

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ	
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REVIEW

by Prof. ScD ILIA GEORGIEV ILIEV,
 member of the scientific jury for the competition for "professor"
 in professional direction 2.2. History and archaeology, specialty "History of Bulgaria"
 (Agrarian economy and society in the 17th - 18th centuries)
 for the needs of the "Bulgarians, Ottoman Empire and Europe" section
 to the Institute for Historical Studies – BAS,
 as announced in the State Gazette (No. 30 of 15.04.2022)

The contest

At the competition for the academic position "professor" in the professional field 2.2 History and archaeology, specialty "History of Bulgaria" (Agrarian economy and society in the 17th - 18th centuries) for the needs of the section "Bulgarians, the Ottoman Empire and Europe" at the Institute for Historical Studies – BAS, announced in the State Gazette (No. 30 of 15.04.2022), appeared only one candidate – Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stefka Georgieva Parveva. The orderliness of the applicant's documents was checked by a dedicated institute committee, which found that they were correctly filled out and complete and were submitted within the required deadline.

In addition, from the attached documentation on the competition, and from the official page of the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID), it is clear that the candidate for the academic position of "professor" has the necessary scientometric profile, in addition, the points collected for the individual groups of indicators are proportionately distributed and far exceed the required minimum.

The candidate

In 1982, Stefka Parveva graduated from Veliko Tarnovo University "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" with a master's degree in history. In the period 1984 – 1987, she was a full-time postgraduate student at the Institute of History – BAS, and in 1989 she was awarded the scientific degree "candidate of historical sciences" (dissertation on the topic "The Bulgarian population at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century. Demographic and Socio-Economic Aspects"; scientific supervisor, Professor,

ScD Elena Grozdanova). In 1982 – 1984, Stefka Parveva worked as a history teacher and Deputy-Director of Dimitar Blagoev School, Svishtov. Since 1988, she has been a researcher, and since 1989, a research associate at the Institute of History – BAS. In 2007, she obtained her habilitation as a 2nd degree senior research associate (= Assoc. Prof.) at the same institute, in which position she currently works (in the section "Bulgarians, the Ottoman Empire and Europe").

Assoc. Prof. Parveva is a member of the Bulgarian Society for the Study of the 18th Century. During the period 2008 – 2021, she was a member of the editorial board of the magazine "Historical Review". Since 2012, she has been a member of the Scientific Council of the Institute of History – BAS, and in 2021 she was elected its scientific secretary. Between 1992 and 2000, she specialized in prestigious research centres in Naples, Paris, Istanbul, Tokyo, and Cambridge. Her research interests are focused on the agrarian economy of the Balkans during the Ottoman period; the issues of peace and war in the everyday life of the urban population; religious institutions and cultural relationships between ethnic and religious groups in Ottoman society in the Balkans and historical demography.

Description of scientific works

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stefka Parveva appeared at the competition with one monograph, which fulfils the functions of a habilitation work, and 16 studies and articles on the announced topic of the competition. The habilitation thesis on the topic "Wealth and poverty among rural communities in the province of Rumelia in the XVII – XVIII centuries" (Research and documents), was published in 2022 in Sofia by the Publishing House of the BAS "Prof. Marin Drinov" (ISBN 978-619-245-187-5) in a volume of 568 pages.

From a content point of view, the remaining studies, and articles of the candidate in the current competition can be divided into twelve thematic areas, as she herself has done and to which I have no objections. However, in order to present her scientific achievements in a more concentrated form in view of the theme of the competition, I will allow myself to categorize the research into three more generalizing circles. Some reason for this is given to me by the obvious overlap of the research field between many of the works listed in the Self-Reference for Scientific Contributions, which their author submitted as part of the competition documentation.

The first of these three circles focuses generally on different types of sources of information for the period in which Assoc. Prof. Parveva specialized. This includes studies Nos. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15 and 16 from the List of Publications, which refer to "newly discovered, translated and brought into scientific circulation Ottoman Turkish

sources". Next to them can be placed the articles dedicated to "the transfer of information and the preservation of the written trace of it" – Nos. 3, 6 and 9.

The second thematic circle is dedicated to the idea of wealth and poverty, presented through the official documents of the era and through the mental attitudes of the then Sultan's subjects. Assoc. Prof. Parveva makes her observations and findings by outlining property and professional profiles of people from different social and religious strata. If possible, production structures are reconstructed and data are given on quantitative parameters of the concepts of wealth and poverty. Articles Nos. 1, 7, 11, 13, 15, 16 and 17 fall into this thematic circle.

Part of the works with which Assoc. Prof. Parveva participated in this competition can also be classified in a **third thematic circle**, referring to the theme of the reflection of the war in the everyday life of the Ottoman subjects in the 16th – 17th centuries and in particular to the memory of the war of the Ottoman Empire with the Holy League at the border between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the song folklore of the Bulgarians. Articles Nos. 2, 6 and 10 deal with these issues.

At the end of this analysis, I want to draw attention to the fact that the numbers of the same articles sometimes appear in different (more than one) thematic circles, which shows only one thing: that the dividing lines between these circles are not insurmountable and have been completely crossed conditionally – for the purposes of this review.

To the notes on the works with which colleague Parveva appeared in this competition, the fact that she participated in six international scientific projects of particular importance to her research work, which also contributes to her personal recognition in the circles, should be added of Bulgarian and international Ottoman studies. In addition, she leads and/or participates in eight collective scientific projects of national importance.

