

LYSIMACHUS, THE GETAE, AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Among the principal successors to Alexander the Great, Lysimachus¹ is probably the one that has suffered most by neglect in the scanty literary sources at our disposal. His wars with the Getae and their king Dromichaetes are among the few events in his long career which have received more than a casual notice in the historical tradition;² no wonder that they have been examined repeatedly both in the context of Lysimachus' political biography³ and of the history of the region and its Thracian population, the Getae.⁴ However, many aspects of the circumstances remain obscure and dubious, and their discussion has more than once ended with the expression of hope that one day new archaeological finds might permit the solution of some of the associated riddles. The recent archaeological discoveries near Sveshtari in north-eastern Bulgaria seem now to warrant a re-examination of these problems.

LYSIMACHUS IN THE NORTH

Lysimachus received his appointment as satrap of Thrace⁵ from the hands of Perdicas in 323 B.C. as a part of the Babylonian settlement.⁶ He arrived in his province in the spring of 322 and soon succeeded in establishing effective control over the strategically important area comprising the littoral of Aegean Thrace as far as the Nestus in the west,⁷ the Thracian Chersonesus and the Northern Propontis in the east⁸ and at least a part of the West Pontic littoral. The determined resistance of the Odrysian king Seuthes III, who had already won his practical independence in the

¹ Among the many recent publications witnessing the renewed scientific interest in Lysimachus, see esp. F. Landucci Gattinoni, *Lisimaco di Tracia: Un sovrano nella prospettiva del primo ellenismo* (Milano, 1992); H. S. Lund, *Lysimachus: A Study in Early Hellenistic Kingship* (London, 1992); C. Franco, *Il regno di Lisimaco: strutture amministrative e rapporti con le città* (Pisa, 1993).

² Diod. 21, frs. 11, 12; Strabo 7.3.8, 3.14; Paus. 1.9.5–6; Polyæn. *Strat.* 7.25; Polyb. fr. 102; Justin. 16.1.19; Plut. *Demetr.* 39, 52; *Mor.* 126ef (*De Tu. San.* 9); 183e (*Reg. et Imp. Apophth. Lys.* 1); 555de (*De Sera Num.* 11).

³ G. B. Possenti, *Il re Lisimaco di Tracia* (Torino, 1901), 132–5; W. Hünerwadel, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Königs Lysimachos von Thrakien* (Zürich, 1901), 72–4; G. Saitta, 'Lisimaco di Tracia', *Kokalos* 1 (Palermo, 1955), 87–9, 116–20; Landucci Gattinoni (n. 1), 182–6; Lund (n. 1), 43–9; P. Delev, *Epohi* (1994), 4.17–28.

⁴ V. Pârvan, *Getica. O protoistorie a Daciei* (Bucuresti, 1926), 55–65; A. Fol, *Trakia i Balkanite prez rannoelinisticheskata epoha* (Sofia, 1975), 53–8; K. Jordanov, *Bulgarian Historical Review* (1990) 1. 39–51; id., *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 4 (1990), 13–20; id., *Istoria* (1992), 2.1–10.

⁵ Or *strategos*? This was the traditional office in Alexander's lifetime, the *strategos* for Thrace being subordinate to Antipater as plenipotentiary *strategos* for the whole of Europe. It has, however, been suggested that with the Babylonian arrangement Thrace was given the status of the Asiatic satrapies, the purpose being to transfer the overall jurisdiction from Antipater to Perdicas; cf. J. G. Droysen, *Geschichte des Hellenismus* 2.1 (Gotha, 1878²), 31; Possenti (n. 3), 51; Saitta (n. 3), 62–3; Lund (n. 1), 20; *contra* Franco (n. 1), 14, n. 3.

⁶ Diod. 18.3.2; Arr. *Succ. (FGrH no. 156)* 7; Dexip. (*FGrH no. 100*) 8; Curt. 10.10.1–6; Justin. 13.4.16.

⁷ For the Nestus as a frontier dividing Macedonia from Thrace in Early Hellenistic times, see Strabo 7, fr. 33, 35.

⁸ On the Thracian Bosphorus, Byzantium remained independent as before.



FIGURE 1. A map of ancient Thrace showing the emplacement of the site of Sveshtari.

previous years, prevented him, however, from expanding his domination over the deeper interior of the country (Diod. 18.14.2-4; Arr. *Succ.* 10).⁹

The extant sources offer no evidence about the initial advance of Lysimachus to the north of the Haemus, but his early activities here must also have been restricted mainly to the coastal area with its Greek cities which were both politically and economically

⁹ The depth of Lysimachus' penetration in the interior remains uncertain; Cabyle on the middle Tonzos seems to have remained out of his sphere.

of primary importance.¹⁰ Probably established in his early years in Thrace, Lysimachean control over the Pontic cities was maintained with military garrisons which were expelled when the cities revolted in 313 B.C. (Diod. 19.73.1).¹¹ Diodorus Siculus mentions Callatis, the instigator and leader of the revolt, Odessus, Histria, and unspecified 'other cities' among which Tomis and Dionysopolis should be placed together with some minor cities of the area like Bizone. The notice in Strabo (7.6.11, p. 319) that Lysimachus kept his treasury in the inaccessible fortress on *Tirizis Acra* (Cape Kaliakra) remains chronologically uncertain and could refer to later years. It is, however, perfectly possible for the rocky cape with its natural defences and strategic position half-way between the Haemus and the Danube delta to have become from the very start a permanent power-base and maybe the main centre of Lysimachean rule over the whole area.

The revolt of the Pontic cities occurred during the third war of the successors (315–11 B.C.), in which Cassander, Ptolemy, Seleucus, and Lysimachus united their forces against Antigonos the One-Eyed, and it may have been instigated by the latter's diplomacy (it was at this time that Antigonos raised the slogan of Hellenic freedom). According to the detailed account of Diodorus (19.73.1–8) the Callatians were first to rise and expel the garrison of Lysimachus, regaining their autonomy. They also helped the other Greek cities of the area to break free and formed with them a military alliance, into which the 'neighbouring Thracians and Scythians' were also drawn.

When he learnt of the revolt of the Pontic cities, Lysimachus immediately crossed the Haemus with his army, attacked successively Odessus and Histria, and forced both cities to capitulate, then besieged Callatis. On the belated arrival of the Thracian and Scythian allies he succeeded in making the former change sides and then defeated the Scythians in battle. Antigonos, in the meantime, had sent a land force and a fleet to help the Callatians, and Lysimachus, leaving a part of his army to maintain the siege of the city, hastened back across the Haemus and beat in separate battles both the Odrysian king Seuthes, who had deserted to Antigonos, and the latter's general Pausanias. The subsequent fate of Callatis remains uncertain; although according to the clauses of the peace treaty of 311 B.C. (Diod. 19.106.1)¹² Lysimachus was obliged to grant freedom and independence to all Greek cities in his domain, the evidence of Diodorus that a thousand Callatian refugees were settled by the Bosphoran king Eumelus, who reigned between 310/9 and 304/3 B.C. (Diod. 20.25.1), suggests that the military operations against the mutinous colony had continued over the next few years.

The next we hear of any action in the north of Thrace is already connected with the wars between Lysimachus and Dromichaetes, the king of the Getae. The evidence available about these wars, although attested in a number of ancient authors,¹³ remains

¹⁰ On the Greek cities between the Haemus and the Istrus, see C. M. Danov, *Zapadnati briag na Chernomore v drevnostta* (Sofia, 1947); id., *RE Suppl.* 9 (1962), 844–1175; T. V. Blavatskaia, *Zapadnopontiskie goroda v 7–1 vekah do n.e.* (Moscow, 1952); C. Preda, *Callatis* (Bucuresti, 1968); D. M. Pippidi, D. Berciu, *Din istoria Dobrogei. 1. Geti si Greci la Dunarea de jos din cele mai vechi timpuri pina la cucerirea romana* (Bucuresti, 1965); D. M. Pippidi, *I Greci nel basso Danubio dall'età arcaica alla conquista romana* (Milano, 1971); id., *Les cités grecques de la Dobroudja dans l'histoire de l'antiquité* (Bucarest, 1977); numerous publications have appeared in the periodicals *Pontica* (Constanta) and *Izvestia na Varnenskoto arheologicheskoto druzhestvo* (continued as *Izvestia na Narodnia muzei Varna*), and in the monographic series *Histria* (Bucuresti).

¹¹ See Lund (n. 1), 33–5; Franco (n. 1), 21–4, 33–6, 41.

