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Coracanda, Korokondamè, Korokondamitis: Notes on the most ancient names of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, the Kuban Bosphorus and the southern part of the Taman Island

Anca Dan, Helmut Brückner, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Daniel Kelterbaum, Udo Schlotzhauer, Denis Zhuravlev

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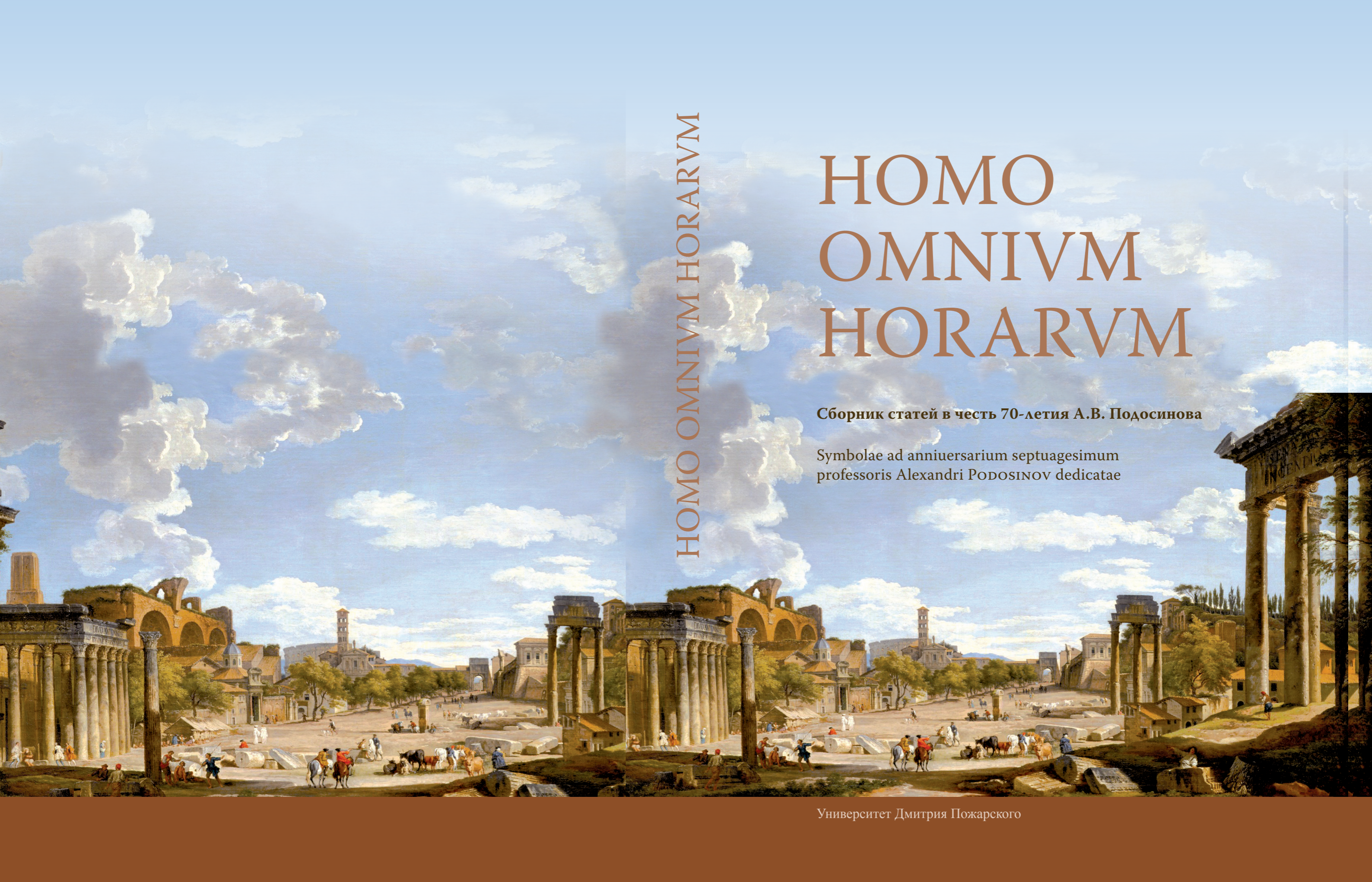
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HOMO OMNIVM HORARVM

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Сборник статей в честь 70-летия А.В. Подосинова

Symbolae ad anniuersarium septuagesimum
professoris Alexandri PODOSINOV dedicatae

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Cura Alexii BELOUSOV
et Catarinae ILYUSHECHKINA
in lucem editae

In aedibus Academiae Pozharskianae
Mosquae
MMXX

НОВОМ ОМНИВМ НОРАРВМ

Сборник статей в честь 70-летия
А.В. Подосинова

Под редакцией
А.В. БЕЛОУСОВА
и Е.В. ИЛЮШЕЧКИНОЙ

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ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ

В этом году Александру Васильевичу Подосинову исполняется семьдесят лет. Как и о многих других ученых здесь можно, конечно, сказать, что все эти годы Александр Васильевич посвятил тому, чтобы нам стало известно об античности чуть больше, чем было известно прежде. Но Александр Васильевич не просто ученый, а человек, для которого дружба и любовь обладают не меньшей (если не большей) ценностью, чем академические занятия. Все, кто имеет счастье знать Александра Васильевича лично, могут подтвердить, что само общение с ним – это особое счастье. В любой, даже совсем невеселой ситуации, самый беглый разговор с Подосиновым внушает радость и оптимизм, который он излучает без преувеличения на всех, с кем общается.

Практически для всех в этом сборнике первые шаги в науке были так или иначе связаны с Александром Васильевичем. Кто-то вместе с ним учился на одном факультете, кто-то познакомился с ним на конференции и с тех пор по-настоящему дружит с ним, кому-то он писал отзыв на диссертацию, кому-то повезло еще больше – сама диссертация была написана под руководством Александра Васильевича, руководителя очень внимательного и в любой момент сомнений или научных поисков способного зарядить человека своим интересом и поддержать добрым словом, кто-то проработал с ним несколько лет в одном секторе или на одной кафедре.

Все авторы этого сборника, также как и огромное количество друзей и коллег Александра Васильевича вне этой публикации, хотели бы выразить ему свою любовь и признание. Новых свершений и успехов Вам, дорогой Александр Васильевич! Подобно Томасу Мору для Эразма, Вы для нас всех – *homo omnium horarum*.

А.В. Белоусов и Е.В. Илюшечкина
апрель 2020 г.
Москва, Гамбург

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***Coracanda, Korokondamè, Korokondamitis: Notes on the most
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CORACANDA, KOROKONDAMÈ, KOROKONDAMITIS:
Notes on the most ancient names
of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, the Kuban Bosphorus
and the southern part of the Taman Island *

ANCA DAN, HELMUT BRÜCKNER, HANS-JOACHIM GEHRKE,
DANIEL KELTERBAUM, UDO SCHLOTZHAUER,
DENIS ZHURAVLEV

Abstract: Following on from the geoarchaeological reconstruction of the ancient archipelago and channels of the Kerch Straits before the progradation of the Kuban Delta, this paper offers arguments for the identification of *Coracanda* with the “Kuban Bosphorus”, of *Korokondamè* with Volna 1 and the southern part of the Taman Island, and of *Korokondamitis* with the Bugaz, Kyzyltash and Zukur Liman. These ancient names could go back to an Old Iranian description of the straits as a “throat, gorge”. They are coherent with other Greek and non-Greek toponyms in the region and could have influenced the local anchoring of the Cimmerian myth.

Keywords: Kerch, Bosporan Kingdom, geoarchaeology, historical geography, toponymy, etymology, Strabo, Pomponius Mela, Pliny the Elder, Iranian languages, cultural transfers

INTRODUCTION: INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH ON THE CIMMERIAN BOSPORUS

One of the main results of the German-Russian project of geoarchaeological investigations in the Taman Peninsula, led by U. Schlotzhauer and D. Zhuravlev since 2006, is the reconstruction of the ancient archipelago situated in the middle of the Kerch Straits (the ancient Cimmerian Bosphorus) between the Black Sea (*Pontus*

* We are extremely happy to honour here Prof. Dr. Alexander Podossinov, leading specialist in the history of ancient geography, who changed our way of looking at ancient spaces by ground-breaking articles published since the 1970s, and who contributed greatly to our understanding of the Roman descriptions of the Black Sea. We are also very grateful to Alexey Belousov and to Ekaterina Ilyushechkina for the kind invitation to contribute to this *Festschrift*, and for having showed great patience and full support through the publication process. Warmest thanks go to Samra Azarnouche and Frantz Grenet for their precious help with Indo-Iranian linguistics. All remaining errors are our own. Anca Dan wrote the first version of this paper in 2019, and shared it with the co-authors for further discussions.



Fig. 1. Fragment of the Sovietic map of the Krasnodar region 1:500000 (137–3), showing the late 20th century situation of the Kuban Delta (1986)

Euxinus) and the Sea of Azov (Μαιώτις λίμνη / *palus Maeotis*, fig. 1–6)¹. The archaeologists coordinating the project collected all the archaeological data around Taman Peninsula in the ancient *Sindikè* (region of the Sindian people *lato sensu*, between the Caucasus, the Black Sea, the Azov Sea and the straits) and carried out surveys and excavations, revealing the patterns of the Archaic Greek fortifications². In order to reconstruct the ancient landscapes, they brought together an interdisciplinary team of geoscientists (geomorphologists, geophysicists) and historians as specialists for ancient space representations (in texts and images).

Using geoscientific methods (electromagnetic surveys, more than 100 drill cores studied by sedimentological as well as macro- and microfauna analyses, plus ¹⁴C dating of organic material), D. Kelterbaum and H. Brückner determined the sea, lake, and river patterns with approximate depths, for different historical periods³. Besides the archaeological excavations (in Golubitskaja 2, Strelka 2, Krasnyj Oktober' and Blagovetschenskaja), several interdisciplinary surveys were conducted between 2011 and 2019. By comparing the reconstructed maps (fig. 3–6) with archaeological data and descriptions of the region interpreted by A. Dan and H.-J. Gehrke, we can propose new identifications of archaeological sites and localisations of ancient toponyms: for the first time, they fit all the ancient itineraries and distances⁴.

In this paper, we present an example of such an identification with broader consequences on our view of the ancient Cimmerian Bosphorus and our reading of Greek and Latin texts from early Roman times. We identify the hydronym *Coracanda* with the reconstructed “Kuban Bosphorus”, a “Sindian” channel in the straits. *Coracanda*'s lexical relatives — the toponym *Korokondamè* and the hydronym *Korokondamitis* — should be identified with a part of the main island of Taman (the νῆσος of the ancient historical and epigraphical texts⁵), and with the open lagoon, which had formed in antiquity to the south-east of the island in a former part of the Sindian Gulf, respectively.

This interpretation changes the current representations of the Asiatic part of the Bosphoran Kingdom (as illustrated in the *Barrington Atlas* map 87i). According to Strabo's itinerary from the *Maeotis* to the *Pontus* (11.2), following the coasts reconstructed by geomorphological evidence, the traditional identification of *Korokon-*

¹ Cf. the preliminary list of publications in Журавлев, Шлотцауер 2016a: 94–97. A complete reconstruction of the historical geography of the Straits will be published in our forthcoming book *Die Geographie der Taman'-(Halb)insel in der Antike. Untersuchungen zur Paläogeographie, historischen Topographie und Archäologie des asiatischen Teils des Kimmerischen Bosphorus seit der griechischen Kolonisation. Archäologie in Eurasien*.

