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## The Greek Colonization in the Black Sea Litoral and Iberia: Similarities and differences

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In the West there was not any legend like the one about the Argonauts that went across the Strait of Gibraltar. Strabo III, 2-13 talks about an Heracles expedition to the West. This hero went with the Argonauts to find the Golden Fleece to the Colchis. Iustinus in its *Epit. Hist. Phil* XLIV, 4, 1 takes note of this story of Gargoris and Habis. The Curetes lived in the forests of Tartessos after the Titans' fight against the gods. Gargoris is the name of the oldest king to which has been attributed the art of making honey. He ordered to abandon the son of his daughter in the wilds with the intention that the wild animals killed him but the sea returned him breastfed by a hint. Finally, Gargoris recognized him as his heir and called him Habis. He was a civilizing hero that made the first laws, taught how to cultivate the land with a plough pulled by oxen, forbade the nobles to work and distributed the masses in seven cities. Strabo III, 1, 6 tells that the south of Iberia had very antique writings, poems and laws in verse that were believed to have 6.000 years of antiquity. This legend has points in common with the legend of Romulus and Remus, breastfed by a female wolf; with the one of Cyrus raised by shepherds; with the one of Moses saved from the waters; and with the one of Semiramis abandoned in the wilds.

The legislative work of Habis is similar to Theseus' work in Attica. Habis is also similar to Triptolemos that taught his people how to cultivate the land with a plough pulled by oxen. Habis, as Romulus, divided the population in tribes. The legend of Habis has been interpreted by some researchers as a legend of the Hellenistic period, but the majority believes that this is a myth of the end of the Bronze Age<sup>1</sup>.

A myth that is documented in the Scythia and in the Guadalquivir basin, and which is very present in the Greek Art is the fight of the griffins that

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1. J.M. Blázquez, *Primitivas religiones ibéricas II. Religiones prerromanas*, Madrid 1983, 20-23; *Id.*, *Diccionario de las religiones prerromanas de Hispania*, Madrid 1975, 125-126.

defended the gold against the Arimaspians. This makes us to go back to Aristeeas of Proconnesos that lived during the second half of the 7th century and later was mentioned by Aeschylus, Hecataeus, Pindarus and Herodotus. This myth appears in Attic glasses of the 4th century, founded in Iberia and quite probably in an sculpture from the important mining center of *Obulco* (Jaen), dated in the second half of the 5th century, from an heroon. A piece of ivory from Carmona (Seville), dated around the year 600, represents the fight of a man against a griffin, but here the theme is just decorative<sup>2</sup>.

The Iberians of the south-east coast of Spain could know the myth of the Golden Fleece because it is represented in a Attic glass founded in Santa Pola (Alicante) from the 4th century, though the Iberians could have also get this wonderful glass without knowing how to interpret it<sup>3</sup>.

In an Iberian mosaic of the Constantine I period, founded in Torre de Parma (Portugal), it is represented Medea with her children<sup>4</sup>.

A myth, which is represented in the Iberian art, but not by the peoples of the Black Sea, is the fight against the giants. It appears in an Iberian glass founded in *Villares de Caudete de las Fuentes* of the second half of the 2nd century or the beginning of the next century. In the glass there are to very big men that plunged a dagger to another two small men. Eumenes immortalized the fight in the Pergamum altar build in Zeus and Athena Nikephoros honor between the years 180-160 before Christ<sup>5</sup>.

I consider that it may be interesting to analyze the similarities and differences of the Greek colonization in the Black Sea and in the West, the Greek Iberia. First and foremost, I would like to highlight the thesis recently presented in Spain and accepted nowadays by most of the researchers, according to which the name of Iberia, that the Greeks gave to the Iberian Peninsula, such as Herodotus (I, 163; VII, 165), Polybius (III, 37. 10-11) and finally Strabo (I. 1.5 ; II, 1.30; III, 1.2; 2.4; 2.6-7; 2.13; 4.19), has nothing to do with the river Iber, that was firstly located in the South, in Huelva an later in the Iberus, up in the North, but with the Iberia of the Caucasus (Str. III. 4.19), that the Greeks knew before the Western Iberia. Probably they gave this name to the Iberian

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2. J.M. Blázquez, *Primitivas religiones ibéricas*, 104-105.

3. R. Olmos, About the Attic Red-figure Crater with a Colchian subject, *Le Pont-Euxin vu par les Grecs, Annales de l'Université de Besançon* 427, 1990, 231-234.

