



SOUTH-WEST
UNIVERSITY
·NEOFIT RILSKI·
BLAGOEVGRAD, BULGARIA

VOLUME 3
2004

SCIENTIFIC *Research*

ELECTRONIC
ISSUE

THEORY AND PRACTISE ON THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT THRACE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WORLD ANCIENT HISTORY

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(Abstract)

It is generally accepted to assume that the History of the Ancient World comprises the History of the Ancient East, the History of the Ancient Greece and the History of the Ancient Rome. There exists, however, yet another division of Ancient History and it comprises three major periods that are both chronologically and historically successive. These periods are: Early Antiquity (late 4th – early 3rd until the end of the 2nd mill. BC), Flourishing of the Ancient Societies (1st mill. BC) and Decline of the Ancient World (1st – 5th centuries AD).

On the basis of the first elements of script, social and class division, and ideology, the first period is believed to cover the two great civilizations in “Thracian Protohistory”: Late Chalcolithic (late 5th mill. BC) and Early Bronze Age (mid-4th – late 3rd/early 2nd mill. BC). Thracian civilization from the Late Bronze Age, the Early Iron Age and the Antiquity is also attributed to that period. All three civilizations mentioned have typological similarities in the economic and socio-political structure, as well as in their ideological characteristics, which proved to be communities with a social and class differentiation, Thracian society being an early class society during the Antiquity.

Irrespective of the ethnic definitions, which will always remain debatable, the Late Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age class societies in the Thracian lands, due to typological parallels and to their earlier successive chronology with respect to the Thracian socially stratified community and early class society of the 2nd – 1st mill. BC, formed a part of the History of the Thracians as protohistory, early history, or the genesis and formation of Thracian civilization. This is precisely the attitude to the Minoan civilization of the 3rd mill. BC in the island of Crete, compared to the Achaean-Greek civilization of the 2nd – 1st mill. BC.

Thus, in addition to the Thracian civilization of the 2nd – 1st mill. BC, the Late Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age civilization in the Thracian lands is also attributed to the History of the Ancient World. In this way, the beginning of the History of the Ancient World should be predated from the 4th to the 5th mill. BC, according to the dating of the Late Chalcolithic civilization in the Thracian lands, and should start with it – at least for the History of Europe.

Although Ancient Thrace maintained active contacts with Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome – societies with flourishing slave-owning relations – the History of the Thracians from the second period of the History of the Ancient World fits chronologically into it, though social relations belonged typologically to the first period. Nevertheless, with the emergence of the Early Hellenistic tendencies of the 5th – 4th centuries BC, especially under the Odrysian King Kotys I – tendencies which proved to have lasting consequences for the History of the Ancient World – and were actively implemented by the Macedonian rulers Philip and Alexander, Thracian

society had a place of its own during the second period of the History of the Ancient World.

During the third period of the History of the Ancient World, especially at the time of the Late Roman Empire, the History of the Thracians who did not have a state of their own was most intensely manifested at the level of the communities. This was due to the strong conservatism in the not fully developed and non-dominating territorial/neighborhood community, private ownership and a slave-owning system. In this way, the History of the Thracians brought them closer to societies from the East, e.g. the Hittite society in Asia Minor, but also to the early feudal societies in Southeastern Europe, e.g. the Byzantine and Bulgarian societies. Due to these historically determined circumstances, the History of the Thracians was integrated relatively painlessly and naturally in the transition to the new socioeconomic relations of the emerging medieval feudalism.

According to the conventional classification World Ancient History comprises three large domains: the History of the Ancient Orient, the History of Ancient Greece, and the History of Ancient Rome. The first branch is related to Asia and North Africa, the other two undoubtedly being part of Europe's Ancient History. We certainly owe this traditional historical and geographic division to the Euro-centric concept inherent and explainable in regard to the great classical philological-historical schools of today in countries like Austria, United Kingdom, Germany and France, and accepted as a fact by the school in Russia as well. We owe it certainly to the existing source data base as well. Outside this history - though having lived inside Europe and making up a part of its development – remained, however, the large groups of the non-literary ancient ethnical communities of the Celts, the ancient Germans, the Illyrians, the Scythians and the Thracians (the latter having inhabited Northwestern Asia as well). Thus, quite logically, the question arises “When and how these ancient peoples were or had to be included in and regarded as part of Europe's Ancient History, resp. of World Ancient History”. Considered in view with Ancient Thrace, this problem would find its theoretical solution and practical application both with respect to the above-mentioned ethnical communities, and to the specifying a conception of the typology of the societies and the criteria of their against the background of the Ancient History of Europe and in of the general World History.

