

REVIEW

by Dr. Ana Georgieva Luleva

Professor at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with the Ethnographic Museum
at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

on the materials submitted for participation in the competition

for the academic position of Associate Professor

at the „Paisii Hilendarski“ University, Plovdiv

by: Field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.1.
Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Studies (Culture and Communication)

In the competition for the position of 'Associate Professor', announced in the State Gazette, no. 98 of 19. 11. 2024 and in the internet page of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History, as a candidate participates Assistant Prof. Maria Stoyanova Petrova, PhD, from the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History at the same university.

1. General presentation of the materials received

Subject:

By order № P3D-22-436 of 18.02.2025 of the Rector of the 'Paisii Hilendarski' University, Plovdiv (PU) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of the competition for the academic position of 'Associate Professor' at the PU in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Culture and Communication), announced for the needs of the Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of Philosophy and History.

Only one candidate has submitted documents for the announced competition:

Assistant Prof. Maria Stoyanova Petrova, PhD, from 'Paisii Hilendarski' University, Plovdiv.

The application submitted by Assistant Prof. Maria Stoyanova Petrova's set of materials on paper is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU, and includes the following documents:

1. Administrative documents: Application for admission to the competition, Candidate's CV, Bachelor's Diploma, Master's Diploma, Doctoral Diploma, List of scientific publications; List of citations; Separation protocol; Report of compliance with national requirements; Summaries of scientific papers in English; Annotation of materials; Self-assessment of contributions; Declaration of originality; Certificate of work experience, Reference of teaching workload; Reference of research activity; Other evidences of participation in creative and applied scientific projects.

2. Scientific publications

Candidate Assistant Prof. Dr. Maria Petrova has submitted a total of 11 scientific publications - 1 monograph, 3 studies and 7 articles. The 11 scientific works, which are different from the dissertation, are accepted for review and are taken into account in the final evaluation. The distribution of the scientific works by relevant headings, at home and abroad, is as follows: one study was published in a scientific journal, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information abroad; one article was published abroad in a non-refereed in the world-renowned databases of scientific information peer-reviewed journal; nine works were published at home in journals and edited collective volumes.

A separation protocol has been submitted for one study

2. Brief biographical data of the candidate

Assistant Prof. Dr. Maria Petrova holds a Bachelor's degree in Ethnology (2001) and a Master's degree in Applied Ethnology from 'Paisii Hilendarski' University (2003). In 2009 she defended her doctoral degree in the Department of Ethnology with the dissertation "Ivan Hadjiyski - Folklore Sources and Ethnosociological Interpretations". Maria Petrova taught at the Department of Ethnology initially as a visiting assistant (2006-2009), and since 2009 - as a senior assistant. She actively participates in the educational process, in scientific research and applied projects of the department.

3. General characteristics of the candidate's activity

Evaluation of the candidate's teaching and pedagogical activity and training (teaching aids, lecture courses, work with students, graduates and PhD students)

Assistant Prof. Dr. Maria Petrova teaches the following lecture courses: Linguistic Anthropology (30/15); Practicum in Storytelling and Anthropology (15/45); Bulgarian Ethnology (45/15); Stereotypes and Prejudices (30/15); Globalization and Nationalisms (30/0); Representing Cultural Heritage in Experience Tourism (30/15); Summer Practice in Social Anthropology (15/45); Internship in an Institution (0/75). Linguistic Diversity and Heritage (30/0) - elective. She has supervised successful graduate students and student participation in research projects and scholarly forums.

Evaluation of the scientific and applied activity of the candidate

In the present competition the candidate has contributed one monograph, three studies and seven articles. For the study *Creative traditions and cultural projects: re-thinking heritage through experience*. In. Krastanova and E. Stoilova in a journal, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, a separation protocol is presented. One article - *Official holidays - realizations and transformations. From the archives of a rural community centre*. In. Epochs, 2024, no. 2 (31), pp. 458-474, was published in a journal refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information. Two studies and six articles were published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes. One of these articles - Kissikova, M. *Self-Identification and collective Identity - personal Hierarchy and social Reflections (examples from biographical interviews with University*

Professors). In. Skopje, 2020, vol. 4, pp. 71-79 was published in English in a foreign journal. The remaining articles are published in Bulgarian editions - edited collective volumes. All publications are on the theme of the competition.

Contributions (scientific, applied, applied) and citations

The scientific contributions of the candidate are situated in the following thematic areas:

- Contributions to **cultural heritage research**. Based on empirical material obtained from various sites and sources - ethnographic field research of the village of Pchellarovo, Chernoochene municipality, Kardzhali region, archival sources, publications in the press, urban research project ("Textile and the City 2019"), the author examines significant aspects of cultural heritage: The role of cultural heritage in the construction of collective (local) identities; the cultural heritage-memory-identity relationship; the role of institutions in the creation of cultural heritage and local collective memory; mechanisms for the construction of local memory and identity - spatial dimensions, community celebrations, the work of institutions and social actors "from below"; the construction, transmission, socialization of cultural heritage; the impact of project culture on cultural heritage.

