

The “Serres, 1966” Hoard: A Contribution to the Coinage of the Macedonian Koinon*

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ABSTRACT In recent years, scholarly investigations pertaining to the institution of the Macedonian Koinon have witnessed a notable expansion, primarily driven by excavations conducted within the geographic confines of Macedonia, yielding a substantial amount of numismatic and epigraphic evidence. Although the historical record regarding the foundation and the existence of the Macedonian Koinon remains obscure, numismatic testimonies have significantly contributed to the comprehension of the institution, and its role within the Macedonian territory under Roman rule. The present article focuses on a meticulous examination of the “Serres, 1966” hoard, discovered in 1966 and currently preserved at the Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum. Particular emphasis is given to the comprehensive analysis of the iconographic representations as well as inscriptions, which offer valuable insights into the institutional and cultural attributes characterising the Macedonian Koinon. Lastly, an endeavour of contextualising the hoard within the broader framework of the Roman province of Macedonia is attempted by a comprehensive analysis of hoard evidence.

KEYWORDS Coin Hoards, Numismatics, Macedonian Koinon, Roman Macedonia.

1. THE “SERRES, 1966” HOARD

On the 7th November 1966, a coin hoard consisting exclusively of fifteen bronzes was delivered to the Serres Archaeological Museum by a local resident. Subsequently, it was transferred to the Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, where it is preserved today¹. This hoard comprises fourteen coins of the Macedonian Koinon and one coin of Thessaloniki. The majority of the coins exhibit a condition of notably suboptimal preservation. Several issues have endured considerable wear and abrasion, with some demonstrating conspicuous signs of deterioration, including instances of double perforation and structural damage, thus rendering them unsuitable for conducting a comprehensive analysis and observations pertaining to the inscriptions and the

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¹ Concerning the references on the hoard, see PETSAS 1969, 211. Some information regarding the hoard is observed in the journal *Makedonika* 9 (PETSAS 1969); see also TOURATSOGLOU 1988, 121 n°. 15. All references lacked accurate information since the coins have never been published before.

symbols. The primary objective of studying this hoard is to conduct a comprehensive examination of its composition, including iconography, metrological aspects and the probable date of concealment as well as to contextualise it within the broader historical context of the Roman province of Macedonia. In the following catalogue, the coins of the hoard are classified first by issuing authority and secondly by chronological order.

2. CATALOGUE

MACEDONIAN KOINON

Time of Severus Alexander (222-235 AD)

231 AD: Omonoia



Figs. 1a & 1b.

Obv. Diademed head of Alexander the Great to r., with flowing hair; [AΛE] ΞΑΝΔΡΟV.

Rev. Alexander the Great riding on Boukephalos to r., his mantle floating behind him, raising hand, star beneath horse; KOI [NON] [MA- KEΔON] ΩN – OMONOIA.

Æ 26 mm, 10.27 g, 10 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 54.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 97, n° 339; *RPC* VI, n° 304 (temporary).



Figs. 2a & 2b.

Obv. Diademed head of Alexander the Great to r., with flowing hair; ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ.

Rev. Alexander the Great riding on Boukephalas to r., his mantle floating behind him, raising hand, star beneath horse; ΚΟΙΝΟΝ ΜΑΚΕ [Δ] ΟΝΩΝ Ο[Μ]ΟΝΟΙΑ.

Æ 26.5 mm, 7.70 g, 12 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 55.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 97, n° 339; *RPC* VI, n° 304 (temporary).

AD 231-235: First Neokoria



Figs. 3a & 3b.

Obv. Diademed head of Alexander the Great to r.; ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ.

Rev. Alexander the Great riding Boukephalas advancing to r., his mantle floating behind him, holding spear; ΚΟΙΝΟΝ ΜΑ [ΚΕΔΟΝ] ΩΝ ΝΕΩ.

Æ 25.5 mm, 9.06 g, 8 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 53.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 106, n^{os} 386-387; *RPC* VI, n° 330 (temporary).



Figs 4a & 4b.

Obv. Diademed head of Alexander the Great with flowing hair to r., below wreath; ΑΛΕ[ΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ].

Rev. Alexander the Great riding Boukephalos to r., his mantle floating behind him, hurling spear; [ΚΟΙΝΟΝ] ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ ΝΕΩ.

Æ 26 mm, 8.80 g, 2-3 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 52.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 104, n° 378; *RPC* VI, 348 (temporary).



Figs. 5a & 5b.

Obv. Diademed head of Alexander the Great to r.; ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ.

Rev. Alexander the Great riding Boukephalos to r.; ΚΟΙΝΟΝ ΜΑΚΕΔ [ΟΝΩΝ] ΝΕΩ.

Æ 23.55 mm, 10.55 g, 9-10 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 51.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 106, n° 388-389; *RPC* VI, n° 340 (temporary).



Figs. 6a & 6b.

Obv. Diademed head of Alexander the Great to r.; ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ.
Rev. Alexander riding Boukephalos to r.; ΚΟΙ [NON] [ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝ] ΩΝ – ΝΕ [Ω].

Æ 24 mm, 9.43 g, 1 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 57.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 106, n^{os} 388-389; *RPC* VI, n° 340 (temporary).



Figs. 7a & 7b.

