EXAMINER'S REPORT

for the appointment of Associate Professor (Docent) in professional field *2.1. Philology* (Bulgarian - History of the Bulgarian Language)

by **Prof. Krasimira Slavcheva Aleksova**, D. Sc., Department of Bulgarian Language, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Data on the appointment procedure

By Order No. RD-38-423 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski " (SU), dated 15.07.2024, I was appointed member of the examiners' committee responsible for the appointment of an Associate Professor in the professional field 2.1. Philology, (Bulgarian - History of the Bulgarian Language). The competition was announced in *Darzhaven vestnik*, No 55, June 28, 2024. During the first session of the examiners' committee on 11.09.2024 I was assigned the task to prepare an examiner's report (*stanovishte*) for the procedure. The only applicant in the competition is **Gergana Rumenova Ganeva**, Senior Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Slavic Studies, Sofia University. The applicant meets all the necessary requirements for the professional field 2. Humanities, 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian - History of the Bulgarian Language).

Data about the applicant - education, specializations, teaching experience, scientific projects

Dr. G. Ganeva received MA degrees in Bulgarian Philology and in Spanish Philology - Applied Linguistics, both from the University of Sofia. She was a regular PhD student in the History of the Bulgarian language at the Cyril and Methodius Studies Department, Faculty of Slavic Studies, Sofia University, and after a successful presentation of her PhD dissertation on the topic of "Verb suffixation in the history of the Bulgarian language in relation to the development of the aspectual opposition" she was awarded the degree of Doctor (diploma № SU 2012 – 116/25.10.2012). G. Ganeva has worked as an editor; she was in charge of the administration of the project "History and Historicism in the Orthodox Slavic World. A study of the ideas of history", financed by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science; she was employed by the Scientific Research Sector of the University of Sofia, and from 01.10.2011 to 09.2013 she was fist assistant professor and then senior assistant professor at the Institute for Bulgarian language at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Since September 2013 she has been assistant professor and then senior

assistant professor at the Cyril and Methodius Studies Department at the Slavic Studies Faculty of Sofia University.

The university classes taught by Dr G. Ganeva are fully consistent with the scientific field 2.1. Philology (Bulgarian - History of the Bulgarian language) which is the subject of this competition. They include: seminars in the History of the Bulgarian language for BA students of Bulgarian philology at the Slavic Studies faculty of Sofia University; partial participation with lectures, together with Prof. Dr. Sc. A-M. Totomanova, in the elective course in "The theory of stems. Foundations of etymology"; seminars in the Theory and History of Standard Languages in the Old Bulgarian Studies MA program. The applicant is co-author, together with Prof. Dr Margaret Dimitrova, of the *Interactive Practicum* for the online course in the History of the Bulgarian Language, part of the project „E-Medievalia (Electronic resources for distance learning in mediaeval studies)". In my view, this *Practicum*, including the Interactive Readings it offers, is a serious contribution to the improvement of the quality of teaching because it allows immediate access to texts, representative of the history of the Bulgarian language. It also allows self-evaluation of the students' knowledge with the help of the specific tasks, developed for each module of the course, based on various texts, illustrating the history of Bulgarian, the Bulgarian dialects, present-day sociolects and internet communication. Dr. G. Ganeva has taken part in four projects financed by various Bulgarian institutions and co-financed by EU institutions. In my opinion, the participation of the applicant in those projects is one of her serious advantages in the current appointment procedure. I am personally acquainted with the results of those projects, which not only improve the quality of university education but also represent a substantial Bulgarian scientific contribution to contemporary Paleoslavic and Mediaeval Studies.

Scientifc work. Analysis of the publications for the competition

The list of scientific publications presented by Dr. Ganeva for the competition includes 14 items: a habilitation thesis, one more monograph, eight independent articles, two articles in co-authorship, participation in the compilation of two dictionaries. The analysis of these publications shows that the research interests of Dr. Ganeva are fully consistent with the special subject of the present competition for the appointment of an Associate Professor.

I will first focus on the contributions of the applicant in the thematic field of modality in the history of the Bulgarian language since this is also the topic of her habilitation thesis. It is

entitled “The modal meanings of possibility and probability in the history of Bulgarian”, published by Sofia University Press in 2023. I believe that this is the first monograph to apply the diachronic method to linguistic modality in Bulgarian. The author is fully justified in her choice of direction of research from the content plane, and more specifically the modal meanings of *possibility* and *probability*, to the expression plane of the means of their encoding in the history of the Bulgarian language. I also believe that G. Ganeva has made the right choice of the linguistic expressions to analyse on the basis of their features, representing systematic facts in the language structure, prototypical for linguistic modality. These are the conditional mood expressing possibility in the realization of a certain condition, the uses of the future tense to express the modal meanings of *possibility* and *probability*, which represent the primary source in the process of the grammaticalization of the presumptive mood in Modern Bulgarian, and also the modal verbs and the periphrastic constructions with modal meaning.

