

# A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SEARCH FOR ANCIENT HELICE\*

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*ABSTRACT: A major contribution to the fact that the riddle of the location of ancient Helice has remained unsolved for so long, is, in large part due to the influence exerted over subsequent generations of archaeologists by the misinterpretation of sources (of Pausanias in particular) and events (in general) by the French Expedition Scientifique de Moree in 1834. This study argues for an alternative and altogether more plausible interpretation of the sources and events.*

One of the most intriguing riddles still puzzling archaeologists today is the exact location of ancient Helice.

According to existing sources, this ancient city was both the political and religious capital of the Achaean league. The territorial boundaries of this important confederation of twelve city-states, known at that time as "Aegialus", stretched 140 kilometres along the coast of the northern Peloponnese from Aristonautae (present-day Xylocastro) on the Corinthian gulf, to the ancient city of Dyme overlooking the gulf of Patras in the west. Protected by a barrier of mountain ridges, the territories extended some way inland, encompassing a broad area of hinterland.

From early times, the city-states of Achaia encouraged a spirit of harmonious co-existence and collaboration (Paus. 7,7,1), promoting a neutral, yet flexible policy towards other city-states. Thus, at least until the third century b.C., they remained, in principle, uninvolved in the turbulent arena of political upheaval continuously threatening the rest of Greece (Paus. 7,6,3 f.). This period of stability, during which the city-states thrived in an environment of social and political harmony, free from internal strife, lasted up until the time of the Macedonian era (Paus. 7,7,1 f.; Polyb. 2,41,6; Strabo 8,7,1: 384). Benefiting from the natural wealth of the alluvial-rich soil, abundant water supply and temperate climate, the cities of Aegialus also enjoyed a period of healthy economic growth.

Such must have been the case for ancient Helice, occupying a position of unrivalled supremacy amongst the other city-states (Diod. 15, 48,3). From the time of its founding during the Mycenaean ages around 1400 b.C., Helice became firmly established as the religious metropolis of the Ionian Greeks, the "very holy sanctuary" of Helikonian Poseidon (Paus. 7,24,5), claiming the central focus of religious life.

Thus, in terms of archaeological importance, the location of ancient Helice can justifiably rival those of Troy, Mycenae and Thera.

As is well-documented, in about the year 373 b.C., ancient Helice was shaken by an earthquake conservatively estimated at point 7 on the Richter scale. Whatever survived the devastating quake was subsequently engulfed by an ensuing tsunami of considerable magnitude. Large areas of land were submerged and, speculatively, the ruins of ancient Helice were swept away with the receding waves (Paus. 7,24,6-7, and 7, 24,12; Strabo 1,3,18: 59; Diod. 15,48,1 f., Aristot. Meteor. 2,8: 368b).

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generations of archaeologists by the misinterpretation of sources (of Pausanias in particular) and events (in general) by the French Expedition Scientifique de Moree (1834).

Pausanias states that ancient Helice lay at a distance of 40 stades (7.4 km.) from the ancient city of Aegium (present-day Aegion), and 30 stades (5.5 km.) in a direct line from the cave dedicated to Heracles situated on the Buraicus river, near the ancient city of Bura (Paus. 7,24,5 and 7,25,11).

Basing their interpretation largely upon this source, the French Expedition (E. Puillon Boblaye, 1834, 25; cf. Curtius, 1851, 469; Frazer, 1898, 168-169; Marinatos, 1960, 189 f.) agreed conclusively that the location of ancient Helice was at a point some 7-8 km. from present-day Aegion, near the banks of Selinus, in or around the present day villages of Rizomylos, Nikolaiika and Helike (not to be confused with the ancient city of the same name). Their opinion was further strengthened by the location of a large cave considered to be dedicated to Hercules at Trupia (the Holes), 165 km. from Athens on the Old National Road, 6 km. from Nikolaiika and 7 km. from Rizomylos. Besides localized evidence of worship, some have claimed that the carving over the entrance of the cave is a representation of a lion's head, symbolizing Heracles.

This study argues for an alternative and altogether more plausible interpretation of the sources and events.

According to Pausanias, the cave honouring Heracles Buraicus was located near a river. Not only did the established opinion locate the cave at some distance from any river, it placed the location roughly equidistant between two rivers -the present-day Buraicus and Cerynites (1.2 and 2 km. respectively), neither of which, despite the name of the former, appear to bear any relation to the ancient city of Bura.

