THE TUNDZHA REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT

SURFACE SURVEY, PALAEOECOLOGY, AND ASSOCIATED STUDIES IN
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Greek and Latin inscriptions from the Kazanlak and Yambol regions ca. 500 BC to AD 300

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Abstract *Some 136 Greek and Latin inscriptions from the Kazanlak Valley and the Yambol province complement the archaeological data produced by the Tundzha Regional Archaeology Project (TRAP). The inscriptions clarify chronologies and add social and demographic detail to investigation of settlement patterns in the Tundzha River catchment. These inscriptions span the Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods, documenting evolving social and cultural practices amongst Thracians, Greeks, Macedonians, and Romans. The epigraphic record in Kazanlak shows signs of changing behaviour arising from cultural contact during the Classical and Hellenistic period. Inscriptions from the Roman period display standardisation in epigraphic production across both regions, most likely due to Thracian service in the Roman military.*

Keyword *inscriptions; Greek and Latin epigraphy; Seuthopolis; Kabyle; cultural contact; social organisation*

21.1   Introduction

Epigraphic evidence from the Kazanlak municipality and the Yambol province dates from 500 BC to AD 300. The character and contents of the 136 extant inscriptions reflect similarities in the socio-cultural status of individuals living in the two study areas during this era. Epigraphic data, by nature of their local origins, represent an independent line of evidence about how identity was constructed in the communities producing inscriptions (Schuler 2012, 63). Diachronic variation in proper names, in the social function of inscriptions, and in the factors motivating epigraphic expression all reflect demographic and social evolution in these communities, contributing to the broader picture of socio-cultural changes in both regions studied by the Tundzha Regional Archaeology Project (TRAP).

The number of inscriptions surviving in the larger Yambol province totals 79, while the smaller Kazanlak area has 57 inscriptions. When corrected for the size of the study area, Kazanlak leads in the production of inscriptions. Greater production of inscriptions reveals Kazanlak elites as open to adopting Greek practices during the Classical and Hellenistic periods, if only temporarily (Nankov 2012). The communities living in the Yambol province, conversely, produced fewer inscriptions, despite evidence for a Late Iron Age occupation in the region (see *e.g.,* Dimitrova and Popov 1978; Agre 2011; Iliev *et al.* 2012; *cf.* Chapters 14 and 16), interaction with Greek *poleis*, and attempts by Hellenistic rulers to conquer them (Hdt. 6. 33–41; Thuc. 2. 29; 95–8; Diodorus Siculus 18.14; 19.73; Arrian *Anabasis* 3.12.4).

The situation changed in the Roman period, when inscriptions from the two regions show broad similarities in form and content, reflecting a convergence in cultural and social practices. Inscribed objects became the carriers of standardised iconography and formulae. The alignment of the epigraphic evidence in Yambol and Kazanlak during the Roman period contrasts with the Late Iron Age, perhaps due to the impact of Roman rule on social structures, new modes of behaviour linked to this impact, and the appearance of new technologies and consumption patterns in an imperial setting. Similar trends have been documented elsewhere in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire (*e.g.*, Vranič 2014, 39). Epigraphic production in the eastern provinces changed with the onset of Roman rule, but it is unclear whether this change was top-down, from Roman policy, or bottom-up, from peer pressure and adaptation to a new social, cultural, and

political environment. In any case, ostentatious display of status remained the underlying motivation for epigraphic production from the Classical period through the third century AD. Only the means of such display and its socio-political settings evolved through time.

21.2   Kazanlak research area

The Kazanlak dataset consists of 57 Greek and Latin inscriptions representing all surviving evidence from the area at the time of writing, collected from various epigraphic corpora including *IG Bulg*, SEG, CIL, *etc*. (for coded dataset see the digital catalogue of Kazanlak inscriptions).[1] These inscriptions originate from throughout the Kazanlak Valley, an area of 700 sq km bounded in the north by the Stara Planina, in the south by the Sredna Gora, in the west by Tazha village, and in the east by Gorno Izvorovo (Fig. 21.1). This area includes, but is somewhat larger than, the TRAP study area, extending further to the west. Of the 57 Kazanlak inscriptions, 50 were carved into stone, and seven into the surface of metal objects. Fifty-three were written in Greek, three in Latin, and one is bilingual. The inscriptions can be divided into two main chronological groups: an early group of nine Classical and Hellenistic inscriptions representing 16% of the total, and a later group of 48 Roman era inscriptions representing the other 84%. The main differences between the two groups are: (a) the demographic profiles of the commissioners, who shift in status and occupation, and (b) the motives for making inscriptions, which diversify over time as they serve a broadening social group.

21.2.1   Kazanlak in the Classical and Hellenistic periods (Late Iron Age)

The nine Classical and Hellenistic inscriptions from Kazanlak are found on objects commissioned by elites. The Kazanlak Valley, which was then in the territory of the Odrysians, served as a centre of activity for the Thracian aristocracy in the latter half of the first millennium BC (Strabo 7, frag. 47; Domaradzki 1991, 136–8; Archibald 1998, 213–39; Dimitrova 2015, 12). While the inscriptions were all commissioned by aristocrats, they differ in function and place of deposition. Six inscriptions were found on funerary objects from burial mounds, which we assume were seen by participants in the burial rites, *e.g.*, family members and other elites, while three were placed on stone monuments in open-air locations, where the public could have seen them.

21.2.1.1   Inscriptions on funerary goods

The six inscriptions from burial mounds appear on the surface of funerary objects made of silver or bronze. The texts consist of personal names (or abbreviations or initials) stating the ownership of the object, its capacity, or its value. Although the texts are written using the Greek alphabet, the personal names are mostly Thracian, like Seuthes or Dyntas, and the language of other words varies between Greek and Thracian as far as we can tell (*cf*. Dana 2015, 247–51). These six inscriptions can be divided into two groups: three early inscriptions dated between 500 and 350 BC, and three inscriptions from the late fourth century BC associated with the 'royal' burial of Seuthes III. The first group of inscriptions encompasses three short texts that consist of individual letters possibly
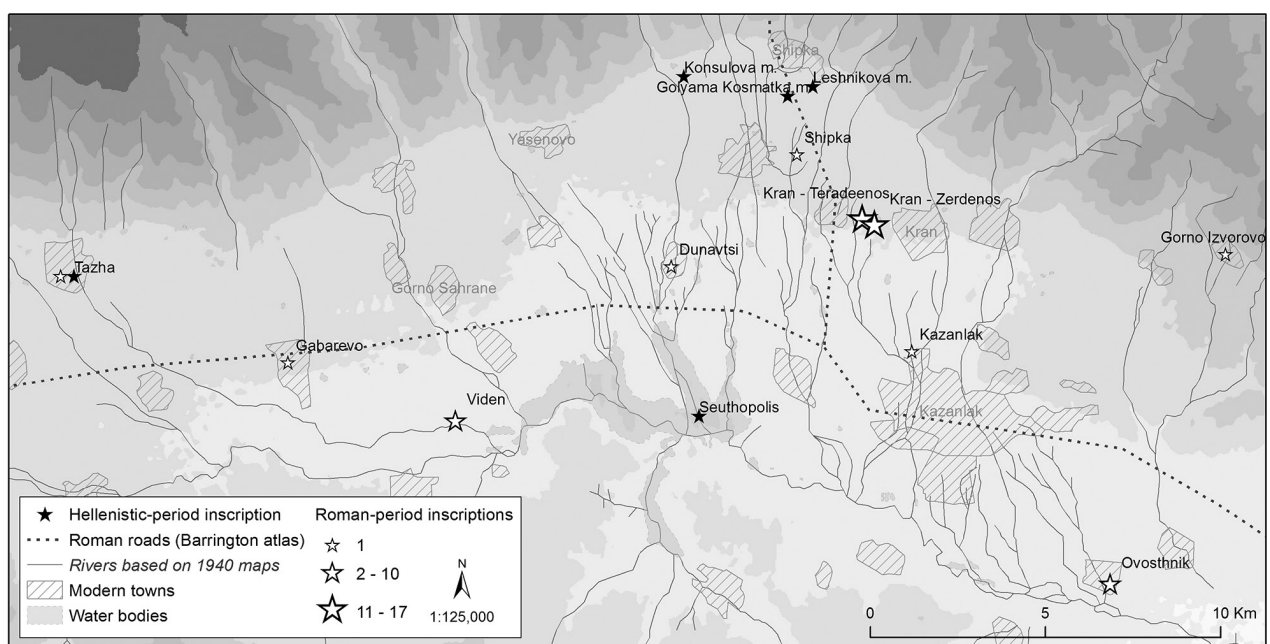

