

AEGEAN THRACE FROM GREEK COLONISATION TO THE END OF THE ROMAN PERIOD*

For the ancient Greek colonist heading north in order to settle and exploit its endless resources, Aegean Thrace offered a series of attractive advantages¹: fertile plains that could sustain both an abundance of agricultural products – such as wheat and vines – and extensive animal husbandry – most famously, horses; a coastal littoral dotted with estuaries and lagoons, suitable for fishing and also possibly for salt production²; an easily recognisable land communication network, centring upon a main east-west axis – already in use at the time of Xerxes' invasion to Greece, though better known under its Roman name as the Via Egnatia – but also radiating to the north, through river and mountain passes³; few but adequate natural harbours, offering direct access to the southern Aegean world and to the colonists' homelands⁴; proximity to areas of important strategic and economic importance, such as the Pangaion and Lekani Mountains or the Strymon valley to the west, the Thracian Chersonese to the east⁵; and, last but not least, thanks to the Rhodope and Zonaia Mountains, some level of protection against cold northern winds and, most importantly, against the various barbarian tribes dwelling in the hinterland⁶. It was all these advantages that made ancient Greek colonists willing to face and tackle the region's two serious disadvantages: the unpredictable and sometimes even hostile attitude of the indigenous population and the unhealthy, potentially hazardous conditions as a result of the region's extensive marshes⁷.

In this area (**fig. 1**), defined by the lower courses of the Nestos and Evros rivers, two major plains may be distinguished: the western one – known today as the plain of Xanthi and Komotini – and the eastern one – known today as the plain of Alexandroupolis. The first extends from the Nestos to the western slopes of the Ismaros Mountain, and the second from the eastern slopes of the Ismaros Mountain to the Evros. The Ismaros (highest peak: 700m) forms at its southern end the Σέρρειον ἄκρωτήριον, also known as ἄκρα Μαρωνείας, a promontory renowned in Antiquity for those sailing along the north Aegean coast⁸. The isolation and protection offered by the Rhodope Mountains in the western plain, compared to the only limited protection offered by the Zonaia Mountains at the western extremity of the eastern plain, explain both the choices of the first Greek colonists who settled in the area and the early development of their foundations.

ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL PERIODS

At the two extremities of the western plain – that is, the plain of Xanthi and Komotini –, the Greeks founded two colonies that came to rank among the most powerful of Archaic and Classical Thrace: Abdera and Maroneia. In this same plain lay Dikaia – whose territory was later absorbed by its more powerful neighbours – and Stryme, this being the easternmost *emporion* of the Thasian *peraia* and the only one, it seems, to the east of the Nestos estuary. In the eastern plain – that is, the plain of Alexandroupolis – until the Hellenistic period, Greek presence seems to have confined itself to the settlements of the Samothracian *peraia*, squeezed in the area to the south of the Zonaia Mountains. In the context of Xerxes' expeditions to Scythia and Greece, a fort was also constructed on the western bank of the Evros river, known under the name of Doriskos. The next most important colony, Ainos, lay to the east of the estuary of the Evros, well protected on all sides by both river and sea⁹.

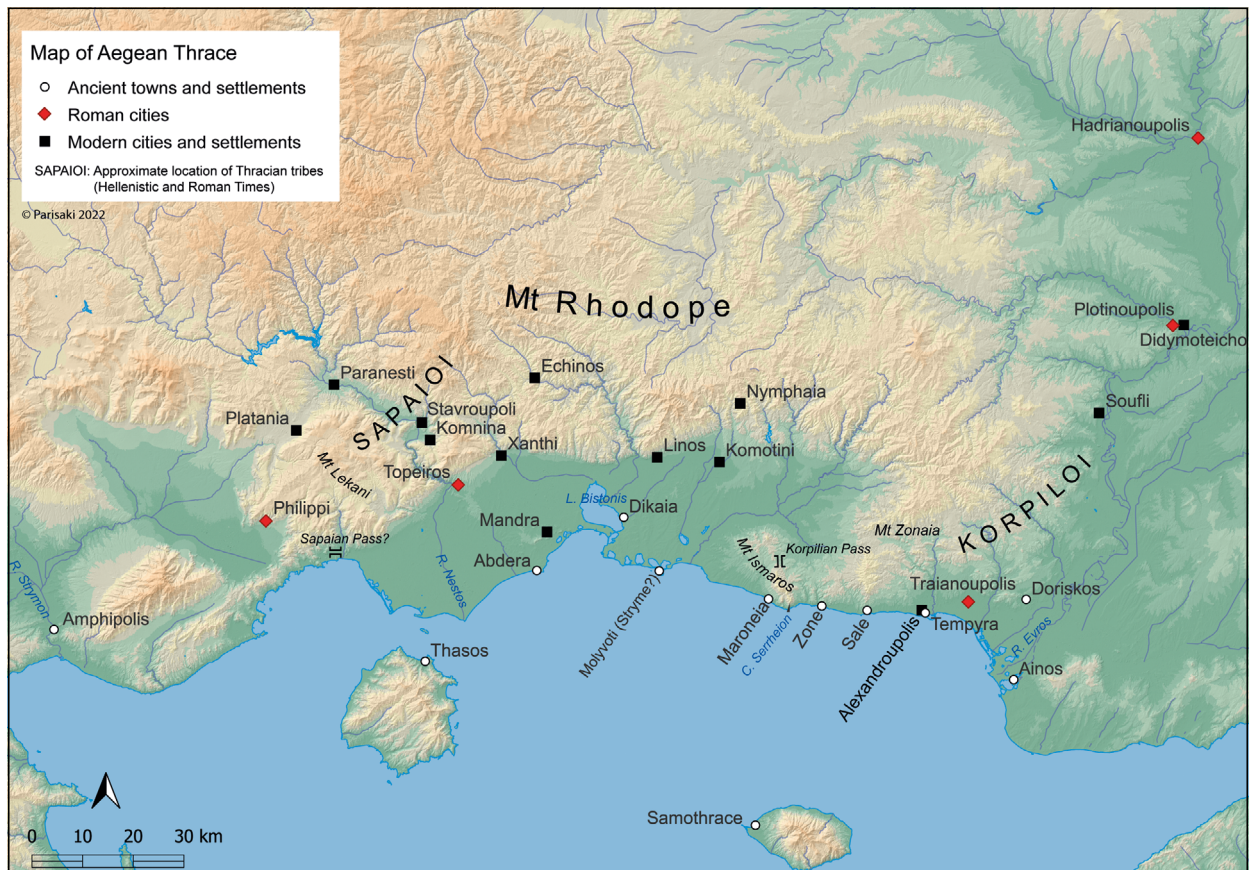


Fig. 1 Map of Aegean Thrace. – (Map V. Antoniadis / M.-G. Parissaki. Sources: European Space Agency, Sinergise [2021]. Copernicus Global Digital Elevation Model. Distributed by OpenTopography. DOI: 10.5069/G9028PQB; © OpenStreetMap contributors).

The history of the archaeological research at Abdera has been told many times, therefore only the basic points will be repeated here. The site was first described by Salomon Reinach in 1881, identified by W. Regel in 1887 and systematically excavated by Dimitrios Lazaridis during the 1950s and 1960s; Lazaridis brought to light the so-called southern peribolos, that is the city of the Hellenistic and Roman periods¹⁰. Further archaeological excavation, just to the north of Lazaridis' excavations, unearthed a second peribolos, accordingly named »northern peribolos«, of which two building phases have been recognised: phase A, dating to the third quarter of the 7th century BC and, thus, corresponding to the colony of the Clazomenians, and phase B, dating to the late 6th century BC and linked to the Teians¹¹. Thus, Herodotus' account of Abdera's double foundation was illuminated in the most interesting way¹². An Archaic necropolis excavated and published a few years later by Eudokia Skarlatidou, just outside the NW corner of this »northern peribolos«, further contributed to the knowledge of the colony's early history¹³. According to the excavator, the necropolis comprised 282 burials – mostly jar burials, but also a few pit graves and one cist grave –, of which 81.2 % belonged to infants and few children; their dates covered a period of approximately seventy to eighty years, from the middle of the 7th century to the end of the first quarter of the 6th century BC. Thus, albeit severely weakened and »probably with the help and support of its metropolis, which must have had some special interest in consolidating this colony on the Thracian coast«¹⁴, the first generations of colonists somehow managed to withstand both Thracian attacks and malaria. With the arrival of the Teian colonists, a cemetery of tumuli seems to have been introduced, gradually expanding to the north of the »northern peribolos« (in an estimated area of 1200 ha) and continuing in use until the beginning of the 3rd century BC¹⁵. Further geomorphological analysis revealed that the first colonists built their city on the western shore of a penin-

sula that offered shelter for ships on either side¹⁶. As for the city's *chora*, knowledge of its formation and development greatly increased thanks to the compilation by Dina Kallintzi of a thorough and careful inventory of all the archaeological sites spotted by the local Ephorate of Antiquities. At its fullest extent, this *chora* stretched from the estuary of the Nestos to the western shore of lake Bistonis and from the Aegean shore to the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains; it seems, moreover, to have been formed quite early, since the stones used to build the city's first enclosure but also some of its older monuments within, originated from the quarry of Mandra¹⁷. The publication of Abdera's epigraphic *corpus* in 2005 and of its numismatic one in 2007 shed additional light on the city's early prosperity and its international relations. The presence of Abderitan silver coins of the late 6th and the 5th centuries BC in hoards in the East and Egypt – such as those of Persepolis, Elmalı, Damanhour or Asyut – offer a clear illustration of this relationship¹⁸.

Contrary to our expectations until now, Maroneia's early history seems much less obvious. The city was founded at some point before the middle of the 7th century BC by Chian colonists, as indicated by Pseudo-Scymnos (676-678). Its mint seems to have started operating at approximately the same time as that of Abdera; that is 520-510/505 BC, according to prevailing chronologies. Until the beginning of the 4th century BC, though, this coinage seems to have had only a local distribution¹⁹. In 454 BC, the city contributed three talents to the First Athenian League, compared to the fifteen given by Abdera during the decades 452/451-433/432 BC. Thus, Maroneia does not seem to have been a serious competitor for the commercial success of Abdera or neighbouring Thasos during the Archaic and Classical periods. The city's early urban development also remains unknown, despite the efforts of archaeologists to identify Archaic and Classical strata. It is this paucity of available data that led to the view that the first colony of Maroneia was initially founded on the peninsula of Molyvoti, only to be relocated to the site of Hagios Charalambos, where Maroneia of the Hellenistic and Roman period was located, in the middle of the 4th century BC²⁰.

As noted above, the landscape of Archaic and Classical Aegean Thrace to the west of the Ismaros Mountain included also Dikaia and Stryme. At Dikaia – first identified by G. Bakalakis as the remains on the hill of Katsamakia, on the eastern shore of Lake Bistonis, and briefly excavated by Diamantis Triantaphyllos in 1971 and 1972 – no systematic research has been undertaken in recent years²¹. However, recent research at the ancient site on the northern part of the Molyvoti peninsula offers a clear illustration of how knowledge is being accumulated gradually. Since 2013, the site has been the subject of a recommenced archaeological expedition, conducted by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Rhodope and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens (represented by Princeton University), focusing on both the *asty* and its *chora*. One of the project's major aims is to settle precisely the question of the site's identification. The first systematic excavations, carried out by George Bakalakis in 1957-1959, brought to light remains from the 5th and first half of the 4th century BC, which led the first excavator to suggest an identification as ancient Stryme. According to Bakalakis, the site flourished during the Classical period, but was destroyed by Philip II and definitively abandoned in the middle of the 4th century BC²². In 2008, Louisa Loukopoulou and Selene Psoma put forward another proposal; combining both the evidence of ancient authors and, especially, the considerable number of Maronitan coins unearthed at the site, they suggested its identification as Maroneia of the Archaic and Classical periods. According to this view, Maroneia was relocated to the site of Hagios Charalambos only after the destruction of the site of Molyvoti under Philip II²³. The ongoing project has not yet answered the question of the site's identification in a decisive manner²⁴ but it has brought to light new evidence that led to a revision of the city's chronology and has posed new perspectives for the site's development and activities. Excavations have been gradually revealing a relatively large coastal site: 46 ha according to recent estimations, though probably even larger. According to the available (archaeological) evidence, it was settled during the 6th century BC, flourished during the 4th century BC, destroyed in 350-340 BC – and this destruction could indeed be associated with Philip II – and then, briefly reoccupied. Activity on the site seems

to have continued up to the first half of the 3rd century BC. Architectural remains and various finds (e. g., coins) indicate, moreover, that activity resumed during the Late Roman period (4th-6th century AD)²⁵. The settlement of the Classical and Hellenistic periods was heavily involved in trade, as indicated by the significant amount of amphora sherds or by fine ware sherds, which, according to the excavators, were imported mostly from Athens²⁶. The presence of harbour facilities on the southern side of the peninsula was revealed by satellite photography.

The settlements of the Samothracian *peraia*, lying to the east of the Ismaros Mountain, have also been the subject of detailed analysis in recent years; once again, only the most important points will be repeated here, with an emphasis on more recent developments. To the east of the Ismaros, ancient authors name six settlements, though not in existence simultaneously and not always with the same status²⁷. Nowadays, the view prevails that the settlements mentioned by earlier authors lay in the narrow coastal strip to the south of the Zonaia Mountains that extends from the eastern slopes of the Ismaros Mountain to the promontory of Marki; these were, from west to east, Drys, Mesambria, Zone and Sale. Settlements mentioned from the Hellenistic period onwards seem to have been located further to the east; these include Sale and, further east, Tempyra and Charakoma. After years of analyses and field observations, only one settlement seems to have been securely identified; and that is Zone, identified as the archaeological site excavated at Shapli Dere. Two more sites have been identified with a fair degree of certainty: Sale, with the archaeological site of Makri, and Tempyra, with modern Alexandroupolis²⁸. Despite various suggestions, the locations of Drys, Mesambria and Charakoma still evade archaeologists²⁹.

As indeed indicated by various literary references, the settlement at Shapli Dere seems to have spanned the longest period, from the end of the 6th century BC to the Roman period. The excavations there have revealed a walled settlement, a sanctuary devoted to the cult of Apollo and Artemis and an impressive deposit of ostraca, many of which bear inscriptions in a native, non-Greek language³⁰. Zone's importance is further emphasised by the fact that it is the only settlement of the Samothracian *peraia* to have minted its own coinage during the 4th century BC³¹. Excavations at the site of modern Makri brought to light a settlement that existed from the Prehistoric period to the Byzantine period; remains corresponding to the historical period, though, seem less impressive. Despite some reservations, identification as Sale remains generally accepted, since it corresponds well with the distances indicated by Roman itineraries³². An important contribution of modern archaeological research in the area rests in the identification of a series of forts that seem to have defined the Samothracian *peraia* on its north-western side. Six forts have been reported thus far; their precise date and purpose, though, remain for the time being undetermined³³.

The last important site of the Archaic and Classical period before the Evros crossing seems to have been the fort of Doriskos, built by the Persians but still in use during the 4th century BC, as indicated by Demosthenes' references to it. Its identification as the archaeological site of Saraya remains the only proposal for the time being³⁴.

