1. Greeks and Thracians. Geography and culture

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DOI: 10.4000/books.pccj.666
Publisher: Publications du Centre Camille Jullian, Éditions Errance
Place of publication: Aix-en-Provence
Year of publication: 2010
Published on OpenEdition Books: 13 February 2020
Serie: Bibliothèque d'archéologie méditerranéenne et africaine
Electronic ISBN: 9782957155729

http://books.openedition.org

Printed version
Date of publication: 1 June 2010

Electronic reference
Fig. 141 Situation de la Thrace, entre mer Egée et mer Noire (Tréziny 2009).
The east Balkan landmass is, for the most part, the ecological counterpoint of the Aegean area—a continent with mountain chains orientated west–east, which impede movement from the margins to the interior. Parallel to the Danube is the Stara Planina (Balkan range), and further south are the peaks of Rhodope, separated by a roughly triangular lowland area, the Thracian Plain. Even today, whether one uses the arterial roads or the railways, it is much easier to travel east–west or west–east than it is to go north–south or south to north. Ease, however, is only one of the factors that determines why people travel. Evidence from antiquity, whether it be the witness of Thucydides (2.97.1–2), in his otherwise unexplained remarks about travel times between the Aegean coast and the Danube (Archibald 2006, 115–122) or the distribution of bulk commodities, such as wine and oil amphorae, or the spread of distinctive Classical architectural forms in tomb construction and decoration, or the widespread adoption of Greek as the language of administration and politics, not just in the fifth and fourth centuries BC but well into the Roman Empire and beyond, laying the foundations for the Cyrillic alphabet, all point to dynamic patterns that seem to defy the dictates of geography.

One of the reasons for this apparent contradiction is the permeability of the region’s liminal zones, particularly the coastlines, towards the Aegean and the Black Sea, but also its rivers, which cut through the solid geography to provide natural highways across country. Half of these have eroded channels through the southern mountain chain that continues the geology of the Pindhos range in the west Balkans, beginning with the Vardar (ancient Axios), in the far south west, and thence the Strymon (Struma), Nestos (Mesta), and the Maritsa (Hebros), with its principal tributaries. The northern river system consists of the tributaries of the Danube, which flow northwards from the Stara Planina and south from the Transylvanian Carpathians into the Danube valley. ‘Thracians’ is the name that was applied in antiquity to most of the inhabitants of this large and ecologically highly varied region of southern Europe without any clear distinctions, obliging historians and archaeologists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to make their own sub-divisions on the basis of material culture as well as linguistic roots.

Whatever we consider, on the basis of maps, and geology, and transport considerations, to have been logical and practical strategies for subsistence, does not entirely correspond to what people in the ancient past actually did. Past behaviours cannot be logically inferred from landscapes, nor were they determined by geographical necessity, but rather represent a symbiosis between human populations and their environment. In the east Balkans, there is historical evidence that patterns of land ownership changed, depending on the nature of political structures, and we can therefore infer changes of land use, which mean that different regimes of exploitation have been adopted at different times. In the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, nucleated settlements practising intensive agriculture created stratified mounds. In the first millennium BC, growing ecological diversification resulted in more varied exploitation of upland as well as lowland resources, a pattern that continued into later times. These dynamic processes have left a variety of physical impressions on the contemporary landscape that are only just beginning to be recognised and valued as sources of evidence in their own right—the deforestation of hillsides and valley floors to provide arable and pastoral resources; the construction of roads and route ways through hill country as well as lowlands; the creation of stable settlements using durable materials; the exploitation of minerals, especially for metallurgy and building stone, and clays for a wide range of ceramic products. This silent history, which has literally shaped the external features of the region, needs to be married with the information that we can glean from a limited range of written sources concerning affairs in the north.

