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## Review

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## DID A GETIC LANGUAGE EXIST?

*Svetlana Yanakieva*

The paper discusses the hypothesis launched about the existence of a Getic language that was different from Thracian and from the so-called Dacian-Moesian language. The analysis was made on the basis of two criteria: socio-linguistic – the evidence of ancient authors on the speech of the Getae compared to the other Thracians, and internal linguistic – data on the phonetics and lexical material in the onomastic finds from the lands of the Getae, compared to the onomastics from the remaining Thracian territories. It becomes clear from the examples that no substantial differences – either phonetic or lexical – existed between the onomastics of the region inhabited by Getae and the one from the areas inhabited by the other Thracian tribes, which does not give grounds to refer to the Getic language as independent.

V. Georgiev's hypothesis about the existence of two separate languages – Thracian and Dacian-Moesian (Георгиев 1957; 1977; Georgiev 1971: 164-165; 1983, and others), which appeared in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, divided researchers of the Thracian language into its ardent supporters and skeptics<sup>1</sup> – a division that exists to this day. Parallel with that, terms like Thracians-Dacians, Thracians-Getae and Dacians-Moesians circulate among linguists, historians and archaeologists (Russu 1969; Berciu 1974; Poghirc 1976; Coman 1980; Vulpe, Zahariade 1987, and many others), clearly due to the hesitation about whether there is a common linguistic and ethnic belonging of Thracians, Getae, Moesians and Dacians.

V. Georgiev's hypothesis about the two separate languages sprouted the idea about the hypothesis launched by Boris Simeonov, which went even further, claiming that the Getic language is an “*independent* language, separate from Thracian, but closer to it and to Phrygian than to Dacian and Moesian” (Simeonov 1980). That conclusion of B. Simeonov is built on two types of data: evidence by ancient authors who – in his opinion – spoke about ethnic belonging of the Getae that was different from that of the Thracians, and linguistic facts: onomastic and phonetic.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on this issue, see Janakieva 2014.

**ON THE RELATIONS OF THRACE WITH  
THE PROPONTIS REGION IN THE 4<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BC:  
PHIALE B71 FROM TOMB NO. 2  
IN THE MOGILANSKA MOGILA TUMULUS**

*Ruja Popova*

The study is on the phiale with the medallion from Tomb No. 2 in the Mogilanska Mogila tumulus, placed in the context of the three cups bearing inscriptions from the same find. In the museum in the town of Vratsa there is an instrument shaped like a truncated cone, on the basis of which a female profile to the right is depicted in low relief. It can be noted that the image on the seal is highly similar to that on the medallion of the silver phiale. A very close parallel is found in the images on coins of one of the most important ancient cities in Asia Minor – Cyzicus, as well as on coins from Lampsacus. The questions are focused on the possibility the image on the gilded silver plaque to be directly related to the bronze instrument and on the ways in which it could have been found on the territory of Northwestern Thrace. Some of the options considered are the seal to have been in the possession of one of the so-called “itinerant” toreuts, who worked on that territory, or of a local craftsman learning his trade on the territory of the Propontis, possibly also in Cyzicus, where he acquired skills to make such objects.

This text was inspired not by art historian interest, in spite of the indisputable aesthetic qualities of the vessel placed in its centre, but by research quests connected with the relations of ancient Thrace with the Propontis region, and – more specifically – with one of the *megapoleis* of the ancient world: Cyzicus. Precisely they directed my attention to the silver phiale with a gilded medallion on the umbo.

