

OLBIA AS A FRONTIER SOCIETY

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## ABSTRACT

In this study the Greek colony of Olbia, on the north coast of the Black Sea, is examined in the light of both the literary and the archaeological evidence relating to the city's first two centuries of settlement. The effects upon the colonists of isolation from the great centres of Greek urban life, of the hostile physical environment into which the Greek settlers transplanted their civilization, and of the barbarian peoples who surrounded the colony are studied. It can be seen from the evidence gathered here that the Olbiopolitai, while struggling to maintain a Greek way of life in their city, yielded in some measure to the artistic, religious and political influences of their Scythian neighbours.

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# I

## INTRODUCTION

Olbia, also called Borysthenes<sup>1</sup>, was founded on the Hypanis (the Bug) River, north of the Black Sea, by colonists from Miletos during the second half of the seventh century B.C. Eusebios fixes the date of its foundation as the first year of the thirty-fourth Olympiad, 644/3 B.C. Archaeological evidence confirms the presence of Greek colonists on the site during at least the final quarter of the seventh century.

One of the most fascinating aspects of this colony during the first two centuries of its existence is its isolation; both in the Greek imagination and in fact the shores of the Northern Pontos were in a world apart from and alien to the familiar environment of the Aegean. Not only its great distance from home (Olbia was nearly a thousand miles by sea from Miletos), but the harshness of its climate and the strangeness of the native Scythian culture, into close contact with which the colonists at Olbia were forced, evoked in the Greek

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1 Herodotos is the first writer who uses the name "Borysthenes". Coins and inscriptions from the colony at every date refer to the city as Olbia.

inhabitants of the northern coast of the Black Sea a feeling of exile. And, because of the difficulties of transport and communication that arose from navigational hazards peculiar to the Black Sea, this isolation was more than an illusion; it was a fact.

In spite of the hardship, real and imagined, that might have deterred a prospective colonist from exchanging the warm civilization of Miletos for the chilly wilderness of the Hypanis River in Pontos, there were incentives for the adventurous. Chief among these was the abundance of arable land on the Hypanis, for, although Miletos and the Ionian coast were not, in the seventh century, so desperately short of land as the cities of the mainland of Greece, their fields were never quite enough, and, after the Persian conquest of Lydia in the mid-sixth century, the Milesians perhaps foresaw a possible shrinkage of the lands available for their use. In addition to productive land, the Black Sea's northern coast offered the possibility of lucrative trade; the Scythian natives of the region could supply cattle, hides, slaves and certain kinds of decorative art, and in exchange they were glad to obtain wine and oil and other products of a warmer climate. Another promising industry suggested itself in the convenient coincidence of abundant edible fish in the estuaries of the great rivers and

natural deposits of the salt that is used to preserve fish for export.

A first glance at the situation of Olbia's earliest colonists — the prospects that lured them there, and the harsh unfamiliarity of the environment into which they found themselves transplanted — suggests an obvious analogy: European settlers in early North America found themselves in a very similar situation. In both cases the colonists placed themselves into circumstances of more or less permanent exile as a result of the problems of transport and the distances involved. In both cases, too, the people involved were adventurers, willing to abandon the familiarity and security of home in order to find material wealth and a better way of life. And in both seventeenth-century America and seventh-century Olbia the colonists were faced with the problem of establishing workable relations with native populations.

The physical environment in each case was of an unaccustomed harshness. Just as the settlers of the North American frontier created a special lore about the barrenness of the plains and the unearthliness of the winters, so the Greeks



developed, in connexion with the Euxine region, a particularly forbidding environmental lore; the Greeks at home heard exaggerated tales of eternal mists, grey, stunted vegetation, and bizarre physiological effects of the frigid northern climate. By greatly increasing the reluctance of travellers to voyage to the northern colonies, these fanciful reports tended to aggravate the isolation of outposts such as Olbia.

In the case of the North American settlement, the harsh environment, the contact with a native population, the almost limitless availability of productive land and, above all, the isolation of the settlers from their mother countries, led to the evolution of a style of life that was different in many respects from that of Europe. During the centuries of North American colonization there existed industrial enterprises, modes of architecture and even a style of living that were peculiar to the frontier society.

Did the strangeness of the environment, the contact with a native population (the Scythians) and the isolation of Olbia produce in that colony a unique way of life? To what extent, in the first two centuries after the city's founding, did the inhabitants cling, in spite of the "frontier" aspect of their existence, to Greek traditions in the administration of their

city, in their architecture, their art, their religion and generally in their way of life?

An examination of the evidence bearing on these questions is the concern of this study. The evidence, although it is incomplete, does appear to warrant some conclusions, and some tentative answers to the questions.

Literary sources for Olbia before 400 B.C., and for life on the northern coast of the Black Sea, are not voluminous. References to this region in the writings of Archilochos, Herodotos, Hippokrates, Homer, Strabo and Theophrastos provide a sketch of the conditions under which life had to be lived at Olbia — the climate, the condition of the soil, the flora and fauna, and the resources of the area. In the fourth book of Herodotos one finds a wealth of detail about the Scythian people and their relations with the settlers of Olbia. Hippokrates describes some of the physical peculiarities of the Scyths. The site of the city and its architecture are briefly touched upon by a number of authors, notably Dio Chrysostom, Herodotos and Strabo. The region's industries are discussed by Polybios and Strabo.

About the Olbiopolitai themselves at this early period

there is only a smattering of written information. Dio Chrysostom provides a hint about the mode of dress at Olbia, Diosdoros and Herodotos mention the colonists' Milesian origin and describe their dealings with the Scythians, and Strabo tells us that a major preoccupation of the Olbiopolitai was trade. A few inscriptions provide a fragmentary picture of Olbian external relations in the sixth and fifth centuries.

All the literary evidence is presented, under the heading "Testimonia," in the next chapter.

We must turn to archaeology in order to fill the rather spacious gaps in the written tradition about Olbia. Unfortunately, although the site (near Nikolaev in Southern Russia) has been excavated, much of the detailed information regarding the Russian excavators' work is difficult of access in the Western hemisphere. From the reports that are available, however, especially the lists of artifacts recovered from the city's earliest layers, one can make a good beginning in the task of reconstructing details of Olbian life in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Some significant observations can be based upon the Olbian factories that specialized in imitations of Scythian art, upon the domestic architecture adapted in construction

and style to the special demands of the Olbian climate, and upon the pottery that originated in the factories of Ionian Greece and Athens, as well as upon Olbian coins that bear some interesting political and religious clues. An appendix provides illustrations of some finds of pottery and metalwork, particularly those exhibiting a distinctly Scythian influence in their design.

Epigraphical evidence at Olbia is scanty for the earliest centuries of her existence. Few of the many inscriptions unearthed on the site can be dated before the third century B.C.; apart from brief sepulchral monuments, only one or two inscriptions can be said to antedate the end of the fifth century.

From the evidence that does exist, however, an attempt can be made to reconstruct the Olbian way of life in the first two centuries after the colony's foundation. This evidence will be examined with a view to uncovering, where possible, the aspects of life in the Olbian society that represent a departure from the style of life "at home."

## II

## TESTIMONIA

The literary evidence for the arguments of the following chapters is set out here both in the Greek and in translation. The Greek text of each author is that of the edition cited in the bibliography, except in the case of inscriptions, where I use the publications of Latyshev<sup>1</sup> and Tod<sup>2</sup> and cite by number.

The material has been roughly classified according to content under the following headings: The Site and Surrounding Country, The Climate and Living Conditions, Resources and Industries, The Scythians, The Olbiopolitai, External Relations. In the body of this study, reference will be made to these testimonia by number.

## a. THE SITE AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY

T1. Dio Chrysostom, XXXVI, 1,2.

ἡ γὰρ πόλις τὸ μὲν εἴληφεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Βορυσθένους διὰ τὸ κάλλος

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1. Latyshev, Basilius, Inscriptiones Antiquae Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae, Hildesheim, 1965.
  2. Tod, Marcus N., A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions, II, Oxford, 1948.

καὶ τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ ποταμοῦ, κεῖται δὲ πρὸς τῷ Ὑπάνιδι, ἢ τε νῦν καὶ ἡ πρότερον οὕτως ᾤκειτο, οὐ πολὺ ἄνωθεν τῆς Ἰππολάου καλουμένης ἄκρας ἐν τῷ κατ' ἀντικρύ. τοῦτο δέ ἐστι τῆς χώρας ὁξὺ καὶ στερεὸν ὥσπερ ἔμβολον, περὶ ὃ συμπίπτουσιν οἱ ποταμοί. τὸ δὲ ἐντεῦθεν ἤδη λιμνάζουσι μέχρι θαλάττης ἐπὶ σταδίου σχεδόν τι διακοσίους· καὶ τὸ εὖρος οὐχ ἦττον ταύτῃ τῶν ποταμῶν. ἐστὶ δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ μὲν πλεον τέναγος καὶ γαλήνη ταῖς εὐδαίαις ἐν λίμνῃ γίγνεται σταθερά.

For, the city has taken its name from the Borysthenes because of that river's great size and beauty; it lies on the Hypanis River — and the original settlement was founded on this site—not far upstream from the headland called Hippolaus, on the opposite side of the river. This point of land about which the two rivers converge is sharp and like a ramming-beak, but the terrain from there to the sea for almost two hundred stades forms a marshy basin, and the width of the river here is not less than that. There is in that region a great deal of shoal water and a calm brought about by the lack of winds, such as one finds on a quiet lake.

T2. Dio Chrysostom, XXXVI, 6.

Σημεῖον δὲ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἢ τε φαυλότης τῶν οἰκοδομημάτων καὶ τὸ συνεστάλθαι τὴν πόλιν ἐς βραχύ. μέρος γάρ τινι προσφκοδόμηται τοῦ παλαιοῦ περιβόλου, καθ' ὃ πύργοι τινὲς οὐ πολλοὶ διαμένουσιν

οὐ πρὸς τὸ μέγεθος οὐδὲ πρὸς τὴν ἰσχὺν τῆς πόλεως.

The poor quality of the buildings and the shrinking of the city within narrow limits are evidence of its overthrow; for it has been built up near one particular section of the old city-wall along which a small number of towers remain standing, now disproportionate to the size and power of the city.

T3. Herodotos, IV, 101.

ἀπὸ γὰρ Ἰστρου ἐπὶ Βορυσθένεα δέκα ἡμερέων ὁδός, ἀπὸ Βορυσθένεός τε ἐπὶ τὴν λίμνην τὴν Μαίητιν ἑτέρων δέκα· καὶ τὸ ἀπὸ θαλάσσης ἕς μεσόγαιαν ἕς τοὺς Μελαγχλαίνους τοὺς κατύπερθε Σκυθέων οἰκημένους εἴκοσι ἡμερέων ὁδός. ἡ δὲ ὁδὸς ἡ ἡμερησίη ἀνὰ διηκόσια στάδια συμβέβληται μοι. οὕτως ἂν εἴη τῆς Σκυθικῆς τὰ ἐπικάρσια τετρακισχιλίων σταδίων καὶ τὰ ὄρθια τὰ ἕς τὴν μεσόγαιαν φέροντα ἑτέρων τοσούτων σταδίων. ἡ μὲν νυν γῆ αὕτη ἐστὶ μέγαθος τοσαύτη.

From the Istros to the Borysthenes River it is a ten-day journey, and ten days' farther travel brings one to the Maiotian Lake; from the sea inland to the Black Cloaks who dwell beyond the Scythians is a journey of twenty days. Now, since by my reckoning a day's journey is approximately two hundred stades, the breadth of Scythia would be about four thousand stades, and the inland distance a similar number of the same units. The land, then, is of this order of magnitude.

Τ4. Strabo, VII, 4,8.

θήραι δ' εἰσὶν, ἐν μὲν τοῖς ἔλεσιν ἐλάφων καὶ οὐσάγων, ἐν δὲ τοῖς πεδίοις ὀνάγων καὶ δορκάδων. ἴδιον δέ τι καὶ τὸ αἰτὸν μὴ γίνεσθαι ἐν τοῖς τόποις τούτοις. ἔστι δὲ τῶν τετραπόδων ὁ καλούμενος κόλος, μεταξὺ ἐλάφου καὶ κριοῦ τὸ μέγεθος, λευκός, ὀξύτερος τούτων τῷ δρόμῳ, πίνων τοῖς βώθωσιν εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν, εἴτ' ἐντεῦθεν εἰς ἡμέρας ταμιεύων πλείους, ὥστ' ἐν τῇ ἀνύδρῳ νέμεσθαι ῥαδίως. τοιαύτη μὲν ἡ ἐκτὸς Ἰστροῦ πᾶσα ἡ μεταξὺ τοῦ Ῥήνου καὶ τοῦ Τανάιδος ποταμοῦ, μέχρι τῆς Ποντικῆς θαλάττης καὶ τῆς Μαιώτιδος.

The wild game in the marshes include deer and wild boar, while on the plains there are wild asses and antelope. But it is a strange fact that the eagle is not found in this country. There is a four-footed creature called the "stump-horned goat," which falls between the deer and the domestic sheep in size, but is more swift-footed than either of them. The creature, which is white in colour, drinks up water through its nostrils into its head, managing on that supply for many days afterward so that it survives without difficulty in waterless regions. Such is the whole region beyond the Istros River from the Rhenos to the Tanais as far as the Black Sea and Lake Maiotis.



T5. Strabo, VII, 3,17.

εἶτα Βορυσθένης ποταμὸς πλωτὸς ἐφ' ἑξακοσίους σταδίους καὶ πλησίον ἄλλος ποταμὸς Ὑπανίς καὶ νῆσος πρὸ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ Βορυσθένους, ἔχουσα λιμένα. πλεύσαντι δὲ τὸν Βορυσθένη σταδίους διακοσίους ὁμώνυμος τῷ ποταμῷ πόλις. ἡ δ' αὐτὴ καὶ Ὀλβία καλεῖται, μέγα ἐμπόριον, κτίσμα Μιλησίων. ἡ δὲ ὑπερκειμένη πᾶσα χώρα τοῦ λεχθέντος μεταξὺ Βορυσθένους καὶ Ἰστροῦ πρώτη μὲν ἐστὶν ἡ τῶν Γετῶν ἐρημία, ἔπειτα οἱ Τυρεγέται, μεθ' οὓς οἱ Ἰάξυγες Σαρμάται καὶ οἱ Βασίλαιοι λεγόμενοι καὶ Οὐργοί, τὸ μὲν πλεόν νομάδες, ὀλίγοι δὲ καὶ γεωργίας ἐπιμελούμενοι.

Next is the Borysthenes River, navigable for a distance of six hundred stades, and adjoining it there is another river called the Hypanis. At the mouth of the Borysthenes there is an island that has an anchorage. If one sails two hundred stades up the Borysthenes, one will come upon a city of the same name as the river; the city is also called Olbia. It is a great trading centre, a colony of Miletos. Of all the territory beyond what I have described, between the Borysthenes and the Istros, the first part is the Desert of the Getai, and then one comes to the Tyregetans and the Iazygian Sarmatians, the so-called Royal Scythians, and the Ourgoi, who are nomads for the most part, although a few of them engage in farming.

## b. THE CLIMATE AND LIVING CONDITIONS

T6. Herodotos, IV, 28.

δυσχείμερος δὲ αὕτη ἡ καταλεχθεῖσα πᾶσα χώρα οὕτω δὴ τί ἐστι, ἔνθα τοὺς μὲν ὀκτὼ τῶν μηνῶν ἀφόρητος οἶος γίνεται κρυμός, ἐν τοῖσι ὕδωρ ἐκχέας πηλὸν οὐ ποιήσεις, πῦρ δὲ ἀνακαίων ποιήσεις πηλόν. ἡ δὲ θάλασσα πῆγνυται καὶ ὁ Βόσπορος πᾶς ὁ Κιμμέριος, καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κρυστάλλου οἱ ἐντὸς τάφρου Σκύθαι κατοικημένοι στρατεύονται καὶ τὰς ἀμάξας ἐπελαύνουσι πέρην ἐς τοὺς Σίνδους. οὕτω μὲν δὴ τοὺς ὀκτὼ μῆνας διατελέει χειμῶν ἐών, τοὺς δ' ἐπιλοίπους τέσσερας φύχεα αὐτόθι ἐστί. κεχώρισται δὲ οὗτος ὁ χειμῶν τοὺς τρόπους πᾶσι τοῖσι ἐν ἄλλοισι χωρίοις γιγνομένοις χειμῶσι, ἐν τῷ τὴν μὲν ὥραίην οὐκ ἔχει λόγου ἄξιον οὐδέν, τὸ δὲ θέρος ὕων οὐκ ἀνίει.

All this land that I have described suffers harsh winters to such a degree that for eight months of the year there occurs unbearable cold, and in these months you cannot create mud by pouring out water, but by lighting a fire. The sea and all the Kimmerian Bosphoros freeze over, and all the Scyths who dwell on this side of the channel make expeditions across the ice and drive their wagons across to the Sindoi. Thus winter continues for eight months, but there is cold weather there during even the four remaining months. This kind of winter is

different from the winters that occur in all other lands; here, in the season when one would expect rain, none falls worth recording, but during the summer it never stops raining.

T7. Homer, Odyssey, XI, 13-19.

ἡ δ' ἔς πεῖραθ' ἵκανε βαθυρρόου Ὠκεανοῖο.  
 ἔνθα δὲ Κιμμερίων ἀνδρῶν δῆμός τε πόλις τε,  
 ἥρι καὶ νεφέλῃ κεκαλυμμένοι· οὐδέ ποτ' αὐτοὺς  
 ἥελιος Φαέθων καταδέρκεται ἀκτίνεσσιν,  
 οὔθ' ὅπότε ἂν στείχῃσι πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα,  
 οὔθ' ὅτ' ἂν ἄψ ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν προτράπηται,  
 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ νύξ ὅλοή τέταται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι.

