

OPINION

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on the materials submitted for participation in a contest

for the academic position of Associate Professor

In the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Section of
Ontology and Epistemology

On professional field 2.3. Philosophy (Ontology)

In the competition for the position of ‘Associate Professor’ as announced in the State Gazette, No. 67 as of August 4, 2023, there is one candidate applying: Senior Assistant Professor PhD Yassen Aleksiev Andreev of the Section of Ontology and Epistemology in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. In accordance with the possibility provided in the Institute’s Regulations, Dr. Andreev has attached documentation of cumulative habilitation including 22 scientific publications satisfying the requirement to submit ‘at least 15 publications (articles and studies) in specialized scientific periodicals of which at least 2 publications in peer-reviewed foreign or international periodicals; participation in at least 2 scientific research projects funded by a foreign source, and existence of at least 5 scientific papers presented at national or international venues’.

The publications are divided into two main thematic circles, as the first circle relates to classical phenomenological philosophy and some of its contemporary orientations (specified by the author as ‘onto-semantics, hermeneutic realism, after-metaphysical thinking’), while the second circle deals with the sphere of culturology specified as ‘historically oriented hermeneutics of the human sciences knowledge the constitution of its modern scientific and institutional canon’ (see the *Author’s Statement of Contributions*).

The submitted publications demonstrate a specific research strategy in which the dimensions of the historical philosophical and the systematical theoretical types of thinking in the said spheres are deployed as productively intertwined and mutually enriching. During the fifteen years following the dissertation thesis defense of Dr. Andreev (in 2008), he analyzed

philosophical questions in thinking-with, thinking-through, thinking-in-deviation-from the classics of phenomenology such as Husserl, Heidegger, Becker, on the one hand, the authoritative commentators of their ideas such as Dorothea Frede, Hans Blumenberg, Madga King, on the other, but also such personally important (as I surmise) partners in living intellectual interaction such as Dimitri Ginev or Austrian and German colleagues whom he had the chance to meet during his numerous scientific stays abroad. This style no doubt makes eminent the remarkable erudition that accompanies Dr. Andreev's contribution in elucidating such thematics that are little known in Bulgarian human sciences (like e.g. the interpretive human studies of the early 19th century or the ideas of Paul Lorenzen, the founder of the so-called constructive epistemology of the Erlangen School). This style also demonstrates Dr. Andreev's skills in constructing dialogical fields that contain a potential of 'self-elaboration' by open contrasts or affinities of different philosophical positions but also by implicit dimensions of what was left unexplored within them. Such is the whole research line in the publication discussing the disruption in the phenomenological tradition between Husserl's transcendental constitutive phenomenology and Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology of *Dasein*, the intermediate place (in relation to this disruption) of Becker's phenomenology of mathematical existence, as well as in the publications thematising the aporias of the *Seinsfrage* in Heidegger's 'mental path'.

However, it is doubtless to me that the author would gain a lot in the aspect of public recognition of his own contribution in a single work under a more exhaustive and 'systematic' form. By 'systematic' I mean here what Yassen Andreev himself says of the 'system in the processual meaning of "an open", i.e. "infinitely approximate horizon of meaning"' (*The Model of Human Sciences Knowledge...*, p. 42). In my view, that wouldn't be a renouncement to the abundance of ideas that comes from superposing interpretations, or to the Heideggerian proclivity to the 'questionability' (Fragwürdigkeit) itself of philosophical questions. That is, that wouldn't be a renouncement to the doubtless strengths of the 'open' mental style that Yassen Andreev follows. It would, rather, be a reaching out to the reader who wants to understand the movement of thought and the possible answers to central questions that sometimes appear in the margins of texts but leave it to the reader to have their own ideas as to how to make transitions between texts. Such, for instance, is in my view the key set of questions appearing in a footnote to the important study *Die Seinsfrage according its material and formal significance. Foreword to the translation of Dorothea Frede's study "The Question of Being: Heidegger's Project"*, which I will allow myself to quote: 'Does philosophy indeed have just one only theme? Is it precisely being – whatever this enigma

could be at all – what exhaust entirely and fully this (supposedly) unique philosophical theme? [...] If philosophy is entirely reducible to ontology, should it then accept as its thematic leading motive a specific – for instance, precisely Heidegger’s own – conception of being?’ (p. 102). In view of the erudite specialization of Dr. Andreev in phenomenological philosophy, it would be interesting to me to ask what he thinks as to the competing position of the concept of ‘world’ in relation to ‘being’, which is defended by some most authoritative thinkers like e.g. Klaus Held, as well as by representatives of a new generation of phenomenologists oriented to the so-called ‘phenomenological metaphysics’.

In accepting the self-evaluation of contributions in the publications of Dr. Yassen Andreev, I would like to note especially the strengths of the mentioned line of problematisation that starts from the philosophical disruption between Husserl and Heidegger that has become apparent during their attempt to work together on the *Phenomenology* article of the Encyclopedia Britannica, passes through a detailed tracing of the ‘pragmatist’ layer of *Being and Time* and reaches the summarizing thematic of the *Seinsfrage*, which, in the author’s words, comes out to be ‘utterly strange and desperately tangled’ question (*Die Seinsfrage...*, p. 99). The method of critical analysis of interpretation is here combined with a careful statement of the author’s phenomenological theses. Some of them can provoke me to a dispute, e.g. the over-emphasized pragmatist interpretation of *Being and Time*, leading to the thesis of a ‘hermeneutically modified intentionalism and finalism’ being the ‘specifics of Heidegger’s phenomenological analysis of human activity’ (*To the conception of surveying handling in the ‘for-to’ contexts in Being and Time*, p. 144). My view, for that matter, is that this thesis can only be defended at the price of neglecting the analytic of *Dasein*’s passivity (‘being thrown into’) deployed by Heidegger through the thematic of disposition and attunements, which leads precisely to a non-intentionalist and non-finalist notion of ‘world’ as well as of an existential ‘what for’. On this context, however, I wouldn’t like to skip mentioning the more than respectful way in which Yassen Andreev pays his homage to his teacher Dimitri Ginev, in recapitulating the latter’s contribution for the creation of a phenomenology group as early as in the beginning of the 1990s at the then Centre of Culturology; and one of its themes is precisely the “reformulation of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology by Martin Heidegger into a hermeneutic phenomenology of factuality, with a special focus on the Husserl-Heidegger debate on the *Phenomenology* article in Encyclopedia Britannica as of 1927 and phenomenological sociology“ (*Remembering the hermeneutic anarchist*).

The Author's Statement of Contributions is formulated clearly and correctly, the attached other mandatory information shows that the Bulgarian Academy of Science's minimal requirements as well as the national minimal requirements for the academic position of 'Associate Professor' have been fulfilled.

Due to my bias related to the research field of phenomenology in Bulgaria, I would like to permit myself one more final recommendation to Dr. Yassen Anreev related to his perspectives on the *Seinsfrage* through the works of the late Heidegger, as well as the reflection of 'the mathematical beginnings of Husserl's phenomenology' in the manuscripts of the late Husserl; and also a little remark related to correcting the conceptual use of Heidegger's methodological distinction between *Grundfrage* and *Leitfrage* of philosophical thinking.

To conclude: after becoming acquainted with the materials and scientific works submitted for the context, analyzing their importance and the scientific contributions they contain, I have all reasons to give, with full conviction, my positive evaluation to the respected Scientific Jury and propose Sen.Ass.Prof. PhD Yassen Aleksiev Andreev be elected to the academic position of '*Associate Professor*' in professional field 2.3. Philosophy (Ontology).

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