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GREEK SETTLEMENTS IN BARBARIAN LANDS (TOWARDS THE PROBLEM OF THE ETHNIC INTERPRETATION)

Defining the ethnicity on the base of only archeological data always tends to incite problems. The aim of the present article is not to elucidate the development of the Greek settlements in the inner lands of Scythia and Thrace, neither it is to seek for a model of the emerging and setting of a similar settlement. The idea is much more to present, using several examples, the variety and ambiguity of the forms, a material culture of an ethnos could have. Even more – the ethnos is the Hellenic one, whose culture has been meticulously studied and should presumably be easy to recognize in a barbarian milieu. The settlements, forming the base and illustrative material, are different – by their character, designation, terms of emerging – but they have anyway, to a greater or a lesser extent, been assumed traces of Greek presence. Besides, some disputable sites are going to be mentioned.

From a geographical point of view, the first example is situated in inner Thrace. The story goes about a settlement near the present town of Septemvri, identified as emporion Pistiros. Despite of containing Thracian finds, it can be viewed as a Greek settlement par excellence, as it is in a sharp contrast with what is known about the Thracian milieu. The settlement is surrounded by a defensive wall, with preserved foundations of ashlar stone¹. The eastern gate, having on its sides a tower and a bastion, has been excavated². In the part excavated inside the defensive wall, the following complexes have been

revealed: a street covered with stone slabs³; building having quite imposing parameters (18.2 x 14.35), the walls of which are made of mudbrick on stone footing, covered with tegulae and with a portic of wooden pillars on stone bases⁴; covered drainage canals⁵; traces of craftsman activities – sheds with waste materials from metal-working (Домарадски М., 1995, 22). What impresses among the finds is the great quantity of amphorae, wheel-made pottery – common gray ware, imported red-figured and black-glazed⁶, and coins (minted in Greek towns and by Thracian rulers)⁷. The settlement emerges in the middle of the 5th century BC and exists throughout the 4th century BC. Even though the material culture of its inhabitants outlines its outstanding status among the Thracian milieu, the certainty of the ethnic identification is not based on it. The data about it is contained in the numerous graffiti in Greek (in a presumably illiterate milieu)⁸, and most of all in the stone stela, on which the treaty between emporitai and a native ruler – a successor of Kotys, is carved⁹. The epigraphic material explicitly supplements the archeological one. In addition to this settlement, the necropolis near the village of Akandjievo, 3 km afar, with a native type of tombs and contents, being close to the Hellenic rites¹⁰. The presence of the cumulative evidence, clarifying the settlement's nature, allows for taking it as a model.

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As we are talking about an emporion, another example from the Thracian lands is of interest – the site the «Sladkite kladentzi» locality near the city of Bourgas. The contrast with Pistiros is quite indicative, as in the present case, data about an emporion are considered to be the finds of amphorae and imported Greek ware of the 4th century BC, without them being related to buildings or whatever traces of a settlement¹¹.


A type of settlements, which have not been studied by now in South Thrace, can be discussed on the base of examples from the North-West Black Sea coast region. These are the so called agricultural settlements, situated in or on the border of the hora, i.e. the agricultural land of a colony. Several of those have been studied near Histria. It should be pointed out that in some of them, Histria-Sat for example, the house-structures correspond to the native «barbarian» types to such an extent – wattle-and-daub with a fireplace or a hearth, that only the prevalence of antique material makes evident their Greek ethnicity¹². Another settlement, near Tariverde, has the same characteristics- dug-outs and wattle-and-daub houses and a great quantity of imported Rhodian and Attic ware. J.Boardman¹³, for example, assumes that it is a «native town» with strong Greek influence and according to J.Bouzek it has mixed population of Greeks and the Getae¹⁴. C.Preda, taking as a base the lack of a pure native layer under the Archaic one considers it as a Histrian trading post, that delimits its hora¹⁵.

