

FROM BOSPORUS ... TO BOSPORUS: A NEW INTERPRETATION AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE OLD PERSIAN INSCRIPTION FROM PHANAGOREIA*

BY

Eduard RUNG¹ & Oleg GABELKO²

(¹The Department of General History, Institute of International Relations,
Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia; ²The Department of Ancient History,
Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies, Russian State University for
the Humanities, Moscow, Russia)

Abstract: The article offers a new interpretation of the fragment of an Old Persian inscription discovered during the Phanagoreia excavation in 2016. The first publishers of the document, V.D. Kuznetsov and A.B. Nikitin, concluded that Xerxes should be identified as the author of the text, and connected the appearance of the stone in Phanagoreia with a hypothetical military expedition by that king against the Greek *poleis* of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, supposedly carried out before the invasion of Balkan Greece. Nevertheless, the remnants of the text in the extant lines 1 and 2 give stronger grounds for attributing the inscription to Darius I and for connecting its creation with that king's Scythian campaign (ca 513–512 B.C.). The evidence provided by Herodotus (4. 87), Ctesias of Cnidus (*FGrHist* 688 F 13. 21) and Dionysius of Byzantium (52) testifies to the erection on Darius' orders of a complex of monumental constructions in the immediate proximity of the bridge over the Thracian Bosphorus, and those constructions

* A shorter version of this article has been published in Russian: Rung & Gabelko 2018. Oleg Gabelko acknowledges financial support from The Russian Science Foundation grant (project No 19-18-00549 'Discourse of the State Power in Ancient Societies and the Reception of its Elements in the Social and Political Practices in the World and Russia'). The authors express their deep gratitude to C.J. Tuplin (Liverpool) for his help in interpreting the Old Persian text and polishing the English version of this paper. We are also grateful to M.A. Alontsev (Moscow), A. Avram (Le Mans), A.S. Balakhvantsev (Moscow), V. Cojocar (Iași), A.B. Kiselnikov (Balashov), T.P. Kishbali (Moscow), I.C. Nicu (Iași), E. Shavarebi (Vienna) and A.A. Sinitsyn (St.-Petersburg) who have generously supplied the authors with the required bibliography and valuable advice, to A.V. Unzhakov (Nizhny Novgorod) for the English translation. None of these colleagues is responsible for any mistakes or disputable conclusions that may appear here. We would like to express our special thanks to the discoverer and the first editor of the inscription, Dr Vladimir D. Kuznetsov (Moscow) for his kind permission to reproduce the photograph and drawing of the inscription.

included a cuneiform inscription that clearly had symbolic significance. On hearing rumours of the king's failures in Europe the citizens of Byzantium and Chalcedon destroyed these monuments for the purpose of proclaiming their own liberation from Persian control and put to shame the ὄβρις that Darius had displayed – thus, as a consequence, bringing punishment upon themselves (Hdt. 5. 26; Ctes. *FGrHist* 688 F 13. 21; Polyæn. 7. 11. 5; Dion. Byz. 14). A fragment of Darius' inscription might have been brought to Phanagoreia as a kind of trophy, where it would have political significance because that *polis* was founded by citizens of Teos in Asia Minor who fled the threat of enslavement by the Persians in 546 B.C. (Hdt. 1. 168; Strabo. 14. 1. 30) and had every reason to persist in their hatred of the Great King. It cannot, however, be ruled out that the stone found its way to the Cimmerian Bosphorus as a simple piece of ship's ballast.

Keywords: Phanagoreia, Old Persian inscription, Darius I, Scythian campaign, Greco-Persian relations, Byzantium, Chalcedon, Thracian Bosphorus, Istros, bridges

Introduction

The fragment of an inscription written in the usual Old Persian cuneiform script excavated in Phanagoreia (DFa)¹ in 2016 is a unique find of immense importance.² Its discovery prompts investigation and invites new hypotheses. In this article we would like to offer our view of the object and its probable historical context. This view is significantly different from the one put forward by the first publishers of the inscription, but that is only to be expected in a case such as this (Pl. 1).

The Persian text

We start with the Persian text itself and possible ways of restoring, reading and interpreting it.

According to Kuznetsov and Nikitin, a relatively small stone fragment that measures 41.2 × 35.9 × 11.8–14.8 centimetres has been preserved of the original inscription, probably stele. The front is carefully made and polished, whereas the back was left totally untouched. At the top, at the bottom and on the left, some parts of the fragment are broken off. The right

¹ The DFa abbreviation was invented by Shavarebi 2019.

² See the publication (Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2018; 2019) and the historical interpretation (Kuznetsov 2018; 2019).

side of the stele's front face is partly damaged so that the polished surface has been preserved only near the back of the stone. Naturally, no written signs have been preserved in that area. The cuneiform characters are incised in lines that are 6.0–6.2 cm apart. The height of the characters varies between 5.0 and 5.5 cm. The depth of the characters reaches 1.2 cm. They are clear-cut and fine, carved by a professional. The lower part of the stele as well as its corners on the left side are slightly damaged by fire: in those areas there are traces of burnt material which might come from small wooden boards or planks that fell on it in a fire. In that area the marble is covered with black coating³. The distance between the lines and the height of the characters make our inscription comparable to the monumental inscriptions of the Great Kings⁴, but it was written on a separate stele and therefore has no exact analogy in the corpus of Old Persian texts (one exception is the Darius' Suez Canal stele)⁵. The physical characteristics of the text suggest that the stele was of considerable size⁶ and indicate that the inscription was intended for public display⁷. It must have served as a propagandistic text, and its impressive dimensions will have made it a very striking one. Moreover, if one compares it with Old Persian inscriptions on individual stone slabs, one can see that the stele has more in common with Greek than with Old Persian epigraphy.

³ Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2018: 154–155.

⁴ But the distance between lines and the height of the characters in the Old Persian columns of the Behistun Inscription were distinctly smaller – 3.8 cm and 2.8 cm respectively (Schmitt 1991: 18).

⁵ M.P. Canepa makes a number of important observations in his review of Old Persian epigraphic practices: 'Many inscriptions in ancient Iran were meaningful only as graphic rather than textual signifiers, especially those looming high above on cliffs or adorning nearly inaccessible architectural features in palaces'; 'Achaemenid inscriptions appear mainly in two contexts: as monumental reliefs carved into the living rock, often in close proximity to figural relief sculpture, or incorporated into the architectural fabric of palaces, again near extensive relief decoration' (Canepa 2015: 12, 14).

⁶ We quote the first publishers' estimate: 'Judging from the thickness of the marble slab and the fairly large size of the cuneiform signs, the stele must have been no less than 2 m high and 1 m wide.' (Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2019: 2). It is hard to say what served as a basis for this conclusion; if we look for guidance at the Darius' Suez Canal stele that this stele was at least 3 meters high, 2.30 meters wide, and 78 centimeters in thickness (Kent 1942: 415).

⁷ The Behistun inscription, located on a cliff at a height of 61.8 meters, was totally illegible from the ground – in fact, it was not intended for reading (Schmitt 1991: 18; Canepa 2015: 16); but the erection of a stele might have been a different matter.

The inscription contains six preserved lines, in which both beginning and end are lost. In the first line, one sign is fully visible and the sign that immediately follows is partly legible; in the second line, three signs are fully legible and two more are partly visible at the beginning and at the end of the preserved part of the line; in the third and fourth lines, four signs are almost fully legible and one more – the first sign – is partly visible; in the fifth line, three signs are preserved and there are traces of two more signs; and, finally, the sixth line contains four legible signs. Since all the lines, except the first one, contain a word-dividing sign, it can be stated with confidence that in the second to fourth lines we see traces of two words, and in the first and final lines (in which a word-divider stands at the line beginning) of one word.

We start by reproducing the text of the inscription (in which some of the signs have to be restored on the basis of the partly preserved cuneiform signs) and then transliterate it.

	The Old Persian text	Transliteration:
x+1	𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥	-v-h-
x+2	𐎧𐎥(?) 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥	-u(?)-š : x-š-
x+3	𐎧𐎥(?) 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥	-a(?)-v-m : a-
x+4	𐎧𐎥(?) 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥	-r(?)-y-m : a-
x+5	𐎧𐎥(?) 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥(?)	-d(?)-m : a-k ^u - or a-g-(?)
x+6	𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥 𐎧𐎥	: m-r-t-

In the first line, the publishers believe that King Darius (I)'s name is used in the genitive case – *Dārayavahauš*⁸. This is certainly possible since the syllabic writing of that word is d-a-r-y-v-h-u-š, but, in the light of other inscriptions that contain Darius' name in the genitive case⁹, doubt may be expressed about the conclusion that the publishers reach on the basis of this reading of line 1: 'The preserved part of King Darius' name in the genitive case as well as the archaeological context of the discovery allow one to date the inscription to the reign of his son Xerxes (486–465 B.C.)'¹⁰.

⁸ Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2018: 157; 2019: 5.

⁹ There are a number of occurrences in the corpus of Old Persian inscriptions: DPc; DPd, 10; DPi; DNd; DZc, 3; XPb, 19; XPc, 14; XPd, 13; XPe, 3; XPf, 17, 25; XPh, 11; XPj; XPk; XSc; XE, 19; A¹Pa, 16.

¹⁰ Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2018: 158; 2019: 6. G.P. Basello, Professor at the University of Naples (L'Orientale), whose opinion Kuznetsov & Nikitin report, observes that 'the

We shall say more about the archaeological context later, but the thing to note here is that Darius' name in the genitive case is quite common not only in the inscriptions of Darius' son, Xerxes, but also in those of the king himself¹¹. So, line 1 of the text in no way rules out an ascription of the inscription to Darius himself¹². Nevertheless, it is line 2 that is most informative for the purpose of identifying the author. Kuznetsov and Nikitin suggest that it reads [*dahya*]uš ('countries') *xaša*, or, probably, *xaš[iyam]* ('truth'), but we are dealing with two words and they ought to stand in a meaningful relationship with each other, so, out of the whole range that contain the syllables -š and x-š-, we should give priority to *combinations* of two words in which the first ends with -š and the second starts with x-š-. The solution proposed by G.P. Basello matches this requirement: d-a-r-y-v-u-š : x-š-a-y-š-i-y ('Darius the King'). Xerxes' name (x-š-y-a-r-š), which would correspond to the first publishers' interpretation of the text, is ruled out for the first word of line 2 as the sign that precedes š- resembles u-. Theoretically, Xerxes' name cannot be ruled out for the second word, which starts with x-š-, but the combination 'Darius the King' is a recurrent element across the Old Persian corpus and for this reason we believe that Basello's restoration is preferable¹³. The mention of the name

signs -v-h- (line x+1) should be part of the genitive of "Darius", maybe in the royal titulary of Xerxes, so "[Xerxes, the king, son] of Darius, [the king]"; but *obviously there are many other possibilities* [emphasis added], since we have only a few signs' (Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2018: 157).

¹¹ For instance, it is to King Darius I that the following expressions in inscriptions belong: *Dārayavahauš XŠhyā višiyā* (DPc; DPi: 'in the house of Darius the King'); *Dārayavahauš XŠhyā xšačam* (DZc, 3: 'the kingdom of Darius the King'); *vačabara Dārayavahauš xšāyašiyahyā* (DNd: 'the clothes-bearer of Darius the King' – about Aspathines); *vašnā Auramazdāhā manacā Dārayavahauš xšāyašiyahyā* (DPd, 9–11: 'by the grace of Ahura Mazda and me, Darius the King...').

¹² Of course, we cannot altogether discard other possible readings of the first line, but they are far from numerous. Firstly, as the preceding sign is not visible and it may be assumed that there is word division, the syllables v-h might be the beginning of a word. Yet the number of possibilities comes down to the word *vahišta* ('the best') and proper nouns derived from the same root: *Vahuka*, *Vahyasparuva*, *Vahyazdāta* (Schmitt 2014: 273–274). Secondly, if we assume that the signs v-h were not word-initial, then we will acquire a wider set of potential restorations, but make no contribution to understanding the meaning of the text; among such words are: *āvahana* ('settlement', noun), *avahya* ('to ask for help', verb), *avahyarādiy* ('therefore', adverb), etc. From a methodological point of view, it should be stated somewhere that all the listed possibilities are from the extant Old Persian corpus. Obviously, it is also possible, from a theoretical point of view, that a word not attested until now occurs there.

¹³ Kuznetsov & Nikitin comment on it as follows: "This particular combination of signs is very common in the royal Achaemenid inscriptions. It is also possible that the

and the title of the King in the nominative case is usually preceded by the verb *ḡātiy* ('he says') in all inscriptions¹⁴.

By contrast with lines 1–2, the other four lines of the preserved text admit of no entirely convincing restoration.

The first sign in line 3 cannot be accurately identified, but, as the only preserved parts of the sign are two vertical wedges and a distinctly visible horizontal wedge above them, its appearance allows three possibilities: a, d, u. Deciding between them is made easier by the fact that we are looking for words that end with -a-v-m or -u-v-m. (The ending -d-v-m does not seem to appear anywhere in the corpus of Old Persian inscriptions). In this case a- is probably the preferable choice: the word *avam* (a-v-m) is the accusative singular of the demonstrative pronoun 'this'. The word *avam* appears in the few combinations of words in Darius I's inscriptions in which the following word also starts with a- (as in the present text): *avam agarbāya* (DB V. 27–28: 'I captured this'), *avam Araxam* (DB III. 82: 'this Arakha'), *avam asmānam* (DZc. 1; DSf. 2; DSt. 2–3; DE. 3–4: about Ahura Mazda's creation – 'this heaven'). However, that there are also words that end with -u-v-m and, although they are less frequent, they cannot be entirely ruled out of count; there is, for instance, the adverb *paruvam* (DB I. 9; DSe. 43, 47: 'previously'), to which G.P. Basello has drawn attention¹⁵.

In line 4, one word ends with -y-m and the following one starts with a-. The preserved parts of the very first sign are a vertical wedge and two or three slightly visible horizontal wedges. They allow three possibilities:

name and the title are written here in the genitive case: *Dārayavahauš: xšāyathiyahy*" (Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2019: 5). E. Shavarebi notes: 'The most plausible option for the first word remains *Dārayavauš*, and we empirically know that a king's name in Achaemenid inscriptions is followed by a royal title. Therefore, the most probable reconstruction of this line of DFa would be <: d-a-r-y-v]-u-š : x-š-[a-y-θ-i-y :> = *Dārayava] uš xš[āyaθiya* 'Darius the King'.' (Shavarebi 2019: 7). Cf. also the view independently expressed by Tuplin in private letter to the authors: 'x-š in line 2 should be the start of *xšāyaθiya* (no other word seems to be available, except Xerxes' name – and the corpus contains no example of that being preceded by a word ending with š). The letter š at the end of the previous word would suit the end of Darius' name (indeed the only context in which the corpus contains a word ending -š followed by *xšāyaθiya* is precisely in the phrase "Darius the King"); but, again, it is not clear that the letter before š is (as it should be) u'.