¹² C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (New Haven, 1934), no. 1.

¹³ See note 2 above.

incomplete and contradictory. The two fragments of Diodorus that offer the most detailed account of the events suggest two separate campaigns: during the first the Getae captured Agathocles the son of Lysimachus, but later set him free with many gifts in order to ensure the peaceful return of occupied territories (Diod. 21, fr. 11); during the second Lysimachus himself was taken prisoner with his whole army, and then released under similar conditions (Diod. 21, fr. 12). A passage in Pausanias which mentions the two occasions (the capture of Agathocles and that of Lysimachus himself by the Getae) seems to imply, however, that they are just parallel versions of one and the same event.¹⁴

The exact chronology of these dramatic events is difficult to establish, but attempts to place any of them before the 'Year of the Kings' are not seriously founded.¹⁵ The first fragment of Diodorus, describing the (presumably earlier) episode of the capture and subsequent release of Agathocles by unspecified 'Thracians',¹⁶ not only mentions Lysimachus as *king*, but also contains the specific information that at the time *all the powerful kings* were at peace with each other.¹⁷ Giving priority to the order of events in Pausanias,¹⁸ some authors have accordingly placed the first Getic war (the captivity of

¹⁴ Paus. 1.9.6: 'Then Lysimachus made war against his neighbours, first the Odrysae, secondly the Getae and Dromichaetes. Engaging with men not unversed in warfare and far his superiors in number, he himself escaped from a position of extreme danger, but his son Agathocles, who was serving with him then for the first time, was taken prisoner by the Getae. Lysimachus met with other reverses afterwards, and attaching great importance to the capture of his son made peace with Dromichaetes, yielding to the Getic king the parts of his empire beyond the Ister, and, chiefly under compulsion, giving him his daughter in marriage. Others say that not Agathocles but Lysimachus himself was taken prisoner, regaining his liberty when Agathocles treated with the Getic king on his behalf. On his return he married to Agathocles Lysandra, the daughter of Ptolemy, son of Lagus, and of Eurydice' (trans. W. H. S. Jones).

¹⁵ Fol (n. 4), 57–8; K. Jordanov in *Istoria na Dobrudja 1* (Sofia, 1984), 116; M. Tacheva, *Istoria na bulgarskite zemi v drevnostta prez elinisticheskata i rimskata epoha* (Sofia, 1997²), 16–17. Cf. my objections in P. Delev, *Epohi* (1994), 4.17–28.

¹⁶ The vague appellation 'Thracians' in this text is not confusing, for Diodorus uses the same name for the Getae of Dromichaetes in the more circumstantial account dedicated to the second war (Diod. 21.12: 'Thracians' is repeated six times in this text, but the more precise 'Getae' is also used, if only once). Diodorus calls the South Danubian Getae 'Thracians' also in the account of the events in 313 B.C. discussed above (19.73.2, 4–5). The Getae *were* a Thracian tribal group, so the appellation in itself is not incorrect.

¹⁷ Diod. 21.11 = Const. Exc. 2 (1), p. 253: 'The Thracians captured Agathocles, the king's son, but sent him home with gifts, partly to prepare for themselves a refuge against the surprises of Fortune, partly in the hope of recovering through this act of humanity that part of their territory which Lysimachus had seized. For they no longer hoped to be able to prevail in the war, since almost all the most powerful kings were now in agreement, and were in military alliance one with another' (trans. F. R. Walton).

¹⁸ Pausanias mentions the crossing of Lysimachus into Asia and the war with Antigonos directly after the passage dedicated to the wars with Dromichaetes, and he also says that Agathocles married Lysandra, a daughter of Ptolemy by Eurydice, long before the marriage of Lysimachus himself to another daughter of Ptolemy, Arsinoë (Paus., 1.9.6; cf. 1.10.3). The marriage of Lysimachus and Arsinoë is confidently dated to the years immediately following the battle of Ipsus. The marriage between Agathocles and Lysandra is, however, a chronological puzzle. The statement of Pausanias is contradicted by the assertion of Plutarch that both marriages were simultaneous (*Demetr.* 31.5), while Porphyry (3.5 *Jacoby* = 4.3 *FrHG* = Euseb. 1, 232 *Schöne*) makes Lysandra the wife of Alexander, the son of Cassander. Many modern historians place the marriage of Agathocles and Lysandra only after 294 B.C. (the death of Alexander V), openly discrediting the chronology of Pausanias. Could not his statement then possibly be regarded as a misrepresentation of an original assertion that *Lysimachus and Arsinoë already had children at the time of the marriage of Agathocles and Lysandra*?

Agathocles) between the 'Year of the Kings' and the war of 302–1 B.C.¹⁹ Preferring the authority of Diodorus,²⁰ others have opted more plausibly for later dates for this campaign, still placing it, however, before the war in which Lysimachus himself was taken prisoner.²¹ A third possibility is to discard the Agathocles story altogether as a doublet of the better attested version with the capture and release of Lysimachus by the Getae.²²

The contradictory evidence does not seem to admit a final and satisfactory solution of this tangled problem. Yet I think a characteristic detail which has so far escaped notice permits at least the advance of some further arguments. In the larger fragment dealing with the capture of Lysimachus in the course of the second war with Dromichaetes, Diodorus mentions twice that the king of the Getae addressed his prisoner as 'father' (πατέρα, Diod. 21.12.2, 6). The repetition of this characteristic appellation seems to indicate that its employment is not fortuitous; the context, however, has been lost, together with the remaining part of the story left out of the fragment.²³ The only adequate explanation seems to derive from the statement of Pausanias, among the clauses of the peace treaty which brought about the liberation of Agathocles, that Dromichaetes received in marriage a daughter of Lysimachus (Paus. 1.9.6).²⁴ With the argument that Pausanias combined the two Getic campaigns, most authors have attributed this marriage to the arrangement after the second one,²⁵ but this is clearly in contradiction with the indirect evidence of Diodorus, who makes Dromichaetes use the appellation 'father' to address Lysimachus when he was just captured; it is obviously preferable to place it among the results of the first war, which

¹⁹ F. Reuss, *Hieronimus von Karden. Studien zur Geschichte der Diadochenzeit* (Berlin, 1876), 124; F. Geyer, 'Lysimachus', *RE* 14 (1928), 6–7. Further, but also inconclusive argumentation in support of this hypothesis has been suggested by F. Papazoglu in *Adriatica praehistorica et antiqua* (= *Miscellanea G. Novak dicata* [Zagreb, 1970]), 335–46.

²⁰ The fragment dealing with the captivity of Agathocles comes from the lost twenty-first book of the 'Library of History' which only starts with the battle of Ipsus, and the assertion of Diodorus that 'all the most powerful kings were in agreement and in military alliance one with another' can hardly be reconciled with any date between the 'Year of the Kings' and Ipsus. It should be remembered that whereas Diodorus is generally considered a relatively trustworthy and reliable source for the Age of the Successors, the information in Pausanias about events of the early Hellenistic age, although probably going back at least partly (but probably indirectly) to good primary sources, contains numerous confusions and inexactitudes in its details. See M. Segre, *Historia* 2 (1928), 217–37; P. Lévêque, *Pyrrhos* (Paris, 1957), 68–9.

²¹ Possenti (n. 3), 97–8 suggested it might have been simultaneous with the war against Antigonos in Asia, while Hünnerwadel (n. 3), 58–60, 72 placed it soon after Ipsus and not later than 299 B.C. Saitta (n. 3), 116–19 proposed dating the end of the war in 297 B.C., when the new system of partial unions established after Ipsus (Lysimachus–Ptolemy and Seleucus–Demetrius) acquired, with the reconciliation between Ptolemy and Demetrius and for the short time before the latter's invasion of Greece in the following year, at least the outward appearance of universal concord. B. Niese (*Geschichte der griechischen und makedonischen Staaten seit der Schlacht bei Chaeroneia* 1 [Gotha, 1893], 367–8) referred the capture and release of Agathocles to the initial stages of the main war between Lysimachus and Dromichaetes; recently this view has been revived by Landucci Gattinoni (n. 1), 183–4, who accordingly dates the episode to 294 B.C.

²² So e.g. K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* (Berlin/Leipzig, 1924–31²), 4.1, 225, n. 2; the idea of reduplication has been taken over, although with less conviction, by Lund (n. 1), 45–6.

²³ The word has tacitly been taken to imply nothing more than a sign of respect to an elder. The text of Diodorus, however, leaves the definite impression that some specific emphasis is laid on the use of πατέρα.

