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**East Adriatic in Pseudo-Aristotle's *De  
Mirabilibus Auscultationibus***

**David Štrmelj**

**University of Zadar**

[dstrmelj@yahoo.com](mailto:dstrmelj@yahoo.com)

**Abstract:** The aim of this article was to gather and evaluate all data concerning the East Adriatic coast from Pseudo-Aristotle's *De Mirabilibus Auscultationibus*, and to find out, if possible, which sources the author of this work had used concerning the scoped territory. In *De Mirabilibus* the following areas are mentioned: the island of Palagruža (§ 79), upper Adriatic with Kvarner bay (§ 81, 105), south Velebit area (§ 104), and southern Illyria (§ 22, 128, 138). Pseudo-Aristotle rarely quotes his sources, but by comparison of his data with those from other ancient literary works, we can conclude that one of his main sources for East Adriatic was Theopompus of Chios.

**Key words:** Pseudo-Aristotle, paradoxography, East Adriatic, mythography, Theopompus

*De Mirabilibus Auscultationibus* is a third century work of paradoxographical genre which found its way into *Corpus Aristotelicum* and is thus attributed to Pseudo-

Aristotle.<sup>1</sup> Despite of its name, and despite the fact that majority of chapters begin with the formula 'they say' or 'it is said', it seems that this literary composition (as well as the other works of this genre) is rather 'copied from books' then heard by the writer himself, and thus should be brought to the context of the ancient libraries and 'the people who worked in those libraries'.<sup>2</sup> As noted in preface of Loeb Edition; 'This curious collection of 'marvels' reads like the jottings from a diary' - the work is indeed a strange mixture of useful data that could be carefully used by classical scholars and silly misinformation such as, for example, chapter 25 which informs us that '*In Cyprus they say that mice eat iron*'.

Although the author is silent about his sources, in this article we will try to indicate which historical and geographical works he could have used. Concerning the east Adriatic coast, *De mirabilibus* deals with Kvarner bay and Velebit channel (chapters 81., 104., 105.), Palagruža island (chapter 79.) and the peoples of southern Illyricum (chapters 22., 128., 138.) so I have divided this article into three separate parts concerning the subject rather than paragraphs in the original text.

### 1. Diomedes' Island

According to Iliad, Diomedes was one of the greatest Greek heroes fighting under Troy.<sup>3</sup> Homeric epic describes him as fearless warrior who didn't even hesitate to injure Aphrodite when she intervene to save her son Aeneas. However, this event proved to be crucial for Diomedes' fate because vengeful goddess turned his wife against him, and after relatively peaceful voyage from Troy to Argos, hero was forced

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<sup>1</sup> If not stressed otherwise, all mentioned years and centuries are those B.C.

<sup>2</sup> The autor was most certainly a member of Peripatetic school, L. Gibbs (2009), For the new views on the transmission of Aristotelian corpus see I. Pajón Leyra (2013) 723. - 733.

I have used Loeb's translation from *Loeb Classical Library's edition of Aristotle's Minor Works* (1936) and I would like to thank Teuta Serrequi from the Department of Classical philology at the University of Zadar for help with the Greek translation.

<sup>3</sup> For the overview of, mostly Greek myths, conected with Illyricum see M. Šašel-Kos (2004) 494. – 504., For the short summary of resarch concerning the cult of Diomedes in the Adriatic M. P. Castiglioni (2008) 9. – 28., and for the excellent critique of literal soucers for Diomed's Adriatic adventures (on Croatian language, but with extensive bibliography) see R. Katičić (1989) 39.-79., or R. Katičić (1995.) 333. – 387. Archeological evidence behind the cult of Diomedes is first discussed in article published by S. Čače, B. Kirigin; (1998.), 63-110., summary of the archeological excecation on the Palagruža Island can be found (on Croatian language) in B. Kirigin's book– B. Kirigin (2012.), and for the excecations of Diomed's sanctuary on cape Ploča see paper by S. Čače (1997.), , 21-44. or PHD thesiss of L. Šešelj (2009.)

to emigrate west in order to save his own skin. In Italy, Diomedes settled in Daunia, where he helped king Daunus in a struggle with the Messapians. He also fought a dragon, founded new cities and institutionalised new cults. Among other literary sources, we can quote Pseudo-Aristotle who mentions temples in Daunia and among Peuceptini where belongings of Diomedes and his crew were honoured.<sup>4</sup> However, I will concentrate on chapter 79. where the fate of hero and his crew is described as well as his last resting place.<sup>5</sup>

Careful analysis of other written sources gives us similar variants of this story.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes Diomedes is buried on the island, but other authors tell us that his last resting place is in Daunia – with only sanctuary on the island. It is indicated that he dies of old age, or sometimes is killed, but not by Aeneas as Pseudo-Aristotle writes, but rather treacherous king Daunus himself. In other variants of the myth local Illyrians murdered his crew while they are offering sacrifice on the island, and gods transform their souls into birds. More often his crew is grief-stricken because of the hero's death on such grand level that god(s) transform them into birds out of compassion. Other variants of the myth suggest that Athena turned them into birds to deliver them from starvation after Diomedes's death. Those birds sometimes dwell in a town-like community or sit in a circle around hero's grave. They are friendly to Greeks and aggressive towards barbarians.

We can see that all these stories have something in common – Adriatic island named Diomedea where there is sanctuary and/or grave of the hero, where birds, which came into existence by divine transformation of his friends, dwell, and are hostile towards barbarians but friendly towards Greeks.

However, actual identification of Diomedea proved to be somehow problematic. Medieval tradition and imprecise data brought to us by Pliny and Varro among other authors, suggested that Diomedes's island(s) were Tremiti near Apulia, but careful

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<sup>4</sup> Ps-Arist. *Mir. ausc.* 109., 110.

<sup>5</sup> *They say that in the island of Diomedea in the Adriatic there is a remarkable and hallowed shrine of Diomedes, and that birds of vast size sit round this shrine in a circle, having large hard beaks. They say moreover that if ever Greeks disembark on the spot they keep quiet, but if any of the barbarians that live round about land there, they rise and wheeling round attack their heads, and wounding them with their bills kill them. The legend is that these birds are descended from the companions of Diomedes, who were wrecked near the island, when Diomedes was treacherously murdered by Aeneas, the king of those parts at the time.* Ps-Arist. *Mir. ausc.* 79.

