

PREFACE

As is the case with most books, there are some threads of its pre-history that authors or editors are keen to talk about. The longer story would take us back to the early 1960s, when my former supervisor and mentor Heinz Heinen discovered his interest in Russian politics, language and culture in the hottest phase of the Cold War. As the first Chair of Ancient History at the University of Trier (1971–2006), he developed his department into an international hub for ancient Black Sea studies. It felt intuitively right to me that the Greeks called the Black Sea *Pontos Euxeinus* – ‘Hospitable Sea’. Heinen’s intellectual skills and love for the ancient world were paired with a sense of humour, generous hospitality and, perhaps most of all, a deep respect for the student, colleague or simply the human who was engaging in a discussion with him. He thus fostered open discourse between scholars across the ideological boundaries that deeply divided the West and the Soviet-dominated East (cf. Heinen 1996; Cojocaru et al. 2014), an effort that resulted in many reflections on the roots of the divide, especially the scholarly work and biography of Michail Rostovtzeff and the effect of Marxism or Leninism on the course of Russian Classical studies (e.g., Heinen 1980; 2006a; 2006b; 2008). Besides, many lasting friendships and multiple research cooperation arose along the way. However, I have told this story elsewhere (Coşkun 2014).

I gained my first insights into this kind of dialogue as a 2nd-year undergraduate student (1992), but shifted my own research towards the Black Sea only much later, when I began collaborating with Heinen on Roman diplomacy and the dynasties of the Graeco-Roman world, briefly in 1999/2000 as his assistant and again as his research associate from 2002 to 2008. Initially, I concentrated on Anatolia and the theory of Roman *amicitia* (Coşkun 2008 and *APR*), while Heinen’s focus was on the Mithradatid house that connected Pontos on the southern littoral of the Black Sea with the Kimmerian Bosphorus on the opposite side (e.g., Heinen 1994; Coşkun & Heinen 2004; Heinen 2006a). In 1997, the first chapter drafts of an envisioned monograph on the dynastic history of the Bosphorus from 63 BC to AD 68 materialized (cf. Coşkun 2016; 2020c; in preparation). His several commitments to his students and administrative duties, besides his dedication to the study of ancient slavery since the later 1990s, prevented him from following through on this plan, especially when his life was cut short by an aggressive cancer.

A year after his death (21 June 2013), his widow Marie-Louise Heinen entrusted me with his unfinished book chapters on the Bosphorus. The best I could think of was to leverage them into a broad international cooperation, in order to acquire the support and expertise to one day publish them in a setting that would at least come close to the original book design, without falling short of the required expertise. To this end, I began building a network of advisors and collaborators, both from among his former friends and, as Heinen would have liked it,

also including many young colleagues with their fresh ideas on ancient Black Sea studies. I could draw on the previous contributors to my *Amici Populi Romani* database (*APR*) and further on the *Interconnectivity* workshop that I co-organized with Victor Cojocaru in Iași (8–12 July 2013). We had designed it to honour Heinen's achievements, but eventually held it with sorrowful hearts to commemorate him a few days after his funeral (cf. Cojocaru et al. 2014).

A series of workshops and conference panels followed to discuss old traditions and new trends in ancient Black Sea studies, with a special emphasis on, but not limited to, Heinen's main ideas, the reflection of ideological implications, and his demand for a sober and diverse methodological approach, paired with strong encouragement for intra- and interdisciplinary cooperation.

4–5/7/2015 (with Andrea Binsfeld): *Colloquium in Memory of Prof. Dr. Heinz Heinen*, St. Vith, Belgium

6–11/7/2015 (with Victor Cojocaru & Alexander Rubel): *Mobility in Research on the Black Sea Region*, Archaeological Institute of the Romanian Academy, Iași Branch, Romania

5–8/4/2017: *Recent Research in Ancient Black Sea Studies*, Panel at the 113th Annual Meeting of CAMWS, University of Waterloo, ON.

16–18/7/2017 (with Victor Cojocaru): *Advances in Ancient Black Sea Studies: Methodological Innovation, Interdisciplinary Perspectives and International Cooperation*, Archaeological Institute of the Romanian Academy, Iași Branch, Romania.

