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INSCRIPTIONS ON EDONIAN COINS

Edonian coins belong to the so-called early Thracian coin-minting from the end of the 6th to the beginning of the 5th century B.C., that of Derrones, Oreski, Bisaltae, Zaieli, Ichni, Edoni (Δέρρωνες, Βισάλται, Ζαίελοι, Ἰχναῖοι, Ἡδῶνες, Ἡδωνοί, Ἡδῶναι¹). E. Babelon's book (Traité des monnaies grecques et romaines. Paris 1907) initiates the study of this coinage, whereas the most recent research of Edonian coins was conducted by M. Tatscheva (Tatscheva 1998, Tatscheva 2006). The purpose of the following study is to actualize and modernize some of the old understandings about the inscriptions on Edonian coins. Since a considerable part of these coins are in the hands of foreign or private collectors, as well as a target of forgery, one of the recent researches of Thracian coinage is limited only to the domestic hoard of Velichkovo village near Pazardzhik, which contains nine silver Deronian tetrastaters (Youroukova 1976, 4–7).

Various explanations exist for the quite diverse standards used in that early Thracian coinage: Euboic-Attic, Babylonian, independent Thracian-Macedonian (in which 1 stater = 9.82 g = 1/50 of the light Babylonian mina). Babelon states that the standard is Lydian-Lycian or Milesian (Babelon 1907, col. 1035–1036). Since these coins were minted in different time periods, changes in the standards of weight are understandable. A remarkably important characteristic of this particular coinage, however, are the common motifs on the obverse and reverse dies, which can be explained by common cultural, historical, and mythological background, as well as by the fact that mints were common. Thus, the motif “a naked man leads two oxen” is common for the coins of Ichni, Edoni, and Oreski, the motif “a

I am grateful to Prof. Claude Brixhe for his kindness and endurance to emendate the article *per litteras*. Any errors in judgement or execution are mine.

¹ The nominative form of the ethnonym is attested as Ἡδωνοί (Thuc. I, 103, 3; Hdt. VII, 110, 5, Aesch., Steph. Byz.) as well as Ἡδῶνες (Thuc. IV, 109, 4). According to the grammarian Herodianus τὸ δὲ Ἡδῶνες μεταπέπλασται ἐκ τοῦ Ἡδωνοί: λέγονται δὲ καὶ Ἡδῶναι (Aelius Herodianus et Pseudo-Herodianus Gramm., Rhet., De prosodia catholica 3,1, page 25, line 7).

centaur carries a maenad” for those of Oreski, Zaieli, and Thasians, and the motif “a warrior and a horse” for the coins of Bisaltae and those of Alexander Philhellene (498–454 B.C.) (Babelon 1907, col. 1037–1038, Tatscheva 1998, 614).

The Edoni inhabited the territory between the lower reaches of the Strymon River and the Pangaion mountain (called Kushnitsa in Bulgarian and Pınardağ in Turkish); or, in other words, between the mouth of the Gulf of Strymon and the Kavala gulf, opposite Thasos.

Coins of the Edonian king Getas date back to the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th century B.C. They are the first European coins inscribed with the name of a ruler and the title of “king”, βασιλεύς. It has been suggested that Getas used these coins to pay the tribute to the Persian satraps on the following basis: first of all, several of the discovered coins were found in hoards from Syria and the region of the Nile river, and second, these coins were silver octadrachms weighing 27–29 g, i.e. they had a great value and large sums were paid with them (Howgego 1997, 95–97). Of course, there are other reasons for their spread in Asia, such as the wholesale trade between the Aegean coast and the East and the conquests of Alexander the Great.