²⁴ For the use of similar appellations between father-in-law and son-in-law (Ptolemy and Pyrrhus), see Plut. *Pyrrh.* 6.7.

²⁵ Cf. Hünnerwadel (n. 3), 73–4; Possenti (n. 3), 134; Geyer (n. 19), 15; Saitta (n. 3), 89; Lund (n. 1), 48.

is also the literal assertion in Pausanias. Thus the combined evidence of Diodorus and Pausanias seems in the first place to substantiate the disputed existence of the first Getic war; the confirmation of this part of the story as told by Pausanias increases further the value of his whole statement. If we accordingly give some credit to his exact account, Lysimachus would have personally headed the punitive expedition in which his first-born son Agathocles 'was serving with him . . . for the first time'; this would inevitably preclude the dating of the episode anywhere between 302 and 300 B.C. when Lysimachus is known for certain to have been absent from Thrace. During the campaign against the Getae, who were 'not unversed in warfare and far his superiors in number', Lysimachus was drawn into a dangerous situation and narrowly escaped, while his son Agathocles was taken prisoner. The Getae subsequently inflicted other defeats, but as the overall strategic situation had changed with the agreement and military alliance established between 'almost all the most powerful kings' (Diodorus), they lost hope of a military victory and treated with Lysimachus, setting his son free 'with many gifts', in order to receive back the disputed lands—'that part of their territory which Lysimachus had seized'. According to Pausanias, these lands were across the Danube; he also mentions, as already noted, the marriage of Dromichaetes to an anonymous daughter of Lysimachus, in all probability one born from the marriage with Nicaea, the daughter of Antipater. This hypothetical reconstruction of the events makes the late dating proposed by Niese and Landucci Gattinoni very improbable: this would mean that almost directly after signing a formal peace treaty—confirmed with the release of territory and a dynastic marriage—Lysimachus had broken it and restarted the war; there is no trace of such perfidy in the sources. In the light of these considerations the suggestion of Giovanna Saitta dating the first Getic war in (or up to) 297 B.C. seems to remain the one which meets most acceptably the various circumstances in Diodorus and Pausanias.

In the long run, the conflict must have been provoked by the territorial expansion of Lysimachus; both Diodorus and Pausanias mention the return of occupied territory to the Getae as a condition of the settlement which brought about the release of Agathocles. It seems, however, impossible to establish the time when these territories were first occupied by Lysimachus; this could well have happened a long time before the actual conflict which led to the capture of Agathocles—perhaps during the initial advance of Lysimachus in north-eastern Thrace, when he also occupied the coastal cities and set garrisons in them, or during his activity in the region at the time of the uprising of the Greek cities in 313 B.C., or even in the years after the peace of 311 B.C., when the war against the rebellious Callatians was finally brought to a successful end. Whatever the case, around 302, when Lysimachus undertook the hazardous war against Antigonus in Asia, the situation in the north must have been settled and stable, and it seems to have remained that way at least until the following winter, when, due to the blockade of the straits by Demetrius, Pleistarchus had to ship his reinforcements across the Pontus from Odessus (Diod. 20.112.1–4).

The idea of initial aggressive actions of Lysimachus in the lands of the Getae in the years after the battle at Ipsus as the immediate cause of the war seems much less plausible because of the problems he now faced in his new Asiatic domain and the still unresolved conflict with Demetrius Poliorcetes. On the contrary, the overall situation was favourable for an attempt by the Getae to recover land previously lost to Lysimachus, profiting from his prolonged absence from Thrace. The Getae could have undertaken their offensive during the war in Asia (maybe encouraged by Antigoniid agents?) or they could have made use of the advantageous situation in the following

years, when Lysimachus remained in relative isolation, abandoned by his allies, attacked from the sea by Demetrius and facing considerable difficulties in Asia; the combined texts of Diodorus and Pausanias create the overall impression of prolonged military activities that went through different episodes.

Although the second Getic war of Lysimachus is mentioned by a large number of ancient sources, the standard information is usually restricted to the extravagant story of the capture of Lysimachus with his whole army and their subsequent release by Dromichaetes, the king of the Getae, while many other important aspects of the events remain controversial and obscure. The most detailed ancient description is contained in a large fragment from the lost twenty-first book of Diodorus Siculus, restored from two complementary passages in the collections *De Virtutibus et Vitiis* and *De Sententiis* of the Constantinian excerpts.²⁶ Deprived of its context and left without a beginning, this melodramatic narrative bears a strong affinity to the fables about the virtuous barbarians, the punishment of pride, etc., which moralizing historiography reiterated in manifold versions; but the widespread conviction that this part of the *Library of History* is based, directly or indirectly, on the lost work of Hieronymus of Cardia, the undisputed authority of the age, gives a distinct flavour of authenticity and reliability to its evidence.

The causes of this second conflict between Lysimachus and Dromichaetes are vague; they were probably connected with the results of the previous war which must have been unfavourable for Lysimachus, who was obliged to make concessions to the king of the Getae in order to obtain the liberation of his son.²⁷ This plot suggests a planned and prepared invasion by Lysimachus into the lands of the Getae, and the sources seem to corroborate this idea;²⁸ but did the whole conflict begin with his expedition, or was this perhaps the reaction of Lysimachus to a Getic incursion in the coastal territories under his control? The latter possibility is plausible in view of the overall political situation—between the hard campaigns of 296–4 B.C. against the cities in Anatolia held until then by Demetrius and the outburst of the crisis around the Macedonian heritage it would have been unwise for Lysimachus to divert his attention—and his forces—to the far north;²⁹ some authors have even suggested the probable interference of Demetrius Poliorcetes, who would not have missed an opportunity to provoke or promote the conflict by encouraging a Getic attack on Lysimachus which suitably assured him operational freedom in Macedonia.³⁰ Once again, poor knowledge of the chronology and details of the events prevents any categorical conclusions; it is perfectly possible that Lysimachus himself, after the successful termination of the Anatolian campaign and before the events in Macedonia took that unexpected turn which led to the establishment there of Demetrius Poliorcetes, could have engaged himself in the conflict with the Getae, probably long postponed.

The determination of the starting-date of this second Getic war depends on a passage in Justin (repeated by Orosius) which links the treaty concluded between Lysimachus and Demetrius Poliorcetes after the latter seized the throne in Macedonia with the war against Dromichaetes; the statement of Justin, the only surviving author

²⁶ Diod. 21.12 = Const. *Exc.* 2 (1), pp. 253–4; 4, pp. 345–6.

²⁷ Cf. Droysen (n. 5), 2.2, 275.

²⁸ Strabo 7.3.14 (p. 305): *Λυσίμαχος . . . στρατεύσας ἐπὶ Γέτας*; cf. 7.3.8 (p. 302); Polyae. *Strat.* 7.25: *Λυσίμαχος . . . ἐστρατεύσεν . . . ἐπὶ τὴν Θράκην*.

²⁹ Hünerwadel (n. 3), 72; Geyer (n. 19), 15.

³⁰ Hünerwadel (n. 3), 72; Saitta (n. 3), 88, n. 56.

to present a full and coherent narration of the events after 301 B.C., is repeated in the extant prologues of his source, Pompeius Trogus.³¹ The casual notice of Porphyry (preserved in Syncellus) that Antipater the son of Cassander fled to his father-in-law Lysimachus *by the Pontus* when he was expelled by Demetrius suggests essentially the same.³² But the exact date of Demetrius' enthronement in Macedonia (early or late in 294 B.C.?) remains doubtful; the lapse of time between this and the eviction of Antipater and the conclusion of the peace with Lysimachus is of unknown length; and on the other hand the war between Lysimachus and Dromichaetes may have started quite a long time before that moment. The evidence on the activity of Lysimachus in Asia Minor up to 294 B.C.,³³ however, restricts the possibility of going back too far; usually the start of the Getic war is placed in 294 or 293 B.C., sometimes with the explicit stipulation that the main campaign of Lysimachus in the lands of the Getae and his captivity should be dated one or two years later.³⁴

