

Euboeans in the Far West? New data and interpretations

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Περίληψη

Τα τελευταία χρόνια νέα υλικά πιθανής ευβοϊκής καταγωγής έχουν βρεθεί στην Ιβηρική Χερσόνησο, κάποια από τα οποία παραμένουν αδημοσίευτα.¹ Χρονολογούνται ανάμεσα στο δεύτερο μισό του 9ου αιώνα π.Χ. και το πρώτο μισό του 8ου αιώνα π.Χ.· πρόκειται για το αρχαιότερο ελληνικό υλικό που έχει βρεθεί στη δυτική Μεσόγειο και στις ακτές του Ατλαντικού Ωκεανού μέχρι σήμερα. Ενώ πολλοί επιστήμονες έχουν προτείνει ότι οι Φοίνικες έφεραν αυτά τα υλικά στη μακρινή Δύση, σκοπός μου σε αυτό το άρθρο είναι να συνηγορήσω υπέρ της πρώιμης μεσολάβησης ναυτικών από την Εύβοια για τη μεταφορά αυτής της κεραμικής. Συνδυάζοντας διαφορετικά αποδεικτικά στοιχεία, τόσο φιλολογικά όσο και αρχαιολογικά, θα εντοπίσουμε παλαιά ευβοϊκά συμφέροντα στην κεντρική και δυτική Μεσόγειο πριν από την ίδρυση των πρώτων αποικιών. Στη συνέχεια θα επιχειρήσουμε να αποδείξουμε πως η πρωιμότερη ευβοϊκή ναυσιπλοΐα μπορεί να γίνει κατανοητή μέσα σε ένα πλαίσιο στο οποίο η συνεργασία με τους Φοίνικες ίσως να αποτελούσε τον κανόνα, καθώς φαίνεται να πιστοποιείται κατά τους πρώτους αποικισμούς τόσο τους ευβοϊκούς όσο και τους Φοινικικούς.

Introduction

From at least the 10th century BC, some centres in Euboea such as Lefkandi were in contact with the Near East, as the archaeological evidence clearly demonstrates.² These contacts increased during the 9th century BC, and by the 8th century BC trade between Euboea and other parts of the Mediterranean had reached its apogee. Finds of Greek pottery dating to these centuries from different sites in the Near East have been widely published and studied, and I shall not consider them further here.³ Of all those places, Al Mina seems to have been one of the sites where the presence of Greek pottery, particularly of Euboean origin, is most remarkable,⁴ and recent Neutron Activation Analysis has confirmed this beyond doubt.⁵ Contrary to the claims of certain scholars who think that an emphasis on Euboean activities tends to detract from the enterprises of people from other parts of Greece or non-Greek peoples, especially the Phoenicians,⁶ we suggest that the archaeological evidence confirms an Euboean presence in the Mediterranean throughout the Geometric period (and even during the Pro-

1. This paper has been written as part of Research Projects HAR2011-25443 and HAR2014-53885, subsidized by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.

2. Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 365.

3. Luke 2003, 31-44.

4. Boardman 1999, 135-161; 2002, 315-331; Luke 2003, 25-28.

5. Kerschner 2014, 157-167; Vacek 2014, 141-156.

6. Papadopoulos 1997, 191-219; 2011, 113-133.

togeometric).⁷ However, it should be noted that this does not imply that other peoples, including the Phoenicians, were not involved in important maritime and commercial enterprises too.

Indeed, it may be wise to escape the ‘insidious tendency to identify pots with people’⁸ and accept that an Euboean vase may have been transported by anyone. But by whom? Within the Greek world of the Early Iron Age (EIA), there were not many candidates capable of transporting Euboean pottery as well as other products. We must disregard, of course, the Corinthians, whose territories of interest do not always coincide with those explored by the Euboeans and who, usually, brought with them their own pottery.⁹

Some authors exhibit certain discomfort when they observe, for example, that the Geometric pottery of Crete, an area with significant Near Eastern connections, ‘is rarely found outside the island’; and explain it as follows: ‘Cretan pottery was not as attractive as that of other regions.’¹⁰ Aside from the high degree of subjectivity that is involved in the issue of ancient ‘taste’, is it not easier to explain the absence of Cretan pottery overseas by suggesting that the Cretans were not those who sailed from their island—that, rather, they received in their ports the foreign vessels? Euboeans, who seem to have been good sailors, would have loaded their ships with their own pottery. As for non-Greeks, Phoenicians ‘may’ have transported Euboean pottery and ‘may’ have appreciated Attic and Euboean painted pottery (although not everyone agrees on this¹¹). However, we may question whether this ‘appreciation’ was for the pottery itself or, conversely, for what it represented, if it is true that, as some authors have suggested, a (good) part of Greek pottery found at Phoenician sites may have served as ‘initiatory gifts’ or the like.¹²

Some current trends cast doubt on the idea that ‘traders from the producing centres were especially active in overseas exchange, as argued most frequently for the Euboeans.’¹³ However, it is difficult to find, for the period between the late 9th and the first half of the 8th century BC, other candidates (aside from the Euboeans) who could have transported Euboean pottery along with other products that we cannot identify (iron?, textiles?¹⁴). The ubiquitous Phoenicians do not solve the issue, especially if we remember that in Italy there are Euboean-type productions that were locally made by potters from Euboea who were established there (as discussed later in this article)—which is further proof of Euboean interest in establishing commercial relationships with different Mediterranean regions.

In this paper, consequently, I will concentrate mainly on the period between the late 9th and the first half of the 8th century BC, which seems to have been the period when trading activities and the beginning of colonization were closely related in the Euboean world.

