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# THRACIA XXIII



БЪЛГАРСКА АКАДЕМИЯ НА НАУКИТЕ



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## NOTES FOR THE ROYAL POWER IN THRACE

*Valeria Fol*

The article examines the genesis of the aristocratic establishment of archaeological data, written testimonies and the powers of the ruler's institution in the Thracian kingdoms. The conclusions reached are that the figure of the ruler in Thracian society embodies a centralized socio-political device in which the king carries the judicial, military and religious power. At the same time, the monarchical organization of the Thracian kingdoms can be defined as "soft", as it does not overcome the system of local rulers. The "soft monarchical organization" is supported by the markedly aristocratic way of life that has impressed the Greek settlers who founded colonies along the Thracian coasts, especially those who came into contact with the Thracians along the North Aegean coast.

Monarchy as an aristocratic form of government is the prerogative of those important because of their bloodline or riches, conforming to traditional norms of life. This also applies to the Odrysian kingdom, despite the evidence of the para-dynastic status reported by Thucydides (Thuc., 2.97.2–3). The Thracian aristocratic establishment does not rule based on ethnic consciousness. Self-determination is based on common traditions, rituals and beliefs, and on belonging to a territory governed by a dynastic clan. The article also looks at the Thracian kingdoms as economic regions, not just as state formations formed solely by the force of coercion, which gives a clearer picture of the need for the military aristocracy to protect them.

**Key words:** Thrace, royal power, powers of the ruler's institution, Thracian aristocracy, soft monarchical organization

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**TO BE A MAN, MALE AND GREEK...:  
ANCIENT THRACIA AND THE THRACIANS IN  
OLD ATTIC COMEDY**

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Thales of Miletus (c. 624 – c. 546 BC), the father of philosophy and one of the Seven Sages of Greece defines three main reasons for his gratitude to fate: first, for being born a man and not a wild animal; second, for being born a man and not a woman; third, for being born a Greek and not a barbarian. “Man, male and Greek” define and at the same time construct the identity of the polis citizen.

The paper examines the paradigm of the relation-interpretation of the ancient Thracian world and the Thracians applied by classical Old-Attic culture, and accordingly by the Old-Attic comedy in constructing the polis identity of the Athenian citizens.

The Otherness is – in general – the result of a discursive process in which the dominant group (We) constructs one or more dominated groups (They, Other) by stigmatization of difference – real or imaginary, presented as a denial of identity, but also as a motive for potential discrimination.

A conclusion is proposed that Ancient Thrace, transformed and reduced to dramaturgical and cultural topos, was interpolated in the Old-Attic comedy so as to materialise the system of otherness and to be modelled as a paradigm of otherness, but also as an effort to overcome it by constructing models of increasing closeness.

**Key words:** the identity of the *polis* citizen, Otherness, Thracian word, Thracians, dramaturgical and cultural *topos*.

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## THE THRACIAN LANGUAGE AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

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The paper traces the thesis that Thracian linguistic data are a purely linguistic issue, on the one hand, but on the other – a specific historical source providing evidence on the entire chronological range of Thracian history: from the settling of the bearers of the Indo-European dialect – the future Thracian language – in the Balkan Peninsula (the earliest Thracian toponymy) to the end of Antiquity and the assimilation of the Thracian language and ethnos (personal names, toponyms, theonyms and ethnonyms).

**Key words:** Thracian language, Thracian history, Thracian toponymy, personal names, toponyms, theonyms and ethnonyms.

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Regional Historical Museum at Kyustendil (ancient Ulpia Pautalia). Part I. Greek, Thracian Macedonian, Roman Republican and Roman Provincial. Sofia.

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## ONE LOST COIN HOARD WITH TETRADRACHMS IN THE NAME OF PHILIP II FROM VILLAGE ELSHNITSA, BLAGOEVGRAD DISTRICT

*Ilya S. Prokopov*

The author makes a reconstruction of one scattered coin hoard. The coins are discovered in the village of Eleshnitsa, Blagoevgrad district. The village is situated on both sides of the Zlataritsa River, a tributary of the Mesta river (anc. Nestus). The coin hoard is homogeneous. It is composed only of tetradrachms with the name of Philip II (359-336).