Figure 21.1 Map of the Kazanlak research area indicating inscriptions dated to the Classical-Hellenistic and Roman periods.

denoting the contents or the owner of the inscribed object. Since they are so abbreviated, their interpretation is still a matter of debate. One of these inscriptions was found on a silver mouth of a wineskin in the Konsulova mound (Kitov and Krasteva 1993, 61–2; Kitov 1994, 85–6), while another was written on a silver vessel from the Leshnikova mound (SEG 55:742; Kitov and Theodossiev 1995, 317–36; Kitov 1999, 1–20). The third appears on a silver vessel from an unknown location in the Kazanlak Valley, probably a burial mound (SEG 46:851; Kitov 1995, 5–21). In the Konsulova mound inscription (which is not in the SEG), the text PKΣN Δ possibly indicates the content of the vessel, as is also the case with the text KYΛIKIAΔ ('four kylikes') on SEG 46:851. The text ΔYNTAΣΣ [Ξ or Z]EIΛAΣΣ in SEG 55:742 indicates that it belonged to a Thracian bearing name 'Dyntas, son of Zeilas' or, possibly, to someone named 'Dyntozelmis' (Dana 2015, 247). Determining the meaning is difficult in part because some of letters are irregular and reversed, which could indicate that the Greek alphabet was a novelty in the Kazanlak Valley at the time (prior to about 350 BC), used only sporadically and in elite contexts.

The second group of three inscriptions comes from the monumental burial mound Golyama Kosmatka, associating it with Seuthes III and dating it to the late fourth or early third century BC (Kitov 2005d, 39–54; Manov 2006, 27–34; Dana 2015, 251). Seuthes III is known from Greek sources as a Thracian leader of the late fourth century BC. Diodorus Siculus describes him as *basileus* ('king') of the Odrysians. Initially an ally, Seuthes III later fought against the Macedonian Lysimachus, maintaining some sort of autonomy in the process (Diodorus Siculus 18.14; 19.73; Arrian *Anabasis* 3.12.4; Tacheva 2000, 10–12; Heckel 2006, 248; Delev 2015, 53–4). More importantly, Seuthes III is traditionally considered to be the founder of the 'royal', Hellenistic city of Seuthopolis, now submerged under the Koprinka Reservoir, 10 km south of Golyama Kosmatka (*cf.* Dimitrov, Čičikova and Alexieva 1978; see Chapters 6 and 8). The brief inscriptions were written in correct Greek, demonstrating the author's (and possibly also owner's) understanding of the Greek letter forms and language. The three inscriptions record Seuthes' ownership of a bronze helmet (SEG 55:776 c) and two silver vessels (SEG 55:776 a, b). The inscriptions on a jug and a *phiale* also mention their weights, explicitly using 'Alexandrian' measures, *i.e.*, the system of weights and measures introduced to Thrace by Alexander the Great and his followers. Ownership was properly expressed using Seuthes' name in genitive singular (ΣEYΘOY). The correct spelling and grammar, as well as the use of Alexandrian weights, suggest familiarity with the Greek language and the system of measures used in contemporary Greek and Macedonian society.

Objects made from precious metals, including vessels, jewellery, and weaponry, are known from many burials across Thrace during the Classical and Hellenistic period.

According to Greek sources, these precious objects were obtained through gift exchange between, or tribute collection by, Thracian elites, symbolising their wealth or broad network of contacts (Thuc. 2. 97. 3; *cf.* Archibald 1998, 225–30; Loukopoulou 2008, 139–63). Objects with inscriptions denoting the name of the owner most often appear on precious drinking implements. These objects were likely used and displayed during elite drinking parties during the owner's life, and later deposited in the grave as part of the festivities marking the owner's burial, as described by Herodotus (5.8).

According to anthropological theory, the vessel's owners used the inscribed, precious items to ostentatiously display their wealth and signal to potential followers an ability to amass wealth and resources, and thus secure appropriate gifts for their retainers (the so-called 'Big Man' model, *cf.* Sahlins 1963; Whitley 1991). A leader's power within the community existed as long as he was able to attract followers. Such ostentatious consumption and display of wealth are common features of elite competition in pre-state societies, and likely occurred all over Thrace (*cf.* Bliege, Bird and Smith 2005).

21.2.1.2 Inscriptions on stone stelae

In addition to the six inscriptions on funerary objects, three Greek inscriptions in stone were found. *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1731 and 1732 date to the early third century BC and come from Seuthopolis, the royal residence of Seuthes III and his entourage. The fragmentary inscription *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1730, which is usually dated to the second century BC, was found in the ruins of a Mediaeval castle above the village of Tazha, 18 km west of Seuthopolis (Fig. 21.1). Although this inscription has been associated with the area around Seuthopolis because its text featured personal names traditionally connected with the house of the Odrysian kings (Mihailov 1964, 145), it is important to remember that the city itself, inhabited for only about two generations, was abandoned during the third century, so this second-century inscription must have been displayed elsewhere.

Personal names in these texts are predominantly Thracian, such as Spartokos, Seuthes, Sadalas, Hebryzelmis, Teres, Satokos, and Amaistas. The two exceptions are Berenike, the wife of Seuthes III, who was probably Greek or Macedonian (Tacheva 2000, 10), and Epimenes, possibly a masculine name of Greek or Macedonian origin (Ognenova-Marinova 1980, 47–8; Calder 1996, 167–75; Tacheva 2000, 33–5). These names indicate that the inscriptions were commissioned by Thracians, often interpreted as members of aristocracy.

