



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: **Prof. DSc Kalin Porozhanov** – research supervisor of the doctoral student and member of Scientific Juri (SJ), from the Center of Thracology at IBCT, based on the Order of the Director of IBCT Prof. Dr. Rumyana Il. Preshlenova for SJ № **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. According to Art. 27, (2) of the Regulations for application of LDASRB (Bulg. abbreviation ZRASRB) the dissertation consists of: title

page; content; introduction; exposition; conclusion - summary of the obtained results; declaration of originality; bibliography.

After the title page and the declaration of originality, which is at the beginning, the content of the paper consists of: introduction = Introduction, exposition = four chapters, Conclusion – summary of the results, Scientific contributions to the dissertation, bibliography = References. A total of 512 pages, of which 455 pages of text.

The **INTRODUCTION** (5-32 p.) contains 7 paragraphs: **1. Aims and objectives** of the work clearly states that *the aim is to determine the role and importance of the Thracian population in the development of Roman provincial society in the territory between Istros and Haimus in 1st – 3rd c.*, from which arise 5 tasks, arguably related to the evaluation and the way of working with the written sources and epigraphic monuments, the discovery of the Thracians in the administrative, cult and military structures of Roman provincialism; **2. Territorial scope of the study** justifies that between the river Danube/Istros, mountain Stara Planina and the Black Sea coast there are three specific zones, shaped by natural conditions, but also by the place of each in the policy of Rome: *Danube region, Black Sea coast region and mountain Stara planina region*; **3. Chronological boundaries of the study** are justified by the political development of the Roman Empire during its first period – the Principate; **4. Research methods** presents prosopographic and anthroponymic analysis of literary and epigraphic monuments containing data about Thracians (mainly in the army, administration, cult colleges), and for more convincing argumentation the texts are included in the exposition (chronologically and territorially – according to the three areas); **5. An overview of the source base of the study** briefly provides data on the main types of sources: written (with criticism of ancient authors) and especially epigraphic; **6. Status of the research** analytically presents the main research in this thematic circle; **7. Terminology** informs us what is understood and in what aspect basic working terms such as *daco-mysoi* and *romanism / romanisation* are used in the work.

CHAPTER I: Written Sources for the Thracians and the Roman Provincial Society (pp. 33-87) is a **contribution with the ancient texts collected on the topic and for the purposes of the work**. It presents the author's view, commentary and analysis on the written sources, which are given in Greek and Latin – under foot. In § 1. – **for the ethno-demographic condition of the Thracians** are commented as traditional for the region Getae, the associated ethnonym Mysoi, and more – *Daci, Triballi, Bessi, Scythae, Sarmatai*, as well

as *Bastarnae* and *Gothi*. But the author's conclusion is that "In the territory between Istros and Haemus, in the descriptions of the ancient authors, the central place mentioned by the classical, Hellenistic and early imperial written tradition is *Tribali*, *Getae* and *Mysoi*." (p.68). In § 2. – **for the socio-economic characteristics of the Thracians** are presented: the importance of the strong Getae state of Burebistas; the role of the priestly institution in the Bessi, related to the priest Vologaesius; the existence of *strategies* as a legacy of local dynastic homes, but not as a form of government that is considered to be transformed into a *civitates* of peregrine municipalities; the role of the *cities*, but also of the *markets*, *road stations* and *villas* for the socio-economic manifestation of the Thracians, who were early included in the tax system of Rome; The whole chapter is a **good historical basis for the next work**.

CHAPTER II: Epigraphic information about the Thracians and the Roman provincial society from the Black Sea coast between Istros and Haemus (88-229 p.) has 4 real paragraphs: II.1. Persons of Thracian (and probably Thracian 1.2) origin among the military structures; II.2. Persons of Thracian (and probable Thracian 2.2) origin among civil and administrative structures; II.3. Persons of Thracian (and probable Thracian 3.2) origin as a civil element in society; II.4. Persons of Thracian origin and presumably among non-free circles. The inscriptions with names of persons of certain Thracian origin are 88, and of those with probable – 54, a total of 142.

This impressive amount of epigraphic data allows us to draw **fruitful conclusions**: through marriages, the Thracians are increasingly involved in **urban life on the Black Sea coast**, on the one hand – associated with a real departure from peregrine status and active social growth, and on the other – Increasingly –Increasing participation of Thracians in the priestly class and the cultural and religious institutions of the *poleis*; here, despite the inevitable Hellenization, there is a visible preservation of Thracian names in the generations. It is also important to note that Rome supported the development of the Thracian villages around the *poleis*, thus making them active in the Roman invasion of the region. This special attitude is due to the boundaries of the area and makes these Thracians an important part of society.

