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Registered in the Register for Academic Recognition of National Centre for Information and Documentation

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## OPINION

on

COMPETITION FOR PROFESSOR IN THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD 2.4. RELIGION AND  
THEOLOGY (EASTERN CHURCH SINGING), SG № 63 /30.07.2021,  
for the needs of Faculty of Theology, Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski

**The only candidate::** Assist. Prof. PhD Ljubomir Angelov Ignatov

### **Procedural requirements**

By order № RD 38-451/17.09.2021 of the Rector of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”, I have been designated for an internal member of the Scientific jury for occupation of the academic position of „associate professor”. With the same minutes (Minutes № 1/11.10.2021) the scientific jury considered that the only candidate PhD Ljubomir Ignatov meets the conditions and admitted to the evaluation procedure the scientific production presented by him in the competition for the academic position „associate professor ", in the professional field: 2.4. Religion and Theology (Eastern church singing).

### **Regarding the compliance with the science-metric criteria**

Upon examination of the documents provided by Ljubomir Ignatov under an inventory list, including a list of the scientific activity and scientific achievements, curriculum vitae, a list of contributions, abstracts, a reference by the National Centre for Information and Documentation, etc., I find succession in his former development, as well as correspondence of his application with the quantitatively measurable requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” for occupation of the academic position „Associate Professor”, as follows:

### **Education and professional development**

Assistant Professor Lyubomir Ignatov graduated from the Theological Academy „St. Kliment Ohridski (1989); from 1989 he was a lecturer in Eastern Church Singing and Liturgical Order (Tipik) at Sofia Theological Seminary „St. John of Rila”; from 2011 to 2014 he was a lecturer in Eastern Church Singing and Liturgical Order (Tipik) and in Theological Seminary „St. St. Cyril and Methodius”.

In 2015, Lyubomir Ignatov was selected as a full-time assistant in the Department of Practical Theology, and in 2019 as a senior assistant at the same department.

The candidate shows skills in organizing and conducting pilgrimage educational trips, church singing practices, concerts, monody choirs in Bulgaria and festivals abroad; Assistant Prof. Ignatov also received the Award for Best Teacher in 2007 from the Ministry of Education and Science - Regional Inspectorate of Education, Sofia.

### **Regarding the academic lecturing activity**

-Development of academic and thematic programs and conduct of Eastern Church Singing and Liturgical Order, Psalter Requirements, Introduction to Church Singing, Psalter Matins and Liturgy, Mathematical Psalms, etc.

-Lecturing workload (curricular and extracurricular): 526/425 hours for 2019-20; 693/591 hours for 2020/21.

The applicant received a very good attestation mark for his overall scientific and academic activity from the Attestation committee at Faculty of Theology, Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski in 2019, which entitles him to apply for a competition for the attainment of an academic rank.

### **Scientific publications**

1. Acquired PhD degree in scientific specialty „theology" 2018 at the Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski (Diploma № 2018-34) on the basis of defended dissertation paper on the following topic: „Dynamics in the understanding of church singing in the period IV-VI century (axiology and praxiology)“. The same work was published in 2021 (ISBN 978-619-91575-4-1).

2. Number of publications according to the thematic bibliographic reference of the National Centre for Information and Documentation – 18.

Assistant Professor Dr. Lyubomir Ignatov participated in the competition with 1 monograph, 2 studies, 15 articles that deal with problems related to the topic of the competition.

3. Positive quotations: 10 in Bulgarian scientific journals.

### **Scientific activity**

- Participation in scientific forums:

Academic lecture „Църковната химнография и музика в контекста на творенията на светите три светители“ (2021); Section report „The woman and the church singing work through the centuries (Prominent singers and songwriters in the Orthodox Church)“ (2019); Section report „Dynamics in the understanding of church singing in the period IV-VI century“ (2018); Section report „From the church-musical past of Anhialo“ (2018); Section report „The history of the liturgical statute of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in the context of the church-public work in the Stara Zagora diocese during the consecration of Metropolitan Metodiy Kusev“ (2018) and others.

