

REVIEW

By: Prof. Margarita Nikolova Karamihova, Dr. Habill. Honorary Professor of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Technology, "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" (retired), habilitated in the professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences.

On the scientific papers for participation in a competition for the academic position of associate professor, in the professional field 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences, announced in the State Gazette No. 38/24.04.2026, with the only candidate senior asst. Milena Ivanova Angelova, PhD.

I. Assessment for compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University

This assessment is based on the data provided by the candidate and on personal observations and assessments that I have made over the years.

Group of indicators		Minimum requirements	Completed by the candidate
A	Indicator 1.	50	50
B	-	-	-
C	Indicator 3.	100	100
D	Sum of indicators 4 to 10	200	470
E	Sum of indicators 11 to 13	50	380
F	Sum of indicators 16 and 17	-	70
G	Sum of indicators 22 to 34	50	110
H	Sum of indicators 35 to 38	70	80
I	Sum of indicators 42 to 49	50	45
	Total	570	1305

The table shows that the results of the candidate's work exceed the minimum national requirements and the habilitation requirements of the New Bulgarian University by more than

two times. The results for indicators D, E, F and G are particularly impressive, which will be presented in detail in the review.

In accordance with the application procedure, a package of documents certifying the candidate's scientific development has been provided, including the relevant scientific publications, citations and developed/led lecture courses. Based on the submitted documents, there is every reason to conclude that the procedure for announcing and conducting the competition was carried out in full compliance with the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADSRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Higher Education Act (HEA), as well as the Regulation on the Development of the Academic Staff in the New Bulgarian University of 03.12.2018. The further course of the procedure fully meets the requirements of the aforementioned regulatory acts.

II. Research (creative) activity and results

The candidate presents the following monograph: Angelova, M., 2021. "The Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Bulgaria in the First Half of the 20th Century", Blagoevgrad: University Publishing House "N. Rilski", ISBN 978-954-00-0251-4, 346 p. Reviewers: Prof. Dr. Zhorzheta Nazarska and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kristina Popova.

The monograph is the first holistic study of tuberculosis in Bulgaria as a socio-historical phenomenon. Chronologically, the work is located from the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century. Senior asst. Angelova approaches the problem areas outlined by the subject and object of her research in an interdisciplinary manner. It masterfully combines methods and methodologies accepted and established in the best academic traditions and contemporary trends of the sciences of history, social anthropology, cultural anthropology/ethnology, and the history of medicine.

In the monograph, tuberculosis is studied as a social disease, influenced and influencing economic, institutional and cultural factors. The rich and diverse source base is impressive, which allows for the analysis of both the biopolitics and the social construction of diseases, including this dangerous infectious disease. Of particular importance for the research paths in professional field 3.1. is the delineation of the cultural images and visual representations through

which the disease is understood and controlled. A very important contribution is the display of human worlds built around suffering, isolation and fear. Here, the author's interdisciplinary mastery is particularly visible - her ability to “enter” the everyday life of the specific groups studied and to turn the narrative of “once upon the time”, into an academic analysis and synthesis.

I read the monograph at a time when the emergency epidemic situation declared due to the COVID-19 pandemic was still in force. Milena Angelova's analyses resonated with our experiences and, in a painful way, were confirmed by practice. Thus, while still reading, I was convinced that tuberculosis is not just a medical diagnosis, but a social experience of vulnerability, as the researcher concludes. Therefore, I have included without hesitation the monograph “The Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Bulgaria in the First Half of the 20th Century” in the required literature of the lecture course “Historical Demography” for my students - ethnologists. The response among the students was impressive. Thus, this contributing monographic work entered immediate academic circulation and received high marks from the next generation. The applied nature of the research is now as undeniable as its fundamental nature for cultural sciences.

It is important to emphasize the original nature of the text. The author has correctly cited all publications and sources used. I do not detect any variants of the use of artificial intelligence or plagiarism.

Milena Angelova has been a senior assistant professor since 2005 at the South-West University “N. Rilski”. Since 2024 she has been appointed by competition as senior assistant professor at NBU. It is understandable that for 20 years a knowledgeable lecturer accumulates publications, enters academic networks and develops new scientific fields. The results reported by Milena Angelova are more than impressive. For the competition, Angelova presents two articles published in journals that are refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, as well as 18 articles and reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes.

