



REVIEW

of the publications of Senior Assist. Prof. Dr. Tsvetomira Stoyanova Danova,
participant in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor
in the field of Humanities, 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian Literature),
announced in SG No. 13/14.02.2025

Dr. Tsvetomira Danova has presented for the competition two monographs, six studies (five of which are co-authored) and six articles published in various scientific journals. In the introduction to the second monograph *John of Damascus' Marian Homilies in Mediaeval South Slavic Literatures*. Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2020. *Studies on Language and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe Vol. 36. pp. 542. ISBN 978-3-631-83390-2*, an undoubtedly prestigious publication, on page 6 the author explicitly states that the work is an extended version of her doctoral dissertation, defended in 2014 at the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Center to the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, which is why this monograph will not be the subject of this review.

However, it is key to understanding the research interests and approaches of Dr. Tsvetomira Danova, who started from marianology, or more generally – from the reception of the homilies of John of Damascus in Slavic literature and subsequently used her experience for textual and codicological studies of translated writings and collections. Against this background, her participation in the preparation of the edition of *the Bibliotheca Homiletica Balcano-Slavica* together with Prof. Klimentina Ivanova is not at all accidental. This type of activity not only corresponds to the creative nature of the candidate, but also allows for its further mature development. Somewhat aside from these interests and her undoubtedly high qualification in the field of text critics and codicology is the already published monograph on the orthography of *John-Alexander's Pesnivets* (No. 1 in the list of publications), which is the result of her participation in the preparation of the edition of this important medieval Bulgarian manuscript.

This monograph testifies to the scientific courage of Tsvetomira Danova, who is not afraid to enter an unknown research field, on which she should be congratulated. I had the opportunity to follow her work on the edition, which we are all still waiting for, and I also participated in the official discussion about the monograph, and I am pleased to find that its author has taken into account almost all the remarks and recommendations of the participants in the meeting.

The book consists of an introduction that briefly conveys the history of the manuscript and reviews the research on it; four chapters describing the orthography of the four copyists, and a fifth chapter, which contains notes on the orthography of the fifth copyist, who wrote only four lines on f. 92v21-25, the separation of which is hardly justified. It would be more logical to insert the notes about his participation in transcribing the manuscript in the part of the first copyist, in which they were found and identified. Conclusions and summaries, a list of abbreviations and a bibliography follow, and at the end of the book three appendices are added: 1. Use and distribution of selected graphemes and allographs; 2. Old Bulgarian-Greek index with lemmatization of personal and geographical names; 3. Old Bulgarian-Greek and

Greek-Old Bulgarian list of personal and geographical names, extracted from the index, and at least for me – with an insufficiently clear purpose.

The author of the monograph strictly follows her research program set out in the introduction: within the framework of the possible systematic and detailed description of the orthographic features of *the Pesnivets*, setting herself several specific tasks:

1. Based on uniform criteria, to analyze entirely the orthography of the *Pesnivets*.
2. To describe in as much detail as possible the orthography of each of the identified copyists.
3. To compare the common and the particular in the different orthographic types, followed by the copyists (p.14).

This predetermines the structure of the study, but makes the exposition quite monotonous, and the descriptions of the copying habits of the individual copyists disproportionate. With this, I do not want to underestimate the achievements of Tsvetomira Danova in this monographic study.

First of all, she has established quite accurately the participation of individual copyists in the creation of the book and justifiably comes to the conclusion that there are two main copyists – the first and the fourth, who copied almost the entire book except the three pages written by the second and third copyist, and the few lines of the fifth. I am convinced that the Paleo-Slavic collegium has been waiting for this clarification for a long time.

Secondly, her observations on the orthography of individual copyists are based on a huge amount of extracted and analyzed material, which makes her conclusions sufficiently substantiated and convincing. In general, they are summarized not so much in the part "Conclusions and generalizations", which briefly repeats the conclusions from the individual chapters, as in the final table, where they are illustrated.

Thirdly, I find her idea to focus specifically on the orthography of Greek loanwords and on the diacritics, punctuation and final marks in this intricately organized interpretative text, to be successful.

Certainly, the author deserves congratulations for her patience and diligence in collecting and classifying the material, which is an exceptional achievement for a philologist without special linguistic training.