² Журавлев *et al.* 2010; Журавлев, Ломтадзе, Шлотцауер 2010; Журавлев, Шлотцауер, Кельтербаум 2010; Журавлев, Шлотцауер 2011; Schlotzhauer, Zhuravlev 2013; Schlotzhauer, Zhuravlev 2014; Журавлев, Шлотцауер 2014; Журавлев, Шлотцауер, Фирсов 2016; Schlotzhauer 2016; Журавлев, Шлотцауер 2016a-b; Schlotzhauer *et al.* 2017; Журавлев, Батасова, Шлотцауер 2019.

³ Cf. D. Kelterbaum in Журавлев *et al.* 2010: 180–182; Brückner *et al.* 2010; Kelterbaum *et al.* 2011; Журавлев *et al.* 2015; Кельтербаум, Журавлев, Шлотцауер 2016; Dan *et al.* 2016.

⁴ The only study of the Black Sea's ancient distances remains Arnaud 1992; cf. Arnaud 2005.

⁵ *E.g.* Strab. 11.2.9; *CIRB* 40, 697, 982, 1000; *SEG* 56, 933 = *BullÉp* 2008, 721–722 No 432.



Fig. 2. Location of the modern names mentioned in the text on the Taman Peninsula (compiled from SRTM and Landsat Data; © A. Dan, D. Kelterbaum)

damitis with either the Gulf of Taman or a “Shemardanskij” channel is impossible: in fact, all the geomorphological drills and old maps (fig. 1–8) clearly show that during historical times there was no water channel flowing into the Taman Gulf, south-west of Sennoj, near the modern Primorskij village.

The first part of this paper deals with the name *Coracanda*, mentioned in the 1st century CE by Pomponius Mela: we show that it designates the Kuban Bosphorus, six centuries after Hipponax’ metaphor of the “Sindian cleft”. The second part is a discussion about the location of *Korokondamè* and *Korokondamitis*. In the third part, we try to explain the etymology of these names, by going back to the oldest names of the Cimmerian Bosphorus that we can reconstruct today from an Indo-

Fig. 3-6. Reconstructions of the Cimmerian Bosphorus based on geomorphological drills, sedimentological and paleobiological analyses and ¹⁴C datings, illustrating four periods: 5th cent. BCE (when the Kuban Bosphorus is a fully marine channel); 1st cent. BCE/CE (when the Kuban Delta front hits the strait between Strelka and Dzhighinka, flowing both towards the Black Sea and the Azov Sea; Semibratnjeje is surrounded by the delta); 5th cent. CE (the Delta was filling the ancient maritime channel; the sand spits blocked the access to the ancient ports; the navigation remains possible with boats); 17th cent. (the ancient channel is silted up; navigation remained possible with fishing boats, depending on the season).

The numbers correspond to archaeological sites inventoried by I. Paromov (© D. Kelterbaum) →

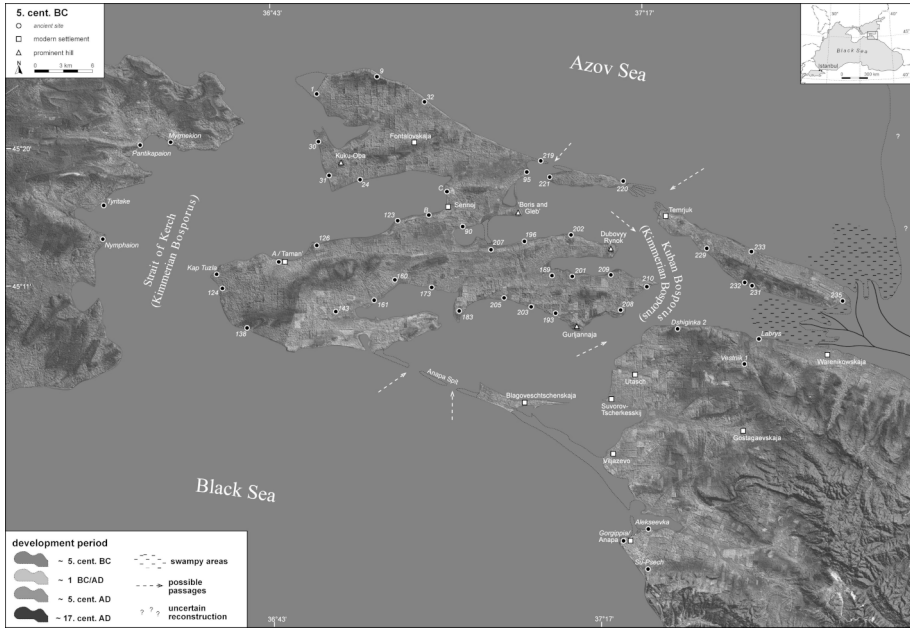


Fig. 3.

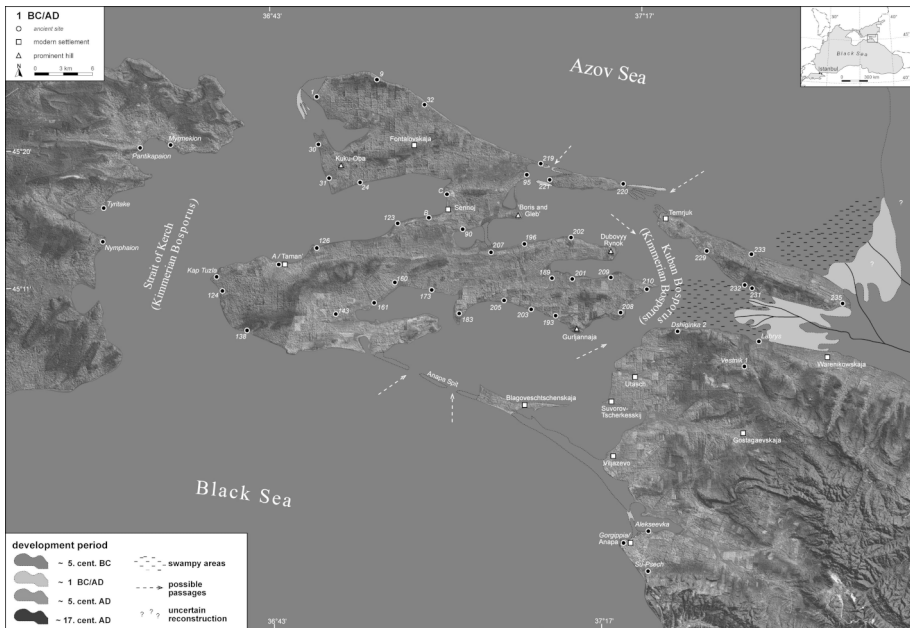


Fig. 4.

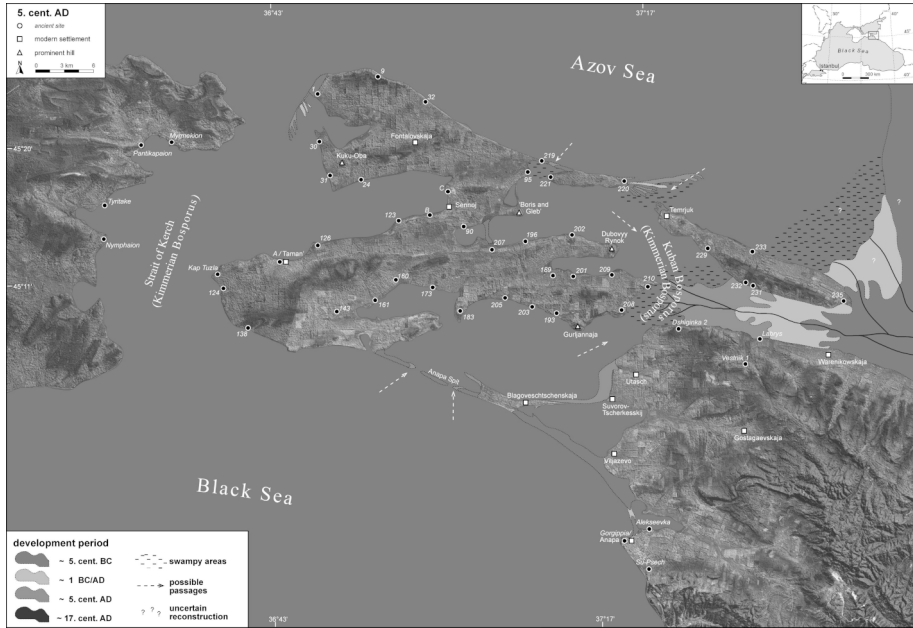


Fig. 5.

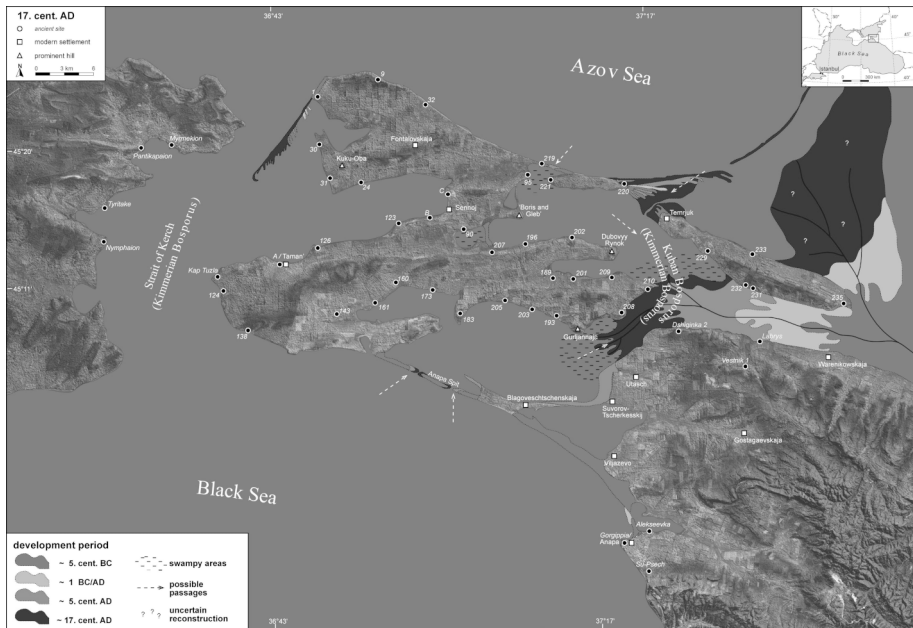
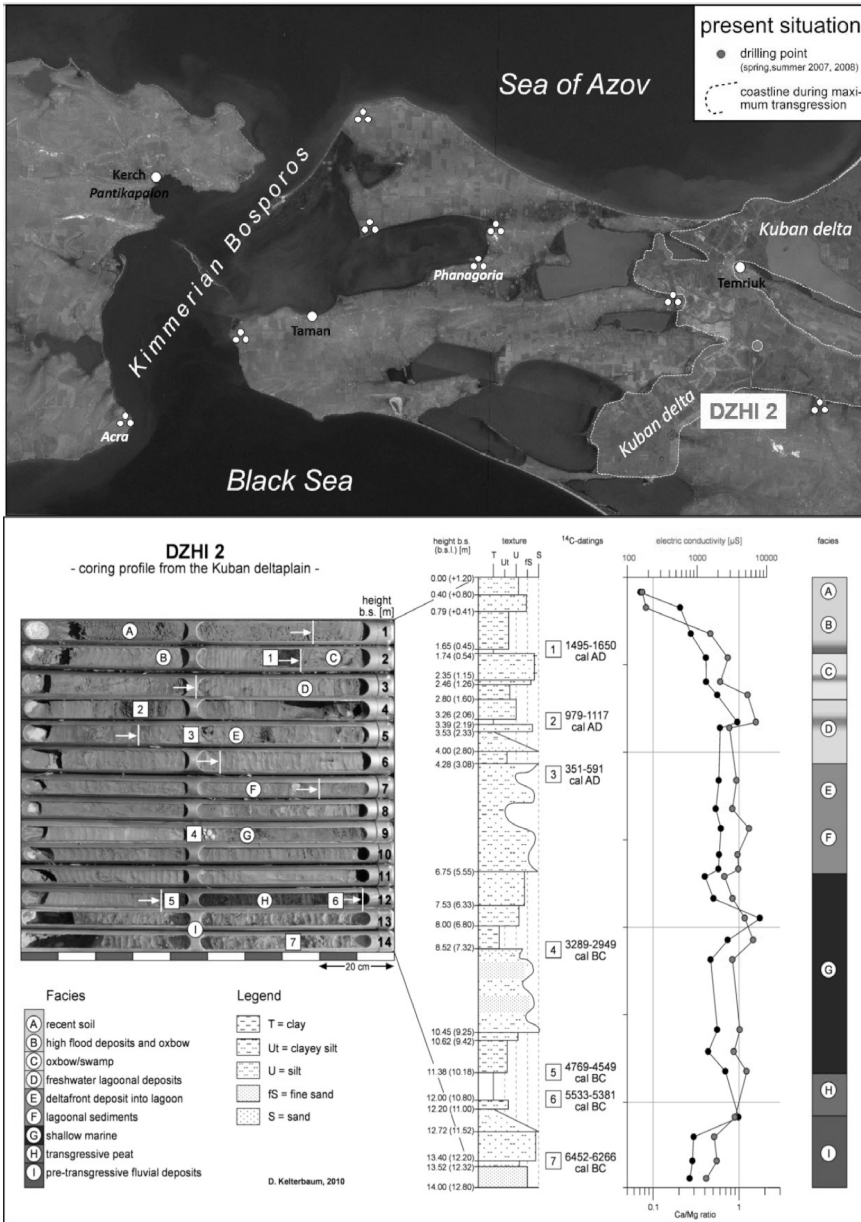