She came to the ends of deep-flowing Ocean, where the race of the Kimmerians have their city, and are shrouded in mist and clouds. Never does the sun look down upon them with his rays either when he is rising into the starry heaven, or when again he sets from the heavens, earthward; but unbroken night covers lowly mortals.

T8. Strabo, II, 1,16.

ἅπαντα δ' ἡ χώρα δυσχεῖμερός ἐστι μέχρι τῶν ἐπὶ θαλάττῃ τόπων  
 τῶν μεταξὺ Βορυσθένους καὶ τοῦ στόματος τῆς Μαιώτιδος. αὐτῶν

δὲ τῶν ἐπὶ θαλάττῃ τὰ ἀρκτικώτατα τό τε στόμα τῆς Μαιώτιδος καὶ ἐτὶ μᾶλλον τὸ τοῦ Βορυσθένους καὶ ὁ μυχὸς τοῦ Ταμυράκου κόλπου, καὶ Καρκινίτου, καθ' ὃν ὁ ἰσθμὸς τῆς μεγάλης Χερρονήσου. δηλοῖ δὲ τὰ φύχῃ, καίπερ ἐν πεδίοις οἰκούντων· ὄνους τε γὰρ οὐ τρέφουσι (δύσριγον γὰρ τὸ ζῶον), οἳ τε βόες οἱ μὲν ἄκερψ γεννῶνται, τῶν δ' ἀπορρινῶσι τὰ κέρατα (καὶ γὰρ τοῦτο δύσριγον τὸ μέρος), οἳ τε ἵπποι μικροί, τὰ δὲ πρόβατα μεγάλα· ῥήττονται δὲ χαλχαῖ ὑδρίαι, τὰ δ' ἐνόντα συμπήττεται. τῶν δὲ πάχων ἡ σφοδρότης μάλιστα ἐκ τῶν συμβαινόντων περὶ τὸ στόμα τῆς Μαιώτιδος δῆλός ἐστιν. ἀμαξεύεται γὰρ ὁ διάπλους ὁ εἰς Φαναγορίαν ἐκ τοῦ Παντικαπαίου, ὥστε καὶ πάγον εἶναι καὶ ὁδόν.

All this region as far as the coastal land between the Borysthenes River and the entrance to Lake Maiotis suffers extreme winters. In fact, of the places on the Pontos, the most northerly are the mouths of the Maiotis and the even more northerly Borysthenes, and the lagoon of the Tamyrakian Gulf and the Karkinitis into which projects the isthmus of Great Chersonesos.

Although there are people living on the plains, it is certain that it is a cold region. For the inhabitants do not breed ~~the~~ <sup>as</sup> ~~as~~, a species that is intolerant of the cold, and they have cattle without horns, or else they file the horns off because the horns are a part of the animal that is intolerant of the cold. Their horses are small, and the sheep larger.

When the fluid within freezes solid, bronze jars split open. But the intensity of the cold is demonstrated most clearly by the phenomenon of the entrance to Lake Maiotis: there the channel between Pantikapaion and Phanagoria is crossed by wagon, the ice being as solid as a highway.

T9. Hippokrates, de Aere, 19.

ἥκιστα πολύγονόν ἐστι, καὶ ἡ χώρα ἐλάχιστα θηρία τρέφει κατὰ μέγεθος καὶ πλῆθος. κεῖται γὰρ ὑπ' αὐτῆσι τῆσιν ἄρκτοις καὶ τοῖς ὄρεσι τοῖς Ῥιπαίοισιν, ὅθεν ὁ βορέης πνεῖ. ὅ τε ἥλιος τελευτῶν ἐγγύτατα γίνεται, ὁκόταν ἐπὶ τὰς θερινὰς ἔλθῃ περιόδους καὶ τότε ὀλίγον χρόνον θερμαίνει καὶ οὐ σφόδρα· τὰ τε πνεύματα οὐκ ἀφικνεῖται, ἢν μὴ ὀλιγάκις καὶ ἀσθενέα, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῶν ἄρκτων αἰεὶ πνεύουσι πνεύματα ψυχρὰ ἀπὸ τε χιόνος καὶ κρυστάλλου καὶ ὑδάτων πολλῶν. οὐδέποτε δὲ τὰ ὄρεα ἐκλείπει· ἀπὸ τούτων δὲ δυσοίκητά ἐστιν. ἡὲρ τε κατέχει πολὺς τῆς ἡμέρης τὰ πεδία, καὶ ἐν τούτοις διαιτεῦνται· ὥστε τὸν μὲν χειμῶνα αἰεὶ εἶναι, τὸ δὲ θέρος ὀλίγας ἡμέρας καὶ ταύτας μὴ λίην. μετέωρα γὰρ τὰ πεδία καὶ ψιλὰ καὶ οὐκ ἐστεφάνωνται ὄρεσιν, ἀλλ' ἢ ἀνάντεα ἀπὸ τῶν ἄρκτων· αὐτόθι καὶ τὰ θηρία οὐ γίνεται μεγάλα, ἀλλ' οἷά τέ ἐστιν ὑπὸ γῆν σκεπάζεσθαι. ὁ γὰρ χειμὼν κωλύει καὶ τῆς γῆς ἡ ψιλότης, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλέη οὐδὲ σκέπη. αἱ δὲ μεταβολαὶ τῶν ὥρέων οὐκ εἰσι μεγάλαι οὐδὲ ἰσχυραί, ἀλλ' ὁμοῖαι καὶ ὀλίγον μεταλλάσσουσαι· διότι καὶ τὰ εἶδεα ὁμοῖοι αὐτοῖς ἐωυτοῖς εἰσι σίτῳ τε χρεώμενοι αἰεὶ ὁμοίῳ ἐσθῆτι τε τῇ αὐτῇ καὶ θερέος καὶ χειμῶνος, τὸν τε ἥερα ὑδατεινὸν ἔλκοντες καὶ παχύν, τὰ τε ὕδατα πίνοντες ἀπὸ χιόνος καὶ παγετῶν, τοῦ τε ταλαιπώρου ἀπέοντες.

The Scythian race is far from prolific and their territory breeds animals that are very small in both size and number. The reason for this is that the region lies near the northern extremities of the world and the Rhipaian mountains from which the north wind blows. As for the sun, even when it is nearest, at the end of the period of its passing through the summer solstice, it raises the temperature for only a brief period, and to a small degree. Winds blowing from the warm latitudes never reach so far north, except feebly on rare occasions. From the arctic regions, however, winds chilled by snow, ice and heavy rains blow unendingly. Because this cold never leaves the mountains, they are uninhabitable. The Scythians spend their lives on plains over which mists hang throughout the day, so that winter is continuous, and a dubious sort of summer lasts only a few days.

Although the plains, which are high and unwooded, are not encircled by mountains, they are steep in their northern reaches. No sizeable beasts are indigenous to this region, but only the species that can shelter under ground. The reason for their scarcity is the cold and the bareness of the land, which provides no warmth or shelter. As for the seasons, their

changes are slight and insignificant, all months being much the same without variation. Thus the people here all look alike because they all eat the same food and wear the same clothing, summer and winter; and they are all subject to breathing the thick, moist atmosphere, and to drinking water that comes from snow and ice, and to avoiding heavy exertion.

### c. RESOURCES AND INDUSTRIES

T10. Dio Chrysostom, XXXVI, 3.

. . . τὸ δὲ λοιπὸν ῥών ἐστὶν ἐλώδης καὶ δασεῖα καλάμῳ καὶ δένδροις. φαίνεται δὲ τῶν δένδρων πολλὰ καὶ ἐν μέσῃ τῇ λίμνῃ, ὡς ἱστοῖς προσεοικέναι, καὶ ἤδη τινὲς τῶν ἀπειροτέρων διήμαρτον, ὡς ἐπὶ πλοῖα ἐπέχοντες. ταύτῃ δὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλῶν ἐστὶ τὸ πλῆθος, ὅθεν οἱ πλείους τῶν βαρβάρων λαμβάνουσιν ὠνούμενοι τοὺς ἄλας καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ Σκυθῶν οἱ Χερρόνησον οἰκοῦντες τὴν Ταυρικὴν.

The remainder of the riverside is marshy and thickly covered with reeds and trees. In fact many of the trees stand up even far out in the river, giving the appearance of ship's masts, so that there have been occasions when certain rather inexperienced men, supposing themselves to be approaching ships, have been led off course. Here too is the great concentration of salt works from which most of the barbarians and the Greek and Scythian inhabitants of the Tauric Chersonese purchase salt.

T11. Herodotos, IV, 53, 2-4.

. . . πίνεσθαί τε ἡδιστός ἐστι, ῥέει τε καθαρὸς παρὰ θολεροῖσι, σπόρος τε παρ' αὐτὸν ἄριστος γίνεται, ποίη τε, τῇ οὐ σπείρεται ἡ χώρα, βαθυτάτη· ἄλεις τε ἐπὶ τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ αὐτόματοι πηγνυνται ἄπλετοι· κῆτεά τε μεγάλα ἀνάκανθα, τὰ ἀντακαίους καλέουσι, παρέχεται ἕς τάριχευσιν....

(The Borysthenes) is the sweetest of rivers from which to drink, and compared to other rivers, which are muddy, it flows crystal clear. The best crops grow along its banks, and very tall grass wherever the land is not cultivated. At the river's mouth, boundless natural salt-beds accumulate, and great schools of spineless fish, which they call antakaioi, are available for salting.

T12. Polybios, IV, 38,4-5.

πρὸς μὲν γὰρ τὰς ἀναγκαίας τοῦ βίου χρείας τὰ τε θρέμματα καὶ τὸ τῶν εἰς τὰς δουλείας ἀγομένων σωμάτων πλῆθος οἱ κατὰ τὸν Πόντον ἡμῖν τόποι παρασκευάζουσι δαφιλέστατον καὶ χρησιμώτατον ὁμολογουμένως, πρὸς δὲ περιουσίαν μέλι κηρὸν τάριχος ἀφθόνως ἡμῖν χορηγοῦσιν. δέχονται γε μὴν τῶν ἐν τοῖς παρ' ἡμῖν τόποις περιττευόντων ἔλαιον καὶ πᾶν οἴνου γένος. σίτῳ δ' ἀμείβονται, ποτὲ μὲν εὐκαίρως διδόντες ποτὲ δὲ λαμβάνοντες.

As for the necessities of life, everyone agrees that the region of the Black Sea provides most abundantly and conveniently our supply of cattle and the greatest number of men



who can be used as slaves. And in addition that region supplies an abundance of honey, wax, and preserved fish without limit, receiving from our localities in exchange our plentiful olive oil and wine of every kind. But as for grain, the situation varies; in some growing-seasons they export grain, and in others they import it.

T13. Strabo, VII, 6,2.

. . . εἰς οὓς (sc. κόλπους) ἐμπέπουσα ἡ πηλαμὺς ἀλίσκεται ῥα-  
δίως διὰ τε τὸ πλῆθος αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν βίαν τοῦ συνελαύνοντος ῥοῦ  
καὶ τὴν στενότητα τῶν κόλπων, ὥστε καὶ χερσὶν ἀλίσκεσθαι διὰ  
τὴν στενοχωρίαν. γεννᾶται μὲν οὖν τὸ ζῶον ἐν τοῖς ἔλεσι τῆς Μαι-  
ώτιδος, ἰσχύσαν δὲ μικρὸν ἐκπίπτει διὰ τοῦ στόματος ἀγεληδὸν καὶ  
φέρεται παρὰ τὴν Ἀσιανὴν ἡϊόνα μέχρι Τραπεζοῦντος καὶ Φαρνακίας·  
ἐνταῦθα δὲ πρότερον συνίστασθαι συμβαίνει τὴν θήραν, οὐ πολλὴ  
δ' ἐστίν· οὐ γάρ πω τὸ προσῆκον ἔχει μέγεθος. εἰς δὲ Σινώπην  
προϊοῦσα ὠραιότερα πρὸς τε τὴν θήραν καὶ τὴν ταριχείαν ἐστίν.

The tunny fish, rushing down into these (the Bosporan) straits, are easily caught because of their great number and the force of the current that drives them along, combined with the narrowness of the waters; here, because of the confined passage, they can be caught even by hand. The tunnies

begin life in the shallows of Lake Maiotis, and then, having gained a little strength, they migrate in schools out through the narrows and are swept along the Asian coast toward Trapezos and Pharnakia where for the first time it is possible to make a catch of them, although not a great one. At this point they have not yet reached a useful size. But by the time they have reached Sinope, they are more nearly ready for catching and salting.

T14. Theophrastos, IV, 5,3

τῶν δὲ ἡμερουμένων ἥκιστα φασιν ἐν τοῖς ψυχροῖς ὑπομένειν δάφνην καὶ μυρρίνην, καὶ τούτων δὲ ἦττον ἔτι τὴν μυρρίνην.... ἐν δὲ τῷ Πόντῳ περὶ Παντικάπαιον οὐδ' ἕτερον καίπερ σπουδαζόντων καὶ πάντα μηχανωμένων πρὸς τὰς ἱεροσύνας· συκαῖ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ εὐμεγέθεις καὶ ῥοιαὶ δὲ περισκεπαζόμεναι. ἄπιοι δὲ καὶ μηλέαι πλεῖσται καὶ παντοδαπώταται καὶ χρησταί. αὗται δ' ἐαριναὶ πλὴν εἰ ἄρα ὄψιαι· τῆς δὲ ἀγρίας ὕλης ἐστὶ δρυς πετελέα μελία καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα. πεύκη δὲ καὶ ἐλάτη καὶ πίτυς οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲ ὅλως οὐδὲν ἔνδοξον· ὕγρα δὲ αὕτη καὶ χείρων πολὺ τῆς Σινωπικῆς, ὥστε οὐδὲ πολὺ χρῶνται αὐτῇ πλὴν πρὸς τὰ ὑπαίθρια. ταῦτα μὲν οὖν περὶ τὸν Πόντον ἢ ἐν τισὶ γε τόποις αὐτοῦ.

Of all the domestic plants, they say that the laurel and the myrtle are least able to stand the cold, and the myrtle less than any.... In the Pontos near Pantikapaion neither grows,

even though people are most anxious to raise these plants, and try every means to encourage them because they are needed for religious rites. But many good-sized fig and pomegranate trees are cultivated under shelter, and numerous pear and apple trees of various kinds --all of them prolific -- grow there. These bear fruit in the spring except when they are retarded. Although the indigenous forest includes such trees as oak, elm and ash, neither fir, pine, nor any of the resinous woods occur at all. The wood here is damp and vastly inferior to that of Sinope, so that they do not make much use of it, except for outdoor construction. Such are the trees of most of the Pontic region.

T15. Strabo, XI, 2,3.

ἦν δ' ἐμπόριον κοινὸν τῶν τε Ἀσιανῶν καὶ τῶν Εὐρωπαϊῶν νομάδων καὶ τῶν ἐκ τοῦ Βοσπόρου τὴν λίμνην πλεόντων, τῶν μὲν ἀνδράποδα ἀγόντων καὶ δέρματα καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο τῶν νομαδικῶν, τῶν δ' ἐσθῆτα καὶ οἶνον καὶ τᾶλλα, ὅσα τῆς ἡμέρου διαίτης οἰκεῖα, ἀντιφορ-  
τιζομένων.

It (Tanaïs) was a common market-place to both Asian and European nomads and to the seamen who sailed from the Bosphoros into the lake. The nomads had slaves and hides for sale,

and whatever else nomads possess, while the others offered clothing, wine and the other items of everyday use.

#### d. THE SCYTHIANS

T16. Herodotos, IV, 46,2.

τὸ δὲ μέγιστον οὕτω σφι ἀνεύρηται ὥστε ἀποφυγεῖν τε μηδένα ἐπελθόντα ἐπὶ σφέας, μὴ βουλομένους τε ἐξευρεθῆναι καταλαβεῖν μὴ οἶόν τε εἶναι· τοῖσι γὰρ μήτε ἄστεα μήτε τείχεα ἢ ἐκτισμένα, ἀλλὰ φερέοικοι ἐόντες πάντες ἕωσι ἵπποτοξόται, ζῶντες μὴ ἀπ' ἀρότου ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κτηνέων, οἰκήματά τε σφι ἢ ἐπὶ ζευγέων, κῶς οὐκ ἂν εἴησαν οὔτοι ἄμαχοί τε καὶ ἄποροι προσμίσγειν;

Now the greatest thing they have learned is the means to prevent anyone who attacks them from making a safe retreat, or from catching up with them when they do not wish to be found. Certainly to men who have neither established cities nor fortifications, but who by custom are all nomads and mounted archers living not by agriculture but by raising cattle, and who have their homes on wagons, there is a sure state of invincibility and difficulty of approach.

T17. Strabo, VII, 4, 6

οἱ μὲν οὖν Νομάδες πολεμισταὶ μᾶλλον εἰσιν ἢ ληστρικοί, πολεμ-

οὔσι δὲ ὑπὲρ τῶν φόρων. ἐπιτρέψαντες γὰρ ἔχειν τὴν γῆν τοῖς ἐθέλουσι γεωργεῖν ἀντὶ ταύτης ἀγαπῶσι φόρους λαμβάνοντες τοὺς συντεταγμένους μετρίους τινὰς οὐκ εἰς περιουσίαν, ἀλλ' εἰς τὰ ἐφήμερα καὶ τὰ ἀναγκαῖα τοῦ βίου. μὴ διδόντων δὲ, αὐτοῖς πολεμοῦσιν.

Now the Scythian nomads are warriors rather than bandits, but when they go to war, it is for the sake of tribute; for they turn over their land to whoever wants it for agricultural purposes, and are happy to collect the moderate tribute that they have assessed. Their prices are fair because they are not interested in luxury, but only in their daily needs and the necessities of life. But, if the tenants do not pay the fee, the Scythians go to war with them.