Related to her work on the edition of the *Pesnivets* are the two studies, published jointly with the late Maria Spasova, on the linguistic features of the translation of the Pseudo-Athanasius' (Hesychius') commentaries in the transcript of the Psalter (No. 7 and 8). The first is devoted to the grammatical archaisms in the text of the commentaries, and the second to the lexical features of the translation. The authors' observations are made only on the commentaries of Ps. 1:1–76:21, and from this point of view the two studies actually are an attempt to create a methodology for dating the translation based on the selected grammatical and lexical markers. On the basis of the grammatical archaisms found in the text of Hesychius' commentaries, the two researchers come to the conclusion that it is early and post-Moravian translation, that could have been created both in Pliska and Preslav, as well as in Ohrid, and the translator was most likely a disciple of Cyril and Methodius. Their observations of lexical archaisms, divided into two groups – lexemes that are not attested in

the classical Old Bulgarian corpus, and lexemes with up to five uses in it, are the basis of the second study (No. 8). A comparison of these two groups of words with original and translated works with established or unestablished authorship allows them to further clarify the conclusion that the translation of Hesychius' commentaries originated in the early Old Bulgarian epoch, and to make the assumption that either Constantine of Preslav or John the Exarch took part in it. Although some of the grammatical criteria, such as the future tense in the past, which simply does not exist in Old Bulgarian, and the opposition *ѡѡ* – *ѡѡѡ*, in which *ѡѡ* is the archaic form, but it is more common in the Preslav texts, could be disputed, I believe that this approach to dating the translation and attributing it to a certain school of translation and even to a certain writer with a certain degree of caution is fruitful, and should also be tested on the second part of Hesychius' commentaries in the *Pesnivets*.

Four other studies (Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6), the last three co-authored with Klimentina Ivanova, and four articles (Nos. 9, 10, 11 and 12) are related to the South Slavic calendar collections and are part of the preparation of the reference book *Bibliotheca Homiletica Balcano-Slavica* (BHomSB). Particular attention should be paid to the study *An Attempt to Systematize the Rhetorical Tradition in the South Slavic Calendar Collections (According to the Content of the Balkan Triodion Panegyrika)*. *Palaeobulgarica*, 2019, year. XLIII (2), pp. 23–46. ISSN 0204-4021 (No. 6), which outlines the principles of structuring the BHomSB, the volume of material and the chronological boundaries for the selection of texts, and raises some terminological issues. The authors focus on the triodion calendar collections with a stable composition, created in the period from the 11th to the 17th centuries, and apply the same approach to them as to the Menaion Panegyrika in *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Balcano-Slavica* (BHBS). Unlike BHBS, the new catalogue includes readings about the feasts of the movable church calendar from the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee to the Sunday of All Saints. According to the authors' observations, the old redaction triodion panegyrika, whose protographs appeared in the period from the 11th to the 13th centuries, and the later new redaction triodion panegyrika differ significantly in composition and vocabulary. While the latter have a closed tradition and contain linguistically correct new translations, the old redaction calendar collections of this type show variations in the composition and selection of readings. In some cases, these variations are more linguistic being the result of errors accumulated during textual transmission, but in others they represent different translations of the same homily. In general, the old redaction collections are shorter and contain a smaller number of readings, while the new ones are more voluminous (up to 176 readings). Homilies from collections that serve the two cycles – the Menaion and the Triodion, which the authors define as *general*, and whose number is limited, are also attracted. Two other studies (Nos. 3 and 4) contain detailed codicological descriptions of manuscripts important for the history of Slavic homiletic literature and the creation of the catalogue BHomSB, such as the old redaction lenten patericon No. 390 from the library of the Hilandar Monastery, which contains readings for the period from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee to Good Friday and the general patericon of the last quarter of the 14th century, No. 540 from the collection of P. N. Tikhanov, which covers the period from the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee to Pentecost. Detailed codicological observations lead not only to the clarification of the composition and correction of the dating of the studied manuscripts, but in some cases they introduce into scientific circulation texts unknown to science, such as *Miracle of Christ's Crucifixion and the Jew* and *Oration and Sermon on the Passion of Christ* in manuscript No. 138 of the collection of A. I. Khludov (No. 5) or new copies of already known

works such as *The Third Sermon* from the *Didactic Gospel* in manuscript No. 540 from the collection of P. N. Tikhanov (No. 4).