The beginning of Getas’ rule must have preceded the Persian invasion into Thrace and Macedonia, namely Darius’ expedition of 513 and Xerxes’ expedition of 480, because the large and expensive octadrachms (equal to 2 darics) suggest “a strong authority over a silver-rich land” (Tatscheva 2006, 34). Babelon believes Getas ruled in the time between Histiaeus’ departure and Xerxes’ arrival in 480. Histiaeus was a Milesian tyrant who was granted the Edonian city Myrcinos as compensation by Darius (Hdt. V, 11) in 513. He started fortifying it, but was summoned to the Great King, not without the influence of Megabazos, who envied Histiaeus the rich land he was granted (Hdt. V, 23). Herodotus mentions other Edonian cities connected with Xerxes’ expedition: Doriskos and Eion (Hdt. VII, 25), which remain in Persian hands even after their defeat in 480. In the last paragraph of his fifth book, Terpsichore, Herodotus narrates that Aristagores, the tyrant of Milet, was sent to Myrcinos after the unsuccessful Ionian revolt, but his army was crushed by the Thracians (Hdt. V, 124). From Thucydides we learn about the place of this territory in the strategy plans of Athenians and Spartans during the Peloponnesian war, and also that the last Edonian king Pittakos was killed in 424 (Thuc. IV, 107, 3).

With his death, the Edoni lost their political sovereignty, but remained present in the Greek and Roman literature. Since they lived in a zone of mutual cultural interaction, they became a popular, even a cliché motif in the works of ancient poets when it came to depicting orgiastic feasts and Dionysus. The first ones to mention the lands inhabited by the Edoni were Aeschylus and Euripides in their tragedies ‘Persians’ and ‘Rhesus’ (A. Persae 49; E. Rhesus 277).

However, the Greek and Roman literary and mythological tradition relates the Edoni mainly with Dionysus, Orpheus, and the Trojan mythological cycle. Aeschylus’ tragedy Ἡδωνοί concerned the mysteries of Kotyto, accompanied by screaming, drums, singing, and bells. We know that Lycurgus was an Edonian king, βασιλεὺς Ἡδωνῶν (Soph. Ant. 955), that maenads are often called Ἡδωνίδες, and their colorful capes βασσάραι are defined as Ἡδωνὰ ἱμάτια (Tomaschek 1980, 39). Edoni are famous for their skillful manufacture of chitons. In his tragedy ‘Hecuba’ Euripides depicts the Thracian king Polymestor telling Agamemnon of his meeting with Hecuba and the Trojan women, before he was blinded. The setting is Thracian Chersonesos, and Polymestor recalls how the Trojan maidens marveled his beautiful peplos, praising “the shuttle held by Edonian hands” (περγίδ’ Ἡδωνῆς χειρὸς ἦινουν, E. Hec. 1150).

In Roman poetry Edōni, -ōrum, are the wine-inebriated adherents of the Dionysus cult. A good example is Horatius’ comparison (C. 2, 7, 25–27):

curatve myrto? Quem Venus arbitrum
dicet bibendi? Non ego sanius
bacchabor Edonis: recepto
dulce mihi furere est amico.

Matres Edonides transform as a *pars pro toto* in *the Thracian women*, “bound by the feete with writhen roote in ground” by Dionysus’ will because of Orpheus’ death (Ovid. Metam. 11, 69), while Edōnis, -idos means simply: a bacchante. So, the tipsy Propertius, returning home in the early morning, discovers that the Edonian girl who collapsed after dancing wildly in the grass near the river Apidanus is no less tired than his peacefully sleeping beloved (Prop. I, 3, 5):

nec minus assiduis Edonis fessa choreis
qualis in herboso concidit Apidano.

The resiliency of this *locus communis* in the Greco-Roman literary tradition suggests how deep social and economical contacts were between Thracians, Greeks, and consequently, Romans, in this part of the Balkans. This cultural and economical community is reflected

by the averses of Edonian coins, which bear a naked man with a *causia* hat, occasionally wielding two spears, and herding two oxen. This is most probably Hermes (which is why he is depicted on Deronian coins wielding a caduceus), and the animals are Apollonius' oxen. This resembles an illustration of Homer's hymn for Hermes, which tells the story of the popular adventure of the light-fingered Hermes, who stole fifty white, gold-horned oxen from Apollonius in Piaeria in the foot of Mount Olympus. Babelon reminds us of another homonymous Piaeria in the foot of Pangaeon (Babelon 1907, col. 1056)² (see figures 1 and 2).

In this study I will adhere to the numeration of the coins described in the last research of M. Tatscheva, in which she separates the eleven known Edonian coins into three sub-groups according to the reverse dies: a four-spoke wheel in a concave square (nos 1, 2, 3, 4), a square separated in four (no. 5), or a square separated in four with a lateral frame (nos 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) (Tatscheva 1998, 615–617).

