
HERAKLES, DIOMEDES AND THRACE

The evolution of society and the early transition from myth to history changed Herakles into an epic hero - a civilizer, who gave up his struggles with monsters and with club in hand he paved the way of Greek Civilization in *barbarian* lands. This was his new social function destined by the colonization that inspired mythmaking, but this time politically defined. This was the end of myth - it's "death" when divorced from the feast and ritual the myth ceased to be a sacred language, thus becoming a literature, changed into a *political tale* it expressed the political aims of Hellenic society (Nilsson 1951; Lévi-Strauss 1971: 131-143; Annequin 1983:267-273). In the newly created myths Herakles was the Ἄρχηγέτης, that fought the *barbarians* in the Greek claims on their lands. The mythical figure of Herakles combined the aspirations of Greek society, this being one of the reasons for him to become an all-Greek hero-god in the ethnic consolidation of the Greeks during the period called *The Great Colonization*.

1. Diomedes

Herakles' campaign in Thrace for the man-eating horses of Diomedes was first mentioned by Pindar (Kurtz 1975:171f; Brommer 1979:33f; Boardman 1990:67; Isaac 1986:77f; Pavlopoulou 1994:128-131), later Euripides in *Alcesta* wrote about Herakles' claim for the quadriga that Diomedes possessed (Eur.Alc., 481-506). Although the scene in vase-painting is known since the last quarter of the 6th century BC (Kurtz 1975:171; Boardman 1990:70f, Nr 2414f), Hellanicus was the first to mention *Abderos* - the son of Hermes, loved by Herakles; as for the town of Abdera founded by Herakles and named after his companion who was torn apart by the horses (Hell.Phoronis, 2, frg.105). It was Apollodorus later who most explicitly informed us about the 8th Labour of Herakles: his victorious war against Diomedes - king of the martial Bistones (Diomedes being a son of Ares) and the foundation of the city of Abdera by Herakles on this very place where his beloved companion was torn to pieces by the mares (Apollod. 2.5.8).

On his way back from the island of Geryon (his 10th Labour), in Italy, as Vergilius glorifies him in *Aeneis*, Herakles fell asleep on the river bank of Tiber, on the place where later the city of Rome was found. While he was still asleep the three-bodied Cacus, the son of Vulcanus, stalled the cattle and by pulling them by their tails, he concealed the herd into a cave. This was not an obstacle for the mighty Herakles who discovered them by their mooing and killed the fire-breathing Cacus (Verg.Aen., 8.193-270).

In this very story about Geryon, the hellenized version of the origin of Scythians has also been involved, as was told to Herodotus by the Greeks living along the Pontus: again on his way back with Geryon's cattle Herakles came to the land, later known to be Scythia, where he fell into a heavy sleep. At his waking, as in the myth about Cacus, Herakles found out that his horses were missing and in search for them he came across a cave with a demonic creature in it: half a maiden, half a snake - she was the Ruler of the land. The serpent-legged maiden returned the horses only after a sexual intercourse with Herakles, as a result of which three sons were born, the youngest becoming the first king of Scythians as he was the only one to perform the probations imposed by Herakles (Hdt. 4.8 ff). As in the myth about Cacus, Herakles meets a chthonic deity in a cave, thus his marriage can be seen as a version of the dragon-fighting myths (Бессонова 1983:44 f).

Again on his way back from the island of Geryon Herakles came to the land of Celts where, according to Partenius, Keltine (Celto) stole part of the cattle, giving them back only after their son - Keltos, the Progenitor of the Celts, was born (Parthen. 30).

In the myths concerning Cacus and Keltine, as in many others mainly in Italy (Burkert 1979:83 ff), Herakles fought for his cattle, thus repeating the Geryon's myth: on coming back from the island of Geryon in Thrace Herakles became angry with Strymon, may be the river-god had stolen some of the

cows, and he filled the river up with stones (Apollod. 2.5.10; Маразов 1992:58 f); but while in Scythia his aim were the horses. For the horses Herakles killed the Thracian king Diomedes, and for the horses, presented to Laomedon as a gift by Zeus, he fought against Ilion destroying the city a generation before the Trojan war (Hom.II., 14.250). In this particular war another Thracian king - Rhesos had been killed, again for his quadriga with four white horses by another Diomedes (Hom.II., 10.468-501), A third (or the same?) Diomedes was known as a founder of colonies on Adriatic littoral of Italy as Strabon attests for a sacrifice of a white horse, made by the Venetti (Strb. 5.1.9; 6.3.9). The horse, as presented in Indo-European myths and mythmaking, being the king's animal (Puhvel 1993:269 ff), here is discussed as a symbol of Royal power, thus the king deprived of his horses signifies, may be, the seizure of political power: Diomedes is the King of Bistones, Laomedon - the King of Ilion, Rhesos - the King of Thracians at Troy, the serpent-legged maiden - the Ruler of Hylaia (later Scythia). Herakles' victories in the land of Scythians and Celts, in Italy, look like additionally involved in the story of his 10th Labour and seem to be inspired by it's structure. It's modern interpretation concerns a popular pattern in Indo-European myths: the victorious Indra and the vanquished three-bodied Vritra hiding the stolen cows (the rainy clouds) in a cave (Burkert 1979:85 f), as in the myth about the young Hermes (a god with chthonic features) and Apollo's cattle stolen by the boy, dragged by their tails (Hymn.Hom., 4), which probably had influenced Vergilius in the literary framing of Italian myth (Winter 1910:229). Thus we have to remember that all these myths, known from literature they function in, are remodeled (created?) by literary devices and according to the needs the society demands - i.e. this is the political function of myths.