The fragmentary remarks in the extant sources permit only a very imperfect reconstruction of the sequence of events during this large-scale military campaign. Although the number of 100,000 mentioned by Polyaeus seems an immoderate overestimate, Lysimachus must have invaded the lands of the Getae with significant forces.³⁵ His Thracian adversaries probably evaded a direct encounter; Polyaeus has preserved the story about Seuthes, a general (*strategos*) of king Dromichaetes who presented himself as a deserter and deceived Lysimachus, led him into difficult terrain, and thus decided the outcome of the whole war.³⁶ Tormented by hunger and thirst³⁷ and attacked by Dromichaetes,³⁸ the army of Lysimachus found itself locked in a desperate situation and the king had to surrender.³⁹ The story of Polyaeus ends with the physical annihilation of Lysimachus and his whole army, which is clearly erroneous.⁴⁰ Pausanias (1.9.6) mentions the captivity of Lysimachus only as an alternative version to his main story in which Lysimachus escaped from a position of extreme danger, but his son Agathocles was taken prisoner by the Getae; this might be a real event of the first war or a random interpolation of facts from the two Getic campaigns. According to the fragment of Diodorus, although advised to run away, Lysimachus refused to desert his soldiers and friends and was taken prisoner together with his train and the whole army (Diod. 21.12.1). The news of Lysimachus' captivity then tempted Demetrius Poliorcetes into a full-scale invasion of Thrace; he evidently counted on an easy victory in a country deprived of both army and government,⁴¹ but the uprising which broke out in Boeotia⁴² and the report about the expedient liberation of Lysimachus by Dromichaetes⁴³ induced him to turn back. The intervention of

³¹ Justin. 16.1.19; Trog. *Prolog.* 16; Oros. 3.23.52; cf. Plut. *Pyrrh.* 6.6.

³² Porphyry. fr. 3.3 *FrHG* = Syncell. 504.

³³ Cf. Plut. *Demetr.* 35.5.

³⁴ Hünerwadel (n. 3), 72; Possenti (n. 3), 133; Geyer (n. 19), 15; Saitta (n. 3), 154; Lund (n. 1), 45.

³⁵ Polyaeus. *Strat.* 7.25; cf. Droysen (n. 5), 2.2, 276.

³⁶ Polyaeus. loc. cit.: ἐς δυσχωρίας.

³⁷ Polyaeus. loc. cit.; Diod. 21.12.1; Strabo 7.3.14 (p. 305); Plut. *Mor.* 126ef (*De Tu. San.* 9); 183e (*Reg. et Imp. Apophth. Lys.* 1); 555de (*De Sera Num.* 11).

³⁸ Polyaeus. loc. cit.

³⁹ Diod. 21.12.3; Trog. *Prolog.* 16; Plut. *Demetr.* 39.6; *Mor.* 126ef, 183e, 555de; Strabo 7.3.8 (p. 302); 7.3.14 (p. 305); Memnon 5.1 *Jacoby*.

⁴⁰ Polyaeus. *Strat.* 7.25.

⁴¹ Plut. *Demetr.* 39.6.

⁴² Plut. *Demetr.* 39.6ff.; Diod. 21.14.

⁴³ Diod. 21.12.3-6; Strabo 7.3.8 (p. 302), 7.3.14 (p. 305); Plut. *Demetr.* 39.6; Trog. *Prolog.* 16; Memnon 5.1 *Jacoby*.

Demetrius, related chronologically to the capture and release of Lysimachus, gives a further possibility for an approximate establishment of the chronology of the second Getic war. Unfortunately the two Boeotian uprisings against Demetrius that give the chronological limits of the episode are not precisely datable and can only be placed generally between 294 B.C. (Demetrius king of Macedonia) and 290 B.C. (the Pythian games mentioned by Plutarch after the second taking of Thebes).⁴⁴ On the basis of these initial data the detention of Lysimachus by the Getae and the intervention of Demetrius in Thrace are placed variously in 293,⁴⁵ in 292,⁴⁶ or even in 291 B.C.⁴⁷ The incursion of Demetrius in Thrace could well have been the real reason for the prompt and easy liberation of Lysimachus by the Getae.⁴⁸

To the background of the prevailing conventional accounts just mentioning the imprisonment and then the unexpected release of Lysimachus, the fragment of Diodorus alone offers further specific details: the king of the Getae Dromichaetes accepted him kindly and transferred him together with his children to the city of Helis (Diod. 21.12.1); he succeeded in persuading his compatriots, at first bent on revenge, that the release of the captured enemy would bring them greater political profits than his punishment (21.12.3), and setting a feast, at which he demonstrated figuratively, in the different furniture, tableware, and food the poverty and barbarian ways of his people, he proceeded to crown Lysimachus with a wreath and then set him free, after receiving his assurances of future friendship and loyalty (Diod. 21.12.4–6; Stabo 7.3.8). The terms of the peace thus concluded between Lysimachus and Dromichaetes also remain rather vague. The only explicitly known stipulation was the return of some Getic fortified places of unspecified location which Lysimachus had occupied either during this campaign or long before (Diod. 21.12.3, 6). The casual notice of Pausanias about the daughter of Lysimachus given in marriage to Dromichaetes must be referred, as explained above, rather to the settlement after the first Getic war (Paus. 1.9.6). The retention of hostages by the Getae seems a probable precaution to secure the implementation of the treaty; this must have been the case with Clearchus, the son of the Heracleian tyrant Dionysius and his Persian wife Amastris, who is known to have remained in Getic custody after the liberation of Lysimachus.⁴⁹ The main clauses of the treaty must have dealt with the legitimate recognition of Dromichaetes and his kingdom and with territorial and economic questions of which we remain absolutely ignorant.

THE GETAE

The tradition of situating the wars between Lysimachus and Dromichaetes, together with the main territory of the latter's kingdom, in the lands to the north of the

⁴⁴ Plut. *Demetr.* 40.7. The dating of the two sieges of Thebes by Demetrius has been discussed recently by B. Gullath, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Boiotiens in der Zeit Alexanders und der Diadochen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1982), 190–1.

⁴⁵ Geyer (n. 19), 14.

⁴⁶ Possenti (n. 3), 133; Beloch (n. 22), 4.2, 248; W. W. Tarn, *Antigonos Gonatas* (Oxford, 1913), 40; N. G. L. Hammond and F. W. Walbank, *A History of Macedonia*, vol. 3, 336–167 B.C. (Oxford, 1988), 220; Landucci Gattinoni (n. 1), 182–5.

⁴⁷ Saitta (n. 3), 88; Lund (n. 1), 45.

⁴⁸ Ibid.; cf. C. Wehrli, *Antigone et Démétrios* (Genève, 1968), 175–6.

⁴⁹ Memnon 5.1 *Jacoby*; cf. Hünerwadel (n. 3), 74; Possenti (n. 3), 133. Clearchus was not yet of age at the death of his father in 306/5 B.C. His relationship to Lysimachus results from the brief marriage of the latter and Amastris in 302–1 B.C.

Danube seems firmly established in the scientific literature.⁵⁰ Some authors have placed the kingdom of the Getae more specifically in the Bessarabian steppe, between the Danube delta and the Dniester, with the occasional addition of adjacent areas in the forest steppe zone of Moldavia, in north-eastern Muntenia or across the Danube in Dobrudja.⁵¹ Others have defended a location in the Wallachian plain, either in the Baragan steppe and elsewhere in eastern Muntenia⁵² or further west around the Arges valley.⁵³ However, neither a scrupulous reconsideration of the sources, nor the archaeological evidence confirm beyond dispute any of these theories.⁵⁴ The Bessarabian version is at variance with the evidence on the traditionally strong Scythian presence in the area in the fifth and fourth centuries,⁵⁵ attested once more in the account of Diodorus on the Scythian allies of the Pontic cities in their anti-Lysimachean uprising in 313 B.C. (Diod. 19.73.1–8), and the lowlands of the Wallachian plain crossed by numerous rivers are far from the desert area described in the sources. In my opinion, the dry high plains and hill-lands of Dobrudja and the Deliorman (Ludogorie) offer a plausible alternative to these Trans-Danubian locations.

The earlier classical authors unanimously place the Getae⁵⁶ between the Haemus

⁵⁰ See e. g. Droysen (n. 5), 2.2, 275–8; Hünerwadel (n. 3), 72–4; Possenti (n. 3), 132–5; Beloch (n. 22), 4.1, 225; Pârvan (n. 4), 56–65; Geyer (n. 19), 15–16; P. Cloché, *La Dislocation d'un empire* (Paris, 1959), 255–6; J. Wiesner, *Die Thraker* (Stuttgart, 1963), 141; Pippidi and Berciu (n. 10), 133–5; C. Daicoviciu, *Dacia* (Cluj, 1970), 97–100; H. Bengtson, *Die Diadochen: Die Nachfolger Alexanders der Grossen* (München, 1987), 128. Among the few who have opposed this widespread view, Fol (n. 4, 56–7) and K. Jordanov (in *Severoiztochna Bulgaria—drevnost i suvremie* [Sofia, 1985], 116) have recently proposed for Dromichaetes' kingdom a location in Dobrudja, along the right bank of the Danube between Silistra and Tulcea. This location seems improbable, however, for it is too near the coastal area which was firmly under the control of Lysimachus.