The wide range of sources of linguistic material to be analyzed is fully described and in my opinion this is very important for a diachronic study since the findings and conclusions should be based on a sufficiently representative corpus, which, in addition to this, should allow the tracing of the stages in the entire process of development from Old to Modern Bulgarian.

Chapter One of the monograph in my view successfully performs the task of presenting the theoretical principles followed by Dr. Ganeva and applied to the empirical data. This is done in the context of the author’s discussion of the current ideas about modality at large, epistemic modality, and presumptiveness, both in linguistics worldwide (and typology in particular) and in Bulgarian studies. In the course of discussing the opposition *reality* : *irreality* , the relationship between evidentiality and epistemic modality and the development of the future tense in Bulgarian, G. Ganeva manages to state clearly her own position and to critically comment on some specific opinions held by other scholars.

On the basis of her analysis of the meaning of the conditional mood in Middle Bulgarian texts and its various uses there, the author verifies some hypotheses about the development of the conditional mood, above all in its uses in the apodosis and the protasis of conditional constructions. In my opinion, especially important is the author’s attempt by means of an in-depth analysis of the meanings of *possibility* and *counterfactuality* to formulate her own position as to the causes leading to the present-day situation, where the conditional mood is substituted by indicative tense forms in counterfactual conditions. I would like to point out that the analysis of a large number of examples of conditional mood uses in various types of complex sentences makes it possible for G. Ganeva

to prove the validity of her belief about the limited nature of the subjunctive uses of the conditional during the 14-15th centuries, as a result of which it is not reasonable to accept the existence of a subjunctive mood in this period. Very successful is also the formulation of hypotheses about the causes leading to the limitation of the uses of the conditional in Modern Bulgarian. Original contributions are to be found also in the section of the monograph dealing with the diachronic observations about the relation between the conditional and evidentiality in Bulgarian. On the basis of a comparison of the meanings expressed, the findings of historical typology and language specific studies, and of the analysis of the empirical data, the author proves her claim that evidentiality in Bulgarian did not emerge in result of interaction with the conditional mood.

Original contributions are contained in the section of Chapter 3 where G. Ganeva analyses numerous examples from the Middle Bulgarian period rhetorical questions with the meaning of *possibility*/ *impossibility*, with perfective verbs in the present tense or some of the future tenses with this particular modal meaning. To the best of my knowledge this problem has not been considered in detail in the literature so far. Also important are G. Ganeva's ideas about the possibility for verb forms with posterior activity meanings to express epistemic modality. This is not only a matter of language specific significance but also of typological interest. The empirical data about the various linguistic expressions of *possibility*/ *impossibility* in rhetorical questions from early Modern Bulgarian damaskin collections allow a number of well-grounded conclusions and here I would single out the findings about *da*-constructions which in those texts can express both epistemic and non-epistemic possibility. Once again we see Ganeva's ability to discover and analyse the causes for linguistic changes and tendencies and to substantiate her position by comparing various hypotheses, in this case concerning the linguistic expression of epistemic or non-epistemic modality in rhetorical questions from the Middle Bulgarian period, through the Early Modern Bulgarian damaskin collections, to Present-day Bulgarian. I find particularly interesting the uses of the future tense in real questions to express, according to Ganeva, epistemic possibility. The author points out the growing number of such examples in the Modern Bulgarian damaskins which indicates that this type of use of the future tense is on the increase in the history of the Bulgarian language. In this connection the important, in my opinion, question arises as to the grammatical status in Present-day Bulgarian of the *shte-da*-construction in interrogative utterances that do not require a positive or a negative answer (e. g. *Къде ще да е това властелине?* ["Where could that be, ruler?"], excerpted by the author from the Bulgarian National Corpus). The three hypotheses analysed by G. Ganeva here and her evaluation of their relative value prompt the author

to prefer the view that in this type of context the Present-day Bulgarian *shte-da*-forms express epistemic possibility. In my opinion this means that Dr. Ganeva does not accept the view that these are presumptive forms. I agree with her that this question needs further investigation, including more opinion polls with native speakers, although here my position differs from that of G. Ganeva.