The cup (Inv. B71, Regional History Museum of Vratsa) belongs to a group of four silver phialae found during archaeological excavations of Tomb 2 in the Mogilanska Mogila tumulus in 1965. The other three are undecorated, but below the rim of each of them there is a stippled inscription containing the personal name Kotys (in the genitive) and the settlement name Beos (in the genitive) – KOTYΟΣ ΕΓ ΒΕΟΥ<sup>1</sup> (SEG 37: 618, 17; on the inscriptions on

<sup>1</sup> The phialae Nos B69 and B70 (Top60B 2005: Cat. 65 and 66) have identical inscriptions:

**THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THRACIAN STATES  
AND COASTAL *POLEIS* ALONG THE WESTERN  
BLACK SEA COAST: 3<sup>RD</sup> CENTURY BC –  
1<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AD, ACCORDING  
TO EPIGRAPHIC DATA**

*Kalin Porozhanov*

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC – first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, Thrace and its Black Sea coast continued the tradition established in the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century BC, consisting in mutually beneficial coexistence and cooperation between *polis* and *ethnos* states, with definite domination of the Thracian rulers over the Greek *poleis*. However, the Greek states preserved their autonomy to a great extent. That line of behaviour in the relations between *polis* and *ethnos*, which had become traditional, was to end with the liquidation of the Thracian states by Rome and their transformation into Roman provinces.

I. The study of the relations between the Odrysian Kingdom and the *poleis* along its coasts, members of the Athenian Empire, for the period from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC until 341 BC (Порожанов 2011), shows that the *poleis* did not always pay taxes to Athens, because they were involved in the orbit of the economy and policy of the Odrysian rulers: the smaller ones – completely or to a very high degree, the bigger ones – partially or to a lesser extent. The issue in these relations stems from the markets of the *poleis*, through which profits were accumulated. Precisely those profits attracted the interest of the Odrysian *basileia*. Through diplomatic treaties and through force it succeeded in imposing itself upon the *poleis*. If this is well visible for the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century BC, it would be interesting to trace the evolution of those processes during the subsequent centuries: from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC until the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, until the Roman conquest of Ancient Thrace.

# TROGLODYTES IN THRACE

## 1. SOURCES AND LOCATION

*Stoyanka Dimitrova*

The present text is the first part of a broader study and it provides a new perspective to certain aspects of the issue of the Troglodytes in Thrace. The analysis and the reinterpretation of the available written evidence lead to reconsidering of the traditional view that Troglodytes inhabited the territories close to the Danube Delta, or lived in the caves along the Black Sea coast, giving arguments for a new localisation in the interior of the Getic lands.

**T**roglodytes (Τρωγλοδύτες, Τρωγλοδύται) is a term with a vast territorial scope and it is used to describe a population from different regions of the *oikumene* known from the Antiquity: Africa, Asia and Europe.

### 1. Africa

The written tradition about the Troglodytes in Africa (Donne 1873: 1236-1237) dates many centuries back, but it is relatively uniform. A large part of the information has preserved its legendary character that can be traced back to the unique narrative style of Herodotus (Hdt. 4. 183. 4). The author presents the Troglodytes as hunting trophy of their neighbours – the Garamantes<sup>1</sup> and defines them as cave-dwelling Ethiopians. The Father of History also writes that they were the fastest people he had heard of, feeding predominantly on reptiles, and their speech resembled the sounds that bats make. That imposed image survived for centuries. A similar description of the neighbours, the language and the habitats of the Troglodytes can be found, e.g., in Pliny the Elder (Plin. *NH* 5. 43; 5. 45), who attributes the information about their speed to Krates of Pergamon (Plin. *NH* 7. 31) and to

<sup>1</sup> On the civilisation of the Garamantes, see Dowler, Galvin 2011; Mori 2010; Castles of 'Lost Cities' Revealed in the Libyan Desert: <https://www.livescience.com/16916-castles-lost-cities-revealed-libyan-desert.html>.