As the main reason for Herakles' activities in the myth is defined the antagonist - presented as demonic creatures Cacus and the serpent-legged maiden, as well as Keltine, act like thieves. Thus they correspond to the Greek notion of barbarous peoples - Laomedon was the one to deceive Herakles to pay him with the horses for his victory over the sea monster. It was sent by Apollo and Poseidon to devastate the town of Ilion, for they were cheated too by the king who had promised to pay them for the town walls (Hom.II., 5.640-652). While the man-eating horses of Diomedes were enough as an argument for a civilizer, as Herakles was in myths, to start a war against Thracians.

In the myths discussed Herakles makes his way through waste lands - Rome has not yet come into being, Scythia was given her name after the name of the first king - Scythes - the son of Herakles and the maiden. The same with the Celts and Keltine. And as the marriage to snake-legged virgin in the cave, the birth and probations of the first king can be regarded as a part of the Scythian genealogical legend of *Targitai* (Граков 1950:7 f; Петров, Макаревич 1963:20-31; Толстой 1966:232-248; Раевский 1977; Бессонова 1983:44 f), while the marriage of Herakles to Echidna (aiming the horses) can be discussed as an act of hierogamy symbolizing the conquest of the land through a marriage to the native queen (Соломоник 1984:14f; Скржинська 1988:8-12; Русяева 1991:98, 96-114)¹ and probably it had emerged among the Greek colonists, including it in Geryon's story², as the myth about Cacus (from the Greek ἦ

¹ A. Rusyaeva rejects any influence between the two legends Herodotus had told about the origin of Scythians - the one told by the Scythians themselves (Hdt. 4.5-7) and the other - by the Greek settlers there (Hdt. 4.8-10). According to A. Rusyaeva the two belong to different chronological levels, but I can not accept such an extreme standpoint, as it is at least unacceptable, having in mind the analysis D. Raevskii has done of the two legends, neither I can accept his opinion that these two are all events from Scythian mythology, later involved in the Greek myth (the myth about the theft and rescue back of the horses). More probable is the model proposed concerning the hellenization of Scythian genealogical legend - i.e. Greek mythological motifs and religious concepts laid upon Scythian ones.

² May be A. Rusyaeva is right in her proposal about mythological speculations done in late 7th century by the Greek priests, but I can not accept her idea concerning the Hellenized version, popular only after Herodotus has written it (Русяева 1991:106 сл., 110-113). As Herodotus has told it himself, he has learned this very story from the Greeks living along the Pontus; the late appearance of Heraklean image in Scythian art (after the 5th century) probably was due to the policy of Scythian kings - the real need for a manifestation of divine origin in their contacts with the Greeks, thus using the Hellenized model already created by the Greeks themselves. Thus the Heraklean image on the coins of Scythian king Ataias (Раевский 1977:164-171) we can interpret as being

κάκη) had: after his victory Hercules had been heartily welcomed by Euandros (from the Greek εὐανδρος as an opposite to Cacus) - immigrant from Peloponnesos who foretold his future deification (Liv. 1.7).

Thus the Greek colonists built up the new cultural environment bringing their own way of life and religious concepts (cults) in contact with the alien (native) culture, giving proof with mythmaking for the right to be civilizers in the newly conquered land (Русяева 1990:49-53). The idea about Herakles as an all-Greek hero, a progenitor in genealogy of dynasties all over the Greek world and far beyond the hellenic οἰκουμένη, was, may be, of great importance in this obscure process. Thus the itinerary of Herakles' journey of coming back from the sunset island of Geryon "draws" the map of Greek Colonization (Croon 1952:35 f).

The archaeological research in Magna Graecia registered an earlier Phoenician presence and it is probable that many of Herakles' adventures in the West were imposed, as the colonization itself, upon the myths of Melqart - the god-*archegetes*, and this probably was the reason for the syncretism of the two cults, mentioned by Herodotus (Hdt. 2.44; Jourdain-Annequin 1982:236-259; 1989; here part 3).

The myth about Diomedes is supposed to belong to Mycenaean times (Φοιλ 1972:41 f)³. This is not perceivable - the analysis here reveals Herakles as a colonizer and the function of the myth is to impose the idea of Greek claims on the new town as instituted by the famous Greek hero. This is proved also by the representations of the myth: the earliest in arts (vase-painting) - from the last quarter of the 6th; and in literature - from the first half of the 5th century BC, and this was the time of Abdera's second foundation by Theans (in the year of 544) after the futile first by Klazomenean citizens in the mid-7th century when the city was destroyed soon after by the hostile Thracians (Isaac 1986:78-86; Triantaphyllos 1994:59). May be this was the reason for the mythmaking as well as its probable date.

