

OPINION

by Dr. Stoyan Iliev Chilikov; Department of Theology, Faculty of Philosophy and History,
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on Dissertation work for acquiring the scientific and educational degree "Doctor" in Scientific
field of High Education: 2. Humanities, Professional field: 2.4 Religion and Theology

on the topic: "**THE INTERCESSION OF THE SAINTS IN THE PRAYER
SEQUENCES OF THE LITURGY FROM THE BYZANTINE RITUAL
(ACCORDING TO THE SLAVIC SOURCES OF THE XV-XIX CENTURIES)**" by
Miloslav Bonov, Theological Faculty, Department of Practical Theology, Sofia University St.
Kliment Ohridski

The opinion was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Law for the development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its Implementation and the New Regulations for the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and the Occupation of Academic Positions at the University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski", amended and supplemented by the AC on 26.05.2021.

The reviewing of the materials is according to the order of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Kliment". No. RD 38-67/ 05.02.2024). **Miloslav Bonov** has provided all the necessary documents concerning the procedure for the defense of the dissertation.

1.Data about the dissertant and the procedure

Miloslav Bonov has studied and graduated from the Faculty of Theology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" . He completed his Individual Plan and was discharged with the right to defend. The dissertation, which has been submitted to me for opinion, has been discussed at a meeting of the Department of Practical Theology of the Theological Faculty, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. At the same meeting it was decided to admit it to public defence. At the first meeting of the scientific jury, a chairman was elected and the authors were appointed to draw up reviews and opinions. The procedure was followed and I consider that no violations were committed.

2. Dissertation data

The dissertation contains a total of 237 standard pages. It consists of a preface, introduction, development in three chapters, conclusion and list of references.

With the preface, the doctoral student introduces the topic by presenting a summary of the motives of his research work.

The introduction justifies the choice of the topic and its relevance; the subject, object, aims and objectives of the research are clearly formulated.

The dissertation consists of three chapters, The first chapter „Holiness as the main goal of man after the fall". It consists of three sub-points, with the help of which the author makes an attempt to dogmatically argue the church teaching on the intercession of the saints on the basis of the biblical and patristic tradition.

The second chapter is entitled "The place of the saints in the Orthodox liturgy after the 4th century". In this part of the dissertation, the development of the Byzantine ritual and the intercession of the saints in relation to it are traced.

The third chapter is entitled "The cult of the saints in the Byzantine ritual according to the Slavic sources of the XV-XIX centuries."

In the conclusion of the research paper, the main conclusions of the essay are drawn based on the thesis statement.

Due to the limited number of pages to compose a statement, I will limit myself to what has been said so far, focusing on the scholarly contributions and critical comments and recommendations to the dissertation.

3. Evaluation of the scientific contributions

The scientific contributions of the thesis according to its author are four.

I accept the first and second of the mentioned scientific contributions, considering that the dissertation of Miloslav Danov Bonov is really the first attempt for the theology in Bulgaria to justify the intercession of the saints on the basis of the source material from the XV-XIX period.

The topic of the scientific research is dissertationable and current. The author has reviewed a huge amount of literature and works with sources on the topic of the dissertation work.

4. Critical remarks and recommendations

The Dissertation work lacks the thesis or hypothesis so necessary for scientific research of this type, for the author to investigate and defend. As a result, the work has acquired a more descriptive form than analytical and research. The text of the study is in some places inhomogeneous, I would even say too chaotic, disorganized, without a clearly expressed concept. Analysis of the main research cores is lacking. Even the famous text of St. John Damascene on the veneration of the saints is not analyzed, but only quoted by the author p.66.

5. Abstract details. Publications and participation in scientific forums. Personal impressions of the dissertation.

The abstract is written as required and correctly reflects the content of the dissertation.

The dissertant has submitted 6 publications that are in the field of his dissertation.

6. Conclusion

Despite the errors and inaccuracies of the dissertation as pointed out, I declare that I will vote positively on the procedure of Miloslav Danov Bonov for the award of the PhD in the professional field 2.4 Theology.

07.04.2024.

Assoc. Prof. Rev. Stoyan Chilikov

Sofia