

REVIEW

by **Assoc. Prof. Valentin Stefanov Asparuhov, PhD,**

on the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of **Associate Professor at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”** in the field of higher education: **2. Humanities**, professional field: 2.3 Philosophy (Formal and Practical Logic)

In the competition for the position of Associate Professor, announced in the State Gazette, issue no. 96 of 11 November 2025, and on the official website of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski,” for the needs of the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy and History, the sole applicant is Martina Stoilova Mineva-Nikolova, Chief Assistant Professor at the same department.

1. General Presentation of the Submitted Materials

By Order No. RD-22-37 of 09 January 2026 of the Rector of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” (PU), I was appointed as a member of the academic jury in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor at PU.

The submitted set of materials in hard copy complies with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at PU and includes all required documents. The candidate has submitted a total of 15 scholarly works (all written after the defense of her doctoral dissertation and substantively distinct from it): 2 monographs, 11 studies (one of which is co-authored), and 2 articles. With this output, she fully satisfies the scientometric requirements for the position of Associate Professor.

There is evidence of at least 15 citations of Martina Mineva’s scholarly works by other authors, all substantive in nature and explicitly acknowledging her contribution.

2. Brief Biographical Data

Martina Mineva graduated from the Ivan Vazov Language High School in Plovdiv. In 2009, she obtained a Bachelor’s degree in Philosophy at Plovdiv University and subsequently completed Master’s and doctoral programs at Sofia University. She was awarded the educational and scientific degree of Doctor (PhD) in 2015 with a dissertation entitled “Wittgenstein and the Problematization of Philosophy.” Since 2016, she has been an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy and History, Plovdiv University.

3. General Characterization of the Candidate's Academic Activity

In addition to being an active researcher, Martina Mineva is an established lecturer in the Department of Philosophy. Within the degree program administered by the department, she teaches the core courses *Formal Logic*, *Philosophy of Early Modernity*, and *Analytic Philosophy*. All of these courses fall within her research domain and intersect with the scholarly works submitted for the present habilitation procedure.

Dr. Mineva also teaches a number of additional courses across various Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral programs at the University, including courses offered by the *Department for Qualification and Professional Development* and at the *University's branch* in Kardzhali.

She is the author of one electronic textbook and numerous electronic teaching materials. For six consecutive years, she has organized the annual student research session under the program of the *Section for Philosophical Logic*. She is a co-founder of the *Student Philosophical Seminar*, which continues the activity of the *Philosophical Discussion Club* established in 2006.

Her work with students, early-career researchers, and postdoctoral fellows at PU deserves special mention. For several consecutive years, she has served successfully as an academic mentor to students in Philosophy, a position aimed at facilitating their adaptation and integration into the academic community. She has authored numerous reviews of Bachelor's and Master's theses.

In recent years, Martina Mineva has participated in several research projects. Particularly noteworthy is her project-related activity connected with the *Institute for Critical Theories of Supermodernity*. Since becoming Chief Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, she has delivered more than 20 conference papers at various national academic forums, including events with international participation.

For many years, she served as Head of the *Section for Philosophical Logic*. Since 2021, she has been Co-Director of the *Institute for Critical Theories of Supermodernity*, which is part of the *Academic Rhizome "Critique and Humanism"* and of the International Consortium for Programs in Critical Theory. She currently serves as Head of the *Section for the Theory of Mediating Structures and Non-Classical Logic of the Dialectical*.

Dr. Mineva is a longstanding member of several university- and faculty-level committees, as well as departmental committees responsible for the preparation of accreditation documentation. During the period 2021–2025, she participated in a total of six accreditation procedures, three procedures under SANK, and three audits. Since its inaugural issue, she has served as managing editor of the journal *Kairos*. She is also a member of the editorial board of the journal *Heterodoksia* and has served on several occasions as guest editor of issues of *Sotsiologicheski problemi (Sociological Problems)*. She is the editor of the collective monograph *Social Vulnerability: Socio-Analytical Perspectives*.

Her overall academic trajectory—beginning with her undergraduate and doctoral studies at Sofia University—demonstrates the steady and systematic development of a serious philosopher and logician with a broad yet clearly defined field of research interests and competences. It is precisely the breadth and solidity of her expertise that guarantee the high quality of her teaching.

These professional qualities are complemented by excellent personal impressions. Based particularly on our joint work within the department, I can attest that she is an exceptionally conscientious and responsible scholar, capable of undertaking bold intellectual experiments. What has been stated thus far—together with the scientometric report included in documentation—is entirely sufficient to demonstrate that Martina Mineva not only meets but substantially exceeds all formal requirements for appointment to the position of Associate Professor.

I shall now attempt a more detailed analysis of her publications, focusing primarily on the two monographs that synthesize key moments from her articles and studies.