Obv. Diademed head of Alexander the Great to r., with flowing hair; ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ. Rev. Athena seated to l., holding a Nike and spear; beside throne, shield, ΚΟΙΝΟΝ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ Ν-ΕΩ.

Æ 25 mm, 10.39 g, 12 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 48.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 101-102, nos. 361b-362; *RPC* VI, n° 362 (temporary).



Figs. 8a & 8b.

Obv. Helmeted head of Alexander the Great to r.; [ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔ] POY [cropped].

Rev. Athena seated to l. holding a patera and a spear; KOINON MAK.
Æ 26 mm, 7.54 g, 7 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 50.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 116, n° 441; *RPC* VI, n° 388 (temporary).



Figs. 9a & 9b.

Obv. Head of Alexander the Great wearing lion skin to r.; below club
ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ.

Rev. Olympias as Hygeia seated to l., feeding serpent from patera, resting on
throne; KOINON MA-KEΔ [ON] ΩΝ- ΝΕΩ.
Æ 27 mm, 13.68 g, 7 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 49.

Reference: *RPC* VI, n° 480 (temporary).

Time of Gordian III (238-244 AD)
239 AD: Second Neokoria



Figs. 10a & 10b.

Obv. Diademed head of Alexander the Great with flowing hair to r.; ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ.

Rev. Agonistic table seen in perspective from l., two agonistic crowns with palm on table, below amphora; ΚΟΙΝΟΝ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ ΝΕΩΚΟ.

Æ 28 mm, 12.99 g, 1 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 45.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 157, n° 687-688; *RPC* VII.2, n° 180.



Figs. 11a & 11b.

Obv. Diademed head of Alexander the Great with flowing hair to r., below star; ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ.

Rev. Agonistic table seen in perspective from l., two prize crowns with palm on table; ΚΟΙΝΟΝ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ Β ΝΕΩΚΟΠ.

Æ 25.5 mm, 12.57 g, 12-1 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 58.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 158, n° 690; *RPC* VII.2, n° 205.



Figs. 12a & 12b.

Obv. Head of Alexander the Great wearing lion skin to r.; ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟV.
 Rev. Alexander the Great riding on Boukephalos to r., rising hand, star beneath horse; [KOIN] ON MAK- EΔON [Ω] N [B NEΩ].
 Æ 27 mm, 12.53 g, 7 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 56.

Reference GAEBLER 1906, 166, n^{os} 735-736; *RPC* VII2, n° 221.



Figs. 13a & 13b.

Obv. Helmeted head of Alexander the Great to r., griffin on helmet, below star; ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟV.
 Rev. Agonistic table seen in perspective from l., two prize crowns with palm on table, star above; KOINON MAKEΔONΩN B [N] EΩKOP.
 Æ 25 mm, 10.35 g, 1-2 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 59.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 176, n° 793; *RPC* VII.2, n° 303.

Time of Philip I (244-249 AD)



Figs. 14a & 14b.

Obv. Diademed and cuirassed bust of Alexander the Great to r., holding shield on shoulder; ΑΛΕ-ΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ.

Rev. Alexander the Great riding Boukephalos advancing to r.; KOINON MAKEΔONΩN B NEΩ | EOC in exergue.

Æ 26.5 mm, 12.09 g, 2 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 47.

Reference: GAEBLER 1906, 185, n° 838; *RPC* VIII, (unassigned; ID 70268).

THESSALONIKI

Time of Gordian III (238-244 AD)



Figs. 15a & 15b.

Obv. Radiate head of Gordian III to r.; ΑΥΚ [Μ] ΑΝΤ ΓΟΡΔΙΑΝΟC.

Rev. Nike walking to l. holding a Kabeiros in the right hand and a palm branch in left; ΘΕC-C-AΛΟΝΙ-ΚΕΩΝ.

Æ 26 mm, 10.96 g, 1 h. Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum, n° 46.

Reference: TOURATSOGLOU 1988, 280, n° 148; *RPC* VII.2, n° 401.

