CELTIC PERSONAL NAMES IN THRACE

Mac Congail

“There is little said but plenty unsaid in the dead Thracian language”.

(Alexander Fol. Ancient Thrace (Sofia, 2000)

The personal names of a population recorded in a region during a given historical period are perhaps the best indicator of the linguistic and historical culture of the population that inhabited that region. What does this linguistic evidence tell us about the ethnic origin of the population of today’s Bulgaria in the centuries after Christ?

THE PIZOS SYSTEM

In the year 202 AD an inscription (IGBulg. III, 2 # 1690) was carved at the newly founded Ἐμπόριον (emporion/market) at Pizos (Stara Zagora region) in the heart of Thrace (Tab. Peut. 18, col. 528-540 (Ranilum XXV – Pizo XII – Arzum XIX); ItAnt 136, 6 (Cillis m.p. XXXI – Pizo m.p. XX – Arso m.p. XVIII); Procop. Aed. 4.11.15 /146.12/ (Πίνζος). The inscription represents, along with the Carasura inscription – found 15 km. to the north (see Mac Congail 2008), the most valuable record of Thracian personal names from this period. The Pizos inscription is composed of the following 17 double component ‘Thracian’ names:

1. Αυλου-ζενις
2. Αυλου-πορις
3. Αυλου-τραλ(ε)ος (Gen.)
4. Βειθυ-τραλεος (Gen.)
5. Βραση-τραλις
6. Βρει-ζενις
7. Δαλη-πορεος (Gen.)
8. Δαλη-τραλεος (Gen.)
9. Διας-κενθου
10. Διαςκου-πορις
11. Διαςκου-πορις
12. Δυτου-τραλις
13. Επτη-τραλις
14. Επτη-κενθου
15. Επτη-κενθου
16. Μουκα-τραλις
17. Μουκα-πορις

Comprised of the following elements:

1st Elements:
1. Αυλου-
2. Βειθυ-
3. Βραση-
4. Βρει-
5. Δαλη-
6. Διας-
7. Δυτου-
8. Επτη-
9. Μουκα-
2nd Elements:
1. –ζενις
2. –κενθος
3. –πορις
4. –τραλις

Based on the Pizos inscription – ‘un monument épigraphique unique par la richesse des noms de personnes qu’il comporte’, the Bulgarian linguist Boïadjiev constructed a system of Thracian anthroponomy – ‘The Pizos System’, which proved that a ‘homogenous Thracian population inhabited this region during this period’ (Boïadjiev D. (2000) Les Relations Ethno-Linguistiques en Thrace et en Mesie Pendant L’Époque Romaine. Sofia. P. 145-150). **In fact, this and other ‘Thracian’ inscriptions, which have been presented as evidence of a ‘pure Thracian race’, provide conclusive evidence of the exact opposite.**

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**THE THRACIAN MYTH**

It has long been established that the name elements Μουκα-, Βειθυ-, Διας-, Δαλη-, -πορις–κενθος and –ζενις from the Pizos inscription are well documented Celtic name elements which appear throughout Europe in single element or compound Celtic names. Cf.:

Μουκα- = (Celtic) Mocca, Mocia, Mucci, etc.

The ‘Thracian’ Mouka- (variants muca-, muco-, mouki-, Moci-, etc. See Detschew 1957: 312-320) has long been linked to the Celtic pn’s Mocca, Mocia, Mucci, etc. The element occurs over 400 times in all areas of Thrace from the 3rd c. BC onwards, i.e. it appears in Thrace exactly during the period of Celtic expansion into the region, in both single and double element personal names (see Holder AC 2, 602-605; Mac Congail op. cit. 146-149; Detschew 1957:312; Duridanov 1997).

This Celtic element is recorded in continental Celtic names in Gaul such as Moccasenia (Lyon, Gaul – CIL 13, 1874), Moccia (Beaucaire, Gaul – CIL 12, 2824, and on two inscriptions from Cimez, Gaul – CIL 5, 7936 and 7947), Moccius (Suse, Gaul – CIL 05 07147 and 07835), N. Italy – Mocciolo
and in the second element in the Celtic name *Catomocus* from Apras, Hungary (CIL 3 6480).

