NEW BOOKS ON THE HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY
OF THE NORTH PONTIC AREA,
THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA (1990-1992)

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Study of the archaeological monuments of the North Pontic area, the
Caucasus and Central Asia is continuing despite the political and economic
difficulties experienced by the republics of the former Soviet Union. Ancient
history of these regions is being discussed in scientific forums and in books by
specialists. This survey briefly outlines the contents of new books on these
problems.

1. Acta Associationis Internationalis "Terra Antique Balkanica". Vol. VI. Ser-
Congress on Thracian Studies held in Moscow from October 18 to 22, 1988
within the framework of the International Symposium "Ancient Balkan
Studies 6" contains several articles by Russian scholars on specific questions
concerning the history, archaeology and epigraphy of the North Pontic area.
S.M. Krykin highlights the significance and nature of Thracian influence on
the ancient North Black Sea littoral. He draws the conclusion that the role of
the Thracians as a substrate ethnic element was not as significant (especially
in Chersonesus and the Bosporan Kingdom) as was supposed by many resear-
chers. I.A. Levinskaya and S.R. Tokhtas'ev have prepared the most complete
list available of personal names of Jewish origin in the Bosporan Kingdom.
The bearers of these names could have been Jews or other God-fearers,
adherents of the cult of God the Highest, which was widespread in the ancient
cities of Bosporus in the 2nd-first half of the 3rd cent. A.D. The theme of the
article by M.N. Pogrebova and D.S. Raevskii is "Scythians of the early period
(On the procedure for searching for an archaeological equivalent of the nar-
rative tradition)". The extensive reconstruction of early Scythian history
based on written and archaeological evidence is hindered by the impossibility
of complete conformity between these two groups of evidence. It is through
the consideration of the change in the content of the term "Scythians" at different
stages of its use that it becomes possible to eliminate this difficulty. Each of
these stages has its own archaeological equivalent. For instance, Scythia as
Herodotus defines this ethnopolitical term had been formed by the end of the
6th cent. B.C. At an earlier period the territorial borders of the peoples who
called themselves Scythians as well as their culture were different. Herodotus
did not always take into account that fact while describing the events of the

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previous epochs. The same can be said of contemporary scholars. A.V. Podosinov analyzes two fragments of the “Chronographia” of M. Vipsanius Agrippa (“Dacia” and “Sarmatia”) as a historical source. There are very important data about ancient Eastern Europe in this geographical treatise of the second half of the 1st cent. B.C. S.Yu. Sapykin publishes two new fragments of Greek inscriptions from Taurica Chersonesus. The first is a part of a tombstone belonging to some unknown wife and husband who were buried together. It dates back to the end of the 2nd—beginning of the 3rd cent. A.D. The second fragment is a part of a prothesis—a decree of the 2nd cent. A.D. The inscription preserved the name T. Plavius Pythodotes who had Roman citizenship and thus belonged to a well-known aristocratic family which produced many famous officials.


For the first time the materials from this famous archaeological monument, the tomb of a Scythian king buried in a monumental barrow on the river Chertomlyk near the city of Nikopol (South Ukraine) have been fully published. Excavations were carried out here in 1862-1863 by the well-known Russian archaeologist I.Ye. Zabelin. Additional studies were made in 1979-1986. The monograph describes in detail the structure of the mound and the layout of the burial chambers. The authors give an exhaustive description of the grave goods among which there are such masterpieces of Greek decorative art as a silver amphora with scenes from the life of Scythians and a gorytos covered with gold plates and with topical compositions after legends of the Trojan cycle (episodes from Achilles’s life). The conclusions of the monograph refer to the dating and historical interpretation of the monument regarded as the burial of a Scythian king who died in the last third of the 4th cent. B.C. A detailed catalogue of all the finds discovered as a result of the excavations is attached to the book.


The book deals with the settlements of the 6th-5th cent. B.C. along the Black Sea coast in the vicinity of Anapa (ancient Gorgippia). Sindicus (the area populated by the local Sindi tribe) and Portus Sindicus mentioned by ancient authors are localized here. Judging by the archaeological evidence, this area was drawn into the orbit of Greek colonization in the mid-6th cent. B.C. For the first time the author publishes extensive materials from the excavations of the settlements and necropoleis, including high-quality works of art (painted vases, etc.). Questions of close and distant external trade ties of Sindicus, as well