

The Main Development of the Western Temenos of Olbia in the Pontos

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In the latter half of the 20th century, two large ritual precincts were discovered in Olbia – the Eastern and the Western.¹ In the former, sanctuaries of Apollon Delphinios, Zeus and a common Sanctuary of Zeus and Athena were excavated. Unearthed in the second *temenos* were sanctuaries of Apollon Ietros and Apollon Boreas (possibly worshipped simultaneously with Apollon Ietros), the Mother of the Gods, the Dioskouroi, Hermes, Aphrodite, Athena, and other deities not mentioned in the inscriptions.

The total area of the excavated part of these sacred precincts now exceeded 6500 m². Taking into account that these two zones were separated from each other by a very broad street (10-11 m wide), probably constructed between the two *temenoi* as early as the second half of the 6th century BC to accommodate religious festivals and processions, the total space used for various ritual activities must have been even greater.² That such a large area was allotted in the central part of the Upper Town for worshipping a number of different deities, distinguishes Olbia from other ancient cities situated around the Black Sea, in that the construction of sacred precincts of this character with such a large number of sanctuaries was uncommon.

The economic and cultural prospering of Olbia, the periodic crises, invasions by barbarians – in particular of that of the Getae under the leadership of Burebista – and other calamities, were reflected *inter alia* in various materials recovered from the city's sanctuaries – both in the urban ones and in the extra-urban ones, including those on the border. These all functioned contemporaneously with the *polis* itself and were closely related to the life of the city's community. But the most significant place in the ideology of the Olbiopolitans was occupied by the worship of the main deities – the original patrons and protectors of their state for almost 10 centuries.³

The various epigraphical and archaeological evidence from the Western Temenos studied by the author enables us to consider its development throughout the four major periods of the history of the ancient world in general, and of the Olbian *polis* in particular: (1) the Archaic period (the second quarter of the 6th – first decade of the 5th century BC), (2) the Classical period (the second decade of the 5th – second third of the 4th century BC), (3) the Hellenistic period (the last third of the 4th – the middle of the 1st centu-

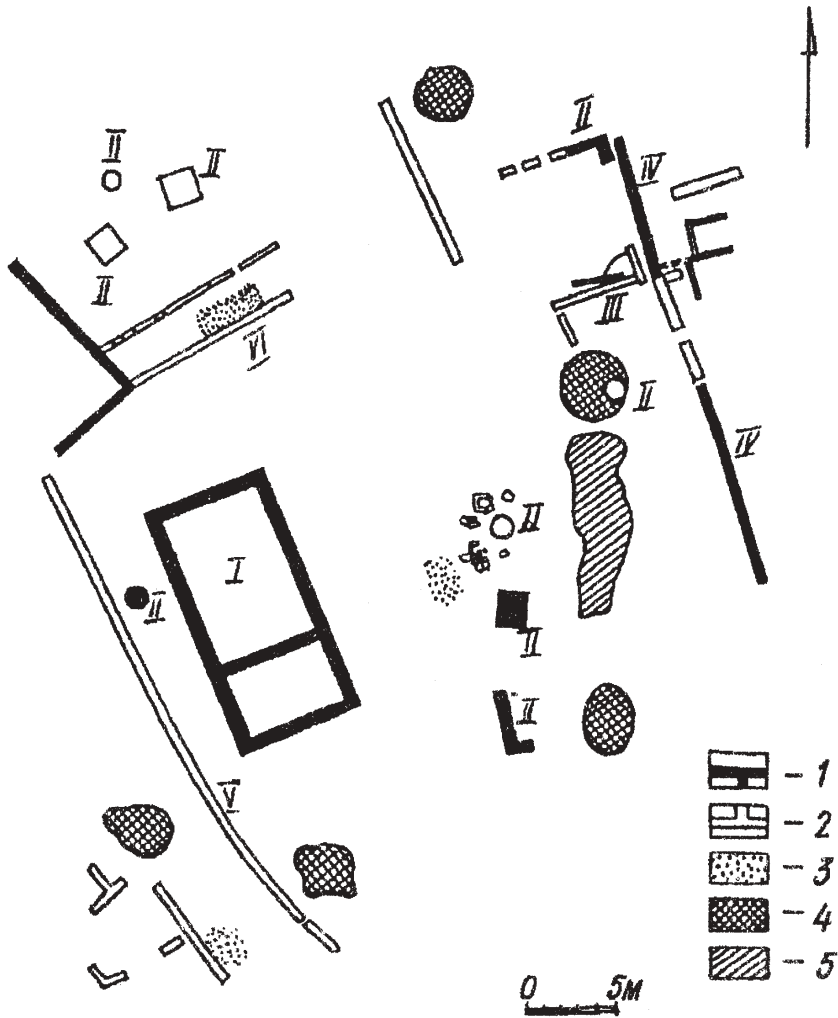


Fig. 1. Central part of the Western Temenos (after Kryžickij 1993 with corrections of A.S. Rusjaeva). 1) Stone masonry of the late Archaic period; 2) stone masonry of the Classical and Hellenistic periods; 3) pavements; 4) bothroi of the 6th-5th century BC.

ry BC), and (4) the Early Graeco-Roman period (the second half of the 1st century BC – 1st century AD). In each of these periods, certain local features and peculiarities are characteristic both in the building activities and in administrative and ritual activities, as well as in the diversity of the archaeological material, which is our main source for a comprehensive study of the development of the *temenos* in general and each particular sanctuary within its boundaries.

