

PHANAGORIA AND ITS METROPOLIS*

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Phanagoria was founded on the Taman Peninsula, South Russia, not far from the modern village of Sennoi. Despite the fact that excavations have been going on for more than 60 years, very little is known about this colony. This is not only because the site is large (more than 60 ha) but also because of the richness of the habitation levels, which reach a depth of 7 m. Thus, on the one hand, investigation takes a long time, and on the other, there is so much to be found. In Western literature Phanagoria is practically unknown, unlike Olbia, Panticapaeum and Tauric Chersonesus, and this is principally because nothing substantial has been published from the excavations of the last three decades (either in the East or the West)¹.

Phanagoria was situated on the southern coast of the Taman Gulf, close to its south-eastern corner (Fig. 1). The city-site has a rectangular form and lies on two plateaus (Fig. 2). The lower runs down to the gulf and ends at a small cliff; the upper contains the largest part of the settlement. On the east and west, the settlement is hemmed in by deep ravines, which were used as natural defences and where the city walls were built. On the south, the city-site is at a higher level than the surrounding territory. On the north it is bordered by the gulf. An underwater study of 1958 showed that the coastline lay some 220-240 m further north in antiquity (Blavatskii 1985, 169, 223). Hence, part of its northern territory has been submerged (about 15 ha in the estimate of V.D. Blavatskii: Blavatskii/Kuzishchin 1961, 137-8). A further underwater survey in the summer of 1999 indicated that the ancient coastline was

* *Editorial note.* This article is published to encourage discussion of the hypothesis it puts forward.

¹ On Phanagoria in Western languages, see Boardman 1962-3, 50; Gorbunova 1971-2, 56-7; Hind 1983-4, 90; 1992-3, 107; Treister/Vinogradov 1993, 556-8; Tsetskhladze 1997; 2001; Tsetskhladze forthcoming, Brandon/Tsetskhladze 2002; Tsetskhladze/Kuznetsov 1997; Kuznetsov 2001. A large publication project of several volumes on Phanagoria and the whole Taman Peninsula is under way. The volumes will appear in the *Colloquia Pontica* series (Brill, Leiden).

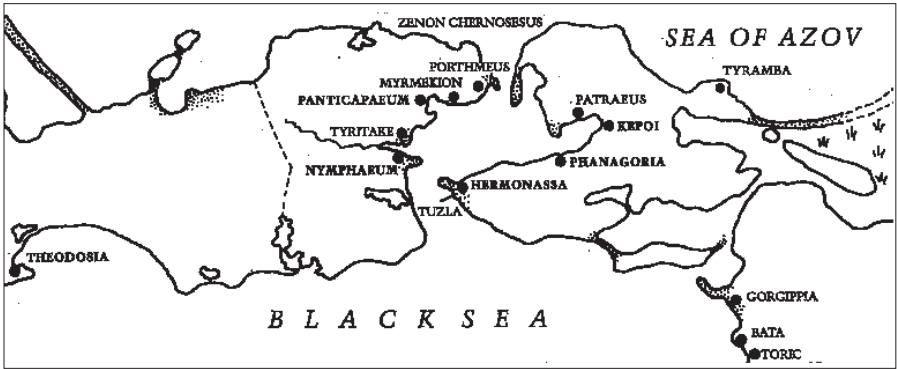


Fig. 1. Map of the Cimmerian Bosphorus.

