

Preface

Meetings of cultures in the Black Sea region, ranging from conflicts to coexistence, was the topic of the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Black Sea Studies' seventh international conference. Meetings of cultures is an overarching theme which forms an umbrella over most of the Centre's activities. It is also a theme which arouses strong feelings, because modern identity formation – not just in the Black Sea region – is to a significant extent still tied to this more distant part of the region's past, as we learnt especially from the contribution by *V. Mordvintseva*. Thus, it was with great expectation – and also some trepidation – that we in January 2006 embarked upon this venture together with a group of Eastern and Western European colleagues.

Because of the different backgrounds of the participants, and because it was needed to bridge the gap between those scholars for whom Black Sea studies are local history and for those whom it is "just" another part of Antiquity, it is unavoidable not to operate with much elasticity in the very concept of culture. Therefore, in the present context we use it as a pragmatic, analytic category.

As is well known, from the remotest Antiquity the indigenous and nomadic non-Greek populations of the Pontic region were persistently viewed as one of the major "Others" (e.g. Hartog 1980). And because the region geographically was located as a bridge between Europe and Asia it was, and still is, also part of a Europe/Asia discourse of dichotomy (cf. Neumann 1998). The region and its non-Greek inhabitants were thus doubly "othered" foremost by the Mediterranean Greeks.

As far back in time as Antiquity, Western self-understanding and identity formation has been shaped not least through its colonial experiences (Stein 2005, 16, 22). With colonies in India, the Caribbean, and Africa, as well as rule over the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, even a small country like Denmark has been a colonial "power" for more than 600 years. Until recently, such colonial experience has led to a very static picture in our analysis of colonial encounters. However, as a result of post-colonialism, post-modernism and now globalization our conception of colonization has undergone a rapid and far-reaching conceptual change. Gone are the days when the Black Sea region was seen as a sea of barbarian wilds enlightened by small flicks of Greek civilization along the coast. Accordingly, we prefer using the terms 'meeting' or 'encounter' whereby we want to emphasize the dynamic nature of the cultural interaction, and by using the term settler rather than colonist, we avoid much heavy semantic baggage of former times. A similar approach has recently been proposed by E.K. Petropoulos in his book from 2005, *Hel-*

lenic Colonization in Euxeinos Pontos: Penetration, Early Establishment, and the Problem of "emporion" Revisited, in which he suggests that the ancient Greek word *apoikismos* is used instead of colonization.

At the conference there was a general tendency to draw the lines between the "Them" and "Us" dichotomy less sharply than had been the case in previous research, as well as a more obvious focus on the successful meetings of cultures and coexistence instead of on conflicts and on what did not succeed. This follows a general trend in the study of colonial encounters, i.e. emphasis is on how the practices of colonialism had a pervasive and transformative impact on the cultures of *all* groups involved neither discriminating the colonized nor the colonizer. Accordingly, this results in a less hierarchical approach to the understanding of cultural interactions.

The self/other perspective upon the region is more readily visible in the literary sources created in the Mediterranean than it is in the local, material sources, be they epigraphy or archaeology. This becomes evident in the four different contributions that discuss the same narrative source, namely the Scythian *logos* in Herodotos' Fourth Book (*D. Braund, P. Guldager Bilde, G. Hinge, and R. Osborne*). All four target the question of the culture and identity of Greeks and Scythians and their interplay (or lack of same), and as foreseeable, the result of the individual analyses is quite different. Thus, as formulated by R. Osborne, the material sources in the quest for an understanding of the identity formation on the local level are to be privileged.

Life in the world of ideas and lived or real life are two very different things. Surely, settling the Black Sea region was a challenge for the Greeks. Compared with the Mediterranean, this happened relatively late, and as explicated in the paper by *J.M. Højte*, the attempts at settling the land were not always equally successful. So when viewed with Mediterranean eyes, the Black Sea region was a marginal one, and even though vain attempts were made to prove the contrary no Mycenaean or even Greek Iron Age material has been found, and the region is also completely devoid of Phoenician colonies.

A number of papers presented at the conference discussed the physical arena of the colonial encounters, namely the production zones surrounding the newly founded cities and settlements. Because of the various claims laid upon the territory, space had to be negotiated all the time, and it is obvious that there were many ways of managing the landscape. Three contributions in this volume, not presented at the conference, provide new insights into the physical management with systematic land divisions (*A.V. Gavrilov, A.V. Karjaka, and T.N. Smekalova*), and such projects surely could only function in periods of collaboration if not outright co-habitation.

It was in the countryside that the meeting of settlers and indigenous tribes mostly took place. Two of the papers (*P. Attema and A. Baralis & A. Riapov*) showed how the various ethnic groups settled in different but neighbouring ecological zones. This was particularly clear in the case of Aegean Thrace as shown by *Baralis & Riapov*, but also in the territory of Sybaris something

similar took place according to *Attema*. The same pattern can clearly be seen around the Džarylgač Lake in western Crimea, where Greeks and barbarians settled at each margin of the demarcated agricultural zone, as established in the Danish Black Sea Centre's ongoing fieldwork (Bilde et al. 2007). The management of widely extended *chorai*, the Metapontion model, seems to be characteristic of the Black Sea region. This must be considered revealing for the Greek-barbarian relationship in the region. Settling side by side – and even burying their dead side by side but in separate plots is visible in the necropolis of Pičvnari as shown by *M. Vickers & A. Kakhidze*.