Two issues pertaining to the region's character and development during the Archaic and Classical periods have attracted the interest of both archaeologists and historians: the relationships between Greek newcomers and the indigenous population and the commercial network that soon contributed to the region's prosperity. Relations with the local, indigenous population during this first period of Greek establishment seem to have varied from case to case³⁵. Fierce battles are reported during Abdera's foundation; and the study of Abdera's onomastic material seems to indicate that personal names of Thracian origin emerge in the city's epigraphy only from the Late Hellenistic period onwards³⁶. The same holds true for Maroneia; but πρόσσοικοι βάρβαροι are mentioned in relation to the conflict between Maroneia and Thasos over the control of Stryme in 361/360 BC³⁷. The excavations at the site of Zone seem to reflect a different reality; the inscribed ostraca mentioned above seem to indicate a close and peaceful co-existence.

Be that as it may, all cities seem to have developed a close relationship with the Thracian hinterland as soon as possible. This is exemplified by the rich monetary production of late Archaic and Classical Abdera, which seems to indicate access to silver mines³⁸. However, the substantial wealth to be gained by commerce with the Thracian hinterland added one great difficulty for the cities established in the region and that was rivalry between them and also with outside forces interested in the region's commercial potential. From brief references in literary sources, we can perceive a strong Thasian interest in the area; this seems to be indicated e. g., by the foundation of Stryme and by the toponym *Θασίων κεφαλαί* reported by Strabo in the vicinity of Maroneia³⁹. Fierce commercial competition must also lie behind the gradual loss of Abdera's prosperity and the emergence of Maroneia. From this perspective, the information that Maroneia may have played a part in the attack of the Triballoi against Abdera in 376/375 BC seems quite convincing⁴⁰. However, the most important find of recent decades for illuminating Greco-Thracian commercial relations has been the Pistiros inscription, found at a site in the upper Evros plain, for it revealed the diplomatic and legal framework that accompanied Greek commercial activity in the Thracian hinterland. The text dates to some point before the middle of the 4th century BC and mentions three Greek cities – Maroneia, Apollonia (perhaps Pontica?) and Thasos – and also their *emporía*⁴¹. The site excavated at Koprivlen, moreover, in the Nestos valley just to the north of the modern Greek-Bulgarian frontier, has been tentatively interpreted as one such *emporion*. We could also attribute pre-Roman finds in the region of Didymoteicho to an *emporion* lying along the land and river route of the Evros⁴². The discovery of the Pistiros inscription also raised the question of what goods were involved. Maroneia's wine and luxury goods from the Greek world could have been transported from the shores to the hinterland in exchange for precious metals. Another indication of the links that Maroneia developed with the Odrysian kingdom is offered by the iconography of Odrysian coinage, which often shows parallels with Maroneia's mint⁴³.

MACEDONIAN EXPANSION AND CONTROL

The prevailing view in modern bibliography is that Philip's II expansion into Thrace – triggered in 357 BC by the seizure of Amphipolis and completed by 342/341 BC – had a profound impact both on the urban development of the cities of Aegean Thrace and on their hinterland. By the middle of the 4th century BC, the relocation of Abdera from the area of the »northern peribolos« to the »southern peribolos« mentioned above had become an inescapable necessity due to the flooding and silting of the Nestos river. The date of construction of this »southern peribolos«, at some point during the 4th century BC, and the use of a uniform building technique for a total circumference of approximately 5 km, indicate a single architectural project, one the city would not have been able to support just a few decades after the disastrous Triballian attack of 376/375 BC. Thus, Macedonian initiative and support seem very likely⁴⁴. The city's acropolis – located on the hill at the south-western end of the promontory and known today under its Byzantine name of Polystylon – was also protected by a wall of the same date and construction. Two ports on either side of the – by now partly shortened – promontory continued to offer shelter to ships. Within the city's new enclosure, houses and workshops were built following the Hippodamian system⁴⁵. This new southern enclosure seems to have remained in use until the end of antiquity⁴⁶.

If Bakalakis' view that the site on the Peninsula of Molyvoti was definitely abandoned in the middle of the 4th century BC has become untenable in the face of recent archaeological data⁴⁷, the belief that the city of Maroneia acquired its monumental character at some point during the 4th century BC still holds true⁴⁸. The foundation of the inadequately known and short-lived city of Orthagoreia has also been connected to Macedonian activity in the area⁴⁹. Its existence is securely attested by two literary references in Pliny and Strabo

and by its silver and bronze coinage, dated to the second half of the 4th century BC⁵⁰. Its identification, though, still remains uncertain; Gaebler located it at Makri, Lazaridis and Chryssanthaki-Nagle at Gatos and Psoma in the *chora* of Hellenistic and Roman Maroneia⁵¹. Macedonian expansion in Aegean Thrace seems to have also affected the region to the east of the Ismaros Mountain and the Evros plain as well. An early 3rd century BC honorary decree from Samothrace mentions the sacred land (ἱερὰ χώρα) on the mainland, granted to the Samothracians by Philip III and Alexander IV and restored to them by Lysimachos. Describing events of the early 2nd century BC, Livy mentions Sale, the former easternmost settlement of their *peraia*, as a *vicus* of Maroneia; by the 1st century BC - 1st century AD, Strabo mentions only Tempyra (by modern Alexandroupolis) and Characoma⁵².

However, Macedonian expansion in Aegean Thrace also had a profound impact in areas that lay outside the limits of the old Greek colonies. In the 1970s, the former Ephor of Antiquities Diamantis Triantaphyllos located a series of forts along the Stavroupoli-Paranesti pass which links the plain of Xanthi to that of Philippi, by-passing Lekani Mountain from the north; among them, only the fort of Kalyva has been excavated⁵³. The construction of these forts clearly shows the desire to effectively control a pass that not only offered an alternative connection between Macedonia and southern Thrace, but also secured the protection of the main land communication axis that run south of the Rhodopes (the later Via Egnatia). In Komnina, which was also located by the Stavroupoli pass, a Macedonian tomb was located and excavated. Another Macedonian tomb was excavated at Symbola, north of modern Komotini. A destruction layer at the site of Linos – a sanctuary and fort of the Classical period located 13 km to the NW of Komotini, in the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains – has been dated to the middle of the 4th century BC by the excavator and associated with Macedonian expansion in the area⁵⁴.

The troubled period that followed the death of Lysimachos in 281 BC, the establishment of the Kingdom of Tylis in Thrace and its impact on the settlements of south-western Thrace is still inadequately known⁵⁵. Some Gaulish presence may have been felt in the region: a decree of Abdera reveals the city's participation in the *Soteria* of Delphi and the *diateichisma* of Zone has been connected to the fear of a possible attack⁵⁶. At the same time, the region became involved in the long and bitter struggles by the Hellenistic kingdoms for its control⁵⁷.

ROMAN EXPANSION TO THRACE

A few, but crucial, literary references and some important inscriptions illustrate the enormous tensions exerted on the cities of Aegean Thrace in the last years of the Macedonian kingdom. Despite the existence of pro-Roman parties at both Abdera and Maroneia, the two cities remained under the sway of the last Macedonian kings, if only as a result of proximity⁵⁸. The attack by the Roman general Hortensius against Abdera in 170 BC and the Senate's decision to qualify this attack as a *bellum iniustum*, the petition of king Eumenes II of Pergamon to incorporate Maroneia and Ainos into his kingdom and the claims raised by king Cotys for a part of Abdera's *chora* after the battle of Pydna are just some of the events of this troubled period⁵⁹. Finally, at the Conference of Amphipolis, Abdera, Maroneia and Ainos, along with Thasos and Samothrace, were declared *civitates liberae*; a treaty of alliance was also signed between Rome and Maroneia and similar texts may have also existed for Abdera and Ainos⁶⁰.

