

Opinion

Prof. Dimo Krăstev Penkov, PhD

For the presented scientific works of Assoc. Prof. Pavel Nikolov Pavlov, PhD in connection with his participation in the announced contest for professor in 2.4 Religion and Theology) announced in State Gazette 100/16.12.2022.

The opinion has been written on the basis of the:

Order of the Rector of the University № RD-38-50/27.01.2023.

Protocol № 1 of the Scientific Jury from 02.03.2023.

1. Brief biography of the candidate.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pavel Nikolov Pavlov graduated from the five-year course of the Sofia Theological Seminary “St. Ivan Rilski” in 1987. He continued his studies at the Theological Faculty of Sofia University “St. Clement of Ohrid”, where he graduated in 1993 with the graduate thesis “Diocese of Sliven”. Simultaneously, during his theological studies, he studied history at the Faculty of History at Sofia University. During the period 1996-1998 he specialized at the Aristotelian University in Thessaloniki. He defended his doctoral dissertation “Sofia – A religious center in the 16th century” at Sofia University “St. Clement of Ohrid”.

Assoc. Prof. Pavlov worked at the Faculty of Theology initially as a part-time lecturer, and later as a lecturer, senior assistant lecturer, chief assistant professor and currently as associate professor in the Department of Historical Theology. He is a long-standing lecturer at the Faculty of Theology in the disciplines, among others, “Introduction to Church History”, “History of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church” and “History of Orthodox Theology in the Twentieth Century”. He is the author of numerous monographs, studies and publications on current and controversial issues related to the disciplines he teaches. He is also the founder of the Master programs in “Contemporary Aspects of Theology”, “Christian Pilgrimage” and “Church Management” and he is the long-standing administrating director of some of them.

The high theological competence, dedication and rigor of Assoc. Pavlov render him an enviable authority to his students. His multifaceted activities show him as a personality engaged in the activity of the Church and proven theologian.

2. General characteristics of the scientific work included in the contest

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pavel Pavlov participates as the only candidate in the announced contest for “professor” in relation with the needs of the Theological Faculty at the Sofia University “St. Clement of Ohrid” with the habilitation thesis “Teacher Gancho Velev Ganchev (1921 – 1998) or on the task of the historian of theology in 20th century”, Sofia, University Press “St. Clement of Ohrid”, 2022, along with three studies and 17 scientific papers.

The scientific-research pursuits of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pavlov have one “stable center” – the Christian understanding of history, which reveals the theological focus and nuances of his theological work. In this vein the presented monograph is dedicated to the life, activity and mission of the polymath Gancho Velev as a teacher at the Seminary and as a theologian-historian. The monograph is based on a great amount of material from Gancho Velev’s personal archive, which is being published for the first time and represents his activities as a researcher and teacher in the field of Bulgarian church history. The habilitation thesis is considered as a “research for the deep roots of the theological-historical heritage of the twentieth century” and is related to the 100th anniversary of Gancho Velev’s birth, the 100th anniversary of the Theological Faculty and the 120th anniversary of the Sofia Theological Seminary. In his interpretation Assoc. Prof. P. Pavlov emphasizes the importance of continuity between different generations of theologians and historians, and introduces the difficulties and challenges they faced during the totalitarian communist regime in Bulgaria. There is no doubt that the monograph of Assoc. Prof. P. Pavlov is a carefully planned, well thought and a systematically written scientific work. However, it is logical, to point some critical remarks about the study mainly related to the use of unpopular words and phrases (p. 43 and 85), etc., which, of course, do not reduce the importance of the work and do not impede its understanding. As the research is related to a specific person – a teacher of history, Assoc. Prof. Pavlov makes an in-depth analysis of the specifics in connection to the

scholar knowledge of history, the theological interpretation of historical sources, as well as the methodology of teaching historical disciplines.

Apart from the reviewed monograph, Assoc. Prof. P. Pavlov contributed also 17 articles and reports published in Bulgarian, English, German and Serbian. Three of them are in publications indexed in Web of Science and Scopus. It is noteworthy that the presented scientific works of Dr. Pavlov have a distinct chronological and thematic sequence, which points to the gradual finding of a dominant motif in the scientific research that is characterized by its own distinct style.

In addition to the activities of Assoc. Prof. Pavel Pavlov, I should also mention his participation in national and international conferences, as well as in several research projects directly related to the disciplines he teaches at the Faculty of Theology.

The attached documentation is complete and in accordance with the regulatory requirements. It complies with the minimum national requirements for the academic post of Professor. I fully share the scholar contributions as formulated in the work, which can be grouped into four main areas: 1. Theology, History, Christianity and Church; 2. Bulgaria and Christianity: history, holiness, Church, culture; 3. History of Orthodox theology in Bulgaria in the twentieth century; 4. Contemporary theological issues.

The candidate's scientometrics parameters as a sum of all groups of categories exceed the required minimum. I have not found any plagiarism or unauthorized copying from other scientific works.

The multifaceted activity of Assoc. Prof. Pavel Pavlov as a researcher and expert, shows that he is a diligent theologian with a clear and interesting position on many current issues. In parallel, the excellent assessments of the candidate's teaching activity are also essential and witness to the undisputable contribution on the improvement of the teaching process at the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University "St. Clement of Ohrid".

Final assessment

Considering the high quality and scholarly contributions of the works presented, and the need for such research in the field of Historical Theology, I strongly recommend the scientific jury to vote positively and to elect Assoc. Prof. Pavel Pavlov, PhD as a professor. I declare that I will vote “**YES**” in this procedure.

31.03.2023

Sofia

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(Prof. Dimo Penkov, PhD)