

**STUDIES IN ANCIENT ART
AND CIVILIZATION**

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ET CIVILISATIONE
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IN ANCIENT ART
AND CIVILIZATION**

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Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka

Krakow 2010

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Scarab with a representation of a sphinx and the symbol of unification of Egypt on its base. From the collection of Princes Czartoryski Foundation in Kraków (inv. no. MNK XI-1117). Photo Jakub Śliwa, courtesy of the Foundation

Photo of Professor Joachim Śliwa on page 7 by Jakub Śliwa

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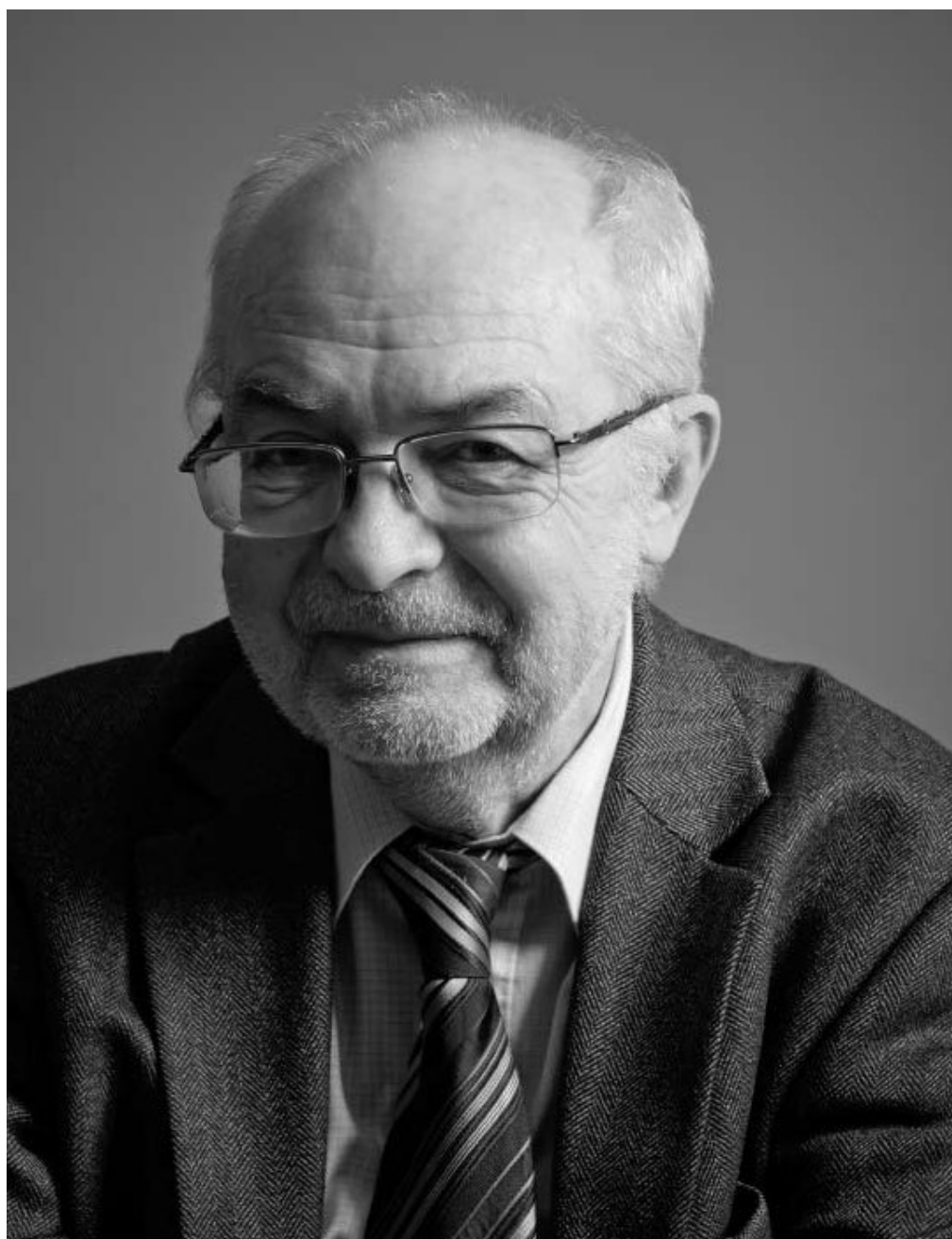
THE 14TH VOLUME OF *STUDIES IN ANCIENT ART AND CIVILIZATION*
IS DEDICATED
TO PROFESSOR JOACHIM ŚLIWA ON HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY

The first issue of *Studies in Ancient Art And Civilization* was published in 1991. The initiator of the series, as well as its creator and the editor of 12 volumes, was Professor Joachim Śliwa. The 14th issue is intended by the current editors as a homage to Professor, and expression of thanks for his activity so far.