The cities were quick to acknowledge that this was the best possible arrangement for them. Thus, from the second half of the 2nd century BC onwards, Roman *negotiatores* became actively involved in the region's economic life; first at Abdera, as it seems, and then, soon after, at Maroneia⁶¹. During the troubled times of the Mithridatic wars, both Abdera and Maroneia remained loyal to Rome, despite the severe pressure on

them. The presence of Romans in their cities may have played a part in this decision. An important decree of Maroneia, unearthed at Samothrace and published by Kevin Clinton, offers an interesting reflection of this co-existence and of the impact of these events on the city⁶². By that time, Abdera and Maroneia may have been the only important cities between the estuaries of the Nestos and the Evros.

For Rome, though, the region's important asset lay in the area behind the old Greek colonies of the shore; and that asset was basically the strip of land between the cities' northern limits and the southern slopes of the Rhodope Mountains; the strip of land where the old east-west road axis linking Macedonia with Asia Minor was actually located. By 167 BC Rome was well acquainted with this road's strategic importance and this explains the decision taken by the Senate to include this zone in Macedonia's first *meris* and then, after the formation of the Roman province of Macedonia, under the jurisdiction of its governor⁶³. Construction of the Via Egnatia followed just a few years later⁶⁴. The actual course of the road on the ground east of the Nestos remains, unfortunately, inadequately identified. Its *mutationes* and *mansiones* are known only from Late Roman *itineraria*. A second construction phase at the fort of Kalyva can be connected to this renewed interest in the region's land communication⁶⁵.

By the middle of the 1st century BC, the region's strategic importance had changed considerably. The pacification of Asia has been secured; the suppression of piracy had opened sea routes for both Roman armies and merchants, and above all, the process of establishing a network of client tribes in inland Thrace, albeit slow and not always reliable, had developed. By the time of the battle of Philippi in 42 BC control of the Via Egnatia to the east of the Nestos and of the territories to the north of the old Greek poleis was handed over to Rome's allied tribes: the Sapaioi and the Astai⁶⁶. A new era of Greco-Thracian relations was beginning. Abdera, the mint of which did not operate during this period, used to a large extent the coins of the Thracian king Rhoimetalkes I⁶⁷. Greek cities set up honorary inscriptions for the Thracian kings; inscriptions in Greek also appear in the region behind the territory of Greek city-states; they refer either to client-kings or to their *strategoí*⁶⁸.

AEGEAN THRACE IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF THRACE

At about AD 46, the assassination of Rhoimetalkes III signalled the end of the client kingdom of Thrace; after two centuries of indirect, though still decisive Roman involvement, Claudius turned Thrace into a Roman province.

In practice and at first, in Thrace as elsewhere, this may have meant nothing more than the replacement of the Thracian king by a Roman governor. No important change seems to have occurred in the region, and this applies to both the status of the old Greek coastal cities as well as to that of the inland *strategiae*. A decree passed by Maroneia just a few years after the creation of the province of Thrace and designated in the text as the »eternal decree« preserves the measures taken by the city to secure its privileged status under this new reality. The insertion in the decree of »the Romans residing in the city« after the city's authorities (*bouleutes* and *archontes*) but before the citizen body, clearly illustrates the importance of this community in Maroneia's life and its relationship with Roman administration⁶⁹. As for inland Thrace and the maintenance of *strategiae*, no text illustrates better the transition from client-kingdom to Roman province than the so-called Topeiros inscription⁷⁰. Set up in honour of the governor M. Vettius Marcellus by 33 *strategoí* of Thrace, the text provides a wealth of information on the prosopography and onomasticon of the upper Thracian elite during this period, attesting to both the maintenance of its role and to the spread of Roman citizenship among its members.

Of subsequent emperors, only Nero and Vespasian seem to have had a tangible effect on Aegean Thrace. The so-called Via Diagonalis – the new inland artery starting from Singidunum, crossing Thrace from Serdica to Philippopolis and ending at Byzantium – was organised under Nero, triggering a reorganisation of the province's wider land communication network. That this reorganisation also affected Aegean Thrace can be deduced from a *milliarium* found near present-day Pherai, i. e. on the vertical artery running along the west bank of the Evros and connecting the Via Diagonalis with the Via Egnatia⁷¹. As for Vespasian and the Flavians, they may have been involved in a reorganisation of the *strategiae* that may have somehow affected the region⁷²; that their reign did not remain indifferent to Aegean Thrace's coastal cities either is indicated by an honorary inscription from Maroneia and a letter, only preserved in fragments, from a Roman governor under Domitian, found at Makri⁷³.

But it was only the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian that seem to have somehow shaken up the region's dormant civic life. In the context of his Dacian Wars, Trajan reorganised the Roman province of Thrace by finally abolishing the *strategiae* and by founding a series of cities that all lay along the region's main communication axes; along the Via Diagonalis, of course, but also along the Via Egnatia and the main vertical axes linking these two arteries⁷⁴. As regards Aegean Thrace, these new foundations were Topeiros – by modern Paradeisos, at the point where the Via Egnatia crossed the Nestos –, Traianoupolis – by modern Loutra, at the junction of the Via Egnatia with the artery running along the Evros – and Plotinoupolis – further to the north on this same axis, by modern Didymoteicho⁷⁵. Unfortunately, of these new foundations, two remain almost totally unexplored. The ongoing excavations of the third one, Plotinoupolis, though, offer a clear indication of the impressive building activity that quite probably accompanied these new foundations⁷⁶. As for the cities' inhabitants, these seem to have remained local in origin, that is basically Greek and Thracian. No significant influx of Italian elements seems to have occurred, although inscriptions seem to indicate a certain influx of inhabitants from Asia Minor⁷⁷. The recent publication of the minting and the circulation of coinage from Topeiros and Plotinoupolis is offering an interesting comparison of the economic impact of these cities compared to the others from within the province or beyond⁷⁸.

During these first centuries of the Christian era and in the *territorium* attributed to these new foundations⁷⁹, sites with archaeological remains seem to multiply. Of the many tumuli dispersed all along the fertile plain of the Evros, the excavated tumulus of Traianoupolis⁸⁰ and that of Mikri Doxipara⁸¹ with its impressive finds – among them five chariots with horses – should be singled out. The first belonged to the territory of Traianoupolis, the second to that of either Plotinoupolis or Hadrianoupolis; in any case, they are to be connected to rich landowners of Thracian origin, who were buried in their estates. A similar phenomenon seems to have occurred at Topeiros, where tumuli of the Roman period have been recorded and sometimes excavated, in the plain all along the southern slopes of the Rhodope Mountains and the Via Egnatia⁸².

With Trajan's foundations, the region's economic life seems to have shifted from the coastal cities to those of the interior. Still, both the Via Egnatia and the ports of Abdera and Maroneia seem to have retained a portion of the region's economic activity. An edict issued by the emperor Hadrian in AD 132 and found at Maroneia includes special measures in order to protect the city and its inhabitants from the abuses of those using the *vehiculatio* on their way to Samothrace⁸³. During the reigns of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, two inscriptions from Traianoupolis and its *territorium* shares the work of repairing the road between the city's different *phylai*⁸⁴. The maintenance and importance of the region's road network is also reflected in the *milliaria* set up during the reigns of later emperors⁸⁵. As for the continuing use of the region's ports during and 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, this is indirectly indicated by the study of the period's archaeological finds, although still at a very preliminary stage. At Abdera, the publication by Vaitza Malamidou of the pottery unearthed during the excavations of a Roman house in the area of the city's Western Gate provided an interesting picture. Pottery found in the complex falls, according to the author, into two chronological groups:

one dating from the beginning of the 1st century BC to the end of the 1st century AD, the other from the 2nd to the beginning of the 4th century AD. Besides being more numerous, finds of the second group also contain an important quantity of fine wares imported mostly from Asia Minor but also from the Black Sea region, Cyprus and even from northern Africa. Imports from Asia Minor have also been recognised by Maria Chryssafi in her study on Abdera's clay lamps. These finds are a clear indication of Abdera's commercial relations with the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean world, in general, and of maritime activity that continued well into the Roman period, at least until the end of the 3rd century AD⁸⁶. Links to Asia Minor seem to multiply not only on a commercial, but also on a cultural level. This is indicated e. g., by a group of funerary inscriptions setting fines for those violating tombs, attested during this period mostly in Asia Minor, Macedonia and Thrace⁸⁷. Both the old Greek colonies of the shore and Trajan's foundations in the Thracian interior seem to have followed the trends of the empire's cultural life as well; gladiatorial games are attested at Abdera, Maroneia and Plotinoupolis⁸⁸.

