

AN UNPUBLISHED HOARD OF APOLLONIA PONTICA AND MESEMBRIA DIOBOLS FROM DOBRUDJA

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Abstract: The authors presents a hoard discovered near the village of General Kantardzhievo containing 66 silver diobols of Apollonia Pontica and Mesembria. They further discuss aspects regarding their issues and magistrate names, their chronology and a possible burial date.

Rezumat: Autorii prezintă un tezaur monetar descoperit în apropierea satului General Kantardjievo conținând 66 de dioboli de argint emiși la Apollonia Pontica și Mesambria. Aceștia discută aspecte privind aceste emisiuni, cronologia lor și posibila dată a îngropării acestui tezaur.

The vast collection of the Numismatic Museum in Russe keeps an interesting hoard of small silver coins from Southern Dobrudja. It was discovered many years ago near the village of General Kantardzhievo (formerly Çauş kyoü until 1942), Aksakovo municipality, 20 km north of Varna, and only 6 km west of the Black Sea coast. The hoard contains 66 silver diobols of Apollonia Pontica and Mesembria – the two neighbouring cities on the Western Black Sea coast.

Catalogue

A. Apollonia Pontica – silver diobols

Obverse: Laureate head of Apollo facing.

Reverse: Inverted anchor; to right, crayfish; to left, letter A under the flukes; some with abbreviated magistrate name in left field ↑ (2 to 4 letters).

1. No magistrate name. 11/10.5 mm; 1.20 g; 3h. *SNG BM 167; SNG Stancomb 42.*
2. No magistrate name. 11/13 mm; 1.25 g; 12h. *SNG BM 167; SNG Stancomb 42.*
3. No magistrate name. 10 mm; 1.21 g; 12h. *SNG BM 167; SNG Stancomb 42.*
4. No magistrate name. 10 mm; 1.26 g; 12h. *SNG BM 167; SNG Stancomb 42.*
5. No magistrate name. 10.5 mm; 1.24 g; 3h. *SNG BM 167; SNG Stancomb 42.*
6. No magistrate name. 11 mm; 1.21 g; 8h. *SNG BM 167; SNG Stancomb 42.*
7. No magistrate name. 11 mm; 1.12 g; 12h. *SNG BM 167; SNG Stancomb 42.*
8. No magistrate name. 10.5 mm; 1.21 g; 12h. *SNG BM 167; SNG Stancomb 42.*

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9. No magistrate name. 9/10 mm; 1.16 g; 12h. *SNG BM* 167; *SNG Stancomb* 42.
10. No magistrate name. 10 mm; 1.21 g; 12h. *SNG BM* 167; *SNG Stancomb* 42.
11. **ΑΠ**-, magistrate. Obv. off-centre, 10 mm; 1.14 g; 12h. Gerassimov 1963, 334, no. 1163; *SNG BM* 168.
12. **ΓΛΑΥ**-, magistrate. 10.5 mm; 1.24 g; 12h. *SNG BM* 171; *SNG Stancomb* 46.
13. **ΗΡΟ**-, magistrate. 10.5 mm; 1.11 g; 6h. Vienna KHM, GR-31.305; Topalov 2007, p. 389.
14. **ΚΩΜΥ**-, magistrate. 10/11 mm; 1.21 g; 6h. Gerassimov 1963, 334, nos. 1166-1170; *SNG BM* 173.
15. **ΚΩΜΥ**-, magistrate. 11.5/10 mm; 1.25 g; 6h. Gerassimov 1963, 334, nos. 1166-1170; *SNG BM* 173.
16. Name off-flan but **ΚΩΜΥ**- (?). 11 mm; 1.12 g; 6h. Gerassimov 1963, 334, nos. 1166-1170; *SNG BM* 173.
17. **ΚΤΗ**-, magistrate. 9/9.5 mm; 1.15 g; 6h. *SNG Lockett* 1073; *SNG BM* 176.
18. **ΚΤΗ**-, magistrate. 11/11.5 mm; 1.19 g; 2h. *SNG Lockett* 1073; *SNG BM* 176.
19. **ΚΤΗ**-, magistrate. 10 mm; 1.18 g; 12h. *SNG Lockett* 1073; *SNG BM* 176.
20. **ΜΗ**-, magistrate. 10 mm; 1.26 g; 6h. Imhoof-Blumer 1883, 236, 38; Babelon 1638; CNT 7500.
21. **ΣΩ**-, magistrate. Obv. off-centre, 11 mm; 1.26 g; 12h. *SNG BM* 175; *SNG Stancomb* 47.
22. **ΣΩ**-, magistrate. 10 mm; 1.17 g; 12h. *SNG BM* 175; *SNG Stancomb* 47.
23. **ΣΩ**-, magistrate. 11.5/10.5 mm; 1.17 g; 6h. *SNG BM* 175; *SNG Stancomb* 47.
24. **ΣΩ**-, magistrate. 10 mm; 1.17 g; 12h. *SNG BM* 175; *SNG Stancomb* 47.
25. **ΣΩ**-, magistrate. 10.5 mm; 1.19 g; 10h. *SNG BM* 175; *SNG Stancomb* 47.
26. Magistrate name off-flan. 9.5 mm; 1.22 g; 12h.
27. Magistrate name off-flan. 10 mm; 1.13 g; 10h.
28. Magistrate name off-flan. 10.5 mm; 1.24 g; 6h.
29. Magistrate name off-flan. Obv. off-centre, 10 mm; 1.18 g; 6h.
30. Imitation, A and crayfish reversed. 11.5/11 mm; 0.97 g; 10h.
31. Imitation. 10.5/11 mm; 0.82 g; 6h. Same dies as Lanz 106 (27.11.2001), lot 13.