Recent archaeological findings, namely the positive identification of Ceryneia on the cite previously believed to have been ancient Bura, near the present-day village of Mamousia (D. Katsonopoulou & St. Soter, 1993, 64 and Fn. 15) have radically shaken the established point of view.

The next piece in the puzzle to fit was to relocate the exact site of ancient Bura. There are strong indications, proposed by Ernst Meyer in 1939 (p.127 f.), that this ancient city was probably located 500 m. away from the settlement Kastro and near the village Katholiko.

In the light of this new proposal, it seems reasonable to suggest that the present-day river of Ladopotamus, flowing east of Katholiko, is, in fact the ancient river of Buraicus. If this is so, the present-day Buraicus could well be the river noted by Strabo (8,8,3: 371) as Erasinus.

Bearing in mind the boundaries of ancient Arcadia recently proposed by Papachatzis (1991, 153), and in accordance with the description given by Pausanias (7,25,5), there is little doubt in my mind that the river tracing its course down to ancient Ceryneia does, in fact, rise in ancient Arcadia and is, indeed the ancient river of Cerynites (present-day Boufousia). Consequently, explorations to find the cave of Heracles Buraicus should not be undertaken at the 165th km. point on the Old National Road, as the previously established opinion claims, but more fruitfully some kilometres to the east, near the present-day Ladopotamus. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the fact that according to Pausanias (7,26,1), the cave of Heracles Buraicus lies about 72 stades (13.3 km.) from the ancient city of Aegeira (present-day Aegeira). Given that the main road from Aegeira to Aegium has not significantly changed course since ancient times, and in further justification of its identity as the ancient river of Buraicus, the Ladopotamus river does, in fact, lie at a distance of 12 km. from Aegeira. Thus, the search for the cave of Heracles should focus on one of the banks of this river, about 1.3 km. away from the main road leading to Aegium.

Based on the same calculations, explorations to locate ancient Helice should focus on a site about 5.5 km. (30 stades) in direct line to the west of this cave, namely in the region of Trupia,

near the present-day village of Zachloritika, on a hill now called Aghios Stephanos, about 1 km. to the east of what I consider to be the erroneously proposed cave of Heracles Buraicus.

Pausanias gives the distance between Aegium and Helice as 40 stades (7.4 km.). By interpreting the sources in this way, Trupia lies at a distance of 12 km. from Aegium and not 7.4 km., admitting a discrepancy of 4.6 km. Yet if one makes an addition of the individual distances given by Pausanias for his itinerary from Aegium to Aegeira via the cave of Heracles Buraicus (40+30+72 stades), one reaches a total of 142 stades (26.3 km.). By subtracting this total from the actual distance of 31 km., one finds a difference of 4.7 km. If the distances recorded by Pausanias are correct, and I believe this is likely to be the case, given that he probably received his information from older sources, then there is only one possible explanation for these missing 4.7 km. The distance between Aegium and Helice was measured not from the city centre of Aegium, but from the bed of the ancient river of Selinus (speculatively located at present-day Paliokamares), up to which point the habitations of ancient Aegium probably extended (cf. Strabo 8, 7.5 : 387 : «And the Selinus river flows through the territory of Aegium»). Furthermore, the distance from this river bed to the great platan tree on the shore of Aegium is about 4 km.

The hypothesis that the site of ancient Helice is more likely to be found in the area of Trupia and not near the banks of the Selinus, as the established view claims, is supported by further indications, expounded in the following four main groups of argument.

A first consideration concerns the location of Trupia and Helice as being one and the same. In a passage from *Geographia* (III,15.16; cf. R. Stieglitz, 1981, 146 f.), a commentary on the ancient geographer Claudius Ptolemaeus (108 - 160 a.D.) recorded: "Helice, the Trupia (?) (or: below Trupia) is now deserted"

In later times, especially during the 17th and 18th centuries, authors frequently note that "Helice is now commonly called Trupia" (Meletios, *Old and New Geography*, in Greek, Venice, 1728, 361). While it could be argued that Ptolemaeus' information concerns the Roman period, it must also refer back to the classical period of antiquity. The location of Trupia, which means 'holes' and is related to the so-called cave of Heracles Buraicus (Xinopoulos, 1912, 109), has a particularly descriptive name, which cannot offer much pretext for misunderstandings. This is evident from the fact that these holes or openings are still clearly visible today.

What is more, it must be stressed that Ptolemaeus' passage encouraged prominent scholars, like Ernst Meyer (1939, 140 and 1957, 81 f.) and Nicholas Moutsopoulos (1958, 5), to reject the established belief regarding the site of Helice near Selinus and to relocate it on the right bank of Cerynites river.

