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# THE THRACIAN SHRINE AT DEMIR BABA TEKE

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## (S u m m a r y)

The remains of three Thracian shrines, were found at the archeological excavations (1983-1989) in the yard of the Teke consisting three separate layers of the ancient cultural strata, dated from the second half of the First millennium BC. The first, the earliest shrine, in the lowest layer, evidenced in the most primitive type of sacrificial altar – clay directly plastered over the earth oval cult fire places in the open air, which existed during the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC. The second shrine, formed by the intermediate layer, is evidenced by remains of the beaten clay building, which belonged to its cult objects: at both ends of the chamber two rectangular, clay days-sacrificial tables; in the middle the Thracian clay omphalos, in two copies, at two successive levels. It existed during the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The third shrine at the highest level, evidenced in the ruins of stone walls, is a Thracian temenos – a walled sacred plot. The temenos lasted for the longest time: the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, according to 5 bronze coins of Odessos (275-250 BC and afterwards) and 2 bronze imitations of coins of Dyrrahion, (dated after 95 BC). Additional studies (1994) during the conservation of the Alianic monument, in the interior of the central chamber (the *Turbe*), established that the two rock massifs in the foundation, which overlap a cult fire-place, are not part of the base rock. These, together with another rock massif at the entrance of the teke, had found themselves on this spot, slid along the steep rocky slope of Kamen rid during the earthquake of approx 250 BC. The calamity appears as a terminus ante quem for the two earlier shrines, and for the temenos the terminus post quem. The appearance of the rock group of the ancient cult site had become an omen for the establishment of the late Thracian shrine. The working of the rock massifs suggests two phases in its existence. The core in this shrine were the twin rocks. These are reason to think, that originally they formed a natural arch. After it was destroyed, they were turned into magnificent rock altars. The third one, the rock massif opposite it, was the sacrificial altar, where sacrificial animals had been slaughtered.

The temenos at Sbornyanovo, with its situation and characteristic elements, represents a rock shrine and is a survival of ancient Thracian megalithic culture.