

THE GREEK COLONIES IN THE PONTIC AREA DURING THE 5TH CENTURY BC, ATHENS, THE RISE OF THE “BARBARIAN” KINGDOMS AND THE IONIAN REVOLT: AN ECONOMIC APPROACH¹

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One of the many interesting periods of the ancient history of the Black Sea region is the transition between the last quarter of the 6th and the first half of the 5th century BC, in which trade seems to become the main occupation of, or at least much more important for, the Pontic Greeks. Events which preceded this change however already started at the end of the 8th century BC, when the east Greek cities on the Ionian coast started to enlarge their territory and pushed the boundaries of their *chora* far into the area which was inhabited by the local Carian population. However, during the middle of the 7th century BC, groups of Thraco-Cimmerians crossed the Bosphorus and attacked the new independent state of Lydia (De Boer d, forthcoming). This state became independent after the destruction of the Phrygian kingdom by an earlier group of Cimmerians that had arrived at the beginning of the 7th century BC from the northern Pontic region along the eastern coast of the Black Sea in Anatolia and the Near East. These events forced the Lydian king Gyges to station Ionian and Carian mercenaries at Abydos (Th. VIII.61; Str. I.3.21; XIII.1.22), a place earlier inhabited by Thracians (Hom. *Il.* IV. 500; Str. XIII.1.22) and probably used during these invasions into Lydian territory. Earlier Ionian expansion into the Propontis had always been blocked by the Phrygians and later on by the Lydians (Roebuck 1959, 105), but the Ionians were now soon able to found other colonies in the Propontis, like Proconnesos and Cyzicus. During several decades, the Cimmerians raided the Greek towns in Aeolia and Ionia, plundering the temple of Artemis outside the city-walls of Ephesus (Call. *Dian.* 251-8). According to Strabo (Str. I.3.21) and confirmed by Assyrian archives (Sauter 2000, 9.2.2.2), the Cimmerian leader Lygdamis was killed between 637 and 625 BC, and the Lydian king Alyattes (610-560 BC) destroyed the last remains of Cimmerian power in the Near East somewhere

¹ This article is a revised and extended version of a paper which was read during the First International Pontic Congress, September 1997, at Varna (Bulgaria). The proceedings of this congress are not published.

between 610 and 592 BC, while some groups of Thraco-Cimmerians probably fled over the Bosphorus and returned through Thrace (Hdt. I.16.2). Around 630 BC Anatolia and the Near East were again invaded, this time by the Scythians, who raided this area for several decades and probably participated in the destruction of Nineveh in 612 BC. The Scythians probably moved east of the Caucasus (Pirtskhalava 1995, 53) as small bands for a short period and hardly left any archaeological traces (Ivantchik 2001, 334).

The result of the Cimmerian and Scythian invasions, the fall of the Phrygian, Urartian and Assyrian and the rise of the Lydian and Median empires changed the political situation in Anatolia and the Near East in a drastic way. It must have made the caravan routes across Asia Minor overland, like the Great Khorasan Road to the west highly precarious and must also have paralyzed the development of new trade routes by land in this area (Barnett 1956, 227; Roebuck 1959, 59; Tuplin 2004, 233). We know practically nothing of the economic situation in Lydia before the time of king Gyges but its relations with its neighbours must certainly have been hampered by the Thraco-Cimmerian invasion (Roebuck 1959, 43-4). At the Lydian city of Daskylion, near the later Greek colony of Cyzicus, protocorinthian and east Greek pottery from the first half of 7th century BC was found (Huxley 1966, 65), showing that there was an increase in trade and growth of wealth, that brought both Lydia and Ionia into the centre of Mediterranean economy until this development was stopped by the Thraco-Cimmerian invasion. At the same time however, the fact that the Lydian king Gyges was forced by these same invasions to station Ionian mercenaries at Abydos in the Propontis resulted in other Greek colonies in the Propontis and opened the Black Sea to the Ionian Greeks for the first time. The Lydian king Gyges started a hostile policy against the weakened Ionian cities (Hdt. I.14-15), which continued under his successors Ardys, Sadyattes, Alyattes and Croesus (Hdt. I.16-18; 26-28). It was caused by the intention to seize as much as possible of the available arable land (Hdt. I.73). This resulted in the fact that most Ionian *poleis* lost large parts of their *chora*, leading in Miletos to a grim internal struggle (Hdt. V.28-29). At the beginning of the 6th century BC, Miletos was even obliged to accept a treaty that drastically reduced its possessions (Hdt. I.25). In the middle of the 6th century BC, the Persian king began to conquer the Greek cities of Asia Minor (Dandamaev 1989, 23-8). These developments probably started several stages of colonization in the now opened Black Sea area (Tsetskhladze 1994, 125). Those in and near the Ionian cities who received the heaviest blow of the attacks, that started with the Cimmerians and which were continued by the Scythians, the Lydians and the Persians, were the Ionian farmers and the Carian population, living in the *chora* outside the city-walls. It is likely that those who were involved in the first Black Sea colonization, or maybe better called Black Sea migrations, consisted mostly of people of these groups. Unluckily the largest part of the early *necropoleis* of the earliest Greek colonies in the Black Sea area, like Berezan, Histria and Apollonia Pontica are

