

## Thracian Sacred Names and Terminology

To the memory of Gheorghe Muşu, *magister mirabilis*

### Introduction

The present paper aims at putting together the relevant forms referring to the Thracian god-names and sacred terminology as known from various sources. We shall try to make justice and condensely present the main hypothesis of late Prof. Gheorghe Muşu, whose remarkable studies in the field of comparative religion and linguistics are little, if at all, known abroad; and refer to some of our previous studies.

It is understandable that the lexicon below is not complete, but tries to present the most relevant forms. It concentrates on the Thracian terminology, but also to the Phrygian and Illyrian terms as far as they may prove relevant; and sometimes to the Greek deities if, in various sources, they may have a certain Thracian influence in their cult or may be etymologically relevant.

As a synthetic brief work, it cannot explain many details; we tried to do this on other occasions (see the references, mainly Paliga 1989 a, b, c; 1994 a, b; etc). We should not forget that the complex Thracian beliefs, religion and mythology were recorded by various sources, often with deformed spelling. There cannot be any doubt now that Thracian had specific sounds (e.g. *č*, *ğ*, *š*, *t'*, at least a neutral vowel *a*, maybe two in some dialects, etc.), impossible to be accurately recorded in the Greek and Latin documents. A possible way for reconstructing the original sounds is to compare the forms with other ancient languages, sometimes with forms preserved in

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the modern southeast European languages (Albanian, Bulgarian, Romanian). Some terms may have been preserved down to the modern and contemporary times, and a careful comparative analysis does indeed confirm this assumption. The way to plausibly reconstructing the Thracian phonetic inventory has been difficult, meandering without a complete consensus among the specialists (linguists, historians and archaeologists) who have basically or occasionally dealt with the Thracian heritage of southeast Europe, in its relationship with the Illyrian, Greek and Roman influences. The topic is indeed vast, and cannot be covered in this very brief paper.

As already shown on other occasions (mainly Paliga 1989 b, c; 1991 a; 1994 a, b; 1998; 2001; most of our relevant studies published until 1998 were gathered together in Paliga 1999), we firmly believe that Thracian had an important Indo-European, but also Pre-Indo-European (sometimes labelled ‘Mediterranean’) heritage. Thus Thracian, beside its Indo-European satem character, is also – just like Greek or Hittite – a precious source in investigating the archaic, indigenous (non-Indo-European, non-Proto-Boreal) heritage of Europe. The term *Proto-Boreal* was coined by N. D. Andreev, and refers to a common minimal inventory of roots (Andreev analyses 203 basic roots) of the Indo-European, Uralic and Altaic languages; later on, he added also Korean. His hypothesis, in the wake of the remarkable investigations across years of, among others, Bojan Čop (Slovenia) and Illič-Svityč (Russia), has remained peripheral, though it should not have deserved this treatment (a comprehensive analysis, with a synthetic lexicon, in our paper for the 13th International Congress of Slavists, Ljubljana, August 15–21, 2003; an electronic PDF format is downloadable at

[http://www.unibuc.ro/uploads\\_en/29386/2/Lexicon\\_Protoborealicum\\_ian04.pdf](http://www.unibuc.ro/uploads_en/29386/2/Lexicon_Protoborealicum_ian04.pdf).

Andreev’s theory (Andreev 1986, 1986 b, 1987) seems to us the most coherent and convincing out of the numerous theories labellable as ‘nostratic’ (Illyč-Svityč’s term), and it should really deserve much more

attention as opens large perspectives for linguistics in general, and comparative anthropology in particular.

I know that our hypothesis is in deep contrast with the traditional view of the Bulgarian school of Thracian and Indo-European studies (see mainly Georgiev 1961 and the works of Ivan Duridanov, e.g. 1997–1998; 1999–2000). Prof. Muşu, whom I try to praise in this paper, was the constant, fervent and active supporter of the major, deep and essential Pre-Indo-European (i.e. Non-Indo-European and, I add, Non-Proto-Boreal) influence on not only Thracian, but on the whole southeast European cultural space, having archaic, prehistoric links with the Pre-Semitic influence in the Circum-Mediterranean region (Muşu 1981 and 1995, the latter work is posthumous; see a brief synthesis, representing a minimal, basic Pre-Indo-European lexicon in Paliga 1998, which should be considerably enhanced with the additional material we have meanwhile analysed; this is a task of a future work).

