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THE
GREEK COLONISATION
OF THE
BLACK SEA AREA

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION
OF ARCHAEOLOGY



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GREEK IDEAS OF THE NORTH AND THE EAST:

Mastering the Black Sea Area

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The recently revived discussion on Greek penetration of the Black Sea area¹ has prompted this paper.

It has long been a scholarly tradition to solve the problems of Greek colonisation of the Black Sea by comparing the evidence provided by archaeological finds with that in the ancient written sources about the region. A serious analysis of the written data is still lacking and the different value of the sources has been little investigated. Recently, another old chestnut has been revived in Russian historiography – that of the Kimmerians and the early Scythians – with a very similar approach being taken.² The availability of data from the Near Eastern cuneiform documents does not make the situation much easier. Palaeo-ethnological studies, on the other hand, are heavily preoccupied with the image of “the other” in Greek culture.³ Their conclusions could be used in considering cultural interactions in the Pontic area.

Some twenty years ago V.N. Toporov wrote about the cosmological sources of early Greek historical writing.⁴ Some notions and images are desacralised, though they remain as a frame to the historical narrative.⁵ Scholars writing on ancient Greek

- 1 For a review of the discussion, see: G.R. Tsetschladze, “Greek Penetration of the Black Sea”, in G.R. Tsetschladze/F. De Angelis (eds.), *The Archaeology of Greek Colonisation. Essays Dedicated to Sir John Boardman* (Oxford 1994) 111–135.
- 2 I.N. Medvedskaya, “Periodisation of Archaic Scythian Antiquities and the Ancient East”, *RosArk* 3 (1992) (in Russian); M.M. Pogrebova/D.S. Raevskii, “Early Scythians in the Light of the Written Tradition and Archaeological Data”, *VDI* 4 (1993) (in Russian); E.A. Grantovskii, “On the Chronology of the Kimmerian and Scythian Stay in Western Asia”, *RosArk* 3 (1994) (in Russian). A new, more realistic approach to these problems can be seen in the several works by A.I. Ivantchik: “L’ethnonyme ‘les Cimmerians’”, *Linguistique Balkanique* 32.1 (1989); *Les Cimmeriens au Proche-Orient* (Freibourg/Göttingen 1993); “On the Question of the Ethnic Attribution and Archaeological Culture of the Kimmerians. I. Kimmerian Monuments of the Near East”, *VDI* 3 (1994) (in Russian).
- 3 F. Hartog, *Le miroir d’Herodote. Essai sur la représentation de l’autre* (Paris 1980); E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian. Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford 1989); M.C. Miller, “Midias as the Great King in Attic Fifth-Century Vase-Painting”, *Antike Kunst* 31.2 (1988) 79–85; E. Hall, “When Did the Trojans Turn into Phrygians? Alcaeus 42.15”, *ZPE* 73 (1988) 15–17.
- 4 V.N. Toporov, “On the Cosmological Sources of Early Historical Descriptions”, *Bulletin of Tartu University* 308. *Studies on Sign Systems, Volume 6* (Tartu 1973) 106–150 (in Russian); *id.*, “Primitive Notions about the World (A General View)”, in *Essays on the History of Ancient Natural Science* (Moscow 1982) 10–13, 34–35 (in Russian).
- 5 Toporov, *On the Cosmological* (as in n. 4) 134, 138.

geography have noted the conservatism of the view of the Ocean as a big stream surrounding the known world.⁶ It can even be traced in the early historical works.

In this context Greek ideas about the far North and East are instructive. Some considerations are offered here on the basis of just two examples: the evidence about the Kimmerians and about the Phrygians.

The first mention of the Kimmerians in a Greek text is in the *Odyssey*.⁷ Odysseus reached them on his way to the Underworld, seeking a prophecy of the seer Teiresias. They dwelt beyond the Ocean, at the entrance to the Underworld. These poor people could not see the sunlight – a verse that has provoked numerous modern geographical speculations. In terms of mythology their liminal position is quite evident: the Kimmerians were placed by the Poet between “the dark” and “the light”, between “the known” and “the unknown”. Thus their functional identification with Cerberus has its mythological reasons in the explanations of the ethnonym by later authors and Homer’s commentators.⁸ Although the idea of the “Barbarian” was formed in Greek drama, mainly for political reasons⁹ and used in the search for a comic effect,¹⁰ the Greek audience still needed mythological images and signs (ideological markers).

