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Oleksandr Bondarenko, Maksym Glibov, Mykhailo Orlyk

Ancient Coins of the 6th – 1st Centuries BC in the Territory of Present-Day Ukraine: Current Scholarly Discourse

Key words: historiography, numismatics, antiquity, coins, Northern Black Sea Region, Ukraine, Olbia, Chersones, Tyras, Pantikapaion, barbarian population.

Cuvinte cheie: istoriografie, numismatică, antichitate, monede, Nordul Mării Negre, Ucraina, Olbia, Chersones, Tyras, Pantikapaion, populație barbară.

Oleksandr Bondarenko, Maksym Glibov, Mykhailo Orlyk

Ancient Coins of the 6th – 1st Centuries BC in the Territory of Present-Day Ukraine: Current Scholarly Discourse

The article examines the current state of historiography on the study of ancient numismatics in the Ukrainian lands during the 6th – 1st centuries BC, outlining its main directions, achievements, challenges, and prospects for further development. It has been established that, despite a significant increase in the number of scholarly works in recent decades, historiographical studies in this field remain limited, which underscores the need for their synthesis and reinterpretation. The diversity, methodological innovation, and thematic breadth of current research are highlighted. Four key areas are identified: the application of digital technologies and interdisciplinary approaches; the study of the coinage of the Greek colonies in the Northern Black Sea region, including analyses of technology, iconography, and cultural-political influences; the investigation of single finds and hoards in order to refine our understanding of monetary circulation; and the exploration of museum and private collections for cataloguing and systematization purposes. The scholarly novelty of the article lies in the absence of specialized historiographical works on this topic, as well as in the fact that, for the first time, the research legacy of contemporary – primarily Ukrainian – scholars has been systematized and synthesized.

Oleksandr Bondarenko, Maksym Glibov, Mykhailo Orlyk

Monede antice din secolele VI-I î.Hr. pe teritoriul Ucrainei de astăzi: discurs științific actual

Articolul analizează stadiul actual al istoriografiei privind cercetarea numismaticii antice pe teritoriile ucrainene în secolele VI-I î.Hr., evidențiind principalele direcții, realizări, probleme și perspective de dezvoltare. S-a constatat că, în pofida creșterii semnificative a numărului de lucrări științifice în ultimele decenii, studiile istoriografice din acest domeniu rămân puține, ceea ce subliniază necesitatea sintezei și reinterpretării lor. Sunt evidențiate caracterul plurivalent, noutatea metodologică și diversitatea tematică a cercetărilor contemporane. Se disting patru direcții esențiale: aplicarea tehnologiilor digitale și a metodelor interdisciplinare; studiul monetăriei coloniilor grecești din regiunea nord-pontică, inclusiv analiza tehnologiilor, iconografiei și influențelor cultural-politice; investigarea descoperirilor de monede izolate și a tezaurilor, în vederea precizării tabloului circulației monetare; precum și cercetarea colecțiilor muzeale și private în scopul catalogării și sistematizării materialului. Noutatea științifică a studiului este determinată de absența unor lucrări istoriografice consacrate acestei problematice, precum și de faptul că, pentru prima dată, moștenirea științifică a cercetătorilor contemporani – în principal ucraineni – a fost sistematizată și sintetizată.

Introduction

Contemporary Ukrainian historiography is characterised by an expansion of research topics and a revision of established conceptual positions, which necessitates an increasing demand for generalising works. Historiography, as a scholarly discipline that studies the process of accumulation, development, and transformation of historical knowledge, acquires particular relevance in the context of the dynamic progress of modern science. Within the framework of Ukrainian historical scholarship, which has undergone a complex path of formation

and re-evaluation, the analysis of historiography in specific fields is of exceptional importance for understanding the evolution of scholarly views and for determining the prospects of further development. One such field is numismatics, particularly ancient numismatics, which in recent decades has attracted ever greater scholarly attention. Nevertheless, despite the considerable number of publications by both domestic and foreign researchers devoted to the study of ancient numismatics on the Ukrainian lands in the 6th – 1st centuries BC, the historiographical dimension of this issue has thus

far remained outside the focus of scholarly interest. The only exceptions are a few publications in which the authors reveal the history of the formation of numismatic collections and analyse the scholarly legacy of Ukrainian numismatists.

Modern historical science faces the task not only of accumulating empirical data concerning various aspects of ancient numismatics but also of providing profound historiographical reflection, theoretical and methodological analysis, scholarly evaluation, and a summation of previous studies. In this regard, an appeal to the analysis of scholarly works dedicated to the subject under discussion becomes not merely appropriate but an indispensable element of the contemporary research process. The study of the contributions of predecessors makes it possible not only to summarise the current state of knowledge but also to identify further directions and prospects for the development of this significant field of historical scholarship.