To the north, the settlement Nadlimanskoe III, situated on the Lower Dniester river, presents a similar picture. The settlement is not fortified. The excavated house-structures are mainly subterranean and semi-subterranean, there are few that are not, but they are also representative of the barbarian tradition¹⁶. Among the randomly placed houses there

are storage-pits. The ethnic characteristic is based on the pottery and some specific groups of finds – terracotta and graffiti. The proportion of the different types of pottery in per cents is the following: 66% amphorae, 23% wheel-made and 11% hand-made. It is normally assumed that amphorae cannot be an ethnic identifier, unlike the domestic and the table ware. The proportion here is: 49% common wheel-made, 32.5% hand-made and 18.5% black-figured and black-glazed¹⁷. It should be noted that the wheel-made ware prevails and that there is a lot of luxury ware. The terracottae¹⁸ and the considerable number of graffiti¹⁹ are also an evidence of the Greek presence. Anyway the presence of a large quantity of barbarian pottery and the comparison to the pottery complex of Nikonios (95% Greek pottery and 70% in Nadlimanskoe III) makes the author define it as an Hellenic settlement, having gradually attracted native elements, which makes it heterogeneous²⁰. In this train of thoughts it would be interesting to point out that up to the Greeks appearing in the Lower Dniester region, there is a lack of settled population²¹. The materials indicate dating 6th – c. the middle of the 5th century BC.

The settlements from the first period (6th – beginning of the 5th century BC) of populating in the Olbian hora constitute a similar picture, although a certain variety can be noticed there. We are talking again about settlements that are not fortified²² and contain subterranean and semi-subterranean house-structures with random placing. On-ground buildings with mudbrick walls on stone foundations are rarely met²³. Anyway the pottery finds are explicit. Amphorae are the basic quantity everywhere, followed by wheel-made pottery – locally-made or imported, and the hand-made pottery does not exceed 20% anywhere²⁴. The terracottae and graffiti, that in their quantity are corresponding to the





finds from Berezanj and Olbia, pre-define the ethnic interpretation²⁵.

The picture changes during the second period of populating the Olbian hora (4th century BC). There is a greater differentiation among the separate types of settlements. In the first quarter of the century, a number of urbanized settlements with stone house-construction appear. They are characterized by buildings with complex planning, situated densely in the settlement²⁶. Large closed complexes – «farms» – also tend to appear²⁷. These two types of structures represent clearly expressed Greek culture. The position of peripheral settlements of temporary nature – shepherds', fishermen's or craftsmen's – is a bit different. There is no explicit cultural layer and they are localized mainly on the base of surface materia²⁸.

In the vicinity of Olbia, a strange necropolis is excavated at Gute Maritzin. The situation is much the same as the one with the Akandjievo necropolis – native type of tombs and Greek material. There is a discussion about the ethnic interpretation, but many scholars tend to assume it as Greek or mixed one²⁹.

According to all of the adduced examples, several main characteristics, on the base of which, Greeks are recognized, can be determined: the prevalence of Greek ware in the daily use, the presence of graffiti, revealing the use of Greek language, and of terracottae, attesting cult to Greek deities. These three elements of the «ethnicity» are not necessarily manifested in a settlement, which is Greek by its appearance, but on the contrary, it's possible that it complies completely with the barbarian tradition.

Some scholars claim, Greek presence can be found in some Scythian settlements, the so called «gradishta». According to V. Lapin the large amount of antique material in the region of the middle current of

Bug and Dnieper rivers is indicative of infiltration of a body of Greek settlers. He considers a hypothetical Greek settlement existed at Nemirovskoe gradishte. The arguments are the presence of a large quantity of imported goods and a Greek graffiti on a locally-made vase (citing Grakov)³⁰.

In this context it's interesting to discuss the data about the Elisavetovskoe gradishte in the Lower Don region. The early publications consider it an emporion of Bosporian Greeks³¹. The meticulous analysis of the imported ware, made by Brashinskii, makes him accept a different interpretation. According to him, it's a barbarian settlement, playing the role of a mediator in the trade between Bosporos and the native tribes³². There have been excavated several structures – mainly subterranean, without any strict planing³³. Without questioning the validity of his conclusions, it's possible to assume some Greek presence. The first thing, we should point out, is the huge scale of commercial exchange – there have been found some 225-235 000 amphorae³⁴. It's difficult to agree that such a quantity of goods did not require a Greek interference in the place. The terracottae, unearthed on the Elisavetovskoe gradishte, also can be interpreted as traces of «an insignificant number of Greek settlers»³⁵. The last thing I would like to mention is the fact, that in the 3rd century BC, Elisavetovskoe gradishte had been replaced, as a trading center, by Tanais, a purely Greek settlement³⁶.