Professor Śliwa is an excellent expert on archaeology and art of ancient Egypt and Middle East, as well as a prominent scholar in the field of the history of collections of antiquities and Mediterranean archaeology in Poland; he is the author of numerous books and several hundred articles. His whole career, starting with the studies under the supervision of Professor Maria L. Bernhard, up to now is connected with the Jagiellonian University. He defended his doctoral thesis here in 1969, in 1975 presented his habilitation dissertation, and in 1988 received professor's title. For many years (since 1978) he had been head of the Department of Mediterranean Archaeology, and after the reorganisation of the Institute of Archaeology became head of the Department of Egyptian and Near Eastern Archaeology; the latter post he holds until now.

The scientific activity of Professor Joachim Śliwa comprises four main topics. The first covers research on ancient Middle East and Egypt. It was in the land of the Nile, where he went for the first time in 1966 on a scholarship funded by the Egyptian government, that he made his most important discoveries. The excavations which he conducted in Qasr el-Sagha (1979-1988) resulted in the discovery and investigation of a so far unknown workers' settlement dating to the time of the Middle Kingdom. The art and culture of Egypt and Middle East became the most important topics of Professor Śliwa's books, textbooks and scientific articles.

His teaching activity is connected with this research, and he became the tutor and example of academic excellence for many generations of graduate and doctoral students. He promoted countless master's theses, more than ten doctoral dissertations, and several of his students are today professors themselves.



Professor JOACHIM ŚLIWA

Professor Śliwa's third passion is the research on history of Mediterranean archaeology and collections of antiquities in Poland. Apart from numerous articles on this subject one should recall the book *Egipt, Grecja, Italia... Zabytki starożytne z dawnej kolekcji Gabinetu Archeologicznego Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego* (Kraków 2007), of which he was originator, editor, and for which he prepared the majority of texts. Thanks to his interest in the subject and Benedictine patience he restored the memory of many forgotten early researchers and collectors. He has always emphasized their achievements in the context of times in which they lived, and it would not be an overstatement to say that many of them owe their 'second lives' to the Professor.

The fourth area of Professor Śliwa's activity lies in the field of publishing. His first experience in this field was the editorial work for *Studia z Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej* published as part of *Prace Archeologiczne*. He had redacted for many years the *Recherches Archéologiques* series, which presents in the first place field research of the Institute of Archaeology of the Jagiellonian University. Professor Śliwa also edited or co-edited many books, but *Studies in Ancient Art And Civilization* became his 'most beloved child'. This periodical is an important forum for the exchange of scientific ideas; it also provides Professor's many students, as well as other scholars beginning their career, with the opportunity to publish their first scientific papers. Being always a demanding editor, Professor Śliwa never refused anyone his help and advice.

For all this we owe Him our deepest gratitude.

Krzysztof M. Ciałowicz
Janusz A. Ostrowski
Ewdoksia Papuci-Władyka

Kraków, October 2010

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Małgorzata Dziedzic

Kraków

THE ITALIAN *AES GRAVE* FROM
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM
IN KRAKOW COLLECTION

In the Coin Room of the National Museum in Krakow, an interesting bronze coin is kept (Fig. 1)¹. Its characteristic feature is its almond shape, hardly ever observed among ancient coins. Technically, the object is ranked among the Italian *aes grave* – bronze cast coins. The obverse features a club, and the reverse features two pellets ••, indicating its value. Therefore, it is a sextans, a coin valued at two unciae (Haeberlin 1910, 236-238; Garrucci 1967, 6; Sydenham 1975, 243; Thurlow and Vecchi 1979, 172; *Historia Numorum. Italy* 2001, 54). This item inv. no. A-116 from the National Museum in Krakow has dimensions of 31.4mm x 23.2mm and weighs 27.330g.

The coin entered the collection of the National Museum in Krakow before 1945. Unfortunately, no documentation regarding the circumstances under which the coin arrived in the Coin Room has been preserved.

The *aes grave*, produced in the shape of a thick disc, appeared across a significant part of the territory of the Italian Peninsula and in Sicily. As opposed to the prolonged decorated ingots or bars known as *aes signatum*, whose monetary purpose is still under dispute (Thomsen 1961, 179-184; Sydenham 1975, 12-21), *aes grave* were coins without any doubt. This can be evidenced by the presence of images, issuer legends and marks of value found on their obverses and reverses. At present, the most numerous group of *aes grave* is constituted by products from the Roman mint, although

¹ I am greatly indebted to Mrs Zofia Gołubiew, Director of the National Museum in Krakow, for permission to publish this object and photographs submitted by the Museum.



