



## Περίληψη :

The Early Byzantine province of Helenopontos (former Diospontos) was established in northeastern Asia Minor by Diocletian; its metropolis was Amaseia. In 535 the province was expanded with the addition of a part of Pontos Polemoniakos. In the 7th century it was incorporated in the Armeniakon theme, while in the 10th century a part of the province came under the theme of Coloneia. It was attacked and plundered by the Persians (6th c. and early 7th c.) and the Arabs (from the 7th c. onwards).

## Άλλες Ονομασίες

Province of Diospontos

## Γεωγραφική Θέση

northeastern Asia Minor, mod. northeastern Turkey

## Ιστορική Περιοχή

Pontos

## Διοικητική Υπαγωγή

Diocese of Pontica

## 1. Administration – Political Geography

The Roman/Early Byzantine province of Helenopontos was established under the name province of Diospontos by [Diocletian](#) (284-305) in northeastern Asia Minor between the years 293 and 305, when the large province of [Bithynia-Pontus](#) was divided; the province of Diospontos was renamed by [Constantine I](#) (308/324-337) in honour of his mother, augusta [Helena](#). In the Acta of the [First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea](#) (325), the cities of Amaseia, Zela and Komana have been registered as cities of the province of Diospontos. Diospontos/Helenopontos was a consular province. It belonged to the [diocese of Pontica](#) since 314, when the dioceses of the empire were founded.

The metropolis of Helenopontos was Amaseia, the seat of the governor, the [consularis](#), of the province, and later of the [metropolitan of Amaseia](#) as well. Amaseia was an inland city of strategic importance, holding a key position in commerce and in communication with the coast line. The two coastal cities of the province, [Amisos](#) and [Sinope](#), controlled the commercial transactions with the peninsula of [Crimea](#). [Synekdemos](#) by Hierocles, compiled in the first quarter of the 6th century, catalogues a total of seven cities in the Helenopontos.<sup>1</sup>

The province of Helenopontos initially bordered to the east the province of [Pontos Polemoniakos](#), which also included the coasts of Lazica, to the south the province of [Armenia I](#) and to the west the province of [Paphlagonia](#). With regard to the military administration, from 390 on, the Helenopontos, Pontos Polemoniakos and the provinces of Armenia formed a single precinct under a [dux](#). Then, from 472/3 on, [Leo I](#) charged [comes](#) Utriusque Ponti et Utriusque Armeniae with the defence of the wider area.

## 2. The 6th century reforms

In 535, according to [Justinian I's](#) (527-565) reforms, the provinces of Helenopontos and Pontos Polemoniakos were united under a [moderator](#) based in Amaseia, and the expanded Helenopontos became a border province of the empire for that year. The ecclesiastical administration was not disturbed due to ecclesiastical practice and to a special imperial order: the expanded province would accommodate two ecclesiastical metropolises, Amaseia and [Neocaisareia](#). The superior military official in the broader border region was the [magister militum per Armeniam](#).<sup>2</sup>



In 536, according to administrative reforms concerning the provinces of Armenia, parts of the eastern and southern Helenopontos were detached and annexed to the newly established provinces of Armenia I and Armenia II (former I) respectively. The cities detached, namely [Trebizond](#), [Cerasous](#) and Komana Pontica, had belonged to Pontos Polemoniakos until 535. The western border of the Helenopontos remained unaltered. Several researchers believe that the reforms of Justinian I should have been suspended in 548, although there is no clear clue in the sources for such a development. Whatever happened was a temporary development, as in 591 the administrative reforms of [Maurice](#) (582-602) resulted in the formation of three provinces of Armenia around the province of Helenopontos. It was Armenia I, Armenia II and Inner Armenia. To the west, the province of Paphlagonia was untouched. In the [notitia episcopatum](#) no.1 of the [Patriarchate of Constantinople](#), informing on the ecclesiastical administration in the early 7th century, the metropolitans of Amaseia and Neocaisareia are responsible for the operation of six and four bishoprics respectively.<sup>3</sup>

In the Middle Byzantine period the Helenopontos came under the [theme of Armeniakon](#), after 667. The part to the south of [Neocaisareia](#) came under the [theme](#) of Koloneia shortly before 863, while the [theme of Chaldia](#) was established in the northeastern part of the Armeniakon theme in the 920s.

