



RECENSION

by **Assoc. Prof. Dr. SVETOSLAV S. RIBOLOV**

Faculty of Theology

SOFIA UNIVERSITY

"ST. KLIMENT of OCHRID"

concerning the candidature of

Assoc. Prof. Dr. DIMO KRASTEVA PENKOV

participant in the competition

for professor in the professional field

2.4 - RELIGION and THEOLOGY (Christian Apologetics) -

SG, iss. 48/ 28.06.2022 from University of Sofia

"St. Kliment of Ochrid"

The competition of the professional field 2.4 – *Religion and Theology (Christian Apologetics)* takes place for the needs of the Department of Systematic Theology at the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University "St. Kliment of Ochrid". It has been announced in the State Gazette, issue 48 of 28.06.2022. The whole procedure of the announcement of the competition and the admission of candidates to participate in it is made according to the terms of the requirements of the Law for Development of Academic Grades and the Regulations for its implementation. The envisaged legal deadlines and procedural requirements have been met and the necessary documents have been attached. The only candidate is Assoc. Prof. Dr. DIMO PENKOV, whose research biography fully meets the expectations for participation in the competition for the academic position of "professor". All materials concerning the competition were handed to me electronically within the time limits specified by law.

During the years as his colleague – from 2005 until today– I had

the opportunity to follow his research work. Assoc. Prof. Dr. DIMO PENKOV has always proved to be a thorough and hard-working researcher, kind and responsive colleague. The acquired professional skills and capabilities allowed him to develop as a scholar who has made indisputable contributions not only in the field of theology, but in the field of Religion and Philosophy.

During the years in which I am a colleague of Assoc. Ph.D., DIMO K. PENKOV, initially in Systematic and Practical Theology (2005-2010), Department of Historical and Systematic Theology (2010-2019) and currently in Department of Systematic Theology (from 2019 to today), I had the opportunity to follow the scientific work and research of Prof. Dr. DIMO K. PENKOV.

In his scientific research, Prof. Penkov has always been thorough and has approached his scientific field – Christian apologetics – with seriousness and responsibility. Over the years, he has grown as an impartial and efficient scholar, also making enormous efforts in the field of administrative activities in our faculty. Whether in the teaching or in the administrative field, he was always a responsive and kind colleague, benevolently approaching everyone. Prof. Dr. Dimo K. Penkov participated in the competition for “professor” with two monographies, one study, twelve articles and one study reader.

After obtaining the scientific degree “Associate Professor” Dimo Penkov participated in eight scientific research projects financed by Sofia University, the national research fund and the EU. In one of them, he is the head: *Dogmatic sources for the fight against iconoclasm*, Head, Sofia University "St. Kliment of Ochrid", contract number: No. 80-10-169/24.04.2020 (2020). In the next projects he is a member of the team: *1000 years of Ochrid Archdiocese (sources and research)*, member, Sofia University "St. Kliment of Ochrid", contract number: 80-10-226/04.05.2018 (2018), *Biblical themes and images in Bulgarian fiction after the Liberation until today*, member, Sofia University "St. Kliment of Ochrid" (2018), *The Image of the Sacred Image in the Palamite Disputes*, member, Sofia University "St. Kliment of Ochrid", contract number: 80-10-152/21.04.2017 (2017), *Thesaurus of the theology of St. John Damascene*, member, SU "St. Kliment of Ochrid", contract number: 136/17.04.2015 (2015), *Education, religion, media, politics: analysis of realities* (2012), *Education,*

religion, media, politics: analysis of realities (scientific information center for doctoral students -humanitarians), member, contract number: BG051PO001-3.3.06-0061 (2012), *From tolerance to recognition. Legalization of Christianity* (311 - 313), article, contract number: 108/ 15.04.2011 (2011).

Prof. Dr. Dimo Penkov was the supervisor of five successfully defended doctoral students and nineteen successfully defended master's students. The reference is available in the "Authors" system of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ochrid". His assets also include articles from the *theological dictionary* of St. John Damascene, published in St. John of Damascus, *Source of Knowledge*, pt III. *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*. Thesaurus "On Heresies in Brief" (dictionary articles, pp. 173-317), East - West, Sofia 2021, ISBN: 978 - 619 - 01 - 0885 - 6, as well as editorial work on the collection *Professor Dr. Archimandrite Evtimii Sapundjiev: Life, Church and Academic Activity*, Sofia, 2019.