First of all, however, I would like to state that as regards the here selected subject I would prefer to choose another classification system [1] of World Ancient History, considering the proposed. It is better than the traditional one; besides, it was founded and substantiated by the former Soviet, today prevailing Russian, historical school as early as the 1980s 20th-century . This division does not reject the old one; nevertheless as a periodization it has the advantage of being more historical, not so much geographic. I would like to explain briefly the above periodization:

According to this global theoretical model of the development of societies in ancient times World Ancient History is classified in three large periods:

The first is the period of *Early Antiquity*: from the end of the 4th/beginning of the 3rd millennium till the end of the 2nd millennium BC. The second period deals with the *Flourishing of Ancient Societies*, comprising in general terms the 1st

millennium BC. The third period - *Decline and Fall of the Ancient World* - is to be situated between 1st and 5th centuries AD.

During the first period the earliest neighbouring (or territorial) communes arose the early forms of private property can be traced back that time; estate-class and early-class relations took shape up; state organization came into being, and the earliest states in the world emerged on the historical scene. Besides, the first literary monuments were created, as an expression of a more advanced development of societies. The period is best illustrated by the examples of: Egypt in North Africa; the Eastern Mediterranean (in the narrow sense of the term), Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, India and China - in Asia; the Minoan civilization on the island of Crete, and the Achaean (Mycenaean) civilization in Mainland Greece and Crete – in Europe.

In the second basic period were definitively established and most completely developed the ancient social-and-class slaveholding relations. During this period, too, came into being the first *world empires* as e. g. in West Asia – in chronological order – the New-Assyrian, the New-Babylonian state and Persia; in Asia Minor – Phrygia and Lydia; in Europe – Hellas with its creation, the *polis*, which happened to spread over the whole Mediterranean and West Asia during the next-following Hellenistic Age, and finally, the Roman Republic trying to expand and develop the essence and meaning of the social relations of the Hellenic polis.

The third basic period is determined by the decline and disintegration of the classic ancient slaveholding class relations, as well as by the earliest-emerging signs of the transition to the Middle Ages. This period is mainly and best illustrated by the birth, development and wane of the Roman Empire in Europe, West Asia and North Africa.

The principal criteria which should help us determine the societies belonging to Ancient World History as a stage, or division apart within World History may be reduced mainly to 3, suppose, however, we refer them to the most advanced aspects of these societies.

The *first* criterion - appearing rather to be an exterior mark, resp. a reflection of certain inner social processes, as well as of a spiritual and intellectual level - concerns the existence of literary monuments; written monuments as a demonstration of the intellectual (resp. cultural) change and maturity of a community. The earliest monuments of this kind - though not yet deciphered to date - are the pictographs (as well as the first ideograms) preceding all the early writing systems in ancient times. As being of particular importance, maybe even as the most significant, we consider however not only and so much the very existence of literary monuments but rather their extremely high value as a summarized expression of human and social thought - an expression, which turned out to be a source - the best primary source for the history of human societies, i.e. of the estate-class, early-class and class societies in Antiquity.

The *second* criterion is related to the essence of societies. We are referring here to the emergence and development of a different type of social relations, which deny tribal-communal relations. Besides, we would have to establish the existence of a neighbouring (or territorial) commune and (some) private property (irrespective of the degree or level of development) as the basis for the shaping up and development of estate-class, early-class and Antiquity class slaveholding relations, in the conditions of strict preservation of the tribal system, i. e. of the tribal-communal property and

relations. Hence, ultimately, we are considering here stages in the development of the state organization and of the state. This point needs - to my mind - a little more detailed consideration.

