



# Oracle of Apollo in Kalkhedon\*

## Kalkhedon'daki Apollon Bilicilik Merkezi

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### ABSTRACT

Ancient literary sources, inscriptions, and numismatic evidence, although few, attest to the existence and activities of an oracular center of Apollo in Kalkhedon, starting from the Hellenistic period until the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. This oracle, exhibiting characteristics pertaining to a supraregional domain, was the subject of discussion instigated by the *asylia* decrees written on two different occasions. Kalkhedon was declared "sacred and inviolable" on behalf of Apollo, who was named with different epithets on each occasion, namely Pythaios and Khresterios. The possibility of there having been two separate Apollo sanctuaries and proposals about the location of the oracle are examined in this article by evaluating the related material, in addition to the supraregional characteristics of the oracle of Apollo in Kalkhedon.

**Keywords:** Divination, Apollo, Kalkhedon, Khresterios, Pythaios, Oracle, Asylia

### ÖZ

Antik edebi kaynaklar, yazıtlar ve numismatik buluntular az sayıda olsalar da Eskiçağ'da Kalkhedon'da bir Apollon bilicilik merkezinin varlığını ve faaliyetlerini Hellenistik dönemden başlayarak MS 3. yüzyılın başına kadar doğrulamaktadır. Bölgelerüstü bir etki alanı olduğuna dair özellikler gösteren Apollon kutsal alanı, Kalkhedon'un Apollon adına Pythaios ve Khresterios *epitheton*larıyla iki kez *asylia* imtiyazı olarak "kutsal ve dokunulmaz" kabul edildiği yazıtlar vasıtasıyla anlaşılmasının ardından tartışmalara konu olmuştur. Makalede Apollon Khresterios bilicilik merkezine dair var olan bulgular değerlendirilerek, Kalkhedon sınırları içerisinde iki farklı Apollon kutsal alanı olması olasılığı ve lokalizasyon önerileri incelenmiş ve Apollon Khresterios bilicilik merkezinin bölgelerüstü etkisine işaret eden nitelikleri değerlendirilmiştir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Bilicilik, Apollon, Kalkhedon, Khresterios, Pythaios, Kehanet Merkezi, Asylia



Ancient Greek oracles offered a direct line of dialogue between mortals and their gods, thus rendering oracular centers very popular in antiquity. Within the scope of ancient Greek religion, which did not have a specific doctrine but was institutionalized with temples, religious offices, and rituals, ancient people could communicate with their gods through sacrificial offerings, libations, prayers, and divination practices. Among these practices, divination was regarded as the medium which provided the fastest results. Oracles generated answers to questions to which mere mortals did not have answers. The fact that the sacrifices and prayers alone did not produce results as fast, increased the role and importance of divination and the importance of temples where these practices took place. One of these popular oracular centers was the temple of Apollo in Kalkhedon (today Kadıköy, Istanbul)<sup>1</sup>. Kalkhedon was a Megarian colony that also had settlements before the Greek colonisation of western Asia Minor, on the southeast coast of the Bosphoros' Propontis entrance. Due to their location, both the harbour and the inland territory of the *polis*, which encompassed a vast area from the sanctuary of Zeus Urios located close to Euxenios' entrance of the Bosphoros to Panteikhon (Pendik) on the coast of Propontis, were much frequented; having an oracular center in its territory may have added to the traffic to the *polis* and vice versa. However, the precise location of the sanctuary of Apollo is unknown as the information concerning the temple of Apollo in Kalkhedon and the oracular activities is somewhat scattered. Literary sources briefly mention the oracle, and there is some epigraphic and numismatic material, but no other archaeological evidence remains.

Dionysius, writing in the second century AD, ends his *Anapoulos Bosphorou* by mentioning Kalkhedon's oracle. Dionysius is mostly interested in describing the Bosphoros' sea coast and its landmarks, along with related anecdotal information. After describing the Thracian coast of the Bosphoros, he crosses to the Asian side and continues from the Euxenios entrance, moving along the Asian coast until his last stop, Kalkhedon. According to Dionysius, after the Bous (Salacak) cape, there is a spring called Heragora and the sanctuary of the hero Eurostos, which should have been located roughly around the vicinity of the current districts of Harem and Selimiye. After this, he mentions a plain traversed by the river Himeros where the sanctuary of Aphrodite is located<sup>2</sup>. This plain should be between the Haydarpaşa railway

1 There are several different spellings of the city's name both in antiquity and in modern literature, i.e. Khalkedon, Kalkhadon, Chalcedon etc. A variant of the ancient Greek spelling of the city's name, which is also attested in the inscriptions, has been used for this article. See R. Merkelbach, F.K. Dörner, S. Şahin, *Die Inschriften von Kalchedon*, IK 20, Bonn 1980 (IK Kalchedon), 5.

