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Purses of Mithridates' Mercenaries From The Cimmerian Bosphorus

Mithridates'in Kimmer Bosphoruslu Paralı Askerlerinin
Para Keseleri

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PURSES OF MITHRIDATES' MERCENARIES FROM THE CIMMERIAN BOSPORUS

ABSTRACT

This article examines the numismatic sources from the Cimmerian Bosphorus: hoards representing soldiers' purses, cases of cash payments for rations, as well as the coinages minted to make these payments during the Mithridatic Wars. Several hoards of a military context came from this time, consisting of coins, which were precisely used for the allowances of soldiers. On the one hand, these hoards provide evidence of the payment made to Mithridates' mercenaries who served in garrisons in cities and in their *chora* to protect the grain-producing areas that supplied the king's army with bread. Such hoards consist of silver or bronze coinages specially minted for military payments in Bosphorus. However, except for two cases of wage payment made to the garrison in silver (CH XI, 137, 138), using bronze coins for military payments is characteristic of the Bosphorus in the Late Hellenistic period. On the other hand, at least five garrisons in Bosphorus, whose existence has been attested due to finds of soldiers' purses, are in Tyritace (IGCH 1145 = CH XI, 140), Myrmecium (CH XI, 116, 141), Patraeus (CH XI, 142), Phanagoria (CH XI, 145A-B) and the Vyshesteblievskaya 3 settlement, located in the grain-producing area subordinate to Phanagoria. These purses show that during the Mithridatic Wars, mercenaries were paid in Bosphoran and Pontic bronze coins of significant denominations, which apparently amounted to less than an obol per day. The purses of mercenaries containing the same amount indicate the approximate level of their pay, equal to 22(?) obols per month. The case of Bosphorus demonstrates the success of one of the major innovations of the Hellenistic period – the systematic use of bronze for military payment.

Keywords: Numismatic, Cimmerian Bosphorus, Mithridates VI, Mercenaries, Coin Hoards.



MİTHRİDATES'İN KİMMER BOSPORUSLU PARALI ASKERLERİNİN PARA KESELERİ

ÖZ

Bu makale, askerlerin keselerini temsil eden definelere, tayınlar için nakit ödeme kutuları ve Mithridates Savaşları sırasında bu ödemeleri yapmak için basılan sikkeleri içeren Kimmer Boğazı'ndan gelen numismatik kaynakları incelemektedir. Bu döneme ait, askerlerin harcırahı için kullanılan sikkelerden oluşan, askeri içerikli birkaç define ortaya çıkmıştır. Bir yandan bu definelere, Mithridates'in şehirlerdeki garnizonlarda ve kralın ordusuna eklemek sağlayan tahıl üretim alanlarını korumak için choralarında görev yapan paralı askerlerine yapılan ödemenin kanıtlarını sunmaktadır. Bu definelere, Bosporus'ta askeri ödemeler için özel olarak basılmış gümüş ya da bronz sikkelerden oluşmaktadır. Ancak, garnizona gümüş olarak yapılan iki ücret ödemesi örneği dışında (CH XI, 137, 138), askeri ödemeler için bronz sikkelerin kullanılması Geç Hellenistik Dönem Bosporusu'nun karakteristik özelliğidir. Öte yandan, Bosporus'ta varlığı askeri keseleri buluntularıyla kanıtlanan en az beş garnizon Tyritace (IGCH 1145 = CH XI, 140), Myrmecium (CH XI, 116, 141), Patraeus (CH XI, 142), Phanagoria (CH XI, 145A-B) ve Phanagoria'ya bağlı tahıl üretim bölgesinde yer alan Vyshesteblievskaya 3 yerleşimidir. Bu keseler, Mithridates Savaşları sırasında paralı askerlere Bosporus ve Pontus bronz sikkeleri ile ödeme yapıldığını göstermektedir ki bu da görünüme göre günlük bir obolden daha az bir miktara tekabül etmektedir. Paralı askerlerin aynı miktarı içeren keseleri, aylık 22(?) obole eşit olan ücretlerinin yaklaşık seviyesini göstermektedir. Bosporus örneği, Hellenistik dönemin en önemli yeniliklerinden biri olan bronzun askeri ödemelerde sistematik olarak kullanılmasının başarısını göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Numismatik, Kimmer Boğazı, Mithridates VI, Paralı Askerler, Sikke Defineleri.



INTRODUCTION

Numismatic studies play an essential role in advancing our understanding of ancient military finances, especially cash allowances for mercenaries, garrison wages, etc.¹. During the Hellenistic period, the soldiers were paid in either silver or bronze coins. Numismatic data allowed, for instance, the evaluation of Ptolemaic military existence and the attestation of Egyptian garrisons in Mainland Greece, the Aegean Basin, and Asia Minor². The role of bronze coins used for military payments in Mainland Greece, Thrace and Macedonia in the Hellenistic period has also been studied in detail³. The silver coinages for armies of the era of the Mithridatic Wars have also become the subject of thorough studies⁴. However, we know much less about the payments to soldiers in the Cimmerian Bosphorus. Meanwhile, just like everywhere else in the Greek world, mercenaries served in the Bosphorus in cities and military settlements on the *chora* always for payment for their labour. Numismatic evidence of these payments has been preserved, and this paper will study some of them – purses of Mithridates' soldiers from regular archaeological excavations.