T18. Hippokrates, de Aere, 18

ἡ δὲ Σκυθέων ἐρημὴ καλευμένη πεδίας ἐστὶ καὶ λειμακώδης καὶ φιλὴ καὶ ἔνυδρος μετρίως. ποταμοὶ γὰρ εἰσὶ μεγάλοι, οἳ ἐξοχετεύουσι τὸ ὕδωρ ἐκ τῶν πεδίων. ἐνταῦθα καὶ οἱ Σκύθαι διαίτεῦνται, Νομάδες δὲ καλεῖνται, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν οἰκήματα, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀμάξῃσιν οἰκεῦσιν. αἱ δὲ ἄμαξαι εἰσιν αἱ μὲν ἐλάχισται τετράκυκλοι, αἱ δὲ ἐξάκυκλοι. αὗται δὲ πύλοις περιπεφαγμένοι. εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ τετεχνασμένοι ὥσπερ οἰκήματα τὰ μὲν διπλᾶ, τὰ δὲ τριπλᾶ. ταῦτα δὲ καὶ στεγνὰ πρὸς ὕδωρ καὶ πρὸς χιόνα καὶ πρὸς τὰ πνεύματα. τὰς δὲ ἀμάξας ἔλκουσι ζεύγεα τὰς μὲν δύο, τὰς δὲ τρία

βοῶν κέρως ἄτερ. οὐ γὰρ ἔχουσι κέρατα ὑπὸ τοῦ φύχεος. ἐν ταύτησι μὲν οὖν τῇσιν ἀμάξεσιν αἱ γυναῖκες διαιτεῦνται. αὐτοὶ δ' ἐφ' ἵππων ὀχεύονται οἱ ἄνδρες. ἔπονται δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἐόντα καὶ αἱ βόες καὶ οἱ ἵπποι. μένουσι δ' ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τοσοῦτον χρόνον, ὅσον ἂν ἀποχρῇ αὐτοῖσι τοῖς κτήνεσιν ὁ χόρτος. ὁκόταν δὲ μηκέτι, ἐς ἑτέραν χώραν ἔρχονται.

The region called the Scythian wilderness is a level meadowland devoid of trees but fairly well-watered; there are in fact great rivers that drain the water from these plains. in this region too live the Scythians who are called Nomads because they have no permanent dwellings, but live in wagons the smallest of which are four-wheeled, although some have six wheels. These wagons have canvas coverings and are laid out like houses, some two-roomed and others three-roomed, and impervious to rain, snow and winds. Teams of hornless oxen—two, or sometimes three—pull these wagons. It is because of the cold that the beasts do not have horns. While the women live in these wagons, the Scythian men ride along on horseback, and behind them follows the train of their sheep, cattle and horses. The Scythians remain in one place only as long as it provides them with sufficient fodder for the cattle; when it no longer does so, they move to another place.

T19. Herodotos, IV, 17-18

ἀπὸ τοῦ Βορυσθενεϊτέων ἐμπορίου (τοῦτο γὰρ τῶν παραθαλασσίων μεσαίτατόν ἐστι πάσης τῆς Σκυθίης), ἀπὸ τούτου πρῶτοι Καλλιπίδαι νέμονται ἐόντες Ἕλληνες Σκύθαι, ὑπὲρ δὲ τούτων ἄλλο ἔθνος οἱ Ἀλαζόνες καλέονται. οὗτοι δὲ καὶ οἱ Καλλιπίδαι τὰ μὲν ἄλλα κατὰ ταῦτα Σκύθησι ἐπασκέουσι, σίτον δὲ καὶ σπείρουσι καὶ σιτέονται, καὶ κρόμμυα καὶ σκόροδα καὶ φακοὺς καὶ κέγχρους. ὑπὲρ δὲ Ἀλαζόνων οἰκέουσι Σκύθαι ἀροτῆρες, οἱ οὐκ ἐπὶ σιτήσι σπείρουσι τὸν σίτον ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πρῆσι. τούτων δὲ κατύπερθε οἰκέουσι Νευροί. Νευρῶν δὲ τὸ πρὸς βορέην ἄνεμον ἔρημον ἀνθρώπων, ὅσον ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν.

ταῦτα μὲν παρὰ τὸν Ὑπανιν ποταμόν ἐστι ἔθνεα πρὸς ἐσπέρης τοῦ Βορυσθένεος· ἀτὰρ διαβάντι τὸν Βορυσθένεα ἀπὸ θαλάσσης πρῶτον μὲν ἡ Ὑλαίη, ἀπὸ δὲ ταύτης ἄνω ἰόντι οἰκέουσι Σκύθαι γεωργοί, τοὺς Ἕλληνες οἱ οἰκέοντες ἐπὶ τῷ Ὑπάνι ποταμῷ καλέουσι Βορυσθενεΐτας, σφέας δὲ αὐτοὺς Ὀλβιοπολίτας. οὗτοι ὦν οἱ γεωργοὶ Σκύθαι νέμονται τὸ μὲν πρὸς τὴν ἡῶ ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ὁδοῦ, κατήκοντες ἐπὶ ποταμόν τῷ ὄννομα κεῖται Παντικιάης, τὸ δὲ πρὸς βορέην ἄνεμον πλόον ἀνὰ τὸν Βορυσθένεα ἡμερέων ἑνδεκα. ἥδη δὲ κατύπερθε τούτων ἡ ἔρημός ἐστι ἐπὶ πολλόν. μετὰ δὲ τὴν ἔρημον Ἀνδροφάγοι οἰκέουσι, ἔθνος ἐὼν ἴδιον καὶ οὐδαμῶς Σκυθικόν. τὸ δὲ τούτων κατύπερθε ἔρημον ἥδη ἀληθέως καὶ ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων οὐδέν, ὅσον ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν.

Beyond the market city of the Borysthenitai, which is the midway point on the entire extent of the Scythian coast, the first inhabitants are the Kallippidai who are Scythian

Greeks. Northward of them dwells another people called the Alazones. Both these men and the Kallippidai live in the manner of the Scythians; in particular they sow grain for their own consumption, as well as onions, leeks, lentils, and millet. Beyond the Alazones live the land-tilling Scythians who sow wheat not for their own consumption, but for sale. And beyond these people the Neuroi live, and to the north of them the land is empty as far as we know.

These, then, are the peoples who populate the shores of the Hypanis, which lies to the west of the Borysthenes. Beyond the Borysthenes River near the sea one comes first upon the Woodland, and going inland from this one meets the next inhabitants, Scythian farmers whom the Greeks living on the Hypanis River call Borysthenitai (to themselves these Greek colonists give the name Olbiopolitai). These Scythian farmers occupy the territory stretching three days' travel eastwards as far as a river to which is given the name Pantikapes, and eleven days' travel northward up the Borysthenes. And just above these regions there is a land that is for the most part empty, and still further beyond there dwell the Man-eaters, a separate and non-Scythian race. And beyond these the land is truly empty and, as far as we know, devoid of human life.



T20. Herodotos, IV, 76, 78-80

Ξεινικοῖσι δὲ νομαίοισι καὶ οὗτοι αἰνῶς χρᾶσθαι φεύγουσι, μήτε τεῶν ἄλλων, Ἑλληνικοῖσι δὲ καὶ ἥκιστα, ὥς διέδεξαν Ἀνάχαρσις τε καὶ δεύτερα αὐτὶς Σκύλης. τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ Ἀνάχαρσις ἐπεῖτε γῆν πολλὴν θεωρήσας καὶ ἀποδεξάμενος κατ' αὐτὴν σοφίην πολλὴν ἐκομίζετο ἐς ἥθεα τὰ Σκυθέων, πλέων δὲ Ἑλλησπόντου προσίσχει ἐς Κύζικον· καὶ εὔρε γὰρ τῇ μητρὶ τῶν θεῶν ἀνάγοντας τοὺς Κυζικηνοὺς ὀρτὴν μεγαλοπρεπέως κάρτα, εὔξατο τῇ μητρὶ ὁ Ἀνάχαρσις, ἣν σῶς καὶ ὑγιῆς ἀπονοστήσῃ ἐς ἑωυτοῦ, θύσειν τε κατὰ ταῦτα κατὰ ὥρα τοὺς Κυζικηνοὺς ποιεῦντας καὶ παννυχίδα στήσειν. ὥς δὲ ἀπίνετο ἐς τὴν Σκυθικὴν, καταδύς ἐς τὴν καλεομένην Ὑλαίην (ἥ δ' ἔστι μὲν παρὰ τὸν Ἀχιλλήιον δρόμον, τυγχάνει δὲ πᾶσα ἐοῦσα δενδρέων παντοίων πλέῃ), ἐς ταύτην δὴ καταδύς ὁ Ἀνάχαρσις τὴν ὀρτὴν ἐπετέλεε πᾶσαν τῇ θεῷ τύμπανόν τε ἔχων καὶ ἐκδησάμενος ἀγάλματα. καὶ τῶν τις Σκυθέων καταφρασθεὶς αὐτὸν ταῦτα ποιεῦντα ἐσήμηνε τῷ βασιλεὶ Σαυλίῳ· ὁ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπικόμενος ὥς εἶδε τὸν Ἀνάχαρσιν ποιεῦντα ταῦτα, τοξεύσας αὐτὸν ἀπέκτεινε. καὶ νῦν ἦν τις εἴρηται περὶ Ἀνάχαρσις, οὐ φασὶ μὲν Σκύθαι γινώσκειν, διὰ τοῦτο ὅτι ἐξεδήμησέ τε ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα καὶ Ξεινικοῖσι ἔθεσι διεχρήσατο.

Οὗτος μὲν νυν οὕτω δὴ ἔπραξε διὰ Ξεινικά τε νόμια καὶ Ἑλληνικὰς ὁμιλίας. πολλοῖσι δὲ κάρτα ἔτεσι ὕστερον Σκύλης ὁ Ἀριαπεΐθεος ἔπαθε παραπλήσια τούτῳ. Ἀριαπεΐθει γὰρ τῷ Σκυθέων βασιλεὶ γίνεται μετ' ἄλλων παίδων Σκύλης· ἐξ Ἰστρινῆς δὲ γυναικὸς οὗτος γίνεται καὶ οὐδαμῶς ἐγχωρίης· τὸν ἡ μήτηρ αὕτη γλῶσσάν τε Ἑλλάδα καὶ γράμματα ἐδίδαξε. μετὰ δὲ χρόνῳ ὕστερον Ἀριαπεΐθης μὲν τελευτᾷ δόλῳ ὑπὸ Σπαργαπεΐθεος τοῦ Ἀγατύρων βασιλέως, Σκύλης δὲ τὴν τε βασιληίην παρέβαλε καὶ τὴν γυναικα τοῦ πατρός, τῇ ὄνομα ἦν Ὀποίη· ἦν δὲ αὕτη ἡ Ὀποίη ἀστή, ἐξ ἧς ἦν Ὀρικος.

Ἀριαπεΐθει παῖς. βασιλεύων δὲ Σκυθέων ὁ Σκύλης διαίτη οὐδαμῶς ἠρέσκετο Σκυθικῇ ἀλλὰ πολλὸν πρὸς τὰ Ἑλληνικὰ μᾶλλον τετραμμένος ἦν ἀπὸ παιδεύσιος τῆς ἐπεπαίδευτο, ἐποίησεν τε τοιοῦτο. εὖτε ἀγάγοι τὴν στρατιὴν τὴν Σκυθέων εἰς τὸ Βορυσθενεΐτέων ἄστν (οἱ δὲ Βορυσθενεΐται οὗτοι λέγουσι σφέας αὐτοὺς εἶναι Μιλησίους) εἰς τούτους ὅπως ἔλθοι ὁ Σκύλης, τὴν μὲν στρατιὴν καταλίπεσκε ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ, αὐτὸς δὲ ὅπως ἔλθοι εἰς τὸ τεῖχος καὶ τὰς πύλας ἐγκλήσειε, τὴν στολὴν ἀποθέμενος τὴν Σκυθικὴν λάβεσκε ἂν Ἑλληνίδα ἐσθήτα, ἔχων δ' ἂν ταύτην ἡγόραζε οὔτε δορυφόρων ἐπομένων οὔτε ἄλλου οὐδενός. τὰς δὲ πύλας ἐφύλασσον, μή τις μιν Σκυθέων ἴδοι ἔχοντα ταύτην τὴν στολὴν. καὶ τᾶλλα ἐχράτο διαίτη Ἑλληνικῇ καὶ θεοῖσι ἱρὰ ἐποίηε κατὰ νόμους τοὺς Ἑλλήνων. ὅτε δὲ διατρίψειε μῆνα ἢ πλεόν τούτου, ἀπαλλάσσετο ἐνδὺς τὴν Σκυθικὴν στολὴν....

Ἐπεῖτε δὲ ἔδεε οἱ κακῶς γενέσθαι, ἐγίνετο ἀπὸ προφάσιος τοιήσδε. ἐπεθύμησε Διονύσῳ Βακχεῖῳ τελεσθῆναι. μέλλοντι δὲ οἱ εἰς χεῖρας ἄγεσθαι τὴν τελετὴν ἐγένετο φάσμα μέγιστον. ἦν οἱ ἐν Βορυσθενεΐτέων τῇ πόλει οἰκίης μεγάλης καὶ πολυτελέος περιβολή, τῆς καὶ ὀλίγῳ τι πρότερον τούτων μνήμην εἶχον. τὴν περίε λευκοῦ λίθου σφίγγες τε καὶ γρύπες ἕστασαν. εἰς ταύτην ὁ θεὸς ἐνέσκηψε βέλος. καὶ ἡ μὲν κατεκρή παῖσα, Σκύλης δὲ οὐδὲν τούτου εἶνεκα ἦσσαν ἐπετέλεσε τὴν τελετὴν. Σκύθαι δὲ τοῦ Βακχεύειν πέρι Ἑλλήσι ὀνειδίζουσι. οὐ γὰρ φασὶ οἶκος εἶναι θεὸν ἐξευρίσκειν τοῦτον ὅστις μαίνεσθαι ἐνάγει ἀνθρώπους....

Ὡς δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐξήλαυνε ὁ Σκύλης εἰς ἥθεα τὰ ἑωυτοῦ, οἱ Σκύθαι προστησάμενοι τὸν ἀδελφεὸν αὐτοῦ Ὀκταμασάδην, γεγονότα ἐκ τῆς Τήρῳ θυγατρὸς, ἐπανιστέατο τῷ Σκύλῃ.

These Scythians scrupulously avoid falling in with foreign customs, and of all nations' customs they shun those of the Greeks especially; both Anacharsis and Skyles were cases in point. When Anacharsis, after having seen much of the world and having proved the greatness of his wisdom during his travels, was returning to the Scythian country he sailed through the Hellespont and landed at Kyzikos. There he found the citizens celebrating very lavishly a festival in honour of the Mother of the Gods, and he, Anacharsis, vowed to the goddess that, if he made a safe arrival home, he would offer sacrifice using the rite he had observed the Kyzikoi practising, and he would establish a festival of worship. So when he had arrived in Scythia, going off into the region called the Woodland, which lies near the Racetrack of Achilles and which happens to be covered with trees of all kinds, Anacharsis carried out in full the rite of the goddess, complete with cymbals and statues. But one of the Scythians observed him in the act, and reported him to King Saulios, who, when he arrived on the scene and with his own eyes witnessed Anacharsis doing these things, killed him with an arrow. If anyone nowadays inquires about Anacharsis, the Scythians say they have never heard of him, because he travelled to Greece and took up foreign customs.

So he fared because of his foreign ways and his association with the Greeks. But many years later a similar case occurred, involving Skyles the son of Ariapithes. Skyles was one of several children born to Ariapithes, king of the Scythians, but he was the offspring of an Istrian rather than a native mother, who took it upon herself to teach him the Greek language, both spoken and written. After a time, however, when Ariapithes had died by treachery at the hands of Spargapithes the Agathyrsonian king, Skyles inherited both the throne and the wife of his father. This woman, whose name (after her native town) was Opoeia, had borne a son, Orikos, to Ariapithes; Skyles, however, assumed leadership of the Scythians. But since he was altogether dissatisfied with the Scythian way of life, and greatly preferred Hellenic customs because of the education that he had enjoyed, he used to do as follows: he would lead the Scythian army to the city of Borysthenes (the inhabitants of this city refer to themselves as Milesians) and, leaving the army to wait on the city's outskirts, he himself would enter within the walls and close the gates behind him. Then, throwing aside his Scythian costume and putting on Greek clothing, he used to go about the streets dressed thus, and unattended by spearmen or anyone else. Meanwhile someone

used to guard the gates to prevent any of the Scythians from seeing him wearing this mode of dress. Skyles conformed to all aspects of Greek life, even to the extent of performing sacrifice according to the Greek rites. Finally, when he had spent a month or more in this fashion, he would put on Scythian clothing and depart. He did this quite frequently. He even had a house built in Borysthenes, and he married a local woman.

But sooner or later things had to turn out badly for him, and it happened under the following circumstances: he wished to be admitted to the rites of the Bakchic Dionysos, but, as he was on the point of undertaking this, a very significant portent occurred. Skyles had in the city of Borysthenes a great and expensive house, which I mentioned a few lines above, around which sphinxes and griffins in white stone formed a decoration; upon this house the god let fall a thunderbolt. But, although the entire building was burned down, Skyles nevertheless carried out the Bakchic rite. The Scythians, however, object to the Greek custom of engaging in this rite, on the ground that it is unreasonable to worship a god who drives men into a frenzy....

So, when after this Skyles rode back to his own people, the Scythians, enlisting the leadership of his own brother Oktamasades the grandson of Teres, rebelled against Skyles.

