

ADVANCES IN ANCIENT BLACK SEA STUDIES: HISTORIOGRAPHY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND RELIGION

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Content

Preface.....	9
Note on Abbreviations.....	15
Contributors.....	17

I. STUDYING THE BLACK SEA: BETWEEN COLONIZATION AND IDENTITY

Thibaut Castelli

Entrer et sortir du Pont-Euxin durant l'Antiquité (VII ^e s. av. J.-C. – premier quart du IV ^e s. ap. J.-C.).....	27
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Madalina Dana

Regards grecs sur le Pont-Euxin: réflexes changeants d'un espace «colonial»...55	
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David Braund

Clashing Traditions Beyond the Clashing Rocks: (Un)Ethical Tales of Milesians, Scythians and Others in Archaic and Later Colonialism.....	79
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Valery P. Yaylenko

Diodorus' Evidence on the Bosporan Archaeoactidae and New Data about the Aeolians on Taman.....	109
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Michael A. Speidel

<i>Natione Ponticus</i> : Roman Navy Soldiers and the Black Sea.....	133
----------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Dan Ruscu

The Black Sea in the Historical Writings of Late Antiquity.....	143
-----------------------------------------------------------------	-----

II. GREEKS AND NON-GREEKS:
SCHOLARLY TRADITIONS AND ACCULTURATION

Victor Cojocaru

BCOSPE I-III. Einige Überlegungen zum Beitrag der russischen, sowjetischen und postsowjetischen Schulen.....165

Valentina Mordvintseva

Scholarly Traditions in the Studies of the 'Late Scythian Culture of the Crimea' and 'Crimean Scythia'179

Lavinia Grumeza

'Sarmatian' Identities in Crimea: A Survey of Recent Literature.....199

Marina Yu. Vakhtina, Maya T. Kashuba

East Greek Archaic Pottery at the Nemirov Fortified Settlement: On the Question of Classical Imports in 'Local' Context.....231

François de Callatay

Did "Dolphins" and Non-functional Arrowheads Massively Found in and Around Olbia, Istros and Apollonia Have Ever Had a Monetary Function?..257

Amiran Kakhidze, Emzar Kakhidze

Hellenised Burial Customs and Deposit Patterns at Pichvnari: Intercultural Studies on the Acculturation of Colchis in the Classical Period.....281

Mikhail Treister

Second-Hand for the Barbarians? Greek and Roman Metalware with Signs of Repair from the Nomadic Burials of Scythia and Sarmatia.....313

Jean Coert, Tassilo Schmitt

Wer war Fl. Dades? Überlegungen zum Verständnis einer Inschrift aus dem kaukasischen Iberien.....347

III. NEW DISCOVERIES AND PROSPECTIVE
RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Ulrike Peter

Von Mommsen zum Semantic Web: Perspektiven der vernetzten numismatischen Forschung – die Münzen der westlichen Schwarzmeerküste online.....393

Natalia V. Zavoykina

A Letter of Polemarkhos from Phanagoria.....419

Dorel Paraschiv, Mihaela Iacob, Costel Chiriac	
Les origines de la vie romaine à (L)Ibida.....	431

Ștefan Honcu, Lucian Munteanu	
A Shield Umbo Discovered in the Rural Settlement of Ibida – ‘Fântâna Seacă’ (Slava Rusă, Tulcea County).....	457

Dan Aparaschivei	
Some Late Fibulae from Ibida (the Province of Scythia).....	473

IV. STUDYING RELIGION: EVOLUTION, ICONOGRAPHY, SOCIETY

Jorge Tello Benedicto	
Nouvelles perspectives sur le culte d’Apollon et d’Artémis dans le monde ionien archaïque.....	503

Vladimir F. Stolba	
Images with Meaning: Early Hellenistic Coin Typology of Olbia Pontike.....	523

Livia Buzoianu, Maria Bărbulescu (†)	
Éléments communs de l’iconographie des terres cuites hellénistiques dans la région pontique.....	543

Annamária-Izabella Pázsint	
Cult Associations in the Black Sea Area: A Comparative Study (3 rd Century BC – 3 rd Century AD).....	563

Gabriel Talmațchi	
Monnaies et divinités. Remarques sur le culte d’Hélios à Istros à la basse époque hellénistique.....	587