¹⁴ Cf. Avram's restoration: '-- θāti *Dārayava]uš xš[āyaθiya --*' ('Darius, the King, proclaims') (Avram 2019: 17).

¹⁵ Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2018: 158.

b, r, d. If the sign is b, there is only one known word with ending -b-y-m: *patiyazbayam* (XPh. 38: ‘I declared’), and if it is d the word may be restored as *niyašādayam* (DNa. 36: ‘I sat’, ‘I made ... able to sit’). Nevertheless, in view of the length of horizontal wedges in front of the vertical one (the middle wedge is clearly slightly longer than the other two), r is the only reasonable reading. There are only two known words that end with -r-y-m: *niyačārayam* (DB I. 64: ‘I repaired’ or ‘I worked on’) and *viyata-rayam* (DB V. 24–25: ‘I crossed’, ‘I passed through’). A. Avram preferred to restore [*adam niyačā*]rayam, ‘j’ai restauré, j’ai fait restaurer’ in line 4, but provided no further comment on his choice¹⁶. E. Shavarebi, by contrast, has reconstructed the line as follows: ... *draya: viyata*]rayam: *a[vadā* ... , ‘... (I) crossed [the sea?]. Then?’ and suggested that this restoration ‘would be the most plausible option, if we assume that Darius is speaking of his Western Scythian expedition and crossing the Thracian Bosphorus or the Danube in this inscription’. In support of this, he refers to column V of Darius’ Behistun inscription: “In this case, it reminds of the fifth column of the Bisotun inscription, where Darius reports his campaign against the Eastern Sakā in Central Asia and mentions crossing a sea/river” (DB V. 24f)¹⁷. An earlier passage in the same inscription, where the verb appears in the first-person plural in reference to the crossing of a river (*Tigrām: viyatarayāmā: avadā* (DB I. 88: ‘we got across the Tigris. Then...’), provides further support, although he does not mention it. The restoration of the verb *viyatarayam* in line 4 therefore seems to be the most probable solution for both epigraphical and historical reasons.

In the case of the first sign in line 5 the situation is the same as with the first sign in line 3. The number of possibilities is limited to three symbols: a, d, u. The following word-final sign is -m, and the next word starts with a-. If the word ended with -a-m, we are again dealing with the ending of either a noun (for instance, the accusative or genitive of an -a stem noun) or a verb (first-person singular imperfect), and the number of possible restorations is theoretically infinite. To restore -u-m gives the accusative ending of a noun (*u*-stem), and this too leads nowhere. Nonetheless, if the correct reading is -d-m, things are better, since it could be the first-person personal pronoun a-d-m (‘I’). The first sign of the following word resembles a staple and is followed by the vestiges of a vertical wedge. Either

¹⁶ Avram 2019: 17.

¹⁷ Shavarebi 2019: 8.

a-k^u- or a-g- is a possible reading. The fifth line of the inscription could therefore contain one of two expressions applied to the activities of Darius I elsewhere in the corpus of the Old Persian inscriptions: *adam akunavam* ('I made', 'I built': DB I. 68, 72; IV. 3, 40, 45, 59, 89; V. 2; DSe. 34; DSf. 21; DSg. 3; DSj. 2–3) or *adam agarbāyam* ('I captured': DB IV. 32; DNa. 17; DSe. 16).

In the sixth and last preserved line, the beginning of the word is, fortunately, well preserved and can be transliterated as m-r-t-. One can state with certainty that there are only three known Old Persian words that correspond to the signs used in line 6. They are *mart[iya]* ('man', Avestan *marəta*, New Persian *mārd*, originating in Common Iranian **mrt* = mortal), the same word in its plural form *mart[iyā]* ('men'), and the proper name *Mart[iya]*. Of these the third seems to be the least probable as the name is only attested once (DB II. 8, 12–13)¹⁸. The last line of the preserved inscription fragment therefore contained a reference to an individual or a number of individuals, but who he/they was/were is impossible to say with certainty. Elsewhere in the corpus of Old Persian inscriptions *martiya/martiyā* either refers abstractly to a man or men in general or labels a particular man or men who can be either loyal subjects or rebel leaders¹⁹. In itself, then, the word had no clearly defined connotations, unlike, for instance, *kāra-* ('people', 'army'), which usually appears in socio-political or military contexts, or *dahyu-* ('people', 'country'), which was used in administrative contexts.

¹⁸ Kent 1953: 203; Schmitt 2014: 212–213.

¹⁹ The contexts in which the words *martiya/martiyā* occur are varied, but fall into two groups. (1) In its abstract sense the word is used to denote *a man/men* in general in passages that describe relationships between the monarch and his subjects (translated by R.G. Kent): 'Within these countries, the man who was loyal, him I rewarded well; (him) who was evil, him I punished well' (DB I. 21); 'the man who shall be a Lie-follower, him do you punish well' (DB IV. 38); 'the man who cooperated with my house, him I rewarded well; whoso did injury, him I punished well' (DB IV. 65); 'the man who shall be a Lie-follower or who shall be a doer of wrong – to them do not be a friend, (but) punish them well' (DB IV. 68), etc. (2) The word is used in its concrete sense to denote a particular man or men who are loyal or hostile to the king: 'there was one man, a Magian, named Gaumata; he rose up from Paishiyavada' (DB I. 36); 'I with a few men slew that Gaumata the Magian, and those who were his foremost followers (*martiyā*)' (I. 56–58); 'and one man, a Babylonian, named Nidintu-Bel, son of Ainaira – he rose up in Babylon' (I. 77), etc. We tentatively suggest that mention was made here of the Scythian king whom Darius set out to punish.

Unique though it is, there is a limit to what this new text can be expected to tell us. Nonetheless we shall try to draw some preliminary conclusions based purely on the reading and interpretation of the text. The probable appearance of King Darius' name in line 1 (albeit in the genitive case) and in line 2, and the appearance of the king's title in line 2 make it possible to attribute the inscription to King Darius – presumably Darius I, who is associated with the largest number of inscriptions in the Achaemenid Corpus²⁰. An appearance of Xerxes' name in line 2 is virtually out of the question. Line 4 may allude to something slightly more specific: for, if the restoration of *viyatarayam* is correct, the King was said to have crossed a sea or river, and (in the light of other arguments in this article), the reference could be to his crossing of the Thracian Bosphorus. If we accept that line 5 contains the word *akunavam*, we might conjecture that it speaks about construction on the king's orders of an architectural or engineering structure – but it is no more than conjecture²¹; if it contains the word *agarbāyam*, the inscription could refer to the capture of a country, town or enemy leader. The sixth, and last, line of the text permits the certain restoration of a reference to a man or a group of people, but his/their identity remains entirely obscure. This is, of course, hardly surprising since the fragment preserves only a tiny (if indeterminable) proportion of the original document.

The best we can do by way of restoration of the text is as follows:

...*Dāraya*]vaha[*uš*](?)| [*xšāya*ḡiyahyā or XŠhyā(?) ... ḡātiy *Dārāyava*] u(?)š : *xšāl*[*ya*ḡiya ... *draya*(?)] *avam* : *a*[*dam hadā kārā*(?) *viyata*] *rayam*(?) : *a*[*vada a*]d(?)*am* : *akul*[*navam*] or *agal*[*rbāyam*]... : *mart*[*iya*] or *mart*[*iyā*]...

...of Darius(?) [the King(?) ... says] Darius the King ... [the sea(?)] this I [with army(?)] crossed(?) then(?) I made *or* captured... man *or* men...

²⁰ According to the latest edition of the corpus of Old Persian inscriptions (Schmitt 2009), 83 inscriptions out of 181 belong to Darius I.

²¹ In the light of the historical context discussed below (the building of the bridge across the Bosphorus), this restoration deserves special attention. Of course, the same verb is used in royal epigraphic texts in relation to the inscriptions themselves: 'this is the inscription which I made' (*i(ya)m dipīmaiy ty(ām) adam akunavam*) (DB IV. 89).

Greek sources

With the text established as well as it can be, the next requirement is a historical interpretation of the monument that clarifies the circumstances of its creation and the reasons for its ending up in Phanagoreia.

Examining the historical setting of the inscription's composition, Kuznetsov links it to a (purely conjectural) military expedition of Xerxes to the Bosphorus before or simultaneously²² with the invasion of Greece²³. As we have already noted, this is entirely based on the apparent presence of Darius' name in the genitive case in line 1²⁴. The argument is obviously weak both in terms of textual interpretation and from a general historical viewpoint²⁵, and it seems more promising to associate the monument with Darius I (which is the natural inference from the presence of his name in two lines of the text) and not with his son. Kuznetsov does not completely rule out this possibility, although he thinks it hardly probable²⁶, but his treatment of the possibility that the inscription was created during Darius' Scythian campaign is oddly selective: he draws attention to Herodotus' report that an inscription was erected by the king when the Persian troops reached the River Tearos in Thrace (Hdt. 4. 90)²⁷, but he entirely ignores

²² The latter option looks quite improbable because it would have led to a division of Persian forces.

²³ Kuznetsov 2018: 166–180; 2019: 8–43.

²⁴ Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2018: 158; Kuznetsov 2018: 160, 166.

²⁵ Putting aside the question of Persian political influence in the Cimmerian Bosphorus, an issue that requires special treatment, and the problem of a direct Achaemenid military invasion/presence (which poses more problems), we note that archaeologically attested destruction in a number of Bosporan cities cannot at the moment be accurately dated, assessed or assigned a specific cause. We plan to discuss this set of problems in a separate paper; for the moment, see the summary of arguments against an Achaemenid conquest of the Bosporan state in Balakhvantsev 2018.

²⁶ Kuznetsov 2018: 161–164.

²⁷ The problem of that inscription is also quite interesting, and there are more data than those provided by Herodotus. As early as 1854, a report was published about a stele with an inscription in 'the Assyrian language', found 20 years earlier in the area of the town of Bunarhissar (modern Pınarhisar) in European Turkey – presumably, in the vicinity of the place where the Tearos river might have flown (according to one view, the river is located in the vicinity of Pınarhisar: Vasilev 2015: 59–61; cf. Boteva 2011: 741, n. 32 – with references). The stele, however, mysteriously vanished without trace (Jochmus 1854: 44). In 1915 E. Unger described the discovery of a stele which he associated with the lost Bunarhissar monument and identified, accordingly, as Darius' River Tearos inscription (Unger 1915, 3–16). On the monument in general, see the substantial work by Vasilescu 2007: 117, 122–127; cf. Schmitt 1988: 34–36. Kuznetsov's opinion that 'not a single

another much more significant and detailed piece of information that appears just a few paragraphs earlier in the same book of *The Histories*²⁸.

In his account of the beginning of the Scythian campaign ‘the Father of History’ relates the following (4. 87):

Darius then having gazed upon the Pontus sailed back to the bridge, of which Mandrocles a Samian had been chief constructor; and having gazed upon the Bosphorus also, he set up two pillars²⁹ by it of white stone³⁰ with characters cut upon them, on the one Assyrian³¹ and on the other Hellenic³², being the names of all the nations which

Old Persian inscription has so far been found outside the Achaemenid domain’ has to be reviewed in the light of another important item to which we shall return later.

²⁸ To be fair the analysis provided in other studies cannot be viewed as exhaustive either. See Merle 1916: 11–12; Nevskaya 1953: 60–61; Chernenko 1984: 57–58; Loukopoulou 1989: 88–89; Briant 2002: 198; Tuplin 2010: 294–295; Asheri, Lloyd & Corcella 2007: 644–645. The most detailed account: Schmitt 1988: 32–34; Vasilescu 2007: 117, 119–121 – regrettably, without comparison with the data provided by other ancient written sources (see below).

²⁹ Schmitt (1988: 33) points out the peculiarity of the use of this word in relation to an Old Persian inscription.

³⁰ The marble of the inscription from Phanagoreia is light grey in colour (Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2018: 152; 2019: 2). This does not mean that it cannot be identified with the stone used for Darius’ Thracian Bosphorus stelae. The expression ‘of white stone’ (ἐκ λίθου λευκοῦ) is quite common in Greek epigraphic texts, and it is unlikely that the marble would have been perfectly snow-white in every case. More probably Herodotus is merely employing a common (virtually cliché) expression. One should remember that he had probably not seen the remains of Darius’ pillars himself. On this issue, see n. 40 below.

³¹ The expression ‘Assyrian writing’ (τὰ Ἀσσύρια γράμματα), found not only in Herodotus but also in other ancient authors (Thuc. 4. 50. 2; Diod. 2. 13. 2; Strabo. 14. 15. 9; Them. *Ep.* 21), was used by Greeks to denote the cuneiform of Mesopotamia and Iran in general (Nylander 1968: 118–136; Schmitt 1988: 33; 1992: 21–35) and perhaps other forms of Eastern writing as well (Lewis 1977: 2–3 n. 3).

³² There were (at least) two stelae. This allows us to amend the first publishers’ statement that the inscription was a *Persian and Greek bilingual* (Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2018: 158). No example of such a bilingual has so far been discovered, and a Greek text translated from Old Persian on an individual stele seems more probable. (For a stele with a Persian document in Greek one may compare the letter from Darius to Gadatas: ML. 12; Briant 2001; Tuplin 2009, but this is an object of post-Achaemenid date, and the status of the text is disputed). It was also normal practice for Persian kings to make inscriptions in different languages on *individual* stelae: cf. e.g. Xerxes’ famous *Daiva* inscription from Persepolis and Pasargadae which is now known to exist in five copies, including those in the Elamite and Akkadian (Abdi 2006–2007: 46). In 1967 a stone slab was found near Persepolis; it contained an Old Persian inscription belonging to Xerxes, in which the king

he was leading with him³³: and he was leading with him all over whom he was ruler. The whole number of them without the naval force was reckoned to be seventy myriads including cavalry, and ships had been gathered together to the number of six hundred. These pillars the Byzantines conveyed to their city after the events of which I speak, and used them for the altar³⁴ of Artemis Orthosia³⁵, excepting

repeated – practically word for word – the characteristics that his father, Darius, had given himself in the text on his Naqsh-e Rostam tomb (XPl): for more detail, see Rung & Chiglintsev 2017: 701–702. For a long time, scholars believed that the text had no parallels in other languages (i.e. it was monolingual), but in 2015 an unpublished Elamite fragment from the University of Chicago Oriental Institute’s collection was examined and shown to be related to the same inscription of Xerxes (Green & Stolper 2015: 13).

Tuplin (2010: 294–295) points out that, by analogy with Darius’ Canal Stelae, the Greek text might have been lengthier than the Persian, and both the Bosporan inscription and that from the Tearos might have been incised on several stones.

³³ What Herodotus refers to here is probably not just a list of those actually involved in the expedition but a list of all the peoples of the Achaemenid Empire. This is what the historian actually implies in the following phrase: ‘he was leading with him all over whom he was ruler’. We should, therefore, expect to see in the texts of both stelae (in addition to the standard praise to Ahura Mazda and the ‘royal protocol’) a list of the king’s subject countries and nations of the sort found in other inscriptions of Darius I (DB I. 14–17; DPe. 10–18; DNa. 22–30; DSe. 21–30; DSm. 6–11) and Xerxes (XPh. 19–28) (Schmitt 1988: 33). On the principle of ‘cataloguing the empire’ as a reflection of Achaemenid imperial ideology, see Rung 2015: 136–137.

