



# ESAG

ÉCOLE SUISSE D' ARCHÉOLOGIE  
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SCHULE IN GRIECHENLAND

## FIELDWORK OF THE SWISS SCHOOL OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREECE 2021

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The Artemision at Amarynthos: The 2021 Season

KARL REBER, ANGELIKI SIMOSI, MARIA CHIDIROGLOU, CHLOÉ CHEZEAUX, JÉRÔME ANDRÉ,  
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Les «maisons des dragons» eubéennes: fouille du *drakospito* d'Ilkizès

TOBIAS KRAPF, STELLA CHRYSOULAKI, LEONIDAS VOKOTOPOULOS, SOFIA MICHALOPOULOU  
Aegina, Hellanion Oros

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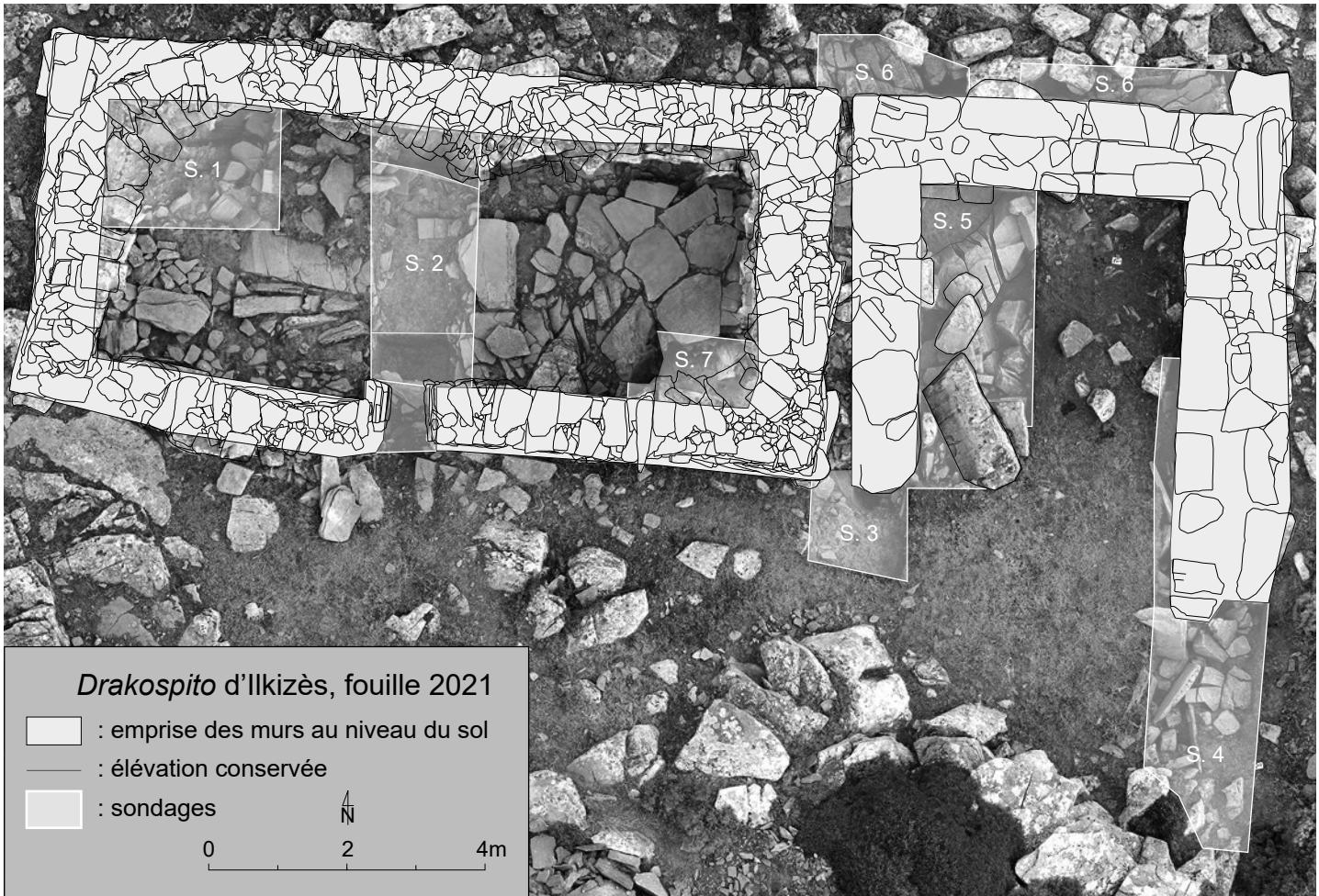


Fig. 10 Plan du *drakospito* d'Ilkizès

d'Ilkizès semble donc avoir été occupé, ou du moins régulièrement utilisé, durant une longue période.

