

Review

by Prof. Dr. Nadya Georgieva Boyadjieva,

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of the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of **Associate Professor** in the sphere of Higher Education: 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology, promulgated in the *State Gazette* No. 57/9 July 2021, for the needs of the Regional Museum of History – Montana

1. Presentation of the procedure and of the materials received for reviewing

With Order No 89 ПД-16./22.07.2021 of the Director of the IBSCT – BAS I was appointed member of the Academic Panel for conducting a competition for conferring the academic position of **Associate Professor** in the sphere of higher education: 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology, promulgated in the *State Gazette* No. 57/9 July 2021, announced for the needs of the Regional Museum of History – Montana.

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Vanya Ivanova Georgieva is the only candidate in the competition.

The set of materials submitted by Dr. Vanya Ivanova is in compliance with the requirements of the Regulations for the promotion of the IBSCT – BAS staff. They comprise 23 academic works: one monograph declared as habilitation work; a book published on the basis of defended PhD dissertation (monograph); 7 studies, 14 articles and papers in journals with academic reviewing, or published in edited collective volumes. A list of the works published after the candidate defended her PhD dissertation in the sphere of the competition is submitted. Six research projects have been accepted for reviewing, submitted as applied research projects (leadership and/or participation in projects).

Twenty research publications have been accepted for reviewing, which are outside the candidate's PhD dissertation and are taken into consideration in the final evaluation. One research work (book based on the PhD dissertation) is not reviewed. One report from a conference (No. 11) and one article (No. 28) from the submitted list of publications and applied research, drafted in connection with the participation in the competition, which are in co-authorship, have not been reviewed for lack of protocols identifying the share of each of the authors.

The candidate's applied research projects (academic and popular science publications) are taken into consideration in forming the final evaluation of her work. The list of publications and the applied research projects, which was drafted for the competition, also contains publications that had not been submitted for participation in the competition, which creates difficulties for the reviewer in the evaluation of the candidate's compliance with the criteria under the law. It is my conviction that the list of publications and applied research projects ought to contain only those that are relevant to this competition. The author's information on the original academic contribution of the works does not highlight the contribution of each of the publications, only summarised information on all works. This approach is not conducive to acquiring complete evaluation of the contribution in the publications. A list of summaries of the publications is submitted for participation in the competition. A document certifying the candidate's teaching activities is presented: reference issued by the *Lyuben Karavelov* Subsidiary in Kardjali of the University of Plovdiv. The publications for participation in the competition are submitted with their entire texts.

2. Biographical data of the candidate in connection with the competition

Dr. Vanya Ivanova Georgieva graduated Bulgarian Language and History from the Paissiy of Hilendar University of Plovdiv in 1999. In the 2000-2003 period she was full-time PhD student at the Department on History of Byzantium and the Balkan Peoples of the Faculty of History of the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. In 2002 she obtained her PhD degree in the academic discipline Modern General History. She has worked as Assistant Professor (2008–2009) and Chief Assistant Professor (2009 – to this day) at the Lyuben *Karavelov* Subsidiary in Kardjali of the University of Plovdiv, where she acquired teaching and research experience. She has participated in training programmes and courses in the sphere of the competition. Her professional experience as teacher (1999–2000), curator and guide in the Regional Museum of History in Montana (2006–2008) and the Museum of History in Chiprovtsi gave her an opportunity to apply academic research in practical work.

3. General characteristics of the candidate's activities

Evaluation of the candidate's teaching activities

Dr. Vanya Ivanova has conducted seminars and has delivered lectures before students in Bulgarian Language and Literature in the disciplines: History of the Balkan Peoples 15th–19th Century, Modern General History, Introduction to Historical Knowledge, etc. She has also provided academic guidance to undergraduates; reviewed graduation theses; participated in the preparations for the accreditation of the BA specialisation of the Kardjali Subsidiary, etc.

Evaluation of the candidate's academic and applied research activities

Dr. Vanya Ivanova's academic production is diverse. Her research interest in various issues of the Bulgarian and Balkan Modern History gives grounds to outline at least four thematic circles that make it possible to build the general mosaic of the candidate's academic interests and research quests.

The publications that can be unified provisionally in the first group are dominated by the Yugoslav idea and Yugoslavianism, both from a theoretical perspective and with a view to the practical applications in the Yugoslav state in its varied forms. Here it is possible to include a series of articles and studies in which theoretical contribution is noticed, e.g., the study of the link between the Yugoslav state, the Yugoslav nation and the Yugoslav citizen. The theoretical deliberations on the success/failure of the state experiment in Yugoslavia and the attempts at consolidating a unified Yugoslav nation are original (Nos. 4, 5, 9, 17, 18 and 19).

I attribute to the second group of publications the ones with the central theme of Dr. Ivanova's research preferences: the issue of the "image of otherness." She has studied that issue by using interdisciplinary approaches and original methodology. The issue is examined in the context of the attitude to "the other" – the one who is different in terms of ethnos, religious belonging or ethnographic group. The habilitation work – the monograph *Images of "the Others" in the Bulgarian Northwest*. Faber, Veliko Tarnovo, 236 p. – deserves special attention, together with the contribution in it, a part of which I shall indicate.

