A HOARD OF GOLD BOSPORAN STATERS OF THE 2ND AND 3RD CENTURIES AD FROM THE VILLAGE OF KAZANSKAYA

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In 1972 a hoard of Bosporan staters from the reigns of King Sauromates II (174-210/211 AD) and Rhescuporis III (211-226 AD) was found in the village of Kazanskaya near the town of Kropotkin in the Krasnodar Territory. The hoard was later brought to the Krasnodar Museum for safekeeping (KM 1021-1034). Since the report on the find made by N.V. Anifimov, a member of the museum staff, this hoard has been mentioned in a summary of Bosporan hoards dating from the Roman period. Yet no detailed description of the staters from the hoard according to year and type has been published and neither have any metrological data on them. The Kazanskaya hoard only includes 14 coins, four of which date from the reign of Sauromates II (Nos. 1-4) and ten from the reign of Rhescuporis III (Nos. 5-14). The hoard which resembles the one published here most clearly — both as far as its composition is concerned and the time when it was buried, is the 1958 hoard from the Gnilovskoye city-site which consisted of staters from the reigns of Eupator, Sauromates II and Rhescuporis III.

The earliest coin in the Kazanskaya hoard is the Sauromates II stater with the date Z0Y (477 BE = 180 AD) — No. 1. According to the classification used by

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2 N.V. Anifimov, “Hoard of Bosporan Coins found in the Krasnodar Territory”, Abstract for a paper given at the 1972 Archaeological Conference of the Institute of Archaeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences devoted to field research, 1972, Moscow, p. 1.


4 V.V. Yatsenko, “A Hoard of Electrum Bosporan Staters from the Gnilovskoye City-site”, VDI (Bulletin of Ancient History), 1993, No. 3, pp. 43-54.
A.N. Zograf, the coinage of Sauromates II can be divided into three periods. The 180 AD stater relates to the first period (174-186 AD). The average weight of staters from the first period is 7.70 grammes. Yet after the year 180 the weight of gold staters decreases sharply. Of the eight recorded staters of that year (not counting the example from the hoard published in this article) only three coins weigh over 7.70 grammes: the average weight of the others comes to no more than 7.57 grammes. Analysis of the staters from the first period enables us to assume that Sauromates II must have come up against a number of problems relating to the financial and economic state of the Bosporan kingdom.

The 193 AD stater (No. 2) from the Kazanskaya hoard relates to the second period of Sauromates II (186-196 AD) coinage. During that period more gold coins were minted than during the first one. The official weight of the staters from the second period was 7.70 grammes, but the gold content decreases. In the staters of the year 193 AD, for instance, the gold content was only 33%. The two 197 staters from this hoard (Nos. 3 and 4) relate to the third period of the coinage issued by Sauromates II (197-210 AD). This period is characterized by a reduction in the numbers of gold coins minted. The average weight of staters from this period is 7.70 grammes and the gold content amounts to less than 37.5%.

Rhescuporis III began issuing gold coins in 211 AD (No. 5). This hoard also includes staters from the years 214 AD (No. 6), 215 (No. 7), 218 (Nos. 8 and 9), 219 (No. 10), 220 (No. 11), 221 (No. 12), 222 (No. 13) and 225 (No. 14). As regards weight, the Rhescuporis III staters keep strictly to the norm of 7.60-7.70 grammes. In the early years of his reign coins are still to be encountered, in which the gold content is as much as 50%, but from 215 onwards there is a marked deterioration to be observed in the metal composition of the coins: the gold content drops by almost half. In a mere two years (217 and 218 AD) the gold content of the staters dropped by 10-15%.

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8 Ibid., pp. 149, 163.