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**A GROUPING OF CHANCE COIN FINDS
FROM THE TIME OF MITHRIDATES VI EUPATOR
ON THE TERRITORY OF THE DNIPRO RIGHT-BANK FOREST-STEPPE
(IN THE VILLAGES OF MOSHNY, BUDYSCHE, AND LOZIVOK
OF CHERKASY DISTRICT, CHERKASY PROVINCE)**

ABSTRACT This article suggests that a grouping of stray coin finds containing coins of the Pontic state of Mithridates VI Eupator (120-63 BC), discovered on the territory of the Dnipro River Right-Bank, Forest-Steppe zone (especially near the villages of Moshny-Budyshche-Lozivok, where forty-one coins were found), were deposited due to commercial-monetary relations between the local population and the Greeks. Of course, these relations were not as intensive as in the Greek colonies of the Northern Black Sea. Nevertheless, they provide additional evidence for the picture of economic relations in this region in this period.

Key words: Olbia, Dnipro, coins, hoard, accumulations of casual finds, Mithridates VI Eupator

ABSTRAKT Z artykułu tego wynika, że grupa znalezisk zawierających monety pontyjskiego państwa Mithrydatesa VI Eupatora (120-63 r. p.n.e.), odkryta na terenie prawobrzeżnej strefy leśno-stepowej rzeki Dniepr (zwłaszcza w pobliżu wsi Moszny, Budyszczce, Łożywka, gdzie znaleziono czterdzieści jeden monet), związana jest ze stosunkami handlowo-pięniężnymi pomiędzy miejscową ludnością a Grekami. Oczywiście relacje te nie były tak intensywne, jak w greckich koloniach na północnym Morzu Czarnym. Niemniej jednak dostarczają one dodatkowych dowodów na obraz stosunków gospodarczych w tym regionie w tym okresie.

In the late second and early first centuries BC, King Mithridates VI Eupator of Pontus united the Greek cities of the Southern and Northern Black Sea into a single state. This unification had a positive impact on the economic life in the region. Trade between the cities of the Southern and Northern Black Sea coast significantly increased, and the types and weight-standards of copper¹ coins were unified throughout the cities of Pontus and Paphlagonia, as well as on the Northern Black Sea coast. As a result of the revival of trade relations, the share of Pontic and Paphlagonian coins in circulation among the cities of the Northern Black Sea region increased, especially in Olbia and Tyras, which suffered shortages of local coinage due significant drops in their own minting.

The economic life of the Greeks of the Northern Black Sea region was connected not only with

the Hellenistic world, but also with neighbouring lands. Therefore, the influence of the Mithridatic state extended not only to the Northern Black Sea, but also into the lands bordering it, with which Greeks of the Northern Black Sea coast had trade relations. In particular, the Middle-Dnipro region had traditionally traded with Olbia.² Cattle, meat, and *valuable fur of beaver and other fur-bearing animals* were most likely exported to Olbia from the Dnipro's Right-Bank Forest-Steppe region,³ where they could be either purchased or obtained by exchange. Numerous finds of ancient coins of the 6th-3rd centuries BC, mainly from Olbia, as well as coins from the time of Mithridates Eupator, have been recorded on the territory of the Right-Bank Forest-Steppe region.⁴ The dominance of Olbian coin finds, as well as the almost complete

¹ By the term "copper", the author refers to all coins minted with a copper base.

² Boltrik 2000.

³ Maksimov 1972: 75.

⁴ Orlyk 2021.

absence of coins from the second century BC, testifies to the leading role of Olbia in trade with the barbarian populations of that region during the 6th-3rd centuries BC. At the end of the third century BC, Olbia survived the Scythian-Galatian invasion, and the second century BC was likewise a rather difficult period in Olbian political and economic life. Numismatic sources, in particular coin finds, confirm the thesis that in the second century BC, Olbia's relations *with the barbarian tribes of the Northern Black Sea were reduced to a minimum*.⁵ The restoration of economic ties between Greeks and the population of the Forest-Steppe took place after Olbia and other Greek colonies of the Northern Black Sea became part of the Pontic state of Mithridates VI, as evidenced by coin finds.

However, the presence or absence of coin finds on the territory of the Right-Bank Forest-Steppe zone can do more than confirm or deny the existence of commercial-monetary relations in the region. The nature of such finds, and in particular, the existence of accumulations of coins or commodities, as well as the concentration of individual finds in a limited area, are of great importance.

