

PEER REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Irina Nikolaeva Saraivanova,
professional field 2.1. Philology,
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for the competition for filling the academic position “Professor” in the area of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology (Turkic languages – historical linguistics of the Turkish language) at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen, announced in the State Gazette No. 41 of 03.06.2022.

By order No. ПД-16-169/31.08.2022 of the Rector of the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen I have been appointed as a member of the Committee for the competition for the academic position “Professor” for the needs of the Department of Turkish Language and Literature at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen.

The only candidate participating in the competition for “Professor” announced in the State Gazette No. 41 of 03.06.2022 is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Nejib Salim-Ahmed, Department of Turkish Language and Literature at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen.

The documents submitted by the candidate for the competition are in conformity with the minimum requirements of the applicable laws. According to the submitted reference, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim fulfils and exceeds the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position “Professor” in the scientific area 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, as follows:

Under Indicator Group A (min. 50 points), Assoc. Prof. Salim has presented a diploma for the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” from the Higher Attestation Commission (No. 31945/02.01.2008), 50 points. Under Indicator Group C (min. 100 points), she has presented the monographic study *Tracing the Ottoman Epistolary Art İlm-ü İnşa* [„По следите на османското епистолярно изкуство илм-ю инша“] (“Konstantin Preslavsky” University Press, 2022, 195 pages), 100 points. Under Indicator Group D (min. 200 points) she has presented a total of thirty-three publications, a total of 262.65 points. Under Indicator Group E

(min. 100 points) references have been quoted – a total of 180 points. Under Indicator Group F (min. 100 points) the candidate in the competition for professor has been director of studies of a doctoral student with a successfully defended thesis, she has managed and participated in national projects and has published teaching aids, a total of 130 points.

The higher education and professional realisation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Necib Salim-Ahmed are closely linked with the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen. In 1998, Ms. Miyryam Salim acquired the educational and qualification degree “Master” in the specialty “Turkish Philology”. Her dissertation thesis entitled *Development of the Phonetic System of the Literary Turkish Language in the Period between the 19th and the Early 20th Century (Based on Written Sources)* [„Развитие на фонетичната система на книжовния турски език в периода XIX – началото на XX век (въз основа на писмени източници)“], defended before the Higher Attestation Commission in 2007, pinpoints the focus of the candidate’s scientific interests – the historical development of the Turkish language. In 2014, she was granted the academic position of “Associate Professor” at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen.

From 1999 until the present day, Ms. Miyryam Salim has been a member of the Department of Turkish Language and Literature at Shumen University. Assoc. Prof. Salim is involved in active administrative activities, including being Head of the Department, a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Humanities, Chair of the General Meeting of the Faculty of Humanities, a member of the General Meeting of the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen, a member or chair of various faculty committees.

Assoc. Prof. Salim is also an active participant in research projects at a university or national level, three of which are included in the submitted reference for participation in the competition for the academic position “Professor”. She is also a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria.

Ms. Miyryam Salim’s activity is expanded by the composition and editing of scientific publications and educational literature, membership in the editorial boards of periodicals and other publications. She is also involved in the organisation and conducting of national and international scientific forums in our country and in the Republic of Turkey, and is also mobile within the Erasmus+ programme.

An important element of the work of every university lecturer and candidate for the academic position “Professor” is working with students and doctoral students, as well as

providing direction of studies. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim has experience as a director of studies of six graduate students and five doctoral students (under this procedure, participation has been requested with one direction of a doctoral student with a successfully defended thesis).

In order for a candidate to hold the position of “Professor” the candidate’s educational and teaching activity is also essential. The teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Miyryam Salim at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen includes compulsory and elective courses in both regular and correspondence form of education in the educational and qualification degree “Bachelor” and the educational and qualification degree “Master” in disciplines related to her research interests, including “Ottoman Language”, “Ottoman Legal and Commercial Documents”, “Historical Linguistics”, “Development of the Turkish Linguistic Norm”, “Ottoman Language and Culture”, “Modern Turkish Language – Syntax”, “Theoretical Foundations of the Modern Turkish language – Lexicology”, “Theoretical Foundations of the Modern Turkish language – Morphosyntax”, etc.

As her habilitation thesis the candidate has submitted the monograph *Tracing the Ottoman Epistolary Art İlm-ü İnşa* [„По следите на османското епистоларно изкуство илм-ю инша“]. The study covers 195 pages and was published in 2022, and is structured as follows: introduction (pp. 5-11), four chapters (pp. 12-154), conclusion (pp. 155-157), bibliography (pp. 158-168), and appendices (pp. 169-195).

The bureaucratic apparatus was undoubtedly one of the pillars on which the Ottoman Empire rested for centuries. The existence of this apparatus was directly related to the orderly system of written communication/correspondence subject to certain rules. Observance of these rules was a kind of guarantee for the functioning of an administration on the scale of the Ottoman one. If we add the gap between the spoken and the written language, the need to introduce models for written communication is obvious. The role of another important factor should not be underestimated – the importance of the art of fine speech in the Muslim tradition, which was also reflected in the work of the Ottoman administration and the business style.

