

## REVIEW

For a professorship competition, announced by the Institute of Literature at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Professional Field 2.1. Philology, Specialty – Bulgarian Literature (Old Bulgarian Literature), published for the needs of the Institute, Old Bulgarian Literature Section, January 2019 (State Gazette Issue 12, February 8, 2019, p. 102) for applicant Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Ana Stoykova Stoykova

Reviewer: Prof D.Sc. Anisava Miltenova, Department of Old Bulgarian Literature, Institute for Literature at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Assoc. Prof D.Sc. Ana Stoykova Stoykova, who has been working in the Department of Old Bulgarian Literature since 1978, is the only candidate in the competition announced by the Institute of Literature. In 1993, she has successfully defended a PhD thesis on the subject of *Physiologus of South Slavonic Literatures* (Institute of Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences). Her habilitation took place in 1999, and in 2015, she defended a dissertation for acquiring the scientific degree Doctor of Sciences with a paper entitled *The Passions of St George the Victory-Bearer in South Slavic Medieval Tradition* (Institute of Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences). In the course of forty years of creative work, she has been studying objects and issues related to the history and theory of Old Bulgarian Literature and works, Cyrillo-Methodian Studies, Agiography and Agiology, Byzantine-Slavonic Literary Relations and Computer Processing and Electronic Publishing of Texts. A. Stoykova has been actively involved in the international and national projects of the Institute of Literature (more than ten in number), and has led several of them (joint projects with the Institute of Slavistics, Polish Academy of Sciences; J. Kalinescu Institute of Literature Theory and History, Romanian Academy of Sciences, and the Old Bulgarian Literature in the Context of Byzantine and Slavonic Medieval Literatures Project). For ten years she has been actively involved in the organizational and administrative work of the Institute as a Scientific Secretary (1999–2001) and as Deputy Director (2001–2007, from 2012 to this day). She participated as editor and author of articles in the four-volume edition of the Cyrillo-Methodian Encyclopedia (1985–2003), and served as member of the editorial board (1999–2011) and editor-in-chief (2012–2018) of the journal “Starobalgarska literatura” (Old Bulgarian Literature). Her teaching work enriched Bulgarian studies abroad with the courses she delivered during her lecturing sessions in Warsaw (2006–2011) and her participation in the e-Medievalia (Electronic resources for distance learning in Mediaeval Studies) Project (2012). She is well-known in the scientific circles outside the borders of Bulgaria with a number of publications and as a participant in over 20 conferences and internationally participated symposia with (2000–2018). The high appreciation of A.

Stoykova's scientific contribution is evident from the reviews of her books and from the number of citations (168) prevailing for her study on the *Physiologus...* (1994), its electronic edition (2011) and the monograph dedicated to the hagiographic works for St George the Victory-Bearer (2016).

A. Stoykova's scientific works covers both old Bulgarian literature and interdisciplinary studies, in which the connection between folklore and literature, the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition, the study of the cults of saints and their reception in the Slavic cultures are present. The scientific and habilitation work, submitted for reviewing: "Dragon-Slayer Saints: Theodore Tiron, Theodore Stratelates and George the Victory-Bearer" and selected publications (studies and articles) is fully meeting the requirements of the competition. She is also the author of three books (monographs): one represents her participation in the collective work on History of Medieval Bulgarian Literature (2008; 2009, the independent parts are duly described in the documentation) and the above-mentioned electronic edition of the *Physiologus* (2011). The studies and articles are 48 in number. In total (reviews and encyclopaedic articles included), she is the author of more than 160 publications.

