

CHAPTER I:

THE GEOGRAPHY OF EUBOIA AND THE ERETRIÁS¹

The island of Euboia extends for c.220 km. along the coastline of Boiotia and the Attike on the mainland,² to which it is presently linked by a swing bridge across the narrowest part of the Euboian Channel, known as the Euripos, and a new



Fig. 1: The Euripos narrows and the swingbridge at Khalkis

suspension bridge further south.³ It was believed that the island had once upon a time been violently torn away from the mainland as a result of earthquakes, and indeed they are still of frequent occurrence. The presence on the island of a number of hot-springs that both in ancient times and today attract tourists to try the cure are a legacy of its seismic history.⁴ Its length impressed the ancients and it was thus

¹ Physiological, geographical, botanical bibliography: Appendix 2. Cf. maps pp. viii; ix.

² Between lat. 37°56' and 39°02' and long. 23°53' and 24°51': Strabon 9, 1, 22 C399. Strabon 10, 1, 2 C444: διὰ δὲ τὴν στενότητα καὶ τὸ λεχθὲν μῆκος ὑπὸ τῶν παλαιῶν Μάχρις ὀνομάσθη. Plin. *H.N.* 4, 63 both give its approximate length as 1200 stadia. Skylax *Peripl.* 58; Agathemerios 5, 25 (K. Muller [ed], *Geographi Graeci Minores*, II, Hildesheim, 1965, 486) both overstate it at 1350 and 1700 stadia respectively. Cf. Gehrke 1992 (I/1) pt III, 81 - 102. 1 stade = 1.82 m.

³ The channel is 2 plethra (c.70m.) wide. Boulanger 1964 (I/1) 596. The Euripos was first bridged in 411/10 and subsequently repaired or renewed several times. For discussion of the Euripos and its famous reversals of current, Geyer 1903 (Intro./3) 29 - 30 lists ancient sources and, more recently, Gehrke 1992 (I/1) 111 - 116.

⁴ For earthquakes: Thouk. 3, 89, 2; Diod. Sik. 12, 59, 2; Strabon 1, 3, 16 C58; Ion (ap. Strab. 1, 3, 19f. C60); 10, 1, 9 C 447; Ar. *Meteor.* 2, 8; Seneca, *Quaest. nat.* 4, 17, 25; the Lelantine springs: Plin. 4, 64. Sulla at Aidepsos: Plout. *Sulla*, 26. Geyer 1903 (Intro./3) 101 believes the fact that the thermal springs at Aidepsos were dedicated to Herakles bespeaks a very early date for their use. (Strangely, J. H. Croon, *The Herdsman of the Dead. Studies on some cults, myths and legends of the Ancient Greek colonization-area*, Utrecht, 1952, in his study of the relationship of Herakles with the hot-springs in the Mediterranean, and although seeing the area around Thermopylai as a major centre of the legends [ch. III], has nothing to say about the cult of Herakles at Aidepsos). The Eretrian deme-name ΧΥΤ. (=

sometimes called Makris⁵. It varies between c.60 km at its widest to 3.2 km at its narrowest point. Its area is 3770 sq. km., a large island by Mediterranean standards.⁶



Fig. 2: Hot springs erupting at the site of the ancient spa on the coast at Aidepsos

1. Mountains:

Like most of Greece, Euboeia is mountainous with a few small plains which in historical times were controlled by four principal cities, Histiaia, Khalkis, Eretria and Karystos.⁷ The extensive tracts of rugged terrain separating most towns on the island were probably one reason why there was no real movement towards unity on the island until late in the



Fig. 3: The ancient pass between Khalkis and Kerinthos (also fig. 66)

Χύτροι?) may indicate warm springs: R. C. Jebb, *Sophocles 'Trachiniae'*, Cambridge, 1908, 98, nn. 633ff. There are several notable springs in the Eretrias, though none are listed as warm: P. Rhodhakis/K. Triandafillidis, *Σύγχρονη Γεωγραφία Ἑλλάδος*, Athinaí, (c.1965) 531.

⁵ I.e. "Long" Island: Strabon 10, 1, 2 - 3 C444; Agathemeros 5, 25. Geyer 1903 (Intro./3) 31. For other names for it in ancient writers: II, n. 4.

⁶ It is the sixth largest, after Sicily, Sardinia, Kypros, Corsica and Krete. (Here, I remind the reader of the transliteration conventions I have adopted in rendering names etc.: supra, introduction vii).

⁷ Karystos is generally considered one of the principal poleis; its plain was quite small. On the other hand, Kerinthos which also had a smallish plain was never of great significance politically, and was probably dependent on its larger and more powerful neighbours during most periods of its history. By the sixth century, it was certainly a dependency of Khalkis: infra VII 203f. and n. 68; Geyer 1903 (Intro./3) 96; 107, however, believed that it was under Histiaian domination.

century. The notable exception was the area of fertile grazing and agricultural land between Eretria and Khalkis, and it is no accident that it was the cause of the best-known "event" in the history of Euboeia, the Lelantine War, which takes its name from the plain over which it was fought.