2 According to Petrus Gyllius, the sanctuary of Aphrodite was later turned into the church of Saint Euphemia (Petrus Gyllius, *de Bosporo Thracio: Lib. III*, Lyon 1632, 230), while the oracular temple of Apollo was destroyed on the same day, 28<sup>th</sup> of June 326 (Joseph von Hammer, *Constantinopolis und der Bosporos II*, Hartlebens Verlag, Pest 1822). On the other hand, Dethier proposed that Saint Euphemia was constructed on the location of the oracular temple (Philipp Anton Dethier, *Boğaziçi ve İstanbul (19. Yüzyılın Sonu)*, trans. Ümit Öztürk, İstanbul 1993, 94). On the location of St. Euphemia church and the map of Kalkhedon (Figure 1), see Raymond Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins: Bithynie, Hellespont, Latros, Galèsios, Trébizonde, Athènes, Thessalonique Géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, Institut

station and the Ayrılık Çeşmesi Marmaray station, where a prairie and the mouth of the Himeros river<sup>3</sup> used to be. Dionysius places the peninsula on which Kalkhedon<sup>4</sup> is located after this plain and ends his account asserting that there are many wonderful things from antiquity in Kalkhedon, in particular, “a sanctuary and an oracle of Apollo which is in not at all inferior to the highest ones,”<sup>5</sup> thus providing us the only, albeit vague, description of the temple’s location. However, it is still clear from Dionysius’ account that the temple of Apollo is at the southern end of the Asian coast of the Bosporos, in the *polis* itself where Kadıköy’s Moda district is situated today. He portrays the sea route, harbours, and sanctuaries, respectively, along the way according to their location, therefore placing the oracle of Apollo in the *polis* itself as the last and the most important landmark of the last *topos* of both his account and the Bosporos. However, another location was also proposed regarding this narration. Robu brings up the fact that the term *polis* describes the city as much as the territory of a Greek city and since it should be interpreted as a generic term, he thinks that the temple could be at the *khora* of the *polis*, as much as it could be in the *polis* itself. Furthermore, he points out that Dionysius has left out most of the monuments of the city or the other sites in the *khora* of Kalkhedon since they were only partly in the geographical region chosen for his description, namely the shores of the Thracian Bosporos. However, even though the Asian coast of the Bosporos was not Dionysius’ focus and he only deals with it in the last quarter of his account, all the places that he mentions prior to Kalkhedon, especially starting from Hieron (Anadolu Kavağı) were in fact, the *khora* of Kalkhedon<sup>6</sup>. How he portrays the coast does not justify Robu’s suggestion in the sense that if the temple was outside of the city, it should have been somewhere that could be seen from the strait, and consequently he would have mentioned the sanctuary earlier, as he has collocated several sites in geographical order, instead of leaving it at the end of this account to be a representative of all the marvelous landmarks of Kalkhedon.

Another source related to Kalkhedonian Apollo is Antiphilus’ epigram dating to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, which vaguely implies the oracular capabilities of Apollo. The epigram is about

Français d’Études Byzantines Publications, Paris 1975, 30-33.

- 3 Haydarpaşa and Ayrılık Çeşmesi are also the modern names of the Himeros river, which is not visible today (see Semavi Eyice, “Haydarpaşa”, *DİA*, XVII, 36-41).
- 4 For the location of Kalkhedon between the rivers of Himeros and Kalkhedon (Kurbağalidere), see C. Foss’ map 53 in Richard J. A. Talbert - Roger S. Bagnall, *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2000, along with the other aforementioned toponyms.
- 5 The works of ancient authors are taken from TLG and TLL unless otherwise specified. Dionysius Byzantius, 111: Μετὰ δὲ τὴν Βοῦν <Ηραγόρα> κρήνη καὶ <τέμενος> ἥρωος <Εὐρύστου>. μεθ’ ὃν αἰγιαλὸς ὕπιος, <Ἰμέρω> ποταμῷ καταρδόμενος, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ <τέμενος Ἀφροδίτης>· παρὰ δ’ αὐτὸν ὀλίγοσιςμὸς πολλὴν πάνυ περιγράφει χερρόνησον, ἐφ’ ἧς <ἡ πόλις> μικρὸν ὑπὲρ <Χαλκηδόνος> ποταμοῦ· καὶ λιμένες ἀμφοτέρωθεν κατὰ τὰς ἐπὶ τὸν ἰσθμὸν ἀναχωρήσεις· αὐτοφυῆς μὲν ὁ πρὸς ἐσπέραν ἀφορῶν, χειροποίητος δ’ ὁ πρὸς τὴν ἔω καὶ Βυζάντιον· αὐτὴ δ’ ἀνέστηκε λόφου μὲν χθαμαλωτέρα, πεδίου δὲ τραχυτέρα· πολλὰ δ’ ἐν αὐτῇ θαυμάσια κατὰ τ’ ἀρχαιότητα τῆς κτίσεως καὶ πράξεις καὶ τύχας καὶ τὰς ἐπ’ ἀμφοτέρα μεταβολάς, μάλιστα γὰρ μὴν τέμενος καὶ χρηστήριον Ἀπόλλωνος, οὐδένος τῶν ἄκρων ἀποδεέστερον.
- 6 Dion. Byz. 92; Strabon 7.6.1; Dion Byz. 98: τῆς Χαλκηδονίων ἀκτῆς.

