Copyright information

Wroth, Warwick William, 1858-1911.
The Santorin find of 1821 / by Warwick Wroth.
London, 1884.

ICLASS Tract Volumes T.23.8

For the Stavros Niarchos Digital Library Euclid collection, click here.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License.

This book has been made available as part of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Digital Library collection. It was digitised by UCL Creative Media Services and is copyright UCL. It has been kindly provided by the Institute of Classical Studies Library and Joint Library of the Hellenic and Roman Societies, where it may be consulted.

Higher quality archival images of this book may be available. For permission to reuse this material, for further information about these items and UCL’s Special Collections, and for requests to access books, manuscripts and archives held by UCL Special Collections, please contact UCL Library Services Special Collections.

Further information on photographic orders and image reproduction is available here.

With thanks to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.
THE

SANTORIN FIND OF 1821.

BY

WARWICK WROTH.

(REPRINTED FROM THE NUMISMATIC CHRONICLE,
Vol. IV., Third Series, Pages 269—280.)

LONDON:
1884.
In the month of April in the island of Rome, a hoard consisting of gold coins, of an unknown age, was discovered by that cartographer, whose name was subsequently incorporated in the Chronicle of Sertec.

Though Green, in his 'History of the Existing World,' has attempted to establish a chronology of certain events, these attempts have been generally met with scepticism. However, in the case of coins, where the inscriptions are often of a more ornate nature, the historian must rely on the memory or the records of those who have come before. The wear and tear of time have certainly diminished the legibility of many inscriptions, and it is only by the most careful examination that even a hint of a clue can be found. One must also consider the possibility of forgeries, which have been known to circulate, and the temptation to alter or add to the inscriptions may have been irresistible. Consequently, the historian must proceed with the utmost caution in his conclusions as to the authenticity of the inscriptions.

It is difﬁcult to assign dates to these coins without the aid of inscriptions and the help of numismatists who have been able to study and decipher the inscriptions. The inscriptions themselves, however, are often the most valuable part of a coin, for they not only indicate the reign of a king or the name of a city, but may reveal a great deal about the history of the time. The historian who is fortunate enough to have a good collection of coins with inscriptions will be able to trace the history of a city or a king with a great deal of accuracy. He will be able to see the changes that have taken place in the coinage, and the relations that have existed between the different cities. He will be able to see the growth of a city, the decline of another, and the rise of a new one.

The historian who is fortunate enough to have a good collection of coins with inscriptions will be able to trace the history of a city or a king with a great deal of accuracy. He will be able to see the changes that have taken place in the coinage, and the relations that have existed between the different cities. He will be able to see the growth of a city, the decline of another, and the rise of a new one.

The historian who is fortunate enough to have a good collection of coins with inscriptions will be able to trace the history of a city or a king with a great deal of accuracy. He will be able to see the changes that have taken place in the coinage, and the relations that have existed between the different cities. He will be able to see the growth of a city, the decline of another, and the rise of a new one.
THE SANTORIN FIND OF 1821.

BY WARWICK WROTH.

In the month of September, 1821, there was discovered in the island of Santorin (the ancient Thera), a large hoard consisting of seven hundred and sixty Greek silver coins, of archaic style, probably of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. A memorandum as to the contents of this hoard was fortunately made at the time by that careful coin-collector, Mr. H. P. Borrell, and was subsequently published by him in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1843—44 (vol. vi. page 134; cf. *ib.* page 47). Though Greek numismatists are not unaware, of course, of the existence of this memorandum, it has happened, owing to the extreme brevity of Mr. Borrell’s descriptions and the absence of any accompanying illustrations, that the Santorin find has had but little attention bestowed upon it. I have, therefore, brought together in the present paper specimens of all the types of coins which I believe to be indicated in Mr. Borrell’s memorandum, giving photographs of them and full descriptions. And I should be glad to think that numismatists may be induced thereby to offer further suggestions as to the attributions of these coins from Santorin, and also—what is still more important—that any collectors who happen to have coins of similar types may be led to state what they know as to the provenance of their spe-
specimens. Several coins from the Santorin hoard passed into the Borrell and Payne Knight collections and have now found a resting place in the British Museum. With regard to some of the specimens in my Plate I cannot, indeed, say positively whether or no they are actually from the hoard, but at any rate they correspond in type and fabric to coins mentioned by Mr. Borrell, and so will serve our purpose of laying once more before the numismatist this interesting island-treasure.