It is interesting to notice here the genealogy of Abderos, defined by some authors as a son of Hermes (Apollod. 2.5.8), and according to Herodotus Hermes was the god that the kings of Thracians bring their descent from (Hdt. 5.7), while Diomedes was a son of Ares (worshipped by the Thracians too, as Herodotus attests - Hdt. 5.7) and in such case the question is whether the myth manifests any political struggles in Thracian society and the Greek interference on the side of the heir-at-law (Herakles to restore justice and order).

2. The Thracian Women

In the strange story about the origin of Heraklean cult in Erythrae a statue of the god sailing on a wooden raft from Tyre, is taken to the city with a rope, woven from Erythrean women's hair after a prophetic dream, but they were only the Thracian women who cut off their locks and thus they were the only women allowed to enter the sanctuary of Herakles, and as Pausanias attests the hair rope was still kept there (Paus. 7.5.5).

Another bronze statue of the Thasian athlete Theagenes, considered to be a son of Herakles (his father being a priest of Thasian Herakles), was thrown to the bottom of the sea in a prosecution for murder. Some time later when the earth yielded no crop and after an oracle by the priestess in Delphy, it was brought back by fishermen to sacrifice Theagenes as to a god (Paus. 6.11.2). These myths, concerning the Heraklean cult, too similar in structure were probably created in one and the same religious center, most

just an act of political maturity (dynastic cult, not religious) having in mind the story about Philip II's campaign against Scythians and his request for an admission to the Istros outflow to erect a statue of Herakles there, and the reply of this very Atheas to turn it's metal into arrows, if it done without the Scythians themselves (Pomp.Trog. Hist.Philip., 9.2). The preference examined for the scene of Heraklean victory over the Nemean lion (imports and imitations) already has been explained with an original Scythian myth and a Scythian interpretation of the subject, but this doubts the popularity of the Greek hero in Scythia, thus his image had not been a subject to religious syncretism (Граков 1950:7-18; Раевский 1980:49-71).

³ The origin proposed in mycenaean times concerns mainly the idea about the *Dodecathlos* (Nilsson 1972:187-220). O. Gruppe has traced an earlier versions of the myth in Greece that the Greek colonists had probably moved it to the Thracian coast (Gruppe 1918:1053 f).

probably the Thasian Herakleion - the most prominent center of Heraklean cult for all the Antiquity.

This can explain the presence of Thracian women in Erythrean cult and especially their role as mediators in the cult propagation. We can attest the same in Antimacheia on the island of Kos, where the priest of Herakles performed the rituals dressed in female attire (Plut. Quest. Graec., 58). This had been explained with a myth about Herakles coming back from Troy and landing on Kos island after a shipwreck provoked by the jealous Hera (Hom. Il., 14.253 ff; 15.26 ff). There he was forced to escape from a battle with the native Meropes into the house of a Thracian woman who gave him shelter and female garments to fling off his pursuers. Later on, after his victory over the Meropes (Pind. Nem., 4.25; Apollod. 2.7.1), he married Halkiopa - the daughter of the slaughtered king Euripilus, dressed in female attire. Thus Plutarch explains the strange transvestism of the officiating priest in female attire, as well as every bridegroom dressed himself as a bride during the wedding ceremony. The myth's probable interpretation concerns a wedding initiation - the practiced *ἱεροῦ γάμος* on Kos (Gruppe 1918:960; Farnell 1921:165f), the same as the birth of Theagenes in the Herakleion on Thasos was (Seirig 1927:191; Launey 1941:22-49; Launey 1944:202 f). Of great importance here is the fact that Herakles, being an alien god both in Erythrea and Antimacheia, had been admitted to the society by foreigners (Thracians) to this very society and what is more they were women, among them - even slaves. May be this is the model in mythmaking: the admission of an alien god with the help of oppositions. The proposed solution involves the Herakleion on Thasos and its role for the religious propaganda - the island of Thasos where Herakles was an alien god too, imposed on native Thracians in time of colonization⁴.

3. The Thasian Herakles

But there is just another interpretation concerning the eastern origin of Herakles on Thasos: Herodotus' account about two Herakles - the first one being a god (the Egyptian one), the other - a hero (the Greek one) and the Herakleion being devoted by the Phoenicians to this very god, called *Thasien Herakles*, whose temple Herodotus saw in Tyre (Hdt. 2.43 f). Here come Pausanias' words about the statue of the god on a wooden raft from Tyre, absolutely Egyptian in style, neither like no other Greek, nor the most ancient Attic images (Paus. 7.5.5). As it becomes clear from the text, Pausanias has seen the idol personally, but on Erythrean coins from his time, even earlier (after Augustus), we can see it absolutely in archaic Greek style as A. Furtwängler had proved (Furtwängler 1884:2137). Thus we can assume that Pausanias has followed the old tradition - of Phoenician origin of the first colonists on Thasos, as well as of Heraklean cult there. All this is summarized in Apollodorus when he tells us that the island, conquered by Herakles, was given by him to the sons of Androgeos: Sthenelos and Alkaios who lived on the island of Paros (Apollod. 2.5.9). Thus the myth aetologically explains the Parian colonization, but that is not all, because Androgeos was a son of Minos, who himself was a son of Zeus and Europa - the daughter of the Phoenician king Agenor (Apollod. 3.1.1). His son (king Agenor's) being Thasos - the eponym of the island and the city, founded by him in search for his sister Europa (Paus. 5.25.12). The same concerned even Abdera as a Phoenician foundation with its name explained as Phoenician *'abd* = *servant* or *lover* of Melqart (Isaac 1986:76), as with Herakles and Abderos, also having in mind the other Abdera in Southern Spain, known to Strabon as a Phoenician settlement there (Strab. 3.4.3).