<sup>6</sup> As discussed in R. Katičić (1989) 41. – 50., S. Čače, B. Kirigin (1998) 66. - 67., and J. Marohnić (2010) 43. – 47. where all literary sources have been mentioned and evaluated.

analysis of written sources by S. Čače and B. Kirigin as well as more precise data brought to us by Strabo showed that ancient authors were referring to the small mid-Adriatic archipelago of Palagruža.<sup>7</sup> The islands have a central position in the Adriatic, as one of the crucial navigation points, so it was suspected that the larger island of Velika Palagruža could have been a place of some ancient cult, however only when pottery fragments with name of Diomedes found a way into local museum a proper examination was conducted.<sup>8</sup>

Archaeological excavations were conducted on the site called 'Salamandria' (see fig. no. 1.). Excavation were limited because stone pavement is covering most of the site, as well as the remains of church of St. Michael.<sup>9</sup> It soon became clear that it is possible to identify several successive building phases which have obliterated remains of a Greek shrine. Those later remains were recognised as parts of a fort, one of the many in a defensive chain of early medieval byzantine fortifications known as the "Justinian's naval limes", but now, after new excavation campaigns it seems that the 'so-called fort' was build already in classical antiquity at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>10</sup>

The most stunning findings were pottery fragment – around 12 000 of them, many with engraved name of Diomedes– which were push aside during later construction. Now it is clear that those fragments are only remains of numerous votive gifts brought by sailors in order to secure their voyage or the thank the hero for safe passage.

Analysis of the same fragments revealed that the shrine was used from 6<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of new era, with steady decrease of gifts from the Hellenistic period.<sup>11</sup>

While archaeological date cannot help us in order to depict Pseudo Aristotle's temple, written sources say a little bit more. Pliny writes about tumulus on a island, and earlier sources such as Pseudo Aristotle or Theophrastus mention the 'temple', while Lycophron writes about theatre-shaped rising ground.<sup>12</sup> It is possible to imagine

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<sup>7</sup> S. Čače, B. Kirigin (1998) 68. -70.

<sup>8</sup> B. Kirigin (2003) 42., Palagruža is situated roughly around half-way from Corcyra to Spina and Adria, and about half-way from Gargano to island Vis L. Šešelj (2009) 382.

<sup>9</sup> Pavement was build in the 18th or 19th century A.D. by fishermans from island Vis as a part of water tank, and archeological team decided not to remove it entirely because of its cultural importance.

<sup>10</sup> B. Kirigin, (2003) 375., For the comprehensive summary of early byzantine fortification architecture in coastal Croatia see Ž. Gunjača (1986) 124-136., Ž. Tomičić (1990) 139-162, Ž. Tomičić, (1990.) 29-53, Ž. Tomičić (1997), , 97.-100.

<sup>11</sup> B. Kirigin (2003) 377.

<sup>12</sup> Plin. NH X., 126-7, Lycophr. 594., Thphr. H. P. 4., 6.

tholos-shaped temple from Classical period, which desintegrated during Hellenistic times into tumulus only to be levelled down completely around the time of Pliny's death.

Although some scholars are still sceptical about the nature of this shrine, is clear that the cult of Diomedes was of imminence important for Greeks and locals alike.<sup>13</sup> According to B. Kirigin, Diomedes was protector of the sailors and was revered in the entire Adriatic basin.<sup>14</sup> It seems he was perceived as a master of storms and wild winds – booth phenomena's were synonyms for Adriatic sea for classical Greeks.<sup>15</sup> Thus it is easy to comprehend the establishment of Diomedes cult on this island: Written as well as archaeological sources tell us that from the late 6<sup>th</sup> century regular trade contact were established between Spina, Adria and Athens, and in following centuries trade only intensified, all of which we can brought into connection with establishment of other Diomedes' shrines, such as one on Cape Ploča.<sup>16</sup>



Figure 1. – Island of Velika Palagruža. On the plane named Salamandria (in red circle) was situated Pseudo Aristotle's temple mentioned in chapter 79.

## 2. Upper Adriatic and Velebit channel

<sup>13</sup> For example, M. Zaninović is one of the prominent local scholars who disagrees with this opinion. M. Zaninović (2013, Zagreb) 27.

<sup>14</sup> B. Kirigin (2003) 377.

<sup>15</sup> L. Šešelj 2009. 362.

<sup>16</sup> L. Šešelj 2009. 381.

As it is the case with Diomedes' island, the Upper Adriatic is also mentioned by Pseudo-Aristotle in context of mythological geography. In chapter 81., we are informed about the existence of the Electrides – the mythical Amber islands.<sup>17</sup>

It appears that in this passage Pseudo-Aristotle broke his telling about Daedalus in order to insert yet another story about the Eridan, Faeton and the lake, were Amber islands would serve as a connection between those two narratives, so for now we will dismiss the central part of this paragraph, and concentrate on the islands themselves. Before proceeding with any kind of analysis, it must be explained why these islands, which were according to Pseudo-Aristotle situated around Po river's delta, we associate with the east Adriatic coast.

It seems that already in classical antiquity scholars distinguished two literally traditions which can be traced to the Greek semi-mythological geography dating to the archaic period. One of these traditions places Electrides somewhere around Po estuary as we are informed by Pseudo-Aristotle and Strabo, while the other mention these islands in front of the East Adriatic coast, somewhere around Kvarner bay and next to the equally mysterious Copper islands.<sup>18</sup>

Greek geographers and mythographers distinguished several island archipelagos in the North-eastern Adriatic; the Electrides, the Apsirtides, and the Copper islands, with Mentorides and Liburnides more to the south. While first three island groups we can put into connection with mythological geography, Mentorides and Liburnides are

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<sup>17</sup> *In the Electrides Islands, which lie in the gulf of the Adriatic, they say that two statues have been dedicated, one of tin and one of copper, wrought in the old-fashioned style. It is said that these are the works of Daedalus, a reminder of the old days, when escaping from Minos he came to this district from Sicily and Crete. They say that the river Eridanus silted up these islands. There is a lake apparently near the river, containing hot water. A heavy and unpleasant smell comes from it, and no animal ever drinks from it nor does bird fly over it without falling and dying. It has a circumference of two hundred stades, and a breadth of ten. The local inhabitants say that Phaethon fell into this lake when he was struck by a thunderbolt. There are many poplars in it, from which oozes the so-called electron. They say that this is like gum, and hardens like a stone; it is collected by the inhabitants and brought to the Greeks. They say that Daedalus came to these islands, and putting in there set up in one of them his own image, and in the other that of his son Icarus. Later on, when the Pelasgians, who were expelled from Argos, sailed there, Daedalus fled, and sailed to the island of Icarus.* Ps-Arist. *Mir. Ausc* 81.

