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## BIBLIOTHÈQUE DES CAHIERS DE LINGUISTIQUE DE LOUVAIN — 137

# Έλληνικές διάλεκτοι στὸν ἀρχαῖο κόσμο

Actes du VI<sup>e</sup> Colloque international sur les dialectes grecs anciens (Nicosie, Université de Chypre, 26 – 29 septembre 2011)

édités par

Anna PANAYOTOU — Giovanbattista GALDI



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### PANHELLENES AT METHONE, PIERIA (CA. 700 BCE): NEW INSCRIPTIONS, GRAFFITI/DIPINTI AND (TRADE)MARKS

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ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ. — Παρουσιάζονται εννέα διαλεκτικές επιγραφές σε σύνολο 191 ενεπίγραφων αγγείων και οστράκων· βρέθηκαν στη Μεθώνη της Πιερίας, σημαντικής αποικίας της Ερέτριας στον Θερμαϊκό, η οποία ιδρύθηκε περί το 733 π.Χ. 157 από αυτά τα κείμενα (εγχάρακτα και γραπτά) χρονολογούνται ασφαλώς βάσει αρχαιολογικών ενδείξεων στην περίοδο 730-690 π.Χ. και προσφέρουν πολυτιμότατες πληροφορίες για πλήθος θεμάτων, όπως το εμπόριο, τον αποικισμό, τα τοπικά αλφάβητα, τη διάδοση της γραφής, τις σχέσεις γραφής και έπους, τα συμποτικά κείμενα της τοπικής αριστοκρατίας.

RÉSUMÉ. — Neuf inscriptions dialectales sur un lot de 191 vases et tessons inscrits sont présentées ici ; elles ont été trouvées à Méthone de Piérie, importante colonie érétrienne sur le littoral du golfe Thermaïque, fondée vers 733 a.C. La date des textes (graffiti et dipinti) est assurée grâce à leur contexte archéologique : elle se situe dans la période 730-690 a.C. Ces textes offrent un témoignage irrécusable sur un éventail de sujets, le commerce, la colonisation, les alphabets locaux, la diffusion de l'écriture, ses rapports avec la littérature et les banquets de l'aristocratie locale.

One of the questions Plutarch asks in his *Greek Aetia* (293a-b) is: "who are the men repulsed by slings" (τίνες οἱ ἀποσφενδόνητοι;), to which the answer relates the colonization of Methone by Eretrians:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This contribution presents the nine inscriptions from Methoni in Pieria, inscribed on mostly sympotic vessels and dated to the late 8th and the beginning 7th centuries BCE. The references are kept to the minimum; for full discussion see *Methone I*.

Men from Eretria used to inhabit the island of Corcyra. But Charicrates sailed there from Corinth with an army and defeated them in war; so the Eretrians embarked in their ships and sailed back home. Their fellow-citizens, however, having learned of the matter before their arrival, barred their return to the country and prevented them from disembarking by showering upon them missiles from slings. Since the exiles were unable either to persuade or to overcome their fellow-citizens, who were numerous and inexorable, they sailed to Thrace and occupied a territory in which, according to tradition, Methon, the ancestor of Orpheus, had formerly lived. So the Eretrians named their city Methone, but they were also named by their neighbors the "Men repulsed by slings" (tr. Babbitt 1936).

As Plutarch's brief explanation implies, the "repulsed by slings" Eretrians sailed from Eretria to an already existing settlement, known to the locals as Methon's place, hence the name Methone.

