

The Language of the Thracians, Ivan Duridanov

IV. The Thracian onomastics

D. Names of deities

Bendis (Herodian, Choer., Hesych. and in inscriptions) - a Thracian goddess, identified by the Greeks with Artemis or Hekata. Her name is interpreted as 'binder', 'patroness of the marriage, the family life', from the IE *bhendh- 'to bind, to join', in the Avest. bandayaiti 'to connect', the Old-Ind. bándhana- 'connection', the Goth., Anglo-Saxon bindan, the German binden 'to bind'. The cult of Bendida was also spread in Bythinia, Asia Minor.

The Thracian deity **Sabázios** (Orph., Aristoph., etc.), **Sabádios** (Artem., etc.), venerated also by the Phrygians, was thought to be identical to Dionysus-Bacchus, or more correctly - it was an epithet of Dionysus. The name is derived from the IE *s^uobhodhi-(i)o-s, related to the Old-Bulg. svobodǫ 'free'. This interpretation is further supported by the fact that one of the Greek epithets of Dionysus-Bacchus is Eleutherós (eleutherós = 'free'). Zabazios is thought to be a Thracian name because in it the IE o is a, and di is zi, which is characteristic of the Thracian language.

Another deity common to Thracians and Phrygians was **Semelē**, a goddess of the earth, Dionysus's mother. The name is related to the Phrygian zemelō 'mother-earth', related to the Old-Bulg. zemlja, the Russ. zemlja 'land', the Lith. zeme, the Latv. zeme, etc., and its initial form must have been *zeml'a with epenthetic l, as the Slavic word from the IE *g'h(d)m^la. The inserting of -e- between m and l in the Greek rendering of the name is explained by the lack of the ml combination in Greek.

One of the most popular deities in Thracia and the neighbouring regions was **Zbelthurdos** (variants: Zbelthiurdos, Zbelsurdos, Zbeltiurdos, Zberthurdos, Zberturdus). The name also occurs as a Zeus' epithet. It is a two-component one: Zbel- (Zber-) belongs to the Latv. zibele 'shining', the verb zibelēt 'to flash, to twinkle, to shine'; -thurdos is related to the German stürzen 'to overthrow, to fall', the Old-HighGerman sturzen from the IE *(s)t^rd-i-o-. The name meant 'to hurl thunders, lightnings; thunderer', corresponding to the Greek epithet for Zeus - Zeus keráunios, from the Greek keraunós 'thunder, lightning'.

The epithet **Pyrumērulas** (variants: **Pyrmērulas**, **Pyrymērylas**, **Pirmerulas**), which occurs as an epithet of the Thracian deity of **Heros**, is obviously a two-component word. The first component is linked to the Greek p^urós 'maize, corn' from the IE *p^uro-, compare also to the Lith. pūrai 'winter maize', the Latv. puri 'maize', the Church Slavonic p^oiro 'spelt', etc.; the second component is an extension of the stem of the IE verb *mēr- 'big, great' in Slavic personal names, ending in -mērǫ (Vladimer), the Old-HighGerman -m^ar in names such as Volk-m^ar, Hlodo-m^ar, the Gal. -māros in names as Nerto-māros 'great-in-strength', the Old-Icel. mār 'big'.

The epithet **Germetitha** for Diana (in an inscription from the Pleven district) is a two-component name. The second component is etymologically linked to the Greek *tito* ‘morning, day’, the Alb. *ditë* ‘day’; the first component *Germe-* is compared (not very convincingly) to the place name *Germania* from the basis *germ-* < IE *g^uerm- ‘warm’.

Inscriptions from Aegean Thracia mention “the great god” **Rincaleus** (or **Ringaleus**), whose name may be translated as ‘quick, adroit’ from the IE *urngh-, from the IE verb *urengh-, in the Greek *rhimpha* ‘quickly, skillfully’, the Old-HighGerman (ge)ringi ‘light’, the Middle German (ge)ringi ‘light. quick, quickly preparing’.

One of the most frequent epithets of Asklepius, who is identified with the Thracian god **Heros**, is **Zymydrēnós** (variants: *Zymdrēnós*, *Zymlyzdriēnós*, *Zymydrēnós*, *Zylmyzdrēnós*, etc.). It is a two-component word, which first component is related to the Old-Bulg. *zmĭbia* ‘a snake’ with an epenthetic *l* in *Zyml-*. Recently V. Georgiev proposed a better interpretation - ‘water dragon’: *zyml-* ‘dragon’ and *-udrēnos* ‘water’, from *udr- ‘water’, similar to the Greek *án-ydros* ‘waterless’, *hydrinós* ‘referring to water, water’.