

The Black Sea: Hub of Peoples and Cultures



THE BLACK SEA:
HUB OF PEOPLES AND CULTURES
(8TH CENTURY BC–5TH/6TH CENTURY AD)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
SEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
ON BLACK SEA ANTIQUITIES
(THESSALONIKI, 26–30 SEPTEMBER 2022)

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF PROF. ALEXANDRU AVRAM

Edited by

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Editors' Preface

The sad and unusual circumstances of the Seventh International Congress on Black Sea Antiquities, which was held in Thessaloniki in September 2022, are well known: first and foremost, the sudden death of our dear friend Gocha Tsetsckhladze, 'the Founder', just a fortnight before the event. But there is more: the Congress was planned to take place a year earlier (2021), however the Covid pandemic, particularly the public policy responses to it, obliged us to postpone the event. Then came the sudden death of another good friend and co-founder Alexandru Avram, whence the decision to dedicate this Congress to his memory.

And finally, the unthinkable happened: war. For a congress on the Black Sea, with so many potential Ukrainian and Russian participants, one can easily understand what this would mean. We all explicitly condemn this war – any war, and any violent invasion of one country by another. War is man's worst invention. But people cannot be blamed for the decisions and acts of leaders and governments. Undoubtedly, strong feelings are held, but these should be left aside in an academic forum, It is a negation of our purpose if we re-divide, or allow ourselves to be divided, along some new iron curtain.

We hope that civility and understanding will reign in Warsaw in 2026. Clarissa Eden (wife of the then British prime minister) complained in 1956 that she had the Suez Canal flowing through her drawing room: the Suez crisis sundered friendships. We would not wish the Dnieper or Don to flow through our lecture rooms. We are very glad that in the auditorium where the Congress was held there were colleagues from both Ukraine and Russia. We all share the same interest and passion: the archaeology and history of the Black Sea. This must unite us, against any will for the opposite. This is the best message that we can send against the war.

As we promised several times both during and after the Congress, we indicated that we would not publish any paper presenting the results of illegal excavations in annexed areas of the Ukraine. This decision was respected by all contributors.

Despite all these difficulties, the event went ahead successfully. There were 93 attendees, delivering 48 oral presentations and displaying some 40 posters; 41 papers are published here. We are grateful to all the participants in the Congress for presenting papers and especially to those who submitted their papers following the instructions in a timely manner. Special thanks go also to the staff of the International Hellenic University in Thessaloniki for their hard work, often done behind the scenes, both before and during the Congress.

It is appropriate that Gocha's name appears on this volume. It would not exist without him. He presided over the editing of the abstracts and the preparation of the programme; he had also received the first submission (from one unable to attend). In this, and other respects, the volume largely follows its predecessors in style and format, though we have dispensed with repeating abstracts before individual papers; they are consolidated at the end of the volume. Thanks, once again, are richly deserved by David Davison and his team at Archaeopress for prompt publication.

At the opening of the Congress, and after our remarks, Alexander Podossinov and Jan de Boer made short and emotional statements about Gocha, his work and our collective loss. Vasilica Lungu (by 'Zoom') and Eka Avaliani followed them and urged us (JFH and MM) to continue Gocha's work through continuing his publications and holding future congresses (the next, as Gocha had already arranged, will be in Warsaw in September 2026). We are committed to doing this.

It is perhaps a sign of the times that only one paper for publication was received in a language other than English. English usage and practice feature throughout.

The death of Sir John Boardman casts another shadow over the volume. He was very active in the establishment of the Congress and in its early iterations. The master has followed his star pupil.

James Hargrave, Manolis Manoledakis

Message from the President of the Congress, Prof. Sir John Boardman (†)

The Black Sea Congresses have offered unparalleled opportunities to meet scholars of many nationalities, always well backed by visits to sites, and it is a pleasure to send this message to welcome you to the latest, the seventh, 25 years after the first. It is a welcome sign of the success of the congresses that we have reached this point and that the momentum is as strong as ever: the explosion of interest in the Black Sea shows no sign of abating. All present will be aware of the significant part in all of these developments played by our indefatigable Secretary-General, the late Gocha Tsetskhladze, not merely through his own scholarship, publications and projects but through his encouragement of others, the institutionalisation of these endeavours through Ancient West and East, its Colloquia supplements, and not least, these congresses themselves. Gocha's sudden and premature death casts a dark shadow.

