

The Odrysian Kingdom – a Concept of an Interactive Multimedia Application for Educational Purposes

Valeria Fol, Oleg Konstantinov

University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Sofia, Bulgaria
valeriafol@gmail.com, o.konstantinov@unibit.bg

Abstract. The presentation of cultural heritage is difficult comprehensive and constantly updated topic. Researchers often focus more on the different techniques to digitize artifacts of cultural heritage. This work focuses on the overall shape and structure of future multimedia application whose specificity is determined by the topic - Odrysian kingdom. Below is presented a concept for structure and content-based information available for individual kings from Odrysae dynasty. Special attention is paid to the presentation of preserved artifacts associated with the reign of specific rulers. The main concept of multimedia application dedicated to the Odrysian kingdom, it is to be used in teaching programs related to cultural heritage and history of antiquity in universities. The aim of designers is that it can be modified easy for use in museums also.

Keywords: Multimedia Content, Multimedia Application, Interactive Presentation, E-Learning, Cultural Heritage, Thracians, Odrysae, Odrysian Kingdom

1 Cultural Heritage Education - the Role of ICT

Cultural heritage education in most European countries was based for a long time on traditional teaching methods such as face-to-face classroom lessons using mainly printed materials (texts and images), and very seldom watching videos [1]. Strangely enough, such innovativeness has not yet reflected openness to the introduction of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in teaching and learning methods, which has, on the contrary, characterized other disciplines in the last few years [2]. As a matter of fact, no specific reference was directly made in the recommendation, as far as the use of ICT to support and enhance Cultural Heritage Education [3]. As a consequence, nowadays ICT, while being increasingly employed in the field of Cultural Heritage [4] to produce large archives of materials [5], to support scientific research and to foster the maintenance/preservation of Cultural Heritage artifacts [6], has not yet affected the approaches to teaching and learning in Cultural Heritage Education enough.

2 Presentation of Cultural Heritage Artifacts

The graphic information handled by people working in the cultural heritage sector usually is presented using several different approaches – bidimensional images (scanned documents or photographs), video (e.g. documentaries) and 3D virtual models. Cultural heritage sites and artifacts get a significant added value from high-resolution 3D models. These models are increasingly available due to improvements in technology and to higher integration of survey techniques such as laser scanning and photogrammetry [7]. Photogrammetry has been extensively used for obtaining three-dimensional digital models from valuable sites from a set of photographs [8]. However, in general terms, it is worth pointing out that this technique is primarily oriented to solving well-defined shapes (such as cones, cylinders or plane polygons). Complex shapes are preferably acquired using modern laser scanners.

3 The Odrysian Kingdom - Characteristics of the Subject [9]

The name 'Odrisos', 'Odrysos', 'Odreios' and 'Odryios' occurred already as a topographic and ethnic designation in Linear B inscriptions from Knossos on the Island of Crete and from Thebes in mainland Greece, but its meaning has not been clarified. The kingdom of the Odrysaie emerged on the political scene of ancient Europe at the end of the 6th or the beginning of the 5th century BC. From Herodotus onwards, their name was used to denote the Thracians inhabiting the territory along the Tonzos (present-day Tundzha) and Hebros (present-day Maritsa) rivers to the Aegean Sea. Athenian historian Thucydides reports that their kingdom was the biggest and the most powerful one in Europe between the Adriatic and the Black Seas.

Herodotus writes about the Thracians that they would have been unbeatable if they had been united. That observation of his was valid of the entire history of the local state organisations. According to the oral Orphic faith, their ruler was the son of the Great Mother-Goddess and of her son-Sun. Power in the dynastic families was conferred according to the ancient rule of the best among equals reaching the top.

The legendary tradition required a value trial through which the worthiest was to prove his qualities over the rest. Royal power was not passed from father to son. Although that occurred upon ascension to the throne, replacing the practice of electing rulers. The dynastic insignia were given to the person recognised by the others as being the worthiest to wear them. During the age of written history, primacy was often usurped by plotting with allies and aliens, by banishing the incumbent ruler and even by murdering him.

The hierarchy in the political and administrative system of the Odrysian state was not complicated: the king was at the head, followed by his council, which initially consisted of the members of the dynasty. The paradynasts – parallel dynasts, corulers – appeared already in the 5th – 4th century BC. They, too, usually came from his family, ruling over vast territories on behalf of the dynast and not infrequently trying to become independent or to usurp the throne. In later times, representatives of other aristocratic families or of the administrative elite responsible for the labour and mili-

tary conscription also became paradynasts, albeit not so frequently. As Alexander Fol wrote 35 years ago, it is necessary to bear in mind always that the 'terms used reflect the Greek views on the situation to the north of them during the different historical periods. And the titles used by the Greeks for the rulers in the Balkans were extremely confused and inconsistent.'

