

ΦΑΓΡΕΣ· ΠΟΛΙΣ ΘΡΑΙΚΗΣ: RE-EVALUATING ITS LOCATION



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Abstract. – The following paper examines the long-running problem of the location of the ancient settlement of Phagres, as well as delving into its significance concerning the dynamics of the interactions between the Thracians and the Greeks during the 4th century BC in the Pangaion area. First and foremost, the prevailing notion among scholars, placing Phagres at the Kanoni hill, has been challenged. Thereafter, it has been noted that the original Thracian/Pierian settlement was resettled by the Greeks (possibly by the Thasians) at a certain point during the first half of the 4th century BC, who attempted to gain control over the silver mining areas. Taking this into account, it has been suggested that Phagres should be looked for closer to the southern slopes of Pangaion because of the proximity to the ore deposits discovered there.

Key words. – Phagres, Pierian Valley, Thracian settlements, Thasian Pereia.

The issue of the geographical location of the Pierian settlement of Phagres remains a subject of debate, so far mainly in Greek historiography. The scant data from the literary sources mentioning the settlement rather increases the difficulty of precisely situating it within the geographical area south of Mount Pangaion. Furthermore, the discovery of archaeological sites near two modern settlements provides the basis for the hypotheses proposed so far on the subject. However, the complex analysis of all the available source data leads to new conclusions: it becomes clear that the case of the location of Phagres may also reveal an essential moment within the interactions between the Thracian tribe of Pieres and the island of Thasos during the Classical period.

The state of previous studies on the subject justifies the need for updated reading, which would revise the entire source base and offer new arguments concerning the location of Phagres, as well as clarifying the place of the settlement in the historical development of the Pierians and

the island of Thasos during the 5th–4th centuries BC. Thus motivated, the main aim of the present paper is to show the function of Phagres as one of the main elements in the relationship between the Pierians and Thasos.

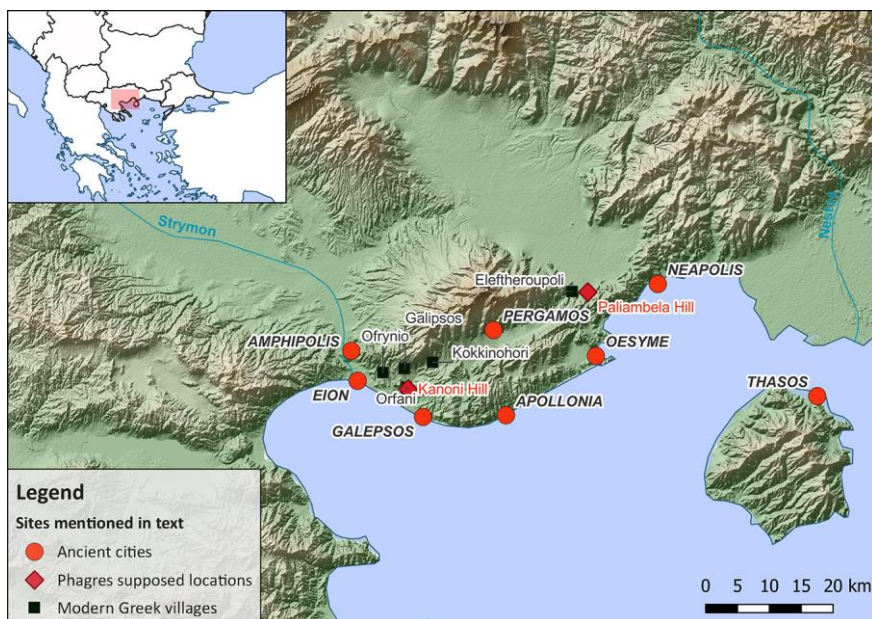


Fig. 1. Phragres' supposed locations

The main thesis concerning the location of Phagres, which still predominates the debate, places the ancient settlement at the modern Greek village of Orfani (Ορφάνι), in the Kavala district (see Fig. 1). It is based on the travelogue of the British military topographer and antiquities collector William Martin Leake, who on November 7, 1806, visited the village of Orfani and described the remains of ancient buildings and finds in its surroundings.¹ Although his reports record the presence of archaeological remains on the site, they are entirely in the nature of conjecture rather than a reasoned opinion that would place ancient Phagres near the modern-day village of Orfani. Nevertheless, having been repeatedly quoted since the late 19th and early 20th centuries,² William Leake's suggestion

¹ Leake 1835, 176–178.

² Perdrizet 1894, 440, n. 3: *Or, il semble certain que Phagres, que d'après Strabon et Scylax était près de la mer, et qui d'après Hérodote (VII, 112) un lieu fort des Rières, devait se trouver, à l'extrémité orientale de la Piérie près du village actuel d'Orphano* (cf. Leake, *North. Greece III*, p. 178); Kiepert 1910, S. 5: *Von den beiden festen Städten der Pierer am Pangaeus M. (Herod. VII, 112) ist Phagres schon von Leake III, 176ff in der alten, an Münzen und Schleuderbleien reichen Stadtlage östlich über Orphano wiedererkannt worden*; see also

imposes a persistent prejudice among researchers regarding the location of Phagres. It was also adopted by a number of modern Greek archaeologists who explored the region during the second half of the 20th century.³ This requires Leake's statement to be quoted in full:

Nov. 7. – *Being detained this day by the weather at the menzıl hané, or post office of Orfaná, I discovered in the course of the day that the height which overhands the village to the eastward was the site of an ancient city. Only a few small pieces of the walls remain in situ, but all the space now ploughed for corn, which they once enclosed, is strewn with fragments of ancient pottery, and the remains of former buildings, among which are a few squared blocks of stone. Greek coins are very often found here, and among the small productions of Hellenic art, oval sling-bullets, of lead, generally inscribed with Greek names in characters of the best times, or with some emblem such as thunderbolt. In walking over the ground, I found several of these bullets, and purchased others, together with coins from the people of the village. There is a reason to believe that the site is that of Phagres, a place of some importance, situated in a district which was named Pieria, because it was inhabited by descendants of emigrants of Pieria near Mount Olympos, who had been driven from thence by the Macedones. Hence the valley included between Mount Pangæum and the sea, in which Phagres was situated, was still called in the time of Thucydides ὁ Πιερικὸς κόλπος, or the Pieric bay; the latter word is explained by the nature of the extensive hollow which reaches from Orfaná to Právista, and is included between Pangæum and the lower maritime ridge which at Právista forms a junction with that mountain and there separates the head of the Pieric valley from the plain of Philippi. The army of Xerxes followed this valley in their march into Greece, leaving as Herodotus observes, Mount Pangæum on the right. It is true that the order in which the historian names Phagres and Pergamus, as the two chief places in Pieria, tends to the belief that Orfaná occupies the site of Pergamus, rather than that of Phagres; his words however do not absolutely require that Xerxes should have passed the two places in the order in which the names occur, and Orfaná is the only situation in which Phagres can be placed, so as to conciliate the testimony of Herodotus and Thucydides, in attributing it to the Pieric valley, with that of Scylax and Strabo, who show that it was the first town beyond the Strymon. (underlined mine, I. T.) If Phagres stood at Orfaná, Pergamus was most probably the modern Právista.*

Oberhummer 1938, Sp. 1516: *Die Lage entspricht etwa dem heutigen Orphani*. Kiepert FOA XVI. Leake North. Gr. III 168.

