



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 Dimitrov Yanakiev, entitled *The Thracians and the Roman provincial society between Istros and Haemus in 1st – 3rd c.*

prepared by: Ass. Prof. Oleg Angelov Alexandrov, PhD – member of Scientific Juri (SJ), from St Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, based on the Order of the Director of IBCT Prof. Dr. Romyana Il. Preshlenova for SJ N 66 RD-10/11.06.2021 and Protocol № 01/21.06.2021 of the first meeting of SJ.

Brief biographical data about the candidate.

Stefan Yanakiev graduated from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" as a bachelor in "Archeology and History" (2016), and the following year (2017) a master's degree in "Archeology and Archaeological Cultural Heritage". Since January 2018 he is a full-time doctoral student at the Center of Thracology of IBCT at BAS, with a dissertation on the *Thracians and the Roman provincial society between Istros and Haimus in the 1st – 3rd c.* and term of study: 01.01.2018 - 31.12.2020. Here he successfully performs and re-fulfills the tasks set in the Individual Plan, participates in conferences and projects of the Institute. There are 4 articles written: 3 published and 1 under print, upon request of 3 articles, according to art. 9 (2) of the Annex to the Regulations of the Scientific Council of IBCT regarding the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions. The doctoral student meets the minimum national requirements for "doctor" (PhD) in the field of Humanities by group of indicators, gaining 90 points (Group A = 50 + Group D = 40), from the required minimum of 80 points: from Group A - 50 + from Group D - 30, according to the Regulations of BAS for application of *Law for development of the academic staff in the*

Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB, Bulg. abbreviation ZRASRB) and according to the requirement of art. 9 (2) of the Annex to the *Regulations of the Scientific Council of IBCT*.

Characteristics of scientific production.

The topic of the dissertation is interesting and well formulated. It is clear from the title that the emphasis is mainly on the study of the indigenous population in the area and its opportunities for expression within the newly formed provincial system, with a period of existence from the beginning of the 1st to the last quarter of the 3rd century. The doctoral student rightly emphasizes that the period 1st – 3rd century, or the time of Roman presence and rule in the lands between the river *Istros* and *Haemus*, is characterized by the imposition of the Roman model of cultural influence, and is one of the most challenging periods in the study on these lands. It is associated with the establishment of the Roman provincial system in the eastern parts of the Balkan Peninsula and the incorporation of the Thracian lands with an indigenous population during the time of Octavian Augustus to the *Pax Romana*. Against this background, Stefan Yanakiev undertook the difficult task of determining the place, role and significance of the Thracians in Roman provincial society. Such a study is a real challenge, given by the low social level at which a significant part of the Thracian population remains, and hence the resulting weak need for epigraphic expression of this population. However, the author has collected and used in his research 356 inscriptions, giving the necessary basis for his work.

The dissertation presented by Stefan Yanakiev consists of Introduction, Exposition in four chapters, Conclusion (a total of 461 pages of text), which in itself is impressive. The bibliography used by the doctoral student (located on a total of 50 pages after the main text) includes a significant number of ancient sources, epigraphic corpora and collections, 168 modern editions in Cyrillic and 421 in Latin.

At the very beginning of the introductory part (p. 5-32) the main aim and tasks of the research are presented (p. 7). The main aim is precisely and clearly formulated, and the research tasks are subordinated to the general idea for its achievement. Also in the Introduction are laid the solid territorial and chronological benchmarks of the study. A detailed review of the source base and a concise informative view of the state of research

on this issue. Particular attention is paid to research methods and terminology. Quite rightly, in my opinion, it was decided to examine the monuments in chronological order, so that in this way a better idea of the progress of the persons of Thracian origin could be created (p. 10). I have some reservations about the "insertion of the texts in the exposition" (p. 11), which the author explains with the fact that "the access to the source with the analytical part of the text is facilitated and the observational value invested in the dissertation is increased". Probably due to my professional attitudes (as an archaeologist) to separate the objective (in a catalog, index, etc.) from the subjective (the author's analysis and interpretation). In this sense, I respect that way, but I still think that some "convertibility" is lost when working with the available database. I would advise in the future publication of the dissertation to consider extracting the most important information from the inscriptions in easy-to-use tables, indexes and numbering of the inscriptions from one to infinity (and not starting in each chapter from the beginning) so that future readers to make quick and easy references in the presented inscriptions.

The exposition begins with a detailed presentation of the historical sources concerning the Thracians (ethno-demography and socio-economic characteristics) and the Roman provincial society (Chapter I, pp. 33-87).

In the following parts (Chapters II - IV), each of which begins with an appropriate own introduction, the doctoral student submits an in-depth analysis of the collected epigraphic monuments. These chapters (pp. 88-442) represent the core of the dissertation. The grouping of the texts is in accordance with the historical and geographical features of the section between *Istros* and *Haemus*. The following are considered successively: The Black Sea coast and the hinterland of the Greek cities (Chapter II, pp. 88-229); the military camps and their territories along the *limes* (Chapter III, pp. 230-328); the remote territories, occupying and covering the lands on the northern slopes of *Haemus* (Chapter IV, pp. 329-442).

The role and importance of the Thracians as an integral part of Roman provincial society is evidenced by the 139 inscriptions in Chapter Two, 96 in Chapter Three and 121 in Chapter Four (erroneously noted in the Conclusion of p. 445, in the Scientific Contributions of p. 460, as and in the Abstract of p. 29 as First, Second and Third). The inscriptions organized on a territorial principle with certified persons of Thracian origin

are subjected to an internal arrangement, completely subordinated to the peculiarities of the social structure of Roman society. All inscriptions are subjected to in-depth analysis and the information necessary for the research is extracted from them. The author demonstrates high opportunities to work with epigraphic material, available literature and excellent language culture. The performed analysis has allowed him to proceed to the synthesis of the obtained results in the form of derived tendencies, as each part ends with generalizations and conclusions.

The final synthesis is performed in the Conclusion (pp. 444-459), where a total of XXX points are derived. The end result shows the peculiarities of the policies applied by the Roman state and what part of the population of Thracian origin managed to take advantage of the nature of the imposed system. A general assessment of the role and importance of the Thracian population in Roman provincial society is given, thus achieving the aim of the study. Separately, 10 general scientific contributions are presented in the dissertation (pp. 460-461).

CONCLUSION: The conclusions and the self-report of the scientific contributions clearly show that the dissertation "*The Thracians and the Roman provincial society between Istros and Haemus in the in the 1st -3rd c.*" is an original contribution to science and has the necessary qualities, so I think it is justified for the award of PhD degree (bulg. *doctor*), in Professional field 2.2 History and Archeology, in the scientific specialty Ancient History and Thracology, to Stefan Dimitrov Yanakiev.

22 August 2021

Ass. Prof. O. Alexandrov, PhD: