

The Thracian King's Tomb

(an attempt at a new interpretation)

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The study presented aims to discuss the architecture of king's tomb¹ from the stand point of the Thracian burial practice: the approach leading to the underground burial chamber (the dromos²) interpreted in modern literature as an entrance towards the dead (to the Underworld), why not as an exit to the world of the living, in which the deified King had to return? The reason for this entrance to the burial chamber is proposed to be for:

- laying of the dead body in the burial chamber;
- multiple use of the vault for successive burials - a family (a dynastic) tomb;
- an approach to the chamber for memorial services, or for certain rites in honour of the heroized dead.

Having in mind that the tomb was constructed before the tumulus was piled up (or simultaneously)³, it was possible for the deceased to be laid directly into the burial chamber and in such case the dromos would be superfluous, as in the case with numerous burial tumuli without vaults, or without a possibility for an access into it⁴. I cannot accept the idea that the vault, which probably had been built during the King's lifetime, up to his death has functioned as a temple⁵, because the tumulus, as Herodotus told (Hdt. 5, 8), was made as a part of the funeral rituals, and the same regularity, archaeologically proved, we can trace also in the contemporary burial tumuli without any built construction under⁶. Thus the vault could not function as a religious place without the mound above it.

I cannot accept also the idea about a multiple use of the burial chamber⁷ as a reason for the existence of dromos: the confined space inside was provided for one, not more than two klinai, which means that the secondary burials violated the custom that the tomb had been ordered and built for⁸. There was no place inside for the mortal remains of the preceding burials⁹ and the question is whether such a "cleaning" we can interpret today as a disrespectful treatment of the mortal remains (unbelievable according to the literary evidence for the Thracian burial rites¹⁰), or as a part of ritual requirements for their burial outside the vault¹¹ (under its floor?¹²), although the secondary burials out of the tomb are still not registered archaeologically¹³. The opposite is proved, maybe, by the existence of more than one vault in the close proximity of one necropolis, or even under the same tumulus¹⁴.

The other popular opinion interprets the use of the *dromos* approach for certain memorial ceremonies¹⁵. To specify their nature it is necessary to distinguish theoretically the family tomb from the tomb-heroon in which the deified King has been honoured, because the archaeological research gives enough proofs for rituals performed on the tumuli¹⁶, as well as in front of the sepulchre itself where the memorial service had been held¹⁷, as it is the case with burial mounds without any built construction under, where memorial sacrifices and libations were done: the excavations of tomb N 2 in the Great Tumulus near Vergina revealed a built altar in the mound just above the sepulchre. This proposes the memorial service to be done at the time when the tumulus was piled up and the tomb had already been closed (it had no *dromos*)¹⁸. Here we have to discuss also the question concerning the horses discovered today in front of the tomb's entrance, in the *dromos*, even in the burial chamber itself¹⁹. They were left there, not buried and hindered the penetration inside if not for hygienic reasons only. To the opinion stated, that these horses were sacrificed with the last burial and after the tomb was closed for ever²⁰, I would oppose the fact about sacrifices of a horse (horses) at funerals in mounds without any built constructions. The question of course is who was the one to consider which burial to be the last in order to "seal" the entrance once and for ever.

In such case we would hardly appreciate that the *dromos* approach to the underground chamber has been built only as an entrance to help the profaners after. One of its probable interpretations is as a road out of the World Under (the burial chamber) - i.e. as an exit through which the deified King can return to the World of Living, but mortal men.

Thus the tumulus with the burial chamber in it is explained as the World Mountain (the body of the Mother-Goddess) with the cavern in it (her womb) and the road to the cavern (i.e. to the womb) being the *dromos* itself²¹. The monarch buried into the vault-cave-womb was supposed to be born for a second time, but already from the womb of the Goddess and this time for an eternal life. Subordinated to this idea of rebirth was not the tomb's architecture only, but also its entire decoration²², as well as the burial rites, revealed through synchronous burials too, in mounds without any built constructions. Here I would like to mention the burial wreaths discovered in graves, the same that we can see on the mural paintings inside tombs, bearing the idea for regeneration²³, as well as the horses and chariots discovered in graves and tombs, which we also can see on wall-paintings inside - the chariot with horses and a saddle-horse in front of Zaba mogila, the same as depicted on the wall-paintings in the burial chamber of Kazanlak's tomb and on the funeral relief from Shapla-dere on the Aegean coast of Thrace²⁴. The horse being interpreted as a solar animal (the Sun's chariot) - the idea about the Solar cycle (sunset which is death, and sunrise - rebirth and resurrection) - thus

the horse is revealed as a mediator between the worlds²⁵. And this was the reason for the gods to appear on chariots and the mortals (as Herakles was) to ascend among gods also on chariots²⁶. This can explain the chariot's position in front of the tomb in Zaba mogila near Strelcha, as if waiting for the King's exit²⁷.

