

Marianna Koromila

THE GREEKS AND THE BLACK SEA
from the Bronze Age to the early twentieth century



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Front cover: 'ΔΕΞΑΜΕΝΟΣ ΕΠΙΟΙΕ ΧΙΟΣ', 'DEXAMENOS OF CHIOS MADE (IT)'

Gold signet ring with intaglio chalcedony sealstone, 5th c. BC. Found at ancient Pantikapaion (modern Kerch), on the straits of the Cimmerian Bosphoros (Straits of Kerch, at the entrance to the Sea of Azov, Ukraine). Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

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**Antiquities and archaeology
in the Thracian seaboard of the Propontis**
by Louisa Polychronidou-Loukopoulou



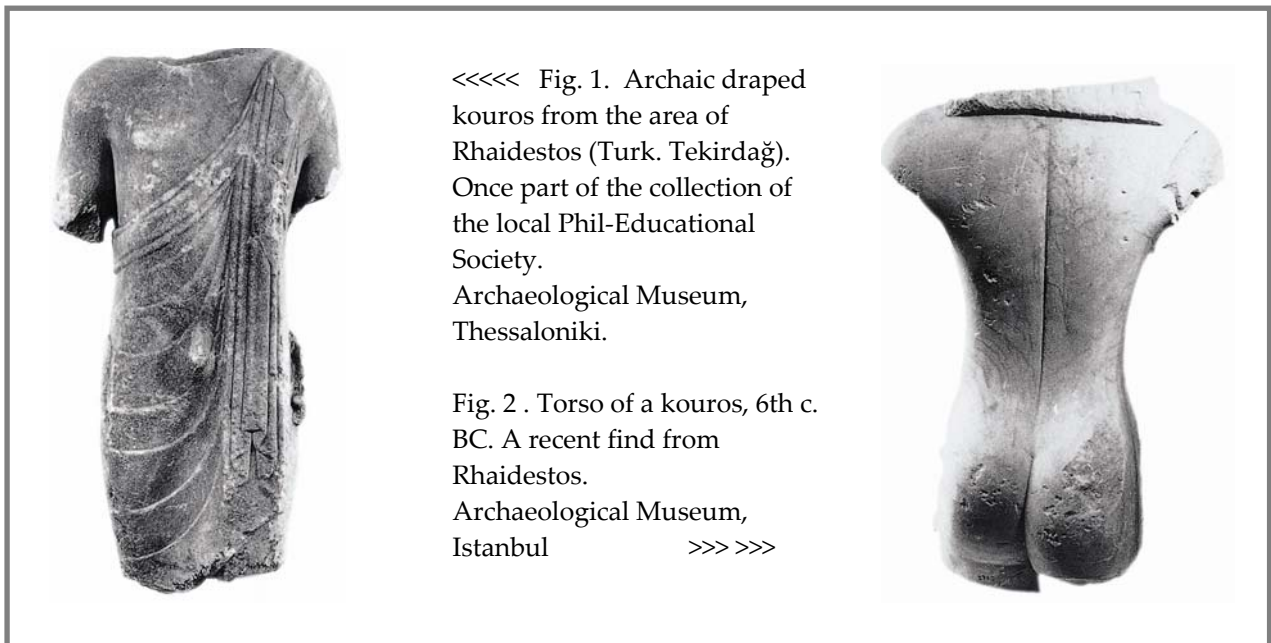
The Thracian shores of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara), one of the most persistent homelands of Hellenism, are *terra incognita* to systematic archaeological investigation. The reason may be sought perhaps in the great historical and strategic importance of the region which has remained unaltered to this day. In contrast to other parts of the Mediterranean basin that have been focal points of history in certain periods but have faded into obscurity in others, the shores of the Propontis, from the Thracian Chersonese to the Bosphoros, have never ceased, since the time of the Trojan War, to claim a pre-eminent position in the history of those peoples who have attempted to extend their influence or impose their ascendancy over the two continents, Europe and Asia, and over the two seas, the Mediterranean and the Euxine (Black Sea). The strategic value of the region was greatly enhanced so long as the Bosphoros lay at the heart of two successive world empires, the Byzantine and, after 1453, the Ottoman. Today, as in the past, the potential for archaeological research is subordinate to political and strategical priorities.

Nonetheless, although the greater part of southeastern Thrace was bathed in the overwhelming radiance and splendour of Constantinople, which thus cast a shadow over its ancient past, and although systematic excavation has not occurred, some noteworthy antiquities have been preserved in the region. The interest of European scholars of Classical Antiquity was aroused at an early stage. First in the field were members of the *Association pour l'encouragement des études grecques en France*, founded in 1867. The numerous papers published by A. Dumont, Th. Homolle, G. Seure, P. Perdrizet, and many others are a measure of their fervour.

Moreover, the history of the antiquities of the Propontis during that period is closely bound up with the activities of Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire and of the educational societies they founded. Established in the capital or at a regional or local level, these societies had as their aims the advancement of education among the Greek peoples of the Empire and the rescue of their national heritage. The extent and significance – historical, social, scientific, but above all ethnic – of this movement, inaugurated in 1861 with the founding of the Hellenic Literary Society of Constantinople, have not yet been fully assessed. Special mention must be made here of the appeal issued by the Society of Constantinople, to which regional and local societies responded.

The appeal called for the gathering and recording of all manner of archaeological remains, for the founding of museums and collections in every town and city, and even for the transcribing of ancient inscriptions. Professional members or correspondents of the Society were also engaged in a variety of scientific activities, in an attempt to establish and maintain international interest in the study of the region's history.

One of the first to answer this appeal for help was the *Thracian Phil-Educational Society of Rhaidestos* (modern Tekirdağ). Founded in 1871, it survived until 1920 despite all the unfavourable circumstances that arose from the historic events which occurred at the turn of the nineteenth and in the first decades of the twentieth century. By encouraging a zealous regard for Antiquity among Greeks of the region, it rapidly succeeded in forming notable collections of archaeological finds from different parts of Eastern Thrace. Another collection of historical material and archaeological treasures was formed about the same time in Selymbria (Turk. Silivri), on the initiative of the wealthy Greek businessman Anastasios K. P. Stamoulis. A passionate delver into history and a dedicated patriot, Stamoulis devoted himself to the subject of Thracian archaeology, collaborating with both Greek and European scholars, with whom he maintained continuous contact. He formed a series of unique collections (antiquities, coins, Byzantine lead seals, etc.), financed archaeological excavations in Selymbria, and compiled a wide-ranging archive of his own devising, in which he meticulously recorded data and information regarding the history of Thrace, extending from prehistoric antiquity into his own day.



<<<<< Fig. 1. Archaic draped kouros from the area of Rhaidestos (Turk. Tekirdağ). Once part of the collection of the local Phil-Educational Society. Archaeological Museum, Thessaloniki.

Fig. 2 . Torso of a kouros, 6th c. BC. A recent find from Rhaidestos. Archaeological Museum, Istanbul >>>>>

This burgeoning activity did not last long. Archaeology itself, as well as the antiquities in southeastern Thrace, fell victim to the political rivalries and open conflicts of the early years of the twentieth century. While campaigns fought in World War I provided an opportunity for members of the French Expeditionary Corps to excavate at Eski Hisarlik (ancient Elaiou) in the Thracian Chersonese (Gallipoli Peninsula) in 1915, the consequences of Greek-Turkish confrontation signalled, among other things, the end of the Greek educational societies, the eclipse of their strenuous scientific endeavours, and the dispersal and plundering of their archaeological collections. A few exceptions are pointers to the profound importance which Greeks attached to their contents.

The antiquities in the possession of the Rhaidestos Society, or at least the greater part of them, were borne away by the Greek refugees as if they had been their household gods and were

handed over to the Museum of Thessaloniki in 1922. [See Fig. 1 (327).] Although most of the ancient objects in the Stamoulis Collection, like the collections belonging to the Constantinople Society, passed into the possession of the Turkish authorities and were dispersed, some of the more valuable treasures in it, together with smaller collections of terracotta figurines, coins, and lead seals, accompanied the family to Greece and were eventually donated to Greek museums. The historical archive compiled by Stamoulis continued to be expanded with the help of his son Miltiadis, until 1957, when it was entrusted to the Academy of Athens.

