

STATEMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anelia Alexandrova Kassabova

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

on the materials submitted for participation in the competition

for the academic position Professor

of "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv

Field of higher education: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences

Professional field: 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies

(Cultural Studies - Historical Anthropology of Political Culture)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Dragieva Parusheva from the "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv participates as the only candidate in the competition for the academic position "Professor", announced in the State Gazette No. 39 of 02.05.2023 and on the Internet-page of "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv for the needs of the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the applicant

Subject

By Order No. RD-21-1601 of 31.07.2023 of the Rector of "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv (PU) I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific jury of the competition for the academic position of professor at "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies (Cultural Studies - Historical Anthropology of Political Culture), announced for the needs of the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History.

For participation in the announced competition has submitted documents only one candidate: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Dragieva Parusheva from "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv.

The set of materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Parusheva in electronic and paper format is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of

PU and includes the following documents: Application form to the Rector for admission to the competition; CV in European format; Diploma of higher education with a Master's degree - original with an annex; Diploma with the educational and scientific degree of Doctor - original; Diploma (certificate) for the academic position of Associate Professor - original; List of scientific publications; Scientific publications (copies); Certificate of compliance with the minimum national requirements; Declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents; Annotations of the materials (in Bulgarian and English languages); Self-assessment of contributions; List of citations; Document (certificate) of length of service; Documents on academic work; Documents on research activity.

The candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva has enclosed a list with a total of 70 scientific works, including 68 articles and studies and 2 published monographs. In the competition, she participates with 1 monograph and 12 studies and articles, which are outside the dissertation and were published after holding the academic position of Associate Professor. The distribution of the scientific works according to the relevant headings, at home and abroad, is as follows: 2 monographs published by Bulgarian academic publishers, 37 studies and articles in French, English and German, 31 studies and articles in Bulgarian - all in academic editions. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva has numerous participations in national and international scientific forums, participates in 7 national and 5 international research projects, is a member of prestigious national and international scientific organizations.

Brief biographical data

Dobrinka Parusheva, MA in History with a specialization in *History of Byzantium and Balkan Peoples* and a second specialty in *German Philology* at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", defended in 1990 her doctoral thesis (Candidate of Historical Sciences) at the Institute of Balkan Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and started working as a Senior assistant at the Institute. In the following years she worked as a lecturer at the Faculty of History - Mediterranean and Asian Civilizations, High School "Chernorizets Hrabar"; at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"; and at the Faculty of Philosophy and History, "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv. In 2009, after successful participation in a competition, she was appointed as Associate Professor of New and Contemporary History at the Institute of Balkan Studies and Thracology - BAS. From the following year she was appointed Associate Professor of Theory and History of Culture at the Department of Ethnology of "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv.

Prof. Dr. Parusheva's professional career shows a long-lasting and steady interest and accumulated rich experience in research and teaching.

Personal impressions

Assoc. Dr. Parusheva and I have known each other for years, we have common scientific interests, we have worked together in the editorial board of the journal "Bulgarian Ethnology", we have had numerous meetings at scientific forums. For me, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva is a highly erudite and competent professional, a hard-working and cooperative colleague who is very responsible to her commitments.

2. General description of the applicant's activities

Evaluation of teaching activities

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva is a lecturer with many years of experience at various higher educational institutions. At the "Paisii Hilendarski" University of Plovdiv Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva teaches a variety of lecture courses – both compulsory and elective – in Bachelor's and Master's programs, supervises graduate and doctoral students, including in international doctoral programs of PU, Charles University Prague and TU Eindhoven. My meetings with graduate students and PhD students of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva have convinced me that they are highly motivated by the contact and personal example of Dobrinka Parusheva.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva's significant administrative obligations must also be recognised.

