

A History of the archaeological excavations of the French School of Athens in Thassos - Greece: main sanctuaries and other buildings from the Archaic period

Juliana Figueira da Hora¹

Abstract

This article aims to bring a history of the archaeological excavations of the island of Thassos, a Greek polis located in the North of the Aegean, founded in the Archaic Period. In this sense, we will present important structures excavated over the 19th and 20th centuries. These are religious structures such as the Sanctuary of Heracles, Sanctuary of Athena, Sanctuary of Artemis, Sanctuary of Demeter and two Sanctuaries of Apollo (*Píthio* and in Alikí), and also other Archaic structures such as Phari ceramic workshop and Archaic residences. The French School of Athens coordinated all of these excavations between 1911 and 2011. In this article, we will highlight the main places of worship in this polis, as they are important spaces for understanding the initial urban and civic-religious dynamics of one of the most important polis in the Mediterranean.

Keywords: Archaeology; Ancient Greek, archaeological excavation in Thassos; French School of Athens; archaic period

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Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é trazer um histórico das escavações arqueológicas de ilha de Tasos, uma pólis grega localizada no Norte do Egeu, fundada em período arcaico. Neste sentido, apresentaremos importantes estruturas escavadas ao longo dos séculos XIX e XX de período arcaico. Tratam-se de estruturas religiosas como o Santuário de Héracles, Santuário de Atena, Santuário de Ártemis, Santuário de Deméter e dois Santuários de Apolo (Pítio e de Alikí), e também de outras estruturas arcaicas como o ateliê de Phari e as residências arcaicas. Todas essas escavações foram coordenadas pela Escola Francesa de Atenas entre 1911 e 2011. Neste artigo, destacaremos os principais locais de culto desta pólis, pois tratam-se de espaços importantes para a compreensão da dinâmica inicial urbana e cívico-religiosa de uma das pólis mais importantes do Mediterrâneo.

¹ Bacharel em Letras pela Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas-USP (2007). Mestre em Arqueologia Clássica (2013) pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Arqueologia MAE-USP (FAPESP). Doutora em Arqueologia pelo Museu de Arqueologia e Etnologia/USP (2018). Contato: juliuspro@gmail.com

Palavras-chave: Arqueologia; Grécia antiga; escavações arqueológicas em Tasos; Escola Francesa de Atenas; períodos arcaico

Resumen

El propósito de este artículo es traer una historia de las excavaciones arqueológicas en la isla de Tasos, una polis griega ubicada en el norte del Egeo, fundada en el período arcaico. En este sentido, presentaremos importantes estructuras excavadas a lo largo de los siglos XIX y XX. Se trata de estructuras religiosas como el Santuario de Heracles, el Santuario de Atenea, el Santuario de Artemisa, el Santuario de Deméter y dos Santuarios de Apolo (Pítio y Alikí), así como otras estructuras arcaicas como el estudio de Phari y las residencias arcaicas. Todas estas excavaciones fueron coordinadas por la Escuela Francesa de Atenas entre 1911 y 2011. En este artículo destacaremos los principales lugares de culto de esta polis, ya que son espacios importantes para entender la dinámica urbana y cívico-religiosa inicial de una de las polis más importantes del Mediterráneo.

Palabras llave: Arqueología; Grecia Antigua; Excavaciones arqueológicas en Tasos; Escuela francesa de Atenas; período arcaico

Thassos: context.

Throughout its history, the island of Thassos has supplied fertile land to its inhabitants. According to Herodotus (History 6.46, 2-3), the island's resources provided an annual income of at least 80 talents² in the early fifth century B.C.. The first Parisian settlers³ settled in Limenas, Northeast of the island (Map, Figure 1), which was a very favorable place since it had a natural harbor that was safe, becoming fundamental for the exit from the North – facing the Thracian continent. Due to its proximity to the coast of Thrace, commercial exchanges between Thracians and local peoples of the island became quite close (TIVERIOS, 2008, p. 73). The map below (Figure 1) presents an overview of the distance between the Thracian continent and the island of Thassos.

The excavation reports⁴ and publications referring to the 7th century B.C. show the geographic positions of the shrines, ports and dwellings that would have been cult areas in foundations that were prior to the Greeks (OWEN, 2009, p. 94). These signs of synoecism⁵

² The talent described by Homer as a unit of currency was probably the gold equivalent of the value of an ox or a cow (Seltman 1924: 112-114). Homer describes how Achilles gave a golden half-talent to Antilochus as a prize (Iliad, Il. 23.784). Late Attic talent was of a different weight than the Homeric one, but represented the same value in copper as Homeric in gold, with the ratio of the price of gold to copper in Bronze Age Greece being 1:3000 (Seltman 1924: 112-114).

³ Inhabitants of the island of Paros, in Cyclades.

⁴ B.C.H (Bulletin de Correspondance Hellenique).

⁵ Synoecism: "amalgamation of small villages in a larger one that takes their place; process in the Ancient Greece that led to the formation of polis". From the Greek word *συνοικισμός*, or (*ó*). From the site <<http://labeca.mae.usp.br/pt-br/>

coincide with a significant upsurge in trade boom, as the presence of geometrically decorated Macedonian amphorae is observed in many places in the North Aegean, including Thassos and Thrace, in remote periods (BERNARD, 1964; BOZHKOVA 2005 apud OWEN, 2009, p. 95).



Figure 1 - Map of the northern region of the Aegean Sea, with the location of Thassos and its close proximity of Southern Thracia. Author: Rodrigo Araújo de Lima. HORA, 2018.

The island of Thassos has been inhabited since the Paleolithic period, according to archaeological research carried out in Tsinés, a region close to Limenaria, *khóra*⁶ of Thassos. The approximate dating of these sites is around 10,000 B.P.⁷, at which time, according to geological studies, the island was still part of the continent. In the *khóra* of Thassos, Neolithic huts were found, further South of the island, in Limenaria, in La Scala Maries and in Kastri (GRANDJEAN; SALVIAT, 2000, p. 23).

Important remains from the Bronze Age were found in the Potos area and especially in La Scala Sotir, where anthropomorphic fortifications and stelae from the second millennium were evidenced. The dates are from 1300 B.C. at Kastri, Potos and Theologos, continuing uninterruptedly through 700 B.C. (Map, figure 2). In the Palaiokastro region, a few kilometers from La Scala Maries, traces of a housing nucleus from the 11th to 8th century B.C. were found. The materials recovered were: tools, models of Macedonian,

glossary/>. Accessed in: 23th February, 2021.

6 *Khóra* is understood as the territory attached to the urban centers of the various Greek polis (ásty); the rural hinterland controlled by a polis, or at least subject to the expectation of control by a polis.

7 B.P.: before present. It is counted from the year 1950, which was used as reference to establish calibration curves in radiocarbon datings, prior to the large scale testing of nuclear bombs after the Second World War.

Oriental and Balkan vases, with incised decoration and grooves (PORTO ; HORA, 2016, p. 2). Thassos, in the 8th century B.C., was connected with populous nucleated settlements in the region of Thrace, according to Sara Owen (2009).

