

OPINION OF A MEMBER OF SCIENTIFIC JURY

Reviewer: Assoc. Prof. PhD Pavlin Sabev,

Department of Biblical and Systematic Theology, Faculty of Orthodox Theology,
St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo.

For the dissertation of **Mihail Rumenov Mihaylov**:

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

For awarding the educational and scientific degree PhD in professional field 2.4 Religion and
Theology (Church Law).

Department of "Practical Theology", Faculty of Theology,
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.

Research supervisor: Prof. Dr. habil Dilyan Nikolchev.

1. Information about the doctoral program

Mihail Rumenov Mihailov was enrolled as a full-time doctoral student at the "Practical Theology" department on January 10, 2019. After winning a competition for an assistantship, the full-time doctoral studies were transformed into part-time. He has been released from the doctoral program with the right of defense by order of the Rector RD-20-546/01.03.2022. The discussion of the dissertation has been conducted in the Department of "Practical Theology" on 07.11.2023, all members of the department have given motivated positive opinions about dissertation work.

The Rector's order RD-38-650 of 13.12.2023 determined the composition of the Scientific Jury for the present procedure. The opinion presented by me

was prepared on the basis of the Rector's order and decision of the first meeting of the Scientific Jury held on 15.01.2024.

No violations were committed in the procedure. The doctoral student has successfully completed his individual study plan and meets the requirements of the Regulations for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. No plagiarism was found in the dissertation.

2. Data for the dissertation and the author's abstract of dissertation and publications

The dissertation is very well structured. The language is clear, legally precise, without redundancy. All this contributes to the readability and easy followability of the dissertation's argumentation, which is based on legal sources that he clearly not only knows well, but also analyzes precisely. The Introduction contains a clearly stated object and subject, goals and objectives, research methods and an analysis of the historiography of the researched problem. The conclusions to each chapter are very well worded and fully grounded in the content.

The author's abstract of dissertation is precisely made and fully meets the requirements. The PhD student has published four articles on the topic of the dissertation in peer-reviewed journals. The content of the articles does not duplicate the text of the dissertation. The publications are written in professional legal language, yet are readable and enable the lay reader to navigate the issue at hand. This characteristic of the PhD student writing style also applies to the dissertation itself.

3. Scientific contributions

I define the dissertation work of Mihail Mihaylov as a significant and contributing study of the Statute of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. The author's legal education has built in him the ability to work with legal sources and analyze them through clear and precise language. The analyzes of gaps and conflicts in the Statute with the sources of church law, as well as the proposals

for changes, give great practical value to the study, which, as far as I know, is the first and so far only study of the Statute of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, done by a priest with twenty-six years of ministry and vast pastoral experience.

I fully accept the contributions indicated by the doctoral student as an adequate self-evaluation of his work. Because of the significant theoretical and practical contributions of this work, I hope it will be printed and adapted (I mean Latin expressions and specific terms which need to be explained) for a wider audience.

3. Conclusion

The peer-reviewed dissertation of Mihail Rumenov Mihaylov corresponds to the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the terms and conditions for obtaining scientific degrees and holding academic positions in Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.

Considering the stated contributions, which I accept as real achievements of this research, I recommend the honorable Scientific Jury to award of Mihail Rumenov Mihaylov the scientific degree PhD in professional in professional field 2.4 Religion and Theology (Church Law).

*On the current procedure my vote is **positive**.*

1.02.2024

Assoc. Prof. Pavlin Sabev, PhD