

Note on a possible new Hellenistic coin hoard from Dobroudja. The Lipnița hoard

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In the year 1981 the Archaeological Museum from Constanța received from colonel Gh. Crețu a Lysimachus type stater discovered on the territory of Lipnița farm, Constanța county, 8-10 km from Canlia commune. It was a rare type issue from Chalcedon, having in the inner left field the monogram Κ and in the exergue the name ΤΩΠΥ. The discovery of a gold coin is not quite usual, so it was quickly published¹. Twenty years later, a second Lysimachus type stater coming from the same village of Lipnița, having monogram ΑΥ was bought for the numismatic collection of the Romanian Academy from Iuliana Herlea (Bucharest)². The coin was found nearby Băneasa forest on Lipnița territory. There are around 9 km between Canlia and Lipnița border of Băneasa forest, confirming colonel Crețu's data and suggesting that the coins belong in fact to the same location and context with that from Constanța Archaeological Museum. The two coins could be the remains of a possible hoard buried somewhere at the Lipnița limit of Băneasa forest.

Lifetime Lysimachus type stater
Uncertain mint (Alexandria Troas?)

Obv. Diademed head of deified Alexander right with the horn of Ammon.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ – ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΟΥ

Athena seated left on throne, holding Nike and spear and resting left elbow on shield; spear behind; in inner left field, monogram ΑΥ.

1. Stater 12 h; 8,51 g; 18 mm (fig. 1; 2×1).

Müller, *Lysimachus*, - .

Pridik, *Anadol*, - .

Thompson, *Lysimachus*, - .

A. Meadows, *The Earliest Coinage of Alexandria Troas*, NC, 164, 2004, p. 63-67, -

Classical Numismatic Group, Mail Bid Sale 58, 19.09.2001, no. 369.

Numismatica Ars Classica, Auction 59, 4.04.2011, no. 581.

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¹ Antoaneta Vertan, *Un stater din Chalcedon descoperit*

în Dobrogea, BSNR, 75-76 (1981-1982), 1983, pp. 29-30.

² C. Preda, E. Petac, *Les monnaies d'or de la Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine. I. Monnaies grecques et romaines*, Wetteren, 2006, p. 62, no. 264.



Fig. 1

Numismatic Department from the Library of the Romanian Academy, inv. AV.A.176.
Alexandria Troas?, years 297/6-282/1.

Posthumous Lysimachus type stater
Chalcedon

Obv. Diademed head of deified Alexander right with the horn of Ammon.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ – ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΟΥ

Athena seated left on throne, holding Nike and spear and resting left elbow on shield; spear behind;
in inner left field, monogram Κ and ΩΠΥ in the exergue.

2. Stater 12 h; 8,43 g; 19 mm (fig. 2; 2×1).

Müller, *Lysimachus*, 468 var (K in inner left field).

Seyrig, *Byzance et Calcédoine*, pp. 196-197, 205-195 BC.

Marinescu, p. 223, group III, issue 35, no. 77 (O33 / R71), 230-mid 220 BC.

National History and Archaeology Museum from Constanța, inv. 6114.

The first coin (fig. 1), is not recorded in the catalogues and seems to be a lifetime issue of Lysimachus type. The style of this stater suggests that it could be included in a rare series of gold coins considered to be struck in a mint supposed to be Byzantion³, Alexandria Troas⁴ or even another mint, still unidentified⁵. Whatever the mint was, it is certain that all the known coins of this type were struck using a single pair of dies (pl. I, nos. 1-3)⁶. The obverse die presents strong and apparently exclusive stylistic similarities (being almost identical) with the obverse die of certain restraint Lysimachus type lifetime series (issues 30-31⁷) from generically called Alexandria Troas mint. These series are not so well-defined. Certain issues (Meadows 29=Thompson 140 and Meadows 30=Thompson -) have in inner left field an eagle head and in the exergue monograms Ω⁸ or ΜΕ⁹ (pl. I, no. 4). Another one (Meadows 31=Thompson 141) has the

³ Cf. Margareth Thompson, *The mints of Lysimachus*, in C.M. Kraay, G.K. Jenkins (eds.), *Essays in Greek Coinage presented to Stanley Robinson*, Oxford, 1967, p. 176, note 2.