The inter-penetration of cultural features

As soon as we cease to view the east Balkans from a distance, the abstract clarity of habitual academic distinctions between indigenous communities and incoming ones—Thracians on the one hand, Greeks on the other—quickly becomes muddied. We may take as an opening
example the funerary practices of communities in the area of the lower Danube, which are examined here in some detail by Vasilica Lungu. The size, layout, and architectural pretensions of the ancient city of Histria/Istros mark it out not just as one of the leading cities of the west Pontic coast in antiquity, but a community with a well defined Greek character, whereas the burial practices reflected in its cemeteries seem to tell a different story. Lungu looks at Istros alongside the much smaller settlement of Orgame. Istros lay on the south-western banks of Lake Sinoe, a deep and sheltered bay south of the Danube estuary, Orgame lay on the northern edge of the same lake, so we may expect strong links between them. Istros was one of the main Black Sea settlements connected with Milesian immigrants and it is likely that Orgame had a similar pedigree; according to Stephanos of Byzantium, Orgame was a polis epi to Istro (F. Gr. Hist. I, fr. 172; Nenci 1954, fr. 183: Lungu, this volume). There are two especially interesting phenomena in these cemeteries. One is the overwhelming dominance of cremations over inhumations. As Lungu explains, the two rites were not opposed but complementary.

One of the most valuable dimensions of research in the lower Danube area is the wide range of sites that have been investigated archaeologically over the last century. This means that the evidence from Istros and Orgame can be viewed in the context of social interactions between groups and individuals, over many centuries, which were, at the outset at least, culturally diverse. The principal features of the funerary rite that we note in these communities, including the laying out of the corpse, the consignment of the body (whether by inhumation or cremation) to the ground; the funeral feast; the construction of a monument; and the performance of games, is a sequence that has much in common with Greek mainland and island practices, even if the precise details were reworked or manipulated according to different traditions. Granted that these distinctions provide some of the local flavour that made one locality both like and unlike any other; it is the second distinctive feature of the cemeteries at Istros and Orgame, namely the presence of isolated burials belonging to prestigious individuals, which deserves more attention. These, as Lungu emphasises, are best interpreted as members of the ruling elite, founding immigrant Greek settlers, whose monuments reminded later arrivals of their status and formative role. Several technical features reinforce such an interpretation. The range and quality of the grave goods are an obvious factor. More significantly, the bodies of the deceased were cremated at exceptionally high temperatures and the remaining bones, fired white, were carefully collected from the pyre (which was located outside the area of the tumulus thrown up over the remains), while the residue from banquets and periodic libations testifies to the subsequent commemorations enacted near the tomb.

The construction of the tumuli has structural characteristics that connect them to indigenous practices (for example, the ring of stones surrounding a cairn of stones at the centre of the mound fill). In other respects, indigenous cremations, such as those well represented at systematically excavated cemeteries within the wider lower Danube area (Aegyssus, Celic Dere, Enisala et Murighiol) were quite different, the less highly fired bones frequently housed in urns with lids, with or without specially constructed stone cists. There is still a great deal to be learned about the social nuances that funerary practices incorporate. Age profiles in particular are highly incomplete. As is often the case in ancient cemeteries, the poor representation of children’s graves needs clearer explanation.

The presence, in these indigenous cemeteries, of imported pottery, particularly transport amphorae, from Chios, Thasos, Klazomenai, Akanthos, Rhodes, Herakleia Pontika, and other major producing centres, but also fine wares (cups, kantharoi, skyphoi, and pouring vessels), suggests deliberate and conscious choices and well developed concepts of what was judged appropriate for the performance of rites that writers such as Herodotos and Arrian considered to be highly articulate reflections on death and the migration of souls to the afterlife. Such writers sought to describe what they saw as distinctive and different about Thracians. At the same time, the Thracians themselves were responding to objects and forms of behaviour that involved novelties to them and incorporated new features within traditional practices. Where archaeologists see indicators of change, historians underscore social and cultural differentiation. These subtle but significant divergences of interpretation deserve to be looked at more closely.

