

## **STATEMENT**

by **prof. ScD Vera Boneva** – University of Library Studies and Information Technologies,

on the occasion of the

selection procedure for the position of **professor**, advertised in the State Gazette №100 of 16.12.2022 in the professional field 2.4. Religion and theology (Introduction to Church History with History of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church); candidate – associate professor Dr. Pavel Nikolov Pavlov

### **Overview of the candidate's research work and output**

Associate professor Dr. Pavel Nikolov Pavlov is the only candidate in this selection procedure for a full-time professor position at the Faculty of Theology of the Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“. All required documents have been made available, and the file demonstrating compliance with the minimum requirements confirms that the candidate by far exceeds the minimum points required. Having familiarized myself with the documents and the course of the procedure up to now, I declare that I have not found any non-observances of the legal framework or academic ethics.

Dr. Pavel Pavlov has been a full-time lecturer at the Theological Faculty of Sofia University since 1998. The candidate has completed a successful specialization at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and is engaged in teaching basic academic subjects in the field of Church History. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Dr. Pavlov also works to popularize the Orthodox cultural wealth of Bulgaria and the Balkan Peninsula. He has published a total of 91 academic titles in Bulgarian, English, German, and Serbian languages. The

candidate is the author and co-author of a total of six books; two of these books are textbooks, which is a necessary condition for participation in the concourse.

Dr. Pavlov actively participates in scientific conferences with theological themes and national events related to the Orthodox tradition. As a theologian, university professor, and public figure, he holds high authority in academic circles and the Orthodox community alike. He is presented in the National Academic Register with representative publications.

### **Assessment of the scholarly and practical outcomes and contributions of the academic work submitted for the selection procedure**

The candidate submitted one monograph, three studies, and 17 articles for consideration in the professorship competition. These publications have been featured in authoritative scientific books and journals, undergone prior assessment and peer review, and are registered in the national database for scientific bibliography COBISS. It is worth noting that these academic texts were not used in Dr. Pavlov's previous scientific procedures.

The articles and studies cover *three thematic areas*: 1) theoretical issues of theology; 2) historical events and figures in the Bulgarian Orthodox tradition; 3) history of Orthodox theology in Bulgaria. Despite the different topics, there is a unifying element in all of the publications – respect for the Holy Scriptures and the Sacred Tradition. The analyses and conclusions are based on sources of great reliability. Moreover, the author shows great respect for previous authors and researchers in the field.

*Theoretical papers* in theology address the crucial question of the church's role in preserving the Christian tradition. These papers present compelling arguments about the importance of distancing oneself from current politics, while still maintaining ethical positions on leading public and social issues. The author's reasoning about the crucial role of higher education in theology for maintaining

the staffing status of the Orthodox Church at a high level is well-founded. Dr. Pavlov perceives the church as the guardian of Christian values and emphasizes the importance of ensuring continuity between generations and placing greater emphasis on human virtues than secular institutions and norms.

Dr. Pavlov's articles *on key figures from the historical development of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church* offer significant contributions. He provides precise descriptions of the works of St. Kliment Ohridski, St. Gregory Palamas, St. Prince Boris, and other medieval ecclesiastics within the context of their respective eras. The localization of the diocese of Archbishop Methodius in Pannonia is carried out with meticulous attention to detail. Furthermore, Dr. Pavlov's analyses of the ecclesiastical activities of Metropolitan Boris Nevrokopski and Exarch Anthim I Bulgarian are presented within the logic of their monumental personalities, which had a profound impact on generations of spiritual and secular persons.

In addition to his work on key figures, Dr. Pavlov has also provided *valuable reviews of authoritative theologians* with significant contributions to 20th century theological science, such as Georgi Florovski, Nikolay Glubkovski, and Hristo Stoyanov. Through his interpretation of their correspondence and works, the author highlights important directions in the development of theological thought and provides crucial characteristics of our national theological school. It is worth noting Dr. Pavlov's significant professional contribution to the publication in Bulgarian of five books of the great Orthodox theologian Georgi Florovski.

Associate Professor Pavlov has also submitted *a monograph* that possesses all the qualities of a habilitation thesis. Titled "The Teacher Gancho Velel Ganchev (1921–1998) or on the Art of the Theologian Historian during the XXth Century," the work is published by the University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski" and spans 288 pages. The monograph includes a detailed scientific apparatus, with 231 footnotes.

The book presents the biography and creative activity of the theological historian Gancho Velev, based on precise work with the teacher's personal archive. The chapter titled "The Charisma" explores the dimensions of Gancho Velev's unique impact on his students, stemming from his personal qualities and specific working methods. The author provides insightful analyses of Velev's methodology, including working with primary sources and understanding topics and contexts that are not typical of the generally atheistic public environment of the 1950s and 1980s. The self-narrative in a number of reconstructions shortens the distance between the subject and the author of the study. However, this approach slightly subjectivizes the text, which is not very acceptable for a scientific monograph.

The conclusion of the book adds more information about Velev's figure and his role in shaping several generations of churchmen during the secular era of state socialism. The book's message is that a person devoted to service and science always leaves a lasting mark in their time. The research addresses important themes of intergenerational continuity and cultural memory.

The monograph also includes an applied section that demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of Gancho Velev's archive and provides a practical contribution to its organization and preservation. The author meticulously describes 69 folders and 2 archive boxes that contain manuscripts, letters, photographs, and other documents. According to the current standards, the description of the files must also include the number of sheets, as well as data on whether the document is handwritten or printed. Additionally, a brief professional autobiography dated 4 December 1947 is published, and the short essay on the Plovdiv Theological Seminary provides valuable "first-hand" data. Some jubilee, tombstones, and other words of Gancho Velev have also found their place in the book. As a result, the object of the theological-historical narrative speaks with its

authentic language and style, thus enhancing and enriching the analytical part of the monograph. Furthermore, 29 images, entirely sourced from Gancho Velev's archive, complement the biographical and analytical paragraphs. The monograph features a detailed bibliography and an index of personal and geographical names.

This procedure is for a teaching position, and I would like to highlight some of the candidate's academic achievements. Associate Professor Pavlov has supervised the successful defense of three doctoral theses and 38 master's theses. He has also led one international and four national research projects. As the editor-in-chief, he oversees one scientific journal and has edited nine scientific books. Additionally, he has organized and chaired several conferences and forums on theological topics. The teaching position he is applying for involves a sufficient number of compulsory courses. Furthermore, he is currently serving as the head of three master's programs and is also the deputy dean of the Faculty of Theology.

### **Conclusion**

In light of the candidate's extensive public profile, teaching activities, impressive scholarly output, and in-depth analysis, which explores original and innovative research threads, it can be amply demonstrated that Associate Professor Dr. Pavel Nikolov Pavlov is an eminent scholar. Therefore, I wholeheartedly support conferring upon him the academic title of Professor of Religion and Theology. I hereby propose that the esteemed Faculty Council of the Faculty of Theology approve his application.

Prof. ScD Vera Boneva

Sofia,  
09 March 2023