**THE GETIC MESSENGERS TO ZALMOXIS,  
THE FAITH IN IMMORTALITY  
AND THE DEATH OF THE WIDOWS**

*Dobriela Kotova*

The paper turns again to the well-known and extensively commented narrative by Herodotus about the faith of the Getae in their immortality, about the anthropodaimon Zalmoxis and about the periodic dispatching of a messenger to him. Attention is focused on the link between that evidence and the information in Herodotus about the killing of the beloved widow over the grave of the deceased husband among the Thracians who dwelled above the Crestonaeans, as well as with the statement by Stephanus Byzantius about a similar practice among the Getae. The evidence is analysed in the light of the universal historical phenomenon of following into death when someone is killed so as to follow someone else in the World Beyond. The analysis gives grounds to believe that traces of the ritual known as following into death in its institutional form are concealed behind the intricate story about the god/man Zalmoxis, his cult among the Getae and their beliefs. Among the Getae it was of a markedly religious character, based on the strong faith in the supernatural/divine existence of the dead in the World Beyond, in their influence on and direct interference in the course of life in this world and a clearly manifested cult of the ancestors.

**A**ncient authors ascribe two extraordinary customs to the Getae. Extraordinary – because ritual taking of human life, either as a sacrifice or as accompanying of the deceased in the World Beyond – has always been an occurrence of exceptional character everywhere in the world. The reference was to the periodic *dispatching* of a messenger to Zalmoxis, about which Herodotus writes, as well as the hacking of the widow to death upon the demise of her husband, which is reported in the *Lexicon* of Stephanus Byzantius. It is difficult to determine whether the information provided by the lexicographer was due to erroneous reading of the famous narrative by Herodotus about the killing of the beloved widow over the grave of the deceased husband among the Thracians “who dwell above the Crestonaeans” (Hdt. 5.5), or based on other sources attesting the existence of such a custom

## ZALMOXIS AND KRONOS

*Milen Ivanov*

The paper analyses the information in some sources as the ancient author Hesychius and the *Suidas* Lexicon on the similitude between Zalmoxis – the ancient king, priest, healer and deity attested in the lands of the Getae – and the ancient Greek god Kronos. On the one hand, the teaching of Zalmoxis about immortality promises eternal happy life, which is reminiscent of the Golden Age of bliss described by Hesiod, during which Kronos reigned. On the other hand, the ancient Greek god ruled also over the generation of heroes inhabiting the islands of the blessed. These specificities could serve as a basis for bringing the images of Zalmoxis and Kronos closer to one another. The image-idea of Kronos apparently designated the teaching about immortality and about the happy life after death preached by Zalmoxis. These ideas are in total harmony with the information provided by the ancient authors about the faith of the Thracians in immortality and with the archaeological evidence. The entire range of religious and philosophical notions connected with Zalmoxis is at the basis of the later cult of the Thracian *Heros*. In view of these links between the image of Zalmoxis and the teaching personified by him, on the one hand, and the heroic cult on the other, it seems logical for Zalmoxis to be likened to Kronos by the Greek authors. The syncretism between Zalmoxis and Kronos-Saturn can also be assumed from the *Vitae* of the Early Christian Saint Dasius of Durostorum. Following this line of thought, there is a possibility that the cult and image of Kronos could be perceived as a starting point for the understanding of Thracian culture, just as, e.g., Dionysos, Ares, Artemis, Hermes, the Thracian *Heros* and other deities.

It is well known that Zalmoxis was worshipped as king, priest, teacher, healer, hero and deity in the lands of the Getae and elsewhere in ancient Thrace.<sup>1</sup> Herodotus has left evidence about him in his narrative about the march of Darius to the north, as well as other ancient authors (Hdt. 4. 93-96; Hellanic. Fr. 73 (Jacoby); Iambl. *Vita Pyth.* 173; Jord. *Get.* 39-41; Str. 7. 3. 5; Plat. *Charm.* 156d-157b). One of the most interesting aspects of his cult and image can be seen in his identification with the ancient Greek god Kro-

<sup>1</sup> The literature on Zalmoxis is rather voluminous. The most recent and most exhaustive monograph on that topic is by D. Popov (Πονοβ 1995).

