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<https://doi.org/10.26485/AAL/2018/64/9>

**RHODIAN-STYLE FRACTIONS BEARING APOLLO AND A ROSE:
 MINT AT PHANAGORIA**

ABSTRACT Among the coins found on the Taman Peninsula, in the neighbourhood of Ancient Phanagoria, the silver coins depicting a rose (described as a diobol) have been recently found. These coins are without any inscription but their iconography is similar to that on Rhodian coins. As coins of similar iconography but bearing the inscription ΦΑΝΑ[ΓΟ] / ΠΙΤΩΝ have been found at Phanagoria, the new coins have been attributed to the Phanagorian mint. The new finds of such coins at Phanagoria confirms that Rhodian-style coins were struck at her mint.

Keywords: coin finds, Taman Peninsula, Phanagoria, Rhodes

ABSTRACT Wśród monet znalezionych na Półwyspie Tamańskim, w okolicach antycznej Fanagorii, znalazły się egzemplarze wybite w srebrze przedstawiające różę (określone jako diobol). Te pozbawione napisów monety ikonografią i stylem wykonania nawiązują do pieniądza Rodos. Monety przypisane zostały mennicy w Fanagorii, gdzie znaleziono również egzemplarze o podobnej ikonografii, ale opatrzone napisem ΦΑΝΑ[ΓΟ] / ΠΙΤΩΝ. Nowe znaleziska tego typu monet w Fanagorii potwierdzają, że monety w stylu rodyjskim były bite w jej mennicy.

Słowa kluczowe: znaleziska monet, Półwysep Tamański, Fanagoria, Rodos

Introduction

The unepigraphic small silver fractions with Apollo's head/rose are occasionally found on the Taman Peninsula, generally in the outskirts of Phanagoria. Until recently, none of the catalogues (except for *Anokhin* 2011) included such Rhodian-styled coins which were recently at first attributed to the mint at Phanagoria.¹ At present, the Catalogue-Archive 'Coins of the Bosporan Kingdom' records some 33 pieces², however not with precise provenances. On the other hand two pieces have been provenanced to the 1986 and the 1996 excavations at Phanagoria, and another one found in 2016 at the Vinogradny 7 Settlement located on the Phanagorian *chora* (Fig. 1, 1):

1. Phanagoria, 1986. PhM, Inv. no. Ph-86-5. Weight 0.80 g. Diameter 10.5 mm. Locus "Upper town", Trench LIII-LIV, blade.³ Dies: <https://bosporan-kingdom.com/000-3134/21.html>.

2. Phanagoria, 1996. PhM, Inv. no. Ph -96-38. Weight 0.67 g. Diameter 11 mm. Locus "Upper town", Trench 32; basket 5.⁴ Dies: <https://bosporan-kingdom.com/000-3134/12.html>.

3. Site of Vinogradny 7, 2016. PhM, Inv. no. 63-2/1. Diameter 12 mm. Locus 2, Trench L-63, basket 2.⁵ Dies: <https://bosporan-kingdom.com/000-3134/8.html>.



Fig. 1. Diobol and tetrobol depicting a rose from the excavation at Phanagoria. Scale 2:1

¹ Anokhin 1999: fig. 24, 9; Anokhin 2011: no. 1167.

² <https://bosporan-kingdom.com/000-3134/1.html>. etc.

³ Ashton 2003: pl. 48, A; Abramzon and Kuznetsov 2015: 78, fig. 29, 1.

⁴ Ashton 2003: 384, no. 53, pl. 48, 53.

⁵ Abramzon and Sudarev 2017: 7, no. 2.

