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**THE COIN HOARD FROM THE SARNITSA VILLAGE, HASKOVO REGION.
TOWARDS THE QUESTION OF CLARIFYING THE ORIGIN
OF THASOS IMITATIONS OR BARBARIZATION***

The article examines one of the well-preserved coin hoards consisting exclusively of imitations or barbarizations of tetradrachms traditionally minted on the island of Thasos. A homogeneous coin find of this kind is characteristic of the area where the latest coinage took place. Actually, these are the last-ever tetradrachms minted in Thrace in the 1st century BCE. Since numismatics still hardly can tell “imitation” from “barbarization” with any certainty, both are still used here on equal terms. However, the long-standing dispute over which coins are real imitations of Thasos tetradrachms is about to be settled. The large series of tetradrachms, which can hardly be differ from the original Thasos ones and are called “of the Thasos type”, should be defined as imitations. They were issued by the Roman administration of the Balkans. All the rest, which lack a clear issuer and generally go far beyond the limits of good style and inscription, can be called barbarized. This is why the coin hoard from Sarnitsa is worth republishing.

Key words: Thrace, Thasos, tetradrachm, imitation, barbarization, homogeneous.

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**МОНЕТНЫЙ КЛАД ИЗ СЕЛА СЫРНИЦА, ХАСКОВСКИЙ РЕГИОН.
К ВОПРОСУ ОБ УТОЧНЕНИИ ПРОИСХОЖДЕНИЯ
ФАСОССКИХ ПОДРАЖЕНИЙ ИЛИ ВАРВАРИЗАЦИИ**

В статье рассматривается один из хорошо сохранившихся монетных кладов, состоящих исключительно из образцов имитации или варваризации тетрадрахм, обыкновенно выпускавшихся на острове Фасос. Этот вид однородных монетных находок характерен для района, где происходила самая поздняя чеканка, и перед нами одни из последних тетрадрахм, отчеканенных во Фракии в I в. до н.э. Поскольку вопрос о различиях «подражания» и «варваризации» до сих пор не решен, здесь используются оба термина. Думается, однако, что давний спор о том, какие монеты являются действительными подражаниями фасосским, вот-вот завершится. Большую серию тетрадрахм «фасосского типа», которые выпускались римской администрацией Балкан и почти не отличаются от оригинальных, следует определить как собственно подражания. Тетрадрахмы же без четкого эмитента и выходящие за рамки хорошего стиля и легенды, следует называть варваризированными. Эти соображения и заставили переиздать клад из Сырницы.

Ключевые слова: Фракия, Фасос, тетрадрахма, подражание, варваризация, гомогенность.

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The Sarnitsa village is located in the municipality of Mineralni Bani, Haskovo region, with coordinates: 41.866667° N. 25.3° E. It is an old mining center at the foot of the Rhodope massif “Mechkovets”. In the vicinity of the village, there are traces of many ancient mines where gold, silver, and lead were mined. The coin hoard was discovered in 1958 in the locality named “Petrov Pozar” (Gerasimov 1962: 228). It was first published by Dimcho Aladzhov (Aladzhov 1970: 16—19; 1997: 260—264).

The coins are kept in the fund of the Regional Historical Museum in Haskovo under inv. No. H-2. The treasure consists of 12 silver coins — imitations of the Thasos tetradrachms. As empirical data, the coins are published in the book of the museum collection (CCCHBulg VII 2017: 180—183, No. 1017—1028). The present publication aims to examine the coin hoard in his own natural setting. In addition, it is located very close to a metal mining and manufacturing center.

Like several other small coin finds already published, it is of small volume. Its composition is homogeneous and belongs to the group of coin hoards described later.

The treasure from the village of Sarnitsa is numbered 372 and is marked on the map with a circle. Together with the finds from the village of Bolarino (IGCH 975) (mixed) — No. 33, and the village of Stroino (IGCH 924) (mixed) — No. 363, marked with rectangles, form a kind of triangle. This is the area of the greatest concentration of coin finds with imitations of the Thasos. Identifying links through the coin seals connects these three coin finds.

Homogeneous coin hoards in southeastern Bulgaria, listed from west to east:

Smolyan area — ?, Smolyan region. Hoard of unspecified coins. All of them were rough Thasos imitations. Only 4 coins are in the Smolyan Regional History Museum. Published (Prokopov 1991: No. 158—161; CCCHBulg. III 2011: 40—41, No. 89—92).