- Participation in scientific research projects, as follows:

Member of a national project: „The musical work of St. John Kukuzel - theological, liturgical and spiritual-ascetic aspects " (2021); Member of a national project: „Testimony, ministry and worship of the Church" (2019); Member of a national project: „AB ORIENTE LUX - Music of the Orthodox East“ (2017).

## **Regarding the scientific contributions**

In his Reference on contributions, the applicant has provided an in-depth analysis of the essence and objectives of the dissertation paper, the monographs, the articles and participation in scientific forums under different major trends, as well as the accomplished scientific theoretical and applied contributions ensuing thereof, which I fully accept. The entire research activity of the candidate is focused on the disciplines he has been a holder of in recent decades.

The main work, with which Ignatov participates in the competition, is the monograph „The Psalms. Spiritual and musical treasure of the Two Testaments. Book of the Book of Psalms“ (Sofia, 2021. ISBN 978-619-91934-1-9).

The proposed study draws attention to the tradition of the Psalter and the ways in which it finds its place in worship. The author of the monograph studies the musicological data in the psalms and everything related to the experience and traditions of biblical musicology and, accordingly, its reflection in the later church tradition.

The monograph consists of two parts. The claim for the contribution character of the first part, which has an introductory character and concerns issues in the field of biblical studies, sounds a bit exaggerated. The lack of source and critical literature on individual topics does not allow the author to delve deeper into the issue, which at times distances him from established in the scientific tradition reconstructions and interpretations of individual texts and artifacts, as well as the historical context and use of psalm poetry. in the Tabernacle, the Temple of Jerusalem, and the Synagogue.

With illustrative material in the text are considered some material evidence of the Old Testament musical instruments, which are presented and the means of extracting music from the three main types of instruments - percussion, string and wind. Caution should also be exercised here in the reconstruction phase of archaeological artifacts.

It is correct to conclude that despite the fact that the early Christian Church did not accept the accompaniment of musical instruments in the performance of David's songs and affirmed the vocal liturgical tradition, the psalms find their place in every Orthodox worship.

The proposed text emphasizes the extremely important place that psalmist occupies in the church rites today, which gives theological significance, relevance and benefit of this proposed work. The work has an undoubted contribution in the field of its church-historical and hymnographic part, in which attention is paid to insufficiently researched problems.

It is recommended that the chapters to the individual parts be titled and that this be reflected in the exposition and content of the monograph. The latter should be structured and reflect the issues addressed in separate paragraphs.

The rest of the scientific production of the candidate presented for participation in the competition includes studies and articles on various current issues in the field of Eastern church singing, incompetent notation, prosopography and current topics related to the practice of Eastern church singing.

Dr. Ignatov focuses on problems such as the formation of the church octave, as well as the degree of influence of symbolic numerology and in particular the mystical eight and the patriarchal doctrine of the Eighth Day: „*The number of Eastern church voices in the works of St. Maximus the Confessor*“ (2016). The study focuses mainly on the issue of the symbolic-numerological hypothesis, or the so-called “mystical octave” with its characteristics, which are mentioned in the writings of famous holy fathers and teachers of the church, as well as their teaching about the Eighth day of creation, called in the Credo „the coming century”, and in church chants – „non-evening day“.

The articles are devoted to other terminological and hymnographic topics: „*The hymns in celebration and prayer to the Holy Mother of God (in front of the doors of the Virgin Lent)*” (2019) (The article

examines the issue of hymnographic works in honor of the Virgin. Special attention is paid to two hymnographic genres - the canon, presented with the Prayer Canon, which is performed at the end of the evening service during the Virgin Lent, and the Akathist, performed at any time and especially on Friday evenings of the Lent); The issue of the two nominal traditions regarding the Eastern Church singing practiced in our country - Eastern Church and Byzantine: „*Is our church singing Byzantine or Eastern?*“ (2018); Other articles in this group are: „*The woman and the church singing work through the centuries (Prominent singers and songwriters in the Orthodox Church)*“ (2018); „*On the 8 tone musical system of the church*“ (2018); „*On church singing*“ (2018); „*Singer positions*“ (2018). In the work „*Church music in the Bulgarian lands*“ (2018) a special place is occupied by the theme of the so-called Bulgarian chant, presenting the views in this regard of famous Bulgarian musicians from the first half of the twentieth century.

