

THE EAST GREEKS BETWEEN THE LEVANT AND PONTOS EUXEINOS IN THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

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Cuvinte-cheie: *amforă „cu toarte de coș”, amforă „torpilă”, Berezan, Cipru, comerț, Fenicia, Ionia, Histria, migrație, Olbia, război, refugiat, Siria.*

Keywords: *basket-handled amphora, Berezan, Cyprus, Ionia, Istros, migration, Olbia, Phoenicia, refugee, Syria, “torpedo” amphora, trade, war.*

Rezumat: *Această actualizare a unor studii mai vechi dedicate importurilor levantine din regiunea Mării Negre în perioada arhaică se concentrează pe examinarea unor noi date valoroase, precum cele oferite de amforele „torpilă” și cele „cu toarte de coș” identificate în săpăturile arheologice de pe insula Berezan. Cadrul mai larg al schimbărilor dramatice produse în Levant la sfârșitul secolului al VII-lea și începutul secolului al VI-lea î.e.n. de prăbușirea Asiriei și de conflictul egipteano-babilonian pentru dominația asupra regiunii, cu consecințe importante asupra grecilor răsăriteni, este luat în discuție pentru potențialul său de a produce noi interpretări istorice ale obiectelor levantine și de inspirație levantină găsite la Berezan, Histria și Olbia.*

Abstract: *This update of earlier papers devoted to the Levantine imports in the Black Sea region in the archaic period is focused on examining new valuable data such as those brought by the “torpedo” and the basket-handled amphorae identified in the excavations on the island of Berezan. The larger background of the dramatic changes brought in the Levant in the late 7th and early 6th century BC by the fall of Assyria and the Egyptian-Babylonian conflict for the region, with important consequences for the East Greeks, is discussed for its potential of putting new historical interpretations on the Levantine and Levantine-inspired objects found at Berezan, Istros and Olbia.*

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The first version of this paper with the title *East Greeks in Motion between the Levant and Pontos Euxeinos* was presented at the International Conference *People in Motion in the Ancient Greek World*, Complutense University of Madrid, Faculty of Geography and History, 17–18 May 2020. The paper is based on results of the postdoctoral research conducted at the Interdisciplinary School of Doctoral Studies, University of Bucharest. I am indebted to Pierre Dupont, Thibaut Castelli and Iulian Bîrzescu for their bibliographic support.

Any new archaeological finds may contribute to the revival of the academic interest for a certain research topic and the development of new historical hypotheses, especially when the already existing sources are noticeably few. Thus, the inspired recognition by M. Alexandrescu-Vianu of the Levantine origin of three archaic figurines from Istros depicting a seated female character¹ aroused great interest in the topic of the presence of Phoenician objects and even of the Phoenicians themselves in the Black Sea region since the early phases of the East Greek colonization of the Pontic shores. This steady interest consequently led to papers like those written by J. Bouzek and A. Dan². Similarly, the Levantine-type amphorae recently identified at Berezan and to a far lesser degree at Istros justify resuming the discussions on the Pontic-Levantine contacts in the archaic period and their underlying vectors.

The East Greek expansion beyond the western shores of Anatolia and the adjacent islands since the 7th century BC is remarkable through its rapid development to the four winds. The academic focus on the western and northern directions, where the East Greeks founded *apoikiai* such as Abdera, Kardias, Kyzikos, Istros, Olbia, Sinope, Gela, Elea and Massalia on the Thracian, Scythian, Italian, Sicilian and Gallic shores is wholly explainable as these cities left numerous traces in written sources and the archaeological record. On the other hand, to the south and east, the only comparable case is that of the original Hellenic settlement of Naukratis, an *emporion* whose existence was strictly regulated by the Saite pharaohs in the archaic period and reached the status typical to *apoikiai* only later. Otherwise, the evasive traces left by the Ionian and Carian mercenaries in Egypt and the Levant, the few and debatable clues of the activity of Greek merchants in famed Levantine ports such as Tyre and Ashkelon and *emporia* and *enoikismoi* such as Al Mina and Tell Sukas, and the questionable literary accounts on the Samian and Rhodian *apoikiai* established at Nagidos, Kelenderis and Soloi³, on the Rough Cilician coast, only recently submitted to verification through archaeological excavations⁴, decisively contributed to the persistence of the picture of the imbalanced geographical intensity of East Greek mobility.

Moreover, the exclusive regional approaches adopted by modern researchers still impair the study of archaic Greek mobility. There is a notable lack of constant and systematic preoccupation for establishing at least chronological, if not causal or contextual connections between East Greek undertakings carried out on different geographical directions. Few scholars underscore such correlations of the utmost importance as the almost simultaneous foundations of the Lindian

¹ ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 1994; ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 1997.

² BOUZEK 2000, followed by BOUZEK 2010/2011 and DAN 2011. See esp. BOUZEK 2000, p. 124 and DAN 2011, p. 213.

³ Pompon. 1.71 and 1.77; Str. 14.5.8.

⁴ Kelenderis: ZOROĞLU 1994; Soloi: YAĞCI 2013. See also the results of The Lower Göksu Archaeological Salvage Survey and a cautious interpretation of the ancient literary sources as opposed to the current archaeological state of affairs in Mac SWEENEY 2017, esp. 4§2–3, who emphasizes the mixed ethnic composition of these settlements and doubts the validity of their classification as *apoikiai*.

apoikiai of Gela, in Sicily, Phaselis, in Lykia, and Soloi, in Cilicia, around 690 BC⁵.

