

## FISH EATING HORSES IN CENTRAL MACEDONIA OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BCE: WAS HERODOTUS FINALLY RIGHT?

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**Summary.** Five horses and two dogs buried in a human cemetery dating to the 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> c. BCE were unearthed in 2003-5 during a rescue archaeology project at Sindos, southwest of Thessalonike, Greece. The good state of preservation of both human and animal skeletons due to the sandy alluvial deposits of the Rivers Axios and Haliakmon that cross the area was rare enough to prompt a detailed archaeozoological analysis. In addition to routine macroscopic and microscopic examination to determine sex, age, height, use and palaeopathology, carbon dating and multiple stable isotope analyses were performed by two independent laboratories: (a) the “Democritus” Nuclear Research Ctr. Archaeometry Unit, Athens; (b) the Carbon Data, FLA Both laboratories came up with identical data concerning stable isotope analyses which indicate that a portion of the horses’ food was fish-related. The unexpected find is discussed in view of Herodotus’s *Histories* in which he recorded the habit of ancient Macedonians to feed their pack horses with fish. Although more extensive sampling and research is needed to prove or disprove Herodotus, this find indicates that historians who referred to him as “father of lies” may need to reconsider their views.

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