

# THRACIA

## XXV





ИНСТИТУТ ЗА БАЛКАНИСТИКА  
С ЦЕНТЪР ПО ТРАКОЛОГИЯ „ПРОФ. АЛЕКСАНДЪР ФОЛ“

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# THRACIA

## XXV

### ДРЕВНА ТРАКИЯ И ТРАКИТЕ: САКРАЛНО И ПРОФАННО

СЪСТАВИТЕЛСТВО И РЕДАКЦИЯ:

*Ваня Лозанова-Станчева, Валерия Фол, Калин Порожанов*

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### ***Topoi* for transitioning from profane to sacred space**

*Valeria Fol*

The article looks at the *topoi* that mark sacred and profane in sanctuaries. Attention is focused on water sources, the door and the threshold in an architecturally internalized space. Written sources and architecturally absorbed space are analyzed. Attention is also paid to the transformation of water, threshold and door into metaphors on the boundary between sacred and profane space.

**Keywords:** sacred, profane, space, sanctuaries, water sources,

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## **The Orpheus Taming Wild Animals Scene: Between the Profane and the Sacred**

*Vanya Lozanova-Stancheva*

The Orpheus Taming Wild Animals scene is particularly popular in all genres of ancient fine art. It is commonly perceived and interpreted as a metaphor for Orpheus' magical and musical skills in the ancient Hellenic poetic tradition, which the Roman poets make *locus communis*.

The aim of the present paper is to offer a new reading of the scene, which – in combination with the fragmented poetic evidences – allows the reconstruction of a possible mythological precedent for the journey of Orpheus to the World Beyond where he attained the mystic theological knowledge that allowed him to lay the foundations of the mysterial initiations.

A serious digression from the conventional scene “The Orpheus Taming Wild Animals” shows the composition on some artifacts depicting unusual figures – a centaur(s), Pan, Satyroi.

Thematic systematization and semantic analysis of the individual components in this type of compositions could outline some hypotheses regarding the ‘reading’ of its conceptual sources and messages. The analysis of the formal basic components of the images suggests that the scene presented a sacral topos in the World Beyond, associated with the myth-literary tradition of the Argonauts journey.

**Keywords:** The Orpheus Taming Wild Animals scene, the World Beyond, mysterial initiations, Centaur(s), Pan, Satyroi

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### ***The Sea Mother of the Gods from the Antique Temple in Dionysopolis (Balchik) and the Sea Mother from the Traditional Culture in Sozopol***

*Kalin Porozhanov*

In the dedications of the temple of the *Pontic Mother of the Gods* (4<sup>th</sup> century BC – 4<sup>th</sup> century) in Dionysopolis (now the town of Balchik) on Bulgarian Northern Black Sea Coast the goddesses' references are *Pontic Mother of the Gods*, *Pontic Mother*, *Pontic Goddess Mother*, *Mother of the Gods*.

In other inscriptions from the Black Sea region is used *Mother of the Gods* (Bizone, Istros/Histria, Tomis, Olbia), *Pantikapaion* – *Phrygian Mother*, *Mesambria* – *Kybele Mother*, *Marcianopolis* – *Heavenly Mother of the Gods*.

The concept of *Pontic* is found in inscriptions for Aphrodite from Histria and Olbia, from Tiristasis, Kyzikos/Cyzicus and the island of Kos, where it is a *protector of sailors*. Obviously, in the case of the *Pontic goddess* of the Temple of Dionysopolis, it is a *protector from and into the sea*. It is certain that behind the term *Pontic* lies *the meaning of the sea*, and this characteristic as the *Sea Mother of the Gods*, according to the use of forms of the Ionic dialect, probably originates in Asia Minor.

In the traditional culture of the town of Sozopol (ancient *poleis* Apollonia Pontica) and in the others towns of Bulgarian Southern Black Sea coast, the *Sea Mother* (Greek *Kiratalassa* = *mistress, lady sovereign, ruler of the sea*) is the *Goddess of the Sea*. Its strength and power is so great that it can both break the sea and the worst storm to make it subsided. To express their esteem to her, fishermen portray her as a bust of a female figure made of wood. It is placed at the front of the boat's nose to protect them in the sea.

