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Communication Uneven.

Acceptance of and Resistance
to Foreign Influences in
the Connected Ancient Mediterranean

Edited by Jan Driessen & Alessandro Vanzetti

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10. Greeks and Thracians at Abdera and the Xanthi-Nestos Area in Aegean Thrace

Constantina Kallintzi
Mercourios Georgiadis
Eurydice Kefalidou
Ioannis Xydopoulos

1. Introduction

The harbour city of Abdera in Aegean Thrace was a ‘double’ Ionian colony, first colonised by people from Clazomenai and, later, from Teos. It was the birthplace of the famous philosophers Protagoras and Democritus, the ‘father’ of atomic theory, and of other illustrious people. Greek mythology relates the city to the eighth labour of Herakles, the capture of the man-eating horses of Diomedes, King of the local tribe of Bistones, which will be discussed below (for the Thracian myths and their iconography: Tsiadaki 1998; 2000; 2002).

Since the 1950s, important archaeological research has been conducted at Abdera and its surrounding area, as well as at the large plain of Xanthi (the modern capital of the Xanthi Prefecture) and the nearby Rhodopi mountain range, including the valley of River Nestos (see **Fig. 10.4**). It includes several rescue and systematic excavations by the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Greek Ministry of Culture and an extensive survey, the ‘Archaeological Program of Abdera and Xanthi, 2015-2022 (A.P.A.X), which is an international and multi-disciplinary intensive survey project centred in the area of the city of Abdera (**Fig. 10.1**). A large number of studies on landscape, sites, finds, coins, and inscriptions have been published up to today; they provide important data that present a rare opportunity to review the relations and socio-cultural dynamics that developed between various cultural groups, namely between the Greek colonists from Ionia and the local Thracian tribes (for an overview: Tiverios 2008: 91-107).

Our present paper aims to shed some light on the types of interaction between the different groups residing in this part of Aegean Thrace, on the way they viewed each other, and/or on the resistance to the cultural influence of the ‘other’. Our study incorporates archaeological and historical data to address these issues during a long time span, mainly from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age (a term used for the Northern Aegean and the Balkan hinterland, *i.e.* Sub-Mycenaean, Geometric and Orientalizing Eras for the Southern Greeks), and to the Archaic and early Classical Period. The Aegean Sea played a vital role in long-distance trade networks, which were dominated by the Greeks. However, the role of the Thracians in this framework remains unclear and the degree it was influenced by these interactions will be reviewed. Our research is focused both on the cultural influence that the Greeks had on the local population and on the character of the indigenous groups, their culture and the form of their resistance or the degree and character of the newly arrived social, economic, political and cultural influence, elements which will be assessed and analysed.

In a post-colonial analytical framework, this line of inquiry also emphasises the fact that the interaction between the two populations was not one directional, but it had an effect on both and it was not static, but varied through time. The work conducted by Dietler in France had similar aims, underlining various cultural influences on both groups. The Greek colony of Massalia brought the wine cultivation and drinking ethos to the locals (Dietler 1990). At the same time, they traded wine in amphoras as well as other clay and bronze drinking vessels with the Hallstatt population of southern France (Dietler 2010: 193-216). However, other cultural influences were far slower and were resisted by the locals who continued to follow their own traditional practices. The adoption of tiles in the roof construction of buildings is one such example: although it lies far away from Thrace, it is worth mentioning that tiles have been used by the Greek colonists in 6th century BCE Massalia; however, they appeared in Hallstatt settlements only from the late 2nd century BCE, sporadically at first and more widely later on, from the period of Augustus onwards (Dietler 2010, 276). A similar set of data will be analysed and discussed in the case of Abdera and its surrounding region in the Aegean Thrace.

2. The indigenous Thracians, from Herodotus to the Hellenistic period

The ethnography of the Thracians needs not be repeated, since this has been done long ago (Asheri 1990: 134). However, some issues must be mentioned and discussed here.

According to Herodotus, Thrace is a four-sided area surrounded to the south and east by two seas, the Aegean and the Black Sea, and to the west and north by two great rivers, Istros and Strymon (Hdt. 4, 99.1-2 & 5. 1-2). Asheri (1990: 136) argued that the choice of rivers as ethnical and political boundaries is not coincidental “especially Strymon marked the western boundary before entering Greece”. We cannot be sure what Asheri means when using the term ‘Greece’. ‘If entering Greece’ means entering into another cultural environment then one should reconsider the nature of the relationships between the Thracians and all the Greek colonies founded at the shores of Aegean Thrace.

The Greeks often used to call the local populations of the North Aegean with the general name “Thracians” although some of them were not of Thracian origin (Graham 1982: 115). The fact that the whole area was known or designated as Thrace by the southern Greeks, especially the Chalcidice peninsula and the various (Greek) cities on its coasts, becomes obvious in the Athenian Tribute Lists down to 438/7 BCE: the Chalcidice cities belonging to the Delian League are recorded either as ἐπί ἀπὸ Θράκης φόρος or simply Θράκιος φόρος (*i.e.* the tax from Thrace). Besides the epigraphic evidence, literature confirms this perspective with numerous references to the Greek colonies in Macedonia and Thrace. But the boundary between ‘Hellenism’ and ‘barbarism’ – which the Greeks always found most problematic – was amongst the tribes of the mainland in northern Greece, where Hellenic influence was at its strongest (Xydopoulos 2007b: 10).

In Greek literary sources, especially those of the Classical Period and later, the Thracians appear to comprise the warlike and ferocious tribes living in the mountain ranges of Haemus and Rhodopi as well as the more (but not always) peaceable inhabitants of the plain. The latter were those who had first come in contact with the Greek colonies on the Aegean coasts and the Propontis. The written sources also mention a tribal system that existed among the Thracians and, in many occasions, the specific region each tribe resided in (Xydopoulos 2007a: 696; for the region of our study see below, 3). In any case, by the mid-7th and mid-6th century BCE, Greek settlements had been established at various coastal sites of Thrace, *i.e.* at Abdera, Dikaia, Stryme, Maroneia, Mesambria, Ainos, Perinthos, Byzantion and Apollonia (Xydopoulos 2007b: 9-10).

The Thracian speech – Herodotus’ second criterion of Hellenicity – was not intelligible to Greeks. In addition to this, certain traits of these indigenous tribes (*ethne*) must have contributed to this ‘foreign’ image: they had their own material culture, cult, and other customs. In any case, the proximity and close interaction between Greeks and Thracians prevented the first to place the latter (*i.e.* the Thracians they had contacts with, not those far in the hinterland who were perceived as ferocious) among the ‘barbarians’ (Xydopoulos 2007a: 697; 2007b: 12).

The Thracians are described by Herodotus as the most numerous people of all mankind, next to the Indians¹. In the beginning of his description (Hdt. 5, 3.1), he uses the general ethnic name Θρήϊκες while later he writes about certain tribes belonging to the Thracians, such as the Getai, the Trausi and ‘those above the Crestonai’, whose customs and rituals are described in detail. Some of these tribes are treated favourably as, for instance, the Chersonite Dolonci who are said to be civilised as they are ruled by kings (Hdt. 6, 34.1; cf. 5, 3.2). We must assume this positive characterisation is due to his Athenian sources, for the Dolonci had extremely good relations with the Athenians and had taken part in a joint colonial enterprise (Asheri 1990: 139) while other tribes, like the Brygoi, the Edones and the Apsinthians are mal-treated, like the Apsinthians, being enemies with the Dolonci therefore hazardous to the Athenian interests in the area.