³⁴ It is likely to have been a separately standing altar of the goddess. In Byzantium and its vicinity there were quite a few such structures, as reported by the most valuable and informative source on the historical topography of Byzantium and its environs, the *Voyage through the Bosphorus* by Dionysius of Byzantium (2nd century A.D.?) (8; 16; 24; 28; 46; 71; 74; 86); cf. Hesych. *Illustr. Patria Const. BNJ* 390 F 3; 14; 16; 37. Taken literally, Herodotus’ text implies that the stelae were sawn or broken up after they had been moved to the city, but it cannot be ruled out that this happened in the place where they had been erected (cf. Vasilescu 2007: 119–120 n. 13); that would have had an obvious symbolic meaning and there is a certain analogy in Ctesias’ report (cited below).

On the structural peculiarities of ancient Greek altars, see Yavis 1949 – an old, but still frequently referenced work. The plentiful evidence from the Archaic and Classical periods (p. 87–227) indicates that they varied considerably in size and were often assembled from more than one element. We can rest assured that the marble of Darius’ stelae would have been sufficient in quantity to construct the altar of Artemis or, at least, some of its parts.

³⁵ This *epiclesis* of Artemis (Orthosia) is explained in the scholia on Pindar (*Ol.* 3. 54a; cf. Ps.-Plut. *De fluv.* 21. 4). It is clearly related to her other and more common epithet of Orthia (see Mejer 2009: 64). It is noteworthy that under this name Artemis was worshipped in Megara, Byzantium’s mother city (*SEG* 48, 568 – 4th century B.C.); cf. Asheri, Lloyd & Corcella 2007: 644. The epithet Soteira (Paus. I. 40. 2–3) was also used there (in the context of Xerxes’ invasion), so Artemis’ function as protector of the city and its walls could also be characteristic of Byzantium (Loukopoulou 1989: 106–108; Russell 2017: 185) – which supports the historicity of Herodotus’ report.

one stone, which was left standing by the side of the temple of Dionysus³⁶ in Byzantium, covered over with Assyrian characters³⁷. Now the place on the Bosphorus where Darius made his bridge is, as I conclude, midway between Byzantium and the temple at the mouth of the Pontus³⁸ (hereinafter translated by G.C. Macaulay)³⁹.

This passage is objective and detailed, and there seem to be no grounds to question its reliability, at least in its broad outline – some minor details may, of course, have been reported not quite accurately⁴⁰. Always inquisitive, Herodotus took a keen interest in epigraphic documents – both

³⁶ There is no mention of this temple in other sources. Dionysius' image appears on some coins of Byzantium (Schönert-Geiss 1970: 152). On Dionysian worship in Byzantium in general see Russell 2017: 141; 148–150; 180–181.

³⁷ This proves that there was more than enough marble to build the altar. The author's choice of words gives the impression that it was *on purpose* that this other stone was not used to build the altar: can (a kind of) dedication to a temple be implied here?

³⁸ I.e. at the narrowest part of the strait (Asheri, Lloyd & Corcella 2007: 644–645).

³⁹ Ὁ δὲ Δαρεῖος, ὡς ἐθεήσατο τὸν Πόντον, ἐπλεε ὀπίσω ἐπὶ τὴν γέφυραν, τῆς ἀρχιτέκτων ἐγένετο Μανδροκλῆς Σάμιος. Θεησάμενος δὲ καὶ τὸν Βόσπορον στήλας ἔστησε δύο ἐπ' αὐτοῦ λίθου λευκοῦ, ἐνταμῶν γράμματα ἐς μὲν τὴν Ἀσσύρια, ἐς δὲ τὴν Ἑλληνικά, ἔθνεα πάντα ὅσα περ ἦγε· ἦγε δὲ πάντα τῶν ἦρχε. Τούτων μυριάδες ἐξηριθμήθησαν, χωρὶς τοῦ ναυτικοῦ, ἑβδομήκοντα σὺν ἵππεῦσι, νέες δὲ ἑξακόσθαι συνελέχθησαν. Τῆσι μὲν νῦν στήλησι ταύτησι Βυζάντιοι κομίσαντες ἐς τὴν πόλιν ὕστερον τούτων ἐχρήσαντο πρὸς τὸν βωμὸν τῆς Ὀρθωσίης Ἀρτέμιδος, χωρὶς ἐνὸς λίθου οὗτος δὲ κατελείφθη παρὰ τοῦ Διονύσου τὸν νηὸν ἐν Βυζαντίῳ γραμμάτων Ἀσσυρίων πλέος. Τοῦ δὲ Βοσπόρου ὁ χῶρος τὸν ἔξευξε βασιλεὺς Δαρεῖος, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκέειν συμβαλλομένῳ, μέσον ἐστὶ Βυζαντίου τε καὶ τοῦ ἐπὶ στόματι ἱροῦ.

⁴⁰ *A Commentary on Herodotus* even says that the historian speaks of the Persian structures on the Bosphorus as an eye-witness (How & Welles 1912, vol. 1: 333). So far as the inscriptions are concerned, this would only have been possible if he visited Byzantium and was able to observe e.g. the fragment of one of the slabs by the side of the temple of Dionysos. The author himself, however, makes no direct reference to such a thing. (Harmatta 1954: 11 has no doubt about autopsy, Vasilescu 2007: 120–121 is more critical, and Schmitt 1988: 33 denies it – although with regard to Persian and Greek inscriptions in general, not specifically the fragment in question here). One cannot be confident that the stone remained where the Byzantines had put it, considering the reverses of fortune that fell their city after Darius' Scythian expedition (see below). During his travel to the Black Sea, Herodotus could not have seen the inscriptions on the coast of the strait – they had long gone; as to the other structures of Darius on the European coast, they had, to all appearances, survived to the date of Dionysius of Byzantium (see below). It also seems probable that the historian obtained the information about the bridge over the Bosphorus and all the structures associated with it during his stay on Samos, Mandrocles' motherland (Vasilescu 2007: 120–121).

Greek and Oriental⁴¹ – and it is quite natural that he should have paid attention to Darius' inscriptions on the Bosphorus⁴².

Moreover, the information he provides is by no means unique: there are comparable reports in other ancient writers. The first of them comes from Ctesias of Cnidus (*FGrHist* 688 F 13. 21)⁴³:

Darius assembled an army of 800,000 men and built bridges over the Bosphorus and the Istros. He crossed into Scythia and marched for 15 days. The two sides sent bows each other and the Scythian bow was stronger⁴⁴. As a result, Darius took flight and crossed the bridges and, in his haste, set them adrift before the whole army had crossed. Those men left behind in Europe were killed by Scytharbes, 80,000⁴⁵ in all. When Darius had crossed the bridge, he razed the homes and temples of the Chalchedonians to the ground because they had planned to set the bridges near them adrift and because they had

⁴¹ In addition to the work by Schmitt (1988) referenced above, see West 1985, a substantial article with a list of the epigraphic documents mentioned by Herodotus.

⁴² See particularly West 1985: 281–282.

⁴³ Although Ctesias was Herodotus' consistent 'opponent' both in general and on many issues of Achaemenid history in particular, and continually polemicized against him (see, for instance, Lenfant 1996; Bichler 2004), in this case there is little or no conflict between the two authors' evidence: Herodotus and Ctesias complement each other by reporting different details of the same events that took place in Europe as well as Asia. The reason is their use of different sources: Ctesias lived at the Achaemenid court for a long time and was therefore able to obtain information about Darius' personal participation in the expedition against Chalcedon. Herodotean evidence sometimes seems damaging to Ctesias' credibility, but this does not preclude the latter actually being right in certain instances (Gillis 1979: 13). We can hardly accept the view that both Greek authors speak *of one and the same fact*, and that Herodotus' version is more credible than that in Ctesias because he (allegedly) writes as an eye-witness (How & Welles 1912, vol. 1: 333). On that basis, one might conclude that Darius' stelae were indeed dismantled by the Byzantines, whereas the report that the Chalcedonians destroyed the altar of Zeus Diabaterios is nothing but a fabrication by Ctesias (cf. Balcer 1972: 121). Nonetheless, as is shown below, it is impossible to accept such a view.

⁴⁴ At this point Llewellyn-Jones and Robson have 'The two sides fired arrows at each other and the Scythians prevailed'; cf. A. Nichols' translation: 'The two sides exchanged volleys of arrows and the Scythians were victorious'. These translations, however, are quite incorrect because Ctesias is clearly speaking about an exchange of bows between the Persians and the Scythians – a novelistic motif similar to that present in Herodotus' story about the Scythian king's 'gifts' to Darius (4. 131–132). Cf. the tale of the same kind on the bow sent to Cambyses by the Ethiopian king (3. 21–22).

⁴⁵ The same number is reported by Herodotus (4. 143) – which does not make it more reliable.

destroyed the altar which Darius had dedicated on his way through in the name of Zeus Diabatērios⁴⁶ (translated by L. Llewellyn-Jones and J. Robson with authors' correction)⁴⁷.

The order in which Ctesias mentions the Chalcedonians' crimes against Darius is probably not chronological but reflects their relative gravity. Later on, Ctesias rather strangely claims that they served as a pretext for Xerxes' invasion of Greece (*FGrHist* 688 F 13. 25), but this is a clear misrepresentation.

The other source of information parallel to that in Herodotus comes from two passages in the *Voyage through the Bosphorus* by Dionysius of Byzantium (see above n. 33)⁴⁸.

Describing the European coast of the Bosphorus, Dionysius writes in the following terms:

After the temple of Artemis Diktyinna⁴⁹ ... the sailing is rough and strongly affected by the powerful current. The area, however, is called Pyrrhias Kyon (Pyrrhias Dog)... This is also the site of the most northerly crossing of the strait, dividing the two continents. Darius is said to have made his crossing here; for it was from here

⁴⁶ Zeus as the 'Patron of Crossing'. Ctesias probably hellenizes the Iranian Ahura Mazda (Nichols 2008: 171 – with references). One of the most important symbols of (later) Zoroastrian mythology is the Chinvat/Chinvar Bridge leading to the world of the dead (Pahlavi: *čīnwad*; Pazend: *čīn.var*; Avestan: *čīnvant-*, Adj. 'separating', *čīnvatō* in combination with the noun 'bridge, passage' [Avestan: *paretav-*, m.]); when crossing this bridge, the souls of the righteous are assisted by the divinities Sraosha, Vohu Manah and Bahram (Chunakova 2004: 256–257). An allusion to these ideas might have been intended when Darius' bridge was constructed.

⁴⁷ στράτευμα δὲ ἀγείρας Δαρείου π μυριάδας, καὶ ζεύξας τὸν Βόσπορον καὶ τὸν Ἰστρον, διέβη ἐπὶ Σκυθάς, ὁδὸν ἐλάσας ἡμερῶν ιε. καὶ ἀντέπεμπον ἀλλήλοις τόξα· ἐπικρατέστερα δ' ἦν τῶν Σκυθῶν· διὸ καὶ φεύγων Δαρείου διέβη τὰς γεφυρώσεις, καὶ ἔλυσε σπεύδων πρὶν ἢ τὸ ὄλον διαβῆναι στράτευμα· καὶ ἀπέθανον ὑπὸ Σκυθάρβω οἱ καταλειφθέντες ἐν τῇ Εὐρώπῃ μυριάδες ὀκτώ. Δαρείου δὲ τὴν γέφυραν διαβάς, Χαλκηδονίων οἰκίας καὶ ἱερὰ ἐνέπρησεν, ἐπεὶ τὰς πρὸς αὐτοῖς γεφύρας ἐμελέτησαν λῦσαι, καὶ ὅτι τὸν βωμόν, ὃν περὶ Δαρείου κατέθετο ἐπ' ὀνόματι Διαβατηρίου Διός, ἠφάνισαν.

⁴⁸ Unlike Ctesias, Dionysius has been virtually overlooked in discussion of Herodotus' evidence about Darius; and more generally, he has been undeservedly (half-)forgotten by modern historiography.

⁴⁹ A well-known *epiclesis* of Artemis (here called Diana, because *Voyage* 57–95 is preserved only in a Latin translation) that means 'Catching with a net'.

that Androcles⁵⁰ the Samian put together a bridge in the Bosphorus⁵¹. This place offers among other monuments of history a chair cut in the rock⁵² where they say Darius sat to watch the bridge and his army's crossing' (hereinafter translated by the authors) (57)⁵³.

Earlier in the work, when Dionysius is describing the sights of the southern shore of the Golden Horn, in the immediate vicinity of Byzantium itself but outside the city walls, we find another useful bit of information:

By a landing-place on the sea there are two temples, of Hera and Plouton; nothing remains of them but their names. The former was burned by the Persians who were with Darius during the campaign

⁵⁰ This must be Dionysius' or a scribe's mistake. There are no grounds to doubt that the name Mandrocles is correctly reported by Herodotus and other authors (Theocr. *Anth. Gr.* 6. 341; Tzetz. *Chil.* 1. 826); see Belfiore 2009: 310, n. 138.

⁵¹ Cf. Polyb. 4. 43. 2: '... just at the narrowest point of the whole channel, where Darius is said to have made his bridge of ships across the strait, when he crossed to invade Scythia' (translated by E.S. Shuckburgh).

⁵² Herodotus also tells us about Darius' throne, although in a somewhat different context: 'After this Dareios being pleased with the floating bridge rewarded the chief constructor of it, Mandrocles the Samian, with gifts tenfold; and as an offering from these Mandrocles had a painting made to present the whole scene of the bridge over the Bosphorus and king Dareios sitting in a prominent seat and his army crossing over' (4. 88). As far as we know, thrones cut in a rock were not characteristic of Persian architecture, but they were wide-spread in Asia Minor, especially among the Phrygians. See e.g. Berndt-Ersöz 2006 who mentions them many times; of particular note is p. 171 n. 228 (examples of similar objects in the Hellenistic world) and p. 196 (general concept of 'divine rock-cut thrones'). See also Vassileva 2009. These details are important on account of the above-mentioned probability of Greek (and, it seems, not only Greek) influence on the manner of making the inscription itself. Darius' example was evidently followed by Xerxes who build a stone throne at the bridge over Hellespont: 'When Xerxes had come into the midst of Abydos, he had a desire to see all the army; and there had been made purposely for him beforehand upon a hill in this place a raised seat of white stone (προεξέδρη λίθου λευκοῦ), which the people of Abydos had built at the command of the king given beforehand. There he took his seat, and looking down upon the shore he gazed both upon the land-army and the ship' (Hdt. 7. 44). In this case the throne and the observation point were on the Asian side of the strait, evidently because it was more convenient due the landscape's peculiarities.