In Thrace the element is most commonly found as the first element of double compound names, most frequently in the structures – Μουκα-ζενις – from Kustendil, Nicopolis ad Istrum, Dupnica, Ivailovgrad, Pazardjik (x2), Glava Panega, Plovdiv, Kazanluk and Bela-Zlatina (Detschew 1957: 313); Μουκα-κενθος – Pazardjik (x3), Elchovo, Sliven, Osman Pazar, (Detschew 1957: 314); or, as in the Pizos case – Μουκα-πορις. This element appears 15 times on other inscriptions at the Pizos site and on inscriptions from Kazanluk, Chirpan (x3), Tarnovo, Stara Zagora, Harmanli, Provadia, Pazardjik (loc cit) and twice on the Carasura inscription (line 12/13). In each case the second elements of the compound (–ζενις, –κενθος, and –πορις) are well attested Celtic name elements. Particularly interesting are compound ‘Thracian’ names such as Μουκακενθος Βειθυος (from Pazardjik – Detschew 1957: 314) which is formed exclusively of well documented Celtic name elements (see below).

The Carasura inscription
(see Mac Congail 2008)
Further:

Βειθυ- = (Celtic) Bitu-, Bitu(s), Bitheus etc.

One of the most common ‘Thracian’ anthroponymical name elements, of which over 300 examples have been recorded in Thrace (Detschew 1957:66; Georgiev 1977:68); 370 according to the latest study (Felecan 2010:61). The Thracian element has long been linked to the element bitu(s) - which occurs as a first and second element in Celtic personal names such as Bitu-rix (fig. c), Bitu-daga, Dago-bitus, etc. (Kretschmer 1896: 239; Duridanov 1997: 130-131). Again, it is not recorded in Thrace prior to the Celtic migration into the area in the 3rd c. BC. (Georgiev 1977:68; Duridanov 1997: 131; Mac Congail op. cit. p. 135-137. The element reflects the Celtic – Bitu- ‘World’ – OIr bith ‘world’, OB ‘bit’, MB bet OC bit, MW byt – DGVB:84; GPC: 360-361; LEIA: B 53-54; PECA:14 – Falilieyev 2007).

The element appears in a large number of Celtic names such as Bituitus, a King of the Averni tribe who fought against C. Fabius Maximus in Gaul (Bituitus – Livy (per. LXI. Eutrop. 4, 22 [from which Hieronym. chron. a. Abr. 1891 Vituitus); Βιτύτως als Genetiv bei Poseidonios, Athen. IV 162 d = FHG III 260, Strabon IV 194 - Βιτωίτου, Appian. Celt. 12 - Βιτοίτος); in the Balkan context in 78-76 BC where a Scordisci officer from Thrace also carried the name Bituitus (App. Mith. 16, 3), Bitoitos - a Galatian chieftain in 63 BC (Livy. Per CII, App. Mith. CXI), and in the Celtic names Bitugentus (Dunaujaros, – RIU 05 1220) and Bitumarus (Alsoszentivan, – CIL 6 112) from Hungary. In Dacia the name element is present on a Celtic inscription from Potaissa (Cluj, Romania – CIL, III, 917):

D. M. Aia Nandonis vixit annis LXXX, Andrada Bi[t]uvantis vix. anis LXXX, Bricena vixit anis XL...

(Felecan O. A Diachronic Excursion into the Anthroponymy of Eastern Romania. Philologica Jassyensia”, An VI, Nr. 1 (11), 2010, p. 57–80  P. 69)

In the territory of the Leuci tribe in Gaul, a 2nd-century inscription (fig. C) (CIL XIII, 4661; RG 4828) reads:

Apollini et Sironae Biturix Iulli f(ilius) d(onavit)

= ‘To Apollo and Sirona, Biturix, son of Jullus offered (this altar)’.

The Biturix inscription from Tranqueville-Graux. Musée d’Epinal (Vosges)

Also in insular Celtic names. Cf.:

Bitu[bus] (Catterick, N. Yorkshire – RIB II 2501.107); Bitupr[...] (Chesters, Northumberland – RIB II 2501.105); Bitucus (Cirencester, Gloucestershire – RIB I 108 = Duo Nomina – Fl[au]ius Biticus); Bitudacus (Leicester, dated AD 45-65 – RIB II 2501.108); Bitu[...] (York – RIB II 2494.111).