⁵¹ T. D. Zlatkovskaya and L. L. Polevoi, in *Drevnie frakiytsi v Severnom Prichernomor'e* (Moscow, 1969), 35–60; A. I. Meliukova, *Skifia i frakiyskiy mir* (Moscow, 1979), 237–8; I. T. Nikulitse, *Severnye frakiytsi v 6—I v. do n.e.* (Kishinev, 1987), 83, 192.

⁵² Pârvan (n. 4), 61–5; Pippidi, *I Greci nel basso Danubio* (n. 10), 18, 107; id., *Scythica Minora. Recherches sur les colonies grecques du littoral roumain de la mer Noire* (Bucuresti–Amsterdam, 1975), 51–2.

⁵³ G. Trohani and L. Nemoianu, *Revista de istorie* 34 (Bucuresti, 1981), 2.271–4.

⁵⁴ Except for the vague and general expressions situating the wars of Lysimachus in *Thrace* or in the *lands of the Getae* and the just as indefinite in *Ponto* of Pompeius Trogus (Trog. *Prol.* 16), practically no ancient text offers any explicit localization of the events. The passage in Strabo (7.3.14 [p. 305]) about the Getic desert (ἡ τῶν Γετῶν ἐρημία) in what is now Bessarabia seems to mention the war between Lysimachus and Dromichaetes only as a typological parallel to the main story (the expedition of Darius against the Scythians, for which this localization is also rather problematic). The only direct mention of territories 'across the Istrus' in relation to Lysimachus is in Pausanias (1.9.6) and does not allude to any particular event from his wars with Dromichaetes, but only to the cession of territory after one of these (probably the first, as proposed above). Even if taken at face value, it would only imply that, from his bases in Dobrudja, Lysimachus had at some indefinite moment before or during the wars with Dromichaetes crossed the Danube and occupied some territory along the left bank, most probably in Eastern Muntenia, which he later returned to the Getae; this does not at all preclude a location of the main territory of the Getic kingdom on the southern bank of the river.

⁵⁵ B. N. Grakov, *Skify* (Moscow, 1971), 29; Pippidi, *I Greci nel basso Danubio* (n. 10), 11–42; A. Fol, *Politicheska istoria na trakite. Kraia na vtoroto hiliadoletie do kraia na peti vek predi novata era* (Sofia, 1972), 139, 144–54; id., *Studia Thracica* 1 (1975), 160–5.

⁵⁶ From the abundant literature on the Getae, see e.g. Pârvan (n. 4); id., *Dacia. An Outline of the early Civilisation of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries* (Cambridge, 1928); R. Vulpe, *Histoire ancienne de la Dobroudja* (Bucarest, 1938 = *La Dobroudja*, 35–454); Pippidi and Berciu (n. 10); Fol (n. 4), 35–59; K. Jordanov, *Vekove* (1974), 1.44–9; id., *Études Balkaniques* (1974), 208–17; id., *Thracia antiqua* 2 (Sofia, 1977), 110–22; id., *Izvestia na Bulgarskoto istoricheskoto druzhestvo* 31

and the Istrus, and near the Pontic coast. Their name appears for the first time in the account of the Scythian expedition of Darius in Herodotus, who says they offered resistance to the Great King, were defeated, and then forced to escort the Persian army (Hdt 4.93, 96). Later the Odrysians from Southern Thrace managed to impose their domination over the battered Getae; this was certainly a fact during the rule of Sitalces in the third quarter of the fifth century (Hdt 4.80; Thuc. 2.96.1, 97.1–2, 98.4), but the beginning of Odrysian rule must rather be associated with Teres the father of Sitalces ‘who was the first to establish for the Odrysians a large kingdom over much of the rest of Thrace’ (Thuc. 2.29.2–3; cf. Hdt 4.80).⁵⁷ We are ignorant of the details of the events and of the real character of the Odrysian domination over the Getae;⁵⁸ the probable imposition of a tax (Thuc. 2.97.3) and the certain obligation of military support on demand (2.96.1, 98.4) leave wide scope for the relative independence of the ‘paradynasts’ (οἱ παραδυναστεύοντες, 2.97.3) who might be local or imposed Odrysian princes. It is important to note that Thucydides mentions explicitly other tribes alongside the Getae in the area (2.96.1–2); among these might be the Crobyzi and Terizi who were known to Hecataeus, Herodotus, and Hellanicus,⁵⁹ if they were not (as it is often presumed) constituent tribes of the Getae themselves. The internal tribal and political geography of the region remains, however, as ambiguous as the obscure details of the historical events.

After this somewhat vague introduction, the history of the Getae breaks off for almost a full century. There is no available information about the possible continuation or cessation of Odrysian control over the territories between the Haemus and the Istrus after the reign of Sitalces. Even for the period of presumed Odrysian recovery under Cotys I (384/3–360/59 B.C.) there is not the slightest hint in the extant sources about the circumstances in the lands beyond the Haemus. It has been argued that some prominent categories of archaeological sites or finds in the area are indicative of the existence of centres (or rather, areas) of consolidated political power inhabited by anonymous Getic dynastic houses;⁶⁰ the ethnic attribution and all consequent conclusions, however, remain purely conjectural. There are no adequate means to differentiate between the burial of an independent (or semi-dependent) Getic dynast and that of an Odrysian provincial governor. The few instances of finds with vessels bearing the inscriptions of Odrysian kings from the Getic area⁶¹ are likewise ambiguous; these are usually interpreted comfortably as royal presents to autonomous local rulers, but the alternative conjectures of presents to dependent subordinates of paradynastic status⁶² or to mercenaries in Odrysian service seem just as feasible.

(1978), 5–17; id., in *Actes du deuxième Congrès international de thracologie* (Bucarest, 1980), 1.331–6; id., in *Istoria na Dobrudja 1* (Sofia, 1984), 72–123; I. T. Nikulitse, *Severnie frakiytsi v 6–1 vv. do n.e.* (Kishinev, 1987).

⁵⁷ On the Odrysian kingdom, see Fol (n. 55), 115–54; id. (n. 4), 93–195; Z. H. Archibald, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, VI: *The Fourth Century B.C.* (Cambridge, 1994), 444–75; id., *The Odrysian Kingdom of Thrace. Orpheus Unmasked* (Oxford, 1998).

⁵⁸ Fol (n. 55), 139; Pippidi, *I Greci nel basso Danubio* (n. 10), 53.

⁵⁹ Hecat. fr. 170–1 Jacoby (= St. Byz. s.vv. Κρόβυζοι, Τριζοί; Hdt. 4.49; Hellanic. fr. 73 Jacoby (= Phot., Suid. s. Ζάλμοξις).

⁶⁰ Fol (n. 55), 78; id. (n. 4), 44–50; K. Jordanov, in *Severoiztochna Bulgaria—drevnost i svremie* (Sofia, 1985), 112, 115.

⁶¹ There are inscriptions of Cotys I on silver vessels from the tomb at Agighiol and from the Borovo treasure, and one reading Τήρης / Ἀματόκου πάδρν from Branichevo, cf. I. Venedikov, *Arheologia* 14 (1972), 2.1–7; K. Painter, in *The Rogozen Treasure. Papers of the Anglo-Bulgarian Conference, 12 March 1987* (London, 1989), 76–8. The remaining finds of this type (e.g. Alexandrovo, Vratsa, Rogozen) are from the presumed realm of the Triballi further west.

⁶² Cf. Thuc. 2.97.3.