³ Σαμσάρης 1976, 160: Ἡ θέσις τῶν ἐρειπίων αὐτῶν εἶναι ἡ μοναδικὴ στὴ γύρω περιοχί, ἡ ὁποία συμφωνεῖ μὲ τίς τοπογραφικὲς ἐνδείξεις τῶν πηγῶν γιὰ τὴ Φάγρον.

The presence of some of the archaeological structures and monuments described above was later confirmed on the hill of Kanoni (Κανόνι), located east of the village of Orfani, some 8 km east of the mouth of the Strymon.⁴ In 1979 the local authorities of Kavala decided to cultivate the hill for agricultural purposes in response to the local population's need for new arable land around the village of Orfani, without, however, coordinating this with the archaeological experts in the region. The levelling of about 400 ha of the site with mechanized equipment brought to surface fragments of pottery from the Archaic and Classical periods. As it appears, this site should be the one described by William Leake,⁵ and, as a newly discovered archaeological site, should be excavated. Until then, no systematic and consistent archaeological investigations had been conducted in the adjacent region. Before the beginning of the partial excavations at the Kanoni hill, the finds from Orfani and its surrounding area were rather incidental, having been discovered either during agricultural activities, or during the construction of infrastructure sites.

The most significant contributions to the archaeological study of site at the Kanoni hill belong to the Greek archaeologist Maria Nikolaidou-Patera. Those excavations were partial and took place in six inconsistent archaeological seasons (1979, 1985, 1989, 1990, 1993, 1994), revealing sparse architectural remains and a bulk of finds. The results have been published in varying degrees of comprehensiveness and detail, and as the site has not been fully explored, they do not fully reflect the entire archaeological structures and materials located on the hill, raising some concerns about the stratigraphic periodization, and the site's functions.

The trial excavations carried out on the hilltop in 1979 showed a predominance of Archaic pottery. Walls of an Early Hellenistic building have also been uncovered, dated by a posthumous bronze coin of Alexander III issued ca. 320 BC, as well as a few fragments of Roman pottery.⁶ The most significant structures, however, are a series of pits ("storage pits?") with cylindrical shapes, cut below the floor levels of the supposed private dwellings. The geological structure of the hill allows this because of the soft

⁴ See its location on Fig. 1.

⁵ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1988, 343.

⁶ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1988, 345; Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997a, 840. The occupation of the site during the Hellenistic period is confirmed by the studied Hellenistic necropolis to the NW of the hill (Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1989, 271; Πούλιος 1990, 266–267, Πίν. 114α-β; French 1991–1992, 52; Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997a, 839), as well as by the Macedonian tomb from the second half of the 4th century BC discovered in 1997 within the Classical necropolis east of the hill (Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1999, 567–572; Blackman 2000–2001, 103; Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 2003, 827; Whitley 2003–2004, 59). However, the remains of the Hellenistic period on the hilltop are very scarce, mainly due to the cultivation of the terrain with mechanized equipment, which severely compromises the stratigraphic situation. As a result, the Hellenistic strata have been almost removed, and archaeologists come across those of the Archaic and Classical periods (Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997, 499–504).

and friable rock from which it is made (marl).⁷ The rock is easy to cut or shape, but it is not durable to natural conditions, so the marl made constructions on the hill (mostly for building dwellings) were barely preserved. It is also crucial to note that modern agricultural activity has caused severe damage to the archaeological remains on the hilltop.⁸

The first five pits were uncovered already in 1979 during the trial excavations. The initial excavator's hypothesis that these negative structures may have had cultic functions had already been rejected. Deciding in this respect were the large area of the hill, being untypical for a sanctuary, as well as the pits' contents and the lack of evidence of cult practices carried out in them.⁹

By 1990, a total of 13 pits had been detected and explored on the hilltop. Some of them were interconnected by channels. They all had the same infill of loose dark brown soil, stones, fragments of household pottery and building ceramics, small metal finds (mainly nails), numerous animal bones and seashells.

The ceramic collection represents luxurious imported vessels for the storage of liquids and libations(?). The almost complete absence of cooking or dining ware for daily use is striking. Most of the fragments found were of *amphorae*, *hydriae*, *oinochoai*, and *skyphoi*, as well as a few fully preserved cups of high quality.¹⁰ Among them, imports from Thasos predominate, with a small part of the vessels originating from Corinth and Athens. The chronological frame of the discovered ceramic vessels can be set between ca. 560–500/480 BC.¹¹

Particularly impressive is the discovery of four Attic black-figure craters in the pits, dating to ca. 530–520 BC. The first two were discovered as early as 1979. It is noteworthy that, according to the excavator, parts of the same crater were found in different pits distant from each other.¹² Their production is attributed to two Athenian workshops.¹³ Their pictorial repertoire features heroic scenes influenced by plot points from the *Iliad* – the departure of warriors and the battle for the bodies of fallen warriors. Furthermore, depictions of mythological subjects featuring Dionysus, Poseidon, Athena, and Hermes, as well as lions slaying a bull, occupy an important place.¹⁴ Their fine quality indicates that they were most likely used as votive offerings.

⁷ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1988, 343–345.

⁸ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997a, 837.

⁹ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1988, 344.

¹⁰ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1993, 518.

¹¹ The first report of the materials discovered on the hill belongs to Χάιδω Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη: Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1987, 332–333, Πίν. 145α-η.

¹² Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1993, 518.

¹³ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997a, 838. For more about them, see Zannis 2014, 256.

¹⁴ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997a, 838.

Bearing in mind that the site on the Kanoni hill is preserved in extremely poor condition and the scarcity of materials from it does not allow for a full archaeological interpretation, the contents and functions of the pits are of key importance to the overall definition of the site. As research progresses, it becomes more increasingly evident that the original hypothesis of their function as *bothroi* is not supported. The emergence of the alternative hypothesis that the negative structures represent garbage pits became the basis for the idea that the site suffered destruction around the beginning of the 5th century BC, considering the latest pottery samples found in the pits.¹⁵ One argument for this is the discovery of parts of the same vessel in different pits. But these were most likely not ditches filled with the remains of a dwelling destroyed as a result of an attack. Given the contents and the uniform diameter, depth, and cylindrical shape of all the pits, their purpose may have been to store goods and products for times of need. In addition, their structure shows that they were filled gradually, which suggests their use for the gradual disposal of household waste.¹⁶ The hypothesis explaining the pit forms as parts of a workshop because of the channels between them sounds unconvincing, since they contain mostly domestic waste and not production waste.

The first significant monumental structure was excavated in 1990: a 16.40 m long wall, which, along with other household objects found in its vicinity, was seen as one of the dwellings on the hill.¹⁷ It is noteworthy that no traces of fortifications have ever been found. Nikolaidou-Patera tends to explain this with the development of the site during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, when it probably changed its appearance and purpose.¹⁸ However, given the quality of the building material found, it is unlikely that there was a fortification on the hill at any stage in the development of the site. To sum up, this represents the total amount of archaeological structures explored on Kanoni hill.

