

STATEMENT
about the contest for the academic position "Professor",
announced by the Institute of Literature – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
(State Gazette 102/8 February 2019)

by Assoc. Prof. Maya Petrova-Taneva,
Institute of Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

The only applicant for the academic position "Professor" in the contest, announced by the Institute of Literature - BAS (State Gazette, issue 102/8 February 2019) is Assoc. Prof. Ana Stoykova Stoykova.

Assoc. Prof. Ana Stoykova is an established medievalist and palaeoslait with international prestige and an author of numerous outstanding studies in the field of medieval Bulgarian literature. Although she has long experience as a lecturer at several universities (Plovdiv, Warsaw and New Bulgarian University), her scholarly career is primarily related to the Institute of Literature, where she has worked since 1978 as a philologist, research fellow, and senior research fellow / Associate Professor (since 1999). Ana Stoykova became a Doctor of Science in 2015 after publishing her impressive research *St. George the Victory-Bearer. South Slavic Medieval Hagiographic Tradition* (724 p.). She played an important role in the preparation of the four volumes of the authoritative *Cyrillo-Methodian Encyclopaedia* and was responsible for one of its most difficult and time-consuming parts - the bibliography. She has dedicated great part of her time and energy to the journal *Medieval Bulgarian Literature* (Старобългарска литература), first as a member of its editorial board and since 2012 as its editor-in-chief. Ana Stoykova is actively involved in the international and national projects of the Department of Medieval Bulgarian Literature at the Institute of literature. She is in fact the head of the largest of them – *Medieval Bulgarian Literature in the Context of the Byzantine and Medieval Slavic Literatures*, which brings together the personal research topics of the members of the scholarly team. She is also the organizer of the seminar regularly held in the frames of this project. During this seminar colleagues from different scientific institutions are invited to present and discuss current outcomes and achievements of their studies. Ana Stoykova is in charge of the international cooperation of the Department of Medieval Bulgarian Literature with Romania and Poland. Her success is evidenced by the fact that the international projects of the Department with these countries have been renewed several times. From 1999 to 2001 Ana Stoykova was the Scientific Secretary of the Institute of Literature. She has been its deputy director for many years (2001-2007, 2012-) and she holds this administrative position at present.

In this contest, Assoc. Prof. Ana Stoykova presents four books (one in co-authorship and one electronic edition), 35 papers and studies written in Bulgarian and in English, as well as a large number of book reviews and articles in encyclopaedia and reference books. All of them were published in the period from 2000 to 2018, that is after her habilitation as Associate Professor. The full list of her works consists of 141 titles. Most are dedicated to the investigation of Slavonic translations of Byzantine hagiographic works, to the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, and to publication of unknown South Slavic texts and manuscript copies. The list of her citations points to 168 citations spotted by the author, some of them in foreign publications.

Here, I will present briefly some of Ana Stoykova's publications in chronological order, as this allows to see the development of her methodology and the innovative elements that she has introduced in the study of non-liturgical texts with fluctuating tradition.

I will start with Stoykova's electronic edition of the three existing South Slavic translations of the Byzantine recension of Physiologus (2011), which is highly appreciated both in Bulgaria and abroad. The edition is in the form of an internet site. It makes possible not only to compare in detail the individual manuscript copies of the same version (often significantly differing in their language, spelling, word order, vocabulary and in the order of the texts included), but also to read each individual text separately by itself. The publication is accompanied by comprehensive information about the history of the Physiologus, about the Byzantine manuscripts which contain it, about the preserved South Slavic translations and their manuscript copies, the libraries where they are kept, their closest Greek parallels (when known), etc. The electronic edition gives access to dynamically formed dictionaries, a translation of the Physiologus' texts in modern Bulgarian, and bibliography. The site is accessible from anywhere, user-friendly and, last but not least, very beautiful to look at.