4. J.M. Blázquez, *Mosaicos romanos de España*, Madrid 1993, 289-290.

5. J.M. Blázquez, *Primitivas religiones ibéricas*, 179, fig. 100.

Peninsula, because they found great similarities between the Iberia of the Caucasus, that they already knew, and the Western Iberia. As for example in its mineral richness (Str. III. 2.8), that the Greeks firstly discovered in the Iberia of the Caucasus. There is an important difference between these two separated regions. In the Black Sea shores have not been found any Mycenaean pottery; on the other hand it has been found in the South of the Western Iberia, at Montoro (Cordoba) and in other places of the South <sup>6</sup>.

Nevertheless, it cannot be totally reject the hypothesis that the Mycenaean people had some knowledge of the Colchis, as it seems to reflect the Argonauts legend that was so popular in the 8th - 7th centuries, date of the first Greek contacts with the Colchis. The same reasons that have the Greek colonists to go to the Colchis, the mineral richness, are the ones they had to go to Iberia. The date of the Sinope settlement, based on the archaeological findings is dated around the years 632-631, that it is approximately the date of the arrival to Tartessos of Colaïos of Samos who according to Herodotus (IV, 152) was the first Greek that arrived to Tartessos and came back with lots of metals.

The first Greek colonies did not appear in the Western and Northern coast of the Black Sea before the first half of the 7th century; so they were surely established after the foundation of Chalkedon and Byzantium at the Propontis in the years 685 and 659 respectively. The Greek pottery except a subgeometric Attic piece of 635 found in Huelva is not earlier than 625-600. And its presence is bigger between the years 600-590 and it is abundant between the years 590-560 and later its presence started to drop between the years 560-530. In the second half of the 6th century the Greek pottery that is found in Huelva is of Ionic origin and then of Attic origin.

At the Black Sea the oldest Greek importation is not earlier than the half of the 7th century, date that coincided with the Greek presence in the important mineral exploitation port of Huelva.

In the Colchis the most archaic pottery are dated in the first half of the 6th century, date that coincided with the biggest exportation of Greek pottery to Iberia. From Massalia, set up around the year 600, the Greeks set up a little later Emporion (Str. III, 4-8), town in which the first Greek pottery came from Ionia and a little later from Attica.

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6. A. Domínguez Monedero, Los términos "Iberia" e "iberos" en las fuentes grecolatinas: estudio acerca de su origen y ámbito de aplicación, *Lucentum*, 2, 1983, 203-224.

In Iberia it is not documented a Greek pre-colonial presence, but it is documented a Phoenician pre-colonial presence. At the Black Sea Iberia there was not a Phoenician colonization as important as the one in the Western Iberia. At the Huelva estuary the Phoenician pottery is documented between the years 750-700, then being previous to the Greeks arrival. Its presence doubled between the years 700-675, then it continued its way up between the years 675-625, and finally it reached his maximum presence between the years 625-590, and as we can observed this presence was much longer than the Greek one (590-530) <sup>7</sup>.

Therefore, the presence of the Greek pottery in Huelva is previous to its presence in the Colchis. Lordkipanidze has paid special attention to the precolonial contacts between the Greek world and the Colchis, and in special to a serial of findings at Vani. There are many animals made of terracotta <sup>8</sup>, documented in the local environment of the Greek world (Olympia, Delphi, Athens, Crete, Rhodes, Samos, etc.) between the 8th and 7th centuries. These terracotta of Vani are probably of Greek inspiration, as well as the fibulas of bronze of arch of a single piece, so frequent in the archaeological surroundings of the Colchis between the 8th-7th centuries. This material could indicate the contacts between the Greek world and the Colchis. Herodotus said sharply that Colaios was the first Greek that visited Iberia.

The most ancient legend located in Iberia is the theft of the Gerion bulls by Heracles, which geographical location is probably due to Stesichorus of Himera (640-555), because other legends such as the arrival of Odysseus and other heroes of the heroic Age (Str. III, 2-13) are just fantasies of the Hellenic epic and do not demonstrate that there was a precolonial Greek period <sup>9</sup>.

