REVIEW

of the research activity of Assoc. Prof. D.Sc. Stella Milcheva Doncheva, participant in the competition for the academic position "Professor", professional field 2.2. History and Archeology (Medieval Bulgarian Archeology), field: higher education 2. Humanities at the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski"

Reviewer: Professor Dr. Habil. Lyudmila Doncheva-Petkova, PhD

1. Information about the competition

The competition for a professor in the field of higher education 2.2. History and Archeology (Medieval Bulgarian Archeology) was announced by a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Humanities (Minutes No. FD-02-12 / 12 / 18.06.2021) in accordance with Art. 80, para. 1 and para. 2 of the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski", Art. 29a of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and in connection with a report of the Dean of FHN. The competition was announced in the State Gazette no. 40 / 14.05.2021 Stella Milcheva Doncheva is the only candidate.

2. Brief presentation of the candidate

The candidate for the scientific position "Professor", Assoc. Prof. Stella Milcheva Doncheva was born on May 17, 1972. She graduated from the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski" - in 1996 - a master's degree - Bulgarian language and history, in 2002 - a master's degree in theology. In 2000 he received the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" as a part-time doctoral student with a dissertation on "Principles and interpretation of the planned and extensive reconstruction of the cross-domed churches in Veliki Preslav." For two years she worked as a history teacher, and in 2002, after winning a competition, she was appointed research associate II degree and head of the department "Medieval Archeology" in RIM Shumen and NIAR "Shumen Fortress". Since 2006 he has been a research associate of the 1st degree (chief assistant). Since 2011 he has been an associate professor of medieval archeology at the Branch of NAIM at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Shumen, and since 2015 he has been the head of the Branch. In 2020 he defended his second dissertation on the topic: "Production of artistic metal in early medieval Bulgaria (according to data from the findings)" and obtained the scientific degree "Doctor of Science". Since 2002, with her appointment in RIM-Shumen, St. Doncheva participated in archeological excavations of the Inner City of Preslav in the team of

Prof. D. Ovcharov. Since 2004 he has been researching the production centers for artistic metal from the period of the early Bulgarian Middle Ages in the vicinity of the capital Veliki Preslav - near the villages of Novosel (deputy's head) and Zlatar (head). He is the leader (on the Bulgarian side) of four international projects, together with colleagues from the Atomki Institute for Nuclear Research in Debrecen, which aim to study the elemental composition of metal and ceramic finds from the three production centers for metal - in the villages of Novosel, Zlatar, and Nadarevo.

3. Description of the presented materials

The documentation for participation in the competition is accompanied by a folder with materials, including application; declaration for participation in a competition; announcement of the competition in the State Gazette, CV; two diplomas for completed higher education; diplomas for the acquired educational and scientific degree "Doctor" and for the acquired scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences"; certificate for acquired academic position "associate professor"; diploma for the Shumen award in the system of education and science; list of publications, together with the publications of the competition; reference of the citations on the competition; reference for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under art. ж2б, ал. 2 and 3 of ZRASRB with the respective evidence; general list of scientific production; general list of all citations; reference for additional indicators, applicable for the respective area under art. 61, para. 3 of PPZRASB; declarations of authorship and authenticity; reference for original scientific contributions with the relevant evidence; summaries of publications - in Bulgarian; summaries of publications - in English.

All these materials are presented on electronic media. The accompanying documents meet the requirements of the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at the University of Shumen "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski".

4. Compliance with minimum national requirements

The given reference for the scientific activity of the candidate by scientometric indicators has been prepared accurately and shows full coverage of the formulations under Art. 2b of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria under art. 1a, para 1 and the appendix to it (Area 2. Humanities. Table 1) of the Regulations for its application. St. Doncheva has a defended dissertation for a doctor and a dissertation for a doctor of sciences (indicators 1 and 2). He participated in the competition with a total of 80 publications, of which three monographs - one dedicated to the molds and matrices from the

territory of Bulgaria (indicator 4), the other - to the production centers and their products. The last monograph is in print and is related to the dissertation defended in 2020, dedicated to the technology of production of artistic metal in the X century. Most of the publications are in refereed editions at home and abroad - a total of 1028 points of indicators A, B, and D (with 350 points required).

