

REVIEW

by Prof. Dr. Totko Stoyanov
member of the scientific jury for the assessment of the qualities of the dissertation work of Denis Danielov Borisov, full-time doctoral student at the Department of Archaeology, Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski on the topic: Economic and cultural contacts of Northwest Thrace with the Greek world (V-I centuries BC), presented for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor"

Denis Danielov Borisov is a graduate of the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of History of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridsk. Already in the course of his studies in the Bachelor's program he showed interest in the issues of classical archaeology, which had a natural culmination in his studies in the Master's program in Classical Archaeology, which culminated in a master's thesis on "Ethnic and social composition of the population of Augusta Traiana and its territory in the Roman era (1st-4th centuries)", successfully defended in 2019.

The presented thesis has, I would say, a classical structure - Introduction, five chapters, concluding chapter, bibliography, catalogue and appendices (tables, maps and charts) with a total length of 425 pages. At the beginning of the introduction the aim, objectives and methods of the research are succinctly presented. The defined main tasks determine the five chapters in the exposition. In the following text, the doctoral student has discussed the content of the concepts of "economic" and "cultural contacts" using as a basis the examples of the monograph of Dr. Tedosiev on Northwest Thrace and a rather theoretical study of the German scientist K. Wolf. The following is the presentation of the author's understanding of the chronological framework and geographical scope of the dissertation, derived from ideas successfully presented in previous studies by Bulgarian and authors from neighbouring countries. The final part of the introduction presents the main historical events related to the development of Northwest Thrace, as reflected in the historical sources that have come down to us.

The site catalogues, and especially the categories of finds, are the starting point for the analysis in the individual chapters. Information is presented for 38 archaeological complexes and 181 catalogue units - finds from Northwest Bulgaria, Southwest Romania and Eastern Serbia, following a constant pattern of data presentation. 92 panels with photo- and graphic illustrations of the studied artefacts, linked to the catalogue and the text of the exposition, are at a good level and a prerequisite for an objective analysis and synthesis. 4 maps and 16 tables with a relative chronology complement the illustrative part. (The graphic images that repeat the photograph of the vessel next to them do not bring any additional information and are unnecessary).

Art. I. History of research. Following the chronology of publications, an informal review of a substantial part of the literature on the dissertation's problems is presented. The earliest primary publications from the early twentieth century are presented analytically - an assessment of the volume and quality of the data and their illustration, the presence of dating, notes on the provenance of the artefacts, etc.

According to the PhD student, a new stage in the publications on the topic in the researched region came with the study of the Mogilanska mound in Vratsa and the publications of I. Venedikov and B. Nikolov on the nature and content of the three burial structures, which attracted the attention of specialists to this important complex for the political and cultural history of Thrace. The efforts of B. Nikolov for collecting and publishing information on various sites and finds - accidental and archaeological. The publications of important finds and complexes, such as the burial from Valchitran, the grave at the cement factory near Pleven, the treasure from Yakimovo, the excavation of mound necropolises by the team of G. Kitov in Lovech, etc. I would also note the attention of the PhD student to general publications on Thrace, the content of which is relevant to the problems of the dissertation, such as *Bulgaria in Antiquity* by R. Hodinot (1975), the article by V. Vassilev on the reconstruction of the helmet from Varbitsa (1979) the monograph by M. Domaradski *The Celts on the Balkan Peninsula* (1984), etc.

The discovery of the treasure from Rogozen is rightly defined as the beginning of a new stage in the research of the region. The doctoral student has tried to trace in a balanced way individual publications on various issues related to the treasure, the catalogues for the exhibitions abroad and the summary publications on the main topics and discussions, such as the composition and character of the vessels, the information from the inscriptions on some of them, the problem of the nature of the deposition, the chronology of the accumulation, the date and reasons for the deposition, etc. The research on various sites of the region and the publications about them in the last two decades of the twentieth century are traced. Special attention is paid to the dissertations of N. Theodosiev and D. Antonov, directly related to the problems of the dissertation (published in 2000 and 2007). Other important publications on the subject from the first decades of this century are also commented. Data from rescue studies on major infrastructure projects in the region are highlighted. Publications of Romanian and Serbian scholars are presented that are important for the topic of the thesis.

The final part of the chapter is devoted to a summary of the main developments in the research and publications on them. Problems and shortcomings in the studies of the economic and cultural contacts of North-West Thrace during the Classical and Hellenistic eras are highlighted.

