THE BOLJARINO HOARD
(IGCH 975 - NEAR PLOVDIV)

The Boljarino hoard was found on the 28th of May 1963 in a place called "Stariya dium" ("the old way"), located 1.2 km North of the village of Boljarino in the district of Plovdiv. It is now the property of the Archaeological Museum of Plovdiv where it is kept under the inventory numbers 2273-2295 and 2313-2319.

It had been buried in a ceramic vessel, part of which is preserved with the coins (1). Among the 30 silver coins of its content, we may distinguish 3 Athenian tetradrachms of the so-called "New Style", 1 late posthumous Alexander of Mesembria, 1 late Hellenistic tetradrachm of Maroneia, 3 tetradrachms of Thasian type, 15 barbarized imitations of Thasian tetradrachms and 7 Roman denarii (2).

1. Catalogue

Athens

Obv. : Head of Athena Parthenos r., wearing triple-crested Athenian helmet, ornamented with Pegasos and foreparts of horses.

Rev. : Owl standing r., head facing, on prostrate amphora. In the field: names of magistrates. On the amphora and in the exergue: letters. All within olive-wreath.

(1) K. KOLEV, Coin Hoards from the Last Year, in Archeologia, 6, 1968, p. 160.
(2) The content given by T. GERASSIMOV (B1AB, 27, 1964, p. 241) and repeated by the IGCH (M. THOMPSON, O. MØRKHOLM and C. M. KRAAY, An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards, New York, 1973, p. 125, n° 975) was 13 tetradrachms: 1 Mesembria, 1 Maroneia, 1 Thasos, 1 Thasian imitation, 2 Athens, 7 denarii. Thus, 2 tetradrachms of Thasos, 14 Thasian imitations and 1 tetradrachm of Athens were missing.
1. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2286 (16.23 g - 28/29Ω)
Field 1.: EY - MH. Amphora: Γ. Exergue: Δι
M. THOMPSON, p. 176, pl. 45, n° 447a (4)

2. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2287 (16.37 g - 28/29Ω)
Field 1.: EY - MH. Amphora: Γ. Exergue: Δι
M. THOMPSON, p. 176, pl. 45, n° 447? (same obverse die as n° 1 [447], reverse unknown)

3. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2319 (15.91 g - 28Ω)
Field 1.: ΔΕΙΝΩΚ. Amphora: Δ. Exergue: ΠΩ
M. THOMPSON, p. 176, pl. 45, reverse die of n° 448a (obverse unknown).

Mesembria
Obv.: Head of young Heracles r., clad in lion’s skin.
Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ - ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ. Zeus seated l. on backless throne, his r. leg drawn back, holding an eagle in the r. and his sceptre in the l. Field 1.: ΜΑ. Beneath throne: Κο.

4. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2288 (16.41 g - 32/33Ω)

Maroneia
Obv.: Head of young Dionysos r., wreathed with ivy and with hand across forehead.
Rev.: ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΥ - ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ - ΜΑΡΩΝΙΤΩΝ. Dionysos, naked, standing l., holding grapes in his r. and two narthex wands in his l. Monograms in l. and r. inner fields.

5. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2285 (16.25 g - 28/29Ω)

(3) The dating of c. 158/7 proposed by M. THOMPSON for this issue (The New Style Silver Coinage of Athens, New York, 1961) must be lowered by c. 32 years (see O. MØRKHOLM, The Chronology of the New Style Coinage of Athens, in ANSMN, 29, 1984, p. 29-42).

(4) Different lines and motives can be seen in the left field behind the helmet. They are not remains of an overstrike. They belong to the die since all the coins struck with this die present the same pattern.
Thasos (Early imitations)

Obv.: Head of young Dionysos r., wreathed with ivy and with band across forehead.

Rev.: ΗΡΑΚΛΕΟΥΣ - ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ - ΘΑΣΙΩΝ. Heracles, naked, standing l., holding a club in the r., lion’s skin over l. arm. Monogram Μ in field to l.

6. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2318 (16.49 g - 28/30Ø)

7. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2274 (16.18 g - 30Ø)
   I. Prokopov, Class HH7 (see Popina Hoard, n° 324).

8. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2273 (15.92 g - 30/31Ø)
   I. Prokopov, Class CA.

Thasos (Late imitations)

Ditto but in a more and more barbarized fashion. For the many peculiarities of each specimen, we refer to the plates.

9. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2276 (16.35 g - 29/31Ø)
   R. Göbl, Class I, cfr pl. 46 (Osterrätter Typenatlas, Braunschweig, 1973)

10. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2275 (16.10 g - 31Ø)
    R. Göbl, Class III, cfr pl. 46, n° 5

11. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2315 (16.86 g - 33/37Ø)
    R. Göbl, Class III, pl. 46-47 (see also I. Mirnik, A Thracian Silver Coin Hoard in the Osijek Slavonian Museum, in NC, 153, 1993, n° 29)

12. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2316 (16.18 g - 32Ø)
    R. Göbl, Class III/A, cfr pl. 47, n° 3

13. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2278 (16.38 g - 35/37Ø)
    R. Göbl, Class III/A, cfr pl. 47, n° 4

14. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2279 (16.42 g - 33Ø)
    R. Göbl, Class III/A, cfr pl. 47, n° 4

15. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2281 (16.20 g - 29/30Ø)
    R. Göbl, Class IV, cfr pl. 47, n° 2 - Overstruck over Athens

16. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2282 (16.15 g - 29Ø)
    R. Göbl, Class IV, cfr pl. 48, n° 7

17. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2277 (16.12 g - 33/35Ø)
    R. Göbl, Class V, cfr pl. 48, n° 1 (see also I. Mirnik, n° 30)

18. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2313 (16.20 g - 34Ø)
    R. Göbl, Class V, cfr pl. 48, n° 6
Roman Denarii

For classifications and datings, we refer to M. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, Cambridge, 1974 (= RRC)

24. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2289 (3.99 g - 17/180)
Obv.: Head of Roma r.; Rev.: Victory in biga r., holding reins in both hands. In exergue: D.SILANVS L.F - ROMA
*RRC* 337/3 - c. 91 BC

25. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2294 (3.23 g - 16Ω)
*RRC* 349 - c. 87 BC

26. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2290 (3.87 g - 16/17Ω)
Obv.: Helmented bust draped r.; Rev.: Cybele in biga of lions r., holding reins in l. hand and patera in r. hand. In exergue: M.VOLTEI.M.F. Above: OH
*RRC* 385/4 - c. 78 BC

27. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2291 (3.84 g - 17/19Ω)
*RRC* 391/2 - c. 75 BC

28. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2293 (3.97 g - 17/19Ω)
Obv.: Head of Ancus Martius r. To l.: lituus and ANCVS / Rev.: Aqueduct, on which stands equestrian statue. At horse’s feet: flower. Within arches of aqueduct: AQVAMR. To l.: PHILIPPVS
*RRC* 425 - c. 56 BC

29. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2292 (3.89 g - 19/20Ω)
Obv.: Head of Genius Populi Romani r., with sceptre over shoulder/ Rev.: Eagle on thunderbolt r. To l.: lituus. To r.: jug. In exergue: Q.CASSIVS.
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RRC 428/3 - c. 55 BC

30. Plovdiv, Inv. n° 2295 (3.87 g - 180)
Obv.: Head of A. Postumius r. To l.: A.POSTUMIVS.COS/
Rev.: Wreath of grain stalks. In center: ALBINV - BRVTI.F
RRC 450/3b - c. 48 BC.

2. Comments

The Boljarino hoard is one of the very interesting mixed hoards which was recovered in Southern Bulgaria. Especially important is the combined presence of Roman Republican denarii, which can be dated with rather good accuracy, with late imitations of Thasian tetradrachms. Hoards similar to this one exist in Bulgaria but are not too many: Belitsa (IGCH 976), Topolovo (6), K. Marinovo (6) or D. Botevo (7). They were buried in the second third of the 1st c. BC. for which our information is not as abundant as for the first third of the same century (c. 100-60 BC).

In this area, namely South-Western Bulgaria, Thracian hoards buried between c. 100-60 BC mainly contain huge numbers of early Thasian imitations along with Athenian tetradrachms, not to speak of smaller numbers of tetradrachms in the name of Aesillas, original issues struck in Maroneia or Thasos, or late posthumous Lysimachi from Byzantium (the late Alexanders from Odessus and Mesembria are more typical of the Eastern part of Bulgaria).

