Corpus of Mural Paintings from the First Half of the 19th Century in Bulgaria*, Institute of Art Studies, 2018, ISBN 9789548594738, 1, 83; Moutafov, E. Inscriptions in "Holy Archangels Church", Bachkovo Monastery. - In: *Corpus of Mural Paintings from the First Half of the 19th Century in Bulgaria*, Institute of Art Studies, 2018, ISBN 9789548594738, 810-834, etc.

Sometimes Moutafov deals with unpublished monuments, and then he presents a comprehensive study of images and inscriptions. Such is, for example, the following publication: Moutafov, E. Texts, Inscriptions, and Images in the Church of St Nicholas, Bachkovo Monastery. - In: *Texts / Inscriptions / Images - Art Readings 2016* (eds. Emmanuel Moutafov & Jelena Erdeljan), vol. 1, 14, I, Institute of Art Studies, 2017, ISBN 978-954-8594-65-3, 247-260, etc.

CONCLUSION

Based on the objective requirements for the occupation of the academic position of "Professor" under the *Act for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria* and the Rules of the BAS for its implementation, I find that the scientific works presented by Assoc. Prof. Moutafov not only completely meet these requirements, but represent and significant contributions to the relevant academic field.

The only candidate in the competition Emmanuel Moutafov has a rich academic production, clearly defined specificity and thematic scope of his research interests and skillfully uses an interdisciplinary approach, appropriate methodology and good scientific knowledge for the successful achievement of his academic goals. The systematically studied cult of saints by him is a very important cultural phenomenon, affecting the essence of medieval society and personality, making them a particularly significant object of scientific study.

The author not only has fluent and thorough knowledge of all the historical and artistic material, but presents interesting results that undoubtedly enrich our ideas about the development of Byzantine and Bulgarian medieval art. I would like to emphasize here that, in terms of volume and quality, Emmanuel Moutafov's academic output exceeds the requirements for the academic position of "professor" and probably only the high criteria that are characteristic of the candidate himself could explain this delayed procedure.

All this gives me grounds to suggest to the honorable members of the Scientific Jury of the competition to award Assoc. Prof. Dr. Emmanuel Moutafov the academic position of "Professor", for which I will vote with confidence.

Sofia, September 30, 2019

REVIEWER:

(Prof. Elka Bakalova DSc, Associate Member of
the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)

¹ P. Underwood. *The Karye Djami. Studies in the Art of Karye Djami and its Intellectual Background. Vol.1- 4.* Princeton University Press 1966-1968. See also:
R. Ousterhout. *The Architecture of the Kariye Camii in Istanbul*, *Dumbarton Oaks Studies 25*, Washington, D.C., 1987;
R. Ousterhout. *The Art of the Kariye Camii* (London-Istanbul: Scala, 2002);
Same. *Restoring Byzantium: The Kariye Camii in Istanbul and the Byzantine Institute Restoration*, exhibition catalogue (Columbia University, New York, 2004), edited, with Holger Klein.
Same. *Kariye: From Theodore Metochites to Thomas Whittemore* (Pera Museum, Istanbul, 2007), with H. Klein and B. Pitarakis