the ill-omened heron which is hated and punished by the Kalkhedonians because it accepted food from the enemy. The words are referred to as those of Phoibos<sup>7</sup>. It is not clear why Apollo was evoked, as the epigram does not relate anything of a prophetic nature. However, it has been suggested that since the epigram was about the Kalkhedonians, Apollo, being their principal and oracular god, was mentioned due to his omniscient nature.

Another literary source is Lucian's work on Alexandros, the false prophet of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD from Abonoteikhos. When explaining the origins of Alexandros' deception of introducing a new prophet to Abonoteikhos (Inebolu), he tells the story of his arrival at Apollo's temple in Kalkhedon. According to Lucian, Alexandros buried bronze tablets announcing the arrival of Asklepios and his father Apollo in Abonoteikhos<sup>8</sup>. This account introduces the sole indication of the divination method, which might have been used in Kalkhedon, like other oracular centers. For example, lead tablets were used to inscribe the consultants' questions and oracular answers at the temple of Zeus in Dodona<sup>9</sup>. The oracles of Kalkhedonian Apollo might have been written in bronze tablets, which Alexandros used to announce his new cult<sup>10</sup>. He must have fabricated this oracle to prove the authenticity of the new cult. Lucian tells the story of Alexandros' lies and how he has built the image of a false cult in a conniving manner. Alexandros would need to construct his deception on a solid base, and Apollo's oracular center and the bronze tablets with his oracles were a good starting point. Thus, as it is clearly understood from Lucian's text, Alexandros used the contemporary fame of Kalkhedonian Apollo's oracle. Furthermore, we also learn from this text that Apollo's temple was the oldest sanctuary in Kalkhedon, which suggests that it was an oracular sanctuary since its founding by the Megarian settlers, or that there was already an oracular sanctuary prior to their arrival. Apollo was the principal god of Megara but divination was not originally one of the specialities of Megarian Apollo. It would be plausible to assume that an already existing local oracular shrine integrated with the Greek oracular god, who also happened to be the principal god of the colonists.

There are three more literary connections concerning Kalkhedonian Apollo. The first is the suggestion of a connection between the Homeric prophet Kalkhas and his son Kalkhedon<sup>11</sup>. Parke

7 Φοῖβος ἐρεῖ Anthologia Graeca IV, 9.551; A. S. F. Gow, D.L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Garland of Philip and some Contemporary Epigrams*, 2 vols., 1968, 123.

8 Lucian, Alex. 10.

9 For more on the lead tablets of Dodona, see Éric Lhôte, *Les lamelles oraculaires de Dodone*, École pratique des Hautes Études, 3, Genève 2006.

10 There is no other testimony of bronze tablets in Kalkhedon but even though there are ca. 4000 lead tablets found in Dodona, there is no mention of the tablets at Dodona in ancient sources either, apart from a slight implication by Soph. (*Trach.* 1166-1168; Jessica Piccinini, "Beyond Prophecy, The Oracular Tablets of Dodona as Memories of Consultation", *Incidenza dell'Antico*, 11, 2013, 63-76, 67-70). However, here Piccinini suggests that tablets of Dodona were not part of the process of divination, but rather testimonies of consultations.

11 Giorgio Camassa, "Calcante, La Cecita' Dei Calcedoni E Il Destino Dell'eroe Del Bronzo Miceneo", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Classe di Lettere e Filosofia, Serie III, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1980, 28*. On the

asserts in his work *The Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor* that this claim of lineage to the prophet Kalkhas may have helped the prophetic priests of Kalkhedon to create a suitable genealogical tree<sup>12</sup>. Kalkhas was an important figure for the oracular scene of Asia Minor. The oracles of Gryneion<sup>13</sup>, Klaros<sup>14</sup> and Mallos have origin myths recounting Kalkhas' oracular abilities along with his rival Mopsos<sup>15</sup>. In addition, this connection is linked to the origins of the city, since it yields a reference to the mother city of Kalkhedon, Megara,<sup>16</sup> suggesting that Kalkhas' adaptation as a Megarian hero could have motivated the foundation of the oracular center, or Kalkhedon was promoting its oracular center by adopting Kalkhas as the founding hero<sup>17</sup>.