**Interpreting cultures – ‘colonisation’ and other models of cultural evolution**

It has become conventional, in Greek historiography, to consider events within the first half of the first millennium BC in terms of a ‘colonial’ framework, namely the process by which (in the present context) numerous settlements were founded by groups of pioneers from the Aegean islands, beginning in the second half of the seventh century BC onwards, notably Euboians (towards various locations in the Chalcidian peninsula), Andrians to Akanthos and Stageiros in Chalkidike; Parians to Thasos and thence on the neighbouring mainland of Thrace; Chians to Maroneia on the coast of eastern
Thrace and Samians to Samothrace. There was a similar level of interest shown in this area by Ionian Greeks from Asia Minor and the islands nearest that coastline. Some Klazomenians, who settled at Abdera in the middle of the seventh century BC did not outlast two or three generations. But they were succeeded by people from Teos who were more successful. Besides the activities of incoming groups along the Aegean coastline, there was a parallel movement towards locations along the Thracian seaboard in the Hellespontine Straits and beyond, onto
the Black Sea littoral. This latter phenomenon is usually treated as part of a separate narrative, namely the ‘colonization’ of the Pontic zone, rather than in conjunction with Aegean events.

The area that is circumscribed by these foundation stories is, in simple spatial terms, larger than the whole of the Greek mainland. Yet the stories themselves refer to no more than 190 locations, mainly coastal, between lower Macedonia and the whole Black Sea littoral (including Scythian-dominated territories). As statisticians are fond of emphasising, numbers need to be understood within a context. The context for the poleis listed in the new Inventory edited by Hansen and Nielsen requires careful articulation. Although these sites became urban societies, with many of the physical and institutional features that we associate with civic communities, they began as rural settlements, and, like most civic centres of Antiquity, continued to have strong rural roots, with varying degrees of dependence on the surrounding rural habitat for resources. The overwhelmingly coastal distribution of the named sites does not represent a natural settlement pattern. It represents a selection of the settlement configuration within the region. As Baralis shows in his paper (this volume), the settlement pattern in the early first millennium BC, between the Thermaic Gulf and the Thracian Chersonese, included upland sites, often enclosed with dry-stone walls, and lowland sites, some of which were coastal. This extensive pattern of landscape exploitation can only be understood as a consequence of systematic surveys, which have rarely been adopted in academic or professional archaeological research strategies. What is true of the coastal hinterland is even more relevant for continental areas. The marked expansion in the recognition and registration of sites in

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Macedonia during recent decades is paralleled in the data base of sites compiled for the Archaeological Map of Bulgaria during 1992-94. Ideas about the nature of urban development, and consequently of local self-organisation, need to be revised in the light of this new spatial research (cf Archibald 2000).

The story of how Greeks and Thracians developed irregular encounters into long-term relationships is much larger and more inclusive than the simple foundation stories hint at. The sometimes partisan accounts that were nurtured for their own adherents by one group or another, and which contributed so significantly to the creation of proud local histories in Hellenistic times, form components of a broader canvas, on which the legacy of earlier interactions during the second (not to mention the third) millennium BC should find a place, when direct contacts between the interior of the east Balkan landmass and Aegean sources can be traced via imported artefacts and imitations of Aegean objects. The number of actual imports (principally copper or copper alloy weapons) is small within the material assemblages in which they were found. Nevertheless, these individual items testify to a surprising degree of inter-regional ‘connectivity’, which can be revealed by studying less visible cultural and ecological links (Horden and Purcell 2000, 123-72; 346-8; 562-71).

The general analogies that we find in terms of subsistence, the exploitation of natural resources, and technological development between the east Balkans, the north Aegean coastal regions, and mainland Greece are much more significant than the evidence suggested by artefacts. The range of agricultural crops grown, including cereal varieties, pulses, and their concomitant weeds of cultivation (Zohary and Hopf 1994, 212-15); the range and design of tools and weapons (Bouzek 1985; 1998); and the form of domestic structures, including flask-shaped food storage pits or ceramic pithoi (Tsiafaki and Baralis, this volume; Stefanovich and Bankoff 1998), demonstrate that the communities developing in and around the Thermaic Gulf in lowland Macedonia, the coastal hinterland of the Aegean, and groups living in the Thracian Plain of modern-day Bulgaria had a good deal in common. These similarities reflect common subsistence strategies, as well as a level of direct or indirect interaction (cf Archibald 2000). Some foodstuffs that first make their appearance during the Bronze Age are likely to have penetrated into Greece from the north and north-east. Among the novel foods are spelt wheat and millet, as well as the opium poppy.