In the far north is the large mountain anciently known as Telethrion, an off-



Fig. 4: Cape Artemision and the Straits of Oreoi.

shoot of the Knemis Range in Epiknemidian Lokris on the mainland opposite, which rises to an altitude of 970m. Strabon⁸ unambiguously locates the mountain in the Histiaiotis. A series of ranges thrust themselves out from Telethrion: one to the west ends as Mt Likhas on the Kenaion Peninsula, another to the north forms the promontory of Artemision while a third, today called Kandeli, which rises to a



Fig. 5: Hera's throne; the summit of Mt Dirphys.

height of 1209m., extends south-eastward. In ancient times it was known as Makistos.⁹ Spurs and ranges extend out from it in a wide arc to the east and then curve around the north coast to link with Mt Dirphys (1962m.), the highest point on the island. Across its eastern and southern flanks was the border zone between the

⁸ 10, 1, 3 C445. He is to be preferred to Steph. Byz. s.v.: Τελέθριον ὄρος τῆς ἐν Εὐβοίᾳ Οἰχάλιας, Στράβων δεκάτη who places it near Oikhalia in the Eretriás. He claims Strabon as his source (!). A. Meineke, *Stephan von Byzanz: Ethnika* (Stephani Byzantii Ethnicorum quae supersunt, ex recensione Augusti Meinekii)², Graz, 1958.

⁹ Its identity is disputed; infra: II, n. 10.

territory of Khalkis and the Eretriás.¹⁰ This chain then continues southward, though at a lower altitude, by way of the narrow neck of territory on which were located Zarex and Styra, to connect with the most southerly of the great mountains of Euboia, Okhe (1398m.) in the Karystia. In the middle of the large amphitheatre below Makistos and Dirphys and their foothills there rose another significant mountain, Olympos, in the Eretriás proper (1172m.). The southern limit of this bowl is defined by a range of moderately high ridges, presently called Servoúni (anciently, Kotylaion, the highest point being 775m.) which terminates on the coast near Amarynthos.¹¹

2. Plains and Lowlands:

There are only three significant plains on the island, and clearly they are of the greatest importance as factors influencing its history. The most famous is the Plain of Lelanton, which is part of the large semi-circle of lowland enclosed by the peaks and ridges of Makistos, Dirphys and Kotylaion. It is cut off to some extent from the



Fig. 6: Wheat and barley crops on the northern Lelantine Plain; Mt Dirphys in the background.

most easterly sector south-east of Eretria, known as the Plain of Amarynthos (or Eretria), by the mass of Mt Olympos. The Lelantine Plain lies between Eretria in the

¹⁰ I use **Eretriás** for the territory of Eretria, since this was what the Eretrieis themselves certainly called it by the fourth century. (Law against tyranny, c.340: καὶ ἐὰν ἀποκλεισθεῖ ὁ δῆμος τῶν τειχέων, καταλ || [αμβάνειν χωρίον τι τῆς] Ἐρετριάδος ὅτι ἂν δοκεῖ σὺνφορον εἶναι κ. τ. λ.: *S.E.G.* 1981, no. 184; *B.C.H.* 105, 1981, 302, n. 57). Others, e.g. Hekataios (6th/5th century) ap. Paus. 4, 2, 3, call it the "Eretriké".

¹¹ The most detailed physical map of Euboia, on which this and subsequent descriptions are based, is published by the Ἐθνικὴ Στατιστικὴ Ὑπηρεσία, (National Statistics Service of Greece), *Νόμος Εὐβοίας: 1:200,000*, 1961/1972, supplemented by my own observations, and detailed local maps in various journal articles.

south-east and Khalkis in the north-west.¹² It was (and is) a very fertile region,¹³ ploughed for the barley for which, in later centuries, Eretria was renowned.¹⁴ Its soil



Fig. 7: Barley and vegetable crops on the eastern Lelantine Plain near Mýktas.

is deep and thick, as we are told by Theophrastos.¹⁵ It was on the pasturage of the upland fringes on the slopes of the surrounding foothills, and on an extensive area of irregular terrain north of Khalkis called the Diakria, that the horse-rearing lands of the Hippobotai were located.



Fig. 8: The Kerinthos Plain near Mantoudhi.

The other two areas of relatively flat land are in the north and north-east of the island, around the cities of Histiaia and Kerinthos. These are really coastal plains and, although they are separated by hill-land (presently called Korakólithos

¹² Directional indications are a problem, since Euboia lies along a N-W to S-E axis. I consider the Aegean coast to be "north", and the gulf coast to be "south". If we imagine Eretria as the central point for our purposes, Histiaia and Khalkis are "north-west", Kyme "north-east"; Amarynthos and Karystos "south-east" (i.e. of Eretria).

¹³ Theoph. *peri phyt. hist.*. 8, 8, 5; Kallim. *Hymn.* 4, 289. Cf. *infra* n. 38.

¹⁴ Eustath. *in Hom. Il. pert.* 2, 537; Athen. *Deipn.* 4, 160a - b.

¹⁵ *Supra* n. 13.

and Xerónoros); they are in many respects extensions of each other. They were famous in antiquity for the viticulture carried out on the surrounding hill slopes.¹⁶

Karystos in the far south of the island had its own small plain that supported its smallish population. But Kyme, which must have been insignificant almost to the point of being non-existent, had no coastal plain and had to rely on the narrow strips of flat land along the river valleys for cultivatable terrain.¹⁷

3. Rivers and Streams:

As might be expected from the description of the island so far, Euboia is not a land of notable rivers. The largest is the Boudouros which waters the Plain of



Fig. 9: The River Boudouros in its plane-tree shaded valley.