The geographer Ptolemy, writing during the reign of Antoninus Pius, mentions six cities in the region: Abdera and Maroneia along the coast, and then Topeiros, Traianoupolis, Plotinoupolis and also Dyme. One more city was to be added a few decades later: Maximianoupolis. But after the reorganisation of Diocletian, only Ainos, Maximianoupolis, Traianoupolis, Maroneia and Topeiros in the province of Rhodope and Plotinoupolis in the province of Haimimontos seem to have still existed as cities, according to the *Synekdemos* of the Hierokles (6th century AD).

Notes

- *) I would like to express my warmest thanks to Thomas Schmidts for his kind invitation to contribute to this volume and to Marina Tasaklaki for discussions on recent research and bibliography. In the analysis that follows, emphasis will be given to bibliography postdating IThrAeg (2005); for earlier bibliography on the region, see IThrAeg pp. 15-42.
- 1) Aegean Thrace is a modern term, extensively used in 20th century bibliography, in order to denote the part of south-western Thrace that stretches from the southern course of the Nestos river to the west, to the southern course of the Evros river to the east and from the lower ridges of the Rhodope Mountains to the north, to the Aegean littoral to the south. Though the term does not occur in ancient literature, a more or less corresponding division can be found in Strabo 7, 7, 4: αὔτη [sc. ἡ παραλία] δ' ὑφ' Ἑλλήνων οἰκεῖται, τῶν μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ Προποντιδίῃ ἰδρυμένων, τῶν δὲ ἐφ' Ἑλλησπόντῳ καὶ τῷ Μέλανι κόλπῳ, τῶν δ' ἐπὶ τῷ Αἰγαίῳ.
 - 2) For the natural resources of the North Aegean area in general, see Archibald 2013; for Aegean Thrace, see IThrAeg p. 122-123. 172 (for Abdera). 331-332 (for Maroneia). For the unhealthy conditions created by stagnant waters, though, see below n. 7.
 - 3) For the Via Egnatia, see below n. 64. To this main west-east axis abutted two main vertical pathways that secured access to the Thracian hinterland, bypassing the Rhodope Mountains to the west and east, through the Nestos and Evros valleys respectively. A number of secondary mountain passes offered access through the Rhodope Mountains, the two most important ones being to the north of Xanthi, through modern Echinus, and to the north of Komotini, through modern Nymphaia (also known under its Bulgarian name as the Makasa pass). Though difficult and probably impractical during the winter, the importance of these mountain passes should not be underestimated; they could certainly sustain trade with the use of pack animals for a substantial part of the year; see Parissaki 2018.
 - 4) The colonists of Aegean Thrace originated basically from the coast of Asia Minor (Clazomenae and Teos for Abdera) and the islands of the eastern Aegean (Chios for Maroneia; perhaps Samos for Dikaia). The inhabitants in the settlements of the Samothracian peraia originated from Samothrace, which means basically also from Samos, but probably mixed with Aeolian elements originating from Aeolis on the opposite coast of Asia Minor; see Tiverios 2008, 91 (Abdera), 99 (Maroneia), 104 (Dikaia) and 110-111 (Samothrace).
 - 5) For recent research on the mines of the Pangaion and Lekani Mountains, see Vaxevanopoulos et al. 2012 and 2018, with earlier bibliography; for the Strymon valley, see Zannis 2014; for the Thracian Chersonese, see Tzvetkova 2008 and Sayar 2018.
 - 6) The attack of the Triballi on Abdera in 376/375 BC is, of course, a clear reminder of how limited this protection actually was; still, the plain to the south of the Rhodope Mountains did offer a certain protection compared, e. g., to Byzantium; on the attack of the Triballi, see Papazoglu 1978, 11-15; on Byzantium's vulnerability to Thracian attacks, see the famous passage of Polyb. 4, 45-46.
 - 7) The abundance of water flowing from the mountains towards the sea, through the Nestos and Evros rivers and a number of secondary rivers and torrents (such as the Kossynthos and the Lissos), contributed to the creation of a marshy coastline and unhealthy climate conditions; for the relevant ancient testimonies on Abdera, see IThrAeg p. 123 n. 2. It should also be noted that the existence of estuaries has substantially modified the ancient coastline in their surrounding area; see Polychronidou-Loukopoulou 1989 for the area of the Nestos estuary.

