

THE GRECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY AT THE LOWER DNIESTER AND IN THE NEIGHBORING TERRITORIES: HISTORY AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH

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Abstract: This article briefly examines the consequences of the Greek colonization of the Black Sea, and those of the extension of the Roman domination in this area. Concrete examples in this regard are the ancient cities on the Lower Dniester, Tyras and Nikonion, as well as the island of Leuke, currently known as the Snake Island. At the same time we will refer to the rural settlements of the *chora* of these cities, and from the space between the lower courses of the Dniester and Danube. This study attempts to present a very brief assessment of the extended research results, from various scientific backgrounds, of these places and territories.

Keywords: Greek colony, Greeks, Romans, Thracians, Geto-Dacians, Scythians, Sarmatians, Bastarnae, Goths, cultural syncretism, Tyras, Nikonion, Leuke /Snake Island.

Although there has been relatively much writing regarding the Greco-Roman antiquity on the Lower Dniester area (Fig. 1/1) and in the immediate vicinity of this territory, however in Romania and in the West this topic is little known. The explanation lies in the fact that the research of these regions was conducted almost exclusively by Russian and Ukrainian historians, because throughout the last almost two centuries, this territory was a part of Russia and, respectively, of Ukraine. For understandable reasons, Romanian archaeologists and ancient history specialists could not perform direct research here, except for the brief period between the world wars, when Paul Nicorescu and Grigore Avakian worked for a while at Akkerman (Fig. 1/2), on the spot of the ancient Tyras¹, and have produced a series of investigations of real scientific value. For reasons that are not quite clear, the specialists of the former Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, with the exceptions of a few cases of mainly numismatic research, have not shown an interest in classical antiquity of southern Bessarabia. Neither the Western specialists have ever shown much preoccupation in this regard. Based on this situation, we felt it would be appropriate to begin with of a short synthetic study of

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¹ Avakian 1924; Avakian 1927; Avakian 1931; Nicorescu 1924; Nicorescu 1933.

the ancient Greco-Roman Dniester liman area, of the southern part of Bessarabia and Transnistria, without forgetting the ancient Leuke, the nowadays Snake Island in front of the Chilia branch of the Danube.

This research does not claim to be absolutely unique, rather it is just a cumulative and synthesis study, which does not mean an easy task at all, since it does not aim to simply describe the concerned places and events, but wishes to present such a history of these phenomena that could primarily be traced through the evolution of its research.

In the classical antiquity the history of the settlements at the Lower Dniester and in the neighboring territories begins with the Greek colonization of the Black Sea coast. In the case of Tyras, the prevailing opinion is that it was founded in the 6th century B.C. by a group of colonists from Miletus – a city located on the western coast of Asia Minor². With regard to the settlement of Nikonion, the most convincing seems to be the opinion that it was founded in the second half of the 6th century B.C.³ by colonists coming from another Greek settlement on the western shores of the Black Sea, that namely Histria.

THE GREEK CITY OF TYRAS

The description of the political, economic, social and cultural life of this Greek colony must be preceded by the analysis of ancient texts related to it, as well as by describing the history of research done on this city. Some of the ancient authors that wrote about this city are Herodotus (5th century B.C.), an unknown author called Pseudo-Skylax by the specialists (2nd century BC), Skymnos of Chios (2nd century BC), Demetrios of Callatis (3rd century BC) and Flavius Arrianus (2nd century), but most of the attention is paid to the works of Strabo and Ptolemy. Some short mentions, which are often indirect, have been reported in the writings of Greek authors such as Artemidorus, Ephorus, Diodorus of Sicily, [Pseudo]Apollodorus, Pausanias and those of the Latin authors like Alexander Polyhistor, Pliny the Elder, Pomponius Mela, Valerius Flaccus, Ovid, Polybius, Ammianus Marcellinus and others. The same conclusion regarding the close connection between the river Tyras and the Greek city of the same name is being suggested by all these authors mentioned above. Therefore the location of the city was suggested to be on the lower course of the river, namely on the right bank of the present day estuary. At the same time, these ancient texts suggest a certain relation between the names of Tyras and Ophiussa⁴, whether they were two different settlements, as mentioned by Ptolemy, or one and the same, as it would appear from the works of Pseudo-Skylax and Strabo.

² Zlatkovskaja 1959, p. 63; Furmanskaja 1963, p. 40–41; Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 41; Klejman 1996, p. 283–286. See also a new study: Avram 2012, p. 200 sqq; Țurcanu 2014, p. 21, 88.

³ Sekerskaja N. 1989, p. 3–5, 13, 43; Okhotnikov 1990, p. 59.

⁴ Agbunov 1985, p. 87–88.

The research on Tyras (Fig. 1/2–3) was conducted during four successive stages: 1) the Tsarist period (first half of the 19th century – beginning of the 20th century), during which dozens investigations with real scientific values were carried out, such as those conducted by F.K. Brown, N.N. Murzakevitch, V.N. Iurhevitch, P.V. Bekker, and especially the research carried out on the archaeological site of the old city by E.R. Stern during 1900–1903 and later in 1912; 2) the interwar period is defined by the valuable results of archaeological excavations at Akkerman (Belgorod-Dnestrovskij), led by P. Nicorescu and Gr. Avakian; 3) the postwar period, especially late 50s – late 80s of last century, when the research on Tyras accumulated a rich material: monographs, articles, studies, documents, numismatic and epigraphic material. Particularly valuable have proven to be the studies by O.P. Karyshkovskij, I.B. Klejman, A.I. Furmanskaja, T.L. Samojlova, N.A. Son, K.D. Kryzhitskiy, and A.N. Zograf, but the present-day knowledge regarding the history of the city owes a lot also to the research undertaken in the various spheres of the ancient city life: research conducted by specialists like V.A. Anohin, L.D. Dmitrov, V.A. Shahnazarov, A.S. Kotsievskij, S.A. Bulatovitch, A.V. Gudkov, N.M. Sekerskaja, S.B. Okhotnikov, D.B. Shelov, S.A. Semyonov-Zuser, I.D. Golovko, E.M. Shtaerman, Iu.G. Vinogradov; 4) The early 90s of last century to the present: a period characterized by the resumption of excavations at Cetatea Albă, and the participation in the research on Tyras history of specialists from outside Ukraine and Russia – first of all, from Moldova and Romania.

The political history of Tyras during the Greek period is known only by very fragmentary data. The main political and military events in the northwestern area of the Black Sea that are usually invoked in studies concerning Tyras, are the campaign against Scythians in 510/509 B.C. undertaken by the Persian King Darius I, the expedition of 331 B.C. conducted by the Governor of Macedonia, Zopyrion, against the Getae and Scythians, the rule of Mithridates VI Eupator over the city during the first half of the 1st century B.C., and Burebista's attack against Olbia around the middle of the 1st century B.C.⁵ There is also an assumption that in the year 439/437 B.C. the city was visited by Pericles, the Athenian leader, who obliged Tyras to pay the phoros to the treasury of the *Delian League*⁶. Of course there is still much more data being invoked, i.e. the city relations with the Scythian king Skyles (during the middle of the 5th century B.C.), those with the Celtic tribes of Galateans (the middle of the 3rd century B.C.), a possible involvement in the clashes between the Macedonian king Lisymachos and the cities on the west coast of the Black Sea (during the end of the 4th – beginning of the 3rd centuries B.C.), or in those between Callatis and Byzantium (approximately 260 B.C.), but this data

⁵ Šelov 1962, p. 100; Pippidi, Berciu 1965, p. 260–270; Pippidi 1967, p. 154; Iliescu 1971, p. 57–72; Petre 1971, p. 101; Hammond 1972, p. 194; Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 44; McGing 1986, p. 50; Vinogradov 1989, p. 265;

⁶ Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 45; Okhotnikov 1990, p. 70. See also Pippidi, Berciu 1965, p. 181–182.

are not reliable. Since the middle of the 1st century B.C., the city enters under the Roman sphere of influence.

Due to the archaeological excavations conducted at Akkerman over a long period of time by several groups of specialists, a large number of documents of the most varied character have been accumulated, presenting a comprehensive and nuanced picture about the ancient city. Thus the character of the public and private buildings was highlighted: fortifications⁷, roads, drains, houses; many materials were gathered (ceramics, tools and production facilities such as furnaces to reduce iron ore, works of art, especially terracotta statuettes, etc.). Many artifacts, including remains of dwellings, were discovered in the rural area of the city (*chora*)⁸. Several houses, especially inside the city, are described in detail⁹.

The archaeological materials (Fig. 2/1–6) constitute a very instructive testimony regarding the economy of Tyras during that period. The main sphere of production was the agriculture, with its two branches: cultivation of land, and animal husbandry. Several sorts of crops like millet, barley and wheat were raised¹⁰. The land was plowed with a wooden plow that had iron blade, and the grains were harvested with an iron sickle. There have been found apple seeds, grape seeds and seeds from different types of berries. Due to the good preservation of the animal osteological material we have a pretty good data regarding the animal husbandry. The paleozoological researches based on data from several settlements in the vicinity of the city have established that of all the livestock cattle formed between 27.8 to 40% of the total, sheep from 26.6 to 30.9%, horses from 6.7 to 13, 4% and pigs from 12.4 to 13.3%¹¹. Regarding crafts, the main occupation was the pottery, which is characterized by a rich and varied production, made on the wheel, or by hand. Pottery consisted of vessels for all kinds of destinations, but also lamps, tiles, portable fireplaces, sewer pipes, etc.¹² An unquestionable testimony of practicing metallurgy is represented by the furnaces used for ore reduction, but also especially by metals items: bronze and iron nails, pieces of copper wire, sickles, knives, fishing hooks, harness parts, certain articles of lead, etc.¹³ The building remains from the ancient Akkerman show that stonework was one of the major crafts of the people of this settlement. The fact that the Greek city of Tyras has developed a dynamic economy and had also the status of an independent state is convincingly demonstrated by the existence of the city's own mints. Since the first

⁷ See a relatively new study about such sort of buildings: Klejman 2001, p. 53–66.