Monographies

Undoubtedly, the most important and fundamental work, which represents a summary of the candidate's scientific research, is: *The Philosophical-Theological Arguments of St. John Damascene on the Existence of God (Theological-Apologetic Research)*. Sofia: Librum, 2022, 149 pp.; ISBN 978-619-7690-01-9; COBISS.BG-ID- 53998088. The composition is an original monographic work with a clearly defined thesis. The author has been working on the given topic for years and fills a significant gap in Orthodox theological scholarship by outlining very clearly a distinct theological problem in the theology of St. John Damascene. The argumentation of the holy father about the existence of God was previously only marked by a number of authors, but without being developed as a theological-apologetic problematic. Here before us, the author has done just that by laying out very clear and precise outlines of his research, methodology, tasks and results of his work. The arguments given are solid, theologically sound and could be successfully used in a modern context when discussing the question of God and our belief in Him. The author has presented the specific apologetic problematic in a way understandable to the reader, which sets a high degree of accessibility in the discipline of "Christian apologetics", and offers a deep and objective view of the relationship between

the achievements of ancient Hellenic philosophy and culture and Orthodox Christian theology. It is particularly important that the candidate has systematically analyzed the philosophical-theological arguments for the existence of God, given by St. John Damascene in the opening chapters of “An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith”. As a first study, it focuses on a theological problem that St. John Damascene solved, based on the ancient philosophical heritage, and expanding the horizons of patristic theology, with the specific argumentation on the subject, without, however, entering into the scholastic methodology of Latin medieval scholasticism.

The other basic work of the candidate is: *The Resurrection of Christ - the victory of life over death*. Sofia: University Publishing House “St. Kliment of Ochrid”, 2017, 148 pp.; ISBN 978-954-07-4244-1; COBISS.BG-ID- 1278814436. The study is a serious theological study of a systematic nature, which analyzes the Christian Orthodox understanding of life after death - a basic theological concept that generally defines the vision of creation, the fall, redemption and the eschatological vision of man in Orthodoxy. The work also has an indisputable contribution character, as it systematically and objectively presents the Orthodox teaching on the subject as an integral whole, combining knowledge from the entire palette of theological disciplines.

Study

“The Uncreated Light of the Transfiguration of the Lord in the Teaching of St. Gregory Palamas.” *Forum Theologicum Sardicense. Prius Bogoslovska Missal*, n. 1 (2020), no. XXV, pp. 7-31; ISSN 1310-7909; COBISS.BG-ID – 1120297953. The study is a thorough analysis of the Palamite doctrine of uncreated light in the context of the Transfiguration event. At the core of the author's vision lies a vivid eschatological impulse that permeates the interpretation of this important biblical episode.

Articles

1. “Faith and Knowledge”. *Orthodox Theology & the Sciences. Glorifying God in His Marvelous Works*. Sofia University Press, 2016, pp. 173 – 182; ISBN 978-954-07-4223-6; COBISS.BG-ID – 1279077860. The essay discusses basic

theological concepts in Orthodox theology in the context of the dialogue between theology and science in an Orthodox context.

2. "Religious Identity and World View." Man in the European civilization of the XXI century. Sofia, 2019, pp. 349 – 359; ISBN 978-954-392-575-9 COBISS.BG-ID – 1293253604.
3. "The categories of "good" and "evil" in the worldview of Stoyan Mihailovski." P. P. Slaveikov, Dr. K. Krastev, St. Mikhailovsky. Literature and social experience: a collection of reports from the national scientific conference of the same name with international participation November 3-4, 2016. Sofia, 2018, pp. 241-249; ISBN – 978-954-326-339-4; COBISS.BG-ID – 1285667044. The article analyzes the important question of the moral categories "good" and "evil" in the work of a Bulgarian church author of the modern era. The work has a high scientific value, as it reflects on current issues, never before examined in science and making sense of the history of the modern intellectual environment in Bulgaria.
4. "The Sophiology of Prince Evgeny Trubetskoy (1863 - 1920)". In: IN MEMORIAM. Archpriest Georgi Florovski (1893-1979): a collection of reports from the Year of Florovski. Sofia, 2012, pp. 208 – 216; COBISS.BG-ID – 1251529956. Research concerning the history of Orthodox theology in the 20th century. It is distinguished by an innovative approach and analytical methodology. Undeniable contribution.
5. "Theodore the Studite (759 – 826) and his apologetic approach in "Three Refutations Against the Iconoclasts." *Forum Theologicum Sardicense. Prius Bogoslovska Missal*, n. 2 (2020), no. XXV, pp. 7-22; ISSN 1310-7909; COBISS.BG-ID – 1120297956. The work is an attempt to analyze through the perspective of Christian apologetics the polemic of St. Theodore the Studite in defense of holy icons. The work is important because it broadens the perspective of the author's work on St. John Damascene.
6. "The Apologetic Views in the Early Writings of St. Athanasius the Great." *Forum Theologicum Sardicense. Prius Bogoslovska Missal*, n. 1 (2018), an. XXIII, pp. 61-70; ISSN-1310-7909; COBISS.BG-ID – 1120297956. The article is an attempt to explore the apologetic principles embedded in the anti-pagan polemic of St. Athanasius the Great in his earliest work preserved to this day. Contributory work.
7. The redemption and salvation of man in the words and teachings of St. Kliment of Ochrid. Saint Kliment of Ochrid – first bishop of the Bulgarian

