



Review

for: Dissertation on Acquisition of PhD Degree (Doctor), in Professional Field 2.2. History and Archaeology, in doctoral program Ancient History and Thracology, of the regular doctoral student Stefan Yanakiev, entitled: *The Thracians and the Roman provincial society between Istros and Haimus in 1st – 3rd c.*

prepared by: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kalin Stoev, member of the Scientific Juri, based on the order No. 66 RD-10/11.06. 2021 of the Director of the IBCT Prof. Romyana Preshlenova and Protocol No. 01/21.06.2021 of the first meeting of Scientific Jury.

Short biographical data about the doctoral student: PhD student Stefan Yanakiev completed his higher education at Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" with a Bachelor's degree in "Archeology and History" (2012) and a Master's degree in "Archeology and Archaeological Cultural Heritage" (2016). Since the beginning of 2018 he has been a full-time doctoral student at IBCT, in the doctoral program "History and Archeology" with dissertation topic *The Thracians and the Roman provincial society between Istros and Haimus in 1st – 3rd centuries*. His participation in a number of conferences and projects, as well as his publications during his doctoral studies show serious preparation for engaging in fruitful scientific work. Accordingly, the report on the implementation of the minimum national requirements for holding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in his field (Humanities) shows that Stefan Yanakiev scored 90 points (Group A-50 + Group D-40) in groups of indicators A and D of the required 80 points (Group A - 50 + Group D - 30) according to the Regulations of BAS for Application of Law for Development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and according to article 9 (2) of the Annex to the Rules of the Scientific Council of IBCT.

Characteristic of the scientific production: The presented dissertation consists of 512 pages, structured in an introduction, main text of four chapters, conclusion, scientific contributions of the dissertation and references.

The introduction lists the goals and objectives of the dissertation, the approaches to the scientific problems, the territorial and chronological scope of the study, the research methods, as well an overview of the sources and the historiographical base. The goals and tasks are formulated specifically and appropriately and are consistent with the specifics of the source material involved and the general direction of research in this scientific field.

It must be said that the importance of the topic is indisputable - although it is a scientific practice to study certain strata of Roman provincial society in our lands, a targeted study of the Thracian ethnic group defined by certain features fills a gap in the literature on the subject and thus seems justified and profitable. In comparison, the argumentation of the determination of the geographical scope of the study needs additional argumentation, which is also available (p. 8 ff.). Although in scientific practice it is accepted that the research of the Roman provincial society goes according to provincial boundaries (see, for example, the monographs of Il. Boyanov, O. Alexandrov, K. Stoev), the approach to investigate the territories of the Danube and the Balkan Mountains, without the title explicitly specifying the provinces, which, in any case would cover regions with their own political and cultural peculiarities, is acceptably argued. On the other hand, the cultural and political peculiarities of the regions in the area in question are highlighted through the structure of the dissertation, because the individual chapters concern regions with certain specifics - the Black Sea coast, the Danube Limes and the southern parts of Lower Moesia. From a methodological point of view, this facilitates the study's compliance with the structure of Roman society, which takes into account the differences in cultural and social sense between the "more militarized" and Romanized regions and those with less military influence (p. 11), which makes a good impression.

The chronological framework of the study does not raise objections, as well as the methodology (prosopographic and anthroponymic analysis), which is logically selected in view of the main and most abundant historical source available for the study of Roman provincial society - epigraphy, as the subject presupposes historical tracing the behavior

and fate of the Thracian ethnic group in the Roman provincial society, which in view of the source documentation for the society in the Roman Limes province of Lower Moesia, is inevitably associated with the study of visible manifestations of the Thracians in the sources – mainly epigraphic. It is therefore logical that the work practically consists of a number of micro social and prosopographical analyzes, which ultimately lead to certain conclusions about the place of the Thracians in Roman provincial society. For the analysis of the names the doctoral student has involved the available literature, especially the anthroponymic compilations and catalogs, which are scrupulously listed in the introduction to the sources and literature. From the further exposition (pp. 89-90) it becomes clear that in methodological terms the doctoral student successfully handles the signification of the so-called "Epigraphic habit" as a socially significant practice to build his conclusions.