The Archaic period

For the beginning of the first stage (the late Archaic period), relatively few ritual activities have been recorded. They took the form of separate bonfires or single wooden altars for burning sacrificial offerings, and also included a very small number of votive gifts.⁴ For these, in the 6th century some wooden tables and partitions were erected, as well as some primitive structures on posts on which traditionally were set *xoana*, statues and figurines of the worshipped deities. That such structures did indeed exist, is suggested by pits of various size found at the spots where the ancient surface is preserved intact.

No division between the separate sanctuaries of the early period has been discerned. Evidently, the first settlers, like all the Pontic Greeks of the Archaic period in general, still had no definite ideas about the necessity to demarcate the boundaries of individual sanctuaries. To all appearances, the sacred complexes were generally arranged arbitrarily, as was the case with many other early Greek sanctuaries. The possibility should not, however, be excluded that some structures and fences being made of wood have not, therefore, been preserved, and that trees, bushes and flowers may have been planted constituting additional features of the site.

Considering the excavated building remains and the fragments of pottery found (mostly East Greek of the second quarter of the 6th century BC), one should bear in mind that these were discovered within the oldest archaeological horizons with Greek material, which were later repeatedly subjected to modification and destruction during the building of later ritual structures of various types and periods, including numerous *bothroi*. Beneath many of the late structural remains still preserved *in situ*, the Archaic layers have never been excavated. As a result, we are entitled to presume that the first settlers organised their religious festivals and the related rituals observing the traditions brought from the *metropolis*.

At present, numerous early ceramic materials (mostly of the second quarter of the 6th century BC), similar to those found in the *temenos*, have already been recovered from excavations in Olbia itself, particularly in its south-eastern part.⁵ Such materials from both sites confirm that the first religious rituals in honour of the main patron deities took place at the *temenos* at the time of the foundation of Olbia itself.⁶ If this is so, then it was probably here that the Olbiopolitans kept the small bronze statue of the first patron Apollon Ietros in wearing a *kalathos* and holding a bow. Notwithstanding the periodic shifts in their political and religious ideas, sudden changes in the fate of their state, and various crises and disastrous barbarian incursions, they were able to preserve this, their most ancient idol for at least eight centuries, as is suggested by its representations on coins from the second half of the 2nd century AD.⁷

There can hardly be any doubt that as early as the 580s-550s BC, separate sanctuaries of Apollon Ietros – the chief god of the Milesian founders of

many *poleis* in the Pontic region – were functioning within the Upper Town, as well as sanctuaries of the Mother of the Gods, also popular with all the Ionians, and Athena, whose cult was popular in Miletos and its territory during the period of colonisation. It is to precisely these deities that the oldest East Greek and Attic black-figured vessels with dedicatory graffiti in the Western Temenos were offered.⁸ Although no dedications to Aphrodite Urania or the Dioskouroi have been found in the *temenos* from this period, it is probable that they were also worshipped here from the time of Olbia's foundation. The discovery of a Sanctuary of Aphrodite Urania dating to the 7th-5th century BC in Miletos,⁹ and some very early evidence for her cult in Istria,¹⁰ Borysthenes¹¹ and Olbia,¹² undoubtedly indicate that this goddess, along with other female deities, appeared as patroness of the Milesian-Pontic colonisation and of the family as the basic unit of the rising *poleis*. In the Western Temenos, there was a small sanctuary of this goddess. This was of the closed type with an altar and a stone fence and, judging by two graffiti found in it, it was called "ἄβρατα Ἀφροδίτης – the *sancta sanctorum* of Aphrodite".¹³

The number of offerings that had previously been rising gradually, increased significantly in the third quarter of the 6th century – i.e. in the period when a new group of colonists had already come to the lower Bug region as a consequence of the Persian conquest of Ionia, which abruptly changed the entire situation in that region.¹⁴ The social and political disturbances, very characteristic of many *poleis* during the period of colonisation, were probably the main reason why the Olbian *epoikoi* consulted the Didymean oracle. As a result, the *polis* not only received its name, but also, instead of the cult of Apollon Ietros, the cult of a new protector of the city – Apollon Delphinios (the aboriginal patron of Miletos) – was instituted.¹⁵

Contemporary with the introduction of this cult was a new type of currency – bronze coins in the shape of a dolphin, which for many years became one of the main symbols of the Olbian *polis*.¹⁶ Having rejected Apollon Ietros as the supreme god and his symbol, the arrowhead-coin,¹⁷ Olbia thus to a certain extent segregated itself in its religious aspect from the other Milesian *apoikai*, in particular the western Pontic ones, which continued to consider Ietros their main protector. However, it is unlikely that the Olbiopolitans, especially the descendants of the aristocratic families of the first settlers, would have finally relinquished their participation in the sacral amphictyony, created by their ancestors under the aegis of this god.¹⁸

Thus the oldest evidence of the rites at the Western Temenos leads to three important conclusions:

(1) that the *apoikia* which later received the name of Olbia, or more exactly Ὀλβίη πόλις, probably arose in the second quarter of the 6th century BC;

(2) that Apollon Ietros, whose cult in particular was established in the early Milesian-Pontic *poleis*, was originally considered the city's main divine protector; and,



Fig. 2. Trenches remaining after the removal of stones from the foundation of the temple of Apollon Ietros. On the preserved parts of the adobe platforms are the structural remains of stone altars from the second half of the 1st century BC to 1st century AD (view from SW).

