

## STATEMENT

by Prof. Dr. of Science Anna-Maria Kostova Totomanova (Sofia University) on the dissertation of Prof. PhD Petya Nikolova Burkalova ("Paisii Hilendarski" University) "Bulgarian syntactic tradition and the path of the syntactic element of grammatical knowledge" for awarding the scientific degree "**Doctor of Sciences**" in the HE area of Humanities, professional field 2.1 Philology (Modern Bulgarian Language - Syntax)

### **1. General description of both the procedure and the applicant.**

By order No P33-4964 of 13.10.2020 of the Rector of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU) I am appointed as a member of the scientific jury in connection with a procedure for defense of dissertation entitled "Bulgarian syntactic tradition and the path of the syntactic element of grammatical knowledge" for the acquisition of the scientific degree Doctor of Sciences of Plovdiv University in HE area of Humanities, professional field 2.1 Philology (Modern Bulgarian Language - Syntax). The author of the dissertation is Prof. PhD Petya Nikolova Burkalova from the Department of Bulgarian Language of the Faculty of Philology of "Paisii Hilendarski" University.

The set of materials presented by Prof. Petya Burkalova (in both electronic and paper format) is in conformity with Article 45 (4) of the Regulations of the University of Plovdiv regarding the academic staff development. The applicant has presented a dissertation (378 pages) and 12 articles on the topic of the dissertation, all published in Bulgarian scientific journals and collections over the past 25 years.

### **2. Relevance of the topic**

The problem of the history of grammatical knowledge in the Bulgarian literary, educational, and scientific tradition is not new. In this case, however, the author is tracing the syntactic thinking from Antiquity throughout the Bulgarian Middle Ages, the Revival and the Modern age and makes a connection between the models inherited from Byzantium - the so-called practical philologism of medieval men of letters and grammarians, and the emergence of the actual school and scientific descriptions of the modern Bulgarian language, which were born not only due to the need of new education, but were also under the influence of other models and foreign scientific paradigms.

### **3. Knowledge of the problem**

The applicant's entire professional life is dedicated to the syntactic problems and the author is undoubtedly well oriented in the chosen scientific field, but her own observations and contributions are based on Church Slavonic, Revival and modern Bulgarian textbooks. As to the medieval materials, she relies on the descriptions of the researchers in OCS area (i.e. on metadata collected by different researchers in different periods and influenced by various scientific paradigms) and though she has processed a huge amount of literature on the topic, she has not been able to fully navigate it, which also affects the methodology used in the study.

#### **4. Methodology of the study**

In the abstract P. Burkalova states that her work was carried out "in one of the most exciting scientific paradigms in modern Humanities – the generative grammar and grammatical formalisms applied to the syntax of the modern Bulgarian language", thus acknowledging that this methodology does not affect the first two parts of the dissertation. Here I would like to note that even in the third part grammaticography is not consistently applied, affecting mainly the definitions of sentence given by the authors of grammars from the Revival to the present day.

