

Malešovo

Malešovo is a relatively small, hilly region that lies in the eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia along the border with Bulgaria. It occupies the southern area of the sources of the river Bregalnica, where some 15 villages are concentrated around Berovo as administrative centrum. The whole district may have received its name by the mountain Maleš, a large mountain chain that also includes the hilly region of Orgažden and Plačkovica mountain as their branches. Judging by its location and geographical description made by the ancient writers, we may conclude that in the district of Malešovo lived the Paeonian tribe Maedi in Maedica, as their home country.

Pehčevo is a small town in Malešovo, located seven kilometers north of Berovo.



During the Turkish rule of Macedonia Pehčevo was an important place since it came in use as administrative seat for the whole region of Malešovo. Of importance is to note that during antiquity through Pehčevo passed a major road leading to Strymon. Around Pehčevo there are several archaeological places among which, the site called Gradište is of particular importance.

Gradište is an archaeological site from the Roman time that lies about 7 kilometers east of Pehčevo, located on the right side of the river Bregalnica, on an hilly place with a rich source of water. Available facts indicate that on the site of Gradište existed Alexandropolis in Maedica, i.e. Jamphorina that was the capital and main fortress of Maedica.

Paeonian tribes and historical events

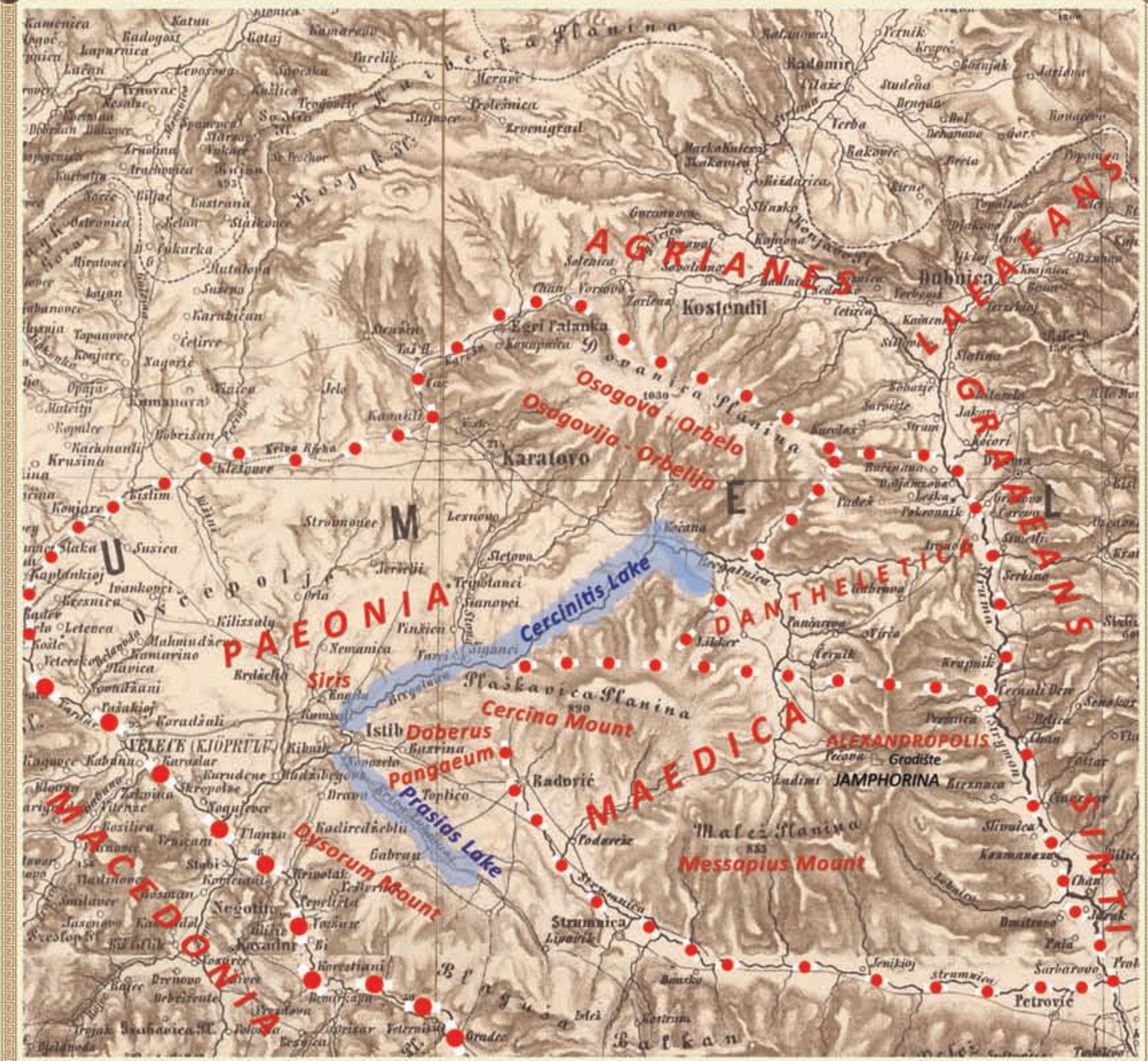
Among the Paeonian tribes are accounted Paeonians, Agrianians, Graeans, Laebeans, Dentaletica and Maedi. Our knowledge about the individual Paeonian tribes and the geographical territories that they occupied in antiquity is quite obscure.

