

# Orpheus



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# ORPHEUS

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VARIA THRACICA ET PSEUDO-THRACICA

*Alexander Falileyev*

This article consists of two parts. The first part addresses several recent pieces of epigraphic evidence from Olbia. Data from the inscription containing Thracian *Muca(-)* are discussed, and a number of possible readings of the second and third lines are offered. The name on the recently discovered Roman flask is also discussed, concluding that it should not be considered in scholarly discourse. The second part deals with the place-name Βιργινασώ recorded in *De Aedificiis* by Procopius. It is argued that this toponym should be considered to be Latin, cf. Lat. adjective *virginōsus*.

**I. Some ‘new’ names from Olbia**

Thracian personal names from Northern Pontic areas and particularly from Olbia are well known to specialists and have been studied by several academics, see e.g., Тохтасьев 1992, Крыкин 1993, or Cojocar 2004: 140–150, to list just a few references; cf. also Dana 2012: 225–227 for his broader survey of the four Thracian onomastic provinces. In this part of the paper I would like to draw attention to two examples which have recently been published but which have not received the attention they merit and certainly deserve revisiting.

A funerary stele with a Latin inscription was unearthed in Olbia in 1994 and was dated to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The inscription, which survived only fragmentarily, was published by V. M. Zubar’ and Yu. I. Kozub (Зубарь, Козуб 2005: 185–192). According to the two Ukrainian scholars, its reading is:

*D(is) M(anibus)*  
*Muca* ||||  
*AT* ---- *m*  
 [il](es) v[e(xillationis)?C]oh(ortis) ?  
 [Il Britto]num ?  
 [qui] vixi(t)  
 [an(nis) or an(nos) ----- ] m[il(itavit

**PERSIAN *HYPARCHOI* AND *STRATEGOI* IN ANCIENT THRACE ACCORDING TO HERODOTUS**

*Miroslav Izdimirski*

The article examines the entire available evidence on the existence of a Persian administration in ancient Thrace. In addition to Herodotus, later Greek texts also contain references to Persian military commanders and administrators. The author has expressed his opinion on the debate concerning the existence of a Persian satrapy named Skudra in Southeastern Europe. The conclusion reached is that certain places along the coast were conquered, but they were not given the administrative status of a satrapy. The Persian administration inevitably built its relations with the local Thracian tribes. Their relations were subordinated to mutual profit above all, although there was confrontation as well.

The topic of the Persian administration in Ancient Thrace reveals new opportunities to trace back the structure, character and nature of the Persian domination in the Balkans. This issue has already been studied by Bulgarian historiography (Йорданов 2003: 57–66). It is required to study the administration of King Xerxes (486–464 BC) in Europe, which would elucidate the parameters of the Persian domination on the continent. This topic will inevitably touch upon the issue of the presence of a Persian satrapy in the Balkans (on the Persian invasion in Thrace see Venedikov 1970: 25–32; Tacheva 1992: 273 sqq).

The name of the Persian general Megabazus is mentioned for the first time in Herodotus' account of the campaign of King Darius (521–486 BC) against the Scythians. After having passed through Thrace and reached the Thracian Chersonesos, Darius crossed over with his fleet to Asia Minor at the city of Sestos (Hdt. 4, 143, 1). In this context, Herodotus mentions that Darius left Megabazus, a Persian, as his general of Europe (στρατηγὸν ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ Μεγάβαζον ἄνδρα Πέρσην) with an army of eighty thousand men (Hdt. 4, 143–144; on previous campaigns of Megabazus in Thrace see Ботева-Боянова 2000: 135–137). We can infer from the text that Megabazus was part of King Darius' campaign against the Scythians. In this relation, Herodotus writes two anecdotes about Megabazus. The

## THE SEVERED SPEAKING HEAD

*Nicolas Kazanas*

In this essay I examine one aspect of Orpheus, that of his severed head, which continued to sing and utter prophecies long after it had been cut off. Many instances of severed heads (or skulls) are recorded in the cultures of many peoples, but the head that continues to sing and speak advising or prophesying forms a distinct case or category, found only in some Indo-European traditions of which the Greek legend of Orpheus is but one example. Here I examine this mythologem in the Celtic, Germanic and Vedic traditions too.

