ПРАКТИКА ACTES
20Y ДИЕΘΝΟΥΣ ΣΥΜΠΟΣΙΟΥ 2E SYMPOSIUM INTERNATIONAL
ΘΡΑΚΙΚΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ DES ETUDES THRACIENNES
ΑΡΧΑΙΑ ΘΡΑΚΗ THRACE ANCIENNE

ΑΝΑΤΥΠΟ EXTRAIT

ΕΚΔΟΣΗ EDITION
ΜΟΡΦΩΤΙΚΟΥ ΟΜΙΛΟΥ ΚΟΜΟΤΗΝΗΣ
ΚΟΜΟΤΗΝΗ 1997 DE L’ASSOCIATION CULTURELLE DE KOMOTINI
ΚΟΜΟΤΙΝΙ 1997
THRACE AND PHRYGIA.
SOME PROBLEMS OF THE MEGALITHIC CULTURE

Megalithic monuments are known from many regions, quite different in ethnic, cultural and historical characteristics. The East-Mediterranean aspect of the megalithic culture problem is of special interest. Thracian dolmens and rock tombs have been already discussed in the light of a Mycenaean tradition and their parallels have been sought in the Caucasian and some of the Anatolian monuments. Yet little attention is paid to the similarity between Thracian megaliths and Phrygian rock tombs, niches and platforms. Supporting the ancient written tradition about the Thracian-Phrygian kinship, modern scholars usually seek archaeological proof in the tumuli piled in both regions. Actually, the rock monuments offer many more possibilities for typological comparisons in function and semantics. These will include the recently reported monuments from Northeastern Greece and from some of the Aegean islands, as well as those logically occurring on Turkish territory in Southeastern part of the Balkan peninsula. Though the island of Samothrace is already present in the linguistic Balkan-Anatolian parallels, little is said about the megaliths.

Rock constructions both in Thrace and in Phrygia are poorly dated. Thracian ones are generally situated between the 12th and the 6th century BC, while the proper Phrygian monuments, due mainly to the epigraphic data, are placed between the 8th and the 6th centuries BC.

1. Венедиков, И., Тракийските долмени, долмените в Кавказ и гробниците в Мала Азия. - In: Тракийски паметници 1. Мегалитите в Тракия 1. С., 1976, 76-81; Венедиков, И., Скалните гробници в Тракия М. микенските гробници. - In: Ibidem, 110-115.
2. Hdt., 71, 73.
3. Венедиков, И., Тракийските долмени ..., р. 78; Most recent review of the opinions on the Phrygian migration. - In: Francoovich, G., de Santuary e tombe rupestri dell’antica Frigia e un’indagine sulle tombe della Licia, Roma 1990, 1-11.
The tendency of combining rock tombs, niches and altars in complexes is common for Thrace and Phrygia, though perhaps it is more evident on the Anatolian plateau. The variety of shapes of the rock tombs in Asia Minor is greater and often their plan is more complicated. While the quadrangular plan of some of the Thracian tombs parallels Anatolian monuments, the analogous round chambers can be sought in Mycenaean Greece and in some of the earlier tombs. The structural link between the dolmens and the rock tombs has been already emphasized. An important difference is the lack of dolmens on the plateau. But one can see chamber, entrance, antechamber and niches in the walls that were cut in the living rock both in Thrace and in Phrygia. The same practice is attested in the Caucasus. A dolmen was found in the Sakar Mountain with a niche in one of the slabs, while in another case the rock was used for the back wall of a dolmen. Thus, it can be concluded that in Phrygia the dolmens were cut in the rocks and were not made of slabs, while in Thrace similar architectural elements were achieved by stone slabs and earth.

The funerary bed cut in the rock, which appears only in the Eastern Rhodope monuments, is another parallel to the tombs in Phrygia and Paphlagonia.

The structural link between the rock monuments and the tombs built in stone was also established both in Thrace and in Phrygia. The difference is in the tumular tombs. While the firmly closed wooden chambers, «sealed» by huge clay and earth embankment, were evidently meant for a single burial of an important person, some of the later Thracian stone tombs were regularly visited and played the role of a sanctuary or mausoleum. However, the Phrygian approach parallels some of the earlier Thracian dolmens, which were made as chambers without entrance or opening.

Rock-cutting skills were more advanced in Phrygia. Every element of the wooden constructions was repeated in the rock.