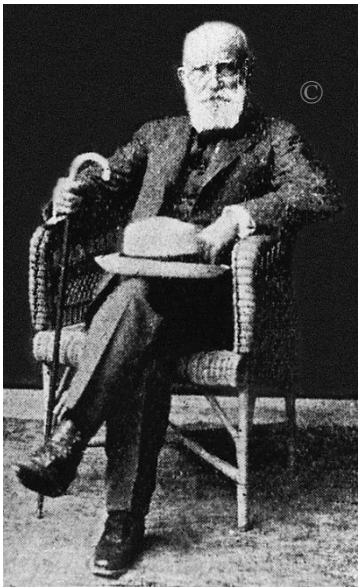


Fig. 3. Selymbria / Silivria (Turk. Silivri): the flour-mills of Anastasios Stamoulis. The photo was taken in 1972, fifty years after the Exodus of the Greeks (1922) and the compulsory Exchange of Populations (1923-24).

<<< Fig. 4. Anastasios K. P. Stamoulis, 1843-1934.

[Figs 1-4 (326-329) are from the archive of the authoress, printed with her permission in the first edition of the book, November 1990, and reprinted in the revised edition.]

A rough calculation suggests that all trace of more than seventy per cent of the material recorded, and in part studied, during the nineteenth century on the most important sites in the Thracian Propontis has been lost. This loss is compensated for, but not of course replaced, by later, for the most part fortuitous, finds brought to light during investigations or studies made by Turkish or

West European archaeologists in the same region during recent decades. Excavations in the historic centre of Constantinople and building works for the new Faculty of Letters at the University of Istanbul have produced a wealth of information about life in the seventh-century BC Megarian colony of Byzantion.

Momentous finds on the outskirts of Rhaidestos (Tekirdağ), in Perinthos-Herakleia (Marmaraereğlisi), and at so far unidentified sites within the coastal zone and in the hinterland, as well as the opening of new museums in Tekirdağ and Çanakkale, may indicate a revival in the field of scientific study of the region. This may be expected to cast fresh light on various aspects of its history and historical geography, to the extent at least that publication progresses and allows easy access to the material by the international scientific community.

Louisa Polychronidou-Loukopoulou
Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity
National Hellenic Research Foundation
November 1990

[Note for the revised edition. Despite the fact that real progress has been made in the study of Thrace by Turkish archaeologists between 1990 and 2000, primarily along the coast of the Propontis, the incredible pace of the construction boom in the region has now raised its head as the greatest enemy. The mushrooming holiday complexes, the urban sprawl and the insensitive carving out of roads across the landscape have ushered in a host of grave transformations. The Thracian environment, physical and historical, has been utterly ravaged.]

**MAJOR COLONIES ON THE HELLESPONT AND THE PROPONTIS (SEA OF MARMARA)
IN THE ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL PERIODS: 700-300 BC**

(Map 9, from Chapter II 'The Propontis or the Sea of Marmara' pp. 53-74)