Mantouddhi around Kerinthos.¹⁸ It is fed from two smaller streams, the Kereus and the Neleus, which were reputed to change the colour of the fleeces of animals that drank from their waters black or white respectively.¹⁹ The Lelantine Plain is traversed by the torrent Lélas, which in winter constituted a barrier to communication between Eretria and Khalkis.²⁰ The Eretrian Plain is watered by two

¹⁶ Hom. *Il.* 2, 537; Plin. *H.N.* 14, 76; Athen. *Deipn.* 1, 30: Euboian wine is favourably compared with Korinthian. For "Κήρινθον τ' ἔφαλον" (Hom. *Il.* 2, 538): VII 196ff. and nn. 65 - 73 and photo (fig. 66).

¹⁷ There is controversy over its very existence as a town in antiquity: V 133f., nn. 17 - 23.

¹⁸ Just which stream was the ancient Boudouros is a subject of some doubt. For the possibilities: Geyer 1903 (Intro./3) 27. His opinion is that most favoured by subsequent investigators.

¹⁹ Strabon 10, 1, 14 C449 (Kereus > white; Neleus > black); Antigonos Karystios, *Ἱστοριῶν παραδόξων συναγωγή*, 78 (O. Keller, *Rerum naturalium scriptores Graeci minores*, Berlin, 1877) reverses the order.

²⁰ On the name: Plin. *H.N.*, 4, 64; Richardson 1903 (I/1) 111 - 113; D. Knoepfler, 'Argoura: un toponym dans la "Midiennne" de Démosthène', *B.C.H.* 105, 1981, 308; L. A. Tritle, 'Eretria, Argoura

small rivers, the Erasinós not far from Amarynthos, and the Ímbrasos (sometimes



Fig. 10: The dry bed of the "River" Lelas at Vasilikó, in summer called the Parthénios) which flowed east of Kotylaion. The names are significant for Eretrian cult.²¹

4. Coasts and Harbours:

All the sheltered harbours of the island face the Euboian Gulf. Neither Kerinthos nor Kyme has good shelter for shipping in time of storm, and the Aegean coast is still notorious for tempestuous weather.²² Consequently no town of any importance arose on that side of Euboia. The promontories of Géraistos



Fig. 11: The rugged Aegean coast near Kyme.

(Cape Kaphareus) and Leuke Akte in the south, and Artemision in the north, are known for their storms, and they were avoided as far as possible by ancient mariners.²³ Thus control of the Gulf, and of the Euripos in particular, was of prime

and the Road to Tamynai. The Athenians in Euboia, 348 B.C.', *Klio* 74, 1992, 140 - 141. Richardson amusingly describes an occasion in the 19th century, when he had to cross the stream in flood to reach Eretria.

²¹ Appendices 5; 6.

²² Richardson 1903 (I/1) 111 - 113.

²³ For the dangers of the Aegean coast: *The Mediterranean Pilot* (I/1); quoted by A. E. Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*, Oxford, 1915, 30: it "is rocky, irregular, precipitous, destitute of harbours; therefore must always be avoided." How much more so in ancient times!

importance politically in all periods of Euboian and Greek history; Khalkis was later, by reason of her controlling position on the Euripos, regarded as one of the so-



Fig. 12: The Petalioi islands from near Marmari.

called "fettters of Greece",²⁴ and the Euboian Gulf was in all times one of the most important trade routes on the Greek coasts.²⁵

Just where the stretch of coast, in ancient times known as the "Hollows of Euboia",

should be located, is still a controversial question. Famous for their wild storms from as early as the times of the poet Arkhilokhos, I would locate them on either side of the island, from roughly Cape Okthônia on the Aegean coast to the Petalioi (anciently, Petalioi) Islands in the South Euboian Gulf, where the coasts curve inward on both sides of the island. Some ancient writers, including Strabon, would have them include the mainland shore as far as Aulis, and Geyer agrees with them.²⁶



Fig. 13: View of Khalkis and the Euripos from the mainland

²⁴ An expression attributed to Philippos V, King of Makedonia: Polyb. 18, 11, 5; Liv. 32, 37, 4.

²⁵ For the Euripos as a principal trade route: Gehrke 1992 (I/1) 98 - 117; for Prasiai on the Euboian Gulf coast of the Attike as the principal port for the export of Attic grain in the first half of the sixth century: A. French, 'The Party of Peisistratos', *G. & R.* 6, 1959, 46 - 57. *Infra* VI 174ff.

²⁶ His discussion includes a complete list of those writers who mention them. Also: F. H. Sandbach, 'AKPA ΓΥΠΕΩΝ once more', *C.R.* 56, 1942, 63 - 65; C. M. Bowra, 'Signs of Storm: Archilochus fr. 56', *C.R.* 54, 1940, 127 - 129; Geyer 1903 (Intro./3) 25 - 26. The Epitomator of Strabon appears to correct his own author from Ptol. 3, 15, 25; they are the only ancient writers to place the "Hollows" on the Aegean coast; all others put them on the Gulf side of the island. Cf. Smith 1856 (I/1) 641 - 642.

Khalkis had two excellent harbours (supra fig. 13). The city was an early coloniser in the west, and from this fact, and from its controlling position on the Euripos,²⁷ historians have somewhat uncritically assumed that it was an important naval power in the archaic period; this view is challenged in this thesis, and not for the first time.²⁸ I shall be arguing that the most important maritime power on the island in most periods of its history down to the third century, and perhaps even later, was in fact Eretria. It too had a good harbour, which was improved with protective moles and harbour works. We shall see that the town became the refuge for inhabitants of the Lefkandí settlement, which lay between Khalkis and Eretria, when it was destroyed c.825, probably as a result of a war with neighbouring Khalkis.²⁹ Its people seem to have already been engaged in seaborne commerce. Lefkandí itself had two harbours of rather mediocre quality.³⁰



Fig. 14: View of Karystos and its harbour from the Venetian kastro on the slopes of Mt Okhe.

