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KING MIDAS' ASS'S EARS REVISITED

Maya VASSILEVA

Abstract

On several occasions the Phrygian King Midas was portrayed with donkey's ears in Greek literature and art. There is no text that offers a plausible explanation of Midas' strange appearance and later commentators provide many competing stories to account for his animal ears. A new interpretation can be offered on the grounds of a pre-Phrygian Anatolian tradition. The revised reading of the Luwian hieroglyphs on the so-called 'Tarkondemos Seal' reveals the donkey as an old Anatolian royal symbol. The Phrygians might possibly have adopted this kind of symbolism which later was lost or misunderstood. Greeks who provided their own interpretations of Midas' ass's ears only reinterpreted the original myth creating several *aitia*. Anatolian and Aegean Bronze Age survivals in Phrygian culture are being discussed as well.

J.D. Hawkins and A. Morpurgo-Davies's reading and interpretation of the Luwian hieroglyphs on the so-called 'Tarkondemos Seal' from the Walters Gallery collection¹ has proved to be of great significance not only for the Anatolian linguistics, but for early Greek and Phrygian studies as well. Drawing on this study, S. Morris resourcefully pointed out to a possible connection between King Midas' donkey's ears in the traditional Greek legend and the use of the donkey as an older Anatolian royal sign and symbol.² The aim of my article is to discuss a few further details of the problems concerning the image of the Phrygian King Midas in the Greek tradition.

King Midas was famous in Greek literature for his incredible wealth. By the mid-7th century BC he had already become proverbial for his riches, judging from a text by Tyrtaios (fr. 12). Although Midas' name has a negative connotation in the verse of the Spartan poet, his ass's ears are not mentioned. Other Greek authors also referred to Midas as a symbol of wealth (Aristophanes *Plutus* 287, Callimachus *Aitia* fr. 75, 47; Cicero *De Divinitate* 36; Plutarch *De nobilitate* 140; Aelian *Varia Historia* 12. 45).³ For the first time Midas appeared with ass's ears in the sarcastic verses of Aristophanes' *Plutus* (286-287). However, no story offers an explanation for this strange change in Midas' appearance. Fifty years or more before *Plutus* was staged (388 BC) the Phrygian king was already depicted with long animal ears on

¹ Hawkins and Morpurgo-Davies 1998; Hawkins 1998, 2-4.

² Morris 2003a, 8; 2003b, 10-12. Some preliminary notes on the same subject appeared in my book: Vassileva 2005, 27-35.

³ Discussed at length by Roller 1983, 302; see also Miller 1997, 846; and Vassileva 2005, 27-29.

Greek vases. He is portrayed in scenes on red-figure vases from Italy in an episode about the captured Silenus.⁴

The capture of Silenus by Midas (or the Phrygians) seems to have been much more popular in antiquity than we may think drawing on the preserved texts. Herodotus (8. 138) mentions

the Gardens of Midas, the son of Gordias, in Macedonia, where roses grow wild – wonderful blooms, with sixty petals apiece, and sweeter smelling than any others in the world. According to Macedonians it was in these gardens that Silenus was caught.⁵

Later texts describe a water source which the Phrygian ruler mixed with wine to catch the drunk Silenus. The spring was located either in Macedonia (Theopompus *FGrHist* 115F75a and b; Bion *FGrHist* 14F3) or Anatolia (Xenophon *Anabasis* 1. 2. 13; Pausanias 1. 4. 5).⁶ Fourth-century BC narratives speak about Silenus disclosing wisdom to King Midas about life and happiness (Aristotle fr. 44 Rose; Plutarch, *Moralia* 115b; Theopompus *FGrHist* 115F75c; Conon *FGrHist* 26F1).⁷

Illustrations of different episodes of Silenus' (or satyr's) capture appear on Greek vases. The earliest representations on Laconian black-figure vases are dated ca. 560 BC.⁸ The abovementioned depictions of Midas with ass's ears belong to the same mythological story.