<sup>18</sup> Strabo V, 1, 9., For newer bibliografy and short overview of diferent opinions concerning this problem see R. Katičić (1995) 31. -115., 183. – 199., 305. – 333., M. Zaninović (1996, Zagreb) 320 – 325., M. Zaninović, (2005) 8. - 16., J. Čus-Rakonić, (2012) 395. – 400., M. Blečić, (2012) Zagreb, 215 – 230

designated with actual native populations living in that aerie.<sup>19</sup> Mentorides are obviously connected with Mentores, a native ethnic which was, as we will see, later either assimilated or equated with the Liburnians, and which lived somewhere on the sea shore on the foothills of Velebit, thus the Mentorides islands were often identified with islands Pag and/or Rab.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, Liburnides were at Pliny's time bounded to the Zadar archipelago, yet at earlier periods the name was used to designate various Adriatic islands, all of them being southern then Kvarner bay.<sup>21</sup> We can with relative safety identify Apsirtides with Cres and Lošinj or perhaps, even with all Kvarner islands in general. As we will see later, the Greeks connected Osor (ancient Apsorus), one of the important local settlements which probably gave name to the entire archipelagos, with Apsirt who was allegedly killed there by Medea and Jason.

So in the case of the 'Kvarner' Electrides we are basically left with only two solutions: we can dismiss these information altogether or we could assume that mythological stories had at least some foundation i.e. some existing islands were designated by mythographers as Electrides.

It seems that was Pliny's opinion – He simply dismissed the existence of Electrides in front of Po's delta;

*It is the fact, however, that there never were any islands there so called, nor, indeed, any islands so situate as to allow of the Padus carrying down anything in its course to their shores.*<sup>22</sup>

Yet he was willing to give full explanation about Electrides in Kvarner bay;

*Some islands near them (Apsirtides) have been called the Electrides, upon which amber, which they call electrum was said to be found; a most assured instance however of that untruthfulness which is generally ascribed to the Greeks, seeing that*

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<sup>19</sup> Pseudo-Skylax's Periplous informs us about huge island called Istrida (probably Istrian peninsula), Amber islands and Mentorides (c 20.,21.), while Pseudo-Scymnus's Periegesis mentions Amber islands between Apsirtides and Liburnids adding the two islands rich with copper near Istra (verses 369 – 394.) Strabo mentions Apsirtides in the north, Liburnides in front of the Liburnia proper and then the 'other islands' to the south (Strabo VII. 5.5.) while Pliny informs us about the island of Cissa near the territory of the Istri, and the Pullaria and Apsirtides in Kvarner bay (Plin. HN. III. 30)

<sup>20</sup> M. Zaninović (1996) 321.

<sup>21</sup> R. Katičić (1995) 197.- 198.

<sup>22</sup> Plin. HN., XXXVII, 11

*it has never been ascertained which of the islands were meant by them under that name.*<sup>23</sup>

So it seems that Greeks at one period of history considered Kvarner islands as source of amber. All of this we can bring into connection with so called 'Amber road' which connected Baltic and Adriatic, and was used to transport Baltic amber to the Mediterranean since bronze age.<sup>24</sup> It appears that majority of archaic and classical Greeks were uninformed about details of this process, so they imagined different North Adriatic sites (such as various islands and river Po) as place of origin of amber and not as just one stop in their transport.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, it seems that various East-Adriatic ethnics actively participated in this interchange. We can assume that amber trade was one of the source of wealth for Dolenska culture with its extremely rich burials, and Baltic amber itself is often present in graves of local iron age cultures such as Liburnian and Iapodian.<sup>26</sup> This is especially emphasised in case of the Iapodi whose graves regularly contain amber objects, with 650 pieces of amber jewellery alone in grave 63. at Krmpolje necropolis.<sup>27</sup>

So how was Daedalus brought in the Upper Adriatic? The well-known myth tells the story of a brilliant Cretan inventor who build an artificial cow for Pasiphaê, the wife of king Minos, and was because of that forced to construct labyrinth for Minotaur – a monster born by the same Pasiphaê. Daedalus was later imprisoned with his son Icarus by Minos, from whose captivity he escaped by constructing artificial wings.<sup>28</sup> Although Icarus perished during the flight, Daedalus reached Italy, where he visited numerous places often persecuted by angry Cretan king as we are informed by various versions of the same myth. But in Greek mythology Daedalus was not just a travelling hero, he was also a greatest travelling craftsman.<sup>29</sup> He was often labelled as inventor and architect of marvellous buildings, but foremost he was known as magnificent sculptor. According the Diodor, Daedalus was the first sculptor who managed to make

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<sup>23</sup> Plin. *HN.*, III. 30.

<sup>24</sup> M. Zaninović (2005) 14. – 16.

<sup>25</sup> More about this problem A. Mastrocinque, (1991).

<sup>26</sup> D. W. Harding, (1994) 407., Š. Batović,(1987) 363. – 367., L. Bakarić, (2012), The Greek literary sources often mention local peoples, especially liburnians as skilled navigators and rulers of the Adriatic. A. Kurilić, (2008) 5. -15.

<sup>27</sup> Spectrographic analysis confirmed Baltic origin of amber found in local graves . Bakarić (2006) 17., 19., 21., 62.

<sup>28</sup> Other version of the same myth describes Daedalus escape via ship with specially designed sail, but when he escaped Minos's fleet, Icarus drowned near island named Icaria.