Herodotus often refers to the physical appearance of the ‘exotic’ people he describes. Regarding the Thracians, apart from their dresses (Hdt. 7, 75.1), not a single comment is made. However, the Thracian tattooing drew his attention: “to be branded is a mark of noble birth and not to be branded is a mark of low birth” (Hdt. 5, 6.2; for the images of Thracian on Attic pottery: Tsiafaki 1998; Avramidou & Tsiafaki 2015: 77-110). The same attitude

¹ Hdt 5, 3.1-2: “The Thracians are the biggest nation in the world, next to the Indians. If they were under one ruler, or united, they would, in my judgment, be invincible and the strongest nation on earth. Since, however, there is no way or means to bring this about, they are weak. The Thracians have many names, each tribe according to its region, but they are very similar in all their customs, *save the Getai, the Trausi, and those who dwell above the Crestonai*” (our italics).

is shown towards the phenomenon of polygamy (Hdt. 5, 5.1). Although Greeks thought this was typical for the Thracians, Herodotus views it mere as a neutral mark of diversity than as a sign of inferior civilisation (Asheri 1990: 145). Also, selling their children “for export” (ἐπ’ ἐξαγωγῆς: Hdt. 5, 6.1), namely to slave traders, is a practice well-known to Athens which was a major importer of slaves.

In 341 BCE, Philip II conquered the Odrysian kingdom, after defeating the Thracian king Cersobleptes. Philip finally succeeded after two long years of continuous fighting, as the Odrysians proved to be a hard opponent. We know the final results of this campaign: He made the ‘barbarians’ pay a tribute to the Macedonians and he founded important cities “in the right places” (according to Diodorus’ estimation: Diod. 16, 71, 1-2, 1st c. BCE) so that the Thracian audacity would be paused for good. But the issue had not yet come to an end: Plutarch (*Alex.* 9) records that Alexander the Great, already in 340 BCE, led a campaign against the Maidoi in the area of the middle Strymon valley while Philip’s generals were busy trying to eliminate every resistance in the Thracian realm that used to be one of the three stronger in the ancient world, after Persia and Sparta.

Nevertheless, the Thracians residing in the vast area of the Odrysian kingdom were not the only *ethne* (tribes) in Thrace. There were also other *ethne*, called autonomous by ancient authors, probably because they were not subjects of the Odrysian king, *i.e.* tribes that were trying to find their way out of the political chaos caused by the liquidation of the Odrysian power. Archibald (1998) has pointed out that the tribes that did not belong to the Odrysian kingdom (Getai, Scythians and Triballi) tried to profit from the Macedonian conquest as they thought that the anarchy, which followed the loss of power by Cersobleptes was to their advantage. The Triballi had kept their independence after a fierce battle with the Macedonians in 339 BCE and as long as Philip II was alive. Therefore, it was natural to be the first ones to cause problems right after his death. Although we have no sources on the grade of their dependency on Macedonia after their subjugation to Philip II, it is highly probable that they either refused to pay tribute to the Macedonian king or they wanted to invade Macedonia.

Arrian (*Anab.* 1, 1, 4 ff., 2nd century CE) states that those were the main objectives of Alexander’s campaign in the spring of 335 BCE, immediately after his father’s murder, since he wanted to punish them for their uprising against his authority. Alexander put a Lyncestian (*i.e.* a Macedonian from an Upper Macedonian canton) noble, also called Alexander, in charge as general of Thrace. There is not a single reference in our sources indicating any troubles in the period between 335 and 330 BCE although the defeated tribes as well as the inhabitants of the province that Philip II had acquired (*i.e.* of what used to be the Odrysian kingdom) were treated as servile.

However, the situation changed after 330 BCE. At that time we know that Seuthes III (*ca.* 330 - *ca.* 295 BCE) was ruling Thrace in dependence from Macedonia as *basileus* (king) of the Thracians, a title attributed to him in the 1st BCE by Diodorus (18, 14.2; 19, 73.8). To the Athenians, who were again using the close connection with their Thracian ‘relatives’ in the North, new hopes for an anti-Macedonian move in Thrace and an increase of their influence in the area may have arisen. But their help to Seuthes was confined only to words since written sources are quite absolute that they were not in a position to help him effectively. A few years later, in 325 BCE, Seuthes had another opportunity to escape from the Macedonian dependence when Zopyrion, the last general of Thrace appointed by Alexander, met a total disaster during his campaign against the Getai and he himself got killed. According to Curtius, our main source (*Historiae Alexandri Magni*, 1st c. CE), Macedonians lost political control of Thrace and Seuthes’ power must have risen considerably. Seuthes’ opposition to Lysimachos, to whom Thrace was given as his area of control after Alexander’s death in 323 BCE, gave no winner for a decade, but in 313 BCE he was forced to submit to his Macedonian overlord (Xydopoulos 2010: 213-216).

3. Ionian colonists, southern Greeks, and indigenous Thracians in the Nestos and the Xanthi Plain

The two colonisation episodes brought to Abdera, within a century, two Ionian populations from neighbouring (*metro*)*poleis*. The coexistence of Greeks and natives from the mid-7th c. BCE onwards is part of our analysis and some dynamic elements with ethnic characteristics will be highlighted. Furthermore, the political domination of the Persians in the late 6th-early 5th c. BCE, and of the Athenians later in the 5th c. BCE could reveal aspects of cultural resistance or emulation.

It is not easy to define the specific Thracian tribes which inhabited the area of the Xanthi plain (*IThrAeg* 157; Kallintzi 2011: 97). For example, the Bistones, after whom Lake Bistonis was named, are placed between myth

and history (Hdt. 7, 110; Strabo 7, frg.18a; Veligianni-Terzi 2004: 13-14). At the time of the colonisation, the Sinties or Sintoi or Saioi, who according to Strabo were later renamed Sapaiani, lived at the lower east bank of the Nestos river (Archilochos fr. 5-West; Strabo XII, 3.20) while the Satres lived around the Nestos valley and towards the North (Hdt 7, 110).

The Nestos river area has similar cultural remains with the rest of Northern Greece during the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (Andreou *et al.* 1996; 2001; Kallintzi 2011: 1302-1304 and n° 080, 087, 090; Kallintzi & Papadopoulou 2017: 490-491). The evidence of contacts with the rest of the Aegean Sea was so far limited to a sporadic occurrence of obsidian from Melos in both coastal and inland Early Bronze Age (EBA) sites as the recent survey conducted in the area suggests (Kallintzi *et al.* in press a; in press b).