The purely mythological context of the Kimmerians in the passage by Homer does not provide any geographical signposts. The localisation of the Kimmerians on the Northern Black Sea coast stems from Herodotus’ narrative (probably rendering an earlier Ionian tradition).¹¹ They are included in the third Scythian legend of origin, which makes them historical predecessors of the Scythians in the Ukrainian steppes.¹² Not much later they were localised in Italy, near lake Avernus, which was also considered to be one of the entrances to Hades.¹³

Another name closely connected with Greek views about the North is that of the Hyperboreans.¹⁴ First of all they were associated with Boreas, the River Istros (Histria) and Thrace. Later they were removed by Herodotus to the far north-east, be-

6 L.A. Elnitskii, *The Earliest Ocean Sailings* (Moscow 1962) 11 (in Russian); E.H. Bunbury, *A History of Ancient Geography* I (London 1883) 145.

7 Hom. *Od.* 11. 14–19.

8 Soph. frg. 1060 (Jebb-Pearson); Aristoph. *Ran* 187 *et* schol.; Et. M. 513. 44; Schol. ad Hom. *Od.* 11. 14; Eusth. *Ad Od.* 1671.

9 Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (as in n. 3) 1–2, 16–17, 160–168. See also: P. Georges, *Barbarian Asia and the Greek Experiens. From the Archaic Period to the Age of Xenophon* (Baltimore/London 1994) 1–114.

10 Ivantchik, *L’ethnonyme ‘Les Cimmeriens’* (as in n. 2) 5.

11 Herod. 4. 11–13. Probably Aristeeas: J.D.P. Bolton, *Aristeeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford 1962) 206 No. 1.

12 In Herodotus they turned into a derivative of the interpretation of the Scythians: Pogrebova/Raevskii, *Early Scythians* (as in n. 2) 113.

13 Ephor. frg. 134 (Jacoby); Strabo 5. 4. 5; U. Cozzoli, *I Cimmeri* (Rome 1968) 35–44; a recent review and a concise comment on the ancient written sources about the Kimmerians: S.R. Tokhtasev, “Cimmerians”, in E. Yarshater (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 5, fasc. 6 (Costa Mesa 1991) 563–564.

14 Pind. *Ol.* 3. 11–34; the scholia reflect later notions about Istros as the boundary of Scythia: Schol. ad Pind. *Ol.* 3. 25.

yond “the Scythian Quadrangle”.¹⁵ They are interpreted by modern scholars in the light of Palaeo-Balkan and Thracian religious practice.¹⁶ The Greeks probably perceived the Hyperboreans – the worshippers of Apollo – as the personification of the boundary between the earth and the sky, between life and death (they lived a heavenly life without war, sickness or old age). They were also associated with the Ocean, the Rhipaeon mountains, the Arimaspians and the griffins.¹⁷ Later mythographic versions ascribed a Titanic origin to them.¹⁸ The one-eyed Arimaspians could also mark the opposition of light and dark, dream and wakefulness, life and death. Griffins were guardians of the gold at the end of the known world.

In defining Scythia, Herodotus listed the following tribes at its north-eastern boundary: Issedonians, Arimaspians, Griffins and Hyperboreans (running south to north). This model could have originated from Aristeas of Proconnesus and a similar one can be found in Damastes.¹⁹ It is dynamised and desacralised in the historical narrative, where the Kimmerians are driven away by the Scythians who are themselves chased by the Massagetae and the Issedonians.²⁰

Another mythological image is also involved in Herodotus’ description of Scythia: the Amazons. Together with Scythian men they founded the tribe of Sauromatae and occupied the land far to the north of Lake Maeotis.²¹ Homer, however, knew the Amazons in Asia Minor. Before the Trojan War they fought against the Phrygians whom Priam came to help.²² The Third Labour of Bellerophon in Lycia was a victory over the Amazons.²³ Their image belongs to the Greek cosmological strategy for mastering both the eastern and northern parts of the unknown world. The conservatism of their northern connection is demonstrated by later authors, mentioning the Amazons together with the Hyperboreans, Abioi, Chalybes and Galaktophagoi.²⁴

Thus, in the Greek written tradition, the Kimmerians along the Northern Black Sea coast represent a cosmological element interwoven into the historical narrative about the Scythians.²⁵ The search for archaeological proof of their presence there has not yet yielded a positive result and it is highly unlikely that it will do so. “Kimmerian culture” turned long ago into a typological term for pre- and early Scythian

15 Herod. 4. 27–32.

16 T. Lazova, *The Hyperboreans. A Study on the Palaeo-Balkan Tradition* (Sofia 1996).

17 Hellenistic and Roman authors placed them in Italy as well: Posidonius in Schol. ad Apoll. Rhod. 2. 675; Plin. *NH* 4. 89–91.

