

REVIEW

by Prof. Vasya Nikolova Velinova, DSci

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professional field 2.1. Philology

reviewing the academic work submitted for the contest for the academic position Professor in
professional field 2. 2.1. Philology,

announced by the Institute of the Bulgarian Language at the BAS in SG no. 93 of 22.XI.2022
with a candidate associate professor Dr. Yavor Miltenov, PhD

The candidate in the current competition for the academic position of "professor" Yavor Miltenov is an established philologist-medievalist in the field of the history of the Bulgarian language, historical lexicology and lexicography. His scientific interests also concern some aspects of the history of Bulgarian medieval literature and culture, paleography and archaeography. His studies mainly focus on the Old Bulgarian era (IX-X centuries). Quite logically, following the historical development of some phenomena, the author turns with some of his publications to the later literary tradition. The candidate graduated from NGDEK (1996), has a master's degree in Bulgarian philology (2001). He defended his doctorate for obtaining the PhD degree in 2006 and qualified as an associate professor in the IBE at the BAS in 2014. He has two specializations in Bulgaria and abroad. His scientific biography is evidence of continuous self-improvement and expansion of the field of scientific research.

From the tender documents attached, it can be seen that a procedure has been launched that corresponds to the requirements in the ZRASRB and the Rules for its implementation. Only one candidate in it, Associate Professor Yavor Miltenov, has attached all the necessary documents and meets the requirements for participation in the competition. The candidate participated in the competition with the monograph "Слова от колекцията Златоструй с неизвестен гръцки източник" (Sermones from the Chrysorrhoeas Collection with an unknown Greek source", Sofia, 2021, ed. "Avalon, 248 pp. and twenty articles. Five of them are referenced in Scopus (Web of science), the rest are mostly in peer-reviewed collections, pleasing the candidate's participation in prestigious scientific forums (national and international).

The monograph "Sermones from the Chrysorrhoeas Collection with an unknown Greek source", with which Associate Professor Yavor Miltenov participated in the competition, is a continuation of a monograph published in 2013, dedicated to the Chrysorrhoeas Collection, its composition and textual versions. In his new study, the scientist "completes" some topics identified in the previous work and focuses on certain sermones from Chrysorrhoeas Collection, for which there are no Greek equivalents. Thus, even with the title of his study, he focuses on a problem specific to literary medieval studies - the attribution of anonymous works. It has always attracted both with the possibilities of introducing an unknown/unattributed text into scholarly circulation and enriching the literary profile of a specific author, as well as with the challenges it poses to the researcher, because it is a test of his methodological, factual and philological erudition.

Yavor Miltenov examines ten anonymous texts included in the complete Chrysorrhoeas Collection, containing 138 homilies and known in 25 Russian copies, the earliest of which date from the 15th century. The monograph contains a short "Introduction" (pp. 5-11), supplemented with information "About the history of this book" (p. 13-14), which, although succinctly, gives a clear idea of the object of research, of the goals and tasks of the author, and of the methodology and publishing principles chosen by him. Already in the introductory part of the book, an important stipulation is made, which, in my opinion, outlines the parameters of a complex research approach, which is necessarily necessary in this type of attempt to attribute anonymous words: "*The Chrysostom homiletic miscellany has worked as a matrix for creating anthologies with different purpose. It would not be too much of a stretch to suggest that this was part of the original design of its compilers and its sponsor: to create, not a single book of translations, but a textual base from which later scribes could draw lessons for their needs.*" (p. 4).

Presented in this way, the Chrysorrhoeas Collection is further interpreted as an open structure. Borrowings from it have been identified in miscellanies of different types (at the level of groups of texts), but also in works of different genres - at the level of intertextual interactions. And such a fact in itself is a sharp pitfall for any attempt at categorical attribution. The author is definitely aware of such difficulties and the conditional nature of the concept of "authorship" in the Middle Ages, especially when it comes to preaching literature, to which the analyzed works belong. Therefore, he has chosen an adequate approach - to present each word separately, accompanied by a scientific apparatus, systematizing the following problem fields: previous studies; manuscript tradition; textological history; language and vocabulary observations. At the end of each short study, main conclusions are formulated, mainly concerning the attribution

hypotheses. The following is an edition of the text with different readings. This gives clarity to the entire monograph and allows the reader to quickly navigate the connections between individual texts.

In the first section, concise reference information is given on research and publications of each individual sermon, hypotheses about its authorship (if any) as well as corrections of some opinions already accepted in science. The second section is devoted to transcripts. It includes both an archeographic reference and a commentary on previous editions of the texts, an analysis of the connections between the individual transcripts, comments on the issue of redactions (when such are available) and, in general, gives sufficiently accurate information about the merits, resp. the gaps in the editions of the studied work. This part also motivates the choice of the transcript on which the edition was made, as well as the need sometimes to issue the text in two transcripts representing different editions (see e.g. words No. 1, 2, 4 and 5).

The third section is dedicated to textology, and in different cases it varies in completeness (depending on the number of transcripts, their filiation, etc.) and for different sermones it has a different title. It is undoubtedly important both for the selection of the transcript for the edition and for the presentation of the different readings, as well as for the following linguistic and lexical notes. In the part dedicated to linguistic observations, there is again a differentiated approach, somewhere they are replaced by more detailed analyzes of the connections between the transcripts or are connected with an analysis of the sources of the relevant text, including parallels with other Old Bulgarian or Greek works. In a number of cases, it is also about observations of the vocabulary of individual words, which has a direct relation to the attributions proposed by the author. At the end, the main conclusions of the textological, lexical and archeographic analyzes are summarized and a conclusion is formulated regarding the possibility of attribution of the specific word. The editions of the text comply with modern edition principles and give the reader the opportunity to check the hypotheses stated in the accompanying scientific apparatus.

The sermones presented in the monograph are arranged according to the degree of certainty of already existing attributions proposed by the author. This implicit criterion (Miltenov nowhere derives principles on which the order of the words is based) is imposed by itself, upon careful reading of the individual analytical parts. First, the Sermon for St. Trinity for both Creation and (Last) Judgment is analyzed, a work with the unanimously accepted authorship of St. Clement, especially since in one of the transcripts his name appears as the author. In this case, the research task is rather to outline the changes in the work in the process of its existence, to offer up-to-

date textual observations, to deepen the analysis of the relationships between the transcripts in the full and abridged Chrysorrhoea and other miscellanies, in order for the author to motivate his conclusions about the stages of distribution of the work, and also to offer his version about the presence of "Preslav lexical markers". According to Miltenov, they are the result of lexical processing of the archetype by Preslav scribes (p. 28). For the researcher, this is a "topic with continuation". The issue with the so-called "Preslavism" (lexica with Preslav origin) is important for the linguistic-textological studies of the Old Bulgarian literary monuments and is still debatable, as the recently published studies of our colleagues show. In his monograph, the candidate identifies the "Preslav lexica" as a mark of the editorial work of the compilers of the collection Chrysorrhoea. But then, in the attributions, he uses, in my opinion quite justifiably, either examples of archaisms, of rare word usages, or of specific words (and word combinations) characterizing the work of a given author, not Preslavism, based on texts that are certain as authorship. A separate question is whether the lexical criterion alone is sufficient for reliable attribution.

With the second literary work presented, Sermon for the salvation of the soul, there is also a transcript with indicated authorship, that of the Chernorizec Peter (with a black garment, a Monk). But the work poses a wider range of questions related to the use of Greek samples identified in Miltenov's monograph and giving the analyzed text the character of a compilation. Perhaps this is the reason why the researcher made an explicit stipulation that he would not consider the question of authorship, as he considered the question of the history of the text to be more important (p. 57, note 5). This is necessitated by the fact that the version of the word identified in the composition of Chrysorrhoea differs in a number of its features from the two main transcripts.

The first two works are relatively distinguished as "author's" i.e. original, since Miltenov himself accepts the attribution of the first as a work of St. Kliment of Ochrida, and the second sermon as a compilation made in a Bulgarian literary environment. The two analyzed works, in my opinion, are important in this monograph not so much with the proposed attributions, but as evidence of the work process of the Old Bulgarian scribes, who had to compose sermons on various occasions within the liturgical process. In this sense, the compilations have successfully met such needs, a process well illustrated by the identification of borrowings from Greek authors carried out in the study. The conclusion about the second work "*For now it must be assumed that it is an Old Bulgarian compilation, the basis of which lie Byzantine sources, skilfully combined into a smooth and meaningfully unified text*" (p.66) actually returns us to the

text-centric point of view of analysis (in the terminology of R. Marty). But it should not be forgotten that a similar conclusion is also applicable to other known "author's" texts.

The remaining eight works are sermons whose authorship is being discussed either for the first time or the proposed attributions are not widely known in science. These are literary works which, according to their content and formal characteristics, are examples of the moral-didactic line in the Old Bulgarian homiletics. They are analyzed in depth, numerous parallels with known works of Kliment Ohridski are presented. A number of Greek sources have been identified where this was possible. Among the texts there are those that have already been the subject of analysis and their attribution as the work of St. Clement has been made by other authors, such as Sermon about God's creation, and about mortal death, and about repentance. For other works, the author himself already has publications that are incorporated into the present volume by updating and supplementing the material (see, for example, A Sermon on Adulterers and Bigamists and A Sermon on Drought and God's Punishment). When presenting them, the researcher's desire to situate each work in a broad literary context and to extract the maximum amount of information about its probable author, editorial interventions, creation of new versions, and this is mostly done at the level of lexical material, is impressive. Thus, each word is practically accompanied by a short lexicographical reference book, which would be very useful for other studies, as well as for checking texts different in terms of their stylistic characteristics and functional orientation. What should be clarified are the comments to the so-called *topos*, which are not unconditional markers of authorial decisions. The analysis of the standardized theological, catechetical and moral-dogmatic lexicon, which is a common cultural layer in all samples of church eloquence, also needs clarification. I am convinced that in her future research activities, Associate Professor Miltenov will be able to further develop her hypotheses and connect the results of her observations with other characteristics of the works, affecting their style, the way of interpreting common themes, etc.

With regard to the conclusions at the end of the volume (pp. 225-237), and in the part concerning the "characteristic themes" in Kliment's work, I believe that it is more about the traditional themes for moral theology and catechetical preaching, sometimes presented in motifs and images specific to the style of Kliment Ohridski. So e.g. "the story of the "enslavement by the devil" (p. 226) from a literary and structural-semantic point of view is a motif from the great theological and moral-didactic theme of the fall and salvation, as can be seen from the examples cited by the author. The remaining topics (about the Second Coming, about the Last Judgment, etc.) are common to the entire Christian moral-didactic tradition. A careful reading of the cited

examples and comments shows that the author actually presents us with the specific motifs, biblical allusions or references to various canonical texts, which are typical of the style of Clement's works, dedicated to otherwise generally accepted and established (catechetical) themes of moral theology. Probably, taking into account this fact, Miltenov makes an essential and methodologically sound stipulation - that it is still possible that these works are about followers of Kliment Ohridski and about compilations based on his author's works. It would also be necessary to further develop the thesis that the analysis should include other characteristics of the works, besides the lexicographic ones, which is only hinted at.

In this sense, I would emphasize that attributions are not always possible or even desirable. After all, we know the names of several of the most distinguished Old Bulgarian writers who survived the centuries-old tradition of copying and editing. But there are probably many more names we don't know. And for this reason, it seems to me that what was done by the author in the field of the analysis of the intertextual connections between the works, of the connections and interactions between the transcripts, is much more important, because this is a significant contribution to the big picture of the literary process in Bulgaria in an era, when the Bulgarian artistic language was created, when the literary culture was formed in society. The observational conclusions of Yavor Miltenov in this direction give us very interesting information for reflection. This is also his indisputable and original contribution to the study of the literary process in the Old Bulgarian era.

The monograph testifies to the broad philological culture of its author. Not even all the attributions made can be confirmed (and their verification is practically impossible, unless one discovers the "inscribed" author's text dreamed up by every philologist-medievalist, possibly with the date and place of its creation) made by Yavor Miltenov for clarification of the processes of compilation, borrowing, and use of the Greek sources identified by him is a solid foundation for future research. The texts provided to the scientific community, issued in the most user-friendly form, in turn provide another perspective direction for scientific pursuits and the search for challenges. Let's hope that Yavor Miltenov will also be willing to continue this interesting topic.

