

Women in the History of Academic Science in Bulgaria

Dzheni Ivanova

Scientific Archive, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1, “15 Noemvri”, Str, Sofia, Bulgaria
dzheni.ivanova@gmail.com

Abstract. The goal of this paper is to present the project “Women in the history of academic science in Bulgaria” of the BAS Scientific Archive. In this regard, will be created an encyclopedic reference book and an archival database about the academic career of women. The expected scientific results are as follows: establishment of an information body with free access to the materials and options to extract concepts from them; building a comprehensive interdisciplinary theoretical framework for analysis of information on women in science; the popularization of themed archives will enrich the vision of women history and science history, as well as about the cultural and historical heritage.

Keywords: Women, History of Science, Gender History, Archival Database

1 Introduction

The goal of the paper is to present the project “Women in the history of academic science in Bulgaria” of the BAS Scientific Archive with participation of researchers from the Historical Research Institute at BAS (HRI at BAS), Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” (SU) and University of Library Studies and Information Technologies. The project is supported and funded by UNESCO. In this regard, for the first time in Bulgarian historiography will be prepared encyclopedic reference book about the place of women in the history of the Academy (Savova, E., Velinova, L., & others., 1969a) (Savova, E., Velinova, L., & others, 1969b) (Savova, E., Velinova, L., & others, 1972). Archival database will popularize the professional activity of women in the field of knowledge and the various branches of science in Bulgaria.

The information reference book and the database titled: will raise awareness about women’s participation in the scientific and research activity, based on the sources kept at various archives. The documentary wealth is the most truthful source regarding the life, work and achievements of scientists. Bringing that into scientific circulation has great importance for the history of Bulgarian science and the role of women in its development.

2 Project Description

To compile the reference book we will use autobiographical and biographical documents, materials related to the creative and public activity, documents from official and

staff records, kept on file at the Academy and in the institutes (42 independent scientific units and 8 academic specialized units in the BAS system), in the scientists personal funds, in various collections and personal archives. The project plans to also use documents from unprocessed archival funds, which are currently inaccessible to researchers in terms of methodology. Apart from that, materials from the processed archival funds will be included, which are familiar to the research community, but are vaguely examined in the different aspects of the topic about the role and significance of women in the academic science development. In a large portion of the personal archives of renowned scientists (male) there is information about the activity of women researchers as well: office scientists; female lecturers in Bulgarian and foreign universities; women carrying out charitable activity for science and education; and/or women working at applied and research institutes and laboratories. That will present an opportunity to outline the main trends and characteristics of women participating in the creation of scientific knowledge in Bulgaria as per periods, areas of expertise and professional field, as well as to outline the preferences towards different branches of science. It is evident from BAS's history that until the middle of the 20th century the participation of women in science has been scarce. Against the background of general modernization in society and the creation of the network of scientific institutions and laboratories, the picture is changing relatively quickly. The proposed project aims to examine the staff potential (women) in BAS system by preparing the most exhaustive lists possible for the period from the establishment of the Academy in 1869, to present day. We will also include (vaguely known so far) information about women who have contributed to the creation and development of the institution. The accent will be placed on the main biographical elements in their personal and professional development, their political orientation, the public activity, membership in domestic and international scientific organizations, participation in international forums and projects, etc.

It is necessary to track the improvement of the qualifications and the capacity of women, working in science, their career and scientific growth through the award of scientific degrees (Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Science) and academic positions (senior assistant, associated professor, professor, associated member, academician). In this regard, the Academy Archive keeps the official and staff records of its members in collection No. 23: "Documents regarding scientific degrees and academic positions"; the registry of certificates for academic positions – "senior assistant", "associated professor", and "professor", issued by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; the registry of diplomas awarding educational and scientific degree "Doctor of Philosophy" and scientific degree "Doctor of Science", issued by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences; the register of certificates, issued by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences to acknowledge diplomas, issued abroad.

The database and articles in the reference book will also include the activity of women on management positions in their respective institutes and as members of the General Assemblies and the Assembly of academicians and associated members.