18 Schol. ad Pind. *Ol.* 3. 24 – a Pherenic fragment. The narrative resembles considerably that of the Titanic blood around Herakleia Pontica.

19 Herod. 4. 13, 27–32; Damast. ap. Steph. Byz. *Hyperboreoi*.

20 Herod. 4. 11.

21 Herod. 4. 110–116.

22 Hom. *Il.* 3. 184–189; 6. 186.

23 Hom. *Il.* 6. 186.

24 Apoll. Rhod. 2. 373–377; Steph. Byz. *Abioi*; Schol. ad Pind. *Ol.* 13. 124.

25 The story of the fight between the two Kimmerian kings and the decision to leave the country belongs entirely to legend. It reflects a ritual duel and the mythological and ritual significance of the choice, used as an historical grounding for the appearance of the Scythians: M. Vassileva, “The Ethnic Code of the Road”, in *Mythology – Art – Folklore* 3 (1988) 11–15 (in Bulgarian).

finds.²⁶ That is why the most recent works on the problem have turned to the Kimmerian presence in Asia Minor, for which there is more reliable evidence.²⁷ There co-ordination with the Near Eastern texts could be undertaken as well. Herodotus' story of the Kimmerian raids in Asia Minor is of quite a different nature to the legend told in the Scythian *logos*.²⁸ It is extremely difficult to isolate "Kimmerian" finds and authors are forced to use the term "early Scythian" in archaeology.²⁹

The possibility of giving two parallel examples with Kimmerians and Phrygians stems not only from their connection with the Amazons. So far, reliable data about both peoples can only be found in Anatolia. Furthermore, Greek written sources about them preserved traits reflecting the Greek mastering of the Straits and the Black Sea. These details are instructive for the shaping of Greek informational space but hardly for the history of Greek colonisation.

The Greek notion about Phrygia as a coastal land in north-western Asia Minor has been considered in an earlier work.³⁰ Hellespontic Phrygia is a designation originating from the Hellenistic period, much later than Phrygian political independence.³¹ Hellespont is the key word here. It is bound to the epic pre-Trojan and Trojan War context. Homer uses a special epithet for it, usually defining a river.³² A comparison with its use in the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite could suggest the image of the Ocean.³³ The cosmogonic significance of the Hellespont in Trojan saga was already emphasized.³⁴ The mythological precedent of passage (similar to the mythological meaning of bridge – Xerxes' bridge over the Hellespont)³⁵ was probably revived owing to the first attempts at penetrating the Black Sea region. Later the strait was still considered a boundary: between Thrace and Phrygia, a boundary for the Persian army.³⁶ The cosmogonic elements and the memory of the mythological trial of Phrixos and Helle were still preserved.

The name Phrixos might be interpreted as "the Phrygian" ("u"/"i" alternation is not unusual in Anatolian onomastics). Phorkys is one of the Phrygian leaders in the *Iliad*.³⁷ His name is homonymous to the name of the eighth Titan of the Orphic

26 For the most recent review of this terminological situation, see: Ivantchik, *On the Question* (as in n. 2) 149–150.

27 Medvedskaya, *Periodisation of Archaic Scythian* (as in n. 2); Ivantchik, *On the Question* (as in n. 2); Grantovskii, *On the Chronology* (as in n. 2).

28 The chronology of events in Asia Minor in the 7th–6th centuries BC given by Herodotus is highly unreliable, but in principle the events are authentic: Grantovskii, *On the Chronology* (as in n. 2) 35.

29 Ivantchik, *On the Question* (as in n. 2) 167.

30 M. Vassileva, "The 'Catalogue' Written Tradition about Phrygia and Thrace", *TP-V* 217–220.

31 Historical and cultural grounds for this name, however, could be found in the pre- and early Hellenistic periods: M. Vassileva, "Thracian-Phrygian Cultural Zone: the Daskyleion Evidence", *Orpheus* 5 (1995) 27–34.

