

OPINION

from Prof. Panayot Dimitrov Karagyozev,
Professor of Slavic Literature
at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski",
about the search for the occupation of the academic position
Professor of professional field Philology (Slavic literatures)
at Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski,
announced in the State Gazette no. 31 of 12.04.2019,
with a single candidate Prof. Dr Habil **Georgetta Petrova Cholakova**

The only candidate in the search for a Full Professor in Slavic Studies at the University of Plovdiv, Georgetta Petrova Cholakova, fully meets the formal and the scientometric requirements stipulated in the Guidelines for the development of academic faculty in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for their implementation. Dr. Cholakova received her Doctorate degree in 1993 from Charles University in Prague, has held an Associate Professor position at the University in Plovdiv since 2000 and successfully defended her Dissertation for Doctor of Sciences at University of Plovdiv in 2018.

For two decades Assoc. Prof. Cholakova has taught courses and specialized seminars on Czech and Slavic literature at the University of Plovdiv; she was a Visiting Professor in the Czech Republic and France, and has held senior administrative positions, including Associate Dean and Vice-Rector of Plovdiv University. Currently, she is the head of the Department of Slavic Studies at her Alma Mater.

Prof. Georgetta Cholakova is the author of almost one hundred publications, four of which are monographs. Among them is her newest (no yet published) fundamental study "Mythopoeitic Genesis, Artistic Evolution and Contextualization of the Lake in the Poetry of Czech Romanticism."

In the search for a Full Professor at University of Plovdiv Assoc. Prof. Georgetta Cholakova participated with twenty publications, among them one monograph, studies and articles

published in prestigious scholarly journals and specialized Collections in Bulgaria, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, France and the Czech Republic; as well as papers presented at national and international Slavic studies conferences. She has supervised three PhD students and over forty MA students. Dr. Cholakova has participated several times in the Erasmus International Teacher Mobility Program and in numerous national and international research projects. She is fluent in French, Czech, Slovak, Russian, and English.

Dr. Cholakova's newest monograph is a continuation of her dissertation "Mythopoeitic Genesis, Artistic Evolution and Contextualization of the Lake in the Poetry of Czech Romanticism". However, while in her dissertation, she focuses on the depictions of nature, the images of the lake, the differences between the objective and subjective representation of reality, and others, in her last book, she focuses on specific aspects of the human and creative psyche.

The monograph "Melancholy of Poetry. Karel Hinek Macha" is an original interdisciplinary study in which the concept of melancholy is discussed from the point of view of ontology, medicine, psychology, sociology, visual arts, and other domains of human knowledge but with a particular focus on its literary interpretations and Karel Hinek Macha's oeuvre. Dr. Georgetta Cholakova discusses the popular definitions of the notion of melancholy and traces its representations in literature from Antiquity to the middle of the 19th century, formulating the thesis that during Romanticism melancholy "can be viewed as a philosophical and aesthetic manifestation of the artistic consciousness." She examines in depth the philosophical, religious, social and artistic aspects of melancholy. In the individual chapters of the book ("François Villon and Karel Hinek Macha", "Liras of Ronsard and Macha", Alexander Pope and Karel Hinek Macha", etc.), Assoc. Prof. Cholakova promotes the idea that the leading Slavic artists were a part of the European cultural elite of the time, not its satellites. Dr. Cholakova's main contribution to the study of the Czech Romantic poet is that her book considers for the first time K.H. Macha's entire oeuvre (poetry and prose) in the context of European artistic melancholy (comparing it to Dante, P. Ronsard, F. Vioon, etc.), and in the history of his native literature, which "according to Macha is full of religious and patriotic messages and didactic guidance."

As in her dissertation, here Georgetta defends her main thesis by analyzing and interpreting a series of topoi. She contextualizes the material, spiritual and psychophysical images typical for Macha, including the static body, the sacral face, the smile, the dream, the romantic

landscape, the bells and the bell ringing, the swan, etc., highlighting the inextricable link between the material and the spiritual – ”the dichotomous disproportion between spiritual need and being reality.” By building on previous studies on Karel Hinek Macha's poetics and providing her own insightful readings of the literary texts, Georgetta Cholakova reveals that in the works of the father of modern Czech literature, the words are not only a description of the psycho-physical reality, but its individual artistic expression, a fine synthesis of the Czech literary tradition before him.

I would like to draw attention to Prof. Cholakova's wonderful translations of Macha's poetry and prose, which might go unnoticed among the sophisticated textual analyses. Georgetta Cholakova's comprehensive and thorough approach to the works of Karel Hinek Macha makes her one of the world-class specialists on the Czech Romantic poet.

The book “Poetics of Melancholia. Karel Hinek Maha”, the nineteen articles (some of which deal with the issue of melancholy in Czech literature in general) and the overall scholarly, teaching and translation achievements of Assoc. Prof. Georgetta Cholakova give me a solid reason to enthusiastically endorse her appointment to the academic position of Professor in Czech and Slavic Literatures.

Sofia, August 12, 2019

Prof. Dr. Habil Panayot Karagyozov