As was the case with other centres that emerged over the course of the 8th century, there can be little doubt that Al Mina, situated at the mouth of the River Orontes, clearly had a commercial function. Although it should be pointed out that Boardman has recently restudied and re-evaluated the information gathered by Woolley, and that he argues in favour of a definite Euboean presence in the region during the 8th century,¹⁵ it should also be mentioned that this information has often been inaccurately interpreted,¹⁶ mainly because many scholars have interpreted Al Mina as a true Greek ‘colony’, rather than what it actually was: a place next to the sea where Greek merchants were authorized to trade and establish the necessary infrastructures for their activity. It was, undoubtedly, a precursor of

7. Crielaard 2006, 271-297; Lemos 2002, 212-217.

8. Dickinson 2006, 199.

9. Kourou 1994, 27-53.

10. Dickinson 2006, 218.

11. Cook 1959, 122.

12. Luke 2003, 52.

13. Dickinson 2006, 218.

14. Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 365.

15. Boardman 2002a, 315-331.

16. Graham 1986, 51-65; Perreault 1993, 59-83.

what would in due course become known as an emporion.¹⁷ I do not believe it too extreme to say that the Greeks were being integrated into an economic system, the roots of which were undoubtedly of Oriental origin.

In addition to Al Mina, the presence of Greek pottery in other Oriental locations is also proof of commercial contacts which do not imply, in any way, that Greek political domain extended to Levantine territories. Most of the pottery, as in the case of Al Mina, was clearly of Euboean origin, which would suggest that the Euboeans were directly involved in trading products from the Aegean or central Mediterranean to the Orient.

Leaving aside Euboean activity in the Aegean, the presence of Euboeans in the central Mediterranean also seems to have been important from at least the beginning of the 8th century. Euboean-type pottery has appeared at several locations in Sardinia,¹⁸ Sicily,¹⁹ and along the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy,²⁰ and is sometimes dated to before the founding of the first Greek establishment in Pithecussae, which is usually said to be around 770 BC on account of Middle Geometric (MG) II sherds found in a deposit in the acropolis.²¹ It should be noted, however, that these sherds represent a small percentage of the total quantity of pottery found in it thus far.²² On many of the central Mediterranean locations the Euboeans cooperated or competed with Greeks of other origins (from Corinth, the Cyclades?) and doubtless with Phoenicians and, less probably, with northern Syrians, who perhaps were not good sailors.²³ Late Geometric (LG) Greek pottery of various types (but largely of Pithecussan origin) has been found in Phoenician centres in Sardinia, such as Sulcis,²⁴ and its discovery in Carthage itself²⁵ indicates that this is a much more complex field than was outlined some time ago by those who have defended the exclusive monopoly of the Phoenicians or the Euboeans.²⁶ The reality was much more complex: as well as Pithecussae being populated by peoples of diverse origins, Euboean representatives of certain commercial and artisan interests would also have been present, at least since MG II, among the Sardinians of Sant'Imbenia, the Etruscans of Veii, Caere, Tarquinia or Pontecagnano or, later, among the Phoenicians of Sulcis or Carthage. The presence of Euboeans among so many different peoples resembles the situation in the Aegean and the Levant previously mentioned.

The Euboeans' presence still further to the west is even more difficult to determine although recent new findings and interpretations are providing information that builds on the knowledge we already have regarding the territories mentioned. This is the case, for example, with the abundance of toponyms that extend throughout the Mediterranean, including to its western reaches and areas on the Atlantic, which share the ending *-oussa*. Research of a philological nature demonstrates that these names may have originated in Euboean circles at fairly remote times—in any case earlier than the seafaring expeditions which came later, such as the Phocaeen expedition.²⁷ Similarly, studies of certain toponyms found on the north African coast suggest that ancient Euboean explorations to those regions were undertaken before (or at the same time as) Phoenician settlements.²⁸

Another line of investigation has consisted of analysing the different mythical traditions that had taken hold in the Far West in early times: for instance, the tradition, described by Aristotle (Frag. 678

17. Luke 2003, 64.

18. Rendeli 2005, 92-97; Ridgway 1997, 50-52.

19. Voza 1982, 169-171; 1986, 543-562.

20. Peserico 1995, 425-439; Ridgway 1998, 311-322.

21. Ridgway 1992, 87-88.

22. Coldstream 1995b, 251-267.

23. Domínguez 2003, 19-59; Ridgway 2004, 15-33.

24. Bartoloni et al. 1988, 73-119; Tronchetti 2003, 162-163.

25. Kourou 2002, 89-114; Vegas 1998, 133-145.

26. Mermati 2009-2012, 97-118.

27. García 1996, 105-124.

28. Antonelli 2006, 7-26; Boardman 2006, 195-200; Gras 2000, 39-48; Lane Fox 2008, 136-139.

Rose), according to which the Pillars of Herakles were formerly known as the Pillars of Briareus. The fact that Briareus may be linked to traditions of Euboean origin allows us to suggest early Euboean exploration of the territories where the Mediterranean meets the ocean;²⁹ in like manner, the geographic vision of Hesiod, a figure closely linked to the Euboean world, would correspond with the news that he would have heard from Euboean explorers.

The issue with these data (until a few years ago) was that archaeological confirmation of Euboean presence in such westerly territories was lacking, and the few objects of Greek origin predating the 6th century were usually attributed to the Phoenician presence.³⁰ Over many years, the aforementioned pottery found at Sant'Imbenia, in north-western Sardinia, were the westernmost Euboean objects known. The situation, however, has gradually changed and, with time, we may see an increase in the number of objects of Euboean origin, or objects which are a consequence of Euboean trading, being discovered.

