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## OPINION

By professor PhD Rositsa Stoyanova,

Member of the scientific jury

For the announced competition, for holding the academic title "Associate professor",

Field of higher education 2. Humanities;

Professional direction 2.2. History and archaeology

scientific specialty "History of Bulgaria" (The Thracian question after 1878)

For the needs of the "History of the Bulgarian National Question" section, Institute for

Historical Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

In issue 95 of the State Gazette dated 29 Nov. 2022, an advertisement was published for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional direction 2.2. History and archaeology, scientific specialty "History of Bulgaria" (The Thracian question after 1878). The need and the theme of the competition were argued and defended before the Scientific Council of the Institute for Historical Studies by the "History of the Bulgarian National Question" section. The only candidate who submitted documents and was allowed to participate is PhD Vanya Petrova Stoyanova.

Stoyanova is a graduate of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", where she graduated with a Master's degree in "History" and a specialization in "Theory and History of Culture". She was a full-time doctoral candidate at the Institute for Historical Studies, and in 1991 she defended her dissertation on the topic "The Belomor Region in 1941-1944." Except for two years when she taught history in secondary schools in Plovdiv, her work experience was entirely related to the Institute for historical studies, where she was successively a researcher and Chief Assistant (since 1991). She has an excellent command of English and Russian, and also speaks French.

### **Compliance with the minimum national requirements**

In the current competition, V. Stoyanova has chosen to participate with one monograph, 47 articles and studies, all published in authoritative scientific journals and thematic collections with scientific review. As the main habilitation thesis, she presents the monographic study "Bulgarians in Turkey (1913-1945)", Institute for Historical Studies - BAS, 2022, 478 pages. All publications concern various aspects of the Bulgarian national question and in particular

the Thracian question. Thus, the scientific interests and publication activity of the candidate fit into the issues that the Institute for Historical Studies, and specifically the "Bulgarian National Question" section, would like to develop. The author reference for the publications and citations attached to the documents shows that Dr. Stoyanova not only meets, but significantly exceeds the requirements regulated by the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as those in the Regulations on the Terms and Procedures for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and for occupying academic positions at the BAS and at the Institute for Historical Studies.

### **Assessment of scientific production**

Dr. Stoyanova's scientific activity is significant in volume and diverse in subject matter. As the main habilitation thesis, the colleague presented the monograph "The Bulgarians in Turkey (1913-1945)". Although regional in nature, the topic is undeniably significant and relevant. The goals and tasks formulated by Dr. Stoyanova in the introduction are ambitious: "... to study, tell and make sense of the history of the Bulgarians in Turkey from the end of the Balkan Wars to the end of the Second World War as a minority community with its own educational, religious, charitable and other institutions" (p. 17). Their realization in this volume and form is possible only on the basis of the search, detailed knowledge and thorough analysis of the available sources and historiography. In this direction, the research fulfills high criteria. A source base that is wide in volume and diverse in origin and character was used: 13 archival collections (all in Bulgarian archive repositories and institutions), published documents, several diaries and memoirs, periodicals, about 180 studies in Bulgarian and English. A significant part of the archival materials was put into scientific circulation for the first time by Dr. Stoyanova herself (in the book or in her previous publications).

The habilitation thesis contains 478 pages and is composed on a thematic-chronological principle in an introduction, 5 chapters, a conclusion, a list of used sources and literature, a documentary appendix. Already in the introductory part, the colleague makes the important stipulation that the object of research are the Bulgarian-speaking Christians, whom the agreements of the two countries (from 1913 and from 1925) define as Bulgarians and recognize them as a minority within the borders of the Ottoman Empire or the Republic of Turkey.

The contribution nature of the work is beyond doubt and can be found both in the narrative which is rich in facts and events, as well as in the approach to the topic and the

analysis and conclusions reached by the author. To begin with, I would like to note that this is the first comprehensive study of the Bulgarians in Turkey as a minority community in a difficult and turning point for them, marked by the end of two military conflicts. The relatively long (more than 30 years) period of time and the first-class sources base enable Stoyanova to outline the main directions in the development of the community, the factors (internal and external) that determine them, the state of the inherited and newly created educational, religious and public organizations.

What I find particularly helpful in the study is the author's approach. The point of view to the processes from which the majority of researchers approach the subject is from the outside-in - political relations, diplomatic activities, the functioning of the exarchial institutions, etc. Starting with the very title of the monograph, Dr. Stoyanova gives a request that she intends to shift the focus of research from the inside-out, to try to penetrate the fabric of the community - structures, social networks, everyday rhythm of being, etc. The source base, unfortunately, does not allow her to fully develop and realize these intentions. However, looking for information grain by grain mainly in the abundant institutional documentation, she managed to give color and density to the Bulgarian presence in the area, to outline the social groups, to present the dynamics, difficulties and joys of the working day (the remote school, the material deprivation, the activity of the "Support" and "Joy" societies, the dissatisfaction and contradictions within the community and those with the Exarchial Alternate Membership and the Bulgarian diplomats, she underlined the coexistence with others (mainly Turks and Greeks). In the text itself or in the scientific apparatus, we find the portraits of a number of personalities who played a significant role in the life of the community.

Other significant contributions of the monograph are the comprehensive and in-depth presentation of the institution "Exarchial Alternate Membership" in Tzarigrad (Constantinople) and the state of the exarchic structure in Eastern Thrace after 1913, the detailed tracking of the vicissitudes surrounding the fate of the exarchic properties in the period under consideration, the study of the various aspects of the Thracian question. What I expected to find in the text in a more developed form was the attitude of the Bulgarian society towards the Thracian question and the fate of the compatriots.

In addition to the habilitation work, Dr. Stoyanova submitted a voluminous and diverse production for participation in the competition. Among them, I would like to highlight the

developments dedicated to personalities, the history of the Thracian Organization, the birth and development of the women's social democratic movement in Bulgaria, the several publications dealing with the topic of memory and the construction of the image of socialism in Bulgarian feature films and documentaries created in the transition period.

Apart from the regulated normative requirements (which, as I noted, the candidate repeatedly exceeds), Dr. Stoyanova carried out a much wider scientific activity: participation in scientific projects (5 of them international), in national and international scientific forums. Her scientific competence and organizational skills are manifested in her long-term activity as scientific secretary of the Bulgarian Historical Review magazine (since 1996), in her membership in the Thrace Scientific Institute. The numerous citations of her publications testify to the quality and relevance of her scientific production, to her recognition as a scientist.

**In conclusion:** The thorough familiarization with the competition materials, the established correctness of the procedure, compliance of the submitted documents with the requirements of the current Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application, fulfilment of the national minimum requirements for the academic position "Associate Professor", availability of original and contributing scientific works, lack of plagiarism data give me reason to give a positive assessment of the scientific activity and achievements of Dr. Vanya Petrova Stoyanova. As a member of the scientific jury, I will vote for Dr. Stoyanova to be proposed to the Scientific Council of the Institute for Historical Studies for the award of the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional direction 2.2. History and archaeology, scientific specialty "History of Bulgaria" (The Thracian question after 1878).

20.03.2023

prof. R. Stoyanova .....

