

McDONALD INSTITUTE MONOGRAPHS

An Age of Experiment: Classical Archaeology Transformed (1976–2014)

Edited by Lisa Nevett and James Whitley



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with contributions from
Susan E. Alcock, Giovanna Ceserani, Alexandra Coucouzeli, Thomas W. Gallant, Michael Given, Jonathan M. Hall, Paul Halstead, Sturt W. Manning, Ian Morris, Lisa Nevett, Robin Osborne, Sara Owen, Gillian Shepherd, David B. Small, Jeremy Tanner and James Whitley

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Chapter 3

Gifts for Gods in an Early *Polis*, Zagora on Andros

Alexandra Coucouzeli (Cambridge)

This chapter focuses on the deities worshipped at Zagora, a major Early Iron Age site, which has been the subject of my research for many years. Our honoured guest, Anthony Snodgrass, wrote about Zagora in 1987 that it 'was surely for a time the leading settlement on Andros' (Snodgrass 1987, 173).

The first signs of occupation at Zagora (Fig. 3.1) go back to *c.* 925–900 BC. By the second half of the eighth century BC, Zagora had become a flourishing town. It was, however, abandoned *c.* 700 BC, never to be re-occupied, except for its sanctuary, which appears to have been used until *c.* 425–400 BC (Cambitoglou *et al.* 1971; 1981; 1988).

Concerning the temple itself, the excavators believe that this was not contemporary with the town, but was erected on the site of the old sanctuary in the sixth century by nearby Palaiopolis, the historical *polis* of Andros, to which the population of Zagora would have migrated towards the end of the eighth century (Cambitoglou *et al.* 1971, 11; 1981, 84; 1988, 171). However, this view was challenged in 1982, when as a PhD student of Anthony Snodgrass, inspired by his perceptive remark about 'the regular orientation of [the] closely-grouped blocks of houses' at Zagora (Snodgrass 1971, 426; cf. Coldstream 1977a, 306), I discovered that the first-phase houses of the upper plateau (sectors D/H) were laid out *c.* 760–750 BC according to a grid plan divided into 'lots' and that the temple occupied a specially reserved 'lot', apparently being separated from the inhabited space of the grid by means of an intersection of streets. This raised the strong possibility that the temple was originally built at the time of the urban planning and was simply renovated in Archaic times (cf. Coldstream 1977a, 213, 305; Ekschmitt 1986, 19). An eighth-century temple at Zagora would have constituted the earliest known Greek building specifically designed for religious purposes at the heart of a planned, urban site.

Based on Anthony Snodgrass's emphasis on the link between the rise of the *polis* and communal religious rituals, and his stimulating statement that 'the building of a monumental temple, to a recognized patron deity, (…) may be our clearest physical indication that the emergent *polis* has arrived, or is at hand' (Snodgrass 1977, 24; 2006, 212; Snodgrass 1980, 33, 90–100; see also Morris, this volume), I then interpreted Zagora as the likely *astu* of an early *polis*. This would have been a town (re-)built *ex novo* (or rather *de novo*) *c.* 760–750 BC following a procedure resembling the founding act of a colony, yet being earlier than the first planned Greek colonial foundations in southern Italy and Sicily. Zagora's 'foundation' would have also differed from the western colonial foundations insofar as the right of residence within the planned space and the egalitarian spirit characteristic of colonies appear to have been here the prerogatives of an elite that would have also dominated the religious rituals of the community (*contra* Small, this volume). This is apparent from the following features: the grid plan is exclusive to the upper plateau (in sheer contrast with the unplanned lower slopes) of Zagora; it shows a division of space such as to suggest an equal distribution of plots of land among upper-class families or *oikoi* joined together into a number of inter-related solidary groups, probably high-status descent groups or 'clans'/*genē* headed by chiefs or 'kings'/*basileis*, with a leading group among them, in the immediate vicinity of the temple, containing the residence of a supreme chief or 'king'/*basileus*; all these groups were united by the general outline of the grid into a highly cohesive and corporate body, probably a closed, hereditary and internally egalitarian elite of 'equals'/*homoioi* with a *primus inter pares*, constituting an 'aristocracy' or an 'aristocratic kingship' (translation of Carlier's expression 'royauté aristocratique' – Carlier 1984, 187).[1] Therefore, the '*aristoi*' at Zagora would have



Figure 3.1. *View of Zagora on Andros from the north, photograph by the author.*

consciously opted for an entirely new conception of urban space, comprising clearly demarcated private and public areas, and a religious area, the site of an early 'civic' cult, which they would have appropriated, in order to link their claimed descent from the 'poliad' deity with their right to rule (Coucouzeli 2004; 2007).[2]

Prompted by all this, Anthony Snodgrass affirmed in the early 1990s that 'planning often dictated religious decisions, by determining the location of the colonial cult-centres according to rational, secular principles' and that 'something of the same kind may have happened with the location of the sanctuary at a site like Zagora on Andros' (Snodgrass 1994, 8–9; 2006, 301). He also argued that if Zagora was indeed 'the centre … of an early polis embracing the island of Andros', given its sheer size and the fact that '[it] has a protecting wall (...), areas of housing that show clear signs of planning, a probable contemporary temple, and plenty of open space for the siting of a hypothetical *agora*', then this 'early experiment was a short-lived' one, for Zagora eventually met the fate of a series of other settlements of this era that were abruptly abandoned towards the end of the eighth century or in the earlier Archaic period, probably as a result of the advent of the actual *polis* (Snodgrass 1991, 8–9; 2006, 274–6, 338). In most cases, the desertion of the settlements was complete and permanent, but in the case of Zagora the sanctuary outlasted the settlement by a few centuries, and so was also the case at Emporio (Boardman 1967, 5 ff.; Archontidou-Argyri 2003, 81), to which I shall return shortly. At Zagora, after the abandonment of the settlement, we are probably dealing with an 'extra-urban' sanctuary, which would have belonged to the city of Palaiopolis and would have been reached via a religious procession set out to bind the *astu* to the *chora* (cf. F. de Polignac 1995).

But which were the deities honoured in the sanctuary of Zagora? In trying to answer this question, the main excavator, Alexander Cambitoglou, relying heavily on two dedicatory inscriptions, one of which he interpreted wrongly, as we shall see, concluded that the temple probably housed a double cult of Athena Polias and Heracles (Cambitoglou 1972, 266–7; 1981, 84).

I believe that Cambitoglou's reading of one of the inscriptions (and of the ex-votos that he invokes to support his reading) presents weaknesses and that

the problem of the deities honoured in the sanctuary of Zagora needs to be re-examined by including many other votive offerings hitherto not taken into account. This is what I attempt to do in this chapter. My ultimate aim is to highlight the value of the votive offerings, and of the deities that they suggest, in the context of the problem of the formation of the early *polis* of Zagora and of the cross-cultural dynamics within the Mediterranean in the eighth century BC.

The deities of Zagora: a fresh examination of the evidence

A series of votive offerings, listed on Table 3.1, suggest the presence in the Zagora cult of Heracles, Poseidon, the Dioskouroi, Thetis, and probably also Hera. All these deities are linked to each other by a strong maritime connection. Let us examine the evidence for each one of them.

I. Heracles

Ex-voto A (Fig. 3.2) bears one of the two dedicatory inscriptions already mentioned. The inscription is clearly delineated and reads: ΗΡΑΚΛΕΟΣ, i.e. 'of Heracles'. It therefore proves beyond question the worship of Heracles at Zagora.



Figure 3.2. *Ex-voto A. The kantharos inscription from Zagora, Archaeological Museum of Andros, 1276+1277+2047. Courtesy of Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.*

II. Poseidon

Ex-voto B (Fig. 3.3) bears the other dedicatory inscription mentioned above. Cambitoglou has suggested two possible readings for this inscription: either ΠΟΜ (retrograde), as an abbreviation of the name Poseidon (the >M< representing the letter *san* and the sound [s]), or ΠΟΛΙ (retrograde), as an abbreviation of the usual epithet of the goddess Athena, 'Polias'. However, Cambitoglou quickly dismissed the first reading (I will examine his arguments shortly) and he opted for the second reading, suggesting that there are intimations of the cult of Athena in two other votive offerings, the female figure on a bone seal amulet (ex-voto G) and the forearm of a marble female statue (ex-voto H).

Apart from the fact that these last ex-votos do not necessarily indicate a cult of Athena (see below for alternative interpretations), the arguments offered by Cambitoglou against the interpretation of the lekane inscription as a dedication to Poseidon do not bear close scrutiny for two reasons.

Firstly, the inscription reads *clearly* ΠΟΜ (retrograde). The third stroke of the letter *san* (in retrograde) is faint, but nonetheless discernible.

Secondly, Cambitoglou argued that since 'the letter M [i.e. *san*], which is characteristic of the Dorian islands Thera, Melos and Crete, would not have been used on Andros', an Ionian island, one has to assume that the lekane was an offering from a Dorian visitor; however, he maintained, 'in the Dorian dialect the name of the god was Poteidon and not Poseidon and therefore it is a bit difficult to believe that a Dorian visitor would have used the letter M (...)' (Cambitoglou 1972, 266, transl. mine).

However, this argumentation is flawed. The first part of the argumentation, in particular, reminds us of Herodotus's statement that the Dorians used *san* >M< while the Ionians used *sigma* >Σ< to render the sibilant, i.e. the sound [s], which is an over-schematization (Herodotus 1.139; cf. Guarducci 1987, 22).

In reality, even though the sibilant letter *san* >M< was used 'only by Dorians', it was not used by *all* Dorians, as Guarducci affirms, or, to put it more accurately, it was not used *throughout* the Western group of Greek dialects (for instance, in Laconia, Messenia, Megara, Mycenae, Rhodes, as well as in Elis and Locris, the letter *sigma* >Σ< was employed instead for the sibilant) (Guarducci 1987, 22, App. 1 and 2; Jeffery 1990, 33–4, 104–7, 183–6, 202, 216–7, 345–6, Table of alphabets at end of volume; cf. Hall 1997, 153).[3]

Moreover, evidence from many places within the Doric dialect group or, more generally, within the West Greek dialect group, shows the use of the name Poseidon (and its derivatives) written with a -σ- [-*s*-]

Table 3.1. *The votive offerings from the sanctuary of Zagora examined in this chapter.*