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1. A conspectus of the place names documented in written records is now available in Hansen and Nielsen eds, 2004. Sites that are recognised as poleis by the editors and dating to before the Hellenistic period include 17 in Macedonia, 82 in the Chalkidic peninsula, 13 between the Strymon and Nestos, 11 between the Nestos and Hebros, 6 in inland Thrace, 15 in the Thracian Chersonese, 9 in Propontic Thrace, and 43 in the Black Sea as a whole. Sites that are documented historically but cannot be located are not included in the numbered inventory.


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There may be an association between the introduction of millet and of the domesticated horse, whose origins in the steppe regions of south Russia and Ukraine are well known (Valamoti 2007, 98-102). Thrace is the logical connecting region, where early horse remains and millet are both represented (Archibald 1998, 10; Popova, Božilova 1998, 391-7).

We do not have a model that explains how such transmissions occurred. Was it a gradual, progressive inter-penetration? How far did knowledge about new resources, particularly when this involved the introduction of a radically new form of transportation, catalyze this process, with emissaries consciously seeking them out? We lack a suitable conceptual framework within which to imagine the ways in which new foodstuffs became established across the east Balkans and northern Aegean and how horse rearing and riding were adopted to become one of the most significant and powerful resources to be deployed by northern communities, for acquisitive as well as subsistence purposes, spectacularly so during the fifth and fourth centuries BC, when cavalry warfare was to have a decisive impact on the balance of power between northern and southern Greece. Recent research in the area around the Thermaic Gulf and in the administrative district of eastern Macedonia, including the Chalkidic peninsula, is beginning to reveal some aspects of these processes (see Tsiafaki this volume). In a nuanced and perceptive survey, Baralis argues that the changes in settlement patterns that took place in the early part of the first millennium BC are probably connected with the enhancement of pastoral resources (which will have included horse-rearing and the herding of cattle, as well as sheep or goats), alongside arable farming.

The difficulty of envisaging, let alone encapsulating in a single narrative, the complex interactions that lie behind the stories about ‘foundations’ in the first half of the first millennium BC has challenged historians since the earliest attempts in modern times to create a comprehensive account of Greek history. In a recent survey of early Greek historiography, John Davies has described why the process of constructing a narrative is so problematic:

‘... each island, each micro-state, each sanctuary presents a certain number of pieces of information – but they turn out to be pieces from a huge number of different jigsaws. Either, then, the historian presents a set of simultaneous micro-narratives, at the cost of obscuring links and similarities, or s/he groups them in various ways, at the cost of occluding differences, or s/he identifies recurrent themes and patterns of behaviour, at the cost of losing the thread of processes which unfold and intersect through time.’ (Davies 2009, 5)

The framework of ‘colonisation’ has proved a popular narrative template, partly because much twentieth century scholarship was concerned with the very real problems of establishing a credible and valid chronology across large parts of the Mediterranean and adjacent regions, and partly because the movement of colonising groups provided a sense of structural coherence between and within regions whose histories are otherwise hard to interpret. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that this interpretative scaffolding has serious drawbacks that need to be borne in mind, particularly when the spotlight falls on more remote regions. The term ‘colonisation’ brings with it associations that are potentially confusing, if not wrong-headed, when anachronistic or inappropriate assumptions are made without reflection on the specific context under study. "Colonisation" involves "colonialism", namely the unequal exploitation of another territory by a socially (or politically, or technologically) dominant group. Far from denying that such unequal relationships existed in antiquity, there is a new desire to assert a consciously exploitative approach on the part of settler groups, arguing that it was the richer, well connected individuals and families who were best placed to derive revenues from new territory: "tryphe" was the underlying aim of Greek overseas settlement (Purcell 2005, 118).