In the third quarter of the fourth century B.C., the lands of the South-Danubian Getae became the stage of repeated large-scale military action. Some vague communications mention Philip II's activity to the north of the Balkan mountain range during the Thracian war of 342–40 B.C.;⁶³ it was probably then that he married a Getic princess, the daughter of king Kothelas.⁶⁴ About the same time the Scythian king Atheas invaded the area of the lower Danube with his army and presumably succeeded in establishing himself temporarily on the right bank of the river in Northern Dobrudja.⁶⁵ Then it was Philip's turn again in 339 B.C., after the unsuccessful siege of Perinthus and Byzantium, to march to the Danube and defeat in battle the Scythian king.⁶⁶ In 335 Alexander the Great led his army to the Danube against the Triballi;⁶⁷ the young king effected a demonstrative crossing of the river with part of his troops, routed an army of the Getae that had assembled on the northern shore, and razed a fortification of theirs: this is the earliest instance in which any Getae are mentioned on the northern side of the Danube.⁶⁸ It should be inferred that in the second half of the

⁶³ Jordan. *Get.* 10.65; cf. Athen. 14.24 (p. 627de) = *FGrH* 115 (Theopompos), F 216; Steph. Byz. s. *Γερία*. The curious story told by Jordanes shows Philip attacking Odessus and then intimidated into retreat by the unexpected sortie of Getic priests with white garments and guitars from the city. According to Jordanes, 'the rich state of the Odessites in Moesia was then subject to the Goths [i.e. to the Getae] as far as neighbouring Thomes [Tomi]'. There is no other hint in the extant sources that, in one way or another, the Greek colonies had been *subjected* by the Getae; the situation, however, could have been similar to that of 313 B.C., when the Getae were *allies* of the same cities in their fight against Lysimachus.

⁶⁴ Jordan. *Get.* 10.65; Athen. 13.5 (p. 557 d); Steph. Byz. s. *Γερία*. Jordanes calls the Getae *Gothi*, their king *Gudila* or *Gothila*, and the daughter that Philip took for a wife *Medopa* or *Medora*; Athenaeus gives the names *Kothelas* and *Meda*, adding that the latter became Philip's second wife after Olympias.

⁶⁵ Justin. 9.2.1–4; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 174ef (*Reg. et Imp. Apophth. Ateas*); Polyæn. *Strat.* 7.44.1; Frontin. *Strat.* 2.4.20; Clem. Al. *Strom.* 5.31.3 = *FGrH* 493 (Aristokritos), F 6. The only coherent narration of the ensuing events is preserved in Justin's abbreviation of Pompeius Trogus: Atheas, the king of the Scythians, being at war with the *Histriani* asked Philip for help through the Apollonians; then as the king of the Histriani (*Histriani rex*) died, the Macedonians of Philip were sent back without pay. The anonymous 'king of the Histriani' and the obscure Kothelas are the first real historical figures who could be associated with the political development in the lands of the Getae during the fourth century B.C. Any correlation of the two kings and their respective domains with archaeologically defined areas remains, however, purely hypothetical. It is tempting, for example, to place the *Histriani* and their nameless king in the north of Dobrudja, where the princely tomb at Agighiol seems to suggest the location of a seat of political power in the previous generation. But was this the seat of an independent Getic prince, as is usually presumed, or that of the last Odrysian governor watching the Danube frontier?

⁶⁶ Justin. 9.2.4–16, 3.1–3; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 174 f; Frontin. *Strat.* 2.8.14; (Ps.) Lucian. *Macrob.* 10. Philip must have acted in defence of (and possibly together with) his father-in-law Kothelas. The campaign was clearly decided in one general encounter; the death of the aged Atheas and the evidence for numerous captives and booty suggest that the defeat of the Scythians was complete and that they were probably driven for good beyond the Danube. Philip immediately started on his way back, but the return of the Macedonian army, overburdened with the spoils, was made difficult by the unexpected interference of the Triballi who demanded a part of the Scythian booty. The rapid and inglorious Macedonian retreat created favourable opportunities for the process of political consolidation in the Getic lands, which was an accomplished fact under Dromichaetes in the following generation. We can only guess at the part that Kothelas played in this process. The various political figures and domains active in the late forties and early thirties, however, mark an initial state of political division in the lands of the Getae, which recalls the similar situation described as usual by Strabo (7.3.11; cf. Cl. Ptol. 3.11.6) in a later age.

⁶⁷ Arr. *Anab.* 1.3.5–4.5; Strabo, *Geogr.* 7.3.8 (C 301); cf. Diod. 17.8.1; Plut. *Alex.* 11.

⁶⁸ The episode is mentioned by both Strabo and Arrian (cf. previous note); this coincidence and the probable common source Ptolemy, the son of Lagus, who must have been an eyewitness, increase the reliability of the story.

fourth century an unidentified area along the left bank of the river was inhabited (or maybe only controlled) by the Getae.⁶⁹ This would have to be located near the island Peuce and presumably against Triballian territory on the southern bank of the river; the plausible identification of Peuce with the island Belene would place it roughly between the rivers Olt and Arges. Last but not least, in the late thirties or early twenties came the expedition of Zopyrion, one of the Macedonian *strategoi* who ruled the conquered part of Thrace under Alexander the Great; with a strong army at his disposal, he undertook a major operation in the north-east (against either the Getae or the Scythians) which ended in complete disaster.⁷⁰

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF SVESHTARI

We remain practically ignorant of the particulars of internal developments in the lands of the Getae in this period. The dynamic events referred to above must have shaken the world of the Getae, creating an atmosphere of danger and insecurity which was favourable to their political consolidation; the process, however, need not have been an easy or rapid one. The most conspicuous fact at our disposal is the establishment, apparently during the thirties of the fourth century,⁷¹ of a Getic royal residence that has only recently come to light as a result of the archaeological investigations at Sveshtari.

The archaeological site associated with the names of *Sveshtari* and *Sborianovo* is situated between the villages of Sveshtari and Malak Porovets to the west of the town of Ispcrih, less than 40 km to the south of the Danube at Tutrakan.⁷² The discovery in 1982 of the great tomb in Ginina Mound, which has become popularly known as *the Sveshtari tomb*,⁷³ inaugurated the systematic investigation of the whole archaeological

⁶⁹ It has become customary to associate with the Getae all the rich and representative fourth-century archaeological finds from the lands along (and beyond) the left bank of the Lower Danube in modern Romania. A number of these originate from scattered sites in the Wallachian plain, like the gold helmet from Cotofenesti, the princely burial from Peretu, and the rich graves from Gurbanesti and Gavani. Similar finds from further away are readily added to the list, like the gold treasure from Baiceni in Northern Moldavia, the 'Craiova treasure', and the silver rhyton from Poroina in Oltenia. However, this random attribution is rather suspicious. It has recently been suggested that some or all of the finds mentioned might have belonged to 'an élite group of incursive steppe nomads' (T. Taylor, in *The Rogozen Treasure* [London, 1989], 96). We have no direct evidence about the real ethnic situation in this wide area, and the mechanical expansion of the use of an ethnic name witnessed for this age only at one indefinite location on the northern bank of the Danube seems an arbitrary procedure.

⁷⁰ The evidence on Zopyrion is hopelessly confused in the few sources at our disposal (Justin. 12.1.4, 2.16; 37.3.2; Curt. 10.1.43; Macrob. *Saturn.* 1.11.32). Cf. H. Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage* 2 (München, 1926), no. 340; Pârvan (n. 4), 49–50; V. Iliescu, *Pontica* 4 (1971), 57–73; Fol (n. 4), 53, 189; K. Jordanov, *Istoria* (1996), 5/6.1–9.

⁷¹ A. Bozhkova, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 4 (1990), 93–6; M. Chichikova, K. Dimitrov, In: *D' epistemoniki synantisti gia tin ellinistiki keramiki* (Athena, 1997), 128, 132–4.

⁷² The meandering canyon of the river Krapinets (or Demir Baba Dere) cuts deeply into the undulating hills of the Ludogorie (Deliorman) to give the area its most significant geographical feature. Another conspicuous characteristic of the site are the substantial natural springs, used nowadays for the water supply of a large surrounding area.

⁷³ A. Fol et al., *The Thracian Tomb near the Village of Sveshtari* (Sofia, 1986); cf. also M. Chichikova, *Izkustvo* (1983), 4.18–27; id., *Muzei i Pametnitsi na Kulturata* (1983, 3), 25–30; id., *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 3 (1988), 125–3; id., in *Thracians and Mycenaean* (Leiden/Sofia, 1989), 205–18; id., *Helis* 2 (1992), 143–63; T. Teofilov, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 3 (1988), 144–60; *Trakiyskata grobnitsa ot Sveshtari* (Catalogue of a photographic exhibition at the National Historical Museum in Sofia, July 1986); T. Ivanov, *Helis* 2 (1992), 132–42.

