

OPINION

according to the procedure for acquiring the educational and scientific degree "doctor"
of doctoral student **Yonko Danov Bonov**

in the doctoral program "Christian Apologetics" from professional direction 2.4. Religion and Theology, Faculty of Theology, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski",

The opinion was prepared by **Assoc. Prof. Galya Valcheva Yordanova, PhD** Shumen *Konstantin Preslavsky* University of Shumen, as a member of the scientific jury for the procedure.

1. Information about the dissertation student

Yonko Danov Bonov is a full-time doctoral student assigned with the right of defense to the Department of "Systematic Theology" at the Faculty of Theology of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski". His dissertation is on "Christian faith and values in the works of Yordan Yovkov and Elin Pelin".

From the presented CV it is clear that the dissertation student has completed two master's degrees - in Bulgarian Philology and in Theology, and as a second major in the bachelor's degree he completed History, which speaks of a marked interest in academic growth. The mastery of several foreign languages (English, Russian and Ukrainian) implies the problem-free use of scientific literature in the original, which supports his research activity.

In his scientific research activity, the doctoral student Yonko Bonov has participated in 2 scientific projects

His scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation are three in number. He has also published 3 books for children: "Adults Ask", "Grammar in a Cage", "A Walk with a Royal Throne".

He has extensive professional activity as a publisher and editor-in-chief of a newspaper and magazine, as well as teaching experience as a teacher of Bulgarian language and literature in our and foreign schools.

The submitted documents for the procedure meet the requirements of PPZRASRB and are well arranged and complete. They certify the necessary academic and practical qualities and achievements of the doctoral student Yonko Bonov in the field of theological science in general.

2. General characteristics of the doctoral student's scientific works and achievements

The scientific works of doctoral student Yonko Bonov are related to systematic theology.

The presented work consists of a preface, an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion, references, and an appendix. It has a volume of 367 pages. and with a scientific-critical apparatus of 736 points. The literature used is correctly divided into Sources, Works (in

Bulgarian - 258 and in a foreign language - 8); Latin translations of works by Yordan Yovkov; Latin translations of works by Elin Pelin.

In the Preface, the dissertation student Yonko Bonov presents the personal reasons for choosing the topic of his work.

In The introduction, the author justifies the relevance of the research, the object, the subject, the goals and tasks, reveals the methodology of the research. A history of research related to the issues under consideration is offered. The introduction presents the key issues and aspects that will be addressed in the further exposition. It also prepares the reader for the deeper consideration of the topic and creates a context for understanding the arguments and analysis that follow.

The subject of the dissertation is clearly defined: a comparative analysis of the entire work of Elin Pelin and Yordan Yovkov in the light of Christian faith and values. The subject of the proposed dissertation is the new Bulgarian literature from the end of the XIX to the 40s of the XX century, as well as the state of the Bulgarian clergy during this period.

The purpose of the scientific exhibition is to investigate and make a study, freed from class-party qualifications, with consistent theological argumentation, in order to reach the Christian worldview of the two writers as much as possible by looking for the spiritual dimensions of the characteristic artistic images in the literary work of the two authors. In my opinion, the set goal is precisely formulated, and the separate stages of the research are presented as separate tasks. The tasks are multi-layered. The most important of them are: to discover, comment on and analyze articles, studies and monographs dedicated to the works of Elin Pelin and Yordan Yovkov, which are ideologically and thematically related to the researched thesis; to discover from the point of view of apologetics the Christian faith and ethical values in the works of Elin Pelin and Yordan Yovkov, placed on a biblical basis.

To achieve the set goals, the following methods were used - the comparative analysis, the analytical method, and the descriptive method was used as an auxiliary method.

In the first chapter, "*Yordan Yovkov: Man is a Sinner, Blessed by God for Repentance*," Yordan Yovkov's understanding of war and faith is presented. Yovkov creates realistic portraits of Bulgarian soldiers from the front, recreating important aspects of the psychology and character of the Bulgarians who participated in the Balkan wars. In these stories, he depicts and summarizes the main features of the moral image of the Bulgarians of that time. Emphasis is placed on the main features of the moral character of the Bulgarians of that time. From the portrait characteristics, it can be concluded that the Bulgarian in the conditions of a real military situation carries the Eastern Orthodox faith deep in his soul and in his life and in his relations with others he is guided by Christian moral norms.

