

SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"

FACULTY OF HISTORY

## STATEMENT

under the procedure for defense of a dissertation on a topic

**"The Thracian lands and the legal texts of the Roman empire (AD 212 - 249)"**

For acquiring of the educational and scientific degree "PhD"

by

Candidate: Lyudmila Jeleva Chakarova–Prisoeva

Scientific area: **2. Humanities**

Professional field: **2.2. History and Archaeology**

Doctoral program: **"Ancient history" - Ancient history**, department "Ancient history, Thracian studies and Mediaeval history"

Academic supervisor: **Prof. Dr.Dr.Sc. Dilyana Boteva**

Statement author:

Assoc. Prof. **Julia Milcheva Tzvetkova**, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Faculty of History, Department "Ancient history, Thracian studies and Mediaeval history"

member of the scientific jury by order № РД 38-179/ 27.3.2025 of the Rector of Sofia University

## 1. General characteristics of the PhD thesis

The dissertation by Lyudmila Chakarova-Prisoeva examines the place of the Thracian lands in the dynamic period of the first half of the 3rd century BC (212–249 AD), outlined according to the legal texts of the Roman Empire. The topic has not been the subject of independent research to date, which makes this work a pioneering study. The topic has not been the subject of independent research to date, which makes this work a pioneering study.

The work consists of 299 numbered pages and comprises an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, a list of references and four text appendices. The thematic structure is very well suited to the thematic and chronological focus of the work: the introduction, which provides a historiographical overview (pp. 2-16), Chapter I, devoted to the principles of Roman law and the place of the Thracian lands in the political landscape of the Roman Empire (pp. 17-98), Chapters II-IV, examining legal documents from the chronological periods of Caracalla and immediately after his death (212-218) (pp. 99-160), the late Severan period (218-235) (pp. 161-197) and the period of the soldier emperors (235-249) (pp. 198-247), as well as a conclusion (pp. 248-256) summarising the main conclusions and observations. The bibliography is impressive in length, covering 22 pages. The thesis has four text appendices, which systematise in catalogue form the various written documents researched and collected by the doctoral student with information on legal content related to the Thracian lands – the edict of Caracalla, epigraphic monuments, legal texts from the Justinian Code, as well as from the Digests.

The layout of the computer pages exceeds the accepted standard of 1800 characters, and the sources and literature are cited in footnotes, which is appropriate in this case and does not interrupt the main text.

## 2. Data and personal impressions of the candidate

Lyudmila Chakarova-Prisoeva's academic career took place at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, where she obtained a master's degree in Law in 2001 and a bachelor's degree in History in 2020. Since 2021, she has been a doctoral student at the Department of Ancient History, Thracology and Medieval History, in the doctoral programme under the current procedure.

In terms of professional experience, prior to her doctoral studies, she held various positions as a legal assistant, legal advisor, and chief legal advisor at law firms, the National Assembly, and the University of National and World Economy. During the last year of her doctoral studies, she was also involved in the administrative work of the Department of Ancient History, Thracian studies and Mediaeval history, for which her unquestionable legal expertise and her diligent and collegial attitude towards our academic community were of great importance. Although her active involvement was challenging in terms of combining administrative and research activities, it did not prevent her from completing her dissertation on time. In March 2025, Lyudmila was appointed as an R1 researcher at the Faculty of History.

## 3. Observations on the scientific achievements of the candidate

Lyudmila Chakarova-Prisoeva's interest in legal practices during the Antiquity ranks her among the few historians in Bulgaria who also have expertise in the field of legal sciences. The choice of topic for her dissertation perfectly combines her legal knowledge with the specifics and methods of in-depth historical research based on primary sources.

The author successfully integrates research approaches from both history and legal science to achieve the objectives of the dissertation—to outline the specifics of law enforcement in the Thracian Roman provinces.

Of particular historical value are the systematic and theoretical excursions presented in Chapter I on Roman jurisprudence as a whole in the first half of the 3rd century, as well as the various ways in which Roman procedural law was applied in the Thracian lands. In doing so, the author manages to "translate" the complex legal issues and terminology into understandable language, making it accessible to non-specialists in the field of law. Her excellent historical background is illustrated by the professional manner in which she draws on a variety of historical sources in her analysis—in addition to the strictly legal texts of the Corpus Iuris Civilis (Codex Iustinianus and Digesta) and other written documents, she works with numismatic material, and epigraphic monuments, from which she has selected, systematized, and analyzed information of a legal nature. The proven changes and interpolations in the authentic preserved texts in the Codex Iustinianus and Digesta are correctly commented on.

Each of the chapters II to IV begins with a concise introduction to the general historical processes in the Roman Empire, which highlights the author's in-depth knowledge of the 37-year period under review, while at the same time illustrating her ability to synthesize and highlight key events which have a *longue durée* effect. Such is the edict of Caracalla, dated 212, to which she has devoted well-deserved attention to the related problems in historiography and emphasizes that the period of adaptation was clearly long and proceeded at different speeds in the spheres of public life. We must also agree with the colleague's observation that the centralization of the empire, respectively the creation of the corresponding hierarchical administrative apparatus, was one of the reasons for the attractiveness of state positions at the local level, but also in the higher imperial services.

An analysis of preserved rescripts, edicts, and local practices allows us to trace the application of Roman law and the imposition of common standards, while taking into account regional specificities in accordance with customs and standards, both for the empire as a whole and in the application of law in the Thracian provinces.

The conclusion summarizes the observations and conclusions made, such as that the Thracian lands were invariably linked to the policy of applying imperial law to Roman citizens in the provinces. Their geographical position and place in the empire as a major military recruitment area, but also as a target of frequent attacks and devastation, is correctly assessed. This is probably the reason why all of the emperors under consideration (with the exception of Elagabalus) visited and personally inspected the provinces, given the maintenance of the border line, the restoration of roads, and defensive structures. Her observations are that a very small proportion of the constitutions (compared to the number of those preserved) directly concern the Thracian lands. The rescripts deal with both civil law relations and those of a state-legal nature – regulation of military and post-military service, public duties, punishment of decurions, etc.

#### 4. Approbation of the results

The scientific works cited—a dissertation and three articles (one of which is in print)—meet the minimum national requirements and the additional requirements of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski for the award of the educational and scientific degree of "doctor" in the scientific field and professional direction of the procedure.

The dissertation and scientific papers submitted under this procedure do not contain any plagiarism.

#### 5. Qualities of the abstract

The abstract accurately reflects the content of the dissertation and meets all requirements for the preparation of a summary presentation of the topic and main achievements. The contributions of the dissertation listed reflect objectively the quality of the work.

## 6. Critical remarks and recommendations

Some isolated grammatical, punctuation, or purely technical errors are observed throughout the text, which in no way detract from the quality of the dissertation.

## 7. Conclusion

After getting acquainted with the dissertation presented in the procedure and based on the above-said, I **recommend** to the scientific jury to award Lyudmila Chakarova-Prisoeva the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of 2. Humanities, professional field 2.2. History and archaeology".

Signature:

Date: 15.06.2025

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/Assoc. Prof. J. Tzvetkova/