Fig. 6.



*Fig. 7. Sediment core DZHI 2 in the Kuban Bosphorus, showing the transformation of the marine environment into an open lagoon in Greek times, the progradation of the delta front in early Roman times and the progressive siltation between medieval and modern times in a central location between the archaeological sites of Strelka, Dzhighinka and Semibratnje (© D. Kelterbaum, published in Fouache *et al.* 2012; Кельтербаум, Журавлев, Шлотцауер 2016)*

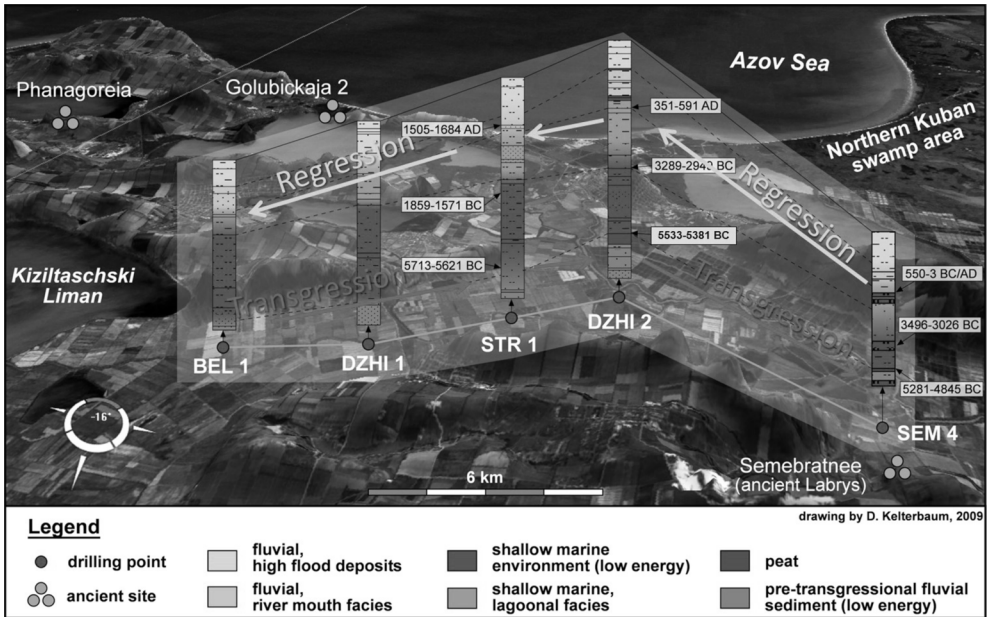


Fig. 8. Synoptical sequence of sediment cores perpendicular to the Kuban Bosphorus, in the lower Kuban Delta plain. The ^{14}C dates show the maritime transgression and filling of the channels in the 6th millennium BCE, followed by the regression and siltation due to the progradation of the Kuban Delta, from the 5th cent. CE onwards. The Kuban Bosphorus main channel remained flooded until early modern times, as illustrated on Fig. 6 (© D. Kelterbaum, modified from Giaime *et al.* 2016)

European (and Kvarterian) root meaning “throat”. We will never know if the Greeks who settled here knew the original meaning of these “Barbarian” names. But we can make some speculations about how they could integrate such data obtained from the local populations into the Homeric *imaginaire* of the Cimmerian *polis* — starting point of the legendary Cimmerian empire over Asia.

Historical geography is not only about geomorphologic reconstructions of paleo-environments and archaeological studies of the human impact. Landscapes are made up by people who think and talk about spaces, who construct them by their hands but also in their minds, and who share them within their communities. This is why, in this paper, our method is mainly philological and historical: we confront the literary sources with the reconstructed maps and archaeological contexts, in order to rediscover the original link between names and *realia*.

Furthermore, we try to understand the mental maps of the Greeks and the “Barbarians” and the “hybrid” fabric of the space they shared. We take into consideration the probable contacts between the Ionian Greeks (Milesians, Klazomenians and Teians), their fellow Anatolians (Lydians, Carians) and the people they found on the northern shores of *Pontus* upon their arrival. We ignore how the latter

called themselves: they are “Sindians” or “Maeotians” — if we use the names given by the Greeks — or “Iranians” and “Caucasians/Circasians”, if we use the modern names of linguistic groups attested here by toponyms and hydronyms. Information about these contacts comes from the Greek and Latin texts which quote indigenous names, and sometimes legends relating to these names.

Caution is needed, however, because even if some linguistic loans are explicit in the ancient texts, they are not always confirmed by modern etymologies. This happens because of our fragmentary knowledge of the ancient literature and of the languages spoken in this area, or because of misunderstandings and misappropriations of foreign names in ancient oral and written traditions. A good example is the Scythian name of the Sea of Azov, *Temarunda(m)*, wrongly translated as “mother of Pontus” (*matrem maris*) by Pliny the Elder (6.20) who copied a statement of Herodotus (4.86, *cf. infra*), which did not relate to the Scythian proper name but to a more general idea about lakes as sources of rivers, and therefore about the *Maeotis* Lake as source for the *Pontus* and the Hellespont⁶.

In contrast, as we will try to show, for names like *Corocanda* and *Korokondamè*, Greek and Latin authors could have had access to genuine local traditions and unknowingly transmitted elusive echoes of Iranian (or maybe Caucaso-Iranian) etymologies. We suggest that *Corocanda* could mean “throat”, “gorge” (or “channel of the throat”) while *Korokondamè* is “what stays in the throat”, “the lump in the throat”. If so, Strabo’s legend of the Cimmerian fortifications could reflect some knowledge about these Iranian names and therefore preserve a trace from a “Barbarian” representation of the straits.

I. THE KUBAN BOSPORUS: CORACANDA, THE “SINDIAN CLEFT”

1. Kuban Bosphorus’ paleo-environment

The inflow of the Don (ancient *Tanais*), Kuban (ancient *Hypanis*, *Antikeites/At-tikitès*, *Phasis*, *Hybristes*⁷), *Rhombitai* and other northern rivers into the southern sea

⁶ Marquart 1910; *contra* Asheri, Lloyd, Corcella 2007, *ad loc.* For the modern etymologies: Тохтасъев 2017a: 189–190.

⁷ Мусбахова 2014a-b, Мусбахова 2015, Мусбахова 2018 and Dan 2016 independently came to the same conclusions; we could not consult Мусбахова 2013. Some critics (Tsetskhladze 2016, Скаков 2019) misunderstood these philological argumentations: the authors above never wanted to “move” the Colchian river and city of Phasis on the Kuban River; although neither the city nor the river course have been surely identified, there is no doubt that from Herodotus onwards, historical Phasis was always located around Poti and the mouths of the Rioni. When we identify other rivers which could have been called “Phasis” in some contexts, we deal with ancient homonyms (*i. e.* identical names used for different spaces) which could provoke confusions and contaminations in the literary traditions. We also deal with mental representations of far-away spaces, in cultures that had no maps, where orality played an impor-

(*Pontus*) pass through the *Maëotis*, which was not a “sea”, but a “marsh” (λίμνη, *palus*) for the ancient people, due to its shallowness, brackish water and intermediate position between the river mouths and the sea⁸. Like in other deltaic environments (of the Nile, Istros/Danube or Phasis/Rioni), the lake emptied into the sea through several channels, separated by islands and ridges. Unlike the current Kerch Strait, which has only one channel for the water flowing from the Azov Sea into the Black Sea, the ancient Cimmerian Bosphorus was a strait with multiple openings (hence our preference for the plural “Straits”; cf. fig. 3–6). Besides its main flow (corresponding to the modern Kerch Strait), an eastern channel or rather network of channels, which we call the “Kuban Bosphorus” (to emphasise the modern character of its geoscience-based reconstruction), existed before the formation of the modern lagoons of Bugaz, Kyzyl-tash, Zukur/Zokur, Vitjazev, Starotitarovskaja, and Akhtanizovskaja⁹. The Kuban Bosphorus was probably only ca. 2–4 m deep on average in Greek times. Its width could stretch up to 4 km (between Dzhighinka and Belyj or between Golubitskaja and Temrjuk) or less (ca. 2 km between the western end of the Golubitskaja territory and the Peresyp’ Cape). At its extremities, especially on the shore of the Black Sea, the anticlockwise maritime currents formed littoral sandbars which must have been sensitive to tempests and therefore are quite difficult to map over the long term. Future drills should allow us to propose a more detailed chronology. For now, we can only suppose that the spit north-west of Anapa was already formed during antiquity and that openings allowed the navigation of ships. The main channel of the Kuban Bosphorus connected the Black Sea with the Sea of Azov between the modern Veselovka to the south and Peresyp’ or Temrjuk or Krasnyj Oktyabr’/Kurshanskaja/Varenikovskaja openings to the north. It was sinuous, with multiple inlets and shoals. Its length of ca. 55–65 km, measured from the Bugaz opening, varied depending on the outlet by which the Sea of Azov was entered from the south: while Temrjuk is still open for navigation today, the Peresyp’ Canal is mainly used for fishery purposes. To the north-east, the Krasnyj Oktyabr’/Varenikovskaja passage was filled with sediments by one of the Kuban mouths, perhaps even before the arrival of the Greeks¹⁰.

At least three islands — a large νῆσος to the west and two smaller islets (α σκόπελος and a νῆσος μικρά) to the east, at the northern and southern margins of the main island — as well as a peninsula barely connecting to the Asiatic hinterland to the

tant role and the articulation between mythical and historical spaces was different from ours. Ancient people were familiar with the “softness” of their spaces and never expected the precision possible only after the 18th century CE.