South of Eretria, Karystos lies on a wide and beautiful bay that offered good moorings for large fleets at several times throughout its history, and in view of the lack of adequate arable land near the city, the inhabitants no doubt early on took to the sea. We have echoes of an early conflict with Miletos in Asia Minor,³¹ a fact

²⁷ For a useful map: S. C. Bakhuizen, 'The Two Citadels of Chalcis on Euboea', *A.A.A.* 5, I, 1972, 134 - 146, figs 1; 2. Idem 1976 (Intro./2): the contribution by R. Kreulin, geologist, 5 - 6.

²⁸ N. M. Kondoleon, 'Οἱ Ἀειναῦται τῆς Ἐρετρίας' *A.E.* 1963/65, 1 - 45 a seminal, but flawed essay.

²⁹ This theory is, however, not universally accepted, cf. III 67ff.; IV 71ff. For the date: Popham et al. 1980 (Intro./4) introduction n. 4 (theirs), Section 14, pt. ivb, 367.

³⁰ For a full description of site: *ibid.* section 1, pt. i. 1 - 3; pll. 2 - 4, and of the harbour: Tritle 1992 (1/20) 17, 139.

³¹ Konon, *Διηγήσεις* (*FGrH* 26 F 1, 44).

that presupposes some involvement of ships, though not necessarily Karystian. At any rate, she was never reckoned a naval power of any importance.

5. Climate:

Euboia shares the general climatic regime prevalent over most of the southern to central east coast region of Greece; the island is, for the purpose of discussing climate, part of the mainland, sharing the general characteristics of the Attike and Andros. Summers are hot and dry, with occasional downpours that turn the seasonal streams into torrents causing temporary breaks in communication



Fig. 15: The bed of the Boudouros in spring; levée-banks protect against flash-flooding.

between settlements. Winters are mild on the Gulf side of the island, but on the Aegean coast, it is subject to very cold winds from the north when shipping along that coast virtually ceases from fear of storms that, even in summer, can suddenly rage in from the open sea. On the whole the island provides a healthy climate for its people, although Eretria has from time to time constituted a notable exception; to the east near the city lay the Ptekhai swamp which, until quite recently, was malarial in summer. It was this fact that led to the gradual abandonment of the site in late antiquity, when the lake expanded and the ancient drainage works were allowed to deteriorate.³²

³² We are fortunate to have preserved a decree of the Eretrian Demos, IG XII 9, 191, ratifying an agreement with the entrepreneur Khairephanes to drain this swamp, and turn it into productive farming land, dated to 322 - 309 by M. Holleaux, *R.E.G.* 10, 1898, 189. For the situation in 1891: Pickard 1890/1897 (I/1) 325; he also describes the elaborate plans by Othon, first king of modern Greece, to build a large metropolis with a naval base (using the excellent harbour) and school on the site in 1825, which were thwarted by the malarial climate arising from the Ptekhai swamp which gave the city its unhealthy reputation in antiquity: Diog. Laert. 2, 133 (διὰ τὸ νοσῶδες τῆς Ἐρετρίας); Athen. *Deipn.* 2, 46b - d.. The present triangular road grid (on which are based the archaeological plans) is the only reminder of the noble plans of the king and his Bavarian advisers. Cf. IV 83, map 2.

6. Vegetation:

In ancient times the island was largely covered by forests, and even today there are remnants of these woodlands on the higher or more inaccessible areas, especially on Mt Telethron.³³ The two major species of Silver Fir (*Abies alba* and *A. cephalonica*), unfortunately produced timber of very poor quality according to Plinius,³⁴ quite unsuited to the needs of ship-building, and so prime quality timber must have been imported from Thrake and Makedonia via the Eretrian and Khalkidian colonies that were thickly planted in that region at an early date. Other species were the Larch, the Mediterranean Plane tree, Hellebore, Laurel and Heather. The Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) was common, and supplemented the diet of the inhabitants. Theophrastos and Plinius³⁵ also record a number of medicinal plants that grew wild on the mountainsides of Euboea.



Figs 16 & 17: Central Euboian forests of chestnut (*C. sativa*), pine (16: above) and Silver Fir (*A. alba/cephalonica*) (17: below).

³³ Theophr. *peri phyt. hist.* 9, 20, 5; Strabon 10, 1, 4 C446: "Telethron is (also?) called 'Drymos'" (woodland).

³⁴ Plin. *H.N.* 16, 197. This contradicts Theophr. 5, 1, 5 - 8

³⁵ Theophr. *peri phyt. hist.* 4, 5, 2; 9, 15, 4; 9, 15, 8; Plin. *H.N.* 25, 94.



Fig. 18: Flowering *Cercis siliquastum* against a background of Fir and Pine forest, Central Euboia.

7. Pastoralism, Agricultural Production and other Primary Industries:

The commonly used name of the island (Eu-boia = [land of] fine cattle³⁶) reflects the principal ancient industry on the island. Pastoralism in Greece was always more widespread than agriculture in antiquity thanks to the paucity of suitable areas for grain crops. Similarly, the names of the dominant social groups in Khalkis and Eretria (the Hippobotai = horse-rearers and Hippeis = cavalrymen) indicate the importance, at least in the archaic period, of horse-rearing. Histiaia, Eretria and Karystos all, at one period or another, used the cow as a symbol on their coinage. It was to Euboia that the Athenaioi transferred their herds during the Peloponnesian War because of its good grazing lands. Other animals attested as being raised and herded in Euboia are pigs, goats, and sheep. The Khalkideis raised cocks for fighting, and the hunting dogs of Eretria were famous and much sought-after.³⁷

Though of lesser significance than livestock herding, agricultural activity was varied and, as the island's population increased, it became increasingly

³⁶ Dr Parker has reminded me, in a private communication, that the folk-etymology of the name is hardly secure; we may note however that Strabon 10, 1, 3 C445 indicates that the island was in fact "well-cowed".

