ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΕΙΖΟΝΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΥ

Συγγραφή : *Πετρόπουλος Ηλίας*
Μετάφραση : *Κούτρας Νικόλαος*
Για παραπομπή : *Πετρόπουλος Ηλίας , "Tomi", Εγκυκλοπαίδεια Μείζονος Ελληνισμού, Εύξεινος Πόντος*
URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=11242>

Περίληψη :

The settlement of Tomi lies today under the modern city of Constanţa in Romania, on the western coast of the Black Sea. According to sources Tomi was a Milesian colony. The ancient settlement is mentioned by many ancient Greek and Latin authors either as an ‘emporion’, ‘polis’ or a ‘polichnion’, while the Latins describe it as a ‘urbs’, ‘civitas’ and ‘oppidum’. The name of the settlement itself varies with time and the author.

Άλλες Ονομασίες

Tomoi, Tomeus, Tomeis

Γεωγραφική Θέση

Romania

Ιστορική Περιοχή

Western coast of the Black Sea

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1. Location - Name

The ancient city of Tomi[1] lies today under the modern Romanian city of Constanţa,[2] on the coast of the western Black Sea. A Milesian colony, it was built on a promontory, occupying a very strategic point offering good anchorage. Ancient sources describe the location of the ancient colony’s site with great precision: on the western coast of the Black Sea, between Histria and Callatis, and more specifically at a distance of 250 stadia from Histria and 280 from Callatis,[3] while according to another author the distance between Tomi and Callatis was 300 stadia.[4]

The name of the ancient city has been handed down in diverse variants originating from different historical periods. In Greek it is ‘Τόμις’ or ‘Τομεύς’, while in Latin ‘Tomi’ or ‘Tomis’. Other types found in ancient writers are: ‘Τομέοι’ (in Scymnus of Chios), ‘Tomoe’ (in the Latin author Pomponius Mela), ‘Tomos’ (in Pliny the Younger), ‘Τόμους’ and ‘Τόμοι’ (in Apollodorus’ Bibliotheca), ‘Τομέας’ (in Arrian, in the accusative case from ‘Τομείς’).[5] The types found on the city’s coinage also vary depending on the period. Thus we have the types ‘Τόμι’, ‘Τομέως’, ‘Τόμος’ and ‘Τομέων’. The most common type during the period of the city’s autonomy is ‘Τόμι’. Epigraphical evidence also preserve the name ‘Τόμις’ in Greek and its Latin equivalent ‘Tomis’.[6]

2. Mythological traditions

The name of the city has been etymologically linked with mythological material pertaining to the death of Absyrtus, Medea’s brother.[7] The same mythological tradition is found in Apollodorus’ Bibliotheca (1st-2nd cent. AD).[8] According to it the name derives from the verb ‘τομεύω’ (=cut, dissect) and the word ‘τομεύς’ (=a knife or axe). There are also other myths, concerning a hero-oikistes (founder) as indicated in some coins, as well as about a heroine, who according to the Byzantine textual tradition and the author Jordanes[9] apparently founded the city. Jordanes probably wished to explain the presence of Scythians on the region of modern Dobruja (in antiquity Scythia Minor, i.e. the area of Danube’s estuary) in the 4th cent. BC.[10] According to another version, the word ‘Τόμις’ is of Thracian provenance,[11] although for the time being there are no indications supporting the existence of an earlier Thracian settlement in the same area.[12]

3. Foundation – origins of the colony

There is no scholarly consensus on the precise date of the settlement's foundation. The ancient sources preserve no relevant piece of information, and thus archaeology is the only science that can offer substantial help in solving this issue. Initially, scholars believed that the colony of Tomi had probably been founded during the same period as the first Greek colonies in the Black Sea, i.e. during the last

quarter of the 7th cent. or in the early 6th cent. BC. Most historians, however, are gradually becoming convinced that ultimately the settlement was founded at some point in the 6th cent. BC[13] and probably in the first half of that century. Others think that a group of colonists arrived at the Tomi promontory from Miletus at some point between 549 and 494 BC, that is during the period the Greeks of the area of Ionia revolt against their Persian conquerors.[14]

The Milesian provenance of the Tomi colony was for long taken for granted given the testimonies of ancient authors. Lately a view has been proposed that this colony is not after all the direct result of colonizing activities of the metropolis, Miletus, but indirect, i.e. a settlement founded by the inhabitants of neighbouring Histria, which was a Milesian colony itself. This hypothesis is based on the references of certain ancient authors that Tomi was an emporion. Notwithstanding efforts to discover incontrovertible archaeological evidence to prove this theory, the data available thus far is not so convincing and this theory has not received widespread acceptance.[15]

4. Historical overview – archaeological remains

The first historical period of the city of Tomi begins in the 6th cent. and lasts until roughly the mid-3rd cent. BC, when wars erupt over the control of the city. During this period the city apparently participates in the Delian League together with other Greek cities of the Black Sea.[16] It should be mentioned that according to certain archaeologists the chances of Tomi having participated in the league are minimal. It is believed that the small settlement of 5th cent. BC Tomi[17] could not have taken on the burdens and responsibilities accompanying membership to such an important alliance.[18]

There are no serious indications of Scythian control over the city in the mid-4th cent. BC, at least until the clash of Athens with Philip II (which ended with the death of Lysimachus in 281 BC), or even of Macedonian occupation after the aforementioned clash.