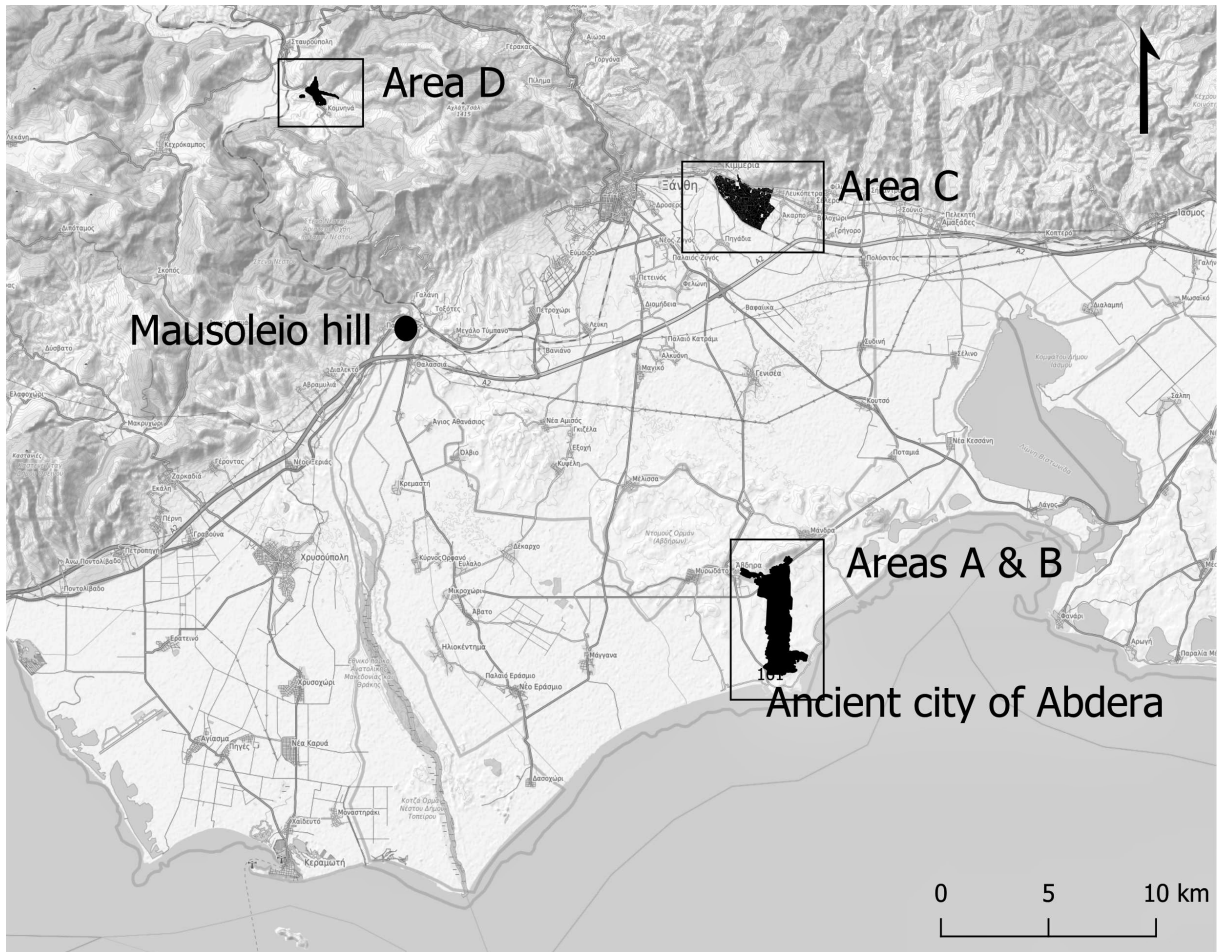


FIG. 10.1 THE PLAIN OF XANTHI AND PART OF THE SOUTHERN RHODOPI MT: THE POLIS OF ABDERA, THE FOUR AREAS THE APAX SYSTEMATIC SURVEY HAS BEEN CONDUCTED AND MAUSOLEIO HILL

3.1. Mid-7th to mid-6th c. BCE

The Clazomenians came from Ionia to Abdera in *ca.* 654 BCE, according to the historical records, and founded their colony on the modern Voloustra peninsula, south of the modern village of Abdera (Fig. 10.2). The presence of an Early Iron Age (EIA) settlement in this specific area, as was the case of the neighbouring *polis* of Thasos and its *peraia* (Boardman 2000: 229-230; Tiverios 2008: 66-67, 76-78) cannot be substantiated with our current knowledge.

Of special interest is the modern Mausoleio hill (**Fig. 10.1**), on the eastern bank of river Nestos, in an area which could have been coastal during the EIA and the colonisation period (Kallintzi 2011: 516-525, site n° 127). No excavation has been carried out, but surface pottery and limited architectural remains confirm the presence of a Thracian EIA settlement. Fragments of 7th and 6th c. BCE imported painted pottery suggest that this site was one of the first areas where the colonists encountered the native inhabitants. In later years, handmade ‘Thracian’ pottery seems to coexist with Greek vases of Ionic and North-Greek production (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 1986: 88-89; Skarlatidou 1986: 617). A similar early interaction between Greeks and locals may also have been practiced in more inland locations (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 1986: 86, 87; Kallintzi 2011: sites n° 134, 144, 155, 161: Petrolofos-Mandra, Agios Athanasios, Profitis Ilias).

On the Abdera peninsula itself, no positive evidence of pre-colonial trade contacts between Clazomenai (and the Ionian coast in general) can be supported with material remains from that era, as it has been hypothesised and/or proved in other sites of Greek colonies. The location where the North Precinct has been founded (**Fig. 10.2**), *i.e.* the Archaic and Classical *polis* of Abdera, had been quite attractive (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2004: 235). It provided an excellent anchorage unlike the coastal area of Aegean Thrace from Thasos/Neapolis to Maroneia, several kilometres to the west and east, respectively. Furthermore, it was separated from the inland coastal plain and it could have been more easily defended. Finally, it had a strategic position along the sea trade routes of the Northern Aegean and could potentially have access to the rich resources of inland Thrace via the Nestos River. On the negative side, Abdera was placed too close to the mouth of the river and within a zone of stagnant waters (to this we will return).

One of the first things that the Clazomenians did was to construct a robust fortification that surrounded their settlement (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2004: 238, figs 6-19; Kallintzi 2012). Safety against the Thracians was a primary concern for the newly arrived Greek population. The wall was not just a symbolic barrier demonstrating the capabilities of the colonists, but a necessity against the Thracians. According to Herodotus, the Ionians were defeated by the Thracians (probably the Saians) at some battle and their leader, Timesios, had to leave the area (Hdt. I, 168-169; *cf.* *IThrAeg* 158 and Kallintzi 2011: 98-99; for the battles during the 7th and 6th c. BCE: Veligianni-Terzi 1997; 2004; Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2004: 242; Kallintzi 2012; see also the Second *Paeon* of Pindar, below).

Interestingly enough, the adult male skeletons from two cemeteries of this period (**Fig. 10.2**) (in Ammolophos/ previously Koum Tepe, and in Hortolivado) show no traces of traumas that could be attributed to hostile activities (Agelarakis 2001; 2004: 336-338; Kallintzi 2004: 271: cemeteries K and X; Skarlatidou 2010: 363-365). Moreover, other available archaeological data from the mid-7th to the mid-6th c. BCE argue that there were limited buildings or settlements established by the Greeks outside their *polis*’ walls and that they were restricted to the immediate surrounding land of the city (Skarlatidou 2010: 363-365; Kallintzi 2011: *passim*).

