

A 2nd century BC bronze hoard of Euboean coins from Macedonia (?)

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In the winter of 2000, fifty Hellenistic bronze coins minted in Euboea and Boeotia were delivered by an individual to the Museum of Dion. Their identical patina, their provenance and their dating, leave no doubt that the fifty specimens belong to a hoard and there is no reason to believe that this is not the entire lot. It was said to be found in Rhitine, a small village on the road that crosses the Pierian Mountains and connects the plain of Pieria with Aigeai and Beroia. Archaeological finds from rescue excavations and surveys in the Pierian Mountains have shown the existence of important ancient settlements in the modern villages of Daskia, Sfikia and Rizomata, all on the west slope of the mountain, above the Haliakmon River. From there one crosses the mountain to Rhitine, where traces of a Hellenistic settlement and a pebbled, probably ancient, road have been discovered. This must have been an ancient passage, on the axis that connected the plain of Bottiaia with that of Pieria and further to the south, through the passes of Agios Dimitrios and Petra, with Perrhaibia.¹ The upper part of this route coincides with the contemporary road that connects Katerini to Beroia. The discovery, furthermore, of a Hellenistic house with signs of destruction around the middle of the second century BC, shows trouble in the area at the time of the concealment of our hoard.² For a hoard of bronze Euboean coins, however, the find spot is rather unusual, and although it cannot be excluded, one should keep some reservations concerning its accuracy. This matter will be further discussed below.

1. On finds in the Pierian mountains see: *AEMTh* 11 (1997) 109-114 (Ch. Brekoulaki, A. Kottaridi), *AEMTh* 14 (2000), pp. 527-536 (A. Kottaridi); *AEMTh* 18 (2004), pp. 543-550 (A. Kottaridi). On the passage that connected Emathia with Elimiotis see: G. Karametrou-Menteside, "Από την Ελιμιώτιδα στην Κάτω Μακεδονία. Σύγχρονες πορείες και αρχαίες διαβάσεις", in: *Μνείας Χάρων, Τόμος στην Μνήμη Μαίρης Σιγανίδου* (Thessalonike 1998) pp. 103-114, at p. 103 and 105-108.

2. *AEMTh* 11 (1997), p. 109.

The contents of the hoard are the following:

- 2 coins of the Boeotian League of the type Demeter / Poseidon (cat. nos 1-2).
- 14 coins of the Euboean League of the types Demeter / butting bull (cat. nos 3-16).
- 2 coins of Eretria of the types Demeter / reclining bull (cat. nos 17-18).
- 32 coins of Chalcis of the types head of Hera / eagle grasping serpent (cat. nos 19-50).

The earliest coins of the hoard are certainly the two Boeotian coins (cat. nos 1-2) as well as the coin of Chalcis with the head of Hera facing (cat. no. 19); both groups show a great degree of wear indicating that they must have circulated considerably before their concealment. Of the two Boeotian coins, one (no. 2) is restruck on a bronze of Antigonos Gonatas of the Herakles / rider type. These common issues, very often restruck on Macedonian bronzes, were originally dated by Head to the period 220-197 BC³. Catherine Grandjean has identified them with the bronze drachms mentioned in the famous Pompidas inscription from Thebes, and limited their date to the period 224-217 BC⁴. Over the last decades a considerable number of hoards containing these issues have come to light, which provide valuable information on their circulation and do not contradict the proposed dates. Several hoards from Boeotia and Euboea, containing an important number of these bronzes date to the first half of the 2nd century BC⁵. A much more limited number of specimens have been found, together with Athenian coins, in hoards from Attica concealed at the time of the invasion of Syllas in 86 BC⁶. A date in the last quarter of the third century compatible with the degree of wear of these coins in our, and

3. B. Head, 'On the Chronological Sequence of the Coins of Boeotia' *NC* 1881, pp. 177-275, esp. 183, 260-263.

4. C. Grandjean, 'Les comptes de Pompidas (*IG VII 2426*): Drachmes d'argent symmachique et drachmes de bronze', *BCH* 119 (1995), pp. 1-26.

5. These are the hoards 'Thebes 1965' (*IGCH 233*), published by T. Hackens, *BCH* 93, 1 (1969), pp. 712-729; 'Copais 1908' (*IGCH 229*), published by J.N. Svoronos, *JIAN* 11 (1908) pp. 230-32; *CH* 9.225 (= *CH* 3.42), published by A. Walker, *Hesperia* 47 (1978) pp. 42-43; 'Euboea 1963' (*IGCH 169*) and the 'Boeotia (?) 1976' partial hoard in the Numismatic Museum of Athens published in *AD* 43 (1988) B, 1, p. 7 probably from Boeotia. In her publication of the important 'Thebes 1997' hoard (*CH* 9. 244) Ç. Vlachogianni, 'A hoard of coins from Thebes : the problem of the Boitian overstrikes' *NomChron* 19 (2000), pp. 55-113, discussed all the relevant material in detail.