The pottery unearthed so far in the site indicates the presence of a stable Greek community at least from the late 6th cent. BC. The pottery is characteristic of the eastern Greek workshops of the 6th and 5th cent. BC, although we also have some specimens of Corinthian pottery from the same period. The Attic pottery found bears similarities to that known from Histria. A large number of amphorae (dating mainly to the 5th cent. BC) has also been discovered in Tomi, which indicates that intense commercial activities were carried out in the settlement. As in Histria, the main production centres of imported pottery were Chios, Lesbos and Thasos. The same holds for the following century. During the second half of the 4th cent. BC the intensity of commercial activities recedes noticeably, mainly due to the tumultuous political situation in the area of Scythia Minor. The conduct of commerce was facilitated by the use of arrowhead-shaped bronze coins.[19]

The second period of the city (mid-3rd cent. to 1st cent. BC) is characterized by the war “over the commerce of Tomi”, as described by Memnon[20], i.e. a clash over the monopoly of the commercial activities of Tomi. More specifically, Memnon relates that a war broke out between the city of Byzantium and Callatis and Histria over the commerce of Tomi, which was situated close to Callatis.[21] The people of Byzantium wanted to create their own monopoly and thus attempted to gain the support of their metropolis, Heraclea Pontica. Callatis was finally defeated and after this disaster the city never regained its former glory. This war, according to recent studies, apparently occurred in 256/5-254 BC (variant datings are apparently inaccurate).[22]

During the 1st cent. BC the Greek cities of the western Black Sea had entered into an alliance with Mithridates VI Eupator, ruler of the Kingdom of Pontus. Unfortunately, we have scarce information on the circumstances under which the western cities of the Black Sea were incorporated into Mithridates’ state. In all likelihood, this was accomplished during the first decade of the 1st cent. BC or somewhat earlier, in 110-107 BC with the annexation of Chersonesus Taurica into Pontus’ domain.[23]

Archaeological research in the northern section of the ancient settlement has brought to light two strata of the Hellenistic period, dating to the 3rd and 2nd cent. BC. Judging from the finds from these two strata, commerce apparently continues to play a major role in the life of the city. During the Hellenistic period the city expands considerably. In terms of religion, its inhabitants continue to

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worship Apollo, the deities of Samothrace, Cybele, Castor and Pollux and Demeter.[24] The city's coins bear incised depictions of Apollo, Zeus, Hermes, Athena, the Great Gods, Helios, Castor and Pollux and Demeter. Probably during the Roman period the pantheon is expanded to include the worship of Dionysus.[25] The city's calendar was purely Milesian.[26]

With the expeditions of the Roman general Lucullus (72/1 BC) and Licinius Crassus (29/8 BC) the Roman conquest of Scythia Minor begins, and we enter the third period in the history of Tomi, lasting to the 3rd cent. AD.27 An important event of this period is the establishment of the province of Moesia by the Romans (in which the area of Dobruja also belongs) in 15 AD.28 The city continues to exist in the Byzantine period.

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3. Strabo 7, 6, 1.

4. Arr., *Peripl. M. Eux.* 24, 2.

5. Nawotka, K., *The Western Pontic Cities. History and Political Organization* (Amsterdam 1997), pp. 11-2; Herman-Hansen, M. - Heine-Nielsen, T. (eds.), *An Inventory of Archaic Classical Poleis: An Investigation Conducted by The Copenhagen Polis Centre for the Danish National Research Foundation* (Oxford University Press 2004), p. 940, no. 693.

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7. Ovid, *Tristia* III, 9, 1-10; Strabo 7, 5, 5.

8. Pseudo-Apollod. I, 133.

9. 6th cent. AD.

10. Jord., *Get.* 62.

11. More on the etymology of the word can be gleaned by Buzoianu, L. - Barbulescu, M., "Tomis", in Grammenos, D.V. - Petropoulos, E.K. (eds.), *Ancient Greek Colonies in the Black Sea 2* (BAR International Series 1675, vol. I. Oxford 2007), pp. 287-9.

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Γλωσσάριο :

emporion, the

Places where trade was conducted, usually small settlements of urban character on the borders or along the coasts and the commercial routes. With the same term are characterized the trade districts, the markets outside the walls of a city and/or settlements being themselves trade centers.

Πηγές

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Ovid, *Tristia* III.9.1-10.