1. Pure classicists rarely show much interest in the different Indo-European cultures and the few who do so, like M.L. West (1971, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1997a, 1997b), display little knowledge of the wider IE spectrum. Some express strong doubts about the existence of a Proto-Indo-European culture. Walter Burkert is one of them: in his *Orientalising Revolution* (1992) he disregards totally the rich evidence of parallels and affinities of many ideas, motifs, practices, etc. in the early Greek civilisation with those of other IE branches like the Celtic, Germanic, Baltic, Italic, Slavic, Hittite, Iranian and Vedic – to mention the more significant ones; instead, he seeks and finds parallels in the Near-Eastern cultures and assumes that the latter have influenced Greece even in cases where we may have an inherited IE element. So have done P. Walcott (1966), B. Dietrich (1974), C. Penglase (1996) and others. This is a pity, for in many cases, had the IE relations been taken into account, deeper understanding would have resulted, producing new appreciations and different significations.

It is the same with the scholarship dealing with Orphism: the figure of Orpheus, the various Orphic groups/movements/schools, the funeral tablets, etc. and the religious-philosophical doctrines associated with Orphism. There is now a plethora of articles and books on Orphism, particularly after the publication of the fairly reliable translation of the *Derveni Papyrus* in Laks and Most (1997) and the new *Fragmenta Orphicorum* by Bernabé (2004–2005).

**BARBYSIOS  
OR THE BIRTH OF BYZANTION**

*Vanya Lozanova-Stantcheva*

The paper deals with classification and analyses of the ancient and Byzantine written tradition about the Barbys(i)os/Barbyses river at the Golden Horn in Byzantium. The ancient (Thracian?) name Barbyses appears in two main functions:

- As a Heros eponymous to the river Barbyses on the top of the Golden Horn in Byzantium;

- As a mythical Thracian ruler of the land at the mouth of Pontus, Phidaleia's father and father-in-law of Byzas.

The interdisciplinary analysis of the mythological traditions suggests two possible stages in the development of pre-emporial Byzantium:

- The earlier Thracian city of Barbyses at the junction of the river with the Cydaros river before it flows into the Golden Horn and at the altar of Semestre;

- the later (new) city of Byzas and Phidaleia on the promontory of the Historical Peninsula in Byzantium, which overlooks both the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus. There the written sources already "visualized" the city's walls "from sea to sea," the historical acropolis and agora, as well as some religious institutions, outlining the transition from the pre-emporial to the early emporial stage of Thracian-Hellenic *apoikia*.

Barbys(i)os (Barbyses or Barbysos: Βαρβύσης, Βάρβυσος, Βαρβύσιος; Βορβύσης in Georg. Codin. p. 4 Bonn; see the form Βαρβύζης; Dion. Byz. fr. 16–18 Wescher; Georg. Cedr. 2, 80B; Niceph. Greg. 2, 847, 858, 1291; Oberhummer 1897: 5–6) was the eponymous hero of the small river (today's Kağıthane), which joins the Kydaros (Κύδαρος, presently Alibeyköy) before they both empty into the Gulf of Keras (Κέρας – τὸ κέρας, Gr. *horn*), of the Golden Horn (Chrysokeras: Χρυσοκέρας), at the so-called "Sweet Waters of Europe" or Σαπρὰ θάλασσα in Byzantium. These two rivers, coming respectively from the west and northwest, were

**THEORETICAL ISSUES OF THE ETHNOS AND OF THE ETHNIC.  
FROM BLOOD-KINSHIP TO TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY**

*Tosho Spiridonov*

The text raises theoretical issues of the ethnos and of the ethnic with a view to the ethnogenesis and ethnic consolidation prior to the industrial age: from prehistorical times to the Middle Ages.

The first range of issues is related to content analysis of the ethnic, whereby the ethnic components are examined as being composed of ethnic nucleus and ethnic syntagma, and are presented on the basis of the example of the wedding rite. The principal parameters of the ethnic self-awareness are outlined, which is to be acquired through accelerated mastering of the ethnic specificities of the new community.

The second range of issues refers to the ethnic processes. Based on a purely academic segmenting of the object of research, i.e., of the "ethnos/ethnic" system, it can be divided into two parts, each of which comprises in turn separate subsystems, components and elements. Each system is alive when it functions, i.e., when certain processes develop in it.

After 1989, ethnologists dealt either with known and described things, or with issues of the contemporary life of society. The key theoretical themes of ethnogenesis, of territorial scope, etc. disappeared from the agenda of ethnologists. These themes remained in the hands of historians, while some ethnographers started exploring issues in the sphere of the "ethnography of the contemporaneity."

At the same time, the problems of the transition from blood-kinship to territorial community remained. Some scholars see the nature of ethnicity exclusively in the sphere of the individual conscience constructing an ethnic identity depending on the socio-economic or political interests and lying at the basis of the emergence and existence of ethnic groups. However, if this is more relevant to the contemporary ethnic picture, *in the clan-tribal age blood kinship could be and actually was the only unifying mechanism*. The most important conclusion