In his lifetime the King was the one to maintain the contact with gods as a mediator (the king-priest), after his death, deified probably, he continues his protection of the living, but mortal people²⁸. In such case his vault can be revealed as a temple, dwelled by the deified King - a heroon. The Greek term ἡρώων (ἡρώιον), perhaps not too accurate²⁹, but felicitous, because the Greek hero had his power only in the town where his grave (cult) had been worshipped³⁰. Thus he is proposed to be a daemon, then a god - an ἀνθρώποδαίμων as Euripides describes Rhesos to be after his death (Eurip. Rhesos 971). In the modern literature on Thracian vaults the term named after the Carian king Mausolus³¹ proved to be used improperly, because of its meaning as an overground construction predominantly³². Thus the mausoleum has been related mainly with the function of political power (the Hellenistic fashion), while the heroon concerns the religious practice and the cult of the deified Ruler as one who can assure Life and Prosperity³³.

The prototype of these ideas can be traced in the Hellenized myth about Rhesos, who after his death will not go beneath the black earth (as Demeter's daughter owes to her mother), but from inside the caves of the mountain, rich with silver, he will be gazing at the daylight like an anthropodaemon, as the prophet of Bacchus (Orpheus?) had lived in the rock of Pangaeos, honoured by the initiated (Eurip. Rhesos 962-975). This can be traced also in the story told by Herodotus about Zalmoxis who vanished for three years from the sight of the Thracians into his underground chamber, in order to appear again on the fourth (Hdt. 4, 95)³⁴, and Hellanicus, according to whom the Getai tribes of Terizoi and Krobyzoi practiced the rites of immortality, believing their dead that go to Zalmoxis will be back again. This was the reason for their feasts and the victims they sacrificed - their belief that the deceased will be back (Hell. fr. 73). Maybe this idea is the proper explanation of the inhumation ritual, examined in nearly all of the vaults here discussed - their belief in physical immortality³⁵, as the Getai who practiced the rites of immortality³⁶ - i.e. they pretended to be immortal (Hdt. 4, 93), and as Plato explained the unity between the soul and the body that a Thracian physician, one of Zalmoxis' followers, had taught (Plat. Charm. 156c-157c). To this is opposed the Greek Orphism and the idea about the body (σῶμα) as a sign (σῆμα) of the soul, interpreted by Plato as a grave (prison) of the immortal soul (Plat., Cratyl. 400c; Phaed. 62b; Paedr. 250c)³⁷. So I cannot accept the equivalence between the two doctrines as proposed by D. Gergova³⁸.

These ideas can be traced also in the poetic myth about Orpheus and

Euridica which in its late, hellenized (?) version puts the accent on the explicit limit between the two worlds: that of the living and of the dead (Apollod. 1, 3, 2). An earlier myth with a happy-ending has been suggested in accordance with the Thracian influence on Greek Orphism, as the words of Admetos have been interpreted (Eurip. Alc., 357-360)³⁹. Thus under the Greek religious influence, later authors misunderstood the Thracian religious ideas, speaking about the immortality of the soul, that has to return (Pomp. Mela 2, 2, 16-33; Solin. 10, 1-11)⁴⁰, the same as we can trace in the ritual practice of Athenean Anthesteria⁴¹.

All these ideas we can trace in the decoration of the tomb near Kazanlak and the main scene here discussed as a “heroic banquet”⁴² - a popular scene in Greek art⁴³. The gesture with the hands of the married couple, similar to “dexiosis” in Greek art, here is interpreted as a new reunion of the married parted by Death, as can be seen on Greek funeral memorials⁴⁴. May be this was the reason for the proposed interpretation of the scene as a wedding ceremony⁴⁵, or even hierogamy⁴⁶. In contrast to the Greek banquet, the king is sitting on something like a shortened kline⁴⁷, while his wife, as it is accepted by the Greeks⁴⁸, is sitting on a chair (a throne?). The King who is the only to give wine and food to his men, here is depicted to hand a phiala to his wife - we can compare the scene with the banquet in Seuthes, described by Xenophon, where the tripods in front of each one of the guests, are mentioned too, and all those present there were sitting in a circle (not reclining on klinai) - καθήμενοι κύκλω; also the king who has been endowed with rich gifts, a horse among them (Xenoph. Anab., 7, 3, 21-26), the same as we can see on wall-paintings in the tombs near Kazanlak and Sveshtari. Looking at Kazanlak’s frescoes a comparison arises with the words of Plato about the doctrine of Mousaios and his son (Eumolpos?), that the pious men, crowned with wreaths, spend all their time in feasting, thus thinking the everlasting drunkenness to be the best price for the virtuous life they lived (Plat. Rep., II, 363 d). This turns my attention to the idea, already stated, about the stone klinai in the tombs and their purpose for the banquets of the heroized dead, but not as funeral couches for the everlasting sleep of death, even the idea that the tombs resemble in plan the temporal tents for feasts (the ἐσπατόρια), set up by the kings at places shaded with trees and watered with running streams⁴⁹. And the question here concerns again the Thracian tombs and their personal character: the number of klinai in them - one, rarely two⁵⁰: for the King and his wife at their “heroic banquet” and all the others would be merely servants, as the mural painting has shown. The same as Herodotus tells us about the andreon of Zalmoxis, where he entertained and treated the chiefs among his countrymen, and taught them that neither he, nor his guests, nor any of their descendants should ever die, but that they would go to a place, where they would live for ever and have all good things (Hdt 4, 95).