<sup>29</sup> R. L. Fox (2008) 201. – 216.



a statues with opened eyes, with legs separated in a stride and with extended arms.<sup>30</sup> Also, it seems that Greek scholars such as Pausanias attributed various famous statues which still existed in their age to Daedalus. Some of those images were very old, made from wood, in archaic fashion and often in a form of *Xoanon*.<sup>31</sup>

As the Greek world expanded westwards, Greeks used the myth of Daedalus to construct a familiar historical geography of new lands – in short many non Greek wonders erected by previous inhabitants were labelled, because of its archaic construction, as works of Daedalus, and thus a part of Greek history.<sup>32</sup> Pausanias even informs us that Antiphemus, after sacking the Sicilian city of Omphace, brought back home to Gela an image thought to be made by Daedalus.<sup>33</sup> It is possible, that was the case with the statues on the Electrides islands, i.e. the local sculptures were interpreted as work of Daedalus by Greek voyagers.<sup>34</sup> All of that would imply that Electrides islands, without going into the problem of their attribution and local name, were real and not imaginary as some scholars thought.<sup>35</sup>

Putting a side relatively rich iron age sculptural tradition of the Western Adriatic coast, it must be noted that archaeological excavations at the nearby Istrian peninsula revealed a number of impressive stone statues, mostly at the Histrian capital of Nesactium, which would imply that other cultures of protohistoric east Adriatic were not unfamiliar with this kind of art.<sup>36</sup> According to the archaeological data, Istri and their neighbours sustained vivid contacts with the Etruscans - we can see that not only in rich Etruscan import in local burials but in some aspects of Histrian sculptural tradition.<sup>37</sup> Daedalus was known among the Etruscans known as 'Taitale' where he was often depicted as winged creature, a frequent motif in Etruscan iconography, thus being one of the Greek mythical personalities adopted very quickly and successfully into Etruscan pantheon.<sup>38</sup> All this considered, we can argue that there is a possibility

<sup>30</sup> Diod. Sic. IV. 76.

<sup>31</sup> Pau. II. 4., IX. 3., IX. 40.

<sup>32</sup> R. L. Fox (2008) 205.

<sup>33</sup> Pau. VIII. 46.

<sup>34</sup> Pseudo Aristotle also mentions Sardinia where nuraghi are described as buildings in 'ancient Greek style' which were built by Iolaus the son of Iphicles who descended from Heracles. Ps-Arist. *Mir. ausc.* 100

<sup>35</sup> R. Katičić (1995) 184.

<sup>36</sup> About sculptures among the Istri see K. Mihovilić, *Nezakcij* (2001), S. Kukoč, (Zadar, 2001) 1-22, S. Kukoč, (2003) 52-60.

<sup>37</sup> K. Mihovilić (1986) 54.

<sup>38</sup> R. L. Fox (2008) 204.

that statues on the Electrides were not only '*interpretatio graeca*' of local cults but could have been really depicting Daedalus i.e. as local interpretation of original Greek myth.

The fact that one of the Pseudo Aristotles' statues was made from copper we can bring into connection with nearby copper islands mentioned only by Pseudo-Scymnus and thus conclude that so called 'amber road' was used for transport of much more goods than amber alone – with copper and tin being two of them.

Staying in the same geographical area, the chapter 104. gives us precise data concerning local populations, and their trade relations.<sup>39</sup>

Where were mentioned Mentorice, Istriane and Delphium? Those names in that particular form do not appear at any other ancient literary source. Istriana should be probably identified as Istrian peninsula with Mentorice as a land of Mentores and Delphium mountain as Velebit (see fig. no.2). Early sources depicting east Adriatic such as Pseudo-Skylax, Theopompus (quoted by Pseudo-Scymnus), Hekataios (quoted by Stephan of Byzantium) etc., mention a greater number of smaller communities which were probably assimilated into bigger ethnics as the time passed by, thus consequently sources describing the Roman conquests during last centuries B. C. mention only 3 large ethnics on today's Croatian coast from Istra to the Neretva river.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, Pseudo-Scymnus's *Periegesis* quoting earlier sources mentions Ismeni and Mentores as eastern neighbours of the Istri, and as we have seen, Pseudo-Skylax's *periplous* mentions Mentorides islands as a part of Liburnia.<sup>41</sup> We have also seen that some scholars even identified Mentorides with islands Rab and Pag and Electrides with Krk, Cres and Lošinj, thus Mentores should have lived somewhere on the sea shore from today's northern Dalmatia to the northern Kvarner, along the Velebit mountain.<sup>42</sup>

It would be futile to search a high peak from which one can see ships sailing in the Pontus, but it seems that Greek literary tradition cherished a thought of some very high mountain –either Velebit or east Alps – around upper Adriatic. Pseudo-Scymnus

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<sup>39</sup> *There is said to be a mountain between Mentorice and Istriane called Delphium, having a high peak. When the Mentores who live near the Adriatic climb this peak they can apparently see ships sailing in the Pontus. There is a spot in the middle in which, when a common market is held, Lesbian, Chian and Thasian goods are bought from the merchants who come up from Pontus, and Corcyraean amphorae from those who come from the Adriatic.* Ps-Arist. *Mir. Ausc* 104.

<sup>40</sup> S. Čače, (1979) 43. - 45.

<sup>41</sup> Critical translation with useful commentaries can be found in M. Križman, (1997) 37. - 40., 59. – 65.

<sup>42</sup> M. Suić (1981), 121., M. Zaninović (2005) 16.

informs us about the mountain called 'Northern Pillar' which is 'very high' and which breaks into the sea, with Celts, Veneti and Istri living around it.<sup>43</sup> This 'Northern Pillar' we can probably connect with a set of mythological 'pillars' of which most renowned were the pillars of Heracles i.e. the Gibraltar. Strabo, who was more interested in real than mythological geography, writes about the *'Iapodes who are situated on the very high Albian Mountain, which is the last mountain of the Alps.'*<sup>44</sup> Information about 'common market place' is for Pseudo-Aristotle proof of Pontus's vicinity, but for us this is an important insight into local trading habits. It is not hard to understand the context around this information - Velebit is a quite long mountain, which stretches over 150 km along the Adriatic shore. Populations living at the relatively cramped seashore enjoyed the Mediterranean climate and benefits from the exploitation of the sea but were limited with only a hints of good soil. Communities existing on the eastern, Lika's side of the Velebit extensively used rich forests, soils and pastures but lacked the salt for their animals and a access to the maritime trade and goods.<sup>45</sup> In short, during pre-modern period Velebit mountain was a medium of connection between these two populations, rather than impenetrable barrier.<sup>46</sup>

