

COINS FROM MINTS OF THRACE AND LOWER MOESIA ON THE VIMINACIUM CEMETERY “VIŠE GROBALJA”

ABSTRACT

Coin finds from mints of Thrace and Lower Moesia dating from 2nd and 3rd century that were discovered on the Viminacium necropolis “Više Grobalja” are of great importance for tracing the ways of monetary circulation in the Balkan and Danubian provinces of the Empire. At this necropolis, 25 examples were discovered, dating from the time of Antoninus Pius to Philipp I.

KEY WORDS: ROMAN PROVINCIAL MINTING, THRACE, LOWER MOESIA, VIMINACIUM.

During the systematic archaeological excavation of the Viminacium necropolis “Više Grobalja”, 25 examples of bronze coins were found, minted either in Thrace or Lower Moesia (Table 1).¹ Studying of numismatic finds from the cemeteries of Viminacium offers possibilities for new and exceptional discoveries, mostly because of the fact that one comes upon a huge sample from reliable archaeological contexts. Final publication of the whole numismatic fundus from this ancient

site will represent a great contribution to the study of Roman coinage and point out once more the great importance Viminacium once had, as an important administrative, economic and military metropolis in this part of the Empire.

Thrace		
	Hadrianopolis	3
	Augusta Traiana	1
	Mesembria	1
	Pautalia	9
	Perinthos	2
	Plotinopolis	1
	Philippopolis	2

¹ Systematic excavations of the southern Viminacium cemetery (sites „Više Grobalja“ and „Pećine“) were undertaken from 1978 to 1987. Coins found at the site „Više Grobalja“ were published so far, making some 40% of all the numismatic finds from the southern Viminacium cemetery.

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Lower Moesia		
	Marcianopolis	1
	Nicopolis ad Istrum	5
Total		25

Table 1. Coins from the mints of Trace and Lower Moesia from the necropolis “Više Grobalja”.

It is especially interesting to track down the ways of circulation in the Balkan provinces of the Roman Empire and that is why our intention was drawn by the Thracian and Moesian examples found at Viminacium. As already known, the difference between provincial and imperial coinage is in their areas of circulation. On the other hand, during the first half of 3rd century, one felt the lack of small bronze coins within the Balkan provinces (Borić-Brešković 1976: 8, ref. 2). It is therefore obvious that coins from the local Balkan were replacing bronze coins from the Roman mint on a large scale.² The coins from Thracian and Moesian mints found at the necropolis „Više Grobalja“ can be dated from the period of Antoninus Pius to Philipp I (Table 2).

² Apart from coins from the mentioned mints of Viminacium, Thrace and Lower Moesia, at the „Više Grobalja“ necropolis there are also coins from other Balkan mints: Stobi, Philippi, Union of Macedonian cities and coins from the province of Dacia.

It is noticeable that coins from these mints circulated towards the West already in the second half of 2nd century, being most intense during Severian times and then starting to decline, which corresponds with opening of the Viminacium mint, which began to mint enough bronze coins at the territory of Upper Moesia. An almost identical picture of circulation and chronology is shown related to the coins of the Nicaea mint, much represented at the „Više Grobalja“ necropolis (Vojvoda 2011: 243–256). Geographical position of Viminacium, at the cross-road of many roads, of which the main lead towards the south to Naissus and after that over Thrace and Bosphorus, made it one of the most important points on the road towards the East. Wars, that often broke out starting from the time of Septimius Severus and becoming even more numerous during his heirs, lead to a great circulation of people, goods and money along the road over Thrace and Upper Moesia. Obviously, there were several reasons that lead to a greater money circulation between the Balkan provinces and the provinces in Asia Minor, especially from Bithynia, over Thrace and Upper Moesia and ever further to the West, since at the same time finds of Nicaean coins were found at the territory of the southeast Alps (Kos 1986: 107–109).³

³ Emona – Iulia Maesa (1 pc.) i Severus Alexander

Emperor or a family member	no. of pieces	%
Antoninus Pius	2	8
Marcus Aurelius	2	8
Faustina Iunior	3	12
Commodus	1	4
Septimius Severus	4	16
Caracalla	5	20
Plautilla	1	4
Geta	3	12
Elagabalus	1	4
Gordian III	2	8
Philipp Senior	1	4
Total	25	100

Table 2. Coin percentage of different emperors and their family members.

Further research and publishing the greatest number possible of all the coins from Upper Moesia, as well as from Thrace and Lower Moesia will make it possible for us to understand historical circumstances and consequences they had on life in these neighbouring provinces.

(1); Poetovio – Elagabalus (2), Severus Alexander (3), Iulia Mamaea (1).

CATALOGUE¹

¹ Abbreviations used: r. = right; l. = left; st. = standing; si. = sitting; lau. = laureal wreath; rad. = radial crown; dr. = draped; arm. = armour; in lig. = in ligature.