³⁷ On Euboian rural industries generally: N. Ch. Settas, 'Η Ἀγροτική Ἀνάπτυξις τῆς Εὐβοίας, *A.E.M.* 10, 1963, 142 - 217. Sheep: Paus. 8, 1, 5; Athen. *Deipn.* 5, 201c. Cocks: Varro *de re rust.* 8, 2, 4; Plin. *H.N.* 10, 48. Eretrian dogs: Pollux 5, 37; 40; Ailian. *peri zoôn idiot.* 7, 40; 17, 8; Makarios 4, 5; Pigs: Paus. 8, 1, 5; Euboieis still wore pig-skins in Pausanias' time.

important. It was especially diverse on the Lelantine Plain, where barley and wheat were planted along with fruit and vegetable crops and vines.³⁸ Viticulture was important especially on the northern plains. The production here was favoured with a mention by The Poet himself!³⁹ Since names compounded from Oivo- are very common in the inscriptions of Eretria (and Dionysos had an impressive temple there at least in the fourth and later centuries),⁴⁰ we may assume that vines were grown in the Eretriás, most probably on the Eretrian Plain. And, of course, the ubiquitous olive was grown on marginal land in the foothills of the mountains, and formed a major export in the mediocre pottery that characterised Eretrian output.⁴¹ Other fruit grown on the island in ancient times, and which are even today still major crops there, are apples, pears and figs. Chestnuts were known as "the Euboian" nut. Karystos presumably had an industry producing them: they were called "karya".⁴² Lastly we may note that the production of honey was also an industry of some note in Euboia.⁴³

Fishing was also important for coastal communities. The seas of Euboia were particularly rich in fish. We have testimony for both Eretrieis and Khalkideis being engaged seriously in fishing, and there are several references to much sought-after fish from Euboia in that gastronomic encyclopaedia, the *Deipnosophistai* of Athenaios.⁴⁴ The harvesting and processing of murex shells for their purple dye was a major secondary industry, especially for the Eretrieis and Styreis (Styra later became part of the Eretriás).⁴⁵ It is likely that the Khalkideis were also engaged in this activity. The product was probably sent to Korinthos for use in the cloth industry there, although the notice in Philostratos implies that there was a dyeing industry at Eretria itself. There is evidence of direct Korinthian interest in Euboia in

³⁸ Geyer 1903 (Intro./3) 33 waxes eloquent in praise of the fertility of this plain. Eretria was in later times famous for a kind of cabbage, said to be the very best! (Athen. *Deipn.* 9, 369f).

³⁹ Homeros was well aware of the extensive viticulture in northern Euboia, esp. in the Histaïotis: *Il.* II, 537. Theognis 784: "I once came to the vine-clad plain of Euboia"; perhaps that around the city of Kerinthos (VII 201f.), although elsewhere, he talks of "the good vine-lands of Lelanton" as having been laid waste (l. 892).

⁴⁰ VII 199, n. 72; IG XII Suppl. Test./Not. 203, 94ff. For the temple of Dionysos: P. Auberson, 'Le Temple de Dionysos', *Eretria* V, 1968, 59 - 67, pl. 5.

⁴¹ J. Boardman, 'Pottery from Eretria', *B.S.A.* 47, 1952, 1 - 48.

⁴² For the apples and pears: Hermippos (ap. Athen. *Deipn.* 1, 27f); Athenai imported pears and apples from Euboia: Aristoph. *Akharn.* 878f.; *Eirene* 1000f. For figs: Athen. *Deipn.* 3, 75e; chestnuts: Athen. *Deipn.* 2, 54b; d: they were called both "κάρινα" and "λόπιμα"; cf. **Karystos(?)**.

⁴³ Ar. *peri thaum. akous.* 20 (831 b); Plin. *H.N.* 11, 42.

⁴⁴ Athen. *Deipn.* 4, 135e (λοπάδες = mezedhes [Geyer 1903 {Intro./3} 34]); 7, 330b (Khalkidian fish); 7, 284b; 7, 295c (φαγγρόν). Paus. 5, 13, 3; Philost. *Vit. Apoll.* 1, 24; Ar. *de an. hist.* 4, 6. For the wealth of fish: Athen. *Deipn.* 7, 295c; 302a; 304d. Ailian. *peri zoön idiot.* 2, 8; Plin. *H.N.* 32, 18.