In that micro-cosmos, mountain saddles were of immense importance – we see that virtually all significant ancient settlements on the sea shore such as Senia, Lopisca, Ortopla, Vegium and Argyrutum developed near those saddles which connect shore and hinterland. Yet, it seems that those main passes were not exclusive communication – sometimes it was cheaper to carry the goods over the mountains, via series of pastoral settlements then to transport them along the seashore in order to use one of the main roads utilising mountain saddles. A number of those supporting transitions used already in prehistory have been identified by local archaeologist, with some of them passing over mountain peaks of over 1300 meters.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, it is likely that some of those pastoral settlements were used as trading places in a similar manner described by Pseudo Aristotle.<sup>48</sup> Two prominent mountain-paths have been used virtually until recently; the northern, starting at Senj (ancient Senia) and Sveti Juraj (ancient Lopisca) connected via Oltari the Krasno silent, and Iapodian capital

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<sup>43</sup> M. Križman (1997) 61.- 62.

<sup>44</sup> Strabo V. 5. 4.

<sup>45</sup> A. Faber (2000), 16.

<sup>46</sup> V. Glavaš (2010), 6.

<sup>47</sup> A. Faber (2000) 17.

<sup>48</sup> A. Faber (2000) 16.

Arupium situated some 15 kilometres to the east, with the sea. The southern passage was used by populations of island Pag and North Dalmatia. It connected Starigrad (ancient Argyrutum) with Lika via Veliko Rujno and Ribnička vrata. That prehistoric path was probably used mostly for transport of Adriatic salt, with Veliko Rujno plateau (at 900 meters) as a central point of that path. Aerial photography as well as archaeological research revealed pre-modern subdivision of the land on the plateau, remains of the pastoral lodgings used in transhumant livestock farming, and a hill fort where limited excavations revealed that it was inhabited for a relatively long time – from beginning at the early bronze. A. Faber argues that the hill fort and the plateau were a trading center for local merchants coming from nearby continental and coastal regions.<sup>49</sup>

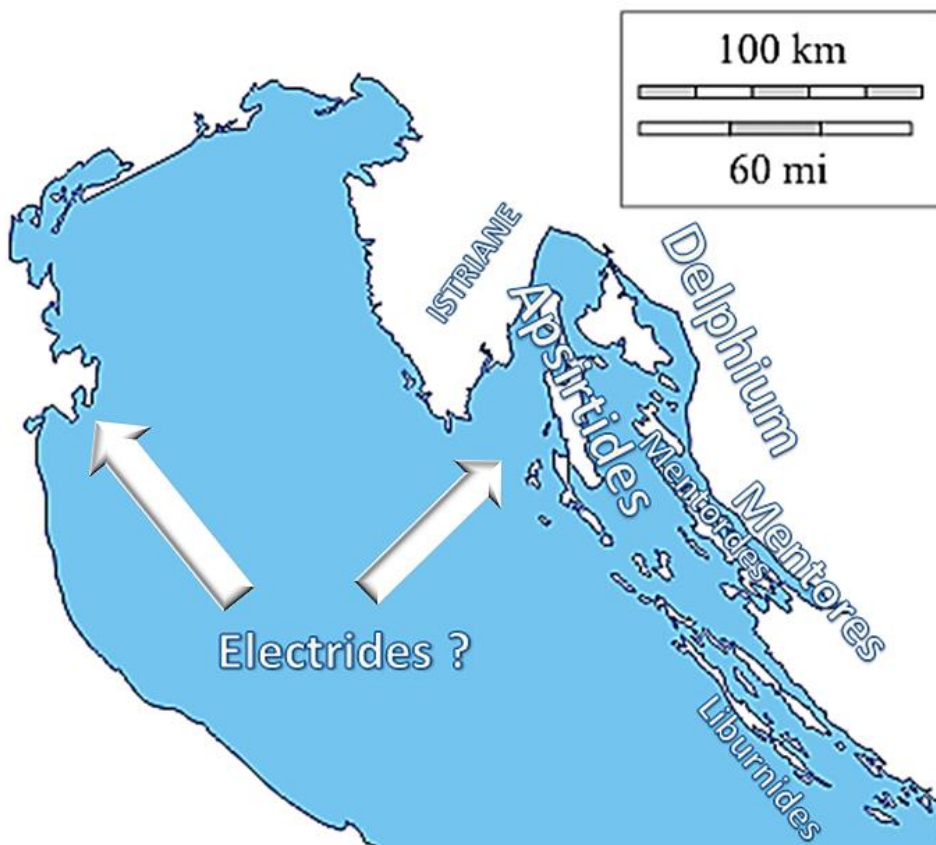


Figure 2. – The Upper Adriatic

This could easily be the site of a Pseudo Aristotle's market place where southern Velebit could be identified with Delphium or Strabo's Alban Mountain. Some of its high peaks could be brought into connection with Pseudo Aristotle's summit where one can see ships sailing in the Pontus (Vaganski vrh is with 1 757 meters the highest

<sup>49</sup> A. Faber (2000) 25.

peak in the region, and from nearby Sveto brdo (1 752), it is possible to see coasts of Italy during fair weather), with Mentores living on the southern side of the mountain as we are informed by other sources.<sup>50</sup>

All of this outlines the position of geographically conditioned aerie where scholars should seek Pseudo Aristotle's trading place – there is a number of similar locations more to the north with near identical layout of the mentioned sites (high peak, mountain path connecting coast and the hinterland with hill fort or other evidence of ancient human presence) such as Veliki Alan transit with Zečjak peak or Zavižan silent and peak.

Our knowledge about Greek pre-Hellenistic contacts with the east Adriatic communities is still relatively limited, so this information about pottery types in one local market place is very valuable. Research made in recent years emphasized the role of Corcyra in pre-colonial times. This local 'superpower' probably held a role of local *hegemon* in central Adriatic from 5<sup>th</sup> or even 6<sup>th</sup> century, yet unfortunately we can only outline the economical aspect of this thalassocracy.<sup>51</sup> If these information are true i.e. if Corcyran pottery and goods regularly found its way into the Liburnian held Northern Adriatic, we should once again re-think our positions about international relations during that period.