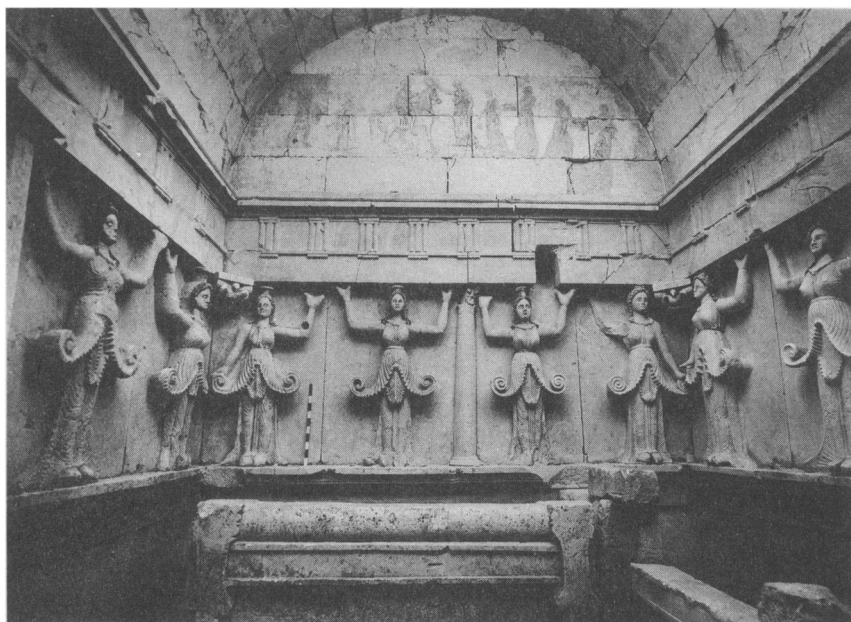


FIGURE 2. The Great Tomb at Sveshtari: the main burial chamber. (Photo by M. Enev.)

site, at first under the direction of Maria Chichikova and later under that of Diana Gergova.

With its unique architecture⁷⁴ and lavish decoration,⁷⁵ the Sveshtari tomb (Figure 2) can be ranged among the most conspicuous Thracian tombs known; in particular the painted scene, easily interpreted as one of either heroization or investiture, points to its probable royal character.⁷⁶ The tomb is dated to the beginning of the second quarter of the third century B.C.;⁷⁷ the many unfinished details of its sculptured and painted decoration imply a hasty and premature interment. The two stone beds were evidently intended for a double burial; anthropological analysis of the scattered bone remains

⁷⁴ Built in excellent ashlar masonry, the tomb had an antechamber, a burial chamber and a side-chamber, all three rectangular and covered by semi-cylindrical vaults. The antechamber opens to the main and side chambers, the side entrance being doubled with an internal window.

⁷⁵ The entrance has a carved lintel (*bucrania supporting a garland and interceding rosettes*) resting on rectangular pilasters topped by profiled capitals with painted ornaments (*ionic cyma and rosettes*). A relief frieze representing caryatids with raised hands, crowned with calathoi and wearing peculiar dresses in the form of inverted lotus flowers, runs along the walls of the main chamber. The lunette of its back wall is decorated with an unfinished fresco depicting a horseman riding right, faced by a goddess who offers him a crown. Along the back and right side of the chamber are two stone beds with beautifully carved legs, the back one having originally been hidden behind a now crumbled partition screen in the form of a sham triple door under a pediment.

⁷⁶ Fol et al. (n. 73), 112–14, 117–19, fig. 42, 72–4; K. Dimitrov, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 3 (1988), 161–4. A characteristic detail is the ram's horn depicted behind the ear of the horseman; in the current iconographical tradition of the age this should be interpreted as a royal symbol.

⁷⁷ M. Chichikova, *Helis* 2 (1992), 148.

found among the debris left after the robbing of the tomb has identified a tall and robust man aged 30–35 years and a slender woman aged 25–30 years, the latter probably killed by a piercing wound in the occipital bone.⁷⁸

The impressive assemblage of early Hellenistic tumuli in the vicinity of Sveshtari⁷⁹ is associated with a large fortified settlement, the archaeological excavation of which began in 1986.⁸⁰ Situated in a natural stronghold with abundant natural water supply,⁸¹ the settlement has a comparatively large area and imposing fortifications.⁸² The abundant imported goods—fine Attic black-glazed ceramics, pottery of probable west-Pontic colonial origin, amphorae from Thasos, Sinope, and Heraclea Pontica—stand out among the archaeological finds from the site.⁸³ The numerous amphoric stamps, especially those of Thasian origin which offer reliable and comparatively precise dating, as well as the coins found during the excavations or fortuitously, permit definite establishment of the period in which the settlement existed—between approximately 335 and 250 B.C.⁸⁴ The settlement at Sveshtari evidently sustained very active trade relations with the Greek colonies on the Black Sea coast,⁸⁵ and through them with more distant early Hellenistic cities; it can also be inferred plausibly that it was the main economic and commercial centre of the whole surrounding region in this period. Among contemporary early Hellenistic sites in the interior of Thrace—for example Seuthopolis and Cabyle which were significantly both urban agglomerations

⁷⁸ P. Boev, L. Kavgazova, *Helis* 2 (1992), 164–70.

⁷⁹ The Sveshtari tomb was found in one of over 100 burial mounds scattered on both banks of the river canyon. With the exception of the early Iron Age burials in an isolated group of five small mounds (T. Stoyanov, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 3 [1988], 51–5; id., *Helis* 2 [1992], 93–114; id., *Sborianovo 1. Early Iron Age Tumular Necropolis* [Sofia, 1997]), all the tumuli studied archaeologically are early Hellenistic in date. Two more tombs with semi-cylindrical vaults, smaller and simpler, yet evidently contemporary to the great one in Ginina Mound, were excavated in two smaller tumuli in its immediate vicinity (D. Gergova, *Helis* 2 [1992], 118–26; id., *Obredut na obezsmurtiavaneto v drevna Trakia* [Sofia, 1996], 13–44), while another contained a sarcophagus-type tomb with red paint on the interior walls and a preserved inhumation burial (T. Ivanov, *Helis* 2 [1992], 137).

⁸⁰ The author took part in the excavations of the settlement site in 1987–8 as a member of the team of Maria Chichikova. Since 1989 the excavations have been continued by T. Stoyanov and Z. Mihailova under the overall direction of D. Gergova. Among the preliminary publications, see M. Chichikova, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 4 (1990), 82–92; id., in *Studies on Settlement Life in Ancient Thrace. Proceedings of the 3rd International Symposium 'Cabyle'* (Jambol, 1994), 34–43; M. Chichikova, P. Delev, and A. Bozhkova, *Helis* 2 (1992), 73–88; Chichikova and Dimitrov (n. 71), 128–34; A. Bozhkova, *Arheologia* 32 (1990), 2.37–40; id., *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 4 (1990), 93–6; D. Gergova, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 4 (1990), 66–71; id., *Helis* 1 (1992), 9–27; T. Stoyanov, *Istoria* (1996), 5/6.84–92; (1997), 1/2.72–84.

⁸¹ The fortified settlement is situated on a comparatively flat plateau surrounded on all sides like a peninsula by the abrupt meandering ravine of the river Krapinets which separates it from the surrounding tableland, over which the tumuli are scattered on all sides. The only easy natural approach is from the south-west, where a narrow neck of land connects the peninsula with the left bank of the river. The access to this isthmus was additionally barred by an exterior fortress with strong stone walls, preserved to a height of over 2 m in some places.

⁸² The defences follow the outline of the peninsula, repeating its roughly triangular shape and reaching through the isthmus in the south-west to the outer fortress. The outer defensive stone wall running along the edge of the peninsula has an impressive thickness of up to 4 m and encloses an area of about 100,000 sq m. This was doubled with an inner wall of similar construction, which delimited a roughly quadrangular inner area of about 50,000 sq m.

⁸³ Chichikova et al. (n. 80), 78–79; Chichikova and Dimitrov (n. 71), 130–2.

⁸⁴ A. Bozhkova, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 4 (1990), 93–6; Chichikova and Dimitrov (n. 71), 128, 132–4.

⁸⁵ As indicated e.g. by the finds of coins from Odessus, Histria, Callatis, and Mesambria Pontica; see Chichikova and Dimitrov (n. 71), 132–3, nos. 6–13.

and royal residences—very few can offer an analogy in the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of imported foreign trade articles. The presence of epigraphic monuments⁸⁶ and the traces of active local manufacture on the site⁸⁷ also bring out the singular character of the settlement at Sveshtari.