Euboean Pottery in the Iberian Peninsula

What follows is a rapid overview of the main objects known to us. One important location is present-day Huelva, located on the Atlantic coast in the south-west of the Iberian Peninsula. We are already familiar with a fragment possibly from a krater or a pyxis made in Attica, dated to the MG II, as well as two fragments of Euboean skyphoi, one featuring a bird within a metope dated to the LG.³¹ These items were found without context, making their cultural ascription hard to assess. Nevertheless, during the systematic recovery in 1998 of the contents of a site adjacent to the ancient coastline (Méndez Núñez Street/Monjas Square), a total of 33 fragments of Greek pottery were found with a large quantity of Phoenician and local ceramic pieces. These belong to two clearly defined groups: 1) 15 Euboean pendent semicircle plates and two Euboean pendent semicircle skyphoi (Fig. 1); and 2) two kantharoi, two skyphoi and one trefoil-mouth jug, which were considered to be Attic (Fig. 2). The chronologies assigned by the authors to ceramic wares described as Attic and Euboean pottery differ considerably.³²

The pendent semicircle skyphoi have been attributed to Kearsley's type 6,³³ and dated to the Sub-Protogeometric (SPG) III (equivalent to the Attic MG I-II), whereas finds from Eretria indicate that these were still in use during the LG.³⁴ In the case of the Huelva plates, on the basis of their typology, it has been suggested that their chronology is in the SPG I-II period (c.900-850 BC). Attic ceramic ware has been dated to the MG II period (800-760 BC).³⁵ The discoverers of these pieces favour early chronologies, in the Greek Protogeometric and Geometric periods,³⁶ but this has been strongly contested in recent times;³⁷ indeed, some authors have even expressed doubts about the high chronologies attributed by excavators to the finds as a whole, as the chronology was assigned on the basis of a few Phoenician ceramic pieces which may be older (although this has not been securely demonstrated).³⁸ Moreover, these ceramic pieces were found during the process of clearing the site for building; thus, their stratigraphic position cannot be ascertained, and it is possible that several different levels have become mixed.

29. López 2004, 1-42.

30. Domínguez and Sánchez 2001, 88, with criticism, which I accept in light of new evidence, in Lane Fox 2008, 413.

31. Domínguez and Sánchez 2001, 10, 12.

32. González de Canales et al. 2004, 82-94.

33. González de Canales et al. 2004, 86-87; however, Gilboa et al. 2008, 171 consider them type 5; Kearsley 1989, 99-104.

34. Verdan et al. 2008, 82.

35. González de Canales et al. 2006, 19.

36. Brandherm 2008, 93-106.

37. Kourou 2008, 305-364; Pappa 2012, 2-38; Toffolo et al. 2013, 1-11.

38. Gilboa 2013, 320-322; Gilboa et al. 2008, 168-173.

In any event, according to Nitsche's periodization,³⁹ and based on their rims, it is true that some of the plates may be older than others (SPG I-II). However, the majority seem to belong to a late stage in their production, based on the evidence of the rims and the fact that the pendent semicircles overlap—a feature generally, but not always, characteristic of later production.⁴⁰ The handles, both single and double, have also been considered a dating criterion (single handles being older and double handles a later design),⁴¹ but this is not always true either.⁴² In any case, these are a new type of vessel for which, for the moment, there are but few definite contexts that allow a generally valid typological serialization to be established.⁴³ Furthermore, it is also possible that these forms were manufactured at numerous workshops within Euboea itself, which is something that authors such as Coldstream have interpreted as a response to local demand, in Cyprus and the Levant, positing that this type of vessel was not particularly common in the Greek repertoire.⁴⁴ This form, however, was also present in Euboea throughout its long period of use and in different contexts; this challenges this statement, which has been accepted with little criticism by many authors.⁴⁵

Indeed, during the period of extensive use of this form in Lefkandi, from the SPG I-III period,⁴⁶ the morphology of plates underwent multiple variations owing to the length of time over which they remained in use. In Eretria, later forms are represented, and, although it is not known with certainty until what point they were produced, it is likely that they were manufactured until the beginning of the LG.⁴⁷ Consequently, rather than the general timeline proposed by the authors who published the discoveries at Huelva (first half of the 9th century BC), we find that it is more reasonable to assign a more advanced chronology to those Euboean pieces, i.e. sometime between the end of the 9th century and the first half of the 8th century BC, thus allowing for the possibility of some fragments being older, although this is not certain.⁴⁸ To that same chronology belongs, it seems, most of the plates of this class that have been found in Cyprus and the Levant.⁴⁹ Both the pendent semicircle plates and skyphoi appear to be of Euboean production, despite the existence of imitations originating from different circles. However, as Coldstream has pointed out, with regard to pendent semicircle skyphoi, in some instances these have been ascribed to Cycladic workshops without objective supporting data.⁵⁰

Recently, and likewise in Huelva (3 Concepción Street), three fragments consisting of two skyphoi rims and one oinochoe have been found. These are possibly of Euboean origin, and were found in a level situated beneath the water table; their chronology seems to belong to MG II—that is, sometime in the first half of the 8th century BC—meaning that they are of the same date as other objects found in the same deposit (which was not excavated adequately either).⁵¹ One of the skyphoi seems to be a 'Black cup'.⁵²

Along with those items featuring pendent semicircles (skyphoi and plates) from the excavation at the Méndez Núñez/Monjas Square site, other fragments were also found, corresponding to two kantharoi and two skyphoi, seemingly Attic, as well as further fragments of at least three other vessels of