The author analyzes all similar finds from Southwestern Bulgaria. This is the territory of the rivers Struma (anc. Strymon) and Mesta. There are also 6 very similar homogeneous coin hoards: Pelatikovo, Kyustendil district; Dupnitsa, Kyustendil district (IGCH 729); Ranentsi, Kyustendil district (IGCH 821); Kyustendil area; Gospodintsi, Gotse Delchev area (IGCH 819); Ribnovo, Gotse Delchev area (IGCH 820). Of them in the valley of Upper Struma are: Pelatikovo, Kyustendil district; Dupnitsa, Kyustendil district (IGCH 729); Ranentsi, Kyustendil district (IGCH 821); and Kyustendil area. The coin hoard from the village of Eleshnitsa is territorially situated between the finds from Upper Struma and the



coin hoards from Gospodintsi, Gotse Delchev area (IGCH 819) and Ribново, Gotse Delchev area (IGCH 820). The last two coin hoards are downstream of the Mesta River.

In addition to the homogeneous finds, the author commented and the mixed ones, which are found in the north in the region of the town of Pernik and the city of Sofia.

The closest parallel of the coin hoards from the village of Eleshnitsa is the coin hoard from the village of Pelatikovo, Kyustendil district. There are 6 tetradrachms from Pelatikovo identical to 5 tetradrachms from Eleshnitsa.

The find from the village of Eleshnitsa probably was hidden shortly after 294 BC. It can be assumed it happened at the time of the struggles between Demetrius Poliorcetes and Lysimachos?

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## THE MYTHOLOGICAL STORY OF TYRO AND SOME ITS REALIA IN ANCIENT THRACE (τυρώ; apollod. 1.9, 8)

*Ivan Todorov*

Salmoneus, the son of Aeolus, had a daughter named Tyro. She is the issue from the marriage to his first wife, Alcidice. Once the mother died, and the father suffered a punishment by Zeus – he was punished with a lightning because of his pride, Tyro's uncle Cretheus raised her and she subsequently married him. Before that, however, and against her will, Tyro gave birth to the twins Pelias and Neleus; their father was Poseidon, “God of the Sea”. Pelias was to become king of Iolcus. As for Neleus, he drove away the Leleges from Messenia, and has been even considered as the founder of Pylos.

Sophocles keenly employed the mythological plot of Tyro in the dramas that he dedicated to her (fragments have been preserved). Apart from the literary analysis and through the scientific studies of nowadays, we link etymologically the name of Tyro to the early religious practices in Hellas and to some widely used namings and terms in the Ancient Greek language. These terms can also be used in a broader context, as they may strongly relate to the history and the culture of Ancient Thrace.

**Key words:** Tyro, early religious practices, Hellas, Ancient Greek language, Ancient Thrace

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## PALAEOBALKAN-WESTANATOLIAN COMMUNITY: THE REQUIRED TERM

*Alexandar Portalsky*

The paper justifies the use of the term Palaeobalkan-westanatolian community. The community is defined as over-lingual and culturally identifiable, but it demonstrates similarities in the political systems too.

The community becomes identifiable from the second half of the 2nd millennium BC., slightly blurred in Hellenistic and Roman period, but its strong fundamentals hold until the end of antiquity. The announcement of Constantinople as an imperial capital plays a big role for that.

It, in turn, is conditioned by the existence of this core that ensures the centuries long existence of Byzantium. Late manifestations of Palaeobalkan-westanatolian community are well documented and easily noticeable. A more significant question is since when we may identify this community and what might cause its formation. It`s appearance is related with the presence of similar natural conditions and the common to a great extent religion, as well as with the eased communication around the three seas - the Aegean, Sea of Marmora and Black sea.

The community includes different languages, not all of which are ethnically close. Within the community appear some of the earliest *protopoleis* and cities in Europe. The Greek polis was born here too. Polis suggests a different type of culture and polity in comparison to the monarchy, but both are formed gradually and would have hardly strengthen without interaction with the other political formations in Palaeobalkan-westanatolian community. They do not simply accept greek *apoikies*, they need a symbiotic relationship with them. The easy migration of local population in the colonies shows that the way of life in them is known and acceptable for non-greeks. All that will emerge as a symbiosis between polis and monarchy in the era of Hellenism and in the Roman Empire, has already been tested within the Palaeobalkan-westanatolian community and has proven its viability.