Ana Stoykova's achievements in exploring the issues related to hagiography and hagiology leave a lasting imprint in modern Paleo-Slavonic studies. The above-mentioned habilitation work includes a study and issuing of the miracles of the three dragon-slayer saints in the South-Slavic medieval tradition, Theodore Tyron, Theodore Stratelates and George the Victorious. Therein the motif of their fighting and slaying the dragon is connected – the motif of St George's exploits comes after the older motifs of the two Teodors. At first, the emergence and development of each of the three cults recorded in Byzantine tradition, both in literature and in iconography (the latter is particularly important as it illustrates the early appearance of the motif) are studied. Out of the wonders of Theodore Tiron, the Miracle with the Mother and the Dragon is most widespread in South Slavic manuscripts, which the author finds to have been translated twice. The first translation is preserved in a copy in the miscellany of German (1358–1359), and its distribution is limited. A. Stoykova believes that the second translation (the so-called Konstantinov's version made in Greek environment) had been made in the Early Middle Ages in Bulgaria (before the beginning of the 14th century) and is contained in miscellanies with mixed content that had appeared in the period 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries, where apocrypha and short narrative works prevail. This second translation fits into the other readings with its entertaining and instructive storyline in which wonderful elements stand out.

The miracles associated with St Theodore Stratelates' fighting and slaying the dragon, are dealt with in the second chapter of her work. A detailed overview of the cult is made – its

appearance and development on Balkan soil, its featuring in works in the Byzantine and Slavic tradition, as well as related images. The *Passio of Theodore Stratelates ascribed to Augarus* (BHG 1750) has several versions in Byzantine manuscripts – the first one (in its original form) is based on motifs from a *Vitae before the Passions* of Theodore Tyron, and the second is an extended version of the former. There is also a reworking of Simeon Metaphrastes, made around the end of the 10th century. The author established that the Slavonic translations of the *Passions ascribed to Augarus* are two, the first of which goes back to the Old Bulgarian Age (probably 10<sup>th</sup> century), and the second one refers to the so-called new translations that appeared in the Balkans and Mount Athos in the 13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The first translation is present in both menaion-type of miscellanies (often for the First Saturday of Lent), and in manuscripts, which are mixed-content miscellanies dominated by apocrypha. The variations in the text of the Old Bulgarian translation is clearly seen, which is due not only to the lengthy period of its dissemination, but also to the different reception of the text itself. The copies (13 in number) that have been found are reasonably divided into two groups, each of them in subgroups, and a precise lingo-textual analysis of each of them is present. The first translation of the *Passions...ascribed to Augarus* is transcribed into triodion and menaion panegyrics, but it is also found in early representatives of the mixed-content miscellanies (14<sup>th</sup> century). There is a comprehensible explanation on the variations of the text in the composition of the collections of the vitae and panegyric types, both pre-Metaphrast and new derivatives, which had appeared later in terms of translation and distribution. Specific emphasis is laid on the peculiarities of Slavic witnesses – the episode with the monster, either present or absent, in various translations (here are three in number) – in the different types of books. This typical feature of the transformation of the text on Slavic soil reflects well the transmission of the work. The second translation (probably in the pre-Euthymius age), unlike the first one, is preserved in miscellanies with calendar composition and has a more homogeneous character.

Undoubtedly, the focal point in examining the wonders related to the fighting and slaying the dragon is the study of St George's miracle with the dragon – widely spread in literature, iconography, and oral tradition. The literary tradition of translations and their processing is quite complex, as there are usually several translations and several edits of the translated texts. Furthermore, Slavonic translations differ from the well-known and published Greek originals. A. Stoykova has identified two translations of the so-called *Widespread* Greek recension: one featuring in copies from the third quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and a second one, featuring in the so-called miscellany of German (1358–1359). The texts describe the miracle with the demon as a continuation of the miracle with the dragon. A third translation she has identified in the so-called *Extended* Greek recension widely circulated in Russian copies and believed to have originated in Russia. On the basis of a textual analysis she proves that the translation is Bulgarian and

assumes that it was done around the 14<sup>th</sup> century, after which it had transcended into the Russian tradition. Later, its ‘descendants’ are the translations in Bulgarian damascenes (archaic type), thus outlining an extraordinarily interesting picture of literary communication, which is introduced for the first time in scientific literature. For the late copies, the connection with the Adjar literary centre in the 17<sup>th</sup> century is also pointed out. Another novelty and a strong point of the work is the analysis of the text of the Tuman apocryphal miscellany, which is compilative, including extracts of different recensions and inserted elements of folklore origin. Thus, in general terms, a Balkan (mostly Bulgarian) literary tradition, which spans more than five centuries, is traced, and if the history of the Greek originals is counted – it spans to almost eight centuries.