Tsvetomira Danova pays special attention to this sermon as part of the Mid-Bulgarian Triodion Panegyrikon from the 14th c. (No. 9) and makes a detailed linguistic, orthographic and textcritical analysis of the text. The variant readings cited by her are mostly orthographic-phonetic and grammatical variants, while the lexical and textual deviations are relatively few and most likely arose during the transmission of the text, and do not seem to be a result of meaningful editorial intervention, which convincingly proves that this relatively late copy of Constantine of Preslav's Sermon unlike the previously known copies stands closest to its Old Bulgarian original. This fact sheds additional light on the complex and diverse transmission of the old redaction texts and the manuscripts that contain them.

Two of the articles submitted for the competition (No. 10 and 12) are dedicated to the textual transmission of another important homiletic text, *The Homily on the Exaltation of the Cross by Andrew of Crete*. In the earlier one (No. 12 of 2016) Tsvetomira Danova carefully analyzed the text of the same homily in Stanislav's Menaion, comparing it with its Greek original and, based on a detailed lexical and text critical analysis, came to the conclusion that the transcript goes back to an old pre-Preslav original. In her more recent article (No. 10 of 2020), the researcher deals with the partially preserved copy of the same homily in the Mileševa Panegyrikon (No. 50 from the library of the Cetina Monastery from the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century). Morphological and text critical analysis allow her to come to the conclusion that the two versions of the *Homily*, distributed in the Slavic literary tradition, are actually two parts of the same ancient translation. At a certain stage of the transmission of the text, it was shortened and this version was distributed in a number of calendar collections and from there – in Macarius' Menaion-reader. And it was the Milesheva Panegyrikon that most likely preserved the complete Old Testament translation of this homily.

Articles No. 11, 13 and 14 are the result of Tsvetomira Danova's interest in the work of John of Damascus and are undoubtedly related to the preparation of her doctoral dissertation and the book published on it. In the first of them (No. 11) she finds that the homily *The (Cursed) Fig-Tree and the Parable of the Vineyard* is distributed in three different Slavonic translations, one revision and one contaminated version, and reveals important touches of the compilation approach of Slavic writers to the work of the eminent Byzantine author. The other two articles are thematically related and reveal new touches from the history of the transmission of John-Damascus' homilies in the Slavic environment. On extensive and unexplored source material from the library collections in Romania and Moldavia, Tsvetomira Danova adds new touches to the textual history of the Slavonic translations of the *First Sermon on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary* and the *Oration on the Nativity of the Virgin Mary* in translation A (No. 14). Her observations lead her to the conclusion that the newly researched copies of the homilies were distributed in Romanian and Moldavian environments and are undoubtedly related to the translation and editorial activities of the Tarnovo writers. In the article, marked No. 13, the researcher provides indisputable evidence that the anonymous homily about the Dormition of the Theotokos, preserved in Mihanović Homiliary and the Germanov sbornik, is a translation-compilation of the *Second Sermon on the Dormition of the Theotokos* by John of Damascus. Her arguments and observations for the identification of the text are indisputable and convincing, and in fact in this way she finds the missing link in the translations of Damascus' sermons on the *Dormition of the Theotokos*. However, it remains

unclear why this discovery did not make it into her 2020 book (No. 2) after the article was published in 2015.

The review of the scientific publications of Assist. Prof. Dr. Tsvetomira Danova convincingly presents her as an accomplished researcher with a solid background in the field of Slavic and Byzantine Studies and with a certain taste for the study of the textual history of the Slavic translated literary heritage, which does not prevent her from including observations on the phonetics, grammar and orthography of the studied texts in her research.

While still a PhD student at the Cyrillo-Methodian Research Center, she was involved in various research projects and for the period from 2014 to the present day she has actively participated in six projects funded by various sources – such as the National Research Fund, the Heritage BG Program, the National Research Programs "Cultural Heritage, National Memory and Social Development" and "Development and Promotion of Bulgarian Studies Abroad" and others.

Her conference activity is also impressive. For the same period, she has participated in twenty scientific conferences in the country and abroad, most of them having international participation.

The list of citations of her undoubtedly contributing research, which she modestly described, is also convincing, so in conclusion I call on the honorable jury to vote Senior Assist. Dr. Tsvetomira Danova to take the academic position *Associate Professor*.



Sofia, 18.06.2025

/Prof. Doctor Habil Anna-Maria Totomanova/