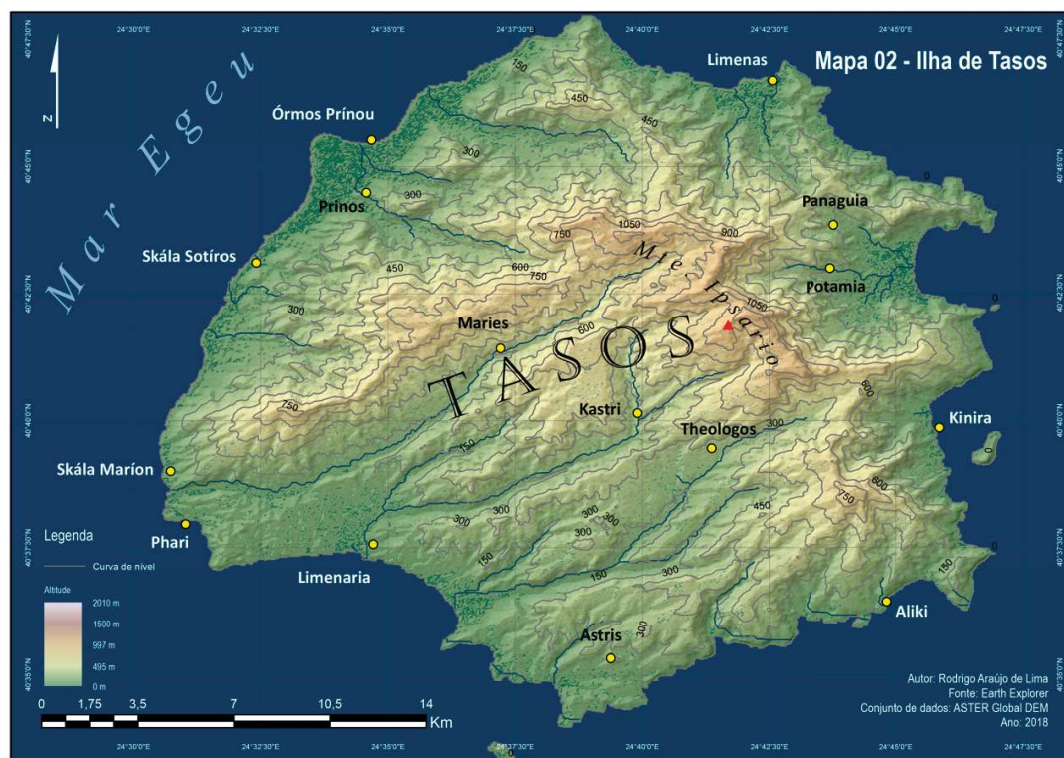


Figure 2 – Map of the island of Thassos, showing its topography and main cities. Author: Rodrigo Araújo de Lima. HORA, 2018.

According to Hora (2018) the island opened the flow for trade both in the Northeast region of the Aegean and to the nearby continent. Herodotus, in tome VI of *History*, where he describes the Medical Wars that took place in the 5th century B.C., says that there were gold mines located between Coenyra and a place called Aenyra and recalls that the first to explore these Thasian mines were the Phoenicians (Heródotos History VI, 46-47).

I myself have seen the mines in question: by far the most curious of them are those which the Phoenicians discovered at the time when they went with Thassos and colonised the island, which afterwards took its name from him. These Phoenician workings are in Thassos itself, between Coenyra and a place called Aenyra, over against Samothrace: a huge mountain has been turned upside down in the search for ores. Such then was the source of their wealth. (*History* VI, 46-47).

Thassos continued to prosper, and the sanctuaries were filled with monuments and offerings (GRANDJEAN; SALVIAT, 2000, p. 8). The new polis was commercially and culturally related to other polis and other peoples. Archaeological remains show a great external influence on pottery, bronze and ivory, illustrating the relationship with the Cyclades and with the Rhodians, Ionians, Corinthians and Athenians in the 6th century B.C.. This growth could be attributed to the political history of Thassos: from the beginning of the sixth century B.C. to 540 B.C. it was under a tyrannical regime, which was followed by a moderate oligarchic period from 540 to 465 B.C. until becoming dependent on Athens. In order to, in the meantime, more precisely in 492 B.C. – Thassos was dominated by the

Persian King Darius, who dominated Ionia (Heródotos, History VI, 44) (HORA, 2018, p. 47). In 491 B.C., when Darius and his general Mardonius invaded Thrace, they forced Thassos to dismantle its walls and pay tribute. In 477 B.C. Thassos joins the Delian league, a time when Athens is dominant in the Aegean Sea and Attic imports are growing (GRANDJEAN; SALVIAT, 2000, p. 28).

Thassos: a timeline of the principal excavations.

Before the systematic excavations, Thassos followed a very long route of interventions in its territory and was the scene of picturesque stories by enthusiastic travelers. With the creation of the French School of Athens, at the end of the 19th century, research was expanded and excavations were intensified, both in Limenas, the most important urban part of Thassos, and in the interior of the entire island. In this section, we will present an overview of the history of excavations from 1911 to 2011. We seek to emphasize and detail the excavations of sites from the Archaic period, since in my research had the chronological objective of deepening local and regional discussions in areas and contexts archaeological site from the 7th and 6th centuries B.C.

Among the travelers we cite: Florentin Cristoforo de Buodelmonti⁸, who traveled through Thassos in 1419; between 1444 and 1445, Ciriaco de' Pizzicolti wrote the first voyage report on the island; and in and in 1864, Georges Perrot, a member of the French School of Athens (EFA), published the results of his studies on the island of Thassos, carried out in 1856, ten years after the founding of the French School of Athens, in *Mémoire sur l'île of Thasos*. This compendium was more specifically a travel account, as systematic excavations had not started.

The travel journals, in turn, provided fortuitous information about sculptures and inscriptions present in the collections of Egyptian governor Toussoun Bey and M. Boulgaridis, vice-consul of France in Kavala. They were found adorning the governor's room of Limenas and the home of the Oiconomidis family, when they were not yet broken to serve in other constructions or used in lime kilns (MULLER; MULLIEZ, 2012, p. 6).

Salomon Reinach spent a few days on the island of Thassos at the beginning of 1882 together with André de Ridder, as part of a trip to the Thracian archipelago. His *Chroniques d'Orient: documents sur les fouilles et découvertes dans l'Orient hellénique de 1883 to 1890*⁹ (1891) brought very significant contributions about the local archaeology and reports. Paul Pedrizet and Gustave Mendel, in late July 1899, copied Limenas' epigraphic inscriptions.

