

A HOARD OF BRONZE COINS OF LYSIMACHIA

MELİH ARSLAN*

A hoard of bronze coins minted at Lysimachia was found in Turkish Thrace in the early part of 1997 and in due course came onto the market in Istanbul, where a group of 23 coins were purchased by a dealer from Ankara. This group of coins was subsequently brought to Ankara and so came to my attention when it was purchased by a registered collector, Mr. Cafer S. Okray. A few months earlier Mr. Okray had purchased in a similar manner two other small groups of Hellenistic coins, one of posthumous issues of Lysimachus, the other of New Style Athenian tetradrachms. These two groups had also appeared on the market in Istanbul, reportedly having been found in Thrace. In addition, a considerable number of individual coins from the same region have been offered for sale in recent months. For example, before Mr. Okray purchased the group of 21 coins that is discussed here, he had already acquired (in March of this year) a single coin of the same type. This example, bought from the same dealer, was registered as item no. 342 in his collection in accordance with the Turkish laws pertaining to private collections and collectors. It is because my job as one of the numismatists at the Anatolian Civilizations Museum in Ankara is to carry out and oversee these regulations that I am now in possession of the details relating to the acquisition of this group of coins by Mr Okray. As a result, it would seem quite likely, given the similar circumstances of their acquisition and the fact that the single coin (no. 342) is overstruck in the same way that many of the examples in the group are, that they represent part of a large hoard that has been dispersed in the trade.

It is, therefore, important to publish this group, not only because of its intrinsic importance but also because in this way it may provide details that will allow colleagues to identify other groups belonging to the same hoard and so to reconstitute its original composition as well as to gain more precise

* I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Cafer Okray for allowing me to study and publish these 22 coins from his collection. My thanks also go to Dr. Chris Lightfoot, who discussed the material with me and helped me to prepare this English text.

information about its find-spot. In just such a way my work in Sinop Museum allowed me to identify a group of 69 tetradrachms in its collections as forming part of a larger hoard. A group of coins from this hoard had already been published by C. Boehringer, who stated that it had been found in Trabzon¹. Research into the history of the Sinop material, however, revealed that this hoard had in fact been found at Ordu². It is interesting to note that in both groups the most common type found is a posthumous issue of Lysimachus³.

The present group comprise 23 specimens, all of which were minted by the city of Lysimachia between 309 and 220 BC. This city, whose exact location remains unknown, was founded by Alexander's famous general and successor, Lysimachus. He had made himself king of Thrace and in 309 BC he decided to establish a new city bearing his own name on the isthmus to the Thracian Chersonese (the Gallipoli peninsula). Lysimachia thus replaced the earlier city of Cardia, which lay in the same area. The new city had a strategic position, guarding the passage both through and across the Dardanelles, and as a consequence it played a significant role in the struggles between the various Hellenistic kingdoms⁴.

The coinage of Lysimachia is relatively unknown, since few specimens from the city's mint have been published⁵. The present group thus not only represents the first recorded hoard from Lysimachia but also the largest number of similar issues to appear together. It is thus eminently appropriate to offer this small study in honour of Frau Dr. habil. Edith Schönert-Geiss.

The most interesting feature of the group is that most of the coins have been overstruck on earlier issues. Signs of such an overstrike have been

¹ C. Boehringer, *Hellenistischer Münzchatz aus Trapezunt* 1970. *Schweizerische Numismatische Rundschau* (Bern 1975),

² M. Arslan, Ordu (Cotyora) Hoard. *Coin Hoards* VIII (London 1996), 442.

³ However, the most striking elements in that part of the hoard now in Sinop are undoubtedly the unique tetradrachm of the Cappadocian king Ariarathes and the rare Macedonian issues, struck under Roman supervision, that have Zeus on the obverse and Artemis Taurupolos mounted on a bull on the reverse. The Macedonian coins are the first examples to have been recorded as found in Asia Minor. A paper discussing the Ordu Hoard and, in particular, the unique tetradrachm of Ariarathes was presented at the recent 12th International Numismatic Congress in Berlin (8-12 September, 1997).

⁴ For the city's history, cf. *RE* Band XIII, 2, cols. 2554-6 sv. Lysimacheia.

⁵ See, for example, Weber 2452-2454; Sear I, 1618-1623; Lindgren II, 869-876; III, 79-80.

detected on 14 examples. All have the same obverse type, namely that of the head of a youthful Herakles wearing a lion's skin, which is meant to recall portraits of Alexander the Great. But two variants of the type can be distinguished among the present group. The first sub-type, which is found on the majority of the coins, is a representation of the young Herakles that conforms closely to the one found on Alexander drachms and tetradrachms issued during his own lifetime. The second sub-type, distinguished only on nos. 6, 7, 13 and 21 in the following catalogue, depicts Herakles with longer, dishevelled hair. Likewise, the representation of the lion's skin headdress on the two sub-types differs. The second sub-type's depiction of Herakles may thus recall that seen on the posthumous issues of Alexander and Lysimachus, and in this case the four coins belonging to this sub-group may be considered as later issues in the series.

On two of the coins in the first sub-group the name of the Syrian king Antiochus can be read on the flange. The word ANTIOXOY is plainly visible on the obverse of one example (no. 4) and on the reverse of the other (no. 10). In both cases traces of other letters are also detectable below the king's name, but these are difficult to make out. The letters may be AS or WS, representing part of the word ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ. Alternatively, they may be a monogram, such as is commonly found on coins of the Antiochids. It remains uncertain which Syrian king re-issued these coins from the mint of Lysimachia, stamping them with his name.

On the reverse of most of the coins in the group are found two monograms in the form of the letters AI M. Many examples also bear on the reverse countermarks, especially one in the form of a dolphin, although different symbols are also encountered.