#### *Un édifice à vocation pastorale?*

Le mobilier découvert lors de la fouille ne permet pas à lui seul de déterminer l'usage du bâtiment. Sa situation à flanc de colline exclut la fonction de tour de guet. En revanche, sur le plan fonctionnel, le *drakospito* trouve des parallèles proches avec les bergeries de la région encore en fonction au cours des derniers siècles. Le site d'Ilkizès serait donc plutôt lié à des activités agro-pastorales, de tout temps prépondérantes dans cette partie montagneuse de l'Eubée.

#### *Pour une étude globale des «maisons des dragons»*

Outre la fouille à Ilkizès, un second volet de la campagne a été consacré à la documentation de trois autres *drakospita*, à Kroi Phtocht, Loumithel et Palli Lakka. Ce

dernier site a fait l'objet d'un important nettoyage, afin d'effectuer un relevé de son architecture (*pl. 15, 3*). Les modèles 3D obtenus vont notamment servir à produire le plan pierre à pierre de ces constructions, ce qui n'avait jusqu'alors jamais été réalisé, et en faciliteront l'étude. L'investigation des *drakospita* est appelée à se poursuivre, non seulement dans l'intention de mieux comprendre l'insertion de ces monuments dans le paysage antique, mais aussi en vue de mettre en valeur ces vestiges, qui comptent parmi les plus visités de la région.

#### AEGINA, HELLANION OROS

*Tobias Krapf, Stella Chryssoulaki, Leonidas Vokotopoulos, Sofia Michalopoulou, Jérôme André*

The Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Piraeus and Islands launched in 2021 a five-year research project on the island of Aegina, on the summit of Hellanion Oros – the highest

