

Title of the Paper:

The Struma Valley Revisited: Cultural Encounters in Roman Times on the Balkans (the Epigraphic Data).

Language of the Paper:

English

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Abstract of the Paper:

The aim of the paper is to demonstrate the cultural and linguistic unity of the population in the Struma Valley in Roman times on the base of the epigraphic monuments. I shall discuss the onomastic and linguistic data as well as the interference of Latin and Greek in this area in antiquity. Inhabited by Thracians, Macedonians, Greeks, and immigrants from Italy, North-western Balkans, and Asia Minor, this region of present-day Bulgaria could illustrate the cultural encounters in the Roman Empire and the blending of the local subcultures with the Greco-Roman cultural achievements.

My intention is by showing and analysing some of the typical epigraphic monuments (some of them newly discovered) to focus on the specific manifestation of the cultural interaction in the area in question: on the one hand, the co-existence of numerous Greek and less Latin inscriptions and Latin words written through Greek letters, and on the other hand, the presence of traditional Macedonian, Thracian, and Asia Minor names. An additional aspect of the ethnocultural situation here is evidence of Romanised ex-solders (not to forget the closeness of Philippi) as well as the specific cursive writing and the style of portraying.