The choice of this particular peninsula had other consequences for the first colonists, since the location of the *polis* in a swamp environment placed a heavy toll on their lives. The five known necropoleis of this period were placed in close proximity to the city (Kallintzi 2004: 271-274, figs 1-5). In one of those, in Ammolophos, more than 80 % of the graves consisted of infants up to 1.5 years old. Anthropological studies of the bones have shown that many adults suffered from various diseases and that their diet included mainly fish and, in second place, vegetables; also, that subadults provided evidence of anaemia and scurvy which are related to the marsh environment that surrounded them (Agelarakis 2001; 2004: 336; Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2004: 241; Skarlatidou 2010: 358-362 and 371-388 [A. Agelarakis]). Therefore, the environment had a dramatic effect on the sustainability of this colony, which was invigorated in *ca.* 545 BCE, with the arrival of another group of Ionians, this time from Teos, to which we return below.

The pottery consumed during this phase was mainly produced locally, while certain luxury/painted wares were imported from the metropolis (or Ionia in general) and from Corinth. We can mention some Ionian bowls, Aeolian (and Clazomenian) wares and small Corinthian pots (Skarlatidou 2004: 249-256, figs 10-13, 17-25). Moreover, imported transport amphoras from Clazomenai and from other Ionian cities have been recovered (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2004: 241; Skarlatidou 2004: 256, fig. 28; 2011: 361 and *passim*; Dupont & Skarlatidou 2012), while no pottery from nearby Thasos or from the Cycladic islands has as yet been identified in the settlement or the burials. The common use of the griffin as the main coin/*polis* symbol for both Abdera and Clazomenai reveals their close interrelation (Chrysanthaki-Nagle 2007).

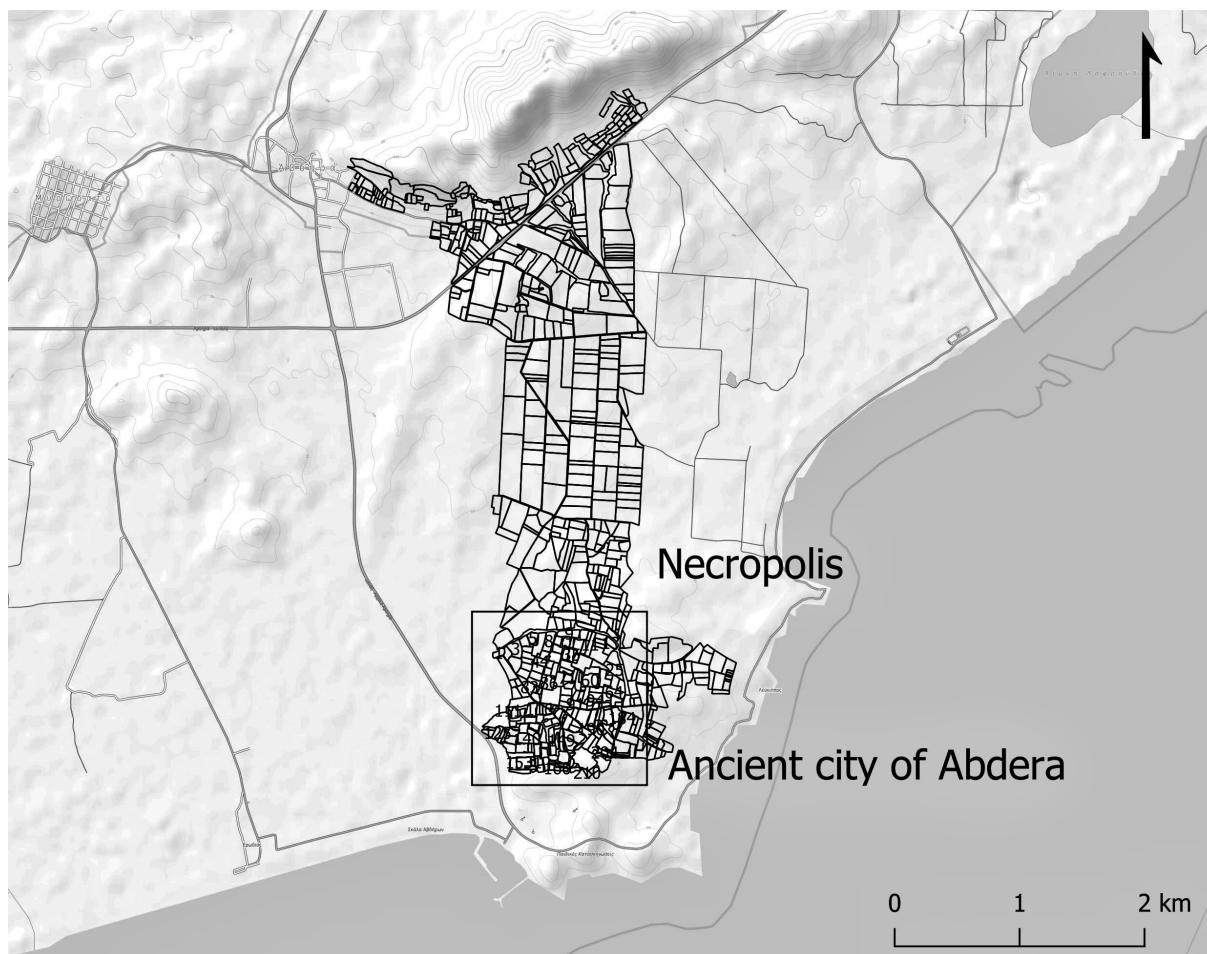


FIG. 10.2 THE *POLIS* OF ABDERA (ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL) AND THE AREA NORTH OF IT WHERE THE NECROPOLES WERE LOCATED

3.2. Politics and intergroup dynamics from the mid-6th to the Macedonian conquest

The Teians that came to Abdera in *ca.* 545 BCE had their own metropolis in Ionia, located south of Clazomenai (Hdt. 1, 168). The new group was much larger than the declining Clazomenians of Abdera. Again, one of the first actions they took was the construction of a new wall along the lines of the old to strengthen the defences of the *polis* against the ‘Thracian threat’. Pindar’s Second *Paeon*, commissioned to him by the Abderitans in the first half of the 5th century BCE, emphasises the recurrent hostilities between the Greek citizens of Abdera and their Thracian neighbours (Dougherty 1994). In fact, the poem itself commemorates a recent victory over the Thracians at Mount Melamphyllon, and in this context records the original Greek acquisition of this fertile territory by force (*Paeon* 2. 59-63; for the issue of ‘Paeonians’ mentioned in this context: Dougherty 1994: 213-214). The poem closes with a reference to Delos and Delphi and an appeal to the eponymous hero of the city, Abderos, to help the Abderitans in one final battle (v. 96-106).

The cemeteries that had already been established by the Clazomenians for one or two more generations continued to be in use after the mid-6th c. BCE. Along with the coming of the Teians a new burial practice emerged: large earth tumuli were constructed which contained numerous burials, both inhumations and cremations, quite

often in pithoi or in terracotta and stone sarcophagi (see also below and **Fig. 10.5**)². In any case, the burial tumuli possibly represent family or kin-groups' resting places (Kallintzi 2004: 264-275, fig. 6). They lasted from the late 6th c. BCE until the early 3rd c. BCE and hundreds of them dominated the landscape for several kilometres north and northeast of the city. A rather large number, however, has been destroyed due to cultivation and other earthwork interventions (Kallintzi 2013).

