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□□□□□□ □□ **National Museum for History and Archaeology, Constanța, Romania**
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The two initiators of this event, Victor Cojocaru from the Iași Branch of the Romanian Academy and Altay Coşkun, Director of the Waterloo Institute for Hellenistic Studies, previously collaborated at the University of Trier, Germany. Much of their work had been initiated, supervised, or inspired by Heinz Heinen, who is renowned not only for his several publications on Hellenistic culture in general and the Pontus region in particular, but also for his sustained efforts in fostering the exchange of scholars and scholarship between eastern and western Europe, starting in the 1970s, i.e. several years before the Iron Curtain fell. It has been a long-term goal of the two co-organizers not only to follow in that same spirit, but even to extend the network further by also including colleagues from North America, as much as to other countries dedicated to Classical scholarship, including the state whose territory provides the longest coastlines of both the Black Sea and the eastern Mediterranean: Turkey. Thanks to the generous offer of the third co-organizer, Dr. Gabriel Custurea, the Director of the National Museum for History and Archaeology at Constanța (ancient Tomis, famous due to the exile of Ovid), the participants will enjoy an ideal location between one of the most important museum collections in Romania on the one hand and the Black Sea coast on the other.

The conference will bring together some 50 scholars from Europe, Asia, and Northern America to discuss aspects of political, social, cultural, and economic exchange mainly in the north-eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea (Pontus) region. The chronological scope will be the whole of Classical antiquity, but the majority of papers will concentrate on the 4th century BC to the 3rd century AD. This venue will thus provide plenty of opportunities not only to exchange news relating to recent epigraphic, numismatic and archaeological discoveries, but also more generally to share perspectives, methods, and frameworks from which to look at ancient texts and artefacts, whether to gain a better understanding of the past, or to make ancient objects or histories more meaningful for us today.

To foster international friendships and collaborative research initiatives is not only among the missions of the Romanian Academy – Iasi Branch, of the Waterloo Institute for Hellenistic Studies, and of the National Museum for History and Archaeology, Constanța but it is also entirely worthy of the research contexts that brought together Victor Cojocaru and Altay Coşkun in the first place: the former's study of the public guest friends (*proxenoi*) of Greek cities of the Pontus, and the latter's dedication to international friends and friendship of the Romans. Both topics are still being studied collaboratively within the framework of the research projects on the ***External Relations of the Pontic Greek Cities in the Hellenistic and the Roman Times: a Multidisciplinary Approach***

(
<http://www.ponticgreekcities.ro>
) and on the Amici Populi Romani (
<http://wihs.uwaterloo.ca/node/15>

). Several of the participants are already contributing to either of these research agendas,

others will feel encouraged to join them, or to agree on new collaborative initiatives, such as the recently designed project on the

Dynasties of the Hellenistic World (DHW)

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