The Boljarino hoard belongs to a later hoarding-phase (c. 60-30 BC). Typical of this phase are the Roman denarii and the late «barbaric» Thasian imitations. Our information is rather scanty for this period. It is unfortunate that the Belitsa hoard (IGCH 976) has not yet received the comprehensive publication it deserves with its 112 coins now in Sofia (36 Roman denarii, 28 Thasian tetradrachms, 27 Athenian tetradrachms, 12 coins from Dyrrachium, 7 Aesillas

(7) Discovered in the Haskovo region, it consists of 12 silver coins: 10 imitations of Thasian tetradrachms, 1 core of a tetradrachm and 1 Roman denarius (brockage).
and 2 cistophori). Other hoards discovered in Bulgaria appear to be of little use. Yet the *IGCH* quotes hoards from Nova Maxala (*IGCH* 977), Karavelovo (*IGCH* 978) and Korten (*IGCH* 979) (8). I. Mirnik has recently published a small hoard coming most probably from Bulgaria (see catalogue, n° 11). A new hoard was found in Malak Chardak, in the district of Plovdiv, which contains about 600 coins, *i.e.* 598 Roman denarii for only 1 Athenian tetradrachm (ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣΩΣΑΝΔΡΟΣΚΑΛΛΙΚΡΑ) and 1 late imitation of Thasos (R. Göbl, Class V) (9). For this period (c. 60-30 BC) and this kind of evidence (Roman denarii and late Thasian imitations), Romania offers a greater number of hoards (10).

On the specific issues of the Boljarino hoard, we can make the following comments:

**Athens**

All 3 tetradrachms belong to the same issue (ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗΣΩΣΑΝΔΡΟΣ - c. 126/5 B.C.). It is no surprise if this issue is one of the four which are systematically over-represented in Macedonian of Thracian hoards (11). This piece of evidence confirms the case. Maybe it is worthwhile to note, although this point is doubtful, that the 3 coins were struck during the third and the fourth months of the Athenian calendar (Γ and Δ), thus is a very short period of time.

There is, at least, one other Athenian tetradrachm in this hoard. The nr 15 of the catalogue, a late Thasian imitation (R. Göbl, Class IV), is indeed clearly overstruck over Athens. On the reverse, we can see different letters as well as some parts of the owl (the dot for the left eye). There is enough, in fact, to identify the precise issue.

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(9) This hoard, still unpublished, is kept in the Archaeological Museum of Plovdiv (nos 5769-5770).
involved: \textit{MIKION-EYPYKLE} (156/5 BC [\textit{M. Thompson}] = c. 124/3 BC) (12). The underlined letters are still visible:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ccc}
A & ΘΕ \\
MIK & ΩΝ \\
ΕYP & ΥΚΛΕ \\
BOY & \\
ΚAT & \\
ΘΣ & \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Once again, this issue \textit{MIKION-EYPYKLE} is one of the few overrepresented in Thracian hoards.

\textbf{Mesembria}

This late Alexander of Mesembria (issue MA-Ko) is dated shortly before 150 BC by both I. Karayotov (1994, p. 125) and F. de Callatay (1994, p. 306). This dating is mainly founded on the presence of one Mesembrian Alexander with MA in the Babylon Hoard (\textit{IGCH 1774}), now kept in Berlin Münzkabinett. Due to the Seleucid tetradrachms and other well-dated coinages, this hoard can safely be dated from c. 155-150 BC. Had this piece of evidence not existed, a later date, closer to 120 BC, would have appeared as very suitable.

\textbf{Maroneia}

F. de Callatay has shown that the chronology proposed by E. Schönert-Geiss for Maroneia was very erroneous (13). Since the Maroneian tetradrachm attested in the Boljarino hoard is classified after the overstrike over a tetradrachm of Mithridates VI struck most probably in 85 BC, one is led to infer that the Boljarino hoard may hardly have been issued before the beginning of the 70s BC.

(12) M. Thompson, 1961, p. 187-193. The obverse dies nrs 479-482 are linked with BOYKATΗΣ (see pl. 48). The overstrike was most probably struck with the reverse nr 482a.

Thasos (early imitations)

I. Prokopov, who is preparing a major work about this coinage, dates the 3 tetradrachms 90-70 BC. They belong to his varieties GG (nr 6), HH (nr 7) and CA (nr 8).

Thasos (late imitations)

The late Thasian imitations are not so well-classified. It is hoped that further research will improve our knowledge in this area (14). As may be seen, nr 15 is overstruck over Athens. A closer examination of the material indicates that other coins were probably overstruck too (nrs 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18 and 21). Nr 19 is in the same case. It was struck on an insufficiently heated coin and this is why it is cracked and even broken.

Roman denarii

Roman denarii attested in the Boljarino hoard were struck from c. 91 BC to c. 48 BC. Some of them, as nrs 25 (c. 87 BC) and 27 (c. 75 BC), are conspicuously worn out. Even the latest issue (nr 30: Crawford 450/3b = ALBINVS BRVTI F.) shows some traces of wear.

This last fact, combined with the presence of many late Thasian imitations, prompts us to date the burying of the Boljarino hoard c. 40/30 BC.

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