In 2021, published by *Izток–Zapad*, Dr. Mineva authored the monograph *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Problematization of Philosophy (The Praxeological Turn, Limits, Legitimation)*. Through a meticulously constructed dialogue between the views of the “later” Wittgenstein, several of his most perceptive interpreters, and the ethnomethodologists Garfinkel, Sacks, and Coulter, the book most clearly outlines not only her overarching philosophical and research project, but also what we today almost self-evidently designate as **the praxeological turn in logic**.

Beyond explicating Wittgenstein’s critique of traditional philosophy—articulated through the opposition between the “said” and the “shown”—and the failure of logical positivism in its attempt to overcome philosophical silence through the rigor of formal discourse, the text offers a compelling rehabilitation of philosophical logic. Following an analysis of the pivotal controversy concerning the status of logical objects (logical forms), the author’s focus shifts toward so-called “grammatical observation.” Recognized as a “semantic heir to logical experience,” grammatical observation restores the potentials of philosophical logic. Its problematic character proves not only to persist but to remain philosophically productive. Logic does not disappear into the “mist” of what is shown; rather, it is embodied within linguistic practices.

This powerful **emphasis on the praxeologization of logic** resonates throughout the second part of the book, culminating in the thesis concerning the non-equivalence of language games. “Naming games” (Austin), “the turn toward the logic of ordinary language” (Strawson), the Bourdieusian theory of the mismatch between theory and practice, and the “endogenous logics of practices” (Garfinkel and Sacks) are all identified by the author as gestures of reorientation toward the praxeological dimension.

Dr. Mineva does not content herself with merely indicating that the problems of logic remain with us. The major contribution of her first and substantial study lies in the development of an “analytic” and “taxonomy” of the “language games of legitimation” within the field of practical logic. The philosophy of Lyotard is presented as an example of a possible rethinking—**through the praxeological turn**—of the contemporary challenges facing philosophy and logic. Such problematizations of the praxeological dimension recur throughout her work. However, the second book, *Groundbreakings*—perhaps because it builds upon the meticulous groundwork of the first—ventures to articulate these moves in a more explicit and radical manner. These forceful gestures unsettle the canonical inclination of logic toward the formal-inferential and situate it instead as a historically conditioned and dynamically evolving formation.

After this brief and inevitably schematic presentation, I shall proceed to discuss the second monograph submitted for the purposes of the present competition.

As its title indicates—*Groundbreakings* (2025, Sofia: *Izток–Zapad*)—the book’s task is discovery. Discovery, however, is not merely its immediate objective; it constitutes the very substance of the work. I would like to recall my initial impressions when the text was still in manuscript form:

“Do not reach for this book unless you are willing to challenge and test yourself... Martina Mineva’s study is magnificent. The analysis focuses on the moments in which the new is born in science, not merely reopening the problematic of logical inference for further reflection, but boldly tracing the often unintelligible—even to innovators themselves—trajectories of non-deductive derivations. These are interpreted beyond the usual idealizations of ‘crystalline purity in logic,’ through points of rupture, fracture, transition, and temporal intervals. This new analytic of practico-logical inferences, growing around abduction, radically de-psychologizes the inferential situation and demands a reconfiguration of its potentialities.”

More generally described, the study is an attempt to transcend the givenness of ready-made propositions by turning toward the non-givenness of their derivation within practices—toward what the author calls living practico-logical derivation. This move enables her to sustain what may be termed the ecstatic component of the logical: a dimension grounded less in strictly formal logical structures than in events, fissures, and deviations through which thought meanders, provokes, and surprises itself.

This component ties the logical—understood as thought self-constituting in the very process of derivation—not primarily to formal-inferential structures, but to events in thinking and to the practices within which thinking emerges. In this regard, particular emphasis should be placed on the author’s well-founded suspicions toward those interpretations of abductive inference that reduce it to “guesswork,” that is, to something weak or logically inauthentic. On the contrary, insofar as abductive inference presupposes an indeterminate a priori synthesis, it possesses—according to one of the text’s most powerful theses—its own normative weight ex post and a practice-framed general validity.

Although the parts of the book are diverse in orientation, the leading role of the second part seems to me entirely evident. It clarifies why the study begins with Peirce and the analysis of abduction, why it proceeds to the endogenous logic of practice, and why it cannot remain within those frameworks. It cannot remain there because within the boundaries of Peircean pragmatism an explicit theory of practical logic cannot be fully articulated. Peirce thus becomes the occasion for a more fundamental question: how non-deductive derivation is in fact possible within the practices that Martina Mineva terms groundbreaking practices—practices that midwife a more adequate understanding and description of what exists.

