

## REVIEW

By Professor Doctor of Historical Sciences **RUMEN TEOFILOV IVANOV**

of the Section of Ancient Archaeology

of the National Archaeological Institute with Museum

at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

of the materials submitted for participation in a competition

for the academic position of **Associate Professor**

in area of higher education 2. Human Sciences,

professional field 2.4. Religion and Theology (scientific speciality of Christian Art)

In the competition for the position of Associate Professor, as announced in the State Gazette, No. 99 of Nov. 20, 2020, and on the internet page of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv for the needs of the Department of Theology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History, a participant is Head Assistant Professor Adriana Hristoslavova Lyubenova of the Department of Theology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History.

### **General presentation of submitted materials**

#### **Subject:**

With Order No. P33-610 of February 18, 2021, of the Rector of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, and also according to a report by Associate Professor Dr. Krassimira Hristova Krastanova, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and History, in relation to the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor as announced in the State Gazette, No. 99 of November 20, 2020, in: area of higher education 2. Human Sciences, professional field 2.4. Religion and Theology (Christian Art), I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of **Associate Professor in the University of Plovdiv** in the area of higher education 2. Human Sciences, professional field 2.4. Religion and Theology (Christian Art), **announced for the needs of the Department of Theology** at the Faculty of Philosophy and History. The scientific jury was appointed by a resolution of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History with Protocol No. 146 of January 25, 2021.

For participation in the announced competition, there is **one applicant:**

**Head Assistant Professor Ph.D. Adriana Hristoslavova Lyubenova of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv**

The set of materials submitted by Adriana Lyubenova, on paper and on an electronic medium, is in conformity with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv, and it includes the following documents:

- application form to the Rector for admittance to the competition;
- European format CV;
- Diploma of higher education with the educational and qualification degree of Master;

- Diploma for the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (Ph.D.);
- list of scientific works;
- certificate of conformity with the minimal national and additional Faculty requirements;
- annotations of the materials as mentioned in Art. 65 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv, including a self-assessment of contributions;
- declaration of the originality and veracity of submitted documents;
- certification of work experience;
- documents of teaching work;
- documents of scientific research work.

The applicant **Adriana Hristoslavova Lyubenova** has submitted a total of 20 scientific works: 3 monographs, 3 studies, 16 articles. Of these, 17 scientific works are accepted for review which are external to the dissertation and are taken into account in the final evaluation – 3 studies, 3 monographs, 11 articles. No review is done of 3 scientific works on the dissertation. The geographical distribution of scientific works is as follows – 8 publications are abroad and the rest are in Bulgaria. The applicant has submitted proof materials for each of the publications.

### **Short biographical data of the applicant**

The applicant **Adriana Lyubenova** was born in Plovdiv but she had the chance to continue her education in the USA: Coordination and Management of Projects in Greenpeace in 1995-1999; BA in Fine Arts and Sculpture in the George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, in 1998-2004; The Corcoran School of Arts and Design in Washington, D.C. She was an Assistant Professor in the George Mason University in 2000-2001, a mural painter for G. Byron Peck, Washington, a Head Assistant Professor in the George Mason University in 2001-2004; a teacher in the McLane Children Center in 2004-2005.

After that, she continued with her M.A. and Ph.D. studies in Plovdiv, Shumen and Sofia: M.A. in Church Painting in the Academy of Music, Dance, and Fine Arts in 2005-2007; M.A. in Practical Theology in the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in 2009-2011; M.A. in Archaeology, Conservation and Restoration in the Konstantin Preslavski University of Shumen in 2010-2012.

In the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, A. Lyubenova wrote a doctoral thesis on ‘The Mosaic Art of the Late Ancient Philippopolis, 4-6 c. A.D.’ (2009-2014). She has obtained the scientific and educational degree of Doctor (Ph.D.). Parallel to that she obtained her M.A. degrees in Shumen and Plovdiv.

She has a perfect command of English and Russian, a very good computer literacy, she easily communicates with young and older people and students of different races (especially in the USA) as well as with persons of most diverse needs and interests (in Bulgaria and abroad), more specifically over 500 persons of 30 ethnic groups as well as children with special needs. Very often during weekends Adriana leaves Plovdiv to guide student trips to monasteries and monastic complexes in the area of the Plovdiv Province.

**One must note especially her artistic gifts that she has developed into skills and competences in the sphere of small-scale and monumental painting as well as glass painting, mosaic, sculpture, all related to Christian art and not presented because the professional area of the announced competition.**

She is deservedly a member of diverse Bulgarian and international bodies such as e.g. the International Committee of Restoration and Conservation of Mosaics, the Association of Bulgarian Schools Abroad (member of the Governing Board), the University Center for Christian Art and Culture of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (scientific secretary), the Association of Orthodox Theologians (member of the Governing Board), the 'My Museum' Foundation (program coordinator) etc.