In the case of the flat cemetery at Hortolivado, a continuation of the older burial tradition is attested (Kallintzi 2004: 276-279, figs 9-13). The existence of a parallel burial system, *i.e.* with and without tumuli, in the late 6th - early 5th c. BCE argues that for at least a generation or two the Clazomenians and the Teians had a different 'burial identity'. The intensity of this dynamic relationship between the two Ionian populations can only be speculated at the moment. However, this difference appears to have died out with the beginning of the Classical period and an amalgamation of the two groups in a common Abderitan identity seems to have taken place.

The Persian conquest of Abdera and Aegean Thrace by Darius in *ca.* 513 BCE must have had a certain social and political impact on the area, which unfortunately remains unknown, due to the lack of information regarding the character of the Persian rule in the area. Indirect hints exist, however, if one reads Herodotus' narrative on Macedonia. He informs us that in 505 BCE, the Macedonian king was a client of the Great King of Persia, Darius. One can then assume that Amyntas must have had a full jurisdiction in his kingdom, but not in areas which were not included in it and were controlled by the Persians (Xydopoulos 2012: 26). After its subjugation to Persia, Macedonia was a client kingdom and not part of a satrapy (Hdt. 5, 2.2), Persian approval for any action on the Macedonian king's part was necessary, therefore one should date this subjugation during Amyntas' reign and not later, as it has been argued (Xydopoulos 2012, 21-37). The epigraphic evidence from Persia seems to support our view since in some of the inscriptions, dated to *ca.* 513 BCE, Darius' possessions 'Beyond the Sea' (*i.e.* the Hellespont) are mentioned, while the inscriptions dated to *ca.* 492 BCE refer to the people who had become the Great King's subjects. These people are named as *Saka paradraya*/Saces beyond the sea, *Skudral* probably the Thracians, and *Yaunã takabarã*/Ionians with a hat as a shield (Xydopoulos 2012: 26-27).

During Megabazos' campaign in 512-510 BCE, Abdera came under Persian rule that lasted until 476/5 BCE. The port of Abdera acted as a base for the Persian fleet; in fact, a shipshed excavated at the northeast edge of the harbour, parallel to the city wall at a distance of 6 m, may have been constructed by the Persians for their warships possibly during the last decades of the 6th c. BCE (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2004: 244-246; Kallintzi in press b).

In 480 and 479 BCE, the city of Abdera had the economic capability to host Xerxes and his large army, although this was not an easy task (Hdt. 7, 118-121; *cf.* the already mentioned *Paeon* commissioned to Pindar [2. 25-26, 60] who praises its bountiful, prolific and full of vine land; for Xerxes' presence at Abdera see also: *IThrAeg*: 61, T 96; 74, T 160; 91, T 248). Soon afterwards, an enormous mass of clastic sediments from river Nestos in the port facilities suggests that a process of port silting was under way (Syrides & Psilovikos 2004). A strong water break has been constructed in the mid-5th c. BCE. Large unworked boulders of granite were employed probably coming from the surrounding area (Kallintzi 2011: 85). Moreover, two main local sandstone quarries were also used in this period (Kallintzi in press a).

Did the aforementioned situation affect Greek-Thracian relationships? A period of peace would have been expected considering the Persian campaigns which were organised and passed through this area in 490 and 480 BCE, respectively. The Persian defeat brought about the Athenian political domination in the area east of the Strymon River after 477 BCE. This also included Abdera and the emphasis was once again on the democratic political system with an anti-Persian agenda, on the sea routes, and on the safety of trade in the Aegean (for the administration of the city: *IThrAeg*: 170-173).

Later, during the Peloponnesian War, it was important for Athens to maintain strong relationships with Thrace in order to keep its allies and to protect the sea routes to the Black Sea. In 431 BCE, the Athenians made Nymphodoros of Abdera their *proxenos* in Thrace (Veligianni-Terzi 2004: 118-119, 122-125; Parissaki 2007: 223). Interestingly enough, Nymphodoros' sister was one of the wives of the Thracian king Sitalkes, therefore this powerful Abderitan managed to play an important role in keeping the balance between Abdera, Athens, the Odrysian Kingdom and the Macedonian king Perdikkas.

² The sarcophagi of the A.P.A.X survey are being studied by Dr. Nicholas Dimakis.

Despite the political relation between Abdera and Athens, the material record so far offers little evidence for this interconnection. For example, the import of fine Attic wares at Abdera is rather minimal and local simple linear fine pottery versions were preferred. Until now, Attic pottery occurs mainly within burial contexts. However, the 5th c. BCE houses have not been excavated yet (generally for Attic pottery in Thrace: Avramidou & Tsiadaki 2015: 121-159).

3.3. The economy from the late 6th c. BCE to the Macedonian conquest

The Teians brought with them new ideas and concepts, which culminated during the 6th c. BCE in Ionia, such as the introduction of coinage and new burial practices. Coinage was introduced in the later part of the 6th c. BCE at Abdera (Chryssanthaki 2004: 311, with references; Chryssanthaki-Nagle 2007), an element that interconnected this part of the Aegean with the rest of the Greek and non-Greek trade that used coins as a common currency³.

The annual records of the Delian League recovered in Athens reveal that in the 430s BCE Abdera paid the second highest tax. This supports the hypothesis that this *polis* was one of the richest among the allies of Athens as mentioned already by Diodorus (XIII 72, 2, referring to the 5th c. BCE: πόλιν ἐν ταῖς δυνατοτάταις οἶσαν τότε τῶν ἐπὶ Θράκης). The source of this wealth is an open issue that still needs to be clarified. A combination of primary and secondary productions and trade through the sea and mainland routes can be expected to have played a main role in the success of the Abderitan economy during this peaceful period. Untroubled symbiotic conditions have been proposed in other areas where the Greek-Thracians coexisted such as in Samothrace and the opposite mainland coast of Mesimvria-Zone (Ilieva 2007: 218-219; Matsas 2007; Iliopoulou 2015: 25-41), where late Archaic and Classical inscriptions in a Thracian language have been found (Brixhe *et al.* 2015: mainly graffiti on pot sherds inside the temple of Apollo, but also some stone inscriptions from other areas of the city).

The first analysis of material remains from the *polis* of Abdera provides us with useful information regarding the local economy, production and trade (Kallintzi *et al.* in press a; in press b; in press c). Large terracotta pithoi have been recovered throughout the city emphasising the degree of storage taking place within the settlement. The agro-silvo-pastoral local produce must have been collected and stored for local consumption or export. Remains of iron working have been identified concentrated in various areas within the city, arguing that the material was brought from the primary sources and worked in metalworking facilities, which, however, cannot be dated yet. The origin of these materials is unknown at the moment, but the surrounding Rhodopi, Lekane, and Pangaion mountain ranges to the north and west, as well and the island of Thasos to the southwest, were very rich in metals of all types (Fig. 10.1 & 10.4).