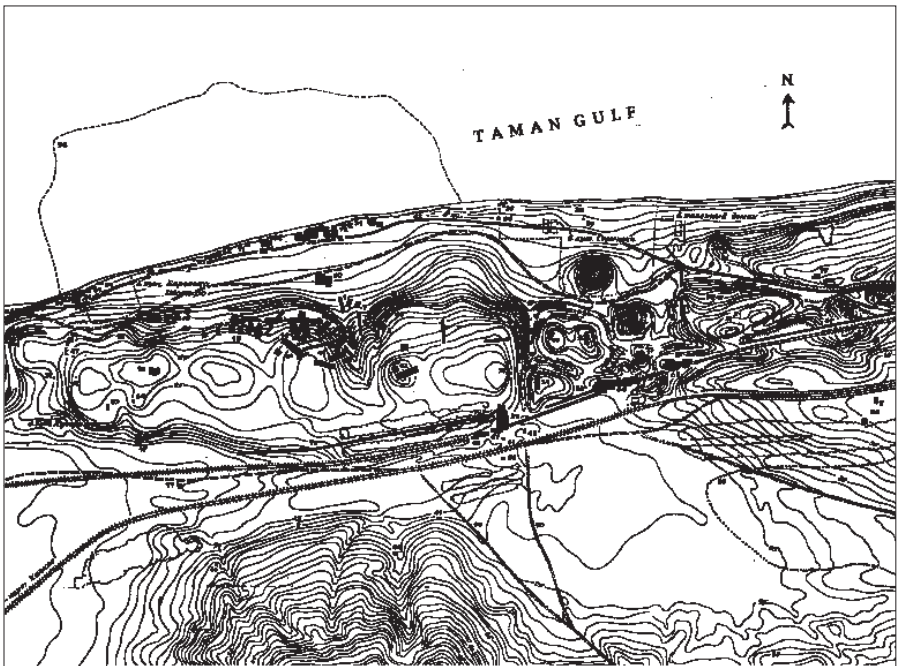


Fig. 2. Plan of Phanagoria.

slightly further out. The submerged area is covered with stones and ancient artefacts².

As well as many other features, large stone blocks and architectural details from some large public building were found (parts of columns 0.82 m in diameter and details of a marble cornice). Pottery finds from the submerged part of the site exhibit a chronological range from the 5th century to the early Middle Ages.

Phanagoria is surrounded on three sides by a necropolis, the largest in the Taman Peninsula. Since ancient times, travellers and scholars have remarked upon its great size. The burial mounds are on the south, east, and west sides of the settlement, partly on the flat plateau, partly on natural hillocks. To the south-west the necropolis continues with graves without mounds.

For the identification of Phanagoria in written sources with the above-mentioned site, we rely first of all on Strabo that Phanagoria was μητρόπολις of the Greeks of the Asiatic Bosphorus (11. 2. 10)³. From this information it is clear that Phanagoria was the most important city of the Asiatic Bosphorus. It had a very advantageous geographical location, practically at the centre of the Taman Peninsula, amidst fertile land, with maritime links with the Greek world (Zavoikin 1992) and contacts with local tribes by land and via the river Hypanis-Kuban (Koshelenko/Marinovitch 2000, 175). Indeed, the site near Sennoi has no equal on the Taman Peninsula in size or in the richness of its habitation levels. Furthermore, study of aerial photographs has demonstrated that the same site was the centre of the whole ancient road system of the Peninsula (Paromov 1998, 219, 222). This, once again, underlines the status of this site as the main city of the Asiatic Bosphorus.

The accuracy of the traditional identification of Phanagoria with the site near Sennoi is supported by the inscription dedicated to Aphrodite found there (CIRB 971): Ἀπ[ολλ]όδω[ρ]ος Φαναγόρῳ κτλ (*cf.* Blavatskii 1954, 23, note 2). It is quite logical that the name Phanagora should be popular in Phanagoria and not, for example, in the neighbouring cities of Kepoi and Hermonassa. In addition, an inscription found in the immediate vicinity of

² Cultural levels in the submerged part of Phanagoria are situated at a depth of between 1 and 5 m.

³ “Sailing into Lake Corocondamitis one comes to Phanagoria, a noteworthy city, and to Kepoi, and to Hermonassa, and to Apatouron, the sanctuary of Aphrodite. Of these, Phanagoria and Kepoi are situated on the island above-mentioned, on the left as one sails in, but the other cities are on the right, across the Hypanis, in the Sindi territory ... Panticapaeum is the metropolis of the European Bosphorians, while Phanagoreium (for the name of the city is also spelt thus) is the metropolis of the Asiatic Bosphorians. Phanagoria is reputed to be the emporion for the commodities that are brought down from the Maeotis and the barbarian country that lies above it ...” (Strabo

the western edge of the site was published quite recently (Vinogradov 1991, 15-6)⁴; it informs us about Φαναγοριτῶν ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος.

