

Orphic Thrace and Achaemenid Persia

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The issues concerning the areas in which the Achaemenid presence in the Balkans influenced the culture of ancient Thrace naturally arouse interest amongst researchers. Abundant archaeological material and, even more, the examples of toreutics discovered south of the River Danube, as well as various written sources enlighten the issues (Marazov 1977; Kalojanov 1988; Boardman 2000; Tacheva 2000; Jordanov 2002; Megaw & Ruth 2002; Jordanov 2003; Valeva 2006; Valeva 2008, etc.).

The period of Achaemenid presence, influence, diplomatic and commercial exchange in Thrace began in 520 BC with Dareios I leading his forces over the Bosphorus and up the Danube, and continued to around 400 BC (Megaw [& Riith?] 2002, 488).

Dareios' intention to enlarge his possessions in Europe (i.e. in Thrace, Macedonia and Greece) involved the incorporation of territories abounding in natural resources, including in particular the gold and silver mines of Thrace. When, in the middle of the fourth century BC, Philip II took control of the mines, he was able to obtain an annual income of 1,000 talents. Where the Thracian *logos* intertwines with the Scythian one in his discourse, Herodotos narrates the story of Dareios' route through European lands and details the relations between the Achaemenids and the Thracian tribes, both along the north Aegean coast and along the west Pontic. Naturally, not every aspect was related by him, and, accordingly, reconstructions of Thraco-Persian relationships have been accompanied by various hypotheses (Tacheva 2006).

Paying particular attention to the lack of resistance on the part of the Thracian Odrysae and the Hellenic poleis along the west Pontic coast, investigators have identified a preliminary diplomatic and strategic organization of Dareios' march that was not mentioned by Herodotos. The Persians just passed by them during their march against the Scythians, while the Getae, who were confronting the Achaemenid army, were defeated by the Persians (Jordanov 2003; Tacheva 2006).

The gravity of Dareios' strategic plans for control of the coastal areas of Thrace is obviously testified by the Persian towns built by him – Borysa and Doriskos, where the royal fortress developed to be the most important Achaemenid political and administrative centre. After Dareios returned to Persia, Megabazos conquered all those who refused to go over to the Persian camp, with the exception of the Thracian Satrai, the priests of Dionysos' oracle located on Rhodope mountain. Through a system of submitted tyrants and



Fig. 1. The relief from the tomb of Dareios I at Naqsh-i Rostam, where no. 25 corresponds to 'Skudra'.

hyparchoi, the subjected coastal Thracian lands became the European satrapy of Dareios, which included the coast of Propontus, the Thracian Chersoneses, the coast of north Aegis with the lower reaches of Nestus-Strymon, as well as the southern parts of Paeonia (Tacheva 2000; Jordanov 2003; Tacheva 2006, 12-14).

The reliefs from the Apadana in Persepolis are considered to be evidence for the existence of a satrapy of Skudra in Europe. Thracians are among the names of the peoples within the Achaemenid Empire listed in the royal inscription from Susa, and in the relief on Dareios' tomb at Naqsh-i Rostam (no. 25 on Fig. 1 corresponds to 'Skudra'). One of the figures – with *petasos*, two spears and *akinakes* – is armed in a typical way for both the local commanders in the Thracio-Macedonian-Paenonian zone and for the Odrysae from the Mycenaean Age onwards (Tacheva 2006, 12-13) (Fig. 1).

The Odrysae created the first state among the Thracian tribes. Its formation took place at the end of the sixth century BC, during the period of Achaemenid presence in the Balkans, which might, in fact, have been one of the factors which gave impetus to this process. It was localized in the upper and middle reaches of the Maritsa river, to the east of the Tundja river and to the north to the Getic territories (Tacheva 2006, 25) (Fig. 2).

The lack of reports from Herodotos on the military successes of Dareios in Odrysian lands, on meetings with Odrysian kings or on demands for "earth and water" (i.e. for voluntarily submission) has given grounds for certain



Fig. 2. Map of Thrace and the Odrysian territories.

investigators to assume that diplomatic relations, totally natural at that time, were established between the two states through a peacefully arranged dynastic Thraco-Persian marriage. Thus, Odrysian state independence was safeguarded, as was the prestige of Dareios, and the Persian troops were allowed to pass peacefully to the north. This was probably the reason why Dareios, when setting foot on Odrysian lands, left piles of stones thrown by his troops by his order, instead of a royal inscription. Odrysian men were also not mobilized in his army (Tacheva 2006, 25).

