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“BAD-STYLE” COINS OR IMITATIONS?*

The aim of this article is to discuss a very important topic of interest and to define the character of an immense group of coins, namely — the group of the tetradrachms, which, according to the author, are called the tetradrachms of the island of Thasos, and the “Thasos type” tetradrachms of “bad-style”. A number of authors have supported the hypothesis that the coins in question are eastern Celtic imitations. The author of this article has analyzed a number of large coin hoards, which he has already sorted and published. The methodology includes the analysis of spatial distribution; the examination of the internal chronology and dynamics of the coinage; a “die-study”. The author has divided the coinage in terms of names and types of Thasians present on the coins in three main groups: original — up until approximately the end of the 2nd Century BCE; of a “Thasos type” under the control of the Roman administration in Macedonia in the period up until *ca.* 80 BCE; imitative — after 70 BCE. At the same time, the author has given his own definition regarding which tetradrachms of the “Dionysios Soter” type are imitations. These are the rough and almost completely barbarous imitations, on which the legends are simply forged by marks. The images are stylized and they diverge from the prototype. The coins themselves, which have so far been called imitations, the author has divided into three groups: the first and the second ones he refers to as “bad-style” coins, whereas the third one he calls “real” imitations. The question of the so-called imitations of the tetradrachms of the Macedonian regions has been touched upon, as well.

Key words: numismatics, coins, tetradrachms, imitations, Celts, Thracians.

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МОНЕТЫ «ПЛОХОГО СТИЛЯ» ИЛИ ИМИТАЦИИ?

Целью данной статьи является обсуждение очень важной темы, представляющей интерес, а также определение характера огромной группы монет, а именно — группы тетрадрахм, которые, по мнению автора, являются тетрадрахмами острова Тасос, а также тетрадрахмы типа «Тасос» «плохого стиля». Ряд авторов поддержали гипотезу о том, что рассматриваемые монеты являются восточными кельтскими имитациями. Автор этой статьи проанализировал ряд крупных сокровищ, которые он уже отсортировал и опубликовал. Методология включает анализ пространственного распределения, изучение внутренней хронологии и динамики чеканки, а также соображения по вопросу о возможности выявления подражаний. Автор разделил чеканку по именам и типам, присутствующих на монетах тасийцев, на три основные группы: оригинал — примерно до конца II в. до н.э.; типа «Тасос» под контролем римской администрации в Македонии в период до ок. 80 г. до н.э.; подражательный — после 70 г. до н.э. В то же время автор дал собственное определение относительно того, какие тетрадрахмы типа «Дионисий Сотер» являются имитациями. Это грубые и почти полностью варварские подражания, на которых легенды переданы знаками. Изображения стилизованы и отличаются от прототипа. Сами монеты, которые до сих пор назывались имитациями, автор разделил на три группы: первую и

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вторую, которые он называет монетами «плохого стиля», а третью — «настоящие» имитации. Был также затронут вопрос о т.н. имитациях тетрадрахм македонских регионов.

Ключевые слова: нумизматика, монеты, тетрадрахмы, подражания, кельты, фракийцы.

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Investigation and results

The investigation of the imitations of the Thasian tetradrachms, and, to a lesser extent, the investigation of the First Macedonian region, has long been an object of study for a number of numismatists. The methods of approach most researchers have undertaken are primarily based on stylistic analysis. Attempts for classification have been made, based on the exterior elements: style, shaping through notches, dots, distinguishing features and designs. It is important to pinpoint that one of the first collectors who has published his collection — M. Dessewffy, has managed to identify the real Thasos imitations quite successfully (Dessewffy 1910: No. 391—404, 538—549, 831—844, 992—995, 1261—1277). Only one “bad-style” coin has been misidentified as an imitation (Dessewffy 1910: No. 1260). In actuality, this is a Group I, “original” type coin, but it has been struck to a lesser standard than what was commonly accepted (Fig. 1: 1). This particular type of coin is commonly found in coin hoards, dating to the 2nd century BCE, and they are much earlier than real imitations (Prokopov 2011: pl. I, No. 5) (Fig. 1: 2). Another researcher is D. Allen, who has also proposed his own classification and has managed to identify the real imitations quite successfully (Allen 1987: pl. XIII—XIV, No. 222—237). There are, however, 4 tetradrachms, which he has classified as imitations (Allen 1987: pl. XIII, No. 218—221). These are an original one (Prokopov 2006: Gruppe IX, Taf. 11—29) and three “Thasos type” tetradrachms, which have nothing in common with the imitations. Furthermore, the solid coin hoards, discovered and retained in Thrace, have allowed for an opportunity to trace back the origin and development of the different classes of coins (Prokopov 2006: Gruppe XV, Taf. 80—83, Gruppe XVI, Taf. 84—103).

Deriving from what are already commonly-accepted views on the subject, other researchers affiliate “normal” coins to the imitation groups. In order to prove his point, R. Göbl introduces the prototypes of the imitated coins first, and the imitations themselves later. There is a good selection in Göbl’s work, and only a small portion of the “bad-style” coins are labeled as imitations (Göbl 1973: Taf. 46, Klasse II: 2—5). The determination of their type according to the examination of the composition of a number of substantially large coin hoards from Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary, has shown that those are regular “bad-style” coins, and not imitations (Prokopov 2006: Gruppe XII, XIV).

A similar approach is observed in K. Castelin’s work, regarding the selection of the imitations. One category includes regular emissions of “bad-style” coins and real imitations (Castelin 1978: 1349—1355). The seven coins, labeled as imitations, are from regular emissions (Prokopov 2006: Gruppe XVI—XIX). The tetradrachms of the First Macedonian region, declared imitations (Castelin 1978: 1384, 1387), are regular emissions, as well. Furthermore, they possess the same obverse seal, but on the second coin, it is heavily worn (Prokopov 2012: No. 732—744).

