**Black Sea Study Day**

**The Northern Black Sea Coast on the Fringes of the Roman Empire**

**Sopot, 2 August 2019**

In 110/9 BC, Mithradates Eupator united large sections of the south, east and north of the Black Sea coast under Pontic rule for the first time. But after he had lost three wars against the Romans, his successors were confined to the Bosporan Kingdom in the North. Roman power gradually radiated into all angles of this peripheral area, whether through provincial rule or imperial diplomacy. The study of the Ancient Black Sea poses several difficulties: literary sources are scarce; the divides between the subdisciplines of Classical Studies sharp; national and ideological barriers further inhibited progress through the 20th century. Recent years, however, have seen several international and interdisciplinary initiatives to overcome such limitations. Our workshop will showcase current historical, epigraphic, numismatic and archaeological research. Many papers will be guided by these questions: how did imperial ambitions affect local communities? How did local dynasties, elites, and subjects shape their identities and develop their sociopolitical relations?

**Dawid Borowka**, Gdańsk (davidborowka@gmail.com)

*The Process of the ‘Mycenaeanisation’ and the Nature of the Mycenaean Involvement in the Black Sea*

In this paper I would like to pose several questions about the nature of Mycenaean involvement in the Black Sea during the so-called Koine era (ca. 1450 BC–1250 BC). The recent excavators of Troy have suggested the existence of a sea-route into the Black Sea on which the metal products from Colchis and the northern Black Sea were carried to the Aegean via Troy (Troy VIh period). Additionally, scholars like Hiller, Buchholz and French have postulated the existence of a Mycenaean presence and trade for a variety of different sites around the Black Sea. I would like to examine archaeological finds that might indicate such a presence and compare them with what we know about the contemporary process of ‘Mycenaeanisation’ in the Aegean. Mycenaean presence in the Black Sea might be even further supported by the literary sources. In his Argonautica, Apollonius of Rhodes locates Aia, where Jason found the golden fleece, on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, while placing Iphigenia among the Taurians. But there is a tension with earlier authors like Homer, Hesiod and Mimnermus, who were unaware of this location. As was noticed by R. Drews (1976), if the Catalogue of Trojan Allies was passed down from the end of the Bronze Age, one must assume that the Mycenaean Greeks had knowledge of the coast. The native settlements on that coast would therefore have maintained their identity through the Late Bronze Age into the Early Iron Age.

**Altay Coskun, Waterloo ON, Canada** (acoskun@uwaterloo.ca)

*Dynamis and Pythodoris. Hellenistic Queenship around the Black Sea in the Shadow of the Roman Empire*

Royal women could obtain high visibility in the Hellenistic age and the early Roman Empire. Queen Dynamis is the most illustrious example from the Bosporan Kingdom. As the granddaughter of King Mithradates VI Eupator of Pontos (123–63 BC) and the daughter of King Pharnakes (II) of the Bosporos (63–47 BC), she became the prize of three subseqent usurpers, Asandros (47–ca. 19 BC), Scribonius (ca. 19–ca. 15 BC), Polemon I (ca. 37–9/8 BC), before Augustus allowed her to rule in her own right over the Kimmerian Bosporos. Both the reconstruction of her biography and the interpretation of her political choices are highly controversial. But many problems can be overcome, if the literary, numismatic and epigraphic evidence is subjected to a sober scrutiny. Dynamis’ younger contemporary Pythodoris was another remarkable queen: as the (bigamous) wife of Polemon, she inherited Pontos and Kolchis from him and later co-ruled with his second husband, Archelaos, king of Kappadokia. She became the mother and grandmother of kings and queens in various Black-Sea territories. Both careers were exceptional, but can be explained in the broader context of Hellenistic queenship under Roman imperial rule.

**Anca Dan, Paris (**anca.dan01@gmail.com**)**

*Hellenistic and Roman Sites in the Bosporan Kingdom: the Testimony of the Roman Itineraria*

In preparation.