In a tentative, synthetic lexicon we can only approach the basic data, trying to make plausible or reasonable connections. We may of course be wrong. Our view on the Thracian sacred world is based on the quite scarce material noted down by various reliable and unreliable sources, almost always approximately spelled, as the Greeks and Romans did not have the possibility to note those specific Thracian phonemes. This is an extremely difficult point, which is improbable to may ever get an absolute consensus. I just note, as an adjacent but hopefully useful comparison, the case of spellings *Diurpaneus*, *Diupanas*, *Dorpanas* etc. we once analysed (specifically in Paliga 1987 and 1996: 28 ff.) which, in our constant, unmodified view by any other argument so far, reflect tentatives to note the Thracian (genuine) form reconstructable as \**ǵupən-*, \**ǵupan-*, i.e. the proto-form of the later forms *županъ*, Rom. *ǵupân*; and there is, in fact, an etymologically compact group represented by Rom. *ban*, *ǵupân* > *jupân*, *jupîn*, *stăpân*, all with various survivals in all the southeast European languages (further discussions in our quoted studies). The similarity is

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striking, and if still counter-arguments are also argued, I am ready to withdraw my former hypothesis.

This is just an example. Other available examples cannot be developed in this context. We just wish to underline the complexity of analysis, and the (still) diverging views among scholars in some essential aspects of the Thracian heritage.

The lexicon tentatively presented below is, as far as I know, a rare attempt. It does not claim to be complete or thorough, nor does it claim to bring essentially new data. It has been worked out mainly on the works of late Prof. Gh. Muşu and our own; and have tried to refer to some essential works in the field, at least for understanding the *sacred* context of those remote times. I would just briefly note that the Thracian world, which so fascinated the Greeks, must have had its complexity, differences of attitudes among the social strata, the folk or *élite* beliefs must have reflected attitudinal differences (just as in our days, the official Christian religion often contradicts the folk beliefs spread mainly in the rural, isolated areas of southeast Europe). We should try to plausibly reconstruct that specific society BEYOND these approximately noted forms. It was, we cannot doubt, a complex society, a society with local kings in continuing rivalry, with men and women and children, with periods of peace and war, with ghosts and fairy queens, and with the supreme god Zamolxis or Gebeleizis as by-name or epithet. Some of these beliefs were undoubtedly passed on to their heirs, the modern ethnic groups of southeast Europe: Albanians, Bulgarians, Romanians, Serbs – as the main, at various degrees, heirs of the ancient Thracians. This paper just notes some forms, but cannot speak of the complex religious and sacred context which accompanied the use of these terms. This may be an ambitious task of the future.

### A. Selected Lexicon

Some probable or possible personal names of Thracian origin in

Bulgarian (mainly), also in Serbian and Romanian were presented and analysed in Paliga 1996: 81 ff. Some references are made here to some other forms, which we may assume possible or probable.

The abbreviations in the following lexicon are those I have constantly used since 1987, namely:

- ND *nomen dei*: god-name;
- NFl *nomen fluminis*: river-name or name of a flowing water in general;
- NI *nomen insulae*: island-name;
- NL *nomen loci*: place- or locality-name *stricto sensu*;
- NM *nomen montis*: mountain-, hill- or peak-name;
- NP *nomen personae*: personal name;
- NPp *nomen populi*: name of an ethnic group;
- NR *nomen regionis*: name of a region or land;
- NSt *nomen stagni*: lake- or pond-name.

**Aba**, Greek spelling Ἄβα. A nymph, also local queen and a place name. Cf. NFl, NL Rom. *Abrud*, NL *Abud*, NL *Abuş*. There are more Thracian names with the root *ab-/ap-* which must derive from IE *\*ap-* ‘water, river’, Sanskrit *āpah* ‘waters’, Persian *āb* ‘water’. The Romanian river- and place-names witness the same Thracian origin. For the relation Rom. *Abrud* – Thr. *Abrutos*, *Abrutus* see also Paliga 2003 a: 48.

**Akmon** Epithet of Zeus with the Phrygians. Related to north Thracian (Dacian) place-name *Akmonia*, *Acmonia*. The basic meaning of the root *ak-* was ‘sharp; a peak; the sky’, Old Indian *asman* ‘the sky interpreted as a stone arch’, for which Hesychius *akmon*: ‘anvil’ and ‘sky’.

**Akrisias, Acrisias** The Phrygian god equivalent of the Greek *Kronos* venerated on elevations. The root *akr-* is the same as in Greek *akropolis*. The Phrygian-Greek equivalent may be summarised such:

*Kronos* = the son of the sky-god *Ouranos* (of Pre-Indo-European origin,

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root \**OR-*, \**UR-* ‘big, high, giant’) and father of the sky-god *Zeus* (Indo-European, basically the god of the shining sky)

*Zeus* = The sky-god, father of *Perseus*

*Akrisios* = ‘the supreme, high (god)’, grand-father of *Perseus*

*Akrisias* = ‘Kronos of the Phrygians’

**Alsēnós**, Gr. ἄλσηνός. An epithet of Apollo. Presumably derived from Gr. ἄλσός ‘a sacred wood, a grove’, of unknown, probably of Preie. origin.

\***Aplus** Cf. Illyrian *Teuti-aplus* ‘defender of the people/nation’. Perhaps the Thracian form of Apollon, for which see the numerous Thracian place- and personal names in *apl-*, *apul-*.

