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ALEXANDRU AVRAM – IN MEMORIAM

Alexandru Avram – A Universal Scholar

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Abstract: *Alexandru Avram (1956–2021), a preeminent Romanian scholar of ancient history and epigraphy whose sudden passing is described as the greatest loss to Dobrujan studies since Vasile Pârvan. A polyglot expert in Greek and Latin sources, Avram authored a monumental bibliography covering Black Sea antiquities, Greek colonization, and amphorology, including major corpora like Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris. He held prestigious positions at the University of Bucharest and Le Mans University, serving as a devoted teacher and a vital „ambassador" connecting Romanian research to the international scientific community. Beyond his erudition, he is remembered for his professional integrity, his role in the 1989 Revolution, and a legacy of unfinished projects that remain foundational for future classical studies.*

Keywords: *Alexandru Avram, Epigraphy, Scythia Minor, Pontic Antiquities, Amphorology, Ancient History*

Farewell to Alexandru

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Abstract: *This personal tribute reflects on the life and academic character of Alexandru Avram, highlighting his profound dedication to scholarship and his disdain for academic politics. The author recalls their collaboration on the Black Sea Congress and editorial projects, noting a mutual respect that transcended professional duties. Avram is remembered as a serious, focused individual who earned the high esteem of his true peers through intellectual integrity. Ultimately, he is envisioned in a scholarly afterlife, continuing the dialogue with the great historians of the past.*

Keywords: *Alexandru Avram Scholarship Black Sea Congress Academic Integrity Intellectual Legacy*

Dimitrie Cantemir's Letter to Jeremiah Cacavelas:
An Essay in the Philosophy of Knowledge

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Abstract: *As a complement to historical approaches which consist of reading Dimitrie Cantemir's dedicatory letter to Jeremiah Cacavelas, accompanying his work Sacro-sanctae scientiae indepingibilis imago, as a source documenting the hardships endured by the prince in his youth the author proposes a reading of it in terms of intellectual autobiography, specifically within the framework of the theory of knowledge.*
Following rigorously the path traced by Cantemir, the author identifies its philosophical sources in Platonic and Neoplatonic texts, as well as in their tradition extending from Pseudo-Dionysius to Marsilio Ficino.

Keywords: *Reason, intellect, love, Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius*

On the Date of the Orphic Bone Plaques from Olbianon

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Abstract: *Orphic and other similar beliefs, which attract the attention of many scholars, are attested to in different places of the Greek world, beginning from the Archaic period. In the early period, they are known mainly from literary sources, and there is little epigraphical and archaeological evidence of the Orphic cults before the second half of the 4th century BCE.*

The Olbian bone plaques with brief dicta were dated by the first editors to the 5th century BCE, and this date has never been revised. Nevertheless, many scholars note the unusually early existence of the Orphic community in the remote Olbia Pontica. This article argues that in accordance with their linguistic and palaeographic peculiarities, these inscriptions should be redated to the mid-4th century BCE (or later), i.e. to the period when Orphic and similar beliefs became common in the Greek world, including its periphery.

Keywords: *Olbia Pontica, Orphics, epigraphy, bone plaques, Orphic dicta*

On the Margins of a Lost Inscription from Ulpiana (Dardania)

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Abstract: *An inscription from Ulpiana (Dardania, in Upper Moesia), now lost, had been well restored except for the end of line 1. Here, we revisit the study of this monument and propose a restoration—convincing, in our view—for the end of that line. It concerns a votive monument for Jupiter, the genius loci, and all other gods and goddesses, erected by a speculator of the Fourth Legion.*

Keywords: *votive inscription, Ulpiana, Dardania, Jupiter, genius, all the gods, all the goddesses, speculator, legio IIII Flavia, Alexander Severus*

The *Aulon*, from Pisidia to Karpathos and Beyond.
Notes on Hellenic Topography and Toponymy

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Abstract: *Since the Greek Classical period, numerous literary texts have employed the word αὐλών to designate a long valley, often steep-sided and relatively narrow, but above all fertile within a mountainous environment. Occurrences of the word αὐλών are rarer in epigraphic texts, but the use of this term from the 4th century BCE until the Roman Imperial period reflects a marked interest in the agricultural and political development of land by royal and imperial powers. Comparing the topography and toponymy of several regions in the Mediterranean basin, particularly the eastern part, allows for a partial inventory of this type of space and provides specific observations on Hellenic historical geography, from Pisidia and Caria to the island of Karpathos, and from Macedonia to the Western Mediterranean, with brief references to Crete and Illyria.*

Keywords: *Greek historical geography, geopolitics, agriculture, terminology, epigraphy, literary sources*

Proxenos, Proxenia, and the Proxeny Decrees as a Research Task.
With a Special Focus on the Black Sea Region