(3) that from the very beginning of the colonisation, an important role was also played by the cult of the Mother of the Gods.

Possibly, already in the earliest period of Olbia's history, a common temple was erected to these two deities. During the entire existence of this sacred precinct, they were worshipped (to a greater or lesser extent) at the same site, apparently as the original protectors of the first colonists. For the sacral protection in the new localities, in particular of those Greeks who penetrated the northern lands of the *oikoumene*, the cult of Apollon Boreas, only recorded in Olbia, was introduced. In the course of the excavations in the Western Temenos, three inscriptions dedicated to this god have been found: one on the neck of an amphora from Klazomenai dated to the middle or the third quarter of the 6th century BC, and two others on the fragments of Attic black-figured vessels of the last quarter of the same century.¹⁹ In the first of these inscriptions, an offering of honey to Apollon Boreas, the dedicant, in the interpretation of Ju.G. Vinogradov, was a certain Anaperres, son of Anacharsis, probably to be identified with the well-known Graeco-Scythian sage Anacharsis.²⁰ It is quite likely that there was in Olbia a religious association of the elite propagating the significance of Apollon as the almighty



Fig. 3. General view of the Sanctuary of Apollon Ietros (left) and the Mother of the Gods (right). In the background, the sanctuary of an anonymous deity with a stepped altar and eschara (view from S).

god, as is suggested by the presence of the cult of Apollon Boreas – not to mention that of Apollon Ietros.²¹

The introduction of the cult of Apollon Delphinios and the foundation of his separate *temenos* on a new plot of land, though in the immediate vicinity of the old one discussed above, marked the beginning of a phase of intensive construction of cult buildings in all of the sanctuaries in the second half of the 6th century BC. In the north-western part of the *temenos*, in the third quarter of the 6th century, a small temple, the first in Olbia, was built of mud-bricks and wood with a small altar in front of its facade.²²

The possibility cannot be ruled out that at the same time, in the course of the remodelling of the earlier sacred precinct, the latter or perhaps just one of the chief sanctuaries there were enclosed by a low wooden fence, the dedication of which is mentioned in a fragmentary graffito of this period.²³ It is common knowledge that a sacred fence, especially in the absence of any natural boundary, was traditionally an indispensable part of any Greek *temenos*.²⁴

At the end of the 6th century BC, possibly even immediately after the destruction of the first temple, a new temple of Apollon Ietros was erected to the south of it on a well-levelled surface of soil for which many architectural decorations were produced in Miletos (Fig. 2).²⁵ According to the available evidence, this temple remained for 80 years a dominating feature not

only of the sacred precinct but the entire city. It had been built much earlier than the mud-brick-and-wood temple of Apollon Delphinios in the Eastern Temenos, which did not possess such rich architectural décor.²⁶

This difference in the two main cults of Apollon, one with the *epiklesis* of Ietros, and the other of Delphinios, may be explained by the prolonged social and ideological opposition between *apoikoi* and *epoikoi*. Judging by the evidence from the Olbian Archaic necropolis and the Western Temenos, in the second half of the 6th century BC many of the first settlers and their descendants were the richest persons in the *polis*. They possessed the best land in the area, and must have regarded themselves as the traditional patrimonial aristocracy.

It was undoubtedly at their expense that different temples, altars and some less important ritual buildings were erected in the Western Temenos; that various architectural decorations and sculptures (including some tomb monuments) were imported from the *metropolis* and other cities; that some general municipal improvements were carried out, and that the festivals and rituals common to the entire *polis* were organised. It was from their ranks that the priests and other religious officials must have been elected. In contrast, the *epoikoi* (who had escaped from Ionia after the Persian invasion and belonged to a lower social stratum) were probably not able to immediately build a temple to their original god Apollon Delphinios.

It was only after the lapse of some time and the corresponding change of generations, when the cult of Apollon Ietros in the *hypostasis* of the *archegetes* had begun to lose its former significance even among its traditional worshippers, that a temple was erected to Apollon Delphinios at the expense of the entire Olbian community, the citizens of which were no longer so highly differentiated in wealth – as may be judged by the mass burials of this period.²⁷ A fairly important role in the popularising of this cult and its increasing influence in public life was played by the union of the Molpoi in the name of which most of the dedications of this period were set up in the sanctuary of this god.²⁸

In the second half of the 6th and beginning of the 5th century BC, throughout the entire area of the Western Temenos, the sanctuaries of many deities underwent various improvements.²⁹ The epigraphic evidence suggests that there was a certain chronological difference regarding the appearance of the first signed dedicatory offerings: those to Apollon Ietros are dated to the second quarter of the 6th century, those to the Mother of the Gods and Athena to the 560-550s, those to Apollon Boreas to the middle and the third quarter of the 6th century, those to the common Sanctuary of Aphrodite and Dionysos to the third quarter of the 6th century, and those to the Dioskouroi and Hermes to the last quarter of the same century.³⁰

It is worth noting that the fragments bearing dedications (though rather rare), found in different *bothroi* on top of the ancient surface or trampled into