Unfortunately, I cannot be present with you today, but I envy you the prospects of renewing friendships, making new ones, sharing knowledge and new information, making advances in scholarship and interpretation – and remembering Gocha.

We also here recall the work and scholarship of Prof. Alexandru Avram, deeply involved in the organisation of our previous congress in Constanța, an admired friend of all who have enjoyed these congresses. He will be much missed by all but his scholarship will not be forgotten, nor his generosity and friendship. It is a small sign of that, and well merited, that this Congress is dedicated to his memory.

Appreciation of Gocha Tsetskhladze

Possibly all that can be said about Gocha Tsetskhladze has been said in the last two years (see particularly AWE 23 [2024]). The timing of his death was so tragic in terms of the Black Sea Congress, one of his many great and lasting achievements, and its suddenness apparent since he was booking his return flights less than a month prior. Although his last years were dogged by increasing ill health – he was a resolutely heavy smoker – the end was sudden, culminating in a cardiac arrest which he had no strength left to counter.

In shock, we mourned him at the Congress, we mourn him still – I as one of his closest friends for over 30 years.

I have been involved with the Congress from the outset – I was in Varna in 1997. But I have never sought the spotlight (nor the letterhead). My reward is that there will be more congresses in the future – the next, in Warsaw in 2026, dedicated to Gocha and with a session on his work and influence. He deserves no less for he was, as someone described him, a titan of Black Sea archaeology.

Rest in peace beloved Gocha Revazovich.

My Zoom presentation from the morning of September 26th follows, slightly edited to remove the raw emotion.

And so to Hamlet without the prince. Some of you know me as a long-time collaborator of Gocha's. I met him in his first weeks in Oxford in the autumn of 1990 at a social event – a shy man, sitting in a corner nursing a drink. He was older than most of those present, and considerably better dressed in a foreign sort of way. Then and always the exotic. Oxford is a strange place in which all outsiders, including those of us used to other British universities, needed practical help – and I was the first person he had met there who could place Batumi on a map. I sought to provide that help. He needed it then, he still needed it. That he is not among us I take bitterly.

I am in Gocha's sitting room with just a few of his books behind me. His dining table, where latterly he worked, is piled high with material about Tios and about the Achaemenids, his two works in progress. Annotated photocopies for the Greeks in the Black Sea, the great work never to be, litter his desk.

He was, I think we might agree, the most prominent Georgian scholar of antiquity of his generation, of several generations. A phenomenon. His intellectual honesty, evident from a very early age, meant that he could not make himself accept the nationalist orthodoxy of Lordkipanidze in respect of Colchis, thus bringing a rocky relationship with many in Georgian academia (I understate). It also meant that by going to university in Kharkov, then Moscow, his horizons broadened further. Hence, almost by accident, the last-minute application for a Soros scholarship in Oxford and so to the world, and now eternity.

His translator from Oxford days remarked what a pity that he should have had so many disappointments during his professional life and to have made enemies both in his home country, Britain and elsewhere. I have witnessed his many successes but also his ultimate failure to achieve all that he deserved. He enjoyed the considerable estimation of his peers, but he was never able to 'sell' himself to interviewing panels, and he certainly would not sell himself for a mess of managerial pottage. A glorious naivety, interlaced with stubbornness, endearing and at once infuriating, persisted until his last breath. He paid the price for his honesty and, in some cases, was punished for doing good. To be one of his enemies tells us much about the people concerned. The disappointments were at the hands of modern university 'managers' – he recognised them for what they were. At both Royal Holloway and especially Melbourne he encountered deceit and ignorance among colleagues and apparatchiks alike – he had no time for the second rate or the party line (even in the Soviet Union) and, indeed, Melbourne drove him close to nervous collapse.

The recent *Festschrift* surely underlines his prominence and the regard in which he was held by his peers. This is the man called Mr Colonisation and King of Pontus – he relished both titles, but was too modest to use either – a man who did far more than anyone else to bring Black Sea Studies to the West and to bring Eastern and Western scholars together to mix, match and meld. No preaching here about the supposed superiority of one model of scholarship – but a deep distaste for the West's increasing obsession with theories – the building of castles on foundations of sand.

