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This double issue of the 2012 volume of the *Etudes des Lettres* of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Lausanne collects papers from three round tables on the archaeology and history of the Greek Pontic cities, held at the University of Lausanne in 2009. The book presents a variety of themes and approaches to the study - past and present - of the Greek presence in the northern Black Sea area, intended for a wider French-speaking scholarly public. The publication comprises ten chapters, which are organised in three parts: History of the Cimmerian Bosphorian Kingdom ("Histoire du royaume du Bosphore Cimmérien"), Writing Ancient History in Russia and in Central Asia ("Écriture de l'histoire antique en Russie et en Asie centrale") and Archaeological Sites of the Pontic Basin ("Sites archéologiques du bassin pontique").

The starting point of the book is the observation that Swiss nationals have played an important role in the educational and cultural life of Russia since the nineteenth century, as there were F.-C. De la Harpe, who educated Alexander I and his brother Constatine, or P. Gilliard, who educated Nicolas II as a child. Also during and immediately after the USSR days, Swiss and Russian classicists maintained contacts on a regular basis. These contacts have only strengthened during the last decade and have resulted in fieldwork projects of the University of Lausanne with Russian and Ukrainian colleagues and in the round tables which led to the publication of the volume presently under discussion. The theme of Swiss-Russian relations is elaborated in the first part of the first chapter ("Une introduction à l'archéologie du royaume du Bosphore Cimmérien" by Pascal Burgunder). Burgunder discusses Swiss intellectuals with an interest in antiquities, who were travelling and working in Russia. The second

part of the first chapter is dedicated to key figures and publications in the study of the epigraphy of the Bosphorian Kingdom. The long road towards publication of the CIRB ("Corpus Inscriptionum Regni Bosphorani") which collects 1316 inscriptions of the area is discussed, as well as the work of Jurij Vinogradov. The third section of the first chapter summarises the history of research of the Bosphorian Kingdom, from the first discoveries made under Catharina the Great to the recent surveys published in the Archaeological Reports of London and the syntheses published by D.V. Grammenos and E.K. Petropoulos ("Ancient Greek Colonies in the Black Sea", four vols.).

The second chapter ("La colonisation grecque du Bosphore Cimmérien" by Jurij A. Vinogradov, translated from Russian) treats the period between the first Greek presence in the northern Black Sea area until the early fifth century BCE, when important changes would lead to the formation of the Bosphorian Kingdom. Vinogradov focusses on new discoveries and some interpretations of older, but problematic, discoveries, such as the semi-buried huts and hand-made pottery, which feature in the discussion of Greek versus native ethnicity. Vinogradov defends the indigenous theory, and stresses the important role played by the indigenous population in the Greek foundations as well as their important influence on Pontic Greek culture. He rightly stresses that the Greeks in the Pontus had to adapt to a new environment, and that this adaptation and the confrontation with the indigenous population changed Greek culture as well as the economic system in comparison to the homeland, for example the importance of grain and the absence of olive cultivation.

The third chapter ("Le royaume du Bosphore Cimmérien aux époques grecque et romaine: un aperçu" by Aleksandr Podosinov, translated from German) continues the general overview begun in the previous chapter and discusses the Bosphorian Kingdom from the ascent to power of the Archeanactidai in 480 BCE to the end of the Roman period. The author treats the most important events in the history of the kingdom, especially the relation with Athens and later Rome, and the changing relations with the indigenous groups (Scythians, then Sarmatians, and later Goths and Huns). The chapter concludes with three appendices, one with a summary of the most important bibliography on the Bosphorian Kingdom, one with the names of the Bosphorian kings from 480 BCE to 342 CE, and one with maps, images of sites, and objects and a reconstruction of the citadel of Panticapaeum. These three chapters comprise the first part of the book on the general history of the Bosphorian kingdom ("Histoire du royaume du Bosphore Cimmérien").

The next part discusses the writing of ancient history in Russia and Central Asia ("Écriture de l'histoire antique en Russie et en Asie centrale") and comprises, as the previous part, three chapters. Chapter four ("L'archéologie classique à l'Université de Saint-Pétersbourg du XVIII^e siècle à nos jours" by Igor Tikhonov, translated from Russian) is in content partially related to the first chapter in its discussion of the history of studies of the Bosphorian Kingdom in Russia. The chapter addresses the cultural context of the foundation and development of the department of Classical Studies at the University of Saint-Petersburg, which formed several notable scholars, such as Rostovtseff, Farmakovskij and Gajdukevič.