3. COMMENTARY ON “SERRES, 1966” HOARD

3.1. Composition and dating

Due to the elusive provenance of the hoard, a dearth of information regarding the circumstances and contextual details of its discovery persists. A significant concern revolves around the question of whether the hoard encompasses its entirety or represents merely a part of another coin hoard. It is important to acknowledge the publication from Ioannis Touratsoglou on the coinage of Thessaloniki during the Roman imperial period. Touratsoglou argued that a hoard unearthed in Macedonia in 1966, examined by the authors of the Evelpidis Collection, could be a constituent part of the “Serres, 1966” hoard². To draw definitive conclusions, it is imperative to conduct a comprehensive examination of both hoards. A comparative analysis of these two hoards reveals several key points of interest. Both hoards are in suboptimal preservation conditions and were both discovered in 1966, which might be a chronological coincidence. Notable distinctions arise when examining their respective provenances; one was unearthed in the region of Macedonia, with an undisclosed source, while the other was discovered in the region of Serres. Delving into the composition of the “Macedonia, 1966” hoard, it becomes evident that it comprises over sixty-six specimens, encompassing nearly all the cities of the Roman province of Macedonia which include Thessaloniki, Amphipolis as well as the colonies of Dion, Cassandreia, Pella, Philippi, the municipium of Stobi and the Macedonian Koinon. Conversely, the “Serres, 1966” hoard is exclusively composed of the issuing authorities of the Macedonian Koinon and Thessaloniki. The coins of the “Serres, 1966” hoard were struck under three Roman emperors, namely during the reigns of Severus Alexander, Gordian III and Philip I. Ten out of the fifteen coins, were issued during the reign of Severus Alexander (231-235 AD)³, while three coins were attributed to Gordian III reign (238-244 AD); two of which were produced by the Macedonian Koinon, whereas the last coin was issued by Thessaloniki⁴. Lastly, one coin of the Macedonian Koinon belongs to the reign of Philip I (244-249 AD)⁵. Among various hoards discovered in the region of Macedonia (Table 1), it is of utmost interest that the “Serres, 1966” hoard is unique in its composition, as it includes only issues from the Macedonian Koinon and Thessaloniki. Regarding the coins from the Macedonian Koinon and Thessaloniki in both hoards, they are attributed to the reigns of Severus Alexander (222-235 AD) and Gordian III (238-244 AD). This evidence does not support the assertion that the hoards are necessarily interconnected. Therefore, aside from the same year of their discovery, and their composition of common issues of Thessaloniki and the Macedonian Koinon, there is no additional evidence to affirm the hypothesis that these two hoards are indeed interrelated. Further investigation and analysis are thus requisite to shed greater light on this intriguing numismatic conundrum.

Apart from the composition of these coin hoards, it is essential to assess whether their concealment dates align. It should be noted that the concealment date of the “Macedoniossa, 1966” hoard is attributed to the reign of Gallienus (253-268 AD),

² For the composition of the coin hoards, see TOURATSOGLU 1988, 121-122, nos. 15, 18.

³ Concerning the coins minted during the reign of Severus Alexander, see nos. 1-10, and also GAEBLER 1906, 97-99, 111, 116.

⁴ For the coins struck by Gordian III, see nos. 11-13, 15; GAEBLER 1906, 131, 144, 176; TOURATSOGLU 1988, 263.

⁵ GAEBLER 1906, 183; for the unique issue of Philip I, see n°. 14.

predicated on the presence of late issues of Thessaloniki⁶, while the “Serres, 1966” hoard should be dated during or after the reign of Philip I (244-249 AD). Comparing the proposed concealment dates, it can be inferred that the chronological abstinence between the time of Philip I (244-249 AD) and the reign of Gallienus (253-268 AD) is relatively small. However, this time proximity does not conclusively imply that it might be the same hoard. The composition of the “Serres, 1966” hoard, encompassing issues from the era of Severus Alexander (222-235 AD) up to Philip I (244-249 AD), shows that these issues were in circulation at the same time. Regarding the motive behind the concealment of this hoard, bearing in mind the historical context of emergency hoards in the region of Macedonia, it is plausible that the hoard may have been stashed as a response to the frequent invasions and raids by barbarian forces from the north⁷. Such a scenario aligns with the broader historical situation in the middle of the Third Century AD within the Balkan Peninsula⁸.

3.2. Iconography

Despite the limited quantity of specimens of the hoard, it is worth highlighting the variety of the depicted scenes and motifs, rendering it of particular interest. Concerning the obverses, various types have been observed. Remarkably, except for the issue of Thessaloniki, which possesses distinct historical implications, the fourteen issues of the Macedonian Koinon represent the head or bust of Alexander the Great. The Macedonian king was illustrated in several variations and roles; specifically there are four distinctive types. Most of the coins –in total nine– bear Alexander’s head, represented as a youthful king wearing a royal diadem and in most cases with flowing hair (nos. 1-7, 10,11). This is the most common representation of Alexander the Great on the coinage of Macedonian Koinon, as a sign of his royal status. Two specimens (nos. 9, 12) depict Alexander wearing a lion’s skin, an emblematic symbol of Hercules. This type recalls Alexander’s lifetime coinage, in which he was illustrated as Hercules emphasising his association with the mythic hero and his heroic achievements⁹, while coins (nos. 8, 13) portray Alexander wearing an Attic helmet, indicating his military virtue¹⁰. Finally, the last type on the obverse of the coin (n° 14), illustrates a cuirassed bust of Alexander¹¹. The obverses of the above emissions are always accompanied by the Greek legend ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ (nos. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 14) or ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ (nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13), which runs in genitive from left to right; given the presence of this legend, the identification with the king of Macedonia can be easily affirmed.

On the other hand, the reverses represent iconographic scenes related to Alexander the Great or representations referring to festivals, games, and competitions that took

⁶ TOURATSOGLOU 1988, 122 n°. 18.

⁷ Considering the proximity of the hoard’s provenance in eastern Macedonia, the concealment date might be also linked to the Gothic invasions in the neighboring city of Philippopolis in 249-250 AD; KREMYDI 1996, 128.

⁸ TOURATSOGLOU 2006a, 19-20. The “Serres, 1966” hoard conforms the characteristics of an emergency hoard, a pattern observed in numerous hoards unearthed in the region of Macedonia. Its concealment might have been a precautionary measure taken by individuals to protect their wealth from the unpredictable circumstances by the barbarian incursions.

⁹ TSANGARI 2010, 184.

¹⁰ PALAGIA 2018, 142.