The comparability of the deities of the *Sea Mother of the Gods* from Antiquity in Dionysopolis (now town of Balchik) on Bulgarian Northern Black Sea Coast and the *Sea Mother* of the Twentieth Century in the town of Sozopol on Bulgarian Southern Black Sea Coast – allows for the problem situation to come up with a working hypothesis that would say it is for the Great Goddess Mother as a Thracian-Anatolian Deity, honored in Thracian environment in Hellenic *poleis* on the Thracian coasts.

**Key words:** Pontic Mother, antiquity, faith, traditional culture, continuity, modernity

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**The Thracian Megalith Sanctuary *Kara kaya*  
as a Symbol of the Cosmic Mountain**

*Vassil Markov*

The Thracian megalith sanctuary *Kara kaya* is located in the Western Rhodopes Mountains. It occupies a dominant peak over the surrounding terrain, ending with a natural stone pyramid. The rock cuttings are concentrated on the top of the slopes and at the foot, near the Visteritsa river. This structure, combined with the semantics of the rock cuts, make it a classic symbol of the cosmic mountain.

**Keywords:** thracian sanctuaries, megaliths, rock-cut altars, mythology, archeology

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## **The Cup of Initiation. Towards the Semantics of Precious Metal Vessels in the Orphic Ritual Practices of the Thracian Aristocracy**

*Michaela Yordanova*

The exposition analyzes the semantics of Thracian vessels of precious metal; an attempt was made to discuss their function in the context of sacred mysterious logos; a reinterpretation of the ritual symposial practices characteristic of the Orphic communities of Thracian political elites is proposed. Precisely because of their sacred functions, vessels of precious metal with inscriptions are found in the funerals and treasures of the aristocratic elite. They function in a certain way in the symposium rituals during the ruler's symposia, and such practices in Thrace, are part of the Orphic religion and are associated with aristocratic political elites.

There are several reasons for this topic: There is discussion in the literature and there is still a lack of a systematic and consistent thesis about the function of precious metal vessels in the Thracian cultural model. Despite the fundamental research of Al. Foul, the connection between the Thracian basic model of Orphism as aristocratic ideology and its projections in artifacts and folk narratives has not yet been sought. No effort was made to illuminate the function of the Thracian sacral artifacts in parallel with the Greek orphic sources.

**Keywords:** Thracian vessels, sacred mysterious logos, Orphic communities, Thracian political elites, initiation

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**Who Issued the Bronzes of the Types of *round shield* // *kypsele*,  
Discovered during the Excavations of the Thracian Settlement Called  
“Emporion Pistiros”**

*Boryana Russeva*

The paper presents the extremely interesting bronze coin of the types of *round shield* // *two-handled cup* (*kypsele*, *kotyle*, *diota*) (Fig. 1a–1b) discovered in 1996 during the archaeological excavations of the Thracian settlement located in the area of *Adzhiyska Vodenitsa* near the village (now a town) of Vetren, Septemvri Municipality, better known as “Emporion Pistiros”. Grounded on both informative types known as *parasema*, the author tries to interpret (issuer and time of minting) this unique bronze issue – an allusion of the Odrysian Royal court from the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC under Seuthes II, Kotys I and their successors via the unambiguous presence of the cult cup – the *kypsele* or *kotyle* decorating the reverses of their coins.

**Keywords:** bronze coin, round shield, *kypsele*, “Emporion Pistiros”, Seuthes II

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## Harpocrates in Thrace during the Greco-Roman Period

*Vessela Atanassova*

When Ptolemy I became ruler of Egypt (306 BC), he continued to have interests in Thrace and Asia Minor where Lysimachus, its ruler, married his daughter Arsinoe II. Most likely, their wedding was fixed with certain benefits, which led to the permanent presence of the Ptolemy in Southern Thrace. In fact, the whole 3<sup>rd</sup> century was marked by the presence of the Ptolemies in Thrace. This for sure, but also for some other unclear reasons facilitated the spreading of the Egyptian cults in that region. Several Egyptian deities, mainly Isis and Sarapis, but some other deities in relation with them, were found on various documents attesting their presence in Thrace from the Hellenistic period to the end of the Roman Era.

