

REVIEW

By Prof. Dr. **Rayna Dimitrova Gavrilova**, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ", Faculty of Philosophy, Department of History and Theory of Culture; elected professor in 2016 in field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural studies (Theory and history of culture), of the research record and teaching qualities of **Galina Nikolaevna Praskova** (with scientific pseudonym **Goncharova**), candidate in a competition for the academic position of associate professor, in professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural studies (Theory and history of culture. Social and cultural history of Bulgaria. Modern period), published in the State Gazette no. 105 of 11.12.2020

I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum requirements

The candidate submitted the information on quantitative indicators of performance, required by the Academic Staff Development Act, as well as documents supporting the claims. The information is presented in a table by sections and after reviewing it I confirm that Galina Goncharova not only meets the minimum national requirements and the requirements of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski " for holding the position of associate professor, but also exceeds them: in group A she has 50 points (minimum requirement 50); in group B - 100 (100); in group D - 345 (200); in group E - 130 (50).

II. Research activity

Galina Goncharova has attached to the documents for the competition a full list of her publications, as well as a list of publications after her last promotion (defense of a Ph.D. dissertation in 2011). The first list includes 2 monographs, 5 edited anthologies, 3 book chapters, 33 articles in anthologies and periodicals, 2 textbooks and 5 reviews and interviews. The list of publications after 2011 that will be the subject of this review includes one monograph, 5 edited anthologies, 2 book chapters and 25 articles - a certificate of increasing productivity and research confidence.

The main monograph presented for the competition was published after 2011 and is titled "*Chronicles of wealth and modernization in the Kingdom of Bulgaria. The History of Alexander Tenev*" (2021, forthcoming). It is an original independent work, different in theme and content from her previous monograph "*Generational" Policies. Generational divisions in Bulgaria in the second half of the XIX and early XX century*", which was published in 2018 and is a book version of her Ph.D. dissertation). The monograph is an extraordinary text, in the most positive sense of the word. I would describe it as an excellent example of historical anthropology, combining the focus on people with the totalizing approach of looking at all possible aspects of life in a very broad context. The introduction, written as a diary, traces the methodological steps, hesitations, and decisions of the author, and meets all expectations for a scientific introduction (field definition, objectives, methods, sources, bibliographic notes). At the same time is highly readable and gives a good taste of the subsequent unusual, interesting, and informative style. The introduction is characterized by a consistent self-reflection, which constantly asks about its own reasons; this position corresponds to the new approach of the social sciences and humanities to submit to critical analysis not only the field but also the position of the

author. The method of work is "registration, contextualization and reproduction of each occurrence of the names", related to the eponymous character, "in different scenarios and constellations of interpersonal and social roles and relationships" (p. 25); placement of the specific biographical findings in successively researched and presented historical dimensions of social life (agriculture; regional development; local history; home and domestic life; religion, holidays and rituals; consumption of culture and education, etc.). It should be immediately noted that Alexander Tenev and his family are the center and focus of the research, but methodologically, they are "ideal figures", which help clarify important social trends. The structure of the work follows the elements of an identity card from 1935 (preserved original) - occupation, place of residence, birth, etc. and unpacks each of them within a complex narrative. Each part begins with a general methodological, historical and comparative discussion in order to focus on the case under study (Tenevi family) and from there to elucidate with rich empirical material a number of contexts: national, regional, local, familial. This approach produces the special value of the monograph: its convincing polyphony. I would liken it to a symphony in which the parts of different instruments play separate melodies, which merge into the highly informative symphony of the understanding. The material used is impressive - as a variety and as details, but no less impressive are the observations and conclusions about the specifics of the Bulgarian economic and social system. The grand conclusion that modernization cannot be grasped and understood through oppositions and pure categories is not surprising, but the facts and interpretations it marshals are beyond doubt. I find this historical-anthropological work very relevant and timely, because it shows a way to achieve the much-needed clarification of the several half-baked ideas about the past and the roots of the present in scholarly literature, and in everyday discourse.

Galina Goncharova's research interests are concentrated in several different but neighboring and even overlapping circles: mental health care (6 texts), anthropology of religion and religious experience in general (6), death and afterlife (5), remembering and experiencing socialism (5), generations, biographies and identities (5), modernization (3). The biographical method that underlies most publications is a unifying link between the study of various topics and points to the core of her scientific pursuits: the man with his physical and spiritual worlds as a subject and object of major social changes (or lack thereof).

The anthologies edited by Galina Goncharova deserve special attention. They fall in the general fields of her interests, but give throw light on undeveloped and important topics. Galina's introductions introduce and connect different, often interdisciplinary texts (of sociologists, literary critics, anthropologists, cultural studies researchers, etc.) and thus not only help shape new fields, but contribute to their enrichment. The two studies/chapters of books published recently (2019, 2020) are parts of international, English-language collections and present "Bulgarian cases" in a comparative perspective: an important contribution undoubtedly as they reaffirm the place of Bulgarian researchers in international academic life, but also to adjust the local perspectives on religious consciousness, religious practices, and perceptions of death in Bulgaria in a historical context.

