

NOTES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ODESSOS AND ITS VICINITY
UNTIL EARLY HELLENISTIC TIMES*Supplementum Ponticum 3*

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This article is an attempt to trace the development of a small part of the present-day Bulgarian Black Sea coast from 6th to the 3rd century BC, *i.e.* from the beginning of the Greek colonisation up till Early Hellenistic times, and more precisely the changes in the latter period. This article covers the area from Odessos and its immediate vicinity to Cape Kaliakra in the northeast.

Along this part of the littoral there are a few ancient sites that are related to the Greek colonisation in this area. This is first of all Odessos (present-day Varna), the earliest *apoikia* in the region. To the northeast are Dionysopolis (Balchik), Bizone (Kavarna) and Tirizis (Kaliakra). Each one of these sites is specific on its own.

It is necessary to begin with the chronology of the Greek colonisation. The foundation of Odessos does not raise significant problems. According to Pseudo-Skymnos the city was founded by Milesians when Astyages ruled the Medes (*Ps-Skymnos* 748-750). From the two alternative reigns of Astyages – 598/7–560 BC (Eusebius and Hieronymus) or 584–549 BC (Herodotus) – the latter is more likely, as in the last analysis on that matter, K. Boshnakov proposed a foundation date for Odessos in the time from 584 to 575 BC, when the Medes made war against the Lydian kingdom (Boshnakov 2004, 179-181). Archaeological finds confirm a date in the second quarter of the 6th century BC (Lazarov 1998, 91; Minchev 2003, 213-214).

The written sources do not provide us neither with the foundation date of Dionysopolis, nor with the name of its metropolis. The information given by Pseudo-Skymnos (based on Demetrius of Callatis) speaks of a change in the name – from the earlier Kranoi to Dionysopolis – but does not offer a chronological framework for this event (*Ps-Skymnos* 751-757). The idea about a Milesian or more generally an Ionian foundation of the colony can be found in several existing studies (Bilabel 1920, 15; Danov 1990, 154; Nawotka 1997, 23-24). An inscription from the Roman period, mentioning “the seven tribes” (*IGBulg.* I², 15ter, 3) seems to support this hypothesis as according to N. Ehrhardt these are the original six Milesian tribes plus “Romans”. Such a

combination of tribes is also attested in other Black Sea poleis that are described as Milesian colonies, including Odessos (Ehrhardt 1983, 65-66, 101).

The main argument against the Milesian origin of the population of Dionysopolis is the leading role of the god Dionysus (Блаватская 1952, 29; Gočeva 1980, 52-53, Ehrhardt 1983, 66). Al. Avram suggested that a group of Dionysus devotees could have founded Dionysopolis in the time of Alexander the Great (Avram 1996b, 297-298). M. Oppermann agrees that such a change in the name is characteristic for the Hellenistic period (Oppermann 2004, 199). This raises the question of the status of Dionysopolis before the change and it was hypothesized that the *polis* was refounded on the place of an earlier trade settlement (Avram 1996b, 294, 297-298; cf. Oppermann 2000, 141-142; *idem* 2004, 11). This also leaves the possibility open that Dionysopolis was a secondary colony of one of an already existing Milesian polis, probably Odessos (Велков 1931-32, 46). This could account for the “seven tribes”, but cannot answer the question about the leading role of Dionysus in the pantheon.

The earliest materials that could be related to the existence of a Greek (?) settlement on the place of Dionysopolis are two Chian amphorae from the early and mid-5th century BC (Лазаров 1973, 10, No. 14, Табл., XXIV/14; 11-12, No. 28; *idem* 1982, 8-9). The existence of the polis with its new name is attested for the first time in a decree, issued on behalf of the *Dionysopolitai* (*IGBulg.* I², 13bis). Nawotka says that the formula used in the inscription could be dated as early as the late 4th century BC, *i.e.* from that moment on Dionysopolis was already a functioning polis (Nawotka 1999, 69f.).

Most of the published archaeological material from Bizone is dated to the Hellenistic period, but earlier finds, possibly Archaic, were also mentioned (Salkin 1986; Lazarov 1998, 93). According to Pseudo-Skymnos Bizone was either a barbarian settlement, or an *apoikia* of Mesambria (*Ps-Skymnos* 758-760). As Avram comments, in the time of Demetrius of Callatis (late 3rd – early 2nd century BC) even the origin of the settlement was not clear (Avram 1996b, 294-295). K. Boshnakov writes that this ambiguity is indicative of a local oral tradition that predates the foundation of Callatis itself (*ca.* 390 BC, according to him). Thus, it is possible that Bizone was either a pre-Greek settlement, or it was an initiative of Mesambria from mid-5th century BC or slightly later (Boshnakov 2004, 186 *sq.*). At present, the latter remains a highly hypothetical historical reconstruction (cf. Oppermann 2004, 11). The site was inhabited in the Early Iron Age (Мирчев *et al.* 1962, 32-34), and some later materials are mentioned (Oppermann 2004, 27), but no clear connection can be traced with the Hellenistic settlement.

