

## The half-victoriatus from the Mogente hoard identified as unicum

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The coin, an anonymous half-victoriatus kept in Madrid in the Instituto Valencia de Don Juan, is in fact the well-known one found in Mogente<sup>1</sup> —fig. 1—, which was published by L. Gestoso in 1910,<sup>2</sup> who described and catalogued it as a half-victoriatus of 1.50 gm., and typical obverse. Of the reverse he wrote: «El genio de la Victoria con corona de laurel, en la mano una R y entre ésta y el cuerpo unas haces.» The description is unclear, but it provides sufficient detail for us to assume that if there have been a monogram and a trophy, they would have been recorded. O. Gil Farrés repeated the description in 1954,<sup>3</sup> and other Spanish numismatists normally refer to it just as a half-victoriatus,<sup>4</sup> though Villaronga considers that it may be Sydenham's n.º 114 (with *VB* and *S*).<sup>5</sup> H. Mattingly quotes Gestoso,<sup>6</sup> but is of the opinion that it may be a specimen with *VB*, yet R. Thompson refers to it simply as a roman half-victoriatus.<sup>7</sup> M. Crawford and P. Marchetti classify it as a piece with *VB* without any reservation at all.<sup>8</sup> When I discovered the coin illustrated

1. Although a great part of the Mogente hoard must be in IVDJ the lack of a Catalogue and the fact that the coins have been dispersed into different trays, make impossible for the moment any study of it.

2. «El hallazgo numismático de Mogente», *BRAH* 56, 1910, 460.

3. Review of Gestoso in *NH* 6, 1954, 293.

4. J. Amorós, «Les dracmes empuritanes», *Junta de Museus, Gabinet Numismàtic de Catalunya*, serie A, n.º 2, Barcelona 1933, 51; «Les monedes empuritanes anteriors a les dracmes» as previous, n.º 3, 1934, 33; Pio Beltrán, «Monedas griegas ampuritanas de Puig Castellar», *Ampurias* VII-VIII, 1945-46, 302.

5. *Las monedas de Arse-Saguntum*, Barcelona, 1967, 92; *MHC*, 77.

6. «New light on the Roman Victoriates», *Essays presented to S. Robinson*, Oxford, 1968, 314, n.º 5.

7. *ERC*, I, 127.

8. *RRCH* n.º 91; *RRC* 40; P. Marchetti, *Histoire économique et monétaire de la Deuxième Guerre Punique*, Bruxelles, 1978, 363.

here, in the Instituto Valencia de Don Juan, I thought it unpublished, but as the description of Gestoso fits in weight, size and typology with this coin, and as the Mogente hoard is in part in the IVDJ, I assume that this half-victoriatus and the Mogente one are the same.

The reasons for the long misunderstanding lie undoubtedly in the lack of illustration when published by Gestoso, and in the difficult times through which the IVDJ has passed.

*Description* —fig. 2.

Obverse: laureate head of Jupiter r., border of dots.

Reverse: Victory r. crowning an R. Exergue without legend, line border.

1.53 gm., 13,40 mm., very fresh condition.

The naked Victory has a wreath in her right hand, she holds it out over the R of *R(oma)*. From her left arm hangs the himation, falling in front in twisted folds (taken by Gestoso for «haces») and over her legs behind. Between the wreath and the R there is a small horizontal line, which I take to be the left hand. On the exergue and all the camp bordering the figure, there still remains some rust, which may be misinterpreted in the photograph.

*The style and fabric* of the coin are clearly attributable to the same mint and issue as the anonymous doble-victoriatus RRC 90/1, also from Spain and now in Paris —fig. 3—. In spite of the different freshness of both pieces the similarities are obvious: in obverse the type of the laurel wreath, the long hair, the beard near the mouth. In reverse, the nakedness of the Victory, the himation hanging from the arm in the same kind of folds, the double curve of the back and leg, the right arm extended horizontally and not raised as in the other victoriati, etc.