⁸ Herrmann 1928; Jackson, Podossinov 2015; Подосинов 2018; Подосинов 2019; cf. Finzenhagen 1939: 119–120.

⁹ See our publications quoted above (n. 2–3). The first to challenge the traditional reconstruction of the Cimmerian Straits was É. Fouache in Müller *et al.* 1998; Fouache, Müller 1998; Fouache *et al.* 2001; Fouache *et al.* 2004; cf. Müller 2010: 105–108. Against our reconstruction, see especially Тохтасъев 2017b, Завойкин 2017, Молев 2018 with further literature, but without taking into consideration the evidence from sediment cores.

¹⁰ Giaime *et al.* 2016.

north-east sheltered a dozen of Greek and later Bosphoran cities. They facilitated the access to the *Maeotis* Lake when the ancient sailors came from the Caucasian coast of *Pontus* or when they preferred to avoid the southbound current off the Gulf of Pantikapaion (modern Kerch). The channels, which separated these islands from the Caucasus and the rest of the ancient *Sindikè*, have progressively silted up over the last three millennia by the progradation of the delta of the Kuban River, which flowed into both the *Maeotis* and the *Pontus* through several distributary arms. In late Hellenistic and early Roman times, when the delta front hit the eastern channel of the straits (our “Kuban Bosphorus”), Alexander Polyhistor explicitly recorded the double spill of the westernmost mouth of the Kuban-*Hypanis* River (*FGrHist* 273 F 179 *apud* Stephanus of Byzantium s. v. “Hypanis”) towards the *Pontus* and the *Maiotis*, through the old maritime channels¹¹. This reference fits not only Pseudo-Skymnos’ testimony (fr. 17–18 Marcotte) but also the dates we obtained from the analysis of the sediments, indicating the arrival of Kuban’s delta front in the channel between Dzhighinka and Strelka/Belyj in late Hellenistic and early Roman times (fig. 7). The historical and geomorphological data allow us to reconsider the important changes observed by the archaeologists for this period not only in a historical, but also in an environmental perspective.

2. Kuban Bosphorus’ names:

Mouth of the *Hypanis*, *Coracanda*, “Sindian cleft”

Ancient authors never clearly describe the Cimmerian Bosphorus as a multi-channelled strait. The texts are ambiguous and we must read them from a critical perspective, without presuppositions. For example, while Herodotus refers to the Cimmerian Straits (πορθμῆια Κιμμέρια, 4.12, 45), we may suspect that he has in mind several water paths through which one could navigate between the sea and the lake or pass from Europe to Asia. Nonetheless, we admit that the plural could simply refer to the crossings from one Cimmerian shore to another. Also, in Aeschylus’ tragedy *Prometheus Bound* (729–731), the plural of the *Maeotis*’ “narrow gates” (ἐπ’ αὐταῖς στενοπόροις λίμνης πύλαις) could either refer to these channels or just be a form of plural designating one entry between pillars.

There are, however, clear indicators that the Greeks assigned the whole region to the mythical Cimmerians¹². Each extremity of the straits is marked by a toponym derived from their ethnic: first, there is *Kimmerikon/Cimmerium* on the main island (νήσος), at the northern entry from the Kuban Bosphorus into the *Maeotis* — in our opinion on the shore of the Akhtanizovskaja Lagoon¹³. But *Kimmerion* is also a

¹¹ Cairns 2011.

¹² Strab. 1.1.10, 2.9. See Иванчик 1988; Качарава, Квирквелия 1991: 135–138, s. v. “Киммериды”, “Киммерий”, “Киммерик I”, “Киммерик II”, “Киммерия”; Tokhtas’ev 1991; Алексеев, Качалова, Тохтас’ев 1993; Tokhtas’jev 1996; Иванчик 2010. For the history of the Cimmerians outside Bosphorus, Ivantchik 1993 and Ivantchik 2001.

¹³ Cf. Ps.-Skymn., fr. 17a Marcotte; Strab. 11.2.5; Mela 1.112; Plin., *NH* 4.87, 6.18 Strab. 1.1.10, 2.9–19; Ptol.,

smaller settlement at the south-western end of the straits on the Black Sea coast of Crimea, identified with the archaeological site of Opuk¹⁴. Therefore, in its broader sense, the name of the (Cimmerian) Bosphorus was used for the straits, including their multiple channels and islands¹⁵. There are, however, exceptions, when the western (Kerch) channel alone was called “Bosporus”, because it has always been the main channel of the Cimmerian Straits (the “Maeotian canyon / αὐλῶν’ ...Μαιωτικόν”, in the terms of Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* 731, cf. *infra*). While the eastern channel (the Kuban Bosphorus) has been associated with the mouth of the Kuban/*Hypanis* River from late Hellenistic and Roman times onwards, the western (Kerch) channel was thought to be the southern mouth of the *Tanais*/Don. This is why, like the Kuban/*Hypanis*, the *Tanais*/Don was said to flow not only into the *Maeotis*, but also beyond the *Maeotis* Lake into the *Pontus*¹⁶.

The complex shape of the Cimmerian Bosphorus (with its multiple channels) is indirectly confirmed by the different Greek and Latin references to the water courses or marshes before the formation of the modern Taman Peninsula. Of course, the descriptions are difficult to understand, because they are not as coherent as we want. Each river mouth could be perceived by the ancient authors as a different water course: this is the reason why Ptolemy represents the Kuban Delta as a series of small rivers, ranging from *Attikites* in the east, to *Psathios* and *Ouardanos* to the west (*Geography* 5.9, Second Map of Asia). Moreover, the ancient authors felt no obligation to make a clear distinction between a river and a maritime current through the straits. This appears clearly in Greek references to the Thracian Bosphorus as a (salty) river¹⁷, and in the Latin designation of the Cuban Bosphorus as *Coracanda*. What we consider to be a maritime channel or a strait could have been defined by ancient authors as a water course or even as a stream.

According to Pomponius Mela (1.112), *Corocanda* spills through a double river bed into both the <Maeotis> Lake and the <Black> Sea and transforms part of the Sindian land almost into an island. The Sindian region must be imagined as an isthmus or a peninsula (*paene insula*), which projects over a moderate span between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov towards the Bosphorus (*obliqua tunc regio et in latum modice patens inter Pontum Paludemque ad Bosphorum excurrit; quam duobus abveis in lacum et in mare profluens Coracanda paene insulam reddit*). Pomponius Mela, who wrote this passage in the first half of the 1st century CE, seems to have followed

G. 5.9.5 Stückelberger-Grafshoff. For the Archaic discoveries made by G. Lomtadze in Akhtanizovskaja 4, see Журавлев, Ломтадзе, Шлотцауер 2010; Ломтадзе 2013; for the investigation of the early Roman fort, Ломтадзе 2015.

¹⁴ Strab. 7.4.3; Ptol., G 3.6.5; Ps.-Arr. *FGrHist* 2037 F79 Podossinov. See Avram, Hind, Tsetschladze 2004: 946–947, No 700; Golenko 2007.

¹⁵ Scylax of Caryanda, *FGrHist* 709 F8 *apud* Avienus, *Ora maritima* 367–369 (with Panchenko 2005; Dan *et al.* 2016); Pliny, *NH* 6.18.

¹⁶ *E.g.*, Arr., *PPE* §19 and Ps.-Arr. § 68 Podossinov with Dan 2016. Cf. Подосинов 2015a.

¹⁷ Dan 2015; Dan 2018; cf. Podossinov 2013; Lebreton 2016; Toliaş 2017; Toliaş 2019; Marcotte 2019. For the similarity of the navigation in straits, rivers and estuaries, Arnaud 2019.

earlier — maybe Herodotean and post-Herodotean — sources when describing the eastern channel of the Cimmerian Bosphorus as an open channel. His source must be earlier than the progradation of the delta front into the Kuban Bosphorus channel in late Hellenistic and early Roman times¹⁸.

Since Mela's *Coracanda* is a hapax, one could ask if the Greek and Latin authors had other names or manners to describe the Kuban Bosphorus while still a maritime channel. Hipponax, one of the earliest Greek authors referring to the topography of the north-eastern *Pontus*, seems to allude to this fissure, while mentioning the "Sindian cleft" (Σινδικὸν διάσφαγμα) in an iambic poem of which only disparate fragments remain. As a native of Ephesus and later exiled in Klazomenai (*Suda* s. ν. Ἴππώναξ), Hipponax composed satiric poetry towards 540/537 BCE¹⁹. He lived during the conquest of Sardis by Cyrus the Great, when many Greeks from Asia Minor went away and founded "colonies". Among them, the Teians founded the city of Phanagoreia in the Asiatic part of the Cimmerian Bosphorus²⁰. Hipponax' fellow citizens, the Klazomenians were about to settle in the same region (in the "Klazomenian towers" mentioned *infra*) or were undertaking intensive business activities — as shown by the quantities of Klazomenian ceramics (or assimilated) discovered in the 6th-century layers of Bosphoran and Maeotian sites²¹. If they were not themselves speakers of Anatolian languages (other than Greek), the Milesians, Klazomenians, Teians and other Ionians must have been accompanied in their Pontic adventures by Carians and Lydians — expressly attested together with the Klazomenians by Pliny the Elder (6.20).

Hipponax' poetry is a vivid testimony about the ethnic diversity and the multilingualism of the Ionian society in Asia Minor as well as about the feedback it received from recent "colonies". The linguistic mixture of his verses allows us to understand the genesis of Pontic toponyms like **Labrys/Labryta*. This ancient city is identified with the fortified settlement of Semibratnje, on the north-eastern shore of the Kuban Bosphorus, where an inscription attesting Apollo, the god of the *Labrytôn*, was discovered²². The name may have been created by multilingual Micrasiatic immigrants (ἄποικοι): this is the Lydian name of the "two-edged axe", called in Greek "πέλεκυς" (Plut., *Greek and Roman Questions* 302a). But we ignore why the site was

¹⁸ Attested by Alex. Polyhistor, *FGrHist* 273 F 179, Ps.-Skymn. fr. 17b Marcotte, and Strab. II.2.

¹⁹ *Parian Marble* 239 F A42.57 Jacoby = T1 Degani; cf. Plin., *NH* 36.11 = T2 Degani.

²⁰ Качарова, Квирквелия 1991: 284–288, s. ν.; Avram, Hind, Tsetskhladze 2004: 950–951, No 706; Kuznetsov 2003: 897–921; Kuznetsov 2016.

²¹ Cf. Cook, Dupont 1998: 151–157; Alekseeva 2002: 93 Abb. 2; Кузнецов 2005; Kadioğlu *et al.* 2015; Шлотцауер 2016: 42; Kerschner 2017. The modern scientific designation as "Klazomenian" for certain decorated East Greek pottery groups (cf. Cook 1952) is misleading. Recent archaeometric investigations for determining the origin of their production have shown that various centers in North Ionia produced these wares, including Klazomenai and Teos: see for example Schlotzhauer 2012: 38–43 esp. 40. Nevertheless, decorated tableware and transport amphorae from Klazomenai can be found in numbers on the Cimmerian Bosphorus.