The term summarizes many previous observations made by many scientists. The term “Mycenaean Thrace” shows diachronic proximity between societies in Mycenaean Greece and Thrace from the early Iron Age. I can add also the parallels between Thrace and Phrygia synthesized in the term “Thracian-Phrygian contact zone” and “Thracian-Trojan ethnocultural community.” Subsequently the term “Palaeo-Balkan community” is introduced.

Observations on ancient authors show awareness of the existence of such a community. It is expressed most often through mythological genealogy of eponyms of different ethnic groups that show the connections between them. This tradition began by Herodotus and increased during the Hellenistic era. Finally I offer examples which suggest the existence of a Palaeobalkan-westanatolian community in the understanding of kingship and cults.

**Key words:** Mycenaean Thrace, Thracian-Phrygian contact zone, Thracian-Trojan ethnocultural community, Palaeobalkan-westanatolian community

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## THE CAMPAIGN OF ALEXANDER III AGAINST THE TRIBALLOI IN SCYTHIA DURING 335 B.C.

*Plamen Petkov*

According to Strabo, the Autariatae, having defeated the Triballoi from the Agrianes to the Istros, within 15-days distance, imposed their domination over the rest of the Thracians and the Illyrians. The author indicates the Autariatae as the most numerous and most powerful Illyrian people, who managed to impose its power on the Triballoi and on the other Thracians and Thracians. But Arrian points that about 335 B.C. the Autariatae were not quite important in terms of military force, and during the following about twenty years they were not able to create it. Therefore the hegemony of the Autariatae refers to

the time before the campaigns of Philip II in 339 B.C. and of Alexander III in 335 B.C. The domination of the Autariatae over the territory around Sofia and north of the Haemus Mountains did not last long, as around the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., under the pressure of the Celts, the Autariatae lost their power over the Thracian people in the valley of the Oescus river. Meanwhile, the Triballoi were at war against the Scythian ruler Ateas in Scythia Minor. After the murder of Ateas by Philip II and the destruction by him of the Scythian political formation on the south of the river in 339 B.C., the Triballoi imposed their domination along the entire right side of Lower Istros between 339 and 335 B.C. They have been evidenced there during the military campaign of Alexander III in Thrace. Plutarch (or Pseudo-Plutarch) and Orosius provide evidence that in 335 B.C. Alexander III reached Danubian Scythia, where he was at war against the Triballoi.

**Key words:** Triballoi, Agrianes, Thracians, Thracians, Autariata, Scythia, Alexander III

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**THE MIDDLE STRYMON VALLEY IN THE CONTEXT  
OF THE ROMAN PROVINCIAL POLICY FROM  
THE MIDDLE OF 2ND CENTURY BC  
TO THE MIDDLE OF 1 CENTURY AD**

*Sotir Ivanov*

After the conquest of Macedonia, the Romans built a provincial administration that took advantage of the Polis heritage of Hellenism. The political, economic and cultural life in the Middle Struma valley is closely related to the town municipality institution from the middle of the 2nd century BC until the 1st century AD. The traditions inherited from Hellenism in the urban self-government have been preserved and developed according to the Roman interests. The Roman political and tax system relies on the oligarchy, which leads to an increase in the influence of the town council and the limitation of the role of the National Assembly. The importance of the central administration, which begins to restrict local self-government, is growing gradually.

**Key words:** provincial administration; the Middle Struma valley; the Polis heritage of Hellenism; the town municipality institution; the urban self-government

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## THE RULER OROLES – BETWEEN MYTH AND HYPOTHESIS

*Stoyanka Dimitrova*

The study presents a summary review of the different and contradictory hypothesis about the ethnic origin, identification, chronology, political history and territories of the Northern-thracian ruler Oroles (Just. *Ep.* 32.3.16).