⁸ Okhotnikov 1990, p. 10–15; Okhotnikov 2001, p. 91–105; Okhotnikov 2005, p. 86; Okhotnikov 2008, p. 122–125.

⁹ Furmanskaja 1963, p. 41; Kryžitskij, Klejman 1979, p. 22 sqq.; Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 31, 46–55; Samojlova 1988, p. 10–21.

¹⁰ Okhotnikov 1990, p. 47–48; Samojlova 2008, p. 197–200.

¹¹ Okhotnikov 1990, p. 48–49; Okhotnikov 2001, p. 102–103; Sekerskaja 2005, p. 172.

¹² Nicorescu 1933, p. 573–574; Samojlova 1978, p. 254–266; Furmanskaja 1979, p. 11–12; Kryžitskij, Klejman 1979, p. 33, 46–47.

¹³ Nicorescu 1933, p. 595; Samojlova 1988, p. 44.

half of the 4th century B.C., when Tyras struck the first coin issues, namely silver drachmae featuring the image of the goddess Demeter (according to V.A. Anohin)¹⁴ and until Mithridates' era, the mint city functioned almost without interruption. There have been minted different coins, first pieces of silver, rarely of gold such as Lysimachos' type of staters, then, and more often, coins with reduced nominal value made of copper and bronze. Occasionally there have been stamped foreign currencies with local countermarks¹⁵. Money is a proof of the existing permanent and intense commercial relations. The evolved state of the Tyritan trade is attested by further evidences. First of all, in the city itself, as well as in its vicinity, a large amount of imported ceramics was found, mainly amphorae, that used to contain wines and oils from various cities of the Greek world – Athens, Thasos, Sinope, Heraclea Pontica, Rhodes, Kos, Samos, Thracian Chersonese, Knidos, Chios, Paros, Bospor, Clazomenae, Mende, Histria, etc.¹⁶ Apart from ceramics, Tyras was also importing many other goods made of marble, jewelry, art, furniture, canvases, various clothing articles, etc. The city of Tyras was, in turn, an active exporter of grain, cattle, furs, and woods. Coins from various Greek cities were found in Tyras, especially from cities on the Black Sea coast; Tyritan coins were discovered in some of these settlements as well.

The social structure of the city of Tyras has been studied based on two categories of evidence: the houses with their equipment, and the epigraphic material. Both sources show mainly the existence of two social groups that differed greatly between them in terms of the wealth they possessed, which gave them different status in the society. It was found that there were Tyritans of greatwealth (such is the case of Nylos at the end of the 2nd century or early during the 1st century B.C.), who were asked by the governing bodies of the city to help the extremely poor segment of the population in difficult situations. On the other hand there was a category of population called mixhellenes (*μιζέλληνες*), probably a mixture of Scythians and Greeks, considered a lower social class¹⁷. The phenomenon of slavery, in the classical sense of the term, seems to have been unknown in Tyras, but there is no doubt that, like in the Pontic city of Olbia, and as well as in other cities, there was a special category of household slaves. So it was a patriarchal slavery. A more precisely and, for some time already, better known fact is that the role of slaves in the Northern Pontic Greek cities was determined not by their place in the economy, but by the fact that they were an important article of export for the slave market of the Aegean world¹⁸. Those who held this status were designed by the terms of *οικετεία* and *οικέτης*¹⁹. So far we have no data that would support

¹⁴ Anohin 1989, p. 87–89.

¹⁵ Zograf 1951, p. 111–114; Zograf 1957, p. 19–23; Anohin 1989, p. 87–89.

¹⁶ Samojlova 1981, p. 52.

¹⁷ IOSPE, I², 32B, p. 5–21.

¹⁸ See a new confirmation in Avram 2007, p. 239–247.

¹⁹ Marčenko 1985, p. 132, 136.

the existence of a genuine slave market in the Greek cities of the Black Sea, but the export of slaves on the specialized markets of the Greek world, such as that of Chios, cannot be ruled out. In addition to the free population, in Tyras there were many foreigners who were designated by the term of *xenos* (ξένος). Here, just like in Histria and, perhaps, to a lesser extent in Olbia, most of the non-Greek population was made up of the Getae, but gradually other tribes came to settle in, among whom the Scythians, the Sarmatians, the Galatae (Celts) and Bastarnae were predominating during the last centuries B.C.²⁰ This can be supposed, if not certainly demonstrated, on the basis of material remains such as the percentage of Getae, Scythian and Greek ceramics, and undoubtedly demonstrated by using such ancient texts as those of Chrysostomos and those of Ovid.

In terms of the political system and governance, Tyras was a classic type of *polis*, i.e. there were higher state institutions like the popular assembly (ἐκκλησία), the supreme council (βουλή), followed in hierarchical order by the colleges of Archons (those of the seven, or those of the nine) the colleges of the strateges, agoranomoi, astinomoi, etc.²¹. But the always troubled environment in which this city had to exist meant that the political stability was almost always poor. As a result, democracy took a sinuous course and several times had to retreat under the most different reasons: internal fighting, barbarian pressures, natural disasters, famine, occupations and protectorates of other states, etc. Therefore it seems that democracy had fewer chances of establishing a lasting rule in comparison to the authoritarian forms of government, but which always worked under the guise of democracy, as it happened during the time of Nylos. Exceptions to this rule have been periods when the city it has been under the protectorate of the Scythians, as it was during the rule of the Scythian king Skyluros (2nd century B.C.), or under the hegemony of Mithridates, in the first half of the 1st century B.C.; under these rules the city was administered directly by governors.

The cultural life of the Greek city of Tyras, even if there was no way it could be as rich, as varied, refined and effervescent as the one in the cities of Greece itself, it was however, at least a pale copy of the well-known Greek life. Unfortunately, because of the lack of sources of information at our disposal, we cannot know well enough even this copy. However we can form at least a rough idea of what was the culture and spirituality of this city before it was annexed to the Roman Empire. We know for example that the Tyritans were using a calendar consisting of 12 months, each month having 29 or 30 days, and that the year had 354 days; this calendar was exported to these areas of the Lower Dniester by the colonists from Miletus²². We have also testimonies regarding the spread of literacy. In some neighboring cities, for example in Olbia and Tomis, remains belonging to gymnasiums were found and some inscriptions found here contain words that

²⁰ Samojlova 1985, p. 51–59; Samojlova 2000b, p. 82; Samojlova 2000a, p. 87–107.

²¹ Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 60–61.

²² Latyshev 1909, p. 25–40.

represented the teachers: *παιδευτής, παιδοτρίβης, διδάσκαλος*²³. These realities were probably characteristic also for Tyras. We do not know the name of the cultural personalities who lived in Tyras, but it's a known fact that in some neighboring cities, such as Callatis, well-known scientists were activating, which is suggesting that scholars represented a common phenomenon for the Greek cities of the Black Sea. Moreover, the Borysthenite discourse of Chrysostomos leaves no doubt in this regard²⁴. From the same text, but also from other sources, we learn about Greek's great interest for literature, especially for Homer.

There are some data concerning de artistic preoccupations of the tyritan population of this period. We can get some ideas about painting, examining the pottery figures of red and black, however the painted vessels were often brought there from other Greek cities. Regarding the architecture, unfortunately, we have no more information than the remains of the constructions that we have mentioned above. We do not have a lot of data regarding the works of sculpture, made in marble or limestone, yet some remains were discovered during archaeological excavations. We're talking about fragments of monuments, executed in marble, white marble mostly, rarely having various color shades, all dating from the Hellenistic period. A representative sample of this art, discovered in Tyras, is constituted of a series of fragments of marble handicrafts art: funerary relief, columns, pedestal, cornice, draped statue, statuette foot, etc. A testimony of the monumentality of the Tyritan sculpture is a large block of marble, which was part of the pedestal of an equestrian statue, and regarding the way the marble statues were being executed one can judge by the small statue of a bull. A far more complex picture is provided by the terracotta, or the small clay sculptures²⁵. Among them stand the statues of women draped in the usual Greek clothing representing the head of the woman or, more rarely, a man. The most numerous are the statues of deities, like those of Demeter, Kybele, Dionysos, Aphrodite and Eros. The statues of the deities, along with coins and several inscriptions, provide some information about the religion of the Greek population of Tyras. In addition to those mentioned above, other deities worshipped in Tyras were Apollon, Kora-Persephone, Athena, Zeus, Hecate, the god of the river Tyras, Tyche, Hygiea (Fig. 2/6) and Asklepios. In the Hellenistic period some oriental cults appeared, such as those of deities Osiris, Serapis and Isis. Finally, religious practices related to heroes, or demigods like Achilles and Heracles are also to be found in Tyras. The research of the recent decades seems to demonstrate the early penetration of Thracian cults, such as the Thracian-Phrygian god Sabazios, the Thracian Horseman, or the Orphic-Dionysian cult²⁶. This synthesis of elements of Greek and

²³ *Istoria* 2010, p. 611–612.

²⁴ Dion Chrysostomos, *Orationes*, XXXVI, 9–10, 24–26.

²⁵ Klejman 1970, p. 25–27; Klejman 1980, p. 97–101; Klejman 1982, p. 132–135; Alekseev, Loboda 2008.

²⁶ Alexandrescu-Vianu 1980, p. 261–265; Bondarenko 2005; Bondarenko 2007, p. 14–15, 20–21; Kuzina 2008, p. 178–182.

barbarian culture, characteristic, furthermore, for all the Pontic cities, was also signaled by some recent epigraphic researches²⁷.

