

**Prof. Dr. Alexander Omarchevski**  
[omarchev@gmail.com](mailto:omarchev@gmail.com)  
Faculty of Theology  
Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski ”  
19 Sveta Nedelya sq.  
1000 Sofia

e-mail:

e-mail: [omarchevski@theo.uni-sofia.bg](mailto:omarchevski@theo.uni-sofia.bg)  
Tel. 003592 9890115/25

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November 16, 2020, Sofia

## **OPINION**

on

**COMPETITION FOR PROFESSOR IN THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD 2.4.  
RELIGION AND THEOLOGY (CHURCH LAW. ORGANIZATION AND  
GOVERNANCE OF THE BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH),**

**SG № 57/26.06.2020, for the needs of**

**Faculty of Theology, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”**

The only candidate: Assoc. Prof. Doctor of Science Dilyan Nikolaev Nikolchev

By order № RD 38-352/26.07.2020 of the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury for this procedure, and at the first meeting of the jury (Minutes № 1/14.09.2020) – I have been appointed for the President of the jury. With the same minutes the scientific jury considered that the only candidate Assoc. Prof. Dilyan Nikolchev meets the conditions and admitted to the evaluation procedure the scientific production presented by him in the competition for the academic position "Professor", in the professional field: 2.4. Religion and Theology (Church law. Structure and governance of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church).

Assoc. Prof. Nikolchev participates in the competition with one monograph, two studies and thirteen articles that deal with problems related to the topic of the

competition. The entire research activity of the candidate is focused on the disciplines Church Law and Organization and Governance of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, where for the last two decades he is the leading figure.

The main work, with which Assoc. Prof. Nikolchev participates in the competition, is the monograph "History, structure and governance of the Strumica-Drama Diocese (White Sea part, 1941 - 1942) and the Drama Diocese (1943 - 1944) according to the archival documents." Sofia, Sofia University Publishing House "St. Kl. Ohridski", 2020, 366 pages. It should be noted that this is the first serious scientific study based on rich archival material on the history of the Strumica-Drama and Drama dioceses of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in the period 1941 - 1944. For reasons of a different nature, this chapter of the history of our Orthodox Church was let be forgotten for decades. True to his approach to formulate his arguments mainly on reliable archival sources, Nikolchev remains consistent in this work as well. The monograph presented by him outlines a clear picture of the historical context as a whole, and of the important events during the period under consideration. The emphasis is on the activities of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in the lands annexed to Bulgaria during the Second World War. The church organization then included two successively existing subjects of church government - Strumica-Drama and Drama diocese. In the first part of his study, the author considers consistently their history and canonical structure. In the monograph, a space is devoted to the Drama Uprising (1941), as well as to the fate of the Jews in the region in question.

The second part of the monograph is lavishly illustrated with statistical information extracted from the archives concerning the internal structure and organization of church life in the dioceses in question. The status of the three spiritual districts in the Drama Diocese, the temples and monasteries in it, the spiritual and moral level of the population are traced in detail. Rich information is also given about the Bulgarian clergymen sent there, as well as about the material condition of the religious sites entrusted to them. The concerns of the

Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church for the normal provision of the spiritual and material needs of the clergy and laity in the diocese are also indicated. The monograph is original and definitely contributing.

The rest of the scientific production of the candidate presented for participation in the competition includes studies and articles on various current issues in the field of church law and the structure and governance of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which the candidate examines in depth and with a great deal of skill.

In view with the foregoing Assoc. Prof. Nikolchev can be characterised as a knowledgeable specialist (an erudite) in his field of matter. His many years of teaching experience also contribute to this. The successful management of three doctoral students, the participation in research projects and the accumulated administrative experience as head of the department and chairman of the General Assembly of the Faculty of Theology also contribute to his high qualification.

I do not have joint publications, projects or any other type of conflict of interest with the author.

In view of the above and in conjunction with Article 111 para. (2) of PURPNSZADSU, I express my positive assessment and allow myself to recommend to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to allow Assoc. Prof. Doctor of Science Dilyan Nikolaev Nikolchev to be elected by the Faculty Council for the academic position "Professor" in professional field 2.4. Religion and theology (Church law. Structure and governance of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church).

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(Prof. Aleksandar Omarchevski, PhD)