

БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ ИНСТИТУТ ЗА ИСТОРИЧЕСКИ ИЗСЛЕДВАНИЯ	
Исходящ №	дата 201 г.
Входящ № 300	дата 12.08. 2013 г.
София 1113, бул. Шипченски проход № 52, бл. 17 тел.: 02/ 979 29 98 ; факс: 02/ 870 21 91	

EXPERT OPINION

from Prof. Dr. Alexander Nikolov Nikolov

SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", PN 2.2 History and Archeology (Medieval History)

On the academic achievements for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Professor" in Professional Field 2.2 History and Archaeology, academic specialty "History of Bulgaria" ("Italian sources for Bulgarian medieval history") announced in SG No. 38/28.04.2023 by the Institute for Historical Studies - BAS, for the needs of the "Medieval History" section with a single candidate, Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Penka Stiliyanova Danova.

I. Assessment of compliance with the minimal national requirements and the requirements of the Institute for Historical Studies at the BAS.

The verification of the data submitted by the applicant shows that the minimal national requirements of The Development of Academic Staff in the **Republic of Bulgaria Act**, and the requirements of the Rules of the Institute for Historical Research-BAS have been met and the procedure is completely legitimate. The candidate meets the conditions for participation in the procedure for occupying the academic position "professor", as the indicators in all six groups fully cover the necessary conditions.

II. Research activity and results:

The only candidate, Assoc. Ph.D. Penka Stiliyanova Danova, graduated with a major in "Italian Philology" in 1980 at the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski". In 1997, she successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on the topic "The Balkan peoples under Ottoman rule in the works of the Venetian diplomats and travelers (second half of the 15th -16th centuries). At the same time, from 1980 to 2011, she held the position of "researcher" at the Institute of Balkan Studies - BAS, "Cultural History of the Balkan Peoples" section, taking part in numerous academic forums with national and international participation as well as in numerous projects and preparation of various scholarly editions and publications. In 2011, she won a competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at the Institute of Balkan Studies with the Center for Thracology at the BAS, and from April 2020 she became part of

the Institute of Historical Research's academic staff, "Medieval History" section, as Assoc. Professor as well.

Associate Professor Dr. Penka Danova is a member of the Association of Byzantinologists and Medievalists in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Society for the Study of the Eighteenth Century. She specialized in several prestigious research centers in Italy. Her scientific interests are mainly focused on finding, translating, and commenting mainly on Italian sources relating to Bulgarian history.

III. Description of the academic achievements and contributions:

Assoc. Prof. Danova presented an impressive list of publications published after 2011, when she won a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor". These are four monographs, 55 articles and studies and 18 reviews and reviews in renowned publications at home and abroad. The candidate has taken part in the compilation and editing of several collections.

The four monographs (one co-authored with Assoc. Prof. Snezhana Rakova) and 19 articles and studies in Bulgarian, Italian and French have been submitted for participation in the current competition. These publications have been cited widely by representatives of the medievalist guild at home and abroad, which is also evident from the attached list of citations required for participation in the competition.

As a habilitation thesis, Assoc. Prof. Danova presented a monograph with the title "Bulgaria and the Bulgarians in Italian historiography (14th -17th centuries), Sofia, Institute for Historical Studies-BAS, 2023. ISBN 978-954-2903-63-3. The work is a summary of Penka Danova's many years of research in the field of source studies: investigation, translation and interpretation of numerous Italian-language sources related to the past of Bulgaria and the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages. The same issue is widely presented in the other three presented monographs, as well as in the studies and articles included for participation in the competition. The first thematic round of articles and studies covers 13 publications, in which Assoc. Prof. Danova presents individual specific sources containing valuable and sometimes unique information about the history of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian people and the Balkans as a whole (No. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23).

A second group of publications, in particular No.7 and 12, examines the life and activities of Italian diplomats who resided in the Balkans mainly during the era of Ottoman rule on our lands. This is also a topic addressed in some of the presented monographs.

The third round of publications (Nos. 5 and 20) are devoted to problems of historiography and Italian studies in general, which also suggests the fundamental philological education of the candidate in the field of Italian and Latin languages. Publication No. 21 and other separate publications present the contributions of Assoc. Prof. Danova in the study of Balkan trade and the role of merchants in the Balkans, and the results of her participation in several joint projects with the Romanian Academy of Sciences are also reflected here.

The habilitation monograph "Bulgaria and the Bulgarians in Italian historiography (14th –17th centuries)" consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, references, a list of illustrations and a summary. In her book, Prof. Danova, based on rich source material, outlines a full-blooded picture of the image of the Bulgarians in the Italian historiography of the period under consideration. The monograph is the culmination of many years of thorough research in Italian and other European archives, which have brought to light and put into use invaluable texts on the subject that has interested Prof. Danova throughout her career.