¹¹ DAHMEN 2007, 136; the types with armoured busts are less frequent on the coinage of the Macedonian Koinon. Instead, the types with the diademed head of Alexander as well as the type with the Attic helmet are more usual.

place in Veroia in honour of the Hellenistic King¹². The majority of the reverse dies illustrate Alexander the Great riding on his horse Boukephalas (nos. 1-6, 12, 14). Representations of Greek deities can also be discerned¹³. The coins (nos. 7,8) depict the goddess Athena, demonstrating the ancient Greek religious spirit¹⁴. Interestingly enough, among the issues of the “Serres, 1966” hoard is also the type that features the representation of Alexander’s mother, Olympias (n° 9), presented on a seat to the left, feeding a serpent. This scene can be associated with one of the myths pertaining to Alexander’s divine descent. According to this legend, in the absence of Philip II, the hybrid deity of Zeus Ammon appeared as a giant serpent and impregnated Olympias, hence making Alexander the son of Zeus Ammon¹⁵. However, other numismatists have linked this type to the deity of health, Hygeia¹⁵.

New iconographic scenes emerged from the time of Elagabalus. During the reign of Elagabalus (218-222 AD), the Macedonian Koinon received the significant grant of a second Neokoria (δὲς νεοκόρος) and this augmentation of status is notably evident in the coinage of the Macedonian Koinon¹⁶. A defining feature of the institution was its emphasis on the social, cultural and religious activities of daily life, with relatively less involvement in political matters. Moreover, a preoccupation was focused on the cult of the Roman Emperors along with the organization of festivals¹⁷. Representations of an agonistic table with two prize crowns on it, are depicted as reverses on the coinages during the reign of Elagabalus and Gordian III (nos. 10-11, 13). This type is related to the games and festivals, which were held in honour of Alexander the Great, the so-called ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑ ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ¹⁸. Honorary and sepulchral inscriptions as well as numismatic testimonies indicated the existence of the festivals ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ and ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑ, which were held in Veroia¹⁹. These festivals were organized in honour of the emperor; athletic and artistic competitions were celebrated on an annual basis and they might have attracted not only local athletes and merchants from the neighbouring regions, but even outside the borders of the province²⁰. The games under the reign of Gordian III renamed ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑ in honour of the Hellenistic King, Alexander the Great²¹. A glance at the iconography of the issues, minted by the Macedonian Koinon, gives a vivid impression of the predominance of Alexander’s representations. During the Third

¹² TOURATSOGLOU 2006, 294-295; DAHMEN 2007, 136. The games of ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑ ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ had taken place every four years starting from 242-243 AD during the reign of Gordian III, and a second time in 246-247 AD under Philip I.

¹³ HOWGEGO 2005, 3. Local deities were relatively common on the coinage of the eastern Roman provinces. Contrary to the western provinces, they were not integrated into the Roman Pantheon.

¹⁴ GAEBLER 1906, 19.

¹⁵ DAHMEN 2007, 140-141.

¹⁶ KANATSOULIS 1956, 41; BURELL 2004, 192-193. The seat of the assembly, where the representatives of the Macedonian cities and the officials of the Koinon met, was Veroia, strategically situated in close proximity to the two Macedonian capitals –Aegae and Pella– as well as the significant center of Thessaloniki. This geographical advantage made Veroia an appealing location for Roman officials, who established their presence in the hinterland.

¹⁷ TATAKI 1988, 456; KREMYDI 2005, 102-103.

¹⁸ BURELL 2004, 193-194; DAHMEN 2007, 138.

¹⁹ GAEBLER 1906, 102-103; honorary and sepulchral inscriptions had testified names of athletes and magistrates, who were involved in these festivals. According to epigraphic and numismatic evidence, the celebration of ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑ can be dated during the reign of Alexander Severus and more precisely in the year 229 AD. See GOUNAROPOULOU–HATZOPOULOS 1998, nos. 68-69; for further information on the games, see LESCHHORN 1998, 403-405.

²⁰ DAHMEN 2007, 33.

²¹ TOURATSOGLOU 2006, 294-295.

Century AD, this phenomenon became more intense. Based on the iconography of both obverses and reverses, the revived interest of the cult of Alexander the Great during the Roman imperial period is related to the policy of the emperors to identify themselves with Alexander as well as to the “revival” of the Macedonian past²². Furthermore, the variety of the iconographic types that illustrate Alexander as a young and beautiful king, and in several instances represent him with heroic and divine features, exemplify a profound adoration for the Macedonian king²³.