8 Born in an aristocratic family in Florence, he left for Rhodes in 1414. He spent eight years in Greece, perhaps in the service of the Dukes of Naxos or Catholic religious institutions in the Aegean. He learned Greek and toured the Cycladic islands and the Ionian and northern Aegean islands for six years (Luzzati Laganà Francesa, Hordynsky-Cailat Lada, *Sur les mers grecques: un voyageur florentin du XVe siècle, Cristoforo Buondelmonti*). In : PATLAGEAN, E. (right), *Toutes les routes menent à Byzance, Médiévales*, n° 12, 1987, p. 67-77.

9 Reinach, S. *Chroniques d'Orient : documents sur les fouilles et découvertes dans l'Orient hellénique de 1883 a 1890* (1891), Ed. Paris-Leroux: Paris, 1896, p. 74-79.

Waldemar Déonna, a Swiss member of the EFA, produced, in 1907, a series of images now preserved in the Museum of Art and History of the city of Geneva.

In 1864, Emmanuel Miller excavated what he called “the Great Hall of Thassos”, or the “passage of *théores*”¹⁰ (Figure 3, below). Miller identified the theater between 1886-1887; Theodore Bent, excavated the area of the Caracalla arch and the theater in Limenas and Alikí, in the Southeast of the island (MULLER; MULLIEZ, 2012, p. 6).



Figure 3 – Part of the ruins of the “passage des Théores”, in Thassos. Personal archive, 2015.

In 1910, researchers from the French Schools, Charles Picard and Adolphe Joseph Reinach, made a trip to Chersonesus¹¹ and the Thracian archipelago, where they highlighted the inscriptions and carved fragments from Thassos. In the same year, Théodore Macridy-Bey found seven female statues from Artemision¹². (PICARD, 1912, p. 194).

¹⁰ Θεωρός: word of Ionic origin. θεωρός: word of Doric origin. The *théores* were organizers of celebrations close to a great religious feast. It was a title reserved for those chosen to offer sacrifices to the gods at Delphi or Olympia in the name of the city (Revue des Études Grecques, 1967-80, p. 292-297). The passage of *théores*, according to Grandjean and Salviat (2000, p. 222), was an architectural space (Hellenistic period) that served as an administrative place. Previously, in the Archaic period, according to Blonde, Muller and Mulliez (2000), with the advance of excavations, it was possible to unveil a peculiar Greek architectural structure, which may be related to the topographical disposition of the place. For Bernard Holtzman (in Érthas XV, pp. 29-59), it could be a place that would divide the city into two parts, like an ancient gateway.

¹¹ Chersonesus was a Greek colony founded approximately 2,500 years ago in the southwestern region of Crimea, which was called Taurica. The colony was founded in the 5th century B.C. by settlers from Heracleia Pontica.

¹² The temples/shrines of the Greek deities end with the suffix ION. Thus, the temple of the goddess Athena is called Athenaion, the temple of the goddess Artemis is called Artemision, the temple of the goddess Hera is called Heraion, and so on.

Archaeological trips continued to be done throughout the island after this first one; the descriptive reports of the excavations were published in the *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (CRAI). In 1920, as shown in **Figure 4** below, an important discovery was made at the Acropolis of Thassos: a broken colossal Archaic statue of *kouros*¹³ with monumental dimensions (Pottier 1920: 218-223).

In 1921, a new phase of research began, with Charles Picard as the new head of the board of the French School of Athens. Researchers emphasized the island's topographical domains. To the East of the port, in a site partially occupied in the Archaic period, the agora¹⁴ of Thassos was evidenced, dating from the 4th century B.C. The central esplanade (*aulé*) was occupied by a series of shrines, among them that of Zeus Agoraios (Conf. LAKY, 2016). However, during the last twenty years, two areas adjacent to the agora were explored, and during this period there were significant changes in the perception of its space (MULLER; MULLIEZ, 2012, p.12).

In the Southeast of the agora archaeological excavations between the period of 1921-1931 have unveiled the so-called Roman quarter, with many structures: cobblestone streets, the Exedra de Limendas¹⁵, the Odeon and the plaza. The excavations were completed between 1962 and 1965. In 1996, another mission was started to identify the food market, the *macellum*.

In the 40's and 50's of the 20th century, a new period was marked with the archaeologist Roland Martin and other important researchers. A diversified technical team, consisting of architects, topographers and archaeologists, was formed to excavate the Agora of Thassos, with findings that furthered the knowledge about the early days of Greek colonization until the end of the Roman Empire (MARC, 1997, p. 499). Between 1961 and 1964, the concern shifted to the *khóra* and, around a decade later, in the 70s of the 20th century, topographic studies were completed on the *khóra* of Thassos from Archaic Greek times. The *Guide de Thasos*, first published in 1968 by the French School of Athens, edited by Yves Grandjean and François Salviat, details the excavations undertaken on the island of Thassos. The most important publications are found in the *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellenique* and the *Études thasiennes*¹⁶.