Although we are obliged to accept that the power balance in many instances was in favour of the indigenous population, the cultivation of the land and the establishment of exchange systems must nevertheless, as stressed by *D. Braund* and *J.M. Højte*, have been beneficial for all participants in the exchange network.

Several papers investigate the dynamics of the cultural exchange of various types of goods. *N. Gavriljuk* discusses the function of Attic black-glazed pottery in the tombs of the Forrest Steppe Scythians. The paper by *L. Summerer* gives an interesting insight into the creative reception, emulation, and transformation of architectural terracottas and their ornamentation between the South Coast of the Black Sea (Sinope, Amisos) and the hinterland, in the double-cultural influence from the Greek, one the hand, and from Anatolia, on the other. In the paper by *N. Novicenkova*, on a hilltop sanctuary near Gurzuf in the Mountain Crimea a portrait is painted of a central place in the Taurian culture, where votives of Mediterranean and Bosphoran types show a close connection with the surrounding cultures.

In general, the perception of how it was to be Greek in the Pontic realm was heavily debated at the conference. Was there a thick or a thin coherence (cf. Sewell 1999)? How much influence – if any – was exerted by the indigenous tribes upon the Greek settlers? And vice versa? And how do we weigh the individual building blocks of identity, such as ethnic affiliation, gender, age, status etc., against each other? Several papers agree that status and power were perhaps more important markers than ethnicity (*D. Braund*, *P. Guldager Bilde*, *J. Hjarl Petersen*), and *P. Guldager Bilde* even attempted to turn the discussion upside-down in her attempt to introduce the term *diaspora* as a means of obtaining a glimpse of the psychological side effects of settling abroad within a comparative sociological framework.

Five contributions included in this publication were not presented at the conference. However, since they fit well with the theme and/or present important new relevant data are they included here (*A.V. Gavrilov*, *G. Hinge*, *A.V. Karjaka*, and *T.N. Smekalova*). The papers in the publication are for the most part grouped thematically. The book opens with the broader historical context as presented by *J.A. Vinogradov* and *V. Mordvintseva*, in addition to reflections on the psychology in the process of settling by *P. Guldager Bilde*. A section follows with three papers discussing the spaces of identity as found

in the *chorai* of Sybaris by P. Attema, and Aegean Thrace by A. Baralis. Five contributions bring us close to the theme of conflict and coexistence. J.M. Højte discusses the occasions where Greek settling failed, and A.V. Karjaka brings us the new data on the excavation of the city wall in Olbia. This manifest marker of latent conflicts teach us (as did D. Braund's contribution) that conflicts are found not alone between the Greeks and the barbarians, but equally among Greeks themselves, because what may have left the most significant traces of destruction in Olbia around the city wall, may have been caused by Alexander's general, Zopyrion, rather than groups of barbarians. In this section, also the second contribution by A.V. Karjaka and the papers by A.V. Gavrillov and T.N. Smekalova give further details as to the actual territory management. Then follows a section on the dynamics of cultural exchange seen from a perspective, on the one hand, of power rather than ethnicity (J. Hjarl Petersen) and, on the other hand from various indigenous tribes – be they steppe Scythians (N. Gavriljuk), Anatolian (L. Summerer), or Taurian (N. Novičenkova). Included also is a paper on Roman Apsaros at the border of the Roman limes (E. Kakhidze). Finally, three papers consider the reciprocal strategies exerted by the Greeks and Scythians in Olbia as described in Herodotos' Fourth Book of his Histories (R. Osborne, D. Braund, and G. Hinge). Together the three papers fully explicate how we also describe ourselves when we describe the "others". Self and other are two sides of the same coin – yesterday, today and, tomorrow.

Before finishing this preface, it is a great pleasure for us to extend our heartfelt gratitude to colleagues at the Centre, who have helped to make this book: Kristina W. Jacobsen, who did a lot of editing, Jakob M. Højte who undertook the hard job of editing the illustrations, and finally Elena Stolba for checking transliterations. The articles were linguistically revised by Robin Wildfang and Stacy Cozart.

Pia Guldager Bilde and Jane Hjarl Petersen

Bibliography

- Guldager Bilde, P., P. Attema, S.B. Lancov, T.N. Smekalova, V.F. Stolba, T. de Haas & K. Winther Jakobsen 2007. Džarylgačskij issledovatel'skij proekt. Resultaty sezona 2007g, *Bosporskij Fenomen*, 107-118.
- Hartog, F. 1980. *Le miroir d'Herodote. Essai sur la représentation de l'autre*. Paris.
- Neumann, I.B. 1998. *Uses of the Other. "The East" in European Identity Formation (Borderlines 9)*. Minneapolis.
- Petropoulos, E.K. 2005. *Hellenic Colonization in Euxeinus Pontos: Penetration, Early Establishment, and the Problem of "emporion" Revisited* (British Archaeological Reports International Series 1394). Oxford.
- Sewell, Jr., W.H. 1999. The Concept(s) of Culture, in: V.E. Bonnell & L. Hunt (eds.), *Beyond The Cultural Turn: New Direction in the Study of Society and Culture*. Berkeley.
- Stein, G.J. (ed.) 2005. *The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters*. Santa Fe.