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8. Haspels, C. H. E., op.cit., 2, fig. 549, 556, etc.
11. Венедиков, И., Тракийските долмени ..., р. 76; Марковин, В. И., Дольмени Западного Кавказа, Москва 1978, 179-181, fig. 105, 25, 26.
12. Венедиков, И., Долмени. – In: Ibidem, fig. 49-51.
This results perhaps from the aspiration to represent the house of the dead or the deity regardless of the material. The rock-cutting tradition in Thrace was also demonstrated by the practice of digging in an already piled embankment in order to construct a tomb, or by piling the tumulus over a rock.

The sepulchral character of Thracian megaliths is almost generally accepted. The impressive Phrygian rock façades, behind which there are shafts, were first determined also as sepulchral. However, the written source analyses and the rock complexes point to open-air cult places and sanctuaries. Thracian, Phrygian and Samothracian cult practice did not always require temple building. It is not clear whether there was a permanent temple building in Samothrace even in the 5th century BC. The rocky island itself was considered to be both the home and the incarnation of the Goddess.

For non-literary societies, whose Pantheon was dominated by the Great Mother-Goddess in her mountanous hypostasis, every protruding rock, open platform, stone pillar or any natural peculiarity of the mountain was a cult place.

In terms of Thracian Orphism, the sepulchral and cult functions of the megalithic monuments do not contradict. The mountain, the rock and the tumulus are images of the Great Mother-Goddess, in whose womb her doctrinal son would be buried. The grave and the burial can be symbolic when the son of the Goddess is concerned on a mythological level. From a religious perspective, the sacred place in the mountain is the scene of the supreme ritual, in which the king is both subject and object.

This idea is perfectly illustrated by the most impressive Phrygian rock façade, known as “Midas Monument”, where Midas is both the author and the object of two votive inscriptions. His dedication is to the Great Mother-Goddess (mater). Greek literary sources related the Thracian cult and religious practice in the story about the high construction near Libethra, where the urn with Orpheus’ ashes was placed. About Phrygia the same meaning can be found in the evidence about the Agdistis mountain (the other name of the Great Goddess), where Attis should be buried. The connecting link is Strabo’s text about “the sanctuary of

19. Венедиков, И., Проблеми на мегалитните паметници в Тракия. – In: Ibidem, 31-35.
23. Фол, А., Политика ..., 166-167, 193.
25. Paus. 9, 30, 4-12.
Tereus” on the Tereia mountain in the Troad\textsuperscript{27}. Thus, the place where the Great Mother-Goddess was worshipped, the heroon and the ruler’s grave coincided.

Worship of the mountain / the rock was widespread in the Mediterranean world and in the ancient Near East. In Minoan Crete, the ruler was the supreme priest in the peak sanctuary\textsuperscript{28}. Political and religious aspects of the rock cult are demonstrated by the investiture scene engraved on a ring-seal from Knossos, as well as by the rock-shaped back of the stone throne in the Knossian palace\textsuperscript{29}. Probably the same religious ideas are conferred by the rock throne in Thrace and Phrygia. Their religious and political implications derive from the inscriptions found on some of the Phrygian thrones: vanak is mentioned in M-04 and a deity is obviously meant in M-06\textsuperscript{30}.

Scholars concluded that a young male deity was worshipped in the Cretan peak sanctuaries\textsuperscript{31}. The male god of the mountains is preserved in the Hittite and Hurrian tradition. The image of Teshub in the rock sanctuary of Yazilikay is represented above a mountain\textsuperscript{32}. The site itself combines a chamber dedicated to the cult of the dead, or a burial chamber (probably of Tudhaliyas IV), and many cult constructions\textsuperscript{33}. Anatolian and ancient Near Eastern parallels include the «divine child»\textsuperscript{34}, born from a rock\textsuperscript{35}. All these correspond to the evidence about Thracian and Phrygian religious practice. The idea of a male cosmogonic mountainous divinity can be seen in the graffito «Sabas» on a solitary rock in Phrygia\textsuperscript{36}, as well as DIN / DEN- on the Samothracian sherds\textsuperscript{37}. The reading of DIN as Dyonyssos in-

\textsuperscript{27} Strabo, 13, 1, 17.
\textsuperscript{31} Levi, D., op.cit., p. 39; Rutkowski, B., op.cit., p. 179.
\textsuperscript{36} M-08: Brixhe, Cl., M. Lejeune, op.cit., 27-28.
\textsuperscript{37} Lehmann, K., Documents of the Samothracian language. – Hesperia, 1955, 24, No. 2, No. 4, 7, 10, etc., p. 97-98.
stead of Zeus is supported in Bulgarian literature. Single letters Δ and Η are inscribed on the rocks near Boğazköy, which have not been interpreted yet. The human images and some other engravings in the Southern Rhodope Mountains and in the Pangaion can probably be included in the same context after a more detailed study.