The first occasion where Bizone was explicitly mentioned is in a Histrian decree honouring Agatocles (*ca.* 200 BC), telling us that the *chora* of the settlement was subjected to Thracian incursions (*ISM* I 15, 25-27). Nevertheless, neither this information, nor the mentioning in a 2nd century BC inscription

from Iasos of a *Bizonites* could be considered a testimony for the polis status of Bizone (Oppermann 2000, 142-143). Regardless of the possible presence of earlier materials, it is clear that Bizone's heyday was in the Hellenistic period, when the overall situation in this part of the littoral changed considerably (see below).

It is also necessary to examine the development of this part of the Black Sea coast in the context of the colonisation of the western and northwestern Pontic regions as a whole. What has to be noted is the relatively late foundation of Odessos, as well as the numerous ambiguities surrounding the Greek colonisation in the whole region (including the area immediately northwards – the early periods in the history of Callatis and Tomis also raise questions). The earliest Greek *apoikiai* appear in the northwestern Black Sea area in the middle or the third quarter of the 7th century BC. These are Histria (and Orgame) in Northern Dobrudzha and Borysthenes/Berezan on the Dniepr liman, followed by Apollonia Pontica in the south, the foundation of which is traditionally dated *ca.* 610 BC. Then Odessos appeared. So it seems reasonable to accept that the Greeks penetrated the Black Sea following its western coast. One cannot help noticing the similarities between the places the Greeks chose for their earliest settlements. Both Histria (and Orgame) and Borysthenes (and later Olbia) were situated in flatlands near large rivers (that provided the names). There were favourable conditions for taking possession of more land. As a result, secondary settlements appeared as early as the end of the 7th century (around Histria) or the first half of the 6th century BC (on the coasts of the limans of Bug and Dniepr)¹.

It seems that this secondary colonisation was facilitated by another factor – the absence of settled native population in both regions. Some differences, however, should be noted. The steppes of the Northern Black Sea area that were the immediate hinterland of Borysthenes and Olbia remained almost entirely empty until late 6th and early 5th century BC, and the majority of the sites here date from the 4th century BC².

Northern Dobrudzha presents us with more complex situation. The region was also part of the changes in the northwestern Black Sea area in the first half of the 7th century BC and the local culture Babadag III ceased to exist at latest in the middle of the century³. The Greeks came to territories that were practically empty. There are some late 7th and 6th centuries BC sites that

¹ The bibliography about the territories of Histria and Olbia is enormous, therefore here just a few recent studies will be mentioned: for Histria see Avram 1990; *idem* 2001; for Olbia see *et al.* 1989; Kryžickij 1999; Kryžickij/Bujskikh 1999; Bujskikh/Bujskikh 2001; Kryžickij/Krapivina 2003.

² See the statistics in Ильинская/Тереножкин 1983; Мурзилко 1984; Мелюк 1989; Ольховский 1991.

³ Morintz 1987, 67-68; Alexandrescu 1990, 49, 63; Simion 1992/1993, 23; *idem* 1998, 167.

could be related to the presence of steppe population – a grave at Sabanjia (Simion 1992-1993, 25, Fig. 2, 29; Мелюкова 2001, 20-22), a few stone stelae (Ольховский/ Евдокиев 1994, 16, Nos. 1-3; вж. Oppermann 2002, 252), etc. Later, from the mid-6th century BC, monuments of settled population appeared near Histria – e.g. the necropoleis at Celik-Dere and Ciucurova (Simion 1992-1993, 29 sq.; *idem* 1995; *idem* 1998, 169-170; *idem* 2000). Despite the controversies about the ethnic attribution of these sites (Thracian or North-Pontic population?), they attest the filling of the demographic gap after the events in the 7th century BC – much sooner than the same process in the Northern Black Sea area.

The appearance of secondary settlements with a presumably agricultural character speaks of the interest of the Greek settlers to expand their territory, as well as of an increase of the population. The availability of free lands (without presumably hostile local population) could have played an important role in the Greeks' choice of places to found the earliest colonies in the Black Sea.