Object(s)	Description	Date	Illustration	References
A	Black glaze kantharos (fragments) with inscription ΗΡΑΚΛΕΟΣ	Second half of 5th century BC	Fig. 3.2	Cambitoglou 1972, 266, pl. 235β; Cambitoglou *et al*. 1981, 89 no. 285 (inv. 1276+1277+2047), 90 figs. 47–8; 1988, 166, 222, pl. 257
B	Lekane (fragments) with inscription ΠΟΜ (retrograde)	Second half of 6th century BC	Fig. 3.3	Cambitoglou 1972, 266, pl. 235α; Cambitoglou *et al*. 1981, 84, 88 figs. 45–6, 89 no. 284 (inv. 1932)
C	Pyxis (fragments) with 'master of horses'	Late Geometric, *c.* 750–700 BC	Fig. 3.5	Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 96 no. 300 (inv. 1281), fig. 56; 1988, 219, pl. 264
D	Base of lead seal figurine (broken). Seal face: Dioskouroi on either side of their sacred emblem, the *dokana.*	Late Geometric, *c.* 750–700 BC	Fig. 3.6	Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 91 no. 291 (inv. 1238), 93 fig. 50; 1988, 233, pl. 281
E	Terracotta relief plaque (fragment). Foot of a man with spear(?) walking to the left	Late Geometric II, *c.* 725–700 BC	Fig. 3.7	Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 82, 91 no. 288 (inv. 1328); 1988, 228, pl. 273a–b
F	Black-figure column-krater with a scene from the struggle of Peleus and Thetis (fragments)	Second half of 6th century BC	Fig. 3.9	Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 87 figs. 43–4, 89 no. 280 (inv. 1212 + M10); 1988, 173, 222, pl. 268a–b
G	Bone seal amulet. (a) Top face: female figure (goddess) *en face*, with naked torso and bare feet, wearing long skirt, belt, bracelets and flat cylindrical headdress. (b) Seal face: two winged animals (horses? sphinxes?) arranged heraldically on either side of a sacred tree.	Late 8th or 7th century BC	Fig. 3.10	Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 91 no. 293 (inv. 1240), 94 fig. 53; 1988, 235, plates 289a–b, 290a–b
H	Marble forearm of female figure (*kore* ?) with bracelet and sleeve of chiton with button	Second half of 6th century BC (?)		Cambitoglou *et al.* 1988, 230 (inv. 1222), plates 284a–b, 285
I	Spindle whorls			Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 96 no. 298 (inv. 1934), no. 299 (inv. 1941)
	Bobbin (?)			Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 91 no. 297 (inv. 1945)
	Bronze fibulae	Late Geometric – Archaic, *c.* 750–600 BC		Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 97 no. 312 (inv. 1308), no. 313 (inv. 1883), no. 314 (inv. 1230); 98 no. 315 (inv. 1875), 316 (inv. 2068), no. 317 (inv. 1776); Cambitoglou *et al.* 1988, 232 (inv. 1230, inv. 1308)
	Iron pin (?)	8th or 7th century BC (?)		Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 97 no. 311 (inv. 1294)
	Stone pendant	8th century BC (?)		Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 96 no. 302 (inv. 1771)
	Beads	8th or 7th century BC (?)		Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 96 no. 303 (inv. 2412, 2410, 2413, 1815, 1812, 2445), no. 304 (inv. 2414), no. 305 (inv. 1783)
	Rings	8th century BC (?)		Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 97 no. 307 (inv. 1775), no. 308 (inv. 1882)
J	Bone seal amulet. Top face: couchant lion	Beginning of 7th century BC (?)	Fig. 3.12	Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 91 no. 294 (inv. 1800), 93 fig. 52; cf. Boardman 1963, 154, pl. XXe; 2001, 118, 119 fig. 173
K	Terracotta relief plaque (fragments). Raised right arm and left foot of dressed female figure standing in front of small votive plaque picturing a warrior.	7th century BC	Fig. 3.13	Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 91 no. 289 (inv. 1810), 92 fig. 49



Figure 3.3. *Ex-voto B. The lekane inscription from Zagora, Archaeological Museum of Andros, 1932. Courtesy of Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.*

(or *-h-*) instead of the standard West Greek -τ- [*-t-*], as a result of the phonological process of assibilation (Lejeune 1972, 64 n. 8; cf. Buck 1955, 57–8; Hall 1997, 158) (e.g. Table 3.2).

Finally, and most interestingly, in Poseidonia-Paestum – a city founded by Achaeans from Sybaris and/or by Dorian Troezenians driven out by the Achaeans in the mother-city Sybaris (Bérard 1957, 141–2, 214–6; Greco and Longo 2000, 46) – the abbreviation ΠΟΜ (retrograde), written in the Achaean alphabet (which belongs to the West Greek dialect group) is used for the name of Poseidon on coins of the city dating from *c.* 550 to *c.* 430 BC (e.g. Fig. 3.4) (Jeffery 1990, 253, 260 no. 5; *LIMC* VII.1, *s.v.* 'Poseidon', 454 nos. 61–2; Giacomelli 1998, 32, 87, 90, 96–8; Rutter 2001, 109 no. 1107).

All this strongly suggests that the Zagora lekane was offered to Poseidon by a person originating from a place within the West Greek dialect group where the letter *san* >M< and assibilation were used. Therefore, one may safely conclude that Poseidon, rather than Athena Polias, was the recipient of the lekane dedicated to the temple of Zagora.

This naturally raises the question of whether Cambitoglou's identification of Athena Polias at Zagora might have been influenced by the publication, a few years earlier, of the excavation of the temple at Emporio,



Figure 3.4. *Coin from Poseidonia-Paestum with the name of Poseidon abbreviated as ΜΟΠ (c. 525–500 BC), Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18215987, photograph by Reinhard Saczweski. Courtesy of Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin.*

Table 3.2. *Examples of the use of the name Poseidon (and its derivatives) written with a -σ- [-s-] (or -h-) instead of the standard West Greek -τ- [-t-] in various places within the Doric/West Greek dialect group.*

Place(s)	Name of Poseidon	Festival in honour of Poseidon	Month named after Poseidon	Deme named after Poseidon	References
Sparta	Ποσιδᾶν				*IG* V.1. 469.6; 1336.22; *C.I.G.* 1374; Farnell 1907, 84 no. 62b
Sparta	Ποhοιδᾶν (pre-Dorian)				*IG* V.1.241.1; Buschor and von Massow 1927, 37. 63; Cartledge 1979, 96; Jeffery 1990, 200, no. 34; *LIMC* VII.1, *s.v.* 'Poseidon', 477 no. 275; Mylonopoulos 2003, 227
Sparta		Ποσειδαῖα			*C.I.G.* 1430
Tainaron	Ποhοιδᾶν				*IG* V.1. 1228.2; 1230.4; 1232.2
Helos, Thuria		Ποhοιδαῖα			*IG* V.1.213.12, 18; Bourguet 1927, 50–51
Argos	Ποσειδᾶν				Buck 1955, 58, no. 61.4
Kalaureia	Ποσειδᾶν				Farnell 1907, 83 no. 58f.
Isthmus	Ποσειδᾶν				*IG* IV. 201; Bourguet 1927, 51
Achaia	Ποσειδᾶν				Lejeune 1972, 64 n. 8
Mantineia	Ποσιδᾶν				Dittenberger 1883, 633 no. 444
Epidauros		Ποσίδαια			Trümpy 1997, 29
Epidauros			*Ποσίδαιος*		Trümpy 1997, 30, 141–2, 146
Megara		Ποσείδεα			Trümpy 1997, 25 n. 99
Melos, Thera, Nisyros, Carpathos, Crete	Ποσειδᾶν				Farnell 1907, 89 no. 72, 90 nos. 77 and 80, 91 nos. 83–4
Rhodes	Ποσειδᾶν				*IG* XII.1.809
Cimolos				Ποσίδαον	Buck 1955, 173, 287 no. 86.15

where Athena's presence is, nevertheless, secure. The architectural similarities between the temples of Zagora (Cambitoglou 1971, 32; 1981, 82–4; 1988, 165 ff.) and Emporio (Boardman 1967, 5 ff., 23; Archontidou-Argyri 2003, 62ff., 76) – plans, dimensions, presence of an altar at the back of their cellas – alongside the common trait of the continuity of cult after the abandonment of the settlement (above), may indeed have prompted the Zagora excavator to draw parallels with respect to the identity of cult as well.

Another ex-voto that might be connected to a cult of Poseidon at Zagora is **ex-voto C** (Fig. 3.5), which is decorated with the motif of the 'master of horses'. This well-known motif in Late Geometric pottery, and the *Leitmotiv* of Argive pottery, in particular (Courbin 1966, 475–83, 485–7; Schweitzer 1971, 62–3; Coldstream 1977a, 141–2; 2008, 129–30, 137–8, 143–4), has generated much debate as to what it actually represents: a mere mortal (Courbin 1966, 484–7), a horse-tamer (Coldstream 1977a, 141–2; 2008, 129–30, 137–8, 143–4), an aristocratic warrior (Snodgrass 1971, 414–5), a hero (Webster 1955, 42) or a god? The vast majority of those who believe that the 'master of horses' represents a god, propose either a sun-god (Roes 1948, 121; 1953, 95 and n. 1) or Poseidon Hippios, i.e. Poseidon as horse-god or Master of the horses (Charbonneaux 1932, 224, 227–30; Yalouris 1950, 82, 91; Charitonides 1954, 416; Webster 1955, 42; Courbin 1966, 484–7; Schweitzer 1971, 62–3; Coldstream 1977a, 141–2; 1977b, 12; 2008, 129–30, 137–8, 143–4; Langdon 1989, 185–6, 191, 199–201).

As far as the Zagora pyxis is concerned, one may reasonably argue that this was not a fortuitous offering,

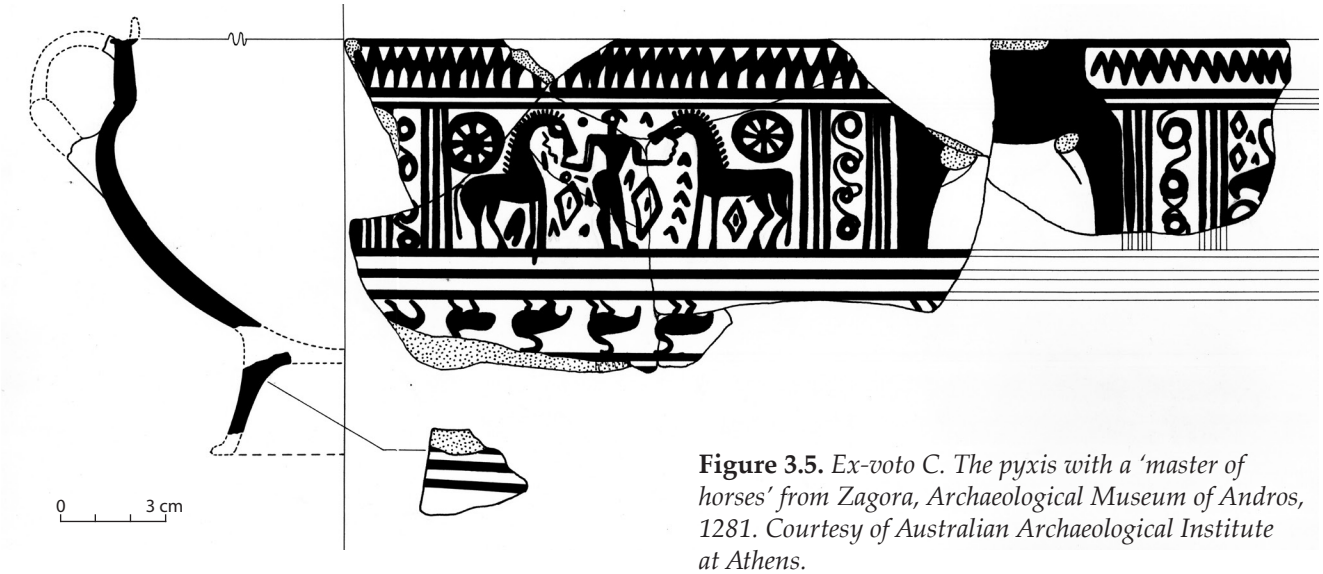


Figure 3.5. *Ex-voto C. The pyxis with a 'master of horses' from Zagora, Archaeological Museum of Andros, 1281. Courtesy of Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.*

but a vase chosen for the specific purpose of honouring Poseidon in his double aspect as Master of the earth and of the horses, and fertilizing god of fresh water, *as well as* Master of the sea, fishing and seafaring.[4] The actual *association* of the main motif of the 'master of horses' with the 'filling' motif of the chevrons, suggesting the water element (Courbin 1966, 475; Boardman 1983, 19), and that of the 'ornamental oval' (beneath one of the horses), indicating a fish (Courbin 1966, 473, 481) and possibly the sea (Coldstream 1977b, 12), may indeed have been considered on the part of the dedicator as an appropriate expression of the dual nature of Poseidon (cf. Charitonides 1954, 416; Schweitzer 1971, 62–3; Coldstream 1977b, 12; Langdon 1989, 185–6, 191, 199–201).[5] The horse was the most important of Poseidon's sacred animals and horse sacrifices in water took place in his honour;[6] while the fish (especially tunny) was a common attribute of Poseidon and played an important role in his cult.[7] If so, the pyxis with the 'master of horses' at Zagora would accord well with the lekane inscription to Poseidon examined above.

