



Summary :

Anchialos was a town in the West Pontic area. It was originally inhabited by both Greeks and Thracians. The city flourished in the Roman period and was visited by Emperor Septimius Severus (209/211).

Other Names

Pomorie (modern)

Geographical Location

Black Sea

Historical Region

Thrace

1. Anthropogeography

Anchialos (modern Pomorie) was a settlement in the west Pontic area, situated on the Pomorie peninsula on the northwestern shore of today's Burgas Gulf. To the NW of the peninsula lies a waste field and the firth salt lake. There, in the locality of Paleocastro, the remains of the Roman and Medieval settlements were found, as well as a few finds from the Hellenistic period. It is believed that the pre-Roman settlement is nowadays under the sea in the vicinity of the Krotyrion promontory.¹

The etymology of the name Anchialos is disputable. It probably derives from the Greek words ἀγχι- (near) and ἄλς (salt, sea) either because of the saltern nearby or simply as a poetic name for the settlement near the sea.² The Old Bulgarians called it Tuthon/Tohun but the majority of the transcriptions are closer to the original name.³ In 1934 Anchialos was renamed to Pomorie.⁴

Anchialos was founded by Apollonians as an **emporion** in the 5th or 4th century BC, but there are no traces from this phase of the settlement.⁵ A Thracian settlement was found in the vicinity dating from the 8th – 7th and the 5th – 3th centuries BC.⁶ At the beginning, Anchialos was inhabited by both Greeks and **Thracians**. During the Roman period, people from Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt settled there, and some of the native citizens obtained Roman civil rights.⁷ Bulgarian settlers came to Anchialos after the conquest of the city by the Bulgarian Kingdom (812 A.D.). During the Ottoman period, Turkish families (Muslims) lived in Anchialos, but their number was insignificant in relation to the Christian families (Greek and Bulgarian).⁸ Some Yuruk and Tatar communities also lived in the area.⁹

2. History

The first testimony to Anchialos was made by **Strabo** and relates to its foundation as a **polichnion** (small town) of the Apollonians.¹⁰ There are not many records concerning the early history of Anchialos.¹¹ The honorary decree of the Apollonians to Hegesagoros, son of Monimos from **Histria**, attests to the war between **Apollonia** and **Mesembria** over the **phourion** of Anchialos (2nd century BC)¹². During the war the city-wall was ruined, but the Apollonians re-conquered Anchialos.¹³ Another epigraphic source attests that in the late 1st century BC Anchialos was the see of a strategy, the **strategos** being the Thracian Apollonios, son of Eptaikentos.¹⁴ Emperor **Trajan** (98-117) proclaimed



Anchialos as a city with its own **chora**.¹⁵

The city flourished in the Roman period and was visited by Emperor [Septimius Severus](#) (209/211) and probably by [Diocletian](#) (294).¹⁶ Barbarian invasions after the mid 3rd century affected Anchialos. The city was attacked by Goths (ca. 270)¹⁷ and captured by Avars (584) who stayed there and negotiated terms with the Byzantine emperor.¹⁸ The city was a military base during subsequent Byzantine campaigns against the Avars and Slavs (585 and 591) and the newly created Bulgarian Kingdom (708, 763 and 766).¹⁹ Anchialos was included in the territory of the Bulgarian Kingdom in 812 after the victory of Chan Krum²⁰ over Emperor Nicephoros I.²¹

In the next centuries, it was conquered consecutively by the Byzantine Empire (864, 971, 1263, 1330) and the Bulgarian Kingdom (894, 1201, 1304, 1331).²² The city was captured by count Amadeus VI of Savoya in 1366 and it was given back to Byzantium a year later.²³ After the Ottoman occupation of the Balkans, Anchialos remained Byzantine until 1453 when Sultan Mehmed II conquered Constantinople. In the course of the Russian-Ottoman War from 1877-1878 resulting in the liberation of Bulgaria, Anchialos was occupied by the Russian army.

3. Economy

Three natural factors were important for Anchialos's economy: a) the firth, where at least in the Middle Ages was a working saltern,²⁴ b) the waste field, useful for agriculture, and especially for viticulture, and c) the harbour, where the local-produced goods were exported and foreign ones were imported.²⁵

In Roman times, Anchialos minted bronze coins during the period from the reign of Antoninos Pius (138-161) to that of Gordianus III (238-244).