nowadays under the sea-level, but the few finds which remain from them are extremely modest and downright poor compared, for instance, with those of the earliest Greek trade colonies in the west and the earliest Phoenician settlements in southern Spain. The houses of the first settlements in the Black Sea area, like Berezan and Histria, were simple dugouts and semi-dugouts (Treister/Vinogradov 1993, 539; Solovyov 1999, 29-42) and the pottery of the first settlers was mostly handmade (Solovyov 1999, 43-4). Dugouts and semi-dugouts are also found in Phrygia (Tsetsckhladze 2000, 166) and probably also used in the *chora* of several Ionian cities. Aim of the colonists was to find arable land and fishing grounds to survive, for example at Histria where cereal cultivation was an important part of the colonial economy (Krebs 1997, 48) and Apollonia Pontica that was probably originally founded for its excellent fishing grounds. The earliest colonists were mostly concerned with themselves and their new environment, as large scale export of grain to the mother cities was a phenomenon that possibly started in the 5th or 4th century BC (Noonan 1973; Šceglov 1990; De Boer 2005, 167-80). The same can be concluded about the traces of bronze-working in earliest levels at Berezan (Domanskij/Marčenko 2003, 32-35), which are probably more concerned with a local market as any indications for export are missing. It is possible that in the second half of the 6th century BC, the descendants of the first settlers were already the richest persons in the *polis*, as they possessed the best land (having had the first choice), and developed into an aristocracy (Rusiaeva 2003, 99), but this does not mean that this was the case with the first Greeks who arrived over there. The Carian part of these first settlers may also account for the many Carian place names along the western and northern Black Sea coast (Besevliev 1981, 266; Dimitrov 1987, 21). There were originally Carians near the Sea of Azov at Tanais and in the area near Shabla (A.R. II.943; Plin. *Nat.* VI.20). According to Arrian (Arr. *Peripl.M.Eux.* 24.3), there was in his time still a place called Carôn Limên. Another Carian name on the Black Sea coast is Callatis. This is a more likely reason for these names than a pre-Greek presence of Carians in the Black Sea, a Carian thassolacracy (Bilabel 1920, 61), for which any further archaeological or historical proof in the Pontic region is lacking.

It seems however that the situation in the Black Sea area changed in the period between the last quarter of the 6th century and the first half of the 5th century BC. Trade among the Pontic cities and with the Mediterranean became much more important and the whole Pontic region turned into a cultural and economical unity (Vinogradov 1997, 1-73). As literary sources for most of the areas in the Pontic region in this period are extremely scarce or non-existing, most of our evidence comes from archaeological excavations. Unluckily, as already mentioned, the finds from the early *necropoleis* of the larger Greek colonies, like Apollonia Pontica, Histria and Olbia, are less than those from the later Hellenistic periods. There is however still enough material available to give evidence for a considerable rise, at least on the western and north-

western Black Sea coast, in economic activity, resulting in an increase of personal wealth and building activities.

In this article, I shall try to demonstrate these changes in a (although not complete) survey of examples in a large part of the western and northern Greek Black Sea region (Fig. 1).

Apollonia Pontica on the western Black Sea coast (now Sozopol) was according to Pseudo Skymnos (Ps-Skymn. 739) founded around 609 BC, and this date is supported by fragments of Ionian and Rhodian pottery from the late 7th and early 6th century BC found during several excavations in the centre of the old town (Hoddinott 1975, 34; Isaac 1986, 244; Nedev/Panayotova 2003, 95-156; Nedev/Giuzeev, forthcoming). The first real archaeological evidence of large economic activity however comes from the end of the 6th century BC: a possible indication that from this time onwards Apollonia became a major factor in the Pontic trade (De Boer a, forthcoming). Between the end of the 6th and the 4th centuries BC, Apollonia Pontica doubled its import from Attic pottery and still continued to import Ionian ware; Attic and Corinthian terracotta reached it at the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th century BC for the first time (Bouzek 1990, 104) and the amount of black-figured (6th-5th centuries BC) and red figured (5th-4th centuries BC) ceramics rose significantly (Venedikov et. al. 1963, 75-78; Reho-Bumbalova 1985; 215-6; De Boer a, forthcoming). Amphorae of the biconical and heavy biconical types from Thasos and the Lambrino A 2 type from Chios, both dated to the beginning of the 5th century BC (Lazarov 1980, 173; Cook/Dupont 1998, 149), are found in larger amounts at the former sites of Apollonia Pontica and its “emporion” or Thracian trading posts at Kiten (Perinthos), near the mouth of the Ropotamo river (Chersonesos/Tonzos), Debelt, Skadkitke Kladenci and Anchialos (nowadays Pomorie)². This indicates a drastic rise in the wine and oil trade in the above mentioned period which is also attested in other parts the Black Sea area (Fig. 2). At the same time Apollonia founded a number of the above mentioned new “emporion”, and coins were minted in this *polis* from the beginning of the 5th century BC onwards (Hind 1985, 95; Isaac 1986, 246). The prosperity of Apollonia Pontica in the 5th century BC was shown by the enormous cult-statue of Apollo, made by Kalamis around 466 BC, and several rock marble tombs dating from the first half of the 5th century containing a.o. the funeral stele of Anaxandros and again indicating an increased wealth to finance these funerals (Isaac 1986, 244; Panayotova 1991, 127).

Messembria Pontica (now Nessebre) and its “emporion” Ravda, Naulochos

² See for information regarding these sites Balabanov/ Drazjeva 1985, 9-29; Bouzek 1989, 249-259; Bouzek 1990, 46; Caneva 1980 447-50; Caneva 1982, 197-200; de Boer 2002a, 125-38; de Boer 2002b, 355-60; de Boer a, forthcoming; de Boer/Stronk 2000-1, 233-8; de Boer/Stronk 2003, 55-62; Karajotov 1991, 135; Lazarov 1973, 3-52; Lazarov 1980, 173; Nedev/Panayotova 2003, 95-156.

