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Jenny Strauss Clay, Irad Malkin, Yannis Z. Tzifopoulos (Eds.)

PANHELLENES AT METHONE

GRAPHÊ IN LATE GEOMETRIC AND PROTO-ARCHAIC METHONE, MACEDONIA (CA 700 BCE)

TRENDS IN CLASSICS

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Panhellenes at Methone

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Table of Contents

Preface

Excavations, ongoing since 2003–04, have begun to bring to light ancient Methone in the southern tip of the Haliacmon River Delta, immediately north of modern-day Agathoupolis, ca. 35 kilometers southwest of Thessaloniki. According to the ancient sources, Methone was established by colonists from Eretria in Euboea during the second colonization period (800–500 BCE) and is the oldest colony of the southern Greeks on the northern shores of the Aegean. By the end of the 8th century, with its safest harbor in the Thermaic Gulf, Methone became a chief commercial and industrial centre.

Methone occupies two hills, which were located by the sea before sedimentations of the rivers Axios, Loudias, and especially the nearby Haliacmon pushed the coastline ca. 500 meters away from the site. On the eastern, lower hill habitation already starts by the late Neolithic (5200 BCE) and continues throughout the Bronze Age (3000–1100 BCE), while a Late Bronze Age (1400–1100 BCE) cemetery has been located on the western, higher hill. During the Early Iron Age (1100–700 BCE) habitation extends on both hills, and the finds from the eastern hill confirm that colonists from Eretria settled in Methone around 733 BCE.

Unique and so far unprecedented for Macedonia are the pots and potsherds unearthed from a rectangular pit of 3.50 × 4.50 meters wide and over 11 meters in depth, apparently used as an *apothetes*. The greatest majority of these sherds dates to ca. 700 BCE, and 191 of them, recently pieced together, bear inscriptions, graffiti, and (trade)marks inscribed, incised, scratched, and (rarely) painted.

The Centre for the Greek Language, a private legal entity under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Research, and Religious Affairs, under John Kazazis and Antonios Rengakos, undertook the implementation of the project, cofinanced by the European Union (European Social Fund) and the Greek State: "Ancient Greek Dialects of vital importance for the continuity of the Greek language and the cultural tradition – A documentation project for the support of the curricula in the Universities' Departments of Language and Literature" – Horizontal Action, priority axes 1-2-3 of the Operational Programme "Education and Lifelong Learning" in accordance with the decision of accession No 24885/30.11.2010 of the Ministry of Education, Lifelong Learning and Religious Affairs.

Within the framework of this Project, the Centre for the Greek Language undertook the publication of the 191 incised sherds from Methone, dated to ca. 700 BCE, which appeared as: Matthaios Bessios, Yannis Tzifopoulos, and Antonis Kotsonas, *Μεθώνη Πιερίας Ι: Επιγραφές, χαράγματα και εμπορικά σύμβολα στη γεωμετρική και αρχαϊκή κεραμική από το 'Υπόγειο' της Μεθώνης Πιερίας στη*

Μακεδονία, Thessaloniki (2012) (online: http://ancdialects.greeklanguage.gr/studies/methoni-pierias-i).

Also, within the framework of the same Project, the Centre for the Greek Language entrusted to Jenny Strauss Clay, Antonios Rengakos, and Yannis Tzifopoulos the organization of an international interdisciplinary conference, which took place in Thessaloniki (June 8–10, 2012), under the title: "Panhellenes at Methone: graphê in Late Geometric and Proto-archaic Methone, Macedonia (ca. 700 BCE)."

We would like to thank all invited speakers, chairs, and participants for an eventful and "out of the ordinary" conference, which raised many stimulating ideas and generated lively responses and discussion (in addition to the authors and editors of this volume, in alphabetic order): Ioannis Akamatis, Stelios Andreou, Lucia Athanassaki, Ewen Bowie, Albio Cesare Cassio, Stella Drougou, Giorgos Giannakis, Miltiadis Hatzopoulos, Richard Hunter, John Kazazis, Anne Kenzelmann Pfyffer, Barbara Kowalzig, Irene Lemos, Angelos Matthaiou, Alexandros Mazarakis Ainian, Franco Montanari, Aliki Moustaka, Chryssoula Paliadeli, Nikolaos Papazarkadas, Katerina Rhomiopoulou, Petros Themelis, Thierry Theurillat, Rosalind Thomas, Michalis Tiverios, Kyriakos Tsantsanoglou, Manolis Voutiras, and Rudolph Wachter.

