



# JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Institute of Archeology and Art History of  
Romanian Academy Cluj-Napoca  
Technical University Of Cluj-Napoca



**JAHA**  
JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY  
AND ARCHAEOLOGY

# Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14795/j.v8i1>

ISSN 2360 – 266X

ISSN-L 2360 – 266X



Scopus®



**Clarivate  
Analytics**



Central and Eastern European Online Library



**No. 8.1 /2021**

# CONTENTS

## STUDIES

### ANCIENT HISTORY

#### Alin HENȚ, Daniel CIOATĂ

DEBUNKING A MYTH: THE DACIAN CURVED SWORD  
BETWEEN HISTORIOGRAPHICAL DISCOURSE  
AND THE ARCHEOLOGICAL REALITIES ..... 5

### NUMISMATICS

#### Emre ERDAN

IT'S A SWORD, IT'S A SCABBARD, IT'S TISNA COINS  
WITH DEPICTION OF PERSIAN AKINAKES ..... 19

#### Metodi MANOV

AN UNKNOWN COIN DIE OF AUGUSTUS (27 BC – 14 AD),  
FOUND NEAR OESCUS ON THE DANUBE ..... 26

#### Cristian GĂZDAC, Marius-Mihai CIUȚĂ

RECOVERING CULTURAL HERITAGE.  
FORENSIC ARCHAEOLOGY AND NUMISMATICS  
– THE ROMAN HOARD FROM  
THE PRISACA HILL (ROMANIA) ..... 34

#### François de CALLATAÏ

A STILL LIFE OIL PAINTED BY HENDRIK VANDER  
BORGH T IN 1650 WITH ANCIENT COINS FROM DACIA:  
A HIGHLY EDUCATED WORK  
AND A POLITICAL MANIFESTO ..... 47

### ARCHAEOLOGY

#### Aleksandr SYMONENKO

LATE SCYTHIAN NECROPOLIS CHERVONY MAYAK:  
10 YEARS OF EXPLORATION ..... 69

#### Vitalie BÂRCĂ

THE SARMATIAN MIRROR WITH TAMGAS  
FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF SEBEȘ - "PODUL PRIPOCULUI"  
(ALBA COUNTY, ROMANIA): 50 YEARS LATER ..... 87

#### Emil Sever GEORGESCU

TROPAEUM TRAIANI: REVISITING THE FIELD FINDINGS  
OF CARL WILHELM WUTZER (1856) VS. EXCAVATION DATA  
OF GRIGORE TOCILESCU (1885)  
ON THE TRIUMPHAL MONUMENT ..... 116

#### Hossein SARHADDI-DADIAN, Zuliskandar RAMLI, Hossein MORADI, Zohre JOZI

COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS ANALYSIS OF THE  
POTTERY SHARDS FROM KUH-I KHAWJA HISTORICAL  
SITE, SISTAN, EAST OF IRAN ..... 127

### DIGITAL ARCHAEOLOGY

#### Radu COMES, Cătălin GREC, Călin NEAMȚU, Cristian GĂZDAC, Liliana Mateescu-SUCIU

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE?...NOT ANYMORE FROM PHOTO  
TO 3D PRINTED CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSETS REPLICAS  
THE TWO MISSING IRON DISCS FROM THE DACIAN  
HILLFORT OF PIATRA ROȘIE (ROMANIA) ..... 134

## REVIEWS

#### Csaba SZABÓ

SCHEIDEL, WALTER (ED.), *THE SCIENCE  
OF ROMAN HISTORY. BIOLOGY, CLIMATE  
AND THE FUTURE OF THE PAST*, PRINCETON/OXFORD,  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2018. .... 144

#### Annamária-Izabella PÁZSINT

RADA VARGA, *CARVING A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY.  
THE OCCUPATIONAL EPIGRAPHY OF THE LATIN WEST*,  
ARCHAEOPRESS ROMAN ARCHAEOLOGY 73, OXFORD,  
ARCHAEOPRESS, 2021 ..... 147

#### Matthew G. MARSH

TOURAJ DARYAEE & KHODADAD REZAKHANI.  
*FROM OXUS TO EUPHRATES: THE WORLD OF  
LATE ANTIQUE IRAN*. ANCIENT IRAN SERIES VOL. 1  
IRVINE/LOS ANGELES, CA: JORDAN CENTRE  
FOR PERSIAN STUDIES/  
FARHANG FOUNDATION, 2017 ..... 150

Design & layout:  
Petru Ureche

### AN UNKNOWN COIN DIE OF AUGUSTUS (27 BC – 14 AD), FOUND NEAR OESCUS ON THE DANUBE

**Abstract:** The paper presents an unknown coin die, which is for obverse of denarii of Augustus. The coin die is said to have been found many years ago in the vicinity of the village of Gigen, district of Pleven – near the ancient Roman colony of Ulpia Oescus and is now kept in a private collection. Only the bronze plate is preserved, where in negative is featured a portrait of Augustus, turned to the left, and around the portrait image is disposed the legend: AVGVSTVS DIVI F – mirrored. The coin type of the coin die is for denarii of Augustus struck in the mint at Lugdunum (today Lyon, France) between 15 and 11 BC. The new coin die presented is of the same type as one of the coin dies from the collection of the National Institute of Archaeology with Museum in Sofia. The collection of the same museum in Sofia stores another obverse coin die for denarii of Augustus of a type struck in the mint at Colonia Patricia (today Cordoba, Spain). All three obverse coin dies for denarii of Augustus are discussed in a general context, because their time of making is between 17 – 16 and 15 – 11 BC. All three obverse coin dies of Augustus are represented as dies of moving military camp mints.

