

# A PTOLEMAIC BRONZE HOARD FROM CORINTH

(PLATE 101 b)

IN February of 1948 a group of 34 bronze coins of the Ptolemaic period was found during the excavation of a well in the South Stoa of Corinth.<sup>1</sup> Although no container was in evidence, the circumstances of finding indicate that this is a hoard whose final burial is to be related to the destruction of the city in 146 B.C.

With three exceptions, the coins are all of the same issue:

No.	Size	Obverse	Reverse
1-31.	25 to 30 mm. <sup>2</sup>	Head of Isis r., with wreath of grain. Circle of dots.	ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ. Eagle l. on thunderbolt, wings open; in field l., ☐. <sup>3</sup> Circle of dots.

(Pl. 101 b, left; Svoronos, *Tὰ Νομίσματα τοῦ Κράτους τῶν Πτολεμαίων*, No. 1384)

32.	29 mm.	[ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗ]Σ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ. Head of Zeus Ammon r. Circle of dots.	ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ [ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ]. Two eagles l. on thunderbolt, wings closed; in field l., cornucopiae. Circle of dots. <sup>4</sup>
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(Pl. 101 b, center; Svoronos, No. 1380)

<sup>1</sup> Well XIX in the Corinth excavation records of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

I am deeply indebted to Professor Oscar Broneer, director of the Corinth excavations, for permission to publish this hoard, and to Dr. G. Roger Edwards, who excavated the well, for helpful suggestions and information regarding the coins and their provenance.

<sup>2</sup> The coins with unbroken diameters measure: 28, 27.5, 28.1, 26, 28, 26.2, 27, 26.5, 28.2, 27, 26.7, 27, 26.3, 28.8, 30, 27, 26.7, 27, 27.2, 25, 28.8, 27.4, 27.8, 28.3, 30.2 (Pl. 101 b, left), and 26.2.

Corrosion in some degree or other has affected many of the coins so that weight statistics are of minor value. The specimen illustrated on Pl. 101 b weighs 15.29 grams; other fairly well preserved pieces show the following variation: 14.43, 16.80, 15.20, 18, 15.10, 16.52, 15, 16.10, 19.37.

<sup>3</sup> Seventeen pieces bear a clear impression of the monogram; three others probably carried the same marking. Of the remaining 11, the left field is broken in seven cases and illegible in four.

The ☐ is often interpreted as the mark of the Paphos mint, but this is hypothetical. J. G. Milne ("The Copper Coinage of the Ptolemies," *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, I, 1908, p. 39) believes that the frequency with which this Isis head type is found in Egypt renders a Cypriote origin dubious. He prefers to explain the monogram as an indication of value. The argument is based in part on his observation that only the coins of smaller size, 28 mm. or less, are struck with the ☐. However, in our hoard the largest specimen, of 30.2 mm., has a clearly defined monogram, while the ☐ appears also on fractional issues of the same general period (Svoronos, Nos. 1382 and 1387).

<sup>4</sup> This issue has the monogram ☐ between the legs of the second eagle. On our piece that section of the flan is missing.



- 33-34. 26 mm.<sup>5</sup> Head of Zeus Ammon r. Circle of dots. ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ  
(legend incomplete on both coins). Two eagles l. on thunderbolt, wings closed; in field l., cornucopiae. Circle of dots.

(Pl. 101 b, right; Svoronos, Nos. 1424-1425)

For the most part the coins are in a fair state of preservation, but a number are badly corroded, presumably as a result of their long exposure to the dampness of the soil. This is frequently true of bronze money found in wells and cistern deposits in Greece, making it difficult to estimate how much use individual coins had had prior to burial. Of the three odd pieces, No. 32 shows distinct signs of wear, No. 33 is in rather better than average condition, while No. 34 is too deeply corroded for any evaluation of its original state. All specimens are marked with the small circular depressions characteristic of the larger Ptolemaic bronze.

The well from which the coins came was apparently opened in the late fourth or early third century B.C. During the 150 years of its use and subsequent abandonment, a total of 87 coins, together with large quantities of pottery and miscellaneous debris, accumulated in its depths. Clearance of the well revealed three distinct fills, differentiated by pottery joins. Fill I, extending from 10 meters to the bottom of the well at 10.70, is to be associated with the period of use. Its coins are predominantly issues of the late fourth and third centuries B.C.<sup>6</sup> Fill II, with a depth of 8 to 9.20 meters, accumulated between 200 and 146 B.C. after the well had ceased to be a water supply. In this deposit were found 25 coins of the Isis head type and the ΚΛΕΟ-ΠΑΤΡΑΣ piece, together with money of Ptolemy III, Corinth, Sicyon, and Histiaea.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The measurement is that of No. 33 (Pl. 101 b, right); the diameter of No. 34 is not intact. In the case of the last three coins (Nos. 32-34), their condition makes it impossible to tell how much they weighed originally.

<sup>6</sup> 14 Corinth, 400-146 B.C. (Edwards, *Corinth*, VI, *Coins*, p. 14, No. 11).

