

STATEMENT

OF PROF. D-R ANELIA BOZKOVA (NAIM-BAN) ON THE DOCTORAL THESIS
OF NIKOLAY STEFANOV SHARANKOV, INDEPENDENT DOCTORAL STUDENT
AT THE DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY, FACULTY OF CLASSICAL AND NEW PHILOGIES,
ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI UNIVERSITY OF SOFIA, ENTITLED “ANCIENT INSCRIPTIONS FROM
DIONYSOPOLIS. EDITION OF THE TEXTS WITH COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS OF THE LINGUISTIC
AND ONOMASTIC DATA” FOR THE AWARD OF THE EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEGREE OF DOCTOR
IN THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD 2.1. PHILOLOGY (CLASSICAL LANGUAGES AND EPIGRAPHY)

The doctoral thesis of Nikolay Sharankov is an impressive and consequential scientific work on the epigraphic inscriptions from Dionysopolis on the Black Sea. The dry statistics present it as a corpus of 80 documents written on stone, 37 of which have been previously published. On their own, the numbers are notable for anyone who knows the difficulty of the task of deciphering epigraphic monuments. Behind them is a comprehensive and exhaustive study which includes, besides the presentation of the inscriptions, convincing corrections on the previously published texts, and also a linguistic and cultural-historical analysis that offers much new knowledge about the history of Dionysopolis, about its administrative and religious life, about the name of the city, about the ethnic composition of its population and the language of the inhabitants.

With its comprehensive character, the dissertation addresses various important issues for the ancient history of the Pontic cities and in this sense its problematic is both modern and scientifically relevant.

The work has an excellent organization and each part builds on the previous one(s), adding new emphasis on different themes and issues related to the content of the inscriptions.

The main part of the PhD thesis is a corpus of inscriptions that meets all modern requirements for such a publication: objective and convincing readings, accompanying commentary and added translation into Bulgarian. The text is extremely informative, full of new knowledge and facts. The qualities of Nikolay Sharankov as a scholar whose talent in dealing with ancient texts regardless of their complexity is by now universally acknowledged, are fully exemplified in this part of the thesis. The commentaries on the inscriptions are also distinguished by their profound knowledge of ancient realities, and the proposed additions to missing places and

letters in the inscriptions and the dating of each of the artifacts do not raise any objections. All inscriptions discussed in the text are also illustrated with good photographs in an appendix.

In the second part of the work, devoted to the language of the inscriptions, a thorough linguistic analysis has been carried out from both a grammatical and a semantic point of view. An important conclusion is drawn here about the origin of the population of Dionysopolis, which, according to N. Sharankov, cannot be defined unambiguously as Ionian. This observation will trace a new direction in the future research of specialists in Greek antiquity.

The third part of the doctoral thesis deals with the proper names attested in inscriptions, both anthroponyms and toponyms. The results are important from a cultural-historical point of view and provide evidence for the ethnic composition of the population, for religious cults and festivals (from which the corresponding anthroponyms derive), and for various other aspects of the urban reality. The absence of names of Thracian origin in the inscriptions until the end of the 1st century BC is not surprising and is in full accord with what is known from archaeological research in the ancient Greek colonies on the western Pontus in recent decades.

At the end of the work all the important results and conclusions reached by the author are synthesized. The scientific contributions claimed here are completely objective and correspond to the real achievements of the work.

My general impression is that the work of Nikolay Sharankov is an extremely successful, independent and original piece of research, the significance of which from a scientific point of view exceeds by far the requirements for a PhD thesis. This study undoubtedly continues the high level of excellence established in the field of ancient epigraphy in Bulgaria and should certainly be published and made accessible to a wide range of specialists.

On the basis of my overall assessment of the dissertation, I vote with conviction for the award of the educational and scientific degree of Doctor to Nikolay Stefanov Sharankov.

09.09.2001
Sofia

prof. d-r Anelia Bozkova