

## Honors for Protogenes of Olbia: A Guide to the Economic Resilience of a Pontic *Polis*

With the sustained interest in interrogating the ‘periphery’ of the Hellenistic world in several disciplines studying the ancient Mediterranean, the economic narratives of the Basin’s margins would similarly benefit from a re-evaluation (Migeotte 1984). In the post-Soviet period, the growing integration of the Black Sea’s scholarship within study of the larger Hellenic East indicates several opportune cases for the reconsideration and specification of local economies within their regional contexts (Vinogradov 2008, Hojte 2008). With its rich epigraphic record (Halamus 2017), a benchmark from a similarly richly resourced mother-city (Nawotka 2014), and an extended presence in modern memory (Braund 2007 and 2019), Olbia offers such a case. Drawing principally on the *Honors of Protogenes* as an extended source on euergetism and fiscal actions for the 3<sup>rd</sup> through the early 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE, this Pontic *polis*’ economic story of repeated crises and decline will be reassessed (Veyne 1976, Gauthier 1985, Migeotte 1997). After a refinement of the definition of crisis, an examination of Müller’s crisis symptom framework and its applicability to Olbia will figure (Müller 2011). Recent contributions on interpreting the register of speech for Hellenistic honorific inscriptions and the ‘Greek-ness’ of Black Sea cities will assist in placing this text in its cultural and historical context (Chaniotis 2011 and 2013, Osbourne 2008). Likewise, insights from numismatics will clarify the inscription’s data on bronze coinage and minting dynamics at play in early Hellenistic Olbia (Stolba 2005). Treating an economically productive region during a transition between periods of imperial domination, a close reading of the *Honors of Protogenes* in its historical and archaeological context illuminates the structural economic adaptations underway in an otherwise thinly documented point in the literary record. More broadly, Olbia’s resilience in the face

of external pressures and cyclic shocks suggests a path for reexamining the financial health of cities around the Black Sea in the Hellenistic Period.

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