

Reviews

Florina Panait Bîrzescu, Iulian Bîrzescu, Florian Matei-Popescu, Adrian Robu (editors), *Poleis in the Black Sea Area: Inter-Pontic Relations and Local Productions. The proceedings of the Colloquium organized by the Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology and the Iași Branch of the Romanian Academy (Bucharest, September 27th–28th 2012)*, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013, pp. 463, ISBN 978–973–50–4236–3

The volume “Poleis in the Black Sea Area: Inter-Pontic Relations and Local Productions” brings together in published form The Proceedings of the Colloquium organized by the Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology and the Iași Branch of the Romanian Academy. The Colloquium took place in Bucharest, September 27th–28th 2012. The editors of the volume are Florina Panait Bîrzescu (Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology), Iulian Bîrzescu (Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology), Florian Matei-Popescu (Vasile Pârvan Institute of Archaeology) and Adrian Robu (Labex Dynamite, Paris, ANHIMA/EPHE).

The volume is printed at the Humanitas printing house and it is the first one in the series *Pontica et Mediterranea* edited by Victor Cojocaru. It contains an introduction (pp. 7–10) signed by the editors, 15 articles (pp. 11–427) concerning the history and archaeology of the Pontic area, the list of abbreviations (pp. 428–431) and illustrations (pp. 433–463). The articles are divided in two groups: history and epigraphy (the first 8) and archaeology and numismatics (the remaining 7).

The first article, *The Relations of the Western Pontic Apoikiai with their Greek and Barbarian Neighbours in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* is signed by Ligia Ruscu. The author analyses at first the relations between the Greek cities from this area, finding that they are created mostly as responses to immediate threats, between these cities and the Barbarians living there, noting a permanent shift in the balance of power in favor of the latter, up until the time the Roman Empire enters the region. Every form of interaction with the barbarians will be severed at this point. Personal relations are analyzed next: the author tries to discern whether they can form a pattern, noting that the arrival of the Roman Empire changes the main orientation of “personal relations” and travel from Black Sea – Egypt to east – west, deep inside Asia Minor and beyond the Danube line. Last but not least the influence of the external partners of a city can be seen in the changes that take place in the religious life, this being the third topic covered by the article.

The second article is entitled “Ἐχω δὲ πατριδᾶς νῦν δύο (CIRB 134): Relationships and Networks between the Cities from Southern Black Sea and Their Pontic Neighbours and is signed by Mădălina Dana. The author views this subject “as a scrutiny of a community of experiences and interests.” These relationships and networks were clearly shaped by economic and political factors, a common metropolis and different alliances. Outside factors such as Mithridates Eupator attempt to unify the Black Sea also helped to

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cement relations between these cities. These relations spread throughout the whole region even though their intensity varies in time, the author concludes. The article ends with an epigraphic catalogue and tables used to better highlight the relations between them.

The third article is signed by Victor Cojocaru and is entitled *The inter-Pontic relations of the Greek cities of the Northern Black Sea Area and their contacts with the Hinterland Barbarians according to the Epigraphic Sources*. The author analyzes 117 inscriptions and proposes a review of relations between the Greek cities of the Northern Black Sea area. Two chronological periods are established: the Hellenistic period and the Roman period. In the Hellenistic period relations are oriented mostly towards other cities and the hinterland while after the appearance of the Roman Empire in the area relations are mostly oriented towards Rome. However some cities are still forced to deal with the barbarians from the hinterland (the case of Olbia). The article ends with an epigraphic catalogue containing the inscriptions analyzed by the author.

Adrian Robu writes about *Sanctuaries and Relations between Cities in the Hellenistic World: The examples of the Cities of Chalcedon and Byzantion*. Religion is involved with politics as Chalcedon uses the cult of Apollo Pythios to obtain recognition as an inviolable city. Recognition comes not only because of the oracle, good vicinity relations are also important (e.g. the decree issued by Tenedos). This is an attempt for Chalcedon to distance itself from Byzantion. The fact that in the 3rd century BC Chalcedon is part of the Confederation of Athena Ilias – of which Byzantion is not – is used to further support this attempt at separation. In its turn Byzantion attempts to improve its position in the Bosphorus area by occupying Hieron, considered an aggressive act by Chalcedon. Relations between the two cities change with the ascension to power of Phillip V.

Adrian George Dumitru signs the fifth article entitled *Considerations over Byzantion and Hieron in the Third Century BC*. Based on the writings of ancient authors two events are discussed: firstly the siege of Callatis by Lysimachus and the attempt of Antigonus Monophthalmos to lift it. Secondly the author discusses the manner in which Byzantion manages to take possession of Hieron. According to the existing evidence the author concludes this must have happened sometime between 246–236 BC.

Liviu Buzoianu and Maria Bărbulescu write about *The Territory of Tomis during the Early Roman Period in the Light of the Epigraphic Documents. I*. After briefly discussing the problems related to the “circulation” of epigraphic documents concerning Tomis and its territory, the authors analyze the rural structures mentioned epigraphically. Several such habitations are identified: vicus Marcissiani, vicus Clementianensis, vicus Sc...ia, kome Apollonion and finally vicus Turris Muca... The article ends with two tables: table I contains the epigraphs analyzed and table II lists the rural settlements attested epigraphically.

Florian Matei-Popescu analyzes *The Legal Status of Histria and Its Territory in the Roman Age*. The first part of the article discusses the different legal status a city could have in the Roman Empire with a special emphasis on the Western coast of the Black Sea. The second part focuses on

the legal status of Histria, the author concluding the city was a *civitas libera et immunis*. Finally the territory of Histria is analyzed: there is a division into the chora integrated in the city limits and inhabited by Greek communities and the regio Histriae, part of the *ager publicus Romani*. This duality is clearly attested only from the reign of Trajan onwards.

