

Thessaly, 1993 Hoard (CH IX, 64)

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CATHARINE C. LORBER

THESSALY, 1993 HOARD (*CH IX*, 64)

PLATES 9–10

When I first entered the field of ancient numismatics in the early 1970s, my mentors pointed to Silvia Hurter as a role model for female numismatists. She was not only an inspiration but a wonderful friend, generous with encouragement, information, and her peerless photographs.

This modest hoard is a coda to two previous discussions of Pharsalus that were published in *SNR* 82 and 85 under Silvia's aegis as editor.

A mixed hoard of 39 Thessalian silver coins appeared in early 1993, consisting of four drachms and two hemidrachms of Pharsalus, together with 33 drachms of Larissa. The Larissa varieties included two bull wrestler drachms, three drachms with the profile head of the nymph Larissa, and 28 early facing head drachms. The hoard was recorded by a friend of numismatics who believed it to be complete.

The greatest interest of this hoard is that it allows for wear comparisons between the coins of Pharsalus and those of Larissa. All the Pharsalian issues bear letters on the obverse and some on the reverse as well. They belong to Series B.1 of Stella Lavva's recent corpus of Pharsalian coinage¹. Lavva dated Series B c. 424–405/4 BC, following the reasoning of Ernest Babelon². Babelon believed that the genitive name ΤΕΛΕΦΑΝΤΟ, inscribed in tiny letters on one lovely reverse die of this series (Lavva R58), is a die engraver's signature and that the artist is to be identified with Telephas of Phocis, a sculptor discussed by Pliny the Elder under the Latinized name Telephanes. According to Pliny, Telephanes was admired by connoisseurs for his Thessalian oeuvre, including a statue of the nymph Larissa. Telephanes also worked in the ateliers of the Persian kings Xerxes and Darius; assuming these to be Xerxes II and Darius II, the *floruit* of Telephanes can be dated around 425–404 BC. Yet Lavva herself conceded that most art historians associate Telephanes with the construction projects of Darius I, in which case the foundation of the Babelon/Lavva chronology collapses.

My review of Lavva's book in *SNR* 82 cited three Thessalian hoards whose contents suggest that Pharsalus Series B was complete by the time Larissa's early facing head drachm coinage came to an end, a *terminus* tentatively dated c. 370 BC³. The present hoard, *CH IX*, 64, was the basis for a provisional hypothesis that the Pharsalian silver of Series B was actually contemporary with the early facing head drachms. Full publication of the hoard will now allow all numismatists to evaluate the evidence. Several of the Pharsalian coins in the hoard are clearly more worn than any of the Larissa drachms with which they are associated. This is especially true of the Pharsalian reverses, which should have enjoyed some protection from their

¹ S. LAVVA, *Die Münzprägung von Pharsalos*, Saarbrücker Studien zur Archäologie und alten Geschichte 14 (Saarbrücken, 2001).

² E. BABELON, *Traité des monnaies grecques et romaines IV* (Paris, 1932), cols. 275–280.

³ C.C. LORBER, review of LAVVA (n. 1), *SNR* 82, 2003, pp. 156–157.

incuse or cupped fabric, whereas the majority of the Larissa drachms are flat on the reverse. The contrasting wear may imply that the Pharsalian issues antedated the profile head drachms of Larissa and even the late bull wrestler drachms represented in the hoard. This relative sequence would tend to vindicate a high chronology for Pharsalian Series B.1, though absolute dates remain elusive in the absence of a reliable chronology for Larissa. For what it is worth, Fritz Herrmann placed the end of the bull wrestler series c. 400 BC and dated the latest profile head drachms (those with round reverse dies) c. 395 BC⁴. My own best guess is that these dates are a little on the low side, and that the early facing head drachms were introduced c. 405–400 BC⁵.

But is it really credible that the Pharsalian issues are the oldest coins in our hoard? The contents overall suggest that the hoard was formed in the environs of Larissa, or at least in northern Thessaly where Larissa provided the bulk of the coinage in circulation. We should therefore expect that the oldest hoard coins would reflect the circulating coinage, i.e., that they would be issues of Larissa. A possible explanation for the makeup of our hoard is that it is a savings hoard that captured coins of Larissa after some limited circulation, whereas the coins of Pharsalus acquired more wear before they reached northern Thessaly. The present hoard can only open the discussion; we must await the publication of other mixed hoards to clarify the relative chronologies of Pharsalus and Larissa.

