

Thracian-Phrygian cultural zone: The Daskyleion evidence

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The earliest evidence about Phrygia and the Phrygians suggests the notion of a coastal country in Northwestern Asia Minor.¹ Homer mentions the Phrygians near the river Sangarios,² while later authors and modern researchers interpret his verses by localizing the Phrygians along the lower course of that river and along the southern Propontic coast.³ The „catalogue“-like written tradition about Phrygia was elsewhere discussed.⁴ The earliest data about the Thracians referred also to the Hellespontic region.⁵ (The earliest meaning of Hellespontos comprised the whole of Propontis⁶) The designation Hellespontic Phrygia probably originated from the Hellenistic age. Phrygia Minor was first mentioned by Xenophon⁷ and later used as a synonym of Hellespontic Phrygia and Phrygia Epictetus.⁸ Probably the legendary story of the close relations between the Trojan kingdom and the Phrygians also contributed to those later administrative designations. In Roman times Hellespontic Phrygia included even Alexandria Troas.⁹

Some recent Phrygian finds from Daskyleion provoke a few more comments on the Propontic zone of cultural interactions.

The only city identified as Daskyleion on the basis of the written sources is on the southern coast of the Sea of Marmara, to the west of the Rhyndakos river.¹⁰ After Munro's suggestion¹¹ and Akurgal's excavations¹² the centre of the Persian satrapy was localized on the southeastern coast of the lake Daskylitis (Aphnitis). Ancient written sources hardly differentiated between the two cities. Some of the texts refer to Daskyleion in Phrygia, the other — to the homonymous city in Bithynia.¹³ Nevertheless, the whole region where both settlements are localized was closely associated with Kyzikos.¹⁴ The example of Daskyleion is instructive both for historical geography and for the ethnic and cultural interactions on the southern Propontic coast. Distinction marked by „in Phrygia“ and „in Bithynia“ probably bear mainly chronological reference as can be seen from the passage of *The Iliad* about the Phrygians who came from near the lake Ascania (Iznik gölü, to the east of both settlements identified as Daskyleion, later Bithynia).¹⁵

¹ Vassileva 1994: 217.

² Hom. II. III, 187.

³ Ruge 1941: 788–789; Венедиков 1982: 93–94, 99.

⁴ Vassileva 1994: 217–220.

⁵ Hom. II. II, 845.

⁶ Strabo 7, frg. 57.

⁷ Xen. Cyr. 7, 4, 8–10; 8, 6, 7.

⁸ Strabo 12, 8, 1.

⁹ Strabo, 2, 5, 31; 10, 3, 22; Ptol. 5, 2, 3. 12. Steph. Byz. 186, 12–18.

¹⁰ Kaptan-Bayburtluoğlu 1990: 15–16; Corsten 1988: 51–71.

¹¹ Munro 1912: 65.

¹² Akurgal 1956: 47–51.

¹³ Reviews of the discussion in: Corsten 1988: 57–71; Kaptan-Bayburtluoğlu 1990: 15–16.

¹⁴ Munro 1912: 60–61.

¹⁵ Hom. II. II, 862–863.

The city was the centre of a satrapy created probably even before Darius I. It was ruled by five generations of a family known to us best in Pharnabazos of Xenophon's *Hellenica*.¹⁶ Herodotus does not mention it as a Phrygian city, but the Phrygians and Thracians living in Asia are present in the description of the Third Persian Tax District, comprising the right coast of the Hellespontos and the hinterland.¹⁷ The seat of Pharnabazos is in Daskyleion, which — according to Xenophon — was in Phrygia.¹⁸ However, it is possible to trace in Xenophon's texts the superposition of Phrygia (i.e. Phrygia Minor or Hellespontica), Bithynia or Bithynian Thrace.¹⁹

An Old-Phrygian inscription was recently discovered in a tomb near Daskyleion¹⁰. It resembles Thracian vaulted tombs²¹ with an 8-meter dromos and an open antechamber at the entrance, robbed probably by the Alexander the Great's soldiers. Scattered burnt grave offerings were found in the antechamber.²² The burial offerings and the practice itself resemble Thracian burials of the time.

The stone on which the Old-Phrygian inscription had been hewn was re-used as a threshold. The text is too fragmentary for its meaning to be thoroughly understood. Yet, some more suggestions could be ventured.

