

# A HOARD OF PTOLEMAIC SILVER COINS FROM AMMAN

by  
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## Introduction

A hoard of twenty-nine Ptolemaic silver coins (Tetradrachma 4 drachma) was found at Moraba'at Mosa, west of Amman on September 25, 1979. The collection is now at The Jordan Archaeological Museum.

After Alexander the Great's invasion into the Orient in 332 B.C., Greek coins replaced the existing coinage.<sup>1</sup> The portrait of Alexander appeared on coins struck by his generals, who claimed independence shortly after his death.<sup>2</sup> What concerns us in this article is the Ptolemaic kingdom which was established in Egypt.

The coinage of the Ptolemies has great historical significance because it is the first regular monetary currency made in Egypt in antiquity.<sup>3</sup> Ptolemy I (295-284 B.C.) struck issues in 306 B.C. bearing on the obverse the portrait of Alexander.<sup>4</sup> When Ptolemy I took the title of king in 305 B.C., he began to put his own portrait on the coinage instead of Alexander's.<sup>5</sup>

The coins, Nos. 1-5 (Pl. CXX: 2-5 and 7) belong to Ptolemy I (295-284 B.C.) and the rest of the hoard, twenty-four pieces, coin Nos. 6-29, Pl. CXX: 1, 6 and 8-29), belong to Ptolemy II Philadelphus (284-247 B.C.). Silver coinage seems to have formed the bulk of the ordinary currency of Ptolemy II in the second half of his reign.<sup>6</sup>

Coin Nos. 10, 14-20 and 23-26 present examples of the first coinage of Ptolemy II<sup>7</sup> which bear the inscription ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ. Coin Nos. 8, 9, 11-13, 21-22 and 27-29 present the second coin-

age of Ptolemy II, which were inscribed:

ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ

The change of style from ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ to ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ occurred when the worship of Ptolemy I with the title Soter was introduced by Ptolemy II Philadelphus between ca. 262-255 B.C.<sup>8</sup>

The hoard is especially important because it presents the first evidence in Jordan of a large number of silver coins belonging to the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Most of the coins in this hoard were minted in the following cities: Alexandria, Joppa, Ptolemias, Tyre and Sidon.

The description and comparisons of the coins in this hoard were made on the basis of the book of Svorouos on the Ptolemaic coins (J.N. Svorouos, *The coins of the Kingdom of the Ptolemies*, Athens, 1904-1908, Greek). Special thanks are here given to Dr. Fawzi Zayadine, Dr. James A. Saur and Mr. Christian Auge for their help and useful remarks.

**Catalogue:** (Pl. CXX)

**Abbreviations:**

aeg.	:	eagis
Gr.	:	Gram
M.	:	Mint
r.,	:	right
W.	:	Weight
Dia.	:	Diameter
Hd.	:	Head
Ob.	:	Obverse

<sup>1</sup> Darrel A. Amyx, ed., *Echoes From Olympus*, Berkley, 1974, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> G. K. Jenkins, *Ancient Greek Coins*, London, 1972, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> Jenkins, p. 235.

<sup>4</sup> Amyx, p. 128.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Seltman, *Greek Coins*, London, 1965, p. 240.

<sup>6</sup> R.S. Poole, *Catalogue of Greek Coins, The Ptolemies, Kings of Egypt in the British Museum*, Bologna, 1963, Pl. XXIV

<sup>7</sup> Poole, Pl. XXXV,

<sup>8</sup> Poole, Pl. XXXV.

Stadg. : Standing  
 Diad. : Diademed  
 L. : Left  
 Rev. : Reverse  
 SV. : Svoronos

<sup>3</sup> Jenkins, p. 235.