Here it is interesting to discuss the images of the Royal couple: the artist

who succeeded in presenting the Holy Beginning, where the king - solemn and passionless, has returned⁵¹, he could not escape his own reality, when the King is dead and his wife is deep in sorrow at the parting, the wife who remains in the profane time of the ordinary mortals, dependent on the implacable lapse of the days⁵². And if the King after his death is to go to Zalmoxis, in whose mysteries he has been initiated in his lifetime (he has visited him)⁵³, it is Zalmoxis to receive him on the feast in his underground chamber (the tomb)⁵⁴. Thus Zalmoxis is to be interpreted as a god-protector of the King's transition to the world of Gods - as told by Porphirius, that the barbarians worshipped Zalmoxis as Herakles (Porph. Vita Pithag., 14 f), if only Porphirius had perceived Herakles as we can suggest today in the reconstruction of his myth and cult⁵⁵.

Here an interesting question comes up as some scientists recognize Demeter or her daughter Persephone in the tall woman who offers food to the Royal couple⁵⁶. And the question is about the scene in the tomb: is this not the place for the blessed in underworld Kingdom, where Persephone is receiving the newly come, initiated in the Great Mysteries at Eleusis, which again reminds us of the link, already mentioned, between Eumolpos and Musaios, Orpheus and Thrace in the syncretism of Greek religious and philosophical ideas. But this would solely mean that these ideas from Greek Orphism, close to Thracian religious thinking⁵⁷, penetrate (or return?) in the hellenized Thracian society (the time that most of the known tombs were built). And this was the only reason perhaps, for these ideas to be adopted in such a conservative sphere of social life as the burial rites and beliefs are.

Gone to his immortal life, blessed in his eternal existence, the King can always be prayed to return back to the mortals and this was the reason for the tomb (his heroon) to be connected with the world, using the dromos approach⁵⁸. This is the road to the world under, but also to the world of the living - the road that the only one to pass through in its two directions was to be the King⁵⁹. For all the others it had only one direction and that is why the proposed rituals inside it, I would associate only with the King and his cult - he who maintained the right (also the duty?) to visit his predecessor, may be for the reasons of his own initiation⁶⁰.

The archaeological research on some of the tombs proposes that at one time or another the tombs were finally closed, may be as a kind of a ritual after the death of the next king when a new tomb was built as a center of the religious cult⁶¹?

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1. The dimensions of the vault were as to assure space for an erected man (Стоянов Т., *Гробничната архитектура в Североизточна Тракия в светлината на контактите с Мала Азия (VI-III в. пр.н.е.)*, Terra Antiqua Balcanica IV (1990), 122). In modern literature the burial mounds have already been discussed as made for the aristocracy - the tumulus as a social sign, later - an economic (Китов Г., *Тракийските могили*, Thracia 10 (1993), 39-80; Китов Г., *Тракийските могили в България*, Годишник на департамент Археология към НБУ, I, (1994), 67 сл.). Thus the vaults we can attribute to the most prominent part of aristocracy, and those with a possibility for an access to the burial chamber - to determine as Royal, and this is the aim of the paper proposed.

2. I mean the dromos not only as a construction leading to the burial chamber, but also the vaults that were situated in the periphery of the tumulus and whose entrance remained uncovered (archaeologically proved) for a certain period of time: the one near Philippopolis (Ботушарова Л., Коларова В., *Куполна гробница край Пловдив*, В: Studia in honorem K. Škorpil. С., 1961, 279-296, фиг. 5, 6); near Varbitza (Атанасов Г., *Тракийската гробница при град Върбица, Варненска област*, ГМСБ XVI (1990), 26); near Sveshtari (Gergova D., *Studies on tumulus N 13 from the eastern necropolis of Sveshtari*, Hellis II (1992). Sboryanovo - Studies and Prospects. Proceedings of the Conference in Isperrich, 8 December 1988, 119 f). The ornamentation of the entrance has been considered as a proof for its free access (Китов Г., *Тракийската гробница-мавзолей край Стрелча*, Векове 1977, N 1, 12-21), but the tomb's entire decoration in and out, has been directed not to its visitor-spectator, but to the world beyond (Маразов Ив., *Мит, ритуал и изкуство у траките*, Университетско издателство "Св. Кл. Охридски", С., 1992, 422). These problems we can trace in the Macedonian tombs with their richly decorated façades that were covered with mounds soon after the funeral (Andronikos M., *The Royal Tombs at Vergina*, Athens 1980 (Athens Annals of Archaeology X, 1977, 1), 44; Fedak J., *Monumental Tombs of the Hellenistic Age: A study of selected tombs from the pre-Classical to the Early Imperial Era*, University of Toronto Press 1990, 40); also in the tomb in Ginina Mogila near Sveshtari, similar in plan and construction, to those in Macedonia, with the dromos that was added (not as a part of its construction) to the entrance, as the thracian tombs were - may be as a ritual requirement here in Thrace. See also: Русева М., *Тракийската гробнишна архитектура в българските земи през периода V-III в. пр.н.е.*, Годишник на ВИАС XXIX (1981-82), св. 1, 301-317; Проблеми на тракийската гробнишна архитектура в българските земи през V-III в. пр.н.е. - Годишник на НИПК III (1984), 11-22.