Among the publications presented for the competition, there is a group of studies and articles also touching on the topic of the Gold Rush from various aspects. In the article "The Hilendar witnesses of Zlatostruj and their significance for the reconstruction of the proto-collection" the three Serbian manuscripts containing fragments of the Old Bulgarian collection are analyzed and evidence of Glagolitic prototypes of the translations is presented.

"Three Unexplored Slavic Chrysostom Anthologies in Comparison with the Zlatostruj Collection" is the analytic description of three voluminous collections of Zlatoust words, which documents the influence of the original Zlatostrudi on Slavic literatures, on scribes and compilers centuries removed from the time of creation of the archetypal corpus.

In the article "The common passages between the Zlatostrui collection and the Knjazhi Izbornik" several matching passages in these two Old Bulgarian collections are drawn and their common source, used independently and selectively by their compilers, is established. The articles "A Note on the Adoption of the Byzantine Models in Medieval Bulgaria (9th-10th c.): The Case of the Chrysorrhoeas Collection", "Stretches from the history of the Bulgarian Golden Age: the translated literature in the context of the spiritual accession to the Byzantine community", "Features of the reception of the Byzantine literary heritage in the Old Bulgarian translated literature of the 9th-10th centuries" present the various stages in the construction of the author's hypothesis for the construction of the Chrysorrhoeas Collection. A comparison was made with other Old Bulgarian anthologies, collections of the words of patristic authors and florilegia, which led to the establishment of certain typological similarities.

With this part of his scientific publications, Prof. Miltenov managed to outline the ways of distribution and the mechanisms for the perception of the Gold Rush in other collections, the typology of new compositions based on the archetype from Simeon's Golden Age. It presents us with a complex process of interaction - adaptation, adaptation, compilation - through which each new stage in the literary tradition associated with Zlatostrui passes.

Lexicological and lexicographic problems are the focus of another group of publications by Prof. Miltenov. They examine questions of the history of the language, but also of the history of individual manuscripts - the Zograph Gospel, Stanislav's Cheti-minei. The author even makes an interesting and provocative attempt to present a comprehensive methodology for the scientific analysis of the so-called Old Bulgarian written culture. Golden Age, trying to build his own concept of Preslavic lexical markers, both in relation to the criteria for their excerption, and in relation to their role as a means of solving controversial problems of the origin of various texts.

The author also offers us a number of precise analyzes of individual aspects of the study of the manuscript tradition - for example "Three layers of lexical editing in the Zograph Gospel", "The Five Ws of the Old Church Slavonic Codex Zographensis: Recent Studies, Future Tasks",

which show an original and a productive approach to the analysis of an individual manuscript with a complex textual history.

Indicative of the breadth of Prof. Miltenov's scientific interests are also the articles devoted to the mistakes of scribes, to the problems of Glagolitic and Cyrillic, to rare words in marginal written evidence, to the literary connections between Mount Athos and Sinai. His conclusions are well-argued, supported by skilfully selected factual material. I would recommend the author to be more comprehensive in the bibliographic citations, because the problems raised by him in a number of studies have their background, were the object of scientific interest, and this should be taken into account when designing the publications. But since this is a matter of individual scientific style, it in no way diminishes the value of the candidate's work.

The presented reference for the citations of Yavor Miltenov's scientific publications convincingly testifies that they enjoy scientific interest and are known outside Bulgaria. Both monographs and a large number of articles and studies are cited. They add to his profile as an established philologist-medievalist with his own place and recognized contributions in literary medieval studies.

His participation in a number of national and international scientific projects contributes to his active research activity.

In conclusion, I would like to note that the candidate in the competition, Associate Professor Dr. Yavor Miltenov, made a significant contribution to the study of the literary process in the 9-10th centuries. to rethink established productions, to modernize the methodology of scientific research on the literary process of the era. This is undoubtedly due to the philological breadth, erudition and scientific certainty with which the hypotheses, scientific results and analyzes presented by the author are defended. Before us is an established philologist-medievalist of a high class, with his own approach to scientific problems and a desire for innovation.

Bearing in mind everything said above, I propose to the respected scientific jury without hesitation to vote "yes" that Associate Professor Yavor Miltenov occupy the academic position of "Professor".

Prof. Vasya Velinova