²² SEG 43.515; cf. Avram, Hind, Tsetskhladze 2004: 947, No 702.

called this way. Was there any local name, sounding familiar, which the newcomers adapted to a word they already knew? Suggestions have been made to compare it with modern Caucasian toponyms and water names (like the Abkhazian *Labra* or the *Laba* tributary of the Kuban)²³, but the ancient ethnic context in which such Caucasian names could be used remains uncertain. The Anatolian “two-edged axe” was required if the tutelary divinity of the city was a thunder-god — but the *Labrytai* clearly preferred Apollo to Zeus —, or if they took into consideration the vicinity of the Amazons, whose favourite weapon was precisely the *πέλεκυς/λάβρυς*. It seems, however, that some authors pronounced the name as *Λαύριον* and described the site as a Scythian plain (*Schol. ad Apoll. Rhod.* 4.321). The association with the Greek “λάυρα”, “the narrow passage”, could suggest that Greek scholiasts of late Hellenistic and Roman times were aware of the strategic importance but also of the growing difficulties in sailing to **Labrys/Labryta*, a key-point at the end of Hipponax’ “Sindian cleft”, between the Kuban Bosphorus and the progradating delta of the Kuban River.

Unfortunately, Hipponax’ reference to the “Sindian cleft” comes from a 19th-century philological assemblage of two quotations preserved in the *Chiliades* of the 12th-century Byzantine writer Tzetzes and in lexicographic compilations going back to Hellenistic and Roman times²⁴. If the assemblage is correct, Hipponax must have been making a sexual joke by alluding to the topography of the “Kuban Bosphorus” and the northern Caucasus slopes. This is the actual reconstruction of the fr. 2 (of Diehl³, Masson and West) from the quotations of Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 10.370-374²⁵ (cf. Hesychius s. v. “Κοραξοί”)²⁶ and from the *Scholia* on Apollonius’ *Argonautica* (4.321²⁷; cf. Hesychius s. v. “Σινδικὸν διάσφαγμα”²⁸, and Steph. Byz. s. v. “Σίνδοι”²⁹):

Κοραξικὸν μὲν ἡμφιεσμένη λῶπος. <γυμνή δὲ> πρὸς τὸ Σινδικὸν διάσφαγμα.	...covered by a Koraxian mantle, <but naked> until the Sindian cleft...
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Both verses allude to the woman’s cunt using Greek or Anatolian words with sexual connotations: the “Sindian cleft” (“crevice in a rock, narrow, gaping sink-hole or

²³ Виноградов 2002; Тохтасъев 2015: 429–430; Тохтасъев 2017a: 196–198. Cf. Яйленко 2017: 8–9.

²⁴ Cf. E. Diehl in the different editions of his *Anthologia lyrica Graeca*, following Otto Crusius (Teubner 1907); Masson 1962: 102–103; West 1971: 110–111 (fr. 2–2a).

²⁵ Περί τῶν Μιλήσιων μὲν ἔφαν πολλοὶ ἐρίων / περὶ εἰρίων Κοραξῶν ἐν πρώτῳ δὲ ἰάμβῳ / Ἴππώναξ οὕτως εἶρηκε μέτρῳ χαλῶν ἰάμβων· / Κοραξικὸν μὲν ἡμφιεσμένη λῶπος. / Τοὺς Κοραξοὺς δὲ καὶ Σινδοὺς ἔθνη τυγχάνει νόει // “Many people speak about the Milesian wool; / so speak Hipponax about the Koraxian wool, / in the first iamb of his choliamb: / dressed in a Koraxian mantle. / He thinks that the Koraxian and the Sindians are people”.

²⁶ Κοραξοί· Σκυθῶν γένος καὶ τὸ γυναικεῖον αἰδοῖον / “Koraxians: Scythian people and woman’s sex”.

²⁷ “...Σίνδοι ...καὶ Ἴππώναξ (fr. 68 A B. II 484) δὲ μνημονεύει, πρὸς τὸ ‘Σινδικὸν διάσφαγμα’ / the Sindians, Hipponax mentions them also, ‘up to the Sindian cleft’”.

²⁸ “Σινδῖς ἢ Σκυθία. καὶ ἡ πόρνη. Σινδικὸν διάσφαγμα· τὸ τῆς γυναικὸς / Sindis: Scythia. And the prostitute. Sindian cleft: the sex of the woman”.

²⁹ Σίνδοι, ἀπὸ μεσημβρίας τῆς Μαιώτιδος λίμνης. ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸ Σινδικὸν γένος φασὶν εἶναι τῶν Μαιωτῶν ἀπόσπασμα. λέγεται καὶ τὸ γυναικεῖον αἰδοῖον. / “Sindians, from the south of the Maiotis Lake. Some say that the Sindian people is a branch of the Maiotians. This is also the name of the woman’s sex”.

crack in a rock”) recalls the Lycian word designating the female cunt, *sinda*, as well as the Greek σίδη, the “pomegranate”³⁰. The “Koraxian mantle” could have been understood as the cover of the κόραξ, metaphorical designation of the male penis³¹. The poetical character of the expression is reinforced by the phonic similarity between the adjective “Κοραξικόν” and the Greek lexical field of “κρέκω”, “weave” and “κρόξ” or “κρόκη”, “thread passed between the threads of the warp, woof”.

For the public familiar with the realities of the Ionian migration towards the Cimmerian Bosphorus, these names would initially evoke the north-eastern Black Sea area. In the past, scholars debated whether these names should be understood in an ethnic sense — and therefore as a reference to the Barbarian luxury, as suggested by the Koraxian wool mantle mentioned by Tzetzes (and by the refinement of the Sindians, famous up to Hellenistic times; cf. Ps.-Skymn. fr. 18 Marcotte), or at least as an allusion to the Koraxian and Sindian slaves that had probably arrived in Ionia by that time³². However, the geographical interpretation, based on the morphological similarity between a strait and a cleft/vagina, cannot be excluded: V.D. Blavatskii³³, and V.G. Zubarev³⁴ linked the metaphor to the channels of the Cimmerian Bosphorus, in particular to the ancient Kuban arm (Kyzyltash Liman), which covered part of our Kuban Bosphorus. This hypothesis, now reinforced by the discovery of the Kuban Bosphorus, has been republished in a convincing way by I.E. Surikov³⁵.

For the ancient Greeks, *Sindikè* in the widest sense corresponded to the north-western extremity of Asia, facing the eastern end of *Taurikè*/Crimea and including all the civic territories from *Phanagoreia* and *Hermonassa* to *Sindikos Limèn* and *Sinda/Gorgippia*³⁶. *Maeotis*, “mother of *Pontus*” for Herodotus (4.86), could have already been viewed in the 6th century BCE as a kind of matrix, supporting Hipponax’ sexual joke. In fact, the common imaginary of the strait has a strong sexual connotation in Greek, as shown by the toponyms involving the cult of Parthenos and Achilles on the two shores of the Kerch channel (with the male deity on the island in the middle of the straits)³⁷ or by the allusions to sexual organs in descriptions of the Thracian Bosphorus³⁸. Furthermore, such allusions, combining geographical and anatomical clues, must have been common in iambic and comic creations: Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* (1168–1170) enumerates a whole series of places in the Internal Sea associated with female organs.

³⁰ Pestalozza 1951.

³¹ Henderson 1991: 20–21.

³² Braund, Tsetsckhladze 1989.

³³ Блаватский 1958.

³⁴ Зубарев 1999; *contra* Nikonov 2007.

³⁵ Суриков 2013; for another geographical explanation see Мусбахова 2014a.

³⁶ *E.g.* Ps.-Skyl. §72; Strab. 7.4.6, 11.2.10–12, 12.3.29. See Тохтасъев 2002; Tokhtas’ev 2006; Braund 2007; Горончаровский 2011; for a narrower meaning, see Новичихин 2017; for “Sindian” etymologies, Тохтасъев 2017a.

³⁷ Braund 2018.

³⁸ Cat. 11.99.5–6; Ausonius, *Ep.* 108.9.

Since we lack the complete poem as well as other *scholia* on Hipponax, the reconstruction of the fragment and the identification of the Kuban Bosphorus with the metaphor of the “Sindian cleft” are only hypotheses. By contrast, *Corocanda* is a genuine indigenous name, whose identification cannot be doubted. Both designations emphasise the reduced dimensions of the Kuban Bosphorus — when compared to the Kerch channel (on average 18 m deep, 35 km long, and 4.5–15 km wide) — as well as its importance for the earliest populations living in that area.

II. THE ARCHIPELAGO BETWEEN THE CHANNELS AND ITS KOROKONDAMÈ/TAMAN ISLAND

1. Why did the Greeks settle on the Kuban Bosphorus / *Corocanda*? Strategic and economic advantages

A favourable environment for long time survival, connectivity and quick access to valuable raw materials are the main criteria when choosing the best locations during the Greek “colonisation”. In the embayments of the Kuban Bosphorus, several sheltered sites provided fresh water, food and fuel, easy defence against invaders and shorter paths towards the metals and stones of the Caucasus, the fish of the Azov Sea, the slaves and the other organic products of the steppe. The settlers on the archipelago controlled the crossroads of Europe and Asia, the northern nomadic zone and the Greek southern seas: this is how at the beginning of the Roman era, *Phanagoreia*, by then the most powerful Greek city on the eastern shores of the straits, became the *emporion* of Asia (Strab. 11.2.10). The strength of its *chora* was its hegemony over the eastern ways through the Kuban channels to the Azov Sea and the Black Sea.

For those familiar with this region in the Archaic and Classical times, the navigation through the Kuban Bosphorus had several advantages. Due to its lesser depth and numerous splits into bays, the current was probably less strong in this eastern channel than in the Kerch channel, when sailing north from the Black Sea to the Sea of Azov. At least until early Roman times, the Kuban Bosphorus offered proper harbouring conditions — as one can understand from Strabo’s mention of the *Phanagoreia* and *Kepoi* territories (and maybe harbours) on the eastern shore of the main island (νήσος), while sailing up the *Korokondamitis*, *i. e.*, around the Kyzyl-tash Liman (11.2.10; *cf. infra*). Its coves, with quieter and fresher waters (due to the input of the Kuban river mouths), attracted and trapped fish migrating from the *Pontus* to the *Maeotis* and back. Fish must have been an essential part of the diet and exportations of the Greeks established along these shores. The best evidence relates to the name of the *Antikeites* given by Strabo to the westernmost mouth of the Kuban, which had already started to fill a part of the Kuban Bosphorus channels

with sediments in his time (11.2.4, *cf.* Ptol., *G.* 5.9.4; **fig. 4**). In fact, the hydronym can spontaneously be understood as “that lies in front” (of Pantikapaion/Bosporus or Phanagoreia Island), but it is probably derived from a name of the sturgeon, Ἀντακαῖος³⁹. Further evidence for fishing activities in the Kuban Bosporus are the “Klazomenian towers”; we propose their location on the north-eastern shore of the straits between *Tyrambè* and *Kimmerikon*. These “watching towers” (σκοπαι) could correspond to the sites of Golubitskaja 2 and maybe even Golubitskaja 1, as well as to Peresyp’ on the opposite side of the Akhtanizovskaja Lagoon, which is still an excellent fishing trap⁴⁰.

Those travelling and establishing themselves on the eastern channels of the ancient Cimmerian Bosporus directly controlled the links with the Caucasus. The use of the Kuban Bosporus was the only possibility to avoid the monopoly of Pantikapaion — at least in Archaic times until the consolidation of the Bosporan Kingdom and Pantikapaion/Bosporus’ domination over the straits, marked by the foundation of *Gorgippia* in the Gulf of *Sinda* and *Sindikos Limèn* (modern Anapa region).