The complex web of cultural interactions, over an extended timescale, is likely to have involved a wide range of individuals, from different social backgrounds, with different motives for travelling far beyond their familiar localities. Pioneering ventures always involve risk and dangers, but also exceptional rewards. Notwithstanding the increase in population that has been widely accepted as having taken place in the Greek world between the eighth and fourth centuries BC, there is insufficient evidence to support the idea that populations exceeded the carrying capacity of their home territories, even if temporary food shortages did take place. As Scheidel has observed, ‘over-population’ is a functional imbalance between average well-being and subsistence levels, and that in practice no more than a few hundred thousand individuals are likely to have emigrated between the archaic and Hellenistic periods (Scheidel 2007, 64; Id. 2003). This estimate, based on various kinds of comparative and proxy demographic data, is nevertheless consistent with the technical limitations on mass movement in the form of transport.

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4 See esp. Lyons and Papadopoulos 2002; Hurst and Owen 2005; the most recent collective volume on archaic Greece (Raaflaub and van Wees 2009) does not include any section that takes the transfers of population as a starting point or as a narrative device.
Ship construction and transportation

Ship construction is a resource-intensive technology and most scholars who have studied ship building in the first millennium BC agree that the bulk of sea-going and coastal vessels were privately built and owned, while Korinth was the only significant Greek city with a navy of any size before the last quarter of the sixth century BC. Thucydides’ description of the expansion of the city’s commercial ports either side of the Isthmus underlines the close connection between the expanding accommodation for merchant ships and the boom in Korinth’s revenues (Thuc.1.13.1-5).

Ship design in the archaic age was by no means uniform, but larger vessels are more likely than smaller ones to have tended towards similar dimensions, since ships built for community defence could then also serve commercial purposes. The largest type of ship recorded was for fifty oars (pentekontoros), very likely arranged in two banks (with a hull c.3.25 m wide), and this design probably superseded the twenty-oared ship (eikosioros), which was known to Homer (Od. 9.322-23 ; Bravo 1983). Sails could be used for short voyages in known waters, but voyages to unfamiliar areas, and for irregular traffic, required oarsmen, for at least part of the voyage. Once oarsmen are factored into the equation, there were limitations on the number of passengers and freight that could be handled, even though the eikosioros evidently had a broader beam than earlier galleys, and the pentekontoros may be seen as a further, more ambitious development, which may well have been sponsored by civic authorities, including oligarchic families (Wallina 1993, 13-65, esp. 41-57). Very large ships (and much of the technical development in ship-building) were the preserve of large powers, and in this respect the Phoenicians and Egypt had the edge over Greeks and others in the first half of the first millennium BC (Wallina 1993, 108-15 ; 126-8).

In addition to considerations of space, there was the additional challenge of cost. Any overseas journey had to be financed in a planned fashion, with the expectation that this outlay would be paid for in some way agreed in advance ; otherwise the enterprise would have had to be consciously subsidised, whether by a wealthy individual or the community concerned. Research on shipwrecks confirms the idea that sea-going vessels represent carefully planned journeys, with commodities intended for specific recipients, or for anticipated sales (Parker 2008). Although the clearest evidence is derived from Roman shipwrecks, the presence of items intended to cater for particular clients is apparent much earlier, as the range of black glazed drinking vessels in the Thracian interior and the subject matter of Red Figure pottery at Apollonia Pontika demonstrate (Hermay ; Božkova, this volume).