**Areus**, **Arēs**, Gr. Ἄρεός, Ἄρης. The god of war. There are indeed some other Thracian names with this root, but it has been often questioned (e.g. Dečev 1957: 24) whether the god is indeed Thracian or a Greek import. In his Thracian *facies*, was identified with Heros (or the Thracian Knight). If a Preie. origin is assumed (as the author of this paper believes), then Ares’s ultimate origin may be put in other terms: an archaic, Pre-Indo-European, god whose cult was spread in the Pontic-Aegean area. Anyway, the numerous Thracian forms with root *ar-* is a minimal indication that the name could not be felt as foreign. As a final note, the Preie. origin of most Greek names is clear, and therefore the analysis should be continued in this perspective.

**Asdoulēs** Also PN *Asdula*. Seemingly a compound \**as-doul-*. The first part is met in other Thracian forms, among these *asa*, the plant *Tussilago Farfara*, ‘coltsfoot’, NP *Asa-bithys* etc.; the second part is also attested as personal name, e.g. *Dolas*, *Dolea*, *Doleus*, for which cf. Romanian NP *Dulea*, *Dolea* etc. (with the normal preservation of intervocalic *-l-*). The etymological analysis is difficult. The first part, *as-*, may be Preie. \**AS-*

with chromatic meaning: ‘white; bright’; it is not clear the second part, possibly related also with Rom. *dulău* ‘a big, wicked dog’ (held for unknown origin or of Polish origin?). The relationship seems possible: Thr. *As-doulēs, Dolas, Dolea* etc. - Rom. *Dulea, Dolea*, possibly also *dulău*.

**Athy-parēnós**, Gr. *Αθυ-παρηνός*. An epithet of Sabazios (Dečev 1957: 8). There are numerous Thracian personal names of the type *Athys, Atias, Atius* etc. And also the Phrygian god *Attis*, with which all these may be related. The ultimate origin may be Preie. There are also some Romanian place-names with this root (for which see Paliga 2003: 50).

**Attis** Phrygian god, whose sacred tree was the pine. His initial representation was dendromorphic, and later got a central position in cult (as described in Ovid’s *Fastes* 4, 182–186; 237–244).

**Axieros**, Gr. *Ἀξι-ερος*. See *Kábeiroi, Kábiroi*.

**Axiokersos**, Gr. *Ἀξιό-κερσος*. See *Kábeiroi, Kábiroi*.

**Axiokersa**, Gr. *Ἀξιο-κέρσα* See *Kábeiroi, Kábiroi*.

**Bagaios** *Zeus Bagaïos* An epithet of the Phrygian sky-god. The related Bythinian epithet of the sky-god was *Syrgastēs, Syrgastōr*, presumably related to the Thracian personal name *Suregethes* ‘the bright (one, i.e. god or person)’. If so, the meaning must have been also ‘the bright one, the bright god’. Cf. Rom. *sur* (now only about horses) ‘with whitish (black and white) fur’, which may be or not related to Basque *xuri* [read: šuri] ‘white’. If the relationship with Basque is accepted (and is not unique), then Thr. *Sur(e)-* may be of Pre-Indo-European origin.

**Bassárai**, Gr. *βασσάραι*. A garment of Bacchus priestesses. The root

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\**bas(s)-* is frequent in some personal and place-names. See also the Medieval Romanian family of Basarab, from unknown reasons not usually held for continuing the similar Thracian names, e.g. *Bassaros*, *Bassos*, *Bassus*, NPp *Bássaroi* etc. The etymon is unknown; I assume it cannot be of Phoenician origin as quoted in Dečev 1957: 44, but rather a Preie. origin of unknown meaning. • There was, and still is, a largely spread tendency among my colleagues to put down or simply dismiss the existence of Thracian personal names in Romanian, which are not very numerous perhaps, but so much more precious. And there are indeed numerous place-names of Thracian origin in Romania as, in fact, all over southeast Europe (Paliga 2003 a, with many other examples).

**Batalde-ouenós**, Gr. *Βαταλδε.ουηνός*. An epithet of Dionyssos. Unclear meaning. The root of first part, *bat-*, seems related to other forms in *bat-*, maybe the same as in *\*batileus > basileus*, for which is Preie. origin is probable.

**Bendis**, Gr. *Βενδίς, Βένδις, Μενδίς*. Goddess of the moon and fate. From IE *\*bhend-* ‘to bind’ (hence the English word too). This divinity was imagined as *weaving*, i.e. *binding* the fate of people. Identified with Artemis–Diana, sometimes with Hekate. This reflects the complex values of Bendis: goddess of moon when in the sky, of forests on earth, and of the underworld, if identified with Hekate. As in Horace's Odes (3, 22):

Montium custos nemorumque virgo  
Quae laborantes utero puellas  
Ter vocata audis adimisque leto,  
Diva triformis.

