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Inhalt – Table des matières – Sommario

Giovanni Gorini: The Ballaeus Hoard from Rizan in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. S. 25. Michel Dürr: Le diadème, marque de l'*auctoritas* ou de l'*imperium*. S. 31. – Martin Lory: Neue Halbbatzen aus alten Schillingen. S. 48. – Münzfunde - Trouvailles monétaires. S. 57. – Kongresse - Congrès. S. 57. – Berichte - Rapports. S. 58. – Schweizerische Münzkabinette - Cabinets des médailles en Suisse. S. 60.

THE BALLAEUS HOARD FROM RIZAN IN THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

Giovanni Gorini

Among the numismatic material bequeathed by the late J. M. F. May to the Ashmolean Museum, there is a group of 52 worn bronze coins belonging to a hoard acquired by May probably in Rizan (Yugoslavia) before the second World War. A short account of this hoard had been given in *Coin Hoards* 1, 1975, 28 no. 88 but it seems to me that it deserved to be studied more in detail.¹

Until the present day little is known about the history of King Ballaeus and we know nothing about the chronology of his reign. Now however some new archaeological material, this hoard of bronze coins, and still other material, as May's manuscripts which I was able

¹ I am deeply indebted to Dr. C. M. Kraay, who gave me the opportunity to study this hoard in the summer of 1977 and in October 1978 at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Many thanks also to Dr. Michael Metcalf for providing me with the plaster casts in 1982 after cleaning the coins illustrated. This paper was submitted for publication in *Coin Hoards* VIII which is not yet published. As I think it is relevant to the chronology of Ballaeus' coins, I thank the editors of SM for accepting the article in this journal.

to see in the Ashmolean Museum, has allowed me to come to some new conclusions about this king and the mint of Rizon.²

All the coins recovered by May are of bronze. Some specimens are similar in colour with a green patina, some are cleaned to reveal the details. The coins are as follows: 14 of Ballaeus (8 of the Rizon type and 6 of the Pharian type), 28 are barbarian imitations of the Ballaeus Rizon type and 10 are of the autonomous issues of the Rizon mint.

Rizon type

A. Obv.: Head of king Ballaeus l.

Rev.: Artemis advancing l. and wearing short chiton and boots. In her r. hand she holds a torch, in her l. 2 spears.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΛΛΑΙΟΥ downward in field r. and l., sometimes only a few letters appear.

No.	Weight	Dies	BRUNŠMID ³	Diameter
* 1	3.285	6	VI 105	19 mm
2	2.227	1	VI 115	15 mm
3	2.352	3	VI 116	15 mm
4	2.128	3	VI 101	15 mm

B. Obv.: Head of king Ballaeus r.

Rev.: Same type as A.

* 5	2.481	6	VI 96	14 mm	
6	2.442	8	VI 98	14 mm	
7	1.542	5	VI 98	14 mm	same die as 6 (?)
8	1.982	8	VI 96 (?)	13 mm	

C. Barbarous imitations of type A, with the head of Ballaeus l.

* 09	2.801	6	VII 113	16 mm	
10	2.556	7	VII 114	17 mm	
11	2.460	12	VII 108	17 mm	
12	2.407	12	VII 108	15 mm	(irregular)
13	2.398	12	VII 108	16 mm	
14	2.272	12	VII ?	16 mm	
15	2.352	11	VII ?	16 mm	
* 16	2.314	4	VII 113	15 mm	

² G. Gorini, *Re Ballaios, una proposta cronologica*, in: *Il crinale d'Europa. L'area illirico-danubiana nei suoi rapporti con il mondo classico*. Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma 1984, 43–49 (= *Atti del convegno*, Roma 18–19 maggio 1982); *idem*: *Bilješke o novcu kralja Baleja (Ilirija)*. Notes about the coinage of king Ballaios, *Numizmatica I (VII)* 1988, 16–21; *idem*: *Una moneta di Ballaios da San Domino (Isole Tremiti)*, *RIN* 91, 1989, 27–32; *idem*: *Ancora monete di Ballaios dalla Puglia*, *RIN* 92, 1990, 319–323.