⁴ Margareth Thompson, *The mints of Lysimachus*, in C.M. Kraay, G.K. Jenkins (eds.), *Essays in Greek Coinage presented to Stanley Robinson*, Oxford, 1967, p. 176, nos. 140-141 and note 2.

⁵ A. Meadows, *The Earliest Coinage of Alexandria*

Troas, NC, 164, 2004, p. 64, nos. 29-31 and especially p. 66.

⁶ 1: Classical Numismatic Group, Mail Bid Sale 58, September 19th, 2001, no. 369; 2: C. Preda, E. Petac, *loc. cit.*; 3: Numismatica Ars Classica, Auction 59, April 4th, 2011, no. 581.

⁷ A. Meadows, *op. cit.*, p. 64, issues 29-31.

⁸ ANS 1944.100.81206.

⁹ Cayon Numismatica, May 2012 Auction, May 16th 2012, no. 4001.



Fig. 2

eagle head in the exergue and monogram ME in inner left field (pl. I, no. 5)¹⁰. Other coins, which appeared on the market during the last years, after Meadows's article was published, have the same eagle head in inner left field and monograms ME and Δ in the exergue¹¹ (pl. I, no. 6) or only the monograms ⊕ and ME in the exergue¹² (pl. I, no. 7) – without eagle's head symbol, as Lipnița's stater. All these coins – Meadows 29-31 and the new entries – were struck with a single obverse die (Meadows O 4), exclusively used for this group and nowhere appearing in the rest of the sequence from Alexandria Troas. Despite few minor but existing different details (pl. II, 1 a-c and 2 a-c), the obverse die's features of Lipnița's stater with monogram Δ in inner left field suggest that this coin could be included in the series represented by Meadows 29-31 issues and the new entries from Alexandria Troas. As it was already noticed, "the absence of die-links between these issues and others in the sequence gives ground for caution"¹³ in their assignment to Alexandria Troas mint. Anyway, the presence in this fragment of hoard of a lifetime Lysimachus type stater is significant. It suggests a 3rd century BC hoard.

The second stater (fig. 2) is also a very rare one from the 3rd group of Chalcedon posthumous Lysimachus type emissions, which "sees the commencement of the regular gold mintage of the city"¹⁴. In fact, only few such coins are registered. They belong to the so-called 35th issue from Chalcedon struck around 230-mid 220 BC¹⁵ or more recently late 220's¹⁶. This "35 issue" includes Marinescu's staters 76 (O 32 / R 71)¹⁷, 77 (O 33 / R 71)¹⁸ and 78 (O 34 / R 72)¹⁹, having monogram K in the inner left field and ΓΩΠΥ in the exergue²⁰. The problem is that Marinescu 76²¹ and 77²² were struck with the same pair of

¹⁰ Ponterio & Associates, Sale 154, June 2010 Baltimore Auction, 18 June 2010, no. 8029 (pl. I, no. 5); also, Roma Numismatics Ltd., Auction 3, 31 March 2012, no. 184. A similar stater comes from Dăeni hoard; see Gh. Poenaru Bordea, *Tezaurul de la Dăeni, jud. Tulcea. Catalogul monedelor din colecția Muzeului Național de Antichități*, in Simpozion Chișinău 2003, p. 19, no. 40; MNIR inv. 2377.

¹¹ Nomos AG, Auction 2, 18 May 2010, no. 43.

¹² Numismatica Ars Classica, Auction 54, 24 March 2010, no. 89.

¹³ A. Meadows, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

¹⁴ C. A. Marinescu, *Making and spending money along the Bosphorus. The Lysimachi coinages minted by Byzantium and Chalcedon and their socio-cultural context*, Columbia University PhD diss., New York, 1999, p. 219.

¹⁵ C.A. Marinescu, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

¹⁶ C.A. Marinescu, Catherine Lorber, *The "Black Sea" tetradrachm hoard*, in Evgeni Paunov, Svetoslava Filipova

(eds.), *Studies in honor of Ilya Prokopov for his 60th birthday*, Veliko Turnovo, 2012, p. 235.