B. Mesembria – silver diobols

Obverse: Crested Corinthian helmet facing. Sometimes two letters beneath.

Reverse: **M-E-T-A** in the four quarters of a radiate wheel with four spokes.

32. **ΑΑ**-, magistrate. 11/10 mm; 1.23g. *SNG BM* 270; Karayotov 1994, nos. 13-25.
33. **ΑΑ**-, magistrate. 11 mm; 1.18g. *SNG BM* 270; Karayotov 1994, 13-25.
34. **ΑΑ**-, magistrate. 10.5 mm; 1.21g. *SNG BM* 270; Karayotov 1994, 13-25.
35. **ΑΑ**-, magistrate. 10/9 mm; 1.16g. *SNG BM* 270; Karayotov 1994, 13-25.
36. **ΑΑ**-, magistrate. 10.5/10 mm; 1.21g. *SNG BM* 270; Karayotov 1994, 13-25.
37. **ΑΑ**-, magistrate. 11.5/10 mm; 1.24g. *SNG BM* 270; Karayotov 1994, 13-25.
38. **ΝΙ**-, magistrate. 10.5 mm; 1.23g. Karayotov 1994, 26-36.
39. **ΝΙ**-, magistrate. 11.5/11 mm; 1.13g. Karayotov 1994, 26-36.

40. No magistrate, but small 'o' attached below **M** on rev. legend. 10.5 mm; 1.25g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 37-38 ('o' not noted).
41. As above on rev. legend. 10 mm; 1.22g. Karayotov 1994, 37-38.
42. As above on rev. legend. 10.5 mm; 1.24g. Karayotov 1994, 37-38.
43. As above on rev. legend. 10/10.5 mm; 1.23g. Karayotov 1994, 37-38.
44. No magistrate name. 10/9.5 mm; 1.20g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
45. No magistrate name. 10.5 mm; 1.23g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
46. No magistrate name. 10 mm; 1.24g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
47. No magistrate name. 11 mm; 1.21g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
48. No magistrate name. 10 mm; 1.22g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
49. No magistrate name. 11 mm; 1.16g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
50. No magistrate name. 11 mm; 1.20g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
51. No magistrate name. 10.5 mm; 1.18g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
52. No magistrate name. 9.5/11 mm; 1.19g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
53. No magistrate name. 10.5 mm; 1.20g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
54. No magistrate name. 10 mm; 1.24g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
55. No magistrate name. 10/11 mm; 1.25g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
56. No magistrate name. 10.5 mm; 1.20g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
57. No magistrate name. 11 mm; 1.24g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
58. No magistrate name. Obv. off-centre, 11.5/12.5 mm; 1.19g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
59. No magistrate name. 10 mm; 1.20g, obv. test-cut. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
60. No magistrate name. 10.5/8.5 mm; 1.14g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
61. No magistrate name. 10 mm; 1.18g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
62. No magistrate name. 11.5/10 mm; 1.27g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
63. No magistrate name. 10.5/11 mm; 1.28g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
64. No magistrate name. 10 mm; 1.24g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
65. No magistrate name. 11 mm; 1.16g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.
66. No magistrate name. 11/10.5 mm; 1.19g. Karayotov 1994, nos. 39-130.