In addition to the iconography, the legends should also be mentioned, especially on the reverses that inform on the wider historical and cultural context, in which the coins have been struck. The issues of the Macedonian Koinon can be divided into three groups. The first group contains coins (nos. 1-2) with iconographic types of Alexander's head and horseman (Alexander on Boukephalas), which are dated in the early reign of Severus Alexander (222-235 AD). These emissions, apart from the Greek legend KOINON MAKEΔONΩN, on their reverses carry also the word OMONOIA, “concordia”²⁴. The title of OMONOIA is referred to the alliance between the Macedonian Koinon and the *civitas libera* Thessaloniki²⁵. Historically, it is well attested that the Macedonian Koinon and Thessaloniki had a rivalry concerning the organisation of their local festivals and games²⁶. Furthermore, they also had a dispute for proclaiming their privileges and the honorary titles of Neokoria and Metropolis²⁷. Types that bear the title of OMONOIA were inaugurated during the reign of Severus Alexander and according to Gaebler are precisely dated to 231 AD. In addition, on the reverses of these coins, the symbol of a star is also portrayed beneath the horse (nos. 1-2). The second group comprises later issues of Severus Alexander (nos. 3-9), which refer to the first Neokoria of the city, when Veroia was granted with the privilege of erecting a temple related to the imperial cult²⁸. The inscribed legend KOINON MAKEΔONΩN (NEΩ) denotes the connection with the first Neokoria. Although the title was achieved during the reign of Nerva (96-98 AD), the inscription of Neokoria appeared on the coins for the first time a century later, during the reign of Macrinus (217-218 AD). The title continued to exist also during the reign of Severus Alexander. Finally, the third group of coins (nos. 10-13) is associated with the celebration of the second Neokoria of the city, since the inscriptions demonstrate the ethnic KOINON MAKEΔONΩN along with the indication of B NEΩKOP²⁹. The coin n° 14 holds great significance on the grounds that there is a very rare reference to the year of issue (244 AD) in the exergue of its reverse die, indicated by the engraved letters EOC (according to Actian Era)³⁰. Taking

²² MUCCIOLI 2018, 277.

²³ TSANGARI 2010, 186-187; DAHMEN 2007, 31-33.

²⁴ LIAMPI 2005, 896. Issues bearing the title of OMONOIA were also minted during the reign of Julia Mamaea with the depiction of Nike and Macedonia holding a Kabeiros, the divine protector of Thessaloniki. See TOURATSOGLOU 1988, 95.

²⁵ GAEBLER 1906, 21.

²⁶ Likewise, the case of Veroia, literary sources in accordance with coins and inscriptions testified that the games of KABEIPIA and IIYΘIA were held in Thessaloniki; see LESHORN 1998, 406-408. In the case of Thessaloniki, the title of Metropolis on the coinage has emerged in the reign of Gordian III (240-241 AD), and at the same time title of Neokoros is also mentioned under his coinage. TOURATSOGLOU 1988, 277.

²⁷ TOURATSOGLOU 1988; KREMYDI 2005, 103.

²⁸ GAEBLER 1906, 97-101 nos. 341-358.

²⁹ GAEBLER 1906, 101-188, nos. 359-859; BURELL 2004, 193; The coins (nos. 10, 11 and 13) of the hoard with the depictions of the prize urns which are closely related to the festivals in honour of Alexander, according to Gaebler's die study, are dated back to the reign of Gordian III (238-244 AD).

³⁰ GAEBLER 1906, 14.

into consideration the implied chronology, these issues can be attributed to the reign of Philip I and precisely to AD 244³¹. Regarding the coin of Thessaloniki (n° 15), which is dated during the reign of Gordian III (238-244 AD), on the obverse the emperor is depicted with a radiating crown to the right, along with the legend AYK M ANT ΓΟΡΔΙΑΝΟC. The reverse die illustrates a Nike holding a Kabeiros and a palm branch, which are accompanied by the *ethnikon* of the city ΘΕCCAΛΟΝΙΚΕΩΝ³². According to Touratsoglou, the type with Gordian III and the Nike holding a Kabeiros and a palm branch can be approximately dated to 238-240/1 AD and belongs to the first group of the coin series under this emperor³³.

3.3. Metrology

In terms of metrology, the specimens of the hoard have an average weight between 10-12 g. with a diameter measuring approximately 24mm. to 27 mm. Such denominations were in widespread use within the province of Macedonia, particularly after the Third Century AD³⁴. Although all the issues of the coin hoard were struck in bronze, only a limited number of them are preserved in excellent condition. Notably, coins with nos. 13-15 display either outstanding or rather careful production work from both mints. Several coins bear partial imprints of the circular die's edge. These imprints were discerned on the obverses of nos. 5 and 9 and on the reverses of nos. 1, 4-5, and 10-12. Another indicative observation is that some coins bear signs from die breaks. For instance, coin n° 8 has a partially broken flan, while coin n° 2 features a round hole. In addition, by examining the coins, it can be assumed that almost all the emissions retained some measures of similar type of oxidation, thus suggesting that they all come from the same place of concealment. An overall impression of the production of these issues is that they were minted for the supplement of the local needs, but also for covering the expenses of the organisation of festivals in both cases of Veroia and Thessaloniki.

Taking into consideration comparative data from studies of other mints of the Macedonian cities, it becomes evident that the bronze coinage of the Macedonian Koinon adhered to the metrological patterns of the other Macedonian mints, particularly of Thessaloniki³⁵. Although the early denominations varied, by the Third Century AD these coins adopted a standard value equal of 1-*assarion*³⁶. However, it is important to note that this adoption does not imply that the Macedonian cities ceased minting larger or smaller denominations during this period. As Kremydi stated, the bronze provincial issues often experienced effects of inflation³⁷. Despite certain similarities with the Roman denominational system, the provincial authorities in Macedonian cities, including the Macedonian Koinon, displayed a degree of autonomy that allowed them to respond to local economic conditions, financial needs and the broader economic dynamics of the region while still adhering to certain Roman standards.

³¹ LIAMPI 2005, 897.