23/7/2018 (with Joanna Porucznik and Krzysztof Nawotka): *Power, Status and Symbols in the Black Sea Area in Antiquity*, Institute of History, University of Wrocław, Poland.

12/11/2018 (with Germain Payen): *Recent Research in Ancient Black Sea Studies in Canada and Beyond. Colloquium Ponticum Canadiense*, University of Waterloo, ON.

2/8/2019 (with Nick Sekunda): *Black Sea Study Day: The Northern Black Sea Coast on the Fringes of the Roman Empire*, Sopot near Gdańsk, Poland.

Many of the papers given on those occasions have been published elsewhere (such as in Cojocaru & Rubel 2016), while others are still being developed for a volume dedicated specifically to the Bosporan kingdom (Coşkun in preparation). The present collection assembles 14 original studies on the history, archaeology and geography of the ancient Black Sea region, many of which were first discussed at one of the abovementioned gatherings. When combined, they cover the Euxine coastlines of all four hemispheres, while addressing problems from the archaic to the Byzantine period with a panoply of methodological approaches.

(A) The first five papers (I / Mordvintseva, II / Porucznik, III / Harland, IV / Oller Guzmán and V / Podossinov) try to overcome essentialist views on cultures and ethnicities, demonstrating how much more can be learned about the past and the present, if we regard such notions not as stable and closed entities, but as highly fluid and permeable concepts. In fact, they are best understood as social constructs that one way or another work within ideological frameworks, ancient or modern, and sometimes tell us more about those who speak of them than about what they are supposed to describe. The Orientalism debate, the Postcolonial turn and many other constructivist approaches have gradually allowed such wisdom to

penetrate the Humanities and Social Sciences for some time now, but their reception is heavily delayed in ancient Black Sea studies: European nationalisms and Marxist materialism appear to have cast longer shadows on this part of the ancient world than elsewhere. While this is particularly true for Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet scholarship, such perspectives are by no means limited to eastern Europeans (cf. Coşkun 2020c).

The fundamental role that the Russian scholar Michail Rostovtzeff has been playing for more than a century is disproportionate to the limited accessibility of his publications, especially in the West. A clear description of his world-historical analysis, placed within its historical and cultural context, thus opens this book (I / Mordvintseva). And I recommend the study of the Olbian *chora* (II / Porucznik) as a second introduction to this volume, thanks to its lucid survey of scholarship on intercultural encounter and (in)considerate use of physical evidence.

(B) Four further chapters are the result of my colleagues' and my interest in dynastic history along the shores of the Pontos Euxeinos. At the same time, most of these studies illustrate the potential of questioning pre-conceived ideas of ethnicity and their assumed or effective influence on politics (VI / Dana, VIII / Ballesteros Pastor, IX / Coşkun & Stern). The investigation of Pharnakes I (VII / Payen) traces the Mithradatid dynasty's pre-history on its way to becoming the leading player in the Black Sea. As such, it could as well have been grouped with the next part.

(C) Feeling the need for short-termed adjustments to the overall book plan (see below), I have contributed three chapters on the historical geography of Pontos and Kolchis. These exemplify how quickly research in political or cultural history leads to controversial questions on toponymy, settlement history or political geography, while also illustrating how many details of our ancient literary accounts have remained underexplored. Too often modern scholars have quarried them, looking for the information they were expecting, while missing subtle points that ancient authors were making. Even worse than this traditional 'positivism' is a bequest of Marxist materialism, a strong tendency to downplay or even discard literary evidence as unreliable or ideologically distorted – as if documents, such as coins, inscriptions and artefacts, were not subject to similarly purposeful distortions. I would hence like to show how reading ancient authors in context provides at least glimpses of the world 'through their eyes'. Many problems disappear, while new ones may emerge. In other words, accounting for every source individually rather than selecting or rejecting according to our preconceived ideas is a path that still promises to yield many new insights. Similar emphasis on the subjective perspective of ancient authors are also prevalent in the earlier chapters, such as the one that deconstructs ethnic hierarchies in ancient civilizations (III / Harland), explores paradoxical descriptions of barbarians (V / Podossinov) or discovers clusters of confrontation between Greek settlers and indigenous people (IV / Oller Guzmán).