According to their dialect peculiarities, the coins can be divided into³:

1. Coins bearing Ionic dialect inscriptions: nos 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11;
2. Coins bearing Doric dialect inscriptions: nos 2, 3, 9.

Coins bearing Ionic dialect inscriptions

First group

No. 5 ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ

No. 6 ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ

No. 7 ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ

No. 10 ΓΕΤΑΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ

A common peculiarity of the above group is the consistent usage of the eastern Ionic script known for its special rendering of /e:/ through <H> and for that of /o:/ through <Ω>.

All four inscriptions have been composed as a phrase in the nominative.

The *genitivus possessivus* of the name of Edoni has the typical Ionic ending -εων: ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ from Ἡδωνᾶ-ων (ᾱω > εω via /a:/ > /ä:/ > /e:/ > /ë/ before the following vowel)⁴; therefore, we can infer that its nominative should be different from the one testified by Herodotus or Aeschylus and rather agree with Herodianus about the existence

² Tatscheva 1998, 620 believes this to be a depiction of Getas himself.

³ No. 4 does not have any inscription.

⁴ Cf. Thumb–Scherer 1959, § 311, 9 (a); Buck 1955, § 41, 4.

of the form Ἡδῶναυ. It is this form that gives the genitive plural ΗΔΩΝΑΝ in the Doric inscriptions below.

The two nouns whose morphology poses a problem here are ΓΕΤΑ and ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ because of their missing final /s/ in the nominative singular⁵.

Second group

No. 11 ΓΕΤΑΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΗΔΩΝΕΥΝ

The script is eastern Ionic.

The genitive form of the tribal name, ΗΔΩΝΕΥΝ, instead of the current Ionic ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ, deserves special attention. It is well known that the vowels εο and εω in Ionic were often maintained uncontracted in spelling, but diphthongized to ευ and pronounced as one syllable (cf. Πηληιάδεω of the first verse of the Iliad). Most likely our inscription illustrates this phonetic phenomenon, namely “the fusion of the two mid-high vowels in a diphthong where the second element is short or long” (Szemerényi 1956, 205; Garbrah 1978, § 25, 3), although the common genitive plural endings of masculine stems in -ā in Ionic are usually -έων or -ῶν.

Another puzzling question is the case of the nominal phrase – is it a nominative or a genitive? At first glance, ΓΕΤΑΣ should be a nominative, and ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ a genitive form resulting from a quantitative metathesis -ηο > -εω. It is evident that the phrase has been mistakenly composed.

Third group

No. 1 ΝΟΜΙΣΜΑ ΕΔΩΝΕΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΓΙΤΑ

The inscription runs from right to left and is written in a retrograde way. Between the letter Γ and the postulated letter Ι in the lettering ΓΙΤΑ there is space enough, as far as can be discerned in the photo, for three absent hastae to form the letter Ε only backwards, and to read the lettering as ΓΕΤΑ.

Apart from the one and only retrograde start of this inscription (a pattern which remained strong in the early alphabetical inscriptions in Greece), this is the only coin legend engraved consecutively in a script, which has no particular signs for e: and o: vowels; Ε and Ο have here the phonetic value respectively of e: and ě, o: and ō. Bearing in mind the certain part that the island of Andros played in the early colonisation in that area of the Aegean coast (founding Akan-

⁵ At this point it is appropriate to remind the reader that coins no. 5 and no. 6 are believed by some to be imitations (Tatscheva 1998, 616–617).

thos and Stageira in Eastern Chalkidike in 650 B.C., and Argilos on the Strymon River), and the occurrence of Naxian script in its early inscriptions (Jeffery 1961, 298), we could postulate the derivation of the script in question from the central Aegean islands which were the probable mediators in the spread of writing.

Another peculiarity of the text is the genitive form of the name of King Getas – ΓΕΤΑ. The problem is that, in Ionic, the genitive form should be ΓΕΤΕΩ (written also ΓΕΤΕΟ), cf. for instance Φιλήτεω, Πανχατίδεω (Garbrah 1978, § 25, 1 b (I)).

Fourth group

No. 8 ΓΕΤΑΣ ΗΔΟΝΕΟΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ (figures 1–2)

The text runs in the nominative.

Although showing a confusing system of rendering the long middle vowels (<E> for */a:/, <H> for /e:/, and <O> for /o:/), this coin legend has the general characteristics of the Cyclades as well. This is the Naxian system of *e*-vowels, but taken *vice versa*, since in Naxos <E> was used for the original open */e:/, and *eta* only to express the original */a:/⁶.



Figure 1



Figure 2

⁶ Cf. the similar perplexed situation in the inscriptions of some central Cycladic islands such as Delos and Keos (Jeffery 1961, 296).

Coins bearing Doric dialect inscriptions

No. 2 [ΓΕΤΑ Β]ΑΣΙΑ[ΕΩΣ Η]ΔΟΝΑΝ

No. 3 ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΗΔΩΝΑΝ

No. 9 ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΗΔΩΝΑΝ

These three legends are written in Doric dialect. It is worth mentioning the not yet fixed and consistent usage of <O> and <Ω>.

Both Getas' name and the tribal name are in the genitive according to the rules of Doric.

Let us examine how these ten inscriptions have been interpreted up to now. Their content poses no difficulty because it either reports the name of Getas, the Edonian king, or that the coin belongs to Getas, the Edonian king.

1. Babelon's interpretation (Babelon 1907 col. 1056)

Nos 5, 6, 7: ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ – Babelon dubs these forms with the vague term “diminutive abbreviations” (“abréviations hypocoristiques”) in note one with cited literature. He refers to the oldest Boeotian inscriptions and indicates the existence of asigmatic nominatives such as Καλλία (= Καλλίας), Τυδεύ (= Τυδεύς), Μυρίλλα (= Μυρίλλας). He also states that the final sigma was not pronounced and therefore was not always represented in writing.

No. 8: ΗΔΟΝΕΟΝ – archaism instead of ΗΔΟΝΕΩΝ.

Nos 2, 9: ΗΔΩΝΑΝ – Aeolic of Asia Minor or Doric (“l'emploi du dialecte éolo-asiatique ou dorien”).

2. Perdrizet's interpretation (Perdrizet 1911)

Nos 5, 6, 7: ΓΕΤΑ – Perdrizet also believes that in monetary legends where there is βασιλευ and Γετα, this is an asigmatic nominative. Using the information of Apollonius Dyscolus from the 2nd century A.D. and also that of Priscien, who asserted that Macedonians and Thessalians used the vocative of the names ending in -ας as a nominative, he postulates an old Aeolian trend in Macedonian, assuming Γετα an earlier form of Γετας. He also adds the Boeotian nominative Νεστίδα (IG VII 4209) as an additional proof (Perdrizet 1911, 123–124).

Nos 5, 6, 7, 10: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ – according to Perdrizet, this asigmatic form is a remnant of Old Aeolic (“survivance de l'altäolisch”) and the dropping out of sigma is explained as a particularity of the spoken language (“particularité de langage parlé”). As proof he quotes vase

inscriptions such as $\text{ONETOPIΔEKAΛOΣ} = \text{'Ονετορίδη(ς) καλός}$ and $\text{HOΠAIKALOC} = \text{ὁ παῖ(ς) καλός}$.

No. 8 HΔONEON – the Parian alphabet is used, in which no separate symbol <Ω> is used when denoting /o:/. As for the symbol for /b/ in BAΣIΔEYΣ , it is , and not the lunar <C>, as should be if the Parian alphabet were used consecutively. Perdrizet's explanation is that mints were in a hurry to strike coins in order to pay the King's debt, and the two Ionic alphabets, the Thasian and the Akanthian, intermingled. An additional reason of this is that writing was not controlled by competent coin engravers in the mints.

Nos 5, 6, 7, 10: HΔΩNEΩN – in these legends the eastern Ionic alphabet, which was used by Greek colonies in Epithracia, is used. The Attic genitive ousts the Ionic one in Amphipolis coins in the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 4th century, when an ending -ων instead of -εων for the genitive plural appears.