Scientific contributions

I will begin my brief review of the scientific contributions of Assoc. Prof. Stefka Parveva with the observation that she quite business-likely and neatly sets out in the attached Autoreference the main points of contribution both in her monographic work and in the articles and studies with which she appears in the current competition. I think that for the needs of the decision that our jury must make on the procedure and qualities of the candidate for the academic position of "professor", it will be sufficient to share my impressions of her monographic work on wealth and poverty among rural communities in the Ottoman province of Rumelia in the 17th – 18th centuries. The work contains two parts – research and publication of documents on the subject. Without detracting from the documentary part of the work, which has

been done very thoroughly and will be of use to many researchers from here on, I still want to pay attention to the first part, the research part.

It has a classic three-part structure and an impeccable internal narrative logic aimed at solving the tasks set in the introduction. In the first chapter of the work, the criteria for wealth and poverty are defined; in the second – based on these criteria, the main categories of productive rural population belonging to the paradise category are distinguished; and in the third - to the already reproduced structure of the village in the Bulgarian lands during the considered period, new important details are added, related to trade as an intermediary activity between the producing village and the market in the Ottoman Empire.

In my humble opinion, in the synthesis of these three main lines of research, Assoc. Prof. Parveva has achieved what can be considered quite sufficient to recommend her as a researcher worthy of holding the academic position of "professor". This opinion is also supported by the numerous citations enjoyed by colleague Parveva's articles and studies, dedicated to individual details of the questions posed in the monograph and serving as a building block for writing the candidate's monographic work.

Without going into details, I will note that in many places in the reviewed work relevant references and comparisons with the previous medieval era are made or the elements of the new that are about to be imposed in the economic reality of the Empire in the following eighteenth century are sought. And since I don't want, in my capacity as a non-specialist, to comment on the issues of new history, I will content myself with marking only the new productive horizons that Assoc. Prof. Parveva's research discovers in the direction of the late Bulgarian, Byzantine and Balkan Middle Ages in general. We can't help but think again about the insistence of the unforgettable Ivan Duychev that the centuries up to and including the 17th should be counted as the Middle Ages in Bulgarian (and in general the region's) history.

I also have some critical notes, or rather recommendations, to colleague Parveva for a future second (revised and supplemented?) edition of her monographic work. She has done a tremendous job of searching, researching, and critically using a documentary massif remarkable for its volume. She has created good criteria and schemes for studying the socio-economic history of the Bulgarian lands during an important and insufficiently researched period preceding the New Age. She then used these scientific tools to show us what the rural population of the Ottoman province of Rumelia looked like in social and economic terms in the 16th – 17th centuries.

Personally, I expected at the end of the individual chapters, and in general of the research part of the monographic work, to see more comprehensive summarizing texts in which the important conclusions she reached would be systematized. Apparently, Assoc. Prof. Parveva's style makes her limit herself to rather laconic (albeit quite accurate) findings. And instead of the conclusion of the research part of

her work, there is an excellent text dedicated to the spirituality and generosity of the Bulgarian. A text that undoubtedly has a place in this book, which in a significant part of its pages tries (and very successfully) to outline the profile of different categories of the rural population of our lands, stepping above all on the material side of the issue. And this finale, dedicated to the book and spirituality, is an excellent counterpoint to everything said in the previous parts of the study. And I remind again that this is about different preferences and a specific style of an already established researcher.

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Apart from the specific topic of the monographic work with which Assoc. Prof. Stefka Parveva is appearing in the current competition, there is the question of the general impression of the candidate's writings. They are generally known to the international Ottoman collegium and have been cited and used in numerous prestigious publications both at home and abroad, which can be seen in the reference attached to the competition documents (over 200 citations in Bulgarian and foreign scientific publications). This is partly due to her participation in numerous (over 30) prestigious scientific forums at home and abroad.

I must especially emphasize that Assoc. Prof. Parveva writes in proper Bulgarian, concisely, at the required scientific level and at the same time accessible, understandable, and impactful – as well as speaking to students or colleagues at various scientific forums (at which I have had the opportunity to listen to her). She is by no means a supporter of hyperinterpretations, and this is clearly evident in the careful analysis of the so-called Papasinadinos Chronicle, as well as in her other writings, reports and lectures.

Teaching job

Assoc. Prof. Parveva has conducted and continues to conduct lecture courses at Sofia and Shumen University (some of which for several academic years) with a general focus on the history and ethno-cultural phenomena in the Bulgarian and Balkan lands during the period XV – XVII cent.

She has also delivered ten lectures at home and abroad to listeners from the relevant specialized scientific community.

In addition, in recent years, she has also tutored a full-time doctoral student at the Institute of Historical Studies – BAS, Stefan Hristov Dimitrov, who successfully defended his doctoral thesis in 2013 and subsequently realized himself as a thriving young scientist at the Institute.

Conclusion

Everything that has been said so far gives me reason to vote FOR the Scientific Jury, in which I participate, to recommend to the Scientific Council of the Institute for Historical Studies at the BAS that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stefka Georgieva Parveva be elected to the academic position of "professor", object of the present competition.

Sofia, 5/08/2022

Signature:

(Prof. D.Sc. Ilia G. Iliev,
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