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on two aspects. The first part briefly discusses the origin of the terms proxenos/proxenia and the evolution of friendly relations from private hospitality to partnerships between an individual and a state. It also emphasizesthat the obligation to represent the interests of other states, even when this led to a conflict of interest – what in modern terms might be called 'espionage' in favour of the adopted country – was associated with special honours and privileges. The text also examines the changing meaning of proxenia over time. The second part focuses on the proxeny decrees as a part of Greek epigraphy, their treatment in the literature, and the research interest in these inscriptions. It also highlights the challenges and the need for a catalogue of the proxeny decrees of the Greek cities on the Black Sea. At the same time, the author is aware that in reconstructing historical images it is crucial to relate the proxeny decrees to other documents in order to gain a more complete understanding. Proxeny decrees can be considered both as part of the honorary decrees and as a category in their own right. Their importance varies according to geographical context and research interest. It is emphasized that a holistic approach is required to adequately reconstruct the historical information. Thus, the paper highlights the important role of proxenia in ancient Greek city-state relations, particularly in the Black Sea region, and traces its development and decline over time.*

Keywords: *proxenos, proxenia, proxeny decrees, links with the outside world, Black Sea region*

A Scarab from Istros

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Abstract: *In 2001, a small scarab made of dark greenish-blue 'Egyptian' paste was discovered during the excavation of the 'Episcopal Basilica' foundations in Istros (Constanța, Romania). Its elementary shape and the inscription engraved on its base before firing – Jmn-Rʿ, one of the many trigrammata of Amun, near the solar symbol of Re – show that this scarab belongs to a series of scarabs found at Naukratis but also on the Black Sea coast at Berezan-Olbia, Panticapaion, Orgame and Mesambria. Many of these finds are later than the 'scarab factory' excavated by W.M.F. Petrie in the sanctuary of Naukratis and dated by him up to the early 6th century BC. This calls for a critical re-examination of the excavations in which these amulets were found, their circulation paths, and their possible meanings. The 'Egyptian' scarabs could be worn by several generations. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that these small scarabs were made in several workshops in Egypt and on the Eastern shores of the Inner Sea, by craftsmen who mechanically reproduced a model dating back to the 18th dynasty but who probably had a general knowledge of its prophylactic meaning.*

Keywords: *Greek Egyptomania, Egyptianising amulet, cryptogramy, Amun-Re, Naukratis, Istros, Danube, Black Sea*

Between “Friendly Greetings” and “Due Respects”: An Impossible Collaboration, mirrored by ten Letters between Scarlat Lambrino and Dionisie M. Pippidi (1931–1932)

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Abstract: *A small collection of ten letters (1930–1931) exchanged between two Romanian philologists and historians trained in Paris, Scarlat Lambrino (1891–1964) and Dionisie M. Pippidi (1905–1993), concerns their collaboration on the* Bibliographie classique *projected by Jules Marouzeau. These letters provide details which, corroborated by other known or forthcoming epistolary files, shed light on the diverging paths and specific segments of the biographies of these two representatives of Romanian historical philology—one the successor of Vasile Pârvan at the University of Bucharest and at the Istros excavations, the other in the process of completing and extending his studies in Paris and Rome.*

Keywords: *Classical Bibliography, scholarly correspondence, Scarlat Lambrino, Paris, Dionisie M. Pippidi*

The Road Station *Templum Iovis* according to *Tabula Peutingeriana* = *Aristaeum* after Pliny the Elder: Substantiation of A Hypothesis

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Abstract: *Our task is to verify the hypothesis related to the identity of Aristaeum mentioned by Pliny the Elder and of statio Templum Iouis indicated in Tabula Peutingeriana. The article contains evidence of historiographical nature and results from our field observations at Cherkovishteto locality (an archaeological site unknown so far) in the eastern part of the Haemus mountains (Stara Planina).*

Keywords: Aristaeum, *Aristaeus*, *Haemus mountains*, Templum Iouis, Tabula Peutingeriana *(TP)*

Oropos and The Publicani

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Abstract: *In 73 B.C. the Oropians gained a senatus consultum against Roman publicani, who illegally collected taxes in their territory (IG, VII2 2, 308). This paper demonstrates that there was a substantial delay between the Oropians' appeal and the final decision of the Roman senate, though the legal case was clear. Probably this was engineered in favour of the publicani, who apparently could keep all they had grabbed until the senate's resolution.*

Keywords: *Oropos, Amphiaraos, publicani, Roman Republic, senatus consultum*

Five Funerary Inscriptions from Northwestern Lycia

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Abstract: *Five funerary inscriptions preserved in the archaeological and epigraphic collection of the Fethiye Museum in south-western Turkey are presented in this article. No. 1 that is already published has been revised, and nos. 2–5 are published for the first time. Provenance of three inscriptions is uncertain, and two of them originate from Telmessos and Sidyma. The article provides an iconographic, onomastic and historical analysis of five monuments from ancient Lycia.*

Keywords: *funerary inscriptions, Graeco-Roman period, north-western Lycia, Asia Minor*