O virgin of woods and guard of mountains  
Who, three times invoked, pay  
Attention to mothers in labours,

You, with three forms  
[our improvised translation]

**Blēkouros**, Gr. *Βληκουρος*. A god-name attested in one inscription in Omar-Oren, south of Orta-köy: *Θεῶ Βληκουρω*. The meaning is unclear; nevertheless, *bla-*, *ble-* are recorded as first part of other compounds, e.g. *Blasa/Blassas*, *Blébois*, *-bleptēs*. These are not sufficient for a clear contour of the form. The second part, with several spelling variants, is also attested in other forms, e.g. *Epta-koros*, *Kyri-dava*, *Moukouna-kyros* etc. See in Dečev 1957: 264.

**Bouaiparēné**, Gr. *Βουαιπαρηνή*. An epithet of Hera. Dečev (1957: 78) suggests IE *\*bheu-* ‘to live, to have location in’, which seems unconvincing in the given context. It is, of course, a compound, the meaning of which may ultimately be ‘daughter of bulls’.

**Cotys** See *Kotys*.

**Dabatopeios** *Deus faber* of the Thracians. Also NP *Dabeis*. The first part must reflect IE *\*dhabh-* ‘to fix, to match’, as in Armenian *darbin* ‘faber’, maybe also Sl. *dobr* (but not all slavists agree with this hypothesis). This root is also inherited in Rom. *dibaci* ‘deft’, with the normal preservation of intervocalic *-b-* in an indigenous Thracian element (despite the opposite, but not argued, view of most historians of the Romanian language). The comparison with the Romanian form may lead to reconstructing the genuine Thracian pronunciation *\*Dibačo-pay-*. • Intervocalic *b/v* is absolutely normal in the Thracian elements of Romanian, unlike the latin heritage, when it is almost regularly lost (with very few exceptions). The still largely spread view, among my Romanian colleagues, that Thracian intervocalic *b/v* must have been lost too in the evolution to Romanian is erroneous, and not argued. There is NO example proving this false theory.

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**Darzalas, Derzelas, Derzis** Chtonian Thracian god venerated in the region of Odessos (today Varna region); characterised as a *theos megas* ‘the great god’. Cf. *theō epēkoō Derzei* ‘to the god who listens to/pay attention to prayers’. Must be related to *Darēs* (below), from the same root as in Sl. *drz*, Lith. *drąsùs* etc. The expected Slavic form would have been *\*drs > drch*. • It may be debatable if Rom. *dârz, dârz* is of Slavic or rather of indigenous (Thracian) origin, but this is not the only case of this type. This problem is complex and will require vast and complex investigations. The satem character of both Thracian and Slavic has often led to confusing conclusions regarding the Thracian or Slavic character of some elements in Romanian.

**Darrōn** A *daemon* with the Macedonians (Hesychius; Dečev 1957: 119). Must be related to *Darēs*.

**Darēs** Name of a Phrygian (Trojan) priest of Hephaistos (Illiad, 5, 9–11). By Hephaistos, Homer of course noted a local god assimilated to the Greek god. The name must be theophoric. IE *\*dher-* ‘to keep tight; to support’; hence Persian *Dareios*. See *Darzalas, Derzelas, Derzis*.

**Dēloptēs** Unclear meaning, yet again the root is met again in several Thracian forms; also an epithet of Heros: *Heros Dēloptē[s]*. If our interpretation is correct, one may think at the archaic root *\*dal-*, *\*del-* in various place-names as *Dalmatia* or Rom. *deal* ‘a hill’, still held by many linguists for a Slavic origin. I assume that the ultimate root is Preie. *\*DaL-*, *\*DeL-*, *\*TaL-*, *\*TeL-* in various forms referring to elevated locations, maybe the same as in Hebrew *tel*, Arabic *tell* ‘a hill, an elevated location’ (a Pre-Indo-European, Circum-Mediterranean archaic root). The archaic *Urverwandtschaft* of southeast European forms (Preie.) and other Circum-Mediterranean forms should not be rejected, as it may prove realistic and

in accordance with the archaeological finds of the last decades.

**Diuzenus** Etymologically the same as Gr. *Diogenes* ‘born from Zeus’. Some equivalents are *Deospor*, *Deosporis*, in which the second element is -*por*, -*poris* ‘offspring; son’. The description ‘born from Zeus’ was also specific to Thracian personal names, mainly names of leaders.