Sarnitsa — 1958, Haskovo region (ICHB I 2017: 694). Content 12 rough barbarizations of Thasos tetradrachms. Kept in Haskovo Regional Museum. (Gerasimov 1962: 228). Published (Aladzhov 1970: 16—19; 1997: 260—264; Prokopov, Slavova 2018: 7—16).

Pravoslav — 1960, Stara Zagora region (ICHB I 2017: 632; Prokopov 2006: 247; 2016: 317, No. 277). The coins — 5 tetradrachms imitations of Thasos, were found in 1960. The hoard was scattered. The coins were not published. It dates back to the middle of the 1st century BCE (Gerasimov 1963: 261).

Medovo — 1998, Stara Zagora region (ICHB I 2017: 303, No. 627; Prokopov 2006: 179; 2016: 303, No. 210) Hoard of silver coins. All 5 are imitations of Thasos tetradrachms, minted at the end of the 1st century BC. (Prokopov, Minkova 1998: 563—584, Taf. 578—584).

Naydenovo — 1998, Stara Zagora region (ICHB I 2017: 630; Prokopov 2006: 193; 2016: 306—307, No. 227). Contains 3 rough Thasos imitations (Prokopov, Minkova 1998: 563—584, Taf. 578—584). In RIM-Stara Zagora, there is a group of three coins filed under one number — No. 3092.

Zetyovo — 1945, Chirpan district, Stara Zagora region (ICHB I 2017: 621—622; Prokopov 2006: 332; 2016: 285—286, No. 129). Contains tetradrachms - Thasos imitations (Gerasimov 1946: 243).

Oryahovitsa — 1963, Stara Zagora region (ICHB I 2017: 631; Prokopov, Minkova 1998: 563—584, Taf. 578—584; Prokopov 2006: 210; 2016: 312, No. 251). The coins — an unspecified number of imitations from Thasos were found in 1963. They date from the middle of the 1st century BCE. From this hoard in the museum in Stara Zagora, there are 2 coins filed under one number — No. 3272 (Gerasimov 1964: 243).

Radnevo — 1951 (formerly Gypsovo), Stara Zagora region (ICHB I 2017: 633; Prokopov 2006: 106; 2016: 276, No. 83). A small find of about 36 Tasso imitations. Of the find, only 7 barbarized Thasos tetradrachms were inventoried in the numismatic fund of the Archaeological Museum in Nova Zagora under No. 1002—1007 and 1015 (Gerasimov 1952: 404).

Radnevo — 1980+, Stara Zagora region (ICHB I 2017: 633; Prokopov 2006: 248; 2016: 318, No. 285). The coin hoard was discovered in the 1980s. It consisted only of rough imitations of Thasos tetradrachms. The find is scattered. The coins are not published.

Sabrano — 1971 (Sabranovo II), Nova Zagora area, Sliven region (ICHB I 2017: 557; Prokopov 2006: 264; 2016: 323—324, No. 311) The coins were found on 16.03.1971, in the locality “Orta Korja” about 200 m southeast of the village. Their quantity is not specified. In the Archaeological Museum in Nova Zagora, 7 Thasos imitations are preserved under inventory number 1935. The coins have not been published (Gerasimov 1979: 134—141).

Nova Zagora — 1965, Sliven region (ICHB I 2017: 550; Prokopov 2006: 203; 2016: 309, No. 236). Only 5 tetradrachms, Thasos imitations, are known. The concealment took place in the 1st century BCE (Gerasimov 1967: 188).

Mladovo — , Sliven region. A hoard with imitations of Thasos tetradrachms. Of them, only one entered the museum in Nova Zagora under inventory number 1153. The coins were not published.

Palauzovo — 1956, Straldzha area, Yambol region (ICHB I 2017: 752; Prokopov 2006: 220; 2016: 313, No. 256). They were found in 1956 in fields near the village. There is information about 8 tetradrachms — Thasos imitations. The find is scattered. The coins are not published. It dates back to the middle of the 1st century BCE (Gerasimov 1959: 358).

Karnobat area — 1916, Burgas region, IGCH 967. (ICHB I 2017: 49; Prokopov 2006: 143; Prokopov 2016: 289—290, No. 148) Contains an unspecified amount of silver tetradrachms — there is information about 20 Thasos imitations (Mushmov 1919: 163). 18 coins have been preserved in the collection of NAIM-BAS, Sofia.