The state of the Odrysaе was first described by Greek authors on account of the actions of Teres I (\pm 540 – 448 BC). He was not the first dynast, but he was the most powerful and he succeeded in building a large kingdom over most of the lands to the south of the Istros (present-day Danube) River. Teres I had sons, two of whom ruled after him: Sparadokos and Sitalkes. There is indirect evidence that Sparadokos reigned after the death of Teres I and before Sitalkes. The silver coins of that ruler that have survived to this day also support the hypothesis that he was at the head of the state organisation (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Coin of Sparadokos. On the obverse: a horse depicted in slow motion to the right, with right foreleg raised high and inscription SPA/RA/DOKO. On the reverse: an eagle with spread wings and holding a snake in its beak in a rectangular frame. Photo: Nikolai Genov

After about 60 years, and a change of a few rulers Kotys I (383–359 BC) came to the throne at a time when the Greek world was torn by controversies and wars. Kotys I ruled for 24 years. He entered history as a friend of the Athenians, later turning into their most dangerous enemy. By killing Kotys I, the Athenians unwittingly opened even wider the door to Philip II, and he benefited fully. Odryesian Thrace was divided into three parts between Kersebleptes (359-341 BC) – reliably attested as son of Kotys I, Berisades and Amadokos. Kersebleptes sought alliance with and help from the Triballoi, which is evidenced by a gift with his inscription found in the Rogozen silver treasure (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Part of the Rogozen silver treasure that belonged to the dynastic clan of the Triballoi. There are vessels bearing inscriptions in the treasure: to Kotys I, Kersebleptes and Satokos.
Photo: Nikolai Genov

Berisades (359-356 BC) reigned to the west of Maroneia. He died in 356 BC and he was succeeded by his son Ketriporis (356–352/351). Amadokos II (359–? BC) established his kingdom in the lands between the lower courses of the Nestos (present-day Mesta) with the Bistonian Lake and the Hebros (present-day Maritsa). After 351 BC, Teres II (second half of the 4th century BC) appeared in the place of Amadokos II, being probably his son. Seuthes III (\pm 330–302/301 or 297 BC) emerged on the political scene. Seuthes III felt sufficiently secure and enjoying military and political autonomy and he built his capital Seuthopolis in the present-day Kazanlak Plain, at the meander of the Tonzos River (nowadays submerged under the waters of the Koprinka Dam). The region was recently given the name Valley of Thracian Kings on account of the numerous sacral constructions: subterranean tombs, herons and halls for mystical initiation.

4 Structure of the Multimedia Application

We chose the following structure of the multimedia application “The Odrysian kingdom” - after a short animated introduction (musical impression of moving images realized by keyframe animation technique), the user sees a detailed list of all known

kings of Odrissae dynasty. Each name is a link leading to an internal page dedicated to the respective king. There will be given detailed information for the specific ruler - text, combined with the available visual material associated with him and the period of his reign, for example preserved coins, treasures, armor etc. These artifacts will be presented in two ways - as individual images and three-dimensional models also (as far as possible). In the texts for individual rulers we plan to implement internal links that lead to pages with explanatory information about specific famous areas, historical facts or artifacts, which will be separated also in menu section called “visual glossary”. There will be available and internal links between articles of different rulers also. (fig. 3).

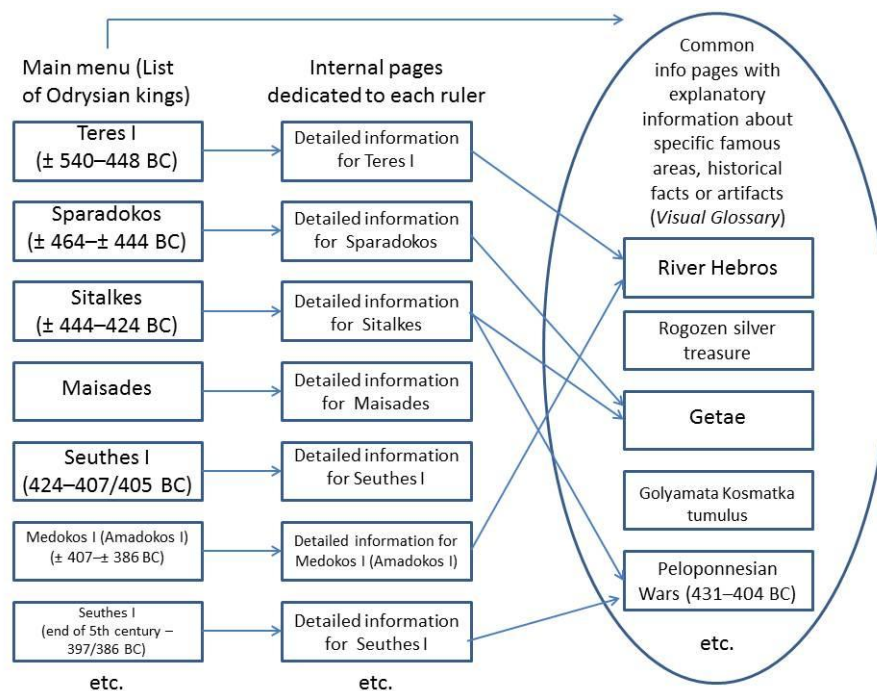


Fig. 3. Internal structure concept of multimedia application

Multimedia application will be created using Action Script and Lua programming languages and produced and disseminated on DVD. So at first multimedia application will be only available for PC users. The final version of the DVD can be used as an additional learning resource in universities in the subjects related to cultural heritage and Thracology. The aim of designers is that it can be modified easy for use in museums also.

5 Conclusions

The presented work describes the concept and content of the multimedia application dedicated to the Odrysian kingdom. Presented are known rulers of the dynasty Odrysae with brief information about each of them. The study of historical facts is the result of many years of work and study of a number of authors and their works.

Acknowledgements

This article presents part of the activities and results of work on research project named “Policies for Cultural Heritage Management - Communication and Socialization through Education”. The project is implemented by a research team at the State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (SULSIT) in Sofia, Bulgaria and is supported by the National Science Fund at the Bulgarian Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS).

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