Marta Oller Guzmán	
Les <i>strategoï</i> et le culte d’Apollon à Olbia du Pont. Nouvelles recherches prosopographiques.....	601

Ligia Ruscu	
Zu manchen Wandlungen im religiösen Leben der Schwarzmeerpoleis in der römischen Kaiserzeit.....	621

Abbreviations	637
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Indices.....	641
1. Literary Sources.....	641
2. Inscriptions.....	646
3. Proper Names (Regions, cities, persons, etc.).....	652

Preface

The volume 'Advances in Ancient Black Sea Studies' is in line with our efforts in recent years to bridge the large gap between two scholarly traditions, conjoining the research traditions of scholars educated in the West with those of scholars educated in the East in order to absorb, interpret and integrate the constant flow of new information about the Black Sea region into mainstream western classical scholarship.

The 'Advances' conference brought together 61 scholars from 12 European countries, ready to discuss key advance of recent years in ancient Black Sea studies, in Greek, Roman and Byzantine times, with a focus on scholarly traditions, archaeology, religion and the preservation of cultural heritage. Of the 44 papers presented in Constanța, 24 have been included in this volume; two more (by V.P. Yaylenko and N.V. Zavoykina) were added, being very suitable contributions to the subjects of colonization and identity, and entailing new discoveries. The subsequent collection of papers has been organized into four main categories based on research fields and chronological criteria. Their content can be easily explored through the abstracts available in all of the three languages of the conference. Taking into account the large number of contributions and the topics approached, we decided that the papers on the preservation of cultural heritage should be published in a separate volume (ed. by S. Musteață). In what follows, we intend to provide a more systematic overview of the selected studies, based on the way in which the main themes of this volume were addressed.

a) Several contributions deal with the study of the Black Sea between colonization and identity. THIBAUT CASTELLI focuses on the navigational conditions of sailing ships in different seasons, by using the nautical sources of the last two centuries (sailing directions, travel stories, etc.), as well as ancient literary sources. MADALINA DANA specifically examines a certain exoticism visible in the manner of speaking, dressing and behaving among Greeks in the Black Sea, where they are surrounded by 'Barbarians'. The author ponders the ways in which the Euxine was perceived by

other Greeks, as a place of cultural innovations, but also with respect to the traditions and cultural heritage which the inhabitants of the Pontus themselves tried to conserve and bring to the fore. The overall intention of DAVID BRAUND is to bring together literary traditions on colonial settlement and ancient ethical considerations on related matters, – touching on aspects such as the primary relationships between colony and mother-city, and the importance of religion in the process of overseas settlement. VALERY P. YAYLENKO rejects the correction proposed by F.V. Shelov-Kovedyaev regarding Diodorus' Ἀρχαίανακτίδαι (ἀρχαὶ ἀνακτισταῖ), arguing that the ending -αι of Ἀρχαί- is a Lesbian phonetic feature, which supports the correctness of Diodorus' form. Moreover, the author reveals new evidence concerning the Aeolians on the Taman peninsula. Disagreeing with previous scholarship, MICHAEL A. SPEIDEL argues that the pattern that emerges from the surviving evidence suggests that the expression *natione Ponticus* was rooted in the Roman naval force's administrative practices. Its use, nevertheless, remained ambiguous and prone to 'misunderstandings'. DAN RUSCU describes the image of the Black Sea in the historical writings of Late Antiquity, thus offering valuable information not only on the contemporary knowledge of the region, but also on the way this information was articulated and transmitted.

b) A second cluster of articles concentrates on the Greeks and non-Greeks between scholarly traditions and acculturation. VICTOR COJOCARU explains the reason why the bibliography project *Bibliographia classica orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini* was set in place, presenting its general structure as well as its innovative elements compared to other bibliographical works. This is followed by further reflection on the contribution of the Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet schools in the study of North Pontic antiquities. VALENTINA MORDVINTSEVA discusses the expressions 'Late Scythian culture' and 'Crimean Scythia' as two modern concepts. According to the predominant point of view, the Late Scythian culture of the Crimea was constantly transforming in the course of the 'Sarmatization' process. This position seems to the author unsustainable. Some migrations to the Crimea from the North Pontic steppe or the Caucasus could well have occurred, but newcomers certainly had much less effect on the functioning of the social networks and the economic and cultural appearance of 'Crimean Scythia' than the proximity of the ancient centres and geopolitical aspirations of the great hegemonic powers from outside the region. LAVINIA GRUMEZA focuses on the issue of recent research on funerary archaeology in ancient Crimea. The author summarizes some of the most important publications of the last 10 years or so, on topics such as: cemeteries (graves – inventory – rituals); external influences on beliefs and on the selection of inventories; evidence of cultural contacts based on