In chap. II Ceramic wares, the documented vessels in the region, the product of the Hellenistic ceramic industry of the Classical and Early Hellenistic periods, as well as examples of local imitations of typical Greek forms, are examined as a source of opportunities for the study of the economic and cultural contacts of Northwest Thrace with the Greek world during the period under study, as well as the ways in which these contacts were made. The following forms are considered in turn: scyphos, kylixes, moulded rim cantharos, lekites, kraters, amphoriskos, pyxides, lamps, bowls, and amphora tare, 24 finds in all. The doctoral student points out that most are represented in grave contexts and only one example is from a settlement structure. Each vessel of a given form is represented by the context with which it is associated, its particularities, parallels from Greece, mainly Athens, the West Pontic apophyses and inland Thrace. In some cases, examples from the northern Black Sea coast and other parts of the Mediterranean are also cited.

Suggested dating is given and the preferred one is usually indicated. It seems to me that, unnecessarily in some cases, there is almost complete repetition of the catalogue descriptions, and a penchant for quoting parallels, not always in an acceptable sequence. There is a very good retention of pottery forms and basic publications, both for Attic complex pottery and for pottery from the Pontine Coast and Thrace. There are some failures, such as the placement of Ennisala north of the Danube, the use of the term "amphoriska," instead "amphoriscus," or the phrase that a cilix from the Athenian agora is similar to vessels from Doirensi (pp. 47, 164).

The final part of this chapter discusses general issues such as the reception and use of Greek pottery in "barbarian" societies such as Thracian; the likely greater affinity of the Thracian aristocracy for precious metal wares (vessels); the observation by specialists that the presence of identical vessels in long series in the Thracian environment was the result of trade relations, but that there was probably also a practice of gift-giving; the discussion as to whether the use of Greek vessels in barbarian societies led to the adoption of Greek (ritual) practices and, in particular, the suggestion "that a symposium 'on the Greek model' was not practiced in ancient Thrace." The opinion of A. Bozhkova that craters were used in the Thracian environment for the serving of wine, not for its mixing with water. In Northwest Thrace, a banqueting set composed of ceramic and metal vessels has been documented only in Tomb 1/II from the Mogilanska mound in Vratsa. In the other complexes there are single ceramic vessels. The opinions on the existence of markets in the Thracian environment, which for the time being refer mainly to southern Thrace, and the related question of the routes by which economic contacts were made, are discussed. The PhD student presents the existing views on the probable routes by water and land - from the east along the Danube and its major tributaries and from the south along the Vardar and Morava and through the Petrohan and Vitinja passes. In relation to the southern direction, knowing the literature on the research of Kale Kersheva, D. Borisov formulated the hypothesis that it is possible that the import of part of the Greek ceramics in NW Thrace to have been made through this settlement with an obviously Hellenized character. In an attempt at a final synthesis of the issues commented on, the doctoral student formulates the controversial conclusion that "the pottery of NW Thrace shows that the region was not integrated into trade with the Greek world. " Before that, however, he allows for the existence of occasional visits of Hellenes to NW Thrace, the getting of Greek pottery there "through indirect trade contacts involving other Thracian tribes, these wares getting to NW Thrace through trade exchanges between Thracian tribes" (p. 62).

Art. III. Torrefaction wares is the core of the dissertation with the quantity and variety of precious metal vessels dating from the early classical to the late Hellenistic period. The main aim of this chapter is to synthesize the data from the analysis of the Torrefaction wares from northwestern Thrace that attest directly or indirectly to the existence of economic and cultural contacts with the Greek world during the Classical and Hellenistic eras.

Eleven categories with a total of 13 vessel forms from Northwest Thrace are examined. The analysis begins with the phiales and calyx-bowls, which are the most numerous and, as a function, are the main element of the wares.

The PhD student first presents two bronze fiales-mesomphalos from Northwest Thrace, which predate the mass appearance of fiales in the region. The fial from Sofronievo was found in a mound burial of a mounted warrior whose inventory points to a date in the 7th century BC, confirmed by the parallels drawn for a date between the early 7th and third quarter of the 6th century BC. The Nefela fial is an accidental find and a tentative date within the 6th century BC has been suggested. The formal features of both vessels allow for the suggestion of their manufacture in Hellenistic workshops. What follows is a text outlining the penetration of the two main varieties of phiale into the region in the 5th to early 4th centuries - a few phials from the Rogozen hoard and one from the Radjuven hoard of the mesomphalos variant, typical of Greek practice, and, much more than in a larger number of places, phials of the so-called Achaemenid type (with a two-component body and S-shaped profile), more suitable for drinking wine and reflecting the adoption of the Achaemenid model of banqueting by the Thracian aristocracy. From the beginning of the 4th century they were the dominant type with different variations in the morphology and proportions of the vessels with accompanying variations in decoration - from a plain body to different combinations of motifs illustrated by specific examples.