In light of the above, the aim of this article is to analyse the state of contemporary Ukrainian historiography concerning the study of numismatics of the 6th – 1st centuries BC, to elucidate its leading directions, main achievements, and problems, as well as to determine the prospects of further scholarly inquiry.

Exposition of the main research material

Interest in the study of Ukrainian numismatics arose as early as the nineteenth century. The principal direction of numismatic studies in this period consisted in compiling topographies of coin-hoard finds in various historical and geographical regions of Ukraine. In particular, M.F. Beliashevskii examined finds in the territory of Polissia [Beliashevskii 1889], V.B. Antonovich – in the territories of Kyiv region and Volhynia [Antonovich' 1900; Antonovich 1895], and V. Goshkevich – in the Northern Black Sea region [Goshkevich' 1903]. Researchers devoted considerable attention to the influx of coin hoards into the collection of the coin cabinet (Münzkabinett) of St Volodymyr University, which, in particular, was highlighted in the works of K. Strashkevich [Strashkevich 1867].

The outstanding Ukrainian Soviet numismatist and historian P. Karyshkovskii laid the fundamental foundations for our understanding of

the structure of Olbian coinage and its role in regional trade. His works are distinguished by a solid source-critical approach, the extensive use of archaeological materials, and a high level of historiographical analysis. Central here is the monograph *Monety Olvii. Ocherk denezhnogo obrashcheniia Severo-Zapadnogo Prichernomor'ia* (“The Coins of Olbia: An Essay on the Monetary Circulation of the North-Western Black Sea Region”), in which the evolution of minting, the regularities of circulation, issues of emission and the functioning of denominations, as well as Olbia’s contacts with classical centres and the local population are examined [Karyshkovskii 1988]. This study retains the status of a classic and remains a methodological foundation for contemporary numismatic research.

Following the proclamation of Ukraine’s independence, research on national history intensified, which conditioned an expansion of numismatic studies. Contemporary scholars increasingly turn not only to the direct analysis of coins, but also to the history of their study, methodological approaches, and the socio-historical functions of monetary tokens. At the same time, Ukrainian scholarship still lacks a generalising work that would comprehensively present the historiography of ancient numismatics on the Ukrainian lands in the 6th – 1st centuries BC.

Closest to the problematics outlined is the article by S. Bulatovich, which offers a comprehensive analysis of the scholarly corpus devoted to the numismatics and archaeology of the ancient polis of Tyras [Bulatovich 2008, 17-22]. The author not only systematised the sources, but also critically assessed the contribution of leading scholars, delineating key trends in the study of the region. She convincingly emphasised the interdependence between the interpretative potential of numismatic artefacts and the level of archaeological investigation of the city, noting that the absence of a full publication of the corpus of materials limits the potential of research. The application of a historiographical approach made it possible to trace the evolution of research emphases through the prism of the expanding archaeological context, which reveals the close connection between numismatics, archaeological excavations, musealisation, and the publication of sources. As a result, the researcher concluded that “on the example of Tyras one can see how numismatic artefacts and their quantitative and qualitative composition, and the

possibilities of their interpretation, are directly connected with the state of archaeological study of the city. At the same time, an important aspect is not only new coin finds, but also the entire complex of material sources obtained in the course of field research. Within this complex, coins are among the most important categories of archaeological finds given the multifaceted information they contain” [Bulatovich 2008, 17]. This work made a significant contribution to the formation of the historiographical basis for ancient numismatics on the Ukrainian lands.

An important role in the formation and development of the domestic school of ancient numismatics was also played by S. Bulatovich’s textbook *Antychna numizmatyka* [Bulatovich 2005], which analyses issues related to the organisation and techniques of coin production, the origins of coin types, their systematisation, and also outlines the principal methods of researching ancient coins. This work is a fundamental and still relevant publication that established a robust methodological and theoretical foundation for generations of Ukrainian historians.

In recent decades Ukrainian ancient numismatics has been significantly enriched by a large number of scholarly works, which necessitates a rethinking of achievements in this field of national historiography. The published studies are distinguished by their multidimensionality, methodological novelty, and thematic diversity, which provides grounds for their provisional division into several key directions:

1. The application of digital technologies and the development of new methodological approaches in numismatic studies.

2. Research on the coinage of the Greek colonies of the Northern Black Sea region, encompassing manufacturing technology, typology, iconography, chronology, and the cultural-political factors influencing the development of local minting.

3. The analysis of coin finds and hoards, including the introduction of new materials into scholarly circulation, the study of their topography, distribution, and archaeological context, which refines the picture of monetary circulation.

