

BLACK SEA COLONIES

GRAMMENOS (D.V.), PETROPOULOS (E.K.) (edd.) *Ancient Greek Colonies in the Black Sea 2*. In two volumes. (BAR International Series 1675 [I] and [II].) Pp. viii, vi + 1262, ills, maps. Paper, £140. ISBN: 978-1-4073-0111-2 (vol. I), 978-1-4073-0112-9 (vol. II), 978-1-4073-0110-5 (set).

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This is heavy work in every sense. It is the second volume of this title: the first, published in Salonika in 2003, was itself in two volumes; so too is the second, though published in Oxford. There are two Editors: biographical information is given only for the second, Petropoulos; likewise, the first Editor, Grammenos, remains unmentioned in the copyright declaration. As with the first 'volume', there is a lack of a coherent structure; and here there is no introductory matter to explain what is intended in this assemblage of a fairly wide scatter of papers. To make the review more coherent than the book, I shall divide the 34 papers into various groupings.

What is traditionally considered as the western Black Sea is covered by contributions on Dionysopolis, Bizone, Durankulak, Kallatis (*sic*) and Tomis, and by thematic pieces on Pontic Thrace in Greek mythology, burial rites in the Greek necropoleis of the Bulgarian Black Sea littoral, the coinage of Messambria, Odessos and Dionysopolis, the Greek necropoleis of Histria, Orgame, Tomis and Callatis (*sic*), and prosopographical evidence from Greek sites in Scythia and Scythia Minor.

For the northern Black Sea the chapters cover Tyras, Nikonion, Odessa and surrounding territories, the island of Leuke, Olbia Pontica in the third and fourth centuries A.D., the far *chôra* of Taurian (*sic*) Chersonesus and the city of Kalos Limen, Scythian Neapolis, Tyritake, small towns of the kimmerian (*sic*) Bosporos, Iluraton, Torokos, Greeks in northern Caucasus, the Kul Oba necropolis, Akra and Kimmerikon. More thematic pieces focus on the hillforts of the Lower Dnieper, Greek imports in Scythia, and Tauric Chersonesus and the Roman empire. It is quite strange to find chapters on Scythian Neapolis and hillforts in a volume with the title of that under review.

The Georgian Black Sea is represented by two papers, one on the Greek necropolis of Pichvnari, the other on Hellenism in ancient Georgia, a large part of which is devoted to eastern Georgia, an area singularly lacking in Greek colonies.

The southern Black Sea coast takes us from ancient Greek settlements in eastern Thrace (several of which, especially in the hinterland, cannot be considered Greek at all) to Cotyora, Kerasus and Trapezus. A piece on the Central Black Sea region of Turkey in the Iron Age is a strange inclusion: it does not talk about Greeks at all. The 'volume' concludes with 'Greek Fine Pottery in the Black Sea Region', a further updating of J. Bouzek's book of 1990 on this topic.

The supposed aim of this publication and its predecessor, one that is both noble and welcome, is to give Western readers up-to-date information about the Greek Black Sea colonies. Although some of the contributions succeed, it is, alas like P.'s other publications, a missed opportunity. Many of the pieces were written long ago or are translations of already published articles or chapters or summaries of the contributor's own book – for instance V. Cojocaru (of his book published in Roumanian in 2004), Y.P. Zaytsev (of his BAR volume of the same year), and V. Licheli (of a 1991 book in Georgian; the additions to the bibliography are minor, comprising mainly his own more recent writings).

The impression is given of papers simply collected, then published without any editorial attention. Errors mar the Greek throughout. There is a complete absence of uniformity in notes, references and bibliographies: some have text references, some have Harvard-style footnotes, others have full bibliographical details buried in the footnotes. Eastern European bibliography may be transliterated, with no consistency in how, even in a single article, let alone between different ones, or translated as well – mainly into English, but in a few contributions, into a random selection of English, French and German. The reader is left confused: is there a single author or two, a single work or two? The journal *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii*, for example, emerges as 'Journal of Ancient History', correctly, but also as 'Herald ...' and 'Annals ...'. Errors in dates and places of publication are commonplace. In Licheli's paper various notes have embedded themselves in the bibliography.

In general, details of the contributors are given, though sometimes not. In some instances they were clearly intended to be present but are wanting. Where they are provided, they are not always in the same language as the contribution, and in length and content they exhibit considerable variation (some inform us of the author's marital status, children and nationality).

In the main text, place names are rendered differently, even on the same page, and in some articles italics are used for them and for the names of vessels and ancient authors. B.C. and A.D. are sometimes with points, sometimes without; again, the variation may occur not just within a single piece but within a single page.

The quality of the articles themselves varies considerably. Some discuss 'ancient authors' without ever telling us which, let alone giving proper citations. A number have sections impossible to understand: what is meant by 'underground rooms' or 'underground area', used interchangeably on pp. 489–94? Alexander the Great campaigned against the Getae (p. 450); the Ionian period belonged to the first to third quarters of the fourth century B.C. In one article the find of Greek objects of the late seventh–sixth centuries B.C. in a local site is considered evidence of precolonial contacts, yet the first colonies had already been established in the third quarter of the seventh century (pp. 951–2). In the same piece, the Taman Peninsula and Tanais were, apparently, situated in the northern Caucasus (p. 952). The middle of the first century A.D. is considered 'Late Hellenistic' on p. 1037 and Roman on p. 1038. For another author, Greek colonisation falls within the Achaemenid period (p. 1083). The fourth–fifth centuries A.D. are Early Byzantine (p. 1143).

Several contributions adhere to the old-fashioned view that a find of Greek pottery in a local settlement indicates that a trade relationship existed, without exploring the context of the find further; and the more pottery found, the more intense was the trade relationship. Another paper, in which much effort is spent seeking to identify proto-Georgian letters from scratches on local pots, is faultily conceived: the scratches, which are in the shape of swastikas, anchors, tripods, etc., might easily be potter's marks. The methodology of comparing them with Greek, Semitic,

Phoenician, Carian and other scripts in search of similarities is weak and unsustainable, particularly since the author cannot provide phonetic equivalents. (table, p. 1117).

The translations, into a mixture of British and American English, are of varying quality, some clearly not made by specialists. Unhappy phrasing abounds. The illustrations are a redeeming feature, but even here there are problems. Several maps and drawings, such as those on pp. 946, 948, 972–7, 1006, are too small to be legible or useful. On p. 1055 a caption offering objects of the Roman period is married to three illustrations of architectural remains.

I have tried my best not to be negative. Alas, the lack of editing, in conjunction with erratic translation, forms a barrier between the reader and the material. It is a great pity to have to dwell on this, but reviewers of P.'s other publications, including the previous volume in this series, have repeatedly made similar observations (see, for example, *BMCR* 2004.09.01; *AWE* 4.2 [2004], 405–7; *AWE* 6 [2007], 350–7; *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* 3 [2007], 205–16). One could have hoped that P. would realise that it is a matter of how to publish and what to publish, not just to 'publish and be damned'. His publishers should pay more attention to the quality of material appearing under their imprint, especially at such a price.

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