

REVIEW

by Kolyo Videv Koev, Prof., DSc.

of the materials submitted for participation in a competition for holding the academic position of 'Associate Professor' for the needs of the section "Ontology and Epistemology", Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, professional field 2.3 Philosophy (Ontology)

The only candidate for participation in the competition is Dr. Jassen Aleksiev Andreev.

The set of materials submitted by Dr. Andreev is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff of BAS.

The applicant has submitted a total of 22 scientific papers (5 studies and 17 articles). There are 23 papers presented at national and international scientific forums after the defense of the dissertation in 2008. 14 scientific papers are accepted for review, which are outside the dissertation and are counted in the final evaluation. Scientific publications from the time of the preparation and defense of the thesis (Nos 18-22) and co-authored papers (Nos 9, 12, and 16) for which there are no separation protocols and for which the candidate's share cannot be ascertained are not reviewed. Three of the scientific works have been published in foreign journals. A total of 7 publications are in foreign languages – 3 in German, 2 in English and 2 in French.

The candidate meets the national minimum requirements for habilitation.

1.

Yassen Andreev's attached scientific curriculum vitae testifies to solid scientific experience concerning the announced competition. After defending his PhD thesis in 2008, Dr. Andreev has worked practically every year for different periods at foreign universities with small interruptions. His most significant participations are in the Academic Network of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Academic Network of the Austrian Agency for International Mobility and Cooperation in Education, Science, and Research (OeAD), and his membership in the Central and East European Society for Phenomenology.

Between 2002 and 2009 Yassen Andreev was an assistant professor of History of Cultural Discourses at the Department of Theory and History of Culture, Sofia University. Noting his teaching engagements

during this time, I would like to point out the author's lecture courses "The Construction of Cultural Identities as a Problem of Ethics" at the Master's Program "European Studies and Social Sciences", as well as "The Theory of Culture" at the Faculty of Primary Pedagogy, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsky". I cannot judge the content of these courses, as the candidate has not offered annotations or thematic outlines, but I will note the fact that they are directly related to one of Andreev's areas of scholarly interest (History and Methodology of Humanitarian Knowledge).

Another academic activity that testifies both to the candidate's involvement in scientific networks at home and abroad and to his inclination towards teamwork is his activity as a compiler and editor. In the CV, 5 compilations are noted, including 2 in German and 1 in English.

The applicant has listed 10 citations of his works.

2.

Yassen Andreev has chosen to submit a so-called cumulative habilitation, i.e. to participate in the competition not with a compact habilitation work, but with individual articles and studies. The author locates his work in two areas of scholarly interest: 1) The tradition of phenomenological philosophizing (Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Oskar Becker) and its recent developments (ontosemantics, hermeneutic realism, post-metaphysical thinking) and 2) The history and philosophy of humanitarian-scientific knowledge. In my review, I will follow this division.

Within the first area of interest, Husserl's work on the foundations of mathematics is a particular focus of Andreev's as having contributed significantly to the formation and establishment of phenomenology. In terms of later phenomenological development, this stage of Husserl's evolution seems marginal and does not attract much research attention today. But although chronologically speaking, Husserl's writings on the philosophy of mathematics refer to the earliest period of his work, his preoccupations from that time leave a significant trace – through *Logical Investigations*, *Ideas I*, *Formal and Transcendental Logic* to *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* – in all stages of the development of phenomenology (it is sufficient to mention even just the treatment of the idea of *mathesis universalis* or the role of idealizations in the unfolding of the language of geometry). In this sense, the candidate's decision to privilege this group of Husserl's writings in his work is itself heuristic. Turning to the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* and the manuscripts grouped in *Husserliana* under the title *Studies in Arithmetic and Geometry*, Andreev enters a less developed (and almost unknown in