Thus, the epigraphic evidence and probably also the iconographic evidence suggest the worship of Poseidon in the temple of Zagora. This is not surprising: Poseidon's temples were regularly located on islands, headlands or the edge of harbours, and the temple of Zagora fits this description, as it stood on a high promontory overlooking the sea (Semple 1927, 365, 367–8). But what about the presence of Heracles alongside Poseidon?

Heracles and Poseidon: a first maritime connection

The association of Heracles with Poseidon at Zagora may at first seem strange, but it is less so when one considers that Heracles also had marine attributions and sometimes assumed the function of protector of navigators. Thus, on some Attic vases, Heracles is shown holding a trident while destroying the palace of Nereus (Brommer 1984, 112–13, plates 44, 47a, 47b) or fishing under the guidance of Poseidon (Brommer 1984, 109, 110 fig. 53, 115). On Etruscan scarabs and mirrors, Heracles is pictured as a navigator, floating on a raft supported by amphoras (Lacroix 1974, 53–7; *LIMC* V.1., *s.v.* 'Hercle', 232 nos. 337–9). Furthermore, there is sufficient evidence to show that a cult affinity existed between Poseidon and Heracles. In the Greek cities of Italy, Heracles often had a marine character and he was particularly venerated in ports (Bayet 1926b, 46–7; Bonnet 1988, 308), as it seems also to have been the case on Delos (Bruneau 1970, 407–8) and Rhodes (Morelli 1959, 149). In Messene, in Sicily, those who had escaped the perils of the sea expressed gratitude to Poseidon and Heracles equally (Aelius Aristides, *Orationes* 40.12; Behr 1981, 241). And it was apparently enough for 'people in distress everywhere on land and sea' to invoke Heracles's name, in order to gain his protection (Libanius, *Orationes* 18.186). Finally, on a stele relief from Thasos, Heracles is even represented alongside Poseidon seemingly as a protector of navigation (Launey 1944, 146, 159–60, 188; Bruneau 1970, 410–11; *LIMC* VII.1, *s.v.* 'Poseidon', 459 no. 126).

It is perhaps not excessive to say that the interrelatedness of land and sea was a basic component of the nature not only of Poseidon but also of Heracles. Indeed, the scene of Heracles's exploits was not only the land but also the sea (cf. *Homeric Hymn to Heracles* (15), 4–5: 'Once he used to wander over the unmeasured land and sea'). As the supreme travelling and civilizing hero, Heracles navigated the great maritime routes all across the Mediterranean. His individual sea journeys took him both to the east, to Troy, and to the far west,

to 'the ends of the inhabited world' (Strabo 3.5.5), past the Pillars that bore his name, i.e. the Straits of Gibraltar, and 'beyond the glorious Ocean' (Hesiod, *Theogony* 215, 274, 294), as when he sailed in the golden boat-cup of the Sun to the 'sea-girt Erytheia' (Hesiod, *Theogony* 290) or to the Garden of the Hesperides (Lacroix 1974; Burkert 1985, 209; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 22–4, 91–104, 164, 168, 218, 221–4, 227–70; *LIMC* V. 1, *s.v.* 'Herakles', 73–81, 100–1, 111–12; Gantz 1993, 31, 403–8; Marín Ceballos 2001, 329–30; Larson 2007a, 186–7; Lane Fox 2008, 204–5, 218; Stafford 2012, 6, 44).

Pindar praises Heracles for his terrestrial *and* seaward adventures, as well as for having taken special care to safeguard and fix the limits of navigation. He writes that 'it is not easy to cross the trackless sea beyond the pillars of Heracles, which that hero and god set up as famous witnesses to the furthest limits of seafaring (*ναυτιλίας ἐσχάτας*)' (Pindar, *Nemean* 3.21–3) and that Heracles 'went to Olympus, after he had explored all lands and the high-cliffed hollow of the gray sea, and had tamed the straits for sailors (*ναυτιλίαισί τε πορθμὸν ἁμερώσαις*)' (Pindar, *Isthmian* 4.55–7) (cf. Lacroix 1974, 52–3; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 524–5; Bonnet 2005, 20).

Now, 'sea-girt Erytheia' was one of the three offshore islands that constituted the Phoenician colony of Gadir (or Gades, modern Cádiz), situated beyond, but not far from, the Pillars of Heracles. In Gadir, on the island of Kotinoussa, there was also a famous temple dedicated to Melqart-Heracles going back to the time of Gadir's foundation, perhaps in the early eighth century or even earlier.[8] The cult of Melqart, the god of Tyre and Phoenician god *par excellence*, was implanted throughout the Mediterranean by the Phoenicians, i.e. mainly Tyrians, in their vigorous expansion to the west, which began in the ninth century (Kition on Cyprus being one of the first Tyrian settlements overseas) and was firmly established by the mid-eighth century BC (van Berchem 1967, 75; Bonnet 1988, 31–2, 79, 107, 141, 324, 335, 373, 432; Lipiński 1995, 26ff., 226–43; Markoe 2000, 77, 115–20, 145; Aubet 2001, 51–4, 150–7; Ribichini 2008, 299; Woolmer 2017, 38, 42, 170, 175–6, 182, 203). Melqart was a god inventor of navigation, and protector of sailors and traders as well as of colonizers, a true *archēgetēs* (Gese, Höfner and Rudolph 1970, 190–7; Ribichini 1985, 46; Bonnet 1988, 167, 399–415, 436 and *passim*; 2005, 20, 24–5; Lipiński 1995, 226–43, 291; Malkin 2011, 126–9, 132–42; Woolmer 2017, 113), and it is actually believed that the Greek Heracles acquired his maritime attributions and his role as protector of seafarers through his assimilation to Melqart (Bayet 1926a, 188 ff.; 1926b, 118–20; Bonnet 1988, 375, 384–5, 399–415, 436–7; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 525; Szidat 2001, 107–8 n. 408; Malkin 2005, 254; 2011, 141).

The religious syncretism between Melqart and Heracles must have begun very early on, at the time of the first contacts of the Greeks with the Phoenicians, and, in Corinne Bonnet's words, it was 'un phénomène cumulatif et réciproque d'assimilation profonde' (Bonnet 1988, 401 (citation), 436; 2005, 18–19; Jourdain-Annequin and Bonnet 2001, 195–213). According to the classical sources, the cult of Heracles on Thasos and at Erythrai was of Phoenician origin: on Thasos, it would have been the Phoenicians themselves who implanted the cult of Melqart well before its inhabitants 'became part of the Greeks', i.e. well before the arrival of the Parians (see Owen, this volume), while at Erythrai the god, in the form of a statue, had sailed all the way from Tyre on a raft (Herodotus 2.44; Pausanias 5.25, 12; 7.5, 5–8; Bonnet 1988, 346–71, 383–6; Morris 1992, 144–6; Brody 1998, 35–6; Stafford 2012, 187–91). Melqart-Heracles appears on the coins of Gadir wearing the *leonte*, on the obverse, and, on the reverse, associated with a tunny fish (Bonnet 1988, 229, 493, fig. 14), while on the coins of Tyre a marine god armed with a bow and riding over the waves on a winged sea-horse is probably a syncretized form of Melqart-Heracles and Poseidon (Hill 1910, 229–33; 1911, 61 and pl. IV.24; Bonnet 1986, 210 n. 7; Aubet 2001, 154; Elayi and Elayi 2009, 265–71 with bibl.). Through his association with a tunny fish and a sea-horse on these coins, Melqart-Heracles could equally well evoke Poseidon in the eyes of a Greek (Bayet 1967, 269 n. 3, 271; Fantar 1977, 50, 53, 79, 105–6, 119–20, 128–30). In fact, in some places of the Mediterranean, it is the Greek god Poseidon, rather than Heracles, who is identified with Melqart (Masson 1960, 137; Bonnet 1988, 335–6, 374, 435; Lipiński 1995, 118, 233). And, besides Poseidon, also Melqart and Heracles had their sanctuaries upon headlands on the Mediterranean coasts (Semple 1927, 357, 366; Brody 1998, 24, 33–4, 38, 81).

I would therefore be inclined to consider that there was at Zagora a *rapprochement* between Heracles, probably also Poseidon, and Melqart, as a result of contact with the Phoenicians (discussed below).

III. Dioskouroi

Ex-voto D (Fig. 3.6) shows two other male deities that appear to have been worshipped at Zagora, the Dioskouroi Castor and Polydeuces. Indeed, the design underneath the base of this (broken) seal figurine, which has been described by the excavators as 'two incised abstract figures on either side of [an] altar' (Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 91 no. 291), can readily be reinterpreted as depicting the Spartan Twins on either side of their sacred emblem, the *dokana* (Séchan and Lévêque 1966, 317–8; Guarducci 1984; Burkert 1985, 213; *LIMC* III.1, *s.v.* 'Dioskouroi', 567ff.; Walker 2015,



Figure 3.6. *Ex-voto D. The lead seal with a representation of the Dioskouroi from Zagora, Archaeological Museum of Andros, 1238. Courtesy of Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.*

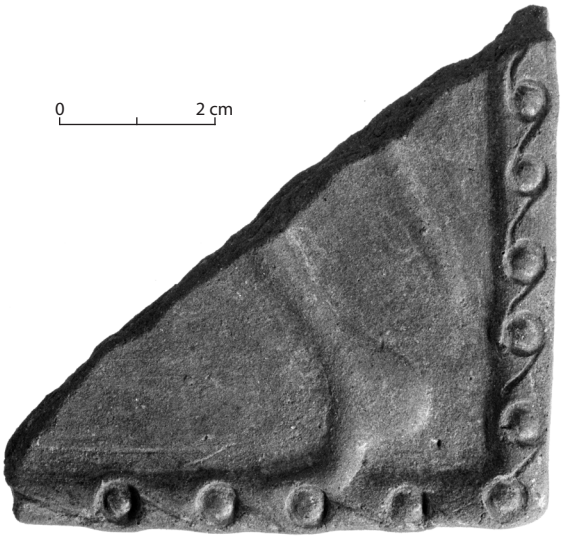


Figure 3.7. *Ex-voto E. Fragment of the terracotta relief plaque with the foot of a walking man with spear(?) from Zagora, Archaeological Museum of Andros, 1328. Courtesy of Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.*



Figure 3.8. *Late Geometric crater with a scene of the 'epiphany' of the Dioskouroi as saviours of sailors, RMN-Grand Palais, Louvre Museum, A 522, photograph by Stéphane Maréchalle. Courtesy of RMN, Louvre Museum.*

137–9), as I argue elsewhere (Coucouzeli, in preparation). In fact, the seal represents the Dioskouroi as part of the constellation Gemini or the Twins, following their famous catasterisation (Pseudo-Eratosthenes, *Catasterismi* 10; Hyginus, *De Astronomia* 2.22) and, by so doing, it underlines their astral, rather than their purely mythological and heroic, character. This is significant, because the stars Castor and Pollux were an important element in the role of the Divine Twins as protectors of navigation (below).

In the light of the above, **ex-voto E** (Fig. 3.7) may be deemed to represent one of the Dioskouroi holding their characteristic weapon, the spear, as can be seen, for instance, on Archaic reliefs from Sparta (e.g. Tod and Wace 1906, 191, n. 575, fig. 65; *LIMC* III.1, *s.v.* 'Dioskouroi', 573 nos. 58–9).