4. Society-Institutions

According to available information, there were phylai, a demos and a boule in the Roman period.²⁶

5. Religion

The only evidence about religion is a dedication to Sarapis and Isis.²⁷ The temples of Sarapis and Concordia could be seen on the coins from the time of Septimius Severus (193-211), Maximin (235-238) and Gordian III (238-244).²⁸ During the Middle Ages, Anchialos was the seat of a bishopric, and until the 18th – 19th century the church was the most important educational institution.

6. Urban planning and Architecture

Nothing is known about pre-Roman Anchialos but it is likely that the city was fortified and covered an area of approximately 120 ha.²⁹ The streets were paved with stone-blocks, and were furnished with canals for rainwater.³⁰ The city walls were probably rebuilt in the course of [Justinian](#) I's building programme.³¹

The cemetery is located to the west and north-west of the city. A rich female grave dating to the 1st century BC – 1st century AD with gold jewelry was found.³² Another unusual find is the beehive tomb with a hollow column in the



chamber's center and five niches on the walls.³³

1. Nedev Dmitri, Panayotova Kristina, "Apollonia Pontica" in Grammenos, D, Petropoulos, E. *Ancient Greek colonies in the Black Sea* (Thessaloniki 2003) p.108.
2. Лазаров, М. Античният Анхиало. in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 7. Some scholars suggest that the name has Thracian origin, connected with the word *akhel (water) – Георгиев, В. *Тракийският език* (София, 1957) p. 67.
3. Italians – Anchialis, Achilo, Aquilo, Assilo, Lassilo, Laxillo, Laquilo (11-14 century); during Ottoman period the name was Ahilol, Ahiolu, Anhial, Achelo, Akjelos, Ahjal etc.
4. About the names of Pomorie – Лазаров, М. Античният Анхиало. in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 7-9.
5. Данов, Х., *Западният бряг на Черно море в древността* (София 1947) p. 123; Erhardt, N., *Milet und seine Kolonien. Vergleichende Untersuchung der kultischen und politischen Einrichtungen* (Europäische Hochschulschriften 3, Archäologie 206, Frankfurt am Main – Bern - New York 1984) p. 62-64; Lazarov, M., "Notizen zur griechischen Kolonization am Westlichen Schwarzen Meer. Schriftquellen und archäologische Denkmäler", in: Tsetschladze, G. (ed.), *The Greek Colonization of Black Sea Area* (Stuttgart 1998) p. 89-90; Лазаров, М. Античният Анхиало. in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 13-14; Лазаров, М., "Българското Черноморие през архаичния период. Състояние на проучванията", *Известия на Народния музей Бургас* 3 (2000) p. 29; Oppermann M., *Die westpontischen Poleis und ihr indigenes Umfeld in vorrömischer Zeit.* (Schriften des Zentrums für Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte des Schwarzmeerraumes 7., Langenweißbach 2004), p. 90, 179.
6. Стоянов, Т. "Археологически данни за неизвестно тракийско селище край Анхиало (Поморие)", *Археология* 35/3 (1993) p. 17-25.
7. Тачева-Хитова, М. "Ролята на преселниците от Мала Азия, Сирия и Египет в икономическия и културния живот на Западнопонтийските градове през I-III в.", *Известия на Народен музей Варна* 8 (23) (1972) p.39-40; Лазаров, М. Античният Анхиало, in: *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 34.
8. The data are about 17 – 19 century. In the Ottoman registers the population was described mainly as number of the families and divided in Muslims and Christians. Only occasionally Greeks and Bulgarians were mentioned. Грозданова, Е. "Османско господство.", in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 90; Тонев, В. "Преход към нова епоха.", in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 147.
9. Грозданова, Е. "Османско господство.", in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 91.
10. Strab. 7, 6, 1.
11. Nedev Dmitri, Panayotova Kristina, "Apollonia Pontica", in: Grammenos, D, Petropoulos, E. *Ancient Greek colonies in the Black Sea* (Thessaloniki 2003) p.107-109.
12. *IGBulg* I, 388 bis; *ISM* I, 64.
13. Erhardt, N. *Milet und seine Kolonien. Vergleichende Untersuchung der kultischen und politischen Einrichtungen* (Europäische Hochschulschriften 3, Archäologie 206, Frankfurt am Main – Bern - New York 1984) p. 294; Лазаров, М. Античният Анхиало. in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 16-17; Oppermann M. *Die westpontischen Poleis und ihr indigenes Umfeld in vorrömischer Zeit.* (Schriften des Zentrums für Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte des Schwarzmeerraumes 7. Langenweißbach 2004), p. 259.
14. *IGBulg* I, 371; *IGBulg* II 743 Лазаров, М. Античният Анхиало. in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 17-20.



