

An Overview on the Agreement Between Greece and Egypt on the Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone – 2020: A Reminiscence of the Pre-Alexandrian Contacts Between Europe and Africa

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One of the most discussed recent contracts in international foreign affairs is the agreement between Greece and Egypt on the delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone in the East Mediterranean Sea. On the 7th of August 2020, they signed the agreement in Cairo which sets the sea boundaries between the two countries. The agreement demarcates an exclusive drilling right for gas and oil, two major energy resources in the Mediterranean Sea. This recent agreement is reminiscent of commerce, diplomatic and political contacts that prevailed between ancient Greece and Egypt. The relationships between Greece and Egypt can be traced back to the 2nd millennium BCE. Unearthed archaeological evidence supports the ancient contacts, specifically of trade contacts between the two countries, that will be discussed in the paper, including references to historical records. Naukratis, the Greek port in Egyptian territory at the mouth of Nile was a major trade port inhabited by selective Greek communities. Other trading ports such as Canopus and Heracleion also functioned as major ports linking ancient Greece and Egypt for a considerable period of time. Furthermore, there are ancient records on how Egypt sends grain supply to Greek cities and functioned as the main grain supplier to Athens. On the other hand, evidence proves that Greece had sent mercenaries to Egypt in times of need. Nevertheless, ancient Egypt only had allied with selected Greek states depending on the necessities. The recent agreement signed by Greece and Egypt in 2020 will be examined as a present case study to reassess how the two countries maintained mutually beneficial long-term contacts. The objective of the research is to illustrate how and why, Greece and Egypt maintained continuous relations. Further, it is evident that maritime commerce has played an important role for continuation of foreign relations between Greece and Egypt throughout the centuries.

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