

SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"  
Faculty of Theology  
Department of "Historical Theology"

R E V I E W E D

by Prof. Ludmil Martinov Malev, Ph.D  
of a dissertation on:

"Trull (Fifth-Sixth) Ecumenical Council (691-2) Historical-Canonical Study"  
author: Svetoslav Georgiev Tsekov

for awarding the scientific and educational degree "doctor"  
by field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional direction 2.4, scientific  
specialty Religion and Theology (General History of the Church)

Sofia

2023

Data for the Ph.D

Doctoral student Svetoslav Tsekov has a theological and legal education. He obtained his secondary education at the Sofia Theological Seminary "St. Ioan Rilski" in the period 2006-2011. After that, he graduated from the Faculty of Law of Sofia University, from where he received a Master's degree in Law. Both his secondary education and his legal training, as well as his studies as a doctoral student in the Faculty of Theology of SU, are in areas that are closely related to the developed dissertation and are an important prerequisite for the positive end result achieved.

Svetoslav Georgiev Tsekov was enrolled as a doctoral student by order of the rector of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski" in January 2019. All preparation, including the writing of the dissertation, was carried out in the Department of "Historical Theology" at the Faculty of Theology of Sofia University. His academic supervisor is Prof. Dr. Alexander Omarczewski.

During the period of doctoral studies, the dissertation student has completed his study plan in full. He successfully passed the scheduled exams. He managed to prepare and implement the required number of scientific publications. He always responded and diligently handled the activities assigned to him by the department. He was involved in additional forms of doctoral training at the faculty level. He participated in doctoral readings organized by the Faculty of Theology. In the current control carried out through the provided attestations, it has always received good marks.

All this has led to the completion and integrity of his doctoral studies and the successful preparation of a doctoral dissertation.

He was dismissed by rector's order in January 2022 on the basis of the law and regulations, as well as a decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Theology, with the right of defense.

In my opinion, Svetoslav Tsekov meets the requirements and meets the criteria of the RSARB and the Regulations for its implementation.

What has been pointed out so far gives me reason to accept. that all procedural rules have been followed and no violations have been committed.

The first meeting of the scientific jury approved by order of the rector of Sofia University was held on 13.12.2022 and is reflected in the protocol attached to the documents.

#### Dissertation data

The dissertation work of Svetoslav Tsekov, proposed for defense, has a volume of 279 pages and is organized structurally in the following parts: Preface, Introduction, three chapters, Conclusion, Bibliography and Appendices.

There is a balance between the individual parts, in terms of volume. The preface, introduction and conclusion are quite lengthy.

In the Preface, the author, after the initial introductory thoughts, shares the reason why he turned to the topic and its development in historical and canonical aspects.

The introduction contains all the attributes specific to this part. Actuality and practical orientation - here it is very clearly stated not only what the importance and contemporary sound derives from, but also specifically who could benefit from the applicability of this work. Object and subject matter - these important aspects of the research work are formulated with the necessary precision. The goals and tasks that the author sets for their achievement are formulated. The methodology is indicated. It stands out with the necessary complexity and comprehensiveness. The limits of the study are outlined. A short review of the foreign works known to the dissertation was made.

The content of the Three Chapters corresponds to their wording. Probably in order to arrive at a complete elucidation of even the smallest detail, the dissertationer has separated each detail into appropriate subdivisions. This is a technique that also serves for better visualization and easier orientation in the content. It should be noted that the author did not engage in mechanical fragmentation and fragmentation of the text, and each of the substructures seems appropriate.

Each chapter has its own conclusion, and at the end of the dissertation work a general Conclusion is made, which outlines the results of the research, highlights the contributions and gives recommendations to those who are related in a different way to the field of this work and more specifically to the underlying problematic.

The parts indicating the sources and the literature (author's and reference) are particularly impressive. Over one hundred and fifty titles in various languages are indicated, which testifies to a deep interest and diligent work.

Placed applications are tailored to the topic and contribute to its visualization.

The abstract presented by Svetoslav Tsekov meets the requirements and enables a clear and accurate introduction to the text of the dissertation in a synthesized form

The dissertation's publications are sufficient in number and depth and have been published in authoritative journals. The same could be said about his participation in scientific forums.

#### Scientific contributions

The dissertation work of Svetoslav Tsekov, although it is dedicated to a problem, which at first sight is clear for the scientific community, has a marked contribution character. For researchers in this field, it is clear that the contributions are contained in the extensive and thorough analysis down to the smallest detail. The positive approach to clarifying the facts and events in close connection with the historical premises and setting is not to be neglected. This is

what the present study suggests. As for specific dimensions, I fully accept the contributions highlighted in the abstract. The main ones, as indicated by the dissertation student, are: 1. First voluminous and detailed study, dedicated specifically to the Council of Trula, and not as part of the general picture of church life at the end of the 7th century; 2. Linking the issue with the causes and consequences not only of an ecclesiastical, but also of a state and political nature; 3. Justification of the definition "Universal", of course according to the meaning of Orthodox theology; 4. Grouping of the rules of the council according to classification criteria, which lead to better understanding and digestibility by the trainees, and also by a wider circle of those interested in the matter; 5. Author's assessment of the relevance of some of the rules and their possible change in the spirit of modern times;

#### Remarks

Along with the undoubted qualities of this work, in my opinion, there are also some weaknesses:

1. The balance of the content could be improved if information in the preface and introduction (19 pages in total) which is mainly contained in the exposition is shortened. For example, item 7. Structure could be saved. It is prominent in the Table of Contents and detailed in the Abstract

The same applies to the conclusion, which is long and repeats information from the exposition. Moreover, there is a separate conclusion to each chapter.

2. In the review of the historiography, not only information about authors and titles should be given, but also a brief critical analysis of the more significant of them should be made. This would make the contributions stand out even more brightly.

3. Sources and literature should be identified in the Bibliography.

4. In view of the thus formulated topic of the dissertation work, it would be good to present a definite explanation at the very beginning of why this Council has the status of ecumenical. This is explained in ch. Second point 2.5. But early clarification will dispel any confusion the uninitiated reader may have.

Regarding the years of the council in the title: it is more appropriate to write (691-692).

5. In an effort to give as complete and clear a picture of the era as possible, in places, historical information comes in excess. (eg the emperors and their rule in chapters one and two)

#### Conclusion

I declare that I do not in any way fall under the hypotheses of the law and other normative acts concerning conflict of interests!

The qualities of the current dissertation give me full reason to vote positively "FOR" Svetoslav Georgiev Tsekov to be awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional direction 2.4, scientific specialty Religion and Theology ( General History of the Church).

Veliko Tarnovo

2023