As the data on the archaic East Greek presence in Egypt, the Levant and southern Asia Minor increasingly become more abundant, it is expected that the parochial approach of studying East Greek mobility will slowly be abandoned⁶. Specific remarks already made on the ceramic assemblages of Istros and Tell Sukas⁷, or Berezan and Naukratis⁸ are modest steps towards studying the East Greek presence in the Pontic region, on the one hand, and in the Levant and in Egypt, on the other hand, in a manner which highlights the existence of East Greek networks which united ever since the archaic period smaller or greater Hellenic communities permanently or temporarily settled on the three continents of the Old World.

In this paper, I attempt to make an additional step in the same direction by asking the question if historical events that took place in one of the regions where the East Greeks travelled and settled in the archaic period might have generated sensible consequences in other distant geographical areas by the ripple effect propagated through the networks set up as a result of the extraordinary mobility of East Greek individuals and social groups. I examine therefore the connections between the Levant, understood as the area delimited by the Taurus Mountains, the Euphrates river, the Arabian Desert, the Sinai Peninsula and the Mediterranean, including Cyprus, and the western and north-western Black Sea shores where the main Hellenic settlements which I take into consideration are the Milesian *apoikiai* of Istros, Borysthenes (Berezan) and, to a lesser extent, Olbia. The overview of the main archaeological testimonies of the contacts between the two regions is the fundament for a potential answer.

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The archaic Levantine amphorae were identified for the first time in the Black Sea region in 2003 by P. Dupont and V. Nazarov, who wrote in a short note about “un petit nombre de fragments d’anses circulaires de forte section (ca. 5 cm), à pâte fine jaune claire”, originating from Berezan and preserved in the storerooms of the Military History Museum of Ochakov and “d’autres fragments d’anses, de panse et surtout de fond appartenant à des récipients du même type”, discovered as well on Berezan by the researchers of the State Hermitage Museum of Saint Petersburg⁹. Whereas there are no indications on the archaeological context of the latter group of sherds, the former fragments were discovered in the northeast of the island, in the R. 1-v residential area, in a layer dated in the second half of the 6th century BC¹⁰. The distinctive massive loop-shaped handles raised above the rims leave no doubts concerning the identification at Berezan of the so-called basket-handled amphorae: chiefly produced in Cyprus, between the 8th and

⁵ BING 1971, p. 103.

⁶ Like it happened in the case of Euboian mobility, as the data on the Euboian presence in the Levant (especially at Al. Mina), in Sicily, in Italy (at Kymai and Pithekoussai) and in the Northern Aegean in the 8th century BC have become richer and more diverse.

⁷ PLOUG 1973, p. 98; BÎRZESCU 2012, p. 203–204.

⁸ POSAMENTIR 2006.

⁹ DUPONT & NAZAROV 2003, p. 145.

¹⁰ DUPONT & NAZAROV 2003, p. 146, n. 1 and 2.

the 3rd century BC, as containers for oil and wine, their peculiar form seems to be explained by the way they were carried by two persons holding a beam that passed through their horizontal handles¹¹. More recently, the Ukrainian and Russian ceramologists have identified six additional sherds from nearby northeastern areas of the island and dated them in the late 7th century BC and the first three quarters of the 6th century BC (see the appendix). A fully preserved amphora seems to have been discovered by Georgiy Skadovskiy during his excavations of 1900–1901 in the archaic necropolis of Berezan, but was unfortunately lost¹².

Careful research of the artefacts unearthed by V. Lapin in Berezan between 1960 and 1980, nowadays preserved in the storerooms of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Science of Ukraine, revealed as well four fragments of “torpedo” amphorae (also called “crisp-ware” or “carinated-shoulder” amphorae), dated by A. Buyskikh in the late 7th and early 6th century BC (see the appendix). These distinctively shaped containers, with carinated shoulders, more or less cylindrical bodies, pointed feet and small handles attached to the shoulders that allowed only a finger or a rope to pass through their holes¹³, were extremely popular in the Eastern Mediterranean from the 9th to the 4th century BC, as well as at Carthage. For example, at Per Atum / Tell el-Maskhuta, an Egyptian city on the canal that linked the eastern Pelusiac branch of the Nile with the Red Sea, more than 6000 diagnostic potsherds of this type were found, a large part of them produced like those found in Berezan in the late 7th century BC and the first half of the 6th century BC¹⁴. After a broad debate on the exact origins of “torpedo” amphorae which involved Israelite and Cypriot hypotheses, too, their Phoenician provenance currently seems to be sure¹⁵. Although they might have been used as containers for a large diversity of commodities¹⁶, the few that reached the Pontic region probably contained the widely praised Phoenician wine, known by the Greeks as a luxury good since the archaic period¹⁷.

The presence of these two types of amphorae at Berezan is unquestionably spectacular given their quite limited distribution in the Aegean. At Miletos, the city established by tradition as the mother-city of Borysthene, the excavations

¹¹ NIEMEIER 1999, p. 389–392; WINTHER JACOBSEN 2002; DUPONT & NAZAROV 2003, p. 145–146; DEMESTICHA 2017, p. 130–132, with bibliographic references for these conclusions. On their use as olive oil containers, see NIEMEIER 1999, p. 390 and PAVLISH 2015, p. 376–377. On the production of this type of amphorae on the Cilician shores opposite Cyprus, see ZOROĞLU 2013, esp. p. 43, and at Tell Sukas, on the Syrian coastal plain facing Salamis, see BUHL 1983, p. 23.

¹² SKADOVSKIY 1900-1901, f. 39–40, pl. XXIX *apud* CHISTOV *et alii* 2019, p. 20, n. 69.

¹³ BUYSKIKH 2017, p. 197–198; MARTIN 2017, p. 119.