Evaluation of the candidate's scientific activity

The scientific research activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva is rich, devoted to various and broad scientific topics. In the competition for the academic position of "Professor" Assoc. Parusheva participates with the monograph *"Down with the Government! Long Live the Cartoon!!" Politics, Culture and Caricature in Early 20th Century Bulgaria*. University Publishing House "Paisii Hilendarski": Plovdiv, 265 pp., in which the author links caricature, culture and politics - the thematic fields in which is her research interest and the 12 studies and articles submitted to the competition. The differentiation between politics and culture is, of course, conditional, but within this conditionality the author defines as "political" three studies devoted to informal political networks in Bulgaria, but in a broader comparative perspective for South-Eastern Europe in general. The analyses of the ways in which politics function through friendship circles and club affiliations, the role of family ties and vertical clientelist networks as social capital in the formation and functioning of political parties are clearly contributory. The specific examples are mainly from

Bulgaria, but the author convincingly traces the Balkan dimensions of the themes. Historical studies of political life in the first half of the 20th century, unfortunately, sound relevant for Bulgaria today, providing a basis for reflection on the "threads of the web" of the political elite today. Highlighting the historical roots of contemporary developments and problems is an important key to their understanding.

As a second thematic group "visual" publications are highlighted. Innovative and beneficial for the development of ethnology is the tracking by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva of the relations between photography and ethnography from the beginning of the use of photography as a recording medium to the so-called visual turn. The visual turn is still largely to come for Bulgaria, the image has not yet established itself as a central theme in the humanities and social sciences, images are still used mainly as illustration. This highlights the significant contribution of Assoc. Parusheva, who provides a rich historiographical overview in a broad international perspective and deepens the discussion about the meanings of images and the relationship of ethnography/ethnology and photography. The author classifies and highlights types of uses of photography – visual narrative, photo-essay, photo-revelation, as well as practices of "participatory photography" and "reflexive photography".

The borders between ethnology and anthropology are conditional, as historical-anthropological the author defines her analyses of the visual representations of revolts, revolutions and wars in the Bulgarian press of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with separate publications devoted to the visual representation of the First World War and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. The wide range of images covered – photographs, reproductions, drawings, cartoons – are presented from a historical perspective, and the means of representing the 'Us' and the 'Others', allies and enemies in uprisings and wars are highlighted.

The third group of publications focuses on caricature as a visual materialization of already existing mental images. The images in the cartoons of the close Other, of the neighbours, and of the generalized Other - Europe are traced in detail. The in-depth presentation, based on concrete examples, of the dynamics of images, as well as the relationship between caricature and caricature's objects, and the relationship between caricaturists and audiences, is beneficial.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva participates in the competition with two publications dedicated to the city in the Balkans. In one of them, the author gives a wide-ranging overview of the main directions in the research of the modern city in the Balkans, proposing, besides a possible typology, various new perspectives for future research on urban life. The second one is devoted to the city Plovdiv at the end of the 19th century, and the author discusses the role of communications (railway transport) and the importance of the city as a capital and at the same time a frontier (capital of the

Ottoman province of Eastern Rumelia from 1878 to 1885) for political, commercial, economic and cultural life.

All of these contributory publications prepare the monographic research of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva. *"Down with the Government! Long Live the Cartoon!!" Politics, Culture and Caricature in Early 20th Century Bulgaria.* is a logical continuation and enrichment of the author's research. The three elements – politics, culture, caricature – are discussed through the prism of the political imaginary, defined as a collective construct that organizes the imagination and symbolism of the political. In the introduction, the author presents a synthesized historiographical overview, defines the conceptual apparatus, approach and scientific tools, defines her main research objective - to assess the place and role of caricature in shaping the political culture of the Bulgarians in the early 20th century. The choice of the time period is justified – at the end of the 19th-early 20th century in Bulgaria there was a so-called transformation of visibility, associated with a new type of relationship between politicians represented in the press and the reading public. The choice of political cartoons for the study of mental images and established representations and attitudes is also argued, insofar as caricature is a visual social commentary.

In the first chapter "Politics and Culture" D. Parusheva traces the means for the creation and dissemination of cartoons, presents the main humorous newspapers in Bulgaria of the period under study with a strong influence on public opinion ("Bulgaran", "Baraban", "Smyakh"), humorous sheets (Bulgarian Parrot, Balkan Parrot) and daily newspapers that regularly published cartoons ("Balkanska Tribuna", "Vecherna poshta"). The author outlines the ways in which cartoonists react to their contemporary events in Bulgaria and around the world. The caricature images of individual politicians, the images of the "Others" – both close and distant, and the general idea of politics are presented.