**Ptolemy I (295-284 B.C.)**

- |       |   |                                   |  |
|-------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| No. 1 | M. Alexandria<br>OB.<br>Hd of Ptolemy I facing r.,<br>diad. and aeg. on neck, two<br>countermarks on front face.<br>(Sv. No. 247, Pl. IX: 1)  | W. 13.54 Gr.                      | Dia. 28.6 mm.<br>REV. ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑ.. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ<br>Eagle stadg. L., on<br>thunderbolt, wings closed.<br>In field L., P<br>Α |
| No. 2 | M.?<br>OB.<br>Hd. of Ptolemy I facing r.,<br>diad. and aeg. on neck, very<br>small Δ behind ear.<br>(Sv. No. 256, Pl. IX: 12)                 | W. 14.000 Gr.                     | Dia. 24.5 mm.<br>REV.<br>ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ<br>As above.<br>In field L., P<br>Α                                     |
| No. 3 | M.?   | W. 13.780 Gr.<br>Similar to No. 2 | Dia. 24 mm.  |
| No. 4 | M.?<br>OB<br>Hd. of Ptolemy I facing r.,<br>diad., and aeg. on neck, four<br>countermarks, small Δ behind ear.<br>(Sv. No. 245, Pl. VIII: 24) | W. 13.575 Gr.                     | Dia. 24.5 mm.<br>REV.<br>.....ΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ<br>As above.<br>In field L., M<br>Τ<br>Ρ                                |
| No. 5 | M.?<br>OB.<br>Hd. of Ptolemy I facing r., diad.<br>and countermark η<br>(Sv. No. 263, Pl. IX: 17)   | W. 13.792 Gr.                     | Dia. 24. 9 mm.<br>REV.<br>ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ<br>As above<br>In field L., p<br>φ                                     |

**Ptolemy II Philadelphus (284-24 B.C.)**

- |       |   |               |   |
|-------|---|---------------|---|
| No. 6 | M. Alexandria<br>OB.<br>Hd. of Ptolemy I facing r.,<br>diad.<br>(Sv. No. 271, Pl. IX: 19) | W. 13.955 Gr. | Dia. 25 mm.<br>REV.<br>...ΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ<br>As above φ<br>In field L., Α Γ., ο<br>(Countermark) |
| No. 7 | M.?<br>OB<br>As above   | W. 13.792 Gr. | Dia. 24.9 mm.<br>REV<br>ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ   |

- Sv. No. 375-376, Pl. XI: 5) As above  
In field L., EY  
KE  
A.
- No. 8 M. Ptolemias (Ace) W. 14.700 Gr. Dia. 25 mm.  
OB. REV.  
Hd. of Ptolemy I facing r.,  
diad. and aeg. on neck. ...ΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΡΟΣ  
As above  
(Sv. Nos. 789-781, Pl. XXV: 14-15) In field L., Π r., ΛΕ  
ME ⊙  
(year ΛΕ (35) = 251 B.C.)
- No. 9 M. Ptolemias (Ace) W. 13.790 Gr. Dia. 25.5 mm.  
OB. REV.  
As above ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ  
As above  
In field L., Π r., ΑΛ  
ME ⊙  
(year ΑΛ (31) = 255 B.C.)
- Sv. No. 744, Pl. XXV. 10)
- No. 10 M? W. 14.140 Gr. Dia. 26 mm.  
OB. REV.  
As above ...ΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ  
As above  
Sv. No. 528, Pl. XII: 2) In field L. Π r., ⊙ (sheild)  
KA
- No. 11 M. Joppa W. 13.950 Gr. Dia. 23.8 mm.  
OB. REV.  
As above.  
Sv. Nos. 808-810, Pl. XXII: 11) In field L., ΙΠ r., ΛΕ  
Α ⊙  
(year ΛΕ (35) = 251 B.C.)
- No. 12 M. Joppa W. 14.145 Gr. Dia. 26.1 mm.  
OB. REV.  
As above ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ  
As above  
(Sv. No. 800) In field L., ΙΠ R., ΑΛ  
⊙  
(year ΑΛ (31) = 255 B.C.)
- No. 13 M. Joppa W. 14.130 Gr. Dia. 26 mm.  
OB. REV.  
As above ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ  
As above ΛΙ  
In field L., ΙΠ r., ⊙  
(year ΛΙ (37) = 249 B.C.)

