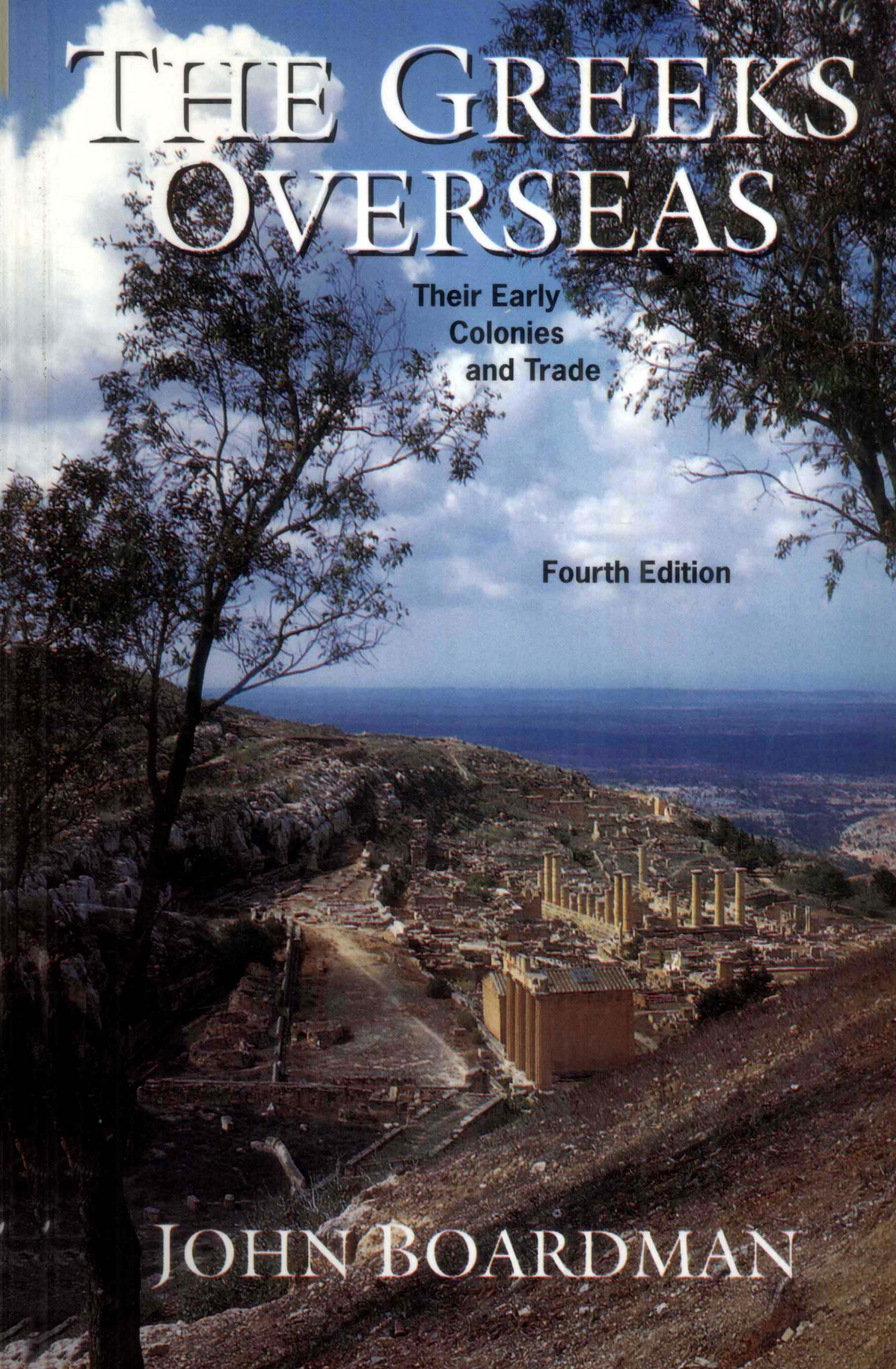


THE GREEKS OVERSEAS

**Their Early
Colonies
and Trade**

Fourth Edition

JOHN BOARDMAN



THE GREEKS OVERSEAS

JOHN BOARDMAN

THE GREEKS OVERSEAS

THEIR EARLY COLONIES AND TRADE

Fourth Edition

with 332 illustrations



THAMES AND HUDSON

382610

Any copy of this book issued by the publisher as a paperback is sold subject to the condition that it shall not by way of trade or otherwise be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including these words being imposed on a subsequent purchaser.

