

REVIEW

by Prof. Rossitsa Slavcheva Draganova, PhD, Institute of Art Studies – BAS,
professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Arts

On the competition for acquiring the academic position of Professor in Musicology and Musical Art (Bulgarian church and secular music from the late 19th and early 20th centuries),
professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Arts, announced by the Institute of Art Studies – BAS
(State Gazette, issue 44 / 14 May 2026)

with Assoc. Prof. Stefka Georgieva Venkova-Mosheva, PhD as the sole candidate

Brief information about the candidate

Stefka Venkova-Mosheva graduated from the National Music School “Prof. Veselin Stoyanov” in Ruse with a major in piano (1990), and from the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv, where she obtained master’s degrees in Music Pedagogy (1995) and Musicology (1996). In 2010 she received the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in Musicology and Musical Art. Her professional career includes teaching in general education schools (1996 – 2006) and at the New Bulgarian University (1998 – 2009). Since 2009 she has worked at the Institute of Art Studies – BAS, where she has successively held the positions of specialist, senior assistant professor (2010 – 2015), and associate professor in Church Choral Music (since 2015). Since 2022 she has served as the scientific secretary of the Institute, and since 2024 she has been a part-time lecturer at the Faculty of Theology of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. Her research interests focus on Bulgarian church and secular music of the 19th–20th centuries, Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholic music, East – West cultural interactions, musical archives, and musical institutions. She is the author of the monographs *Music of the Eastern-Rite Catholic Church in Bulgaria* (2010) and *Apostol Nikolaev-Strumski: A Life Inspired by Music* (2016), both distinguished with awards from the Union of Bulgarian Composers and the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, as well as the book *Building the New Musical Life in Bulgaria – The Work of Nikolay Iv. Nikolaev (1852–1938)* (2026), with which she participates in the present competition. She is a member of the International Musicological Society, the Association of Byzantinists and

Medievalists in Bulgaria, the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, and the Musicologists' Section of the Union of Bulgarian Composers, where she has served as secretary since 2014.

Brief description of the materials submitted for the procedure

In the procedure for the academic position of Professor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Stefka Venkova-Mosheva participates with the monograph *Building the New Musical Life in Bulgaria – The Work of Nikolay Iv. Nikolaev (1852–1938)* (2026), presented as her principal habilitation work. It is accompanied by selected publications produced after her promotion to associate professor: studies and articles grouped into four thematic areas – Bulgarian church music from the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century; religious and spiritual songs; the earliest musical institutions in Bulgaria; archives and archival collections containing church music.

The NACID dossier also includes information on doctoral supervision, participation in research projects, and scholarly awards. An autobiographical note and documents certifying the candidate's academic and professional qualifications are likewise provided. All materials are carefully prepared and demonstrate full compliance with the requirements for holding the academic position of Professor in professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Arts.

Review of the candidate's activity by indicator groups

Group A – Defended PhD dissertation – 50 points

Assoc. Prof. Stefka Venkova-Mosheva has defended a dissertation entitled Music of the Eastern-Rite Catholic Church in Bulgaria. The public defense took place on 13 October 2009; diploma issued by the Higher Attestation Commission, No. 33720 / 05 January 2010. The dissertation represents the first comprehensive musicological study of Eastern-Catholic music in Bulgaria and has served as a foundation for subsequent research in the field of religious music.

Group B – Habilitation work (published monograph) – 100 points

- Building the New Musical Life in Bulgaria – The Work of Nikolay Iv. Nikolaev (1852 – 1938) (Sofia: Institute of Art Studies – BAS, 2026, ISBN 978-619-7619-71-3). The monograph is submitted as the principal habilitation work in the present competition.

Group C – Total: 390 points (minimum required: 150 points)

- 5 articles/papers indexed in Web of Science – 150 points

- 10 articles/papers in specialized publications (ERIH Plus, international volumes) – 150 points
- 3 studies in specialized editions – 90 points

Group D – Total: 205 points (minimum required: 80 points)

- 1 citation in an edition indexed in internationally recognised databases – 15 points
- 16 citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes – 160 points
- 2 citations in non-refereed journals with scholarly review – 10 points
- 2 reviews of published authorial works (monograph) – 20 points

These are the citations known to the candidate at the time of submitting the documents; their number may be higher.

Group E – Total: 125 points (minimum required: 120 points)

This group includes the supervision of a successfully defended PhD student, participation in research projects, and awards for scholarly and creative work (books). As is evident, Assoc. Prof. Stefka Venkova-Mosheva, PhD meets – and in terms of publications and citations significantly exceeds – the minimum national scientometric requirements in professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Arts.

Evaluation of the Candidate's Contributions

I. Habilitation Work

The monograph “*Building the New Musical Life in Bulgaria – The Work of Nikolay Iv. Nikolaev (1852 – 1938)*”, submitted for participation in the academic competition, was published in 2026 and comprises 283 pages. It represents the first independent and comprehensive musicological study dedicated to the figure and work of Nikolay Iv. Nikolaev in the context of the new musical life in Bulgaria from the late 19th and early 20th century.