¹⁷ Classical Numismatic Group, Auction 28, 08.12.1993, no. 80; Gemini, Auction VII, 9 January 2011, no. 312 (the same).

¹⁸ National History and Archaeology Museum from Constanța, inv. 6114; Antoaneta Vertan, *loc. cit.*

¹⁹ L. Müller, *Die Münzen des Thrakischen Königs Lysimachus*, Kopenhagen, 1858, pl. IX, no. 468 (where monogram K); H. Seyrig, *Monnaies hellénistiques de Byzance et de Calcédoine*, in C.M. Kraay, G.K. Jenkins (eds.), *Essays in Greek Coinage presented to Stanley Robinson*, Oxford, 1967, pp. 197, 200 and pl. 25, no. 29 (where also K); Paris, Cabinet des Médailles de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France, inv. 75.

²⁰ C.A. Marinescu, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

²¹ Classical Numismatic Group, Auction 28, 08.12.1993, no. 80; Gemini, Auction VII, 9 January 2011, nr. 312 (the same).

²² Antoaneta Vertan, *loc. cit.*



Pl. I. Lifetime Lysimachus type staters from Alexandria Troas.



Pl. II. 1: Alexandria Troas?, Meadows 29-31, Obverse 4 and details (a, b, c); 2: Alexandria Troas?, Lipnița stater obverse and details (a, b, c); 3-5: Chalcedon staters, Marinescu issue 35, nos. 76-78.

dies (so there are in fact parts of a single issue); concerning Marinescu 78 it has in inner left field monogram K, not K, $\Gamma\Omega\PY$ in the exergue and a completely different obverse die than Marinescu 76-77²³. Marinescu's issue 35 includes in fact two different issues, each of them struck with a single and specific pair of dies (pl. II, nos. 3-4 and no. 5). Lipnița stater seems to be the single known of this type coming from an identified coin hoard. A tetradrachm having in the left field a monogram maybe derived from $\Gamma\Omega\PY$ ($\overline{\text{K}}$)²⁴ and lyre in the exergue (the same symbol present on Marinescu 74 stater from Chalcedon²⁵) come from Mektepinini hoard²⁶, offering a *terminus ante quem* (190 BC) that is not contrary to Marinescu's chronology.

Even if there are only two staters recovered from the hoard, it is possible that the original batch has not been significantly larger than this, reflecting maybe a payment for a local mercenary²⁷ in one of the political context from the last part of the 3rd c. BC (the events taking place in Thrace during the last period of fight between Antiochus Hierax and Seleucos II, the conflict between Byzantion and Rhodes or the fall of Cavarus and of the Tylis kingdom).

²³ For a correct description, see L. Müller, *loc. cit.* and H. Seyrig, *loc. cit.*

²⁴ C. A. Marinescu, *loc. cit.*

²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 222-223.

²⁶ Cf. H. Seyrig, *op. cit.*, pp. 196, 200 (no. 27) and pl. 25, no. 27; C.A. Marinescu, *op. cit.*, p. 223, no. 75; N. Olcay, H. Seyrig, *Le trésor de Mektepinini en Phrygie*, Paris, 1965, p. 12, no. 228 (where it seems that the author described another coin than in photo) and pl. 9, no. 228.

²⁷ There is a long tradition of the Thracian mercenaries presence in the Hellenistic armies: see Diodorus Siculus XIX, 14.5 (where the Thracian cavalry from the army of satrap

Peucestes, in 317 BC); Diodorus Siculus XIX, 27.5 and 29.3 (where the Thracians from the armies of Antigonus and Eumenes, battle of Paraetacene, 317 BC); Diodorus Siculus XX, 22-23.3 (where the Thracians and Scythians from the army of Satyrus, king of Cimmerian Bosphorus); Polyenus 4.7 (the Thracians from the Antiochus II army); Polybios, V, 5.82 (Thracians in the battle of Raphia between Ptolemy IV and Antiochus III, 217 BC); ISM I 15 (Istros payments for the military protection of Rhemaxos against Zoltes); for a discussion applied on the late 4th century see A. Vilcu, *La diffusion de l'or monnayé au nord du Danube à la fin du IV^e siècle av. J.-C. et les guerres des diadoques*, Peuce, 13, 2015, p. 193-208.