New technologies

One of the most important developments of the first half of the first millennium BC was the emergence of new technologies, particularly iron tools and ceramics turned on a fast wheel. These developments undoubtedly played a key role in the new configuration of settlements that took place in this period. We know a good deal more about ceramics than we do about iron technology, partly because iron corrodes easily and has received far less attention from researchers (Kostoglou 2008a). The appearance of precocious iron artefacts in Macedonia and in various parts of the east Balkans suggests that the new material attracted technological experimentation on a considerable scale and in a variety of unrelated locations (Bouzek 1985, 213-18 ; idem 1997, 104-114 ; Archibald 1998, 66-71). Pre-modern iron production was complex and problematic, because of the difficulty of achieving satisfactory extraction methods that would remove enough of the trace elements from the ores that impeded the creation of an efficient blade, whilst retaining the strength of a comparatively carbon-rich tool, which could also take a sharp edge. Since ancient metallurgists had no means of understanding the scientific structure of metals, and the phase changes that occur at different temperatures, observation and experimentation were the only realistic ways of developing knowledge about iron production. Analyses of samples taken from iron tools and from associated slag deposits, dating between 6th century BC and 2nd century AD, at three locations in Aegean Thrace, namely Abdera, ‘Messimvria’-Zone (the excavated walled settlement between ancient Maroneia and modern Makri) and the fortress of Kalyva, in the foothills of the Rhodopes north-west of Xanthi, have revealed that different ores were used in each of these locations, and different processing and finishing methods adopted in each case (Kostoglou 2006 ; eadem 2008b, 66-70). At ‘Messimvria’-Zone, iron bars that were dedicated as votives in the sanctuary of Apollo demonstrate a high level of expertise in the use of manganese ferrous ores. The incidence of cast iron is a rare example of a particularly demanding technology prior to the early modern period. Indigenous mining and smithing technology was evidently adopted within the settlement from an early stage, which probably means that local specialists, working closely with those who were smelting the ores in the mining region (identifiable by substantial slag heaps), established smithing forges in the south-eastern part of the city.
(Kostoglou 2008b, 35-43). By contrast, the quality of iron working in Abdhera was comparatively poor, perhaps because the inhabitants did not have access to suitable ores, or were unable to negotiate appropriate terms with experienced smiths (Kostoglou 2008b, 43-7; 66-70). The contrast between Abdhera’s very fine gold coinage, and its poor ironwork, is particularly striking.

Thrace constituted one of the most important sources of metals in the ancient Aegean (Gale and Gale 2002, 280-90). Mount Pangaeon is the best known source, because of its precious metal resources, but iron and copper were also extracted. Smelting slag is the clearest indicator of local extractive workings and can be difficult to date without systematic scientific analysis. Nevertheless, examination of iron slags in connection with the analysis of artefacts indicates that the principal metal reserves known from modern survey were investigated, albeit partially, in the first millennium BC; substantial reserves north-east of Serres, and less extensive reserves around Thermi, near the Greek-Bulgarian above Xanthe, and around Kimeria, east of Xanthe, and close to Kirki, Evros. The early Thracian inhabitants of Thasos (Ononis), may have used copper from the mainland for their tools, but the early first millennium BC inhabitants of the inland site of Kastri made their own iron tools and could also have been the first to explore the island’s gold mines. There is now evidence that the Thracians of Ononis were also mining iron and copper near the harbour of the city of Thasos (modern Limenas: Muller, this volume). These activities could well have stimulated the interest of other communities searching for new metal sources, perhaps the Phoenicians, to whom Herodoto ascribes an active role (although this is still hard to demonstrate: Hdt. 6.47), and undoubtedly the Parians, who eventually competed actively with the Thracians of Ononis, and may finally have found a modus vivendi with them. The evidence from Samothrace provides one relevant analogy (Matsas 2007).

The indigenous Edonians continued to mine the metals of Pangaeon, although the wide dissemination of the region’s metals indicates that the miners negotiated with various end users effectively, probably through bilingual middlemen, the bar iron and silver or gold ingots that would have been smelted close to the mines (Photos et al. 1989). Metals are referred to by historians at times of increased inter-group tension. These incidents were probably exceptional; the importance and success of the extractive industries in Aegean Thrace suggests that the prevailing situation was one of mutual co-operation, even if some agents benefited more than others. A wealth of artefacts from inland Thrace (the territory of modern Bulgaria) demonstrates very high levels of production but, excepting Bronze Age copper metallurgy, little is yet known about the relationship between the extraction of metals and the manufacture of tools, coins and artefacts.

By contrast, during the last twenty years there has been a dramatic increase in research on ceramic production and circulation in the east Balkans. Around the Thermaic Gulf, excavations at the toumba of Karabournaki, and 99 burials in the cemetery of Sindos have revealed the range and variety of locally made fine wares, storage vessels (mainly wine and oil containers) and cooking wares, alongside imported tableware (Manakidou; Sarapanidi, this volume). Imported Korinthian and Attic cups are among the more distinctive non-local grave goods at Sindos. Only 27 of the excavated burials contained locally made pottery, but the choice of burial items seems to have been determined by special considerations. Site excavations in and around the Gulf and the Chalkidic peninsula show that local ceramic production was prolific and popular. Ninth and eighth century BC shapes, including jugs, cups, and other drinking vessels, as well as a preference for linear and concentric decoration, were much influenced by Euboean prototypes (Manakidou, this volume). Alongside these new shapes, there was a range of traditional regional forms, including jugs with ‘cutaway’ necks, which have a much older pedigree. The taste for large vessels, covered with a highly micaceous slip, to give a silvery sheen, sometimes accompanied by geometric motifs, is a fabric well represented throughout the region of the Thermaic Gulf and Chalkidiki, as well as on Thasos (Manakidou, this volume; Panti 2008, 87-88).