It is however the whole typology of the reverse which suggests that these two pieces be set aside from other victoriati and be brought closer to a Hellenistic conception of Niké as seen, for example, in the Roma-Victory ROMANO didrachms —fig. 4—. Their similarities with the half-victoriatus are considerable: both pieces have an exergue with no legend and have no trophy; on the earlier piece, the control-letters are in the same position as the letter R for *Roma* on the half-victoriatus. Other parallels, nearer in time, are the small bronzes of Capua, Ausculum —fig. 5—, Caelia and Petelia<sup>9</sup> with similar typology although with the complete place-name as legend, behind the Niké following the model of the tetradrachms of Agathocles, or in exergue as the italic type. The issues seems to be also from the Second Punic War times, some of them under the hannibalic occupation. As we see they follow more the south-italic types than the Roman ones.

Both Nikai, that of the double and half-victoriati, are naked, with only the himation in the same way as on the didrachms; but the Roman Victory typical of the victoriati, is always clothed, with chiton and himation. This difference of typology may even be seen in the double-victoriatus which, though with a trophy, differs in conception from the other victoriati: the Niké occu-

9. BMC, Italy 83, 131, 134 and 372 respectively; SNG, ANS Part 1, nos. 648-650 (Ausculum).

pies the centre of the blank, the trophy is aside and smaller, of secondary importance, a similar conception as on the pieces of Agathocles.<sup>10</sup>

The denominations of the anonymous double and half-victoriati are also anomalous among the rest of the victoriati. The double is the only multiple we possess in the entire issue. Of half-victoriati there exist only two more issues,<sup>11</sup> that of Luceria<sup>12</sup> and that with *VB*,<sup>13</sup> both with *S* on the reverse as an indication of their value,<sup>14</sup> a letter which does not appear on our pieces.<sup>15</sup>

Owing to the unusual nature of these two values and the absence of any unit clearly attributable to this issue,<sup>16</sup> it is likely that these may be anomalous coinages designed to match certain local values different from those normally exchanged with the victoriatus. They would have been used to complete the victoriatus, already current, though we do not know at present which of the anonymous victoriati served as the unit for the double and half-victoriatus.

Let us consider, along general lines, the Hispanic monetary circulation at the beginning of the Second Punic War. In the north there was the Emporian drachm, which weighed 4.70 gm. In the Carthaginian south the system was based on the 7.60 gm. shekel,<sup>17</sup> with very wide variations as to the actual weights, the older issues being clearly heavier and better, becoming lighter and of poorer quality as the war continued, till average weights were as low as 6.99, 6.70 and 6.08 gm.<sup>18</sup> Zobel noted this debasement already in the Chesterton hoard, and realized that the freshest coins did not exceed 6.00 gm. These series constitute the majority of the Punic coins found in Mogente 85 out of 111.

This was the system the Romans found as they moved towards the south-east, and it may have been in order to adapt to it that the double-victoriatus = shekel of 7.50—6.03 gm., the victoriatus = 1/2 shekel of *c.*3.40 gm. and the half = 1/4 shekel of 1.78—1.56 gm. were issued, thus covering the same range of small denominations as the Carthaginians had. 65 of the smallest of these values were found in Mogente together with the half-victoriatus.

On the east coast two cities, Arse (Sagunto) and Saiti (Játiva), issue drachms of 3.40 gm. The issues from these cities are found in the hoards of

10. *BMC*, Sicily, 195 f.

11. Those proposed by Ailly *RMR*, II, 113, were rejected very wisely by Bahrfeldt, *Blätter für Münzfreunde* 1921-23, 364-6.

12. *RRC* 98 A/2. The types are not those of the victoriati. This liberty for foreign issues is also applicable to the Iberian victoriati, cf. infra.

13. *RRC* 95/2.

14. These value-marks are always lacking in the Roman coins for «abroad». Their omission in the smaller denominations of the didrachms, in the half-quadrigati and in the oath-scene gold is constant, and we should expect the same in the victoriati. The exception is the *S* in the half-victoriati with *L/T* and *VB* and it should be regarded as a contamination of the denarius system and as a reply to the confusion created by so many small denominations: sestertii, quinarii and half-victoriati, when denarius and victoriatus occupied the same area. It is important to realize that the victoriatus was still considered as the silver unit and its halves marked with *S* the same as the *aes*.