¹⁴ PAICE 2015, p. 318–321. As shown in BIKAI 1978a, p. 48; BIKAI 1978b, p. 46–47 and BIKAI 1985, p. 71, 527 diagnostic potsherds were found in Strata III-II at Tyre, in a dump for kiln wasters covering only half of a 5-m square, dating from the second half of the 8th century BC.

¹⁵ FINKELSTEIN *et alii* 2011, p. 250; PAICE 2015, p. 319, n. 2; MARTIN 2017, p. 119.

¹⁶ MARTIN 2017, p. 129; SCHMITT *et alii* 2019, p. 4, 23–28.

¹⁷ ORSINGER *et alii* 2021; BOTTO 2013, p. 107–108.

conducted in the residential quarters on the southern slope of Kalabaktepe and near the temple of Athena revealed 23 sherds from basket-handled amphorae and seven from “torpedo” amphorae, the latter dated in post-archaic times¹⁸. Beyond Miletos, the basket-handled amphorae are attested in the Aegean, in the 7th-6th centuries BC¹⁹ at Kommos, in Crete (six sherds in the buildings Q and V)²⁰, Rhodes (twelve fully preserved amphorae used for children burials in the cemeteries of Ialysos and Kamiros)²¹, and Abdera (a fully preserved amphora in the necropolis)²². The cabotage route employed for the distribution of these amphorae from their production centres in Cyprus and on the nearby shores to the Aegean is marked by shipwrecks at Kekova Adası (on the southern tip of Lykia), Çaycağız Koyu (in Caria, between Kaunos and Knidos, near Physkos, nowadays Marmaris) and Kepçe Burnu (in Caria, as well, east of Halikarnassos)²³. The frequency of the Phoenician amphorae in the archaic Aegean is even lower: probably a few dozen at Kommos, in Crete, between 850 and 650 BC²⁴, four in archaic Rhodian necropolises, used for *enchytrismoi*²⁵, and six in the cemetery of Methone, in the Northern Aegean region, between 730 and 690 BC²⁶.

The dozen Cypriot and Phoenician transport amphorae attested at Berezan contribute to a radical change of the perception of the direct and indirect economic contacts between the western and north-western Pontic region and the Levant in the archaic period²⁷. Their assessment based on pottery had been

¹⁸ NASO 2005, p. 77; NASO 2010, p. 10–11, 16, fig. 1 for those found on the southern slope of Kalabaktepe and NIEMEIER 1999, p. 389–392, p. 412, n. 21 for a single basket-handled amphora sherd discovered in a well near the temple of Athena. For the Phoenician amphorae from Kalabaktepe, see HEINZ 1990, p. 56, n. 6, pl. 11. A few additional sherds were discovered during the excavations of the archaic precinct of the temple of Aphrodite from Zeytintepe and will be published in the near future (pers. comm. Iulian Bîrzescu).

¹⁹ On the basket-handled amphorae distribution in the Northern Aegean, see DUPONT & NAZAROV 2003; WOLFF 2009; WOLFF 2011, p. 16*–17*; GREENE *et alii* 2011, p. 62.

²⁰ JOHNSTON 1993, p. 370, pl. 80.138; JOHNSTON 2005, p. 358, 372.

²¹ JACOPI 1929, p. 114, 141, 143, pl. IV (LXXVII, CXXI, CXXIX); JACOPI 1931, p. 261, 270, 275, 280–281, 332, pl. VIII (CXXXI, CXLII, CXLIX, CLVIII, CLIX, CLX, CCX); see JACOPI 1931, p. 29–30, for another two *enchytrismoi* in similar amphorae (112, 129, pl. VIII) from the Kameirian necropolis of Macri Langoni considered “insignificant in terms of type, ritual and grave goods” and intentionally omitted from publication.

²² DUPONT & SKARLATIDOU 2012, p. 260, 263, fig. 31.

²³ The three shipwrecks that carried a significant amount of basket-handled amphorae of the 7th and 6th centuries BC are discussed in GREENE *et alii* 2011, esp. p. 62–63; GREENE *et alii* 2013; GREENE 2018.

²⁴ BIKAI 2000; GILBOA *et alii* 2015.

²⁵ JACOPI 1929, p. 174, pl. III (CLXXIV); JACOPI 1931, p. 364–366, fig. 412, pl. VIII (CCXI) – necropolis of Checraci, ca. 580–570 BC, based on the Middle Corinthian trefoil *oinochoe* attributed to the Ampersand Painter (BENSON 1960, p. 283, no. 9, pl. 81.1); see JACOPI 1931, p. 29–30 for another two *enchytrismoi* in similar amphorae (117, 121, pl. VIII) intentionally omitted from publication.

²⁶ KASSERI 2012.

²⁷ Cf. DAN 2011, p. 214: „Le goût des Pontiques pour le vin et l’huile ouest-asiatique ne semble jamais avoir été assez fort pour justifier un marché de distribution rentable à très grande distance. Il n’y a à présent aucun reste d’amphore «phénicienne» classique ou hellénistique sur les côtes de la mer Noire.”

founded until recently solely on a sherd of a White Painted IV Cypriot jug discovered at Istros by Scarlat Lambrino²⁸ and possibly on some analogous finds from Berezan²⁹, as well as on the aforementioned similarity between the archaic Greek assemblages at Istros and the autochthonous Syrian settlement of Tell Sukas, frequently visited and even inhabited by an unknown number of individuals of Hellenic stock³⁰.

