REPORT ON THE COLLOQUIUM, L’ARI亚STOCRATIE ODRYSE : SIGNES ET LIEUX DU POUVOIR EN THRACE (VÈ -III È SIECLES AVANT J.-C.), PARIS, 12-13 JUIN 2015

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Within the framework of the major Louvre exhibition on the Thracian aristocracy (*L’épopée des rois thraces. Découvertes archéologiques en Bulgarie*, Louvre, April 16-July 20, 2015), organized by the museum and the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture under the curatorship of J.-L. Martinez, A. Baralis, N. Mathieux, T. Stoyanov and M. Tonkova, a colloquium was organised recently with much the same theme under the auspices of the Louvre, the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, the Institut National de l’Histoire de l’art and the Institut Français, Bulgarie. The academic direction was assumed by Alexandre Baralis and Néguine Mathieux, and sincere thanks are due to both of them for the excellent organisation and the importance of the papers presented during these two days. There were four sections with, officially, 18 presentations, actually delivered by 22 scholars (three of whom had two presentations each), plus four brief introductory talks by the four scholars chairing the respective sections.

The first section, entitled “Persons mobility and knowledge circulation” and chaired by Madalina Dana, presented various aspects of the subject, through epigraphic and topographic data, technical observations, circulation of artefacts and influences between various cultural domains. Véronique Chankowski raised the issue of persons and the circulation of goods in connection with the apparent lack of a documented institutional framework within which such circulation took place. She examined a number of decrees (*Agathokles*, *Bergaioi*, *Pistiros*) and pointed to a divergence between the information from extent epigraphic or literary sources and the archaeological evidence. Alexey Gotsev gave a brief history of the excavations in the *emporion* *Pistiros*, while Jan Bouzek focused on the actual places of commercial and manufacturing activity, preserved only in the northern part of the same settlement, while much of the other parts have been destroyed by the erosive activity of the River Maritsa/Hebros. He also drew attention to the canalisation system, which seems to be similar to the one known from Amphipolis. Dan Dana approached the problem of the mobility of the artisans on the basis of their signatures on artefacts. He raised the issue of artistic self-conscience and discussed toreutics (*Disloias*, *Xevanoukos* and Sinemorets jewellery) as well as some grave graffiti (*Alexandrovo*) and their interpretation. Milena Tonkova presented the evidence for mining and metallurgical activity from Babjek and Kozi Gramadi and discussed some classes of artefacts (more than 50 gold pectorals as of now) and the

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23 The same five French and Bulgarian scholars appear also as the editors (sous la direction de...) of the exhibition catalogue: Martinez, Baralis, Mathieux, Stoyanov, Tonkova 2015.
indications for toreutic and jewellery workshops in Yabalkovo, Malko Tranovo, Halka Bunar and Pistikos. Thracian metalwork production was the subject of a presentation by Athanasios Sideris. He outlined the most important characteristics of Thracian metalware shapes (imported and local: phialae, oinochoae, poteria, lebetes, aryballoid bottles, etc.) and insisted on the difficulty of accurately defining production in the territories of the Odrysoi, Getae and Triballoi, since the find-spots of artefacts do not necessarily indicate their origin. Aliénor Rufin Solas exploited the written sources in order to better understand the structure of Odrysian social and political organisation and she compared it with examples known from Macedonia. The tribute paid by emporia and colonies to the Thracian kings emerges as a factor of stability, given that the loss of earnings might be larger than the expected gains from hostile activities.

The second section, entitled “Aristocracy, necropolis and territories”, was held in the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres and was chaired by its president, Robert Martin. Various aspects of the power exercised by the Thracian aristocracy were the subject of a presentation by Zosia Archibald, which was introduced by Olivier Picard. Among other issues she discussed monetisation in Thrace, with many Greek mints represented but in small quantities of coins. She also observed the much higher number of coin hoards found in the North than in the remaining parts of Thrace. The next presentation, by Totko Stoyanov and Milena Tonkova, introduced by Véronique Schiltz, bore on the royal and aristocratic necropolis of Shipka and its monumental tombs, dated from the mid-5th to the early 3rd century BC. The topographical approach showed two concentration spots, one near Shipka and a second between Kazanlak and Maglizh. The architectural remains show an impressive unity, despite the various degrees of adoption and adaptation of the Greek elements. The grave goods, when not looted, are as much (or even more) luxurious as in Macedonia. The tumulus of Golyamata Kosmatka (one of the most important in the Shipka region) and its finds, although known for more than a decade now, recently received their full publication. It is noteworthy that Schiltz, in her response after the presentation, denied the identification of the bronze head found in the entrance of the Golyamata Kosmatka tomb with Seuthes III (which, by the way, was the emblematic exhibit of the Louvre exhibition), and it would be very interesting to read soon on what basis she does so, given the discovery in this tomb of three items (helmet, jug and cup) bearing the king’s name. Alexandre Baralis and Krastina Panayotova, in the

24 Several of the speaker’s ideas are also expressed in the relevant chapter of a recent book: Tonkova 2015.
25 For a slightly different approach one may now consult: Váleva 2015.
26 Dimitrova 2015 (full bilingual English and Bulgarian edition).
last presentation of this section, introduced by Alain Pasquier, recapitulated the results of the Franco-Bulgarian expedition in Apollonia Pontica and gave a full insight on the recent discoveries: besides the very important finds of the necropolis (mostly Greek pottery, coins and small artefacts), they gave a detailed account of the bio-archaeological research conducted at the site aimed at establishing fluctuations in the shoreline and the variability of flora in antiquity. Some parts of the site have been investigated with a new technique, which is able to represent the real terrain configuration by removing the vegetation layer.

