

# Opinion

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

Dr. Vanya Ivanova Georgieva obtained her MA in Bulgarian Language and History in 1999 from the Paissiy of Hilendar University of Plovdiv. During the 2000–2003 period she was full-time PhD student of Modern History at the Faculty of History of the University of Sofia, Department of History of Byzantium and the Balkan Peoples. In 2005, she successfully defended her PhD dissertation.

The candidate's career passed through the following stages:

Curator in the Department of New and Modern History of the Museum of History in the town of Chiprovtsi (2003–2006), curator of the New History Department in the Regional Museum of History – Montana (2006–2008), Assistant Professor and Chief Assistant Professor at the Paissiy of Hilendar University of Plovdiv, L. Karavelov Subsidiary of that university in Kardjali. Lecture courses and seminars: History of the Balkan Peoples – lectures and seminars; Modern General History – lectures and seminars; Museum Works – lecture course; History of Bulgaria 1878–1944 – seminars. Since 2 April 2018, she is Director of the Regional Museum of History – МОНТАНА. At the same time, she continued her part-time teaching at the Paissiy of Hilendar University of Plovdiv, L. Karavelov Subsidiary of that university in Kardjali.

The documents that the candidate for participation in the competition has submitted are detailed and provide the necessary information. Based on them, I believe that Dr. Vanya Ivanova Georgieva meets the mandatory conditions under the Law on the Promotion of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LPASRB) and its Regulations, as well as the Regulations of the IBSCT. She has fulfilled the minimum requirements for the academic position of **Associate Professor**.

The candidate participates in the competition with a total of 29 academic publications from the 2008–2020 period.

Dr. Vanya Ivanova Georgieva participates in the competition with two monographs. The first of them (*Yugoslavianism in Yugoslavia. Principal Viewpoints of the Federal Centre (1945–1974)*. Faber Publishers, Veliko Tarnovo, 2013, 532 p.) is an expanded version of her dissertation. Her second monograph (*Images of the “Others” in the Bulgarian Northwest*. Faber Publishers, Veliko Tarnovo, 2016, 236 p.) is submitted as habilitation work.

In connection with the first monograph, I can note that the author deserves praise for her work on the topic, and more specifically for her demonstrated knowledge and analysis. The work in question demonstrates the successful “climbing” of the first step in her formation as scholar specialising in the Balkans.

Dr. Vanya Ivanova Georgieva has directed her research efforts in her dissertation work towards academic issues that are different from the topic of her dissertation, although it is also possible to find indirect points of intersection along the line of identity construction.

It was important for me to read again that book, this time in the context of the present competition, because it draws attention to a region in which I have been interested for a long time – the Bulgarian Northwest that provides an opportunity for new research and interpretation of a number of aspects. On the whole, the author has coped with the research tasks she has formulated: she has selected an appropriate structure, she has used most of the publications on the topics and has adduced various sources. In this way, the reader can become convinced in the correctness of the thesis launched by Dr. Ivanova on the perception of the Bulgarians from that border region as “the others” who are differentiated on the basis of ethnic and confessional principles.

Parallel with this, she also examines the issue of the ethnographic group of the *Torlaks*, which indeed merits the attention of the academic community in Bulgaria. I agree to a great extent with the theses and argumentations defended by Dr. Ivanova, although I have certain reservations on some of them. Nevertheless, I recognise the right of the author to defend her own positions.

In addition to the two monographic works, the candidate in the competition participates with 27 other studies, articles and reports published in specialised journals and volumes, of which 21 have been submitted. Naturally, I also take into account the circumstance that three of them are in co-authorship. On the other hand, it is also necessary to assess positively the fact that four of the articles have appeared in foreign publications. Here I would like to specify something: the publication submitted under No. 29 in the presented list is not a report at a conference, but an article in a reviewed volume published by the IBSCT subsidiary in Montana.

They are connected to a high degree with the thematic area of her two monographs. Dr. Vanya Ivanova has developed further in them research issues related to the different aspects of “socialist Yugoslavianism,” regional history (both in the Northwest and in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains), museology and museum work.

I accept the academic contributions of the materials submitted as assessed by the author. It is not by chance that in the beginning of my opinion I presented the facts demonstrating a permanent and steady development of the colleague. The publications submitted by the candidate, taken together, reveal her as an already accomplished professional scholar whose level ought to be recognised institutionally as well.

It is necessary to add also her activities as museum worker and university lecturer, as well as her participation in numerous academic fora and projects, both national and international. I appreciate highly also the candidate’s applied academic and promotional activities.

On a personal note, I have known Dr. Vanya Ivanova for several years. I have worked (and continue working) with her in the context of the cooperation between the IBSCT subsidiary in the town of Montana and the Regional Museum of History in that town, whose Director she is, as well as on certain projects. In addition to her participation in a number of jointly organised events, she contributed articles and studies in some of our volumes. The last of them is in the special edition devoted to the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the proclaiming of city status of Montana. It is due to appear very soon (by the end of November this year), which is the reason why it had not been submitted for participation in the competition.

In conclusion, I would like to summarise the facts presented above. The results of the candidate’s research in the competition demonstrate her indisputable academic contribution in a number of spheres: regional history, museology, cultural-historical heritage and historical Balkan studies. Moreover, she complies fully with all requirements stipulated in the legislation on participation in the competition. This is why I vote **in favour** of the election of **Dr. Vanya Ivanova Georgieva** to the academic position of **Associate Professor** in Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology, for the needs of the Regional Museum of History – Mon-

tana. It is my belief that my colleagues from the Academic Panel ought to give a positive evaluation of her qualities and work so far.

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