#### d. THE OLBIOPOLITAI

T21. Athenaios, XII, 523

Μιλήσιοι δ' ἕως μὲν οὐκ ἐτρώφων, ἐνίκων Σκύθας, ὥς φασιν Ἐφορος, καὶ τὰς τε ἐφ' Ἑλλησπόντῃ πόλεις ἔκτισαν καὶ τὸν Εὐξεινον πόντον κατώκισαν πόλεσι λαμπραῖς, καὶ πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν Μίλητον ἔθεον. ὥς δὲ ὑπήχθησαν ἡδονῇ καὶ τρυφῇ, κατερρύη τὸ τῆς πόλεως ἀνδρεῖον, φασιν ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης, καὶ παροιμία τις ἐγγεννήθη ἐπ' αὐτῶν πάλαι ποτ' ἦσαν ἄλκιμοι Μιλήσιοι.

As long as the Milesians did not yield to soft living they held the Scythians in control, as Ephoros tells us, and founded the cities on the Hellespont and settled the Euxine with renowned cities. At Miletos everyone competed in the races. But when they were overcome by pleasure and luxury, the state's manliness drained away, as Aristotle records, and a maxim about these people became current: "Once long ago the Milesians were stout-hearted men."

T22. Dio Chrysostom, XXXVI, 7

παρέζωστο δὲ μάχαιραν μεγάλην τῶν ἱππικῶν καὶ ἀναξυρίδας εἶχε

καὶ τὴν ἄλλην στολὴν Σκυθικὴν, ἄνωθεν δὲ τῶν ὤμων ἱμάτιον  
μικρὸν μέλαν, λεπτόν, ὥσπερ εἰώθασιν οἱ Βορυσθενεῖται.

He wore on his belt a great cavalry sword, and was dressed in trousers and the rest of the Scythian costume, and over his shoulders he wore a black cloak of light cloth, as the Borysthenitai generally do.

#### f. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

T23. Archilochos, frag. 79 (Diehl)

κύμ[ασι] πλα[ζόμ]ενος.  
κάν Σαλμυδ[ησσ]ῶι γυμνὸν εὐφρονέσ[τατα]  
θρήκες ἀκρό[κ]ομοι  
λάβοιεν — ἔνθα πόλλ' ἀναπλήσει κακά  
δούλιον ἄρτον ἔδων —  
ρίγει πεπηγὸτ' αὐτόν.

May the mop-haired Thracians merrily seize him, sent astray by the waves and naked at Salmydessos — for there he will have his fill of numerous troubles as he eats the bread of slaves — his body stiffened by the cold.

T24. Xenophon, Anabasis, VII, 5, 12-14

ἔνθα τῶν εἰς τὸν Πόντον πλεουσῶν νεῶν πολλὰὶ ὀκέλλουσι καὶ ἐκ-  
πίπτουσι· τέναγος γάρ ἐστιν ἐπὶ πάμπολυ τῆς θαλάττης καὶ θοᾶρες

οἱ κατὰ ταῦτα οἰκοῦντες στήλας ὀρισάμενοι τὰ καθ' αὐτοὺς ἐκ-  
πίπτοντα ἕκαστοι λήζονται. τέως δὲ ἔλεγον πρὶν ὀρίσασθαι ἀρπάζ-  
οντας πολλοὺς ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἀποθνήσκειν. ἐνταῦθα ἠύρισκοντο  
πολλὰ μὲν κλῖναι, πολλὰ δὲ κιβώτια, πολλὰ δὲ βίβλοι γεγραμ-  
μέναι, καὶ τᾶλλα πολλὰ ὅσα ἐν ξυλίνοις τεύχεσι ναύκληροι ἄγουσιν.

Here (Salmydessos in northern Thrace) many of the ships bound for Pontos run aground and are wrecked—the result of shoals that abound in this part of the sea. And the Thracians who inhabit this coast plunder the ships that run aground, each band descending upon those ships within its own marked boundaries. For a time, apparently, before they established these boundaries, they used to attack and kill one another in numbers. Here were discovered many beds, many boxes and written books, and many other effects of the sort that ship-owners carry in wooden coffer.

T25. Pliny, Nat. Hist., IV, 13, 93

Non est omittenda multorum opinio, priusquam digredimur a Ponto, qui maria omnia interiora illo capite nasci, non Gaditano freto, existimavere haut improbabili argumento, quoniam aestus semper e Ponto profluens numquam reciprocet.

Before passing on from the Pontos, one ought not to overlook the theory of many people who believe that all the waters



within the Mediterranean arise from that source, and not through the Straits of Gades; and their argument derives probability from the fact that there is a current flowing continuously out of the Pontos, and never any in the opposite direction.

T26. Latyshev, Inscriptiones Antiquae Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae, 20 (Olbian proxeny-decree, 5th c.)

Τύχη ἀγαθή.

Ὀλβιοπολῖται

ἔδωκαν Χαιριγένει

Μητροδώρου Μεσημ-

βριανῶι αὐτῶι καὶ ἐκ-

γόνοις προξενίαν,

πολιτείαν, ἀτέλειαν

πάντων χρημάτων,

ὧν ἂν αὐτὸς εἰσάγηι

ἢ ἐξάγηι, ἢ παῖδες, ἢ ἀ-

δελφοὶ οἷς κοινὰ τὰ

πατρῶια, ἢ θεράπων

καὶ εἴσπλουν καὶ ἔκπλουν

καὶ ἐ[μ] πολέμωι καὶ ἐν

εἰρήνηι ἀσυλε[ῖ] καὶ

ἀσπονδε[ί].

With the blessing of the gods, the Olbiopolitai have de-

creed proxeny to Chairigenes of Mesembria, son of Metrodoros, and to his descendants; and also the right of citizenship, and of exemption from all tariffs on what he himself or his children or his brothers and co-heirs or his agent may import or export upon entering and leaving the city in wartime or in peace, inviolably and without treaty.

T27. Tod, 195 (treaty between Olbia and Miletos, ca. 330 B.C.)

τάδε πάτρια Ὀλβιοπολίταις καὶ Μιλησ[ί]οις. τὸν Μιλήσιον ἐν Ὀλβιηπόλει ὡς Ὀλβιοπολίτην θύειν ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτῶν βωμῶν καὶ εἰς τὰ ἱερὰ τὰ αὐτὰ φοιτᾶν τὰ δημόσια κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ Ὀλβιοπολίτας· εἶναι δὲ καὶ ἀτελείας Μιλησίοις καθάσσα καὶ πρότερον ἦσαν· ἔαν δὲ θέλῃ τιμουχιῶν μετέχειν, ἐπὶ βουλὴν ἐπίτῳ καὶ ἀπογραφεῖς μετεχέτω καὶ ἔστω ἐντελής, καθότι καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι πολῖταί εἰσιν· εἶναι δὲ καὶ προεδρίαγ, καὶ εἰσηγῆσθαι εἰς τοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ ἐπαρᾶσθαι ταῖς τριακάσιγ, καθάσσα καὶ ἐν Μιλήτῳ ἐπαρῶνται· ἔαν δέ τι συμβόλαιον ἦ(ι) τῷ Μιλησίῳ ἐν Ὀλβίᾳ, ἰσχύτω δίκη καὶ ὑπεχέτω ἐν πένθ' ἡμέραις ἐπὶ τοῦ δημοτικοῦ δικαστηρίου· εἶναι δὲ [ἀ]τελεῖς πάντας Μιλησίους, πλὴν ὅσοι ἐν ἄλλῃ(ι) πόλει πολιτεύονται καὶ ἀρχεῖω(μ) μετέχουσιγ καὶ δικαστηρίων. κατὰ ταῦ(τὰ) δὲ καὶ Ὀλβιοπολίτας ἐν Μιλήτῳ ἀτελεῖς εἶναι, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον Ὀλβιοπολίταις ἐν Μιλήτῳ ὑπάρχειγ καθότι καὶ Μιλησίοις ἐν Ὀλβιόπολει.

The following provisions are customary for the Olbiopol-

itai and the Milesians: that the Milesian in Olbia may sacrifice at the same altars as an Olbian citizen, and enter the public temples on the same terms as the citizens; and that there are the same exemptions from taxation for the Milesian as there formerly were, except that, if he wishes to hold the office of a magistrate, he must go before the Council to be registered before holding office, and must then be subject to taxation, just as the other citizens are; and, furthermore, that the Milesian may enjoy a seat of honour at, and the right to compete in, the games, and the right to participate in the prayers on the Trikades, just as they do in Miletos; and that, if a lawsuit involves a Milesian in Olbia, it shall come to trial and receive judgement within five days before the people's tribunal. All Milesians are to be exempt from taxation, except those who have citizenship or hold a civic or judicial magistracy in another state. This agreement also ensures that Olbiopolitai are similarly exempt from taxation in Miletos, and that all the other provisions are to apply to Olbians in Miletos just as they do for Milesians in Olbia.

## III

## LIFE IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT

That the archaeological site on a wedge of land jutting southward into the Bug River near Nikolaev in Southern Russia is, in fact, the Olbia of the ancient literary tradition is not a matter of dispute. Although Strabo<sup>1</sup> places the city of Borysthenes (also called Olbia) at a point two hundred stades up the river of the same name — the modern Dnieper — this is an easily explained anomaly; the Bug and the Dnieper Rivers share a common estuary, the vast Dnieper "liman," which is by itself over two hundred stades in length. Thus the approach to Olbia on the Bug River involved a voyage of nearly that distance up the estuary of the Borysthenes to the point of the two rivers' confluence.

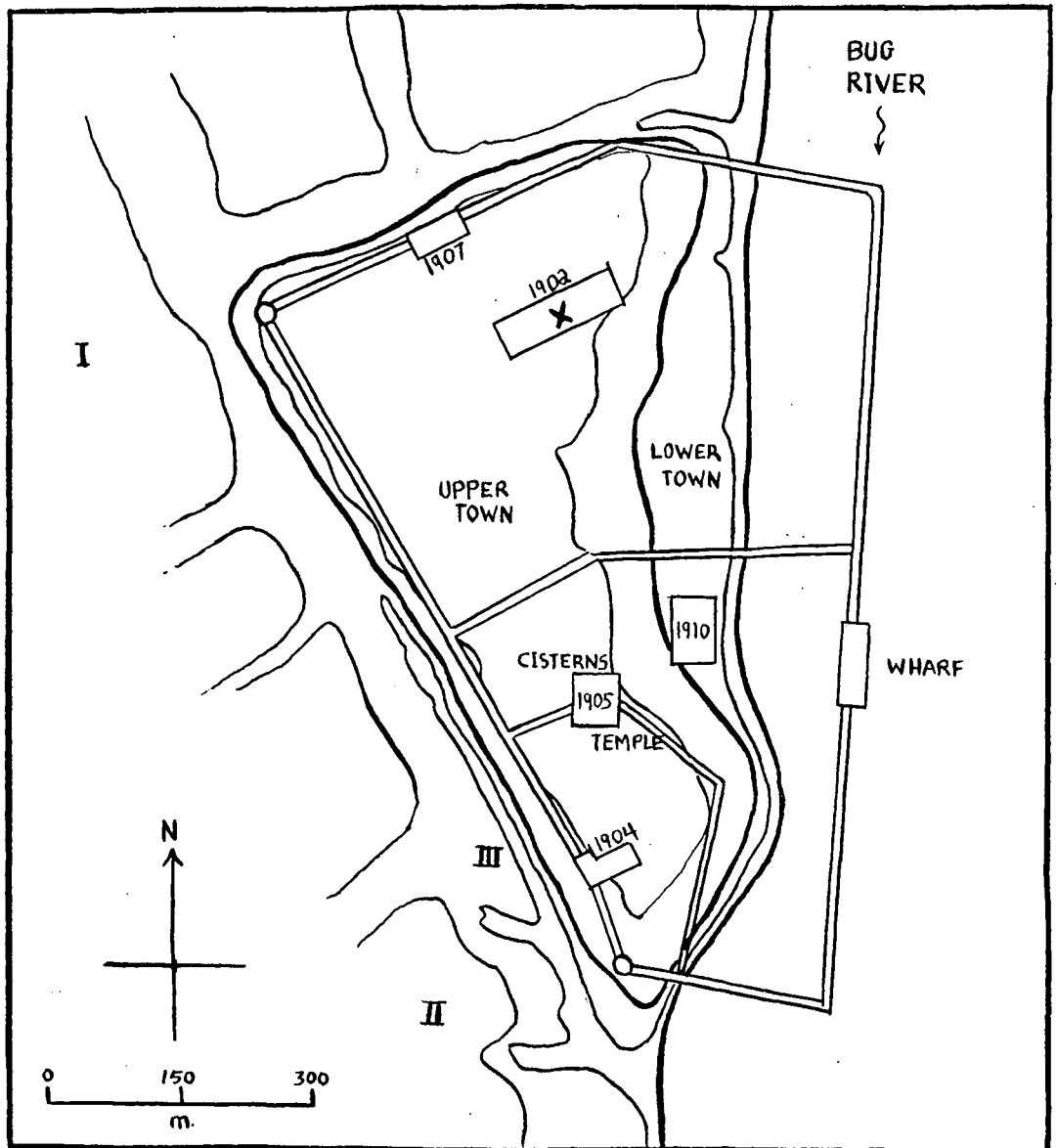
Herodotos<sup>2</sup> unequivocally identifies the Olbiopolitai as "the Greeks living on the Hypanis River," and Dio Chrysostom<sup>3</sup> explains that, although the city was named Borysthenes be-

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1. T5.

2. T19.

3. T1.



THE SITE OF OLBIA (after Minns, Mongait).

I Sixth-century graves.

II. Fifth; fourth-century graves.

III. Hellenistic graves.

X Archaic masonry.

cause the inhabitants were impressed by the beauty of that river, the site was not on the Borysthenes, but on the Hypanis River (the Bug). He goes on to describe the location in detail that leaves no doubt about the exact position, just above the sharp beak of land that separates the two rivers, and on the bank of the Hypanis opposite the promontory. He also provides a measure of the distance from the mouth of the estuary to the point where the Hypanis flows past the cape to empty into the Borysthenes — two hundred stades. Olbian coins and inscriptions found in great number on the site near the mouth of the Hypanis confirm the ancient city's identity.

The information given by Strabo<sup>1</sup> and Herodotos<sup>2</sup> that Olbia was a colony of Miletos is supported by the earliest pottery found on the site. Although pottery appears to have been imported to Olbia at an early date from many parts of Greece — an Eretrian black-figure vase and a similar vase of Attic manufacture, both of the first half of the sixth century B.C., are among the earliest<sup>3</sup> — most of the pottery found in the lowest strata is of East Greek origin. Chian and Rhodian vases recovered from the site belong to the final quarter of the seventh century, very shortly after the date (643) given by Eusebios for Olbia's founding. Small terracotta figures rang-

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1. T5.  
2. T20.

ing in style and date from archaic to Hellenistic appear to be almost exclusively from Asia Minor.<sup>1</sup> The same is true of Greek jewellery found in Olbian tombs; except for pieces of Scythian design, the jewellery is of Ionian origin in most cases.<sup>2</sup> An especially valuable indication of the relationship of Miletos and Olbia is a fourth-century inscription found at Miletos, outlining the rights of citizens of each city who take up residence in the other.<sup>3</sup>

The region of which Olbia eventually formed an important centre was, as we have seen above, the coast and its hinterland of the great northern bulge of the Black Sea. The land upon which Olbia depended for her agricultural livelihood was the quite exotic terrain of the southern Ukrainian steppes, drained by the mighty Bug and Dnieper Rivers. In a number of important ways this region represented, to settlers coming from Aegean shores a thousand miles to the south, a very alien environment.

Olbia must, in fact, be regarded as the most northerly ground to which Greek civilization was ever successfully transplanted. Its vast hinterland of inhospitable wilderness, its

1. Cf. Boardman, "Greek Archaeology on the Shores of the Black Sea," Arch. Reports 1963, pp.34-51.
2. Rostovtzeff, Iranians and Greeks in South Russia, pp.65-70.
3. This inscription (T27) is discussed in chapter V below.





unfamiliar terrain, its severe climate and the privation that the somewhat limited native flora represented demanded a very special effort of adaptation on the part of its new inhabitants.

One of the first effects of the region upon the quality of life among the Greek settlers there was a process of selection and elimination. That the population of the first settlement on the Hypanis River was composed only of men having unusual courage and initiative can be deduced from the forbidding picture of the North Euxine region that had to be shrugged off by any man who, in the sixth or even the fifth century B.C., contemplated venturing northward.

Even if the general impression of the northern wastes as an abode of mythical monsters was treated with some incredulity, the detailed enumerations of the region's natural hazards remained to be considered. The first of these considerations was the great difficulty of entering the Black Sea at all. Both Pliny<sup>1</sup> and the modern Black Sea Pilot<sup>2</sup> describe the southward-flowing current through the Bosphoros as a considerable obstacle to entry into the Black Sea. "The surface current," says the Black Sea Pilot, "is similar in character to

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1. T25.

2. Black Sea Pilot, p.21, line 5.

that which would be produced by a great jet of water, under high pressure, directed down the narrow and irregular channels."

Rhys Carpenter, in a study<sup>1</sup> of the effect of this current on ancient ships, points out that the prevailing northerly winds in the Bosphoros made a voyage under sail into the Black Sea impossible. Oar-driven vessels, on the other hand, had to evolve for many centuries before they achieved a sustained oar-powered speed great enough to make headway against the unrelenting four-knot current in the Bosphoros. Even the Greek trireme of classical times, Carpenter argues, seems not to have been capable of sustaining oar-driven speeds exceeding five or six knots.<sup>2</sup> To the Greek navigator planning a voyage from Miletos to Olbia in the sixth century the passage through the Bosphoros must certainly have loomed as a forbiddingly difficult undertaking. While considering the problems of the northward passage, a prospective colonist could well have asked himself how frequent and dependable Olbia's contacts with the Aegean world might be.

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1. Carpenter, "Greek Penetration of the Black Sea," A.J.A. LIII (1948), pp.1-10.

2. That Carpenter is not greatly underestimating the speed of ancient vessels is indicated by Casson (Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World, pp.282-284), whose tables of passages made by ancient ships show average speeds between three and six knots in normal conditions of wind and current.

