

OPINION

by Prof. Amelia Veselinova Lichevaq D.S., St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, regarding the participation of Chief Asst. Professor Fotiny Christakoudy Ph.D. in a competition for the award of the academic tenure of Associate Professor in professional area 2.1. Philology – Literature of the peoples of Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia (Greek literature)

Chief Asst. Professor Fotiny Christakoudy Ph.D. is among the active young researchers in the area of comparative linguistics and one of the very few specialists in Greek literature. The latter fact makes her studies particularly valuable in terms of their contribution to the body of knowledge, adding new perspectives and examples to comparative linguistics.

In support of her candidacy for the tenure of Associate Professor in Greek literature, Chief Asst. Professor Hristakudi Ph.D. has submitted 16 articles and the monograph ‘Issues of the development of Greek literature 1880–1930’. Her articles, published in prestigious Bulgarian and foreign journals, represent the breadth of her research interests and set an example of high professionalism. It is also essential to note that Fotiny Christakoudy fully satisfies (and even exceeds) the minimum eligibility requirements for the position applied for. However, as the habilitation thesis is the most important factor in a tenure award procedure, my opinion will henceforth focus on that.

This opinion started with a brief bio sketch of the researcher, as it explains the contributory value of her academic pursuits. On the one hand, what we see is a research project that is entirely focused on the Greek theme, which has as its foundation the author’s thorough familiarity with the history of Greek poetry, and in a wider context, of Greek literature and culture in general. Such close familiarity betrays many thorough readings of poets and poetic texts, prompting

important conclusions about the Greek national poetic tradition, as well as interesting additions on her part to the theories of leading Greek scholars on the subject at hand. But this surely is just one aspect of the research interests of Fotiny Christakoudy. The other aspect is provoked by her commitment to comparative linguistics. In that context, her study expands its scope, adding a number of parallels between the poets that are the subject matter of her analysis and European ones, primarily French, but also Balkan, most of them Bulgarian. Thus we have paired readings, which add new details to the body of work of the analyzed authors, while also enriching the Greek national tradition itself. Beyond that, the comparativist approach evolves towards a discussion of issues that are key to modern comparative linguistics, such as the juxtaposition between small and big, native and foreign, European and Balkan, national and universal literatures. In discussing all that, Dr. Hristakudi applies more than theoretical evidence; she also manages to demonstrate how literature responds to those questions by interweaving dialogues between cultures, or with other, non-literary arts, by absorbing context and, in general, by reading from the perspective of a cultural scholar. Therefore I could say that we are faced here with a highly relevant, conscientious and important study, which indirectly has something to say to the students of world, as well as to the students of national literature.

On a purely theoretical level, I could outline other aspects of her contribution: her focus on the reception of Parnassianism and symbolism and the definition of Greek modernism, which cast additional light on the general definition of Parnassianism, symbolism and modernism; the indirect reading of poetry as an existential genre according to the terminology of Käte Hamburger and the allusions to the structuring of the human and the identifying through it; the tacitly suggested idea of Thomas Elliott about the reverse influence – of present-day works on the works of the past – in the formation of literary tradition. And, of course, already at a purely practical level, her focusing not only on popular

names like Cavafy, Seferis and the like, but also on little known (at least to the Bulgarian audiences) poets of that period, who moreover appear in translations by Fotiny Christakoudy herself, which is yet another contribution to her study.

In view of all of the above, and considering the erudition and the analytical mind of the author, and also in light of the seriousness of her research and teaching work, it is with profound conviction that I recommend her for the tenured position of Associate Professor in professional area 2.1. Philology – Literature of the peoples of Europe, America, Asia, Africa and Australia (Greek literature).

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