1 Corinth, 338-300 B.C. (B.M.C., *Corinth*, p. 35, No. 322).

1 Argos, 350-228 B.C. (B.M.C., *Pelop.*, pp. 143-4, Nos. 98-105).

1 Boeotia, 338-315 B.C. (B.M.C., *Cent. Gr.*, p. 38, Nos. 57-62).

2 Sicyon, 323-251 B.C. (Edwards, p. 52, No. 316).

1 Phlius, 431-370 B.C. (B.M.C., *Pelop.*, p. 34, Nos. 13-17).

3 Philip V, 220-178 B.C. (Grose, *McClellan Coll.*, Nos. 3652, 3653, 3654).

1 Antigonos Gonatas, 277-239 B.C. (Grose, Nos. 3609-3613).

1 Ptolemy III, 247-222 B.C. (Grose, No. 9784).

1 Thera, 4th-3rd cent. B.C. (Grose, No. 7309).

<sup>7</sup> 2 Ptolemy III, 247-222 B.C. (Grose, Nos. 9784, 9787).

1 Corinth, 400-146 B.C. (Edwards, p. 14, No. 11).

1 Histiaea, 196-146 B.C. (B.M.C., *Cent. Gr.*, p. 128, Nos. 34 ff.).

1 Sicyon, 323-251 B.C. (Edwards, p. 52, No. 319).

Fill III, 2.10 to 8 meters, is the Mummian destruction fill thrown into the well at one time. It is characterized by masses of broken building material and by a very homogeneous collection of pottery connected with some kind of a paint shop. In this upper deposit were found the remaining eight coins of the present hoard as well as 22 other pieces, chiefly of third and second century date.<sup>8</sup>

The 31 Isis head coins and the one marked ΚΛΕΟΤΑΤΡΑΣ were found in almost uninterrupted sequence at a depth of 7.80 to 8.40 meters, six just above the break between Fills III and II and 26 in the first 0.40 meters below the break. Nos. 33 and 34 were nearer the surface at 5.50-5.90 meters.<sup>9</sup>

In all probability the entire group of coins is to be connected with Fill III, the Mummian destruction fill. Infiltration from above would easily explain the presence of the majority at the top of Fill II. Actually it makes little difference with which of the two deposits one associates them. The implication is strong in either case that they represent a hoard closely linked with the catastrophe of 146 B.C. The money may have been secreted in the well for safekeeping prior to the destruction or it may have been hidden in the paint shop above and tossed into the well with the first fragments of debris when a general cleaning up was attempted.

<sup>8</sup> 6 Corinth, 400-146 B.C. (Edwards, p. 14, No. 11).

2 Sicyon, 251-146 B.C. (Edwards, p. 52, No. 320).

5 Sicyon, 323-251 B.C. (Edwards, p. 52, No. 316 for 4; No. 313 for 1).

2 Sicyon, 323-146 B.C. (Edwards, p. 52, No. 316 or 320).

1 Achaean League, after 280 B.C. (B.M.C., *Pelop.*, pp. 12-15).

1 Philip V, 220-178 B.C. (Grose, No. 3652).

4 Ptolemy III, 247-222 B.C. (Grose, No. 9784).

1 Corcyra, 229-48 B.C. (B.M.C., *Thess.*, p. 146, No. 488).

<sup>9</sup> Although these last two coins were separated from the others by some two meters of fill, it is likely that they originally formed a part of the hoard. Of approximately 55,000 coins uncovered at Corinth to date, only 151 are Ptolemaic. Their proportions and chronological range are interesting. Excluding those found in Well XIX, the remainder come from deposits scattered throughout the excavations:

- 2 Ptolemy I
- 105 Ptolemy III
- 1 Ptolemy IV
- 1 Ptolemy XIII
- 1 Cleopatra VII

On the basis of evidence to be presented later, it seems clear that our 34 coins were all minted within a relatively short period, probably *circa* 180-168 B.C. No other Ptolemaic money of the second century B.C. has yet been found at Corinth. It is surely more credible, considering the circumstances under which the well was filled, that a few coins became separated from the group as a whole than that these two pieces, connected chronologically with the bulk of our hoard, found their way by chance into the same well at the same time as the other pieces.

There is a bare possibility that the seven bronzes of Ptolemy III from Well XIX are also a part of our hoard since a large issue such as this undoubtedly circulated for many years. However, over 100 coins of Ptolemy III have been dug up in different sections of the excavations, and the seven from our well were discovered in all three fills. There is no reason for linking them specifically with the group of coins under discussion.

The particular significance of our hoard lies in its contribution toward the dating of two controversial issues of Ptolemaic bronze. Despite extensive numismatic research, the coinage of the Ptolemies, with its highly standardized types and legends, still presents numerous problems which can be solved only on the evidence of hoards such as the one from Corinth.