For a long time, the question of who founded Phanagoria and when has been regarded as solved in scholarly literature. Based on information given by some authors of a later period (Late Hellenistic, Roman), scholars reached the quite logical conclusion that Phanagoria was established by Teos in the 540s BC, at the same time as another Teian colony, Abdera (Zhebelev 1953, 61; Graham 1992, 48). As far as I know, this is universally accepted (Koshelenko/Kruglikova/Dolgorukov 1984, 77; Loukopoulou 1989, 58, note 5)⁵.

The most detailed information from an author naming the metropolis of Phanagoria is that given by Eustathius in his commentary to Dionysius Periegetes (*GGM* II, 549, p. 324.36-41 = Arr., *Bith.*, fr. 55. Ed. Roos)⁶. To this must be added the information of the Anonymous *Periplus* (Pseudo-Arrian and Pseudo-Scymnos) who also name Teos as the metropolis of Phanagoria (*GGM* I, 886-7, p. 232 = *GGM* I, 47, p. 412: Diller 1986, 102-17, 165; Skrzhinskaya 1980, 115-25).

But, in reality, things are not so simple. The problem is that two authorities writing of the decision of the Teians to leave their homeland in the face of the Persian siege, have information about the migration to Abdera, but never mention Phanagoria. According to Herodotus: "... Very similar were the actions of the Teians. For when Harpagus captured their town with his earthwork, they, too, all took to their boats and sailed off for the parts of Thrace and there founded the city of Abdera ..." (1. 168). And Strabo states: "Teos is also situated on a peninsula; and it has a harbour. Anacreon the melic poet was from Teos; in whose time the Teians abandoned their city and migrated to Abdera, a Thracian city, being unable to bear the insolence of the Persians; and hence the verse in reference to Abdera: 'Abdera, beautiful colony of the Teians'" (14. 1. 30).

Why did neither Herodotus nor Strabo mention the foundation of Phanagoria by Teos, which we know only from later authors, writing from the beginning of the 2nd century AD? Either we must take the silence of Herodotus and Strabo as mere coincidence, and accept that Phanagoria was an *apoikia* of Teos, founded at the same time as Abdera, or that the Teians migrated only to Thrace and not to the Taman Peninsula.

Let us return to the authors of the Roman period. Dionysius Periegetes (first third of the 2nd century AD) does not name the metropoleis of Phanagoria

⁴ In the text of the article there is a mistake: the inscription was found not on the coast of the Kerch Strait but of the Taman Gulf.

⁵ In Pauly-Wissowa there is no mention of Teos being the metropolis of Phanagoria (Bd. V, 1, *s.v.* Teos, Sp. 545; Bd. XIX, 2, *s.v.* Phanagoreia, Sp. 1751-7).

⁶ Dionysius Periegetes talks generally about the Ionian origin of Phanagoria and Hermonassa without giving the names of their metropoleis (*GGM* II, 549-53, p. 137-8).

and Hermonassa, talking only about their Ionian origin. From the commentary of Eustathius (12th century AD: Tsavari 1990, 61-2), it is clear that one of the sources of information for the Teian foundation of Phanagoria was Arrian. But, in the surviving text of Arrian's *Periplus of the Pontus Euxinus*, Phanagoria is not mentioned. Maybe there was a fuller text of Arrian's *Periplus* which has not survived (Silberman 1995, XXIV). Nevertheless, it is essential to pay attention to the nearly identical phrases in Arrian (as presented by Eustathius) and Strabo. On the reasons for the establishment by Teos of colonies, the first writes (on Phanagoria): φεύγων τῆ ντῶ νΠερσῶν ὕβριν; the second (on Abdera): οὐ φεροντες τῆ ντῶ νΠερσῶν ὕβριν. Perhaps this is a simple coincidence but it is possible that Arrian based his information on the *Geography* of Strabo or that both of them used the same source – but Strabo says nothing about Phanagoria, only Abdera. This means that Arrian must have had some additional information.

