

## REVIEW

by Prof. Emeritus, D.Sc. Vesselin Petrov Petrov

on the materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Kiril Plamen Kartalov for participation in the competition for the academic position of “Professor” in the professional field 2.3. Philosophy (Philosophical Anthropology – The Vatican’s Policy during the Second World War and its Attitude towards the Jewish Question) for the needs of the “Anthropological Studies” Section at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IPS–BAS)

By decision of the scientific jury (appointed by Order of the Director No. RD 09-366.1/27.09.2025, based on a decision of the Scientific Council of IPS–BAS, Protocol 16/09.09.2025) (Protocol No. 1/14.10.2025 from the first meeting, scheduled by Order of the Director No. RD 09-399/13.10.2025) for the competition for the academic position of “Professor” in the professional field 2.3. Philosophy (Philosophical Anthropology – The Vatican’s Policy during the Second World War and its Attitude towards the Jewish Question), announced in the State Gazette No. 61/29.07.2025 for the needs of the “Anthropological Studies” Section at IPS–BAS, I was appointed to prepare a review for the participants in the competition.

Pursuant to Art. 46, para. (2) of the IPS Rules for the Application of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), I follow the structure below:

### 1. General Description of the Submitted Materials

Only one candidate has applied for participation in the competition – Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Kiril Plamen Kartalov. The regularity of the submitted documents was verified by a technical committee appointed by Order of the Director of IPS–BAS No. RD-09-374.3 dated 30.09.2025. The candidate holds a Doctor of Science Diploma No. 001686/31.10.2024; Associate Professor Certificate No. 000937/20.07.2016; and certificate of work experience No. LS-05-10-126/30.06.2025, showing more than seven years of professional experience in the field at BAS.

The candidate participates in the competition with the following scholarly works:

- Habilitation work – published monograph: Kartalov, K. *The Sound of Silence. Pius XII and the Jewish Question in the Light of the Vatican Archives*, Iztok-Zapad Publishing, Sofia 2025, 560 pp., ISBN 978-619-01-1606-6 – corresponding to 100 points according to the minimum requirements table of NACID and IPS–BAS (minimum required: 100 points).

- Published monograph (not presented as main habilitation work): Kartalov, K. *Transformations of Politics: From the Twentieth Century to the Global Age*, Ars Millennium MMM Foundation for Art and Culture, Sofia 2025, ISBN 978-954-2950-64-6 – 100 points under the same table.

- Published book based on a defended dissertation for the degree of Doctor or Doctor of Science: Kartaloff, K. *I fiori delle nazioni. Pellegrini sul Cammino di*

Santiago, Fondazione per l'arte e la cultura "Ars Millennium MMM", Sofia 2024, 800 pp., ISBN 978-954-2950-56-1 – 75 points.

- Fifteen articles and conference papers, published in peer-reviewed but non-indexed journals or in edited collective volumes, earning a total of 150 points (i.e. a total of 325 points for Indicator G under the NACID and IPS–BAS table, with a minimum required of 220 points).

- Citations and published reviews in scholarly journals – 160 points (minimum required: 120 points).

- Indicator E (academic service and other scholarly contributions) – 135 points (minimum required: 100 points).

The comparison tables show that the publications with which Assoc. Prof. Kartalov applies for the academic position of Professor differ from those submitted for the degrees of Doctor of Science and Associate Professor.

From the above, it is evident that **the candidate fully meets the requirements of Art. 3, para. (3) of ZRASRB. On this basis, the works submitted for the competition may be evaluated substantively (i.e. for their scientific merits) by the appointed scientific jury.**

## **2. Overall Characteristics of the Candidate's Scholarly, Applied, and Teaching Activity – Which of These Prevails**

From the submitted CV of Assoc. Prof. Kartalov, it is evident that since his appointment at IPS in 2016, his predominant activity has been scholarly and research-oriented. In addition to his publications and citations, he has edited or co-edited 8 of a total of 11 collective works published since 2016; he is currently participating in one international and one national research project; and has taken part in more than 20 major international conferences after 2014, and in nearly as many before 2014. He has also carried out expert and consultative work in recent years — as adviser to the Apostolic Nuncio to Bulgaria and North Macedonia (2018–2019), and as adviser to the President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2013–2016).