Some archaeological finds from Odrysian lands are related to these specific aspects of Odrysian-Achaemenid relations.

It was in this period that rich burials under very high tumuli first appeared in the Maritsa valley, along with the earliest precious metal objects of eastern origin. The three highest tumuli in the Odrysian necropolis of the Teres dynasty near Duvanli, in the Plovdiv region – the Koukova, Mushovitsa and Arabadjiska mounds – belonged to women, demonstrating an extraordinary status that expresses a degree of parity with, or even superiority over, their male counterparts (Filow et al. 1934, 46, Taf. III, Abb. 55-59; Archibald 1998, 168). The graves in the Koukova and Mushovitsa mounds, dated before the middle of the fifth century BC, contained, together with exquisite sets of jewellery, silver and bronze vessels, one of the best pieces of Achaemenid art – an amphora-rhyton with a lotus-palmette chain, which remained a characteristic type for later Thracian metalware, as well as a fluted omphalos phiale and a



Fig. 3. The Achaemenid amphora from Kukuva mogila, Duvanli in the Plovdiv area.

deep bowl of Achaemenid type (Archibald 1998, 167). The amphora could be considered as a symbol of Thraco-Persian diplomatic relations and dynastic marriage, unknown from the written sources (Tacheva 2000; Tacheva 2006, 25) (Fig. 3).

The phialae from Daskal Atanasovo village, dated to the end of sixth to the fifth century BC, of “open lotus” form with high omphalos, are considered by some authors to be of purely Achaemenid origin (Nikolov 1961, 193; Marazov 1989; Valeva 2008), while others notice only strong eastern connections (Archibald 1998, 177). They seem to be another expression of the early and probably direct contacts between Thracians and Persians.

Although the sources do not report any contacts between the Persians and the Odrysaes, it was precisely at this time that the names of rulers containing the Indo-Iranian suffix *dokos/tokos* and which are thus regarded to be of eastern origin, such as Sparadokos, Satokos, Metokos, Amatokos, Mesad, etc, first appeared in the Odrysiyan royal family (Vlahov 1966, 305). Presumably these names had a political character. Bearing in mind the existing practice of polygamy and the customary practice of political marriages, it has been assumed that, most probably, one of the wives of Teres I, the founder of the Odrysiyan state, was of eastern origin. A similar practice can also be identified in Odrysiyan-Scythian relations. When Teres gave his daughter to the Scythian king Ariapeites, his son was given the Scythian-Odrysiyan name Oktamasades, while a ring in one of the rich male burials in Duvanli belonged to Skythodokus – most probably a son of Teres from his marriage to a Scythian princess (Tacheva 2006, 24-27).