**NOTES ON DECIUS' GOTHIC WAR  
IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW FRAGMENTS  
BY DEXIPPUS OF ATHENS**

*Kalin Stoev*

The paper examines the Gothic invasion in the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD and the ways in which the newly-discovered fragments by Dexippus (*Scythica Vindobonensia*) complemented or altered the picture of the event known so far. Comparing the evidence in them with the information known from other sources about events during the last years of Philip the Arab and the rule of Trajan Decius led to the altering of some old theories about the course of events. The appearance of Ostrogotha (Ostroguthos) in the new fragments indicates that he was probably the leading figure in the Gothic incursions between 248 and 251 AD, and this clearly suggests Gothic ethnic belonging of the “Scythians” – as Dexippus referred to them.

The first in a series of Greek fragments containing extremely valuable information about the history and about the barbarian incursions in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD was published in 2010, acquiring the generalising name *Scythica Vindobonensia* (Martin, Grusková 2014; Martin, Grusková 2014a; Mallan, Davenport 2015). The authors G. Martin and J. Grusková identified the fragments as parts of Dexippus' *Scythica* (Martin, Grusková 2014), a partially preserved contemporary source about the Gothic Wars in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, and more specifically about the two big invasions of the “barbarians” in 249-251 AD (with all the relative nature of the dating) and 267-268 AD – the so-called “Herulian invasion” (Piso 2015; Mallan, Davenport 2015; Martin, Grusková 2014b). The newly-discovered fragments<sup>1</sup> are a rare example revealing unknown parts of a classical and extremely important source, notably the work by the Athenian politician and historian P. Herennius Dexippus. Their value in the concrete case was also augmented by the fact that the historical period and the events that they refer to are among the least elucidated by the

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<sup>1</sup> The main information of interest to us here is contained in four sheets of a medieval manuscript (11<sup>th</sup> century), which was transformed into a palimpsest in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Martin, Grusková 2014a: 29 sq.).

**OSSERVAZIONI SULLA PUBBLICAZIONE  
DELL'EDICTUM DE PRETIIS RERUM VENALIUM  
AD ODESSOS**

*Lyuba Radulova*

The paper focuses on a fragment of Diocletian's Edict of Maximum Prices, found in Odessos in Moesia Inferior. Being one of only three pieces found outside Asia Minor, this fragment has frequently been considered problematic as it disproves the hypothesis about the promulgation of the Edict only in the Eastern part of the Empire. Attempts have been made to ascribe the Odessos fragment to a micro-Asiatic context, considering it a piece that was brought from Asia Minor to Moesia in modern times.

In the first place, the paper examines the epigraphic characteristics of the fragment, focusing also on the archaeological context in which it was discovered and on the possible parallels with other inscriptions and monuments found on the same spot. The observations lead to the conclusion that the fragment fits completely into the archaeological context and there are no reasons to believe that it was recently brought to Odessos.

Secondly, the paper examines the broader historical and social context of Odessos. Keeping in mind that the inscription of an imperial edict on stone is usually not obligatory, but is due to the initiative of a local magistrate, the study identifies a relation between the economic and political crisis in which Odessos found itself in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD and the desire of the local magistrates to revive the city's importance as a trade port by publicly stating that Odessos does apply the official regulations and does not tolerate speculation.

### **1. I problemi intorno alla provenienza del frammento**

Nel 1961-1962, nel corso di una campagna di scavi, condotta nella zona delle cosiddette "piccole terme romane" ad Odessos nella provincia di Moesia Inferior (oggi Varna in Bulgaria), viene rinvenuto un piccolo frammento centrale di lastra di marmo dalle dimensioni (24) x (14) x 2 cm. (Mihailov 1978: 147-148; AE 1978, 714; Robert J., L. Robert 1979: 427-428, nr. 79). Il frammento riporta parzialmente nove righe del *Edictum de pretiis rerum ve-*