39. Nitsche 1986-1987.

40. Nitsche 1986-1987, 38.

41. Courbin 1982, 193-204; Popham et al. 1982, 232.

42. Coldstream 1995a, 193; Coldstream and Bikai 1988, 39.

43. Gilboa et al. 2008, 172.

44. Coldstream 1995c; 2008²; Coldstream and Bikai 1988, 39.

45. González de Canales et al. 2006, 19.

46. Popham and Lemos 1996, pls. 102-103; Popham and Sackett 1979, 341.

47. Andreiomenou 1986, 105-106; Verdán et al. 2008, 70.

48. Gilboa et al. 2008, 171-172.

49. Verdán 2013, 68.

50. Coldstream 1995c, 202.

51. González de Canales et al., Forthcoming.

52. Kourou 2005, 502-504.

one of these forms.⁵³ All of these fragments are decorated with the meander and meander-hook motifs that are so common on Attic pottery from the early Geometric period;⁵⁴ this became established as almost the sole decoration for drinking vessels during the EG II and the MG I periods, and reached its peak during the MG II period, despite the appearance of other decorative motifs.⁵⁵ The meander motif appears on other Geometric wares outside Athens, a situation no doubt related to the influence of this city. One of the two types of cup found at Huelva, the kantharos with high handles, is an Attic innovation of the MG II period⁵⁶ which was quickly adopted, in that same period, in Euboea and the Cyclades.⁵⁷ In Eretria, both this form and skyphoi have been identified, with decorations consisting basically of meander motifs. Two of the Huelva pieces, one kantharos (Fig. 1b) and one skyphos,⁵⁸ display what appears to be a metope with an eight-pointed star in the top right-hand corner, and in the case of the kantharos, to the left-hand side of the panel with the meander. Other very similar examples from Eretria, decorated with meanders and, in some cases, with figurative metopes (especially birds) have been published recently, and these have been dated to between the MG II and the LG I periods.⁵⁹ Naturally, without a study of the clays used, it is difficult to assert that we are in the presence of Euboean pieces; however, it is often the case that the clay used in Euboean pottery is indistinguishable from that of Attic origin,⁶⁰ as Neutron Activation Analysis has shown.⁶¹ A skyphos fragment known since 1984, which was found without context at 9 Puerto Street (Fig. 3),⁶² whose Euboean ascription has not been questioned (owing principally to the bird in the portion of metope that is preserved), may also belong to this group.⁶³ At the time of its discovery, it was assigned a date in the LG due to its isolated nature and the lack of evidence for situating it in the MG II period; we believe it is now possible to date it with the rest of similar pieces to a transitional period between the MG II and the LG periods.

At last, this group of Greek pieces from the MG II period can be related to the first such piece found: a krater (or pyxis) from the MG II period, which was discovered devoid of context on Palos Street, in Huelva.⁶⁴ The grounds for classifying it as Attic are quite reasonable: parallels can be drawn, in particular with the krater-pyxis A514 at the Louvre,⁶⁵ which would also explain the uncertainty regarding the exact form of this piece (a krater according to some, but a pyxis according to others).⁶⁶

An interesting collection of pieces (skyphoi, kantharoi, oinochoai), which were intended as drinking vessels, is concentrated in Huelva. These are clearly of Euboean origin, and were with others that may very well be Euboean, and a large vessel (krater or pyxis) made in Attica, all of which date to the MG II period, although some of the pendent semicircle plates (but not the majority) may be a little earlier. It has been insisted upon with some frequency that these products usually appear to be associated with Cyprus or the Levant and, therefore, must have been brought to the West by the Phoenicians on complicated itineraries, circuits and carriers, while the possibility that the last might have been Greek is ignored.⁶⁷ In such cases, we sometimes fail to notice that it is in Euboea itself (both at Lefkandi and Er-

53. González de Canales et al. 2004, 82-85.

54. Coldstream 2008², 12.

55. Coldstream 2008², 15, 19, 23-24.

56. Coldstream 2008², 22-23; Coulié 2013, 41.

57. Coldstream 2008², 168.

58. González de Canales et al. 2004, pl. XVIII, 2-3.

59. Verdan et al. 2008, nos. 18, 19, 61 (kantharoi), 58, 59, 60, 163, 214 (skyphoi).

60. Boardman 1952, 2; Popham and Sackett 1979, 40; Huber 2003, 46-47.

61. Verdan et al. 2014, 71-90.

62. Fernández 1984, 34-36.

63. Cabrera 1988-1989, 44-45.

64. Del Amo 1976, 40-42.

65. Rouillard 1977, 397-399; on the krater in the Louvre, see Coulié 2013, 42-45.

66. Cabrera 1988-1989, 44 (pyxis); Coldstream 1982, 369; Shefton 1982, 342, n. 11 (krater).

67. Cabrera 1988-1989, 45-47; Shefton 1982, 343.

tria) that all of these products are found represented at the same time: Euboean pottery of Sub-Proto-geometric tradition, Euboean imitations of Attic products of the MG II period and genuine Attic vases of the same period. Furthermore, it has now been demonstrated that in Euboea, pottery in the Euboean tradition and pottery imitating Attic Geometric designs were both made at the same workshops, and perhaps by the same potters: they were of the ‘same clay, [had the] same painting and same firing’.⁶⁸ Recent Neutron Activation Analysis has shown that these two types of pottery were constructed using the same clay, which was quarried in the area of Phylla in Euboea.⁶⁹ Kenzelmann Pfyffer made a valuable observation to the effect that, in Euboean centres, ‘Subprotogeometric and Atticizing ceramics appear side by side in every kind of context (ritual, funeral, and domestic)’⁷⁰ exactly as is the case in Huelva, as we know today.

Likewise, in Euboea, objects imported from Athens were already looked upon by the Euboeans as luxury goods. It follows, therefore, that when distributing their own ceramic wares to other lands, they would have reserved the same position for Attic products, as suggested by the presence of a great krater or pyxis in Huelva, the ‘monumental vase’⁷¹ status of which would have rendered it an ideal ‘goodwill gift’;⁷² this may have arrived in the hands of a Phoenician, but equally in those of a Greek. To all this we may add the recent study by Boardman, who asks who the real recipients were of the Greek cups which have appeared outside Greece, in non-Greek contexts, and which were imitated in those places.⁷³

Although the ways in which Greek and—more precisely—Euboean seafarers arrived are not easily discernible,⁷⁴ it is often forgotten that the Homeric poems allude to joint ventures between a Greek (Odysseus characterized as a Cretan warrior and shipping enthusiast) and a Phoenician who, in the words of Odysseus, ‘set me on a seafaring ship bound for Libya, having given lying counsel to the end that I should convey a cargo with him’ (*Od.*, 14.285-14.300). As Sherratt and Sherratt have put it, ‘the Aegean must have seen a considerable density of traffic, in which both indigenous and eastern seamen participated without apparent rivalry’.⁷⁵

Further recent archaeological data reinforces the possibility of an Euboean presence in the Far West. We refer to the discovery of a scaraboid seal of the Lyre-Player Group, found under one of the walls of the sanctuary identified in the scientifically excavated levels at the Méndez Núñez Street/Monjas Square site in Huelva.⁷⁶ It appears to represent ‘a hunting scene with a passing lion and an ungulate’, and strong parallels can be established with other seals of this type, as the publishers have pointed out, including specimens found in Pithekoussai.⁷⁷ At this time, this is the westernmost specimen of this kind, as is the case with the Euboean ceramic wares mentioned earlier and which were discovered on the same site, albeit at lower levels.

With regard to these items, the main debate is centred equally on their place of manufacture (Cilicia-northern Syria, Rhodes, in some cases by emigrant artisans) and on those responsible for their distribution (Phoenicians, Euboeans), for which there is abundant bibliography but little unanimity. To this mix we must add that the stones from which they are made, although precise analyses have not yet been undertaken, do not appear in all cases to be of Eastern origin, which to some would indicate

68. Kenzelmann Pfyffer 2011, 142.

69. Verdan et al. 2014, 73.

70. Kenzelmann Pfyffer 2011, 143.

71. Coldstream 1982, 369.

72. Cabrera 1988-1989, 46.

73. Boardman 2002b, 1-16; 2004, 149-162.

74. Domínguez 2013b, 16-17.

75. Sherratt and Sherratt 1993, 367.

76. Osuna et al. 2001, 177-188.

77. Serrano et al. 2012, 279-288.

local production.⁷⁸ For the moment, the locations at which the highest numbers have been found are Pithekoussai (nearly 100)⁷⁹ and Rhodes (some 45 from all three cities).⁸⁰ Their abundant presence in tombs at Pithekoussai, dated to the LG, would seem to confirm the chronology for the majority of these items as belonging to the second half of the 8th century BC. No one has suggested Pithekoussai as the manufacturing centre for these items, despite the fact that the highest number of these has been found here, while it has, on some occasions, been postulated that Rhodes was such a centre.⁸¹ We must not, however, overlook the relation of these objects with western Semitic glyptography⁸² or the fact that the Adana Museum has a notable quantity of these seals (35 specimens) made from a type of stone (serpentine in a range of tones) found naturally in the area.⁸³ For some, this is decisive proof of their origin in the region between Cilicia and Zincirli (Sam'al), on the other side of Mount Amanus;⁸⁴ and others have also reached this conclusion following different criteria.⁸⁵ Access to the Mediterranean from the whole of this region leads through the Amuq Valley and the lower reaches of the Orontes, reaching the sea at Al Mina. The lyre that gives its name to the entire group has been identified as a string instrument of Aegean origin, which later gave rise to the *phorminx*,⁸⁶ and a relationship with the story of Kinyras has been convincingly suggested.⁸⁷

Since the paper by Winter⁸⁸ in which the Phoenician origin of these pieces is upheld by arguments that are poorly grounded (which some researchers have followed),⁸⁹ no specimens other than those already known at the time have been discovered on Phoenician soil. It is becoming difficult to blame their absence on the 'scarcity of excavations at the major centres'; although further pieces may yet appear in Phoenicia, and in other places, the distribution maps⁹⁰ for the moment exhibit a great void throughout the north of Africa, in Sardinia, in Sicily and, up until recently, on the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, it is difficult to posit that it was the Phoenicians who distributed these seals across the Mediterranean, owing to their almost total absence from this territory (something which has been observed for some time now⁹¹); it should be noted that this has not been taken into account by those who defend the distribution of such objects throughout the Mediterranean by the Phoenicians. Moreover, in Eretria six of these objects are known and a further two have been identified in Lefkandi,⁹² which, in conjunction with other considerations, would allow us to suggest the possibility of Greek, and in particular Euboean, carriers.⁹³

Furthermore, the seal found at Huelva and those found in Eretria were discovered in cult-related areas. This is opposed to the situation in Pithekoussai, where they appear primarily in tombs. This may have interesting implications for this community's dynamic,⁹⁴ which would in no way necessarily affect their use by other Euboeans in other places. In any case, we should also keep in mind that, as in other cases, their presence in Huelva, a commercial centre established by the Phoenicians which was opened

78. Giovanelli 2008, 73-86.

79. Boardman 1990, 1-17; Buchner and Boardman 1966, 1-62; Buchner and Ridgway 1993, *passim*.

80. Rizzo 2007, 33-88.

81. Rizzo 2008-2009, 105-138.

82. Parayre 1993, 27-51.

83. Poncy et al. 2001, 9-38.

84. Lane Fox 2008, 107-108.

85. Parayre 1993, 36.

86. Scardina 2010, 67-72.

87. Franklin 2015, 405-418.

88. Winter 1995, 262, 267.

89. Among the more recent: Hodos 2006, 67; Serrano et al. 2012, 281-282.

90. The most recent, including the finding of Huelva, in Serrano et al. 2012, 286.

91. Boardman 1994, 95-100.

92. Huber 1998, 114-118; 2003, 91-92.

93. Huber 1998, 132; 2003, 171-172.

94. Ridgway 2000, 235-243.

up to Mediterranean trade, would have occurred within the general framework that was gradually taking hold; in this framework, ‘Greeks and Phoenicians moved westwards together in small groups developing new and fruitful markets.’⁹⁵

The progression of archaeological works has also led to the discovery of other Greek ceramic wares, possibly of similar traditions, at other sites in the south of the Iberian Peninsula. First, the case of the Phoenician sanctuary at El Carambolo (Camas, province of Seville). During recent digs at this site (2001–2005), ‘a fragment of the lip of a *skyphos*, probably Attic, from the Middle Geometric II with parallels at the tomb 450.23 of Amathus, in Cyprus’ was discovered, in a pit for ritual debris (Fig. 4).⁹⁶ The vase found in Cyprus, to which the El Carambolo piece has been compared, was considered Attic by Coldstream⁹⁷ (although at the time of its appearance the same author believed it could be a ‘*skyphos attique ou atticisant du Géométrique moyen II*’).⁹⁸ A further two *skyphoi* discovered in another tomb on Amathus (tomb number 443) were, likewise, initially considered Euboean and later, Attic.⁹⁹ In any case, we are not concerned here with the ascription of the *skyphoi* from Amathus,¹⁰⁰ which were used by the excavators at El Carambolo as a parallel for theirs, nor with the uncertainty regarding their origin, and that of others like them, in Attica or in Euboea.

The characteristic feature of the small fragment found at El Carambolo is the rim decorated with a row of dots—a motif found on Attic ceramic ware, especially *skyphoi*, from the MG I to the LG periods.¹⁰¹ Similarly, and owing to Attic influence, this decorative motif also appears on Attic and Atticizing vessels from Eretria, especially *skyphoi*, *kantharoi* and *kraters*.¹⁰² The El Carambolo piece appears to be covered with a light slip, on which the motifs are painted—apparently a feature of Euboean pottery.¹⁰³ Therefore, although we cannot be completely certain until further analyses are undertaken, we believe this piece should be considered Euboean rather than Attic. Chronologically speaking, it should be dated to the transition period between MG II and LG I, as this is the period in which the closest parallels from Eretria are situated.

Lastly, and also as a consequence of recent archaeological activities, further examples of Geometric ceramic ware have been found at the La Rebanadilla site (province of Málaga), on the right bank of the River Guadalhorce. At that location, in the first urban phase of this Phoenician centre (phase III), which was established towards the end of the 9th century BC, and together with materials of diverse origins (local, Phoenician, Sardinian, etc.), ‘several Greek *skyphoi* from the Middle Geometric II, located in phases IV and III’ have been found.¹⁰⁴ Of this Greek pottery, only two drawings and three photographs corresponding to two items have been published (Fig. 5). One of these items is a large *skyphos* fragment decorated with a meander-hook motif, of a type very similar to those mentioned for Huelva, and with the same chronology (MG II). The authors do not propose a definite ascription but, based on the published photograph, there seems little doubt of its Euboean ascription.¹⁰⁵ Its colour is lighter than the similar Huelva specimens, but in the latter case the darker colour is due to having been buried in dark grey loam for a long period of time.¹⁰⁶ No context is given for this piece (Fig. 5a).

Several photographs and a drawing of the second vase have been published. Clearly, in this case,

95. Kearsley 1995, 81.

96. Fernández and Rodríguez 2007, 204–205.

97. Coldstream 1995c, 207.

98. Karageorghis 1987, 700.

99. Coldstream 1995c, 207, fig. 5.

100. Lemos and Hatcher 1991, 197–208.

101. Coldstream 2008², 19, 24, 50.

102. Verdán et al. 2008, nos. 8, 18, 24, 28, 60, 66, 101, 133, 185, 220, 228, 234 (Euboean), 11 (Attic?).

103. Boardman 1952, 2; Coldstream 2008², 190.

104. Sánchez et al. 2012, 75.

105. Prof. Irene Lemos, through the photographs and the drawings, has also suggested an Euboean origin.

106. Arancibia et al. 2011, 131, fig. 12; Sánchez et al. 2012, 75, fig. 12.

the piece is a skyphos with a chevron design and it is almost whole. Under the rim, a panel with chevrons angled to the right, which become straight lines near the handles and reach as far as the horizontal bands framing them, indicate that this piece dates to the MG II period (Fig. 5b).¹⁰⁷ Its Euboean ascription also seems evident, with clear parallels in Eretria¹⁰⁸ and, above all, in Italy, where these are fairly frequent finds at, among others, Veii, Cerveteri, Pontecagnano¹⁰⁹ and Pithekoussai itself during the MG II period.¹¹⁰ In addition to the above, this vase exhibits many signs of repairs performed in antiquity, which without doubt reflect the importance of the piece. It should also be noted that the room in which it stood is thought to have had a religious or cult function.¹¹¹

The two Thapsos cups found at the Phoenician site of La Fonteta (Guardamar del Segura, province of Alicante) made of the greenish clay typical of this type of pottery, correspond to a wholly different setting, and date to LG. To these we can add a third fragment of pottery rim, which belongs to the same type but is made of different clay,¹¹² suggesting that this is an imitation. However, the fragment is too small to ascertain whether this potsherd could be an Euboean imitation of the Corinthian form.

At other Phoenician sites, such as Toscanos, the oldest Greek fine pottery found thus far is also of Corinthian origin (LG and EPC; late 8th–first quarter of the 7th century BC); as for the transport amphorae of this same chronology, they are described, generically, as east Greek, with some samples specifically coming from Samos or Chios.¹¹³ It is not within the scope of this article to examine why Toscanos did not produce Euboean pottery (either MG II or LG). It should be noted, however, that at Carthage Greek imports begin with LG Euboean sherds, as well as LG Pithecussan pottery,¹¹⁴ while in nearby Utica MG II Euboean pottery has been found and the excavators have suggested that ‘la présence de groupe eubéens en cohabitation avec ces Orientaux n’est en fait un phénomène à écarter.’¹¹⁵

Conclusions

The broad overview provided here, demonstrating the existence of undoubtedly Euboean materials as well as others that are probably also Euboean (despite these having been initially classified as Attic), indicates that these materials arrived on the Iberian Peninsula during the first half of the 8th century BC, with some continuity over the following decades. This tells us nothing, though, of who took them there. However, in addition to the arguments put forward at the start of this paper (mythical traditions, toponymy, etc.) we must underscore the close links between many of the Euboean materials found in Italy, where it is almost certain that Euboean potters made Euboean-style wares locally, and those found on the Iberian Peninsula.

I believe that we can in fact speak of an Euboean commercial network, with many points connecting different commercial routes and different interests and relationships which were multilateral rather than just two-directional. Without doubt, the centres of Euboea played an outstanding role in developing and maintaining this network: Eretria, which underwent considerable growth in the

107. Sánchez et al. 2012, 75, figs. 12 and 17.

108. Verdan et al. 2008, 76–78, nos. 10, 57, 164, 216.

109. Boitani 2005, 319–332; D’Agostino 1999, 11–24; Descoedres and Kearsley, 1983, 9–53; Kourou 2005, 497–515; Rizzo 2004, 333–378.