The inscriptions in stone represent public communications between the elites and their communities, serving as a new instrument for establishing status, exercising power, or building identity and cohesion (Velkov 1991, 7–11; Calder 1996, 169). The fact that elites from the interior of Thrace chose Greek as their

language of public communication has led to the belief that Thracian aristocrats, at least, were Hellenised (Calder 1996, 169; Delev 1998, 378; Theodossiev 2001, 14–15; but see Vranič 2012 for a critical re-evaluation). In this conventional view, the process of Hellenisation is usually defined as an adoption of the Greek language, religion, and customs, combined with the use of imported goods (Hdt. 8.144; Zacharia 2008).

21.2.1.3   Seuthopolis as a 'Hellenised' settlement

Since its discovery, Seuthopolis has been interpreted as a Hellenised settlement because of its Hippodamian layout and Greek-style urban architecture. Archaeological excavations revealed the existence of a central square, possibly an agora, and houses resembling the Greek *pastas* type (Dimitrov 1961, 94–100; Dimitrov, Čičikova and Alexieva 1978, 6–14). Together, these features suggest Greek or Macedonian influence, or perhaps even the presence of foreign architects. The famous 'Seuthopolis inscription' *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1731 includes references to typical Greek institutions, such as the *boule*, *agora*, *hieron*, and *bomos*, which indicate that Seuthopolis had a council, an agora, a sanctuary, and an altar in the Greek fashion.

The same inscription identifies two Greek cults practised in Seuthopolis: that of Dionysus and that of the Great Gods of Samothrace (Calder 1996, 169). *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1732, which was commissioned by the Thracian Amaistas, specifies that he served as a priest of Dionysus, adding further evidence for the existence of that cult. Both inscriptions were found during excavations at Seuthopolis and likely came from the same sanctuary. The evidence does not reveal whether the cult of 'Dionysus' represents a syncretic application of a Greek name to an indigenous deity, or the importation of a Greek deity. If it was an import, the degree to which the cult was adapted to its new Thracian environment is not known. The Greek text mentions the Greek deity and the Thracian origin of the priest, but the nature of the cult remains obscure. At a minimum the inscription reveals a familiarity with Greek religious tradition in Seuthopolis.

Another argument for the Hellenisation of Seuthopolis is the language of inscriptions and the fact that they were publicly displayed. The texts are not only Greek, but written using rather conservative invocation formulae found across the Greek speaking world, such as ΑΓΑΘΗΙ ΤΥΧΗΙ ('good fortune') or ΔΕΔΟΧΘΑΙ ('having been resolved by [ ]'; Velkov 1991, 7–11; Calder 1996, 169). *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1731 also specifically prescribes that the text should be publicly displayed in the agora, another common expectation of Greek inscriptions (Velkov 1991, 7–11). The use of this formulaic terminology, combined with an explicit order for public display, suggests familiarity with the Greek epigraphic habit, if not the presence of Greeks in Seuthopolis.

The inscriptions of Seuthopolis, together with archaeological evidence from its excavation (Dimitrov,

Čičikova and Alexieva 1978), suggest Greek or Macedonian influence on elite architecture, religion, and inscriptions. This evidence, however, does not indicate how far this influence extended beyond the aristocratic class.

21.2.1.4   Graffiti

Literacy rates in the ancient world were low, and the ability to read (and especially write) was largely restricted to elites (Harris 1989; Cribiore 2005). The percentage of the population that was literate rarely exceeded 10%. Even in Athens, the most epigraphically active Greek *polis*, literacy rates reached perhaps 15% during the Classical period (Harris 1989, 327). Additionally, literacy was a fuzzier concept in Antiquity than today. Some people knew how to read, but not write, while others had a limited 'functional literacy', often defined as the ability to write one's own name or read a simple text. Literacy was a skill important for a relatively small part of the population with particular skills or occupations, such as merchants, soldiers, artisans, or other specialists, who used it to better pursue their professions (Boring 1979, 1; Ong 1982, 94; Harris 1989, 5).

Graffiti denote short inscriptions scribbled on everyday material, such as broken sherds. In Thrace, graffiti mostly come from aristocratic grave contexts, or from the merchant, soldier, and artisan communities who regularly interacted with the elites (Archibald 1998, 229–31; Domaradzka 2005). Over 130 Greek graffiti were found on imported and local pottery during rescue excavations in Seuthopolis in 1953, suggesting that functional Greek literacy and numeracy extended beyond the Thracian aristocracy (Chichikova 1984). A typical graffito from Seuthopolis consists of a few letters, representing personal names or numerals. The graffiti include both Greek and Thracian names, such as the typical Thracian name Seu[thes], the common suffix [-ze]lmi[s], and the Greek names Aristoxenos, Here, Kle[-], and Filai[-] (Dimitrov, Čičikova, and Alexieva 1978, 22–3; Chichikova 1984, 52–3; 74). Although the status or occupation of the vessel's owners remains unknown, the presence of personal names of various ethnic background suggests a multi-ethnic community was residing at Seuthopolis.

Moreover, the numeric graffiti use the acrophonic numeral system, in which the first letter of the Greek word for a number represents a numeral. This system was commonly used among Greek speaking communities to denote the value of contents or capacity of a vessel (McLean 2002, 58–61). It was probably brought to Seuthopolis by Greek or Macedonian merchants or soldiers, who were familiar with this system from their previous activities.

In addition to the graffiti, a few styli and seal rings were also found in Seuthopolis. These provide additional evidence of local production of texts and ownership markings. Emil Nankov has used the presence of graffiti and writing utensils to argue that the population of Seuthopolis was composed of Hellenised Graeco-Thracians and

possibly Macedonians, largely from military backgrounds (Nankov 2012, 109; 120). According to Nankov, Greek language and writing were in general use amongst not only elites, but also merchants and soldiers who routinely used it for business and social interaction.

The context of graffiti and writing utensils at Seuthopolis suggests these artefacts were likely to be made and used in the town. The absence of graffiti in Seuthopolis' hinterland may arise from the lack of excavations in Classical and Hellenistic settlements outside the city. The fragility of graffiti, furthermore, inhibits their survival in the plough-zone, where they suffer from mechanical and chemical wear. The failure to find graffiti outside Seuthopolis may, however, also indicate that there were few elites or specialists living in the countryside – or living in the valley at all outside the brief period of habitation at Seuthopolis.

21.2.1.5 Discussion: the depth of literacy in the Kazanlak Valley

In the Kazanlak Valley during the Classical and Hellenistic periods, inscriptions on non-perishable materials were rare, and only elites commissioned them to serve their own needs. Some were made on metal vessels that only elites would have seen, while others were inscribed on stone monuments for public display. In either case, one of their functions was to enhance the status of the elite commissioner, either in the eyes of other elites or the wider community (*cf.* Woolf 1994, 117).

While the available evidence from Seuthopolis supports the proposition that the population was Hellenised, the lifespan of Seuthopolis was limited to some 50 years. It was founded after 340 BC (Nankov 2015, 404–5, suggests the date of foundation as 313 or 310 BC; *cf.* Nankov 2008, 45) and abandoned in the third century (Calder 1996, 169, uses numismatic data to suggest 229 BC as the final horizon of the Hellenistic city). Besides inscriptions from Seuthopolis and nearby elite mound burials, only one other fragmentary inscription *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1730 from Tazha attests to use of the Greek language in the Kazanlak Valley. One would expect that after decades of living in close contact with Graeco-Macedonian soldiers and merchants, residents would develop the sort of mixed culture common in contact zones (Malkin 2004, 356–9; Woolf 2009, 209–10). We might expect such a society, in the Thracian case, to adopt the sort of cultural practices attested in inscriptions and graffiti, like the use of Greek and the practice of commissioning inscriptions. During its relatively short life, the community of Seuthopolis adopted some aspects of Greek epigraphic practice under the influence of Seuthes III, an advocate of Graeco-Macedonian culture. After the death of Seuthes III, no further securely dated evidence of inscription making, or of writing in any form, in Greek or any other language, is to be found before the Roman conquest, when the cultural dynamic changed dramatically.