In the South of Russia has turned up an sculpture of archaic Greek influence that is kept at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. In *Llano de la Consolación* have been found three heads of archaic Greek style <sup>10</sup>, During the

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7. M. Pellicer, Huelva tartésica y fenicia, *RSF*, XXIV.2, 119.140. B.B. Shefton, Greeks and greek imports in the South of the iberian Peninsula. The archaeological evidence, *Madridier Beitr.* 8, 1982, 337-362. About the metalurgical sites in this time: D. Ruiz Mata, J. Fernández Jurado, *El yacimiento metalúrgico de época tartésica de San Bartolomé de Almonte (Huelva)*. *Huelva Arqueológica*, VIII, 1986.

8. La geste des Argonautes dans les premières épopées sous l'angle des premiers contacts du monde grec avec le littoral pontique, *Sur les traces des Argonautes*, Paris 1996, 21-46. 9. J.M. Blázquez, *Fenicios, Griegos y Cartagineses en Occidente*, 323-333.

10. G. Nicolini, A propos de l'archaïsme ibérique: trois têtes du Llano de la Consolación au Musée du Louvre, *Homenaje a García y Bellido*, III, Madrid 1977, 25-54.

second half of the 5th century there were workshops of sculpture from Phocis (at *Obulco*, Jaen) that have not been discovered up to now in the Black Sea.

In Iberia, from the 6th century until the arrival of the Carthaginians, in the southeast coast of Iberia an sculpture of Greek influence was developed. This kind of sculpture has not been discovered until now in the Black Sea. The Elche's Lady, dated in the 4th century belongs to this kind of sculpture, and it is very similar to the Hera of Selinus or to one sculpture founded in Syracuse, that nowadays is in the Vatican Museum <sup>11</sup>.

In Elche (Alicante), there was a Greek sculptors workshop or at least a workshop that was very influenced by the Greek Art. They made sculptures of warriors and seated ladies. These ladies inspired in the Greek Art, that were possibly goddess, have appeared in *Llano de Nuestra Señora de la Consolación* and in *Verdolay* (Murcia). In the sanctuary of the *Cerro de los Santos* (Albacete), from the 4th century the votive offerings were made of stone; they represented men and ladies, and many of them carried offering glasses for liquids, none of this sculpture has been found in the Black Sea, nor in the Iberian sanctuaries of *Sierra Morena* or of the northeast of the Iberian Peninsula, where have been founded small votive offerings made of bronze, that represented ladies, men or warriors <sup>12</sup>.

Other kind of Iberian sanctuaries with votive offerings of horses, as the ones of *El Cigarralejo* (Murcia) and Pinos Puentes, do not have any equivalent in the Black Sea. Nevertheless, funeral monument founded at Jumilla (Murcia) dated in the 4th century represents a seated lady saying goodbye to his son; it has a clear influence of the Attic gravestone of the 5th century with a monument parallel in a gravestone founded in the South of Russia <sup>13</sup>.

Three lions heads made in calcareous stone and dated in the 2nd century corresponds, because of the face gestures, the mouth half-open, the tongue drooping and the big round eyes, to a kind of lion that was well accepted in the Iberian and the Etruscan funeral monuments. Also in the South of Iberia was founded a similar gesture in pieces of the Hellenistic period <sup>14</sup>.

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11. J.M. Blázquez, *La Dama de Elche, una obra maestra del arte ibérico*, *Historia* 16, 1995, XX, 99-113.

12. A. Blanco, *Die Klassischen Wurzeln der iberischen Kunst*, *Antonio Blanco Freijeiro. Opera Minora Selecta*, Sevilla 1996, 239-249, figs. 37-46. A. García y Bellido, *Arte Ibérico*, *Historia de España*. I.3, Madrid 1963, 468-541, 558-574, figs. 378-466, 489-494.

13. J.M. Blázquez, *Fenicios, Griegos y Cartagineses en Occidente*, 452-458.

14. A. García y Bellido, *op. cit.* 574-587, figs. 503-591. T. Chapa, *Influjos griegos en la cultura zoomorfa ibérica*, Madrid 1986.

In the Black Sea there have not appeared heroines decorated with sculptures or reliefs of warriors as the ones of *Obulco* (Jaen), Osuna (Seville) o Huelma (Jaen)<sup>15</sup>.

In Iberia it is documented around the year 600 the granulated technique (*La Aliseda*, Cáceres) but this technique was well known in the previous centuries in Colchis.

The Attic pottery was very rare during the 5th century in Iberia, but this change since the 4th century when the same Attic pottery workshops export to the South of Russia and the South of Iberia where arrived the glasses of inferior quality<sup>16</sup>.