© 1964, 1973 John Boardman

© 1980, 1999 Thames and Hudson Ltd, London

New and enlarged edition first published in the United States of America in 1980 by Thames and Hudson Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10110

Fourth edition 1999

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 98-61437

ISBN 0-500-28109-2

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed and bound in Spain

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	7
1 THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE	10
Our Sources	10
Archaeological Evidence	12
Literary Evidence	19
2 THE BACKGROUND	23
3 THE EASTERN ADVENTURE	35
North Syria and the Empires beyond	38
Eastern Influence in Greece	54
Phrygia and Lydia	84
The Persians	102
4 THE GREEKS IN EGYPT	111
Naucratis	118
Other Greeks in Egypt	133
The Persians in Egypt	141
Egyptian Objects and Influence in Greece	141
Greeks in Libya and Cyrenaica	153
5 ITALY, SICILY, AND THE WEST	161
The Colonists	162
Greek Cities in Italy and Sicily	165
Greeks and Natives in Sicily and Italy	189
Western Greek Colonial Art	192
Coinage	198
Greeks and Etruscans	198
Greeks and Phoenicians	210
Greeks in France and North Spain	216
6 THE NORTH AND THE BLACK SEA	225
Greeks in the Adriatic	225
Greeks on the Macedonian and Thracian Coast	229
Illyrians, Macedonians, and Thracians	232

The Black Sea and its Approaches	238
The Greek Cities	245
Greeks and Scythians	256
Athenians, Persians and Hellespont	264
7 EPILOGUE	267
<i>Notes</i>	283
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	300
<i>Index</i>	300

MAPS

Greece and the Aegean Coasts, <i>page 22</i>
The Near East, <i>page 34</i>
Egypt and Cyrenaica, <i>page 110</i>
South Italy and Sicily, <i>page 160</i>
The Western Mediterranean and Europe, <i>page 211</i>
The Black Sea, <i>page 239</i>

Preface

Rhubarb, rhubarb; Barbara buzz buzz – stage conversation which is intended to be unintelligible stresses the *bar-bar-bar* noises of ordinary conversation. Foreigners make similar incomprehensible noises, and it was not only the Greeks in antiquity who characterized those whose speech they could not follow as *bar-bar* talkers – ‘barbarians’. When Greek met Greek the result may often have been violent, but at least they could understand each other’s language, and this bond of speech was one which the Greeks always acknowledged and respected. But the Greeks did not use the term ‘barbaros’ quite as we do ‘barbarian’. For them it embraced all non-Greek-speakers, both the ‘rude, wild, and uncultured’ of our dictionary definition, and the kings and subjects of the great empires of the east.

This book deals with the material evidence for relations between Greeks and barbarians down to about 480 B.C. It is inevitable that in this early period the material remains should prove the most rewarding, and part of our first chapter will be devoted to an assessment of the value of sources, material and otherwise. The enterprises overseas include both those which were undertaken with the avowed objective of founding colonies, and those which served trade, with or without the establishment of trading posts. So we shall look for the physical evidence for Greek presence on foreign soil – their relations with and effect upon native populations, and the effect of the natives upon them. In their travels to the east and Egypt it is the latter which is the more important, for contact with the older civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley provided the spark which fired the new Greece, and kindled that flame which the discerning may still cherish in modern western civilization. To do as full justice as possible to these matters, it has proved necessary to devote part of the book to a study of the effect of the Near East and Egypt upon the Greeks at home, as well as on the Greeks overseas. Only in this way could the whole story be told. Even so, we deal here with material things only, and the reader must turn elsewhere for an account of the debts of Greek literature, religion, and thought to the east and Egypt.