Recent efforts to continue the investigations of the site have focused on the study of the classical necropolis located at the north-eastern foot of the hill. The earliest graves date back several decades after the pits on the hilltop were filled. Some of the cremations from the 5th–4th centuries BC

¹⁵ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1992, 490; Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1993, 519; Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1995, 376, Πίν. 210α-γ, 211α-β. The development of the site, reflected through the said ceramic fragments and their chronology, coincides with the Achaemenid presence along the Lower Strymon in the late 6th century and during the first quarter of the 5th century BC. Zannis 2014, 353 rightly points out that according to Herodotus (7.112–113), the Pierians did not resist the passage of Xerxes' army in 480 BC, but the available archaeological data from the settlements in the Strymon region (including from the Kanoni hill) speaks of an anti-Persian resistance (?) – see also Zannis 2014, 356.

¹⁶ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1993, 519; Ilieva 2023, 5.

¹⁷ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1993, 518; Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997a, 837.

¹⁸ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1988, 347.

discovered there in 1994 are distinguished by a rich funerary inventory.¹⁹ The data from the necropolis prove that the inhabitation on the site continued after the middle of the 5th century BC.²⁰ Interestingly, the necropolis lacks graves from the 6th century BC, synchronous with the ceramic inventory from the pits.

In one of the cremation graves from the 4th century BC, there was a discovery of a bronze coin with the legend ΦΑΓΡ on the reverse.²¹ This is the most significant find from the necropolis, and, in fact, the only one that gives Nikolaidou-Patera a reason to confirm the hypothesis proposed in her initial report, that the site at the hilltop is indeed the ancient settlement of Phagres.²² In addition to the newly discovered coin, she makes reference to the accounts of both Herodotus and Thucydides about the approximate location of the Thracian settlement.

Among the published results of the archaeological excavations on the hilltop, though, no materials of Thracian descent were discovered.²³ Furthermore, graffiti on pottery fragments provide anthroponyms such as [- -]κράτης, Αλκιδάμας, and Μελπώ,²⁴ and definitions to anthroponyms, such as καλός²⁵ indicating beyond doubt the Greek descent of the local inhabitants.

Literary sources mentioning Phagres are few and scarce in number. In the Tab. 1. below, they are presented according to their chronological appearance, also taking into consideration the ethnic attribution of the settlement – Pierian (Thracian) or Greek.

It becomes clear that all the sources from the late Archaic and Classical periods define Phagres as a Thracian, and more precisely, a Pierian settlement, while those from the Hellenistic and Roman periods give it a Greek identity, mentioning it alongside other Greek settlements.

¹⁹ Blackman 1999–2000, 98, Fig. 130; Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 2017, 207–210, 212, Εικ. 4, 5.

²⁰ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997a, 839–840.

²¹ Ibid., 838–839; Blackman et al. 1997–1998, 90; For an image of the coin see Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 2017, 205, Εικ. 1.

²² Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1988, 346. The practice of placing a coin or coins as part of a funerary inventory (with the function of the so-called Charon's obol?) is widely spread among the Greeks especially in the 4th century BC (Grinder-Hansen 1991, 211).

²³ She herself admits that Thracian materials are completely absent, but the site is nevertheless recognized as the Thracian settlement of Phagres. See Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1988, 347–348; Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997a, 840. Only Zannis 2014, 256 suggests that the sub-geometric pottery found on the hilltop originated from local workshops and may testify to the Thracian material culture.

²⁴ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1988, 347–348, Εικ. 13; SEG 38.656; Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997a, 841.

²⁵ Κουκούλι-Χρυσανθάκη 1987, 332–333.

Ancient author	Quotation mentioning Phagres	Approx. date of composing the evidence
Hecat. <i>via</i> Steph. Byz. Jacoby, FGrHist I (1957), No. 1, Fr. 156	Φάγρες· πόλις Θράκης· Ἑκαταῖος Εὐρώπῃ· καὶ Θουκυδίδης δευτέρᾳ (β). τὸ ἐθνικὸν Φαγρήσιος. λέγεται καὶ Φαγρησαῖος	ca. 500 BC ²⁶
Hdt. 7.112	παραμειψάμενος δὲ ὁ Ξέρξης τὴν εἰρημένῃν, δεύτερα τούτων παραμείβετο τείχεα τὰ Πιέρων, τῶν ἐνὶ Φάγρης ἐστὶ οὐνομα καὶ ἐτέρῳ Πέργαμος.	second half of the 5 th century BC
Thuc. 2.99.3	πρῶτοι ἐκτίσαντο καὶ ἐβασίλευσαν ἀναστήσαντες μάχῃ ἐκ μὲν Πιερίας Πιέρας, οἱ ὕστερον ὑπὸ τὸ Πάγγαιον πέραν Στρυμόνος ὥκησαν Φάγρητα καὶ ἄλλα χωρία	ca. the end of the 5 th century BC
Ps.-Scyl. 67	εἰσὶ δὲ ἐν Θράκῃ πόλεις Ἑλληνίδες αἶδε· Ἀμφίπολις, Φάγρης, Γαλνπός, Οἰσύμη καὶ ἄλλα ἐμπόρια Θασίων	ca. 340–330 BC
Strab. 7. Fr. 33 ²⁷	εἴτα αἱ τοῦ Στρυμόνος ἐκβολαί· εἴτα Φάγρης Γαλνπός Ἀπολλωνία, πᾶσαι πόλεις	1 st century BC – AD 1 st century

Tab. 1. References to Phagres in the literary sources.

It is striking that no contemporary researcher has yet linked the search for the settlement with the statements from literary sources about the existence of its first Pierian/Thracian stage of existence.²⁸ The Pierians are known for having been one of the Thracian tribes that extracted silver ore from the mines of Pangaion²⁹ and yet their settlement is usually placed on the seashore or in the Pierian valley far away from the mountain.

The earliest mention of Phagres is to be found in the *Περιήγησις* of Hecataeus of Miletus, composed toward around the end of the 6th century BC. It is preserved in *Ἑθνικά* of Stephanus of Byzantium (AD 6th century), who refers to Hecataeus and Thucydides. The definition of Phagres there as *πόλις* raises crucial questions – whether it is a genuine classification of Hecataeus, of Thucydides, or whether it belongs to the time of Stephanus

²⁶ Hansen 1997, 17; The date of the mention of the settlement in Hecataeus offers a conditional *terminus ante quem* of its foundation. (Zannis 2014, 314).

²⁷ Olshausen 2022, 31: Fr. 33 belongs to the lost second part of Book 7, describing the lands south of the lower Danube: Illyria, Epirus, Macedonia, and Thrace.

²⁸ Roller defines the settlement only as a Thasian colony, as is Galepsos (Roller 2018, 409: *Phagres is southeast of the mouth of the Strymon*).

²⁹ Hdt. 7.112.

himself. It becomes apparent from Tab. 1. presented earlier that Thucydides does not define the settlement as a πόλις. It is generally accepted among scholars that Stephanus of Byzantium correctly refers to the writings of geographers (Strabo, Pausanias), but is not so accurate when quoting historians (Thucydides, Xenophon).³⁰ Since Hecataeus of Miletus was a Late Archaic geographer, and since in Thucydides Phagres is not classified as a πόλις, we may expect that this definition of the settlement comes from the Περιήγησις of Hecataeus. Such an assumption is, however, highly speculative, because of the specific way in which Stephanus cites his sources. It is evident that in the discussed quotation he classifies the toponym as πόλις without indicating whether Hecataeus was the source only of the toponym, or also of its classification as πόλις. As pointed out in the literature, in a number of similar cases, it has been established that it was Stephanus of Byzantium who was the author of the addition that a settlement was πόλις.³¹ Unfortunately, Hecataeus' data provide no details of either the location or the ethnic identification of Phagres, which limits the interpretation possibilities of the earliest data layer.