The new discoveries are of considerable importance, especially since the minor objects made of faience and glass – globular and zoomorphic *aryballoi*, Egyptianizing scarabs and anthropomorphic and zoomorphic glass core pendants are at best problematic for establishing economic and cultural ties between the western and north-western Pontic shores and the Levant during the archaic period. The *aryballoi* and the scarabs traditionally ascribed to Rhodian and Naukratite workshops give proof only of the strong influence exerted by the Egyptian culture on the East Greeks in the archaic period and are easily explainable through contacts between the colonists in the Pontic region and the cities of Western Anatolia³¹. The evidence brought by the glass core pendants of indisputable Phoenician, and above all, Punic influence, discovered mainly at Olbia – but also in several other sites from Crimea and the northern Black Sea region – is fraught with a twofold problem: firstly, the lack of undisputable criteria for assessing these objects either as authentic products of Levantine and North African workshops, or as imitations manufactured elsewhere; secondly, the inability to identify the trade routes by which these jewels reached the northern Black Sea shores, given that they were widely distributed in the whole Mediterranean³². Last but not least, besides a few questionable exceptions³³, the pendants found in the Pontic area are later than the archaic period.

²⁸ It seems that only one of the six sherds discussed and illustrated in ALEXANDRESCU 1978, p. 63, cat. no. 256, pl. 26–256 c, is undoubtedly of Cypro-Achaic date, as shown, after a new examination, in KARAGEORGHIS 2006, p. 7, n. 1.

²⁹ Ks. Gorbunova's personal communication *apud* ALEXANDRESCU 1978, p. 63.

³⁰ See above, p. 1, n. 7. Two additional issues concerning pottery should be mentioned: 1. The discovery at Istros, in a dwelling on the residential neighbourhood on the Plateau and the sanctuary area on the acropolis, of two East-Greek amphorae of the so-called Ashkelon type (late 7th and 6th century BC), of unknown provenance, but with distribution restricted at the moment to finds made exclusively in the Levant, at Ashkelon and in Cilicia (BÎRZESCU 2012, 199, 348, cat. no. 1404–1405, pl. 74; cf. BUYSKIKH 2017, 199); 2. the hypothesis expressed in DUPONT & LUNGU 2007 that a Greek workshop in Propontis imitated the Phoenician-Punic wares known as *piatti ombelicati* and produced as a result the so-called archaic Pontic *fish-plates* discovered at Istros and Berezan (met with skepticism in POSAMENTIR *et alii* 2009, p. 38–39, n. 25; on the same wares, see also POSAMENTIR & SOLOVYOV 2006, 115, fig. 4).

³¹ On the globular faience *aryballoi* found in the Black Sea region, see DOMĂNEANȚU 1988 (esp. on the *aryballoi* found at Istros) and SKUDNOVA 1988, p. 45 (no. 31.1), 48 (no. 43.1), 108 (no. 161.1), 118 (no. 181.4), 135 (no. 213.3) (from Olbia), with DAN 2011, p. 218. On the 7th-4th centuries BC Egyptianizing scarabs, see BOUZEK 2000, p. 137–138, fig. 2; DAN 2011, p. 217–218, with commentary and relevant bibliography.

³² On the distribution of these objects, see SEEFRIED 1979, p. 22–26 and SEEFRIED 1982, p. 35–36. For the mainly Punic origin of the glass core pendants found in the north-western and northern regions of the Black Sea, the trading routes they followed and the

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At the same time, the new trade-related artefacts shed a better light on the few objects and epigraphic testimonies to the Levantine-Pontic connections in the sphere of religion.

Two *graffiti* identified at Berezan and Olbia on Greek pots dedicated to the Syrian Aphrodite by worshippers bearing Hellenic names and using the Ionian dialect and the Ionian alphabet, dated in the 6th century BC, respectively the first half of the 5th century BC – therefore much earlier than any other Aegean mention of this cult³⁴ – are spectacularly corroborated by three clay figurines of a seated female deity, priestess or worshipper with Levantine and Egyptianising traits, modelled in the same mould and coming from the sacred area of Istros, but originating most probably in Cyprus or Northern Syria, given their artistic features and their clay composition³⁵. Despite immense chronological and historiographic difficulties, a story attributed by Athenaios to an otherwise unknown Polycharmos (of Naukratis?) – recounting how the merchant Hermokrates of Naukratis bought a statue of Aphrodite from Paphos, in Cyprus and dedicated it in the temple of the goddess from his home city – provides a plausible parallel for the dedication of the three figurines in the Istrian *temenos*³⁶. Incidentally, Aphrodite was adored as a marine deity, in an Orientalizing manner, in the Istrian sanctuary, as attested in the 2nd century BC by her epiclesis of Πόντια³⁷. More Oriental and Orientalizing features of the cult are documented in

hypothetical existence of certain Pontic workshops, see SEEFRIED 1982, p. 43–44; BOUZEK 2000, p. 135–136; DAN 2011, p. 220–222.

³³ E.g., a late 6th – early 5th century BC ram-shaped pendant discovered at Olbia, ALEKSEEVA 1982, p. 42, type 468, p. 34, fig. 22, pl. 47:32. On the chronology of these pendants, deemed to be among the earliest, see SEEFRIED 1982, p. 30–31.

³⁴ Berezan: Αθηνόμανδρός μ' ἀνέθηκεν Ἀφροδίτῃ Συρίῃ; Olbia: [Α]φροδίτῃ Συρίῃ Μητροῶ. RUSYAEVA 1992, p. 104; DUBOIS 1996, cat. no. 73–74, p. 122–123; RUSYAEVA 2005, p. 297.