In the course of time, Dr. Lyubenova has accumulated a sufficient teaching, scientific and professional experience directly relevant to the announced competition. This is also confirmed by the many attachments to the Declaration of Originality and Veracity submitted in relation to the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in 2.4. Religion and Theology (Christian Art) in the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

### **General description of the applicant's activity**

During three years, I witnessed her teaching pedagogical activity – her work with students and graduates from the USA, Australia, Bulgaria and other countries. In the exceedingly hot weather, she would provide the transport for us to visit the respective religious objects. Dr. Lyubenova held full lectures on the history of the monastery (for example) since its founding through its stormy historical periods up to the current problems related to restoration and conservation. She knows the problematic quite precisely and is a very competent speaker. My evaluation of her would be accompanied with the greatest superlatives.

### **Evaluation of the applicants scientific and applied scientific activity**

Here I will put my emphasis mostly on her two monographs after entering the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. She demonstrates that according to written sources, epigraphic monuments and archaeological excavations, Philippopolis was the largest and most important center in the Roman, late Roman and early Byzantine periods in Thrace. Both monographs were published in the same year 2021. The first one is entitled *The Mosaic Art of the Late Ancient Philippopolis, 4-6 c. A.D.* (Plovdiv, 2021, ISBN 978-619-236-227-0), 341 pp. Among Bulgarian towns, Plovdiv has the largest number of preserved (fragmented, and some whole) mosaics. She traces the spread of Christianity, a diametric process in the rule of Diocletian (284-305) and Constantine (306-337), coming to the full triumph of Nicaeans under Theodosius I. She traces the origins of the influences in the mosaic schools in Thrace and Philippopolis. It must be noted that there were mostly masters and teachers who worked predominantly in the centers of Asia Minor and from there in the capital Constantinople. Another direction was the big city Thessaloniki while a more distant centre were the Apennines.

Her second work is *Floor Mosaics of Philippopolis* (Plovdiv, 2021, ISBN 978-619-236-237-9), 227 pp. With this volume, Adriana Lyubenova is applying for the position of Assistant Professor. She has collected all the mosaics of Philippopolis (from the Great and the Small Basilicas, the Synagogue, the Martyrium, Eirene etc.). From the mosaics we obtain data on the flora and fauna as well as of the types of geometric figures. The dating of most of them is changed or, mostly, made more precise.

Here I must pay attention to the following fact. When books on mosaics or wall paintings are published, the quality of the paper and especially of photos must be flawless. Why is it not so here? Because the persons exploring Philippopolis and finding cult buildings and other constructions with

mosaics have not published with quality and entirety the materials of their sites. In Western Europe, the manner of proceeding is as follows. The team excavates for five years and on the sixth year the materials are published. In Bulgaria, the method is entirely wrong. обекти. The explorers keep their copyrights for decades and publish nothing. With a few small exceptions such as presentations or acts of conferences, or often an interesting site is published three or four times, in English, German, French and Russian, with a show-off documenting of the most curious things. Old literature is being quoted. But Plovdiv was the leading center of mosaic art in the Bulgarian part of Thrace. Since recently, there is a catalogue of mosaics from Philippopolis. According to the applicant for the competition, this catalogue is incomplete and even the descriptions of mosaic floors have deficiencies. The photographic material is not at the necessary level either. The materials have been handed over to UNESCO but have not being published yet. **The work of Adriana is an attempt to set the mosaics of Late Ancient Philippopolis into circulation among the scientific circles, and the proposed study is a very important step in this direction. These mosaics are a part of our national heritage and of the world treasury, they are of enormous cultural value and extraordinary importance, and their exploration cannot be overestimated.**

It will be good and useful if Adriana gets soon the chance to work with these mosaics and make new quality passports of them.

### **Evaluation of the applicant's personal contribution**

The applicant has a solid scientific background, three M.A. degrees and one Ph.D, she has a perfect command of two languages, she uses foreign language literature, and she lives in Plovdiv. All of this provides a solid foundation for the improvement of the work on the problem of mosaics in Ancient Philippopolis. She is an organized person and is able to work in more than one direction. For her age, she has three monographs and a good number of articles – a very good indicator of her scientific career.

### **Critical remarks and recommendations**

My recommendation is for her to overcome the problems on the mosaics of Ancient Philippopolis.

Another is to make a corpus of the mosaics of the city. She has the necessary achievements and is able to succeed – of course with a bit of chance and understanding on the part of the relevant administration and the Ministry of Culture.

### **Personal impressions**

I have met Adriana on a professional occasion seven years ago. She has a psyche that can withstand great pressure. She is constantly traveling to Sofia, to other places in the country, especially in the Plovdiv Province, and abroad. Her general culture and her linguistic skills allow her to be active in events outside her scientific needs. She does everything with a formidable desire.

## CONCLUSION

The materials submitted for review are **in full conformity with** the Development of Academic Staff in Bulgaria Act (DASBA), the Regulations for the Application of DASBA, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. On the basis of the scientific, applied scientific and applied contributions in them, and of these contributions' originality, I find it justified to **give my positive evaluation and recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a proposal report to the Faculty Board of the Faculty of Philosophy and History on the appointment of Adriana Hristoslavova Lyubenova to the academic position of Associate Professor in the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in professional field 2.4. Religion and Theology (scientific speciality of Christian Art).**

April 18, 2021

Reviewer: .....

Professor Doctor of Historical Sciences

Rumen Teofilov Ivanov