15. Dr. Crawford suggested to me that the half value might be marked in our specimen for the half type.

16. I do not think that the victoriatus *RRC* 90/2 belongs to this issue, cf. n. 24.

17. The theoretical weight was 7.60 gm, cf. G. K. Jenkins and R. B. Lewis, *Carthaginian Gold and Electrum Coins*, London 1963, 13. The Hispano-Punic coinage seems to show two different standards, 7.14 for the silver and 7.50 for the gold —cf. Villaronga *MHC* 96-7.

18. Villaronga, *MHC*, table p. 98.

Cheste, Mogente and Valeria, together with a great many Hispano-Punic coins and with scarce ancient Roman coinage, a Dioscuri denarius with incuse legend on tablet, the anonymous half-victoriatus and denari down to the issue with cornucopiae (early issue) respectively.<sup>19</sup> This composition gave rise to the hypothesis that these issues of the two mints must have coincided with the Roman presence. That is to say, some issues, at least in the case of Sagunto, cannot have been prior to the liberation of the city by the Scipios in 212—Livy 21, 24, 42—<sup>20</sup> and that of Saiti, judging from the type of its Rev. —fig. 6— which is an exact copy of the contemporary Roman gold, could not be very far from 209.<sup>21</sup> Some of these drachms as we call them have exactly the same weight as the first victoriatus and Zobel, in my opinion very wisely, has considered them «victoriatos saguntinos».

This may indeed be the first instance of something which Rome was to repeat throughout her colonial history. The closest parallel to this, both in time and space, is to be found in the «Iberian denarius», a Roman coin which looks Iberian, or later in the Celtic pieces coined principally to pay troops in Gaul.<sup>22</sup>

There is, however, even more evidence that our *dobue* and half-victoriati were in fact designed to form part of a Hispanic system in which these pieces were necessary: the entire eastern zone fell within the Punic monetary area, as witness the hoards of Mogente Cheste and Valeria, where drachms from Arse and Saiti are to be found beside Carthaginian coins. It is not surprising, therefore, that on opening these mints they should have thought of issuing a range of values which could be exchanged for Carthaginian money, and Saiti in fact minted a didrachm whose existence Zobel did not know —fig. 6— of

19. *RRCH* n.º 75, 91 and 109 dated between 211-208 BC, but the Mogente hoards is earlier than Cheste, cf. infra. The Saiti (or Saitabi) coinage appears only in the Valeria hoard, a didrachm and not a dracm as Crawford thinks. For the Iberian issues cf. Villarronga, *Numismática Antigua de Hispania*, Barcelona 1973, 109-110.

20. The chronology of the early issues of Sagunto is uncertain, but not very far from 212 BC as shown by the pieces found in Montemolín with Carthaginian coinage down to the last issues, cf. L. Villarronga «Hallazgo de cuatro dracmas de Arse de Cabeza de Pallas en Montemolín (Sevilla)», *Saguntum* 1981, 247-254. The Marchetti's arguments for a high chronology based exclusively on the identification of Arse name with the legend of a drachm of Emporion imitation (Untermann A.6.03) are erroneous, 1) the legend is not well read, 2) Arse is written with *r* and the drachm with *r* which implies two different letters graphic— and phonetically, 3) in the case they were the same, which it is not, the ancient place-names with radical *ars*— are in Spain frequent: *arsaos* (Ebro), *arsakoson* (Celtiberia), and *Arsa* (Badajoz?) and 4) it seems possible that the legend on the drachm was a person-name. Cf. Marchetti, *op. cit.*, pp. 392 f.f.; J. Untermann, *Monumenta Linguarum Ibericarum*, Wiesbaden 1975, A.6.03, A.33. A.36. A.37. For Arsa, not in Untermann, Solá Solé, *El alfabeto monetario de las cecas libiofenices*, Barcelona 1980, 79 f.f.; and M. P. García-Bellido «Apostillas a El alfabeto libiofenice...» *Acta Numismática*, 1981, 41 f.f.