A territorial community (rural or urban) consisted of neighbouring adjacent families, not necessarily connected by kinship, as was the case with the tribal-family commune (also known as *patriarchal*). The core of the interrelations within the territorial commune was related to the attitude to the private ownership of each family over the means of production and to the distribution of the goods resulting from their labour within the commune as a whole.

The estate division is in principle with a social, not economic motivation. It rests upon the unwritten customs born already in the tribal-communal relations system. This law entitles a part of the community to greater rights and powers, it empowers them - to be leaders, however it does not entitle them to possess means of production. It was just the exercise of power, while preserving and re-distributing the accumulated *surplus*, when available, of course (this happened to be the case with Thrace, Egypt and Mesopotamia during the Late Chalcolithic Age at the earliest) that, - the significance of the leader, the chieftain, the king increased to the extreme. At this point the ownership over the means of production and the ensuing of material goods were of utmost importance. This the estate differential, although social, gradually began to achieve its own economic expression and dimension. The classes are the result of the economic differentiation. Class stratification in a society has economic grounds and is based upon the difference in the social relations regarding the ownership and the possession of the means of production. That is why, they are defined as classes. In this respect power has already been exercised as the result of the economic might, and not merely according to the customs tradition.

Both estates and classes exist in Ancient World History. Before the emerging of classes societies were just of the estate type: divided according to gender, age and similar criteria like characteristic of the tribal-communal relations. In the periods of emerging classes, the respective communities might be determined as estate-class societies. In the ancient world the beginning of this process coincided with the archaeological periodization of the Late Chalcolithic Age, but it can be followed in the Bronze Age as well. When classes began to manifest themselves on the historical scene by their own individuality, one would recognize the early-class society. This process is evidenced in the Bronze Age, but it continued in Antiquity as well. In the period of Classical Antiquity classes must have already been a fact, so the communities became simply class societies of a slaveholding type. However, again, not all of them!

After this detailed consideration of the second criterion, I would like to address briefly the *third* criterion, too, because it is of particular importance. It consists in the fact that those newly-emerged state social relations needed to be motivated and affirmed by a properly formulated ideology, different from the tribal-communal beliefs, but related to the societies' cosmogony, mythology and religion.

What would these criteria be like, if applied to the History of Ancient Thrace?

The earliest known written evidence by the Thracians, in the Thracian language using Greek character letters, is considered to be an inscription [2] on a stele (discovered in the village of Kyolmen near Preslav, north of the Balkan Range - in

today's Northeastern Bulgaria), dated to the 6th century BC. Does this mean that the history of the ancient Thracians began in the 6th century BC?

The earliest literary sources about Thracians originated in the middle and the second half of the 2nd millennium BC. [3]. Here, first I would like to emphasize the particular significance of the Homeric epic as Europe's oldest literary monument. It was followed by the accounts of a number of ancient authors: accounts referring to the second half of the 2nd, the whole of the 1st millennium B. C., as well as to the last centuries of the Antiquity.

Many Thracian names [4] however, were already evidenced in Mycenaean Greece: deciphered in the archaic Greek language of the Linear B script (15th-12th century BC), and several Thracian names - even in Linear A (18th-16th century BC), from Minoan Crete.

Thus, if the Thracians expressed themselves in writing in the 6th century BC, their neighbours, the Greeks, had been observing and mentioning them in written texts for a whole millennium already, i. e. around the mid-2nd millennium BC onwards. They had obviously been traced and recorded in the southeastern part of Europe, having been directly involved in this section of Europe's Ancient History. The fact, the usual question "When and where did the Thracians come from?" ought to be formulated otherwise: "When and where the society known in ancient times and also at present, as *Thracian* included, resp. when did it get involved in the well-known facts, events, processes and phenomena recorded in Ancient World History?" It seems quite certain that the Thracians emerged on the historical scene, have been registered and properly identified as creators and participants in Europe's Ancient History, resp. in Ancient World History, the mid-2nd millennium BC onwards. How should we then define the inhabitants of Thrace and their history prior to this termin?