Our type with the Isis head obverse has been attributed to Ptolemy V, to Ptolemy VI during the regency of Cleopatra I, and to Ptolemy VIII.<sup>10</sup> The issue (represented by No. 32 in our hoard) bearing the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ has been identified with both Cleopatra I and Cleopatra III.<sup>11</sup> As for Nos. 33-34, there is more general agreement that this type was minted during the joint rule of Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VIII.<sup>12</sup>

With the destruction of Corinth as an indisputable *terminus ante quem* for the burial of our hoard, we can without hesitation reject the identification of the "Cleopatra" issue with the third queen of that name since her coinage began at a much later date. Similarly the Isis head series cannot be connected with Ptolemy VIII, who did not become king of Egypt until 145 B.C.<sup>13</sup>

The elimination of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy VIII makes it virtually certain that our ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ piece was minted by Cleopatra I and the Isis head money

<sup>10</sup> Svoronos (*op. cit.*, Nos. 1233-35 and No. 1384) divides this Isis head series on the basis of the presence or absence of the  $\Phi$  monogram, assigning coins without the marking to Ptolemy V and those with it to Cleopatra I as regent for her son Ptolemy VI. Macdonald in publishing the Hunterian coins follows the same arrangement. In the Weber and De Luynes Collections, both marked and unmarked issues are attributed to Ptolemy V. On the other hand, Feuardent (*Numismatique Égypte ancienne*, I, p. 70) publishes both types as money of Cleopatra I during her regency.

The catalogues of the McClean Collection and the British Museum give the series in its entirety to Ptolemy VIII, although in the latter work, Poole considers it possible that the coins with the monogram belong to Ptolemy VI.

<sup>11</sup> Svoronos lists it under Cleopatra I as regent for Ptolemy VI, and Babelon, in publishing the De Luynes Collection, presumably intends the same classification in placing it among the coins of Ptolemy VI. Poole and Feuardent attribute the type to Cleopatra III reigning with Ptolemy X.

<sup>12</sup> The use of two eagles on the coin reverses is not common for the earlier Ptolemaic currency, but it does occur, notably during the reign of Ptolemy II (Svoronos, pls. XVII and XXII). During the first part of the second century B.C., the type appears again, and the various issues are attributed by Svoronos as follows: those with K or  $\Phi$  on the reverse to Cleopatra I, those without letter or monogram to the joint rule of Ptolemies VI and VIII. Judging by the number of specimens listed by Svoronos, this two-eagle series is too extensive to be assigned in its entirety to Cleopatra I. Furthermore, there is no other coinage which can be ascribed with any degree of certainty to the reign of the brother Ptolemies. In general, Svoronos' classification seems plausible even though, as Regling points out (*Zeit. f. Num.*, XXV, p. 380), the interpretation of the type as symbolic of joint sovereignty is unconvincing. There is definitely a possibility that Ptolemy VI continued to issue the two-eagle coins during the years when he ruled alone.

<sup>13</sup> Prior to the death of Ptolemy VI, there were several attempts by Ptolemy VIII to gain control of the country, but it is highly improbable that a bulk coinage could have been issued during his brief intervals of power.

either by the same queen or by her husband, Ptolemy V. It might be useful at this point to glance briefly at the history of Egypt during the early second century B.C. in the hope that it may throw additional light on the currency.<sup>14</sup>

After the death of Ptolemy IV, Philopator, his minor son inherited the throne in 204 B.C. as Ptolemy V, Epiphanes. His reign was a disastrous one for Egypt. An ill-advised campaign into Asia Minor, undertaken by the Greek regents Scopas and Aristomenes, resulted in the loss of Coele-Syria and Palestine. Revolts in both Lower and Upper Egypt kept the country in turmoil for years, while the decline in revenue from the Aegean outposts of the empire further aggravated Ptolemy's grave financial difficulties. Unfortunate to the extreme in his administration of Egypt, Epiphanes was highly fortunate in his marriage. In 192 B.C. he wedded Cleopatra, daughter of Antiochus III of Syria, and in her gained a loyal, intelligent wife and queen. The couple had three children, two boys and a girl, of whom the older son was six years of age at the time of his father's death in 180 B.C.

For the second time in some 25 years Egypt had a child king. In this instance, however, affairs of state were in capable hands. The gifted and energetic Queen Mother assumed the regency and for seven years governed the country without the support of male ministers. This Syrian princess, the first of the Cleopatras of Egypt, was a woman of extraordinary character, far more worthy of fame than her better-known descendant, the last queen of that name. Historians agree that she ruled ably and well and that with her regency Egypt enjoyed almost a decade of unprecedented peace, both internal and external.

Shortly before or after Cleopatra's death, *circa* 173 B.C., her son was formally proclaimed king as Ptolemy VI, Philometor, but for a few years thereafter the power rested with two foreigners, Eulaeus and Lenaeus. They were undoubtedly responsible for the decision to attack Syria as a protest against the cessation of the Coele-Syria revenues, which Cleopatra had brought as her dowry and which the Syrians held to have been her personal estate and not a permanent grant to Egypt.