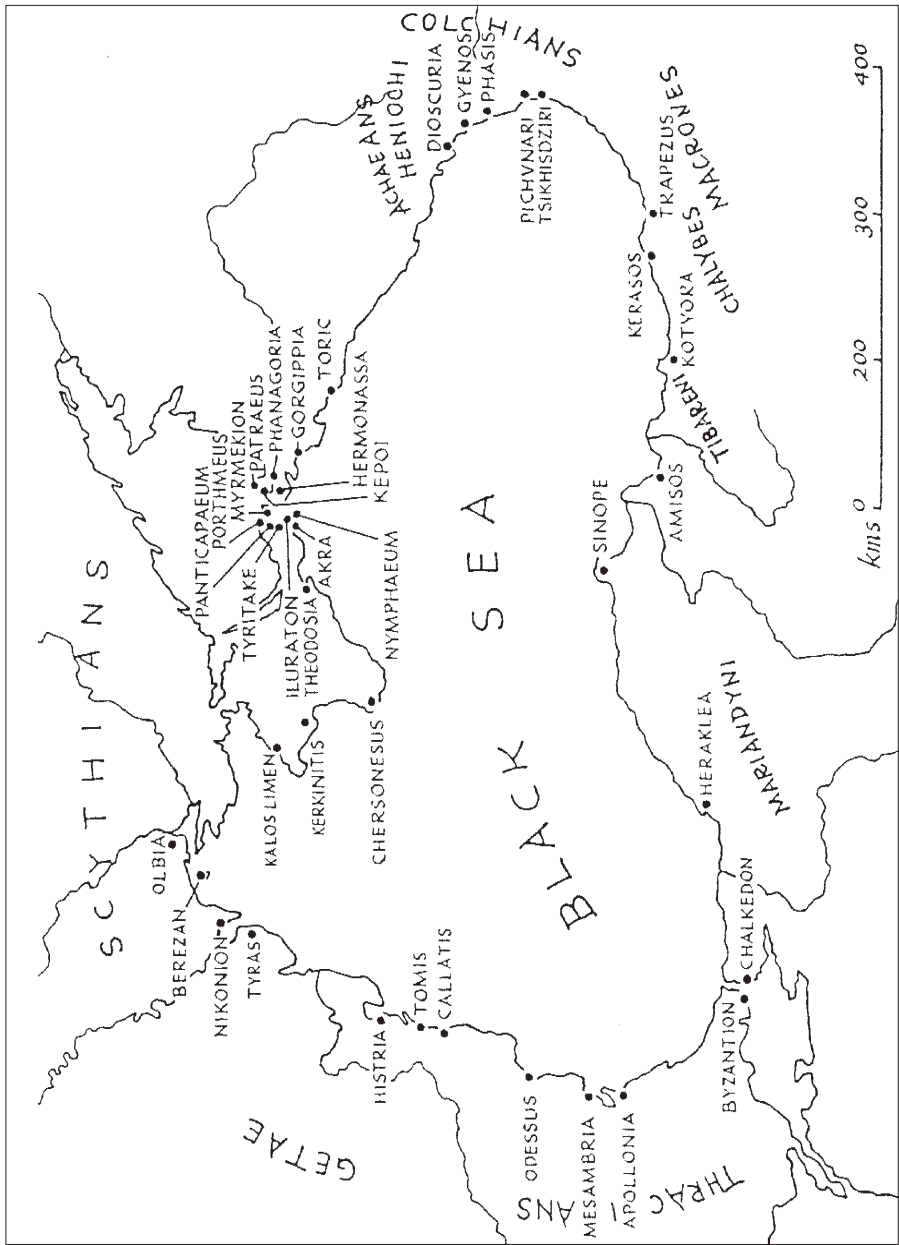


Fig. 1. Map of the Greek colonies in the Pontic region.

(near present-day Obzor) and Bizone (now Kavarna and founded in the mid-5th century BC or slightly later: Boshnakov 2004, 186; Oppermann 2004, 11; Damyanov 2004-5) were founded by the Dorians of Megara and Chalkedon between 510 and 450³, showing an increased interest of the mainland Greeks in the west Pontic area and now starting a competition in trade with the earlier Ionian colonies in this region (Hoddinott 1975, 41; Venedikov 1969, 15-16). Messembria almost immediately started to mint coins that are found far into the interior of Thrace, and its *chora* was supposed to reach 40 till 50 km inland (Karayotov 1994, 14-23.).

Odessos started in the beginning of the 5th century BC to orientate its economy on Athens (in the earlier period, during the 6th century BC, it had been orientated on Ionia, Rhodes, Samos and Chios), while at the same time it started to import, like Apollonia Pontica, wine from Thasos (Lazarov 1985, 66; Hoddinott 1975, 51). Two Ionic capitals discovered at Varna could have been the remains of a large temple which was build around 480 BC in Odessos (Minchev 2003, 245).

The earliest material from the site of Dionysopolis in the Dobrudja, probably a secondary colony from Odessos, are Chian amphorae from the early 5th century BC (Lazarov 1982, 8-9), indicating the foundation of this colony during this period.

At Tomis, the first stone houses were build at the beginning of the 5th century BC (Isaac 1986, 267).

