

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ
ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ

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STATEMENT

Regarding the documentation and academic materials, submitted for the open competition for the academic position of “PROFESSOR” announced in the State Gazette (issue 30 from 15.04.2022) in the professional field 2.2. History and Archeology, History of Bulgaria, (Agricultural economics and society during the XVII – XVIII centuries) for the needs of section “The Bulgarians, the Ottoman Empire and Europe” in the Institute for Historical Studies (IHS) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS)

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Professional field 2.2. History and Archeology

1. Information about the competition

In the open competition for the academic position of “professor” the only candidate is Assoc. Prof. PhD **Stefka Georgieva Parveva**. The procedure and the resulting requirements in accordance with the *Law for Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* and the *Regulation for the Conditions and the Order for Obtaining Academic Degrees and Academic Posts of BAS* (14. 06. 2021) have been observed, which is evident from the submitted documentation. Having acquainted myself with its contents, I find it to be complete and correct.

2. Information about the candidate

Assoc. Prof. PhD **Stefka Parveva** completed her Master's degree in History in the Faculty of History at the University of Veliko Tarnovo in 1982. From 1984 to 1987 she was accepted as a regular doctorate in the Institute of History at BAS. Two years after the end of her postgraduate studies she defended her doctoral dissertation titled “The Bulgarian Population at the End of XVII and the Beginning of XVIII centuries. Demographic and Socio-economic Aspects.” under the academic guidance of Professor Elena Grozdanova (Diploma N 19026/ 30.05. 1989).

Meanwhile Assoc. Prof. PhD Stefka Parveva gained working experience as a history teacher (1982 – 1984) and a deputy head of “Dimitar Blagoev” secondary school in Svishtov. After obtaining her Doctoral degree she was appointed as a researcher in the Institute of History, BAS. Her academic career gradually developed from being research associate (1989) towards becoming associate professor /Senior 2nd grade research associate/ (2007) at the same Institute (Certificate from the Higher Attestation Commission N 24043 from 29.01. 2007). Currently Stefka Parveva is Assoc. Prof. PhD in section "The Bulgarians, the Ottoman Empire and Europe" in the Institute for Historical Studies at BAS.

Owing to her rich linguistic culture and competence, being fluent in English, French, Russian and Ottoman Turkish languages, Assoc. Prof. PhD Stefka Parveva participated in many academic specializations in prominent, highly prestigious universities abroad: in 1992 - International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, Naples; 1992 - Laboratoire de Démographie Historique, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris; in 1994, 1997, 2005 - Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul; 1999 – Rikkyo University, Tokyo ; 2000 – Skilliter Center for Ottoman Studies, Newnham College, Cambridge.

Her social involvement includes active participation in the Bulgarian Society for XVIII Century Studies, as well as being a member of the editorial team of Historical Review journal from 2008-2021. Concurrently since 2012 Assoc. Prof. Parveva has been a member of the Science Council of the Institute of History/Institute for Historical Studies at BAS, and since 2021 – academic secretary at the same council.

Our colleague Parveva gradually established her reputation in the Bulgarian historical science with series of researches on the peasant population (*rayah* and *askeri*) on the Balkan territories within the Ottoman Empire; the military structures in the province of Rumelia and how the Bulgarians were included in them; the religious institutions and the cultural interaction between the ethnic and religious groups in the Ottoman society on the Balkans, as well as issues of the historical demographics for the period XVII – XVIII century. The presented documentation for the competition gives evidence for her active participation in numerous international and national academic forums, her work on multitude of individual scientific projects, as well as her involvement in national and international collaborative projects.

The rich academic biography of Assoc. Prof. Stefka Parveva, who is a follower of the distinguished

Bulgarian scholars Prof. Elena Grozdanova, Prof. Tsvetana Georgieva, Prof. Stefan Andreev and others, shows her development as one of the prominent representatives of the contemporary Bulgarian Ottoman Studies from the end of the XX and the beginning of XXI century.

3. Description of academic works

For the competition Assoc. Prof. PhD Stefka Parveva has submitted 18 studies and articles, including her monograph “Wealth and Poverty among Peasant Communities in the Province of Rumelia during XVII-XVIII centuries. Research and Documents.” (BAS publishing house “Marin Drinov”, Sofia, 2022, 568 pages) as well as an article for the prestigious *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three*. Ed. by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas and Everett Rowson. Brill: Leiden • Boston, 2014, 72-73. Several of her studies and articles have been published in English in important national periodicals. The presented works show the author's profound academic interests. They are also proof that one of her main aims as a researcher, a researcher who establishes their conclusions and theses upon documents, is to search for, translate and introduce into academic circulation mainly Ottoman sources along with a variety of other sources. Concurrently these publications reflect the stages of her development as a scholar and researcher of those centuries, often traditionally perceived as “the dark centuries” in the Bulgarian history.