In 110/109 BC, Bosphorus was incorporated into the Pontic kingdom and became one of the leading grain suppliers to the army of Mithridates VI. The three largest Bosporan cities – namely Panticapaeum, Phanagoria and Gorgippia – controlled the grain-producing areas of the satrapy since the main task of the king was to provide bread to his subjects in the Asia Minor possessions⁵. The establishment of royal garrisons in Bosphorus was explained by the king's desire to attract the most important cities to his side and, at the same time, control the grain-producing region⁶. For instance, the presence of a garrison of mercenaries in Phanagoria has been attested from the epitome of the decree of the Council and the People of Phanagoria on granting civil rights to foreign veterans from 88/7 BC⁷ and from Appian's story on the anti-Mithridatic uprising in 63 BC (Appian, Mithridates, 108), as well as from the purses of mercenaries discovered during archaeological excavations (see below). Small detachments or garrisons of Mithridates' mercenaries were stationed in important strategic points at the *chora*, controlling the largest grain-producing districts of the European Bosphorus and Sindice and the main routes crossing them. Recent excavations at the *chora* yielded a new attestation of Mithridates' garrison in light of coins: Vyshesteblievskaya 3 settlement, the Taman Peninsula.

1 See Psoma 2009, 3-4.

2 See Chryssanthaki 2005; Lenger – Dündar 2020.

3 Psoma 2009, 4.

4 Callataj 1997; Callataj 2000, 348-359; Callataj 2011; Callataj 2015.

5 Saprykin 2010, 82.

6 Saprykin 2010, 86.

7 Vinogradov 1991, 30-31; Vinogradov – Wörrle 1992; SEG 41, 625.

We know of at least seven hoarded purses associated with Mithridates' mercenaries in the Cimmerian Bosphorus (Fig. 1). Their provenances are Myrmecium (CH XI, 116, 141), Patraeus (CH XI, 142), Phanagoria (CH XI, 145A-B and one discovered in 2022⁸) and the Vyshestiblievskaya 3 settlement⁹, located in the grain-producing area subordinate to Phanagoria. They all contain Bosporan and Pontic bronze coins of only the largest and middle denominations (obols and tetrachalkoi). The hoard evidence suggests that payment could have been made in coins of different chronological series, but each time, a specific coinage dominates in the amount paid: These are either anonymous Bosporan obols or Pontic bronze, or Bosporan tetrachalkoi of the Dionysus/tripod type.

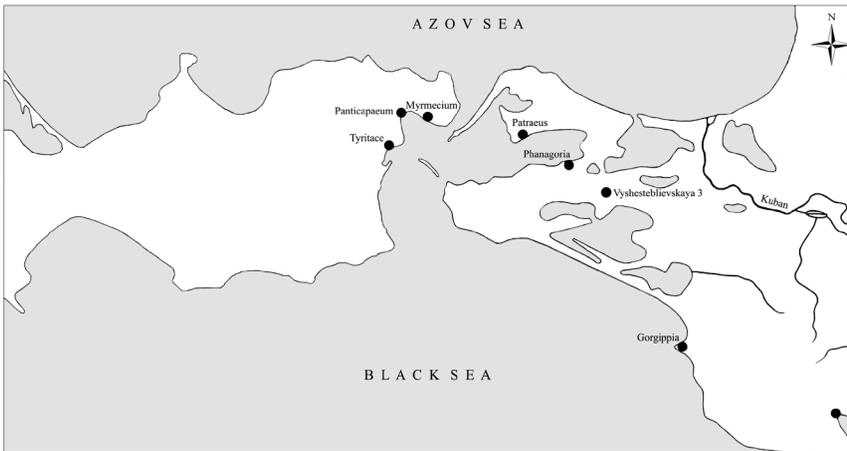


Fig. 1. Map of the Cimmerian Bosphorus showing the location of Mithridates' garrisons, whose existence has been attested through finds of soldiers' purses

The bulk of coins in these purses/hoards are constituted by the so-called anonymous Bosporan obols of the Dionysus/bow-case type, accompanied by a small number of Bosporan and Pontic obols and tetrachalkoi¹⁰. Notably, in contrast to the 90s BC Mithridatic hoards, often vast in numbers and consisting of small bronze denominations, hoards of anonymous obols are of modest size and almost always associated with garrisons stationed in the cities or military settlements.

8 Abramzon – Ostapenko 2023.

9 Abramzon et al. 2022.

10 The only exception is the Patraeus 1950 hoard (IGCH 1146), in which 40 anonymous obols mixed with two Panticaepaean obols and 36 Pontic tetrachalkoi.

