

СОФИЙСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ
„СВ. КЛИМЕНТ ОХРИДСКИ“
КАТЕДРА ПО АРХЕОЛОГИЯ
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STATEMENT

of Assoc. Prof. PhD. Daniela Stefanova Stoyanova, from the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", member of the Scientific Jury, approved by order of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (RD–38–404/12.07.2024), on a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology (Archaeology - Museology), announced in the State Gazette 55/28.06.2024

1. In the announced competition, organized at the request of the Faculty of History for the needs of the Department of Archaeology, the only candidate is **Assist. Prof. PhD. Iliana Georgieva Borisova-Katsarova**. Her documents were accepted by a commission appointed by the Rector. The basis for her participation in the competition is the submitted certificate that she meets the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of the ZRASRB. Iliana Borisova-Katsarova graduated from the first class of the Archaeology at the Faculty of History of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1997. Immediately after graduation, she won a competition for full-time PhD studies at the Faculty of History. In 2002, she defended her PhD dissertation on the topic "Archaeological museums and museum exhibitions *in situ* – achievements and prospects in Bulgaria". In the period 2003–2008, she worked at the State Central Archives and as a part-time lecturer at various higher education institutions. Since 2008, she has been a Assistant Professor at the Department of Archaeology of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" with readings in Museology. In the current competition, Iliana Borisova-Katsarova participates with a published habilitation thesis entitled "The Western Gate of Serdika. Archaeological Research and Socialization." Sofia. University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2024. Also participates with 24 selected studies and articles according to the attached list.

2. With Assist. Prof. PhD. Iliana Borisova-Katsarova, we graduated together Archaeology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and I can confidently state that she was among the most active and prominent students in the course, with diverse interests and participation in

archaeological research of sites from different periods. Over the years, her interest in Classical Archaeology and, in particular, the Roman era in Bulgarian lands took precedence. With the defended dissertation, she developed and upgraded her multifaceted interests, specializing in an area in which professional archaeologists rarely appear, if not at all, are not interested. It is about the preservation of immovable cultural heritage in all its aspects, from research and publication to its physical preservation and exhibition. It is quite logical for me that the presented work is related precisely to the main areas of Iliana Borisova-Katsarova's scientific interests - Roman archaeology and the preservation of immovable cultural heritage. For me, what I read in the habilitation thesis is an undeniable contribution and an upgrade to the modern level of research in this direction, a benchmark for what the approach should be in the study of immovable archaeological cultural heritage. Such research requires in-depth knowledge not only in the field of archaeology, but also of global and local legislation for the protection of immovable cultural heritage, leading and adequate principles for conservation and exhibition, patience and strength, so that the monument ultimately wins.

The teaching work of the Assist. Prof. PhD. Iliana Borisova-Katsarova is extremely active, with lecture readings in the basic course in Museology in all specialties of the Faculty of History, as well as in specialized courses in Museology in the Master's degree program in Museology in the Faculty of History (which she has been the head of since its inception), in specialized courses in Roman archaeology in the bachelor's program in Archaeology and a basic course in Archaeology (bachelor's programs History and Philosophy and History and Foreign Language in the Faculty of History), to the supervision of course and master's theses (13 successfully defended masters), as well as a scientific consultant to PhD students in Museology. The active and successful teaching work is also accompanied by active fieldwork, especially on the territory of ancient Serdica. Here I can also include the commitment to the summer school of the students of the Master's degree program in Archaeology, as well as the practicum of the students of the Master's degree program in Museology. I cannot fail to note the active participation of the Assist. Prof. PhD. Iliana Borisova-Katsarova in research projects, the result of which is the published habilitation thesis.