In my opinion the works listed in the reference and those presented for review are in full accordance with the requirements of the competition, therefore I accept them without any remarks. They demonstrate convincingly the scope of Stefka Parveva's academic and research activity, conducted after her election for an Assoc. Prof. PhD. It also becomes evident that during the years she intensifies her research into archive sources and investigates, often in micro-historic perspective, but also in the spirit of Fernand Braudel, unexamined questions such as the reasons that led to the XVIII century being characterized as a difficult time; the use and the organization of the agricultural space on the Balkans; the social differentiation among the peasant population – Christian and Muslim and many more. The author's characteristic approach while building her academic text is to involve and intrigue the reader into the analysis of the sources used. I would like to highlight her skill to gradate the complexity of the historical narrative “moving” from explaining the mental attitudes of the social classes studied (peasants, military, farmhands, travelling and settled merchant, etc) towards studying their economic activity, material position and place in the social hierarchy. Based on detailed study of Ottoman, Bulgarian and other foreign sources (we are talking about tens of analyzed documents, presented in their bigger part via diagrams and tables!) on the subject matter in her work the XVIII century becomes alive with living, active characters and a variety of real life situations, complex

shifts in the Ottoman society, a decadence with new tendencies and new heroes. It is evident that Assoc. Prof. PhD Stefka Parveva has discovered new directions in which she continues to deepen the research of issues, thematically linked to her academic interests.

4. Academic contributions

Within the limited frames of this statement a detailed analysis of all scientific contributions found in the presented works is impossible. The main and most important among them holds Assoc. Prof. Stefka Parveva's newly published monograph "Wealth and Poverty among Peasant Communities in the Province of Rumelia during XVII-XVIII centuries. Research and Documents." The most important contribution of the book, in my view, is the detailed characteristics of basic types of the peasant population in Rumelia during this time. Next in importance is the second part of the monograph, with its separate body of sources which contains 130 inheritance inventory lists from the pages of the *sicili* of the *kadi* courts functioning in the cities of Sofia, Vidin and Ruse during the XVII-XVIII centuries. The work represents a successful finale of the long researching, editorial and translation activity performed by the development of numerous details to create a complete depiction of the wealth and poverty among the peasants in Ottoman province of Rumelia in the said centuries.

It is necessary to point out Assoc. Prof. PhD Stefka Parveva's contribution towards the study of some of the specific professional groups from the peasant communities such as *kiraci* and *arabaci*, their social status and practices; the profiles of representatives of the Christian and Muslim religious institutions in the XVII century, their economic behaviour, the differences in their sources of income and household expenditures and others.

In my view especially interesting is Assoc. Prof. PhD Stefka Parveva's contribution toward clarification of the mechanism by which the memory of war is retained with its defeats and consequences, the memory of the war in the collective consciousness. Again her studies of the issues are based on specific examples from the behaviour of the population in Nikopol and Silistra and the surrounding regions, from their folklore songs which condemn the brutalities of the Wallachian *voivode* Michael I as an unforgivable sin. Towards the common theme as to how the information about important events and persons is transferred and remembered, her approach is to study both the oral and written tradition. She follows the process of creation and preservation of archive collections of documents, which are carriers of variety of information; analyses the mechanism for how memories of events and persons are transferred across generations.

The reference of the quotes of Assoc. Prof. PhD Stefka Parveva's works is yet another convincing proof of their merit.

5. Educational activity

Assoc. Prof. Stefka Parveva prepared the postgraduate student in IHS Stefan Hristov Dimitrov who successfully defended his thesis “Population and Settlements in the Sakar Mountain and the Surrounding Regions during the XV-XVIII centuries” in 2013.

In various stages of her career she has worked in Shumen University and Sofia University, delivering series of lectures on historical issues from the history of the Bulgarian land under the Ottoman rule. I would like to specially emphasize her important contribution towards the popularization of the Bulgarian Ottoman Studies after her lectures in the Universities of Florence, Tokyo and Cambridge.

Conclusion

After having been acquainted with the documents and academic works presented for the competition, and having pointed out their contributions, I am in no doubt to give my vote for the election of Assoc. Prof. PhD **Stefka Parveva** for the academic position of “**PROFESSOR**” in the professional field 2.2. History and Archeology, specialty ”History of Bulgaria” (Agricultural economics and society during the XVII – XVIII centuries) for the needs of section “The Bulgarians, the Ottoman Empire and Europe” in the Institute for Historical Studies (IHS) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS).

1st August, 2022

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Sofia

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