- No. 14 M. Sidon W. 13.300 Gr. Dia. 28 mm.  
 OB. REV.  
 As above ..... ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ  
 (Sv. No. 713, Pl. XXI: 2) As above  
 In field L., ΣΙ
- No. 15 M. Sidon W. 13.780 Gr. Dia. 25 mm.  
 Similar to No. 14.
- No. 16 M. Sidon W. 14.110 Gr. Dia. 26 mm.  
 Similar to Nos. 14-15.
- No. 17 M. Sidon W. 14.005 Gr. Dia. 25.1 mm.  
 Similar to Nos. 14-16.
- No. 18 M. Sidon W. 13.815 Gr. Dia. 24.1 mm.  
 Similar to Nos. 14-17, but on reverse counter-mark X.
- No. 19 M. Sidon W. 13.915 Gr. Dia. 25 mm.  
 Similar to Nos. 14-17.
- No. 20 M. Sidon W. 14.150 Gr. Dia. 25.1 mm.  
 Similar to Nos. 14-17
- No. 21 M. Tyre W. 11.345 Gr. Dia. 27 mm.  
 OB. REV.  
 As above ..... ΡΟΞ  
 (Sv. Nos. 650-704, Pl. XIX: 2-28, Pl. XX: 1-13). As above  
 In field L., . r., obscure  
 |
- No. 22 M. Tyre W. 14.300 Gr. Dia. 26.1 mm.  
 OB. REV.  
 As above ..... ΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ  
 As above  
 Between Eagle legs: M  
 In field L., <sup>Λ</sup> <sub>Β</sub>, r., <sup>Λ</sup> <sub>Β</sub>  
 (year <sup>Λ</sup> <sub>Β</sub> and M (30)=256 B.C.)
- No. 23 M. Tyre W. 14.135 Gr. Dia. 24.2 mm.  
 OB. REV.  
 As above ..... ΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ  
 (Sv. No. 646, Pl. XIX: 16) In field L., <sup>Λ</sup> <sub>Β</sub>, r., <sup>Λ</sup> <sub>Β</sub>  
 (year <sup>Λ</sup> <sub>Β</sub> (21) = 265 B.C.).

- |                                   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| No. 24 M. Tyre<br>OB.<br>As above | W. 14.060 Gr.                           | Dia. 26 mm.<br>REV.<br>..... ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ   |
| (Sv. No. 644, Pl. XIX: 14)        |   | As above<br>In field L., $\Psi$<br>   |
| No. 25 M. Tyre                    | W. 14.058 Gr.<br>Similar to No. 24.     | Dia. 24 mm.   |
| No. 26 M. Tyre                    | W. 13.920 Gr.<br>Similar to Nos. 24-25. | Dia. 28.5 mm.   |
| No. 27 M. Tyre<br>OB.<br>As above | W. 14.000 Gr.                           | Dia. 26.1 mm.<br>REV.<br>ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ<br>As above but:<br>Between Eagle legs: M<br>In field L., $\Psi$ r., $\Lambda B$<br>  M                                   |
| (Sv. No. 668)                     |   | (year $\Lambda B$ (32) = 254 B.C.)  |
| No. 28 M. Tyre<br>OB.<br>As above | W. 11.950 Gr.                           | Dia. 24 mm.<br>REV.<br>..... ΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ<br>As above but:<br>Between Eagle legs: $\odot$<br>in field L. $\Psi$ r., $\Lambda E$<br>(Year $\Lambda E$ (35) = 251 B.C.) |
| (Sv. No. 686, Pl. XX: 4).         |   |   |
| No. 29 M?<br>OB.<br>As above      | W. 14.130 Gr.                           | Dia. 27.5 mm.<br>REV.<br>..... ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ<br>As above.<br>In field L. P  |
| (Sv. No. 91, Pl. XVIII: 13)       |   | <br>$\Phi$<br>$\phi$  |

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