Fig. 4. Votive reliefs of the Mother of the Gods from the late Archaic period in the course of the excavation.

the soil, indicate that among the first settlers there were some well-educated citizens. An indication of a definite familiarity with the various myths is a dedication to Athena (the earliest in the northern Black Sea region) on a black-figured bowl of the second quarter of the 6th century with a representation of a seated Zeus and two standing Eileithyias with fillets in their hands, awaiting the birth of Athena from the god's head. The graffito is drawn over the heads of these figures, the initial letters of the name of Athena being arranged over the head of Zeus thus disclosing the meaning of the entire scene.³¹ Dedications this early are fairly scarce even in different sanctuaries of the major centres of Greece to say nothing of the North Pontic ones. It was of no small importance that the leading families of the colonists were descendants of aristocratic and well-educated families originally from Miletos, where, as is well known, Greek philosophy had its cradle and the religious culture was highly developed as early as the first half of the 6th century.

The semi-dug-outs of the late Archaic period unearthed in the eastern part of the *temenos* and formerly regarded as the earliest dwellings of the colonists,³² now seem rather to have been in some way related to this sacred area, although similar structures found in other areas of the city may, of course, have functioned as dwellings. Possibly, the builders of the first tem-



Fig. 5. Structural remains of the stone fences, altars, and a portico in the sanctuaries of Hermes and Aphrodite (view from N).

ple resided temporarily in some of the earliest semi-dug-outs within the *temenos*, while in others valuable offerings or building materials may have been stored. Corresponding to the period of the erection of the second temple are a number of semi-dug-outs ranged along the main longitudinal street. In some of these structures, various fragments of architectural elements of stone and terracotta, votives with different dedications, and numerous fragments of pottery from various manufacturing centres – Ionic bowls of different types in particular – were found.³³ Here, it seems, such pits served for burying the items of ritual furnishings and apparatus no longer in use.

Thus, in the course of the first stage, during the late Archaic period, the entire territory of the Western Temenos was divided into separate sanctuaries, the largest areas among them being occupied by the Sanctuary of Apollon Ietros and that of the Mother of the Gods located in close mutual proximity (Fig. 3). In the second half of the 6th century, when various temples and altars had already been built, the number of votives dedicated to different deities increased considerably, and various rituals with libations and animal sacrifices, including offerings not only of small livestock (mostly sheep and goats) but also of bulls, became much more frequent.³⁴



Fig. 6. The remains of semi-dugout houses, bothroi and stone one- and two-roomed buildings (view from SW).

Of note among the votive gifts are the fragments of a variety of East Greek pottery, black-figured and red-figured vessels, including those produced by first-rate Athenian vase-painters, and apparently very expensive items of armour. A fragment of a bronze plate with a relief representation of two male figures, which was part of the decoration of an Argive shield, must be considered a unique find.³⁵ Especially amazing is the rich collection of Archaic architectural polychrome terracottas, which is so far unequalled both as regards sheer quantity and diversity in any other of the Pontic cities.³⁶ In the second half of the 6th century, two small votive steles for the Sanctuary of the Mother of the Gods were carved from local limestone but based on a Milesian model (Fig. 4).³⁷

The Classical period

In its second phase, the Western Temenos gradually acquired its new appearance. The sanctuaries on its territory(?) were improved; in each of them stone altars were erected and some sanctuaries were encircled by low stone fences with entrances.³⁸ On all sides, the *temenos* was probably bordered by streets. The broad and well-made main street, situated between the two *temenoi*, served as a sacred road during various festivals and ritual processions. Different sport *agons* and ritual processions with torches took place



Fig. 7. Dedication of Andokides to Apollon on the bottom of an Attic black-glazed skyphos.

here, since it is unlikely that there was room for such activities in the densely built-up city itself. Access to the small sanctuaries proper was possibly forbidden except to the priests and other officials of the cults, and also the builders of the sacred edifices. Indirectly, this is suggested by the stone enclosures for offerings, partially preserved near the fences of the sanctuary.

Throughout almost the entire 5th century, the Temple of Apollon Ietros, the decorations of which had already been produced in the late Archaic period dominated in the *temenos*. In the other sanctuaries, only stone altars, mostly rectangular in form, were set up (Fig. 5).³⁹ After the temple had been constructed, the semi-dugouts described above ceased to exist, and over their fills various small one-roomed and two-roomed buildings were constructed of stone and mud-brick. These structures undoubtedly belonged to the *temenos* and served as small storehouses for amphorae containing wine, oil and honey intended for libations and other ritual activities, and also for the storage of diverse cult equipment and votive gifts. They may also have been *thesauroi* or shops for selling votives. These were located mostly in the north-eastern part of the sacral area (Fig. 6).

Most of the votives found throughout the entire *temenos* belong to the period when the first Temple of Apollon Ietros was in use. It is to the period from the end of the 6th to the last quarter of the 5th century that the majority of the fragments of amphorae, mainly imported from Chios and Thasos, are dated. Hence it is clear that the best Greek wines were purchased for the rituals. Many of the black-glazed *kylikes* and *skyphoi* bear different graffiti indicating that they belonged to the sanctuaries either of the Mother of the Gods or of the Dioskouroi.⁴⁰ It seems that these sanctuaries were thus sepa-



Fig. 8. The stock of a stone anchor and a stone block from an altar in the process of excavation (view from NE).

rated from those of the other deities, especially those located nearby, in particular the sanctuaries of Apollon Ietros, Aphrodite and Hermes, which were also very important in the 5th century BC.