In addition to the reports in the annual bulletins and published coin finds composed of rough Thasos imitations, the collection of NAIM-BAS contains several without data on the location. These are 4 parts of similar finds made up of rough barbarian coins from the same type found in Bulgaria:

Group 1. There are 8 tetradrachms preserved in the collection of NAIM-BAS Sofia — Thasos imitations, under inventory Nos. VI, 1—8. Coins not published;

Group 2. In the collection of NAIM-BAS Sofia, 4 tetradrachms — Thasos imitations, under inventory numbers 2007—2010, have been preserved. Coins not published;

Group 3. 3 tetradrachms — Thasos imitations under inventory numbers 8232—8234 are preserved in the collection of NAIM-BAS Sofia. Coins not published;

Group 4. In the collection of NAIM-BAS Sofia, 5 tetradrachms — Thasos imitations, under inventory No. 9989—9993, are preserved. Coins not published.

Coin hoards from South-Eastern Bulgaria are the main group concentrated in a relatively small area. Apart from them, there is information about 3 more of this type from Central Northern Bulgaria. Of these, 2 hoards are scattered and have not been seen and published: Byala Slatina, Vratsa region (ICHB I 2017: 180; Prokopov 2006: 59; 2016: 269, No. 51). 35 tetradrachms are known — Thasos imitations (Gerasimov 1943: 282); Staro selo (formerly Sayevo), Lovech region (ICHB I 2017: 313; Prokopov 2006: 270; 2016: 335, No. 371) The coins were found during plowing, near the village, in a ceramic vessel. The find consisted of silver coins — 36 pieces. Tetradrachms Thasos imitations. Only one coin hoard has been preserved. It is kept in the collection of NAIM-BAS Sofia. He is from the village of Mindya, Veliko Tarnovo region, inv. nos. 10837—10839. Not published. It will be included by I. Prokopov in the corpus of Tassoian imitations and barbarization.

In our previous publication (Prokopov, Slavova 2018: 7—16) we identified the coins from the find in the village of Sarnitsa as the “Second” and “Third” group of Tasos imitations (Prokopov 2011: 337—344). This definition is unfortunately not accurate. The long-standing dispute over which Thasos coins are imitations is about to be settled. It is very important to justify with a solid argumentation how to divide the imitations themselves into groups. At this stage, there are two main options. The division into 2 groups: imitations and imitations-rough barbarizations. In the process of solving this scientific problem, we will call the coins from the hoard from the village of Sarnitsa — rough Thasos barbarization. With them, the engravers have lost the connection with the original coin issues used for a prototype. For their model, they used other rough imitations.

The authors of this article have already published another, very important coin find — from the Dolno Botevo village, Haskovo region (Prokopov, Slavova 2016: 815—825). It is mixed, and the dating of the Thasos imitations is made possible by a Roman republican denarius present in it. The find was hidden in the period after 50 and before 29 BCE. This result provides guidelines for the time of circulation and concealment of this type of coin hoards in the period around the middle to the end of the 1st century BCE.

The corpus on tetradrachms — imitations of Thasos is in the process of completion and allows some conclusions to be drawn. They are based on a comparison of coin dies and allow us to trace the distribution of this coin type. Another important observation is the presence of identic coins from other hoards.

Catalogue

1. AR Tetradrachm, 31.3/32.7 mm; 13.84 g; 12 h; Inv. No. H-2/11. There is only one coin match — from an auction sale (Gorny & Mosch, 2015: 1022) (Fig. 1: 1).

2. AR Tetradrachm, 33,5/32,7 mm; 16,72 g; 12 h; Inv. No. H-2/12. There is a match with some single finds and with 3 coins from different collections (Lukanc 1996: 1297, 1480) (Fig. 1: 2).

3. AR Tetradrachm, 33,3/33,8 mm; 16,29 g; 7 h; Inv. No. H-2/9. There are no matches (Fig. 1: 3).

4. AR Tetradrachm, 34,6/33,5 mm; 15,21 g; 10 h; Inv. No. H-2/8. There is a match with only one coin from the Budapest collection (Lukanc 1996: 1885) (Fig. 1: 4).