Methone, so it seems, was of strategic importance in the Thermaic Gulf (Fig. 1) because its harbor was naturally protected from the southern winds, the main problem for ships sailing the Gulf, and the site had access to fine timber resources. These two advantages are also evident in the fifth century BCE, when Athens suppressed the revolt of Euboea in 446 BCE, and the former Euboean colonies became Athenian strongholds. Methone with its safest harbor in the Thermaic Gulf became a member of the Athenian League, paying a tax of three talents or eighteen thousand drachmas, and was instrumental for facilitating exports to Athens, especially wood for its increasing naval needs. As the Macedonians consolidated their power under Philip II, the Athenian stronghold at Methone, being so close to both the old and the new capitals of the kingdom, became a constant threat both strategically and economically, a threat that Philip could no longer tolerate. Three years after he secured Pydna and its harbor, Philip besieged and annihilated Methone in 354 BCE, as Diodorus reports (16.34.3-5), at which time purportedly he lost his eye. Philip distributed the land to Macedonians and forced the local population to move N-NW in a new site, allowing the inhabitants to take with them only one piece of clothing.

This scanty information in the sources does not make the site look very promising, an assumption which has recently been called into question by archaeological research. After an overview of excavations at Methone, the extraordinary, and so far unique and unprecedented for Macedonia, new inscriptions, graffiti/dipinti, and (trade)marks are presented, which emerged in the last two-three years, when a number of pots and potsherds were pieced together. This find from Methone is a prelude to and offers an unparalleled insight into significant historical processes of the eighth century, which culminated in the seventh century BCE, such as: trade and colonization; the alphabet, local scripts and dialects; and the sympotic and literary context(s).

Excavations, ongoing since 2003-2004, have begun to bring to light ancient Methone in the southern tip of the Haliacmon River Delta, ca. 35 kilometers south of Thessaloniki, and immediately north of modern-day Agathoupolis. Methone occupies two hills, which were located by the sea, before sedimentations of the rivers Axios, Loudias, and especially nearby Haliacmon pushed the eastern coastline ca. 500 meters away from the site. On the eastern, lower hill, habitation starts already by the late Neolithic (5200 BCE) and continues throughout the Bronze Age (3000-1050 BCE), while a Late Bronze Age (1400-1050 BCE) cemetery has been located on the western, higher hill. During the Early Iron Age (1050-700 BCE) habitation extends on both hills, and the finds from the eastern hill not only confirm the incident related by Plutarch above, but support the older date of 733 BCE (instead of 709) assumed for the arrival of the Eretrians. The confirmation of Plutarch's testimony makes Methone the oldest colony of the southern Greeks on the northern shores of the Aegean attested in the sources.

The foundation of the colony was not an isolated event. In both Methone and nearby Pydna, Euboean-style pottery dated to the ninth century BCE indicates that the western shores of the Thermaic Gulf were in contact with Euboea from an earlier time. The arrival of the Eretrians but also of colonists from other parts of the Greek world invigorated the activities of the Methonaians, as the archaeological research is beginning to corroborate, and by the end of the 8th century BCE the colonized Methone became a chief commercial and industrial centre. It is indicative that the relatively small part of the archaic agora excavated so far has produced evidence for workshop-activities of every kind of material.

Few meters uphill, on the top of the lower eastern hill, a rectangular pit of  $3.60 \times 4.20$  meters in plan, and 10.50 meters in depth, came to light. This pit, conventionally called the 'Ypogeio', had apparently been used as an *apothetes* (a dump) and was filled in with a huge amount of pots, potsherds, and other remnants of the activities from the nearby workshops. The lower layer/filling of the dump dates to the late 8th and the beginning of the 7th centuries BCE; the intermediate layer/filling, which involves the erection of terrace walls after the *apothetes* was sealed, dates to the first half of the 7th century; and the upper and thinner layer was formed in the late 7th and 6th centuries BCE and represents domestic depositions.

The excavation of the 'Ypogeio' yielded an amazing wealth of finds of all sorts, including the inscriptions, graffiti/dipinti, and (trade)marks in question. Seldom has the excavation of basically a single trench produced so far reaching results, which suggest that the late 8th century was a crossroads of tradition and innovation in Greece. Most of the pottery found in the lower deposit of the