110. Coldstream 1995b, 261.

111. Sánchez et al. 2012, 79, 83.

112. García 2011, 531, fig. 1, pl. I.

113. Docter 2001, 63–88.

114. Docter 2001, 66; Vegas 1998, 133–145.

115. Jerbania and Redissi 2014, 196.

8th century BC,¹¹⁶ Xeropolis, before it disappeared at the end of the same century¹¹⁷ and, of course, Chalcis.¹¹⁸ However, on the other hand, we cannot underestimate the importance of other points of the network, such as Al Mina and, in particular, Pithecussae, whose connections with different points on the Tyrrhenian Sea, and Sardinia and Carthage have been pointed out on numerous occasions. It appears that different places which developed as a consequence of Euboean enterprises soon developed their own interests in contact with the local environments to which they were related. We do not know enough of the emerging Greek *poleis* of the 8th century to claim that there was strong state control in the development of overseas activities, as seems to have been the case in later times.¹¹⁹ However, it is clear that there were wealthy aristocrats who accumulated wealth and power and whose ways of life and burial customs—the latter visible in the archaeological record—demonstrate they were very concerned with the ideological justification of their own social status.

It was these aristocrats who, in expeditions sponsored by themselves or jointly with partners (including Greeks of other origins, such as Cycladic Greeks and Phoenicians),¹²⁰ explored territories increasingly distant from their points of departure.¹²¹ Although objects may have been used both by Greeks and Phoenicians alike, this does not rule out that Greeks were the carriers of ceramic wares and other objects (e.g. seals of the Lyre-Player Group) which they were accustomed to using and, at times, that they put some of those items at the places of cult they accessed on their travels. We must not forget that the greater part of the Euboean ceramic wares analysed herein were discovered in contexts of a religious nature, in Huelva, and at El Carambolo and La Rebanadilla. If these ceramic wares are thought fit for offerings at the sanctuaries in Euboea, as demonstrated in the case of Eretria or Plakari, near Karystos,¹²² it follows that they were considered fit for foreign sanctuaries. The case of the La Rebanadilla skyphos, which was repaired in ancient times, provides evidence of the appreciation shown towards this object, which possibly continued long after it was deposited at a cult area within the Phoenician settlement. We cannot know, at present, who deposited these objects—whether they were Greeks, Phoenicians or natives—but any of these three options is possible. This is a matter that deserves to be explored beyond the specific concerns of this paper.

I believe that the pieces we have analysed here serve as further proof of the Euboeans' early interest in the westernmost Mediterranean territories before the second half of the 8th century BC, at which time a considerable flow of peoples from Euboea and other locations took place towards Italy and Sicily, giving rise to the beginning of what has been called, not without recent controversy, the 'Greek colonization'. In addition to the aforementioned objects, the footprint of those early voyages remains in all the mythical traditions and the ancient Euboean-rooted toponymy which has only recently been considered a useful means of recovering the Euboeans' earliest voyages to the Far West.

Finally, the evidence discussed here allows us to distinguish between an initial series of ventures to set up a trade network in which Euboeans participated, perhaps jointly with other peoples, and subsequent colonization. It is neither surprising nor the result of coincidence that it was easier to establish colonies on the basis of information gathered from previous expeditions, which sometimes led to the establishment of trade posts, or that this process was started by the Euboeans and the Corinthians, whom we have not mentioned here. It is also reasonable to suppose that it would be in the territories that the Euboeans frequented most intensely, on the Italian Peninsula and Sicily, that they would be-

116. Krause 1981, 175-186; Walker 2004, 99-108.

117. Popham and Sackett 1979, 362-369.

118. Bakhuizen 1985.

119. Domínguez 2000, 507-513.

120. Fletcher 2008, 104-114.

121. Domínguez 2013a, 419-427.

122. Chidiroglou 2003-2004, 69-80; Crielaard et al. 2011-2012, 83-106.

come established whenever the necessary conditions occurred. Conversely, in the regions they visited sporadically, a trail was left of mythical traditions or vague toponymy, which was sometimes confusing, even for the Greeks who followed, but not a real memory. This trail would explain why, centuries after the Euboeans frequented the coasts of the Iberian Peninsula in the 8th century, both the Samians and the Phocaeans claimed the role of 'discoverers' of those lands: the old voyages undertaken by the Euboeans towards the end of the 9th century and during the first half of the 8th century had been forgotten.

Recent archaeological finds that have been ascribed to production centres and provided with realistic chronologies illustrate the expeditions of Euboean explorers, and these expeditions, increasingly towards westerly regions, have been well documented in all other Mediterranean territories, several generations prior to the first colonial settlements.

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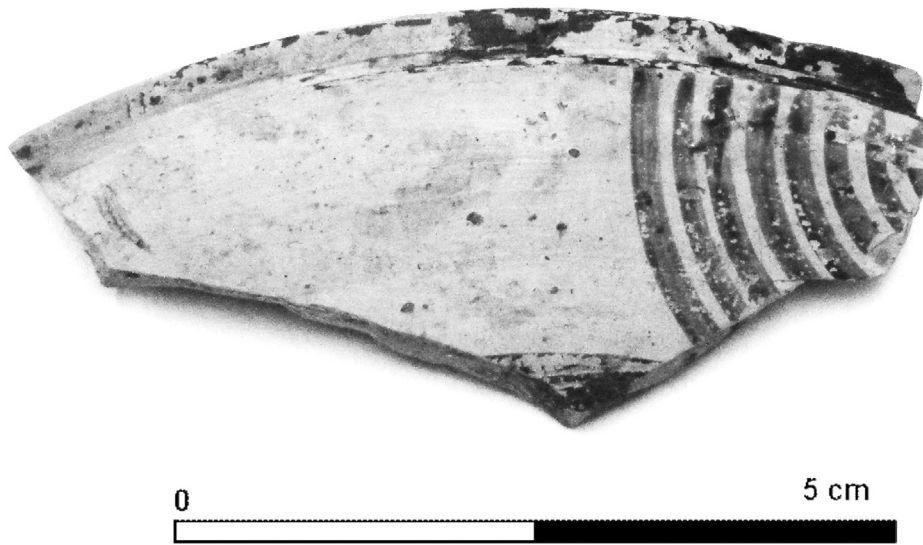
Figures

Figure 1. Pendent semicircle plate of Euboean origin. Huelva, Méndez Núñez/Monjas Square site. (Photo: author).

