

The Euripus Bridges - Evia, Halkida



The region of central Evia is characterized by the brilliant historical presence of two of the most important cities of ancient Greece. Chalkida and Eretria, long before the appearance of Athens, have established the world-wide mark of the Greek culture. Chalkida [the city where Nikos Skalkottas was born] has always been the natural entrance to Evia.

The capital of Evia, astonishingly beautiful indeed, instantly wins over anyone who crosses the old bridge of Euripus and Evia. A city, with a history and culture which is lost in the depths of the ages. By the many colonies of Chalkida, (Chalkidiki. S. Italy, Ionian coastland etc), civilization was passed to the world through written speech. The well-known Chalkidiko or Kimaiko alphabet (ancestor of the Latin alphabet) was the first attempt of man to immortalize his experiences and history.

The Euripus Strait, is a narrow channel of water separating the Greek island of Euboea in the Aegean Sea from Boeotia in mainland Greece. The strait's principal port is Chalcis on Euboea, located at the strait's narrowest point. The strait is subject to strong tidal currents which reverse direction approximately four times a day. Tidal flows are very weak in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the strait is a remarkable exception. Water flow peaks at about 12 km/hour, either northwards or southwards, and lesser vessels are often incapable of sailing against it. When nearing flow reversal, sailing is even more precarious because of vortex formation. The first bridge across Euripus was built by the Emperor Justinian I in 540 AD. Another was built by the Venetians in the late Middle Ages; it was called the "Black Bridge" (Italian: Negroponte) and it temporarily gave its name to the town and island. In his *Phaedo*, Plato has Socrates use the Euripus tide as a simile for things that "go up and down" in describing the thinking of those who hold that nothing is sound or stable (*Phaedo*, 90c). Aulis, the strait's port on the mainland, mentioned by Homer as the launching point of the combined Greek fleets in the Trojan War, is now a major cement shipping terminal.