Nos. 2, 9: HΔΩNAN – the form cannot be Doric, because there was no Dorian colony on the Aegean coast; therefore, he believes this to be an Aeolic form. However, there were no Aeolians there, either. Consequently, the form is Macedonian and overlaps with the Aeolic one.

3. Tatscheva's interpretation (Tatscheva 1998, 620; Tatscheva 2006, 41–42)

Tatscheva cites Perdrizet, making a rather general claim that Old Aeolic, archaic Ionic, Thasian and contracted forms are present in the coin legends in question.

As was emphasized in the beginning, several questions connected with the script and the dialect of the inscriptions on Edonian coins arise:

1. Which script has been used?

As we can infer from the observations made above, most legends of Edonian coins have been written in Ionic dialect in eastern Ionic (the first and the second group) or in Naxian script (the third group). As for the fourth group, it represents a reversed and confusing Naxian *e*-vowel system, which is nevertheless connected with the main central Cycladic graphic trends.

The lack of regularity in the usage of an established graphic system in the inscriptions of Edonian coins is representative for the irregularity of acceptance, and the variety of factors and local changes of

the Greek alphabet's Phoenician prototype, all of these discussed in detail in the beginning of Jeffery's book. As is known, the Aegean coast of southern Thrace between the mouths of the Strymon and Hebros rivers (including the islands of Thasos and Samothrace) was colonized by none other than the eastern Ionians of Asia Minor and those of the Paros and Andros islands. Thus, in 680 B.C., the Parians led by Telesikles, father of Archilochos, conquered Thasos, in 650 B.C., Andros created Akanthos and Stageira in Eastern Chalkidike, and Argilos on the Strymon River. On the other hand, the eastern Ionians from Klazomenai and Teos founded Abdera (another poet, Anacreon, being among the colonists), Chios settled Maroneia, whereas Samos took possession of Samothrace. Thus, we can identify at least three different scripts spread in this area of the Aegean coast in the 6th century B.C. – the eastern Ionic and the Cycladic one with its two modifications – the Naxian and the Parian. Such diversity, combined with the unsettled local graphic systems, the bilingualism of the engravers, and the different location of mints served to the different writing patterns of Edonian coin legends. It is not surprising that the other Thracian coinage dating back to the same period, that of the Bisaltai, the Derrones, and the Orreskioi likewise shows uncertainty in the use of <O> and <Ω>, <E> and <H> (Jeffery 1961, 364). As we can notice in Topalov's catalogue (Topalov 2005), some of these coin legends are written in eastern Ionic script, but often with a confusing usage of <O> and <Ω> (no. 35 ΜΟΣΣΕΩ, nos 13–16 ΩΡΡΗΣΚΙΟΝ, but no. 17 ΟΡ/Η), others show only <E> and <O> – ΔΕΡΡΟΝΙΚΟΝ (nos 2, 6, 8, 9, 10).

It is also mandatory to draw parallels to the 75 sixth-century graffiti of the northern Aegean coast written in Thracian and found in the Great Gods shrine in Samothrace, as well as to the still unpublished 220 graffiti from the Apollonian shrine in Zone in the perea of Samothrace (Brixhe 2006a, 124). As Brixhe notes (2006a, 128), in these local inscriptions, in contrast with the Parian script, neither <H> nor <Ω> is attested⁷. In regard to the rendering of the middle vowels, the script of these local graffiti could be compared with the only one retrograde inscription no. 1 on the Edonian coins: ΝΟΜΙΣΜΑ ΕΔΟΝΕΟΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΟΣ ΓΙΤΑ. Based on the above mentioned Thracian graffiti, Brixhe even launches the idea of the existence of

⁷ It is worth noting that one Greek dedication in Zone (no. 226) published by Tsatsopoulou shows <Ω> for /δ/ and <O> for /ο:/ as in the Parian script, which is quite natural providing the strong influence of the Parian colony of Thasos on this part of the Aegean coast (Brixhe 2006a, 126–127).

a local alphabet before the coming of the Greek colonists, which is quite probable (2006a, 128).