Bulgaria) niche of phenomenology, arguing that the treatment of modern mathematical theory "marks Husserl's philosophical work ... at its very core, leaving a deep imprint both on its scientific ethos and on its working style and thematic content" (No. 10, p. 66). Important in this context is the dialogue between Husserl and Frege on the program of 'arithmetizing mathematics'. In focusing on this dialogue, Andreev traces a specific development in Husserl's thinking from an interest (partly influenced by Franz Brentano) in the genesis of the concept of number from mental experiences (as opposed to Frege's logicism) to the anti-psychologism (but not the logicism) of *Logical Investigations*, where the "mathematical" and the "psychological" are seen as "different" worlds, the mediation of which seems "absurd" (in Husserl's words from *Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*). At the same time, as Dr. Andreev shows, citing a 1928 overview by Husserl, the naiveté of *Philosophy of Arithmetic* does not invalidate the importance of this work as the first "phenomenological-constitutive study" to conceive of categorial objects as original manifestations of intentional activity. This direction of thinking is further consolidated under the "indirect", according to Yassen Andreev, influence of the "intuitionist program in philosophy of mathematics" (Brouwer-Weyl) and finds its concrete manifestation in the phenomenology of Oscar Becker. (Husserl himself, as is well known, suggested to Hermann Weyl that he contribute to his yearbook with an article on the new fundamental crisis in mathematics, emphasizing also in the 1920s his abiding interest in this subject). As in the case of the emphasis on Husserl's mathematical pursuits, Yassen Andreev again demonstrates his desire to present to the reading public forgotten and neglected episodes in the history of phenomenology. Oskar Becker was one of Husserl's talented students and a continuator of his work, for a time his informal assistant, but for various reasons (not least his loyalty to the Nazi regime) he remained for a long time virtually forgotten. Andreev's focus was partly on Becker's habilitation work *Contributions to the Phenomenological Grounding of Geometry and its Physical Applications* (1923) and especially on his monograph *Mathematical Existence* (1927). In his habilitation thesis, Becker maintains that Husserl's phenomenology developed steadily – from his very first works (on the foundations of mathematics), through the *Logical Investigations* – towards the transcendental attitude that is a key feature of his later philosophy. Therefore, the "bridge" that Becker attempts to build "between phenomenology and today's mathematics and physics" is based on Husserl's "transcendental-constitutive" perspective, mostly developed in *Ideas I*.

Becker's major phenomenological work, *Mathematical Existence*, was published in volume 8 of the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* (1927), together with Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Husserl thereby demonstrated that he regarded the two publications not merely as complementary to each other, but that he invested in them the (unfulfilled) presentiment that his two

assistants would continue two key lines in his phenomenology, the scientific and the humanistic, respectively. Although Becker claims to combine the methods of Husserl's transcendental-constitutive phenomenology and Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, the title itself suggests what the dominant research strategy of the work is. A significant context for the analyses in *Mathematical Existence* is the famous debate in the 1920s about the foundations of mathematics between the constructivist intuitionism of Luitzen Brouwer and the formalism of David Hilbert. Taking the viewpoint of constructivism, Becker attempts to radicalize this position through the prism of Heidegger's phenomenological hermeneutics. In his study, Andreev carefully traces the implications of Becker's synthesis, emphasizing especially "the interpretation of the mode of being of mathematical objects" through "the temporality of the existence of the mathematizing subject." The emphasis here is on the specificity of Dasein's historical time, which is not accessible to the scientific notion dealing with linear and neutral time series; the "human experience of time", on the other hand, is marked by finitude. Hence Andreev's conclusion: 'Becker's ontology of mathematical objects starts from an anthropologically determined foundation. While not itself reducible to a 'hermeneutic of the facticity of human Dasein,' it methodologically presupposes it as its ground" (№ 3, p. 9). In turn, phenomenological analysis as hermeneutic, in Becker's own words, resolves "the controversial question of mathematical existence in favor of intuitionism," insofar as mathematical objects are achieved "through factually conceivable syntheses." This, of course, also occurs through a redirection of intentionality from the subjective vacuum of transcendental consciousness" to "historical Dasein" (№ 3, p. 11). In the last analysis, the mathematical is a means of attaining the infinite and in this sense presupposes the "finitude of the mathematical subject". The key conclusion that Andreev reaches as a result of his analyses of "mathematical existence" can be summarized in his words, "The anthropological foundation of mathematical phenomena constitutes a strategy of desanthropologizing mathematics" (#3, p. 12).

Of the work on Heidegger within the first area of interest, I would note first of all the publications dealing with the central question of Heidegger's philosophy, the "question of being" and its concomitant enigmas (papers nos. 5, 8, 11). These are three articles accompanying three translations proposed by Andreev (an excerpt from Magda King's *Guide to Heidegger's Being and Time*, Dorothea Frede's „The Question of Being: the Heideggerian Project“, and Hans Blumenberg's short article "Being as MacGuffin: How to Keep Our Desire to Think"). Disentangling the perspectives of the authors under discussion, Yassen Andreev comments on the series of difficulties facing the comprehension of the so-called *Seinsfrage*, considering it both from the broader perspective of the (remaining unrealized) project of *Being and Time* and its published part. Particular emphasis is placed here upon Prof. Frede's position on

