

OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Ventsislav Nikolov Dintchev

(National Archaeological Institute with Museum at BAS)

by COMPETITION

to hold an academic position

PROFESSOR in the professional field "2.2. History and Archeology", for the needs

of the Department of Numismatics & Epigraphy

at the National Archaeological Institute with a Museum at the BAS,

announced in "ДВ", no. 91/ 23.10.2020,

with candidate – Assoc. Prof. Dr.

DOCHKA IVANOVA ALADZHOVA

In the competition for Professor, announced at the National Archaeological Institute with a Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (NAIM–BAS) for the needs of the Department of Numismatics & Epigraphy, there is one candidate – Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dochka Ivanova Aladzhova. She defended her dissertation on "Coins and Coin Circulation in the Province of Lower Moesia (395-491)" in 1987 at NAIM-BAS. From 1988 to 1996 she was a senior assistant (research associate, I degree) at the Regional Historical Museum of Shumen. From 1996 to 1999 she held the same position at NAIM-BAS. At the end of 1999, after a competition, she acquired the academic position of "Associate Professor" at NAIM-BAS.

The results of the research activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. D. Aladzhova, presented in the competition documentation, exceed the so-called minimum national requirements for holding the academic position of "Professor", fixed in the legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria. She has a teaching activity, incl. two successfully defended PhD. She was scientific secretary and deputy director of NAIM-BAS.

The attached list of publications since 2000, i.e. after the acquisition of the academic position of "Associate Professor", contains the titles of two monographs (№№ 1, 2 on the attached list), ninety-two studies, articles and scientific reports in Bulgarian and foreign languages (mainly in English) in well-known Bulgarian and foreign editions (№№ 3-94), quite a few of which are presented as reports at scientific conferences in Bulgaria and abroad, a review in English (№ III/1), forty-three articles and annotations in encyclopedic editions and catalogues in English (№№ V/1-/36: in R. Ivanov /ed./. Tabula Imperii Romani. K-35/2 – Philippopolis,

Sofia, 2012) and in German (№№ VI/1-/7: in E. Meijden /Katalog Koordination/ Die alten Zivilisationen Bulgariens. Das Gold der Thraker: 15. März – 1. Juli 2007, Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, 2007), several articles in popular science editions (№№ IV/1-/4) and three reviews (№№ VII /1, /3 – in memory of colleagues; № VII/2 – for an exhibition).

It is not surprising that the main part of the publications of Assoc. Prof. D. Aladzhova – our long-established numismatist, are about newly discovered or newly interpreted by her numismatic finds, or about the characteristics of coin circulation in certain centers or areas during certain periods. The chronological scope of her interests is from the time of the pre-monetary currency types (№ 68) to the Late Middle Ages (e.g. № 19). The most significant, however, is the number of her publications for the period of Late Antiquity (the end of the 3rd – the beginning of the 7th century). All her published numismatic studies are of a contributory nature and have been used by archaeologists and historians.

However, the scientific interests of Assoc. Prof. D. Aladzhova are not limited to numismatic problems. She is also permanently present in the sphragistic historiography with publications on valuable seals from Late Antiquity, originating mainly from Serdica (№№ 62, 64, 69, 72, 73, 78, 80, 84, 91, 93, 94). She does not bother to publish finds such as an interesting gold ring with an inscription from the 5th century (№ 22) or to examine lids for theriac drug jars from the Late Middle Ages and Bulgarian National Revival (№№ 45, 49). Her first book is dedicated to rare antique silver vessels used as salt pans or for storing other spices, usually found in large, famous treasures from throughout the Roman Empire (D. Aladzhova. Salt, Pepper ... and Archeology. Sofia, 2009, ISBN 978-954-400-088-2). She is also the author of general research on the character and history of larger and smaller sites from the Roman era and Late Antiquity in our country (№№ 14, 35; №№ V/1-/36).

A distinctive trend in the publishing activity of Assoc. Prof. A. Aladzhova, especially in the last decade, is her orientation towards the study of Roman and late antique Serdica. About a third of the articles presented in the competition procedure and over half of her articles published in the last decade are about numismatic and sphragistic finds from Serdica. They are also the prerequisite for the monograph “Serdica (6th – 7th centuries). Money circulation, weights, seals”.

The mentioned monographic work was discussed and recommended for publication at an extended meeting of the Department of Numismatics & Epigraphy of NAIM–BAS on October 12, 2020. It will be published as a volume in the series "Excavations and Research" (published by NAIM–BAS). It includes: an introduction (albeit with the title "Instead of an introduction"), which confirms the purpose, subject and chronological scope of the work defined in the title; "First chapter", dedicated to history, sources and historiography with a focus on data and research on Serdica (pp. 6-22); "Second chapter", dedicated to the numismatic finds and the money circulation in Serdica for the whole period of its existence, but with an accent (and catalogue) for the period of the 6th – the beginning of the 7th century (pp. 23-95); "Third chapter" on the weighting measures found in Serdica (some of which are unique) used in trade and in the control of money circulation (pp. 96-133); "Fourth chapter" for the known seals of Serdica from the 6th – the beginning of the 7th century (pp. 134-183), the last part of which is dedicated to an interesting group of artifacts – lead plates with inscriptions and monograms (the so-called *signacula*, pp. 173-183); final part containing the main conclusions of the study (pp. 183-188); an impressive bibliographic list (pp. 188-239); applications with maps, photos and tables, illustrating the problems and finds discussed in the study (pp. 242-278).

The discussed monographic work – in the form presented to us, needs some grammatical and stylistic editing. In view of the kind, number, dating and context of the considered numismatic and sphragistic finds, I believe that the chronological boundary in the title could be specified to the beginning or the first quarter of the 7th century. Three gold coins from a collective find from the second half of the 7th century with an unclear location "in the Sofia region" are presented in the respective chapter, but they are rightly not included "in the analysis of the circulation" (pp. 46, 86). Archaeological excavations in present-day Sofia have not registered any remains, cultural layer or finds relating to the middle and the second half of the 7th century.

These remarks, as well as some other remarks that could be made, do not question my assessment of the work under discussion. Its contribution character is indisputable. And this is not only due to the fact that it presents many numismatic and sphragistic finds of importance for the history of Serdica and the Balkans in general at the end of Antiquity. The professional analysis of the finds and the

conclusions derived from it turn this work into a generalizing study, which has not been done so far for another significant late antique center within the borders of today's Bulgaria.

I conclude my opinion with a clear assessment that with her research and publication activities, incl. with the monographic work “Serдика (6th – 7th centuries). Money circulation, weights, seals”, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dochka Ivanova Aladzova is a worthy candidate for the announced competition and deserves the academic position of "Professor ".

23.01.2021.



Prof. Dr. V. Dintchev