G. Dembski has also miscategorised several “normal” coins of the Thasos variation as imitations (Dembski 1998: No. 1505—1506, 1512). Additionally, he has labeled several regular

tetradrachms of the First Macedonian region as imitations (Dembski 1998: No. 1202—1204). These are coins of Group III, struck with a heavily worn obverse seal, represented in huge numbers in a number of localized coin hoards (Prokopov 2012: No. 732—744).

A. Sâșianu has suggested a specific approach to the subject, which aims to analyze the Celtic symbols in the depictions on the reverse sides of the Thasos variation coins. As regards the present images, he has identified 8 groups, which bear resemblances to animals, with an extant scepter, a nimbus of dots etc. (Sâșianu 1994: 293—299). The author has only commented on rough imitations of the Thasos tetradrachms.

Successive researchers have also “adhered to the rules” and have categorized “normal” coins as imitations. Five tetradrachms are evident in M. Kostial’s catalogue, for which she has expressed uncertainty whether they are imitations or not (Kostial 1997: 950—954). She has frankly stated that the early Celtic imitations mimic the style of these tetradrachms so well that it is impossible to give a definite answer to the question of whether they are originals or fakes. In actuality, all five of the coins are *not* imitations. They are a part of big regular series (Prokopov 2006: Gruppe XV, Taf. 80—83, Gruppe XVI, Taf. 84—103). As regards to the next group, indisputably labeled as imitations (Kostial 1997: 955—967), it can be said that all of them are in fact regular emissions of the “Thasos” type (Prokopov 2006: Gruppe XII, XIII, XIX). Three tetradrachms from the First Macedonian region, labeled as imitations, have been published in the same catalogue. These are, however, completely standard tetradrachms from Groups II and III (Prokopov 2012: No. 217—244, 732—744).

The final generalizing study is the one by I. Lukanc, where the idea of the tetradrachms of the Thasos type being imitations, has practically been “cemented”. What is more, there are even original coins, labeled as imitations, which have been included in the catalogue (Lukanc 1996: No. 1—994). In the catalogue, the author has successfully managed to separate them from the genuine imitations and has stated that he is aware of my definition of the tetradrachms of the Thasos type, coined in Macedonia for the needs of the Roman Republic. Yet, he has decided to label the entire coin assemblage as imitations. A huge portion of them is from coin hoards from Bulgaria, which I have personally sorted. Another portion, published in Romania and Hungary, I have sorted through the available publication. All of them are included in my “die-study” (Prokopov 2006). This has given me the grounds to state that the group of 944 tetradrachms, described in I. Lukanc’s catalogue, is a regular Roman Provincial coinage; therefore, these coins are not to be labeled as imitations in the accepted sense of the word (Fig. 1: 1—3).

The traditional approach towards this subject in the recent years can be seen in the published collection of A. Sergeev, issue The Moscow State Historical Museum, as well, in which the Thasos type tetradrachms have once again been labeled as imitations (Sergeev 2012: 57—59, No. 145—150). Similarly to the previously mentioned publications, these are regular tetradrachms of the Thasos type (Prokopov 2006: Gruppe XII, XV—XVI). Perhaps the preparation process for publication has taken place in parallel and the authors of A. Sergeev’s catalogue have not had any time to get acquainted with the results of the work that myself and other Russian colleagues had conducted. Our work on the tetradrachms of the Thasos type (Prokopov et al. 2011a: 77—103) and of the First Macedonian region (Prokopov et al. 2011b: 104—118) from the MIG Moscow collection has been realized along with a team of Russian colleagues. This has enabled the correct interpretation and definition of all coins on the basis of the information, obtained from the coin hoards, examined so far.

Dating and spatial distribution

One of the most complicated issues of this subject is the correct dating of the imitations. It was found that a direct link exists between the obverse seals of some of the regular coins, combined with reverses of genuine imitations. Unusual combinations of regular obverse seals with highly barbarous reverse sides are found. As a result, a complicated picture is in evidence, abundant in contradictions in terms of dating. At times, the difference in the striking time exceeds the scientifically-reasoned and logically-accepted time limits. I have received criticism from colleagues regarding the dating of some particular coin seals. One such occasion has prompted me to seriously examine the possible reasons behind this. One dependable option is the use of the following method: the copying and the direct casting of coin seals, which would, later on, be used to strike coins. This practice has been used in ancient times and therefore requires special precautions when it comes to dating. There are solid examples with dozens of early Thasian seals, copied and used for coin striking, combined with reverses of rough imitations (Prokopov 2006: Gruppe XVI, V DD9; Gruppe XX, V HH1). These processes have taken place around and after the middle of the 1st century BCE. The combining of regular obverse seals from *ca.* 100—90 BCE with rough imitations from the period after the middle of the 1st century BCE can lead to some serious complications. If the traditional comparison between seals is taken into account, it can be concluded that the same seal has functioned for half a century, if not even more.

Aside from the direct application of a coin seal via taking a seal mould and then casting it on a harder material, other attempts made for copying the original seal via engraving are evident, as well. Both methods have given a starting point about the prototype, but not about its origin and time of production. One thing is certain — the manufacturers of imitative tetradrachms of the Thasos type are people with solid training in metalworking. Deriving from the traced attempts for the making of the legends, it can be concluded that the manufacturers did not have a command at the written language. With regards to the Thasos imitations, as they have been commonly perceived so far, it is not a case of a single coinage. Their manufacture has continued throughout dozens of years. The several coinage centers have functioned at different times. With regards to Groups I and II, as previously defined (Prokopov 2012: 337—338), it can be accepted that they are “bad -style” coins.