## **3. Teaching Activity of the Candidate since the Beginning of His Career: Lectures, Seminars, Textbooks, Supervision of Doctoral and Graduate Students**

Assoc. Prof. Kartalov has extensive teaching experience. He is a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," where he has taught the following courses, both in Bulgaria and abroad:

- History and Basic Principles of Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," 2024–.
- Traditional Religions and Counterterrorism, Contemporary International Conflicts, Evolution of International Peacekeeping, International Relations and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, New Bulgarian University (NBU), 2024–.
- The European Identity of the Balkans, Graduate School of Humanities, Osaka University, January 2024.
- Public Lecture, NBU, Sofia, 4 April 2023.

- The Foreign Policy of the European Union, Department of Political Science, NBU, Sofia, February–June 2023.
- Cultural Diplomacy: Comparative Approaches, Actors, and Genres, Master in Advanced Public and Cultural Diplomacy for International Relations, ASERI, Milan, 2019–.
- Storia diplomatica dei Balcani, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, 2017–2019.
- Papal Diplomacy, Diplomatic Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2013–.
- Political Science (lectures and seminars), University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Sofia, 2009–2017.

He has served as reviewer of numerous master's theses and several academic projects. Many of his publications can also be effectively used as teaching materials in higher education.

#### 4. Analytical Assessment of the Candidate's Scholarly Achievements in the Publications Submitted for the Academic Position of "Professor"

As already noted, Assoc. Prof. Kartalov applies with a habilitation work — a monograph — as well as 15 articles and studies in English and Italian, mostly published abroad.

The primary object of analysis, therefore, is the monographic work:

Kartalov, K. (2025). *The Sound of Silence. Pius XII and the Jewish Question in the Light of the Vatican Archives*. Sofia: Iztok-Zapad Publishing. 560 pp. ISBN 978-619-01-1606-6.

**The monograph** consists of a preface, three main chapters (each subdivided into several sections), an epilogue, and a bibliography of 345 titles in Latin script. It includes more than 250 archival documents and over 700 footnotes — many of which reference new sources not listed in the bibliography — as well as valuable archival photographs and video materials, a rare feature in scholarly monographs, offering unique historical visual evidence.

The research focuses on the Vatican's position — primarily through Pope Pius XII — regarding the Jewish question during the Second World War, as well as, more broadly, on the Catholic Church's attitude towards anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the Vatican's relations with totalitarian regimes in the first half of the 20th century. The author offers his own interpretation of the "silence" of Pope Pius XII.

By its very nature, the study is interdisciplinary, encompassing history, papal diplomacy, anthropology, philosophy, social and individual psychology, and other humanistic fields.

As the author himself writes:

"The aim of the present study is to explain the position of the Holy See, as embodied by Pope Pius XII, on the Jewish question during the Second World War by means of an examination of the Vatican archives, based on an analysis of the evolution

of the Catholic Church's attitude toward anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism over the centuries." (p. 42)

To achieve this goal, the author formulates specific tasks:

"To present the personality and reveal the work of Pope Pius XII; to trace the attitude of the Catholic Church toward anti-Semitism through the centuries; to explore the Holy See's attitude toward the totalitarian regimes of the 1930s; to examine and compare papal diplomacy during the first half of the 20th century; to describe the Holy See's behavior in relation to the extermination of the Jews in 1942–1943; to trace the information concerning the 'capture' of the Pope; and to attempt an interpretation of the so-called silence of Pius XII." (pp. 42–43)

This research is entirely original for Bulgarian specialized literature and, to a significant extent, for international scholarship as well, since it is based on numerous archival sources that became accessible only after 2020.

Naturally, in this review I will not analyze all aspects of these complex problems nor summarize the monograph's content in detail. My task as a philosopher is, above all, to identify the philosophical dimensions of the contributions found in these publications — which is what matters for the scholarly assessment of the candidate's qualifications for professorship.