4. The study of museum and private collections with an emphasis on cataloguing and the systematisation of museum holdings.

Contemporary Ukrainian ancient numismatics is undergoing a qualitative transformation

owing to the implementation of digital technologies. This innovative direction opens the way for a shift from traditional descriptive methods to comprehensive, interdisciplinary analysis, which substantially expands the source base and enhances the potential for reconstructing historical processes.

The use of electronic databases, 3D modelling of coins, and geographic information systems (GIS) for the visualisation of finds is becoming a necessary condition for thorough research. These instruments make it possible not only to reconstruct economic and cultural processes with greater precision, but also to formulate new methodological approaches within Ukrainian scholarship. Digitalisation promotes deeper analysis and interpretation of historical sources, making numismatic research more effective and reliable.

In the 2000s in Ukraine, the digitalisation of numismatic research emerged as a relatively new direction that gradually gained active development in academic and museum environments. One of the first in the domestic scholarly community to analyse the possibilities and potential of using digital resources for the study of numismatic materials was the well-known Ukrainian historian and numismatist V. Orlyk. He emphasised that information technologies are becoming an integral component of historical studies, outlined the potential of internet resources in numismatic research, provided concrete examples of their application, and at the same time drew attention to the problems and limitations faced by researchers when working with digital sources [Orlik 2013, 129-133]. The scholar underlined the prospects of web resources for the development of numismatic science, demonstrating their high informational potential and effectiveness within the scope of auxiliary historical disciplines. He noted that international and domestic online platforms often contain reports of hoard finds, their composition, and the circumstances of discovery, which substantially enriches the topography of known hoards and provides new material for scholarly generalisations.

In turn, O. Shvets, analysing the use of information resources in numismatic research, focused attention on the shortage of large-scale databases with domestic materials, as well as on the absence of unified criteria for the systematisation and clas-

sification of periodical online publications. The author stressed the necessity of creating a specialised methodology for working with virtual sources and with numismatic materials published online [Shvets' 2015, 15-18]. An important aspect of contemporary research in the field of numismatics is the problem of creating and operating a digital infrastructure aimed at the preservation and processing of numismatic data. In this context, of particular importance is the article by O. Shvets', which considers issues of the long-term preservation of digital numismatic objects. Special emphasis is placed on the development of strategies for digital archiving, which include creating back-up copies, employing reliable file formats, and adhering to international data-preservation standards. Such an approach, in the researcher's conclusion, constitutes a necessary condition for forming a stable source base that ensures the long-term preservation of the results of scholarly studies and at the same time contributes to strengthening the research infrastructure in the field of numismatics [Shvets' 2023, 137-153].

A significant impetus to the development of ancient digital numismatics in Ukraine was provided by the Ukrainian-American project "Finds of Ancient Greek Coins in Ukraine", co-led by the American scholar M. Pyzyk and the Ukrainian scholar V. Orlyk. This project "began in 2022, shortly after the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. It had two initial aims. The first was to provide a scholarly basis upon which to begin discussing heritage loss, looting, and markets for ancient Greek coins in the region. The second was to provide a scholarly resource to fill large gaps in overall numismatic knowledge since 1973, when the Inventory of Greek Coin Finds (IGCH) was published" [Pyzyk 2024, 332]. Within the framework of this project, M. Pyzyk prepared two articles published in 2023-2024 in *The Ukrainian Numismatic Annual* [Pyzyk 2023; Pyzyk 2024]. In the first article, devoted to a general overview of this digital project, the scholar emphasises that the participants of the project seek "to improve and expand access to the data. This means implementing full data compatibility with Nomisma's Linked Open Data standard, as well as improving CFU visualization tools for users aiming to use our data for research. We intend to integrate IGCH's data alongside CFU's, in order to provide

a more complete historical picture" [Pyzyk 2023, 286]. The other article by M. Pyzyk is devoted to describing the project in relation to Linked Open Data (LOD), with particular attention paid to its strategy for complying with the Nomisma standard for encoding numismatic objects. The scholar underscores "that this is a viable method for many digital numismatic projects to take in pursuing object digitization" [Pyzyk 2024, 338].

One of the directions of digital numismatics in Ukraine is the study of digital archives. Thus, in particular, A. Boiko-Gagarin, V. Kotsur, and D. Tyshchenko examined the scholarly potential of electronic archives of numismatic auctions as an important source for studying the history of monetary circulation under conditions of limited access to museums and archives. The researchers outlined the advantages of auctions, developed a methodology for keyword search using aggregators (in particular CoinArchives, NumisBids) and regular monitoring to identify rare lots. They also formulated standards for scholarly citation of auction sources, provided examples of scholarly discoveries, and at the same time pointed to shortcomings, in particular the absence of information about provenance and find context, historically incorrect attributions, and inaccurate or unprofessional lot descriptions [Boiko-Gagarin *et al.* 2024, 358-386].