Rituals involving libations and the sacrifice of animals including both smaller livestock and bulls and horses, and to a lesser extent wild animals, became much more frequent.⁴¹ The majority of the *bothroi*, into which bones and disused ritual equipment of the 6th-5th were thrown, dated to the 5th century. It is worth noting in this context that predominant among all the categories of imported pottery of Classical period was the Attic ware of various types.

It should be mentioned that votives such as sculptures and terracotta figurines are extremely uncommon here. Only one stone inscription with a dedication to Apollon Ietros, the Lord of Istria, made by the Olbiopolitan Xanthos, has been found; this was engraved on the base, possibly that of a tripod or a small bronze statue.⁴² The possibility cannot be excluded however that a *proxenos* from Keos also erected a statue of Apollon Ietros, of which part of the base with a dedicatory inscription dated to the second quarter of the 5th century is preserved.⁴³ Of special interest is a unique dedication from Andokides to Apollon, incised on the base of a black-glazed *skyphos* of the same period: in this dedication the four *epiklese*s of that god (Delphinios,



Fig. 9. The western fence of the Sanctuary of Apollon Ietros. In the foreground, bothroi and fragments of stone and adobe altars (view from SW).

Ietros, Targelios and Lykeios) are mentioned together with the enumeration of all the months of the Olbian calendar, which correspond completely to the Milesian one (Fig. 7).⁴⁴ Also unique is a dedication to Aiginean Apollon on a black-glazed bowl of the first half of the 4th century, offered probably either by an inhabitant of the island of Aigina or by an Olbiopolitan, who had travelled there and had successfully returned under the aegis of the god.⁴⁵

Thus during the 5th century many of the elements characteristic of the previous phase persisted. These included not only the functioning of the temple and altars with the architectural décor produced in the second half of the 6th century, but also the Archaic sculptures of the Mother of the Gods and the ritual application of various ceremonial black-figured vessels, the work of prominent Athenian vase painters, e.g. a *krater* of Lydos, and other extremely valuable vases with representations of different mythological characters; this pottery was undoubtedly handled very carefully by the temple servants and it was often repaired by means of lead clamps.

At the same time, certain completely new types of votive gifts were now offered, namely the stocks of imported stone anchors of the 5th century and rather carelessly manufactured local limestone anchors dedicated in the Sanctuary of the Dioskouroi (Fig. 8);⁴⁶ numerous votives in the form of spe-



Fig. 10. Structural remains of a stone temple without architectural order of the Classical period with layered substructure of the Hellenistic period inside (view from N).

cially dressed *ostraca* of various shapes and sizes, made from different parts of vessels and animal bones, and some primitive small altars set up as though each was some kind of enclosure. Only in this *temenos* were there found numerous unique votives made from Corinthian *kalypteroi* sawed into small pieces, some with graphic representations of a temple and an altar, and bearing characters indicating their dedicatory purpose.⁴⁷

Of special note is the fact that in the sanctuaries of any gods, and particularly in the *bothroi*, a great number of dolphin-shaped coins of various types have been found, while the round coins were much more uncommon there. As mentioned above, the dolphin-shaped coins served as a particular symbol and votive in the cult of Apollon Delphinios. However, on the basis of the finds from the Western Temenos it is also clear that such coins were used as votives in the cults of other deities too. In the sanctuary of an anonymous deity, four cast coins of the third quarter of the 6th century with a representation of the head of Gorgone Medusa were put under a small limestone altar as a kind of votive.

During the late Classical period, all of the sanctuaries continued to exist, but the remains of the new structures built within them are more uncommon, suggesting that in the majority of cases this was restricted to the erection of a number of altars. The number of offerings also slightly decreased.



Fig. 11. Fragmentary marble statue of Apollon of the second half of the 4th century BC at the moment it was unearthed.

Predominant among the tableware was the Attic black-glazed pottery and, to a lesser extent, red-figured pottery of the corresponding vessel types; these rarely bore graffiti. Apparently the practise of “inventorying” the pottery belonging to different sanctuaries was abandoned.

The decrease in the ritual activities in the Western Temenos was probably related to the considerable changes in the public life of Olbia – the establishing of the democratic constitution and the spread of the worship of Apollon Delphinios and Zeus in the hypostases of Soter and Eleutherios. In general, both the town-planning and the burial rites, the material culture and the onomastic evidence, as well as different finds from excavations in the rural territory of Olbia, suggest that the main mass of the urban and rural population of the Olbian *polis* was fairly homogeneous in terms of its social composition.⁴⁸

Beginning with the end of the 5th and, especially in the 4th century BC, the practise of issuing various laws and decrees in the name of the *demos* was intensified.⁴⁹ This was probably the period when the Olbiopolitans enjoyed more or less equal rights. The aristocratic stratum, the representatives of which had earlier made up various *thiasoi* (the Molpoi, Noumeniastai, and Backchistai), seems to have been dissolved. At least are none of these religious guilds ever mentioned in the inscriptions from Olbia thereafter.⁵⁰ Instead there arose a new religious union of the clan of the Euresibiadai.⁵¹