The earliest written documents from Ancient Thrace are the clay tablets with pictographs and ideograms in Proto-Linear script [5] from the Chalcolithic Age (5th millennium BC). They undoubtedly bear the evidence of a highly developed society, which had evidently achieved the intellectual and socially-motivated necessity to speak up in written form. As a matter of fact, to express themselves in writing they reflect the world of thought comparable and similar to those of the earliest state organization formations, e. g. before and at the time of Egypt's unification the *nomes* (the Egyptian term - *sepat*), as well as prior to and during the founding of the Sumerian Kingdom the *patessiates* (the Sumerian term - *ki*).

Hence, following this criterion, we would be bound to include the Late Chalcolithic civilization of Ancient Thrace in the beginning of the first great epoch of the Ancient History. Is it, however, a Thracian civilization indeed? And is this a History of the Thracians?

Here follows the comparison according to the *second* criterion.

The earliest state formations in Ancient Thrace have been traced according to the archaeological data from that period: the Late Chalcolithic Age (5th millennium BC). Here are some of the pieces of evidences [6]: the metal-working center near the present-day town of Varna at the Black Sea coast (in today's NE Bulgaria); the great quantity of gold decorations illustrating sharp and contrasting social differences reflected in the finds of the Varna Chalcolithic necropolis; the public building known

as *palatial complex* on the island near the village of Durankulak (north of Varna); the copper-producing works (indeed huge for that time) near the village of Meči Kladenec, not far from Stara Zagora (in present-day Southern Bulgaria, south of the Balkan Range); the discovered fortress constructions (palisades), as well as the planning of the urban settlements. The discovered settlements and dwellings however, significant social differences of estate character existed as can be seen from the above-mentioned necropolis. The prosperity of that society was based on metal-production and metal-working (prevailingly copper and gold), as well as on the metal trade with these metals. All these, in addition to the already mentioned numerous clay tablets with pictographs and ideograms in Proto-Linear script, allow us to determine this Late Chalcolithic society as one of estate-class type, the ruling king having a particularly important role. Of course, the territorial (or neighbouring) commune and primary private property forms can theoretically be assumed for this society, but they will remain only a hypothesis, because of the lack of any explicit written evidence. The same is valid for the presumable domination of the tribal commune and the communal property.

Consequently, according to this criterion, too, we do have to include the Late Chalcolithic civilization of Ancient Thrace in the initial stage of the first great period of Ancient World History.

Typologically similar, though different in the archaeological aspect, seems to have been the community in Ancient Thrace [7] in the Early Bronze Age (from the mid-4th/end of the 3rd millennium B. C. up to the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC). In spite of the fact that we do not have any written evidence about this epoch either, the archaeological facts and data related to a number of settlements (e. g. in the area of the villages of Ezero and Yunacite in today's Southern Bulgaria, south of the Balkan Range) protected by stone fortress walls, behind which is said to have lain an integral, two-level town consisting of acropolis and adjacent part, as well as the necropoleis archaeology, indicate the existence of an estate-class stratification in that society. The latter does not seem to have developed exactly in the same way as it did in the preceding period; however the similarity appears real. In this society, metal-production (predominantly copper and gold) and the metal trade are the characteristic feature as well. Consequently Ancient Thrace was in that epoch part of a great cultural-historical community defined as Circumpontic. In spite of the lack of a script and literature, the Early Bronze Age society in Ancient Thrace may be determined as one of the estate-class type. Yet, I should add here that within this space existed some scanty evidence [8] for Proto-Linear characters: for example - near Troy, and also a script resembling the cuneiform writing discovered on ceramic vessels, from the previously-mentioned archaeological site near Yunacite. This society seems to "have frozen" at its earliest stage of class development, and that was probably why the writing did not develop. In the Early Bronze Age society of Ancient Thrace the correlation between *neighbouring (territorial) community* was not in favour of the first, nor did it the private property prevail over the communal property. Here, too, the role of the ruler-king must have been particularly important to the functioning of society.