Key aspects of the application of digital technologies in numismatics, including ancient numismatics, are addressed in the article by V. Kotsur, S. Orlyk, and O. Bondarenko [Kotsur *et al.* 2023, 258-276]. The authors emphasise the necessity of a clear distinction between the concepts of "digitisation" and "digitalisation", which is among the defining issues of contemporary scholarly discourse. Within this approach they offer a thorough analysis of the theoretical-methodological foundations and source-critical prospects of the digital transformation of numismatic studies. Particular attention is paid to the processes of digitising numismatic sources and digitalising research, with an emphasis on questions of informativeness, representativeness, and the reliability of the digitised source base. An important result of their work was the identification of promising directions for the development of digital practices in numismatics. The scholars proposed a classification of the corpus of digital numismatic materials, distinguish-

ing several principal groups: virtual collections of museums, libraries, and scholarly institutions; numismatic auction platforms; specialised fora; virtual catalogues and reference resources. Special emphasis is placed on the emergence of new types of digital sources, in particular materials from internet fora, the incorporation of which into scholarly circulation ensures the preservation of information about coin finds, including data on the typology of coins and the topography of discovery sites. A promising direction, in the authors' view, is the automation of coin identification processes, in particular through the creation of software for die analysis. Among the current trends in the development of digital numismatics they also include the introduction of systems for monitoring internet resources and the use of video format as a complement to traditional textual sources. In conclusion, the researchers arrive at the view that the processes of "digitisation" and "digitalisation" in numismatics, as in other fields of knowledge, are not merely a fashionable trend, but a fundamental process which, owing to digital content, forms a new level of numismatic research and requires the development of new methodological approaches both to the collection and analysis of information and to a critical stance towards digital sources [Kotsur *et al.* 2023, 258-276].

Thus, a direction connected with the digital infrastructure of numismatics is taking shape in contemporary Ukrainian numismatic historiography. It encompasses the creation of digital repositories and the implementation of software solutions for data processing, which refreshes the methodological base. The application of digital technologies is transforming traditional scholarly practices, expanding the possibilities for source analysis and contributing to the integration of Ukrainian research into the international scholarly community.

Among the topical directions of contemporary domestic historiography of ancient numismatics is the study of the coinage of the Greek colonies of the Northern Black Sea region, since in the 6th – 1st centuries BC these poleis became important centres of minting. Ukrainian numismatists analyse in a comprehensive manner the technology of coin manufacture – from cast bronze series of the Archaic period to the classical struck coinage of silver and gold – as well as

coin types and iconography, which reflected the cults of patron deities (Demeter in Olbia, Apollo in Chersonesos).

The leading researcher of ancient numismatics of the Northern Black Sea region, V. Anokhyn, exerted a substantial influence on the study of this subject. In his works he examined a wide range of issues relating to the distribution, production, and circulation of ancient coins on the territory of present-day Ukraine [Anokhin 1999; Anokhin 2011]. His scholarly investigations possess both source-critical and conceptual significance, contributing to a deeper understanding of the functioning of monetary systems in the region during the ancient period.

A significant contribution to the study of ancient numismatics of the 6th – 1st centuries BC belongs to the well-known Ukrainian scholar M. Nikolaev, who in a series of works focused on the problems of dating and interpreting the coin emissions of the ancient poleis of the Northern Black Sea region, above all Olbia. Thus, in one of his articles the scholar proposed a new conception of the monetary reform of Olbia in the second half of the 4th century BC, critically rethinking traditional interpretations and advancing arguments regarding changes in weight standards and their socio-economic foundations. He demonstrated that the reform had strategic importance for the integration of Olbia into broader economic connections of the Northern Black Sea region and the ancient world as a whole. The article, from modern positions, considers the dramatic course of the monetary reform of 350-300 BC, associated with the replacement of full-weight copper by struck coinage. The first attempt to introduce the "obol series" and a small quantity of silver met with resistance from the population, as a result of which the polis was compelled for a certain time to return to the previous monetary system [Nikolaev 2023b, 161-172]. In the article "Monetary Legends as a Mirror of Olbian Palaeography" M. Nikolaev turned to the problem of interpreting coin inscriptions as an important source for studying the development of literacy in Olbia [Nikolaev 2023a, 25-39]. He showed that legends on coins played a role not only in the attribution and dating of emissions, but also in reproducing local palaeographic traditions. The selective analysis carried out made it possible to identify the features of

monetary palaeography in comparison with lapidary and manuscript scripts, demonstrating its independent character.