Secondly, the location of Trupia is situated at a distance of 12 km. from Aegium, the city next in political power to Helice, that which occupied, after the destruction of Helice, its presidency in the Achaean league (Paus. 7,7,2). Two cities of such political significance could hardly stand removed by a distance of only 7.4 km. (40 stades), as Pausanias' description was considered to mean.

Besides, it is well known that the region of Aegialus had been divided equally between its twelve city-states (Herod. 1,145; Strabo 8,7,4; Paus. 7,6,1). Aegium, a city-state with a vast and populous rural hinterland (cf. Paus. 7,18,3 f; Strabo 8,7,5: 386), should have extended at least up to the former bed of Selinus river (Strabo 8,7,5: 387), or, even as is correctly maintained, up to the western bank of the Cerynites river (L. Papakosta, 1991, 235). Thus it is logical to suppose that Helice should have had a hinterland equal to the size of Aegium or, perhaps even greater, as befitted its position as capital of the Achaean league. Therefore, it should have occupied at least the area between the former beds of the rivers of Cerynites and present-day Buraicus (ancient Erasinus). Yet it is precisely this area (valley and hills) which

was known, in general, as Trupia. Hence, this area has been identified as ancient Helice since the time of Ptolemaeus.

Conversely, other territories, such as that which lies above the village of Rizomylos, between the rivers of Selinus and Cerynites, neither form part of the area called Trupia, nor fulfill the requirement of similar distances between city-states.

Thirdly, the identification of ancient Helice with Trupia seems to be in full accordance with the description given by Pausanias regarding the itinerary he followed from Aegium to Aegeira. After leaving Aegium and passing the Selinus river, Pausanias first visited the sea shore of what was believed to have been ancient Helice, where he records seeing "some ruins", but "corroded by salt water" (7,24,13 and 5). Afterwards he deviated from the main street (near the sea shore), to the right in order to reach Ceryneia, "on a mountain above the high road" (Paus. 7,25,5; cf. Strabo 8,7,5: 387: "Here is too Ceraunia, which is situated on a high rock, [in equal distance from Bura and the sea]").

If one accepts that the Cerynites river had once followed a straight course down to the sea, flowing somewhere between the villages of Rodia and Elaeon, and that subsequent seismic activity and alluvial deposits changed its course northwest, Pausanias' itinerary can be interpreted as follows. The first part of Pausanias' route took him to the supposed remains of ancient Helice in the region of Elaeon and Trupia. Soon afterwards, he turned inland towards Ceryneia, using the road along the Cerynites river which nowadays leads to the village of Mamousia. Returning to the main street by the same road, Pausanias proceeded for about 9 km. and then turned to the right once again, away from the sea shore (7,25,8), at a point where the present-day village of Trapeza lies. From this junction he followed the road up to the ancient city of Bura, a distance, according to Strabo (8,7,5: 386), of some 40 stades (7.4 km.). On his descent, he circled down along the road following the right bank of the Ladopotamos (speculatively the ancient Buraicus) river. Nearing the end of his itinerary, Pausanias must have seen and visited the cave of Heracles Buraicus (7,25,10). It is, however, difficult to ascertain the existence of this cave nowadays, given the intensity of seismic activity and frequency of landslides in the area. After leaving the cave, it seems Pausanias continued directly to the northeast, descending to the main street which leads to Aegeira.

The hypothesis that ancient Helice was situated at the location of Trupia is further supported by evidence found in the writings of Aelian in his work "On the characteristics of animals" (11,19). The author notes that five days before the earthquake of 373 b.C., various little creatures such as mice, martens and snakes, presumably in presentiment of the forthcoming earthquake, fled Helice for Ceryneia, it being the nearest neighbouring settlement of a height that could offer them shelter and protection. This concurs with the opinion expressed here, that Helice stood mainly upon the hill of Aghios Stephanos (Trupia), on the front or north side of the mountain of Aghioi Asomatoi; the city of Ceryneia standing some way above it, on the same range.

Fourthly, the hills at the location Trupia dominate the entire region between the Cerynites and the present-day Buraicus rivers, offering a natural barrier of obvious strategic value (Pict. 1). Thanks to the morphology of the ground, the two rivers complete the effective defence of the area.