The gender roles and the contribution of women to the household economy, but in some cases also to trade, can be seen in textile-working. The dispersal of loom weights has been attested in several parts of the *polis* in contexts, which can be called domestic⁴. It seems that women in their homes produced textiles for family needs, but at least in some instances a surplus could have been formed. In other contemporary Classical *poleis*, like Athens, there is positive evidence of their role in the market (MacLachlan 2012: 65-67) and we should not overlook the fact that they may have been an additional means of trade, even on a local level, although it is difficult to evaluate its bulk and market value.

The extent of international trade can be more easily measured through the remains of transport amphoras found at Abdera (Kallintzi *et al.* in press a; in press b; in press c)⁵. The plethora of the amphora sherds throughout the settlement and outside of the city is a very rich source of data. It seems that there were two amphora types consumed in this area, the imported and the locally produced ones; the last suggest that the local product(s) had significant quantities of surplus to allow exports outside Abdera. Thus, the participation of the city in Mediterranean trade was two-directional in character.

The large numbers of imported amphoras show that the Abderitans were able to consume (and/or circulate, see below) foreign imports to a large scale. Close to 80 % of the imported amphoras found in the A.P.A.X survey come from the northern Aegean coast, from Mende and Chalcidice to the east to the Aenos to the west. The

3 The coins from the A.P.A.X survey are under study by Kyriaki Chatziprokopiou (Kallintzi *et al.* in press a; in press b).

4 The loom weights from the A.P.A.X survey are under study by Dr. Bella Dimova.

5 The transport amphoras from the A.P.A.X survey are under study by Dr. Chavdar Tzochchev (Kallintzi *et al.* in press a; in press b).

remaining 20 % of the imports come from the eastern Aegean, from Lesbos to the north as far as Kos and Rhodes to the south. There are even a few examples of amphoras from the Greek colonies of the Black Sea. Thus, the main focus of these trade interactions was the immediate area to which Abdera belonged, *i.e.* the Northern Aegean, and the Eastern Aegean, including its metropoleis in Ionia, only in second position.

These data (so far) do not seem to support the hypothesis of very close ties, at least commercial ones, between Abdera and its (second) metropolis, Teos, based on the scarce available epigraphic evidence (Loukopoulou & Parissaki 2004: 307). The amphoras' provenances include some of the *poleis* that produced what was considered the highest quality and priced wine in the Greek world, *i.e.* Mende and Chios. Thus, expensive and high end products were imported in a *polis* that thrived economically during the 5th c. BCE and possibly also during the 4th c. BCE.

The large number of burial tumuli (erected after the end of the 6th c. BCE and discussed above) suggests that they were destined for all the inhabitants of the city, not only for some distinct members, such as the landowners. This is a unique phenomenon in the cities of Aegean Thrace. The only other city with similar (but far fewer) tumuli is Stryme, where this custom seems to have been used only for prominent citizens (Triantaphyllos & Terzopoulou 2012: 147). The Abdera tumuli had a permanent impact on the landscape. Symbolically, the tumuli may have signified the claim of the Greek colonists over land ownership demonstrated by the generations of the ancestors buried in these earth ('chthonic') monuments. The expansion of the different necropoleis to several square kilometres around the city emphasised this message (Kallintzi 2004: 275). At the same time, it reflected the expansion of Greek control over the hinterland in areas outside its dominance, which were probably considered as Thracian land until the late 6th c. BCE.

However, the tumuli were not an isolated phenomenon, but occurred with another important trend. From the 5th c. BCE onwards, a new settlement pattern developed outside the walls of Abdera. Small sites, most probably farmsteads, either isolated or sometimes a cluster of few, were constructed. In some cases, these seem to be directly associated with a tumulus, underlining their connection to the specific plot of land as discussed earlier. The preliminary data suggest that the storage of agro-silvo-pastoral produce was taking place in these 'farmsteads', while some positive evidence of textile and metal working has also been identified. This settlement pattern that continued during the entire Classical and part of the Hellenistic periods, introduced a new economic model of exploiting the land and suggests that the Greek colonists expanded their control towards the hinterland (*i.e.* to the north of Abdera) (Kallintzi 2011: 1320-1331 and *passim*).

The *chora* of Abdera included almost half of the Xanthi coastal plain during the Classical period up to the Kossynthos River (**Fig. 10.1**) (Kallintzi 2011: 1331). This expansion was achieved both in aggressive and peaceful ways, as discussed above. In any case, this area used to be part of the Thracian land and contributed to the economic growth of Abdera (Kallintzi 2011: 1257; *cf.* also Kallintzi 2012). A turning point for broader Aegean Thrace was the conquest of this region by King Philip II of Macedon in 350 BCE. In the following centuries, this region became under the political domination of large kingdoms and empires. Intercommunity tensions between Thracians and Greeks must have decreased or they were small scale since there are no historical references to such events. Perhaps a slow process of cultural, economic, social and political homogenisation under these regimes was progressively achieved throughout the centuries.

3.4. Recent archaeological data

The tribal system of the Thracians developed within the diverse landscape of Thrace, which included sea shores, plains, river valleys and plateaus, and high mountainous areas (Triantaphyllos 1991; 2009; Veligianni-Terzi 2004; Xydopoulos 2007a; 2007b). In some cases, their way of life included seasonal movement and relocation of settlements, especially in the mountainous part of the Rhodopi mountain range. This may have caused intertribal tensions and conflicts over resources and land. The exploitation of the (mainly marshy) coastal areas was probably minimal during the Early Iron Age, as mentioned above, and their participation in trade is archaeologically almost invisible. In any case, in the present state of research, we cannot be sure whether the arrival of Greek colonists and the establishment of *poleis* and *emporía* deprived these coastal areas from the Thracian control or the Thracians were generally indifferent with regard to the coastal areas.

Recent research on the identification of Thracian settlements in Aegean Thrace gives us a clearer picture,

complemented by the first results of our A.P.A.X extensive survey (**Fig. 10.1**). Large settlements have been identified, located at the northern edge of the Xanthi plain by the lower slopes of the Rhodopi range (Kallintzi *et al.* in press a; in press b; in press c; cf. Triantaphyllos 1990a; 1990b; Veligianni-Terzi 2004). They tend to occupy a strategic position with an overview of the valley and are located very close to rivers and streams. Two of these sites are close to each other at Leukopetra hill, possibly sharing a fortified citadel on top of the hill. Smaller sites appear to have also existed in the plain south of the Rhodopi Mountains, where limited ceramic evidence has been found making their character difficult to assess. Therefore, a rather complex settlement pattern becomes progressively more evident in this part of Aegean Thrace. Additionally, the strategic position of the larger sites may suggest certain measures against threats, thus supporting the hypothesis of inter-community or intertribal conflicts as well as tensions with the colony at Abdera.

The surface remains from these sites are limited as far structures are concerned. Their exact character can only be recovered after systematic excavations. So far, the A.P.A.X survey revealed a conspicuous lack of clay tiles, thus it is very likely that the houses were constructed with the wattle-and-daub technique and/or they had mudbrick walls with thatched roofs, despite the fact that tiled roofs were widely used by the Greek colonists on the coast⁶. There may have been a resistance or refusal to follow the Greek forms in architecture in everyday life during the Archaic and Classical periods. The same applies to the manufacture of pottery that continued to be handmade while a few kilometres to the south more sophisticated techniques of using the wheel and kiln firing techniques were employed in the colony of Abdera⁷. The persistence of handmade pottery can be seen in Aegean Thrace until the Roman period (Papadopoulou 2001; Kallintzi *et al.* in press d).