Another of the researcher's works was devoted to the interpretation of coin monograms [Nikolaev 2024, 37-57]. Drawing on global experience, M. Nikolaev integrated methodological approaches of European and American numismatic scholarship, which made it possible to reconceive "problematic" legends and abbreviations. He emphasised that the precise elucidation of monograms is of key significance for reconstructing the political and administrative history of Olbia [Nikolaev 2024, 37-57]. Taken together, these works attest to M. Nikolaev's striving for a comprehensive understanding of numismatic sources, their incorporation into a broader historical and cultural context, as well as for the development of new methodological approaches that integrate Ukrainian research into the international scholarly space.

The classification of Olbia's copper coins of the second half of the 4th century BC was carried out by Ye. Kolesnichenko, who introduced into scholarly circulation new varieties and proposed the most complete systematisation to date of Olbian emissions of this period [Kolesnichenko 2021, 45-58]. The author systematised the "obol series" of Olbian minting (c. 350-330 BC) and demonstrated the structure of the monetary system, which consisted of four denominations: obol, dichalk, chalk, hemichalk. The use of die analysis made it possible to distinguish two stylistic groups of coins of the higher denomination and to determine precisely the number of varieties of each denomination (26 types of obols, 6 each of dichalks and chalks, 2 hemichalks). In his conclusions the researcher underlined the importance of the results obtained for understanding Olbia's coinage and delineated prospects for further studies, in particular the introduction into circulation of new materials from various collections.

One of the priority directions of contemporary domestic historiography of ancient numismatics is the study of coin finds and coin hoards; the introduction of new materials into scholarly circulation, their systematisation, and analysis substantially broaden ideas about the socio-economic processes that took place in the region. At the centre of researchers' attention are the topog-

raphy and area of distribution of coin finds, the factors of their dissemination, as well as the archaeological context, which makes it possible to interpret coins not only as numismatic artefacts but also as historical sources.

A weighty scholarly problem of contemporary academic discourse is the role of ancient coins in the milieu of the local barbarian population of the Ukrainian Forest-Steppe. In Soviet historiography a narrative was formed concerning the absence of monetary circulation among the barbarian tribes of the Ukrainian Forest-Steppe [Grakov 1971; Anokhin 1971, Maksimov 1972, etc.]. However, as German archaeologists and numismatists U. Peter and V. Stolba rightly point out, "Since the well-known monograph by Mielczarek (1989), the question of the role of money among the local barbarian population has no longer been at the center of scholarly discussion, due to the lack of data on finds of Greek coins in the Scythian hinterland, particularly in the Ukrainian forest-steppe... The reason for this is not only the ongoing uncontrolled use of metal detectors throughout Ukraine, but also the markedly increased attention to this issue on the part of professional numismatists and archaeologists, whose studies have brought the question of commodity-money relations among the population of the East European forest-steppe during the Scythian period into sharp focus" [Peter, Stolba 2022, 190]. On the basis of an analysis of numismatic finds at Scythian settlements in the steppe zone of Ukraine, the well-known Ukrainian archaeologist N. Gavriliuk arrived at the conclusion that monetary relations existed in trade between Greeks and Scythians, at least in the 4th century BC [Gavriliuk 2013, 491]. The Ukrainian archaeologists S. Skoryi and R. Zymovets, having analysed the information available to them about finds of ancient coins at settlements of the Scythian period – though indeed these finds were for the most part made by so-called searchers using metal detectors – likewise refuted the thesis, dominant in Ukrainian archaeology since Soviet times, concerning the non-use by the barbarian population of ancient coins. The scholars emphasised that finds of ancient coins "at settlements of the Scythian period, including in the cultural layer, and in quite a representative quantity, unambiguously indicate that they were used as monetary means by the local population in set-

ting accounts for goods or any services with the Greeks” [Skoryi, Zimovets 2014, 145].

Arguably the greatest contribution to the contemporary historiography of the study of finds of ancient coins and coin hoards on the Ukrainian lands of the 6th – 1st centuries BC was made by V. Orlyk. In his works both individual coin finds and entire hoard complexes are systematically published, while particular attention is paid to questions of their topography and area of distribution.

