

## Re-attributions of the two-eagle coins of Ptolemy VI and the closing date of the Coinex and Necropolis hoards (c.170 BC)

RP Graph 1 shows Sv1423, Sv1424-A and Sv1424-B as coins of Ptolemy VI (180-c.170 BC) while earlier studies have placed Sv1423 with Ptolemy IV, Sv1424-A with Ptolemy V, and Sv1424-B perhaps with Ptolemy VIII. After reviewing these previous attributions, the assignments to Ptolemy VI are corroborated by recent information as given below.

Coins Sv1423, Sv1424A-B are two types of early second century Ammon coins, each with two-eagle reverses which differ only in that Sv1423 does not show a cornucopia at the left of the two eagles. Two-eagle coin types appear in the closely related Coinex and Necropolis hoards and the closing dates for these hoards have been placed to the time of Pt V (before 180 BC),<sup>1</sup> or Pt VI (c.170 BC),<sup>2</sup> or possibly in the time of Pt VIII (after 146 BC).<sup>3</sup>

However, consistent with the attributions of Price (and as shown in RP Graph 1), it has recently been possible to reasonably settle these coins into the early time (180-c.170 BC) of Ptolemy VI. Following a review (below) of earlier attributions, there is new information that supports the closing date of c.170 BC for both the Coinex and the Necropolis hoards.

### Various attributions of Sv1423 and Sv1424

In his 1981 study of the Necropolis hoard, Price attributed coins Sv1423 and Sv1424 to the early time of Ptolemy VI (180-170 BC). This was based on the presence of two Sv1424 coins in the Corinth hoard<sup>4</sup> together with a coin (Sv1380) that showed the name Cleopatra I (180-176 BC); also present were examples of Sv1384 that are universally dated within 180-170 BC. Price also associated the burial of the hoard with the threat of Syrian king Antiochus IV's expedition to Egypt in 169 BC, and he gave a closing date of c.170 BC for the Necropolis hoard.<sup>5</sup>

Huston and Lorber, in 2001, with coins Sv1423 and Sv1424 in the Coinex hoard, recognized that the Sv1424 coins in this hoard were of distinctly higher weight than generally found. They determined that the Sv1424 type in general is comprised of two populations differing only in weight/size; these were called, respectively, Sv1424-A (c.29g/32-35mm) and Sv1424-B (c.23g/28-30mm).<sup>6</sup>

Contrary to Price's assignment of Sv1423 and Sv1424 (in the Necropolis hoard) to Ptolemy VI, with the Coinex hoard Huston and Lorber assigned coins Sv1423 to Ptolemy IV (or early issues of Ptolemy V) and Sv1424-A to Ptolemy V. These assignments were based on an argument-from-absence, i.e., 'Because Sv1380 and Sv1384 are relatively common and extremely common, respectively, their absence [from the Coinex and Necropolis hoards] is significant and points to closure of before 180 BC ... in the reign of Ptolemy V'.<sup>7</sup>

In a 2005 review of Ptolemaic bronze coins,<sup>8</sup> some examples of Sv1423 were 'perhaps issued under Ptolemy IV, but the majority were surely coins of [Ptolemy V]'. The heavyweight coins, Sv1424-A, were still assigned to Ptolemy V while the lightweight coins Sv1424-B were moved to Ptolemy VI. This change for Sv1424-B was based on association with Sv1380 (showing Cleopatra's name), and with Sv1383 (both of the latter are unquestionably established as coins of 180-170 BC). All three types (Sv1424-B, Sv1380, Sv1383) have essentially the same weight/size module (c.23-24g/28-32mm) and also show the double-eagle reverse with a cornucopia in left field. In addition, association with Sv1380 in the Corinth hoard supported the assignment of

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<sup>1</sup> S. M. Huston and C. C. Lorber, 'A hoard of Ptolemaic bronze coins in commerce, October 1992 (CH 8, 413)', *NC* (2001), pp. 15-18, 28-9.

<sup>2</sup> Lorber, 'Development', p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> Faucher and Lorber, 'Bronze coinage', p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> M. Thompson, 'A Ptolemaic bronze hoard from Corinth', *Hesperia* 20 (1951), p. 355.

<sup>5</sup> Price, 'Necropolis', p. 161.

<sup>6</sup> Huston and Lorber, 'Coinex', pp. 24-6.

<sup>7</sup> Huston and Lorber argued that Price incorrectly took Sv1380 and Sv1384 as coins of Cyprus. However, while later accepting that Sv1380 and Sv1384 are coins of Alexandria, it is apparent (from the argument presented in Huston and Lorber, 'Coinex', p. 28-9), that Price did not change his mind about coins Sv1380, Sv1384 and Sv1424, all being coins of Ptolemy VI. Nor is it reported that there was any change of mind regarding his closing date (c.170 BC) for the Necropolis hoard.

<sup>8</sup> Lorber, 'Development', pp. 141, 145.