Excavations at the lower Danube revealed large amounts of Greek material from the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th century BC onwards, like a big *oenochoe* in the *necropolis* of Bradita, while Greek import ware is found to Transylvania in the west. Products in exchange could have been cattle, skins, wool, honey, wood for shipbuilding, metals and slaves (Hartuche/Bounegra 1985, 277-87; Irima 1980, 120-8).

Histria started to advertise its slave-trade through silver coins at the beginning of the 5th century BC (Hind 1991, 153-8), while the second stage of the great Zeus-temple was build in the same period, probably shortly after the destruction of Histria around 500 BC by the Getae. In the hinterland of Histria and in the vicinity of Orgame, but also in the territory of Moldova, Greek imports from the late 6th and the early 5th century BC onwards can be traced. Chian amphorae with bulging neck appear on several sites (Nikulits 1987, 33-34) and the number of imported amphorae found in several centres multiplied fast in number after this period (Preda 1986, 269; Sirbu 1982, 104; Isaac 1986, 273-275; Alexandrescu 1990, 54; Hind 1991, 269). At Histria Pod, near the *polis* of Histria, Attic black-figured ceramics were found in larger quantities dating from the 5th century BC onwards (Zimmerman/Avram 1987, 18).

³ There is a possibility that Bizone was founded earlier, see for the arguments of this case, Salkin 1985, 251-55.

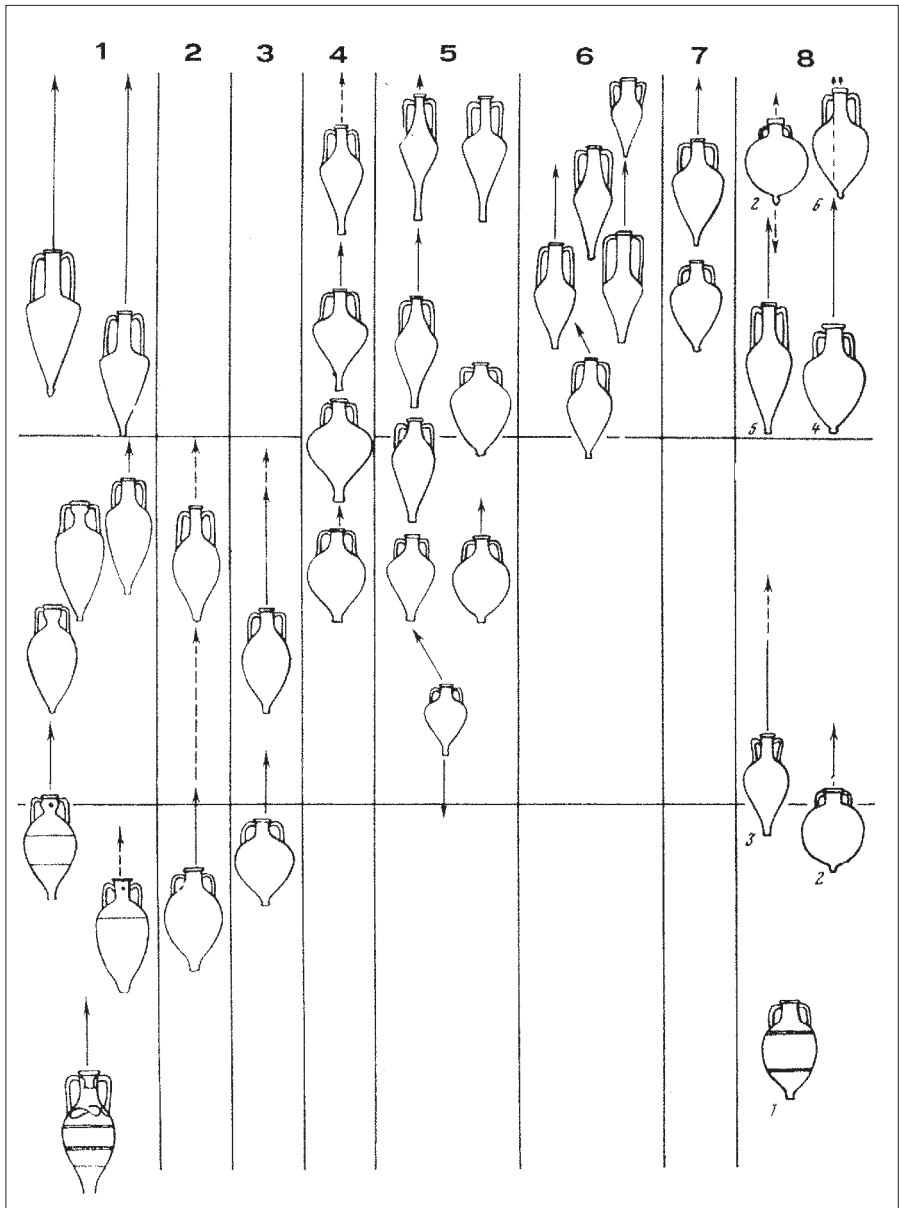


Fig. 2. Transport amphorae in the Pontic area.

At the bottom: 6th century BC; in the middle: 5th century BC; at the top: 4th century BC.

1 Chios, 2 Lesbos, 3 Samos, 4 Mende, 5 Thasos, 6 Heraclea, 7 Sinope, 8 Other centers. (After Brashinskii 1963).

At Nikonion, being founded as a secondary colonization from Histria in the middle of the 6th century BC, the earliest remains of stone buildings appear in the second/third quarters of the 5th century BC (Treister 1994, 8), while at the nearby island of Leuke sherds of Attic black-figure vases from the end of the 6th and early 5th century BC are most numerous (Ochotnikov/Ostroverchov 1993; Treister 1994, 10; Vinogradov/Treister 1997, 534).

