

OPINION

for a competition for the academic position "professor"
in a professional direction 2.1. Philology
(Sanskrit - Language and Culture)
by Prof. Dr. Ivo Panov, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

The contest for "professor" in a professional field 2.1. Philology (Sanskrit - language and culture) was announced in SG, no. 86 on 13. 10. 2023. The only candidate for this contest is Assoc. Dr. Gergana Ruseva from the "Classical East" department at the Faculty of Classical and New Philologies (FCNPh) of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The candidate meets all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria for holding the academic position of "professor". Over the years, she has successively passed through academic positions: part-time lecturer in the discipline "Vedic Language" (2002 - 2004), part-time lecturer in the disciplines "Sanskrit Part I" and "Sanskrit Part II" (2002 - 2009), part-time lecturer in the discipline "Hindi Morphology and Syntax" (2007 – 2009), Principal Assistant Professor of Sanskrit (2009), Associate Professor of Sanskrit (2012). The scientific growth of the candidate goes entirely to the "Indology" specialty at the "Classical East" department at the FCNPh of the SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Prof. Ruseva's teaching activity is closely related to her scientific interests. She also leads the following courses in the compulsory disciplines in the undergraduate program of the "Indology" major: "Lexicology and Syntax of Hindi", "Academic Writing", "Darshana: Indian Worldview Studies"; "Early Buddhism in Texts". She is the head of the "Thesis Preparation Seminar in the Master's Program Buddhism (with Eastern Language)"; she teaches the elective discipline in the bachelor's program of the specialty "Indology" - "Jyotisha: Traditional Indian Astrology", and in the master's program of the same specialty "Buddhism (with Eastern language): Eastern language (Sanskrit), Part I; Oriental Language (Sanskrit), Part II'.

Prof. Gergana Ruseva is a scholar with a lasting interest in Sanskrit, Vedic, culture and religion of Ancient India. She participates in the contest with two monographs: Forward to the Past, Back to the Future (2023) and To Taste the Sweetest Fruit of Immortality: Ideas of Death, the Path to the Hereafter, and Sleep in Ancient India (2023). She also participates in six studies 'Look Ahead in the Past, Look Back in the Future': TIME IS SPACE Metaphors in

Sanskrit", "The wheel, the thread and the loom - about some ideas about time and destiny in Ancient India", "Some ideas on time in the Vedas", "The wanderings of the soul beyond - the tree of life and death", "On the Personal Experience of Momentariness in Buddhism" and "Some Buddhist Notions on Time and on the Sense of Time". Three articles have been added to this impressive list: "The Moment in which the River Rests: Time in early Buddhism", "Pranà in the Atharvaveda", "Creating the cosmos from oneself - on dismemberment and rebirth". The scientific works presented for this competition are published in Bulgarian and in English and have not been mentioned in previous academic procedures.

The total number of published works of the candidate is 56.

Associate Professor Gergana Ruseva's administrative commitments are respectable. She was the head of the "Indology" specialty at the "Classical East" department from 2009 to 2019 (with a break in 2012), and from 2019 to the present time she is the head of the "Classical East" department at FCNPh of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The 14 translations (some accompanied by commentary) of rare Indian works from Sanskrit and Hindi into Bulgarian must be added to Gergana Ruseva's active teaching and scientific activity. She is also the author of the book "Vetālapañcaviṃśati /sanskrit aid/" (2014), published by East-West Indology Foundation. The candidate is a participant in 11 scientific projects, has participated with reports, two of them plenary, at 23 scientific conferences, 5 scientific guides, 4 participations in editorial boards, is the editor of three refereed editions of the electronic journal "Manas". She is the author of 11 studies in collections or scientific journals, 23 articles - in scientific journals (7 items), in series (2 items), in collections (14 items), as well as 14 popular scientific publications.

Among the candidate's academic works are her doctoral thesis "Indo-Aryan Personal Pronouns in Diachrony", as well as her habilitation thesis for the academic position "Associate Professor" "A Grammar of Identity: On the Development of the Word atman in Indo-Aryan Languages".

