

REVIEW

by Prof. Antoniya Veselinova Velkova-Gaydardzhieva, Phd, Veliko Tarnovo University “St. Cyril and St. Methodius”,

of the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of

“Professor”

at "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv

in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, (Bulgarian literature - Bulgarian literature after World War I)

In the competition for the academic position of "professor", announced by the SG, issue 40/14. 05. 2021 and on the website of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of History of Literature and Comparative Literature Studies at the Faculty of Philology, as a candidate participates Associate Professor Tatiana Ivanova Ichevska from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski “.

1. General presentation of the received materials

In the announced competition for the academic position of "professor" from the Department of History of Literature and Comparative Literary Studies, there is only one participant - Assoc. Prof. Tatiana Ivanova Ichevska, a lecturer at the same department. All necessary documents and materials in accordance with the Law on the Development of Academic Staff and in accordance with the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "professor" are available. No violations were committed.

The book “Bulgarian Literature. Plots, Contexts, Studies” and the nineteen articles problematize various aspects of the Bulgarian literature. The list of the submitted scientific papers is different from the publications from previous procedures.

Subject

According to order № RZZ-3117/12.07.2021 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU) I was appointed as a member of the scientific jury of the competition for the academic position "Professor" in Plovdiv University in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian literature after the First World War), announced for the needs of the Department of History of Literature and Comparative Literature Studies at the Faculty of Philology.

One candidate has submitted documents for participation in the announced competition: Assoc. Prof. Tatiana Ivanova Ichevska from “Paisii Hilendarski” University of Plovdiv.

The set of paper materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Tatiana Ichevska is in accordance with the Regulations for development of the academic staff of the University of Plovdiv. The set of documents includes:

- a professional biography; diplomas for the academic positions of “doctor”, “doctor of sciences” and “associate professor”; application to the rector; list of the publications; reference for the contributions; annotation of the materials in Bulgarian and English; signed page for fulfilment of the minimum national requirements to the scientific and teaching work of the candidate; certificate for the teaching work.

The candidate Assoc. Prof. Tatiana Ivanova Ichevska has submitted 20 scientific papers - 1 book and 19 articles. The review includes the submitted 20 scientific papers, which are not part of the dissertation work but considered in the final evaluation. The candidate has also participated in 8 research projects, and in the Register of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria there are over ten citations and reviews of works by Assoc. Prof. T. Ichevska. 15 of her scientific papers are published in Bulgaria, and 5 of them are published abroad.

2. Brief biographical information about the candidate

Assoc. Prof. Tatiana Ichevska has consistently passed through all scientific degrees and academic positions in the hierarchy of the University of Plovdiv. She was a teacher of Bulgarian language and literature, assistant, senior assistant, associate professor. In 1999 she received the scientific and educational degree "Doctor of Philology", and in 2018 - the scientific degree of “Doctor of Science”. She has proven herself over the years as an authoritative literary historian, analyst and interpreter of the Bulgarian artistic and aesthetic heritage, but also of Slavic literature. A key period in Tatiana Ichevska’s biography is her work teaching Bulgarian, Bulgarian literature and culture at the University of Bratislava (2002-2006), a period that undoubtedly perfected her creative and literary studies ideas.

3. General characteristics of the candidate's work

The academic biography of Assoc. Prof. T. Ichevska shows consistency in the professional path of a literary critic and university lecturer in Bulgarian literature. She has held lecture courses and seminars on the history of Bulgarian literature after the First World War in

bachelor's and master's degrees. Along with her main lecture courses, she prepares other courses such as:

- "Contemporary Bulgarian prose from the 60s to the end of the 80s of the 20th century", "Anthropology of the Slavs", "Bulgarian folk mythology and literature", also elective courses such as "The Biblical Word in the Works of Yordan Yovkov", "Dimitar Dimov's Novels - Reading Strategies" and many others. These facts are indicative of the "polyvalence" in the scientific profile of the candidate, as well as the ability to adapt the research works in lecture courses, in accordance with the real needs of the respective specialties.

Assoc. Prof. Ichevska is the supervisor of a PhD student who successfully defended their dissertation in October 2020. In addition, she has supervised over 80 graduates who successfully defended their dissertation before the Departmental Commission. T. Ichevska actively works with the younger generations of philologists, but also with high school students. She is the organizer of national scientific conferences for students, doctoral students and high school students. She is the head of "Student Internships". She is a co-author of textbooks for the high school students.

