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INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCE OF THE THRACIAN HERITAGE STUDY
(Book review: Рабаджиев К. Елински мистерии в Тракия (Опит за археологически прочит). Университетско издателство София «Св. Климент Охридски». 2002. 209 с.)

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For modern scientists and researchers, Hellenistic Thrace remains the object of careful study. In particular, among archaeologists, the religion and spirituality of Hellenistic Thrace attracts special attention. In this context, the book of Kostadin Rabadzhiev "Hellenic secrets in Thrace (An attempt at archaeological reading)" deserves considerable attention. This study is based on unique archaeological material. At the same time, the author highlights Hellenistic Thrace in the context of the modern interpretation of archaeological and literary sources of spiritual communication between the Greeks and Thracians. A certain innovative aspect of the study lies in the scientific discourse regarding the sacredness of the Thracians. A new reading of famous monuments and iconography was also proposed. Thus, the author made an attempt to comprehend ancient history, religion, spirituality and ancient myths - thanks to archaeological sources and his personal archaeological research. The archaeological reading proposed by the author provides a model of study that is valuable to us, which scrupulously interprets the facts (artifacts and social phenomena). This greatly increases the evidentiary value of this scientific study.

K. Rabadzhiev believes that any communication with the forces of the afterlife carries a manifestation of mystery - initiation is the possibility of contact and interaction with powerful and immortal gods. Mystical cults are pushed to the periphery of urban life. Accordingly, the Greek mysteries represent a more complex and developed model of communication, since this may indeed be the result of the uniqueness of Hellenic social life.

The first chapter of the book "Great Gods in Seuthopolis" is devoted to the history and religion of Seuthopolis - the ancient capital of Seut III - the ruler of the Odrysian kingdom in Thrace, who ruled from 331 to 300. Here K. Rabadzhiev, considering the dilemma of the Thracian city or city in Thrace, as especially important to study the history of Thrace, emphasizes his own position regarding the interpretation

of Thracian antiquity. In subsection 1.1. "Seutopolis" - notes, among other things, the influence of the Hellenistic school of architecture on the urban planning of Seuthopolis. A city that is pretentiously called a polis. After analyzing the specifics of the Thracian urban planning (when compared with Hellenistic examples), the author points to the presence of two urban centers in Seutopolis. Moreover, the second was placed in a fortified citadel - the so-called palace-temple. Pointing to the existing opinion regarding Seuthopolis as a royal city, the author emphasizes the urban nature of the Hellenistic culture, and the trends of Hellenization (urbanization) of culture were observed everywhere in the ancient world, but in parallel with the democratization of urban institutions.

Subsection 1.2. "Palace-temple (?)" is dedicated to the royal palace in Seutopolis. The author points to the special specifics of palace construction - combined with the temple complex. At the same time, the possibility of using the palace building for residential needs is called into question. Accordingly, it is logical to interpret the palace as a "sanctuary of the Great Gods". Attention is drawn to the author's parallels between Seuthopolis and Samothrace, as well as the peculiar archaeological comparativeism of urban planning of Greek and Thracian cities. In subsection 1.3. "Samothracian Great Gods" considers the religious life in Seuthopolis. In particular, the author traces the ideological origins of the Eleusinian mysteries. Subsection 1.4. "Pelasgians of Samothrace (?)" (similarly - like subsection 1.5. "Hermes of the Thracians (?)", where the discussion started here continues) begins with a question regarding the Pelasgians of Samothrace. And the answer lies in the more ancient origin of the Pelasgians, compared with the Thracians. Here the role of Hermes, an important deity (against the background of the triad of other deities: Demeter, Persephone and Hades), becomes key - first for the Pelasgians, and then for the Thracians. Regarding the Pelasgians, the testimony of Herodotus is also authoritative¹. But it is K. Rabadzhiev who concludes that the origins of the Samothrace mysteries come from the Pelasgians. The latter, in turn, were second only to the Eleusinian mysteries. In subsection 1.6. "Macedonians and the Sanctuary of Samothrace" examines the role of the Macedonian royal house in the religious life of Samothrace and Thrace. At the same time, in addition to written sources, the author uses archaeological research of sanctuaries. Assuming that the construction of monumental buildings here began in the time of Philip II and was probably financed by the Macedonian kings. And continuing his peculiar discourse with a figurative reader, the author traditionally asks us another question: "Can we explain this activity of the Macedonian royal family in Samothrace only by the religious policy of Philip II, aimed at joining the Greek world, but also against Athens and their Eleusinian sanctuary? The search for an answer is indicated to us in the Macedonian tradition of the origin of the royal dynasty from Argos. Having accepted the assumption that it refers not to the Peloponnesian, but to the Pelasgian Argos. Accordingly, this suggests much more ancient roots for religious contact with Samothrace. And in this context, attention should be paid to the desire of the Thracian rulers to demonstrate their belonging to the Macedonian dynasty. This outlined changes in the religious life of the Thracian society, and most clearly in the urban culture of Seuthopolis, both the perception of new cults and religious syncretism, and the trend of the ideological diversity of the Hellenistic world, of which Thrace was a part. In subsection 1.7. "Great gods in the cities on the