One further difference should be noted between the development of Borysthenes and Olbia on the one hand and that of Histria and Orgame on the other, being the extremely early penetration of Greek imports in the forest-steppe regions of the Northern Black Sea area. Greek goods appeared on several *gorodishta* as early as the last decades of the 7th century BC (Онайко 1966, *passim*; Alexandrescu 1975). Of particular importance is Nemirovskoe *gorodishte* that seems to mark a trade route from Olbia following the course of the River Bug. The finds testify for an active import of Greek vases in the last quarter of 7th and early 6th century BC (Вахтина 1996; *eadem* 2000).

This suggests a possible commercial interest on the part of the Greek settlers and of a not entirely “agricultural” colonisation. In fact, in the last years there is a revival of the old theory of the Berezan settlement as a trading post that predated the large-scale colonisation of the region (see Solovyov 1999).

The situation in the hinterland of Histria is different. Except for the immediate vicinity of the polis (and of Orgame), on the territory of Walachia and Moldova, Greek imports could be traced only clearly from the late 6th century BC onwards. The earliest materials are Chian amphorae with bulging neck that appear on a limited number of sites (Sirbu 1985; Никулицэ 1987, 33-34). The picture changes in the 5th century (e.g. Sirbu 1982) and more visibly in the 4th century BC (Никулицэ 1991, 198). So it seems that Histria did not develop the same early commercial activity that was noted in the northern Black Sea area – possibly due to the lack of such a partner as the major centres with large population in the forest-steppe regions.

Apollonia Pontica is considerably less studied (see last in Nedev/Panayotova 2003). This is true for the city itself and for the region in general. Therefore, it is not possible to offer detailed observations. Nevertheless, there are a couple of things that should be noted. The first one is the foundation of the polis after Histria and Borysthenes, despite the fact that it is far to the south on the main route of entering into the Black Sea. Apollonia was founded in a very

different geographical setting – in a narrow coastal plain with the heights of Meden Rid blocking the access to the interior. There were no possibilities for massive secondary colonisation. Nonetheless, the Milesian colonists took advantage of the site – an isolated and protected peninsula with a good harbour. It cannot be excluded that the copper deposits in the area also played a part. In the early period, Apollonia was the first safe shelter after the long and inhospitable coast to the north of the Bosphorus. Unfortunately, the demographic situation in the region in late 7th and early 6th century BC is not entirely clear. There is however some evidence for trade contacts with the Thracian population from the mid-6th century BC onwards (Балабанов 1999, 71-72).

It is against this general background that the development of Odessos in the Archaic period should be considered and once again, its late foundation should be stressed – six or seven decades after the earliest colonies in the northwestern Black Sea area and a quarter of a century or more after Apollonia.

Odessos appeared in a very different landscape in comparison with the *poleis* further north. To the south of Cape Shabla the littoral has elevated coasts and a hilly hinterland. The surroundings of Odessos are characterised by two pronounced plateaus – Frangensko and Avrensko – and between them are the Varna lakes. There are large landslide areas on the slopes of both plateaus. The navigation in the coastal waters is not safe (Шкорпил/Шкорпил 1892, 4-9, 15-17; Мишев/Попов 1979, 14-15).

Another observation should be made, as stated earlier: the areas of the earliest Greek colonisation in the Black Sea had no settled native population. The hinterland of Odessos presents us with a different situation. It seems that the events that took place in the Pontic steppes in the 7th century BC had their echoes in this region as well. This is demonstrated by a few graves that might be related to a population with northern origins – the graves at Belogradets and Tsarevbrod to the west of Odessos and another one at Polsko Kosovo further north (Попов 1930-1931, 97-102; Tončeva 1980; Stantchev 2000). However, they are quite early, from the beginning or the first half of the 7th century BC, and have no importance for the problem under consideration here.

The latter half of the century was marked by significant changes, as the next group of sites that appeared in the region is very different. These are cremation necropoleis attesting the presence of settled population. Among the early examples, those at Ravna and Dobrina are closest to Odessos, some 30-35 km to the west following the course of Provadijska River (Мирчев 1962; *idem* 1965). B. Hänsel analyzed the chronology of the two sites and dated their appearance to the late 7th century BC (Hänsel 1974). In recent studies, the beginnings of the *necropoleis* are dated in the late 7th or early 6th century BC (Vulpe 1990, 126-127; Стоянов 1992, 89-91; Archibald 1998, 58 ff.). Contemporary sites were excavated to the north of Odessos, e.g. two large necropoleis at Cherna and Kragulevo (Бобчева 1975; Василчин 1985; *idem* 1998-1999)⁴. The processes covered large areas and in result in the following

centuries a thick network of similar necropoleis took shape in the whole present-day northeastern Bulgaria (cf. Радев 1992, 122-123). Despite some regional variations, they testify to the presence of homogeneous population in the area for the period of the 6th–4th centuries BC. and to the fact that the population corresponds with the Getae from the written sources.