Because of the significance for archaeology, ancient history, literature, and the study of the Greek dialects, the conference took the form of a round-table discussion of these new 'texts' from Methone and their contexts; the major themes and issues discussed were: Greek(s) in Macedonia and the Second Colonization; trade and the earliest transport amphorae; the scripts of Methone and the appearance of the alphabet; the dialect(s) of Methone and the Greek dialects; contexts for the development of writing, 'literacy', and the literary beginnings (trade and economic factors, *symposia* and literary performances, Homer and heroic/didactic poetry). The fourteen papers in this volume resulted from the conference's discussions, scrutinizing the finds from these different angles, and have been thoroughly revised and a few written anew.

The conference's success emphasized the need for further study of the finds hitherto unearthed from excavations in Methone and was, therefore, instrumental in the resumption of excavations in 2014 with the cooperation of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Pieria (Matthaios Bessios, Athena Athanassiadou, Kostas Noulas and their team) and the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA, John K. Papadopoulos, Sarah P. Morris and their team).

Much of the conference's success was due to the assistance of departmental colleagues, research assistants, both graduate and undergraduate students of the Department of Philology at the Aristotle University, and the colleagues from the Centre for the Greek Language.

We are very much indebted to our co-organizer Professor Jenny Strauss Clay, and also to the President of the Centre for the Greek Language Professor Emeritus John Kazazis and his team for helping us run a successful conference.

A special debt of gratitude goes also to Franco Montanari, General Co-Editor of *Trends in Classics*, for his constant interest and support, as well as to Professors Jenny Strauss Clay and Irad Malkin for accepting our invitation to serve as editors.

Last but not least, at De Gruyter we would like to thank Katharina Legutke, Sabina Dabrowski and Elisabeth Kempf for their efficiency and professionalism.

Antonios Rengakos and Yannis Tzifopoulos Thessaloniki, July 2016

Jenny Strauss Clay, Irad Malkin and Yannis Z. Tzifopoulos

Introduction

The key term in the title of our volume is *Panhellenes*, drawing on a complaint of Archilochus, a poet writing in the mid-seventh century BCE: "The misery of the *Panhellenes* has converged on Thasos." Archilochus represents himself as having come to Thasos from Paros (Telesikles, the Parian founder of Thasos, was his father). The *metropolis* of Thasos was the community on the island of Paros, but as we see from Archilochus' reference to *Panhellenes* converging on Thasos, many others joined too (Graham 1978, 61–98). The context of colonization, then, encouraged a man from Paros to articulate the identity of non-Parian migrants, arriving through networks unknown to us, to join in the new foundation. The wider term of reference for the identity of those coming is explicitly Hellenic (*contra, pan-* in a partitive, not inclusive, sense: Hall 2002, 132 with further references).

Even without such explicit articulation, the variety of finds at Methone seems to justify the title of this book. The first publication of the exciting finds, which this volume follows up, discusses some twenty five new alphabetical inscriptions (aside from one hundred and sixty six non-alphabetic signs) and stresses the "panhellenic" aspect of the Eretrian colony through the varied provenance of the pots, the alphabet, and the dialect.

For the alphabet, only one inscription seems *not* to be in an Eretrian/Euboean alphabet, no. 22 XSENI (*contra* Méndez Dosuna arguments, but he and Panayotou-Triantaphyllopoulou argue for Eretria for all twenty five; and cf. Janko). The argument presupposes that cups from Lesbos, Samos (the Samian N on an amphora before firing is a case in point), and elsewhere were bought and inscribed by Euboean settlers (not to mention that trading, using, and inscribing cups may have been discrete activities). We do not know to what extent the population of Euboea could sustain numerous activities all over the Mediterranean at the time. It is perhaps naive to suggest that only Euboeans were allowed to enter the Thermaic Gulf and Methone, or that only Euboeans knew how to scratch the letters of the alphabet. Until the Persian Wars and chiefly after Athens suppressed the Euboean revolt in mid fifth century BCE, we do not know how Methone fared. The area was a Persian satrapy after Dareios' expansion to the West in the late sixth century BCE.

What was Methone? Like a fossil embedded in rock, Plutarch's late text *Greek Questions* 11 (*Mor.* 293b) contains information to which the Methone findings lend veracity. Eretrians, he says, first settled on Corcyra whence they were expelled by Corinthians. They first tried to return home to Eretria, and when re-

fused they went on to found Methone in the Thermaic Gulf. The episode suggests that Methone was founded before 700 BCE, since the Corinthians performed their double act of settling both Syracuse and Corcyra around 733 BCE (or slightly later, for Corcyra). The synchronicity of Syracuse and Corcyra makes sense in terms of maritime imperatives: Corcyra was essential for sailing to Sicily from Greece, as ships, like those of the Athenian navy *en route* to the siege of Syracuse, would sail north in the Ionian Sea to Corcyra and then catch the NE winds directly to Sicily (otherwise the winds would have pushed mariners down to North Africa; Malkin 1998a, 78). Since the inscriptions at Methone date to ca. 700 or earlier, this seems to confirm the time-frame of Plutarch's account. It also makes sense on more general grounds: the pan-Mediterranean settlement activity of both Chalcis and Eretria seems to have sharply declined after 700 (some would say the Lelantine war was the reason), so a pre-700 date seems probable in any case. Some scholars doubt the story in Plutarch (doubts based mostly on an argument of archaeological silence for Corcyra, a huge island with insufficient excavations), but now, with the dates from Methone, doubters may need to take a step back (cf. Malkin 1998b, 1–10).