3. G. Kitov was the only one to propose just the opposite (Китов Г., *Тракийските могили край Стрелча*, С., 1979, 21).

4. Only 14 of the known more than 40 vaults have dromos as a possibility for an access to the underground burial chamber (Русева М., *Тракийската гробнишна архитектура...*, 306 f). Interesting for our discussion are the one-chamber tombs with entrance, but without any possibilities for an access in, under the mound: the one near

Malko Belovo, Pazardzik district (Велков Ив., *Куполната гробница при с. Малко Белово*, ГНАМ VII (1943), 37-43); near the village of Ruetz, Targovishte (Велков Ив., *Нови могилни находки*, ИАИ V (1928-9), 37 f, fig. 46); near the village of Staroselka, Shumen district (Василева Д., *Тракийско могилно погребение при с. Староселка, Шуменски окръг*, Археология XIII (1971), N 3, 39-41); the tomb N 3 from "Mogilanska" tumulus in Vratsa (Николов Б., *Гробница III от Могиланската могила във Враца*, Археология IX (1967), N 1, 11 ff); the tomb in "Akchilar" near Odessos (Мирчев М., *Паметници на гробната архитектура в Одесос и неговата околност*, In: *Studia in honorem acad. D. Dechev. S.*, 1958, N 4, 573 f, fig. 5), and the newly discovered tomb in "Malkata mogila" near the village of Sheinovo (Kitov G., Theodossiev N., *New data on Thracian archaeology and religion from the tumuli near the villages of Shipka and Sheinovo in the Kazanlak region*, In: *Studia in honorem Alexandri Fol (= Thracia XI)*. S., 1995, 320, fig. 2). The question is whether we can interpret the entrance, that could not be used, as a tradition from the house architecture (the idea about the eternal home) or as an imitation of the king's vault with a decorated entrance and a possibility for an access into it? Or, as it is in Christian eschatology, in the Doom's day when all the dead will resurrect from their graves - thus the entrance was made for the deceased and not for the living.

5. Маразов Ив., *Към семантиката на стенописите от Казанлъшката гробница*, Изкуство 1978, N 7, 25; Теодосиев Н., Хиерон Орос. -Култура 1990, N 6, 65.

6. Gergova D., *op. cit.*, 119 f; Гочева Зл., *Погребалните обичаи на траките и вярата им в безсмъртието*, В: *Международен симпозиум - Севтополис и надгробните могили в Югоизточна Европа*, Казанлък 1993, 30.

7. Филов Б., *Куполните гробници при Мезек*, ИБАИ XI (1937), 79, fig. 89); Миков В., *Античната гробница при Казанлък*, БАН, С., 1954, 28; Венедиков Ив., *Тайната на тракийските могили*, С., 1968, 21, 23; Фол Ал., *Политическа история на траките. Наука и изкуство*, С., 1972, 64; Venedikov Iv., *L'architecture sepulcrale en Thrace*, Pulpudeva 1 (1974), 57; Чапъров Б., *Маджаровската гробница*, МПК XXV (1985), N 4, 28; Домарадски М., *Тракийски богати погребения*, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica III* (1988), 81; Гочева Зл., *op. cit.*, 29; Китов Г., *Тракийските могили в България...*, 77. В. Nikolov, having in mind the example of the tumulus in Vratza with three successively built tombs under it, has suggested that this problem was surmounted with the use of the dromos as a possibility for a multiple use of the burial chamber (Николов Б., *op. cit.*, 13).

8. The tomb near Magliz was painted again and the dromos was prolonged, probably due to enlarging of the tumulus (Цанова Г., Гетов Л., *Тракийската гробница при Мъглиж*, Археология XV (1973), N 2, 15-29; Гетов Л., *Мъглижката гробница*. Български художник, С., 1988, 15 f); the second use of the tomb near Mezek demanded a new pavement of the floor with stones (Филов Б., *op. cit.*, 1-116); and in the tomb in Ginina Mogila near Sveshtari, a second kline has been added, that was not provided in primary, so the architectural design was partly broken (Fol Al., Chichikova M., Ivanov T., Teofilov T., *The Thracian Tomb near the village of Sveshtari*, Svyat Publishers, S., 1986,

Pl. 42, 43; Чичикова М., *Свещарската гробница - архитектура и декорация*, -Terra Antiqua Balcanica III (1988), 125-143; Теофилов Т., *Анализ на стиловите особености на тракийската гробница при с. Свещари*, Terra Antiqua Balcanica III (1988), 157, 159; Русева М., *Някои наблюдения върху архитектурата на гробницата в "Гинина могила" край с. Свещари*, Terra Antiqua Balcanica IV (1990), 113.

