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НАУЧЕН ЦЕНТЪР - БАН
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ASSESSMENT

By Dr. Diana Atanassova, Associate Professor of Bulgarian Literature (Old Bulgarian Literature) at Sofia University "St Clement of Ohrid", concerning the scholarly works submitted for the position of **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR** at the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, advertised in *State Gazette,* Issue No. 61 of 3 July 2026.

Field of study: 2. Humanities
Professional field: 2.1. Philology

Candidate: Chief Assistant Professor Dr Ivan Iliev

Overview of candidate's research work and activity

Chief Assistant Professor Ivan Iliev, PhD, is the sole applicant for the position of Associate Professor at the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, advertised in the *State Gazette*, Issue No. 61 of 3 July 2026.

He obtained his PhD from the Institute for Literature at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in 2016, having previously completed a Bachelor's degree in Classical Philology and a Master's degree in Medieval Bulgarian Studies at Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski". He has gained academic and teaching experience as a research assistant at the Institute for Literature (2009-2013) and as an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Theology of Sofia University (2015-present).

Dr Iliev has submitted, within the prescribed deadline, a complete set of documents meeting the requirements of the Bulgarian Act on the Development of Academic Staff, its implementing regulations, and the regulations of the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre. He has also provided proof that he meets the minimum national requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor.

I have known Ivan Iliev since he was a student of mine in the Master's Programme in *Medieval Bulgarian Studies*. Even then, he stood out for his exceptionally broad knowledge, intellectual curiosity, and wide-ranging interests in medieval studies. Over the years, I have had many opportunities to appreciate his qualities as a thoughtful and thorough scholar, the care and precision with which he works with primary sources, and the scholarly value of his research.

I have followed his publications and research interests with great interest. I can confidently say that many of the 24 publications submitted for this competition demonstrate Dr Ivan Iliev's scholarly maturity and the distinctive approach he has developed as a researcher.

Assessment of the Habilitation Monograph and publications

In assessing Dr Iliev's research, I shall focus primarily on his habilitation monograph and his publications from recent years. The book based on his doctoral dissertation (Monograph No. 3, 2017), together with the studies related to it, was already evaluated during the procedure for the award of his PhD, and I shall therefore not discuss it here. This is by no means to diminish its scholarly value or contribution. On the contrary, even without these earlier works, Dr Iliev has produced a substantial body of independent research that provides ample and convincing evidence of his abilities as a scholar.

I should mention that the subject of Dr Iliev's habilitation monograph goes back to a topic he first explored while completing his Master's degree in Medieval Bulgarian Studies. His Master's thesis examined the Latin translation of the *Life of St Petka*, although its main focus was different: it was primarily a lexicographical project involving the compilation of a dictionary-index. Even at that stage, his strong interest in medieval studies and his rigorous approach to research were clearly evident.

His habilitation monograph, *Lives of Bulgarian Saints in the Latin Tradition* (Monograph No. 1, 2026), examines the reception in Western Europe of two texts of particular importance to Bulgaria's literary heritage: the Lives of St Petka and St John of Rila. Although it builds on work begun during his Master's studies, it is a new, mature, and original contribution, considerably broader in scope and bringing together several complementary approaches to the subject.

I see the value of this monograph in several respects. First and foremost, it successfully combines close work with primary sources and textual criticism with a broader cultural and historical perspective. On the one hand, it offers a careful linguistic and stylistic analysis of the Latin translations, shedding light on the translators' methods and their understanding of the Slavonic originals. On the other, it traces the history of these texts within the sociocultural and religious contexts that shaped their reception and circulation in the Latin-speaking world. I find this broader perspective particularly valuable, as it gives us a fuller and more nuanced understanding of medieval literature. Another important contribution is the practical scholarly resource provided by the bilingual Latin-Slavonic and Slavonic-Latin dictionary-indexes included in the monograph. These not only shed further light on the reception of the texts but also enrich our knowledge of historical lexicology and translation practices in the medieval period.

Research Interests and Publications

Over the ten years since completing his PhD, Ivan Iliev's research interests have extended well beyond linguistic and textual analysis to encompass the wider cultural and historical contexts of medieval literature. This is clearly reflected in a number of his articles and studies, including his research on the work of Metropolitan Cyprian (No. 23); the legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius in East and West (No.

18, co-authored with Achim Rabus); recurring images and topoi in historical and apocalyptic literature (No. 14); and questions concerning the educational activities of the Russian Jesuits Ivan Gagarin and Ivan Martynov (No. 9).

This broadening of his research interests is also evident in his valuable studies of a reworking of the Book of Daniel from the Chronicle of John Zonaras, preserved in Manuscript No. 107 at Zographou Monastery (No. 7); the poetry of Catullus (No. 5); and the concepts of "education" and "upbringing", explored in a recently published study co-authored with Ekaterina Tomova (No. 4).

Participation in Research Projects and International Academic Activities

Dr Iliev's academic profile is further strengthened by his involvement in a number of prestigious research projects and international academic initiatives. He has held fellowships from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Freiburg and the Ernst Mach programme in Vienna, and has also undertaken training in spoken Latin in Italy.

Since 2024, he is a President of the Association for the Development of University Classical Education (ARUKO). He has also participated in research projects funded by the Bulgarian National Science Fund and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, such as "A Unified Annotation of the Stages of the Bulgarian Language", projects associated with the Scripta Bulgarica digital library, and research on biblical apocrypha and the Bollandist heritage.

The scholarly work submitted by Dr Ivan Iliev fully meets, and indeed exceeds, the requirements set out in the regulations governing academic appointments. He has published a substantial habilitation monograph that builds upon and advances his long-standing research interests, authored numerous publications in respected academic journals and volumes, and participated in research projects, including international collaborations.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the habilitation monograph and the related studies submitted for consideration, and taking into account the significant original contribution of his research on the Latin translations of Bulgarian saints' Lives and the accompanying dictionary-indexes, I am firmly convinced of Dr Iliev's scholarly maturity and considerable potential as a researcher.

Having taught him during his Master's studies in Medieval Bulgarian Studies, it gives me particular pleasure to see how he has developed into a highly promising medievalist with a strong academic profile and excellent prospects for further research.

The scholarly work of Dr Ivan Iliev fully meets all the requirements of the Bulgarian Act on the Development of Academic Staff, its implementing regulations, and the regulations of the Cyrillo-

Methodian Research Centre of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor.

As a member of the academic selection committee, I therefore give Dr Iliev my **UNEQUIVOCALLY POSITIVE ASSESSMENT** and strongly recommend that the Scientific Council of the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences appoint **DR IVAN IVANOV ILIEV,** chief assistant professor, to the academic position of **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR**, in Field 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.1. Philology.

20.10.2026 г.
София

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Diana Atanassova