Sitalces passes Cercine Mount

Thucydites tells us that Sitalces, King of Thrace, collected a mighty host for war against Perdiccas, the king of Macedonia. Among all of his Thracian subjects Sitalces also called out the Agrianians, the Laebeans, and the other Paeonian nations who were his subjects. These tribes were the last within his empire; they extended as far as the Graean Paeonians and the river Strymon, which rises in Mount Scombrus and flows through the country of the Graeans and Laebeans; there his dominion ended and the independent Paeonians began. When he had collected his army and his preparations were complete he marched into Macedonia, passing first of all through his own territory, and then through Cercine, a desert mountain which lies between the Sinti and the Paeonians. As he left the Odrysian territory in going through the mountain he had on the right hand the Paeonians and on the left hand the Sinti and Maedi; on quitting the mountain he arrived at Doberus in Paeonia.

Megabazus removes the Paeonians

Herodotus tells us that Megabazus, a highly regarded Persian general under Darius the Great, was given a mission to conquer Thrace in 509 BC and to remove the Paeonians from their country. When the Paeonians heard that the Persians were marching against them, they gathered themselves together, and marched down to the sea-coast of the Lake Cercinitis, since they thought the Persians would endeavour to enter their country on that side, from the Strymon River around Blagoevgrad in direction to Delcevo and Vinica. Here then they stood in readiness to oppose the army of Megabazus. But the Persians, who knew that they had collected, and were gone to keep guard at the pass near the sea, got guides, and taking the inland route before the Paeonians were aware, poured down upon their cities, from which the men had all marched out; and finding them empty, easily got possession of them. Then the men, when they heard that all their towns were taken, scattered this way and that to their homes, and gave themselves up to the Persians. And so these tribes of the Paeonians, to wit, the Siropaeonians, the Paeoplians and all the others as far as Lake Prasias, were torn from their seats and led away into Asia. But those near the Mount Pangaeum and the country of the Doberes and the Agrianians, and the Odomantians, and the Prasiad lake itself were never subdued at all by Megabazus.



Toponyms in Republic of Macedonia

Messapius mount - Maleševska planina

MESSAPIUS, mons Macedoniæ bonasum animal gignens. *Aristotel.*

Dysorum mount - Konečka planina

DYSORUM, Thraciæ mons in Pœonia reg. *Herod.*

Orbelia - Osogovija

ORBELIA, regio Macedoniæ, ab Orbelo monte, qui eam à Moesia dirimit, & cum Hæmo conneßitur, in limite Thraciæ, cuius meminit Plin. l. 4. c. 10. *M. Caropnitze*, teste *Laziō*.

Prasias lake – valley of river Kriva Lakavica

PRASIAS, palus in qua Pœones habitant prope Obelum montem.

Doberus – village Dolneni, Štip

DOBERUS, urbs Pœoniæ. Steph. Ferrario urbs Maced. intra montes; in Pannon. seu Myſiæ confinio, quæ Deborus Ptol. dici videtur.

Cercinitis lake - Plačkovičko ezero, Kočanska kotlina

In antiquity Cercinitis Lake occupied the plain of Kočanska Kotlina, the Valley of Kočani, in the foot of Plačkovička Planina, i.e. Cercine Mountain, as a part of the river Bregalnica from Kočani to Štip. Cercinitis lake was probably drained about 2000 year ago by the Romans at the time when they practiced the method to recover new arable land for growing grain. Arrian in his Anabasis of Alexander tells us that when Alexander started his expedition to Granicus in 334 BC he marched alongside the Lake Cercinitis in direction of Amphipolis and to outlets of the river Strymon. The reason of that must have been the need to assemble his troops in Paeonia, contributed by Illyrians, Paeonians, Agrians and Thracians, and necessity to cross the river Strymon about its sources at Blagoevgrad.

The clip citations: Lexicon Universale by Johann Jacob Hofmann, printed 1698

View of the drainage of Cercinitis Lake at the village of Novo Selo, south of Štip