The sign *-x-* appears for the first time in an Old-Phrygian text, though found in New-Phrygian inscriptions.²³ A new publication considers a rock inscription discovered in Southern Bulgaria to be written in a Phrygian dialect resembling Western Phrygian inscriptions.²⁴ It was dated to the period between the 3rd and the 1st centuries BC and the sign *-x-* occurred there several times. The authors suggested on combinatorial grounds a change of intervocalic **-k->-x-*, transcribing the sign by χ .²⁵ The reading seems convincing, although the inscription is very carelessly executed and the opinions on it are highly controversial.²⁶

The inscription from Daskyleion can also be ascribed to the „Western“ Phrygian language area. This is the second longer text, after reading the inscription from Uyučik in Phrygian,²⁷ found far off to the northwest of the heart of the Phrygian territory.²⁸ These „para-Phrygian“ inscriptions demonstrate some peculiar signs, whose transcriptions are still under discussion. Thus, *-x-* is regularly attested in intervocalic position and next to vowels in anlaut and auslaut in the Daskyleion text. It is satisfactorily rendered by *-y-*, perhaps most convincingly in „*yos tumoy*“. Further data and investigations will be necessary to reconcile the two transcriptions of *-x-* proposed.

The enclitic conjunction *-ke* known from P-03 and frequent in New-Phrygian,²⁹ could be separated from „*stalake*“ in the first line. Some authors consider *starna* to be

¹⁶ Xen. Hell. 3, 4, 12; 4, 1, 15; Cook 1985: 264–265; Burn 1985: 339.

¹⁷ Hdt. 3, 90.

¹⁸ Xen. Hell. 3, 2, 1; 3, 4, 12–13.

¹⁹ Besides the military activity of Pharnabazos, he is mentioned both as a satrap of Phrygia (Hellespontic) and of Bithynia, otherwise called Bithynian Thrace or only Thrace: Xen. Hell. 3, 2, 2; An. 6, 2, 17–19; 6, 4, 1, 24; 7, 8, 25, etc.

²⁰ Bakır and Gusmani 1991: 157–164; Bakır 1990–1991: 60–61.

²¹ Mellink 1992: 148; Mellink 1993: 121.

²² Bakır and Gusmani 1991: 158–159.

²³ N-15, N-18, etc.

²⁴ Bayun and Orel 1991: 147.

²⁵ Bayun and Orel 1991: 146 considered *viχusin viχu* as *figura etymologica*, related to the Greek εἰχών, while *δαχιu* might be connected with the Phrygian and Lydian name of Bacchus.

²⁶ Gérasimova-Tomova 1989: 131–140.

²⁷ Bayun and Orel 1988: 131–138.

²⁸ Besides the Daskyleion graffiti: Bakır and Gusmani 1993: 135–144, there is only preliminary information about graffiti from Ikiztepe: Mellink 1992: 144.

²⁹ Brixhe and Lejeune 1984: 234; N-18, N-48, N-69 in Haas 1966: 93–94.

the Phrygian word for „stela“.³⁰ *Sttala* is present in Lycian.³¹ In the present inscription, however, it seems that the dialectal Dorian form of *στήλη* – *στάλα*³² could be recognized.

The reading of the next words is too difficult, due to destruction. The point of discussion here is the sign ↑, which is considered to be the result of a palatalization.³³ If a recent assumption is to be accepted, then „t“ would be a possible transcription.³⁴ ↑*ekm*[. . .] *Jeske*³⁵ and ↑*ekmatin* in the third line might be considered words of the same stem. These could be related to *tekmor* in P-04a and to the Homeric (epic) *τέκμων*, „boundary, end“, or „sure sign, solemn token“.³⁶

Yos tumoy in the 3rd line can be considered to be the most clear part of the inscription from a grammatical point of view. The word that can open a discussion is *tumoy*, a dative form. It could be suggested for *tumoy* to be compared to *δοῦμος*, declared to be a Phrygian word due to the evidence of Hipponax and Hesychius.³⁷ Some authors considered it a Lydian word.³⁸ *Doumo-* is attested in a New-Phrygian inscription,³⁹ the accusative form of *duma-*, *duman* is present in B-01,⁴⁰ while some of the Gordion graffiti probably offer its derivatives: *dumastaeia* (G-131), *dumast-* (G-245).⁴¹ The word is interpreted as „religious assembly“, related to the cult of the Great Mother-Goddess.⁴²

The word *δοῦμος* has not an established etymology, but is compared with Greek words that originate in **dhe-* and in the verb *τίθημι*: *θωμός*, *θέμος*, *θέμυς* (as the Goddess of Justice and Assembly).⁴³ The name of the legendary Thracian singer *Thamyris* also belongs to this circle of parallels.⁴⁴

As far as the Old Phrygian inscriptions could be comprehended, i.e. **dh-* was rendered usually by *d*. Different researches, however, reveal the relatively great uncertainty of the reading and interpretation of the phrygian words, nothing to say about their etymology. Some authors find examples of Phrygian *t* from i.-e. **dh* and accept its alternatively reading by *t/d*.⁴⁵ Different interpretations and attempts to equate *devos*, as well as *tives* with the i.-e. word for „god“ or „divine“ are an instructive example for the state of the Phrygian linguistic studies.⁴⁶ Against the background of so controversial suggestions, *tumoy* could possibly be another example of *t-* transformation of **dh-*, if the etymological connection proposed were true.