Harpocrates, the presumed son of Isis and Sarapis in Greco-roman period, was one of those deities. Unlike his divine parents, he was a *synnaos theos* and his cult spread on a different manner. According to the monuments he was more likely worshiped because of his qualities as savior god and his magical competences. The study will examine the existing documentation and will discuss the mechanisms of spreading of the Harpocrates cult in Ancient Thrace from the Hellenistic period onward.

**Keywords:** Harpocrates, Isiac cults, Egyptian cults, Greco-roman Thrace, magic amulets

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### **New Data on Commemorative Practices in the Necropolis of Apollonia Pontica**

*Pavlina Devlova, Milena Krumova*

This part of the necropolis of Apollonia Pontica was actively used without interruption from the end of the 5th century BC to the III rd century BC. The space has been planned since its creation in the 5th century BC. The areas studied were most likely used by wealthier families, given the construction of such expensive burial and fencing facilities.

For the first time in the necropolis of Apollonia, was discovered and documented a large section of the outer peribolus of the sacral space – the Southern Peribolos. The outer Peribolos was probably built in the 4th century BC. Confirmation of the date is the reused stelae, base and fragments of other similar elements. Since the beginning of the use of the family site, it has designated a special place for commemorative practices. It is certain that the places of burial, funeral and commemoration are different and memory is preserved in time, because there is no case of a broken grave. Numerous discovered preserved whole vessels may have been left behind after the change of sand, and he eventually poured them, helping to preserve them. Honoring deceased relatives is a long-standing practice. Probably the place is ennobled, there are stairs, open spaces that allow people to gather. Wine containers, jars, glasses, food containers allow us to visualize, although partially, the rituals of commemoration. Even though they come from a long way, the tradition is long-lived, the remains remain in the necropolis – that is why the bottoms are punctured and missing, the knife left in the amphora.

After the 3rd century BC this section has been abandoned and is no longer used – either with the function of a necropolis or for other purposes.

**Keywords:** Apollonia Pontica, necropolis, rituals of commemoration

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## Human Hair in Ancient Thracian Culture

*Miroslav Izdimirski*

In the analysis suggested, I make an attempt first and foremost to gather in one place all evidence on the function and meaning of human hair in Thracian culture. Human hair, save for being a biological factum, is an object of impression in human culture, i.e., it is a unique cultural phenomenon. I consider written evidences on the specific Thracian hair-do, as noted by the ancient authors, as well as the evidence according to which Thracians were red-haired. I pay attention to the archeologic findings of human hair in ancient Thrace, to visual evidences about hair-dos and colour in human hairs, as well as some folklore evidences on treatments of human hair, precisely as the object and subject of human culture.

**Keywords:** human hair, Thracian culture, Thracian hair-do

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## About the Successors of Burebista: Some Notes of Chronological and Territorial Aspect

*Stoyanka Dimitrova*

According to Strabo, after the plot against the Getic king Burebista and his assassination, the kingdom was divided between the conspirators into four, later on, five parts (Str. 7. 3. 11). The study is focused on the disputes concerning the different identifications and ethnic belonging of some dynasts, who were assumed as Burebista's successors or the dating of their rule over separate military and political formations that had emerged immediately after Burebista's death. The text also provides a brief overview of the different approaches in discussions about the localization and the territorial limits of the 4 parts, mentioned by Strabo. The aim is not to give categorical answers, but rather to substantiate the need for presenting the problems in a more flexible variant.

**Keywords:** Burebista, Burebista's successors

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## The March of the "Demon" Alexander between the Sacred and the Profane

Kalin Stoev

The article deals with a curious event, described by Cassius Dio – a bacchic procession, led by certain "daemon", "spirit" that claimed to be Alexander the Great, passed through the Roman provinces of Moesia and Thrace and crossed the strait of Bosphorus. The event is approached in scientific literature as an imitation both of Alexander of Macedon's campaign in Thracian lands and Caracalla's own version of *imitatio Alexandri*, but there is more to be added. Caracalla's *imitatio* probably intended to present a good *omen* for his campaign against the Parthian Empire and thus, the procession of Pseudo-Alexander seems to be organized as an imitation of Caracalla's pompous travel and is probably organized by the Bacchic adherents nearby the camps of the Roman legions – an inscription from Boutovo (Nedan), near the Roman camp of Novae seem to present a documental evidence for one of the societies concerned.