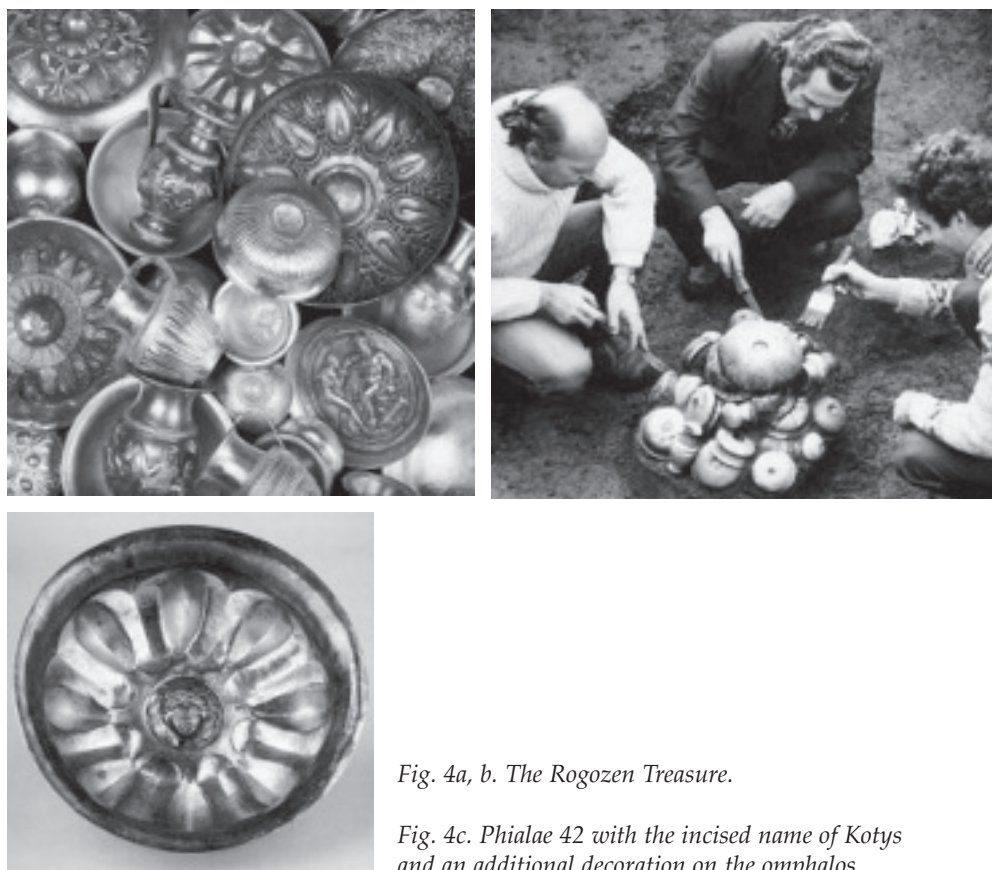


Fig. 4a, b. The Rogozen Treasure.

Fig. 4c. Phialae 42 with the incised name of Kotys and an additional decoration on the omphalos.

Numerous examples of toreutics discovered in the territory of Bulgaria and dated from the end of sixth to the end of the fourth century BC show that the demand for local manufactured goods, especially precious metal tableware, evidently increased during the period of the Persian presence, but most probably also as a result of greater demand from the Odrysian court and the Thracian aristocracy. The number of imported vessels, which were probably *xenoi*, among them is relatively small and decreased further in the fourth century BC (Archibald 1998, 267).

Increasing in number every year, the remarkable silver vessels from Bulgaria – jugs, rhyta, goblets and phialae – were used for formal banquets, religious ceremonies and rituals. The majority of imports of precious metal vessels in Thrace consists of Achaemenid or Achaemenid-inspired drinking cups, beakers and bowls, more numerous than those originating from Greece. Achaemenid shapes were introduced into the metalworkers' repertoire on the Greek mainland and the Thracian Aegean coast around the turn of the sixth century BC. However, it has been noticed that the merging of the Achaemenid and Greek traditions and the coexistence of distinctive Greek and Achaemenid

styles in the same context is rare outside Thrace before the early Hellenistic period (Archibald 1998, 179-180).

The samples from within the Odrysian Kingdom, in view of the quantity of circulating silverware, indicate that there was probably enough work for several local workshops operating full time. These workshops, however, also developed and applied some decorative schemes of local and Mediterranean traditions. These include, for example, the reliefs of garlanded human faces and floral ornaments discovered in Thrace on phialae and skyphoi from Rogozen, Strelcha, etc (Valeva 2006, 28). The short rhyta with animal heads, whose number has increased considerably during recent years with the discoveries in Zlatinitza and Sliven, seem also to be specific to and preferred in Thrace (Valeva 2008, 20-24).

It is worth noting that, despite the resemblance of Thracian examples to Achaemenid ones, in terms of the basic shapes of the rhyta, phialae and some of the jars, the use of the rhyta is known previously in Cretan culture. The bronze phialae from Sofronievo from the end of seventh century BC (Nikolov 1965) and the bronze cauldron from Kazichene (Stancheva 1974) indicate that these shapes were known even before the Achaemenids appeared in the Balkans, and were a consequence of earlier contacts between Thrace and the East.

According to Z. Archibald, Persian fashions are more in evidence in Thrace, whose ruling dynasty came to power at a time of Persian expansion, than in Macedonia (Archibald 1998, 195). J. Valeva recently discussed the gold and silver vessels from ancient Thrace, their shapes, decoration and functions, in the context of recently discovered toreutic works from Eurasia, and demonstrated the similarities across this huge territory, the western boundary of which is Thrace (Valeva 2006; Valeva 2008).