The second chapter is entitled "*Elin Pelin: The Fallen Man - Part of Bulgarian Modernity*". In it, the doctoral student analyzes Elin Pelin's dual attitude towards clergy and faith. It explores how the writer simultaneously criticizes religious figures and at the same time respects beliefs, highlighting the complexity of his perception and his relationship to religion and Christian values.

The third chapter of the dissertation deals with the similarities and differences in the interpretation of Christian themes and morality in the work of Yordan Yovkov and Elin Pelin. Emphasis is placed on how the two authors interpret Christian values through their characters.

The dissertation examines how these values are reflected in the characters' behavior and actions, highlighting the differences and similarities in the authors' approaches.

In the conclusion, the main results of the research on the topic are presented.

The publications are related to the topic of the dissertation and well illustrate its content

The submitted abstract meets the requirements.

In relation to the scientific publications submitted for participation in the procedure, I summarize the following:

meet the minimum national requirements for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the scientific field 2. Humanities and professional field 2.4. Religion and Theology (Christian Apologetics);

there is no plagiarism that has been proven in accordance with the law.

3. Content analysis of the scientific and scientific-applied achievements of a doctoral student contained in the materials for participation in the procedure

The contributions presented by doctoral student Yonko Bonov are:

First: for the first time, the topic has been put up for systematic discussion in Bulgarian theological science, with a theological analysis of Christian messages and moral values in selected works of Yordan Yovkov and Elin Pelin

Second: an overview of the state of research regarding the two authors by their most authoritative contemporaries - literary critics such as Nikolay Rainov, D. B. Mitov, Ivan Bogdanov, Ivan Meshekov, Petko Tiholov, Georgi Konstantinov, Mikhail Arnaudov, Petar Dinekov, etc., who dedicate reviews, reviews and analyzes of newly published books to them.

Third: a number of unknown or forgotten archival materials from the National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", from the scientific archive of the BAS, from the Central State Archive, from the library of the Rila Monastery, which enables a more objective analysis of the text.

4. Critical notes and recommendations

I can note the following:

- It is noticeable that the text uses plural. a number (eg the aim is to check...p. 7) which should not be used in a scientific paper;

- Some of the authors mentioned in References are only noted there and not elaborated in the text

- In the second chapter, the life path of Elin Pelin could be presented in more detail in order to better highlight its influence on the author's works.

- In *the Conclusion*, it is striking that the thesiser's conclusion is a bit exaggerated that "From these unique stories (the cycle "Under the monastery vine") in our new literature flows the victory of the Christian faith, that an eschatological meaning is locked in them." on p. 334.

- Rather, in these narratives through various characters and situations, Elin Pelin presents the complexity of the human soul and the relationships between people in the context of religious life. The stories are filled with philosophical reflections and wisdom that prompt the reader to think about the meaning of life and spiritual values.
- Contributions are formulated too generally, vaguely and more detailed clarification is needed

My shared observations are in good faith and do not change my overall positive impression.

5. Personal impressions of the candidate

I do not know Yonko Bonov personally, but only through the dissertation work and publications presented by him, and therefore I am only commenting on his research skills. To the already made evaluation of the dissertation development, I also add a good language culture

6. Conclusion on the application

After reading the materials, scientific work and publications presented in the procedure, as well as after analyzing their significance and scientific applied contributions, I declare that the scientific achievements meet the requirements of the ZRASRB, the doctoral student **Yonko Danov Bonov** has in-depth theoretical knowledge and professional skills in the field of Pastoral Theology and can independently conduct scientific research.

Conclusion

The dissertation contains scientific, scientific-applied and applied results that have their contribution to science and meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) and due to the above, I confidently give my positive assessment for the presented dissertation work, abstract, the achieved results and contributions, and I propose to the honorable scientific jury to award the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to **Yonko Danov Bonov** in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional direction 2.4. Religion and Theology (Christian Apologetics).

10.01.2025

Prepared the opinion:

(Assoc. Prof. Galya Yordanova, PhD)