Already in the introduction, the author clearly formulates the object, aims, and tasks of the study, emphasizing the need for a new reading of Nikolaev’s role in the formation of Bulgarian musical culture. I would add that the approach to the topic proves to be truly very successful: through the analysis of Nikolaev’s activity and personality, a convincing interpretation is offered of the processes involved in the formation of professional musical practice and the dynamics of the main layers of our musical culture and education during the indicated period. Certainly, such a study requires the search, mastery, and comparison of large amounts of information – a task with

which the author has coped excellently, and which has allowed her to present her ideas in a well-structured text. Moreover, the lack of a fully preserved archive necessitates the gathering and comparison of data from numerous diverse sources: the State Archive – Sofia, the National Library “St. Cyril and Methodius” – Bulgarian Historical Archive, the Scientific Archive of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, personal collections of musicians from the era, as well as materials provided by Nikolaev’s descendants. This labor-intensive process has been carried out with professionalism, analytical precision, and methodological consistency.

The structure of the monograph is clearly outlined and logically coherent: six extensive chapters, introductory remarks, conclusion, bibliography, and nine appendices that systematize important documents, lists, correspondence, congress resolutions, and biographical data. Each chapter examines a separate aspect of Nikolaev’s activity – biographical information and periodization, contribution to Bulgarian church music, role in the establishment of the first musical institutions, history, ideas, and activities of the Bulgarian Music Union, journalistic legacy, interactions with leading musicians of the era.

The study offers new facts, previously unknown documents, and corrections of existing data, thereby filling significant gaps in musicological literature. Particularly valuable is the interpretation of the processes related to the formation of professional musical practice in Bulgaria. Venkova traces the parallel lines in Nikolaev’s activity – as pedagogue, conductor, organizer, public figure, and ideologist of musical development. His interactions with leading personalities of the era are carefully analyzed, including the complex relationships and professional rivalries that shaped the musical community in the early 20th century.

Highly indicative of the significance of Nikolay Iv. Nikolaev in the cultural history of Bulgaria is the fact that in the three volumes of Luka Kasarov’s *Encyclopedic Dictionary* (1899 – 1907), which essentially represent the first Bulgarian general encyclopedia, only two names of musicians are included – Georgi Baidanov (1853 – 1927) and Nikolay Nikolaev (1852 – 1938). These are truly leading figures of the post-Liberation era who, together with the Czech musician, theorist, and pedagogue Karel Macháň (1867 – ?1935), who worked in Bulgaria from 1891 to 1903, significantly influenced the formation of the model and specificity of Bulgarian musical culture at the turn of the century, and thus its further development. As already noted, the examination of the cultural dimensions of the era in continuous dialogue with the evaluation of Nikolaev’s activity, applied in Venkova’s habilitation work, represents a very successful research

approach. Its realization, however, is possible only with the presence of profound knowledge and accumulated expertise in both secular and church music – knowledge that the candidate undoubtedly possesses. This is precisely what makes her a convincing author of a monograph on Nikolaev – a figure who contributed simultaneously to the development of secular music and to the manifestations of church music in Bulgaria.

Overall, I accept the contributions formulated by the candidate in the habilitation work. Particularly important for me, as a researcher of the same period, is the contribution to tracing the history of the Bulgarian Music Union – an organization that has not yet been the subject of a comprehensive study. The author reconstructs its history, periodization, congress resolutions, leading ideas, and its role in the development of church music, musical education, and the professional musical community.

II. Articles, Studies, and Citations

As previously noted, the selected articles and studies – published following the candidate's appointment as an associate professor – are organized into four thematic areas: Bulgarian church music from the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century; religious and spiritual songs; the earliest musical institutions in Bulgaria; archives and archival collections containing church music. The publications have appeared in authoritative national and international editions, including journals indexed in Web of Science and ERIH Plus, which attests to their high scholarly value and to the candidate's sustained presence in the professional academic community. The citations listed – many of which refer precisely to the publications submitted for the present competition – confirm this assessment. I would add that a considerable number of them appear in monographs and collective scholarly volumes; for example, I myself have cited one of the articles from the first thematic group, devoted to Bulgarian church music (Venkova, Stefka. The Bulgarian Music Union and Church Music in Bulgaria during the First Half of the 20th Century. – In: Bulgarian Musicology, 2022, № 4), in my book on Georgi Baidanov and Karel Macháň.

The texts in the second group – religious and spiritual songs – examine paraliturgical repertoire in the Orthodox and Eastern-Catholic traditions, cultural transfers, and new genre manifestations. The publications from the third group, dedicated to the processes of institutionalization of musical life in Bulgaria and the role of the Bulgarian Musical Union and its members, are very mature. They are distinguished by a profound understanding of these processes

and by meticulous handling of the documentary material. A similar systematic approach characterizes the fourth group of publications, focused on archival collections and their multifaceted interpretation.

In summary, the candidate's habilitation materials reveal solid scholarly competence, consistent development of research ideas, and a contribution to the study of Bulgarian church and secular music from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Based on the above and in accordance with the requirements of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, I confidently propose that Assoc. Prof. Stefka Georgieva Venkova-Mosheva, PhD, be elected by the Scholarly Council of the Institute of Art Studies – BAS to the academic position of Professor in professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Arts (Bulgarian church and secular music from the late 19th and early 20th centuries).

Sofia, 20.09.2026

Prof. Rossitsa Draganova, PhD