The indicator “Citations by other authors” refers us to the group of indicators “E” in which the candidate has exceptional results. As shown in Table 1, she reaches 380 out of the minimum number of 50. I will present only some of the citations: A Global History of Medicine, Oxford

University Press; *Entangled Histories of the Balkans: Transfers of Political Ideologies and Institutions*, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers; *Health, Hygiene, and Eugenics in Southeastern Europe to 1945*, Budapest: Central European University Press; *Historia Slavorum Occidentis*; Martor. *Revue d'Anthropologie du Musée du Paysan Roumain*; Hamburg: Lit Verlag; *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich*, (60) *The Museum of the Romanian Peasant Anthropology Review*, *Social History of Medicine*; *European Review of History (Revue européenne d'histoire)*, *A New Ecological Order: Development and the Transformation of Nature in Eastern Europe*. University of Pittsburgh Press, – *L'Homme: europäische Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* etc.

The geography of M. Angelova's citations is more than impressive. With this statement, I in no way underestimate the citations of her texts related to the current competition among Bulgarian publications on the subject. It is enough to mention two of the most authoritative journals: “Bulgarian Ethnology” and “Balkanistic Forum”, without underestimating the influence of the texts that are in academic circulation through publications in collections and journals, which, unfortunately, are assessed as less important by national criteria. I believe that the academic audience and the next generations will appreciate the value of the holistic, analytical and interdisciplinary approach in the articles and studies of Milena Angelova, regardless of which collection or journal they are published in. 35 citations have been tracked.

The assessment of the productivity and significance of M. Angelova's publications - h-index is equal to 6 (last check - 25.08.2026). I pay special attention to this fact, because such a high h-index is very rare among scientists, representatives of the Bulgarian humanities.

When assessing the results of participation in research and creative projects as well as the application of the obtained results in practice it must be remembered that changes in society are a slow, prolonged and redundant process. However, there are still measurable results that should be emphasized:

- Milena Angelova is a member of the Association “Balkanistic Forum - International University Seminar for Research and Specializations” (founded in 1998) and has been its chairman since 2020. The work of this Association has provided a platform for academic for both established scientists from around the world, as well as students and doctoral candidates - some of them are already famous researchers.

- M. Angelova was a member of the editorial board of the journal “Balkanistic Forum” from 2001 to 2024. With the efforts of the team, including M. Angelova, the journal was indexed and referenced in SCOPUS, Web of Science (ESCI), ERIH PLUS, MIAR after 2017. For 2024, the journal received Q1 in SCOPUS. M. Angelova is the Chief Editor of 5 thematic issues of the journal over the last five years. Anyone who is familiar with the procedures for obtaining such a high status for an academic journal will understand how much systematic work is involved. Anyone who has compiled thematic issues of journals or edited collections knows what serious investment of time and professionalism they require. Milena Angelova demonstrates high professionalism in this complex and responsible work.

- It is important to note that since 2025 she is a co-founder and a member of the editorial board of the new journal “Balkanistic Worlds”.

- Moreover, Milena Angelova has been a member of the editorial board of the prestigious academic Turkish journal “Tobider” since 2023.

In order for the information to be complete according to this criterion, it should be emphasized that M. Angelova is also a member of the author's team of the traveling exhibition “Assimilation and Resistance of Muslim Women”, participating in all events accompanying the opening and running of the exhibition. I would also draw the attention to two very important facts: 1. The exhibition was a guest at IEFSEM, BAS, which demonstrates exceptional academic and civic support, and 2.: This summer the exhibition is traveling to the Rhodope Mountains. Based on the responses that I observe on social media, it is receiving considerable acceptance and support. I believe that this is the meaning of the work of the researchers and teachers in the professional field. 3.1. Sociology, Anthropology and Cultural Sciences.

III. Educational and teaching activities

Despite the short time that Senior Assistant Professor Milena Angelova has been on a basic employment contract at the New Bulgarian University and the resulting limitations, I am still required to comment on her work there. In accordance with the Law and the Regulations for its implementation, it has been agreed that the esteemed Jury will take into account the fact that she has a long teaching experience at The South-West University.

The candidate for the competition for associate professor at NBU reports that she is in the process of uploading presentation material with detailed content, links and additional materials that comply with the requirements of the NBU for the courses she teaches. So far, the courses are:

1. 2024-2026 - Civic Knowledge and Skills;
2. 2024-2025 - Cultural Heritage and International Policies;
3. 2025-2026 - Medical Anthropology. Developed author's course, APLB793;
4. 2025-2026 - Political Anthropology;
5. Developed and approved author's course: Social History, APLB794 for the academic year 2026 - 2027;
6. Developed and approved author's course: Invention of Childhood and Youth and Charity and Social Work, OOOK329, also for academic year 2026-2027.