³⁰ Haas 1966: 24, 79, 98, 237.

³¹ Considered as a loan-word from Greek: Нойман 1980: 329.

³² Liddle and Scott 1968: 1353.

³³ Brixhe and Lejeune 1984: 281.

³⁴ Vassileva 1992: 1–2. It seems now even more probable after the discovery of a graffito from an Antalian tumulus, reading *ATES*, Varinlioglu's drawing shows clearly „the arrow“-sign for *-t-*: Varinlioglu 1992: 12, 14–15, No. 1, Fig. 1, 7.

³⁵ It can be assumed that *-ke* is again the conjunction, while the word ends in *-es* and might render a preterit/aorist form, 3rd p. sg.: Brixhe and Lejeune 1984: 8, 10, 14, 116, etc.; Баюн 1986: 168.

³⁶ Brixhe and Lejeune 1984: 237–238; Liddle and Scott 1968: 1767.

³⁷ Hipponax frg. 30 (67D³); Masson 1962: 124; Chantraine 1968: 295; Frisk 1972: 75.

³⁸ Gusmani 1964: 99f; Haas 1966: 142, Note 2.

³⁹ N-48: Kretschmer 1900: 445–446.

⁴⁰ Though this is the longest Old-Phrygian inscription found, its understanding is quite poor. Whatever the discussions were, part of the word divisions already accepted separates *duman* in the 3rd line: Lubotsky 1993: 96–97.

⁴¹ Баюн and Орел 1988: 187. Cf. Brixhe takes these for personal names: Brixhe 1993: 339; Brixhe 1994: 175; another word division for these derivatives: Diakonoff and Neroznak 1985: 104–105.

⁴² Kretschmer 1900: 446; Баюн and Орел 1988: 187; Haas 1966: 79, 98, 142 gives „Grabhügel“.

⁴³ Chantraine 1968: 295, 421, 428, 450; Sarafov 1978: 51–54.

⁴⁴ Detschew 1976: 202.

⁴⁵ *tives* in M-04 and *etoves*, *tivo(t)* in B-01: Баюн and Орел 1988: 180, 187; Баюн and Орел 1983: 25.

⁴⁶ Баюн and Орел 1988: 180; Lubotsky 1989: 83–85; Diakonoff and Neroznak 1985: 102.

The context of female followers of the Goddess for *δοῦμος*, provided by the Hypponax' fragment, can be further confirmed by a 2nd century AD Greek inscription found in Bulgaria. It refers probably to female participants in a mystery cult, the restoration being: [αἱ τοῦ [ε]ρου δούμου [-σὺν ταῖ]ς μυστρίας.⁴⁷ *Δοῦμος* is explained as *θίασος*. Two Latin 2nd–3rd centuries AD inscriptions from Moesia Inferior could be also considered. The one from Novae mentions *dumopireti*, the other from Tomis mentions *mater dumi* and *pater dumi*.⁴⁸ The Greek inscription and the Latin one from Novae are dedications to the Mother of Gods. The record can be supplemented by two Greek inscriptions from Thessalonica where *Δοῦμος Ἀφροδείτης Ἐπιτευξιδίας* (1st century AD)⁴⁹ and *Ταυρουκομπετουδουμος* (word division suggested: *Ταυρου κομπετου δουμος*; 2nd–3rd century AD)⁵⁰ were found. Though Voutiras argues rather for a professional college than a religious one, the presence of Aphrodite is instructive. The religious sense of the word is attested by some Greek inscriptions from Maeonia.⁵¹

Doumo- in N-48, considered to be a bilingual New-Phrygian-Greek inscription, was earlier interpreted as „of the *κώμη*“ due to the Greek counterpart.⁵² The correspondence with the Gr. *θωμός-* „heap“, which is far from being undoubtable, however, provokes the almost general acceptance of the meaning „tumulus“ for *doumos/duma*.⁵³ *Doumo-* and *duman* in B-01 (according to the highly hypothetical translation), are connected with a curse formula.⁵⁴ The Daskyleion text seems to be of the same nature: dedication plus a curse formula, as already proposed.⁵⁵

An opportunity for still another parallel and further interpretation might be offered by *tumiā* found in Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions from Ancoz and Carchemish. A general word for offering or for a particular type of offering was suggested.⁵⁶ *Tumiā* is mentioned in one of the texts together with a temple (probably of Kubaba), while in the others it is present in the context of an (offering) table of Kubaba.⁵⁷

On the other hand, *tumoy* can be compared with Hitt. *dl̄tamaš*, *dameš-*, „to subject by force“, Luw. *damaš-*, „to dominate“, but the Lyc. participle *asi-t̄m̄māta*, „added, joint“⁵⁸ seems the closest parallel.

