

Sergei J. Saprykin, *Ancient Farms and Land-Plots on the Khora of Khersonesos Taurike, Research in the Herakleian Peninsula 1974-1990* (McGill University Monographs in Classical Archaeology and History No. 16. *Antiquitates Proponticae Circumponticae et Caucasicae* 1), Amsterdam, J.C. Gieben, 1994, pp. XI + 153, 44 figs., 65 pls. Cased. ISBN 90 5063 326 9.

J.G. Vinogradov/S.D. Kryzickij, *Olbia. Eine altgriechische Stadt im nordwestlichen Schwarzmeerraum* (Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava, Supplementum 149), Leiden, Brill, 1995, pp. X + 168, 119 figs. Cased. ISBN 90 04 09677 9.

J. Chapman/P. Dolukhanov (eds.), *Landscapes in Flux, Central and Eastern Europe in Antiquity* (Colloquia Pontica 3), Oxford, Oxbow Books, 1997, pp XVI + 340, ISBN 1 900188 33 3.

It's a joyful fact that during the last few years, many scientific publications are published in Western Europe dealing with the Graeco-Roman archaeology of the Black Sea region. Being long neglected by Western scholars owing to political circumstances and language barriers, the area is now at least receiving the attention it deserves.

The archaeology of Greek colonisation, which was long monopolised by the sites in the western Mediterranean, is now becoming available in western languages for sites on the northern Black Sea coast, as shown by the new publications discussed here. Saprykin's publication of the chora of Chersonesos is the second publication on this site, while Vinogradov and Kryzickij's book on the excavations of Olbia is the third one in a western language.

The first two books start, like most Russian monographs on archaeological sites, with a history of the excavation. In the case of Khersonesos/Chersonesos, this history goes back till 1876, while archaeological research at Olbia even started some two hundred years ago. Excavations in the former Soviet Union, and nowadays in the G.O.S. states, have a very peculiar publication tradition. Results are not published in a series of excavation reports but in a large number of monographs and articles, in the case of Olbia amounting to several

hundreds of bibliographical entrees, sometimes even published in local newspapers. Individual articles may deal with a single find category or subject. This makes it, even for a Russian scholar, extremely difficult to collect all available information. Since all are published in Russian, one has to rely on summary monographs as those of Saprykin and Vinogradov for further study.

Saprykin's book gives a summary of 16 years of excavation (1974-1990) in the chora of ancient Chersonesos by the Moscow State University, the Academy of Sciences of the former USSR and the State Museum of Chersonesos. During this period, three farms in the northern part of the Herakleian Peninsula and one on the isthmus of Lighthouse Point were excavated.

In Part 1 (Introduction), the history of excavation at the ancient chora of Chersonesos and the changing aims are summarily described. These excavations started in 1876, but were particularly intensified between 1974 and 1990.

Part 2 (Chapters 1-4) deals with the excavation of the four farmhouses, their construction phases and some of the materials found in them. The farmhouses are dated from the end of the 4th century BC till the beginning of the 6th century A.D. They all have several construction phases and were, except the one near Lighthouse point, fortified for some time during their existence. The chora proved to have had trade contacts with other cities on the Black Sea coast (a.o. Sinope) and the Mediterranean (a.o. Thasos, Rhodes, Kos). The excavations show a very interesting change from wine making to cattle breeding somewhere between the 1st and the 2nd centuries A.D., although the cause of this change (climate, economic changes?) remains unclear and undiscussed.

Part 3, Chapter 1, gives an analysis of the architecture of the farms, comparing them with farms in other parts of the Greek world. Saprykin concludes that, apart from the fortifications, the farms at the chora of Chersonesos are not very different from contemporary ones in other parts of the Greek world (like Attica and the Cyclades).

Part 3, Chapter 2, describes the history of the chora during the Classical and Hellenistic periods, mostly based on the epigraphical evidence. Saprykin closely links the land-division and the land tenure system to the political development in the city of Chersonesos without taking the factor of Mediterranean/Black Sea trade in account. The settlement of Lighthouse Point is treated separately.

Part 3, Chapter 3, is extremely short and discusses the post-Hellenistic period.

In Part 4 (Conclusions), Saprykin compares the development of the

chora of Chersonesos with that of its mother-city Herakleia Pontica. He links this development with the continuing battle between democrats and oligarchs in both cities. The Scythian raids seriously disturbed agriculture during the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C.

Following part 5 (Bibliography), part 6 consists of two appendices. Appendix 1 is written by E.N. Zerebtzoff and deals with the land subdivision in the chora, while appendix 2 is a publication of the epigraphic evidence concerning the chora.

Although the book is an extremely useful publication in a hardly researched field of investigation, the history of the chora of Greek colonies, its contents are restricted to the architecture, land division and political relations between chora and polis. The book lacks a wider and economic view on Chersonesos in the context of the whole Black Sea and Mediterranean world. A more detailed publication of the ceramics and especially of the imported transport amphorae would certainly have contributed to a clarification of such wider relationships. The same relates to palaeobotanical evidence, which may give indications for possible climatological changes and may consequently contribute to a better understanding of the shift from agriculture to cattle breeding.

The book lacks a decent map of Chersonesos and its chora and readers should turn to '*Greek Transport Amphorae*' by I.K. Whitbread (London 1995), for a good surface view of this area.