21. P. Beltrán, «Acerca de las monedas de Saetabi», *Saitabi*, 4-5, 1942, 32, confirms that Dioscuri denarii exist already in 209 BC, an important view for his time; Mateu y Llopis «Águila explayada en oro romano y plata setabiana», *Estudios de Numismática Romana*, Barcelona 1964, 71-73.

22. Whether the troops were paid with provincial coinage has often been a matter of controversy. Were Iberian victoriati, later denarii and Gaulish coinage used for paying the *auxilia* and even the Roman troops? cf. Livy 24.49.17 and Plutarc *Cat.* 10, A. Balil, «Un factor difusor de la romanización: tropas hispánicas al servicio de Roma», *Emerita* 24, 1956 108-34; M. Crawford «Financial organization of Republican Spain», *NC* 1969, 80 f.f.; D. F. Allen, «Wealth, Money and Coinage in a Celtic Society», *Essays... to S. Piggot*, London 1976, 202 f.f.

6.80 gm, exactly the same as the theoretical weight of a doble-victoriatus, and a hemidrachm - thought by Zobel to come from Arse and which he named a half-victoriatus - weighing 1.49 gm, the same as the half-victoriatus.

It was probably for the same practical reasons - adapting to the currency of this area - that the Romans were led to issue in Hispania values not existing in the metroopolis.

The *Hispanic provenience* of the double and the half-victoriatus enables us to ascribe the whole issue quite safely to an Iberian mint, and we may thus confirm Ailly's theory.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, owing to the uniformity of style between the double and the half-victoriatus, I would exclude from this issue the victoriatus RRC 90/2, which Crawford ascribes to it.<sup>24</sup>

The half-victoriatus comes from the Valencia interior, Mogente. There exists some doubts as to whether the double comes from Tortosa (Tarragona) or Cástulo (Jaén), though most scholars consider the latter source more likely, mainly because this was the original information provided by Von Salis.<sup>25</sup> Certainly this origin fits better the contemporary historical circumstances, and it is of course the SE of Spain the richest zone in coin hoards,<sup>26</sup> because it was there where the Roman troops moved mainly during the Second Punic War in Spain.

The style and typology of our coins point more to an area influenced by Hellenizing mints, which produced the Hispano-Carthaginian coins, than to the north where the coinage was at the time under strong Iberian influence. Even the victoriati of Arse and Saiti are highly Iberianized coinages, sharing in the localistic trend which was also affecting the coinage of Emporion.

All the Hispano-Carthaginian coinage is undoubtedly «Greek» in typology and in fabric. Hence, a Greek interpretation of the Roman types of victoriatus could only have occurred in Carthagonova.

It is common knowledge that Greek artists worked not only in the mints but in the whole range of art workshops of the Punic world. Robinson drew on this Hellenistic atmosphere to justify his opinion that the effigies on the shekels were, following the Hellenistic fashion, portraits of the Barcids. There has been much debate over this matter<sup>27</sup> and I do not intend to go into it here except in so far as to present a possible model for the same head that was considered by Robinson to be that of Hamilcar Barca and which frequently appears on Hellenistic gems, —fig. 7. It is a head of the Lisipean Hercules

23. «...si l'Espagne nous restituait encore d'autres spécimens semblables, que l'Italie ne nous a jamais fait connaître, on pourrait jusqu'à un certain point trouver dans ce fait une probabilité que le multiple du victoriatus a été frappé en Espagne seulement». *Recherches sur la Monnaie Romaine...*, vol. II, 1<sup>re</sup> Partie, Lyon 1866, 101-102.

24. NC 1970, 53-54, on the basis of certain similarity between the double-victoriatus obv. and the one which appeared in Campania, concludes that «the presence of a victoriatus in this hoard of course removes the slight evidence which the Spanish provenience of the double-victoriatus once provided for the situation of the mint».