Many chapters compare material evidence with the literary or documentary tradition, e.g., in an effort to illustrate assumed ethnic markers (I / Mordvintseva), to anchor the sense of threat as reflected in historiographical accounts also in ar-

chitectural remains (IV / Oller Guzmán), to shed light on the Achaimenid agenda of Pharnakes II (VIII / Ballesteros Pastor) or in the context of Roman imperial propaganda as displayed in the friezes of the *Ara Pacis Augustae* (IX / Coşkun & Stern).

(D) Three contributions primarily focus on archaeological data, also showing the vibrancy and methodological diversity of archaeological fieldwork along the Black Sea coasts – by far the most intensive area of research in terms of manpower and financial resources. The first of these studies is on cult rituals in the *chora* of Olbia (II / Porucznik) and has been grouped with part A. Another chapter soberly challenges the perceived view that Christianization reshaped the urban structure in the 4th to 5th centuries AD – an unbiased reassessment of the evidence appears to tell a different story (XIII / Ruscu). Third comes the final chapter of this volume (XIV / Elton), which offers a long-term perspective from the Classical to the Byzantine age and thus briefly revisits many of the historical periods addressed throughout the book, while investigating the crops that farmers cultivated in Pontos. It is innovative for its combination of biology, geology and cultural history.

Science and technology have left their traces also in other studies: osteology contributed to the scrutiny of Olbian rituals (II / Porucznik) and satellite images hugely benefitted my own research on Kolchian geography (XII / Coşkun; cf. Coşkun 2020a and 2020b), just as the maps that my student Stone Chen has skilfully drawn for this volume (printed at the end of this volume), beginning with the summary map ‘Key Settlements on the Black Sea Littoral’. The investigation of farming in Pontos (XIV / Elton) yields the well-documented result that periods of climate change, which was a reality in the past as it is in the presence, ultimately affected the choice of crops to a much lesser degree than major political reversals and the new fiscal and economic conditions that these entailed. As such, our volume closes with an example of the fresh insights that historical research may expect from new technologies in the future, while, at the same time, implicitly endorsing the relevance of the most traditional concern of historical studies: political power – its protagonists, the structures within which these operated and the effect it wielded on historical societies.

This preface provides me with the opportunity to thank those who have contributed in so many different ways to produce this book, to develop its much broader research agenda or to rekindle the passion for collaborative research on the ancient world of which the Black Sea region formed an integral part.

I start with Heinz Heinen for the immeasurable support, guidance and inspiration he gave me ever since we first met in 1991. Close by his side, I mention Marie-Louise Heinen for her ceaseless moral support and heart-warming affection.

Next, I would like to thank all the co-organizers and participants of the workshops mentioned before as well as the authors of the studies presented here. To many of them, I am indebted for more than entrusting me their research papers; many gave me advice, offered hospitality or shared literature. I refrain from re-

peating all their names and refer the readers instead to the short CVs assembled at the end of this volume.

This restraint notwithstanding, I wish to mark out Valentina Mordvintseva, a model of dedication (in her roles as daughter, mother and grandmother no less than as colleague and professor), bestowed with a mysterious source of energy. I mention Luis Ballesteros Pastor for the friendship we have been enjoying since our first encounter in Trier in 2007, which goes beyond discovering ever new facets of Mithradatic history. I first made friends with Alexandr Podossinov during his visits to Trier in the 1990s, lost touch but happily reconnected with him in Moscow in 2017; he did not hesitate to offer a contribution. Our shared interest in *Dynamis* and the *Ara Pacis* allowed me to learn much from Gaius Stern, to benefit from his generous editorial support and to be inspired by his devotion to exploring the ancient and modern worlds and sharing new insights.

