TWO GOLDEN BRACELETS FROM OLBIA IN THE WALTERS ART GALLERY

M.YU. TREISTER

1. History of the Olbia bracelets and their acquisition by the Walters Art Gallery

These bracelets (Figs. 1-2) probably originate from a rich burial of the Olbian necropolis, thought to date from the middle or the third quarter of the 1st century AD. This burial, according to A.V. Oreshnikov, was clandestinely excavated by peasants in 1891. However, another possibility is that they were found in another Olbian burial, at the Filipov Farm, that was plundered in 1913. This later location was studied in the same season by B.V. Pharmakovskii. Although neither Oreshnikov nor Pharmakovskii mentioned the bracelets, R. Zahn has suggested that these two Olbian burial sites may have been one and the same. The bracelets were acquired by P. Mavrogordato in 1913 who was told that they had come from a recently discovered burial at Olbia. This was said to coincide with the acquisition of some other objects of jewelry from the first Olbian burial plundered in 1891, along with several objects published by Pharmakovskii as having been found in 1913, including two necklaces with butterfly-pendants, also in the Walters Art Museum collection in Baltimore (inv. No. 57.386 and

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1 Oreshnikov 1894, 1-13; Minns 1913, 406; Shilov 1968, 314-5; Oliver 1979, 94 ff.; Treister 1998, 49, 52-3.

2 Pharmakowsky 1914, 244-5, fig. 68; 254-7, figs. 78-80; CR St. Petersburg 1913-1915, 47-8, fig. 74. Most of the objects described and illustrated by Pharmakovskii except for a gold bracelet with widening ends (Pharmakowsky 1914, 255-6, No. 6, fig. 78) and a bowl of red-yellow glass (Pharmakowsky 1914, 256-7, No. 8, fig. 80) later ended up (1921-1931) in the Galerie Bachstitz.

3 Zahn 1921, 32-3. See also Rostowzew 1931, 585-6.

4 Pfeiler-Lippitz 1972, 108 f., pl. 31; Oliver 1979, 94 f., No. 281; Cat. Baltimore 1984, No. 49; Gold Jewelry 1983, 62, fig. 5; Deppert-Lippitz 1985a, 283, 286, fig. 215; Reeder 1988, 236-237, No. 132; Skrzhinskaya 1994, 19, fig. 1, 2; 21; 2000, 176, fig. 79; Boardman 1993, 187, No. 182B; Treister 1998, 49, 53, fig. 4.
Fig. 1. Bracelet from Olbia. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, inv. 57.376. General view. Photo: M. Treister.

Fig. 2. Bracelet from Olbia. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, inv. 57.375. General view. Photo: M. Treister.