A much later account, given by Ovid, provides an explanation of Midas' donkey's ears. Midas preferred the melody of Pan's pipe over that of Apollo's lyre. That is why Apollo punished him with ass's ears. The Phrygian king covered his animal ears with a purple tiara and only his barber knew his secret (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 11. 146-193). Conon, the Greek mythographer, explained Midas' long ears away with the fact that the king had a lot of eavesdroppers at his disposal (*FGrHist* 26F1). Scholiasts and lexicographers came up with more versions, none of them very plausible (Scholia ad Aristophanem *Plutus* 287a; *Suda* s.v. Midas; Athenaios 12. 516b).⁹

A different, earlier, tradition discusses a competition between Apollo and the Silenus or the satyr Marsyas (Herodotus 7. 26; Xenophon *Anabasis* 1. 2. 8-9). Be-

⁴ Miller 1997, nos. 38-40, Attic red-figure vases from Chiusi, Lentini and Vulci, ca. 440 BC; no. 41, a Lucanian red-figure amphora from Agrigento, ca. 380-360 BC; Brommer 1970, 56-57; Roller 1983, 305-06.

⁵ Translation by A. Sélincourt.

⁶ Roller 1983, 303; Vassileva 1997, 13; 2005, 17-19.

⁷ Roller 1983, 306-07; Vassileva 1997, 14-15; 2005, 20-23.

⁸ Roller 1983, 303; Miller 1997, nos. 7-8 and several other scenes of uncertain identity on Chiot vases and an Attic red-figure vase (nos. 15-17).

⁹ Modern scholars have also enriched the rationalising variants: Brommer 1970, 56-57, n. 50. For critical remarks on these explanations, see Roller 1983, 308, n. 67.

cause of Marsyas' Phrygian affiliation the story could have later been transferred onto Midas.¹⁰ However, nothing in the vase paintings suggests a musical competition or a punishment of the Phrygian ruler.

Some scholars interpret the presence of Midas' ears as a result of his association with Dionysiac figures.¹¹ In earlier scholarly literature Midas was interpreted as an ancient demon or fertility deity that turned into the first mythological king of Phrygia.¹² According to Philostratus, Midas was *in a way* a kin of the satyrs (*Vita Apollonii* 6, 27). Thus, it has been suggested that the similarity or identity with the Silenus or the satyr can account for the transfer of physical features of the Hellenic mythological figure to the representations of the Phrygian king.¹³ However, is this the only explanation? If the Bacchic elements on 4th-century BC Greek vases and in the satyr plays were the sources of the theriomorphic look of the Phrygian ruler, why do later commentators provide so many competing stories to account for his animal ears?

The answer may lie in a pre-Phrygian Anatolian tradition. One has to turn to the latest progress of Anatolian linguistic studies. The recently emended reading of the Hittite 'Rosetta Stone', that is, the silver seal of the king of Mira, might offer Anatolian perceptions of the donkey's ears attached to King Midas. Hawkins and Morpurgo-Davis suggested a reading of *TARKASNA-wa/i* (a logogram plus a syllabogram on the seal) for the king's name, the basic word *TARKASNA* meaning 'donkey or mule', and *-wa/i* – 'provided, equipped with'; in this way the name can be translated as 'rich in donkeys or mules'.¹⁴ It can be compared with Targasnalli, a king of Hapalla, one of the kingdoms created when Arzawa was split by Mursili II (1321-1295 BC),¹⁵ the other two being Mira and the Seha River Land. The 1st-millennium BC hieroglyphic inscriptions record the presence of a substantivised adjective in *-iya*, 'the donkey-like', 'the donkey's descendant'.¹⁶

In elucidating the difference and the connection between the two hieroglyphic signs *100 and *101, the authors admit that it is hard to differentiate between a donkey and a mule in the hieroglyphic representations (and consequently, in the exact meaning of the words). Such a distinction is also difficult to perceive on

¹⁰ See Griffin 1997, 92, who suggests that the music contest between Pan and Apollo may be Ovid's invention.

¹¹ This idea might find some justification in the other figures and scenes depicted on the Italian vases where Midas first appears with ass's ears: Dionysiac scenes on no. 41 and Thracian affinities in the clothes of the guards on no. 38 (Miller 1997, 849; cf. Marazov 2002, who considers the association of donkeys with the Cabylac mysteries).

¹² Eitrem 1931, 1526-28.

¹³ Roller 1983, 308.

¹⁴ Hawkins and Morpurgo-Davis 1998, 247-49.

¹⁵ Hawkins 1998, 10; Bryce 1998, 213-14.