Perhaps the writing of Greek, and the entire 'Hellenised' way of urban life, were limited to Graeco-Macedonian soldiers or veterans stationed in Thrace, along with the Thracians who had joined them for Alexander's conquests and the Successor's wars that followed his death. Seuthes III, a 'Hellenised' veteran, promoted Greek culture and a Greek way of life to maintain his status and prestige after he had expelled Macedonian rulers from his corner of Thrace (Malkin 2004, 353; Vranič 2012, 40–1). The limited duration of Seuthopolis attests, however, to the fragility of the multicultural community he founded.

21.2.2 Kazanlak in the Roman period

Evidence from the first to the fourth century AD in the Kazanlak Valley shows that epigraphic expression was no longer dominated by Thracian elites operating from one (semi-) literate centre. The use of inscriptions was now distributed among multiple sites and their commissioners came from wider socio-demographic groups, such as Thracians, foreigners, soldiers, veterans, and magistrates.

A total of 48 inscriptions from the Kazanlak Valley date to the Roman period. Some 43 texts are from the second or third century AD. The inscriptions are mostly carved into stone, with one bronze military diploma. The stone inscriptions appear on marble tablets (ca. 30×20 cm), often bearing a relief depicting the Thracian Rider or a standing deity. The texts are mostly published on behalf of an individual, or his or her closest kin. Unlike the previous period, when inscriptions are associated exclusively with elite interactions, the extant Roman inscriptions show more variability in their function: 41 of the inscriptions are dedications to local or Greek deities, such as Heros, Apollo, Daphne, Heracles, and Asclepius (Oppermann 2006, 222–6). Two inscriptions, *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1741 and *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1741(2) bis, are funerary, while one is a military diploma CIL XVI 106 (Dana 2013, 229). Four are too fragmentary to specify their function.

21.2.2.1 Archaeological context of inscriptions

Most texts come from archaeological excavations at three sites, which have all been interpreted as sanctuaries. Two of these sites are located near the modern town of Kran in the northeastern part of the study area. The third is near Viden in the southwest.

The two sanctuaries near Kran provide the largest collection of votive offerings. The first sanctuary is located ca. 0.5 km west of Kran in the 'Bostandzhiyska Koriya' locale and dated from the mid-second to the early third century AD (Tabakova 1959a, 104; site 4123; *cf.* Chapter 6). Of 69 votive offerings found at this sanctuary, 15 were dedicated to Apollo *Zerdenos*. The second sanctuary near Kran is in the 'Atemov Oreh' locale, ca. 2.5 km southwest of the first sanctuary and dated to the third century AD (Tabakova-Tsanova 1980, 173–94; site 2044 and 2046). Most of the 65 offerings from this sanctuary appear on stelae and contain representations of the Thracian Rider

(Oppermann 2006, 224). Only 16 bear inscriptions, mostly to Apollo *Teradeenos*, Heracles, and Asclepius. Between them, these sanctuaries yielded 134 votive objects, mostly tablets, but also sculptures, lamps, and altars (Tabakova 1959a, 97–104; Oppermann 2006, 224). Inscribing a votive object was not routine; only about 20% of all offerings are inscribed; for every inscribed tablet, four anepigraphic objects were dedicated.

The sanctuary near Viden is in the 'Bentat' locale, about 2 km northwest of the village. Based on personal names, letter cutting style, relief comparanda, and associated archaeological evidence, the lifespan of this sanctuary has been dated from the Hellenistic period to the turn of the third and fourth centuries AD (Tabakova-Tsanova 1961, 203–19). It produced 30 anepigraphic dedications and eight with inscriptions. Thirty-five bear representations of the Thracian Rider, and three others of Apollo and Daphne (Tabakova-Tsanova 1961, 203–19; Domaradzki 1991, 127; Oppermann 2006, 222).

Comparing the identity of dedicands in the three sanctuaries, the two sanctuaries at Kran appear to have been frequented by soldiers, veterans, and city council members, who mention their status in the text of the dedications. The driving factor for these dedications may have been the location of the sanctuaries along the main road connecting Augusta Traiana with Novae on the Danube River, which ran through the Kazanlak Valley and over the Stara Planina via the Shipka Pass. Conversely, the sanctuary near Viden, which lay further from major roads, seems to have been used more by the Thracian population, or some other group, who do not emphasise their status or occupation in the inscriptions (Fig. 21.1).

21.2.2.2   Socio-cultural markers in the inscriptions

Greek predominates as the language of inscriptions during the Roman period in the Kazanlak Valley. Some 44 of the Kazanlak inscriptions are Greek (92%), three are Latin (6%), and one is bilingual (2%). The inscriptions, however, do not indicate any clear ethno-linguistic division, such as indigenous Thracians preferring Greek and newer arrivals Latin. The prevalence of Greek reflects the valley's location with respect to the so-called 'Jireček Line', the linguistic border running through the Balkans that divides the areas where most inscriptions are in Greek from those areas where most are in Latin (Jireček 1911, 36–9). Traditionally, the Jireček Line runs through the natural boundary created by the Stara Planina, just north of the Kazanlak Valley. Proximity to this boundary makes the mix of languages in the Kazanlak Valley inscriptions unsurprising (Dana 2015, 253). No precise statistics for Thrace as a whole exist, but Minkova (2000, 1–7) claims 1,200–1,300 Latin inscriptions have been found in Bulgaria compared with ca. 3,000 Greek inscriptions (Mihailov 1956–1997; see also the 'Hellenization of Ancient Thrace Database', Janouchová 2014). These figures produce a ratio of about 70% Greek to 30% Latin, with variation from region to region.

The personal names occurring in inscriptions from the Kran and Viden sanctuaries attest to dedications by Thracians, as well as by soldiers, veterans, and immigrants of other ethnicities. Some dedicands bore Thracian names, *e.g.,* Moukianos, son of Salos, in *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1746. Others had 'Romanised' or mixed Romano-Thracian names, such as Aurelios Markellos *stratiotes* ('the soldier'), in *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1747, Aurelios Ouales and his brother in *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1751, or Markos Aurelios Beibianos and his brother Markos Aurelios Moukianos in *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1756. These 'Romanised' Thracian soldiers adopted Roman names and naming habits when they returned to Thrace after service in the Roman army as a sign of Roman citizenship.