32 G. Jachmann, "Hellespontos als geographischer Terminus", *Athenaeum* 33 (1955) 95–96.

33 Jachmann, *Hellespontos* (as in n. 32) 96.

34 G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore/London 1979) 343–345.

35 Herod. 7. 33–36.

36 Aesch. *Pers.* 65–72, 721–724, 743–752; comments in: A. Bernard, *La carte du tragique* (Paris 1985) 55–58.

37 Hom. *Il.* 2. 862–863.

cosmogony. The proximity of the name to the ethnonym of the Berekynthes has been supported since P. Kretschmer's time.³⁸ Phorkys and the verb *phrygo* could have originated from the same radical **bher-*.³⁹ *Phrix* (*phrikos*) was used for a sea surface roughened by the wind, but also meant trembling, fear of the sea.⁴⁰

Without joining the discussion about Colchis and the journey of the Argonauts it should be remembered that similar travel myths signified journeys to the Underworld.⁴¹ They were even used in visual texts of the 6th–5th centuries BC to structure, in a rather emblematic way, the world known to the Greeks.⁴² Scholars have already discussed the supernatural barbarian marking the boundary between civilisation and nature, as well as his relation to epic heroes.⁴³

It has been noted many times that in a mythological context gold is an intermediary between the worlds and a marker of the Underworld.⁴⁴ The route of the Argonauts is marked by gold not only in the Golden Fleece. According to the scholiast of Apollonius of Rhodes⁴⁵ the former name of Lampsakos – Pityeia – was given after the Thracian word for treasure, because of the treasure left by Phrixos.⁴⁶ Later commentators connected a city in Caria – Pitaou – with a mythological Phrygian figure, a friend of Midas.⁴⁷ Hellespont was again thus “marked” by the Persians: Xerxes threw a gold cup into the Hellespont. Similar golden “marking” could be seen in Troy as well.⁴⁹

A monster or a fantastic figure guarding either gold or a gold object was typical of the Greek model of the boundaries of the unknown space: the golden Apples of the Hesperides, the Golden Fleece. The griffins to the north of Scythia also guard gold.⁵⁰ Herodotus tells us about giant ants in India which unearthed gold sand.⁵¹

Thus, these cosmogonic and cosmological elements, together with “the golden mark”, which could be traced even in early historical narratives, reflect the Greek mastering of the Straits and the Black Sea. They could be detected in the formation of the Greek conception about the Northern Black Sea coast and Phrygia (probably connected with the notion of “Asia”).

38 P. Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache* (Göttingen 1896) 186, 229, 288; H. von Kamptz, *Homerische Personennamen* (Göttingen 1982) 46–47, 113.

39 P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* II (Paris 1968) 1222, 1230.

40 Chantraine, *Dictionnaire* (as in n. 39) 1228–1229.

41 B. Ridgway, “Archaic Architectural Sculpture and Travel Myths”, in *Vani-1987* 414–415.

42 *Ibid.* 411–427.

43 Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (as in n. 3) 39, 51–53.

44 Most recently in a Thracian and Phrygian context, see: I. Marazov, *Mythology of the Gold* (Sofia 1994) 8–9 (in Bulgarian).

45 About an early layer of data in Apollonius of Rhodes, see: P. Dimitrov, “Quelques considérations sur les témoignages d'Apollonius de Rhodes dans ses 'Argonautiques'”, *Thracia* 7 (1985) 197–199.

46 Schol. ad Apoll. Rhod. I. 932–933b.

47 Steph. Byz. *Pitaou*; L. Zgusta, *Kleinasiatische Ortsnamen* (Heidelberg 1984) 498, No. 1067–3.

48 Herod. 7. 54.

49 Hom. *Il.* 22. 351; Schol. ad Hom. *Il.* 22, 351.

50 Herod. 4. 13.

51 Herod. 3. 102, 104; concerning Indian gold see also: Soph. *Ant.* 1038–1039.

The ritual significance of the gold object, and especially of the Golden Fleece (which probably had a Mycenaean context), as a royal insignia⁵² could form the subject of another study. Here only one comment needs to be added. Despite the legendary fame of Colchis and King Midas for their gold, the archaeological evidence shows an abundance of bronze objects.⁵³ The Great Mound near Gordion, assumed to be that of Midas (and called Midas Mound), yielded extremely rich grave offerings but not a single gold object.⁵⁴ Traces of ancient gold mining were discovered in Sardis.⁵⁵ Croesus was famous for his wealth, but not for gold. These discrepancies between the literary and the archaeological evidence show that the legendary gold should be interpreted in another way. It belongs to the Underworld, marks the boundary between the worlds, and thus played an important rôle in shaping Greek ideas of distant lands.