Nevertheless, if the shapes of the drinking vessels are closely related to Persian forms, could we consider that this was equally related to Persian banqueting fashions being adopted by the Thracians? Did the Persians influence the ideology or the ritual behaviour of the Thracians?

The written sources and archaeological data indicate that the use of metal vessels in the gift-giving tradition and for ritual banquets had deep roots in the political and religious life of the Thracian aristocracy and of the Thracians more generally from the late Bronze Age. Homer devoted special attention to the gifts Priam prepared for the Myrmidonian hero – precious objects, including “a beautiful cup given to him by the Thracians” as a great gift when he was sent to them. Odysseus received from the Thracian king and Apollo’s great priest Marron splendid gifts: “seven talents of masterfully proceeded gold; a silver krater and poured 12 amphorae of wine, a precious, blended sweet beverage, a divine drink”. Among other gifts, the Thracian king Kotys I gave three cups as a dowry to his son-in-law Iphicrates – “a shallow cup for drinking, a helix-shaped cup, a vessel for drinking snow water ... a multiple sacrifice”.

In Xenophon's narrative, the rich banquet was followed by a ritual in which guests handed gifts to the ruler: a horse, a slave, expensive clothes and a silver cup. Seuthes received everything without offering a gift in return. Heraclitus, who was close to the Odrysian ruler, told the guests that "according to custom, every time Seuthes invited people to dinner, they had to bring him gifts ... the greater the gift you offer him, the greater the gift you will receive from him" (Marazov 1989, 165-173). Thoukydides emphasized that the above-mentioned custom was popular among Thracian tribes, but Odrysae benefited from it more because of their power. Without gifts being offered nothing could be done with them (Thuc. 97.1).

Thracians observed the custom, in contrast to that of the Persian state, of taking rather than giving. Herodotos narrates how the inhabitants of Thasos prepared to welcome the Persian royal court. After the feast, the guests at the royal table took the precious vessels they had used. The event ruined the island financially (Hdt. 7.119.1) (Marazov 1989, 165-173).

Other aspects of Thracian ritual practices are better testified in the archaeological sources. The deep changes in the religious beliefs and practices of the Thracians, which took place in the late Bronze Age, are no doubt connected with the notion of the religious reform of Orpheus – the Thracian who founded, so Herodotos says, the mysteries, which were called after him *treskeia*. The archaeological expression of these changes can be seen in the numerous sanctuaries found at strategic and picturesque locations at the end of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age, the appearance of tumuli all over Thracian territory, the formation of huge cult-burial complexes and the beginning of the ritual practice of burying sacred gifts in the earth. The latter remains one of the most characteristic features of Thracian culture throughout the whole of the Iron Age (Gergova 1988a; Gergova 2005; Gergova 2007).

Four categories of ritually buried hoards have been clearly distinguished – jewellery, horse harnesses, ritual helmets, as well as sets of clay, bronze, silver or golden vessels (Gergova 2005). These hoards are usually found in the open air, near rivers, on the territory of tumular necropoleis and in tumuli without burials, and correspond to the "Hyperborean" tradition of keeping sacred gifts in the open air. The structure of the hoards indicates the importance and sacredness of the number three and hints at the involvement of three main participants in the ritual ceremony. The specific ratio between the different components of the hoards suggests the application of strict ceremonial rules (Gergova 1987).

One hypothesis suggests that most probably the ritually buried groups of objects were dedications to the main gods venerated by the Thracians – the jewellery to the Mother Goddess, the horse harnesses to Apollo, the helmets to Ares – while the sets of vessels were general gifts to the sacred triad of the Mother Goddess and her twins Apollo and Artemis (Gergova 2005).

Among the famous sets from the early and late Iron Age, it is worth noting the groups of clay vessels from Plovdiv and Cherkovna in the Razgrad area and Esenica in the Varna area from the end of the Bronze Age and the



Fig. 5. The Susani ritual set of clay vessels.

beginning of the Iron Age, the golden treasure from Valchitran from the ninth century BC, the silver treasures of jewellery and vessels, horse harnesses and vessels or only of vessels from Bukyovtsi, Stoyanovo, Lukovit, Borovo, etc. from the fifth to the fourth century BC (Gergova 1987; Gergova 1988a) and, in particular, the collection of silver vessels from Rogozen in the Vratza region discovered in 1986 (Rogozen 1988).