Even in the year in which she won the competition for the position of Senior Assistant Professor at NBU, Milena Angelova worked with students from the Department of Anthropology on the Project “Cultural Diversity and Shared Heritages: Yakoruda and Belitsa” (June 7-9, 2024, Fund by “Curriculum Programs”). The goal of the project is for students to become familiar with the specifics of the local policies towards the cultural heritage in the municipalities of Yakoruda and Belitsa in the field. The field trip is organized as an added symbolic value and field experience to the academic course APLB555 “Cultural Heritage and International Policies”. M. Angelova's many years of experience as a field worker and a lecturer has undoubtedly built knowledge, skills and competencies in students, in line with the strategy of the New Bulgarian University. This finding is supported by the student survey scores. The average student survey score for the academic year 2024-25 for Senior Assistant Professor Milena Angelova is Excellent. 5.54. Obviously, this assessment confirms M. Angelova's experience in scientific supervision of students. Before her competition at the New Bulgarian University, she had successfully supervised eleven students to defend their bachelor's or master's degrees at the Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski", Blagoevgrad. I believe that in time she will prove herself as an excellent scientific supervisor of students who develop bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses at the NBU.

IV. Administrative and public activity

Evaluating the work of Senior Assistant Professor Milena Angelova in the competition for Associate Professor, I cannot miss the fact that she has been working at NBU since 1.09.2024. Therefore, by this indicator I would not expect an extensive track record. But I will immediately note that she has gained the trust of her colleagues and became a member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Arts. I am sure that her academic popularity is already attracting students to NBU, as is the practice in the educated world.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate.

I know Milena Angelova, PhD from our participation in the seminar on “Historical Anthropology”, held in the small town of Bansko, 1999. For over a quarter of a century, I have been following her development as a scientist and as a teacher. I am categorical that her multifaceted interests guide her to choose important research topics, which she develops at a global level and are embedded into her teaching work.

M. Angelova stands out with a clear defense of her civic positions and unwavering adherence to academic ethics. Over the years, she has established herself as an excellent fieldworker and has demonstrated exceptional skill in guiding her students through fieldwork, a particularly important aspect of the work of an anthropologist who combines research and teaching.

VI. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the candidate's activities and achievements

For this competition, it is necessary to emphasize the exceptional theoretical preparation and the clearly defined research focus of the candidate, which goes beyond the narrow, outdated framework of the academic disciplines of scientific fields 3.1. and 2.2. I accept her assessment for academic contribution.

Milena Angelova's proven qualities as a fieldworker not only in Bulgaria but also abroad, as well as her achievements as a leader of expeditions with students, are key to her assessment as a social/cultural anthropologist.

With her first, author's lecture courses (Medical Anthropology APLB793 and Social History, APLB794) she categorically introduced international educational standards at NBU.

In the short time that M. Angelova has been on a basic employment contract at the NBU she has achieved a high degree of integration in the Department of Anthropology and actively participates in the academic life of NBU.

VII. Conclusion

To summarize what has been said so far:

- The candidate's scientometric data not only fully meet the requirements for holding the academic position of associate professor of the Bulgarian Law and its regulations, but even impressively exceed them;
- The candidate has significant teaching experience and proven skills to successfully supervise bachelor's, master's and, in the future, doctoral theses;
- The candidate's scientific output is entirely of a contributory nature;
- Her scientific research is directly related to its application in the educational system and is in line with the strategy for scientific and teaching development of the New Bulgarian University;
- The candidate's research interests fully align with the plans of the University and the planned courses for an associate professor to be appointed through this competition;
- the research fields developed by the candidate and the competencies she possesses would provide young people with the opportunity to acquire both theoretical knowledge, in line with the contemporary development of science, and practical knowledge, with a view to their future application.

All this gives me reason to give a completely positive assessment and to propose that Senior Asst. Prof. Milena Angelova, PhD be elected as an Associate Professor at NBU under the current competition. I believe that the set of criteria and indicators for acquiring the title of Associate Professor are satisfied, according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Law on Higher Education, as well as the Regulation on the Development of the Academic Staff at the New Bulgarian University of 03.12.2018. I propose that the Scientific Jury vote positively and recommend that Senior Asst. Prof. Milena Ivanova Angelova, PhD be admitted to the Academic Council.

Date 02.09.2026

Signature

Prof. M. Karamihova, Dr. Habill.