⁵³ Post ... Dianae Dictynnae aedem turbulenta est et vehementer contento fluxu comota navigatio; locus autem dicitur Pyrrhias Cyon ... ibi quoque meatus freti arctissimus, dirimens duas continentes; ibidem etiam dicitur fuisse Darius transitus; hinc enim Androcles Samius pontem iunxit in Bosporo, hic locus cum alia praebet historiae monumenta, tum sellam in petra excisam; in hac enim aiunt sedentem Darium spectatorem fuisse pontis et transeuntis exercitus.

against the Scythians, avenging the king for the crimes he accused the city of committing...'⁵⁴ (14).

Darius' bridge was clearly located at the narrowest point of the strait (where its width is only 700 metres) between Rumelihisarı and Anadoluhisarı (Pl. 2). This is where the Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge was constructed in 1985–1988 (the second of the three modern bridges linking the European and Asian shores of the Bosphorus). Both shores in the vicinity are still rather lofty and picturesque (Pl. 3), and this created an excellent setting in which to erect the sort of monumental architectural structures that would satisfy a Persian ruler's taste and self-esteem⁵⁵. There is little doubt that Darius wished (a) to mark his crossing of an important geographical divide by putting up a symbol of his control of the Bosphorus⁵⁶ to be viewed by his subjects, his enemies, and the whole world and (b) to affirm his status as ruler not only of Asia, but also (now) of Europe⁵⁷. Of course, such an action would have been regarded by Greeks as a display of ὑβρις⁵⁸. The fact that the altar of Zeus was destroyed by the Chalcedonians strongly suggests that it stood on the Asian side of the strait. By a similar reasoning the inscriptions that the Byzantines conveyed to their city would have been in Europe⁵⁹.

⁵⁴ Κατὰ δ' ἀπόβασιν τῆς θαλάττης δύο νεφί, "Ἡρας καὶ Πλούτωνος·λείπεται δ' αὐτῶν οὐδέν, ὅτι μὴ τοῦνομα· τὸν μὲν γὰρ οἱ σὺν Δαρείῳ Περσῶν κατὰ τὴν ἐπὶ Σκύθας ἔλασιν ἐνέπρησαν, τῷ βασιλεῖ τιμωροῦντες ἀνθ' ὃν ἠτιᾶτο τὴν πόλιν.

⁵⁵ Compare the impression we get from Strabo of the Persians' tastes in the use of landscape for their structures: 'Above Sardeis is situated Mt. Tmolus, a blest mountain, with a look-out on its summit, an arcade of white marble, a work of the Persians, whence there is a view of the plains below all round, particularly the Caÿster Plain' (Strabo. 13. 4. 5; translated by H.L. Jones).

⁵⁶ On the strategic importance of straits for the Persians, see Stronk 1998–1999, although the focus is on the Hellespont rather than Bosphorus.

⁵⁷ Briant 2002: 198; Bichler & Rollinger 2017: 9.

⁵⁸ Rollinger 2013: 73. In a detailed article, A. Dan for some reason does not mention Darius' crossing of the Bosphorus among other crossings of symbolic natural boundaries: Cyrus at the Araxes, Croesus at the Halys, Darius at the Istros (during the same Scythian campaign), Xerxes at the Strymon. The most detailed treatment is that of Xerxes' crossing of the Hellespont (Dan 2015). Much of Dan's analysis, however, certainly applies to the episode under discussion here. Cf. the opinions expressed by Artabanos, Darius' brother, about the ill effects of marching against the Scythians in general (Hdt. 4. 83) and of building bridges over the Bosphorus and the Istros in particular (7. 10 – remarks addressed to Xerxes).

⁵⁹ Of course, in principle, there was nothing to prevent the Byzantines from sailing to and acting on the Asian side, and the Chalcedonians on the European shore; cf. Vasilescu 2007: 119 n. 11.

Historical Context

So far, we have proposed a restoration of the text on the Phanagoreia fragment and laid out the material in Greek sources that seems likely to be relevant to the monument to which that fragment originally belonged. We now need to consider in more detail (1) the events surrounding the creation of the inscription and (2) the circumstances in which (part of) it ended up in Phanagoreia. A discussion of these questions should also shed more light on various aspects of Darius' Scythian expedition and Greco-Persian relations at that time. It must be stressed that the issues raised by these extremely interesting events are numerous and diverse, and the amount of published research discussing them is truly enormous. We shall therefore be selective in choosing topics for discussion and in our citation of the modern bibliography. More specifically, we are going to discuss (a) the crossing of large bodies of water by Persian troops, viewed from politico-military, religious-ideological and (partly) engineering perspectives, (b) the position of the Greeks in the area of the Black Sea straits (primarily the Byzantines and the Chalcedonians) during the Scythian campaign, and (c) the final stage of the expedition, in particular Darius' return to Asia.

The reasons that caused the King of Kings to launch a Scythian expedition in ca. 513 B.C. are of little importance in the present context⁶⁰. More important is the fact that right from the outset the campaign was bound to have a direct effect on Byzantium and Chalcedon, standing as they did on the two sides of the Thracian Bosphorus. We have virtually no information about the relations of those *poleis* with Darius before the start of the expedition: it appears that they submitted to the Persians (more or less) voluntarily⁶¹, and evidently did not find the rule of the King of Kings too burdensome at first⁶². When listing Greek leaders who were 'men of

⁶⁰ For a review of the historiography see Vasilev 2015: 41–45. Kuznetsov's idea that the king wished to include excellent Scythian warriors in his army (Kuznetsov 2018: 164) also seems quite probable.

⁶¹ Vasilev 2015: 56–58. The author rightly stresses the absence of a Persian garrison in Byzantium.

⁶² Grounds for this belief are provided by Herodotus' account of the stay of Megabazos, Darius' favourite, in Byzantium (4. 144), an account that in no way suggests that there had previously been a war between the Persians and the Byzantines and that the city had been captured. The context of the narrative precludes the view of L.A. Pal'tseva (Pal'tseva 1999: 166) that Megabazos visited the city after Darius left him in Thrace with 80,000

consequence in the eyes of the king' (ἐόντες λόγου πρὸς βασιλέος) and who discussed destroying the Istros bridge, Herodotus mentions the tyrant Ariston of Byzantium⁶³ (4. 138), and it cannot be ruled out that he had come to power thanks to Darius' support⁶⁴. It seems likely that the King took advantage of local knowledge of the currents and the shoreline of the strait when selecting a place for Mandrocles' bridge and that he exploited the human and material resources of Byzantium and Chalcedon for the actual building of the bridge (cf. Hdt. 4. 83)⁶⁵. The erection of such a grand structure⁶⁶ must have been a high-profile event, and this is indeed attested

troops (cf. Ctes. *FGrHist* 688 F 13. 21), after the king himself had returned to Asia (Hdt. 4. 143–144): at that time the Byzantines were already rebels and enemies of the Great King, but the Persians under Megabazos failed to punish and capture the city (see below). So, the visit evidently took place some time earlier, before the Scythian campaign, when Byzantium was still loyal to the Persians. For the problem see Merle 1916: 12 n. 6. Vasilev 2015: 85 excludes the possibility of Megabazos' presence in the city before the Scythian campaign on the assumption that Megabazos and Otanes acted jointly in Thrace after Darius' crossing to Asia, but his logic here is not completely clear.

⁶³ Unfortunately, this is the only reference to him. The name recurs in later Byzantine epigraphic materials: *IvByz* 32; 155.

⁶⁴ H. Merle (1916: 11) states without reservation that Ariston was appointed by the Persians; cf. Nevskaya 1953: 60; Vasilev 2015: 54–55 (with more details). A contrary opinion (without arguments) is expressed by Isaac 1986: 223. D. Engster, for some reason, mentions Ariston only in the context of later events, when Byzantium was taken by Otanes after the Scythian expedition (Engster 2014: 369). See also Loukopoulou 1989: 86 and n. 6: she does not rule out the possibility that both Byzantium and Chalcedon were under Ariston's rule, because the two cities seem to have broken from the Persians simultaneously (freed of the tyrant's control?). This is possible, but both *poleis* were independent political units at the time.

⁶⁵ Merle 1916: 11.

⁶⁶ See the description provided by Jordanes: 'Crossing on boats covered with boards and joined like a bridge almost the whole way from Chalcedon to Byzantium, he started for Thrace and Moesia. Later he built a bridge over the Danube in like manner...' (Get. 63; translated by C.C. Mierow). It was a pontoon bridge and evidently made in the same way as Darius' bridge over the Istros (Hdt. 4. 89; 139) and Xerxes' over the Hellespont (7. 36, with detailed description). On the design of Xerxes' bridge, see Hammond & Roseman 1996; Stronk 1998–1999: 58–65. Similar bridges had already been built for Cyrus during the war against the Massagetae (1. 205) and for Darius during his expedition against the same people. For details, see Chernenko 1984: 58; 61–63; Fol and Hammond 2008: 238. The word *draxtā* ('by means of wood/tree' – DB V. 24: [d]-r-x-[t]-a; Middle Persian *draxt*; New Persian *diraxt* – 'wood') in the Behistun Inscription's text about Darius' crossing over the 'sea' (*draya*) in his expedition against the Saka Tigraxauda in 519 B.C. probably had the metaphoric meaning of a *bridge*, although there is no scholarly consensus on interpreting this part of the text. For a long time, researchers chose to leave it without translation as some lines were partly destroyed and others poorly legible (King & Thompson 1907: 81–82; Turaev 1911: 277). V.I. Abaev, who originally accepted the translation and

by Mandrocles' dedication of a painting with poetic inscription in the temple of Hera at Samos (4. 88) as well as by Choerilus of Samos's *The Crossing of the Pontoon-Bridge* (ἐν τῇ διαβάσει τῆς σχεδίας ἣν ἔξευξε Δαρεῖος), a poem mentioned by Strabo (7. 3. 9) citing Ephorus⁶⁷. 'The crossing of the host from Asia to Europe was a moment of religious significance; for the waters which divided the two continents were sacred – those of the Tanais (Don), the Black Sea, the Bosphorus and the Hellespont'⁶⁸. To mark the event, commemorative monuments were erected on Darius' orders: on the Asian side there was (at least) an altar, attributed by Ctesias to Zeus Diabaterios (= Ahura Mazda or some other Iranian deity?); on the European side there were stelae listing the subjects who were involved in the King of Kings' expedition (and very probably all the peoples of his empire: above n. 33), a throne from which he could conveniently observe the troops' crossing, and some other structures. The inscription on the European shore may have mentioned the construction of the bridge over the strait as well as the aim of the expedition, which was to punish the Scythian king.

It is very likely that the next crossing – over the Istros – was also presented by Darius as an important symbolic event. This conjecture can be supported by a fresh look at a source that has already been known for a long time. In 1954, J. Harmatta published a fragmentary inscription in Old Persian (DG), written on a small clay tablet (47 mm in height, 52 mm in width, 5–6 mm in thickness). It had been discovered accidentally in an unclear archaeological context in the Romanian city of Gherla (Transylvania)

interpretation proposed by V.V. Struve (Struve 1946: 231), believed that it spoke of a 'ship bridge' (Abaev 1950: 263); later, however, he changed his mind in favour of 'rafts' (Abaev 1980: 31). M.A. Dandamaev assumed that Darius and his army had done the crossing 'by ferry' (sic!) (Dandamaev 2002: 397). Kent wrote of a crossing 'by raft' (Kent 1953: 134), and Schmitt translates *draxtā* 'by means of a tree-trunk' (Schmitt 1991: 76 and n. 24) and 'auf Baumstämmen' (Schmitt 2009: 90), and assumes that the text is talking about 'wooden rafts' (Holzflößen) (Schmitt 2009: 90). On Achaemenid bridges in general, see <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bridges> (analysis of terminology and archaeological evidence).

⁶⁷ E.V. Chernenko apparently believes that Choerilus described the bridge over the Istros (Chernenko 1984: 62); but, being Mandrocles' compatriot, the poet would surely have chosen the Bosphorus bridge as a subject for his work (cf. Fol & Hammond 2008: 238); and, contrary to B.A. Rybakov's opinion (Rybakov 1979: 29, 70, 79), there are no grounds for assuming that Mandrocles was involved in the construction of the Istros bridge (Chernenko 1984: 62).

⁶⁸ Fol & Hammond 2008: 238.

back in 1937. Harmatta restored the text as follows: ‘Darius the Great King, King of Kings, King of countries, son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenid, the one who built this palace’⁶⁹. The word *tacaram* (‘palace’) was proposed on the grounds that the text contains the verb *[a]kunauš* (‘he built’) in its third-person singular imperfect form and that the combination of *akunauš* and *tacaram* occurs in another building inscription of Darius I from Persepolis (DPa). (See above for the possible use of the same verb in a different form in Line 5 of the Phanagoreia inscription). Harmatta suggested several different ways in which the tablet might have found its way to Gherla. He did not rule out a connection with the Scythian expedition of Darius I, but he did not rate the hypothesis as very likely. As to the purpose of the document, he made the quite reasonable suggestion that it served as a first draft for the stonemasons who were going to copy the text onto stone⁷⁰. However, the likelihood of the Persians having built a palace in the Balkans⁷¹ is fairly low⁷², and it is equally implausible that the tablet related to an inscribed structure somewhere in the depths of Asia but somehow found its way to Europe hundreds or thousands kilometres far away. This is probably why P. Lecoq (who also accepted that the tablet was a draft to be copied onto stone) associated it with the inscription that Darius erected on the shores of the Bosphorus. Concomitantly Lecoq cites the text without the restoration of *tacaram* proposed by Harmatta⁷³. Schmitt also does not feel bound to accept *tacaram*. In his view, the Gherla inscription

⁶⁹ Harmatta 1954: 7. Due to the obviously singular character of the discovery, Harmatta himself offered a rather detailed discussion of the possibility of forgery and ruled it out (Harmatta 1954: 13–14). In his monograph on *pseudo-altpersische Inschriften*, Schmitt, a leading expert on Achaemenid epigraphy, expresses the view that there are no indications that the inscription was forged (‘aber es spricht vorderhand im Falle von DGa nichts für eine Fälschung oder dafür, daß das Fragment nicht authentisch ist’) (Schmitt 2007: 63).

⁷⁰ Harmatta 1954: 7–11.

⁷¹ This suggestion is, however, sometimes made: see e.g. Rahe 2015: 88. In recent decades, quite impressive remains of Persian palace architecture have been found in Transcaucasia (see the thorough survey by Knauß, Gagošidse & Babaev 2013), but Achaemenid rule in that region was far more lasting and stable than that in Thrace. On probable archaeological evidence for the Persian presence there, see Chernenko 1984: 58–62; Tuplin 2010: 294; Vasilev 2015: 122–123 (diplomatic gifts for independent Thracian rulers?), Avram 2017 (the destruction of Istria).

⁷² The same applies to Z. Archibald’s suggestion that the inscription contained information about the construction of fortifications on the west coast of the Black Sea (Archibald 1998: 81): it is unlikely that Darius would have spent time and resources on solving issues that were not directly related to his war against the Scythians (Avram 2017: 10–11 n. 41).

