

ZEEST'S „SAMIAN“ AND „PROTOTHASIAN“ TRANSPORT AMPHORAS: NORTH-IONIAN HOMETLAND VS. „THASIAN CIRCLE“ PRELIMINARY LAB. RESULTS

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Summary: *Mostly reattributed to the North-Ionian sphere by lab results, finds of Zeest's "Samian" & "Protothasian" amphoras from the Black-Sea area still have to be differentiated from their counterparts from the Northern Aegean.*

Whereas the attribution to the North-Aegean sphere of archaic transport amphoras of Zeest's "Samian" and "Protothasian" types is based on rather erratic pieces of evidence, restricted to some scattered shares of finds and, from now on, mostly reassigned to North-Ionian centres of manufacture, either mainland (Erythrae, Clazomenae, Teos) or opposite island (Chios), recent reference handbooks still maintain the confusion about it, either by anonymous or, what I would call, somewhat nostalgic attributions referring to Zeest's pioneer contribution¹.

In Sezgin's excellent manual, both former Zeest's types are grouped together under the neutral label "Ionia-β"². The same uncommitted track is followed by Bîrzescu in his volume of amphora finds from Istros³.

As for the Russian side, Monakhov's flagship contributions still refer to amphoras, either "with multibevelled foot (after Zeest's 'Protothasos' series)"⁴ or from "unidentified centres of the Northern-Aegean"⁵.

Of course, as it is mostly the case, the general reattribution of origin of both of these two classes of containers from the Northern-Aegean to the North-Ionian

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¹ ZEEST 1960, who confusingly muddled up the lineage in dividing it between "Samian" (p. 70, pl. I :3) and "Protothasian" (p. 79, pls. V : 15a-δ -VI :15B-r) variants.

² SEZGIN 2012, p. 259-281.

³ BÎRZESCU 2012, p. 110-125, pl. 50-56.

⁴ MONAKHOV 2003, p. 38-42, 191-192, 253-256.

⁵ MONAKHOV *et alii* 2019, p. 113-119.

sphere admits a minor share of exceptions, subject matter of the present paper.

First of all, the dendrogramme of classification of chemical data of these jars of both Zeest's "Samian" and "Protothasian" samples has evidenced two minor clusters which, as compared with some early classical samples of amphoras of standard North-Aegean type, has confirmed their preliminary attribution to the Thasian Circle, to Thasos itself for one of them.

The attribution to Thasos itself for one of them (**Fig. 1**) was obtained thanks to the association within the same cluster of a sample of tortoise stamp from the Olbian chora⁶ (OLV 19), interpreted today as Thasian, and of another sherd of jar of Johnston type⁷ from Thasos itself (MAR 500), also attributed to the island. As for the most representative associated samples of Zeest's "Samian" and "Protothasian" types, they are restricted to two canonical specimens of the latter variety (BOR 22 & OLV 10), both characterized by their darker orange clay than usual for the greater part of their counterparts of North-Ionian manufacture. Whether the genuine Thasian origin evidenced for these two specimens suggests that only the shape of Zeest's "Protothasian" type was produced on the island of course remains in abeyance at the present stage. On the other hand, the fact that they are represented in a tiny minority suggests that we are rather faced with imitations of North-Ionian originals and in fact their proportion doesn't exceed at all 10% or so of the total amount of our samples of both Zeest's "Samian" and "Protothasian" types. Also supporting such an assumption, one can put forward the fact that, among the finds from the earliest Clazomenian necropolis of Abdera, some predecessors of Zeest's "Samian" type are to be found, which have revealed North-Ionian chemical patterns, thus not later than the very beginning of the 6th century BC⁸.

Of course, as most of our samples of both Zeest's "Samian" and "Protothasian" amphoras were collected on Pontic settlements, that might accordingly explain such a predominance of original imports of North-Ionian manufacture, whereas throughout the North-Aegean sphere one can presume proportions, not only in reverse order, but much more diversified, due to the increase of imitating scattered centres of manufacture, either island (Thasos well ahead) or mainland (e.g. Mende, Torone, Oisyme, Abdera, Maroneia).