**Keywords:** *coin die, Augustus, military camp coinage, Oescus, Moesia.*

**Metodi MANOV**

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences  
National Institute of Archaeology with Museum –  
Sofia  
hemusthegreat@abv.bg

DOI: 10.14795/j.v8i1.579

ISSN 2360 – 266X

ISSN–L 2360 – 266X

**A**ncient coin dies are the most interesting objects directly related to the striking of coins. They are quite rare and are therefore even more valuable to science. For comparison, today are known hundreds of thousands of ancient coins, but in museums and in private collections worldwide probably are known no more than about 150 such ancient coin dies. The rarity of this type of numismatic items is due to their functions. Preparation of coin dies was entrusted to very skillful and experienced engravers who were under the exclusive control of state authorities. The official authorities have taken extremely strict security measures for the preservation of the necessary coin dies until they were fit for coin production. To avoid unofficial and uncontrolled by the authorities coinage, coin dies for each issue were usually destroyed when they were worn out of use. These circumstances also explain the extremely rare finding antique dies for coins.

For example from Bulgaria from the pre-Roman times and from the Roman period hitherto are known totally of 10 coin dies – 6 in museums and 4 in private collections, among which 3 are in the Numismatic fund of the National Institute of Archaeology with Museum in Sofia – 1 coin die for imitations of tetradrachms of the type of Philip II<sup>1</sup> and two obverse coin

<sup>1</sup> DOBRUSKI 1897, 564; KUBITSCHKEK 1925, 134, n. 1; Pl. 13, Fig. A-1; VERMEULE 1954, 12, n. 6.

dies of Augustus<sup>2</sup>, an obverse coin die for solids of emperor Jovian from the Museum of Archaeology in Plovdiv<sup>3</sup> and a reverse coin die is kept now in the museum in Varna, which is for striking of early silver coins of small denomination of Apollonia Pontica<sup>4</sup>. In addition, in private collections are known one positive matrix – actually a hub, for preparation of negative coin dies for Celtic type coins<sup>5</sup>, a reverse coin die that is for denarii of Caesar<sup>6</sup> and one reverse coin die for denarii of emperor Tiberius<sup>7</sup>. Also a reverse coin die has been published for Roman Republican denarii from the second century BC from a private collection in Bulgaria<sup>8</sup>, and an obverse coin die, also for Republican denarii of 91 BC, is kept in the National History Museum in Sofia<sup>9</sup>.

The study of coin dies always put a large number of problems related to coin production, as well as its centres or mints. In different historical periods of development of the ancient world there were different states and cities which had their own mint. Moreover, in the later periods of the Roman Empire the right to have their mint was given to many provincial cities.

It should be noted explicitly that most of the known today coin dies were found far from the official mints with some exceptions. Moreover, some of the coins present some deviations from the iconographic and stylistic canons of the official coinage centres. In this respect, such coin dies provide new guidelines for the study of the functions of another, different coinage and the conditions and circumstances under which it was carried out<sup>10</sup>.

It will be presented a new and formerly unknown obverse coin die that is for striking of denarii of Augustus. The coin die has been found before many years in the vicinity of the village of Gigen, district of Plevan – near the ancient Roman colony Ulpia Oescus and is now kept in a private collection. Only the bronze plate of the coin die is preserved, on which there is a negative portrait of Augustus, turned to the left, around which is the legend: AVGVSTVS DIVI F – mirrored (Fig. 1a). Part of border of dots is visible. The diameter of the plate-die is 28 mm and its thickness is 2 mm. The coin die has a light green to dark patina in one part, with traces of corrosion on the surface. On its left side the coin die is damaged, as in the antiquity it was cut by a sharp chisel so that part of the plate is now missing and in one place it is cracked. In addition, some parts of the legend are pretty worn and damaged by its intensive use during the striking of coins. Traces of residual silver from the minting process can also be seen on its surface. On the reverse side of the bronze plate there is a round bulge by which the coin die was attached to an iron part, which is now missing, but the traces



**Fig. 1a and 1b.** Obverse and reverse side of an unknown coin die of Augustus, found in the vicinity of Oescus (diameter: 28 mm; private collection; photo: the author).

of rust are still visible (Fig. 1b). Obviously after maximal possible use of this coin die, finally it had been destroyed and thrown away. Thanks to two obverse dies also for denarii of Augustus, which are kept in the National Institute of Archaeology with Museum – Sofia, we can get an idea of how it looked the whole coin die, which was composed of two parts. The difference in these dies compared to the new coin die presented is that these convexities on the dies from the Museum in Sofia were made on the iron parts, while on the new die the prominence, or the bulge itself, was made on the plate and a bed was apparently made in the iron part – actually the iron case or sheath, now missing.



