

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ	
Изходящ №	дата 201 г.
Входящ № <u>297</u>	дата <u>21.08.</u> 20 <u>13</u> г.
София 1113, бул. Шипченски проход № 52, бл. 17 тел.: 02/ 979 29 98 ; факс: 02/ 870 21 91	

R E V I E W

By Assoc. Prof. Elena Kostova

Institute for Historical Studies – Bulgarian academy of Sciences

Member of the Scientific Jury of the “**Professor**” competition

In the Professional Field: 2.2. History and archaeology,
Scientific Specialty: “History of Bulgaria” (Italian sources for Bulgarian medieval history)

For the needs of the “Medieval History” section, Institute for Historical Studies – BAS,
as announced in the State Gazette (No. 38 of 28.04.2023)

1. Information about the Competition

At the competition for the academic position “Professor” in the Professional field 2.2 History and archaeology, Scientific specialty “History of Bulgari” (Italian sources for Bulgarian medieval history), for the needs of the section “Medieval History” at the Institute for Historical Studies - BAS, announced in the State Gazette (No. 38 of 28.04.2023), appeared only one candidate – Assoc. Prof. Dr. (PhD) Penka Stiliyanova Danova. The procedure and the resulting requirements in accordance with the Law for Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations of the Institute for Historical Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences have been observed, which is evident from the submitted documentation. In reviewing the entire content of the documents, I found no violations. From the attached documentation on the competition, it is clear that the candidate for the academic position “Professor” has the necessary scientometric profile. The points collected in some of the indicator groups exceed the required minimum many times over. The members of the Scientific Jury were provided with all the necessary documents for the competition, as well as the candidate’s scientific works.

2. Information about the Candidate in the Competition

Penka Stiliyanova Danova completed her Master's degree in Italian Philology at the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski” in 1980. In 1997, she defended her doctoral dissertation titled: “The Balkan peoples under Ottoman rule in the works of Venetian diplomats and travelers (second half of the 15th-16th centuries)”.

From 1980 to 2011, Penka Danova worked as a researcher at the Institute of Balkan Studies - BAS, in the Section “Cultural History of the Balkan Peoples”. There she gained

extensive experience in organizing and conducting national and international scientific forums, prepared a number of scientific publications, participated in the development and implementation of numerous projects related to the work of the unit. In 2011 Penka Danova was elected as an Associate Professor at the Institute of Balkan Studies with a Center for Tracology – BAS, where she worked until the end of March 2020. Since April 1, 2020, she has been part of the scientific staff of the Institute for Historical Studies – BAS, “Medieval History” Section, and holding the academic position of Associate Professor.

Assoc. Prof. Danova is a member of the Association of Byzantinists and Medievalists in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies. She specialized in a number of prestigious research centers in Italy. Her scientific interests are focused mainly on searching, translating and commenting on Italian sources related to the Bulgarian history.

3. Description of scientific works

Assoc. Prof. P. Danova, for her participation in the current competition, has attached a complete list of her publications, printed after receiving the academic title “Docent” in 2011. A significant volume and quality production is presented, including four monographs, 55 articles, 18 reviews, a large part of them published in reputable Bulgarian and foreign publications.

Specifically, in the announced competition for “Professor”, Assoc. Prof. Penka Danova appeared with four monographs, one of them was co-authored (with Assoc. Prof. Sn. Rakova) and 19 articles published in Bulgarian, Italian and French. As can be seen from the attached list of citations, her publications have a good citation rate by other scientists working on similar issues.

The main monograph with which Prof. Danova appears in the current competition fulfills the function of a habilitation thesis and is entitled: *“Bulgaria and the Bulgarians in Italian historiography (XIV–XVII centuries). – Sofia: Institute for Historical Studies, 2023. – ISBN 978-954-2903-63-3.* This research, together with the other three monographs presented in the competition, are a vivid testimony to the lasting scientific interests of Prof. Danova, aimed at the search, translation and publication of Italian sources about the past of Bulgaria, the Bulgarians and the Balkans in the period XIV - XVII.