Under close examination, the text reveals not merely the familiar expectation that discovery involves the synthesis of new transcendental schemes upon which new propositions may be constructed. Rather, it discloses the result of invention: propositions proposed as conclusions—that is, the product in which the process of derivation is sedimented. The fact that such schemes are not pre-given, and that effort is required to redraw them so that they may “occur as practical achievements,” constitutes, in my view, a decisive move on Dr. Mineva’s part—one that is highly original, provocative, and undeniably contributory.

There is little doubt that such a move generates a cascade of theoretical effects. One may note, for instance, the radically reformulated question of non-classical transcendentalism: how synthetic a priori propositions have in fact become possible—a question traditionally posed within a classical transcendental framework seeking the conditions of possibility of synthetic a priori judgments. Whence the difference? From the insight that what is synthesized a priori is not the proposition as proposition, but the proposition as conclusion. Synthesis—unlike classical transcendental schematization—is here conceived as a process of pre-deductive derivation, capable of generating the meaningful distinction between conclusion and deriving (in the sense of a practical act).

At least three substantial conceptual innovations may be identified in the book. They are internally interconnected and, in terms of their practical implications, far exceed the brief remarks that follow.

First is the concept of “**anomaly**.” Far removed from its standard connotations—deviation, defect, crisis—“anomaly” is reconceptualized as a productive segment within practico-logical derivation.

Second is the concept of the “**abductive quantum**,” which designates the value (unit) of a newly emergent quality. Considered within the totality of the inferential event, it constitutes an indeterminate opening—a direction toward a new quality—while simultaneously functioning as the just-arisen determining closure of the endogenous logical event, enabling it to preserve its normative-objectivist potential.

Third is the concept of “**theoretical thrust**.” Beyond expressing the dynamism of thinking within groundbreaking practices (i.e., non-deductive derivations), it absorbs the resonance between de-temporalized synthesis and synthesis-as-temporalization (a new logical configuration).

The intersection of these three concepts proves especially productive in the third part of the study. Through the exemplary case of Kepler, the transition is convincingly demonstrated from what initially appears to be a negligible, almost accidental discovery to the formulation of revolutionary laws.

I would also like to underscore another merit of the book, namely its re-evaluation of Cassirer’s dialectic between *forma formata* and *forma formans*. The emphasis extracted from this dialectic is twofold. On the one hand, it concerns its genealogical claim in relation to Kant’s productive imagination. On the other, it reinforces the key thesis already mentioned: that forms ought not to be regarded as ready-made. The non-pre-given a priori syntheses—understood as expressions of a non-pre-given will to formation—expose new practical truths. Martina Mineva demonstrates this convincingly. From this follows her powerful interpretation of the will to formation, showing how sensibility and understanding may, in practice, restore the isomorphism lost in anomaly. The overcoming of anomaly is presented as both a will to formation and the achievement of an isomorphism between understanding and sensibility.

Finally, I would like to note the ease with which the text opens itself to the reader. I am convinced that this will be the case even for readers not previously initiated into the intricate terrain of non-classical transcendentalism. Those already trained to attend to the rhetorical scale of philosophical exposition will readily discern the many voices of thinkers and traditions whose

interweaving resonates as a “meaningfully interaction.” Behind the polyphony of the text stands not only lived intellectual experience but also what might be called a common analytic language—the forging of a blade, a meta-language (as was remarked during its first public discussion)—a fully adequate reflexive instrument for critical engagement, that is, for thinking which “follows its multidimensional object: non-deductive derivations in groundbreaking practices.”

4. Assessment of the Candidate’s Personal Contribution

The scientific contributions contained in the materials submitted by Martina Mineva are formulated comprehensively and precisely. They are organized into four subgroups:

1. methodological contributions;
2. conceptual and interpretative innovations;
3. new demarcations and critical revisions;
4. applied contributions.

Considered within each subgroup separately, the list may appear relatively concise, as it highlights only the general innovative features and achievements of the research project, without detailing the numerous micro-discoveries discernible throughout the submitted publications.

5. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

The remarks I am about to formulate in no way call into question the originality or contributory character of the discoveries presented in Martina Mineva’s second monograph. They belong rather to the category of the “noticed yet not fully clarified,” reflecting the particularities of my own reading.

I shall begin with questions concerning the concept of “theoretical thrust.” What is its status? Is it merely operational—that is, a concept not explicitly thematized or defined, though employed throughout? Or, on the contrary, is it susceptible to definition and, consequently, to discussion, expansion, restriction, and critique? What is its provenance? Am I mistaken in thinking that it carries an impulse transmitted by the rhythm of Cassirer’s pendulum of “spiritual life itself”? If so, do the equilibrating and mutually penetrating forces that undermine *forma formata*, thereby clearing the path for *forma formans*, stand behind it?