**Keywords:** Moesian provinces, Caracalla, Alexander the Great, Roman Religion, Bacchic mysteries

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## IGBulg III, 1, 998 and Religious Syncretism in Roman Philippopolis

*Lyuba Radulova*

The paper examines a Greek inscription from Philippopolis (IGBulg III, 1, 998) which illustrates the complex dynamic in the local religious and cultural life. The inscription contains a grave imprecation reproducing models from Asia Minor. However, the practice of using supernatural protection against grave violations is quite uncommon for the Thracian context and is clearly related to the fact that the owner of the grave identifies himself as a native from Nicaea. The foreign element of the grave imprecation is mixed in the inscription with a reference to the city's main cult of Apollo Kendrisos, itself a result of the religious syncretism between the Greek Apollo and a local Thracian deity. The double protection of the grave entrusted both to the local gods and to the native supernatural forces is enhanced by adding a third protective element – a grave fine. Thus, the use of profane, legal means of protection, typical only for the Roman law, demonstrates the owner's integration also into the dominant Roman culture.

**Keywords:** Philippopolis, local religious and cultural life, IGBulg III, 1, 998, grave imprecation, Apollo Kendrisos

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## Epigraphic Evidence for Roman Provincial Society from Abritus I–III c.

*Stefan Yanakiev*

The Roman castellum Abritus, located during archaeological excavations in the 1950s and 1960s, about 2 km east of the modern town of Razgrad, Bulgaria, is among the military camps of auxiliary troops whose main role is to preserve peace in the area between Danube river and the Balkan Mountains, as well as to counteract the barbaric offensives originating from the northern lands of the Lower Danube limes. Due to the fact that it housed ancillary military units, as well as archaeological evidence of the remains of buildings and the other unclear architectural components in the immediate vicinity, suggest the presence of official and private epigraphic monuments. The inscriptions published so far are not limited to the territory of the Hisarlak area, but also to the villages near Razgrad. Some texts have been discussed many times before, but the revision gives them the opportunity to draw a more complete insight of Roman provincial society.

The examples clearly show the Romanization process in the Lower Moesia lands on a smaller scale, which is emerging in and around the territory of Abritus. The Roman army appears to be the primary factor for the penetration of Roman influence in these lands. The erected inscriptions from Abritus, which mention veterans, Roman citizens, and migrants in the *canabae* of the *castellum*, testify to the gradual absorption of lands east of the Yantra River by a population that succeeded through its entry into the army. Abritus land is a vast territory that provides sufficient livelihoods through cultivation. This is also one of the factors that contribute to the economic uplift of the population, whether local or veterans. This is confirmed by the epigraphic material in the *castellum* and the surrounding area, which is characterized by good workmanship and rich decorative elements. It is obviously a population of a high standard and expressing its economic presence through the so-called “epigraphic habit”.

**Key words:** Roman provincial society, soldiers, roman veterans, thracians, romanization, local administrative structures.

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## Motives of Thracian Heritage in Products of Bulgarian Graphic Design (Postage Stamps) in the Second Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

*Sasha Lozanova, Stela Tasheva*

As is well known, postage stamps now have existed in Europe for about 160 years. They are a type of applied graphic (or graphic design) artifacts – small paper elements with visible prints, which are intended for wide, public use. Postage stamps were introduced in Bulgaria in 1879 – immediately after the state Liberation. Until 1980, over 3000 stamps had been issued. Following the laws of the genre, they reflect a rich register of themes, motives and images, and were created by talented Bulgarian artists.

Here, we explore the images on stamps, representing the ancient material heritage of Bulgarian lands. A number of them reproduce and promote specimens of Thracian artifacts.

The focus of the study is on the systematization of these images, traced in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Bulgaria. We looked for the answers to the following questions:

- Who are the artists – authors of such stamp images?
- When (and how) do they depict motives and images from our Thracian heritage?
- What are the semantic and symbolic messages of these graphic artifacts?

The base of our report is traditional: art samples from ancient Thrace. The chosen perspective on them however, is new: their inclusion in contemporary graphic design, and their massive circulation in stamps. Their images have an administrative (documentary, commercial, etc.) application, but also significant social functions: informative, educational, artistic, advertising. Traditionally, postage stamps also make a significant contribution to the global knowledge and culture dissemination network.

**Keywords:** postage stamps, Thracian artifacts, images, second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, artists, semantics, symbolism

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