

REVIEW

for competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in direction 2.3 Philosophy for the needs of the Department "Religion, Beliefs, Worldview"- section of the IPS – BAS, announced in the State Gazette, no. 58 of 09.07.2024 and Protocol No. 16 of 03.09.2024 of the National Assembly of the IPhS of the BAS

- Candidate: Ph. D. Tsvetelin Angelov Angelov
- Reviewer: Prof. D-r Dimitar Angelov Denkov, SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"

- The only candidate in the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" is Chief assistant professor Dr. Tsvetelin Angelov from the "Religion, Beliefs, Worldview" section of the IPhS at the BAS, who presented his habilitation monograph Philosophical Dimensions of the Problem of the Divine Absolute, PH "PROPELLER" Sofia, 2024. It is a continuation, summary and upgrade of the studies Reason and the Speculative Concept of Religion in the Philosophy of G. Hegel (2023), The Concept of G.V.F. Hegel on the Divine Absolute (2023) and Ontological Monism under Spinoza and Hegel as Theomonism - Theomaximalism (2022) and the articles Hegel's philosophy - main ideological specifics, nature and role of the Divine Absolute (2021), Philosophical challenges of postmodernism and the problem of the Absolute in metaphysics (in the perspective of Hegelian philosophy) (2021), Heidegger's conception of the Kantian understanding of being as positing and the possibility of the ontological argument in a transcendental context (2020), and A Philosophical Analysis of Theological Consequences in Teleology (2019). They have been published in anthologies and the electronic magazine philosophia-bg.com and are referenced in an excellent author reference. Along with other works mentioned in this reference, they fully cover the formal requirements for the number of publications. The minimum required points by groups of indicators for the various scientific degrees and academic positions have also been exceeded. To this should be added the mentioned twelve citations, and although most of them refer to previous works of Tsvetelin Angelov, further developed in the works presented for the habilitation, show his undoubted leading place in an important and rarely considered topic in the Bulgarian history of philosophy and philosophy of religion . It could be wished that some of them, as well as the main moments of the habilitation work, were published not only in Bulgarian, in order to contribute to the wider discussion of a neglected, but important for modern thinking, classical philosophical and worldview topic.

-This is the theme of the interweaving between the philosophical and theological contexts, in which concepts of the Divine Absolute play an important role. The educational and scientific development of Tsvetelin Angelov, who has master's degrees and defended doctorates in theology and philosophy, as well as teaching activity in secondary and higher education in these

disciplines, certainly influences its placement, discussion and decision. It should be noted his numerous reports in scientific forums and participation in seminars, where at least since 2019 the accumulation of theoretical experience can be seen, which flows into the habilitation work. With it, for the first time in our country, a systematic presentation of the problem, considered in its classical guises in the foundational works of Kant and Hegel, with the corresponding connections with previous and modern interpreters, is given; thus opening the possibility for its further development.

- The habilitation monograph consists of a preface and three chapters; the literature used is from 82 books and articles in Bulgarian, 25 in English and German, as well as 10 internet sources, duly cited in the text; the author reference accurately presents the main points and the presented thesis. It can be presented as considering the problem of the Divine Absolute in different perspectives of the relationship between philosophy and religion, in order to arrive at a transcendental-moral-axiological concept that combines the Divine Intelligence and the Transcendental Ideal and is a regulative principle in theoretical and constitutive in practical attitude. In this way, reason-based philosophical knowledge turns out to be the highest adequate knowledge of the Divine Absolute, ultimate as a self-understanding ontological maximum in itself and for itself.

- In order to substantiate the thesis, the concepts of Kant and Hegel, especially from the point of view of the correlation between philosophy and religion, to which the First Chapter is dedicated, are thoroughly examined. It starts from Kant's idea of theology as knowledge of the original essence, based on reason and revelation and revealed as transcendental and natural in the belief in an abstract and concrete God. The resulting moral laws not only represent the existence of a supreme being, but are practically absolutely necessary. Since they are not derived from experience, but have a priori validity, the highest essence is freed from naturalistic, cosmological and anthropomorphic notions, which gives it its pure concept. Its development is examined from the point of view of the Critique of the ability to judge, presented convincingly in its systematics especially on pp. 20-21 in the work in connection with the Hegelian concept, overcoming even more powerfully the physicalist ideas about God. Here it should be noted that Tsvetelin Angelov ignores the much-discussed fourth antinomy from the Critique of Pure Reason about the existence of the highest essence, which even within the framework of only theoretical philosophy has a direct connection with the continuation of the theme of the Absolute in Hegel as unity of thought and being. This topic is presented in the second part of the first chapter as epistemological dualism and ontological monism at the universal level through a thorough discussion of the absolute idea and the metascience of philosophy. The concept of the absolute includes within itself the transcendental unity of logical-ontological-epistemological and is the "thinking idea itself" as being and the absolute reality of reason, God. This is discussed mostly in Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, but with references to other works as well, which enables a more complete interpretation of them from the subject of the Absolute in its various appearances as an idea, reason, directed to itself and to the other is subjectivity. Thus we

arrive at the thesis of the Divine, which "dialectically explains itself as an absolute idea in its self-manifestations, positing its own alienation"; such self-reflective identity is the basis by which "the Divine Absolute can be understood in Christianity, namely as a dialectically subsisting Subject-Substance" (p. 97). This leads to the conclusion that "the Divine is a unity of causa efficiens-omnia in omnibus-causa finalis, rp. Absolute non-aliud, Absolute Actual Self-Reflective Transfinity, Divine in-itself-for-itself and for-itself-in-itself." (p. 100).