In the first chapter "Written information about the Thracians and the Roman province society", the doctoral student deals with the Thracian ethnic group in the historical context of the Roman provincial society in the area in question - as it is outlined by the information from the written sources. Problems common to Thracology and Thracian historical textcritic science are considered (the ethnic picture in the Carpathian-Danube basin, the campaigns of M. Licinius Crassus, the problems of the *Moesi* tribe, etc.). In this part the author is in no hurry to offer a radically new view of events and problems: for example, the problem of ethnogenesis of the *Moesi* is considered on the basis of more accepted opinions from the existing literature, which puts their presence in the sources in the context of August propaganda. 46). This is an acceptable approach, given the fact that in view on the specific of the sources, the chapter is introductory rather than central and aims at overview of the written sources. In my opinion, some acceptable and correct observations deserve more attention and development on the part of the author, such as the fact that the Dacians have a serious presence south of the Danube (p. 48). There are also some minor omissions - on page 48 it is forgotten to note that the attack on Moesia was made by the Dacians and Sarmatians. The doctoral student is well acquainted with historical sources and, although without pretensions to text criticism, shows familiarity with the main characteristics of written information as a source, e.g. the tendency of some ancient authors to compile their information from older information, to

use archaisms, in other words, is capable of critical use of the source information. This allows him to make interesting points such as that Pliny the Elder was better acquainted with the lands of the future Upper Moesia (p. 59), as well as to outline the important conclusions for the understanding of the further exposition from the historical context of the region, like, for example, the stages in the administrative development of the lands between the Danube and Haemus, which began in the time of Augustus and intensified after the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, as well as the contributory stratification of "historical", "administrative" and "Romanization" ethnonymy (pp. 69-70). As for the information about the public organization in the Thracian society in the pre-Roman era, about which there is scarce information, the doctoral student correctly focuses on the information about the public organization of the Getic people in Jordanes, Dio Chrysostomus and Strabo, on the strategies and subsequent administrative reorganizations in the northern Thracian lands. The general conclusion about the role of written sources and sources concerning the general administrative framework leads to the correct conclusion that only the epigraphic study at micro-regional level can lead to observations about the behavior of the Thracians in the provincial society.

From the second chapter ("Epigraphic information about the Thracians and the Roman provincial society from the Black Sea coast between Istros and Haemus") onwards, the chapters that represent the analytical "core" of the work begin. This chapter is dedicated to the Thracian population in Roman society in the Black Sea region. Geographically and methodologically, the issue is set correctly - in fact, the Black Sea coast between Istros and Haemus is characterized by specifics and different intensity of the Romanization processes; the statement of the problem is correct, taking into account the traditional concepts for the study of Roman integration models - the influence of public policy and the involvement of elites in the Roman civilization model (often called in literature „elite negotiation”), „epigraphic habit” and others. Minor remarks are due to the over-interpretation of some epigraphic manifestations as necessarily those of „military identity” (e.g. the dedication of Thracian Horseman - p. 96), as well as the categorical acceptance of some Thracians for the representatives of the military community, which are not explicitly marked in the inscriptions with a military position (nos. 6-10), although their „military Romanization” is probable on the basis of

anthroponymy and other factors considered by the author. However, the analysis of the monuments is satisfactory and leads to correct conclusions - e.g. that the recruitment policy is unfolding outside the cities, in the „Dobrudja settlements”, as well as the registration of the regions on the Black Sea coast, where the army is a factor. The doctoral student's approach deserves admiration not to consider the bearers of more banal Roman names necessarily as Thracians, but only as possible representatives of the Thracian ethnic group (Chapter II.1.2.). The study of the Thracians in the administrative life of the province rightly focuses on the settlement structures in Scythia Minor.

The author successfully maneuvers between the possibilities of Thracians population's pertinence to a military element or to one, related to the imperial administration, in order to explain the origin of some magistrates (pp. 122, 131, etc.). A number of important observations of the doctoral student are worth noting here: for example, that some inscriptions give reason to believe that in these lands some Thracians built a socially higher strata (p. 124), or that in some settlements the Romans began to rely on local magistrates after a particular historical moment, such as the invasion of the Costoboc tribe (129-130), which is a reasonable hypothesis. The conclusions about the reasons for the rise of the Thracian population in the Black Sea cities, which must be due to their earlier integration into Hellenic society (141), or to some balance of what the doctoral student calls "Romanization and Hellenic", are well formulated and argued (p. 148). There are also some exaggerated conclusions concerning the micro social analysis (e.g. that the formula *cognomen* + *patronymic* necessarily testifies to the origin of the Macedonian lands). This does not prevent the doctoral student on the basis of all the considered material to make contributing conclusions, for example that the Thracians, available among different types of positions and colleges in the Greek colonies were previously integrated urban population and reached their maturity as a social group in the "micro socium" of the Greek polis (p. 165, at general conclusions 226, 229). The general conclusion about the rural territories as a main element of predominance of administratively authorized Thracians is well argued (pp. 165-167, also 228), and the fact that the author takes into account the possibility that certain anthroponyms are not sufficient for a determination of their bearers as Thracians, and to testify to cultural ties and population transfer in Circupontic region (173 ff., 194 ff.), make a good impression.