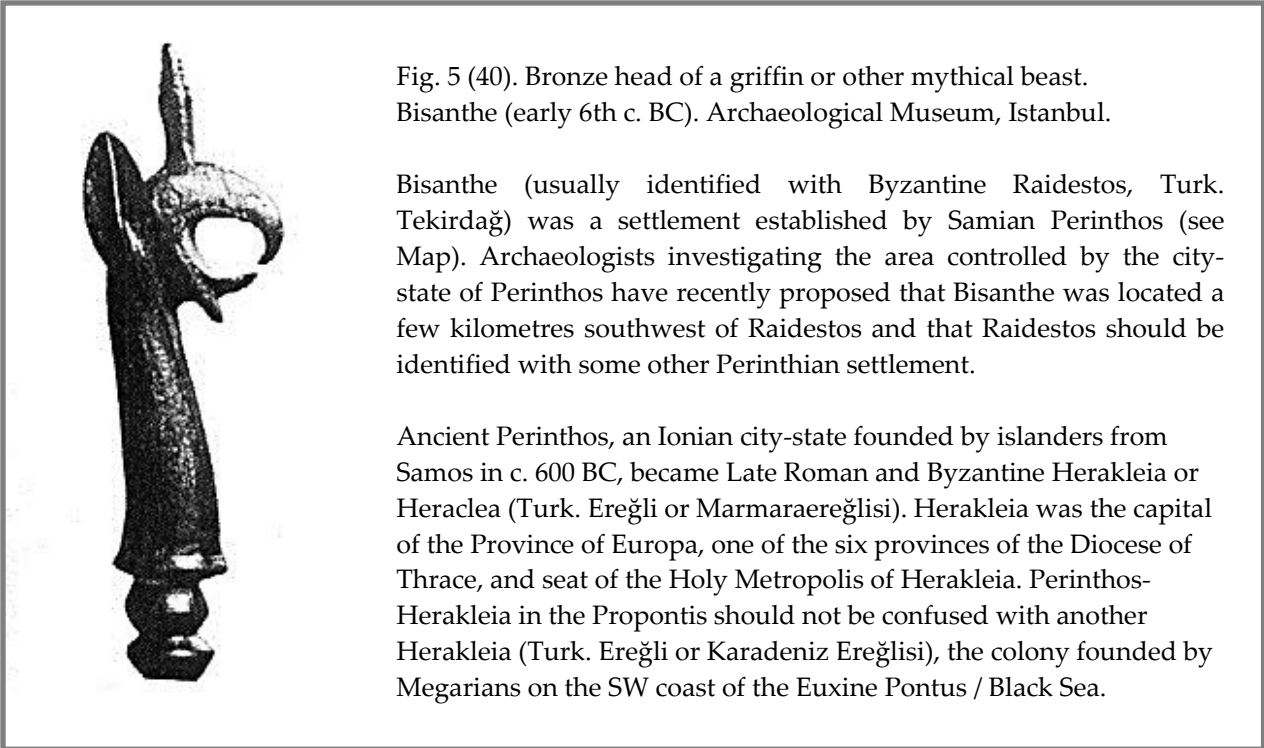


Fig. 5 (40). Bronze head of a griffin or other mythical beast. Bisanthe (early 6th c. BC). Archaeological Museum, Istanbul.

Bisanthe (usually identified with Byzantine Raideustos, Turk. Tekirdağ) was a settlement established by Samian Perinthos (see Map). Archaeologists investigating the area controlled by the city-state of Perinthos have recently proposed that Bisanthe was located a few kilometres southwest of Raideustos and that Raideustos should be identified with some other Perinthian settlement.

Ancient Perinthos, an Ionian city-state founded by islanders from Samos in c. 600 BC, became Late Roman and Byzantine Herakleia or Heraclea (Turk. Ereğli or Marmaraereğlisi). Herakleia was the capital of the Province of Europa, one of the six provinces of the Diocese of Thrace, and seat of the Holy Metropolis of Herakleia. Perinthos-Herakleia in the Propontis should not be confused with another Herakleia (Turk. Ereğli or Karadeniz Ereğlisi), the colony founded by Megarians on the SW coast of the Euxine Pontus / Black Sea.

From the Bibliography (pp. 441-464):

- Louisa D. Loukopoulou, *Contribution à l'histoire de la Thrace propontique durant la période archaïque* (Μελετήματα 9· Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity National Hellenic Research Foundation [K.E.P.A., E.I.E.] Athens 1989).
- S. Casson, M.A., *Macedonia, Thrace and Illyria, Their relations to Greece from the earliest times down to the time of Philip son of Amyntas* (Greenwood Press, Publishers, Westport, Connecticut 1926), Part I pp. 3-283 mainly Chapter V «The Thracian Chersonese» pp. 210-228.
- John Boardman, *The Greeks Overseas...* (1980), Chapter VI pp. 238-266· bibliography pp. 280-282.
- B. Isaac, *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest*, in «Studies of the Dutch Archaeological and Historical Society», t. X, ed. B. H. Isaac / J.G.P. Best (E. J. Brill, Leiden 1986), Chapter IV «The Thracian Chersonese and the Propontis» pp. 159-214· Chapter V «Byzantion and the Black Sea» pp. 215-237.



Fig. 6. Amazon painted on an Attic vase of 470-460 BC (fragment).