The identification of burial sites belonging to the Thracians is limited although tombs were usually covered by tumuli (Iliopoulou 2015: 25-27). In the area of our investigations, only three pithos burials have so far been found, and only one case of multiple adult burials, possibly belonging to the 8th c. BCE (Triantaphyllos & Kallintzi 1998: 2-6; 2011: n° 080, 087, 090)⁸.

The erection of a fort during the 2nd half of the 4th c. BCE in Polysitos, at the northern part of the Xanthi plain, suggests that the main aim of the garrison was to ensure peace in the area (Kallintzi *et al.* in press d). Later, during the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods, a wider fortification system developed in strategic positions of the mountainous passages of Rhodopi (Triantaphyllos 1988: 443, fig.1; 1990). Some of these forts were erected on hills that had earlier Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age fortifications.

The Thracian economy would have been based on locally available agro-silvo-pastoral resources. Overpopulation and lack of food have been mentioned in Greek sources that refer to the volunteer enslavement of some of their children in order to cope with this pressing issue (Xydopoulos 2007a: 696). Their control over the mountainous part of Thrace ensured access to good quality wood, as well as to the metal resources that were available on a local or regional level. The identification of metal slags in the larger settlements shows that metalworking was practiced *in situ*, underlining the easy access they had to this material, as in the site identified on the Leukopetra hill. However, this slag is not dated yet therefore we cannot be more specific about the process of metalworking in the area. The rearing of horses is another commodity for which Thracians and Aegean Thrace were famous. The mythical labour of Herakles who stole the man-eating horses of the Thracian king Diomedes has already been mentioned.

All these products could have potentially been collected in Abdera with its *agora* and organised harbour. Slave and horse trade are mentioned in an inscription from Abdera that dates to the Classical period (*IThrAeg*: 186-190, E3 on p. 189: before 350 BCE, a law on the trade of slaves, pack animals, and horses).

The goods imported by the Thracians from the colonists are, so far, elusive. The local economies appear not to have been directly linked to the international maritime trade conducted throughout the Mediterranean Sea. The limited amount of wheel-made pottery, most probably coming from Abdera, suggests an eclectic importation of objects and a conscious cultural distance from the colonists, including technological elements, like construction techniques and pottery-making.

6 The tile fragments from the A.P.A.X survey are being studied by Dr. Daniela Stoyanova.

7 The Thracian pottery from the A.P.A.X survey is being studied by Dr. Petya Ilieva.

8 One of those pithoi lay inside a circular enclosure which served as a tumulus base. It is important to mention that the EIA level of the Xanthi plain was several meters lower than today, due to aggradation process. This explains the scarcity of EIA findings in this area, where all discoveries so far have been due to earthworks or erosion.

The Nestos valley was a natural passage and a major road since the prehistoric period until the construction of the *Via Egnatia*. Its importance is demonstrated by the numerous archaeological sites that have been identified along the valley. Of these, the Mourgana Hill with a settlement of the Early Iron Age (which existed already from the Late Bronze Age: Triantaphyllos 1990b: 627-630) may be mentioned.

Further east, a Thracian site in Komnina (near modern Stavroupolis) identified in the highland plateau of Nestos can provide a better understanding of the sociocultural processes that were taking place (Fig. 10.3), acting as a case study for the broader area under research (Triantaphyllos 1993: 607-610). The site was located on a slope a few kilometres away from the Nestos River already during the prehistoric period. The site may have been called *Nestos* or *Nastos* and continued to be occupied until Late Roman times. Handmade pottery was dominant in the settlement, but a burial of the Classical period at the northern side of the site is different in character (Triantaphyllos 1993: 609-610, figs 26-27). Among the locally made offerings, a 5th c. BCE small black figure Attic lekythos and two silver coins from Abdera stand out. Clearly, the lekythos with its content was valued and its use within the burial context, according to Attic custom, was appreciated and followed. Moreover, it is doubtful if this object was the result of direct contacts and trade transactions between Athenians and local Thracians. It is more likely that it was an object that was exchanged between Athenians and Northern Greeks (Abderitans?), and Northern Greeks and Thracians, and perhaps more Thracians until it reached its final destination. In any case, a degree of cultural interaction with the Greek world and its practices is evident even in this far northern mountainous area during the 5th c. BCE.



FIG. 10.3 AREA D AT THE KOMNINA AREA: THE THRACIAN SITE NEXT TO THE RIVER NESTOS AND THE MACEDONIAN TOMB

A part of a Hellenistic marble statue was also recovered from the settlement (Triantaphyllos 1993: 610), while a tomb of the Macedonian type of the 2nd c. BCE, the ‘Stavroupolis Tomb’ (Fig. 10.3), was constructed just a few hundred meters north of the Classical burial mentioned above (Makaronas 1953). The construction techniques and the architectural elements of this monumental tomb follow those attested in Macedonia. It may therefore be an attempt by a wealthy local family to emulate the burial tradition of the Macedonian elite during this period. The cultural integration of at least the local upper class within the cultural, social and political ethos of the Macedonian kingdom is rather clear. Finally, during the Roman period, tiles were used in the buildings of the settlement. It seems that by this phase at least, this particular construction technique was adopted but the ongoing study of tiles will provide more evidence on this important issue.

On the basis of these highland Nestos’ sites, a broad chronological scheme regarding changes that the Thracians accepted/adopted from the Greek colonists can be developed. During the Archaic and Classical periods, there were some trade contacts and interactions between them, which seem to have intensified in the latter phase. There were tensions and severe conflicts, while at the same time an expansion of the land ruled by the colonists in the coastal plain is attested. In the beginning, imports were minimal and selective while, no obvious adoption of Greek cultural elements by the Thracians can be seen. From the time of King Philip II onwards, it seems that at least the leading social groups of the Thracians imitated the Macedonian elite, while symbolic elements with Greek characteristics were incorporated in the local context. During this process, the construction techniques introduced by the Greek colonists were adopted in Thracian settlements in the Roman period, if not earlier.

4. General discussion and remarks

The relations as well as conflicts between Greeks and Thracians must have been more frequent between colonists and tribes that resided in the Xanthi plain, where many conflicts of interest existed. The available land and its resources in the coastal valley of Xanthi was an issue of hostility from the 7th c. BCE until ca. 350 BCE. Perhaps this feeling of insecurity along with the tendencies towards land expansion that the colonists had, made the Thracians of the Xanthi plain resent and resist Greek cultural influence.

Economy was central in the relationships between the Greek and Thracian communities. It appears to have been mutually beneficial, but the material remains are uneven between the two parties. Metal from the Rhodopi Mountain sources, which were controlled and exploited by the Thracian tribes, is the only product that has left positive evidence of exchange, since it has been traded through various circulation networks (and possibly through other tribes) to the Greek city of Abdera. However, as mentioned, other products that have left no material remains must have been traded with the colonists, such as slaves, pack animals and horses, as mentioned in an early 4th c. BCE inscription.

The same scarcity of evidence applies largely to the items and goods exported from Abdera to the Thracians, apart from a few sporadic traces of pottery. Abdera was one of the most important ports in the Northern Aegean with an international character. It acted like a hub, which consumed a lot of the goods traded in its port and some beyond the *polis* and in its *chora*, while it is also clear that it produced (and collected) enough goods for export.

