

GREEKS ON THE BLACK SEA

TROFIMOVA (A.A.) (ed.) *Greeks on the Black Sea. Ancient Art from the Hermitage*. Pp. xvi + 307, b/w & colour ills, colour maps. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007. Cased, £45, US\$65. ISBN: 978-0-89236-883-9.

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This handsome book, edited by the Head of the Department of Classical Antiquities in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, has been published to accompany an exhibition held at the J. Paul Getty Museum from 14 June to

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7 September 2007. It is a remarkable achievement and is certainly no mere catalogue: it is, in addition, a collection of articles, written by T. and her departmental colleagues (A.M. Butyagin, D.E. Chistov, L.I. Davydova, Y.I. Ilyina, N.C. Jijina, Y.P. Kalashnik, N.Z. Kunina, L.A. Nekrasova, O.Y. Neverov, A.P. Petrakova, O.Y. Sokolova, S.L. Solovyov, L.M. Utkina and E.V. Vlasova), and it provides much general background information about the Greeks in the northern Pontus. The title is quite misleading: only the northern Black Sea is covered, and only objects housed in the Hermitage are described (as noted on the title page). It is true that the Hermitage houses the foremost collection of North Pontic antiquities to be found anywhere in Russia or elsewhere; but other institutions, such as the State Historical Museum and the Pushkin Museum, both in Moscow, the museum in Kiev, and many local museums elsewhere in the Ukraine and South Russia hold collections of antiquities from excavations in the region (although all major and spectacular finds were sent to the Hermitage from its establishment until recent times).

After forewords by the Directors of the Getty and the Hermitage, M. Brand and M. Piotrovsky, there are acknowledgments which demonstrate the huge amount of work put in by both sides to create the exhibition and to compile this volume.

The book falls into two parts: a series of introductory articles and the catalogue. The former covers the history and history of exploration of the northern Black Sea and the ancient monuments at the Hermitage, and the art of the region's ancient cities in general, with individual contributions on the Kerch Vases, sculpture and sculpted portraits, gold from ancient monuments, Dexamenos of Chios and his workshops in the region, barbarian art in the region's cities, and decoration of Bosporan sarcophagi in the first–second centuries A.D. These combine to provide a sound background to the antiquities held in the Hermitage and their importance for the study of Greeks in the northern Pontus. The Hermitage has been and continues to be the initiator of, or major participant in, excavations at many sites in the Crimea and South Russia.

The catalogue contains descriptions of the 176 objects displayed in the exhibition. These represent all varieties of material excavated – pottery, plastic vessels, metal objects, inscriptions, gems, jewellery, personal ornaments, coins, sculpture, funeral stelae, glass-ware and metal-ware, terracottas, etc. – and illustrate all aspects of the material culture of the Greeks and local peoples in Graeco-Roman times. Some objects are here published for the first time, such as an assos of Olbia (p. 114; cat. no. 32). The catalogue is clearly organised by major site – not only Greek colonies such as Berezan, Olbia, Chersonesus and the Bosporan cities, but also such famous tumuli as Kul Oba, Yuz Oba, Pavlovsky, Great Bliznitsa, Vasiurinskaia Gora and Artiukhovsky; and each site is provided with a location map and a short description in which its significance is described. There can be no doubt of the catalogue's utility, and the illustrations are superb. A useful glossary and a bibliography conclude the work.

There are few inconsistencies and errors. The bibliography contains mainly Russian and Ukrainian material, and the few Western works cited do not adequately reflect the great interest in the region shown by Western scholars in the last ten to fifteen years.

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