**Gebeleizis** Epithet of Zamolxis. Erroneously considered another god. The invoked fragment in Herodotus (*Historiae*, 4, 93, 94) is very clear: Gebeleizis is another name of Zamolxis, specific with some Thracian groups [i.e. as compared to the usual, more spread form *Zamolxis*, *Zalmoxis*]. IE \**ǵwer-* ‘to shine’ or rather \**ǵheib-* ‘light; lightning’; hence also *Zbeltiurdos*, *Zbelsurdos* and *ziby-thides* ‘the nobles (i.e. the bright ones) of the southern Thracians’, the *clarissimi*. The real pronunciation in Thracian was perhaps \**ǵ(ə)beleiz-iš*, \**ǵ(ə)beleiz-iš*, *ǵəbeleiz-iš*, *žb(ə)leiz-iš*.

**Hēra** Reportedly the sky goddess of the Thracians (Polyainos, *Strategemata* 7, 22). If really a parallel of the Greek goddess, the information of a sky goddess, even if uncomfortable in the field of comparative religions, should not be rejected.

**Hērōs**. See below *B. Hērōs and His Epithets*

**Iambadoulēs** Unknown origin and meaning. Held for either male or female god. The second part of the compound, -*do(u)las*, -*dou(u)lēs* is also met in some other Thracian forms. See above *Asdoulēs*.

**Kábeiroi**, **Kábiroi**, pl. (sing. **Kábeiros**, **Kábiros**; Greek spelling *Κάβειροι*, *Κάβιροι*). Long held for chthonian Thracian deities, whose cult was spread in Samothrake and other islands. Dečev 1957: 220 quotes Berneker’s approach to OCS *kob* ‘a Genius, a spirit’, which may be at least

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debatable. The *kabiroi* were surrounded by a certain enigma in the antiquity, so the information about their initiatic cult is scarce. Their epithets were *Axieros*, *Axiokersos*, *Axiokersa*, which may ultimately illuminate their basic meaning, and also their original cult, later centred around an ithyphallic Hermes. The epithets are derived from *axios*, *axia* ‘venerable, capable’; and *Axiokersos*, *Axiokersa* must have meant ‘the most venerable/capable bridegroom, the most venerable/capable bride’ respectively. The root *kers-* had two basic meanings, apparently different, but semantically connected: ‘to plough’ and ‘to cut, to penetrate; to inseminate (sexually); intercourse’. There was therefore a cult related to both farming and sexual life, in full accordance with traditional cults. The etymon of the generical term *Kábeiroi*, *Kábiroi* must be connected to a root of Pre-Indo-European origin (presumably \**K-B-*, \**K-P-*), as most Greek god-names too, and presumably related to other place- and personal names attested in the Thracian world: NP *Kaba-dokos*; NL *Kaba-ssós*, *Kabē-ssós*, *Kábē-sos*, *Kábē-sa*, *Kába-sa*; NL, NR *Kabe-tzós*; NL *Kabý-lē*, *Cabyle*, *Cabula* (some 7 kms from Jambol, on the Tundža, a region with rich Thracian sites); NL *Kapí-dava*, *Kapí-daba* etc. (all forms quoted after Dečev 1957). Even if we may not be able to identify the archaic meaning of the root *kab-*, it is beyond any doubt that it was frequent in many Thracian forms. We are inclined for an archaic Pre-Indo-European origin.

**Kogaion, Kogaionon** The sacred mountain of the northern Thracians (the Daci or Getae). Cf. NM *Gugu* (Romania), NP *Goga*, also *gogă* ‘a ghost, a phantom’ = Alb. *gogë* etc. Probably archaic Preie. root \**K-K-*, \**G-K-* ‘to swell, to inflate; big, make big’. The Romanian mountain *Gugu* cannot be held as a direct heir of the ancient form, but as a similar, etymologically related place-name. There are no archaeological proofs that Mt. *Gugu* may directly continue the ancient form.

**Kotys** The goddess of vegetation, often imagined with prominent, cone-like contours; her veneration often got orgiastic features. Must be

related to Rom. *ciot* [pron. /čot/] ‘a knot, gnarl’. The original name of the goddess must have been \*Čot-is or Čot-iš. The goddess ‘assisted’ ithyphallic rites (*ephoros aischrōn*). In Korinthos, she was venerated under the name *Kotyt(t)ō* or *Kottō*. There was also a king *Kotys I*, theophoric name (with the Odrysae, 4th century B.C.). • The name must be also related with the Thracian name of plant *cotiata* ‘couch grass’ (*Triticum* or *Agropyrum repens*, see Dečev 1929: 25); in Romanian, it is called *iarbă tare*, lit. ‘hard, strong grass’, all from IE \*k<sup>w</sup>od- ‘sharp; to sting’. The reconstructable pronunciation for *cotiata* is \*čotyata or \*čotsata.

**Kybēlē**, also **Kybēbē** Phrygian goddess of earth, harvest and love: lover of *Attis*. Etymon unknown, presumably of Preie. origin.

**Manimazos** ND, epithet of Hērōs. The second part is clearly related to *Mazeus*, while the first part may be from the same root as Germ. *Mann*, Eng. *man*.

