

Exploring the Hospitable Sea

Proceedings of the International Workshop on the
Black Sea in Antiquity held in Thessaloniki,
21–23 September 2012

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BAR International Series 2498
2013

Published by

Archaeopress
Publishers of British Archaeological Reports
Gordon House
276 Banbury Road
Oxford OX2 7ED
England
bar@archaeopress.com
www.archaeopress.com

BAR S2498

Exploring the Hospitable Sea: Proceedings of the International Workshop on the Black Sea in Antiquity held in Thessaloniki, 21–23 September 2012

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ISBN 978 1 4073 1114 2

Cover image: The ruins of a medieval basilica on the seashore. Chersonesus, Sevastopol, Ukraine
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Printed in England by CMP (UK) Ltd

All BAR titles are available from:

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122 Banbury Road
Oxford
OX2 7BP
England
www.hadrianbooks.co.uk

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INTRODUCTION

It is an often quoted fact that, for reasons mainly to do with its geopolitical situation during the Cold War, the Black Sea region did not assume in the 20th century the position it deserved in international science, especially as regards the field of archaeology and particularly in comparison to the other important region of Greek colonial activity in antiquity, South Italy and Sicily.

Similarly it has frequently been mentioned that the end of the Cold War also allowed the fall of the scientific wall that separated East from West Europe; the Black Sea region is now an area of continuously increasing scientific interest. During the last two decades, scholars from the former 'east' and 'west' worlds have come increasingly in touch with one another, with the result that we now have – not only in the Black Sea region but also in Western Europe, North America and Australia – dozens of research programmes, excavation teams, conferences and collective volumes, mainly in English, focused on the Black Sea in antiquity.

Consequently one would expect that after 1990 the study of the Black Sea would have penetrated in the same impressive way into the sphere of university education. However, this has not happened, at least to the same degree that it has in the field of research.

The history and archaeology of the Black Sea has, of course, been included in the programmes of relevant departments of many universities around the world, at undergraduate as well as postgraduate level. Indicatively we could mention the universities of Exeter, Melbourne, Moscow, Odessa, Komotini (with more stress on languages and philology) and many others. However, this aspect of studies on the Black Sea constitutes only an element of the studies in each department and in many cases an elective element, open to selection or otherwise by the student.

In this context and having first thoroughly researched the postgraduate programmes available in Greece and elsewhere, the School of Humanities of the International Hellenic University created an English-speaking postgraduate programme (the first in Greece on a humanities subject) that is dedicated exclusively to the Black Sea region, the 'Master of Arts in Black Sea Cultural Studies'. The approach is interdisciplinary. Attending this programme, one studies the Black Sea through the examination of its history, its monuments, its contemporary economy and its political situation through time. One sees the interaction of the histories of the peoples of the region, gets to know the archaeology, the monuments and the art of each period, the religions and mythologies, and, of course, one examines the modern economy and the political developments after the Cold War, the creation of new states, the migration and minority problems that have arisen and the relations of the Black Sea countries with both the European Union and Asia.

Today, now in its third year, the programme has and is being attended by students from Russia, the USA, Ukraine, Lithuania, Romania, Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, New Zealand, Cyprus and Greece. Specialists from all over the world are invited to give lectures, while the publication of a collective volume on the 'Black Sea in Ancient Times', with contributions of many of the world's top specialist scholars, is already being prepared.

In the context of this postgraduate programme, the School of Humanities organised an international workshop in Thessaloniki in 21-23 September 2012 on the theme of 'The Black Sea in Antiquity', aiming at bringing together young scholars from all over the world who specialize in research in this field. The choice, for the first time, of inviting exclusively young (in science as well as in age) scholars, was made for a rationale: The International Hellenic University, which as an educational institution is by nature addressed to young people and aims to create young scholars, believes that in a field of such significance and range, it is particularly important to give young scholars the opportunity to present their research, to discuss with each other all the issues that concern them and to publish these papers and discussions in a publishing house of the British Archaeological Reports' authority.