For those who do not doubt the story –and we see no *a priori* reason not to accept it– there is another, "panhellenic," implication: in spite of the conventional image of Pithekoussai as hosting "the first western Greeks," the "west" to which the Eretrians were sailing included both Pithekoussai and the *contemporary* (ca. 750?) Eretrian settlement on Corcyra. Pithekoussai was indeed "international." One wonders what might have developed at Corcyra had the Eretrians succeeded in staying; we might have had another "panhellenic" situation instead of the more homogenous and exclusive Corinthian colonization that continued in North-Western Greece (see Graham 1964, 118–153).

Some scholars regard the alphabetic evidence from Methone as indicating more strictly "Eretrian" (not panhellenic) identity; but should we expect a precise, eighth-century, alphabetic overlap between mother cities and *apoikiai*? Authors in this volume take different positions on this question. But we need to remember that just as Thasos was simultaneously both "Parian" and "panhellenic", so too Methone should not have been exceptional. There is no contradiction here, since the following parameter needs to be taken into consideration: colonization kept enlarging the criterion of eligibility to join in a new settlement. It ranged from the narrow circle of a specific *metropolis* (such as "Corinthians" going to Syracuse) to "Greek" immigrants in general, while probably rendering them more "Greek" through such migrations. *À la longue durée*, the dynamics leading up to ever larger numbers of settlers would eventually be expressed in the Hellenistic era, when colonies became more distant, more heterogeneous, and when mother cities disappeared altogether. Much earlier, in

the Archaic period, a mother city would find it hard to send a plentiful supply of its men away to an *apoikia*, especially in cases such as Chalcis, Eretria, or Miletos, reputed to have founded numerous colonies with no apparent reservoir of manpower.

Although often overlooked, this Hellenic extension is a major parameter of Archaic Greek colonization. To illustrate, two generations after Cyrene's foundation, more immigrants were encouraged to come. The Delphic Oracle pronounced a panhellenic oracle addressed, expressly, not to the mother city but to "all the Greeks" (*eis Hellenas pantas*, Hdt. 4.159). So many came from all over that eventually redistribution and a renaming of tribes was implemented by an external arbitrator that Delphi was asked to send. There were three: (1) Therans (the original settlers) and *perioikoi* ("dwellers around": perhaps local populations or mixed Greek-Libyan groups); (2) Peloponnesians and Cretans; (3) Islanders. In the new tribal division the original Theran nucleus dwindled to about one-sixth of Cyrene's citizens even though its Theran identity, rituals (e.g., the *Karneia*) and the Theran founder-cult remained consistently during later centuries as a focus of collective reference. The alphabet of Cyrene was rather unified and it is almost certain that Cyrene "used the script of Thera" (Jeffery in *LSAG*, 319). This may serve as a test case for assumptions concerning "mixed" colonies (Dell'Oro).

Examples for such an increase in the original nucleus abound across the chronological spectrum, thus rendering the "panhellenes" aspect at Methone more convincing: there were Naxians who joined the Chalcidians to found the earliest colony in Sicily (Hellanicus, *FGrHist* 4 F 82); there were Megarians who joined the Corinthian founder, Archias, at Syracuse (733 BCE; Strabo 6.2.4 C 270; Ps. Scymn. 278–80); the original settlers of Zancle "were followed later by a large body of colonists from Chalcis and the rest of Euboea who shared in the allotment of the land" (Thuc. 6.5). We hear of Samians and "other Ionians" colonizing Sicily (first at Kale Akte, then taking over Zancle, Thuc. 6.4.5), and so on. When Corinth announced its second colony to Epidamnos, aside from Corinthians, "whoever so wished" could join "on fair and equal terms" (Thuc. 1.26-27).

The dynamics of migration and adaptation were rapid. Within a generation or two all "the misery of the Greeks" would become "Parians," "Eretrians," "Milesians," or "Corinthians" thanks to processes of co-optation of the initial "funnel" through which all new immigrants poured in. What was this funnel? During the initial foundation the *oikistes* would normally establish the *nomima* of the colony, such as its tribal organization, its magistracies, and its sacred calendar. On the other hand, it is significant that no official decision would be made, or so it seems, concerning the dialect or the alphabet. This was not an essential element of *nomima* which the founder had "laid down" (*tithemi* is the

verb commonly used by Thucydides; Malkin 2009, 373–394). And our period is probably too early for such matters (state decisions about the form of the alphabet such as the three-bar *sigma* are a relatively late and an Athenian phenomenon, and it remains an open question by what processes the local alphabets became homogenized).