The second connection is complex, and relates to an oracle recorded in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. According to Socrates Scholasticus, a marble block inscribed with the oracle came to light during the demolition of Kalkhedon's walls by Valens. Ammianus Marcellinus recounts the reason behind this demolition as a sort of retaliation. Valens punished the Kalkhedonians by demolishing their walls and constructed the Constantinian baths with the same stones, because they had backed the usurper Procopius and cursed and closed their doors while Valens was passing by Kalkhedon<sup>18</sup>. Thus, this possibly Kalkhedonian oracle about Constantinopolis came to light. The oracle recorded the prophecy that when the city was supplied with an abundance of water, the wall would be a bath and the barbarians attacking the Roman provinces would be crushed<sup>19</sup>. This was linked to the construction of the Constantinian baths after the construction of Valens' (Bozdoğan) aqueduct in Constantinopolis. The second interpretation of this prophecy focused on the literal meaning. The prophecy literally said, "when the nymphs will dance with their watery feet on the streets of Byzantium." After the construction of the aqueduct, the praefectus of the city, Clearchus, constructed the *Δαμυλλῆς ὕδωρ* bath and a festival began to be celebrated<sup>20</sup>.

There is also a specific oracle which was falsely attributed in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD by Zosimos, in his *Historia Nea*, to the Sibyl at Erythrai or to Phaennis at Epiros. While writing

etymology of Kalkhedon, see Adrian Robu, *Mégare et les établissements mégariens de Sicile, de la Propontide et du Pont-Euxin*, Peter Lang, 2014, 223-226, (Robu, Mégare).

12 Herbert William Parke, *Oracles of Apollo in Asia Minor*, London 1985, 179 (Parke, Oracles); Hesychius Illustis 21.

13 Euphorion fr.97; Serv. Ecl. VI.72.

14 Hesiod, Fr. 128; Strabon XIV.1.27.

15 For more information on Kalkhas and Mopsos, see Robert L. Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography. Volume 2: Commentary*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, 547-550.

16 On the foundation of Kalkhedon as a Megarian colony, see Robu, Mégare, 222-247; Alexander Herda, "Megara and Miletos: Colonising with Apollo, A Structural Comparison of Religious and Political Institutions in Two Archaic Greek Polis States", *Mégarika, Nouvelles recherches sur Mégare et les cités de la Propontide et du Pont-Euxin. Archéologie, épigraphie, histoire*. Textes réunis et édités par Adrian Robu et Iulian Birzescu, Paris 2016, 15-127.

17 For more on these suggestions, see Adrian Robu, "Réflexions sur le culte d'Apollon à Chalcedoine", *Les études classiques*, 75, 2007, 144-146 (Robu, Chalcedoine).

18 Amm. Marc., Rerum Gestarum XXVI.vii.2sq.

19 Parke, Oracles, 180; Socrates, Hist. eccl. IV, 8.

20 *loc. cit.*

on the development of Byzantion-Constantinopolis, Zosimos writes that he was amazed by the fact that there was not a single oracle predicting the city's bright future. Thus, he started to research and claimed that he read volumes of history books and prophecy collections; finally, he came across this oracle written as a hexameter consisting of 21 lines. He assumed that it concerned Constantinopolis, and it has been interpreted as a post eventum prophecy on the arrival of the Celts in Asia Minor in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC<sup>21</sup>. Zosimos' text, however, poses several problems. Unfortunately, we do not have his original source. His work is a rewriting of Eunapius' *Kronike Historia*, of which there is no original copy today. Furthermore, there are historical inconsistencies with his interpretation. The different readings of Greek manuscripts led to different interpretations in the past. Lastly, it was suggested that this oracle was not about Constantinopolis but Kalkhedon, and that the oracle actually belonged to the Kalkhedonian Apollo. The last 7 lines should be considered the words of Apollo, which were written at the time to be an answer to the Kalkhedonians during a trying period<sup>22</sup>. The last 4 lines of the oracle are so obscure that they cannot be connected to any certain period or event. The oracle ends by saying that Thrace is pregnant with a great malice, there will be a sore on the shore, and it will swell and burst with bleeding<sup>23</sup>. Although Zosimos specifically looked for evidence to fill the gap he had already identified, without his misconception we would never have this oracle of Kalkhedonian Apollo, if it is in fact so.

Corroboration for the literary sources is found in the epigraphic record. An inscription concerning the temple of Apollo was found in 1927 in Moda, Kadıköy, through which we learn that the epithet of Kalkhedonian Apollo was Khresterios (*Χρηστήριος*), meaning oracular<sup>24</sup>. The inscription dates approximately to the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC; its findspot was given as the new building of Notre Dame de Sion School in Kadıköy. Today, Kadıköy Professional and Technical Anatolian High School stands in its place, at the intersection of Moda Avenue and Cem Street, which is on the highest hill of Moda district, Kadıköy, making it an appropriate location for the principal god of a *polis*<sup>25</sup>. As for the content of the inscription, in accordance with Apollo Khresterios' oracles, Kalkhedon was awarded *asylia*, and deemed sacred; the people of Phokai and Tenedos

21 Herbert William Parke, "The Attribution of the Oracle in Zosimus, *New History* 2. 37", *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 1982, 441-444 (Parke, Zosimus).