This demonstrates that in the first quarter of the 6th century BC, when Odessos was founded, its hinterland was already settled by native population. Therefore, it cannot be excluded that some agreement existed between the Greeks and the natives from the very beginning (Minchev 2003, 218). Ravna and Dobrina are not in closest proximity, but on the Frangensko plateau, immediately overlooking Odessos, fibulae from the 6th century BC were discovered (Георгиева 1993). It is very possible that the absence of similar necropoleis closer to Odessos is a result of insufficient investigations. Under a tumulus at Dolishte, 15 km to the northwest of Odessos, golden ornaments from late 6th or early 5th centuries BC were discovered (Tonkova 2002, 285) while Thracian urn cremations from 4th century BC are known from the surroundings of the villages Ezerovo, Banovo and Kipra, some 10 to 20 km from Odessos (Тончева 1956, 54; Марџос 1961).

The aforementioned defines the specific setting in which Odessos was founded. On the one hand, we have the specific landscape that leaves little space for the development of the polis, and on the other is the presence of a settled native population at the moment that the Greek colonists appeared. The immediate surroundings of Odessos offer some arable land (mainly suitable for vineyards and orchards), but cannot provide enough food for a large population (cf. Damyanov 2004). At present, there is no evidence of the existence of a large *chora* of Odessos in the early period, as suggested by other scholars (see Minchev 2003, 219-220). Therefore, it is hardly possible to speak of colonisation with agricultural purposes as it is presumed for Northern Dobrudzha and the Dnieper-Bug area.

There are however very few data about the circulation of Greek goods in the native hinterland. The earliest example is an archaic East Greek *oenochoe* from Dobrina, dated to the first half of the 6th century BC (Alexandrescu 1976, 118, no.12). It testifies for some contacts between the Greeks and the natives, but remains so far the only example from this period. Some of the wheel-made pottery from Ravna and Dobrina may also be attributed to work-

⁴ This process was roughly contemporary with the emergence of the related Ferigile-Barsești group near the Carpathians (second half of the 7th century BC). As A. Vulpe observes, the Thracian population tended to cluster in elevated areas away from the flatlands (Vulpe 1980; *idem* 1987). The same seems to be true for the early necropoleis in the present-day Bulgarian lands. As it is the case with Ferigile-Barsești, among the finds from Ravna and Dobrina there are items with north-pontic (Scythian) origin or influence that suggest the impulse for these movements of population to have come from the east.

shops in Odessos. Nevertheless, there are no other easily identifiable and datable imported items – amphorae, fine ware, etc. The situation did not change significantly in the 5th century BC, with the single exception of a collective find of Chian amphorae from the third quarter of the century at Dobrich (Лазаров 1973, 11-12, No. 28; *idem* 1982, 9), so new investigations and discoveries in the future may change this picture.

The first aristocratic graves with imported objects appeared later. It seems that several complexes in the Ruse region (Obretenik, Koprivets) and more to the south between Popovo and Targovishte (Svetlen and Ruets) were the earliest, all dated to the end of the 5th century BC⁵. Z. Archibald considers the sites at Ruets and Svetlen in the context of the rich necropolis at Duvanli in the Plovdiv region (Archibald 1998, 165-166). It is not clear whether the imported goods at these sites came from Odessos on the coast or from Southern Thrace through the Balkan passes.

Only during the late period of the common Getic necropoleis (4th-3rd century BC), a different picture took shape, though still relatively few imported goods do appear. This gives the impression that only from the latter half of the 4th century BC Greek imports started to penetrate in the Thracian interior on a larger scale (Божкова 1992, 112; cf. Reho 1990, 22).

The evidence, available at present, speaks of underdeveloped relations of Odessos with its hinterland during the first centuries of its existence. From things stated so far, it follows that on the one hand Odessos did not have the conditions to develop as an important agrarian polis, and on the other hand, it did not develop an active trade with the native population. In an interior which was densely inhabited (though no major centres have been identified so far), this could be a result of the specifics of the polis itself. It seems probable that Odessos remained relatively insignificant until the 4th century BC or even until the Early Hellenistic period. The late development of Dionysopolis and the other settlements in the area (Bizone, Kaliakra-Tirizis – see below) could be a testimony for the meagre activity of the Greek colonists.