The characteristics of the Early Bronze Age society of Ancient Thrace are a reason that enables us to refer to it typologically - though with reserves, for the

scarcity (almost full lack!) of some writing - to the beginning of the first great period in Ancient World History.

It is assumed that the culture of the Early Bronze Age society in Ancient Thrace belonged to the Thracians themselves. This thesis is based on the fact that from the beginning of the Bronze Age onward archaeology registered a relatively undisturbed and independent development of the population, including the period after their identification as *Thracians*. Moreover, the linguists have not discovered any onomastic material in the European Southeast, older than the Indo-European Thracian. Another term used with regard to this case is that of *Proto-Thracians*.

Actually, here a digression is quite on the point appropriate, whether we can write history without written sources; and my immediate answer will be positive: starting from the practice, yes, it is possible! For example: The Early Minoan civilization in Crete (3rd millennium BC) did not have a single deciphered domestic literary source; nevertheless, it is considered to have belonged to an estate-class or early-class community followed by the Achaean/Mycenaean during the 2nd millennium BC, and by the ancient Hellenic society at the end of the 2nd/beginning of the 1st millennium BC. As regards the Late Chalcolithic or the Early Bronze civilization of Ancient Thrace, however, which - as already mentioned - belonged at least to estate-class communities of this same period of Ancient World History (as they were to be succeeded by the historical Thracians), they have traditionally been left in the *barbarian* Hellenic periphery, and hence have not really been included in the very Ancient History of Europe.

There are certain practically refutable arguments that Minoan civilization (3rd millennium/first half of the 2nd millennium B. C.) was neither of Achaean/Mycenaean, nor of a Greek type. Nevertheless, however, it should be included - and this has been the usual practice - in the early stage of the History of Ancient Greece related to its origin.

So, we can write history, in spite of the lack of literary sources, but not ethnonymic, ethnic or political history. The whole complex of archaeological data used as a primary source when there is no written information provide certain knowledge about the economic characteristics, the social-economic structure, as well as about the organization of the social relations, the essence of the spiritual (intellectual) world, or, to - put it generally - about the culture of societies. Given this, the ethnic definitions will obviously not be precise, so social-economic and cultural characteristics will have to be highlighted.

The next major period in the History of Ancient Thrace is defined between the 2nd millennium BC and the mid-6th c. BC, and it comprised - as already mentioned - most likely the whole, or at least a part of the Middle Bronze Age, definitely - the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Ages. About this epoch exist some outside written sources and a very small number of domestic literary monuments [9]. Matched with the archaeological data settlements, necropolises, metal treasures and armaments, they again give evidence for primary state structures of estate-class type. According to the source information [10], neither a particular role of private property, nor any active development of the neighbouring (territorial) community is to be observed during this period either. The most expressive political class of the Thracians for that period seemed to be their participation [11] in the Trojan War (13th

or 12th c. BC) on the side of the Trojans. Another event of this kind might be the participation of Thracians in the campaigns of the *over-Sea Peoples*, as Egyptian sources defined them.

It is interesting to observe that the level of development and the type of the society at the period date the latter to the beginning of the first great period of Ancient World History as well.

Here follows the *third* criterion: the ideology of these early societies.

During the second half of the 2nd and in the 1st millennium B. C. the ideology of Thracian society was represented by the royal doctrine defined as Thracian Orphism [12]. It was both a solar and a solar-chthonic ideology. According to it, the king born by the Great Goddess-Mother is both a priest and a god. This certainly completes the arguments in favour of the attributions the Thracian community among estate-class societies, and from the 6th c. B. C. on among Old World early-class societies, and from the 6th century BC on among World Ancient early class societies, as well.

Solar was the ideology of the Early Bronze Age society in Ancient Thrace, as well. This is best demonstrated by the burial mounds (tumuli) [13] synchronous and similar in meaning to the Pyramids of the Old Kingdom rulers from the in Egypt. And that is why this is undoubtedly a royal ideology of an estate-class or early-class society.