The fifth chapter ("Le sacrement scythe. Rostovtseff, son interprétation de l'art gréco-scythe et l'étude de l'interaction culturelle dans le royaume du Bosphore" by Caspar Meyer, translated from English) zooms in on the work of one of the former students of the University of Saint-Petersburg, discussed in the previous chapter: Rostovtseff and his interpretations of Greek-indigenous (Scythian) interactions in the Bosphorian Kingdom. One of Rostovtseff's most cited works, *Iranians and Greeks in*

South Russia (1922), discusses the complex relations between Greeks and the various indigenous groups with whom the Greeks came in contact in the northern Pontic regions. Meyer deconstructs Rostovtseff's theory of race-migration-syncretism (he believed the Scythians to have belonged to the Iranian race) and his relation to the Belgian historian of eastern religions, Frans Cumont. In order to illustrate his deconstruction of Rostovtseff's beliefs, Meyer focusses on Rostovtseff's interpretation of the so-called Scythian sacrifice. Scenes depicting a woman, one or more male figures and the handling of a cup were interpreted by Rostovtseff as the mother goddess who offers the holy communion to the sovereign. As Meyer demonstrates, there is no firm ground for Rostovtseff's reading: the scenes might as well represent a priestess engaged in cult activities.

The sixth chapter ("L'archéologie russe en Asie centrale en situation coloniale: quelques approches" by Svetlana Gorshenina with partial translations from Russian) tackles questions in relation to colonial and post-colonial archaeology in a Russian context. The author argues that most post-colonial studies by classicists and classical archaeologists are in fact limited to studies of Greek-indigenous interaction, and not to the study of the execution of archaeological research in a colonial context. The annexation of Turkestan by Russia in the 19th century and the development of archaeological research in the area by Russian intellectuals are identified by Gorshenina as full-blown orientalism, colonialism and colonial archaeology.

The last part of the book collects recent excavation results made in the northern Pontic region ("Sites archéologiques du bassin pontique"). The seventh chapter of the book ("La Borysthène archaïque (site de l'île de Bérézan). Première colonie grecque du nord de la mer Noire, d'après le matériel des fouilles récentes du Musée d'Etat de l'Ermitage menées dans la partie orientale de l'île" by Dmitrij E. Čistov, translated from Russian) treats the recent excavations in sector O on the island of Berezan, where the earliest excavations took place. Čistov discusses in detail new observations made on the so-called semi-buried huts (cf. discussion of the second chapter). The recent excavations brought to light that intensive metal working activities had taken place on Berezan, in the first phase (traditionally designated as the primitive phase, from the late seventh and the early sixth centuries BCE) as well as in the second phase (from the second half of the sixth century until the end of the first quarter of the fifth centuries BCE). The recent excavations also contributed to the discussion of the motives behind the reconstruction and urbanisation in Berezan: traces of fire may indicate the reason for the shift from semi-buried huts to houses built on the surface in an urban lay-out. In sector O, the archaeologists also discovered a complex of public buildings, although they are not yet sure about the exact nature of the complex. Also observed is the partial return to semi-buried huts in ca. 480-470 BCE.

The eighth chapter ("Olbia Pontica. Principaux résultats des fouilles menées de 2006 à 2010" by Valentina V. Krapivina, tranlated from English) discusses synoptically the latest excavation results in Olbia. The sectors (R25 in the SW of the upper city, area of the port at the west wall, the terrasses of sector T3, sector NGS in the north of the upper city and two sectors in the necropolis) have added information to the existing corpus of architectural forms: more semi-buried huts and hellenistic houses and a part of a fortification wall. The excavations further brought to light material dating from the earliest phases to the Roman period. In the necropolis several more tombs of different periods were found.