The Rogozen Treasure, found in northwest Bulgaria in 1986, consists of 165 silver and silver-gilt vessels: there are three main vessels (a goblet, a skyphos and a kotyle), 54 jugs and 108 phialae, dated from the end of the sixth and beginning of the fifth to the middle of the fourth century BC. It was buried in two parts, the first one consisting of 100 vessels and the second of 65 vessels. The ratio of the jugs to the phialae is 1:2. The interrelationship between the numbers of vessels, their shapes and iconographic language produces a remarkable harmony within the structure of the set, conditioned by the principles of the definite religious system which lay behind it (Rogozen 1988; Gergova 1988b; Gergova 1990, 113) (Fig. 4).

The origins of the vessels are both local and imported. Some of the vessels show a secondary use, such as phiale 42 of Persian origin which has an inscription of the Thracian name *Kotys* and an image of Apollo soldered on to the omphalos of the phiale (Marazov 1989, 27) (Fig. 4a). Archibald considers that the Rogozen find illustrates an artistic phase in Thrace during which Persian and Greek influences were on a par, when the local Persian rulers of Anatolia and the Odrysaes vied in their patronage of eminent craftsmen and set the standard for their respective peer group (Archibald 1998, 274).

The names of several Thracian kings from the fifth century BC, including *Kotys*, *Kersebleptes*, *Satokos*, etc., are incised on the silver vessels.

There have been a number of different interpretations of the character of the find, but, in the context of the phenomenon of the "Thracian treasures" as sacred gifts, the most probable seems to be an interpretation of it as a set for a banquet, which was ritually buried after a ceremony as a gift to the sacred triad of the Mother Goddess, Artemis and Apollo. The inclusion of the name of the Thracian prince *Satokos*, who was given Athenian citizenship, suggests a political connection to this event (Gergova 1988a; Gergova 1988b).

Fig. 6. The bowls from the Oxus treasure.



Along with its uniqueness, the Rogozen Treasure is of considerable interest in two further ways. In the first place there is the fact that it had much earlier predecessors in Thrace, testifying to the deep-rooted local tradition of organizing banquets and religious ceremonies with numerous participants. Secondly, it is the closest parallel as a ritual set to the recently discovered part of the Oxus Treasure – the most important surviving collection of Achaemenid Persian metalwork (Treasures 2002).



Fig. 7. *The Belene bowl.*

The late Bronze Age find from Susani, Romania (Stratan & Vulpe 1977) consists of more than 213 cups and bowls dated to the 11th century BC, which were buried under a tumulus without human bones. They were divided into ten groups. Two special vessels were constructed of three phalerae and of three different vessels each. The lack of human bones and the great number of clay vessels, including 100 in a ritual pit surrounded by wheat grains, suggest that the tumulus was piled over the dishes after a ritual banquet or complicated cult ceremony (Fig. 5).

Another collection from a tumulus near Taşlıcabir in European Turkey, which is similar and synchronous to the Susani find, has been published. The find of 53 clay vessels was divided into two main groups, and included a type of cernos – an indication of the religious character of the clay banqueting set (Özdoğan 1987).

However, the most striking parallel to the Rogozen Treasure can be found in the recently published “Bactrian treasure”, which is considered to be another part of the famous Oxus Treasure (Pichikyan 2002; Treasures 2002). This treasure includes vessels, a gold scabbard, model chariots and figures, seals, jewellery and miscellaneous personal objects, dedicatory plaques and coins from the time when the Achaemenid Empire stretched from Egypt and the Aegean to Afghanistan and the Indus valley, and when the typical style, which is generally called Graeco-Persian, was found dispersed throughout the Empire from the Aegean to India. It seems that the objects were gathered together over a long period, perhaps as a Zoroastrian temple treasure (Secunda 2002, 203).

Two drinking sets may be clearly distinguished among the objects. The first one consists of 18 golden phialae, a pyxis with a lid, an incense burner and two ladles, dated to the sixth to the fourth century BC (Treasures 2002, nos. 123-144). Of special interest are the silver vessels with gilt, which form a second set consisting of a predominant number of phialae – an essential element of the temple – utensils, bowls, a kotyle and several rhyta (Treasures 2002, nos. 97-122).