#### **5. Characteristics and evaluation of the dissertation and contributions**

The study is organized in three parts, each of them containing 4, 3 and 2 chapters, respectively. The first part is dedicated to the ancient grammatical models, which our Middle Ages perceived mostly through the translations of the Greek originals, the second – to the Church Slavonic and Revival grammars, and the third – to the problems that the first syntactic descriptions of the modern Bulgarian language face in defining the simple two-part sentence and to the tension between the logical and formalistic concepts of syntax. The first part is practically a review of some of the views on grammatical knowledge in the Middle Ages, and though the researcher's main conclusion is that it is agrammatic - it is not clear why outdated and unverifiable hypotheses such as that of a grammar, written by St. Cyril or his brother Methodius or of John Exarch as translator of the treatise "About the Eight Parts of Speech" and so on. Tracing the syntactic element in the practice of medieval men of letters could have indeed produced interesting results but P. Burkalova is not looking for it in the right places. For example, she accepts that the influence of the Greek language on the Old Bulgarian tradition is manifested through the word order and the replacement of Genitivus absolutus by Dativus absolutus (p. 33) but she does not tackle upon on the use of *иже* as a definitive article, which substantivizes not only words but also whole expressions and which is an undisputed Greek model, accepted as early as in Old Bulgarian period. This model however is mentioned on p. 87 as a part of Euthymius' reform, that – I can safely say – remains incomprehensible to most researchers. Prof. Burkalova proceeds from the statement that the Bulgarian language became analytical during the Middle Bulgarian period, which finds no evidence in either the language of the manuscripts of the 12th -14th centuries or even in such marginal texts as the Vlach-Bulgarian royal charters and the Trojan Parable; these texts appeared in bilingual environment and demonstrate some deviations from the correct use of the cases after prepositions, but by no means do they testify of a destroyed or lost nominal inflection. Moreover, in the Vlach-Moldavian charters, which are a complete analogue of the Vlach -Bulgarian charters<sup>1</sup>, though written in a Southern Russian dialect, the same phenomena are attested. Parting from this erroneous presumption the applicant features Euthymius' orthographic

<sup>1</sup> See A. Тотоманова. Езикът на молдавските грамоти от XV в. – В: *ИѢСТЪ ОУЧЕНИКЪ НАДЪ ОУЧИТЕЛИМЪ СВОИМЪ*. Сборник в чест на Иван Добрев, С., 2005, с. 477-499; A. Totomanova. Oratorio for Bulgarian analytism – In: *Scripta & e-Scripta*, 7, 2009, с. 98-106.

and linguistic reforms as a conscious intent to archaize the literary language in complete contrast to the state of the Bulgarian morphosyntax of the time. In fact the careful reading of Konstantin Kostenečki's treatise "On the letters" as well as the practice of the Bulgarian and Slavic scribes in general throughout the 14th-15<sup>th</sup> and the following centuries, unequivocally show, that Euthymius is rather an innovator and language reformer than a conservative archaizer. On orthographic level he devised new rules for using the nasals and yers that had already lost their initial phonetic value and for using the Greek letters, thus preserving the sacred inventory of the Slavonic alphabet. On stylistic level he introduced a new style, the so called "плетеніе словесъ", which elevated the original work of old Bulgarian writers to a new artistic level. The theory of the *antisticha* (i.e. allographs for the same sound) was creatively applied by Euthymius and his followers as a means of distinguishing the homonyms thus facilitating the perception of the text when reading. Euthymius introduced the mandatory use of diacritics (*spiritus* and different types of accents) as a means of additional textual criticism<sup>2</sup> that is rather close to the use of the *antisticha*.<sup>3</sup> The introduction of punctuation seems to be the most revolutionary change in this direction and both the meaning and use of the period, comma, question and exclamation marks and of the signs for quoting true and heretical phrases are described in chapter 17 of "On the letters". The introduction of punctuation clearly demonstrates the evolution of the literary concepts of the phrase structure and of the different types of speech, that did not exist in the earlier epoch. Unfortunately, this has escaped the applicant's attention. The second part contains both the author's own observations (especially valuable here are the observations on the unpublished grammar of the living Bulgarian language by Yuri Venellin) as well as references to researchers of the history of the Bulgarian literary language such as B. Valchev, P. Popova, R. Rusinov, M. Slavova and appears to be more convincing than the first one. Burkalova's conclusion that "Syntactic thinking in Bulgaria is not born in the first grammars created to meet the needs of teaching Bulgarian. It has matured decades later than morphology and phonetics" seems to be well-founded, though it appears only at the end of the third part. Yet it raises the question whether it is methodologically justified to divide the two parts of grammar in such a study. Moreover, Slavic inclination is a morphosyntactic phenomenon, given the fact that by morphological means – the ending - syntactical relations are expressed. The problem of the first authors of modern Bulgarian grammars is that they have to describe an already analytical language with a metalanguage, which is adapted for synthetic languages,