THE CITY OF TYRAS DURING THE ROMAN PERIOD

The rising of the Roman rule over the northern and north-western coast of the Black Sea occurred gradually and over more than a century. The start of the process is marked by the Mithridatic Wars of the 1st century B.C., while its end is somewhere at the middle of the 1st century A.D. Although discussions in relation to the time Tyras became part of the Roman Empire continue, yet it seems that there are no serious arguments against the opinion that this should have happened at the same time with the adoption of the Julian calendar, i.e. at 57 A.D.²⁸, when the city of Tyras, together with Olbia, are included in the composition of the Roman province of Moesia. The surest proof of the Roman rule in Tyras is the presence of a Roman garrison, called vexillation, in the city. There is no doubt that the garrison was there is at the moment the city was incorporated in the Moesia province, but there is no actual data to confirm this. Only a later document, an inscription dating from 116–117 A.D., discovered by P. Nicorescu (Fig. 1/1), clearly shows that at that time the city was hosting a military unit led by a centurion, Marcus Ennius Illadianus. It is possible that the clear statement of this presence is being linked to Trajan's victory in the Dacian Wars. This victory, which resulted in the foundation of the province of Dacia, increased the influence of Rome north of the Danube and of the Black Sea. The Tyritan garrison was not a numerous military unit, but depending on the period it had troops of several legions: the 1st Italica, the 5th Macedonica (Fig. 2/3), the 11th Claudia, the 1st Minerva and the 13th Gemina²⁹. Temporarily, there have also been stationed some cohorts here, as well as vessels belonging to the *Flavia Moesica* military fleet. The vexillation's role was not restricted only to ensure order in the city: it was also the expression of Rome authority in the area, so it had a much higher power than a simple and small military unit.

The political history of Tyras after the Dacian wars is as fragmented as during the period of its autonomy. It is characterized by three prominent elements: the relations of the city with the Empire, and in particular the direct control exerted by the imperial government, mainly through the garrison stationed there, some of the city's contacts and collaborations with other Greek cities, especially with those in Pontus area, but also with some more distant, such as Athens and Miletus, and finally the city's relations with the barbarians in the context of their violent

²⁷ Cojocaru 2004, p. 421.

²⁸ Latyshev 1909, p. 37–40; Nicorescu 1937, p. 221; Vulpe, Barnea 1968, p. 58; Karyškovskij 1971, p. 152–154; Pârvan 1982, p. 103.

²⁹ Nicorescu 1937, p. 110–120; Nicorescu 1944, p. 501–510; Vulpe, Barnea 1968, p. 126; Aricescu 1977, p. 33.

confrontations with the Empire. The somewhat best known of the three phenomena is the last one. The first barbarian attack that Empire had to endure in the area of the vicinity of the northwestern coast of the Black Sea was that of the Carpi. This confrontation took place in 214 A.D. and, judging by some inscriptions, one of the fiercest battles occurred very close to Tyras³⁰. The military operations against the Carpi have been conducted by the emperor Caracalla himself, whose head-quarters, throughout the confrontation, were in Moesia Inferior. The authenticity on this event was questioned by some historians³¹, but most of the studies provide unambiguous evidence that it was a real historical event³². Towards the middle and in the second half of the 3rd century A.D. a great challenge for the Empire, but also for the safety of the city of Tyras, was posed by the Gothic invasions directed towards the Balkans and the Aegean Sea³³. The Goths, sometimes having as allies the Carpi, the Sarmatians, or the Bastarnae, have caused great disruption and devastation in the northeastern part of the Empire. The belief that in 238, i.e. at the beginning of the military campaign of the Goths, Tyras has been destroyed, can be encountered in historiography³⁴. But this opinion is being disproved by two well-known facts: in 248 the Roman garrison was still in the city, and in 253 the building, in which the garrison was to be stationed at the time was built. However, the fact that Tyras suffered greatly from these invasions cannot be questioned. It seems that the city has undergone the greatest damage to the final stage of the Gothic invasion by 269–270 A.D. Major confrontations of the many barbarian hordes of Goths, accompanied by the same allies, and that affected much of the Lower Dniester settlements, also occurred during the 4th century A.D. At that time the territory between the rivers Dniester, Prut and Danube was ruled entirely by the Goths of Athanaric. In 376, the Huns crossed the Dniester River and therefore the territory mentioned above was ruled by the Huns since that date. It seems that the city of Tyras has not disappeared, but gradually barbarized having the status of administrative center, first of the Goths, and after that of the Huns³⁵.

Just like in the case of the Greek period, the material culture of the Roman Tyras is much better known than its political history. It is known even better than that of the autonomous period, as a result of the fact that the archaeological layers corresponding to Roman period at Akkerman have been investigated much better than those of the Greek period. The construction debris found at the central site

³⁰ Dobruski 1900, p. 124–125; Domaszewski 1902, p. 507, note 8; Karyškovskij 1980, p. 75–77, 82 (notes 32–36); Ivantchik, *Son* 2002, p. 10.

³¹ Tudor 1960, p. 350–356; Vulpe, *Barnea* 1968, p. 202.

³² Dobruski 1900, p. 124–125; Domaszewski 1902, p. 507; Gerov 1971, p. 431–438; Doruțiu-Boilă 1973, p. 435–441. Karyškovskij 1980, p. 76–88.

³³ Remennikov 1954, p. 28 sqq; Doruțiu-Boilă 1964, p. 247–259; Vulpe, *Barnea* 1968, p. 257; Vulpe 1969, p. 157–171; Poenaru-Bordea 1971, p. 91–113.

³⁴ Zograf 1941, p. 144; Zograf 1957, p. 17–18, 43; Karyškovskij 1988, p. 127–128.

³⁵ Kravčenko, *Korpusova* 1975, p. 20–42; Pavlenko, *Son* 1991, p. 6–16; *Son* 1993, p. 57–58; Samojlova 2004, p. 205–219.

dates almost entirely from the time of Roman rule over the Black Sea. Among other things, it has been investigated in detail the living space of the city, which provided very useful information regarding the people, their occupations and culture and, indirectly, references to the social structure of the community. It was noted, for instance, that the two houses that were investigated had two rooms, one for rest, and the other one for various activities of the household. Each of the two objectives is presented as a large-scale and complex housing and household construction (500 m², and 7–8 rooms), containing a varied inventory for various destinations, starting from simple kitchenware and simple ornaments (to which should be added the diverse clothing and furniture) to metallurgical furnaces³⁶. There is no doubt that the house belonged to rich families. Under Roman rule, Tyras, just like all other Pontic cities expanded outside the fortifications, and in these new spaces the homes the poor or low income people were located, as well as various places with economic purposes: workshops, warehouses, markets for the sale of goods, jetties, etc. The *chora* of the city expanded and developed a lot, as it is demonstrated by some inscriptions, like the decree of the year 181 in honor of Cocceius found at Korotnoe, and the rescript given by Septimius Severus in 202 to C. Ovinus Tertullus, discovered near Ciobruciu village, and the archaeological materials found in some rural settlements on both sides of the Dniester estuary.

Obviously the economic life of the Roman Tyras is much better known. As in the previous stage, the main industry was the agricultural production. The main crops were cereals, but if during the autonomous period the wheat was not the object of the agricultural preoccupations (an observation resulting from the archaeological research of the territories), on the contrary, during the Roman period we find out that the absolutely dominant cereal was the wheat, sometimes up to 90% of total production of cereal³⁷. Meanwhile, in response to market demands, that have changed during the imperial period, the interest for growing grapes has increased. For the reasons mentioned when referring to the autonomous period, we know more facts and have much more reliable data on raising animals. Researches conducted in 1977 and 1981–1984 in the settlements dating since the 1st to the 4th centuries A.D. like Mologa II, Ripa, Cholmskoe I, Nagornoe I and II and Bužorka, situated between the lower course of the Dniester and the Danube, close to the sea, have resulted in the discovery of approximately 1,600 animal bone fragments³⁸. With few exceptions, these are bones of domestic animals, cattle, sheep and goats predominating, while the bones of horses and pigs represent a lesser proportion of the total³⁹. Other important occupations were the beekeeping and especially fishing, while hunting was practiced very little⁴⁰.

³⁶ Dmitrov 1949, p. 39–52; Dmitrov 1952, p. 59–64; Furmanskaja 1979, p. 5–6; Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 101–102.

³⁷ Furmanskaja 1963, p. 49; Kruglikova 1975, p. 185; Furmanskaja 1979, p. 136.

³⁸ Sekerskaja 1987, p. 150–151.

³⁹ Žuravliov 1986, p. 639–640.

⁴⁰ Furmanskaja 1964, p. 56–63.

The crafts have also known a greater development during that period of time. By the first centuries of the new era the metallurgy has developed significantly, proof being the discovery of furnaces of iron ore and a variety of objects made out of metal: knives, nails, pins, bracelets, buckles, iron locks, brass keys, arrow and spear heads, and some jewelry – rings, beads, pendants, brooches, etc.⁴¹ The main branch of the craft practiced in Tyras remained pottery. In some of the houses mentioned above pottery kilns were found⁴². The ceramic production of the Roman Tyras can be grouped, generally speaking, in three categories of products: the architectural ceramic (bricks, tiles, gutters, pipes, etc.), pottery (along with several other types of items, such as lamps, cult vessels, weights for looms and fishing nets), and terracotta's. The main category of products is represented by pottery. This is divided into two types: a) pitchers, bowls, cups and flasks of red clay and b) bowls, plates and cups with red varnish⁴³. According to some researches, in Tyras a certain type of amphorae with local specific elements was being produced⁴⁴, but this still remains just a supposition. There also has been some talking regarding a certain specialization of the Tyritan artisans required for the production of some specific types of dishes sold on the large market of the Empire, such as the recipients of the *mortaria* category⁴⁵. Other crafts that were quite common in this period were the stonecutting, masonry, plastering, carpentry, as well as weaving, bone processing, etc.