Discussion

The find-spot region of this hoard is abundant of similar coin finds. The extant hoards from Dobrudja are listed below¹:

1. **Vratarite 1985**, Dobrich region – 132 diobols in a red-figured lekytos: 66 Apollonia, 66 Mesembria (all kept in AM-Varna).² Burial date: ca. 339-335 BC³;
2. **Medovets 1991**, Dalgopol municipality, Varna region – 36+ diobols: 20 Apollonia Pontica; 16 Mesembria (all very worn, kept in AM-Varna), the rest dispersed.⁴ Burial: ca. 320-313 BC⁵;

¹ For an earlier list of similar hoards, see Karayotov 1994, p. 115.

² Karayotov 1994, p. 24-26, n.7, 79-81, cat. nos. 13-78 (Mesembria only); Karayotov 2008, p. 11-13, figs. 5A-5R; Custurea – Talmatchi 2011, p. 384, no. 176, and p. 193, no. 38 / II (the very same hoard).

³ Karayotov 1994, p. 26-27; see now Ivanova 2017, pp. 92, 99-100, nos. 71-132.

3. **Kladentzi 1947**, Tervel municipality, Dobrich region (IGCH 770) – 3+ diobols: 1 Apollonia, 2 Mesembria. Burial: ca. 330-320 BC⁶;
4. **Constanța 1938/40**, România (IGCH 771) – ca. 40 diobols: a few diobols of Apollonia and Mesembria are known (kept in Bucharest Academy coll.). Burial: ca. 330-320 BC⁷;
5. **Ion Corvin (fmr. Cuzgun) 1905**, near Oltina, România (IGCH 734) – ca. 200 AR, ca. 20 EL: 21+ Apollonia Pontica, 16+ Mesembria diobols, some drachms of Istros and Callatis, hemidrachms of Parium, and 7+ EL cyzikenes.⁸ Burial: ca. 330-320 BC.

As can be seen from the list above, the diobols of Apollonia and Mesembria are usually associated in equal numbers in all known hoards. Nearly the same mixture appears in the hoard from General Kantardzhievo – in this case, 31 against 35 specimens. Once again, this confirms they were equivalent denominations of the same weight and circulated together as legal means of payment. The same fact has led I. Karayotov to suggest that there must have been some kind of fiscal or monetary union between the cities of Apollonia Pontica and Mesembria in the 4th century BC.⁹ Actually, in this period both West Pontic cities did not strike large denominations in silver¹⁰, but only diobols (in Attic standard). The inter-changeable diobols of Apollonia Pontica and Mesembria have been struck in large quantities¹¹ and widespread on the markets of the Western Black sea coast and in Inner Thrace.

Abbreviated names of seven different Apolloniate officials appear on coins from General Kantardzhievo hoard: 5 specimens of **ΣΩ**-, 3 **KTH**-, 3 **KΩMY**-, 1 **HPO**-, 1 **ΓΛΑΥ**-, 1 **MH**-, and 1 **ΑΠ**-. Roughly, the coins signed by officials form 50% of the total, or 15 out of 31 diobols (but 2 of them are imitations).

Since there is no published data about magistrate names from the other extant diobol hoards, we cannot draw particular conclusions about their internal sequence, the size and proportions of their individual issues. Until now¹², we are aware of 15 different magistrate names from the diobols of Apollonia Pontica, arranged below in alphabetic order:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name as on coins</i>	<i>References</i>	<i>Specimens recorded</i>
1.	ΑΠ -	Imhoof-Blumer 1908, p. 141; Gerassimov 1961,	6

⁴ Karayotov 1994, p. 26-27, 115, cat. nos. 79-94 (Mesembria only); Karayotov 2008, p. 12-13; Ivanova 2017, pp. 92, 98-99, nos. 47-70.

⁵ Karayotov 1994, p. 27.

⁶ Custurea – Talmačhi 2011, p. 248, no. 74.

⁷ Custurea – Talmačhi 2011, p. 169, no. 31/ VIII.

⁸ von Renner 1906, p. 97-106; Custurea – Talmačhi 2011, p. 229, no. 65.

⁹ Karayotov 1994, p. 24.

¹⁰ With a single exception – the unique tetradrachm of Mesembria signed by Anthesterios, see below for discussion.

¹¹ Karayotov 1994, p. 24; Topalov 2007, p. 396.

