

## Opinion

**of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mihail Gruev, member of the Scientific Jury for election of associate professor under 2.2. - History and Archeology, announced by the Institute of Balkan Studies with a Center for Thracian Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences for the needs of the Regional History Museum - Montana**

The competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 2. - Humanities, Professional field 2.2. - History and Archeology, was announced by the Institute of Balkan Studies with a Center for Thracian Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and is for the needs of the Regional History Museum - Montana. An announcement about him was published in the State Gazette, issue no. 57 of 9.07.2021. Based on the documents submitted to the members of the scientific jury, there are all grounds to conclude that the procedure for announcing and conducting the competition was carried out in accordance with the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application. The given further course of the procedure fully meets the requirements of the indicated normative acts. The only candidate in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" is Chief Assistant Professor Vanya Ivanova Georgieva, Ph. D., current director of RHM - Montana.

The subject of this opinion will be only the publications after the acquisition by Ivanova of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in 2005. The candidate participates in the competition with one independent monograph and seventeen studies and articles. Of these, 2 are published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information, and the remaining 15 are in unreferenced journals or in edited collective volumes and collections. Two of the publications are co-authored. Two of the texts are in English and two in Romanian. It should be noted, however, that in essence they are translations of its existing texts in Bulgarian. In addition, the candidate presented to the scientific jury a list of 7 citations, as well as information about her participation in 6 educational and scientific programs and projects. I note all this, as it undoubtedly has to do with the construction of Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Vanya Ivanova as a specialist and scientist, located primarily in the crossroads of application between museology, history and ethnology. The candidate covers both the minimum and the additional required points by groups of indicators for holding the respective academic position.

The works of V. Ivanova proposed for review could be divided into several thematic areas. The first and perhaps the largest area in terms of relative weight is related to the problems of Tito's Yugoslavia, Yugoslavism and its modern projections. It is a continuation of the author's activities on the topic in connection with her Ph. D. thesis.

The second thematic round consists of publications with mainly ethnological themes. These should include articles on Chiprovtsi carpets, anthropogeographical research, the demonological character "brobnyacha", the three studies of the image of the other, united in a common book, etc. Both in the first and in the second thematic round, the good philological preparation of the author and her sense in the field of dialectology is impressive. The fact is, however, that in some of the texts, and especially in the one about the " brobnyacha", there is a lack of depth and even naivety.

The third thematic round consists of publications that could be characterized as museological. Undoubtedly, the author's experience as a curator at HM - Chiprovtsi, and then as director of RHM - Montana has affected the professional interpretation of a number of museum phenomena.

Central among the academic production of the candidate is her latest book, entitled: "Images of" Others "and the Bulgarian Northwest", published by "Faber" - Veliko Tarnovo, 2016. It is the only monograph that Ivanova has proposed for review, which is why I will dwell on it in a little more detail. The total volume of the paper is 234 pages. As already mentioned, it essentially unites three studios, the connection between which is in itself problematic. The first of them is dedicated to a text-critical analysis of the stereotypical images of the ethnic "other" in the monumental collection of folk songs published in 1928 under the editorship of Vasil Stoin "From Timok to Vit". However, before introducing her own typology, the author tried to review the broad topic of nations and nationalisms, but failed to deal with it. Surprisingly, the main reference author here is Nikolai Aretov. The second study is devoted to the problem of the emergence of the Catholic community in Chiprovtsi, its fate and the uses of this issue in the interwar and communist periods, as well as today. The text impresses with the good knowledge of the main scientific and local history literature about the Catholic community in Chiprovtsi and the surrounding villages, as well as the critical view of it. The third part of the book is dedicated to the local group of Torlaks. In particular, the author focuses on the secondary construction of this group through various festivals, cross-border cooperation

projects between Bulgaria and Serbia and especially on the Internet - the space. Ivanova emphasizes the changing semantics of the term and its situational uses, which also affects the dynamics of local identity. However, both in the introduction and in the conclusion, it is evident the difficult semantic connection of the three studies with each other and the lack of a serious theoretical key to be applied in this regard.

The above gives me reason to conclude that the scientific jury has been nominated, a candidacy which has its indisputable merits, but in its work there are many weaknesses. However, it should be noted that she has the necessary qualities to hold the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Regional History Museum - Montana. This makes me vote positively in the selection by the scientific jury of Ch. Assistant Professor Vanya Ivanova, Ph. D., for this position.

Sofia, 18.11.2021. member of the scientific jury:

/Assoc. Prof. Mihail Gruev, Ph. D./