Even after a successful passage of the Bosporos a Greek ship in the sixth century was not guaranteed a safe voyage to the northern coast. At the beginning of the seventh century B.C., Greek colonists from the Aegean had Archilochos as a witness<sup>1</sup> that Thracian pirates awaited travellers along their Pontic coast. Xenophon provides<sup>2</sup> later and much fuller details about this hazard off Salmydessos; the maze of uncharted shoals along the coast, he tells us, formed a natural net for the capture and destruction of northbound ships. The vessels that went aground, laden with goods for colonists on the Black Sea, were irresistibly alluring targets for the professional plunderers of North Thrace.

If the prospect of getting there seemed poor, the prospect of surviving on the frigid steppes of the Northern Pontos were made to seem equally hopeless. At the date of Olbia's foundation, Homer's description<sup>3</sup> of the Cimmerian kingdom was available as a hint of what the traveller could expect to find: fog, clouds, and a sunless chill for most of the year. In the fifth century Herodotos put on record<sup>4</sup> the tales that were current about that northern Euxine coast; there were frozen

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1. T23.
  2. T24.
  3. T7.
  4. T6.

harbours that promised winter-long isolation for colonists, and unending summer rains that would cheat sun-loving Greeks of the few months of outdoor weather the climate had to offer.

These were the stories about the north coast of the Black Sea, in spite of which the boldest of the Milesians were not deterred from migrating to that region, because, in the words of Ellis Minns,<sup>1</sup> "the Euxine coast was the first El Dorado, the first mysterious land to draw adventurers across broad seas in search of fame and treasure." But what was the environmental reality? How forbidding was the world that Olbian settlers found on the Hypanis River and the steppes of the hinterland?

There is a considerable body of ancient evidence of what the colonists found in their new surroundings, and how they reacted. To the Greek physical constitution, the climate of the region seemed nearly as intolerable as travellers had been led to expect. Fascinated by the variety of their new experiences with ice, snow and freezing conditions generally, the Greek inhabitants of all the northern Euxine colonies collected a body of lore, a canon of stories about the sort of thing they were faced with in an alien climate. Both Herodotos and Strabo<sup>2</sup> record reports of cavalry expeditions conducted by the

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1. Minns, Scythians and Greeks, p.436.

2. T6, T7.

Scythians on the ice of the frozen seas along the northern coasts, and Strabo mentions<sup>1</sup> the customary use of the ice-covered straits at the mouth of Lake Maiotis (the Sea of Azov) as a winter highway for wagons. Strabo and Hippokrates<sup>2</sup> describe herds of cattle indigenous to the region, their horns stunted because of the cold, and horses displaying retarded development for the same reason. Typical of stories intended to impress strangers to the northern Euxine is the report by Strabo<sup>3</sup> (which he considers sufficiently noteworthy to warrant telling twice) about the fate of bronze water-jars left outdoors; when their fluid contents solidify, the jars shatter.

One of the most important effects of the cold winter climate, from the colonists' point of view, was the inability of the region to support certain kinds of vegetation. Theophrastos,<sup>4</sup> in his essay de Plantibus, elaborates on this theme, cataloguing the plant-species that will (or will not) grow in the harsh conditions of the Black Sea's highest latitudes. Laurel and myrtle cannot survive the cold, he says. Fruit-trees, which do exist on the coast, are sometimes reluctant to bear fruit. Significant also is the lack of building timber of good quality; the few kinds of trees that grow in the region are

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1. T8.
  2. T8, T18.
  3. T7, T8.
  4. T14.

damp, stunted and far inferior to wood produced further south. That olives and grapes could not be persuaded to mature in the north Euxine climate is implied by Strabo and Polybios.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to compare these ancient observations of the climate and productivity of the Pontic coast with modern climatological records for the same region. Statistics published by the British Meteorological Office<sup>2</sup> indicate that settlers from Miletos did, indeed, find conditions to which they were not accustomed. At Odessa, on the coast in the vicinity of Olbia, a January minimum of minus eleven degrees Fahrenheit can be expected; at Izmir on the Turkish coast near the site of Miletos the records indicate that midday temperatures of seventy degrees — subtropical warmth — are not rare in January.

The valley of the Bug River near its mouth is, as the ancient writers noted, better suited to the production of hardy cereals than of trees or subtropical plants; the chief industry of the region today is wheat-farming. The possibility of luxuriant forest-growth is ruled out not only by the low winter temperatures, but also by the annual rainfall of only about fifteen inches. (This does not conflict with the ancient complaint about annoying rainfall; nearly half of the total falls during the summer months, just as Herodotos recorded.<sup>3</sup>)

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1. T15, T12.

2. Great Britain, Meteorological Office, Tables of Temperature.

3. T6.

Yet the implication that fruit and vines were intolerant of the vicinity's frosts is perhaps exaggerated. The coast is described today<sup>1</sup> as supporting "some orchards and vineyards."

Not all the environmental conditions on the north Euxine coast as described by the ancient writers were matters for complaint; the region had its advantages as well. There was much wild game to be hunted, including certain species with which the Greeks had not previously been familiar, as Strabo records.<sup>2</sup> The city of Olbia was ideally situated, as both Dio Chrysostom and Herodotos inform us,<sup>3</sup> to reap the advantages of a natural salt deposit at the junction of the Borysthenes and Hypanis Rivers, and of the rich sturgeon-fishing grounds of the Borysthenes estuary. (The commercially more desirable tunny fish, however, although they spawned in the northern waters of the Black Sea, were large enough for catching only after they had left the vicinity of Olbia.<sup>4</sup>)

The region surrounding Olbia provided the arable land that Milesian settlers had hoped for. Herodotos and Polybios<sup>5</sup> describe the abundance of wheat and cattle that the country

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1. Hooson, The Soviet Union, p.156.

2. T5.

3. T10, T11.

4. T13.

5. T19, T12.

supplied. The mouth of the Hypanis River, with its sheltered anchorage<sup>1</sup>, offered the natural advantage of a port from which the region's produce could be embarked for export. And finally, as Dio Chrysostom observes,<sup>2</sup> the site was not without its aesthetic charms.

Although evidence for the details of everyday life in the sixth or fifth century at Olbia is not plentiful, there are indications of some adaptations forced upon the inhabitants by the demands of the physical environment. That the business of export and import formed an essential basis of the Olbian existence is implicit in the colony's position; to maintain a Greek way of life so far beyond the range of the Mediterranean climate must have required a continuing supply of many commodities from the south. The wheat and fish in which the region abounded formed Olbia's medium of trade. It seems that extensive areas immediately adjacent to the town itself were used for the cultivation of cereals,<sup>3</sup> and a large submerged structure in the Bug River about fifty yards off the present shoreline of the Olbian "lower town" appears to have been a quay for deep-draft

1. T1, T5.

2. T1.

3. Cf. Mongait, Archaeology in the U.S.S.R., translated by David Skirsky, pp.190-195.



vessels. A feature of excavation at Olbia is the frequency of the appearance of point-based amphorai that were used for the storage and shipping of food products.<sup>1</sup>

Although the presence in Olbia of pottery from every part of the Greek world, even early in the sixth century B.C., and of much jewellery and small statuary artwork imported from Ionia, as well as the quite early attempts at a highly civilized style of substantial hewn-stone houses in the town, are evidence that the colonists of Olbia were eager to reproduce in their city the details of life at home in Greece, nevertheless conditions forced upon them some practical measures that remind one of the pioneering aspect of their first encounter with these northern lands. No life-sized sculpture has been found on the site of Olbia, and no marble appears to have been used. Locally made representations of figures are small terracottas and rather crude carvings in stone.<sup>2</sup>

As for the matter of personal dress, Herodotos tells us<sup>3</sup> that the Olbiopolitai went about the streets of their colony in traditional Greek attire; yet Dio Chrysostom describes<sup>4</sup> an

1. Cf. Mongait, Archaeology in the U.S.S.R., pp.190-195.

2. Cf. Minns, Scythians and Greeks, p.317.

3. T20.

4. T22.

Olbian friend who, probably because of the northern climate, has adopted the trousers and cloak of the Scythian natives. A small terracotta statuette, possibly of Olbian manufacture, illustrates a Greek colonist wearing precisely this mode of dress.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest houses of the settlers, as revealed by excavations at both Olbia and the primary settlement on the island of Berezan at the mouth of the estuary, are another concession to the difficulty of the circumstances. The first Olbian houses were simply pits in the earth roofed over with sails and sometimes equipped with adjacent storage pits.<sup>2</sup> Second-generation houses, dated to the middle of the sixth century B.C., are one- or two-roomed mudbrick structures on unusual foundations of ashes and clay, demanded by the spongy nature of the riverside building sites.

Even in the much later houses constructed at a time when Olbian prosperity made grander buildings and greater freedom of design possible, considerations of the local climate seem to have been as important as the requirements of tradition. Although the best preserved example of an Olbian house<sup>2</sup> belongs

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1. For a representation of this terracotta figure, see the appendix.

2. Cf. Minns, Scythians and Greeks, pp.450-490.

to a period later than the pioneer era of the sixth century at Olbia (it is a Hellenistic house of the third century B.C.), still, the local factors that influenced its design are indicative of the special architectural problems that the Olbian site forced upon builders there at any period. The positioning of the house is a significant feature; the prostas, which in Greece would usually open to the south, faces toward the north-east, because in Olbia a house facing south would be unbearably hot in summer, while if it faced west it would be exposed to the severe westerly winds of the steppe. Another purely local aspect of the building's design is its roof. Heavy winter snowfalls explain the comparatively steep pitch of the roof on this Olbian house; the remains show vestiges of eaves at an angle of more than twenty degrees.

If the physical environment of Olbia exerted an influence upon the lives of the Greek colonists, a dominant part of that influence must have belonged to the river itself. The Hypanis was one of those impressive south Russian rivers whose grand scale was beyond the experience of the Greeks at home. The Borysthenes estuary, which opened just four miles below Olbia to a breadth of more than ten miles, was a sheltered inland sea that must have dominated the lives of the settlers around its

shores. The Borysthenes, Strabo tells us<sup>1</sup>, was navigable for a distance of six hundred stades; Dio Chrysostom<sup>2</sup> describes the river's magnificent beauty, and Herodotos<sup>3</sup> adds that its exceptionally pure waters were the source of the surrounding fertility and the robust crops along the riverbank.

The importance of the river in the lives of the Greek colonists is pointed out by G.M. Hirst,<sup>4</sup> who makes reference to the cult of the River-God Borysthenes at Olbia. The cult, Miss Hirst informs us, is represented on Olbian coins more often than any other except that of Apollo. Illustrations of some Olbian coins that depict the River-God are provided in the appendix below.

The effect of an alien landscape upon the lives of the Greek colonists is undeniable; we have both the testimony of the ancient authors and the evidence of archaeology to support this belief. But the Greeks in the north Euxine region faced an influence upon their lives far more powerful than their physical surroundings in the Scythian natives with whom they had to deal on an everyday basis. We must now consider the nature of those people and of their interaction with the settlers of Olbia.

1. T5.

2. T1.

3. T11.

4. Hirst, "The Cults of Olbia," J.H.S. XXII (1902), pp.245-267.

## IV

## THE SCYTHIANS

In almost every aspect the Scythian way of life was quite alien to the Greeks; to the nomadic Scythians who inhabited the north coastal region of the Black Sea, the stability and restrictiveness of Greek urban life were equally strange. In spite of the cultural differences, however, the contact between Scythian natives and Greek colonists was at most times beneficial to both peoples, and was to the Greeks an essential factor in the successful development of their Euxine colonies. Nowhere was this more true than at Olbia.

The reference above to the Scythian "natives" in the vicinity of Olbia is perhaps yet something of an anachronism in mid-seventh century, the period of Olbia's first settlement. It was during the seventh century that the Scythians themselves laid claim to the territory that Greek colonists found them occupying along the Black Sea's northern shores. The Scyths had moved into the region from the east—Herodotos describes the migration in his history<sup>1</sup>—and had spent most of the seventh

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1. IV, 2.

century wresting control of the land from its previous tenants, the warlike Cimmerians. The period immediately preceding the arrival of the Olbian settlers was, therefore, a time of violent unrest along the north Euxine coast.

The conflict ended with the expulsion of the Cimmerian nomads and the control of their territory by the also nomadic Scythian tribes. It was the eventual Scythian monopoly and the resulting absence of inter-tribal strife over territory that gave the north coast of the Black Sea the stability necessary for successful colonization by the Greeks. Rostovtzeff says:<sup>1</sup>

The Greek colonies on the Black Sea owed their very existence to the formation of stable kingdoms on the Russian steppes....The Black Sea colonies, exposed as they were to attack from the north, could only survive and prosper if the surrounding country was in a more or less settled condition. Just as the prosperity of the Greek colonies in Asia Minor depended on the existence of the kingdoms of Lydia and Persia, of which they were the maritime outlets, so Olbia, Panticapaeum and Chersonesos only thrived because a united kingdom in the Rus-

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1. Rostovtzeff, Iranians and Greeks in South Russia, p.12.

sian steppes guaranteed them free intercourse with peoples on the banks of the great Russian rivers.

Coexistence with the Scythian peoples meant, for the Greeks, a confrontation with a way of life that was from their point of view somewhat uncivilized. There was uncertainty, for instance, in dealing with a people who did not inhabit permanent cities, but were essentially nomads. The elusive nature of the Scyths is a theme upon which Greek writers dwelt at great length. Herodotos<sup>1</sup> points out that, having no fixed headquarters, the Scythians are capable of moving swiftly across the land, attacking and dispersing into the hinterland where they are invincible. Hippokrates<sup>2</sup> describes the wagons in which the nomads make their homes; a nation on wheels seemed rather untrustworthy to the Greek colonists.

Although it is true that in Herodotos' day the Scythian tribes near Olbia had begun to adopt the stationary, agricultural life of their Greek neighbours,<sup>3</sup> they must still have been warrior nomads in the last half of the seventh century, so shortly after their expulsion of the Cimmerians. Sophisticated

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1. T16.
2. T18.
3. T19.

though these Scythians may have been in some ways — particularly in the excellence of their arts, as we shall see— they presented what must have been a very savage exterior. In the roughness of their dress,<sup>1</sup> in their disdain for the civilized pursuit of agriculture,<sup>2</sup> and in the cruel harshness of their religious rites (which occasionally demanded human sacrifice<sup>3</sup>), the Scythians offered cause for hesitancy on the part of newcomers to their territory.

That the first Milesian migrants to the Borysthenes estuary felt uneasy about their nomadic neighbours can be seen in the cautious nature of their first settlement. As a prelude to entering the Hypanis River and establishing the city of Olbia itself, the colonists stopped initially at Berezan, an island in the mouth of the estuary. Pit-dwellings and slightly more elaborate single-roomed mudbrick houses have been found on the island, as well as pottery of the late seventh century, all of it East Greek — Rhodian, Chian and Klazomenian ware.

The original motive for the choice of Berezan as a site for the colony was clearly not navigational convenience; the island, which faces the open sea and is beyond the protection of the estuary, has a reasonable anchorage, but no true harbour.

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1. T9.

2. T16.

3. Herodotos, IV, 72.



Apart from the island's strategic position in relation to the sturgeon-fishing industry, it failed to provide access to the natural (chiefly agricultural) resources of the mainland. Clearly a major consideration was the separation of the island from mainland neighbours whom the first colonists did not trust.

Eventually, however, the Greeks, if a successful colony such as Olbia was ever to become a reality, had to establish a basis of cooperation with the Scythian peoples. There is evidence in both the literary and the archaeological records that trade was the means by which this cooperation was effected. It can be seen in the Scythians' own artistic endeavours that they prized the luxuries of artwork and fine craftsmanship; the colonists at Olbia were a source of these items and other commodities that the northern steppes lacked — chiefly wine and oil. To acquire these luxuries the Scythians had to have outlets for the products of their own society, hides, metals, wheat and slaves,<sup>1</sup> the export of which their unfamiliarity with ships and the sea greatly hindered.

That the Scythians welcomed a friendly exchange of goods with the Greek colonists at Olbia at an early stage of the

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1. T15 (a description of the exchange of goods between Greeks and Scythians at Tanais, but equally descriptive of the trade at nearby Olbia).

colony's development is evident in the East Greek pottery and jewellery that appears in Scythian graves near Olbia. One of the earliest Greek vases recovered in South Russia is from a Scythian tomb of the late seventh century, near Nemirov on the Bug River, two hundred miles upstream from Olbia.<sup>1</sup> Nearer Olbia, in sixth-century Scythian tombs on the Borysthenes estuary, there are Greek bronze mirrors with figured supports,<sup>2</sup> and north of Olbia remains of archaic Greek bronzes including a large bronze crater. At a later stage, in an early fifth-century tomb on the estuary between Olbia and Berezan, the occupant of the grave, a Scythian warrior, is provided with two Chian wine jars, an Athenian cup, a Greek bronze dipper and a strainer incised with a Greek design.

By the date at which this warrior was buried, accompanied by items acquired at nearby Olbia, a firm pattern of commercial intercourse had been established between the colonists and their Scythian neighbours. Herodotos<sup>3</sup> tells of land-tilling Scythians who raise crops not for their own consumption, but purely for sale to the colonists at Olbia. Rostovtzeff<sup>4</sup> com-

1. Boardman, The Greeks Overseas, p.252.

2. Ibid., p.272.

3. T19.

4. Rostovtzeff, Iranians and Greeks in South Russia, p.12.

ments that "Scythians and Greeks constituted an economic unit, and their mutual influence was necessarily the dominant factor in their lives."

