

REVIEW

by Prof. Emil Traytchev Stoyanov, Sofia University „St. Klement of Ohrid“

Regarding the competition for the occupation of the academic position of „professor“ with a single candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Prot. Ivan Stoyanov Ivanov by professional direction 2.4. Religion and Theology (Liturgy), announced in State gazette, issue 35 of 18.04.2023

The competition is announced on the basis of Art. 4 and Art. 29a of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Art. 60 et seq. of the Regulations on the Implementation of the ADASRB, Art. 118 para. (1) and (3) of the Rules on the Conditions and Procedure for Acquiring Science Degrees and Holding Academic Positions in Sofia University „St. Klement of Ohrid“ and decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Theology, protocol № 10 of April 20, 2023.

The review was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB) and the Rules on the Conditions and Procedure for Acquiring Science Degrees and Holding Academic Positions in Sofia University „St. Klement of Ohrid“. Structurally, it is composed of 6 parts with the conclusion. In them, in addition to the information about the candidate, for the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the scientific production and the teaching activity, an evaluation of the scientific contributions of the candidate is also given and critical notes and recommendations are made.

1. Personal characteristics of the candidate

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Prot. Ivan Stoyanov Ivanov is the only candidate in the announced competition. From the inspection of the submitted documents for the competition, no violations in the procedure were found. The requirements of ADASRB, RIDASRBA (Regulations on the implementation of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act) and Rules on the Conditions and Procedure for Acquiring Science Degrees and Holding Academic Positions in Sofia University „St. Klement of Ohrid“.

The participant in the competition was born on February 10, 1972 in Lom. He received his higher education at the Faculty of Theology of the Sofia University „St. Klement of Ohrid“, where in 1996 he graduated in the subject „Theology – (bogoslovie)“ with the professional qualification „specialist – theologian (bogoslov) teacher of theology – (bogoslovie)“.

In the period 2003-2004, Fr. Ivan Ivanov is a part-time assistant in the Faculty of Theology of the Sofia University, after which he was successively reappointed as assistant (2004 - 2006) and as chief assistant (2006). In 2005 he was awarded the Educational and Science Degree „doctor“ in the scientific direction 05.01.17 „Theology“, and in 2009 the Academic Position „associate professor“ in the same scientific direction. His total tenure at SU is 19 years (2004 – 2023), and his tenure as an associate professor is 14 years (2009 – 2023). Since 2021 he has been ordained as a presbyter of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Bulgarian Patriarchate.

The candidate is the head of the Department of „Practical Theology“ in the Faculty of Theology (2021 –), as well as of the Master's program „Liturgy and Music“ in the same faculty (2009 –).

Prof. Ivan Ivanov has specialized in various universities of the European Union. His more important specializations and studies are at: National Academy of Music „Prof. Pancho Vladigerov“ (1994 – 1999), Pontifical Institute for the East (2001 - 2003) and Higher Pontifical College Capranica (2000 – 2004). He is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria (2008

–) and of the World Association of Liturgists (Societas Orientalium Liturgiarum), USA (2006 –).

Father Ivanov has carried out teaching mobility under Erasmus (2011 – 2012 / 2022 – 2023), he is the head of 3 national scientific and educational projects (2013, 2018 and 2021), as well as under his leadership 4 doctoral students of ECD „Doctor“ have defended.

The candidate is distinguished by active scientific research and public activity. He is the ecclesiastical and diplomatic representative of the BOC in Rome and head of the Orthodox community „Sveti Sedmochislenitsi“ in Rome. In 2022 he was awarded an honorary plaque of the Pontifical Lateran University „Benedict XVI“. To this we will add his duties as a teacher of Orthodox liturgical, eucharistic theology at the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome (2021 –), regular member of the Academy „Saint Louis King of France“ (2021 –), member of the scientific council of The Association „Together for Athos“, Rome (2003 –), referent of the Apostolic Nunciature in Bulgaria for relations with the Orthodox Church (2019 –), etc.

Father Ivanov is fluent in written and spoken Italian, English and Russian. These knowledge and skills in many ways support his teaching and public activities. He also maintains an active correspondence with colleagues from abroad.

The candidate enjoys a good reputation among colleagues and students. He also has active contacts with specialists from the practice. He is well known in church circles.

