

Opinion

By Prof. Dr. Miliana Kaimakamova, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, professional field 2.2. History and Archeology on the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of "professor" in professional field 2.2. History and Archeology (specialty “Numismatics”) for the needs of the Section “Numismatics and Epigraphy” of the Bulgarian Archeological Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, announced in State Gazette No. 91 of 23rd October 2020.

Associate Professor Dr. Dochka Ivanova Aladzhova is the only applicant in the competition. The procedure and the ensuing requirements in connection with the conduct of the competition, as evidenced by the submitted documentation, have been complied with. I did not establish any violations upon becoming acquainted with the procedure. The applicant has fulfilled the minimum national requirements under Article 26, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

Assoc. Prof. Aladzhova has been permanently connected with the activities of the Bulgarian Archeological Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences since 1996. Along with her research over the years, she has performed various social and scientific functions as its scientific secretary, deputy director, editor-in-chief, member of editorial boards, etc. The specializations realized in prestigious international research centers also contribute to her professional development. Assoc. Prof. Aladzhova has numerous participations in various important international and national scientific forums, projects, contracts, etc. Her scientific biography is complemented by teaching activities carried out in various universities across Bulgaria.

The applicant has presented herself with a total of 94 titles, of which 2 monographs and 92 articles in the announced competition. These works present the main topics developed by Ms. Aladzhova after her election as "associate professor", and namely: the coin circulation in the V century according to data of the Bulgarian lands; coin circulation in multi-layered settlements; the coins of Serdica IV-VII c.; standard measure of weights (exagia) of the IV-VII c.; contributions of sphragistic monuments; lead tiles; theriac medicine; the newly discovered fourrée coins. In their entirety, they show Ms. Aladzhova's desire to expand scientific matters depending on newly discovered or lesser-known artifacts. Judged from a historical point of view, the publications are important for the further study of the life across the Bulgarian lands in the late antiquity. Assoc. Prof. Aladzhova contributes to the creation of an even more specific idea regarding: the changes in the Byzantine west on the border between Antiquity and the Middle Ages and in the course of the barbarian invasions of the Balkans in the IV-VII century (No. 3, No. 6, No. 7, No. 9, No. 26), the functioning of some of the settlements and fortresses north and south of Stara Planina (No. 11,

No. 14, No. 23, No. 29, No. 35), the state of trade (No. 30, No. 31, 32, No. 33, No. 41, No. 44). Of particular importance are the researches that contribute to the clarification of the matters related to the rate of the monetary circulation within medieval Bulgaria and the first centuries of the Ottoman rule in the Bulgarian lands (No. 8, No. 41, No. 44, No. 56).

In 2009, Assoc. Prof. Aladzhova published her monograph "Salt, Pepper... and Archeology", dedicated to the extraction, use and storage of salt, pepper and some other spices in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. The author's observations and findings are based on finds of treasures found in Lebanon, Bulgaria, France and England, which include silver statuettes - spices containers. The statuette from the village of Nikolaevo, Pleven region is subject of a specific comparative analysis. The author reasonably joins the group of researchers who refer the monument to the *Piperatoria* containers, designed for storage of black pepper. The similarities between the Bulgarian find and the other statuettes - containers (*Piperatoria*) are presented in details.

The most significant place among the scientific papers submitted for review is the habilitation work of Assoc. Prof. Aladzhova, entitled "Serdika (VI-VII century). Coin circulation, weights, stamps." The study is based on the analysis of source material discovered in the last 20 years. Based on it, the problem of Serdika's transition from late antique to medieval city is considered, which has not been the subject of independent research so far.

The brief historical overview in the first chapter gives an accurate idea of the importance of Serdika in the governmental, religious, political and economic life, first of the Roman Empire and then of Byzantium. Based on the historical context, the author substantiates the chronological framework of her research. It is pointed out that the newly discovered numismatic and sphragistic material significantly expands the information about the changes that occurred in the functioning of the city in the VI-VII century during the Bulgarian and Slavic attacks on the Balkan Peninsula.

I believe that in this first chapter it would be better to point out the strategic importance of Serdika as one of the main cities through which the ancient Roman road *Via Militaris* had passed. It is well known that, this "royal road" is considered the most important road connecting Western Europe with the East from ancient times to the present day.

Serdika's money circulation is examined in the Second chapter. A significant amount of numismatic material, discovered mainly during the last ten years, has been subjected to analysis. By tracing it, the author makes an important contribution to the study of the commodity and money exchange of the city and its importance as a trade and military center in the Byzantine West in the VI-VII century.

The characterization of the weights used in the commercial activity in Serdica is realized in the third chapter. Undoubtedly, Assoc. Prof. Aladhova has successfully dealt with the identification and chronology of these artifacts. Their analysis provides valuable information in the field of metrology, numismatics, finance, illegal speculation, etc.

The significant number of sphragistic monuments discovered in Serdica in the recent years is discussed in details in Chapter Four. It is pointed out that this is the largest collection of late antique seals found on Bulgarian territory. The description of the individual specimens reveals their common and specific features with those found in other Byzantine centers of power and trade.

After becoming acquainted with the scientific papers and indicating the contributions contained therein, I find it justified to give my positive vote for the election of **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dochka Aladhova** for the academic position of "**professor**" in professional field 2.2. History and Archeology (specialty "Numismatics") for the needs of Section "Numismatics and Epigraphy" of the Bulgarian Archeological Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

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Prepared by:

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