Above all comes the idea about Herakles as one of the Idean Dactyls in Crete, whom Diodorus considered to come from Ida in Asia Minor (Diod. 5.64). It is worth mentioning because Pausanias writes about the Herakleion in Erythrae and in Tyre as places where the Idean Herakles had been worshipped

⁴ L.R. Farnell rejects the idea stated by U. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf about the original *Τραχίς* corrupted into *Θρακίς*, explaining the ethnic name used with no ethnic precision, but generically for slaves (Farnell 1921:161 ff). We have the slave-women of Thracian origin mentioned in Erythrae and not in Kos, and in Erythrae they were listed together with free-women. Also O. Gruppe, who proposed a metaphrastic explanation of the myth - with Thracian ethnical presence on Kos and in Erythrae: the migration from Chalkis and Eretria, with Thracians among them, making an association with the genealogy of Abantes from Chalkis (Thracians according to Aristoteles) - and the district with the same name near Erythrae (Gruppe 1918:960, 966).

(Paus. 9.27.8) and Cicero adds that Idean Herakles had been worshipped on the island of Kos (Cic.De Nat. Deor., 3.17.42). According to Pausanias Idean Herakles was worshipped in the sanctuary of Demeter in Mycalessus (Paus. 9.27.5) and on Erythrean coins the image of Demeter and Herakles were depicted (Gruppe 1918;966). In the sanctuary at Thespieae where the Idean Herakles had been worshipped, his priestess was a virgin who acted as such until she died (Paus. 9.27.5), this as a sign of the ritual of sacred marriage, having in mind also the myth of Herakles and the fifty daughters of Thestius (the king of Thespieae), according to Pausanias, an aethological story for this very sanctuary and the ritual of ἱερὸς γάμος, already proposed in his sanctuaries on Kos and Thasos.

All this suggest that the old writers and theologians had assumed that in Thasos, Erythrae and in Kos an old, strange kind of cult practice had been performed in honour of Herakles. For Herodotus the most probable introducers of those ideas were the Egyptians as he claims for many other religious phenomena, and also the Phoenicians, as Pausanias had proposed too. The problem is in the dual nature of Herakles himself. In Homer he is mentioned as a mortal who dared to challenge the immortal gods, he even wounded Hera and Hades (Hom.II., 5.392-397) - a theomachy so characteristic of heroes of Culture. So strange to Homer was the idea of Herakles deification, that at one and the same time he was among gods on Olympos and between shades in Hades' obscure kingdom (Hom.Od., 11.601-627). Pindar was the first to solve the inconsistency calling him ἥρωες θεός (Pind.Nem., 3.22) and it was Herodotus who separated him emphatically in two: the god whose origin was from Egypt and the hero - much later in Hellas (Hdt. 2.43f; 145f); Cicero even distinguished between six different Herculese (Cic.De Nat.Deor., 3.16.4ff). This helplessness (?) at the face of Herakles' complicated nature finally evoked Lucian's sarcasm in his Nekrikoi dialogoi (16).

But these ideas we can trace in the myths themselves: Herakles being a mortal man at birth, gaining immortality after his death on the pyre. And his "biography" ends with his ascend up on Olympos and his marriage to Hebe. And the same is even in the cult practice: in the regulation of divine service as a secondary one we can reveal the aims of ancient theologians to solve the contradictions observed in the ritual: Diodorus (4.39) states that the first to adore Herakles with divine honours were the Atheneans; according to Pausanias (1.15.3) that happened at Marathon in the sanctuary mentioned by Herodotus (6.108); and according to Arrian (Anab., 4.11.7) it happened after his death and it was the Delphic oracle to recommend his apotheosis, as Aristides declared that this oracle was uttered first to the Atheneans just after his death (Farnell 1921:98; Holt 1989:69-76); Iphitus, on the oracle of Pythia, induced the Eleans to sacrifice to Herakles as to a god (Paus. 5.4.6); in Sicyon the offerings to Herakles in his sanctuary were given to a hero and it was Phaestus who insisted on a sacrifice as to a god, thus explaining the dual nature of the festival that Pausanias had visited (2.10.1). Phaestus was considered to be a son of Herakles, but he is known to come from Crete (Paus. 2.6.6 f) which reminds me the idea about Idean Herakles, already discussed.