In the list of citations - indicator E, the points are 240, collected from 16 cited publications (out of the required 100). All of them are in referenced editions (indicator 12). At indicator E the collected points are 160 (out of the required 100). Thus, after summing up the final result, it turns out that St. Doncheva participated in the competition with a total of 1428 points (out of a required 550), which fully covers the minimum national requirements for holding this position.

5. Analytical characteristics of the scientific activity of the candidate

The total publication production of Assoc. Prof. St. Doncheva includes a significant number of works - 207, excluding those in AOR (28 copies), of which seven monographs. The publications of the competition are 80, of which three monographs and 10 separate reports in ARD. The established citations are a total of 271 titles, of which 16 were in the competition. St. Doncheva is an active participant with reports/articles in numerous conferences in Bulgaria (Varna, Shumen, Plovdiv, Preslav, Sofia, Kyustendil, Provadia, Veliko Tarnovo) and abroad (France, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Romania). Of particular importance are her publications in English with the results of the analysis of selected samples of finds carried out at the Atomic Nuclear Research Institute in Debrecen. These results find a place in some of the most important sections of the second monograph, such as the origin of raw materials and metals and alloys used in the production of artistic metal, tools, and applied technology. The publications in Russian in the collections of the Hermitage, devoted to issues related to the stages and methods of production, as well as the techniques that accompany it, also make a significant contribution.

The publications in our publications are mainly in collections of conferences dedicated to topics of medieval Bulgarian history, as well as in leading periodicals of archeological science, such as the journal Archeology, the collections Preslav, Pliska-Preslav, Dobrudja, Izvestia NAIM, Acta Musei Varanensis, Archaeologia Bulgarica, et al.

And so in the announced competition, St. Doncheva participates with 80 publications. Of these, 16 are in English, 10 - in Russian, 26 are co-authored, the main author is St. Doncheva. These publications, published after 2011, when she was elected associate professor, largely

follow the earlier topics - from the first period of her research - and are also divided into two main areas: A. Cult architecture and ritual and B. Production and art metal technology in the Middle Ages. Small plastic items. In the third direction - Others - there are publications with different topics. The reports related to the excavations - in the ARD - are marked separately.

The first direction - "Cult architecture and rituals" - includes seven articles (№ 4-10). Two of them - № 6 and 9 - are related to the early Christian period and although they are interesting, they do not relate to the topic of the competition. Article (№ 4) "The exact sciences in medieval Christian architecture" is related to the author's observations on mathematical dependencies and geometric relationships mainly in the construction of temples from the early Middle Ages, but also from later periods. It was found that medieval builders applied the principles of proportionality and modular relations. In another article (№ 5) successful graphic and three-dimensional reconstructions of cult buildings from the pagan period of medieval Bulgaria (№ 5) are applied. The graphic and three-dimensional reconstructions of the temple complex discovered in recent years in the eastern part of the ancient Abritus (№ 7) are also very successfully presented. This complex, dating to the end of the 10th century, immediately after 971, consists of a large three-nave single-apse basilica with a three-part narthex and atrium, a small basilica located north of the great temple, and three intermediate rooms located between the two basilicas. It was established that the design and construction of the complex were carried out at one stage. Article № 9, which is co-authored, presents the authors' vision of combining modern three-dimensional design with graphically executed architectural and structural plans. According to the authors, this is "a path leading to the elaboration of a precise and correct reconstruction of the church building and offers a real idea of its appearance." Of interest is the article (№ 10), devoted to the role of the ruling institution in the liturgy of the Eastern Church, the role of the emperor (from the time of Justinian) in the church ritual. The changes that took place in the ritual at a later time are indicated, which do not affect the role of the ruler, but only the scale and duration of his participation. The continuity in the worship from the Byzantine to the Bulgarian church is indicated.

