

## OPINION

**on the submitted works  
for participation in a competition for the academic position of ASSOCIATE  
PROFESSOR in professional field 2.4. Religion and Theology (Eastern Church singing),  
announced by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in SJ, issue 63 of July 30, 2021**

**Reviewer:** Assoc. Prof. Marian Bogoev Stoyadinov PhD – VTU "St. Cyril and Methodius" (Religion and Theology / Humanities), in the capacity of a member of the scientific jury of the competition according to Order № RD 38-451 / 17.09.2021 of the Rector of Sofia University.

**Candidate:** Assistant Professor Lubomir Angelov Ignatov PhD, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

### I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBMITTED MATERIALS

#### 1. Candidacy data

The documents submitted by the candidate comply with the requirements of ZRASRB, PPZRASRB and the Regulations on the terms and conditions for obtaining scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (PURPNSZADSU).

For participation in the competition, the candidate Lyubomir Ignatov presented a list of 18 titles, incl. 17 publications in Bulgarian scientific journals and scientific forums and one monograph. Other documents were also presented (*additional agreement to the employment contract at Sofia University, official note for auditorium employment by the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University, Reference from the Adamic Chapel of the Faculty of Theology, list of concerts, gratitude for participation in a festive ceremony by Sofia Municipality, official note from the National Library for citations*), supporting the achievements of the candidate.

The attached documents certify the necessary practical and academic achievements of Lyubomir Ignatov in the field of Eastern Church singing. They formally confirm facts that are well known to the Bulgarian theological collegium and church community.

#### 2. Candidate data

Lyubomir Ignatov obtained a master's degree in theology at the Theological Academy "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1989 – one year before the Academy regained the status of the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University. Since the time of his studies and graduation, his life and professional path have been connected with Alma Mater.

To date, Dr. Lyubomir Ignatov is a member of the church board at the chapel of the Faculty of Theology, supporting the practical training of students at the Faculty and their participation in liturgical services. He is also a conductor of choirs for Eastern church chants at the Faculty of Theology, with which he participates in ceremonial events organized by the Faculty and performances organized jointly by the Metropolitan of Sofia and the Cultural Department at

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. Lyubomir Ignatov is the leader and conductor of the Sofia Psalms Choir, consisting of current and former graduates of the Faculty of Theology; also participates in representative performances of the Sofia Priests' Choir. He defended his doctoral dissertation in 2018 on the topic: "Dynamics in the understanding of church singing in the period IV–VI century (axiology and praxiology)."

### **3. General characteristics of the scientific works and achievements of the candidate**

The scientific works of the candidate presented for evaluation are mainly from the last five years (2016-2021). Two others are from 2009. The central place among them is occupied by the monograph "The Psalmopenie. Spiritual and musical treasure of the two Testaments" (2021). With it Lyubomir Ignatov confirms his place as a specialist in the liturgical tradition of the Church. Such a theoretical development is extremely useful in the analysis and interpretation of church hymnography. At the same time, such a study would not be possible without the good theological and biblical training that the candidate definitely possesses and demonstrates in his work.

In summary, the following can be confirmed for all proposed texts:

- A) Two of the candidate's publications (*Hymns in Glory and Prayer to the Blessed Virgin. In front of the Lent*, in the magazine **Svetodavets**, *History of the liturgical statute of the BOC in the context of church and public affairs in the Stara Zagora diocese during the service of the Metropolitan Methodiy Kusev*, in the magazine **Nashata vyara**) are not in journals with scientific review and in my opinion should be dropped from the table of minimum state requirements. All other scientific works meet the minimum national requirements (Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of ZRASRB) and respectively the additional requirements of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” for holding the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the scientific field and professional direction of the competition;
- b) The scientific papers submitted by the candidate do not repeat those of previous procedures for acquiring a scientific title and academic position;
- c) There is no plagiarism proven in the statutory order in the scientific papers submitted at the competition.

### **4. Characteristics and evaluation of the teaching activity of the candidate**

The educational and pedagogical activity of the candidate is summarized in the reference regarding his classroom employment for the academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. This reference gives the formal framework in which the activity of Assistant Professor Ignatov. But this activity is not limited to formal parameters. The fact that he is the leader and conductor of the *Sofia Psalms choir*, in which both current and former students sing, is a testimony to the high quality of his teaching.

### **5. Content analysis of the scientific and scientific-applied achievements of the candidate contained in the materials for participation in the competition**

Contributions in several areas can be commented on. First of all, I would like to highlight the candidate's activities in the field of axiology of church singing and the theory of psaltic art. The most tangible result of these activities is his monograph, commented above. This is a work in which the maturity gained in practice and in academic work has led to a very good result. The article "On Church Singing" is a kind of chronological preface, three years away from the publication of the monograph, but it is also a request for the development of this important topic in our church-singing tradition. The history of psaltic art, archeographic research, as well as prosopography – are also the subject of research interest on the part of the candidate. His doctoral dissertation – which is not the subject of this opinion – is the basis, but the articles published subsequently confirm the permanence of this interest.

Church singing is by definition a practical discipline in which Lyubomir Ignatov is a proven authority. The fact that he has devoted himself to the above-mentioned topics is a very good attestation not only for him, but also for the Bulgarian theological and academic field in general.

The citations to date are 10 (based on a reference from the National Library). The candidate's texts have been cited in publications by other authors since 2012, making approximately 1 per year. With the publication of the latest monograph and the latest research of the candidate this year, I believe that this figure will be significantly higher in the coming years.

## **6. Critical remarks and recommendations**

I would recommend that the bibliography in the candidate's monograph (in case of republishing) be formed "by subject" and not only by language or spelling. In this sense, the patristic sources, as well as the liturgical sources, can be distinguished from the other bibliographic data.

## **7. Personal impressions of the candidate**

I have known Lyubomir Ignatov since the time I studied at the Theological Academy (1996-1990) and my impressions of him are excellent. We participated together in almost all the services in the Academic Chapel of that time. Subsequently, I followed and read most of the texts he published. To date, I believe that his participation in this competition is a natural development in his career. This will benefit both his students and the academic debate and development of the theological field in which he has worked for years.

## **8. Conclusion on the application**

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific papers presented in the competition and based on the analysis of their importance and the scientific and scientific-applied contributions contained in them, I confirm that the scientific achievements meet the requirements of ZRASRB, Regulations for its application and relevant Regulations of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for holding the candidate for the academic position "Associate Professor" in the scientific field and professional direction of the competition. In particular, the candidate satisfies the minimum national requirements in the professional field and no plagiarism has been established in the scientific papers submitted at the competition.

I give my **positive** assessment of the candidacy.

## II. OVERALL CONCLUSION

Based on the above, I **recommend** the scientific jury to propose to the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” to elect **Lyubomir Angelov Ignatov** to take the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the professional field 2.4. Religion and theology (Eastern Church singing).

Jury member:: .....

(Assoc. Prof. Mariyan Stoydinov PhD)

30.11.2021