- With these heavy definitions, which are certainly due to the complete immersion of Tsvetelin Angelov in the characteristic German classics and especially of Hegel in a special self-understanding, we start to the second chapter of the monograph, where the arguments for the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are examined. Here again the main authors are Kant and Hegel, but this time with an interest in the ontological, cosmological and theological argument types and the metaphysical problem of the immortality of the soul. The concept of the absolute is presented in "self-reflective self-referential self-manifestations", it "self-objectifies and self-explains" as a dialectical system in its own existence as a captured transcended moment" - definitions that are characteristic of the way of expression not only of Hegel, but also of the author. They are rather difficult to understand if one does not follow the schematic of the whole work and the particular wording with which the relationship between the types of arguments is presented. As far as I know, there is no such examination of the relationship between the mentioned arguments, which finally leads to the conclusion of the special identity between them, as well as to the departure from the specific authors and the orientation to other traditions of thought, such as e.g. is existential, naturalistic and even Indian Advaita. In this way, the problem of the absolute acquires the status of a special thought and ontological constant, placed outside time and the dominant philosophical school. Tsvetelin Angelov presents it as the positing, supposing and affirming of a super-essence and identity between a universal and an individual spirit inherent in every way of thinking. This is done from a rather broad, but still Christian context that covers all possible perspectives: a thesis that may be philosophically sound, but could also be further discussed from the Lutheran version characteristic of the German philosophers, even when they initially Catholics, such as is Heidegger. In this version, the direct connection with the absolute implies the self's conviction in itself in the rejection of mediators higher than the self-asserted objective subjectivity. The other two classics of German philosophy, Fichte and Schelling, whose conceptions of absoluteness and identity from the Self, nature and religion remain beyond the attention of Tsvetelin Angelov, would surely help here. It could be recommended that this be done in his further research.

- The third chapter of the book examines basic philosophical concepts of the Absolute, presented as ontological monism in Spinoza, absolute religion in Hegel and Heidegger's understanding of being and the ultimate God, which reveals the connection with postmodernism, undoubtedly influenced by existential-ontological philosophy and its conceptual twists. The latter is a special contribution of the author, who, although he does not share the recently imposed postmodern tendency, gives convincing explanations and critical arguments against it, connecting it partly

with an extra-philosophical contemporary context. In it, the effort to deny absolute truth turns out to be a negative claim on it in its otherwise asserted notion of the polyvalence of existence through an inherently one-dimensional human being. With this loss of the universal, the possibility of the singular and the particular is also lost, in order to reach the satisfaction of imagery devoid of concepts. This is also a deprivation of thinking from the pursuit of the Absolute, with which everything falls apart and becomes meaningless. Such a thesis is not new, but it is presented in the work in a new and convincing way. Surely this would be even more convincing if such references beyond the purely conceptual were also given to classical authors who, especially in their journalistic works, converged with the wider Enlightenment, encyclopedic, political and media context. In this way, verbal-conceptual accumulations undoubtedly influenced by German classical philosophy could be better understood, such as the one with which Tsvetelin Angelov presents the relationship among Father-Son-Spirit in Hegel: "That is, the Holy Spirit is the very unity of the Father and the Son, with which the Divine is not an abstract, self-identical essence, namely Spirit, resp. subsisting self-reflective transcendence, having in itself the moment of otherness, but itself being the otherness-of-otherness-without-otherness in itself and for itself, resp. self-differentiating from itself in itself for itself, coinciding with its difference, having it as its immanent dialectical self-reflexive moment." (p. 294) Such phrases and explanations have long been characteristic of his style, which undoubtedly makes it difficult to quickly understand. Since I am familiar with most of his work since his dissertation *The Problem of Dasein in Martin Heidegger's Fundamental Ontology*, I will venture to say that this style has its positive features as well, insofar as it allows for a slower and rereading that makes the point clear.

- In general, the habilitation work has enough contributions not only in historical-philosophical, but also in systematic terms. It opens up possibilities for theological and cultural readings, as well as it will cause disputes from the side of supra-denominational, historical and socio-ideological ideas about the Divine Absolute, insofar as in almost all of Tsvetelin Angelov's works the coherent presence and dialectical unity of logical - ontological - epistemological - historical. It is a kind of methodological regulation, I would call it "hyperthesis", in his research and scientific performances that distinguish him in the collegium.

- My personal impressions of Tsvetelin Angelov, whom I have known since his student years and independent doctoral studies in the Department of History of Philosophy at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", contribute to this distinction. These impressions are excellent and are mostly related to his research work, which I became more directly acquainted with as a reviewer of his doctoral dissertation in philosophy *The Problem of Dasein in Martin Heidegger's Fundamental Ontology* successfully defended in 2015. I have no publications with him, as well as I have not participated in joint research projects; I have not consulted him on any of the articles, as well as on any of the parts of the presented habilitation thesis.

- The candidate meets the requirements of the National Academy of Sciences, the requirements of the BAS and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology. I did not find any elements of plagiarism. The texts are the author's.

- **Conclusion:** In view of the presented habilitation work, previous publications, scientific and research appearances, I strongly suggest that the scientific jury propose **to fill the academic position of Associate Professor** for the needs in the "Religion, Beliefs, Worldview" section of the IPS at the BAS by field 2.3. Philosophy Dr. **Tsvetelin Angelov Angelov**.

16.10.2024

Sofia, Prof. D-r *Dimitar Denkov*