In Chapter Two, "War and Caricature," the author turns her attention to the wartime images of the political in the Balkan Wars and World War I. Notwithstanding the increased depiction of Otherness with clear dividing lines between allies and enemies in the war, the analysis allows D. Parusheva to make the conclusion that the wartime did not significantly change the political ethos and practices of domestic politics: "The Bulgarian political imaginary, although enriched with new content, rather complements and develops further what has already been constructed."

The third chapter with the indicative title-quote "Masqueraders are all to one!..." presents the main characteristics of political life in Bulgaria – the specific relationship between the state and society, the distrust in the institutions, the priority of personal, non-institutionalized forms of action in different networks. The political cartoon is an expression of the political imaginary, while at the same time influencing the ways of perception and imagination through the meanings of politics and

politicians embedded by the cartoonists. The ability of cartoonists to visualize different political issues in an accessible way can set "holes" in the constructed political imaginary and thus open up possibilities for its transformation. This function of the cartoon in Bulgaria, however, as D. Parusheva underlines, is greatly hampered by the prevailing not-yet-modern (passive) political culture and the lack of a sufficiently large reading public. , although newspapers are read and commented on publicly in pubs and cafés. Mainly through the verbal communication of print media, read and commented publicly in pubs and cafes, the function of the cartoon to set the possibility of national identification through the images of the Other was realized.

Dobrinka Parusheva shows the value of the political cartoon as a historical source, as an "eye on the period", through which the political and cultural development of Bulgaria at the border of the 19th and 20th centuries can be seen in a broad perspective.

3. Recommendations

Insofar as the presented monographic study is complete and coherent, my re-recommendations are rather wishes to D. Parusheva to continue to "gaze" into the vast research fields of politics, culture and caricature, to discover the visible and the invisible, the shown and the hidden. I look forward to a sequel in which the author analyses other types of caricature, such as social caricature, insofar as the distinction of political caricature is conditional, everything is political.

One possible line along which the analysis could continue relates to the category of gender. Д. Parusheva cites examples of caricaturing through comparisons with women, one of which is that of the few female caricaturist in this period, Aneta Hodina (p. 60). The analysis of the place of women among caricaturists, as well as of images of women in cartoons, could be expanded in a subsequent study.

Another possible direction for future research is on the intertwined history of the caricature. The author gives not a few examples of influences, borrowings, and reprints from foreign humorous publications. The topic of exchange and (mutual) influences in the Balkans and in an European context could be a subject for future research.

The thoroughly traced notions of the Other - the near and distant Other, could be enriched by tracing the presence of Bulgaria, Bulgarian politicians, themes from Bulgarian political or cultural life in the cartoons of other countries.

I would like to emphasize that these are not criticisms, but wishes for further research motivated by the contributions of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parusheva. D. Parusheva's original studies enrich a number of scientific disciplines and can be used in teaching of history, ethnology and

cultural/social anthropology, art studies. Their contributory character is reflected in the numerous citations of her works in Bulgarian and foreign academic publications.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Dragieva Parusheva meet all the requirements of the Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADAS), the Regulations for the implementation of the ADAS and the relevant regulations of “Paisii Hilendarski” University of Plovdiv.

The candidate in the competition has submitted a significant number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defense of the PhD thesis and in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor. The candidate's works contain original research that has received international recognition. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Dragieva Parusheva are undoubted.

The results achieved by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Dragieva Parusheva in the teaching and scientific-research activities fully comply with the minimum national and supplementary requirements of the Faculty of Philosophy and History, adopted in connection with the PU Rulebook for application of the ADAS.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analysis of their significance, scientific and applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my **positive assessment** and to recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History for the election of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dobrinka Dragieva Parusheva to the academic position of "Professor" at “Paisii Hilendarski” University of Plovdiv, Field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences; Professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies; (Cultural Studies - Historical Anthropology of Political Culture).

06. 09. 2023

The statement is prepared by:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anelia Kassabova