'Ypogeio' and pieced together is local, but much comes from different regions of the Aegean and also from Phoenicia. Most significantly, an assemblage of 191 pots and potsherds bear inscriptions, graffiti, and (trade)marks, the majority of which (157) date from 730 to 690 BCE. Interestingly, imports from Euboea are not abundant in this assemblage, but the locally produced imitations of Euboean styles are. Likewise, imports from Corinth, the Cycladic islands, and Ionia and Aeolis in Asia Minor are limited, whereas imports from Athens (17), Samos (17), Chios (14), and Lesbos (9), especially transport amphorae, comprise the great majority. The material recovered confirms that the production of many amphora-types had already begun in the 8th century BCE and suggests systematic trade in subsistence goods (rather than trade in commodities). Transport amphorae and sympotic vessels dominate the assemblage, but there are also few pouring and storage vessels. This pattern of representation of different shape categories is also seen on the inscribed pottery from Eretria, Pithecussae, but especially from Kommos, the site most closely paralleled to Methone.

Both the place of discovery, Methone in Pieria, and the date of this assemblage, 730-690 BCE, are remarkable, because excavations in the north Aegean have, so far, yielded hardly anything inscribed, incised, scratched or rarely painted that could be dated so early, with the exception of a limited, but barely comparable number of finds from Torone, Karabournaki in Thessaloniki, and Krania/Platamon in southern Pieria. Most of the pieces from Methone are scratched or incised after firing, but there are rare instances of marks made before firing. The great majority of these pieces, 166 pots and potsherds of mostly amphorae and sympotic vessels, bear non-alphabetic symbols, marks, graffiti, and very few dipinti, most probably signs of ownership and/or trading.

Of the remaining twenty-five amphorae and sympotic vessels, eighteen bear alphabetic symbols, marks, and graffiti, which again most probably denote ownership and/or trading activities. The remaining nine, mostly sympotic vessels bear complete or fragmentary inscriptions. These are listed below, in ascending chronological order based on letter shape, admittedly a subjective criterion:

- On a coated amphora of unknown provenance, dated to ca. 700, most probably a name abbreviated, whose circular letters were incised with a compass (Fig. 2):
   vacat? Θεο() vacat.
- 2. On an amphora from Lesbos, dated to ca. 700, the name (Fig. 3): *vacat* Άντεούδεος *vacat*.
- 3. On a Macedonian skyphos, dated to ca. 700, most probably an abbreviated name, retrograde (Fig. 4):

- $vacat \ \Sigma \chi \epsilon vi() \ vacat (= < X \sigma > \epsilon vi() = < \Xi > \epsilon vi()).$
- 4. On an Attic SOS amphora, dated to ca. 700, retrograde (Fig. 5): *vacat*? NAN[-?] (or NM[-?] or NГI[-?]).
- 5. On an Euboean skyphos, dated to ca. 700, retrograde (Fig. 6): *vacat* Pιτ[-?].
- On a Macedonian drinking cup, dated to ca. 730-720, retrograde (Fig. 7): vacat Ἐπιγέ[νεος? ἐμί?].
- On an Euboean skyphos, dated to ca. 730-720, retrograde the ownership tag (Fig. 8):
   [-²]ō ἐμ[ί].
- 8. On an Euboean skyphos, dated to ca. 730-720, retrograde (Fig. 9): Ηακεσάνδρο ἐμ[ὶ .........................]ειτετο[...........]μεκ[.........ατον στερέσ[ετ]αι.
- On a mug from Lesbos, dated to ca. 730, retrograde (Fig. 10): Φιλίονος ἐμί.

All nine inscribed vessels come from the lower deposit of the 'Ypogeio', hence their dating to the last thirty years or so of the 8th century BCE. This chronology is relative, because chronological matters become complicated when an object, particularly one of a private and not a public nature, is inscribed. The time of production is not always the same as the time of the inscription, as is the case, e.g., with public state-decrees and laws, or, closer to our case, potters' marks. Particularly in the case of Hakesandros (no. 8), the time of the poetic composition inscribed need not be the same as that of the text's incision on the cup.