The beginning of the next chapter is discussing the same aerie, mentioning how one bayou of the Danube which is flowing into the Adriatic was used by the Argonauts.<sup>52</sup>

Except from this well known geographical misinformation, it is interesting to see how similar version of this story has been utilized by Apollonius of Rhodes.<sup>53</sup> In his *Argonautica* the fleeing Argonauts enter Danube's' estuary and end up in the Upper Adriatic, only to discover that Colchidian prince Apsirt and his crew have already

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<sup>50</sup> It seems that *de mirabilibus* is the only ancient source which explicitly states that Mentores live *near* the sea

<sup>51</sup> S. Čače, (2002) 83. -100., S. Čače, (2005, Bakar) 169. -181.

<sup>52</sup> They say that the Ister flowing from the forests called Hercynian divides, and one part flows into the Pontus, and the other into the Adriatic. We can see proof not only at the present time, but still more in ancient days that the river at these points is not navigable; for they say that Jason made his entry to the Pontus by the Cyanean rocks, but his exit by the Ister; and they produce a considerable number of other proofs, and in particular they show altars in the district dedicated by Jason, and in one of the islands of the Adriatic a temple of Artemis built by Medea. (...)Ps-Arist. *Mir. Ausc.* 105.

<sup>53</sup> This geographical error probably originated from a similar name of Istrian peninsula and a Greek word for Danube (Istros), as well as Greek unfamiliarity with local watercourses. It is possible that local river complexes used by local merchants (the Amber road example) Greek interpreted as a Danube's bayou.

arrived there and have blocked all the passages and islands. However, there were 2 unguarded Brigian islands, one with a temple of Artemis where Medea invited Apsirt for negotiations, and where he was ambushed and slaughtered by Jason.<sup>54</sup> Both stories are virtually identical regarding the main narrative, but some details are different - a temple of Artemis built by Medea is already there in Apollonius who doesn't mention the altars. The rest of that (not quoted here) 105<sup>th</sup> passage is also dealing in a similar manner with 'archaeological' remains of Argonauts from the Tyrrhenian sea, so it would be interesting to explore Pseudo Aristotle's and Apollonius' sources regarding this myth as well their interaction.<sup>55</sup>

### 3. The Southern Illyricum

In the end, there are three paragraphs concerning Illyrians and Illyria proper, but before we move to the analysis of the text it should be noted that Pseudo-Aristotle uses ethnical designation for these people. This could be seen as trivia, but local scholars have spent a lot of time and energy to examine ethnical identity of those peoples. While imperial era sources use more or less the term 'Illyrian' to describe all populations living on the East Adriatic coast i.e. the Roman province of Illyricum, Pseudo-Aristotle is writing only about Illyrians in Illyria proper, the people referred by Pliny as '*Illyrii Proprie Dicti*'.<sup>56</sup> It seems that the term has been verified by linguistic research, thus it is not surprising that Mentores for example, are never called Illyrian by Pseudo-Aristotle.<sup>57</sup> First of these passages is discussing Illyrian brewing skills.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> According to Apollonius, it seems that the original name of the islands is Brigian, which is derived from the name of one small community from southern Illyria. It is hard to see any connection between this, thus it is probably author's lack of information about real geography to blame. R. Katičić (1970) 99. -107.

<sup>55</sup> See final remarks about Pseudo Aristotle's sources

<sup>56</sup> Plin. HN., III. 26.

<sup>57</sup> R. Katičić (1964).17

<sup>58</sup> 22. Among the Illyrians they say that the people called Taulantii make wine out of honey. When they have squeezed out the wax, they pour in water and boil in a cauldron, until only half the liquid is left; then they pour it into earthenware vessels; they say that it ferments in these for a long time, and that it becomes vinous, sweet and strong. They say that this has occurred even among some people in Greece, so that it shows no difference from old wine; but that when they sought for the mixture later they could not find it. Ps-Arist. *Mir. ausc.* 22.

The Taulantii were an Illyrian ethnic living east of Epidamnos, and it seems that Pseudo-Aristotle is describing a recipe for preparation of mead. Although we often associate classical Mediterranean civilizations with wine, other alcohol beverages such as mead were not unfamiliar to them – and were probably quite outspread and popular. Aristotle in his *Meteorology* simply mentions beverage made of 'boiling honey' and a recipe similar to Pseudo-Aristotle's is described by 1<sup>st</sup> century writer Columella in his work *De re rustica*.<sup>59</sup> Columella suggests usage of rainwater which was then kept for several years and mixing it with honey. That liquid should then be exposed to the sun for 40 days, and left on a shelf near the fire.<sup>60</sup> Pliny mentions not only a mead recipe which derives little from Columella's, but also several wine types which were sweetened with honey.<sup>61</sup> This could be the 'old wine' mentioned by Pseudo-Aristotle..

Next paragraph informs us with extraordinary fertility of cattle in Illyria.<sup>62</sup> It is hard to interpret these reports. *De Mirabilibus* has a similar chapter concerning Umbrians where 'fast-breeding cattle is mentioned', but in that case that extraordinary fertility is extended to soil and woman too.<sup>63</sup> Fraternal twins are hereditary so we could try to explain those animal twins with genetic inheritance of certain herds, yet it is impossible to estimate the human influence in the selection process of those animals. So, although we can interpret all of this as an allegory for the abundance of certain '*pecunia*' among Illyrians and Umbrians at one point of history, it is probably easier to accept these informations as the temporarily fascinations of Pseudo-Aristotle's sources – in the end, the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

<sup>59</sup> Arist., *Met.*, IV. 6., 10.

<sup>60</sup> Colum., *De re rust.* XII. The production process of mead has changed little from Columella's period, except manufacturers now add yeast directly into the honey mixture unlike the ancients which rely on wild yeast.

<sup>61</sup> Plin. *HN*. XIV. 11., 20.

<sup>62</sup> *Cattle in Illyria are said to breed twice during the year, and most commonly of all to have twins, and that goats often bear three or four, and some five or even more; they readily yield a gallon of milk. They also say that hens do not lay once a day, as they do elsewhere, but two or three times.* Ps-Arist. *Mir. ausc.* 22.

<sup>63</sup> 'Among the Umbrians they say that the cattle bear three times in the year, and the earth bears many times as many fruits as that which is sown; also that women have many children and seldom bear one (at a time), but most of them two or three.' Ps-Arist. *Mir. ausc.* 128.