Before examining the items of Mr. Borrell’s memorandum it will be useful to quote it in its entirety:

"41 Silver, type half horse; some to the right, others to the left. Rev.—A double indented square; one much larger than the other; in each a large star.

47 Do. half lion. Rev.—Rude square.
1 Do. Do. Rev.—Rude square, a star in the centre.
2 Do. large fish’s head, and the tail of a fish above. Rev.—Rude indented square.
14 Vase, with bunch of grapes to each handle, and an ivy-leaf above. Rev.—Indented square, divided in unequal compartments. Naxus? Mionnet, in his Supplement, gives them to Teos, in Ionia.

3 Dova flying. Sicyon.
1 Cock. Carystus?
1 Boar’s head.
82 Do. half size. Lyttas Creta?
23 Two dolphins. Phidon. See my notice.
2 Goat upon a fish.
1 Plain vase, without handles.

541 Aegina.
1 Head of Silenus. Rev.—Rude indented square. Naxus?
(From Mr. Payne Knight’s collection, now in the British Museum.)"

760 Total."

A. 41 Silver, type half horse; some to the right, others to the left. Rev.—A double indented square; one much larger than the other; in each a large star.

Several specimens of these coins (which are of the
weight of Æginetan Didrachms) are in the British Museum. They present two distinct types:

1. **Obv.**—Forepart of horse r. ; beneath it, uncertain letters. **Rev.**—Star within an incuse square ; below it, in a smaller incuse square, star.

   **AR. 8** Wt. 184 grains. Brit. Mus. (from the Borrell coll.) [Pl. XII. No. 1.]

   (Similar specimens in Brit. Mus. weigh 183 grs. and 186·3 grs. respectively.)

2. **Obv.**—Fore part of horse l. (apparently no letters beneath). **Rev.**—Floral pattern within an incuse square ; below it, in a smaller incuse square, star.

   **AR. 9** Wt. 178 grains. Brit. Mus. (from Borrell coll.). [Pl. XII. No. 2.]


The British Museum also possesses a hemi-drachm (**AR. 55**, wt. 43 grains) with types similar to No. 2, but without the smaller incuse square on the reverse. It was formerly in the Payne-Knight collection, but does not appear to have occurred in the Santorin hoard.

The fact that the coins in the hoard are almost all uninscribed renders their attribution difficult. From the find-spot of the hoard, and from the presence in it of a large number of Æginetan coins, we must suppose that it contains specimens of the currency of the Ægean islands, of the Peloponnese, and, possibly, even of northern Greece. Our coins with the half horse do not by their types con-

---

nect themselves with any island of the Ægean. They have been attributed to Maronea, to Cyme in Æolis, to Erythrae in Ionia, and (owing to a mistaken reading of Sestini's) to Clazomenae.² The fifth century coins of Maronea³ present a resemblance in type to those now under discussion, though the attribution thus suggested cannot be regarded as certain: the Æolic and Ionian attributions have been well shown by Dr. Imhoof-Blumer, to be, on several grounds, extremely unsatisfactory. At present, indeed, without further knowledge of the provenance of other similar coins, the attribution of these specimens must be admitted to be little better than guess work.

B. 47 Half ion. Rev.—Rude square.
   1 Half ion. Rev.—Rude square, a star in the centre.

1. Obr.—Fore part of lion, l., looking back.
   Rev.—Rude incuse square, quartered and (apparently) divided diagonally.

Ai. '75. Wt. 188·4 grs. Brit. Mus. (from the Payne Knight Coll.). [Pl. XII. No. 3.]