Only at first glance, "Bulgarian literature. Plots, contexts, research"- the most important work that the candidate presents - is a collection of texts created on different occasions and at different times. Not only the problematically formulated titles of the three parts, but above all the overall reading gives grounds to perceive the book as a deeply thought-out study of Bulgarian literature, interpreted through certain conceptual cores in its specific historical realizations. I would say that to some extent the publication is a kind of mini- or "micro" - (I do not use the term in its narrow terminological meaning) history of Bulgarian literature, analysing national artistic practices in their development process through unknown perspectives and on a different scale - according to which the "interpretive magnifying glass" is aimed. The book is deeply concerned with how man/human experiences the world, how he/she learns, how he /she fits (or not) in the world.

The first part called "Temptations and Redemptions" ("Izkusheniya i izkupleniya") focuses on the notions of the woman in the national literary works. I want to emphasize something important that characterize the T. Ichevska's style. She bases her judgments and typologies on extremely rich textual work. She constructs them in that way in order to give a more comprehensive vision of the Bulgarian literature. It is a preliminary accurate empirical-inventory and literary-historical-reconstructive work.

In the article "Water and (or) champagne" our literature is examined through the "images of temptation". The author starts with the biblical archetypal notions, from our "hidden" folklore heritage. She goes through works of the classics or not so popular and canonical works. (of T. Vlaykov and Y. Yovkov, of K. Petkanov and A. Karaliychev, of K. Hristov and G. Stamatov) and reaches the novels of D. Dimov. The author makes unique observations on the artistic images of female seduction: The Woman water and The Woman wine.

Among the contributing literary-historical works is "The Slavic Woman in the Mirror of Our Literature". Our literary science is excited above all by the figurative incarnations of the Balkan female/woman. The Slavic woman in her various national variations has rarely been the subject of analysis. Here, too, I will express my admiration for the research comprehensiveness of the author, who, before constructing her conceptual typologies, has "studied" dozens of works of native writers. What makes the greatest impression from the summaries at the end of the text is that Bulgarian literature remains distanced from the sensual-erotic beginning. The native writer is not a master of love scenes. We know that since the time of Dr. K. Krastev and B. Penev the evaluative-interpretative judgments lead to the rightly generalized thesis that the native artists have no sense of the words of love; that in Bulgarian literature there is no "cultivated" language through which to express and profess love. Thesis, reaffirmed today by T. Ichevska. Yet, despite the commented features of our national artistic visionary - in it appear the Slavic blue-eyed beautiful women, passionate lovers or devoted and tender loved ones.

After following a respectfully rich corpus of official-canonical and non-cult texts, the researcher derives a kind of "taxonomy" of the motives through which our Old Bulgarian and Revival literature give meaning to the "fallen woman" in "The Fallen Woman in Bulgarian Literature". In any case, the semantic volumes of this image consist of many layers. T. Ichevska focuses on the problem of how our literature from different years understands and interprets the "fallen" woman. I would like to emphasize again that T. Ichevska is a researcher who knows in detail not only individual works of Bulgarian literature, but above all is able to decipher the dialogical relations between them, the hidden plots that they construct, thanks to pre-focused points of view. . But the opposite is also true - thanks to the detailed knowledge of Bulgarian literature in its entirety, the writer chooses the problematic fields through which to read it. So to speak, the receptive grids, the problematic cores through which the author chooses to read the native art, set not only alternative interpretive optics to the great procedural literary-historical narrative, but also

change the way of narration. Because T. Ichevska does not remain at the level of the "microscopic" closed view of separate author's styles and art worlds, but always has in mind the large-scale panoramic picture of Bulgarian literature. The individual in-depth analytical sections of texts and books are made in order to construct the overall vision of the national literature as an internally connected world.

Another aspect of women's "falling" in Bulgarian literature is the text "Error and sin in the works of Yordan Yovkov." Starting from the "beginning" in the artistic reproduction of Yovkov's woman who violated the norm, the researcher will accumulate a number of names for the woman who refuses to follow the traditional code of conduct. Here the most interesting is the perspective on the "wrong man", which calls into question the meaning of female existence. The "wrong husband" blocks the opportunity to experience the "metaphysical experiences" in love, those that give the greatest depth to existence.

I do not know a literary text that problematizes the native artistic visionary through the image filter of the "alternative" queen - not by origin, but by personal qualities and historical and social vocation. It is through this conceptual optics that *Golgotha of the Bulgarian Queens* examines the constructed Bulgarian images of the world from different periods of our literature. To see that to *live like a queen* in Bulgarian literature means to defend the truth about yourself and your place in the world; it means upholding the fullness and meaning of existence, overcoming pain, sadness and loneliness in the world. To be a queen in Bulgarian literature also means the ability to turn the exceptional, beyond the normative, the extraordinary into behavioural language, into a conscious choice to pass through the world with the dignity of a different, of another.

The second part of the book is entitled "Worlds, desires and sufferings". The very first text "Flying with an angel's feather" makes a strong impression. The literary critic analyses in depth the collections of short stories by Angel Karaliychev to see that in its entirety the writer's work painfully comprehends the catastrophic world, to oppose the world of the fundamentally human, the so-called transcendental: truth, beauty, good "(J. Tischner).