Once again the forces of Syria defeated those of Egypt, and Philometor himself was captured by his uncle Antiochus IV and taken to Memphis. Then followed a strange period in Egyptian history. Antiochus, under the pretext of safeguarding the interests of his young nephew, kept him a prisoner, while official proclamations and even bronze coinage with Ptolemaic types were issued under the name of the Syrian king. Meanwhile at Alexandria, the people, resentful of this foreign intervention, acclaimed Philometor's younger brother as king—the same who was to rule later as Ptolemy VIII, Euergetes II.

At this point Antiochus, fearful of Roman interference and convinced that Egypt

<sup>14</sup> The historical résumé which follows is based on Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire des Lagides*, II; Bevan, *A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*; Macurdy, *Hellenistic Queens*; Strack, *Die Dynastie der Ptolemäer*; Elgood, *The Ptolemies of Egypt*.

was on the verge of a bloody civil war from which Syria would ultimately profit, felt that there was no advantage in further prolonging his campaign. Accordingly, he took the first reasonable opportunity to break off hostilities and return to Syria. Egypt for some months was a divided kingdom; both brothers refused to surrender their prerogatives. The critical situation was saved by Cleopatra II, sister and wife of Philometor, who persuaded her brothers to put aside their differences and share the royal power. This union, established in 170 B.C., was to last for six years.<sup>15</sup>

From the beginning of the joint reign the threat of Syrian intervention hung over the brother kings, and their fears were realized *circa* 168 B.C. when Antiochus thought the time propitious for another campaign against Egypt. His armies stood at the gates of Alexandria; only the mandate of Rome saved the city from siege. An emissary, dispatched by the Senate, demanded that Antiochus retire from Egypt, and the Syrian king, still reluctant to provoke the Republic, complied.

For two years the brother Ptolemies had been united in the face of the danger from abroad. Now it became apparent that there was no room in Egypt for two kings. Repeated attempts by Euergetes II to seize the throne for himself finally forced the rightful king to leave the country and plead his case at Rome. The Roman decision awarded Egypt to Philometor and gave Euergetes the regency of Cyrenaica. An uneasy truce of this nature endured from about 163 B.C. until the death of Philometor in 145 B.C., at which time Euergetes became king in his own right as Ptolemy VIII.

The history of the period, taken in conjunction with the *terminus ante quem* of our hoard, supports Svoronos' assignment of our ΚΛΕΟΤΤΑΤΡΑΣ and Isis head types to Cleopatra I during the seven years that she served as regent. Concerning the first issue, there can be no doubt that it must belong to either Cleopatra I or II. While it would have been most unusual for either queen to have had her name inscribed on the obverse of a standard denomination during her husband's lifetime,<sup>16</sup> it would, on the other hand, have been extremely logical for Cleopatra I to have placed the legend there after she assumed the regency. In the beginning at least there must have been a certain insecurity inherent in the novelty of her position. What better means could she find of affirming her status than by a new issue of coinage prominently marked with her name and royal title. The unit and fractional pieces bearing the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΚΛΕΟΤΤΑΤΡΑΣ may well represent the first money of the new regent.

<sup>15</sup> In connection with the fourth volume of the Rylands Papyri, Eric G. Turner publishes a vineyard lease (*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, XXXI, pp. 148-161) which takes the joint reign of Philometor, Euergetes and Cleopatra II back to the autumn of 170 B.C. Consequently the first invasion of Antiochus IV, often dated in the spring of 169 B.C., must have occurred at least a year earlier.

<sup>16</sup> The association of the earlier queens of Egypt with the coinage was largely limited to special gold and silver issues, often commemorative, with the name of the queen inscribed on the reverse. An exception was Berenice II, wife of Ptolemy III. Fractional bronze pieces, bearing her name and royal title on the obverse, were struck in Phoenicia (Svoronos, pl. XXXI).

As the regime became more firmly established, there was less reason for continuing the obverse inscription. The Isis head pieces do not bear the name of the queen, but the type itself, whether introduced by Cleopatra or carried over from her husband's coinage,<sup>17</sup> was highly appropriate. Throughout their reign Ptolemy V and Cleopatra had identified themselves with the gods Sarapis and Isis in the tradition of their predecessors, Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe.<sup>18</sup> Upon the death of Ptolemy V, it was fitting that the widowed queen continue the association of herself with the great goddess of Egypt, the tutelary divinity to whom she consigned herself and her young son.