In this context, two other mythological ethnonyms can briefly be considered. Homer's mentioning the Halizones coming from far away Alybe, the birth place of silver,⁵⁶ gave grounds for identifying the ethnonyms of the Halizones and Chalybes. Homer's scholiast explained that the Halizones inhabited a land surrounded by sea.⁵⁷ Another scholium to the verse where Odius, the Halizonian leader, is mentioned, makes him chief of the Paphlagonians.⁵⁸ Sayce derived the Greek *Halybe* from the Hittite *Khaly-wa* – "Land of Halys".⁵⁹ For the Greek name of the great Anatolian river a Phrygian source has been suggested.⁶⁰ Ionian literary tradition placed the Chalybes near the Pontus, along the River Thermodon,⁶¹ while the Halizones were placed among the Scythian tribes.⁶² A text by Ephoros, however, considers the Halizones as Amazons, placing them near Kymai.⁶³ Apollonius of Rhodes localises the Chalybes beyond the Amazons, near the mouth of the Thermodon, calling them the

52 Marazov, *Mythology* (as in n. 44) *passim*.

53 J. Boardman, "Perceptions of Colchis", in *Vani-1987* 197.

54 R.S. Young, *Three Great Early Tumuli* (Pennsylvania 1981) 79–190. [The same situation can be noted in Colchis. According to the myth of the Argonauts, Colchis was a gold-rich country but archaeological material shows that there was no local goldsmithing activity. The activity was introduced by the Greeks in the 5th century BC. On the other hand, bronzeworking was already advanced by ca. 1000 BC, see: Tsetskhladze, *Greek Penetration* (as in n. 1) 114; *id.*, "Did the Greeks Go to Colchis for Metals?", *OJA* 14.3 (1995) 307–331 – Editor's note.]

55 G.M.A. Hanfmann, *Sardis from Pre-Historic to Roman Times* (Cambridge, Mass./London 1983) 76.

56 Hom. *Il.* 2. 856–857.

57 Schol. ad Hom. *Il.* 2. 856 and the common etymology of their ethnonym from *hals* = sea.

58 Schol. T ad Hom. *Il.* 5. 39.

59 Sayce's notice in: T.W. Allen, "The Homeric Catalogue", *JHS* 30 (1910) 315; comments in T. Lazova, "Are the Halizones a Thracian Tribe? Some Glances at the Ancient Greek Tradition", in *Actes du II Congrès International de Thracologie I* (Bucharest 1980) 323–324.

60 C. Brixhe/T. Drew-Bear, "Trois nouvelles inscriptions paléo-phrygienne de Cepni", *Kadmos* 21.2 (1982) 74–75.

61 Probably in Hecatacus (frg. 203 – Jacoby), although the fragment does not clearly associate them with the northern Black Sea coast; Halizones: Hellan. frg. 172; Schol. ad Aesch. Sept. 728, 941.

62 Herod. 4. 17; 52.

63 Ephor. frg. 87.

most miserable people living in a rocky and savage land⁶⁴ – a definition greatly resembling that of Homer about the Kimmerians. The scholium to Homer's passage, which mentions the Halizones as a Thracian tribe, is of a later origin (the time of Persian rule).⁶⁵

The Chalybes were famous for inventing silver or iron working.⁶⁶ Traces of ancient iron processing and iron ore deposits have been sought in Georgia and Turkey, along the Southern Black Sea coast.⁶⁷ The silver mines of Taurus were also mentioned.⁶⁸ A Hittite origin was commonly suggested for the iron-processing skills of the Chalybes.⁶⁹ There was also a great discussion on the Hittite monopoly over iron production.⁷⁰ Here only a brief comment should be added: in Archaic societies the smiths had a great mythological and ritual significance, their functions doubling with those of the demiurge. They possessed secret knowledge and were often associated with mystery cults.⁷¹ In an Anatolian-Aegean context "metallurgical" functions are well attested for the Idaean Dactyls and the Telchines who were also magicians and spell-binders.⁷² They had an important place in the circle of the Great Mother-Goddess, in Dionysiac and Sabazian rituals, their number being different like the Kabeiroi and Kouretes.⁷³ The ritual significance for the Hittites of iron and silver has already been noted.⁷⁴