Thus, how can we solve this problem? On the one hand, we have quite direct sources telling us that Teos is the metropolis of Phanagoria, on the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that such authors as Herodotus and Strabo say nothing about this. It is very difficult to imagine that Herodotus, who not only gives a detailed description of the situation in Ionia in the 6th century BC but also specially gives two cases of the fight between Ionian *poleis* (Phocaea and Teos) and Eastern despots, omits to give information about Phanagoria, the second colony of Teos. Most probably, we should trust Herodotus and Strabo, and believe that Teos established only one *apoikia*, Abdera. Let us return once again to the information of Herodotus about how and why Teians fled, and where they went: "... when Harpagus captured their town ... they, too, all took to their boats and sailed off for the parts of Thrace and there founded the city of Abdera ...". Now let us compare this information with the fact that Phanagoria was established according to one of the rules governing the establishment of an *apoikia* – the choice of an *oikist* (mentioned by Arrian). We must accept that the Teians had neither the time nor the possibility to organise an expedition under the supervision of an elected *oikist*. This is an additional proof that the Teians went only to Thrace and were not divided into two groups, one of which went to the northern Black Sea.

Now let us turn to Abdera. Excavations conducted there over a relatively long time have presented the city as quite prosperous with an extensive *chora*. For the Archaic period fortifications⁷, dwellinghouses, and a necropolis (which also yielded the burials of the Clazomenian establishment in the 7th century) have been discovered⁸. Unfortunately, the size of the city and

⁷ About their dating (1st phase: second half of the 7th century BC; 2nd phase: 5th century BC), see Lang 1996, 260.

⁸ AR for: 1982-3, 46; 1983-4, 50-1; 1984-5, 50; 1985-6, 70-1; 1986-7, 44; 1987-8, 55; 1988-9, 84-5; 1989-90, 62; 1990-1, 60; 1991-2, 53; 1992-3, 62-3; 1993-4, 64-5; 1996-7, 87; 1997-8, 96; 1998-9, 92; Pariente 1992, 916; Huber/Varalis 1995, 973; Καλλιντζή 1991; 1993; 1995; Σκαρλατίδου 1992.

its *chora* is still unknown for the initial Teian period of its existence (Graham 1992, 52)⁹. Thus, archaeology cannot help us to reconstruct the event examined in this paper.

The other evidence on the early history of Abdera is provided by coins. The city was established in a quite good location. As well as a fertile *chora* it had a harbour not far from the famous silver mines. J.M.F. May (1966, 1-11) came to the conclusion that Abdera began to participate in the silver trade very early. The first coins of Abdera were minted according to a two-weight system. Large denominations were minted according to this system, which was exclusively Abderan; small denominations according to the Thraco-Macedonian system. From this, May concluded, the first class of coin was for the export trade (Egypt and the Near East), and the second for the internal market. Hence, it is not just chance that heavy Abderan coins are found in hoards discovered in such distant locations as Persepolis. May's second important conclusion is connected with the date at which Abdera commenced minting coins (1966, 49). The first appeared in 540-535 BC, several years after the establishment of the city (May 1966, 49; Balcer 1968 [*non vidi*]). It is very important that the minting of coins began in both the colony and metropolis at practically the same time. Furthermore, the only difference between the impressions on their coins is that the griffin is turned to the left on those from Abdera and to the right on those from Teos (May 1966, 49, 54). This provided C.M. Kraay (1976, 35) with grounds for concluding that the minting of coins by the metropolis and its *apoikia* was a co-ordinated act.