⁴⁵ Ar. *peri zoön hist.* 5, 15; Athen. *Deipn.* 3, 88f. On Eretrian involvement: Phil. *Vit. Apoll.* 1, 24; "(to show) that the various individuals had lived in Euboia and engaged either in seafaring trade or in that of purple either as sailors or dyers . . ." (my trans.): Apollonios has been reading old **Eretrian** epitaphs at Kissia in Asia, to which place the Eretrian captives were sent by the Persians in 490, following the capture of the city. For Styreans: Athen. *Deipn.* 4, 132c.

the sixth century as we shall see. Oysters were also harvested from Euboian waters; those of Khalkis were especially praised.⁴⁶

8. Minerals:

The name Khalkis is frequently derived from χαλκός (copper), but there are other interpretations, even amongst the ancient lexicographers, and there are modern scholars who deny connection to any known Greek word. There are indeed few, if any, signs of local copper sources near Khalkis.⁴⁷ There is, however, physical evidence of other metals, particularly iron,⁴⁸ having been extracted in the neighbourhood of Khalkis, and there is a persistent tradition linking the city with the development of the "Khalkidian sword". Aidepsos in the north was a centre of copper and iron mining, and was also noted for sword-manufacture.⁴⁹ In the Karystia, at least in later times, the famous green marble as well as asbestos were mined from open cuts on the slopes of Mt Okhe, above the modern town called Marmári.⁵⁰

To conclude, Euboia was considered to be "blessed by fortune" by Herodotos,⁵¹ thanks to the variety of her resources, and Isokrates later wrote that: "Euboia [. . .] was fitted for command of the sea and surpassed all the other islands with respect to her general resources."⁵²

THE ERETRIÁS:

By the Hellenistic Age, the Eretriás was a very large *polis*-territory by Greek standards. W. Wallace⁵³ thinks that it covered 500 sq. miles, but admits that "The extent of Eretrian territory cannot be accurately estimated because of the uncertainty over her western and northern boundaries - the exact line between her territory and that of Karystos is also uncertain." This estimate would make the Eretriás half the size of the Attike, which along with the territory of Sparta, is a giant amongst Greek *poleis*. For comparison, the Korinthia was about 350 sq. miles,

⁴⁶ Athen. *Deipn.* 4, 132c. Geyer 1903 (Intro./3) 35. For trade with Korinthos, *ibid.* n. 5; L. J. Siegel, *Korinthian Trade in the Ninth through Sixth Centuries*, Diss. Yale, 1978, 273ff. (but she does not note the evidence of Korinthian political interest in Euboia during the 6th century, discussed at length *infra* chs V - (especially) VII, *passim*).

⁴⁷ Or indeed on Euboia. Hesych. *Lex.* s.v. χαλκή makes this a synonym of πορφύρα. Bakhuizen, 1976 (Intro./2) pt. II, ch. 3, 58 - 64: denies the link with χαλκός; he thinks that the root χαλκ- is pre-Greek.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* pt. II *passim*. *Infra* V 137f. and nn. 44; 46; 55.

⁴⁹ Bakhuizen *ibid.* 63 - 64 regards all ancient references to Khalkidian copper as aetiological; he is probably right. In part II he shows convincingly, that any metallurgy carried on in Khalkis was related to the production of iron, and discusses the sources, local and foreign, of the raw materials. For Aidepsos: Steph. Byz. s.v. Αἰδῆπος.

⁵⁰ For marble: Strabon 9, 5, 16 C437; 10, 1, 6 C446; Plin. *H.N.* 36, 48; 49; Dion Khrys. *Disc.* 79, 2; Plout. *peri eklel. khrest.* 43. For asbestos: Strabon 10, 1, 6 C446.

⁵¹ Hdt. 5, 31, 3.

⁵² Isok. *Panegy.* 108. (my translation).

⁵³ W. Wallace, 'The Demes of Eretria', *Hesperia* 16, 1947, 146.

while the Sikyonia was only 180.⁵⁴ We may be quite certain that in the Archaic age, the territory controlled by Eretria was smaller than it later became, following the annexation of the south-easternmost districts based on Dystos and Styra.⁵⁵

Before the ninth century, the western boundary of "Eretrian"⁵⁶ territory was probably west of the River Lelás which crosses the Lelantine Plain, and over which there was so much warfare during the archaic period. Following the destruction of Iefkandi/Old Eretria (c.825)⁵⁷ and the withdrawal of the greater part of its population to the site of the historical city, this border would have moved considerably further to the east, removing the narrow coastal plain linking the