Table 1. Chemical composition of silver alloy of Phanagorian silver coins depicting a rose

No.	Denomination	PhM nos.	Ag	Cu	Au	Zn	Sn	Pb
1.	Diobol	Ph-86-5	36.67	62.78	0.23	-	0.32	-
2.	Diobol,	Ph-96-38	45.33	53.39	0.19	0.23	0.37	0.28
3.	Tetrobol	Ph-08-148	81.5	0.62	0.5	-	-	0.57
4.	Tetrobol	Ph-08-149	67.4	27.85	0.5	0.20	0.30	0.66
5.	Tetrobol	Ph-08-150	82	9.28	0.5	-	-	0.5
6.	Tetrobol	Ph-09-2	52.5	42.12	0.5	-	-	0.7
7.	Tetrobol	Ph-09-3	66.5	23.5	0.12	-	-	0.5
8.	Tetrobol	Ph-17-23	53.75	12.37	0.12	-	-	0.5

The absence of any ethnicon on the coins and the lack of precise information about their provenance still caused difficulties in identifying the mint; hence, it is no coincidence that these Rhodian-styled coins are often confused with Rhodian coins bearing a rose on their reverse. For this reason, the Phanagorian specimens mentioned above were first published as Rhodian copper coins with a radiate Helios' head/rose issued ca. 200 BC.⁶ Later we also attributed some pieces to the copper coinage of Rhodes.⁷ However, the obverses of both coins bear a wreathed Apollo's head instead the radiate Helios' head, and the type of Apollo's head is not used in Rhodian numismatics. Furthermore, recently it became known that they were struck from billon.

A study of the chemical composition of Phanagorian silver coins depicting a rose by XRF-analysis

In 2017-2018, a team of Phanagoria Museum Department of Restoration, and the Institute of Archaeology RAS conducted a study of the chemical composition of the alloy of the Phanagorian silver coins by XRF spectroscopy. The analysis was performed with XRF-spectrometer M1 Mistral (Bruker), which allows one to obtain data about the chemical composition of the thin surface layer (up to 10 µm), and to identify the presence or absence of any coating. The average analysis time was 30 s under 50 kV voltage.

The study showed that the smallest fractions (diobols?) were made of copper-silver alloy, while the tetrobols were struck mainly of a slightly better metal. Only a tetrobol no. 3 (Ph-08-148) was made of fine silver (920 sample), with copper additives and inclusions of gold and lead: bismuth and tin were not recorded. A sufficiently high gold content (1%) suggests the use of silver obtained from epithermal gold-silver deposits, which are not enriched with any trace elements. The tetrobols nos. 4-5 (Ph-08-149 and Ph-08-150) have a silver coating. The diobols (nos 1-2, Ph-86-5, Ph-96-38) and tetrobols nos. 6-8 (Ph-09-2, Ph-09-3, Ph-17-23) were made of low-grade silver alloy with large additives of copper. According to the content of trace impurities, one can suggest several sources of silver, in particular, one of them is most likely located in Macedonia (no. 8, Ph-17-23), and others may be associated with the territory of Bulgaria.

The circulation pattern of fractions bearing Apollo / rose

The distribution of the finds is of considerable value in settling the issue of the identification of the mint minting the silver fractions depicting a rose. The only district where such diobols (?) are commonly found is in the outskirts of Phanagoria. We have only three references to precise provenances of such coins. For the first time, two diobols (?) found in layers of Phanagoria and one more piece found in her *chora*, in the layers of the Vinogradny 7 Settlement. This is firm evidence given by excavated numismatic material, that the coins belonged to the currency of Phanagoria.

⁶ Ashton 2003: 384, no. 53, pl. 48, 53, A.

⁷ Abramzon and Kuznetsov 2015: 78, fig. 29, 1.

The Vinogradny 7 site is located 4.8 km to the northwest of the Vyshesteblievskaya stanitsa, 3.8 km to the northeast of the present village of Vinogradny, and 3.5 km south of the village of Primorsky. The settlement was located along the ancient road that connected Phanagoria with the ancient settlement of Vinogradny 1, and the northwestern tip of the Kiziltash estuary (Tsokur), the largest estuary of the Kuban Delta, which flows into the Black Sea. This route was one of the three main roads across the Taman Peninsula, and ran from Golubitsky Island through Phanagoria to the Cape Panagia⁸. All the other coins have a less secure provenance, being found in the rural settlements near Phanagoria. Therefore, the archaeological finds in Phanagoria of the fractions bearing a rose, and their circulation pattern, certainly suggest that the mint can only be located in the capital of the Asian Bosphorus, as Anokhin believed little earlier on.