Attribution of the ΚΛΕΟΠΤΑΤΡΑΣ and some at least of the Isis head coins to Cleopatra I is confirmed by the money which Antiochus IV minted during his occupation of Egypt in 170 B.C.. The Seleucid king was responsible for four distinct bronze issues (Svoronos, pl. XLVIII, 1-5, 7), of which two are particularly significant. One combines an Isis head obverse with an eagle on the reverse; the other, the head of Zeus Ammon and two eagles. Antiochus' adoption of these uncommon Egyptian types would indicate that he was imitating issues in current circulation—the choice perhaps inspired by political considerations as a shrewd bid for the favor of the Egyptian people. Antiochus must have realized that his occupation of the country and his custody of the young king required justification. By using the distinctive coin types of his sister Cleopatra, he emphasized his relationship with the dead regent and consequently his suitability as the guardian of her son.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> As has been noted before, Svoronos divides the Isis head coins under discussion between Ptolemy V and Cleopatra as regent, attributing the pieces without Α to the earlier period and those with the monogram to the regency. Actually there is still a third variation of the type (illustrated only in Svoronos, No. 1491; pl. LI, 10) separated from the other Isis head coins by differences in the rendering of the hair and wreath, the heavy treatment of the obverse portrait, and generally larger flans. There is no monogram on the reverse. The issue Svoronos assigns to the joint rule of 170-164 B.C., but it seems more likely that it belongs at the beginning rather than at the end of the series. If it was struck by Ptolemy V, perhaps the other Isis head pieces without monogram should, as Svoronos indicates, also be attributed to that period, or it may be that the difference in the style of the obverse, rather than the presence or absence of the monogram, marks the division between the coinage of Cleopatra and that of her husband. In any event the coins of our hoard, linked as they are by the Α monogram with other issues definitely minted under Cleopatra, almost certainly belong to her regency.

<sup>18</sup> Inscriptions and dedications, including the Rosetta decree, refer to Ptolemy V as the son of Isis (Svoronos, *op. cit.*, p. 7λδ'). Poole (B.M.C., *Ptolemies*, p. lviii) interprets the radiate diadem and corn-ear symbol on his coinage as evidence of association with Sarapis.

The tetradrachms with the jugate busts of Sarapis and Isis, formerly placed among the coins of Ptolemy V, are now more generally attributed to Ptolemy IV (E. T. Newell, *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*, No. 33, p. 8).

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that E. T. Newell regards the coinage of Antiochus with Ptolemaic types as a commemorative series struck at Antioch after the conclusion of the Egyptian campaigns ("The Seleucid Mint of Antioch," *American Journal of Numismatics*, LI, 1917, pp. 24-27). Basically the mint attribution does not affect our argument that these extraordinary issues of Antiochus were modelled on Egyptian money in current circulation and are, therefore, supporting evidence

We have, then, in our hoard a compact group of coins: 32 of them issued by Cleopatra I between 180 and 173 B.C. and the other two pieces by Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VIII during their royal partnership of 170-164 B.C. Considering the proportions involved, one might suggest that the hoard was assembled in the first years of the joint reign before the coinage of the brother Ptolemies had had time to circulate widely, perhaps *circa* 170-168 B.C.

The Corinthian provenance presents certain problems in view of the scarcity of Ptolemaic money from the excavations at Corinth. Nearly 55,000 coins have been unearthed to date but only 151 are Egyptian pieces, with the 34 coins of the present hoard included in this total. Of the remaining 117 specimens, 112 were minted by Ptolemy III.

It would seem that some explanation other than a commercial one must be found to account for the presence of our bronze hoard in a Corinthian well. On the whole, there is much to be said for the theory that it was accumulated by a Corinthian mercenary who entered the service of the Ptolemies and returned after his discharge to his native city, bringing with him whatever he had been able to save from his earnings.

Mercenary forces were widely used in the Hellenistic world. The Ptolemies, like the monarchs of Asia Minor, waged war to a large extent with hired troops in whose fidelity they placed greater confidence than in that of their own people. The high cost

for the assignment of the original pieces to Cleopatra I. However, the question of the issuing mint is an intriguing one, which I have discussed at some length with Aline A. Boyce, who is now working on this series, among others, in connection with a forthcoming publication of the Gautier Collection. We both feel there is still much to be said in favor of the usual attribution to Egypt.

Allowing for certain qualities of style which are Seleucid rather than Ptolemaic, the fact remains that, in fundamentals of denomination and types, practically all of the coins are in the standard Egyptian tradition and correspondingly non-Syrian in character. We know that Antiochus did use an Egyptian mint during his occupation, for there is one issue with his name and two eagles on the reverse (Svoronos, pl. XLVIII, 7) which was undoubtedly, as Newell points out, struck in Egypt. The mint in question cannot have been Alexandria, to which Antiochus never had access, but must have been a provincial workshop, probably in Memphis. While copper from the Sinai mines would have been available for its operation, technical skill was another matter. It seems likely that die-cutters, or at least a supervising artisan, had to be imported from Syria, which would account for the anomalous character of the resulting coinage.

One of the strong arguments against an Egyptian mint is the fact that the coins are not found in Egypt—the majority of the pieces with recorded provenance come from Syria. Nevertheless one might justifiably assume that this extensive coinage was intended for military as well as civilian use, in which case much of it would have found its way to Syria with Antiochus' troops. As to the pieces circulating in Egypt, would not the brother Ptolemies after the establishment of their joint rule have made every attempt to call in these reminders of invasion and occupation? In all, one can understand the practical necessity for this pseudo-Ptolemaic money during Antiochus' stay in Egypt; it is harder to see why after his return to Syria he cared to commemorate to such an extent his unfruitful, though technically victorious, campaigns, the second of which, moreover, had been terminated under distinctly humiliating circumstances.



of living at home made the prospect of foreign service attractive to the poorer Greeks, and there are frequent historical references to their employment abroad.<sup>20</sup> In 221 B.C. mercenaries, among them 3,000 Peloponnesians, composed a majority of the troops on guard at Alexandria. The campaign of Ptolemy V against Antiochus the Great was waged with the help of recruits from Aetolia, of whom 6,500 were enlisted by Ptolemy's emissary Scopas. Presumably even more men could have been inducted had not the general of the Aetolian League expostulated against any further draining of the country's youth.