The style and language that Associate Professor Gergana Ruseva adheres to are always at a high scientific level. At the same time, her texts are accessible for perception, they are not self-servingly cluttered with scientific terminology, their language is clear, without unnecessary circumlocution. Which, at least for me, has always been a testimony to professionalism and to a successfully built own style of exhibition.

Prof. Gergana Ruseva has more than 60 citations in prestigious journals, anthologies and books, nine of which are in publications referenced in WOS / SCOPUS.

It is a striking fact that Associate Professor Gergana Ruseva feels at home not only in ancient and medieval Indian texts, but also in the vast sea of Indian philosophical thought. Gergana Ruseva has entered deeply into the importance, traditions and religious beliefs of a great honor from the ancient, as well as today's, population of the Indian subcontinent. With her knowledge, the candidate covers and illustrates convincingly the cultural and historical development of a huge area, enjoying the glory of being the homeland of one of the first world civilizations.

The scientific works with which Assoc. Prof. Ruseva participated in the competition have a specific contributing character and arouse legitimate interest among specialists. They have been repeatedly cited and referenced in internationally recognized journals. The presented works mainly concern topics that have been little developed to date and are relevant for both Bulgarian and world Oriental studies.

The contributions of the candidate's scientific publications are in the following areas: linguistic, religious-cultural and translational. They are presented correctly and reasoned. For me, as a literary scholar and translator, as a culturist and a researcher of Iranian religions, the second two directions are of particular interest. In this regard, I find many points of contact between the Vedic cosmogonic myth of the creation of the world and the doctrines of creation in the first Iranian religions - Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism, which only once again proves the proximity of ideas and representations in the ancient Indo-Iranian community. The ideological concepts of Buddhism about personal experiences mark a visible closeness to Islamic mysticism - "tasawwof" and "erfan". Therefore, I would like to note that Associate Professor Ruseva very correctly uses the terms "Indo-Aryan", "Indo-Aryan", "Ancient Indo-Aryan". I completely agree with Prof. Ruseva when she says that: "Contributing to the research of these basic concepts is the highlighting, the contrast of the ancient Indo-Aryan culture compared to other ancient cultures...". I stand in solidarity with Prof. Ruseva also regarding the translation activity. In the document on the contribution nature of her works, she rightly defends the work of translating from ancient languages: "Although translation work is not considered a scientific activity, translations from ancient languages often hide great challenges, and commentaries on these translations must to reveal the distinctive images and ideas of the culture. Therefore, I consider helpful the numerous scientific translations into Bulgarian of original Vedic and Sanskrit texts of excerpts from Rigveda, Atharvaveda, Brahmanas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Garuda Purana, Svapnachintamani, Charakasamhita, etc, .

Associate Professor Ruseva's scientific reviews, intended for a narrower circle of specialists, also demonstrate high cultural and linguistic competence. They contain not only a critical view of research but also reflections on the development of Indian philosophical thought through Antiquity, the Middle Ages and modern times.

The candidate shares his research results and scientific-practical experience with students and PhD students. Prof. Ruseva is the scientific supervisor and scientific consultant of a total of 5 doctoral and master's theses in the specialty "Indology" at the Sofia University FCNPh.

I would especially like to note the personal interests, abilities and competences of the candidate, proof of which are: the Captain's certificate (for a vessel up to 20 gross register tons) - from 2001; the alpinist's license - from 1989; the active practice of sports such as: skiing, rock climbing, mountain tourism, windsurfing, table tennis, swimming... They complement the image of the profound scientist and present him in the light of a broad-minded nature, entered deeply into the philosophy of life.

In conclusion. In view of the above, I recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to elect Associate Professor Dr. Gergana Ruseva as a professor in professional direction 2.1. Philology (Sanskrit - language and culture) for the needs of the "Classical East" Department at FCNPh of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Prof. Ivo Panov, PhD

Sofia,

15. 01. 2023 г.