Excavations of the remains of the Archaic period.

Thassos is among the most excavated and published ancient cities in the Mediterranean. On the island, there are many areas already well researched and known, including the

¹³ Kouros (in Greek: *κῦρος*, "young man", pl.: *kouroi*) was a type of statue from Ancient Greece that represented a young male. The young man was always standing and naked, with long frizzy hair and a smile typical of sculpture from the Archaic Period of Greek art in his serene face (c. 650 BC to 500 BC). Kouros are produced from the 8th century B.C. until the implementation of the Severe Style around 480 B.C., which preceded the Classical period (Calado 2005).

¹⁴ Agora (*ἀγορά*; "assembly", "place of meeting", derived from *ἀγείρω*, "to gather") is a Greek term meaning the gathering of any kind, generally employed by Homer as a general gathering of people. The agora appears to have been an essential part of the constitution of the early Greek states. It was usually a free space with buildings, where citizens used to go, shaped by the presence of markets and fairs within its limits, as well as by public buildings (Smith 1843: 33).

¹⁵ Limendas (*Λιμένδας*) was a bronze sculptor from Thassos, son of Charopinos. *Bull. Corr. Hell.*, XLIX, 1925, p. 462 ss.; G. Lippold, in Pauly-Wissowa, Suppl. V, 1931, c. 594, s.v.; C. Dunant-I. Pouilloux, *Recherches sur l'histoire et les cultes de Thasos*, II, Paris, 1958, p. 152.

¹⁶ The *B.C.H* and the *Études thasiennes* are in the references.

main sanctuaries, the monumental center, the ports, the residences, among others. The contemporary historical interpretation of these important archaeological remains could rely on a *corpus* consolidated by centuries of research and quite complete on issues relating to the first settlements and their relationship with indigenous sites¹⁷, the urban configuration since the Archaic period, the beginning of the arrival of the Greeks, the specialization of large public spaces since the beginning of the 5th century BC, the monumentalization of the main civic institutions, large constructions from the Hellenistic period, in addition to the impact of Romanization.

Both the residences and the constructions of sanctuaries and monumental spaces that make up the urban landscape are part of a complete set of structures inserted in an urban landscape that comes from periods as far back as the beginning of the 7th century B.C. (MARC, 2012, p. 3).

Main Sanctuaries

This section will present the history of the excavations of the main shrines in Thassos. They are built spaces that have great importance and traces of occupation from different periods. The places of worship were carefully chosen by the Greeks, when they arrived in 680 BC. The choice was based on local religious markers, in other words, areas that, since very remote periods, already functioned as votive deposits. Archaeological excavations took place in a systematic manner, and were described and well documented in excavation reports. The sanctuaries of Heracles, Apollo Pythien, Artemis, Athena, Demeter and the Sanctuary of Apollo in Alikí will be shown below.

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Heracleion

Located Southwest of the agora, on the main road of Limenas, the Sanctuary of Heracles was excavated between 1932 and 1936 (with additions in 1984 and 1985), which led to the publication of the first volume of *Études Thasiennes* (1944)¹⁸. On the esplanade there was a Doric propylaeum¹⁹ with a monumental altar surrounded by three buildings: to the North, the temple went through two construction phases (6th and 5th centuries BC) and was surrounded by a colonnade from the Hellenistic period; to the East is an elongated

¹⁷ Within the scope of the Ancient Mediterranean it is agreed to call local populations indigenous. This discussion can be further developed in the texts *Ethnicity and Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, by N. Mac Sweeney (2014); and *Archaeologies of Colonialism. Consumption, Entanglement, and Violence in Ancient Mediterranean France* Michael Dietler (2010).

¹⁸ The *Études thasiennes* consists of 24 volumes of research, excavations and articles relating to the most important excavation sites in Thasos. See bibliographical references.

¹⁹ In ancient Greek architecture, propylaeum (in Greek: Προπυλαία) is a monumental portal. One example is the prototypical one that serves as the entrance to the Acropolis of Athens. The Greek revival “Brandenburg Gate” in Berlin and the Propylaeum in Munich evoke the central part of the propylaeum in Athens (Lawrence 1973).

building built in the early 5th century BC; and to the South five identical banquet rooms preceded by a portico.