9. Such "places" - the niches in walls for the mortal remains (ashes) are to be seen in tombs in Macedonia, even one in Lefkadia has twenty two niches in two rows with the names of the dead being painted over them (Kurtz D., Boardman J., *Greek burial customs*. Thames and Hudson, L., 1971, 275).

10. Попов Д., *Проучвания върху тракийската религия*. I. - Обезсмъртяването, ГСУ ИФ 75 (1982), 13-47.

11. D. Gergova has proposed a ritual dismembering of the dead body, practiced by the Thracians on account of the Orphic mythology, thus the sepulchre is interpreted as a temple in which the rite of immortalization took place (Gergova D., *The Problem of the "Plundered" Thracian Tombs and it's proposed solution: A New Method Applied during Excavations*, In: Heinrich Schliemann. Grundlagen und Ergebnisse moderner Archäologie. 100 Jahre nach Schliemann's Tod. Berlin 1992, 290 f; Гергова Д., *Обредът на обезсмъртяването в Древна Тракия*. С., 1996, 96-109). My reason for the rejection of this concerns our knowledge about the hon-ours, the remains of Orpheus and Rhesos were treated with (Маразов Ив., *op. cit.*, 312 f; about the cult of Rhesos in Amphipolis: Isaac B., *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest*. E. J. Brill, Leiden 1986, 55-58), and from Orphic texts a variant is known concerning the regeneration of Zagreus from his gathered remains, (Богданов Б., *Орфей и древната митология на Балканите*, Университетско издателство "Св. Кл. Охридски", С., 1991, 38 f.

12. The only known to me sounding under the floor has been done by B. Filov in the tomb near Mezek (Филов Б., *op. cit.*, 18 f)

13. The proposed secondary burial of the mortal remains in a pit out of the tomb (Гергова Д., *op. cit.*, 66 f) as can be seen in the tomb near Voivodovo, Haskovo district (Аладжов Д., *Тракийска гробница в с. Войводово*, Археология VIII (1966), N 4, 52-56) was done probably by the thieves, as the author has proved; and the tomb near Madjarovo (Чапърв Б., *Археологически открития в Маджаровската гробница*, АОР за 1986 г. Разград 1987, 105-107) is still not published in detail.

14. Китов Г., *Тракийските могили край Стрелча...*, 12 f, fig. 13.

15. Китов Г., *Куполните гробници при Равногор в Родопите*, Археология XXXI (1989), N 3, 33, 37; Попов Д., *Залмоксис. религия и общество на траките*, Университетско издателство "Св. Кл. Охридски", С., 1989, 197 f; Гетов Л., *Тракийски гробници в хинтерланда на Севтополис през елинистическата епоха*, В: Сборник Тракийската култура през елинистическата епоха в Казанлъшкия край. Казанлък 1991, 42 f; Гочева Зл., *op. cit.*, 29; Китов Г., *Тракийските могили в България...*, 77.

16. Китов Г., *Тракийските могили в България ...*, 78; Гочева Зл., *op. cit.*, 30; Георгиева Р., *Поминальные обряды во Фракии (конец II-I тыс. до н.э.)*, Terra Antiqua Balcanica VI (1991), 25-31.

17. A bothros with human and animal bones, sherds and golden artefacts has been found in front of the tomb's entrance in tumulus N 13 of the Eastern necropolis near Sveshtari (Gergova D., *op. cit.*, 120); a hearth with traces of a long use was found in front of the sepulchre near Vurbitzza (Атанасов Г., *op. cit.*, 25); as well as vessels with their bottom up, that were discovered in front of the sepulchre near Brestovitzza village, Plovdiv district (Герасимова В., Русева М., Кисъов К., *Непубликувани тракийски паметници от землищата на селата Брестовица и Първенец*, Пловдивско, ИМЮБ XVIII (1992), 70).

18. Andronikos M., *op. cit.*, 29 f; Fedak J., *op. cit.*, 105.

19. In front of the tomb in Zaba mogila near Strelcha a chariot with two horses and a third saddle-horse have been discovered (Китов Г., *Тракийските могили край Стрелча...*, 6, fig. 5, 29); a horse in the open antechamber of the tombs N 1 and 3 near Yankovo (Дремсизова Цв., *Надгробни могили при с. Янково*, ИАИ XIX (1955), 61-72) and near Kaloyanovo (Чичикова М., *Тракийската могилна гробница от с. Калояново, Сливенски окръг (IV в. пр.н.е.)*, ИАИ XXXI (1969), 45-90); a horse (horses?) have been discovered in the dromos (on the floor) of the tomb near Mezek, according to the men that were the first to enter in (Филов Б., *op. cit.*, 4), as well as in the dromos of the tomb near Kazanlak (Миков В., *Античната гробница при Казанлък...*, 25), and in the dromos of the tomb near Madjarovo (Чапърво Б., *op. cit.*, 25); a horse was found in the antechamber of the tomb near Valchepol, Svilengrad district (Филов Б., *op. cit.*, 79), while in the tombs near Losengrad the horse was laid in the burial chamber (Миков В., *Произход на куполните гробници в Тракия*, ИАИ XIX (1955), 19, fig. 2d). A burial of a horse has been discovered southwest of the tomb in Ginina mogila near Sveshtari, while in the antechamber inside, the bones of three horses and other animals together with two human skeletons - that of a man and a woman, have been discovered too (The Thracian tomb near Sveshtari..., 24 ff).