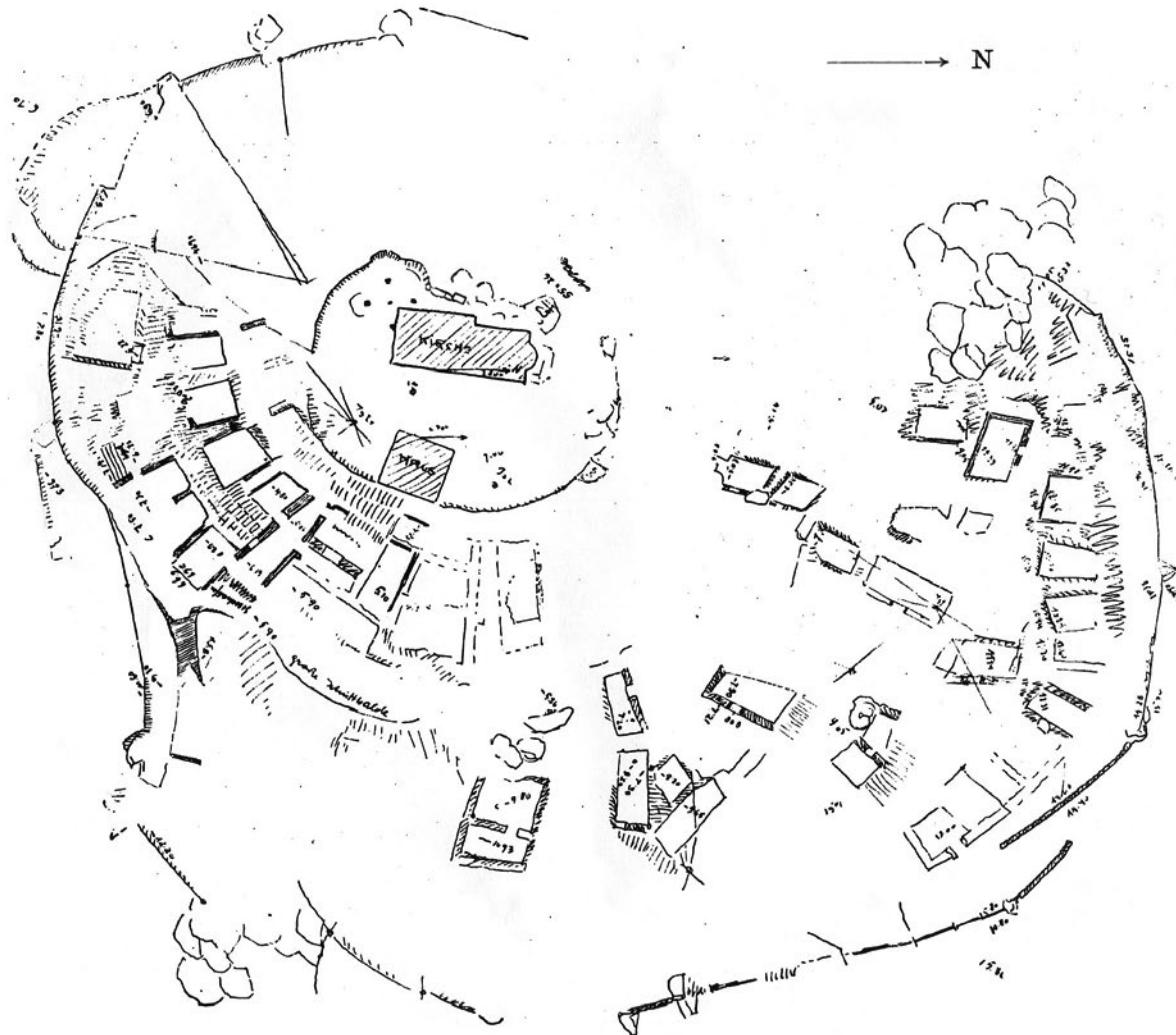


Fig. 11 Topographical sketch published by G. Welter (1938), the North arrow indicates East

peak of the Saronic Gulf (*pl. 15, 4*)<sup>33</sup>. The site was the object of archaeological investigations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> c., but the excavation results were never published in detail and the only topographical sketch dates from 1938 (fig. 11)<sup>34</sup>. The site is characterised by diachronic finds, starting in the Bronze Age, and the presence of multiple architectural remains including a Cyclopean wall, a circular dry stone fortification wall, and rectangular houses that seem to represent more than one settlement phase. At the summit, a small chapel (Analipsi), which incorpo-

rates *spolia* in its walls, is built on ancient foundations, partially preserved in two courses. This foundation may be linked to the cult of Zeus Hellanios, whose sanctuary has been identified on the north slope of the mountain<sup>35</sup>. The discovery of a wheelmade Mycenaean figurine in the 1930s suggests a Bronze Age origin for the cult<sup>36</sup>.

The new project aims at the reconstruction of the site's diachronic use through the excavation of trial trenches, the preparation of a detailed topographical plan, and a survey of the surrounding landscape. Main questions are the origins of the cult of Zeus and the reasons for the installation of a settlement on this remote and hard to reach yet highly visible site.

<sup>33</sup> F. de Polignac (Prof. at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris) supported the works on the site as scientific member of the project. E. Anastasaki, K. Koukouna, A. Mallikopoulou, A. Mpitrou and I. Viktoratou (University of Ioannina) participated in the campaign (20.09.–15.10.2021), which has been financed by the Foundation of the ESAG.

<sup>34</sup> For bibliography and the history of research at the site, see Salavoura 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Goette 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Pilafidis-Williams 1995.