22 Parke, *Oracles*, 179; Parke, *Zosimus*, 441-444; Robu, *Chalcedoine*, 143 fn. 29.

23 *Θρησσα κεί μεγα πημα τόκος δε οί ουκέτι τηλοῦ/ σπειραι παιδα κακόν...καί τηδε φέρουσαν/ τρηχὺ παρ' ἠπίρου πλειράς ἐπιναισεται ἔλκος/ καί μέγ' ἀνοιδήσει ταχὺ δὲ ῥαγὲν αἰμοροήσει. Zos. 2. 37.*

24 IK Kalchedon, 5.

25 See Figure 2; it is not possible to determine if there was a temple of Apollo at this location with certainty because the stone was not in situ, and it was understood that it had been reused. Therefore, the stone may have been relocated; its original place is unknown. Vitalien Laurent, "Une nouvelle inscription grecque de Chalcedoine", *Échos d'Orient*, tome 27, n° 149, 1928, 44.

both recognized this<sup>26</sup>. There is a parallel 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (ca. 230-200 BC<sup>27</sup>) inscription from Delphi, which also recognized a temple of Apollo in Kalkhedon as *asylia* and sacred, but expressed it with different words. Here the god's epithet was Pythaios, rather than Khresterios<sup>28</sup>. Pythaios was also the epithet for Apollo in Kalkhedon's mother city, Megara. There is a conflict of opinion concerning these two epithets. Arguments such as the same god being referred to with different epithets<sup>29</sup>, or Apollo being entitled with a new epithet after acquiring oracular characteristics<sup>30</sup>, or the ignorance of Phokaians in terms of the original epithet of Kalkhedonian Apollo<sup>31</sup> were not found plausible for several reasons. As a matter of fact, *asylia* decrees tend to have the wording of requesting parties<sup>32</sup>, hence, Kalkhedonians themselves must have explicitly requested *asylia* for Apollo Pythaios and Apollo Khresterios on two different occasions, and the inscriptions were written in response to their request using the same expressions. Furthermore, it has been asserted that Apollo was known to be an oracular deity in Kalkhedon before the time of both inscriptions<sup>33</sup>. The evidence suggesting the earlier existence of oracular Apollo stems from an inscription found at Istros/Histria in Romania and Kalkhedon's coinage. According to the aforementioned inscription, Istros had consulted the oracular shrine of Apollo in Kalkhedon circa the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC about the establishment of a cult of Sarapis, earlier than both *asylia* decrees, thus annulling the suggestion that the original Apollo Pythaios received the epithet of Khresterios after acquiring oracular characteristics in between the times of the two decrees<sup>34</sup>. Furthermore, the Istros inscription also gives the impression that Kalkhedonian Apollo's oracular cult was already well established and recognized in the Hellenistic period to the point where Istrians did not even need to specify the epithet of the god<sup>35</sup>.

26 The epithet Khresterios is only mentioned in the first part of the inscriptions concerning Phokaians; Tenedians do not mention Khresterios and refer to the god as only Apollo.

27 Jean Pouilloux, *Les inscriptions de la terrasse du temple et de la region nord du sanctuaire* (nos 351-516), Fouilles de Delphes, III; *Épigraphie*, 4, Paris 1976, no. 372, 53-54; Although Rigsby thinks that it cannot be much later than 250 BC, Kent Rigsby, *Asyilia. Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World*, University of California Press, 1997, 167.

28 IK Kalchedon, 116; A. Jacquemin, D. Mulliez, G. Rougemont, *Choix d'Inscription de Delphes, traduites et commentées*, Boccard 2012, 75.

29 Günther Klaffenbach, "IV. Inschrift aus Kalchedon (SEG IV 720)", *Varia Epigraphica*, Berlin 1958, 10-14, no. 4; Louis Robert, "Hellenica", *RPh* 13, 1939, 188 (=Opera Minora Selecta: *Épigraphie Et Antiquités Grecques*, II, Hakkert, 1969, p. 1341) (OpMin.Sel II); Louis Robert, *À travers l'Asie Mineure*, Athènes, Paris 1980, 395.

30 Kurt Latte, "Orakel", *RE* 18, 1939, 848.

31 Laurent, *op.cit.*, 33.

32 Klaffenbach, *op.cit.*, 10-14, no. 4; Rigsby, *op.cit.*, 165.

33 *loc. cit.*

34 Dionisie M., Pippidi, *Scythica Minora: Recherches sur les Colonies Grecques du Littoral Roumain de la Mer Noire*, Bucharest, 1975, 105-106 (Pippidi, *Scythica Minora*); Rigsby, *op.cit.*, 165.