The first Mithridatic coin finds on the territory of Right-Bank Ukraine recorded in scholarship date to the second half of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus the Polish numismatist T. Czacki reported the discovery in 1782 of a coin of Mithridates VI⁶ near the town of Dashiv.⁷ Unfortunately, the author provides neither an image of the coin nor a detailed description. Another discovery of a copper coin of Mithridates Eupator, also within the territory of the modern Vinnytsia region, near the village of Zbarazh,⁸ is noted in the work of the Ukrainian archaeologist M. Bilyashevsky.⁹ The Vinytsia coin finds point to an important logistical development in Greek trade relations with the forest-steppe region, wherein the Southern Bug came to serve as a trade route between the Hellenistic world and Podolia¹⁰. V. Danilevych pointed out that two hoards in the

territory of Kyiv province contained coins of Mithridates VI.¹¹ However, he did not provide any specifics, which, if available, would have allowed us to identify their provenance (Middle Dnipro or Pobuzhzhia?), as well as to determine what types of coins they were, their prominence among the other coins discovered, etc.

The coin finds belonging to the 6th-1st centuries (including coins of the Pontic State) on the territory of Ukraine were, for the first time in modern history, studied by the Polish scholar M. Mielczarek.¹² In recent years, several publications have reported new coin finds in the region under study¹³, which have included coins from the time of Mithridates VI.¹⁴

Increased metal detecting activity in recent decades by so-called “detectorists” or “treasure hunters,” in concert with insufficient legal enforcement in protecting archaeological sites, has led to significant destruction of the cultural heritage in Ukraine. Indeed, scholars have been unable to ameliorate or prevent such negative activities without greater support from the state. Nevertheless, while the protection of archaeological sites is outside of the ability of numismatists, as part of their professional duties, numismatists can (indeed, should) record all materials accessible to them. Therefore, modern numismatic researchers, if only in response to such difficult realities, must think hard about how to derive maximum benefit from grey and black-market archaeological activities. Among the coins available on these markets, the copper coins of Mithridates VI are a significant element.

For the purposes of this article, the author has processed forty-one coins struck during the reign of Mithridates VI, which were found in a narrow region of the Dnipro Right-Bank Forest-Steppe zone. Information about the discovery of these coins is garnered from several sources: museum collections, traditional research scholarship, local historians' testimony, as well as materials from treasure hunting forums. All of these coins, rather

⁵ Kryzhyts'kyy 1998: 326.

⁶ Czacki 1845: 374-375.

⁷ Dashiv, Haisyn district, Vinnytsia Region.

⁸ Zbarazh, Koziatyn district, Vinnytsia Region.

⁹ Belyashevskiy 1889: 69.

¹⁰ Podolia (Podillia) is a historical region in the central-western part of Ukraine bordering Moldova. The region's name refers to the valley between the Pivdennyi Buh and Dnister rivers. This forest-steppe region is dotted with low mountains, many ravines, and river canyons. (Podillia • Ukraïner URL: <https://ukraïner.net/regions/podillia-en/>).

¹¹ Danilevich 1895: 261.

¹² Mielczarek 1989.

¹³ Skoryy & Zimovets 2014; Kotsur 2017; Lyashko 2017-a; Lyashko 2017-b; Mielczarek & Orlyk 2019; Nikolaev 2019 ; Orlyk 2020-b. Orlyk & Orlyk 2020; Nikolaev 2021; Nikolaev & Tsyganenko 2022; Orlyk & Kolesnichenko 2023.

¹⁴ Shostopal 2007; Shostopal 2016; Orlyk & Orlyk 2020; Orlyk 2020-a; Orlyk 2021-a; Orlyk 2021-b; Orlyk 2022-a; Orlyk 2022-b; Orlyk & Mekh 2022; Orlyk & Pyzyk 2023.

than coming from hoards or excavations, are to be classified as “accumulations” of “casual or stray” finds, according to Grierson’s classification.¹⁵

The accumulations of coin finds near Kaniv and Kumeiky-Sakhnivka have been recorded in detail by the author elsewhere,¹⁶ and for this reason we draw attention primarily to the coin finds near Moshny, Budysche, and Lozivok. In analyzing these coin finds, let us note their relative proximity. The distance between Moshny and Budysche is 9 km, between Moshny and Lozivok, 11 km, and between Budysche and Lozivok, 5 km.