For example, in the article “Ancient Coins of the 6th – 1st Centuries BC in Podillia” V. Orlyk carried out a systematisation and introduced into scholarly circulation a complex of finds of ancient coins, which constitutes a significant contribution to the study of the economic and trade history of the region [Orlik 2022a]. The analysis of 118 coin finds was conducted using a set of general scholarly and specialised numismatic methods. On this basis the author singled out seven points of concentration of finds, among which there are both individual specimens and hoards. An important result was the identification of 12 “demonetised” coins (11.65% of the total), which indicates their use as ornaments. The summarisation of the data gave the scholar grounds to state the existence in Podillia in the period indicated of commodity–money relations, albeit less developed than in the Greek poleis. In addition, V. Orlyk identified two principal directions of the region’s trade connections: the North Pontic, which in the 4th – 3rd centuries BC was connected primarily with Olbia, and the south-western, which ran through Thracian lands. The latter ensured the inflow of coins from the Greek colonies of the Western Black Sea region, as well as Thracian and Macedonian emissions, which testifies to the active integration of Podillia into the international trade networks of the ancient world.

Finds of ancient coins of the 6th – 1st centuries BC in the basin of the River Tiasmyn are the subject of another article by V. Orlyk, in which a systematisation is undertaken of 167 coin finds from 23 points, including four hoards [Orlik 2021a]. The scholar emphasised that almost 75% are Olbian emissions, among which are early specimens of the 6th – 4th centuries BC and 78 “Borysthenes” coins of the late 4th – early 3rd centuries BC. By contrast, the share of coins of Panticapaeum does not exceed 3%, which calls

into question the widespread thesis of the Bosphorus’ dominance in trade with the local population in the 4th century BC. The results obtained, in the researcher’s considered view, provide convincing evidence of Olbia’s leading role in North Pontic trade. Finds of hoards and single coins attest to the functioning of commodity–money relations between local communities and the ancient poleis, albeit less developed than in the colonies. The importance of this work also lies in the fact that it filled a substantial lacuna, becoming the first comprehensive study of ancient coins in the basin of the River Tiasmyn.

In other works, V. Orlyk examined finds of ancient coins and their imitations in the territory of Volhynia [Orlyk 2023a] and in the basin of the River Ros (Orlyk 2024).

Thus, the scholar for the first time summarised data on the coins of Olbia, Tyras, Kerkinitis, and Chersonesos, as well as other ancient Greek issuing centres, showing the routes by which ancient emissions penetrated far beyond the limits of the polis oecumene. V. Orlyk consistently emphasises the importance of the archaeological context: each coin or hoard is considered not only as a numismatic object but also as a historical source for reconstructing trade routes, the scale of intercultural contacts, and crisis phenomena in the Northern Black Sea region. Owing to his research, a distinct segment of contemporary Ukrainian historiography of ancient numismatics has taken shape, within which coin finds emerge as a key to a broader understanding of the economic and social processes of antiquity [Orlik *et al.* 2019; Orlyk, Orlyk 2020].

The scholar has also devoted considerable attention to the study of the spread in the territory of the Northern Black Sea region and the Ukrainian Forest-Steppe of the coins of the state of Mithridates VI Eupator [Orlik 2020; Orlik 2022b; Orlyk 2022; Orlyk, Mekh 2022; Orlyk 2023], and, in collaboration with the well-known Canadian–American scholar M. Pyzyk, investigated a hoard of bronze coins of Pontus and Paphlagonia from the reign of Mithridates VI Eupator, found in 2022 in the Ochakiv district of Mykolaiv region, Ukraine [Orlyk, Pyzyk 2023].

The scholarly value of V. Orlyk’s studies lies in the introduction into circulation of new materials that specify the character of Greco–barbarian

economic integration and underscore the role of small denominations as instruments of everyday trade, reflecting the intensity and quotidian nature of economic relations.

A new interpretation of a hoard of Olbian coins from the valley of the River Kuchurhan was offered by M. Nikolaev and L. Tsyganenko, who proposed a refined reconstruction of its composition and chronology [Nikolaev, Tsyganenko 2022, 34-41]. This made it possible to reassess the significance of the hoard for understanding monetary circulation and economic processes in the region. The authors substantiated the hypothesis of the minting of additional copper series in the period between the issue of the “Borysthenes” and showed that the hoard should be regarded as a purse reflecting local monetary circulation in 240-230 BC. An important result was the introduction into scholarly circulation of coins of magistrates connected with the decree in honour of Protogonos.

D. Mirosnichenko summarised and introduced into scholarly circulation a complex of ancient Greek coins from the Bilozerskyi district of Kherson region [Mirosnichenko 2022, 46-70]. He analysed materials from museum holdings, archaeological excavations, and chance finds. Most of the coins discovered are Olbian emissions, which points to early trade links between the local population and Olbia. The earliest find is a bronze “dolphin” coin (late 6th – early 4th century BC), and the latest is a Demeter-in-Armour obol (240-230 BC). Of particular interest are a “reduced as” with a gorgoneion, which was used as an ornament, as well as two coins from the time of Alexander the Great. Special attention is devoted by the author to a hoard from the village of Orlove, which contained more than 85 “Borysthenes” coins (63 examined), dated to the 30s – 20s of the 3rd century BC. These materials confirm that in the 4th – 3rd centuries BC the area of the mouth of the River Inhulets was densely populated and actively integrated into the economic and trade network of the ancient poleis, above all Olbia.

