

REVIEW

by Prof. Momchil Metodiev, Dr. Sc. New Bulgarian University,
habilitated in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology
on the scientific works for participation in the competition
for the academic position of Associate Professor,
in the field of higher education 2. Humanities,
professional field 2.2 History and Archaeology,
announced in the State Gazette, no. 92/18.11.2022 г.
with only one candidate, assistant professor Dr. Dimitar Yordanov Gyudurov

I. ASSESSMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE MINIMUM NATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW BULGARIAN UNIVERSITY

The submitted documents certify that Assistant Professor Dr. Dimitar Gyudurov fully meets and even exceeds the minimum national requirements of the Law on the Academic Development in the Republic of Bulgaria for the academic position of Associate Professor, as well as the Regulation on the Academic Development of the NBU.

II. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

1. Evaluation of the submitted monography

Dr. Dimitar Gyudurov's research interests are related to the history of Bulgaria in the period from National Liberation to 1944. The results of his research have been presented in numerous articles and studies published in various journals and have been summarized and expanded in the habilitation thesis submitted for the announced competition, as well as in the previously published monograph.

The submitted habilitation thesis, entitled *Bulgarians and Opiates. Production and Trade 1879-1944*, was published by the New Bulgarian University in 2022. Dedicated to a widely discussed social problem today, the fight against drug addiction, the monograph examines the problem of drug production, trade and smuggling in the context of Bulgarian modernization. It examines the transition from the traditional cultivation of opium poppy in the 19th century to Bulgaria's involvement in the global phenomenon of "drug production, trafficking and distribution" in the

interwar period. The First World War was the turning point, after which drug production and trafficking was recognized as a global problem, allowing the drive towards its regulation and criminalization, including at the international level through the adoption of a number of international treaties and conventions.

On the one hand, the Bulgarian policy towards this problem is in line with the general global trends, but on the other hand, it has some peculiarities specific to the country. As the author convincingly argues, the policy of the Bulgarian state evolved from a relatively liberal one to a willingness to comply with established international law, even under external pressure, which led to the regulation and restriction of drug production and smuggling, including the prohibition of drug production in the second half of the 1930s. Another peculiarity in Bulgaria, which is also well argued by the author, is that drug production and trafficking in the country was not driven by organized crime, which in other countries was “an urban phenomenon with a strictly profiled ethnic base, formed in an environment of strong urbanization and industrialization, and parasitizing on the middle or working social strata of society”. Precisely because of the lack of such strong urbanization and the high level of integration of ethnic minorities in the country, drug production, trafficking, and distribution in Bulgaria in the defined chronological period was not driven by organized crime, but by specific individuals, including “empowered state officials” who committed “repeated and complementary unlawful acts for personal gain” (pp. 258-260).

At first glance, the chosen topic could be described as “commercial”, “journalistic”, or even “lightweight”, but this is completely contradicted by Dr. Gudurov’s research approach. The positive aspect of this approach is that he does not leave the terrain of historical research, does not succumb to the temptation of easy generalizations when they cannot be defended and argued by the researched material, which makes the proposed monograph a fully academic study.

The real reason for maintaining this academic character is that the author remains faithful to the available sources and allows himself to be “guided” by them, without attempting to “supplement” them or to venture into broad generalizations that go beyond the stated thematic and chronological framework. The research is based on a large number of sources, the main part of which are archives from the funds of Bulgarian ministries and other state institutions, embassies and consulates. The information from these sources is supplemented by articles published in the periodical press of the defined period, as well as the stenographic records of the National Assembly.

This thematic context is further expanded by examining the legislator's attitude towards the social evils under study, as well as the relevant international documents binding Bulgaria to the prevention of these crimes, which also have cross-border implications. All these documents are examined in the context of the existing Bulgarian and world historical literature, which makes the author's conclusions about the role of the state in the prevention and punishment of these crimes convincing in a comparative European context. The present monograph is the first part of the research project conceived by Dr. Gudurov *From Both Sides of the Law 1879-1944* on social evils and modernization, the second part of which *Merchants of "Living Flesh", Counterfeiters and Smugglers in Bulgaria (1879-1944)* has recently been submitted for publication. This is proof of the author's continuing interest in this subject, which is relatively underdeveloped in Bulgarian historiography.

2. Evaluation of the contributions of the other publications

In addition to the submitted text, the candidate has another published monograph, which is not presented as a major habilitation work. It was published in 2020, again by the New Bulgarian University, with the title *Bulgaria, the Muslim Minority and Turkish Propaganda (1923-1944)*. This monograph has been most often cited by other authors, which is also a proof of its contributions. The reason for this is that, although it addresses a relatively well-researched problem in Bulgarian historiography, the author approaches the research problem completely independently, which allows him to draw original and innovative conclusions about the policy of the Bulgarian state towards the Muslim minority in the country during the defined difficult period of state history. As the author convincingly demonstrates, this policy was not only and not so much driven by the state's internal situation, but necessarily had a reactive character and developed in response to the ethnic homogenization policy of Bulgaria's neighbors, especially Kemalist Turkey.