The cooperation between Scythians and Greeks at Olbia is seen not only in their mutually beneficial trading arrangements, but in the eventual participation of at least some Scythians in the urban life of Olbia. In fact the precise position of the Greek colonists seems to have been that of tenants on territory leased from the Scythian tribal kings, who retained the right to some sort of representation in the administration of the colony.<sup>1</sup> Strabo<sup>2</sup> tells us that the agricultural lands used by the colonists in all the Greek cities on the north Euxine coast are leased to them by the Scythians, whose peaceful cooperation depends upon a regular payment of rent.

Some of the Scythians apparently resided within Olbia; among the graves in the cemeteries immediately outside the city's walls are a number of obviously Scythian burials, with the bodies laid in their tombs in the foetal position (a Scythian custom) and buried with Scythian weapons. From the size and

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1. Although there is no evidence for the constitutional structure of the colony in the early period, much later inscriptions and coins issued at Olbia in the fourth and third centuries indicate the existence of a magistrate (perhaps a figurehead), the "King Archon," whose representation on the coins is often as a long-haired, bearded Scythian type. One such King Archon, depicted on a fifth-century coin of Olbia (Minns, Scythians and Greeks, p.487), has the probably Scythian name **EMINAKO**.

2. T17.

style of these graves it appears that the occupants were not important citizens, nor prominent in their own Scythian society. As a rule, it seems, Scythian residents in Olbia did not occupy positions of any considerable authority. A.J. Graham observes<sup>1</sup> that, "of the names preserved on inscriptions from the sixth to the fourth centuries, only four are non-Greek, and among the names of the magistrates, none." Here Graham is excluding, of course, the numismatic evidence.

But the house in Olbia of a wealthy Scythian is described by Herodotos<sup>2</sup> in his story of Skytes, one of the Scythian kings. The at least unofficial influence of a Scythian king in the Greek colony can be read between the lines of this story, which occupies chapters seventy-eight to eighty, inclusive, of Book IV. One derives considerable insight into the strategic relationship between the Greek colonists and the Scythian kings — the tenants and their landlords — when one reads of Skytes marching up to the gates of Olbia with the Scythian army at his back. It is little wonder that he felt quite at his ease while playing the game of Olbian citizenship, knowing that his army attended him at the gates of the city.

1. Graham, Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece, p.104.

2. T20.

The Olbian house of Skyles, as described by Herodotos, is a measure of his influence and prominence in the Greek colony. It is a "great and expensive house" and, with its ostentatious decoration, one of the showplaces of the city. It is interesting to note, too, that Skyles' wife was an Olbian woman; here we have the most celebrated story of intermarriage between a Scythian and a Greek colonist.<sup>1</sup>

The story of Skyles, of course, represents the potential influence of a Scythian king at Olbia, rather than the normal relationship of the kings and the Olbian colonists. Herodotos' purpose in relating this story, as in the story of Anacharsis that precedes it, is to acknowledge two notable exceptions to the general observation that "these Scythians scrupulously avoid falling in with foreign customs, and of all nations' customs they shun those of the Greeks especially."<sup>2</sup> Yet, as we have seen in the archaeological evidence mentioned above, the Scythians were not averse to accepting the material benefits of the Greek culture; it appears to have been Greek religion, specifically, from which they preferred to remain aloof.

1. Intermarriage at Olbia and its effects will be further discussed in Chapter VI below.

2. IV, 76.

The religion of the Scythians was powerfully governed by two dominant factors: the physical environment, in intimate contact with which these nomads lived, and the immense importance that they attached to the life beyond the grave. Their homage was paid, Herodotos tells us,<sup>1</sup> to gods representing motherhood and the earth — Tabiti and Apia. Their own ancestor<sup>2</sup> was the River God, Borysthenes. The place of their worship was the land itself; temples, as Herodotos observes, were not a normal part of their religion.

The important place held in the Scythian ritual by death and its aftermath can be seen in the lavishly extravagant burial rites<sup>3</sup> involving embalming of the body, self-mutilation by relatives and followers, the inhumation of treasure, and, most dramatically, human sacrifice. Archaeological corroboration of this Herodotean information is found in the magnificent tumuli of the noble Scyths, the only significant monumental remains of their culture.

All these aspects of the Scythian religion were founded upon instincts sufficiently powerful to withstand, to a large extent, the infiltration of incompatible ideas. Thus, in the

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1. IV, 59.
  2. IV, 5.
  3. IV, 71.

sixth century when the Scythian philosopher Anacharsis, returning to Scythia after consorting with the Greeks at Athens, was observed practising a Greek religious rite, his own brother slew him with an arrow. In the story of Skyles, too, the Scythian king's association with the mistrusted Greek rite of Dionysos results in his expulsion from the ranks of his own people.

Of perhaps greatest importance in a catalogue of the attributes of the Scythian people is the excellence of their art, particularly in the field of wrought and cast metal-work. The colonists at Olbia, encountering the quite non-Greek styles of Scythic art for the first time in their early trade with the coastal natives, were immediately exposed to the most powerful single influence their new environment would ever bring to bear upon them.

Although the Scythic style is so distinctive that it can easily be described verbally, the illustrations in the appendix to this study will assist the reader in grasping the quality of some of the work. While Greek artists experimented widely with the human figure, and with the portrayal of human activity, scenes including the human figure were essentially foreign to the Scythic artist. The basic themes for Scythian works of art in bone, wood or metal are floral and animal shapes depicted

in the form of swirling semi-abstract designs.

A striking characteristic of the Scythian animal-style is the use of sharply contrasted slanting planes that meet along distinct junctures to create bold, curving lines of design.<sup>1</sup> The most exciting aspect of this work is the discovery, by the Scythian artist, of the secret of capturing the essence of motion, while depicting an animal subject at rest; it is a matter of striking the body through and through with tightly coiled patterns of sinuous line.

This lively style was applied by its Scythian inventors to a wide variety of practical crafts. It characterizes the decoration of the weapons and the personal jewellery found in Scythian tombs of the early sixth century, and it is the basis of an entire Scythian industry — the production of worked metal plaques (often gold) that became an essential part of the clothing, armour and riding equipment of the Scyths. Among the forms most often represented on these plaques and in the jewellery are the stag, the lion and the griffin. The latter had special significance to the Scythians, as it had also to the Egyptians and the Syrians; it is a motif that appears everywhere

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1. See Minns, "The Art of the Northern Nomads," Proceedings of the British Academy (1942), pp.47-81; Rice, The Scythians, passim.



in Scythic art, including, as Herodotos noted, the decoration of Skyles' house at Olbia.

In contrast with the magnificence of their metal-working arts, the pottery of the Scyths is uninteresting; it is purely utilitarian in design. The bowls, jars and drinking vessels of Scythian origin are simple in decoration, and normally grey or dull black in colour.

From the discussion above, one can gather some feeling for the Scythian world into which the colonists at Olbia transplanted their Greek society. In some aspects it was a harsh and frightening world; the best of the natives were apparently uncivilized nomads, and the worst were reputed<sup>1</sup> to be cannibals. Other aspects of the Scythian people were more appealing; they were willing to coexist with the Greeks, and in certain fields of endeavour each of the two races found that the other could be of service. If the relationship tended to be that of powerful, though benevolent, kings and their rent-paying guests, still the Olbian way of life was capable of arousing a cautious respect in the minds of the best of the Scythians. And in return, as we shall see in a later chapter, the Greeks paid the Scythians, to at least a limited extent, the compliment of imitation.

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1. T19.

## V.

## CONNEXION WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

The power of the unfamiliar physical environment of the Hypanis River and of the alien and half-civilized Scythian people to shape the development of Olbia's culture was dependent, in part, on the exclusiveness of their influence upon the Olbian colonists. To what extent was the colony isolated in these surroundings, and what was the nature of her contact with other centres of Greek life?

It is clear that in the earliest period of Olbia's existence her connexion with the outside world was tenuous. As we have seen in Chapter III, travel northward into the Black Sea was a difficult undertaking because of the natural hazards to navigation on the route, and because of piracy, which still threatened every ship that ventured along the Euxine coast of northern Thrace. The distance of Olbia from the mother city, Miletos, was almost a thousand miles by sea, a considerable voyage for oar-driven ships that were capable of an average speed, against the prevailing northerly winds, of perhaps three or

four knots.<sup>1</sup> Ancient references to these various difficulties are found in Archilochos, Xenophon and Pliny,<sup>2</sup> as we have noted above.

The nearest centres of Greek civilization were, of course, the other Greek colonies situated on the shores of the Black Sea; it was to these cities that Olbians could most easily sail, keeping at all times within sight of the coast and within moderate range of the relative security of their own territory. In the first decades of its settlement Olbia was truly isolated, for there were few close neighbours. Although the founding of Olbia during the first of three waves of colonization into the Black Sea<sup>3</sup> was roughly contemporaneous with that of Istros on the western shore of the Euxine, and Sinope on the south coast, these settlements were quite remote from Olbia. The journey to Istros involved a coastal voyage of over two hundred miles; the journey to Sinope — a direct, open-sea crossing — was three hundred and fifty miles.

A second wave of colonization, in the first half of the sixth century B.C., added two important settlements to the

1. Carpenter, op. cit., pp.1-10.

2. T23, T24, T25.

3. Roebuck, Ionian Trade and Colonization, p.124.

north coast — Pantikapaion, two hundred miles east of Olbia, and Tyras, less than a hundred miles to the west. In the second half of the sixth century numerous other colonies sprang up along the north coast, including Chersonesos, which, located on a sheltering harbour near the southern tip of the Crimean peninsula, formed an important halfway stop-over on both the long crossing to Sinope and the eastward coastal voyage to Pantikapaion.

The most important reason for maintaining relations with other Greek cities on the Black Sea was what had prompted the first contact between the colonists and their Scythian neighbours — the need for trade. A natural exchange of commodities between the cities of the north coast and those of the south (especially the important colony of Sinope) arose because of the geographical differences of the two regions. While timber of good quality for construction was, as Theophrastos tells us,<sup>1</sup> rare on the north coast of the Black Sea, Sinope with its almost sub-tropical climate was provided with luxuriant forest-growth, the nearest exportable timber supply to Olbia. The superb harbour of Sinope, the only harbour on the entire south

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1. T14.

coast, made that city a market for the southward-moving trade of the Black Sea, for the grain, hides, slaves and refined salt that were Olbia's exportable products. In its key position Sinope was the natural meeting place for the trading enterprises of the north and east coasts of the Black Sea; Strabo<sup>1</sup> confirms that this was the case.

Although Olbia was the most remote Black Sea colony from this centre of commerce, her trading vessels found their way easily into the busy harbour of Sinope. Seamen navigating south from Olbia by way of the stopping-place at Chersonesos could, on days of clearest visibility, just catch sight of the headland at Sinope while the hills of the Crimea were still visible astern. The passage from Chersonesos to Sinope is the only direct crossing of the Black Sea that can be made without losing sight of land.<sup>2</sup>

Strong trading connexions between Olbia and the neighbouring colonies are reflected in numerous inscriptions granting proxeny to citizens of these states. The earliest decree, a

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1. XII, 3, 11.

2. Leaf, "The Commerce of Sinope," J.H.S., XXXVI (1916), pp.1-15.

fifth-century inscription,<sup>1</sup> extends the right of citizenship and special trading privileges to a family of Mesembria, a colony of Megara on the western shore of the Black Sea. It can be seen from the regular trading relations established in this treaty between Olbia and colonists at Mesembria that, by the fifth century at least, long coastal voyages were a normal and frequent undertaking in the Black Sea. The passage to Mesembria, a southward journey of nearly four hundred miles along the western shore of the sea, would involve stops at several major centres, including Tyras, Istros, Tomis, Kallatis and Odessos.

Although similar voyages were also made to the eastern cities of the north coast, the tedious route around the great protruding headland of the Crimea (whose coastal cities were not established until the late wave of colonization near the end of the sixth century) created a geographical hiatus between the two distinct groups of colonies on the north coast. Olbia, the most prominent settlement of the western group, found her most natural contacts in the nearby cities to the west — Tyras and Istros. Pantikapaion, which later assumed leadership of the cities clustered around the Cimmerian Bosphoros (the modern Kerch Strait) to form the Regnum Bosporanum, naturally

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1. T26.

looked to these easily accessible centres on the eastern side of the Crimean barrier.

After the end of the sixth century, however, ships from Olbia, making use of the shelter provided at Chersonesos and Theodosia, could pass the dangerous promontory of the Crimea in order to reach the important cities of Pantikapaion and Phanagoria. Discussing the sites of the later colonies on the Black Sea's north coast, Roebuck observes<sup>1</sup> that "the selection of Chersonesos probably indicates the knitting together of the Euxine colonies in the latter part of the century, for it was a useful port of call on crossings. . . from Olbia to the towns in the Cimmerian Bosporos." By the end of the period under study here, contact between cities of the eastern and western groups was frequent. Both Herodotos and Strabo<sup>2</sup> (who, of course, describes the region at a later date) discuss the vicinities of the Borysthenes and the Cimmerian Bosporos as parts of a single neighbourhood.

But Olbia's intercourse was clearly not only with cities within the Black Sea. Numerous finds of pottery and other manu-

1. Roebuck, Ionian Trade and Colonization, p.124.

2. T6, T8.

factured goods that had their origins in a surprising variety of Greek cities attest to the continuing influence of the outside world upon Olbia at quite an early date. In addition to the plentiful East Greek pottery that one might expect to find on the site of a Milesian colony, Olbia has yielded Attic, Corinthian and even Eretrian vases of the earlier half of the sixth century B.C. Among the most exotic wares recovered from the site are a sixth-century goblet from Naukratis and a fifth-century black-figure hydria of shape and technical characteristics that suggest Etruscan origin. Graves at Olbia of both Greeks and Scythians contain many luxury items imported from cities in Greece, including jewellery, oil flasks and strigils. Although no life-sized statuary has been unearthed at Olbia, small terracottas and bronzes are found, imported from Ionia, and a fourth-century inscription,<sup>1</sup> apparently a fragment from the base of a work of sculpture, contains the name of Praxiteles. That Olbia's connexion with the Greek cities from which such imports arrived was a commercial connexion is suggested by the great number of point-based amphorai found on the site, of a type used for the storage and shipping of food.

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1. Latyshev, Inscriptiones Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini, I, p.145.



There is evidence for the existence of transport for passengers between the Euxine and Greece as early as the beginning of the sixth century. The journey of the Scythian philosopher Anacharsis to the cities of Greece in Solon's day (probably as a passenger on a Greek ship travelling south and returning to Olbia, since the Scythians themselves were landsmen) is reported by Herodotos.<sup>1</sup> It is significant also that Herodotos himself in the fifth century found it possible to travel extensively in the northern Euxine.

If the remoteness of its position and the hazards of navigation forced upon Olbia a degree of isolation in the earliest period of settlement, that isolation was no longer a reality in the latter half of the fifth century. The voyage of Perikles into the Black Sea<sup>2</sup> may have been an attempt to secure for Athens the important grain-producing centres of the region by replacing with Athenian ties the colonists' older local ties with Scythian kings. In the years following Perikles' tour of the Euxine, many of the colonies appeared on an Athenian list of Pontic states; in this panel,<sup>3</sup> called "Cities of the Euxine,"

1. T20.

2. See Chapter VII for a discussion of the date of this voyage.

3. A9, IV, 162, in Meritt, Wade-Gery and McGregor, The Athenian Tribute Lists, II, p.109.

most of Olbia's nearest neighbours can be identified, including Tyras immediately to the west and Karkinitis and Tamyrake immediately east of Olbia. Although the name of Olbia cannot be identified with certainty on the list, it is likely that the colony was included. There is an assessment of one talent entered for a state 'O[- - -], which could be restored as Olbia. Since other Pontic cities that had grain for export to Greece — notably Pantikapaion and other colonies on the Cimmerian Bosphoros — were listed as potential tributaries to Athens, it is probable that Olbia, also competing in the grain-exporting market, was among the cities that appeared on the list.

In any case near the end of the fifth century Olbia no longer occupied a position of isolation from the Greek world. The possible tributary relationship of the colonies to Athens and the large-scale export of produce from the Black Sea made the Euxine a focal point of Greek maritime traffic.

While attempting to assess the effect of Olbia's remote northern location on the lives of the colonists one must consider the connexion of Olbia to the mother city, Miletos. Although the relationship of colony to mother city in ancient

Greece did not usually involve the political dependence that bound a nineteenth-century British colony, for instance, to the mother country, commercial links were likely to exist. In the case of Olbia there is an indication in the predominantly East Greek pottery found on the site, as we have seen, that much of the colony's commercial intercourse was with Miletos.

It is interesting to observe that, according to Herodotos,<sup>1</sup> the inhabitants of Olbia referred to themselves as Milesians. Yet, although this fact is evidence of the colonists' continuing interest in the mother city, it does not imply the political dependence of Olbia upon Miletos. As Graham<sup>2</sup> points out, there are numerous instances that illustrate the practice of designating colonists by the ethnic adjective of their places of origin; he cites as examples the name of Πυθαγόρας Σάμιος, a citizen not of Samos but of Kroton in Magna Graecia, and Thucydides' reference<sup>3</sup> to colonists from Zankle as οἱ Χαλκιδῆς.

The precise nature of the colonists' connexion with Miletos is outlined in a fourth-century inscription<sup>4</sup> from Miletos. The importance of this decree, which was inscribed on stone

1. T20.

2. Graham, Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece, p.100.

3. VI, 5, 1.

4. T27.

about 330 B.C., is increased for the present study by the fact that it appears to be a restatement of terms that were established at a much earlier date. The evidence for this will be considered after we have examined the contents of the decree.

The document, although it is worded in such a way as to deal primarily with the rights of a Milesian in the colony of Olbia, is a treaty between equal states; its terms apply equally to Milesians at Olbia and Olbians at Miletos. A citizen of the mother city is exempt from taxation in the colony. He may hold Olbian citizenship and be eligible for magistracies in Olbia on the condition that he be entered in the rolls for taxation. If a Milesian at Olbia becomes involved in a legal action, his case, like that of a citizen, will be heard before the δημοτικὸν δικαστήριον of the colony. The same privileges and obligations belong automatically to an Olbian who returns to reside at Miletos. In every case the terms of this agreement apply only to citizens of either city who do not hold citizenship or public office in any third state. The decree therefore involves two states that, being equal and independent, nevertheless recognize a special tie of kinship. It can be inferred that movement of individuals from one city to the other was a frequent occurrence.