The testimony of ancient historians will also be used. More than most 'archaeological' histories of ancient cultures, this should be read as a supplement to what is known from other sources, although our evidence may often fill gaps in the record or even correct it. But it would be otiose here to do more than allude to the ancient sources and to the many modern studies devoted to those aspects of our search on which ancient texts may shed light. There are many modern histories which offer this, but they generally give second place to the primary material evidence, and here, to redress the balance, greater emphasis is placed on the archaeology of the subject.

It must be remembered that this is only part of the story of the Greek renaissance, and can take little account of the Greeks' own genius except in so far as it led them to explore and learn from older civilizations. With so much left unsaid it might even seem that classical Greece could have been nothing without this inspiration, but we have only to look at what the Greeks made of what they had borrowed and how soon they outshone their models. Sappho wrote her poems only 200 years after the Greeks had learnt their alphabet. The Parthenon and its sculpture appear only 150 years after Greece's first steps in monumental architecture and sculpture. And all these things – alphabet, architecture, sculpture – the Greeks had in some degree learnt from the 'barbarians'.

There were material benefits too which determined the quality of life in Greece for later years. A comic poet of the late fifth century, Hermippos (fr. 63), lists some of the goods from overseas which his countrymen enjoy – silphion and hides from Cyrene, mackerel from the Hellespont, pigs and cheese from Syracuse, sails (linen) and papyrus from Egypt, frankincense from Syria, ivory from Libya, slaves from Phrygia, nuts from Paphlagonia, dates and flour from Phoenicia, carpets and cushions from Carthage. He intersperses his list with joke offerings but the rest are real enough and we shall be studying the Greeks' first experience since the Bronze Age of these foreign sources. It is interesting to see that the poet says nothing of metals, which modern scholars judge to bulk large in early trade overseas.

Then there is the other side to the story. With their colonizing and trade in the west and the north, the Greeks made contact with people who were less advanced culturally, and technologically, and we are able to observe the beginnings of the spread of Greek civilization into Italy and western Europe, with benefits to be enjoyed by Rome and by all later western cultures.

Learning in the east and south; teaching in the west and north. The story is a balanced one, and the two parts run concurrently. The late ninth and eighth centuries see the first moves to east and west; the seventh, the first moves to north and south; the sixth, consolidation in the face of powerful opponents and rivals – Persians, Phoenicians, Etruscans. In these three centuries the Greeks passed from isolation and comparative poverty to a posi-

tion of power and enjoyment of the highest culture. This is the 'archaic' period in the broadest sense of the term. In these years the foundations of classical Greece were laid, and it is these formative years only that we shall be studying. They culminate in 480 BC with the Greeks' successful stand against the challenge of Carthage in the west, of Persia in the east, and in this book we shall rarely be led to consider the fortunes of the Greeks overseas after that date.

My descriptions of sites and particular objects are not often, I fear, based on first-hand experience of them. Where my dating of objects differs from that given in some publications (as it often does), this is deliberate and, I hope, in better accord with the evidence now available. Many of the monuments and objects which have to be considered are of no less documentary value for being considerable works of art. This is, after all, one of the many compensating factors in any archaeological study of ancient Greek affairs.

It is usual to give some explanation or apology for the spellings of place-names and personal names, and to excuse inconsistencies. I have preferred to accept the inconsistencies, and my spellings are those which are most familiar to me and come most readily to my pen. I doubt whether anyone will be seriously misled, and I hope few will be annoyed by the lack of system in this matter.