The earliest evidence indicating the approximate location of Phagres is provided by Herodotus, who refers to it as τεῖχος of the Pierians, i.e. a fortified settlement with defensive walls. It is mentioned in the context of Xerxes' march to Greece in 480 BC, when the army of the Persian king crosses the Pierian valley south from Pangaion.³² In fact, this is the only ancient text linking the settlement to a specific historical event. Herodotus explicitly notes that Pangaion remained to the right of the Persian army, and it passed by the fortresses of the Pierians, one of which was Phagres. It may be suggested that a fortified site should be situated in the mountain heights, on a natural elevation, rather than in the middle of a plain through which a road passes, as is the case with the Kanoni hill. Yet, in the written tradition, this is not a prerequisite for defining a fortified settlement as a τεῖχος: in none of the references to the term by the authors of the Classical period is there any suggestion of a settlement situated on a natural hill.³³

³⁰ Hansen 1997, 18.

³¹ Quite similar to this is the case of Fr. 115: Κρίσα· πόλις Φωκίδος. Ἐκαταῖος Εὐρώπῃ where it is established that the author of the classification of the settlement is precisely Stephanus, because of the way he refers to Hecataeus (Hansen 1997, 17–18). See also the other possible ways in which Stephanus of Byzantium classifies settlements as πόλις, quoting Hecataeus' data in Περιήγησις.

³² The route of the army in this region of Thrace is traced in Delev 2014, 411. Although Herodotus does not mention the Pierians either when describing Megabases' actions in Thrace ca. 513–512 BC (Hdt. 4.143.1; 5.10.14–16), or when describing the communities inhabiting the area of Pangaion (Hdt. 5.23.2; cf. Zannis 2014, 316).

³³ Cf. Memphis: Hdt. 3.14.91; the walls of Piraeus built by Themistocles: Hdt. 7.141; 8.51; 9.65; Thuc. 1.93; Plateia: Thuc. 2.75; Xen. Cyr., 7.5.13.

In the passage quoted, Herodotus mentions a second fortified Pierian settlement – Pergamos. Based on field surveys and pottery discovered, the belief is that it should be looked for at the present-day village of Mous-theni (Μουσθένη), at the foot of Pangaion.³⁴

Thucydides does not mention Phagres when describing the hostilities in this part of Thrace during the Peloponnesian War, as he does for all the others in this region – Amphipolis, Eion, Galepsos, Neapolis, Thasos. In the passage quoted he defines the settlement as “a place” – χωρίον,³⁵ adding that the Pierians “settled at Phagres and other places there”. There are no references to the fortification mentioned by Herodotus. However, Thucydides’ account makes it clear that at the time of the Peloponnesian War, Phagres was still a Pierian settlement and not defined as a Greek one. The role of the settlement during the Peloponnesian War remains completely unknown, which perhaps means that by 404 BC Phagres – as a Thracian settlement – did not enter the hostilities. In this sense, such an *ex silentio* interpretation may indirectly indicate that the settlement of the Pierians was not located close to the sites of the hostilities along the coast of the Strymon Gulf.

Pseudo-Scylax’s message is usually interpreted as evidence that Phagres was situated directly on the coast.³⁶ Nonetheless, this cannot be taken as a categorical statement, since Ps.-Scylax’ account also mentions non-coastal settlements, despite the fact that it is a *periplus* (description of coastal settlements and ports).³⁷ Of special interest is the reference to Phagres as a Greek rather than a Thracian settlement.³⁸ Ps.-Scylax lists

³⁴ For an early identification of the other Pierian toponym mentioned by Herodotus, Pergamos, with the village of Eleftherupoli (called Pravista until 1929), see Leake 1835, 178: *If Phagres stood at Orfaná, Pergamos was most probably the modern Právista*; Σαμσάρης 1980, 238; Loukopoulou 2004, 857. For more on the presence of an archaeological site there, see Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1998, 32. In fact, Phagres and Pergamos remain the only fortified Thracian settlements mentioned in Herodotus, past which the Persian army passed in 480 BC – Werner 1999, 79, Anm. 35. The well-established modern view that Pergamos is located at the village of Μουσθένη is thanks to Σελίνη Ψωμά – see Ψωμά 2003, 241. On the current state of archaeological research at the site there, see Zannis 2014, 182–183 and especially Klingborg et al. 2024.

³⁵ The different definitions of Phagres in the cited ancient authors are due to the different contexts through which they refer to the settlement (Zannis 2014, 315).

³⁶ Σαμσάρης 1980, 252: *πόλις στις περική παραλία*; Isaac 1986, 62–63: *It was on Xerxes’ route which bypassed the coastal towns south of Symbolon, at the same time it was close enough to the sea to be included among the coastal towns by Skylax and Strabo. A site at the western exit of the Valley of Pieria seems probable.*

³⁷ Flønsted-Jensen, Hansen 1996, 140.

³⁸ Under the classification πόλις Ἑλληνίς Ps.-Scylax names settlements inhabited by Greeks located outside mainland Greece, as in this case – the toponyms mentioned in §67 are in southwestern Thrace. Similarly, the text of *Periplus* names every Greek colony outside of Greece.

Phagres between Amphipolis and Galepsos, which some authors take as an argument for identifying it with the site of the Kanoni hill.³⁹

Strabo's fragment is most likely based on an earlier text that reflects the policy of Philip II and Alexander III toward southwestern Thrace.⁴⁰ This is evident from the fact that immediately after the quoted list of cities, Strabo writes: εἴτα αἱ τοῦ Στρυμόνος ἐκβολαί: εἴτα Φάγρης Γαληψὸς Ἀπολλωνία, πᾶσαι πόλεις: εἴτα τὸ Νέστου στόμα τοῦ διορίζοντος Μακεδονίαν καὶ Θράκην, ὡς Φίλιππος καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ τούτου παῖς διώριζον ἐν τοῖς κατ' αὐτοὺς χρόνοις. Some of the settlements listed in the fragment may not have existed at the time of Strabo (1st century BC – AD 1st century). For example, Galepsos was destroyed by Philip II around 358–356 BC at the same time as the capture of Amphipolis. The same is supposed for Apollonia.⁴¹ Thus, it appears that Phagres is mentioned in a text from the beginning of the AD 1st century together with settlements that were nonexistent at that point. As such, it is plausible that it did not exist in Strabo's time either.⁴²

It should be pointed out that Strabo does not mention in this description between the Strymon and the Nestos any settlement which had existed by this time, like Amphipolis, Neapolis, Philippi. It can be further assumed that there might be a connection between the mentioned settlements, which are known to have been destroyed by Philip, and the next part of the quoted text about relocating the border between Thrace and Macedonia immediately afterwards. What the two statements have in common is that they refer to the policy of Philip and Alexander in this region:

³⁹ Papazoglu 1988, 390. However, the order of listing is chaotic and there is no strict geographical sequence. See Zannis 2014, 528.