I followed very carefully Ganeva's reflections on the examples from Middle Bulgarian texts of future tense uses with suppositional meaning in declarative sentences, where epistemic possibility predominates over probability. This, according to Ganeva, shows that in this period in the development of the Bulgarian language the suppositional meaning is not yet dissociated from the future and does not have the status of an independent feature. I find acceptable the author's belief that the meaning of *possibility* is more basic in the linguistic consciousness in comparison with that of *probability* and that typologically *probability* implies *possibility*. I would add here that the reverse is not true because the derivative feature presupposes the existence of the basic one and not the other way round. From the position of my special interest in the presumptive in Modern Bulgarian I fully accept Ganeva's position about the time of the emergence of the presumptive as an independent category - the 19th c. - with the indicative future tense still preserving the *da*-particle, and also her view on the combination of factors explaining why the presumptive did not acquire a wide use comparable to that of the evidential forms: the complex semantics of probabilistic statements, the semantic closeness of the conclusive and the presumptive, the somewhat limited dialect area of the spread of the presumptive, and the competition with the epistemic use of the modal verb *трябва.*

In my opinion in Chapter 4 Dr. Ganeva has successfully managed to develop her views on the emergence of epistemic modality in the history of the Bulgarian language with the analysis of the semantic development of the modal verbs *мога* and *трябва* and with observations on some periphrastic constructions expressing epistemic possibility and necessity. Following the diachronic principle, which is central for her monograph, she has included in her observations two constructions, extinct in the present-day language, but important for understanding the historical development of epistemic modality in our language. The abundant empirical data are analysed in depth through comments on the semantic content they express with special attention to the genre characteristics of the various texts. An important achievement here is the tracing of the processes of semantic development of the Bulgarian modal verbs. The author relies on the findings of linguistic typology in outlining the specific nature of the semantic development of the Bulgarian modal verbs, leading to their present-day polysemy (they encode both epistemic and non-epistemic

meanings) which is not so common typologically. In this chapter the author demonstrates once again her ability to find convincing arguments in support of her claims. As an example of this I would point out her hypothesis for the order of development of the epistemic senses of the verbs *мога* and *трябва*.

In my view the Conclusion of the habilitation thesis contains substantial contributions to the elucidation of the semantic changes in the history of the Bulgarian language, leading to the appearance of epistemic modal meanings. I am not aware of the existence of another monographic work offering similar generalizations and systematic presentation of the facts in that specific area with a view to Bulgarian. These contributions no doubt include the hierarchy of modal meanings in Bulgarian, founded on a very solid base: the analysis of the empirical data, the detailed comments on the various modal meanings and their formal expression throughout the historical development of the Bulgarian language, the special attention paid to the role of context on the realization and grammaticalization of the modal meanings in our language, the reliance on the modern achievements of linguistic typology in the interpretation of the language facts.

The second group of publications presented for the competition (No: No: 2, 8, 9, 10 on the list) belong to the thematic area of history of form-formation and word-formation. They confirm the impression that the applicant is a competent researcher capable of not only analysing the diachronic changes in the organization of word forms but also discovering the stable tendencies in form-formation in the context of a dominant fusional typology of the language and paying attention to the systematic organization of the morphological categories. These publications are characterized by the consistent scientific approach of the author, relying on solid argumentation of her claims and awareness of the modern achievements of linguistic typology. I am convinced that this group of publications represent an original contribution in the field of Bulgarian historical grammar and typology.

The third group of publications presented by Dr. Ganeva for the competition (No: No: 5, 6, 11, 12 and 14 on the list) represent the author's contribution to the development of a representative diachronic corpus of the Bulgarian language, of a historical dictionary of the language, digital instruments for the processing of mediaeval texts, and of a grammatical dictionary of Old Bulgarian, covering the period 9-15th c. These resources are produced by a very competent team of researchers, one of whom is Dr. Ganeva. Let me stress the fact that the above enumerated resources are a contribution to mediaeval studies worldwide.

Dr. G. Ganeva offers a detailed list of citations of her works which proves that her research is quoted and commented on by other scholars in the country and abroad.

Conclusion

Having in mind the evaluation of the scholarly contributions of Assistant Professor Dr. Gergana Ganeva, made in this examiner's report, I recommend with full conviction that the examiners' committee should vote in favour of awarding the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of 2. The Humanities, 2.1 Philology (Bulgarian - History of the Bulgarian Language) to Dr. Ganeva and at the same time I declare my own categorical vote of YES.

October 13, 2024 Signed:

Sofia

(Prof. Dr.Sc. Krasimira Aleksova)