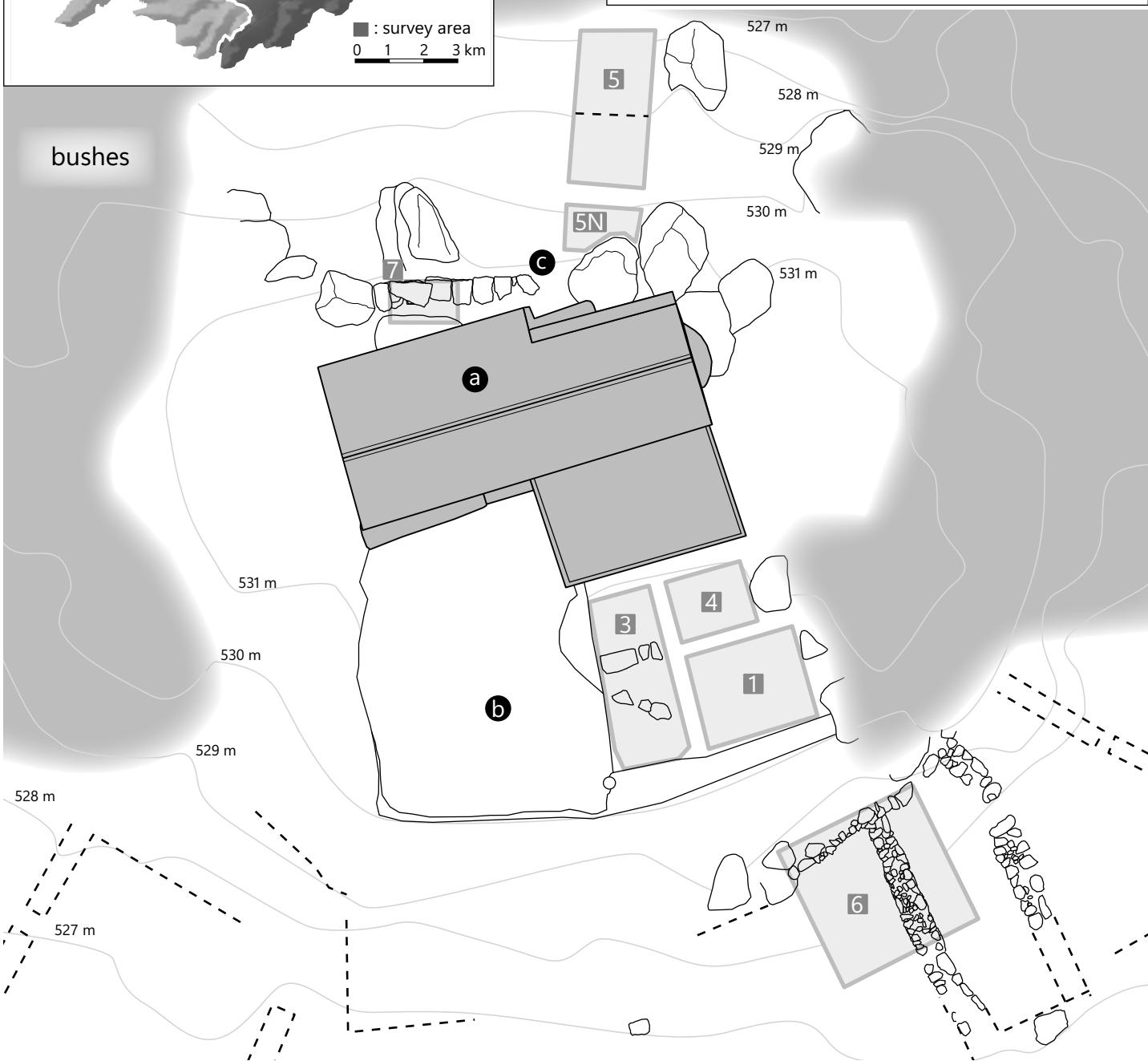
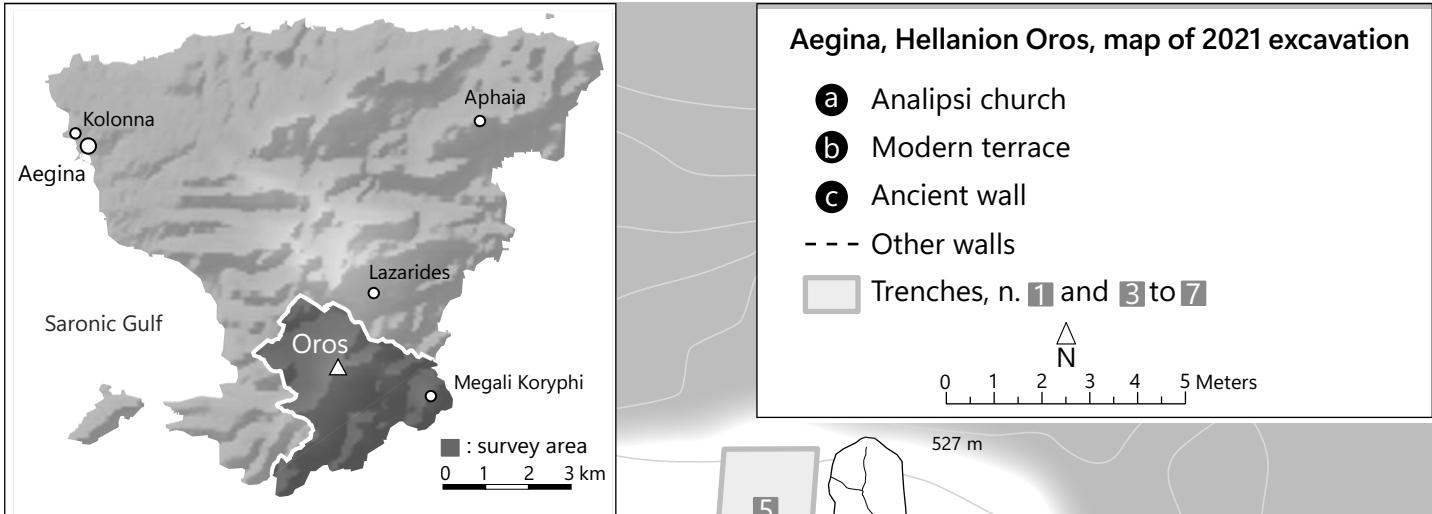