His death has cut me to the quick but I continue to devote myself to his legacy projects – in honour of a great friend and a great scholar. Memories of Gocha are things to treasure. The Black Sea Congress will continue. So too will Ancient West and East, his journal, and his publication series *Colloquia Antiqua*. For, despite declining health, to which the stresses and strains imposed on him in his later years at Melbourne contributed, he was wonderfully active.

He achieved his success almost despite the supposedly academic institutions for which he worked. We would not be here today without all the work that Gocha put into Black Sea studies. He followed in and filled the shoes of Minns and Rostovtzeff.

In a cliché, he was loved by those who met him – in whatever the circumstance (from his chiropodist upwards). His quality as a teacher was exemplary; his work ethic phenomenal. Work was his only activity – he had no hobbies, and the love of his life was the Pontus. He had a vision of quality and true scholarship. And he was always ready to help others. *Contra* Churchill, a modest man with lots to be immodest about. He made and remade lives, mine included. His innate, quiet charm shone through to the end. In a cliché, he was loved by all who met him

I conclude by sharing some of the messages from his former graduate students in Australia:

Before he left, I told him that I recalled digging shoulder to shoulder with him one morning at Pessinus: he was anxious to finish, and he took it upon himself to join me on all fours in the trench with trowel in hand. I told him that of all the time I'd known him, I would always remember and treasure that moment, personally excavating with such a renowned archaeologist. I knew from his expression that this meant something to him. These are meagre words.

I hardly need tell you that Gocha was a brilliant, sensitive, generous, determined, genuine, sincere and fundamentally decent person. He was unwavering and courageous in his commitment to what he saw as fair and right. He will have my admiration and gratitude always.

'Gocha had a profound effect on my life that was truly transformational, as you know. I saw this kind of magic first hand at the various conferences I had the honour of taking part in: the way he brought people together (at an international scale) was extraordinary. I will be forever grateful for knowing him and for all the help he gave me.'

Quite simply, those who knew him loved him and we will never forget him. I dearly hope that the *Festschrift*, now a *Gedenkschrift*, is a fitting tribute. The first of many.

The funeral was on October 6th at Hereford Crematorium, conducted by the former Dean of Hereford Cathedral, someone who knew him. His remains were returned to Georgia two weeks later. [As he wished, he now lies next to his mother in Kobuleti.]

James Hargrave

About Gocha

When I started writing my first paper on the Black Sea, coming from a university totally concentrated on Greek archaeology in Greece, I fell on a strange name, which I could hardly pronounce. Trying to write it correctly in the citation was a real torture, and the auto correction would anyway underline it. I couldn't even decide whether the name was male or female. The only thing I was sure about was that it was of Georgian origin.

Hoping that I would not encounter it again during my study, I soon got disappointed, since it was there again on the next page of the paper I was reading, and on the next and the next. Well before finishing, I had realised that this guy must have been a very important scholar on Black Sea studies.

A bit later, when I started my second Black Sea paper, I had already replaced the desire to avoid this name with the desire to look for it. I wanted necessarily to find out what Gocha Tsetskhladze had written about my new topic. Of course, I found a lot of things. And not much later, I had discovered that this man was the so-called 'Mr Colonisation' and later 'the king of the Black Sea'.

Two PhD dissertations, one from the East and one from the West, five monographs, 226 articles and chapters, 31 book reviews. But also an international journal with a monograph series supplement, 32 edited volumes, seven huge international congresses on the Black Sea and others on relevant topics. These volumes and congresses represent one of the most significant aspects of his work, to which he dedicated his whole life: the connection between East and West, on the occasion of a very important topic that represents both worlds itself.

Gocha was insightful enough to understand that there was a promising future for the Black Sea studies in the West. But he was also lucky, because he found himself in the right place at the right moment. The importance of the Black Sea was always acknowledged by many western scholars, and many eastern scholars were always willing to share the results of their archaeological investigations with their western colleagues. When the cold war ended and the walls fell, Gocha, having contacts with both worlds and deep knowledge of the Black Sea, and – very crucial – of its languages, was the ideal person to initiate an essential development of the Black Sea studies in the world – not just the West or the East.

Fortunately, he didn't miss this opportunity; on the contrary he did his best to bring the two sides together, to make everybody comprehend the significance of the Black Sea and the peripheral world in general for the shaping of the world culture, and to encourage scholars search and write about relevant matters. The ancient Black Sea studies would have been in a much more primitive stage today, were it not for Gocha's research, dynamism and eagerness to bring the East to the West and the West to the East.