Thus modern scholars consider the deification of Herakles (including the myth about his self incineration on Oeta) as a result of late eastern influences in the Colonization period (Launey 1944:200 ff; Boardman 1990:121f, 131f). But in the fire festival on mount Oeta Herakles' ascending to the gods has been celebrated on the forth year ever since the geometric period (Burkert 1987:210), so this can be regarded as a manifestation of Herakles' marginal character between the worlds of mortal men and immortal gods, a god-protector in the passage between worlds - the king's transition among gods (Levy 1934:40-53; Burkert 1987:209ff)⁵. And this, may be, was the reason for Herakles to be honoured in Greek ritual as a hero with the rejection of Royal institute, as well as his syncretism with gods through the colonization activities of the Greeks with people that were unknown to the specific development of Greek polises in democracy.

⁵ Thus the opposition examined in Herakles' figure between his divine (as a son of Zeus) and human origin (born by the mortal Alcmena) built up a model of transition from human to divine status, in which the probation of his vallues (Labours of the Dodecathlos) were, may be, the circumstances needed for this transition (an initiation), and his rebirth on the pyre determined its function as a part of the ideology of Royal institution.

The Herakleion on Thasos functioned in the very area of contacts with the Thracians (their presence on the island is proved archaeologically by the excavations of M. Launey and J. Pouilloux) and may be this was one of the reasons for the divine aspect of Herakles⁶, as well as the divine service held therein⁷, as Herodotus emphatically stated (Hdt. 2.44). The temple of Thasian Herakles in Tyre, that Herodotus had visited, denotes only the fact concerning the significance of Thasos and its Herakleion in colonization period as we already have proposed. We would have believed Herodotus if he had visited the sanctuary of Tyrian Herakles on Thasos as he did in Tyre. M. Launey has proposed a too early date (1500 years BC) for the Herakleion taking into account the words of Herodotus about the Phoenician presence on the island (Launey 1944:217). Later archaeological researches proved the foundation date to be in the 7th century BC - the time of the Parrian colonization of the island. The lack of any archeological data for the Phoenician presence casts suspicion on Herodotus' contention (Pouilloux 1954; Bergquist 1973:19f).

Herakles *Kallinikos*, to whom the Parrian poet Archilochos dedicated his hymn, is known in votive inscriptions from the island in the 2nd century BC and also from Paros in a dedication to Zeus *Basilieus* and Herakles *Kallinikos* in the 1st century BC (Bergquist 1973:29f, 35). M. Launey discussed Herakles *Kallinikos* as the Greek hero worshipped in the Herakleion with a heroic ritual (Launey 1944:21), and the same epithet is known from an inscription from Erythrae (Gruppe 1918:966). All the parallels here discussed between the sanctuaries on Thasos and these in Erythrae and Antimachea: the proposed role of these mysterious Thracian women and pairs of brothers from Thrace (here part 4), also the rituals mentioned, outline the role of Thasian Herakleion in propagation of religious ideas, the same that we can pro-

⁶ The ideas concerning the divine service at the Herakleion on Thasos were explained by modern scholars with the Eastern influences in his cult, having in mind the ancient tradition already discussed. Thus according to L.R. Farnell the Greek settlers in 7th century should have identified the chief god of Tyre with their Herakles (Farnell 1921:142 f). H. Seyrig explained the divine cult of Thasian Herakles as a syncretism between the Cretean Herakles, popular on Paros, and the Phoenician Melqart, and according to M. Launey these were the Thracians that were the mediators between Phoenicians - the founders of the cult and the Greeks from Paros that came a long time after, while the heroic service in the same sanctuary (the idea about two Herakles) was due to the Hellenic tradition and the worship of Herakles Καλλίνικος - the son of Alcmena (Seirig 1927:185-198, 369ff; Launey 1944:189-219). C. Jourdain-Annequin discusses the Thasian Herakleion among the cult centers of the Phoenician Melqart, although her doubts in the fact that the Herakleion mentioned by Herodotus is the same discovered and excavated on Thasos (Jourdain-Annequin 1989:157-161). O. Gruppe expressed his doubts in the words of Herodotus concerning Phoenician origin of Heraklean cult on Thasos on the question about its essence as a religious doctrine, or as a private opinion, later repeated by Pausanias too (Gruppe 1918:964). A. Furtwängler explained the sanctuary of Thasian Herakles in Tyre with the influence of the Herakleion on Thasos, as we can judge today from what Herodotus had told (Furtwängler 1884:2142). The same opinion about the Greek origin of Thasian Herakles was sustained also by U. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1959:20). P. Friedländer has proposed that the first settlers from Dorian Hexapolis brought the Heraklean cult on Thasos and later it was the center for its diffusion on Thracian coast and in other Greek cities (Friedländer 1907:13 f). According to Ch. Picard the cult was a result of parrian colonization of the island (Picard 1923:241-247), and it was J. Pouilloux that explained the divine aspects with the influence of native Thracians on the religious cult, their close relation with eastern culture and thus making possible Herakles' identification with the main god of Tyre (Pouilloux 1954:354ff).

