

Description for the general public: **The Bosporan Kingdom and the Impact of Rome from the times of Mithridates Eupator**

In this project I am going to examine the position of the Bosporan Kingdom within the Roman imperial policy and the attitude of the ruling elite of the Bosphorus towards the Empire from the end of the second c. BCE until the end of the third c. CE. As the main idea is to present ongoing processes from the two perspectives: local (Bosporan) – strategies used by the local ruling elite; and global (Roman) – interests and capabilities of impacting the region throughout the subsequent centuries.

The discussed issues concerning Roman – Bosporan relations, can be placed into two categories depending on the perspective. The Bosporan perspective can be broadly understood as its attitude towards the Empire. Phenomena that were significant in shaping that attitude were: Mithridatism – referring to Eupator's anti-Roman heritage; Sarmatization – the growing influence of the non-Greek element within Bosporan society; official propaganda of the Bosporan rulers – titulature visible in the epigraphic and numismatic material used to underline loyalty to Rome or legitimation of power; and last but not least, the motivations of Bosporan *reges socii* to remain under Roman supervision – whether a fear of military intervention went hand in hand with a willingness to remain under Roman protection and being subdued.

Whereas, from the Roman point of view, Bosphorus was just one brick in the wall of their whole client state system. Most of these political organisms ceased to exist, being incorporated into the provincial administration throughout the first c. CE. To look closer at the factors which allowed the Bosporan Kingdom to avoid that fate, I have decided to juxtapose this northern Black Sea state with other kingdoms functioning in the so-called two-level sovereignty system. Hence, besides careful analysis of the Northern Pontic evidence I will look closer at cases of the selected eastern client states, which can be very helpful in the assessment of the Roman attitude towards the Bosporan Kingdom. Besides the meaning of the Hellenization, the role of the indigenous dynasties and geographical localization, the importance of the given state can be judged by its strategic localization.

Discussion over these complex issues necessitate both analysis of the source material and application of the given methodological approach. In my opinion, the ongoing trend in criticizing the nationalistic and Marxist-Leninist approach, which was dominating in the previous century is correct. I believe however, that instead of rejecting previous ideas *en bloc*, the one should examine these phenomena in context of their gradual changes and evolution. Therefore, I intend to use comparative method in order to present a coherent view on meaning and motivation standing behind long-lasting patterns in the Bosporan propaganda differed at various stages of the Roman-Bosporan *status quo*.

This project is interdisciplinary in nature, as it adopts epigraphic, numismatic, archaeologic and – to some extent – philological approaches. Moreover, it will contribute to the international discussion concerning the significance of the Northern Pontic region within the Roman imperial policy and the notion of the Roman client kingship in antiquity.