

PEER REVIEW

by Prof. Maria Antonova Schnitter, DSc, Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University
in connection with competition for occupation of the academic position of “Associate
Professor” in Higher education field 3. “Social, Economic and Legal Sciences”, Professional
field 3.1. “Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences”, Scientific specialty “Cultural
Anthropology – Intangible Cultural Heritage and Cultural Policies”, announced in State
Gazette, Issue 10/14.05.2021

By Order No № P33-4301 dated 10.08.2021 г., I was appointed a member of a scientific jury
in the competition described above. In the competition for occupation of the academic position of
“Associate Professor”, announced in State Gazette, Issue 10/14.05.2021 and on the website of
Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University, for the needs of the Ethnology Department at the Faculty
of Philosophy and History. The only candidate who participates in the competition is **Chief
Assistant Dr. Elitsa Rumenova Stoilova** from the same Department.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

I have known the candidate since the very beginning of her studies at Plovdiv University
in 1989 and I am pleased to say that she is one of the examples of successful development of
research and academic resources within the Plovdiv School of Ethnology and Sociology. Her
participation in the announced competition for occupation of the academic position of “Associate
Professor” is timely and will contribute to the staff by strengthening and developing this major
center of social and humanitarian knowledge in Bulgaria.

Within the term established by the law, Dr. E. Stoilova has submitted a set of documents
that meet the formal requirements. She is included in the announced competition with one
monograph, two studies, and six articles, as well as one chapter of a collective monograph, all
published after the defense of her doctoral dissertation (2014). The studies and two of the articles
have been published in referenced periodicals (one of them – abroad), and the others – in

thematic and conference collections. Two of the articles are in foreign languages. In addition, in the period from 2015 until 2021, E. Stoilova participated in six research projects, three of them – international, two – national, and one – intra-university.

With the described scientific production the candidate satisfies the quantitative parameters of the competition and the minimum state standards for occupation of the academic position of “Associate Professor”, as well as the specific requirements of the Faculty of Philosophy and History.

General characteristics of the activity of the candidate

The scientific work of Elitsa Stoilova can be examined in two thematic areas, which in different ways fit into the study of intangible cultural heritage and cultural policies. The first and main direction of her research is related to the topic of festivals and the construction of local cultural heritage through the use of food as a marker of local identity. One of the studies and four of the articles (the content of which is partly duplicated) are dedicated to this topic, as well as the monograph, which is a summary and conclusion of the previously published theoretical ideas and analyzes of field materials. Due to the thematic overlap between these several publications, I would comment on them together.

The central contribution of the candidate in this group of publications is the development of a general theoretical model of the processes of transformation in the festive culture, taking place in the last two decades in our country. The characteristic features of these new forms of festivity, the process of valorization of food and food technologies as authentic and unique for a particular region, as well as the social and economic transformations they lead to are considered. In connection with the effects of globalization, the theoretical frameworks of festivalization and neo-localism are based on already established concepts. In order to reveal the specifics and processes behind the new festivity, the new term *gastrolocalism* is proposed as representing the processes of constructing a locality and an authentic local product. Thus, the current research paradigms have been mastered and successfully adapted to the Bulgarian social and cultural context. Undoubtedly valuable is the approach developed by the candidate for understanding these new forms of collective festivity as related to the rethinking of culture, traditions, and

territory, as well as to the tracing of the dynamic processes of cultural pluralism, mobility, and globalization.

I am convinced that this original and contribution part of Dr. Stoilova's research is to be further developed and applied in the analysis of new field materials, as well as in the formulation of real cultural policies in the future.

The second group of publications by Dr. Stoilova reviews various aspects of the intangible cultural heritage. In two of them (the article in *Sociological Problems* from 2020 and the article in *Seminar_BG 18* from 2020), the processes of transformation in the attitude to food and beverages in the first half of the XX and in the 20s of the XXI century are analyzed. The epoch of modernity (respectively, postmodernity) is outlined through the prism of the changing community and public attitudes towards consumption, based on a detailed study of field materials.

The other two publications are the result of the candidate's work within the CU TENDA project, funded by the Creative Europe Programme. This is related to an article co-authored with M. Zlatkova (there is no protocol for the settlement of copyright) and the chapter of the collective monograph, published within the project, dedicated to the work of the artist Nikola Zarov. Both scientific texts testify to an in-depth and careful study of the peculiarities of the Karakachan culture and to Stoilova's ability to draw information about her analyzes not only from direct "field" meetings, but also from the respective social and cultural context.

Let me summarize: the scientific publications submitted for review are proof that the candidate in the competition for occupation of the academic position of "Associate Professor" has mastered the necessary "craft" of the academic work and has reached a degree of research maturity that allows us to expect serious future steps in the field of science.

As for her teaching work, she is represented by the author's lecture courses in a total of ten disciplines in different levels of education, for which E. Stoilova has prepared the relevant information packages (curriculum, syllabus, bibliography, exam requirements, exam materials, etc.). Her work with students and doctoral students at the Ethnology Department is a testament to her ability to pass on her knowledge to future generations and thus to preserve the traditions of the academic community.

CONCLUSION

Based on all that has been said so far, it can be summarized that the candidate for occupation of the academic position of “Associate Professor” Dr. Elitsa Rumenova Stoilova has submitted for participation in the competition documents and materials that meet the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, and the respective Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University.

The candidate in the competition has presented a significant number of scientific papers published after the materials used in the defense of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”, which contain original scientific contributions. Elitsa Stoilova’s scientific and teaching qualification is unquestionable.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific papers presented under the competition, as well as the analysis of their significance and the scientific contributions contained therein, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and to recommend to the esteemed Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History for the selection of Elitsa Rumenova Stoilova for the academic position of “Associate Professor” at Paisii Hilendarski Plovdiv University under Professional field 3.1. “Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences”, Scientific specialty “Cultural Anthropology – Intangible Cultural Heritage and Cultural Policies”, for the needs of the Ethnology Department.

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Prepared by:

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