Types/findspot	Tyritace (IGCH 1145 = CH XI, 140)	Myrmecium (IGCH 1141 = CH XI 116)	Myrmecium (IGCH 1146 = CH XI 141)	Patraeus (IGCH 1147 = CH XI 142)	Vyshesteblievskaya 3 (2018)	Phanagoria (2022) ¹¹
Anonymous Bosporan obols (SNG BM I, 946-948)	+		12	40	18	2
Panticapaeum: Mên/Dionysus standing (BAR 1102, pl. VIII.1-7)			1	2		1
Phanagoria: Artemis/stag (SNG BM I, 1000-1003)					1	
Amisus: Head in leather cap/quiver (SNG BM I, 1135)						1
Amisus: Athena/Perseus (SNG BM I, 1166-1176)			1			
Amisus: Dionisus/cista mystica (SNG BM I, 1199-1209)		6				
Amisus: Perseus/Pegasus (SNG BM I, 1213)						1
Amisus, Zeus/eagle (SNG BM I, 1231)					1	
Chabacta: Perseus/Pegasus (SNG BM I, 1258)						1
Sinope, Zeus/eagle (SNG BM I, 1543-1549)			2	34	3	1
Uncertain Pontic, Athena/Perseus (as SNG BM I, 1166)				2		
Unidentified, etc.				4		3
Total:	?	6	16	82	23	10

Table 1. The pattern of Mithridatic hoards/purses containing anonymous Bosporan obols and Pontic bronze.

The dating of these hoards depends on the chronology of anonymous obols and that of the Pontic bronze coins of the Mithridatic period. Since these issues were discussed on many occasions by other scholars¹², it makes sense to confine ourselves to a few remarks only. First, it is necessary to revise the chronology proposed by N. Frolova and S. Ireland, who distinguished 57 monograms on the anonymous Bosporan obols and dated them to the end of the 2nd century BC to 63 BC¹³. However, the similarity of many monograms, which correspond to the exact name of the royal official supervising the mint of Bosporus, allows us to reduce the number of names of magistrates to 25, and counting from 63 BC gives a date of 88 BC, i.e. the beginning of the First Mithridatic War.

¹¹ Abramzon – Ostapenko 2023.

¹² See Ireland – Frolova 1999; BAR 1102, 24 (with references); Callataj 2007; Smekalova 2019.

¹³ BAR 1102, 24-31. The hypothesis that each monogram corresponds to one year of minting is controversial.

BRONZE COINS FOR MILITARY PAYMENTS IN THE BOSPORUS IN THE MITHRIDATIC ERA

The case of Bosphorus demonstrates the success of one of the major innovations of the Hellenistic period – the systematic use of bronze for military payments¹⁴. Bosporan and Pontic bronze coins replaced military payments in silver (didrachms of the Dionysus/wreath type¹⁵). Recent XRF analyses of didrachms and anonymous Bosporan obols show that ‘pure’ copper was used for their alloy¹⁶. This point is crucial for determining the purpose of both coinages. Most likely, it was ‘pure’ copper intended for the minting of the anonymous Bosporan obols: the XRF investigation of the latter from CH XI, 154 demonstrates that a large number of them (37%) were minted from expensive ‘pure’ copper (while 61% from brass¹⁷ or zinc bronze containing zinc varying between 1% and 17.80%), which allowed them to replace silver coins when paying for military expenses. Anonymous Bosporan obols can be considered military coins that approach the value of silver coins¹⁸. Apparently, in Bosphorus, the minting of anonymous obols and didrachms began simultaneously c. 89/8 BC, i.e. at the very beginning of the First Mithridatic War¹⁹. Hence, the reserves of ‘pure’ copper at the Panticapaeon mint could be used in parallel for minting both anonymous obols and didrachms, whose value was, of course, higher. Both coinages were undoubtedly intended to pay for military expenses.

Meanwhile, at the very beginning of the reign of Mithridates VI, anonymous Pontic obols of the male head in leather helmet/star type, as well as their fractions²⁰, were also minted from ‘pure’ copper. They can be considered coins for military payments²¹, as evidenced by their heavily military flavour – the military iconography of the obverse showing the helmeted head of a warrior. The city’s name is missing because such coins for military payments could be used in different parts of the Pontic kingdom if needed. The anonymous Pontic obols were overpriced in their value, so it was necessary to mint them not from ordinary bronze but from

14 See Psoma 2009, 34.

15 SNG BM I, 932-934, 997; BAR 1102, pl. V:18-21.

16 Abramzon – Smekalova 2024.

17 The use of brass for minting Bosporan coins, the similarity of Dionysian types in both coinages, as well as the active flow of Pontic bronze coins to Bosphorus after 90 BC, indicate the unification of trade, economy, coin production and currency of Pontus and Bosphorus (see Saprykin 2007) in the reign of Mithridates, and, possibly, a shortage of metal for minting, judging by the re-melting and reminting of the Pontic coins at the Bosporan mint.

18 Smekalova et al. 2019, 119-120.

19 Hence, the coinage of anonymous obols is connected neither with Machares nor with the idea that Mithridates deprived the Bosporan cities of the right to mint. These were coins for military payments, and the ethnic name was simply not required. Minting them from refined copper and brass, rather than from ordinary bronze, rather indicates an overestimation of their value. Smekalova et al. 2019, 120.

20 SNG BM I, 972-984.

21 It is no coincidence that such an obol is also present in the purse of a mercenary from Phanagoria (see below).

‘pure’ copper²². It is clear that like anonymous Pontic coinage, the anonymous Bosporan obols represent another case of Greek coinage for the army. Both those and other obols are coins of conditional value, and it is no coincidence that they were minted from ‘pure’ copper and brass, which brought their value closer to silver coins in the face of a shortage of coin silver²³.

Hoard from Tyritace (CH XI, 140) and Myrmecium (CH XI, 141) date from the 80s BC to 63 BC. Purses from Patraeus (CH XI, 142, 144) and Phanagoria (CH XI, 145–147 and the 2022 purse²⁴) were discovered in the ruins of Hellenistic buildings that perished in massive fires, most likely under the same circumstances related to the operations of Mithridates against the Bosporan rebels in 63 BC²⁵.