With regard to dialect, Thucydides (6.5.1) reports the case of Sicilian Himera: its official *nomima* were Chalcidian, but due to the later arrival of a group of Dorians the dialect became mixed, Chalcidic-Doric, as a process of natural evolution. The case is noteworthy in relation to some a-priori assumptions, also evident in this volume, about what to expect in a Greek settlement in terms of exact copying of the alphabetic forms prevalent in the mother city, or of employing local alphabetic idiosyncrasies as well. The more open question, referred to in this volume, is how systematic and consistent were alphabets in the eighth century? (Dell'Oro, Méndez Dosuna, Panayotou-Triantaphyllopoulou).

The "Panhellenes" of Methone are also relevant to questions of pan-Mediterranean connectivity, beyond Greek circles (Kourou). The inscribed amphora jars which are plentiful and of variable types indicate cross Mediterranean links, "from Crete to Malaga" (Johnston), and their marks may be nothing more than numerical notations for trade purposes (Verdan). Their quantity and range are impressive (Kotsonas *et al.*). This is noteworthy, since in a world with no passenger ships, it was the trade routes and multi-directional, Mediterranean networks (especially since the ninth century) that can better explain the operative links through which various forms of the alphabet (Phoenician? Phrygian?) were disseminated. We note that at Methone more than six unincised Phoenician amphoras have been found. That early examples exist in Latium and Gabii illustrates the multi-directionality of such contacts (Kourou, Johnston, Janko, Papadopoulos, Verdan). Not only letter forms, but possibly also names imply Greek-Semitic connectivity (Woodward). Methone itself was a hub of interregional connectivity (not just Euboean) around the Thermaic Gulf and beyond. Trade in timber as well as metals, for example, seems to have been significant around the Thermaic Gulf; its availability not only answered the needs of shipbuilding but probably also encouraged it, implying more activity and widening horizons.

The level of literacy as revealed by the Methone inscriptions is nothing less than astounding. The potters themselves seem to have been literate (Papadopoulos, Oikonomaki, Pappas) as well as those expected to read what was on the pot. Neither scribes, nor scholars, nor aristocrats: anachronistic assumptions that literacy was limited only to the elite or to professionals need to be reevaluated. Such early literacy, as revealed in Methone, should be understood on its own terms, not in comparison to the ancient Near East or to the Middle Ages.

The discovery of early abecedaria and graffiti among classes of people that until recently were assumed to be illiterate (e.g., the rock-cut inscriptions of Thera or herders' graffiti around Mt. Hymettos), join the amazingly early inscriptions of Methone and call for re-assessment of the issue (Langdon 2005, 175–182; and 2015, 49–58). This issue (the circles of literacy and non-elite use) touches directly upon one of the major finds, the Cup of Hakesandros, which receives various linguistic and philological interpretations in this volume (Skelton, Woodard, Oikonomaki). The interpretation of the cup as belonging to the context of the *symposion* and its relation to other verse inscriptions on (mostly Euboean) cups, such as the "Cup of Nestor" from Pithekoussai (today's Ischia in the Bay of Naples), allows us to ask about the social implications of the finds (Węcowski). At Pithekoussai the excavated tombs have no "aristocratic" characteristics (e.g., weapons) and, in general, the inscribed cups are mostly modest affairs. "Don't steal me!" is a recurring statement on such cups. It refers not to expensive silver or bronze utensils but to clay pots, the price of which could not have been prohibitive although their specific value to their owners may have been significant. A more economically modest circle of participants (implying again a wider degree of literacy) may be evident. One may still insist on an "elite" context but, in the vein of Alain Duplouy's (2006) re-assessment of what it meant by being an aristocrat (a state of mind, ambition, and lifestyle), a sympotic context is an attractive hypothesis, especially as the notion of "elite" seems flexible.

When we re-direct the question as to the significance of the Methone finds for the history of the Greek alphabet, one implication seems momentous. The variety of the texts, meager as they are in total number, nevertheless indicates a high degree of sophistication and *savoir faire* in their deployment, which also touches upon literary beginnings (Clay 2016). There have always been scholars who insisted on an early date for the adoption of the alphabet (Janko: 900–850 BCE), arguing for a date ca. 800 or earlier (Sass 2005).

The Methone finds therefore reinforce such a conclusion. They not only add to our knowledge of the early geographical diffusion of the alphabet, but also attest to its diffusion both among social classes, discrete communities, and within a *panhellenic* context. Yet, our reevaluation is only now beginning.