2. Can we trace any characteristics of Thracian on the base of the coin legends?

a. The drop of the final /s/

No. 5 ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ

No. 6 ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ

No. 7 ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ

No. 10 ΓΕΤΑΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ

It is important to note that the phrases in these inscriptions are in the nominative. The missing sigma in the forms ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ and ΓΕΤΑ could be either influenced by the practice to omit last letters or syllables on coin dies in order to save space, or a simple omission committed by the coin-engravers. Nevertheless, it is possible that this omission reflects spoken Thracian similar to Greek vernacular on vase inscriptions, which is a very good parallel to make. Cl. Brixhe's observations of Aegean Thracian graffiti from Zone and Samothrace (2006a, 131, 134; 137), where we read Απολοδορε instead of Ἀπολλόδορος, confirm such a tendency to drop out final sounds and, eventually, the imposing of dynamic stress.

b. The genitive singular of the masculine *-ā*-stem nouns in Thracian

No. 1 ΝΟΜΙΣΜΑ ΕΔΩΝΕΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΓΙΤΑ

No. 2 ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΗΔΩΝΑΝ

No. 9 ΓΕΤΑ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΗΔΩΝΑΝ

Getas' name and title are in the genitive.

The termination *-āo* > *-α* (Ἀτρείδα, εὐεργέτα, Ἡρακλείδα) is characteristic of Doric dialects. There is only one Dorian colony, that of Potidaea, on the Aegean coast. Potidaea influenced the graphical practice in Olynthos, where the Corinthian alphabet was used up to 480, when the writing practice of Chalkidian Torone heavily influenced Olynthos (Jeffery 1961, 363). We need this «Dorian link» to support the statement that it is unnecessary to search for an «Old-Aeolian» trace in Edonian inscriptions to explain the forms ΓΕΤΑ and ΗΔΩΝΑΝ. They might be as well Doric since obviously a «Doric-speaking island» existed near the Edonian lands.

But another parallel arises as well.

It is worth noting that we possess inscriptions in Doric from Kozani and in Boeotian on the Derveni crater; however, it is com-

monly accepted that these vessels were brought by the Doric-speaking population from the south.

On the other hand, such preservation of */a:/ as we have in the genitives ΓΕΤΑ and ΗΔΩΝΑΝ is present also in the early Macedonian inscriptions. The ancient Greek inscriptions in Macedonia are written in Hellenistic koiné, so there are few examples of a genuine */a:/. One of the earliest examples is from Pella, between 375 and 350 B.C., in a burial inscription: Ἀμαδίκας – gen. sg. of a feminine name (Panayotou 1990, 212–213). Another Pella defixio also from 380–350 B.C., published by Voutiras and widely discussed by L. Dubois and Cl. Brixhe, throws more light on the linguistic situation in the northern Aegean (Brixhe 1996). Not only does the vernacular of the defixio lack any trace of Hellenistic koiné, but it also shows characteristics of a specific dialect possessing among other peculiarities a non-raised */a:/. Without entering the slithery ground of the problem about the nature of Macedonian (a subject treated by Brixhe in the study mentioned above), I will restrict myself to stressing the fact that, obviously, apart from Potidaia, there was another ‘Dorian island’ in the vicinity of Edonian territory, that of Macedonian.

At any rate, in both Ionic (no. 1) and Doric legends (nos 2, 3 and 9) of the Edonian coinage, we have one and the same genitive form of the King’s name – ΓΕΤΑ. It can be Doric in the Doric inscriptions nos 2, 3 and 9, but not in the Ionic one. Therefore, we can cautiously assume a conserved ‘Thracian’ genitive of the King’s name here. Besides, we have genitives ending in -α also on other early Thracian coins from the last quarter of the 5th or the beginning of the 4th century B.C.: ΣΕΥΘΑ ΚΟΜΜΑ, ΣΕΥΘΑ ΑΡΓΥΡΙΟΝ⁸, and quite recently the legend ΣΗΥΣΑ ΘΡΗΠΤΟΣ⁹. More interesting is the fact that the genitive form of Seuthes’ name engraved on the reverse of the first Thracian bronze coins is ΣΕΥΘΟ in contrast to the legends on the silver coins discussed above. The date of that bronze coinage is still debated by Bulgarian numismatists, but the suggestions vary between Seuthes II (400–387 B.C.)¹⁰ and Seuthes I (424–407 B.C.)¹¹. Hence we can infer that as early as the end of the 5th century, the genuine Thracian genitive form was Σευθα, and afterwards, in the

⁸ Youroukova doubts their authenticity because she believes these to be unusual legends: “The name of Seuthes appears in the form ΣΕΥΘΑ instead of ΣΕΥΘΟΥ as it should be in genitive” (Youroukova 1976, 13).