The ninth chapter ("Fouilles récentes dans la zone sacrée d'Istros" by Alexandru Avram and Iulian Bîrzescu) comprises the latest discoveries made at the temenos area

of Istros/Histria. Although Istros was, strictly seen, no part of the Bosphorian Kingdom, its importance and the continuous effort of the excavators to publish, make so that the chapter connects well to the rest of the content of the book. The excavations of the period 1990-2009 brought a pit in front of the temple of Aphrodite to light. The pit is identified as abaton, and dated to the first half of the fourth century BCE. Another notable discovery made is that of monument M, a cult building of the sixth century, of a yet unidentified (but probably female) god.

The continuous research has also informed the excavators about the adaptations made to the natural topography in the sixth century BCE and the lay-out of the area during the hellenistic period.

The tenth and last chapter ("La vie rurale en Crimée antique: Panskoe et ses environs" by Vladimir F. Stolba, translated from Russian) addresses the research of the rural settlement of Panskoe I, which was founded in the fifth century BCE by Olbia, and taken over in ca. 360 BCE by Chersonnesos. Stolba discusses the lay-out of the settlement, the public building, probably used for collective storage, the necropolis, and the results of the archeo-botanic research.

Overall, this book offers exquisite reading for the scholar interested in the archaeology of the Black Sea area. Most papers are translated from Russian, and thus tackle the language barrier which unfortunately exists for most Western scholars with an interest in the Black Sea area. It can only be hoped that similar efforts will be made in the future. The Swiss perspective on the research in the Pontic region was not well-known until now, and offers interesting new insights. Although Russian colleagues are sometimes accused of maintaining old-fashioned theoretical viewpoints (at least in the eyes of some Western scholars), the high level of the papers indicates that theoretical concerns of the Western scholars are adopted by the Eastern colleagues. As the chapter by Svetlana Gorshenina illustrates, Western scholars have in fact not addressed all issues of post-colonial archaeology in a satisfying way, and the Russian perspectives certainly have something valuable to add to the discussion. The same can be said of the chapter by Igor Tikhonov, who rightly stresses the neglect of the study of the development of formal classical education in recent western archaeological manuals.

The book offers a comprehensive overview of the latest historical and archaeological research in key sites, and the intellectual and cultural context of the development of this research from the beginning until today. The text is richly illustrated, mainly with high-quality colour plates. While it answers the basic needs of students looking for a comprehensive overview of the northern Pontic area and the Bosphorian Kingdom, it will offer stimulating and challenging reading for scholars interested in Greek colonisation, Greek-indigenous relations, the history of archaeological research and the archaeology of the Black Sea area in general.

Table of contents

Pascal BURGUNDER - Introduction (p. 7-14)

Histoire du royaume du Bosphore Cimmérien

Pascal BURGUNDER - Une introduction à l'archéologie du royaume du Bosphore Cimmérien (p. 17-56)

Jurij Alekseevič VINOGRADOV - La colonisation grecque du Bosphore Cimmérien (p.

57-86)

Aleksandr Vasil'evič PODOSINOV - Le royaume du Bosphore Cimmérien aux époques grecque et romaine : un aperçu (p. 87-110)

Ecriture de l'histoire antique en Russie et en Asie centrale

Igor L'vovič TIKHONOV - L'archéologie classique à l'Université de Saint-Pétersbourg du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours (p. 113-150)

Caspar MEYER - Le sacrement scythe. Rostovtseff, son interprétation de l'art gréco-scythe et l'étude de l'interaction culturelle dans le royaume du Bosphore (p. 151-182)

Svetlana GORSHENINA - L'archéologie russe en Asie centrale en situation coloniale : quelques approches (p. 183-220)

Sites archéologiques du bassin pontique

Dmitrij Efimovič ČISTOV - La Borysthène archaïque (site de l'île de Bérézan). Première colonie grecque du nord de la mer Noire, d'après le matériel des fouilles récentes du Musée d'Etat de l'Ermitage menées dans la partie orientale de l'île (p. 223-260)

Valentina Vladimirovna KRAPIVINA - Olbia Pontica. Principaux résultats des fouilles menées de 2006 à 2010 (p. 261-278)

Alexandru AVRAM et Iulian BÎRZESCU - Fouilles récentes dans la zone sacrée d'Istros (p. 279-310)

Vladimir Fjodorovič STOLBA - La vie rurale en Crimée antique : Panskoe et ses environs (p. 311-364)

Adresses des auteurs (p. 365-366)

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