I had already come to the International Hellenic University, and the MA in Black Sea Studies had been launched, when I decided to write to Gocha and introduce myself and the programme. His reply was immediate: 'you have an amazing MA indeed'. And this is how we started to correspond with each other and co-operate. In 2014 I wanted to invite him to come here and give a lecture on any topic he would like. He immediately said yes, proposing Pessinus and the Mother of Gods. At this time he was living in Australia, which is literally on the other side of the world. I thought 'although a celebrity in his topic, he is a polite man, he doesn't want to disappoint me from the beginning; but he is not coming'. And yet, some days after, he told me that his flight was already booked, asking me to book an hotel room. Indeed, he made a two-day journey just for a one-hour lecture.

This was the first time I met him in person. Driving him back to the hotel after the lecture, I remember telling him that even though I was seeing him for the first time, I felt that I was a student of his; for he had been a source of knowledge and inspiration for me. He was very tired from the journey, the jet lag and the lecture, but when he heard this I saw a sparkle in his eyes.

His students were a very important part of his life. As one of them, Cecily Grace, writes in this *Festschrift*,

Gocha had a life-long sense of responsibility and concern for his students. Those of us whose theses sit contentedly in his extensive library are part of his academic family. We know that friendship and mentorship from Gocha is something we can rely on, no matter in what direction life takes us.

The next couple of days of his visit in Thessaloniki in 2014, we went to see the sites and museums, to eat and have a cup of coffee. This is when we really got to know one another and became friends. The next eight years, his last eight years, our friendship strengthened, our co-operation became increasingly fruitful, and the privileges of his sincere friendship marked me more and more. In our dense – sometimes almost every day – correspondence, we shared plans and fears, ideas and theories, suggestions and wishes.

This was Gocha, a modest 'king', a prominent scholar, a giving teacher, a devoted friend. And a meeting point of West and East himself. I am sorry that he is not here to receive his *Festschrift* from us, but I am glad that he saw it and was aware of our appreciation for him and his work. I wish that he is somewhere good right now and, even better, that he can see and enjoy this wonderful gathering from afar.

Manolis Manoledakis

Launch of the *Festschrift*, 26 September 2022

Gocha Tsetskhladze's untiring work for the Black Sea Congresses and for his masterly periodical *Ancient West and East* are familiar to all scholars of the Classical and Eastern worlds and their archaeology. It is meet that it should be celebrated by a *Festschrift* in this way; it is a great sadness that he is no longer with us (I am assured that he did see the *Festschrift* on the day he was taken to hospital). His own scholarship was exemplary and covers the great field to which he devoted his own work and the content of *Ancient West and East*. A whole generation of scholars has savoured his scholarship and imagination in the congresses and will continue to do so by reading his publications and continuing to read *Ancient West and East*. He has become part of the history of classical archaeology and scholarship and this publication can only begin to express the admiration and congratulations of his many admirers. It also serves as a reminder of the work and scholarship of Prof. Alexandru Avram, one of the co-editors, who died untimely little more than a year ago. That Gocha should follow him a mere 13 months later is a bitter pill.

John Boardman (†)

Almost 1600 pages, 85 contributions, over a hundred authors, many personal recollections, divided rather arbitrarily into Black Sea and hinterland in vol. 1, the rest in vol. 2, with a few stray papers on modern themes – a project about which Gocha knew from a very early stage (one of his Georgian colleagues spilled the beans, for here was another thing in which West and East differed), and thus, in line with his personality, he tried to interfere. I took the first soundings about this venture at our last congress in Constanța in 2017. The project grew, almost to a point of unmanageability – it could easily have been longer – and so did the timescale. It would not have been ready, as planned, for the then next congress, scheduled for 2021; as it was, the same thing, a novel cold virus which had all the public authorities in a funk, further delayed publication just as it had delayed the congress, and the death of dear Alexandru Avram imposed additional strain (he had taken proofs with him to Histria where he died). What none of us could have foreseen is the ghastly turn of events just two weeks ago.