Date of issue of the Rhodian-style fractions

V. Anokhin, who correctly attributed these coins to the Phanagorian mint, at the same time, without any argument, dated them to ca. 165–155 BC.⁹ Stylistic comparison with Rhodian coins of the 2nd century BC yield little to confirm this dating: the same style of rose is depicted on the group dating to 205–188 BC¹⁰, as well as on earlier or later groups. In 188–84 BC, Rhodes also minted plinthophoric coins depicting the same rose.¹¹ Nevertheless, it is clear that Phanagorian fractions imitated the Rhodian hemidrachms. The reason for the issue of the Rhodian-styled diobols (?), and consequently of their dating, is associated with the historical circumstances of the epoch, and the emergence of political conditions which led to the revival of silver coinage at the Phanagorian mint.

We believe that the unepigraphic fractions (diobols?) are synchronous with the Phanagorian tetrobols with Artemis/rose, ΦΑΝΑΓΟΡΙΤΩΝ (Fig. 1, 2), which were dated by Zograph to 200–121 BC¹², by Shelov to the last decade of the reign of Spartocids, i.e., ca. 120–110 BC¹³, and by Anokhin to 107–100 BC¹⁴. Following Anokhin, the Catalogue-Archive ‘Coins of the Bosporan Kingdom’ dates

the diobols (?) and tetrobols to the first decade of Mithridates VI’s reign in the Bosphorus, i.e. 109–100 BC.¹⁵ It seems likely that both issues cannot be separated by any noticeable time gap, and they apparently constitute a series of silver coins consisting of two denominations each having a common reverse type of a rose, and therefore imitating the Rhodian emblem. Our concept of grouping both fractions in a single series is confirmed by the combination of their obverse types depicting the heads of the famous brother and sister pair, Apollo and Artemis. The same pair, for example, occupies the obverses of the series of synchronous Athenian copper coins, bearing a common reverse type depicting a plemochoe.¹⁶ While the coinage of Phanagoria was certainly in line with the main trends of the Greek numismatics, her choice of Artemis and Apollo for the obverses of a new series of coins is not accidental.

We believe that this series was most likely issued shortly before the transition of the Bosphorus to the rule of Mithridates VI, following the end of the Spartocid period. The revival of Phanagorian silver coinage reflects the rise of her economy in the 2nd century BC, and a new growth in the importance of the city authorities, coinciding with the weakening of the Spartocid dynasty.¹⁷ The choice by Phanagoria, as well as Gorgippia, of Rhodian coin types for minting their silver coins is not accidental, and, in the Shelov’s opinion, it provides evidence for the possible political alignment of Phanagoria and Gorgippia with Rhodes, the mighty sea power of the time, coinciding with the progressive socio-political crisis of the of Spartocid state.¹⁸

Phanagoria and Rhodes during the Hellenistic period

Scholars have noted the influence of Rhodes on the political and economic life of the states of the Northern Black Sea region during the Hellenistic period, and Phanagoria was no exception. Shelov compared the finds of Hellenistic Rhodian amphorae stamps from Phanagoria and the adjacent Kuban region, with a number of such stamps found in the cities of the European Bosphorus: namely Panticapaeum, Tyritake, and Mirmekion. He believed that closer economic ties existed between Phanagoria (and its Asian Bosphorus periphery)

⁸ Paromov 1998: 219–220, fig. 2.

⁹ Anokhin 2011: 168.

¹⁰ *SNG Keckman* 599–613.

¹¹ *SNG Keckman* 621–692.

¹² Zograph 1951: pl. XLII, 12.

¹³ Shelov 1956a: pl. IX, 114.

¹⁴ Anokhin 2011: no. 1171.

¹⁵ <https://bosporan-kingdom.com/000-3134/1.html>.

¹⁶ Kroll 1993: 77, nos. 103–104.

¹⁷ Zograph 1951: 181.

