

OPINION

By Assoc. Prof. Dr *Marina Koleva*, Institute of Art Studies – BAS, member of the scientific jury in accordance with Order of the Director of the Institute of Art Studies – BAS № 474 – PД/25.07.2024

For the competition for acquiring the academic position of associate professor in Theory and History of Architecture (Digitalization of Architectural Heritage), professional direction 5.7 Architecture, Construction and Geodesy for the needs of the Fine Arts Department, State Gazette issue 52 from 18.06.2024

1. In the announced competition the only candidate is senior asst. Dr. arch. **Dimitrina Marinova Popova**, Research Group Ancient Art, Fine Arts Department, Institute of Art Studies - BAS. The basis for participation in the competition is the submitted certificate that she fulfils the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the LDASRB.

In the competition D. Popova participates with the habilitation thesis: *Architectural Heritage in Photographs of 19th Century Houses. Analysis and Digitization of the Architecture Archive of the Institute of Art Studies*, Sofia. Institute of Art Studies, BAS, 2024. She also contributed 20 other articles and one book chapter to the attached list, all published since 2015.

2. Dimitrina Popova acquired her master's degree in architecture at the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy in 2000. In 2011-2014 she was a full-time PhD student at the Institute of Art Studies - BAS, with a dissertation entitled: *Boundaries of Intervention of the Roman Empire through the Architecture of Thrace* (defended in 2014).

Since 2015 Dimitrina Popova has been a senior assistant at the Institute of Art Studies - BAS, RG Ancient Art, Fine Arts Department. In the period 2010-2016 she was a visiting assistant professor at the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy. And between 2015 and 2024 she was a lecturer and assistant professor at the European Polytechnical University. She gives lectures and tutorials on Architecture and Architectural Heritage Conservation.

Dimitrina Popova is a member of the Chamber of Architects in Bulgaria, the Union of Architects in Bulgaria, Europeana Network Association and the Bulgarian Studies Association, USA.

3. The presented habilitation thesis *Architectural Heritage in Photographs of 19th Century Houses. Analysis and Digitization of the Architecture Archive of the Institute of Art Studies*, Sofia, 2024, is a monographic study, which consists of an introduction, two parts (with a total of six chapters), a conclusion, a bibliography, a summary in English, and 37 figures in the text, for a total of 224 pages.

The introduction sets the theoretical framework, comments on the research methods and the terms used.

The first part focuses on the Architecture Fund, part of the Archives of the Institute of Art Studies - BAS, commenting on its structure, types of medium, describing the processing of the fund and analyzing the archival holdings. This first part introduces the institution responsible for the foundation and preservation of the archive over the years - the Institute of Urban Planning and Architecture (STIGA, ITIGA, later the Centre for Architectural Studies, merged into the Institute of Art Studies in 2011). The history of the Institute of Urban Planning and Architecture, and of the creation of the archive, are examined in the broad historical context of Bulgaria's development after 1949, which influenced both the formation of the institute and that of the archive. Architectural photographs created between 1949 and 1962 have been selected for the purpose of the study of houses from the period of the Revival. A significant part of the text is devoted to the conceptualization of cultural architectural heritage in the selected period, the reasons for the selection of the nineteenth-century houses identified for photographing, and the creation of the "grand narrative of the Bulgarian house" (p. 91).

In the second part the digitalization of the archive of architectural photographs and the opportunity it provides for the research and presentation of architectural cultural heritage is commented. A total of five houses from the Revival period from Sungurlare, Berkovitsa, Teteven and Etropole, which no longer exist, have been selected. Architectural photographs from the Architecture Archive were used as the basis for the digital reconstruction, and where possible the data were combined with photographs and other documents. The contact with these houses in virtual reality is the last phase of the work and it raises the question of rethinking the preservation, research and socialization of architectural heritage in a virtual environment.

The conclusion presents a summary of the ideas presented in the monograph and the contributions of the work.

I would like to note that more illustrations of the reconstructions of the selected Revival houses would only have contributed to the completeness of the presentation of the methods and results of the study.

The monograph shows the preservation of the architectural cultural heritage according to the scientific achievements in different periods. In the 1950s and 1960s, it consisted of searching, describing and mapping the sites. The Revival houses were then documented and became part of the archive, thus being preserved and becoming a basis for further research. Nowadays, thanks to new technologies, cultural heritage can be preserved and socialized now in a digital environment. D. Popova theoretically develops the methods of work and then practically uses them with architectural monuments from Bulgaria.

We are presented with a complete monographic work that clearly shows the views and contributions of the author regarding the preservation of architectural cultural heritage, its most appropriate socialization and its preservation for future generations.

4. Dimitrina Popova participated in the competition with 20 publications in periodicals and collections and one book chapter, published after 2015. One of the articles was published in a refereed and indexed in Scopus and Web of Science edition (under No. 1 in the attached List of publications in scientific journals), other five were published in refereed in ERIH PLUS (No. 3-6, 8), and the rest - in specialized academic journals. Most of the publications included in the competition list are in Bulgarian, but six are in English, which broadens the audience familiar with the author's achievements.

A large part of D. Popova's publications is in the field of research and digitization of architectural heritage (Nos. 1-2, 4-5, 6, 9), in them the methods of work have been developed and tested, and over time the author's ideas have taken shape and gradually acquired the completeness seen in the monograph.

This methodology has also been used at other sites, such as the house from the Revival period from Nessebar (No. 7 in the attached List of publications in scientific publications) and the Thracian tomb at Sheynovets peak near Svilengrad (No. 3, co-authored with R. Stoychev).

The layout of cities and sites in their urban territory in the Roman era are also the subject of D. Popova's academic interests (nos. 10-12, 19-20). And the more contemporary periods of the 19th -20th centuries are the subject of the studies of the building of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the Palace of Justice and the panel complexes of the 1960s-1980s (nos. 8, 13, 15-18, 21).

Citations are given for the candidate's works found in Bulgarian and foreign scientific publications, as well as for realized author's projects in the field of architecture.

Dimitrina Popova is the author of a monograph and several other publications with undoubted scientific contributions. They mark the author's long-term academic interest in the architectural heritage of different periods. Finally, I would like to add that no elements of plagiarism are noticeable in her texts.

5. D. Popova has presented her academic work at international and national conferences. She has been involved in a number of research projects, including those in the field of research and digitization of cultural heritage monuments, such as *Cultural Heritage in the Archives of the Institute of Art Studies: Interactive Map of the Arts in Bulgaria for the Construction of a Centre for High Achievements Heritage BG* (2020-2022) and *Bulgarian Cultural Heritage Presented in Virtual Digital Spaces of Different Eras* under the Bulgarian Studies National Program (2022-2025).

Dimitrina Popova meets the requirements for candidates for the academic position of Associate Professor according to Art. 24, par. 24, paragraph 1 of the LDASRB, as well as the additional requirements of the Institute of Art Studies - BAS.

In conclusion, considering the qualities of the candidate, I vote positively for the election of senior assistant Dr. Arch. **Dimitrina Marinova Popova** to the academic position of Associate Professor by the Scientific Council of the Institute of Art Studies.

Sofia Assoc. Prof. Dr. Marina Koleva

14. 10. 2024 г.