### 3. Data on the history of the area

The history of the hinterland of the Helenopontos was different from the history of its coastal areas. The Persians, who never reached the coasts, were threatening the cities in the plain of Dazimon and Amaseia in the 6th century. Moreover, the [Arabs](#), who already from the 730s had been following the flow of the Rivers Iris, Lycus and Halys, from south to north, in order to advance into the Byzantine territory, were conducting successive raids. The settlements in the plains suffered, were eliminated and were abandoned to a large extent. The harbours had a better fate. In some cases the coastal settlements were successfully besieged and plundered, the acropolises however were never conquered. As for the defence of the wider area, it came within the competence of the Armeniakon theme.

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1. Honigmann, E. (ed.), *Le Synekdèmos d'Hiérokès et l'opuscule géographique de Georges de Chypre* (Bruxelles 1939), p. 37 (701.2-702.1).

2. See Jones, A.H.M., *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford 1971), pp. 225ff.; Garsoian, Nina G., "Αρμενία Μεγάλη και επαρχία Μεσοποταμίας", in *Ευνομία, Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler I* (Byzantina Sorbonensia 16, Paris 1998), pp. 239-264, esp. pp. 248, 249. In the early years of Justinian the title of the official was "magister militum per Armeniam Pontem Polemoniaccum et Gentes".

3. See Γυφτοπούλου, Σ., "Πολεμωνιακός Πόντος – Λαζική: οι εκκλησιαστικές έδρες, οι εκκλησιαστικές επαρχίες (7ος-16ος αι.)", *Ιστοριογεωγραφικά* 10 (2004), pp. 107-157, esp. Appendix no. 1, p. 136-140.

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	<b>Bryer A.A.M., Winfield D.</b> , <i>The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos, 2 (With Maps and Plans by R. Anderson and Drawings by J. Winfield)</i> , Washington D.C. 1985, <i>Dumbarton Oaks Studies</i> 20



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	<b>Zuckerman C.</b> , "Sur la Liste de Vérone et la province de Grande Arménie, la division de l'Empire et la date de création des diocèses", <i>Mélanges Gilbert Dagron</i> , Paris 2002, Travaux et Mémoires 14, 617-638
	<b>Felix W.</b> , <i>Byzanz und die islamische Welt im früheren 11. Jahrhundert</i> , Wien 1981, Byzantina Vindobonensia 14
	<b>Garsoïan N.</b> , "Αρμενία Μεγάλη και επαρχία Μεσοποταμίας", <i>Ευρυχία, Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler</i> , Paris 1998, Byzantina Sorbonensia, 16, 239-264
	<b>Γυφτοπούλου Σ.</b> , "Πολεμωνιακός Πόντος – Λαζική: οι εκκλησιαστικές έδρες, οι εκκλησιαστικές επαρχίες (7ος αι.-16ος αι.)", <i>Ιστορικογεωγραφικά</i> , 10, 2003/4, 107-157
	<b>Βλυσίδου Β., Λουγγής Τ., Λαμπάκης Σ., Σαββίδης Α., Κουντούρα-Γαλάκη Ε.</b> , <i>Η Μικρά Ασία των θεμάτων. Έρευνες πάνω στη γεωγραφική φυσιογνωμία και προσωπογραφία των βυζαντινών θεμάτων της Μικράς Ασίας (7ος-11ος αι.)</i> , Αθήνα 1998, Ερευνητική Βιβλιοθήκη 1
	<b>Lilie R.J.</b> , "Twelfth-century Byzantine and Turkish State", <i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i> , 16, 35-51
	<b>Adontz N.</b> , <i>Armenia in the Period of Justinian</i> , London 1970