⁷³ Lecoq 1997: 128, 218.

can be linked to Darius' Scythian expedition and relates either to the king's *stelae* marking the building the Bosphorus bridge or to the inscription at the source of the River Tearos⁷⁴, but, having reached this point, it is logical to pose another question: could the Gherla text have been about the construction of a bridge over the Istros? In view of the symbolic significance of the river as one of the sacred borders of the Achaemenid Empire (Plut. *Alex.* 36, citing Deinon of Colophon)⁷⁵, it seems reasonable to assume that the construction of a large bridge across it and its subsequent use by the army were also reflected in some way in the king's propaganda, all the more so because similar events (albeit rather vaguely described) may have been mentioned elsewhere in Darius' inscriptions (unfortunately, it remains unclear what word or phrase was used there). Perhaps an inscription about the construction of the bridge was erected somewhere on the bank of the Istros⁷⁶, but for some reason Herodotus knew nothing about it. As to the clay tablet (the inscription's first draft) it obviously remains unclear precisely how it found its way to Transylvania, north of the Danube⁷⁷. Nevertheless, the likelihood of its making such a journey seems much greater than in the other versions, when the starting point would have been very much further away.

After the arrival of the Persian army in Europe, the Greeks of the Thracian Bosphorus were apparently largely left to their own devices. As is well known, the Scythian campaign turned out quite badly, and the Byzantines, Chalcedonians and other Greeks were hardly unaware of the disastrous

⁷⁴ Schmitt 2007: 63.

⁷⁵ On Achaemenid imperial geographical borders, see Rung 2015: 133–136 (esp. 135). Dan 2011 is a substantial article about the Istros as a natural/geographical as well as mental border as viewed by Greeks.

⁷⁶ On bridging the Istros, see Herod. 4. 89; Chernenko 1984: 61–62. Strabo provides an additional detail, that the crossing ran *via* the island of Peuce (7. 3. 15). This helps us to understand how, by dismantling only that part of the bridge that was the closest to the north bank, the Greeks later managed to deceive the Scythians who were demanding that the whole bridge should be destroyed (Hdt. 4. 139): clearly, the Scythians could not see what was happening on the opposite side of the island. Scholars sometimes stress the contradictions between Herodotus' and Strabo's data (Vasilev 2015: 67–68; Avram 2017: 8), but they do not seem to us to be significant.

⁷⁷ In the area of the Poiana Ruscă and the Apuseni mountain ranges in western Romania there are deposits of high-quality marble, whence a stone might hypothetically have been delivered on Darius' orders for making an inscription by the Danube. According to some researchers, the deposits were first mined in ancient times, see Tudor & Surd 2015: 102 (with references).

situation into which Darius' army had got itself in Europe: Greek ships were actively used by the king (Hdt. 4. 83; 85; 87; 89; 97–98; 141), and, if we assume that they were able to sail to the Thracian Bosphorus and the Propontis while the expedition was going on⁷⁸, their crews were well placed to spread the word about the state of matters. This is very probably the situation in which Darius' structures were torn down on both sides of the strait. In taking such action the Byzantines and the Chalcedonians were pursuing an obvious political and propagandistic goal: to destroy the symbols of Persian rule over the strait and their cities and to undermine the authority of the Persian king. In the case of the Byzantines, it also seems legitimate to assume that the political regime was changed: there is no certainty that the tyrant Ariston, who had joined Darius' expedition, was able to return to the city⁷⁹. The Greek cities on the Propontis also presumably intended to free themselves from Persian rule (Strabo. 13. 1. 22).

It is likely that the final phase of the return of Darius' troops from Europe was accompanied by considerable problems. According to Ctesias, the citizens of Chalcedon tried to make things difficult for the (severely depleted) Persian army by destroying the Bosphorus bridge. No doubt they hoped to make themselves safe from the barbarians. They must have been guided by the same reasons as the Greek leaders who (incited by the Scythians) mooted the idea of destroying the Istros bridge (Hdt. 4. 136–141) – a move that would have led to the total annihilation of the Persian army⁸⁰. Given the logic of the situation, the Chalcedonians must have come up with a plan to destroy Mandrocles' bridge *after* it was known that Darius had re-crossed the Istros and was back in Thrace. At that stage (with the Persians approaching Asia) inflicting a real defeat on their army will hardly have been on the agenda, but removing the bridge would have caused them

⁷⁸ In the description of Xerxes' Hellespont bridge (Hdt. 7. 36), special note is made that 'between the anchored penteconters and triremes, they (the Persians – *authors' note*) left an opening for a passage through, so that any who wished might be able to sail into the Pontus with small vessels, and also from the Pontus outwards'. Darius' bridge was presumably laid out in the same way.

⁷⁹ In fairness, it should be noted that, of the ten tyrants who discussed the destruction of the Istros bridge, only three (all from Ionia: Histiaios of Miletos, Aiakes of Samos and Strattis of Chios) are mentioned by Herodotus more than once.

⁸⁰ On this episode and its interpretation in modern historiography, see Gillis 1979: 8–13; Graf 1985: 82; Rung 2008: 98; Lapteva 2017: 132.

serious inconvenience⁸¹. Since Ctesias only speaks of them intending to set the bridges adrift, something evidently prevented them from actually doing so. Perhaps not all Chalcedonians agreed that it was a good idea or perhaps they simply lacked the resources and hardware required to carry out ‘disassembly’ on such a large scale⁸². In any case, the bridge remained intact and, according to Ctesias, Darius crossed it.

The view has, of course, sometimes been expressed that Ctesias is wrong and that the Chalcedonians *did* manage to destroy the bridge while the Persians were still in Scythia⁸³. An argument for this view might start from the fact that in Herodotus’ account the king by-passed Byzantium, marched to the Thracian Chersonese and crossed from Sestos to Asia by ship (4. 143): perhaps the reason for his doing so was that the Bosphorus bridge had been destroyed.

But there are no good grounds for this view. It is not necessary to suppose that it was because Mandrocles’ bridge had been destroyed that Darius reached Asia across the Hellespont rather than the Bosphorus⁸⁴. Darius might have been led to go *via* the Hellespont by other quite rational strategic reasons – by information that Byzantium and Chalcedon had

⁸¹ Herodotus seems to date the Scythian invasion of Thrace (Hdt. 6. 40; cf. Strabo. 12. 1. 22) to a somewhat later period; but some believe that it happened immediately after the Persians’ retreat (Alexandrescu 1956: 18; Chernenko 1984: 106–110; Gardiner-Garden 1987: 338–340; cf. the newest work: Vasilev 2015: 68–71, with earlier literature). In this connection, it is pertinent to wonder whether it might have been Darius who destroyed the Istros bridge. This is a subject on which Herodotus is silent and Ctesias rather vague. Such an action would, of course, have prevented the Scythians from pursuing the enemy into Thrace. That the Persians led by Megabazos experienced certain difficulties (entirely unmentioned in Herodotus) may be implied by Ctesias’ report that the Scythian king Skytharbes executed the 80,000 Persians left by Darius in Europe (*FGH Hist* 688 F 13. 21), though the report is on the whole doubtless unreliable.

⁸² At the same time, they could hardly count on the Byzantines’ assistance: it was not to the latter’s advantage to do anything that would keep Persian troops in Europe and in the immediate vicinity of Byzantium. Moreover, if guards were left to watch the Istros bridge as Herodotus implies (4. 97: Coës the Mytilenian’s speech), it seems logical to assume that Darius made similar arrangements at the Bosphorus (Loukopoulou 1989: 86), and these guards stood in the way of the Chalcedonians’ plan.

⁸³ Merle 1916: 11 Anm. 6; Nevskaya 1953: 61; Chernenko 1984: 106. Surprisingly, Nichols (Nichols 2008: 31) also supports this version, despite the fact that he gives an accurate translation of the crucial passage, pointing to no more than the Chalcedonians’ *intention* (p. 93). Llewellyn-Jones & Robson (2010) also translate it correctly: ‘they (the Chalcedonians. – *Auth.*) had planned to set the bridges near them adrift’ (p. 181).

⁸⁴ Among the above-mentioned authors, only Nevskaya provides this explanation (Nevskaya 1953: 61).

rebelled (perhaps backed up by *rumours* of an actual or intended destruction of the Bosphorus bridge) and by the possibility of getting help from Miltiades, the tyrant of the Thracian Chersonese⁸⁵. Moreover, it made sense for him to punish the coastal *poleis* of the Propontis that were intending to defect (of which only Abydos is specifically named by Strabo. 13. 1. 22⁸⁶) and then make for a base in Asia from which he could raise additional troops and carry out an efficient operation against the Byzantine and Chalcedonian rebels: that would have been impossible if he had crossed the Bosphorus into the territory of Chalcedon, for Chalcedon was on the edge of Bithynia, a region that had probably not been completely subdued by the Persians⁸⁷. Herodotus records that Darius stayed in Sardis (5. 12), and it was presumably from there that the expedition against Chalcedon was launched. Ctesias' account is inconsistent with Herodotus inasmuch as he makes Darius cross the Bosphorus bridge, but in other respects he simply abridges the story⁸⁸: Darius did capture and destroy Chalcedon, but this happened later, not at the point at which he first crossed back into Asia⁸⁹. That Darius led the expedition himself is, incidentally, something attested not only by Ctesias but also by Polyaeus (7. 11. 5)⁹⁰.

Thus, the Chalcedonians who had dared to oppose the king were severely punished, and Darius' prestige was partly restored. As to Byzantium, its time was yet to come. It is important to note that Dionysius (14) does not

⁸⁵ Cf. Gardiner-Garden 1987: 341; Asheri, Lloyd & Corcella 2007: 668–669; Tuplin 2010: 282–283.

⁸⁶ It is perhaps not accidental that it is precisely this city, which was also the point of crossing from Europe to Asia, that is mentioned as rebellious.

⁸⁷ On the position of Bithynia in Darius' empire, see Gabelko 2005: 94–96.

⁸⁸ It can hardly be the case that Ctesias' narrative has no value whatsoever (Alexandrescu 1956: 17–18; cf. Vasilev 2015: 71–72). For a more balanced approach, see Gardiner-Garden 1987: 338; Tuplin 2010: 282.

⁸⁹ It was also later that Darius tore down Mandrocles' bridge (*FGrHist* 688 F 13. 21) which had performed its function and was now obstructing normal passage from the Pontus to the Propontis. And, contrary to Ctesias' report, Darius did not have to do it in a rush at that point. Thus, the Cnidian author is wrong only in one thing: the King of Kings did not return from Europe to Asia along the bridge constructed by Mandroclus.

⁹⁰ The siege was difficult, as the Chalcedonians took cover behind strong city walls and had a sufficient store of provisions, but the Persians managed to take possession of the city by digging a mine under it. J. Balcer dates the capture of Chalcedon by Darius to the time right after the Scythian campaign (Balcer 1972: 126, 129), but it remains not quite clear whether those events should be distinguished from the capture of the city by Otanes (*Hdt.* 5. 26). More definitely: Tuplin 2010: 282.

say that it was the king himself who had the temple of Hera burnt⁹¹, whereas Ctesias and Polyaeus do attribute the capture and destruction of Chalcedon to Darius personally. It is likely that the first punitive action against the Byzantines was undertaken by some part of the Persian army that Darius left in Thrace under the command of Megabazos (4. 143–144; 5. 1–2), and that it was quite a small-scale affair. As reported by Dionysius, the Persians confined themselves to destroying the temple of Hera which stood outside Byzantium's city walls⁹². It may well be that, at the outset, they were not in a position to attack the city's robust fortifications⁹³, either because they did not have the appropriate resources to hand or because there were other more pressing strategic goals⁹⁴. Herodotus' rather vague report

⁹¹ Which was omitted by Russell 2017: 4 n. 10.

⁹² Obviously, the choice of target was determined by its accessibility. The temple of Diana Diktyinna also mentioned by Dionysius and located in the vicinity of the bridge had probably not been built by the time of the events under discussion here, nor the Hermaeum on a promontory on the European side that was mentioned by Polybius in his description of the Thracian Bosphorus (4. 43. 2; 4). As for the temple of Dionysus, mentioned in connection with the destruction of Darius' stela, it was inside the city and inaccessible to the Persians. We cannot accept Nevskaya's association of the destruction of the temple of Hera with the devastation of Byzantium caused by the Phoenicians after the suppression of the Ionian revolt (Nevskaya 1953: 64): Dionysius is quite accurate here as regards the details. In her commentary on *The Voyage through the Bosphorus*, S. Belfiore provides no explanation of the historical context of the destruction of the Heraion (Belfiore 2009: 300 n. 55). The obscurity (even evasiveness) of Dionysius' reference to Darius' accusation against the Byzantines may be explained by the fact that, when speaking of things that had an adverse effect on his native *polis*, he is often allusive or resorts to omissions (for instance, see 47; possibly, also 103 and 105). The situation in this case was quite awkward: not only was the destruction of the temple a bad thing in itself, but it may be that the damage the Byzantines had done to Darius' royal authority entitled him to take revenge.

⁹³ On Byzantium's walls, see Engster 2014: 392–393. Evidently, the city's fortifications were already strong, and this casts doubt on the view that (at least) the Thracian Wall (Dion. Byz. 6), which protected the city from the hinterland, was built by the Spartan Pausanias during his occupation of the city in 470's B.C. (Belfiore 2009: 296 n. 37). In the face of a constant threat from the Thracians (Dion. Byz. 8; 16; 53; cf. Polyb. 4. 45) the citizens of Byzantium should have taken seriously care of the construction of fortifications, probably immediately after the founding of *apoikia*. Hesychius of Miletus connects the building of the walls with the activities of the mythical first king of the city and its eponym Byzas and indicates that they were built by Apollo and Poseidon (Hesych. Illustr. Patria Const. *BNJ* 390. F 12 14).

⁹⁴ M. Vasilev writes as follows: 'Dionysius does not quote his source, but it appears that he uses Herodotus (V.26.1–28.1), or an author who follows him (?! – *Auth.*), for at least a part of the information he provides (with the exception of the detail about the temple of Hera). If Herodotus is the ultimate source, this means that Dionysius' information

(4. 144) that Megabazos, who had been left in command in the land of the Hellespontians⁹⁵, conquered all the cities that did not support the Persian cause (στρατηγὸς λειφθεὶς ἐν τῇ χώρῃ Ἑλλησποντίων τοὺς μὴ μηδίζοντας κατεστρέφετο) provides no solid ground for including Byzantium among those *poleis*: after taking possession of Perinthos, Megabazos' troops probably headed west (5. 1–2)⁹⁶.