Already in the Introduction, Prof. Danova makes an extremely valuable comment about the symbiosis between the Latin and Italian languages in the period under consideration, which requires good knowledge from the researchers and an awareness of the overflow of the two languages in the studied texts. This focus will also be of great benefit to future researchers on the subject, as it reveals the difficulties and pitfalls that this symbiosis presents to them.

The first chapter examines the works of the most famous Italian historians of the period in question - Giovanni Villani, together with his successors, Giovanni Sercambi and Bartolomeo Pitti, Antonino Pierozzi, Giacomo di Filippo Foresti - representatives of the rich Italian tradition of historiography and the genre of urban chronicle. Bulgaria and Bulgarians appear sporadically in these texts, as most of these texts focus too much on events taking place in the Apennines.

However, some key moments of medieval Bulgarian history, especially related to Bulgarian-Byzantine relations and conflicts, are presented in these texts, and in separate works, valuable information about the initial stage of the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans and in the Bulgarian lands can be found.

The second chapter is dedicated to the historiography in the 16th century, when, along with the traditional themes from the Bulgarian Middle Ages, information about the Bulgarians under Ottoman rule is also presented. Central here are the writings of Marco Guazzo, Giovanni Tarcagnotta, Pierfrancesco Giambullari and Giovanni Niccolò Doglioni, closely related to the Venetian tradition of book printing. Assoc. Prof. Danova pays special attention to Doglioni and his "Amphitheater of Europe", where Bulgaria and Bulgarians find their place, regardless of the lost political freedom at that time.

The third chapter examines the subject in Italian Baroque historiography, and in particular the writings of Giovanni Botero, Orazio Torcellini, Antonio Foresti, and Niccolò Bulgari. The candidate places special emphasis on Botero's work "Reports from around the world" and also on the biography and works of Niccolò Bulgari, which are of special interest in her other studies.

The summaries and conclusions drawn from the studied texts show that Bulgaria and the Bulgarians were well known to the Italian authors of the period in question and as a "historical" people, with their place in world history, regardless of the lost political and ecclesiastical independence at the end of the 14th century. Several trends in the presentation of Bulgarian issues by the individual authors are also reflected, refracted through a wealth of information that refers to their overall creative and life path.

I will briefly touch on the other three presented monographs, which also represent a valuable contribution of Associate Professor Danova in the researched field and fit perfectly into the theme of the competition. First, it is 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 pp. - ISBN 978-954 -326-329-5. This is an extremely interesting diary of an Italian in Austrian service who traveled from Central Europe to Constantinople and Bursa and visited the Serbian and Bulgarian territories of the Ottoman Empire.

Assoc. Prof. Danova's approach to a comprehensive study of the text and the author is very valuable, which gives us a clear idea of the place of the Bulgarian theme in the context of the presented source. Assoc. Danova's extremely valuable research on the Anonymous Chronicle of the Bulgari Counts has a similarly comprehensive character - a source from the end of the 17th century containing unique information, both about Bulgarian history and the Bulgari family, to which the detailed introductory study is also dedicated to the monograph.

Finally, we should note the joint research of Assoc. Prof. Danova with Assoc. Prof. Rakova on two well-known Venetian politicians and diplomats - Benedetto Ramberti and Daniele Ludovisi, who visited Constantinople at the height of the Magnificent Century. The two recognized connoisseurs of Venetian politics in the Balkans in the period under consideration present us a full-blooded picture of the epoch, and the background of this extremely interesting delegation of the Venetian diplomats to the Sublime Porte.

Prof. Danova's contributions in the field of the connections of Italy and especially Venice with the Balkan region in the Late Middle Ages are large-scale and will yet be appreciated by her followers in the complex field of medieval and early modern history. She combines unique philological skills with the qualities of a historian, a combination that invariably leads to valuable contributions to both scholarly fields.

IV. Conclusion:

From everything stated so far, we can summarize that Associate Professor Penka Stiliyanova Danova, the only candidate, fully meets the criteria and requirements for occupying the academic position of "Professor", in accordance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the Regulations of the Institute for Historical Studies - BAS. Her academic record, her diverse scientific activity, her teaching activity in working with doctoral and master's students testify to high professionalism and significant scholarly achievements in the field of Medieval Studies

Therefore, I firmly support and vote positively with "Yes" for the candidacy of Associate Professor Penka Stiliyanova Danova for the academic position of "Professor".

Date:

Signature: