

SHORT REVIEW

in relation to the competition for holding academic position of *Professor*

in professional area 2.1 Philology. Bulgarian Language

according to the announcement in SG No. 92/22.11.2022

with candidate Yavor Ivov Miltenov, Associate Professor in the Section of the History of the Bulgarian Language at IBL "Prof. Lyubomir Andreychin"

Reviewer: Prof. Doctor Habil Anna-Maria Totomanova, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

The entire scientific biography of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yavor Miltenov, who is also the only candidate in the announced competition, is related to the section of the History of the Bulgarian Language at the Institute of the Bulgarian Language, he joined in 2006 as a researcher, and afterwards held successively the positions of Assistant and Chief Assistant, and in 2014 he was elected Associate Professor after the presentation of a habilitation thesis entitled *Zlatostruy: Old Slavonic Homiletic Collection Commissioned by the Bulgarian Tsar Symeon. Text-Critical and Source Study*. Sofia: Avalon, 2013. With this second monograph, Yavor Miltenov convincingly confirms his prestige as a young but established scholar and medievalist with excellent philological training and the ability to deal with the research and publication of significant Old Bulgarian monuments and collections of texts. Therefore, it is not surprising, that in 2022 he was awarded the Pythagoras Prize of the Ministry of Education and Culture as an established scholar. It is interesting to note that during all this time Ya. Miltenov did not abandon his duties as a librarian in the Central Library of the BAS.

For the current procedure, Assoc. Prof. Miltenov presents the following scientific works, grouped according to the national scientometric indicators and the Regulations of the Institute of the Bulgarian Language for the holding the academic position of Professor: a published monograph of habilitation work status; three studies and seventeen articles, with two of the studies and three of the articles published in refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information publications. The noted citations are twenty in number. In the course of his entire scientific career, Assoc. Prof. Miltenov participated in 37 national and international conferences and seminars in Bulgaria and abroad and in a total of nineteen national scientific and educational projects, five of which are still ongoing, and he was the team leader of five other projects.

The monograph *Homilies from the Chrysorrhoeas Collection With Unidentified Greek Original*", Sofia: Avalon, 2021, presented as a habilitation work for the competition, is a continuation of his creative pursuits on the composition and history of the creation of the Chrysorrhoeas collection, to which his previous habilitation thesis was also dedicated. But while in his first monograph Miltenov dwells on the macro composition of the collection with a view to the origin and translation of the individual texts that are included in both its complete and short redactions, his new work focuses on ten homilies for which no Greek source has been found. The book contains precisely made critical editions of each of the homilies, accompanied by the history of the text itself and its functioning outside the Chrysorrhoeas collection. For this purpose, the author tried to find almost all the witnesses of the selected texts and worked *de visu* with most of them. The complex methodology developed by the candidate for presenting and studying these texts, which is already being applied by other researchers, is one of the main methodological contributions of the candidate. And the results of its application are truly impressive: the researcher discovered that the Chrysorrhoeas Collection has preserved a revised version of *The Sermon on the Salvation of the Soul*, attributed to the Old Bulgarian writer Petar Chernorizets, and the stylistic and linguistic

features of some of the other studied homilies allowed him to assume that they were probably created by St. Clement of Ohrid or his followers. Instead of a conclusion, the author dwells again on some of the characteristic themes in the homilies and sermons attributed to this prolific Old Bulgarian writer and concludes that this approach can be used in other studies as well.

The Chrysorrhoeas Collection is a recurring theme in a large part of Miltenov's articles and studies. While focusing on tracing out and studying new witnesses of the work's functioning in the South Slavic and the Russian environments, Miltenov discovers that parts of the stable compositions of the complete and the short redactions were used for the compilation of new collections several centuries after its creation, and pays special attention to the accompanying texts, taken most often from Simeon's florilegia. His observations on the process of compilation of the homiletic collection are summarized in three consecutive publications that deserve special attention: *A Note on the Adoption of the Byzantine Models in Medieval Bulgaria (9th-10th c.): The Case of the Chrysorrhoeas Collection*, *Touches to the History of the Bulgarian Golden Age: The Translated Literature in the Context of the Spiritual Accession to the Byzantine Community*, and *Peculiarities of the Reception of the Byzantine Literary Heritage in the Old Bulgarian Translated Literature of the 9th-10th centuries*. In these articles Miltenov comes to the conclusion that the typological similarities in the compilation of Chrysorrhoeas Collection and other miscellanies emblematic of the Golden Age reveal a consistently implemented state cultural policy for the creation of its own literary tradition through the assimilation and adaptation of Byzantine models and religious literature. However, in contrast to Byzantium, where the texts and anthologies were mirrored and statically copied, the approach of Bulgarian writers was dynamic, and the texts selection depended on the purpose of the collection. Therefore, the translated texts were probably kept separately, and in some cases only parts of them (cuts, gnomas) were used, which in turn served to compose new texts. According to Miltenov, already back in the 10th century in the capital city of Preslav there was enough accumulated material, which was used variably for the creation of different collections.

Very characteristic of Miltenov's research style is his approach to important problems and topics in Old Bulgarian studies, to which extensive publications and editions, created since the dawn of Slavic studies to the present day, have been devoted. According to him, despite the huge amount of accumulated literaturesome fundamental problems still remain unsolved, such as, for example, the problem of the Old Bulgarian canon, which, compared to the information about the huge literary production in the 10th century, consists of a small number of monuments produced in the periphery of the Bulgarian state rather than in its capital, as well as the problem of establishing the origin and dating of the manuscripts from the canon. The researcher claims that in the absence of concrete data in the manuscripts themselves, it is necessary to look for new methods and tools for dating the manuscripts and revealing their provenance, and places hopes on new technologies. Focusing on the Preslav recension of the texts, Assoc. Prof. Miltenov opposes the implicitly imposed opinion that literary activity took place only in the capital and possibly in Ohrid, and claims that there is sufficient historical and archaeological data to allow the existence of multiple book centers and scriptoria in the 10th century. In his opinion, Preslav is simply a synonym of Eastern Bulgarian when defining manuscripts and translations. Particularly significant in this regard is his study on Preslav linguistic markers, in which he emphasizes that lexical variability is not only a Preslav phenomenon, and therefore variability on the morphosyntactic level should also be taken into account. The copyist with his habits and errors is also the subject of Assoc. Prof. Miltenov's research. He is not afraid to establish that some of the scribes of the canon were quite inexperienced and unprepared for the tasks assigned to them, and in all probability did not know the Greek language, for some of the most typical and numerous scribal errors are found in the spelling of the loanwords. He realized that the language of the canonical manuscripts was the result of the interaction between the language of the original and the idiolect of the copyist and his spelling

habits, and that therefore the classical corpus was extremely heterogeneous. The development of graphics and spelling, according to him, is not a reliable basis for the dating of the manuscripts, because language development itself is a complex phenomenon - on the one hand, the same linguistic phenomenon can have different results in the dialects of the same language, and on the other - they can appear at different times. Therefore, he considers that the traditionally used dialect markers ѱ>ѳ, ꙗ>ѡѣ, ꙗ>ѡ are not reliable enough. Miltenov's contribution to uncovering the history of the creation of Codex Zographensis is also significant. He discovered that its main copyist was an extremely experienced and educated man of letters who worked in a rather rich and prestigious literary environment. He also edited the text, leaving a number of Cyrillic and Glagolitic glosses in the margins, and certainly his main graphic system was Cyrillic. For the first time, Miltenov examines and compares the two layers of Glagolitic text of the added folia in the codex, which come from another more modest literary center and are written by two less experienced scribes, with the scribe of the lower layer having more sophisticated spelling than the one who wrote the above. In connection with these activities, the researcher once again returns to the problem of the coexistence of Glagolitic and Cyrillic scripts in the early Old Bulgarian era, adding new observations about the use and transliteration of Glagolitic manuscripts in the next few centuries as well. According to him, digraphia can be due both to the education of the scribe and to the special status of the Glagolitic codices, which were prestigious and very valuable, and therefore their use, although waning, continued until the 15th century.

In conclusion, I can say that Yavor Miltenov is a fully accomplished scholar and researcher of our oldest literary heritage with a special taste for text critics, graphics, the technique of copying and compiling manuscripts. In the works presented for the competition, he uses the achievements of our predecessors to reach new bold and contributing conclusions and outline new horizons for his own development and the development of the scientific field he has chosen. Emblematic in this respect is his article dedicated to Francis Thomson, which, together with the homage to the teacher, reveals Miltenov's own views on the research tradition established in the 1990s, in which he also fits.

Based on the above, I believe that the candidacy of Assoc. Dr. Yavor Miltenov fully meets the national scientific requirements and the Regulations of the IBL, and as a member of the Scientific Jury I will confidently vote for him to occupy the academic position of Professor in the Section on the History of the Bulgarian Language.

17.03.2023

/Prof. DSc A. Totomanova/