⁴⁰ Dueck (2000, 183) states that among Strabo's sources for his Book 7 are: the *Periploï* of Artemidoros and Posidonius, the *Periegesis* of Hecataeus of Miletus, Ephorus of Cyme, and some of the "historians of Alexander III", such as Callisthenes of Olynthus. A reference to Callisthenes occurs in Strab. 14.5.28 again in connection with the area of Pangaion (see Jacoby, FGrHist IIB (1962), No. 124, Fr. 54). It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the information in 7. Fr. 33 probably originates from a composition by Callisthenes (for example, the lost *Θρακικά*). On the other hand, in the fragmentary preserved work of Ephorus of Cyme *Ἱστορίαι* (describing events up to 341 BC, i.e., until the siege of Perinthus by Philip II) one finds descriptions of settlements on the northern Aegean coast: Oesyne, Damos (near the future Philippi), Maroneia, etc. See Jacoby, FGrHist IIA (1961), No. 70, Fr. 35–40, where at the mention of Damos Ephorus speaks of the policy of Philip II in the region between the Strymon and the Nestos.

⁴¹ Hammond, Griffith 1979, 363: *Not only was it important for Philip in a general way to take control of the country between Amphipolis and Crenides, but in particular it was important then for him to deny to the Athenians a choice of possible bases if and when they might be able to use their naval strength against him.* Loukopoulou 2004, 858: *Together with Galepsos, Apollonia was conquered and destroyed by Philip II (Strabo 7 fr. 35E; Dem. 9. 26), presumably following the capture of Krenides in 356.*

⁴² The same fragment also mentions toponyms whose locations are not known at all – for example, the port of Κάπρος and an island of the same name: ἐν ἡ λιμὴν ὀνομα Κάπρος καὶ νησίον ὁμώνυμον τῷ λιμένι.

the destruction of settlements upon the establishment of Macedonian rule⁴³ and shifting the border with Thrace to the east in favour of Macedonia.⁴⁴ It is possible that both events date ca. 358–336 BC. According to the order of their being mentioned, Phagres may be located near Galepsos and Apollonia, although these topographical records remain uncertain.⁴⁵

A similar list of settlements in the region between the mouths of the Strymon and the Nestos is found several decades after Strabo's text in Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis historia*, where he lists in 7.11 (42): *Cuius ... in ora a Strymone Apollonia, Oesyma, Neapolis, Datos*. Pliny's account dates from AD 77 and the absence of Galepsos and Phagres raises the question of whether the latter continued to exist during the Principate.⁴⁶

Litterary sources provide a rough idea of the geographical location of Phagres within the Pierian Valley. Alongside this, though, they contain important information concerning changes in its inhabitants' ethnic structure. Indications of such a change may also serve as an additional clue when searching for its location. In such a case, the following archaeological situation should be expected: traces of Thracian inhabitation during the 6th–4th centuries BC, reflecting the pre-colonial period of Phagres, namely – handmade pottery from the Early Iron Age,⁴⁷ defense fortifications, and respectively Classical and Hellenistic Thasian pottery. A further clue, resulting from the analysis above, is that the site had probably been destroyed by Philip II, and may not have survived during the Roman era.

The search for an archaeological site that meets these conditions leads to new hypotheses regarding the location of the Thracian settlement. Thus, on the hill of Παλιάμπελα (Paliambela) near the village of Eleftheroupoli, archaeological materials were discovered suggesting the existence of an ancient settlement with a necropolis (see Fig. 1). The site has been studied by Chaido Koukouli-Chryssanthaki. During the 1979 excavations on the Paliambela hill, a large quantity of pottery fragments was found,

⁴³ To this see also W. Leake's references of Macedonian lead sling bullets found on the Kanoni hill.

⁴⁴ Roller 2018, 408. According to Diod. 31.8.8 the Strymon River was the original eastern border of Macedonia.

⁴⁵ Loukopoulou 2004, 865: *Together with Galepsos and Apollonia, Phagres may have been one of the poleis occupied and destroyed by Philip II after his capture of Amphipolis (Strabo 7 fr. 35; cf. Dem. 9.26)*. Tuplin also argues that the location of Phagres should be sought in the southwestern part of the Pierian Valley and specifically around Eion: Tuplin 2003, 385: *...Phagres and Pergamos. These are conventionally located near Eion...* There are also opinions that no reliable data about the location of Phagres can be found in the later sources – see Radt 2007, 358: *Phagres: nicht sicher lokalisiert*.

⁴⁶ Loukopoulou 2004, 865 also states that Phagres existed at least until the end of the Hellenistic period, based on the finds from Kanoni hill, referring to the publications of Nikolaidou-Patera – *Archaeological remains [...] indicate the survival of the settlement probably down to the Roman period*. See also Zannis 2014, 529.

⁴⁷ See Papadopoulos 2001, 173–178 for the dating and distribution of handmade Thracian pottery within Thasian Pereia. See also Πίκουλας 2001, 109 [*non vidit*].

testifying to the continuous occupation of the site until the end of the Hellenistic period.⁴⁸ The earliest fragments date from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age – vessels of various sorts with typical twisted handles and incised decoration on the body.⁴⁹ The Late Archaic period is represented by numerous Ionic bowls and sub-geometric *skyphoi*. The latest fragments date from the Hellenistic period – Megarian bowls and *West-slope* pottery.⁵⁰ The location of the necropolis of the ancient settlement at the northern foot of the hill was also discovered, which further specifies the chronology of the settlement's occupation.⁵¹ Based on the ceramic inventory of the site, Koukouli-Chryssanthaki suggests that the city of Phagres mentioned by ancient authors must have been located actually on the Paliambela hill.⁵² The most significant monument from the necropolis, however, remains unmentioned in her publications. It is a tomb stele containing an inscription that reads:

Σωσικράτης
Κρωκίνα
Φαργίσιος⁵³

Partial investigations of the site at Eleftheroupoli, revealing several graves within the necropolis, do not definitely support its identification with Phagres. Until now, there have been no studies of its urban structures, or traces of fortification, which is assumed from the literary sources. The only one argument for its identification with ancient Phagres according to Koukouli-Chryssanthaki is the discovered funerary inscription, which is also the first epigraphic mention of the toponym.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1987, 332. The author evaluates the finds from Kanoni hill, discovered in 1979, insisting that the site near the village of Eleftheroupoli should be recognized as Phagres, and not the one near the Kanoni hill (cf. Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1987, 332, n. 10, 333).

⁴⁹ Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1993, 688.

⁵⁰ Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1998, 39–40.

⁵¹ More on the Hellenistic graves excavated in 1982 and 1984 within the necropolis at the Paliambela hill and the collective coin finds found in them, see: Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1989, 272; Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1989a, 325; French 1989–1990, 59; French 1990–1991, 58; French 1991–1992, 51.

⁵² Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1987, 332; Catling 1987–1988, 54.

⁵³ SEG 48.797; The inscription was discovered in 1981 outside its archaeological context (it was associated with a cist grave looted by treasure-hunters) and published in 1988 (Πούλιος 1988, 343–344, Πίν. 233α; cf. Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρη 1988, 347–348, Εικ. 14). It is nowadays exhibited in the Archaeological Museum of Kavala under Inv. No. Α1328.

⁵⁴ Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1998, 38. Dating of the inscription is also a matter of debate. A significant number of scholars assume that, based on its palaeography, the monument should be dated to the 5th–4th century BC (Πούλιος 1988, 343; Touchais 1989, 655; French 1989–1990, 59; Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1998, 38), while only Hatzopoulos et al. 1990, 529–530, No. 491 suggests that the stele could not have been inscribed as early as the 5th century BC, and most probably dates to the 4th century BC.