One of the meta-constructed plots, through which the Bulgarian literature could be examined, is its relation to technology as a phenomenon of modernity and rather of modernization. The author's choice to consider works from the interwar decades in a comparative spectrum is completely deliberate, because through the dialogue between "man and machines" a number of socio-historical, cultural-philosophical, moral-religious and other humanitarian problems can be discussed.

Quite different, but relevant in the last few decades, is the chosen perspective on the text "Heterotopia labour camp." The observations are focused on the novels of the Slovak Anton Balaz "The Camp of Fallen Women" and the Bulgarian Atanas Lipchev "The Quiet White Danube". Through the socio-historical, political-ideological totalitarian phenomenon of the "labour camp", the authors make a deep section of the world, divided into "two camps".

The third part of the book "A matter of view" ("Gledni tochki. (Ne)saotvetsviya") goes beyond the literary plots, interpretations, typologies and problematizes the connection between the different arts, between the nationally determined cultural policies, between the editions and reprints of selected classics, the result of specific socio-political conjunctures.

Most of the texts here indeed can be defined as studies that delve into the relationship between literature and power, art and politics. The huge empirical work done is impressive, but also the analytical depth with which Ichevska comments on literally every "dropped" or "added" story in the next edition of Yovkov's work. I mean that her research is not limited to finding some changes in publications, but focuses on the prevailing criticism paradigms, socio-cultural tools for manipulating the readership, but also on the extent to which the respective generations know and understand the moral and religious ethos of Yovkov's metaphysical-realistic world.

All sketches about Yovkov in the book have a contribution. Two of them deal with the interesting connection between the verbal and the fine arts, answering many important questions related to the "artist Yovkov". Here the author stands out as a skilled analyst of the works of native artists who recreated the Balkan Wars and the First World War. I think that Yovkov's works for the first time are analysed with such detailed observations on the presence of names of artists and titles of paintings, as well as on the frequency of use of words directly related to the fine arts.

Almost all chapters in this part of the book are indicative of T. Ichevska's obviously cultivated ability to interpret shrewdly the various arts in their "intertextual" dialogue, but also their ability to speak one language, to build together the united world of the Spirit. Especially interesting are the observations in the sketches "The film in the novels and the novels of Dimitar Dimov" and "Between the prison and the garden". Observations on the movie "The Peach Thief". The author was mostly interested in what "new readings", what provocative interpretations the directors present.

I am not a Slavic Studies expert, but I think that the final touch in the book "Bulgarian Literature in Slovakia and Slovak Literature in Bulgaria after 1989" is among the

most in-depth studies on the translation of the two literatures since the fall of the socialist regime.

"Bulgarian literature. Plots, Contexts, Studies" can be read as a contemporary version of a different, modern history of Bulgarian literature. Without claiming to be comprehensive, through the prism of pre-selected problem areas, this "mini-history" of individual periods of literature leads to the universal horizons of the human.

And all this - with a pure and clear categorical-conceptual, aesthetic-evaluative, literary-historical, artistic-interpretive language, which is difficult to achieve in modern literary criticism.

4. Assessment of the personal contribution of the candidate

The contribution aspects in the candidate's work have already been detailed. Without ceasing to deal with the "generals" - Iv. Vazov and J. Yovkov, D. Dimov and Em. Stanev, on the contrary, T. Ichevska's book meets the deep needs of contemporary literary culture for alternative writing of literary history. Something that in the last two decades we have seen in the works of Milena Kirova, Valeri Stefanov, Plamen Doinov and others. It can be said that the works of T. Ichevska prove with new means significant new aspects of already existing scientific fields, problems, theories, hypotheses; construct new typologies, create new interpretations.

5. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no notes on the works and materials submitted by the candidate. My personal expectations were that we would have a book collecting T. Ichevska's review texts.

6. Personal impressions

Tatiana Ichevska has proven herself as a professional. With her in-depth literary-historical models, comparative readings, analytical observations, interpretive inventions, with her work with young representatives of philological thought at national level, with the popularization of Bulgarian literature and culture abroad, she established herself as a proven literary critic and lecturer.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Tatiana Ivanova meets the initial requirements to the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic

of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff and the relevant rules of the “Paisii Hilendarski” University of Plovdiv.

After I examined the submitted documents and scientific papers and analyse their significance, I give my positive assessment. I propose to the scientific jury and the Faculty Council to choose **Tatiana Ivanova Ichevska for "Professor"** in the professional field **2.1. Philology (Bulgarian literature after the First World War)** in “P. Hilendarski” University of Plovdiv.

September 14, 2021

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