

**СОФИЙСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ  
„СВ. КЛИМЕНТ ОХРИДСКИ“  
КАТЕДРА ПО АРХЕОЛОГИЯ**  
БЪЛГАРИЯ, СОФИЯ 1504  
БУЛ. „ЦАР ОСВОБОДИТЕЛ“ 15  
☎ (02) 9308/ 572



**ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI  
UNIVERSITY OF SOFIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ARCHAEOLOGY**  
1504 SOFIA, BULGARIA  
15 TZAR OSVOBODITEL BD.  
☎ (+359-2) 9308/ 572

## STATEMENT

of Assoc. Prof. PhD Daniela Stefanova Stoyanova, from the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", member of the Scientific Jury, approved by order of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (RD–38–407/14.07.2024), in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology (Archaeology – Thracian Archaeology), announced in the State Gazette 55/28.06.2024

1. In the announced competition, organized at the request of the Faculty of History for the needs of the Department of Archaeology, the only candidate is Assist. Prof. PhD Nikola Petrov Teodossiev. His documents have been accepted by a commission appointed by the Rector. The basis for his participation in the competition is the deposited certificate that he meets the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of Law on the Development of Academic Staff. Nikola Teodossiev graduated in History from the Faculty of History of the VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" (1991). After that, he continued his academic development as a full-time PhD student at the Department of Archaeology of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" with the topic of his dissertation "Northwestern Thrace in the 5<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC", which he successfully defended in 1998. Since 1995, he has been a lecturer at the Department of Archaeology of the Sofia University. He participated in the competition with a published habilitation work entitled "The Tholos Tombs in Ancient Thrace" Sofia, University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2024. He also participated with 8 selected publications – monograph, studies and articles according to the attached list.

2. Assist. Prof. PhD Nikola Teodossiev is a long-established researcher on various topics of Thracian archaeology and a long-time lecturer at the Department of Archaeology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Initially, he led seminars in the main course of the Bachelor's program in Archaeology "Archaeology of Southeast Europe in the 1st millennium BC", as well as seminars in the main course Archaeology for Bachelor's students in History.

Over the years, his teaching work has expanded significantly. To date, he is the titular of the main course "Archaeology of Southeast Europe in the 1st millennium BC" in the Bachelor's program in Archaeology, of a specialized course on "Funeral Rites and Facilities in the Late Iron Period", as well as of courses on "Archaeology of Bulgaria" in the Bachelor's program in History and in History and Geography. In the Master's program in Archaeology, he teaches a specialized course on "Monumental Tomb Architecture in the Eastern Mediterranean in the 1st millennium BC".

Nikola Teodosiev is a long-standing member of the Association of Bulgarian Archaeologists, as well as of a number of prestigious international societies and organizations such as the Society of Fellows of the American Academy in Rome, the Archaeological Institute of America, etc. He is also a member of the editorial board of several prestigious international publications: *Ancient West&East*, *Colloquia Antiqua*, successor to *Colloquia Pontica* (published by Brill, Leiden and Peeters, Leuven), as well as a representative for Bulgaria in the online publication *Fasti Online* (published by the Associazione Internazionale di Archeologia classica in Roma).

Nikola Teodossiev is also an active participant in international scientific and educational projects, mainly funded under the COST European Cooperation in Science and Technology program.

3. The monographic work with which Nikola Teodossiev participated in the competition is about the tholos tombs in Thrace (183 pages) and fully corresponds to the topic of the competition for Associate Professor in Thracian archaeology. The structure of the monograph includes an Introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, an analytical catalog of selected tholos tombs from Thrace with graphic documentation, a list of tholos tombs from Thrace not included in the catalog with a bibliographical reference, a bibliography and a short summary in English. I will discuss the monograph from the position of a researcher deeply tempted by the funerary architecture in Thrace, and also as a participant in the field observations on the tholos tombs, organized by Nikola Teodossiev more than 20 years ago. Here is the place to say that Nikola Teodossiev's interest in the tomb architecture in Thrace is long-standing and includes systematic work on collecting archival documentation, on-site observations, participation in excavations of some of the monuments, long-term specializations in leading scientific institutions in order to become familiar with the extensive bibliography on the topic of tomb architecture in general, without which, of course, the in-depth discussion of the problems of tomb architecture in Thrace would not have been possible, and long-term correspondence with leading foreign specialists on the problems of tomb architecture. These

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efforts have undoubtedly been reflected in the monograph. I will also draw attention to the fact that a significant part of the tholos tombs in Thrace, as well as those of other types, are of modest volume and quality publications, with poor, inaccessible, and sometimes missing documentation. This has undoubtedly affected the pace and volume with which his research is being carried out. I must also note one more thing, in practice the proposed monographic study is the first of its kind in the Bulgarian historiography, dedicated to a certain type of tomb structures in pre-Roman Thrace.