The Tyritan currency of this period, together with Roman coins, with or without countermarks, and coins of other ancient cities, found here, represent a particularly relevant indicator of the economic situation of the city, especially in relation to the level and nature of its business bonds. It is true that, just like during the Greek period, these data reflect mostly foreign trade, and very little or almost at all the trade within the city. Although the local mint worked with some interruptions during the imperial era and, in any case, less continuously than in the autonomous period, yet the city has known a circulation of a greater money supply consisting of coins minted locally or brought here from other minting centers of the Empire. Since its last mints during the autonomous period, dating since the times of Mithridates, the city of Tyras didn't have its own coin for roughly a century. As demonstrated by some researches that have conducted lately (G.I. Makandarov, V.P. Alekseev, P.G. Loboda), the city resumed minting its own currency in during the middle of the 1st century A.D., maybe in 46 or 47, making obsolete the older theory, after which the minting process was resumed in Tyras during the time of Vespasian or Domitian. Since then and until the first half of the 3rd century A.D.

⁴¹ Dmitrov 1955, p. 116–117; Fomin 1974, p. 26–27; Ostroverhov 1978, p. 26–36; Ostroverhov 1981, p. 108–109.

⁴² Dmitrov 1949, p. 46–47; Dmitrov 1955, p. 112–113; Furmanskaja, Maksimov 1955, p. 64–65.

⁴³ Nicorescu 1933, p. 590–594; Furmanskaja 1963, p. 50; Maliukevič 1987, p. 140; Son 1993, p. 72.

⁴⁴ Furmanskaja 1957, p. 89–91.

⁴⁵ Son 1993, p. 74–75.

the city of Tyras had its own mint, but the process of minting was irregular, with some interruptions, and a production that has greatly varied during different rules. The minting process in Tyras was active enough during Emperor Hadrian (117–138), Antoninus Pius (138–161), Marcus Aurelius (161–180) and Commodus (177–192). However, the highest levels were achieved during the reign of Septimius Severus (193–211), when there were issued five series of coins. Afterwards the issues gradually decrease until they disappear for a short period of time, followed by their resumption during the reign of Alexander Severus (222–235). Since that time, Tyras has never had its own currency again. In the periods when the Tyritan mint was not working, the city was using coins issued by other cities of the Empire⁴⁶. Local countermarks were often used on these coins, but some of the money was also circulating without any local countermarks, especially during the last centuries of Roman domination. Thus, the monetary circulation in Tyras cannot be reduced only to the minting process in the city itself, but should rather be seen as a more complex manifestation, which has three distinct elements: the minting of its own coins, applying local countermarks to the Roman currency, and the usage of coins minted in different Roman cities. In total, in the city Tyras and in its *chora* between 400 and 450 coins were found, but throughout the southern Bessarabia this number is several times higher. The numismatic material from the Roman period, discovered in Bessarabia, has its origins in different minting centers of the empire, like that of Rome, Constantinople, Sirmium, Siscia, Aquileia in Antiochia, Trier, Heraclea, Thessaloniki, Kyzikos, Olbia, Histria, Tomis, Pantikapaion, Lugdunum, Deultum, Londinium, Tarraco, Alexandria and Arelate, basically from every corner of the state: from the British Isles in the northwest, to Egypt and Antiochia in south-east, and from Tarraco in the West, up to Pantikapaion in the northeast⁴⁷.

The monetary activity of Tyras, together with the Roman coins, scattered throughout the city, and in the neighboring territories, are testimonies of intense trade relations. As a result of the fact that the city was included in Empire that had great land and sea communications network, the trade routes of Tyras became much more developed and displayed a greater ramification than during the Greek period. The well-known Dura-Europos itinerary shows that Tyras was one of the main points of the sea route, which began in Thrace, ran through northwest and north of the Black Sea and was reaching Meotida⁴⁸. Several major land roads passed through the city, which gives it a double status, on the one hand, Tyras was the point of departure and destination for the trading goods, and on the other, it was

⁴⁶ Zograf 1957, p. 32–36, 124; Anohin 1989, p. 97–98; Alekseev, Loboda 2008, p. 148; Alekseev, Loboda 2010, p. 136–137; Alekseev 2012, p. 113–117.

⁴⁷ Nudel'man, Rikman, 1956; Bondari 1982, p. 133–135; Nudel'man 1982, p. 127; Rozumenko 1982, p. 135–138; Nudel'man 1985, p. 27; Stolearik 1987, p. 67–70; Ciobanu 1997, p. 245; Popa, Ciobanu 2003, p. 52, 54; Myzghin 2012, p. 21–22, 25, 27.

⁴⁸ Cumont 1925, p. 1–15; Cumont 1926, p. 323–337; Rebuffat 1986, p. 86; Arnaud 1989, p. 373–389.

a transit point. Sometimes the Roman emperors, as Antoninus Pius did in 201, were granting the city certain customs privileges. Just like in the Greek period, the main item of export was the ceramics – first of all, and especially the amphorae brought here separately, or containing certain products, especially wine and oil. The amphorae and other types of pottery were imported mostly from Pontus, and Asia Minor, and among the most important cities importing this product are to be noted Chersonesos, Pergamum, Knydos, and Samos. Tiles, spindle whorls, lamps, bottle, figured vases, tiles, etc. were brought to Tyras from different regions of the Empire, especially from the Pontic cities. Among the ruins of Tyras were found many ornaments of foreign origins, for example amulets, and scarabs from Palestine, Syria, and Egypt, which were often made of glass. The numismatic material is a relevant testimony with respect to the Tyritan commerce. Thus, coins coming from Tyras were found in Nikonion, Chersonesos, Olbia, in the Leuke, and Tendra islands, in Tomis, and Nikopolis, but also in more distant cities like Miletus, and Alexandria. During the Roman era, the city of Tyras expands its contacts with the barbaric world. These contacts were facilitated by the Dniester River, so that goods coming from Nikonion could reach San or Visla on the upper course of the Bug River, but there was also a lot of trade going on land, since some Greek goods were found in different parts of the region between Prut and Dniester. In any case, it is beyond any doubt that now, even more than during the autonomous period, Tyras was a center of the Greco-Roman-Barbarian trade, where just like all other cities situated on the northern shores of the Black Sea – Olbia, Phanagoria, Pantikapaion, Chersones, Tanais, etc. – as Strabo indicates (VII, 4, 5; XI, 2, 3), there was high concentration of goods, and traders, both locals or arriving from other cities of the Empire, as well as those of the indigenous origins⁴⁹.

Although we lack sufficient information regarding the social physiognomy of Tyras, we can still form at least an approximate idea about certain categories of the population, especially about the rich and privileged groups. Quite explicit in this regard are some inscriptions, such as that of Marcus Aurelius Artemon in honor of Emperor Alexander Severus (Fig. 2/5), which shows all too clearly that in Tyras, just like in all Pontic cities, there was a privileged class that did not only concentrate wealth in its hands, but also power. This class was constituted of the provincial aristocracy, who probably belonged to the decurional order, the third upper social class in the Empire, after senators, and knights (*equites*). Also, the discovery of large houses with an area of 400–500 square meters is another proof of the existence of a rich population within the city. The same conclusion is being suggested by the discovery of some houses, and cemeteries in the city *chora*, where a certain concentration of wealth, and the presence of a relatively large number of precious objects, and jewelry has been noted. According to some incomplete data,

⁴⁹ Kropotkin 1970, p. 16, 82, nr. 672; Samojlova 1978, p. 255–261, fig. 1–2; Klejman, Son 1983, p. 49, fig. 2–6, 7–8; Brašinskij 1984, p. 182; Son 1993, p. 74–76; Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 108, fig. 35.

the wealth, and social stratification of the Roman Tyras is emphasized by the fact that almost 80 percent of city residents had no civil rights. In addition, it was found that about 50% of pottery dating from this period and found in the city was hand made, so it obviously belonged to the poorer segments of the population. Comparing these two indexes, we can deduce that the poor population of Tyras, the so-called *humiliores* or *dediticii* (the subjects), comprised at least the average of these two indicators, i.e. around 65% of all city residents⁵⁰.

Some observations regarding the ethnic composition of the population in this period can also be made. The first thing to be noticed when examining the available data from that period, especially the prosopographical material, is the heterogeneous ethnic composition of the population of Tyras, which included Greeks, Romans, Getae, Iranians (Scythians), etc. Just like a grecization of the names of Tyritan residents occurred during the Greek period, the latinisation of those names can be noted during the Roman era. This phenomenon, in addition to the fact that it's complicating the ethnic map of the city, it shows just how big was the influence of the Latin language, and Roman culture in the Pontic cities during the first centuries of the new era. But it is well-known that during the first centuries A.D. the northwestern Pontic cities were still heavily barbarized, probably due to the barbaric penetration in the area, referring in particular to the Getae, and Scythians, but also the Sarmatians, and other ethnicities, as we learn from Ovid's testimony on Tomis (*Tr.*, V, 2, 68; 7, 52–56), and from what Chrysostomos (*Or.*, XXXVI) has to say about the population of Olbia. As it has been suggested in some investigations, the proof of the massive penetration of Tyras by the Getae is the absolute predominance during that time of the Getae pottery that was discovered here, which is all too natural, since the city was located in a Getic environment⁵¹.

Political regime of during the imperial period was essentially different from that of the autonomous period. At first glance, nothing has changed since the city was being run by the same institutions of the Greek democracy: *ἐκκλησία*, *βουλή*, the college of the archons, and other characteristic institutions of a Greek polis. Just like in the ancient times, the public servants in office had Greek titles (*ἀρχοντες*, *νομοθέται*, *αἰσυμνήται*, etc)⁵². The political reality, however, was different. These democratic organs were placed under the control of the Roman civil, and military administration. Key state decisions that were binding also for Tyras, were the decrees of the Roman Emperor, decrees, and decisions of the Senate, as well as the provisions of the governor of Moesia (since 46 A.D.), and

⁵⁰ CIL, III, 14437, 14447; Kravčenko, Korpusova 1975, p. 20 sqq.; Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, p. 100–110.