**Fig. 1c.** Horizontally flipped positive image of the same coin die.

Among the previously known coin dies from the Roman period, the most numerous are those of Augustus<sup>11</sup>. Two types of Roman coin dies are known – those that have been engraved in the official centres of coinage or elsewhere, and those that were made by an impression of an original coin on a highly heated bronze plate<sup>12</sup>. As far as can be judged, the presented here coin die was prepared in the second way – by impression of a denarius onto the plate, as traces of the irregular flan of the coin used are clearly visible in the upper part over the border of dots (Fig. 1c). This can be explained by the need for striking coins far beyond official centres. The new coin die presented here is of the same type as one of the dies in the collection of NIAM-BAS in Sofia<sup>13</sup>, and the coin type of this die is for denarii of Augustus struck in the mint at Lugdunum (today Lyon, France) in 15 BC<sup>14</sup> or between 15

<sup>2</sup> KUBITSCHKE 1925, 134-135, n. 2 and n. 3; Pl. 13, Fig. A-2 and A-3; VERMEULE 1954, 23, no. 21 and no. 22; GIARD 1976, 24, nos. 1-2; BOJKOVA 1984, 15-19; 16, 1-2 and 3-4; BOJKOVA 1992, 62-65; PAUNOV 2014, 29-30, Fig. 1 and Fig. 2.

<sup>3</sup> GERASIMOV 1934, 438-439; BOJKOVA 1986, 8-11.

<sup>4</sup> LAZARENKO 2009.

<sup>5</sup> DRAGANOV 2008, 36-41; 39 with Fig. 1. Recently republished: MANOV 2018, 247-248 and Pl. 54, Fig. 5.

<sup>6</sup> MANOV 2002, 1118-1121.

<sup>7</sup> MANOV 2002, 1120-1121.

<sup>8</sup> PAUNOV 2014, 32 with Fig. 10.

<sup>9</sup> PENCHEV 2013; PAUNOV 2014, 32, Fig. 11.

<sup>10</sup> BOJKOVA 1984, 15.

<sup>11</sup> VERMEULE 1954, 20-24; GIARD 1976, Pl. A; BOJKOVA 1992, 64; PAUNOV 2014, 31, Fig. 5.

<sup>12</sup> PAUNOV 2014, 29-30.

<sup>13</sup> BOJKOVA 1984, 15, no. 2; 16, Fig. 3-4, with inv. no. 164, but the place of finding is given as near Dolna Dikanya; PAUNOV 2014, 29, no. 1; 30, Fig. 1.

<sup>14</sup> BOJKOVA 1984, 16.



**Fig. 2.** Denarius of Augustus struck in Lugdunum/Lyon, France, 15 – 13 BC (image after: Numismatica Ars Classica, Auction 59, 4 April 2011, Lot 1838).



**Fig. 3.** Denarius of Augustus struck in Lugdunum/Lyon, France, 15 – 13 BC (image after: Numismatica Ars Classica, Auction 106, May 2018, Lot 562 = [https://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s1609.html#RIC\\_0165a](https://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s1609.html#RIC_0165a) with permission of [www.wildwinds.com](http://www.wildwinds.com)).



**Fig. 4.** Denarius of Augustus struck in Lugdunum/Lyon, France, 12 – 11 BC (image after: [https://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/av-gustus/RIC\\_0174.jpg](https://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/av-gustus/RIC_0174.jpg) – with permission of [www.wildwinds.com](http://www.wildwinds.com)).

and 13 – 11 BC<sup>15</sup> as on the obverse of these coins the head of Augustus is bare and has no laurel wreath. The different issues of the mint at Lugdunum are with different reverses, but all coins are labeled with IMP X, XI or XII (figs. 2, 3, 4)<sup>16</sup>. It is believed that the bimetallic coin dies made of bronze and iron parts were intended for protection of cracking of blows by a hammer in the process of striking coins<sup>17</sup>.

Finding Roman coin dies far away from the official centres of coinage has caused numerous discussions and there are opinions mainly in the older literature on the topic that they were used by ancient forgers<sup>18</sup>. Of course such assumptions do not exhaust the possible interpretations. Rather, for such coin dies should be sought other solutions.

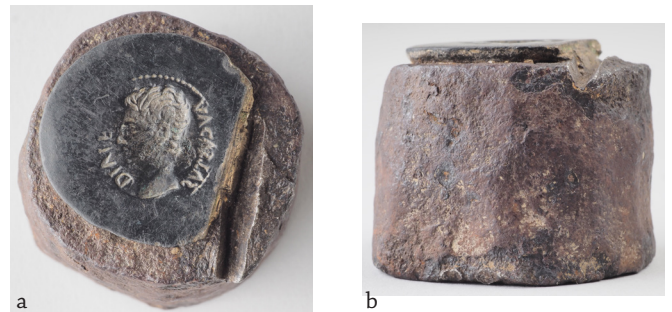
<sup>15</sup> SUTHERLAND 1984 = RIC I<sup>2</sup>, 162a; PAUNOV, 29-30, fig. 1.

<sup>16</sup> KUBITSCHER 1925, 135; GIARD 1976, 50-51, Pl. LVI.

<sup>17</sup> BOJKOVA 1984, 17 with ref.

<sup>18</sup> PAUNOV 2014, 32-34 with lit.