The professional experience of female researchers may also be revealed on the basis of awarded state honors and prizes they have received during their professional growth. That way their public activity will also be popularized.

3 Electronic Database

Along with the reference book, an electronic database will also be set up. On that foundation, a thematic micro website will be built to provide information on the project, with the option for full text search and virtual presentation of selected documents related to the project. A wiki-system will be built, that will be connected to the website, where scientific workers will be able to add read-out text to the attached images of documents related to the history of women in academic science.

4 Implementation

The activities under this project shall be implemented in two stages, for a period of one year.

The first stage, encompassing a period of six months includes preparation, selection and review of the printed sources on the topic; studying and research activity with archive materials at the Scientific Archive of BAS, Archives State Agency and the regional archives related thereto, the Bulgarian historical archive with the National Library “St. Cyril and St. Methodius”, the archives of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and New Bulgarian University etc. Scanning and processing of the scanned copies of the more important documents, related to the history of women and making entries in the database regarding the generated information. In addition to the above, we will start creating encyclopedic articles for the reference book, following the created structure, and we will also conduct interviews with Bulgarian researchers from different branches of science. Unprocessed personal funds from the Scientific archive of BAS will be systematized and measures will be taken to restore and preserve the damaged documents.

During the second stage of the project, we will prepare the final versions of the articles in the reference book, we will make indexes, and certain elements of the articles will be translated into English. The selected illustrative materials (personal and group photographs) will also take their place in the edition. The final draft of the work will be reviewed by two editors, participating in the project. In the course of the work, external consultants will also be involved. The result of the cooperation will be an exhibition dedicated to the women in academic science, which will be displayed during the reference book presentation. Also, we plan to prepare and print a catalogue of the exhibition.

5 Contribution to Science Development

This project implementation will help in outlining a new thematic circle in science both in Bulgaria and in other countries. The innovative nature of its methodology will build a new research model, which may be applied by other scientific teams as well.

The thematic model and the encyclopedic-referential nature of the publication is the information bank containing the history of women and genders, scientific knowledge,

source knowledge, historiography, genealogy and other disciplines, outlining a broad interdisciplinary field.

The expected scientific results are as follows: establishment of an information body with free access to the materials and options to extract concepts from them; building a comprehensive interdisciplinary theoretical framework for analysis of information on women in science; the popularization of archives will enrich the vision of the cultural heritage and history of science.

6 Significance of the Scientific Solutions to Society

The project will help in providing more public visibility for the instances of academic science created by women. That will form a certain public attitude and will stimulate the active inclusion of young women in the field of science. More information will be made available regarding the empowerment of women in academic institutions. Also, that way, a number of prejudices will be eliminated that are currently deemed valid about the “weak gender”, regarding its significance.

The study is also directly correlated to the overall cultural appearance of our society, because it will attract the attention to aspects of great importance for the social cohabitation of men and women, and because it will develop our value system about equal rights between the genders, solidarity, trust and involvement.

The encyclopedic edition will be useful not only to researchers on this subject, but it will also be used by students and by a broader scope of scientists, lecturers, journalists, publicists, politicians and women NGOs.

References

- Savova, E., Velinova, L., & others. (1969b). *100 godini BAN 1869-1969* (Vol. 2). (P. Zarev, I. Peshev, B. Kurtev, & E. Mateev, Eds.) Sofia, Bulgaria: BAS Publisher.
- Savova, E., Velinova, L., & others. (1972). *100 godini BAN 1869-1969* (Vol. 3). (P. Zarev, I. Peshev, B. Kurtev, & E. Mateev, Eds.) Sofia, Bulgaria: BAS Publisher.
- Savova, E., Velinova, L., & others. (1969a). *100 godini BAN 1869-1969* (Vol. 1). (P. Zarev, I. Peshev, B. Kurtev, & E. Mateev, Eds.) Sofia, Bulgaria: BAS Publisher.

Received: June 02, 2017

Reviewed: July 04, 2017

Final Accepted: July 23, 2017