

PEER REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Milena Yordanova

of the materials submitted for participation
in a competition for the academic position “Professor”
at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen

By order No. PD-16-169 of 31.08.2022 of the Rector of the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen, I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Committee for the competition for the academic position “Professor” at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen, announced in the State Gazette No. 41 of June 3, 2022 in the area of higher education: 2. Humanities, professional field: 2.1. Philology, academic specialty: Turkic languages – historical linguistics of the Turkish language. The respective competition procedure has been announced for the needs of the Department of Turkish Language and Literature at the Faculty of Humanities.

Only one candidate has submitted documents for participation in this competition: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Nejib Salim-Ahmed, who is a lecturer at the Department of Turkish Language and Literature at the Faculty of Humanities at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen.

The set of materials for participation in the competition for “Professor” submitted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim-Ahmed has been prepared in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Shumen University. The documents are well put together and organised. The references and lists contain the necessary information in relation to this procedure.

To participate in the competition, the candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim-Ahmed has submitted a total of 35 scientific papers, which are distributed as follows: 1 authored monograph, 2 co-authored monographs, 1 study (co-authored), 26 articles (of which 12 co-authored), 3 multilingual dictionaries (co-authored), 2 teaching aids (one of which co-authored). The scientific works in question have not been submitted for the

acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” or for a competition for the academic position “Associate Professor”, which means that the candidate has complied with the legal requirements and with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of Shumen University.

After graduating from the “Nuvvab” secondary general education theological school in Shumen (1993), the candidate Miyryam Salim-Ahmed continued her studies at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen, from which she graduated with a Master’s degree in Turkish Philology (1998). Immediately after obtaining her higher education degree, Ms. Salim-Ahmed began teaching at Shumen University. In 2007 she defended before the Higher Attestation Commission a dissertation for the acquisition of an educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in the scientific field 05.04.23, Iranian languages; Semitic-Hamitic languages; Turkic, Mongolian languages; Finno-Ugric languages, 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)“]. In 2014 she won a competition for the academic position “Associate Professor” at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen with her habilitation thesis *Subordinate Relations in the Complex Sentence in the Turkish Language (Based on the Text of an Anonymous Essay)* [„Подчинителни отношения в сложното изречение в турския език (Въз основа на текст на анонимно съчинение)“].

The analysis of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim-Ahmed’s project and scientific work shows that she is an active representative of the Faculty of Humanities at Shumen University in two national scientific projects, and that she also participates in ten university scientific projects.

As a representative of Bulgarian Ottoman studies, Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Salim-Ahmed is respected not only in the country but also abroad, which is why she is included as a member of the editorial boards of various scientific periodicals.

Currently, Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Salim-Ahmed is the head of the Turkish Language and Literature Department (2017–) at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen.

At the same time, she carries out various additional administrative responsibilities in the Faculty of Humanities and has participated in the preparation of documents for several accreditation procedures (2017–2018).

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim-Ahmed's educational and teaching work is interesting in its nature and content. It includes the independent development, preparation and conducting of lecture courses and exercises in the following academic disciplines:

- A. In the educational and qualification degree "Bachelor": Ottoman language, Ottoman legal and commercial documents, historical linguistics, modern Turkish language – syntax, semantics and lexicology, practical Turkish language – grammar;
- Б. In the educational and qualification degree "Master": theoretical foundations of the modern Turkish language – lexicology, theoretical foundations of the modern Turkish language – morphosyntax, text linguistics, development of the Turkish linguistic norm, Ottoman language and culture, with applied innovations in the teaching of the specified disciplines.

It is important to note that Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Salim-Ahmed has supervised five doctoral students and six successful graduates at the "Konstantin Preslavsky" University of Shumen.

The scientific texts with which Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim-Ahmed participated in the competition for the academic position "Professor" are distinguished by the contemporaneity of the discussed issues and the diversity of the used research approaches.

Her main habilitation work – the monograph *Tracing the Ottoman Epistolary Art Ilm-yu Insha* [„По следите на османското епистоларно изкуство илм-ю инша“] (2022), covers a total of 195 pages and is distinguished by its interdisciplinary nature. At the same time, this work is a scientific study with a clearly expressed practical orientation and the possibility of transferring knowledge into skills and competences. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim-Ahmed demonstrates a good knowledge of the subject and extensive bibliographic awareness – the list of literary references includes 82 sources in Bulgarian and Turkish. Without reducing the breadth of the author's reference to the bibliographic

sources in question, it would be interesting to present the position of Western European researchers on the issue as well, which would only enrich the monograph.