The accumulated evidence authorizes the conjecture that the short-lived fortified settlement at Sveshtari was a major Getic centre of paramount military, political, economic, and cultural importance for the whole region of what is today north-eastern Bulgaria (and very probably also for territories across the Danube in Muntenia), the seat of a mighty royal dynasty in the last decades of the fourth and during the first half of the third century B.C.⁸⁸ In the whole North Thracian realm between the Balkan and Carpathian ranges there is no contemporary settlement site that can even partly compare with its concentrated expression of wealth, power, and eminence. Two possible reasons might explain the establishment of the Sveshtari settlement with its distinctive location and appearance: the retreat from areas found vulnerable to enemy attack into a stronger and better defensible position, and the choice of a central situation suitable for the unification of the Getic lands under a common rule.

IMPLICATIONS

The overall historical development of the North Thracian tribes and the archaeological evidence from the site at Sveshtari suggest the gradual formation, in the late fourth century, of a Getic political alliance in the region between the Danube and the Balkan range (perhaps including also territories across the Danube in Muntenia). The establishment of stable Macedonian control over the seacoast secured with considerable military power would have stimulated as a response the process of political fusion in the interior. It can easily be assumed that the 'neighbouring Thracians' mentioned by Diodorus as allies of the Pontic cities in 313 B.C., who were evidently independent Getae from the lands in the hinterland of the rebellious colonies (i.e. from the area between the Haemus and the Danube), should be identified with the political formation ruled from the new dynastic centre at Sveshtari.⁸⁹ The relative remoteness of Sveshtari from the field of action (some 110 km from Odessus and 150 km from Callatis) seems a good possible explanation for the delayed arrival of the Getic force at the scene of action in 313 B.C.

⁸⁶ The first and so far only inscription found *in situ* on the site was unearthed in 1987 near the southern gate—a dedication to the goddess Phosphorus from a certain Menecharmus, the son of Poseidonius (*Μενεχάρμος Ποσειδονίου* or possibly *Μενεχάρμου Ποσειδόνιος*; the endings of both names are not clearly readable). The name of the dedicator is Greek, and he could well be a merchant (?) from Odessus or any of the other Greek cities along the western coast of the Pontus. On palaeographic evidence (notably the use of both the angular and lunar sigma) the inscription can be dated in the early Hellenistic period. Two other Hellenistic inscriptions from Thrace mention *Phosphorus* (literally 'carrier of light'), an epithet often associated with Hecate or Artemis: the great inscription from Seuthopolis (*IGBulg* 3.2, 1731; V. Velkov, in *Cabyle* 2 [Sofia 1991], 7–11) which contains a reference to a temple ('Phosphorion') in Cabyle, and a votive relief from Odessus (*IGBulg* 12, 88 bis).

⁸⁷ Including metal-working for the production of tools, arms and ornaments, imitative bronze coinage, and presumably pottery; cf. T. Stoyanov, *Istoria* (1996), 5/6.89.

⁸⁸ Cf. K. Dimitrov, *Istoričeski pregled* (1987), 12.19–30; P. Delev, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 4 (1990), 97–109.

⁸⁹ Cf. P. Delev, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 4 (1990), 103. Helen Lund's suggestion of identifying the 'Thracians' of Diodorus with the tribe of the Terizi and their fortress Tirizis on Cape Kaliakra (Lund [n. 1], 28–9) does not seem convincing in the light of the overall situation; the littoral would have been under the firm sway of Lysimachus in this period.

It seems only too probable that the kingdom of Dromichaetes in the early third century was the direct successor to this alliance. The only place-name in the lands of the Getae mentioned in connection with the events of this age is that of Helis, where king Dromichaetes led the captured Lysimachus and his retinue. Diodorus clearly differentiates this place from the other strongholds of the Getae, which he calls *forts* (τὰ φρουρία, τὰ χωρία), preserving only for Helis the designation *city* (πόλις). Helis was probably the main residence of Dromichaetes, the political centre from which he ruled over the large political alliance of the Getae; the fact that neither Strabo nor Claudius Ptolemy mention it suggests that it had a short period of existence. All this agrees perfectly with the archaeological situation at Sveshtari, and if we ignore the tradition of looking for the kingdom of Dromichaetes somewhere across the Danube, Sveshtari would naturally appear the most probable location of his capital, and its identification with Helis would become perfectly plausible.⁹⁰

The proposed identification of Sveshtari as Helis⁹¹ will, of course, remain provisional until it can be confirmed or refuted by future archaeological investigations in the lands of the Getae or by the eventual find of an explicit epigraphical monument. However, even at this stage it is worthwhile discussing some further ideas. It seems possible to advance, as has recently been suggested,⁹² a tentative identification of the man and woman buried in the great Sveshtari tomb as king Dromichaetes and his queen, the daughter of Lysimachus, the latter probably murdered in the Thracian fashion in order to accompany her husband in the grave. As already mentioned, the tomb is dated approximately (and on indirect evidence) to the beginning of the second quarter of the third century B.C.; the many unfinished details of the decoration suggest a hasty and premature burial, and the skeletal remains belong to a man of 30–35 years and a woman of 25–30.⁹³ A strict endorsement of these indications would make the case impossible; we should therefore allow for a mistake of about ten years at least either in the proposed date of the tomb or in the suggested age of the buried individuals. If split both ways, the mistake would be reduced to only about five years, and the result would be a date around 280 for the burial and an age of 40 for the male and 35 for the female skeleton; at the probable date of the marriage of Dromichaetes and the daughter of Lysimachus (297 B.C.) they would have been respectively 23 and 18 years of age. The need to introduce such corrections does not make the whole hypothesis implausible, as there are strong arguments for the case: the tomb and its decoration (especially the symbolic horns on the horseman's head in the painted

⁹⁰ I believe I was the first to suggest this identification, cf. P. Delev, *Terra Antiqua Balcanica* 4 (1990), 97–109. It has been accepted recently by T. Stoyanov, *Istoria* (1996), 5/6.90–1.

⁹¹ A different view is expressed by Fol in a number of statements which mention in connection with Sveshtari the name 'Dausdava', cf. *Izkustvo* (1983), 4.3–5; (1984), 4.26; (1985), 2.21. The only ancient evidence for this name is in the *Geography* of Claudius Ptolemy (3.10.6); placed on a modern map the Ptolemaic coordinates fall near the city of Razgrad. Taken at its face value, this communication amounts to the attestation, somewhere in present-day north-eastern Bulgaria, of a probably important urban centre, whose Thracian name loosely suggests the possibility of pre-Roman establishment. The decisive point is that the mention of Dausdava by Ptolemy undoubtedly attests that the city not only existed in the geographer's own age (i.e. the second century A.D.), but was evidently among the major urban centres of the time in the province of Moesia Inferior. In this case any large unidentified Roman site in the area could eventually prove to be Dausdava, but not the fortified city near Sveshtari which, according to the archaeological evidence, terminated its existence as an urban centre of any importance some four centuries before the age of Ptolemy.

⁹² T. Stoyanov, *Istoria* (1997), 1/2.73–5.

⁹³ Cf. M. Chichikova, *Helis* 2 (1992), 148; P. Boev and L. Kavgazova, *ibid.*, 164–70.

scene) suggest it belonged to a mighty king of the Getae, and Dromichaetes is the only known historical personage in this age who meets this specification.

The inferred date of 280 B.C. prompts another conjecture. In an isolated notice deprived of any details Justin mentions that about that time 18,000 Celts left at home by Brennus went campaigning and defeated both Triballi and Getae before attacking Antigonos Gonatas, probably at Lysimachia.⁹⁴ The relatively young age of the king buried in the great Sveshtari tomb and the evident traces of a hasty burial in the unfinished decoration suggest a premature death, and the logical assumption is that Dromichaetes could have fallen in battle against the Celts in 280 or 279 B.C., shortly after the death of Lysimachus at Koroupedion.⁹⁵

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⁹⁴ Justin. 25.1.

⁹⁵ A different possibility is suggested by Polyaeus in a stratagem describing the siege of Cypsela in southern Thrace by Antiochus II Theos in 254 B.C. (Polyaen. *Strat.* 4.16); Teres and Dromichaetes are mentioned there as leaders of some Thracian allies in the army of Antiochus who impressed the defendants with their magnificent attire. This Dromichaetes could well be a relative of the Dromichaetes who fought king Lysimachus forty years earlier or might even be identical with him, if we presume that he had survived that long; but the mere coincidence of names is not enough to make a strong case either way.