1 Геродот. История / Пер., прим. Г. А. Стратановского. М.: Наука, 1972. Кн. 1. 56-58.

western coast of Pontus" analyzes the distribution of the cult of the Great Gods in the cities on the western coast of Pontus. At the same time, the geographical distribution of this cult is impressive - in almost all cities of the coast of Pontus - from Odessa to Olbia. Subsection 1.8. "The Great God in Odessos", first of all, attracts attention with material that characterizes the specific religious cult of the Great God Odessos, in particular, the role of Lysimachus (the ruler of Thrace from 323 BC) in the spread of this cult. In subsection 1.9. "Epimenes in Kabila (?)" reveals the significance of Epimenes (representative of King Spartok in Kabila) in the religious life of Seuthopolis. The author traces this with the help of archaeological research. At the same time, he emphasizes that his interpretation is only an assumption for future research. Subsection 1.10. "The Great Gods of Thrace" in a peculiar way completes the first chapter of the book. At the same time, in a certain way, the author's paradigm is developing - an analysis of the religious life of the Thracian urban environment - under the influence of the urban culture of Hellenism.

In the second section of the monograph "Eleusinian mystery of the tomb in Kazanlak (?)" the process of creating tombs for the burial of the Thracian nobility is studied. At the same time, a variety of architectural solutions was noted. This, among other things, suggests the involvement of Hellenic craftsmen in the design of the tombs. In subsection 2.1. "Painted Scene: Ideas and Interpretations" characterizes the frescoes from the burial chamber of the Kazanlak tomb as a source of eschatological ideas of the Thracians. When analyzing the architectural form with picturesque decor, the connection with the Greek school is emphasized. In particular, interpretations of scenes with picturesque motifs are borrowed from the Greek cultural circle. Although the presence of separate fragments of the Thracian way of life is also noted. Continuing the characterization of the Kazanlak tomb in subsection 2.2. "Holiday", the author demonstrates a skillful combination of data from archaeological research, mythology, evidence of ancient authors and modern scientific literature. In subsection 2.3. "Heroization" when considering the iconography of the Kazanlak tomb, attention is drawn to the obvious ideological features of the Eleusinian mysteries. Subsection 2.4. dedicated to the Eleusinian sacraments, obviously according to the author's intention, is one of the key ones in the monograph. And here it is important for us to note that ideas from the circle of Greek Orphism, close to Thracian religious thinking, penetrated the Hellenized Thracian society. Which demonstrates the tomb in Kazanlak as an exceptional monument of religious syncretism. In subsection 2.5. "The ruler who will return" marks the special specificity of the funeral ideas and customs of the Thracians. The significance of the burial mound for the Thracian rulers, the connection of the heroized ruler with the world of the living by his subjects in life are analyzed in detail. Particularly noteworthy is the interpretation of the idea of rebirth for a new life (the entrance to the tomb and as an exit from which the ruler can return), which can be traced not only in the architecture of the tomb, but the mound itself is a sign and idea of light. The ruler, who during his life was the leader of his people, also establishes a connection between the gods and the human community after death. And in this context, the tomb should be considered as a temple in which the deified ruler-hero lives. Subsection 2.6. "Eumolpus and (in) Thrace?" starts again with a legitimate question. This time, regarding the thesis about the Thracian origin of the Eleusinian mysteries through the genealogy of their founder, Eumolpus. Giving an answer to this rather

