

# OPINION

for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"  
Professional field 2.4. Religion and theology

Dissertation on the topic:

## **„LITURGICAL AND MUSICOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE GREAT DOXOLOGY IN THE SLAVONIC MANUSCRIPTS OF THE RILA SINGING SCHOOL“**

PhD student: Julian Hagop Odajyan

Prepared by: Assoc. Proff. Dr. Ivelina Nikolova Nikolova

Writing on theological issues that are located in the interdisciplinary field of two different, but also deeply interconnected, scientific fields is a frank challenge. This challenge was taken over by Doc. Julian Agop Odajian. In his dissertation, he tries not only to find the intersections between theology and musicology, but also to seriously analyze the object he examines – the Great Doxology in the Slavonic manuscripts of the Rila Singing School.

**Topicality of the topic.** Undoubtedly, the topic chosen by him is relevant, insofar as in Bulgarian practical theology this segment "remains theoretically and practically far from the field of view of many Bulgarian theologians and musicologists", and at the same time sets the responsible task of being examined, taking into account another important task: a duty to the traditions of Bulgarian theology in a jubilee 100-year period since its establishment, in which every theologian is conscientiously obliged to add his contribution to his treasury. The relevance of the study is complemented by the insufficient contemporary research on one of the most popular segments in the practical life of the Church.

The value of the dissertation is in the special emphasis that Assoc. Julian Odadzhiyan undertook: to study the liturgical and musicological aspects of the Great Doxology in the manuscripts of the Rila Monastery, and in particular – in the Slavonic manuscripts of the 20th century. century". This is the main purpose of the essay.

**Characteristics of the dissertation.** In terms of volume and content, the dissertation solves the tasks adequately and convincingly and meets the requirements for a dissertation. It consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, scientific contributions, literature used and appendices. It consistently and systematically examines the main ideas of the topic, the subject and the object of the study, includes in-depth analyses and generalizations, which further strengthen the importance of both the considered issues and the theoretical analysis. The chosen topic is problematized with a clear methodology – from the general to the particular, with logical connections between the individual segments. The entire structure and content of the dissertation strictly follow the goals and objectives arising from the defined object and subject.

Theoretically, the foundations and grounds for the development of the chosen problems are logically and consistently presented, with which the PhD student shows in-depth competence both in terms of the specifics of the matter and in relation to its overall interpretation. Each component, analyzed by my colleague Odajyan, is examined through the prism of his many years of practical work in the field of church music and is skillfully commented and analyzed. In this way, the reader acquires an in-depth understanding of the object of study.

As for the **scientific contributions**, they are categorically clearly formulated: for the first time such a study is made in the Bulgarian theological literature with the relevant analyses and findings. We cannot fail to mention the fact that Doc. Julian Odajian covers in his analyses 5 pcs. Great doxologies of different voices. An exceptional impression is made by the detailed interpretation of the specific aspects and components of the Great Doxology, accompanied by a theological analysis with the relevant specific theological terminology. I consider this to be an undoubted contribution, since he manages to center his interpretations in the field of interdisciplinary issues, without deviating from the actual theological direction in which he lays them.

Of a contributing nature are the appendices in the dissertation, which support and facilitate the reading of the research.

I would allow myself to make a recommendation to the PhD student that rather complements the integrity of the research and should in no case be taken into account as a disadvantage: given the importance of the topic under study, it should be accessible textually to a wider range of theologians and interested persons. This means that in the future, my colleague Odajian could supplement and enrich the content of the problems with analyses and terminology that would be more understandable and accessible to non-specialists in the field of

musicology. Such a reading will only add to the value of the research and will allow it to open up its practical applicability. I would not spare myself the recommendation for further complete publication of the dissertation, due to the lack of such publications in Bulgaria.

In conclusion, I allow myself to share my personal impressions of the PhD student and as a colleague with whom we work together in the Department of Theology. These impressions are more than positive – an enthusiastic theologian who has been sowing in the field of practical theology for many years, mainly in the field of church singing, and has reaped success both in his academic work and in his work with students.

After all that has been said so far, I strongly support the awarding of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" to Julian Hagop Odajian in PN 2.4. Religion and Theology.

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Sofia

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(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivelina N. Nikolova)