2. Quantitative characteristics of scientific production

To participate in the competition, the candidate submitted 28 papers, including 1 monograph, chapter of a collective monograph, 21 studies and 5 scientific articles. Of these, 22 are accepted for evaluation, excluding the studies numbered 10, 13, 15-18 from the presented list: in their content, a thematic inconsistency with the theme of the competition is found or, although peripherally hinting at the theme of the competition, they have a generally known and generally understood character.

The candidate's publications are peer-reviewed by qualified professors mainly from Sofia University, University of Library Studies and Information Technologies and Plovdiv University. They are printed in university publishers and promoted, mostly through the usual channels of book distribution.

The candidate has been cited 37 times by other authors. Moreover, 36 of the citations are from Bulgarian authors in Bulgarian publications, and one of the citations is in a foreign publication.

3. Evaluation of the main research work

The monograph „Eucharistia – Mysterium fidei – Mysterium vitae (liturgical study of the sacrament of the Eucharist)“ is a thorough scientific study of problems fundamental to liturgical theology. And this is understandable, given that the faith of the Church is reflected in the liturgical texts, prayers and orders – “their inseparable connection and testimony to the faith in the Holy Trinity, the God-man Jesus Christ, the Blessed Mother of God, the host of angels and the world of saints“ (p. 17). The work explores a significant for liturgical and Eucharistic theology issue related to the Sacrament of the Sacraments, the Holy Eucharist, in the perspective of church traditions and theological views and challenges of modern science. It is also related to a number of other publications by Ivan Ivanov, the most important of which are the studies „Liturgy-tradition, liturgy-science, liturgy-life in Bulgarian theology“ (2012), „Liturgical families. Peculiarities, characteristics and confessional factors shaping the Eucharistic and liturgical texts of the Eastern Church“ (2021), „The social dimension of the Eucharist in the context of the Bulgarian and world ecumenism. Testimony, ministry and liturgy of the Church“

(2021), as well as his other publications in Bulgarian and international specialized editions, which have found recognition in the scientific field.

The work is printed in a volume of 605 pages, of which the main text is 446 pages, and the remaining 159 pages are composed of abbreviations – 5 pages, description of the content of the work – 3 pages, preface – 5 pages, reviews of the monograph – 5 pages, introductory questions – 19 pages, closing words – 1 page, appendix – 85 pages, and reference to the literature used – 28 pages and other illustrations – 8 pages.

In my opinion, the volume of the monograph of 446 pages is sufficient to set forth and clarify „the main motives, theses, hypotheses and opinions, terms, biblical texts and liturgical analyses, historical facts and events, personalities and teachings for a clearer understanding of liturgical phenomena“ (p. 18). The volume accepted by the candidate gave him the opportunity to systematize and present his knowledge in this field and to build the content of the monograph, applying appropriate means of scientific knowledge.

In terms of structure, the monograph is composed of four chapters, in which the main aspects of liturgical theology are traced in the perspective of world scientific research on the issues of the Eucharist and, accordingly, Bulgarian research in this area, a thorough liturgical and theological analysis is made of the prayer texts from the Eucharist canons of the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great and that of St. John Chrysostom, the process of preventing and understanding the Liturgy and the sacrament as a saving dialogue between God and man, as well as Eucharistic angelology.

I believe that this structure, despite the different volume of the respective chapters (in particular, the fourth chapter consists of only 35 pages), provides the necessary organic unity of the constituent parts of the main scientific research work in their mutual relationship, conditionality, purposefulness and determination. It defines the connections and relationships of the concepts and judgments included in the work, used to derive one or another regularity and justify one or another statement.

Chapter one focuses on methodological, symbolic, liturgical, patristic, dogmatic, interpretive characteristics in the study of the Eucharist.

Chapter two of the monograph focuses on the Holy Liturgy – history, development, parts and features. The author proposes to decompose it into four aspects – first, general characteristics of the Eastern liturgical families; secondly, an analysis of the parts of the liturgy of the Church; third, Jewish and early Christian liturgical practice; and fourth, the ancient Byzantine (Constantinople) anaphora.

In the third chapter attention is paid to the teaching of the Church on the Holy Eucharist – a basic study of liturgical and eucharistic phenomena.

The fourth chapter is devoted to Eucharistic angelology: from Christ's sacrifice to thanksgiving, glorification and eternal life, confession and sanctification in and through the angelic song, „the Angels sing in Heaven...“.

The appendix presents a large part of the ancient Eucharistic prayers, their origin, essence, parallels with other liturgical texts and their appearance in the liturgical practice of the Church.