While working intensively on this book, devastating news reached me twice, first of the passing of my friend Mackenzie Lewis (7 March 2020). As a scholar deeply invested into ancient colonial history and archaeology, he actively contributed to my research workshops at Waterloo and gave me encouraging feedback (not only) on my *Leukothea* piece (XII), which I would like to dedicate to him. Not much after this loss, I was saddened by the likewise premature death of Federicomaria Muccioli. Our friendship goes back to my undergraduate years in Trier; he last hosted me at Bologna in 2018. One of my next publications on Hellenistic history (a passion we shared), will be dedicated to his memory.

We lost four paper commitments towards the conclusion of the present volume, at least in part due to the corona pandemic, which continues imposing unusual restrictions on all of us. Three of these would have strengthened and diversified part C on historical geography (to which I originally planned to contribute only one paper). One of them was meant to explore the geography of the Bosporan kingdom and would thereby have addressed the most sensational discovery in recent years, the Kuban Bosphorus, a second straight connecting the Maiotis (Sea of Azov) with the Pontos Euxeinos. Its two straights thus carved out Phanagoreia as an island (Zhuravlev & Schlotzhauer 2016; Schlotzhauer et al. 2017; cf. Dan 2016, 270f.; Papuci-Władyka 2018, 312 and see Map 1 at the end of this volume). While hoping to include contributions by this team in one of my subsequent Black Sea volumes, I do not want to fail to thank Udo Schlotzhauer and Anca Dan for kindly receiving me in Berlin (2017) and Paris (2019) respectively, and for the many valuable books they gifted. The latter trip to France is memorable also for other reasons, the generous hospitality of Madalina & Dan Dana in Paris and of Suzan and Alexandru Avram in Le Mans, besides the opportunity of visiting Notre Dame a few days before it went up in flames.

Germain Payen and I connected some eight years ago due to our shared interest in Asia Minor studies. I am glad I enlisted his support for my Black Sea studies agenda, which brought him to Waterloo as a postdoctoral fellow (September 2017 to December 2018). Much of the support for this book he has provided as a postdoc at Cologne University. I look forward to continuing our cooperation and friendship in whichever format in the future. Joanna Porucznik was a postdoctoral

research fellow at Wrocław University when I met her first at a Humboldt Conference hosted by the Russian Academy in 2017. I immediately benefitted from her many talents, including not getting lost in Moscow. She was quickly appointed assistant professor at Opole University, and I foresee that many other institutions will want to have her. Germain and Joanna both joined me repeatedly at workshops or even co-organized them with me in 2018. They gave feedback on some of the papers and helped me with formatting others. Germain prepared the index of names. Joanna took it on herself to unify the transcription of Russian titles in all bibliographies and translated into Russian all abstracts from English, with the support of Olga Olszewska (Wrocław), whom I include in my expression of gratitude. Cordial thanks further go to Stone Chen for his diligence and aesthetic ambitions in drafting five maps for this volume.

I got in touch with the series editors of *Geographica Historica* Eckart Olshausen and Vera Sauer in Spring 2019, and received more than kind encouragement, useful advice and mature guidance. I very much appreciate the efficient and diligent review process as well as the bibliographical support they provided during the pandemic library closures of 2020. My cooperation with the Franz-Steiner Verlag was as pleasant as previously, thanks to the dedication of Katharina Stüdemann and Sarah-Vanessa Schäfer.

Much of the research that I have been conducting on the ancient Black Sea would not have been possible without the institutional support of the University of Waterloo, my academic home since 2009, as well as the financial support that my project ‘Ethnic Identities and Diplomatic Affiliations in the Bosporan Kingdom’ is receiving from the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada (2017–2022).

My prefaces usually close by acknowledging one of the two women who have mattered most in my life, my mother Brunhilde and my wife Dorothea. This time, both of them are to be named: less so for the typos they picked in some of the chapters than for patiently and lovingly allowing me to be away, whether absorbed in books or off to a conference: my mother regularly took generous care of the logistics of my European travel base in Herzogenrath, while my wife never fails in giving me peace of mind by keeping our children safe and happy.

Altay Coşkun
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