Byzantium was properly dealt with later in ca 510 B.C., when, together with long-suffering Chalcedon⁹⁷, it was conquered by Otanes, Megabazos' successor as commander of the army in Europe (5. 26). If the Byzantines were among those whom Otanes accused of damaging Darius' army on its return from Scythia (5. 27), his capture of the city may count as its punishment for the harm to royal prestige caused by the destruction of the Bosphorus stelae⁹⁸. Otanes' conquests stretched as far as Antandros and Lamponion (in Asia) and also included the islands Lemnos and Imbros, and this indicates that (unlike Megabazos, it seems) he had a fleet. This allows us to clarify what happened. After the end of the Ionian Revolt, the

cannot serve as proof of a clash between Byzantium and the Persians during the Scythian campaign' (Vasilev 2015: 55), but this is quite wrong. First, one can hardly doubt that Dionysius relied on local Byzantine written and oral tradition, and not on Herodotus: the fact that he gives the wrong name for the builder of the bridge across the strait (see above, n. 50) is consistent with that supposition. Secondly, if we understand the phrase of Dionysius broadly, as we propose, and not in the narrow sense with reference to the very beginning of the campaign and the passage of the Persian troops through the strait, then this phrase takes on a completely non-contradictory meaning: the Byzantine author could have in mind here namely those Persian troops led by Megabazos who remained in Europe after the passage of Darius to Asia – no doubt they also went to the Scythians with the king.

⁹⁵ In this particular instance, as well as in many others, the historian attaches a broader meaning to this place name and understands it (in modern terms) as the region of Turkish Straits as a whole.

⁹⁶ For the most detailed account of Megabazos' activities, see Boteva 2011: 745–749; Vasilev 2015: 47–50, 56–57, 65, 71–73, 84–92, 105–109, 111–124 (with different interpretations).

⁹⁷ Chalcedon had probably not only recovered after the destruction inflicted by Darius, but was again seeking independence. It is possible, however, that Herodotus, knowing about the subordination of Chalcedon to the Persians in general, but not having specific information available to Ctesias and Polyaeus (about the campaign carried out by Darius himself), attributed this action to Otanes, on whose share numerous and serious successes fell. In this case, we are talking about only one conquest of Chalcedon by the Persians, which happened shortly after the Scythian campaign, and Ctesias and Polyaeus should be recognized as right.

⁹⁸ Archibald 1998: 81; cf. Vasilev 2015: 54.

Byzantines and Chalcedonians did not wait for the Phoenician fleet to arrive but left their cities immediately and went to Mesambria (Hdt. 6. 34)⁹⁹: despite Polybius' judgement that the city has an extremely advantageous position in relation to the sea (4. 44. 11), Byzantium was, it seems, vulnerable to attack by naval forces, and Otanes was in a position to exploit this fact.

The subsequent fate of Darius' stelae

It will be clear that the authors of this article are firmly convinced that the marble fragment from Phanagoreia is part of the stele of Darius described by Herodotus. The crucial elements of Herodotus' account (it will be recalled) are: Darius I himself (mentioned [perhaps] twice in the text of our inscription), a stele with a Persian inscription erected by the king virtually 'in the doorway' of the Black Sea, and the Greeks who destroyed that monument and used its fragments for their own purposes – either purely utilitarian or, possibly, also political and ideological¹⁰⁰. We must now consider the various ways in which a piece of that Persian inscription could have found its way to the northern shore of the Black Sea.

The first step is to re-examine the archaeological context of the object. We cannot accept Kuznetsov's view that this context is of decisive importance for dating the monument and establishing whether it belonged to Darius or Xerxes¹⁰¹ – partly (as we have tried to show earlier) because he seems to underestimate the viability of other ways of dating and interpreting the fragment and partly because the particulars of the discovery of the stone in Phanagoreia raise quite a few questions. Correct understanding of the context would be greatly helped by an indication of its location on the map of the site of Phanagoreia and, even more importantly, a photograph of the stone *in situ* in the burnt building and a drawing of the plan of the latter in the topographic context of Phanagoreia (Pl. 4). The unfortunate absence of such information in the publication of the monument

⁹⁹ On the historicity of this passage see: Avram 2017: 12 n. 45 (with earlier literature).

¹⁰⁰ It is even tempting to identify the Phanagoreian inscription more precisely as the piece of Darius' stele which Herodotus says was placed next to the temple of Dionysus in Byzantium; we do not exclude this possibility, but to assert it obviously takes a good deal of audacity.

¹⁰¹ Kuznetsov 2018: 166.

significantly complicates its interpretation. It would also, of course, be useful to carry out chemical and mineralogical analysis of the marble in order to determine its geographic origin¹⁰².

But we are where we are, and we have to proceed on the basis that we have only one indisputable archaeological fact: an isolated fragment of an Achaemenid inscription was discovered in a house destroyed by fire in the fifth century B.C. (We will leave it to Phanagorean archaeologists to date more accurately when the building was destroyed. The precise answer is not important for our hypothesis). In all probability, the stone was used as part of the interior structure or furnishing of the house – threshold, step, prop, etc. – and had been brought into it (long?) before the building was destroyed. Kuznetsov based his dating and historical interpretation of the fragment on the view that the destroyed Phanagorean fortifications and the house were closed contexts¹⁰³, but his argument is weak: the fragment had clearly found its way into the latter context before it ‘closed’.

The fact that ‘attempts to discover other fragments of the stele in the excavation area during the 2017 field season were, unfortunately, unsuccessful’¹⁰⁴ (and, to our knowledge, the same was true in 2018 and 2019) together with Kuznetsov’s comment about the exceptional rarity of stone in general, and the absence of marble in particular in early Phanagoreia¹⁰⁵ clearly show that the city never had a whole Persian inscription. There was only a fragment (which had been brought from far away) and there is little doubt that the fragment we have now looks exactly as it did when it arrived in the Cimmerian Bosphorus: otherwise, after ‘the collapse of Achaemenid rule over the Bosphorus’ and the destruction of the inscription with Xerxes’ supposed victory report (according to Kuznetsov’s scenario), the Phanagoreians would certainly have re-used the scarce marble, just as the Byzantines did not hesitate to do (according to Herodotus) – and this despite the fact that they, unlike the Phanagoreians, had ample supplies of that stone. The marble of the broken stele (or, most probably, two stelae) would almost certainly have left some trace in Phanagoreia: it is highly unlikely that the citizens would have thrown it into the sea or calcined it.

¹⁰² *A priori*, it seems most likely that the stone for Darius’ inscription on the Thracian Bosphorus came from Proconessus.

¹⁰³ Kuznetsov 2018: 166.

¹⁰⁴ Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2018: 152 n. 2.

¹⁰⁵ Kuznetsov 2018: 160–161. He believes that ‘there was no necessity’ to use stone but it is more likely that they simply did not have the chance.

Discovery of further fragments of the inscription would, of course, negate this argument, but for the moment we must proceed on the basis that the existing fragment is unique.

The back of the stele was not polished. This makes it very likely that it was erected in a place that did not require such a finish. That makes perfect sense if it stood by some slightly hewn rocks on the shore of the Bosphorus and was part of a complex of structures that made sense in terms of Persian monumental architecture (see above). Had the stone been erected in the acropolis or agora of a Greek *polis* (which is what Kuznetsov's interpretation entails), it would surely have been executed in a different fashion. His interpretation also implies that, after the destruction of the putative inscription of Xerxes immediately in the course of a turmoil in the city, a piece of it was dragged into a house which was then burned. This is incomprehensible.

Our interpretation means that we must take a closer look at the possibility that the stone reached the Cimmerian Bosphorus by 'conveyance of the inscription or its fragment from one of the Ionian cities'¹⁰⁶. Kuznetsov ruled this out because he was thinking in terms of the stone being used as ballast on a voyage from Ionia and considered that such a scenario involved an extraordinary and improbable 'chain of coincidences'¹⁰⁷. Yet, if the Phanagoreian fragment comes from Darius' monuments on the Thracian Bosphorus the geographical and logistical situation changes. The distance between the Thracian Bosphorus and Phanagoreia is not so great¹⁰⁸, and it

¹⁰⁶ Kuznetsov 2018: 160. The mention of Ionian cities here may reflect the initial interpretation of the inscription, posted on the Internet in which it was suggested that Miletus was mentioned in the last line of the text (<http://volnoe-delo.ru/events/news/fanagoriya-nakhodki-etogo-leta/>). If so, it is out of place, since that suggestion has been abandoned.

¹⁰⁷ The size of the Phanagoreian fragment (and, probably, its weight – which, unfortunately, is not given in the publication) fully corresponds with the stones (e.g. millstones) that were used by ancient seafarers as a ballast to increase a ship's stability (to avoid heeling and excessive trimming, to minimize pitching, etc.). See on the ballast of antique ships in general: Williams & Moore 1995; Kisel'nikov 2007. It is significant that ballast 'consisting of rounded cobblestones of imported origin' (italic is our – *Auth.*) and large fragments of ceramic tiles produced by Panticapaeum and Sinope was also found in the remains of a ship discovered at the bottom of Taman Bay during the excavation of Phanagoreia in 2012 (Olkhovskiy 2012: 23).

¹⁰⁸ Kuznetsov 2018: 161. Epigraphists have long been aware of the phenomenon of '*pierrres errantes*', which was thoroughly studied and brilliantly discussed by L. Robert: Robert 1932; 1939; 1966; 1973. The routes of their migration can sometimes be rather

does not look particularly improbable that some part of the marble slab that was brought to Byzantium after Darius' stelae were dismantled in 513 B.C. might then (immediately or somewhat later?) have been taken by a citizen of Phanagoreia who found himself in Byzantium on trade or other business¹⁰⁹.

Why did he take it? It is unlikely that it was intended for the construction of a religious structure like the altar of Artemis Orthosia at Byzantium: the Phanagoreian stone did not have the proper dressing to be used for that purpose, and its size and shape would hardly have been suitable.

The stone lay 'face down' in the burnt house. At first sight the residents were no longer interested in it or in the content of its barbarian inscription, but the fact that the stone served as the threshold of the house (see above) suggests another explanation: perhaps the re-use was a peculiar case of *damnatio memoriae*, the purpose being to violate the monument of the King of Kings by making people tread on it. The fact that the stone was laid text down¹¹⁰ is understandable: the letters were cut quite deep, so laying it the other way up would lead to accumulations of dirt that would be inconvenient for those living in the house.

However, we would not like to rule out a more 'romantic' scenario, on whose historical accuracy we shall certainly not dare to insist. As is well known, Phanagoreia was a colony of Anatolian Teos. The citizens of Teos abandoned their native city in 546 B.C., when it was besieged by Cyrus' general Harpagos, in order to avoid the enslavement that would result from defeat, and settled in Abdera on the Aegean coast of Thrace (Hdt. 1. 168,

long and complex. New examples relating to the Pontic region include (1) a decree in honor of Epicrates (2nd c. B.C.?), found in Byzantium, but originating in Olbia Pontica (Cojocar 2011) and (2) an inscription found in Sukhumi in Abkhazia (2nd cent. A.D.?: Vertogradova 2002) that was apparently written in Doric (as the preserved fragment of the word ΔΑΜΟΣ [?] in line 1 indicates) and most likely came from a Dorian city – e.g. Heraclea Pontica, Callatis or Chersonesus Taurica (all of them quite remote from the coast of the Caucasus). So, in this geographical context, the 'journey' of a fragment of the inscription of Darius from the Thracian Bosphorus to Phanagoreia looks quite possible.

¹⁰⁹ Although there is no specific evidence of Bosporans in Byzantium, there is little doubt that they came there on occasion. An example of reverse travel: Teisias, son of Deloptichus of Byzantium on behalf of his brother Phrasidemus made a dedication to Aphrodite in Panticapaeum in the late fourth century – early third century B.C. (*CIRB* 17).

¹¹⁰ Contrast, for example, the Anthesterios decree from Olbia: his political adversaries embedded it in the surface of a square or yard, with the result that the central part of the text (not very deeply incised) was almost completely erased (Vinogradov 1984: 51–80, esp. 72–73; Vinogradov 1989: 194).

Strabo. 14. 1. 30)¹¹¹. Clear evidence of the foundation of Phanagoreia by the Teians is given by Pseudo-Arrian (*Per.* 47) and Pseudo-Scymnus (886–887), while Arrian of Nicomedia provides an especially eloquent statement of what forced the Teians to found a new *apoikia* on the Cimmerian Bosphorus: ‘Phanagoreia, that was founded by Phanagoras of Teos, who had fled the insolence of the Persians’ (φεύγων τὴν τῶν Περσῶν ὄβριν)¹¹². Kuznetsov believes that the founders of Phanagoreia came *via* Abdera and not directly from Teos (though they still thought of themselves as Teians)¹¹³, but, whether or not that is the case, the motif of (heroic) preservation of freedom by flight from the Persians must have still been topical in Phanagoreia at the time of the Scythian expedition. Ca. 513 B.C. many of the original colonists will still have been alive and, although a new generation had, of course, been born and raised, memories of the dramatic events surrounding the loss of their native land and the discovery of a new one must have been quite fresh¹¹⁴. The failure of Darius’ European campaign was surely seen by the Bosporan Greeks as well as most other Hellenes (above all those directly affected by the events: the Byzantines, Chalcedonians and citizens of the Propontic *poleis*) as an extremely important, if

¹¹¹ On these events, see Lloyd, Asheri & Corcella 2007: 188–189. Teos was quite a large city, located virtually on a plain. A visit to the site in May 2018 convinced Gabelko that the citizens would have had no chance of withstanding an enemy who hopelessly outnumbered them (Pl. 5, 6).

¹¹² Bithyn. F 55 Roos = Eustath. ad Dion. Perieg. *GGM.* II. 549, p. 324. 36–41. Strabo (14. 1. 30) also offers a very similar description of the Teians’ earlier migration to Abdera.

¹¹³ Kuznetsov 2001: 228; Kuznetsov 2000–2001: 70. Later he narrowed the date of the move of the *apoikia* to the Bosphorus by the Abderites to ca. 540 B.C. (Kuznetsov 2010: 341). The interpretation of the Phanagoreia inscription proposed by us perhaps somewhat decreases the probability of this version but it does not rule it out. Indeed, as will be shown below, the ‘psychological effect’ produced by the inscription fragment brought to Phanagoreia would have been more tangible if its citizens – the first settlers – had themselves been forced to flee the Persians.