As Assistant Prof. Dr. Maria Petrova herself rightly points out in her self-assessment of her contributions, the village of Pchellarovo is the main source of empirical data for much of her research. The publications, based on a variety of field material gathered by different methods - interviews, observation, archival sources, press publications - create a picture of the village in which the author's analysis and interpretations are cogently argued.

The long-standing research of the village is well documented. Pchellarovo are also the place of study in the monograph *Chitalishte and Time. Institutional Construction and Social Transformation. From the Pages of the Chronicle Book* (Plovdiv: Paisii Hilendarski University, 2024), 318 pp. The monograph consists of an Introduction, three chapters and a Conclusion. It is constructed as a build-up of levels of meaning that are revealed through a "close" reading of the archival document, seen as a narrative, a gesture of power, "a constructed narrative pursuing very specific goals that is not devoid of ideological and political implications." The author is guided by the principles of grounded theory, usually applied when working with recordings of interviews with respondents. In this case, the attempt to apply the inductive approach of grounded theory to the analysis of an archival document, combined with its contextualization, is innovative and successful. A 'thick' description of the institution is achieved through which the economic, political and ideological dominants of different historical periods are revealed.

In my opinion, the monograph *Chitalishte and Time* contains a significant scientific contribution on at least two levels: methodologically, as a successful attempt to work with a basic archival document such as the Chronicle Book of the Ivan Buyukliev People's Chitalishte, v. Pchellarovo, its contextualization through additional sources and analysis of the available archival information; and epistemologically - as a result, achieved knowledge, reconstruction and in-depth interpretation of the activity of an institution (the Chitalishte) and its place in the everyday life of the local community in a long historical perspective.

Contributions to the **research of the Karakachans** based on field studies of the Karakachan communities in Bulgaria (Karlovo, Sopot, Shipka, Kran, Sliven) and Northern Greece (Komotini, Xanthi, Serres), in which the author focuses on life stories and the spatial outlines of "ours", seen through the institutions of the community (museum collections, cultural and educational societies) and in the images, emotionally charged and preserved in the collective memory.

- **Research on university culture** - a new topic for Bulgarian anthropologists and ethnologists, developed innovatively, with an ethnological approach, based on interviews with faculty and staff at the 'Paisii Hilendarski' University. This field also includes the article on the challenges of teaching ethnology, in which the author thematizes the problems of teaching two courses in the undergraduate programmes in Ethnology and Social Anthropology (Department of Ethnology, 'Paisii Hilendarski' University) - Intercultural Communication and Stereotypes and Prejudices. Reflexivity stands out as a characteristic feature in these studies.

The presented publications contain scientific contributions in several main themes: research on identities, institutions, cultural heritage and specific communities (village of Pchelarovo, Karakachans, university community).

Dr. Maria Petrova's works have been cited 14 times in Bulgarian and foreign publications.

The quantitative indicators of the criteria for holding the academic position of associate professor at the 'Paisii Hilendarski' University have been met.

4. Evaluation of the personal contribution of the candidate(s)

All the scientific results, objectified in the presented publications, are original authorial texts, the result of conscientious research carried out by the author, in compliance with the norms of academic ethics, without the presence of signs of plagiarism.

5. Critical comments and recommendations

The candidate demonstrates high theoretical competence and skills in working with different sources and research terrains. This is reflected in the variety of topics on which she has published so far and promises future interesting research.

6. Personal impressions

I met Dr. Maria Petrova on the occasion of her work on the monograph *Chitalishte and Time. Institutional Construction and Social Transformation. From the Pages of the Chronicle Book* (Plovdiv, 2014). As a scientific reviewer of the manuscript, I was impressed by her erudition, research integrity and reflexivity.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Assist. Prof. Dr. Maria Petrova comply with all the requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the LADAB and the relevant Regulations of 'Paisii Hilendarski' University.

The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defense of the PhD. The candidate's works contain original scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition, as a representative part of them have been published in journals and scientific collections published by Bulgarian and international academic publishers. The theoretical developments have practical applicability, as some of them are directly oriented to teaching work. The scientific and teaching qualification of Assist. Prof. Dr. Maria Petrova is undoubted.

The achievements of Assist. Prof. Dr. Maria Petrova results in teaching and research activities, fully comply with the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Philosophy and History (if any), adopted in conjunction with the PU Regulations for the implementation of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

After reviewing the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions contained in them, I find it justified to give my positive assessment and to recommend the Scientific Jury to make a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History for the election of the Assistant Prof. Dr. Maria Petrova to the academic position of Associate Professor at the 'Paisii Hilendarski' University in the following field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences (Culture and Communication)

April 11th, 2025

Reviewer:

Prof. Dr. Ana Luleva