These nine brief texts, together with the 16 alphabetic and the 166 non-alphabetic pots and potsherds, comprise a group, which should be added to the chronologically and contextually comparable finds from Lefkandi, Eretria, and Zarakes in Euboea; from Oropos and Thebes; from Hymettos and Attica; from Pithecussae and Cyme; and last but not least, from Crete, particularly from Kommos, which has yielded a variety of inscriptions, symbols, and (trade) marks rendered on pots of varied provenance.

All nine texts from Methone, some inscribed 'professionally' and others less so, are ownership tags of the familiar formula of the speaking object: "I belong to X", with the verb ɛiµí inscribed or omitted. Five of them are incised sinistrorsum and two dextrorsum, a fact which implies that in certain areas of the Greek world both directions of the alphabet co-existed early on. Because of their brevity, the few letters of each text are not conclusive as to the script, local or imported, of the owner/trader or the engraver, except for Hakesandros' cup, the script of which, like the pot itself, is Eretrian/Euboean. But even this is of little help in securely identifying the owner Hakesandros as an Eretrian, let

alone in identifying the poem's composer, who perforce remains anonymous. The nine texts from Methone, however, do emphasize one important and crucial fact of life, which is often overlooked in discussions of archaic local scripts: although Methone was, according to Plutarch above, an Eretrian colony and one would expect the Eretrian script to have been adopted, the variety of letter-shapes in these 9 texts attests suggests the occurrence of difference scripts and the possibility that not all the inhabitants of the site were from Eretria/Euboea. It seems that the concept 'local script' cannot be applied to these few texts of Methone, perhaps even to all texts incised on portable objects, and a more nuanced approach is required, particularly for sites at crossroads and/or along major trading routes (e.g. Kommos and now Methone), where inevitably more than one scripts and perhaps more than one dialects would have been in use.

Like the majority of early Greek inscriptions, the Methone texts employ the shapes of E for ε, η, ει, and O for o, ω, oυ, but their brevity is not of any assistance as to the spoken dialect, although Ionic, most probably the dialect on Hakesandros' cup, is the primary candidate. The aspiration of the name  $H\alpha\kappa\epsilon\sigma\alpha\nu\delta\rho\sigma\varsigma$  (from the verb ἀκέομαι, "he who cures men") remains a puzzle, although the verb ἀκέομαι with aspirate is attested in two inscriptions: one from Argos, dated to the 6th century BCE (SEG 11, 314, ll. 11–12: ἀφ[α]κεσlάσθο);² and the other from Athens whose dialect, however, is that of Delphi, dated to 380/379 BCE (IG II² 1126, l. 37: ἐφακείσθων, l. 41: ἐφακεσθαι).³

The 191 incised inscriptions, symbols, and (trade)marks of Methone are private inscriptions and belong to the epigraphical category of *fictilia* and *instrumenta domestica*. However, since a number of them are inscribed on sympotic vessels, they also have a semi-public aspect within a sympotic context. It cannot be a coincidence that most of the earliest inscriptions belong to this category, and perhaps, alongside trading activities, the *symposion* played an important factor both for the introduction but also the dissemination of the alphabet and its techniques. Being private but at the same time on a sympotic-public display, these brief texts advertise their literacy, even when they exhibit more than one scripts of the Greek alphabet, as is the case with the Methone and Kommos texts.

Of the seven texts, the cup of Hakesandros stands out, not only for the professional engraving and its script, but most importantly for the text incised on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> LSAG<sup>2</sup> 158 and 168 no. 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> CID 1, 10 and 4, 1, SEG 28, 100. According to DELG (s.v.) the word ἄκος has undergone Ionic psilosis; Buck 1955, 53–54 §58c argues that aspiration in the Greek dialects is a complicated phenomenon and originally the word was aspirated.

