

Candidate Assessment

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Member of the Academic Jury (Rector's Decree № RD 38-171/11.04.2023)
regarding the competition for the position of Associate Professor
in the professional field 2.1. Philology
(20th and 21th-Century French Literature),
published in *State Gazette*, issue 24 of 17.03.2023

Chief Assistant Professor Antoaneta Robova, PhD, is the only candidate for Associate Professor in the professional field 2.1. Philology (20th and 21th-Century French Literature). She meets all the requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in Bulgaria and the Regulations on the Terms and Conditions for Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions in Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. She has submitted all the necessary documents and academic production for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in the scientific field 2. Humanities, complying with the requirements of the Law and the Regulations. No procedural violations have been found.

The professional development of Chief Assistant Professor Antoaneta Robova is related to the teaching of French Language, French Literature and Literary Stylistics in the Department of Romance Studies at the Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. She has successively held the positions of Assistant Professor (2001–2007), Senior Assistant Professor (2007–2011) and Chief Assistant Professor (since 2011). In 2012, after defending her PhD thesis in French on the topic "Mythical Figures in the Contemporary French-Language Novel" at Blaise Pascal University –

Clermont-Ferrand II, France, she acquired the degree in “Docteur en littérature comparée”. Her PhD was validated to the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in the professional field 2.1. Philology with a published by Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski official memo No. 97-00-209/19.09.2013, based on the decision of the Academic Council (protocol No. 12 of 18.09.2013). She is currently lecturing in the Bachelor’s program in French Studies on the following disciplines: *French Literature – Modernism and Avantgardism, Literary Stylistics, Analytical Readings of Literary Text – Part I and Part II, Discussion Club on French-Language Cinema and Pop Music*. She has been teaching exercise classes in modern French.

The publishing activity of the candidate is testimony to her constant efforts for scientific development in the fields of Modern French Literature, Comparative Literary Studies and Literary Stylistics. She is participating in the competition for Associate Professor with a habilitation thesis; two studies, one of which was published in a scientific journal, indexed in the world’s top scientometric databases; a preface; sixteen articles published in peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes.

The monograph of Chief Assistant Professor Antoaneta Robova, “Creative figures and the cycle of the arts in the prose of Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt” (2022), submitted as a habilitation thesis, is dedicated to an undoubtedly topical problem – the reflection of the dialogue between the arts in modern literature. I find the choice of the topic appropriate and enriching the frontier field of literary and art studies. The original study is the result of a long-standing interest. The clearly formulated thesis, the careful and exacting critical reading, the solid cohesion and the good balance of the chapters, the precise statement and the relevant references are impressive. The good mastery of the studied issues and the in-depth insight into the work of the considered author are obvious.

Taking a literary methodological framework as a starting point, in her analysis Dr. Robova resorts to well-established literary approaches – narratological, semiotic and stylistic, which she skilfully combines and doses

according to the set goals and stated hypotheses. In some chapters, she also refers to certain studies in the fields of cognitive science, Reception theory and philosophy. Naturally, considering Schmitt's nationality, she relies mostly on the Western European literary critical tradition and cultural context, which she knows in detail. This also applies to her preference for the conceptual apparatus, but it does not in the least prevent her, when she deems it reasonable, to resort to concepts inscribed in the Bulgarian literary critical tradition, such as autotextuality, for example. Of course, autotextuality is used as a function of intertextuality and intermediality, and in this sense is a secondary strategy to the two leading strategies.

The structure of the scientific work – introduction, two parts and conclusion – is optimal in view of meeting the set goals and proving the thesis and the hypotheses. The comprehensive and well laid out bibliography is organized by genre. Carried forward from the introduction to the conclusion, supporting the analyses with arguments of authoritative literary critics and researchers, specialists in Schmitt and Comparative Literary Studies, becomes a test of the efficiency of the formulated hypotheses.

Chief Assistant Professor Robova consistently adheres to the stated main thesis: "The widely represented intermedial and intertextual practices during the first prose period of É.-E. Schmitt (1994-2020) function as an operator of autotextual fusion, generate an aesthetic and ethical resonance and stylistic originality" (p. 18). She steadfastly follows the clearly defined subject and convincingly proves her hypotheses in the course of the monograph. Among her goals, I would highlight the tracing of the construction of the autotextual network in Schmitt's early fiction works, their interactions with the arts and the reflections they generate. The subject of analysis is the interferences, thematisations and structural similarities in the "circle of the arts", the key concept with which the candidate successfully and adequately reflects the dialogue between the arts in the prose of the French writer, starting from his own titles. This metaphor acquires the status of a macro-stylistic figure that frames the typology of creative figures in

Schmitt's fiction and sustains the analysis of the intratextual and intertextual connections of the works from the presented corpus.

Antoaneta Robova's scholarly works attest both to the persistence of her research efforts in the field of Modern French Literature and Comparative Literary Studies, and to her readiness for full involvement in the academic debate. The presented articles raise or complement the issues of the habilitation thesis. Some of them testify to the lasting interest in the work of Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt. Others fit into the field of intertextuality and intermediality.

Dr. Robova is actively involved in the life of the academic community with varied appearances as teacher and administrator. She organizes and coordinates events of university and general educational nature. Her contribution to the promotion of Francophonie is indisputable. From 2003 to 2009 she was an editor of the journal *Fréquences Francophones*, and from 2021 she is an Assistant editor of the scholarly journal *Colloquia Comparativa Litterarum*.

Conclusion

The level of the teaching and the research work of Chief Assistant Professor Antoaneta Robova, the quality of her scientific publications and promotion activities give me reasons to confidently recommend that she be elected as an Associate Professor of 20th and 21th-Century French Literature in the professional field 2.1. Philology.

23.06.2023

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