Assoc. Prof. Kartalov identifies twelve key contributions in his study. I fully agree with his enumeration and would particularly like to emphasize the following ones, providing commentary and quoting specific passages from the monograph itself:

One of the essential contributions lies in the author's portrayal of the figure of Pope Pius XII. Kartalov observes:

"There are two Pius XII's. One is the one on the portable throne — either absorbed in prayer or passing through the great Vatican halls, blessing and consoling. The other is the one who sits at his desk, studying and elaborating his plans of action. *On the one hand, he is the 'Father, 'engaged in his specific charitable and consoling mission toward his 'children, 'and on the other — the summit of Christianity, the leader of the Catholic Church. These are the roles the Pope plays during the war.*" (pp. 170–171, italics in the original)

Another substantial contribution is found in Kartalov's analysis of the reasons behind the Vatican's concordat policy:

"The reasons for the Holy See's concordat policy must be sought in the papal obsession with communism — a true 'nightmare' for the Holy See for decades, so deeply rooted that it compromised the proper assessment of events." (p. 182) "Respect for constituted authority, regardless of moral judgment against it; paralyzing anti-Bolshevism; and the lack of any freedom of action resulting from previous agreements with neo-pagan regimes — all these have compromised the effectiveness of the Holy See's teaching, confined within narrow spaces from which it could utter only abstract words, deprived of prophetic meaning. For this reason, at least in practical terms, papal diplomacy reduced its activity to the protection of Rome." (p. 183)

A highly original aspect of Kartalov's research is his examination of the distinction between anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism — a problem rarely, if ever,

explored in Bulgarian scholarly literature. This analysis serves as a foundation for understanding the Jewish question during the Second World War:

"The Jewish question during the Second World War can be understood only if the deep roots of anti-Semitism in Christian Europe are taken into account." (p. 218) "In order to assess what would happen to the Church and Christians in the years of Nazi anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, apart from the age-old burden of 'ancient hatred,' one must also remember the more recent weight of the political anti-Semitism of the intransigent Catholic movement." (p. 231)

Kartalov notes:

"For the majority of Catholics, the Jews are still not the forefathers of their faith but the enemies of their religion. ... All this explains the weakness of the Holy See's reaction — as well as that of German Catholicism and of international Catholic opinion — in the face of Nazi anti-Semitism." (pp. 241–242)

Regarding the Holy See's policy under Pope Pius XI, Kartalov writes:

"The gradual transition — achieved mainly by Pius XI — from the category of 'statolatry' to that of 'neo-paganism,' and finally, in 1938, to the category of 'totalitarianism,' marks the path of a gradual understanding of the anti-Christian nature of National Socialism, to which fascism seemed ideologically related. ... The adoption of the concept of 'totalitarianism' as an overarching category designating fascism, Nazism, and communism within one and the same condemnation made it possible to overcome the principle of the 'lesser evil' as a discriminatory element in relations with the regimes of Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin." (pp. 337–338)

He further adds:

"The reserved attitude toward the Jews and, more generally, toward the non-military atrocities committed by Nazism and its allies stems not only from the difficulty of assessing the situation, or from the need to preserve the Church as a place of refuge, but above all from the necessity not to compromise the fragile balance that any internal weakening of Germany would have shifted in favour of the Soviet Union, with devastating consequences for the Catholic Churches in Eastern and Central Europe." (p. 371)

Kartalov devotes particular attention to the Church's attitude toward "total war" and to the Holy See's doctrine of "impartiality":

"While the neutrality of a state implies a certain detachment, if not indifference, toward the substance of conflicts between third parties and the interests of belligerents, impartiality includes action inspired by the pursuit of justice and directed toward a higher good." (p. 344)

A key conclusion drawn by the author is:

"The Second World War therefore differs from the Great War for several reasons: The Holocaust, the communist religious persecutions carried out by the Soviet Union, the presence of the Resistance — which waged a war different from that of the regular armies — and the involvement of the entire civilian population in the conflict." (p. 375)