Dioskouroi, Poseidon and Heracles: a second maritime connection

The presence of the Dioskouroi alongside Heracles and Poseidon at Zagora may be explained by a strong maritime connection that linked them all together. This connection was twofold.

Firstly, like Poseidon, and sometimes also Heracles (above), the Dioskouroi were marine gods. In fact, they were universally recognized in the ancient Greek and Roman world as patrons of sailors (*Homeric Hymn to the Dioskouroi* (33), 6; Diodorus 6.6.1; Strabo 5.3.5; Pausanias 2.1.9; Aelianus, *Varia Historia* 1.30; Theocritus, *Idylls* 22.6–9, 22.23; Séchan and Lévêque 1966, 316; Xypnetos 1982–83, 40ff.; Burkert 1985, 213), having gained '*the power to save the shipwrecked*' by Poseidon himself (Hyginus, *De Astronomia* 2.22). A very old Greek popular tradition, which survived well into Roman times, related that during storms at sea the Dioskouroi darted down from the sky and landed at the top of the ships' masts as Saviours/*Sotēres*, with glowing lights on their heads, the stars Castor and Pollux in the constellation Gemini.[9] It is this kind of 'epiphany' of the Twin Gods that seems to be represented on a Late Geometric crater (Fig. 3.8) (Marwitz 1961, 16 n. 40). It is also noteworthy that Castor and Polydeuces, too, count among the 'promontory gods', i.e. the gods settled upon the headlands of the Mediterranean coasts with the duty to help the navigators (Semple 1927, 365).

Secondly, the Dioskouroi, Heracles and Poseidon all played a role in the voyage of the legendary 'first ship', Argo. The Dioskouroi were among the most famous of the Argonauts (Diodorus 4.41.2). Their major contribution towards saving the Argo from many dangers at sea constitutes, in fact, the most celebrated manifestation of their function as guardians of mariners and was at the origin of the tradition about their 'epiphany' as the stars Castor and Pollux to sailors in distress (Diodorus 4.43.1–2; 6.6.1; Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.588–653; Séchan and Lévêque 1966, 316; Shapiro 1999, 106 n. 36; Walker 2015, 145–7).[10]

As for Heracles, in Apollonius Rhodius (*Argonautica* 1.1285–6) he is '*the greatest hero*' (*ἄριστος ἑτάρων*) among the Argonauts, even though he participated in only part of the voyage; he also appears as the voted leader of the expedition, but he declines this honour, ceding his place to Jason (Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 1.341–9, 1153–1362; 4.1393–405; cf. *Wedding of Keyx* fr. 263MW; Roux 1949, 34; Hunter 1993, 25–7, 30–1; Clauss 1993, 57, 61–5, 92–3, 176–7; Green 1997, 30–4; Stafford 2012, 5, 55, 135). According to another version of the legend, Heracles was present throughout the expedition and was even a leader of the Argonauts (Rusten 1982, 41, 96–7; Clauss 1993, 63 n. 12; cf. Diodorus 4.41.3).

Finally, Poseidon, as 'Enipeus', was the father of the expedition's instigator, Pelias (Pindar, *Pythian* 4. 138), and of a certain number of Argonauts (Hyginus, *Fabulae* 14; cf. Clauss 1993, 32); as 'Hippios', Poseidon was connected to the divine protectress of the expedition, Hera (below); and it was to his sanctuary at the Isthmus that the Argo was dedicated at the end of the voyage (Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 1.9.27).

IV. Thetis

Ex-voto F (Fig. 3.9), which depicts a scene from the famous struggle of Peleus with Thetis (Krieger 1975), introduces us to the female element in the Zagora cult by pointing to the presence of Thetis. This vase does not appear to be a casual offering, for three reasons.

1. Thetis is among the best representatives of the marine element in Greek mythology: she was a Nereid, one of the fifty daughters of Nereus (Homer, *Iliad* 1.358, 538, 556; 18; 141; 20.107; 24.562), the 'Old Man of the Sea', who indicated the maritime routes to heroes, among whom Heracles searching for the Garden of the Hesperides (Pherekydes fr. 16F; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.5.11; Bloch 1985, 127; Gantz 1993, 405–6; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 22, 611 n. 542 with bibl.).[11]

2. Thetis was the sister of Poseidon' wife, Amphitrite, and she had been wooed by Poseidon before getting married to Peleus (Pindar, *Isthmian* 8, 27–41; Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4. 793–804; Slatkin 1991, 70ff.; Gantz 1993, 228).

3. Thetis had close maritime links with Poseidon, Heracles and the Dioskouroi, as we shall now see.



Figure 3.9. *Ex-voto F. The fragment of the black-figure column-crater with a scene from the struggle of Peleus and Thetis from Zagora, Archaeological Museum of Andros, 1212 + M10. Courtesy of Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.*

Thetis, Poseidon, Heracles and the Dioskouroi: a third maritime connection

The maritime connection of Thetis with the male deities attested at Zagora had a dual nature.

Firstly, like Poseidon, the Dioskouroi and sometimes Heracles (above), Thetis, as a sea-goddess, had the capacity to prevent disasters at sea and she was the benevolent assistant of all sea travellers. In her cult site, on the rocky promontory of Sepias in Thessaly, mariners and even the Persian fleet offered sacrifices (Herodotus 7.191; Semple 1927, 365; Borgeaud 1995; Barringer 1995, 55–6; Larson 2007b, 69; Aston 2011, 58–61, 160–3).

Secondly, Thetis played a vital role in the Argonautic expedition: at the orders of Hera, the patron goddess of the expedition, she gave instructions to her husband Peleus and, through him, to the rest of the Argonauts on how to successfully sail past the Planctae or Wandering Rocks, and she subsequently guided the Argo through this obstacle with the help of her sisters, the Nereids (Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.757–967, esp. 930–63). The painted image of Thetis escorted by the other Nereids was the dominant theme in the decoration of the Argo (Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* 1.130ff.).

V. (?)Hera

Ex-voto G (Fig. 3.10) points to the presence of another female goddess in the Zagora cult. The female figure on the top side of this amulet must represent a goddess. Her nude torso obviously evokes a principle of fertility, while the winged animals on either side of a sacred tree, on the seal face of the amulet, suggest that she was conceived as a Mistress of Animals/*Potnia Therōn*, a type developed in Greece under influences from the Levant (Marinatos 2000, 129).

The style of the female figure is half Greek, half oriental. In fact, she has iconographic similarities with figures of the 'Astarte' type of Syro-Palestinian (Albright 1939; Keel and Uehlinger 1998, 99ff., esp. 103; Cornelius 2004, 116–17 Cat. 3.13, pl. 3.13) or Cypriot origin, such as, for instance, the figure standing upon two lions – one of Astarte's sacred animals (Karageorghis 1975, 33; Simon 1985, 59; *LIMC* III.1, Addenda *s.v.* 'Astarte', 1083, 1085; Kyrieleis 1993, 146) – as *Potnia Therōn* on a gold plaque from Cyprus (Fig. 3.11) (Karageorghis 1975; *LIMC* III.1, Addenda *s.v.* 'Astarte', 1078 nos. 7–8, 1083).

Astarte – the sovereign goddess of the Phoenicians, whose cult was spread around the Mediterranean by the Tyrian *diaspora* between the tenth and sixth centuries BC – was apart from a *Potnia Therōn*, a goddess of war, love and fertility, protectress of the family, birth and maternity, and the companion or *paredros* of Melqart, being like him a marine deity and a patroness of seafarers (Bonnet 1988, 34–5, 99, 119–20, 127, 225, 438; 1996, 36–44, 49–50, 87, 90, 143, 146; Lipiński 1995, 26ff., 128–54, 233; Aubet 2001, 154–5; Ribichini 2008, 303, 305).

Astarte was familiar to the Greeks. Objects with an iconography of the 'Astartean' type circulated widely

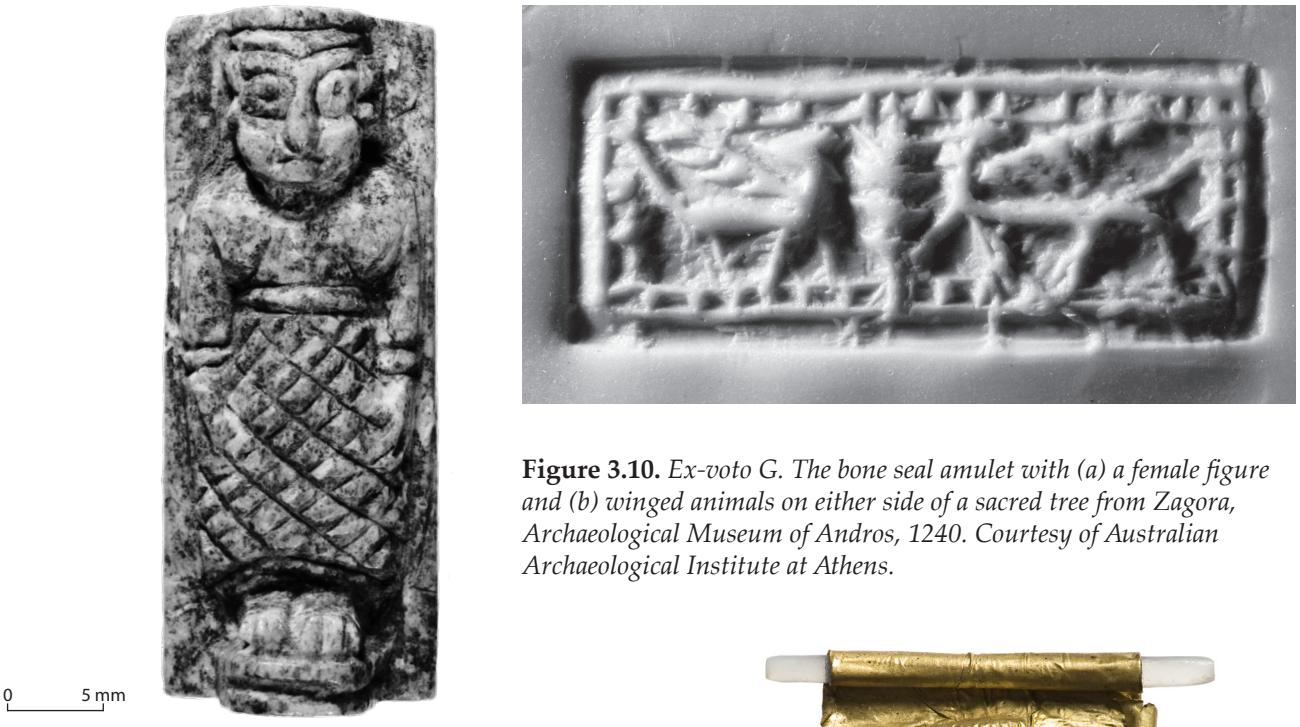


Figure 3.10. *Ex-voto G. The bone seal amulet with (a) a female figure and (b) winged animals on either side of a sacred tree from Zagora, Archaeological Museum of Andros, 1240. Courtesy of Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.*

in the Aegean, especially in the eighth and seventh centuries BC, influencing local art (Coldstream 1977b, 11, 13; Bonnet 1996, 148–9 and *passim*; *LIMC* III.1, Addenda, *s.v.* 'Astarte', 1077–85); Astarte represented as a sacred tree was also a familiar motif in 'Orientalizing' Greek art (López-Ruiz 2010, 207 with bibl.). At the same time, there is no doubt that the Greeks visited the Phoenician sanctuaries of Astarte, especially those on Cyprus, an island whose key position in the East Mediterranean facilitated Greek-Phoenician contacts and where Astarte was extremely popular from very early on (Karageorghis 1975, 33–5; Hermary 1982, 167; Bonnet 1988, 319–24, 327, 334; 1996, 69–86, esp. 77; Lipiński 1995, 128–54, 305). They thus became acquainted with the personality of the goddess and, through the mechanisms of assimilation and syncretism, they tried to interpret her, in order to incorporate her into their own mythological and religious schemes. According to Corinne Bonnet, the principal *interpretatio* of Astarte in the Greco-Roman world is that of Aphrodite/Venus, but her *interpretatio* as Hera/Juno 'est loin d'être négligeable' (Bonnet 1996, 147; cf. Bonnet 1988, 179–80; Lipiński 1995, 74, 106, 132); there are, indeed, several cases of assimilation of Hera/Juno or Uni, her Etruscan equivalent, to Astarte.[12]

If, then, one had to choose for the female figure on the Zagora amulet between Aphrodite and Hera as interpretations of Astarte, which one would be most suitable? This question is, at first sight, not so easy



Figure 3.11. *Female figure of the 'Astarte' type on a gold plaque from Cyprus, Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, 1973/IX-19-1. Courtesy of Department of Antiquities, Cyprus.*

to answer, since there are cases when *all three* deities were sometimes assimilated to each other interchangeably, as for instance on the island of Erytheia (Plinius, *Nat. Hist.* 4.120; Avienus, *Ora maritima* 310–12; Bonnet 1988, 208, 225–6; Lipiński 1995, 152), let alone the cases when Aphrodite and Hera were assimilated to each other (Simon 1985, 232; Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 197–8; Baumbach 2004, 18 with bibl.). Furthermore, both Aphrodite and Hera, in their earlier forms, were goddesses of fertility and *Potniai Therōn*,[13] also connected with the protection of seafarers.[14] Hera, however, is a much better candidate for the following reasons.

