

PHILIPPOUPOLIS

IN
PARORBELIA

The only clue of the name town founded by Philip II in Paeonia that existed in the past is a note preserved in a fragment written by the geographer Strabo (64 BC - 24 AD). He tells us that alongside the country of Agrianes lies Parorbelia, a district of Macedonia, which has in its interior, along the valley that begins at Eidomene, the cities Callipolis, Orthopolis, Philippoupolis, Garescus. We are notified by Diod. Sic., active writer during 60-30 BC, that Paeonians, after the death of Agis, king of the Paeonians, troubled the kingdom of Macedon with distress and harass. Consequently, Philip II entered Paeonia with the choice of all his forces and the enemy who marched out to meet him, were utterly defeated, and the whole nation of Paeonia obliged to submit implicitly to the conqueror, and to acknowledge an absolute dependence on Macedon. However, shortly after that in full secrecy, the king of Illyria, of Paeonia and Thrace joined in a strict confederacy, and mediated an invasion of Macedonia with all their powers. Then, Philip II surprised the Paeonians and reduced them to a state of subjection, as appears to have rendered them incapable of giving him any further opposition. After that, we assume that Paeonians must have been commanded by a strategem with seat in the citadel Psaphara, then renamed to Philippoupolis, known as a city in Parorbelia.



The most evident proof of the Macedonians presence on the site of Kneže is the unearthed ruins of a Doric-style building, possibly a temple that must have been erected by order of the king Philip II for ceremonial purpose and the long lasting rule of Paeonia. Later, in 279-278 BC Paeonia was invaded and thoroughly destroyed by the Celts on their way to plunder the Balkan peninsula. Psaphara, i.e. Philippoupolis in Parorbelia was not spared since the city was abandoned and the temple cut to pieces.

ANTIGONIA

IN
PAEONIA

Our written sources about Antigonina in Paeonia are quite obscure. In description of the greatness of former Macedonia, Pliny (23-73 AD) accounts a number of nations, places and towns. He tells us that Stobi is a town with the rights of Roman citizens, followed by the meaning "next comes Antigonea, Europus upon the river Axios" and so on. Thus, we know that Antigonina is located somewhere nearby Stobi and that Antigonina is not placed on the bank of the river Axios alike Aeropus as said by Pliny.

In 272 BC Antigonus II Gonatas gained full control of Macedonia and we know that he founded at least three name-cities, an Antigonina on the mainland of Chalkidike near Kassandria, another in Antintai, Epyrus as a useful barrier against the Illyrians and a third one as we assume in Paeonia, with aim to control the conquered province. Simply, Psaphara in Paraxia, i.e. Philippoupolis in Parorbelia was consequently renamed to Antigonina, located in Paeonia.



Livy (59 BC - 17 AD) who described the events of the war at Pydna 168 BC gives details of the formation of the Macedonian troops before the battle. On the right wing were Macedonian cavalry, and Cretans interspersed among their troops; Midon of Beroea was in charge of the latter force, Menon of Antigonea commanded the cavalry and the formation as a whole. Next to the wings were posted the royal cavalry and mixed units of the picked auxiliaries of many nation; Petrocles of Antigonea and Didas the governor of Paeonia were in command of these. At last we are informed that Paeonia was commanded by a Macedonian governor and that Antigonina in Paeonia played a central role for providing troops and cavalry to the Macedonian army. After the defeat of the battle at Pydna 168, Macedonia was severely punished and reduced to a Roman Province. Aemilius authorized his troops to massacre the whole Macedonian army, to ravage and plunder the countryside and to spoil the thousands of dead. Antigonina in Paeonia as a seat of governor of Paeonia and the main supplier of cavalry to the Macedonian army was in no means spared, because the military order was mass murder and destruction. However, in spite of that, we know that Antigonina in Paeonia existed as a city since Ptolemaeus (90 -168 AD) listed it in his work Geographiae.

PRESIDIO

Nothing is known of Presidio in addition to the name listed in the Tabula Peutingeriana as one of the stations on the way from Stobi to Scupi. Judging by the distance given in the Tabula Peutingeriana Presidio seems to conform to the site of the ancient city Psaphara in Paraxia, Philippoupolis in Parorbelia and Antigonina in Paeonia, all ubicated at Kneže near Sveti Nikole.



It is assumed that Presidio must have got its name commemorating its past of some city of great importance. The city of Presidio shared the same fate as Stobi because all invaders from the north had to pass through it on the road to Stobi. In 479 Theodoric the Great invaded Stobi and laid the city in ruins and probably Presidio shared the same fate. Later after the invasion of Balkans by the Slavs and Avars, Presidio must have been forgotten forever.

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Republic of Macedonia

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Кнеже - Кнеже

Свети Николe

Sveti Nikole

Psaphara - Philippoupolis - Antigonina - Presidio

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KNEŽE

SVETI NIKOLE

An ongoing archaeological excavation of a large plateau at Kneže near Sveti Nikole in Republic of Macedonia unearthed the site of an ancient city that coincides in chronology and ubication of Psaphara in Paraxia, Philippoupolis in Parorbelia, Antigonina in Paeonia and Presidio, all with historical past of existence on the exact same location. The ancient city at Kneže occupied the most strategic location of importance for defence and control of Paeonia as an independent country or administrative province.



The village Kneže entrance to the archaeological locality

PSAPHARA

IN
PARAXIA

Paraxiae is a region in Macedonia, i.e. Valley of the Axios River or Povardarie. Ptolemaeus (90-168 AD) in his work "Geographiae" has listed a town with the name Psaphara, "surnamed" Antigonina in Paraxiae. Obviously, Psaphara existed as an important Paeonian city but after the occupation of the country by Phillip II it must have been renamed to Philippoupolis and later to Antigonina when Antigonos Gonatas becomes the king of Macedonia.

PARAXIAE

Pfaphara antigona

50 1/2

40 3/4

At least two other towns in Paeonia are known with the names Tranupara and Zapara, with "phara" or "para" meaning town or city. Herodotus (484-425 BC) in his work The Histories tells us that the Persian general Megabazus on order by the king Darius invaded Paeonia 480 BC, when Paeonians, Siriopaeones, Paeoplae and all that dwelt as far as Prasiad lake were taken away from their homes and carried into Asia. Psaphara as an important town and citadel at the time of Persian invasion of Paeonia must have been targeted and destroyed.



Reservoir for drinking water builded with solid blocks of stone.



↑
 Map showing location of Antigonia in Paeonia, printed 1484 by Nicolaus Germanus (1420-1490), based on "Geographiae", a work by Claudius Ptolemaeus (90-168 AD), who relied somewhat on the work of an earlier geographer, Marinus of Tyre, and on gazetteers of the Roman and ancient Persian Empire, but most of his sources beyond the perimeter of the Empire were unreliable.

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 Map showing location of Kneže at Sveti Nikole, the place of ancient town Psaphara, Philippoupolis in Parorbelia, Antigonia in Paeonia and Presidio. Map scale 1:200000