In the summary, an attempt has been made to connect in a single whole the results achieved on the basis of the results in the respective chapters. Basic tasks are also identified, the solution of which depends on the further development of liturgical research in a global and regional plan.

The concrete contribution of work is as follows:

1. Summaries of theoretical and methodological significance for the liturgical tradition of the Church are deduced;

2. Variants and possibilities for developing of existing theoretical statements from the field of liturgical and eucharistic theology are presented;

3. A set of basic liturgical phenomena „related to *eucharistic pneumatology, epicletic change and consecration, eucharistic angelology, etc.*“ is proposed (p. 492).

Despite the indisputable merits of the monograph, in the process of getting to know it I also encountered some weaknesses. Without giving them much importance, I will allow myself to make the following critical remarks:

1. It is noticeable that the candidate considers too wide a range of problems, which in some cases prevents the development of complex solutions in relation to them;

2. The issue of Jewish and early Christian liturgical practice is unilaterally touched upon;

3. The candidate's study would have benefited if other opinions and critical evaluations related to the Jewish Passover meal and the Last Supper had been included. The decision in favor of a Jewish Passover meal is an anachronism.

4. The concluding words at the end of the monograph are too artificial. I think the Summary is enough.

5. The transcription of the Hebrew terms used is according to Putnam's edition, not Putman's. It is inexplicable why this edition was used, since in the Biblical Archeology of Fr. Prof. N. Shivarov has such a transcription.

6. I do not find the „representative sample of published scientific works“ (p. 493) in the Appendix to be relevant. The texts are already published and anyone interested can use them.

The indicated critical remarks do not diminish the significance of the already highlighted scientific contributions. The subject-content analysis shows that the candidate's work has the merits of an in-depth scientific study. It covers all the more essential aspects of the systematic, analytical, comparative, exegetical, historical, patristic and dogmatic-canonical liturgical study of the Eucharist. The findings and conclusions made by the candidate are the result of in-depth productive research activity.

4. Evaluation of other publications submitted for participation in the „Professor“ competition

In addition to the main scientific research work for participation in the competition, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Ivanov also presented other publications, including a chapter of a collective monograph, 21 studies and 5 scientific articles (from which studies with numbers 10, 13, 15 – 18 are excluded when reviewing). Thematically, they treat different problems within the limits of the necessary and sufficient variety so as not to conflict with the announced competition. The analysis of the thematic orientation of the presented publications gives me the reason to separate them into several groups, and the interaction of the topics included in them varies from the simple exchange of ideas to the mutual integration of concepts, methodologies, epistemologies, terminology, etc. More specifically, it concerns the following four thematic areas:

1. Interconfessional dialogue (articles: №№ 1, 4).

2. Unity of Christians in the Eucharist (articles: No. 2; studies: Nos. 1, 12).

3. Christian worship (articles: №№ 3, 5; studies: №№ 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 20, 21).

4. Church music (studios: №№ 6, 7, 9, 14, 19).

These thematic directions reveal the process of fragmentation of scientific knowledge into separate topics. The decomposition of the indicated directions reveals different levels of depth of knowledge and creates conditions for carrying out a substantive analysis of each of them.

The first of the areas under consideration concerns issues related to interconfessional dialogue. In the publications of this direction, the statement is argued that „the rediscovery of the truth about the Holy Eucharist requires both the knowledge of the confessional characteristics of others and the perception, teaching and interpretation of the Eucharist at a new level, with a new methodology, terminology and language...“ (article No. 1, p. 128). In this regard, the candidate refers to the words of Pope John Paul II, whom he calls „successor of the

Chair of Peter“: „Christ calls all his disciples to unity..., (Preamble to the Encyclical of Pope John Paul II „Ut unum sint“, promulgated in the Basilica of San Pietro, Vatican, Rome, on May 25, 1995, on the feast of the Ascension) (article № 1, p. 128). Special attention is paid to „the various hypotheses and theories regarding the practice of the Church concerning the Eucharist and the differences and discrepancies developed over the centuries, reflected in the dogmatic, ecclesiological and liturgical practices of the East and the West“ (article № 4, summary, p. 17). It is concluded that „in their mission for the unification of Christians, Bulgarian theologians unite in their scientific research theories with the scientists of the Christian world, especially in matters related to interconfessional dialogue and cooperation, as a basis for a future real Eucharistic communion“ (article № 4, summary, p. 19).