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## KING RHESUS AND ORPHEUS IN THE MOUNTAIN PANGAION

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The present paper has been focused on the literary passage of (Pseudo-)Euripides from his tragedy “Rhesus”, which deals with the posthumous being of the Thracian king (Eurip. *Rhes.* 962-973), and the fragment of Aeschylus from his tragedy “Bassarids”, which tells about the life and death of Orpheus (Aesch. *Bassar.* Fr. 83). Both texts situate king Rhesus and Orpheus in Mount Pangaion. They describe on one hand Dionysian, chthonian type of cult and ritualism, and on the other hand – Apollonian, solar type of cult and ritualism. The passages have been analysed in comparison with other pieces of evidence from ancient authors, related to Mount Pangaion and other similar cultic *topoi*. These sacred places described in the ancient literary tradition correspond to the rock *topoi* of cult and ritualism in South-East Europe and in Asia Minor, which have preserved numerous ancient relicts as a vital heritage up to the present day. One important feature of Thracian religion is to be noticed – both its unity and its variety. We can see clearly juxtaposed the Apollonian and the Dionysian principle – this fundamental opposition which marks the entire European cultural-historical tradition. But this juxtaposition can be logically explained in the light of the literary evidence of the Roman writer Macrobius. In his work “*Saturnalia*” he provides numerous arguments that Apollo and Dionysus are one and the same god. In conclusion, Mount Pangaion may be considered as an important sacred place of synthesis between Dionysian and Apollonian types of religiousness.

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## DEPORTED PAEONIANS IN ASIA MINOR AND PERSIAN ROYAL ESTATES

*Miroslav Izdimirski*

In this article I would like to reexamine the information in Herodotus for deportation of Paeonians in Achaemenid Empire. This procedure I will put the evidences in context of mass deportations of people, and all families like workers – *kurtaš* from different origin in Persian Empire. They are war captives and worked in Royal estates, and also in economic structures of Persian noblemen like satraps. Paeonians are settled in Anatolia in one '*kome kai hora*' as workers in Persian estates (royal or satrapal) and worked in agriculture. The etiological myth for hard-working paeonian women clearly state that Paeonian workers are settled in Persian provinces '*tayaiy drayahya*' (Hellespontine Phrygia) and '*sparda*' (Sardis, Lydia). Some of Paeonian workers probably was settled in Persida and Elam and named Iškudra / Skudra in Persepolis Fortification Tablets and Old Persian Inscriptions. With ethnonym Skudrians (in Old Persian language) was described Thracians and probably Phrygians.

**Key words:** Paeonians, Achaemenid Empire, *kurtaš*, *tayaiy drayahya*, *sparda*, Iškudra/Skudra, Persepolis Fortification Tablets

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## **THE DIVINE NATURE. THE SACRED CAVES AS ALLEGORY OF THE NETHERWORLD**

*Anton Genov*

The cave in the collective consciousness is closely associated with the earliest shelters and origin of man, the memory of which causes permanent return to these earth wombs. The utilization of the deep cave galleries has provoked in the primitive man various magical ideas and scenes. Inspired by the phenomenal formations and reliefs, his mind has built different images that sometimes he further developed with drawings and engravings.

It can barely be found an answer to the question when the cave was sacralized (the same is valid for the sacralization of the rock). In the animistic consciousness of prehistoric man it was part of the complex essence of spiritualized nature. Moreover, the cave had special significance because it was recreating most figuratively the human-nature interactions and originated the illusion of passing into another dimension related to ancestors.

**Key words:** sanctuaries, mythology, caves, semantics, initiation.

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## THE SOLDIER-MARTYRS OF DUROSTORUM FROM LEGIO XI CLAUDIA DURING THE GREAT PERSECUTION

*Vesselina Miteva*

Before the time of the Great Persecution Christians were not prosecuted by the imperial government, but with the accession of the Emperor Diocletian (284–305 r.) the religious policy takes another direction. The emperor's legislation inaugurates the first and only period of persecution against Christians due to their religious beliefs. One of the first Christian centers in today's Bulgarian territory is the city of Durostorum (modern day Silistra), which at the end of 4th century became the seat of a Christian bishopric and a center of Christianity in the region. Many early Christian buildings and artefacts indicating a strong Christian presence compared to the other parts of the Moesia Inferior province have been discovered in Durostorum. In numerous hagiographical sources the names of a fourteen martyrs stand out. Eight of them are known to be soldiers in the Legio XI Claudia during the time of the Great Persecution. Unfortunately there is no other source that confirms their stories or their actual existence. The only information about those soldiers is that they were executed during the reign of Emperor Diocletian in 304.