Of these hills, Aghios Stephanos is particularly imposing, secure on at least three sides. To the south, the high mountains of Aghioi Apostoloi and Marathia rise behind the hill like a backbone. To the north, the ascent is steep and barely accessible. It should be borne in mind, however, that landslides following in the wake of the 1861 earthquake, must have changed the original topology of the landscape significantly. To the west gapes a precipitous ravine traversed by a partially artificial paved pathway leading to the hill. Finally, to the east the ground falls away, facilitating communication, yet providing the kind of terrain suitable for good fortification. Indeed, while ascending the hill from this side one can still observe huge stones fitting together, highly suggestive of Cyclopean walls (Pict.2).

Furthermore, on the hill of Aghios Stephanos there is an abundantly supplied fountain and also a sheltered cistern (Pict. 3). The latter have recently been fenced in, hindering examination of its present state of preservation. Clearly visible are the remains a watercourse, 0.7 metres in breadth, for the collection and redirection of rain water. Undoubtedly, these are constructions dating back at least to the 16th and 17th centuries, indicating that the area was used as a place of shelter and habitation of old. The location of the church of Aghia Irini, in close proximity to the cistern, can also be offered as evidence to suggest that another place of worship may have existed there in ancient times, as is often the case. Furthermore, proceeding westwards from the church, one comes to the above-mentioned, well-preserved pathway (Pict. 4, 5), similar to those which are found in other barely accessible places in Greece. This pathway constitutes the only means of safe passage over the steep ravine to the west of the hill. This goes some way to explain why this route was protected by ramparts and/or other ancient edifices, some of which are still in evidence today (Pict. 6). It is noteworthy that numerous travellers and scholars of the 19th century, such as Pouqueville (1820, 567, 569), Dodwell (1819, 303), Leake (1830, 397, 399) and Curtius (1851, 471), on their way from Mega Spileo to ancient Ceryneia (which they took erroneously for ancient Bura) and afterwards to Aegion, not only used this very path (they called this place “metokhi of Aghia Irini”) but reported in their writings that they had observed antiquities. In addition, from the rest of the hill and particularly at a short distance from the church, amidst the old olive trees, one can see certain configurations of stones fitting together in a geometrical formation (Pict. 7, 8), similar in style of construction and material to those which Papachatzis (1991, 165) mentions in connection with the walls of Aegeira. These observations strongly suggest that in older times, the hill of Aghios Stephanos at the location of Trupia must have been the site of a fortified inhabitation, thus combining the functions of both an acropolis and a settlement.

According to the ancient sources, it is known that Helice enjoyed the prestige and protection of an acropolis during the Mycenaean ages. Herodotus (1,145), Pausanias (7,1,8 and 7,6,1) and Strabo (8,7,4: 386) testify that at the end of the 11th century b.C., the Ionians of the area, after having been attacked by the Achaean King Tisamenus, son of Orestes and grandson of Agamemnon, took refuge in Helice and succeeded in withstanding the siege for a considerable time. Interestingly, the Achaeans were not able to take possession of the fortification and were finally obliged to allow the Ionians to depart under a truce. This suggests that the acropolis of Helice was situated in a particularly strong strategic position; invincible under attack and impenetrable under siege. Drawing on the arguments presented above, the hill of Aghios Stephanos could indeed offer such protection. Apart from the above-mentioned defensive advantages, the height of the conjectured site of Helice also boasts an extensive flat surface in the form of a plateau (estimated area of about 750 sq.metres), with a plentiful supply of potable water and cultivable soil. Moreover, the altitude of the proposed site is relatively low (about 200 metres), as is similarly the case for most Mycenaean acropolises such as Athens, Mycenae, Midea in Argos, Tiryns, Gla by Lake Copais.

No indications from the ancient sources bear witness to the later fate of the acropolis of Helice. Yet, whatever its historical evolution may have been, it would be peculiar and inexplicable if the inhabitants of Helice had not availed themselves, in subsequent years, to the protection of a fortified place. The likelihood of attack from pirates or other adversaries was very real (cf. Isocr. Panegyricus, 115). Likewise a safe haven from the dangers of flooding and malaria, both of which constantly threatened the region, would have necessitated the existence of some form of refuge.

Owing to the great importance the ancient Greeks attached to healthy living conditions, pertaining to climate and positioning of sites (Aristot. Polit., 7,10,1: 1330a 39; Hippocr. Airs Waters Places, 1 f., 5, 7 f.; Vitruvius, On Archit., 1,4,1), it seems more than likely that the

inhabitants would have found the living conditions in the lower-lying coastal areas acutely unpleasant to an intolerable degree.