⁷ Recently B. Bergquist rejected the idea about an areal and temporal demarcation of the two-folded cult in the Herakleion, proving the possibility of a divine service in the sanctuary as big as for an Olympian deity with a high built altar in it (Bergquist 1973:27ff, 35). Concerning the inscription found on the ancient agora of Thasos Ch. Picard interpreted it as a regulations for a divine service in Heraklean cult (Picard 1923:241-247), an opinion later rejected by H. Seirig who explains the regulations as for a holocaustic sacrifice, but because of the negative clauses in it, he proposed a separate divine service (Seirig 1927:193-198). M. Launey has interpreted it as an indication for a heroic service (Launey 1944:130-135) as J. Pouilloux did just the opposite (Pouilloux 1954:364-368). The analysis done by B. Bergquist has shown that the inscription contains recommendations for a divine service and sacrifice, if the opposite (a holocaustic sacrifice) then the restraints imposed would prove to be unnecessary (Bergquist 1973:31f, 85f).

pose about its role for an ideological justification of the Greek colonization on Thracian coasts, as the analysis of myths already has proved.

4. The brothers from Thrace

The mythmaking from this very colonization period submitted Herakles as a colonizer - in conflict with Thracian tribes and kings, and as a founder of colonies. Here it is important to discuss some myths presenting him in conflict with (or in help of) brothers:

- After his victory over the Thracians on Thasos, Herakles granted Alkaios and Sthenelos, the sons of Androgeos from Paros, the island (Apollod. 2.5.9). Archilochos, the Parian poet whose father Telesikles was the oikist of Thasos, is known to have fought Thracians (Saioi) on the mainland before the middle of the 7th century BC (Isaac 1986:79).

- In the city of Torone on Sithonean peninsula Herakles killed Telegon and Poligon, sons of Proteus and grandsons of Poseidon (Apollod. 2.5.9). Their mother - Chrysoonea was a daughter of the Sithonean king Clythos and her sons were fierce and unjust, thus they provoked the hatred of Herakles (Con. 32). The city was founded by colonists from Chalcis, but the name probably was Thracian - from the Sithoneans that gave their name to the peninsula (Фол, Спиридонов 1983:55, 74).

- Eponym of Dikaia-by-Abdera was the fair Dikaios, whose brother - Syleus was killed by Herakles on account of the injustice he had done (Con. 17; Apollod. 2.6.3). Although the myth was localized at Pelion in Tessalia (according to Apollodorus - in Aulis), on the West of Strymon Herodotus mentions the Syleus plain (Hdt. 7.115), an eponym of which was proposed to be Syleus and thus the myth seems to be connected with Thrace (Wilamowitz-Moellendorf 1959:73, note 134; Friedländer 1907:4; Gruppe 1918:949, 954), probably brought there by the colonists.

- As citizens of Dikaia-by-Abdera are mentioned Zethes and Kalais - the sons of Boreas (supposed to be a Thracian) and Oreithyia. They were killed by Herakles because of their disrespectful behavior (Akusil. frg. 31; Apoll. Rhod. 1.1302 f; Friedländer 1907:4; Gruppe 1918:956).

- In Ainos Herakles was a guest at the home of the good king Poltis, later on he killed his brother - the blasphemous Sarpedon, they the two were sons of Poseidon (Apollod. 2.5.9). Poltis was an eponym of Poltimbria, the previous name of Ainos (Strab. VII, 6, 1; Isaac 1986:146f), and his brother - of the sea promontory Sarpedon near Ainos (Friedländer 1907:4; Gruppe 1918:956).

- King Fineus, an eponym of Finopolis on the western coast of Pontus Euxeinus, was sentenced to death by Herakles for he had blinded his and Cleopatra (a daughter of Boreas) sons: Plexip and Pandion (Diod. 4.44; Gruppe 118:956).

- In a late version of the myth about Herakles and Diomedes Abdera is called a sister of Diomedes (Pomp. Mela 2.16-33; Solin 10.1-11).

This brutal interference of Herakles in the lives of the listed Thracians⁸ is explained in myths with their cruelty and perfidiousness. Such are the sons of Proteus: Telegon and Poligon; the sons of Boreas: Zethes and Kalais; Fineus - the father of Plexip and Pandion. It is worth mentioning also the myths about brothers endowed with opposite qualities - may be a popular motif in mythmaking, such as Poltis and Sarpedon, Dikaios and Syleus, Diomedes and his sister Abdera in a late version of the well known myth. Thus the only "choice" Herakles had was his right and duty to restore harmony in *barbarous* world and he had done this with a strong will for justice as the Greeks in strive for a hegemony imposed their own measures for human behaviour in the Old world.

The listed examples concern the relations of Herakles with couples of brothers from Thrace and they are too many to be considered a coincidence, why not in corroboration of the hypothesis already proposed about the two-man king's power in Thrace (Тачева 1987:25-27). But the most important fact for

⁸ Some of them mentioned as sons of Poseidon: Poltis and Sarpedon, Telegon and Poligon as his grandsons, and this was not a hatred of Herakles on Poseidon and his heirs, as much as Poseidon's presence as a popular figure in myth and cult to emphasizes the activities of Greek cities in transmarine colonization (Pavlopoulou 1994:126 f).

my study are the similarities of myths listed, thus I propose the idea of a **common center** they were created in⁹. This can be supposed about the Thasian Herakleion, due to reasons already mentioned: its significance as a religious center and its closeness to Thrace, even the island being part of the Thracian world, when colonized by Herakles, he granted the island to brothers again.

