

REVIEW

of the works, presented for the acquiring of the academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR in the area of Theory and History of Literature at the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Center in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, in the competition announced in The State Newspaper, Vol. 100 from 20.12.2020.

Scholarly field: 2. Humanities

Professional area: 2.1. Philology (Theory and History of Literature)

Reviewer: Dr. Diana Atanassova, Associate Professor in Bulgarian Medieval Literature in the Faculty of Slavic Studies of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Ewelina Drzewiecka is the only candidate for this position announced in The State Newspaper, Vol.100 from 20.12.2020. She received her PhD degree at the University of Warsaw in 2012. She then enrolled as a research trainee at the Institute of Slavic Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, where she has held the position of Assistant Professor since January 2014. In February 2014 she was appointed to be assistant professor, and since May - chief assistant professor at the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Center at BAS.

By the time fixed of the law, Dr. Ewelina Drzewiecka has submitted a set of materials in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Rules for the implementation of the LDASRB of ZRASRB and verifying information that her research works cover the national requirements for academic positions "associate professor".

I know the candidate and her works and I am convinced of her indisputable qualities as a careful researcher and the high scientific value of her research. In this competition she participates with a monograph entitled "*Юбилейно и модерно. Кирило-Методиевият разказ през социализма в България. София: КМНЦ, 2020 [Кирило-Методиевски студии, кн. 29]*", eight published articles related to the topic of her habilitation which, in one way or another are integrated into the monograph, and other publications, that deal with the question about the place of the religious tradition in terms of modernity, which came out after the Ph.D. The presented works are showing unequivocally the serious progress of the candidate after obtaining a doctorate, as well as her scientific maturity.

In 2016, Ewelina Drzewiecka received a grant under the program for young scholars of the BAS for her project entitled “*Културата на юбилея. Употребата на кирилометодиевската традиция през епохата на социализма в България*”. Later, the research on this scientific project grew into a habilitation thesis. I believe that this initial work has contributed to the clarification of the concept, not only because Ewelina had the opportunity to share her ideas and thesis on conferences and forums and write articles on different aspects (articles №1-4) , but also thanks to the discussions held during the implementation of the project.

Dzevietska’s book successfully fits into the field of metahistoriographical and culturological studies. It focuses on the Cyril and Methodius scientific discourse in the anniversary miscellanies [*юбилейни сборници*] published in the period 1944 - 1989, mostly from symposia and conferences. They all commemorated events such as 1100 years since the death of Cyril, 1100 years since the death of Methodius, 1100 years since the creation of the Slavic alphabet, 1050 years since the death of Clement, 100 years since the establishment of the feast of Cyril and Methodius, etc. According to the historical specificity, the author traces the development of this scientific discourse in three separate periods - the 50s, 60s and 70-80s of the 20th century explaining the crucial events and how they influenced the formation of certain ideas.

After carefully reading a large number of anniversary miscellanies, Ewelina managed to trace certain trends in the development of the ideas about the role of the Cyrillo-Methodin deeds. The concept that the *anniversary* (*юбилей*) is a kind of celebration and collective experience, for which the cultural memory is attached, I find as a very well-found interpretive key to the studied phenomenon. Also important is that anniversary and commemorative texts are seen as one, but not the only channel for the providing of "myths" or "formative texts" (J. Assmann), peculiar mainstay for the cultural memory. Other ones are as textbooks, academic histories, etc. And Ewelina does not ignore them, on the contrary - she pays attention to these publications, thus completing her analysis.