¹² The Apolloniate civic magistrates on coins have been first collected and listed by Imhoof-Blumer 1908, 141-142. See also a list in Karayotov 2007, p. 167, fig. 29.

		p. 334, no. 1163; <i>SNG BM</i> 168; Topalov 2007, p. 387	
2.	ΓΛΑΟ-	<i>SNG BM</i> 169-170; Topalov 2007, p. 388, 1-2	6
3.	ΓΛΑΥ-	Imhoof-Blumer 1908, p. 141; <i>SNG BM</i> 171; <i>SNG Stancomb</i> 46	12
4.	ΔΗ-	<i>SNG BM</i> 172; <i>SNG Stancomb</i> 45; Topalov 2007, p. 388	12
5.	ΗΡΟ-	Vienna KHM, GR-31.305; Topalov 2007, p. 389	5
6.	ΘΕΟ-	<i>SNG BM</i> 168; <i>SNG Stancomb</i> 48; Topalov 2007, p. 389	4
7.	ΚΑΛΛΙ-	Karayotov 2007, p. 167 (from Vratarite hoard)	2
8.	ΚΤΗ-	<i>SNG Lockett</i> 1073; <i>SNG BM</i> 176; Topalov 2007, p. 390	19
9.	ΚΩΜΥ-	Imhoof-Blumer 1908, pp. 141-142; Gerassimov 1963, p. 334, nos. 1166-1170; <i>SNG BM</i> 173; Topalov 2007, pp. 389-390	27
10.	ΛΕ-	<i>SNG BM</i> 173; Topalov 2007, p. 391, nos. 1-2	14
11.	ΜΑ-	<i>SNG BM</i> 174; <i>SNG Stancomb</i> 44; CNT 7493	11
12.	ΜΗ-	Imhoof-Blumer 1883, 236, no. 38 (KHM, Vienna); Babelon, no. 1638; Topalov 2007, pp. 391-392, nos. 1-2; CNT 7500	8
13.	ΟΙ-	Imhoof-Blumer 1883, 236, no. 39; Babelon, no. 1637 (de Luynes); Topalov 2007, p. 392	13
14.	ΠΑ-	Imhoof-Blumer 1908, 142; CNT 7503	4
15.	ΣΩ-	<i>SNG BM</i> 175; <i>SNG Stancomb</i> 47; Topalov 2007, p. 393; CNT 7505	43

Imitations of Apolloniate diobols also appear within the hoard from General Kantardzhievo (only 2 out of 31 coins).¹³ They are executed in poor, barbarized style and of low weight (0.82 and 0.97g). Both imitations have been struck in previously unpublished style.¹⁴ However, the second imitation (cat. no. 31, **Fig. 1a**) is a perfect die-match of a specimen sold at auction sale Numismatik Lanz 106 (27.11.2001), lot 13 (**Fig. 1b**).

Fig. 1a:
cat. no. 31.



Fig. 1b:
ex Lanz 106, lot 13.



Four diobols of Mesembria from General Kantardzhievo hoard (cat. nos. 40-43) deserve particular attention. They all have a clearly visible small letter ‘omikron’

¹³ Against 4 out of 62 in Vratarite hoard, cf. Ivanova 2017, 100.

¹⁴ For instance, compare with Topalov 2007, p. 389, no. 1; as well as CNT 7504 – in Munich collection (1.22g).

attached below the “M” in ethnic, engraved on the reverse die. This interesting combination has been hitherto unpublished, although it can be observed on a coin kept for centuries in the BnF at Paris (Fonds général 850, diobol, 1.08g). It has been left unnoticed for long, even in Karayotov’s corpus of silver coinage of Mesembria (but see his cat. nos. 37-38). Recently, 13 more Mesembrian specimens signed with ‘**Mo-**’ appeared on the coin market, as follows:

1. 1.23g, 11 mm – Fred Shore FPL 81 (January 2000), lot 16 = CNG e-Sale 347 (25.03.2015), lot 78;
2. 1.25g, 10 mm – CNG e-Sale 245 (01.12.2010), lot 56;
3. 1.20g, 10 mm, worn – eBay Deutschland, Numismatik Lanz (13.06.2011);
4. 1.25g – Rauch Summer Auction 2011 (19.09.2011), lot 77;
5. 1.28g, 11 mm – CGB Monnaies 59 (19 June 2013), lot 54;
6. 1.25g, 9x10 mm – Dea Moneta, Ars Coin 7 (28.02.2014), lot 2;
7. 1.25g, worn – Busso Peus 412 (24.04.2014), lot 61;
8. 1.24g, 11 mm – CNG e-Sale 344 (12.02.2015), lot 17;
9. 1.24g, 10 mm – London Ancient Coins 41 (22.01.2015), lot 32;
10. 1.19g, 10 mm – Gitbud & Naumann 31 (03.05.2015), lot 43;
11. 1.25g, 12 mm – Naumann 45 (03.07.2016), lot 58;
12. 1.30g, 11 mm – Naumann 45 (03.07.2016), lot 59;
13. 1.16g, 11 mm – eBay Deutschland, Gallery perfektsionista (07.03.2017), no. 162415557418.