Some of the dedicands likely participated in the civic organisation of the Roman province *Thracia*. A very fragmentary dedication from Kran (*IG Bulg* 3.2, 1753), for example, was commissioned by a nameless *bouleutes* ('member of a city council'). No evidence exists for any Roman settlements in the Kazanlak Valley large enough to have a council, so the magistrates probably came from Augusta Traiana, the closest city with a council, which was located some 30 km southeast in the Sredna Gora foothills (Ivanov 2012, 471). Inscriptions commissioned by city council members, including retired Roman military personnel, were a common feature in the Roman east. In Bithynia, for example, retired officers of higher rank emerged as a new elite in major cities (Fernoux 2004, 198–200). Most extant inscriptions come from this class of ex-military elites, often stating their membership in a city council or mentioning their status as soldiers or veterans in order to declare their identity and enhance their prestige (Woolf 1994, 117; Topalilov 2013, 185–94). These inscriptions fit an Empire-wide pattern beginning in the second century AD, in which elites advertised their status and achievements on funerary monuments (Woolf 2004, 160).

Although Thrace was a *provincia inermis*, one without a permanent legion, the epigraphic evidence documents a military presence in the Kazanlak Valley. The bronze military diploma, CIL XVI 106 from Gabarevo, located in the north-western part of the valley, dates to AD 157 and probably belonged to a Thracian who served in Syria-Palestine before returning home (Dana 2013, 229). A bilingual Greek-Latin inscription from Shipka, *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1741 bis, was dedicated to a fellow Celsus Marius, from Cohors II *Bracaraugustanorum*, stationed in Moesia Inferior, by Markos, son of Traidakos, soldier from Cohors II *Numidia*, stationed in Dacia. The epigraphic evidence does not suggest a permanent military settlement in the Kazanlak Valley, but shows the military background of individual dedicands.

Compared to the Hellenistic period, Roman inscriptions reveal more information about a dedicand's occupation, achievements, and social standing. The content of the
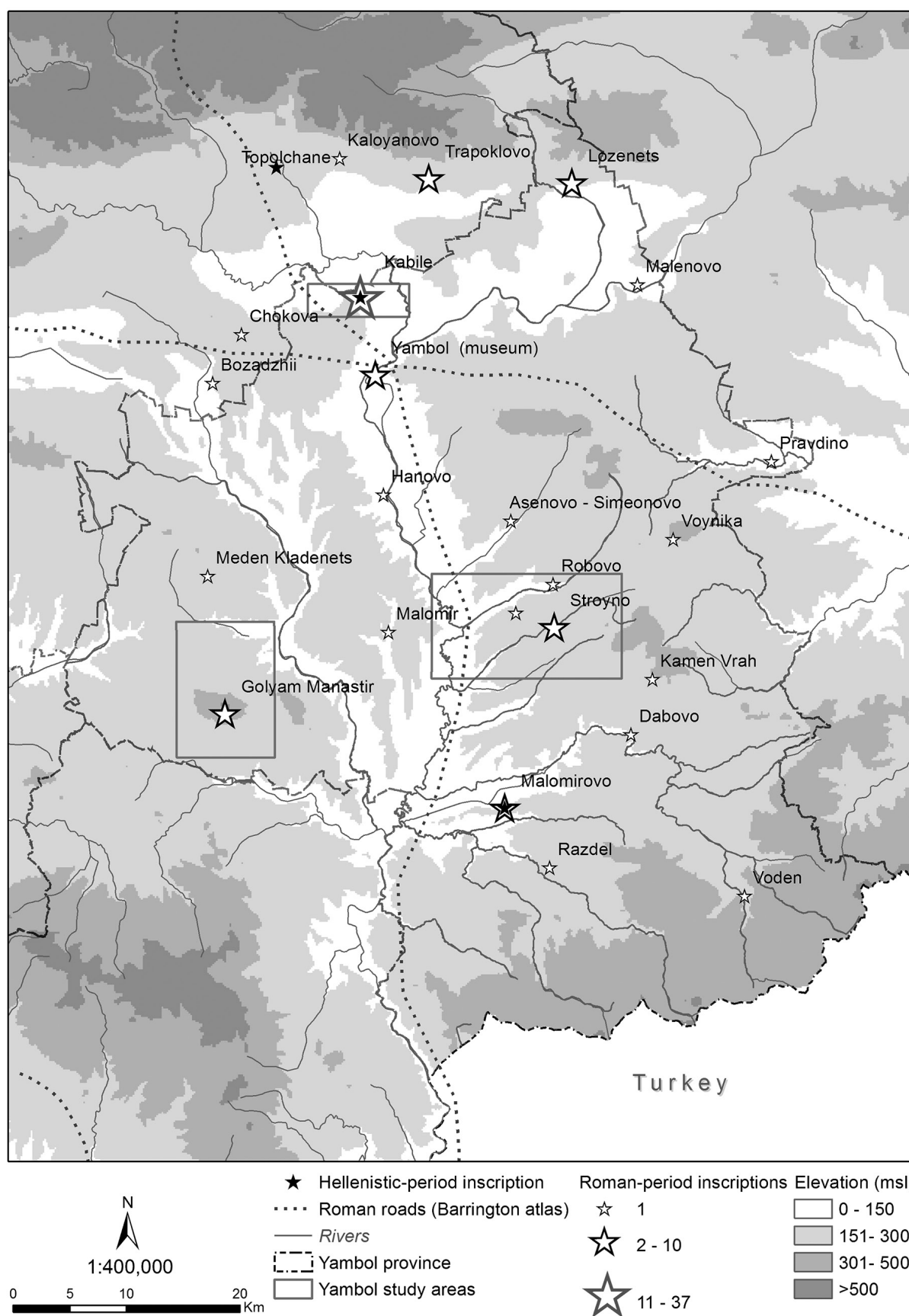
Figure 21.2 Map of the Yambol study areas (including the 2008 pilot project near Kabyle), noting inscriptions dated to the Classical-Hellenistic and Roman periods.

inscriptions reflects socio-cultural circumstances, such as the disappearance of aristocracy and the growth of city elites. The fundamental motivation, however, remains unchanged: enhancing status and individual prestige. As such, during the Classical period inscriptions name aspiring local aristocratic leaders, while during the Roman period, they name soldiers, veterans, and magistrates (Woolf 2004, 160).

In the Classical and Hellenistic periods, inscriptions had been created to display status in aristocratic contexts like elite drinking parties and mortuary rites. In the Roman period, they advertise participation in a new social order built around Roman citizenship, military service, and municipal leadership. The adoption of Roman names as a result of military service, use of formulae typical for Roman epigraphy, alignment of iconography to Roman norms, and the occasional use of Latin all proclaimed status in this new context (*cf.* Bliege Bird and Smith 2005, 233–5).

21.2.2.3 *Discussion: long-term changes in epigraphic expression in Kazanlak*

The epigraphic evidence reflects changes in the socio-cultural milieu in the Kazanlak Valley from the fifth century BC to the third century AD. Throughout this era, Greek remained the principal language of inscriptions, regardless of the dedicand's origin. Inscriptions initially established the autonomy and status of Thracian elites. Later they briefly promoted an elite culture encompassing Greek, Macedonian, and Thracian elements. These short-lived attempts were superseded by the arrival of Roman rule and the disappearance of identifiably Thracian aristocrats from the epigraphic record. A new, more epigraphically active elite emerged, one which derived its position from Roman associations, military service, and civic office.