The present edition is fourth in line from the Pelican paperbacks of 1964 and 1973, through the Thames and Hudson edition of 1980 which added text, photographs and notes, and which turned extended and under-documented essays into a real book. The last forty years have seen changes in interest and method in classical archaeology. These have perhaps had more effect on the subjects considered here, for good or bad, than have new finds which have added a slight percentage to the results of the last 200 years, though often more revealing because better understood. The publishers have allowed me an extra chapter (7) to review these changes and to make a summary and very partial attempt at updating for some areas. The latter cannot hope to be at the same level of detail as the treatment in earlier chapters, which are simply reprinted, unaltered, but I can at least give some guidance to those who wish to seek further; the pace of apparent change and relevant publication has become uncontrollable for any individual scholar who attempts to cover a broad field. As before, I am deeply indebted to many friends who have offered information and criticism, and especially to the publishers, and Pat Mueller, for their continuing support, patience and encouragement.

The Nature of the Evidence

Our Sources

Since 'history' still means, for many people, ancient historians and the study of their texts, spiced where possible with archaeology, anthropology and historical intuitions, it is perhaps necessary to introduce a work which is intended to be history but which leans heavily on archaeology with a reminder about what our evidence for antiquity amounts to, what our sources are, even – in a highly personal way – to rate them in order of merit:

1. *Contemporary evidence* must surely stand at the head, and of the contemporary evidence pride of place must go to –

(a) texts, because they speak directly to us in a language we understand well, though not perfectly. In our period there are no contemporary texts written by historians and the nearest we come to them is in inscriptions dealing with contemporary events. Otherwise we have works of imagination, generally poetic, through which we may glimpse the society for which they were composed. Next come –

(b) monuments and objects, selected for us partly by merit (as were the texts), partly by the accidents of survival and excavation, partly by the durable quality of the materials of which they are made. They are mute, therefore they cannot lie, but we may misinterpret them by failing to allow for their incompleteness, or through inability or unwillingness to treat them on their own terms rather than in the terms dictated by modern typologies and models. (These are too readily thought to carry some near-divine sanction, while in fact they are no more than aids to orderly thought, some degrees more useful than a typewriter and potentially far more dangerous when abused.) It is not merely time, of course, that has selected the monuments for us. It is also the choice of excavators and, more important, the treatment by excavators (and curators) of what has been found. Excavation destroys far more than it uncovers to view. Most excavations are never fully published. As Rhys Carpenter put it, some archaeologists are slow to realize 'that they are burning the book of history page by page as they read it'. More loss of scholarly information is suffered through excavation in

the cause of scholarship than through tomb-robbing for collectors and museums, yet the non-publishing excavators continue to enjoy credit for their discoveries (credit better paid to the ancient creators of what they unearthed) rather than be branded as academic felons.

(c) Other sources of insight into conditions rather than events of antiquity are provided by the natural sciences which now enable us to assess more accurately states of technology, agriculture, climate. And of course simple but accurate maps can be as much sources of historical information as illustrations of it (though we lack any wholly reliable and up-to-date atlas of the classical world).

2. *Near-contemporary evidence* must take second place in merit though it inevitably occupies a major part of conventional histories.

(a) Ancient historians who present narrative accounts of events or periods have to be judged in terms of the validity of their apparent (not always admitted) sources, their remoteness in time and place from the events described, and the motives which led them or their sources to make their records. They generally make little use of the types of evidence considered in our first section, but there are honourable exceptions, notably among the earlier historians such as Herodotus and Thucydides.

(b) Passing allusions in ancient authors, not necessarily historians, are subject to the same disadvantages as the historical narratives of (a), plus the danger they present of appearing to comment on more than their immediate concern. This is magnified by the habit of using these allusions, even when they are quotations from historians, in isolation from the context in which they were quoted; of citing modern corpora rather than the passages in which allusions or quotations were imbedded.

(c) In the study of conditions rather than events the records, literary or material, of possible survivals of practices or styles bulk large in reconstructions of ancient society, especially in works devoted to law, religion and myth. Since part of the fascination of classical antiquity is the picture it offers of change, sometimes rapid and radical change, in all these areas, it is clear that any 'survival' needs to be proved rather than assumed, and this is a most hazardous way of completing gaps in the evidence for earlier periods.