6. One hoard from the Agora in Athens containing one Boeotian specimen with Athenian New Style tetradrachms was published F. Kleiner, *Hesperia* 45 (1976), pp. 1-40, pl. 3. Also see J. Kroll, *The Greek Coins, The Athenian Agora*, vol. 26, (Athens, 1993), p. 67

other, hoards. The same degree of wear can be seen on the coin of Chalcis with the head of facing Hera (cat. No 19), which belongs to an issue dated by Picard to the period 245-196 BC and probably to the last quarter of the century. These small bronzes, units (chalks?) according to Picard, continued to circulate, as smaller denominations, together with the next series of larger coins which should be dated after 170 BC, and which bore the head of Hera in profile on the obverse. The differentiation of the type underlined the different denomination, since the later coins were probably dichalks.

Next, according to their wear in our hoard, come the 14 coins of the Euboean League with the types of veiled Demeter and the butting bull. These have been dated to the period between the reconstitution of the Euboean League and the third Macedonian War (191-170 BC).⁷ Identifiable coins belong to issues 29, 33 and 37, the largest number of specimens coming from the latest issue, something to be expected in a hoard.

The two coins of Eretria belong to issues in the names of Alexippos and Lysandros, whereas the main bulk of the hoard consists of the 31 bronzes of Chalcis that belong to Picard's second series. These are clearly in fresher condition than the Euboean coins, a fact that corroborates the conclusions of Picard that the second series of Chalcis, which he has dated to the period between the third Macedonian war and the Achaean war (170-146 BC) followed upon the coins of the Euboean confederacy. Issues 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 76, 79 and 80 are represented and obverse die links can be observed between coins of the same issues.

The composition of this hoard shows a very close similarity to the three hoards (IGCH 230, 240, 241) originally published by Wallace⁸ and dated by Picard to the middle of the 2nd century BC.⁹ We therefore have a group of four very similar hoards that contain mostly Euboean coins. The only significant difference between them is that the "Wallace hoards" close with Chalcis' issue 81, whereas the "Macedonian hoard" closes with issue 80 and could therefore be a little earlier.¹⁰ Apart from the

and note 109. For another hoard from Peireus (IGCH 316 = CH 2. 111) see: F. Kleiner, *AD* 28 (1973), A, pp. 169-186.

7. O. Picard, *Chalcis et la confédération eubéenne. Étude de numismatique et d'histoire (IVe-Ier siècle)*, *BEFAR* 234 (Athènes-Paris 1979) pp. 194-196 and table after p. 350.

8. W. P. Wallace, *The Euboean League and its coinage*, *NNM* 134 (New York 1956) pp. 119-135, pls. 14-15 (IGCH 230, 240, 241).

9. Picard, *loc. cit.*, pp. 188-198.

10. IGCH 225 published by E. T. Newell, *Five Greek bronze coin hoards*, *NNM* 68 (New York 1935) pp. 1-23 and also discussed by Picard, *loc. cit.*, pp. 187-188, is comparable in

Euboean coins these hoards contain very few specimens from mints in neighbouring areas such as Thessaly, Boeotia or Locris. Their find spots have been considered Euboean, mainly because of their content. However they are known through commerce and only for *IGCH* 241, which is by far the largest hoard and contains 240 bronzes, is there any information that it was actually found on the island.¹¹

The concealment of hoards with Euboean coins around the middle of the second century can probably be related to the events of the Achaean war. The Euboeans and the Boeotians joined the Achaeans against Sparta and Rome, and operations were held in central Greece, opposite Euboea.¹² Sources mention panic and flight amongst the Greeks in 146 BC.¹³ After the sack of Corinth the Achaeans and their allies suffered from counter measures. Pausanias (7, 16.9-10) mentions that the fortifications of the cities that had opposed Rome were dismantled by Mummius, and that the Euboeans were condemned to an indemnity of 100 talents, whereas Polybios (39, 6.5,) sites that the cavalry of Chalcis was massacred by Mummius after his victory. It is therefore possible that the concealment of several hoards of similar composition may have taken place during this difficult period by individuals trying to secure their humble possessions.

Let us now return to the find spot of the hoard, a matter of some importance for coin circulation. A concealment of Euboean coins in the Pierian Mountains seems a little strange and finders are sometimes known to be “inventive” concerning find spots. Even if Rhitine is not correct, however, a find spot outside Euboea is not all that improbable. Published hoards of Euboean bronzes usually come from Euboea. This is the case of the “Iseion Hoard” (*IGCH* 221) of 352 bronzes and one silver coin, discovered at Eretria,¹⁴ the “Wallace hoard no. 1” (*IGCH* 241) of 240 bronzes for which there is some information that it was ‘found in Euboea, before 1920’,¹⁵ as well as for the ‘Euboea 1937’ hoard (*IGCH* 219) of 74 bronzes. But we

composition to the four above mentioned hoards but includes earlier issues. It has been dated by Newell to c. 192/1 BC and by Picard to ‘before 146 BC’.