One of the clearest trends to emerge from systematic excavation is the marked influence of Ionian fabrics and styles, beginning in the seventh century BC and continuing well into the second half of the first millennium BC. This trend is evident not just in products manufactured on the north Aegean coast, but is equally apparent in the numerous workshops that were set up along the Black Sea coast, including the hinterland of Istris (Lungu, this volume) and Odessos (Damyanov, this volume); and thence at a large number of inland sites. Kilns for the production of grey-faced and red wares whose repertoire includes established regional forms as well as Ionian-derived shapes have been found at Halka Bunar, near Chirpan, c.50 km east of Plovdiv (Herries, Kovacheva 2007), and at Adjyyska Vodenitsa, near Vetren, the site identified with ancient Pistoris (Domaradzki 2002a, 13; Id. 2002b; cf also Bouzek 2002). The relationship between indigenous potting traditions and incoming ones is perhaps best represented at Beidaud, in the southern foothills of the Babadag range, north-west of Istris, whose wheel-made greyware was modelled partly on Aeolian fabrics and is closely related to the products of Istris itself and of the neighbouring...
community at Orgame. At Beidaud we have an example of a localised greyware production that developed out of the indigenous dark-faced ‘Hallstatt’ tradition of pottery making, which is one of the reasons why the reducing fabrics of Aeolis proved particularly attractive to the local clientele. Local preferences also explain why the shapes that seem to have been particularly popular with these communities were not necessarily those commonly found on ‘colonial’ sites (Lungu, Dupont, and Simion, 2007, 38-9). Although the potters of the Thermaic Gulf and Chalkidike, as well as other, as yet unidentified kiln sites along the north Aegean coast, were at least partly inspired by a similar repertoire, the choices and preferences in this part of the east Balkans were quite different from those emanating from the Pontic coast.

Reconceiving the interactions of Greeks and Thracians

The second century BC historian Polybios distinguished between three kinds of historical writing (ix.1.1-5), the ‘genealogical’ kind, of interest to a casual audience; accounts of colonies, city foundations, and kinship ties, which he took to be the domain of those interested in what we might call facts and figures; and ‘affairs of peoples, cities, and rulers’, or what has come to be called ‘pragmatic history’ after Polybios’ formulation, which is the kind of history that the author considered worthy of his attention. Polybios’ remarks need somehow to be applied to a period and to places that have no comprehensive voice or witness of his calibre and understanding. Much of what survives as written evidence is so fragmentary and inarticulate that it cannot serve as a suitable narrative framework for what we want to discover, although, within the timescale covered in this section, there is much of relevance in two of the most extensive pieces of historical prose available to us, namely the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides. The people and places of the north Aegean, and of the continental hinterland beyond it, nevertheless have a peripheral role in these works.

Archaeological and environmental evidence provides much more nuanced data, but the evidence currently available is unevenly distributed within the region. Environmental data, which provides a long-term profile of regional changes, is available only in limited areas, but reflects the dramatic impact of intensive agricultural and pastoral exploitation during the course of the first millennium BC (Popova, Božilova 1998; Popova 2002). This evidence, alongside registered archaeological sites of the continental interior, which outnumber the coastal ‘colonial’ sites many times over, represents a still largely underexplored resource. The cumulative picture that emerges from the information discussed so far points to the participation of Thracians in most, if not all the coastal foundations, whether or not they had access to civic membership, which was in any case usually restricted.