Further:

Διας- = (Celtic) Dias

A common Celtic element in personal names. Cf. Diastus from Gaul (Aguilée – CIL 05 1169), Diastumarus from Slovania (Trojane – CIL 3 11683), Diassumarus from Hungary (Dunaujvaros – AE 1906 117), Diasulos, etc. (see also Mac Congail 2008:156).

Δαλη- = (Celtic) Dali, Dala, Dalus, etc.

The ‘Thracian’ name Δαλη-/Δαλα- etc. has long been linked to the continental Celtic personal names Dali, Dala, etc. (Holder AC I: 1217; Detschew op cit 114; Mac Congail 2008:144-146).

-πορις = (Continental Celtic) Porios, Porius etc. (Holder ACII: 1037; Mac Congail 2008)

(Insular Celtic) Porius (Mac Congail, loc cit)
Further:

–κενθος = (Celtic) Cintus, Кинтος, etc.

One of the most common ‘Thracian’ name elements (Georgiev 1977: 84). Compare the Celtic names Кинтος, Cintetra, in Thrace (Detschew, 1957:240; Holder ACI 989), Cinturetus in Galatia (Pliny, Natural History, VIII, 64), Cintugenus - from Bordeaux (CIL 13672), Budapest (CIL 03 12014) and Bad Deutsch Altenburg (CIL 3 12014), Cintusmia - Dijon (CIL 13 5484), Cintulus – Austria, Maria Sall (CIL 3 4934), etc.

–ζενις = (Celtic) –genus/-gnos, etc.

A common I.E. element, which also appears as the second element in the ‘Thracian’ compound PN Бреиζενις from the Pizos inscription, this is one of the most common Celtic name elements, found in Celtic PN’s from Gallo-Greek, Gallo-Etruscan, Latin and Ogham inscriptions across Europe from Thrace to Ireland (Lambert 1995: 74, 82, 84, 96, Mac Congail 2008: 153-156). Cf., for example, the Celtic personal name - Brigenus (RIB 2419, 87-88).

Αυλου- = (Celtic) Aulo-, Allo-

The Celtic element is also found in the personal names Aulia, Auliacus etc. (Holder AC1 291-293), from the Celtic allo- ‘other, second’ (OIr, W all-, prefix; GPC: 76; LEIA-31 and 61. D. Greene, Celtic. In J. Gvozdanović, (ed.) Indo-European Numerals (Berlin/New York 1992) 514). Also the first element in Celtic compound names such as Allobroxus, Alloboesius (Falilieyev DCCPN, 2007), Allocnos (Bergame, Italy CIL 5 5171), etc.

In the vast majority of cases the ‘Thracian’ element Aulou- (var. Aulo-, Allos- etc. – See Detschew 12, 135) is found as the first component in compound names where the second element is formed by the aforementioned (Celtic) elements –ξενις (=Αυλουξενις) – from Messambria, Pazardjik, Borisovgrad, on other inscriptions from Pizos, and inscriptions from Burgas, Jambol, Harmanli, Provadia, Glava Panega, Plovdiv, Nova Zagora, Stara Zagora and Kazanluk, or –πορις (=Αυλουπορις) – from Chirpan, Aptaat (Dobritsch), on other inscriptions from Pizos, and inscriptions from Provadia, Harmanli, Madara and Plovdiv (Detschew 1957: 35-36).

Further:
Δυτου- = (Celtic) Dudio (m.), Duta (f.) (Cf. also the Celtic Pn’s – Dudenis, Dutaius – Holder AC I 1364, 1388)

Βραση- = (Celtic) Brasi- (Also in Brasidia, Brasus, Brasenus etc. – Holder AC I, 1534)

Βρει- = (Celtic) Brεi- (RIB 2419 87-88), Bri- (RIB II 2415.15

The ‘Thracian’ element appears most frequently as part of the compound name Βρειζενις/Βριζενις – from Chirpan (x2), Harmalii (x2), Plovdiv and Pazardjik and on two other inscriptions from the Pizos site (Detschew 1957: 88) which corresponds exactly to the Celtic double element name from Britain – Brigenus (RIB 2419, 87-88).