The mentioned *ethnikon* on the tombstone deserves special attention. If the deceased Σωσικράτης originated from Phagres, and Phagres is, indeed, at the Paliambela hill where he was buried, then he was buried within his native settlement, in which case its mention in the text of the inscription becomes pointless, as noted by Maria Nikolaidou-Patera and Miltiades Hatzopoulos.⁵⁵

Indicating the native origin would make sense only if the deceased was a foreigner to the settlement at Eleftherioupoli and had died during his stay there. The presence of the toponym on the tombstone would be a sign that a person who did not belong to the local community was given a proper burial within the necropolis.⁵⁶

Thus, the hypothesis of Koukouli-Chryssanthaki on the location of Phagres being at the Paliambela hill near the village of Eleftheroupoli remains unconvincing. Although the presence of an earlier stage of inhabitation, as illustrated by the pottery fragments, fits to the profile of Phagres according to the literary sources, the text of the inscription in reality compromises the hypothesis that this settlement of the Pierians should be located there.

On the other hand, Nikolaidou-Patera's main argument for the identification of the site at Kanoni with Phagres due to the bronze coin originating from the necropolis can also be criticized. Until the discovery of the coin in 1994, the identification of the Kanoni hill with Phagres was the result only of W. Leake's assumption back in 1835. It is true that he himself also mentions the presence of numerous coins as well as visible architectural structures on the hill, but this is far from confirming that the site corresponds to Phagres' description in the literary sources.

In this respect, the scientific discussion on the issue of the location of Phagres, based on archaeological data, began with the published report by Koukouli-Chryssanthaki in 1987 regarding the initial studies of the sites near the villages of Eleftheroupoli and Orfani, and the article by Nikolaidou-Patera in 1988, with the results of the excavations on the Kanoni hill.⁵⁷ The

⁵⁵ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρη 1988, 347–348; Hatzopoulos et al. 1990, 529–530, No. 491: *La présence de l'ethnique exclut à notre avis l'identification du site près d'Eleuthéroupolis avec Phagrès*.

⁵⁶ A similar practice is common within a great number of Greek settlements around the Black Sea, the Propontis and the Aegean: SEG 51.914 (Θεών/Αριστάνδρου/Ηρακλειώτας) from Apollonia Pontica, 5th–4th century BC; SEG 24.671 (Φαίκων Ἀρτεμιδῶρου/Καλλατιανός) and SEG 24.683 (Ἀγάθων/ Ἀγάθωνος/Κῶος) from Byzantium, 2nd century BC; in Athens there are several dozens of similar examples (nearly 50): IG II² 10018 (Αριστόμαχος/Χαιρεφάνους/Ολύνθιος) around the middle of the 4th century BC (see Hildebrandt 2006, 216, Cat. No. 1, Tafel 6); IG II² 9157 (Επιθάλης/Δημητρίου/Λαμψρακινός) ca. 340–330 BC (see *Ibid.*, 272–273, Cat. No. 107, Tafel 45); IG II² 9107 (Νίκων Ἡραίου/Κυζικηνός) ca. 360 BC (see *Ibid.*, 276, Cat. No. 114); IG II² 8517 (Λεύκων/Λευκιάνορος/Εφέσιος) ca. 410–380 BC (see *Ibid.*, 220, Cat. No. 9, Tafel 9).

⁵⁷ It is interesting to note that simultaneously with the beginning of the “archaeological” stage of the discussion appears the assumption of Müller 1987, 86–87, who – without knowing

simultaneous start of the excavations at both sites in 1979, as well as the almost simultaneous publication of their results, make it possible for the emergence of two alternative theses on the issue.⁵⁸ A common disadvantage of all contemporary publications on the subject, however, is their uncritical reference to W. Leake. His data on the archaeological materials of Kanoni, which were visible by the early 19th century at the time of his visit to the site, remain outside the researchers' attention.

None of the excavated archaeological structures on this hill unequivocally confirm the topographic identification of the site with the ancient settlement of Phagres, the only argument for which remains the discovery of a bronze coin with the legend ΦΑΓΡ.⁵⁹

The presented combination of the "head of Apollo"⁶⁰ with a "lion protome" is untypical for the iconography of the cities in Thrace. The depiction of the head of Apollo on the obverse of the coins of Phagres, though, finds parallels with those on the obverse of Amphipolis.⁶¹ This iconographic characteristic of the coins allows them to be dated around 400–350 BC.⁶² Nevertheless, both the image of Apollo and the lion on the coins of Phagres stylistically match those on the bronze issues of the Macedonian king Pausanias (ca. 394/390–392/389 BC).⁶³ The years of his reign set

the results of the first archaeological excavations at the two modern Greek villages – suggests that Phagres can be sought within of vicinity of the village of Orfani, but according to him it is most likely located on the hill of Παλιόκαστρο, situated between the villages of Orfani and Karyani and ca. 2 km north of the seashore (Müller 1987, 87, Abb. 3). His publication and that of Papazoglou 1988 mark the end of the first ("pre-archaeological") stage of the discussion, which began as early as Leake 1835 and was characterized by hypotheses about the location of Phagres based on the order in which ancient authors listed the settlements in this region, which modern researchers attempted to identify with the visible but until then unexplored archaeological sites.

⁵⁸ Subsequently, the discussion seems to have reached its conclusion with the recognition of Koukouli-Chryssanthaki that Phagres should be placed precisely at the Kanoni hill near Orfani, as Nikolaidou-Patera has argued since 1988 – see Koukouli-Chryssanthaki 2006, 179: *Cette région est délimitée par deux cités antiques: celle du site de Gaidourokastro, où on localise l'ancienne Galepsos, et celle du site de Kanoni dans la région d'Orfani où l'on place la cité de Phagres.*

⁵⁹ Λιάμπη 1991, 26. See Loukopoulou 2004, 865, where it is incorrectly stated that Liampi 1991 comments on the Phagres coin discovered at Orfani in 1994 and published in 1997: *The site identification was confirmed by the discovery of one bronze coin of C4f. Type: obv. laureate head of Apollo; rev. lion protome; legend: ΦΑΓΡ (Liampi (1991)).* In her paper, Katerini Liampi does not discuss the location of Phagres. An iconographic analysis of the available coin specimens was made, and their typology was proposed, as well as a suggested period of their issuing.

⁶⁰ It is necessary to clarify that the coins of Phagres commented on by Liampi differ iconographically from the one found in the necropolis under the Kanoni hill. All the coins included in Liampi's catalogue (Λιάμπη 1991, 28, Πιν. II), represent the head of Apollo facing right. The obverse die of the coin discovered by Nikolaidou-Patera represents Apollo facing left – see Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 2017, 205, Εικ. 1.

⁶¹ Λιάμπη 1991, 29, Πιν. III, α-β.

⁶² Λιάμπη 1991, 29.

