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November 14, 2022, Sofia

OPINION

on

COMPETITION FOR PROFESSOR IN THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD

2.4. RELIGION AND THEOLOGY (CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS),

State Gazette № 63/30.07.2021, for the needs of the

Faculty of Theology, Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“

The only candidate: Assoc. Prof. Dimo Krastev Penkov, PhD

By order No. RD 38-497/22.08.2022 of the Rector of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury for this procedure. At its first meeting (Minutes № 1/07.10.2021) the scientific jury considered that the only candidate Assoc. Prof. Dimo Penkov meets the conditions and admitted to the evaluation procedure the scientific production presented by him in the competition for the academic position „Professor“, in the professional field: 2.4. Religion and Theology (Christian Apologetics). I have been instructed to draw up an opinion on the procedure.

Assoc. Prof. Penkov participates in the competition with two monographs, one study, twelve articles and one school aid, that deal with problems related to the topic of the competition. The entire research activity of the candidate is focused on the disciplines related with the Christian Apologetics, where for the last years he is the leading figure.

The main work, with which Assoc. Prof. Penkov participates in the competition, is the monograph „The philosophical-theological arguments of St. John Damascene on the existence of God /theological-apologetic study/“ (in Bulgarian), Sofia: LIBRUM, 2022, 149 pages. It consists of: Preface, Introduction, three Chapters, Conclusion, Bibliography and Index.

In the **Preface** the author details the motivation for choosing this topic.

In the **Introduction** are indicated the subject, aim, objectives and methodology of the research. Attention is drawn to the place of St. John Damascene in the patristic literature, as well as the state of the research.

Chapter One, titled „**Life and creative path of St. John Damascene**“, is split into 3 sections. Here the author, along with the biographical data about the saint, points out the teachings that influenced his work. Finally, he reflects on his work itself. The contribution of St. John in the systematization and synthesis of the dogmatic teaching of the Church. His essay „Source of Knowledge“ is presented.

Chapter Two, titled „**God’s being – the source and ontological ground of everything that exists**“, is split into four sections. Presented here are the methods of attaining God-knowledge insofar as it is accessible to man. The understanding of St. John Damascene of the corruptible and the incorruptible is explored. His anthropology is tied to creation, redemption, and the image and likeness of God in man.

Chapter Three, titled „**Philosophical and Theological Arguments for the Existence of God**“, is split into four sections. It continues the revelation of divine knowledge through arguments for the existence of God. In the light of the theology of St. John Damascene's so-called „proofs“ of God's being – cosmological, teleological and historical-psychological – are set forth.

In the **Conclusion** the author summarizes the results of the set objectives of her study.

The **Bibliography** contains a total of 165 sources and contemporary studies on the different aspects of the issue at hand in a few languages. The critical apparatus contains 367 author's notes.

Like Penkov's other works, this one is written with skill and solid argumentation. The text is well written, the language flows well and is of a good style. The monograph is original and definitely contributing.

The rest of the scientific production of the candidate presented for participation in the competition includes works on various current issues in the field of Christian Apologetics, which the candidate examines in depth and with erudition. I accept and agree with the contributions of the author in his scientific production. In view with the foregoing Assoc. Prof. Penkov can be characterized as a knowledgeable specialist (an erudite) in his field of matter. His many years of teaching experience also contribute to this. The successful tutorship of four doctoral students, the participation in research projects and the accumulated administrative experience also contribute to his high qualification.

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

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 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimo Krastev Penkov to be elected by the Faculty Council for the academic position „Professor“ in professional field 2.4. Religion and theology (Christian Apologetics).

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