The problem of the spread of cast coins of Olbia was investigated by M. Orlyk and Ye. Kolesnichenko. The authors analysed finds of 92 Olbian cast coins and compiled a chronological and geographical catalogue of these finds. This study, like the corpus of works by other researchers mentioned above, refutes the thesis of Soviet histori-

ography concerning the absence of participation by Olbia’s coins in monetary circulation beyond the borders of Olbia and its chora [Grakov 1971; Anokhin 1971]. In the view of M. Orlyk and E. Kolesnichenko, “6th – 4th centuries BC was not only the time of active trade cooperation of Greek colonists both with the local population of the Scythian era and with other Greek colonies and settlements, but it was the time of monetary and trade relations. This is evidenced by numerous finds of archaic cast Olbian coins almost throughout modern Ukraine, especially by the presence of regions with the accumulation of such finds at a considerable distance from the Olbian chora” [Orlyk, Kolesnichenko 2022, 144].

Highly informative for the spread and dating of the coins of Olbia, Chersonesos, and Panticapaeum is the study of a mini-hoard of copper coins of the Northern Black Sea region, found in 2022 in the territory of the Novoushytsia settlement territorial community of Khmelnytskyi region, carried out by E. Kolesnichenko [Kolesnichenko 2024]. In addition to copper coins of the Greek poleis of the Northern and North-Western Black Sea region, the composition of this hoard included two bronze ingots. XRF conducted by E. Kolesnichenko on the ingots from this mini-hoard attested that these ingots were not made from coinage metals [Kolesnichenko 2024, 65]. This refutes the thesis of Soviet historiography concerning the use of ancient Greek coins as raw material for the production of bronze by the population of the Ukrainian Forest-Steppe. And the presence in the hoard of bronze ingots, in the researcher’s opinion, “may indicate the use by representatives of Scythian culture in trade operations of bronze ingots in parallel with the coins of that time” [Kolesnichenko 2024]. As regards the routes by which these coins reached the Ukrainian Forest-Steppe, the “analysis of coin issuers and the period of minting of the coins under our study indicates their arrival from Crimea (the Heracleian and Kerch peninsulas) to the Podillian Dniester region via the Lower Southern Bug, which corresponds to the Black Sea-Dniester segment of the Eastern Amber Route” [Kolesnichenko 2024, 65].

A separate direction of contemporary research on finds of ancient coins of the 6th – 1st centuries BC in the territory of present-day Ukraine is the study of finds of Roman Repub-

lican denarii and denarii of the first Roman emperor, Gaius Iulius Caesar Octavianus Augustus, as well as imitations of such coins. The greatest contribution to the study of this complex scholarly problem has been made by the Ukrainian–Polish researcher K. Myzgin [Myzgin 2015]. The scholar quite rightly notes that “although finds of Roman Republican coins have been recorded in the territory of present-day Ukraine ... for quite a while, and found their way on occasion into some catalogues, their study and interpretation is still at a very early stage” [Myzgin 2015, 51]. K. Myzgin draws attention to the problem of the absence “of the archaeological context for the vast majority of the coins [which] seriously obstructed our search for sources areas and routes of infl ux, and the dating of this process” [Myzgin 2015, 52].

The problems of imitating the denarius of Octavian Augustus of the Malokopany type (village of Mala Kopania, Zakarpattia region, Ukraine) were investigated by the Ukrainian archaeologists M. Orlyk and I. Prokhnenko [Orlyk, Prokhnenko 2023a]. Another joint article by M. Orlyk and I. Prokhnenko is devoted to imitations of Roman denarii of the Rosca Fabatus type. Five such coins were found during archaeological research at the Malokopany hillfort, in particular in “three separate locations of the archaeological complex (three – from the Horodyshche area, including an Eraviscan coin; one each – from Chelenytsia I and Chelenytsia II, the sacral centre)”. A further five specimens of such coins were found “by local residents in the forest between the village of Mala Kopania and the village of Bukove” [Orlik, Prokhnenko 2023, 42]. In the authors’ opinion, “imitations of the coin of the Rosca Fabatus type most likely reached the territory of the La Tène-ised Dacian settlement in the mid-1st century BC” [Orlik, Prokhnenko 2023, 52]. The establishment by M. Orlyk and I. Prokhnenko of the identity of dies for two specimens of these coins and the discovery of a potentially similar imitation enabled the researchers to suppose that the local population had, at least indirectly, “links with the Eraviscan tribes, and the coins with the same defect were struck and reached the Malokopany region simultaneously, evidently together with plundered trophies, in the same way as Illyrian coins in the period of Burebista’s military campaigns” [Orlik, Prokhnenko 2023, 52].

