

# OPINION

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of the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski", in: field of higher education  
2. Humanities, professional field 2.4. Religion and Theology (New Testament)

In the competition for "associate professor", announced in the State Gazette, issue 96 of 11.11.2025, and on the website of the Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of "Theology" at the Faculty of Philosophy and History, Eva Krasteva Kovacheva participated as a candidate.

## 1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

**Subject:** By order No. PD-22-36 of 09.01.2026 of the rector of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury in a competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at PU in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.4. Religion and Theology (New Testament), announced for the needs of the Department of "Theology" at the Faculty of Philosophy and History. Only one candidate has submitted documents to participate in the announced competition: Dr. Eva Krasteva Kovacheva from the Paisii Hilendarski University.

The set of materials on paper presented by Dr. E. Kovacheva is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Sofia and includes the following documents:

- Administrative documents
- Monograph
- Articles and studies
- Compilation of collections

To participate in the competition, the candidate submits a total of 58 scientific papers, 1 monographic work, 10 studies and 47 articles, which are in the specialized field of the competition, relevant to the professional field 2.4. Religion and Theology. The publications have not been used in a previous procedure for acquiring an ONS doctorate. These publications certify that the candidate meets the minimum national requirements according to the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Register of Academic Staff. Two of them are in Russian and two in English. 1 scientific work (book) on the dissertation is not taken into account.

## Brief biographical data (of the candidate)

Dr. Eva Krasteva Kovacheva graduated from a language school with two spoken languages – German and English. She completed her higher education in theology at the Faculty of Theology of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". She subsequently acquired an additional qualification in "International Relations". She obtained her doctoral degree in 2011 in Marburg, Germany. From 2012 to 2013 she was a part-time assistant at the Department of Theology, Faculty of Philosophy of the University "Paisiy Hilendarski". From 2013 to the present, she has held the position of Chief

Assistant Professor in the same department. Her professional experience is mainly related to conducting lecture courses in the field of New Testament, Infidel confessions, Early Christianity, etc. Her professional experience is related to her participation in the editorial board of numerous collections and participation in scientific projects.

### **Personal impressions**

My personal impressions of Dr. Eva K. Kovacheva are more than excellent. I know her as extremely responsible, thorough, hardworking, precise and dedicated in her work and research. Her meticulousness in preparing scientific output, as well as in the precision in every detail in her teaching, university and scientific work, are worthy of being properly appreciated. An extremely correct and conscientious colleague, who in our joint work has always shown a high level of professional skills, activity in carrying out academic activities and excellent results.

### **2. General characteristics of the candidate's activities**

The teaching and pedagogical activity of Dr. Eva K. Kovacheva reflects her work as a serious teacher, who over the years since 2013 has shown active teaching activity, organizing 8 lecture courses. I must note the not unimportant fact that Dr. E. Kovacheva began to build the New Testament discipline from the very beginning, since the acquisition of her doctoral degree in Germany throughout the entire 8-year period was related to the field of History of Religions. In this regard, Dr. Kovacheva shows activity, thoroughness and systematicity in her scientific research and most importantly: the ability to build the scientific profile of the New Testament discipline in its two parts: Introduction to the Holy Scripture of the New Testament and Interpretation of the Holy Scripture of the New Testament.

*The assessment of the educational and pedagogical activity of the candidate's preparation can be theoretically observed from the surveys conducted systematically with the students, which show the high assessment of her work, the construction and constant updating of the training courses, and the precise work with the students, only complement the positive characteristics that can be given.*

#### *Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and applied scientific activity.*

In this part, Dr. E. Kovacheva shows significant skills in working in scientific research with precision, thoroughness and pedagogical tact.