Fig. 12 Schematic plan of the trenches on the peak of Mount Hellanion Oros

## *Excavation*

Besides the partial cleaning for the architectural survey, several trial trenches were opened in different areas of the summit (fig. 12): three trenches (1, 3 and 4) were excavated on the sole available spot on the highest point, directly south of the church. There is more than one meter of sediments, the majority resulting from the backfill of the old excavations. These deposits yielded abundant pottery, dating from the Mycenaean period to Roman times. In the east part of the area, a layer containing burnt animal bones and Middle Helladic pottery extended under the backfill. The evidence suggests that the earliest use of the site for ritual purposes may well date to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. BCE. The slope immediately north of the church seems less disturbed. In trench 5, a thick layer of black soil with hundreds of fragments of burnt animal bones was excavated. The burnt debris might be redeposited, but it logically resulted from the sacrifices that took place on the summit. If confirmed by the archaeozoological analysis, this context could provide an exceptional case study for cult practices in sanctuaries on mountain peaks. Additionally, a probable retaining wall appeared in this trench; this is an interesting discovery because the area seemed to be devoid of architectural remains. There is also a fair amount of Mycenaean pottery and the head of a Psi- or Phi-figurine.

A small trench (7) was opened behind the ancient foundation on which the church was built. Apart from pottery sherds, there were many stone flakes from the carving of the blocks, indicating that this is the original construction fill. Another trench (2, located outside the area of fig. 12) was dug along the Cyclopean wall on the west slope, in order to document its construction. Moreover, a trench (6) was opened to the southeast of the church, within one of the buildings that extend in this area. The building postdates the Bronze and Early Iron Age. Noteworthy is the discovery of a scarab during the sieving of the sediments.

Finally, a multiroom complex constructed with large boulders was identified on the south slope, outside the fortified area. It is partially obliterated by fallen blocks, coming from its own superstructure and the construc-

tions extending upslope. Based on the construction technique, a date in the Mycenaean palatial period can be suggested, but cleaning and test excavation are needed in order to verify this hypothesis. Interestingly, this complex has not been noted by earlier scholars.

In conclusion, this first, limited campaign already produced important new data concerning the diachronic use of the site and laid the base for a systematic exploration in the coming years.

Survey

The project includes a survey area of 11 km<sup>2</sup> (fig. 12), about an eighth of the island's surface, in the southern part of Aegina. Both intensive and extensive survey have been initiated in 2021. This rugged area, which today is almost uninhabited, was much more frequented in prehistoric, ancient, and premodern times, as attested by the presence of another late Mycenaean fortification (the site of Megali Koryphi<sup>37)</sup>), a "dragon house", ancient boundary stones, cisterns, chapels, and the ubiquitous agricultural terraces. Mount Hellanion Oros, with its sanctuary, dominates the entire landscape and its new exploration will hopefully contribute significantly to the reconstruction of Aegina's long-term history.

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<sup>37</sup> Vokotopoulos – Michalopoulou 2018.

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Fieldwork of the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece 2021

1 Amarynthos, offering deposit in the Archaic temple of Artemis

2 Field survey of the coastal plain between Eretria and Amarynthos

3 Palli Lakka, Euboea. Aerial view of the site after cleaning

4 Aerial view of Mount Hellanion Oros on Aegina Island, from the West. On the right side Megali Koryphi, in the background the peninsula of Attica

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