the 'funerary' costume, ethnicity and multicultural societies. MARINA YU. VAKHTINA and MAYA T. KASHUBA present Nemirov and its special place among the gigantic early Scythian city-sites of the forest-steppe zone of the Northern Black Sea Coastal Region. A detailed survey of the local pottery complex of the site made possible a distinction between several components, among them the early nomadic or Early Scythian culture, the so-called Carpathian-Danubian Hallstatt cultures and perhaps the influences of the cultures of the Eastern-Hallstatt circle of Central Europe. FRANÇOIS DE CALLATAÏ aims to reconsider the question of the 'arrowheads' found *en masse* along the western shore of the Black Sea. Past literature on the topic has largely endorsed the idea that they were monetary objects (both standards of value and means of exchange). Put into perspective however, this idea does not fit well with the general framework: an area with a hinterland which remained poorly monetized up to the end of the Hellenistic period. AMIRAN and EMZAR KAKHIDZE make some observations concerning the acculturation in the Classical period of coastal Colchis on the basis of the Greek and Colchian cemeteries at Pichvnari. The ritual of burying the dead in a contracted position was widespread in the Bronze and Iron Age cultures of Georgia and of the Caucasus. The discoveries at Pichvnari suggest that Greeks no longer practised this custom by the 5th century BC, although it seems to have been in use for some time among the locals. MIKHAIL TREISTER discusses evidence which may lead to the interpretation of Greek, Macedonian and Roman bronze vessels found in Scythia and Sarmatia as 'second-hand' objects. The signs of repair on the vessels may in rare cases, when this type of repair is unusual for local metalwork and typical for that of Greek/Roman origin, give hints which suggest that the vessels found their way to the nomads in an already repaired format. JEAN COERT and TASSILO SCHMITT propose a re-dating (the middle of the 4th century AD) of the inscription on a silver bowl from the city of Mtskheta. Of importance in supporting this theory is the origin of the dish (Gaul). The artefact might be a political gift from Constantine I to a king Dades, who gave it to the *pitiax* Bersumas to ensure loyalty and good relations. The result has consequences for the understanding of the Christianization of Iberia.

c) A third section assembles those contributions which are dedicated to new discoveries and to prospective research directions. ULRIKE PETER presents the corresponding online catalogue for the Western Pontic shore, which is in the making and which is part of a larger international project for the cooperative registration of ancient Greek coin types. With the *Corpus Nummorum Thracorum* (www.corpus-nummorum.eu), an innovative Web portal for Thracian coins was established. This is a research database for collecting and categorizing, based on inventories, imports,

larger collections, into which external coins can be integrated. NATALIA V. ZAVOYKINA proposes a new dating and reading of a *graffito* from Phanagoria. This private letter, dated between the second half of the 5th and the beginning of the 4th century BC, adds to our knowledge of anthroponomy, private life, and the linguistic characteristics of the language used by the Phanagorians in the Classical period. DOREL PARASCHIV, MIHAELA IACOB and COSTEL CHIRIAC synthesize some results of the systematic archaeological research of the city of (L)Ibida, which began in 2001. Among other matters taken into account are the following: the evolution of the site during the Principate, the Roman building in the 'Curtain' sector, the stratigraphy of the Roman period, the ceramic finds as well as other categories of archaeological materials. ȘTEFAN HONCU and LUCIAN MUNTEANU present an iron shield umbo from a rural settlement of Ibida – 'Fântâna Seacă'. The artefact was (exceptionally) found in a civilian area, in a settlement with a dominant agricultural character, situated in the rural territory of a fortified town. The owner of the villa where the umbo was uncovered seems to have been a veteran with a role in the local administration or even an active soldier. DAN APARASCHIVEI makes a detailed presentation of 12 fibulae and fibula fragments used by the inhabitants of the fortress of Ibida, from the 5th century to the early 7th century AD. Along with the other previously published finds, the publication of this batch of fibulae allows the construction of a relevant picture for this site, which is representative for the province of Scythia, from the 2nd century until the beginning of the 7th century AD.