Some of the titles are dedicated to historical figures and their contribution to the construction of generations of church music figures who worked in the field of church music: „*St. Ioan Kukuzel – a measure of singing mastery in Eastern church music*“ (2020); „*CHURCH CHIMNOGRAPHY AND MUSIC IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CREATIONS OF THE HOLY THREE SAINTS*“ (2019); „*About St. Kliment Ohridski as a church songwriter and the first Bulgarian music teacher*“ (2020).

Dr. Ignatov reveals a research approach in working with archival units in another group of publications. The discovery and publication of a manuscript from the Rila Monastery scriptorium from 1886 in the article „*Unknown musical manuscript from the Rila Church Singing School*“ (2011) is a contribution to the church music science, shedding additional light on the issue of the activity of the Rila Singing School and the existing church music scriptory at that time; The titles are in this spirit: „*Newly discovered sources for the life and church-musical activity of Dimitar Zlatanov - Gradoborski*“ (2009) and „*The history of the liturgical statute of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in the context of the church-public work in the Stara Zagora diocese during the consecration of Metropolitan Metodiy Kusev*“ (2021), wherein some events and facts from that time are derived from the kondika of the church „*St. Bogoroditsa*” in Stara Zagora and here they are announced for the first time.

In view with the foregoing Ljubomir Ignatov can be characterised as a knowledgeable specialist in his field of matter. His many years of teaching experience also contribute to this.

Participation in many scientific-practical and applied academic activities shows the availability of specialized skills and opportunities to apply the acquired scientific competence and qualification in academic work in preparing students of theology at the Department of Practical Theology of the Faculty of Theology.

### **Critical notes and recommendations**

I do not have critical notes on the participation documents and the application in general, except on the list of publications submitted for participation in the competition. Instead of the candidate's monograph (habilitation), the candidate's dissertation is noted, which was also published in 2021. Three of the publications submitted under the procedure have also already been reviewed under the procedure for obtaining a scientific and educational degree „*PhD*“ (№ 6; № 7 and №.8).

I recommend expansion of the publication activity in foreign scientific journals.

### **General assessment of the applicant's compliance with the compulsory conditions and the compulsory quantitative criteria and science-metric indexes**

According to the table provided from NACID for compliance of the applicant's science-metric indexes with the requirements for occupation of the academic position of associate professor”. All necessary

conditions have been complied with both in their, nature and under measurable criteria – the actual number of points of the applicant is 470, the minimum being 400. The scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate, systematized and objectified in the attached science to metric table, testifies to the achieved results and contributions in the academic work.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above described, I believe that the overall professional, lecturing and scientific and research activity, the proven theoretical knowledge and practical skills, the accumulated experience, the accomplished contributions to the education and science to PhD Ljubomir Ignatov fully comply with the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” for the academic position of „Associate Professor” in the Field: Religion and theology (Eastern church singing)

The analysis of the submitted documents for participation in the competition (described, formatted and ordered precisely), as well as my personal impressions of pedagogical skills, professional and academic growth of PhD Ljubomir Ignatov and his development as a serious and diligent lecturer and researcher, give me reason to give a positive vote for the implementation of the procedure for his habilitation.

I do not have joint publications, projects or any other type of conflict of interest with the author.

In view of the above and in conjunction with Article 111 para. (2) of PURPNSZADSU, I express my positive assessment and allow myself to recommend to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to allow Assist. Prof. Ljubomir Ignatov to be elected by the Faculty Council for the academic position „Associate Professor " in professional field 2.4. Religion and theology (Eastern church singing).

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