The manufacturers of the rough imitations from Group III, however, came outside of Thrace. It is highly likely that they are of a Celtic origin. They worked the metal and manufactured the coins over a significant period of time. Additionally, they catered for the Thracian market after the island of Thasos discontinued their coinage. Most probably, it was a case of a mutually beneficial agreement between the metalworking masters and the local Thracian rulers. The end of the Thasian type tetradrachms most likely occurred during the 70s of the 1st century BCE — a time, when there was no longer a need in Rome for these coins to be produced. This most probably took place after the attack on and death of Mithridates VI in 63 BCE (Luc., 27, 8—9; Plut. Cam., 19, 11). As a result of the analysis of the coin hoards, it has become clear that until then, rhythmic production cycles of Thasos type tetradrachms had occurred. Most commonly, they are encountered in coin hoards, which contain a small number of regular coins and a significant number of the Thasos type imitations. This pattern is extremely characteristic of the territory north of Hemus to the Carpathians. The coin hoards found in the southern part of Stara Planina, however, consist predominantly of original coins from the 2nd century BCE and, after a hiatus, of another group, consisting exclusively of rough imitations, mixed with Roman Republican denarii from around the middle of the 1st century BCE. These are two separate groups, divided into a well-pronounced chronological order. The ceasing of production of original tetradrachm coinage affected both territories south and north of Hemus differently. To the south, an abundant coinage of the Thasos

type imitations appeared, which was being produced in the Eastern and Northeastern Rhodopes (Fig. 1: 5—6). Some of these imitations were combined in mixed hoards along with Roman Republican denarii. Often times coin blanks, meant for the striking of imitations of tetradrachms, are found in these coin hoards (Slavova, Prokopov 2017: 1014—1015). A perfect example of this trend is the Dolno Botevocoïn hoard, Haskovo region, composed of rough imitations (Prokopov, Slavova 2016: No. 815—824). Two coin blanks are evident in this coin hoard. Several imitations, countermarked with an anchor symbol, are in evidence, as well (Gerasimov 1946b: 63; Prokopov 1995: 451—454) in the Kolyo Marinovo coin hoard, Plovdiv region, and in the NAIM-BAS Sofia collection (Inv. No. 6113 and 7144), which are believed to have been struck prior to the start of the 72nd year BCE, i.e. prior to the Lucullus march along the Western Pontus and the conquest over Apollonia Pontica. This directly correlates with the temporary ceasing of work on this mint (Fig. 1: 7—9).

The area, in which the coin hoards containing real imitations were discovered, covers the territory east of the Black Sea coast, and west to the region of Philippopolis. To the north and to the south it is restricted within the territory between the Rhodopes and Stara Planina. Deriving from this fact, my personal notion regarding the existence of several production centers has been radically shifted. The abundance of imitations of Thasian tetradrachms in the collections of a number of European museums has allowed for such a hypothesis to be considered. Particularly in southwestern areas — in Romania, East Hungary, and Slovenia. However, following the thorough examination of the coin hoards, it was found, that outside the borders of the mentioned territory, there is not a single coin hoard, consisting exclusively of pronounced real imitations of the Thasian tetradrachms. It is most likely the case that they spread to the west and north-west as either part of mixed coin hoards or as single coins.

An important starting point is the analysis of the composition of the coin hoards, conducted by D. Allen. He has noted that the Thasos imitations have not been found mixed up with imitations of coins of Philip II, Alexander III, and Philip III. They are, however, often found along with tetradrachms of Macedonia Prima. In this instance, it is important to clarify that the coin hoards D. Allen has written about, namely Ostrov, Bogati and Kis-Szederjes (Mura Mica) do not contain any real Thasos imitations, but they do contain “bad-style” coins. Provided that we overlook the fact that the Thasos coins have been incorrectly interpreted as “bad-style” coins, as well as the fact that some Macedonian regions’ tetradrachms have been incorrectly identified as imitations, there is one important conclusion that can be drawn from D. Allen’s analysis — between the times of circulation of the Philip II, Alexander III, and Phillip III imitations and those of the Thasos type, there was a hiatus (Allen 1987: 36—37).

D. Allen has chosen an overstrike of a tetradrachm with the name of the Roman quaestor Aesillas on it as a starting point for the late dates of the Thasos imitations. He has mentioned the dates 93—88 BCE, which were familiar at the time. D Allen has correctly noted that the Thasos imitations were dispersed as parts of mixed coin hoards together with Roman Republican denarii. He has estimated the exchange rate to be 4:1 and has established that the manufacturers of the barbarous imitations were not influenced by the technology and style of the Roman coins. In the context of the overall analysis, D. Allen has proposed a concrete example of an exceptional tetradrachm, which would aid dating. The obverse side of the coin is standard — the head of Dionysius is depicted; however, the reverse displays a horseman with a spear, along with a comparatively well-preserved legend ΔΗΜΗΤ (Allen 1987: fig. 39, No. 240). Until recently, this coin was one of a kind. However, I was lucky enough to find a second, similar one, but with another set of seals, as well as a full legend — ΔΗΜΗΤΠΙΟC. D. Allen has put forward the hypothesis that

the image depicts the Thracian Horseman God. However, there is no current evidence to support the hypothesis of the existence of a Thracian king or leader, named Demetrius (Fig. 1: 10).