¹¹⁴ In this context we should also mention the relationship between the Persians and the citizens of Abdera (on which see Isaac 1986: 89–90). We know that by the time of Xerxes that relationship had become rather good (Hdt. 8. 120). An important step towards normalization was the return of some of the Abderites to Teos (Strabo. 14. 1. 30), but it is not clear exactly when that took place. Kuznetsov has no doubt that it was shortly after Harpagos had conquered Teos (Kuznetsov 2001: 232; 2010: 314). A.J. Graham, who studied the problem in much more detail (Graham 1992), proposed an additional variant, that it could be after the Ionian revolt as well. We believe that the latter view is more probable: it is hardly likely that any of the Teians who went to Abdera changed their mind about the Persians so radically in such a short time.

not indeed epoch-making, event – an event that marked, as it might have seemed at the time, the collapse of the Achaemenid claim to rule in Europe and even in the Greek world as a whole. Of course, nobody could have imagined the great and dramatic events that actually lay ahead: the Ionian revolt, the battle of Marathon, the invasion of mainland Greece by Xerxes, the battles of Thermopylae, Salamis, Plataea and of Mycale, the following decades of highly tense military and diplomatic confrontation... Still, bearing in mind that the Greeks' demolition of the structures put up by Darius clearly had a symbolic meaning (just as their erection did), we may reasonably assume that pieces of those structures were liable to be collected as 'souvenirs' (probably right after the pillars were destroyed and in the very place where they had been erected)¹¹⁵, and that such souvenirs were perceived as trophies by those who got their hands on them. Herodotus records that one fragment of the inscription lay next to the temple of Dionysus in Byzantium and, although we cannot call this a 'proper' offering in a temple, the location makes clear the political and religious overtones of the demolition of Darius' monuments – a retribution for that very Persian *hubris* of which Arrian speaks in the context of Phanagoreia. One may legitimately compare the dedication of parts of Xerxes' Hellespont bridge in Greek temples (Hdt. 9. 121) as a marker of the end of Persian aggression against European Greece¹¹⁶. If we assume that a fragment of the Persian inscription from the European shore of the Thracian Bosphorus was brought to the Cimmerian Bosphorus in a similar spirit, it will be clear why it turned up precisely in Phanagoreia, a place whose citizens had their own scores to settle with the Persians¹¹⁷. Brought by one of the citizens, it is possible that it was on public display for some time in (or next to) a temple or other public building. If so, its find-spot shows that in due course public display came to an end. Or perhaps it remained in the private sphere all along, passed from generation to generation as a kind of family heirloom. In any

¹¹⁵ The citizens of Chalcedon may well have done the same to fragments of the altar of Zeus Diabaterios. In this context one should remember that Greeks were fond of all kinds of exotic curiosities, especially of eastern origin; on this subject, see Sinitsyn 2015, 187–192, with an extensive list of references.

¹¹⁶ On this see the recent profound and substantial article by Sinitsyn 2017.

¹¹⁷ Especially so in the light of possible Persian attempts to gain control over the Cimmerian Bosphorus. Such attempts can *to a certain extent* be illustrated by the expedition of Ariaramnes, the Cappadocian satrap, to the North Pontic littoral (Ctes. *FGrHist* 688. F. 13. 20). This episode requires special study that goes beyond the scope of this paper.

event, if the explanation of its eventual use as a threshold given above is correct, it never quite lost its ‘symbolic’ meaning.

Detailed analysis of the issues connected with the creation and destruction of the Persian monuments on the Thracian Bosphorus reveals a number of very interesting nuances in the relationship between the Persians and the Greeks living on the coasts of the Black Sea approaches at the end of the 6th century B.C. Meanwhile, the Phanagoreia inscription does not, admittedly, provide us with substantial new details in the history of the Greek North Pontic littoral, but it may nonetheless attest the existence of a ‘moral opposition’ among the Bosphoran Greeks (or some of them) to Achaemenid imperial ambitions.

Bibliography

- ABAEV, V.I., 1950. [Russian translation of the Behistun inscription], in: Struve, V.V. (ed.), *Khrestomatiya po istorii Drevnego mira*, vol. 1, Moscow: 255–263.
- , 1980. [Russian translation of the Behistun inscription], in: Korostovtsev, M.A. et al. (eds.), *Khrestomatiya po istorii Drevnego mira*, vol. 2, Moscow: 24–32.
- ABDI, K., 2006–2007. The ‘Daivā’ Inscription Revisited, *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* 6: 45–74.
- ALEXANDRESCU, P., 1956. Izvoarele grecești despre retragerea lui Darius din expediția scitică, *Studii și cercetări de istorie veche* 7: 1–24.
- ARCHIBALD, Z.H., 1998. *The Odrysian Kingdom of Thrace: Orpheus Unmasked*, Oxford.
- ASHERI, D., LLOYD, A.B. & CORCELLA, A., 2007. *A Commentary on Herodotus. Books I–IV*, Oxford.
- AVRAM, A., 2017. Istros et les Perses, in: Gallo, L. & Gentio, B. (eds.), “*Grecità di frontiera*”. *Frontiere geografiche e culturali nell’ evidenza storica e archeologica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”*. Napoli, 5-6 giugno 2014, Alessandria: 1–25.
- , 2019. Remarques sur l’inscription achéménide de Phanagoria, in: Tadamir, R.G. (ed.), *East-West dialogue: Individual and Society through Ages. Proceedings of the first international interdisciplinary conference of the historical specialization, Bucharest, June 1st-2nd, 2018*, Bucharest: 15–24.
- BALAKHVANTSEV, A.S., 2018. Bospor i Ahemenidy, in: Zuev, V.Yu. & Chrshanovsky, V.A. (eds.), *Bosporskij fenomen. Obshcheye i osobennoe v istoriko-kul’turnom porstranstve antichnogo mira*. I, St.-Petersburg: 61–65.
- BALCER, J.M., 1972. The Date of Herodotus IV.1 Darius’ Scythian Expedition, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 76: 99–132.
- BELFIORE, S., 2009. *Il Periplo del Ponto Eusino di Arriano e altri testi sul Mar Nero e il Bosforo. Spazio geografica, mito e dominio ai confini dell’impero Romano*. Introduzione, traduzione e note a cura di Stefano Belfiore, Venezia.

- BERNDT-ERSÖZ, S., 2006. *Phrygian Rock-Cut Shrines. Structure, Function, and Cult Practices*, Leiden – Boston.
- BICHLER, R., 2004. Ktesias „korrigiert“ Herodot. Zur literarischen Einschätzung der Persika, in: Heftrner, H. & Tomaschitz, K. (eds.), *Festschrift für Gerhard Dobesch zum fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag am 15. September 2004*, Wien: 105–116.
- BICHLER, R. & ROLLINGER, R., 2017. Universale Weltherrschaft und die Monumente an ihren Grenzen, in: Rollinger, R. (ed.), *Die Sicht auf die Welt zwischen Ost und West (750 v. Chr. – 550 n. Chr.) – Looking at the World, from the East and the West (750 BCE – 550 CE)*, *Classica et Orientalia* 12, Wiesbaden: 1–30.
- BOTEVA, D., 2011. Re-reading Herodotus on the Persian Campaigns in Thrace, in: Rollinger, R., Truschnegg, B. & Bichler, R. (eds.), *Herodot und das Persische Weltreich – Herodotus and the Persian Empire. Akten des 3. Internationalen Kolloquiums zum Thema “Vorderasien im Spannungsfeld klassischer und alt-orientalischer Überlieferungen” Innsbruck, 24.–28. November 2008*, *Classica et Orientalia* 3, Wiesbaden: 735–759.
- BRIANT, P., 2001. La lettre de Darius à Gadatas entre Perses, Grecs et Romains, in: Giorgieri, M. et al. (eds.), *Licia e Lidia prima dell’ellenizzazione. Atti del Convegno internazionale. Roma 11–12 ottobre 1999*, Roma: 107–144.
- , 2002. *From Cyrus to Alexander. A History of the Persian Empire*, Winona Lake, Ind. (trad. P.T. Daniels).
- CANEPA, M.P., 2015. Inscriptions, Royal Spaces and Iranian Identity: Epigraphic Practices in Persia and the Ancient Iranian World, in: Eastmond, A. (ed.), *Viewing Inscriptions in the Late Antique and Medieval World*, Cambridge: 10–35.
- CHERNENKO, E.V., 1984. *Skifo-persidskaya voyna*, Kiev.
- CHUNAKOVA, O.M., 2004. *Pekhleviyskiy slovar’ zoroastriyskikh terminov, mificheskikh personazhey i mifologicheskikh simvolov*, Moscow.
- COJOCARU, V., 2011. “Vozvrashchenie” Epikrata, *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana* 7: 297–318.
- DAN, A., 2011. L’Istros chez Hérodote, *Dacia* 55: 25–56.
- , 2015. Grecs et Perses sur les Détroits: le démon enchaîné et la démesure du Grand Roi, *Ancient West & East* 14: 191–235.
- DANDAMAEV, M.A., 2002. [Russian translation of the Behistun inscription], in: Kuzishchin, V.I. (ed.), *Istoriya Drevnego Vostoka: Teksty i dokumenty*, Moscow: 390–397.
- ENGSTER, D., 2014. Die Kolonie Byzantium – Geschichte, Gesellschaft und Stadtbild einer Handelsmetropole, in: Povalahev, N. (Hrsg.), *Phanagoreia und darüber hinaus.... Festschrift für Vladimir Kuznetsov*, Göttingen: 357–396.
- FOL, A. & HAMMOND, N.G.L., 2008. Persia in Europe, apart from Greece, in: Boardman, J., Hammond, N.G.L., Lewis, D.M. & Ostwald, M. (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History IV: Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean c. 525 to 479 B.C.*, Cambridge: 234–253.
- GABELKO, O.L., 2005. *Istoriya Vifinskogo tsarstva*, St.-Petersburg.

- GARDINER-GARDEN, J.R., 1987. Dareios' Scythian Expedition and Its Aftermath, *Klio* 69,2: 326–350.
- GILLIS, D., 1979. *Collaboration with the Persians*, Wiesbaden.
- GRAF, D., 1985. Greek Tyrants and Achaemenid Politics, in: Eadie, J.W. & Ober, J. (eds.), *The Craft of the Ancient Historian. Essays in Honor of Chester G. Starr*, Lanham: 79–123.
- GRAHAM, A.J., 1992. Abdera and Teos, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 112: 44–73.
- GREEN, J. & STOLPER, M., 2015. Achemenet Project, in: *The Oriental Institute 2014–2015 Project*, Chicago: 11–15.
- HAMMOND, N.G.L. & ROSEMAN, L.J., 1996. The construction of Xerxes' bridge over the Hellespont, *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 116: 88–107.
- HARMATTA, J., 1954. A recently discovered Old Persian Inscription, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 11: 1–14.
- HOW, W.W. & WELLS, J., 1912. *A Commentary on Herodotus*, vol. 1–2, Oxford.
- ISAAC, B., 1986. *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest*, Leiden.
- JOCHMUS, A., 1854. Notes on a Journey into the Balkan, or Mount Hæmus, in 1847, *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 24: 36–85.
- KENT, R.G., 1942. Old Persian Texts, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1: 415–423.
- , 1953. *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*, New Haven².
- KING, L.W. & THOMPSON, R.C., 1907. *The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistûn in Persia*, London.
- KISELNIKOV, A.B., 2007. Morskie perevozki грузов v antichnoe vremya, *Problemy istorii, filologii, kul'tury* 17: 178–195.
- KNAUSS, F.S., GAGOŠIDSE, I. & BABAEV, I., 2013. Karačamirli: Ein persisches Paradies, *Arta* 2013.004: 1–28.
- KUZNETSOV, V.D., 2000–2001. Phanagoria and its Metropolis, *Talanta* 32–33: 67–77.
- , 2001. Metropoliya Fanagorii, *Drevnosti Bospora* 4: 227–235.
- , 2010. O vremeni osnovaniya Fanagorii, *Drevnosti Bospora* 14: 313–321.
- , 2018. Bospor Kimmeriyskiy v 5 v. do n.e. (drevnepersidskaya nadpis' iz Fanagorii), in: *Fanagoriya. Rezul'taty arkhologicheskikh issledovaniy* 6, Moscow: 160–185.
- , 2019. The Cimmerian Bosphorus in the 5th Century BC (an Old Persian Inscription from Phanagoria), *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 25(1): 8–43.
- KUZNETSOV, V.D. & NIKITIN, A.B., 2018. Drevnepersidskaya nadpis' iz Fanagorii, in: Kuznetsov, V.D. (ed.), *Fanagoriya. Rezul'taty arkhologicheskikh issledovaniy* 6, Moscow: 154–159.
- , 2019. An Old Persian Inscription from Phanagoria, *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 25(1): 1–7.
- LAPTEVA, M.YU., 2017. 'Kogda nagryanul Midiets...': Ioniya pod vlast'ju Akhemenidov vo vtoroj polovine VI – nachale V. do n.e., in: Gabelko, O.L. et al. (eds.), *IRANICA: Iranskie imperii i greko-rimskiy mir v VI v. do n.e. – VI v. n.e.*, Kazan: 127–136.

- LECOQ, P., 1997. *Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide*, Paris.
- LENFANT, D., 1996. Ctésias et Hérodote ou les réécritures de l'histoire dans la Perse achéménide, *Revue des Études Grecques* 109: 348–380.
- LEWIS, D.M., 1977. *Sparta and Persia: Lectures Delivered at the University of Cincinnati, Autumn 1976 in Memory of Donald W. Bradeen*, Leiden.
- LLEWELLYN-JONES, L. & ROBSON, J., 2010. *Ctesias' History of Persia: Tales of the Orient*, London – New York.
- LOUKOPOULOU, L.D., 1989. *Contribution à l'histoire de la Thrace Propontique durant la période archaïque*, Athènes.
- MEJER, J., 2009. Artemis in Athens, in: Fischer-Hansen, T. & Poulsen, B. (eds.), *From Artemis to Diana: The Goddess of Man and Beast*, Copenhagen: 61–78.
- MERLE, H., 1916. *Die Geschichte der Städte Byzantium und Kalchedon*, Kiel.
- NEVSKAYA, V.P., 1953. *Vizantiy v klassicheskuyu i ellinisticheskuyu epokhi*, Moscow.
- NICHOLS, A., 2008. *The Fragments of Ctesias of Cnidus: Translation and Commentary with an Introduction*. Diss.: University of Florida.
- NYLANDER, C., 1968. ΑΣΣΥΡΙΑ ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΑ: Remarks on the 21 'Letter of Themistokles', *Opuscula Atheniensa* 8: 19–36.
- OBERTHUMMER, E., 1897. Bosphoros, in: *RE*, Hlbbd. 5: 742–757.
- OLKHOVSKY, S.V., 2012. Fanagorijskij korabl', *Neptun* 6: 22–26.
- PAL'TSEVA, L.A., 1999. *Iz istorii arkhaischeskoy Gretsii: Megary i megarskie kolonii*, St.-Petersburg.
- RAHE, P.A., 2015. *The Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta: The Persian Challenge*, New Haven – London.
- ROBERT, L., 1932. Epigraphica. IX. Pierres errantes, *Revue des Études Grecques* 45: 199–203.
- , 1939. Hellenica XIV: Pierres errantes, *Revue de Philologie* 65: 181–198.
- , 1966. Pierres errantes, muséographie et onomastique, *Berytus* 16: 5–39.
- , 1973. De Cilicie à Messine et à Plymouth avec deux inscriptions grecques errantes, *Journal des savants* 1973/3: 162–211.
- ROLLINGER, R., 2013. *Alexander und die großen Ströme. Die Flussüberquerungen im Lichte altorientalischer Pioniertechniken*, Wiesbaden.
- RUNG, E.V., 2008. Rannie grecheskie tirany i persy, in: Dvornichenko, A.Yu. (red.), *Istoriya: mir proshlogo v sovremennom osveshchenii. Sbornik nauchnykh statey k 75-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya prof. E.D. Frolova*, St.-Petersburg: 83–114.
- , 2015. Imperskaya ideya v gosudarstve Akhemenidov, *Problemy istorii, filologii, kul'tury* 4: 130–140.
- RUNG, E.V. & CHIGLINTSEV, E.A., 2017. *Darius versus Xerxes*. Obrazy Dariya i Kserksa v drevnepersidskikh tekstah i v proizvedeniyah Eshila i Gerodota, *Vestnik Drevney Istorii* 77,1: 696–719.
- RUNG, E.V. & GABELKO, O.L., 2018. Skifskij pokhod Dariya i drevnepersidskaya nadpis' iz Fanagorii, *Vestnik Drevney Istorii* 78,4: 847–869.
- RUSSELL, T., 2017. *Byzantium and the Bosphorus. A Historical Study, from the Seventh Century BC until the Foundation of Constantinople*, Oxford; New York.
- RYBAKOV, B.A., 1979: *Gerodotova Skifiya*, Moscow.