³² Numismatic and epigraphic material affirmed the importance of the worship of the god Kabeiros as a protector of Thessaloniki during the Roman imperial period. For further details on the worship of Kabeiros, see TOURATSOGLU 1985, 71-83.

³³ TOURATSOGLU 1988, 68 n°. 263.

³⁴ KREMYDI 1996a, 283-284.

³⁵ TOURATSOGLU 1988, 98-99.

³⁶ LIAMPI 2005, 898-899.

³⁷ KREMYDI 1996a, 283.

4. THE CIRCULATION OF THE COINAGE OF THE MACEDONIAN KOINON: HOARD EVIDENCE

Significant contribution to the understanding of numismatic circulation in Roman Macedonia as well as to the coin hoards of the “free city” of Thessaloniki was achieved by Touratsoglou³⁸, while a comprehensive examination of the coinage of the Roman colony of Dion was accomplished by Kremydi³⁹. Additionally, Papaefthymiou's research has provided valuable insights into the hoard evidence with specific focus on the coinage of Edessa⁴⁰. These scholarly endeavours have collectively yielded a substantial outline of the numismatic circulation within Macedonia. This section presents a comprehensive overview of the hoards containing issues of the Macedonian Koinon, endeavouring to outline the dynamic of the coinage and its circulation within the Roman province of Macedonia during the second and Third Century AD.

In total, nineteen coin hoards have been collected, including also the “Serres, 1966” hoard⁴¹. Based on the collected data (Tables 1 and 2), it is evident that 167 coins are attributed to the Macedonian Koinon out of the 2,459 total coins of the nineteen hoards, accounting 7%. Notably, the mint of Dion stands out as a dominant production centre, contributing the highest number of coins (1,699), constituting a substantial 73% of the total. The remarkable number of issues associated with the mint of Dion is attributed to the discovery of the “Dion, 1999” hoard, which yielded an impressive number of 1,590 coins⁴². In comparison to the other Roman provincial mints within Macedonia, the coinage of the colony of Dion emerges as one of the most extensively studied and documented cases. Following the extensive contribution of the mint of Dion, the mint of Thessaloniki represents 267 emissions, accounting 11% of the total number of 2,459 issues⁴³. Meanwhile, the mints of the Amphipolis and Pella are notable for their respectable quantities of 71 and 55 issues, respectively. In contrast, the remaining mints, specifically the mints of the colonies of Cassandreia and Philippi, along with the *municipium* of Stobi, are either scarcely represented or entirely absent in the examined hoards. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the Roman issues constitute a relatively small portion, comprising just 2% of the total coins in the examined hoards. In light of the comprehensive analysis and in comparison to other Macedonian mints, following Dion and Thessaloniki, it becomes apparent that the mint of the Macedonian Koinon stands out significantly, boasting a remarkable quantity of issues within the examined coin hoards.

Concerning the districts, where the examined hoards were discovered, it becomes evident that the coins minted by the cities, colonies, and the *municipium* of Stobi predominantly circulated at a local level, not far from the mint of their production. In the case of the Macedonian Koinon, the coins were primarily in circulation within central Macedonia including the peninsula of Chalkidike, but also in the wider area of

³⁸ Touratsoglou's publication concerning a historical, numismatic and economic approach of Greece and the area of Balkans has also supplemented the research towards Macedonia under Roman empire. For a further overview, see TOURATSOGLU 2006.

³⁹ Concerning the coinage of the Roman colony of Dion, see KREMYDI 1996; 2004b.

⁴⁰ For the study on the coinage of Edessa in Macedonia, see PAPAETHYMIU 2002.

⁴¹ Five of the nineteen coin hoards are grave hoards (“Ierissos, 1976”, “Ierissos, 1973”, “Sevasti, 1987b”, “Sevasti, 1987a” and “Methone, 1986”).

⁴² For this specific hoard with the ample numismatic material, see KREMYDI 2004a, 25-28.

⁴³ For the coinage and the circulation of Thessaloniki, see TOURATSOGLU 1988.

eastern Macedonia⁴⁴. More specifically, seven out of the nineteen coin hoards have been concealed in the region of Pieria⁴⁵, while six hoards have come to light in the region of Bottiaia and Mygdonia, namely the neighbouring areas of Veroia and Thessaloniki⁴⁶. Furthermore, three coin hoards discovered in the region of eastern Macedonia (Odomantike, Edonis-Pieris)⁴⁷ and two hoards have been unearthed from the peninsula of Chalkidike (“Ierissos 1976” and “Ierissos 1973”). The existence of multiple coin hoards in these areas serves as a testament to the importance of these locales as centres of economic activity and trade and offer valuable insights into the monetary circulation patterns during the Roman Era. The data from the collected hoard evidence (Table 1) clearly show that the issues of the Macedonian Koinon, in most cases, were accompanied by coins of the cities of Thessaloniki, and Dion. The presence of Thessaloniki is attested in seventeen out of the nineteen hoards, the colony of Dion in fifteen coin hoards, while the city of Edessa and Pella, in nine and eight coin hoards respectively.