The Berezan settlement developed as an urban centre in the last quarter of the 6th/first decades of the 5th century BC (Treister 1994, 12), while a unique stone-built temple, dedicated to Aphrodite, was built in the first half of the 5th century BC (Kryzhitskii 1993a, 66; Solovyov, 1999, 64-7).

As Olbia is (with Histria) the longest excavated and best published Greek *polis* in the north-western Pontic region, its early history allows us to draw some interesting conclusions. Olbia, being an agricultural colony in the 6th century BC with a large *chora* of 6000 inhabitants and 107 settlements (Kryzhitskii 1993b, 16-23; Vinogradov/Kryzhitskii 1995, 67), completely changed at the end of the 6th century BC. Stone houses replaced dugouts and Olbia started, like almost all Pontic cities in this period, an enormous building activity. The first temple of Apollo Delphinios and several other cult-buildings are from this period. At the same time the number of Attic ceramics which were found here rose considerably (Balin de Ballu 1972, 29-37; Vinogradov/Kryzhitskii 1995, 16-25, 110). Bronze working reached its highest level, while the copper was imported from the Thracian mines in the hinterland of Apollonia Pontica, Mesembria and Odessos (Vinogradov/Kryzhitskii 1995, 78-79). The number of inhabitants of Olbia was also on the rise, as shown by the increasing number of graves (Vinogradov/Kryzhitskii 1995, 123). Import of Sinopian amphorae in Olbia started during the first half of the 5th century BC (Skudnova 1958, pl. 11).

To the earliest finds at Chersonesos belongs an oval pit excavated in the centre of the north-eastern part of the city which revealed archaic amphora fragments, Attic black-glazed pottery, and an inscribed *ostrakon* of a proto-Thasian amphora fragment, all from the late 6th/early 5th century BC (Vinogradov/Treister 1997, 542). So the first (Ionian) phase of this *polis* was possibly founded during this period (Lapin 1966, 81-3). In fact in the whole northern Pontic region, like at Olbia, Chersonesos, the Taman Peninsula at the Strait of Kerch and the Scythian settlements at the Tiasman river basin, trade and Greek imports started to appear at the beginning of the 5th century BC (Noonan 1973, 235-237; Tsetskhladze 1994, 122).

In 480 BC Panticapaeum probably became the capital of the Bosporian kingdom and large amounts of Greek and local ceramics, found at underwater excavations, were dated to the end of the 6th century BC (Kondrashkov 1995, 109-112). Metal working started here in the same period (Treister 1996, 32-75), and equally the emission of the first silver coins (Rostovtzeff 1922, 66). Finally at Sinope, on the southern Black Sea coast, a significant expansion of the city is recorded in the period of the 5th century BC (Doonan 2004, 75).

Another indication for a change was the interest of Athens in the Pontic area. The earliest Attic find in the Black Sea area is a vase from Middle Geometric II from Berezan, while about 12,5% of the 7th and 6th century BC ware found in Histria is Attic (Bouzek 1989, 249). It is very likely that these early Attic finds were transported by Ionian traders, as Athenian traders cannot be expected in this area during this period. There is numerous indirect evidence for earlier Athenian trade and activity in the Black Sea region in the 6th and 5th centuries BC. Early Attic black figured pottery at Berezan, Histria and Apollonia Pontica is found from the end of the 7th and the beginning of the 6th century, but Attic ware became dominant at the end of the 6th century BC (Bouzek 1990, 46, 51, Bouzek 1994, 242). In the last quarter of the 6th century BC, Attic ware in the Black Sea region even formed the vast majority (Bouzek 1989, 250). So Athenian presence in the Black Sea area at the end of the 6th century BC and in the 5th century BC is clear without doubt and connected with another hotly debated subject, the corn trade from the northern Black Sea area to the Aegean world⁴. It is nowadays a proven fact that the original idea of Scythian farmers growing corn on a large scale to feed the Athenian population from the 7th/6th centuries onwards is a myth in the minds of earlier scholars (Šceglov 1990, 141-159), although Herodotus' remark about Scythian ploughmen who sow corn not for eating but for selling (Hdt. 4.17) still has to be explained. According to some scholars (Panitschek 1988, 30), Athens already imported corn during the period of Peisistratos (around 545 BC), but other authors deny this early trade⁵. According to G.R. Tsetschladze, the first evidence for real grain trade from the northern Black Sea area comes from the period that Leucon I was king of the Bosporian kingdom (398/88-349/48 BC), and Athens enjoyed commercial privileges in this area (Tsetschladze 1998, 57). But even if Athens was before 413 BC, the year that it was forced to import all her foodstuff, not totally dependent on the import of grain, it is still possible that the Athenians, without access to modern production statistics, still believed that it was necessary to protect its trade-routes from outside (Keen 2000, 64). Anyway, any Greek city risked a bad harvest approximately every five years, and it is a fact that during the Peloponnesian war the Egyptian and Sicilian grain trade to Athens was much more vulnerable to Spartan attacks than that through the Hellespont. The rise in Athenian pottery in the Pontic area may well be connected with Athenian political expansion in the Propontis, the foundation of

⁴ See for the orthodox view Starr 1977, 176 and Austin/Vidal-Naquet 1977, 69. For a discussion about this subject, Noonan 1973, 231-42, Tsetschladze 1998, 52 and Keen 2000, 63-73.

