

REVIEW

by Prof. PhD Petko Stefanov Petkov,
member of a scientific jury, appointed by Order of the Rector of Sofia University No. RD-38-101/14.02.2023, in connection with an open procedure for the defense of Radina Ivo Bozhilova's dissertation work on the topic:
"Kirila Vazvozova-Karateodorova: creative path, archival resources"
for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in a scientific field: 2. Humanities; professional direction: 2.2. History and Archaeology; Doctoral program: "Documentary studies, archival studies, paleography (archival studies)"

1. Data on the doctoral student.

Radina Bozhilova graduated with a bachelor's degree in "History" at the University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. Cyril and St. Methodius" in 2015 and a master's degree in archival and documentary studies at the same university in 2016. Since then, he has been working as a librarian at the Faculty of History of VTU.

2. Data on doctoral studies.

Radina Bozhilova was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student in the Department of "Archivistics and Methodology of History Education" at the Faculty of History of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" on February 1, 2019 with the topic of a dissertation work "Kirila Vazvozova-Karateodorova: creative path, archival resources" and with academic supervisor Prof. Dr. Anna Kochankova. Completes his individual study plan correctly and within the stipulated time. Radina Bozhilova was withdrawn from the doctoral program with the right to defense on February 1, 2022. The composition of the scientific jury

was determined and the date for the public defense of the dissertation was scheduled for June 6, 2023.

During the training and at the opening of the procedure for the defense of the dissertation, the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the Regulations for its implementation, were complied with.

3. Data for the dissertation and the abstract.

Radina Bozhilova's dissertation contains 236 pages and includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, an appendix and sources and literature used. The requirements of Art. 64 of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" have been fulfilled, i.e. the dissertation shows that "the candidate has in-depth theoretical knowledge of the relevant specialty and the ability for independent scientific research."

The dissertation is dedicated to an undeniably significant and unexplored problem. The relevance of the research is well justified by the author at the beginning of the presentation. In the introduction, Radina Bozhilova sets out her reasons for the interest in the topic, as well as the state of research. The purpose of the work is formulated: "to present biographical data about the family environment and professional development of K. Vazvozova, examining above all her activity as an administrator, archivist and archeographer, her participation and contributions in the construction of the modern archival system in Bulgaria" (p. 7). Seven research tasks arising from the objective thus formulated are indicated.

The PhD student described the methods applied in her research and the sources she used. It is reasonable to specify that the scientific contributions of Kirila

Vazvozova as a researcher of the Bulgarian revival are not the subject of research in the dissertation work. Some of her monographs and articles are mentioned only insofar as her research and knowledge in this field is a condition for her highly erudite work as an archivist and archaeologist (p. 9).

It is noteworthy that the author knows a wide range of scientific studies directly or indirectly affecting the topic under consideration. Observations and conclusions are based on a considerable number of mostly archival sources and published documents. They are used archival funds of the Central State Archives, of the National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", of the Scientific Archives of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, of the Archives of the Sofia University, of the State Archives - Sofia. The conclusions are well-grounded and scientifically argued.

The dissertation is structured according to the set goals and specific research tasks.

The first chapter "Biographical data and main directions in the professional development of Kirila Vazvozova-Karateodorova" contains three paragraphs in which the early formative years, her education in Aytos and Sofia and the professional development of K. Vazvozova as a historian, teacher and librarian are traced. In 1948, her internship began in the Bulgarian Historical Archive of the National Library "St. Cyril and Methodius", where she remained until her retirement in 1978. The work of K. Vazvozova as head of the Manuscript and Document Sector of the library is followed in detail. In a separate paragraph, the work of K. Vazvozova in the Scientific and in the Board of Directors of the National Library is discussed. Her positions and opinion on various topics and problems affecting the Manuscript and Documentary Sector she manages are highlighted. The emphasis in the third paragraph of the first chapter is on the activities of K. Vazvozova in the search for documents about Bulgarian history in foreign archives and the study of foreign archival experience.

In the second chapter of the dissertation "Kirila Vazvozova-Karateodorova in Bulgarian archival studies and archaeography" three paragraphs are also distinguished. At the beginning, the views and positions of K. Vazvozova are presented, which she presents and defends in the long discussion about the archives of the 50s and 60s of the XX century. R. Bozhilova proves that K. Vazvozova defends the idea of building a centralized archival system in Bulgaria through uniform methodological rules for working with archival documents and centralized access to archival information. Next, in this part, the participation of K. Vazvozova in the development of methodological rules for scientific and technical processing and publication of documents from the Bulgarian archives is presented. The indisputable merits of the Bulgarian Historical Archive and of K. Vazvosova for the methodical assurance in the promulgation of archival documents are highlighted. The contributions of K. Vazvozova in the preparation and implementation of documentary collections, mainly from the National Library's fund, are highlighted. As a historian who has been using some of the collections compiled with the participation of K. Vazvozova for more than three decades, I cannot but agree with the well-founded conclusion of the doctoral student that the editions in which Vazvozova participated as an author, compiler and editor are proof of her outstanding contribution not only to the improvement of the source base of historical research, but also to the development of archeography in Bulgaria, as well as to the confirmation of high criteria in the search, processing, publication, analysis and interpretation of archival documents.