A large part of the presented articles on this competition are also focused on separate historical sources, providing information about Bulgaria and the Bulgarians, as well as about the Balkans in general. Here we can list articles with numbers No. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23. The second thematic circle of research, which stands out in the scientific production of Prof. Danova, is related to the life and work of a number of Italian diplomats,

reflected in studies No. 7, 12. The same topic is widely represented in some of the monographs of Prof. Danova, attached to the present competition (see: No. 2, 3). Several of the presented publications are related to: Bulgarian historiography, reflecting the development of Bulgarian-Italian relations (No. 5), as well as publications relating to the development of Italian studies in Bulgaria (No. 20), etc. As a result of the long-term cooperation of Prof. Danova with colleagues from the Romanian Academy of Sciences and during the implementation of a number of bilateral Bulgarian-Romanian projects, in the scientific output of the candidate stand out studies dedicated to the role of the merchant in the Balkans in the period XV - XIX centuries (No. 21) etc.

4. Scientific contributions

Presenting the scientific contributions of Assoc. Prof. Danova's work, the main emphasis will be placed on the monograph with which she appeared at the current competition, and which fulfills the role of a habilitation thesis, entitled: *“Bulgaria and the Bulgarians in Italian historiography (XIV-XVII centuries)”*. – Sofia: Institute for Historical Studies, 2023. – ISBN 978-954-2903-63-3.

The monograph reviews the information about Bulgaria and the Bulgarians mentioned in the Italian historiography in the period XIV-XVII centuries. The study is well-structured – it consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, references, a list of illustrations and a summary. In her book, Danova traces the works of a number of Italian authors whose writings cover some of the most important moments of our medieval past, while and at the same time she manages to present and summarize the way how Bulgarians are described in the Italian historical literature of the period in question. The research work, the generalizations and conclusions reached by Assoc. Prof. Danova are the result of her long and in-depth work, which allows her to study the sources and to introduce into scientific use some unknown or little-known reports about Bulgarian history.

Working with historical sources, the colleague skillfully traces the main moments of medieval Bulgarian history, which are most often described in the works of the Italian authors, and at the same time she analyzes and searches for the reasons for this. In her monograph, Danova reaches the eloquent conclusion that what was written about Bulgaria and the Bulgarians was influenced by both traditions and various political factors related to the development of Europe during the period in question.

The introduction reflects the factors that predetermine the interest of scholars from the Old Italian states in the medieval history of Bulgaria and the Bulgarians. This introductory part

also reviews a major issue concerning *Latin-Italian bilingualism*. The issue was of key importance in Italian historiography until the end of the 18th century.

The first chapter, “*Bulgaria and the Bulgarians in the urban, universal and monastery chronicles in Italian from the 14th and 15th centuries*”, contains an overview of the works of five authors who provide information on the history of Bulgaria and the Bulgarians. It is about Giovanni Villani (and his successors), Giovanni Cercambi and Bartolomeo Pitti, Antonino Pierozzi, Giacomo di Filippo Foresti, presented biographically by P. Danova. In this part of the research, the author emphasizes the fact that in the City chronicles of the Late Middle Ages, compiled in Italian, information about Bulgaria and the Bulgarians is rarely found. Often the name “Bulgaria” is found only in a historical-geographical context.

A contributing point in P. Danova’s work is the information provided by Giovanni Cercambi, regarding the use of firearms by the crusaders during the siege of Nicopolis in 1396. In the chronicles of Antonino Pierozzi and Giacomo di Filippo Foresti about Bulgaria and the Bulgarians wrote in the context of the Bulgarian-Byzantine military-political confrontations, as well as in connection with the Conversion of the Bulgarians. Danova rightly emphasizes the fact that these writings set the main themes on which Bulgaria and the Bulgarians will be reflected in Italian historiography in the future. Topics related to: the origin of the Bulgarians are mentioned; their encounter with the Byzantine emperor Constantine IV and the victory over his troops; their establishment in the lands of the Eastern Roman Empire, the role of Khan Tervel, etc.

The second chapter is entitled “*The Bulgarians in the works on general history of the sixteenth century*”. It examines the works of four Italian authors – Marco Guazzo, Giovanni Tarcagnotta, Pierfrancesco Giambulari and Giovanni Nicolo Doglioni, again presented biographically. All of them, as colleague Danova explicitly notes, are authors closely related to Venetian printing.

The book notes that in the selected works, in addition to the well-known topics related to the previous coverage of Bulgarian history by Italian historiography, some new moments also appear. They refer to the Bulgarian rulers from the era of the Ottoman invasions (M. Guatso), or to the provision of information about the Byzantine emperors John Tzimishi and Basil II, about the campaigns of Prince Svetoslav, about the Komitopoulis, about Tsar Samuel, etc. (Giovanni Tarcagnotta). The monograph emphasizes the work of Pierfrancesco Giambulari, which dwells in particular on the reign of King Simeon. Particularly rich in information about the Bulgarians and their history is “*Table of the most remarkable things contained in the Amphitheater of Europe*” by Giovanni Nicolo Doglioni, analyzed in depth by Assoc. Prof. P.