In the 4th century, the Greek Attic pottery that arrived to Iberia was probably brought by the Carthaginians and not by the Greeks, as it demonstrates the Attic pottery of the ship of *Sec* (Balearics) with graffiti in Punic as well as the piece that founded in *Castulo* (Jaen). The same Attic pottery workshops that exported their pieces to the South of Russia, also exported them to *Castulo* and its region and the pieces of bad quality to Huelva.

About the introduction of the writing there is a big difference among the peoples of the Black Sea and of the Iberia. The writing was introduced in Iberia by the Phoenicians since the year 700<sup>17</sup>. It was the Tartessos writing that was founded engraved on stones like the ones founded in Lusitania. On the other hand, the Iberian alphabet of the southeast coast of Iberia is of Ionic origin<sup>18</sup>.

The archaic world of the West did not discover the coining because there should be an exchange economy. It has been suggested that in the mining areas, like the estuary of Huelva and *Castulo*, the Attic pottery was used as money,

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15. J.M. Blázquez, *Fenicios, Griegos y Cartagineses en Occidente*, 533~15. A. Blanco, Las esculturas de Porcuna, en *Antonio Blanco Freijeiro. Opera Minora Selecta*, 533-615. A. García Y Bellido, *op. cit.* 541- 557, figs. 472-487. s. III a.C. There is another *heroon* in *Pozo Moro* (Albacete), dated at the beginning of the fourth Century B.C., with mythological scenes about gods and further allusions to the *Gilgamesh* poem (M. Almagro-Gorbea, *Pozo Moro. Un monumento funerario ibérico orientalizante*, *Madridener Mitteilungen*, 24, 1983, 177-293, láms. 12-34.

16. P. Rouillard, M.Ch. Villanueva-Puig (eds.), *Greco et Iberes au IV. siecle av. Jésus-Christ. Commerce et iconographie*, Paris 1989. P. Cabrera, R. Olmos, E. Sanmartí, *Iberos y griegos: lecturas desde la diversidad*, *Huelva Arq.* XIII,1-2, 1994.

17. J. Rodríguez, Introducción a la escritura ibérica. Variante levantina, *Revista de Arqueología*, 20, 6- 13. The writing is know in the *Ría de Huelva ca. 700 B.C.* J.M. Blázquez *et al.*, Las cerámicas del Cabezo de San Pedro, *Huelva Arq.* 1, 1980, láms. XVIIc; XXIVg.

18. A. González Prats *et al.*, La Fonteta. Una ciudad fenicia en Occidente, *Revista de Arqueología* 190, 1997, 8-13.

which is very possible. In the Phoenician site of *Fonteta* (Alicante) have been founded rectangular thin pieces of metal from the 7th-6th centuries that have been considered as coins.

The oldest coins of the West were coined in Emporion between the years 460 and 300, dates that approximately coincided with the silver coins made in Phasian's Colchis.

It would be interesting to remember other similarities among different elements founded in the Black Sea and Iberia, but having in mind that this does not mean a direct relation, so is the case of the pavement made of stones in Vani, because it is the same as the one of the streets of *Gilivaili* in the Upper Guadalquivir.

Vani was a walled city as were the Iberian cities <sup>19</sup>. Semicircular towers as the one of Vani can be founded also in *Ullastret* (Gerona) in the 5th century, possibly as a result of the Greek influence. The polygonal towers of Vani have not been founded in the West; usually the towers that have been founded are quadrangular as the towers of *Castulo*, *Tarraco* (around the year 200) and *Olerdola* (Barcelona) <sup>20</sup>.

In *Puentetabras* (Jaen) the double wall has a double door and an interior passage.

Wide areas of the Black Sea and the West have in common that the salting industry was very important and that it exported its products to the Greek world. Timaeus (Ps.-Arist. *De mirab. ausc.*, 136) tells that in the 4th and 3rd centuries the people fish a lot of tunas that then were converted in salted fish and exported to Carthage.

The West is also similar to the Colchis because of its mineral richness (Str.III, 2. 8-10).

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19. O. Lordkipanidze, *Vani. Une Pompei géorgienne*, Paris 1995, 25-34.

20. J.M. Blázquez, *Cástulo II*, Madrid 1979, 269-282, plano 7. Th. Hauschild, *Hispania Antiqua. Denkmäler der Römerzeit*, Madrid 1993, 244-249, láms. 1-3. A. García y Bellido, *op. cit.* 387-389, figs. 256-258.