- 8) See Hdt. 7,59 (ἄκρη ὀνομαστή) and Strab. 7a, 1, 47 (48) (παράπλους τραχύς). This promontory is also known under its Turkish name as Sari Kaya. – For its identification and for earlier bibliography, see Parissaki 2000/2003.
- 9) For the history of modern research in the area, see IThrAeg pp. 142-146 (in general), 175-176 (Abdera) and 335-336 (Maroneia); for the region's archaeological remains in the decades preceding the arrival of the Greek colonists, see Triantaphyllos 1987-1990, 297-322. – For the cemetery unearthed in the bed of the Filiouri river by the modern village of Mikro Doukato, dated to the first half of the 6th century BC and tentatively connected to the indigenous Thracian population, see Saripanidi 2017, 79 with earlier bibliography. – For an overview of the region's history and topography during the Archaic and Classical periods, see Loukopoulou 2004 and IThrAeg pp. 126-134; the map published on p. 133 depicts the sites of the Archaic and Classical periods and clearly illustrates the focus of the first Greek colonists. For the period of Greek colonisation in the area, see also Baralis 2008 and Tiverios 2008, 91-118.
- 10) For Abdera's literary testimonia, the inscriptions originating from the city and its territory, and the relevant bibliography up to 2005, see IThrAeg pp. 157-260.
- 11) For the excavations pertaining to the Archaic and Classical city, see basically Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2004 and Kallintzi 2004. Within this second enclosure only few building remains have been unearthed but an extra-mural open-air sanctuary with a monumental staircase leading to a plateau with altars has been excavated nearby. Its finds, approx. 25.000 miniature hydriae produced by local workshops and many clay figurines, point to the cult of a female deity (probably Demeter and Kore); on these, see now Motsiou 2019. – Mention should also be made of the remains of a shipshed, see Samiou 1993. – Information on this first city can also be gleaned from Hippocrates, who visited the site towards the end of the 5th century BC; Hippocrates mentions an agora, a palaestra, an ἱερὰ δῶδος, a temenos of the Nymphs and also the name of a city's wall gate (Θρηϊκίαις πύλαις), see IThrAeg p. 178 and Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2007, 30 with references.
- 12) Herodotus (1, 168) mentions a first attempt by the Clazomenians in 654 BC, which failed as a result of attacks by the local Thracian tribes, and then a second, successful one, by the Teians in 545 BC.
- 13) For the Archaic cemetery of the so-called sector K, see Skarlatidou 2004; 2010; 2012. – Dupont/Skarlatidou 2012. – Saripanidi 2017, 76-77.
- 14) Skarlatidou 2004, 258.
- 15) For a synthesis on Abdera's cemeteries, see Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 1994. – Kallintzi 2004; 2006; 2011a, 1211-1219; 2013; for recent bibliography on particular tumuli, findings or ritual practices, see Kranioti 1987. – Kallintzi 2007; 2011b. – Kallintzi/Papaikononou 2010. – Dupont/Kallintzi 2017. – Kallintzi/Chatziprokopiou 2019. – Chryssafi/Xanthopoulou 2019.
- 16) Psilovikos/Syrides 1997.
- 17) For this inventory, see Kallintzi 2011a. – On the quarry of Mandra and its early use, see also Kokkorou-Alewras et al. 2014, 85-86, no. 290.
- 18) For Abdera's inscriptions, see IThrAeg E1-E82. Since then, a very important decree of Abdera has been unearthed at Teos; it was recently published by M. Adak and P. Thonemann, see Adak/Thonemann 2022 (see also below, n. 59). – For Abdera's monetary production, see Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2007; for coin hoards, see specifically *ibid.* pp. 34-87; the publication of the foreign currency unearthed during the city's excavations remains a desideratum (*ibid.* 33). Pottery also points to close relations with Asia Minor; for Ionian bowls – first imported and later produced locally –, see Kallintzi 2011b; for the presence of Ionian transport amphorae during the Archaic period, see Filis 2012.
- 19) For Maroneia's literary testimonia, the inscriptions originating from the city and its territory, and the relevant bibliography up to 2005, see IThrAeg pp. 319-482. – Maroneia's coinage was first published by Schönert-Geiss in 1987 and re-examined by Psoma et al. 2008, who proposed new dates for the city's minting periods.
- 20) See Loukopoulou/Psoma 2008. For the site of Molyvoti and its identification, see, pp. 73-74; for Hellenistic Maroneia, see, p. 75.
- 21) Dikaia is generally considered a Samian colony, though on uncertain grounds; its existence is also ascertained by its coinage and its presence on the Athenian Tribute Lists; see IThrAeg pp. 127. 130, with earlier bibliography and Triantaphyllos/Tasaklaki 2012, 478-484.
- 22) Bakalakis unearthed parts of a city wall, that protected the peninsula on its more vulnerable northern and western sides, three subterranean tunnels cut into the bedrock of the peninsula's southern shore, that may have provided drinking water to the city, remains of houses and roads, that indicated the use of the Hippodamian system and grave monuments; to these remains should be added some Archaic and Classical sculptural fragments, that provide a clear indication of the city's prosperity. – For the results of this first excavation, see IThrAeg pp. 130. 287-288 with earlier bibliography. – For the site's inscriptions, see *ibid.* 289-317, E107-E167.
- 23) See Loukopoulou/Psoma 2008.
- 24) The issue remains open; see, though, Arrington/Padgett 2019, 521 n. 2, where it is stated that »an argument that the city on the Molyvoti Peninsula should be associated with Ancient Stryme will be presented in the final publication«; and also below, n. 51.
- 25) For a brief outline of the site's occupation, as revealed by recent research and excavation, see Arrington/Padgett 2019, 522. For preliminary reports on the first phase of this research project, see Arrington et al. 2013a; 2013b; forthcoming a-c.
- 26) See Arrington et al. 2013a, 33-44 and Arrington/Padgett 2019, 531 respectively. – For sherds, see Arrington et al. 2013a, 33-44 and Arrington/Padgett 2019, 531 respectively; for harbour facilities, see Arrington et al. 2013a, 13-14, fig. 7.
- 27) Thus, Hekataios of Miletos, as preserved by Stephanus of Byzantium, mentions Drys and Zone, the first as πόλις Θρηϊκῆς, the second as πόλις Κικόνων. A few years later, describing Xerxes' march in the region, Herodotus mentions Mesambria, Zone and Sale and qualifies them as σαμοθηϊκία τείχεα, thus indicating that they were somehow fortified; Athenian Tribute Lists mention Ζώνη παρὰ Σέρρειον, Δρυὶς παρὰ Σέρρειον and Σάλη; Skylax writing in the 4th century BC mentions Drys and Zone as ἐμπόρια; Strabo, writing in the 1st century BC-1st century AD, knows only Charakoma and Tempyra. Roman itineraries mention Sale and Tempyra as mutationes of the Via Egnatia. For references and a recent analysis on the history of

- research and the various identifications advanced thus far, see Tsatsopoulou-Kaloudi et al. 2015, 39-44.
- 28) See Mottas 1989. – Psoma 2008, 125-126. – Tsatsopoulou-Kaloudi 2015, 47-48 with map on p. 49.
 - 29) According to a recent suggestion, Drys could be located in the plain of Petrota to the west of Zone, see Tsatsopoulou-Kaloudi 2015, 53-54 with map on p. 50. For Mesambria opinions diverge; Michael Zahrnt considered that Herodotus' reference to a settlement of this name was due to a misunderstanding of his source Hekataios, see Zahrnt 2008. – Others have tried to locate it to the west or north of Zone; for a recent suggestion (north of Zone), see Tsatsopoulou-Kaloudi 2015, 58-62, with map on p. 50 and earlier bibliography.
 - 30) Now published by Brixhe et al. 2015.
 - 31) For the sanctuary of Apollo and its finds, see Tsatsopoulou-Kaloudi et al. 2015; for Zone's fortifications, Pardalidou 2015; for its cemeteries and their evolution, Iliopoulou 2015; for the city's coinage, Galani-Krikou et al. 2015. All known denominations depict Apollo's head on the obverse.
 - 32) For Makri, see Efstratiou/Kallintzi 1994.
 - 33) For these forts and a detailed discussion of available evidence, see Tsatsopoulou-Kaloudi et al. 2015, 54-58. The chora of Zone and the western part of the Samothracian peraia is the subject of an ongoing research project (ArcGeoPerSa), see www.peraiasamothraceproject.gr/en/home-page/ (07.03.2022), Avramidou forthcoming. – Garyfalopoulos 2022.
 - 34) See IThrAeg pp. 554-557 for ancient references and modern research. The site lies approximately 20 km to the east of modern Alexandroupolis.
 - 35) For the period, see Triantaphyllos 2009. The local Thracian tribes mentioned by earlier authors, that is the Βίστονες and the Κίκονες, may not have actually existed during the time of Greek colonisation, see von Bredow 1999. – The Παῖτροι are nothing more than a name; their memory, though, may have survived in the name Βριαντική, used by Herodotus to denote the plain to the north of Maroneia, the Priaticus campus of Titus Livius and Brendice/Priendice of Roman itineraries, see respectively: Hdt. 7, 108; Liv. 38, 41, 8. – Itin. Ant. 322. The region's most important tribe from the Archaic period onwards may have been the Sapaioi, identified by Strabo as the Σιντοί and Σάιοι, and also the Korpiloi, who appeared briefly in our sources during the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods. For these tribes, see IThrAeg p. 126 and, more extensively, Parissaki 2019/2020 and forthcoming b.
 - 36) For battles, see Hdt. 1, 168 but also Pindar's Second Paian (cf. IThrAeg pp. 158-159). – For the evidence of personal names, see Parissaki 2007, 291.
 - 37) Dem. Against Polycl. 20-23. For the cemetery excavated at Filiori, see above n. 9.
 - 38) Nymphodorus' activity at the court of Sitalkes should also be mentioned here, see IThrAeg p. 161 with references. Another indication of Abdera's interest and involvement in the region's commercial activities is offered by inscription IThrAeg E3, a law dating to before the middle of the 4th century BC and containing protection clauses for those buying animals and slaves. The existence of this law indicates some kind of πανήγυρις held in the region, for which the city legislates in order to protect its reputation.
 - 39) For Stryme, see above; for Θασίων κεφαλαί, see Strab. 7, fr. 43 and IThrAeg p. 128 n. 3.
 - 40) See IThrAeg p. 162.
 - 41) The discovery of this important text, which has revolutionised our view on the commercial relations between Greeks and Thracians, has triggered lengthy discussions; see Chankowski 2009. – Demetriou 2012, 153-187. – Hatzopoulos 2013 with earlier bibliography.
 - 42) See Delev 2002 and IThrAeg p. 132 respectively.
 - 43) See Tiverios 2008, 103 with further bibliography.
 - 44) Gold coinage produced by the city's Mint during this same period has been connected to the important amount of money needed for this building program; see IThrAeg p. 163 n. 2 and Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2007, 159-160.
 - 45) Abdera's »southern peribolos« was excavated by Lazaridis during the 1950s and 1960s, as indicated above, and many times described since then; see indicatively Triantaphyllos 2004b, and also Anagnostopoulou-Hadjipolychroni 2012. – For the cemeteries to be connected to this period, see Kallintzi 2004 and Samiou 2004.
 - 46) At some point during the 3rd-4th century AD, the city wall and the Hippodamian system used within it were definitely abandoned. The city's inhabitants seem to have gathered at the Polystylon hill and the area of the Western Gate was turned into a cemetery, probably Christian.
 - 47) See above, p. 73.
 - 48) With the exception of an important monograph on the city's coinage (Psoma et al. 2008), our knowledge of Hellenistic and Roman Maroneia has not substantially altered in recent years. – To the information and bibliography of IThrAeg (see above, n. 19), add Karadima 2015 and Karadima et al. 2015 on the theatre and the sanctuary of Dionysos. The theatre seems to have had three construction periods, of which the first is dated to the late 4th to early 3rd century BC, the other two to the Roman period.
 - 49) For Orthagoreia, see IThrAeg pp. 128-129 with sources and earlier bibliography; to this, add the extensive analysis of Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2004 and Psoma et al. 2008, 193-204.
 - 50) See Plin. nat. 4, 42-43 and Strab. 7a, 1, 48 respectively. The date of Orthagoreia's coinage rests on the evidence of hoards and excavation finds and also on iconographic parallels. Silver coins depict the head of Artemis on the obverse, bronze coins the head of Apollo; both depict a helmet of Chalcidian type on the reverse. It is basically the date and iconography of this coinage that supports a Macedonian connection.
 - 51) The identification suggested by Gaebler, Lazaridis and Chryssanthaki-Nagle rests on the testimony of Strabo (see preceding note), that of Psoma on the testimony of Pliny and also on the evidence of Maroneia's excavated coins: of the 437 coins of the 4th century BC unearthed at Maroneia, 248 are of Orthagoreia (56%), followed by that of Maroneia (62 coins), Abdera (45) and Philip II and Alexander III (38); for this evidence, see Psoma 2008, 193-204. – The complex issue of the Stryme-Maroneia-Orthagoreia topographic relationship has been revisited by Saba 2018; raising doubts about the importance of the numismatic evidence, the author returned to traditional identifications (Stryme at Molyvoti, Maroneia at the site of Hagios Charalambos from the Archaic period onwards, Orthagoreia to the east of Maroneia). – For an answer to Saba's arguments,

