

OPINION

for

Tsvetelin Angelov, participant in a competition for associate professor in professional direction 2.3. – *Philosophy* (scientific field *Philosophy of Religion*), announced for the needs of the department "Religion, Beliefs, Worldview" at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) in the State Gazette, No. 58, 09. 07. 2024 by Prof. Ph.D. Nina Dimitrova (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology – BAS)

In the competition announced for the needs of the "Religion, Beliefs, Worldview" section, Tsvetelin Angelov is the only candidate. The tender documents are complete and prepared according to the legal requirements.

Tsvetelin Angelov is a Doctor of Theology from the Faculty of Theology of the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (with the topic of the doctorate "Kant's transcendental ontology and its relation to theology", 2007), and then a doctor of philosophy from the Faculty of Philosophy of the same university (with the topic of the doctorate "The problem of Dasein in fundamental ontology of Heidegger", 2015). He has considerable teaching experience both in the Faculty of Theology of Sofia University and in secondary education.

His scientific activity includes one monograph, 7 studies and 11 articles; 22 participations in scientific forums, 9 presentations at sectional seminars, membership in 3 research projects.

The habilitation thesis – "Philosophical dimensions of the problem of the Divine Absolute" (Sofia, "Propeler", 2024), is a solid monograph with a volume of 420 pages, dedicated to a *fundamental philosophical problem*. It is structured in a preface, three chapters, a conclusion and a list of references and references (including 82 titles in Cyrillic, 30 in German and English, and 10 Internet resources).

In the preface, the author comments on the "primordial, immanent and irrevocable" presence of the question of God in philosophy in general, not only in the philosophy of religion. Although the question remains open and the contest between the opponents will never end, as the concluding statement states, the constant proposals for its solution are a perpetual impetus to philosophical knowledge.

In the preface, the author also makes an announcement about the philosophical systems preferred in the monograph, which are to be analyzed in view of the specific presence of the problematic about God in each of them – those of Immanuel Kant and Georg Hegel (and with the ambition of constant comparison in the sought-after relationship), as well as other emblematic concepts that characterize the state of world philosophical thought from the ideas of the Divine Absolute (of Spinoza, Heidegger, and also those of postmodernism).

The first chapter discusses the relationship between philosophy and religion in each of the two selected philosophical systems – It is shown how in Kant's system God is called upon to play the role of the moral cause and the moral creator of the world, and Christianity is simultaneously affirmed as a religion of reason, and as a historical religion, a religion of revelation. Tsvetelin Angelov's conclusion states that what makes Kant's philosophy possible is the existence of God both as a transcendental ideal and regulative principle in theoretical philosophy, and as a constitutive principle of moral-practical philosophy.

The following are reflections on philosophy as a science of the Divine according to Hegel. Again, the essence of the question of the Divine Absolute as a fundamentally philosophical one (in a logical-ontological-epistemological context), as well as its being in theology as a question of salvation, is clearly and categorically confirmed. Precise explanations have been offered to Hegel's well-known statements about the unity of philosophy and religion, affirming this unity in terms of the *content* of the two areas of the spirit, and indicating the difference between them in terms of their *form*. Here is the place to point out that the proposed work is not some analogue of a philosophy textbook (albeit executed at a high professional level); it is *an author's study with an emphasis on his own position*. This is especially true when discussing

the various arguments (or "proofs") for the existence of God that have been developed throughout the history of thought.

First of all, Kant's and Hegel's attitude to the *ontological argument* is examined separately, for which, as Tsvetelin Angelov points out, there are currently many and varied versions of it, with a complex taxonomy. The stipulation is made that when considering the dialectical essence of the concept of the Absolute in the ontological argument, the author launches theses that differ from the known versions of this argument. The positions of the two selected philosophers with regard to the other known historical arguments for the existence of the Divine Absolute are similarly analyzed.

Tsvetelin Angelov has noted that the problem of the theological argument is to be considered in two parts. What determines the specific appearance of the proposed analysis is the introduction of the issue of intelligent design. We are not so much interested in the presentation of this present-day concept (it is, more or less, familiar to the reader) as in the author's "freer and own schematic interpretation of the matter" based on the concept of universalia. The reflections on the importance of the anthropic principle are interesting and well-founded, as well as the assessment of verification (I use the author's vocabulary) by science, in this case – quantum physics.

After a careful analysis of the solutions to the problem of the immortality of the soul as a metaphysical problem by Kant and Hegel, comes chapter three, dedicated to several philosophical concepts – of Spinoza, Kant, Hegel and Heidegger. Particularly impressive is Spinoza's understanding of the problem of substance (and here I would recommend the author to look again at Shestov's writing on this subject in his study "The Religious Philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov") and Heidegger's comments on Kant and his attempt to clarify being. It is important to note again the author's own thesis here, launched in connection with the possibility that Kant's transcendentalism, situated in a holistic and systematic context, turns out to be a kind of version of the ontological argument (see p. 359).

Tsvetelin Angelov makes the interesting assumption of a possible analogy between Heidegger's *ultimate god* and apophatic theology, and then comes the turn of sympathies and criticisms of the proposals of postmodernism. The philosophical character of the work offered to our attention is also highlighted in the rejection of the attempts of purely religious thinking to privatize the Divine Absolute (in the words of the author, "to give a completely dogmatic and theological, completely "completed" confessionally conditioned and constructed profile of it..." , p. 402).

My only note on this well-conducted study concerns one of its stylistic conceits – very often the author, having expressed his thought, begins his next sentence with: "Said more clearly", "Said in another way", "Said more precisely". And in the comments of postmodernism, the phrase "it seems to me" is repeatedly used – this betrays some uncertainty and is completely unnecessary.

The remaining publications of Tsvetelin Angelov are generally in the role of building components of the main work.

In conclusion: My impressions of the overall work of Tsvetelin Angelov are that he is a built scientist with a secure future ahead of him. That is why I strongly plead with the members of the scientific jury to recommend to the Scientific Council of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology to elect him as an associate professor in professional direction 2.3 *Philosophy*, scientific specialty *Philosophy of Religion*.

3. 10. 2024

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