

POSITION

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of the dissertation work of staurophoric butler Mihail Rumenov Mihaylov

„THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH-
BULGARIAN PATRIARCHY: PRACTICE, IMPLEMENTATION AND
COLLISIONS WITH OTHER SOURCES OF CHURCH LAW“

for awarding the educational and scientific degree „doctor“

by field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional direction 2.4. Religion
and Theology (Organization and Management of the Bulgarian Orthodox
Church)

The topic of the presented dissertation is current, and the correct ecclesiastical legal conclusions depend to a large extent on the correct and consistent solution of the tasks. Undoubtedly, there are different approaches to legal and theological analysis of the THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BULGARIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH-BULGARIAN PATRIARCHY. In an opposed duality are the view from the literary artifact to the emerging concept and the view of the individual author's originality through the prism of an extracted and already formulated concept. Or in other words – whose creativity or even a specific decision has contributed to the character of his contemporary theological and legal reading from one side and from the other –to what research trend outlined in his time layer the author belong. The dissertation of Fr. Mikhail Mihailov directed me to these thoughts. In the specific nature of the theological legal reading as unexpectedness in the expected and the requirements of the common ecclesiastical law as expectation in the unexpected, each approach has

the right to research autonomy. And that's why I accept Mihailov's preference for the second approach as completely acceptable.

In fact, this is precisely where the main contributing characteristics of this dissertation work are rooted.

The presented text consists of 491 pages and contains: a list of abbreviations, a preface, an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion, appendices and a bibliography, including 129 titles of books and articles in Bulgarian, Russian and English, scientific contributions of the dissertation research and publications on the topic of the dissertation (four in number). The scientific apparatus consists of 321 footnotes.

The deep immersion of the doctoral student in the facts of the stated topic makes a strong impression. The undoubted juridical and theological orientation, the priority of the conceptual, of the clash or the compatibility of different thought models show a mature view of the research space. Interrelatedness and difference are felt in their indivisible totality. The presence of ecclesiastical discourse beyond the scope of reading, which outlines the bidirectionality of the bridge between the dialectic and the elitist, religious consciousness as a kind of conceptual pathos and pathos as the faith of the Church, „pillar and support of truth“ – delineate an unmistakable research world shadowed by a reverence for the imperative of knowledge and a sense of independence of one's own theological observation.

At the same time, it must be emphasized, Mihailov also shows a sense for the autonomy of the individual presence of the creator, for the irrevocable categoricalness of the bright personality in forming the appearance of a theological school. This is clearly stated in the chapters „The Statute of the BOC-BP as a source of law“, „Central bodies of church authority in the BOC“, „Local bodies of ecclesiastical power in the BOC“, „The ecclesiastical court – regulation, activity and challenges“. In the last fifth chapter, „Incompletenesses in the SBOC-BP and collisions with other sources of Church law“, the established inaccuracies, gaps and contradictions of the statutory norms, church administrative acts and

actions of the bodies and members of the BOC, inconsistent with the canonical principles and violating common ecclesiastical law. In this interrelation, the dissertation student's aspiration for a complete and comprehensive legal and theological reading of the issue is outlined, as well as his urge for an organic connection with the general research direction of the dissertation.

In this aspect, should be emphasized the synchronicity between comprehensiveness of the topic and purposefulness in the chosen research horizon. Mihailov seeks to focus his findings through a wide range of observation. The very structuring of the work suggests the feeling of the sought-after versatility.

Among the listed scientific contributions of the dissertation, I single out the „comprehensive and in-depth reading of the local ecclesiastical law..., based on the SBOC-BP itself, but in accordance with the current Synodal regulations and the decisions of St. Synod, reflecting the organization and management of the BOC“. This is a completely clear definition of the problems accompanying and in accordance with „the current Synodal regulations“. I would even say that the expressed desire to „refine the SBOC-BP“, which in a sense represents a „premeditated“ reception model, springs from the experience of a priest and the dissertation's long-term observations of the structure and management of the BOC, while saving it from oblivion and plays the role of a connecting bridge.

The abstract accurately represents the work. The attached four publications are representative as they have been published in official scientific journals.

In conclusion, I warmly recommend the honorable scientific jury to award the staurophoric butler Mihail Rumenov Mihaylov the educational and scientific degree „doctor“ in professional direction 2.4. Religion and theology (Organization and Management of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church).

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