The inscription of Daskyleion could hardly be understood completely in this state of preservation. Yet, a hypothesis about a dedication of a new monument (stele, podium or table, characteristic of the Near-Eastern cult of the Great Goddess) can be launched. It could mark the boundary (*tekmor*) of a sacred space, intended for the priestesses of the Goddess. The text might include a curse formula against any violator of the boundary.

It is very tempting but too hazardous to assume that the secondary use of the stone might have perpetuated the idea of a sacred boundary, which the threshold of the tomb was surely meant for.

⁴⁷ Mihailov 1966: 41, No. 1925.

⁴⁸ Gerov 1989: No. 295; Haas 1966: 142.

⁴⁹ Voutiras 1992: 87–96.

⁵⁰ Łajtar 1990: 211–212.

⁵¹ Haas 1966: 142, Note 1.

⁵² Kretschmer 1900: 446; Diakonoff and Neroznak 1985: 105.

⁵³ Haas 1966: 79, 98.

⁵⁴ Баюн and Орел 1988: 189; Баюн and Орел 1988a: 148.

⁵⁵ Bakır and Gusmani 1991: 162.

⁵⁶ Hawkins 1970: 99, otherwise in Merrigi 1975: 2, 67, No. 124.

⁵⁷ Hawkins 1970: 98–99.

⁵⁸ Айхенвальд, Баюн and Иванов 1987: 112.

The evidence for a female religious community suggested here seems the most important. It would reveal Dionysiac elements in Phrygian religious practice. Although the sources about *δοῦμος/duma* cited here are asynchronous, they could yield another common point in the religious life of ancient Phrygia and Thrace. The fire context attested in the inscription from Novae could be included in the already underlined fire-rituality of the Sabazios cult.⁵⁹

The cultural interactions in the Propontic zone, which accounted for the Dorian traits in the literary reception and Hellenization of the name and cult of Sabazios,⁶⁰ could be further confirmed by the Daskyleion evidence and the recent research on the whole region. The second Daskyleion (actually the first known), that on the sea, was most probably meant by Strabo when he said that the city belonged to Byzantium.⁶¹

On the other hand, the whole area formed the hinterland of Kyzikos. The founding of the city was associated with the Thracian tribe Doliones whose territory reached the lake of Daskylitis.⁶² The mythographic evidence involved the name of Daskylos in the Bebrykian saga: in their legendary fight with the Mysian/Mariandinian king Lykos.⁶³ Bebrykes, whose ethnonym was probably formed by a reduplication of that of the Brygians, were also placed along the lower Sangarius river, later Bithynia.⁶⁴ The common features which Bithynian onomastics shared with Thracian and Phrygian were already discussed.⁶⁵ Kyzikos and its vicinity yielded the greatest number of epigraphically attested Thracian personal names.⁶⁶

Kyzikos was a centre of worship of the Mother of Gods. The night celebrations which Anacharsis witnessed there conform to the Thracian religious practice, while the tympan he used points to the Phrygian Kybele⁶⁷. The natural setting of an area overgrown with trees is characteristic both for Anatolian (Hittite and Phrygian) and Thracian rituality. Herodotus' narrative about Anacharsis, however, implies an already Hellenized cult. This is still another evidence for the contribution of the Propontic zone of interactions to the Hellenic cultural synthesis.

The *agalмата*⁶⁸ worn by Anacharsis has been recently discussed in the context of some Thracian finds,⁶⁹ while plaques with Goddess' image were common in Hellenistic Asia Minor.⁷⁰

The existence of an earlier Phrygian settlement in Daskyleion is proposed on the grounds of the archaeological evidence, as well as of the Strabo's statements that the lake Daskylitis was also called Aphneion, and Aphneion was a Phrygian city.⁷¹ The Old Phrygian inscription and the graffiti found in the satrapal palace⁷² show that Phrygian language was used in the time of the Persian rule. The conservatism of definitely „royal“ *realia* probably gave grounds to Xenophon to speak about a Phrygian king on the Hellespontos in the time of the Persian rule.⁷³

⁵⁹ Фол 1994: 77, 168, 246–256.