This complex study, which includes: the history of the cult and the related motif of the dragon fighting and slaying, the necessary codicological and palaeographic information, a detailed linguistic and textual study, and the reproduction of the folklore memory in the texts, boasts yet another significant contribution – review of the context in the manuscripts, in which miracles are presented in comparative terms. Outlined are extremely important features of the so-called string literature – the versatility of retransmission of texts, the interference of the scholars, the accents selected according to their personal preference for the intriguing details or for those of instructive and beneficial character. Creativity in the transmission of texts is also related to the composition of the collections and to their purpose. The inconsistency with the preserved Greek texts is not accidental, as the author maintains, because the translations build on older models that are not preserved to this day. In this sense, the research of A. Stoykova restores the archaic state of the writings related to the dragon fighting and slaying, which fill a white field in Byzantine heritage as well. These conclusions are confirmed by the version/edition of the texts attached in the work, which occupy 110 pages. The principles of the editions are not uniform ones, as the author has assumed that they must correspond to the state of the handwritten tradition.<sup>1</sup> I would recommend that a note be included in

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<sup>1</sup> The text of the *Miracle of St Theodore Tyron with his mother and the dragon* was published in a parallel presentation of the copies of the Greek text as well, the Old Bulgarian translation of *Passions of Theodore Stratelates ascribed to Augarus* was issued based on a basic transcript from Jagić’s *Zlatoust* (with different interpretations of the other copies); the first translation of the episode with Theodore Stratelates’ fight with the dragon was published in a basic transcript in the Patriarchal Library in Belgrade No 282 (with different interpretations of the other copies); the following versions are also attached – the second one with a basic transcript from the National Library in Belgrade No 644; the third one based on a manuscript, MDA92.1; the Middle-Bulgarian version – based on a manuscript from the collection of the Rila Monastery 4/8. There is also a Greek text from the Leiden library to serve as a comparison. All Slavonic (Bulgarian) translations of the miracle of St George with the dragon (versus the Widespread and Extended editions) are presented in the respective versions, as well as the Greek text from the National Library of Athens.

the printing of the work to clarify and justify the accepted principles in the publication of the source material.

Not a few of the other publications presented for the competition represent research work on topics and problems found in the habilitation work – a testimony to the author's long-standing searches. Published in anthologies and periodicals, they show the gradual accumulation of knowledge and the scrutinizing of A. Stoykova's research effort on the genre form of the miracle in a theoretical and source aspect for twenty years. Thus, the miracle from the Tuman apocryphal miscellany was published in 2000, the miracles from the Rhymed Prologue – in 2002, the editions related to the Adjar Literary Centre in 2005 and others.

The problems related to St Teodor Tiron and St Theodore Stratelates are firstly identified in a publication of 2013. All these articles are not a random continuation of one of the main themes in the scientific work of A. Stoykova – the cult of St George and the overall hagiographic tradition associated with it. The voluminous scientific work, earned deserved recognition in the scientific community, has been defended as a doctoral dissertation in 2015 and published as a book in 2016, 'St. George the Victory-Bearer. South Slavic Medieval Hagiographic Tradition'. A distinctive feature of the work is its wide scope, the depth of the problem field studied – not only the Byzantine and Slavic tradition of the cult and related works in the literary tradition are examined, but also the overall Christian tradition. The monograph, including the editions of the texts (in 724 pages altogether), is in fact a study, the first of its kind, with a highly appreciated scientific contribution. The work on St George's passions exceeds the study of the literary heritage associated with a particular cult. The study catalyses a new viewpoint to the translated hagiographic works in a much wider, multidimensional context.