Achilles' Shell – An *Imago Mundi* in Search of a Body

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Abstract: *In Ovid's* Metamorphoses*, heroes like Hercules and Achilles survive death and transcend earthly boundaries after their bodies are cremated. Achilles' situation is nevertheless special. After his death, this hero leaves behind a unique memory of himself: an armor, a faithful mold of his body, and a shield which is a miniature copy of the universe. While Ajax claims the shield due to his physical power, this article attempts to prove that the true heir to Achilles' weapons can only be Ulysses, due to his polytropism and his unique interaction with Achilles on Skyros. Through kourotrophic and homoerotic behaviors, Ulysses can boast that Achilles is his invention. More importantly, Ulysses' penetrating mind is the only one capable of understanding the cosmic complexity of the shield. In the end he will suffer his own metamorphosis, becoming an Achilles-like warrior, ready to take Troy, once he acquires Achilles' weaponry.*

Keywords: *Achilles, shield, Ulysses, Ajax, cosmos.*

The Hydraulic Stone – Sawing Machine of Hierapolis in Phrygia

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Abstract: *A small side of a sarcophagus lid discovered at Hierapolis in Phrygia displays a relief well known to historians of technology, but largely overlooked by other specialists of Antiquity. It depicts a stone-sawing machine powered by water, dating to the second half of the third century A.D., and is accompanied by the signature of M. Aur. Ammianos. This individual claims association with Daedalus, yet it cannot be determined with certainty whether he was the inventor of the system or merely took pride in having constructed a machine of considerable technical complexity. The metrical inscription completing the signature, connected to a current of unconventional reflections on death, confirms that he was indeed the owner of the sarcophagus: the main face of the chest, which would normally have borne the epitaph, has not been preserved.*

Keywords: *hydraulic energy, epitaph, Hierapolis in Phrygia, stone sawing, engineer's signature*

Sketch for a Literary Portrait of the Young Cicero (III)

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Abstract: *Continuing his research developed in articles published in two volumes of our journal (Studii Clasice, XLIX/2020 and L/2021), the author examines further references to the poetic work of the young Cicero, references preserved in the biography of Emperor Gordian (which forms part, as is well known, of the collection of lives of Roman emperors known under the famous title* Historia Augusta*). These references concern the poems* Aratus, Nilus, (H)alcyona(e) *and* Vxorius. *An additional reference comes from Quintilian (VIII, 6, 73). Cicero's poetic work belongs to a late preneoteric phase, marking the transition to the neoterism of the Caesarian period. Thus, it may be described as a transitional preneoterism (though certainly tending toward neoterism proper).*

Keywords: *Aratus, Nilus, Halcyonae, Vxorius, evolution of preneoterism*

The Recepe for Happiness in Seneca's *De Vita Beata*

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Abstract: *Seneca dedicates his treatise De vita beata to a subject that is always current: the recipe for happiness. He was thus reviving in the Roman world an idea debated since the 5th century BC in the Greek world. For Democritus, happiness was "a matter of the soul" and the access to it, i.e. to the inner fulfillment (εὐθυμίη), was depending on one's intelligence and discernment, although they could also bring unhappiness. The Stoics saw in "the good judgment" (φρόνησις) happiness itself, whereas for Epicurus' followers it was only a means to get there. Aristotle believed that practicing virtue can lead one to a state of happiness only if a few external conditions are attained: good health, appreciation of others, living in a well-governed state. Inspired by all his Greek predecessors, Seneca has his own recipe to present to the Roman public, based primarily on the principles of the Stoic school. First, it is necessary to define what "happiness" is, the goal of all people, and then to find the means to reach it. If, in accordance with the Stoic doctrine, it is inextricably linked to the "highest (or absolute) good", then establishing its nature is the first step. For Seneca, living in harmony with nature, in its broadest sense, is the winning formula, and the question of pleasure (uoluptas), always present in the discourse of Epicurus' school, must be dealt with only in correct reference to the highest good (summum bonum). This can be achieved only through the strenuous pursuit of a project of life.*

Keywords: *Seneca,* De uita beata, *happiness, Stoicism, summum bonum.*

Remarks on the Ethnonym Geticus in Genoese Sources from the Black Sea Region

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Abstract: *The article analyses the meaning of the medieval term Geticus used in the Genoese sources regarding the Black Sea region at the end of the Middle Ages. The historians argued that this term refers to the Goths, to the Circassians, or even to the Romanians. After briefly discussing the main explanatory theories that have been previously put forward, the author provides arguments for identifying the Getici population with the Circassians who live in the Northwestern Caucasus region.*

Keyword: *Geticus, Genoa, Black Sea, Goths, Circassians, Romanians*

The East European Silk Commerce with Central Asia After the Downfall of Tamerlane

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Abstract: *The present article explores the trade relations between Central Asia and the Black Sea region during the fifteenth century. After a summary of the main historiographical theories that endorse the general idea that the silk commerce between the Orient and the Pontic ports ceased almost entirely following the military pursuits of Tamerlane, the author embarks on a critical examination of several obscure Latin terms, found in the administrative registers kept by the Genoese in Caffa, which designate silk varieties of camocatus, such as camocatus kufteri, camocatus sarancha, camocatus besbades and camocatus sepai. The analysis of this Latin terminology coupled with other insights gleaned from diverse source materials allows the conclusion that, albeit on a diminished scale, the trading activities uniting Central Asia and the Pontic basin continued throughout the fifteenth century.*

Keywords: *camocatus, Black Sea, Central Asia, Genoese Caffa, trade, silk, Tamerlane.*