The excavations of the Heracleion have greatly enriched the knowledge of the political, economic and religious history of this island; however, it is a fragmentary documentation and difficult to interpret (SOKOLOWSKI, 1956, p. 153). Diverse vessels have been found in Archaic layers, according to the *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellenique* (B.C.H n. 108, 1984; B.C.H n. 109, 1985; and B.C.H n. 110, 1986). According to Herodotus, Heracles was perhaps the greatest of the gods of Thassos; he was the protecting god of the city. This male deity was often represented on coins **Figure 6**²⁰ and his worship would have been, according to legendary traditions, implanted by the Phoenicians (*History*, Book II, 44)²¹.



Fig. 4 - Representation of Heracles the Archer. Thasian coin, 5th century B.C. From Gaudron Guy. *Un chenet gaulois, portant une inscription*, du Musée de Clermont-Ferrand (pl. X). In: *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France*, 1956, 1958.

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Sanctuary of Apollo Pythien

The Sanctuary of Apollo Pythien was one of the most important shrines in Thassos. It was probably installed by the first settlers: the god of Delphi (Python²²) had been consulted before the foundation of the city. This sanctuary is mentioned in epigraphic documents from the 5th century B.C. Subsequent constructions removed the access to the sanctuary, and later medieval constructions reused parts of the Archaic sanctuary, such as the 7th century B.C. entrance to the *témeno*²³, which was found in the medieval fortress. Certain elements of Archaic architecture, such as blocks with heart-shaped decorations, among others, belong to sanctuary buildings that remain unknown, for lack of deeper excavations

²⁰ About Heracles and the coins, see Porto, 2018.

²¹ See De Lima, 2019.

²² The Greek gods had several epithets that corresponded to forms of worship. Apollo had epithets that linked him to the Sun, to wolves, to origins and birth, to health and disease, as founder and protector, with music and art, to archery and arrows, to the Amazons, and in the case of the Adoration of Apollo in Thassos, to places of worship, as was the case at Delphi (connected with divination, luck, prophecies and truth, and with Python), hence Apollo Pythien.

²³ Term used in the Glossary made by Labeca: www.labeca.usp.br/pt-br/glossary/. In Ancient Greece, it was a sacred land, often limited by walls or rows of stones, consecrated to a deity, inside which an altar and a temple could be erected.

at the site of the medieval fortress. The area occupied by the sanctuary was limited to the East and North by the fortified line (GRANDJEAN; SALVIAT, 2000, p. 112).

Sanctuary of Athena (Atenaion)

The excavations of the Sanctuary of Apollo Pythien and the Sanctuary of Athena were resumed after the Second World War. Both sanctuaries were installed on the top of the Acropolis, where it was found a statue of *kouros criophore*²⁴ (Figure 7).

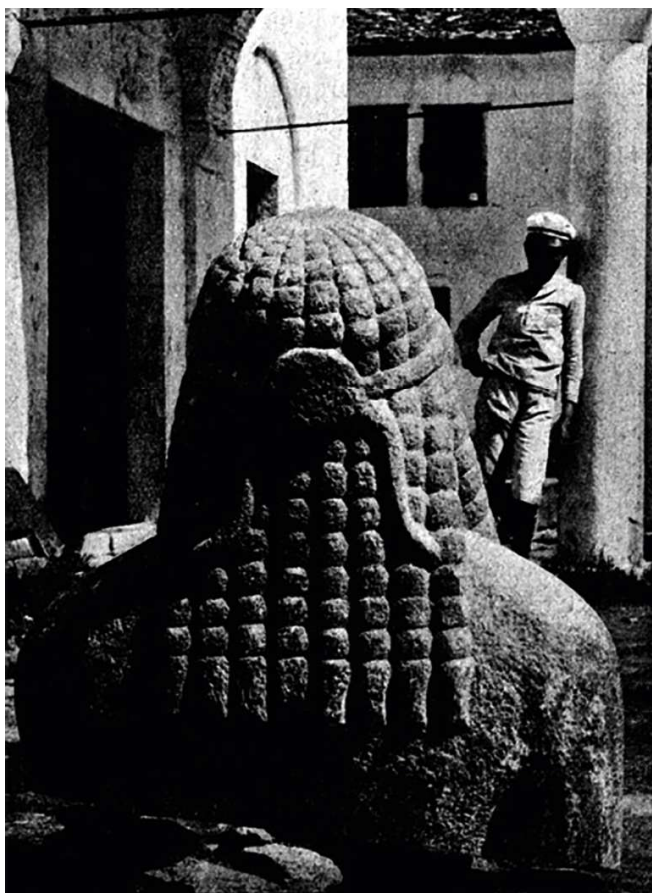


Figure 5 – Head of the statue of *kouros criophore* found in Thassos. Pottier Edmond. *Un colosse “criophore” archaïque découvert à Thasos*. In: CRAI, N. 3, 1920. pp. 218-223.