⁵¹ Vulpe 1957, p. 307, fig. 328; Furmanskaja 1963, p. 50; Pippidi 1967, p. 165–177; Gudkova 1979, p. 103; Symanovič 1981, p. 48–50; Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 113; Samojlova 1988, p. 101–103.

⁵² Nicorescu 1933, p. 566, 568; Karyškovskij 1959, p. 121, fig. 13; Furmanskaja 1963, p. 46–47; Karyškovskij 1979, p. 79–82; Karyškovskij 1980, p. 151; Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 114; Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, p. 54–55.

then those of the Moesia Inferior (since 86 A.D.). The influence of the vexillations was very high, since it was the unit who had the real power in the city. The direct dependence on Rome grew with time, a fact proven by the spreading of the Roman emperor's cult in Tyras. In addition, the traditional institutions of power were greatly limited by the increasing number of Roman citizens, usually rich people who enjoyed great authority in the city. The seizure of power by the local aristocracy, which had the support of the civil and military administration, makes the old democratic legislation to be gradually forgotten, and eligible positions were occupied arbitrarily, and for long periods of time by the same people. Thus, losing its freedom, and independence, Tyras ceased to be polis⁵³.

The spiritual life of the city, and its surroundings continued in the same manner as it existed before the incorporation in the Empire. Due to some inscriptions, as the Chersonesos decree in honor of the Tyritan Diophantos, we can conclude that the Pontic cities had an intense cultural, and artistic life full of important events, some of them of a very high level, with the participation of famous artistic personalities from the Empire, and Rome itself, and that these cities were connected to the cultural, and artistic life of the whole Empire, including its capital city⁵⁴. Intellectual and physical education of the children, and youth was conducted here, and theatrical and musical performances were displayed, however the information regarding these occupations and interests is to be found mostly in sources relating to the neighboring towns. We are better informed about the state of art and religion in the Roman Tyras. The state of architecture during those times is suggested by a few pieces of timber indicating that even then there were monumental buildings in Tyras just like those in other parts of the Empire. We have more available data regarding sculpture. Among the sculptural works of this period one can highlight an especially large-scale statue (2.22 m) of a Roman soldier discovered in the Dniester estuary over a century ago⁵⁵. This is however an exception, as almost all marble sculptures are of a small scale. Sometimes those sculptures represent heads of women or young men, crafted with certain skill, showing that sometimes the sculpture was practiced in Tyras just as skillfully as in any other city under the Roman rule. Most of the times craftsmen used marble to make statues representing deities, for example the statue of Hygieia, or reliefs, such as the one depicting the Thracian Horsemen. Works with secular themes are also encountered, like the relief that depicts a combat scene, conventionally named "rider stomping enemies". However, most of the statues are made of clay. The Tyritan coroplastic art is richer now, more varied, and more sophisticated than during previous stages⁵⁶. Terracotta depicting faces of women is somewhat frequently

⁵³ Zograf 1957, p. 15, 37, 52–54; Karyškovskij 1979, p. 44, 59, 122; Karyškovskij 1980, p. 75; Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 110, 115–117; Son 1986, p. 119–120; Son 1993, p. 110; Ivantchik, Son 2002, p. 12; Ivantchik, Son 2004, p. 87.

⁵⁴ Saprykin 2002, p. 81–83.

⁵⁵ Sokolov 1973, p. 158.

⁵⁶ Nicorescu 1924, p. 392, fig. 7; Nicorescu 1933, p. 571–572, fig. 21–22, 31; Furmanskaja 1960, p. 82–83, fig. 4–6; Klejman 1987, p. 46–51; Alekseev 2004, p. 58, 65; Nicorescu 1924, p. 392, fig. 7.

encountered, commonly representing heads with very sophisticated hairstyles, and a stephane, sometimes embossed portraits, but also pottery with figures on it (for example a ram, or the bottom of one foot shod in sandals, etc.). Of course, most of the tiles represent deities that were worshiped by the Tyritants. It is true that most of these images can be encountered on coins, and very rarely were crafted in stone, for example the relief of the goddess Artemis. However, the representation of deities in art is best to be observed on terracotta. Some of the very well known terracotta represents Athena, Dionysos, Kybele, and Oriental deities like Isis, and Serapis. As for the religious beliefs of the Tyritants, this period is characterized on one hand by the massive penetration of the Oriental cults (in addition to those mentioned earlier, other cults that appear in Tyras are those of Mithras, Attis, Anubis, Bes, Sekhmet, Yahweh, and others), by a much higher syncretization of the religious phenomenon, and on the other hand by the spread of imperial cult⁵⁷. It is possible that by the 3rd or the 4th century A.D. Christianity was already known in Tyras. Some researchers suggest that during that time, or perhaps even earlier, there stood a Christian basilica in Tyras⁵⁸. Concrete data is still insufficient for such conclusions. But on the other hand one should not ignore the fact that on the right side of the Lower Danube, Christianity was, during the 2nd and the 3rd century A.D. an undeniable reality.

THE GREEK CITY OF NIKONION

Compared to Tyras, the city of Nikonion (Fig. 3/1–6) located on the left bank of the Dniester estuary is much less known. We must admit that this is a result of the fact that Nikonion was much smaller, and therefore it could not leave behind enough evidence in ancient texts, as well as an archaeological material as rich as that of Tyras, though, from this perspective we have to say that not enough exploration has been done so far. Historical references from ancient authors regarding Nikonion are few, and not explicit enough. Of some value are only the writings describing the Pontic journey of Pseudo-Skylax (*Ps.-Scyl.*, 68), Strabo's *Geography* (VII, 3, 16), Claudius Ptolemy's *Geography* (III, 10, 16), and the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder. Epigraphic materials are extremely rare, and so far have been found just some fragments of texts, with very little relevance not only for the political history of the city, but even for knowing its social, and economic relations. It is not incidentally that for long time the location of the city could not be identified. Only towards the end of the 19th century the issue was beginning to clarify, namely it was established that the city could have been situated close to the current Transnistrian settlement Roxolani on the left bank of

⁵⁷ Solomonik 1973, p. 62–63; Alekseev 2002, p. 60; Batizat 2003–2004, p. 340–351; Vasinca Hadiji 2006, p. 253; Vulpe 2009, p. 126; *Istoria* 2010, p. 448.

⁵⁸ Samojlova, Cojocar, Boguslavskij 2002, p. 178; Samojlova, Cojocar 2003, p. 40, fig. 2, 1–2; Zubari 2004, p. 164–169.

the Dniester estuary. This opinion was formulated for the first time by A.S. Uvarov, A.A. Brown, P.V. Bekker, and V.I. Goškevič, and afterwards it was retrieved by well-known names of the Western historiography such as K. Neumann, and E.H. Minns, so that by the early 20th century Nikonion's whereabouts could have been considered a problem somewhat definitively solved⁵⁹. However, only the systematic archaeological excavations of the late '50s, and confronting the discovered material with the ancient texts actually settled the issue for good. At the same time the systematic research provided the right answer to the question regarding the founding date of the city: the second half of the 6th century B.C. Of a particular value, and help in identifying the time and the place of Nikonion's establishment have proven to be the studies of M.S. Sinitsyn, and O.P. Karyškovskij⁶⁰. Later, the monographs, and studies about urban settlement of N.M. Sekerskaja's, and regarding the city *chora* – by S.B. Okhotnikov, have proven to be just as valuable. Extremely useful have turned out to be the efforts of some researchers from outside the former USSR, in particular the archaeologists, such as the Polish researchers of the “Nikolai Kopernik” University in Torun, who conducted excavations here beginning with 1995.

Of course, for the reasons noted above, the political history is not known, with the exception of some data provided by ancient authors and epigraphic materials, but this is just too little in order to provide a coherent picture of the phenomenon. Usually when this topic is discussed, reference is made to the anti-Scythian campaign of the Persians in 510 or 509 B.C., to the debatable rule of the Scythian king Skyles (during the middle of the 5th century B.C.: Fig. 3/5)⁶¹, to the possibility that the city was part of the *Delian League* (second half of the 5th century B.C.), to Zopyrion's campaign in 331 B.C., to the connections of that small city with Histria⁶² and Tyras⁶³, the incorporation of the city in the Roman Empire (57 A.D.), to its relations with the Barbarians who transited the place or stationed here for a while (barbarians such as the Scythians, the Sarmatians, the Dacians of Burebista, Carpi, Goths, etc.)⁶⁴. The real problem is that we have no certainty that these events have directly influenced the life of Nikonion. The city could have ceased its existence in the second half of the 3rd century A.D., namely during the barbarian invasions⁶⁵.

⁵⁹ Bekker 1853, p. 175–181; Neumann 1855, p. 359; Uvarov 1856, p. 151; Goškevič 1903; Goškevič 1909, p. 180–181; Minns 1913, p. 14.

⁶⁰ Sinitsyn 1960, p. 197; Sinitsyn 1961, p. 34–35; Karyškovskij 1966, p. 145–162; Sinitsyn 1966, p. 53–56.

⁶¹ Zaghinajlo, Karyškovskij 1990, p. 3–15; Okhotnikov 1997, p. 29.

⁶² Sinitsyn 1966, p. 55; Alexandrescu 1970, p. 149–156; Avram, Hind, Tsetskhladze 2004, p. 936.

⁶³ Vinogradov 1999, p. 66–70; Avram 2012, p. 210–211.

⁶⁴ Köhler 1869, p. 74, 167; Meritt, Wade-Gery, McGregor 1939, p. 157, 539; Brašinskij 1963, p. 73–74; Pruglo, Bondari 1980, p. 29; *Istoria* 2010, p. 581, 590.

⁶⁵ Furmanskaja 1963, p. 47, 50; Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985, p. 90–91, 98; Samojlova 1988, p. 101–103; Vinogradov 1989, p. 66; Son 1993, p. 31–41.