CATALOGUE

C. 309-220 BC

Obv. Head of youthful Herakles r., wearing lion's skin.

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. Nike advancing l., with wreath and palm branch.

1- Inv. no. 367. 4.06g; 18mm; 12h. As Lindgren III, 80. Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ.

In field r., monogram: above, (?); below, A;

2- Inv. no. 368. 3.45g; 17mm; 12h. As Lindgren III, 80. Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ.

3- Inv. no. 369. 4.26g; 18mm; 12h. As McClean, 4161.

Rev. In field r., monogram: above, A; below .

4- Inv. no. 370. 4.27g; 16.5mm; 12h.

Obv. Overstruck with legend: ANTIOXOY;; below, monogram (?).

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field r., monogram: .

5- Inv. no. 371. 3.98g; 16.5mm; 12h. As Lindgren III, 80.

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field r., monogram: above, (?); below.

6- Inv. no. 372. 4.06g; 19mm; 12h. Similar to Lindgren II, 872.

Obv. Overstrike, with traces of hair from head of earlier obverse.

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field r., monogram: above, (?); below, AS (?).

7- Inv. no. 373. 3.46g; 16.5mm; 6h. As Lindgren III, 79.

Obv. Overstrike, with traces of hair and face from earlier obverse.

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. To l., countermark: dolphin; at edge, r.: anchor.

8- Inv. no. 374. 3.75g; 18.5mm; 12h. As McClean, 4161.

Obv. Countermark: anchor; traces of overstrike, with two superimposed heads.

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field r., monogram: above, AI; below, M; below r., countermark: dolphin (vertical with head at bottom).

9- Inv. no. 375. 3.71g; 17.5mm; 12h. Similar to Lindgren II, 872.

Obv. Traces of overstrike on r. edge: part of legend (?).

Rev. In field r., monogram: above, AI; below, M.

10- Inv. no. 376. 3.58g; 18mm; 12h.

Obv. Overstrike, with two superimposed heads facing r. but in opposite directions.

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. Overstruck across upper body of Nike with legend: ANTIOXOY; below, monogram (?).

11- Inv. no. 377. 4.30g; 18.5mm; 12h.

Obv. Traces of overstrike (as on no. 9, above).

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field r., monogram: above, AI; below, M; overstrike, with traces of earlier obverse: male head with flowing locks (Zeus?).

12- Inv. no. 378. 3.99g; 16.5mm; 12h. Similar to Lindgren III, 80.

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field r., monogram: above, AI; below, M.

13- Inv. no. 379. 3.28g; 19mm; 9h.

Obv. Overstrike, with two superimposed heads (of both sub-type I and II) with different axis.

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field l., countermark: dolphin (vertical with head at top); below, at bottom l. edge: anchor.

14- Inv. no. 380. 4.10g; 15mm; 12h. Similar to Lindgren II, 872.

Rev. In field r., monogram: (?); traces of overstrike on l. edge (similar to no. 9, above).

15- Inv. no. 381. 4.94g; 17mm; 12h. As McClean, 4161.

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field r., monogram: above, AI; below, M.

16- Inv. no. 382. 3.55g; 17mm; 12h. Similar to Lindgren II, 872.

Obv. Traces of overstrike on r. edge (possibly as on no. 9, above).

Rev. ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ.

17- Inv. no. 383. 4.24g; 17mm; 6h. As Lindgren III, 80.

Rev. ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field r., illegible monogram.

18- Inv. no. 384. 3.84g; 18.5mm; 12h. Similar to Lindgren II, 872.

Obv. Traces of overstrike on r. edge (?).

Rev. ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. Traces of overstrike on upper part of Nike: chin and neck of obverse head.

19- Inv. no. 385. 3.65g; 18.5mm; 12h. Similar to Lindgren II, 872.

Obv. Traces of overstrike at top (?).

Rev. ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field r., monogram: (?); traces of overstrike (?).

20- Inv. no. 386. 3.52g; 18mm; 12h. Similar to Lindgren II, 872.

Obv. Overstrike: two superimposed heads.

Rev. ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. Traces of overstrike on l. and r. edges.

21- Inv. no. 387. 3.61g; 17mm; 12h.

Obv. Traces of overstrike or minting error.

Rev. ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field l., countermark: lobster (?). Purchased separately

22- Inv. no. 342. 3.79g; 18.5mm; -h. As McClean, 4161.

Obv. Countermark: dolphin; overstrike: two superimposed heads (of subtypes I and II) at different axis.

Rev. ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. In field r., monogram: above, M; below, AI.

23- Inv. no. 404. 5.04g; 18mm; 12h.

Obv. Head of youthful Herakles r., wearing lion's skin.

Rev. ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΕΩΝ. Nike advancing l., with wreath and palm branch. monogram r., above, M.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BMC Thrace Reginald Stuart Poole, *Catalogue of Greek Coins: The Tauric Chersonese, Sarmatia, Dacia, Moesia and Thrace*. London 1877.
- Lindgren II H. Lindgren, *Ancient Greek Bronze Coins: European Mints*. San Mateo 1989.

- Lindgren III H. Lindgren, *Ancient Greek Bronze Coins*. Quarryville 1993.
- McClellan S.W. Grose, *Catalogue of the McClellan Collection of Greek Coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum*. 3 Vols., Cambridge 1923-1929.
- Sear D.R. Sear, *Greek Coins and their Values*. Vol. I, London 1978.
- Weber L. Forrer, *The Weber Collection of Greek Coins*. 3 Vols., London 1922-1929.

Melih Arslan



Lysimachia Definesi Genel Görünüm



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18



19



20



21



22



23