⁶³ Head 1963, 170, No. 4–7; Kray 1974, 144.

the *terminus post quem* of the coinage of Phagres, while its end should be placed ca. 358–357 BC because of the Macedonian conquest.⁶⁴ Although Philip II did not revoke Amphipolis' right to issue coins when he captured the city, he most likely revoked such permission from the surrounding settlements such as Phagres, which had maintained coinage until then.⁶⁵ Therefore, it is assumed that it is almost impossible for these coins to have been minted after 358–357 BC.⁶⁶ The limited number of available coin specimens, as well as their low denomination, indicate that the coinage of Phagres was intended for local circulation. The coin of Phagres from the Classical necropolis at the Kanoni hill appears to be the only one known originating from a well-documented archaeological context of discovery. However, its findspot may not coincide with the location of the ancient settlement.⁶⁷ The coin testifies only to the fact that Phagres maintained its own coinage and that its issues most likely circulated in the surrounding nearby settlements. No other coins are known to have been discovered during the excavations of the necropolis. The grave goods mentioned in the publication from the same context do not seem to be chronologically indicative, since, according to the researcher, the graves are generally dated to ca. 5th–4th centuries BC. Thus, the archaeological context of the coin's discovery does not contribute to specifying the chronology of the coinage of Phagres.⁶⁸

In general, both assumptions about the location of Phagres lack convincing evidence. According to Thucydides, Phagres was founded by the Pierians, which can be dated around the middle of the 7th century BC, while the site at Kanoni shows no traces of inhabitation before the middle of the 6th century BC. On the other hand, the archaeological record at Eleftherupoli suggests much more the presence of pre-Greek inhabitation, evident by numerous finds of pottery, as indicated by the literary sources

⁶⁴ Λιάμπη 1991, 29–30.

⁶⁵ Kray 1974, 150. For another opinion, see Lorber 1990, 63–75 – according to her Philip II ended only the silver coinage of the cities he captured in Thrace, but not their right to issue bronze.

⁶⁶ For instance, it is widely accepted that around this time the civic coinage of Neapolis ceased – see Lazaridis 1971, 43: *The coins of Neapolis began to circulate shortly before 500 B.C., and continued till the colony's subjection by the Macedonians, ca. 350 B. C.*; Παπαευαγγέλιου 2000 [*non vidit*].

⁶⁷ In this sense, it is pertinent to pay attention to the coins of Thasos and Akanthos (5th–4th centuries BC) found in a funerary context when exploring the necropolis of Galepsos. – see Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1977, 527, Πιν. 460β–γ. Numerous examples from the northern necropolis of Corinth and from those of Olynthus, Amphipolis and Abdera dating from the 5th–4th centuries BC also show that a significant part of the coins found in graves may also represent mints of other settlements, since their place of minting and their archaeological findspot do not coincide. See Grindler-Hansen 1991, 211–213; Kosmidou 2006, 416 (Table 1); Kallintzi, Chatziprokopioy 2019, 433 (Fig. 11).

⁶⁸ Νικολαΐδου-Πατέρα 1997a, 839.

for Phagres, even though the inscription found in the necropolis compromises this hypothesis, as mentioned above.

This analysis suggests that the location of Phargres should be sought elsewhere, apart from the sites studied so far. The Kanoni hill falls, indeed, within the tribal territories of the Pierians,⁶⁹ although if interpreted solely based on archaeological materials (with no regard to the literary sources for Phagres and Leake's assumption), it should probably be defined as a settlement, founded by the Thasians ca. 550 BC with a local trading function. Such sites have been recorded elsewhere within the Thasian Pereira, all located on hills.⁷⁰

Returning to the criteria for determining the location of Phagres, formulated on the basis of the data from the literary sources, apparently neither of the two commented on sites provides archaeological confirmation of the elements of Phagres' urban planning, with the lack of traces of fortification in both cases being particularly striking.⁷¹ The question of the need for fortification of the Pierians' settlements is of particular importance in relation to their locations. The need for protection implies the presence of enemies in their vicinity. Herodotus reports that the Pierians were one of the Thracian tribes who exploited the mines in the Mount Pangaion and extracted precious metals from them.⁷² It is conceivable that this requires the presence of walls to protect their main cities.⁷³ On the other hand, it was only Thasos that tried to take control of the mines in the mountains from the Thracians during the 5th century BC, besides Athens and the Macedonian kings.⁷⁴ It is not entirely clear to which period Herodotus' report of the walls of Phagres refers – whether they were already a fact by the time Xerxes and his army passed through the Pierian Valley

⁶⁹ Delev 2007, 115, n. 25: *The Pieres are easily localized in and around the coastal ridge south of Mount Pangaeum, and probably on the southern slopes of the latter*; Delev 2014, 412.

⁷⁰ On this, see Nerantzis, Papadopoulos 2022, 315: *The western settlement is surround by a trapezoidal fortification wall and have functioned as a trading station in association to a port, judging by its location on a hilltop overlooking the Aegean coast*. Moreover, Leake reports the presence of a large number of coins on the Kanoni hill, which is evidence of commercial exchange. In addition, the lack of synchronous graves from the 6th century BC in the studied necropolis does not allow the site to be defined as a settlement, at least during the first decades of its existence.

⁷¹ Lazaridis 1971, 33: *The Pieres [...] seem to have had more walled cities*; Loukopoulou 2004, 865: *It must have been strongly fortified, as indicated by its classification as teichos in Hdt. 7.112.2*. Regarding the building skills of the Pierians see the assumption of Werner 1999, 79: *Die nur von diesem thrakischen Volksstamm geübte Befestigungstechnik scheint keine originäre Schöpfung der Pierer gewesen, sondern von den benachbarten thasischen Kolonien Galepsos und Apollonia in Pierien übernommen worden zu sein, was auf die Unkenntnis der Thraker von der Errichtung städtischer Anlagen schließen läßt*.

⁷² Hdt. 7.112; The question of Pierian tribal coinage during the 5th century BC is commented on in Delev 2014, 413–415.

⁷³ Zannis 2014, 316.

⁷⁴ Picard 2006; Delev 2014, 412–413.

(480 BC), or whether he was talking about his own time when he described the Thasian Pereia several decades later, testifying to the settlements and tribes there. An answer to this question can be suggested by tracing the conflicts between the Thracians and the Thasians in the 5th century BC for control over the mines.

As is evident from Thucydides' text, the settlement retained its Thracian character at least until the end of the 5th century BC. Phagres was initially mentioned as a Greek settlement – πόλις Ἑλληνίς – in the *Periplus* of Pseudo-Scylax ca. 340–330 BC as pointed out by Benjamin Isaac.⁷⁵ It is evident, though, that the Thracian toponym was preserved even after the change in its ethnic structure.⁷⁶

It seems likely that during the first half of the 4th century BC the Thasians⁷⁷ settled in Phagres gaining a foothold over the nearby mines. This enabled the beginning of the settlement's own coinage.⁷⁸ This is why Phagres' coins are stylistically close to the synchronous Greek coin types.⁷⁹ Moreover, autonomous coinage is unusual for the Thracians. Additional evidence of the Greek character of the settlement is provided by the inscription found at Eleftheroupoli bearing the name of the resident of Phargēs on it – Σωσικράτης.⁸⁰ In fact, both the inscription and the coin from

⁷⁵ Isaac 1986, 62–63: *According to Herodotus and Thucydides, therefore, Phagres was a Thracian town, not a Greek one. Skylax, on the other hand, mentions Phagres as one of the Greek towns in Thrace. [...] It seems that Phagres was Thracian in the fifth century and became Greek afterwards.*

⁷⁶ Σαμψάρις 1976, 160.