An important contribution of the dissertation are the observation for the good integration of Thracian in the religious institutions here and the analysis of a series of examples where marriage models for women of Thracian origin are seen (190 pp., also general summary p. 226), whose study ultimately results in satisfactory from a cognitive point of view conclusions: for example that they were looking for models of integration with representatives of the richer elites of the Black Sea colonial civic society or for the preservation of the Thracian identity outside the Roman rank system in a separate stratum (p. 202).

In general, it can be summarized that this chapter of the work is contributing and has important scientific value, as it “paves” the way of studying a “Hellenization” of Thracian society, within the general Romanization. The same is true of other results, such as that Thracian anthroponymy is more likely to appear more often in female names, which deserves to be developed in future studies (226). Additional conclusions, such as why there are not a large number of slaves of Thracian origin, are contributing and more than adequate, especially given the early evidence that the Romans relied on mass distributions of population in the Moesian lands.

The third chapter “Epigraphic information about the Thracians and the Roman provincial society from the military centers along the Lower Danube Limes and the northern part of the territory between Istros and Haemus” works in the methodology of the second and deals, in summary, with the Thracian population in the Moesian “Limes” and its adjacent territories. The methodological and theoretical basis is well placed here as well - the role of the “epigraphic habit” is taken into account, as well as the epigraphic conciseness as circumstances that allow us to estimate the processes (248); the analysis of names takes into account parallels in the nomenclature in certain social strata from different provinces (e.g. 256). Examples of the integration of the Thracians in army circles in different periods of Roman rule between the Danube and the Balkans are considered. In general, the conclusions here seem logical and legit - for example, the peak of Thracian growth in the structure of the army in the time of the Severan dynasty (p. 262) and in general the role of military families in the creation of Thracian society in Roman times. The conclusions about the extended influence of the Thracians in the rural regions here, where they are naturally a well-represented element in the local government

(p. 287), as well as the analysis of several examples of Thracians in provincial environment, from which the mechanisms can be seen, due to which the connection of the Thracians with the provincial-Roman society is formed are logical and well argued (p. 290). A number of prosopographic observations of the doctoral student are contributing and useful - e.g. about the origin of T. Aelius Damanaeus, of Daco-Moesian origin, which confirms the role of the population of such origin from the lands of Moesia (p. 255) or about the representativeness of certain names such as Crescens for the relations between the Thracians and other members of the “Romanized” community”, i.e. as a typical Romanization name (p. 309). A series of passages in this chapter are of great value as a larger summary of a number of Thracian anthroponyms. At the same time, it is good to note that the epigraphic documentation is not absolute, in other words, the conclusions tend to be measured against the disproportions in the distribution of the epigraphic habit (310, 313), which is defined as the main reason for the manifestation of Thracian element in certain regions, rather outside the area of the legionary and auxiliary units. Such a relevant way of research ultimately leads to the correct conclusion that restrictions on the Roman “cultural horizon” are proposed by local municipalities (318, also 326-327). An explanation for this is the Hellenic influence and the development of Roman power, which lead to the integration of the local element. By the way, here is the place for considerations about the influence of pre-Roman structures on the manifestation of Thracian anthroponyms or visible figures of Thracian origin.

The general conclusions of the chapter are measured and contributing in view of the large amount of information on which they are based, which gives us opportunity to trace (also on the basis of the percentage) the career models and the origin of the Thracian members of the Roman society and the level of the influence of the army structures. It is argued that society is divided into two parts - affected and unaffected by the military lands (p. 327). I would highlight as a contribution also the doctoral student's conclusion that women are more likely to represent the tendencies for Romanization, which opens a further path of reflection. It is desirable for the doctoral student to further explain his conclusion that “the Thracians are not a sustainable component for the strengthening of Roman influence, presence and military potential in these parts of

Europe” - whether it is insufficient Romanization in these lands in the context of Romanization in other provinces - for example Gaul, Spain, etc.