The Thessaly 1993 hoard also contributed to the study of Larissa's early facing head drachms. The initial die study⁶ classified these drachms into seven groups, whose tentative sequence derived from an intuitive sense of stylistic evolution. Actual evidence for the sequence was contradictory and inconclusive, but there were important indications that the original Groups One and Four might be closely related. These include the shared signature of the artist ΣΙΜΟ...⁷ and the appearance of two characteristic reverse types of Group One at the beginning of Group Four⁸. No. 18 of the present hoard added another such indication: Its obverse features an iconographic type belonging to the original Group One, a head turned slightly to the left and flanked by dolphins. The reverse type depicts a grazing horse stylistically very typical of Group Four, with long legs, mane and leg joints rendered as pellets, and a dotted exergual line. By 2007 the mounting evidence⁹ inspired a reordering of the groups when a greatly expanded catalogue of early facing head drachms was posted on the website *The Facing Head Coins of Larissa*¹⁰. Only the first three groups changed, as follows:

⁴ F. HERRMANN, *Die Silbermünzen von Larissa in Thessalien*, ZfN 35, 1925, pp. 18, 31, 36–37.

⁵ C.C. LORBER, *Thessalian Hoards and the Coinage of Larissa*, AJN 20, 2008, p. 126.

⁶ C.C. LORBER, *The Early Facing Head Drachms of Thessalian Larissa*, in H. NILSSON, ed., *Florilegium Numismaticum: Studia in Honorem U. Westermark Edita* (Stockholm, 1992), pp. 259–282.

⁷ See LORBER (n. 6), obverse dies 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, and 56, and reverse dies 42.3 and 61.1 = 62.1.

⁸ See LORBER (n. 6), reverse dies 42.1 (to which compare 12.2, 14.1–4, 15.1–2, 16.1, 17.1–2, 18.1, 19.1–3, 20.1–3, 21.1–2, 22.1–2, 23.1–3) and 42.2 (to which compare 3.1, 7.3).

⁹ Also discussed in LORBER, (n. 5), pp. 126–127.

¹⁰ www.lightfigures.com/numismat/larissa/index

New Group One = Original Group Two
New Group Two = Original Group Three
New Group Three = Original Group One

The website includes numerous new dies and die links, some of which imply changes to the sequence of head types and/or dies. The catalogue of the Thessaly, 1993 hoard cites the renumbered groups, renumbered head types, and renumbered dies as they appear on the website.

Represented in the Thessaly, 1993 hoard are Groups One through Four and Group Six, but not Groups Five or Seven. This could, perhaps, be an indication that Groups Five and Seven were minted after the closure of the hoard. Alternatively, Groups Five and Seven may be lacking simply because they are scarce relative to the other groups. In *CHIX*, 65, the source of the original die study, Groups Five and Seven accounted for only fourteen and eight coins, respectively, out of a total of 308 pieces. Groups Five and Seven are also weakly represented in or absent from other Larissa hoards. *CHIX*, 79 contained 124 early facing head drachms, with Groups Five and Seven comprising nine and two specimens, respectively. In *CHIX*, 67, which contained 38 early facing head drachms, Group Five was not represented at all and Group Seven by two specimens. *CHIX*, 78 included 52 early facing head drachms, of which three were of Group Five; Group Seven was not represented. These comparisons suggest that the absence of Groups Five and Seven from the Thessaly, 1993 hoard is probably without chronological significance.

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CATALOGUE

Estimated date of deposit: 370 BC

Contents: 39 silver

LARISSA

BULL WRESTLER DRACHMS

- | | | | |
|----|-------|---|--|
| 1. | 5.80g | 6 | Bull wrestler l. on «heroic diagonal,» horizontal die break across bull's hind legs / ΛAPI above, Σ-AIA below, horse leaping r., lead line trailing under belly between letters Σ-A. Square die. |
| 2. | 5.99g | 1 | Squat bull wrestler l. on short, thick ex. line / ΛAPI above, Σ to r., IA below, bridled horse galloping r., lead line trailing under belly. |

PROFILE HEAD DRACHMS

- | | | | |
|----|-------|---|---|
| 3. | 5.85g | 1 | Head of nymph Larissa r., wearing pendant earring, hair confined by ampyx and sphenone / ΛAPIΣA above, bridled horse galloping r., lead line trailing under belly. Round die. Dies of Herrmann pl. iv, 10, and <i>Traité</i> IV 695, pl. ccxcviii, 5. |
| 4. | 5.97g | 9 | Similar head, facing l. / ΛAPI-Σ above, AI below, bridled horse galloping r. Obverse die of <i>Weber</i> 2847. |
| 5. | 6.20g | 3 | Same obverse die / ΛAPI above, ΣAIA below, bridled horse leaping r., lead line trailing under belly. Dies of <i>SNG Manchester</i> 825. |