Fig. 1. The *aes grave* from the Coin Room of the National Museum in Krakow, inv. no. A-116. Courtesy of the National Museum in Krakow. Scale 1:1

many coinage series were also cast in Etruria, Umbria, Apulia and in Sicily. The above mentioned coinages were produced on the basis of different weight standards (Crawford 1985, 15), including the most popular: Roman and Etruscan-Umbrian (more on *aes grave* see: Thomsen 1961;

Sydenham 1975; Thurlow and Vecchi 1979; Morawiecki 1982).

The sextans from the Coin Room represents the so-called Oval series. Obviously, the name refers to the shape of the coins. No other coinage of this shape has ever appeared within the territory of Italy (Catalli 1989, 142) and this distinguishes the Oval series from the other *aes grave*.

The complete coin series consists of denominations ranking from an As to an uncia (without trientes) and is represented mainly by sextanses. In 1910, Haeberlin presented a list of 266 coins of this denomination. In addition to that, the list includes two Asses, three semises, 11 quadranses and 55 unciae (Haeberlin 1910, 235-239). In 1997, L. Ambrosini published a monograph devoted to the Oval series and completed the list by adding one As, four semises, two quadranses, 108 sextanses, 29 unciae and one specimen that could possibly represent a semiuncia. During the course of excavations carried out recently a further two sextanses have been found. The first was discovered at the site of Campo della Fiera di Orvieto (Stopponi 2002, 114), and the second at Aiano-Torraccia di Chiusi (Cavaliere 2008, 6). That makes 484 coins in total, from which 376 are sextanses. In this classification, trientes are obviously missing. According to Catalli (1989, 142), this is connected to the rarity of this denomination's presence, as is the case with the As, of which only three examples are known. In the opinion of this researcher, a coin with a value of four unciae must have been issued; however, no example of such a coin has been found or correctly documented so far. It seems that the larger denomination coins were produced in lower quantity than the smaller denomination coins. Nevertheless, it is quite puzzling that no triens has been found up until now.

Although the triens is not known, we can attempt to determine its design with a good level of accuracy, since all denominations of the Oval

series kept to the same style. On the obverse, a club is depicted, while on the reverse we can see the marks of value repeating the designs known from Etruscan and Roman coinages: the As I, the semis \cap (an Etruscan symbol of a half, see: Garrucci 1967, 14), the quadrans $\bullet\bullet$, the sextans $\bullet\bullet$, and the uncia \bullet . The club depicted on the obverse is not a new element in Italian coinage. The same motif appears on other aes grave, for example on the so-called Club series from Volterra (Catalli 1998, 91), on the unciæ attributed to the Caes (Sydenham 1975, 101, No. 82, Tab. 11: 2) and Lazio-Campania areas (Sydenham 1975, 105, No. 117, Tab. 13: 7), on the quatrunc of series I from Lucera (Sydenham 1975, 107, No. 126, Tab. 14: 2) and two clubs on the triens of the libral series from Tuder (Catalli 1989, 141). Interestingly, the club is also shown on the obverse of one of the *aes signatum* types: club/fish spine (BMC 1873, 36-37). In the opinion of Ambrosini (1997, 196), the club/fish spine bar weighing 1509.39g could be a multiple of an As belonging to the monetary series under discussion.

Thus, the nominal value of the abovementioned *aes signatum* should equate to 10 Asses, as the average weight of the As belonging to the Oval series has been calculated as 154g (*Historia Numorum. Italy* 2001, 22). Such a weight standard allows us to classify the Oval series to a duodecimal Etruscan monetary system based on an As of 151.50g (also known as light Etruscan libra). According to S. Cesano (1934, 101), it could suggest the Etruscan origin of the coins. Additionally, the researcher emphasises the fact that the weight of the sextanses which varies between minimum 9.16g and maximum 51.20g helps to distinguish two issues of the series: the libral and semilibral. Therefore, the metrological arguments suggest a relationship between the Oval series and Etruscan coinage. The Etruscan *aes grave* from Volterra and the so-called light group of the Wheel series (which production was located in the vicinity of Lake Trasimeno) were cast on the basis of the same light Etruscan libra (151.60g) (Catalli 1971, 73-74). The Umbrian cast series, however, were based on a heavier weight: 255.82g in the case of Tuder and 204.66g in the case of Iguvium (Catalli 1989, 140-141).