THE PURSE OF PONTIC MERCENARY FROM MYRMECIUM (IGCH 1141 = CH XI, 116)

In 1937, a purse was discovered during the excavations at Myrmecium (Excavation site B, Trench 55), containing six coins, all of the Dionysus/cista mystica type from Amisus²⁶. M. Price dates this issue to 85–65 BC²⁷, F. de Callataÿ to 100–95(?) BC²⁸. L.P. Kharko drew attention to the fact that in the hands of the owner of the purse, there were coins of the same mint and same type, which is more than uncommon for a foreign coinage in the case of Bosphorus. He suggested that these Amisus coins had their own exchange rate on Bosphorus and were used for some special payments²⁹. Since this type is not found anywhere else in Bosphorus (excluding an isolated find in Phanagoria³⁰, where a garrison was attested from ancient sources, epigraphic documents and coins), unlike the widespread types Ares/sword and Zeus/eagle, it should be recognised that it was really intended for some special payments on Bosphorus, as Kharko believed. The question is solved if we assume that this purse belonged to a mercenary who arrived in Bosphorus from Pontus. Since the issue of Dionysus/cista mystica is one of the latest in the coinage of Amisus, its absence in the hoards from Amastris, Amaseia, Amisus and northern Anatolia (IGCH 1379–1382) allowed the IGCH authors to date them to 85 BC, while the hoard from Gemene (IGCH 1385), the dating of which rests on the fact that latest substantial issue of Amisus (Dionysus/cista mystica) is missing there, to 75 BC³¹. All these hoards are connected with the movements of Mithridates VI’s

22 Smekalova 2019.

23 Against the comparison of anonymous Bosporan and Pontic obols, see Golenko 1960, 38.

24 Abramzon – Ostapenko 2023.

25 Abramzon – Kuznetsov 2011a; Abramzon – Kuznetsov 2011b.

26 Kharko 1952, 361; Zograf 1952, 378, no. 2552–2557.

27 SNG BM I, 1199–1209.

28 Callataÿ 2007, 282, table 9.

29 Kharko 1952, 361.

30 Phanagoria Museum, inv. no. F-22-73. Type: SNG BM I, 1209.

31 IGCH, 184, comment to no. 1385.

troops during the wars with Rome. A.N. Zograf explained the exact reason for the discovery of hoards and isolated Pontic coins in the cities of the northern Black Sea region³². It is necessary to emphasise the similarity of the iconography of Dionysus on the obverse of this Amisus type and the Bosporan didrachms and anonymous obols. In addition, the Amisus coins with Dionysus/cista mystica and anonymous Bosporan obols are connected by standard monograms  and , and, perhaps not coincidentally.

ANOTHER PURSE FROM MYRMECIUM (IGCH 1146 = CH XI, 141)

In 1949, a second purse was discovered during the excavations at Myrmecium (Sector II, Site I, Trench 17), containing 16 bronze Bosporan and Pontic coins of the Mithridatic era.³³ The set of presented coinage is close to the purses from Patraeus (CH XI, 142) and Vyshesteblievskaya 3. At its core are the anonymous Bosporan obols (12 specimens), which were accompanied by a single Panticapaeon obol of the Mên/Dionysus standing type. Like in the purses from Patraeus and Vyshesteblievskaya 3, emissions of Amisus and Sinope are present here. Y.S. Krushkol published monograms on anonymous obols from this hoard³⁴. K.V. Golenko was also engaged in further study of the hoard³⁵. The set of coinage in the purse leaves no doubt that it belonged to a mercenary.

CATALOGUE

#	Belova 1958	Weight, g	Diameter, mm	Reference, note
Panticapaeum: anonymous, c. 89/8-63 BC				
Dionysus/bow-case. Obols.				
1.	219	14.87	25	Cf. SNG BM I 946. Rev. To l.,  .
2.	224	17.62	23	As last.
3.	229	13.59	23	As last.
4.	231	14.42	24	As last.
5.	232	15.26	26	As last.
6.	233	15.29	25	As last.
7.	234	15.60	25	Cf. SNG Stancomb, 1351. Rev. To l.,  .

³² Zograf 1951, 186.

³³ Belova 1958, 332, 343-44, no. 219-234.

³⁴ Krushkol 1952, 140-41.

³⁵ Golenko 2003, 67.

8.	225	16.63	25	As last.
9.	226	15.25	25	Cf. BAR 1102, pl. XIV.11 (var.). Rev. To l.,  .
10.	227	14.76	25	Rev. To l.,  .
11.	228	14.76	24	Rev. To l., monogram unclear.
12.	230	15.03	25	Rev. To l., monogram unclear.

c. 85-65 BC

Mēn/Dionysus standing. Obol.

13.	220	14.99	29	Cf. BAR 1102, pl. VIII.1-7. Rev. to r.  .
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Amisus: c. 86-65 BC

Athena Parthenos/Perseus. Obol.