¹⁶ Hawkins and Morpurgo-Davis 1998, 254.

many ancient Near Eastern pictorial representations.¹⁷ This difficulty could have possibly been reflected in the Greek word *hemionos*, 'semi-donkey'.¹⁸

A recent study of a number of Mesopotamian and Near Eastern examples has demonstrated that donkeys and mules were considered royal animals (mainly in the Semitic tradition). In the examples from the 1st-millennium BC Luwian texts alone, quoted for linguistic reasons by Hawkins and Morpurgo-Davies, it is clear that mules were considered a prestige (and royal) gift. One of the passages refers to Warpalawa, the king of Tyana, illustrated on the well-known rock-cut relief at Ivriz, where he wears a Phrygian fibula.¹⁹ The political activity of King Mita (Midas) in south-eastern Anatolia has also been considered at length.²⁰ It is worth reminding ourselves that Priam used mules, a princely gifts from the Mysians (Homer *Iliad* 24. 265-280), to bring the ransom for his son's body. Thus, for example, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem mounted on a donkey was not a sign of his imminent humiliation and then sufferings but a royal symbol.²¹

The ritual significance of the donkey is well attested in Anatolian written and archaeological records. The donkey is one of the substitutes in Hittite royal magic rituals.²² It is also a sacrificial animal in Luwian magic rituals.²³ One of the most often quoted Hittite mythological texts relates the story of the queen of Nesas (Kaneš) who had given birth to 30 sons and 30 daughters.²⁴ The donkey is attested in this narrative (I discuss this further below). At the same time, the sacrifices of donkeys were not common in Greece. It was only the Hyperboreans who sacrificed donkeys to Apollo (Pindar *Pythian* 10. 27-46). It is said that once a man decided to perform those same sacrifices at Babylon, but the god forbade him to do so and later punished him for his disobeying (Antoninus Liberalis 20).²⁵

The Greek visual and literary tradition of Midas and his ass's ears reflects none of this. In the light of the Anatolian evidence Morris is right in pointing out that the donkey's ears of the Phrygian ruler may echo an older Anatolian royal symbol,

¹⁷ On the different breeds of wild ass, onager and the different areas of their habitat, see most recently Lafont 2000, 208-10; Levinskaya 2004.

¹⁸ Levinskaya (2004) suggests that *hemionos* actually meant 'onager' and not 'mule', and that the epic and the visual images of the animal were Near Eastern borrowings in Greek culture.

¹⁹ Muscarella 1967a, 83-84; 1967b, 19-20; 1988, 422, n. 5; Boehmer 1973, 151-52; Berges 1998, 186, n. 27; Aro 1998, 221-22. Against the Phrygian origin of Warpalawa's fibula: Börker-Klähn 2004, 168.

²⁰ Hawkins 1993-97; 2000a, 42; 2000b, 427-28.

²¹ Lafont 2000, 218-20.

²² Named both *tarpalli-tarpaša-* and *nakušši-* (Haas 1994, 897). On the eventual development of Luw. *tarpalli-* towards *imani-*, Hitt. *himma-* and the Phrygian *iman*, cf. Bayun 1992, 135.

²³ Haas 1994, 647.

²⁴ KBo XXII 2, 9-10.

²⁵ Cook 1894, 88; 1925, 463-65; Hoffmann 1983, 63-64 (see below).

Hellenised in Greek myth.²⁶ The Phrygians could have adopted this donkey symbolism both in western and in south-eastern Anatolia. While involved in the late 8th-century BC political events in Tyana, Tabal and other neighbouring areas, the Phrygians could have become acquainted with the donkey/mule hieroglyphic sign and its royal symbolism. We cannot prove this, since we do not have any visual or written evidence of donkeys/mules in the Phrygian domestic record. Therefore, it was probably the Greeks who first made the association between the Anatolian symbol and the Phrygian king, although we cannot definitely exclude the Phrygians making use of the same symbolism. Rather it might have been Phrygian political intervention in south-eastern Anatolia that contributed to the Greek inability to distinguish between 'Phrygian' and 'Tabalian', for example.²⁷

We should also remember that it was on the western and south-western Anatolian coasts where the Mycenaean and early Greek world came into contact with the Near East. Phrygian epigraphy furnishes further evidence for these contacts. The Mycenaean titles *wanax* and *lawaetas* survived in Old-Phrygian. An inscription on one of the most imposing Phrygian rock-cut façades, the so-called 'Midas Monument' in 'Midas City' is a dedication from Ates to Midas who is named *lawagtaei wanaktei* (Dat.).²⁸ It is surely no coincidence that survivals of both Aegean and Anatolian royal signs are being found or associated with Phrygia.