The topic of the dragon-slayer saints has long been in the focus of Ana Stoykova's attention. She has dedicated to it a number of studies - more than ten articles and two monographs, *St. George the Victory-Bearer. South Slavic Medieval Hagiographic Tradition* (2015) and *Dragon-Slayer Saints: Theodore Tiron, Theodore Stratelates and George the Victory-Bearer. South Slavic Medieval Tradition* (2019). The first monograph is an in-depth research into the cult and the hagiographic tradition of perhaps the most popular Christian warrior-saint and has been undoubtedly highly esteemed by the scholars. In this book, Stoykova describes in detail the birth of St. George's cult, bringing to light numerous curious facts and controversial hypotheses around his personality, presents the development of the cult in various ethnic and religious communities and their contribution to the history of the saint. Naturally, the emphasis is on the hagiographic texts about him produced in enormous amount both in Byzantium and in the Slavic countries. As the author suggests, St. George's Byzantine Passions form a tangle of interlinked textual recensions and versions. This fact, along with the long history of their Slavonic translations and the intensity of their transmission, makes the search for the origins of the Slavonic translations very difficult. Relying on a careful textual analysis, Ana Stoykova distinguishes between the existing translations, their recensions and versions, makes well-grounded assumptions about the time and place of their origin, about the Greek anticolon used in each translation, and points to the types of manuscripts where these texts were disseminated. One of the greatest achievements of this book is that it makes available previously unknown or little-known Slavonic texts published in original. The deeds of St. George, with their infinite variety of motives reminding of fairy-tales, where various tortures of the saint are accompanied by endless miracles (such as, for instance, the saint being judged by exactly 72 kings or his threefold resurrection before being finally killed with a sword) were read and rewritten for centuries among the Southern Slavs. These texts contain invaluable source material for further studies in medieval literature, culture, language and art history.

The topic of the dragon-slayer saints is continued in the new monograph by Ana Stoykova, presented as habilitation work in this contest. The victory over a dragon is a common motif in medieval hagiography, as well as in biblical and classical literature, and in folklore. Although traditionally associated with the Life cycle of St. George, the episode about the killing of a monster is part of the hagiographic narratives about two other well-known warrior-saints -

St. Theodore Tiron and St. Theodore Stratelates. Indeed, as Ana Stoykova convincingly shows, the dragon-slaying episode is first attested among the miracles of St. Theodore Tiron. Later on, it strongly influenced the hagiographic tradition of St. Theodore Stratelates. In the *Life of St. George* it appears rather late, only after the 12th century. Stoykova summarizes the information about the cult of each of these three early Christian martyrs examining various historical, archaeological and iconographic sources. She makes a very concise overview of the emergence and interpretation of the dragon-slaying motif in Greek hagiographic, homiletic and hymnographic tradition about them outlining the time of its occurrence, its enrichment with additional elements, and its diffusion in various types of manuscripts, both as a part of the saint's Life and as a self-standing miracle. Against this background, the South Slavic manuscript material is introduced. It should be emphasized that the search for the extant manuscript copies of these texts in different manuscript collections, libraries and archives, their examination and systematization in groups according to their versions is a contribution in itself, since many of the manuscripts studied do not fall within the scope of the *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Balcano-Slavica* by Klimentina Ivanova. For instance, Ana Stoykova succeeds in identifying the Serbian codex used (without pointing to it) by V. Jagić in 1886 in his publication of the *Miracle of St. George with the dragon*. Jagić's text proves to be very important with respect to the history of this Miracle in Slavic literatures. Ana Stoykova manages to find its earlier copy, to prove that the text corresponds to the so-called Extended Greek recension (BHG 678b), and to trace its presence in the *damaskin* collections connected to the Adjar literary centre in the 17th century.