The philosophical significance of Kartalov's work is further underlined by the striking correspondence between his conclusions and those of prominent philosophers of the early twentieth century — in particular Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947). In

his essay "Appeal to Sanity" (1939, published posthumously in *Science and Philosophy*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1948, pp. 61-83), Whitehead wrote:

"Our modern progressive civilization owes its origin mainly to the Greeks and the Jews. ... The sustained habit of progressive activity was the discovery of Greeks and Semites in the marvellous thousand years which precede and include the foundation of Christianity. ... Thus, in approaching the Jewish problem as it exists to-day, we are considering one of the factors operative to sustain the many values of life. The question at issue is not the happiness of a finite group. It is the fate of our civilization. To-day civilization is in danger. ... we here approach the basic doctrine of religion. To attach that co-ordination of value to a finite social group is a lapse into barbaric polytheism." (Whitehead, 1948, pp. 72-73)

Whitehead continued:

"In the simple age of mediaeval Europe, the clergy and the Jews served the main purposes of interweaving the varieties of life into a unity of progress. ... Of course, the Jews are not the only factor producing progress in Western life. But their services have been immense. ... the Jews have been a priceless factor in the advance of European civilization." (pp. 74-75)

Written on the eve of World War II, he foresaw:

"An immediate war would probably lead to the the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Jews, together with the slaughter of other millions throughout of various nations. Europe may be forced into war by the wild lusts of dictatorial states to achieve domination. It is necessary for the democracies to be armed and watchful. But war cannot solve the Jewish question." (p. 75)

And also:

"To-day we are witnessing a relapse into barbarism. The tendency touches every country. But it is centred in Europe. And in Europe Germany is the main seat of this vicious explosion. The general character is over-emphasis on the notion of nationality, producing the ideal of the totalitarian state. ... The Jews are the first example of this refusal to worship the state. But religions, arts, and sciences will come next, until mankind are reduced to mean little creatures subservient to the god-state, embodied in some god-man. The worth of life is at stake." (p. 75)

Whitehead concludes:

"Christianity was founded in Jerusalem, proclaiming ideals beyond the customary habits of the world. The Christian Church, which gave Europe its modern civilization, was seated in Rome, where the long habit of imperial rule adjusted ideals ideals to immediate necessities. Christianity gained its genius from Judaea and its survival power from the Roman Empire. In the result, Christianity is a Jewish creation interfused with Roman stability." (p. 81)

He also famously remarked in his book *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: The Free Press, 1967/1933): "... a civilized society is exhibiting the five qualities of Truth, Beauty, Adventure, Art, Peace," (p. 274) adding that "The point to notice is that war, even if successful, can only increase the malignant excitement. The remedy is peace, fostering the slow growth of civilized feelings." (Whitehead, 1948, p. 64)

The convergence between Kartalov's findings and Whitehead's reflections underscores the depth and reliability of his philosophical analysis — providing a powerful scholarly contribution not only to Bulgarian but also to international research on the subject.

**The articles and studies** submitted for participation in the competition can be grouped thematically into the following categories:

- Publications containing elements from the contributions of the main habilitation thesis presented – these are publications Nos. 2, 4, 12, and 16 from the attached list of publications with which Assoc. Prof. Kartalov is applying for the competition, which were used in writing the habilitation thesis.

- Publications with contributions in the field of papal diplomacy – these are publications Nos. 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 14 from the attached list. This group of publications outlines how Pope John XXIII developed a vision of peace based on truth, justice, and mercy, and analyzes the lasting legacy of the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, which continues to inspire efforts for peace in the modern world, as evidenced by Pope Francis' visit to Bulgaria in May 2019. Others propose a new approach to the study of papal diplomacy, explain the concept of "papal diplomacy" and the historical evolution of the Holy See in international relations, and argue the connection between the diplomatic activity of the Holy See and the delicate issues of peace and war. Others analyze Pope John Paul II's visit to Bulgaria in 2002 and his role in the peace process.

- Publications Nos. 6, 7, 8, and 15 examine Patriarch Joseph II's attempt to reconcile the Eastern and Western Churches on the eve of the Ottoman Empire's advance; the relationship between European identity and Christianity is explored through the teachings of John Paul II; the importance of interreligious dialogue is examined.