In this sense, the maintenance of the acropolis in ancient Helice was, to my mind, a matter of survival for its inhabitants. As such, its development can not be paralleled to the usual evolution of other Mycenaean acropolises which, in general, gradually began to fulfil a more ceremonial and religious role (cf. Aristot. Polit., 7,10,4: 1330b 20 f.). The function of the acropolis of Helice can not be compared to those of other acropolises for an additional reason. It has been speculated that the acropolis of Helice encompassed a large surface area on the hill of Aghios Stephanos. As such, this area could well have offered habitation and protection to the entire population of Helice (estimated at 11-12 thousand people), and not simply a safe haven for the monarchical or oligarchical authorities, administrative staff and treasury officials, as was common practice elsewhere.

If we accept that the hill of Aghios Stephanos had sheltered the acropolis of Helice even during the years after the Mycenaean age, then it is likely that this settlement edged its way down the side below the acropolis (Wycherley, 1949, 5) to establish a sheltered harbour town in the place where the sanctuary of Helikonian Poseidon had been. The creation of such sheltered harbour towns under the auspices of the main city, was a fairly typical development for cities situated near the sea (e.g. Samos, Thassos, Halikarnassos), flourishing as centres of maritime commerce in times of peace, and providing vital logistical support in times of war.

Sheltered harbour towns had also been constructed in Aegialus, for example on the sea shore of Aegeira, about 2 km. below the fortified city (Paus. 7,26,1; Polyb. 4,57,5). Indeed, similar harbour villages, connected to an upper main town, can still be seen in many Greek islands or mainland coastal areas today. Since no other coastal city of the Achaean league was without the simultaneous cover and outlet of a fortified height, it would have been far stranger, as several eminent scholars have pointed out (Curtius 1851, 467-8; Bolte 1912, 2857; Marinatos 1960,189), if Helice had stood unprotected in the middle of a flat valley. This observation becomes all the more pertinent, when one considers the attractive target for pirates and plunderers that the treasury of Helice, with its abundance of wealth from the pilgrims' offerings, offered.

Consequently, up until the time of its destruction, the main city of ancient Helice must have stood solidly flanked on the plateau and the foot of the hill which was originally used as its acropolis (most probably the hill of Aghios Stephanos). The location of the sanctuary of Helikonian Poseidon had initially been situated near the sea, perhaps 1 km. from the base of the acropolis of Helice. Continuous alluvial deposits from neighbouring rivers built up and extended the coastline in front of the sanctuary seawards, so that by the time of the 373 b.C. quake, the sanctuary was, in fact, some way inland.

This latter hypothesis is further strengthened by additional arguments concerning the shaping of areas in the vicinity of river beds by the spread of alluvial deposits. It is well documented that such deposits can create a combination of fertile and uncultivable land extending over large areas. This is more pronounced when a river rises in high mountains of easily corrodible matter, as is the case in Achaia. In relation to the area above the site which Prof. Marinatos (1960, 192) suggests could be ancient Helice, he estimated that the average extension of the soil created by alluvial deposits, is 1 metre per year. However, at the 1979 Congress on Ancient Helice, others claimed that the deposits in the region of Valimitika village had covered an area of approximately 100 metres during one life time, taken as 75 years (Acts, 1981, 51 and 124). Even if we accept that part of the land created in this manner has sunk into the Corinthian gulf, either as a result of landslides, or by the gradual rising of the water level since ancient times, the rate of deposit in this area can be estimated at 1 km. per 1000 years. From this point of view, it would not be surprising if geological studies indicate that at the time of the destruction of Helice the deposits had created a coastline calculated at 4

km. away from the base of the surrounding hills (of similar opinion: Bolte 1912, 2857; Marinatos 1960, 190; Schwartz/ Tziavos 1979, 252).

Today, the distance from the foot of these hills up to the cape of Trupia, where the present-day Buraicus meets the sea, is approximately 2 km. The borders of Helice at the time of its destruction were at a distance of 12 stadia (2.2 km). from the shore (Strabo 8,7,2: 385). Thus, it follows that the theoretically habitable area of ancient Helice should be searched for along these 2 km., namely, from the conjectured site of the sanctuary of Poseidon to the foot of the hills, in the area enclosed by Cerynites in its ancient rectangular course and the present-day Buraicus - and not in the sea.