⁵ Noonan 1973, 231-242; Garnsey 1988, 107-33; Tsetschladze 1997b, 243-52; Tsetschladze 1998, 54-63, although Noonan, on who's article most of the arguments in the others are based, is disapproving the existence of a grain route to the northern Black Sea before the 4th century BC and not trade from the Pontis through the Hellespont on

Sigeion and Athenian settlements on the Thracian Chersonesos like Elaious, just after the reforms of Solon in the 6th century BC. At Shirokaia Balka at the Dnieper-Bug estuary, a 6th century BC settlement was located containing 12 pits, according to the excavator evidently used to store grain. It also contained, according to the excavator, an oven, but without any evidence for the production of pottery. Greek pottery was found at this site, like fragments of amphorae, various Ionian vessels, Attic black-figure ware and Corinthian pottery (Noonan 1973, 238-9). It may well be surmised that the oven was used to dry the grain and make it ready for transport over sea (Rabichkin 1951, 120). However, later research at the site of Olbia is throwing doubt on this theory, while the oven of this site seems to be lacking in the original excavation report⁶. Athenian domination in the late 5th century in the Black Sea was reflected in artistic products, a monopoly in pottery, toreutics and other products all over the region. Athenian silver vases largely replaced the Ionian and Persian toreutics among the Thracians and the Scythians (Bouzek 1990, 176). At the same time large agricultural areas were cultivated in the areas of some of the Pontic colonies. In the account of Herodotus, the Persian ruler Xerxes saw grain ships sailing from the Black Sea through the Hellespont (Hdt. VII.147) at the time of his campaign against Greece in 480 BC. It is true that there is no indication that these ships had Athens as their destination, but according to Thucydides, after its disastrous expedition to Sicily in 413 BC, Athens fortified Sunium, a bold promontory at the south apex of Attica, to give security to its corn ships rounding this point (Th. 8.4). Grain ships rounding this point are most likely coming from the Hellespont. In 426 BC Athens stationed special troops at Byzantium, the so-called *hellespontophylakes* (Rostovtzeff 1922, 68). Another place with an Athenian garrison in the Black Sea area was Nymphaeum, at least between 430 and 410 BC (Bouzek 1990, 176, Surikov 2001, 358). Other towns which possibly had an Athenian garrison in the north-eastern Pontic region were Athenion (Anon. *Peripl.M.Eux.* 76) and Stralochia (Plin. *Nat.* VI.18). According to Surikov, the name of the town of Torikos could be reduced to the Attic *deme* of Thorikos, which would make it another candidate for an Athenian base (Surikov 2001, 361-2). Torikos was precisely located on the edge of the North-Eastern part of the Pontic region. It is unlikely that Athens would station these troops here if it had not important interests in the Black Sea area, especially as Byzantium controlled the European bank of the Bosphorus as far as the Black Sea were it possessed a harbour, Phinopolis, Phileas or Philia (Str. VII.6.1; Dion.Byz. 75; Ps.-Skymn. 723), which still can be found on maps of the 13th century AD (Besevliev 1992, Fig. 11; Boshnakov 2004, 154-5). As Megarian Herakleia Pontica could be considered an ally of Sparta and a potential enemy of

⁶ Oral information from Dr. A. Buyskikh, excavating at Olbia and in the above mentioned area.

Athens, voyaging along the southern and eastern Black Sea coast was difficult. This made the western Pontic coast even more important for Athens. All Greek Black Sea colonies, except Sinope (De Boer b, forthcoming), had to import olive oil, an item that Athens together with wine from several Aegean islands, could have been trading in return for grain. Of course, slaves or products like fish and honey may have been alternative reasons for Athenian exertion in this area. An interesting point is that although from the 6th century BC onwards, Athens started to colonise in the Hellespont, there is no sign of any conflict with the Milesians in the sources till at least the end of the 5th century BC. It is generally supposed that after the destruction of Milesian sea power as a result of its defeat during the Ionian revolt, Athens' influence in the first part of the 5th century BC in the Pontic area increased. A closer look at the evidence from this period, however, gives another picture. It turns out that Ionian presence in the Black Sea became even stronger after the Ionian revolt, simultaneous with an increase of Attic ware. After the reform of Themistocles and the decision to build a fleet in 483/2 BC, Athens was able to control an empire by sea (Wallinga 1993, 162). From the time of the peace of Callias in 449/8 BC onwards, which forbade Persian ships to sail into the Euxine, Athens was free to do whatever it wanted. Its fleet could control the passage of corn ships from the Euxine and the major corn-market at Byzantium. Athens could grant the right to import grain from the Pontic area to any Greek city in the Mediterranean. Methone and Aphytis in 430 BC were an example of such a case (Isaac 1986, 224; Meiggs 1972, 206). The expedition of Pericles into the Black Sea, as described by Plutarch (*Plu. Per.* 20, 1-2), is currently a hotly debated subject, as it is not supported by other sources. Not only the date of this expedition (Beloch 1893, 502-504; Oliver 1957, 255; Angelescu 1992, 49; on its route see Vinogradov 1981, 63-68), but even the authenticity of the whole expedition as such is discussed (Tsetschladze 1997a, 466; Mattingly 1996, 153). As all our information regarding this expedition is solely based on Plutarch and as this information is only concerned with the southern Black Sea coast, viz. Sinope, one should indeed be very careful to let this voyage have a bearing to other parts of the Black Sea area as well (Vinogradov 1981, 63-8). On the other hand, however, it is too easy to suggest that the whole event was a 4th century BC Athenian invention (Ferrarese 1974, 18; Tsetschladze 1997a, 466), especially as Plutarch gives other information about Pontic expeditions like that of Aristeides before 467 BC (*Plu. Arist.* 26,1), which is equally unsupported by other ancient authors. But there are other examples of events at first unsupported by the archaeological facts, like the literary evidence of Livy (*Liv.* 8.22.5-6) regarding the early 8th century BC inhabitants of Pithecusa, which in the course of time became justified by later excavations (Graham, 1971, 38). It is possible that Plutarch used an unknown source: this source could have been Theopompus, especially as there are indications that he mentioned Pericles' expedition in one of his works (Surikov 2001, 344). According to Plutarch, Pericles sailed with a large

