

Evaluation for the degree of professor

Posudok oponenta na inauguranta Doc. ThDr. Václav Ježek PhD., et PhD (date of birth 24.08.1973)

Dozent (associate professor) ThDr. Václav Ježek PhD., et PhD, and candidate for professorship specializes in various themes related to Byzantine studies, theology and also archaeology. His education as well as academic career proves to a wide spanning and consistent interest in fields related to the mentioned areas of theology, history but also to current themes and scholarly trends in anthropology and ethics. Attaining a degree in Theology at the Melbourne College of Divinity (Australia) and a degree in Classical history and Archaeology at Monash university (Australia) as well as a Master's degree in Early Christian and Jewish studies at Macquarie University started his academic career which continued in the Czech republic and Slovakia. He attained a doctorate (PhD.) from the Charles University in Prague and a second doctorate (PhD.) from Prešov University. The former was a doctorate in history, while the other in theology. Notably the theological doctorate was completed under the supervision of the late professor Alexander Avenarius a famous Byzantologist. The academic urge for further education and qualification has led the candidate to numerous further partial studies, further adding to his overall education. Among these scholarly endeavors we can mention, studies at the Coptic theological college in Australia, study of Law in Australia, and courses in various fields including modern and ancient Greek. His post-doctoral studies included studies at Cyprus University where he studied a program in Byzantine studies, specializing in Michael Psellos.

After his studies in Australia, the candidate was appointed as an assistant lecturer at the Orthodox faculty in Prešov, where he pursued a PhD, degree, under the supervision of the notable Byzantologist Alexander Avenarius. Later he also pursued a second PhD degree in History, specializing on pilgrimage to the Levant. He also taught at other institutions including for example the Catholic theological College in Olomouc (Palacky University). Or we can mention the latest project at Charles University (faculty of mathematics and physics).

He began his academic career in a turbulent period for tertiary education in Slovakia, where the situation was very similar to the situation in Poland. Universities were aligning themselves with the tertiary system in western Europe primarily on the basis of implementing a credit system of evaluation. The Candidate for many years participated in the various reforms of tertiary education in Slovakia, helped to create academic programs, form new subjects. He also participated in the development of social studies and social work at the faculty in Prešov, forming a program integrating both a theological perspective and social work perspective. In the earlier part of the career of the Candidate, we see the effort to produce textbooks and other sourcebooks for students. Regardless of this often tedious and difficult task, the Candidate managed to write articles and other works which provided a platform for his own original thought and thinking, which was further developed along the way. This originality can be seen in the emphasis on the personalist theology so well propagated by such people as the late Metropolitan of Pergamon Zizioulas. This personalist trend in Orthodox theology has generally enabled the Candidate to draw in other theological trends and insights from fields such as Biblical theology, social theology, social philosophy, and so on. The Candidate developed his own theology within the confines of the Czech and Slovak Orthodox environment. This has been achieved also in a solid ecumenical interaction and cooperation.

The "personalist streak" in the Candidate's intellectual development has allowed him in the most recent period to confront the challenges of artificial intelligence and machine learning. Here any

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common and well-treaded theological path is of no worth in confronting the massive and constantly evolving field of artificial intelligence, and what is required is the ability of original reflexive thinking partially gained by many years in education and scholarly work. The candidate has displayed adamant capacity in this field, which is proven by his latest participation in international conferences, venues and so on with the theme of artificial intelligence and human bioethics. The Candidate's years long interest in exegesis formed a useful steppingstone for developing a wider dynamic ability in the field of ethics of artificial intelligence and so on. His broader study of exegesis has led him to further studies of an anthropological nature, including field trips to Africa (Ethiopia). Where he studied theology and life, concentrating on the interaction between practice and theory in Orthodox ecclesial contexts.

The various scholarly projects and writings has led to a formation of a professional scholarly profile, which can be considered more than adequate for the degree of professor. The candidate has developed his own insights into the development of theological exegesis and Biblical interpretation based on a wider notion of the Greek Hellenistic and patristic concept of "paideia". *Paideia* is understood by the candidate as the key concept of patristic thought and reflection which enabled further incorporation of ideas. The candidate sees in this traditional Hellenistic concept a platform where further ideas, ideas from the exact sciences and other areas can be successfully incorporated into theology, which can go beyond its own borders and limits. This further enables contemporary Orthodox theology to go beyond "itself" to further even interdisciplinary interaction with other fields and areas of thought. Especially regarding the contemporary challenges in bioethics. The candidate has further developed a non-idealistic and objective school of historical thought, especially in relation to Byzantium which has for so long carried the brunt of idealisms and politically motivated studies. Here within the confines of the school already established by Professor Alexander Avenarius, the candidate has further developed an understanding of Byzantine culture as not something isolated limited to its own structures, but as something having a broader impact for example on the European renaissance. The historical interests of the candidate has then led him to further studies which are related to local church history where he is managing to navigate without idealisms which have traditionally tarnished the scholarly historical vision. His postgraduate studies abroad, his experience in countries such as Cyprus and Greece, has only further contributed to his overall professional development. In the Cypriote context he concentrated on the iconographic heritage of the island linking his historical interest with its own development of iconography between Palestine and Constantinople. In terms of social studies, the candidate has developed new approaches to classical problems developing a school of thought related to issues of euthanasia, abortion, and other ethical issues.

His pedagogical activity has spanned for decades educating people and adapting his curriculum according to the needs and capabilities of his students. He did not teach uniformly, but always attempted to assess the students' abilities and possibilities adapting his teaching so that the individual possibilities and potential of each student could be fully developed. His lectures are analytically orientated displaying a high degree of interpretative and reflexive thought.

The candidate has participating in numerous theological dialogues and various conferences, which enabled him to be a respected and well-known scholar abroad, being often invited to contribute to various periodicals or other collected studies and works. The candidate has published over one hundred scholarly articles and around thirteen monographs, all of which testify to the candidate's preparedness and worthiness of the degree and title of university professor.

2024-10-23 Warszawa

Dziekan Wydziału Teologicznego


dr hab. Jerzy Ostapczuk, prof. ucz.