In conclusion I would like to adduce one of the inferences, made by Yu. Andreev in his article about the Greek-barbarian interrelations: the «Greek model» makes a synthesis with the surrounding world and the process of adaptation is attended by «lost of quality» and «genetic mutations»³⁷.



¹ *Домарадски М.* Емпорион Инстирос. Трако-гръцки търговски отношения. – Т.1 Септември 1995. – С. 46–48.

² Там само.

³ Там само. – С. 48.

⁴ Там само. – С. 21–22.

⁵ Там само. – С. 489–50.

⁶ Там само. – С. 56–60.

⁷ Там само. – С. 54–56.

⁸ Там само. – С. 52–54.

⁹ Там само. – С. 75–85.

¹⁰ *Домарадски М.* Гърците в Тракия // Сб. в чест на П. Горбанов. – С., 1999. – С. 3–4.

¹¹ *Гълбов И.* Археологически приноси за историята на гр. Бургас // Изв. на народния музей – Бургас, 1950. – Т.1; *Бакалова-Делийска М.* Керамични находки от Западното Черноморие // ИБАИ XXIII, 1960; *Bouzek J.* Studies of Greek Pottery in the Black Sea Area. – Praha, 1990; 12. – С. 29;

¹² *Никулицэ И.Т.* Северные фракийцы в VI–I в.в. до н.э. – Кишинев, 1987. – С.35.

¹³ *Boardman J.* The Greeks Overseas. – L., 1980. – P. 249.

¹⁴ *Bouzek J.* Studies of Greek Pottery in the Black Sea Area. – Praha, 1990; 12. – С. 28.

¹⁵ *Preda C.* Tariverde- site autochtone, ou bien factorerie histrienne. – Pontica V, 1972. – С. 87.

¹⁶ *Охотников С.Б.* Нижнее Поднестровье в VI–V вв. до н.э. – Киев, 1990. – С. 10–16.

¹⁷ Там само. – С. 19.

¹⁸ Там само. – С. 40–42.

¹⁹ Там само. – С. 60–61.

²⁰ Там само. – С. 60.

²¹ Там само. – С. 56.

²² *Крыжицкий С.Д., Буйских С.Б., Бураков А.В., Отрешко В.М.* Сельская округа Ольвии. – Киев, 1989. – С. 22.

²³ Там само. – С. 45–52.

²⁴ Там само. – С. 57–58.

²⁵ Там само. – С. 86–88.

²⁶ Там само. – С. 99–102.

²⁷ Там само. – С.121–122.

²⁸ Там само. – С. 101.

²⁹ *Лалин В.В.* Греческая колонизация Северного Причерноморья. – Киев, 1966. – С. 169–174; *Boardman J.* The Greeks Overseas. – L., 1980. – P. 263–264.

³⁰ *Лалин В.В.* Указ. раб. – С. 73–74.

³¹ *Книпович Т.Н.* Танаис. – М.;Л., 1949. – С. 9; *Зеест И.Б.* Керамическая тара Елисаветовского городища и его курганного некрополя // МИА. – 1951. – № 19. – С. 119.

³² *Брашинский И.Б., Марченко К.К.* Елизаветовское городище на Дону – поселение городского типа // СА. – 1980. – С. 49–51.

³³ Указ раб.; *Брашинский И.Б.* Греческий керамический импорт на Нижнем Дону в V–III вв. до н.э. – Л., 1980. – С. 92.

³⁴ Там само. – С. 92.

³⁵ Там само. – С. 77–79.

³⁶ Там само. – С. 9.

³⁷ *Андреев Ю.В.* Греки и варвары в Северном Причерноморье. – ВДИ, 1996.