1. The female figure is iconographically comparable to some wooden statuettes from the Heraion of Samos (Ohly 1953, 77–83, Suppl. 13–5; 1967, 89–99, Suppl. 43–7; Kopcke 1967, 102–7, Suppl. 45, 47; Kyrieleis 1980, 94–103; 1993, 141, 142 fig. 7.9), where Hera has definite eastern aspects and appears to have been assimilated to Astarte, especially the Cypriot Astarte (Jantzen 1972; Kyrieleis 1979; 1993, 146–8; Kyrieleis and Röllig 1988; Röllig 1992, 97; Bonnet 1996, 95–6; F. de Polignac 1997, 118; Brize 1997, 128, 131).

2. The emphatically large eyes of the goddess on the amulet may be a reference to the famous description of Hera in the *Iliad* (15.34) as 'ox-eyed' mistress (*βοῶπις πότνια Ἥρη*), an appropriate epithet for a goddess who was also worshipped as the goddess of the cattle pastures, especially under the name of Hera Euboia/'Mistress of the plain rich in oxen' (in Argos, in Euboea – an island echoing her name – and in the Euboean colonial milieu) (Kerényi 1975, 119–20, 140; Simon 1985, 44–5; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 514–5; Jourdain-Annequin and Bonnet 2001, 209, 219–20 with bibl.).

3. The goddess seems to stand on what looks like a column capital, which brings into mind the old statue of Hera in her temple at Argos, her ancestral home, a statue described by Pausanias as standing on a column (Pausanias 2.17.5; Donohue 1988, 372–3 no. 211).

4. The winged animals on the seal side of the amulet represent either horses or sphinxes. Both these types of animals were closely associated with Hera. Horses were Hera's sacred animals. In early times, Hera appears to have been a Mistress of Horses/*Potnia Hippōn*, a charioteer and a protectress of horse-riders (Yalouris 1950, 78ff.; Simon 1985, 43; *LIMC* IV.1, *s.v.* 'Hera', 659) – as attested by related offerings in her sanctuaries (Yalouris 1950, 84, 87; Zancani Montuoro 1961; Kyrieleis 1980, 59; 1993, 145; Billot 1997, 35, 38, 46; Brize 1997, 132; Greco 1997a; Cipriani 1997, 218; Baumbach 2004, 41, 164–5, 181) – just as Astarte was (Karageorghis 1975, 33; Bonnet 1996, 66–7, 143; Cornelius 2004, 42–5, 85, 93).

As for the sphinxes, it was Hera who sent to Thebes the ravenous Sphinx (the child of Typhon, who was in turn her own offspring) (Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.5.8; *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (6), 305–9; Pötscher 1987, 102 n. 236); the sphinx was the subject of votive offerings at Hera's sanctuaries (e.g. Payne 1940, 135–6; Dunbabin 1962, 403–4, 418–29; Spadea 1997, 247–8), and it was also among the preferred animals-emblems of Astarte (*LIMC* III.1, Addenda, *s.v.* 'Astarte', 1085; Bonnet 1996, 50).

5. Hera had special individual relationships with Heracles, Poseidon, the Dioskouroi and Thetis.

According to the Panhellenic tradition, Hera's relationship with Heracles was particularly close, even if fluctuating and mostly hostile: first, she suckled him, gave him her courage and the privilege to carry her name (Diodorus 4.9 ff.; Pausanias 9.25.2; Pötscher 1971; 1987, 28f., 115f.; Hadzisteliou Price 1978, 134, 146; Loraux 1981, 493; 1982, 722–3; 1990; Bader 1985, 121–3; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 62 and n. 256; O'Brien 1993, 113–9, 131, 188); then, after a period of hatred towards the hero (during which he was forced to perform his famous Labours and face monsters such as the Lion of Nemea and the Lernaean Hydra, which she herself had raised – Hesiod, *Theogony* 313–4, 327–32; cf. Bacchylides, *Frag.* 9; Pötscher 1987, 102), she offered him her daughter Hebe in marriage, as an act of reconciliation leading to his apotheosis (Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.7.7; Pötscher 1971; 1987, 102, 115–16; Loraux 1981, 493; 1982, 722–3; 1990; Burkert 1985, 134, 210; Bader 1985; O' Brien 1993, 100, 150; Jourdain-Annequin 1996, 270–1). Furthermore, the cattle of Geryon and the golden apples fetched by Heracles from the far west, when he sailed respectively to Erytheia and to the Garden of the Hesperides (above), were closely related to Hera: the cattle were eventually sacrificed to Hera as the great goddess of Argos, while the apples belonged to the goddess herself (Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.5.10–11; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 268, 514, 517, 540–1, 566; Jourdain-Annequin and Bonnet 2001, 205, 209).

Significantly, in certain Greek pantheons (such as those of Samos, Euboea, Argos and Sparta), Hera is even a *paredros* of Heracles, forming with him a solidary couple in contrast with the canonical image of their conflictual relationship. As argued by Colette Jourdain-Annequin and Corinne Bonnet, the 'variant', according to which Heracles entertains a close relationship with a 'Great Goddess' (in most cases Hera), shares her glory (i.e. works for their common glory) and even becomes her protector, then achieves his apotheosis through his strong link with her, appears to belong to a

very old tradition going back to the Creto-Mycenaean model of the divine couple and which would have been reinforced under the influence of the Phoenician (Tyrian) model of the divine couple Melqart-Astarte (Astarte being the goddess who dispenses power and divine status to her *paredros*), both in Greece itself and in the colonial cities of Italy; especially in the latter, this 'variant' became exceptionally successful and also spread to archaic Etruria and Latium, where the *paredros* of Heracles, most often Hera, assimilated to Astarte, appears to have been worshipped as Mistress of Animals/*Potnia Therōn* or as Mistress of Horses/*Potnia Hippōn*, but also as a marine goddess (Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 566, 654–5; Jourdain-Annequin and Bonnet 2001, 205–23, esp. 213–14; Bonnet 2005, 22, 28; cf. Pötscher 1961; 1971; 1987, 29, 115; Kerényi 1975, 136–9; Giangiulio 1996b).

Furthermore, Hera had a strong land connection with Poseidon and the Dioskouroi: she received as a present from Poseidon the horses Xanthos and Kyllaros, which she in turn gave to Castor and Polydeuces, while in her old form as horse goddess, i.e. as Hera Hippia, she was the partner of Poseidon Hippios in cults associated with horses (Yalouris 1950, 78–87; Kerényi 1975, 133; Johnston 1992, 86 with bibl.; O'Brien 1993, 191 n. 39, 198 n. 52, 200–1, 204–6).

Finally, Hera had an intimate bond with Thetis, whom she took pride in having nursed, raised, and given in marriage to Peleus (Homer, *Iliad* 24.58–63; Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 4.790–97, 805–9; *LIMC* IV.1, *s.v.* 'Hera', 708–9; Gantz 1993, 228–30).[15]

6. Hera had a maritime connection with all the other deities attested at Zagora, as will be shown below.

(?)Hera, Poseidon, Heracles, the Dioskouroi and Thetis: a fourth maritime connection?

The maritime link of Hera with Poseidon, Heracles, the Dioskouroi and Thetis was twofold.

Firstly, Hera, like the other deities mentioned above, was the patroness of the world of seafaring in earlier times. This is clear from (a) the maritime character of many of Hera's sanctuaries (located close to the sea, in harbours or on promontories) (Semple 1927, 365–6; Simon 1985, 45; de Polignac 1997, 115); (b) the models of ships and boats, even actual ships, that she received as offerings (Kyrieleis 1980, 89–105; 1993, 141–3; Johnston 1985, 54–64 (nos 3–24); Lattanzi 1991; F. de Polignac 1997, 115–16; Brize 1997, 130; Spadea 1997, 246, 250; Baumbach 2004, 40, 67, 96–7, 163); (c) the *obeloi* and the numerous Cypro-Levantine objects found in her Heraia, suggesting that the latter were also, among other things, centres of commercial exchange under the protection of Hera, as an extension of her role as protectress of navigation (Simon 1985, 47; de Polignac 1997, 118–19; cf. Snodgrass 1980, 136). Hera was also, like Poseidon, a guardian of fishing and fishermen (Baumbach 2004, 40, 140–1, 187).

Hera's maritime character may well have originated from her assimilation with Astarte (also a coastal and promontory goddess – Semple 1927, 366), just as Heracles's marine aspect appears to have stemmed from his identification with Melqart (above). Thus, for instance, in the maritime sanctuary of Pyrgi (the port of Caere), Uni, the Etruscan equivalent of Hera/Juno, was equated with Astarte and it is likely that she was also a *paredros* of Melqart-Heracles (Bonnet 1988, 279–91 with bibl.; Colonna 2000; Aubet 2016).

Secondly, Hera was the tutelary goddess of the Argonautic expedition (in which Poseidon, Heracles, the Dioskouroi and Thetis all played, as we have seen, an important role), while the head of the expedition, Jason, was also her *protégé* (and the mythical founder of her sanctuaries on Samos and at Foce del Sele, in Poseidonia-Paestum) (Homer, *Odyssey* 12. 69–72; Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica, passim*; Nilsson 1950, 502; Kerényi 1975, 168–9; Simon 1985, 40, 61; 1997, 84; Parisi Presicce 1985, 63–4; *LIMC* IV.1, *s.v.* 'Hera', 659, 712–13).

For all the above reasons, it is entirely possible to assume that our bone seal amulet depicts Hera equated with Astarte. It may then have been worn as a fertility amulet and in childbirth for prophylactic purposes, as would have been the case of the Syro-Palestinian Astarte plaques (Maxwell-Hyslop 1971, 119, 140).

VI. Miscellanea

A series of other votive offerings point to the cult of Heracles and of (?)Hera, perhaps also of Poseidon, Thetis or Helen, the sister of the Dioskouroi. The evidence is as follows.