**Mazeus** ‘The Great/Big (god)’. Epithet of the Phrygian sky-god. Related with the second part of the compound *Mani-mazos*, an epithet of Hērōs.

**Mēdyzis** The first part *mēd-* should be related to other Thracian forms like *Mēda*, *Mēdos*, *Mēdokus* etc. Difficult to determine whether Rom. NL *Mediaș*, in southern Transylvania, continues a Thracian place-names, but this may be possible.

**Mēn** Moon god with the Phrygians. Related to Lat. *mensis* (preserved in Aromanian *mes*, absent in Daco-Romanian), Sl. *měsec*, Eng. *moon*, Germ. *Monat* etc. It is probable that the Thracian and Phrygian calendar was based on the moon phases. Cf. *Bendis* and *mroata*.

**mroata** Presumably referred to the sacred columns in a temple. Cf.

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Lydian *mrud-*, *mruvaa-* ‘a stella, a column’; perhaps related to Avestan *mrav-/mru-* ‘to speak’. If such an approach is accepted, then the basic, archaic meaning was ‘figurative speech of column’, i.e. they were imbued with the magic powers of a message. Such a parallel is Hittite *lali* ‘inscription’ and *lala* ‘language, tongue’; Latin *os*, *oris* and *oraculum*, *oratio*; Hebrew *Aaron* ‘mouth’ and ‘prophet’.

**Myndrytos, Myndrytus** The Thracian equivalent of Greek Hermes and Roman Mercurius as suggested by the inscription: *Jovi Fulm[ini] et Mercur[io] et Myndry[to] Aliulas Zepaibis*. The root *myn-* would indicate a Preie. origin, root *\*M-N-* ‘to hide, to conceal; secret’.

**pleistoi** The high-ranked priests of Zamolxis. The root is also met in NP *Pleistōr* and ND *Pleistōros*. From IE *\*plei-s* ‘full’ as in Lat. *plenus*, Germ. *voll*. They must have initially been associated with the *plenitude* of nature, and presumably were associated with the cult of nature and vegetation. Later on, in the course of spiritual evolution, their figure got more and more abstract values. The etymologically related ND *Pleistōros* got the level of war-god, in a later period.

**Pleistōros** A war-god with the Apsintoi. See preceding entry.

**\*Pūr-** ‘(sacred) fire’ (Phrygian and Thracian). Cf. Thr. NP *Pyroulala*, *Pyroulas*, *Purula* etc. IE *\*pūr-* ‘fire’, hence also the basic word for ‘fire’ in many IE languages; cf. also Umbrian *purum-e* ‘in the fire’. • I have not changed my hypothesis regarding the origin of Rom. *pururi*, *pururea* ‘eternally’, also *de-a pururi*, *de-a pururea* ‘id.’ The basic meaning must have been ‘eternal fire’ > ‘eternal’, a generalisation of meaning (with sacred, religious connotations), which occurred in the first centuries A.D., probably due to a generally spread conception about the eternal, sacred character of fire. The modern form *pururi* obviously is (formally) a neuter plural; it became adverb when the initial meaning was lost, and it became

an adverb (as considered now). The substantive original character is also preserved in the syntagmatic constructions *de-a pururi/pururea* '(lit.) for the (eternal) fires > in eternity, eternally'. The Romanian forms *pururi*, *pururea*, *de-a pururi*, *de-a pururea* are among the clearest proofs of a Thracian heritage, though absent in most glossaries of the indigenous elements of Romanian.

**Sabadios** See *Sabazios*.

**Sabazios** Also *Sabadios*. God of vegetation in full development. the first part is related to Hittite (cuneiform) *suwa* 'to swell', Palaic *suna* 'I fill'; Illyrian *sabaia* 'a brewed liquid; a kind of beer'. In a later development, *Sabadios/Sabazios* becomes a solar god of the southern Thracians.

**Sabos** The abridged form of *Sabadios*, *Sabazios*.

**Sebadius** Late, south-Thracian form for *Sabadios*, *Sabazios*.

**Semele** The Theban (Phrygian) earth-goddess. The name is Hellenised, the original form was *Zemelō*, possibly also a feminine counterpart of the supreme north Thracian god *Zamolxis*, *Zalmoxis*, *Salmoxis*.

**Suregethes** Thracian personal name with sacred value, also sacred epithet. The first part seems related to Rom. *sur* (now about horses only) 'with white and black fur'; the initial meaning presumably was 'bright, bright colour', cf. NM *Suru* (South Carpathians), also Romanian personal name.

**Syroterēs** God-name. The first part is related to the first part in *Suregethes*, and to other similar forms (see Dečev 1957 s.v. in *sur-*, *syr-*, *sour-*); the second part is also found in some Thracian personal names, and

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preserved in Rom. *tare* ‘hard, strong’, also in personal names. The general meaning of the form must be reconstructed as ‘the strong bright/shining (god)’.