However, I believe the area of ancient Helice inhabited at the time of its destruction can be narrowed down still further, to include the hill of Aghios Stephanos, the sloping territory at the foot of this hill and the region situated on both sides of the main road leading from the city to the sanctuary and the sheltered harbour town of Helice. It has already been suggested that the inhabitants of Helice would avoid populating the unwholesome, flat sedimentary area of their territory, preferring to extend their inhabited area lengthways along the foot of the hill under their acropolis, rather than down along the marshy plain. This interpretation is in accordance with Homer's description of Helice as "broad" (Il. 2,575), which I believe we can interpret as "long and thin". It was most likely the narrowness of the area in addition to political change, such as the decline of the monarchy, that forced a considerable number of the inhabitants to leave Helice in 730/720 b.C. and establish the famous colony of Sybaris in southern Italy (Strabo 6,1,13: 263; Diod. 12,9,1). It is interesting to point out that the people of Helice built their new city between the estuaries of two rivers (the Crathis and Sybaris) joined by a sickle-shaped bay and sheltered, to the rear, by a high mountain, in all probability reminiscent of their motherland.

In view of these observations, the following hypothesis is proposed. Although the ancient city of Helice was destroyed completely, never to be inhabited again, not even in the Roman period, it does not necessarily mean, in my opinion, that Helice was submerged in its entirety. On the contrary, the greater part of it, lying above and around the acropolis (most probably at the hill of Aghios Stephanos), not only stood intact by the sea, but was later annexed to the city-state of Aegium (Strabo 8,7,5: 387; Paus. 7,25,4). Only the territory located between the sanctuary of Helikonios Poseidon (nowadays probably on the sea shore northwards from the hill of Aghios Stephanos, in the area between the camp site "Elaeon" and Cape Trupia) and the then existing coastline, two km. further to the north (nowadays below sea-level) was submerged. This part of ancient Helice is thought to have subsided gradually, rather than slid, to a depth of only 6 - 8 metres, since a) the tops of the trees of the sanctuary of Helikonios Poseidon were still visible (Paus. 7,24,12), b) the nets of the fishermen became entangled on the sea horse which was held by the still upright bronze statue of Helikonios Poseidon (testimony by Eratosthenes in: Strabo 8,7,2: 385) and c) the Ionians from Asia Minor were able to measure the dimensions of the submerged sanctuary in order to rebuild a similar sanctuary in their own region (Strabo 8,7,2: 385 and Curtius 1851, 490 FN 10 ; cf. Diod. 15, 49, 2 f.).

It should be added that similar low depth submersions were observed during later seismic activity, notably following the earthquakes of 14/26. 12. 1861 and more recently 15.6.1995. During the former (estimated magnitude 6.7 Richter) caused by the same fault responsible for the ancient Helice quake, a coastal zone 13 km. in length and 100 metres in breadth extending from the village of Temeni up to the estuary of Ladopotamus (ancient Buraicus) was reported to have sunk to a depth of 1 metre (J. Schmidt, 1867, 13, 20 f.). Furthermore, the quake of 1995 (6.2 Richter), caused settlements over an area of at least 1400 metres in length, stretching along the coastline in the area of Pera Kampos, near the camp site Elaeon, and up to the mouth of the ancient Cerynites river.

The behaviour of these submersions is connected to the fact that the sedimentary area of the three rivers do not have a solid foundation on the sea bed and can easily slide to the greater depths of the Corinthian gulf in the event of recurring seismic activity.

It is highly likely that the earthquake of 7 Richter (corresponding to 30 quakes of 6 Richter) which destroyed ancient Helice caused submersions of considerably greater length and depth than those caused by more recent quakes. It has already been suggested that an extended area of apparently 2000 sq.km. between the sanctuary of Helikonios Poseidon and the then existing coastline sank to a depth of 6-8 metres. Yet it is difficult to suppose that Helice in its entirety, a city of an area estimated at 1000.000 sq. metres, was totally submerged in this way.

Prof. Marinatos (1960, 189-190) stresses: "The trees of the grove of Poseidon, which surely grew in the plain, were almost covered by the tide, but not the town itself, since it stood on the height, apparently surrounded by walls" (...) " I see but one possibility: Both cities (i.e. Helice and Bura) possessed little harbour towns which were subsequently submerged, and the event was later transferred to the main towns" .

Therefore I believe that the greater part of ancient Helice still remains not on sedimentary rock, but on solid ground on the heights and the surrounding area of Trupia (most probably the hill of Aghios Stephanos). It is at this place that archaeological research should be primarily focussed. I have high expectations that by searching in this specific area, sufficient clues to help solve the riddle of ancient Helice may well come to light, hereby opening a new and exciting chapter in modern archaeology.



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