Eight copper coins of Mithridates VI were discovered near the village of Moshny in the Cherkasy district of Cherkasy province between 2004-2006.¹⁷ Shostopal points out that *seven coins (tetrachalkoi of two types: Nike/Gorgoneion and Head of Ares/Sword) were minted in Amisos. Eight others were coined in Chabakta.*¹⁸ Iconographic analysis of the only examined coin indicates that it is a medium value “Head of Ares” type, minted in Amisos between 100 and 85 BC. Unfortunately, the scholar did not publish images of the other coins and did not provide more detailed information about them. However, based of the information that was provided, it is clear that the coins belong to these two types, issued between 100-85 BC and 85-65 BC, respectively. Four further “similar *tetrachalkoi*” were discovered between 2009 and 2012. A further coin of the Head of Ares type, coined in Amisos, was found between Moshny and Budysche.¹⁹ Subsequent to this, near Moshny, in the Cherkasy district of Cherkasy province, fourteen copper coins of Mithridates VI were discovered.

The Moshny-Budysche-Lozivok triangle seems to have been a significant area. At Budysche, for example, six further *tetrachalkoi* were discovered which included coins of the Head of Ares/Sword type, the Nike/Aegis type, as well as a coin minted in late second century Dioscurias. The coins were found in the course of preparing a property for the construction of chicken-sheds near Budysche, in September 2017.

Subsequently, eighteen more Pontic coins were found on a property adjacent to the poultry farm, which are known to the author. The coins were an Olbian *dichalkos* with Demeter/Tyche

(wearing a corn wreath and turreted) on the obverse and an archer kneeling (with the legend ΟΛΒΙΟ ΣΩΣΤΡΑ) on the reverse, minted at the end of fourth century BC (Fig. 1). These were of considerable interest alongside the coins of the Mithridatic era.



Fig. 1

Figure 1 shows that the coins of Mithridates VI and the aforementioned Olbian *dichalkoi* are of the same size, and this may indicate the existence of a settlement on this site with links to Olbia in the late 4th–3rd centuries BC. It may also illustrate the possibility that earlier Olbian coins were still current in monetary circulation in the time of Mithridates Eupator, at least as regards the Greeks’ payments to the surrounding barbarian population. Unfortunately, due to the complete lack of archaeological context for this find, we cannot say with certainty whether these assumptions are correct. However, both point to Olbia being the route by which Mithridatic coins entered the territory of the Middle Dnipro.

Finally, within the Moshny-Budysche-Lozivok triangle: the three villages being located practically next to each other, numerous finds containing coins of Pontus have been discovered. In 2013, nearest to Lozivok, a *tetrachalkos* of Mithridates Eupator (of the Nike/Gorgoneion type), minted in Amisos was discovered.

In summary, forty-one coins of Mithridates Eupator have been discovered in the Moshny-Budysche-Lozivok “triangle”. That is the largest concentration of such finds on the territory of the Dnipro Right-Bank Forest-Steppe zone. The coin finds analysed in this article constitute only a small part of the entire body of similar finds in this region, about which the author was able to find information from various sources, including

¹⁵ Grierson 1975: 125, 128.

¹⁶ Orlyk 2021-b.

¹⁷ Shostopal 2007: 42.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The author is grateful to A. Shostopal, a local historian from Cherkasy, for providing information and a photo of the coin.

the online forum and auction-house, Violity. These findings confirm the opinion of many researchers that the Dnipro River with its tributaries in the forest-steppe zone was the main trade route between the Greeks of the Northern Black Sea, and the inhabitants of the Middle Dnipro.

We emphasize that the coin finds in the settlements of the Middle Dnipro region, especially the accumulation of such finds within the Moshny-Budysche-Lozivok triangle, cast doubt on the thesis of some scholars that bronze coins came to this region by accident and in small quantities, being used solely as raw materials for the manufacture of bronze objects, and that the inhabitants

of this region relied solely upon commodity exchange transactions with the Greek colonies of the Northern Black Sea.²⁰ In our opinion, the discovery of sites on the territory of the Dnipro Right-Bank Forest-Steppe zone, where one observes accumulations of coins of the Pontic state of Mithridates Eupator, especially near the villages of Moshny-Budyshe-Lozivok (forty-one coins), allows us to assume that these coins were used in the course of commodity and monetary exchange between the local population and Greek traders. It goes without saying that these relations would not have been as intensive as in the Greek cities of the Northern Black Sea coast.

