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A rare Celtic drachm

Melinda TORBÁGYI

Drachm, AR 4.4 g

Obverse: bearded Zeus-head with laureate wreath.

Reverse: Doll-rider with crest. Rider has body without legs, wearing a double-crest on his head. The horse is relatively well-modelled with normal hooves and a tulip-form head.

Findspot: Szakoly – Kígyós-dűlő (county Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg)

Location: Jósza András Museum (Nyíregyháza)
Inv.nr.: 2008.93.1



Fig. 1.
(Photo: Jósza András Museum)

The closest analogy of this drachm is Pink 418 which is probably a smaller denomination of Pink 417. This drachm can be found in the collection of the Hungarian National Museum (HNM) (Fig. 2), unfortunately from unknown findspot with unknown provenience. (Inv.nr. R.I.6094) The two drachms have the same obverse die, the reverse, however, is different because the rider of Pink 418 has only one crest or plait. Their common origin – same workshop – can be expected. The weight of the exemplar in HNM – 3.45 g – fits the metrology of Philip drachm imitations better. The drachm from Szakoly belongs probably to the DLT 9723 tetradrachm whose two exemplars can be found in the collection of the HNM (131A.1914.41 and R.I.6385), unfortunately both come from an unknown site (Fig. 3–4).



Fig. 2.
(Photo: Cs. Gedai)

Fig. 3.
(Photo: Cs. Gedai)

Fig. 4.
(Photo: Cs. Gedai)

The design of the rider and the horse on the reverse of the Szakoly drachm indicates a close relationship with the types of *Y auf Postament* (Pink 422), *Puppenreiter* (Pink 417), *Triskeles* (Pink 433) and the *Audoleonmonogramm* (Pink 429). Through the characteristic helm crest of the horseman it has a close connection with the type Pink 420 (=KHM 1338) which, however, has an obverse with the type of *Arabeskenlocke* looking to the left. On this type the horseman has even a leg and an inscription can be seen under the horse. An exceptionally beautiful exemplar

of this type is known in the Flesche collection.¹ Although the types are drawn from different sources, a certain regional affinity of style is recognizable. Pink derived the types mentioned above typologically from the northeastern part of the Carpathian-basin (Audoleon imitations, *Baumreiter*), but he localized their minting to Transdanubia (west of the river Danube in Hungary).² The type of *Triskeles* came to light in Transdanubia in the largest amount due to the two big coin hoards of Zichyújfalu³ and Dunaújváros (former Sztálinváros)⁴. The other related types cannot be found in large coin hoards, in the case of the single pieces the find place is rarely known. The few known find spots are in the northern and eastern part of the Carpathian basin. Type of *Audoleonmonogramm* is known from county Nógrád from two sites (Lapujtő, Kutas)⁵ and from Gálishegy (near Munkacevo, Ukraine).⁶ An exemplar in the British Museum came from Kronstadt (Brasso, Romania).⁷ Only the piece in the collection of the Abbey in Zirc was found in the vicinity of Győr (Transdanubia).⁸ A tetradrachm of type *Arabeskenlocke* on the obverse and *Y auf Postament* on the reverse came to light recently in Kotmanova (okr. Lučenec, Slovakia).⁹

At the moment it is impossible to localize the minting centre of the above mentioned types on the basis of the few known find spots. Their style means a transition between the coinages in the northern part of present-day Hungary and Transdanubia.

These types can be ranged into the early period of the Philip imitations according to their elaboration and metrology. The early stage of the eastern Celtic coinage is dated to the second part of the third and the first part of the second century BC.¹⁰

The drachm in question was unearthed at the excavation in 2007 by G. Pintye and M. L. Nagy, unfortunately at the edge of the excavated area where no Celtic objects could be revealed. During the excavation a part of a Celtic settlement was unearthed which is dated to the LTB2–LTC according to the ceramic finds. The earliest Celtic find is a broche dated to early LTB2, c. 290–270 BC by K. Almássy who worked up the Celtic material of the excavation. Another very worn Celtic tetradrachm with a deep cut on the reverse above the horse was found in a house of the excavation (Jósa András Museum Inv.nr. 2008.143.1). It is a Philip imitation from the early stage of the Celtic coinage (Fig. 5). On the basis of the style and the deep cut the tetradrachm can be ranged to the Huși-Vovriești type which also dated to the first period of the Celtic coinage by C. Preda.¹¹



Fig. 5.
(Photo: Jósa András Museum)

The drachm in Szakoly can be – even with a certain amount of caution – dated to the turn of the third and second centuries BC.

I am deeply indebted to dr. Katalin Almássy and Gábor Pintye for the photos of the coins and the information on the excavation in Szakoly in 2007.

1 ZIEGAUS 2010, 211. nr. 562.

2 PINK 1974, 69.

3 TORBÁGYI 2012.

4 KERÉNYI 1959–1960.

5 TORBÁGYI 2008, 88.

6 PINK 1974, 70. (KHM 1343)

7 BMCC I 125.

8 TORBÁGYI 2008, 89.

9 FRÖHLICH 2013, 9. nr. 1.

10 PREDA 1973; ALLEN 1980, 48; SZABÓ 1983; TORBÁGYI 1997; ZIEGAUS 2010, 9–14.

11 PREDA 1973, 444–445.

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