Petrified voices:
evolution of the Graeco-Roman epigraphic production in space and time

Petra Heřmánková
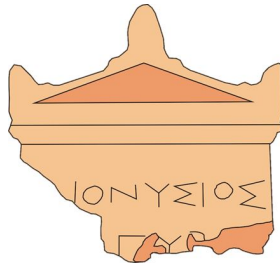
Petrified voices

messages on a permanent medium (stone, Greek [πέτρα](#) petra)

ca. 600,000 Greek & Latin inscriptions around the Mediterranean

8th c. BC - 6th c. AD, produced unevenly in diverse communities

WHY?

Case study: Greek epigraphic production in Thrace

- SE Balkans
- digitising & transforming printed material
- DIY approach*

1929

E211. Ἀπότμημα τιμητικῆς (;) ἐπιγραφῆς τοῦ δήμου Σαμοθράκων

Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Συλλογὴ Μαρωνείας ΑΚΜ 387. Τὰ ἀκριβῆ στοιχεῖα προελεύσεως, τὸ σχῆ ὕλη καὶ οἱ διαστάσεις τοῦ μνημείου παραμένουν ἄγνωστα. Ὁ λίθος δὲν ἐντοπίσθηκε οὔτε Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Συλλογὴ Μαρωνείας οὔτε στὸ Μουσεῖο Κομοτηνῆς.

Φωτογραφία. Πίναξ 52.

Ἀδημοσίευτη. Πρβλ. ὅμως Δ. Τριαντάφυλλος, Θρακικὴ Ἐπετηρίδα 4 (1983) 425, σημ. 24 (= BCH 111 [1987] 502, σημ. 7 καὶ Loukopoulou, "Frontier" 108 σημ. 43).

1ος π.Χ. αἰ.

[Ὁ δῆ]μος
[Σα]μο-
θρά[κ]ων.

Ἡ ἐπιγραφὴ μνημονεύεται χωρὶς λεπτομερῆ στοιχεῖα σὲ δημοσίευση τοῦ Τριαντάφυλλου, ὁ ὁποῖος τὴν συνδέει μὲ ἐπιγραφικὲς ἀναφορὲς "μετοίκων" ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀμφίπολη καὶ τὴν Αἶνο σὲ ἄλλες πόλεις τῆς Μακεδονίας καὶ τῆς Θράκης. Ἡ ἑρμηνεία ἀμφισβητήθηκε ἀπὸ τὸν Stern καὶ τὴν Loukopoulou, οἱ ὁποῖοι ὑποστήριξαν ἀνεξαρτήτως ὅτι καὶ στὶς τρεῖς περιπτώσεις πρόκειται γιὰ κάποια —τιμητικὴ πιθανῶς— ἐπιγραφὴ τοῦ ἀναγραφόμενου δήμου (στὴν συγκεκριμένη περίπτωση τῶν Σαμοθράκων), ποὺ εἶχε στηθεῖ, ἄγνωστο μὲ ποιάν ἀφορμή, στὴν Μαρώνεια.

1929. Serdicae reperta, nunc in museo Serdicensi conservatur (inv. 422).

Pars superior tabellae marmoreae fastigatae cum anaglypho, in quo tres Nymphae exhibitae erant, a. 0.22, l. 0.35, cr. 0.27, litt. 0.01—0.013 m.

Edd. V. Dobruski Sb. 12, 1895, 326 n. 8 litteris maiusculis et minusculis, idem Sb. 13, 1896, 401 n. 6, idem AEM 18, 1895, 109 n. 11 litt. maiusculis et minusculis, idem Sb. 16—17, 1900, 68 n. 11 fig. 36, delineatio, G. Kacarov Sofia p. 45 et 80 n. 16, cuius in usum contulit B. Filov.

Super anaglypho:

Θεαῖς
Νύμφαις ναε
Ἀπόλλων .. ΞΔΡΗΣΙ - -
[Κ]κίντος Φλόρου (sic) χαριστήριον].

3. ΚΕΔΡΕΣι et [Κε]δρε_η]νῳ?] dubit. Dobr.¹, non dubit. Dobr.², ΚΕΔΡΗΣΙ et [Εἰδρ̣ο̣η̣]νῳ?] dubit. Dobr.³, [Κε]δρε̣η̣]νῳ?] dubit. Dobr.⁴, Κ[ε̣ιδρησ̣η̣]νῳ] „littera κ non bene distinguitur, inter eandem et δ spatium duarum litterarum" Fil.-Kac., inde G. Mateescu EDR 1, 1923, 240 nota 8, G. Kacarov RE 6A, 1937, 502 s. Thrake, Religion, D. Dečev Thr. Sprachreste 239 s. v., in lapide: post Ἀπολλων- spatium duarum litterarum, ubi nihil certum vidi, sed tamen ΘΣ distinguere mihi visum est, post quod potius Σ quam Ε mihi videtur, ΔΡΗ certa, post ea Σ (quod Ζ item esse potest) et hasta parte inferiore a sinistra paululum inclinata: primum Ἀπόλλων[ι] Σεδρ̣ησ̣η̣]νῳ] legere volui, cum autem Apollo in anaglypho exhibitus non esset et in vs. 2 καί non inscriptum esse censeam, Ἀπολλών[ος] Δρη̣ο̣[- i. e. nomen patris καί] supplendum mihi videtur.