³ J. Brunšmid, *Die Inschriften und Münzen der griechischen Städte Dalmatiens*, Wien 1898 (Reprint Padua 1979).

17	2.268	11	VII 113 same die	15 mm	
18	2.239	5	VII 113 same die	13 mm	
19	2.232	11	VII 113 same die	13 mm	green patina
20	2.170	11	VII 113 same die	15 mm	
21	2.126	12	VII 113 same die	15 mm	
22	2.146	1	VII 113 same die	14 mm	green patina
23	2.147	5	VII 113 same die	15 mm	
24	1.945	12	VII 113 same die	15 mm	
25	2.068	3	unclassifiable	15 mm	
26	1.934	2	unclassifiable	15 mm	
27	1.910	2	unclassifiable	14 mm	green patina
28	1.904	5	unclassifiable	15 mm	
29	1.120	10	unclassifiable	11 mm	green patina
30	1.822	–	struck twice	16 mm	
31	1.820	12	unclassifiable	13 mm	type more barbarous
32	1.742	5	unclassifiable	15 mm	
33	1.725	1	unclassifiable	14 mm	
34	1.684	–	unclassifiable	14 mm	
35	1.489	–	unclassifiable	14 mm	
36	1.428	8	unclassifiable	15 mm	

Pharian type

D. Obv.: Head of king Ballaeus l. but smaller and of a quite different type, with short curly hair.

Rev.: Artemis, clad in short chiton, standing to front and holding spear in r. hand; l. hand on hip.

*37	2.265	6	VII 121	15 mm
38	1.577	8	VII 121 (?)	13 mm
39	1.294	6	VII 121	14 mm
40	1.757	2	VII 121	15 mm

E. Obv.: Head of king Ballaeus r. but similar to the above.

Rev.: Same type as above.

*41	1.820	5	VII 135	13 mm
42	1.504	1	VII 135	13 mm

Mint of Rizon

F. Obv.: Female head wreathed r.⁺

Rev.: Artemis advancing r. holding a torch in her r. hand, [PIΣON] IT [AN].

⁺ The female head is not helmeted as it was seen on the specimen of the hoard published by Evans, NC 1880, 291–296 pl. VIII 21, and now in the Ashmolean Museum.

*43	3.054	7	13 mm	
44	1.705	10	13 mm	
45	1.672	2	13 mm	
46	1.511	2	13 mm	
*47	1.479	3	13 mm	
48	1.287	–	in very bad condition	11 mm holed
49	1.058	–		11 mm
50	0.942	2		11 mm
51	0.940	7		11 mm
52	0.892	2		11 mm

As probable date of burial we might assume 168 B.C. because what remarkable in this hoard is the presence of coins not only of Ballaeus but also of the mint of Rizon. We know 3 autonomous issues of this mint:

I. ca. 175–170 B.C. Obv.: Young male head r. or l.⁵
 Rev.: Artemis advancing l. holding a torch in her r. hand,
 ΠΙΣΟΝΙΤΑΝ.

1.86 g 10 mm Coll. Evans, Ashmolean Museum (fig. a)

II. ca. 170–168 B.C. Obv.: Female head wreathed r. (Persephone ?)
 Rev.: Artemis advancing r. holding a torch in her r. hand,
 ΠΙΣΟΝΙΤΑΝ

1.20 g 13 mm Evans pl. XIII 10 (fig. b)

III. ca. 168–150 B.C. Obv.: Head of Zeus r.
 Rev.: ΠΙΣΟ within wreath
 1.45 g 12 mm Evans pl. XIII 9

According to Evans the third issue can be attributed to the period immediately following 168 B.C., because the type is similar to the Scodrian issues of the period after the defeat of Genthios. If this is accepted, our first and second issues must belong to a period before 168 B.C. according to the autonomous emissions of Scodra, Lissos and Labeati⁶, which struck their own coins before the reign of Genthios (ca. 186–168 B.C.)⁷. Now the state of conservation of the Ballaeus specimens is as fresh as that of the Rizon pieces and their average weight similar to the Rizonian. So the most plausible view is that the Ballaeus coins are to be dated in the same period, or better before the first autonomous coinage of the mint of Rizon which belongs, as I suppose, to the years ca. 175–168 B.C. according also to the typology of these issues which follows and imitates that of Ballaeus. To this period in the