Δικτυογραφία :

	Diocese of Pontica <a href="http://www.roman-empire.net/maps/empire/dioceses/diocl-pontica.html">http://www.roman-empire.net/maps/empire/dioceses/diocl-pontica.html</a>
	Le Synekdèmos d'Hiéroclès et l'opuscule géographique de Georges de Chypre, Bruxelles 1939: charted are the lands of: Europe, Asia Minor, Near East <a href="http://soltm.com/sources/mss/hierocl/harta1.htm">http://soltm.com/sources/mss/hierocl/harta1.htm</a>
	Provincial Reorganisation <a href="http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/secondary/BURLAT/21*.html#2">http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/secondary/BURLAT/21*.html#2</a>

Γλωσσάριο :

	<b>comes</b> 1. A title in the Roman and the Byzantine Empires, designating an official with political but mostly military jurisdiction. Especially the <i>comes Orientis</i> held the position corresponding to that of a vicar in Early Byzantine period. In the years of Justinian I, the comes in head of wider provinces assumed political and military powers, while in the Middle Byzantine period the Opsikion theme was one of the few themes which was the jurisdiction of a comes instead of a strategos. 2. A nobility title in medieval Europe.
	<b>consularis</b> Provincial governor. According to the later roman and the early byzantine administrative organisation, the provinciae consulariae belonged to the jurisdiction of the consuli and later the consularii (consularis, vir clarissimus as far as the senatoral rank is concerned). The dignity of consularios had been an administrative innovation of Constantine I, relating to the exercise of the political authority.
	<b>doukas (lat. dux)</b> Antiquity: Roman military commander who, in some provinces, combined military and civil functions.



Byzantium: a higher military officer. From the second half of the 10th c. the title indicates the military commander of a larger district. After the 12th c., doukes were called the governors of small themes.

**magister militum per Armeniam**

Στρατιωτικός διοικητής των βυζαντινών στρατευμάτων που υπερασπίζονταν τα αρμενικά και τα ποντικά εδάφη της αυτοκρατορίας. Το αξίωμα δημιουργήθηκε από τον Ιουστινιανό Α'.

**moderator**

A short-lived office, designating the governor of a province, introduced under Justinian. Moderators were in head of the administration of the diocese of Pontica, with administrative and military jurisdiction.

**Notitia episcopatum**

The Notitiae episcopatum are official documents of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Antioch, containing the ecclesiastical dioceses in hierarchical order. These documents were modified regularly.

**Synekdemos of Hierokles**

A geographical text book composed a little before 535 by Hierokles the Grammarian. It constitutes a list of 64 provinces and 923 (originally 935) cities of the Empire, being the most important source for the administrative and political geography of the Byzantine Empire prior to the Arab raids. It is assumed to have been based on state documents, and presents the political, administrative, and, to an extent, the ecclesiastical geography from mid-5th c. However, it contains additions from the age of Justinian I, while some of its evidence is still under discussion. Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos used it as a major source, along with Stephen of Byzantium, for the composition of the work "De thematibus". This most important work of Hierokles was published by G. Parthey (Hieroclis Synecdemos, Berlin, 1866), and A. Burckhardt (Hieroclis Synecdemos, Leipzig, 1893). The last and most authoritative edition is E. Honigmann (ed.), *Le Synekdèmos d'Hiéroklès et l'opuscule géographique de Georges de Chypre* (Brussels 1939).

**theme**

A Byzantine term that signifies wide military and administrative units under the administration of a strategos (general). The institution was consolidated in the 7th century and was characteristic for the organization and the division of Byzantine Empire at the Middle Byzantine period. The term applies also to the army unit that resided in each administrative unit and was staffed by farmer-soldiers. The thematic system was maintained until the end of Byzantine period. However, in the Later Byzantine period it was used in order to declare mostly tax units.