Apparently, this variation of ethnic on diobols must be explained as a hidden name of Mesembrian official magistrate beginning with the letters **Mo-**. Notably, the hoard from General Kantardzhievo contains 4 such coins (cat. nos. 40-43), out of 36 Mesembrian diobols in total. It was not a small issue – for the moment 2 obverse and 4 reverse dies can be distinguished.

The numismatic evidence provides no less than four officials of Mesembria responsible for coinage in the 4th century BC:

<i>No.</i>	<i>Name as on coins</i>	<i>References</i>	<i>Specimens recorded</i>
1.	Anthesterios (Ανθεστήριος)	Head 1911, p. 278; Babelon 1932, no. 1654; Karayotov 1994, p. 18, 79, pl. 1, 3; Paunov 2014 – a unique tetradrachm (23 mm, 15.40g) from the former Fenerly Bey and Prince B. Shahovskoy collections.	1
2.	AA-	<i>BMC Greek</i> (Thrace), p. 132, 3; Gerassimov 1950, p. 25, nos. 3-5; <i>SNG BM</i> 270; Karayotov 1994, p. 24, cat. nos. 13-25	ca. 35
3.	NI-	Gerassimov 1950, pp. 24-25, nos. 1-2; Karayotov 1994, p. 25, cat. nos. 26-36	ca. 30
4.	MO-	See discussion above, nos. 40-43; Karayotov 1994, nos. 37-38 (but “o” not noted).	18

Chronology & burial date

Previously, different chronologies have been proposed for both series under discussion.

Diobols of Mesembria:

- Head 1911, p. 278: 450-350 BC;
- *SNG Copenhagen* 652: 450-350 BC;
- Gerassimov 1950, p. 24-25: ca. 440 BC;
- *SNG Evelpidis* I, 974: 450-350 BC;
- *SNG Tübingen* II, 893: 450-350 BC;
- *SNG Ashmolean* 3529-3530: ca. 450-350 BC;
- Price 1993, in *SNG BM Black Sea*, 268-269, 271: 4th c. BC;
- *SNG Stancomb* 219-222: 400-300 BC;
- Karayotov 1994, p. 27, 13-130: ca. 375-350 BC;
- Topalov 1995, 4.1: 480-323 BC.

Diobols of Apollonia Pontica

- *BMC Greek* (Mysia) p. 9, no. 15: 450-330 BC (to Apollonia ad Rhyndacum);
- Head 1911, p. 277: after 400 BC;
- *SNG Copenhagen* 459-461; after 400 BC;
- Gerassimov 1963, p. 334: 350-306 BC;
- *SNG Ashmolean* 3565-3567: ca. 357-342/1 BC;
- Price 1993, in *SNG BM Black Sea*, 167-176: late 4th c. BC;
- *SNG Stancomb* 41-48: 4th c. BC.

As the hoard evidence clearly demonstrates, the coinage and circulation of Apollonia Pontica and Mesembria diobols was parallel and contemporary. The new hoard from General Kantardzhievo also testifies that the diobols of both cities were closely associated and circulated together. However, we cannot suggest a more precise date of both series than the wider period from ca. 375 to 342/1 BC, due to the absence of more reliable chronological and numismatic markers.

The main reason for the active distribution and circulation of Apollonia Pontica and Mesembria diobols far north from their civic territories was the lack of other convenient small silver denomination in the region of Dobrudja (Odessos did not strike its own coinage until the 280's BC, Istros was far north). As a date of concealment of the hoard from General Kantardzhievo we do suggest the timespan between ca. 340 and 320 BC, but most likely in its very beginning – related with the march of the Macedonian king Philip II along the Western Euxine coast against Scythian king Ateas in 339 BC.¹⁵

¹⁵ For more details, see Draganov 2015, p. 29, 45-47.

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Planșa I. Monede emise de Apollonia Pontica descoperite în satul General Kantardjievo.

Plate II. Coins from Mesembria discovered at General Kantardzhievo, nos. 32-66.

Planșa II. Monede emise de Mesambria descoperite în satul General Kantardjievo.



Plate I. Coins from Apollonia Pontica discovered at General Kantardzhievo



Plate II. Coins from Mesembria discovered at General Kantardzhievo