Moesia Inferior
Marcianopolis
Caracalla

cat. no./no. of il-lustr.	Obverse	Reverse	Weight (gr.) Diameter (mm) axis	Reference	Dating	Više Grobalja C no.
1	AVT K [...] ANTONINOC Bust facing r., head with lau.	MAPKIAN[...]ΩN Grape	2,22 17,40 NE	Мушмовъ, 426	198-217	8198

Nicopolis ad Istrum
Commodus

2	AV K MA AVT KOM[...] Bust facing r., head with lau.	ΗΓΕ ΚΑΙ[...]Α[...]ΕΡ - N[...] Apollo (?) st. l. in front of an altar, in r. hand holding a patera, in l. a stick (?).	13,37 29,90 N	Мушмовъ, unknown, but no. 893 naked male figure holding a horn and a stick; no. 1064 (Caracalla) Apollo in l. hand holding a branch.	180-192	980
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Septimius Severus						
3	[...] CEVHPPOC Head facing r., with lau.	NIKOΠOΛITΩN ΠPOCIC Star.	2,53 18,10 S	Мушмовъ, 948	193-211	4247
Caracalla						
4	[...] ANTONIN Head facing r., bare	NIKOΠOΛITΩN ΠPOCIC TPON Star above cres- cent.	2,25 17,00 SE	Мушмовъ, 1097	198-217	913
Plautilla						
5	[...] ΠAAV- TIAAA CEB Bust dr. facing r.	[...] ΓAΛΛOY NIKOΠOΛIT[...] Eagle on a globe, wings spread, head facing r., wreath in his beak.	9,61 26,30 N	Мушмовъ, 1159	undatable 202-205 ?	8989
Elagabalus						
6	Illegible. Head facing r., head with lau.	NIKO [...] In lau. wreath.	5,74 23,20 N	Мушмовъ, 1426	218-222	9742
Thrace Hadrianopolis Autonomous minting						
7	TON KTI-CTHEN Bearded head of Heracles facing r.	AΔPIANO-[...] Heracles fighting a Hydra, behind him bow and quiver.	3,01 19,20 N	Мушмовъ, 2479; Юрукова, 709	Gordianus III	903

Caracalla							
8	[...] AVR CEV -ANTONINOC Bust dr. facing r., head with lau.	ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟ- ΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ Asclepius st. straight, in his r. hand stick around which winds a snake.	8,56 27,00 NE	Мушмовъ, 2605; Юрукова, 303.	198-217	4289	
Gordian III							
9	ΑΥΤ Κ Μ ΑΝΤ ΓΟΡΔΙΑΝΟC ΑΥΓ (VI in lig.) Bust dr., arm. fac- ing r., head with lau.	ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟ- ΠΟΛΕΙ ex – ΤΩΝ Temple with four pillars and four steps, at the en- trance st. Fortuna, holding a stem and a cornucopia.	11,68 26,70 S	Мушмовъ, 2758; Юрукова, 497.	238-244	4127	
Augusta Traiana (Traianopolis) Geta							
10	ΠΣΕΠΤ - ΤΕΤΑC K Bust dr. facing r., head bareheaded.	ΑΥΓ ΤΡΑΙΑ ex – ΝΗC Lion facing r.	3,74 17,50 N	Мушмовъ, 3104	197-208	11569	

Mesembria
Philip I

11	<p>MAP IOY AIOY [...] ex – KAICAP Bust dr., arm. facing r., head bare headed, across the bust of Serapis facing l.</p>	<p>MECA-MBP-IA-ΩN Female figure (Demeter ?) st. facing l., in r. hand holding a patera, behind her a tree branch with a snake around it.</p>	<p>12,53 27,50 SW</p>	<p>Мушмовъ, 4037</p>	<p>244-249</p>	<p>9080/1</p>
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Pautalia
Marcus Aurelius

12	<p>[...] AVP – ANT[...] Bust dr. facing r., head with lau.</p>	<p>ΗΓΕΜ ΤΟΥ ΛΛΙΟΥ-V – ΜΑΞΙΜΟΥ ex – ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙ ΩΤΩΝ Female figure with kalathos on head si. facing l., in her r. hand holding Victoria, in l. a cornucopia. [...] Μ ΤΟΥ ΛΛ[...] ex – ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΩ</p>	<p>19,19 31,40 S</p>	<p>Мушмовъ, 4091</p>	<p>161-180</p>	<p>2620</p>
13	<p>Πεγίβη Head facing r., with lau.</p>	<p>ΤΩΝ Temple with four pillars, Asclepius and Hygieia standing at the entrance.</p>	<p>17,42 31,10 N</p>	<p>Мушмовъ, 4101</p>	<p>161-180</p>	<p>1776</p>

Faustina II

14	ΦΑΥΣ[...] Bust dr. facing r.	ΟΥΛΠΠΙΑΣ ΠΑ[...] Fortuna st. facing l., in her r. hand holding a stern, in her l. a cornucopia.	7,65 21,50 N	Мушмовъ, 4114	undated 161-175	981
15	ΦΑΥΣΤΕΙΝ[...] Bust dr. facing r.	Ο[...] Similar.	6,28 24,00 S	Мушмовъ, 4114	undated 161-175	217