The last passage in *De Mirabilibus* which deals with the Illyrians is also concerning cattle,<sup>64</sup> and the similar version of this story is brought to us by Strabo.<sup>65</sup> A lot of ink has been spilled by local scholars in order to resolve some of the numerous questions which arise from this short chapter.

First of all, we have a solid evidence that two prominent local ethnics (Ardiaei and Autaritae) at one point of history shared border. Ardiaei have been sometimes seen as a cornerstone of later 'Hellenistic' Illyrian kingdom, whose last dynasty was in fact of Ardiaeian origin.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, Autariatae were warlike people whose power diminished in the Hellenistic period, when they disappeared from history, but were important international factor in earlier times.<sup>67</sup>

Both ethnics were mentioned by various later sources, so all the more, it is strange that we still cannot precisely locate their homelands. Among scholars there are two main views on this problem, and as we will see, locating of Ardiaeian homeland is often conditioned by embedding of the territories of the Autaritae, and vice versa.<sup>68</sup>

One group of scholars has, mostly following Strabo, situated the Ardiaei in present day Croatia, on a sea shore and hinterland in front of the island Hvar.<sup>69</sup> Because of the data from Pseudo-Skylax's periplous which puts different local communities on the sea shore and allocates Autaritae (Ardiaei neighbours) in the hinterland near the 'Great lake' – which was sometimes interrelated as Hutovo Blato swamp complex – most of those scholars who advocate 'Central Dalmatian' homeland of the Ardiaei

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<sup>64</sup> *Among the Illyrians who are called Ardiaeans along the boundary between them and the Autaritae, they say there is a high mountain, and near to it a glen from which the water rises, not at all seasons but in the spring, in considerable quantity, which they take and keep under cover by day, but put in the open at night. After they have done this for five or six days, the water hardens and becomes very fine salt, which they keep especially for the cattle; for salt is not imported to them because they live far from the sea and do not associate with others. Consequently they need it very much for the cattle; for they give them salt twice a year. If they fail to do this, most of the cattle are found to die.* Ps-Arist. *Mir. ausc.*.138.

<sup>65</sup> *Now the Autariatae were once the largest and best tribe of the Illyrians. In earlier times they were continually at war with the Ardiaei over the salt-works on the common frontiers. The salt was made to crystallise out of water which in the spring-time flowed at the foot of a certain mountain-glen; for if they drew off the water and stowed it away for five days the salt would become thoroughly crystallised. They would agree to use the salt-works alternately, but would break the agreements and go to war.* Strabo VII. 5. 11.

<sup>66</sup> F. Papazoglu, (1967). 144.

<sup>67</sup> F. Papazoglu, (1969) 79. – 89.

<sup>68</sup> See newer article of R. Dodig (2013) 35. – 61 for critique of the sources with extensive bibliography of this problem

<sup>69</sup> Strabo VII. 5.



believe in a some kind of 'migration theory' where original habitat of the Ardiaei would have been somewhere in present day Hercegovina.<sup>70</sup> From there they should have been migrated – mostly because of the aggressive Autaritae - to the sea shore and hinterland (around Vrgorac and Ljubuški), and from where they should have been deported by Romans once again.<sup>71</sup> That would mean that the original homeland of the Autaritae should be around upper Neretva river.<sup>72</sup>

The other group of scholars, represented mostly by Fanula Papazoglu, puts Ardiaeian homeland more to the south into the boundaries of present day Monte Negro.<sup>73</sup> The same author suggested some kind of 'high cronology' of the Illyrian kingdom with continuity from 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>74</sup> From that period Illyrian kingdom should have expanded north occupying Ardiaei (and not to the south by conquering Ardiaei as has been proposed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>75</sup> In this case, Autaritae are situated around lake Scodra – which was indentified by Mate Suić as a 'gread lake' from mentioned periplous<sup>76</sup>

So, how does Pseudo-Aristotle's salt - bearing glen fits into this narrative? As it has been indicated, the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars like A. Ruckner, C. Patch and many more preferred the first hypothesis, so they placed these springs around present day Donji Vakuf or Konjic, where salt founts can be seen even today.<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, it seams that mentioned springs can give only symbolic amount of salt - around 1-2 kg from a hectolitre of water. Pseudo-Aristotle as well as Strabo relate this salt founts with high mountains and spring i.e. the time when the snow on a mountain melts – neither of which we can relate with Konjic or Donji Vakuf, so we can say that the exact nature of these salt springs remains a mystery, although we are still awarded

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<sup>70</sup> For the new translation of Pseudo-Skylax's periplous with comments see P. Counillon, (2006), and for the 'Great lake' hypothesis see M. Šašel-Kos (2013) <http://mefra.revues.org/1376>

<sup>71</sup> Some prominent scholars who suport the embedding of the Ardiaeians on the Dalmatian shore and hinterland were C. Patsch, G. Alföldy, J. J. Wilkes, Ivo Bojanovski and Marin Zaninović <R. Dodig (2013) 41. – 42>. For the Roman deportation of the Ardiaei see Strabo VII. 5.

<sup>72</sup> F. Papazoglu (1969) 70.

<sup>73</sup> F. Papazoglu, (1967) 127.

<sup>74</sup> F. Papazoglu, (1967) 129.

<sup>75</sup> F. Papazoglu, (1967) 142.

<sup>76</sup> F. Papazoglu, ((1969) 76.

<sup>77</sup> For the bibliography conserning this problem see M. Zaninović (1996) 396. – 397., where other ancient salt springs in Dalmatian hinterland have been mentioned.

with valuable information about the importance of war, cattle breeding, salt for ancient Illyrians.<sup>78</sup>

#### 4. Pseudo-Aristotle's Sources

As it has been said in the introduction, Pseudo-Aristotle virtually never quotes or mentions his sources, but in the case of the Adriatic and its east coasts, we can with relative safety identify one of authors he most certainly used. It was none other than famous historian and rhetorician Theopompus of Chios (c. 380 – c. 320).