35 Although Robu does not agree that there were two Apollo temples at Kalkhedon, he shares the same opinion regarding the Hellenistic presence of the oracle center (see Robu, Chalcedoine, 147).

Numismatic evidence confirms that Kalkhedon started to identify itself with Apollo, who is depicted on civic coin types from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>36</sup>. Even though early city coinage does not put forth the oracular side of Apollo, the bearded head on the coins of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC was identified as the Homeric prophet Kalkhas<sup>37</sup>. Herda deems this identification insecure because of the problems related to the etymology of the city name<sup>38</sup> but it is not improbable, considering the lengths oracular temples and their host cities would go to prove the basis of their expertise. Mythological origin stories are widespread phenomena for the oracles. In some cases, the oracle centers are built on a mythological oracular connection, and in others, they adopt an appropriate origin myth along the way in order to emphasize their level of competency. It is not always easy to determine the beginning and the end of each case, as they become sort of a causal nexus<sup>39</sup>. Thus, Kalkhas, who was a renowned mythological prophet, might have become an oracular figure for Kalkhedon even if he was not the namesake of the city to begin with. Consequently, from the Hellenistic period onwards, Apollonian attributes such as swans and lyres, which are regularly found, were joined with imagery more clearly related to oracular activities. On coin types dated to approximately 260-230 BC, Apollo is sitting on an omphalos, facing right, and holding his bow and arrow<sup>40</sup> and these depictions of omphalos can be considered further evidence of the existence of the oracular cult prior to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC<sup>41</sup>. In addition, coins dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD surely refer to the oracular nature of the temple of Apollo, depicting tripods entwined with serpents<sup>42</sup>.

Consequently, Rigsby suggested that there were two different Apollo temples in the territory of Kalkhedon: the one known from inscriptions and literary sources was in the city center, while the other, of Apollo Pythaios of the Delphi inscription, might have been outside of the city, in the *khora*, maybe on the hills of Çamlıca, Üsküdar. However, it should be noted that if the temple was somewhere in Çamlıca, it should have been on the eastern slopes, otherwise Dionysius would have not passed the temple of the principal god without mentioning it, since those hills are quite visible from the Bosphoros strait. These two

36 Hans Aulock - Gerhard Kleiner, *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum Deutschland*, Sammlung V. Aulock, Mann, Berlin 1957, Reprint Sunrise Publications, 1987, 481 (SNG Aulock); W.H. Waddington, E. Babelon, T. Reinach, *Recueil général des monnaies grecques d'Asie Mineure*, I, 2, Paris 1904, 290; For the discussion of these coins, see Robu, Chalcedoine, 142; Camassa, *op.cit.*, 30-31.

37 Robu, Chalcedoine, 145, fn. 36.

38 Herda, *op.cit.*, 35, fn. 89.

39 For other Anatolian examples on the adoption of mythological lineages such as Klaros, Didyma, Patara, etc., see Selin Önder, *Anadolu'da Yerel, Yerelüstü ve Bölgelerüstü Bilicilik*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Eskiçağ Tarihi Bilim Dalı Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, 2020.

40 SNG von Aulock, 491.

41 C. A. Marinescu, "The Posthumous Lysimachi Coinage and the Dual Monetary System at Byzantium and Chalcedon in the Third Century BC", *XII. Internationaler Numismatischer Kongress* (Berlin 1997), Berlin 2000, 333-337.

42 Krister Hanell, *Megarische Studien*, Lund 1934, 165. RPC III 1060, 1064; RPC IV 4750, 4754; RPC VI 3501, 3516.



inscriptions, which seem to be approximately 30 years apart, might indicate that the city received the status of *asylia* twice for two different temples in its territory; he added that the reason for the omission of Apollo Pythaios in the literary sources was due to the popularity of the former cult<sup>43</sup>. On the other hand, it is clear that the city founded as a Megarian colony would have adopted Apollo Pythaios, in the same way as the other colonies of Megara<sup>44</sup>. According to scholars elaborating on the Megarian origins of the cult, Apollo Pythaios could be referred to by more than one epithet in the metropolis; in Kalkhedon, it may have taken Khresterios as a new epithet, because of Apollo's oracular characteristics. Thus, they argue that Apollo may not have had two temples in Kalkhedon, and based on the phrase of *ἐν ταῖ Καλχαδονίαι* in the Delphi inscription, it has been suggested that Apollo's only temple should have been in the city's *khora*<sup>45</sup>.