The ideology [14] of the Late Chalcolithic society in Ancient Thrace, best reflected in the above mentioned Varna necropolis, was both solar and royal. It is certainly an ideology of an estate-class or early-class society, too.

So it turns out that the two great early civilizations in Ancient Thrace - that of the Late Chalcolithic Age (5th millennium B. C.) and the following subsequent one - of the Early Bronze Age (mid-4th/end of the 3rd till the beginning of the 2nd millennium B. C.), as well as the History of the Thracians from the Middle Bronze, Late Bronze and the Early Iron Age (2nd millennium-first half of the 1st millennium B. C.), show certain typological similarities in economic structure, social-economic and social-political organization inherent in estate-class communities. There are also similarities in the ideological characteristics of these estate-class societies.

Irrespective of the ethnic definitions regarding the Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze estate-class societies, which will remain debatable and most likely will account for many hypotheses, because of the typological parallels and their earlier sequence in chronology, compared to the Thracian society of the Middle and the Late Bronze Ages, of the Early Iron Age and the Antiquity, these societies must be included in the History of Ancient Thrace and of the Thracians as proto-history, as early history, or as a history of the genesis and the formation of Thracian civilization. The situation the same as the classification of the Minoan civilization on Crete (3rd millennium B. C.) in relation to the Achaean-Hellenic civilization (2nd/1st millennium B. C.). Hence, the Late Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze civilizations in Thrace became part of the History of Ancient Thrace, of the History of Ancient Europe, and resp. of Ancient World History, being just a part of its very first period (4th/2nd millennium B. C.). This period should actually be extended back to the 5th millennium B. C. - following the dating of the Late Chalcolithic civilization in Ancient Thrace, and it would mark its beginning. At least as regarding the Ancient Europe History!

Only during the next-following important period of the History of Ancient Thrace and of the Thracians, the Classical Antiquity, will the Thracian society definitely be determined as early-class society of pre-classic slaveholding type [15], thus completely covering the interval up to the end of the existence of the Thracian state organization (beginning of AD 2nd century). Meanwhile the neighbouring-territorial commune in Thrace will be trying to dominate over the tribal community. And, like private property, it has not been able to develop intensely enough. Private property stretched - as it had probably done in preceding millennia - prevalingly over the means of production, and the herds/flocks, but not over the land. The communal members were collectively exploited, thus - instead of communal proprietors - becoming communal owners of pieces of land tilled by them, however under a certain dependence on the king or the dynast, who collected used the taxes.

Although the 1st millennium B. C. represented the second large period of Ancient World History, marked by the flourishing of ancient slaveholding relations, it is still being referred to the first great period of Ancient History, because of the typology of Thracian society. It should not be a surprise, actually. Similar was, for instance, the situation with the Hellenes before the polis came into being (i. e. prior to the 8th/6th c. B. C.), with the Etruscans and with Roman society from the royal period (8th-6th c. B. C.).

Surprising, therefore, come to be - using prefixes and words like *pre-*, *proto-* and such like - the Early Hellenistic tendencies [16] of the Thracian society from the 5th/4th c. B. C. under the Odryssian rulers Seuthes I, Medokos (Amadokos I) and Ebruzelmis, finding their most eloquent expression in the mid-4th c. B. C. under king Kotys I (383 - 359 BC), who succeeded in imposing the trend towards political and cultural unification of the polis and the early-class *barbarian* states. A tendency continued after him by the Macedonian rulers Philip II and Alexander III the Great. Basing namely upon the beginning of the realization of these historical tendencies with lasting consequences both to Europe's Ancient History and to Ancient World History, Thracian society found its place within the second period of Ancient World History in the 1st millennium BC.

Regardless of the prosperity of the slaveholding relations during this epoch, especially in the Age of Hellenism (end of the 4th/end of the 1st c. BC), in Thracian society was registered the flourishing of early-class social relations (as well). This fact indicates that Thracian society remained archaic and diachronic in the above period. This archaism and diachrony - most likely appearing as *barbarity* in the Hellenic aspect - can definitely be determined as a characteristic of the most conservative bearer of the essence and (of the) features both of the Circumpontic cultural-historic community from the 3rd millennium B. C. and of the Palaeobalkan-Westanatolian cultural-historic community from the 2nd/beginning of the 1st millennium B. C. [17]. Amid this community the Greeks seem first to have made a contribution in writing - as early as the mid-2nd millennium BC, followed later (in the 8th c. B. C.) by the Phryges, in the 7th c. B. C. - by the Carians, and in the 6th c. B. C. - by the Thracians.