Case study: Greek epigraphic production in Thrace

- Team collaboration
- Documented my decisions & data model
- Commented scripts
- https://osf.io/fjnw5/

Case study: Greek epigraphic production in Thrace

- 6th c. BC - 5th c. AD
- over 4600 Greek inscriptions
- Thracians, Greeks, Romans...
- Clustered along major cities and roads
- Mountain sanctuaries accessible by roads
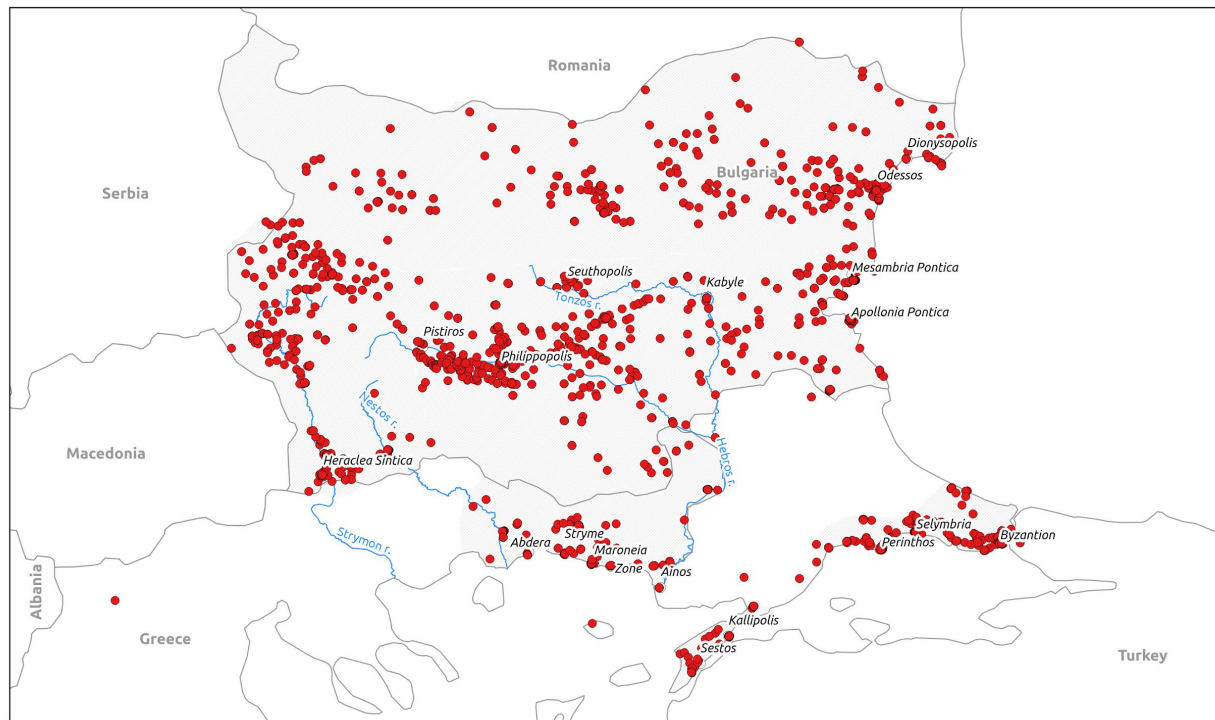
HAT database: all inscriptions found in Thrace

- ● Inscription findspot
- ⊙ Ancient city
- ▭ Modern countries
- — River
- ▨ Area covered by HAT database