Toward the beginning of the second quarter of the second century B.C., about the time our hoard was being accumulated, Egypt still required large bodies of mercenary troops. The armies of Eulaeus and Linaeus, invading Coele-Syria in 171/170 B.C., unquestionably included hired soldiers, and Polybios<sup>21</sup> states that Philometor and Euergetes, early in their joint reign, tried to protect themselves against Antiochus IV by requesting reinforcements from the Achaean League and a mercenary force of 1,000 men from Theodoridas of Sicyon.

There can be little doubt that Corinthians were to be found in the ranks of the Ptolemaic armies. So great was the traffic in military service that Griffith<sup>22</sup> suggests the possibility that Athens and Corinth, because of their location and importance, became permanent rallying points for prospective soldiers and for recruiting officers. In any event, Corinth by her geographical position must have often witnessed the passage of men from Achaea and from Aetolia on their way to foreign lands, and it would have been strange if some Corinthians, dissatisfied by conditions at home and excited by stories of good pay and easy living abroad, had not joined the mercenary forces.

Assuming that a "mercenary" origin for our hoard is valid, it would be interesting to know what value the individual coins had, how this related to the prevailing wage scale for soldiers in second century Egypt, and why the hoard was kept intact for some twenty years between the time of its probable accumulation and the destruction of Corinth. Given the present state of knowledge, any conclusions must remain highly speculative.

We know that in Pergamon and probably elsewhere, the military contract was a yearly one, and that payment in Egypt was made on a monthly basis, partly in cash and partly in kind. As to how much the average mercenary received about 170 B.C., there is no definite record. A papyrus of *circa* 158 B.C.<sup>23</sup> gives the monthly salary of a soldier stationed at Memphis as 150 bronze drachms and three *artabae* of wheat,

<sup>20</sup> References to mercenary forces are taken from G. T. Griffith, *The Mercenaries of the Hellenistic World*, based primarily on the accounts of Polybios, Livy and other historians.

<sup>21</sup> XXIX, 23-27.

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 256, with reference to Xen. *Hell.*, VI, 5, 11 and VII, 3, 4.

<sup>23</sup> Wilcken, *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit*, I, 14.

of which one was paid in kind and the other two redeemed at 100 bronze drachms each. At Thebes about 130 B.C. a troop of mercenary horse received 56 *artabae* of wheat as a month's food allotment, of which 13 were paid in kind and the remaining 43 commuted into cash. In addition the troop was paid 2785 bronze drachms.<sup>24</sup> Without knowing the exact number of men involved, one cannot arrive at the individual wage, but if each horseman, like the guard at Memphis, received one *artaba* of wheat in kind for his monthly food needs—and it is hard to see how he could be given any less—the troop consisted of 13 men. On this basis the average monthly wage was about 200 bronze drachms, with allowance made for difference in rank. This figure is in line with the pay scale of the Memphis papyrus in that the cavalryman was traditionally better paid than the ordinary soldier.

There are indications, however, that wages in 158 and 130 B.C. were higher than at the end of the first quarter of the second century. Between the years 173 and 168 B.C. Egypt experienced a disastrous inflation, probably due to the invasion of Antiochus and the widespread plundering that followed.<sup>25</sup> In 173 B.C. wheat sold for 125-160 drachms an *artaba*; by 162 B.C. it had jumped to 500 drachms. At the end of the third century B.C. a house was valued at 66 silver drachms; in the "time of troubles" about 169 B.C., houses were selling for as much as 168 silver drachms.<sup>26</sup> As further evidence of the inflation, Heichelheim in his study of the period cites a letter (*U.P.Z.*, 59), to be dated *circa* 168 B.C., in which a woman complains to her husband that she and her child are in the greatest need due to the soaring food prices.

The effect of the inflation on wages is reflected in the papyri records. In 180 B.C., or a few years earlier, construction and agricultural workers were getting 20-30 bronze drachms a day;<sup>27</sup> in 158 B.C. a stoker at Memphis was making 45 a day.<sup>28</sup> Over a period of 22 years the wage scale in Egypt had increased by at least 100 per cent, perhaps even more if the seasonal laborer were better paid than one with regular employment. Under the circumstances one might assume that a mercenary in the Egyptian army *circa* 170 B.C. received about half as much in cash payments as his successor in 158 B.C. A monthly wage of 80-100 bronze drachms seems a reasonable figure.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Wilcken, *Actenstücke*, VI and Commentary.