The maps reconstructed by D. Kelterbaum and H. Brückner (**fig. 3–6**) demand a complete revision of our identification of the ancient toponyms, which are not concentrated along the Kerch channel but rather spread over all the shores of the straits in a complex maritime and terrestrial network, already emphasised by the surveys of I. Paromov. It is not easy to find the historical names of these settlements in the Greek and Latin texts: as often occurs when seeking correspondences between modern and ancient spatial representations, the ancient designations were neither as precise nor as coherent and consistent as modern scientific terminology. For example, there is no ancient notion of “delta” or “archipelago”. The ancient term of “island” was much broader than it is today, as it could include any land that was, more or less, surrounded by water⁴¹. This is one of the reasons why the late Hellenistic and early Roman descriptions of the insular landscapes of the Taman area are so fuzzy, mentioning one peninsula, a kind of island, or two or three islands. This contradictory image emerges if we compare the fragments preserved by Pseudo-Arrian from the Pseudo-Skymnos (fr. 17b Marcotte) with Strabo (11.2.10), Pliny the Elder (6.18), Dionysius Periegeta (549–553), Ammianus Marcellinus (22.8.29–30), and Stephanus of Byzantium who combines Archaic as well as Hellenistic and Roman testimonies (*s. v.* Ἐρμώνασσα and Ταυριική). However, these testimonies are not fully contradictory, and they should not be entirely rejected: the philologist’s task is to explain their invention by taking into consideration their geohistorical contexts, literary tradition and sources of errors.

The more consistent evidence points to the existence of two major islands: the larger νῆσος, that we call the Taman, *Phanagoreia* or *Korokondamè* Island, on which the cities of *Kimmerikon* and *Kepoi* were situated, and the small *Hermonassa* Is-

³⁹ Hdt. 4.53, Strab. 7.3.18. See Schramm 1973: 179–180.

⁴⁰ For other fishing towers in the Black Sea: Højte 2005.

⁴¹ Finzenhagen 1939: 146.

land located in the middle of the eastern channel when coming from the Caucasian shore of the Black Sea (Pliny the Elder 6.18; Stephanus of Byzantium s. v.: νῆσος μικρά, πάλιν ἔχουσα, ἐν τῷ Κιμμερίῳ Βοσπόρῳ). Further to the north-east, the maritime channels started to become landlocked by the Kuban Delta in late Hellenistic and Roman times. Navigation continued in humid summers until modern times, but with smaller ships. The loss of the strategic importance of several harbours together with the inconveniences of the advancement of the delta and the proliferation of the mosquitoes, often mentioned by modern travellers as a major danger of the area, determined the abandonment of several sites — like Strelka 2 — at the beginning of the Roman times and the concentration of the activity on specific spots, like Semibratnje.

2. *Korokondamè* between Kerch and Kuban Bosphorus

The location of *Korokondamè* in the southern part of the main island, and *Korokondamitis* in the current bay of Zukur, Bugaz and Kyzyltash is based on the mentions in Strabo (11.2.8–9), Ptolemy (*Geography* 5.9.6–8), and to a lesser extent, Stephanus of Byzantium who quotes one of Strabo's sources, Artemidorus of Ephesus (s. v.)⁴². The last mention can be misleading, since it situates *Korokondamè* near Sinope (Κοροκονδάμη, πλησίον Σινώπης). This quite surprising association of two distant sites, facing each other on the northern and southern Pontic shores, refers to the short crossing through the middle of the Black Sea. This crossing took advantage of the double maritime currents that were well attested since the early 5th century BCE in the representations of *Pontus*, the “Path”, as a double sea or a Scythian bow⁴³.

Strabo and Ptolemy show that *Korokondamè* (or rather its territory) must include the south-western and south-eastern extremities of this large island (the νῆσος), between the territories of *Phanagoreia* and *Hermonassa*. The Panagja Cape, under the most important north-eastern Black Sea harbour of our days, still marks the navigation starting point through the straits to the north and from the straits to the southern and eastern shores of the Black Sea. This can be an argument for its inclusion in the ancient territory of *Korokondamè*. Despite the heavy erosion, ancient traces of Greek frequentation (or at least contacts with the Greeks) have been discovered in relation to the tough promontory⁴⁴. Several kilometers inland, around the archaeological site of Volna 1, the team of N. Sudarev and R. Mimokhod unearthed settlements with traces of continuous habitation from the Bronze Age (12th

⁴² For Strabo's use of Artemidorus on *Pontus*, see Подосинов 2015b.

⁴³ Dan 2013.

⁴⁴ Cf. Gajdukevič 1971: 207–208, who hesitates between Panagja and Tuzla. The far-reaching visibility of the hills of Volna, beyond Panagja, recommends this strategic site rather than the Tuzla lower promontory. Further arguments about the territorial organization of the island will be presented in our forthcoming book.



Fig. 9. Visibility study (including the *Coracanda/Korokondamè/Korokondamitis*) from a ship in the Black Sea at the central point. Viewpoint is 10 m above sea level, the visible zones are represented in light grey. Based on SRTM 30 data, calculated by ARCGIS (© D. Kelterbaum)

century BCE) until medieval times⁴⁵. Moreover, the highest peaks of this mountainous range are the main landmark at the north-western extremity of Asia, seen from both the Azov and Black Sea and from other points with good visibility on the Kerch channel (fig. 9–12). Furthermore, in the necropoleis near Volna 1, the oldest Greek imports date back to the first half of the 6th century BCE, and they are continuously mixed up with local ceramics. The site of Volna 1 (Paromov's site no. 137) covers ca. 45 ha. The richness of the Greek and Barbarian finds as well as the traces of urbanisation show that this area was the most important site in the southern part of the island. Its inhabitants could control the access from the Black Sea along both the Kerch and Kuban channels. Since their settlement preceded the arrival of the Greeks, they may have continued to use the old, pre-Greek toponyms.

Strabo's distance of 70 stadia (ca. 14.2 km) between *Akra* (modern Naberezhnoe), on the European coast of Crimea/*Taurikè*, and *Korokondamè* fits the flying distance between the south-eastern extremity of Crimea and the feet of Volna, especially when one takes into consideration the strong erosion and change of the coast line

⁴⁵ E.g. Соловьев, Бутягин 2002; Волкодав 2016; Волкодав 2017; Мимоход, Сударев, Успенский 2018; Бочковой, Булах, Данилин 2019.



Fig. 10. Visibility study from Ilich into the Kerch Straits and adjacent areas. Viewpoint is 20 m above surface level, the visible zones are represented in light grey. Based on SRTM 30 data, calculated with ARCGIS (© D. Kelterbaum)

under the new Black Sea harbour. At the same time, the distance of only 10 stadia (ca. 2 km) between *Korokondamè* and the entry into the *Korokondamitis* (11.2.9) must be understood as the length of the sandbar which, on the southern coast of the island, restricted the entry of the ships from the Black Sea into the Kuban Bosphorus and finally started to close the lagoon in Roman times (fig. 13–14).

3. *Korokondamitis* / Bugaz-Zukur-Kyzyltash Liman

The Kuban Bosphorus (*Coracanda*) with its southern lagoon or series of lagoons (*Korokondamitis*) provided sheltered anchoring points in the territory of *Phanagoreia* (probably modern Sennoj) and *Kepoi* (maybe modern Taman, nowadays wrongly identified as “Hermonassa”)⁴⁶. The best candidates for an anchorage depending on *Phanagoreia* / Sennoj in the Zukur Liman could be identified or associated with the sites of Vinogradnyj 1 and 2 (Paromov’s nos 160–161), which were perhaps connected by an ancient land path to *Phanagoreia*; for an anchoring point

⁴⁶ The complete argumentation for these locations will be published in our book.



Fig. 11. View from Kerch to the east, over the main channel, towards Volna and Cape Panagja/ Korokondamé (© D. Zhuravlev)



Fig. 12. View from the mud volcano Kuku-Oba to the south, over the archaeological site of Garkousha (identified as Patrasy) and the Taman Gulf, towards Volna / Korokondamè (© U. Schlottzhauer)



Fig. 13. View from the north-western end of the Blagovetschenskaja Island towards west, over Korokondamitis, and the sand spit separating Coracanda and Korokondamitis (to the right) from the Black Sea (to the left) (© A. Dan)



Fig. 14. View over a modern cut through the Anapa spit, towards west and *Korokondamitis* (© A. Dan)



Fig. 15. View of the so-called "Cimmerian Wall" on the Fontalovskaja Peninsula (© A. Dan).

relating to Taman, the best site seems to be Tamanskij 3 (Paromov's no. 143), also connected to the territory of the modern Taman city via a land path.

However, before making further assumptions about the articulation and connectivity of the civic territories of *Korokondamè*, *Phanagoreia* and *Kepoi* in this southern part of the island (νήσος), more archaeological investigations are necessary in order to verify the dimensions, chronology, and importance of other sites between the Bugazkaja spit, the Zukur and Kyzyltash Liman (around Veselovka and Vysh-esteblievskaja). In fact, although the identification of *Korokondamè* with Volna 1 seems plausible — given the importance, long chronology, and mixture of Greek and indigenous cultures at Volna 1 as well as the appropriate distances given by Strabo —, here like anywhere else no firm conclusion can be drawn without the discovery of an inscription or, at least, without the excavation of all the sites and their final comparison.

III. CORACANDA & KOROKONDAMÈ — A DITCH AND A HITCH BEYOND THE CIMMERIAN POLIS?

1. **kork-*/**korok-*, “the throat” and the local names of the Cimmerian Straits

Even though *Coracanda*, *Korokondamè*, and *Korokondamitis* have no well-established etymologies, most philologists point to their possible Iranian or Kvartelian origin. It goes without saying that reconstructing Iranian or Kvartelian words — that one could consider either as “Cimmerian”, “Sindian”, “Maeotian” or, more generally, “Scythian” or “Sarmatian” — is a highly risky initiative, which should be taken as a conjectural exercise fully dependent on the current evidence and linguistic (pre-)suppositions.

For the Latin and Greek names *Coracanda* and *Korokondamè*, the best suggestion seems to be the derivation from the Indo-Iranian stem **kork-*/**korok-* or, without reduplication, **kor-*, ultimately going back to the Indo-European root **k^wer-/k^wor-/k^wor-* (**g^wer-/g^werh³-*). This root corresponds to Indo-European verbs meaning “to devour” and nouns signifying “throat, neck” (or related to the throat, like the objects and animals with a particular kind of neck)⁴⁷. This is the origin of the Avestan *garəman-* and the modern Persian *gulū/galū* (گلو), “throat, neck, wind-pipe” as well as of the Slavic **g^wrdlo*, from which derives the Church Slavic *grělo* and the modern Russian *горло*. By reduplication, the Indo-European stem gave *kokord* (կոկորդ) “throat” in Armenian, *quer(e)kela*, *querka*, “gullet” in Old High German (with modern German “Gurgel”), *gurges* in Latin, **кѣркѣ* in Slavic languages (кѣрчии in Old Russian, and Кѣрчевъ/Kerch in the medieval inscription

⁴⁷ Cf. Pokorny 1959–1969: II.474–476; Гамкрелидзе, Иванов 1984: I.231, II.702.

from Tmotorokan/Taman, *cf. infra*)⁴⁸. From the old Indo-Iranian languages, we may cite *xux/xox* (*xūrx/xorx*) in Ossetian, with the compounds *xūrxwawynzæntæ* (“bronchia”) and *xūrxwadyngz* (“vocal cord”)⁴⁹. However, comparable words for “throat” are attested in other linguistic families, like the Uralic (maybe with the Finnish *kurkku*, Estonian *kurku*) and, more important for us, the Kartvelian languages: from a Proto-kartvelian root **qarq-/ *qorq-*, the “throat” was designated by the Georgian stem *qorq-i*, the Megrelian *xorx-*, *xurx-* (*cf. xorx-ot-a*), the Laz *xurx-*, *xux-*, the Svan *qharqh*, the Abkhazian *qərqə*⁵⁰. Therefore, both Kartvelian and Iranian-speaking populations, which have probably preceded the Greeks on the Cimmerian Bosphorus, could have used similar names to designate the straits or part of the straits.

