



University
of Cyprus

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

**TRADE VS. CULTURAL MEDIATION:
INTEGRATING THE BLACK SEA IN THE GRECO-
PHOENICIAN NETWORKS OF EXCHANGE (7TH –
1ST CENTURY BC)**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This doctoral dissertation investigates commercial and cultural exchanges between the Levant and the Black Sea in a period spanning from the time of the Greek colonisation of this area in the second half of the 7th century BC until the Roman age. The research brings together a large amount of archaeological data which has come out in the last few years but which is dispersed in publications that are often inaccessible because they are published in local journals or monographs. The aim of the dissertation is to fill a gap in the current research of Mediterranean and Euxine interregional trade in Antiquity and specifically to identify the axes and spheres of interaction that involve the Black Sea.

The principal objective of the current research is to give insight into a topic that has attracted little scholarly attention until recently. The adopted approach to this end is to reconstruct trade routes, define chronological limits and identify merchants, consumers and intermediaries, while taking into consideration the cultural impact of the long-distance exchange. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been employed in order to analyse a large body of archaeological and literary material. The volume and variety of the integrated data provides the opportunity for a multi-dimensional analysis of trade patterns that adds to the investigation of interregional trade and intersocietal interaction in this area in Antiquity and potentially will stimulate future research.

The second major goal of this research is to reconceptualise the conventional approach to the archaeology of the Black Sea and facilitate the collaboration between Western and the Eastern scholars. The Black Sea region is often overlooked in the studies of ancient maritime trade. However, the increased amount of Phoenician artefacts reported in the last years from various sites within the region raises important questions in terms of far-reaching marine trade routes and the role of the Levant in what had been essentially Greek networks of exchange between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. In this respect, the present study emphasizes the important role of the Black Sea as an integral partner in overseas exchanges, because of its abundant natural resources (like metals) and because of its rich agricultural landscape. At the same time the need to be a part of this wide and intricate trading network was clearly also triggered by social factors, such as the constant local demand for exotic goods.

The study is structured in seven chapters. Chapter One introduces the purpose and methodology of the thesis. Chapter Two provides a detailed overview of the Black Sea archaeology and outlines the economic dynamics in the region during the period under study. Chapter Three presents the current state of research regarding Phoenician trade networks in the Eastern Mediterranean in the first millennium BC, and discusses employed terminology, previous studies and economic models relevant to the study. Chapters Four to Six analyse in detail the archaeological evidence from the Black Sea region and beyond, focusing respectively on the Archaic, Classic, and Hellenistic periods.