14.	221	14.91	27	Cf. SNG BM I 1166-1176.
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Sinope: c. 86-65 BC

Zeus/eagle. Tetrachalkoi

15.	222	6.40	21	Cf. SMG BM I 1543-1549.
16.	223	4.70	22	

A PURSE FROM PATRAEUS (IGCH 1147 = CH XI, 142)

In 1950, a purse was discovered during the excavations at Patraeus within the ruins of a Hellenistic building that perished in a great fire³⁶. It contained 82 bronze Bosphoran and Pontic coins: 1) Dionysus/bow-case. (SNG BM I 946-949), 40; 2) Panticapaeum: Mēn/Dionysus standing (SNG BM I 936), two; 3) uncertain Pontic: Athena/Perseus, two; 4) Sinope: Zeus/eagle (SNG BM I 1543-1549), 34; 5) unidentified Bosphoran or Pontic, four. The anonymous Bosphoran obols make up half of the coins; a slightly more minor part of the hoard consists of the Pontic coins of the Zeus/eagle type. Yu.S. Krushkol ascribed all of them to the mint in Sinope; however, Golenko believed there were issues from other mints among them³⁷. Two obols of the Athena/Perseus type could not be ascribed to any mint because of their poor state. The mints of Amisus, Cabeira, Chabacta, Comana, Pharnaceia, Taulara, Amastris, and Sinope issued such type.³⁸ Price dates this type to 85-65 BC, Callataj to 90-85(?) BC³⁹. Such a set of types (the mix of four dozen anonymous obols with three and a half dozen coins from Sinope) allows us to consider the assemblage as a soldier's purse.

36 Krushkol 1952; Krushkol 1956, 116; Golenko 2003, 67.

37 Golenko 2003, 67, no. 44.

38 SNG BM I, 1532-1534.

39 Callataj 2007, 282, table 9.

The thickness of the burnt layer is 1.5 m, which indicates the scale of the disaster caused by the siege of the city and conflagration. Narrative and archaeological evidence of the siege of the neighbouring Phanagoria by the fleet of Mithridates in 63 BC strongly suggests that both cities suffered synchronously during the suppression of the anti-Mithridatic uprising. Purses containing Pontic latest issues (Zeus/eagle) were also found in the burnt-out royal residence in Phanagoria.

THE MERCENARY'S PURSE FROM THE VYSHESTEBLIYEVSKAYA 3 SETTLEMENT

The settlement of Vyshesteblievskaya 3⁴⁰ controlled a large grain-producing region on the Taman Peninsula, which occupied the plain between the villages of Vyshesteblievskaya and Starotitarovskaya (Temryuk district of the Krasnodar region). The site, discovered in 1982, was considered a rural settlement crossed by an ancient road leading north to Phanagoria⁴¹. The 2013-2020 seasons revealed that this site was not just a rural settlement. Many clay pits, a complex of large grain pits connected by ventilation drifts, finds of marble architectural details, and numerous fragments of tiles in combination with a whole group of cult items, etc., suggest that in the mid-2nd and 1st centuries BC, the settlement might have been a temple complex or an administrative centre with fundamental stone buildings and big industrial zone. This was facilitated by the favourable location of the settlement in the centre of a microregion, which is replete with synchronous archaeological sites. Eighteen ancient rural settlements were discovered within a radius of just 5 km from Vyshesteblievskaya 3. Most of them, including Vyshesteblievskaya 3, were surrounded by land plots and connected by a single network of ancient roads that eventually led to Phanagoria. On the main road connecting the metropolis with large rural settlements located on the northern shore of the Tsokur Liman lay Vyshesteblievskaya 3. Presumably, in the 5th-1st centuries BC, it belonged to the *chora* of Phanagoria.

In 2018, a hoard of 23 Bosporan and Pontic bronze coins was uncovered here. No traces of a container were found; the coins, apparently, were stored in a bag. The great majority are anonymous obols (18 pieces), half of which bear the most common monogram  (Fig. 2.1-9). The rest have monograms



As in all other similar hoards, the Bosporan city coinage is represented (this is a tetrachalkon from Phanagoria), as well as coins of the Zeus/eagle type from Amisus and Sinope. Thus, the hoard contains bronze coins of only the largest and middle denominations, in contrast to a large

40 Paromov 1992, 556-58, no. 175.

41 Paromov 1992, 556-58, 563.

group of Mithridatic hoards associated exclusively with the *chora*, consisting of a mass of Bosporan small copper coins, mainly of the 2nd century BC, and including an earlier Mithridatic issue of the Panticapaeum (tripod/star) dating from the turn of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, as well as several Pontic bronze coinages of the Mithridatic era.⁴²

It is not by chance that the Vyshesteblievskaya 3 hoard is associated with the significant rural settlement located in the centre of the grain microregion, on one of the main strategic routes of the Taman Peninsula connecting Phanagoria with the settlements of her rural district. Sindice and the surrounding Asiatic district represented the most fertile areas of Bosphorus, supplying grain to the army of Mithridates VI. The proximity of the Maeotian tribes threatened the uninterrupted supply of grain to Pontus from here⁴³. Apparently, a garrison of mercenaries was deployed in Vyshesteblievskaya 3 and Phanagoria, where the presence of foreigners/veterans has been attested by the well-known decree (see above). Anonymous obols, as well as Pontic issues Zeus/eagle and Ares/sword, were used precisely for military payments. The pattern of such hoards allows us to speak about this with a high degree of confidence.