Additionally, D. Allen has found similarities between the Thasos imitations and Noricum's coins, which are described in Section I of his catalogue (Allen 1987: No. 173—180), as well as similarities to some of the coins of Biatec and Nonnos, described in Section V (Allen 1987: No. 241—247). He has supported his hypothesis by describing the composition of the Tamadau Mare, Reg. Bucuresti Coin hoard, Romania. A mixed coin hoard has been uncovered there, containing Thasos, Biatec and Nonnos coins. I fully support D. Allen's statements and I will continue to search for an answer to the question: Who is Demetrius?

Coins declared to be imitations have been predominantly discovered on the territories of modern-day Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. Up-to-date, the complete number of coins, registered and included in my new corpus of real imitations, is 504. In actuality, these are coins of determined origin or coins which have been published in scientific catalogues. It is important to note that hundreds of coins, included in auctions, exist as well, but they are not included in the territorial distribution analysis. In terms of territorial distribution between countries, the number of coins discovered alone or within a coin hoard is as follows: Bulgaria — 300 coins, Romania — 68 coins, and Hungary — 136 coins. In percentages, the ratio is Bulgaria — 59,52%; Romania — 13, 4%; Hungary — 26,9%.

It is important to clarify the following: The coin's registration in a museum collection or any other collection is not a valid justification for an origin. The interest towards the Celts takes place in times, during which Bulgaria is under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, whereas Romania is a vassal state of the Empire. The existing trend at the time — to create collections of Celtic coins — enabled wealthy collectors from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as western countries, to buy them from the Ottoman Empire.

An inventory of the coin hoards with Thasos imitations from Bulgaria

Group One: Mixed coin hoards. Uncovered solely in southern Bulgaria

Vetren, Pazardzhik region (42.266667° N 24.05° E) (CH VII 1985: 141; Prokopov 2006: 325; 2016: No 60). The coin hoard was discovered in 1977 during work in the vicinity of the village. It consists of silver coins from the 1st century BCE: four “New style” tetradrachms of Athens: (ΦΙΛΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ — ΗΡΟΔΗΣ) — 2; (ΗΡΑΚΛΩΝ — ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΔΗΣ) — 1; (ΦΙΛΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ — ΚΑΛΛΙΦΩΝ) — 1; 1 tetradrachm, a Thasos forgery; 3 Republican denarii (Paunov, Prokopov 2002: No. 131): L. Hostilius Saserna, 48 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 448/1—3?) — 2 specimens; L. Plautius Plancus, 47 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 453/1) — 1 specimen. Concealment took place *ca.* 47 BC. Misplaced. In Plovdiv — only 8 are retained in a private collection, reported by Yurukova (Yurukova 1979: 60). Unpublished.

Bolyarino I, Rakovski region, Plovdiv region (42.23° N 25.05° E) (IGCH 1973: 975; CH IX 2002: 325; Karayotov 1994: No. 28; Paunov, Prokopov 2002: No. 102; Prokopov 2006: 25; 2016: No. 33; Schönert-Geiss 1987: 96). Discovered on the 28th of May 1963 in the “Staria Drum” locality, 1200 metres north of the village (Gerasimov 1964: 241). It consists of 30 silver coins; 3 Thasos tetradrachms (Prokopov 2006: Class GG1, Obv. 378; HH7, CA, 90—70 BCE); 15 Thasos imitations (Göbl 1973. Klass III: 1; Group II: 1, overstruck on an Athens “new style”); 3 “new style” tetradrachms of Athens (ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗ ΣΩΣΑΝΔΡΟΣ) (Thompson 1961: No. 2286—2287, 2319—126/5 BCE); 1 tetradrachm — forgery of Maroneia (Schönert-Geiss 1987: 192, No. 1138/3);

1 Alexander tetradrachm from Messambria, M47 according to Iv. Karayotov — *ca.* 150/125 BCE (Karayotov 1994: 28) and 7 Republican denarii. Kept in the Plovdiv Regional Archaeological Museum, inv. No. 2273—2295 and 2313—2319. A portion of the finds has been misplaced. Published. Concealment took place in the period after 50 BCE. Different authors have suggested the following dates: M. Thompson — *ca.* 44 BCE; M. Crawford — 50/46 BCE (Crawford 1985: No. 328, 54/II), F. de Callataÿ and I. Prokopov — during 40/30 BCE (Callataÿ, Prokopov 1995: 5—12).

Karavelovo, Karlovo region, Plovdiv region (42.616667° N 24.65° E) (IGCH 1973: 978; Prokopov 2006: No. 140; 2016: No. 144). A mixed coin hoard of 40 silver coins from 2nd — 1st century BCE, discovered in 1959, close to the village. Of them, 36 are Republican denarii (Paunov, Prokopov 2002: No 108): (from Pinarius Natta, 150 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 208)) to M. Iunius Brutus, 54 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 433/1); one drachm of Dyrrhachium (Ceka 1972: No. 361). There is information about five other coins from the same coin hoard: Athens “new style” — 3 tetradrachms; Thasos — 1 tetradrachm; Thasosimitations — 1 tetradrachm. Concealment *ca.* 54 BCE. According to M. Crawford — 55/1 BCE (Crawford 1985: No. 328). Kept in the Karlovo Historical Museum. Unpublished (Shulekova 1979: 13—17, No. 1—32).