it. Although fragmentary, the text ends in an iambic rhythm  $(-]\alpha\tau\bar{o}\nu$ στερήσ[ετα] $\iota = - - - - -$ ). This indicates that the text consisted of the ownership tag in prose (Ηακεσάνδρο ἐμ[ὶ ποτέριον vel sim.), and then of an iambic dimeter or trimeter (?), the oldest one attested. The secure restoration of the final word στερέ|σ[ετ]αι (the third singular form of future of στεροῦμαι) and the probable restoration of [κηρξμ- vel ὀμμ]άτον before the verb suggest the phrase: "will be deprived of /loose his [money/eyes]". This strongly implies that Hakesandros' text, as other early inscriptions on sympotic pots, was also composed in a playful, iambic manner within a sympotic context. And quite astonishingly, this text seems to be a forerunner of the one on Tataie's lekythos from Cyme, dated to the second quarter of the 7th century BCE (IG XIV 865):4 I am Tataie's lekythos: whoever steals me (sc. the lekythos from her or it from me, Tataie) will lose his eyes. This epigram, also in an iambic rhythm and manner, seems to supply the most probable meaning of the missing part of Hakesandros' text: "I belong to Hakesandros; [whoever steals me from him], will be deprived of / loose his [money/eyes]."

Hakesandros' poetic, but not hexametric, text brings, once more, to the fore the literary beginnings in Greece. Trade and economic factors facilitated the spread of the alphabet and the competence in writing within commercial and sympotic contexts, i.e. the beginnings of literacy. And as soon as people learnt the alphabet, they began engraving the small poems, composed orally beforehand or impromptu at the symposion, on pots, which would otherwise have been unexceptional objects in a shelf of a storeroom. The earliest recorded attempts of Greek poetic expression —from the Dipylon oinochoe and Nestor's cup to Hakesandros' cup and Tataie's lekythos, and notwithstanding different interpretations— all these first fruits of inscribed poetry bespeak a playful tone expected within a sympotic context. Although they clearly bear no comparison to the Homeric/Hesiodic epics, these brief epigrams, composed in an iambic manner, were also oral compositions which were orally transmitted, as the coincidence between the epigram of Hakesandros and that of Tataie seems to suggest. And even if they are not high lyric poetry, they are written lyric and sympotic poetry in nascenti, a genre which they presage and which emerges sooner than later. Archilochus, traditionally the earliest eponymous lyric poet, active sometime between 680 and 640 BCE celebrated bitterly Paros' and the other Greeks' colonization of Thasos: the misery of the Panhellenes came together running to Thasos (fragment 102 West: ὡς Πανελλήνων ὀϊζὺς ἐς

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> LSAG<sup>2</sup> 236, 240, no. 3, 456.

Θάσον συνέδραμεν).<sup>5</sup> *Mutatis mutandis*, this line can as well be taken to portray the late 8th century BCE colonization of Methone.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Apud Strabo 8.6.6 in his discussion of the word Πανέλληνες.

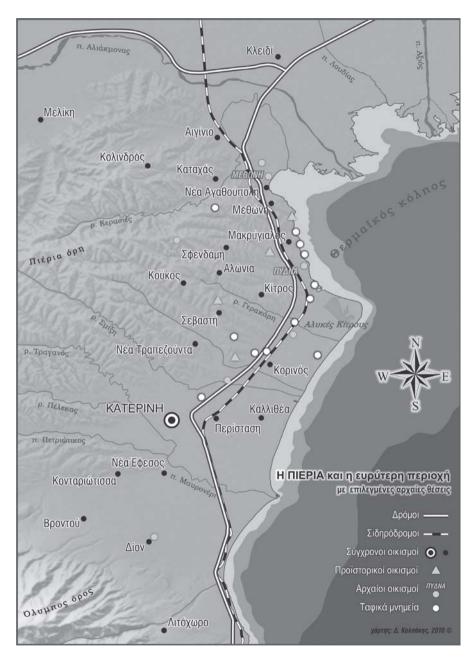


Figure 1. Map of Northern Pieria.