- see Gatzolis/Psoma 2021; I warmly thank the authors for putting a draft of their article at my disposal.
- 52) On the decree, see McCredie 1968, 220-221, pl. 66 and Psoma 2008, 129. – For Sale as a vicus of Maroneia, see Liv. 38, 41, 8. – For Tempyra and Charakoma, see Strab. 7, fr. 47. On the settlements of the Samothracian peraia, their evolution and identification, see above.
 - 53) The results of his research have been gathered in a short booklet, published in both English and Greek but not easy to access, see Triantaphyllos 2004a. – See also Triantaphyllos 1990. – For recent research at the acropolis of Platania, further to the west, see Poulioudi 2013.
 - 54) The identity of those buried in the two Macedonian tombs remains unknown, due to the lack of adequate evidence. For these three sites, see IThrAeg pp. 136 n. 13 (Komnina). 137 n. 8 (Symbola). 134 n. 1 and 137 (Linos), with earlier bibliography.
 - 55) Despite the substantial increase in recent studies devoted to the presence of Gauls in Thrace, see Emilov 2015, with further bibliography.
 - 56) For the Soteria decree, see IThrAeg E4; for Zone's diateichisma, see Psoma 2008, 134-135.
 - 57) For these, see IThrAeg pp. 163-164 (for Abdera). 324-326 (for Maroneia). – Also Adak/Thonemann 2022.
 - 58) For Abdera, see IThrAeg p. 165. – For the presence of a pro-Roman faction at Maroneia during the reign of Philip V, see IThrAeg pp. 325-326. 426 (comments of inscription E278).
 - 59) For Hortensius' attack, see IThrAeg p. 165. – For Eumenes claims, op. cit. p. 326 with further bibliography; for Cotys, IThrAeg E5. – To this same period refers the important inscription to be published by Adak/Thonemann 2022.
 - 60) See IThrAeg E168.
 - 61) For the establishment and later presence of Roman *negotiatores* in the region, see Parissaki forthcoming a. – The sanctuary and cult of the Egyptian Gods at Maroneia seems to have functioned as a gathering place for the city's various ethnic elements, including Roman newcomers; most of the non-imperial nomina attested at Maroneia during the pre-Christian era occur in a catalogue with the names of the therapeutai of the Egyptian Gods (IThrAeg E212-E213). – For this religious association, see now CAPInv. 739 (Copenhagen Association Inventory): <https://ancientassociations.ku.dk/CAPi/viewing.php?view=resultassoc&id=739&hi=Maroneia> (08.03.2003). An important aretalogy (IThrAeg E205), three association decrees (IThrAeg E182-E183) and some dedicatory inscriptions of the Late Hellenistic and Imperial periods (IThrAeg E199-E204) are also to be connected to this cult; their finding place indicates that the sanctuary must have been located at the area of the city's theatre; for Maroneia's theatre, see above n. 48.
 - 62) For this decree (IThrAeg E180). The famous silver tetradrachms issued by Maroneia have been connected to this period, see Picard 2008.
 - 63) For Manlius Vulso's march along this road during his return from Asia Minor in 188 BC and the events related to it, see Parissaki 2000/2003.
 - 64) From the vast bibliography on the Via Egnatia, see Lolos 2008 and 2009 with further references; for the section between the Nestos and the Evros rivers, see Tsatsopoulou-Kaloudi 2005.
 - 65) On Kalyva and the forts of the Stavroupoli-Paranesti pass, see p. 102-103.
 - 66) On this period, see provisionally Parissaki 2013; on the coinage of the Thracian kings, see Paunov 2021.
 - 67) See Apostolou/Papageorgiadou 2018 and Papageorgiadou/Parissaki 2021.
 - 68) For these relationships and the inscriptions of Aegean Thrace to be associated to the client-kingdom of Thrace, see Parissaki 2018a.
 - 69) See IThrAeg E180, with further bibliography. The Romans are designated in ll. 1-2 as οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι οἱ τῆν πόλιν κατοικοῦντες.
 - 70) See IThrAeg E84.
 - 71) IThrAeg E453. – Mottas' analysis remains fundamental, see Mottas 1989. – This vertical artery continued to be maintained in subsequent centuries; a figured tombstone, dating to the 2nd or early 3rd century AD and thought to originate from the area of modern Soufli, at about mid-distance between Traianoupolis and Plotinoupolis, has been interpreted as depicting a soldier of the Roman *auxilia* and as offering an indirect hint to the possible presence in the region of a detachment (*vexillatio*), responsible for some construction or repair of the road, see Andrianou 2017a, 234-235, no. 59 and 2017b.
 - 72) For this reorganisation, see Parissaki 2009.
 - 73) See IThrAeg E208 and IThrAeg E455 respectively.
 - 74) That is the vertical axes running along the Strymon valley (Pautalia), the Nestos (Nicopolis ad Nestum) and the Evros. For Trajan's foundation in Thrace in general, see indicatively Boteva 2014 and Lozanov 2014 with references.
 - 75) For these cities, their inscriptions and earlier bibliography, see IThrAeg pp. 261-282 (Topeiros). 531-569 (Traianoupolis). 570-592 (Plotinoupolis).
 - 76) In a relatively small excavation area, the impressive remains of a public building with mosaics and important hydraulic installations have been unearthed, see Koutsoumanis 2016. A gold bust of Septimius Severus made of hammered sheet metal (0.24 m in height and 980 gr in weight) offers a rare example of an emperor's imago, carried in processions; on this bust, see now the excellent publication of de Pury-Gysel 2017.
 - 77) See Parissaki 2007, 304-306 for an analysis of the onomastic material linked to Topeiros, Traianoupolis and Plotinoupolis. – For the limited presence in Aegean Thrace of names pointing to an origin from Asia Minor, op. cit. p. 292. – This phenomenon seems to have been stronger in cities lying to the north of the Rhodope Mountains, such as Philippopolis or Nicopolis ad Istrum, where private associations of persons originating from e.g., Nikaia or Nikomedeia are attested, see e.g., IGBulg V 5464 or IGBulg II 674 = V 5222. – That this phenomenon did affect the cities of Aegean Thrace as well is indicated by the funerary inscription of a σιευτήρ from Nikaia in Bithynia found at Topeiros, see IThrAeg E89.
 - 78) See Tasaklaci 2018; 2020.
 - 79) The exact boundaries of this territory remain ill defined, due to lack of adequate evidence, see IThrAeg pp. 264-265 (Topeiros). 534 (Traianoupolis). 576 (Plotinoupolis). See also the map at Karambinis 2020, 450. It is to be stressed that the only concrete evidence, for the time being, consists of a *milliarium* set up by Topeiros that has been recorded in the area around modern Aetolophos, that is at approximately 70 km to the east

