

Review

by Prof. Dr. Lyudmil Yordanov Spassov,

Member of the Academic Panel in a competition for conferring the academic position of
Associate Professor

in the Higher Education Sphere 2. Humanities,

Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology,

announced by the Institute of Balkan Studies with *Professor Alexander Fol* Centre of Thracology
(IBSCT), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

for the needs of the Regional Museum of History – Montana, promulgated in the *State Gazette*
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Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Vanya Ivaova, Director of the Regional Museum of History – Montana and part-time Chief Assistant Professor at the Lyuben Karavelov Subsidiary of the University of Plovdiv, is the only participant in the announced competition for **Associate Professor**. She is participating in the competition with two monographs and 14 articles, two of which in co-authorship. In the monograph *Images of the “Others” and the Bulgarian Northwest* submitted by the candidate as habilitation work Dr. Vanya Ivanova focuses attention on three main thematic fields: ethnos, confession and ethnographic group. The first part of the work reveals the prehistoric times and the identity change on the basis of the folkloric tradition. An in-depth analysis is made of the songs contained in the volume *Folk Songs from Timok to Vit* in which Turks are the principal figures personifying the image of the “other” among the Bulgarians. It is pointed out that in addition to the image of the Turks, the images of the Tatars, Circassians and Arnauts are also associated with violence and cruelties. The folk songs from the Northwest demonstrate a negative charge of the image of the Jew and marriage to a Jew is viewed as equal to marriage to a Muslim. Attention is devoted also to the Gypsies, who are placed at the lowest level in the social hierarchy.

The study also examines the images of the neighbours: Serbs, Greeks and Romanians. It is emphasised that the most differentiating line between them and the Bulgarians – the confessional difference – is absent. Dr. Vanya Ivanova states that none of the songs mentions Bulgarian-Greek confrontation in connection with the status of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and that in spite of the lyrical characters of Haydut Velkov, Kosovo Pole, etc., Serbians are depicted as alien and undesired partners in marriage. The author expresses interesting thoughts on the etymology of the name “Wallachian” and on the images of Germans, Frenchmen, Russians, etc. It is pointed out that only with respect to the Wallachians the ethnic difference is not an obstacle before marriage.

The part devoted to the confessional “other” reveals in great detail the historiographic situation in the literature on the local lore in the 1930s, reflecting the Chiprovtsi Uprising in 1688. The principal shortcoming of these studies is pointed out to be the disproportion between the pages devoted to the uprising and the prerequisites for its explosion, and the substitution of the of the

concrete history of Chiprovtsi with a general retelling of Bulgarian history. An in-depth analysis is made of the different hypotheses on the transfer of Catholicism to Chiprovtsi, launched by K. Jireček, Blasius Kleiner, Ivan Sotirov, Bozhidar Dimitrov, and others. It is pointed out that the flourishing of the settlement is “associated” with the 17th century and is connected with the activities of the local Catholics Peter Parchevich, author of the first history of Bulgaria, Philip Stanislavov, publisher of *Abagar*, etc.

The monograph substantiates the conclusions: (1) There is no clarity on the penetration of Catholicism in Chiprovtsi; (2) The Chiprovtsi Uprising, about which little is known, is heroised and extrapolated; (3) The emphasis on the aristocratic families – Peyachevich, Parchevich, Knezhevich, and others, who had merits before the Habsburgs and not to the Bulgarian national-liberation cause – is too much intensified; (4) The notion about the conflict-free coexistence between the two confessions – Orthodox and Catholics – is of the “halo” type. The text is appropriately visualised with tables presenting the monuments in Chiprovtsi, connected with the Christian Orthodox denomination and the Catholic activities in the 16th–17th centuries.

Chapter Three of the reviewed monograph is also original in intention. Successful analysis is made of the “lexeme *Torlak*” in the virtual space, in the *Dictionary of Rare and Obsolete Dialect Words in the 19th–20th Century Literature*, in the dictionaries and studies of Yordan Ivanov, Zhivko Voynikov, and others. Answers are given to the question: Are the *Torlaks* “other”? Chiprovtsi is indicated as a kind of regional centre for intensified highlighting of the “*Torlak* identity.” Sound arguments are adduced in support of the thesis that the “*Torlak* identity” functions as a regional cross-border model within the frameworks of the Bulgarian and Serbian national identity. It is emphasised that the pejorative use of “*Torlak*” at the end of the 19th century has been changed in a positive plan as the name of an ethnographic group in the beginning of the 21st century.