Danova. Based on the detailed study and comparison of the texts, P. Danova reaches the correct conclusions that in the 16th century the Bulgarians and their history are permanently present in Italian World histories, and the author brings out the common themes reflected in the works of the selected authors.

Chapter three is entitled *“Parceling Knowledge – Parceling Historiography in the Baroque Era”*. It actually consists of several parts, reflecting the evolution in the development of knowledge and the profiling of individual scientific disciplines in the 17th century. First of all, the research focuses on *“Reports from around the world”* written by Giovanni Botero, which are essentially diplomatic and missionary reports describing the state of the countries of the world. In addition, Botero, in the series of biographies of great personalities that he wrote, reveals moments from the campaign of Amadeus VI, Count of Savoy against the Bulgarian lands of 1366–1367. Danova also examines the writings of Horazio Torcellini and Antonio Foresti, used as teaching aids, giving information about the history of Bulgaria and Bulgarians. In this part of the work the author pays special attention to the dictionaries and reference books with historical content, on the pages of which there are data on: Bogomilism, on the Bulgarians as a people etc. In the last part of this chapter P. Danova presents the work of Nicolo Bulgari from 1669 and analyzes the relation Bulgari – Bulgarians.

Assoc. Prof. Danova groups the cited authors mainly according to the time in which they composed their works. In this way, the emergence, accumulation and transmission of the information and knowledge relating to our medieval past can be seen. In the course of her entire work, the author presents information about the life of the relevant Italian author, as well as about his work, about the time and circumstances surrounding his writing. In the appendix, Prof. Danova also presents parts of the commented work, relating to the history of the Bulgarians.

In conclusion, we can point out that knowing the content of the Italian works in detail P. Danova does not self-servingly present only the excerpts concerning the history of Bulgaria and the Bulgarians during the Middle Ages. It seeks the objective historical truth, pointing out some of the mistakes made, as well as where they come from. The author clearly points out the opinion of individual writers in relation to Bulgarian history and traces their attitude to the topic, as well as whether they take a pro-Bulgarian, anti-Bulgarian or neutral position. The book draws the conclusion that regardless of the known inaccuracies, the main merit of the Italian historiography under consideration is that it keeps alive the memory of the Bulgarians, of their rulers, of their military glory, as well as of some important stages of the historical development of their country.

Here I will pay some attention to the other three monographs with which Assoc. Prof. Danova participated in the competition. The content of the books will not be presented in detail, but rather I will note some main highlights that stand out in the work of Danova in the preparation of the scientific texts in question. One of the books is titled ***“Giovanni Chiaromanni and his journey from Vienna to Bursa in 1659 // Giovanni Chiaromanni e il suo viaggio da Vienna a Bursa fatto l'anno 1659”***. Sofia: Paradigma, 2017, 257 p. – ISBN 978- 954-326-329-5. The research reveals the personality of Giovanni Chiaromani, sent to the borders of the Ottoman Empire as a nobleman from the retinue of the Austrian Internuncio Augustin von Mayern, who has the task of informing Sultan Mehmed IV of the election of Leopold I as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. During the movement of this embassy, traveling from Vienna to Bursa, passing through Constantinople and returning to the Habsburg Empire, Giovanni Chiaromani sent twenty-five letters to his *“friends and patrons”* in which he described the mission, as two of the letters are in verse form. These texts are the basis of the monographic work. They became available to Bulgarian science thanks to P. Danova, who for the first time in our historiography published the sources in Italian and in Bulgarian translation.

The book contains a detailed introductory part in which Assoc. Prof. Danova reviews the political situation in Europe and the reasons that necessitated the organization of the embassy in question. Here again, the author presents the personality of Giovanni Chiaromani in the context of the era. It is worth explicitly emphasizing that the biography of this Tuscan (from Arezzo) diplomat has not been the subject of research by Bulgarian historical science until now. In the introductory study, Danova also presents information about the addressees of the letters – persons previously unknown to our historical science. Seeking comprehensiveness of the study, the author traces the route of the trip in detail, analyzing and evaluating the information contained in the historical sources. As an experienced philologist, Danova examines the language, style and artistic merits of the letters, which have become a kind of epistolary travelogue. The monograph also contains an independent section, presenting the letters in Bulgarian translation, accompanied by a commentary on historical events, clarification of individual realities, personal names and geographical names. All this is followed by the Italian version of the book.