I cannot omit the terminological inaccuracies that dominate some of the studies of leading researchers of tomb architecture in the native historiography, among which suffice it to point out the definition of a significant part of the tombs as temples. In the study proposed by Nikola Teodossiev, the aspiration for objectivity and reliability of the presentation of facts and their interpretation is unquestionable.

In Chapter One, entitled Origin of the Tholos Tombs in Thrace, a long-standing and still unresolved question is discussed. As far as I know, it is Nikola Teodossiev who poses this question in the modern historiography of the tholos tombs in Thrace on an extremely broad basis, tracing the emergence, development and spread of the tholos tombs in the Mediterranean. This gives him the opportunity to take an adequate and scientifically substantiated look at the possibilities at that time for answering the question of origin. I personally believe that the possible connections that he sees with examples from Thessaly will yet find even better justification with the publication of the large-scale studies conducted at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the region.

In Chapter Two, the typology of the plans of the tholos tombs in Thrace is traced, basically following the scheme proposed by Malvina Ruseva and developed by Julia Valeva, adapted to the specific group of monuments. At this stage of knowledge about the tombs in Thrace, I do not think that a more workable typology can be proposed, allowing its application in certain regions of Thrace (for example, in the dynastic center in the Kazanlak Valley region, made in the dissertation of Vesselina Dimitrova, defended in 2023). However, one should think in the direction of its upgrading, since it does not allow to see the more than one construction period characteristic of the tombs in Thrace, the different building techniques and structural elements that were used.

The third chapter discusses the political, social and religious context of the tholos tombs in Thrace. This perhaps the most representative group of monuments of funerary architecture in Thrace is undoubtedly associated with the highest representatives of Thracian society, who have not only political, social and economic opportunities, but also a culture oriented towards the dynamic world of Anatolia, Macedonia and Ancient Greece. Attention is paid to written information about the funeral customs of the Thracians and their religious beliefs related to death and life after death, as well as to the heroization of notable deceased. The discussion draws on evidence from the picturesque decoration of the Royal Tomb with caryatids from Sveshtari, the Kazanlak and Alexandro tombs, as well as the emblematic written and archaeological evidence for Brasidas of Amphipolis and Euphenes of Philippi. The religious and political symbolism of the laying of horses and chariots in/in front of the tombs, the golden funeral wreaths, and evidence of rituals accompanying or following the funerals are also examined. I find the proposed discussion useful, as it relates not only to the tholos tombs, but to the tomb architecture in Thrace in general.

The analytical catalog is the core of the work with a very detailed and careful analysis of the monuments included here, considered under one model. The 15 tholos tombs examined are presented in a synthesized and up-to-date manner with selected graphic documentation. I would be very happy if in the coming years Nikola Teodossiev manages to prepare for printing a similarly synthesized catalog for the remaining tholos tombs in Thrace. The bibliography is extremely comprehensive.

In conclusion, I can say that the proposed study, in my opinion, fully covers the criteria for a habilitation thesis and is on the topic of the announced competition.

4. The remaining works with which Nikola Teodossiev participated in the competition include one monograph and 7 studies and articles, out of a total of 73 publications and 11 reviews included in the general list. All publications from the competition list and a large part of the others have been published in English in authoritative publications. Undoubtedly, the revised and published monograph dissertation dedicated to Northwestern Thrace in the period 5<sup>th</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC stands out in the competition list, which remains to this day the most comprehensive study of this region. The remaining publications from the competition list, as well as those from the general list, show the multifaceted and profound interests of Nikola Teodossiev on current and numerous topics in Thracian archaeology and undoubtedly have their own contribution. I would also note as extremely relevant a recently published study on the two tholos tombs from Ravnogor, which presents new and essential information about the monuments, as well as specifies their chronology. This provides an opportunity to adequately

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discuss local phenomena that developed after the period of representative tomb construction in Thrace and to see both late variants of tholos tombs and to correctly understand newly discovered examples, such as a tomb in the Great Mound in the city of Plovdiv (research by Kostadin Kisyov 2023–2024).

The accumulated citations of his publications also testify to what Nikola Teodossiev has achieved. And there can be no question of elements of plagiarism in the works written in an extremely professional language.

5. In conclusion of what has been said so far, I will emphasize that the submitted documentation for the competition, as well as my personal observations and joint work on publications and projects for more than 25 years, give me reason to state that Assist. Prof. PhD Nikola Teodossiev is a scientist with undoubted potential and achievements, a university lecturer with diverse readings in the field of Thracian archaeology, widely known among the archaeological community in our country and abroad. This gives me reason to vote with conviction for the award of the academic position of "associate professor" to Assist. Prof. PhD Nikola Petrov Teodossiev.

November 16, 2024



*Daniela Stoyanova*