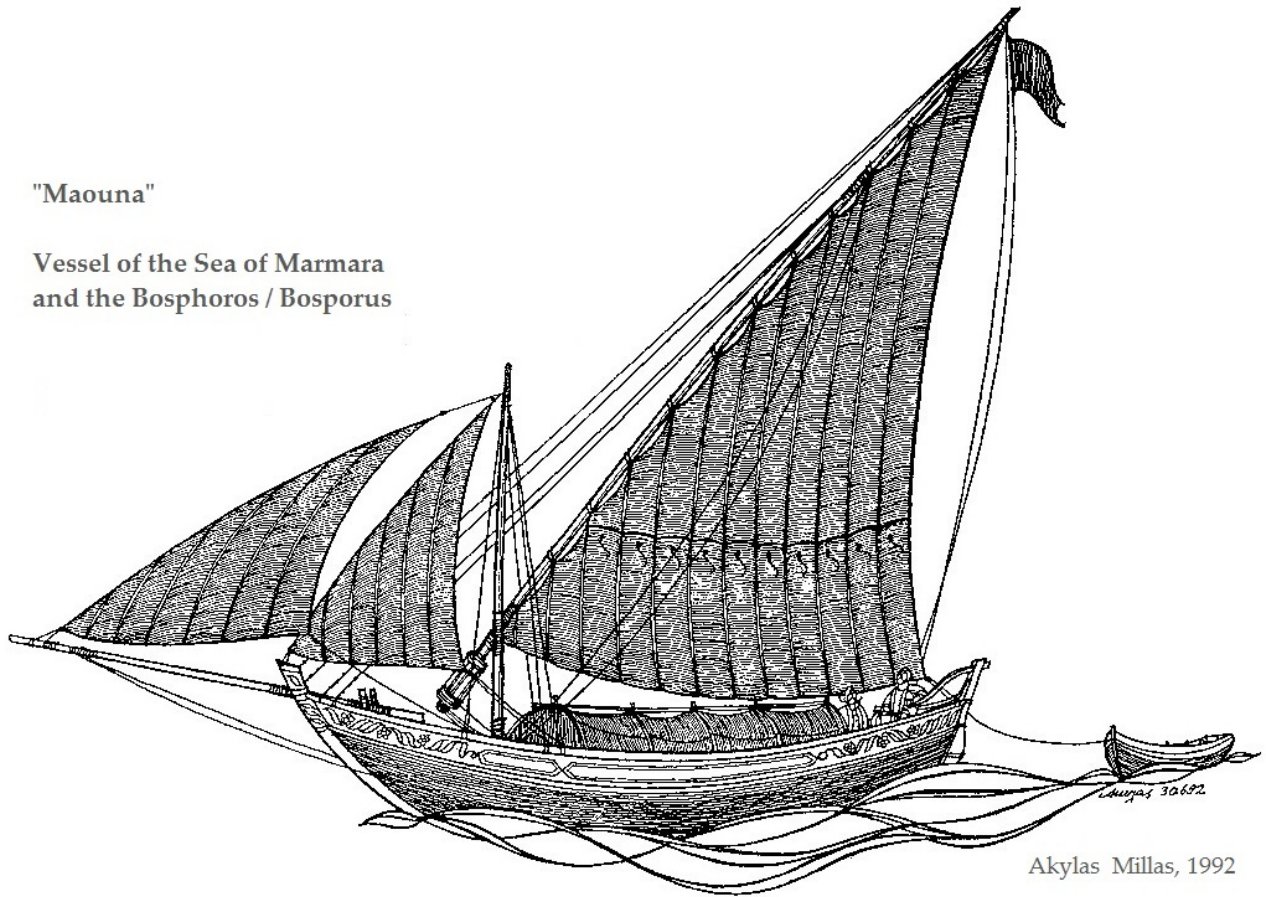
It was found during the French excavations in the Necropolis of ancient Elaiou in the southernmost part of the Gallipolis Peninsula together with another 1,500 items, most of them pieces of art (offerings etc.) dating to the Archaic and Classical periods.

By navigating at Geography / Places >>> European Turkey you will find more information about recent excavations (1995-2014) not only along the coastal zone of the Aegean, the Dardanelles and the Sea of Marmara (like Enez, Eceabat, Marmaraereğlisi etc.) but also in the Thracian hinterland. Through our photos and other Accompanying Material you will be able to ‘visit’ the local Archaeological Museums such as the Tekirdağ, the Edirne and the Kırklareli Museums. Every place and every subject is accompanied by bibliography.

The Panorama’s Cultural Society Archives (APAN)

"Maouna"

**Vessel of the Sea of Marmara
and the Bosphoros / Bosporus**



Akylas Millas, 1992