

Description for the general public: **Shaping the political landscape in the Bosporan Kingdom: Greek and non-Greek elites in a qualitative and quantitative approach.**

In this project I am going to investigate heterogenic elites of the Bosporan Kingdom and how they functioned due to shifting political situation throughout centuries (from 438/7 BCE to the end of the third c. CE). This small state, situated in the western Crimea and Taman Peninsula is a great example of an ancient multi-ethnic kingdom. A mixture of Greeks, local tribes, steppe nomads of Iranian stock, royalty of Mithridatic descent and last but not least Romans – all had to function hand in hand for several centuries.

According to the old fashioned vision of Bosporan society, it consisted of two groups: Greeks and ‘others’ (barbarians). However, Greek inscriptions provide examples of members of the Sarmatian elite eagerly adopting some elements of Greek culture and applying these elements to civic life. For this reason I will investigate whether there were such processes inside Bosporan society such as acculturation and hybridisation, and how they might have impacted the local Iranian populace. The growing significance of the non-Greeks forced the Bosporan rulers to seek their support and they frequently referred to Iranian symbols in their official propaganda. Hence, another task will be to investigate who the target of this propaganda was and what role the oriental symbols played.

The way I am planning to conduct my research, gives a great chance to trace hitherto unnoticed tendencies in the history of this region. Thanks to quantitative approach I am going to show how frequently the evidence occurs, and how it is connected with activities of the elite members. Pointing on this particular moments, will allow me to confront them with the general view of the Bosporan history. Next, I am going to check the quality of the sources, and to answer the question what was the level of engagement of the Bosporan society in typical Greek social phenomena such as sport, theatre and most importantly – public munificence.

According to my research hypothesis, the Bosporan Kingdom – situated on the outskirts of the Greco-Roman world, was under constant impact of the neighbouring powers, which found its reflection in the functioning of a local societies and elites. Despite its heterogenic ethnicity, elites had been taking part (more or less actively) in the typical Greek phenomena, sometimes adapting them to the local conditions.

To achieve my goals I will analyse all types of available epigraphic evidence (inscriptions), numismatic (coins) and literary sources. Moreover, to make my research complete, I will study the newest archaeological work devoted to the Black Sea area. Adapting of historical and philological research methods, combined with knowledge from other fields such as history of art, anthropology and archaeology, will allow me to present a coherent vision of the heterogenic society and its meaning in the Bosporan history.