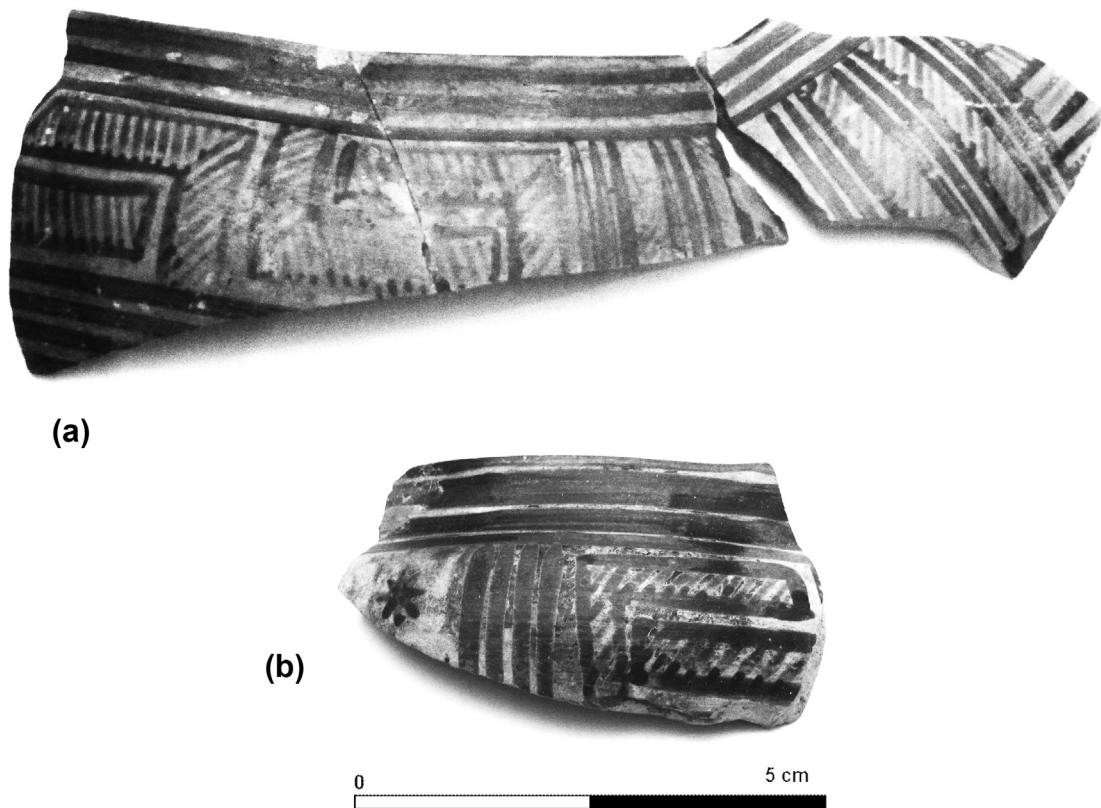


Figure 2. Fragments belonging to two kantharoi with decorations of Atticizing type. Huelva, Méndez Núñez/Monjas Square site. (Photo: author).

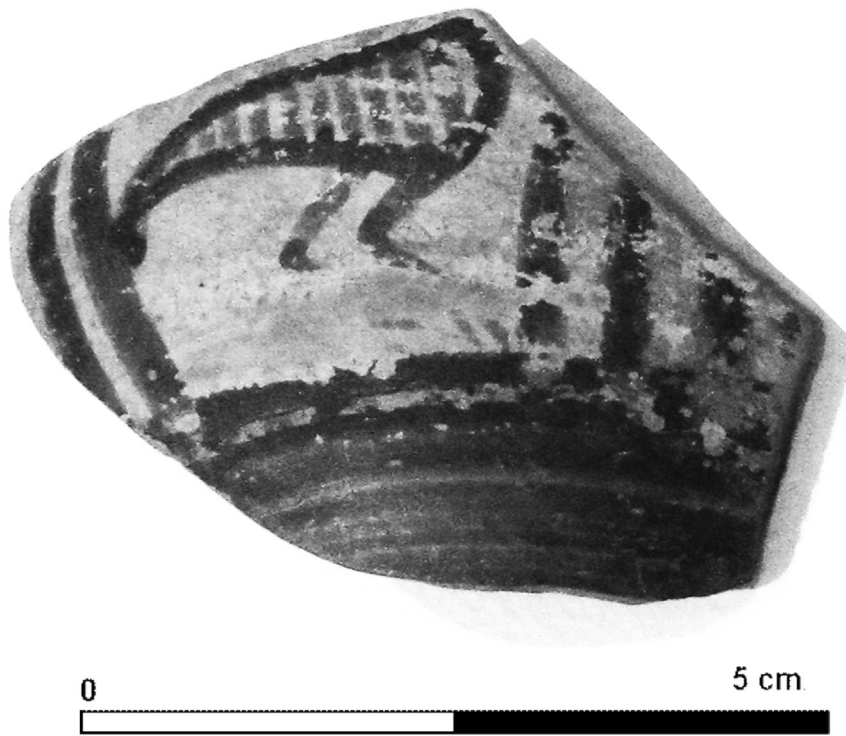


Figure 3. Fragment of skyphos of Euboean type. Huelva, 9 Puerto Street site. (Photo: author).



Figure 4. Fragment of skyphos. El Carambolo (province of Seville). (Photo: author).



Figure 5. Fragment of two skyphoi. La Rebanadilla (province of Málaga). Photo: Sánchez et al. 2012).