

## **REVIEW**

**by Prof. Emil Traichev Stoyanov**

**for the academic position of „Associate Professor“**

**field of higher education 2. Humanities**

**professional field 2.4. Religion and theology (Eastern church singing)**

**FACULTY OF THEOLOGY at University of Sofia „St. Kliment Ohridski“**

**Department of PRACTICAL THEOLOGY**

The procedure was announced for the needs of the Faculty of Theology and was promulgated in Official Gazette № 63/30.07.2021.

The review was written and presented on the basis of an order of the Rector RD-38-451/17.09.2021, as well as on a decision of a meeting of the scientific jury (PROTOCOL № 1/11.10.2021).

According to the announced competition, the only candidate is Head. Assistant Dr. Lubomir Angelov Ignatov.

### **Candidate details**

Lyubomir Ignatov is born on April 10, 1963. In the period 1985-1989 he is a student at the Theological Academy „St. Kliment Ohridski“. In 1989 he graduated with a master's degree in theology. From August of the same year until now he has been a teacher of Eastern church singing and liturgical order (typic) at the Sofia Theological Seminary „St. John of Rila“. In the period 2015-2019 he is an assistant at the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“, Department of Practical Theology. On April 11, 2018 he successfully defended his dissertation on the topic: „Dynamics in the understanding of church singing in the period IV - VI century (axiology and praxiology)“. From 2019 to the present he is a Head Assistant at the Faculty of Theology.

### **Description of scientific works**

Lyubomir Ignatov participates in the competition for associate professor with 18 publications, structured as follows: 1 monograph, two studies and 15 articles.

The monograph „The Psalm. Spiritual-musical treasury of the two Testaments“, according to the author, „is an in-depth liturgical-musicological study of the problems for which theological science is indebted... **Key words** in it are *music* and *song*“ (p. 13). From the Orthodox-theological point of view, studies of „leading“ specialists on the issues under consideration have been skillfully traced and critically used – basic literature that reflects the historical development, the Church and patristic tradition, as well as the different approaches in the field of psalm singing. This helps to highlight the positive qualities of the monograph.

However, the reviewed monograph needs corrections and improvements concerning:

– The bibliography is too scarce. Despite the author's claim that he refers to „leading biblical scholars, philologists and writers“ (p. 13), at the same time there are omissions concerning basic researches on the Psalms, e.g. the works of Orthodox scholars Καϊμάκης, Δ. Ψαλῶ τῷ Θεῷ μου. Θεσσαλονίκη, 1992; Eiusdem. Σύντομο υπόμνημα στους ψαλμούς. Αθήνα, 2010□; Χατζηγιακουμής, Μ. Κ. Χειρόγραφα ἐκκλησιαστικῆς μουσικῆς. Αθήνα, 1980; Βουρλῆς, Α. Θ. Δογματικοῦ καὶ ὄψεις τῆς ὀρθοδόξου ψαλμωδίας. Αθήναι, 1994; the survey study with a abundant bibliography of John Day, Psalms. Sheffield, 1990; Lamb, J. A. The Psalms in Christian Worship. London, 1962; collected and transcribed Jewish chants from diaspora communities, published by Abraham Zwi Idelsohn in the 10-volume Hebraeisch-orientalischer Melodienschatz. Leipzig/Berlin/Jerusalem, 1914 seq .; in connection with the use of special signs in the synagogue singing tradition called ta'amim or neginot, the work of Abraham Zwi Idelsohn, Jewish Music in its Historical Development. NY, 1929; the study by Reinhard Flender, Hebrew Psalmody: A Structural Investigation. Jerusalem, 1992, on the Jewish Psalmody; Randhofer, R. Psalms in unique vocals Ueberlieferungen: A convoluted study of Jewish and Christian traditions. 2 Bde. Frankfurt/M. 1995; the classic study of the famous Norwegian scholar S. Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship. 2 vols., Oxford, 1962; in relation to the Old Testament musical instruments: the dissertation of Elena Ivanovna Kolyada, Biblical musical instruments in musical practice and book tradition: Interpretation of biblical instrumentation in the history of translations of the Holy Scriptures.

2004, or its English translation: Kolyada, Y. A Compendium of Musical Instruments and Instrumental Terminology in the Bible. London/NY, 2014, with a rich bibliography on the subject, as well as the work of Montagu, J. Musical Instruments of the Bible. Lanham/London, 2002, et al .; in connection with the Psalm inscriptions: the dissertation of Jerome L. Skinner, The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms: An Exegetical, Intertextual, and Methodological Analysis. Andrews University, 2016, including an extensive bibliography on the subject, Thirtle, J. W. The Titles of the Psalms. Their Nature and Meaning Explained. London, 1904 et al.