The majority of the vessels present exceptional propinquity to the Rogozen Treasure’s phialae or to objects from other sets found in Thrace. Some bowls from Oxus are of particular interest. They have a specific biconical shape, a pointed base and a vertical neck (nos. 104, 103, 106, 109, 110) (Treasures 2002,

Fig. 8. *Phialae* nos. 99 and 100 from Rogozen decorated with human heads and the skyphos from Strelcha.



243-244), and decorated with gilded rosettes and almond-shaped protuberances or with narrow framed arches each fitted with a protruding male head in the top of an arch (no. 109) (Treasures 2002, 244.) (Fig. 6).

The above-mentioned deep bowls are very similar in shape to several early



Fig. 9. The kotyle from Oxus.

golden vessels from Thrace. The bowl from Belene (Marazov 1998, 202) (Fig. 7), decorated with bosses and channelling, and that from Kazichene, with incised and channelled decoration (Marazov 1998, 233), indicate, on the one hand, deep-rooted traditions in late Bronze Age pottery and, on the other hand, the existence of a similar style of decoration in the Thracian lands already at the beginning of the early Iron Age (11th to ninth century BC).

Decoration incorporating the depiction of human heads or those of mythological creatures was also widespread in the Mediterranean area and was extremely popular on golden and silver bowls and phialae in Thrace. Among the examples that should be mentioned are phialae nos. 99 and 100 from Rogozen, which are decorated with alternating female heads and palmettes (Fig. 8), a bowl from Loukovit and the golden phiale decorated with negro heads from the Panagyurishte Treasure. Female heads also decorate the skyphos from Strelcha. It is accepted that they symbolize the Mother Goddess – the major figure in Thracian religious beliefs (Valeva 2006, 28, fig. 28).

The ornaments on the bottom of the kotyle from Oxus (Fig. 9), a gilded ornamentation of alternating bucrania and mussel shells, show a similarity to both the bucrania and acorn decoration on phialae nos. 94, 95 from Rogozen (Fig. 10), and vessels of this type have been produced in Thrace too (Tonkova 1994; Valeva 2006, 27). The golden mussel-shaped vessel from the tumulus of Goliama Kosmatka, where a symbolic burial of the Thracian king Seuthes III was discovered by G. Kitov, indicates the popularity of the shape in Thrace in the Hellenistic period (Fig. 11).

There is a striking resemblance between two rhyta from Oxus and Borovo, each with protomes of a horse and a mix of Persian and Greek iconographic elements and stylistic devices. The resemblance gives ground to assume that both works may have been created by the same workshop (Ivanov 1980; Treasures 2002, nos. 116, 245) and to presume a larger production of such luxury items (Valeva 2008, 14-15, figs. 16, 17) (Fig. 12a, 12b).



Fig. 10. Phialae nos. 94 and 95 with bulls' heads from Rogozen.

The short type of rhyta in the shape of different animals' heads, which were very popular in Thrace (at Zlatinica, Sliven, Rozovets, Panagyurishte, etc.) and the rhyta in the shape of a fawn's head from Oxus (Treasures 2002, no. 19; Valeva 2008, 20-24) also indicate the utilization of common types, and they may be products of one and the same workshop.

It is worth mentioning that among the published objects from Oxus (Treasures 2002, nos. 204, 205) there can be found other, small objects that are almost identical to examples found widespread throughout Thrace, such as golden ornaments, attached most probably to a veil, human heads as horse-harness ornaments, etc., from the beginning of the fifth and the fourth centuries BC, for example the finds from Mogilanska mogila, grave II in Vraca, from Kralevo in the Targovishte district, Sveshtari, etc. (Ginev 1983; Torbov 2005, 187, 191) (Fig. 13). These small objects seem to support an even a stronger argument for the close links between the Thracian and the Bactrian monuments.