25. Cf. Grueber *BMCR*, I, 190 and Mommsen, *Histoire de la Monnaie romaine* II, Paris 1870, 223, n.º 2.

26. Cf. the new coins hoards in Andalucian, L. Villaronga, «Diez años de Numismática Hispano-Cartagines 1973-1983», *Rivista di Studi Fenici*, 1983, 57-73; «Necesidades financieras en la Península Ibérica durante la Segunda Guerra Púnica...», *Nummus* 1981-83, 127 f.f.

27. Vid. a state of the question in J. M.º Blázquez «Retratos barcidas en las monedas cartaginesas» *Numisma*, 1976, 39-48.

type, a bearded adult, at rest, a style which attained great popularity and eventually replaced the young, beardless Hercules, in action. The same models that served for the gems are certain to have reached Cartagonova too and to have been used for coins, —fig. 8—.<sup>28</sup>

Where and when could these Roman coinages have passed into the hands of Hellenized artists?

There is a possible answer, which I should like to put forward, even though I myself do not think it is sufficiently demonstrable: that Scipio the Younger, once Carthagonova had been captured in 209, may have used the mint to issue proper Roman coins, victoriati.

Let me recall Robinson's position in this respect, which was criticized and which I should now like to reverse. Basing his argument on texts of Polibius and Livy —10, 17, 9 and 19, 1-2; 26, 47, 2 and 7— Robinson claimed that once Carthagonova had been taken, Scipio coined Carthaginian money showing male head/horse with palm tree, and interpreted the obverse as a portrait of Scipio himself.<sup>29</sup> There are several counter-arguments against this interpretation: 1) in the atmosphere and times of Scipio, a portrait on a coin would not have been likely; 2) why poor quality Roman fabric when the artists of the Carthaginian mint had a Hellenizing style, as may be seen in the rest of the Hispano-Punic coinage? 3) why should the most typical Carthaginian emblems have been chosen, without any variation, for a Roman coinage? etc. Robinson's argument, on the other hand, can be reversed: using the same Hellenized artists and perhaps even the same blanks it was possible to mint coins of Roman type and values, since these were easily adaptable, but the style, fabric and interpretation remain Hellenistic, typical of a mint which has been working along these lines for years. Scipio ordered double and half-victoriati as a commemorative and propagandistic issue, adapted, moreover, to the local denominations. The Hellenistic type of Niké was chosen and in the half-victoriatus Victory crowns not a trophy but a victorious R(oma). It is an appropriate allegory, for the historical moment. This theory is certainly an attractive one, but for the time being undemonstrable of course, even though the wide date span of the Mogente hoard renders the interpretation perfectly valid.

The Mogente numismatic materials do not allow us to be much more precise. The only dated coin is the Gelon II,<sup>30</sup> undoubtedly the most worn of the entire hoard, since none of its legends are legible. Most of the Hispano Punic coins of Mogente belongs to the last series, which both Robinson and Villaronga<sup>31</sup> consider to have been minted after Hannibal's departure for Italy in 218. As this series formed the greater part, 85 out of 111, of the Carthaginian coins to have appeared in Mogente, we may assume that quite a long time must have elapsed for the issue to reach the public in such large proportion. Unfortunately, we do not know clearly to what groups in the

28. *Antiken Gemmen in Deutschen Sammlungen, Band I, München, Teil 1, München, 1968, n.º 449.* My thanks to the Sammlung for the photograph.

29. «Punic coins of Spain and their bearing on the Roman Republican series» *Essay ...to H. Mattingly*, London 1956, 41 f.f.

30. Important datum given by García y Bellido, *Hispania Graeca* II, 225, pl. 168, A. *Guadán Numisma* 6, 1955, 16-7.

31. opp. citt. series 7 and XI respectively.