11. Picard, *loc. cit.*, pp. 189ff. and the *IGCH* mention all the “Wallace hoards” as coming from Euboea, but this is probably a conjunction since the information is not provided in the original publication.

12. Pausanias 7,15.

13. Polybios 38, 16.4.

14. The hoard was published by J. Svoronos in: *AD* 1 (1915) p. 115-190 together with the rest of the excavation finds published by Papadakis, and re-examined by Picard, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-188.

15. Wallace, *loc. cit.*, pp. 123-124; Picard, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-192.

have no direct evidence for the provenance of the smaller hoards, since they were all acquired through commerce.¹⁶ More recent finds include grave hoards containing Euboean coins of the 3rd century BC from the coast of Phthiotis, opposite Aidipsos (*CH* 9. 134, 154) as well as from Karditsa in Thessaly (*CH* 9. 126); a 2nd century grave hoard from Aiginion in Pieria (*CH* 9. 226) contained a coin of Chalcis together with regal Macedonian issues. Euboean bronzes therefore did leave Euboea as has been shown by Picard in his study on numismatic circulation of coins of Chalcis,¹⁷ together with the Euboeans that moved from their country for various reasons. As for the silver, this occasionally travelled to the north as far as Thessaloniki (*IGCH* 471).

The discovery of a small bronze hoard outside Euboea therefore, would not be impossible. One could imagine that some individual who had to leave his city in Euboea, probably Chalcis, took with him his modest savings and lost them during the troubled events of the last war with the Romans. As has already been mentioned this war was fought in mainland Greece, opposite Euboea, the decisive battle taking place at Thermopylae, in Locris. A find spot somewhere in Central Greece or Thessaly seems compatible for a lot of coins that ended up in the Museum of Dion, in Pieria. If, however, the coins were actually found in Rhitine, then the concealment and subsequent loss of the hoard could have been connected with the troubles that emerged in Macedonia during the revolt of Andriskos and his war with the Romans. In this case the hoard would have been concealed around 148 BC.

CATALOGUE

BOEOTIAN LEAGUE

Obv.: Facing head of Demeter or Kore crowned with corn-wreath.

Rev.: Poseidon, naked, standing l., resting his right foot on a rock and leaning on a trident with his r. BOIQTΩN.

BMC, 81-89. *SNG Cop.* 384. Wear 5-4.

1. 7h., 4.2 gms.

2. 7h., 5.1 gms. *Obv.*: round countermark.

Restruck on a coin of Antigonos Gonatas of the Herakles/rider type.

16. This is the case of *IGCH* 230 and 240.

17. Picard, *loc. cit.*, pp. 318-333.

EUBOEAN LEAGUE

Obv.: Veiled head of Demeter to the r.

Rev.: Butting bull to the r. ΕΥΒΟΙ-ΕΩΝ.

Unclassified varieties, no visible symbols. Wear 5-4.

3. 7h., 4.2 gms.
4. 12h., 4 gms.
5. 7h., 5.5 gms.

Caduceus to the l., star above (off flan). Picard 29. Wear 4.

6. 3h., 5.2 gms.

Wreath above between ΕΥ and ΒΟΙ. Picard 33. Wear 5.

7. 12h., 4.3 gms.
8. 1h., 4.2 gms.

Grain of wheat in exergue to the r. of the inscription. Picard 37. Wear 4-3.

On nos 14-16 the symbol is off flan but they probably belong to this issue.

9. 1h., 4.1 gms.
10. 2h., 4.5 gms.
11. 11h., 3 gms. Nos 10-11: same obv. dies.
12. 1h., 4.9 gms.
13. 1h., 4.1 gms.
14. 2h., 3.6 gms.
15. 2h., 4.5 gms.
16. 5h., 4.3 gms.

ERETRIA

Obv.: Veiled head of Demeter to the l.

Rev.: Bull reclining to the l., head facing. In the exergue: ΕΡΕΤΡΙΑΕΩΝ.

Above: ΑΛΕΞ-ΙΠΠΙΟΣ. Picard, p. 196. Wear 3.

17. 1h., 4.1 gms.

Above: [ΑΥΣΑΝ]-Δ[ΡΟΣ]. Picard, p. 196. Wear 4.

18. 1h. 5.1 gms.

CHALCIS

Obv.: Head of Hera facing, on an ionic capital in the form of a broad line.

Rev.: Eagle with wings spread to the l., grasping a serpent. The serpent forms a small circle around the eagle's beak and is entwined around its' tail.