The second direction, which is related to the activity and publications of St. Doncheva, as stated above, is "Production and technology of artistic metal in the Middle Ages. Items of small plastic. Three new monographs and 69 articles are devoted to this topic. In 2015 the monograph "Molds and matrices from the Bulgarian Middle Ages (IX - XIV century)" was published in a volume of 312 pages. As the title shows, it is dedicated to the famous molds and matrices with which metal jewelry and objects are produced. For the first time, attention has been paid to these items, proving a well-developed production carried out by craftsmen who master all aspects of

the jewelry craft to perfection. The work consists of four chapters - 1. Early Bulgarian Middle Ages (IX-XI century); 2. Byzantine period (XI-XII century); 3. Late Bulgarian Middle Ages (XII-XIV century) (correct is the Mature Middle Ages, Late Middle Ages is the period XV-XVII century) 4. Purpose and use of molds and dies This part concerns the practical application of the means of production against the background of Finally, the author's opinion on some more important observations is outlined, and conclusions are drawn, such as that a large number of molds and dies, as well as the various tools found in the research not only of the complexes around Preslav but also on the territory of the country, prove the existence of well-developed production in all periods of the Bulgarian state. An important part of the work is the catalog of 190 pages, which presents illustrations of the finds, the context of their discovery, and similar examples, if available.

The second monograph is "Metal Art Production in Medieval Bulgaria. Jewelry craftsmanship in Bulgaria at the Middle Ages ". Lambert Academic Publishing, 2012, 161 pp. Saarbrücken is small, but important because it is published Saarbrücken in English and presents settlements and finds from the early Bulgarian Middle Ages, unknown to the Western scientific world, related to the production of various jewelry and objects. Separate topics are proposed, which are related to the technology, stages, and organization of the production of artistic metal: Workshops; Toolkit; Metals and alloys, metallurgical analysis; Technological process. The sequence of the technological process from model creation to extraction and cleaning of castings is traced. It is rightly noted that the production of artistic metal was very well organized and met all the requirements of this craft.

The third monograph "The production of artistic metal in Bulgaria in the X century (according to data from the production centers in the vicinity of Preslav)" is the defended dissertation for obtaining the scientific degree "Doctor of Science", which is published. This work, with a volume of 1,068 pages, is devoted to the technology of production and the extracted products, among which belt belts are most often found. Their number exceeds the figure of 3000 and accounts for 80% of all production in these centers. Finds from the same centers, received in the museum collections before the excavations, mainly from Nadarevo, which are stored in NIM-Sofia and in several museums in Northeastern Bulgaria - RIM Shumen, Targovishte, Varna, Preslav. Thus, on the basis of the numerous production of belt sets, collected for 20 years - from 2004 to 2009 near the village of Novosel, from 2007 to the present, with a short break - near the village of Zlatar and from the 90s years of the twentieth century within a season near the village of Nadarevo, St. Doncheva aims to present the production of artistic metal in early medieval

Bulgaria, to show the decorated belt as a single composition, composed of separate and morphologically, technologically and stylistically related details - current, tips, applications.

The workshops in Novosel and Zlatar, defined as temporary, seasons, are examined. The furnaces, pre-kiln space, hearths, and pits for waste products found in the workshops were traced. Raw materials, blanks, semi-finished products, discarded and waste products are shown. The found foundry vessels (numerous whole and fragmented small crucibles) and tools - anvils, hammers, pliers, tweezers, awls, holes, files, grindstones, etc. are examined. The results of the study of the first production complexes in medieval Bulgaria show that most products are made of lead-tin bronze (Cu-Sn-Pb), as the amount of copper is the largest, and tin and lead vary. Silver alloy products are also cast. The models for the products are cast in lead. The presence of other elements in the alloys (besides copper, tin, and lead) is proof that they are of different origins and that obsolete, recycled products have been used. Thus St. Doncheva traces the entire production process from the creation of the models to the receipt of the finished products, cast in crates with foundry soil.