The monographic study "CARNAL", "SOULFUL" AND "SPIRITUAL" CHRISTIANS according to the EPISTLES OF THE HOLY APOSTLES in the context of the topic of the UNION OF THE SOUL WITH GOD", which Dr. Kovacheva presents, covers 370 pages. This study is the first New Testament study in the direction 2.4. Religion and Theology, which is the first of its kind comprehensive study of the three types of Christians, according to the epistles of the holy apostles. This topic seems familiar, but in this context it has not been considered so far. Placing the topic in the context of the idea of "union of the soul with God" reveals the author's intention to deal with the familiar problem not only theoretically, but also systematically. The study is structured in five chapters that logically follow the chronology of the New Testament books, with the author in the last chapter focusing on metaphors, symbols and allegories that reveal the thesis she set out at the beginning: to prove that the definitions "carnal", "soulful" and "spiritual" Christians are used by the holy apostles in their Epistles in view of what Christians are primarily guided by at the respective stage on their spiritual path - by their spiritual or by their soulful manifestations, which also depends on the degree of their achieved inner communion with God.

The importance of the study is based on the well-known anthropological thesis, according to which three layers are harmoniously combined in a person - spiritual, mental and physical, knowledge of their various functions and manifestations is extremely necessary as knowledge for anyone who wants to grow spiritually, since only after a person first knows their meaning can he then strive to live in harmony with the "spirit", or more precisely "by the spirit", "by the spirit" or "in the spirit", as St. Apostle Paul expresses it. It should also be noted that Dr. Eva Kovacheva uses sources and secondary sources in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, Russian, Bulgarian, English and French. In addition to the field of the Holy Scripture of the New Testament, she also makes a survey of the topic in the Old Testament and in rabbinic literature, in the field of the history of religions, in mystery cults and Gnosticism, in philosophy, and also in apocryphal literature. The topic of the study has an interdisciplinary nature and includes directions from the field of moral theology, dogmatics, patrology and church history. In four of the five chapters in total, it contains extensive exegetical parts, covering both interpretations of the Holy Fathers and of newer and contemporary scholars and researchers of the Holy Scripture.

The deposited articles and studies of the candidate Eva Kovacheva reflect her overall scientific and research activity in the field of the New Testament, but not only. Dr. E. Kovacheva systematically works in the corpus of New Testament issues, but places some of the topics in an interdisciplinary nature in the fields of hagiology, General History of the Church, History of Religions (“The Wheel of Life” in Bulgarian Church Painting as a Symbol for the Stages of Spiritual Transformation of Man to the Achievement of the Union of the Soul with God (Biblical Analysis)”. – In: Petrova, T., Debryune, N. (comp.). *The Many-Faced Science. Collection of papers from the Fourth Annual Doctoral Readings of the Department of Culture, Historical Heritage and Tourism at UniBIT* (held on November 16-17, 2023 at UniBIT, Sofia). Sofia: Academic Publishing House "About Letters - About Writing", 2023, 134–152. ISSN 2815-536X; 2.6. Kovacheva, E. "The Most Positive Image of a Bulgarian and Spiritual Ideas in the Story 'Bae Mitar the Prophet' by Mikhalaki Georgiev". – In: Debryune, N. (ed.). *Problems of Cultural Heritage. Volume 4. (Cultural heritage issues. Vol. 4). Collection of papers from a scientific conference with international participation* (held on September 21, 2021 at UniBIT, Sofia). Sofia: Academic Publishing House “About Letters – About Writing”, 2022, 61–81. ISBN 978-619-185-580-3, etc.). This reveals the broad profile of a researcher, deeply immersed primarily in his scientific field, but with eyes open to the broad field of theological science in the part in which it can directly or indirectly reduce its results and those from the close or distant context of systematics.