## Πηγές

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Schöll, R. (ed.), *Corpus Iuris Civilis* vol III: *Novellae* (Dublin, Zürich <sup>10</sup>1972), p. 84, 218-223.

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## Παραθέματα

1. The contributions of the governor of Helenopontos for the benefit of the imperial officials in Justinian I's years (527-565):

«Από του άρχοντος Ελενοπόντου ούτως  
τοις περιβλέπτοις χαρτουλαρίοις τρισί του θείου κουβουκλείου νομ.(ίσματα) θ' (= 9)  
τω πριμικηρώ των λαμπροτάτων τριβούνων νοταρίων νομ.(ίσματα) κδ' (= 24)  
τω αυτώ βοηθώ νομ.(ίσματα) γ' (= 3)  
τη τάξει των ενδοξοτάτων επάρχων υπέρ προστάγματος νομ.(ίσματα) μ' (= 40)»



Schöll, R. (ed.), *Corpus Iuris Civillis*, vol. III: *Novellae* (Dublin, Zürich<sup>10</sup>1972), p. 84.

## 2. The administrative reform of Justinian I:

« ... επάνιμεν δε αύθις επί τους Πόντους και την ένωσιν αυτών. τούτους γαρ νυν άμφω τους Πόντους τους ταις τρισκαίδεκα πόλεσι περιερχομένους εις μίαν επαρχίαν αύθις συνάγομεν, και αποδίδομεν αυτοίς της μεν παλαιότητος την ένωσιν, της δε νεότητος την επωνυμίαν....

Πάσαι τε αι τρισκαίδεκα πόλεις επαρχίας έστωσαν μιας αφαιρουμένης μεν ουδετέρας αυτών των μητροπόλεων (Αμασειας τε φαμέν και Νεοκαισαρειας) του της μητροπόλεως ονόματος...»

Schöll, R. (ed.), *Corpus Iuris Civillis*, vol. III: *Novellae* (Dublin, Zürich<sup>10</sup>1972), p. 213.

## Βοηθ. Κατάλογοι

### 1. The Bishoprics of the Diospontos Province accordingg to the Acta of Nicaea (325, First Ecumenical Council):

Amaseia

Komana

Zela

Honigmann, E. (ed.), «La liste originale des pères de Nicée (A propos de l'évêché de Sodoma: en Arabie)», *Byzantion* 14 (1939), pp. 17-76.

### 2. The Cities of the Helenopontos Province according to the Synecdemos of Hierokles:

Amaseia

Ivora

Zela

Zalichos

Andrapa

Amisos

Sinope

Honigmann, E. (ed.) *Le Synekdèmos d'Hiéroklês et l'opuscule géographique de Georges de Chypre* (Bruxelles 1939), p. 37 (701.2-702.1).

### 3. The Cities of the Helenopontos Province according to the Novel of the year 535:

#### a) The Cities in the Helenopontos Province of the previous era

Amaseia

Ivora

Euchaita



Zela

Andrapa

Sinope

Amisos

Leontopolis

b) The cities of the Pontos Polemoniakos Province of the previous era

Neocaesareia

Komana

Trebizond

Cerasous

c) The Lazic Cities that until 535 pertained to the Pontos Polemoniakos Province

Petra

Archaeopolis

Rhodopolis

Schöll, R. (ed.), *Corpus Iuris Civillis*, vol. III: *Novellae* (Dublin, Zürich <sup>10</sup>1972), p. 84, 218-223.  
(Dublin, Zürich <sup>10</sup>1972), σελ. 84, 218-223.

4. The Bishoprics of the Helenopontos Province according to the Notitia Episcopatum of Constantinople no 1:

Amaseia

Amisos

Ivora

Andrapa

Zalichos

Zela

Darrouzès, J. (ed.), *Notitiae episcopatum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Paris 1981), no. 1.267-273.