

OPINION

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regarding the selection procedure for the academic position of PROFESSOR in the area of higher education: 2. Humanities, Professional Field: 2.1. Philology (Turkic languages – Historical linguistics of the Turkish language), Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, announced in the State Gazette, issue 41 / 03.06.2022.

1. Information for the procedure

There is only one candidate for the participation in the selection procedure for the position of professor in Turkic languages - historical linguistics of the Turkish language, Assoc. Prof. Miyryam Nedzhib Salim-Ahmed, PhD. The applicant has submitted all the required documents and a report for the fulfillment of the Minimum national requirements according to the terms and conditions of the Bulgarian legislation in the area of Higher Education.

2. Information for the applicant

The applicant graduated from Shumen University at an MA degree in Turkish studies (1998) and in 2000 she was appointed to an assistant position in the same university. In 2008 she successfully defended her PhD thesis and in the same year she rose through the ranks to an assistant professor's position. She was habilitated in 2014 and moved to the next level of academic ranking, associate professor. She has been the head of the Department of Turkish language and literature since 2017.

3. Teaching and administrative work

Assoc. prof. Salim has a long experience as a lecturer in Turkish language having lectures and seminars in historical linguistics, Ottoman studies (Ottoman language, paleography, Ottoman legal documentation) as well as in Modern Turkish language – morphology, syntax, lexicology, textlinguistics. Her pedagogical areas overlap with her scientific interests which becomes evident in her publications and applies to the profile of the selection procedure. She has also presented an extensive number of new course programmes and innovations in teaching methodology. She has also been a scientific reviewer of several PhD, BA and MA students and has participated in a great number of national and university projects and editorial boards. She is also a member of different organizational and scientific committees, has been on Erasmus teaching mobility programmes, has

taken active part in accreditation activities on a department, faculty and university level. Apart from Turkish language, assoc. prof. Salim has a very good level in Russian and good in English. It is highly impressive that for a period of 22 years, the applicant has managed to go through the ranks both as a scientist and a teacher, whose interests follow a straightforward and clear line of upgrading and deepening into a particular scientific field.

4. Overview of the publications

The list of scientific publications presented by the applicant comprises titles of one monograph – the habilitation thesis, 3 other monographs in co-authorship, which provide a solid basis for the habilitation work, one study in Turkish, 1 article indexed in Erih Plus and 25 reviewed publications in Bulgarian and foreign journals, 12 of which are in Turkish language. All of the scientific papers focus on the examination of different types of texts and linguistic items in the area of cultural studies, lexico-semantics and historical linguistics in Ottoman language and Modern Turkish; a list of citations is also presented in prestigious international journals. Assoc. prof. Salim's papers are interesting in their matter of observation and the given research works in linguistics and cultural studies contribute significantly to the development of science in the prism of the Ottoman period testimonies.

I intend to stress only on the monograph in relation to the present selection procedure for habilitation, which indeed seems to be a natural continuation of the applicant's scientific aspirations. She provides an in-depth examination and analysis on topics that have been previously overviewed in her papers in brief. The monograph *Following the footsteps of the Ottoman epistolary art ilm-ü inşâ* refers mainly to two types of epistolary manuals *inşâ* and *munşaat* in the Ottoman and Ottoman-Turkish epistolary art in which the interdisciplinary approach is clearly distinct chronologically and linguistically. The monograph consists of Introduction, 4 chapters, conclusion, bibliography (82 authors) and appendices with sample copies of handwritten and print epistolary manuals before and after the reformation period (Tanzimat, 1839). *Chapter one* provides an overview of the beginning of the epistolary art in the Ottoman culture and before it in the official and private correspondence of the Arabic and Persian communities. It is clearly stated that what actually gains priority in the style and language in epistolary prose is the elegance of speech and the elements of the classical rhetorics and while the Arabic language was used mainly in scientific works, Persian was predominant in literature. In *Chapter two* the author presents the chronology of the development of the *inşâ* epistolary genre introducing also the terminology

apparatus in the Ottoman epistolary art, its parallel use with the term *munshaat* before the Tanzimat reformation period, the interactions with other, foreign cultures and its orientation towards simplicity of expressions and practically in manuals. In the *Third chapter*, which occupies almost one third of the habilitation work, the candidate gives an in-depth set classifications in the Ottoman manuals in view of their credibility, content and problematic fields, literary/non-literary texts, as she gradually moves to the structure of the Ottoman epistolary manuals highlighting the preservation of the traditional criteria in handwritten manuals compared to the print ones which were more easily accessible in view of the lighter and less sophisticated style of expressions, with simplified and more understandable lexis. An essential contribution to the habilitation work is the detailed review of the structural components in writing a letter, given at the end of chapter 3 which focuses on the introductory addressing words regarding the social status and distance, which in turn, can determine the level of language lavishness, glorification and exaltation. The *Fourth chapter* dwells on the linguistic analysis of the texts in the manuals. Quite skillfully the author has managed to pinpoint the grammatical, lexical and phraseological peculiarities in the exploited language with prevalence of words and isaphet markers in Arabic and Persian, though with abundance of verb and verb forms in Turkish. The author has clearly depicted the dynamics in the approach towards a more colloquial language and the gradual transition from the more worldly-wise style to a lighter language, with expressions of seriousness intertwined with witty phrases. However, the candidate invokes to many texts following the diverse dimensions of the research and at times the reader may lose the focus of the gist. In my opinion there are moments of reiteration of some common-sense references to the epistolary style of writing, which are unnecessary and it would be better if she could extend the linguistic analysis citing Western European scholars.

5. Contributions

The main contribution of the monograph is that for the first time the specific characteristics of the structure, style and means of expressions have been presented and analysed in the letters in the Ottoman correspondence, which turns to be a key factor both in the official correspondence and the private correspondence. I can state that as an overall contribution of the candidate's scientific production is the enrichment of the scientific field in Turkish and Ottoman studies with an extremely high number of deciphered and examined sources.

Conclusion: In view of the aforementioned contributions, scholarly qualities and achieved results stated above, I would recommend the members of the esteemed Scientific Jury to vote **positively** for electing Assoc. Prof. Miyryam Nedzhib Salim-Ahmed, PhD for the academic position of Professor in the field of Higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology – (Turkic languages – Historical linguistics of the Turkish language), Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen.

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Prepared by:



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