EARLY FACING HEAD DRACHMS

The groups, head types, and die numbers reflect the new classification presented at *The Facing Head Coins of Larissa*, www.lightfigures.com/numismat/larissa/index. The abbreviation *FW* refers to the initial die study of C.C. LORBER, «The early facing head drachms of Thessalian Larissa,» in H. NILSSON, ed., *Florilegium Numismaticum: Studia in Honorem U. Westermark Edita* (Stockholm, 1992), pp. 259–282.

Group One

- | | | | |
|----|-------|----|---|
| 6. | 5.84g | 10 | Head Type 1. O1/R1, specimen i. <i>FW</i> 30, new reverse die. Dies of <i>CHVIII</i> , 137, pl. xii, 22. |
| 7. | 5.89g | 1 | O2/R1, specimen h. <i>FW</i> 31.1. |
| 8. | 5.91g | 12 | O2/R3, specimen a. <i>FW</i> 31, reverse die of <i>FW</i> 30.1. |

9. 5.68g 5 O6/R3, specimen a. *FW*29, new reverse die: ΛΑΠΙΣΑΙ (curving) above, horse grazing l., withers lower than hindquarters. Small oblique flaw rising from horse's back.
10. 5.98g 11 O6/R3, specimen b. Same dies.

Group Two

11. 6.06g 11 **Head Type 3.** O10/R3, specimen c. Gorny & Mosch 138, 7 March 2005, lot 1283. *FW*36.3. Reverse double struck, exactly as on *CHVIII*, pl. ii, 26.
12. 5.87g 5 O1/R1, specimen b. *FW*37.1.

Group Three

13. 5.97g 4 **Head Type 8.** O20/R2, specimen c. *FW*2.2.
14. 5.98g 3 **Head Type 9.** O23/R2, specimen c. Artist's signature ΣΙΜΟ above head of nymph Larissa. *FW*10.2.
15. 6.04g 6 **Head Type 13.** O29/R1, specimen c. Γ–Ε flanking neck of Larissa. *FW*14.1.
16. 5.95g 9 **Head Type 14.** O34/R7, specimen a. Artist's signature ΑΙ in tiny letters above Larissa's head, ΓΕΥ on ampyx. *FW*20, new reverse die: ΛΑΠΙΣΑΙ in ex., bridled horse half-crouching r., about to roll, legs spread, tiny ΑΙ under belly, [lead line trailing in ex.].
17. 5.77g 7 O36/R3, specimen a. Artist's signature ΑΙ in tiny letters above Larissa's head, ΓΕΥ on ampyx. *FW*22, new reverse die with ΑΙ and trailing lead line.
18. 5.86g 4 **Head Type 16.** O50/R1, specimen a. New obverse die similar to *FW*16: head three quarters l., wearing ampyx, two dolphins flanking neck, dotted border. New reverse die in style of Group Four, not in *FW*: ΛΑΠΙ above, horse with dotted mane grazing r. on dotted ex. line.
19. 5.94g 1 **Head Type 17.** O56/R2, specimen a. *FW*27, reverse die of *FW*26.1.

Group Four

20. 5.54g 10 **Head Type 19.** O76/R1, specimen a. New obverse die close to *FW*50: head three quarters r., wearing double ampyx, dotted border. New reverse die close to *FW*51.1: [Α]ΑΠΙ above, long-legged horse grazing r. on dotted ex. line, graffito X under belly.
21. 5.70g 10 **Head Type 21.** O87/R3, specimen b. *FW*59, reverse die of Hirsch XXXV (Philipsen), 29 November 1909, lot 641.

22. 6.06g 2 **Head Type 23.** O99/R3, specimen a. *FW* 66, reverse die of *FW* 67.1.
 23. 5.94g 7 O106/R3 specimen e. *FW* 70.3.
 24. 5.99g 7 O105/R1, specimen a. New obverse die close to *FW* 70: head three quarters r., wearing ampyx, drapery at neck with central clasp, die flaw under chin, dotted border. Reverse die of *FW* 71.1.
 25. 6.04g 1 O108/R1, specimen b. *FW* 72.1.
 26. 5.90g 6 O111/R1, specimen a. New dies not in *FW*: head turned very slightly to r., wearing ampyx, drapery at neck with central clasp, dotted border / Λ API above, long-legged horse grazing r.