⁶⁰ Фол 1994: 69–70, 176.

⁶¹ Strabo 12, 8, 11; Corsten 1988: 67–68: this connection is attested for the Hellenistic and Roman times.

⁶² Apoll. Rhod. 1, 952–1022; Strabo 12, 8, 10; Orph. Argon. 501–502 (Abel); Plin. NH 5, 40.

⁶³ Schol. ad Apoll. Rhod. 2, 724; 752.

⁶⁴ Strabo 12, 3, 3; 14, 5, 23, the mythographic stories also connected them with Bithynia: Apoll. Rhod. 2, 4; Apollod. 1, 9, 20. Comments in: Leaf 1923: 62.

⁶⁵ Фол 1972: 202; Duridanov 1980: 220–222; Mihailov 1978: 72, 74–75; Mitchell 1978: 119–127; Mitchell 1982: 20.

⁶⁶ Although some of them probably should be connected with military settlements and Thracian mercenaries: Mitchell 1978: 121.

⁶⁷ Hdt. 4, 76.

⁶⁸ Interpretation of *agalмата* in Thracian ritual in: Фол 1990: 114.

⁶⁹ Venedikov 1995: 143–156.

⁷⁰ Reeder 1987: 423–440.

⁷¹ Bakır 1990–1991: 61; Mellink 1992: 148; Mellink 1993: 121, 132; Strabo 13, 1, 9, comments in: Leaf 1923: 63–64; Kaptan-Bayburtluoğlu 1990: 16, note 6.

⁷² Bakır and Gusmani 1993: 135–144.

⁷³ Xen. Cyr. 4, 2, 30; 7, 4, 8–10.

It is well known that Persian authorities occupied important local centres and doubled age-old routes. The effect of the Persian presence and Persian royal code on the political life of both Thrace and Bithynia has been already estimated.⁷⁴ Pharnabazos' favourite hunting parks (*paradeisoi*), described by Xenophon, bear a striking resemblance with Theopompos' narrative about the residence of Kotys.⁷⁵ The common context might be confirmed by Strabo's mentioning of the „Mount of Tereia“, near Zeleia, inhabited by the citizens of Kyzikos, where Lydian, and then Persian, royal chase took part.⁷⁶ An Attic kylix from Daskyleion bears *wana[— wanax*. Though the authors considered it a personal name, like those found in New-Phrygian texts — Ουναξος,⁷⁷ the contextual reference is quite eloquent for this earlier period.

The centre of the Persian satrapy appears as a meeting point of many cultures and active cultural interactions, both synchronic and asynchronous. There were found Phrygian, Lydian, Aramaic and Greek graffiti, while the animal representations on the Persian seals and the so-called „Graeco-Persian“ reliefs in the vicinity⁷⁸ attested the interactions in the time of the satraps. Lydian characteristics are conferred not only by the finds but by the name of the city as well — after Daskylos, Gyges' father. The superimposing of different cultural layers could probably be dated further back, if the Hittite toponym *Taşkurija*, derived from the Hattic PN *Taşkuili*,⁷⁹ could have referred to the region.

The tomb near Daskyleion could lead to a re-evaluation of other archaeological sites in Northwestern Asia Minor from the Hellenistic times. Should the discovery of built tombs, using a technique of vaulting known in Thrace, be attributed only to the Galatians who transferred these tombs to Asia Minor?⁸⁰

The combination of a 4th century BC Thracian-like vaulted tomb and a 6th—5th century BC inscription, however, offers yet another evidence for the cultural interactions in the centre of the Persian satrapy which united Phrygians and Thracians in Asia.⁸¹ Though multi-sided in space and time these interactions preserved the earlier Thracian-Phrygian background, which probably gave grounds for the designation Hellespontic Phrygia used centuries later.

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⁷⁴ Fol 1972: 206—208.

⁷⁵ Xen. Hell. 4, 1, 15—16; Theop. frg. 31 (Jacoby).

⁷⁶ Strabo 13, 1, 17; Leaf 1923: 91—92.

⁷⁷ Bakır and Gusmani 1993: 137, 143, No. 2.

⁷⁸ Kaptan-Bayburtluoğlu 1990: 15—27.

⁷⁹ Laroche 1952: 73.

⁸⁰ About the Anatolian and Thracian traditions in the stone chambered tumuli rather than Celtic ones in: Winter 1988: 64.

⁸¹ Hdt. 3, 90; 126.

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