The next article is entitled *The External Relations of Scythia Minor in Late Antiquity – The Ecclesiastic Dimension* and is signed by Dan Ruscu. With the self-government system of the Principate gone, the external relations of the province of Scythia Minor are conducted mainly by the religious authorities. The author analyzes several synods and religious controversies in order to highlight the fact that communications occur in a theological framework. This also gives some religious groups the chance to assert their own points of view.

The first article from the second part of the book is signed by Valeriu Banaru. The author discusses the problem of Regular Trade or Exchange of Goods? Considerations about the Modalities of Disseminating Greek Imports on the Northwestern Coast of the Black Sea. Assuming that not all Mediterranean products discovered in the hinterland arrived were the result of trade the author highlights other possibilities for their dissemination. The analysis of finds from Thracian and Scythian areas, their high artistic qualities, their geographical distribution and the number of such finds prove relations other than economical ones can be considered: a system of private and collective gifts, tributes and robberies, the mobility of craftsmen and of military troops etc.

Costel Chiriac and Sever Petru Boțan write about *Hellenistic and Roman Glassware of the Pontic Area. Between Production and Import*. The historiography of the subject is briefly discussed in the beginning of the article, while some specific difficulties are highlighted. Further on the authors analyze the archaeological finds and conclude that for the period in between the 6th century BC- 2nd-3rd century AD the demand for glass pottery was covered by imports. The local production of glassware is given an impulse however by the Roman military presence (1st-3rd century AD). The difference in quality between glassware produced on the north coast of the Black Sea and the one from the rest of the Pontic basin might be due to economic differences although this could be changed by future discoveries. A strong regional production can be observed from the 3rd century AD onwards.

Irina Nastasi analyzes *Roman Lamps from Tomis: Considerations on the Local Production and Diffusion*. The author presents four lamps discovered in 2011 following preventive archaeological research and tries to place them in a more general frame concerning the production of such objects at Tomis and their area of diffusion. For the 1st century AD few such finds are recorded but their production develops greatly in the 2nd-4th centuries. Imitations of Attic, Micro-Asian and North-African lamps proves their production at Tomis in the 5th-6th centuries. Three directions of diffusion are identified: inside the territory of Tomis, intra provinciam and finally, in centers located outside the province.

Gabriel Talmațchi brings *Contributions regarding the Research of Monetary Signs in the West Pontic Greek World Context (Chronology, Forms, Penetrations)*. The appearance

of arrowheads-monetary signs and Olbian dolphins with monetary value is linked to the evolution of trade from barter to more evolved forms. The first category appears to be issued starting from the last two decades of the first half of the 6th century while the latter are issued later, probably at the middle of the 6th century BC. Two categories of arrowheads-monetary signs are observed: those shaped for commercial purposes (shaped as willow or laurel leaves) and those originating from modified war arrowheads, possibly by the local inhabitants. Such a classification is not possible for Olbian dolphins. With regards to their area of diffusion arrowheads-monetary signs are discovered in rural zones and in the area of influence of colonies with the Danube a possible artery of penetration in the local hinterland. Olbian dolphins are discovered mostly at Olbia and in the settlements from its chora. Besides their economic role they can also be connected with the cult of Apollo Delphinos.

Lucian Munteanu writes about *The Relations between Western Pontic Greek Cities and "Barbarian" Populations in the Hellenistic Period. The Numismatic Evidence*. The first part of the article identifies and inventories the monetary finds from the Western Pontic area dated in the Hellenistic age. Four categories are discussed: silver coins minted at Hystria (the most numerous), bronze and gold coins issued by the same polis, including the Apollo and Istros types, coins minted at Callatis (in Dobrudja bronze finds are the most numerous while in the barbarian hinterland gold ones predominate) and finally those coins issued by Tomis (again coins of little value are the most numerous). The second part of the article presents their circulation and means of diffusion. The large number of low value coins discovered on the sea coast area proves the existence of a real monetary circulation. In the rest of the province the small number of finds as well as the fact that they are made from precious metals suggest different means of diffusion: non-commercial methods such as tributes paid to barbarians, the pay of mercenaries, ransoms, raids, diplomatic gifts and the mobility of people. The article ends with lists of discovered coins minted by the four cities.

Florina Panait Birzescu presents *Common Iconographic Models from the Black Sea Cities in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*. The standardization and variation of Micro-Asian statuettes with case studies concerning Cybele and Dionysus and the origins and pattern of circulation of iconographic models in the Pontic area in bronze and marble statues are the topics of discussion. The iconography of the Mother of the Gods was standardized from the Archaic period. It is perpetuated in the Hellenistic and Roman periods with few variations. The few that do exist (e.g. a statuette from Pantikapaion and two from Hystria and Tomis) serve to prove the movement of persons from Efes and Pergamum where these models originate. Dionysus is a different case, with a varied iconography but in his case the author highlights a standardization of representations due to the need to simplify production. The iconographic sources come from Aegean centers and they are adapted or reproduced in Pontic workshops. Such examples prove the artistic dynamics of the area and its connection with the Aegean artistic environment.

Last but not least Iulian Birzescu analyzes *Zoomorphic*

Terracottas and Plastic Vases from the Greek Sanctuaries in the Black Sea Area. The author differentiates between terracottas and plastic vases and then identifies four categories of representations: terracottas representing animals, terracottas and vases representing birds, terracottas shaped as turtles and fish and finally representations of fantastic animals. After identifying the iconographical types the author tries to discern whether they are specific types from the Pontic area or simply imported and adapted from the Aegean world, without any changes.