

## REVIEW

by Panayot Karagyozov,

Professor at the Department of Slavic Literatures at Sofia University,  
about a competition for the academic position of Professor of Anthropology  
(Professional Field 2.1. Philology. Anthropology of the Bulgarians. Bulgarian  
Folklore)

at the Department of Bulgarian Literature at Sofia University “St. Kliment  
Ohridski ”

with the only candidate **Ass. Prof. Nikolay Georgiev Papuchiev**

The only participant in the competition, Nikolay Papuchiev, has obtained his PhD degree in 2007 and Doctor of Science degree in 2016. He has appointed as Associate Professor at Sofia University since 2013.

During the period 1996–2021, Dr. Papuchiev has published four author's monographs, a textbook on Cultural Anthropology, three studies and over fifty articles. Alone, or in a team, he has been the editor of five collections of scientific papers. The Dr. Papuchiev's publications have been cited more than fifty times and he has participated in numerous scientific forums in Bulgaria and abroad. Assoc. Prof. Papuchiev have conducted several large-scale research projects, including: "The Transition after 1989 - Interpretations of Historical Change, Social Experience and Cultural Memory in Contemporary Bulgarian Literature", "The Museum - Possible and Impossible" , “Emergency Anthropology: A Biography of Institutions”, “The Museum and the Formation of National Culture”, “The Bai Ganyo Phenomenon in the Bulgarian Folklore and Literary Culture of the First Half of the 20th Century”, “Marriage and the Family in the Small Town” and etc.

Dr. Papuchiev is fluent in English, Russian and Polish.

For this competition the candidate has presented the monographs “The Museum - Possible and Impossible. Challenges of mass culture, market strategies and nostalgic memory of the past”(Sofia, 2019, Queen Mab) and “Festivals. Networks. Identities. The masquerade games in the city of Pernik and their regional reflections (Sofia, 2021, St. Kliment Ohridski University) and the studies/ articles "The change of names as a plot in the cinema from the period of the Transition and after it", "Festival *Surva* in city of Pernik and the specifics of politics for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage in the Age of the People's Republic of Bulgaria” and “Count Dracula and the Artistic Images of Evil: Imagologies, Ideologies, Tourism”. These publications did not used for acquiring a previous scientific degree and holding another academic position.

The majority of Dr. Papuchev’s publications are interdisciplinary from the fields of anthropology, classical folklore and ethnography, filmography, memoirs and others and they were performed primarily by the methods of interpretive anthropology.

The main subject of the most of his monographs and articles is the issues related to museums and folklore festivals, and their common denominator is the transformation of the material and spiritual cultural heritage into history or places/sites of memory.

Dr. Papuchiev's research is relevant and is a part of the world stream of historical, literary and anthropological science, illuminating from different points of view the issues of memory and trauma; man's connection with the material world; various manifestations of nostalgia; the problems of culture and consumers of culture; attempts to revitalize the museum work, as well as its interactive visualization. Attention was paid to the orientation of museums and folklore festivals to the developing cultural tourism.

The publications applied for participation in the competition can be conditionally divided into two groups: "statics" and "dynamics". To the "statics" belong "The museum - possible and impossible. Challenges of Mass Culture,

Market Strategies and Nostalgic Remembrance of the Past” and “Count Dracula and the Artistic Images of Evil: Imagologies, Ideologies, Tourism”, and to “Dynamics” Festivals. Networks. Identities. The Masquerade Games in Pernik and Their Regional Reflections” and the studies “Changing Names as a Plot in Cinema from the Transition Period and Beyond it”, “Festival *Surva* in city of Pernik and the Specifics of the Policies for Preservation of Cultural Heritage in the Age of the People's Republic of Bulgaria”. In the first group (at first glance) the material presence prevails, and in the second - the human one. Here, however, I would like to note that the researcher shows the existing and identifies new ideas for turning statics into dynamics through the "animation" of museum exhibits and the presentation of personal, local and national narratives through objects and things, photographs and more.

In the monograph "The Museum - Possible and Impossible..." Dr. Papuchiev considers the specific exhibits and the overall concept of museums as objects and phenomena created or started in the past, but important for the present and the future - ie. their functioning as places, and in some cases as memory stains. At first glance, the wide-ranging selection seems eclectic, but in the course of the entire monograph it is clear that it is not an end in itself, but pursues research logic to present how museums, taking into account the tendencies of this type of memory to adapt to from the mass culture of commercialism, can avoid turning them into "museums of themselves." Dr. Papuchiev shows the intertwining of the cognitive and educational function of museums with entertainment, entertainment and utilitarianism.

The researcher states that “The geographical location of the studied museums is not a guiding principle in the selection of sites; the role that [they] play in typologizing certain trends in the field of culture is decisive” and Dr. Papuchiev chooses as the object of his analyzes: the Grimm Brothers Museum in city of Kassel, the Juliet House in Verona, the open-air museums Skansen in Stockholm and “Etar” near Gabrovo, the houses of Baba Iliytsa / Pena in

Chelopek and Todor Zhivkov in Pravets; the memorial of Georgi Dimitrov in Kovachevtzi (and some other similar collections related to G. Dimitrov); private exhibitions of collectors in Veliko Tarnovo and the surrounding area; the photo collection of the Stoyanovi family and others. In general, the research follows descending order - from the older to the newer and from the largest world-famous indoor and outdoor museums to the smaller and little-known even to most Bulgarians our museum collections, which the author defines as "unrealized museums of the recent past."

The researcher selects a variety of interpretive symbolic keys. His approach to the Museum of the Brothers Grimm and the commercialized phenomenon "On the Track of the Brothers Grimm" is through the intense discussion about the original and adapted tales of the two brothers. Juliet's house is examined mainly through the analysis of the many films and productions that multiply and update the ideas of Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet". The Swedish Skansen are presented through the prism of modern nationalism and world ethnographic exhibitions, and its Bulgarian counterpart - the Ethnographic complex "Etar" - through the reviving nationalism in socialist form and developing domestic and international tourism. The Bulgarian museums and collections that emerged in the era of "mature socialism" and during the Transition Period are interpreted through interviews with their creators, curators and researchers, and the opinions recorded in the visitor books. The general approach to the various museums is Papuchiev's aspiration to reveal "the mechanisms by which notions in the collective memory are built in a symbolic way", or the lack of potential for their transformation from personal to collective memory.

One of the threads that runs throughout the study is the idea of expanding the functions of museum spaces, in which, through various events, and entertainment new places of family, local and national memory are generated. Another important approach of Dr. Papuchiev to the classical and

new museums is the transformation of their spectators / visitors from passive recipients into active participants in the events of the museum exposition.

As the academic position of professor includes not only research but also teaching, I would like to confirm as the director of the Summer Seminar on Bulgarian Language and Culture for Foreigners at Sofia University that the lectures given by Dr. Nikolay Papuchiev to foreign audience were enjoyed great interest. Colleague Papuchiev is an erudite and charming teacher, able to hold the attention of listeners and provoke their questions.

Based on the high scientific value of the peer-reviewed publications, as well as a number of other unmarked in the review contributions in the overall research of the candidate, I propose to the esteemed colleagues of the Promotion Committee to vote Assoc. Prof. Nikolay Papuchiev to take the academic position of Professor of anthropology (professional field 2.1. Philology. Anthropology of the Bulgarians. Bulgarian folklore) in the Department of Bulgarian Literature at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Prof. Panayot Karagyozov