It is obvious that due to the archaeological excavations near the present day village of Roxolani, we have an almost general idea regarding the material culture of the settlement, as well as of the adjacent agricultural land. Fragments of the fortification system, of the cobbled streets as well of many houses have been discovered (Fig. 3/1). The largest construction dates from the Greek period, more specifically, from the second quarter of the 4th century B.C.⁶⁶ A very valuable inventory was found there: ceramic, tiles, labor tools, weapons, coins, and jewelry. All these are important, but the most valuable is the ceramic material which, besides the fact that it provides a picture of how the pottery production and import has evolved over centuries, it also contains a number of lapidary inscriptions and graffiti, particularly useful for the investigation of phenomena of social and cultural life of Nikonion. Just like in the case of other Pontic cities, the main production activity of the population is related to agriculture. Paleobotanical research conducted in the Lower Dniester area has provided some data that is helping us to get a better picture regarding the cereals grown here in ancient times. Thus, we could establish that there were planted two varieties of millet (*Panicum miliaceum* L., and *Panicum italicum*), a sort of barley (*Hordeum vulgare* L.), and two varieties of wheat: the so-called spelt wheat with two bobs (*Triticum dicoccum* Schrank), and another sort which is the club wheat – *Triticum compactum aestivo* which, in turn, has two subspecies – *Tr. Aestivum*, and *Tr. compactum*⁶⁷. The agricultural inventory represents other evidence about this occupation: during archaeological excavations at Nikonion there were found sickles, coulter for plows wooden grinders. Some multiannual plants like vine, and fruit trees were also being cultivated. Perhaps a more precise information is the one concerning the animal husbandry. It has been observed that during the 6th to the 4th century B.C. 87.1% of the osteological animal remains, found in the settlement of Roxolani, belonged to domestic animals, and only 12.9% to the wild animals, while in the period of the 3rd to 1st century B.C. the ratio was 90.5% to 9.5%. Cattle made up 45.7%, and 42.5%, respectively, of the total during the two periods mentioned above, while sheep, and goats – 32.4%, and 30.5%. In the Roman period, the ratio of the two categories of animals was 60.1%, and 18.6%⁶⁸.

As stated before, the pottery was predominating in crafts. The production of ceramic is diverse (Fig. 3/3, 3/4), but generally speaking it can be divided into two categories: made by hand, which of course was a local product, and the one imported here from different centers of the Greek world, and in Roman times – from other regions as well. Both these categories are described in detail by the specialists⁶⁹. The metallurgy, the weaving, the woodcraft, and the bonecraft have

⁶⁶ Sinitsyn 1966, p. 19–22, 26–27, 41, 50; Zaghinajlo 1977, p. 293; Zaghinajlo 1984, p. 74–79; Sekerskaja N. 1989, p. 51–53; Sekerskaja 2001, p. 75.

⁶⁷ Okhotnikov 1990, p. 47; Okhotnikov 2001, p. 88, 101; Sekerskaja 2001, p. 70, 77.

⁶⁸ Sinitsyn 1966, p. 52; Suško 1966, p. 142; Sekerskaja N. 1989, p. 34, 65, 116; Sekerskaja 2001, p. 70, 82, 88.

⁶⁹ Kuz'menko, Sinitsyn 1966, p. 56; Sekerskaja 1976, p. 84–95; Sekerskaja 2001, p. 70–71, 77, 79–80, 86–87; Brujako, Dzigovskij, Sekerskaja 2008, p. 58, 66–70.

experienced some development, but the factual material related to these occupations is very poor. However some metal slag was found at Roxolani, which is a sure indication of local ore processing, and there were discovered forms designed for the base metal casting, and some iron objects, for example mouldboard plows, sickles (about 30 pieces), knives, daggers, arrowheads, and spearheads, nails (approx. 100 pieces)⁷⁰. Due to the perishability of the materials used for fabrics, and woodwork, the remains that could be related to these branches of production are very few, with the exception of indirect evidence such as spindle whorls, and loom weights.

Nothing is known for sure about the mint of Nikonion. A well-known opinion is stating that during the Scythian king Skyles time (mid. of the 5th century B.C.) there could have been a local mint⁷¹, but this is just a supposition. We do not even know if Skyles ever stayed in Nikonion. We do know, however, that a large number of coins were discovered in Nikonion. They fall into several categories: those regarded as of local production, i.e. bearing the inscription ΣΚ, ΣΚΥ, ΣΚΥΛΕ (Fig. 3/5). But the big batch of coins found here consists of those minted in Histria, i.e. 214 out of 253, or 84.6%, a phenomenon that made the specialists consider that Nikonion was a settlement founded by this western Pontic city. In the third group is formed of currencies originating from various other centers, and regions: Scythian (those of Athalos, Skylures, Pharzoios), the Macedonian kingdom, then from Olbia, Apollonia, Amisos, Kyzikos, and of course the Roman imperial coins⁷².

The commerce was similar to that of Tyras, but it is understood that it could have not known the extent, and the variety of the bigger city⁷³. Not so long ago, the Polish archaeologist B. Awianowicz found a very interesting inscription here, the so-called letter of Dionysos to his family⁷⁴. Dionysos was a ship owner, and a trader, who used to perform various commercial operations: selling grains from Nikonion, and importing building materials, fabrics or clothing; he would also do the transportation with his own ship on (probably) not very long distances. The overall picture provided by this document is that in the second half of the 4th century, and at the beginning of the 3rd century B.C., Nikonion knew a varied, and intense economic activity, the document mentioning construction, trade, transport ships, and grain production. The most important item brought here from other Greek cities were the amphorae as separate goods among other dishes, and as containers for some products required by the city or the surrounding population. The most important exporters of this kind of product were Chios, Lesbos, Thasos, Samos, Pontic Heraclea, Mende, followed by Athens, Corinth, Byzantium, Kos,

⁷⁰ Sinitsyn 1966, p. 20, 26, 48, 51–52; Zaghinajlo 1977, p. 293; Sekerskaja N. 1989, p. 32, 66–67.

⁷¹ Zaghinajlo, Karyškovskij 1990, p. 4; Okhotnikov 2005, p. 84–85; Okhotnikov 2008, p. 127.

⁷² Preda 1960, p. 21–35; Karyškovskij 1961, p. 109–112; Zaghinajlo 1964, p. 168–169; Zaghinajlo 1966, p. 100–101; Zaghinajlo, Karyškovskij 1990, p. 3–15; Mielczarek 2003, p. 273.

⁷³ Zaghinajlo 1976, p. 76;

⁷⁴ Awianowicz 2009, p. 196–198; Awianowicz 2011, p. 237–239.

Rhodes, Chersonesos, Pantikapaion, Apollonia, Histria, and Thrace. On the site of the ancient city several kraters with red figures were discovered, representing an evidence of the great beauty of the Greek art of pottery decoration. Some vessels from Pergamum, Knidos, Bospor, Thrace, and Moesia Inferior date back from the Roman period⁷⁵. Many other goods were also being brought here. Among these there were objects of stone, for example some vessels made of this material, grinders (stone mills), various glass products, as well as many perishable materials: fabrics, garments, furniture, various jewelry (rings, beads, bracelets, a varied assortment of brooches, etc.) Unfortunately, we are a less informed in regard with the local trade, and the exchange of goods between the city, and the neighboring barbaric population.

The fact that about 300 of small inscriptions were found in Nikonion, some of which are certainly of local origin, proves the fact that literacy was not unknown in this place. But we cannot know however, based on just these materials, to what extent were the reading, and the writing widespread among the population of the city. These inscriptions are so lapidary, that we cannot learn many things from them. Almost all of them are graffiti, which means that besides some Greek words, they are most often some signs or groups of signs difficult to decipher. We also know still some happy exceptions that allow us to draw bolder conclusions about the state of literacy in Nikonion. This is a short votive inscription of a citizen of Nikonion in honor of the Roman emperor. Even more explicit in this regard is the letter of Dionysos to his family, the one that I have mentioned already, and which tells in detail about his occupations as a merchant, and as a ship owner. Documents of this kind show that at least for the middle, and upper classes of the population, literacy was a common phenomenon for the cultural life of Nikonion⁷⁶.

Even though we have little information regarding the art of this settlement, there are some materials there that show similar features with that from Tyras or any other Greek city on the Black Sea coast. But we must keep in mind that Nikonion was a small settlement. Public buildings artistically crafted in marble were to be found here as well. The proof for that is a miniature model of an Ionic column that was found here. A small marble sculpture realistically depicting a bull was found here, suggesting that, as in the case of large buildings executed in marble or any other hard rock, in Nikonion there could have been large-scale sculptural works, crafted in such materials. However, the most complete picture about the art of Nikonion is offered by small terracotta sculptures. Setting aside their small proportions, and modest technical possibilities of their production, we see that they were made at the same level as the artistic works of the same type from any other Greek city. A natural phenomenon for the time, most of the

⁷⁵ Gansova 1966, p. 72–77; Vasilenko 1970, p. 217–224; Vasilenko 1971, p. 137–149; Sekerskaja. 1976, p. 85, 90–95; Sekerskaja 1980, p. 39–49; Sekerskaja 1982, p. 136–138; Sekerskaja N. 1989, p. 71, 79–84.

⁷⁶ Golovko 1966, p. 78–88; Kravčenko 1966, p. 88–89; Sekerskij 1971, p. 226–227; Sekerskij 1976, p. 215–217; Alekseev 2001, p. 72–76; Alekseev 2002, p. 64–65.

terracotta depicts deities, according to those who have discovered, and published the materials. Most often these are images of Demeter, Aphrodite, Kybele, Eros-Thantos, of Silens, some images depicting goddesses on thrones, etc. But almost as often one can encounter small sculptural portraits inspired by everyday life, for example sitting girls or boys, a woman's head with a veil covering the hair, or the figurine of a rooster. Of a happily inspired artistry, and very realistically executed manner are the bas-relief portraits on some pottery, and ceramic discs, such as that of Silenus, or another one depicting a bearded young man with curly hair, or the Gorgon Medusa. A small number of sculptures were crafted in bone⁷⁷. Such are the portraits of the goddess Kybele on the throne, and the representations of the god Pan. Nearby the settlement Nadlimanskoe, close to Nikonion, fragments of flutes (*aulos*) were discovered, which suggests that music was a constant pursuit of the local population⁷⁸.