(Another similar in Brit. Mus. from the same collection, weighs 182·9 grains.)

[1.² Obr.—VAO fore part of lion l., looking back.
Rev.—Similar to No. 1.

Ai. '8. Wt. 183·5 grs. Brit. Mus. (from the Borrell coll.). Found in Milo. [Pl. XII. No. 4.]

(A similar specimen in the Brit. Mus., from the Woodhouse collection, weighs 180·8 grains.)

² Cf. Imhoof-Blumer, l. c. p. 276 (notes).
³ Brit. Mus. Catalogue, "Thrace," p. 128, No. 4. The coins belonging to the period before the expedition of Darius have obv., fore part of horse; rev., incuse square; see ib., Nos. 1—3.
2. Obr.—Fore part of lion, l., looking back.

Rev.—Ornamented star within incuse square.


All these coins, if we judge by the similarity of their fabric and of their obverse types, must be assigned to the same period; possibly, however, the specimen with the star for reverse may be somewhat later than the specimens which have only a plain incuse square. Coins with the type of 1* do not seem to have occurred in the Santorin deposit: Mr. Borrell states 1 that some were found in the island of Milo (a few years subsequent to 1821), together with other coins "bearing the same types [as those in the Santorin find, but which] were evidently of more modern date." The inscription on the obverse of 1* ought to give us the key to all the coins in our class: it was read by Mr. Borrell OAV or ΛΟΑ. 2 Possibly, as Professor Percy Gardner has suggested, it is ΟΛΑ (retrograde, = ΛΟΑ), in which case it might be thought to indicate Gythium, the sea-port of Laconia: so far as the types are concerned, Miletus, or better, the Thracian Chersonese (cp. B. M. Cat. Thrace, p. 182, Nos. 1—4) would seem to have the best claim to the coins.

C. 2. Large fish's head, and the tail of a fish above. Rev.—Rude indented square.

1. Obr.—Head of fish l.; above, fish's tail.

---

2 "VΛΑ konnte auch für ΩΥ . . . stehen, die Gammaform A wird auf Münzen von Gortyna, Argos u.a. nicht selten getroffen." Imhoof-Blumer, Z. f. N. III., p. 278 (note 8). The attribution to Olus in Crete proposed by de Luynes seems out of the question.
THE SANTORIN FIND OF 1821.

Rev.—Rude incuse square (probably intended to be quartered and divided diagonally).


These three coins will serve to represent to us the coins with similar types in the Santorin hoard, though it is not certain they actually come from it. If No. 3 is, as it seems to be, the same coin as Cadalvene’s Fig. 23 in Plate II. of his Recueil, it was found (in 1821) in Milo (cf. ib. page 174). With regard to our No. 1, I find from a note in Mr. Borrell’s MS. catalogue of his own collection that it too was discovered in Milo. The provenance of No. 2 is not known to me, but possibly it is one of the two coins with fish’s head and tail found in Santorin. There can be little doubt that we have on the obverse of these coins the “complete abridgment” of a fish—its head and tail. The head was thought by De Luynes to be that of a raven, and he attributed a specimen in his collection to Ialysos in Rhodes; the form of the incuse squares of these coins is, however, quite unlike that of the incuse reverses characteristic of Rhodian coins (cf. e.g., Head, Guide, Pl. III. 30 and 32). At present, the find spot of these coins seems rather to point to their being the

6 Brandis, Das Münzwesen, &c. p. 479. inserted De Luynes’ coin under “Rhodos, Ialysos (Kleinasieischer Puss),” but says, “Die Zutheilung ist sehr zweifelhaft, sie ruhrt von Luynes her, der in seiner Sammlung die Münze, unter Vergleichung von Müller’s Fr. b. Gr. IV. 405 Ialysos beigelegt hat.”