Assoc. Prof. Salim has submitted as her habilitation thesis a text dedicated to this current problem in Ottoman studies – epistolary forms and sample collections, focusing on its most important aspects diachronically. She traces *ilm-i inşa* from its emergence in the Islamic tradition to the first surviving Ottoman examples, and then she introduces some of the most significant authors of manuscript and later printed letterbooks. The author dwells on basic terms and concepts related to the epistolary genre. The analysis of the terminological apparatus

proposed in the study should be interpreted not only as a mandatory element of such research, but also as an opportunity for Ottoman non-philologists to enter the sphere of the epistolary art.

The reception and insight into the specificity and style of the samples of the Ottoman administrative correspondence are crucial in the analysis of the archival documents, which predetermines the author's approach to give considerable attention to the structure and content of the sources studied by her – the letterbooks in the third chapter of the study. The core of this chapter, however, is the analysis of the letter as a “centre of the epistolary culture”, as the author herself states. The analysis of both the general structure of the letter, the terminology associated with the individual elements, and the different types of letters is supported by examples from popular letterbooks. I applaud Assoc. Prof. Salim's choice to dwell on the specifics and style of structuring private correspondence. It seems that the efforts of our Ottomanists are focused more on the study of business/official correspondence and less on personal letters. The existence of letterbooks of mixed content, as well as those devoted entirely to private correspondence, are sufficient evidence of the place of these epistolary forms in Ottoman society and culture and call for a more in-depth analysis.

One of the most difficult aspects of epistolary samples to interpret (and translate) is related to etiquette, courtesies expressed through the most elegant expression possible, often using means of expression borrowed from Arabic and Persian. Regardless of the modest space allocated in the submitted text to the language and style of private and official letters, the author has managed to touch on some key points, focusing on the grammatical forms and lexical means of expression which form the patterns of the epistolary samples, citing the relevant clichéd formulas selected from Ottoman letterbooks.

The monograph *Tracing the Ottoman Epistolary Art İlm-ü İnşa* presents a general picture of Ottoman epistolary art, highlighting some unexplored aspects. The text is also characterised by a practical value, which makes it relevant both in terms of teaching Ottoman language and Ottoman diplomacy, as well as in the work of researchers of the Ottoman documentary heritage in our country.

I would also like to point out some directions for future research, and my main recommendation is related to the study of the Ottoman archival and literary heritage preserved in Bulgarian archives. Given the extremely small number of Ottomanists working in the field of philology in our country, I believe that for the development of Bulgarian Ottoman science it

is important that the presented text be expanded by Assoc. Prof. Salim with a focus on the letterbooks from the oriental collection at the Saints Cyril and Methodius National Library, which she has traced and presented as a separate appendix. In view of its practical applicability, including for teaching students, it would be appropriate in a future study to present the titles of the researched sources, the terminology related to the epistolary tradition, and the excerpted examples in the original Ottoman language, translated into Bulgarian, and the accompanying transcription should be unified and refined.

In addition to the submitted habilitation work, in the current competition Assoc. Prof. Salim is participating with three co-authored monographs, one study (co-authored), 26 articles and presentations (12 of which co-authored), one of which in an edition referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information, participation in the collective compilation of a dictionary (including an electronic edition), two teaching aids (one co-authored).

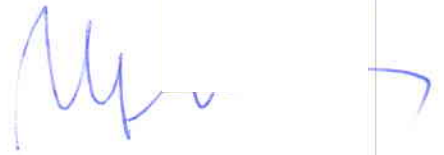
The scientific publications testify to consistency and orderliness in the linguistic areas in which Assoc. Prof. Salim works, and her scientific contributions stand out in the analysis of issues in the field of historical linguistics and Ottoman studies in a broader sense. Some of this scientific production places Assoc. Prof. Salim among those Ottoman linguists who are tempted to enter the study of Ottoman topics outside of philology, related to economic history, diplomacy, demography, culture, architecture.

The analysis of the publications submitted for participation in the competition shows the diversity of the candidate's interests in the field of Turkology, with an emphasis beyond historical linguistics and Ottoman studies falling on the grammar of the modern Turkish language. The achievements of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim are complemented by her co-authorship in writing a multilingual dictionary, as well as textbooks in Ottoman and Modern Turkish, which undoubtedly meet the tangible need for such educational and reference literature for the needs not only of university education in our country, but also for a wider range of users.

Based on the analysis of the teaching and research activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim-Ahmed, as the only candidate in the competition for "Professor" in professional field 2.1. Philology (Turkic languages – historical linguistics of the Turkish language) at the "Konstantin Preslavsky" University of Shumen, announced in the State Gazette No. 41 of 03.06.2022, I give my positive assessment and propose that Prof. Dr. Miyryam Nejib Salim-Ahmed be elected to the academic position "Professor" in professional field 2.1. Philology (Turkic languages – historical linguistics of the Turkish language).

15.10.2022

Reviewer:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Irina Saraivanova', written over a faint yellow rectangular stamp.

/Prof. Dr. Irina Saraivanova/