This leaves us with the possibility that Odessos was created as a port of call along the West Pontic route northwards to the more significant early colonies. This also could have been the initial function of Apollonia in the south, and probably Odessos filled the gap between Apollonia and Histria. Without favourable conditions for large-scale territorial expansion and without commercial initiative Odessos could not develop as a major polis in the early period. On the other hand, its location provides a suitable harbour before a long, elevated and feebly indented stretch of the coast. The site is sheltered from the northern winds and offers a relatively pleasant climate (Isaac 1986, 254).

Unfortunately, from an archaeological point of view the early period of

⁵ See Stoyanov 2000 with map and bibliography.

Odessos remains poorly understood. Some remains of humble habitations from the Archaic period were discovered (Lazarov 1998, 91), as well as some pits with archaic materials (Тончева 1967). Judging from the two Ionic capitals discovered without context, a temple could have been built in Odessos around 480 BC (Стоянова, unpublished manuscript; Minchev 2003, 245).

Fortifications seem to have appeared only in the 4th century BC (Preshlenov 2002, 16; Minchev 2003, 240-241). This date was proposed partly on the ground of the information given by Jordanes. He tells that Gothic/Getic priests met Philip II outside the walls of Odessos (Jord., *Get.* 10.65). The earliest graves discovered so far in the necropolis date from late 5th and the first half of the 4th century BC (Тончева 1956, 52, 63; *eadem* 1964, 111-120). Of course, this is also due to the insufficient investigations and to the fact that the earliest necropolis is under the present-day city.

It seems that in the Early Hellenistic period the situation changed radically in the whole region. In Odessos it was clearly a time of upsurge. We know of the construction of at least two monumental buildings – a temple and a tholos in Doric style (Stoyanova 2003; Stoyanov/Stoyanova 1997).

There is a considerable increase in the number of graves in the necropolis, which are excavated⁶, as well in the surrounding territory, which had remained bare before that time. In the urban necropolis and beyond its limits several monumental barrel-vaulted tombs were constructed (Мирчев 1958). However, as already mentioned above, the necropolis is poorly studied and we still depend on the state of the research of today. Nonetheless, the difference with the previous period is too significant to be accidental. Only five graves from before Hellenistic times were discovered, against 32 from the late 4th and 3rd century BC (for the urban necropolis and immediate vicinity). Twenty-seven of those 32 graves could be dated from late 4th to mid-3rd century BC. The later period is also under-represented and the bulk of the evidence comes precisely from the Early Hellenistic period.

It was proposed that the appearance of rich graves far from the city attested a change in the way the territory of the polis functioned (see Damyanov 2004). In this respect, the necropolis on Cape Galata to the south of Odessos is noteworthy. Here six tumuli were excavated, dating from the very end of the 4th and the first quarter of 3rd century BC⁷. The burial rite does not demonstrate pronounced differences with the urban necropolis and it seems possible that this small necropolis was related to a rich family's estate and not to a larger settlement in the periphery of the polis – the mounds and the rich jewellery speak of the high status of the buried. Such groups of tumuli also existed in the limits of the urban necropolis (Шкорпил/Шкорпил 1909, 12-13).

⁶ Unfortunately, no summarizing publication on the necropolis of Odessos has appeared so far. For Early Hellenistic grave finds, see Шкорпил/Шкорпил 1909; Иванов 1956; Тончева 1961; *eadem* 1974; Сазова 1971; Минчев 1978.

⁷ For Galata necropolis, see Тончева 1951; Минчев 1975; Minchev 1990; Tonkova 1997; Damyanov, in print.

To the west of Odessos, a rich tumular grave from mid-3rd century BC was discovered at the village of Topolite, some 8 km from the ancient city (Тончева 1964a, 56-59). It should be noted that during the 4th century BC, there was a Thracian necropolis in that region⁸.

This westward expansion is confirmed by another Early Hellenistic site, which was excavated at Povelyanovo, some 20 km from Odessos. This settlement was situated on a terrace above Devnensko Lake. As the results of the excavations (in 1970) were not published, it is worth offering a short description (Тончева, unpublished manuscript).