The image of the “throat” perfectly fits the topography of the Bosphorus, with its multiple water channels and sand spits between Kerch/*Pantikapaion* and *Cora-canda*/Kuban Bosphorus, on both sides of the *Korokondamè* Island and the nearby islets. Since the etymology of both Indo-European and Kuartelian names involve the action of the throat (to swallow), and taking into account our geomorphological reconstruction of the earlier phase of the straits, when the water channels were most important, we tend to think that the original name could refer to the waterways cutting through the lands, nourishing the *Pontus* from the *Maotis* “mother”. Later on, however, the same name could have been related not only to the water “throat” but also to a land “neck” (*isthmus*). The obstruction of these channels started in Greek times, with the sandbars formed by the Black Sea current between Caucasus’ eroded slopes and the old archipelago in the middle of the straits. Pliny the Elder (6.18) and his sources were perfectly aware of the peculiarity of this land strip blocking parts of the eastern maritime channel: he called it *Eone* (gr. ἤτων, “the shore”), estimating its length at 675000 feet (more than 20 km) and its width to be always superior to two *iugera*, 200 ancient Greek feet (*podes*), *i. e.*, ca. 60 m. In our opinion, this corresponds to the “Anapa-Bugazkaja spit”, the sandbar separating the *Pontus* from the *Korokondamitis*, an almost continuous shoreline from *Sinda* and *Sindikos Limen* (modern Anapa and nearby gulf) to the small island of Blagovetschenskaja and up to the big island of Taman⁵¹. Considering Strabo’s testimony and the actual geomorphological situation, the main opening in this ridge, partially still preserved today by human intervention, was situated at 2 km east from the territory of *Korokondamè* (11.2.9; *fig. 3–6*). This spit was the longest land path towards the center of “the throat”, before the progressive silting of the narrowest part of the Kuban Bosphorus with the sediments of the Kuban Delta. During this formation of land necks, the original names of the straits and, in particular, their Greek translation by “ἰσθμός”

⁴⁸ Трубачев 1999: 248–249; Бушаков 1991.

⁴⁹ Абаев 1958–1995: IV.249–250.

⁵⁰ Klimov 1998: 244; Fähnrich 2007: 708.

⁵¹ Ps.-Skymnos (fr. II Marcotte) used the same term for another sand spit of the Black Sea, the *Achilleos dromos*; *cf. Finzenhagen 1939: 137–138.*

could be used not only for the water but also for the new and narrow lands, leading to some confusion in our sources (*cf. infra*).

Later toponyms referring to these complex maritime straits, in other languages, probably derived from the same Indo-European root. Since they are not strictly related with the Taman peninsula, but refer also to the Kerch peninsula on the European side, they might show that the whole straits, with their multiple entries and exits, could be seen as “throats”. The best example is Kerch itself, whose medieval name Кърчевъ was perhaps constructed on the Slavic stem of “throat/neck”. Additionally, the Kuban Delta offered examples of hydronyms derived from an Indo-Iranian stem probably related to the same lexical family. A trace of a stream name Курка/Курки still appears in the modern Russian name of the Kurchanskij Liman (on the southern shore of the Azov Sea) and in the city name Kurchanskaja on the ancient Temrjuk Island. Another western arm of the Kuban, flowing towards the Black Sea precisely through the ancient maritime channel of the Kuban Bosphorus, was called Οὐχρούχ in Constantine Porphyrogenetos’ *On the Administration of the Empire* (§42). This word was sometimes interpreted as Turkish (Old Bulgarian?), but it is still supposed to have preserved the trace of the same Indo-European (Slavic?) stem of the “throat”⁵². Conversely, the Turkish toponym of Bugaz (with its modern derivative, the hydronym Bugazskij Liman), at the southern entry to our Kuban Bosphorus and *Korokondamitis*, uses the Turkish root to designate the “throat/neck” (and the “gorge”, the “strait”, just like “Boğaz”, the current Turkish name of the Thracian Bosphorus). This does not necessarily show the continuity in naming the strait (and especially the Kuban Bosphorus) as a “water throat”, but it is at least proof that different linguistic groups who occupied the whole region over time designated the channels in a similar way.

2. *Coracanda* — the channel of the throat, and *Korokondamè* — the lump in the throat?

There is no consensus regarding the meaning of the second part of the proper nouns of *Coracanda* and *Korokondamè*. *Coracanda*, the ancient name of our Kuban Bosphorus, seems to have a parallel in the hydronym *Karakunda*/*Karakunga* attested as a river name in Crimea but changed by Turkish assimilation and folk etymology (*Kora*->*Kara*, “black”)⁵³. We might imagine that both were formed from the Indo-Iranian root of the “gorge” and a kind of suffix which was understood by the Greeks as “-anda”. The Iranian evidence recommends the possessive suffix “-uant-”, analogous to that of the river name *Ghorvand* (“which has the tumult”) in Kabul⁵⁴. In this case, *Coracanda* would mean “what belongs to the **kork*-, what goes through the

⁵² Moravcsik 1983: 229.

⁵³ Pallas 1801: II.133; Кеппен 1837: 197.

⁵⁴ Трубачев 1999: 250.

throat". The name would have underlined the inclusion and the importance of the Kuban Bosporus/*Coracanda* among the waterways of the Bosporus Straits.

Unfortunately, up to now, there has been no coherent explanation for all the Indo-European nominal stems finishing in **-n/-nt*⁵⁵. Yet, although not fully satisfactory for all the linguists, quite attractive are the Indo-European parallel names of body parts formed with an Indo-European extension **-nt-* and used for agents. For example, there are the Greek **gonwós, *gónwatos* > γουνός, γόνατος ("knee"), Latin *plantā* ("sole of the foot"), **(s)rh₂w-ónts* > Old Armenian *argand* (արգանդ, "womb"), Celtic **brāgants* ("neck, throat"), Germanic **mundō* ("hand") and **waisundaz* ("wind-pipe")⁵⁶. If such a derivation was possible also in the East-Iranian languages of the Northern Black Sea, *Coracanda* would be the water "throat, gorge, strait", corresponding to the organ which swallows. In any case, it can be compared with the Latin *gurgēs*, also formed (after reduplication) with an unknown suffix from the Indo-European **g_her-/g_herh³-* and specialised in designating a narrow water channel⁵⁷. Although it remains a pure hypothesis, this explanation of the *Coracanda*, name of the Kuban Bosporus, as an organ confirms its identification with Hipponax' "cleft": if the locals saw it as the upper orifice of a body, through which the water filled the *Pontus*, the Ionians considered it as the lowest periphery of their world, the vagina — an image confirmed by the "anthropomorphic" map of Pseudo-Hippocrates' *Peri Hebdomadôn*⁵⁸.

Coracanda could also be understood as a formation from **kor(k)-* (possibly in genitive singular, "of the throat/neck"), and **-kanda*, an Iranian element often used in composed place names, which signifies "dig, ditch, trench, channel". Attested in Avestan (**kani-*) and Old Persian (**kann-*), this stem gave not only the name of the Chorasmian capital Kāt, but also many compounds, especially the toponyms denoting "fortification, city" in the Eastern Iranian languages, from which derived also the Scythian and Sarmatian dialects: best known examples are "Samarqand", "Tashkent" or "Pendjikent"⁵⁹. In our case, the Kuban Bosporus could have meant "the trench in/through the throat". Even if it is not the original etymology, the name could have been understood in this sense by Iranophone populations sensitive to the strategic situation of the channel separating the ancient islands from the Kuban mouths and the Caucasian/Sindian mainland. This etymology could have also inspired variants of the Greek traditions about the "Cimmerian fortifications" in Asia (*cf. infra*).

The etymology of *Korokondamè* is even more challenging. We do not know if this toponym was derived from *Coracanda*, as the land bordering the water channel, or

⁵⁵ Oettinger 1982; Oettinger 2001; Olsen 2004 with previous literature.

⁵⁶ De Vaan 2008: 470; Kroonen 2011; Kroonen 2013: 213, 375–376, 567. See, however, the cautious position of Stringer 2017.

⁵⁷ De Vaan 2008: 275–276: "Both *gurgēs* and *gurgulio* might represent a reduplicated form of the root 'to devour', but the morphology is unclear".

⁵⁸ Pseudo-Hippocrates, *Peri Hebdomadôn II–12* (Bergstraesser 1914: 115); *Corpus Hermeticum* fr. 24.11–12.

⁵⁹ Абаев 1958–1995: I.579, s. v. "kænt"; Lurje 2003.

if both names were separately formed from one Iranian stem, **kor(k)-*, the “throat/neck”. In the first case, *Korokondamè* could be interpreted as an adjective derived from *Coracanda* with either a suffix “-m-” or the fossilisation of an Iranian accusative case. In both situations, it would mean “the settlement related to the channel of the throat”, which could be problematic if the original center of the settlement was not situated directly on the Kuban Bosphorus.

The second possibility is more attractive from a semantic point of view: *Korokondamè* could have been composed from the root **kor(k)-*. Two arguments support this derivation: the series of toponyms and hydronyms derived from the same Indo-European root or with the same meaning of “throat/strait”, and the fact that the hydronym *Coracanda* and the toponym *Korokondamè* are not transmitted by the same sources. This is also why *Coracanda* contains an *-a*, maybe corresponding to the degree zero of the root **kork-* or to a regressive assimilation to *-canda*, while *Korokondamè* can be formed on the degree *-o* of the same root (**korok-*) or by assimilation of *-r-/-ra-* with the syllables *Kor-* and *-kon-*.

If *Korokondamè* was derived directly from **kork-* and not from *Coracanda*, there are at least three possibilities to explain its ending:

1. The first and most plausible, in our opinion, is to suppose a formation with the substantive “*dam*”, meaning “obstacle, hold-up, dam” and referring to an object that obstructs the “throat”⁶⁰. This perfectly fits the shape of the main island that we rediscovered in the middle of the ancient Cimmerian Bosphorus. Phonetically, the compound would be either **korok(o)-+n+dam*’, “the lump of/in the throat” (with an epenthetic “*n*” between the two nouns) or **korok-(a)n(t)+dam*’, “the lump/hitch that possesses/occupies the throat” (with a possessive suffix, supposing an assimilation to the “*o*” vocalic timbre).
2. The second option, already proposed in the Russian literature, involves the Indo-European root **dhemn*”, which gave several Indian and Thracian toponyms ending in “*dama*”⁶¹. Semantically, this seems a good hypothesis, because our toponym corresponds to a “village” according to Strabo (11.2.8) and, therefore, must refer to a constructed site (Volna I or nearby). However, since the root **dhemn*” does not seem to be attested in Iranian toponyms, this hypothesis cannot be retained.
3. Finally, we might consider a third composition, which could have been at least an Iranian popular etymology transmitted to the Greeks: it involves the Iranian **damā*, recalling the name of the highest Iranian mountain Damāvand. *Korokondamè* could have been understood (though not originally formed as) **korok(o)-+n+damā*, meaning “the (mountain) swelling up/blowing fog in the

⁶⁰ Mayrhofer 1986–2001 (1992): I 698, s. v. “*DAM*”; cf. Абаев 1958–1995: I.365–366; Шапошников 2005: 41; Cheung 2007: 55, s. v. **damH²*.