- hesitation in the way of quoting the biblical and other texts (use of italics without explanation of the reasons, quotation marks, etc.) (pp. 15, 17, 24, 51, 60, etc.);
- lack of unity in the abbreviations used regarding the biblical books (pp. 16, 55);
- printed mistakes (pp. 18, 19, 23, 26, 27, 28, 34, 48, 51, 52, 57, 58, 86, 88, 279);
- vague words or expressions (p. 19 – „Syrian and Arabs“, perhaps Syrians/Syrian translations?, p. 22 – „the treatise Tamid“, i.e. the treatise in the Mishnah concerning the order of the ministry in the temple, p. 37 – the title „History of the Study“, probably the History of the Studies?, p. 43 – „according to Targum“, p. 45 – „the pre-messianic past of the people of Israel“, 55 – „Jewish Antiquities“, p. 85 – translations from Russian „lest God fail to destroy his enemies“ (p. 85) and „which were characteristic of engaging in such activity“ (p. 86) are incorrect, p. 88 – the existence of an earlier one cannot be judged from later practice, this is an anachronism, etc.);
- second-hand citations (pp. 20, 21, 23, 30, 31, 35, 63, 70);
- the works of famous church writers and holy fathers are not indicated (pp. 38, 39, 71);
- music and psalmody flourished during the time of Solomon, as John Bright writes (A History of Israel. Louisville/London, 20004, p. 220), and not, as L. Ignatov claims, that „the use of psalms in Solomon temple began around 950 BC“ (p. 48, note 11), referring to the same author;
- The author's reconstructions of a number of concepts are a positive experience, but they hide many risks, possibility for mistakes, ambiguities, etc. It is advisable to use specialized publications for this purpose in experiments of this nature (eg Kohler, L. Baumgartner, W. The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament in 4 volumes, 1994-1999; Liddell,

HG, Scott. R. .A Greek-English Lexicon.Oxford, 19409; Bauer, W. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.Translation and adaptation of the 4th rev. And augmented ed. By WF Arndt and FW Gingrich.Cambridge / Chicago, 1957, etc.).

My general impression of the presented monograph is positive. However, I believe that both the introduction and the first part of the work partially need to be revised in the light of the notes made and the literature recommended. Undoubtedly, this will improve the work and gives breadth, depth and additional weight to the analyzes and final conclusions.

The first study,,St. John Kukuzel – a measure of singing masterly in Eastern Church music“, on the one hand, draws attention to the work of St. John Kukuzel as a hymnographer, whose work is little known among scholars of musical medievistics, and on the other hand, the question of Kukuzel's ethnicity . The value of the study is based on a creative combination of the used research, source and patristic material with analyzed working hypotheses and well-grounded conclusions.

In the study „The Number of Eastern Church Voices in the Works of St. Maximus the Confessor“ a hypothesis is presented for a new sacred number – eight, as well as for the new day connected with it in the God's plan. Undoubtedly, the set goal and the achieved results deserve a positive assessment both in view of the preserving of the rich musical heritage in the church tradition in our country, and on a methodological level. The proposed concept,considered in comparative way with the trends and concepts presented in the works of many researchers, testifies to a good knowledge of the issue. I find that this study outlines a new style of work in the field of church music in our country, treats important problems in our theological science and suggests ways to resolve them. The proposed work can be a valuable reference work for the students of theology and specialists in the field of Eastern church music.

The other fifteen articles submitted for participation in the competition are characterized by a popular and useful religious-pedagogical and church-social character. The articles have an initial orientation in the ideological stands of the candidate, which finds some completeness in the presented monograph.

The candidate has participated in a scientific project: AB ORIENTE LUX – Music of the Orthodox East (2017). As a conductor of choirs for Eastern church music at the Faculty of Theology he has given numerous concerts. He is a member of the church board of trustees at the chapel of the Faculty of Theology. He is the founder, leader and conductor of the Sofia Psalms Choir.

### **Scientific contributions**

In the documentation for participation in the competition L. Ignatov has attached a document entitled „Scientific contributions from the research activity in the field of the Eastern Church singing of Head Assistant Dr. Lubomir Ignatov“. In assessing these contributions (especially with regard to the monograph on the psalm singing) in two respects the candidate faces a serious problem related to ignorance (evidence of this are both formulated contextual and conceptual scientific contributions and used or cited specialized literature) of contemporary theological-musical literature and context.

Of particular importance in the competitions for associate professors and professors is the reflection of the scientific achievements of the candidate not only in the context of the „Bulgarian music-loving community“ or „Bulgarian theological science“, but also in the foreign scientific environment. Therefore, there is no clear assessment of the contributions in relation to the foreign church-musical tradition, the knowledge of the modern context of the issue. I agree with the statement of the candidate that „such a purposeful and thorough study in theological aspect is done for the first time“, but in our country, and not at all in the space of psalm singing!

The „contributions to theological science“ claimed in the monograph are formal, external, rather than substantive, instructive and analytical. The development, approbation and validation of a new research methodology presupposes the substantiation of the novelty of the achieved results through its application in comparison with already known scientific instruments. There is no in-depth examination and critique of a hypothesis already formulated in science. It seems that we have „contributions to theological science“ only in the peer-reviewed papers submitted by the candidate.

There are ten noticed citations in Google Scholar and Bulgarian scientific journals.

Good quality of works from a linguistic point of view.

### **Teaching work**

Parallel to the research tasks in his works Dr. Lyubomir Ignatov often has in mind his teaching duties, so they show a focus on supporting the learning process. This corresponds to his successful pedagogical work. From 2019 until now he holds the academic position of Head Assistant at the Faculty of Theology, and his main activities and responsibilities are respectively lectures in the field of Eastern church singing and liturgical order, as well as conducting practical exercises. He was awarded the prize for best teacher for 2007 by the Ministry of Education and Science – Regional Inspectorate of Education, Sofia.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the presented assessments and findings, especially in view of the prominent positive aspects in the reviewed theological production, I recommend to the esteemed jury Dr. Lyubomir Ignatov to be deservedly elected to the scientific position of „Associate Professor“ in the professional field 2.4. Religion and theology (Eastern church singing).

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