The study is of interest for at least several reasons. First, this is an interesting combination of theoretical thinking in a historical study, partly with a local lore orientation towards a frequently underestimated geographic region in Bulgaria: its Northwest. Being interdisciplinary in its nature, the work addresses the issue of "the other(s)" in its concrete examination of different receptive attitudes to "the otherness" characteristic of the Bulgarian Northwest. The

theoretical reasoning is presented based on the example of the geographic and thematic perimeter – Chiprovtsi – chosen by the author.

The author's approach is original and she presents the "evidence" in support of her theses in the different chapters of the book, in which the issue of "the otherness" is examined at the levels of the ethnos, confession and ethnographic group. The original interpretational paradigms outlining "the otherness" by adducing images and *topoi* from the primary and secondary Bulgarian mythology, selected facts and processes, constitute a contribution. It is interesting to note the methodological pattern elaborated: it is original as a theoretical experiment, but it constitutes a practical-applied contribution as well. The conclusions in connection with the perception of the image of the ethnically different (non-Bulgarian) also deserve attention. The analysis of the state policy changing in time and of the actual population to the Bulgarian Catholics in Chiprovtsi, both in the cultural-educational and in the economic spheres, with emphasis on materialisations in the public space concerning the "Catholic past" of Chiprovtsi during the socialist era and the period of transition to market economy. The theoretical theses on the role of Catholicism in the history of Chiprovtsi and the contemporary interpretation of the past through the eyes of the local population are highlighted as a separate contribution. The work is presented with original Annexes containing information on monuments and evidence of collective memory, author's photographs, etc., which complement the general impression of personal involvement and original author's interpretation, highlighting the specificities of "the other" on the examples of the "*Torlak* group" and the original author's interpretations of the place of that group in the ethnic mosaic of Bulgaria, as well as raising the issue in the context of Bulgaria's EU accession, etc.

A third group of works comprises individual studies and articles addressing issues of contemporary Balkan history, anthropogeographic studies, state policies vis-à-vis certain ethnic groups, etc., which evoke Dr. Ivanova's interest and research. These works are thematically diverse.

The fourth group can unite publications of a practical-applied nature. They are devoted to various issues in the sphere of theoretical and applied museology and museum work in Bulgaria in the recent past and today (Nos. 11 and 13). In this group there are publications with theoretical contribution connected with private legal aspects of the cultural values (e.g., No. 23) and proposing theoretical formulations and practical solutions in the sphere of the "new museology," etc.

The research and practical contribution is indisputable. The results attained in the habilitation work, as well as in the papers and studies focusing on important issues of the organisation of museum work in Bulgaria, and more specifically of the region under investigation, the problem of the contemporary reading of the cultural-historical heritage, and even more of the correct way for the contemporary reading public becoming familiar with this, constitute a priority issue of the state policy in the sphere of culture and the preservation of the historical memory. In this sense, I perceive particular importance in those of the candidate's research publications devoted to the above issues.

4. Critical comments and recommendations

The main comment on the habilitation work concerns predominantly the limited number of sources and references. The author could have adduced more works, especially publications in the past years by Bulgarian specialists, all the more that the work is interdisciplinary. In my opinion, the limited use of foreign sources, especially in a theoretical research on the issue,

affects the quality of the work. I would suggest overcoming that lack by broadening the scope of the bibliographic sources.

I accept that theoretical theses are essentially original, but the theoretical analysis and generalisations need to be supported by more arguments from the theoretical debate on the issue of Bulgarian and foreign authors.

5. General evaluation of the candidate's achievements

I believe that the candidate's personal contribution in the publication submitted for reviewing is indisputable. The academic and applied contributions and the results obtained, formulated in the information submitted, are her own merit. They are based both on her research and on her practical-applied work.

The candidate Dr. Vanya Ivanova complies with the minimum national requirements under Article 26 of the Law on the Promotion of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LPASRB) and Article 1a, Paragraph 1 of the Regulations on the implementation of the LPASRB. She has complied with the quantitative requirements for holding the academic position of **Associate Professor** in the sphere of higher education 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology. She also meets the qualitative requirements for holding the academic position of Associate Professor and has gained recognition as a researcher with contributions to Bulgarian historical science. This is evidenced by her academic production, her teaching activities, her participation as teacher/trainer in various educational fora, her academic promotion as Assistant Professor and Chief Assistant Professor, and her work in research projects are proof in support of these statements. Dr. Ivanova's practical-applied work for popularising the academic achievements of historical science, the close links that she has succeeded in creating between science and the practical work for society and for the state in connection with the popularising of the cultural-historical heritage, formulation of solutions and good practices, constitute a contribution that needs to be taken into account. The general evaluation of the candidate's work should also note her active personal involvement inherent to her work: as scholar, expert and practitioner.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above, it is my conviction that the candidate in the competition, Dr. Ivanova, has submitted a sufficient number of academic works published after the materials used for defending her PhD dissertation. Her academic works have research contributions and practical applicability.

I believe that Dr. Vanya Ivanova Georgieva has demonstrated qualities that give me grounds to express my positive evaluation and to recommend to the distinguished members of the Academic Panel to propose to the Academic Council of the IBSCT – BAS to choose Dr. Vanya Ivanova Georgieva for the academic position of Associate Professor in the Higher Education sphere: 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology.

Sofia, 11 November 2021

Reviewer: /sg./