The name of *TARKASNA-wa*, king of Mira, that appeared on the silver seal mentioned above, was found in the Karabel rock-cut hieroglyphic inscription as well.²⁹ This inscription could possibly have marked the border between Mira and Milawanda-Miletos.³⁰ The most recent Luwian hieroglyphic inscription discovered in western Anatolia, at Latmos, also shows the donkey-sign.³¹ The text itself refers to the Great Prince, probably Kupanta-Kuruntiya, the nephew of Mursilis II and adopted son of the king of Mira. The inscription is damaged and the context of the donkey-sign remains obscure.

²⁶ Morris 2003a; 2003b. The idea about a visual pun on the grounds of the Luwian hieroglyphs is worth considering. The Greek response to a 2nd-millennium BC Anatolian symbol can be considered in the context of other Oriental motifs in Greek art and myth that turned 'the Orientalizing period into a long-lived phenomenon' as discussed by S. Morris (1997, 62-63, 68).

²⁷ Cf. Aro 1998, 222, who claims that it is hard to distinguish Phrygian from Tabal metal objects and in many other classes of objects as well.

²⁸ Brixhe and Lejeune 1984, M-01a.

²⁹ Hawkins 1998, 1-10. The text accompanies a relief, situated in a pass across the Tmolos Mountain between Ephesos and Sardis.

³⁰ Hawkins 1998, 23-24; Peschlow-Bindokat and Herbordt 2001, 366; Hawkins 2002, 150.

³¹ Peschlow-Bindokat and Herbordt 2001, 370, Abb. 5; Peschlow-Bindokat 2002, Abb. 8-10.

Recently, the interest in the Achhiyawa-question has increased.³² At present almost nobody doubts the identification between Achhiyawa–Mycenae and Milawanda–Miletos.³³ The Luwian inscriptions mentioned above from Karabel and Latmos contribute to the picture of cultural interactions in western Anatolia. King Midas' ass's ears could be considered among the survivals of the Bronze Age Anatolian–Mycenaean cultural exchange. This is strongly suggested by Midas' titles cut on the façade at 'Midas City'. Previously scholars suggested that these Mycenaean titles were borrowed by the Phrygians while still in the Balkans.³⁴ But it is also possible that the Phrygians adopted these titles after their immigration into Anatolia.

Another possible connection between the Phrygian King Midas and the donkey or ass lies in the realm of religious practice. In Greek literary tradition, the association of Midas with Dionysiac religion is mentioned in several texts. Ovid says that he was initiated in the mysteries by Orpheus and Eumolpos and immediately recognised the captured Silenus as his companion (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 11. 92–94). According to Hesychius, 'onos agei mysteria' (s.v. *onos*): the Eleusinians performed the sacred rites with the help of donkeys (Aristophanes *Ranae* 159).³⁵ According to a late mythographic version it was the donkey that brought the child Dionysos to the Nysa Mount (Oppian *Cynegetica* 4. 242–250).³⁶ In a damaged and obscure passage from the Gurōb papyrus (3rd century BC), a donkey is mentioned next to *boukolos*.³⁷ The syntactical connection between *onos* and *boukolos* here is unclear but that the ass stands for a *mystes*/initiate is generally accepted.³⁸ Donkeys seemingly played a role in the Orphic–Dionysiac mysteries and their symbolism.³⁹ As I have argued elsewhere, the similarities between Phrygian and Thracian rites, noticed by the Greeks (Strabo 10. 3. 13–16), could have accounted for the Phrygian migration story and for Midas' Macedonian affiliation in Greek narrative (Herodotus 7. 73; 8. 138).⁴⁰

³² The bibliography is copious, see, for example, Latacz 2001, 54–57; 2004, 120–28; Hawkins 2002, 151; Bryce 2003a; 2003b, 199–212; Genz 2004; Niemeier 2002; 2005.

³³ Bryce 1998, 59–63, 342–44; Hawkins 1998, 30–31; Latacz 2004, 122.

³⁴ Huxley 1959, 97–98, who also considers Aeolis; Brixhe 1993, 340.

³⁵ Mylonas 1974, 252; sceptical remarks by Keuls 1997, 48, n. 30.

³⁶ Cf. Keuls's remarks (1997, 44) that there is no iconographic evidence about this myth.

