

GRAVES AT PISTIROS AND ITS VICINITY CONTEMPORARY WITH THE EMPORION

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Mieczysław Domaradzki had some ideas about graves situated in the vicinity of Pistiros¹, but he died without telling us. He always mentioned in this relation that the political situation in Bulgaria is not safe enough to protect the graves from the *imaniari*, as the Bulgarians call the treasure-hunters digging illegally, and he may well be right. We still hope, however, that one of the hints left by him for us in his notes may one day bring us nearer to the discovery of what he had in his mind.

Until this happens, we know the row of tumuli in the vicinity of the emporion Pistiros (Figs. 1 and 2) called *Oreshkovi mogili* (Fig. 3), of which one had in its centre one of the earliest monumental vaulted architectural chamber with antechamber and dromos (Figs. 4 a). Its technique of construction is identical with that of the city wall, and it must have been constructed by masons coming from the same school of stonecutting and designed by the same school of architects (Fig. 4b). It is apparently not far from the truth that Pistiros stonecutting technique and its masons were among those who had a large share in the introduction of Thracian tombs from the stage of coffin-like sarcophagi, as in other places (e.g. around Duvanli) into those of vaulted tombs.² As the development was contemporary with the rise of similar tombs in Macedonia, another inspiration may well have come from there, besides the preparative stage in Thrace itself, especially in its eastern part, from the most sophisticated type of the dolmens. It's should also be remembered that the recollection of stories of mythical heroes of the past probably gave similar impetus as was in the use of the double axe as the symbol of the royal power in Thrace, a strong fact in favour of 'Thracian renaissance' discussed several times before by our predecessors.

Other tumuli of the series of *Oreshkovi mogili* have partly been examined in a few attempts by the archaeologists, in other cases illegally, but – as far as known - without yielding spectacular finds. The nearest barrow situated close to the emporion yielded some bronze coins but no important finds. We found only entries in the diary by M. Domaradzki, who made a test section into the NE part of the tumulus; several badly preserved bronze coins were found and some observations of stratigraphy of the barrow noticed. But what is also important is the situation of the whole group of the tumuli – the grouping of them is hardly accidental. The barrows form a nearly regular row in the direction from the Pistiros site in the NW direction towards between the small city of Vetren and the village Akandjievo, at a distance of roughly around 100 m from each other; they seem to have been burials of an aristocratic family or the dynasty of local rulers.

Fifteen tumuli of the necropolis of Akandjievo (Fig. 5), situated some 3 km west of the Pistiros/Adjyska Vodenitsa site, have been examined by N. Gizdova³. Only a brief preliminary report has been published, but she kindly completed the information personally. The graves were mainly inhumations, though in two barrows cremations were deposited (Fig. 6, 7 and 8). The

¹ Домарадски, М., 1996: *Некрополи*, 69-70.

² Cf. already Bouzek, in *Pistiros I*, Prague 1996, 44, and Bouzek-Domaradzka, in *Pistiros III*, Prague 2007, 254 sqq.

³ Домарадски, М., 1996, 70.

burials contained both local and Greek pottery of 5th to 4th century B.C. (Fig. 9), coin of Aige (dated between 6th and 5th c. BC) and other finds (Fig. 10), among them several Attic lekythoi (Fig. 11), a shape unknown from Thracian tombs and common in Greek burials; graffiti in Greek letters are also known on pottery from this cemetery (Fig. 12 and Fig. 13). The preliminary publication is in the BAR volume of the conference organized at Kazanlak in 1999 in honour of Mieczysław Domaradzki,⁴ and the full report by Mrs. Gizdova is in print. Besides lekythoi, there are also several clay lamps known from the cemetery in clearly recognizable fragments, and their presence among the burial gifts also points out that some members Greek or mixed Graeco-Thracian population was buried in the Akandjievo cemetery. The custom of burying under tumuli was abandoned mainly in Classical Greece,⁵ but there was a strong tradition of them during the whole of Geometric and Orientalizing periods, and the Greeks in the colonial outposts hardly had much objections against taking over this kind of *sema* on the grave; it was also Homeric and – more in general – heroic custom, as we know from several graves in the North Pontic area. But Domaradzki had certainly something else in mind and he was sure to know that there must be another cemetery near Pistiros, perhaps also around a tumulus, like the grave of the hero – ktistes of Orgame, whose publication he still noticed before his death.

The tombstone from Parvernec of Antiphanes, son of Herandros⁶ (Fig. 14), speaks for the presence of Greeks buried in the central Thrace similarly, as do the two funerary inscriptions found in the emporion itself (Fig. 15): one, in honour of Dionysios Diothrepheos⁷ (Fig. 15 a), was found long ago and published by Václav Dobruský before the First World War, and a second for the son of Metrophon⁸ (Fig. 15 b), in which only the name of his father is fully preserved. The latter was first considered to be part of tombstone but a similar inscription revealed in Messembria / Zone suggests another explanation. It was put into the city wall at the gate and was probably a commemorative inscription, celebrating an important person for his deeds in favour of the city, perhaps its successful defender.

Another stone found by the Czech mission with several letters preserved: (..APA/...TON..[?]) may well have also been a tombstone in one of the stages of its story⁹. Its first use may have been as a kind of lintel of a building, and its third use, together with other architectonic stones published in Pistiros III, was for the foundations of the hastily repaired building of the Tripartite Southern House, just south of the E-W street leading inwards from the Eastern Gate and with monumental paving at its front. This last use was around 300 B. C. or slightly later, the first use of the stone, as of other fragments of the monumental architecture in the emporion, was most probably in the first city prior to the destruction of the emporion by Kotys the Great in the seventies of the 4th century, while the supposed second use of the item as part of a funeral monument falls thus between the two events.

In general, we do not know much about the funerals of those who lived in Emporion Pistiros, but certainly a number of people died there, and we hope to know more about their graves in the future; this aim of this modest contribution is to summarize the existing evidence and point out what may be found in the future.

⁴ Gizdova N., 2005, 115-122

⁵ The exceptions were reserved to heroic monuments; cf. the tumuli of soldiers fallen in battles, like the tumulus of Marathon, or of the fallen Spartans in Kerameikos.

⁶ Domaradzka, L., 1993, 55-57; В. Герасимова in Герасимова и др., 1993, 63 – 78.

⁷ Domaradzka, L., *op.cit.*, no. 2, 55-56 and no. 3, p. 56; see also earlier publications, mainly В. Добруски, 1985, 318 – 338 and IGBulg, III/2, nos. 1068 and 1069.

⁸ Domaradzka, L., *op. cit.*, no. 4, p. 56.

⁹ Domaradzka, L., 2002, 302.

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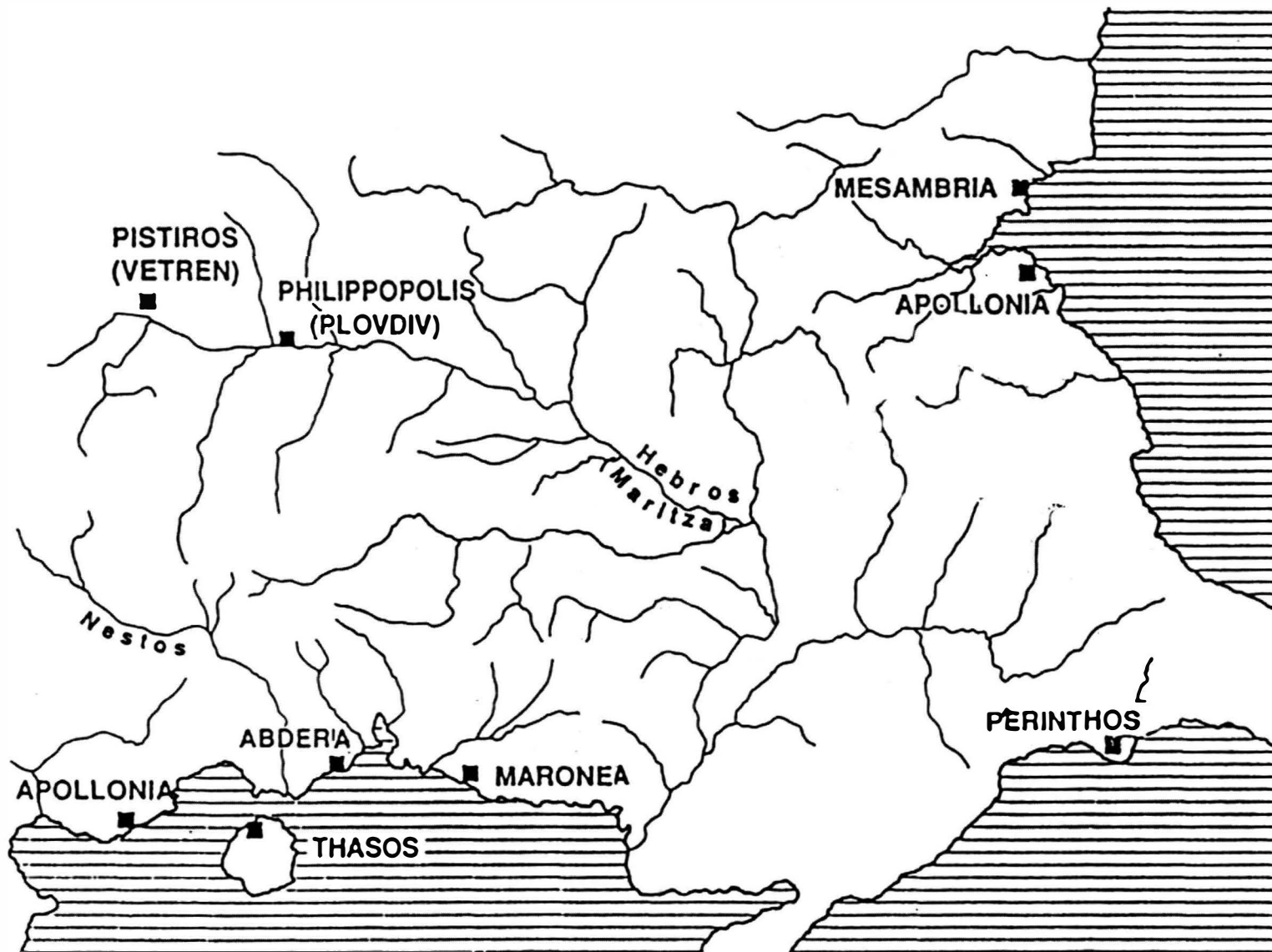


Fig. 1. Pistrós and North Aegean Greek cities.

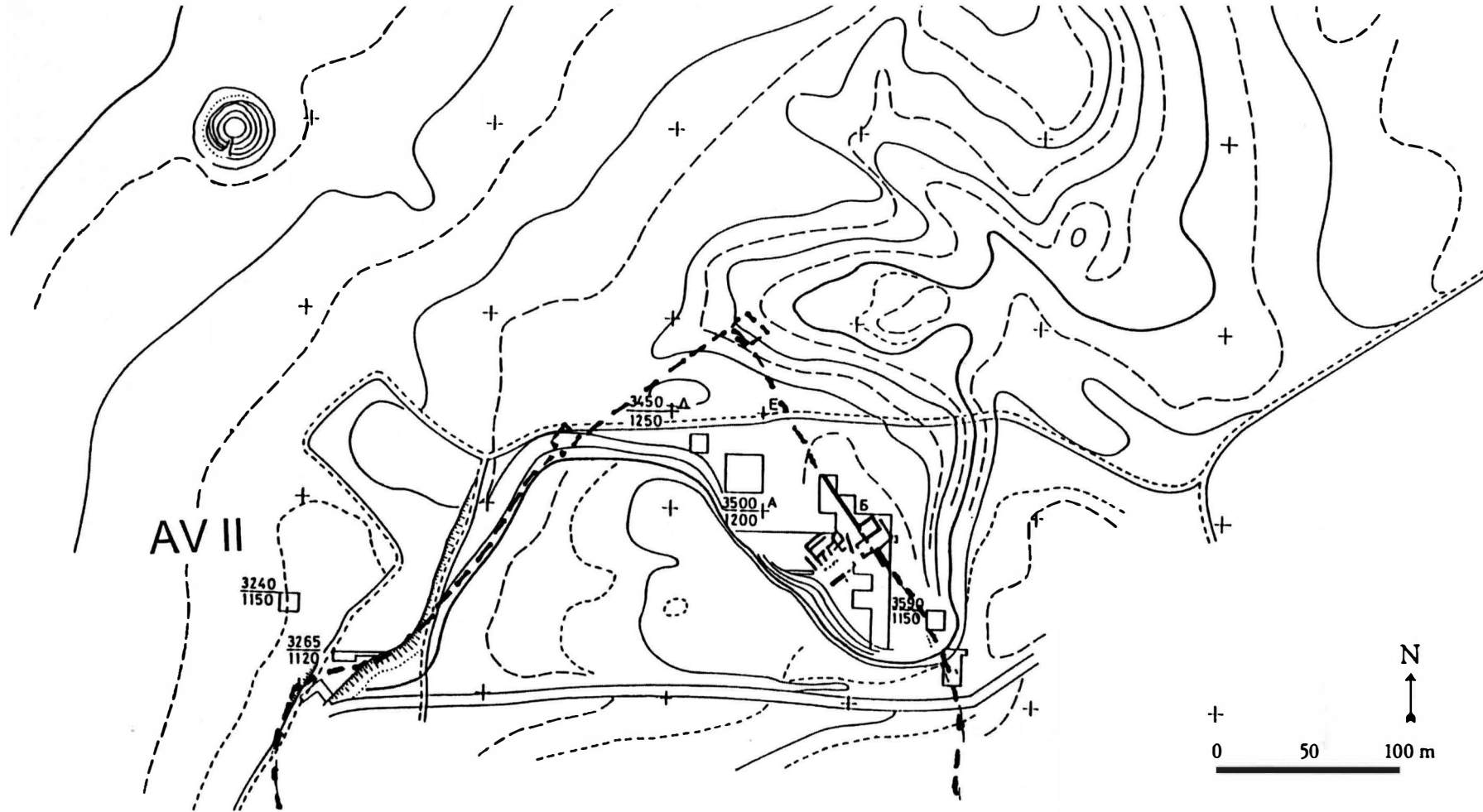


Fig. 2. Pístiros: general amp of the fortified area, with the nearest Vetren tomb marked.



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Fig. 3. Tumuli (Oreshkovi mogili) around Pistiros;
Fig. 4. a. and b. Vetren tomb.



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Fig. 5. Emporion Pistiros and 5th 4th c. B.C. tumuli (with semicircles) and settlements (full circles) in its environs;
 Fig. 6. Necropolis of Akandzievo. A general view of the tumuli (after Gizdova).



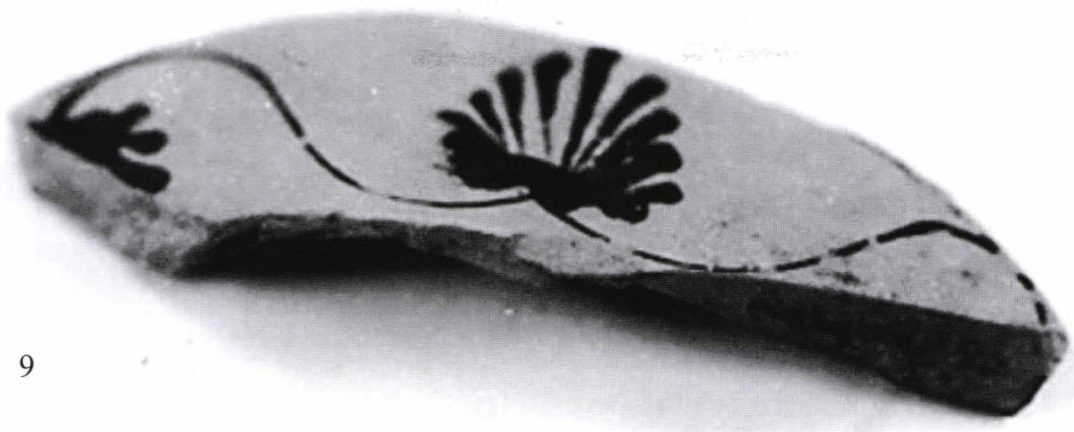
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Fig. 7. Akandzhievo. Tumulus No 6 (after Gizdova).

Fig. 8. Akandzhievo. Tumulus No 12. A general view before the start of the excavations after Gizdova.



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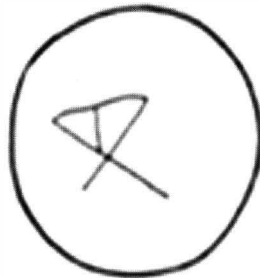
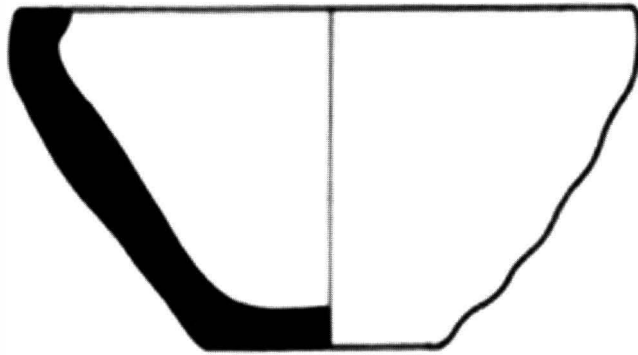
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Fig. 9. Necropolis of Akandzievo. Tumulus No 10. Fragment of shoulder of a BF kekythos (after Gizdova);

Fig. 10. Necropolis of Akandzhievo. Bronze and iron objects (after Gizdova).

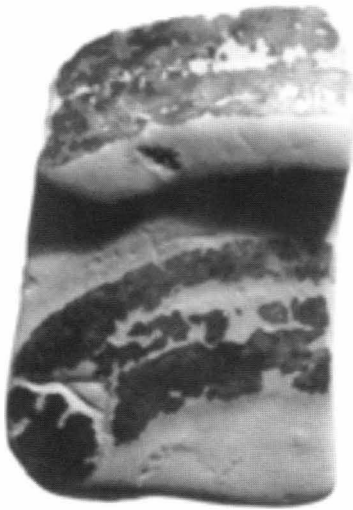


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Fig. 11. Necropolis of Akandzievo. Tumuli No3 and 7. BG Lekythoi.
Fig. 12. Akandzievo. Graffiti on local vessel.



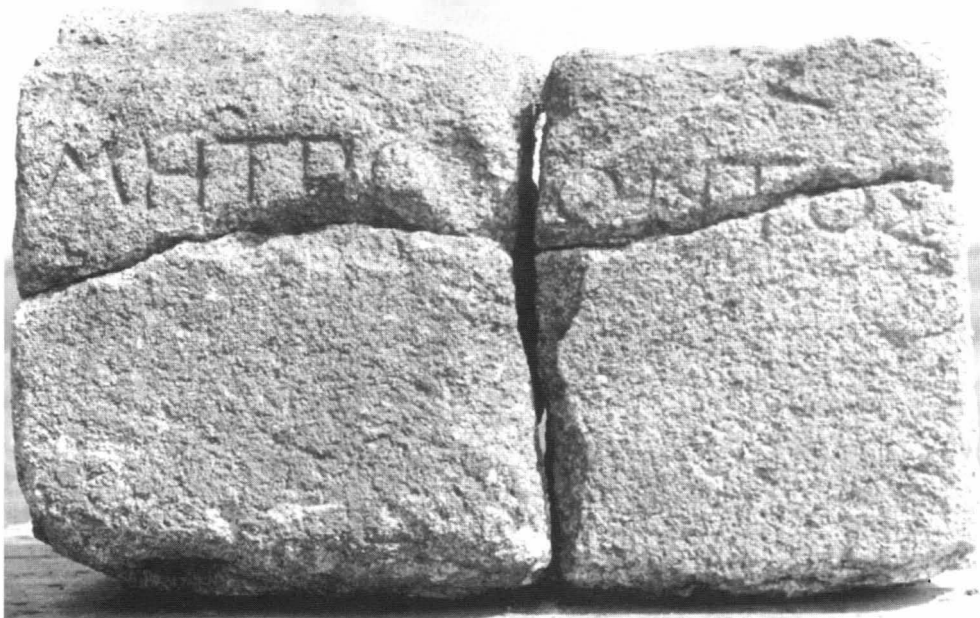
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ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΣ
ΔΙΟΤΡΕΦΕΟΣ

15a



15b

Fig. 13. Akandzhievo. Graffito on imported pottery;
 Fig. 14. Parvenec, Plovdiv region. Grave stele of Antiphanes, son of Herandros, 5th c. BC.;
 Fig. 15. Funerary inscriptions from Pistiros. a) Funerary monument of Dionysios, son of Diotrefhes (4th c. BC); (discovered and published by V. Dobrusky, end of the 19th c., facsimile by E. Kalinka); b) Epitaph of the son of Metrophon (early 4th c. BC).