5. AR Tetradrachm, 35,3/32,9 mm; 15,56 g; 9 h; Inv. No. H-2/4. There is a complete parallel: one is from the hoard from the Bolarino village, Plovdiv (Callataÿ, Prokopov 1995: 5-12). It was inventoried under H-2281 in the collection of RAM-Plovdiv; one coin is from an auction sale (Fig. 1: 5).

6. AR Tetradrachm, 33,2/32,3 mm; 16,24 g; 12 h; Inv. No. H-2/3. This and the two coins numbered 7 and 8 were struck from the same pair of dies. They have a complete parallel with one coin from the coin hoard from the village of Stroyno, Yambolsko (Prokopov 2015: 212—224), and one from the NAIM-BAS collection, listed under No. 10540 (Fig. 1: 6; X-ray FA Table 1).

7. AR Tetradrachm, 35,0/33,7 mm; 16,98 g; 12 h; Inv. No. H-2/6 (Fig. 1: 7).

8. AR Tetradrachm, 33,5/32,0 mm; 16,59 g; 12 h; Inv. No. H-2/10 (Fig. 1: 8; X-ray FA Table 2).

9. AR Tetradrachm, 28,5/28,1 mm; 15,57 g; 12 h; Inv. No. H-2/2. There are 7 matches: one coin from the NAIM-BAS collection, filed under No. 9992; two coins from Budapest (Lukanc 1996: 1755—1756); one from Leiden (Lukanc 1996: 1758); one from Zurich (Lukanc 1996: 1759) and two from an auction (Fig. 1: 9).

10. AR Tetradrachm, 32,6/32,8 mm; 16,08 g; 1 h; Inv. No. H-2/7. There are no matches. (Fig. 1: 10).

11. AR Tetradrachm, 32,9/31,2 mm; 16,59 g; 12 h; Inv. No. H-2/5. There are no matches (Fig. 1: 11).

12. AR Tetradrachm, 32,2/33,1 mm; 16,99 g; 1 h; Inv. No. H-2/1. This is the only coin where the obverse has the head of Dionysus facing left. This type is much less common. For this coin, so far, no direct parallel has been recorded either (Fig. 1: 12).

The most important conclusion from comparing the coin stamps is the coincidence with coins from the treasures from the village of Bolarino, Plovdiv, and the Stroyno village, Yambol. These two treasures are published and dated. However, they are not homogeneous, like the one from the Sarnitsa village. Their composition suggests that they are earlier than the commentary hoard. The coins dated the latest in Bolarino and Stroyno are the earliest in Sarnitsa.

In addition to the two coins that create a connection with other similar treasures from today's South Bulgaria, there are also several much cruder imitations, which are characteristic of the middle of the 1st century BCE. The absence of the coin types characteristic of the earlier period in South-Eastern Bulgaria — tetradrachms of Thasos, Maroneia, and Athena "New Style" places the treasure from Sarnitsa after 72 BCE. This is the time of Lucullus' campaign in Thrace, accompanied by the cessation of several coinages. On the other hand, there is no republican denarius in its composition, which places it before 42 BCE, when the battle of Philippi took place. During this battle bounties were paid in republican denarii to the Thracian allies of both sides of the conflict. Until then, the spread of Roman republican denarii was weak in this part of Thrace (Paunov, Prokopov 2013: 107—130). The process of entry of the Roman republican denarius into Thrace was accelerated especially after the battle of Actium in 31 BCE. The events and facts on this topic have been clarified based on the collective findings and the results of archaeological research (Filipova et al. 2011: 44—53).

Thus, the small treasure is characteristic of local communities using the imitations. The most saturated area with them is in Southeast Thrace. East from the Maritza River to the Black Sea coast and south to the Tekirdag region of Turkey. All in all, this could be defined as a small family treasure.

Table 1. X-ray fluorescence analysis

Obverse		Reverse	
Ag	98.34 0.03	Ag	97.89 0.03
Cu	0.98 0.03	Cu	0.98 0.02
Au	0.36 0.02	Pb	0.65 0.01
Pb	0.31 0.01	Au	0.40 0.01
		Ga	0.08 0.01

Table 2. X-ray fluorescence analysis

Obverse		Reverse	
Ag	98.70 0.02	Ag	98.32 0.03
Cu	0.76 0.02	Cu	0.99 0.02
Au	0.37 0.01	Au	0.39 0.01
Pb	0.166 0.007	Pb	0.30 0.01

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Fig. 1. The coin hoard from the Sarnitsa Village, Haskovo region.