3. Modern comment and scholarship is our usual route to the ancient sources already mentioned, and their deductions supplement what is missing from those sources and may often have a validity superior to that of the non-contemporary evidence, though many deductions are often too readily honoured as facts rather than opinions. The scholarly presentation of material ranges from the invaluable work of our hewers of wood and

drawers of water and the mainly secretarial skills involved in presenting lexica, corpora, catalogues, excavation reports; through observation of categories in prosopographies, attribution of works, hands, and workshops, identification of ancient copies; to assessment based on perceptive understanding of the nature of all the evidence, textual, stylistic, excavational, iconographic. Often an apparently simple description or quotation or juxtaposition can be a notable work of scholarship. Finally come those works of interpretation and insight, based often upon several skills in several disciplines, which break through the silences of antiquity to render a truer account of man's history and achievement.

The relevant rewards and limitations of our two main classes of evidence now require a closer look.

Archaeological Evidence

It is not too difficult today to recover the archaeological history of any well-excavated Greek site. Studies in the stylistic development and chronology of pottery, bronzes, and other likely finds have been carried to a degree not matched in the scholarship devoted to any other culture of comparable antiquity. A large part of the evidence is afforded by decorated pottery – the archaeologist's bread and butter. A vase of fired clay may be broken readily enough, but its pieces are almost indestructible. As the fragments were virtually useless, they were left about ancient sites, whence they can be recovered by excavation. The pottery placed in tombs can often be recovered intact. Other objects disappear too readily – iron corrodes, bronze and precious metals are melted down for re-use, marble feeds the lime kilns – but potsherds had no value and so have survived. A Sunday-newspaper columnist has written with wit and sympathy of the 'blue-saucer folk' whose waste litters his and many other back gardens in England. A small fragment may give away what the whole shape was – a teapot, saucer, or cup. A scrap of willow pattern, a '... ade in Birm ...', part of a monogram from a Coronation mug, may reveal design, provenance, and date. Antiquity has left similar clues in its rubbish dumps, and on or under floors. And in ancient Greece it was the potter who provided vessels for purposes now served by bottles, tins, glasses, cardboard boxes, plastic bags, and even barrels. But even with our mass of evidence, interpretation is a tricky matter. The willow-pattern plates still made today prove no close cultural ties with contemporary China! But there is an explanation for them, which *could* be worked out by some post-atom-age archaeologist. In the same way, if a town rubbish dump were to yield in its lowest (earliest) levels empty packets of Woodbines, and in its upper levels empty packets of Gauloises, or of chewing-gum, the deduced changes in habits might lead to a reasonable guess about trade, or at least changes in life style. The

scraps and fragments which will form a great part of our evidence in this book may seem miserable substitutes for fine whole vases, but it need hardly be remarked that such pottery evidence is not less important because it has failed to survive intact; nor is it the less important when it is of such merit that it offers information for the art historian, iconographer or student of religion, although there is a tendency for some students of other periods to regard such studies as non-archaeological.

The importance which the Greeks attached to the vase-painter's art in the centuries with which we shall be dealing, and the characteristically Greek sensitivity to changes in decorative fashions, mean that arguments based on *stylistic* study of vases can carry much weight. Add to the stylistic sequences which can be determined for the various Greek wares some indications of *absolute* dates, and you have a system which will permit the dating of decorated pottery to within a generation, or sometimes a decade. This is already to some degree true in the mid eighth century B.C., and the degree of precision increases through the seventh and sixth centuries. Not only can dates be assigned, but regional studies have made possible the attribution of most wares to particular cities, and in many instances we are able to distinguish even individual workshops, painters, and potters.

This is no place for any detailed survey of the background to the systems of dating which we shall be using throughout this book, but something must be said of the most important wares which will be mentioned and the grounds for dating them.

Furthermore, although the interpretation of finds on a homeland Greek site may be a comparatively easy matter, we have to deal largely with Greek finds on foreign shores or in newly founded Greek settlements overseas. It is necessary therefore to say something of the principles which should – but rarely do – govern the interpretation of such finds, for they often form our only evidence to support some far-reaching theories.