The Hellenistic period

The Hellenistic period in Olbia is characterised by two major processes: (1) the economic and cultural zenith in the last third of the 4th and first third of the 3rd century BC, and (2) a lingering crisis caused by repeatedly bad harvests and wars, relative subjugation by the kingdom of Skilouros, then joining for a brief period the Pontic Kingdom of Mithridates VI Eupator; finally there was the devastating invasion of the Getae under the leadership of Burebista about the middle of the 1st century BC.⁵²

After Zopyrion's siege, when many rich foreigners had entered the civic community of Olbia, large-scale rebuilding was undertaken and the private house-building expanded, in some cases with the use of architectural orders, mosaic floors and wall-paintings.⁵³ The cultural appearance of the city was changed significantly due to the construction of new temples in the Eastern Temenos, *stoai*, a theatre, a *gymnasion*, a *dikasterion*, and other public buildings, as well as the construction of terraces and defensive walls with towers. The considerable renovation of the city was quite probably promoted by the resuscitation of the *isopolitia* with Miletos, owing to which the Milesians enjoyed full civic rights in Olbia, and the Olbiopolitans the same in Miletos.⁵⁴

In contrast to all the aforementioned renovations in the city,⁵⁵ the changes recorded in the Western Temenos are not of such a spectacular character. On the site of the late Archaic temple of Apollon Ietros and the supposed Sanctuary of Aphrodite, relatively large clay platforms appeared. The old stone altars continued to function here, but new ones were also set up, including a fairly well preserved stepped altar and a low *eschara* made nearby, as well as a ritual complex with a monolithic cylindrical altar and numerous small, primitive, but peculiar altars in the form of enclosures.⁵⁶ The Sanctuary of Apollon was walled in from the west by a sacred fence, of which the outside was of adequate workmanship (Fig. 9). Directly to the south-west of this feature, inside a small temple to an anonymous deity, a thick platform was constructed of alternating layers of clay and ash, presumably to support a large stepped altar (Fig. 10).

In the eastern part of the *temenos* there were two deep cisterns for water. In order to drain the rain-water, a stone well and a drain was constructed near the main street, possibly joining the drainage system of the Eastern Temenos. The Western Temenos was flanked by two large stone structures at two of its corners (the north-eastern and south-eastern) – presumably the buildings of the Collegium of the Seven and of the Law-Court respectively, due to the construction of which the total area of the earlier sacred plot was reduced. Flanking the main street were a number of one-roomed and two-roomed stone buildings.

Among the offerings, tableware of Olbian manufacture and pottery imported from Athens predominated. However, compared to the finds of pottery dated to the Classical period the amount decreased. In contrast to the



Fig. 12. Remains of a sacred fence of the 2nd to the first half of the 1st century BC (view from N).

previous period, the number of terracotta figurines of the Mother of the Gods increased significantly; also, various small marble statues appeared: Apollon, Hermes, Hermaphroditos, Aphrodite, and other deities unidentified because of their poor state of preservation (Fig. 11).⁵⁷ It is probable that in the last third of the 4th century, a bronze statue of Apollon Ietros created by the Athenian sculptor Stratonides and commissioned by a certain rich Olbiopolitan, Leokrates of the clan of the Eurisibiadai, was installed in the Western Temenos.⁵⁸ A peculiar result of the religious and philosophical development of the cult of Apollon in Olbia is represented by an apophthegm of the members of the aforementioned *thiasos* of the Boreikoi, according to which this god appears already devoid of any *epikleseis* – in the *hypostasis* of an universal deity personifying the Sun, Earthly Welfare, Light and Life.⁵⁹

Dedicatory inscriptions on vessels are extremely uncommon, and therefore it has remained unclear to what deities the altars of this period were dedicated, whether during various periods of rebuilding those places sacred to the worship of Apollon, the Mother of the Gods, the Dioskouroi, and Hermes were either displaced, or whether in their place altars to new deities (not worshipped earlier or poorly known) appeared. The cults of these new

deities became popular during the Hellenistic period due to the expansion of economic and political contacts, the integration of foreigners into the civic community, new cultural and political links to various cities in Asia Minor, the territorial expansion of the Olbian *polis* and the increasingly intensive cultivation of grain.

Concerning the last factor, it is worthy of note that although no sanctuary of Demeter or Kore has been unearthed within the area under consideration, nevertheless the fragments of some terracottas of Olbian manufacture representing these goddesses and coins with the figure of Demeter have been found in different spots in the *temenos*, among them the large cistern. The latter, after its destruction, was used as a *bothros*, into which were thrown various ritual gifts and votives from the sanctuaries of the Mother of the Gods, of Hermes and of Aphrodite. Far more numerous fragments of terracotta representations of the same type have been found in the Eastern Temenos – in the fill of an enormous cistern, also transformed into a *bothros* in the second half of the 2nd century BC.⁶⁰ Various gifts with representations of Demeter in terracottas and on coins, which were offered in the sanctuaries of other deities were fairly widespread due to the fact that it was precisely in the 4th and first half of the 3rd century that this goddess was the most popular in the Olbian *polis* after the expansion of the city's *chora*.⁶¹