CHAPTER III: 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 (230-328 p.) has 3 real paragraphs: III.1. Persons of Thracian (and probable Thracian) 1.2) origin among military

structures; III.2. Persons of Thracian (and probable Thracian 2.2) origin among civil and administrative structures; III.3. Persons of Thracian (and probable Thracian 3.2) origin as a civil element in society. The inscriptions with names of persons of certain Thracian origin are 89, and of those with probable – 7, a total of 96, **as 101 men** are of the first type and **6 – of the second. The statistical and analytical conclusions are here:** over 1/3 of the reported are related to the army corps or present as former military; another 1/3 - turned out to be connected with the auxiliary units, which shows that the Thracians were relied on as a combat-ready factor in the region, which through the military successfully joined the provinces; this **happens as Thracians, in addition to ordinary military recruits (most widely), actively participate in the cavalry and navy, reaching prestigious officer ranks;** Despite the advanced Romanism (seen in the "Roman" Thracians) and despite the "Limes" region, this is a manifestation of a small part of the local population, because most (56.2%) of the reported Peregrines, **ordinary Thracians from this region, use Thracian names,** maintaining its conservatism in the countryside.

CHAPTER IV: Epigraphic information about the Thracians and the Roman provincial society from the southern Pristina mountainous part of the territory between Istros and Haimus (329-442 p.) has 4 real paragraphs: IV.1. Persons of Thracian (and probably Thracian 1.2) origin among the military structures; IV.2. Persons of Thracian (and probable Thracian 2.2) origin among civil and administrative structures; IV.3. Persons of Thracian (and probable Thracian 3.2) origin as a civil element in society; IV.4. Persons of Thracian origin and presumably among non-free circles.

In this case, the names of 145 men and 19 women were derived from 121 inscriptions with certain Thracians, and 19 and 3, respectively, from the presumed ones. They give grounds for the following **contribution conclusions:** Despite the relative distance from the Danube and the Black Sea coast, it turns out that are similar to those of the "Limes" society, with a definite active role of the cities of Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis in the development of the Roman army and the distance of part of the population from the Thracian; thus, it turns out that 32.9% of the persons of Thracian origin transformed their name system under the influence of the Romanization strata and the army structures and **at the end of the 2nd and in the 3rd century some reached the prestigious Praetorian Guard and the personal cavalry of the emperor; others manage to develop into administrative positions and civilian positions as members of the decurion staff of a city** such as Nicopolis ad Istrum, for example, or some other settlement; on the third hand – 55.4% of the safe Thracians

(men and women) keep their names; the peculiarity of the Roman policy to rely on the Thracian village as a reserve for the participation of Thracians in the legions and auxiliary units is also observed; It is noteworthy that about 40% of the studied names **managed to develop in the religious-priestly institution**, retaining their Thracian names in full.

CONCLUSION (443-459 p.): here are summarized the main conclusions of the four chapters. It is clear that the information of the ancient authors is a good basis for studying the problematic thematic circle. However, their data are insufficient to draw a clear enough picture on the issue, which is why the epigraphic monuments from the lands between the Danube and the Balkans were used: in Chapter One – 139 inscriptions, in Chapter Two – 96 and in Chapter Three – 121, in total the impressive amount of 356 inscriptions on stone. The combined approach of examining written sources and epigraphic monuments, through the use of research methods of *Interpretatio Graeca and Latina* and *Interpretatio Thracica* leads to important conclusions.

On the one hand, they show that this part of the Thracian lands, like other parts of the Roman Empire, purposefully and methodically became a real and active part of *Pax Romana*. If in the first century Rome's policy was to subdue the population, then from the middle of the second century the emphasis was on joint organization. It got to the point that through the army the Thracians held extremely prestigious leadership positions in the highest echelons of the empire; they also have a well-visible presence, both in the administrative and civil institutions, as well as in the priestly colleges and the cult-religious institutions.

On the other hand, it is clear that for the most part the Thracian village remains conservative, preserving its name system and traditions. In the end, although to varying degrees, there was a gradual integration of the population into *Pax Romana*, well represented in the "epigraphic culture".

THE LITERATURE USED is rich and comprehensive. It covers 50 pages and covers 168 titles in Cyrillic and 421 in Latin, a total of 589.

The Abstract (bulg. *Avtoreferat*) meets the requirements, **I confirm the 10 contributions listed in it**; the publications on the topic of the dissertation are sufficient in number – 4, of which 1 is in print.

There is **no plagiarism in the dissertation**.

I would recommend, when publishing the dissertation, the sources to be formed as an appendix (s) in order to make it easier to read the text for a wider audience, something that was suggested at the preliminary discussion by Assoc. Prof. PhD Ilian Boyanov from NBU.

CONCLUSION: All the above and the important scientific contributions mentioned by me give me a reason **to give a positive assessment** of the award of **PhD degree** (bulg. *doctor*), in PF 2.2 History and Archeology, in the scientific specialty *Ancient History and Thracology*, to **Stefan Yanakiev** for his dissertation *The Thracians and the Roman provincial society between Istros and Haimus in the 1st -3rd c.* Sofia, 2021, 512 p.

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