³⁵ ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 1994; ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 1997; ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 2004, p. 79–83, fig. 1-3; ALEXANDRESCU *et alii* 2005, p. 494, fig. 72, p. 496–498, cat. no. Tc 17, pl. 80. The attempts to establish their origin more closely through clay analysis were more successful than those based on the identification of the puzzling object or being held against the chest, between the breasts, by the goddess, priestess or worshipper. An indication of the Levantine origin of the mould where the figurines were cast is given by the analogies for the Egyptianising traits of their face and hair provided by objects such as a Kamelarga-style Cypriote terracotta of the Cypro-Archaic II period, 6th century BC (CM B 51, with KARAGEORGHIS 1977, p. 205, 234, pl. 35b and KARAGEORGHIS 1998, p. 60, cat. no. II(vii)20, pl. XXXIX.3) and a figurine unearthed in the important Mediterranean *emporion* of Al Mina, on the mouth of Orontes river, in the Level IV, ca. 520–430 BC (WOOLLEY 1938, p. 19–20, fig. 6). The figurines found at Istros were cast with the greatest care and are probably the earliest of all, evoking both the position and the traits of some representations depicted on Cypro-Geometric III gold sheets, ca. 850–750 BC (Lapithos T. 403/1 and Paphos ?, CM 1973/IX–19/1, in KARAGEORGHIS 1977, p. 155–156, pl. 25 b and c). Cf. ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 2004, p. 81.

³⁶ Ath. 15.18 Kaibel = 15.675f–676c Casaubon (= *FGrHist* 640 fr. 1), with ALEXANDRESCU *et alii* 2005, p. 87, n. 113.

³⁷ ALEXANDRESCU *et alii* 2005, p. 88. Cf. the similar epiclesis Εὐπλοία, attested at Berezan and Olbia, RUSYAEVA 2005, p. 298.

the second half of the 6th century BC, like the usage of red ochre in religious rituals, in *mortaria* and *perirrhanteria* of Greek manufacture, but undoubtedly inspired by Levantine models³⁸. Similarly, at Olbia, an additional proof of the Oriental influence over the cult of Aphrodite is that the temple in whose vicinity was discovered the *graffito* mentioning the Syrian Aphrodite is jointly dedicated to the goddess and Hermes³⁹.

The lower fragment of a late 7th century BC clay amulet or applique depicting a masculine human head, with good analogies among North Syrian ivory figurines, and the head of a Cypriot terracotta figurine dedicated in the sacred area of Istros in the early 6th century BC are additional proofs that the Levantine religious influences over the Hellenic communities of the western and north-western Black Sea region might not have been restricted only to the cult of Aphrodite⁴⁰.

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A proper assessment of the archaeological evidence of the Levantine connections of the western and north-western Pontic *apoikiai*, aiming to draw truthful historical interpretations, requires comparisons between the volume and the features of the Levantine *testimonia* from the Black Sea and those from the Aegean. This approach is nonetheless difficult to accomplish.

First of all, the scholarly interest in the topic of the Levantine connections is heavily imbalanced. Until recently, it has been far less developed in areas deemed less likely to establish and maintain contacts with the Levant, such as the Euxine, the Hellespont and large swaths of the Northern Aegean. The sheer number of academic papers dealing with this topic is revealing⁴¹.

Moreover, although there are numerous papers on the relations of the Central and South Aegean with the Levant in the first half of the 1st millennium BC, most of them focus on the period before the late 8th century BC. The *orientalia*

³⁸ ZIMMERMANN & ALEXANDRESCU 1980, p. 271–276, fig. 2, 4.4, p. 278, fig. 5 (*mortarium* - tripod), p. 275–281, fig. 4.2-3, 6, 7 (*perirrhanteria*); ALEXANDRESCU *et alii* 2005, p. 75–78, 87.

³⁹ ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 1997, p. 15–16, 17.

⁴⁰ ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 2004, p. 82, 84, fig. 5.

⁴¹ Studies dealing exclusively or partially with the distribution of Levantine objects in: a) the Pontic region: BOUZEK 2000; ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 2010/2011; BOUZEK 2010/2011; DAN 2011; b) in the Northern Aegean and in Propontis: TIVERIOS 2004; TIVERIOS 2008, p. 75–76; TIVERIOS 2012; ILIEVA 2019; c) in the Central and Southern Aegean: COLDSTREAM 1982, p. 261–275; COLDSTREAM 1998, p. 255–263; 2006, p. 49–55; SHAW 1989, p. 163–185; SHAW 2000, p. 1107–1119; STAMPOLIDIS 1990, p. 99–106; STAMPOLIDIS 2003, p. 217–232; NEGBI 1992, p. 599–615; JONES 1993, p. 293–303; CRIELAARD 1998, p. 187–206; KOUROU & GRAMMATIKAKI 1998; MORRIS & PAPADOPOULOS 1998, p. 251–263; KOUROU 2000, p. 1067–81; KOUROU 2003, p. 249–262; KOUROU 2007; KOUROU 2008a, p. 361–374; KOUROU 2008b, p. 305–364; KOUROU 2009; KOUROU 2012, p. 24–51; STAMPOLIDIS & KOTSONAS 2006, p. 337–360; BOUROGIANNIS 2000, p. 9–23; BOUROGIANNIS 2007; BOUROGIANNIS 2009, p. 114–130; BOUROGIANNIS 2012b, p. 183–205; BOUROGIANNIS 2012c, p. 67–84; BOUROGIANNIS 2013, p. 139–189; SHERRATT 2010, p. 119–142; PAPADOPOULOS 2011, p. 113–133; KOTSONAS 2012, p. 155–183; GILBOA *et alii* 2015, p. 75–102; IOANNOU 2017, p. 435–446; BOUROGIANNIS 2018.

found in the Aegean are generally considered proofs of the Phoenician physical presence in the region. They contribute thus to the passionate quest of fact-checking the classical traditions which assert an early Phoenician influence over the Greeks, preserved in celebrated accounts like that of Herodotos. The discussions on the Levantine objects that reached the Aegean in the 7th-6th centuries BC – helpful for drawing comparisons with the Pontic region – are rare and inconsistent, as the amount of *orientalia* sharply increases and are generally explained as imports made by the Greek merchants.