*Olbia* by J.G. Vinogradov and S.D. Kryzickij is a different publication. It is an up-to-date and condense survey of the history and archaeological research done at Olbia during the last two centuries.

Olbia has the longest record of scientific excavation and is the best-published ancient Greek colony at the Black Sea coast, a position shared only with the Rumanian site of Histria.

Vinogradov and Kryzickij deal with all aspects of the site of Olbia: history of excavation, topography, stratigraphy and chronology, architecture, the island of Berezan, agriculture at the chora, economic relations, art, religion and cult, the grave mound and the historical background of Olbia.

It certainly is a fact of science-historical interest that in the chapter dealing with the history of the excavation no mention is made of Stalin's purges during the thirties, in which part of the excavation team was sent to Siberia, as described recently by Neal Ascherson (*Black Sea*, London 1995, 75). Another interesting fact in the same category is the authors' heavy criticism on the earlier publications of Olbia in a western language by E. Bellin de Ballu (*Olbia*, Leiden 1972) and A. Wasowicz (*Olbia*, Paris 1975).

The early history of Olbia is excellently described in the fifth chapter, dealing with town planning and architecture.

The authors claim that Olbia, being an agricultural colony with a large chora comprising 6000 inhabitants and 107 settlements during the 6th century B.C. (p. 67), completely changed at the end of that century. Stone houses replaced mudbrick ones and Olbia witnessed, like almost all Pontic cities in this period, an enormous public building activity.

During the same period however, the small settlements around Olbia were abandoned and their population seemed to have concentrated in the town, resulting in a drastic reduction of the chora (p. 68). According to Vinogradov and Kryzickij, this phenomenon was caused by a hostile attitude of the surrounding Scythian tribes (p. 89). This opinion, however, is contradicted by the apparent growth in wealth of Olbia at that time and a total lack of destruction layers in the former chora. A more likely explanation would be that a steep rise in transit trade with the interior made it economically more profitable for a large part of the population to concentrate in the polis.

The chapter about Berezan is rather limited, especially in view of the fact that this probably was the first Greek colony in the Pontic area. One has to wait for the publication of *Colloquia Pontica 4* by S.L. Solovyov, announced for 1998, which will be dedicated completely to the excavations at Berezan.

The best chapters of the book are definitely those on the architecture, the economic relations and the necropolis, whereas art and religion are treated rather superficially.

The book gives, besides the most up-to-date overview, by far the most extensive summary of literature on the subject, available in a western language. It is therefore indispensable for any scholar dealing with Greek colonisation or with the ancient history and archaeology of the Black Sea region.

*Landscapes in Flux* is a collection of 20 papers. Together they form the proceedings of the second CITEE (no mention is made of the meaning of this abbreviation) in 1994, in which several authors dealt with one central theme, landscape archaeology.

Contrary to the other two books, *Colloquia Pontica 3, Landscapes in Flux* deals with the archaeology of landscapes, or more specifically the human influence on landscapes in ancient times in Central and Eastern Europe.

This subject can be categorised under Braudel's "longue durée" and the papers cover a large range, chronologically and geographically.

After an introduction of the general editor of the *Colloquia Pontica* series, G.R. Tsetsckhladze, and two theoretical papers by M. Zvelebil/J.

Benet and J. Chapman, the other papers deal with sites from northwest Hungary, the Baltic area, South Russian Plain and the southern Ukraine. The chronological range goes from Mesolithic times till the Early Medieval period.

Some papers are highly technical like the one of M. Gillings on Geographical Information Systems and statistical analyses of archaeological data from the Tisza Flood Plain in Hungary, while others are plain archaeological like L.P. Stupecki's paper on Pre-Christian Slavic cult-places and S.D. Kryzhitskii's paper on the landscape around Olbia.

The strength of the collection lies in the fact that the papers give a good overview of how humans have shaped the Central and Eastern European landscape (although apparently papers from Rumania and Croatia were not available, while Bulgaria is only dealt with in a rather cursory way).

Not all papers have the same high standard. The paper of D.W. Bailey who argues against the perception that the early agricultural settlements in Bulgaria were continuously occupied offers a good example of the contrary. Almost his whole theory is based on his sector within the excavation of the Chalcolithic site of Ovcharovo. No mention is made of the numerous Bulgarian publications dealing with other, similar sites, like those near Karanovo, Dyadovo, Gulubovo, Yunatsite, etc., which clearly contradict his view. In fact, almost no mention is made at all of publications in the Bulgarian language.

Probably the most interesting papers deal with the northern Pontic area like those of S.D. Kryzhitskii, K.K. Shilik, V.V. Nazarov, G.A. Pashkevich and C.V. Kremenetski. These give a large amount of new archaeological information on this region, ranging from the prehistoric period to archaic times.

The paper of K.K. Shilik is in fact only the second one in the English language on the extremely interesting subject of the oscillations of the Black Sea (the first one was N. Panin's paper in *Dacia* 27, 1983).

Also included in this volume is an excellent overview of new publications in western languages dealing with Eastern European archaeology and projects of western universities co-operating in excavations in Eastern Europe.

This volume of *Colloquia Pontica* is again an enrichment of the growing body of information on the Eastern European archaeology in a western language and one cannot but look forward to the forthcoming volumes of this excellent series of publications.

Jan G. de Boer, Department of Ancient History, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Oude Turfmarkt 129, NL-1012 GC Amsterdam, The Netherlands