Sv1424-B to Ptolemy VI.<sup>9</sup> Although unaware of the weight difference of Sv1424-A and Sv1424-B, Price would no doubt have agreed with the 2005 argument that Sv1424-B belongs to Ptolemy VI (but he would not have agreed with the 2005 assignments of Sv1423 to Ptolemy IV and Sv1424-A to Ptolemy V).<sup>5</sup>

In 2010 (i.e., see F&L Table 3) coins Sv1423 are in the earliest Series 6a and 6b (c.204 BC), while Sv1424-A followed closely in Series 6c. Yet Sv1424-B is in the latest series, i.e., Series 7c that ‘may not commence until after [146 BC]’.<sup>10</sup>

The rather complex difficulties, as described above, in obtaining a single reliable assignment for coins Sv1423, Sv1424-A and Sv1424-B, disappear now that new information is available. The above various attributions of years 2001, 2005, and 2010 may now be replaced by Price’s attributions of year 1981.

**New information related to Sv1423, Sv1424 and Sv1380, Sv1384**

It has been pointed out (in 2010)<sup>11</sup> that ‘The chronology [presented in 2001 and 2005] is problematic because it leaves very little official coinage for the last century of Lagid Egypt’ and ‘The hoards cited by Lorber do not really support a high chronology [i.e., the early chronology for Sv1423 with Ptolemy IV, and Sv1424-A with Ptolemy V] and in fact suggest that at least some of her dates should be lowered [i.e., given a later date].’ In addition, there are the statements that ‘Although we cannot agree with the numismatic arguments Price offered to date the Necropolis hoards,<sup>[12]</sup> his explanation for their loss [burial] is not implausible’, and ‘We differ only in that we would no longer maintain that the absence of Sv1380 and 1384 from the Necropolis hoards dates their burial before 180.’<sup>13</sup> Since the basis of the 2001 argument-from-absence (that gave the assignments of coins Sv1423, Sv1424-A and Sv1424-B) has been abrogated, and since it is agreed by F&L that these coins can reasonably be dated later, Price’s assignments (in 1981) to Ptolemy VI (during 180-c.170 BC) have now been corroborated.

Coins Sv1423, Sv1424-A and Sv1424-B are all found in the Necropolis hoards<sup>14</sup> and, in 2005, Lorber placed Sv1424-A with Ptolemy VI. Also, Price’s historical explanation for the burial of the Necropolis hoards was accepted as ‘not implausible’.<sup>15</sup> Therefore it can no longer be maintained that the Necropolis and Coinex coins must have been buried before 180 BC; coins Sv1424-A and Sv1424-B should logically, until contrary evidence arises, be placed together (as in RP Graph 1) with Sv1423 as coins of Ptolemy VI, 180-c.170 (with a closing date for both the Coinex and Necropolis coins of c.170 BC).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Lorber, ‘Development’, p. 145.

<sup>10</sup> Faucher and Lorber, ‘Bronze coinage’, p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> Faucher and Lorber, ‘Bronze coinage’, pp. 47-8.

<sup>12</sup> Faucher and Lorber, ‘Bronze coinage’, pp. 39, 48. F&L do not agree with Price’s closing dating for the Necropolis hoard due to his use of insignificant wear estimates (with examples of Sv1424, Sv1494, and of a smaller denomination, Price’s nos. 131-134). However, Price’s closing date for the Necropolis hoard (c.170 BC) depended, not on coin wear, but on the close chronological relationship of coins Sv1424, Sv1380 and Sv1384 (all found in the Corinth hoard) with coins Sv1424 in the Necropolis hoard; see Price, ‘Necropolis’, p. 161.

<sup>13</sup> Faucher and Lorber, ‘Bronze coinage’, p. 48, and see p. 48, n. 39.

<sup>14</sup> In 2005, C. Lorber assigned all of the Necropolis coinopia-double eagle coins as Sv1424-A. However, Necropolis hoard F contained fifteen examples of Sv1424 A+B (not distinguished by M. Price). The range of weights for coins Sv1424 A+B is 16.0 to 28.8g with a median of 22.5g; there are seven coins (ave. 26.6g, Sv1424-A) above the median and seven coins (ave. 19.7g, Sv1424-B) below the median. These averages are both within the range of weights for Sv1424-B coins and they are below the mode of 29g for A and 23g for B as given by Huston and Lorber ‘Bronze coinage’, p.25-6. In addition, associated with the Necropolis hoard F were two other groups of coins that contained examples of both Sv1423 and Sv1424; i.e., Necropolis groups C and D contained one example each of the ‘Large Horn’ variety of Sv1423 (as very clearly shown in Plate 44, n. 43 and n. 48, no weight/size data available). In the Necropolis hoard F itself there were two examples of Sv1423 (Price n. 65, 36.30g, 35mm in Plate 45 apparently without the large horn, and n. 66, 30.91g, 31mm, not pictured). The above is good evidence that both Sv1424-A and Sv1424-B were present in the hoards together with examples of the Sv1423 varieties as shown in RP Graph 1. Based on size alone, all of the Sv1424 coins in the hoard were assigned by Lorber to Sv1424-A, see Lorber, ‘Development’, p. 142. That the weights are lower than expected for Sv1424-A coins was because ‘The low weights are typical for [worn] excavation coins’; see Huston and Lorber, ‘Hoard in commerce’, pp. 25, 28. However, Price indicated that Sv1424 coins in the hoard were ‘fresh’, i.e., not worn; see Price, ‘Necropolis’, p. 159. In the related Coinex hoard, the presence of only the heavier weight Sv1424-A coins may be due to selection of these coins as a greater denomination than Sv1424-B.

<sup>15</sup> Faucher and Lorber, ‘Bronze coinage’, p. 48.

<sup>16</sup> See also <http://ptolemaic.net/two-eagles/1c-denomptvi.htm>