The third section, dedicated to “Forms and symbols of power: ornaments and arms”, was chaired by Antoine Hermary and introduced by Jean-Luc Martinez. The rich finds of the Yakimova, Dalakova and Taneva tumuli were the subject of a presentation by Diana Dimitrova, who attempted a connection with the much debated “Orphic death rituals” on the basis of the severed and displaced head and limbs of the dead in two cases. Konstantin Rabadjiev discussed Thracian chariots and carts, both from an iconographical and an archaeological perspective, in connection with chariot history in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean –this problem occupies a focal position in his recent book.27 Rumyana Georgieva presented Thracian clothing and textiles in a funerary context. Besides the expected wool and linen, attention has been drawn to leather and hemp as raw materials for textiles in Thrace. According to Georgieva, there is some evidence from the Zlatinitza tumulus of silk. In the following discussion this was contested by C. Moulherat, who argued that no silk was produced in the Mediterranean until the first century AD. Georgieva in her reply stressed that her position was based on the results of fibre analysis, and noted the mention of silk by ancient authors.28 Christian Moulherat discussed textile finds from Golyamata Kosmatka and Zlatinitsa and made bold the distinction of two different procedures in the use of gold thread (filé and lame). Technological advance between the 4th century BC and the 4th century AD allowed progress from using threads of 10-15 microns to much thinner ones of 1-2 microns.

The last section, entitled “Forms and symbols of power: funeral gifts, decoration and mintage”, was chaired by Gocha Tsentspadze. The presentation of Petya Penkova focused on technical issues related to the silver rhyta of Zlatinica and the scabbard of

27 Rabadjiev 2014 (Bulgarian edition with brief English summary).
28 Pliny, H.N., XI, 75 on an obscure passage by Aristotle, Hist. An., V, 19, 551. Kos and Amorgos are often supposed to have produced silk textiles (most probably wild silk). A lepidopterous cocoon from Thera, two decades ago, reanimated the debate about silk during the Aegean Bronze Age.

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Golyamata Kosmatka. She revealed that niello was used in the nostrils of the calf-head rhyta and a complicated gold inlaying procedure on the iron scabbard. Svetlana Tsaneva, much in the same mood, discussed niello-like fillings, silvery intrusions and patches to repair holes of hammering or casting defects on the Panagyurishte gold vases and the Zlatinitsa wreath. İnci Delemen presented the well-known tumulus of Naip, in the Tekir Dağ area. She concluded that the occupant was most likely one of Alexander the Great’s strategoi who probably followed him in Egypt, and she dated the tomb to the final years of the 4th century BC. Sophie Descamps-Lequime discussed some Greek toreutic products destined for Thracian aristocratic clientele. She paid special attention to a particular shape of oinochoe (type 6 of Beazley, often called “carinated”), traced its origins in Late Archaic Etruscan metal prototypes, connected it with Early Classical Athenian red-figure pottery imitations, and ascribed some bronze exemplars of the 4th century BC, found in Macedonia, to Attic workshops. The following presentation focused on the Borovo treasure and was divided into technical and archaeological parts, delivered respectively by Dominiques Robcis and Toto Stoyanov. The main result of the chemical analysis was to establish a near-identical alloy composition for the basic parts of the two rhyta (horse and sphinx), as well as identical production and gilding techniques, facts which led Robcis to suggest a common origin for them (and possibly also for the bull rhyton, which, however, shows a slightly different alloy composition). Stoyanov, for whom stylistic analysis indicates different artistic and cultural backgrounds, did not agree with this view, and he stressed the fact that the remaining two vases of the Borovo treasure (deep lekane/crater and oinochoe-rhyton) have to undergo chemical analysis too, before the origin of the group can be established. The solution may be, as he seemed inclined to acknowledge during the discussion, that artisans of varying artistic background worked together in the same workshop. Daniela Stoyanova presented the architectural characteristics of Thracian tombs, which often have some architectural elements emphasised by painting, and clarified the presence of all three Greek orders on their facades, in their interiors, as well as on their doors. Julia Valeva discussed the figurative painted scenes in the tombs and stressed their originality and inventiveness, despite their Greek models, which however are rather distant. She did not seem to admit the direct involvement of Greek painters, and both the style and theme of the examined paintings led support to her view. The last presentation of the colloquium was an overview of Thracian coinage by Olivier Picard. He discussed the history of the coins with a maenad and the first ever appearance of the word nomisma on a coin of Dreronnes. He proposed that the coins of Alexander I of Macedon with a horse were meant for payments only within his kingdom, while the series with a mounted horse were for payments outside the
kingdom. He also suggested that in Pistiros could be located one of the mints of Thasian imitations. Most importantly, he contested the traditionally accepted identification of a male head on the coins of Seuthes III as a portrait of the Thracian king, stressing that it is highly improbable that the first ever portrait on a coin occurred in Thrace.

The discussion, although somewhat limited due to time restrictions and language barriers, proved to be very fruitful and stimulating, blending experts from various fields and varying scholarly traditions. We all eagerly await publication of the proceedings volume, which, according to the organisers of the colloquium, will take place by the end of this year.

Athanasios SIDERIS – Fondation du Monde Hellénique, Athènes

Bibliographie


