

Opinion

of Prof. Dr. Margarita Nikolova Karamihova,
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concerning the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of **Associate Professor** at the Institute of Balkan Studies with *Professor Alexander Fol* Centre of Thracology (IBSCT), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Higher Education Sphere 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology, for the needs of the Regional Museum of History – Montana

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Vanya Ivanova participates as the only candidate in the competition for **Associate Professor**, promulgated in the *State Gazette* No. 57/9 July 2021 and on the IBSCT website (<https://balkanstudies.bg/bg/konkursi/arhiv-konkursi-zashtiti.html>).

Brief information on the procedure for notification and organizing of the competition

At a meeting of the Academic Council of the Institute of Balkan Studies with *Professor Alexander Fol* Centre of Thracology (IBSCT), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences on 22 June 2021, the decision was reached to announce 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 (Prot. No. 11). On 14 July 2021, the composition of the Academic Panel of the competition was adopted (Prot. No. 12). The documents required under the Law on the Promotion of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LPASRB) and the Regulations of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences have been submitted on time to the academic panel.

There are no violations of the requirements for the organising and conducting of the entire procedure, and all requirements under the law have been complied with. Based on the documents submitted there is every ground to conclude that the procedure of announcing and conducting the competition has been followed in full compliance with the Law on the Promotion of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LPASRB), the Regulations on its enforcements and the internal Regulations for conferring academic degrees and for holding academic positions in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The launching of the procedure corresponds entirely to the requirements stipulated under the cited legislative acts.

Brief information about the candidate

According to the documents submitted, the candidate Vanya Ivanova obtained her MA in Bulgarian Language and History from the Paissiy of Hilendar University of Plovdiv in 1999 and in 2005 – her PhD from the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia on *Yugoslavianism in Tito's Yugoslavia 1945–1974*. Since 2003 she is curator at the History Museum in Chiprovtsi, and since 2006 in the Regional Museum of History – Montana. Since 2008 she started teaching at the L. Karavelov Subsidiary of the University of Plovdiv as part-time Assistant Professor and Chief Assistant Professor. Since 2018 she is Director of the Regional Museum of History – Montana. The candidate is member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Kardjali Branch and of the Union of Local Historians in Bulgaria – Montana Branch.

Research publications

Dr. Vanya Ivanova participates in the competition with 11 articles and studies, two of which are in co-authorship with one other author. No dividing protocols have been submitted with the documentation. The candidate reports one paper in a reviewed publication (2012). Two papers are published in English (2010 and 2012). The most recent paper with which she participates in the competition was published in co-authorship in 2019.

The habilitation work submitted for the competition is entitled *Images of the "Others" and the Bulgarian Northwest* (2016), as well as a book published on the basis of a defended dissertation work for acquiring the educational and academic PhD degree: *Yugoslavianism in Yugoslavia. Principal Viewpoints of the Federal Centre (1945–1974)* (published in 2013). It should be noted that the habilitation work does not repeat in any way her PhD dissertation.

The candidate has submitted proof of all noticed citations of her texts (2 in reviewed editions, one in a publication with scientific editing and four in unreviewed publications – according to the minimum national requirements under Article 2b, Paragraphs 2, 3 and 5 of LPASRB), which I evaluate as academic integrity.

The survey of the works submitted reveals a broad field of academic interests prompted both by her academic training, by her work in museums and by her teaching work. Her habilitation work and a part of the articles fall within the broad field of research on borders and border areas. The Bulgarian Northwest and the dynamic socio-cultural processes observed in the local communities on both sides of the border are a natural territorial focus. The studies on the dynamism of the markers for construction and deconstruction of the local identity, maintained by memory places and memory institutions, have elements of contribution. The author constructs her research at the levels of ethnic, religious and group belonging (with the disputable identification of the *Torlaks* as an ethnographic group. Her observations on the complicated game with the "Catholic heritage" in the history and present-day life in the town of Chiprovtsi also constitute a contribution.

The articles and studies submitted research concrete issues connected with the construction of the historical memory, with special emphasis on the museum narrative and the cultural heritage, the reformulation of the social space after major political changes and historiographic problems. The candidate has serious claims on contribution to the contemporary museology, which is evidence of her potential both in her current work at the Regional Museum of History – Montana, and in her teaching experience at the Kardjali subsidiary of the Plovdiv University.

Evaluation of the candidate's personal contribution

The materials submitted demonstrate that the candidate is perfectly familiar with the available academic literature and she is citing her sources correctly. There are sufficient grounds to assume that all works submitted for the competition are of an original character.

Comments

The candidate's academic expression is strongly influenced by the fashion of using loan words from the English language. Her future work would gain if she tries to write in good Bulgarian academic language.

The proposed habilitation work abounds in footnotes that sometimes cover 2/3 of the page. This renders complicated the following both of the basic text and of the footnotes. Her future texts will be more readable if she reduces the footnotes to a minimum.

Suggestion

After becoming familiar with the materials and academic works submitted for the competition, and after analysing their significance and the academic and applied research contributions, I find full grounds to give my **positive** evaluation and to recommend to the distinguished Academic Panel to draft a proposal to the Academic Council of the Institute of Balkan Studies with *Professor Alexander Fol* Centre of Thracology (IBSCT), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, to elect Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Vanya Ivanova to the academic position of **Associate Professor** in the Higher Education Sphere 2. Humanities, Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology, for the needs of the Regional Museum of History – Montana.

/sg./ Prof. Dr. Margarita Nikolova Karahristova

23 September 2021