⁶¹ See Трубачев 1999: 249–250, where **krkan-dama* is translated as a “(rustic) community at the neck/on the strait”.

throat”⁶². Nonetheless, Damāvand is not a derivative of **damā*, “the mountain with a snowstorm”. According to W. Eilers, this was only a later etymology. The original oronym had the form *Dunbāvant/d*, meaning “the mountain with tail” and, further on, “the mountain of many faces”⁶³.

Despite the low altitude of the Taman hills, the explanation of *Korokondamè* as “the swelling mountain” fits the general aspect of the region — especially because of the poor meteorological conditions in winter and the gas of the mud volcanoes during their eruptions. Moreover, this explanation fits the Iranian etymology of *Temarunda* — as “dark water”⁶⁴. Together, they give an indigenous Iranian background to the Greek legends about Homer’s Cimmerians who lived in the fumes of the extremity of the inhabited world (*cf. infra*). However, the uncertainties surrounding the composition of the Iranian oronym Damāvand itself give little credit to this last hypothesis.

In the end, we can only make a general assumption that *Korokondamè* was formed either from *Coracanda*/**Coroconda* or from its root, like other Indo-European names of the straits, and that it designated the heights dominating the entry into the Kuban Bosporus and the Kerch Bosporus.

3. The Cimmerian isthmus, trenches and walls: myth and possible realities

These hypothetical etymologies might help us to explain two obscure descriptions of the Cimmerian Bosporus. The ambiguity of the Iranian names related to a land “neck” or a water “throat” parallels the ambiguity of the words used by the Greeks to describe the same “gorges”. This vagueness allowed flexibility in the reinterpretation of the mental maps from one source to another, while the natural environment, the pattern of human habitation and the relationship between the Aegean center and the Bosporan periphery continued to evolve. If these Indo-Iranian meanings were known to the Greeks, they could influence the transformation of this “soft space” over time, by supporting new interpretations for the Cimmerian “isthmus” and “fortifications”.

3.3.1. *Aeschylus and the first passage of the cow*

The first example is the description of the Cimmerian Straits in Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* (729–735). The geography of the play is complicated⁶⁵. In our opinion, the poet transposed the Asiatic itinerary of the southern shore of the Black Sea on the north-western, European coast of the *Pontus*, like in a mirror. However, we can easily follow Io, who generated the name of “cow-passage” (Bosporus), when she “reached the Cimmerian neck, precisely at the narrow gates of the swamp; with fearless heart” she “left behind the Maeotian channel” (ἰσθμὸν δ’ ἐπ’ αὐταῖς

⁶² Cheung 2007: 55–56, s. v. **damH*³.

⁶³ Eilers 1988; Hourcade, Tafazzoli 1993.

⁶⁴ Трубачев 1999: 9–14.

⁶⁵ From the rich bibliography on this topic, see Подосинов 2013.

στενοπόροις λίμνης πύλαις / Κιμμερικὸν ἤξεις, ὄν θρασυσπλάγγχνως σε χρῆ / λιπούσαν ἀλῶν' ἐκπερᾶν Μαιωτικόν). The channel, “canyon” (ἀλῶνα) is certainly the Kerch waterway. But like in Strabo (11.2.5), the Cimmerian “neck, strait/ἰσθμόν” with the narrow gates of the *Maotis* corresponds either to the straits, or to the Taman archipelago. In fact, the Greek word ἰσθμός, meaning “short passage, neck, throat, straits”, describes a maritime channel (between two lands) but also a small firm passage — on land or, we could imagine it for this area, on icy ground during winter⁶⁶. Therefore, it is impossible to know if the poet was referring to the whole straits or only to a part and if he emphasises rather the water channels or the land bridges.

Both interpretations of the Cimmerian isthmus, of water and land, are attested: a more recent scholiast of Aeschylus (*e cod. Neapol. II.F.31, ad loc.*) identifies this isthmus with the land between two seas (τὴν μέσον Εὐξεινοῦ πόντου καὶ τῆς Μαιώτιδος γῆν, ὡς μέσον δύο θαλασσῶν οὖσαν), better consolidated in his time than several centuries before, when Aeschylus wrote his play. But the scholiasts of Dionysius Periegeta (167) knew that the Cimmerian isthmus was the separation — therefore the water — between Europe and Asia (ἰσθμόν δὲ λέγει τὸν κατ' ἐπίου διαιροῦντα τῆς Εὐρώπης τὴν Ἀσίαν). This double explanation in later Greek and Byzantine times fits our hypothetical reconstruction of an Indo-European “throat” (**kork-*) of water and, later on, “neck” of (unstable) land, cut by *Coracanda* and overlooked by *Korokondamè*.

3.3.2. Strabo's Cimmerian isthmoi

When passing by *Kimmerikon* in Asia (to be located, in our opinion, in the region of Akhtanizovskaja 4, south of Peresyp'), Strabo (11.2.5) narrates the legend of the Cimmerians whose center of power extended on a peninsula beyond a land neck (τὸν ἰσθμόν) and who cut it by a trench and erected an earth mound (τάφρω καὶ χώματι) in order to defend themselves against the Scythians: τὸ δὲ Κιμμερικὸν πόλις ἦν πρότερον ἐπὶ χερρονήσου ἰδρυμένη, τὸν ἰσθμόν τάφρω καὶ χώματι κλείουσα. According to the most frequent paleogeographic reconstruction of the Taman archipelago in the 20th century, this trench and mound would have separated the so-called Fontalovskaja Peninsula to the north from the rest of our *Korokondamè* Island. Nonetheless, the geomorphological drillings of D. Kelterbaum confirmed that there was no water channel (so called Subbotin-Erik) in the valley. The small earth hill, usually interpreted as the “Cimmerian Wall” (fig. 15), has never been excavated: we do not know its real function nor construction date. It is however evident that, in antiquity, it could never have defended a settlement or the entire Fontalovskaja Peninsula.

When describing the Cimmerian trench and mound, Strabo or his source probably refers to the well-documented fortification systems in the hinterland of Pantikapaion, the capital of the Bosporan Kingdom which claimed the mythical past of the

⁶⁶ Cf. Finzenhagen 1939: 145.

Cimmerian warriors as part of its “intentional history”⁶⁷. The original homeland of the Cimmerians was situated in Europe, on the northern shore of the *Pontus*⁶⁸. In Roman times, the Cimmerian identity is still present in toponyms like the Cimmerian mountain (Strab. 7.4.3) near the European settlement of *Kimmerikon*, south of *Pantikapaion* (Ps.-Arr., *FGrHist* 2037 F79 Podossinov).

This system of ditches and hills cutting off a promontory had been the usual defence system of the Greek settlements of the Cimmerian Bosphorus from Archaic times onwards⁶⁹. Therefore, if Strabo’s Asiatic *Kimmerikon* is Akhtanizovskaja 4 and if Strabo thought that the Homeric Cimmerian *polis* should have been on the island, the fortifications of Akhtanizovskaja 4, still to be excavated in the northern part of *Phanagoreia* Island, could also have recalled the famous Cimmerian walls over an isthmus⁷⁰.

There is, however, a third possibility: the Cimmerian *τάφρος* (ditch) and the *χώμα* (“earth thrown up, mound, dyke, dam, spit of sand, silting up”) in Asia could be only a legend or a literary confusion. Strabo or his predecessors could have combined the Homeric myth of a Cimmerian *polis*, on a dark, volcanic island on the shore of the Ocean (*Odyssey* 11.14–22)⁷¹, with the memory of the Cimmerian walls in Europe, and with the historical reality of *Kimmerikon*, refounded by the Bosphoran kings at the end of the Hellenistic times in Akhtanizovskaja 4. The fortified Cimmerian isthmus, originally identified with the whole straits (as water channels) or with the neck of the Kerch peninsula in Eastern Crimea, could have been transposed on the Asiatic part of the straits. Whatever the reality of the Asiatic *τάφρος* (trench) and *χώμα* (dam), if our Iranian etymology of *Coracanda*, the “gorge” or the “trench/fortification of the gorge”, and of *Korokon-dam-è*, the “dam in the gorge” had an historic reality and if these meanings circulated in this area from Archaic to Hellenistic times, they could have nourished the Greek fantasy about a Cimmerian throat/neck (**kork-*/ισθμός), with a stronghold on an island, once totally cut from the mainland, at the end of the world.

CONCLUSION: FROM GEOSCIENCES TO ETYMOLOGY — NEW PERSPECTIVES ON ANCIENT PONTIC SPACES

Our geoarchaeological research throughout the Taman Peninsula helped us to reconstruct the first geoscientific maps of the ancient archipelago in the middle of the multi-channelled straits separating the Black Sea from the Sea of Azov. A comparison of these maps with the ancient texts allows us to identify Pomponius

⁶⁷ In the terms of Foxhall, Gehrke, Luraghi 2010; Gehrke 2014.

⁶⁸ Hdt. 4.1, 11–13, 28, 45; 7.20; Strab. 3.2.12, 7.4.3.

⁶⁹ Cf. *supra* n. 2.

⁷⁰ Cf. *supra* n. 13.

⁷¹ Ivantchik 2005; Подосинов 2015с; Подосинов 2016.

Mela's *Coracanda* with the Kuban Bosphorus, an old seaway in the eastern part of the Bosphorus Straits, progressively silted up by the Kuban Delta from late Hellenistic times onwards. *Korokondamè* was the rural territory in the southern part of *Phanagoreia* Island mentioned in the ancient geographical works of Artemidorus (quoted by Stephanus of Byzantium), Strabo, and Ptolemy; the name corresponds to a site which was dominating or obstructing the channels. This etymology fits the Greek *imaginaire* about the native land of the Cimmerians, the mysterious nomads who attacked Asia Minor in the time of "Homer". *Korokondamitis* is the Greek name of the lake between *Korokondamè* and *Coracanda*, corresponding today to the Bugaz, Zukur and the Kyzyltash lagoons. All these names are directly or indirectly derived from an Iranian stem corresponding to the Indo-European **kor(k)*-, the "throat/neck", probably translated by the Greeks as "ἰσθμός", the first and only ancient indigenous name of the Cimmerian Bosphorus.

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CORACANDA, KOROKONDAMĒ,

KOROKONDAMITIS:

Заметки о древнейших названиях

Боспора Киммерийского, Боспора Кубанского
и южной части «острова Тамань»

А. ДАН, Г. БРЮКНЕР, Г.-Й. ГЕРКЕ, Д. КЕЛЬТЕРБАУМ,

У. ШЛОТЦАУЭР, Д. ЖУРАВЛЕВ

Резюме: Опираясь на результаты геолого-археологической реконструкции древнего архипелага и рукавов Керченского пролива до времени расширения дельты Кубани, данная статья выдвигает ряд аргументов в пользу идентификации топонима *Coracanda* с «Кубанским Боспором», топонима *Корокондама* с пос. Волна 1 и южной частью «острова Тамань», а топонима *Корокондамитис* с лиманами Бугазским, Кизилташским и Цокур. Эти древнейшие названия, вероятно, восходят к описанию проливов в виде «шей» в текстах Древнего Ирана, а также связаны с распространенными в этом регионе индоевропейскими топонимами, что могло способствовать закреплению киммерийского мифа, чрезвычайно важного для политического становления идентичности Боспорского царства.

Ключевые слова: Керчь, Боспорское царство, геоархеология, историческая география, топонимика, этимология, Страбон, Помпоний Мела, Плиний Старший, иранские языки, культурный трансфер.

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