Three structures date from the Hellenistic period. Best preserved was a building with three rooms in the northwestern corner of the excavated area. It was oriented north-south and the preserved dimensions were *ca.* 17 by 7 m. The base of the walls was formed of ashlars on which mudbricks were laid which were baked by the fire that destroyed the building. On the inside, the walls were plastered and painted with polychrome decoration. The roof was of tiles, both flat and covering, on a wooden construction. In the northern room, loom-weights and a row of amphorae were found. In the middle one, a terracotta figurine of Cybele was discovered. Another building was excavated immediately to the northwest of the first one. Here the finds include imported (fish-plates, black-glazed bowls, a *lekythos*, amphorae) and local ware.

Another structure was discovered some 60 m to the east. It was a square room 8,40 by 8,40 m. and an adjoining stone wall. The walls of the building were made of well-hewn stone blocks, preserved in two rows. In a later moment, the southern side of the building was dismantled and a new wall passed through it. This latter wall consisted of two faces with a filling in between them. The masonry is of poorer quality – the base is formed by large blocks, taken from the earlier building and the upper rows consist of smaller stones. The preserved length of the wall is some 28 m and it is 2 m thick. It seems that this was a fortification wall.

The only materials that were published were the Thasian amphora stamps (Lazarov 1999, 198-200). According to the chronological table of the Thasian eponyms that was proposed by Al. Avram (Avram 1996), the stamps cover a period from *ca.* 310 to *ca.* 260 BC and thus confirm the proposed date of the site. Another interesting fact is the concentration of stamps in Avram's Group XI (310-295 BC) that corresponds with the peak of the Thasian imports in Odessos while an identical decrease follows (Avram 1996b, 47). It is obvious

⁸ A Hellenistic tomb under tumulus was excavated in 2005 near the village of Banovo, some 10 km from Topolite. It contained a cremation grave with early 3rd century BC pottery. The construction is unusual and the location is to the north on the slopes of the plateau. It is perfectly possible that the remains of a noble Thracian were laid inside, but we do not know what were the relations between the local Thracian population, the Greeks and the Macedonians in that area. Information from I. Lazarenko, presented for the Annual Reports of the Archaeological Institute in Sofia, 2006.

that the settlement of Povelyanovo depended (commercially and probably politically) on Odessos.

It is precisely as obvious that the settlement was founded during Lysimachus' reign, in the time of or immediately after the war with Callatis. Diodorus tells us that Odessos also joined the coalition against Lysimachus, but later opened its gates for the Macedonian king (D.S. 19.73.3). In fact, bringing together large territories in the region under the control of Lysimachus should have changed the situation from the previous period and allowed Odessos to prosper. It could be suggested that the settlement at Povelyanovo served as a border post of its enlarged territory (Damyanov 2004), presumably in the new situation created by Lysimachus.

This is the time when Dionysopolis suddenly emerged as a polis. Here, the archaeological situation in that period remains unclear. The settlement is completely buried under later constructions and only a single Early Hellenistic tumulus from the necropolis was excavated (Damyanov 2003a).

More or less the same is true about Bizone. Remains from the Hellenistic settlement on the Chirakman plateau were identified (see Oppermann 2004, 168), and recently more excavations were conducted, but the results of these still await publication. Some 3rd century BC graves were discovered, one of them containing a (3rd)-2nd century BC sarcophagus with terracotta ornaments (Тончева/Рафаилов 1980; Салкин 1982). A Hellenistic golden hoard was discovered in the in the necropolis (Minčev 1980; Oppermann 2000, 143), which raises the question about the ethnicity of at least part of the buried, as the closest parallel seems to be the golden finds from a Thracian mound at Kralevo in the interior (Гинчев 2000, 26-35, 45-47). Another Early Hellenistic tumulus was excavated near by, which was interpreted as a grave of a noble Thracian (Theodossiev 1994). The situation is further complicated by several tombs – probably a barrel-vaulted one (Салкин 1984), which could have parallels with those around Odessos, and another one of Thracian design (Китов 1990, 118)⁹. The grave finds create the impression of mixed population that echoes Pseudo-Skymnos' uncertainty (see Damyanov 2003b).

Neither Dionysopolis, nor Bizone appear in the written sources that describe Lysimachus activity. An exception is Tirizis (Kaliakra), which – according to Strabo (7.6.1) – was used by Lysimachus as a treasury. This is the earliest written information about this place and this therefore deserves more attention.