<sup>25</sup> F. Heichelheim, *Wirtschaftliche Schwankung der Zeit von Alexander bis Augustus*, pp. 30-32. Hieronymus (*Comment. in Daniel.*, XI. 21 ff.) gives a vivid account of the depredations of Antiochus.

<sup>26</sup> Wheat prices are given by A. Segrè, "The Ptolemaic Copper Inflation ca. 230-140 B.C.," *A.J.P.*, LXIII, 1942, pp. 175 ff.; the cost of housing is taken from Heichelheim (*op. cit.*, pp. 85-86). The latter figures must be regarded as confirmation rather than proof of inflation since houses certainly varied in value at all times.

<sup>27</sup> Segrè, *op. cit.*, p. 180, citing *B.G.U.*, 1290, *P. Tebt.*, 886, and *P. Mich.*, III, 200.

<sup>28</sup> *U.P.Z.*, 99.

<sup>29</sup> A different calculation would give roughly the same sum. In 158 B.C. the stoker received some 1300 bronze drs. on a monthly basis; the Memphis soldier with his *artaba* of wheat valued

Any attempt to relate this sum to the bronze denominations of the Ptolemies plunges one into such a maze of speculation and controversy that one tends to agree with Segrè, "it is mere curiosity to try to ascertain the value of the copper coins." Certainly it would be ridiculous to use our small hoard as the basis for a new classification, but it might be interesting to see whether any existing theory provides a plausible valuation for the coins.

The historical and numismatic evidence relative to the worth of the Ptolemaic bronze pieces is definitely limited. While Egypt maintained a silver standard, the bronze denominations were apparently intended as multiples and fractions of the obol, which was the name given the typical bronze coin as opposed to the stater in silver. By the end of the third century B.C. the country had shifted from silver to bronze, with payment in the latter metal being common practice at home and abroad. The bronze drachm became the unit of reckoning, but the fact that the later papyri accounts use obols and bronze drachms interchangeably in recording conversion rates, would indicate that there was still a bronze denomination known as an obol which was equivalent to a certain number of bronze drachms.

From the papyri again, we learn that the exchange ratio of the silver and bronze drachms fluctuated considerably. About 237 B.C. it stood at 1:1 with an agio of approximately 10 per cent favoring the silver; over the next half century the value of the bronze gradually depreciated until *circa* 170 B.C. it seems to have exchanged with the silver at a 120:1 ratio. With the inflation the ratio soared as high as 600:1, followed by a levelling-off during the latter half of the century so that from then until the time of Cleopatra VII it ranged between 400-500:1.<sup>30</sup>

at 400-500 drs., his two *artabae* converted at 100 drs. each and his cash payment of 150 drs. received 750-850 drs., or about one-third less than the workman. In 180 B.C. a laborer averaged perhaps 600-700 bronze drs. per month. Crediting a mercenary with an *artaba* of wheat at 150 drs., and two others exchanged at 100 drs. each, an additional cash payment of 80-100 drs. would bring his monthly wage to about two-thirds that of the workman.

Even with a lower monthly wage the soldier would have been better off than the laborer, in escaping part if not all of the latter's expenditures for clothing and taxes. Moreover, he could count upon a bonus after a successful campaign. The Egyptian mercenary of the third century B.C. must have been well rewarded for his services, as witness the advice to a prospective soldier in Theocritus (*Idyll* XIV), "If you are thus determined to go abroad, Ptolemy is the very best of pay-masters to a free-man." The situation had changed, however, before the middle of the second century B.C. Heichelheim (*op. cit.*, p. 104) points out that the marked decline in Greek migration to Egypt under Ptolemies VI and VIII is politically attributable to the deterioration of the Ptolemaic empire and economically understandable if one contrasts wage levels with prevailing prices.

<sup>30</sup> The ratios are taken from Segrè, "Ptolemaic Copper Inflation," pp. 175-177; Grenfell-Hunt-Smyly, *The Tebtunis Papyri*, I, Appendix II, pp. 580-603; F. Heichelheim, *Wirtschaftliche Schwankungen*, p. 28. It should be noted that there is often a diversity of opinion regarding the ratio at any given period, due to differing interpretations of the date and meaning of the papyri evidence. While the earliest and latest rates of exchange are fairly well documented and there seems clear indication of a high ratio for the inflation period (*P. Tebt.* 1087 and possibly *P. Petrie*, II, 39 d), the 120:1 rate of *circa* 170 B.C. is less certain.

Despite these fluctuations which must have been reflected in the currency, the bronze coinage as a whole is strikingly homogeneous, leading one to the conclusion that coins of approximately the same size and weight were issued in succeeding reigns but that their value in bronze drachms changed with the inflation of prices and the alteration in the ratio of the silver and bronze. Unfortunately there is no indication on the coins themselves as to what their drachm value may have been at any given period, except in the case of two issues of Cleopatra VII, stamped with a Π and a Μ. It was Regling who first interpreted the letters as marks of value, signifying 80 and 40 bronze drachms respectively. In this connection, our hoard consists almost entirely of coins corresponding in weight and size to the 80 drachms issue of Cleopatra.