The third chapter "Archival and bibliographical resources for Kirila Vazvozova-Karateodorova" contains four paragraphs. Two of them are dedicated to the documentary and bibliographical sources about the origin, family environment and professional development of Kirila Vazvozova-Karateodorova and to the documentary and bibliographical sources about her work as an archivist, archaeologist and administrator in the National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius". The collected information was analyzed on the mentioned

aspects, with which the study of the life and activity of the remarkable scientist achieves one of its goals. A serious contribution of the work in this part of the dissertation is the separate paragraph "Archival inventory of documents of and about Kirila Vazvozova-Karateodorova", which includes the collected documents for her, regardless of the place of their storage. The author's goal of summarizing, classifying, and systematizing the sought-after information in archival holdings of personal and institutional origin is largely achieved through this practical application.

The conclusion summarizes the author's observations and conclusions from the study. The main contributions of K. Vazvozova as an administrator, organizer, archivist and archeographer are indicated. With reason, Radina Bozhilova summarizes that K. Vazvozova devoted more than forty years of her life to the development of Bulgarian archival work, she actively worked for the confirmation of an important scientific field for historical research and Bulgarian society, such as archival studies, which began its development in Bulgaria at the time when K. Vazvozova entered the threshold of the National Library (p. 241).

The appendix is a useful addition to the text, showing the professional growth and the various positions held by K. Vazvozova over the years. The bibliographic reference reveals the broad source and historiographic basis of the study.

The abstract presents both the content and structure of the dissertation work with the main highlights and conclusions, as well as the research methods used and the main scientific contributions.

4. Scientific contributions

The content of the dissertation, as well as its main scientific contributions, meet the requirements of Art. 64 of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the Sofia

University "St. Kliment Ohridski", i.e. the dissertation contains scientific results that represent an original contribution to science.

Radina Bozhilova has indicated five specific scientific contributions in her work. They are argued and defended in the exposition. Various archival documents were searched, containing data on the life and professional development of K. Vazvozova, on her work as an administrator and organizer in the construction of a modern archival system in Bulgaria, a large part of which are being introduced into scientific circulation for the first time. For the first time various documentary sources on the family environment, education and professional development of K. Vazvozova are presented and analyzed in a complex manner. Based on them, the dissertation examines the most important aspects of her work as an administrator and an active participant in the modernization of archives in Bulgaria. A comprehensive and critical review of the documentary editions prepared with the participation of K. Vazvozova was carried out, and her contributions to the creation of the printed base of Bulgarian historical science were indicated. The contributions of K. Vazvozova to the search for and popularization of documents about Bulgarian history in archival repositories outside Bulgaria have been studied independently and in depth. As a result of the author's research, an inventory of archival documents containing information about the family environment and professional development of K. Vazvozova was compiled.

The work is a comprehensive and original scientific study of the life and activities of Kirila Vazvozova-Karateodorova. A number of moments from her biography have been clarified, while newly discovered and previously unused historical documents have been put into circulation. Separate stages of her life have been studied in detail: her education, her initial professional appearances, her active and long-standing activity in organizing and systematizing the Bulgarian archival and documentary heritage. At the same time, unlike many other researchers of significant personalities, R. Bozhilova has kept the necessary

distance and does not approach the object of her research emotionally, but scientifically.

The dissertation has largely achieved the goals that the doctoral student set for herself. Therefore, my main recommendation to the author of the work is to publish it as an independent monographic study, which will be useful not only for lovers of history and archival studies.

5. Publications and participation in scientific forums.

The doctoral student has five published articles on topics related to the dissertation work, two of which are in foreign scientific publications. With papers related thematically to the dissertation work, she has participated in both national and international scientific forums, her observations and conclusions are familiar to the scientific audience.

6. Conclusion.

Bearing in mind the outstanding merits of the dissertation work on the topic "Kirila Vazvozova-Karateodorova: creative path, archival resources", I propose to the respected members of the scientific jury to award Radina Ivo Bozhilova the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the scientific field: 2. Humanities ; professional direction: 2.2. History and archeology (Documentary studies, archival studies, paleography - archival studies).

30.04.2023

Reviewer:

(Prof. PhD Petko St. Petkov)