The second thematic direction includes questions related to the unity of Christians in the Eucharist. Publications in this direction refer to „the catholicity in the *Eucharistic ecumena* – ideas, views and teachings and interpretations in the context of the Holy Liturgy and in particular the Eucharist“ (article № 2, summary, p. 15). The author’s attention is directed in particular to the growing division among Christians. „The modern doctrine of Christian unity, although it has acquired a global character, requires attention due to a number of issues that remain unresolved to this day. One of the questions concerns the catholicity of the Church and the Eucharistic ecumena – the communion of Christians in the Holy Eucharist“ (study № 1, summary, p. 24).

The third thematic direction includes various aspects of Christian worship. It is about the studies: Testimonies of „Truth“ and „Faith“ in the Liturgical Texts and Prayers. Liturgical Interpretation (№ 3) and Eucharistic Sanctity in Anaphora (Resolving Conflicts and Forming Models) (№ 5). In studies on this topic, questions about Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition – Basis for the Divinely Inspired and Confessional Nature of the Eucharistic Texts are presented (№ 2), *Fenomenologia liturgica dell’arte cristiana – musica sacra, iconografia e testo liturgico – nella normativa dei Concili Ecumenici e la testimonianza dei Padri* (№ 3), *The Angelic Song in the Liturgy (Paradigms, Principles and Methods in the Study of Eucharistic Angelology in the Ancient Anaphoras and the Connection with Christian Hymnography and Singing)* (№ 4), *Sanctification Trough the Angelic Song: Sanctus – Benedictus – Post-Sanctus (Principles in the Study of the Eucharistic Angelology of the Ancient Anaphoras)* (№ 5), „*Τρισάγιον – Трисветое – Trisagion*“ in the Byzantine and Old Bulgarian Liturgical Practice. Characteristics, Features and Use in the Liturgical Tradition of the Church (№ 8), *Liturgical Families. Peculiarities, Characteristics and Confessional Factors Shaping the Eucharistic and Liturgical Texts of the Eastern Church* (№ 11), *Liturgy – Tradition, Liturgy – Science, Liturgy – Life in the Bulgarian Theology. Development of practical and moral theology in Bulgaria: traditions, problems, perspectives* (№ 20), *Phenomenology of the Prayer – a Bridge Between God and Man (Liturgical Interpretation of the Prayers on the Church in Comparison with the Apologetic Views of Boris Marinov)* (№ 21).

The fourth thematic direction is dedicated in a concrete sense to issues related to church music and hymnography. In these studies, a wide range of issues are covered, including *Liturgical Theology and Church (Byzantine- Slavic) Music and Hymnographic Practice* (№ 6), *From Beginning to Infinity – from the Prototype to Typos and Antitypos – Paradigms in the Study of Angelic Song in Christian Hymnography and Singing* (№ 7), *Liturgical Characteristics of the Medieval Musical Treatises – an Image of the Cultural and Ecclesiastical Byzantine-Slavic Region in the XIV-XV Centuries* (№ 9), *Angeloglasie – Angelophony, Verbality and Wordlessness, Calophony and Glorification in the Medieval Musical Treatises. Liturgical Testimonies, Interpretations and Exegesis of yhe Medieval Music-Theoretical Works* (№ 14), *Musical and Hymnographic testimonies about the Liturgical Practice of the Holy Brothers Cyril and Methodius, and their Disciples St. Kliment of Ohrid, St. Naum of Ohrid and Bishop Konstantin of Preslav* (№ 19).

Summarizing the candidate's scientific contributions, I could present them as follows:

1. Summaries of theoretical and methodological importance are drawn for the defining characteristics of liturgical, eucharistic and sacramental theology;
2. A specific instrument was developed for the analysis and interpretation of liturgical sources;
3. Solutions to issues related to the ecclesiastical, social and spiritual-moral, dogmatic-canonical and pastoral dimensions in the contemporary liturgical life of Orthodox Christians are presented;
4. Guidelines are defined in the space of interconfessional dialogue, liturgical missionary work and interdisciplinary research.

Regardless of the indisputable achievements in some of Ivan Ivanov's publications, a number of omissions of a formal and substantive nature were also found, which I find relevant and necessary to point out.

1. The construction of the publications, their structure, the internal ideological development, creates problems regarding the formulation of concrete and clear decisions. One is left with the impression of simply accumulated data, in most cases lacking any conclusion.

