



## Summary :

Patraeus, one of the oldest colonies of northeastern Black Sea, was founded in the second quarter of the 6th c. BC, on the east coast of the Maeotian Lake (Azov Sea), and soon became a significant commercial centre of the Asian part of the Cimmerian Bosphorus. Between the 1st c. BC and the 1st c. AD it had a powerful fortification system. The city was destroyed in the late 4th century.

## Other Names

Patrasys, Patous

## Geographical Location

Northeastern Black Sea

## Historical Region

Cimmerian Bosphorus

### 1. Other Names

The city is reported by [Hecataeus of Miletus](#) and Stephanus Byzantius as Patrasys and by Pseudo-Scylax as Patous, while [Strabo](#) calls it Patraeus.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Topography

The ancient city of Patraeus is identified with the remains of a large settlement on the low northern coast of the bay of Taman, on the western edge of the town of Garkousa, in the area of Temryuk of the district of Krasnodar. In Antiquity, the city was on the Cimmeris Island, which was later joined to the peninsula of Tamanski due to the geomorphological activity of the Kuban River and the new level of the Black Sea.

### 3. Research

The settlement was excavated in 1926-1927 by a team of archaeologists from the Russian Union of Research Institutes for Social Studies (A. Bashkirov), in 1948 and 1950 by a team of archaeologists of the Russian Academy for the History of Material Culture (Yu. Krushkol) and later by the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences (1964-1968 M. Sokolsky, 1985-1989 B. Peters and A. Abramov to date).<sup>2</sup> The underwater excavation of the so-called "Lower City", which was covered by water, started in 1991 and is still underway. Research results show that the largest part of the 6<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC city, which covered an area of approximately 80,000 square metres, is under the water.<sup>3</sup>

### 4. Historical Background

According to archaeological evidence, Patraeus was founded in the second quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC.<sup>4</sup> Although the metropolis remains unknown, the [Ionian pottery](#) and the dedications to [Apollo Iatros](#), which were inscribed on sherds, indicate that the city was founded by Ionians with the possible participation of [Miletus](#).

The old city covered the western part of the settlement, while it was later transferred to the east. Research on building foundations of the underwater sector of the city, the so-called "Lower City", showed that the earliest buildings of



Patraeus in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC were made from mudbrick, while in the early 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC the buildings were made on foundations from alternate layers of clay and stones.

The city plan depended on the relief. [Houses](#) of different sizes were built strictly diagonally, following the contour of the cliff that separated the Lower from the Upper city. Judging from the remains of a large building with painted plaster and an exceptional cobbled street, the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> c. BC city covered an extensive area and the buildings were well arranged.

The city was destroyed in the early 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC, possibly due to a huge fire, which was followed by the extinction of part of the population. The turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD saw the construction of Patraeus' [fortification system](#), which was burned during a fire that destroyed the entire city in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, though it was reconstructed a few years later on the previous foundations. The city was rebuilt towards the end of the same century. Unlike the earlier stone-made buildings, the new ones were made from mudbrick on stone foundations.

In the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century the city was once again destroyed, possibly due to invasions of barbarian tribes. However, the final fall of ancient Patraeus is connected with the Hun campaign between 360 and 370.

## 5. Economy

It appears that in Archaic period the people of Patraeus were mainly farmers. Between 550 and 520 BC, six agricultural settlements were founded in the rural area of the city, while at the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC this number amounted to a total of 31.<sup>5</sup> Presumably the production of grain was so efficient that allowed exports, thus including the city in the network of [grain trade](#), the main sector of the Bosphorus economy. This is also evidenced by the large number of grain storage buildings during the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> c. BC and by the big **amphora** storage areas, a total of more than 30, with the earliest being dated to the last decades of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC. After they were unloaded from the ships and before they were dispatched to the mainland settlements or to Mediterranean trading centres, the amphoras were placed into special pits opened in the loamy soil.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC the city was already a key trading center, controlling a considerable part of the trade with the settlements of the Asian Bosphorus. A sizeable kiln, 3 metres in diameter, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup>3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD and used for producing amphoras and large utensils, was discovered in Patraeus in 1965.<sup>6</sup>

## 6. Monuments

### 6.1 Fortifications

At the turn of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, a ditch was dug around the city, while the extracted soil was used for creating a bank 2.60 m high. A 3.60 m wide fortification wall from mudbrick, measuring 0.52 × 0.52 × 0.07 m, was built on this bank. The ground plan of the fortification was probably rectangular. The 3.65 m-wide entrance gate was on the eastern wall and was fortified with two towers measuring 6.70 × 1.90 m. Building complexes of the same design, made from the same material, were erected on stone foundations on an elevated platform inside the fortification. Narrow alleys covered with potsherds and tile fragments ran among the buildings.



## 6.2 Cemetery

The early cemetery of Patraeus is under the Hellenistic city, where a number of burials were brought to light, with the oldest being dated to the second quarter of the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC. They were pit graves or children's burials in amphoras. The burials of the early Christian centuries were traced to the north and east of the city. They were burials in common pits and in graves dug into the ground, consisting of the corridor and a circular chamber.

1. Stephanus Byzantius, see entry "Patrasys"; Pseudo-Scylax 72; Strabo, 11.2.8.
2. For an extensive reference to the entire research on the city, see Abramov, A.P. – Zavoykin, A.A., "Patraeus-Cimmeris-Achilleon", in Grammenos, D.V. – Petropoulos, E.K. (edit.), *Ancient Greek Colonies in the Black Sea 2* (Thessaloniki 2003), pp. 1108-1131.
3. Абрамов, А.П. – Паромов, Я.М., "Раннеантичные поселения Таманского полуострова", *Боспорский сборник 2* (1993), p. 48.
4. Abramov, A.P. – Zavoykin, A.A., "Patraeus-Cimmeris-Achilleon", in Grammenos, D.V. – Petropoulos, E.K. (edit.), *Ancient Greek Colonies in the Black Sea 2* (Thessaloniki 2003), p. 1132.
5. Паромов, Я.М., "Принципы изучения эволюции системы расселения на Таманском полуострове в античное и средневековой время", in *Древние памятники Кубани* (Краснодар 1990), p. 47.
6. Сокольский, Н.И., "О гончарном производстве в азиатской части Боспора", *КСИА* 116 (1969), pp. 63-66.

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## Glossary :

	<b>amphora, the</b>
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from the greek words "αμφί"(on both sides) and "φέρω" (carry): vessel with long ovoid body and a considerably narrower neck made in various sizes from the smaller perfume oil container to the large storage receivers of liquids and solids. It stands on a small foot and it bears two invariable vertical handles on either side. Some of the distinguished types of the amphorae are these whose lower part is tapering to the point (narrow bottomed), the neck type, the Nicosthenian, the Nola, the Panathenaic, the Tyrrhenian, the SOS type.