The dating and attribution of the Oval series have been keenly disputed for years. Chronologically, the production of the discussed coinage took place in the 3rd century BC. However, two different time frames are proposed: the early chronology proposes the period between 273 and 268 BC (Sydenham 1975, 120), whereas the late suggests from 225 to 213 BC (Thurlow and Vecchi 1979, 30) or from 225 to 217/216 BC (Thomsen 1961, 255-256). Sadly, in the case of most of the discovered objects, the data concerning their chronological context is not sufficient. The only discovery providing some

information is a tomb found in Tarquinia by the Marzi brothers in 1874. The burial equipment includes a sextans of the Oval series together with some pieces of *aes rude*, one *aes signatum* bearing an 'A' mark, and a semis and a quadrans from Tarquinian series I. On the basis of the burial equipment, in particular the pottery, the tomb has been dated to the beginning of the 3rd century BC (Catalli 1991, 300-301), which supports the chronology proposed by Sydenham. It is worth noting the other coins from the tomb also. Tarquinian coinage is considered to be the earliest Etruscan *aes grave*, dating back to the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd century BC, a similar dating concerns the *aes signatum* bearing an 'A' symbol (Catalli 1991, 300-301; Catalli 1998, 72-74). The abovementioned sextans is not the only one discovered in Tarquinia. In the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Tarquinia, there are 12 other pieces which were found within the city (Cesano 1934, 101; Catalli, 1989, 142; Ambrosini 1997, 213). Additionally, some fractions of the Oval series together with *aes rude* and *aes signatum* were present in the hoard from Vulci (Crawford 1969, 10). These coins can be used as additional arguments to allow the Oval series to be considered as a product dating to the beginning of the 3rd century BC. The late chronology (225-213 BC) seems to be based mainly on the combination of Etruscan and Umbrian weight systems with the Roman semilibral reduction from the period of the Second Punic War.

The attribution of the Oval series is equally as problematic as its chronological timeframe. Traditionally, it is attributed to the territory of Umbria (1873, 39; Grose 1979, 10) or Etruria as the product of an unspecified mint (*Historia Numorum. Italy* 2001, 22). For many years, most researchers attributed the Oval series to a mint in Tuder (known presently as Todi) (Garrucci 1967, 13) although Iguvium (now Gubbio) had also been proposed, albeit less frequently (*SNG Budapest* 1992, 319-322).

As has already been mentioned above, a weight standard of 204.66g was in operation in Iguvium. Three series of *aes grave* were cast on the basis of it. Their attribution is undisputable as they all bear a legend with the name of the city *Ikuvini* or *Ikuvins* (Catalli 1989, 141-142). The Oval series in Iguvium is represented only by two sextanses and an unconfirmed report regarding the finding of such coins within the city theatre (Catalli 1989, 142; Ambrosini 1997, 213). Additionally, the city itself is located on the peripheries of the area of appearance of the series under discussion (Fig. 2). Consequently, there are no grounds to suggest that Iguvium was the location of the mint.

The case of Tuder is different. The attribution of the mint to Todi is based on two premises. The first is the presence of a significant number of oval coins in the Museo Comunale di Todi. Their local origin is confirmed by P. R. Garrucci and a manuscript from the 18th century kept in the Archivio Storico Comunale di Todi (Catalli 1989, 142-143). Some scholars such as M. H. Crawford (2002, 269), however, question the Tuderian origin of the abovementioned coinage and the correctness of historical reports. The second premise is based on the style. The depiction of a club from the Oval series was linked with two clubs on the reverse of the triens belonging to one of the series from Tuder (Garrucci 1967, 13). As it has already been noted, a club is quite a popular motif, which also appears



Fig. 2. The area of appearance of the Oval series.

◇ 1 piece; ◇ 2-3 pieces; ● >3 pieces of uncertain provenance;
? unknown number of pieces. Drawing M. Dziedzic

on other coins. It seems that looking for such stylistic affiliation we should rather look towards Volterra. On the Volterra coinage, the club is shown centrally on all denominations of the so-called Club series, not only on trientes. In addition to that, as is the case with Iguvium, the mint in Tuder cast its coins according to a different weight standard (255.82g). Two *aes grave* series attributed to Tuder also bear a legend with the name of the city in full: *Tutere* or abbreviated to *Tuter*, *Tute* and *Tue* (the same legend is placed on the struck series) (Catalli 1989, 140-141). Since the city had its own coinage with the name of the issuer, the production of a series without any inscription would appear to be useless, especially one completely different stylistically.