The earliest fial-mesomphalos is probably No. 2 (in the treasure catalogue), whose relief decoration of lotus blossoms and almond-shaped ornaments finds parallels in insular, mainland Greece and Macedonia, pointing to a late 6th-early 5th century date and possibly a studio from the Chalkidiki area. The suggestion of I. Marazov, accepted by others, that the vessel came to the area as a diplomatic gift or part of the booty taken by the Tribals in their campaign against the Abdera. To this are added two other phials with a similar ornamental scheme, but with an S-shaped profile and a date in the 4th century, also the product of Hellenistic ateliers (possibly also in M. Asia). Along with these two, an exquisite Achaemenid-type phiale with a frieze of lion-headed griffins, their tails framing palmettes - a combination of Achaemenid motifs with Hellenistic artistic style - has been added to the presumed Abdera loot.

The next object of extensive analysis is one of the phials from the Mound of Mogilan with an appliquéd medallion with the head of a figure identified as Aphrodite. Similarities with images from coins of Kizik form the hypothesis of the possible creation of the phiale in Kizik's studio or area and date around the second quarter of the 4th century.

One of the phials that has attracted the attention of specialists, the phiale depicting the myth of Auge and Heracles, is examined at length. Opinions on the form and decorative program of the vessel, iconographic parallels for the secondarily mounted medallion with the mythological scene, and opinions on the time and place of creation are presented. Proposed after scrupulous analysis by M. Traister's date of the late fourth-first decades of the third century is probably the most reasonable, and for the studio opinions gravitate around the northern Aegean coast, Chalkidiki and Macedonia or Propontis.

A discussion of the reading and interpretation of the inscriptions on a group of phials with varied morphology and decoration from Rogozen and the previously known phials from Alexandrovo and the Mogilanska mound, which contain the names Kotis and (two) Kersebleptus, is given its due. The basic view that these are the names of the two Odryan rulers leads to the conclusion that the vessels are not locally produced, and analysis of the form, decoration and parallels to variants of their production in the

atelier(s) at the ruler's court, with variants of vessels acquired and inscribed there coming from the south, Propontis or Anatolia. Studies are cited that seek comparison with the practice of inscribing precious metal vessels (objects) in Greek and Achaemenid practice. Emphasis is also placed on the interpretation of the inscription on fial No. 29 of the Rogozen hoard ΔΙΣΛΟΙΑΣ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ, leading to different opinions on the status and role of the Torreuti in Thrace. Different opinions on the circumstances under which the treasure was buried, its nature and origin are also presented. (The problem of the date of deposition is underestimated). The distinct grouping of the Calix cups after the discovery of the Rogozen hoard is presented, reflecting the perception of an important trend in the development of phiale in Achaemenid Persia and the specific characteristics of these cups in Thrace, against the background of their development in neighbouring Macedonia; and in this connection, the steadily increasing group of ceramic replicas from settlements and necropolises, both in southern and northern Thrace. The jugs are the other large group of banquet vessels in Thrace that have stood out since the discovery of the Rogozen Treasure. They are apparently combined with the cups, mainly phials and calyx-cups, as the main element in the services from rich graves and in treasure troves. The basic form in these of silver are round-mouthed and ovoid-bodied (olpe) with a handle usually connected horizontally to the mouth. Despite variations in silhouette and decorative schemes, they are clearly a homogeneous group, typical of Thrace. It is disputed that they are a direct borrowing from the Achaemenid repertoire. The proximity to clay versions in the Hellenistic tradition from the Early Classical period is evident, and they are executed in silver with specimens from prestigious workshops in Macedonia from the 4th-3rd centuries. These main lines are outlined in the PhD student's presentation with references to current research. Д. Borisov has focused on the question of the origin, perception and local production of jugs of this form, with a lotus flower cup decoration, in the context of current publications, including the question of where the priority lies - in the production of Macedonian ateliers or those from Southeast Thrace and distribution among local craftsmen in the interior. Jugs with a trifid mouth (oinohoeta) made of bronze have a more minor presence. The variant with a biconical body, elongated neck and asymmetrical mouth with spout has a more prominent distribution (also in other parts of Thrace). This group is well represented in the context of current research in Bulgaria and beyond, including opinions on the development of the form and the suggested areas where the ateliers are, on the coasts of Thrace and/or in established centres in Hellas. Einochoes with a symmetrical trilobed mouth and ovoid or globular body are single, more often occasional finds. "The 'Phidias-type' bowls and jugs," as the Ph. 93, have a good reception also in NW Thrace. The hesitation about the naming of the form, is also present in the specialized literature. The silver vessels from the Mogilan Mound and Bukyovtsi represent two variants, apparently the production of different workshops. The bronze pot from Pudria represents the rarer versions for Thrace.

