Assessment of the bachelor thesis

Institute of Classical Archaeology
Faculty of Arts, Charles university, Prague

Thesis author: Daniel Polívka

Thesis title: Kurgans and Burials of the Yamnaya Culture in South-Eastern Bulgaria

Name of the reviewer: Dr. Todor Valchev

Thesis supervisor: Mgr. Petra Tušlová, PhD.

Evaluation criteria	Maximum points	Points given
Setting the goal of the thesis and achieving it	5	3
Structure of the thesis and chosen methods	5	5
Work with literature	5	3
The formal side of the thesis	5	3
Achieved results	10	7
Total points	30	**21**

Rating: 1 = 30 - 26, **2** = 25 - 20, **3** = 19 – 15, **failed** = >15

Verbal evaluation of work:

The thesis has sufficient length, it is well structured, supplemented by enough illustrations. The text is mostly easily readable, with only several places with overcomplicated descriptions or statements, which is a big progress from the draft. However, references are missing in several places of the text (even on places suggested previously by the supervisor); there are many small formatting and typing errors, many of which I have pointed out during the previous reading and were not reflected in the corrections (i.g. p. 12 – 4th and 3rd **century**; unnecessary break after full stop and before reference; references to figs. placed after full stop; different spacing p. 32–34/35, the reverse literature format at the end of the thesis, etc.). By the content, surely more recent literature is available for the general parts of the text dealing with Early Bronze Age and Yamnaya presence in the Balkans (chapters 4–6) which, if added, would make the text more up to date, relevant and reliable. Some of the touched topics could have gone more into the detail. There are also some articles missing for the individual mounds as for Boyanovo – Privat *et al.* 2018, surprisingly from the book the student was working

with at UKAR (The TRAP Final report). The conclusions would also have potential to go deeper to the topic, as evaluating and interpreting better the location of the mounds (AKM); to discuss the dimensions of the mounds as in reaction to a newly published article of Valchev – Sobotkova 2024 *Landscape analysis of the Early Bronze Age mounds in the Middle and Lower Tundzha River*; I would also expect more elaborate discussion about the chronology and character of the non-EBA burials placed into the mounds embankment and possible trends. The text would profit from more tables and graphs (as statistics and overviews of the grave goods from the discussed mounds – e.g. the hair rings and other objects, organic mat under the skeleton...) and their evaluation.

Suggested final evaluation:

The text had undergone severe changes from its first versions, which were all to better (structure, comprehension, results). The narrative changed heavily; many parts of the original text were not included in the thesis at the end, while for the more suitable texts regarding the topic too little time was left. It is visible both in the formal and content of the thesis it was finished in rush, with underestimation of some of its aspects (full literature collection, conclusion, more tables/graphs). Nevertheless, its length and the text which goes to the point already suggest the topic might be rather too ambitious for a bachelor work, not mentioning its prehistoric focus which needed more preparation for historical and archaeological background for a student of Classical Archaeology.

The student showed ability to work with scientific texts, with foreign literature, to write comprehensive text in English (!), and to come to conclusions based on set goals. As such I recommend the thesis for defence, from my position of the thesis supervisor with given evaluation very good (2).

Questions for discussion: Are there any chronological tendencies traceable in spatial distribution of the Yamnaya mounds and burials in the studied area?

In Prague on 04/06/2024

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Signature