It must be mentioned that Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Eva Kovacheva strives to develop the New Testament issues precisely in the vein of biblical theological science in Bulgaria, built by generations of famous New Testament theologians, and primarily on the legacy of Prof. Dr. Hristo Gyaurov. This includes the following studies and articles on the New Testament, whose contribution is that they further develop, as well as deepen with new content elements and accents, issues embedded in the university New Testament summaries: 3.411, 3.42, 3.44, 3.45, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, with which she makes an attempt to continue and build on what has been achieved so far by the previous generation of professors, provides an opportunity for new future research and thereby aims to help in a more in-depth assimilation of the teaching material. by the students (example: 7 articles belong to the discipline Introduction to the Holy Scripture of the New Testament – 3.41, 3.42, 3.44, 3.45, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 1 study to Interpretation of the Holy Scripture of the New Testament – 4:2. Gradually, the emphasis in the scientific research work shifts more to the Interpretation of the New Testament, in which area the largest part of the scientific production is concentrated so far – 36 studies and articles

out of a total of 58 publications, which she presents for the current competition for associate professor, since, according to her, the main thing is to understand the meaning and content of the texts of the Holy Scripture, with which she works and which she examines together with the students in the exercises on Interpretation of the New Testament. This emphasis – the continuation of the tradition of biblical theology in Bulgaria by a young and enthusiastic scholar like Dr. Eva Kovacheva – deserves not just admiration, but also categorical encouragement to continue the line she has begun, because in the context of 100 years of theological science, we must practically remember that all attempts to replace native theology with foreign traditions (no matter how successful they may be), sooner or later end precisely because it cannot be characteristic of us, after 100 years of the categorical presence of theological science in Bulgaria, to try to erase the memory of it.

A part, but not so large, of the scientific works of Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Eva Kovacheva is dedicated to the New Testament pseudoepigraphic literature, since in the last decades of the 20th century new, previously unknown apocryphal New Testament texts were discovered, which were translated from Coptic and other languages and published in multi-volume scientific editions.

#### *Contributions (scientific, applied science, applied) and citations*

The scientific contributions in the candidate's research work are primarily related to the relevance of the New Testament issues that he explores and which are measured according to exegesis on a global scale. It should be noted that this relevance is emphasized with a special emphasis that has not been emphasized enough in the past century in Bulgarian biblical theology - namely the role and place of women in the books of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament, as well as the illumination of their activity and mission in the spread of Christianity during the period 1st-4th centuries. From the attached list of citations (15 in total), it can be seen that Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Eva Kovacheva presents citations in peer-reviewed scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases, in monographs and collective volumes with peer-review, in non-refereed journals with peer-review, which shows her open place as a researcher and New Testament scholar, recognizable not only in our country, but also abroad.

#### **4. Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution**

All formulated theses, contributions and scientific results are the fruit of in-depth analyses, detailed scientific research and can be recognized as personal merits of Dr. Eva Kovachev.

#### **3. Critical remarks and recommendations**

I have no critical remarks to the overall package of scientific research and the materials presented by the candidate. I strongly recommend that Dr. E. Kovacheva continue her research in the field of New Testament theology, in the traditions and spirit of Bulgarian theology, and to add to her previous research the new aspects of the development of science, which could also have a pronounced scientific-applied character. I believe that the candidate has an undeniable potential for participation in international research projects, thus expanding her scientific knowledge in the field of modern biblical studies.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The documents and materials presented by Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Eva Krasteva Kovacheva meet all the requirements(s) of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the

Republic of Bulgaria (LAADRБ), the Regulations for the Implementation of the LAADRБ and the relevant Regulations of the Paisii Hilendarski University.

The candidate in the competition has presented a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defense of the ONS "doctor". The candidate's works contain original scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition, with a representative part of them being published in journals and in scientific collections published by international academic publishing houses. The theoretical developments of Dr. E. Kovacheva have practical applicability, with some of them being directly oriented towards academic work. The candidate's scientific and teaching qualifications are undoubted.

The results achieved by Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Eva Kovacheva in academic and research activities fully comply with the minimum national and additional requirements of the FIF, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the University of Sofia for the implementation of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria.

After reviewing the materials and scientific papers presented in the competition and in view of analyzing their significance and the scientific, applied and applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy for the election of Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Eva Krasteva Kovacheva to the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the University "Paisiy Hilendarski" in: field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional direction 2.4. Religion and Theology (New Testament).

March 4, 2026

**Prepared the opinion: .....**  
(signature)

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