The purse was concealed on the southern outskirts of the settlement, where its industrial zone was located, clay was extracted, and grain was stored; later, garbage (mainly in the form of broken tiles, amphorae terracotta, etc) was dumped into these pits. Most likely, the deposition is explained by the activity of the Siraces and Maeotians in the Kuban region. Thus, this hoard of anonymous obols and Pontic copper records one more case of military pay.

CATALOGUE

#	Kerch Museum inv. no.	Weight, g	Size, mm	Reference
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Panticapaeum: anonymous, c. 89/8-63 BC

Dionysus/bow-case. Obols.

1.	KP-200293	17.6	25	Cf. BAR 1102, pl. XIII.12. Rev. To l,  .
2.	KP-200487	14.2	25	Obv. Same die. Rev. As last.
3.	KP-200294	16	23	Cf. https://bosporan-kingdom.com/212-3041/153.html . Rev. As last.
4.	KP-200444	13.3	25	Rev. As last.

42 Abramzon - Novichikhin 2018, 341, table 2.

43 Saprykin 2010, 86.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|------|----|--|
| 5. | KP-200443 | 14 | 24 | Rev. As last. |
| 6. | KP-200449 | 15.5 | 25 | Cf. SNG BM I 948. Rev. As last. |
| 7. | KP-200488 | 16.1 | 25 | Cf. BAR 1102, pl. XIII.5a. Rev. As last. |
| 8. | KP-200446 | 15.5 | 26 | Cf. https://bosporan-kingdom.com/212-3041/98.html . Rev. As last. |
| 9. | KP-200494 | 14.7 | 22 | Cf. BAR 1102, pl. XIII.3. Rev. As last. |
| 10. | KP-200295 | 16 | 25 | Cf. SNG PSMFA 1351. Rev. To l.,  . |
| 11. | KP-200296 | 15.2 | 22 | Cf. BAR 1102, pl. XIV.11. Rev. To l.,  . |
| 12. | KP-200303 | 19 | 24 | Cf. Bibliothèque nationale de France: https://bosporan-kingdom.com/212-3048/18.html . Rev. To l.,  . |
| 13. | KP-200447 | 17 | 23 | Cf. Abramzon – Frolova 2007-2008, pl. 68.19. Rev. to r.,  . |
| 14. | KP-200448 | 15.9 | 23 | Cf. BAR 1102, pl. XIV.13. Rev. To l.,  . |
| 15. | KP-200442 | 17.2 | 25 | Obv. Cf. BAR 1102, pl. XIV.15. Rev. As last. |
| 16. | NVF-29261 | 13.5 | 26 | Cf. CNG Inc. Electronic Auction 293, lot 87; https://bosporan-kingdom.com/212-3042/7.html . Rev. To l.,  . |
| 17. | NVF-29407 | 17.8 | 24 | Cf. SNG PSMFA 1357. Rev. To l.,  . |
| 18. | KP-200445 | 16.2 | 27 | Cf. BAR 1102, pl. XIV.1. Rev. To l.,  . |
- Phanagoria: c. 95-86 BC**
Artemis/stag
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----|----|--------------------|
| 19. | KP-200500 | 7.0 | 24 | Cf. SMG BM I 1000. |
|-----|-----------|-----|----|--------------------|
- Amisus: c. 86-65 BC**
Zeus/eagle
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----|----|---|
| 20. | KP-200497 | 8.5 | 20 | Cf. SMG BM I 1231. Rev. To l.,  , to r., star. |
|-----|-----------|-----|----|---|
- Sinope: c. 86-65 BC**
Zeus/eagle
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----|----|---|
| 21. | KP-200495 | 7.9 | 18 | Cf. SNG Stancomb 802. Rev. To l.,  . |
| 22. | KP-200439 | 9.5 | 19 | As last. |
| 23. | KP-200499 | 7.9 | 18 | Cf. SMG BM I 1544. Rev. To l.,  , to r., star. |

CASH ALLOWANCE TO A MERCENARY FROM THE ROYAL RESIDENCE IN PHANAGORIA (CH XI, 145A)

In 2007, a pile of 19 bronze coins on a plate was uncovered during excavations at the royal residence in Phanagoria, which burned down during the anti-Mithridatic uprising in 63 BC⁴⁴. The assemblage (a purse?) contained eleven coins of the Artemis/stag type from Panticapaeum and Phanagoria and eight obols of the Zeus/eagle type from Amisus, Gaziura, Taulara and uncertain centres. Callataÿ dates the type Artemis/stag to c. 90-80 BC⁴⁵; some such coins were found to be overstruck on Pontic issue Ares/sword, which Callataÿ once again dates to 95-90 BC. The Pontic obols of the Zeus/eagle type are dated either between 100-85 BC or 95-90 BC.

Many of the hoard coins with Artemis/stag are struck from common obverse dies, and therefore, they were issued at one mint in Panticapaeum. All are new, without traces of circulation, and all are punched with the wheat-ear countermark. The appearance of such a countermark can be explained not by the confirmation of their exchange rate but by some other particular purpose of this coinage. For instance, it may somehow be connected with the supply of Bosphoran grain for the army of Mithridates, and countermarked coins may be used to pay for mercenaries who protect the grain regions of Bosphorus. We do not know of any other Bosphoran hoards of such composition, consisting only of countermarked Bosphoran tetrachalkoi mixed with Pontic obols. The neighbourhood of fresh Bosphoran coins linked by common obverses and Pontic obols of the common Zeus/eagle type makes it impossible to sample both coinages from circulation. This existing situation makes us believe that this money was given to a mercenary from the treasury of the garrison guarding the residence where the royal family lived. These bronzes were used precisely for the daily allowances of soldiers, the well-known *sitarchia* of the written sources⁴⁶.