It might seem that the monographs under discussion reveal an interest to two completely independent fields of research - while the earlier published study on minority policy is part of the "grand historical narrative" of Bulgarian state policy in the chronological period in question, the later study on opium trade and production is related to a seemingly very specific problem of Bulgarian social history. This contradiction is only apparent, however, since both proposed monographs deal with processes and events that unfolded on the "frontier", both in the literal

geographical and political sense and in the figurative and social sense of the word. In this way, the two proposed monographs and the candidate's entire research effort become a single entity.

What has already been mentioned, namely that he is "guided" by the documents, applies not only to the specific studies he has written, but also to his general approach to research, which may explain this shift in his interests from "grand" political history to social issues. In a broader sense, this shift is also an indication of the researcher's humility before the historical sources, which I consider indispensable for a genuine historical research, and a proof that the author does not approach his historical research with ready-made narratives to be imposed on the historical sources.

To sum up, Dr. Gyudurov's research has enriched Bulgarian history with numerous contributions, thanks to his use of a large number of hitherto unexplored or little-studied historical sources. Moreover, these studies are based on a good knowledge of world historiography on the relevant issues, which allows the Bulgarian case to be presented in a broader Balkan and European context.

In addition to the two monographs submitted, the candidate also submitted 1 article and 1 study published in scholarly journals that are peer-reviewed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scholarly information; 4 articles and 2 studies published in non-peer-reviewed journals, written and published after the completion of his Ph.D. studies. The articles and studies have been published both in New Bulgarian University periodicals and in other prestigious journals, such as Bulgarian Historical Review and Historical Review, including in English, which is not only a formal but also a substantive indicator of the contributory nature of his research.

3. Citation from other authors

The fact that Dr. Dimitar Gyudurov's scientific works have been cited many times by other authors is a proof of the contributory character of his publications. His texts have been cited or reviewed in 6 publications, peer-reviewed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information; in 10 peer-reviewed monographs and anthologies, and in 2 publications in non-peer-reviewed journals.

4. Evaluation of the results of participation in research projects

Dr. Gyudurov has participated in a national educational project, together with students in 2 research projects, in the organization of 3 seminars outside the NBU, held with the participation of students of the University. As mentioned above, he has also presented his own research program entitled “Two Sides of the Law”, which is to be completed by 2025, and has been consistently working on its implementation.

III. EDUCATIONAL AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

1. Academic and non-academic employment and internships

Dr. Dimitar Gyudurov has a rich teaching practice at the New Bulgarian University. He has participated in the revision and updating of the Bachelor's program in History and Archaeology, the Master's program in History, Politics and Religion and the Master's program in History. He also participated in numerous conferences, seminars and scientific forums organized by the New Bulgarian University, as well as in several national scientific forums where he presented papers on behalf of the NBU.

2. Evaluation of student surveys

An indicator of his responsible attitude towards students is the fact that the average score of student satisfaction surveys in recent years is excellent 4.83 (with a maximum score of 5.00). He was involved in 2 research projects with students, was the main supervisor of 1 successfully defended bachelor's thesis, was the reviewer of 13 bachelor's and master's theses, and participated in 16 scientific committees. Dr. Gyudurov has participated in the organization of 3 seminars outside the NBU, held with the participation of students of the University.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AND PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

The candidate's administrative activities include membership in the NBU Library Council. Since September 2022 he has also held the position of Director of the History and Archaeology Program Board, a position he holds with dedication to students and other faculty members.

Dr. Gyudurov's original research, which fills in the “white spots” in Bulgarian history, has established him as one of the new voices in Bulgarian historical scholarship, with a place in the country's media and public sphere.

V. PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE CANDIDATE

I have known Dr. Dimitar Gyudurov as a colleague at the New Bulgarian University for three years, having joined the team of the History Department at NBU relatively recently. My impressions of him are entirely positive and I can say that he is a conscientious researcher and a loyal colleague who works with students in a very responsible way. His efforts to maintain a good working and academic atmosphere are impressive, as is his ability to work in a team. Last but not least, Dr. Dimitar Gyudurov is always full of research ideas, which he tries to implement with consistency and perseverance. My only recommendation relates to his participation in more conferences and scientific forums outside the NBU, as I am convinced that his research efforts deserve to be presented to a wider academic audience.

CONCLUSION:

Everything said so far gives me reason to summarize that Assistant Professor Dr. Dimitar Gudurov is a proven and authoritative researcher as well as a conscientious lecturer. This gives me reason to state with full conviction my positive opinion about the candidacy of Dr. Dimitar Yordanov Gyudurov for the academic position of Associate Professor in the field 2.2 History and Archaeology (History of Bulgaria) at the Department of History of the New Bulgarian University. As a member of the scientific jury I will vote positively for his candidacy and for the proposal that his candidacy be approved by the Academic Council of the NBU.

Sofia, 22 February 2023.

Prof. Momchil Metodiev, Dr. Sc.