Under these circumstances the study of Thracian society proves to be of extremely high value to the Ancient History of Europe and Ancient World History, particularly as an ancient subject, relatively well-to observe, but also as a *surviving* model of these early communities.

During the **third** great period of Ancient World History (AD 1st-5th century), and especially after AD mid-1st and the beginning of the 2nd century the Thracian society had no state organizations of its own. The Thracians were already subjects of Rome, and later - even citizens of the Roman Empire. Only in this period they entered , resp. were included - basing on the neighbouring-territorial and on the tribal communities - in the orbit and rates of development of ancient slaveholding society, which must, however, have already reached the point of its decline by that time; i.e. the processes in Thracian society, concretely in the communes, were not completely experienced, as e. g. in other parts and other communes of the Empire.

The relations of the Thracian communes (neighbouring or territorial and tribal), on the one hand, and between them and the ruler (i. e. the power, the state), on the other, did not achieve a level of maturity within the slaveholding system, neither in the epoch of the estate-class, nor in that of the early-class society. The free communal members and the communes as a whole fell into different kinds of dependence; they have however never come to a slavery status based on a kind of debt-related slavery (i.e. *kabalá*) of fellow communal members, and prisonership of members of other communes, resp. from other (alien) peoples or ethnic groups. Namely the existence of certain forms of dependence and the lack (non-existence) of the classical type of slavery in Ancient Thrace helped the Thracian communes to survive - even without a state of their own - in the Age of the Roman Empire, particularly of the Late Roman Empire, a period in which slaveholding relations went over to feudal relations. Hence, the relations inherent in the Thracian communes during this period turned out to be closer to the new medieval feudal relations than to the old (already obsolete) classical slavery system. Namely therefore, perhaps (for the still active neighbouring-territorial and tribal communes), have Christianization and barbarization of the Late Roman Empire "*conserved*" and left as a legacy a highly developed traditional popular culture and language on every-day level, especially as regards the villages in Ancient Thrace.

Since the formal state ideology and the formal state and literary language used throughout Southeast Europe - by that time inhabited by Thracians without an own state - was Greek or Latin, and later on, in the Middle Ages, also Slavic Bulgarian (but never Thracian), the certain Thracian-Latin, Thracian-Hellenic or Thracian-Bulgarian bilingualism - related and dependent on the respective state (in our case here - Rome, Byzantium or Bulgaria) - became pointless and was replaced by the Hellenic-Bulgarian bilingualism in the Middle Ages. The latter is particularly well-to-observe in contact zones as the North Aegean coast, as well as about the west coast of the Black Sea. That is why the *Thracian (features)* proved to be best preserved to date in Bulgarians and Greeks of today (from the northern part of present-day Greece). Namely the conservatism of the Thracian society from the third period of Ancient World History enabled it - basing upon its traditional popular culture - to fit (on a level of every-day life) into the new Bulgarian ethnicity of the Southeast-European Middle Ages.

In conclusion, I would like to summarize in brief the main specificities of the History of Ancient Thrace and of the Thracians, so that its place in the Ancient History of Europe and in Ancient World History be clearer outlined:

1. The History of Ancient Thrace and of the Thracians does not possess any written sources of its own - in the classical meaning of the term - and that is why it

had no literature of its own either. However we should not miss mentioning the existence - though rather scanty - and the use - most likely in the cult - of a pictographic and a proto-Linear ideographic script in the period of the 5th/3rd millennium BC, as well as a Linear (A and/or B) during the 2nd millennium BC. In the 1st millennium BC the Thracians made use of the Old-Greek alphabet to write in Thracian (language) - for cult purposes, however, whereas Old Greek (language and alphabet) must have been used to the needs of the state. Ultimately, we may conclude that, as regards the criterion *script-literacy-written sources* the History of Ancient Thrace remained on an early phase and practically almost did not develop at all, thus preserving the conservatism with respect to its use only or even solely for the cult and the ideology related to it.