**Zamolxis**, also spelled *Zalmoxis*, *Salmoxis* The supreme god of the northern Thracians (*Daci*, *Dacisci* or *Getae*, the Daco-Getians or Thraco-Dacians in the modern terminology). Interpreted as Kronos by the Greeks, i.e. the primordial god. A certain magic surrounded the representation of this divinity as reported by the ancient Greek authors. The basic meaning is ‘the earth awed as a divinity’, by which we may identify the peculiar representation of a supreme god: god of earth, unlike all the other Indo-European groups, who imagined the supreme god related to the shining sky. It was indeed venerated as the god of the shining sky and thunder under the epithet *Gebeleizis*. • There are at least two layers in the representation of this divinity. (1) The Pre-Indo-European layer, which clearly associates the supreme god with the cyclic evolution of nature and earth, cf. root *\*S-M-* ‘deep’ or ‘high’ as in Greek *Samos*. (2) The Indo-European layer, which brought, as usual with the Indo-Europeans, the idea of god of the shining sky, as also represented in the epithet *Gebeleizis*; the Indo-Europeans associated the name to ‘earth’, IE *\*ǵ(h)em-* ‘earth’. Hence also the name of the Phrygian goddess of earth *Zemelō*. • It is feasible to assume that the archaic, Pre-Indo-European name of the god was *\*Samol-č-iš*, later deformed, after the advent of the Indo-European groups, to *\*Zamol-č-iš*. The Greeks could not spell the specific Thracian phonemes *č* and *š*, and simplified it –like in many other instances – to *Zamolxis*, by metathesis *Zalmoxis*, *Salmoxis*.

**Zemelō** The Phrygian (and original) name of *Semele*. Related to *Zamolxis*.

**Zeirēnē** See *Zerinthia*.

**Zerinthia** Love goddess with the Macedonians. Also **Zeirēnē**, equivalent of Aphrodite in Macedonia. Derived from IE \*ǵher- ‘to wish, to love, to desire’, hence also Greek *charis*, German *gierig*, (*be*)*gehren*.

### B. Hērōs and (some of) His Epithets

**Baridenthēs** ‘bear (*bari-*) + barley (*denth-ēs*)’, i.e. ‘the bearer of barley = barley-bearer, the one who bears barley’. Cf. *Denthēbaris*, f.; *Orsobaris*, *Orsabaris*, a Bythinian king; Phrygian NP *Denthis*, *denthis* ‘a kind of fermented drink (presumably with barley)’. Also NPp *Dantheleti*, *Dentheleti* (name of a Thracian tribe), the meaning of which seems to be ‘barley farmers, those who cultivate barley’. All these support the idea, reported by ancient sources, that Thracian prepared a kind of drink from barley or, otherwise put, that barley had an important role in their life, including religious beliefs.

**Baskidithias** ‘the one who sits aside, assists (the believers)’. Cf. Hesychius’s Lydian form *baske pikrolea* ‘come here quickly’.

**Borkēithias**, Gr. Βορκηθιας. Seems related to NL *Borkía*, Lat. *Bortia* (Dečev 1957: 76). Cf. NP Rom. *Burcu*, *Burcea* [read: *Burča*], *Burcescu* etc.

**Kendrisos** An epithet of Apollo. Dečev assumes it is related to NPp *Kindrai*. The ultimate root may be, as Dečev believes, an IE \*ǵend- ‘to bright, to shine’, which is possible. Cf. Rom. personal name *Chendrea* [kéndr̥ea].

**Manimazos, Manibazos** See above under A.

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**Vetesprios, Outespeios, Outasprios** ‘the supreme one, the leader’, cf. Rom. *vătaf*, *vătah*, *vătaș* ‘1. a master, a local leader; 2. the most important character in the sacred dance of Călușari’. As argued elsewhere, this word (and others, of course) may indicate that Thracian had a velar spirant (in N. D. Andreev’s terminology) or laryngeal (in the standard terminology); it was preserved until late Thracian. Its reflexes in Romanian seem to be *f*, *h*, *v* and zero; and *f*, *h*, *th/dh* and zero in Albanian (Paliga 2003 c). I am inclined to reconstruct the basic form as *\*vataX*, where *X* notes the velar spirant (in N. D. Andreev’s terminology, or laryngeal, as currently named).

**Pyrmēroulas, Pyrymērylas** For the first part, see *Pūr*- ‘fire’; The second part of the compound may be related to Rom. *mare* ‘big’ (against *mare* ‘sea’, of Latin origin); the Thracian origin of *mare* ‘big’ is still debated, but is probable. If so, the meaning would be ‘the great fire’.

**Saldobysseinos, Soldobooyseinos** Cf. NL *Salda*, *Saldokele*, *Saldovissos* etc. Root *sal-* may be the same as in Lat. *calidus*, therefore the basic meaning would be ‘warm’.