Ex-voto H has been used by Cambitoglou to support his hypothesis of a cult of Athena, a hypothesis which must however be ruled out, as demonstrated above. It has been identified by the excavators as the left arm of a *kore* pulling up her chiton in accordance with the normal *kore* schema. If indeed the statue in question was not a 'hybrid' (Keesling 2003, 123, 129–35) and represented a *kore* and therefore a marriageable girl, the object of exchange between *oikoi* (e.g. Osborne 1994, 90–2), and if Hera was worshipped in the temple, as seems plausible, then this ex-voto might be related to Hera's function as goddess of the *oikos* and of the institution of marriage (cf. Baumbach 2004, 158–9, 177–8).

Ex-votos I are mostly, and some of them typically, linked with the women's sphere. From among these artefacts, the spindle whorls and the (?)bobbin

may have been dedications to (?)Hera as sovereign wife, protectress of the home and of domestic life and industry (Burkert 1985, 132–5). These objects may also, of course, have served a functional purpose, either previously in the home of the dedicants or as part of sacred spinning and weaving in the framework of a *peplophoria* ceremony in honour of (?)Hera (cf. Waldstein 1905, 44, 353, 373; Payne *et al.* 1962, 330–1, 515; Greco 1997b, 191–8; Baumbach 2004, 35, 91). The items of jewellery (fibulae, (?)pin, stone pendant, beads and rings) may have been offered to (?)Hera as the tutelary goddess of childbirth and marriage (cf. the vast numbers of fibulae and pins found at the Heraia of Argos and Perachora – Billot 1997, 15; Baumbach 2004, 32, 35–8, 61, 92–3 with bibl.) and/or to Poseidon (cf. Morgan 1994, 118; Gebhard 1998, 105) by female worshippers at important moments of life transition (Kahil 1977; Kilian 1978; Hollinshead 1985, 425–6, 432–5; Simon 1986, 170–82, 198–205 and n. 186).

Ex-voto J (Fig. 3.12) could have been an offering to Heracles and/or to (?)Hera. It could have stood as a reference to the Nemean Lion (which Hera herself had raised – above), in an attempt to underline Heracles's aspect as 'Master of lions'/*Potnios leontōn* (Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 61, 487) (and his noble-athletic aspect – Stafford 2012, 24, 31). Alternatively, it may have been chosen as an attribute of (?)Hera – in the iconographic and archaeological record, Hera is often associated with lions, which appear as symbols of her power (just as it was the case with Astarte – above)[16] – or as a common attribute to Heracles and (?)Hera as a divine couple, as appears to have been the case in a very remote age (Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 566).

Finally, **ex-voto K** (Fig. 3.13) is decorated with a scene of a female figure in a religious setting, as suggested by the small votive plaque picturing a warrior, which was presumably hung on a tree or on a wall within a sanctuary. This ex-voto is too fragmentary to be interpreted with any certainty. However, in view of what has been said above, one can put forward the following possible interpretations for the scene.

(i) Hera in her sanctuary perhaps brandishing a spear, in the well-known attitude of Hera Hoplosmia, and therefore pictured as patroness of warriors and heroes (especially if she was also conceived here as a Mistress of Animals – above);[17] Hera Hoplosmia was closely associated in cult with Heracles (Giannelli 1963, 139–40; Detienne 1977, 43), who was renowned for his warrior qualities (Stafford 2012, 179, 181, 183, 196–7). If such was the case, the small votive plaque depicted on this ex-voto could represent: Heracles (cf Colonna 2009, 290); Ares, Hera's son and god of war; or Achilles, the greatest of Greek warriors and 'best of the Achaeans'



Figure 3.12. *Ex-voto J. The bone seal amulet with a couchant lion from Zagora, Archaeological Museum of Andros, 1800. Courtesy of Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.*



Figure 3.13. *Ex-voto K. Fragments of the terracotta relief plaque with the arm and foot of female figure standing in front of a plaque picturing a warrior from Zagora, Archaeological Museum of Andros, 1810. Reproduced by kind permission of Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.*

(*ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν*) (*Iliad* 1. 244, 412; 16. 271, 274), who had a special link with Hera via his mother Thetis (above; Nagy 1999, 26–41; O' Brien 1993, 93); alternatively, it could be merely the symbolic image of a warrior and/or hero, dedicated to Hera.

(ii) Thetis in her sanctuary and/or that of her deified son, Achilles, who, like his mother, also had marine attributions as god of the maritime passages and who would be represented here by the warrior on the small votive plaque.[18]

(iii) Helen in her own sanctuary or in that of her brothers, the Dioskouroi Castor and Polydeuces, with the small votive plaque reflecting their role as protectors of warriors and saviours in battle (Burkert 1985, 212–13; Larson 2007a, 189–90); or Helen trying to remove her veil while being threatened by her husband Menelaus after the fall of Troy and taking refuge in the sanctuary of Athena (*LIMC* IV.1, *s.v.* 'Helene', 537–9, esp. 538, no. 225, 551, 559–62; Gantz 1993, 650, 654), the latter denoted by the small votive plaque with the warrior (cf. the offering of models of weapons in Athena's sanctuaries – Boardman 1967, 226–7, 232–3; Simon 1986, 153–62; Higbie 2001, 113, 117–20, 123–4).

If ex-voto K comprised originally a single main figure, as seems probable, then interpretation (i) is the most likely.[19]

Discussion

The deities represented by a whole series of votive offerings in the sanctuary of Zagora are Heracles, Poseidon, the Dioskouroi, Thetis, and probably also Hera. Did all these gods form part of a 'city pantheon', immersed in a convivial atmosphere, or was there a distinction between local gods – the actual 'inhabitants' of the sanctuary and recipients of the gifts – and 'visiting' gods?[20] Which of them was (or were) the supreme god(s), probably acting as (a) patron or 'poliad' god(s), and which the secondary or subordinate ones, perhaps venerated because of their particular competences and/or their common traits or functions with the chief god(s)?

These questions are not easy to answer at present. One thing is certain, however: these deities formed a coherent group insofar as they were all connected with the sea as protectors of navigators and as active participants in the expedition of the Argonauts. This implies that the sea played an important role in the cult at Zagora. What exactly was this role? In what follows, I will suggest some possible explanations of the sea symbolism in the Zagora cult. Then, I will put forward a working hypothesis about the possible patron or 'poliad' god(s) at Zagora.

1. The role of the sea in the Zagora cult

Our analysis has pointed to a likely *rapprochement* between Heracles, probably also Poseidon, and Melqart, as well as perhaps between (?)Hera and Astarte, due to possible contacts with the Phoenicians. Hence, the question that immediately springs to mind is whether the maritime symbolism in the Zagora cult has anything to do with the increasing importance of navigation in the eighth century and with the intense Phoenician and Greek (chiefly Euboean) commercial and colonial activities, which in the mid-eighth century appear to have stretched from the eastern to the central Mediterranean (and even as far as Gadir in the western Mediterranean with the Phoenicians).[21] It is becoming increasingly apparent that such activities fostered close interaction and a complex cultural exchange between Phoenicians and Greeks, tying them together in the context of a Mediterranean *koine*; part of this cultural exchange would have consisted in a dynamic and sustained dialogue concerning religious beliefs and cult practices, which would have given rise to reciprocal assimilations or syncretisms and creative adaptations of gods and their accompanying myths; and most significantly for our purposes, a prominent figure of this *koine* was the Greek Heracles, assimilated to Melqart (Burkert 1992, *passim*; 2000, 17–18; 2001, 27; Morris 1992, 144–5, 168–9 and *passim*; Whitley 2001, 103–5; Marín Ceballos 2001; Ribichini 2008, 316; López-Ruiz 2010, 2, 10–11, 15–16, 21, 28, 35–9, 128, 199–200; 2014, 168, 185, 187–8; Aruz *et al.* 2014, *passim*; Bremmer 2015; Aruz and Seymour 2016, *passim*). Could it then be that the element of the sea in the Zagora cult is due to a potential participation, 'active' or 'passive', of local elite in the Phoenician and Greek/Euboean trade and exchange networks?

An affirmative answer to this question seems to be supported by the following evidence.

Firstly, a certain amount of luxury items of Levantine origin (seals, scarabs and amulets) have been discovered at Zagora, both in the sanctuary and within the settlement (Cambitoglou *et al.* 1981, 91–4; 1988, 235, 241).

Secondly, Zagora was remarkably open towards the world of the sea: it was located on the west coast of Andros, on a headland dominating the Aegean (Fig. 3.1) and flanked by a pair of sheltered anchorages, both of which were accessible from the settlement by means of winding paths. Thus, Zagora could have easily served as a natural stopping place for Euboeans on a 'privileged channel of communication into and out of the Aegean' apparently controlled by them (Snograss 1994, 5) – Andros being the first island that one comes across when sailing south from Euboea – or for Phoenicians travelling from Tyre and Cyprus to Rhodes, then northwards to Euboea via the Cyclades – a sailing trail

that has been qualified as 'the safest and most profitable route for Phoenician trade' (Lipiński 1995, 30; cf. Descoeudres 1973).

Thirdly, a large proportion of the imported pottery found at Zagora is Euboean and dates from Middle Geometric II to Late Geometric II, *c.* 800–700 BC (Cambitoglou *et al*., 1981, 48–69; 1988, 191–219). This fact, in combination with Zagora's geographical location and a passage in Strabo (10.448) mentioning that the Eretrians once 'ruled over Andros, Tenos, Ceos and other islands', has led to the views that the Euboean colonizing movement extended into the Cycladic islands (Desborough 1972, 348; Snodgrass 2006, 146, 299) and that Zagora was a colony founded by the Eretrians to serve as a trading station on their way to the Near East, its sudden eclipse being due to the decline of Euboean commercial power (Descoeudres 1973; cf. Coldstream 1977a, 199–200, 211, 213).

There are some difficulties with these views: (a) the Strabo passage does not provide any chronological framework (Bakhuizen 1976, 29); (b) in his account of early Euboean colonization, Strabo (10.447) makes no reference to the Cyclades; (c) Zagora lacks the architectural cultural features that characterise the early Euboean colonial settlements in the northern Aegean or in the West (i.e. Pithekoussai) (Ridgway 1992, 92–3; De Caro and Gialanella 1998; Snodgrass 2006, 148–51 with bibl.); and (d) Zagora cannot have functioned as a mere trading post/*emporion*, given the evidence of a sophisticated (albeit not all-inclusive) town planning and of social hierarchy, as well as of domestic storage areas with sizeable pithoi (see Whitley, this volume) suggesting exploitation of the land available outside its walls. Nevertheless, in view of the amount of Euboean pottery at Zagora and of the site's special topography and geographical location, it is still possible to argue that there were close ties between Euboea and Zagora, and that the town's socio-economic situation depended, to a greater or lesser degree, upon the intense commercial activities of the Euboeans overseas. Perhaps there was even a Euboean element at Zagora – whether as part of its 'foundation' – following Snodgrass's view (Snodgrass 2006, 292) of mixed-Greek population elements in the process of early Greek colonization – or in the form of residing traders in the course of the eighth century BC (cf. Coldstream 1977a, 200). If so, the likely *rapprochement* of Heracles, possibly also Poseidon, with Melqart, and of (?)Hera with Astarte, at Zagora would have occurred in the context of the early Euboean commercial and colonial expansion, and of the 'compenetrazione di due sfere di circolazione e scambio distinte ma interdipendenti: l'euboico-cicladica e nord-egea da un lato, la cipro-levantina dall'altro' (Giangiulio 1996a, 499).