## **5. In the Case of Collective Publications – Determining the Candidate's Individual Contribution**

Assoc. Prof. Kartalov has no co-authored publications. In all of his works submitted for this competition, he is the sole author.

## **6. Impact of the Candidate's Scholarly Publications in Bulgarian and International Literature**

According to the NACID and IPS–BAS minimum requirements table, 16 citations and published reviews of the candidate's works appear in respected journals and collective volumes, accounting for 160 points (minimum required: 120).

His CV and citation list include at least as many additional references from previous years, which demonstrates his solid visibility in the international scholarly community.

It must also be noted that his most recent monographs, containing substantial original research, have been published only recently and are expected to generate further citations in the coming years.

## **7. Critical Remarks by the Reviewer Concerning the Submitted Works, Including the Candidate's Scholarly Awareness**

I have no critical remarks regarding the content of the works submitted by Assoc. Prof. Kartalov. My only observation — expressed more as a reflection than as criticism — is a certain regret that, due to the considerable length of the main monograph, it was not possible to include a more detailed discussion of the deep roots of anti-Semitism in Christian Europe in earlier centuries.

However, the works presented, as well as the breadth of literature used therein, clearly demonstrate the candidate's high level of scholarly erudition and his thorough familiarity with both the primary and secondary sources relevant to his research themes.

## **8. Personal Impressions of the Reviewer Regarding the Candidate, and Other Relevant Information**

I have known Assoc. Prof. Kartalov for more than ten years. My personal impression is that he is an exceptionally talented and highly dedicated scholar, who is also well-organised, responsible, and fully committed to his academic duties — all qualities that constitute an excellent testimonial for an outstanding researcher.

His studies, ideas, and arguments are profound, innovative, and meticulously substantiated. Proof of this can be found in the academic distinctions and awards he has received:

- His monograph *La sollecitudine ecclesiale di monsignor Roncalli in Bulgaria (1925–1934)*, published by the Vatican Publishing House (LEV) in 2014, was selected from nearly 200 European titles as a finalist in the “Historical Science” category of the 47th edition of the European Prize *Premio Acqui Storia*.
- He has also received a distinction in Milan (2025) for his contribution to the promotion of Bulgarian cultural and historical heritage and the development of national identity.
- He was awarded Second Prize in the “Humanities” category by the Portal for Culture, Art and Society (2025) for his book *The Flowers of the Nations*.
- In addition, he was nominated for the “Hristo G. Danov” Award in the field of Humanities (2025) for the same book.

Recognition of his organizational and professional qualities is reflected in his membership in several distinguished international institutions, including:

- Commission Internationale d'Histoire et d'Études du Christianisme (CIHEC), 2025–
- Società Italiana di Storia Internazionale (SISI), 2024–
- International Council of Museums (ICOM), 2022–
- The International Association of the Wagner Societies (RWVI), 2017–

Assoc. Prof. Kartalov is proficient in Italian, English, and Spanish, which significantly contributes both to his ability to work with international scholarship and to the dissemination of his own ideas abroad.

I have no joint publications with Assoc. Prof. Kartalov and am not in a conflict of interest.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of Assoc. Prof. Kartalov's academic activities, based on the works and documents submitted for this competition, reveals exceptionally high achievements in scholarly, applied, and organisational terms.

His record far exceeds the minimum criteria established by NACID and IPS–BAS.

His research and theses — particularly those defended in his recent monographs — are innovative and constitute a significant contribution not only to Bulgarian scholarship but also to the international literature devoted to the themes he investigates.

By electing Assoc. Prof. Kiril Kartalov to the academic position of Professor in the field of Philosophy (Philosophical Anthropology), the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences will gain an outstanding young scholar with excellent prospects for further academic growth and creative development.

For these reasons, I shall vote decisively “in favour” of electing Assoc. Prof. Kartalov to the academic position of Professor in the professional field 2.3. Philosophy, and I encourage the other members of the scientific jury to vote likewise.

Sofia, 03 November 2025

Prof. Emeritus D.Sc. Veselin Petrov