¹⁸ Shelov 1956a: 176, 201–204.

and Rhodes, in comparison with the European Bosphorus.¹⁹ The adoption of the Chian-Rhodian standard by Olbia²⁰ and Chersonese²¹ provide evidence for Rhodian influence on the development of trade and coinage throughout the Northern Pontic states during the fourth to second centuries BC, while Phanagoria and Gorgippia imitated the obverse and reverse types of Rhodian coins in the late second century BC.²²

Rhodian coins became widespread on the Taman Peninsula as the result of close trade and economic contacts. Three pieces belonged to two hoards found in the Phanagorian *chora* in 2003 and 2007 respectively. The first treasure included a Rhodian plinthophoric bronze coin bearing a Rhodes/rose dating to ca. 177/173-88/84 BC²³. The second assemblage contained two bronze coins with Helios/rose²⁴ minted ca. 200 BC. A Rhodian bronze coin came from the settlement of Taman 4.²⁵ Drachms have also been found in some rural settlements on the Taman Peninsula: a piece of ca. 225-190 BC at the site of Artyushchenko²⁶, and another one dating to 190-180 BC from the site of Taman 3²⁷.

The Taman finds somewhat mitigate the observations of A. Bresson, who has suggested that the autonomous coinage of Rhodes did not circulate in significant volume outside southeastern Asia and the Archipelago.²⁸ More than forty hoards containing Rhodian coins of 400-50 BC come from Asia Minor. Half the assemblages were found in the southern and southwestern regions of Anatolia.²⁹ Zograf also noted that Hellenistic Rhodian coins were widespread in the eastern Aegean and the western and southern coasts of Asia Minor. He was only able to find a single reference to the discovery a Rhodian coin in Gorgippia.³⁰ N. Frolova noted their penetration to the north³¹, which was confirmed by finds of single Rhodian coins in the Bosphorus (Gorgippia³² and

Panticapaeum³³), as well as in a number of the Northern Black Sea centres: Olbia³⁴, Chersonese³⁵, the sanctuaries of Achilles on Leucos Island and the Tendra Spit³⁶. On the other hand, the Phanagorian 2003 and 2007 hoards remain the only assemblages containing Rhodian coins found to date.

So, the intensive economic ties between the Asian Bosphorus and Rhodes, as well as a convenient political moment (the weakening of Spartocid rule) inspired Phanagoria to strike a series of silver coins consisting of diobols (?) and tetrobols bearing the Rhodian emblem, a rose, shortly before the transition of the Bosphorus under the rule of Mithridates VI in 110/109 BC. The fact that the emission of diobols was quite plentiful is evidenced by a sufficient variety of recorded dies. Up to now 8 obverse and 11 reverse have been noted.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Irina Saprykina (Institute of Archaeology RAS) and Olga Gunchina (Phanagoria Museum) for making XRF analysis of the Phanagorian silver coins under study.

Abbreviations

PhM – Phanagorian Museum
MIA – Materialy i Issledovaniya po Arkheologii SSSR [Materials and Researches on Archaeology of USSR]. Moscow – Leningrad

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¹⁹ Shelov 1956b: 128-153.

²⁰ Karyshkovskiy 2003: 54-56.

²¹ Zograf 1951: 147.

²² Anokhin 2011: no. 1167, 1171, 1202.

²³ Abramzon and Kuznetsov 2015: 78, fig. 29, 3.

²⁴ Abramzon and Kuznetsov 2015: 141, fig. 54, I, 2.

²⁵ Rozov 2014: 275, pl. 1, 10.

²⁶ Rozov 2014: 275, pl. 1, 8.

²⁷ Rozov 2014: 275.

²⁸ Bresson 1993: 119-169.

²⁹ Abramzon and Kuznetsov 2015: 141.

³⁰ Zograf 1945: 39.

³¹ Frolova 2001: 416.

³² Zograf 1945: 60, no. 60.

³³ Anisimov 1992: 350, no. 341; Rozov 2014: 281, note 28.

³⁴ Karyshkovskiy 2003: 306, no. 47.

³⁵ Five pieces see: Gilevich 1968: 58.

³⁶ Abramzon and Tunkina 2018: 77, nos. 17, 18.

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