As has already been shown above, the weight system of the Oval series suggests its relation to Etruscan standards. In the light of recent research, the traditional idea of its Umbrian origin has been abandoned (SNG *Australia* 2008, 13). In one of his most recent publications, Crawford (2002, 269) suggests that *aes grave* of the Oval series were produced in Etruscan Volsinii. The evidence, however equivocal (as the author notes), is the finding of a sextans belonging to the discussed series under an altar in Orvieto. It is supposed that it was placed here as a foundation deposit. An additional argument is the position of Volsinii in relation to other places where further examples of the oval coins have been found. The city is located, more or less, in the centre of the distribution area (Crawford 2002, 269-270). However, as Fig. 2 shows, the finds have rather been made towards the territory of Umbria and in a south-easterly direction. East of Orvieto, towards the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea, no oval coins have been registered.

Ambrosini (1997, 220-221) also does not exclude Volsinii as a possible issuer. She is of the opinion that the first half of the 3rd century BC was a period of economic prosperity and the commercial expansion of the city to the original indigenous territory of Etruria and the Po river, Umbria and Picenum. It can be noted that the chronological timeframe and the area of commercial influence of the city are identical to the ones established for the Oval series. Additionally, the economic situation of Volsinii could justify the presence of a club on the coins (as a symbol of Hercules and trade). Also the prevalence of the smaller value denominations (sextanses) in comparison with the larger seems justified.

Over the course of the present discussion it is also worth looking closer at monetary practice in Volsinii. Unlike Tuder and Iguvium, Volsinii is not attributed to any *aes grave* series. The only coins linked with the city, although not for certain, are two very rare gold issues: female

or young man head r., mark of value XX / running bull at l., dove above, star in front, legend *Velzpapi* (so far we know only one example of such a coin which weighs 4.67g), and female head wearing diadem r., mark of value Λ / running dog at r., mark of value Λ , legend *Velsu* (represented by three specimens weighing 1.13g, 1.14g and 1.15g) (Sambon 1967, 9-10). The legend *Velzpapi*, previously read as *Velznani* is translated as 'in Volsinii'; whereas *Velsu* is interpreted as the name of the mint or local family. Both issues are the only examples of coins with such legends. The coins are dated to the first half of the 3rd century BC. The hypothesis has appeared that these are commemorative issues of some unidentified event (Catalli 1998, 115; Morawiecki 2002, 45-46).

As we can see, Volsinii should not be excluded as the potential issuer of the Oval series without careful consideration. However, it is not the only Etruscan city that could have produced the oval coins at the beginning of the 3rd century BC. Therefore, it is worth looking closer at the other mints, especially at those in which a significant number of oval coins were found, such as Tarquinia. Three series of *aes grave* attributed to this city are dated to the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd century BC. They are distinguished by a lower quality of workmanship and the simplicity of representations of symbols such as the following: wild boar and ram protomes, a dolphin, a spear, a pastoral stick, an anchor, a yoke, a plough, a crescent, an insect, and a four- or eight-pointed star. These coins feature no legend (Catalli 1998, 70-71, 76-80). Thus, it seems that, taking into account the simplicity and lack of inscriptions, they have more in common with the oval coins than the Tuder or Iguvium series. Metrologically, the Tarquinian system turns out to be much heavier (max. weight 352g and min. weight 250.25g) than the system set up for the Oval series. However, in the opinion of Cesano (1934, 101), the libra of 151.60g may represent a half of the libra of 304g, which was the basis of the series from Tarquinia and the Oval series may have appeared as a consequence of the previous heavier one. Therefore, it could have been the first series of Tarquinia that went out outside the city. Similarly to the case of Tuder, Tarquinia may be considered to be the potential issuer of the Oval series taking into account the quantity of coins found within its territory. Unfortunately, our knowledge about most of those coin is very limited. We only know that they originate from Tarquinia. The city itself is situated on the edge of the area of the presence of the discussed series. However, its potential expansion would have been limited to the west by the Tyrrhenian Sea and would have taken a north-eastern direction into the territory of Etruria.

In the light of the information presented above and the discussion regarding the coin from the Coin Room of the National Museum in Krakow, it can be said that the coin represents an Italian *aes grave* belonging to the so-called Oval series. It is safe to say that it is a sextans, the most popular denomination of the series. As far as the attribution and dating is concerned, we cannot be sure as we do not know the place or the context in which the coin was found. Hypothetically, it may be dated to the first half of the 3rd century BC, in accordance with the whole Oval series dating. The determination of the mint is not possible in the light of recent research. Most probably the coin was issued by an Etruscan city and not an Umbrian, as had been previously assumed. Currently, researchers are most inclined to point towards Volsinii as the possible city. Unfortunately, we are still dealing with speculation not based on solid evidence.

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