Malak Chardak, Saedinenie region, Plovdiv region (42.283333° N 24.633333° E) (Prokopov 2006: No. 174; 2016: No. 200). It was found *ca.* 1990—1992 in the “Pereto” locality, in a field close to the village. A mixed coin hoard of a total of 600+ silver coins from the 2nd — 1st century BCE. Of them — 529 coins and silver bracelets: Republican denarii (Paunov, Prokopov 2002: No. 115): 527 specimens from 189—180 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 141/1) and late specimens of Marcus Anthony and Octavian Augustus, 39 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 528/2b); 1 barbarous imitation of a Roman Republican denarius (Crawford 1974: No. 319/1, 408/1); 1 “new-style” Athens tetradrachm (ΕΠΙΓΕΝΗ ΣΟΣΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΚΑΛΛΙΚΡΑ) —126/125 BCE (Thompson 1961: 173, pl. 46, No. 442c—442d?); 1 tetradrachm — a Thasos forgery, *ca.* 60—40 BCE (Göbl 1973: Klass V). Concealment — around and after 39 BCE. Additionally, at the exact same location, later, looters dug out approximately 100 coins from the coin hoard, now misplaced and lost. A close parallel is the Bolyarino coin hoard, Plovdiv region (Callataÿ, Prokopov 1995: 5—12). The coin hoard is kept in the Plovdiv Regional Archaeological Museum, inv. No. 5769—5770. Published (Prokopov, Paunov 2013: 149—165).

Bratya Daskalovi, Chirpan region, Stara Zagora region (42.3° N 25.216667° E) (Prokopov 2016: No. 38). The coins were found in 2010 during regular archaeological field research conducted by M. Tonkova and colleagues on Karakochova mound — a Thracian tumulus, located east of the village. The collective coin hoard was uncovered in close proximity to an inhumation. The coin hoard consists of 12 silver coins: 2 tetradrachms with the name of the Roman quaestor Aesillas (Bauslaugh 2000: O.71 — R.273, O.45 — R.?); 1 tetradrachm of Maroneia (Schönert-Geiss 1987: No. 1066, V29—R84); 1 drachm of Alexander III; 5 tetradrachms — Thasos fakes (Göbl 1973: Klass V, Taf. 48—49; Prokopov 2006: 56, Group III); 2 coins, Celtic drachms of the “Philip III” type (Allen 1987: 215—216; Göbl 1973: 577/3; Kostial 1997: 896); 1 Republican denarius of D.L. Licinius, Cn. Domitius with L. Porcius Licinius, 118 BCE — serrate (Crawford 1974: No. 284—285). Concealment took place *ca.* 72/1 — 50/45 BCE. The coin hoard is kept in the Chirpan Historical Museum, PIN 1-20/2010. The coin hoard has been published (Filipova et al. 2011: 44—53).

Nova Mahala, (present-day Nikolaevo); Stara Zagora region (42.616667° N 25.783333° E) (IGCH 1973: 977; Prokopov 2006: 198; 2016: No. 237). Discovered in 1954 (Gerasimov 1955: 610). A mixed coin hoard of over 50 silver coins: 12 Republican denarii (Paunov, Prokopov 2002: No. 121); including 3 in Stara Zagora C. Marcius Censorinus, 88 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 346/2), Faustus Cornelius Sulla, 56 BC (Crawford 1974: No. 426/1), C. Iulius Caesar, 49/8 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 443/1); 18 Thasos imitations (including 11 in Stara Zagora), 3 tetradrachms of Athens “New style” (including 1 in Stara Zagora) — 126/5 BCE (Thompson 1961: 173—180, No. 441—460). Concealment during the 2nd — 1st century BCE. In 1962, the Stara Zagora Museum acquired only 3 denarii with inv. No. H 3187—3189 (Prokopov, Minkova 1998: 563—584, Taf. 578—584). The remaining 33 coins were granted to the Chirpan Historical Museum. Unpublished.

Korten III, Nova Zagora district, Sliven region (42.55° N 26° E) (IGCH 1973. 979; Prokopov 2006: No. 150; 2012: No. 76; 2016: No. 158). The coin hoard was found in 1958 close to the village. A mixed coin hoard of more than 50 silver coins: 4 Roman Republican denarii and 5 Thasos tetradrachms. T. Gerasimov has given information on 6 coins (Gerasimov 1962: 230): 1 tetradrachm of the First Macedonian Region — a forgery (Prokopov 2012: No. 793, O. 33 — R. 40); 3 tetradrachms of the “Thasos type” (Prokopov 2006: Thasos, O.199, HH1, O.200, HH2, O.305, CH2); Republican denarii (Paunov, Prokopov 2001: No.111): 1 serrate of C. Poblucius Q. f. (Crawford 1974: No. 380/1, 80 BCE); 1 serrate of L. Roscius Fabatus (Crawford 1974: No. 412/1, 59 BCE). Concealment *ca.* 59—50/45 BCE. Only 5 coins are kept in the Nova Zagora Historical Museum, under inv. No. 1259, 1852—1856; 1924. Unpublished.

Mindya, Veliko Tarnovo region (IGCH 1973. 664; Karayotov 1994: No. 27; Prokopov 2006: No. 186; 2016: No. 214). The coin hoard was found in 1958 during ploughing, in close proximity to the village (Gerasimov 1962: 231). It consists of more than 80 silver coins from the 1st century BCE. T. Gerasimov mentions only 10 coins: 4 Thasos tetradrachms of the late imitations; 1 tetradrachm of the Alexander type, minted in Odessos; 4 tetradrachms of the Alexander type, minted in Messambria, 1 cistophorus; 1 Roman Republican denarius: L. Cassius Longinus, 60 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 413/1; Paunov, Prokopov 2002: No. 118). Concealment took place after 60 BCE. According to M.H. Crawford — 65—61 BCE (Crawford 1985: No. 328). It is kept in NAIM-BAS, Sofia. The coin hoard has been published. The Thasos coins have been included in a coin seal corpus.

Group Two: Comprised only of two types — Thasos imitations and Republican denarii. Similar coin hoards have been registered in South and North Bulgaria. Similarly to the previous group, the finds from South Bulgaria predominate.