The discussed deeds of Herakles suggest a clear idea about the relations of the Greek hero and Thracians in myths, resembling the Greek and Thracian relations in the early years of colonization - the time for mythmaking in the sanctuary on Thasos. The date is confirmed by the function of myths - to justify the Greek claims on the new settlements in Thrace, already existing at that time by these very names they were known in myths¹⁰. The relations existing in myths between Herakles and the Thracians can explain the absence of Heraklean cult in the Interior of Thrace, although his images (and myth?) were too popular in Hellenistic period, after the campaign of Philip II in Thrace (Рабаджиев 1994:62-67), and which is most striking - the embarrassing absence of any representations in plastic art of Diomedes or his horses - the one of the Dodekathlos that was connected with Thrace. So these political tales (myths) were a Greek invention that concerned mainly the Greeks living in Thrace.

5. Laomedon

The only known today monument from Thrace, presenting the myth about Diomedes¹¹ is the sarcophagus discovered in 1911 in the close proximity of Nicopolis ad Istrum, and published the same year by Prof. B. Filov (Филов 1911:279, fig. 14; Filov 1912:573f). Next year the remains of a small heroon with a sepulchre-mausoleum has been excavated (Филов 1913:319-323). The scene presented on one of the sarcophagus' acroteria was identified as the fight between Herakles and Diomedes - its severe ending with Diomedes' death (**fig. 1**) and this interpretation, although in a preliminary publication, has been imposed up till now (МЪНЗОВА 1978:80; Boardman 1990:No 2442). G. Seure was the only one to express any doubt in the proposed interpretation, due to the clothes Diomedes is dressed in: like a barbarous king and not as a warrior as he usually is (Seure 1916:365 f)¹². For me the suspicion has reinforced due to the

⁹ Common centers for the diffusion of Heraklean myths and cult already have been proposed in modern literature: at first the Dorian colonization (Herakles as a Dorian hero) was considered to be such a center by U. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, but of the 23 towns enumerated by Stephanus with the name Herakleia, the Dorian question can arise only about three of them (Farnell 1921:131), later according to P. Friedländer these were the Rhodian poets and merchants (Friedländer 1907), but all these proved not to be the proper solution.

¹⁰ This is proved also by the coinage of towns related with Heraklean myth: After 404 his image or symbols had been constantly presented on Thasian coins (Le Rider 1968); For nearly a century of coinage (540/35 - 492/90) Herakles' head was presented on all the coins of Dikaia-by-Abdera (Schönert-Geiss 1975); Not so popular was his image on the coins of Abdera, but there is an interesting type, presenting Herakles in fierce motion with a threatening club up in his right hand, from 386/5-375 (May 1966:402 ff) - the time of triballian invasion in 376/5 and may be the image reflected the relations with Thracians that suffered a set-back and this being the reason for a revival of myths concerning the foundation of city in conflict with martial Thracians and their king Diomedes.

The town of Herakleia Sintika was localized on the tribal territory of Sintians in Lower valley of Strymon (Diod. 31.8.5-8; Strab. 7, frg.36; Cl. Ptolem. 3.12.27). Herakleia was known on the Thracian coast between the mouth of Nestos and Abdera (Plin. Nat.hist., 4.11.40-50). Another Herakleia has been localized between Teiristasis and Ganos on the Thracian coast of Propontida (Ps.Skylax 67; Cl.Ptolem. 3.12.27). In late Roman times Perinthos was renamed Herakleia (Amm. Marcell. 27.4.10-14; Procop. De aedif., 4.9), the modern Eregli.

¹¹ One of the exceptions are some coin types minted in Hadrianopolis in Roman times (Jurukova, J. 1995:393-396).

¹² Among the few exceptions known today is the marble frieze from Delphy from 2-1 century BC, on which we can propose the kneeling figure of Diomedes in a long dress next to the reared up horse, if not an antagonist to Herakles in the next labour-episode of the Dodekathlos on the frieze - the Amazon, which is most probable (Boardman 1990:No 2427).

