

Opinion

On the competition for the academic rank of professor of art studies and fine arts (medieval art and art of the National Revival period), 8.1. (State Gazette, 35/30 Apr 2019), for the needs of Medieval and National Revival Period Art research group, Department of Fine Arts, the Institute of Art Studies, BAS, sole entrant Assoc. Prof. Emmanuel Moutafov

By Prof. Dr. hab. in Philology, Mirena Slavova, Department of Classical Philology, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, University of Sofia (Order No. 307-RD/27 June 2019)

The sole entrant into the competition for the academic rank of professor, Assoc. Prof. Emmanuel Moutafov meets the requirements for taking the position of professor set forth in Article 29 of the Academic Degrees and Academic Ranks Act of the Republic of Bulgaria.

He submitted his habilitation thesis containing a monograph (A.1, in press); 2 studies (B.1, in press, and B.10), 14 articles (two of them co-authored: C.11. and C.3), a chapter in a book (D.1.) and ten publications in art exhibition catalogues. These submissions entirely conform to the competition theme. Several thematic research areas can be outlined here: history of Byzantine and post-Byzantine art in the Balkans; problems of Christian iconography; epigraphy and cryptograms in murals; medieval history.

What impresses immediately is the most prominent characteristic of Emmanuel Moutafov as a scholar: he perfectly wed together professional proficiency with research interests. His proficiency at the interdisciplinary intersection of several research areas—art studies, history and Greek language—is the key to objective results, and combined with his disposition of a scientifically inquisitive and critically thinking researcher guarantees ingenious scientific contribution.

Given my expertise in the field of philology, I would deal with the linguistic and philological aspects of the submitted publications, where Assoc. Prof. Emmanuel Moutafov shows that he is very well versed in general philology and proficient in linguistics, which allows him gaining insight into the cultural and historical processes in the Balkans and Christian art of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine period in their entirety and *ex fonte*. Such, for example, is the essence of his fine work on the representations of eunuchs in the Byzantine Orthodox art drawing on the *Manual* by Dionysius of Fournas (C.6.)¹; of the publication on Basil II and his relations with Bulgaria and the Bulgarians (C.1. = C.7.), where the author translates the epigraph (composed in στίχοι πολιτικοί) on the sarcophagus of the emperor and argues about the forms Βουλγαροχθόνιος/Βουλγαροκτόνος (here, however, βασιλέα in v. 9 means ‘a great Tsar:

¹ Here Moutafov uses P. Hetherington’s translation, which is imprecise. The precise translation of the last sentence of this passage from the *Hermeneia* is: ‘and simple like the character of the giving birth (to God), from whom he inherited the spiritual and perfect humanness’, rather than ‘His character is simple, like that of a child, to which he was similar when alive, and which is that of perfect man’. Such a translation even stronger supports the author’s idea of the representation of the Eunuch St Germanus.

since the heavenly king has called me for the emperor of the earth, for a great Tsar', rather than *'for the emperor of this great empire on the earth'*, and the translation of v. 13 is missing), as well as of the linguistic notes about the mural inscriptions at the Church of the Transfiguration, in the village of Sotera, Cyprus (C.1.). I call for more accurate spelling of the diacritics in Greek texts such as those witnessed in publication C.12. The deciphered inscriptions in murals (publications B.1, C.4) and explored cryptograms and monograms in several publications (C.8, 10, 11, 12, 14) show the candidate's philological and epigraphic skills, professionally placed in the fields of art analysis and interpretation of the representational symbolics of Christian art.

Assoc. Prof. Moutafov is also an authoritative expert in the field of medieval Greek literature and in his capacity as such has successfully participated in the inventorying of 13 early printed Greek books from the collection of the National History Museum, Sofia, where he demonstrated competence in the specialised area of liturgical books. There are some omissions in the translation of the titles: τὰ πάντα πρόχειρα τοῖς πᾶσι means *'everything is near at hand for everyone'* (i.e. *'within easy reach'*), rather than *'everything was hurriedly compiled'* (book no. 6) or Πάντα εὐρύθμως καὶ κρ(ε)ίττονί τι τι τάξει ἢ ἐν τοῖς προεκδοθεῖσιν Εὐχολογίοις ἐκτεθέντα *'everything is displayed in a non-random manner and the arrangement is somewhat more orderly, that in the prayer books printed until now'*, rather than *'in good order respecting the current order of printed prayer books'* (book no. 7).

Despite such omissions, we have a candidature of an accomplished expert in art studies, who has made undoubted contributions to the decipherment and interpretation of monuments of the Byzantine representational and literary culture. The citations of and the publications by Assoc. Prof. Moutafov in peer reviewed journals and books testify to the above. His participations in national and international projects characterises him as a sought after researcher, capable to take part in and administrate large-scale scientific endeavours and raise funds for scientific research. And last but not least, the candidate's merit to take on great responsibilities as the head of the Institute of Art Studies and his vision of its development should be mentioned.

In conclusion: Based on the above considerations, I propose to the esteemed Academic Council of the Institute of Art Studies, BAS, to confer the academic rank of professor of art studies and fine arts (medieval art and art of the National Revival period), 8.1. on Assoc. Prof. Emmanuel Stefanov Moutafov.

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