Early materials were discovered in the sea below the cape (see Oppermann

⁹ In 2005 another tumulus was excavated near the Chirakman plateau, containing a “tomb” of roughly hewn slabs. The rite was cremation and three hand-made urns were discovered along with a lamp, two unguentaria and a pitcher. The finds could be dated in the first half of the 3rd century BC. Information from I. Lazarenko, presented for the Annual Reports of the Archaeological Institute in Sofia, 2006.

2004, 27), but at present they cannot be related to a settlement on land. Archaeological investigations have reached the lowest strata on the promontory but, unfortunately, the materials have not been presented in a detailed publication. Preliminary reports, however, offer some interesting information (Balkanska 1974; *eadem* 1980). It was a fortified settlement (with an area of 2.7 ha), the emergence of which should be dated in the Early Hellenistic times. A date in the third quarter of the 4th century BC was proposed for the construction of the earliest fortifications, but this is based only on parallels in the construction technique and on the general appearance of the structures (Джингов *et al.* 1990, 131 сл., 161-162). Keeping in mind the pottery and other finds, a date in late 4th – early 3rd century BC, which was proposed by A. Balkanska, seems more accurate. What has to be noted are the specific structures. Both the fortifications and the walls of the buildings were constructed of ashlar in two faces with filling. Inside one of the structures, traces of polychrome painting were discovered. Regarding this, the closest parallel is the settlement at Povelyanovo that was most probably a part of Odessos' *chora*. Another specific construction technique should be noted. In the case of one of the buildings, foundations of the so-called "Olbian" type were used, which consisted of alternating layers of ash and clay soil (Balkanska 1980, 36-37). Such foundations were discovered in two Greek colonies in the Northwestern Pontic area – Olbia and Histria – and definitely do not belong to the building tradition of the native Thracian population. In the pottery complex, along with the dominating Greek shapes, there are also hand-formed vessels. It is worth noting that the indigenous or the non-Greek repertoire is not homogeneous – along with the Thracian vases, there are pots that are traditionally attributed to the Scythians. In this respect the settlement on Cape Kaliakra demonstrates similarities with sites further north – e.g. Albești in the territory of Callatis, where Greek construction techniques were attested together with a mixed pottery complex that included Thracian and Scythian shapes (see Radulescu *et al.* 2000; Radulescu *et al.* 2002).

Therefore the interpretation of Tirizis as a tribal centre of the native Thracian Terisians is at least problematic¹⁰. The archaeological date of the appearance of Tirizis indicates a date during the reign of Lysimachus. Strabo's information, which categorically links the settlement with the Macedonian king, strengthens this impression. So it is possible that Tirizis was a stronghold under Lysimachus' control (see Делев 2004, 349), probably founded (or re-founded?) by him.

Almost nothing is known about the burial rites of the population. A single tumulus was excavated in immediate vicinity on the cape. It was piled in the Hellenistic period and the earliest materials are from the mid-3rd century BC or a little bit later (Бобчева 1970). There is no ground to interpret it as a non-

¹⁰ Last in Lund 1992, 28-29, and criticized by Делев 2004, 152.

Thracian grave, but it seems that it belongs to a later period (post-Lysimachus), when the political situation in the region is not clear¹¹. Two structures, interpreted as domed tombs, were later dug into the mound (Китов 1990, 116-118). Thus the situation is similar to that around Bizone, but it should be stressed that the tumulus seems to be later than the time of Lysimachus.

One more site should be mentioned here. It is another fortified centre in the interior, overlooking the river Kamchiya – the fortress (or fortresses) on Mount Arkovna, some 60 km to the southwest of Odessos¹². Hellenistic materials were discovered at two sites, Golyama Arkovna and Malka Arkovna (“Big Arkovna” and “Small Arkovna”). Among the finds there are hand-made vessels with relief bands, amphorae, black-glazed vases (including with *West Slope* decoration), and coins. The detected structures are of special interest as they have walls of well-dressed blocks arranged in two faces. The impression of a situation that differs from what is known from similar fortresses in the Thracian interior is reinforced by the large quantity of tiles. In addition, at Golyama Arkovna some fragments of painted plaster were discovered that could be dated to Hellenistic times. None of these specifics appears in other contemporary sites, such as the fortress of Shumen (Попов 2002, 149-155) or the one at Kralevo, also on the river Kamchiya (Илиев 1998). Roof tiles were discovered at the presumed Getic capital at Sboryanovo (see Stoyanov 2002; *idem* 2003), but the size of that centre and the royal necropoleis around it speak of its special status. Regarding the construction techniques, the much smaller fortress at Arkovna stands apart from other Getic sites, similar in size and location, but it resembles the settlement at Povelyanovo and Tirizis. It seems reasonable to suggest that Arkovna could be related to Lysimachus as it controls several roads, including those to the south and to the main territories of Lysimachus’ kingdom. Moreover, the proposed identification of Arkovna as the Celtic capital Tyllis (Лазаров 1996) poses too many problems.