⁷⁷ Pébarthe 1999, 136: *Phagrès doit être mise aussi à part car tout laisse à penser qu'elle ne devint grecque qu'au IV^e s.*; Loukopoulou 2004, 865: *At an unknown date Phagres was presumably colonized by the Thasians and incorporated in their mainland peraiā*; Delev 2014, 412. It is known that around 360–359 BC Thasos expanded its possessions in Thrace, founding Krenides for the purpose of extracting precious metals (Diod. 16.3.7; Strab. 7. Fr. 34). Diodorus reports that until 356 BC, when the Thasian colony was conquered by Philip II, the gold mines at Krenides were not being exploited extensively. Macedonians expanded their output, reaching an annual income of 1,000 talents – Diod. 16.8.6.

⁷⁸ Compared to Krenides, which was founded as a Thasian colony, the coinage associated with this city (ΘΑΣΙΩΝ ΗΠΕΙΡΟ [= “of the Thasians of the Mainland”]) is thought to have been minted on Thasos by 356 BC – Head, Gardner 1963, 226, No. 112; Graham 1964, 88; Kray 1974, 145; Hammond, Griffith 1979, 358; Loukopoulou 2004, 866.

⁷⁹ The synchronous coinages of Galepsos (ca. 411–356 BC, showing on the obverse “a bearded Dionysus facing left”, similar to that of Thasos;) finds stylistic similarities with the reverse dies of the Macedonian king Archelaus I (413–399 BC): “protome of a goat facing right”. The legend on the reverse reads ΓΑ–ΛΗΨΩ[N]. It can, therefore, be assumed that the coinage of Galepsos starts earlier than that of Krenides (359–356 BC). Bon 1936, 172–174; Μπακαλάκης, Μυλωνάς 1940, 58–59; Head, Gardner 1963, 163, No. 1–2; Isaac 1986, 63–64. According to Strab. 7. Fr. 35, Philip II destroyed Galeposos in 356 BC.

⁸⁰ If the inscription from Eleftheroupoli indeed dates from the 4th century BC, it represents one of the earliest known examples of the spread of the male name Σωσικράτης within Aegean Thrace. All the other known cases from this geographical area refer to the Hellenistic and Roman periods, with a concentration of the name's spread around Abdera. See LGPN 2005, 324; Parissaki 2007, 250–251.

the necropolis at the Kanoni hill are approximately synchronous – they are dated to the 4th century BC, when Phagres was already inhabited by Greeks.⁸¹ Apparently, Pseudo-Scylax's statement on Phagres as a Greek settlement reflects this period.

All this points out the location of the settlement immediately at the southern foothills of Pangaion, close to the ancient mines, i.e., in the vicinity of the modern villages of Ofrynio, Galipsos, and Kokkinochori (see. Fig. 1).⁸² Their location is approximately 5 km north of the Kanoni hill, which would have been within the *χώρα* of the ancient settlement, i.e., within the circulation area of its coins. That is most probably how a coin of Phagres happened upon there, since it was minted for local circulation. As a further part of the explanation, it should be noted that only 2 km north of the present-day village of Ofrynio, three mining galleries have been detected, in which fragments of Roman pottery were found.⁸³

The possibility that the ancient settlement was indeed located somewhere in the vicinity of the three mentioned modern-day villages was initially suggested by Dimitar Detschew long before the discovery of archaeological materials from the region.⁸⁴ Decades later – after the already available archaeological situations around these places – Miltiades Hatzopoulos also suggested that the search for Phagres should be set north of the Kanoni hill, without, though, providing any arguments for this.⁸⁵

⁸¹ The complex evidence suggests that Phagres was settled by Greeks nearly two centuries later than coastal Galepsos. If, according to Hecataeus, Galepsos was *πόλις Θράκης καὶ Παιώνων* by the end of the 6th century BC (Jacoby, FGrHist I (1957), No. 1, Fr. 152), Thucydides refers to it as *τὴν Θασίων ἀποικίαν* (Thuc. 7.6.1) concerning events in 422 BC. About this see Pébarthe 1999, 136. It is worth pointing out, however, that Hecataeus' data about Galepsos are contradicted by the archaeological materials from the ancient settlement. The excavated graves, dating from the second half of the 6th century BC, reveal the Greek descent of the local community. At the same time, though, Hecataeus identifies Galepsos as *πόλις Θράκης καὶ Παιώνων*. Danov 1976, 348 suggests that Galepsos may have originated as a Thracian settlement, due to the origin of the toponym, but this would be before the middle of the 6th century BC. Hecataeus' account regarding Galepsos is, therefore, most likely diachronic to his time and does not reflect his own contemporary reality. Previous scholars claim that in the fragment in question Hecataeus mentions Gale(psos?) on the Sithonia peninsula, which was also mentioned by Hdt. 7.122 (see Pearson 1975, 57–58), while modern scholars assume that Fr. 152 refers to Galepsos at Thasian Pereia (Isaac 1986, 63; Flensted-Jensen 2004, 827–828). More about the archaeological studies of the necropolis of Galepsos, see Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1977, 525–527; Catling 1977–1978, 50; Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1980, 785–786; Catling 1981–1982, 42.

⁸² Βάξεβανόπουλος 2017, 218–227, see the maps on p. 128, 133. In this regard, it can be assumed that the colonization efforts of the Thasians from the first half of the 4th century BC attempting to expand their possessions covered not only the Drama Plain with Krenides, but also the Pierian Valley with Phagres.

⁸³ Βάξεβανόπουλος 2017, 295.

⁸⁴ Detschew 1957, 532: *Stadt der Pierier am Fuße des Pangäon*.

⁸⁵ Hatzopoulos et al. 1990, 529–530, No. 491: *Phagrès serait à chercher aux environs des villages modernes d'Orphanion et de Galipsos*.

Although the analysis offered here supports so far the hypotheses of Detshev and Hatzopoulos, their assumption is in need of reliable archaeological evidence. So far almost no surveys have been conducted in the regions of the three modern-day villages. From the vicinity of the village of Ofrynio traces of a dwelling are known, dating back to the end of the 4th – first half of the 3rd century BC.⁸⁶ All the reported finds from the modern-day villages of Galipsos, Kokkinochori and their surroundings were discovered by chance and date back to the Roman period.⁸⁷ The current state of research does not provide any evidence of earlier materials found there. Therefore, only future archaeological investigations could confirm or reject such a hypothesis and offer new horizons for the debate on the location of ancient Phagres.

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⁸⁶ Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1988, 422; Catling 1988–1989, 83; French 1989–1990, 60. In 1980 the foundations of an ancient building were ploughed up while cultivating a private agricultural property. Its excavation was led by M. Nikolaidou-Patera and continued until 1981. On the floor level, 107 coins of Cassander (305–297 BC) and Antigonos II Gonatas (274/272–239 BC) were found in a pot, which, together with the pottery discovered, refined the chronology of the site. The excavator identified the building as a storage room. For a synchronous site in the vicinity, see Blackman 1996–1997, 82.

⁸⁷ For a funerary inscription, found near the modern village of Galipsos, see Σαμσάρης 1976, 191, υποσημ. 3; Κουρκουτίδου-Νικολαΐδου 1989, 332, υποσημ. 3; for archaeological remains of a Roman-period settlement near the modern village of Kokkinochori, see Κουκούλη-Χρυσανθάκη 1987, 332.

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