A.N. Ščeglov's investigations showed that during this period "in all Greek centres in the northern Black Sea region, an intensive development of their own agricultural base, the economic exploitation of their territories and the rapid increase of the rural population" all occurred, creating the opportunity to maintain a regular grain trade.⁶² In respect to Olbia, his supposition is confirmed *inter alia* by the evidence on the cult of Demeter, in particular the numerous peculiar representations of this goddess wreathed in corn or with a separate ear of grain on coins of different issues.⁶³

In the Late Hellenistic period, when a lingering economical crisis began to afflict Olbia and the city fell into a certain dependence first on the Scythian king Skilouros, and then on the Pontic Kingdom of Mithridates VI Eupator, the worship of different deities in the *temenos* continued, though it was not as clearly expressed as before. Apparently, some of the altars previously erected were still in their original settings, especially in the low area of the *temenos* adjoining the main longitudinal street, as well as on special elevations in its western part. However, in the late 2nd century BC or slightly later, no more refuse from cult practice was buried in the water cisterns, which, by this time were already half destroyed.

On the stepped altar, libations and certain rituals were performed involving the use of mouldmade pottery of the 2nd century BC (mostly produced in Asia Minor). Relatively numerous fragments of various bowls were found in the ash-deposit located directly to the west of this altar. During the period under consideration, the thickness of the cultural layer increased

throughout the entire expanse of the *temenos*, evidently because the tidying up and burial of refuse in the pits became less frequent. In the 3rd century BC, in the peripheral areas of the *temenos*, one-roomed and two-roomed buildings with basements or semi-basements were constructed, and to the west and north of it, large dwelling houses were built on the layers, which partially occupied the area covered by the earlier *temenos*. In the early Hellenistic period, the area of the Eastern Temenos was also reduced due to the enlargement of the *agora* and construction of the *stoa*.⁶⁴

Only in the south-eastern part of the Western Temenos have fragments survived of the structural remains of three late sacred fences, which once enclosed some new sanctuaries on the site of the earlier Sanctuary of the Dioskouroi (Fig. 12). These fences were carefully built from small pieces of rubble and fragments of tiles and amphorae held together with a clay-and-earth mortar, thus symbolising in their way the extremely poor conditions of the Olbiopolitans not long before the invasion of the Getae. It is not clear what the other cult structures inside the fences and near them would have looked like, since only single pieces of rubble, which probably once composed the inner fill of some rectangular altars, remained of these. The ritual equipment is represented by a small quantity of assorted local tableware, single examples of painted beakers from Asia Minor, and amphorae from Sinope, Kos, Knidos, Rhodos, Kolchis and other centres, as well as single examples of almost flat plates of brown clay decorated with polished stripes.

The early Roman period

During the last phase (the second half of the 1st century BC – the first half of the 1st century AD), the Olbiopolitans erected two small altars in the Western Temenos directly over the place, where the oldest Sanctuary of Apollon Ietros (Fig. 1) had previously been situated, and a rather small ritual complex of several primitive altars was built in the western part on the pavement of the Northern Street. It was during the first centuries of the new era that most of the surface structures, which had to varying degrees survived the incursions of the Getae, were dismantled and removed.

In the *temenos*, as well as throughout the entire area surrounding it, a number of human burials (mostly devoid of grave goods) appeared. In the cultural layer, numerous isolated human bones were found. These are probably the remains of the graves of those Olbiopolitans killed in the invasion, their resting places disturbed in the search for stone slabs or damaged by grave robbers, as is suggested by separate fragments of amphorae and red-glazed beakers from the first centuries AD found at a relatively considerable depth or in the areas of disturbed masonry.

Nevertheless, no traces of any building or economic activities during the period of the second flourishing of Olbia in the 2nd century BC have been recorded here. Although the Olbiopolitans had taken away from here almost

all the stone slabs suitable for new buildings, they probably still remembered that this place had, for a long period been consecrated to the deities worshipped by their ancestors.

On the basis of what has been said above, it may be concluded that notwithstanding the yet unfinished excavation in the Western Temenos and the extremely poor state of preservation of its cultural layers caused by the numerous replannings and alterations during various phases of its existence and because of the dismantling of its structures during the first centuries of this era, the search for building materials in the recent periods, and archaeological explorations and excavations of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, rich archaeological and epigraphical evidence has survived, enabling us to supplement considerably our knowledge about the religion, history, culture, architecture and trade of Olbia.