The study of the South Slavic transcripts of dragon-slaying miracles of St. Theodore Tiron, St. Theodore Stratelates and St. George in South Slavic medieval literature confronts Ana Stoykova with a very difficult task. Firstly, some of the texts she deals with (especially those found in Triodia and Reading Menaia belonging to the so-called Old redaction) display many variations. This fact is a result of the constant changes introduced due to editorial interventions over time - both in terms of language and vocabulary, as well as in terms of frequent addition or dropping out of elements from the plot. Secondly, there is no critical edition of the Byzantine texts about St. Theodore Tiron and St. Theodore Stratelates, so there is no a solid basis for comparison with the Slavonic translations. All this makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to determine which of the extant South Slavic copies is the closest to the supposed Greek antibolon, to draw the stemma of the copies, the sequence of their appearance and their possible interrelations. One could get an idea as to how complicated the problem is by tracing Ana Stoykova's conclusions about the history of the Old Bulgarian translation of *Passion of St. Theodore Stratelates attributed to Augarus*. She finds out that the *Miracle with the dragon* was not included in its initial Slavonic translation made in Preslav. As part of the early liturgical books, this translation became widespread, brought to the territory of Ohrid Archbishopric (and thus found its way to codices of Western Bulgarian and Serbian origin), as well as to Russia. It was copied in both liturgical and non-liturgical manuscripts. By studying its language peculiarities, Stoykova distributes the South Slavic manuscript copies in two main groups, each of them having three subgroups. She proves that the *Miracle of St. Theodore Stratelates with the dragon* is apparently a later interpolation, but its addition to the *Passion by Augarus* is not a one-time act - the missing episode itself has three independent translations, which were incorporated within the versions of the already existing Slavonic text of the *Passion* at different stages of its transmission. The *Miracle of St. George with the Dragon* has an equally complicated textual development. Ana Stoykova discovers two South Slavonic translations of

the so-called Common recension of the Greek text (BHG 678), a translation of the Extended Greek recension (BHG 678b), which possibly entered in South Slavic literatures with the mediation of a Russian source, and a translation of an unidentified Greek original. By analyzing their language, the author highlights the specific grammatic and lexical characteristics of each South Slavonic translation or textual recension, lists and explains archaic and rare words, and offers reasonable hypotheses about the time and place of their occurrence.

The study of the dragon-slaying miracles of St. Theodore Tiron, St. Theodore Stratelates and St. George is accompanied by a critical edition of all the South Slavic texts discussed in the book.. The *Miracle of St. Theodore Tiron with his mother and the dragon* is published according to all known manuscript copies. The text is divided into parallel horizontal segments - a method already used by Stoykova in her earlier monographs to present texts of floating tradition and to facilitate their detailed comparison.

At the end of this brief review of Ana Stoykova's scholarly publications, I would like to mention her participation in prestigious academic editions such as the *History of Bulgarian Medieval Literature* (edited by Anisava Miltenova, Sofia, 2008 and 2009), as well as her generalizing studies on broader topics, such as her overview of the transformations of the cult of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Bulgarian Middle Ages, on the hagiographic repertoire in Bulgaria during the 9th – 10th century, on the use of information technologies in literary studies, etc. These articles once again disclose Ana Stoykova's precise, clear and objective analysis of the processes, problems and works of the old Bulgarian literature in different historical periods.

I have known Assoc. Prof. Ana Stoykova since 1998, when I myself became a member of the Department of Mediaeval Bulgarian Literature at the Institute of Literature. I am acquainted with her publications, her participation in national and international scholarly fora, her work as editor-in-chief of the journal *Medieval Bulgarian Literature / Старобългарска литература*, I have witnessed her efforts to raise the authority of the journal and of the Institute of Literature being its deputy director. For me personally, as well as, I believe, for my colleagues palaeoslavists, Ana Stoykova is an example of scholarly ethics, profound knowledge and high professionalism. On the basis of her undoubted scholarly achievements, as well as on her scholarly contribution to work at the Institute of Literature, I strongly recommend to the jury to grant to Assoc. Prof. Ana Stoykova the academic position "Professor", and I will vote for this.

June 1st, 2019
Sofia

Assoc. Prof. Maya Petrova-Taneva, PhD