The cantaros and kylixes, basic cup forms for the Greek tradition, are apparently rare in this part of Thrace, made of bronze, also presumably the production of Greek workshops. The rhyton, gobeles, and cotilla are also cups of minor appearance, with a presumed imported character. The cups with a prominent conical body, without stool and handles (mastos) are a manifestation of the good reception of this new form in Late Hellenistic Thoretics, better documented in NW and NE Thrace, and with local production (the treasure at Yakimovo) and in the lands north of the Danube.

Eight bronze situlae (1 from Cernele, Romania) attest to the common presence of these vessels in banqueting assemblages from rich burials in NW Thrace as well, and are presented comprehensively in the context of the current literature. On a similar scale to the situlae, hydriae, representing common variants from other parts of Thrace, have a good reception in sets from NW Thrace.

The two variants of the arifaform vessels - with a curved neck and with a low wide neck - are representatives of a specific group, probably with ritual functions, which were probably produced in Thrace. The Talcott Class bronze auriform lekty from Mezdra is one of the few representatives of this type of vessel in Thrace.

The comment about the bronze cauldron from Letnitsa in the context of recent studies of these vessels in Thrace leads to the opinion that this specimen was probably produced in a Macedonian workshop.

The bronze hutra from Doirentsi, a typical form of Greek utilitarian vessels, is the second example from Thrace, which, together with that from the rich grave at Golemani (and the silver vessel from the Yakimova mound at Topolchan, omitted by the author), is further evidence that in Thrace Greek forms were used (in funerary contexts) with a different function.

The final pages of this voluminous chapter are devoted to an attempt to summarize observations on the origins and timing of documented precious metal vessels in the study region, adopting water and land routes proposed in previous studies. The hypothesis that "Hellenic torrefaction wares came to northwestern Thrace by an indirect route - diplomatic gifts or spoils. ... Bronze vessels and some silver vessels penetrated into Northwest Thrace through indirect trade contacts with the Greek world, which were carried out with the participation of other Thracian tribes. "The vessels of Attic, Boeotian and Corinthian origin, as well as those originating from the Propontis, the Aegean coast, Cyzicus or Chalkida, indicate the existence of contacts with centres that were not intense, unlike those with Ancient Macedonia [above - "the close economic and cultural links of Northwest Thrace with Ancient Macedonia"]. The data from the commented finds show that North-West Thrace was not fully integrated with Greek markets, as is the case with the other territories of Ancient Thrace."(bold. T.S.)

Art. IV. Jewellery and toiletries.

The introductory paragraph states that the objects of analysis in this chapter are: wreaths, earrings, necklaces, rings, beads and glass pendants, gold appliqués, pendants and figurines, mirrors and cosmetic spoons. And it is to be expected that "The presence of certain articles in the grave goods or in an individual find indicates the preferences of the local aristocracy."

In fact, however, it is actually present - one gold wreath from tomb 1/I in the Mogilanskaya Mound; - one pair of gold earrings from the same tomb; - one gold necklace from the hoard from Vladinya, Lovech and one gold necklace from tomb 4 D from the Early Hellenistic necropolis at Bokhot, Pleven; - two bronze rings from tomb 1/II and one bronze ring from tomb 2/II in the Mogilanska mound and two bronze rings from tomb 4 D of the necropolis at Bohot; - golden appliqués were found only in tomb 1/II in the Mogilanskaya mound, and golden pendants and figurines are in the inventory of tomb 1/II and tomb 2/II in the same mound; - a bronze mirror and - two golden cosmetic spoons were also found only

in tomb 1/II again there. From the territory of Northwest Thrace there is no basis for comparison, because apart from the artefacts from the Mogilanska mound, the gold necklaces from Vladinya and Bohot are also solitary in the region. The objects from tomb 1/II actually show the taste of the representatives of the Tribalian ruling family from the time of its apogee, as we assume. The golden wreath is a sign-insignia of the representative of that family buried there. The gold appliqués part of the accessories or panelling of the representational garments have parallels among rich burials in Thrace and Macedonia, because the aristocracy in both countries followed similar modes of self-representation. They are unlikely to have been the object of trade, like the wreath, and were probably specially carved by specialist jewellers. The gold scoops, whose functions as seen from the extensive information may not even one, but are hardly objects of mass production. The bronze rings are badly damaged and it is difficult to judge whether they are the object of more special skill or production of a more mass character. The two gold necklaces are also most representational and unconventional. So the majority of the artefacts are a source of information mostly about calteric contact influences and reciprocations mostly at aristocratic level. In the case of beads and glass pendants, which are actually widespread pri Late Slassic and especially Hellenistic era in the Balkans and delech beyond. Probably there were many centers of origin, especially in Hellenistic times, and we could define these artifacts as part of trade relations, but from where - to where, hardly sure. This group of artefacts is scarce in the whole territory of Northwest Thrace, because more serious , targeted excavations of settlements and necropolises have seen only one in recent years.

