

OPINION

of Prof. Dr. Dr.Sc. Dilyana Boteva-Boyanova (Faculty of History, St Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia) on the candidacy of Assist. Prof. Dr. Iliana Borisova-Katsarova for the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 2.2. „History and Archaeology (Archaeology – Museology)“ for the needs of the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of History, St Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia

At the competition, announced in the State Gazette issue 55/28.06.2024 p.23, only one candidate competes. This is Iliana Georgieva Borisova-Katsarova, who acquired a PhD title in scientific field 05.08.09 Museology back in 2003 with a dissertation entitled “*Archaeology museums and museum expositions in situ – achievements and perspectives in Bulgaria*”. Since 2009 Dr. Borisova-Katsarova has been an Assistant Professor at the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of History at the St Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia.

The documents submitted by the candidate attest that her field experience is related to ten archaeological sites, in the investigation of which she participated with different statuses: team member, deputy leader, co-leader and supervisor. She has participated in 17 conferences, including one in Lisbon (May 2024) and one in Athens (September 2022). In October 2024, she successfully took part at the 6th International Conference "Roman and Late Antique Thrace" in Xanthi and Abdera (Greece), which, for obvious reasons, does not appear in the submitted competition documents. Regarding the project activity of the candidate, I would note that in her CV included in the competition documents she indicated three projects, one of which she was in charge of, while the submitted document, generated by the "Authors" system of Sofia University, reports the participation in six projects.

In the competition, Dr. Iliana Borisova-Katsarova participates with a habilitation thesis, published in the current year by University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski" (Appendix 1), as well as with another 24 articles and studies. Five of them (Appendices 2-6) were published in the years 2001-2002, i.e. in the period when Iliana Borisova was a full-time PhD student; further five publications (Appendices 10-14) are reports of archaeological studies published 2012-2017 in the series "*Archaeological Discoveries and Excavations*", in which the candidate is a co-author. With one exception (Appendix 15), all publications have been issued in Bulgaria;

the mentioned exception is the publication of a paper presented at an international conference in Niš (Serbia).

The habilitation thesis is on the topic “*The Western Gate of Serdica. Archaeological Survey and Socialisation*” published by the Sofia University Press. The study covers 328 printed pages (pp. 282-287 – two drawings with the corresponding legend and an impressive aerial photography from 2012; 303-328 – summary in English). The text includes two thematically separated parts: I. “Archaeological survey. Description and dating of the excavated archaeological structures” with five chapters; II. “The Western Gate of Serdica – Conservation, Restoration, Display and Socialisation” with three chapters. Undoubtedly, this study – dedicated to an important element of the fortress wall of the “Roman and Late Roman” (according to the definition used by the author) city of Serdica – is a significant contribution, not only in its archaeological aspect, but also with the presented achievements and even some failures in the socialisation of the site and its transformation into the “Western Gate of Serdica Archaeological Park”.

In the competition documentation, the candidate has submitted two lists with the references to her publications, and – I admit – the logic of their dividing into two different files is not clear, especially with the presence of the same citation in both lists. The document generated by the Sofia University Authors system includes 49 citations from Bulgarian colleagues alone, while the second document describes nine citations, one of which (No. IX) is in an English-language publication by colleagues from Romania. Obviously, the candidate in the competition for associate professor is already a clearly recognizable expert among researchers in Bulgaria. In terms of promoting her research internationally, more efforts are needed in the future, incl. with more publications in English.

Really impressive is the intensive work of the candidate Dr. Borisova-Katsarova with MA students as she is the scientific supervisor of 13 MA theses.

All requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules for its Implementation have been complied with. Dr. Iliana Georgieva Borisova-Katsarova meets all the additional requirements stipulated in the relevant Regulations of the Sofia University for holding the academic position for which she is applying for the competition. This gives me the ground to **strongly recommend to the scientific jury to vote positively for the candidacy Dr. Iliana Borisova-Katsarova to be promoted to the academic**

**position of “Associate Professor” at the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of History,
Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski.**

Sofia, 2.11.2024

Signature:

Prof. Dr. Dr.Sc. D. Boteva-Boyanova