20. Китов Г., *Тракийските могили край Стрелча...*, 6.

21. Gimbutas M., *The Civilization of the Goddess: the world of Old Europe*, San Francisco 1991, 281, 305; Gimbutas M., *The language of the Goddess*, London 1989, 149-157; Теодосиев Н., *op. cit.*, 59; Русева М., *Опит за тълкуване на погребалните паметници в Тракия като модел на света*, *Анали* 2 (1995), N 1-2, 28 f.

22. Маразов Ив., *За семантиката на изображенията в гробницата от Свещари*, *Изкуство* 1984, N 4, 28-38.

23. Маразов Ив., *Мит, ритуал и изкуство у траките...*, 418.

24. Venedikov Iv., T. Gerassimov, *Thracian Art Treasures*, S., 1979, N 56.

25. Гочева Зл., *op. cit.*, 28; Попов Д., *Конят и колесницата в тракийската царска идеология*, ИБИД 38 (1986), 139 f.

26. Herakles after his self-incineration on Oeta (Boardman J., Herakles' death and apotheosis (Herakles VIII). -In: LIMC V-1, 2 (1990), 131 f, N 2877-2938).

27. Китов Г., *Тракийските могили край Стрелча...*, fig. 5, 29.

28. Фол Ал., *Вярата в безсмъртието*, В: Тракийски легенди. Наука и изкуство, 1981, 18 f; Попов Д., *Залмоксис...*, 52-63, 197; Богданов Б., *Орфей и древната митология на Балканите ...*, 121, 123; Маразов Ив., *Мит, ритуал и изкуство у траките...*, 425-431.

29. Фол Ал., *Слово и дела в Древна Тракия*, Университетско издателство “Св. Кл. Охридски”, С., 1993, 46 f; Попов Д., *Богът с много имена*, ИК “Свят-Наука”, С., 1995, 32 f.

30. Farnell L.R., *Greek Hero cults and ideas of Immortality*, Oxford 1921, 95 f.

31. For the first time in modern literature this term was used by G. Tzanova and L. Getov in their study on the tomb near Magliz (Цанова Г., Гетов Л., *op. cit.*, 27), later by G. Kitov (Китов Г., *Тракийската гробница мавзолей край Стрелча...*, 12-21).

32. Fedak J., *op. cit.*, 23 f.

33. This is proved by the legend about the head of Orpheus, buried under a mound that was enclosed with a peribolos like a heroon, and this all was done as to avoid the failure that succeeded the treachery of the Thracian women that caused his death (Con. XLV); and the story about the foundation of Amphipolis on the Thracian coast only after the remains of Rhesos were buried in a heroon in it, carried there from Troy, where he was killed by the Greeks (Polyaen. VI, 53; See here note Nr 11). It was proved archaeologically with the excavations of a burial mound and a small temple, all enclosed in the sacred area of a heroon in roman times, near the modern village of Lyublen, Targovishte district (Овчаров Д., *О налични героонов в Древней Фракии*, Thracia 3 (1974), 345-352).

34. D. Popov has proposed two levels of Immortalization on the text in Herodotus: the first (the Thracian one) according to which the Thracians claimed to be immortal, believing that they do not die, but that he who perishes goes to the god Zalmoxis (Hdt. 4, 94), and the second one, that Herodotus has been told about by the Greeks who dwelled beside the Hellespont and Pontus (the Hellenized one), that Zalmoxis has made himself an andreon where he feasted with his noble guests and preached his doctrine, that neither he nor his companions nor any of their descendants should ever die, but they all will go to a place where they will live for ever and have all the good things (Hdt. 4, 95, 3). The “Thracian” version concerns the messenger to Zalmoxes on each fourth year, while the “Hellenized” one concerns his aristocratic companions, probably initiated in the mysteries of immortality and believing in the possibility to return back to Life as Zalmoxis did. But this can not be interpreted as a duality of the ritual: the common that go to Zalmoxis and return back, while the initiated remain together with Zalmoxis (Попов Д., *Богът с много имена...*, 32 f, 41).

35. Делев П., *Раннотракийски погребални обичаи и вярвания*. Автореферат на дисертация. С., 1986, 25. One of the exceptions, known to me, is the tomb near Mezek, where a stone kline and two stone urns were placed in the burial chamber (Филев Б., *op. cit.*, 27), but this means that the King, whom the tomb had been built for, was the only to obtain Immortality and the possibilities of coming back. B. Filov has suggested just the opposite: the kline for a woman and the urns for men (*op. cit.*, 27).

36. Попов Д., *Обезсмъртяването...*, 13-47; Попов Д., *Богът с много имена...*, 27-53.

37. Burkert W., *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, Harvard University Press, 1985, 321-325.

38. Гергова Д., *Обредът на обезсмъртяването в Древна Тракия...*, 100.

39. Богданов Б., *op. cit.*, 67. The reason for this being insufficient having in mind Euripidus' idea to prepare his audience for Herakles descent to the Underworld. But the same idea we can trace in the words of Rhesos' mother, that the bride of Hades feels her duty to leave in the world above all the relatives of Orpheus (Eurip. Rhesos 962-975).

40. See here note 36.

41. Simon E., *Festivals of Attica. An archaeological commentary*. The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983, 93; Burkert W., *op. cit.*, 238; Garland R., *The Greek way of Death*. Duck-worth, L., 1985, 6.

42. Миков В., *Античната гробница при Казанлък...*, 14; Димитров Д.П., *За датата на стенописите от тракийската гробница при Казанлък*, Археология VIII (1966), N 2, 9; Venedicov Iv., T. Gerassimov, *op. cit.*, 74; Живкова Л., *Казанлъшката гробница*. Наука и изкуство, С., 1974, 77; Цанова Г., Гетов Л., *Тракийската гробница при Казанлък*. Български художник, С., 1984, 20 f.

43. The scene of the feast as an illustration of the pleasures awaiting the blessed among dead (the initiated?) in Hades, in contrast to the ordinary mortals and their fate as mere shadows (Garland R., *op. cit.*, 70 f).

44. Garland R., *op. cit.*, 66 f.

45. Огненова-Маринова Л., *За централния сюжет и за авторството на стенописите на Казанлъшката гробница*, МПК XVI (1976), N 2, 7-12; Огненова-Маринова Л., *Казанлъшката гробница - шедьовър на тракийското изкуство*, В: Сборник "Тракийската култура през елинистическата епоха в Казанлъшкия край". Казанлък 1991, 15 f. Another opinion proposed a synthesis between the two, based on the metaphor "marriage-death": Маразов Ив., *Към семантиката на стенописите от Казанлъшката гробница...*, 21-25.

46. Маразов Ив., *За семантиката на изображенията в гробницата от Свещари...*, 28. But in the drawing on lunette of the central burial chamber (the tomb in Ginina mogila near Sveshtari) the wife is missing and the scene with the Goddess that offers a wreath to the Horseman, is to be interpreted as a deification (heroisation?) of the deceased King, even the horn of Zeus-Amon, examined behind his ear - as a popular sign of deification after Alexander the Great (Чичикова М., *Гробницата от Свещари...*, 20; Димитров К., *Изображение на тракийски владетел от Свещарската гробница*, Terra Antiqua Balcanica III (1988), 163).

47. It's legs resemble in profile the stone carved legs of the klinai in the tombs near Sveshtari (The Thracian tomb near the village of Sveshtari..., Pl. 42) and near Philippopolis (Ботушарова Л., Коларова В., *op. cit.*, 288, fig. 12), and the blue colour they are painted in, proposes it (the klinai) to be made out of metal or stone and not of wood as the brown coloured throne was.

48. Kurtz D., Boardman J., *op. cit.*, 280, fig. 64: a vaulted tomb in Eretria with two klinai and two thrones in the burial chamber, all of marble, and as the inscriptions show the klinai being for men, while the thrones - for the female dead of the family.

49. Kurtz D., Boardman J., *op. cit.*, 277; Tomilson R.A., *Thracian and Macedonian Tombs compared*, Thracia 3 (1974), 247-250.

50. Klinai are known from: one in the tomb near Malko Belovo (Велков Ив., *op. cit.*, 37-44); one from the tomb near Philippopolis (Ботушарова Л., Коларова В., *op. cit.*, 288, fig. 12); two in the tomb near Sveshtari - one of them additionally built (The Thracian Tomb near the village of Sveshtari..., 106); probably two in the tomb near Mugliz (Гетов Л., *op. cit.*, 14, fig. 6); one kline with two stone urns in the tomb near Mezek (Филов Б., *op. cit.*, 27); in the tombs near Lozengrad (Миков В., *Произход на куполните гробници...*, 17, fig. 2a; 19, 2d); in the tomb N 2 near Odessos (Мирчев М., *op. cit.*, 571 f, fig. 2) and in the tomb near Varbitza (Атанасов Г., *op. cit.*, 25). In the other tombs the klinai probably were made of wood as it is obvious for the tomb near Kazanlak (Миков В., *op. cit.*, 25).

51. Eliade M., *Le Mythe de l'Éternel Retour*. Archétypes et Répétition, Gallimard, Paris 1949.

52. N. Mavrodinov has proposed that the sorrow the king's wife depicted, was due to the earthly joys she had to part with (Мавродинов Н., *Живопись античной гробницы в Казанлыке*, ВДИ 1954, N 2, 157), as well as a sorrow for her dead husband, if the burials in the tomb were not synchronous (Живкова Л., *op. cit.*, 71).

53. Маразов Ив., *Мит, ритуал и изкуство у траките...*, 419.

54. It seems probable to accept that the rituals of king's initiation took place in the underground chamber (the heroon) of the last King - may be as a substitute for the andreon, although that Herodotus had separated the two: the andreon of Zalmoxis and his underground chamber (Hdt. 4, 95).

55. These ideas I have already discussed in my dissertation on Herakles' theme: Рабаджиев К., *Херакъл (Херкулес) в Тракия (4 век пр.н.е. - 4 век от н.е.)*, Автореферат на дисертация. С., 1992 г.

56. Огненова-Маринова Л., *За централния сюжет и авторството на стенописите...*, 9; Venedikov Iv., T. Gerassimov, *op. cit.*, 74; Огненова-Маринова Л., *Казанлъшката гробница - шедьовър...*, 15.

57. Фол Ал., *Тракийският Орфизъм*, Университетско издателство "Кл. Охридски", С., 1986.

58. But we can hardly propose that this world of ideas had caused the real wear of the doorsteps in stone as it is examined in some of the tombs discussed (Китов Г., *Тракийската гробница мавзолей край Стрелча...*, 18; Китов Г., *Куполните гробници при Равногор в Родопите...*, 32; Китов Г., *Тракийските могили в България...*, 77). The reasons for this, may be, were the builders and artists in the process of construction and decoration of the tomb, the cases of its secondary use (in contradiction to the idea it was built with), the visits of thieves in antiquity and later on, also the reuse of stone blocks in its construction (an idea proposed by an architect - Dafina Vassileva).

59. Thus the dromos can be interpreted as the road leading to the Underworld (Маразов Ив., *Мит, ритуал и изкуство...*, 415) and it's interesting to remember the Greek Orphism and its concept of death as a long journey to the world beyond (Kurtz D., J. Boardman, *op. cit.*, 331).

60. On this see: Фол Ал., *Политика и култура в Древна Тракия*, Наука и изкуство, С., 1990, 171; Фол В., *Скалата, конят и огънят. Ранна тракийска обредност*, ИК "Аргес", С., 1993, 154; Попов Д., *Богът с много имена...*, 202 f. See here note 54.

61. In the sepulchre near Philippopolis the antechamber was filled with mud-brick and a stone slab replaced the two-leaved door (Ботушарова Л., В. Коларова, *op. cit.*, 279-296, fig. 7); in front of the iron-made door to the main chamber of the tomb near Kazanluk, a stone slab was added (Мигов В., *op. cit.*, 3); there has been a two-leaved door to the entrance of the tomb near Strelcha, later built in with stones, probably at the time when the axle-door to the burial chamber was replaced with a stone slab (Китов Г., *Тракийската гробница-мавзолей при Стрелча...*, 17 f); the entrance to the tomb near Sveshtari has been built in with stones (The Thracian tomb near the village of Sveshtari..., 26, Pl. 33); in the tomb near Mugliz after the second burial the dromos was locked with a two-leaved door, that later has been built in (Цанова Г., Л. Гетов, *op. cit.*, 27). The idea for a multiple use of the tombs presumes that after the last burial the tomb has been shut up for ever and the mound has covered the entrance. But who was the one to take the decision and when? In such case we have to accept that after each burial the tomb has been built in again and again. But the archaeological research proved periods of time when the entrance had been accessible. One of the answers proposes this to be done as a defence against robbers: the tomb near Philippopol bears the traces of destruction before it has been closed. In the tomb near Sveshtari a secondary burial has been done after a robbery and destruction, even it has not been cleaned before it. Maybe the social status of the deceased did not required an access to the burial chamber, as the case with the common burials was? It can be proved with the archaeological situation in the tomb near Mugliz, where a time after the second burial, which caused a new paintings of the walls in, and an extension of the dromos that was closed with a massive door, later on the entrance was built in with stones. This means that the second burial was a royal one too, as the need for an entrance presumes. The same can be proposed about the tomb near Brestovitz, the dromos of which after a reconstruction had been extended (Герасимова В., М. Русева, К. Кисьов, *op. cit.*, 65), and the tomb near Madjarovo whose dromos had been extended too (Чапъров Б., *op. cit.*, 25). G. Kitov has rejected the idea about a simultaneous close of all the tombs, suggesting the term "sealing of the sacred places", when a horse (with or without a chariot) was laid in front of the built in entrance (Китов Г., *Куполните гробници при Равногор...*, 37 f). A more probable reconstruction of this custom is the burial (a sacrifice?) of the horse as a part of the funeral itself, having in mind the data already discussed, and the synchronous burials in mounds without any built constructions under, where this has been a part of the funeral ritual.