Art. V. Armament. In principle, a chapter with this subject matter has potential because defensive armaments were the object of standard production and trade. Unfortunately, here, as with the previous chapter, the objects of analysis are few. Helmets from Sadovets, Bahovitsa and Rogozen are incidental finds, without context. The helmet from Pleven no longer exists materially and what is written about it cannot be verified. Only the helmet from tomb 1/II in the Mogilanska mound remains, but its exact typological identification is uncertain because of its considerable fragmentation. Against the backdrop of Dennis' extensive presentation of the characteristics and development of Chalcidian-type helmets, information can be extracted in the direction of the object of study of the doctoral thesis. The helmet from Sadovets is probably one of the earliest representations of Chalcidian helmets in Thrace of Type II, from the 5th century. It is probably the product of a Greek weapons workshop, but guessing exactly where is pointless. Exactly how it ended up in this part of Thrace can only be guessed at in the absence of context and actual other contexts with 5th century weaponry in the region as a basis for more objective assumptions. The helmets from northwestern Thrace are relatively remote from northeastern and southern Thrace, with areas of concentration of finds from a variety of contexts. The helmet from Bahovitsa also has similar characteristics to the early helmets that entered Thrace in one possible way - purchase, together with warriors who fought in the region (i.e. possible booty), and why not a gift. The repairs show its long use and repairs already in a Thracian environment, a source of observations for making local variants of the type. The severe damage and the large areas of supplementary material for the restoration of the Rogozen helmet preclude a secure opinion, but there are signs that indicate its local manufacture, hardly in the exact area of its excavation. It is perhaps the westernmost point of Chalcidian helmets in the Thracian lands south of the Danube.

Summary (Final chapter)

In his final text, the PhD student has proposed a summary of the data from his analysis and conclusions in the five chapters of the dissertation, including specific examples. Pointing out objective circumstances such as the remoteness of the region and the lower degree of archaeological exploration, which leads to a lower level of objective data, he also justifies his conclusions about the region's insufficient economic integration with the Greek world like the rest of Thrace, located near the Hellenistic colonies. At the same time, he speaks of "The presence of articles originating from workshops on the Aegean coast testify to the close economic and cultural contacts with the region in the mid- to last quarter of the 4th century BC. Hellenistic ornaments and toiletries appeared in northwestern Thrace by trade." This contradicts the main conclusion. Moreover, behind these ornaments and toiletries are single specimens.

In my opinion, Denis Borisov has managed to achieve, in general, the set goal, implementing the set tasks. The dissertation is written in good language (unfortunately in some places with a clumsy style), with the use of professional terminology, which contributes to the overall perception of the exposition. It is evident from the text of the voluminous bibliography of the literature used that he is well versed in and uses publications on the general and specific problems of the study. The study of a large number, diverse in character, of groups of artifacts for which a significant body of literature has accumulated is not an easy task. In his work the colleague has shown a critical eye, with a correct attitude to the various theses and hypotheses. Throughout the study there is a skill in analyzing sources of different character and a skill in synthesizing opinion to problems of a private and general nature.

In terms of improving the style and clarity of the texts, I will also point out some weaknesses: - Detailed repetition verbatim of much of the voluminous descriptions in the catalogue; - Repetition verbatim of information already given about the date, provenance, etc. of an artefact/group in a paragraph in summary form; - Reverse (incorrect) word order in the first sentence of a paragraph.

The abstract and the statement of contributions correctly reflect the content and the main achievements and contributions of Denis Borisov's dissertation.

The doctoral candidate is the author of three scientific publications directly related to the topic of the dissertation, two of them already out of print, which fulfilled and exceeded the requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", according to the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

In conclusion, having in mind the overall qualities of the dissertation work of Denis Danielov Borisov, I declare to the esteemed scientific jury that the reviewed work has scientific merit, meets the requirements to be awarded the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" and I will vote for it.

31.05.2024

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