Achieving the set goals is related to several tasks that she sets and manages to solve:

1. The belt details and the places of their products are presented. A compositional scheme has been developed, uniting the species diversity of the products, subordinated to the functional division between them - of buckles, belt ends, applications.

2. Attempts have been made to reconstruct various belts. They are made on the basis of ornaments and parallels from dated objects at home and abroad. Variants are indicated within each reconstruction order and are illustrated graphically and to scale.

3. The elemental composition of finds from the three centers, according to the so-called PIXE method. The analyzes, as already mentioned, were performed in the laboratory of the Atomki Institute for Nuclear Research, Debrecen, Hungary. The specific features of metals and alloys are noted. The results are presented in tabular and graphical form.

4. An attempt has been made to establish the origin and route of the raw material to the production centers. For this purpose, the results of the study of the elemental composition from ore sources and the results of finds from the workshops are compared. The historical and archeological data on the existence of raw material bases and their metallurgical development are traced. Attention is focused on the Burgas-Strandzha region, a major source of copper ore mining from prehistory to modern times.

5. The tools found in the production centers related to the production of objects made of artistic metal are presented. Parallels are sought among modern jewelry and blacksmith tools.

6. The technology and the separate stages in the production of artistic metal are traced according to the data of the considered, the most numerous group of finds - the belt details.

7. The text is confirmed by a rich and varied pictorial material, showing the typological diversity of the finds - 30 reconstructions of belts and 33 reconstructions of horse ammunition; numerous tables and graphs with results from the elemental analysis of individual and groups of products from the three production centers.

The considered belt sets are important, not only because they reveal the great variety, the abundance of ornaments in the Bulgarian belts, but because they are well-dated - in the tenth century and serve to date various monuments and objects found with similar ones in other Bulgarian villages.

A number of articles in Bulgarian, English, and Russian are related to the production and technology of artistic metal. In several of them (№ 11, 13, 31, 53, 54, 64) attention is focused on the research in the centers near Novosel and Zlatar, on the workshops and materials found in them, on the sources of raw materials, on the results of the performed chemical analyzes (№ 57, 60, 61, 64), made in different centers and especially the important, already mentioned, the so-called PIXE method - quantitative analysis to determine the main and trace elements of artifacts and their surface, implemented at the Institute for Nuclear Research in the town of Debrecen. Other articles examine the materials found in these centers or in various parts of the country related to the production of works of art - molds and lead models from Novosel and Zlatar (№ 16, 64, 69), a bronze matrix and a matrix imprint with an image of cheeses found in one of the workshops near the village of Zlatar (№ 56), matrices for embossed applications with the images of the archangels Michael and Gabriel, dating from the XIII-XIV century (№ 24, 35), matrices for ornaments with plant decoration 27) and with an image of a bird (№ 34), 35).

St. Doncheva also examines metal objects of different purposes, such as amulets (№ 21, 68). In my opinion, the article under № 72 - "Bronze amulet with inscriptions from the vicinity of Pliska", which is referred to in the section "Others", should be included. In several articles are presented crosses - single and double (№ 20, 23, 37, 55, 65), lead icons from the medieval settlement in Kachitsa near Smyadovo (№ 14), bronze pendant from X - XI century with The Mother of God from the vicinity of the village of Srednya, Shumen region (№ 15), a two-sided Byzantine eulogy from Drustar (10th - 11th century) with St. Constantine and St. Helena and the scene "Annunciation" worn as a medallion (№ 40), one-sided lead an icon (eulogy) with the scene "Annunciation", defined as a model, found together with several anonymous Byzantine follies in the vicinity of Shumen and dated in the XI-XII century (№ 44). Particular attention is paid to several bronzes, silver, and gold rings. One of them (№ 12, 67) is silver rings-seals with

