

## OPINION

by Prof. Dr.S. Ivan Dimov Kabakov

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Chair “History and theory of culture”

Scientific field 3.1. Sociology, anthropology and Cultural Sciences

of the materials submitted for a competition to fill the academic post of

**Associate Professor at the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF)**

in higher education field “3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Occupational Strand 3.8. Economics: Monetary Circulation and Monetary Systems (Development of Monetary Systems and Coinage)”

Valentina Grigorova Grigorova-Gencheva, PhD, a part-time lecturer at VUZF, participated as candidate in the competition for Associate Professor announced in State Gazette No 95/16.11.2021 and on the website of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance.

### 1. General presentation of materials received

**Subject:**

By Order No 40 of 2 March 2022 of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, I was appointed a member of the scientific jury for a competition to fill the academic post of **Associate Professor at VUZF**, in higher education field “3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Occupational Strand 3.8. Economics: Monetary Circulation and Monetary Systems (Development of Monetary Systems and Coinage)”

One candidate has submitted documents to take part in the competition, i.e.:

Valentina Grigorova Grigorova-Gencheva, PhD, part-time lecturer at VUZF  
(academic degree, forename, surname – academic position in a scientific organization)

The set of materials submitted electronically by Valentina Grigorova Grigorova-Gencheva complies with the Rules for Development of Academic Staff at VUZF and includes the following documents:

- Habilitation thesis: a monograph with a synopsis, for the Associate Professor academic post
- Copy of a doctoral degree, a recognition protocol from VUZF, and a certificate of recognition No 08-00-14/12.01.2022 by the National Center for Information and Documentation
- European format CV
- List of publications following the doctoral thesis and copies thereof
- Division of labour documents for joint publications
- Statement of fulfillment of minimum national requirements for filling the academic post of Associate Professor
- Reference to original research contributions in literature and to citations
- Personal data processing consent form in connection with participation in the completion

Candidate Valentina Grigorova Grigorova-Gencheva has enclosed a total of 20 research works, 3 studies, 2 monographs, 2 books and a list of 13 research works. Five research works outside the scope of the dissertation and taken into account in the final evaluation have been accepted for peer review. Fifteen research works within the scope of the thesis and 15 research works outside the scope of the competition have not been reviewed. The distribution of research works by relevant heading, domestically and abroad, is as follows: 12 in the country and 8 abroad.

Valentina Grigorova-Gencheva graduated from St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia in 1990, majoring in ancient and medieval history. She specialized in ancient history and numismatics and defended a doctoral dissertation at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, where she taught a series of lecture courses on numismatics. She worked as an expert for auction houses in Switzerland and Germany, and as deputy head of excavations for the French Archaeological Institute in Argos, Greece. Since the autumn of 2001, she has been working at First Investment Bank, where she has set up and run the first and unique banking department in Bulgaria, specializing in precious metals transactions, investment advice and numismatic expertise. Since 2008, she has been teaching a Master's course of lectures on „Cultural Heritage: Market and Investment“ at the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“. Since 2016, she has been teaching a Master's course at VUZF on „Markets and Investment in Precious Metals“. She has participated in a number

of national and international research projects in the field of cultural heritage and numismatics. Expert to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Culture of the 40<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria (2006-2009).

## **2. General characteristic of candidate's activities**

2.1. Assessment of the educational and pedagogical activities and preparation of the candidate

Dr. Valentina Grigorova-Gencheva leads since 2008 Master's degree from lectures on "Cultural Heritage: Market and Investments" at the Master's programme "Management and Socialisation of Cultural Heritage" at the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" as well as actively participated in various training programs for postgraduate studies. Her lecture courses and trainings have a well-deserved interest on the part of the students and those trained at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" not only because of the theoretical training offered in the field of trade and investment in cultural values, but also in view of the practical knowledge and skills in terms of money and monetary systems. The candidate for "docent" under this procedure has since 2016 a Master's Lecture Kurs at VUZF on "Markets and investments in precious metals" while participating in a number of national and international scientific projects in the field of cultural heritage and numismatics.

2.2. Assessment of the candidate's scientific and applied contribution

The Habilitation Work of Dr. Valentina Grigorova-Gencheva aims "to present to the reader an impartial picture of the contemporary Bulgarian coinage, cleared of the folklore of ordinary traders and collectors of coins. To provide new scientific ones supported by documents and photographs. Each of the parts of the book analyses in detail the periods during which the Bulgarian coinage goes historically: from the Principality and the Third Bulgarian Kingdom through socialism to the Republic. For the first time, all coin images, personalities and heralds were described, explained and accompanied by historical references" (p. 4 of the habilitation work).