21.3 Yambol research area

Although TRAP investigated only a small part of the 3,355 sq km Yambol province, this section discusses the epigraphic corpus from the entire modern region. It includes the environs of Kabyle, extending approximately 20 km around the ancient city and into the modern province of Sliven. The corpus encompasses a total of 79 Greek and Latin inscriptions (see the digital dataset for Yambol).[2] Seventy-two of these inscriptions were carved on stone monuments, six on metal objects, and one on a terracotta tablet. Fifty-nine were written in Greek, 18 in Latin, and two were bilingual. The inscriptions can be divided into two chronological groups: an early group of four Classical and Hellenistic inscriptions (500–1 BC), and a later group of 75 Roman inscriptions (AD 1–300).

Most inscriptions in the Yambol province come from Kabyle, a regional centre founded by Philip II on the bend of the Tundzha River. During the early Hellenistic period, Kabyle served as a counterpart to Seuthopolis (Velkov

1991, 7–31). It had a much longer lifespan, however, housing a military garrison under Roman rule. The permanent presence of Roman auxiliary units influenced the character of the whole region (*cf.* Chapter 18 and Chapter 19). A military road crossed the Thracian Plain, connecting Kabyle to the Greek cities of Perinthos and Selymbria in the Propontis (Madzharov 2009, 231–7). This road enabled movement and trade, as attested by amphorae found in the region (*cf.* Chapter 20) and the increased presence of non-Thracian personal names in the inscriptions discussed here.

21.3.1 *Yambol in the Classical and Hellenistic period (Late Iron Age)*

Kabyle's role as a Hellenistic regional centre and military garrison is attested numismatically, historically, epigraphically, and archaeologically.

Based on numismatic finds from the region, Handzhiyska and Lozanov (2010, 269) describe Kabyle as 'both as an important consumer of imported goods and a centre of redistribution'. The spatial distribution of bronze coins minted or countermarked at Kabyle during the third century BC indicate that the city's sphere of influence extended approximately 20 km to the foothills of Stara Planina in the north, the Manastirski Vazvishenniya in the southwest, and the village of Botevo in the south (Draganov 1993, 87–99; *cf.* Chapter 19). Along the Tundzha River, coins minted in Kabyle have been found as far as Seuthopolis in the northeast and modern Elhovo and Srem in the south.

Demosthenes describes Kabyle as one of the cities conquered by Philip II during his campaign in 341 BC (Dem. 8.44; 10.15; Velkov 1982, 14–16). The so-called 'Seuthopolis inscription' *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1731, found during rescue excavations at Seuthopolis, mentions a contemporary settlement at Kabyle, which served as the seat of a Thracian *paradynast* Spartokos (SEG 42:661; Velkov 1991, 7–11; Calder 1996, 167–78; Handzhiyska and Lozanov 2010, 262). In this inscription, Kabyle is presented as a prosperous Hellenistic city with various sanctuaries and an agora. Archaeological excavations confirm the existence of Hellenistic fortifications enclosing some 30 ha, but otherwise reveal little about the city itself due to their limited extent, compounded by the fact that Hellenistic strata are buried deep below later Roman and Late Antique deposits.

Only three inscriptions (Agre 2011, 134) from the Yambol province are securely dated to the Classical or Hellenistic periods, with one additional text dated to the transition between the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. Two of these four inscriptions were found at Kabyle, carved into stone and intended for public display. The other two were carved into objects made of precious material and deposited in burial mounds as part of the funerary offerings.

21.3.2.1 Inscriptions on funerary goods

The earliest inscriptions from the Yambol area come from monumental burial mounds, interpreted as belonging to local Thracian elites based on their lavish contents (Agre 2011; Kitov and Dimitrov 2008). The inscribed objects served as status markers within the aristocratic class, analogous to finds from monumental burials in the Kazanlak Valley.

The first inscription comes from the Dalakova mound, a fourth century burial near Topolchane, 12 km north of Kabyle. An inscribed golden signet ring (SEG 58:699) was found during the excavation in 2007 (Kitov and Dimitrov 2008, 25–6). It bears retrograde text ΣΗΥΣΑ ΤΗΡΗΤΟΣ ('belonging to Seusa(s)/Seuthes, son of Teres') and a depiction of a bearded man. Signet rings were used by elites to signify ownership and verify identity. They served as a symbol of membership in a circumscribed community of high status. The presence of other grave goods confirms the elite social standing of Seusas/Seuthes, including a golden *phiale* reworked into a burial mask, two silver *rhyta*, other metal vessels, weapons, and imported red-figure pottery.

The second inscription on an item from a burial was found inside the Golyama mound, located between the villages of Malomirovo and Zlatnitsa near Elhovo, ca. 50 km south of Kabyle (Agre 2011). This mound produced rich funerary goods, again indicating the elite status of the owner, including a golden wreath, golden signet ring, weapons, silver and bronze vessels, Greek red-figure pottery, Greek amphorae, and local pottery. One of the decorative silver *rhyta*, which depicts a hunting scene, was incised with a simple inscription consisting of three Greek letters: ΑΙΣ with a three-bar sigma (Agre 2011, 134). Another letter may precede the A, but it is impossible to tell based on the publication. The text may signify the contents of the vessel or its owner, possibly associated with the occupant of the grave. According to the excavator, the grave belonged to an 18–20 year old man, a Thracian aristocrat of the mid-fourth century BC (Agre 2011, 214–30). The inscribed silver vessel likely served as status symbol, as did the signet ring. Inscribed objects from similar contexts in the Kazanlak Valley served the same purpose.

21.3.2.2 Inscriptions on stone stelae

Two fragmentary inscriptions in stone were found during excavations at Kabyle. The first inscription (SEG 42:643; Velkov 1991, 11–12; no. 2) has been dated to the Hellenistic period based on letter shapes and the content of the text. Specifically, Velkov links the occurrence of words ΒΑΣΙ[ΛΕΥΣ] ('king'), ΤΗΣ Π[ΟΛΕΩΣ] (genitive of *polis*, a Greek city state), and ΓΑΛΑ[ΤΑΙ] ('inhabitants of Galatia') to a formal relationship between with the inhabitants Kabyle and those of Galatia, the latter being Celts who passed through Thrace in the third century BC.

The second inscription (Velkov 1991, 12; no. 3), dated approximately by letter forms to the Late Hellenistic or Early Roman period, is difficult to interpret. It could be a decree issued by the *boule* of Kabyle or another city (Velkov 1991, 12 suggests Mesambria). Both inscriptions reinforce the idea that Kabyle served as a political centre, issuing or receiving formal decrees and maintaining relations with other Black Sea cities.

21.2.3.3 Discussion: Late Iron Age epigraphic production in Yambol

Pre-Roman inscriptions from Yambol are associated with the activities of local elites. Inscribed objects like a golden *rhyton* or signet ring were deposited in the tombs, where they denoted ownership and authority, advertising the status of their aristocratic owners. The two inscriptions in stone from Kabyle were produced after the Macedonian conquest and subsequent foundation of the regional centre. Although fragmentary, they document relationships with other polities and signify a degree of autonomy at Kabyle.