44 Abramzon 2012.

45 Callataÿ 2007, 286, table 12.

46 On military types for Hellenistic bronze currencies used to pay *sitarchia*, see Psoma 2009, 34.

CATALOGUE

Panticapaeum: c. 95-90 BC

Artemis/stag

- | | | | |
|----|---------|-----|---|
| 1. | F-07-59 | 7.1 | Cf. BAR 1102, pl. II.4. <i>Obv.</i> countermark, wheat-ear. |
| 2. | F-07-60 | 6.0 | As last. |
| 3. | F-07-61 | 6.5 | As last. |
| 4. | F-07-62 | 5.5 | As last. |
| 5. | F-07-63 | 5.7 | As last. |

Phanagoria: c. 95-90 BC

Artemis/stag

- | | | | |
|----|---------|-----|---|
| 6. | F-07-64 | 6.5 | Cf. Abramzon 2012, fig 6.6. <i>Obv.</i> countermark, wheat-ear. |
| 7. | F-07-65 | 7.9 | As last. |
| 8. | F-07-66 | 6.2 | As last. |
| 9. | F-07-66 | 6.4 | As last. |

Uncertain Panticapaeum or Phanagoria

Artemis/stag

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 10. | F-07-68 | 5.4 | <i>Obv.</i> countermark, wheat-ear. |
| 11. | F-07-69 | 3.7 | As last. |

Amisus: c. 100-85 BC

Zeus/eagle

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|-----|--------------------|
| 12. | F-07-70 | 9.4 | Cf. SNG BM I 1144. |
|-----|---------|-----|--------------------|

Gaziura: c. 100-85 BC

Zeus/eagle

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|------|-------------------------|
| 13. | F-07-71 | 15.0 | Cf. SNG BM I 1266-1267. |
|-----|---------|------|-------------------------|

Taulara: c. 100-85 BC

Zeus/eagle

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|------|---|
| 14. | F-07-73 | 10.9 | Cf. SNG BM I 1288-1289. |
| 15. | F-07-76 | 17.2 | Rev. To I.,  |
| 16. | F-07-72 | 15.9 | |

Uncertain of Pontus: c. 100-85 BC

Zeus/eagle

- | | | | |
|-----|---------|------|------------------------------|
| 17. | F-07-74 | 16.1 | Very worn. |
| 18. | F-07-75 | 15.8 | [...]PQN (Gaziura, Taulara?) |
| 19. | F-07-77 | 11.4 | Very worn. |

A MERCENARY'S PURSE FROM THE ROYAL RESIDENCE IN PHANAGORIA (CH XI, 145B)

In 2007, a purse was discovered in the royal residence⁴⁷ containing seven Panticapaean tetrachalkoi of the Dionysus/tripod⁴⁸ type. In our opinion, the 'hoard' from Kerch Bay (IGCH 1142 = CH XI, 135), representing an amount for military payments, consisted mainly of the same coins. The coins from this purse predate the Artemis/stag included in the previous purse, but both were found in the same burnt layer of the fire of 63 BC.

CATALOGUE

Panticapaeum, c. 85-65 BC

Dionysus/tripod

- | | | | |
|----|---------|-------|---|
| 1. | F-07-01 | 4.8 g | Cf. SNG BM I 937-940. Rev. To L,  , to r.,  . |
| 2. | F-07-02 | 5.7 g | Overstruck on Artemis/stag; ΦANA. |
| 3. | F-07-03 | 4.8 g | As last. |
| 4. | F-07-04 | 3.5 g | Overstruck on unclear type. |
| 5. | F-07-05 | 5.2 g | Overstruck on Amisus, Ares/sword. |
| 6. | F-07-06 | 4.6 g | Overstruck on Artemis/stag; ΦANA. |
| 7. | F-07-07 | 3.6 g | Overstruck on unclear type. |

THE PHANAGORIA 2022 HOARD: ANOTHER CASE OF CASH OF MERCENARY

In 2022, a hoard of bronze coins was discovered during excavation at Phanagoria (excavation site 'Lower City'), hidden under a stone next to the foundation of the wall of the building⁴⁹ (Fig. 3). Owing to corrosion, the coins from the hoard were found adhering together in a pile, the shape of which suggests that they were stored in a purse.⁵⁰ There were ten coins from the Mithridatic period: five Bosporan, four Pontic, and one unidentified. Except for two Panticapaean chalkoi of the Athena/prow⁵¹ and Tripod/star⁵² types, all other coins are obols and tetrachalkoi. A pair of anonymous Bosporan obols struck from a common obverse die adjoins the

47 Abramzon 2012.

48 SNG BM I, 937-940.

49 Abramzon - Ostapenko 2023.

50 Phanagoria Museum. Inv. FM-KP 124/1-9 N4593-4601.

51 SNG BM I, 927.

52 SNG BM I, 941-944.

Panticapaeon obol of the Mên/Dionysus standing type⁵³. Coins of Amisus, Chabacta and Sinope represent pontic bronze. The Amisus obol of the head in a leather cap/quiver type⁵⁴ (c. 120-100 BC) was first discovered in Phanagoria (if not even in the entire Bosphorus). The hoard includes two coins of the Mithridates VI as Perseus/Pegasus type (c. 85-65 BC) from Amisus and Chabacta. The coins of the latter mint have not been found before in Phanagoria (or in the entire Bosphorus). Perseus/Pegasus coins are seldom found on Bosphorus and are always associated with the presence of Mithridates' troops. The latest issue, Zeus/eagle from Sinope completes the set of Pontic coins in the hoard. One coin could not be attributed due to extremely poor preservation; its size allows it to be considered a tetrachalkon.