Similar considerations would be appropriate for the two discs on some of the rock thrones in Phrygia. An opportunity for their further interpretation can be offered by the use of the word παρεδός, «one who shares the same seat» in Greek mythological texts. Pindarus calls Dionysos παρεδός of Demeter, Aphrodite shares the same place with Bacchus in an Orphic hymn, while the Kouretes are παρεδός of the Mother of Gods, Rhea, in a later text. Thus, a hypothesis can be advanced that the cosmogonic male god, more probably Sabazios rather than Attis, sits next to the Great Goddess on the mythological level, while the seat it reserved for the king-priest in doctrinal terms.

The political and religious relations between the palace and the peak sanctuary had been known since Minoan time in Crete, as well as from Hittite Anatolia. The complex Phrygian archaeological, epigraphic and written sources reveal much the same situation. The throne altars are clustered near the so-called Midas City, which, whatever the discussions, was an important royal residence.

Megalithic culture resulted from wide ethnic and cultural interactions in the Mediterranean, facilitated by sea routes. The monuments were made by seafarers. This could hardly be said about the inhabitants of the Central Anatolian plateau. However, the presence of Phrygia in Diodorus’ list of Thalassocracies, as well as the parallels already discussed, speak in favour of typological «sea» characteristics.

Nevertheless, megaliths offer one more evidence for the common cultural and ethnic zone comprising Thrace, Samothrace and Phrygia.

40. Moutsopoulos, N. C., op.cit., fig. 12, 13; Triandaphillos, D., La civilisation mégalithique ..., fig. 10, 11; Фол, А., Тракийският Дионис ..., p. 57.
42. Василева, М., ПАРЕДΡОΙ или още веднъж за фригийските скални тронове. – In: Сборник в чест на проф. Александър Фол С., 1994 (forthcoming).
44. Haspels, C. H. E., the Highlands ..., 93-96; Prayon, F., Phrygische Plastik, Tübingen 1987, p. 102.
ΘΡΑΚΗ ΚΑΙ ΦΡΥΓΙΑ, ΜΕΡΙΚΑ ΠΡΟΒΛΗΜΑΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΙΘΙΚΟΥ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ

Τα μεγαλιθικά μνημεία είναι γνωστά από πολλές περιοχές, οι οποίες παρουσιάζουν μεταξύ τους μεγάλες διαφορές στα πολιτιστικά, εθνικά και ιστορικά χαρακτηριστικά. Ιδιαίτερα ένδιαφέρουν παρουσιάζουν τα μεγαλιθικά μνημεία της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου. Τα θρακικά ντολμέν και οι λαξευτοί στο βράχο τάφοι έχουν στο παρελθόν συνδέθηκαν με τη μικηναϊκή παράδοση και έχουν παραλληλιστεί με μνημεία του Καυκάσου και της Ανατολίας.

Παρόλα αυτά μέχρι σήμερα λίγη προσοχή έχει δοθεί στις ομοιότητες ανάμεσα στα μεγαλιθικά μνημεία της Θράκης και σ’ αυτά της Φρυγίας. Η χρονολογήση των μεγαλιθικών μνημείων είναι ιδιαίτερα προβληματική. Σε γενικές γραμμές οι θρακικές μνημεία χρονολογούνται ανάμεσα στον 12ο και στον 6ο αι. π.Χ., ενώ τα φρυγικά τοποθετούνται ανάμεσα στον 8ο και στον 6ο αι. π.Χ.

Τα αρχιτεκτονικά στοιχεία των μνημείων των δύο περιοχών μας παρέχουν ευρύ πεδίο συγχώνευσης. Βασική διαφορά ανάμεσα τους αποτελεί το γεγονός ότι στην Θράκη τα ντολμέν κατασκευάζονταν από μεγάλες πλάκες, ενώ στη Φρυγία λαξεύονταν στον βράχο.

Στοιχεία διαφοροποίησης αποτελεί επίσης ο βεβαιωμένος ταφικός χαρακτήρας των θρακικών ντολμέν που δεν συμφωνεί απόλυτα με τον λατρευτικό και θρησκευτικό χαρακτήρα των ντολμέν της Φρυγίας. Ωστόσο στο πλαίσιο της θρησκείας του οφρυσμού ο ταφικός χαρακτήρας όχι μόνο δεν έρχεται σε αντίθεση αλλά μάλλον συνδυάζεται με τον λατρευτικό.