History of the Hellenistic and Roman periods is composed of a large number of distant wars and military campaigns of major military units, who often stayed at camp in different places far from their political centre for months and sometimes even years. Therefore, in exceptional circumstances, such as a war or a long distant military expedition, probably the central authority has given permission to the military units to organize a mobile, camp mint. In this military mint during camping in certain areas was carried out coinage in order to be paid the salaries of soldiers and officers, which could be a possible reason for such a military coinage. In this direction have been interpreted both coin dies for denarii of Augustus from NIAM – Sofia – as part of the stock of a mobile military mint<sup>19</sup> and these ideas have already been accepted<sup>20</sup>. In fact with the new coin die presented here, which is for the obverse of denarii of Augustus, such coin dies found in Bulgaria are already three. The most interesting is that coin types of Augustus for which they are intended, are dated in a very short span of time – between 17 – 16 BC and 15 – 13/11 BC, and the three coin dies have their certainly fixed locations of finding. One of the dies from the collection of NIAM – Sofia (inv. no. 164) is also for denarii of Augustus of types struck in Lugdunum (today Lyon, France) and was found in the vicinity of the town of Vratsa, Bulgaria (Fig. 5a and 5b) at the end of the 19th century<sup>21</sup>. The other coin die from the fund of NIAM – Sofia (inv. no. 165), is for obverse types of denarii of Augustus struck in Colonia Patricia in Spain (today Cordoba) (Fig. 6a and 6b) and was found near the village of Dolna Dikanya, the area of Radomir, district of Pernik<sup>22</sup>.



**Fig. 5a and 5b.** A coin die of Augustus from the collection of NIAM – Sofia, found in the vicinity of the town of Vratsa, Bulgaria (inv. No. 164; diameter: 28.8 mm, height: 28 mm; photo: Krassimir Georgiev).

<sup>19</sup> BOJKOVA 1984, 18; BOJKOVA 1992, 65.

<sup>20</sup> MANOV 2002, 1119; PAUNOV 2014, 34.

<sup>21</sup> GIARD 1976, no. 1361; SUTHERLAND 1984 = RIC I<sup>2</sup>, 162a; BOJKOVA 1984, 15, no. 2; 16, Fig. 3-4; In fact, in both publications of Bojkova – BOJKOVA 1984 and BOJKOVA 1992 – both coin dies are with just the opposite representations regarding their places of finding – this of the type of denarii struck at Lugdunum (NIAM-BAS, inv. no. 164) is said to be found near Dolna Dikanya, and that one of the type of denarii struck at Cordoba (NIAM-BAS, inv. no. 165) is said to be found near Vratsa. See the comments in Paunov 2014, 30 with footnote 7 – about the confused place of finding of the two coin dies from the fund of NIAM-BAS. In fact, the coin die of the type of denarii, struck at Lugdunum – exactly with the legend AVGVSTVS DIVVS – is placed with an image and text as found near the modern town of Vratsa – in the book dedicated to the history of Vratsa, published in 1976: see NIKOLOV/MASHOV 1976, 64 – the image there. This fact proves the recent order of places of finding both coin dies from NIAM-BAS, revised by PAUNOV 2014, but noticed still by KUBITSCHER 1925, 134-135, n. 2 and n. 3; Pl. 13, Fig. A-2 and A-3; and VERMEULE 1954, 23.

<sup>22</sup> GIARD 1976, no. 1237; SUTHERLAND 1984 = RIC I<sup>2</sup>, 148; BOJKOVA 1984, 16, Fig. 1-2; BOJKOVA 1992, 64; PAUNOV 2014, 30, no. 2, Fig. 2.



**Fig. 6a and 6b.** A coin die of Augustus from the collection of NIAM – Sofia, found near the village of Dolna Dikanya, district of Pernik, Bulgaria (inv. No. 165; diametre: 24.8 mm, height: 23 mm; photo: Krassimir Georgiev).

An interesting fact is that the new coin die presented here is similarly damaged by a sharp chisel as one of the dies from the collection of NIAM – Sofia, but the damage is in the left field. Apparently, some of the coin dies, after being struck corresponding quantity of coins, have been destroyed in this way, which demonstrates a certain control by some (military?) authority. The fact that all the three obverse coin dies for denarii of Augustus are arranged as a time of preparation in a very limited time span – between 17/16 BC and 15/13 – 11 BC, is hardly accidental. This requires the presentation of a joint interpretation with regard to their places of finding and using.

What was the role of already three dies for denarii of Augustus found in the Bulgarian lands and what events could be connected with them? In the older literature such dies have been identified as used by forgers<sup>23</sup>, or other authors thought that because of their slightly different style sensed in the portrait of Augustus and in more irregular letters of legend were probably used for imitative coinage<sup>24</sup>.

But it was indicated that in order to carry out an imitative coinage, issued coins had to have considerable popularity among the local population<sup>25</sup>. Review of the composition of the coin finds from the Bulgarian lands in which there are denarii of Augustus, however, found that the majority of the coins are Roman Republican denarii and the presence of denarii of Augustus in these findings is quite modest – represented sometimes only with few coins<sup>26</sup> and these facts show that the coins of Augustus among the local population were not so popular to be imitated<sup>27</sup>.