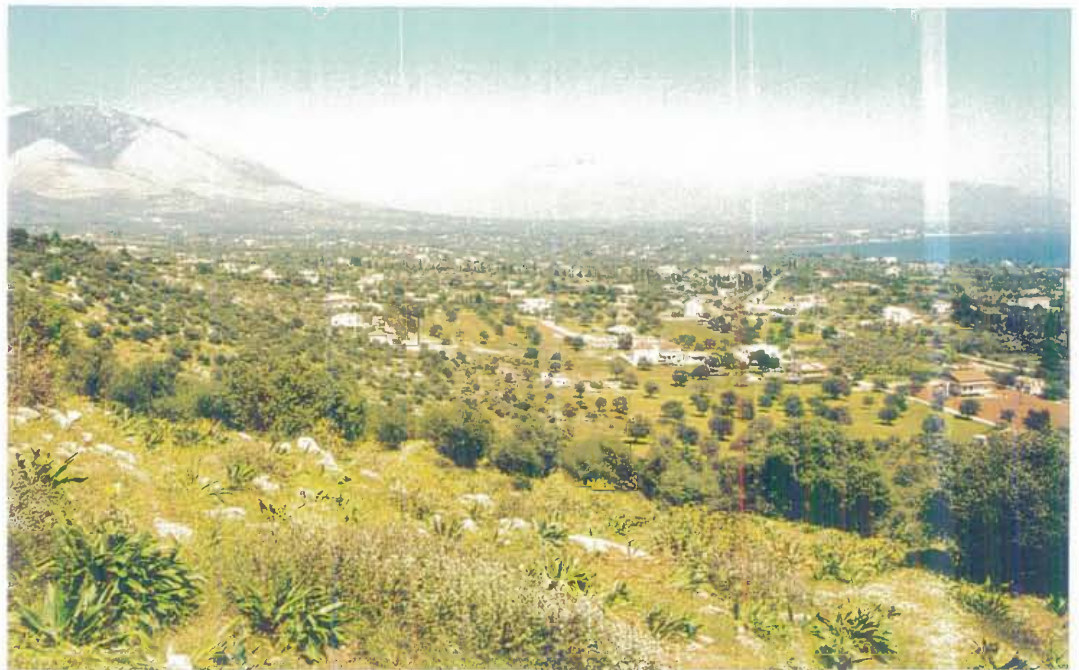


Fig. 19: The Eretrian (Amarynthian) Plain from the acropolis of Eretria; Mt Olympos left background; the Kotylaion Range in the far background.

Lelantine and Eretrian Plains from Eretrian control. Later this ground was to be recovered. We may reasonably suppose that the boundary between Khalkidian lands and the Eretriás stretched north from near Malakónda on the Euboian Gulf, via the valley between Olympos and Arábi Tsouká, past the town of Theológos, to the Aegean coast at the Órmos Metohíou. I shall also suggest that Kyme in the north was in Eretrian control, even as early as the eighth century.⁵⁸ To the east, the town

⁵⁴ F. Adcock, 'The Growth of the Greek City State', *C.A.H.* III, Ch. XXVI, 698. His comparative figures are interesting, although his remarks about the Euboian poleis are misleading; he divides the island amongst eight poleis whereas there were, effectively, four; cf. Wallace 1947 (I/53) 146.

⁵⁵ The date of the Eretrian annexation of these two areas will be of great importance when we consider the socio-political territorial divisions of the Eretriás at the end of the sixth century (VIII 227ff.). The generally accepted period for the conquest of Styra is the end of the Lamian War (i.e. c.323 - 324) but cf. D. Knoepfler, 'La Date de l'Annexion de Styra par Érétrie', *B.C.H.* 95, 1971, 223 - 244, esp. 242ff.: end of the 5th century following the Eretrian revolt against Athenai in 411/10.

⁵⁶ I subscribe to the theory that the settlement at Lefkandi-Xeropolis was Old Eretria, which is not the same thing as saying Strabon's Old Eretria (IV n. 1; Appendix 7).

⁵⁷ Popham et al. 1980 (Intro./4) 367 - 369.

⁵⁸ For Kyme: supra n. 17. Lefkandi: infra III 67ff.; IV, 71ff.; Appendix 7.

of Amarynthos certainly lay within Eretrian territory, but it also probably extended to include the plain around the present day town of Aliveri east of the Kotylaion Range, as far as the low hills between Alivéri and Dystos.

The original Eretriás resembles a huge semi-circular amphitheatre, with a mountain - Olympos - on centre-stage. The foothills of Mount Dirphys and the

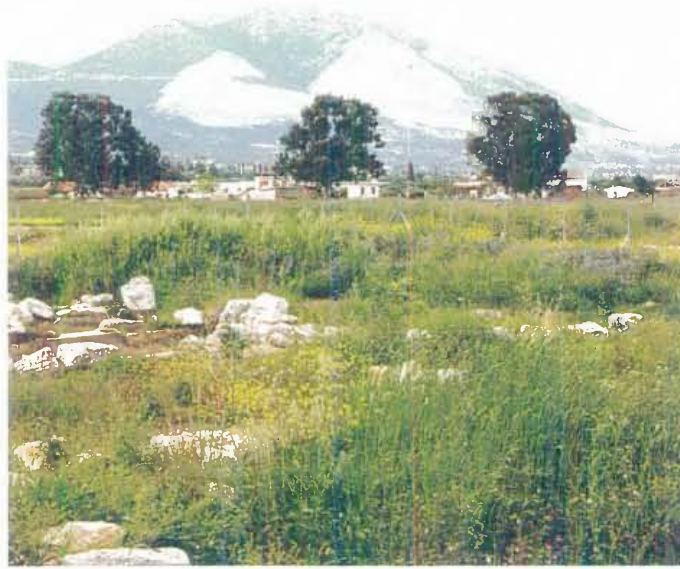


Fig. 20: Mt Olympos from the site of the gymnasium in Eretria.

Kotylaion Range form the "auditorium", while the two plains west and east are the "orchestra". There is also, as I have noted, another area of relatively flat land around the town of Alivéri. The mountains are rough and stony limestone ridges, that quickly absorb rainfall, and are quite unsuitable for agriculture, although one finds minute farmlets in some valley floors. The slopes themselves can



Fig. 21: Mountains and valley near Avlonari in the Eretriás

support small herds of sheep and goats. On marginal land, where plain meets hills, olives and fruit such as figs and vines are grown. The plains, however, are reasonably fertile (though not as spectacularly so as the fabled Lelantine Plain to the west). Barley was grown there in antiquity, and may have been the chief crop.

"Leukalphitos" (rich in pearl-barley) was an epithet bestowed on Eretria by the comic poet, Sopater (third century).⁵⁹ Today, what was in antiquity a very large swamp, with a high citadel-hill in the middle, the site of ancient Dystos,⁶⁰ is drained and is very fertile crop and vine-land. Other crops have been discussed above. It appears, however, that the Eretriás was less favoured by nature for agriculture than was neighbouring Khalκís, especially after the loss of the Lelantine Plain east of the River Lelás. Soils and the lower productivity of the Eretrian Plain are discussed in some detail later.⁶¹



Figs 22 ■ 23: The "acropolis" of Dystos (the town lay on this hill) from the drained lake-floor (22:top); view from the acropolis over the drained lake with vine, wheat and vegetable crops (23: bottom).