The study considers the figures of Cyril and Methodius as strengthening the national Bulgarian identity, focusing on their functioning in the modern era and their use by political and ideological systems. It should be emphasized that such a study has not been done since now and in this sense it is not only a new look at the Cyril and Methodius’s tradition, but also a new approach to the interpretation of its functioning in the second half of the 20th century. The articles included in the anniversary editions - the object of the research - are analyzed in view of their formative potential to serve for self-determination and to provide knowledge about the identity. In this sense, they are considered to produce the Bulgarian "grand narrative”, which is

interpreted in three main overlapping perspectives – of the metahistoriography (1), in which the main object is Constantine the Philosopher; of historical semantics (2) with a focus on the figure of Methodius ; and in the perspective of the discourse *on* modernity (3) (see pp. 153 - 155). The gradual coverage of complementary of the main ideas from the Cyrillo-Methodius's narrative not only expands the focus of the research, but also deepens its meanings. And this makes the conclusions even more persuasive.

E. Drzewiecka's research is part of a modern paradigm, I would say, which researches images and representations from the metadiscursive *narrative* in the period of socialism. It skillfully combines descriptive and analytical approaches, and the reader is introduced carefully and consistently throughout the study. The gradual expansion of the optics helps to clarify better the issues addressed in the book. Written precisely and systematically, the book demonstrates proficiency and scientific maturity.

The book is written in very good Bulgarian and inaccuracies resulting from thinking in the Polish, that is her native language (such as „народоцентричен“, вм. „етноцентричен“; „наративистична“, вм „наратологична“; „демократизъм“, вм. „демокрация“), are rare. Also another careful proofreading of the paper will remove residual typos (including in the bibliography - „Атанасова, Пейчев. 2014“, вм. „Атанасова, Пенчев“ (с. 172)), which in one philological research seems to me to be inadmissible.

For participation in the competition, in addition to the monographic work, Ewelina Drzewiecka has presented a large number of articles, all of them published after 2014, after obtaining the scientific and educational degree "doctor". Ten (eight of which published and two in print) (№2.1-2.10) are on the topic of the habilitation thesis and twelve (four of which are dictionary entries (№ 3.1–3.4) of different concepts) are devoted to the question of the place of the Christian tradition in the modern age. The publications of the young researcher show two directions in which her interests could be traced - one is a continuation of the themes from her doctoral dissertation, the other is related to the issues of the habilitation thesis. The two lines meet and are connected by the topos of *modernity*. In this sense, the peculiar continuity in the research directions that Ewelina chooses to follow and the further development of individual ideas, which she develops in her earlier texts, are visible and tangible .

Ewelina is an enterprising and energetic young scholar, a sought-after research colleague, as can be seen from the information provided about her participation in research projects. She has participated in the teams of two international projects, as well as two national ones. She was project leader of the project researching the *culture of the anniversaries* (2016-2017 AD), and together with Ana Stoykova is head of the joint project between the Bulgarian

and the Polish Academies of Sciences on the biblical models and their influence in the South Slavic literatures and cultures from the Middle Ages to the modern times (2018-2020).

Over the past five years she has participated in ten prestigious international scientific forums. I have had the opportunity to listen to her papers on conferences and I must say that they always manage to provoke lively discussions.

Since there it is a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Cyril and Methodius Research Center, I think it is important to say that the research production presented by Dr. E. Drzewiecka fully meets the requirements set out in the "Rules for the implementation of the LDASRB of the Cyrillo-Methodian research center - BAS "(4.3) - she has an experience in the specialty for more than 5 years, she is an author of at least ten publications in scientific journals after obtaining the academic position "assistant professor", her habilitation book has been published, and she has been involved in at least three research projects, and was project leader of another two .

In conclusion, I would like to state once again that the research works of Dr. Ewelina Drzewiecka fully meets all the requirements for the academic position of "Associate Professor". She is an in-depth young researcher with high scientific potential. The qualities of her research works are indisputable. That is why, as a member of the scientific jury, I will vote without any hesitation for Dr. Ewelina Drzewiecka to take the scientific position of "Associate Professor ".

June 2020

Sofia



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Diana Atanassova,
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"
Department of Cyrillo-Methodian Studies,
Faculty of Slavic Studies
e-mail: dianapa@uni-sofia.bg