I was the principal editor, latterly the only one; Alexandru dealt with French and German contributions and provided a lengthy piece of his own. Gocha desperately wanted Sir John's name on it, but then Gocha was in a class by himself among contemporary ancient historians – which is why the *Festschrift* was, unusually, edited entirely by scholars older than he, in inversion of the common practice, including Sir John, now 95, whose prized pupil he was: he displaced Snodgrass. A few unexpected silences and a curt refusal from the Fens. For the most part, the evident enthusiasm of all contributors for the project has carried me along. It benefits from its larger format and is indeed a handsome production, for which I thank Bert Verrept and his colleagues at Peeters. I think we can take pride in it – a monumental publication now marking a monumental life.

It was my great pleasure to hand Gocha a copy of the *Festschrift* a few hours before he entered hospital. He was pleased; perhaps it was his last pleasure except for one more cigarette (and I probably gave him his last). I am also the last non-medical person to have seen him alive and the first to see him dead, privileges I would readily have foregone. He leaves a huge gap in the lives of all of us. It is an honour to have known him, to have enjoyed his friendship and, in some small way, to have helped him. Let us keep the flame alive, illuminating the Black Sea!

James Hargrave

Alexandru Avram (1956–2021)

Others can write of his fine scholarship, and certainly Gocha would have; this is more of a personal reflection.

I said farewell to Alexandru on a sunny Sunday lunchtime at a small railway station in Mid Wales as he and Suzana boarded a train for Birmingham, thence London, an invitation to Le Mans ringing in my ears. That was in April 2018: how little could we know what the future held. I never saw Le Mans, I never saw Alex again – I recently saw Suzana. They had been to stay with Gocha Tsetsckhladze at his large house in Llandrindod Wells and, as ever, I was a willingly conscripted travel planner and driver for the visit – the previous day had seen us visit the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

There was a lighter side to Alex, but he was a true academic and scholar: his work was all. Nothing would really interfere, apart from a glass or two of beer. I had met him a number of times previously, though in passing. We really got to know each other in Constanța (and Histria) in 2017 at the Black Sea Congress (suitably based in the Oxford Hotel): we were, with Gocha, the editors of the proceedings and organisers, especially Alex, of the event itself. I was also putting forward the idea of a *Festschrift* for Gocha in which Alex would be one of the main editors. We also talked of King Michael, two of whose daughters were the first Romanians (should that be Roumanians?) I had met, long before.

I know that Alex's e-mail correspondence with Gocha contained many tart comments and sharp satire of the academic world and institutions with which they were embroiled. They also contained details of Alex's many plans for research once he had cut the knot with Le Mans through his imminent retirement. Gocha hoped, especially with the success of the 2017, to involve Alex more in the organisation of future events. As it turns out, that Congress was the apogee and an epitaph to their collaboration.

In contemplating Alex (and Gocha) my thoughts turn to the words of W.S. Gilbert in HMS Pinafore, written almost a century and a half ago, to describe the kind of polished performer who was, then as now, their antithesis – the reason that they got on so well together is that both were serious, dedicated and focused, thus with no time for academic politics and little time (fully reciprocated) for the placemen who embraced it. As the Rt Hon. Sir Joseph Porter, KCB, sings:

I polished up that handle so carefully that now I am the Ruler of the Queen's Navy! ... I always voted at my party's call and I never thought of thinking for myself at all. I thought so little, they rewarded me by making me the Ruler of the Queen's Navy!

The glittering prizes, awarded by the usual suspects (the academic machine – or do I mean 'machine-academics?'), may have escaped them, but not the high regard of their true peers, scholars of equal seriousness, whose profound esteem they enjoyed and who remain loyal upholders of their legacy. Some comments on A.I. Doyle, an old friend of mine, strike home:

[A] ... life lived unstintingly and unsparingly in the service of scholarship, not simply through his many publications, but also through the generosity with which he shared his knowledge and the fruits of his researches with others. ... His knowledge was always at the disposal of the enquiring student. ... always courteous in delivering correction, and almost always right (*The Library* 18.3 [2018], 376–81).

I have an image of the perfect Afterlife: Alex and Gocha are drinking and smoking, deep in conversation with Minns, Rostovtzeff, Pârvan (another stubborn individual), Alexandrescu and others.

James Hargrave

List of Illustrations

The Getae and Scythians at Callatis and in its territory, 4th–2nd centuries BC

Nicolaie Alexandru

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Owen Doonan

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The Early Roman burials from Histria

Liana Oța

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Strabo’s ‘Ancient Chersonesus’: new discoveries (*phrourion*, acropolis, temple of the acropolis)

Angelina Zedgenidze

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