First, then, the pottery wares and their dating. We begin in the early Iron Age, the 'Dark Ages' of Greek history after the collapse and decay of Mycenaean civilization by about 1100 B.C. The finds in Athens cemeteries show that after a very short while, probably by about 1050 B.C., the new 'Protogeometric' style of vase-painting had been evolved from the debased Mycenaean forms. The decoration is simple, precise, and extremely effective, often of neat concentric circles or semicircles, and the patterns are never allowed to crowd the surface of the vase. The style is most distinctive, and although finds elsewhere in Greece show that many other towns, most of them less prosperous than Athens, evolved their own 'Protogeometric' idioms, these were always dependent – artistically – on Athens. In the ninth century, the feeling for proportion and restraint in the matter of decoration weakens, and a growing repertoire of Geometric patterns spreads

like a rash over the surface of the finer vases. After 800 B.C., the figure decoration – animal, then human – is admitted, with formal geometrical stylization for natural forms. Athens still leads, but other cities have their own distinctive Geometric styles, in varying degrees still dependent on Athens: especially Corinth, Argos, Boeotia, Crete, and the Eastern Greeks. How much the new Geometric figure styles may owe to the Mycenaean, preserved in the form of objects discovered or styles kept alive in other materials, is still hard to judge, but the possibility must be borne in mind before all or too much is assigned either to foreign influence or to native genius.

The influence of the Near East is seen on Greek pottery already by the end of the ninth century B.C., but only becomes strong a hundred years later. We shall have more to say of the nature and source of this influence in Chapter 3. In Corinth a new, refined style, which has become known as 'Protocorinthian', is evolved, and 'orientalizing' figures and decoration are used as well as a new incising technique known as 'black-figure', which may have been inspired by eastern incised metalwork. Now, too, we have some indications of absolute dating. Ancient historians give dates for Greek colonies in Sicily, and the earliest pottery found in each of those sufficiently well explored can be plausibly attributed to the first generation of the colonists, the very earliest being probably that which they brought with them. Even in detail the sequence of dates given by historians, and the stylistic sequence of the earliest pottery found in the west agree remarkably well. We shall be considering these in Chapter 5. Some confirmation too is provided by the find of an Egyptian scarab, naming a king, with Greek vases. Since dates for Greek cities from Greek sources do not go undisputed (happy the site with only one authority for its date!) it is more of this independent dating evidence which is required. For earlier centuries stratified finds of Greek pottery in Syria and Palestine give broad hints, while the association of Greek with local vases at Al Mina and the finds in the 696 B.C. destruction level at Tarsus (but not the one identified by the excavators) confirm what we deduce from Greek sources. These we study in Chapter 3.

In the seventh century Corinth sets the pace, and the sequence of fine Protocorinthian vases can be followed down to beyond the middle of the seventh century. Athens, meanwhile, went her own way with the older silhouette and outline techniques of drawing, although orientalizing patterns were admitted, and by now human figure decoration and mythological scenes had become more common. The East Greeks and Cretans too were slow to follow Corinth's lead, and they developed their own highly individual styles. Fortunately the Corinthian vases were popular, and it is possible to determine reasonable chronologies for these other wares from contexts – as in graves – in which imported Corinthian vases are found beside local products. For dating now

we turn to the earliest pottery from Selinus and Marseilles or the Lydian destruction level at Smyrna – none of which can be used with great confidence, but by now the inter-relation and sequence of Greek vases is clearly mapped, and the presumed absolute chronology cannot be far wrong. We rely very much on the dating of Corinth's vases in these years, but it is easy to fall into the error of saying that 'the earliest imported vases found at x are Corinthian', when all that can fairly be said is 'the earliest *datable* vases ... are Corinthian'.¹