**CATALOGUE OF COINS OF THE PONTIC STATE OF MITHRIDATES EUPATOR
FOUND NEAR MOSHNY-BUDISHCHE-LOZIVOK**

No.	Description	Catalogue	Published	Time and place of coinage	Diameter / Weight	Place and time of found
1.	Obv. Two pilei surmounted by stars. Rev. ΔΙ-ΟΣ ΚΟΥ-ΡΙΑ Δ-ΟΣ, to left and right of thyrsos (see Fig. 2.1)	SNG BM Black Sea #1021	Not published	Late 2 nd cen. B.C. Dioscurias	15 mm 1.4 g	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
2.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΣΟΥ	Not possible to classify	Shostopal: 2007	105-90 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
3.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΣΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##147-1149	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	18 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
4.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΣΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1147-1149	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	19 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region.
5.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΣΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1147-1149	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	19 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region

²⁰ Maksimov 1982, 57.

6.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΞΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1147-1149	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	16×20 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
7.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΞΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1147-1149	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	22 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region.
8.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΞΟΥ (see Fig. 2.2)	SNG BM Black Sea ##1147-1149	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	21 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
9.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΞΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1147-1149	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	20 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region.
10.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΞΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1147-1149	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	18 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
11.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΞΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1147-1165	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	19 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
12.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΞΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1158-1159	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	20 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
13.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΞΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea #1158	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	19 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region.
14.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΞΟΥ (see Fig. 2.3)	SNG BM Black Sea #1162	Shostopal 2016	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region, 2015

15.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; AMI-ΣΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1147-1165	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	18 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
16.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; ΣΙΝΩ-ΠΗΣ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1528-1530	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Sinope	20 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region.
17.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; ΣΙΝΩ-ΠΗΣ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1528-1530	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) Sinope	18×20 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region.
18.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath; ΓΑΖΙ-ΟΥΡΩΝ (see Fig. 2.4)	SNG BM Black Sea ##1268-1269	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ) m. Gaziura	21 mm 7.65 g	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
19.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath	Not possible to classify	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ)	21 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
20.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath	Not possible to classify	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ)	20 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
21.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath	Not possible to classify	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ)	19 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
22.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath	Not possible to classify	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ)	18 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region.
23.	Obv. Head of Ares in Attic helmet right. Rev. Sword in sheath	Not possible to classify	Not published	111-105 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 95-90 BC (Callataÿ)	19 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
24.	Obv. Aegis with gorgoneion Rev. Nike advancing right; AMI-ΣΟΥ	SNG BM Black Sea ##1177-1180	Not published	105-90 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 90-85 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	22 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region

25.	Obv. Aegis with gorgoneion Rev. Nike advancing right; AMI-ΣΟΥ (see Fig. 2.5)	SNG BM Black Sea ##1177-1182	forum. violity.com	105-90 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 90-85 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region 2020
26.	Obv. Aegis with gorgoneion Rev. Nike advancing right; AMI-ΣΟΥ	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2007	105-90 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 90-85 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
27.	Obv. Aegis with gorgoneion Rev. Nike advancing right; AMI-ΣΟΥ	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2016	105-90 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 90-85 BC (Callataÿ) Amisos	unknown	Lozivok, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region, 2013
28.	Obv. Aegis with gorgoneion Rev. Nike advancing right; ΣΙΝ-ΩΠΗ (see Fig. 2.6)	SNG BM Black Sea ##1536	Not published	105-90 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 90-85 BC (Callataÿ) Sinope	5.55 g	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
29.	Obv. Aegis with gorgoneion Rev. Nike advancing right	Not possible to classify	Not published	105-90 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 90-85 BC (Callataÿ)	21 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
30.	Obv. Aegis with gorgoneion Rev. Nike advancing right	Not possible to classify	Not published	105-90 BC (Imhoof-Blumer) 90-85 BC (Callataÿ)	18 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
31.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2007	Unknown Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
32.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2007	Unknown Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
33.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2007	Unknown Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
34.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2007	Unknown Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
35.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2007	Unknown Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region
36.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2007	Unknown Chabakta	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region

37.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2016	Unknown Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region 2009
38.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2016	Unknown Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region 2009
39.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2016	Unknown Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region 2009
40.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Shostopal 2016	Unknown Amisos	unknown	Moshny, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region 2012
41.	Unknown	Not possible to classify	Not published	Unknown	18 mm	Budysche, Cherkasy district, Cherkasy region



Fig. 2. Coins of the Pontic State of Mithridates Eupator found near villages Moshny-Budishche-Lozivok

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