Far less numerous throughout the North-Aegean sphere, Zeest's related amphora finds seem restricted to the "Protothasian" variant with tapered conical body⁹ (**Fig. 2**), whereas her slightly earlier "Samian" variant with ovoid body appears hardly represented by some uncanonical narrow-necked stout shapes¹⁰. On Thasos itself, an odd piece is represented by the table-amphora published by Ghaly-Kahil, dated from the beginning of the second half of the 6th century BC,

⁶ More exactly from the rural settlement of Bolshaya Chernomorka, inv. БЧ 77-254. This stamp differs from the one published by Y. Garlan (GARLAN 1999, p. 102-103 no. 44) and obviously corresponds to a land tortoise instead a sea one.

⁷ JOHNSTON 1991.

⁸ DUPONT & SKARLATIDOU 2022, p. 100.

⁹ AD 34, 1979, B'2 chron., pl. 142; AD 35, 1980, B' 2 chron, pl. 249 (Thasos, end of 6th-2nd quarter of 5th c. BC).

¹⁰ KOUKOULI-CHRYSANTHAKI 2007, p. 53, pl. 20, fig. 18 (from Oisyme, late 6th/early 5th c. BC).

which seems to have been influenced by the design of Zeest's "Samian" amphoras unless it might interpreted as a fractional variant of it, either imported or of local manufacture¹¹. Conversely, emblematic representations of related shapes of amphoras are swarming among the monetary issues of several North-Aegean *poleis* (Fig. 3), first of all Torone¹² as well as Abdera¹³ and Pangaeian area¹⁴, all devoted to viticulture¹⁵.

Rather blurred and less conclusive appears the second cluster (Fig. 4), within which are only falling the upper part of a sample from Olbia (OLV 103), with narrower neck and rim than usual, as well as a somewhat unorthodox pithoid shape from Apollonia Pontica (APO 227), falling together with two upper parts of jars of "canonical" North-Aegean type, *viz.* one from Istros (DUP 559) and one from Miletus (MIL 139), the shape of which would rather recall Mendean standards than Thasian ones.

Unfortunately, the systematic programme of planned comparisons with North-Aegean references (Thasos, Mende, Samothrace, Maroneia, Ainos, Abdera) still awaits the start up again of our Lyon lab after one year and a half of asbestos removal of our research centre which consequently does not allow me any more tests meanwhile, despite these already conclusive preliminary advances.

Dragă Sandu, îmi pare rău de acest contratimp neprevăzut !

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¹¹ GHALI-KAHIL 1960, p. 54 nr. 6, pl. XIX : 6, pl. C.

¹² FRANKE & HIRMER 1966, pl. 130 (ca. 520–480 BC).

¹³ MAY 1966, pl. XI : 164-165 ; 167-169 (Group LXII, ca. 473/470–449/448 BC).

¹⁴ FRANKE & HIRMER 1966, pl. 123 (ca. 520–480 BC).

¹⁵ SALVIAT 1990.

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BOR 22



OLV 19



MAR 500



OLV 10

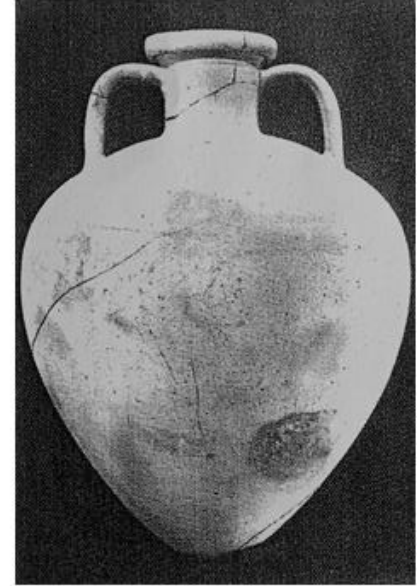
Fig. 1. North-Aegean 1: cluster Thasos ?



Thasos



Abdera



Oisyme

Fig. 2. North-Aegean comparanda.



Abdera
(after May 1966, pl. XI:165).



Pangaion Mt. Area
(after Franke & Hirmer 1966, pl. 123).



Torone
(after Franke & Hirmer 1966, pl. 130).

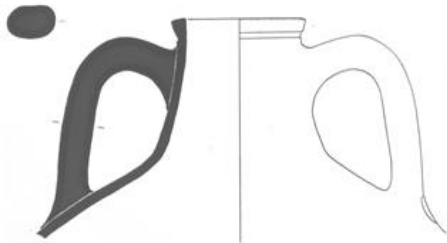
Fig. 3. North-Aegean monetary emblems.



MIL 139



OLV 103



DUP 559



APO 227 (?)

Fig. 4. North-Aegean 2: cluster Mende. ?