The research methods are consistent with the topic, as well as with the goals and tasks that the author sets for herself in her theoretical substantiation.

The monograph consists of an introduction (pp. 5–11), four chapters (pp. 12–154), conclusion (pp. 155–157), bibliography (pp. 158–168) and appendices (pp. 169–195). In terms of composition, the research is calibrated and meets the modern requirements for credibility and factuality.

The first chapter focuses on the question of the origin of the epistolary culture in the Ottoman society by reviewing the state of this tradition in the Muslim societies of the pre-Ottoman period. The issues included in the first chapter of the monograph and the ways in which they are clarified create a logical transition to the second chapter, which presents data on the Ottoman epistolary culture. In this part of her research, the author clarifies the scope of terms related to the Ottoman epistolary art which frame the object and subject of this research. The etymology and meaning of the relevant terms within the framework of the modern research paradigm are exhaustively indicated. It is important to note that the terminological presentation is not limited to the marking of strictly linguistic data, and the content-related information is supplemented with serious extralinguistic information and clarifications. This chapter also contains a prosopographical section, which examines some significant authors of handwritten and printed letterbooks from the Ottoman period.

In the third chapter of the study, the emphasis is placed on the presented classification, structure and content of the Ottoman letterbooks and on the structure of the letter in particular as the centre of the epistolary culture and the types of letters with their specificities.

The fourth chapter analyses the linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary, phraseology, reduplication) characteristic of epistolary works, with special attention being paid to some stylistic aspects present in the texts of this genre. The monograph is a scientific and applied study dedicated to the Ottoman epistolary communication. The author

examines the letter and letterbooks from the period through different prisms, which enriches the Bulgarian Turkological views on this issue.

The monograph *The Eski Jumaya Fair. Centre for Economic and Cultural Dialogue in the 19th Century* [„Ескиджумайският панаир. Център за стопански и културен диалог през XIX век“] (2021), which M. Salim-Ahmed has developed in co-authorship with Aldjan Jaffer, has two editions. The study presents information about the history of today's city of Targovishte (Eski Jumaya), examining in detail matters related to the origin of the fair, its location, time and duration, ensuring the security of the fair, various financial proceeds from the fair, types of goods offered at the fair, the cultural impact of the fair.

The section examining the place of Arabic numerals in the Islamic religion and Turkish culture in the co-authored monograph *Fragments of the Cultural Pictures of the World through the Prism of the Number* [„Фрагменти от културните картини на света през призмата на числото“] (2016) has been drawn up by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim-Ahmed. The author presents the Abjad numerals, which were widely used within the borders of the Ottoman Empire and had an impact on the Muslims' worldview.

The articles presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Salim-Ahmed for participation in the competition for “Professor” outline the professional research pursuits of our colleague who demonstrates a marked interest in the detailed study of Ottoman problematics. The publications are directly oriented to theoretical and practical problems, the results reflected in them are useful both for historical researchers and philologists, as well as for students and doctoral students in the humanities whose training they would expand.

The overall review of the output submitted for review by Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Salim-Ahmed creates the image of a purposeful researcher who competently expands upon a number of practical and applied aspects of Ottoman language teaching.

The candidate for the announced competition for the academic position “Professor” at Shumen University in the area of higher education: 2. Humanities, professional field: 2.1. Philology, scientific specialty: Turkic languages – historical linguistics of the Turkish language, has presented a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials

used in the defence of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” and in the competition for the academic position “Associate Professor”. The theoretical treatments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to teaching work. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Salim-Ahmed are unquestionable.

I, as a member of the Scientific Committee, at the time of submitting the review, have received no signals about any illegal use of scientific publications by the candidate.

After familiarising myself with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analysing their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and to recommend to the Scientific Committee to draw up a report-proposal for the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Humanities to elect Assoc. Prof. Dr. Miyryam Nejib Salim-Ahmed for the academic position “Professor” at the “Konstantin Preslavsky” University of Shumen in the area of higher education: 2. Humanities, professional field: 2.1. Philology, academic specialty: Turkic languages – historical linguistics of the Turkish language.

10.10.2022

Sofia

Reviewer:

Prof. M. Yordanova