d) Finally, the fourth cluster of articles focuses on various religious aspects. JORGE TELLO BENEDICTO aims to present a selection of the Archaic literary and epigraphic evidence regarding Artemis and Apollo in Ionia and its colonial territories in the Black Sea. Such a study may contribute to the understanding of religious, social and political life in the Archaic Ionian world, its dynamics and its development from one Mediterranean shore to the other. Taking as a case study the so-called 'Borysthenes coins', the largest and most famous bronze series in the history of the Olbian coinage, VLADIMIR F. STOLBA explores the connotative meaning of coin imagery and its potential as a communication and marketing tool. An integrated approach that takes into account not only the metrological and chronological characteristics of the coins, but also the contextual typological analysis, along with the distribution of the finds within and beyond the polis territory, this approach gives the key to understanding a number of other coin types and iconographic motifs in the coinages of Olbia and other Greek centres of the region. LIVIA BUZOIANU and MARIA BĂRBULESCU select two categories of artefacts from the archaeological discoveries of Albești which found analogies or similarities over a large area in the Pontic and

Mediterranean Greek world: 1) ceramic altars with decorative registers on the four sides; 2) appliqués with representation of a female deity wearing a veil. Both categories are considered to be votive objects. The main area of their distribution is the Black Sea region, hence the hypothesis of their production in several local workshops. ANNAMÁRIA-IZABELLA PÁZSINT brings into focus the private cult associations from the Greek cities of the Black Sea. The paper provides a comparative outlook on the private cult associations from each of the Black Sea's shores, in order to understand the differences which distinguish them, as well as the aspects which bring them closer. Even though the area is not characterised by uniformity, the common Greek core of these cities – in which the associative phenomenon is a constitutive element – gives them a certain degree of coherence, despite their different political evolution and their economic specificities. The paper of GABRIEL TALMAȚCHI is dedicated to the Helios monetary type issued at Istros, considered until a few decades ago as insignificant both with respect to the number of pieces and to the role of the deity in the local religious life. In the non-numismatic bibliography on the cult of Helios at Istros, the most recent opinion denies its possible presence in this city. But, the reality of the monetary discoveries could point to another approach to the subject, in correlation with the finds from Olbia and other places. MARTA OLLER GUZMÁN addresses the inscriptions attesting the *strategoí* of Apollo *Prostatès* at Olbia, considering that such a study may offer valuable information for the better understanding of the political, social and religious life of the Pontic city in the Roman period. LIGIA RUSCU considers the coming of Rome as a turning point for the Black Sea poleis in many respects, including their religion and cults. Against the background of the impact of religious novelties on the traditional structure of the cults of the poleis, the paper examines the consequences of the evolution of some of the most ancient and venerable cults, as evinced by the place of priestly offices, especially eponymous priesthoods, within the careers of office-holders.

Our hope is that this volume reflects once again a tradition of fruitful collaboration between the Institute of Archaeology of Iași and many academic institutions from Romania and abroad. Among the participants, most have contributed to our previous initiatives, especially to the recent network conferences and volumes 'Interconnectivity in the Mediterranean and Pontic World during the Hellenistic and Roman Periods' (Constanța, 2013 – published in 2014), 'Mobility in Research on the Black Sea Region' (Iași, 2015 – published in 2016), and 'Advances in Ancient Black Sea Studies: Methodological Innovation, Interdisciplinary Perspectives and International Cooperation' (Iași, 2017 – some topics have been developed in this volume). Some of the authors joined our research network even earlier.

Preface

Such meetings helped to establish a permanent dialogue within a research group focused on the Black Sea region in the ancient world. And while the current gathering was based, to a certain extent, on our previous network conferences and volumes, we have moved forward and we took another successful step in the research of the Black Sea region in antiquity.

As editors of the present volume, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to all of the authors for their efficient cooperation during the editorial process as well as to our colleagues within the editorial board of the book series 'Pontica et Mediterranea', who were involved as reviewers and language editors. Last, but not least, we would like warmly to acknowledge yet again the collegial and very efficient collaboration with the Mega Publishing House.

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The editors