

STEVEN BATTELLE

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If deemed a forgery by the ACCS, IGC, NGC, or PCGS, it may be  
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Euboea, Hestiaia, 300-200 BC, AR Tetradrachm

Bo82606/U0406: 2.4 Gm 16 mm

Obv.: Nymph Hestiaia, of nice style, wreathed with vine Rev.: Nymph Hestiaia seated to right on galley, Greek legend ISTIAIEON... SNG Cop 517

The Greek Nymph: Nymphs were an important part of Greek mythology and religion. They were revered as the spirits of specific natural features - mountains, valleys, rivers and springs, forests, trees, and even groves. The name "nymph" comes from the Greek word that means "young woman", and so naturally these beings were considered to be female. And while there is some question about whether they were immortal or not it is believed that they were extremely long lived. These female nature spirits were the companions of satyrs, the lovers of gods and heroes, and in some cases, starred in their own stories. There were a wide variety of nymphs. Some represented various localities like the Acheloids, or nymphs of the River Achelous; others were identified with the part of nature in which they dwelled, such as the Oreads, or mountain nymphs; and still others were associated with a particular function of nature as were the Hamadryads, or tree nymphs, whose lives began and ended with that of a particular tree. Nymphs were represented as young, beautiful, musical, amorous, and gentle, although some were associated with the wilder aspects of nature and were akin to satyrs; others were vengeful and capable of destruction, as in the story of Daphne. The City of Hestiaia: Hestiaia was a city of commercial prominence colonized in 446 BC and located on the northern end of Euboea, the largest island of the Greek archipelago, separated from the mainland by the Euboic Sea. It is traversed throughout its length by a mountain range, which bounds Thessaly on the east, and to the south by the lofty islands of Andros, Tenos and Mykonos. Euboea was believed to have originally formed part of mainland Greece, but was separated from it by an earthquake. This is fairly probable, because of its location near a major fault line, and both Thucydides and Strabo noted that the island had been shaken at different periods. Its northern extremity, near Hestiaia, is separated from Thessaly by a narrow strait less than 1.5 miles wide. It was in this strait that ancient sources relate the story of Agamemnon's fleet being delayed while struggling with the contrary winds and difficult currents. The extraordinary tides which take place in this passage have been a subject of note since classical times.