Topolovo, Plovdiv Region (41.9° N 25° E), (Prokopov 2006: No. 305; 2016: No. 377). Uncovered in October 1961 in “Brantiite” locality, approximately 4 kilometers north of the village (Gerasimov 1963: 265; Kolev 1968: 159). It consists of 170 silver coins dating to the 2nd — 1st century BCE. Of them, 130 are Republican denarii (Paunov, Prokopov 2002: No. 129), the earliest of them date to the time of C. Renius, 138 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 231/1), whereas the latest date back to the time of Octavian Augustus — 30—29 BCE (RIC I 269). The coin hoard contains the so-called “Dacian” imitations (Crawford 1974: No. 361/1 and reverse 363), after 82 BCE; 1 tetradrachm of the “Thasos” type (Prokopov 2006: O. 324, AA8); 39 tetradrachms — Thasos imitations, from the final counterfeit phase. According to the authors, concealment took place *ca.* 30—29 BCE. According to M. Crawford, concealment took place *ca.* 35 BCE (Crawford 1985: No. 328). Kept in

the Regional Archaeological Museum in Plovdiv, inv. No. 2229. Published (Zlatareva 1963: 161—179).

Kolyo Marinovo, Plovdiv region (42.383333° N 25.166667° E) (Prokopov 2006: No. 147; 2016: No. 152). Discovered in September 1958 among the ruins of an old village in “Dalbokoto Dere” locality during vineyard ploughing, 0,15 meters beneath the surface (Gerasimov 1962: 226; Tsonchev 1960: 211). The coin hoard consists of 9 Thasos imitations and 32 Roman Republican denarii. The denarii are allocated by L. Iulius Bursio, 85 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 352/1b; Sydenham 1952: No. 729) to Emperor Augustus and P. Petronius Turpilianus, the consul, 20 BCE. One of the 9 Thasos imitations has a copy of the head of Roma with the letter “X” from a Roman Republican denarius behind it on its obverse side. Another one carries a countermark — the anchor of Apollonia Pontica. Concealment took place after 20 BCE. It is kept in the Regional Archaeological Museum in Plovdiv. Published (Prokopov 1995: 451—454; Zlatareva 1960: 367—376).

Dolno Botevo, Haskovo region (41.75° N. 25.71°E) (CH VI 1981: No. 48; Paunov, Prokopov 2002: No. 106; Prokopov 2006: No. 93; 2016: No.117). The village is located in Stambolovo Municipality, Haskovo region. The coin hoard was found in 1973 in “Terfilika” locality, west of the village (Aladzhov 1997: 82; Yurukova 1978: 73). Later on, several coins have been found on the same spot. The coin hoard consisted of a number of silver coins. Only 9 coins have been preserved until today — imitations, 2 tetradrachm coin blanks; 1 Republican denarius — a curious case — only one side was struck — the obverse side of M. Tulli (Crawford 1974: No. 280/1, 102—100 BC). Concealment took place between 60—50 BCE (Yurukova 1978: 73). It is kept in the Haskovo Regional Historical Museum, inv. No. H-1073-1074 and H-1106-1109.

Pavelsko, Chepelare region, Smolyan region (41.866667° N 24.7° E) (CH VI 1981: No. 45; Prokopov 2006: 221; 2016: No. 255). Discovered in the spring of 1975 in the vicinity of the village during ploughing of a fruit garden (Yurukova 1978: 58). The coin hoard consists of silver coins from the 2nd — 1st century BCE. Yurukova spots only 8 coins — 3 Republican denarii (Paunov, Prokopov 2002: No. 123), one of which — of M. Porcius Cato Propaetor, 47/6 BCE (Crawford 1974: No. 462/1a—c?); 4 Thasos tetradrachms, the late type; 1 tetradrachm, a “Thasos type” forgery. Concealment most likely took place *ca.* 46/41 BCE. According to M. Crawford — *ca.* 50/46 BCE (Crawford 1985: No. 328). The coin hoard has been misplaced. Therefore, it is unpublished. The recorded specimens are part of a private collection in the town of Plovdiv.

Medovo I, Stara Zagora region (42.366667° N 25.2° E) (Crawford 1969: No. 490; Prokopov 2006: 178; 2016: No. 208). Discovered in 1962 in “Sbora St. Nikola” locality, in close proximity to some old gold mines (Gerasimov 1963: 260). It consists of a multitude of silver coins. The majority of them — 151, are Roman Republican coins to Emperor Augustus and L. Aquilius Florus, the consul, 18 BCE, and 7 imitations of Thasos tetradrachms. Originally, immediately after their discovery, the Roman Republican denarii were identified by D. Nikolov, who pointed to a different locality — “Sbor St. Elias”. According to M. Crawford, concealment took place *ca.* 20—16 BCE. The coin hoard is kept in the Stara Zagora Regional Historical Museum. It has been published (Nikolov 1964: 153—180; Prokopov, Minkova 1998: 563—577, Taf. 578—584).

Nova Zagora II, Sliven region (Prokopov 2006: No. 201; 2016: No. 241). The coin hoard was discovered in 1973, northeast of the town (Yurukova 1978: 73). It consists of 7 tetradrachms and 1 denarius: 1 original Thasos tetradrachm, 6 tetradrachms — Thasos imitations; 1 denarius of Marcus Anthony (Crawford 1974: No. 544?). Concealment can be defined within 43—32/1 BCE? Perhaps one part of the coin hoard is kept in the Nova Zagora Museum, whereas the remaining part has been misplaced. Unpublished.