2. In some of the publications, the proposed ideas, representing a basis for drawing generalizations significant for the theory, were underestimated by the candidate and were not developed in the same or other publications. See e.g. the claims of the candidate „John Paul II, successor of the Chair of Peter“ (article № 1, p. 128), or „the Catholic Church, the successor and follower of the chair of St. Peter“, (article № 4, p. 81, monograph, p. 27). The Orthodox position on the matter is quite the opposite (see Meyendorff, J., Schmemmann, A., Afanassieff, N., Koulomzine, N. *The Primacy of Peter*. London, 1963);

3. In individual publications, it is noticed that the summaries and guidelines formulated by the candidate are either incomplete in terms of literary awareness, or have a too general character, although in general they are well-founded and theoretically connected (e.g. articles №№ 2, 3, 5 ; study № 20, etc.);

4. Although episodically, separate publications are found in which a lack of objective facts related to the researched issues is established, in order to build hypotheses and justify the ideas advocated by the candidate (study № 2);

5. In many of the presented publications there is duplication of content (once in Bulgarian, another time in English or Italian);

6. I also find the critical approach insufficiently advocated when comparing Bulgarian liturgical practice with practices abroad, despite the knowledge of the matter by Fr. Ivanov.

The critical remarks made in no way detract from the indisputable scientific merits of the evaluated scientific production of the candidate. The reviewed works have a well-structured language text and a composition scheme, providing the necessary architectonics, characterized by a certain fragmentation and organization of the text. Assoc. Prof. Ivanov's style is clear and unambiguous. Contributions are his personal work. The bibliographic apparatus is used correctly. With few exceptions, peer-reviewed scientific works are distinguished by clearly formulated theses, in-depth studies and concrete results achieved with theoretical summaries, conclusions and recommendations useful for science. The publications show that Fr. Ivan Ivanov is very well acquainted with the literature and scientific achievements in the field of liturgical theology. This has given him the opportunity to highlight some of the unsolved and partially solved problems, examine them and propose appropriate solutions for them.

5. Educational and teaching activity

The candidate delivers lectures to students from professional field 2.4. Religion and theology in the Bachelor and Master's programs at the Sofia University „St. Klement of Ohrid“ by disciplines in the scientific field and competencies: liturgy, liturgical theology (sacraments

and rites), Christian liturgical practice, religious cult practices, church music and hymnography, medieval studies, church diplomacy and interconfessional dialogue. From the study load report, it can be seen that his classroom load in 2021/2022 is 784 hours.

The candidate's teaching activity is distinguished by the use of interactive teaching aids and, more specifically, audio-video technologies, text and images. In addition, some of the classes led by him are held in real conditions in specialized structures.

Conclusion

From the inspection of the materials submitted for the competition, no violations in the procedure were found. The requirements of Art. 29 of ADASRB and art. 60 (1), Art. 61, item 1 and item 2 of RIDASRBA have been met.

Based on the acquaintance with the documents of the candidate for the competition and the evaluation of the publications presented by him, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. He is the only candidate in the competition;
2. Possesses the Educational and Science Degree „doctor“;
3. Holds the Academic Position „associate professor“ in the university that announced the competition;
4. He is provided with the necessary classroom and non-auditory work;
5. The candidate has publications in the main disciplines taught by him;
6. Read profiling disciplines that are directly related to the competition;
7. He supervised 4 doctoral students, all of whom successfully defended their dissertations;
8. Provided scientific and practical guidance to students;
9. It has been submitted and accepted for evaluation scientific production of sufficient volume, unrelated to the first habilitation, including 28 papers, incl. 1 monograph, chapter of a collective monograph, 21 studies, 5 scientific articles.
10. Six of the scientific works submitted for review were published abroad;
11. 37 citations of the candidate by other authors are documented, 1 abroad and 36 in Bulgarian publications;
12. In their totality, the peer-reviewed publications contain essential scientific-applied results and theoretical summaries and solutions to problems in the field of liturgical theology, which correspond to modern achievements and represent a markedly significant original contribution to science.

My overall assessment of the criteria and indicators for the educational and research activity shows that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Prot. Ivan Stoyanov Ivanov meets the requirements of Art. 29 and Art. 29 „b“ of the ADASRB and Art. 60 and 61 of the RIDASRBA for the occupation of the academic position of professor by professional direction 2.4. Religion and Theology (Liturgy).

Reviewer:

(prof. E. Traytchev)