7 De Luynes, in his narrative of his expedition, gives a very full account of the discovery of this coin in Milo, and the wretched state of the place in 1821, and the most miserable mode of living of the inhabitants.
currency of one of the Cyclades, but an attribution to Melos itself would perhaps be hazardous.

D. 14 Vase, with bunch of grapes to each handle, and an ivy-leaf above. Rev.—Indented square, divided into unequal compartments. Naxos? Mionnet in his Supplement, gives them to Teos, in Ionia.

Obv.—Kantharos; from each handle of which a bunch of grapes is suspended; above, an ivy-leaf.

Rev. Incuse square divided into four compartments.


Cf. Head, Guide, Pl. VI., No. 34, wt. 187 grains (Kantharos wreathed with ivy), and Das Königl. Münzkabinett (Berlin), Nos. 9 and 10; without wreath?

These are the well-known coins now generally assigned to the island of Naxos. They usually have the body of the Kantharos wreathed with ivy, but as Mr. Borrell makes no mention of the existence of a wreath on the specimens described in his memorandum, I have thought it better to photograph a piece in the British Museum which seems to be without the wreath—unless, indeed, that object has merely become obliterated. It would appear, however, from some remarks by Mr. Borrell published in the Num. Chron (vol. v. pp. 177, 178), that one at any rate of the Santorin coins was provided with the ivy-wreath, so that perhaps this may have been the case with all. Coins with the wreathed kantharos occurred in the well-known Myt-Rahineh trouvaille of sixth century Greek money.7

E. 8 Dove flying. Sieyon.

1. Obv.—Engle flying r.

7 Revue numis., 1861, p. 421; Pl. XVIII. 8.
Rev.—Incense square quartered and divided diagonally.

Mr. Borrell considered the bird on these coins to be a dove, and supposed them to be "the earliest essays of the Sicilian coinage" (Num. Chron. vi. (O.S.) p. 132.). But the bird seems rather to be an eagle, and it is more likely that these specimens constituted the earliest money of the wealthy island of Siphnos, preceding the archaic, but not primitive, inscribed coins of that island with, **obv.**, female head, **rev.** eagle flying.

F. 1 Cock. Carystus?

I have been unable to make out from this description what coin is intended.

G. 1 Boar’s head.

**Obv.**—Boar’s head r.

**Rev.**—Rude incuse square (apparently not divided into compartments).

Mr. ’75. Wt. 223 grs. Brit. Mus. (from the Borrell coll.).

[Pl. XII. No. 9.]

This coin is of rude globular fabric and much resembles the pieces with fish’s head and tail (our class C.). Like them it is above the right of the Äginetic didrachms in this find.

H. 82 Boar’s head, half size. Lytus Creta?

1. **Obv.**—Boar’s head r.

**Rev.**—Rude incuse square.

Mr. ’55. Wt. 64.5 grs. Brit. Mus. (from the Borrell coll.).

[Pl. XII. No. 10.]
2. Similar; incuse square, divided? Fabric somewhat less lumpy than that of No. 1.


[8. Obv.—Boar's head r.
Rev.—Incuse square.

AR. 85. Wt. 7'2 grs. Brit. Mus. (from the Borrell coll.).]

The British Museum possesses several specimens of Nos. 1 and 2. No. 3 evidently belongs to the same class, though it is not, apparently, from the Santorin hoard. Mr. Head in his Guide (loc. cit.) has attributed No. 1 to Lycia, with a query; in the Guide to the Berlin collection, on the other hand, two similar specimens are given to Lyttus (in Crete), on whose coinage a boar's head is a familiar type. Mons. J. P. Six also writes strongly in favour of this attribution, and considers the pieces to be thirds of the Æginetan stater. He points out that Baron Prokesch-Osten obtained ten specimens of this class direct (apparently) from Crete. It must, however, be borne in mind that similar specimens have been found in Cyprus (Catal. Huber, No. 700), and, as our present find shows, in Thera. Specimens similar to our No. 3 have been found in the island of Seriphos.¹⁰