It is also worth noting that in ‘Thracian’ compound names such as Αυλουζενις Βρειζενε(ος) and Βρειζενις Βειθυος from the Pizos site or Μουκαπορις Βρι(ζενεος) from Chirpan (Detschew 1957:88) all of the name components in the quadruple compound names are Celtic elements recorded in inscriptions from Thrace, Dacia, Galatia, Pannonia, Noricum, Italy, Gaul, Britain and Ireland (See also Αυλου-, Βειθυ-, Μουκα-).

Thus, a comparative analysis of the ‘Thracian’ inscription from Pizos reveals a particularly interesting phenomenon:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'THRAZIAN'</th>
<th>CELTIC</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Μουκα-</td>
<td>Muca-, Mocca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Βειθυ-</td>
<td>Bitu-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Διας-</td>
<td>Dias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δαλη-</td>
<td>Dali</td>
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<tr>
<td>-πορις</td>
<td>Porios, Porius</td>
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<td>–κενθος</td>
<td>Cintus</td>
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<tr>
<td>–ζενις</td>
<td>–genus/-gnos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Αυλου-</td>
<td>Aulo-, Allo-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Αυλου-</td>
<td>Aulo-, Allo-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Δυτου</td>
<td>Dudio (m.), Duta (f.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Βραση-</td>
<td>Brasi-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Βρει-</td>
<td>Brεi-</td>
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</table>

*Of the other two elements from the Pizos inscription, Epta- contains the name of a local goddess (Georgiev 1977:60,79), and the final element –τραλις is probably reflected in the Celtic (Irish) tráill – a thrall, time-server – (Dineen: 1240).

Of the personal names from the Pizos inscription, which contain ‘the most common Thracian name elements’ and which ‘proves that a pure Thracian population inhabited this region’ (Boiadjiev op cit), 92% are well documented Celtic name elements, recorded in both insular and continental Celtic, and in classical historical sources.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

It should be noted that over the past century extensive Celtic numismatic and La Tène material has been discovered in sub-Balkan Thrace (i.e. south-central Bulgaria) – on the southern slopes of the Haemus (Balkan) mountains (the so-called ‘Valley of the Thracian Kings’ – see ‘Behind the Golden Mask’ article), in the central Thracian Plain, and along the Valley of the Maritza River (see ‘The Heart of Thrace’ article).

Remains of the Funeral Pyre from the Central Celtic Burial (#10) at Karakochovata Tumulus (Bratya Daskalovi)(after Tonkova et al 2011; see “Heart of Thrace’ article)

The recent publication of results from large-scale excavations in the Stara Zagora region - i.e. the area where Pizos is located - has marked an important step forward in Bulgarian archaeology, and has finally provided us with objective scientific data on the geo-political status quo and ethnic composition in this part of Thrace in the late Iron Age. These extensive excavations, carried out at a number of sites in Central Bulgaria in the last few years, has yielded material that has prompted local archaeologists to finally conclude that at the onset of the Roman period this region was inhabited by a Celtic (Celt-Thracian) population (Tonkova et al 2011 = Трако-римски династичен център в районна Чирпанските възвишения Тонкова М. (ed.) София, 2011).
Celtic Philip II type drachms from Bratya Daskalovi, Stara Zagora region.
(late 1st c. BC)
(after Tonkova et al, op cit)

THE DOMINO EFFECT

The fact that ‘Thracologists’, who have controlled the academic institutions in Bulgaria since the 1970’s, continue to insist that there was never a Celtic presence on the territory of today’s Bulgaria, despite extensive archaeological, historical and numismatic evidence to the contrary, has led to a ‘domino effect’ in other disciplines, including linguistics. The continuing insistence that the area of modern Bulgaria was inhabited by a ‘pure Thracian population’ in the pre-Roman period has meant that linguists in the region have automatically presumed all ‘native’ personal names to be Thracian.

However, it is perfectly clear that studies into the Thracian (/Dacian) language in Bulgaria (and Romania) since the 1950’s have systematically included not only Thracian personal names, but also those of Thracian Celts. The fact that the pool of data used by linguists to draw conclusions on the language of the Thracians has included a large amount of Celtic anthroponymic (and topographic) elements has logically contaminated all such research, thus rendering all conclusions based on this data, including the Indo-European nature of the Thracian language, invalid.