Nova Zagora III, Sliven region (42.483333° N 26.016667° E) (Prokopov 2006: No. 202; 2016: No. 235). Discovered in 1943 (Gerasimov 1946a: 242). The coin hoard consists of a multitude of coins: tetradrachms of the Island of Thasos 3 originals and 5 of the “Thasos type”, imitations of Thasos tetradrachms and Roman Republican denarii 1 denarius of Marcus Anthony. Concealment can be dated due to the presence of the Marcus Anthony denarius — 40—30 BC. 2 original Thasos tetradrachms, 5 “Thasos type” tetradrachms and imitations, as well as 1 denarius of Marcus Anthony, are preserved in the collection of the Nova Zagora Historical Museum. One original Thasos tetradrachm is kept in the Stara Zagora Regional Historical Museum. Several of the original tetradrachms, as well one tetradrachm of the “Thasos type” have been studied (Prokopov 2006: VE2-R43, VF1-R83, VIA11-R352, VAA17-Rn.r.). The latter has been overstruck on top of a tetradrachm of the name of the Roman quaestor Aesillas.

The coin hoards from northern Bulgaria are significantly lower in number. Here, I draw attention to only two of them, simply for the sake of forming a better understanding of the overall picture. There is no firm evidence for the existence of real imitations in their composition.

Krivina, Senovo region, Ruse region (Prokopov 2016: No. 167). The coins were found in 1910 in the “Manastira” locality, 1 kilometer west of the village. This is a mixed coin hoard of silver coins from the 1st century BC. 5 coins are known: 4 Thasos tetradrachms (of the late type or imitations); 1 Republican denarius (Paunov, Prokopov 2002: No. 112) of the Iulia clan (Crawford 1974: No. 443/1?). Concealment most probably took place around the middle of the 1st century BCE. According to data from K. Škorpil, the above-described 5 coins were kept in the Krivina Museum collection, before they were stolen. The coin hoard is unpublished.

The analysis of the coin hoards, composed only of Thasos imitations, has shown that they are predominantly found in Thrace, south of Stara Planina, and less frequently in the territory between the Danube and Stara Planina. The few of the known coin hoards from the northern zone have predominantly come from the Stara Planina mountain passes. There is one more coin hoard in existence, which contains real imitations of the Thasian type of Osijek. According to the author of the publication — I. Mirnik (Mirnik 1993: 197—200, pl. 25—31), it most probably originates from Bulgaria.

Production centers

While I was writing up my book about the tetradrachms with the Thasian names, I expressed an assumption that the production centers are most likely grouped in two areas: Thrace in the eastern Rhodopes region and Transylvania. Today, when I am in the process of finishing the book, dedicated to the Thasian type tetradrachms imitations, it is safe to admit that I have not discovered any evidence which would point to production in Transylvania having ever taken place. Thanks to the thorough work of the colleagues from Transylvania, the specifics and structure of the circulation of coins during the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE can be clearly seen and understood. In actuality,

there is no evidence of real Thasos imitations being found in a clear context. Only 3 tetradrachms from the composition of *The coin hoard from Luncani, Hunedoara County, 1970*, have been published. The tetradrachms from this coin hoard, which reached their farthest point to the northeast, are of the Thasos type (Găzdac et al. 2006: 25—48, No. 491—499). It is also important to note that these tetradrachms are quite worn due to their inclusion in the monetary circulation. Another important point to be made is the difference in percentages between this coin type and the Roman Republican denarii. It is quite insignificant. No Thasian type tetradrachms appear in the examined Transylvanian coin hoards consisting of Roman Republican denarii.

The situation in East Hungary is similar to the one in Transylvania. The coin hoard from Rete, Ost-Ungarien (IGCH 1973: No. 678), discovered in 1945, consists of 248 coins: 2 Thasos tetradrachms; 42 eastern Celtic tetradrachms and 204 drachms. It is safe to say that these are the last areas of dispersal of tetradrachms with the Thasian names of the type which I call “bad-style” coins.

Everything that has already been said about the definition of a certain type of coins as imitations, is completely explicable. During research, colleagues from Central and Western Europe have used all existing and available data. A lack of compact coin hoards and coins, discovered in a given archaeological context as an object of research, has constricted the scope of the research itself. Had the authors of the existing articles been aware of the enormous amount of silver in the retained coin hoards in Thrace, they would have never assumed that their manufacturing was of a Celtic origin. Especially when it comes to territories which were under the unquestioned Roman domination. Rome’s direct interests defined the necessity for well-known and accepted heavy silver coins to be struck. Such were the originals and the so-called “Thasos type” tetradrachms. They comprise the bigger money supply in this historical period.

On the other hand, par and type comparisons with coin types, indisputably defined as Celtic, have shown a substantial difference in several fundamental factors: style and iconography, circulation, pars. The whole range of the coins, accepted as Celtic in Central and Western Europe, is of lower or heavily reduced par and iconography that is imitative of the coins of the Macedonian kings. The only exceptions are the imitations of the Fillip III Arrhidaeus tetradrachms with their pronounced concave-convex shape, whose weight is nearly the same as the weight of the Thasos type tetradrachms. Nevertheless, having studied the style and the production technology of the coins, the authors of the majority of the research papers are perhaps within their rights to highlight the role the Celts have played in the overall picture. It is possible that the coin masters themselves, as well as their teams, were Celts, who were in charge of conducting the work. The historical period covers an intense stretch of Roman intervention in Thrace, the intentions of which were to ward off annual attacks from Macedonia and Ellada. Furthermore, Mithridates VI’s fight against Rome has had a major influence over the events which were taking place at the time. During this period, Rome needed a large number of coins, far surpassing the mint’s output.