64 Apoll. Rhod. 2. 373–377.

65 Lazova, *Are the Halizones* (as in n. 59) 324.

66 Hom. *Il.* 2. 857; Aesch. *Sept.* 728, 941 et schol., etc.

67 R. Drews, "The Earliest Greek Settlements on the Black Sea", *JHS* 96 (1976) 28–31; J.D. Muhly/R. Maddin/T. Stech/E. Ozgen, "Iron in Anatolia and the Nature of the Hittite Iron Industry", *AnatSt* 35 (1985) 74; O.D. Lordkipanidze/T.K. Mikeladze, "The 7th–5th Centuries BC Eastern Black Sea Coast (Colchis). Ancient Written Sources and Archaeology", in *Vani-1987* 185–186 (in Russian). [Despite the view commonly expressed in the literature that Colchis was rich in iron ore, special studies have shown how far this was from the case, see: Tsetskhladze, *Did the Greeks* (as in n. 54); G.R. Tsetskhladze/M. Treister, "The Metallurgy and Production of Precious Metals in Colchis Before and After the Arrival of the Ionians", *BMM* 24.2 (1995) 1–32 – Editor's note.]

68 Allen, *The Homeric* (as in n. 59) 315.

69 V.V. Ivanov, "On the Problem of the Correlation Between Ancient Greek and Hittite Tradition", in *Slavonic and Balkan Linguistics. Language Contact Problems* (Moscow 1983) 53–55 (in Russian); Muhly/Maddin/Stech/Ozgen, *Iron* (as in n. 67) 71–82.

70 A.M. Snodgrass, "Iron and Early Metallurgy in the Mediterranean", in T. Wertime/J.D. Muhly (eds.), *The Coming of the Age of Iron* (New Haven/London 1980) 357–358; J.C. Waldbaum, "The First Archaeological Appearance of Iron and the Transition to the Iron Age", *ibid.* 81–84; J.D. Muhly, "The Bronze Age Setting", *ibid.* 25–67; Muhly/Maddin/Stech/Ozgen, *Iron* (as in n. 67) 67–82.

71 Marazov, *Mythology* (as in n. 44) 39–53, with bibliography quoted.

72 Strabo 10. 3. 19; 10. 3. 22; 14. 2. 7.

73 For the Kouretes and Korybantes there are versions about their Phrygian or Cretan origin: Strabo 10. 7. 11–20, while the Korybantes are mentioned as coming from Colchis as well: Strabo 10. 3. 19. About Daktyloi in a Thracian-Phrygian context see, most recently: A. Fol, *The Thracian Dionysos. Book One: Zagreus* (Sofia 1991) 64–64, 69, 74, 143 (in Bulgarian).

74 See notes nos. 68 and 70.

The earliest localisation of Aia could hardly be in Colchis,⁷⁵ while the etymology of the name as “mother” or “Mother Earth”⁷⁶ could point to the Anatolian cult of the Great Goddess. The rites relating to the Golden Fleece resemble closely Hittite royal rituals.⁷⁷ Thus, the myth about the Argonauts could have reflected early Greek knowledge of Asia Minor (Southern Black Sea coast).

The cosmogonic (demiurgic) element considered above could have accounted for the inclusion of these mythological ethnonyms in the structuring of the Eastern Hellenic informational space. The sources briefly reviewed could also point to a transfer of some *realia* from the Southern to the Northern Black Sea coast: this process was closely related to the Greek mastering of the Black Sea. However, they could hardly be used for dating Greek colonisation since this earliest knowledge might have been the result of cultural contacts and interactions as well.

The data considered above could offer some suggestions about historical and cultural interactions in the Balkan-Anatolian area. The typological parallel between the Kimmerians and the Phrygians is again instructive. The linguistic problems of the transition of the name of Kimmerians from the Near Eastern texts into the Greek literary tradition revealed a probable Lydian intermediary.⁷⁸ Lydian mediation for the Greek reception of Phrygia has also been noted (in the transition of cultural acquisitions, as well as in the Greek idea about Phrygia).⁷⁹ The earliest Greek idea about Asia was probably connected with Lydian territory.⁸⁰

Parallels could even be drawn in the context of the data about Kimmerians and Phrygians in Eastern written sources. Hesychius' Phrygian gloss *sunchoi* was compared with a word designating “Hattic shoe” in a Hittite text.⁸¹ A New-Assyrian inventory mentions “Kimmerian shoe”⁸² while “Kimmerian straps” and “Kimmerian bows” were mentioned in Babylonian documents of the 6th–5th centuries BC.⁸³ Apart from the military and political questions which the New-Assyrian texts pose, the example implies the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the “barbarian” peoples, which were noticed and entered the terminological vocabulary of the Hittites and Assyrians.