However, the existence of Apollo Pythaios in the *khora* of Kalkhedon does not refute the existence of a city temple, nor do Megarian Apollo's many coexistent epithets; at least until new and more concrete evidence emerges proving otherwise, the idea of another temple of Apollo is still conceivable. In Megara, Apollo Pythaios had secondary epithets. According to Pausanias, there were three different representations of Apollo in the sanctuary of the Megarian patron god, namely Pythaios, Arkhegetes, and Dekatephoros<sup>46</sup>. However, unlike Megara, there is no attestation of Apollo Pythaios Khresterios as an ensemble either in the literary sources or in the inscriptions so far. Therefore, the modern construction of Apollo Pythaios Khresterios might be a misleading concept. In addition, the language of the inscriptions and Dionysius' description suggest the existence of two temples of Apollo in Kalkhedon. The *asylia* decrees tend to differentiate in language according to the location of the appealing temple. When the temple is outside of the city, generally only the temple is mentioned in the inscription, whereas when the temple is in the city, the city and the country are mentioned<sup>47</sup>. In the Delphi inscription, the temple of Apollo Pythaios was granted *asylia*<sup>48</sup> whereas, in the Phokaia<sup>49</sup> and Tenedos<sup>50</sup> inscriptions, the city was declared *asylia* and sacred. According to

43 Rigsby, *op.cit.*, 164-171.

44 For Pythian games indicative of the activities of the sanctuary of Apollo Pythaios, see Robu, Chalcedoine, 152; Mustafa H. Sayar, *Perinthos-Herakleia (Marmara Ereğlisi) und Umgebung. Geschichte, Testimonien, griechische und lateinische Inschriften*, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna 1998, 31, 1.; IGR IV, 161.

45 For more on these arguments, see Robu, Chalcedoine, 137-155; Herda, *op.cit.*, 35, fn. 86; Jacquemin, *op.cit.*, 75.

46 Paus. I 42,5. For the other epithets and temples of Apollo in Megara, see Robu, Chalcedoine, 138, fn. 1.

47 Louis Robert, "Des Textes Inutilisés sur Pergè et sur Sidè", *Hellenica V*, 1948, 67, n. 1.; Rigsby, *op.cit.*, 21.

48 Pouilloux, *op.cit.*, 372, lines 3-5: "τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ Πυθαίου τὸ ἐν ταῖ Καλχαδο-νίαι ἄσυλον καὶ φύκτιμον...".

49 IK Kalchedon, 5, lines 4-9: "...ἐμφανίζοντες περὶ [ῥι] χρησ]μῶν αὐτοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ Χρηστηρ[ίου δεδομένου, ἐν] [φοῖς φησ]ιν τῆμ πόλιν τὴν Καλχηδονίον εἶναι ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ὑπάρχειν ἄπ[ασιν] [ἀνθρώποις] ἱεράν καὶ ἄσυλον, καὶ παρακαλοῦσιν ἡμᾶς συναζῆσαι [τῆς τῶν] [θεῶν τιμᾶς], καθότι καὶ ἐπιβάλλει ἡμῖν, καὶ ἀποδείξει τῆμ πόλιν τὴν Καλχηδ[ονίων] [ἱεράν καὶ ἄ]συλον κατὰ τὰς τοῦ θεοῦ μαντείας...".

50 IK Kalchedon, 5, lines 26-27 "...ταῖν πόλιν ταῖν Καλχαδονίων ἱραν καὶ ἄσυλον κατ [τοῖς τῶ] [θέω χρήσ]μοις...".

this system, Apollo Pythaios' temple is expected to be in the territory of Kalkhedon, as the phrase *ἐν τῷ Καλχαδονίαι* also suggests, and Apollo Khresterios' temple should be in the city as the description of Dionysius also indicates. The reason behind the omission of the *khora* from the Apollo Khresterios inscription may well be to avoid duplication, since the temple of Apollo Pythaios was already deemed *asylia* in Kalkhedon's countryside<sup>51</sup>. The temple of Apollo Khresterios was renowned at the time at least on the western coast of Euxenios as it is understood from Istrians' consultation of the oracle center. Interestingly, Istros, being a colony of Miletos, consulted the oracle at Kalkhedon; although the relatively short distance might have been a factor in the choice of the oracular center<sup>52</sup>, it cannot be the sole reason. It has been suggested that the reason behind this could be Kalkhedon's good relations with the Ptolemies, but another reason could have been the good relations between Kalkhedon and Istros<sup>53</sup>. Apollo Khresterios' oracular center appears to have acquired supraregional importance in the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and it might have pursued this panhellenic honour to prove its worth and prominence, as the other sanctuary of Apollo in Kalkhedon had already acquired, since these grants primarily were religious honours and the *asylia* always belonged to the most famous sanctuaries and the most revered gods<sup>54</sup>.