fleet into the Black Sea, made a demonstration against barbarians, left thirteen ships with crews and soldiers to support the banished Sinopeans against the tyrant Timeileos and, after having defeated the latter, he sent 600 Athenian volunteers to the city. In the same period, there is strong evidence of Athenian presence in nearby Amisos that was renamed Piraeus⁷. The whole event is supposed to have occurred in 438/37 BC (Beloch 1893, 502-504; Agelescu 1992, 49; *CAH* 1992, 146), although other authors make a strong case for the earlier date of 450 BC (Oliver 1957, 255), which makes it interestingly much closer to the date of the rumoured expedition of Aristides in the Pontic area. A weak point remains the silence of Strabo about Pericles' expedition and the fact that Xenophon in his *Anabasis* does not mention an Athenian element in the population of Sinope (Surikov 2001, 345-347). In fact the whole credibility of the story of Pericles' voyage into the Black Sea relies on our proof of Athenian presence in the Pontic area during the 5th century BC. It was with the help of Sinope that Athens came to establish economic control over the lands along the Black Sea coast (de Boer 2005, 178) and Sinope acted for some time during the 5th century BC as a middleman for the interests of the Athenian empire in the Black Sea⁸.

The question is what caused this Athenian interest and the sudden rise of trade and accumulation of wealth in almost the whole Pontic region, colonized earlier by the Ionian Greeks essentially to find available arable land and to survive in a different and hostile environment during the 7th and early 6th century BC?

There are strong indications that these events were caused by two events, which happened almost simultaneously. First of all there was the migration of Scythian tribes from the northern Caucasus to the Crimea and the area near Olbia (Vinogradov 1997, 74-132, Tsetschladze 2002, 84) at the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th centuries BC. This led to a Scythian protectorate over Kerkinitis, Olbia and Nikonion (Vinogradov 1989, 90-109, Vinogradov 1997, 20-1) and offered thus trade opportunities for both the Ionians as the mainland Greeks. At the Cimmerian Bosphorus, this Scythian threat caused a political and defensive union of Greek *apoikiai* (the *Symmachie*), resulting in the Bosporian kingdom (Gajdukevič 1971, 21) under the Archaianakten kings around 480/79 BC (D.S. 12.31.1) and which included all Greek cities on both sides of the Kerch (Vinogradov 1997, 103). Besides the Scythian threat, this union was also forced by the economic crisis, which was caused by the Persian destruction of Miletos after the Ionian revolt (Kallistov 1949, 374). As the Scythians had experience with neither trade nor shipping, they had to use

⁷ *Cambridge Ancient History* 1992, 146; Summerer 1999, 24, Information about Athenian activity in Amisos can possibly also be traced to Theopompus, see Surikov 2001, 345.

⁸ See for some indications regarding this theory in Th. 4.75-76.

the Greeks as middleman for trade with the Pontic area and the Mediterranean (Vinogradov 1997, 108).

At the beginning of the 5th century BC, the settlements around Olbia were abandoned and the population was concentrated in the *polis*: a drastic reduction of the *chora* was the result (Vinogradov/Kryzhitskii 1995, 68), but not resulting into reduction of wealth of the city (Vinogradov 1997, 108). In publications, the reduction of Olbia's *chora* was tributed to a hostile attitude of the surrounding Scythian tribes (Vinogradov/Kryzhitskii 1995, 89). This opinion however is contradicted by the increasing wealth of Olbia and a lack of burning layers in the former *chora*. A more likely solution is that a high rise of transit trade with the interior made it economically more profitable for the largest part of the population to concentrate in the *polis*. Elisavetovskoye, a winter camp of Scythian tribes who traded with the Greeks, became a permanent settlement in the first half of the 5th century BC (Vinogradov/Treister 1997, 553). In 480 BC, a treaty was concluded between the Scythian king Ariapeithes and the Odrysian king Teres after which both could direct their attention to the Greek colonies in the western and north-western Pontic area, resulting in the above mentioned Scythian protectorates and the paying of tribute by the western Pontic colonies to the rising Thracian Odrysian kingdom (Th. II.97.3). There is evidence of increased Thracian influence in Apollonia Pontica during the first half of the 5th century BC, while Greek luxury goods are found in Thracian tumuli, dated to the same period (Filov 1934, 131; Caneva 1980, 449, Blabanov 1999, 71-2). Jewellery workshops for Thracian clients were established in most western Pontic colonies during the same period (Treister 1996, 74). It is possible that Apollonia Pontica used the Thracian settlement at Debelt for trade with the interior, as the first Greek coins in Thrace were found here (Todorov 1989, 199; 204; Balabanov 1990, 34-41). At the eastern Black Sea coast, the rise of the Colchian kingdom caused the same situation for Greek colonies like Dioscuria and Phasis in almost the same period (Lordkipanidze 1991, 109-24).

Another second event probably also forced the Greeks to turn their attention to the Pontic area.