It is important to note that this type of heavy silver coins is not designed for paying everyday expenses. They were tribute towards the local ruler — the goal was for them to become tributaries. In order to be protected from recurring Roman invasion and ravage, the Romans were forced to deprive them of their military power without any war taking place. Thus, paying annual tribute to the local nobles in addition to hiring their forces for removed from Thrace actions, they usually solved multiple problems at once. I presume that in order to rapidly increase production capacity, coin masters and production teams have been hired from outside. It is indeed possible that these people were Celts. The detailed analysis of dozens of large coin hoards containing Thasos type coins has shown that in the composition of these coin hoards, there is an accumulation of original coins, Thasos type coins, as well as hybrid coins, combining a good-style obverse and a bad-style

reverse. Quite often, reverses with false legends can be observed in regular emissions. This, however, does not make these coins imitations.

To conclude, I would like to say that at this stage of the research, there is firm evidence for only one production centre in the Eastern Rhodopes. The area is rich in ores, as well as evidence of silver and gold mining and processing.

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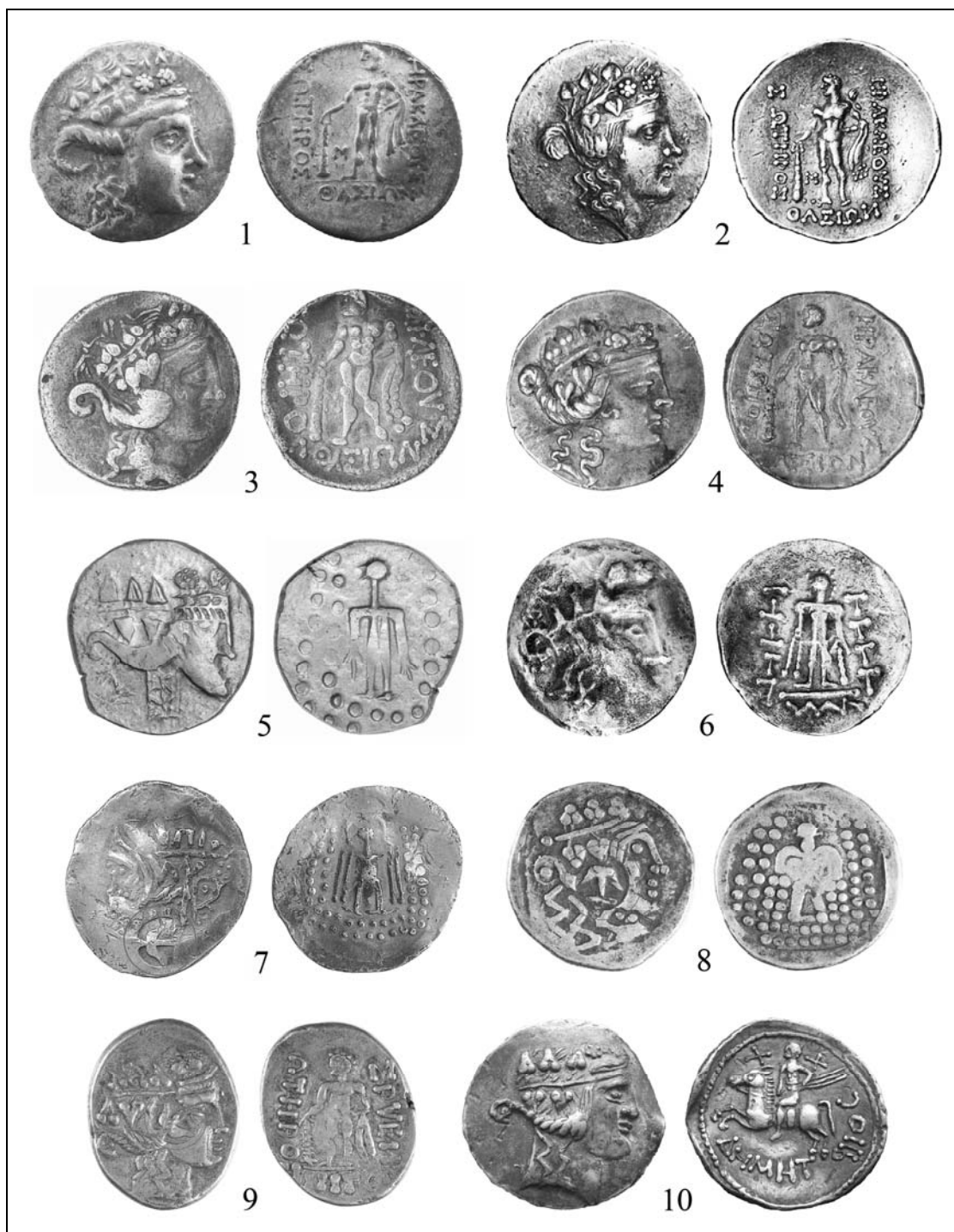


Fig. 1. “Bad-style coins”: 1–2 — First group (“Thasos original” tetrachms) (after Slavova, Prokopov 2017: no. 932; Collection of the Regional Archaeological Museum at Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Unpublished); 3–4 — Second group (“Thasos type” tetrachms) (Private collections. Unpublished); 5–6 — Real Thasos imitations (after Filipova et al. 2011: no. 91; Collection of the Archaeological museum at Nessebar. Unpublished); 7–9 — Real Thasos imitations with countermarks of Apolonia Pontica — anchor (after Prokopov 1995; Collection of National Archaeological Institute and Museum — Bulgarian academy of science, Sofia, Bulgaria. Unpublished); 10 — Tetrachm imitation of “King «ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΣ»” (after Prokopov 2018).