One of the important directions of contemporary Ukrainian historiography of the study of ancient numismatics of the 6th – 1st centuries BC is the analysis of museum and private collections. The holdings of national and regional museums preserve substantial corpora of ancient Greek, Persian, and Roman coins, including coins of the Greek colonies of the Northern Black Sea region – Olbia, Tyras, Panticapaeum, Chersonesos. The introduction of these artefacts into scholarly circulation is regarded as a priority task of contemporary scholarship.

Illustrative in this context is the article by A. Boiko-Gagarin devoted to coins from the collection of the well-known classical scholar V. Anokhin, now preserved in the Money Museum of the National Bank of Ukraine [Boiko-Gagarin 2021, 11-17]. The author not only catalogues the material, but also evaluates its exhibition potential, showing the significance of museum holdings for the formation of historical memory and the enhancement of public interest in the past. The author of the article attests to the importance of private collections in the formation of museum holdings and emphasises that their scholarly processing is a key component of contemporary numismatic historiography. Particular attention is paid by the researcher to the figure of V. Anokhin as a collector who ensured the preservation and systematisation of a significant corpus of artefacts now integrated into the museum space. The scholarly value of the study lies in the introduction into circulation of a previously hard-to-access collection, in demonstrating the potential of museum holdings as sources for the study of ancient numismatics, and in highlighting a broad historical and cultural context – from local emissions of Greek poleis to trans-regional connections. The article, in our view, is an example of contemporary domestic historiography that combines the cataloguing of material with conceptual analysis, and is significant both for the development of a typology of ancient coins and for the understanding of the place of the Ukrainian lands within the system of inter-civilisational contacts of antiquity.

Private collections also contain substantial source potential for researchers of ancient numismatics, albeit such collections, unfortunately, are not always accessible to scholars. In private collections, as in museum holdings, researchers periodi-

cally identify previously unknown coin types, or even coins struck at previously unknown mints. Thus, for example, acquaintance with one such collection made it possible to discover a new type of small bronze Olbian coin from the time of Mithridates VI Eupator [Orlik 2021b]. And a comprehensive study of museum and private collections, as well as the monitoring of leading global online auctions, enabled V. Orlyk, together with the distinguished Belgian scholar F. de Callataÿ, to discover a previously unknown mint of the state of Mithridates VI Eupator, finds of whose products have been recorded in the south of Ukraine, in particular in the Zaporizhzhia region [Orlyk, de Callataÿ 2024].

Conclusions

Thus, an analysis of the state of contemporary Ukrainian historiography of numismatics for the 6th – 1st centuries BC has testified to the absence of a generalising work on the problem raised. At the same time, we may state that contemporary historiography has accumulated a considerable number of publications devoted to various aspects of the study of ancient numismatics. The published studies are distinguished by methodological novelty and thematic diversity, which has made it possible to single out several directions: 1) the application of digital technologies and new methods, which open up prospects for the analysis of ancient coins; 2) research into the coinage of the Greek colonies of the Northern Black Sea region, in particular typology, iconography, and chronology; 3) the introduction into scholarly circulation of individual coins and hoards, their topography and archaeological context; 4) the study of museum and private collections, which is an important component of the development of numismatic scholarship.

The contemporary discourse of ancient numismatics in Ukraine, in particular the emissions of the 6th – 1st centuries BC, faces a number of problems that require a systematic approach. Despite a substantial expansion of the source base, among the principal challenges one should single out its fragmentary character, the uneven distribution of finds, and the complexity of interpreting the archaeological context. Particularly pressing is the problem of the authentication and classification of local imitations, complicated by the limited number of publications and the insufficient cataloguing of material.

The circle of problems also includes: the fragmentary nature of historiographical surveys, an insufficient level of generalisation of the existing scholarly corpus, unresolved gnoseological questions, as well as organisational difficulties conditioned by limited access to sources and the absence of proper coordination in the research milieu. It should be noted that with the creation in 2017 in Ukraine of the specialised professional numismatic journal *The Ukrainian Numismatic Annual*, scholarly studies in ancient numismatics, including for the period of the 6th – 1st centuries BC, received a new impetus, and researchers obtained an academic platform for discussion.

An important direction of the further development of the field is the renewal of methodological foundations, the integration of interdisciplinary approaches, and the implementation of digital technologies. An urgent need remains the preparation of a comprehensive generalising work that would systematically illuminate the evolution of ancient numismatics in Ukraine and outline promising avenues for its further study.

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