

REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Diana Dimitrova Yankova, Professional field 2.1. Philology

New Bulgarian University

on the academic output for participation in a competition for the academic position of "professor" in Professional field 2.1. Philology, promulgated in State Gazette no. 47 / 14.06.2019, with sole candidate Assoc. Prof. Plamen Ivanov Doinov, Ph.D.

I.

The presented academic output and other materials by Assoc. Prof. Plamen Doinov Ph.D. fully meet and, by most indicators, categorically exceed the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University for the acquisition of the academic position "professor".

II.

1. The main monograph presented "Case Literature. From "Tobacco" to „Wolf Hunt". Case Studies in the Literary Field of the Republic of Bulgaria" stands out as an innovative study that introduces the microhistorical approach not only in Bulgarian literary history but also in the literary history in the European context. It is important to emphasize that Doinov binds this approach to a specific period - the Communist regime of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. It is precisely on the terrain of the literature between 1944 and 1989 that the possibilities of an "investigative" literary science can be most clearly understood, which carefully and discreetly relies on the "clues" left in texts and behaviors. Through the instrument of the "case" Plamen Doinov skillfully researches and offers an account of an alternative literary history, turning to an interpretative perspective. As the author points out, "when constructing a case, the literary historian is less often considers what works say and what people who write do, and increasingly - what works do and what life actions and social actions say, how they interpret each other so that they produce meaning" (p. 27). This is achieved through "intensive mutual reading of works of art, texts from literary and other periodicals, archival documents, diaries and memoirs, surveys and interviews, which, checking each other, interweave the narratives of social and political history, writer's biography and literary studies, in order to build at the same time a normal-exceptional case that is both distinguished but also contextual" (p. 35). The seven cases in the book are emblematic of the literature of the socialist past - Dimitar Dimov's „Tobacco“, Konstantin Pavlov's „Poems“, Radoi Ralin's „Hot Peppers“, Ivan Dinkov's „South of Life“ and „Bread of Crumbs“, Blaga Dimitrova's "Face", Ivaylo Petrov's "Wolf Hunt". And if for "Tobacco", "Hot peppers" and "Wolf Hunt" Doinov builds on his discoveries on previous interpretations, introducing unfamiliar archival documents and formulating new ones, then for both Ivan Dinkov's books, K. Pavlov's poems, and for the novel "Face", he offers comprehensive reconstructions for the first time, constituting them as unique cases that change the dynamics of literary development. Undoubtedly, the monograph is a contribution to

Bulgarian literary studies. With it, microhistory becomes an equal component of literary science, and the approach to presenting literature from the People's Republic of Bulgaria period (PRB) (through case studies about works and authors) and is quite suitable for application in the university teaching practice.

2. Five more monographs by Plamen Doinov are presented: „The Name of Poetry: Nikolay Kanchev“, „Literature, Thaw, Division: 1962“, „1910 and the Years of Literature“, „Bulgarian Literature and the Beginning of the 21st Century. 2004-2012“, as well as the published in Hungary „1956: A magyar felkelés és a bolgár irodalom [translated into Bulgarian: "1956: The Hungarian Uprising and Bulgarian Literature"]". They show the diverse nature of the author's critical and academic activities. The book about Nikolay Kanchev demonstrates Doinov's ability to create comprehensive critical and literary historical portraits, as well as to highlight the presence of alternative Bulgarian poets from the PRB period. The bias to the microhistorical approach (in reconstructing the cases surrounding N. Kanchev's books "Presence" and "Like a mustard grain") are also evident here. The books of 1910 and 1962 fit into another contributory approach, in which Plamen Doinov is among the most recognizable figures - a study of the past in the landmark "years of literature". In Doinov's books, this alternative literary-historical approach acquires visibility and density, both as a detailed study of facts, events, authorial behaviors and textual practices, but also as a particular conceptualization of literary history through synchronous cuts in periods of expressiveness. Plamen Doinov's book on Bulgarian literature since the beginning of the 21st century continues his critical activities with current literature. It is valuable both for its many peer-reviewed texts, and for its problematic articles and studies, which contain important ideas for the future of literary history. The book published in Hungarian on the reflection of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising in Bulgarian literature can be regarded as a natural sign of recognition abroad of Plamen Doinov's research contributions, and also as an equal participation of Bulgarian literary studies in international academic dialogue. Moreover, the book was published directly in Hungarian and does not have its own Bulgarian edition. Reviews of the books are published in specialized periodicals.