In a series of studies and articles on the dissemination of the cult and issues related to its function, additional issues have been analyzed, and I would like to point out that a mutual interdependence with the culture of peoples and ethnic groups is sought throughout them. Regarding the history of the texts, A. Stoykova's approach is the purposeful search for intertextual dependencies, as well as the entry in the composition of the manuscripts – the changes that occur over time and the transformation of the works from one type of composition to another. Out of all studies and articles (more than 10) on this topic, I will quote as an example two articles, 'St. George in the Middle East Islamic Tradition' (2013) and 'On the possible sources of the apocryphal motif 'Sataanael refuses to bow to Adam' in one early Christian passion (2016). The first study reveals atypical aspects of St George's image in the early *Passion*, inherent in some Arabic versions as well – he is portrayed as a merchant, which, according to the author, is related to an ancient archetype that has not come to us. In the second article, the motif of St George's early *Passion* is

presented on a broad background of Greek, Latin and Middle Eastern sources, which contributes to a new look at its origins and distribution.

A. Stoykova's interest in pre-Christian and early Christian ideas and the works that reflect them has prompted her to study the work *Physiologus*, its translations and editions in the Byzantine and Slavic tradition. She is responsible for both a complete study of the second and third translations of the South Slavic tradition as a monograph (1994), and individual studies and articles (more than 15 in number), as well as an electronic bilingual edition, which allows easy access to the texts and their variants. The topic was also developed in papers for participation at international conferences dedicated to the translations of the *Physiologus*: 'The Slavic translation of the Pseudo-Basilian recension: the compilation approach' ('The *Physiologus* between East and West Transmission and dissemination of an early Christian text on nature', 2017) and 'From Mesopotamia to late medieval Bulgaria: Transformations of the giant cosmic bird myth' ('The World of the *Physiologus* – Animal Stories and Representations in Oriental Manuscripts, 2018). This topic is likely to be the subject of research in the coming years.

Cyrillo-Methodius studies is an area in which A. Stoykova has published not only a monograph on St Methodius (1995), but also research on hymnography related to the memory of the Slavic apostles: 'Observations on the history and the structure of the early offices of St. Cyrill the Philosopher' (2000), 'The cult of SS. Cyril and Methodius in Bulgarian Middle Age. Ideological parameters and literary reflexions' (2008) and others. Cyrillo-Methodian studies, the literature of the First Bulgarian Kingdom and the characteristic of hagiography, are related to her participation in the collective work 'History of Bulgarian Medieval Literature' (2008, revised edition 2009) – she authored the following articles 'The Cyril and Methodius' deeds (Preconditions and results): Sources about the life and the activity of Cyril and Methodius', 'The Moravian mission of Cyril and Methodius'; 'The Cyril and Methodius' disciples in Bulgaria', 'Bulgarian medieval non-hymnic poetry', 'The hagiography in the 9th – 11th century', 'Constantine of Preslav', 'Monk Chrabr', 'The hagiography in the 13th century'.

The overall scientific work of A. Stoykova has contributed to the understanding of the history of medieval Slavonic literature in relation to Byzantine models, in several directions in particular: (a) clarification of the history and structure of the wonders related to dragon fighting and slaying and their place in the Bulgarian and South Slavic written heritage; (b) introduction and interpretation of new source material for the cult and the works for St George; (c) original summaries on the transmission of the translations of the *Physiologus*; (d) exploring important aspects of the Cyrillo-Methodian sources; (e) methodological development and argumentation of the intertextual connection between text and context in medieval miscellanies.

I would like to point out that A. Stoykova's publications and scientific effort are characterized by indisputable lore and preciseness, correctness of concepts and terms, and by clarity of the scientific position. Her research can be attributed to some of the best achievements of Bulgarian Palaeoslavistics, and a starting point for new studies. Based on everything I have said so far, I strongly propose to the Honorable Scientific Jury to vote for awarding of a Professor's title to the candidate in the competition.

06.06.2019

Sofia

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