⁵ I. Marović, *Novac ilirskog dinasta Baleja u Arheološkom Muzeju u Splitu* (The coinage of Ballaeus in the Archaeological Museum in Split), *Vjesnik Za Arheologiju i Historiju Dalmatinsku* 81, 1988, 96 (145) published a specimen with head to the right (pl. XXII 1a, 1b). What matters here is that the coin was found «among coins of Ballaeus during work on the catalogue» (p. 145), so that it is plausible that its chronology is connected with Ballaeus, as our Oxford hoard confirms.

⁶ D. Rendic Miočević, *L'atelier monétaire de Rhizon et ses émissions, Frappe et ateliers monétaires dans l'antiquité et moyenâge*, Belgrad 1976, 35–46, but with nothing new.

⁷ K. Pink, *Lokale Prägungen aus dem Sinus Rhizonicus, Serta Hoffilleriana* (= *Vjesnik Hratskoga Arheoloskoga Drustva n.s.*, 18–21, 1937–1940) 534.



1



5



9



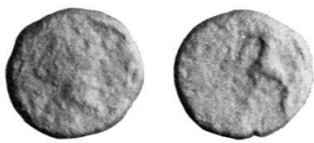
16



37



41



43



47



a



b



activity of the mint of Rizon we may assign our coins nr. 43–52. From the legend we can read only the central letters ...ITA... which can presumably be completed to ΠΙΣΟΝΙΤΑΝ. The type is a female head (Persephone?) wreathed and not helmeted, as was wrongly supposed by Evans. The coins are also of a considerably worse style and craftsmanship than the Ballaeus' coins and in some specimens the obv. and rev. are not well centred, but the weight of the best preserved specimen (3.054 g) puts this coinage soon after or within the Ballaeus coinage. Then it is probable that the weight dropped to less than 1 g both in Ballaeus' coins and in Rizonian coins and imitations of Ballaeus coins. If this relation between the autonomous coinage of Rizon and Ballaeus' coins has been correctly interpreted, we have some elements to support a more correct chronology of the coinage of Ballaeus.

From the relationship with the coins of Pharos⁸ and the variety of style and of dies of the silver and bronze coinages of Ballaeus⁹ it seems reasonable to assume that the king's reign must have lasted from ca. 195/190 until ca. 175 B.C.¹⁰ when the king probably died. Livy¹¹ does not speak about Ballaeus, but mentions the Rizonitae as an autonomous people in connection with the events of the year 168. In this period the weight of coins probably dropped as a result of the war, and this is one reason for the deposition of this and other poor hoards in the same area.¹² These cannot in any case be regarded as saving, but rather as circulation hoards in connection with military operations, since we know more than five hoards from Rizan.¹³ So the date of burial of our hoard might be 168 B.C.

⁸ B. Jubani, Monnaies illyriennes l'ethikon de ΛΑΒΙΑΤΑΝ découvertes à Kukës, *Studia Albanica* VIII, 1971, 69–75.

⁹ I. Morović, Novac Ilirskog dinasta Baleia (cf. n. 2), 1988, 81–145 publishes 415 coins of Ballaeus with many varieties of dies; this implies a long period of coinage.

¹⁰ G. Gorini, Il crinale d'Europa (cf. n. 2).

¹¹ Livy XLV 35.

¹² Cf. D. Rendić Miočević, *Numizmatičke Vijesti* 30, 1987, 5–14 and G. Gorini, Ancora monete dalla Puglia (cf. n. 2) 322.

¹³ From Rizan, the following five hoards are known: a) Oxford (I. Mirnik, *Coin Hoards in Yugoslavia*, BAR Int. Series 95, Oxford 1981, nr. 28a); b) ca. 1888 (Mirnik, op. cit. nr. 39); c) 1927 (Mirnik, op. cit. nr. 40); c) «before World War II» (*Numiz. Vijesti* 30, 1987); e) c. 1940 Hoard unpublished (information from D. Ujes, Beograd). All, except (b), with coins of Ballaios and probably concealed in connection with the defeat of the Macedonian kingdom.