



OPINION

for: the dissertation on acquisition of **PhD degree** (bulg. **doctor**), in Professional field (PF) 2.2 History and archeology, in Doctoral program (DP) *Ancient history and Thracology* at **Institute for Balkan Studies & Center of Thracology (IBCT)** of the **Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS)**, 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. Georgi Mitrev, PhD** – member of Scientific Juri (SJ), from the University of Plovdiv “Paisiy Hilendarski”, based on the Order of the Director of IBCT Prof. Dr. Romyana Il. Preshlenova for SJ № **66 RD-10 / 11.06.2021** and Protocol № 01 / 21.06.2021 of the first meeting of SJ.

The topic of the dissertation submitted for defending is well chosen, clearly formulated and dissertable in character. At the same time, it is also relevant, given the new epigraphic and archaeological discoveries that occur in different parts of the delineated territory. The structure of the dissertation is well organized in an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a reference to the scientific contributions of the dissertation and of the used literature (512 pp.).

The introduction contains all the key elements for a preamble to a historical study. It has a comprehensive character and successfully goes into the theme of the dissertation. The geographical and chronological frameworks of the study are clearly outlined. The methods of the study (p. 10–12) are grounded and refined to the extend necessary. Here a very good impression makes the detailed clarification of the methodology imposed, given the nature of the sources (predominantly epigraphic monuments) and the characteristic features laid down in the dissertation topic for a full and detailed analysis of the social structure of the Roman provincial society in the lands between Istros and Hemus.

A brief but substantial overview of the sources is made, presenting the main ancient authors for the topic and the most essential source of information about the processes in the Roman provinces, namely the epigraphic heritage (p. 12–24). Issues and publications from the end of the 19th century to the present days have been collected and presented – corps, monographs, studies and articles in Bulgarian, Romanian and other foreign researchers. Attention has been paid to onomastics – in particular to the researches in the field of anthroponymia and prosopography.

The section "State of research" (p. 24–30) shows convincingly the PhD student's excellent knowledge of the preceding studies on the topic and the achievements of modern historiography. (The same is evident from the 589 titles mentioned in the Bibliography at the end.)

The objectives set are essential and fundamental in the formation of the dissertable nature of the work. Undeniably the PhD student and his mentor set themselves serious wide-ranging tasks, and this is a basic prerequisite for the formation of the general contribution character of the dissertation.

The First chapter discusses, analyzes and comments on the written sources on the topic of the dissertation, announced already in the introduction, and in particular about the socio-economic characteristics of the Thracians. Texts of Strabo, Dion Cassius, Claudius Elian, Anius Flor, Ovidius, etc., are presented in detail and detail, with the necessary analysis of their role in establishing the ethnic picture between Istros and Hemus. The information and contemporary opinions on the discussion about the Moesi in Moesia have been well conveyed. The summaries (page 71) concerning the first subparagraph and specifically for the development of traditional ethnonyms in the field – Triballi, Moesi and Getae – seem justified and considered. It comes to the conclusion of the existence of three types of "ethnonymic nomenclature" – historical, administrative and romanizational. The summaries regarding the sources about the socio-economic situation of the Thracians (on 88 –89) are grounded, despite their limited and even fragmentary nature, which Stefan Yanakiev noted at the beginning of this subsection.

The model for the organization of chapters 2, 3 and 4 is general and identical, which is explained by the nature of the source base examined, namely the epigraphic monuments. The preference of the geographical approach in sharing these chapters, rather than chronological, seems justified and logical, since the first chapter shows differences in the processes that develop in the western and eastern part of the space between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains, while also presenting the question of the change of the southern provincial border of Lower Moesia, which de facto separates an area with a specific destiny in the northern slopes of the mountain and nearby territories. An essential distinguishing feature of the far eastern territories are the Hellenic city-states along the coast.

Using the same subsections for the presence of persons of certain or probable Thracian origin in military circles, in administrative circles or simply in society further details the study and provides a basis for comparisons between different areas by individual indicators. I also

think it works in favor of the objectivity of the research and the observations and results achieved.

It can be said that the PhD student's work in these chapters is successful as well. A large array of epigraphic monuments – 356 pieces are commented and included in the overall analysis of the exhibition. The summaries clearly formulated at the end of each paragraph highlight the most important observations. The conclusions for each of these chapters are specific and with reference to the epigraphic material. It is difficult to synthesize in a few sentences, but it can still be confirmed again that the geographical zoning of the study has its grounds and gives positive results. Moreover, these pages best show the contributing points of the dissertation.

The observations and summaries on the processes of Romanization and Hellenization in the coastal zone of Lower Moesia, which the author manages to "capture" through the analyses of the epigraphic testimonies, can be emphasized. Especially in the context of the Thracian presence in the old urban surroundings of the Greek apoikiai and in the villages in the nearby periphery. Precisely, the conclusion that the Thracian population to some extent managed to show "character" for the entire period of Roman rule, even in the 3rd c. (p. 230). There are also significant observations about the integration of the Thracians and their presentation as an element of the Lower- Moesian *socium* in the section of the defense system along the Lower Istros, where it is necessary to believe that only the personalities who choose to break away from the peregrine composition will be implemented deep into Roman society; they will be "like Romans" in the Lower-Moesian "lymes" society...; whereas, to a greater extent, the Thracian appeared as an ordinary resident in the villages (p. 330). Regarding the conclusion, it must be said that it is distinctive with its list of 30 main observations and conclusions about the Thracians and their presence in the provincial society, to which the overall study leads. It is clear that a common definition of the development of these processes could not be followed and naturally the conclusion is substantiated that the manifestation of the Thracians in the Roman provincial society between Istros and Hemus had a local (or locally grounded) character on a territorial basis. (p. 460)

The final assessment is acceptable too. It states that the provincial system ... outlines the paths ... for the expression of the Thracian element in the power structures, but it depends on it what directions are accepted and to what extent it wishes to get its advancement (or promotion) (p. 461). In fact, the latter is, to a certain extent, controversial, because it does not all depend solely on the desire or lack of desire on the part of the Thracians.

These contributions referred to at the end of the work and in the abstract reflect the results achieved in the exhibition and are in line with the findings and conclusions drawn.

Linguistically, the text can also be positively evaluated. Spelling errors are relatively rare and many of the obscure formulations have been cleared. At certain places, there are rather inaccuracies in typing (such as missed letters, alliances, etc.) that are good to edit, given future publishing. Regarding the abstract, it should be noted that it accurately reflects the content of the dissertation and its main ideas.

The rest of the documentation concerning the defense shows that Stefan Yanakiev has met the minimum requirements of IBSCT-BAS. In this regard, and also because of the visible contribution qualities of the dissertation, I express my **positive opinion** on awarding Stefan Yanakiev the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

Plovdiv

16 August 2021

Assoc. Prof. Georgi Mitrev