The overlapping of written data about the Amazons, Phrygians, Thracians, Chalybes and Kimmerians in Asia Minor, apart from demonstrating the way the Greeks mastered unknown space, attests to a zone of intense cultural interaction. The evi-

75 A. Lesky, “Aia”, in *id.*, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Bern/Munich 1966) 29–46.

76 Chantraine, *Dictionnaire* (as in n. 39) 29.

77 V. Haas, “Medea and Jason im Lichte Hethitischer Quellen”, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 26 (1978) 241–253.

78 Ivantchik, *L'Ethonymie* (as in n. 2) 15.

79 G.M.A. Hanfmann, “On the Gods of Lydian Sardis”, in *Beiträge zur Altertumskunde Kleinasien. Festschrift für Kurt Bittel* (Mainz 1983) 219–231; L.E. Roller, “The Great Mother at Gordion: the Hellenisation of an Anatolian Cult”, *JHS* 111 (1991) 135.

80 D.J. Georgacas, “The Name ‘Asia’ for the Continent: Its History and Origin”, *Names* 17 (1969) 22–24, 75.

81 Ivanov, *On the Problem* (as in n. 69) 58–59.

82 Ivantchik, *On the Question of* (as in n. 2) 149.

83 M.A. Dandamaev, “Saciae in Babylonia in the Sixth and Fifth Centuries BC”, *VDI* 1 (1977) 30–39.

dence about the Phrygians and the Thracians accumulated in the Hellespotic area is still more impressive. As is shown by recent research, the characteristics of this cultural zone could continue to be traced to a relatively late period – the time of Persian rule.⁸⁴

In another study these considerations could be supported by the evidence provided by the visual arts as well. The images of the Amazons, Scythians, Kimmerians, Thracians, Phrygians and Persians in Greek art have been widely discussed.⁸⁵ Although many of them were influenced by pressing political concerns of the time (the Persian Wars), they still reflect the Hellenic (often Athenian) model of the world and of the “other”.

It is also noteworthy that *realia* mainly from the ritual and religious practices of the “barbarians” formed the earliest Greek knowledge and entered the Greek designation code. The Ionian contribution to the Hellenic idea of the North should again be emphasised, while the literary sources about Phrygia reveal a Dorian (Megarian) tradition as well.⁸⁶

In conclusion, it seems that some of the ancient written sources about the Black Sea region could be interpreted from another viewpoint – or some of their elements should be classified under another title. They are, rather, evidence of the Greek perception of the unknown world, as well as of cultural interactions and transmissions of age-old traditions. Before the 7th century BC the Greek “penetration” to which they attest should be considered in terms of culture and not in terms of exact historical dates. These remarks are also appropriate for mythology.

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- 84 The previously mentioned *scholium* T to the Homeric text (see note 58) defining the Halizones as a Thracian tribe should be placed in this context. Here could be added the evidence of the Pelasgians in Asia Minor, their probably latest attestation, again in the Hellespotic area and near Cyzicus: Herod. 1. 57; Ephor. frg. 61 (= Schol. ad Apoll. Rhod. 1, 1037) about the Pelasgian origin of the Doliones.
- 85 Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (as in n. 3); Miller, *Midas* (as in n. 3) 79–85; J. Boardman, “Herakles, Theseus and Amazons”, in D. Kurtz/B. Sparkes (eds.), *The Eye of Greece* (Cambridge 1982) 1–28; *id.*, *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity* (London 1994) 182–223; G.F. Pinney, “Achilles Lord of Scythia”, in V.G. Moon (ed.), *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography* (University of Wisconsin Press 1983) 127–143; [H. Shapiro, “Amazons, Thracians and Scythians”, *GRBS* 24 (1983) 105–114; *LIMC* 1, 586–653; 2, 593–597; 5, 630–637, 713–726; 6, 388–395 – Editor], etc.
- 86 This would form the subject of another study. Briefly noted in: A. Fol, *The Thracian Dionysos. Second Book: Sabazios* (Sofia 1994) 69–70 (in Bulgarian); Vassileva, *Thracian-Phrygian* (as in n. 31).

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