Finally, there is one more important piece of evidence for the history of early Abdera – Pindar's *Second Paean*. After publication of the text, with a commentary by S. Radt (1958) suggesting a new understanding of several important moments, it has been possible to reconstruct a more or less clear picture of the history of Abdera in the early phases of its existence. In this, a very important role has been played by the articles of G. Huxley (1984) and, especially, A.J. Graham (1991; 1992). From Pindar we know that Teian colonies had to fight with a Thracian tribe, the Paeonians (Pind., *Pae.* 2. 59-70). Eventually, after several successes and reverses, Abdera won. Graham (1992, 49-51) concludes rightly that the war continued for a little over 30 years (from the founding of Abdera until the establishment of a Persian satrapy in Thrace and the deportation of the Paeonians). Furthermore, attention should be paid to the following passage from Pindar: "I am of a young city, but all the same I gave birth to my mother's mother, after she was stricken by enemy fire" (Pind., *Pae.* 2. 28-31). For a long time "my mother's mother" was understood to be a reference to Athens as founder of Teos, but Radt (1958, 37-8) demonstrated that it was referring to Teos being re-

⁹ See plan of Abdera in Hoepfner/Schwandner 1994, 182, fig. 172.

established by its own colony Abdera. We know of this refoundation from Strabo: “But some of them returned again in later times” (14. 1. 30).

Now, let us try to establish when Abdera could have refounded Teos. Graham (1991, 176-7), rejecting the opinion of some scholars that this happened twice (before and after the Ionian revolt), suggested an alternative: that Abdera sent colonists to its metropolis either after Harpagus’ victory over Teos (about 545 BC) or after the Ionian revolt (about 493 BC). Graham provides arguments to support both propositions. In favour of the first, there is information by Strabo (14. 1. 30) about the return of some colonists to their metropolis¹⁰; Herodotus (6. 8) about the provision by Teos of 17 ships at the Battle of Lade in ca. 493 BC; and the contemporaneous minting of coins by Teos and Abdera. In favour of the second choice is the coincidence of the information given by Herodotus (6. 32) on the burning of Ionian cities and temples after the defeat of the Ionian revolt, and Pindar (see above) about enemy fire in which Teos was destroyed. Graham favours the second possibility, although he warns us that there is very little evidence on which to base a choice.

I think Graham is too fastidious in his choice. It is impossible to understand why he does not exclude the possibility of recolonisation of Teos “after the end of the Ionian revolt in c. 493” when Teos participated in this revolt, providing 17 ships. This quite logical conclusion was drawn by Huxley (1984, 150): while we have no evidence that the crews of these 17 ships were composed of Abderan Teians, we have to conclude that Teos had already been re-established by Abdera some time before the collapse of the revolt. Furthermore, if we accept as the right date the commencement of the issue of Teian coinage “within a very few years, perhaps soon after 540” (Kraay 1976, 35), we have to date the new foundation of Teos to the 540s BC. In view of the information given by Herodotus (6. 32) and Pindar of the destruction of Teos city by fire, it is difficult to see why it could not have been re-established by Abdera soon after the latter had been founded.

If the date of the refoundation of Teos is the 540s BC, we should connect this event to the foundation of Phanagoria. The earliest archaeological material from the excavation of Phanagoria dates from the mid-6th century BC (see below). In other words, the traditional date of establishment of Phanagoria is largely correct, although it is based on the information in written sources which also name Teos as the founder. In these circumstances, the only solution seems to be to name Abdera as the metropolis of Phanagoria.

In this case, how can we connect the information of the authors of the Roman period that Teos was the metropolis of Phanagoria with my suggestion that it is Abdera which performed this role. It is obvious that these later authors based their information upon earlier sources. In reality, there is no

¹⁰ Strabo is using χρόνω ὕστερον (later), not giving precise details.

contradiction here. Graham listed examples of how Greeks migrating from one city to another (including from mother city to colony) continued to call themselves by the name of their place of origin (Graham 1983, 103-5). In our case, we can cite Herodotus (1. 168), who calls the citizens of Abdera of his time “Teians in Abdera” (Herrmann 1981, 29; Graham 1992, 57). This means that there is a source unknown to us on which the authors of the Roman period based their information when writing of the establishment of Phanagoria by Teos, although, in reality, it was founded by Abdera. As I have mentioned several times, Strabo and Herodotus tell us nothing about Phanagoria because its foundation took place later than the Teians’ flight to Thrace, and was not directly connected with the Persian siege of Teos.