If the maritime element in the Zagora cult is due to a connection with the multifaceted cultural exchange that would have taken place between Greeks/Euboeans and the peoples of the Levant in the context of a Mediterranean *koine* during the town's floruit, as seems likely, then this would tie well with our image of Zagora as an early *polis* under the rule of an 'aristocratic kingship' or 'aristocracy' (above). Indeed, access to new sources of wealth and the cultures of the Near East through long-distance trade, on the initiative of the local *aristoi*, who were the owners of the land (Murray 1980, 69–70; Coldstream 1994, 53; F. de Polignac 1995, 7–8; Bonnet 2005, 28; Aruz *et al*. 2016, *passim*), appears to have been an important factor in the socio-political and economic changes as well as in the changes in Greek religious ideas and practices that marked the process of the rise of the *polis* (e.g. Murray 1980, 69; F. de Polignac 1995, 8, 15–17).

However, this is not the whole story. As Marie-Claire Beaulieu, in her book entitled *The Sea in the Greek Imagination*, has beautifully demonstrated, the sea, in the Greek worldview, was more than a geographical boundary, more than a space of discovery and exchange connecting different peoples and places, often compared to a path or a road. In a very ambiguous way, the sea was also conceived by the Greeks as a space that can bring suffering and even lead to Hades (or immortality) (Beaulieu 2016, 2, 13, 24–6, 34, 188, 190).

The reason why the sea was associated with death in the eyes of the Greeks is that it also defined the cosmological boundaries of the world. In Greek cosmology, the sea is a space of communication between the visible and the invisible regions of the *cosmos*, in other words, between the worlds of the living, the dead and the gods. At its furthest reaches, the sea may lead to the Ocean, the earth-encircling river that forms the ultimate limit/*eschatia* (Hesiod, *Theogony* 275) of the world of the living and of mortal sea voyages, and where the residences of the dead and the Olympian gods are located. Thus, the sailing of Heracles over the sea to Erytheia and the Garden of the Hesperides via the Pillars or Strait of Gibraltar into the western Ocean or that of the Argonauts to Colchis out of the Black Sea into the eastern Ocean (according to the earliest versions of the Argonautic myth) can represent a voyage to Hades and the afterlife (or, in the case of the Hesperides adventure of Heracles, a voyage to eternal life); the cup borrowed by Heracles from the Sun/Helios and which carried the latter every night from his setting point in the western Ocean to his rising point in the eastern Ocean, then becomes a magical object allowing the crossing between the visible and the invisible world. The sea may also lead to Hades via sea-caves believed to lead to the Underworld, such as the cave in the sanctuary of Poseidon at Tainaron, through which Heracles dragged Cerberus, or even via

a road tunnel leading to Hades under the seabed, such as the one opened by Poseidon for Proteus (Lycophron, *Alexandra* 115–27) (Beaulieu 2016, 2, 14, 16, 21, 26–30, 32, 36, 42–53, 62–4, 84–5, 167, 188, 194, 197; cf. Roux 1949, 24, 27–32, 93, 362; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 314–15, 520–66, 656–7; 1992; Stafford 2012, 45–7).

In the light of this, the sea element in the Zagora cult may have to do with the cosmogonic vision of the sea as a path to the netherworld and with a desire to underline the chthonic character of: Heracles (Bayet 1921–22; 1923; 1926b; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 315, 520); the Dioskouroi (Cumont 1942, 64ff.; Hermary 1978, 59–60); Poseidon, who, although not a divinity of the dead as such, had dominion over the entrance to Hades as master of the depths of the earth and the sea, and of the chthonian powers residing therein, and was closely associated with horses (or sea-horses) (above), animals with a daemonic, chthonic character (Malten 1914, 179ff.; Picard 1958, 454–6; Deonna 1959, 185–8; Séchan and Lévêque 1966, 103–5; Bayet 1967, 274; Lesky 1973, 96–7; Fantar 1977, 71, 73, 79–80; Bloch 1985, 127; Mylonopoulos 2003, 398–9) (cf. also the use of the epithet Blue-maned/*Kyanochaitēs* for both Poseidon and Hades – Philippson 1944, 37, 46); perhaps also the chthonic character of (?)Hera in her archaic form (Kerényi 1975, 125–6, 129 n. 71, 171–2, 174–6), a character reinforced by her likely association with horses (above), and by her being the ultimate receiver of the cattle of Geryon (above) with their strong infernal connotations (Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 315, 514–5, 517, 527–8, 565).

In addition to marking the cosmological boundaries of the world, according to Beaulieu, the sea also represented ontological, social and political boundaries in ancient Greece (Beaulieu 2016, 36–9, 59–89, 191–2, 196–7).

In ontological terms, the sea marked the difference between common mortals and special individuals of heroic or (semi-)divine stock. Thus, by undertaking the dangerous exploit of crossing over the sea into the Ocean, the meeting point of life and death, Heracles or the Argonauts come to the very edge of death and they actually succeed in triumphing over death; they also enter in contact with marine divinities living in the depths of the sea and known to help people in distress, such as the Old Men of the Sea or Thetis, from whom they obtain divine knowledge concerning the way to transcend mortality and even find immortality. This leads them to acquire glory/*kleos* and assert their heroic or (semi-)divine status (Beaulieu 2016, 25, 28, 36–8, 59, 74, 84–7, 196–7; cf. Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 315, 517, 651, 657–8; Stafford 2012, 45, 49).

Therefore, if the sea element in the Zagora cult had any ontological significance, it would have been related to a desire to celebrate the heroic and/or divine character of Heracles and the Dioskouroi as eminent members of the Argonautic expedition (Stafford 2012, 124, 171–4, 189; Walker 2015, 9–12, 134–7, 148–50, 178–9; cf. P. Aelius Aristides, *Orationes* 1.374; Behr 1986, 73).

In social terms, the sea could mark the change in status from youth to adulthood and the initiatory character of such a change. Thus, Heracles's navigation to the western Ocean or the daring expedition of Jason and his age mates to the other side of the world, to the eastern Ocean, on board of the Argo, and the fear of death that they all experienced, were particularly powerful images to express the strain of the youths' coming-of-age and their social transition to a new phase, in which they were expected to get married and establish a new household/*oikos* within the community; this was especially so in the case of young nobles or '*couroi aristoi*' (in their formation as future leaders or 'kings'/*basileis*). The legend of the Argonauts, in particular, a 'mythe religieux et initiatique, lié à tout un ensemble de vertus aristocratiques et royales', as Roux (1949, 73) put it, was used by Pindar (*Pythian* 4) in order to illustrate the social consequences of the coming-of-age of Argo's 'young princes', especially Jason, who is presented as a role-model of leadership (Beaulieu 2016, 14, 58–9, 74, 83, 87–9, 191; cf. Roux 1949, 32–3, 50–76, 136, 172–82, 355, 358, 366).

If the sea had this transcendent role at Zagora, then such images may have been used in the framework of male initiation rites involving the local youths, especially those belonging to the elite families. Especially Heracles's close connection with youths' initiation rites (Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 355–424, 653, 656; Jourdain-Annequin and Bonnet 2001, 212; Stafford 2012, 12, 193, 197) – a connection so close that Jourdain-Annequin (1989, 390, 404) did not hesitate to qualify Heracles as ''l'initié' par excellence' and as the 'héros paradigmatique de l'initiation' – would have played an important role in this respect. Another appropriate image for the underpinning of such ceremonies at Zagora may have been provided by the struggle of Peleus and Thetis, and more particularly Peleus' forced dive into the depths of the sea in his pursuit of Thetis, which is equally rich in initiatory connotations (Roux 1949, 214).

In political terms, the sea marked the difference between 'aristocrats' and common men. Thus, Pindar made use of the metaphor of the maritime expeditions to the Ocean by Heracles's great-grandfather Perseus (*Pythian* 10) and by the Argonauts (*Pythian* 4) in order to justify, respectively, the 'aristocratic' rule of the Thessalian dynasty of the Aleuadai (who claimed descent from Heracles) and of the Cyrenaean dynasty of the Euphemids (alleged descendants of the Argonaut Euphemos) as well as to prove their inborn excellence. King Arcesilaus of Cyrene, in particular, is presented

by the poet as a leader among a group of prominent 'aristocrats', just as Jason was a leader among a group of demigods. Pindar portrays the 'aristocrats' as the pilots of the 'ship of state' in the sea of communal life; the good government or 'piloting' of the state depends on the transmission of excellence through generations within a noble patriarchal lineage (Beaulieu 2016, 58–74, 79–88).

If the sea element in the Zagora cult had any political significance, then it may have conveyed the desire of the members of the local 'aristocratic kingship' or 'aristocracy' (who appear to have controlled the organization of the communal cult at Zagora) to legitimise their claims to power and perhaps to divine or semi-divine origins via the use of the nautical metaphors of the expeditions of Heracles or of the Dioskouroi, as part of the Argonauts, to the Ocean. This would not be surprising, given Heracles's connection with archaic aristocratic values and his serving as a model of excellence or virtue/*aretē* for the young nobles in ancient Greece (Stafford 2012, 121–4), as well as the fact that both Heracles and the Dioskouroi were appropriated for political ends throughout antiquity (Hermary 1978, 71–6; Cartledge 1979, 342–4; Cartledge and Spawforth 2002, 63, 98, 110, 162, 164, 194; Stafford 2012, 137–70; Walker 2015, 132).

2. A hypothesis on the patron god(s) at Zagora

In view of the likely assimilation of Heracles with Melqart, perhaps also of (?)Hera with Astarte at Zagora, and of the archaic tradition of Heracles entertaining a privileged relationship with Hera, especially revived under the influence of the Phoenician (Tyrian) divine couple Melqart-Astarte (above), I would like to tentatively advance the hypothesis that the patron or 'poliad' deity of Zagora was Heracles having (?)Hera as his *paredros*.

As already suggested by a number of scholars, in the framework of Greek-Phoenician interaction across the Mediterranean, Heracles appears to have acquired from Melqart – literally the 'King of the City', mythical ancestor and divinized hypostasis of the Tyrian kings, founder and 'poliad' god of Tyre (Bonnet 1988, 19–20, 76, 408–9; 2005, 20, 25, 28; Jourdain-Annequin and Bonnet 2001, 196; Aubet 2001, 144, 148–9, 152, 154; Ribichini 2008, 299; Woolmer 2017, 113) – his role as *archēgetēs*, i.e. (mythical) founder of both dynasties and cities, and as protector of cities (Bonnet 1988, 406–9; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 654–5; Jourdain-Annequin and Bonnet 2001, 197, 208; Bonnet 2005, 20, 28; Malkin 2005, 242, 244–8, 251). This would have been the natural consequence of the development – almost simultaneously by Greeks and Phoenicians – of urbanization and of the new political structure of the city-state (Snodgrass 1980, 31–2, 90, 121; Morris 1992, 168–9; Malkin 2005, 245–6), and of the concomitant need, in Malkin's words, '[for] communal-type heroes, *archēgetai*, (…) merging the vertical blood principle of aristocracy with the horizontal definition of society' (Malkin 2005, 246).

As a patron or 'poliad' god of Zagora, Heracles would have fulfilled, on the model of Melqart, the role of *archēgetēs* and guardian of the city. A similar view has been expressed by Corinne Bonnet for the poliad character of the Thasian Heracles – whose cult was attributed to the Phoenicians (above) – in the following terms: 'Cette fonction n'est guère fréquente en Grèce pour Héraclès … Peut-être constitue-t-elle l'héritage le plus patent du Melqart dont le trait spécifique est sa qualité de dieu-Baal poliade, d'ἀρχηγέτης' (Bonnet 1988, 371; cf. Morris 1992, 145). In the context of the nascent *polis* of Zagora and of its 'aristocratic kingship' or 'aristocracy', this type of Heracles, a true divine hero (*ἥρως θεός*) (Bonnet 1988, 408), and 'par son passé achéen, (…) héritier de la royauté sacrée' (Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 654), may have been ideologically manipulated by the local chiefs or 'kings'/*basileis* to serve as a symbolic expression of their divine ancestry, on the prototype of the mythical king-god Melqart (cf. Bérard 1982; Bonnet 1988, 406–9; Jourdain-Annequin and Bonnet 2001, 222).