Plamen Doinov's articles have been published in various academic journals, which are refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases, in academic peer-reviewed publications, in edited collective volumes, etc. The list is impressive, expressing the comprehensiveness of Doinov's literary research, extending to broad thematic areas of the Bulgarian literature of the XX and XXI centuries. The studies published abroad are very impressive: „When Writers Turn against Themselves: The Soviet Model and the Bulgarian Experience, 1946–56“, „The Sovietization of Bulgarian Literature and the 'Bulgarization' of Socialist Realism“, „Советское – просоветское – болгарское: литературно-политический проект оттепели в Народной Республике Болгарии (1961–1963 г.)“ and others. Through them, Doinov participates in an ever-increasing exchange of ideas in the field of literature and culture in countries that have survived communist regimes. To these we can add significant research in studies such as “PRB Literature: Dictionaries, Dialogues, (Mis) Comprehension”, "Cleansing without End, or Destroying the Literary Field", "The Secret Publicity of the Samizdat Archive: Editions by Veselin Tachev 1963/1966”, “Transforming Creativity and Rewriting Biography: Anthologies and Memoirs of Bulgarian Writers (1995–2011)” and many others. Adding Doinov's participation in the

collective volumes “History of the People's Republic of Bulgaria. Regime and Society” and “PRB from start to finish”, his contributions to the study of the history and culture of the communist regime becomes even larger and interdisciplinary.

3. A total of 145 citations of Plamen Doinov's books, articles and studies have been registered, and from 2011 to 2018, 57 citations have been identified, yielding 480 points. This is a high citation index, which proves that the candidate's ideas and theses are intensively shared. Without reference to his writings, no serious study of Bulgarian literature after 1944 can be published today. Particularly impressive is the interest in Doinov's studies by researchers of Bulgarian studies abroad.

4. Plamen Doinov is not just an active participant in national and international academic projects. He often creates and leads them. He is known as the author of the conceptual project and the leader of the long-term research program "Literature of the People's Republic of Bulgaria (1946-1990)", at the NBU Department of New Bulgarian Studies. This is an extremely successful program, launched in 2008, without which today contemporary Bulgarian studies cannot be imagined. Doinov is the head of two international academic seminars: "The Literatures of the USSR and the People's Republic of Bulgaria: Parallel Interpretations" and "The Two Faces of the Writer: Personal Case Studies in Eastern European Literatures". He is a consultant in the international project exhibition „A Book Prison and its Inmates. Books written, re-written, imprisoned and saved in post–World War II Bulgaria“, in cooperation with the department of „Russian and Slavonic Studies“ at the University of Sheffield. He has taken part in the following projects: „Literary Pax Sovietica: Late Stalinism and East European Literatures“, „Хронологія радянської культури: константи й трансформації“, „Socialist Realism in Eastern and Central European Literatures: Origins, Institutions, Discourses“.

The results of Plamen Doinov's research projects can be seen in more than 50 books and collections published under the program "Literature of the People's Republic of Bulgaria (1946-1990)", in dozens of conferences and other forums organized by him, but also most importantly - in the university and inter-university research communities formed around these events and publications. Doinov's participation and initiative creates an environment in Bulgarian studies, develop the academic field and offer ideas for new projects and cooperation.

III.

Plamen Doinov is a very active lecturer. He has designed numerous courses for the BA programme “Bulgarian Studies”, the MA programmes “Literature, Book Publishing, Media” and “Creative Writing”, as well as for the doctoral programme “Theory and History of Literature”. The average grade of the students in relation to the satisfaction with the courses and the lecturer is 4.62. He has also taught Erasmus students and provides student internships and internships, most notably in the weekly “Literary Newspaper” and publishing house “Prosveta”. Doinov also supervises bachelor's and master's theses and one PhD student has successfully defended a thesis under his supervision.

IV.

Plamen Doinov is a member NBU’s Academic Council and the Faculty Council of the Graduate School. He flawlessly respects academic discipline. He regularly participates in academic

panels for the defense of doctoral theses, has chaired two of them, and is the author of numerous reviews and opinions. Doinov is active in the public sector: he is an editor in the “Literary Newspaper”; he was a member and chairman of the jury at national and international literary competitions; organizer and leader of inter-departmental seminars; founder and host of the NBU Reading Club and the NBU Creative Writing Club; Vice-Chairman of the Bulgarian Writers Association. As Head of the New Bulgarian Studies Department, he is directly responsible for attracting Bulgarian students to NBU. He also manages to provide funding for publications in most of the department's academic projects and programs.

V.

I have excellent personal impression of the candidate as a colleague at NBU - both as the head of the New Bulgarian Studies Department, as a member of the Academic Council, and as an initiator and direct organizer of many university initiatives. He not only is capable of working in a team, but also sets up working teams that realize projects and events. His efficiency is a guarantee that any good idea in Bulgarian and literary studies will become reality.

VI.

Plamen Doinov's activities are diverse and prolific. My main recommendation is to extend it through separate academic and educational projects to other philological disciplines in addition to Bulgarian. In such a case a stronger and more comprehensive effect would be obtained for the academic field of literary studies.

CONCLUSION:

Plamen Doinov's candidacy is very convincing. His monographs, studies and articles demonstrate both quantity and quality. In addition, his achievements in teaching and community work should not be overlooked. Therefore, I give a positive assessment of the candidate's academic activity and ask Academic Council at NBU to award him the title of professor.

2 October 2019

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