This paper argues that the majority of the martyrdom stories need to be considered as propagandist literature while the martyrs themselves represent the embodiment of a Christian ethic – an ideal example of heroism and other virtues. Whatever the case with the martyrs of Durostorum is, we couldn't possibly consider them as an example for the religious climate during the time of the edicts.

**Key words:** the Great Persecution of Christians; Emperor Diocletian, Durostorum (modern day Silistra), Legio XI Claudia, martyrdom, soldier-martyrs

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## ON ONE PHENOMENON FROM URBAN LIFE IN THRACE IN THE 4TH CENTURY AD

*Ivo Topalilov*

The present paper deals with the phenomenon of the municipal life of the urban society in Late Antique Thrace in a case study of Philippopolis, and possibly Hadrianopolis concerning the invention and proclamation of the ancient origin of the city and its municipal elite. This phenomenon is revealed by the historical narratives which applied to the existence of pre-Roman settlement on both places – Eumolpiada, after Eumolpos and Orestias/Uscudama respectively. In both places the stress is on the Attic link.

This phenomenon is also attested among the ‘Thracian’ municipal elite as the speeches of Himerius reveal in the case with Severus and his wife being proclaimed with royal origin, both also closely linked to Athens.

It is believed that these and others manifestations of the local elite which closely followed that of Constantinopolitan elite, were logical consequence of the intellectual development of the society in Thrace, but it was also proclaimed to the contrary by the Christianity which started to prevail. The rule of Julian was a good reason for such manifestation, probably one of the last ones in this respect in Thracian cities.

**Key words:** Attic origin, Pagan, municipal elite, Thrace, Late antique

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## THE BESSI AND CARMEN XVII OF PAULINUS OF NOLA

*Boryana Markova*

*Carmen* XVII of Paulinus of Nola is the principal source of information about the conversion of the Bessians. The poem, written in 398 A.D., is dedicated to the missionary activity of the bishop of Remesiana – St. Nicetas among different barbarian tribes including the Bessians.

Paulinus of Nola praises the great success of Nicetas in the conversion of the barbarians. He presents the Bessians as rude people who refuse to be slaves and as robbers, transformed by Nicetas in monks. The poet uses different rhetorical techniques to present the transformation from paganism to Christianity and to magnify the power of the Christian faith. That fact questions the credibility of the missionary activity of Nicetas and puts the question if Paulinus writes about historical events or if he uses his imagination to show the greatness of the Christianity. The author gives precise details and an exact information about

the Bessians, their past and their culture so the information about their conversion also does not be put under question.

The geographical area of the missionary activity of Nicetas is not certain – the region of Remesiana and the province of Dacia but without more precise details. The date of the conversion of the Bessians is not evident – around 398 because in the poem the Bessians are presented as already converted to the Christianity. Nevertheless the conversion of the Bessians should be regarded as a historical event considering the historical context of the end of IV c. A.D. and the historical fate of Thrace and the Thracian tribes.

**Key words:** Paulinus of Nola, St. Nicetas of Remesiana, Thrace, Bessians, Christianity, conversion

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## RELATIONS AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ASSYRIA AND NEO-HITTITE KINGDOMS DURING THE REIGN OF ASHURNASIRPAL II

*Zozan Tarhan*

The present paper aims at research of relations between Assyria during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II and three Neo-Hittite kingdoms – Carchemish, Patina and Kummuhu, situated in North-Western Syria and neighbouring parts of Turkey. The first part of the study is dedicated to the political events in the relations, marked by the campaigns of the Assyrian ruler in the first half of IX century BCE. The analysis here is based mainly on written sources – Assyrian royal inscriptions, which describe events in terms of campaigns, subjugation and tributes, received from Neo-Hittite kings. The second part of the study is dedicated to the cultural interaction between Assyria and the three kingdoms mentioned above, as result of their subjugation. Here the analysis is based on artifacts, mainly stone slabs with reliefs and some cylinder seals. Some new observations on the chronology of the monuments and their scenes are added, as also some new conclusions on the direction of influence in some artifacts and their elements. The question about the role of Assyria in the process of cultural interaction is especially discussed in the light of new observations. It is concluded, that the cultural interaction in this period is a bilateral process with long-term consequences in the art and politics.

**Key words:** Assyria, Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Hittite kingdoms, Ashurnasirpal II, relations, interactions, campaigns, tributes, culture.

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