series these coins belong, but it is very possible that group 7(h), which Robinson named «Roman», the group which shows the poorest workmanship, may be missing.<sup>32</sup> If this were so, and we cannot be sure, the coins missing would be precisely the Punic coins minted after the fall of Carthagonova to the Romans,<sup>33</sup> which would mean that the hoarding took place not long after 209 BC, hence the freshness of the half-victoriatus and the absence of the drachms of Emporion imitation which do appear in Cheste, hoard very similar in composition to that of Mogent, but of a later date.<sup>34</sup> The presence of only one Roman coin in both hoards, and the fact that these coins are from the system's first issues —the anonymous half-victoriatus and the Dioscuri denarius with legend incuse on tablet, *RRC* 44/5 or 45/1— would support the theory of an early date, c.210, but the presence of imitation drachms and the fact that the denarius is somewhat worn<sup>35</sup> would suggest to fix a later date for Cheste. The burial of the hoard in Mogente after the capture of Carthagonova in 209 would explain why it contains neither imitation drachms nor coins from the last groups of the Punic series, together with the fact that there is only one Roman coin and that this is scarcely worn at all. If, furthermore, we accept that the half-victoriatus could have been minted in Carthagonova in 209-8, the whole series of dates become coherent.

Nevertheless, there is another, not chronological but geographical, possible explanation for the peculiar hoard composition: so rich in Punic coins and so scarce in pieces of the «Roman» territory (absence of imitation drachms, of victoriari of Sagunto and Saiti and of Roman coins), but with the presence of another group of the coinage, the oldest part of the hoard, that could be typical of the prewar currency: hemidrachms of Ebusus, drachms and obols of Emporion and the drachm of Gelon. This composition, and the presence of only one Roman coin after the nine year stay of Roman troops in Hispania, can only be explained if we accept that this hoard was collected in Punic territory, perhaps in or near Carthagonova, where the half-victoriatus was added to the hoard, fresh from a nearby mint.<sup>36</sup>

32. Gestoso refers to the groups described by Zobel for Cheste but in none of them the description is clear; in fact no coin of the group 7(h) from Mogente is in BM, or in *IVDJ*, cf. Robinson op. cit. 52 and A. Vives, *La Moneda Hispánica I*, Madrid 1926, 49, n.º VII, 14, 15, 16. Villaronga, *MHC* 87 and Marchetti op. cit. 361 f.f. agree with this absence.

33. Villaronga, *MHC* 93, thinks that the differences in fabric and style are due to the fact that they are from different camp-mints, and that all of them close in 209 after the Cartagonova defeat. I agree with Robinson —41 ff.— that probably the bad ones were minted between 209-206, in my opinion not in Cartagonova, but in other camp-mints, probably near Cástulo where the Cartaginians withdrew to after 206. To preserve the types is a natural reaction after a defeat, but the fabric is worse because they could not count on good artisans. If that is true I would propose with Robinson, although for different reasons, the date 209-206 for this sub-group.

34. M. Gómez Moreno, *Misceláneas*, Madrid 1949, 181, dated the Cheste hoard as later than one of Mogente, followed by Villaronga *MHC*, 88, not so Crawford *RRCH*, n.º 75 and 91; P. Beltran «Las monedas griegas ampuritanas...» op. cit. 301-3 is the first who gives a definite date: c. 209, as we see it is the same as the one propose by me.

35. Zobel, *MAE*, 88.

36. To conclude I should like to announce the identification of another piece: a hub for the reverse of victoriati. The presence in Hispania of this instrument, together with almost all the victoriati with incuse legend, and the exclusive presence here of the double— and half victoriati, all serve to make the *provincia* a particular interesting field for the beginnings of the issue.



1



3



2,5:1



2



2:1

4



5



6



2:1

7



8

ANS: American Numismatic Society, New York.

BRAH: *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, Madrid.

ERC: R. Thomsen, *Early Roman Coinage*, 3 vols. Copenhagen 1957-61.

IVDJ: Instituto Valencia de Don Juan, Madrid.

MAE: J. Zobel de Zangroniz, *Estudio Histórico de la Moneda Antigua Española*, I, Madrid, 1878.

MAN: Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid.

MHC: L. Villaronga, *Las Monedas Hispano-Cartaginesas*, Barcelona, 1973.

NH: *Numario Hispánico*, Madrid.

RRC: M. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, 2 vols., Cambridge, 1974.

RRCH: M. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coin Hoards*, London, 1969.

SNG: *Sillogae Nummorum Graecorum*.