In the last third of the seventh century the Corinthian black-figure or full 'Corinthian' series begins.² The style of drawing coarsens as the output increases, but by now the Athenian potteries are again commanding attention. They have accepted the Corinthian black-figure technique, and apply it with a sense for narrative and the monumental which had always escaped the Corinthians. In Corinth fine painted styles flourished beside mass-production, but by about the mid sixth century the industry there failed, for reasons still not properly understood, and Athenian vases won most markets. The contexts of Athenian, Corinthian, and other Greek vases in tombs of these years confirm the clear stylistic sequences and allow a chronological system which has been worked out for one to be applied to the others. In the 560s can be set the earliest vases which were made in Athens to celebrate the re-inaugurated Panathenaic Games; around 545 and 525 comparisons with sculptured reliefs on independently dated buildings at Ephesus and Delphi (the Siphnian Treasury) give further 'pegs'; and, again in 525, the Persian dismantling of a Greek-manned frontier fort in Egypt (Daphnac) gives another terminus.

By about 530, the Athenian painter had developed a new vase-painting technique – the red-figured – in which the figures are reserved in the clay ground of the vase, the background filled in, and the details painted, where before, in black-figure, they had been incised in the black silhouette. The new style appears beside the old into the fifth century, when it becomes paramount, and now the Athenian red-figure vases virtually command all markets. Dating points become more frequent – the Persian sack of Athens in 480; funeral monuments with vases in them at Marathon (490), Thespieae (424), and Athens (the grave of the Spartans: 403); the dumping of the contents of graves from Delos on Rheneia during the purification of the island in 425; and, a less sure criterion, the appearance on vases of complimentary remarks about handsome youths. The last depends on the identification of the youth in his later career, military or political, an estimate of his age then, and a general estimate of the span of years in which a Greek youth might be called beautiful (*kalos*). Women were seldom thus celebrated, and at any rate in this period we could hardly expect to find any independent historical evidence for their ages.³

Allowing, then, some degree of confidence in assigning vases to one Greek city rather than another and in dating them within fairly narrow limits, we have still to determine their possible historical significance when they appear on foreign sites. It is easy to attach undue significance to stray finds of Greek vases or other objects. The archaeologist may overestimate the importance of the evidence or be unrealistic in his explanations for its appearance. The historian may not be able to judge well enough the circumstances and archaeological background to the finds. In the study of Greek history in the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries B.C. there is still much need for intelligent liaison between the two professional disciplines, one which works primarily from recorded evidence, the other which works from first-hand evidence of objects.⁴

For our immediate problem it may help to discuss the various reasons why Greek painted pottery may have travelled overseas in antiquity.

1. The first and most obvious occasion would be for the supply or use of Greeks overseas who had not their own kilns or could not be satisfied with local non-Greek products. Emigrating families would take with them their best dinner service, and probably domestic utensils, and in their new homes they would be likely to create a demand for replacements of the same type of pottery from home. Until local kilns were built – probably to produce imitations of the wares most familiar to them – the pottery used by, say, Corinthian families in Sicily was likely to be much the same as that they were used to at home. The identification of our emigrant Greeks will then depend on what we know of tastes at home. When we deal with well-known pottery-producing centres like Corinth, the matter may seem easy – too easy; for other Greeks may have been used to Corinthian vases and have had no distinctive local wares of their own. I think of Aegina, where there was no production of decorated pottery and where Corinthian vases were in general use. Ancient historians tell us much of Aegina's overseas trade, but if Aeginetans settled or carried pottery overseas they could not be recognized archaeologically or, from the pottery, distinguished from Corinthians. Again, many colonial Greek sites have been better explored than their mother cities in Greece – than Chalcis and Megara, for example.

What is important for us is the probability that minor vases which would never have travelled as containers or *objets d'art* may be taken as proof of the residence or at least regular visits of Greeks. In quantity they should imply some kind of settlement, but the presence of even a few such vases may be an indication of regular trade in other commodities which they accompanied casually, or perhaps of temporary quarters for Greek traders or their agents.

2. Vases which travelled by way of trade may have had commer-