The remarkable resemblance between the newly discovered ritual sets from Oxus, comprising a ritual set, and the Rogozen set, as well as the similarity to other objects of Thracian toreutics, raises the question about the origin of the vessels from Oxus, which, according to the investigators, look "more Hellenistic" as a whole than those discovered earlier. The suggestion of the activity of workshops whose products could have been distributed across such

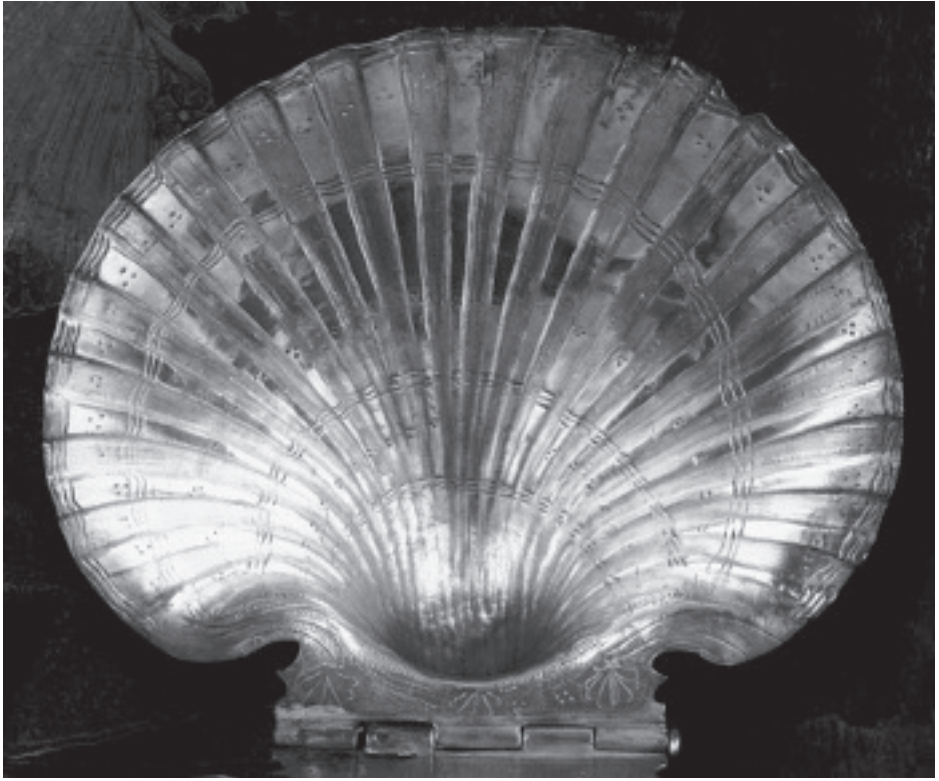


Fig. 11. The shell vessel from Shipka.



Fig. 12. The rhyta with horse protomes from Oxus and Borovo.