Already in antiquity, Theopompus was considered as an important source, but unfortunately, his main work – a gigantic Philippica in 58 books is now lost, and majority of data we have from it, comes from later authors such as Athenaeus, Diodorus or Photius.<sup>79</sup> Although the main theme of this work was life and deeds of Philip II, it was also a universal history of that time, which dealt with other events in the known world, with a lot of digressions by which Theopompus was renowned as a historian.<sup>80</sup>

Let's then examine the evidence proving this hypothesis. In his Geography, in the chapter dealing with Illyricum, Strabo is quoting Theopompus saying that he overstretched the length of the coastline and that: '*...He also says other things that are incredible: first, that the seas are connected by a subterranean passage, from the fact that both Chian and Thasian pottery are found in the Naro River; secondly, that both seas are visible from a certain mountain; and thirdly, when he puts down a certain one of the Liburnides islands as large enough to have a circuit of five hundred stadia; and fourthly, that the Ister empties by one of its mouths into the Adrias*' – we have seen that some of the identical statements are present in passages 104 and 105 of *De Mirabilibus*.<sup>81</sup>

In the Pseudo-Scymnus's Periegesis Theopompus is once again listed as a source: verses 369 – 394 are explicitly quoting Theopompus about the vicinity of Adriatic and the Black sea with the mention of two islands rich with copper near Istria – probably the same islands which were referred by Pseudo-Aristotle in paragraph 81. – the rest

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<sup>78</sup> R. Dodik (2013) 36. – 37.

<sup>79</sup> F. A. Pownall, (2003) 143. - 147.

<sup>80</sup> F. A. Pownall (2003) 144., 154.

<sup>81</sup> Strabo VII. 5. 9.

of the story from that chapter concerning Eridan, Faeton and Amber bearing trees are literally quoted in the next set of Pseudo-Scymnus's verses (395 – 401).<sup>82</sup> Apart these Copper and/or Amber islands, it seems that Theopompus was also familiar with Apsirdits mentioned in 105<sup>th</sup> chapter, which were later further 'exploited' by Apollonius in his *Argonautica*.<sup>83</sup>

There is also a very small possibility that Theopompus was the source for chapters 22., 128., 138., which deals with the Illyrians. He most certainly wrote about them in his 'Philippica', at least on several different places.<sup>84</sup> It seems that in mentioned work, he often moralised about hazards of drunkenness, which he brought in the context with Illyrians, describing in length their drinking habits, as we are informed by the Atheneus.<sup>85</sup> All of this we can perhaps connect with mead recipe from paragraph 22.

Mainly because of the long-term work of Croatian academy member Radoslav Katičić, it is possible to make a sketchy reconstruction of Theopompus's description of the Eastern Adriatic coast.<sup>86</sup> It seems that for Katičić, majority of data present at Pseudo-Scymnus is derived from Theopompus. That includes stories about Ister offshoot flowing into the sea, Northern Pillar where Celts, Veneti and Istri live, various islands similar to Cyclades divided into three groups; Elektrides, Apsirdites and Liburnides with two large islands renowned for copper.

Istmeni and Mentori would be situated on the coast, after Istri. Here we should probably insert the information about the high mountain and marketplace. More to the south, It seems that Theopompus designated overall majority of the Adriatic islands as Liburnian. The exception would be the island Vis, homeland of regional dynast Ionius. On the mainland, he knew of Naro river as we have seen before, and he certainly had abundance of data concerning Illyria proper.

There is also a certain coincidence with parts of Pseudo-Skylax's periplous, another mid-fourth century work. According to the P. Counillon, periplous was written around the ascendance of Philip II to the throne and the revision followed briefly afterwards,

<sup>82</sup> Ps-Scym., *Perieg.s* 369 – 401., M. Križman (1997) 59. – 65.

<sup>83</sup> R. Katičić (1995) 184.

<sup>84</sup> Books 21. and 22. probably described some conflict between Philip and the Illyrians, with 2. book describing some features of Illyrian society. R. Katičić (1995) 188. - 189. C. S. Bearzot (2004) 63. – 67.

<sup>85</sup> F. A. Pownall (2003) 150., C. S. Bearzot, (2004) 64.

<sup>86</sup> For a summary see R. Katičić (1995) 20., 25., 45., 57., 69., 102. – 104., 161. – 170., 172. – 178., 180. – 181., 183. - 187., 191.– 194., 260., 268.

so the text gives us the 'picture of Mediterranean around that time'.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, M. Suić suggested numerous later increments, which were typical for chapter 21. which dealt with Liburnia proper.<sup>88</sup> In that paragraph we are informed about a very large Liburnian island – now known to be a non existing – and we have been informed by Strabo that Theopompus wrote about huge Liburnian islands too.<sup>89</sup> It is useful to add that Suić believed that entire information is an early medieval appendage.<sup>90</sup> The same chapter of the periplous informs us about libertine behaviour of Liburnian woman, as well as strange Liburnian social norms, the telling which is far too similar to Theopompus's description of Etruscan woman and society as we are informed by Athenaeus.<sup>91</sup>

Although we can conclude that Theopompus was one of the main Pseudo-Aristotle's sources for Adriatic region, we cannot exclude other authors (for example we still cannot precisely determine the source for passage concerning Diomedea). Theopompus often wrote about mythological geography of foreign lands yet we just don't have enough evidence to prescribe all this information to him, so it is sound to assume that other contemporary Greek authors such as Ephorus or Timaeus were at some extend used by Pseudo-Aristotle.<sup>92</sup>

### *Post scriptum*

When I was ready to send the draft of this article to the editor, I stumbled at the article of Egidia Occhipinti where it is suggested that the Aristotle (here named as an original author of *De Mirabilibus Auscultationibus*) extensively used the works of his friend Theopompus.<sup>93</sup> Wherever it was the case or not, it seems that Chian historian was beyond doubt one of the main sources concerning the east Adriatic for Greek scholars of classical and hellenistic intellectual *milieu*.

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D.S.

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<sup>87</sup> P. Counillon (2006) 19.

<sup>88</sup> M. Suić (1996), 192. – 194.

<sup>89</sup> Strabo VII. 5. 9.

<sup>90</sup> M. Suić (1996), 221. – 226.

<sup>91</sup> Ath., 517-518

<sup>92</sup> For example, see chapter 119. of *De Mirabilibus* which brings famous story about the Veneti and gifts for the birds on their boundaries. That information is also brought to us by Theopompus K. Mihovilić (2003) 211.

<sup>93</sup> E. Occhipinti (2011) 305- 307.

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