Chapter four “Epigraphic information about the Thracians and the Roman provincial society from the southern and Pristina mountainous part of the territory between Istros and Hemus” concerns the last region of the said area, namely the southern parts of the Moesian lands and the Balkan areas near the Haemus range. The analysis of military personnel of Thracian origin is often accompanied by a review of the archaeological and historical context of the area, for more accurate dating. As for the conclusions about the rate of entry of the Thracian population into the army structures, the doctoral student considers the Edict of Caracalla from 212 as a decisive moment on the way to integration of the Thracian population, for which the relevant argumentation is given (359 p.). This is a conclusion with which, in my opinion, the doctoral student should be more cautious, as this boom is inevitably due to a cumulative process of creating “Thracian careers” within the Roman army, the stages of which can be traced by the beginning of Roman rule in the Bulgarian lands in antiquity, which is mentioned as an important trend later, in the final conclusions of the chapter. In some places one goes into slightly over-speculative hypotheses - for one *Iulius* there is not enough data for any career, incl. in the clerical parts of the Roman army (p. 365). Otherwise, the doctoral student's analysis of the way in which the local Thracians managed to find their place among the elevated strata of the region, especially in the large centers of Marcianopolis and Nicopolis ad Istrum, is valuable and worth noting, including a symbiosis of often among religious institutions. It is rightly stated that this was not always the result of purposeful Roman policy (382-383), and that in Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopol the Hellenic context favored the penetration of the Thracians among the municipal aristocracy. Like the second chapter, here I want to emphasize as a contribution the detailed study of the Thracians from the lower strata of the population, which marks the areas with a more significant compact population and greater stability of the Thracian identity. The manifestations of Thracian identity that the doctoral student detects mainly in the eastern part of the region, and in which the Romanization transformation seems to depend on the absence of a “cultivating motivator”, which is most often the case of veterans and military units (p. 428) is useful and important. The conclusions of the

chapter are contributing in emphasizing the dynamics that create the integration potential of the region, conditioned by the meeting of military romanisation with the Hellenic influence. In general, the detailed analysis of the Thracians in Roman society in this region and the aspects of their activity here, placed in parallel with the manifestation of Thracian identities along the Black Sea coast, can be described as contributing. It is good for the doctoral student to clarify his statement that "the information so far does not give reliable indications for the use of Thracian income abroad", which contradicts the large number of Thracian natives *extra fines* (439 p.).

The conclusion emphasizes the main results and conclusions of the dissertation. The specifics of the "epigraphic habit" and its ability to show or hide the characteristics of the Thracian identity in a Romanized environment are correctly summarized. The assessment and the zoning of the manifestations of the epigraphic habit in the different areas of the region under consideration is contributing and important. The doctoral student's conclusion that the manifestation of the Thracians in an epigraphic way depends mostly on the specific local circumstances is adequate and reasonable. I would point out as a significant contribution the indication of specific percentages for the role of the military element for the Romanization of the Thracian society (p. 450). Another important differentiation is made in the summary of the ratio of military and "civilian" factors for advancement in different regions. The summary, including figures, of the importance of marital relations in the integration of the Thracian element in the Black Sea colonies is also valuable. Contributing and innovative is the conclusion that Thracian anthroponomy spread more thanks to the connections between the bearers themselves, and not so much as a marker for identification among a foreign colonial element (456). The generalizing conclusion about the dependence of the Thracians in the society on the characteristics of the provincial system is an appropriate conclusion for what has been achieved in the text.

The text is followed by a summary of the contributions of the work, literature used, including abbreviations of ancient authors and texts, epigraphic corpora and periodicals, as well as bibliographic titles in Cyrillic and Latin.

In summary, it can be said that the text is well suited in methodological and scientific terms and shows the doctoral student's familiarity with scientific practices. The

doctoral student shows the necessary skills to work with the source material and especially with the epigraphic monuments and to build defensible hypotheses. The few remarks and clarification questions made above regarding a small number of conclusions or concepts do not change the general impression of the work. One weakness of the dissertation is in the style of some places, which is why I recommend a stylistic editing in the event of publication of the work - it should remove a significant number of very expressive expressions and sometimes common-language that do not contribute significantly to understanding the historical dynamics.

The abstract reflects the study in acceptable way and meets the requirements. I recognize the 10 contributions listed by the doctoral student. The text satisfactorily resolves the goals and tasks set in the introduction. It is important to mention that Stefan Yanakiev has dealt with a very labor-intensive topic, his thesis meets the requirements for such a scientific research, offers original scientific results and contributions.

The above said makes me give an affirmative assessment of the award of Stefan Yanakiev to the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD) in the professional field 2.2. History and archaeology and scientific specialty Ancient History and Thracology for the dissertation "The Thracians and the Roman provincial society between Istros and Haimus in I-III c.”

Sofia,
24.08.2021

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