The next monograph worth mentioning in this review is entitled: ***“Anonymous Chronicle of the Bulgari Counts (end of the 17th century)”***. Sofia: Paradigma, 2014, 200 pp. – ISBN 978-954-326-224-3. The chronicle in question is published for the first time by Assoc. Prof. Danova in a translation into Bulgarian, made at a high professional level. The commentary to the text, outlining the historical context in which the events are unfolding, is also the work

of the author. P. Danova is the author of the extensive introductory study, analyzing the source in detail.

In her research, P. Danova develops convincing hypotheses regarding the author of the chronicle, whose identity remains unknown for the time being; the language in which the work is written; the chronology and stages of composition, as well as the purpose of the text. The main emphasis in the exhibition is placed on the critical analysis that Assoc. Prof. Danova makes of the chronicle itself as a source for the history of Bulgaria in the Middle Ages. The detailed and precise work of Penka Danova with the *“Anonymous Chronicle of the Bulgarian Counts (end of the 17th century)”* presents us with an accomplished researcher who successfully combined the knowledge and rich experience of the philologist with those of the historian, studying and analyzing the past in detail. All this allows P. Danova to state a number of hypotheses that complement our historical knowledge.

The last book is co-authored and reflects the long-term scientific collaboration between Assoc. Prof. Penka Danova and Assoc. Prof. Snezhana Rakova. The monograph is entitled: **Rakova, Sn., Danova, P. “Benedetto Ramberti and Daniello Ludovizi – two Venetian envoys in Constantinople in 1534”**. Plovdiv: Bulgarian Historical Heritage Foundation, 2016, 329 pp. — ISBN 978-954-8536-19-6. Prof. Danova is the author of the second part of the study, related to the personality of Daniello Ludovisi (pp. 191–283), and at the same time she participated in the writing of the general parts of the monograph – preface, alphabetical index, literature, etc.

P. Danova's research reveals the mission entrusted to Daniello Ludovisi by the Senate of the Republic of Venice. At the end of 1533 he was ordered to sail to Constantinople and take part in an embassy aimed at preventing a possible threat to the peace between Venice and the Ottoman Empire. In this context, the study unfolds, based mainly on the final report of the Venetian envoy in Constantinople, Daniello Ludovisi. In the monograph, colleague P. Danova published for the first time the full text of the final report in question, translating it into Bulgarian and preparing a detailed commentary on the text. The research is also accompanied by an introductory study in which the life and work of Ludovisi are traced; the content and nature of the report as a diplomatic document is clarified, making it a valuable source for the era of its composition; attention is drawn to diplomatic documentation in general circulating in the Republic of San Marco. Relying on her indisputable philological knowledge, P. Danova analyzes in detail the differences she finds in the individual editions containing the printed and handwritten versions of the text under consideration. The author makes observations on the language and style, coming to the conclusion that Ludovisi's report underwent two major language revisions aimed at bringing the text to the official literary norm.

Along with her rich research activity, which has already been mentioned, Assoc. Prof. PhD Penka Danova is attaching a reference for a lecture course prepared by her, held at University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”, as well as information about her scientific supervision of a doctoral student dismissed with the right of defense. The number of speeches that Assoc. Prof. Danova has made at various scientific forums in our country and abroad is impressive. The colleague has participated in numerous individual and collective research projects – international and financed by the Bulgarian side, with which, in my opinion, she fully meets the necessary criteria for occupying the academic position of “Professor”.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, I will note that the overall long-term scientific research work of Assoc. Prof. PhD Penka Stiliyanova Danova presents her as an established scientist, worthy of occupying the academic position of “Professor”. Her scientific output fully corresponds to the requirements for occupying the position in question, in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations of the Institute for Historical Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Based on this, I am convinced and give my vote for the election of Assoc. Prof. Penka Stiliyanova Danova to the academic position of “Professor”. The foregoing gives me reason to suggest to the Honorable Scientific Jury to recommend to the members of the Scientific Council of the Institute for Historical Studies at the BAS to elect Associate Professor PhD Penka Stiliyanova Danova to the position of “Professor” in Professional field 2.2. History and archaeology, Scientific specialty “History of Bulgaria”, (“Italian sources for Bulgarian medieval history”).

Sofia, August the 10th, 2023

Elena Kostova, PhD, Assoc. Prof.
Institute for Historical Studies – BAS