As evidence of an imitative coinage is considered the collective find of 14 coin dies for imitations of Roman Republican denarii, found at Tilişka, near Sibiu in Romania, which yet C. Preda previously linked with the activities of the famous ruler of Dacia – Burebista, who had undertaken some reforms in the coinage<sup>28</sup>. But the case for the three dies from Bulgaria obviously is not the same. It must be found another solution. It is noteworthy that their places of finding outline as if a road most likely connected with the movement of troops, which should be in the south – north direction. To find a solution for the appearance of these three dies of

<sup>23</sup> VERMEULE 1954, 23; PAUNOV 2014, 32-34 with ref.

<sup>24</sup> GIARD 1976, 24-25.

<sup>25</sup> BOJKOVA 1992, 65.

<sup>26</sup> PAUNOV/PROKOPOV 2002.

<sup>27</sup> BOJKOVA 1984, 18.

<sup>28</sup> PEDA 1973, 345-352.

Augustus – one – south of the Haemus and two – north of the Haemus, we should see what the historical situation on the Balkans had been at the time of government of the first Roman emperor Augustus and even before him.

Even after the conquest of Macedonia by Rome and especially after Macedonia becoming a Roman province in 148 BC, the Roman authorities there had a lot of problems with closer and more distant tribes, and especially with the Scordisci, who together with other tribes often invaded Macedonia, which events being well presented by some ancient authors<sup>29</sup>. Roman authorities then undertook subsequent punitive military expeditions with the aim of restraining the invaders, which may explain the so wide spread of Roman Republican denarii still in the 2nd century BC and the first half of the first century BC in the lands of today Bulgaria, though and some commercial contacts should not be excluded<sup>30</sup>. A significant number of these coins have acted mostly in the lands north of the Haemus Mountains in today's northwestern Bulgaria, where the majority of single finds and many coin hoards comprised of Roman Republican denarii were found, likely arrived mainly by Roman armies and merchants, but also probably taken as booty by the local tribes in the battles against the Roman troops.

After the battle of Actium in 31 BC, the policy of Augustus was closely linked to the conquest of the Balkan lands to the Danube, in order to ensure the northern border of the Empire, being placed on the natural barrier of the great European river. Indeed, the first Roman troops reached the river Danube at the mouth of the river Timok (the ancient Timacus) even during the campaigns of Gaius Scribonius Curio in 75 – 73 BC against the Dardani and Moesi<sup>31</sup>. But a permanent control of the lands between the Haemus and the Danube took place for the first time since the Macedonian provincial governor Marcus Licinius Crassus had undertaken his two consecutive campaigns – in 29 and 28 BC, when he defeated some of the Thracian tribes both sides of the Haemus Mountains and to the Danube. He also defeated the invading south of the Danube tribes of the Bastarnae, as and their leader Deldo had been murdered (Cass. Dio 51.23.2 sqq.). Crassus thus imposed his power by force of arms in these lands in the Balkans and paved the way for their later accession to the Roman Empire<sup>32</sup>. Recently, it was suggested that an echo of these events is probably another coin die for reverse of Caesar's denarii of the well-known "elephant type" (Fig. 7a and 7b), which was found in the vicinity of the modern town of Montana – the ancient Castra Montanensium, as possibly during these campaigns of Crassus in 29 – 28 BC took place a camp coinage in the lands to the north of the Haemus Mountains, having been used dies for striking of probably quite popular among the Roman soldiers Caesar's denarius of that type<sup>33</sup> (Fig. 8).

The two previously known coin dies for denarii of Augustus, found respectively – one – south of the Haemus, and the other – north of the Haemus (Stara Planina), were related to the events of 16 BC, reported by Cassius Dio

<sup>29</sup> See GEROV 1961, 171-174; 229.

<sup>30</sup> PAUNOV/PROKOPOV 2002, passim.

<sup>31</sup> GEROV 1949, 4.

<sup>32</sup> GEROV 1949, 4.

<sup>33</sup> MANOV 2002, 1119-1120.



**Fig. 7a and 7b.** A coin die for reverse of denarii of Caesar, found near the modern town of Montana, Bulgaria (diameter: 24 mm, height: 48 mm; photo: the author = Manov 2002, 1119, fig. 1a and 1b).



**Fig. 8.** Denarius of Caesar (image after: Nomos AG, Auction 6, 2012, Lot 129).

(Cass. Dio 54.20.3), when the ancient tribes Dentheletae and Scordisci had invaded Macedonia and ravaged it<sup>34</sup>. Moreover, at the same time broke out the revolt of the Thracian tribes Bessi led by the high priest of the sanctuary of Dionysus – Vologaesus, as the uprising was suppressed by troops arriving from Asia Minor – from Pamphylia, led by Lucius Calpurnius Piso (Cass. Dio 54.34.5-7).

However, Strabo (Strab. 7.5.12) had noted that the Scordisci were divided into two larger communities – respectively Megaloi Skordiskoi and Mikroi Skordiskoi. The Megaloi Skordiskoi inhabited the lands around Singidunum (today Belgrade), and the Mikroi Skordiskoi inhabited the lands east of the Morava river, which could mean they inhabited the lands between the Morava and Iskar rivers. Perhaps in the previous statement of Cassius Dio (54.20.3) as co-operating with the Dentheletae – the Scordisci, were thus indicated the Mikroi Skordiskoi, inhabiting the lands between the rivers Timok (Timacus) and Iskar (Oescus), as such a location of these Scordisci in these lands had been supposed<sup>35</sup> and was recently confirmed, since it has already been stated that they have mingled with the inhabiting the same lands Thracian tribes of Triballi<sup>36</sup>.