Her successful teaching and research career is complemented by her membership in the Association of Bulgarian Archaeologists, as well as in the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

3. The monograph with which Iliana Borisova-Katsarova participated in the competition (333 pages) publishes the results of large-scale archaeological research of a large sector of Serdica, associated with intensive habitation and active construction activity over several centuries, as

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well as the subsequent modern habitation of the area after the Liberation and the expansion of the capital city. In addition to modern construction and the challenges it poses, the research task is also complicated by earlier large-scale studies of the sector, which unfortunately have been published in summary form, and the sector has been abandoned for more than 30 years, as a result of which there are intensive processes of self-destruction. The new studies begin with the idea of also implementing conservation and exhibition of the area, to which the second main part of the book is dedicated. I am fully convinced that my colleague Iliana Borisova-Katsarova has successfully coped with the challenges, offering systematic and substantiated descriptions and interpretations of the remains of the Western Gate sector of Serdica, accompanied by the necessary critical thought and skepticism, as well as a bibliography and numerous graphic and photo documentation, executed at a modern level. The work also shows systematic work and analysis of the documentation from the old excavations, to the extent that it exists and the quality it possesses. From what I have written, I definitely see an undisputed specialist in the development of Serdica, with systematic and in-depth interests in the topic. To this must be added the experience, through direct participation in the field of museum work and the preservation of the immovable cultural heritage of Serdica. The study is undoubtedly of essential importance for subsequent summaries and publications both for Serdica and for other ancient urban centers in the Balkans, especially as it relates to fortification, urban planning and construction techniques and materials, but also for the principles of conservation, restoration and exhibition in an urban environment. The second part of the monographic study traces the general regulatory framework at an international and national level and the challenges of implementing a conservation, restoration and exhibition project not just in an urban environment, but in Bulgaria and in the center of a city of almost two million people. The stages traced from design to project implementation, as well as the monitoring opportunities, nevertheless illustrate rather the good example of joint work between archaeologists and architects. The control during the implementation of the project turns out to be more complex and difficult, and in this direction the example of the Western Gate should be used to undertake adequate changes in the existing regulatory framework. The writing makes it possible to see how good results can be achieved with the presence of the archaeologist-researcher, taking into account his knowledge of the site and the

use of archaeological documentation. I cannot ignore the discussed problem of the authenticity of the monument and the practically diverse decisions that have to be made in the course of the project's implementation, not always the best, but very often the only possible ones. The second part of the study can also be an example for fellow architects, how necessary the practically missing publications on the problems in the design of projects for the conservation, restoration and exhibition of the immovable cultural heritage in Bulgaria are. As an archaeologist dealing with monumental architecture, albeit from an earlier period, I warmly admire the second part of the monographic study.

The summary is also important, in which the directions in which work should be done are discussed, using the experience of implementing such a large-scale project. The book ends with an extensive summary in English, which adequately reflects the structure of the work and its achievements.

4. The remaining publications with which Assist. Prof. PhD. Iliana Borisova-Katsarova participated in the competition are 24 studies and articles, published in prestigious Bulgarian and foreign scientific publications and series. In them, the two main themes in the candidate's scientific activities and teaching activities can be traced. The first is related to the study of archaeological sites from the Roman period, with the publications on the Western Gate of Serdica (Nos. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19) standing out, others are related to artifacts from the Roman period (Nos. 17, 21, 22), as well as the study of crafts and their production (Nos. 2, 6, 24, 25). Museum issues are the other topic, as specific problems of museums and museum collections, as well as the organization of museum activities are discussed in individual publications (No. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9). In one of the articles included in the competition, one can see the birth of the idea for the monographic study of the Western Gate of Serdica, by synthesizing the two main topics in a discussion of exhibiting the Western Gate of Serdica in a modern urban environment (No. 20).

All the publications reviewed outline the deep interest of Assist. Prof. PhD. Iliana Borisova-Katsarova in the problems of Museology and Roman archaeology. These, as well as other topics, including those for earlier periods, can also be seen in the remaining scientific production of the candidate, which is included in the general list of publications. The accumulated citations of her publications also testify to her achievements. And there can be no question of elements of plagiarism in the works written in an extremely professional language.

5. In conclusion of what has been said so far, I would like to emphasize that the submitted documentation for the competition, as well as my personal impressions for more than 30

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years, give me reason to state that Assist. Prof. Dr. Iliana Borisova-Katsarova is a worthy candidate, a scientist with undisputed potential and achievements, a high-class university lecturer, actively participating in the scientific and administrative life of the Department of Archaeology and the Faculty of History, as well as the archaeological college in our country. This gives me reason to vote positively for the awarding of **Assist. Prof. PhD. Iliana Georgieva Borisova-Katsarova** to the academic position of "**Associate Professor**".

November 16, 2024

Daniela Stoyanova