the principled "questionability" (*Fraglichkeit*) of Heidegger's question, which requires a "diachronic examination of the whole of Heidegger's philosophy" (No. 8, p. 110), including Heidegger's dissertation and habilitation work. Regarding the commentary on Magda King's *Guide*, Yassen Andreev outlines a perspective that maintains the "identity" thesis of the question that Heidegger posed throughout his career, but "illuminates through different ways of orbiting the Hermeneutic circle of being and human understanding" (No. 5, p. 266). To Magda King's questions, Andreev also adds a problem that seems to have been touched upon at the beginning of *Being and Time*, but quickly abandoned by the author and downplayed by King, of the distinction between "onto-semantic" and "fundamental-ontological" questions of being. The question that the candidate raises takes the following more general form: 'When Heidegger skips over the onto-semantic problematic, it remains completely unsettled how to fix the complex meaning – but not of being *per se*, but of the enigmatic *Seinsfrage* itself. It seems impossible to approach a material ontological question ('What is the meaning of being?', 'What is being?') in isolation from the preliminary question 'What are the actual intention and substance of the inquiry concerning being?'" And "what at all is that unified interrelation between the irreducibly different meanings of 'being' which can justify the prefiguration of die *Seinsfrage* as an inquiry into the meaning (der Sinn) of the being (das Sein)" (No. 5, p. 273). Hans Blumenberg's more-or-less anecdotal version of the *Seinsfrage* as an "empty question" that simply plays the role of a *trigger* (MacGuffin) for the philosophical intrigue in *Being and Time* (No. 11) also fits into the series of questions about the riddles of Heidegger's inquiry into being. If we take Blumenberg's provocation seriously, we might say that this view of *Seinsfrage* is not exclusive of any of the others. And, in fact, doesn't this interpretation suggest that we view Heidegger's "being" as a formal-indicative concept *par excellence*?

In the course of his analyses of the question of being in Heidegger, Andreev also makes some critical comments on the Bulgarian translations, which I take as a whole and appreciate as his own contribution to the clarification of Heidegger's complicated language.

However, I will allow myself a critical note here. Although (apart from the earlier paper No. 11) the applicant quotes from the German edition of *Being and Time*, in reality (as some comparisons have shown) he follows, with minor deviations, the translation of Dimitar Zashev. (The major exception is the use of *Dasein* in German instead of Zashev's Bulgarian construct, the reasons for which are explained in detail by Andreev.) In such a case, it seems to me more correct to quote from the 2005 Bulgarian edition, and changes made for more general reasons or in view of the context under analysis can be discussed *ad hoc*. A good model for this is offered, for example, by Darin Tenev in his recently published book *Three*

Lectures on Heidegger, who in his citation draws on the first Bulgarian translation, commenting however on the fly – and introducing operationally into his analysis – suggestions of various Bulgarian authors from their work with Heidegger.

The second area of interest is epitomized most notably by the articles "Hermeneutic Humanities as Procedural Rationality" (No. 6) and "The Humanities Knowledge Model: Erudition or Method" (No. 7). The main line of reconstruction in them is the development from the traditional European model of humanistic knowledge as "erudition" to a "modern" understanding of knowledge as a specific research process through the nonnegligible role of Friedrich Wolff's textual criticism, August Böck's hermeneutics, Leopold von Ranke's contemplative historicism, and Johann Droysen's investigative understanding. I accept the contributions formulated concerning these analyses of the candidate, but I will make a more general critical remark on the development model proposed in them. The problem I perceive in these articles is that they universalize a rather "German" path (this is also evident in the thinkers under consideration) and leave in the dark, for example, French rationalism and English positivism (Henry Buckle with his *History of Civilization in England*). However, it was in sharp dispute with them that nineteenth-century German historiography, and especially Droysen's *historik*, asserted itself, preparing the contribution of the Baden School of neo-Kantianism with its strong emphasis on the specific logical profile of the historical sciences as opposed to the natural sciences. From such a perspective, the model proposed by Andreev could hardly be considered unreservedly pan-European.

3.

In my review I presented the scientific activity and works of Yassen Andreev after the defense of his doctoral dissertation, trying to specify his main scientific contributions. In their general form, the directions in which these contributions unfold can be formulated as follows: 1) critical conceptual work on key fields of phenomenological knowledge; 2) reconstruction of the development of New European knowledge with special emphasis on the hermeneutical method in classical philology and history (in Germany).

Contributions are a personal merit of the candidate.

I believe that the contributions thus demonstrated by Yassen Andreev contain a serious potential for further development and I would wish him that this development will soon take the form of a monograph. And just as a wink to Andreev, I will say that I imagine a monograph centered on an analysis

of Husserl's phenomenology through the "provocations" of his assistants (and here I would also add Eugen Fink to Heidegger and Becker).

4.

After reading the materials and scientific works submitted in the competition, an analysis of their significance, and the scientific contributions contained in them, I give my positive assessment and recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Scientific Council of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology for the election of Dr. Yassen Alexiev Andreev to the academic position of 'Associate Professor' at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in the professional field 2.3 Philosophy (Ontology).

15. 12. 2023 г.

Reviewer. Prof. Kolyo Koev