After the beginning of the Ionian revolt, the Persians swore a horrible vengeance upon the disloyal Greeks (Hdt. VI.9.4) which resulted after the Battle of Lade in the destruction and depopulation of Miletos in 494 BC⁹. However, it seemed that Miletos soon after the sack of the city was inhabited again, although on a smaller scale (64.000 in the archaic period and 15-20.000 in the late 5th century BC), with people culturally indistinguishable from the original population while no change of institutions can be attested (Gorman 2002, 185). The source of these settlers must have been the citizens of the

⁹ See for the archaeological evidence of this destruction layer, the literature mentioned in Gorman 2002, 183, note 4.

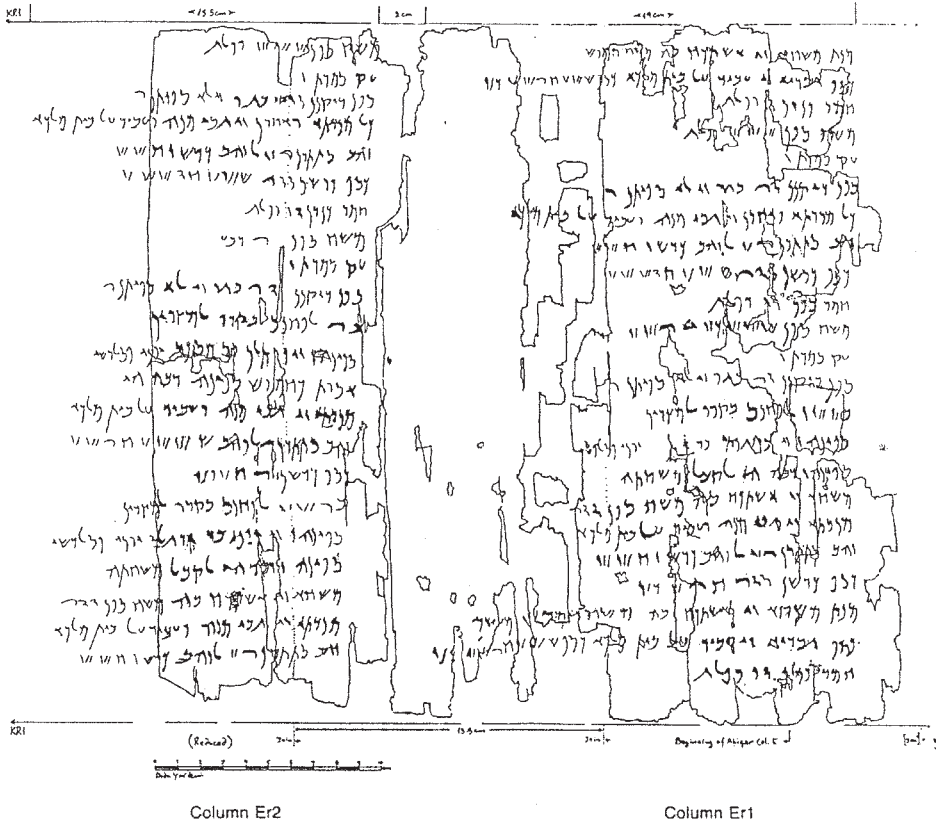


Fig. 3. Drawing of two columns of the custom account, found at Elephantine (after Yardeni 1994, 72).

many Milesian colonies in the Propontis and the Pontic area (Gorman 2002, 186). This return flux was probably settled in treaties with a.o. Olbia and Amisos in the Pontic area, Kyzikos in the Propontis and Chios (Gorman 2002, 189-90).

The Persian empire pushing westwards, the Scythian campaigns of Darius and especially the Ionian revolt resulting in the destruction of Miletos caused a great disturbance for Greek commerce in the Eastern Mediterranean. It probably caused the flight of Ionian craftsmen to the Pontic region and the west in a so-called “second wave of colonization” (Bouzek 1990, 52; Treister 1996, 75, 142). But the long duration of the economic revival in the Pontic area dismisses this argument as the sole reason, especially since, according to

some modern authors, the Ionian Greeks very soon economically recovered from their defeat (Osborne 1996, 325).

At the beginning of the 20th century it was discovered that a text of Ahiqar, found at Elephantine in southern Egypt, was written on a reused papyrus. In 1994 the partly deciphered erased text was published by A. Yardeni (Yardeni 1994, 67-78). The erased text contained a list of duty collected from ships, carrying wine and wood to Egypt and probably grain to the east and the north, during ten months in the year 475 BC (Fig. 3). The name of the harbour is not mentioned but during this period Egypt was under Persian rule, and the list (written in Aramaic) was probably a copy composed for the king's treasury. Two types, Ionian (especially mentioned as being Ionian) and Phoenician ships, are mentioned in the list, carrying Ionian and Sidonian wine and a.o. cedar woods. The Ionian ships had to pay one fifth of the imported goods while the Phoenician ships had to pay only one tenth (Yardeni 1994, 70)!. It seems that contrary to modern opinion, more than twenty years after the Ionian revolt, the Persians still punished the Ionians (and without doubt also the mainland Greeks) with an extra tax of 100%. It is plausible that the Greeks were punished this way in the whole area ruled by the Persian empire. It is likely that Ionian and mainland Greeks, unable to continue this unfair competition with the Persian-protected Phoenician traders, were driven to other and new markets, especially in the Pontic region. This can be one of the factors (together with the rise of the "barbarian" kingdoms and without doubt by other ones) that caused the rise of the Pontic trade in the 5th century BC.

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