**Saldokelēnós** An epithet of Asklepios in an inscription of Glava Panega. A compound of *saldo-kelēn-os*, difficult to analyse.

**Stourouleos, Strōoula** Cf. NP *Sterissa*, father of the Dacian king Diurpaneus (whose real pronunciation probably was *\*Ĝupān-eus*, hence Rom. *giupîn*, *giupân* [ĝupîn], Sl. *župan* (already in Paliga 1987). The IE root may be the same as in Eng. *stark*, Gr. *stereos* etc. Cf. NP Arom. (Macedo-Romanian) *Zdru*, *Zdrula*.

**Tarsozie(is)** Dečev holds *tars-* for the meaning ‘penis’, which may be

debatable.

**Zeindroymēnos** Also an epithet of Zeus.

### Some Modern Forms

(Albanian, Bulgarian, Romanian)

More similar forms are analysed in Paliga 1966: 39 ff.

**bădni večer** ‘the night logs’ = ‘Christmas’; cf. Alb. *nata e buzmit* ‘id.’ See the discussion s.v. *Crăciun*. • Bulg. *bădni* seems related to Rom. *bădăran*, now with pejorative meaning: ‘a boorish, vulgar person’; the initial, archaic meaning must have been ‘piece of wood, a log’. Root *băd-* in Bulgarian and Romanian must be of Thracian origin. Cf. Rom. *butuc*, *butură*, *buturugă* ‘a log; a tree stump’.

**codru** (Romanian); Alb. **kodër** ‘a deep forest; the forest seen as protector, and imbued with magic values’. Erroneously explained from Latin *\*quodrum* < *quadrum* ‘a square’ in many dictionaries: neither the meaning, nor the phonetic evolution would allow such a hypothesis. • Obviously a substratum, Thracian heritage, IE *\*kād̥h-* ‘to cover, to protect’, as in Latin *cassis*, *cassidis* (*\*kadh-tis*), Eng. *hat* etc.

**Crăciun** (Romanian). 1. A piece of wood, a tree-branch, a wooden-rod; 2. Christmas. Obviously related to Alb. *kërcú* ‘a piece of wood, a log’. The current hypothesis, it is true with much hesitation, is that the origin may be Lat. *creatio*. The simple counter-argument is that the dialectal meaning as well as the Albanian form and meaning *de plano* reject such a view. The archaic meaning of the word was, beyond any doubt, ‘a piece of wood’, and was directly related to the Pre-Christian habits around the winter solstice.

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• Cf. *bădni večer*.

**Dordolet** (Romanian). A mythic figure imagined as a powerful young and fat boy. Mut be related to *durduliu* 'fat', dialectal form also *durd*. The word must be of Thracian origin, the archaic etymon is unclear.

**zână, zîna** 'a fairy (queen)'. As once written (Paliga 1989 a), cannot be explained from Latin *Diana*: neither the phonetic changes, nor the general situation of the ancient Latin god-names do not allow such a hypothesis. The word must be of Thracian origin, from the same root like Slavic *žena*, and its meaning was, for sure, 'woman', hence – by euphemistic and taboo approach – 'female deity = fairy'.

## Conclusions

The material available, and just a limited part has been presented here, allows us to have a certain contour of the complex Thracian religious and mythological life. A simple list of names tells us a lot, or very little, depending on our stance and bias for a certain attitude: positive ('yes, we know very much about the Thracians and their every day life') or negative ('we know too little about the Thracians'). Understanding the complex Thracian society involves extra-linguistic data, as always in attempting to reconstruct an archaic society. Among the numerous extra-linguistic details, I would just mention the obvious aniconic character of the Thracian religious complex, at least in its 'standard', or archaic, period. Iconism, or visual representations, gradually came under Greek and Roman influence. And the aniconic, oral tradition was long preserved in the so-called *Jus valachicum* or *Lex Olachorum*, i.e. the oral judicial system of the Romanians throughout the Middle Ages down to the modern times (Paliga 1994 b, in French).

The folk beliefs of the ethnic groups of southeast Europe require a special attention. We just quoted a few examples; more should be added

when a comprehensive lexicon or dictionary may be in view. I would just quote Ovsec 1991 (*Slovenska mitologija in verovanje*, in Slovene), maybe the best analysis of the Slavic mythology and folk beliefs, where the Thracian and Illyrian heritage of southeast Europe is often underlined on almost every page.

There are important, essential tasks for the future: (1) to further enlarge the dialogue between historians and archaeologists, on the one hand, and linguists, on the other; (2) to draw better, more convincing parallels between the Thracian names and their modern and contemporary heritage (which I have tried to do over years); (3) to attempt a large, comprehensive lexicon of the Thracian and Illyrian heritage of Central and Southeast Europe. A symposium on this topic is long expected, and should be done, sooner or later.