- SCHMITT, R., 1988. Achaimenideninschriften in griechischer literarischer Überlieferung, in: *A Green Leaf: Papers in Honour of Professor Jes P. Asmussen*, Acta Iranica 28, Leiden: 17–38.
- , 1991. *The Bisitun Inscriptions of Darius the Great. Old Persian Text*, London.
- , 1992. Assyria Grammata und ähnliche: Was wussten die Griechen von Keilschrift und Keilschriften? in: Müller, C.W. et al. (eds.), *Zum Umgang mit Fremden Sprachen in der griechisch-römischen Antike*, Stuttgart: 21–35.
- , 2007. *Pseudo-Altperische Inschriften: Inschriftenfälschungen und moderne Nachbildungen in altperischer Keilschrift*, Wien.
- , 2009. *Die altperischen Inschriften der Achaimeniden. Editio minor mit deutscher Übersetzung*, Wiesbaden.
- , 2014. *Wörterbuch der altperischen Königsinschriften*, Wiesbaden.
- SCHÖNERT-GEISS, E., 1970. *Griechische Münzwerk. Die Münzprägung von Byzantium*. Bd. 1, Berlin.
- SHAVAREBI, E., 2019. An Inscription of Darius I from Phanagoria (DFa): Preliminary report of a work in progress, *Arta* 2019.005.
- SINITSYN, A.A., 2015. Greki i monstry: ob antichnoy mifologii kak zanimatel'noy etnogeografii (eskiz na temu puteshestviy i otkrytiy), *Bosposkiye issledovaniya* 31: 186–213.
- , 2017. Kanaty i mosty Greko-persidskoy voyny, in: Gabelko, O.L. et al. (eds.), *IRANICA: Iranska imperii i greko-rimskiy mir v VI v. do n.e. – VI v. n.e.*, Kazan: 137–171.
- STRONK, J.P., 1998–1999. Crossing the Straits: The Persians in Thrace, *Talanta* 30–31: 55–72.
- STRUVE, V.V., 1946. Pokhod Dariya I na sakov-massagetov, *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk* III/3: 231–250.
- TUDOR, D.-R. & SURD, V., 2015. History and Tourist Valorization of the Ruschița Marble Quarry (Caraș-Severin County, Romania), *Studia UBB Geographia* 60,2: 97–122.
- TUPLIN, C.J., 2009. The Gadatas Letter, in: Mitchell, L.G. & Rubinstein, L. (eds.), *Greek History and Epigraphy: Essays in Honor of P.J. Rhodes*, Swansea: 155–184.
- , 2010. Revisiting Dareios' Scythian Expedition, in: Nieling, J. & Rehm, E. (eds.), *Achaemenid Impact in the Black Sea. Communication of Power*, Black Sea Studies 11, Aarhus: 281–312.
- TURAEV, B.A., 1911. Skifiya v ieroglificheskoy nadpisi, in: *Sbornik statey v chest' S.F. Platonova*, St.-Petersburg: 358–365.
- UNGER, E., 1915. Die Dariusstele am Tearos, *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 30: 3–16.
- VASILESCU, M., 2007. Études sur la crédibilité d'Hérodote III. Les stèles de Darius de Thrace, *Arheologia Moldovei* 30: 117–127.
- VASILEV, M.I., 2015. *The Policy of Darius and Xerxes towards Thrace and Macedonia*, Leiden.
- VASSILEVA, M., 2009. Phrygian Rock-Cut Thrones, 'Idols' and Phrygian Royal Symbolism, *Thracia* 13: 111–124.

- VERTOGRADOVA, V.V., 2002. Novaya grecheskaya nadpis' iz raskopok Suhumskoj kreposti, *Problemy istorii, filologii, kul'tury* 12: 385–390.
- VINOGRADOV, Yu.G., 1984. Dekret v chest' Antesteriya i krizis Ol'vijskogo polisa v epohu ellinizma, *Vestnik drevnej istorii* 1: 51–80.
- , 1989. *Politicheskaya istoriya Ol'vijskogo polisa (VII-I vv. do n.e.)*. *Istoriko-epigraficheskoe issledovanie*, Moscow.
- WEST, S., 1985. Herodotus' Epigraphical Interests, *Classical Quarterly* 35: 278–305.
- WILLIAMS, H., MOORE, C., 1995. Towing and Ballast in Ancient Ships, in: Tzalas, H. (ed.), *Tropis III: Third International Symposium on Ship Construction in Antiquity Athens. August 24-27, 1989*, Athens: 507–512.
- YAVIS, C.G., 1949. *Greek Altars. Origins and Typology*, St. Louis.

Internet sources

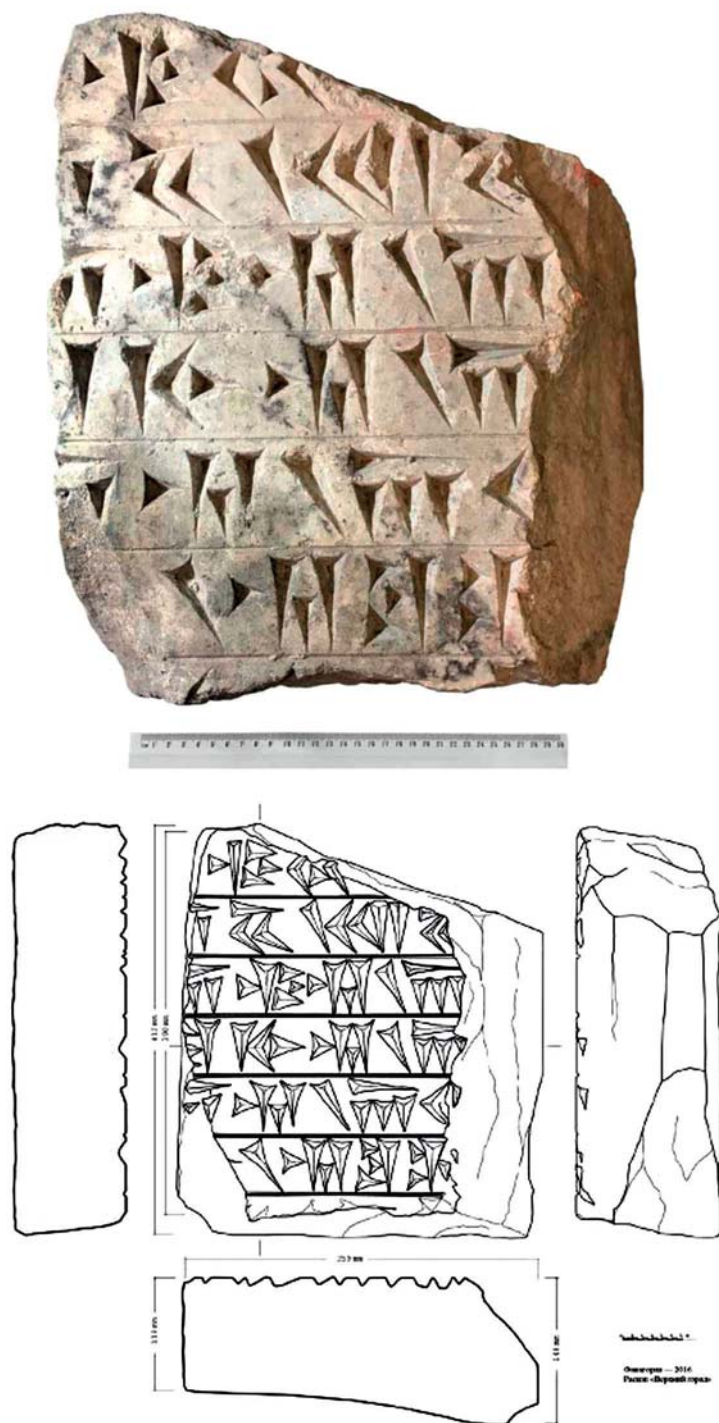
- <http://phanagoria.info/press-center/news/arkheologi-vozobnovili-issledovaniya-akropolya-fanagorii/>
- <http://volnoe-delo.ru/events/focus/arkheologi-na-kubani-nashli-stelu-s-nadpisyu-persidskogo-tsarya-dariya/>
- <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/bridges>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatih_Sultan_Mehmet_Bridge

Abbreviations

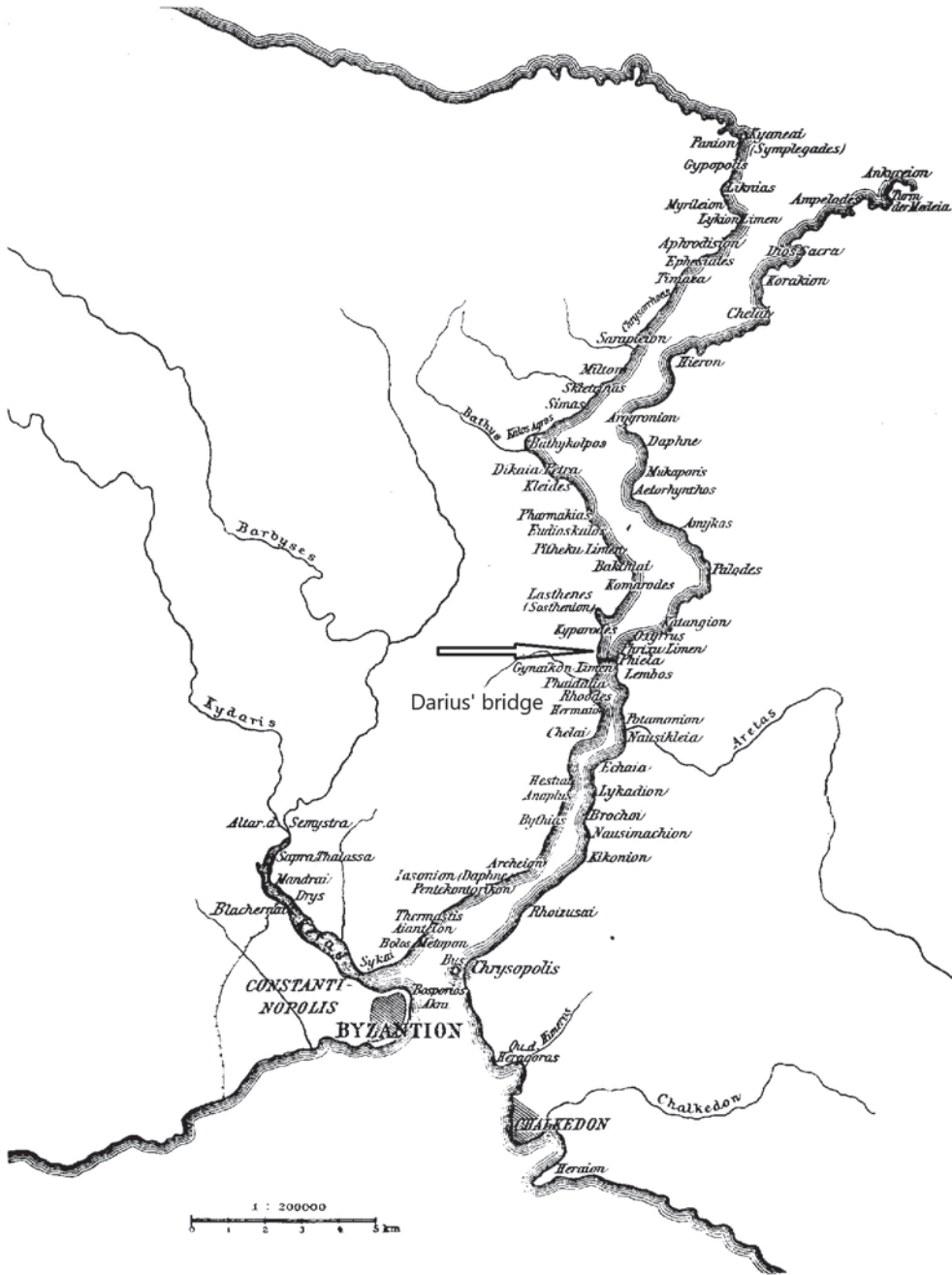
- BNJ *Brill's New Jacoby*.
- CIRB Struve, V.V., et al. (red.), 1965. *Corpus inscriptionum Regni Bosporani*, Moscow.
- FGrHist Jacoby, F., 1923-. *Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker*, Berlin – Leiden.
- GGM Müller, K. (rec.), 1855. *Geographi Graeci minoris*, I–II, Paris.
- IvByz Łajtar, A. (ed.), 2000. *Die Inschriften von Byzantium*, Inschriften Griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 58, Bonn.
- ML Meiggs, R. & Lewis, D.M. (eds.), 1969. *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century BC*, Oxford (revised ed. 1988).
- SEG *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Leiden, 1923-.

Eduard V. RUNG – Dr., Prof., Chair of the Department of General History, Institute of International Relations, Kazan Federal University, 18 Kremlyovskaya str., Kazan, 420008, Russian Federation; eduard_rung@mail.ru

Oleg L. GABELKO – Dr., Prof., The Department of Ancient History, Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies, Russian State University for the Humanities, Miusskaya pl., 6, korp. 1, 125993, GSP-3, Moscow, Russian Federation; gabelko@mail.ru



Pl. 1. The fragment of an Old Persian inscription from Phanagoreia: photo and drawing (after Kuznetsov & Nikitin 2019: 3–5).



Pl. 2. The Thracian Bosphorus (after Oberhammer 1897: 749–750).



Pl. 3. *Fatih Sultan Mehmet* Bridge (photo by Oleg Gabelko + https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatih_Sultan_Mehmet_Bridge).



Pl. 4. Phanagoreia: the trench 'Upper city' (<http://phanagoria.info/press-center/news/arkheologi-vozobnovili-issledovaniya-akropolya-fanagorii-/>)



Pl. 5. Ruins of ancient Teos: theatre (photo by Oleg Gabelko).



Pl. 6. Ruins of ancient Teos: acropolis (photo by Oleg Gabelko).