In this respect, most likely the Roman authorities in the province of Macedonia have initiated a counter-offensive

<sup>34</sup> GEROV 1961, 229; BOJKOVA 1984, 18.  
<sup>35</sup> DOMARADSKI 1984, 93; 109-110.  
<sup>36</sup> MANOV 2018, 245-260.

and significant troops have been sent to punish the invaders, as the discovery of a coin die of Augustus at Dolna Dikanya, district of Pernik – close to the lands of the Dentheletae and near the road Pautalia – Serdica, could not be just a coincidence, and another coin die found near the present day town of Vratsa is in fact exactly to the route of the ancient road from Serdica to Oescus<sup>37</sup>. The presented here new coin die for denarii of Augustus, found near Oescus, appears to confirm these observations about movement of Roman troops in this direction<sup>38</sup>. Furthermore, the locations of finding the three dies of Augustus outline exactly the well-known later Roman road Stobi – Scupi – Pautalia – Serdica – Oescus, as they are clear evidence of the direction of movement of the Roman army from south to north to the lands of present-day northwestern Bulgaria – later lands in the provinces of Moesia Superior and Moesia Inferior.

In addition to a possible movement of Roman troops from the province of Macedonia to the north of the Haemus Mountains and to the Danube, in that time – since 16 BC – most likely in 14/13 BC, thanks to the information of the ancient author Florus (Flor. 2.28-29) we know that Augustus had sent as his commander Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus – probably in 14 BC, when he was consul<sup>39</sup>, who possibly passed through Pannonia to meet the attacks of the Dacians and Sarmatians from the northern side of the Danube, and some authors suggest that in these attacks were also involved and other tribes – Getae and Bastarnae<sup>40</sup>. As evidence of this situation is the report of Tacitus (Tac. Ann. 4. 44) that Lentulus received triumphal decorations for his victories over the Getae (i.e. Dacians). There is evidence also that the command of the Roman armies on the Balkans in operations for the conquest of Pannonia had been entrusted to the future emperor Tiberius after his Alpine campaign in 15 BC, when he established an alliance with the Scordisci around Sirmium<sup>41</sup>.

Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus managed to cope successfully with the raids of the Dacians who had the habit when the river had been frozen, to cross south of the river by order of their ruler Cotiso, as the ancient author Florus (Flor. 2.28) reported, and they devastated the neighbouring lands south of the Danube. By the majority of scholars is perceived that this Cotiso, mentioned as king of the Dacians, is actually the same person well-known by his golden coins – Koson<sup>42</sup>. If this laconic message of Florus reflects the fact that this Cotiso or Koson still ruled the Dacians in 14/13 BC, because the report is explicitly linked to the campaign of Lentulus against the Dacians, then the reign of Koson can be placed between 44/43 BC and in the years around 14/13 BC, or even a little later, as this information have not been sufficiently considered. If so, then the Dacian raids could have been led by Koson himself.

Moreover, the announcement of Florus is clear that after the victories of Lentulus over the Dacians, Dacia was

<sup>37</sup> BOJKOVA 1984, 18.  
<sup>38</sup> See also PAUNOV 2014, 33.  
<sup>39</sup> TATCHEVA 2004, 53 with ref. in note 13.  
<sup>40</sup> GEROV 1949, 6 with ref.  
<sup>41</sup> BOWMAN/CHAMPLIN/LINTOTT 2004, 551.  
<sup>42</sup> BAHRFELDT 1912; PREDA 1973, 357; MANOV 1998; MUNTEANU 2004; VÎLCU 2010.

not subdued, but only stilled by the Roman commander who set garrisons and erected fortresses on the southern bank of the Danube. Thus practically with the campaigns of Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus sent by Augustus had begun the construction of the Danube limes and it is believed that even still in 15 BC the lands of today northwestern Bulgaria between Timok (Timacus) and Iskar (Oescus) rivers been included by the Romans in a military prefecture with garrisons left there<sup>43</sup>. The main points of support or seats of those military garrisons were then the same, known and later, as their locations were determined by the peculiarities of the Danube riverbank – at the mouths of the right feeders of the Danube, which gave an open access and to the Haemus Mountains and to the lands south of the Haemus.

It is believed that in these events together with Lentulus was involved and Lucius Tarius Rufus<sup>44</sup>, who was governor of the province of Macedonia between 18 and 16 BC, and possibly several years later – perhaps the same Lucius mentioned by Cassius Dio (Cass. Dio 54.20.3), who fought against the Sarmatians. Probably for these campaigns in the Balkans have been sent and Roman troops from Spain and Gallia, and to those soldiers the denarii of Augustus struck in both Roman provinces were well known. There are also other opinions about dating the campaign of Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus against the Dacians and Sarmatians (Sarmatae) and it is considered that this happened probably in 10 BC<sup>45</sup>.