The current state of affairs is well-described by G. Bourogiannis: „Some of these [numerous objects in faience, glass, amber, ivory and ostrich eggs dated mostly between the late 8th and the 6th centuries BCE] may have been brought by Phoenician merchants although the Greeks also were active traders and seafarers during this period. For this reason, the presence of *orientalia* in Greek sanctuaries from the early 7th century BCE onwards does not necessarily imply a Phoenician presence or activity but it may be viewed as an expression of a broader, Mediterranean intercultural and commercial exchange with multiple participants. The main exception to this approach is the extremely rare occurrence of Phoenician inscriptions, primarily votive, which confirm that some (coastal) sanctuaries were occasionally frequented by Phoenician seafarers”⁴².

On the other hand, even if the interest in the Levantine *testimonia* of the 7th-6th century BC would be equal in the Aegean and Pontos, the regional comparisons would still be fraught with considerable methodological problems arising from the unequal amounts of archaeological excavations conducted in the two regions.

The historical interpretations of the archaeological situation described in the first part of the paper should be treated therefore as informed speculation. Three main hypotheses were advanced to explain the Levantine objects and influences from the Pontic region:

- a) the Levantine hypothesis: Phoenician and Cypriot merchants, travelers and even immigrants⁴³;
- b) the Greek colonization hypothesis: Greek colonists from western Asia Minor, the Northern Aegean and Propontis who had already been exposed to Levantine cultural influence and carried objects acquired by trade from the Levant⁴⁴;
- c) the Greek trade hypothesis: merchants from East Greek cities, particularly from Miletos, who acted as middlemen between Pontos and the Levantine region⁴⁵.

⁴² BOUROGIANNIS 2018, p. 73.

⁴³ BOUZEK 2000; ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 2004, p. 85; ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 2010/2011, p. 32.

⁴⁴ ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 1997, p. 22–24 (with doubts); ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 2010/2011, p. 32; DAN 2011 (with doubts).

⁴⁵ ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 1997, p. 22–24 (with doubts); ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 2010/2011, p. 32; DUPONT & NAZAROV 2003, p. 143. BUYSKIKH 2017, 200 rejects the existence of Milesian intermediaries, but is rather eager to accept middlemen originating in Propontis and Byzantion.

The three hypotheses are not mutually exclusive, as the simultaneous action of more than one type of vectors can be admitted. A multi-vectorial solution is preferable because otherwise any tentative explanation would oversimplify a complex historical situation characterized both by trade exchanges and considerable religious influence.

I propose a fourth type of vector to be added to those which were already hypothetically conceived: at first, the Greek merchants and then, in the first half of the 6th century BC, the Greek colonists who came directly from the Levant, the latter as a consequence of the political and military turmoil that affected the Hellenic *apoikiai*, like Soloi, as well as the trade factories and the small autochthonous settlements with small Greek communities, such as Al Mina, Tell Sukas, Ras el Bassit, in northern Syria, or Ashkelon, in the southern Levant.

There are several arguments for this hypothesis, which does not exclude the others but has the advantage that it could explain even alone the diverse array of Levantine objects and influences.

The Cypriot and Phoenician amphorae discovered at Berezan testify to trade contacts that took place particularly in the late 7th century BC and the first half of the 6th century BC, with a possible extension in the third quarter of the 6th century BC in the case of Cypriot amphorae. These chronological limits have already raised the interest of A. Buyskikh, but without any definite consequences for the historical interpretations⁴⁶. They are nonetheless intriguing because they display a certain correlation with the main historical events in the Levant in the same period, the great conflict over the region between the Neo-Babylonian Empire and the Saite Egypt, between 612 and 562 BC, and the Persian conquest of the Eastern Mediterranean, between 547 and 525 BC. Thus, after a short flourishing at the turn of the 7th century BC, the cease of trade in Phoenician amphorae and the greater part of Cypriot amphorae might be a direct consequence of the huge devastations provoked by the long-lasting hostilities between the Egyptians and the Babylonians, which took place on the Levantine shores and to a lesser extent, in Cyprus. Practically, there is no settlement with significant amounts of East Greek pottery finds from the late 7th century BC, from the Gulf of Issos in the north, to the Sinai Peninsula in the south, which did not suffer massive destruction or at least a significant decline, as attested either by literary sources or by archeological discoveries⁴⁷. Not even Tyre – at that time the most important Phoenician city, one of the greatest Mediterranean trade hubs and apparently a major producer of “torpedo” amphorae⁴⁸ – avoided a 13 years siege laid by Nebuchadnezzar II, which led at its end in ca. 574/573 BC to the loss of most of its

⁴⁶ BUYSKIKH 2017, p. 198, 201, who examined objects which she dated in the shorter period of the second half of the 7th century and the early 6th century BC. More data have shown that the Cypriot amphorae reached Berezan a few years after the mid-6th century BC, too.

⁴⁷ The negative consequences of the Egyptian-Babylonian conflict for the Levant and especially for the Greek trade in the region are discussed in IANCU 2022, p. 321–322.