Sixteen young scholars (Doctors or PhD students) from eleven countries participated in the workshop, the proceedings of which are presented here. They presented research material either from their PhD dissertations, from their current research or from archaeological material from the Black Sea that has recently come to light in excavations in which they are involved.

I would like to thank them warmly, because from the very first moment they agreed to participate with enthusiasm and contributed to three fruitful days. I would also like to thank Professors Gocha Tsetskhladze, Tatiana Smekalova, Michael Vickers, Alexandru Avram, Deniz Erciyas, Sumer Atasoy, Sergei Saprykin, Vladimir Stolba and Nikola Theodossiev, who recommended many of the participants to me, knowing their work. Thanks are also due, of course, to the administration of the International Hellenic University and the School of Humanities for approving and supporting the proposal to organize the workshop and for the effort put in to creating, despite the negative current conditions, an international centre in Southeast Europe focussing on the research and teaching of the history and the cultures of the Black Sea region.

We considered that it would be useful to include in this volume of proceedings those parts of the ensuing discussions, which contribute to wider deliberation as well as to clarification of the issues presented.

We also thought that, given the particular nature of the workshop, it would not be advisable to set a more specific subject so that we offered the participants more freedom in their choice of topic of contribution.

Thus, the reader of this volume visits the whole Black Sea region and gains insight into several aspects of its history and in several periods: colonisation, religion, local tribes and their relations with the Greeks, geography, written sources, inscriptions, archaeological research, antiquity, late antiquity, Byzantine period. To start with, some more general theoretical issues are developed: S. Handberg attempts to stress the underestimated role of the Aeolians in Greek colonisation in the Black Sea; M. Manoledakis tries to uncover the historical and geographical data arising from references to the Black Sea in the *Iliad*; A. Dan centres on the geographical and cartographic conception of the Black Sea as a Scythian bow, while K. Tesle examines the cult of the Great Gods of Samothrace in the Black Sea region.

We then focus on the northern coast of the Black Sea, where we examine the foundation of Pantikapaion in connection with the relationship between the Greeks and the local people (I. Balena), the same relationship as it appears in the Scythian Kingdom in Crimea (S. Gallotta), and the preliminary results of geoarchaeological research in the Lower City of Tanais that started in 2009 are presented by V. Kozlovskaya and S. M. Ilyashenko.

Afterwards we move to the eastern side of the Black Sea, the local tribes of which are examined by S. Chandrasekaran with the help of both linguistic and archaeological evidence. The western part follows, with A. Petrova dealing with ideological strategies of the West Pontic *poleis* that faced external threats and A. Sobotkova examining political and social aspects of life based on evidence from the *Tundzha Regional Archaeological Project*, a recent landscape archaeology project in central Thrace.

As far as the southern part of the Black Sea is concerned, B. Öztürk takes the reader on a journey through the history of the city of Tios with the help of inscriptions and other finds, E. Sökmen examines the importance of two fortresses of the Pontic Kingdom in the wider region of Komana Pontica, while C. Kocabıyık looks at rural settlements in NW Amaseia during the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

The last part belongs to the Roman and the Byzantine periods. A. Belousov examines 'Greco-Roman bilingualism' in Olbia, based on Roman inscriptions, M. Tymoshenko observes the changes in maritime traffic in the northern Black Sea from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages and M. N. Tatbul tries to help us understand the function of an 11th-century building complex at Komana through spatial analysis of archaeological data.

For the editor of this volume, it was a great pleasure and challenge to cooperate with all these young scholars, to look at different approaches, learn some of the latest research results and see the products of dissertations supervised by scholars that have already offered so much to science on the subject of the Black Sea. I sincerely hope that the reader will share the same feelings reading the results of this first exploration of the authors in the 'Hospitable Sea'.

Finally, I would like to thank Sarah Edwards, for the careful proofreading of all the English texts, and Dr Georgia Aristodemou, academic assistant in our School, for a second proofreading of the contributions. And of course our sincere thanks are due to the British Archaeological Reports, who showed such a gratifying interest in publishing the proceedings of our workshop.

Manolis Manoledakis