This standard bronze denomination, with an average diameter of some 28 millimeters and a weight of 15-18 grams, has been identified by Grenfell and Hunt as an obol. Milne, in doing the same, makes specific reference to our Isis head type, which he describes as of most frequent occurrence in hoards.<sup>31</sup> Yet if we assume that an obol had a value of 80 bronze drachms at the time of Cleopatra VII, it is evident that such was not the case at all periods.

Originally the largest denomination of Ptolemaic bronze, which is roughly six times the weight of the Isis head piece, may have been intended as the bronze equivalent of a silver drachm at a time when silver and bronze held a 1:1 ratio. The denomination comparable in size to our coins would then have had the value of a silver obol. This correlation would be tenable so long as the silver and bronze exchanged on more or less equal terms. In the reign of Epiphanes the silver standard gave way to the bronze, and accounts began to be reckoned commonly in bronze drachms. Since coins of the same size and weight continued to be issued, they would logically have been revalued in terms of the current ratio between silver and bronze, and with the repeated depreciations of the bronze drachm, they would have required successive revaluations. About 170 B.C., given a ratio of 120:1, the obol should have been worth 20 bronze drachms; a few years later as a consequence of the inflation and the 600:1 relationship of silver and bronze, the same denomination would represent 100 drachms. With the steadying of the exchange rate at about 400-500:1, it is probable, as Milne suggests, that the government decided to equate the obol with 80 bronze drachms instead of 100.

Without stressing the point, there is at least a possibility that at the time our hoard was accumulated each Isis head piece had a value of approximately 20 bronze drachms. Let us imagine our Corinthian mercenary with a straight wage of four or

<sup>31</sup> Among the more recent discussions of the Ptolemaic bronze denominations and their value are those of T. Reinach (*Revue des Études Grecques*, XLI, 1928, pp. 122-196); J. G. Milne (*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, XXIV, 1938, pp. 200-207, and *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, I, 1908, pp. 30-40); Grenfell and Hunt (*The Tebtunis Papyri*, I, Appendix II); and A. Segrè (*Circolazione Tolemaica e Pretolemaica in Egitto* and *Metrologia e Circolazione Monetaria degli Antichi*).

five obol pieces per month plus a food allowance sufficient to cover his basic needs.<sup>32</sup> If he were of a thrifty nature, he might well have saved from the cash allotment for a year's campaigning, the 34 coins of our hoard.

The unusual circumstances of the hoard indicate that there was a special reason for its secretion. One would suppose that a Greek mercenary returning home with foreign money would ordinarily have tried to dispose of it by conversion into local currency. This would have been particularly true of bronze pieces which were not circulating freely in Corinth. In the normal course of events there should have been little difficulty. The mercenary could have counted upon finding, in a large center like Corinth, a recruiting officer or a trader bound for Egypt who would have taken his money and given him equivalent value in Greek coins.

Our hypothetical mercenary, however, had chosen an unfortunate time for his service in Egypt. The struggle with Antiochus had brought the country to the verge of chaos and economic collapse. Even before his term of enlistment was up, the soldier may have experienced a depreciation in the purchasing power of his drachms; by the time he returned home, the money was practically worthless in view of the tremendous rise in prices about 168 B.C. Moreover, considering the troubled opening years of the joint reign of Ptolemies VI and VIII, it is to be doubted that the necessary revaluation of the currency could have been undertaken immediately. Our soldier, then, had Egyptian coins with a negligible exchange value. Perhaps he put them aside, hoping that the situation would improve, and had no subsequent opportunity of trading them; perhaps he signed for military service elsewhere, planning to try again to exchange his obols after his return, and did not survive the campaign. Whatever the explanation, the little hoard was concealed in the well or in the paint shop above and abandoned until the destruction of the city in 146 B.C. buried it for another 21 centuries.

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<sup>32</sup> Heichelheim (*op. cit.*, pp. 102-105) estimates that an Egyptian workman's annual food budget called for a minimum expenditure for grain of a sum equivalent to the value of 10 *artabae*, with the same amount spent for wine, oil and relishes (*opsonion*). A. C. Johnson feels that this allowance for *opsonion* is probably too high (*Roman Egypt to the Reign of Diocletian*, p. 304, being Vol. II in *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome*). In any case the mercenary, receiving each month one *artaba* of wheat in kind and a cash return from the conversion of additional *artabae*, should have found this entirely adequate for his food requirements. There would be no need of drawing upon his wages for anything except incidentals.



I. G. II<sup>2</sup>, 1064—*Hesperia*, Supplement VI, No. 31, Fragment d. Photograph (printed in reverse) of squeeze belonging to the Akademie der Wissenschaften in Berlin. Through the courtesy of Günther Klaffenbach.

J. H. OLIVER: ON THE ATHENIAN DECREES FOR ULPUS EUBIOTUS



MARGARET THOMPSON: A PTOLEMAIC BRONZE HOARD FROM CORINTH