The religious life of Nikonion could have not been too different from what we have already seen in Tyras. The coroplastic art data, and some epigraphic material discovered there prove that the most influential cults during the Greek period were those of Demeter (Fig. 3/6), Kybele, and Dionysos, a natural phenomenon considering the fact that the main occupation of the population was the cultivation of the soil⁷⁹. These deities were followed by Zeus, Hera, Ares, Dioscures, and by demi-gods like Heracles, and Achilles. However the data regarding the religious practices in this settlement during the last centuries of the Greek period, and Roman era is still very poor. With respect to the cults dating from the 2nd and the 3rd centuries A.D., according to the assessments of the specialists (I.V. Bujako, N.M. Sekerskaja, A.S. Ostroverhov *et alii*), besides the ancient Greek deities, in Nikonion were also being worshipped, and some Thracian gods, for example the Thracian Horseman⁸⁰; oriental cults, like that of Mithra were also present, which would explain, in the opinion of those specialists, the movement of Roman troops from Thrace or Middle East, towards the area of the Lower Dniester⁸¹. At the same time, the city and especially the rural settlements, nearby, are penetrated by barbaric cults, especially by those of the Thracians, Scythians, Sarmatians; this phenomenon seems to have a material basis in the discovered remains of the Nikonian necropolis, investigated systematically from 1991 to 1999⁸². Among other things, the discovery of this cemetery has provided some information about funeral rite practiced here, for example it was established

⁷⁷ Klejman 1966, p. 100; Klejman 1970, p. 27–29; Andrunina 1971, p. 227–228; Klejman 1976, p. 118; Paskhina 1980, p. 114–116; Sekerskaja N. 1989, p. 105; Alekseev 2001, p. 74; Alekseev 2002, p. 63–64; Batizat, Ostroverhov 2002; Alekseev 2004, p. 70.

⁷⁸ Morozovskaja 1980, p. 111–113.

⁷⁹ Golovko 1966, p. 79; Klejman 1976, p. 120; Sekerskaja N. 1989, p. 106; Brujako, Ostroverhov 1997, p. 76–80; Brujako, Dzigovskij, Sekerskaja 2008, p. 90; Kuzina 2008, p. 178–182.

⁸⁰ Brujako, Ostroverhov 1997, p. 76–80; Brujako, Dzigovskij, Sekerskaja 2008, p. 181–182.

⁸¹ Golovko 1966, p. 78–79; Lejpuns'ka 1970, p. 60–73; Sekerskaja N. 1989, p. 110; Diatropov 2001, p. 11–35; Zaharova 2003.

⁸² Brujako, Dzigovskij, Sekerskaja 2008, p. 81–164, 181–182, 210.

that the adults were buried in niches carved into the walls of the tomb, not in a regular pit, and that young children were buried in clay vessels under the floor of the houses.

LEUKE (THE SNAKE ISLAND)

The phenomenon of Leuke is differing essentially from the ancient cities of Tyras, and Nikonion, although being situated in their proximity. The difference is given by the fact that it was not a regular human settlement, but an island where the sanctuary of Achilles was located, the main worshipping place of this hero, and god in the Black Sea area. It is namely the interest towards the deeds, and the cult of this hero that generated a preoccupation for this island ever since ancient times. Known back then by the name of Leuke (*Λευκός, λεύκε νῆσος*), it was situated in front of the Chilia branch of the Danube, at a distance of 45 km from the seashore.

The association between this island and Achilles is often mentioned in the ancient texts. As a result, the location of the island could have been identified relatively easy. However, the same sources indicate that the only thing of real interest on that island was the sanctuary of Achilles. These two factors have formed the basis on which all the writings and the historical research regarding the island were founded. The first mention of the Leuke name for this island is to be encountered in the works of the lyric poet Pindar (522–443 B.C.), and in those of Euripides (408–406 B.C.), followed by many other Greek writers, including Flavius Philostratos, Quintus of Smyrna, Lycophron, Demetrios of Callatis, Skymnos, Hermias, the Plato's scholiast, Maximus of Tyr, Skylax of Caryanda, Pseudo-Arrianus, Ammianus Marcellinus, Hesikyos, and Stephanos of Byzantium. Typically, these reports were not concerned with evoking some certain realities, but they do not refer only just to fantasies, so they may be useful for understanding the ancient phenomenon of Leuke. Some data regarding the location of this island in the Black Sea can be acquired from Strabo (VII, 3, 16), Pliny the Elder (IV, 26, 27), and Claudius Ptolemeus (III, 10, 8). This data is supplemented by information found in the writings of Lycophron (*Cass.*, v. 188–193), Maximus of Tyr (*Diss.*, XV), Pausanias (III, 19, 11), Pseudo-Arrianus⁸³, Demetrios of Callatis, and Philostratos the Younger. So the location of the island, and its proportions were known – with some approximation – since ancient times. Obviously the ancient authors had a greater interest for Achilles sanctuary rather than for the island itself, so this is why most of the attention in their works is paid to the description of the building, and even more to the time spent by the Homeric hero in that place. Although these are almost exclusively mythological writings, the researcher who wants to know the ancient history of this island can find some useful pieces of information even in texts of this nature.

⁸³ Arrianus, p. 89–90.

The research concerning the Leuke Island began in the first half of the 19th century. The process of rediscovering the island then was initiated when two officers of the Russian navy, I.M. Budishtchev, and N.D. Kritskij, have published in 1801, and in 1823 respectively, two maps of the island. This was followed, in 1826, by a comprehensive and very well documented study by H.K.E. Köhler, a member of the Imperial Academy in St. Peterburg⁸⁴. The archaeological research of the island began only after the establishment in 1839 of the Society of History, and Antiquities in Odessa. The first scientific expedition in Leuke was conducted in 1841 by N.N. Murzakevitch, a member of this Society. The results of the observations and discoveries of that time were to be published a few years later. Murzakevitch will also add to these two studies some coins discovered on the island, very useful especially because they demonstrated the very broad links that the island had with the Greek, and Roman world⁸⁵. In the second half of the 19th century, some interest in Leuke appeared also in the West, following the discovery here of a precious inscription about its relation to Olbia. The English captain, T.A. B. Spratt, who discovered the inscription, published, in 1857, a brief information about it. This article was followed by two publications containing the text of the document as well as comment made by the English scientist Ch. Babington, and R. Egger, the last one, apparently, a dilettante. A complete and well-documented review of the document was to be realised much later by the Russian specialist in classical antiquity, V.V. Latyshev⁸⁶. During the period when the island was administered by the Tsarist Russia, some writings on it have been done by I.I. Tolstoi, M.I. Rostovtzeff, and E.H. Minns (in his book *Iranians & Greeks*)⁸⁷. Between 1856, and 1948, when the island was part of Romania, several Romanian articles, and studies were devoted to Snake Island, but very few was written about antique period of island. It is known that the island was visited by the archaeologists Gr. Tocilescu, and P. Nicorescu, but the results of their observations are not known. So, in the Romanian historiography the antique Leuke was not a matter of real concern. During the Soviet rule, there have been conducted a number of high-level scientific researches. One can emphasize the archaeological investigations conducted by S.B. Okhotnikov, A.S. Ostroverhov, and N.V. Piatysheva. Historians like S.A. Bulatovitch, P.O. Karyshkovskij, I.B. Klejman, and V.P. Iajlenko⁸⁸ have published several studies concerning some particular topics, such as coins, terracotta, and graffiti. A particular interest towards Leuke can be observed in the Western historiography of the last decades, but this interest

⁸⁴ Köhler 1926, p. 531–819.

⁸⁵ Murzakevič 1844, p. 552–559; Murzakevič 1848, p. 413–415, 838–839; Murzakevič 1853, p. 237–245.

⁸⁶ Latyshev 1887, p. 52.

⁸⁷ Rostovtzeff 1918, p. 178–181; Tolstoj 1918.

⁸⁸ Zograf 1941, p. 152–160; Piatyševa 1966, p. 58–70; Klejman 1970, p. 24; Bulatovič 1971, p. 212–225; Karyškovskij 1983, p. 158–173; Bulatovič 1990, p. 56–57; Okhornikov, Ostroverhov 1993, p. 18 sqq.

is almost always concerning the cult of Achilles on the island. So, there is a relatively large number of sources, and studies concerning Leuke, and yet the phenomenon is not being explored enough. The biggest unsolved problem remains to be the shrine of Achilles, which was destroyed by the Russians in the early 19th century, and its only remains are under a construction build on its ruins.

However some of the debris was preserved. These are fragments of cornices, stone plates, an Ionian column drum, pieces of Paros marble, a rather large fragment of relief, and a large block of white marble with grey veins. These materials suggest some ideas regarding the construction of the sanctuary. Of great help in designing a close image of the sanctuary is the plan of the island, made by Kritskij in 1823. Likewise, of a great help are the roof tiles, and the architectural terracotta used for the decoration of the building walls, which were discovered on the island, and in the waters nearby its shores. But only further research of remnants of the temple that were preserved under the ground will come up with a more reliable, but, unfortunately, very reduced data regarding this worshiping construction.