Let me recall that from the earliest scientific investigations of pendular oscillation (around 1600, in the work of Galileo), the cycles of the pendulum were recognized and utilized for centuries as the most precise technology for measuring time (Huygens invented the pendulum clock in 1658, later

replaced in the first half of the twentieth century by the quartz clock). In light of this, I would ask: is there room, within the analytic of non-deductive derivations in groundbreaking practices, for an analytic of time?

Relatedly, I do not fully understand why Kepler's "theoretical thrust"—through which the transition is made from the discovery of the elliptical orbit of Mars to the formulation of general laws of planetary motion (that is, a movement between the extreme states of the pendulum)—is conceived both within the rhythm of Cassirer (which ultimately stabilizes upon the true "solid ground" of the logical) and within the Heideggerian tailoring of Dasein (which tears itself open to its ownmost temporality, abandoning the solidity of reason and the logical). Are only the unceasing efforts of the will to formation at work behind the "long authentic present" of the "extended moment"? Is it solely will that is discernible here? Are there not traces of doubt—of formerly leveled and homogenized "nows"? Ultimately, is there here an attempt to bring these two German philosophers into confrontation or mutual redirection?

With respect to non-classically understood schematization, the text states that "the emphasis falls upon the heterogeneity between sensibility and understanding in groundbreaking practices and the restoration of their isomorphism through a non-pre-given will to formation." This claim appears to me problematic. There is no heterogeneity. Even conceived non-classically, sensibility and understanding remain the two stems growing from an unknown common root. Only intuitions are temporarily blinded (de-temporalized), and thoughts temporarily without content. They remain children of the same father, even if his paternity cannot be established.

I agree that within practices of derivation, together with the non-pre-given a priori synthesis, the transcendental unity of apperception is restored. Yet I cannot accept that, in the most frequently discussed example in the book, Kepler synthesizes the ellipse as a new form of the orbit of Mars. Is this truly a new form, or rather a new figure—an alternative to the circle and the ovoid? Is there a synthesis within the "ego of the astronomer" (*homo astronomicus*), or has the diviner of celestial transits (the astrologer in Kepler) yielded to the persuasive power of numbers?

It seems clear that the above remarks do not express disagreement with the fundamental theses of the text. Rather, they indicate interpretative trajectories along which it may be further developed. I hope that future attentive readings will illuminate not only the discoveries achieved therein, but also its polemical potential. Such potential cannot be fully unfolded within a review. Here it is merely signaled; the future will be the field of its fullest elaboration.

6. Personal Impressions

I have known Martina Mineva since her time as a student in the Bachelor's program in Philosophy at Plovdiv University. Students such as she was—and remains—are a genuine rarity. Her depth and critical disposition, her analytical thinking and imagination, have always been an inspiration to any lecturer. Over the years she has cultivated her talents, and today we are confronted with the accomplishments of a mature and penetrating scholar.

On a professional level, it would be difficult for me to imagine a more responsible and organized colleague—precise, perceptive, tactful, and resolute. Her industriousness is often exemplary for our community. Martina Mineva has also developed and demonstrated solid managerial skills. Her abilities in organizing collective work, forming teams, and distributing functions and responsibilities are impeccable. Today, without her participation, not only the organization of educational and research life within the department, but even its daily rhythm, would be inconceivable.

CONCLUSION

The scholarly works submitted by Martina Mineva within the framework of the competition for Associate Professor address an exceptionally important and multi-layered philosophical and logical problem: how discoveries are possible within the practices of scientific innovators. This problem is clearly articulated, and an original authorial position has been constructed, demonstrating remarkable professional competences—both historical-philosophical and analytical.

The publications and materials submitted by Martina Mineva **comply with the requirements** of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, its Implementing Regulations, and the relevant Regulations of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski.”

The number of submitted scholarly works **exceeds the minimum requirement** and is distinct from the publications used in the defense of her PhD degree. The texts contain an abundance of original scientific discoveries, which I hope will soon become visible to a broader specialized logical audience. The candidate’s scholarly and teaching qualifications are **impeccable**.

The results achieved by Martina Mineva in teaching and research **fully correspond** to the national minimum requirements and to the additional requirements of the Faculty of Philosophy and History, adopted in accordance with the University’s Regulations implementing the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff.

Having examined the materials and scholarly works submitted in the competition, and in view of their significance and the scientific and applied contributions they contain, I find it justified to give my **positive** assessment and to recommend with conviction that the Academic Jury prepare a report proposing to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy and History the election of Martina Mineva to the academic position of Associate Professor at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” in the field of higher education **2. Humanities, professional field 2.3 Philosophy (Formal and Practical Logic)**.

02 March 2026

Reviewer:

Assoc. Prof. Valentin Asparuhov, PhD