To summarize, it seems that the Early Hellenistic period was a time of profound changes in the region under consideration here. It must be stressed again that Odessos, as well as the surrounding territories are poorly studied, so future investigations may change that impression. Nevertheless, what has to be noted is the radical change between late 4th and early 3rd century BC on the one hand, and the previous centuries on the other – especially regarding the situation in the coastal areas. For the Archaic and the Classical times we know that Odessos existed and that its hinterland was inhabited by Thracians. The latter period is the time of the presumed Odrysian domination on all the West Pontic colonies (Minchev 2003, 221), but this situation

¹¹ Another similar mound with a 3rd century BC cremation grave was excavated near the village of Balgarevo, to the west of Kaliakra (Салкин 1973).

¹² Unfortunately the results are only published in preliminary reports, see Лазаров 2002; *idem* 2003a; *idem* 2003b; *idem* 2004.

changed in Early Hellenistic times. In the previously empty (it seems) surroundings of Odessos numerous sites appeared. Dionysopolis, Bizone, and Tirizis all became visible in that period, though each one of these cases raises new problems. What happened around Odessos provides us with the clearest chronological framework of the processes which developed, and its association with the time of Lysimachus is a rather clear one. We know from the written sources that he controlled the littoral and fought to impose his rule on the *poleis* in this area. Later he tried to expand his kingdom towards the interior, where the Getae defeated him. Diodorus tells us that it was from Odessos that Pleistarchus sent troops to help Lysimachus in the battle at Ipsus (D.S. 20.12). There is no reason not to believe Strabo's information about Tirizis being Lysimachus' treasury. The appearance of "Macedonian" type of tombs around Odessos (some of them dug into the ground which is not characteristic for Thrace) also suggests strong Macedonian influence. Another West Pontic colony where such monuments appeared is Callatis, which for some time was the focus of Lysimachus' activities in this region. So it seems more appropriate to relate the tombs to the Macedonian presence, and not to native aristocrats or Scythian kings, as it is stated in the literature¹³.

Unfortunately, the case of Callatis is less clear than it could be expected. The development of the fortified settlement at Albești at some 15 km to the west of the city shows the dynamics in this important period. Lysimachus besieged Callatis for several years – from 313 to after 311 BC (Делев 2004, 146 с.л., 168; Avram 1999, 22-23). According to H. Lund, Lysimachus imposed his control on the *poleis* in this region in 315 BC (Lund 1992, 33-34). Strangely enough, neither this initial events, nor the war could be clearly identified in Albești. The appearance of the settlement is dated in the first half of the 4th century. BC (maybe closer to the middle of the century – see Buzoianu/Barbulescu 2002-2003) and there was a major reconstruction in the "second half or even the last quarter" of the century (Radulescu *et al.* 2002, 192). The authors suggest that the second phase could be related to Lysimachus. However, the publications do not mention traces of destruction and the amphora stamps speak of a heyday in the end of 4th and the first decades or the 3rd century BC.

Without written sources, it is difficult to state how the relations between Lysimachus and the *poleis* were, *i.e.* to what extent the king controlled their economies. It can be presumed that there was an influx of population in the cities (soldiers for the garrisons, but possibly others as well) – which would account for the sudden expansion of Odessos, for example. Nor do we know what happened after Lysimachus' death – it was only some decades later that we learn by the epigraphic documents of barbarian incursions that threatened

¹³ See Avram 1991, 120-121; *idem* 1999, 21; Irimia 2000-2001, 302-302; Oppermann 2004, 165.

the poleis. It seems that the prosperity continued for some time in the 3rd century BC. The specific conditions created by Lysimachus' rule could have drawn part of the native population into the economic (and political) processes in the region, thus creating an entirely new historical situation (see Damyanov 2003b). A good example is the Hellenistic pit sanctuary at Durankulak, some 15 km to the south of Callatis, where human sacrifices were discovered¹⁴. As mentioned above, some of the burials in the coastal areas (around Bizone and Tirizis, for example) seem to be Thracian in character – another sign of the complex processes that developed in the area during and after Lysimachus' reign.



Fig. 1. Western Black Sea region near Odessos

¹⁴ See Burow 1993; *idem* 1995; *idem* 1996.

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