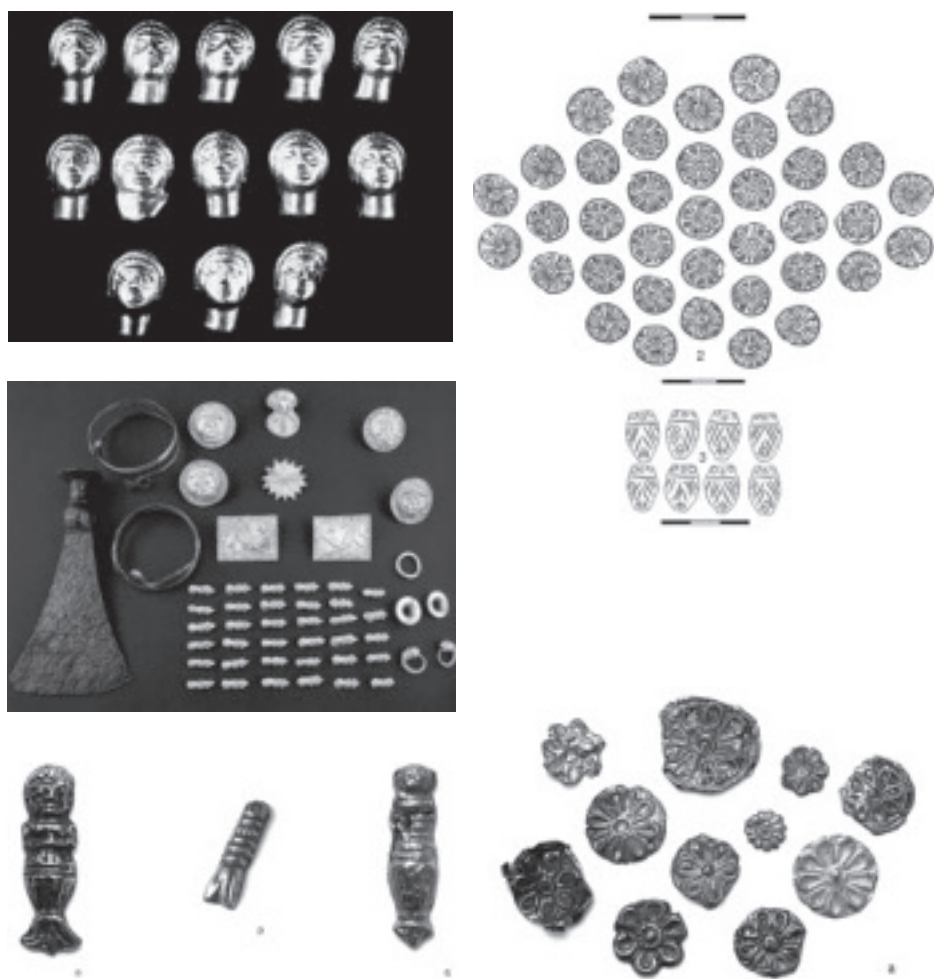


Fig. 13. Golden ornaments for a veil and "human heads" for horse harnesses from Vraca, Targovishte and Oxus.

a wide area, especially in the turbulent period of Graeco-Thraco-Achaemenid relationships, raises the question of their localization.

The great number of gold and silver treasures and jewellery from the territory of Thrace, starting at the end of the second millennium BC, suggests the use of the local gold and silver mines in the Balkan-Carpathian area for the production of precious pieces of adornment, weapons and religious utensils (Tonkova 1994, 214, map 2).

The activity of some workshops can be localized to Thrace already in the seventh century BC, but the numerous instruments and the stamps used for the decoration of metal objects, which have been published recently, originate mostly from the fifth to fourth century BC and testify to the functioning of



Fig. 14. Instruments and matrices from Thrace (Arbanasi and the Getic capital in Sboryanovo).

local workshops, particularly in northeast Thrace, but also to the south of Haemus. A rich collection of tools, matrices, articles and waste testifies to metal workshops, producing tools, arms, jewellery and toreutic goods from ferrous and non-ferrous metals, including silver and gold, in the Getic city in Sboryanovo (Stoyanov & Mihailova 1996; Stoyanov et al. 2006, 31), near the Thracian fortress of Dragoevo in the Shumen area, in Emporion Pistiros, etc. (Tonkova 1994) (Figs. 14, 15).

The present study aimed to trace the level of influence of imperial Achaemenid culture upon the court and religious ceremonial life of Thrace, and especially upon the conduct of the founders of the first Thracian state – the Odrysians.

It could be asserted that the so-called Persianization of Thracian society influenced only the production of the Thracian workshops which participated actively in the formation of the so-called Graeco-Persian style. Another reason for this phenomena could be the similarity between the social models and religious and ideological notions of Thrace and Iran, as Marazov has under-



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|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 1. Sredogriv | 8. Breznik | 15. Srebren | 22. Zvezdel |
| 2. Stakevci | 9. Vitosā | 16. Etropolski balkan | 23. Pčelojad |
| 3. Čiprovcı | 10. Gorno Ujno | 17. Osetenovo | 24. Strašimir |
| 4. Kalimanci | 11. Skrinjano | 18. Čehlare | 25. Davidkovo |
| 5. Dālgi djal | 12. Babjak | 19. Ustrem | 26. Lāki |
| 6. Vāršec | 13. Gostun | 20. Slivarovo | 27. Sedefče |
| 7. Trān | 14. Sarnica | 21. Mađžarovo | |

Fig. 15. Map of the gold and silver mines (a) and workshops (b) in Thrace.

lined (Marazov 1977). Local Thracian religious ritualism and social practice, which were deeply-rooted back in the late Bronze Age and were based on the Orpheus doctrine, offered the most favourable conditions for the wide distribution, mainly in the territory of the later Odrysian Kingdom, of local products and imported vessels for the political and ceremonial needs of the Thracian institution of the priest-king.

The increasing number of works of toreutics, collected from across the vast Euro-Asian area, is now providing the opportunity to elaborate an international project to investigate the provenance of the metals used. Considering especially the rich gold and silver mines of Thrace, more objective conclusions may be drawn regarding the trade of metals and the localization of the workshops, which enriched the local traditions with strong eastern influences.

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