of Topeiros (by the pass between the Ismaros and the Zonaia Mountains, leading from the western to the eastern plain). Inscriptions IThrAeg E78-79, moreover, offer a clear indication of the frictions that sometimes ensued between these new foundations and the old Greek colonies; in these two inscriptions, the city of Ἀδριανέων Ἀβδηριτῶν (and this same name also occurs on the city's coinage, see IThrAeg p. 255) honours Hadrian as Ζεὺς Ἐφόριος (Zeus of the Boundaries), a cult epithet inspired by the emperor's intervention in restituting Abdera's territory; Hadrian is also honoured in this same city with the epithet Ὀλύμπιος σωτήρ, see IThrAeg E23.

- 80) See Andrianou 2017a, 72 with earlier bibliography.
- 81) See Agelarakis 2010. – Paulides et al. 2010. – Trantalidou 2010. – Triantaphyllos 2010. – Vavelides 2010. – Voulgaridis et al. 2010. – The detailed publication of Terzopoulou 2013 and also www.mikridoxipara-zoni.gr (08.03.2022).
- 82) Kallinzi 2011a, 1339.
- 83) See IThrAeg E185 and Jones 2011 with corrections on the reading. The edict offers the additional information that the emperor visited Maroneia, Abdera and possibly Philippi at some point before December 132.

84) See IThrAeg E433 and *E447; on these texts, see now the detailed and valuable analysis of Kunnert 2012, 62-63 with further references.

- 85) See e.g., IThrAeg E395 (Maximinus Thrax) and also the unpublished milliaria mentioned above in n. 79. Six more milestones that have been unearthed at Komotini are currently under publication, see provisionally Arch. Deltion 61 (2006) [2014] 1034-1035.
- 86) See Malamidou 2005, 81-82. – Papaioannou 2010. – Chryssafi 2018. – Parissaki 2018b.
- 87) See IThrAeg E67 and E68 from Abdera, E88, E89 and E102 from Topeiros and its chora, E216, E219, E312, E318, E320, E322, E323, E324 and E327 from Maroneia, *E439 from Traianoupolis and E489 of unknown origin.
- 88) See IThrAeg E68 (Abdera) and E167 (Maroneia). At some point (probably during the 1st century AD) Maroneia's theatre was turned to an arena for gladiatorial and wild animal contests, as indicated by the protective parapet of slabs that were delimited the orchestra, see Karadima et al. 2015, 261-262. – For a funerary inscription of a gladiator from Plotinoupolis, see Tsoka 2013-2014 and Papanikolaou 2017/2018.

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Zusammenfassung / Summary

Der Beitrag konzentriert sich auf das Ägäische Thrakien – den Teil Südwestthraciens zwischen den Unterläufen der Flüsse Nestos und Hebros – und gibt einen Überblick über die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Region von der Ankunft der ersten griechischen Kolonisten bis zum Ende der Antike. Besonders berücksichtigt wurde die nach der Publikation des Corpus der griechischen und lateinischen Inschriften dieser Region (IThrAeg) erschienene Literatur. Zu den hier untersuchten Themen gehören folgende Aspekte: die frühe ökonomische Entwicklung der Region und der heftige Wettbewerb, der sich zwischen den beiden großen städtischen Zentren Abdera und Maroneia um die Nutzung des enormen kommerziellen Potenzials des thrakischen Hinterlandes entwickelte; die Beziehungen zwischen den griechischen Neuankömmlingen und der einheimischen Bevölkerung, die von Fall zu Fall unterschiedlich ausfielen; die Auswirkungen der makedonischen Expansion nach Osten, die nicht nur die städtischen Zentren der Region betrafen, sondern auch die Gebiete, die außerhalb der Grenzen der alten griechischen Kolonien lagen; die enormen Spannungen, die durch den Konflikt zwischen Makedonien und Rom auf das ägäische Thrakien einwirkten; die frühe Ankunft der römischen *negotiatores*; und schließlich die Maßnahmen zur Urbanisierung Thraciens mit drei Gründungen bzw. Neugründungen städtischer Zentren in der Region: Topeiros, Traianoupolis und Plotinoupolis. Darüber hinaus werden auch erste Ergebnisse laufender Forschungen zu Molyvoti, dem mutmaßlichen Stryme, Plotinoupolis bzw. der Samothrakischen *peraia* kurz vorgestellt.

Übersetzung: Th. Schmidts

The present article focuses on Aegean Thrace – that is the part of south-western Thrace included within the lower courses of the Nestos and Hebros rivers – and offers an overview of the region's historical development for the period spanning from the arrival of the first Greek colonists to the end of Antiquity. Special emphasis is given to research results postdating the publication in 2005 of the region's Corpus of Greek and Latin inscriptions (IThrAeg). Among the subjects analysed, reference should be made to the following aspects in particular: the region's early economic development and the fierce competition that developed between the two main urban centres of Abdera and Maroneia over the exploitation of the vast commercial potential of the Thracian hinterland; the relationships between Greek newcomers and the local, indigenous population, which seems to have varied from case to case; the impact of Macedonian expansion to the east, that affected not only the region's urban centres but also the areas that lay outside the limits of the old Greek colonies; the enormous tensions exercised on Aegean Thrace with the conflict between Macedonia and Rome; the early arrival of Roman *negotiatores*; and, finally, Trajan's urbanisation activity in Thrace, with the foundation or re-foundation of three major urban centres in the region: Topeiros, Traianoupolis and Plotinoupolis. The first, preliminary results of ongoing research at sites such as Molyvoti (presumed Stryme), Plotinoupolis and the Samothracian *peraia*, are also briefly presented.