I. 23 Two Dolphins. Phidon.

1. Obv.—Dolphin swimming l.; beneath, a smaller dolphin swimming r.

* Das königl. Münzkabinet, p. 64, Nos. 12, 13 (wt. = 4, 15, and 4, 1 grm.).
* In a letter to myself written in July, 1884.
¹⁰ Prokesch-Osten, Nichtbekannte Europ.-griech. Münzen, Pl. III. Nos. 50, 51, under Lyttus. The boar's head on No. 50 has been mistaken for an eagle's head.
THE SANTORIN FIND OF 1821.

Rev.—Incuse square quartered and divided diagonally.


(Other specimens in Brit. Mns. weigh 198:7 grs.; 186:4 grs.; for similar coins cf. Das k. Münzkabinet, p. 54, No. 7, "Unbestimmt, eine der Inseln der ägischen Meers"; Cadalvene, Recueil, Pl. II. No. 24, &c.)

Mr. Borrell (Num. Chron. vol. vi. (O.S.), p. 42 ff.), was of opinion that these specimens were the coins "minted by the Aeginetæ for Phidon, King of Argos." Without going this length, we may admit that the suggestion that these coins formed the earliest currency of Argos seems at least worthy of consideration. Cadalvene thought that these pieces were actually struck in Aegina itself, being led to take this view by the similarity between the incuse square of the dolphin coins and those of Aegina with the tortoise; and also by the fact that he had procured several specimens of the former from Aegina.

Mr. Barclay Head has further suggested to me that if these coins are of one of the Aegian islands—and their find-spot, so far as it is at present known, would seem to indicate this—they might with probability be assigned to Delos. That island can hardly be supposed at that early period to have been without a currency of its own, and the type of the dolphin would be not unsuitable as a symbol of its god Apollo.

J. 2 Goat upon a fish.

1. Obv.—Goat r., looking back, with r. foreleg bent; beneath, dolphin.

Rev.—Incuse square divided into (6?) compartments.


The attribution of these coins to Paros seems a probable one.

K. 1 Plain vase, without handles.

Obv.—Amphora.
Rev.—Incuse square, quartered and divided diagonally.


(Against similar specimen in Brit. Mus. weighs 186·2 grs.).

It is perhaps one of these coins of Carthæa in Ceos that is intended by Mr. Borrell, though the vase certainly has small handles.

L. 541 Ægina.

These were apparently all didrachms. Mr. Borrell has not described the form of the incuse square on the reverse of the specimens, and we cannot be certain, therefore, whether the reverse had the square quartered and divided diagonally, as is the case with the coin in our Plate XII. No. 15 (wt. 192 grs., Brit. Mus.), or whether it consisted of five triangular sinkings (as on Pl. XII. No. 16, wt. 185·2 grains. Brit. Mus.) ; or whether, again, the find included specimens of both these classes. The British Museum obtained many of its early Æginetan Didrachms from the Borrell collection, all of which, I find, have the five (or four) triangular sinkings for reverse. It would, however, be somewhat hazardous to infer from this circumstance that none of the class with the quartered and diagonally divided square occurred in the find.

1 I gather this from some observations appended to Borrell's memorandum (Num. Chron. i. c.)—"All the coins of the Santorina deposit, excepting the 82 small with the bear's head, agree pretty nearly with each other in weight, which shows them to have been adjusted to the Æginetan standard, of which they must have been didrachms."
M. 1 Head of Silenus. Rev.—Rude indented square. Naxus?
(From Mr. Payne Knight's collection, now in the British Museum.)

Obv.—Head of Satyr r. with pointed beard and long pointed ear.

Rev.—Rude incuse square (quartered and divided diagonally?).

THE SANTORIN FIND 1821.