⁴⁸ BIKAI 1978b, p. 13–14, 46–47, 67; BIKAI 1985; GILBOA *et alii* 2004, p. 691–692; SINGER-AVITZ 2010, p. 189; FINKELSTEIN *et alii* 2011, p. 250, chiefly referring to a large set of jars of the second half of the 8th century BC, but the conclusions can be extended to later periods, too.

commercial significance⁴⁹. Thus, it would not be surprising if the end of the imports of Phoenician amphorae and partially of Cypriot amphorae was another phenomenon plausibly caused by the disruptions provoked to Levantine trade by the Egyptian-Babylonian conflict, just like Tyre's loss of control over its colonies and the beginning of the Carthaginian trading empire⁵⁰, the end of Crete's prosperity and the Oriental imports in Etruria⁵¹, the cessation of supply of ivory to the workshops in Peloponnesos⁵². The imports of Cypriot amphorae to Berezan, which still persisted in the third quarter of the 6th century BC, probably as a consequence of the lesser damage inflicted to the island because of its submission to the Egyptian domination⁵³, did not go on too much longer. Their end might be connected to the submission to Persia, no earlier than 545 BC and no later than 525 BC⁵⁴.

These rough historical developments could have led to the flight of the Greeks settled among the local populations in the Levant and the bankruptcy of the Hellenic merchants actively involved in the region. As permanent relocation to the already overpopulated Aegean was not a viable option for all these people, the resettlement to the new communities established in the Black Sea region seems plausible, particularly if earlier trade contacts had already been initiated⁵⁵.

⁴⁹ Ezek. 26:1–14, 29:17; Joseph. *Ap.* 1.143–156, with KATZENSTEIN 1973, p. 325–336; ZAWADSKI 2015, p. 276–284; van der BRUGGE & KLEBER, 2016, p. 203–208.

⁵⁰ van der BRUGGE & KLEBER, 2016, p. 201; LÓPEZ-RUIZ 2021, p. 13, 32, *pace* KATZENSTEIN 1979, p. 27–29, who places the decline later, after the Persian conquest of Egypt.

⁵¹ MORRIS 1992, p. 171.

⁵² CARTLEDGE 2002, p. 117.

⁵³ Hdt. 2.182.2 and Diod. 1.68.6 place it in the time of Amasis, thus in 570 BC at the earliest, but the account of a great naval victory of Apries against the Phoenicians and the Cypriots in Diod. Sic. 1.68.1 might indicate an even earlier submission of the island; cf. CANNAVÒ 2003, esp. p. 137–148 and REYES 1994, p. 69–78 (although the evidence brought by the Elephantine Stela of Amasis should not be taken anymore into consideration in the light of the new edition in JANSEN-WINKELN 2014, esp. p. 148–150). For the telescoped and confused Greek accounts of Apries' military operations in the Levant, which might indicate an early date for the Cypriot submission to Egypt, see IANCU 2022, p. 315–318.

⁵⁴ The submission was dated ca. 545 BC, after the fall of Lydia in 546 BC and before the conquest of Babylon in 539 BC (Xen. *Cyr.* 7.4.1–2, 8.6.8, with HILL 1940, p. 111, n. 2; GJERSTAD 1948, p. 471–473, esp. 471, n. 3; BROWN & CATLING 1986, p. 54), just after the fall of Babylon, during the organization of the satrapal system (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.6.8., with BRIANT 2002, p. 48–49 who distrustfully mentions this hypothesis), or in ca. 526–525 BC, in the context of the invasion of Egypt (Hdt. 3.19.3, with KATZENSTEIN 1979, p. 27; WATKIN 1987; REYES 1994, p. 85; CANNAVÒ 2003, p. 137). The most appropriate conclusion is expressed by BRIANT 2002, p. 51: "Our ignorance in these areas is profound. We know in any case that Phoenicia and Cyprus were dependencies of Cambyses in 525." Cf. DANDAMAEV 1989, p. 24–25, n. 1, 73.

⁵⁵ It is worth drawing a comparison with the decision taken by Dionysios of Phokaia after the Ionian defeat in the naval battle with the Persians at Lade in 494 BC to embrace piracy for a while on the Phoenician coast and then to retreat in the Sicilian colonial environment, far from the Persian threat (Hdt. 6.17). The Spartan royal offspring Dorieus and his companions provide an interesting case of Greek colonists who had to leave the *apoikia* they had founded for military reasons and resettled in another distant region. After the failed attempt to establish a permanent colony at Kinyps, in Libya, Dorieus and his

This scenario might well explain why the cult of Syrian Aphrodite gained popularity at Berezan, Olbia and Istros from such an early period. The Greek migration from the Levant to the Pontos in the second half of the 6th century BC would thus be a prelude to the more massive (and better documented) Greek exodus from Ionia after the Persian conquest of 546 BC.

Unquestionably, this hypothesis awaits future additional finds to get confirmation. If this is the case, it may be added to the series of suppositions advanced by G. Bourogiannis regarding the Eastern Mediterranean political and military causes of the periodic rise and fall in contacts between the Levant and the Greek world, at least in the Aegean, in the first half of the second millennium BC⁵⁶. Just like the increase in the number of the Levantine artefacts in the Aegean in the second half of the 10th century – 9th century BC and later, in the 8th century – early 7th century BC, could be explained by the periods of expansion of Tyre, the first being independent, the second under the stimulus of the Assyrian domination, the appearance of Levantine objects in the western and north-western Pontic region in the late 7th – early 6th century BC could be correlated with the last period of great flourishing of the Phoenician metropolis and the Levantine trade, in general, under the benevolent Saite hegemony. Similarly, just like the conflict between the Assyrians and the Phoenician cities in the mid-7th century BC led to a decrease in Levantine exports in the Aegean, the devastating conflict between Egypt and Babylonia could have been the main reason for the interruption of the trade in Phoenician amphorae and the decrease in the number of the Cypriot imports in the Pontic region during the 6th century BC, supplemented however by an inflow of refugees seeking resettlement.