In the Sanctuary of Athena it was identified the following structures: the terrace wall, the propylaeum, the altar and the temple itself. The sanctuary dates back to the 5th century B.C., emulating the model of the existing building on the island of Paros. The objects found in the excavation were taken from a deep earthwork to the Northwest of the site, all from the mid-fifth century B.C. Archaic votive offerings, often fragmentary, terracotta figurines,

²⁴ The broken statue (shown partially in Figure 4), was incorporated into the ancient architecture at the base of the East wall of the Acropolis. The reconstituted colossus measured 3.50 m in height, including the base. It was in good condition, but analysis shows that the marble was never finished. The face, especially, remained in the design phase. The man carried a lamb on his shoulders, therefore, the statue was placed in the category of “criophore”, quite rare in the Greek world (EDMOND, 1920, p. 218).

vases and votive plates, as well as ancient antefixes from the old temple, stand out (DAUX, 1960, p. 864-866).

Beyond the citadel the ruins of the medieval village are transversal. The wall is well preserved because it was used by the village for protection. Identification is ensured by the discovery of the votive fragments, that is, vases that carry local dedications registered in the name of Athena Poliouchos (the city's matron) and fragments of painted vases from the Archaic period. Stone inscriptions also mention this sanctuary, such as the charges of fines by the clergy, or the records of official decisions in the *témeno* (sacred area) of the goddess (GRANDJEAN; SALVIAT, 2000, p. 114).

Sanctuary of Artemis (Artemísion)

The Sanctuary of Artemis, referred to as Artemision by Hippocrates (Epidemics III, 1) who, cared for the sick in Thassos in the 5th century BC, occupies two terraces on a steep slope in contact with the *passage of théores* (Figure 3, above). The ruins of the retaining walls resulted in a large part of the Archaic landfills²⁵ and older layers of occupation.

The Sanctuary of Artemis, not far from the Agora, had its first archaeological research expedition carried out before the First World War, but many systematic excavations were carried out later (1957-1960, 1965 and 1975-1985). This sanctuary was installed at the beginning of the foundation of Thassos (in the 7th century BC), with a monumental altar built in the beginning of the 5th century BC and a square terrace measuring with sides of 33m. The South side was occupied by a portico with female statues. Adolphe Joseph Reinach describes, in an excavation report of a 1911 campaign that was published in CRAI (1912), two bases that were first found with female statues that were possibly of Artemis Poles. Later, a perimeter wall was found where there were other statues and other wall foundations (REINACH, 1912, p. 222). The excavation on the lower terrace, built in the second half of the sixth century B.C., revealed a significant amount of figurines, painted vases, objects in gold, ivory, bronze and rock crystals (Figures. 8 and 9) (MULLER; MULLIEZ, 2012, p. 14).

It is important to note that the lower terrace was maintained, on the Northwest side, by a retaining wall built on a small polygonal wall. In the fourth century B.C., this retaining wall was leveled with a monumental entrance (or propylaeum) and replaced by a wall built in marble on the lower terrace. The upper terrace is from the Hellenistic period, built above the lower terrace, and much archaeological material dating from the 6th to the 4th century BC was found there (GRANDJEAN, SALVIAT, 2000, p. 90-91).

²⁵ Landfill meaning "area where objects have leveled with the earth", that is, layers of occupation, areas where archaeological remains are found.



Figure 6 - Part of Archaic structure from Artemision of Thassos. Personal archive, 2015.

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Figure 7 - General view of the excavated structures from Artemision of Thassos: Archaic, Classic, Hellenistic and Roman. Personal archive, 2015

Sanctuary of Demeter (Thesmophorion)

Excavated between 1962 and 1964, Thesmophorion, the sanctuary dedicated to Demeter and her daughter Core-Persephone, is in the northern part of the city. In addition to being outside the city walls, many discoveries led to the identification of ritual use for the vases due to the evidence of an inscription dedicated to Core and thousands of figurines representing women in prayer positions. There were inscriptions mentioning other cults, such as those dedicated to Zeus, Athena, Artemis, and cults of nymphs as ancestral deities. At the beginning of the Byzantine period, a church was built on the sanctuary site (**Figures 10a and 10b**) (MULLER; MULLIEZ, 2012, p. 14).



Fig.8a - Structure of a 6th century B.C. terrace. Personal archive, 2015.

Fig. 8b - Preserved Paleo-Christian basilica (6th century AD) and portico with columns preserved from the 3rd century BC. Personal archive, 2015.