The principal incentive to close engagement between indigenous and incoming groups was access to resources. Those coastal settlements that flourished did so in part because they were in a position to link the wealth of Thrace – its agricultural produce, minerals, and manpower – with markets where these resources were in demand. Some provided moorings and water for long-haul ships travelling further along the north Aegean and Pontic coasts. Others were actively engaged in the exchange of commodities, whether on a local or regional scale. Many aspects of these commercial exchanges are still ambiguous and can be interpreted in a number of ways. It is clear that competition for resources was intense in the lower Strymon valley, where the coincidence of important mineral deposits and route junctions made this a particularly valuable area (Perrault and Bonias, this volume). The history of Amphipolis is better known than that of any other city in the river’s estuary, because it was a bone of contention for parties from within as much as from without the region. But other sites in the immediate vicinity, including Argilos and Berge (Bonias, this volume) evidently had some share in this commercial success. A similar intermediary role was perhaps played by the settlement at Linos, in the valley of the River Filiouri, on one of the possible routes between locations in the Thracian Plain, such as Adjyska Vodenitsa, across the eastern Rhodopes, to Maroneia (Baralis, this volume).

The Pistiros inscription, which was reused at a Roman mansio 2 km from the site at Adjyska Vodenitsa, is one of the most detailed surviving documents concerning commercial regulations at inter-state level. The teams excavating the latter site have felt confident in identifying it with Pistiros mentioned in the text, whilstacknowledging that the connection cannot be securely demonstrated. The site was without doubt a major centre of exchange – this is apparent from the wide range of numismatic evidence, bulk and specialised imports, and from structural details, including the emphasis on secure accommodation reflected in the 2 m wide circuit wall (Pistiros II, Pistiros III). Whilst some scholars have accepted the identification, others have not (for a range of views, see esp. Dossier Pistiros; Hansen 1997; contrast Chankowski and Baralis, this volume).

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5 Beister 1995, 329n.1 for detailed discussion of various suggested meanings for the phraseology of this paragraph.
This variety of opinions in part reflects different assumptions about what constituted an *emporion* and whether an *emporion* was necessarily a self-constituted civic centre. This argument depends to some extent, as I indicated earlier, on scholarly assumptions about the similarities and differences between Greek and non-Greek institutions. International *emporia* were sometimes located at considerable distances from the Mediterranean, and did not necessarily betray recognisably Greek characteristics (Etienne 1993; Bresson 2002). Such centres could nevertheless develop into autonomous civic centres, with or without Greek civic institutions (Bresson 2000, 82-84). Like Naukratis in Egypt, Pistoiros was an urban nucleus where citizens from different originating centres enjoyed rights that were guaranteed by a central ruling authority. The people of Pistoiros, the Pistirenoi, like the Thasians, Apollonians, and Maroneians, exercised rights independently of their commercial partners, but when collaborating with their trading partners were bound by the regulations legislated by King Kotys I and his successors, as set out in the inscription.

It is possible that there may be an etymological connection between the Pistoys referred to by Herodotos (7.109), close to the Aegean coastline, and the location referred to in the inscription. However, attempts to conflate the two names do not necessarily simplify interpretation of the inscription. If Pistoiros were to be located in the vicinity of Nea Karvali, east of Kavalla (see further Chankowski, this volume), it then becomes necessary to explain not only why the stone itself, with its frequent references to Pistoiros and Pistirenoi, should have been found many hundreds of kilometres away, in the midst of the Thracian Plain; but also how it came about that a successor of Kotys could be reasserting his power over a section of coastline little more than 20 km east of the newly established Macedonian military colony at Krenides, renamed Philippoi. An idea that deserves to be examined more seriously in the context of Thrace is that of ‘connectivity’, both physical connectedness, in terms of routes of access, and social connections, which were based on unique historical encounters (Horden and Purcell 2000, 123-52). One of the desirable reasons for the creation of an international trading centre deep in the heartlands of the Odrysian kingdom, such as the settlement at Adjiyska Vodenitsa, was the fact that this establishment created a direct line of contact between peoples otherwise widely separated. The link provided a highway for intellectual and emotional engagement as well as a transit route for luxuries and commodities. As such, it plugged local people into the main currents of Mediterranean life.

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