

REVIEW

by prof. Anna Kostadinova Kochankova

of the scientific production of Assistant Prof Dr. Ralitsa Simeonova Todorova, the only participant in the competition for "Associate Professor", announced by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the needs of the Faculty of History in the professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology (Archival and Documentary Studies), State Gazette, No. 55/28.06.2024.

The procedure is in accordance with the Academic Staff Development Act in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Holding of Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Assistant Prof. Dr. Ralitsa Todorova, the only participant in the competition, has many years of teaching and research experience at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in the field of this competition.

She started her career as an archivist at the Scientific Archives of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2002-2003) and for the next five years (2003-2008) she worked as an archivist at the BIA-NBCM (Bulgarian historical archive at SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library). Since 2008 she has held academic positions – first as a research assistant I in BIA-NBCM, and since 2012, after winning a competition, she has been appointed as an assistant professor in the Department of Archivistics and Auxiliary Historical Disciplines. From 2014 to the present moment she has been a senior assistant in the same department.

R. Todorova graduated in History with a specialization in Archival Studies at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". After that she completed her PhD in the scientific specialty "Documentary Studies, Archival Studies, Paleography (including Historiography and Source Studies)" at the Department of "Archival Studies and Auxiliary Historical Disciplines" at the Faculty of History of the University. In 2008 she defended her PhD thesis on "Access Regulation and Management in Modern Archives".

In parallel with the increase of the archival courses at the Faculty of History of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and in other faculties of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", the teaching commitment of R. Todorova's academic year 2022/2023 will reach 1278 hours of classroom employment. In addition, Todorova is involved in research projects that have resulted in scientifically applied results and publications.

Two monographs were submitted for review (one of them is described in the competition documentation as "Published book based on a defended dissertation" so I will not review it) and 14 articles.

The monograph "The Preservation of the State Security Archive as a Source for Microhistory and the 'Swamp of Communism'", published in 2024 by Alpha Star Publishing House, is an original documentary study that introduces into scholarly circulation documents from the archive of the so-called Commission on Files.

The first part of the study represents archival documents on the state of the building and the material fund of the archival stores of the Ministry of Interior, where the archives of the State Security Service were kept in the 1950s-1960s. It contains data on the acute lack of

premises and the poor conditions for storing documents; on attempts to find better solutions and the administrative irregularities that accompanied them; on the organisation of renovation work, etc. It was the lack of premises that was among the most significant factors in the destruction of documents in the 1950s.

The author points out two main periods related to the physical preservation of documents by the central divisions of the Ministry of Interior/DSS. While the 1950s lacked any standards in the area of document preservation, the 1960s saw a drive to comply with the requirements of the time. A brief presentation is given of the modern arrangements for the State Security Service archive, given to it a few years after the fall of the communist regime.

A substantial part of the monograph is taken up by the documentary account of Georgi Hristov Georgiev. Texts about his follow-up, especially his meetings with foreigners, are presented in detail, recording all sorts of details about the people, what they heard and saw. On the basis of the documents thus compiled and the seized manuscript of Georgi Georgiev "In the Swamp of Communism", he received a court sentence, and after serving it he was permanently included, until his suicide, in the contingent of systematically developed persons. The monograph also includes an account of a young man being developed in the GDR (German Democratic Republic) because of his sympathies for the GDR punk movement, writing and exporting a book on the subject outside the country, which was regarded by the Stasi as a "subversive act directed against the state" and also led to a conviction.

In her conclusion, Dr. Todorova emphasized the importance of the archives covered for the study of the totalitarian period of Bulgarian history, as well as the responsibility of archivists not only to preserve them, but also to ensure access to them.

The subject matter of most of the articles submitted for review is similar. Two of the articles are included in Dr. Todorova's habilitation thesis (No. 3, 4). Documents on the participation of the security services in the activities of the regime on the ideological front before the 1950s and 1960s have been introduced into scientific circulation (Nos. 5, 11). The documentary activity of the State Security Department's Department VIII as a unit that supported and kept records of the work of conducting active measures in the field of foreign intelligence is studied (No. 6).

The theoretical and applied work on the retrieval of data on the Bulgarian name system is a contribution. A set of normative documents that regulate access to official documents as well as to various information systems, including public registers, the system of state archives, etc. is systematized (№10). New factual information is also included in the presentation of the history of the Shumen Branch of the Oriental Department as a branch of the NBCM (No. 9).

In conclusion: the materials submitted for peer review fully meet the profile of the requested competition, as well as the requirements for the academic position of Associate Professor. Based on the merits of her scientific and teaching work, I propose to the Honourable Jury to award the academic title of "Associate Professor" in the declared specialty 2.2. History and Archaeology (Archival and Documentary Studies).

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Sofia

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