The first indication that the decree is a restatement of an old relationship rather than the establishment of a new one is the bald, unelaborated preamble to the document — a single clause noting that the provisions of the treaty are customary for the Olbiopolitai and the Milesians. Further evidence occurs in the body of the treaty where, inserted among the terms relating to exemption from taxation, the phrase καθάσθα καὶ πρότερον ἦσαν occurs. That the obligation of taxation for a citizen or magistrate is described as an exception to the former terms is another indication that this decree is an adjustment to an older agreement.

Graham suggests<sup>1</sup> that the occasion of the re-establishment of relations with Olbia was the freeing of Miletos from Persian control by Alexander in 332; possibly the original agreement had been in abeyance since an earlier period when Miletos was free of external controls. The latest date at which the first treaty with Olbia might have been likely is the mid-fifth century, when Miletos was an autonomous member of the Delian Confederacy. The earliest date might be the early sixth century, before the first invasion of Ionia by the Persians. At whatever

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1. Op. cit., p.102.

date an agreement of this sort first existed, the existence of such traditional conditions of mutual privilege is evidence of a close relationship between Olbia and Miletos from earliest times.

We have seen now that after the first decades of the colony's existence, when Olbia was more or less alone on the north coast, intercolonial travel within the Black Sea became frequent. Trade with the cities of Greece and the exchange of raw materials from the Euxine for luxury products from the south were a normal procedure. And with Miletos especially Olbia maintained fairly close contact. Thus, if isolation was a factor in the shaping of the Olbian way of life, the effects of that isolation were, to an increasing degree as time passed, mitigated by communication with the world beyond the colony's own immediate surroundings.

## VI

## THE OLBIAN WAY OF LIFE

In its remote position above the Black Sea, Olbia was, as we have seen, the most northerly centre at which a sizeable Greek city ever developed. In establishing their way of life the colonists faced not only the problems of an alien climate and landscape, but the cultural influence of a neighbouring race that was strikingly different from the Greeks in many ways. While there is ample evidence that these colonists strove from the very beginning to make the new society at Olbia a copy of the Greek society of their mother-city, there are also indications that aspects of their style of life were peculiar, if not to Olbia alone, at least to the settlements of the north Euxine.

The material trappings of normal Greek urban life have been found in abundance on the site of Olbia. Even if life-sized sculpture and monumental buildings are absent, there are numerous smaller works of art and manufactured items from Miletos and other parts of Greece. In addition to the imported wares, there appears to have been local manufacture of pottery in traditional Ionian fashions at Olbia. Pottery — both

rough and decorative ware — that can be identified by its chemical constituents as locally made<sup>1</sup> retains the styles of the archaic period in Ionia, even when it is found in the levels of later date. In this we have an indication of a typical colonial phenomenon, the adherence to the mother culture with some neglect of current fashion.

In certain other respects the colonists appear to have matched, in their own city, developments that were simultaneously occurring in the Greek cities around the shores of the Aegean. One such feature of Olbia's growth was the laying out of streets on a regular, right-angled grid. The earliest indication of this type of street-planning, which appears on the upper part of the site north of the agora, dates from a period immediately after the devastation of the city by Scythians, following the retreat of Dareios. The Russian archaeologist Farmakovsky dated the establishment of the grid plan at Olbia<sup>2</sup> at approximately 500 B.C., apparently earlier than the first use of the grid-plan at Miletos. It might be supposed, in fact, that the advent of street-planning in Miletos was an innovation first

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1. See Minns, "Thirty Years of Work at Olbia," J.H.S., LXV (1945), pp.109-112.

2. Mongait, Archaeology in the U.S.S.R., p.190.



observed at and copied from the colonies on the Black Sea.<sup>1</sup>

The layout of streets in Olbia reflects not only planning, but also considerable prosperity. The basic pattern of the city, as it appears to have been formalized at the end of the fifth century, is a main thoroughfare ten metres wide, intended for two-way vehicular and pedestrian traffic, and secondary streets about three metres wide, intersecting the central thoroughfare at right angles. The buildings that lined the central street included some large private dwellings, auxiliary structures such as storehouses, and workshops connected with metal-working industries, about which more will be said below. Recent excavations by Russian archaeologists<sup>2</sup> have uncovered the traces of a large stoa that formed the northern end of the Olbian agora at an early date.

Evidence of the continuing uneasiness of the colonists in the Scythian-dominated region of the Hypanis is seen in the massive defensive walls that surround the site. A large fortified gate on the northern edge of the site, described by Minns<sup>3</sup> as polygonal masonry of the archaic period, and lookout towers

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1. There is, however, evidence of grid street-planning also at Smyrna in East Greece before the beginning of the fifth century.

2. Levi, Ol'viiia: Temenos i Agora, p.5.

3. Minns, Scythians and Greeks, p.452.

at both ends of the western side have been excavated, indicating the size and nature of the sixth-century defensive wall at Olbia.<sup>1</sup> Although the city had shrunk in size by Hellenistic times, Dio Chrysostom in the first century of our era was aware<sup>2</sup> of the existence of the ancient circuit wall and of defensive towers that, in his own day, were no longer in use.

An important aspect of colonial life at Olbia, in spite of the occasional uncertainty of relations with the Scyths that made great defensive works necessary, was the commercial dependence of the Olbiopolitai upon their Scythian neighbours. A significant result of this commercial intercourse was the establishment near Olbia of a number of small mixed communities on the Borysthenes estuary in which (as the graves of the inhabitants demonstrate) Greek and Scythian peoples and customs intermingled. In the hinterland immediately north of Olbia, as Herodotos tells us,<sup>3</sup> the inhabitants were the Kallippidai, or "Scythian Greeks."

In many of these small communities, as well as in Olbia

1. The plan of Olbia (see Chapter III) shows the full circuit of this city-wall. Its eastern side, traces of which now lie beneath the Bug River, indicates that the site has been reduced by erosion since ancient times.

2. T2.

3. T19.

itself, the basis of the relationship was the Scythian willingness to pay for the products of Greek workmanship. The vigour of Olbian industry came to depend not only on sale to the Scythians of wares imported from Greece, but also on items manufactured at Olbia in a new Graeco-Scythic style especially for the Scythian market. The products of this new industry begin to appear as early as the latter half of the sixth century B.C.

Among the items found both at Olbia<sup>1</sup> and in Scythian tombs, manufactured by Greek craftsmen for Scythian buyers, are sixth-century gold earrings, early fifth-century cruciform metal plaques of the kind originally developed by the Scythians themselves, an unusual bone buckle, hand-mirrors with stylized animal decoration in the Scythian fashion (but with handles, a feature that Scythian craftsmen never added to their mirrors), and a cast bronze quiver-decoration with Scythian embellishment. The Olbian origin of many of these manufactured goods found in Scythian tombs is beyond doubt. Mirrors of the type mentioned above were discovered in the remains of an extensive

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1. Lists of these finds appear in Minns, "Thirty Years of Work at Olbia," J.H.S., LXV(1945), pp.109-112, and Rice, The Scythians, p.140. Illustrations of products by Greek craftsmen at Olbia manufactured in the Scythic style are provided in the Appendix to this study.

metal workshop unearthed at Olbia in 1948. An even more significant find at Olbia was a mould discovered by Farmakovsky, used for casting bronze fittings like the one found on the Scythian quiver.

This was the industry that made intercourse between Greeks and Scythians lucrative for the settlers in the villages on Olbia's fringes. Of the commerce in these towns, as evidenced by the artifacts that have come to light, Boardman says:<sup>1</sup>

These apparently mixed communities, and the remarkable monuments of Greek work for the Scythians, are more eloquent testimony to the relations between the two peoples — the colonists and the natives—than the finds of objects imported from other parts of the Greek world. They show that the wealth of the Scythians and of the Black Sea trade attracted some of the finest Ionian artists to the northern colonies, where they adapted their natural style to the tastes and styles of the Scythians.

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1. Boardman, The Greeks Overseas, p.275.

We have already seen that from earliest times the settlers at Olbia attempted, through trade and diplomatic connexions with the Greek world and through the import of pottery, works of art, luxury foods and other commodities<sup>1</sup> that were absent from their new surroundings, to maintain in their outpost a Greek way of life. But their intimacy with the Scythians — an essential part of Olbian life — was a factor not present in the life of a normal Greek city. In the new style of art that evolved as a result of the combined Greek and Scythian industry described in the foregoing paragraphs we have the most tangible evidence of the Scythian influence upon the Greeks at Olbia. Rostovtzeff says<sup>2</sup> about art collected in the Hermitage Museum at Kerch from excavations on the northern shores and hinterlands of the Black Sea:

The scholar above all carried away quite novel impressions. He realized that in these rooms he was in the presence of a new world, in which Greek art appeared in an altered, sometimes almost unrecognizable form, and in which side by side with this art, another art was revealed, new and strange.

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1. It can be argued from Xenophon's catalogue of the contents of a wrecked ship in the Black Sea (T24) that written books from Greece and the ideas contained in them were in demand in the Euxine colonies.
  2. Iranians and Greeks in South Russia, p.3.

In a previous chapter we examined the characteristic elements of the Scythic style; now we may discuss some specific pieces of north Euxine Greek art that illustrate the new style to which Rostovtzeff refers. Since most of the Scythian prototypes are examples of metalwork, the products of Olbian craftsmanship are also chiefly metal. Certain images, ever present in the art of the nomads, appear commonly in the art of Olbia. The sphinx and the griffin, which adorned the house of Skyles, a landmark of fifth-century Olbia, recur frequently on jewellery in a style that suggests imitation of Scythic models. An example of the sphinx motif on a Greek gold diadem is illustrated in Figure 2 in the Appendix. A general similarity of aspect, especially in the stylized curves of the creatures' wings, can be seen in the representation on this Greek diadem and the animal on a purely Scythian plaque shown in Figure 3.

A small terracotta statue (Figure 1) from the north Euxine coast —probably of Olbian manufacture— portrays a human figure that looks half Scythian and half Greek. Although the costume depicted is almost purely Scythian, the statue is certainly Greek; both the terracotta medium and the human-figure theme are uncharacteristic of the Scythian artist.

If the statue is a portrait of a Greek colonist, as suggested by Dio Chrysostom's description<sup>1</sup> of an Olbian in Scythic costume, then the influence of Scythian style is seen not only in the statue itself, but in the general aspect of personal dress in the colony.

The finest illustrations of the Graeco-Scythic style are two famous embossed gold plaques from Scythian tombs, the Vett-ersfeld fish and the Kul Oba stag. Although these beautiful pieces were both discovered at sites distant from Olbia, they are the work of Greek craftsmen from the northern Euxine, and are typical of the metalwork that was being done at the beginning of the fifth century in the factories of Olbia. The Kul Oba stag should be compared with a similar animal of purely Scythic design and workmanship. The gold stag from the Kuban (Figure 4) is typical of the Scythian style in the elegant simplicity of its abstract design. The tortuous curves of the exaggerated antlers and the sweeping lines of the body that characterize Scythian work are clearly seen — and nothing else. In contrast, the Kul Oba stag is a departure from the basic style in that its open spaces have been filled with designs that are not complementary to the overall theme of the design, but

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1. T22.

extraneous to it. In the purely Scythian design, every line is part of the animal's body; in the Greek design, lions, rams and the ubiquitous griffin cover the animal's body and break its unity.

The Vettersfeld fish (Figure 5) is an even more extreme example of the simple line of a Scythic design complicated by the addition of irrelevant symbols. If this plaque is not the work of a Greek imitating and elaborating the Scythic style, it is a Scythian craftsman's imitation of the new Graeco-Scythic style of the Greek colonies on the Black Sea. "The Greeks," Minns declares, "spoilt the Scythic style in the West."<sup>1</sup>

In Olbia as early as the sixth century, therefore, the influence of the Scythians, with whom the Greek colonists had established a pattern of intimate contact, could be seen in a style of art that combined the motifs of the Scythian craftsman with elements that were alien to the purely Scythian work. While much of this work from Olbia is highly sophisticated in technique and beautiful in effect, some of it is rather crude and unattractive. One of a pair of lions, roughly carved

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1. Minns, Scythians and Greeks, p.75. Minns suggests 475 B.C. as the date of the Kul Oba stag and 525 B.C. for the Vettersfeld fish.



from stone and covered with inscribed symbols, is shown in Figure 6. These objects, found at Olbia, may be the work of Greek craftsmen or may have been imported into the colony from Scythia.

But in the practical and applied arts at Olbia there were fashions dictated not by Scythian models but by the demands of life in the colony. Of special interest is the domestic woodwork of Olbia, because from no other site in the Greek world have so many articles of wooden construction been recovered intact. Domestic appliances made of wood in simple, functional designs were a feature of life at Olbia. Typical of the unornate Olbian style is a chest (one of many found on the site) illustrated in Figure 7 of the Appendix. Minns<sup>1</sup> suggests that it was used for storage of clothing. The manufacture of coins, which seems to have begun before 500 B.C. in the colony<sup>2</sup>, is another practical operation in which the Olbian technique is somewhat unusual; the coins of Olbia were not stamped, as in most other Greek cities, but cast.

Coins found on the site provide the most explicit clues

1. Minns, Scythians and Greeks, p.322.

2. Coins minted at Olbia have been found on the Berezan site, which appears to have been abandoned shortly after 500 B.C.

to the religious observance of the Olbiopolitai. The most frequently represented deity on the coins of Olbia is Apollo, who appears, as Miss Hirst<sup>1</sup> observes, to have been the city-deity of the new colony just as he was the chief deity of Miletos. "It seems reasonable to believe," says Miss Hirst, "that the earliest colonists brought with them from Miletos this cult, of special appropriateness for those who were going to found a city in a new land."

Demeter is another frequent subject of portraits on Olbian coins. But more frequently than any other deity except Apollo, a strictly local deity, the river god Borysthenes, appears on coins of the colony, represented as a long-haired, bearded Scythian king. The reverse of all these coins of Borysthenes depicts the battle-axe and sheathed bow of the Scythian warrior. (The coins are illustrated in Figure 8 of the Appendix.) Miss Hirst observes that this cult, an obvious reaction to the overpowering influence of the river on the settlers' lives, was the only element in the ritual of the Olbiopolitai that was added to the purely Hellenic cults.

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1. Hirst, "The Cults of Olbia," J.H.S., XXII(1902), p.255.

The portrayal on a large number of Olbian coins of a fish — the dolphin or, more likely, the sturgeon — is an indication of the importance in the lives of the colonists of the fishing industry, another aspect of the influence of the River Borys-thenes upon the colony.

Of the constitutional structure of the colony in the earliest centuries of its existence, nothing can be said with certainty. Inscriptions that describe the functioning of government at Olbia do not pre-date the fourth century, by which time decrees begin with a formula acknowledging a *βουλή* and *ἐκκλησία* as the legislative bodies, as in Athenian democracy. By the fourth century, executive power was in the hands of five archons, in addition to whom two other magistrates held office — a financial adviser and the King Archon, presumably the representative, as we have seen above, of the Scythian king whose territory the Olbiopolitai occupied with their colony. The constitution represented in these decrees belongs, of course, to a period beyond the one under study here, and after the establishment of frequent contact with the Athenian empire in the second half of the fifth century.

In the government of the colony during the first century, or more, of its existence, the position of the Scythian

king's representative may have been much stronger than his role as a figurehead in the fourth century. Guessing at the circumstances of this period, Rostovtzeff<sup>1</sup> expresses the belief that, in a context where only dynastic kings were recognized as true rulers, the Greek colonists must have been very slow, even during the fifth century, to move at all in the direction of democracy. It may have been necessary to accept as tyrants in their colony the Hellenized Scythians who represented the kings, and who later became the less powerful King Archons. Tyranny at Olbia did not, one may surmise, pass quickly as a temporary phase, but existed as the settled form of government for centuries.

But, as we shall see in the next chapter, it was during these early centuries that Olbia enjoyed her greatest prosperity. The most characteristic aspect of life in Olbia in the sixth and fifth centuries was its dependence upon trade — not only the trade with Scythian neighbours mentioned above, but also the export of local products (especially food) to the Greek cities of the Aegean.

In summary, life at Olbia in the first two centuries after

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1. Rostovtzeff, Iranians and Greeks in South Russia, p.71.

its foundation was, to the best of the colonists' ability, a Greek way of life, like the existence they had known at home. Greek art, Greek industry, Greek religion and domestic life were preserved with the greatest possible fidelity. But in spite of their determination to live the life of Hellenes, the Olbiopolitai did make concessions in their daily life to the art, religion and political power of their Scythian neighbours on the Euxine coast.

## VII

## THE HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

From literary sources alone the history of Olbia during the centuries under consideration in this study is extremely slight; if they are to reveal anything at all of the earliest events in the colony, they must receive heavy support from archaeology. Since much of the historical material has been referred to in the preceding chapters, this final chapter will be, in effect, a summary in chronological order of the evidence that exists for the events of Olbia's early history.

The founding of cities on the Propontis and especially of Byzantium, dated by the chronology of Eusebios (with archaeological corroboration) as mid-seventh century, may be taken as an indication of the first surge of commercial traffic through the Bosphoros. It is in the second half of the seventh century, a decade or two after the founding of Byzantium, that the first wave of Greek colonization begins to occupy the sites of the earliest major settlements on the Black Sea — Sinope on the south coast, Istros on the west, and Olbia on the northern coast.