Most likely the presented here new coin die for denarii of Augustus, found near the later Roman colony Oescus south of the Danube, which is just opposite to the Dacian settlement Sucidava on the northern shore of the great river, is an echo of those events – the campaigns of troops sent from Rome not only against the tribes on the southern side of the river, to which also troops from Macedonia joined the army of Gnaeus Cornelius Lentulus, but against the invasions and from the north too – mostly of the Dacians and Sarmatians. Perhaps precisely these military forces have been given the right of striking coins in a mobile military camp mint – on the site of the future colony Oescus. Also important is the possible source of silver used for striking coins in marching conditions or in military camps. Hardly the Roman troops were able to extract silver from the local natural resources immediately during their early penetration into these hostile lands, as considered by some authors<sup>46</sup>. Most likely for this purpose were first used silver ingots that troops were carrying with them instead of large amounts of ready-minted coins – probably for security reasons – not to fall into the hands of enemies. It should not be excluded also the possibility and for use of silver obtained as booty captured from the local population during the Roman military campaigns. Moreover, all necessary tools for carrying out striking of coins in marching conditions had been provided during the establishment of a camp. According to me, it should be also assumed another, quite plausible reason –

such military coin production by temporarily made new coin dies was perhaps intended also to ensure the supply of food from local people in the regions of a military camp. The silver could be supplied first by booty – silver jewelry and vessels, taken from the areas through which the Roman troops had already gone before camping at a certain place for a longer time. Eventually, during the long process of conquering and administrating the area, Romans certainly had begun to use the local natural resources of silver into the Northwestern Balkan Mountains.

Not surprisingly, a little later – probably from 6 – 9 AD, Oescus was the camp of Legio V Macedonica<sup>47</sup>. The establishment of Roman troops in this area – between the rivers Timok (Timacus) and Iskar (Oescus) to the Danube, preceded the later establishment of the province of Moesia. As can be seen from another coin die for reverse of denarii of the Roman emperor Tiberius (14 – 37 AD), which was also found in the vicinity of the ancient Oescus (Fig. 9a and 9b), the tradition to be given the right for military camp coinage far from official centres had been continued even in the reign of this emperor, as the coin die is engraved and shows no difference in style of the respective reverse of denarii of the emperor Tiberius of the same type (Fig. 10a and 10b).



**Fig. 9a and 9b.** A coin die for reverse of denarii of Tiberius, found near Oescus – near the modern village of Gigen, Bulgaria (diametre: 21.5 x 20.5 mm, height: 13 mm; photo: the author = Manov 2002, 1120, fig. 2a and 2b).



**Fig. 10.** Denarius of Tiberius (image after: Classical Numismatic Group, Triton 14, 2011, Lot 636).

Scholarly discussions on this phenomenon – a possible local forgers' coinage or a military camp coinage, certainly will continue in future, and let us hope that new materials gathered and published recently<sup>48</sup>, as well as and the coin die presented now will be of significant help to understand in a better way this specific side of ancient

<sup>43</sup> GEROV 1949, 6 with ref.

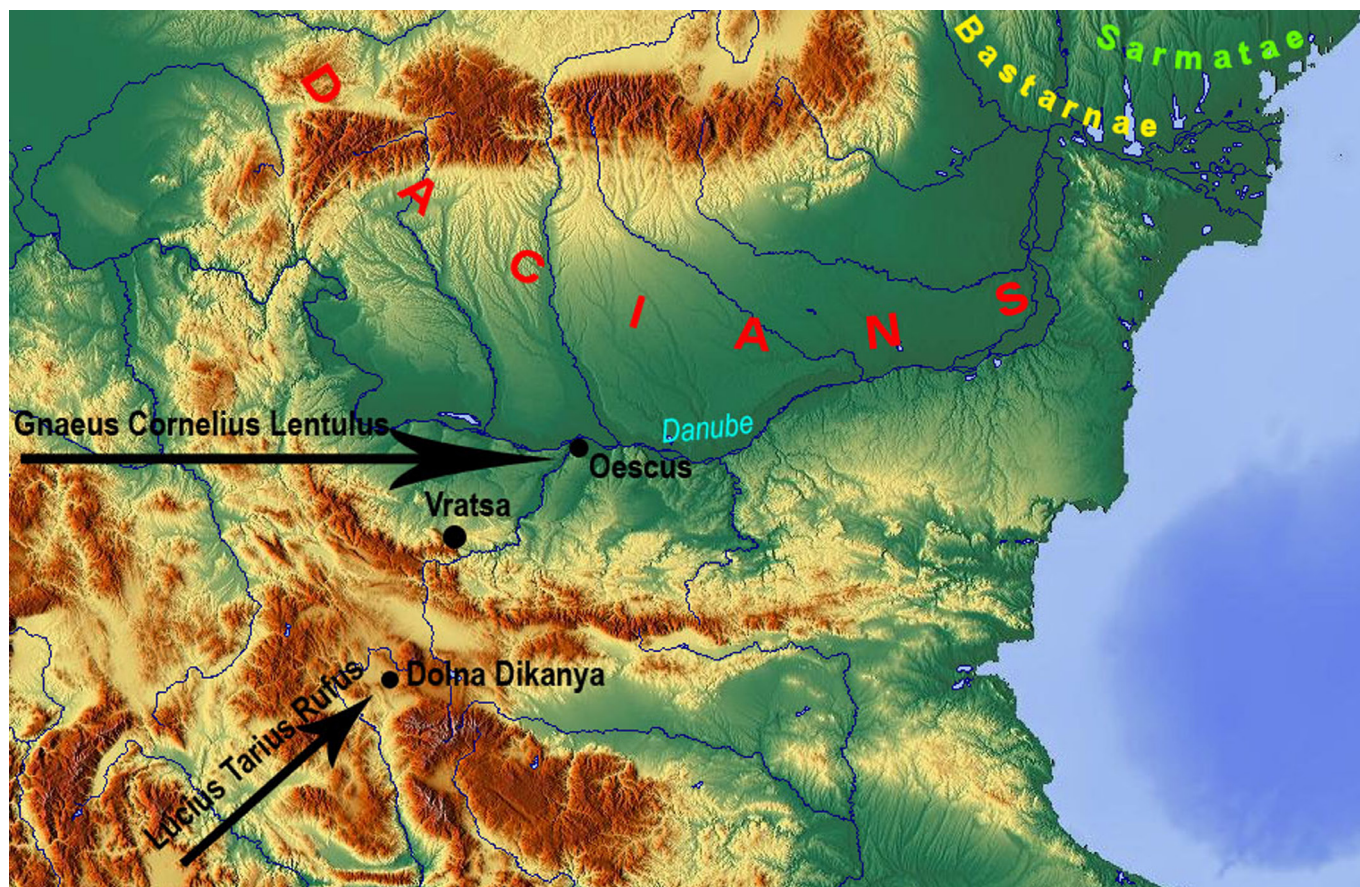
<sup>44</sup> PAUNOV/PROKOPOV 2002, 110; MARTINI/PAUNOV 2004, 164 with lit.; PAUNOV 2013, 96-98 with lit.