⁹ N. Sharankov. It is clear who the die’s owner is. *Thema* 29 (300) / 2007 (23–29 July), 73.

¹⁰ Dimitrov 1999, 175–180.

¹¹ Topalov 1999, 3–11.

beginning of the 4th century under the impact of the Hellenistic koiné, the ending -ov written at first <O> replaced -α.

Therefore, we have proof enough on which to state that in Thracian the genitive of masculine *a*-stem nouns had a case ending like the one in Doric (including the inscriptions found in Macedonia), namely -α instead of -ov, as it is in Attic, or instead of -εω, -ω, or -ευ, as it is in Ionic. This conclusion fits both the concept of a Paleobalkan community¹² of the spoken languages in this area and the assumption of Macedonian as an amalgam of different strata (according to Brixhe and Panayotou), which were unified by the Doric of the Argeads (Panayotou 1990, 134 and Brixhe 1996).

c. The nominative singular of masculine *ā*-stem nouns in Thracian
No. 10 ΓΕΤΑΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ ΗΔΩΝΕΩΝ

Only this Edonian coin legend rendered in nominative demonstrates a sigmatic nominative form of the King's name, the other ones having dropped their final /s/. A phenomenon of the spoken language at a low social level, it obviously affected the nominative form of the following noun ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥ.

As for inscription no. 11 ΓΕΤΑΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΗΔΩΝΕΥΝ, unless it is an engraver's mistake, it puzzles with the discrepancy between the genitive form of βασιλεύς and the nominative of Γετας. It is alluring to interpret it as a vulgar genitive form of a postulated nominative ΓΕΤΑ on the analogy of genitives of asigmatic masculine *a*-stem nouns such as τοῦ Φάγας in Megarian or Προκλείδας in Thessalian. Could the legends of Edonian coins witness an initial stage of hesitation and reorganisation of the masculine *a*-stem paradigm due to different sociolinguistic circumstances and literacy? It would be useful to remember Brixhe's question about the parallel situation in Phrygian (Brixhe 2006b, 42): "En phrygien le nominatif hésite entre -as et -a: rétention partielle de la situation originelle (i.e. before the migration in Asia Minor)?" (Brixhe 2006b, 42).

3. Who has written the coin legends?

Even though we are speaking of kings' coins in contrast to spontaneously written graffiti in Thracian in Zone and Samothrace, which in general do not undergo any autocorrecting, we cannot be sure how literate the author of the die was and how diligently he elaborated it. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration where and how Getas placed his order and in what mint. Most likely these inscrip-

¹² Cf. the term 'conglomérat gréco-thraco-phrygien' proposed by Brixhe (2006a).

tions are a product of a bilingual Greco-Thracian environment: he knew Greek and either said or wrote in Greek what he wanted the inscription to be in Greek. If we suppose he did not know Greek, this duty belonged to either his secretaries or to the die authors in the mints. We should make a parallel here, although rather anachronistic: the usage of Greek as the official language of the First Bulgarian State office in the 8th and 9th century A.D. and the inscriptions of this time, which were written by illiterate bearers of the language. Thus, in regard of the nouns with a drop of the final /s/ on the Edonian coins, we are rather concerned with peculiarities of the spoken language at a low social level (since we have also a “correct” legend ΓΕΤΑΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ (no. 8 and no. 10).

In conclusion, we can generalize that the Edonian coin inscriptions are the outcome of a cultural and economic community that predetermined a common language milieu and writing practices.

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Abstract

The paper reviews the investigations on the Edonian coins made so far and proposes new interpretations of the linguistic features of their legend texts in the light of the achievements of Greek dialectology and recently discovered Thracian texts. Its most important aim is to point out the commonness of languages and writing practices on the Thracian coast of the Aegean Sea in the sixth–fifth centuries B.C.