Notes

1. Karasev 1964, 27-130; Levi 1964, 131-174; Levi 1985, 65-88; Rusjaeva 1991, 123-138; Rusjaeva 1994, 80-102.
2. Karasev 1964, 27, 129; Levi 1985, 73; Rusjaeva 1999a, 75-76.
3. Rusjaeva 1992, 29-83.
4. Rusjaeva 1991, 124.
5. Cf. Rusjaeva 1986, fig. 3; Rusjaeva 1999a, fig. 1; Krapivina & Bujskich 2001, figs. 1-2.
6. Rusjaeva 1998, 164-165.
7. Cf. Pick 1898, 172-173; Zograf 1951, 143; Karyškovskij 1986, 31, fig. 2.5; Anochin 1989, no. 382; Rusjaeva 1986, 47-48; 1992, 37.
8. Rusjaeva 1986, 42, figs. 3.2-5, 4.2-10; 1992, 30-32, 90-92; Rusjaeva 1999a, 76-81, fig. 1.3; Dubois 1996, 108-109.
9. Gans 1991, 137-140; Senff 1992, 105-108.
10. Alexandrescu-Vianu 1997, 15-20.
11. Nazarov 2001, 154-165.
12. Rusjaeva 1992, 100-103.
13. Beleckij 1975, 101; Rusjaeva 1992, 102, figs. 31.3-4, 32; Dubois 1996, 120.
14. Vinogradov 1989, 74-80.
15. For details, see Rusjaeva 1986, 25-64; Vinogradov 1989, 78; Burkert 1990, 155-160.
16. Cf. Rusjaeva 1986, 55-56; Karyškovskij 1988, 38-40; Anochin 1989, 8-10.
17. Cf. Anochin 1986, 83-85; 1989, 5-10; Rusjaeva 1986, 47-49; Karyškovskij 1988, 30-34.
18. Rusjaeva 1992, 40-41.
19. For details, see Vinogradov & Rusjaeva 2001, 136-137.
20. Vinogradov & Rusjaeva 2001, 141.
21. Rusjaeva 1992, 18-20, 196-197; Dubois 1996, 155-156.
22. Rusjaeva 1991, 124-125, fig. 1; 2002, 12-14.
23. Rusjaeva 1994, 81.
24. Bergquist 1967, 5, 62 ff.
25. Rusjaeva 1988a, 33-51; 1988b, 166-174; Kryžickij 1998, 170-190 – with a graphic reconstruction.
26. Cf. Karasev 1964, 51-73; Kryžickij 1998, 170-190.

27. Cf. Kozub 1974; Skudnova 1988.
28. Karyškovskij 1984, 42-51; Rusjaeva 1992, 193-195.
29. Rusjaeva 1994, 85-96.
30. Vinogradov & Rusjaeva 1980, 23, fig. 5.1; Rusjaeva 1986, 42; 1992, 30-32, 87-88, 90-92; Vinogradov & Rusjaeva 1998, 163-164; Vinogradov & Rusjaeva 2001, 134-137.
31. Rusjaeva 1992, fig. 26.3.
32. For references, see Kryžickij 1993, 42.
33. For details, see Crygitsky & Roussjaeva 1980, 73-100; Rusjaeva & Sazonova 1986, 48-63.
34. Žuravl'ov & Markova, 1995, 70-79.
35. Rusjaeva & Nazarov 1995, 251-260.
36. Rusjaeva 1988a, 33-51; Kryžickij 1998, 188-190.
37. Cf. Naumann 1983, Taf. 16; Graeve 1986, Taf. 9.2; Rusjaeva 1992, 144-145; Rusjaeva 1994, fig. 7.
38. Rusjaeva 1991, 125-138; Rusjaeva 1994, 82-102.
39. Rusjaeva 1991, 131-132.
40. Rusjaeva 1992, 116-117, fig. 36, 144, fig. 46.
41. Žuravl'ov & Markova 1995, 70-77.
42. Rusjaeva & Vinogradov 2001, 229-234.
43. *IOSPE* P, 164; Vinogradov 1989, 111.
44. For details, see Vinogradov & Rusjaeva 1980, 24-64; Dubois 1996, 160-164 (with references).
45. Vinogradov & Rusjaeva 2001, 137-138.
46. Rusjaeva & Diatropov 1993, 106-107.
47. Rusjaeva 1988b, 168, fig. 1.
48. For references, see Kozub 1974, 128-132; Kryžickij & Lejpunskaja 1999, 98 ff.; Rusjaeva 1999a, 411-431.
49. Vinogradov 1989, 139-140.
50. Vinogradov 1989, 149.
51. *NO* 71; Vinogradov 1989, 147-150.
52. Cf. Vinogradov 1989, 150 ff.; Saprykin 1996, 132 ff.; Kryžickij & Lejpunskaja 1999, 158 ff.
53. For details and references, see Levi 1985, 26-64; Kryžickij & Lejpunskaja 1999, 158-190.
54. *Milet* 3, 136; *Syll.*³, 286.
55. Karasev 1964, 30-31; Levi 1985, 71-72.
56. Rusjaeva 1991, figs. 3.9-10; Rusjaeva 1994, figs. 11-12.
57. Rusjaeva 1992, fig. 10.66; Rusjaeva 1994, figs. 8-9.
58. *NO* 65; Levi 1965, 86-95; Rusjaeva 1992, 36.
59. Rusjaeva 1992, 18-20; Dubois 1996, 155-156.
60. Levi 1964, 166-173.
61. Rusjaeva 1992, 85 (with references).
62. Ščeglov 1987, 175-176.
63. Gilevič 1972, 74-78; Karyškovskij 1988, 54-70; Anochin 1989, 32-38.
64. Levi 1985, 67-69.

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Abbreviations

<i>Milet</i>	<i>Milet. Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen seit dem Jahre 1899.</i>
<i>NO</i>	<i>Nadpisi Ol'vii</i> (1917-1965). Leningrad 1968.
<i>IOSPE</i>	B. Latyshev, <i>Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae</i> . Petropolis 1885-1916.
<i>Syll.</i> ³	W. Dittenberger, <i>Sylloge inscriptionum Graecarum</i> , vols. I-IV. Leipzig 1915-1924 (3rd ed.).