- language. Collection of articles. University Publishing House "St. Kliment of Ochrid". Sofia, 2020, pp. 41 – 52] ISBN 978-954-07-5097-2; COBISS.BG-ID-44999944.
8. "The contribution of Prof. archim. Dr. Evtimiy Sapundjiev for the development of apologetic science in Bulgaria (on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of his death). Professor Dr. Archimandrite Evtimii Sapundjiev. Life, ecclesiastical and academic activity (1884 - 1943)'. Collection on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of his death. University Publishing House "St. Kliment of Ochrid", Sofia, 2020, pp. 23 - 31; ISBN 978-619-91095-4-0; COBISS.BG-ID- 44228872. The study is dedicated, like other previous ones, to the work of a Bulgarian theologian from the first half of the 20th century. The work is extremely innovative and analyzes data previously unknown to science. Bearing in mind the importance of the personality of archim. Evtimii Sapundjiev for Bulgarian theology, the moment of contribution is determined by the very fact that so far, no studies on his personality have been published.
 9. "Outlines on the biography and scientific apologetic activity of Prof. Dr. Boris Marinov (1895-1980). Professor Dr. Boris Marinov: life and academic activity (1895 – 1980)". Sofia: "St. Kliment of Ochrid", 2022, pp. 62-72; ISBN 978-954-07-5400-0. Also, an essay on the contribution of a Bulgarian theologian from the first half of the 20th century. The work is of particular importance for the candidate's scientific discipline, as it complements the knowledge of the history of the discipline and adds value to the candidate's own research contribution.
 10. Biblical motifs in Ivan Vazov's patriotic lyrics. The fountain of life. *Bible Library No. 7*. Collection of reports from Bible College seminars held in Nessebar, December 2009 and 2010. Sofia, 2011, pp. 87-98. ISBN 978-954-400-617-4; COBISS.BG-ID- 1247866340. A contribution that marks the relationship between theology and literature in the context of Bulgarian literature from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
 11. F. M. Dostoevsky and his Apology of Faith in Jesus Christ". Sp. Giver of light. Year III (2021)/No. 11. Sofia, 2021, pp. 55 – 67; ISSN 2683-0655; COBISS.BG- ID- 1292982244.
 12. "Anthropological productions in the work of Archpriest Alexander Men. Bible – Culture – Dialogue". *Biblical studies and dialogue. Research, studies. Proceedings*, Volume Five. Sofia, 2013, pp. 140 – 147; ISBN 978-954-92528-5-9; COBISS.BG-

ID- 1290554084. An article dedicated to the work of an important Russian theologian of the 20th century, who suffered martyrdom in recent times. Contributed to the history of theological thought in the Orthodox world in the 20th century.

13. "The Orthodox Dogma and the Spiritual Experience of the Church". In: Tenekedjiev, L. (ed.) *Dogma and Terminology in the Orthodox Christian Tradition. Materials from the 4th International Symposium on Orthodox Dogmatics, September 22-25, 2013, Sofia. Supplementum to the journal "Bogoslovska Missal"*. Sofia, 2013, pp. 50-55; ISSN 1310-7909; COBISS.BG-ID-1270715620. A Study of a Basic Problem of Orthodox Theology. Treats the relationship between spiritual experience and the teaching of the Church's system of dogmas. The author's insights are again focused on the apologetic dimensions of Orthodox Christian teaching. In this respect, his work corresponds with his main works for the competition and represents an important methodological approach to his overall work presented for the competition.

Study Reader

The Ancient Theology of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as a Form of Knowledge of God. Sofia: "St. Kliment of Ochrid", 2008, 87 pp. ISBN 978-954-07-2644-1; COBISS.BG-ID-1228057572. Help of indisputable value for students of theology at Sofia University "St. Kliment of Ochrid". It represents a systematic attempt to analyze the theological views of the most important Hellenic philosophical authorities of Antiquity, considered in the context of the history of Christian thought.

Conclusion

The scientific work of Prof. Dr. Dimo Krastev Penkov, reflected in the attached monographies, studies and articles, and teaching reader, can be grouped into three main headings. First and most numerous are the publications devoted to the discipline of Christian Apologetics, followed by works on methodological and other apologetic problems in the patristic literature, and finally come the studies of Orthodox theologians who worked in the first half of the 20th century. I would not like to omit the contributing studies

on literary authorities throughout the Bulgarian modern history, which are considered in the context of the influence of religious texts on their work, but they can be considered entirely in the context of the previous group of studies on a thematic and methodological basis.

Finally, the aid related to the teaching of Christian Apologetics and its application in the process of reflecting on the influence of Ancient Philosophy on Christian Orthodox thought can be brought out. This is also an important feather in the author's work, considering both his active involvement in teaching and administrative-learning activities in recent years.

Considering everything I have stated above, I want to emphasize with pleasure my general impression and complete conviction that with my respected colleague Associate Professor Dimo Krastev Penkov, fills all the professional, personal and scientific prerequisites for occupying the highest academic position "Professor". I fully agree and support the contributions of his research presented in the competition documentation. After having thoroughly and thoroughly familiarized myself with the materials presented for the competition and after considering the importance of the scientific contributions contained in them, I strongly recommend the respected scientific jury to give its positive vote for the election of Prof. DIMO KRESTEV PENKOV to the academic position "Professor" in professional field 2.4 "*Religion and theology*" (*Christian Apologetics*).

With deep conviction I vote "YES"!

I declare that I have no publications in common with the candidate.

Signature: