

# THE HELLENISTIC TOMB WITH GREEK INSCRIPTION FROM SMYADOVO, BULGARIA – RECONSIDERED

**Abstract:** In 2000 on the right bank of the river Kamchiya, to the northeast of the modern town of Smyadovo, district of Shumen in Bulgaria, rescue archaeological researches were carried out in a mound affected by a treasure hunters' intervention and a tomb was found, but its inventory was believed to have been plundered. This tomb bears a clearly readable inscription with incised Greek letters in two lines on its facade above its entrance, which, translated into English, is as follows: Gonimasedze, wife of Seuthes. In 2002 the authors of the primary publication of this tomb admitted the possibility that it had been built for an unknown Thracian woman, who was the wife of a certain Thracian aristocrat named Seuthes. This extremely important Hellenistic tomb from the lands of ancient Thrace is represented again and reconsidered here, being put in a broader historical context. The persons mentioned in the inscription are precisely identified as the Thracian ruler Seuthes III and his first wife. It was found, that the tomb with Greek inscription had been built later by the most powerful king of Thrace – Kavaros, to commemorate both the first wife of the Thracian ruler Seuthes III and especially also Seuthes III himself – for the two major battles against the mighty Hellenistic king of Thrace – Lysimachus, and those battles were mentioned by the ancient writer Diodorus. Now we can assume that those battles had taken place in the area of today's Smyadovo, exactly at the northern end of today's Rish Pass, which is situated in the eastern part of the Balkan Mountains (Stara Planina).

**Keywords:** *Hellenistic tomb, Thrace, Thracian ruler Seuthes III, king Lysimachus, king Kavaros.*

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**T**he discovery of a tomb in the lands of ancient Thrace has always been accompanied by numerous excitements and discussions about the character and dating of such a monument. When such a tomb is found, and when, in addition, this tomb has a clear inscription in ancient Greek on its facade above its entrance – this can now be considered a sensation in archaeology and the interest in this kind of discovery becomes significantly larger.

But exactly such a monument, with a very important inscription written in clear, very well-read Greek letters on the architrave above the entrance of the tomb, has been undeservedly overlooked by the researchers in recent years. As if most researchers have taken the view that a primary publication<sup>1</sup> about this inscribed tomb has already exhausted the main issues related to its interpretation. However, part of the text of the primary publication about this tomb was repeated several years later in another

<sup>1</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002.

publication by one of the authors, and the tomb with the inscription was presented there only with a drawing<sup>2</sup>. So far, this tomb has not been included in any summarizing research on the typology of the various tombs in Thrace. I believe that to this important monument with inscription should be given more attention, and here a clearer interpretation of its character will be presented, with an accurate identification of the persons mentioned in the Greek inscription and a more precise dating of this tomb.

In 2000 on the right bank of the river Kamchiya, to the northeast of the modern town of Smyadovo, district of Shumen in Bulgaria, rescue archaeological researches were carried out in a mound affected by a treasure hunters' intervention, which is designated as the mound № 47 and is part of a group of four mounds<sup>3</sup>. A tomb was found at the southern end of this mound and its inventory was believed to have been plundered by the excavation work to place an electricity pillar on this site in the 1950s and possibly secondary during the later intervention of modern treasure hunters in 2000<sup>4</sup>. After the archaeological research in the mound, later, with a special project, the whole tomb was moved and reconstructed again, being exhibited in one of the halls of the Regional History Museum in the town of Shumen (fig. 1).

The general appearance and structure of the tomb found near the town of Smyadovo, Shumen district, are already presented in detail by the authors of the first publication of this tomb but only with a few not very clear black and white illustrations and drawings, which is why this tomb will be represented here with more images. The tomb is a two-chamber consisting of an antechamber and a burial chamber, and the inner faces and the facade are made of well-formed limestone slabs without binder. In addition, the authors of the primary publication have explicitly stated that the tomb is covered with a double-pitched roof, which consists of eight large limestone slabs, facing each other (fig. 2). The two chambers of the tomb are separated by a partition wall about 0.30 m thick (fig. 3). The entrance on the facade leading to the antechamber is of a complex polygonal shape, which is formed at its upper end as a triangle (fig. 4). The entrance to the internal burial chamber is rectangular, narrowing inward from all its sides through profiled stepped sides that have been coloured with red paint. Above the entrance to the burial chamber is depicted an embossed triangular fronton (fig. 5). On the threshold of this inner entrance to the burial chamber there are two rectangular holes for mounting the door. The tomb floor is covered with thick limestone slabs. On both sides of the tomb facade is placed a semi-column with Ionic type capitals (fig. 6), in the central semi-circular console above the entrance is depicted a large *palmette* with two spirals at its lower end (fig. 7), and on the facade there are traces of red painting. On the capitals of the columns and over the entrance there is a long stone architrave, on which in two lines is written an inscription with Greek letters<sup>5</sup> (fig. 8).

The authors of the first publication about this tomb

have explicitly noted that it is the first known tomb in the lands of ancient Thrace, on which there is an inscription with Greek letters<sup>6</sup>.

In fact, before discovering this tomb in the vicinity of the modern town of Smyadovo, in the lands of ancient Thrace was already known another tomb, discovered in 1982, which also bears four clearly visible Greek letters, which is the famous tomb with caryatids from Sveshtari<sup>7</sup>. There, however, the four Greek letters are presented vertically on one of the pilasters to the entrance of a side room in the tomb. These Greek letters from the Sveshtari tomb until recently were interpreted either as letters placed by the builders of the tomb to indicate the number of individual rows of stones<sup>8</sup>, or for their interpretation, some connection was sought between the Thracian and the Phrygian languages<sup>9</sup>. It has been quite recently found that the Greek letters from the Sveshtari tomb actually present a woman's name<sup>10</sup>.

It can be said again that for the first time on a tomb from the lands of ancient Thrace, and in the most prominent place – exactly on the rectangular architrave above the entrance of the tomb, a clearly readable inscription with incised Greek letters in two lines is written (fig. 9):

## ΓΟΝΙΜΑΣΗΖΗ ΣΕΥΘΟΥΓΥΝΗ

The authors of the first publication of this inscription on the tomb from Smyadovo have noted that probably in the first line was presented a Thracian personal name of a woman – Gonimasedze, which is not attested by other inscriptions from the lands of ancient Thrace. And in the second line there are two words – a Thracian personal male name – Seuthes, as well as a noun in a female genus, meaning a woman or a wife, the two words in the second line being presented together, not separated by a distance<sup>11</sup>. In fact, this is the well-known practice of the inscriptions in antiquity, especially in the Hellenic and Hellenistic world – without leaving a space between the words. In normalized form, the inscription should be as follows:

Γονίμασηζη  
Σεύθου γυνή.

The inscription is very brief and fully clear and can be translated as follows: Gonimasedze, wife of Seuthes.

It has already been noted that, according to its construction, the inscription on the tomb from Smyadovo is completely similar to the well-known gravestone formulas in the Greek cities on the western shores of the Black Sea<sup>12</sup>, but in fact this formula is well known throughout the ancient Greek world. In addition to the example given by the authors of the first publication – an inscription from Mesambria<sup>13</sup>, which however does not include the Greek word γυνή – “wife”,

<sup>2</sup> ATANASOV 2005, 185.

<sup>3</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 550.

<sup>4</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 550.

<sup>5</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 550-553.

<sup>6</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 553.

<sup>7</sup> FOL *et alii* 1986; CHICHKOVA/STOYANOVA/STOYANOV 2012.

<sup>8</sup> FOL *et alii* 1986, 54-55 with fig. 41 there; CHICHKOVA/STOYANOVA/STOYANOV 2012, 68-69 with figs. 91 and 92 there.

<sup>9</sup> THEODOSSIEV 1991, 63; THEODOSSIEV 1995, 163.

<sup>10</sup> MANOV 2017, 143-144 and fig. 53 there.

<sup>11</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 553.

<sup>12</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 553 with ref.

<sup>13</sup> MIHAILOV 1970, No. 335 bis; ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 553.

but the Greek word θυγάτηρ – “daughter”, there are few more examples of such a construction in other inscriptions also from Mesambria, which present precisely the word “wife”<sup>14</sup>. A similar formula of a Greek inscription with the name of a woman in the nominative, followed by the name of her husband in the genitive, finally followed by the word “wife” in the nominative, is also known in several gravestones from Apollonia Pontica<sup>15</sup>. The inscription here, presented in this way in ancient Greek, clearly indicates that the tomb found near the town of Smyadovo, Shumen district, was built for a certain person – a woman of Thracian origin who was the wife of a man, also with a well-defined Thracian ethnic origin – named Seuthes, which is well known as the name of several Thracian rulers – Seuthes I, Seuthes II and Seuthes III.

The main questions that arise are – who was this woman for whom the tomb was made, with the explanatory inscription to it, and at what time could this tomb be dated? Also – who was this Seuthes mentioned in the inscription? In the first publication about the tomb with this inscription, the authors generally stated that the tomb probably was made for the wife of a Thracian aristocrat named Seuthes, suggesting that this personality from the inscription was most likely the same Seuthes, known from the information of the ancient writer Polyaeus (Polyaen. VII, 25), where he was presented as the *strategus* of Dromichaetes<sup>16</sup>. From the narrative of Polyaeus, we learn that Seuthes with a trick managed to persuade the famous *diadochus* (Successor) and king of Thrace, Lysimachus, to take his troops in uncomfortable places to the west of the Black Sea – perhaps somewhere in today’s Dobroudja, where the king Lysimachus was captured together with his troops, and thus this Seuthes had a major contribution to the capture of Lysimachus by Dromichaetes<sup>17</sup>. The same authors also say that the location of the modern town of Smyadovo to the north of the Rish Pass gives them reason to believe that it was probably this area of the Getae that was governed by Seuthes who was a general of the Getae ruler Dromichaetes. And probably in these lands were the conquered cities of the Getae mentioned by Diodorus (Diod. XXI, 11-12), which cities later Lysimachus was forced to return to them when he was captured<sup>18</sup>. The authors of the first publication of the inscribed tomb from Smyadovo have not attempted to suggest any probable dating for this tomb.

Only on the basis of what they said about the connection with the capture of Lysimachus in the lands of the Getae, one might indirectly conclude that the tomb was built sometime after the beginning of the 3rd century BC. For recently, these events received a relatively more precise chronology – generally between 294 and 290 BC, with 293 or 291 BC being more probable years<sup>19</sup>. Of course, only for general reasons, such a tomb can hardly be dated very accurately, and the more specific dates of other similar tombs from the lands of ancient Thrace have so far almost always provoked serious scholarly discussions and controversies.

In fact, before proceeding to dating this tomb

with inscription, it should be sought and found the exact identification of the persons mentioned in the inscription on it. The most important thing is to find out – who was this woman with the Thracian name Gonimasedze and who exactly was this Seuthes in the inscription? In this respect, the authors of the first publication of the tomb have already made an important assumption that the person named Seuthes in the inscription was related to the events of the capture of the king Lysimachus by the Thracians, led by their ruler Dromichaetes. Unfortunately, they have missed in their comments an article by the late Bulgarian archaeologist and historian I. Venedikov, published a long time ago, in which he, the first and only until recently, had suggested that in the above-mentioned statement by the ancient author Polyaeus about the capture of Lysimachus, this Seuthes, mentioned there, was probably the Thracian ruler Seuthes III<sup>20</sup>. In this connection, I. Venedikov believed that probably the Odrysians of Seuthes III had made a military coalition with the Getae, led by Dromichaetes, to provide a decisive resistance against the conquest of Lysimachus, who, with his right to be appointed a Macedonian satrap of Thrace immediately after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, sought to control more and more lands of ancient Thrace<sup>21</sup>. However, the views of this contemporary author, as well as other historians and archaeologists, until recently were that at that time, Seuthes III had ruled some Thracian lands located south of the Haemus and their political centre was Seuthopolis, and only Dromichaetes had ruled the lands of the Getae to the north of the Haemus Mountains (Stara Planina) in today’s northeastern Bulgaria. Due to the fact that in the aforementioned text of Polyaeus the person Seuthes was presented there not as a ruler but as a *strategus*, the conjecture of I. Venedikov has provoked a lot of mistrust that this personality could be precisely the Thracian ruler Seuthes III and this possibility for identification was rejected years ago<sup>22</sup>.

Even before time, the author of this article had given some suggestions regarding the inscription on this tomb from Smyadovo, which were presented by another author in advance only on my oral report that this tomb probably was made for not a casual woman who was most likely the first wife of the Thracian ruler Seuthes III<sup>23</sup>.

Another contemporary author has just recently made some assumptions concerning the inscription on the tomb of Smyadovo. He denied the possibility that the person named Seuthes in this inscription could be Seuthes III and asked a certain question that, besides being rhetorical, was also directed at the scholarly audience – if we assume the hypothesis that this woman, Gonimasedze, as witnessed in the inscription, was the wife of Seuthes III, then the reasons why this tomb was built so far away from the domains of Seuthes III should be clarified<sup>24</sup>. Perhaps he had in mind the existing in the past 50 years and imposed as quite reasonable hypotheses in modern historiography that the lands of Seuthes III since the times of the Macedonian kings Philip II and Alexander the Great – immediately after the conquest of

<sup>14</sup> MIHAILOV 1970, Nos. 330 bis; 331; 334; 337 bis.

<sup>15</sup> MIHAILOV 1970, Nos. 411; 415; 441; 448.

<sup>16</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 554.

<sup>17</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 554.

<sup>18</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 556.

<sup>19</sup> See YORDANOV 2000, 206-208 with ref.; DELEV 2004, 213-215 with ref.

<sup>20</sup> VENEDIKOV 1986, 6.

<sup>21</sup> VENEDIKOV 1986, 6.

<sup>22</sup> DIMITROV 2008, 76.

<sup>23</sup> KOJCHEV 2008, 129.

<sup>24</sup> RABADZHIEV 2011, 224.

ancient Thrace by Philip II in 341 BC, were situated around the well-known ancient city and centre of the domains of Seuthes III, also bearing his name, Seuthopolis<sup>25</sup>.

Because of the very brief and fragmentary information of the ancient authors, modern scholars, mainly in Bulgaria, have made only general theoretical and hypothetical reconstructions of the political activity of the Thracian ruler Seuthes III<sup>26</sup>. Some researchers of the ancient history of Thrace reasonably have admitted the possibility that one Seuthes mentioned as a *hyparchos* of the Thracian ruler Kersebleptes in a Polyaeus' account (Polyaen. VII, 32), could be identified namely with Seuthes III, and the term "*hyparchos*" was interpreted as „the second rank“ after the ruler<sup>27</sup>. Because of this particular statement by Polyaeus, the scholars assumed that perhaps Seuthes III was a relative of Kersebleptes and originated from the ruling Odrysian dynasty, but what exactly was his kinship with Kersebleptes – it was always unclear. Only the situation was perceived as being certain that after the dethronement of Kersebleptes by the Macedonian king Philip II, Seuthes later became an independent ruler of Thrace as a representative of the Odrysian royal family<sup>28</sup>.

Until recently, it was not certain who the father of Seuthes III was, and in the fragmentary accounts of the ancient authors there was no explicit mention either of the time when Seuthes III lived, nor of the time when this Thracian ruler had ruled, and what exactly was his status on the Balkans since much of the lands of ancient Thrace were conquered by the Macedonian king Philip II in 341 BC. Thanks to some of the ancient authors, today scholars have succeeded in establishing in general terms that the king of Macedonia, Philip II, had conquered and placed under Macedonian control the lands of ancient Thrace, located to the south of the Haemus Mountains (now Stara Planina or the Balkan Mountains), because there are explicit data about the capture of several very important Thracian settlements – Drongilon, Cabyle and Masteira, as well as for some colonization activity of Philip II just to the south of the Haemus. Evidence of this activity is known from the speech of the Greek rhetor and politician Demosthenes for the events in Thrace and the Thracian Chersonese (Demosth. de Cherson. 44), as well as from a statement by Pliny the Elder (Plin. Nat. hist. IV, 18), that the ancient city of Philippopolis in Thrace was named after its founder – ie. the Macedonian king Philip II<sup>29</sup>. The ancient writer Diodorus (Diod. XVI, 71, 2) generally mentioned that Philip II had established significant cities in the most suitable places in Thrace, to pacify the Thracians<sup>30</sup>. Information about the colonization activity of Philip II in the lands of southwestern

Thrace is also presented by Strabo (Strab. VII, fr. 36)<sup>31</sup>. Stephanus of Byzantium (Steph. Byz. s.v. Καλύβη = Cabyle; s.v. Φιλίπποπολις) referred to the ancient cities of Cabyle and Philippopolis as the most important centres of Macedonian presence in inner Thrace<sup>32</sup>.

Despite the clear testimonies of the ancient writers, the conquest of southern Thrace by Philip II after the removal of the Thracian ruler Kersebleptes in 341 BC and the imposed Macedonian control over these lands were perceived in modern historiography with some reservations regarding the final results and the effectiveness of the Macedonian power in political and administrative terms, and were thoroughly commented by a number of contemporary scholars in Bulgaria<sup>33</sup>. But the fate of Kersebleptes remained unknown – whether in 341 BC he had found his death in battle with the Macedonian conqueror or had just lost his power and had hidden himself in an unknown place – there were some hypotheses on these questions that he probably did not die in battle with Philip II but he survived and only abdicated power<sup>34</sup>. Recently, however, a hypothesis has been suggested that the Thracian ruler Kersebleptes probably died along with the other Thracian ruler at the same time, Teres II, in the numerous clashes with the Macedonian commanders of Philip II<sup>35</sup>.

Years ago, the hypothesis was suggested that Seuthes III was probably the brother of the Thracian ruler Kersebleptes<sup>36</sup>, which was also presented by another contemporary author, but with assumptions for other possible kinship relations between both of them<sup>37</sup>. And as to when Seuthes III was born and how long he actually lived – there was no reliable information so far and a single hypothesis was presented that he probably was born around 380 BC and probably lived until about 297 BC, or at about 295 BC at the latest<sup>38</sup>, which final year was perceived as the most likely for the death of Seuthes III until very recently<sup>39</sup>.

Based only on speculatively constructed assumptions, it was previously believed that Seuthes III had resisted the conquests of Philip II in Thrace in 341 BC and, as an independent ruler, succeeded to settle in the lands of the upper reaches of the ancient river Tonzos (today Tundja), between the mountains of Haemus (today Stara Planina) and Sredna Gora, and after the withdrawal of the Macedonian troops, it was from there that he ruled Thrace<sup>40</sup>. Another author has suggested that perhaps immediately after the conquest of Thrace south of the Haemus by Philip II of Macedon, Seuthes had become a vassal ruler of Macedonia, but he had retained his possessions centred on the lands of the Tonzos River (today Tundja) in the area of the later built Seuthopolis and was in good relations with the *strategus* of

<sup>25</sup> DIMITROV 1957; DIMITROV 1960; FOL 1975, 115-117; 189-191 with ref.; DIMITROV, D. P. 1984, 11-17; TACHEVA 2000, 10-12 with ref.; TACHEVA 2006, 187-188 with ref.

<sup>26</sup> FOL 1975, 188-192; YORDANOV 2000, 175-185; TACHEVA 2000; DELEV 2004, 108-116; 118-125; 147-150 with ref.; TACHEVA 2006, 184-210; DIMITROV 2008 with ref.

<sup>27</sup> FOL 1975, 116; TACHEVA 2000, 10; DELEV 2004, 118 with ref.; TACHEVA 2006, 187.

<sup>28</sup> FOL 1975, 116; 188-192 with ref.; TACHEVA 2000, 9-12 with ref.; DELEV 2004, 118-120 with ref.; TACHEVA 2006, 187-189 with ref.

<sup>29</sup> YORDANOV 2000, 56-58 with ref.; BOSHNAKOV 2000, 279-287 with ref.

<sup>30</sup> DELEV 1998, 41 with ref.

<sup>31</sup> GEROV 1961, 169 with ref.; DELEV 2014, 441-443 with ref.

<sup>32</sup> DELEV 1998, 41 with ref.

<sup>33</sup> FOL 1975, 184-188; DELEV 1997, 20; 27-29 with ref.; DELEV 1998, 45 with ref.; YORDANOV 2000, 56-58 with ref.; 78 with ref.; TACHEVA 2000, 7; DELEV 2004, 107-116; 118-125; 147-150 with ref.; TACHEVA 2006, 184-210; YORDANOV 2018, 162 with ref.

<sup>34</sup> YORDANOV 2000, 57.

<sup>35</sup> YORDANOV 2018, 162.

<sup>36</sup> MANOV 1998, 10-11.

<sup>37</sup> DELEV 1998, 44; DELEV 2004, 118 with ref.

<sup>38</sup> TACHEVA 2000, 36; TACHEVA 2006, 193.

<sup>39</sup> DIMITROVA 2015, 220-221 with ref.

<sup>40</sup> FOL 1975, 189-191 with ref.



Europe during the time of Alexander the Great – Antipater from Macedonia<sup>41</sup>. In addition, a hypothesis was presented that precisely during his rapprochement with Antipater, Seuthes III had married Berenice, known by the large inscription from Seuthopolis<sup>42</sup>, who was probably a relative of Antipater and Cassander<sup>43</sup>.

The well-known and very scarce accounts of the ancient authors about Seuthes III, mostly related to the wars between Seuthes III and Lysimachus, were discussed in more detail years ago<sup>44</sup>. Recently, all the information from ancient authors, including the references to Seuthes III in two epigraphic monuments – one from Seuthopolis<sup>45</sup> and one from Athens<sup>46</sup>, were gathered in one place and presented with relevant comments<sup>47</sup>. The inscription from Athens in honour of Rheboulas, the son of Seuthes and brother of Cotys, has always given rise to many debates in modern historiography. The identification of Cotys and Rheboulas in this inscription varies among different authors – from their sure perception as the sons of Seuthes III<sup>48</sup>, in perceiving this situation as too uncertain to allow other hypotheses in earlier publications of various authors in modern European historiography that perhaps in this inscription the personalities are rather Cotys I and Seuthes II<sup>49</sup>.

Despite different comments on the facts available for Seuthes III, almost all questions about his ruling until recently remained unclear. In this respect completely hypothetical remained assumptions that probably Seuthes III appeared on the political scene in Thrace more evidently in the years between 330 and 325 BC<sup>50</sup>. It was believed that he had probably become a ruler with an independent status after 322 BC, when his first clash with Lysimachus was dated, as presented by Diodorus (Diod. XVIII, 14, 2-4), where Seuthes III was called even a king (*basileus*)<sup>51</sup>. In modern historiography it is assumed that the first great battle between Lysimachus and Seuthes III occurred in the spring of 322 BC in an unknown location in Thrace<sup>52</sup>.

In addition, there have been various assumptions about the exact time of construction of the ancient city of Seuthopolis, which was located near the modern town of Kazanlak in the middle of Bulgaria to the south of today's Stara Planina – now unfortunately under the waters of Koprinka dam. By common ideas, mainly based on the approximate dating of some archaeological materials, as well as the hypothetical dates of the bronze coins with the name of Seuthes discovered in Seuthopolis, which ancient city was obviously named after its founder – the Thracian ruler Seuthes III, the construction of Seuthopolis has always been placed in 4<sup>th</sup> century BC – generally between 330 and

310 BC. The discoverer of this ancient city, the archaeologist D. P. Dimitrov, has not committed to a specific dating of its construction, and more generally and cautiously presented the situation that the construction of this *polis* probably took place around the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>53</sup>. The hypotheses of some modern scholars about the likely time of construction of this *polis* in the middle of Thrace are even presented surely with some specific years. Some authors believe that probably Seuthopolis was built around 330 BC<sup>54</sup>, while others have made more general assumptions about the construction of this *polis* in the years before 323 BC<sup>55</sup>. Recently, other contemporary authors began to displace the probable initial year of the construction of Seuthopolis closer to the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, expressing some more general considerations, mainly on the basis of the re-interpreted archaeological evidence that the founding of Seuthopolis happened somewhere in the last 15 years of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>56</sup>. There is also a more precise hypothesis about the founding of this *polis* – around 310 BC<sup>57</sup>. In hypothetical dates, based on common interpretations of archaeological materials from the excavations of this ancient city, possible more reliable references have been sought to date its founding. For example, years ago, although the amphora stamps from the excavations of this ancient city were differently dated by various modern scholars, it was concluded that the earliest amphorae imports into Seuthopolis were around 315 BC<sup>58</sup>. It has been quite recently stated that the earliest amphorae from Seuthopolis probably date back to about 310 BC, yet most amphorae from the excavations of this ancient city were dated generally in the first half of the 3rd century BC, which allowed the assumption that the chronological framing of the existence of Seuthopolis was between about 310 and 260 BC<sup>59</sup>. However, this view about the final date of the existence of Seuthopolis is not consistent with several recent studies, which clearly indicated the actual year of the destruction of Seuthopolis – during the campaign of the Seleucid king Antiochus II in Thrace<sup>60</sup>, or, just in 252 BC<sup>61</sup>, which was adopted by a number of modern scholars in Bulgaria<sup>62</sup>, and has recently been confirmed<sup>63</sup>. So far, it was believed that if there is an archaeologically attested ancient city bearing the name of its ruler and founder – Seuthopolis, Seuthes III has always lived in this city in the centre of Thrace to the south of the Haemus (today Stara Planina) and from there he has ruled his lands.

Since the archaeological excavations of Seuthopolis in the 1950s, the hypothetical view that Seuthes III had begun striking his own coins with his name, but without a royal title, at the very same time when he founded his political centre Seuthopolis, was also widespread, which was

<sup>41</sup> TACHEVA 2000, 10-11 with ref.; TACHEVA 2006, 187-190 with ref.

<sup>42</sup> MIHAILOV 1964, No. 1731; ELVERS 1994.

<sup>43</sup> TACHEVA 2000, 11-12; TACHEVA 2006, 189.

<sup>44</sup> See YORDANOV 2000, 174-176; 180-185 with ref.; DELEV 2004, 116-120; 122-126; 146-150 with ref.

<sup>45</sup> MIHAILOV 1964, No. 1731.

<sup>46</sup> IG, II<sup>2</sup>, 1, No. 349.

<sup>47</sup> DIMITROV 2008.

<sup>48</sup> FOL 1975, 108; 115-116 with ref.; VENEDIKOV 1986, 8; TACHEVA 2000, 11; 45 with ref.; TACHEVA 2006, 186 with ref.

<sup>49</sup> DELEV 2004, 117-118 with ref.; DIMITROV 2008, 70-72 with ref.

<sup>50</sup> TACHEVA 2000, 12; TACHEVA 2006, 185-190 with ref.; DIMITROV 2008, 68-69 with ref.

<sup>51</sup> DIMITROV 2008, 69.

<sup>52</sup> YORDANOV 2000, 175-176; DELEV 2004, 124; DIMITROV 2008, 73.

<sup>53</sup> DIMITROV 1957, 66; DIMITROV 1960, 15; DIMITROV, D. P. 1984, 17.

<sup>54</sup> TACHEVA 1987, 140; TACHEVA 2000, 12; 25 with ref.; DELEV 2004, 119 with ref.

<sup>55</sup> YURUKOVA 1992, 84 with ref.

<sup>56</sup> NANKOV 2008, 45; 56.

<sup>57</sup> CHICHIKOVA/DIMITROV 2016, 37.

<sup>58</sup> BALKANSKA/TZOCHEV 2008, 190.

<sup>59</sup> TZOCHEV 2018, 548.

<sup>60</sup> TACHEVA 1986.

<sup>61</sup> MANOV 1999, 65; TACHEVA 2000, 27.

<sup>62</sup> STOYANOV 2008, 56 with ref.

<sup>63</sup> MANOV 2017, 110-118.

perceived as a symbol of independence<sup>64</sup>. Several years ago, a hypothesis emerged that Seuthes III was a vassal of the kings of Macedonia<sup>65</sup>, which was in complete contradiction with Seuthes' categorically alleged sovereignty in contemporary historiography, and unconditionally, the bronze coinage with his name was presented as evidence of this independence. The bronze coins of Seuthes III have so far been hypothetically dated between the last quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and the early years of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, with different relative chronology of the seven different types according to different views presented by various authors. But in general terms, these coins have always been placed in the chronological frame coinciding with the hypothetical years of ruling of Seuthes III that have traditionally been placed between about 330/325 and 297/295 BC<sup>66</sup>. There is also an opinion that the coinage of Seuthes III probably started immediately after 322 BC, which is based on the naming of Seuthes III as "king" in the abovementioned Diodorus' account about the first battle between Seuthes III and Lysimachus, and for that reason it should be assumed that he had become an independent ruler at least this year, and it was then that he began his coinage, carried out in seven different types and denominations<sup>67</sup>. So far as posthumous was determined only one of the types of bronze coins with the name of Seuthes – the one with the portrait image of Seuthes III on the obverse and Seuthes on horseback on the reverse, as it was thought that these coins were struck after the death of Seuthes III – most likely between 295 and 275 BC<sup>68</sup>.

In modern historiography, it has long ago been assumed that probably Seuthes III had two wives at different times<sup>69</sup>, but until recently no one knew what the name of his first wife was – due to the lack of explicit information from the ancient authors on this issue and the lack of an epigraphic monument. Another very important issue that has been dealt with by the scholars so far has been: from which royal house of Hellenism was Berenice, mentioned only in the large inscription from Seuthopolis, who was identified with great reasons as the second wife of Seuthes III<sup>70</sup>. Previous hypotheses about the origin of Berenice due to the lack of any evidence of ancient authors, ranged widely<sup>71</sup>. Recently suggested assumptions that she probably originated from the Ptolemaic royal family<sup>72</sup> were confirmed categorically<sup>73</sup>.

In a recently published study<sup>74</sup>, the very important question of the exact origin of the Thracian ruler Seuthes III found its final decision. It has already been found that the early period of life of Seuthes III was quite different<sup>75</sup> from the hypothetical constructions that were offered until recently. In fact, in 341 BC, the Thracian ruler Kersebleptes

had died in one of the battles against the troops of Philip II near Haemus, when Seuthes III and one of the four sons of Kersebleptes, Medistas, had to defend the Thracian city of Cabyle<sup>76</sup>. When the troops of the Macedonian conqueror had approached Cabyle, then Seuthes III together with his relative, Medistas, decided that they would not resist the assaults of the troops of Philip II and escaped from Cabyle in order to be saved<sup>77</sup>. The real situation about the destiny of Seuthes III and the early period of his life is quite different from previous hypothetical ideas. He had not gone and had not even then settled in the lands between the Balkan Mountains (Stara Planina) and Sredna Gora in the valley of the river Tonzos, as assumed so far<sup>78</sup>.

Until recently, no one had even noticed that the place where Seuthopolis was located was quite flat and easily attackable, so that the one appointed, after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, to be the new ruler of Thrace, Lysimachus, would not have left such a Thracian centre as Seuthopolis easier to conquer, but would have taken it if that city had already been actually built at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. D. P. Dimitrov has already suggested that an earlier *tyrsis* at the site of the later Seuthopolis was destroyed by Philip II<sup>79</sup>. Also, until recently, no one had noticed that no ancient author had said that Seuthes had started a campaign with his troops from Seuthopolis when he was preparing to fight against Lysimachus. This could mean that in those times Seuthes III was elsewhere, and Seuthopolis had not existed yet.

In fact, in 341 BC, after the death of Kersebleptes, Seuthes III, along with his family and Medistas, had rescued themselves from the danger of being captured or murdered by the Macedonian conqueror Philip II, escaping to the north of the Haemus Mountains in the Getae settlement, well known from the testimonies of Diodorus (Diod. XXI, 12, 2) as Helis<sup>80</sup>. The ancient settlement Helis has recently been successfully localized near the modern village of Sveshtari, Razgrad district, in Bulgaria<sup>81</sup>. It has already been found with certainty that actually Seuthes III was the younger son of the Thracian ruler Cotys I (383 – 359 BC) and was the brother of Kersebleptes (359 – 341 BC). It was also found that Seuthes III was born in 378 BC in the political centre and the capital of the Odrysians – Odrysa, which after its conquest by Philip II of Macedon in 341 BC was renamed to Philippopolis<sup>82</sup>. The ancient settlement Odrysa (Ὀδρύσα) is mentioned by Stephanus of Byzantium (Steph. Byz. s.v. Ὀδρύσαι) as a *polis* of the Odrysians in Thrace, without any further information. But it was quite logical that Philip II would give his own name to the capital of the Odrysians, which he had conquered, to be named Philippopolis<sup>83</sup>. In fact, it has recently been found out and confirmed that the ancient main political centre of the Odrysians and, actually, their capital, since the time of the Odrysian ruler Teres I in the first decades of 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, was the settlement called Odrysa, which was located just

<sup>64</sup> DIMITROV, K. 1984, 36-38; YURUKOVA 1992, 84-102; TACHEVA 2000, 12; TACHEVA 2006, 189; 193.

<sup>65</sup> TACHEVA 2000, 12-13; TACHEVA 2006, 189; 196.

<sup>66</sup> DIMITROV, K. 1984, 7-135; YURUKOVA 1992, 84-103; PETER 1997, 172-202; TOPALOV 2001, 7-67; TACHEVA 2006, 194-201.

<sup>67</sup> DIMITROV, K. 1984, 36-38; DIMITROV 2008, 69.

<sup>68</sup> DIMITROV, K. 1984, 36-39; DIMITROV 1988, 15.

<sup>69</sup> MIHAILOV 1964, commentary on IGBulg III, 2, No. 1731; FOL 1975, 116.

<sup>70</sup> MIHAILOV 1964, commentary on IGBulg III, 2, No. 1731; FOL 1975, 116.

<sup>71</sup> DIMITROV 2008, 75 with ref.

<sup>72</sup> ELLERS 1994, 260 with note 61 there; RABADZHIEV 2002, 41-42; CHICHIKOVA/DIMITROV 2016, 28.

<sup>73</sup> MANOV 2017, 67-69.

<sup>74</sup> MANOV 2017.

<sup>75</sup> MANOV 2017, 35-46.

<sup>76</sup> MANOV 2017, 38-39.

<sup>77</sup> MANOV 2017, 38-39.

<sup>78</sup> FOL 1975, 189 with ref.

<sup>79</sup> DIMITROV, D. P. 1984, 12.

<sup>80</sup> MANOV 2017, 39.

<sup>81</sup> See DIMITROV 1987; DELEV 1990.

<sup>82</sup> MANOV 2017, 36-38.

<sup>83</sup> MANOV 2017, 36-38.

in the middle of southern Thrace on the ancient Hebros River (today Maritsa) – in the place of the modern city of Plovdiv<sup>84</sup>.

In 351 BC, Seuthes III had married his first wife, who was exactly named Gonimasedze, as it is testified in the inscription on the tomb from Smyadovo<sup>85</sup>. In fact, this Gonimasedze originated from the settlement of the Getae, known as Helis, and she was born there in 370 BC, being in fact a granddaughter of the well-known local ruler of the Getae – Cothelas<sup>86</sup>. When in 341 BC, Seuthes III, together with his family and the son of Kersebleptes – Medistas, escaped from Philip II, they were guests at the home of Cothelas until 339 BC. Forced by the circumstances of a threat to his subjugated lands by Philip II of Macedon, the ruler of the Getae in this region, Cothelas, led his troops together with the troops of Philip II and they jointly defeated the Scythian ruler Ateas (Ataias), in 339 BC, expelling the Scythians to the north of the Danube<sup>87</sup>. As a guarantee for concluding a political alliance with Cothelas, Philip II had taken as his wife Medopa (or Meda), the daughter of Cothelas, and the events about this marriage of Philip II are known by reports of the ancient writers Athenaeus (Athen. Deipnosophist. XIII, 5, 557c) and Jordanes (Iord. Get. X, 65). The accounts of the ancient authors about the presence of the Scythian ruler Ataias to the south of the Danube in the lands of present-day Dobroudja were recently presented in detail with relevant comments<sup>88</sup>.

When Philip II, along with his troops, returned to Macedonia, then in that same 339 BC, the very old Cothelas granted power over the lands of the Getae to his eldest son, Dromichaetes. On his part, as a sign of respect for Seuthes as the oldest representative of the Odrysian royal family, Dromichaetes offered to him to become a co-ruler of the lands of the Getae which had remained independent and outside the Macedonian control<sup>89</sup>. The other major Thracian tribes north of the Haemus – the Triballi in northwestern Thrace – always tried to have an independent political life. This is evident by the reports of Arrian (Arr. Anab. I, 2, 1; I, 4, 2), Plutarch (Plut. Alex. XI), and Strabo (Strab. VII, 3, 8) about the campaign of Alexander the Great against the Triballi in 335 BC, in which one of their rulers named Syrmus was mentioned even as a king.

The wedding of Seuthes III and Gonimasedze had taken place in the old Odrysian capital, Odrysa, in 351 BC<sup>90</sup>. From his first marriage Seuthes III had a total of five children – three sons and two daughters<sup>91</sup>. Although Seuthes III was the younger son of Cotys I, unlike his older brother, Kersebleptes, who had failed to observe the traditions of the Odrysian dynastic family for naming his children, Seuthes III strictly respected them with regard to the children of male gender. So he gave the name Cotys to his firstborn son, who was born in 350 BC – in honour of his father, Cotys I (383 – 359 BC)<sup>92</sup>. To his second son, who was born in 349 BC,

Seuthes III gave the name Rheboulas, which was the same as the name of his father-in-law and the father of his first wife, Gonimasedze<sup>93</sup>.

It is now quite clear that in the inscription from Athens, where Rheboulas was honoured, and his brother Cotys was also mentioned – both represented as the sons of Seuthes – were actually attested the first two sons of Seuthes from his first and earlier marriage, as it has been assumed by some modern scholars so far<sup>94</sup>. This Rheboulas, the son of Seuthes III, however, was not sent to Athens by his father because of some political rapprochement with the Greeks that was directed against Macedonia, which hypotheses had existed years ago<sup>95</sup>, but he was sent in 331 BC by his father in order to learn better the ancient Greek language and to live far away from the constant military threats hanging over the lands that were still independent in Thrace – the lands of the Thracian tribes between the Haemus and the Danube. Rheboulas rapidly turned to the situation in the Greek *megapolis*, married a woman from the city of Athens, and although he was too young, he became involved in the political life of the great Greek city, which is why, as early as 330 BC, he was honoured with a special decree, which is the repeatedly debated inscription from Athens<sup>96</sup>. Recently, the analysis of the text of this inscription clearly showed that this Rheboulas only lived in Athens and was not sent by his father Seuthes III with a special political mission directed against ancient Macedonia, and this was perceived by some scholars as a very real fact<sup>97</sup>.

Later, the family of Seuthes III and his first wife Gonimasedze had two daughters who were given random Thracian names. The older daughter was named Pyroula, a well attested common Thracian name<sup>98</sup>, and she was born in 347 BC<sup>99</sup>. The first three children by the first wife of Seuthes III had been born in the Odrysian political centre, Odrysa, and the last two were born in Helis, because, since 341 BC, the family of Seuthes III already lived in Helis. The younger daughter of Seuthes III and Gonimasedze was named Paibine, who was born in 340 BC in Helis<sup>100</sup>. The name Paibine is defined as Thracian and is attested in an inscription from Apollonia Pontica<sup>101</sup>. Many years later, in 307 BC, in the settlement known as Helis, one other son was born in the family of Seuthes III when his wife was already quite old – in fact 63 years old, and that was a biological miracle, but a fact<sup>102</sup>. This late-born son was given the name of Dromichaetes – in honour of the other son of Cothelas, with the same name Dromichaetes, with whom, practically, from 339 BC until 294 BC, Seuthes III was a co-ruler of the lands of the Getae which remained independent after the conquest of southern Thrace by the Macedonian king Philip II.

When Alexander the Great has conducted his campaign in Thrace in 335 BC, the march was mainly directed against the Thracian tribes Triballi and Getae – to the north of the

<sup>84</sup> MANOV 2017, 36 with ref.

<sup>85</sup> MANOV 2017, 39-41, 41 with fig. 8 there.

<sup>86</sup> MANOV 2017, 39-42.

<sup>87</sup> MANOV 2017, 40.

<sup>88</sup> DRAGANOV 2015, 41-47 with ref.; LAZARENKO 2015, 115-149 with ref.; 384-389.

<sup>89</sup> MANOV 2017, 40-42.

<sup>90</sup> MANOV 2017, 39.

<sup>91</sup> MANOV 2017, 42.

<sup>92</sup> MANOV 2017, 42.

<sup>93</sup> MANOV 2017, 42.

<sup>94</sup> FOL 1975, 108; 115-16 with ref.

<sup>95</sup> FOL 1975, 108.

<sup>96</sup> IG, II<sup>3</sup>, I, No. 349.

<sup>97</sup> TACHEVA 2000, 11 with ref.; TACHEVA 2006, 186 with ref.

<sup>98</sup> DETSCHEW 1976, 386.

<sup>99</sup> MANOV 2017, 42-44.

<sup>100</sup> MANOV 2017, 42-44.

<sup>101</sup> MIHAILOV 1970, No. 430.

<sup>102</sup> MANOV 2017, 42.



Haemus, as can be seen from Arrian's detailed narrative (Arr. Anab. I, 1-4). However, Dromichaetes and Seuthes III had fled to the north of the Danube<sup>103</sup>. Alexander the Great had also crossed the Danube along with his troops by conquering and destroying a settlement of the Getae, with an unknown location in modern Romania<sup>104</sup>. After Alexander had made sacrifices on the bank of the river, dedicated to Zeus the Saviour, Heracles and the river god Istros, then he crossed the Danube back. In fact, Alexander only formally believed he had subjugated these lands, but when he returned to Macedonia, Dromichaetes and Seuthes III also returned to their political centre and they continued to rule the lands of the Getae to the south of the Danube<sup>105</sup>. Later on, these lands were constantly claimed by the new ruler of southern Thrace, designated by the right of the distribution of Alexander's empire as a deputy of the Macedonian power in Thrace – Lysimachus – from 323 BC onwards. This power of Lysimachus in Thrace – in the lands south of the Haemus, as well as along the Black Sea coasts to the Danube Delta, was not only nominal, as it was considered years ago<sup>106</sup>, but was quite real, which was later perceived as a certain fact in modern historiography<sup>107</sup>. In fact, great difficulties for conquering the lands north of the Haemus, as well as for the occupation of the lands adjacent to the ancient cities on the western shores of the Black Sea – especially those to the north of the Haemus, Lysimachus had with the Getae tribes there. These lands of the Getae to the north of the Haemus – between the Yantra River and the Danube Delta, were ruled in those times by the two co-rulers – Dromichaetes and Seuthes III, who were relatives, and these lands were outside of direct Macedonian control<sup>108</sup>.

The ancient writer Diodorus (Diod. XIX, 73, 1-10) had presented in more details yet another great battle between Lysimachus and Seuthes III during the rebellions of the Black Sea cities Odessos, Callatis and Histria, when the inhabitants of these cities had driven away the garrisons of Lysimachus that were left there probably after 322 BC. Long-standing wars with these Black Sea Greek cities seeking independence from the power of Lysimachus are dated fairly precisely between 313 and 310 BC<sup>109</sup>. According to Diodorus, these Black Sea cities had created a coalition, in which the neighbouring Thracians and even Scythians were also involved. Lysimachus, when he learned about these revolts, immediately crossed with his troops to the north of the Haemus and established his camp near Odessos. After this city had surrendered, Lysimachus succeeded to take also Histria. Then he besieged Callatis, but he learned about the help to the city of Callatis, which was sent by Antigonos Monophthalmus both by sea and by land. That is why he left enough troops to continue the siege of Callatis and he headed the best of his troops to cross back the Haemus to the south.

But when he prepared to cross the Haemus, he realized that

<sup>103</sup> MANOV 2017, 44.

<sup>104</sup> ILIESCU 1990, 101-113; 104 – suggested a location of this settlement supposedly near the modern town of Zimnicea in Romania; YORDANOV 2000, 126 with ref.

<sup>105</sup> MANOV 2017, 44.

<sup>106</sup> FOL 1975, 23; 192.

<sup>107</sup> TACHEVA 1987, 39; DRAGANOV 1993, 18; TACHEVA 2000, 9; DELEV 2004, 150 with ref.

<sup>108</sup> MANOV 2017, 42-46.

<sup>109</sup> See DELEV 2004, 148-156; 167-170 with ref.

he would face the forces of Seuthes in front of him.

The new major battle between troops of Seuthes III and Lysimachus has occurred, by the words of Diodorus, somewhere on the approaches to one of the passes through the Haemus Mountains (today Stara Planina), which were occupied by significant troops of Seuthes III, who at that time had stood on the side of Antigonos Monophthalmus. This battle is dated by modern scholars as most probably occurred in 312 BC<sup>110</sup>. Finally, Lysimachus defeated the Thracians in this battle and crossed the Haemus, heading back against the troops of Antigonos' strategus, Pausanias, who was somewhere in southern Thrace near the site called Hieron – probably to the north of the Thracian Chersonese. According to some assumptions, the pass through the Haemus, most commonly mentioned by Diodorus, was probably the present Pass Aytos – Provadiya<sup>111</sup>. Until now, only Venedikov has suggested that this battle was most likely to have happened in the Rish Pass<sup>112</sup>.

Indeed, the eldest son of Seuthes III, Cotys, found his death in the great battle for the defense of the city of Callatis in 310 BC<sup>113</sup>, which eventually was conquered by Lysimachus in that same year. A reflection of the same events about the siege and capture of Callatis by Lysimachus is the account of Diodorus (Diod. XX, 25, 1) about the escape of roughly a thousand inhabitants of this Black Sea city to the Bosporan ruler Eumelus, the events being dated precisely in 310/309 BC<sup>114</sup>.

Years ago, special attention was paid to the fact that, in a statement of Polybius (Polyb. fr. 102), preserved in the Byzantine lexicon Suda<sup>115</sup>, this same Dromichaetes, who participated in the capture of the king Lysimachus, was presented symptomatically as "the king of the Odrysians"<sup>116</sup>. According to one of the opinions, Dromichaetes was presented so because of the possible death of Seuthes III, and this Dromichaetes headed the coalition of Getae and Odrysians, which won a decisive victory over Lysimachus<sup>117</sup>. According to another opinion, probably one of the clashes between Lysimachus and the Thracian Getae tribes must be dated between 311 and 309 BC, when Seuthes III was either outside the big political game or was no longer among the living, which led Dromichaetes to the head of the united coalition of Odrysians and Getae<sup>118</sup>. The information in the lexicon Suda has been commented by another author quite rightly that perhaps in this way Dromichaetes was presented as a continuator of the traditions of the old Odrysian dynasty, which in the period of the 5<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC had included within the limits of the Odrysian state and the lands between the Haemus and the Danube, and the mention of a certain Seuthes in the Polyaeus' account about the capture of Lysimachus also

<sup>110</sup> ELVERS 1994, 247 with note 14 there; DELEV 2004, 148 with ref.

<sup>111</sup> TACHEVA 1987, 14; YORDANOV 2000, 183; TACHEVA 2000, 13; TACHEVA 2006, 191.

<sup>112</sup> VENEDIKOV 1986, 6.

<sup>113</sup> MANOV 2017, 42.

<sup>114</sup> See DELEV 2004, 155; 168 with ref.

<sup>115</sup> SUDA ON LINE, s.v. Ἀνδρομαί – alpha, 1862, <http://www.stoa.org/sol>. Accessed 5 April 2019.

<sup>116</sup> TACHEVA 1987, 15; YORDANOV 2000, 205-208; DELEV 2004, 218.

<sup>117</sup> TACHEVA 1987, 15.

<sup>118</sup> YORDANOV 2000, 205.



leads to associations with the Odrysians<sup>119</sup>.

More recently, another author<sup>120</sup> has nevertheless reached similar ideas – namely, for a joint ruling of Dromichaetes and Seuthes III, expressing his opinion both on the basis of the already mentioned Polybius' statement, extant in the Byzantine lexicon Suda, as well based on his own hypotheses, but he missed the study published one year earlier<sup>121</sup>. He also assumed for certain that Seuthes, mentioned in three places in the Polyaeus' account, was actually Seuthes III<sup>122</sup>. However, he has presented his ideas much more extreme – that Seuthes III was dependent on the ruler of the Getae, Dromichaetes<sup>123</sup>. Despite some interesting hypotheses in this new article, it is unclear where exactly Dromichaetes resided, and some vague suggestion was made that he had passed to the south of the Danube, coming somewhere from the lands north of that river, and he had subordinated to his power the Odrysians, respectively also Seuthes III<sup>124</sup>.

In fact, Dromichaetes was called „the king of the Odrysians“ precisely because he was a co-ruler along with Seuthes III of the Thracian lands to the north of the Haemus, which remained independent and beyond Macedonian control. In the summer of 294 BC, thanks to a stratagem, invented by Seuthes III, which was presented in detail by Polyaeus (VII, 25), the troops of the king Lysimachus were taken to hard-to-reach and waterless places in the present-day Dobroudja where they were captured along with their king by the troops of Seuthes III and Dromichaetes, and taken to the political centre of these two Thracian co-rulers, which is known as Helis (Diod. XXI, 12, 2)<sup>125</sup>. At the same time, Demetrius Poliorcetes had already entered Pella and became king of Macedonia<sup>126</sup>. Shortly thereafter, in the same 294 BC, Demetrius Poliorcetes had decided to invade Thrace in the news of the capture of Lysimachus (Plut. Demetr. XXXIX, 6)<sup>127</sup>. But when the two Thracian co-rulers, Seuthes III and Dromichaetes, learned that Demetrius Poliorcetes had invaded Thrace, they released Lysimachus<sup>128</sup>. Attempts to determine a more accurate chronology of these events in the period between 294 and 291 BC – the capture of Lysimachus by Dromichaetes, the enthronement of Demetrius Poliorcetes in Macedonia and the reason for the release of Lysimachus, were discussed in detail years ago<sup>129</sup>.

In the same 294 BC, the first wife of Seuthes III – Gonimasedze, had gone from this world, and Seuthes III took advantage of the situation and asked Lysimachus to find for him another wife<sup>130</sup>. From that 294 BC onwards, the history of Thrace would have been different. As a sign of gratitude for his release and for the saving of his life, in the same 294 BC, Lysimachus left Dromichaetes as his *strategus* in the lands of the Getae. Lysimachus also made Seuthes

III his *strategus* in the lands of Thrace to the south of the Haemus Mountains and allowed him to move and build a *tyrsis* for himself in the place of the future Seuthopolis<sup>131</sup>. Besides, Lysimachus committed himself to finding a new wife for Seuthes. As early as 293 BC, Lysimachus found for him a second wife named Berenice<sup>132</sup>, whose name is well known by the large inscription from Seuthopolis<sup>133</sup>. It has already been established with certainty that this Berenice is the same woman known so far with her name Philotera, and she was actually the daughter of Ptolemy I and the sister of Arsinoe II and Ptolemy II, and she arrived in Thrace from Ptolemy's Egypt<sup>134</sup>. From his marriage with Berenice, Seuthes III had four sons, well known also from the Seuthopolis inscription<sup>135</sup>.

As for the time of the construction of Seuthopolis, it was already found that the *tyrsis* of Seuthes III was built between the autumn of 294 and the autumn of 293 BC<sup>136</sup>. After the wedding of Seuthes III and Berenice, in 293 BC, architects and engineers came from the Ptolemaic Egypt, who had designed a new city plan in the middle of Thrace, insofar as it allowed the site provided for that purpose on the banks of the river Tonzos (today's Tundja). The new city was built between the spring of 292 and the autumn of 290 BC and was named Seuthopolis by his ruler Seuthes III<sup>137</sup>, and the *tyrsis* of Seuthes III was transformed into a palace<sup>138</sup>. In fact, when in 294 BC, Seuthes had moved from the settlement of Helis, which was located to the north of the Haemus, and he had passed south of the Haemus to build a new *tyrsis* in the place of the future Seuthopolis, he had come with property, some of which were some Greek amphorae, which were reused many times for many years due to their good making and strength. Thus, it is now easier to explain the few amphorae with amphora stamps from the archaeological excavations of Seuthopolis, dating back to the end of 4<sup>th</sup> century BC – because when people move from one place to another, they transfer from their previous habitat and some of their home property used before moving.

It has already been found with certainty that Seuthes III had gone from this world in 279 BC when he was 99 years old<sup>139</sup>. In the same 279 BC, the Celts/Galatians came in Thrace and founded a new state. The founder of the new state in Thrace and, in fact, the father of the future king Kavaros – Kersibaulos, took to wife Berenice in the autumn of 279 BC<sup>140</sup>. Thus, the new state of the Galatians in Thrace was founded, which is more appropriate to be called the Galatian-Ptolemaic state in Thrace<sup>141</sup>. In 278 BC, the future king of this state was born – Kavaros<sup>142</sup>. King Kavaros would become not only the greatest king of Thrace, but he became one of the greatest kings of Hellenism. In fact, Seuthopolis was one of the three capitals that were maintained simultaneously

<sup>119</sup> DELEV 2004, 218.

<sup>120</sup> PETKOV 2018, 83-91.

<sup>121</sup> MANOV 2017, 42-46.

<sup>122</sup> PETKOV 2018, 84; 86.

<sup>123</sup> PETKOV 2018, 84; 86.

<sup>124</sup> PETKOV 2018, 86 with ref.

<sup>125</sup> MANOV 2017, 45.

<sup>126</sup> DELEV 2004, 198 with ref.

<sup>127</sup> DELEV 2004, 214 with ref.

<sup>128</sup> MANOV 2017, 46.

<sup>129</sup> DELEV 2004, 212-215 with ref.

<sup>130</sup> MANOV 2017, 46.

<sup>131</sup> MANOV 2017, 46.

<sup>132</sup> MANOV 2017, 46.

<sup>133</sup> MIHAILOV 1964, No. 1731; ELVERS 1994.

<sup>134</sup> MANOV 2017, 67.

<sup>135</sup> MIHAILOV 1964, No. 1731; ELVERS 1994.

<sup>136</sup> MANOV 2017, 68.

<sup>137</sup> MANOV 2017, 68-69.

<sup>138</sup> See DIMITROV 1960, 13.

<sup>139</sup> MANOV 2017, 64; 68.

<sup>140</sup> MANOV 2017, 64.

<sup>141</sup> MANOV 2017, 93.

<sup>142</sup> MANOV 2017, 69.

by the Galatian-Ptolemaic state in Thrace<sup>143</sup>. Following the footsteps of Alexander the Great, the king Kavaros began his political activities, starting different projects when he was still 16 years old – in 262 BC. Recently it was found that the bronze coins with the name of Seuthes, in seven different types and denominations, were struck as posthumous issues by projects and by orders of the king Kavaros between 262 and 252 BC in Seuthopolis – as a sign of respect for Seuthes III<sup>144</sup>. They were not struck as lifetime issues of Seuthes III because Seuthes III himself had no coinage rights as a *strategus* of Lysimachus as he had been since 294 BC, and even with the permission of Lysimachus being built the new city and a centre of Seuthes III – Seuthopolis. The rights to coinage at that time were the privilege only of the Successors of Alexander the Great<sup>145</sup>.

When we return to the main issue here – namely to the tomb with the inscription, from Smyadovo, we should quite logically suppose that Seuthes III probably had himself taken care of the funeral of his first wife and ordered that a tomb be built for her. The real situation, however, is very different from everything written about tombs in Thrace. The theoretically constructed ideas about building tombs by anonymous Thracian rulers is a way of thinking that has existed for over 100 years. Because until now it has always been thought that when the tombs were found in Thrace, they were built by Thracian rulers. But the real situation is that the Thracian rulers had neither the ambitions nor the financial possibilities to build tombs. The actual situation regarding particularly the tomb from Smyadovo is that it was built years later after the death of Gonimasedze – in the spring of 252 BC, on order of the new and most powerful ruler of the ancient lands of Thrace – the king Kavaros. He was the king of Thrace with the greatest financial resources, who had made with vigour numerous construction projects<sup>146</sup>. This tomb was made on his order to be a tribute to the first wife of Seuthes III, who was moved from the place in the humble necropolis in the vicinity of the settlement of Helis, her remains were cremated, being put in an urn and reburied in the newly built special tomb for her near today's Smyadovo, district of Shumen, along with special gifts from the king Kavaros. Unfortunately, in the case of twice plundering this tomb nowadays nothing remained of its inventory, and during the archaeological excavations in 2000 it was found that the wall between the antechamber and the burial chamber was destroyed and even the stone slabs on the floor of the burial chamber were overturned<sup>147</sup>.

The first wife of Seuthes III originated from the Getae lands – the lands to the north of the Haemus Mountains, as it already became clear, and she had nothing to do with the later Seuthopolis, and therefore, at the decision of the king Kavaros, her tomb was built in the lands of the Getae to the north of the Haemus. The site of the tomb was chosen not by chance near the present town of Smyadovo, which is located exactly on the northern side of the approaches to the most important, lowest and most convenient pass in this part of Stara Planina – the Rish Pass, which was used

as the main pass for the connection of the lands of southern Thrace with the lands to the north of the Haemus to the Danube throughout the antiquity, and even used as such an important passage nowadays. In fact, the king Kavaros found out that the major battles of Seuthes III – while he resided to the north of the Haemus Mountains (today Stara Planina) in the settlement known as Helis, and from there he ruled together with Dromichaetes the independent lands of Thrace, which remained outside the Macedonian control – against the troops of the king Lysimachus, always took place in the area of today's Smyadovo, precisely at the northern end of today's Rish Pass (fig. 10). Thus, by the tomb on which he ordered to be written the names of the first wife of Seuthes III – Gonimasedze, as well as of Seuthes himself, the king Kavaros also paid tribute to Seuthes III for the battles in the past against the mighty Hellenistic king Lysimachus exactly at that place.

Moreover, by building a special tomb for the first wife of Seuthes, the king Kavaros wanted also to show his respect to the youngest son of Seuthes III and Gonimasedze, who was named Dromichaetes, whom the king Kavaros had appointed as his local governor of the lands of northeastern Thrace, with the centre of the ancient settlement of Helis. Despite that apparently demonstrated respect, this Dromichaetes had committed treason against the king Kavaros and in the same 252 BC he had gone along with the greatest enemy of the king of Thrace – the Seleucid king Antiochus II Theos, who had invaded Thrace with numerous troops. As a confirmation of this fact may serve the Polyaeus' account (Polyaen. IV, 16) about the presence of two Thracian noblemen among the troops of Antiochus II in Thrace – Dromichaetes and Teres. About Teres, there was a suggestion that he was probably the son of Seuthes III, mentioned in the Seuthopolis inscription, and that Dromichaetes was supposed to be from the Getae lands<sup>148</sup>. In fact, this Dromichaetes, mentioned by Polyaeus, was precisely the youngest son of Seuthes III by his first wife, and Teres was indeed one of the sons of Seuthes III by his second wife, also mentioned in the large inscription from Seuthopolis<sup>149</sup>. In the summer of 252 BC, a great war broke out between the troops of Antiochus II and the troops of Kavaros in the lands of Thrace, which has already been presented in quite a large detail in a recently published study<sup>150</sup>. Unfortunately, just during this war, in the same 252 BC, the ancient city of Seuthopolis was conquered and destroyed<sup>151</sup>.

We can now safely say that the first battle between the troops of Seuthes III and Lysimachus, which occurred most likely in the spring of 322 BC<sup>152</sup>, as well as the other significant battle between Seuthes III and Lysimachus, which took place in 312 BC<sup>153</sup> – both battles being well represented by the ancient writer Diodorus (Diod. XVIII, 14, 2-4; XIX, 73, 1-10), were carried out in the immediate vicinity of the modern town of Smyadovo – in all cases, at the northern side of the Rish Pass, which is situated in the eastern part of the Balkan Mountains (Stara Planina).

<sup>148</sup> FOL 1975, 120.

<sup>149</sup> MIHAILOV 1964, No. 1731, ELMERS 1994.

<sup>150</sup> MANOV 2017, 110-124.

<sup>151</sup> TACHEVA 1986; MANOV 1999, 65; TACHEVA 2000, 27; MANOV 2017, 110-118.

<sup>152</sup> YORDANOV 2000, 175-176; DELEV 2004, 124; DIMITROV 2008, 73.

<sup>153</sup> ELMERS 1994, 247 with note 14 there; DELEV 2004, 148 with ref.

<sup>143</sup> MANOV 2017, 93; 182.

<sup>144</sup> MANOV 2017, 107-109.

<sup>145</sup> MANOV 2017, 107-109.

<sup>146</sup> MANOV 2017, 188.

<sup>147</sup> ATANASOV/NEDELICHEV 2002, 550.

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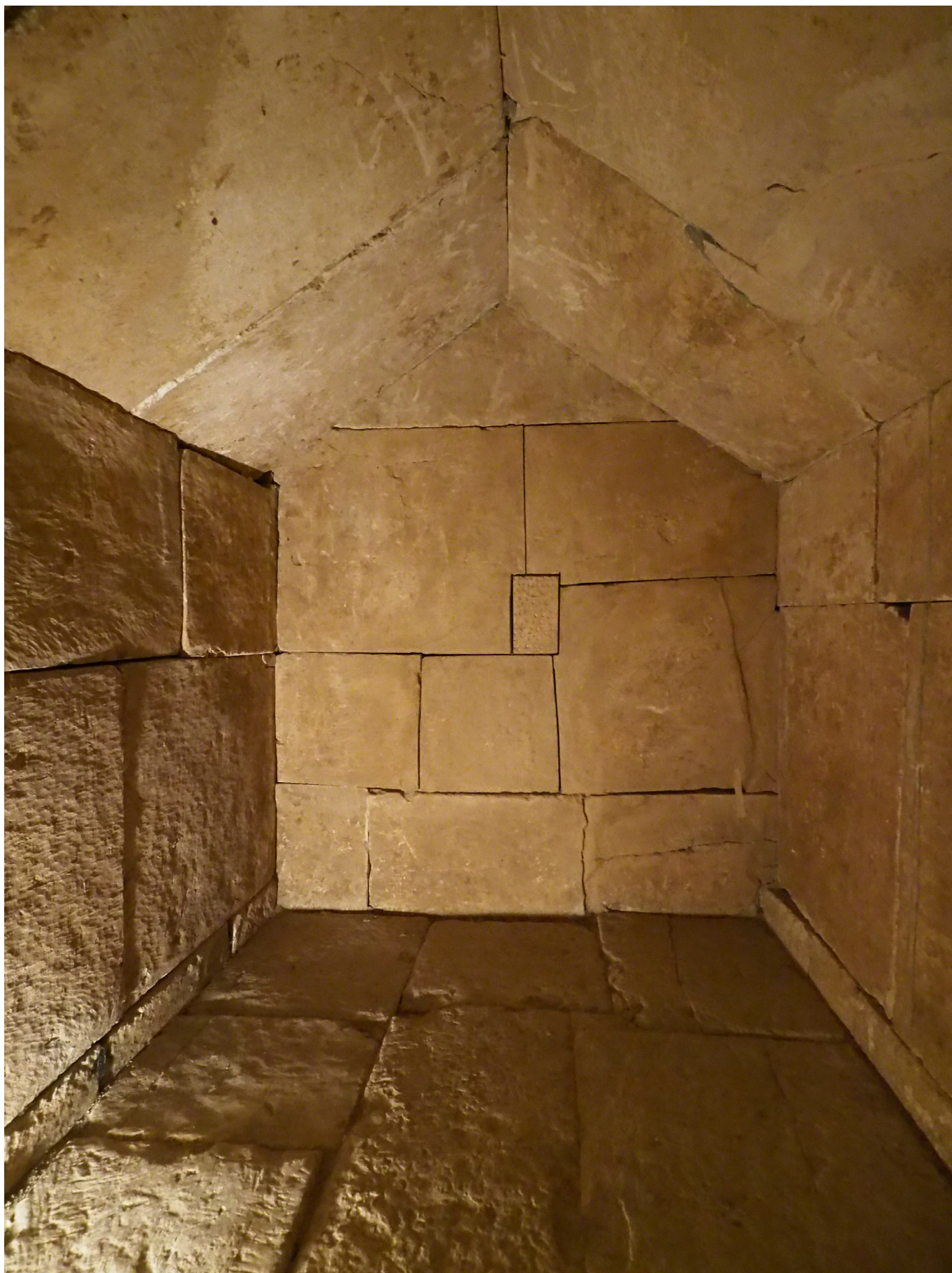
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**Fig. 1.** The tomb from Smyadovo, exhibited in one of the halls of the Regional History Museum – Shumen (photo: Krassimir Georgiev).





**Fig. 2.** The double-pitched roof in the burial chamber of the tomb (photo: Krassimir Georgiev).





**Fig. 3.** The partition wall between the antechamber and the burial chamber – a look from the inside (photo: Krassimir Georgiev).





**Fig. 4.** The entrance on the facade of the tomb from Smyadovo (photo: Krassimir Georgiev).





**Fig. 5.** The entrance to the burial chamber inside (photo: Krassimir Georgiev).





**Fig. 6.** Semi-columns with Ionic type capitals on both sides of the facade of the tomb (photo: Krassimir Georgiev).





**Fig. 7.** The central semi-circular console above the entrance with a large palmette with two spirals (photo: Krassimir Georgiev).



**Fig. 8.** Stone architrave with Greek inscription above the entrance of the tomb (photo: Krassimir Georgiev).





**Fig. 9.** The Greek inscription above the entrance to the tomb – detail (photo: Krassimir Georgiev).



**Fig. 10.** Map with the location of the tomb near the modern town of Smyadovo in Bulgaria at the northern side of the Rish Pass, as well as the locations of the ancient settlements of Odrysa, Helis and Seuthopolis, in which Seutes III had resided in different periods of his life (image source: the base of the map – from Wikipedia: [https://bg.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relief\\_Map\\_of\\_Bulgaria.jpg](https://bg.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relief_Map_of_Bulgaria.jpg). Created by: Bulgaria\_location\_map.svg; NordNordWest.

The additional elements are put by the author of the article here).

*Note of the author:* On the map the names of ancient settlements are presented in capital letters, and the names of modern settlements are in normal letters and put in brackets.