images of mythological creatures - chimeras, griffins, dragons, dated in the XII-XIV century. Of interest is a bronze ring with a Gorgon jellyfish, which according to St. Doncheva belonged to a Byzantine dignitary and was produced in the Byzantine capital (№ 28). A valuable find from the Ovech fortress near Provadia is a gold ring with images of a double-headed eagle on the plate and with round medallions (shields) on the ring - one with a geometric decoration of intertwined lines resembling a swastika, the other with a Palaeologus monogram. It dates back to the 14th century and is also associated with high dignitaries. Several rings are also examined, on the round tiles on which is engraved a bird and a circular prayer inscription in positive in Greek: "+ KE BOHΘH TON EXONTA ME". Finding such a bronze plate in the production center near Nadarevo helps to specify the date of production and use of these rings - not from the second half of the IX century, as has been accepted so far, but to the middle of the X century, when the time of operation of the production center (№ 41). During excavations in the center near the village of Novosel, bronze tiles with a relief image of a peacock were found, as well as a lead model and several bronze castings, which are associated with the making of rings-seals in the 10th century. Shumen (№ 42)

The article under № 59 is very important, which includes the coins found in the centers near Novosel and Zlatar - most of them are bronze castings-imitations of Byzantine follis, made according to the technology approved for the other products. They imitate the coins of the emperors Leo VI (866-912), Roman I Lakapin (920-944), Constantine VII and Zoe (914-919), Constantine VII (920-931), Constantine VII and Roman II (950-959). . Such coin-copies have not been found elsewhere and may have been made, as St. Doncheva, to meet the personal needs of the masters. Only two coins - of Leo VI and of Constantine VII and Zoe, found in Zlatar, are original Byzantine follis, minted in Constantinople and have a different elemental composition. The coins contribute to the dating not only of the production centers, but also of the metal objects found in them - belt ornaments, rings, crosses, etc .. These finds date from the beginning to the middle of the tenth century. It is now known that in an imitation follis of Constantine VII and Roman II (950–959) was found in the center of Zlatar, according to which the production time in this center should be extended. As shared by St. Doncheva, the activity of the workshops probably ended in the 60s and 70s of the 10th century and was caused by the military events during this period. It is important in the future to make metallographic analyzes of applications and tips from Pliska and Preslav, which should be compared with those from the production centers. I have always been impressed by the fact that in shape and ornaments many of the belt ornaments from Pliska are close to those from the production centers, but do not coincide in time.

They originate from the uppermost layer and date to the end of the 10th - the first half to the 60s of the 11th century. –1067). No anonymous follies were found in the production centers. St. Doncheva does not rule out the possibility that craftsmen from the production centers have moved to the fortified Pliska and Preslav, where they continued their activities. This is the only way we can explain the chronological difference in the belt ornaments.

In the direction, "Others" are presented 10 non-articles that shed light on open coins - Venetian pennies (№ 71), an amulet with an inscription from Pliska (№ 72), a bronze spheroid from Preslav (№ 73), stamps (№ 74, 75, 76, 79), lead weight (№ 77), swords (№ 78, 80).

6. Conclusion:

From the reviewed publications (and I know the much larger number of publications from the period until her election as an associate professor) it can be seen that St. Doncheva is a scientist who works hard and successfully publishes a variety of monuments. , kept in various museums mainly in Northeastern Bulgaria, unpublished for many years, reflects on their character and symbolism. The important thing is that for the period from 2011 so far she has also done a lot. Thanks to her, the three large production centers located near Tsar Simeon's capital - Veliki Preslav became famous. Their diverse production became famous. I must emphasize that I followed with interest her annual reports on the results of the excavations in Novosel and Zlatar because the metal objects that were found there and the enolpion crosses I am interested in are well dated.

Considering not only the significant number of publications but also the fieldwork, participation in national and international conferences, international projects, as well as the fact that he is a graduate of the University of Shumen and that always responded with advice, reviews, opinions with the help of colleagues from the Department of History and Archeology, I strongly support her candidacy and recommend the members of the scientific jury to choose Assoc. Stella Milcheva Doncheva is a professor at the Department of History and Archeology of the University of Shumen.

20.08.2021 .....

Shumen (Prof. Dr. Habil. Lyudmila Doncheva-Petkova, PhD)