

## STATEMENT

from Assoc. Prof. Veneta Handzhiyska-Yankulova PhD, member of the scientific jury, appointed by Order No. RD-38-404/12.07.2024 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 2.2. History and Archaeology (Archaeology - Museology) for the needs of the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Only one candidate participated in the competition - Assist. Prof. Iliana Borisova Katsarova PhD. She has a Master's degree in Archaeology from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" since 1997, where before in 2002 successfully defended her dissertation "Archaeological museums and museum exhibitions in situ - achievements and prospects in Bulgaria" and obtained the educational and scientific degree "doctor". Since 2008, she has held the position of Assist. Prof. at the Department of Archaeology of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", and is also the head of the master's program "Museology". At the same time, Dr. Borisova Katsarova is an active archaeologist with extensive field experience, as the main part of the sites she manages are on the territory of Sofia. The latter provides her with the opportunity for direct observations, not only regarding the development of Ancient Serdica, but also the processes of conservation and exhibition of ancient structures in a modern urban environment.

Based on the documentation submitted for the competition, it is evident that the results of the research and teaching activities of Dr. I. Borisova-Katsarova fully meet the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor", according to Art. 2b, para 2 of the ZRASB and art. 1a, para. 1 of the Regulations for the implementation of the ZRASB and the Annex thereto for professional field 2.2. History and archaeology, as well as art. 105 (1) of the Regulations on the terms and procedure for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at the Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski".

The list of publications submitted for the competition consists of 25 titles - 1 monograph, 5 studies, 14 articles (of which two in co-authorship, published in refereed publications and two submitted for the acquisition of the PhD) and 5 publications in the ADE. In her publications, Dr. Borisova-Katsarova demonstrates her enduring scientific interest in museological issues. On the one hand, they are a continuation of her doctoral dissertation, and on the other, they are a consequence of her field and teaching activities. At the same time, she conscientiously and promptly publishes her observations from the archaeological research she leads. Her publishing activity is also directed at individual groups of archaeological material. The predominant part of the texts are of a contributing nature, which is emphasized by the list of citations, and are a testament to the author's research skills.

The most significant project of Dr. Borisova-Katsarova in terms of duration and research commitment is the archaeological study and subsequent exhibition of the site "Western Gate of Serdica". It finds its logical continuation in a monographic work (Appendix

1), in which the field situations, structures and finds are meticulously presented and analyzed. The conclusions drawn on this basis, regarding the periodization and chronology in the development of Ancient Serdica, as well as a number of new hypotheses, undoubtedly define the work as contributing. Undoubtedly, the most distinctive feature of the monograph "The Western Gate of Serdica – Archaeological Research and Socialization" is the unification of archaeological and museological research, which are fully combined. This is the main contribution of the scientific work.

In the presentation of the first part, the fortification, the street network, the water supply and sewage facilities, and architectural remains in the protected area are examined sequentially and in a logical connection. The archaeological situations are analyzed in depth and their chronology is commented on. Special mention should also be made of the introduction into real scientific circulation of information from previous archaeological studies of the site in the 1970s, as well as the convincing re-dating of some of the structures (e.g. those from the Early Middle Ages), which is a valuable contribution. The presentation and analysis include rich illustrative material.

The second part of the monograph is in itself an independent study, in which, along with valuable information about the conservation and exhibition activities, a number of important questions are raised, related to the possibilities for direct participation and control by researchers in the process. In this case, the efforts of Dr. Borisova-Katsarova, aimed at preserving the authenticity of the exhibited archaeological structures, deserve admiration.

My personal commitment (and responsibility) to the preservation of the archaeological heritage of the capital allows me to agree, not without regret, with the author's position on the need for urgent updating of the current regulatory framework, as regards the territorial boundaries of the reserve. In this regard, the unresolved administrative issues and the neglect by some of the responsible institutions are increasingly deepening the problems. The experience shared by Dr. Borisova-Katsarova and the proposed solutions should definitely form the basis of future projects aimed at exposing the archaeological heritage in Sofia.

In conclusion, I express my positive opinion about the appointment of Dr. Iliyana Borisova-Katsarova to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the Department of History and Archaeology (Archaeology-Museology) at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".



15.11.2024

Assoc. Prof. Veneta Handzhiyska-Yankulova, PhD