The most important testimony, and also the most valuable source regarding the material culture of the island of Leuke, is represented by the ceramic materials (Fig. 4/1–3). Pottery here is radically different from those in other Pontic areas and settlements, especially because of the fact that none of it is of local origin, and secondly because we are talking about luxuries, usually painted. Simple wheel made pottery, as well as hand made pottery is hardly encountered. We know about a thousand shards of clay pots, and other objects. Entirely preserved objects are very rare. Basically, all kinds of vessels characteristic for the Greek, and Roman world are to be found here: pitchers, bowls, plates, amphorae, kraters, kylikes, kantharoi, lekythoi, askoi, amforiskoi, lekanai. Although the great fragmentation of these materials makes it difficult to identify their origin, the locations of their production, have generally been set. There were identified in the neighboring towns of Histria, Tyras, Olbia, and Berezan Island, but most of them are from different, remote areas of the Greek, and Roman world: Pantikapaion, Attica, Samos, Miletus, Chios, Corinth, Lesbos, Clazomenae, Megara, Delos, Sinope, Heraclea, Chersonesos, Kos, Rhodes, Thasos, etc.⁸⁹

The importance of the sanctuary of the island to the Greek world is being best demonstrated by the coins discovered here. According to some data, around 2000 to 3000 coins were found on the island (the big difference between the two indices is explained by the fact that some of the coins were stolen)⁹⁰. During the 4th, and the 3rd centuries B.C. coins were brought here from the following cities, and regions: Tyras, Olbia, Chersonesos, Pantikapaion, Theodosia, Phanagoria, Tomis, Histria, Odessos, Mesembria, Dionysopolis, Dioscurias, Abidos, Kyzikos, Heraclea

⁸⁹ Piatyševa 1964, p. 62, fig. 2 (3); Bulatovič 1990, p. 56; Okhotnikov, Ostroverhov 1993, p. 30–51, fig. 7 (1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12), 8 (1, 2, 5, 10), 9 (9, 10, 12).

⁹⁰ Bulatovič 1971, p. 213; Okhotnikov, Ostroverhov 1993, p. 50–51.

Pontica, Pergamon, Ephesus, Chios, Rhodes, Patara, Phaselis, Bruttium, Naples, Messana, Syracuse, Cumae, Lacedaemon, Athens, Megara, Delos, Kythnos, Sythnos, Thera, Mende, Ainos (Anos), as well as coins of Thracian Kings, of the Macedonian kings Philip II, Alexander the Great, Philip III, Lysimachos, the rulers of Scythia Minor, Kanites, and Gaeles (2nd century B.C.), the Bosporan king Leukon II (245–225 B.C.), and those of Philiteros of Pergamon (343–263 B.C.) At the same time, but also during the following two centuries of the Greek period, here have been also brought coins that can not be dated with certainty, such as the coins from (Illyrian) Apollonia, Pylos, Sicyon, Locris (Opuntia), Tanagra, Adramyttion, Ios, Naxos, Tenos, Itanos, Knosos, Sestos, Thasos, Amastris, Prusa in Bythinia), Alexandria in Moesia, Alexandria in Troas), Paros, Tenedos, Eresos, Ionian Heraclea, Clazomenae, Teos, Erythrea, Antiocheia, Pisidias, Knydos, Caesarea, Egyptian Alexandria, and from the rulers of Syria, and Egypt. In the Roman period the flow of money was coming from all provinces of the Empire⁹¹.

Apart from pottery, and coins there have also been found on the island many other materials such as glass, especially Roman vessels, and also metal (weapons, axes, anchors, nails, fishing hooks, etc.), as well as stone, and bone.

The culture of the Leuke Island is of course characteristic to those who have visited it, in other words, is in some way a measure of spirituality, and the level of civilization of the whole Greco-Roman world. Here were present at different times during nearly a millennium many of several cities, and human communities throughout the Mediterranean, and Black Sea. This means that the remaining vestiges that the visitors have left behind on the island of Leuke are testimonies of the ancient Greco-Roman civilization, and also proof that the island and its temple were part of this civilization. The evidence regarding the culture and the civilization of the island is represented by all groups of the objects mentioned above, but its spiritual culture, apart from the temple of Achilles, is to be found mostly in epigraphic materials (Fig. 4/1), works of art, and ornaments⁹². Compared to ceramics, and coins, these are not many, and do not have the value of those discovered in the cities of Tyras, and Nikonion. For example if we speak of works of art – making abstraction of the temple – the only artifacts with real value are three terracotta statues (Fig. 4/2, 4/3), depicting a rooster, a chubby naked boy (Fig. 4/3), and a standing woman, draped in a chiton, and himation, and wearing a small hat on her head. Of some interest are the gemstones, and images of the rings discovered on the island⁹³. The religious life was categorically being determined by the activity of the sanctuary. There are many contemporary studies about the cult of Achilles on Leuke, like those of H. Hommel, J.T. Hooker, A.V. Belousov, but we have no direct information that would emanate from this particular cult center. It is

⁹¹ Bulatovič 1971, p. 214–225; Bulatovič 1979, p. 95–98; Okhotnikov, Ostroverhov 1993, p. 98–99.

⁹² Stern 1897, p. 163–172; Iajlenko 1980, p. 84–89, 170–171; Rusiaeva 1987, p. 140–141; Okhotnikov, Ostroverhov 1993, p. 54, 57–61.

⁹³ Winter 1903, fig. 451, 9; Klejman 1970, p. 24; Okhotnikov, Ostroverhov 1993, p. 62–67.

understood that in this regard one cannot use the fantasies of the ancient authors about the temple, the life, and parties of Achilles, therefore it can be known indirectly, through research of ancient texts concerning the celebrations of the cult of this hero, and god elsewhere, for example at Sygheion⁹⁴, in Troas.

As we had proposed, we have realized in the above lines a synthesis research on the historical realities of the Lower Dniester and in the neighboring territories during classical antiquity. However, being small in volume, this study is really condensed. Writing this study was all the more difficult as throughout the paper the concerned historical processes are seen as projections of the results of their research, i.e., the author conducted a parallel study: on the one hand the history of the concerned phenomenon, and on the other hand, its research stage presented through its phases and forms of manifestations. Such a mobilization of the investigative efforts and concentration of information, have resulted in overlooking some details, even if these are not negligible, especially when we are dealing with such an under-researched topic like the present one, and a quite modest general information on this subject. But this was the only way possible to achieve a comprehensive perspective of the researched phenomenon and to fit it in a small-scale study. Such perspectives could prove useful in order to diversify and further the research in classical antiquity of the southern Bessarabia and neighboring territories.

ANTICHITATEA GRECO-ROMANĂ LA NISTRUL DE JOS ȘI ÎN TERITORIILE ÎNVECINATE: ISTORIE ȘI CERCETARE ISTORICĂ

REZUMAT

În acest articol, sunt examinate succint urmările colonizării grecești a litoralului nord-vestic al Mării Negre și ale extinderii dominației romane în acest spațiu. Drept exemple concrete sunt luate cetățile antice de la Nistrul de Jos, Tyras și Nikonion, precum și insula Leuke, actuala Insulă a Șerpilor. În paralel, se fac referiri și la așezările rurale din *chora* acestor cetăți și din spațiul cuprins între cursurile inferioare ale Nistrului și Dunării. Studiul încearcă să prezinte, într-o evaluare foarte scurtă, rezultatele cercetării îndelungate și în variate medii științifice asupra acestor locuri și teritorii.

Cuvinte-cheie: colonie greacă, greci, romani, traci, geto-daci, sciți, sarmați, bastarni, goți, sincretism cultural, Tyras, Nikonion, Leuke/Insula Șerpilor.

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⁹⁴ See Radet 1925, p. 81–96; Hommel 1980, p. 41–42; Hommel 1981, p. 53–76; Belousov 2009, p. 67–85. See also Burkert 1985, p. 56–57; Rutherford 2009, p. 230–247.

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EXPLICAȚIA FIGURILOR

- Fig. 1. 1. Așezări antice în zona Nistrului de Jos (după Sekerskaja N. 1989); 2. Cetatea Albă/Akkerman (Belgorod Dnestrovskiy). Planul cercetărilor arheologice din perioada 1900–1930 (după Nicorescu 1933); 3. Tyras. Planul orașului potrivit cercetărilor arheologice din anii '60 ai secolului trecut (după Kryžitskij, Klejman 1979).
- Fig. 2. Tyras. 1. Inscriptii descoperite de P. Nicorescu, secolele IV–III a.Chr. (după Nicorescu 1933); 2. inscriptii și ștampile ale garnizoanei romane (după Kryžitskij, Klejman 1979); 3. ceramică attică cu firnis negru, secolele IV–III a.Chr.) (după Samojlova 1988); 4. Cetatea Albă/Akkerman (Belgorod Dnestrovskiy). Cupă getică (după Kryžitskij, Klejman 1979);

Tyras. 5. inscripție votivă a cetățeanului Marcus Aurelius Artemon, dedicată împăratului Severus Alexander (după Ivantchik, Son 2002); 6. statuia Hygiei, unul dintre zeii tămăduitori (secolele II–III p.Chr.) (după Karyškovskij, Klejman 1985).

Fig. 3. Nikonion. 1. Vestigiile unei clădiri, secolul IV a.Chr. (după Brujako *et alii* 2008); 2. Nadlimanskoe, în vecinătatea sitului Nikonion. Locuințe din *chora* cetății (după Okhotnikov 1990); 3. amfore, secolele V–IV a.Chr. (după Kuz'menko, Sinitsyn 1966); 4. ceramică uzuală din așezări rurale din zona Nistrului de Jos (după Okhotnikov 1990); Nikonion. 5. monede ale regelui scit Skyles (după Mielczarek 2003); 6. țiglă, protomă cu reprezentarea unei zeițe, secolul V a.Chr. (după Klejman 1976).

Fig. 4. Leuke/Insula Șerpilor. 1. Imaginea lui Pan și o serie de graffiti, cu numele lui Achille, pe vase și obiecte din bronz (după Okhotnikov, Ostroverhov 1993); 2–3. teracote, secolul V a.Chr. (după Klejman 1970a).