After a brief initial stop on the island of Berezan, attested by pottery and domestic remains rather than literary evidence, the colonists founded Olbia on the west bank of the Bug (Hypanis) River, four miles from the confluence of the Hypanis and the Borysthenes. Eusebios places the foundation of Olbia in the first year of the thirty-fourth Olympiad, 644/3 B.C. The earliest pottery recovered from the site allows verification of Eusebios' date only to the extent of indicating occupation of the site during the last decade of the seventh century. Equally inexact is the reference in the geographical poem of the pseudo-Skymnos<sup>1</sup> to Olbia's date of foundation as contemporaneous with the Median Empire, which, as we see in Herodotos, Book I, persisted until shortly before the invasion of Lydia by Cyrus in the middle of the sixth century.

The original colonists were Milesians, as Herodotos informs us;<sup>2</sup> the connexion between Olbia and Miletos is clearly stated in the fourth-century treaty<sup>3</sup> regarding citizenship in the two cities.

The symbolism of the ear of wheat and the fish (either

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1. Lines 806-9 (Muller, Geographici Graeci Minores, I, p.196.)

2. T20.

3. T27.

dolphin or sturgeon) on the earliest coins minted at Olbia is probably a good indication of the chief industries of the colonists in their first decades of life on the Hypanis River. But the close cooperation with their Scythian neighbours that was to open new commercial avenues for the Olbiopolitai began very early in Olbia's history. The philosopher Anacharsis, whom Herodotos describes<sup>1</sup> as a thoroughly Hellenized Scythian, was contemporary with Solon, as Lucian tells us in the dialogue *'Aváχρσις*.

The next fact, chronologically, that can be ascertained in the colony's history is established entirely by archaeological evidence. During the sixth century Olbia expanded to fill a site larger than that occupied by the city at any subsequent period. A trench that formed the defensive circuit around the colony established by the earliest settlers was filled and built over, apparently at the beginning of the sixth century. Proper city-walls surrounding the entire peninsula upon which Olbia was located were in place later in the same century. The great size of Olbia in the sixth century and its shrinking extent in later centuries are suggested by the location of the

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1. T20.



colonists' tombs. As indicated on the site-plan in Chapter III, sixth-century tombs lay beyond the farthest northern boundary of the site, while fifth- and fourth-century graves are closer to the centre, and Hellenistic graves are closer still. Once again we may recall Dio Chrysostom's observations<sup>1</sup> on the shrinking of the city as seen in the broad extent of its ancient remains.

The prosperity of Olbia in the sixth century is a certain indication of successful relations between the colonists and their neighbours during the period. Excavation shows, however, that at some time near the end of the century this stability came to an end and was replaced by a brief outbreak of violent conflict. The city was devastated and rebuilt shortly before 500 B.C., possibly at the time of the rising of the Scyths against the invading Dareios and his allies in this campaign, the Ionian Greeks. Herodotos tells us<sup>2</sup> that the Scythians had good reason to be vexed with the Greeks because of the Ionian treachery in playing the Scythians and Persians against each other.

The grid-plan of the colony as it was rebuilt after the

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1. T2.

2. IV, 136-140.

destruction was disturbed by no further disruption in the century that followed. That the former close relations between Greeks and Scythians at Olbia resumed shortly after the reconstruction of the city is seen in Herodotos' story of Skyles. Although Herodotos introduces the tale of Skyles with only a vague chronological reference<sup>1</sup> (Skyles' sojourn at Borysthenes was "many years later" than the episode of Anacharsis), a close reading of the narrative permits one to construct a genealogy connecting Anacharsis with Skyles in such a way as to place the latter in the first half of the fifth century. Anacharsis' nephew Idanthyrso, who is shown to have been the adversary of Dareios during the latter's invasion of Scythia,<sup>2</sup> must have flourished about 515 B.C. His son Ariapithes, whom Herodotos identifies<sup>3</sup> as the father of Skyles, flourished therefore about 490 B.C., and Skyles himself perhaps about 470. Thus, from the time of Anacharsis to that of Skyles — a period of a century or more — the fortunes of Olbia were closely tied to the colonists' relations with kings of a single Scythian family.<sup>4</sup> The position of the Olbiopolitai in this period,

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1. T20.

2. IV, 126.

3. IV, 78.

4. This family's descent, as it is represented by Herodotos, may be outlined as seen here:

Saulios —	Anacharsis	(ca 565?)
Idanthyrso		(ca 515)
Ariapithes		(ca 490)
Skyles		(ca 470-60)

from the early sixth to mid-fifth century, is that of tributary subjects of the neighbouring Scythian kings.

Within this framework of Greek/Scythian relations, affairs apparently went forward uneventfully at Olbia until the Athenian naval expedition around the coasts of the Black Sea under the command of Perikles in the second half of the century — at nearly the end of the period under study here. As we have seen in Chapter V, the consequences in Olbia of this Athenian mission into the Black Sea are unknown. It is certain, however, that, sometime after this expedition, colonies adjacent to Olbia on the northern coast appeared in a Euxine panel of assessed members of the Athenian empire (an Athenian mission, apparently for the purpose of collecting tribute, sailed into the Black Sea in 424 B.C.).<sup>1</sup> Olbia may have been included on this list.

The date of the expedition that brought this Athenian influence to bear upon the colonies of the Black Sea is a matter of uncertainty. Although the report of the mission, in Plutarch, Pericles, 20, contains no definite chronological indications, the content and context of the passage provide clues to

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1. Thucydides, IV, 1-2.

the date. Because this expedition is described as a show of Athenian strength on the Euxine coast of Asia Minor, Meritt, Wade Gery and McGregor<sup>1</sup> view it as a breach of the terms of the Peace of Kallias, unless in fact it occurred before those terms were drawn up—probably as early as 450.

Another view, held by Beloch,<sup>2</sup> Rostovtzeff,<sup>3</sup> Ehrenberg<sup>4</sup> and others, places the mission at a much later date, about 435, after the period of scrupulous observance of the terms of the peace. For our purpose we may accept a date within these limits — that is, between 450 and 435.

At whatever date the mission of Perikles to the Black Sea occurred, its significance is that it brought the north shore of the Euxine into a more pressing contact with the outside world than had been experienced before. Certainly by this period — the second half of the fifth century — Olbia was no longer either an isolated outpost, nor in any sense a pioneer community. After two centuries of growth and development, the colony was an established centre of urban civilization, and its character as a city had been permanently moulded.

1. Meritt, Wade Gery and McGregor, The Athenian Tribute Lists, III, p.116.

2. Beloch, Attische Politik, p.325.

3. Rostovtzeff. Iranians and Greeks in South Russia, p.67.

4. Ehrenberg, From Solon to Socrates, p.444.

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APPENDIX

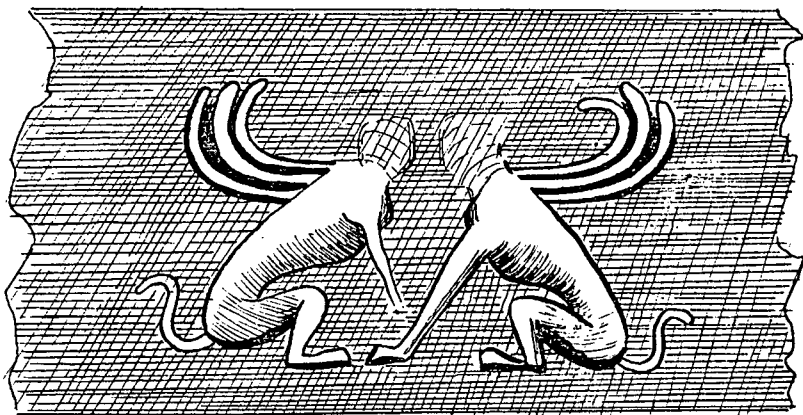
2

Illustrations of  
NORTH EUXINE ART



FIGURE 1

COSTUME OF THE NORTH EUXINE COAST. A  
GREEK TERRA COTTA FOUND IN THE CRIMEA.  
(AFTER MINNS)



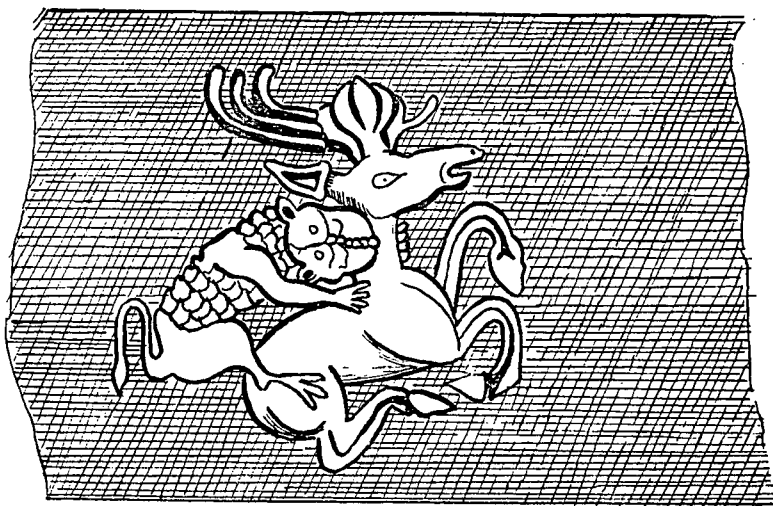
(BOTH DRAWINGS  
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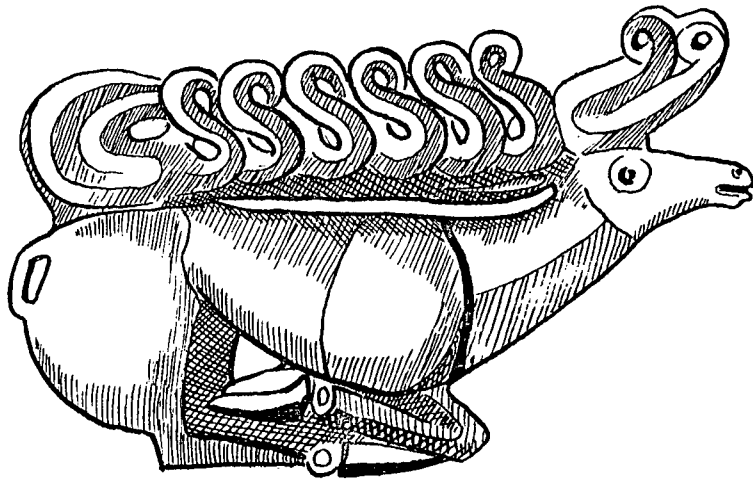
## FIGURE 2

DESIGN FROM A GREEK GOLD  
DIADEM, FOUND AT OLBITA.

## FIGURE 3

DESIGN FROM A SCYTHIAN GOLD  
PLAQUE; SEVEN BROTHERS TOMB,  
KUBAN





ABOVE, THE GOLD STAG FROM THE KUBAN;  
BELOW, THE KUL OBA STAG. (AFTER  
BOARDMAN, pl. 23)

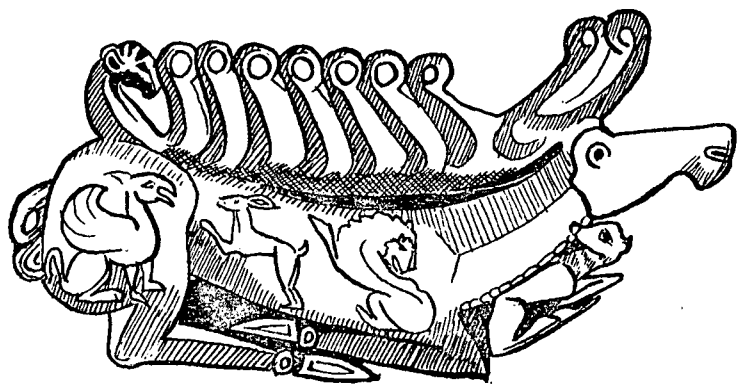


FIGURE 4

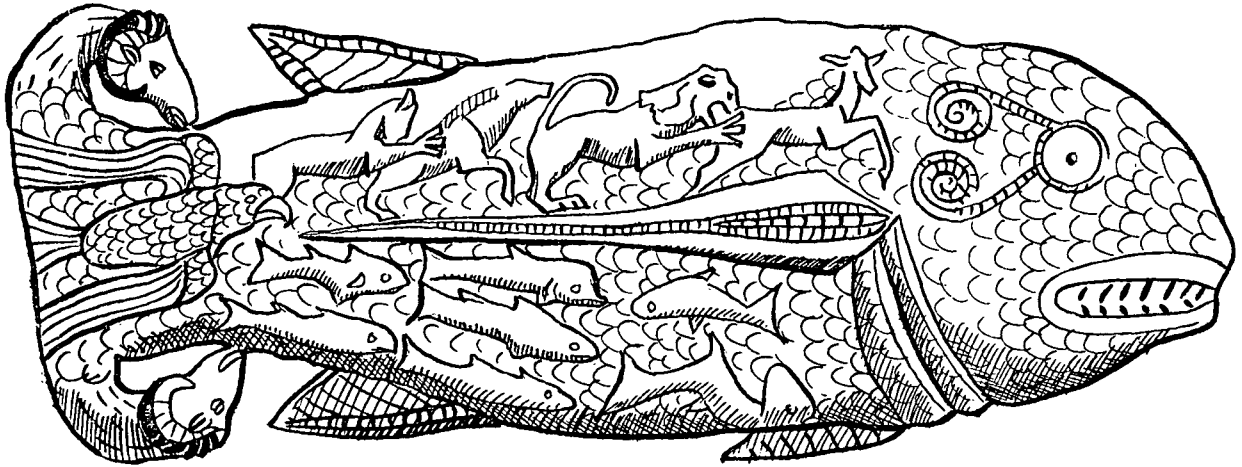


FIGURE 5

GOLD FISH FROM VETTERSFELD  
(AFTER BOARDMAN)

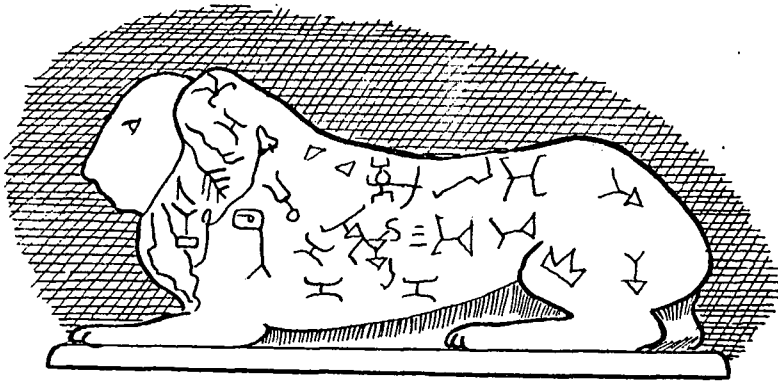
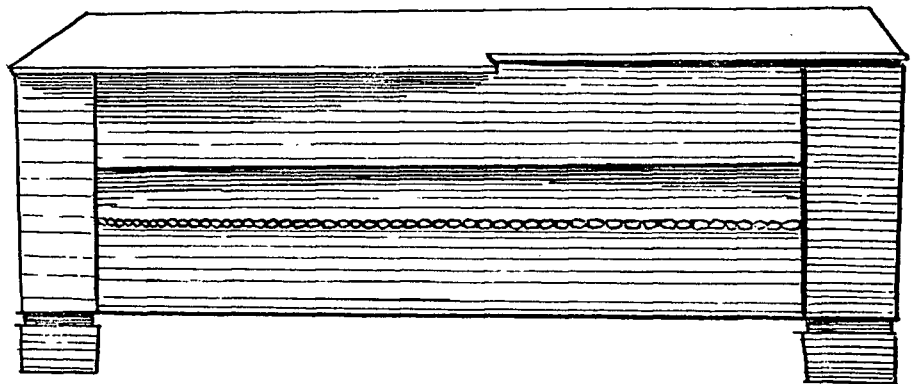


FIGURE 6  
STONE LION FROM OLBIA

FIGURE 7  
PLAIN WOODEN CHEST FROM OLBIA



(DRAWINGS  
AFTER MINNS)



FIGURE 8  
BRONZE COINS OF OLBIA  
(AFTER HIRST)

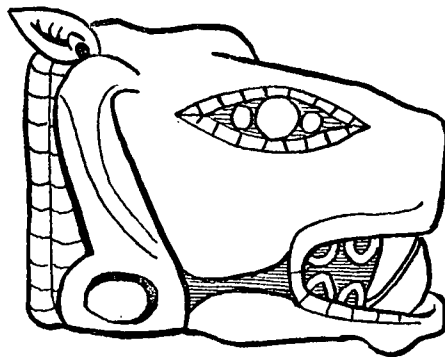


FIGURE 9  
BONE BUCKLE FROM OLBIA  
(AFTER MONGAIT)

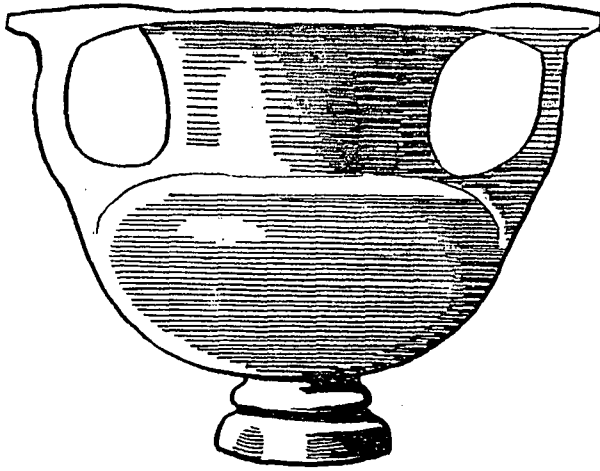


FIGURE 10

CANTHAROS FROM OLBIA,  
OF NATIVE CLAY. CUPS  
OF THIS DESIGN ARE FOUND  
IN SCYTHIC TOMBS NEAR  
OLBIA.

(AFTER MINNS)

FIGURE 11  
BRONZE MIRROR  
MANUFACTURED AT OLBIA  
(AFTER RICE)