The second monograph with which Dr. Ivanova participates in the competition is an extended variant of the PhD dissertation defended by her in 2004. The dissertation has been complemented with a text amounting to more than 200 pages. The book examines in detail the development of Yugoslavianism until 1918, the literary contracts of 1850 and 1870, the administrative division of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia into “*bans*”, the Cvetkov – Maček Agreement, the new order introduced by Hitler and Mussolini, the Ravnogor Movement of Draža Mihajlović, the establishing of the Yugoslav federation and the inclusion of Macedonia in it. It is pointed out that Yugoslavianism received a new definition “socialist” after 1945, which was placed above the national definition. Yugoslavianism is examined thoroughly as an idea and socio-political practice in 1950–1963 and the transition to the socialist Yugoslavianism towards “federalisation” in 1964–1974. The ten annexes at the end of the monograph are extremely valuable from a research point of view.

Dr. Vanya Ivanova comments competently the issue of the so-called “Macedonian” language in her article *National Equality and Linguistic Equality in the SFRY (1967–1971)*. Attention is devoted to the demands that appeared in the press and in other editions for the Slovenian and Macedonian languages to be introduced as subjects in the curricula of the remaining Yugoslav republics, and “to become working languages in the Yugoslav TV and the Union Skupština.” It is pointed out that Slovenian and Macedonian were studied at the Military Academy during the 1970–1971 academic year. A competent analysis is made in the article of the Novi Sad Literary

Treaty (1954), the declaration on the name and status of the Croatian literary language (March 1967), the conflict between *Matica Hrvatska* and *Matica Srpska*, and the Croatian denouncing of the Novi Sad Treaty.

The paper by Dr. Vanya Ivanova on the mass change of settlement names in the former Mastanliyski region of the Kingdom of Bulgaria is with a marked contribution. The bill on the change of the names of some settlements in the Kingdom (1925), the activities of the committee created in the autumn of 1931 intended to study the 1925 Bill, the positions of Prof. Ivan Batakliiev and Prof. P. Moutafchiev, etc., are considered in detail. Concerning the mechanisms of Bulgarianisation of the Turkish names of settlements and localities, Dr. Ivanova differentiates three main models: translation of the Turkish names – accurate, incomplete, hybrid; sound similitude; and choice of a new arbitrary name. The author introduces into academic circulation so far unused archive materials from the State Archives – Kardjali.

The participant in the competition for Associate Professor is extremely active in academic initiatives: she organises academic fora, delivers papers at national and international conferences, published academic and popular articles. Her papers *Two Settlement Studies on the village of Chiprovtsi and on the Town of Ferdinand* in the *History Journal*, 2012, No. 5; *Look Who's Talking... And What Is He Talking?* In the volume *Look Who's Talking. Communication and Interpretation Models in the Museum*, Marin Drinov Academic Publishers, 2014; *Yugoslavianism in the Federal People's Republic of Macedonia in Traditions and Continuity*, vil. 1, Faber Publishers, 2011; *About One Not So Famous Demonic Creature – the So-Called "Brobnnyacha"* in *Historical Future*, 2017, etc.

Dr. Ivanova has been reading lectures and organising seminars on History of the Balkan Nations, History of Bulgaria 1878–1944, Parts One and Two, Museum Work, Country Lore, etc. at the Kardjali subsidiary of the Paissii of Hilendar University of Plovdiv to students in Bulgarian Language and History, Bulgarian Language and English Language, History and Foreign Language, and Bulgarian Language and Civic Education.

As author, Dr. Vanya Ivanova stands out with her rich language culture and encyclopaedic knowledge. Part of her research is interdisciplinary. Her works are cited in Bulgaria and abroad. I recommend with full conviction to the distinguished Academic Panel to confer to Dr. Vanya Ivanova the academic position of **Associate Professor**.

28 October 2021

Sofia

Reviewer:

/sg./ Prof. Dr. L. Spasov