⁵⁹ Athen. *Deipn.* 4, 160 a - b. *L.S.J.* s.v. λευκάλιτος, 1041.

⁶⁰ T. Wiegand, 'Dystos', *M.D.A.I. (A)* 24, 1899, 458 - 467. Remains of 5th century houses (almost unique in Greece) are visible. The site is still unexcavated.

⁶¹ IV 77f., n. 46; 79f.

The Eretriás seems not to have possessed mineral deposits of mineable quality though today, marble called "Eretrian Red" (sic!) is advertised internationally on the internet! It is thus not surprising that the Eretrieis soon turned to trade and secondary industry, often based on imported raw-materials, for a livelihood. However, the Eretrieis quarried for building stone on the N.E. slope of

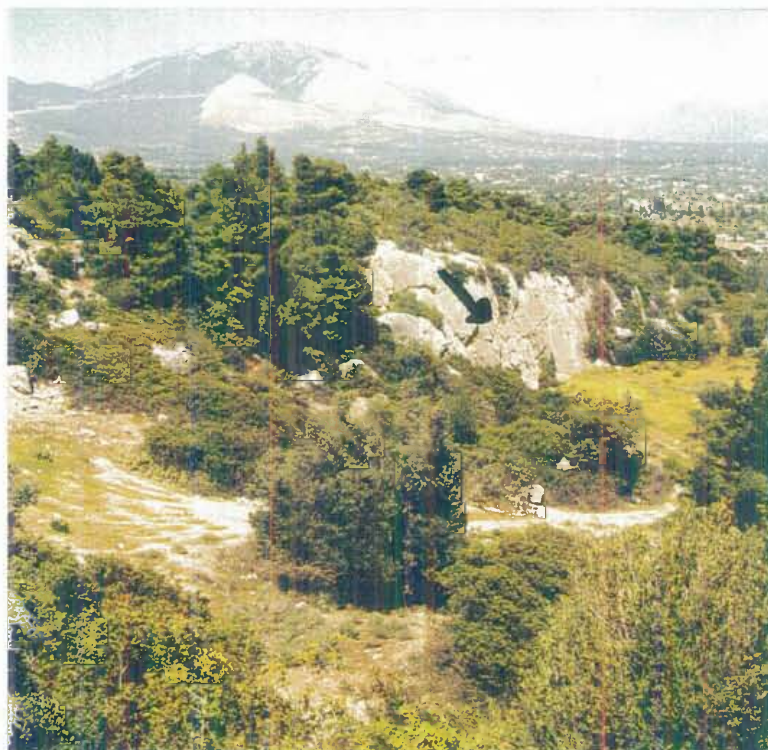


Fig. 24: The stone quarry on the NE slope of the acropolis looking east. Arrow indicates the location of the "kalos" inscription (figs 25 & 26).

the acropolis, where a sixth century "kalos" inscription high on the quarry wall indicates (roughly) the ancient traffic-level.⁶² I have already mentioned the probable existence in Eretria of a cloth-dyeing industry, based on the harvesting of murex shellfish for their famous purple. To this may be added the working of gold;⁶³ metalworking was an "Eretrian" craft even before the move to the new site of the city, for the British excavators of Lefkandí have found evidence of bronze-working there.⁶⁴ Eretria was at all periods a centre for the production of ceramic; in later periods, average quality output degenerated into mediocre.⁶⁵ The level of quality seems to indicate that the ware was churned out for utilitarian purposes in the local

⁶² P. Friedmann, 'De la «carrière» au sanctuaire: investigations archéologiques sur l'acropole d'Érétrie', *A.K.* 37, 1994, 93 - 94.

⁶³ P. G. Themelis, 'An Eighth Century Goldsmith's Workshop at Eretria' in R. Hägg (ed.) *The Greek Renaissance of the Eighth Century B.C.: Tradition and Innovation*, Stockholm, 1983, 157 - 165. For Eretrian industry: IV 74; 79f.; 93; 98; VII 193f.; import of gold for workshops and colonisation to supply raw-materials lacking locally: V 137ff.

⁶⁴ Popham et al. 1980 (Intro./4) 7; 359. In more detail: III 57f.

⁶⁵ Boardman 1952 (1/41); idem., 'Early Euboean Pottery and History', *B.S.A.* 52, 1957, 1 - 29. VII 177f., nn. 6 - 11. For pottery as trade containers: VI 171, n. 31.

area settlements, or that it was bought in bulk by exporters of Eretrian olive oil and wine.⁶⁶



Figs 25 & 26: The "kalos" inscription high on the cut face of the acropolis quarry:
(Δ?)AMANDPOΣ KAAOΣ (6th century).

In summary, the Eretriás provided its citizens with adequate, but not spectacular agricultural land but few outstanding natural resources, thus obliging the inhabitants to begin early to exploit trade and small-scale industry as alternatives to the traditional reliance of Euboian poleis on pastoralism and agriculture. The loss of the fertile farming and pastoral lands of the eastern Lelantine Plain was a blow to the old landed classes but in the end it would prove to be something of a benefit to the population as a whole.

⁶⁶ On Eretrian wine production: cf. also supra, n. 39.