fellows returned to Sparta, entered the conflict between Kroton and Sybaris in southern Italy, and tried to found a new *apoikia* at Eryx, in Sicily. The survivors of the defeat by the Segestans and the Carthaginians in a battle in which Dorieus was killed, finally settled ca. 510 BC in Heraklea Minoa, an eastern outpost of Selinous (Hdt. 5.42–48, with BRACCESI 1999). The possibility that some Levantines followed the Hellenic refugees in their movement towards the Aegean and even farther, to the Pontic region, should not be dismissed and could be envisaged as a new stage in a recurring secular trend (cf. TREISTER 1995).

⁵⁶ BOUROGIANNIS 2018, p. 73.

APPENDIX
Cypriot and Phoenician amphorae discovered at Berezan

Basket-handled amphora (most probably produced in Cyprus)

Inv. no.	Description	Place and year of discovery	Date	Bibliography
Lost	Entire object	The archaic necropolis of Berezan; G.L. Skadovskiy's excavations of 1900–1901	6 th century BC	SKADOVSKIY 1900-1901, f. 39–40, pl. XXIX <i>apud</i> CHISTOV <i>et alii</i> 2019, p. 20, n. 69
The Museum of Military History of Ochakov	Unspecified number of fragments of handles	Area R. I-v, on the north-eastern side of the island; year unknown	second half of the 6 th century BC	DUPONT & NAZAROV 2003, p. 145
Lost or possibly in the Hermitage Museum of St. Petersburg	Unspecified number of fragments of handles, feet and bodies	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	DUPONT & NAZAROV 2003, p. 145
B.63–186	Fragment of handle	Area G, in the northeast corner of the island, next to the harbour; disaffected well; Ks. Gorbunova's excavations of 1963–1964	second quarter of the 6 th century and the 540s BC	MONAKHOV <i>et alii</i> 2018, p. 100–101, 109, fig. 2.5; MONAKHOV <i>et alii</i> 2019, p. 28, fig. 3.1
AB 67–359	Fragment of foot	Most probably Area O Eastern, on the north-eastern side of the island, without further details; V.V. Lapin's excavations of 1967	second half of the 7 th century – early 6 th century BC (?)	BUYSKIKH 2017, p. 195–197, 204, fig. 1.3
AB 69–142	Fragment of handle	Most probably Area O Eastern, on the north-eastern side of the island,	second half of the 7 th century – early 6 th	BUYSKIKH 2014, p. 98–99, fig. 14.3; BUYSKIKH 2017, p. 195–197,

		without further details; V.V. Lapin's excavations of 1969	century BC (?)	204, fig. 1.1
AB 71-405	Fragment of handle	Most probably Area O Eastern, on the north-eastern side of the island, without further details; V.V. Lapin's excavations of 1971	second half of the 7 th century – early 6 th century BC (?)	BUYSKIKH 2017, p. 195-197, 204, fig. 1.2
Be 2007 29/605	Fragment of handle	Area O Western, on the north-eastern side of the island; household pit 118; State Hermitage excavations of 2007	first half of the 6 th century BC	CHISTOV <i>et alii</i> 2012, p. 170, pl. 14.3; BUYSKIKH 2017, p. 197; CHISTOV 2018, p. 26-27, 36, fig. 5.6
Be 2011 18/220	Fragment of handle	Area R. I-v, on the north-eastern side of the island; room 16 (cellar) of house no. 3 (filling consisting of burnt material from the first phase of the building); State Hermitage excavations of 2011	third quarter of the 6 th century BC	CHISTOV 2018, p. 26-27, 36, fig. 5.7; CHISTOV <i>et alii</i> 2020, p. 96, 247, 268, pl. 47.1 (detailed description of context: p. 63-66, esp. 64)

“Torpedo” amphorae (most probably produced in Phoenicia)

Inv. no.	Description	Place and year of discovery	Date	Bibliography
AB 69-96	Fragment of neck and handle	Most probably Area O Eastern, on the north-eastern side of the island, without further details; V.V. Lapin's excavations, 1969	second half of the 7 th century – early 6 th century BC (?)	BUYSKIKH 2017, p. 197-199, 205, fig. 2.4
AB 69-383	Fragment of neck and handle	Most probably Area O Eastern, on the north-eastern side of the island, without	second half of the 7 th century –	BUYSKIKH 2014, p. 99, 98, fig. 14.4; BUYSKIKH 2017, p. 197-199, 205,

		further details; V.V. Lapin's excavations, 1969	early 6 th century BC (?)	fig. 2.3
AB 77–669a	Fragment of neck and handle	Most probably Area O Eastern, on the north-eastern side of the island, without further details; V.V. Lapin's excavations, 1977	second half of the 7 th century – early 6 th century BC (?)	BUYSKIKH 2014, p. 97, 98, fig. 14.1; BUYSKIKH 2017, p. 197–199, 205, fig. 2.1
AB (or Alu ?) 80–377	Fragment of neck and handle	Most probably Area O Eastern, on the north-eastern side of the island, without further details; V.V. Lapin's excavations, 1980	second half of the 7 th century – early 6 th century BC (?)	BUYSKIKH 2014, p. 97, 98, fig. 14.2; BUYSKIKH 2017, p. 197–199, 205, fig. 2.2

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