Regarding the issuing authorities of the Macedonian Koinon (Table 2), a comprehensive analysis of the data reveals that a substantial number of issues were struck during the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD), Severus Alexander (22-235 AD), Hadrian (117-138 AD) and Gordian III (238-244 AD) respectively. Coins of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD), Elagabalus (218-222 AD) and Philip I (244-249 AD) are represented in quite small number, while the number of coins issued during the reign of the early emperors, namely Claudius (41-54 AD), Vespasian (69-79 AD) and Domitian (81-96 AD) is notably limited, and in most instances nonexistent. As far as the concealment date of the hoards is concerned, it covers a period from the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD) to the reign of Claudius Gothicus (268-270 AD). The majority of them are dated to the Third Century AD, while there are several coin hoards that are attributed to the middle of the Second Century AD, during the reign of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Commodus. More precisely, only six coin hoards are dated in the Second Century AD⁴⁸. A majority of the hoard concealments are notably concentrated during the reigns of Gordian III (238-244 AD), Philip I (244-249 AD), and mostly Gallienus (244-249 AD). According to the studies conducted on the hoard evidence of Macedonia during the Roman imperial period, the concealment of the hoards in the middle of the Third Century AD might be associated with the broader historical context of that era⁴⁹.

⁴⁴ Since the mint of the Macedonian Koinon was situated in Veroia, the circulation of issues in the adjacent areas is reasonable.

⁴⁵ Coin hoards associated with the colony of Dion can be attributed to the systematic and extensive archaeological excavations that have taken place in this region over the past several decades.

⁴⁶ See Table 1. “Veroia, 1949”, “Kentriko, 1981” and “Koufalia, 1966” in Bottiaia, and “Leukochori, 1970” in Mygdonia.

⁴⁷ See Table 1. “Amphipolis, 1976”, “Serres, 1975” and “Serres, 1966”.

⁴⁸ The “Sevasti, 1987a”, “Sevasti, 1987b”, “Ierissos, 1976”, “Dion, 1998”, “Dion, 1999” and “Dion, 2000” hoards are dated in the Second Century AD. The rest of the hoards were concealed in the Third Century AD.

⁴⁹ It could be related with the upheaval invasions of the barbarian tribes of the north that caused an imminent danger in the territory of Macedonia during the middle of the Third Century AD. TOURATSOGLU 2006a, 142-143.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The coinages produced by the cities, colonies and Koina of the Roman provinces proved to be insightful perspectives when it comes to the political, institutional and socio-cultural activities. The hoard evidence unearthed from the region of Macedonia reveals that, among the Macedonian mints operating during the Roman imperial period, Thessaloniki, Dion as well as the Macedonian Koinon produced a sufficient number of issues that circulated extensively within the province. These coinages played a significant role in the economic transactions and monetary circulation of the region. The Macedonian Koinon produced significant issues characterized by a wealth of unique iconographic themes and had a consecutive coin production during almost the entire Roman imperial period. The majority of the coins reflect the ethnic and cultural identity of the Hellenistic Macedonia. A notable phenomenon of the Third Century AD coinage concerns the representations of Alexander the Great that replaced the imperial portrait on the obverses of the coins. This phenomenon started during the reign of Elagabalus (218-222 AD) and continued until the end of the coin production of the Macedonian Koinon under Philip I (244-249 AD). The Third Century AD coin iconography of the Macedonian Koinon, in accordance with the epigraphic material, asserted the coexistence of the Roman imperial cult and the cult of Alexander the Great. This fact could be also affirmed by the renowned organisation of the games and festivals ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ and ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΕΙΑ ΟΛΥΜΠΙΑ in honour of Alexander. The iconography demonstrates that the inhabitants were adapted to the conditions imposed by the Romans; they maintained to a great extent their cults, institutions and traditions. On the other hand, the Roman elements are not absent, since the imperial portraits and cult are represented on the coins. Finally, even though it becomes evident that there is no general pattern behind the iconography of the coinage of the Macedonian Koinon, the iconographic representations of Alexander the Great demonstrate his enduring legacy and influence across different regions, time periods and cultures and the profound impact of his achievements.

The examination of the "Serres, 1966" hoard has led to significant observations and new deductions regarding its chronological assignment and contextualisation within the broader circulation of the province of Macedonia during the Third Century AD. Despite the limited data regarding its provenance, it should be studied as a detached coin hoard. Compared to other coin hoards dated to the Third Century AD, the "Serres, 1966" hoard stands out for its distinctive composition. It is primarily comprised of coins of the Macedonian Koinon, with only two instances of Thessaloniki coinage represented. The Macedonian Koinon, in particular, emerges as a noteworthy contributor to the coinages within the province, following closely the output of other Macedonian cities, like Thessaloniki. This fact underscores the importance of the Macedonian Koinon in the broader context of numismatics as well as the economic activity in the Roman province of Macedonia. Regarding the composition of the hoards, the issues of the Macedonian Koinon are commonly accompanied by the coinages of Thessaloniki and Dion. Furthermore, a prevalent characteristic observed in the coin hoards of the Third Century AD is the predominance of bronze issues, since few instances include a limited number of Roman silver coins. Lastly, it should be noted that by analyzing the hoard evidence, a significant concern is that several coins remain unidentified, lacking essential information. This issue underscores the need for a comprehensive investigation of these coins. As a consequence, it is imperative to acknowledge that the outcomes of this examination

lack the necessary depth required for achieving a better understanding of numismatic circulation.