15. The chora of Anchialos bordered with the territory of Mesambria in the north, with Deultum in the south, and probably reached the Tonzos river on the west. Лазаров, М. Античният Анхиало. in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 24-25.
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17. Jordanes *Getica* 108,109.
18. Theophilactus Symocatta *Historiae* I, 3,5.
19. Teophanes *Chronographia* (ed. C. de Boor I Lipsiae, 1883, p. 382, 432-33, 437); Nicephoros archiepiscopus Constantinopolitanus *Opuscula historica*, p. 43, 69, 73; Гюзелев, В. "Средновековният Анхиало (6-15 век)", in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 44-45.
20. Chan: ruler's title, used by medieval Bulgarian rulers until the mid 9th century.
21. Teophanes *Chronographia* (ed. C. de Boor I Lipsiae, 1883, p. 495-496); Бешевлиев, В. *Прабългарски надписи* (София 1979) p. 152.
22. Nicetas Choniates *Historia* p. 532-533; Theodorus Scutariotes *Compedium chronicum*, p. 429-430; Georgius Pachymeres *De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis*, libri XIII (Bonnae I, 1835), p. 349-350; Nicephoras Gregoras *Byzantina historia* (I,Bonnae, 1829) p. 60-61; Georgius Pachymeres *De Michaele et Andronico Palaeologis*, libri XIII (Bonnae II, 1835), p. 406-407, 601; Ioannes Cantacuzenus *Historiarum libri IV* (Bonnae, I) p. 340; Ioannes Cantacuzenus *Historiarum libri IV* (Bonnae, II, 1829) p. 459-468; Гюзелев, В. "Средновековният Анхиало (6-15 век)", in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 46, 53-56.
23. Гюзелев, В. "Средновековният Анхиало (6-15 век)", in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 58-59.
24. In the Ottoman period the salt-production is the most important subsistence method in Anchialos. Лазаров, М. Античният Анхиало. in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 33; Гюзелев, В. "Средновековният Анхиало (6-15 век)", in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 63-64; Грозданова, Е. "Османско господство.", in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 101-106; Тонев, В. "Преход към нова епоха.", in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 124-126.
25. Гюзелев, В. "Средновековният Анхиало (6-15 век)", in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 61-62.
26. Only four phylai are known (Egeleis, Herois, Bakhis and Tonzis); *IGBulg* I, 370.
27. *IGBulg* V, 5133
28. Лазаров, М. Античният Анхиало. in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 29.
29. Лазаров, М. Античният Анхиало. in *История на Поморие. Анхиало от древността до освобождението* (Поморие 2000) p. 27. The earliest fortifications' depiction was on the coins minted during the reign of emperor Commodus (181-183).
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31. Procopius Caesariensis *De aedificiis* III, 7.
32. Балабанов, П. „Оригинални накити от погребение на богата тракийка” *Изкуство* 26:4 (1976) p. 9-11; Балабанов, П. „Могилно погребение на богата тракийка от некропола на Анхиало” *Археология* 21:3 (1979) p. 23-32; Tonkova, M. „Hellenistic jewellery from the colonies in the West Black Sea coast”, *Archaeology in Bulgaria* 1 (1997) p. 83-102; Oppermann M., *Die westpontischen Poleis und ihr indigenes Umfeld in vorrömischer Zeit.* (Schriften des Zentrums für Archäologie und Kulturgeschichte des Schwarzmeerraumes 7. Langenweißbach 2004), p. 259, 284-285, 287, 290.



33. Петров, Т., Венедиков, И., Кузупов, Б. *Античната гробница край Поморие* (Бургас 1960); Василева, Д. „Два паметника на римската архитектура” *Археология* 15 (1973).

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	Стоянов Т. , "Археологически данни за неизвестно тракийско селище край Анхиало (Поморие)", <i>Археология</i> , 35/3 , 17-25

Webliography :

	Thrace
http://www.snible.org/coins/hn/thrace.html	

Glossary :

	chora, the
The agricultural land (including villages and land-plots) belonging to a polis. It was bounded with the polis on an administrative and economic basis.	
	emporion, the
Places where trade was conducted, usually small settlements of urban character on the borders or along the coasts and the commercial routes. With the same term are characterized the trade districts, the markets outside the walls of a city and/or settlements being themselves trade centers.	
	strategos ("general")
During the Roman period his duties were mainly political. Office of the Byzantine state's provincial administration. At first the title was given to the military and political administrator of the themes, namely of the big geographic and administrative unities of the Byzantine empire. Gradually the title lost its power and, already in the 11th century, strategoi were turned to simple commanders of military units, responsible for the defence of a region.	