Source: QGIS, Google Maps, JICA BG, HAT database, The Barrington Atlas of Greek and Roman World, TRAP
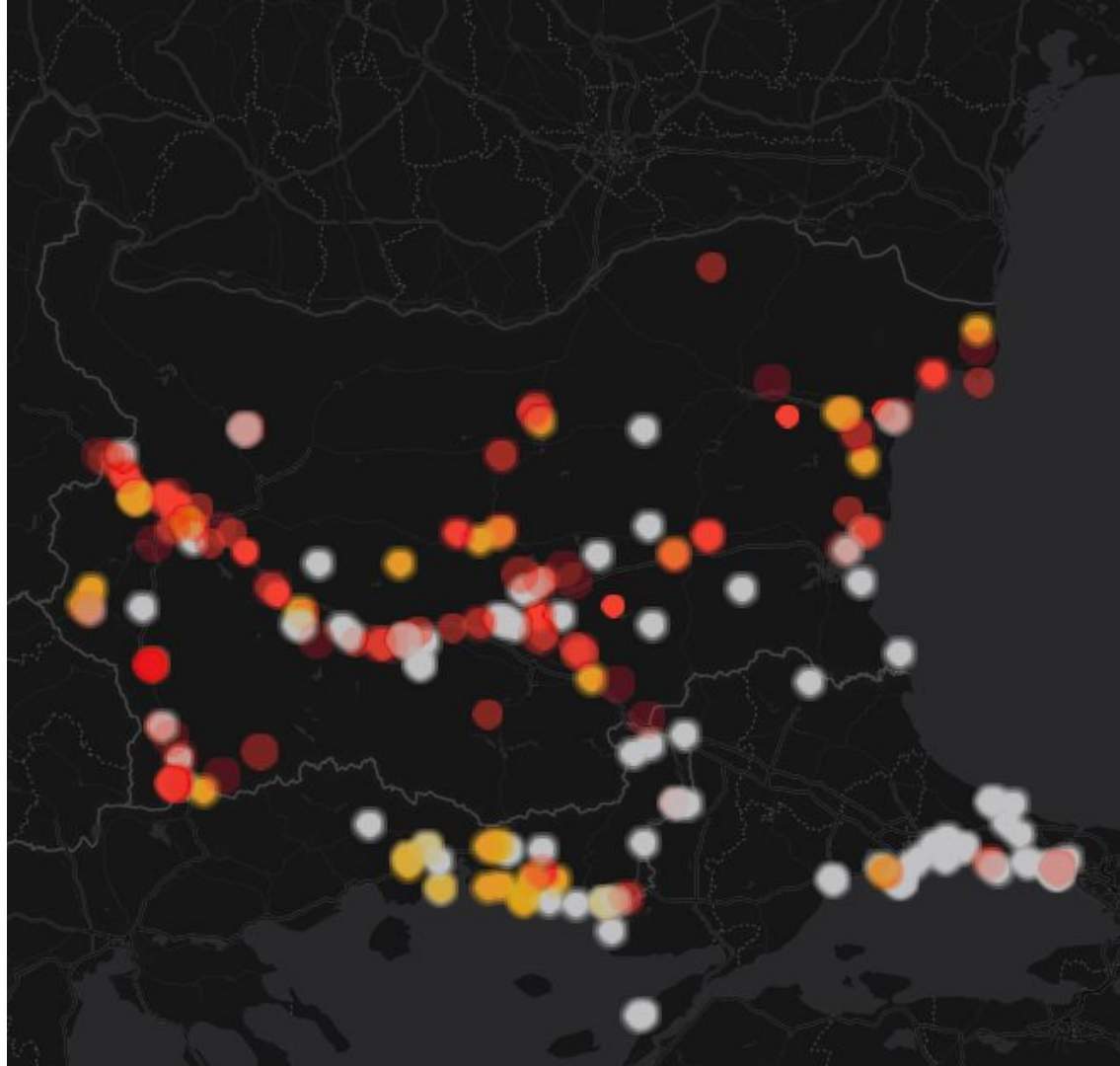Petra Janouchová 11/2016

Before Romans: stark difference between Greek city states & Thracians

Under Romans: spread of epigraphic culture, integration, diversity, infrastructure

After Romans: decline, transformation

Epigraphic production & social complexity

A) **The volume and character of epigraphic production reflect social complexity**

B) **The mass production of inscriptions is a by-product of complex society**

- diversified social hierarchy (existing institutions, procedures in place…)
- functioning labour division and specialisation (skills, literacy…)
- socio-cultural background (social norms, cultural need…)

Next steps

Get (!) & streamline digital epigraphic dataset(s) for **all Mediterranean**

Get comparative longitudinal datasets - urbanism, transport, connectivity, environment, timeline of known historical events ...

Analyze in space & time against set of criteria (methodology from the case study)
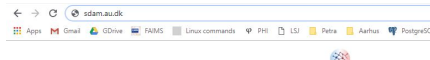
Tools: QGIS; OpenRefine; RegEx; R; Python

Follow my progress:

https://github.com/petrifiedvoices/DigitalApproaches2019_talk

Twitter: @pettulda

www.sdam.au.dk

Criteria (in date and time)

Size of epigraphic production

Typology of epigraphic production (role in the society)

Proximity to a human settlement

- Size, type, social organisation and hierarchy of the settlement
- Socio-cultural background of inhabitants

Proximity to a communication network (road, river, sea)

Diversity of epigraphic production (identity, language, origin, soc. status)

Assumptions (working version)

1. Inscriptions are located in **densely populated areas** with existing and stable institutions, and along the major **communication routes** where the demand is the highest
2. **Private** inscriptions are published predominantly in **affluent** and **stable** times, while at the time of crisis, are produced less or disappear completely
3. **Public** inscriptions are published in greater volume in the time of **crisis** reacting to the growing social pressure
4. Inscriptions are published by **high- to middle classes** of society that are invested in maintaining the current level of social order