The twenty-five articles submitted for evaluation in this competition are original and independent (except for four, co-authored with Teodora Karamelska); four are in foreign languages. Problems around age, life trajectory, generations and death are a consistent focus of Galina Goncharova's scholarly work

and her contributions are significant; they invariably contain the anthropologist's interest in individual experience (biographical narratives) and in cultural forms (rituals, institutions, practices), especially as they change in the experience of different generations. Of particular interest are the observations about the communist period, which fill large gaps in our understanding of the regime ("Death and the afterlife in generational perspective: from socialist burial to personal paradise", 2019; "Living memory and non-living body" in biographical narratives of death ", 2016; "Death in the life-world of socialism ", 2013. The (d)effects of socialism on the psyche and behavior of individuals seen through the prism of religious attitudes, poetic expression or love letters is another research issue, traced through analysis of biographical speech ("Love for the Poet", 2015; "Socialist biographies of the Poet", 2017; "Romantic hobbies of socialist personalities", 2018.) An important contribution to the research work of Galina Goncharova are the texts on the problems of the painful side of life, where society avoids looking, but which are important elements for understanding not only the Zeitgeist and the historical factors, but also nowadays political behavior and institutional morass. The subjectivity and emotional atmosphere of personal stories are subjected to a calm and impartial, but no less harsh analysis of the relationship with/to mental disorders and diseases, migrants, children and people with disabilities. A natural continuation of Galina Goncharova's teaching work is her research on the social history of the 1878-1944 period - the new history of Bulgaria. Here her interest is focused on topics related to mental health, the search for meaning and identity, different communities: mystical communities, doctors and "folk healers", "players", "officials", the church hierarchy.

In general, the research record of Galina Goncharova (presented in her publications) is a serious contribution to historical anthropology; it attempts - and succeeds - to apply the holistic and deep understanding of anthropology to historical narratives. Her texts exhibit rigorous methodology; rich and diverse empirical foundation; consistent conceptualization, all this applied to novel and neglected topics. Evidence of the value of her research is the attached list of citations: 8 citations and 5 indexes in the Web of Science; 4 citations and 4 indexes in Scopus ELSEVIER, one in EBSCO, 11 citations and 2 reviews in CEEOL; Galina mentions 10 citations, established in the traditional way, but their number significantly exceeds this figure.

The participation in and management of research projects (7 in the period 2011-2021) by Galina Goncharova should be noted separately. The involvement as field researcher in the project "Models of Anxiety: Life Stories and Narrative Models in Socialist and Post-Socialist Societies", 2008-2012 and "Oral History of Communism in Bulgaria (1944-1989)", 2010-2012; and "Joint History" 2014-2016 played role in collecting material for her published researches. Her project "Generational models of coping with life crises: biographical, social and institutional discourses", 2016, demonstrated not only her research and organizational capacity, but showed a model of involving young colleagues, PhD students, and students in research activities.

III. Teaching and learning activities

Galina Goncharova began her teaching career as a part-time assistant in the Department of History and Theory of Culture; in 2003 she won a competition for a full-time assistant. She was promoted to senior assistant in 2005 and chief assistant in 2010, position that she holds this today. It should be noted that

from the very beginning of her career she has been a teaching assistant in two separate bachelor's level compulsory disciplines - History of Bulgarian Culture in Modern and Contemporary Times and Culture of the European Enlightenment and the French Revolution, which is evidence not only of erudition but also of capacity. Over the years, she has added new - and different - courses, both as electives and in the master's programs of the Department. Students are highly appreciative of Dr. Goncharova's teaching; it is no coincidence that they regularly turn to her when choosing a supervisor for their theses. She meets the expectations of students with goodwill and a sense of humor; she is participating regularly in various extracurricular activities and invites students in the projects she works on.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate

I have known Galina Goncharova since 2001, when she started working at the Department of History and Theory of Culture, Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and I had the opportunity to get acquainted with her work in person. Galina is a highly educated and competent teacher and ethical person. Her teaching qualities have already been commented on; what I want to point out here is the readiness with which she gets involved in the initiatives of the Department and the responsiveness in her relations with both the students and the colleagues. Communicating with her is always both useful and enjoyable.

VI. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks or recommendations.

VII. Conclusion

Galina Nikolaevna Praskova (with scientific pseudonym Goncharova) fulfills all the requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff, the Regulations for its application and the Regulations for the conditions and procedure for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", both in quantitative indicators and the procedures. Her research and teaching work, her engagement with students and doctoral students, her active involvement in the life and the initiatives of the Department of History and theory of Culture give me every reason to convincingly recommend her for the academic position of associate professor, in professional field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and cultural studies (Theory and history of culture. Social and cultural history of Bulgaria. New and modern period).

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