complicated question, the author identifies Eumolpus in detail, coming to the conclusion that even with his name Eumolpus does not mean that he is a Thracian character.

Section 3. "Orpheus in Thrace? (or Thracian Orphism)" is devoted to the question of the Thracian origin of Orpheus. At the same time, the author's reconstruction concerns, first of all, religious communication between the Thracians and Greeks. In subsection 3.1. "Visible image" indicates that in the interpretation of the Thracian origin of Orpheus there is a question mark about the absence of his image in the picturesque monuments of Thrace before the Roman conquest. This applied both to imported Greek goods and to the works of Thracian masters. Here the author expresses the idea that the iconographic idea of Orpheus in Thrace will hardly be the same as it was laid down in the Greek world. At the same time, the actual absence of such images in the Thracian plots that could be interpreted in the context of the myth of Orpheus is stated. And this can hardly be interpreted only as the absence of the concept of "Orpheus" in the Thracian religious model. Since the picturesque monuments, according to the author, are not a sufficient basis for this. And since Orpheus obviously still had Thracian roots, therefore, the horizons of the study should be much wider. The author points out that Orphism as an image, mythology and religious practice, differed from the Greek prototype. In subsection 3.2. "The idea in the myth" develops the idea that the personality of Orpheus bears the features of individualism in religion. At the same time, it is emphasized that he remains alien to the polis collective. Various versions of the tragic death of Orpheus also attract attention. Subsection 3.3. "Golden Inscriptions" is based on surviving written fragments associated with Orpheus and testifying to the afterlife. In particular, we are talking about bone tablets found on the territory of Olbia in the 5th century BC. In subsection 3.4. "Soul, Body and Death" notes that one of the ideas that most worried the ancient interpreters of Orpheus and his teachings was the idea of the soul - its opposition to the body and the hardships of its existence after death. Also, which is very important for us, there are certain connections between the Scythians and Thracians. And the final subsection 3.5. "Thracian Orphism of the Greeks?" again raises a rather complex and debatable question regarding the influence of Thracian Orphism on the Greeks. And here I would like to note that the significance of Orphism for us also lies in the fact that over time it formed the basis of some monotheistic religions, in particular Christianity. Thus, marking the transformation from polytheism to faith in the One God.

In conclusion, K. Rabadzhiev points out that in the process of research, he analyzes three cults that ancient authors associated with Thrace and the Thracians. The first of these, the Samothracian cult of the Great Gods, was recorded in Thrace in the early Hellenistic era. The second, the cult of Demeter and Persephone in Eleusis, influenced by its ideas the eschatological ideas of the Thracians of the same time. While with regard to the third, the so-called Hellenic Orphism, data on its distribution in Thrace (as well as the Thracian influence in the formation of religious rites) are practically absent. And in general, the author defines the purpose of his research in the analysis of the idea of the Thracians and Thrace, highlighting the elements that make it up: knowledge of Thracian customs, including religious ones.

In general, it should be noted that over four hundred sources and literature were used in the book by K. Rabadzhiev. At the same time, in addition to written sources, the author skillfully uses archaeological research. Accordingly, K. Rabadzhiev demonstrated an innovative example of comparing and logically connecting the data of

archaeological research, mythology, evidence of ancient authors and modern scientific literature. At the same time, the author's presentation is built on a kind of discourse with a figurative reader, to whom K. Rabadzhiev asks questions and at the same time gives us the opportunity to try to find the right answer ourselves. And this is another innovative aspect of the book!

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