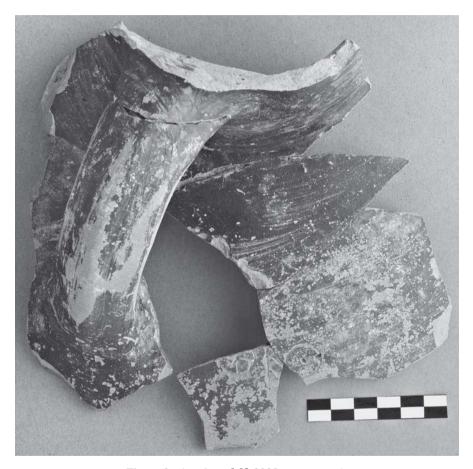


Figure 2. Amphora M $\theta$  2238, *supra* no. 1.



Figure 3. Amphora M $\theta$  2237, *supra* no. 2.

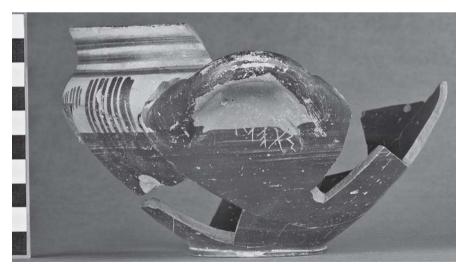


Figure 4. Macedonian skyphos  $M\theta$  2247, supra no. 3.



Figure 5. Attic SOS amphora  $M\theta$  2427, supra no. 4.

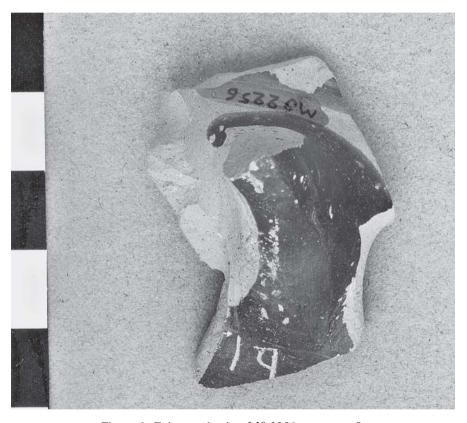


Figure 6. Euboean skyphos  $M\theta$  2256, supra no. 5.



Figure 7. Macedonian drinking cup  $M\theta$  2253, supra no. 6.

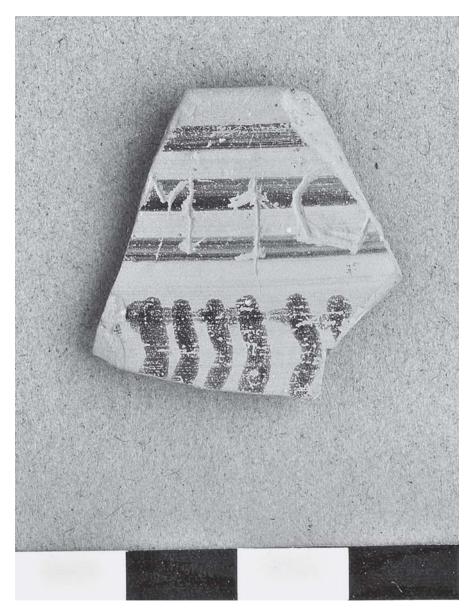


Figure 8. Euboean skyphos  $M\theta$  2255, supra no. 7.

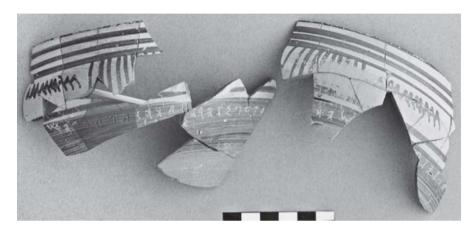


Figure 9. Euboean skyphos  $M\theta$  2248, *supra* no. 8.

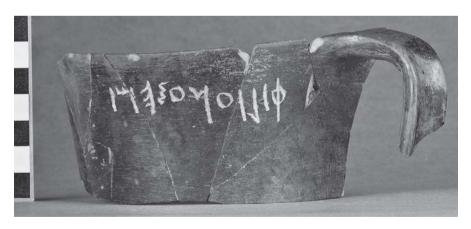


Figure 10. Mug Mθ 2249, *supra* no. 9.