³⁷ West 1983, 171.

³⁸ Hordern 2000, 134, 139.

³⁹ However, it is hardly only the symbol of toil and suffering that the ass retained from the Orphic rites as Keuls thinks (1997). On Midas being associated with the Orphic rites, see Roller 1983, 309–10.

⁴⁰ Vassileva 2005, 19–26, 34–35, 50, 56–57, *passim*. The donkey in Dionysiac and Orphic contexts might have been a mark of initiation rites in which sacred marriage was performed, see further below. There is a visual representation of a (royal/aristocratic) couple in an act of copulation from Thrace, on one of the 4th-century BC Letnitsa silver-gilt appliques: Marazov 1998, no. 92.

This connection of Midas with Dionysiac cult offers a further association of the Phrygian king with ass's ears. Silenoi and satyrs were represented mounted on donkeys and mules throughout antiquity.⁴¹ Dionysos and Hephaistos were the mythological figures most often depicted riding donkeys on Greek vases. The earliest image, however, is that of Hephaistos on an ithyphallic donkey on the 'François Vase'. After the mid-6th-century BC depictions of Dionysos riding an ithyphallic donkey became more common. An oinochoe, a flute box or a human figure hanging on the donkey's phallus were represented.⁴² Or, in other words, the ithyphallic status became associated with the flute tune (respectively, with the rites in which this musical instrument was played).

In literature of Hellenistic and Roman times the donkey is well projected as a symbol of extreme sexuality, of lust and adultery: one should only look at Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* or *The Golden Ass* for the best of examples. Donkeys were sacrificed to Priapos at Lampsakos: the myth explained that their bray stopped the advances of Silenoi (or satyrs) at nymphs (Ovid *Fasti* 1. 391; 6. 345). According to W. Burkert, the ritual castration of the animal was performed just at the moment of its sacrifice where the sexual symbolism had a special value.⁴³

The sexual symbolism of the donkey has most recently been considered in an Indo-European context by C. Watkins: he compared the Ásvamedha ritual, the story about the queen of Nesas, the Greek myth about the 50 daughters of Danaus, and the origin of the dynasty at Argos. The queen of Nesas gave birth to 30 sons at once. She put them in a basket 'and launched them in the river. The river carried them to the sea, to the land of Zalpa' (on the Black Sea).⁴⁴ Later on, she gave birth to 30 daughters who she herself reared. When the sons grew up they returned to Nesas riding a donkey and married their sisters.⁴⁵ All of the texts discussed are foundation myths or origin legends, where the major issues are the kingship, the reaffirmation of the kingship and the assurance of fertility. Among the key elements there is a woman (without a partner), a prolific prodigious generation, forbidden sexual union and a donkey/horse as a symbol of intense sexuality. The incest is not

⁴¹ Simon 1985, 218-20. The earliest pictures of Silenoi are on Attic black-figure vases where they are riding donkeys and chasing nymphs: Carpenter 1986, 81; Hoffmann 1983, 61; Hedreen 1992, 74.

⁴² For example, on an Attic black-figure amphora in Beazley 1963, 283.1, see Hoffmann 1983, 61; Carpenter 1986, 26.

⁴³ Burkert 1983, 68-69. This sacrifice could possibly make a reference to the Ásvamedha ritual (see below).

⁴⁴ Watkins's translation (2004, 70).

⁴⁵ On their way back they stopped in a city and said: 'Here you have so heated up the bedroom that the donkey tries to copulate' (Watkins 2004, 70).

attested in the *Asvamedha* ritual, which in its turn is unknown in Greek ritual practice.⁴⁶

According to Greek tradition, the sacrifice of donkeys among the Hyperboreans was actually observed by Perseus before he went to slay Medusa. The sexuality of the animals is again underlined: 'beasts' rampant insolence' (Pindar *Pythian* 10. 36).⁴⁷ Even more interesting is that Perseus is called *lagetas*, a rarely found survival of the Mycenaean title *lavagetas*. The allegoric meaning of the much discussed 'donkey passage' in the *Tenth Pythian Ode* has been interpreted as 'Other'-worldly, as a 'Hyperborean' existence in the Paradise. Thus, the donkeys (their sacrifice, flesh) were associated with heroes and gods.⁴⁸