Septimius Severus

16	[...] Κ Α СЕР – СΕΥΗΡΟΣ Π Bust dr., arm. fac- ing r., head with lau.	Illegible (around) ex – ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑС Horseman fac- ing r., waving his spear towards a lion	17,05 31,90 S	Мушмовъ, 4183	193-211	1701
17	ΑΥ Κ Α СΕΠΤ – СΕΥΕΡΟΣ Bust dr. facing r., head with lau.	ΟΥΛΠΠΙΑ[С] – [ΠΑΥ]ΤΑΛΙΑС Naked male figure (?) st. facing l., in r. hand holding (?), in his l. a scepter.	3,53 19,40 SW	Мушмовъ, unknown	193-211	7377

Caracalla

18	[...]P CEV - ANTONINOC Bust dr., arm. facing r., head with lau.	OV[...] – ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑC Asclepius st. straight, in his r. hand a stick with a winding snake. ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑC – OV/ΠΙAC Concordia st. facing l., in her r. hand holding a patera above an altar, in her l. a cornucopia.	14,75 30,10 S	Мушмовъ, 4236	198-217	8845
19	AVT K MAVPH - ANTONINOC Bust dr., arm. facing r., head with lau.	OV/ΠΙAC Concordia st. facing l., in her r. hand holding a patera above an altar, in her l. a cornucopia.	15,77 30,00 N	Мушмовъ, 4275	198-217	4465

Geta

20	Λ CE[...] – ΓΕΤΑC K Bust dr., arm. facing r., head bareheaded.	ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑC – OV/ΠΙAC Dionysus, naked, st. facing l., in his r. hand holding grapes, in his l. a thyrsus.	3,17 18,80 S	Мушмовъ, 4326	197-208	8059
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Perinthos
Septimius Severus

21	[...]CEΠ – CEV- HPOC Π Bust dr., arm. facing r., head with lau.	AKTIA – ΠΥΘΙΑ ex – ΠΕΡΙΠΘΙΩΝ ΝΕΩΚΟΡΩΝ Table with two urns standing on it, in each there is a palm tree, under the table a two-handled amphora.	13,39 29,70 S	Мушмовъ, 4506	193-211	5054
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Geta

22	AVT KPAT CE-Π ΓΕΤΑC CEB Bust dr., arm. facing r., head with rad.	ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΕΙΑ- [ΠΕΡΙΠΘΙΩΝ ex – ΝΕΩΚΟΡΩΝ] Tyche st. straight, head facing l., in each hand holding a temple with eight pillars.	19,84 33,60 S	Мушмовъ, unknown; but no. 4580 Tyche holding a temple and a cornucopia.	209-212	7325
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Plotinopolis
Faustina II

23	ΦΑΥΣΤΕΙΝΑ – CE[...] Bust dr. facing r.	ΠΛΩΤΕΙΝΟ- ΠΟΛΕ[...] Apollo, naked, legs crossed st. facing r. in front of an altar, in his r. hand holding a branch, his l. lean- ing on his hip.	5,82 22,30 N	Мушмовъ, 4729	undatable 161-175	206
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Philippopolis

Antoninus Pius

24	ΑΥΤ ΑΙ ΑΔΡΙΑΝ – [...] head facing r., with lau.	[...] ΑΝΤΙΚΟV ΦΙΛΙΠΠΙΟΠ[...] Fluvial deity rest- ing and facing l., in his r. hand holding klasje, elbow of the l. arm leaning on a rock from which water springs.	17,96 30,30 N	Мушмовъ, 5120	138-161	10156
25	[...] ΑΔΡΙΑ [...] Similar.	Illegible. Similar.	21,21 30,30 S	Мушмовъ, 5120	138-161	2238

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Na viminacijumskoj nekropoli „Više Grobalja“ pronađeno je 25 primeraka bronzanog novca koji su emitovani u provincijskim kovnicama Trakije i Donje Mezije. Zastupljen je novac sedam tračkih i dve donjomezijske kovnice (Tabla 1), u rasponu od Antonina Pija do Filipa I (Tabela 2).

Analiza pojedinačnih nalaza novca, pored značaja za istraživanje cirkulacije u pojedinim delovima Carstva, pruža podatke i za bolje upoznavanje sa istorijskim okolnostima u provincijama. Za istraživače balkanskih rimskih provincija veoma je važno publikovanje, u što većoj meri, kako pojedinačnih, tako i skupnih numizmatičkih nalaza sa teritorije Mezije Superior, Mezije Inferior i Trakije. Cilj ovog rada je upravo da široj javnosti ukaže na puteve cirkulacije provincijskog kovanja između pomenutih rimskih provincija, u određenom periodu.