However, it remains unclear if Abdera was the destination of Thracian produce intended to be exported beyond this region. In other words if it were a port of call, where both Greek and Thracian products circulated with the intent to be funnelled from the Thracian inland area to the Aegean, and vice versa. Metals could have been one such case but the exchanges that Thracians received are not known. In any case, the wealth of Abdera must have also been (at least partly) the result of its exchange contacts with the markets of the various Thracian communities during the Classical period.

The first results of the A.P.A.X survey show that there is a significant drop in the distribution of transport amphoras outside the city and the *chora* of Abdera. If this proves true, the maritime international circulation network of Abdera city may not have aimed at the markets of the Thracian tribes in any direct way. One may wonder if this was a decision of the local communities or if we must search for other possible explanations of their non-involvement in the maritime trade transactions. The size of the settlements, as much as we can tell from the available data, may support the necessary socio-economic complexity for participation in trade networks. There must have been sufficient agro-silvo-pastoral Thracian products in order to be part of this circulation. At the same time, the possible lack (or the limited quantity) of specialised and/or secondary products for exportation

probably made this area unattractive to larger markets. In any case, the overall picture appears to support the hypothesis of a conscious abstinence from becoming members of these exchange networks.

As discussed above, the case of pottery that continued to be manufactured by hand rather than adopting the wheel is perhaps revealing for the degree of traditionalism that the Thracians retained. The same can be seen in the continuity of the landscape model for the location of their settlements and the construction of their buildings. Innovations may have been equated with the colonists and may have been avoided to a large extent.

This cultural resistance (or, in some cases, indifference?) to Greek influence was possibly becoming an important aspect of local identity. It seems to have involved various social, economic, and cultural aspects, although at least one Thracian king, Sitalkes, had married a Greek woman from Abdera, the sister of Nymphodoros mentioned above.

As already discussed, the tension between Greek colonists at Abdera and the indigenous Thracians appeared with the arrival of the first and the construction of a robust fortification wall, which was rebuilt a century or so later. So far, the hostilities between them are known mainly through written sources, since the anthropological studies of adult males from the two cemeteries dating from the mid-7th to the mid-6th c. BCE do not provide positive evidence for traumas connected with warfare activities. Further anthropological analyses may perhaps elucidate the conditions for the late Archaic and Classical periods.

In any case, as discussed above, the written sources refer to warfare between the Greeks and Thracian tribes during the Archaic and Classical periods. It is interesting to notice that one of these sources, Pindar's *Paeon*, incorporates some important themes and strategies of 'colonial discourse', especially towards the formation of ethnic identity (Dougherty 1994). In any case, the expansion of settlements and the claim of land in the Xanthi valley by the colonists in the 5th c. BCE, together with the lack of references for hostilities during the second half of the same century, and the wealth that Abdera had (as contemporary Athenian tax records reveal), argue for peaceful conditions and prosperity at least during those years.

The last recorded war of the Classical period was related to the Triballi tribe, who threatened to besiege Abdera in 376 BCE (after a coalition with Maroneia), which was saved by an Athenian squadron. In this episode there was no localised tension between Abderitans and the Thracian tribes. Instead, there was a wider movement of alliances that aimed at plundering the city, as far as the Thracian attackers were concerned, and weakening Abdera for gaining strategic and economic benefits from nearby Maroneia, another strong Greek *polis*.

As mentioned above, a single fort has thus far been located in the wider area of the Xanthi plain. Its establishment close to the area where the Thracian tribes lived could have been an attempt to control any unrests as well as a protection of the land route that passed through the area and pre-dated the Roman *Via Egnatia*, with a similar east-west direction. This route was first opened by Xerxes to be used by his vast army, thus the ancient name 'Royal Road' (*Vasilike Odos*). From then on, it was used both by Greeks and Thracians according to Herodotus (Hdt. 7, 115.3)⁹.

In any case, even during times of peace, the two ethnic groups did not seem to have closer relations nor were they partners in trade. Exchanges took place between them but they seem not to have been regular or they were restricted to specific materials, such as metals, as well as animals and slaves. Abdera was a significant hub in maritime international trade but, so far, it seems that a few kilometres inland the Thracians retained their own cultural identity. However, this trend would change with the arrival of King Philip II and the incorporation of this area into broader and more complex political entities in the centuries to come.

⁹ Hdt. 7, 115.3: "The entire road along which king Xerxes led his army the Thracians neither break up nor sow, but they hold it in great reverence to my day" (written *ca.* 430 BCE).

10. Greeks and Thracians at Abdera and the Xanthi-Nestos Area in Aegean Thrace



FIG. 10.4 RHODOPI MOUNTAIN RANGE SEEN FROM THE PLAIN OF XANTHI (SOURCE: GOOGL EARTH)



FIG. 10.5 A BURIAL TUMULUS NEAR ABDERA

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10. Greeks and Thracians at Abdera and the Xanthi-Nestos Area in Aegean Thrace

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This volume

This volume has its origin in a similarly entitled session organised at the 24th Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists in Barcelona in 2018. The specific aim of both the session and this volume was to measure acceptance of, and resistance to, outside influences within Mediterranean coastal settlements and their immediate hinterlands, with an open time range, but with a particular focus on the processes not reflecting simple commercial routes, but taking place at an intercultural level, in situations of developed connectedness. Following a general discussion of the theoretical and long-lasting facets of the discussion on communication, and of some of the reasons for its unevenness, the contributions in the volume give a wide and stimulating view of the ongoing debate about Mediterranean interaction and communication. The papers' timespan is large: from the Late Neolithic of Crete, in the 5th - 4th millennium BCE, to the Macedonian conquest of Thrace, in the 4th century BCE. Most contributions, however, focus on the Middle to Late Bronze Ages, as this is a phase of particularly intense communication, which matches the interests and connections of the editors. The geographic frame extends from the Central Mediterranean to Thrace, Cyprus and the Levant, with an important focus on Crete and Mycenaean Greece. Other papers, more than specific areas, instead discuss the figures of some of the actors of the intra-Mediterranean interregional communication, and the nuances of their roles: warriors and merchants.

The authors

Marco Bettelli, Valentina Cannavó, Jan Coenaerts, Andrea Di Renzoni, Jan Driessen, Francesca Ferranti, Mercourios Georgiadis, Paula Gheorghide, Constantina Kallintzi, Eurydice Kefalidou, Robert Koehl, Ekin Kozal, Sara Levi, Maria Clara Martinelli, Pietro Militello, Sarah Murray, Karin Nys, Angelos Papadopoulos, Marina Pucci, Daniel Pullen, Melissa Samaes, Simona Todaro, Alessandro Vanzetti, Paola Vertuani, Ioannis Xydopoulos, Luca Zaghetto, Piotr Zeman.

The AEGIS (Aegean Interdisciplinary Studies) series attempts to make the results of new archaeological research on Aegean and especially Minoan societies available to the scientific and wider public at a rapid pace. Monographs, PhD dissertations, proceedings of scientific meetings and excavation reports complete each other to offer a general view of this time frame which is of primary importance to understand the ancient world and its historical, political, symbolical and social sequences.