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TABLES

**Table 1. Coin hoards from Macedonia containing issues of the Macedonian:
Issuing authority.**

DISTRICTS	HOARDS	REFERENCES	BURIAL DATE	TOTAL	MACEDONIAN KOINON	THESSALONIKI	EDESSA	PELLA	DION	CASSANDREA	AMPHIPOLIS	PHILIPPI	STOBI	ROME
EDONIS - PIERIS	Amphipolis, 1976	Touratsoglou 1988, 120.	Claudius Gothicus	39	5	17	3	6			6			2
ODOMANTIKE	Serres, 1975	Touratsoglou 1988, 122.	Gordian III	20	1	9	2	3	1	1	2			1
	Serres, 1966	Touratsoglou 1988, 121.	Philip I	15	14	1								
	Veroia, 1949	Touratsoglou 1988, 119.	Gordian III	11	3	4		2	1					
BOTTIAIA	Kentriko, 1981	Touratsoglou 1988, 119.	Philip I	111	9	69	6	14	3				1	4
	Koufalia, 1966	Touratsoglou 1988, 119.	Gallienus	19	3	8	5		1					2
MYGDONIA	Leukochori, 1970	Touratsoglou 1988, 118.	Decius	44	5	17	1	12	2				1	1
	Macedonia, 1966	Touratsoglou 1988, 121.	Gallienus	66+	4	18	3	2	1	2	32	1	3	
"MACEDONIA"	Macedonia, 1973	Touratsoglou 1988, 121.	Gallienus	149	41	46	5	1	4	13	30	6	3	
	Macedonia, unknown	Kremydi 1996, 132.	Gallienus	114	18	45	9	15	27					
CHALKIDIKE	Ierissos, 1976	Touratsoglou 1993, 60.	Antoninus Pius	3	1					1		1		
	Ierissos, 1973	Touratsoglou 1993, 59.	Maximus	15	4	5				1			1	2
	Dion, 1998	Kremydi 2004a, 30.	Antoninus Pius	81	1	3			72			1		3
	Dion, 1999	Kremydi 2004a, 26.	Antoninus Pius	1590	39	13	2		1452		1	7		15
	Dion, 2000	Kremydi 2004a, 28.	Antoninus Pius	129	1	2			120					
PIERIA	Sevasti, 1987b	Touratsoglou 1993, 58.	Marcus Aurelius	14	4				6				1	1
	Sevasti 1987a	Touratsoglou 1993, 58.	Commodus	24	12	2			7					3
	Methone, 1986	Touratsoglou 1993, 59.	Philip I	12	1	7			1					
	Dion, 1987	Kremydi 1996, 136.	Gallienus	3	1	1			1					

**Table 2. Coin hoards from Macedonia containing issues of the Macedonian Koinon
(Second & Third Century AD):
Periods of issue represented.**

DISTRICTS	HOARDS	REFERENCES	BURIAL DATE	TOTAL	MACEDONIAN KOINON	Claudius	Vespasian	Domitian	Hadrian	Antoninus Pius	Marcus Aurelius	Faustina	Lucius Verus	Commodus	Septimius Severus	Macrinus	Elagabalus	Severus Alexander	Gordian III	Philip I	Unidentified
EDONIS - PIERIS	Amphipolis, 1976	Touratsoglou 1988, 120.	Claudius Gothicus	39	5													5			
	Serres, 1975	Touratsoglou 1988, 122.	Gordian III	20	1																1
ODOMANTIKE	Serres, 1966	Touratsoglou 1988, 121.	Philip I	15	14													10	3	1	
	Veroia, 1949	Touratsoglou 1988, 119.	Gordian III	11	3						1							1	1		
BOTTIAIA	Kentriko, 1981	Touratsoglou 1988, 119.	Philip I	111	9				1	5				1						2	
	Koufalia, 1966	Touratsoglou 1988, 119.	Gallienus	19	3													3			
MYGDONIA	Leukochori, 1970	Touratsoglou 1988, 118.	Decius	44	5											1		4			
	Macedonia, 1966	Touratsoglou 1988, 121.	Gallienus	66+	4													1	3		
"MACEDONIA"	Macedonia, 1973	Touratsoglou 1988, 121.	Gallienus	149	41																
	Macedonia, unknown	Kremydi 1996, 132.	Gallienus	114	18										1		6		6	3	2
CHALKIDIKE	Ierissos, 1976	Touratsoglou 1993, 60.	Antoninus Pius	3	1		1														
	Ierissos, 1973	Touratsoglou 1993, 59.	Maximus	15	4					3	1										
	Dion, 1998	Kremydi 2004a, 30.	Antoninus Pius	81	1				1												
	Dion, 1999	Kremydi 2004a, 26.	Antoninus Pius	1590	39			1	14	20											4
	Dion, 2000	Kremydi 2004a, 28.	Antoninus Pius	129	1	1															
PIERIA	Sevasti, 1987b	Touratsoglou 1993, 58.	Marcus Aurelius	14	4					1	2	1									
	Sevasti, 1987a	Touratsoglou 1993, 58.	Commodus	24	12					6	3	1	1	1							
	Methone, 1986	Touratsoglou 1993, 59.	Philip I	12	1																1
	Dion, 1987	Kremydi 1996, 136.	Gallienus	3	1																1