On the grounds of 'detachable formula', Watkins argues for 'detachable themes', 'which may be deleted from one context and inserted in another', a process he calls 'genetic intertextuality'.⁴⁹ Several major Indo-European detachable themes can be found in Midas' mythology as well. In several stories Midas becomes founder of the Phrygian kingdom and dynasty (although there is no donkey in them) (Arrian *Anabasis* 2. 3. 2-6; Justin 11. 7. 3-13).⁵⁰ There is no extreme sexuality in Midas' behaviour, but the idea of fecundity and prodigious abundance can be translated in myth by his miraculous 'golden touch'. As the above mentioned process is a folklore feature, one can advance the idea of 'detachable scenes' or 'detachable images' as well. Some of the representations on the Greek vases had been inspired by folklore scenes. Thus, Midas' ass's ears in Greek vase painting can be 'detached' and inserted in scenes where there is no evident sexual connotation. And again, the royal symbolism is being preserved. Coming back to Watkins's article 'The Third Donkey: Origin Legends and Some Hidden Indo-European Themes', one could contemplate considering the Phrygian King Midas along these Indo-European patterns as the fourth donkey.

Recent epigraphic evidence from Anatolia could allow for a new consideration of the image of King Midas with ass's ears. An old Anatolian royal symbolism sur-

⁴⁶ Watkins 2004, 76-77.

⁴⁷ Loeb translation; Watkins 2004, 78.

⁴⁸ Hoffmann 1983, 64. Hoffmann's interpretation of the 5th-century Attic rhyta, combining halved heads of a donkey and of a ram is worth noting: 'splitting' (but also uniting) Apollo and Dionysos. An echo of the same dichotomy could be found in Midas' image as revealed in Greek literary tradition (see Vassileva 1997, 13-15; 2005, 26, 34, 120-21).

⁴⁹ Watkins 2004, 77-78. The proverbial sexuality of the ass can be found in Semitic, Sumerian and Babylonian contexts as well, but not in relation with kingship and foundation myth (West 1997, 499; Hordern 2001, 39-40).

⁵⁰ This is the story about the Gordian Knot and it includes a sacred marriage. Slightly different versions of the story are found in Curtius 3. 1. 11-18 and Plutarch *Alexander* 18. Although Gordias is named as the father of Midas and his wagon was dedicated in the temple of Zeus Basileus, all ancient writers consider Midas as the founder of the Phrygian dynasty (see Roller 1984; Vassileva 2003).

vived in the Greek visual and textual representations of the Phrygian ruler, although distorted and transformed.⁵¹ The donkey's sexual symbolism was attested in many Near Eastern traditions and in Greek and Roman literature as well. Probably this abundant sexuality contributed to the donkey's becoming a royal symbol in Near Eastern cultures,⁵² while turning into a figure of ridicule and scorn in Greek texts and art. The Anatolian echo of Tarkasnawa was processed by the Greeks to produce the strange look of the Phrygian ruler on Greek vases. Indeed, the appearance of Midas with ass's ears was so strange that the original rationale for the ass's ears was lost and no plausible account for his animal ears survives in Greek texts. We should also note the importance of Aegean Bronze Age royal survivals, which can be detected in the titulature of the Phrygian king. It was not only the Anatolian background that provided the basis for Midas ass's ears. Midas' involvement in cult and religion, especially his relation with Dionysiac (respectively satyriac and sileniac) figures, as well as his Orphic associations might have also shaped his donkey-like appearance. The amalgamation of Anatolian and European Bronze Age survivals took place along the line of the Indo-European intertextuality. Greeks might not have always understood the detached images and interwove them into other contexts, creating new aetiological stories. The increasing evidence for contacts between the Anatolian and early Greek world show that associations, the 'detachments' and the new 'attachments' might well have occurred on Anatolian soil.

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Abbreviations

KBo *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi* (Leipzig/Berlin).

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⁵¹ S. Morris's discussion (1997, 63-67) on the social context of Orientalisation is very useful. In the case of Midas, eastern Greek sanctuaries should be considered as a probable media for Oriental survivals and Greek transformations. However, in this particular case, I would rather favour (unlike Morris) the elites and the aristocratic families as the social milieu of the process discussed.

⁵² The fertility meaning of the Old Indic ritual and of the Old Hittite and Greek mythological texts, involving the king (and the queen) is obvious, as discussed by Watkins (2004).

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Centre of Thracology
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
13, Moskovska Street
Sofia 1000
Bulgaria
lavagetas@hotmail.com

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