fact that the myth about the horses of Diomedes is one of the Dodekathlos and should be represented on the sarcophagus and not on its roof where heroic deeds from the so called ἐκ παρόργου are to be presented, as it is in the case with Herakles and Antaios on the other acroteria. My second objection concerns the iconography of the scene itself: Herakles usually was presented killing the horses which is the aim of his labour in the land of the Bistonean king. When the scene with the murder of Diomedes is depicted (on column sarcophagi of the so called "Asiatic" type in the main) (Robert 1897:No 126f, 131; Boardman 1990:No 1730-1733) the horses (their heads) are presented on the background for an identification and Diomedes is dressed in armour as a warrior (**fig. 2**). The composition on the sarcophagus from Thrace is nearly the same: Herakles is with legs apart to the right, his left leg - stretched and shown in full face, the right one - folded slightly, shown in profile. With club in his right raised up hand, he threatens the enemy and with his left hand he holds him for his hair. The adversary himself is kneeling helplessly on his left knee in front of Herakles, dragged down from the throne behind and holding a sword in his right hand, that is useless now at the presented moment. In the upper right corner two human figures are presented in background (the mangers with grooms according to Boardman 1990:No 2442). Their heads (the only to be seen) are turned attentively towards Herakles and their bodies are not seen because of a cloth (?) the right figure holds in her outstretched arms. She is beardless (probably a woman) and we can identify her with Hesione and the bearded left figure - her brother Podarkus, thus the scene is interpreted as the killing of Laomedon whose treacherous character provoked Herakles' feeling for justice and he destroyed the city of Ilium a generation before the Trojan war (Hom.II., 5.640; 14.250). Herakles killed Laomedon and promised to his daughter Hesione, whom he saved from the sea monster at his previous visit in Ilium, to ransom the life of any of his victims and she paid with her hymation for her brother Podarkus, thus he was renamed as Priam - i.e. "ransomed" (Apollod. 2.6.4). In this way the scene becomes clear: It is king Laomedon that is killed by Herakles in foreground, and Hesione and her brother in the background - she is holding her ransom - the hymation in her stretched arms as if to save her brother from the mighty Herakles.

Thus the representation of the myth about Herakles and Diomedes as an iconographic scheme was used to present his victory over the king of Ilium and this is not an exception in Roman art and decorations, particularly concerning myths so close in contents as these two are (discussed in part 1). This scene is unknown to me from any other monuments of Classical art, but this does not make it unique as it resembles too much a cliché that was made after the popular version of the scene with Diomedes and Herakles; on the other hand the theme about Herakles' expedition against Troy was too popular in Greek vase-painting, in sculpture - the east pediment of Athena's temple in Aegina, wall-paintings in Pompeii (Boardman 1990:Nos 2788-2793; 2790; Neils 1994:Nos 2, 3, 4¹³; Oakley 1997:Nos 60, 61). But it is still possible the scene to be inspired by a dramatic work as revealed in the dramatic tension of the action - from one side Herakles imposing his justice and from the other - Hesione with her arms pathetically stretched in protection of her own brother.

Much more important is our question, already pointed at: if this is not Herakles and Diomedes, how can we explain the absence of any presentations of this particular myth concerning especially Thrace, and the answer will be - the role of Herakles in it as an invader, as an antagonist of Thracian kings, Thracians and Thrace?

Бессонова, С.С. 1983. Религиозные представления скифов. Киев.

¹³ Similar are three wall-paintings from the Roman Pompeii: in the house of M. Loreius Tiburtinus from the early 1-st century BC Hercules, sitting, is laying a Phrygian cap on the head of young Priamus; the second is from Casa del Naviglio from the time of Nero - Hercules is sitting on a throne, in front of him is Hesione who holds her young brother that has stretched his hands towards the hero; and the third is from the house of the Silver Wedding from the time of Vespasian: Hercules is sitting on the lion skin, holding in his right hand a wreath, pointing at two women (Hesione and her nurse) and an young boy who has stretched his two hands towards the hero.

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ХЕРАКЪЛ, ДИОМЕД И ТРАКИЯ

(резюме)

Предложената статия дискутира проблеми на митовете за Херакъл, които го свързват с Тракия и траките. Митът за сблъсък с Диомед е анализиран в съпоставка с други подобни сюжети от митичната биография на бога-херой, за да се разкрие ролята му на общогръцки херой от епоса, създаван в годините на гръцката колонизация. Така митът е разгледан като политическа приказка, структурата на която е повлияна от литературни творби. Внимателният прочит на многобройните митове и епизоди, които свързват Херакъл с траките очертава ролята на Тасоския Хераклеийон в пропагандата на култа, но и в сътворяване на политическата обосновка на гръцката колонизация по тракийските брегове. Дискутиран е и сложният характер на култа на остров Тасос, който още Херодот е споменал като двоен: с почести към Херакъл като бог, но и херой. Дали бих приел съжденията на древните автори в тълкуването на Херакловия божествен култ като вторичен, което модерните автори свързват с източното влияние в годините на колонизацията, или това може да бъде разбрано днес с маргиналният характер на Херакъл между света на боговете и хората, божество-протектор в царския преход при боговете. Специфичното развитие на елинското общество е изтласкало тази функция от полисното общество, затова я регистрираме в граничните зони на елинския свят (каквото е и остров Тасос) в синкретизъм с боговете на народи, които не познават гръцката еволюция. Но синкретизма засяга предимно гръцката представа: чрез наслаждане върху местни култове се асимилира културно новото пространство. Това бих предположил и за остров Тасос, тъй като не откриваме култ към бога-херой в Тракия - паметниците от вътрешността са от елинистическата епоха и свидетелстват по-скоро за политическа мода (династичен култ). В подкрепа на това е отсъствието на изображения, в които да разпознаем Диомед - популярния в мита цар на траките бистони (с изключение на монетни типове от римския Хадрианопол), може би и заради проявите на Херакъл в мита като нашественик и насилник?