My "reading" of the main work with which Dr. Valentina Grigorova-Gencheva participates in the competition is primarily related to the representative power of money and in

particular its use to present and promote the cultural heritage of Bulgaria, as well as its history. It turns out that this aspect is extremely generous, innovative and satisfactory, including in relation to the legislation in this area. The monograph "Monetary System and Coinage of Contemporary Bulgaria (1880-2021)" is meant. In addition to the already quoted intentions and goals of the author, can be found "full descriptions" of significant historical personalities and events, the jubilee of cultural educational institutions, sports events, a traditional holiday calendar of Bulgarians, as well as significant traditional crafts, all "told" in coins as part of the coinage of modern Bulgaria. They have left lasting traces in the thinking of the Bulgarians, including as a traumatic experience of the type "white money for rainy days" (p. 17-19 from the habilitation work). This is a kind of "added value" in terms of the role and importance of money, the monetary system and the coinage of modern Bulgaria, which remain the main object of the research carried out to the highest standards of scientific research in the field of numismatics.

The precise work of the applicant with the legislation that forms another line of interpretation and analysis, capable of reconstructing and explaining the legal bases of the decisions and steps taken, above all in the field of coinage, is striking. They relate not only to the symbols and images used in the lev and pennies, but also to their preference as a way of upholding national identity, independence and sovereignty (p. 8-9 of the habilitation work). The permanent establishment of the commodity-monetary relations and the development of Bulgaria outside the Ottoman Empire is legally ensured by series of laws, such as (for example) the Law on the Right to Dispensation of Coins in the Prince of 1880, the Coin Act of 1880, the Law on Course and Coverage of Banknotes in the Bulgarian National Bank of 1919, as well as the laws of the following periods. Their knowledge allows Dr. Valentina Grigorova-Gencheva to analyse in depth the ongoing processes in the monetary systems of coinage of modern Bulgaria. The interest in legislation and analytical expertise of the applicant in this area is also confirmed by his/her participation in the development of the Cultural Heritage Act (published. SG No 19 of 13 March 2009).

The publications used for the competition can be classified as follows: a total of 13 articles and reports of which 3 articles are in impact factor editions together with 3 plenary reports, of which 6 articles have been published in reference international journals and 3 papers have been published in papers at international scientific conferences abroad. The articles

in national journals are 2 pieces, 1 report is published in a work at an international scientific conference in Bulgaria, and 2 reports are in scientific papers of universities. According to the language in which the publications are written, respectively: 5 in English, 8 in Bulgarian and 7 in other languages. According to the number of co-authors: the stand-alone publicity is 12; there are six co-authors and three or more co-authors — 1 piece. All publications are on the topic of the competition and demonstrate the wide range of interests and the in-depth attitude of the candidate in the researched issues.

### 2.3. Research contributions and citations

1. The Habilitation Work of Dr. Valentina Grigorova-Gencheva “Monetary system and coinage of modern Bulgaria (1880-2021)” presents for the first time all Bulgarian trial and official coin emissions from 1880 to 2021, with a number of specimens giving detailed historical reference related to the personalities, historical events or monuments depicted on them. Special attention is given to the rare denominations, the text and layout of the supertracks on the edges of the coins and their spelling. The examples are extensively illustrated in detail to make the highly specialised presentation as comprehensible to students, amateur collectors and by a wider range of readers. For the first time, the monetary system and the coinage of Bulgaria are in their entirety, in the context of political and economic history, commenting on the foreign influences on the restored Bulgarian state.

2. A detailed overview of the iconographic compositions and legends presented on the Bulgarian coins is made, with special attention being paid to the symbols used and their messages. Special attention is paid to the characteristics and the main specifics in the ruler’s portraits and coats of arms from the time of the Principality of Bulgaria, the Third Bulgarian Kingdom and the NRB. Through comparative analyses and after reviewing documents from the archives, long-overlaid delusions related to rare specimens of missing emissions, as well as a number of uncertainties about Bulgarian coinage during the socialist period, were overcome. (“Monetary system and coinage of modern Bulgaria (1880-2021).”

3. The book also publishes and comments for the first time a number of valuable documents from the Bulgarian state archives — the Ministry of Finance, Customs, Regional Governments, etc. — related to the monetary system and coinage. The study of

coin-shaped monuments (medals, medallions, jewellery, etc.) related directly to the Bulgarian coinage and its state regulation is also new. ("Monetary system and coinage of modern Bulgaria (1880-2021)").