Considering Kabyle's role as a regional centre, it might be expected that graffiti like those from Seuthopolis would be found, but surprisingly few have been recovered (Nankov 2012). Domaradzki mentions only two graffiti on amphora sherds (1991b, 62). If more exist, they await publication. In part, the paucity of Hellenistic inscriptions from Kabyle reflects extremely limited excavation of Hellenistic contexts, yet it remains surprising. Inscribed objects from associated burials are also lacking; 10 elite mound burials dating to the Hellenistic period have been excavated nearby, yielding local and Greek funerary goods, but no inscriptions (Getov 1991).

In the Kazanlak Valley, the Thracian leader Seuthes III provided a new impetus for publishing inscriptions. His patronage of epigraphy appears short-lived, and he had no successors before the arrival of the Romans. Even though a contemporary Thracian paradynast, Spartokos, is attested in Kabyle, no analogous inscriptions related to him have been found. Only one of the stone inscription dates to the third century. The lack of epigraphic evidence is surprising because the leaders from both Seuthopolis and Kabyle minted their own coinage, with legends in the Greek alphabet, as was customary for Macedonian kings of the same period. Only one fragmentary inscription dating, possibly, to the second or first century BC has been found in Kabyle and its hinterland. The lack of later Hellenistic inscriptions may not be surprising, considering that it reflects a broader decline in economic activity and the minting of coins, as well as a decrease in imported items (Lozanov 2006, 147–52).

21.3.2 Yambol in the Roman period

Epigraphic activity in the Yambol province resumes only under Roman rule, specifically during the second century AD, when a permanent military garrison was stationed

in Kabyle (Getov 2003, 12–3). Seventy-five inscriptions have been found dating to AD 1–300. Of these, 37 come from Kabyle, while the remaining 38 originate at other sites along the Tundzha River, its eastern tributaries (the Gerenska, Azmaka, and Popovska rivers), and the main road connecting the interior of Thrace with the Propontis (Fig. 21.2).

21.3.3.1 Archaeological context of inscriptions

Kabyle dominates the epigraphic record of the region. Starting in AD 135/6 it hosted a permanent Roman garrison (Getov 2003, 121–3). Inscriptions from Kabyle indicate it was the *Cohors II Lucensium*, an auxiliary unit stationed there until the end of second century (AE 1999, 1370–1; Velkov 1991, 12–15; nos. 4 and 5). A bilingual inscription dated to AD 205–208 (SEG 42: 646 a–b; Velkov 1991, 18–21; no. 10) indicates that after AD 193 *Cohors I Athroitorum* may have replaced *Cohors II Lucensium*.

The spatial distribution of Latin inscriptions in Yambol shows Kabyle as the centre of the Latin-writing community, which should probably be equated with the Roman garrison. Texts are concentrated in and around Kabyle, having been found near the modern villages of Stroyno, Trapoklovo in the Sliven province, Malenovo, Asenovo, Meden Kladenets, and Lozenets (Fig. 21.2). Stroyno represents the most distant findspot, approximately 40 km southeast of Kabyle. Most texts have an official or semi-official character: two military diplomas, one boundary stone, one official inscription mentioning *caesar*, and two private texts in Latin on bronze objects about individuals using names of Roman origin (*e.g.,* AE 1999, 1372–3; Velkov 1991, 15–16; nos. 6 and 7; AE 2007, 1259–60; Boyanov 2007, 69–73; see digital dataset for details).[2]

The spatial distribution of inscriptions was influenced not only by the military presence in Kabyle, but also by various religious networks connecting the administrative centre with the areas to the south. Usually, texts cannot be associated with a specific archaeological site, as they were often found in secondary context, or their findspot was recorded imprecisely, *e.g.*, 'in the village', 'in the vicinity of the village', etc. The contents of the inscriptions, however, indicate that at least some of the findspots were connected by personal or religious networks. These dedications were made in Greek or Latin, often to deities bearing Greek names, such as Asclepius or Zeus, or to local deities, such as the heroes Zbelthiourdos, Tisasenos, and Aularkhenos. Dedications to 'ancestral' Apollo included the epithets *Patroos*, *Genikos*, and *Geniakos* and were connected by personal ties between the dedicands, including one case where the same family (of the priest Apollodoros) appeared on inscriptions at Kabyle and Dodoparon (see Velkov 1991; Janouchová 2016) and another case where the same Roman family name (Avilius) appears at both Kabyle and Stroyno (Boyanov 2006, 235–6; 2008, 209–10, Chapter 18 this volume). Religious

networks, as well as military connections, thus extended at least 40 km from Kabyle.

21.3.3.2 Socio-cultural markers in the inscriptions

A total of 75 Roman-era inscriptions come from the Yambol study area. Of 37 texts found at Kabyle, 23 are Greek, 12 are Latin, and two are bilingual. The other 38 inscriptions from the hinterland include 33 in Greek and five in Latin. The percent of Greek inscriptions is lower in Yambol (76%) than in the Kazanlak Valley (93%), but corresponds with expectations for the Roman province of Thracia as a whole (see above). The number of Latin inscriptions was probably augmented by the presence of the garrison at Kabyle, where Latin was used as the language of administration. When the inscriptions found at Kabyle are excluded from regional statistics, the percent of Greek inscriptions rises to 87%.

Based on the appearance of some typical Latin features in Greek inscriptions, such as age rounding and specification of military rank, Velkov (1991) has argued that Latin was the language of official communication at the garrison. It would have been spoken by immigrants of western origin, like the soldier Valerius Proculus, the cavalrymen Lucius Valerius and Valens (Velkov 1991, 28–29; no. 37), or Valeria Festiva and Ulpius Vitales (Velkov 1991, 29–30; no. 38). Greek, conversely, would have been used for the private affairs of people of Thracian and Greek origin, *e.g.*, dedications and funerary inscriptions. The bilingual inscriptions were commissioned by Romans and supplemented by exact translation to Greek, *e.g.*, the bilingual funerary text *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1777, which was commissioned by Gaius Avilius Valens, a member of an old Roman family, for himself and his wife Satria Marcia (Boyanov 2008, 209). The prevalence of individuals bearing Roman names in Latin and bilingual inscriptions suggests that Latin was used mainly by immigrants from the western Mediterranean who identified as Roman, and that Latin did not much effect the epigraphic habits of the local population identifying as Thracian or Greek.

Inscription *IG Bulg* 5, 5636, dated to AD 144, attests to the permanent presence of Greeks in Kabyle. It mentions Greek inhabitants of the city who built and dedicated the temple of Hermes *Agoraios*. Velkov postulates that the main architect of the temple was possibly Narkissos, son of Zenon, from Perinthos (SEG 42:647; *IG Bulg* 5, 5636; Velkov 1991, 17; no. 8 and 13). Personal ties with the Propontis are not surprising, since Kabyle was connected with Greek cities at Perinthos and Selymbria by a military road and the Tundzha/Maritsa River systems (Madzharov 2009, 231–7).

Use of mixed Roman and Thracian names and military ranks reveals the service of Thracians and Greeks in the Roman army. People declare their connection to the army by using the label of *stratiotes*, 'soldier' or 'veteran', or by listing the rank they held in the Roman army. *IG*

Bulg 3.2, 1774 mentions Markos Oulpios Apolinarios *soummos kourator* ('official of mid-rank, curator') and Markos Oulpios Arkhelaos *aktarios* ('official in charge of wages'). *IG Bulg* 3.2, 1776 commemorates the *iatros* ('physician') Alexandros, son of Dilaeos (Velkov 1991, 30; no. 39). Finally, SEG 42:650 includes the *princeps* ('military official of high rank') Aurelios Poseidonis (Velkov 1991, 24; no. 20).