**Oleg Gabelko**, Moscow, Russia (gabelko@mail.ru)

*From Bosorus … to Bosporus: A New Interpretation of the Old-Persian Inscription from Phanagoreia*

The paper offers a new interpretation of the fragment of an Old Persian inscription discovered during the Phanagoreia excavation in 2016. The first publishers of the document, V.D. Kuznetsov and A.B. Nikitin, concluded that Xerxes should be identified as the author of the text, and connected the appearance of the stone in Phanagoreia with a hypothetical military expedition by that king against the Greek *poleis* of the Cimmerian Bosporus, supposedly carried out before the invasion of Balkan Greece. Nevertheless, the remnants of the text in lines 1 and 2 give stronger grounds for attributing the inscription to Darius I and for connecting its creation with that king’s Scythian campaign (ca 513–512 BC). The evidence provided by Herodotus (4.87), Ctesias of Cnidus (*FGrHist* 688 F 13. 21) and Dionysius of Byzantium (52) testifies to a construction project by Darius, a complex of monumental buildings in the immediate proximity of the bridge over the Thracian Bosporus. These works included a cuneiform inscription that clearly had ideological significance. On hearing rumours of the king’s failures in Europe, the citizens of Byzantium and Chalcedon destroyed these monuments for the purpose of proclaiming their own liberation from Persian control and shaming Darius’ ὕβρις. In consequence, however, they brought punishment upon themselves (Hdt. 5.26; Ctes. *FGrHist* 688 F 13.21; Polyaen. 7.11.5; Dion. Byz. 14). A fragment of Darius’ inscription might have been brought to Phanagoreia as a kind of trophy, where it would have political significance. That *polis* had been founded by citizens of Teos who were fleeing the threat of enslavement by the Persians in 546 BC (Hdt. 1.168, Strab. 14.1.30) and had every reason to persist in their hatred of the Great King. It cannot, however, be ruled out that the stone found its way to the Cimmerian Bosporus as a simple piece of ship’s ballast.

**Inga Głuszek,** Toruń (inek.gl@gmail.com)

*The Black Glaze Pottery from the Northern Black Sea Poleis. The Preliminary Report of the Distribution of the Black Glaze Pottery in Classical and Hellenistic period.*

In preparation.

**Mariusz Mielczarek**, Łódź, Poland (...)

*Nikonion in the Roman Period*

In preparation.

**Germain Payen**, Tours, France (germain.payen@gmail.com)

*The Bosporan Tiberii Julii: a Long-Lived Dynasty in the Shadow of Rome*

Around AD 14, the dynasty of Tiberius Julius Aspurgos took control of the Bosporan Kingdom and stayed in power until its dissolution in the 4th century. After his death, his sons Mithradates and Kotys fought for their recognition by Rome, trying to establish or consolidate their own legitimacy. Over the next decades, their descendants progressively built their own dynastic identity, while exposed to the pressures of Roman hegemony and the nomadic tribes of the steppes, including Sarmatians and Scythians amongst others. This paper aims to show how the ideological and practical elements defining dynastic identity evolved in a world dominated by one superpower, in the absence of comparable royal houses in the vicinity. Unlike most other royal houses allied to Rome, the Bosporan Kingdom was not incorporated into the Roman provincial network. An interesting parallel case is that of Armenia, which likewise maintained an inner autonomy until the fourth century.

**Joanna Porucznik**, Wroclaw, Poland (joanna.porucznik@uwr.edu.pl)

*Olbia on the Margins of the Roman Empire: Provincial Subject or Free Ally?*

This paper aims to examine the social, cultural and political situation concerning Olbia Pontike during the Roman period. Special focus will be placed on the self-representation of the city elites in relation to such seemingly contradictory phenomena as ‘Sarmatisation’ and Greek conservatism. It is often taken for granted that this Black Sea *apoikia* was incorporated into the Roman province of Moesia Inferior, but the evidence does not support such a conclusion. In fact, a comparison with the epigraphic material from some Western Pontic cities suggests that Olbia was never subject to the Roman Empire. This freedom may have had an important impact on how the city developed and maintained its cultural identity, an identity that was clearly based on Greek traditions and a conceptual link with the past.

**Sekunda**, **Nick,** Gdańsk, Poland (sekunda@ug.edu.pl)

*The Solokha Comb: Combined Arms Warfare* à la grecque

The Solokha Comb shows warriors on foot and on horseback fighting together. Rather than depicting a combat in a loose mêlée between unco-ordinated forces, I believe that this is an attempt to depict the Scythian equivalent of combined arms combat of cavalry and light infantry in conjunction. In Greek these light infantry were termed *hamippoi*. The first force of troops of this type may well be the pezoi hippodromoi attested in the service of Syracusan tyrrany in 480 BC. They reached their height of popularity in the fourth century BC, the date of the Sokhola Comb.