If (?)Hera was Heracles's *paredros* at Zagora, then a close association Heracles-Hera would have been a particularly powerful factor in the integration and cohesion of the local community, and it would have also conveyed a message of legitimate appropriation of the city's territory, reflecting the equivalent (and complementary) powers of the divine couple Melqart-Astarte. Hera's integratory power, in particular, would have stemmed from her role as protectress of nautical exchanges, of the land, the *oikos*, and the institution of marriage, symbol of the balanced exchange – according to an Aegean-wide model, which appears to have played an important role in the framework of Greek/Euboean commercial and colonial expansion –, while her capacity for appropriation would have derived from her role as war-goddess (F. de Polignac 1997; 1998, 28–9; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 355–424; Jourdain-Annequin and Bonnet 2001, 212, 219, 223; Malkin 2005, 247–8, 254; Pirenne-Delforge and Pironti 2009, 109).

However, this is still only a working hypothesis, which I intend to test in an ongoing, wider study of Zagora (Coucouzeli, in preparation).

Conclusion

A fresh, more thorough examination of the votive offerings in the sanctuary of Zagora offers an entirely new perspective on the deities worshipped there. It shows

the presence of Heracles, Poseidon, the Dioskouroi, Thetis and probably also Hera, as well as a likely *rapprochement* of Heracles, possibly also Poseidon, with Melqart, and of (?)Hera with Melqart's *paredros*, Astarte. The strong maritime links between all these deities suggest that the sea played an important, symbolic role in the local cult.

The maritime symbolism in the Zagora cult may have been manifold and pertaining to: a direct or indirect involvement of the elite of this early *polis* in the networks of trade and rich cultural exchange between Greeks and Phoenicians in the Mediterranean during the second half of the eighth century BC, which would have entailed a number of religious assimilations or syncretisms; the cosmological vision of the sea as a path to the netherworld, a vision that may have been used to underline the chthonic character of Heracles, the Dioskouroi, Poseidon and (?)Hera; the ontological vision of the sea as a line of demarcation between common mortals and special individuals, a vision perhaps used at Zagora to celebrate the heroic and/or divine character of Heracles and the Dioskouroi; the vision of the sea as a social boundary between youths and adults, maybe used in the framework of male initiation rites; the vision of the sea as a political boundary between 'aristocrats' and common men, that may have been exploited by the members of the Zagora elite, in order to legitimise their claims to power and perhaps also to divine or semi-divine origins.

Finally, a tentative hypothesis put forward is that the patron or 'poliad' god of Zagora was Heracles, acting as guardian of the city and *archēgetēs*, intrinsically linked to the ruling elite, with (?)Hera as his *paredros*, on the model of the Phoenician (Tyrian) divine couple Melqart-Astarte.

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Notes

1 I am using the term 'aristocracy' between inverted commas in full awareness of the fact that the closed, hereditary elite or aristocracy traditionally posited for early Greek society has been contested recently as not being the norm or as being rare or even perhaps non-existent (Fisher and van Wees 2015, *passim*; van Wees and Fisher 2015, 7, 28, 34, 41). Yet, Zagora may constitute an example of precisely this type of social structure given the elite's exclusive and continuous use of an equitably divided and extremely cohesive grid for two (30-year) generations or so until the abandonment of the town.

2 The results of my research on Zagora were presented in 1982, at the Classical Archaeology 'Polis Seminar' in the Faculty of Classics, Cambridge, under the title 'Zagora: social organisation and the early polis', and in 1994, at the International Symposium *'Urbanisation in the Mediterranean in the 9th to 6th centuries BC'*, University of Copenhagen, under the title 'Zagora on Andros: The urban planning and social organisation of an early *astu'*.

3 The now more generally accepted theories of classification of the ancient Greek dialects assimilate Doric with North West Greek and consider them both as part of the West Greek dialect group (Bartoněk 1972; Méndez Dosuna 1985; 2007; cf. Hall 1997, 155).

4 *Homeric Hymn to Poseidon* (22), 5; Aeschylos, *Seven against Thebes* 130; Farnell 1907, 1–55; Schachermeyr 1950; Nilsson 1955, 444–52; Séchan and Lévêque 1966, 102–7; Lesky 1973, 94–107; Bloch 1984; 1985, 126–9; Burkert 1985, 136–9; Simon 1985, 67–9; 2014, 39–40; Bremmer 1987; *LIMC* VII.1, *s.v.* 'Poseidon', 446–9; Szidat 2001; Mylonopoulos 2003, 328–9, 381–2, 395–8; Larson 2007a, 57–68; 2007b, 68; Doyen 2011, 36, 294–9, 332–9; Kokkinou 2014, 59–63.

5 Boardman (1983, 16–22), stresses the importance of the association of the 'ornamental' motifs – usually dismissed as convenient filling patterns due to a *horror vacui* – with the main motifs in Late Geometric pottery; he thus points out the horse-fish and horse-water associations in Argive pottery, but he only offers an interpretation for the latter (as a symbol of wealth or status in *polydipsion* Argos).

6 Pausanias 8.7.2; Farnell 1907, 17–22; Nilsson 1955, 448–51; Séchan and Lévêque 1966, 106; Lesky 1973, 96; Bloch 1985, 126–7; Burkert 1985, 138; Simon 1985, 67; Mylonopoulos 2003, 328–31, 398; Doyen 2011, 36ff., 296–9; Kokkinou 2014, 60–1, 63.

7 Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistai* 7.297e, 8.346c; Pausanias 3.21.5; 10.9.3–4; Farnell 1907, 42, 57, 85 no. 62g, 96 no. 116; Nilsson 1955, 451; Séchan and Lévêque 1966, 103, 107; Shapiro 1989; *LIMC* VII.1, *s.v.* 'Poseidon', 461 nos. 141–2; Mylonopoulos 2003, 100, 226–7, 371–2, 395 and n. 29; Lytle 2006, 72–3.

8 van Berchem 1967, 78–87; Bonnet 1988, 203–36; Jourdain-Annequin 1989, 23, 91–3, 95–127, 222–3; West 1997, 463–4; Markoe 2000, 118, 130, 182–3; Aubet 2001, 153, 195–7, 259–79; Marín Ceballos 2001, 315–27; Whitley 2001, 113; Stafford 2012, 191. This was the *Tyrian*, rather than the Theban, Heracles, as Arrian (*Anabasis* 2.16.4) and Appian (*Hispanica* 1.2) clearly pointed out. I will not deal here with the question of the double nature of Heracles, foreign and Greek.

9 Cf. the phenomenon known nowadays as 'St Elmo's fire'. This is a literary 'topos', e.g. *Homeric Hymn to the*

Dioskouroi (33), 7–16; Alcaeus, *Frag*. 34; Euripides, *Helen* 1495–1505; Plutarch, *Lysander* 12; Ovid, *Fasti* 5. 720; cf. Albert 1883, 54–66; Hermary 1978, 62, 64, 73; Xypnetos 1982–1983; Burkert 1985, 213; Lorenz 1992, 114; Köhne 1998, 26–8; Walker 2015, 145–7.

10 Cf. the appearance of the Dioskouroi as guardians of the Argo on a metope of the Sicyonian treasury at Delphi (Vojatzi 1982, 44–7; *LIMC* II.1. *s.v.* 'Argonautai', 593 no. 2; Connor 1988).

11 Cf. Attic kylix depicting the wrestling of Heracles with Nereus, and Peleus's struggle with Thetis, on the reverse (Padgett 2003, 343–6).

12 Bonnet 1988, 179–80, 247, 279–86; 1996, 46–7, 95–6, 112–4, 120–5; Lipiński 1995, 143–4; Aubet 2001, 216; 2016. 'Astarte' type of ex-votos suggesting an assimilation of Hera to Astarte have been discovered in Hera's sanctuaries, such as those on Samos (Jantzen 1972; Kyrieleis 1979; 1993, 146–8; Kyrieleis & Röllig 1988; Röllig 1992, 97; Bonnet 1996, 95–6; F. de Polignac 1997, 118; Brize 1997, 128, 131), at Perachora (Baumbach 2004, 17, 19–20), or at Poseidonia/Paestum (Baumbach 2004, 110).

13 Hera: Nilsson 1950, 339; Lévêque 1949; 1997; Yalouris 1950, 87–8; Laumonier 1956, 58; Simon 1985, 35ff.; 1997, 83ff.; O'Brien 1993, *passim*; Spadea 1997, 258. Aphrodite: Blome 1982, 70–6; Burkert 1985, 154; Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 240; cf. Marinatos 2000, 67.

14 Hera: Simon 1985, 45–7; Parisi Presicce 1985, 64–7; F. de Polignac 1995, 24; 1997, 115–16, 118–19; 1998. Aphrodite: Simon 1985, 231; Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 433–7.

15 It is worth noting, in this respect, the fragment of an Attic kylix with a representation of the struggle of Peleus and Thetis discovered in the Southern Sanctuary of Poseidonia-Paestum, where Hera appears to have played an important role (Cipriani 1997, 215–16).

16 Payne 1940, 130–3, 136–9, 165–7; Dunbabin 1962, 408–10; 414–32; Lévêque 1949; Yalouris 1950, 87–8; Simon 1985, 59–60, 65; Pötscher 1987, 51–2, 102; *LIMC* IV.1, *s.v.* 'Hera', 659; O'Brien 1993, 49–51, 168, 170; Kyrieleis 1993, 145–6; cf. Callimachus, *Aetia* fr. 101, who refers to lion skins strewn at the base of Hera's statues on Samos and at Argos.

17 Lycophron, *Alexandra* 615, 858; Giannelli 1963, 54–5, 137–8, 147; Kerényi 1972, 176; O'Brien 1993, 130, 166; Greco 1997a; Brize 1997, 133–5; Cipriani 1997, 217–18 with bibl.; Spadea 1997, 248, 258; Aloni-Ronen 1998, 13–14; Marinatos 2000, 67, 92, 85, 87, 129; Baumbach 2004, 41–2, 68, 97–8, 118–99, 141, 164–7, 187–8; Pedley 2005, 20; cf. Pötscher 1961; 1987, 28, 52.

18 Cf. the Geometric bronze warrior identified by Karusu (1976) as Achilles and as a likely ex-voto to a sanctuary of Thetis in Thessaly. On the worship of Thetis, often in conjunction with Achilles, see Barringer 1995, 51–2; Aston 2011, 58–61.

19 I wish to thank Robin Osborne for this suggestion.

20 Cf. Alroth 1987; 1989, *passim*; 1989–90.

21 There is a vast bibliography on this subject. See, for example, Snodgrass 1971, 18, 334–5, 339–52, 436; 2006; Coldstream 1977a, *passim*; 1994, 47–9; Niemeyer 1982; Röllig 1992; Strøm 1992; Morris 1992, 124–49 and *passim*; Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 364–9, 372 fig. 1b; Ridgway 1992, 111–19; 1994, 35–6, 39–40; Kyrieleis 1993, 145–8; Popham 1994; Garbini 1996; Osborne 1996, 39–40, 93, 96, 104–13; Tandy 1997, 59–72, 230; Whitley 2001, 110, 113, 117–27; Boardman 2002; Kuhrt 2002; Stampolidis 2003; Sciortino 2009 with bibl.

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The following abbreviation is used:
LIMC = *Lexikon Iconographicum Mythologiae Graecae* (Munich, Zürich & Düsseldorf; Artemis & Winkler Verlag, 1981–2009).

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