To the l. downwards: [XAA].

Up right: star. Picard 51. Wear 4.

19. 7h., 2.7 gms.

Obv.: Head of Hera to the r.

Rev.: Eagle with wings spread to the r., grasping a serpent. The body of the serpent forms a reversed S. To the r. upwards: XAA.

Up right: star. Picard 66var. Wear 2.

The star on this issue is to the left. On most coins the body of the snake forms a circle. On some it is mentioned as having the form of the § (Wallace 34 and 36). The style of the obverse resembles issues 76, 79.

20. 5h., 3.4 gms.

Obv.: As above.

Rev.: Eagle grasping serpent as above. The serpent falls parallel to the body of the bird and is entwined around its tail. To the r. upwards: XAA.

Up left: trident. Picard 67. Wear 2.

21. 5h., 5.3 gms.

22. 11h., 3.4 gms.

23. 3h., 4.1 gms.

24. 11h., 4.5 gms.

21-24: same obv. die as Picard 67, 8.

25. 1h., 5.4 gms.

26. 1h., 4.6 gms.

27. h., 3.5 gms.

25-27 same obv. die.

28. 7h., 3.8 gms.

29. 9h., 4.4 gms. Half symbol off flan.

No symbol. Picard 68. Wear 4-3.

30. 9h., 4.5 gms.

31. 7h., 4.3 gms.

Symbols off flan. Picard 67 (?) and 69C (?). Wear 2.

32. 2h., 4.5 gms. The head of the bird and the symbol are off flan. The style is similar to 67.

33. 1h., 3.4 gms. The symbol is off-flan. The lettering is careless and large, similar to 69C. The Λ is inverted.

Obv.: As above.

Rev.: Eagle grasping serpent, as above. The body of the serpent forms a circle above the claws of the bird. To the r. upwards: XAA.

Left: palm branch, right: dolphin (off flan). Picard 70. Wear 3.

34. 3h. 5 gms.

35. 9h., 4.8 gms.

Obv.: As above.

Rev.: Eagle grasping serpent, as above. The body of the serpent forms a circle above the claws of the bird (nos 36-38), or runs parallel to the body of the bird (nos 39-40). To the r. upwards: XAA.

Up left: bunch of grapes. Picard 71. Wear 3-2.

36. 5h., 3.9 gms.

37. 5h., 3.7 gms. 36-37: same obv. dies.

38. 1h., 4.4 gms.

39. 1h., 4.2 gms.

40. 12h., 4.4 gms.

Obv.: As above.

Rev.: Eagle grasping serpent, as above. The body of the serpent forms a circle above the claws of the bird. To the l. upwards: XAA.

To the r.: thunderbolt. Picard 76. Wear 2.

41. 6h., 4.8 gms.

42. 1h., 3.4 gms.

Obv.: As above.

Rev.: Eagle grasping serpent, as above. The body of the serpent runs parallel to the body of the bird. To the r. upwards: XAA.

Up left: thunderbolt. Picard 76 var. Wear 2.

43. 9h., 3.9 gms.

44. 3h., 4.1 gms. 43-44: same obv. dies

Obv.: As above.

Rev.: Eagle grasping serpent, as above. The body of the serpent forms a circle around the beak of the bird. To the r. upwards: XAA.

Up right: wing. Picard 79. Wear 2.

45. 6h., 4.7 gms.

46. 7h., 4.9 gms. 45-46: same rev. dies.

Obv.: As above.

Rev.: Eagle grasping serpent, as above. The head of the serpent faces the eagle, its body runs parallel to that of the bird and is entwined around its tail. Below left and right: [X-AA].

No symbol. Picard 80. Wear 4-3.

47. 1h., 3.9 gms. Same obv. and probably rev. die as Picard 80, 1.

The inscription is not visible on our coin.

Obv.: As above.

Rev.: Eagle grasping serpent,

Unclassified issues. Wear 3.

48. 3h., 4.6 gms. The obverse is similar to nos 36-37 (issue 71). The form of the serpent is not clear. Traces of a symbol are on flan up left. Perhaps issue 71.

49. 12h., 3.7 gms. The serpent falls parallel to the body of the eagle. No visible symbol.

50. 1h., 3.2 gms.

SOPHIA KREMYDI



1a-b



2a-b



3a-b



4a-b



5a-b



6a-b



7a-b



8a-b



9a-b



10a-b



11a-b



12a-b



13a-b



14a-b



15a-b



16a-b



17a-b



18a-b

A 2ND CENTURY BC BRONZE HOARD OF EUBOEAN COINS FROM MACEDONIA (?)



19a-b



20a-b



21a-b



22a-b



23a-b



24a-b



25a-b



26a-b



27a-b



28a-b



29a-b



30a-b



31a-b



32a-b



33a-b



34a-b



35a-b



36a-b