Another inscription found within the borders of Kalkhedon was roughly dated to the Hellenistic era. This decree states that the highest-ranking magistrates, the king (*basileus*), prophet (*prophetas*), and memorizer of the sacred (*hieromnamon*), formed the executive council of the city and designated a head to the *boule*<sup>55</sup>. The prophet mentioned in the inscription should be the prophet of Apollo Khresterios, who seems to be considered one of the highest-ranking religious officials of the city. Another inscription dated to the Augustan era relates to the foundation of a hero cult by Aulus Octavius; it is recorded that he was a prophet, which should again be the prophet of Apollo Khresterios<sup>56</sup>. Moreover, there are two funerary inscriptions mentioning the prophets. The first one is for a *hieromnamon* who has taken the responsibilities of a prophet during a ceremony, which again shows the importance of the prophets among the officials of the *polis*<sup>57</sup>. The other is a funerary stele commissioned by a *prophetis* for her adopted daughter<sup>58</sup>. *Prophetis* was assumed to be the wife of a *prophetas*<sup>59</sup>, although an office like Pythian priestess may be in question<sup>60</sup>. In the case of the

51 Rigsby, *op.cit.*, 167-168.

52 Parke, *Oracles*, 179.

53 SEG 50-682; Dionisie M. Pippidi, *Inscriptiones Daciae et Scythiae Minoris antiquae. Series altera: Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris graecae et latinae*. Vol. 1. *Inscriptiones Histriae et vicinia*. Bucharest 1983, 5; Pippidi, *Scythica Minora*, 106.

54 Georges A. Radet, "Inscriptions de la région du Méandre", *BCH*, Volume 14, 1890, 227; Rigsby, *op.cit.*, 14.

55 IK Kalchedon, 7.

56 *op.cit.*, 19.

57 *op.cit.*, 42.

58 *op.cit.*, 61.

59 *loc.cit.*

60 Herda, *op.cit.*, 34, fn. 85.

latter two inscriptions mentioning religious officials, even though it is not specified to which oracular god they belonged, the local names of the individuals as well as the offices and institutions, which carry on the traditions of the metropolis, suggest that they were prophets of Apollo Khresterios<sup>61</sup>.

Considering the brief list of the inscriptions, our earliest evidence for the oracular activities dates to the Hellenistic period and the latest date to the Augustan era. However, through literary sources and numismatic evidence, we understand that the oracle's importance continued to exist until the beginning of the 3rd century AD, while its memory reached at least until the 4th century AD and emperor Valens' reign. Especially taking into account Dionysius' text, along with the two *asylia* inscriptions referring to two different Apollos, it would be prudent not to overlook the possibility of two Apollo sanctuaries, one pertaining to oracular activities within the *polis*, until new material surfaces. However, wherever the sanctuary may be, within the city or outside of its walls, Apollo Khresterios' oracular center held supraregional importance, which surpassed both the territorial and regional limits of the city, as understood from the literary sources and inscriptions. It is abundantly clear that Kalkhedon had an oracular tradition from its mythological origin story to its institutions. It had an organised cult with religious officials indicating some level of institutional structure. Although we do not have information about the details of these offices, the priest of Apollo Khresterios, called *prophetas*, held one of the most prominent positions in the city hierarchy. The high position of the *prophetas* reveals the extent of the institutionalisation of the cult, which is a feature attested in many oracular centers that eventually expand their catchment areas, surpassing the boundaries of their own region. Also, the *asylia* status of the sanctuary, which is not always indicative of a panhellenic declaration<sup>62</sup>, can be interpreted similarly on this occasion. Although the Kalkhedonian oracle's busy location between the Bosporos and the Propontis, stretching from the Aegean Sea to the Balkans, provided a logistical advantage to becoming a prominent oracle center, this was not the only reason for its broad area of influence.

61 OpMin.Sel II, 1341; T.J. Russel, *Byzantium and the Bosporus: A Historical Study, from the Seventh Century BC.*, Oxford University Press, 2016, 224, also Herda states that the *hieromnamon* may have been eponymous in Byzantion, while the *basileus* was eponymous in Megara, Herda, *op.cit.*, 57, n. 157.

62 Rigsby, *op.cit.*, 37.



Figure 1

The location of Kalkhedon and the Himeros river (Janin, *op.cit.*, 30).

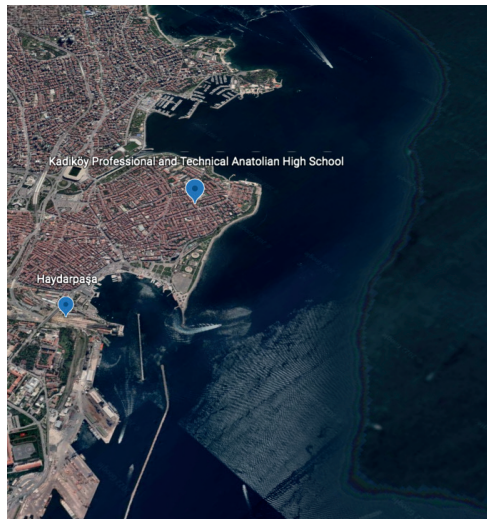


Figure 2

Kalkhedon peninsula (Google Earth, [earth.google.com/web/](http://earth.google.com/web/)).

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