To this list of sanctuaries that included the ones dedicated to Apollo Pythien, Athena, Artemis and Demeter, it must be added the Sactuary at Aliki, in the Southeast of the island.

Aliki: Archaic Sanctuary of Apollo.

Aliki is a village located South of Thassos (Figure 2). This Archaic sanctuary, excavated between 1961 and 1964, is characterized by the coexistence of two buildings of similar plan, designed to accommodate banquets during sacrifices. The sanctuary, probably dedicated to Apollo, dates back to the period when the Parisians arrived on the island in the middle of the 7th century B.C. It consists of a building in the South, in the center of the hill, dating from the 6th century B.C., in Doric style; a terraced complex dating back to 530 B.C., in the North; and an Ionic building from the 470s B.C. According to Servais (1980), fragments dedicated to Apollo were found in two grottos. In one of them there is a cave, which is visibly connected to the sanctuary, although the entrance construction is of late period. The other grotto is located 25 meters Southeast of the building in the center of the hill. Through a narrow mouth leveled with the ground, you reach a steep incline more than

20m deep, between two sloping rock banks. The cleaning of the area provided abundant ex-voto, pottery and terracotta figurines, mainly dating from the early Archaic period, in addition to abundant material from the Hellenistic and Roman era (SERVAIS, 1980 apud GRANDJEAN; SALVIAT, 2000, p. 165).

Other Archaic structures

Phari atelier: a local Archaic workshop

The Phari atelier (Figure 11, below) is Southwest of Thassos (Figure 2, Map). It is a workshop full of local pottery. It was excavated by the archaeologist J. Perreault between 1985 and 1988.



Figure 9 - General view of Phari site. Personal archive, 2015.

As it can be seen in figure 11 above, this workshop occupies a plateau overlooking the sea, located around 15 meters from the beach. In this workshop, two ovens were found that indicate an installation from the Archaic period (between the 6th and 5th centuries B.C). The atelier consisted of Oven A, Oven B, Cistern C, and channel D made up of tiles.

In Oven A, measuring 5 meters in width and with a clay-covered heating chamber, numerous vessels were found. To the South is Oven B, a smaller structure without a

central column. In this place, remains of tiles and ceramic fragments considered by Jacques Perreault (1990) as Attic and Cycladic “imitations” were found.

The excavation revealed a large number of vessels, which can be divided into two main groups, in which Attic “imitations” constitute the majority of them. Some of the common Attic forms from the 6th century B.C. are kraters, oenochoas, large lekanes, among other forms. The other group contains vases inspired by the Cycladic vases of Paros. The Laconian tiles, made and stored there, were also collected. Two fragments of molds of figurines (protomes), as well as two terracotta stamps for stamping large vases (pitos) attest to the variety of productions (PERREAULT, 1990, p. 201).

Archaic residences

Between 1928 and 1932, excavations were carried out in the residential area, next to the Gate of Silen (Figure 12), but they were completed only between 1950 and 1960. Three sites from the Archaic period were explored in this area, so that it was possible to perceive the changes, such as the small houses being more common during the first settlement of the island, to the vast Roman houses with peristyles, namely: Casa Yanopoulos, Casa Phocas and Casa Apostolidis.



Fig. 10 - Gate of Silen. Personal archive, 2015.

The residential areas located in the so-called Porta de Silene were systematically excavated between 1971 and 1980. Two installation sites were explored and, in one of them, from the Archaic period, a modest bronze workshop was found, abandoned in 250 B.C. At the same time, due to a problem in the water table, the Greek archaeological service

allowed several foreign schools to undertake emergency excavations there. The excavations that have taken place then complemented the knowledge of dwellings from the Archaic to the Proto-Byzantine period. In these places were found miscellaneous pottery, including Thasian black figures ceramics and terracota figurines, and small precious objects.

Final considerations

In the present paper, we presented to the reader the history of excavations undertaken by specialists linked to the French School of Athens on the island of Thassos. We discuss the chronology of archaeological expeditions and the main archaeologists who have excavated and published about the archaeological findings on the island. We focused our attention on the excavations and findings related to the Archaic period of Thassos, discussing the excavations in the shrines of Heracles, Apollo, Athena and Demeter, and also presenting the excavations that took place in the Aliki area, in the Phari studio and in the residential area, also from the Archaic period. We observe that the signs of reuse of Thracian ritual sites, according to Sara Owen (2009), were appropriated by Greeks since the foundation of Thassos on the island of Paros. The historical legacy of excavations since the 19th century in Thassos is important for understanding the dynamics and approaches to excavations over the time in order to achieve a critical dimension of what is presented to us in the excavation reports, in terms of material documentation of the collection, of processes of excavation and unveiling of places of worship.

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