2. In the History of Ancient Thrace and of the Thracians can be traced a kind of own state-organizational development that managed - in spite of the historical and geographical conditions, for which it was seeking to preserve its millennial tradition of estate-class society with some forms of dependence and an underdeveloped slaveholding system (prevailingly patriarchal) - to attain certain early-class characteristics during the period of Antiquity; this can be best illustrated by the historical development of the Odrýssian Kingdom in Southeast Europe.

3. The early-class Thracian society in general, and the Odrýssian Kingdom as a concrete example, were neighbours to the classic slaveholding societies in Antiquity: first it was the Hellenic, and later on, after the settling down of the Romans in the Balkans (from the 2nd century BC up to the beginning of AD 2nd century) - the Roman society too. The Thracian community managed to become part of the Antiquity slaveholding society; nevertheless it did not transform into such a model, rather preserving its basic specificities as well as its conservatism.

4. The communes, the forms of dependence, and the underdevelopment of the slavery status in the History of Ancient Thrace and of the Thracians made them appear closer to the communities of the Ancient Orient, as e. g. the Hittite Kingdom in Asia Minor (2nd millennium BC), but also to early-feudal states and societies in Southeast Europe, as proved to be e. g. both the Byzantine Empire and the Bulgarian state.

5. The ideology of the estate-class and early-class society in Ancient Thrace (5th-1st millennium BC) was solar-chthonic, with a definitely predominating solar principle over the chthonic. The Thracian Orphism is an ideology of the Thracian kings from the mid-2nd up to the mid-1st millennium BC which proved to be extremely powerful in the state-organizational tradition and in the spiritual life of the Thracians. Even after the decline of the state the image of a heroized king and god, the Thracian Horseman, continued to live in the population's notions, having still been worshipped to date in Bulgaria and Northern Greece as the Christian saint Sv. Georgi (St. George).

So the History of Ancient Thrace and of the Thracians has to be regarded as both chronologically and typologically belonging to the first period of Ancient World History.

Although Ancient Thrace was adjacent and in active contact with Ancient Hellas, its History as part of the second period of Ancient World History - an epoch of the prosperity of ancient slaveholding relations (1st millennium BC) - chronologically does belong to it; its social relations, however, typologically belong

to the first period. To put it otherwise: this type of relations seem rather to be part of the History of the Ancient Orient than of Ancient Hellas, or Ancient Rome from that time. This fact remains however fully valid and might also be referred - as previously mentioned - both to the pre-polis period of Greek History, and to the early History of Rome. So, it turned out that the History of the societies of Ancient Europe (in our case, here - Thrace, Greece and Rome) preceding the classical Antiquity society, and the History of the communities of the Ancient Orient (at least those in West Asia and North-East Africa) are typologically akin, and both of them, besides - on the level of the first stage of the development and of the History of the Ancient World.

During the third period, particularly in the Age of the Late Roman Empire, the History of Ancient Thrace and of the Thracians - who did not have a state of their own any more - manifested itself mostly on the level of the communes. Relatively easy and spontaneous seems to have been its integration in the process of transition to the new social-economic relations of the emerging medieval feudalism. This must have been possible because of the still very active and conservative, however underdeveloped and unprevailing neighbouring-territorial commune and private property. Thus, the final period of the History of Ancient Thrace and of the Thracians found the best way to merge into the beginning of the History of Medieval Bulgaria, whose society, resp. social relations on that phase proved to be closest and similar to those of the Thracian community.

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Note: This study is printed as: Porozhanov, K. The History of Ancient Thrace, the Old History of Europe and Old World History. - In: *Thracia*, 15, in honorem annorum LXX Alexandri Fol, Institute of Thracology, TANGRA Tan Nak Ra Publishing Hous. Sofia, 2003, 281-294.