4. A number of studies have published for the first time unknown to science coin types of the city of Pautalia, struck in Roman times (II-III century), and archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic data on economic development and trade links between cities of different provinces in the Roman era have been collected and analysed. ("Neue Beiträge zur Erforschung der Münzprägung von Pautalia", *Annotazioni Numismatiche*, Suppl. XII, Milano 1998; 'Médicaments et thermalisme à Pautalia, Thrace', *Gesnerus* (Swiss Journal for the History of Medicine and Sciences) 57/2000, p. 238-249; 'Les mines du territoire de Pautalia (Thrace)', *Atlas historique des zones minières d'Europe*, Brussels, Luxembourg 2000; "Deux médaillons d'Antonin le Pieux du territoire de Pautalia (Thrace)", *Proceedings of the XIV-th International Numismatic congress Glasgow 2009*, vol. I, Glasgow 2011; "Coin finds from sacred places in Pautalia, Thracia: offerings for health and fortune?" (with Lily Grozdanova). In: *Proceedings of the Conference: Coins for the Gods, coins for the merchants — Economy of the sacred compared to the economy of profane*, Athens, October 24-26 2019. (forthcoming). These publications have been cited more than 20 times by Bulgarian and foreign scientists.

5. A series of publications outlines for the first time the boundaries and specifics of a distinct geographical area in the southwestern parts of today's Bulgarian lands and in part of northern Greece and Thassos Island in the VI-V century BC, which is a special military-political and economic union between the Thracian rulers and the island of Thassos. New data from dozens of coin finds, data on metal mining and coin harvesting in the region have been published and analysed for the first time. These publications require a change in the terminology used with regard to commentaries. Instead of the commonly used term „Thracian imitations of Thasos coins“, the use of „thraco-greek coinage“ began. "New hoards with small denomination coins of the Island of Thasos (6th — 5th century BC): Context, interpretation and dating" (with Ilya Prokopov), in *Ex nummis lux Studies in ancient numismatics in honour of Dimitar Draganov*, Sofia 2017; "Spread Treasure of Silen and Nymph Staters" (co-authored with Ilya Prokopov), in *KRATISTOS Collection in honor of Professor Petar Delev*, Sofia 2017.) Evidence for the innovation of these publications,

both in the domain of terminology and in terms of published new data, are their quotes from foreign scientists.

6. Special attention in the publications is given to analysing and dissolving scientific information related to the history of precious metals, their extraction in Bulgarian lands and their products. The use of gold elements as proto-cash for military and/or economic purposes in Antiquity is innovative. (“III. The role of precious metals and coins in the history of finance as a basis for their future sustainable development”, co-authored with Ilya Prokopov, in the sustainability of the financial system — long-term perspectives (ontological and empirical grounds), author’s team, Bulgaria 1990-2020. Economics and Finance. Scientific and applied research, co-authored in separate books, Sofia 2021, pp. 116-139; “Travel of the collector and investor in coins and precious metals”, co-authored with Ilya Prokopov, Sofia 2017; “The transactions in precious metal products in the context of the Covid 19 pandemic”, in “External Trade and Pandemic”, collection of reports presented at a round table on “External Trade and Pandemic”, organised by the Higher School of Insurance and Finance and the Laboratory for Scientific and Applied Research, VUZF Lab on 02.12.2020, Sofia 2021, pp. 103-110).

### **3. Critical remarks and recommendations**

My recommendation to the candidate is related to further development of scientific research on representative force of money. It’s interdisciplinary character and social importance goes beyond the relative narrowly specialized topics of coinage and numismatics. By this research could be applied methods and approaches from historiography, culturology, as well as from the very dynamically evolving research of the cultural heritage.

### **CONCLUSION**

The documents and materials submitted by Valentina Grigorova Grigorova-Gencheva **comply with all the requirements** of the Bulgarian Academic Staff Development Act, Implementing Rules thereof, and the relevant Rules of VUZF.

The candidate in the competition has submitted a **significant** number of research papers published after the materials used to defend her doctoral degree. The candidate’s

works feature original theoretical and applied research contributions that have been internationally recognized, with a representative part of them having been published in journals and scientific collections issued by international academic publishers. Her works have practical relevance, some being directly oriented toward research and learning. Valentina Grigorova-Gencheva's research and teaching qualifications are undoubted and were acquired over the years of research and academic development in Bulgaria and Switzerland. Valentina Grigorova-Gencheva's learning and research achievements are **fully** in line with the VUZF's Implementing Rules for the Bulgarian Academic Staff Development Act.

Having examined the monograph and research works presented in the competition, analyzed their relevance, and theoretical and applied research contributions contained therein, I consider it reasonable and fully convincing to give my positive assessment, and I hereby recommend that the scientific jury draw up a report to the Academic Council of VUZF for the election of Valentina Grigorova Grigorova-Gencheva to the academic post of Associate Professor at VUZF, in Occupational Strand 3.8. Economy: "Monetary Circulation and Monetary Systems (Development of Monetary Systems and Coinage)".

Sofia, March, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Author of the opinion:**

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