The pattern of this Mithridatic hoard of large bronze denominations such as anonymous obols linked by common obverse, as well as Perseus/Pegasus coins from Amisus and Chabacta, and the Amisus obol of the head in a leather cap/quiver type (all these Pontic issues are exclusive to the numismatic profile for Bosphorus and they were used for the military payments), definitely excludes the possibility of their unique sampling from circulation and allows us believe that the cash was issued centrally from a single source, which could only be the garrison treasury. Since a garrison was stationed in Phanagoria, guarding the residence where the king's family lived, we believe the purse could belong to a Pontic mercenary, representing cash allowances to him. The presence of Panticapaeon issues, such as Athena/prow and Tripod/star, used as a small change shows that some part of wages had to be exchanged for everyday spending.

It should be noted that 20 m to the west of the place where the hoard was found, the main city street rose from the lower plateau to the acropolis, which occupied the central hill of the upper plateau, where the royal palace was located. Some part of the mercenaries could be stationed below, protecting this main way to the citadel. There is little doubt that the purse was hidden in a panic during the anti-Mithridatic uprising of the Phanagorians in 63 BC.

53 BAR 1102, pl. VIII.1-7.

54 SNG BM I, 1135.

CATALOGUE

Panticapaeum: c. 110 BC

Athena/prow

1. FM-KP-124/1 N4593 13 1.63 Cf. SNG BM I 927.

After 95 BC

Tripod/star

2. FM-KP-124/2 N4594 14 1.72 Cf. SNG BM I 941-944.

c. 100-75 BC

Mēn/Dionysus standing

3. FM-KP-124/3 N4595 30 9.93 Cf. BAR 1102, pl. VIII.1-7. Rev. To l., .

c. 89/8-63 BC

Dionysus/bow-case

4. FM-KP-124/4 N4596 25 13.76 Cf. BAR 1102, pl. XIII.5a. Rev. To l., .
5. FM-KP-124/5 N4597 24 14.08 Cf. <https://bosporan-kingdom.com/212-3041/72.html>. This dies-combination.
Rev. To l., . Obv. As last.

Amisus: c. 125-100 BC

Head in leather cap/quiver

6. FM-KP-124/6 N4598 27 15.18 Cf. SNG BM I 1135-1138.

c. 85-65 BC

Perseus/Pegasus

7. FM-KP-124/7 N4599 21 10.09 Cf. SNG BM I 1213. Rev. below .

Chabacta: c. 85-65 BC

Perseus/Pegasus

8. FM-KP-124/8 N4600 23 12.62 Cf. SNG BM I 1258. Rev. to l. .

Sinope: c. 85-65 BC

Zeus/eagle

9. FM-KP-124/9 N4601 19 5.44 Cf. SNG BM I 1543-1549. Rev. to l. , to
r. star.

10. Unidentified Bosporus or Pontic. 20 mm.

CONCLUSION

It is time to draw some conclusions. So, the primary source that makes it possible to attest to military payments in Bosphorus in the Mithridatic era are coin hoards from cities and military settlements on the *chora*, where mercenaries served. Such hoards consist exclusively of coins specially minted for military payments. If we leave aside two cases of the payment of wages to the garrison in silver (CH XI, 137, 138), then the use of bronze coins for military payments is characteristic of Bosphorus in the Late Hellenistic period. During the Mithridatic Wars, mercenaries were paid in Bosporan and Pontic bronze coins of significant denominations, which apparently amounted to less than an obol per day. The purses of mercenaries containing the same amount indicate the approximate level of their pay, equal to 22(?) obols per month.

The case of Bosphorus demonstrates the success of one of the major innovations of the Hellenistic period – the systematic use of bronze for military payments⁵⁵. Military iconography often emphasises the purpose of bronze coinage for the army: the anonymous obols were struck with Dionysus-Mithridates Eupator on the obverse and the bow-case on the reverse. The wheat-ear countermark on the Bosporan tetrachalkoi of the Artemis/stag type possibly alludes to the Bosporan grain supplies for the army of Mithridates and the purpose of these coins for the daily allowances (*sitarchia*) of soldiers, ensuring the protection of the grain-producing districts of Bosphorus.

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Conflict of Interest

Within the scope of the study, there is no personal or financial conflict of interest between the authors.

Ethics

Regarding the Ethics Committee authorisation; the authors and reviewers of this study have declared that there is no need for Ethics Committee authorisation.

55 See Psoma 2009, 34.

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Fig. 2. Mercenary's Purse from the Vyshestebliyevskaia 3 Settlement



Fig. 3. The 2022 mercenary's Purse from Phanagoria