<sup>2</sup> The *spiritus* marks the beginning of the word, while the *gravis* and double *gravis* (*kendema*) – the end of the word. The latter also stands above monosyllable words with yer-ending such as тѣ, сѣ, нѣ, thus helping to distinguish the phonetic word. It was noticed a long time ago that the accents in the 14<sup>th</sup> c. Bulgarian texts reflect real pronunciation and true dialect differences, cf. P.B. Булатова, Надстрочные знаки в южнославянских рукописях XI-XIV вв. - В: Методическое пособие по описанию славяно-русских рукописей для Сводного каталога рукописей, хранящихся в СССР, Выпуск 1. М, 1973, с. 76-114. About pre-Euthymius' era see А. Тотоманова. Правописно-езикови особености. – В: А. Тотоманова, Д. Атанасова. Станиславов чети-миней, том I. Издание на текста. С., 2018, pp. 17-74. See also Е. Мирчева и Е. Мирчева. Староизводните и новоизводните сборници – преводи, редакции, преработки, книжовноезикови особености. С 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Konstantin Kostenečki. On the letters, chapters 15, 16.

such as Church Slavonic and to some extent for the Greek katharevusa. Therefore, not only Bogorov was faced with this problem (pp. 181-182), but also Neophit Rilski, who built an artificial declension paradigm for masculine compiling the different forms of determined nouns in Bulgarian dialects.

The third part represents a compilation of the author's publications over the past three decades and seems a bit eclectic. However, this does not diminish the value of the applicant's conclusions on the Bulgarian self-contained syntactic tradition.

The annexes at the end of the presented study are also interesting: while the first and the second one are shaped simply as popular reference books, the third is supplied with a commentary tracing the relationship between the political situation and the state of syntactic knowledge and in a broader sense the state of the literary language. Given the fact that the literary language is a socio-cultural phenomenon highly dependent on the current political situation, I would recommend the author to continue and deepen her research in this direction. For the Bulgarian language, this has been valid since the dawn of its creation, because without the political will and wisdom of our first Christian rulers, the work of Cyril and Methodius would have remained only a curious phenomenon in the cultural history of Europe.

#### **6. Assessment of the publications and personal contribution of the applicant**

The presented work and the accompanying articles highlight the personal contribution of the applicant to the study of the Bulgarian syntactic tradition, which are focused on the Revival and modern period of the development of the Bulgarian literary language. Her classification of authors of grammars as Aristotelians and Cartesians deserves appreciation and I would be happy to support her idea to introduce a separate term for complex sentences in the modern Bulgarian language.

#### **7. Abstract**

The abstract adequately presents the content of the dissertation.

#### **8. Recommendations for the future use of the dissertation contributions and results**

Despite some methodological inconsistency and eclecticism, the work of Prof. Dr. Petya Burkalova is the first complete study of the Bulgarian syntactic tradition and therefore deserves encouragement and admiration. I would recommend that the possible shortcomings and inaccuracies be filled in its eventual preparation for publication and, above all, that the numerous typographical errors in the text, which make it difficult to perceive the text, be eliminated.

### **CONCLUSION**

The dissertation contains scientific results that represent a contribution in the field of Bulgarian language studies and meet the requirements of the Academic Staff Development Act of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Academic Staff Development Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. Based on the analysis of the study "Bulgarian syntactic tradition and the path of the syntactic element of grammatical knowledge" I give a positive assessment and propose to the esteemed scientific jury to award the scientific degree "Doctor of Philological

Sciences" in the HE area of Humanities, Professional field 2.1. Philology (Modern Bulgarian Language) to Prof. Petya Nikolova Burkalova from the Bulgarian Language Department at the Faculty of Philology of "Paisii Hilendarski" University.

30.11. 2020

**Member of the scientific jury:**

Prof. Dr Habil Anna-Maria Totomanova