

STATEMENT by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Antoaneta Nikolova, SWU “Neofit Rilski”, Blagoevgrad

Regarding the participation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gergana Ruseva in the competition for professor in professional field 2.1 Philology (Sanskrit – Language and Culture) published in State Gazette No. 86 of 13.10. 2023

In the competition for professor in professional field 2.1 Philology (Sanskrit – Language and Culture) there is one candidate, Dr. Gergana Ruseva, Associate Professor at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Classical and New Philology, Department of Classical East.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruseva has rich scientific and teaching activities. Her works are varied and original. She is the author of 4 monographs, dozens of articles and studies, profound translations of significant works of Indian spirituality. Two monographs and nine articles are submitted for the competition, and the criteria for the minimum national requirements for holding the position of "professor" are completely covered.

All presented works fully correspond to the theme of the competition and reveal a creator and scholar who knows her field extremely well, has original ideas, knows how to highlight interesting issues and regards profoundly the considered topics. All publications are distinguished by both great competence and creative approach. Assoc. Prof. Ruseva has developed her own style. She presents complex questions with ease and inspiration and manages to involve the readers in her searches and discoveries. Her thoroughness, competence and versatility, her deep understanding in different fields of knowledge make her works extremely rich in ideas. Gergana Ruseva is able to place every specific issue she examines in the context of a comprehensive view of the different conceptual system of Ancient India.

This is clearly expressed in the main monograph presented for the competition, "Forward to the Past, Back to the Future. Ideas about Time in Ancient India". With great clarity and competence, Gergana Ruseva reveals how many of our notions, which we consider unquestionable, are actually a product of the thought system through which we are brought up to perceive and conceptualize the world. Based on a wonderful knowledge of ancient texts, she offers a possible reconstruction of the thought system of the Ancient India, competently defending her theses and making creative discoveries. The ideas about the different nature of the time-space relationship in the concepts of ancient Indo-Aryans, as well as the conclusions about the different value of time and space and the fact that in Ancient India the emphasis was primarily on the conceptualization of time and procedurality are very original. The idea of fate and its connection with the understanding of time is also creatively presented. Very interesting is the

conclusion about the symmetry and fractal structure of time according to ancient ideas, supported by a thorough analysis of ancient texts.

This precise and original analysis of various aspects of the idea of time, itself complex, rich and varied, is presented in other works on this topic as well. In addition to an in-depth reading of the conceptualization of this idea in the ancient Vedic texts, some of the publications examine the equally complex understandings of time in the Buddhist canon. The readings that Assoc. Prof. Ruseva makes of the vision of momentariness, as well as causality and interdependent origin, are very original and well vindicated. The relationship between understandings of time and the soteriological practical orientation of Buddhist teaching is very well justified.

The connection between concepts and concrete religious practices both in the works related to Hinduism and in those belonging to Buddhism is brought out thoroughly and convincingly, and the author manages to build a complete cultural image of the ancient era she studies. The examination of even a single word, such as the word "prana" in the article "Prana in the Atharvaveda," leads to competent conclusions about the whole nature of the thought system and the manner of its expression in the language of the ancient Indians. The depth of the author's approach is revealed in the profound comparisons both with other ancient thought-linguistic systems and with modern European languages, such as Bulgarian and English, as well.

The practical and ritual side of a number of ancient concepts, as well as an in-depth analysis of the ideas of sleep, death and the path to the afterlife, are presented in the monograph "To taste of the sweetest fruit of immortality".

The overall work of Gergana Ruseva is original and full of well-grounded ideas.

I fully agree with Gergana Ruseva's report on the scientific contributions in her works, presented in terms of linguistics, religion studies, cultural studies and translation, and for me a philosophical contribution could undoubtedly be added to them.

Assoc. Prof. Ruseva is a competent and original scholar who inspires with her achievements. Therefore, I propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the position of Professor in professional field 2.1 Philology (Sanskrit – Language and Culture) to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gergana Ruseva.

11.01. 2024

Member of the Scientific Jury:

Sofia

Assoc. Dr. Antoineta Nikolova