Group Six

27. 6.03g 4:30 **Head Type 25.** O118/R1, specimen c. *FW* 78.1.
 28. 5.94g 6 O118/R3, specimen a. *FW* 78, new reverse die similar to *FW* 26.1: Λ APIΣ (curving) above, horse grazing r., of awkward style.
 29. 6.01g 4 O119/R3, specimen c. *FW* 79.4.
 30. 6.07g 9 O121/R1, specimen a. New obverse die: head three quarters l., wearing ampyx and round earring. New reverse die similar to *FW* 81.1: legend off flan (probably Λ APIΣ or Λ APIΣA, curving), horse grazing r., of awkward style.
 31. 5.93g 1 **Head Type 27.** O126/R2, specimen a. *FW* 86, new reverse die: Λ APIΣAI (curving) above, horse grazing r.
 32. 5.85g 12 O127/R2, specimen a. *FW* 85, probably reverse die of *FW* 82.2.
 33. 5.95g 2 O132/R2, specimen b. *FW* 87.2.

PHARSALUS

The references are to S. Lavva, *Die Münzprägung von Pharsalos* (Saarbrücken, 2001). For the revised sequence of issue, see Lorber's review of Lavva in *SNR* 2003.

SERIES B.1 DRACHMS

34. 5.89g 10:30 Head of Athena r. in crested Attic helmet ornamented with running sphinx, Θ behind neck / Φ -A-P-Σ around cloaked horseman galloping r., brandishing lagobolon above head, T in ex. Lavva 144 (V68/R84).
 35. 5.88g 9 Head of Athena r. in crested Attic helmet ornamented with Scylla, TH above MI behind neck / Φ -A-P-Σ around cloaked horseman galloping r., brandishing lagobolon above head. Lavva 152 (V72/R55).

36. 5.95g 12 Head of Athena r. in crested Attic helmet with raised cheek guard, TH above III behind neck / Φ—A—P—Σ around cloaked horseman galloping r., holding lagobolon over shoulder, cloak flying behind, TH in ex. Lavva 80 (V41/R48).
37. 5.94g 10:30 Similar, but from different dies, with TH above III behind Athena's neck and no TH on reverse. Lavva 98 (V49/R56).

SERIES B.1 HEMIDRACHMS

38. 2.98g 7:30 Head of Athena r. in crested Attic helmet with raised cheek guard, T above Θ behind neck / Φ—A—P—Σ around horse's head r. Lavva 151 (V71/R88).
39. 2.90g 7:30 Similar, but T above III behind Athena's neck (illegible on this specimen). Lavva 133 (V62/die of pl. vii, 133*). *Mélanges Le Rider* 62. Countermark on horse's neck: retrograde P in round punch.

Abstract

CH IX, 64 contained drachms of Larissa together with a few drachms and hemidrachms of Pharsalus marked with letters behind the head of Athena. The juxtaposition allows for wear comparisons that may clarify the relative chronology of the two mints. The Pharsalian issues are generally more worn than the Larissa drachms, supporting a high chronology for Pharsalus. But the overall makeup of the hoard suggests that the Pharsalian issues should be contemporary with the early facing head drachms of Larissa (provisionally, c. 405/400–370 BC). The hoard also contributed to the evidence for a new arrangement of the early facing head drachms.

Zusammenfassung

CH IX, 64 enthielt Drachmen von Larissa, zusammen mit einigen Drachmen und Hemidrachmen von Pharsalos mit Buchstaben hinter dem Athenakopf. Die Kombination der beiden Serien im Fund erlaubt Vergleiche der Abnutzungsspuren und somit Hinweise auf die relative Chronologie der beiden Prägestätten. Die Münzen von Pharsalos sind stärker abgegriffen als die Drachmen von Larissa, was eine frühe Datierung der Ersteren nahelegt. Die Gesamtstruktur des Fundes spricht jedoch dafür, die Prägungen von Pharsalos zeitlich mit den frühen «facing head»-Drachmen von Larissa (vermutlich um 405/400–370 v. Chr.) gleichzusetzen. Ausserdem erlaubt der Fund, die Abfolge der frühen «facing head»-Drachmen zu revidieren.

* The reverse die clearly differs from Lavva's R73 as exemplified by her pl. vi, 126 (note the relative positions of the letters P and Σ with respect to the horse's neck truncation).



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