The final question which we should ask ourselves is: why were colonists sent to Phanagoria? It is impossible to give a definite answer. Possibly, this action coincided not only with the refoundation of Teos but also had more general reasons, which could be found in the aggressive local surroundings experienced by the Teian colonists in Thrace (their long fight with the local population, etc.). Many among the colonists could have decided that they had to move on, variously by returning to Teos or founding a new colony in some completely fresh region, in our case Phanagoria. Their actions would be consistent with an earlier experience. In 654 BC an attempt was made to establish a colony at the future location of Abdera by Clazomenians under the leadership of Timesias (Herod. 1. 168), but it failed thanks to the aggressive nature of the surrounding local population (Malkin 1987, 54-6)¹¹.

Phanagoria received its name from its *oikist*. Colonies were rarely so named. Thus Phanagoria is not only a rare exception but the earliest example (Malkin 1985, 121-3; Jacquemin 1993, 21). In I. Malkin’s opinion, this is linked to Phanagoria’s not being a usual colony – its establishment was caused by the precipitate departure of Teians from their home city under the Persian military threat (Malkin 1985, 122-3). This denied them the possibility (as, for example, the Phocaeans in the same situation) of moving to previously established colonies. They had none and had to establish them quickly. In these circumstances, the *oikist* could name a new city after himself (Malkin 1985, 122-3). This suggestion is not without some foundation, but for confirmation it is necessary to know how soon after the foundation of Abdera some Teians went to the Pontus. If this happened immediately after their arrival in Thrace, Malkin could be correct. If there were a two to three year time lag, Teians-Abderans had time to prepare the foundation of a new colony (consultation with the Delphic oracle, choice of *oikist*, etc.). Finally, I shall address briefly the date of the establishment of Phanagoria based on archaeological material. Many years of excavation yielded mate-

¹¹ Based on the investigation of the early necropolis of Abdera, E. Skarlatidou (1986) suggested that the Clazomenians could have left their colony because of an epidemic.

rial of the Archaic period of a later date than the supposed founding of the city in the 540s BC. This gave some scholars grounds to suppose that the earliest levels were situated in the northern part of the site, which is now situated on the shore of the Taman Gulf. It is impossible to excavate the earlier levels there without them being inundated. However, after commencing excavation of one of the hills on the edge of the upper plateau in the central part of the city-site, it became obvious that this was the place where the initial settlement was situated. The choice of the colonists was logical: the hill enjoyed natural defences to the north and east¹².

We still do not know if the earliest colonists built fortifications, but, as excavation has demonstrated, they built small dwellings in mudbrick. So far, the remains of 11 have been discovered, one very well preserved: height of surviving walls 1.5 m; it had a semi-basement store with living accommodation above (area of each being 12.5 m²) (Kuznetsov 1999, 543, 550-3). In all probability, it was the abode of a sculptor – this is indicated by the existence of a bronzesmith's workshop not far away, in which full-size human bronze sculptures were cast. (Fragments of clay casting moulds were found on the steps leading to the basement: see Dolgorukov 1986; Tsetskhladze /Kuznetsov 1997, 24, fig. 7.) The earliest pottery is represented by fragments of kraters in Late Wild Goat Style, of Ionian bowls (type B2 in Vallet-Villard's classification), Attic painted kylikes, Clazomenian painted amphorae (Kuznetsov 1998, 9; Arafat /Morgan 2000). All this pottery gives grounds to date the foundation of Phanagoria to the 540s BC¹³.

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¹² On the establishment of colonies in a similar landscape, see Winter 1971, 21.

¹³ I am most grateful to Gocha R. Tsetskhladze for translating this article from Russian and Prof. Sir John Boardman and Prof. A.J. Graham for their comments. Prof. Graham pointed out that "... the argument about Herodotus and Strabo is a very obvious *argumentum e silentio* ... The current *communis opinio* among numismatists is that Abdera's coinage did not begin till ca. 525 BC. See, e.g., Ian Carradice and Martin Price, *Coinage in the Greek World* (London, 1988), 39. I don't myself agree with that *communis opinio*, as I stated in *JHS* 1991, 177 n.18 ..." (personal letter to G.T., 18 September

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