References to civic magistrates, like members of council, are also present, even though the closest city councils were over 80 km away at Augusta Traiana or Mesambria. The council members are represented on two dedications, one to Apollo and one to the Three Nymphs (*IG Bulg* 3.2, 1844; *IG Bulg* 5, 5652). The identity of only one council member is known: Aulouzenis, son of Hermodoros, who came from Mysia and has a Thracian name (*IG Bulg* 5, 5652). As a council member, Aulouzenis had considerable status, and so it was important for him to record his achievements on a monument displayed to sanctuary visitors.

21.3.3.3   Discussion: Roman presence and status in Yambol

The Yambol dataset from the Roman period shows a high proportion of military personnel on inscriptions, unsurprising considering the military garrison at Kabyle. The textual analysis of personal names and statements of origin indicate a strong Greek presence in the region, which is again unsurprising given the geographical proximity to the Greek-speaking coasts of the Aegean, Propontis, and Black Sea. The findspots fall along major roads and rivers, where settlements and outposts might be expected. Regional authority was concentrated in Kabyle, which served as a communication node and cultural centre.

Roman era inscriptions from Kabyle and beyond emphasise, advertise, and enhance achievements (Ivanov 2008, 142–5), much like contemporary inscriptions from the Kazanlak Valley. It became fashionable to state one's position and accomplishments in funerary or dedicatory inscriptions across Thrace and indeed the Roman world (Ivanov 2008; Woolf 2004).

21.4   Conclusion: Yambol and Kazanlak compared

Although the Yambol study area is nearly five times larger than its counterpart in the Kazanlak Valley, the former has only a few more inscriptions than the latter (79 versus 57), yielding a higher density in Kazanlak. During the Classical and Hellenistic period, the density of inscriptions is almost 12 times higher in Kazanlak than Yambol (1.3 inscriptions per 100 sq km vs 0.11 inscriptions per 100 sq km). During the Roman period, the density in Kazanlak is four times higher than in Yambol (8.14 inscriptions per 100 sq km vs. 2.11 inscriptions per 100 sq km). This difference may indicate a disparity in the number of

inscriptions produced, reflecting divergent cultural and social practices between the two areas, but it might also reflect variations in preservation or recovery.

21.4.1   Late Iron Age

The surviving epigraphic evidence supports the thesis that Kabyle and Seuthopolis were important centres of administration, religious life, and culture. Both cities were regional centres, urbanised by Philip II of Macedon in the case of Kabyle, and returning veterans of Alexander's campaign led by Seuthes III at Seuthopolis. Both cities managed regional administration and housed a variety of specialists, *e.g.,* soldiers, veterans, and craftsmen, whose existence is expressed in the inscriptions. Inscribed funerary objects appear in graves belonging to the Thracian aristocracy in both regions as markers promoting the owner's elite status. The adoption of the Greek epigraphic habit was limited to a small cadre and did not survive long after the death of its main promoters like Seuthes III. At Kabyle, the Thracian aristocrats maintained relations with Greek poleis, but the adoption of Hellenic culture was more limited than at Seuthopolis, despite the proximity of Kabyle to Greek coastal cities and the circulation of coins between the Thracian Plain and the Black Sea coast.

The scarcity of pre-Roman epigraphic evidence from the Yambol area, represented only by two inscriptions in stone and two inscribed objects in elite graves, cannot be explained by low population density or a lack of elites. The Yambol area was not deserted during the Late Iron Age. Archaeological investigations have revealed Late Iron Age habitations: Dimitrova and Popov (1978) list 64 Late Iron Age sites for the province, while TRAP field survey inventoried nine Late Iron Age sites in a 37 sq km study area (*cf.* Chapters 12, 14, and 16). The recently published Late Iron Age elite burial with an inscribed silver *rhyton* from Malomirovo near Elhovo (Agre 2011), demonstrates the presence of elites, but inscriptions on the funerary goods are less common than in Kazanlak. The differential preservation or recovery of burial mounds in the Yambol area does not explain the discrepancy in numbers. Looting around Yambol does not appear any worse than around Kazanlak (*cf.* Chapters 8 and 14), and cannot explain the paucity of Classical and Hellenistic inscriptions from Yambol. A degree of conservativism towards producing inscriptions or using Greek script in the Yambol area remains the most likely explanation.

21.4.2   Roman Period

A phenomenon common to both areas is a sudden decline in epigraphic production from the second century BC until the Roman period. This hiatus possibly coincides with social changes in Thracian society at this time. The disappearance of inscriptions may involve the transformation or collapse of a social order based on elite interaction in the military turmoil of the wars of

Alexander's successors. In times of political instability and declining social complexity, 'artisanal' specialised production is prone to disappear first, a phenomenon typified by the loss of writing after collapse of the Mycenaean culture (Tainter 1988, 102–5).

After a hiatus of nearly three centuries, the habit of publishing inscriptions was reintroduced to both areas by the Romans, reflecting changes in the organisation of society. Epigraphic activity in the Kazanlak Valley was stimulated by religious activities, as opposed to the Yambol region where the garrison at Kabyle became the main driver of epigraphic production. New incentives catalysed the publication of inscriptions during the Roman period: hereditary rights, Roman citizenship, and the proclamation of status by the individual or their next of kin. In both areas inscriptions served primarily as a means of communication within an elite social group, reinforcing social hierarchy. The Thracian aristocracy disappeared from the epigraphic record in both areas, succeeded by a newly formed class of military personnel, civil servants, and Roman citizens. In both areas, the epigraphically expressive population at the turn of the second and third centuries AD consisted of residents belonging to the mid- to upper tiers of society, often involved in Roman military and civic affairs.

The spatial distribution of epigraphic production also reflects this new social order. Inscriptions in Kazanlak are found in distributed religious contexts, providing no evidence of a single regional centre (see the discussion of elite competition and antagonism in Chapter 10).

Instead, the concurrent existence of multiple, mid-sized settlements suggests that political authority no longer resided in a central administrative centre in the Kazanlak Valley, but had been consolidated at the higher, super-regional level of the Roman Empire (see the discussion of Roman period settlement patterns in Chapter 10). The military presence at Kabyle, however, shaped not only the epigraphic record of the city itself but that of the whole region. Inscription findspots in the Yambol province are not distributed sanctuaries, as in the Kazanlak Valley. Instead, inscriptions cluster in the northern and central parts of the province, focused on the cultural and administrative centre of Kabyle.

A greater number of inscriptions survive from the Roman era in both regions, suggesting a more deeply rooted epigraphic habit. Similar increases, together with the appearance of new socio-cultural markers and standardised formulae, reflect homogenisation of epigraphic production not only in the Roman province of Thrace, but across the Roman world.

Abbreviations

AE: L'Année épigraphique
CIL: Corpus Inscription Latinarum
IG Bulg: Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria Repertae
SEG: Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum

Notes

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