<sup>45</sup> BOWMAN/CHAMPLIN/LINTOTT 2004, 551; DZINO 2010, 134; 135 with note 85.

<sup>46</sup> PAUNOV 2014, 33.

<sup>47</sup> KABAKTSCHIEWA 2000, 19; MARTINI/PAUNOV 2004, 164 with lit.

<sup>48</sup> PAUNOV 2014.



**Fig. 11.** Map of campaigns of Roman troops on the Balkans to the south of the Danube during the reign of Augustus (27 BC – 14 AD). (Image source: the base of the map is taken from: <https://maps-for-free.com/>. The additional elements – by the author).

Roman coin production. On the map presented here can be seen the possible routes of different Roman troops involved in the events commented above (Fig. 11).

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Here I would like to express my gratitude to my colleagues from NIAM-BAS – Dr. Miroslava Dotkova for providing the two coin dies of Augustus from the fund of NIAM-BAS for research, and Krassimir Georgiev – the photographer of NIAM-BAS, for the very good photos. I express also my special thanks to Dr. Dane Kurth – the administrator of the scholarly site: [www.wildwinds.com](http://www.wildwinds.com) – for the permission to use some photos of denarii.

### ABBREVIATIONS

NIAM-BAS

National Institute of Archaeology with Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

### REFERENCES

BAHRFELDT 1912

Bahrfeldt, M., Über die ΚΟΣΩΝ-Münzen, *Berliner Münzblätter* 4/33, 251-255; 323-326; 360-369.

BOJKOVA 1984

Bojkova, B., Dva pečata na Avgust / Deux sceaux d'Auguste (in Bulgarian, French summary), *Numizmatika* 4, 15-19.

BOJKOVA 1986

Bojkova, B., Moneten pechat – matritsa na imperator Yovian / Un coin de l'empereur Jovien (in Bulgarian, French summary). In: (no ed. given) *Numizmatika. Sbornik ot dokladi po problemi na antichnata i srednovekovna numizmatika i medalistikata*, chast II (Sofia), 8-11.

BOJKOVA 1992

Bojkova, B., Two coin dies of Augustus, *Journal of the Society for Ancient Numismatics (SAN)* XVIII/3, 62-65.

BOWMAN/CHAMPLIN/LINTOTT 2004

Bowman, A./Champlin, E./Lintott A. (eds.), *The Cambridge Ancient History, X. The Augustan Empire, 43 BC – AD 69* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

DOBRUSKI 1897

Dobruski, V., Istoricheski pogled varhu numizmatikata na trakijskite tsare (A historical view on the numismatics of the Thracian kings) (in Bulgarian), *Sbornik za narodni umotvoreniya, nauka i knizhnina* 14, 555-633.

DOMARADSKI 1984

Domaradski, M., *Keltite na Balkanskiya poluostrov IV – I v. pr.n.e. (The Celts on the Balkan peninsula IV – I c. BC)* (in Bulgarian) (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo).

DRAGANOV 2008

Draganov, D., Matritsa za izrabotvane na litsevi monetni pečati za imitatsii ot tipa "Sattelkopfpferd" (Virteju-București) / A matrix for producing obverse coin dies for imitations of the "Sattelkopfpferd" ("Virteju-București") type (in Bulgarian, English summary), *Proceedings of Rousse Regional Museum of History (The World of the Getae)*, book XII, 36-41.

- DZINO 2010  
Dzino, D., *Illyricum in Roman Politics 229 BC – AD 68* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- GERASIMOV 1934  
Gerasimov, T., Matritsa za moneti na imperator Yovian / Matrice de monnaies de l'empereur Jovien (in Bulgarian, French summary), *Izvestiya na bălgarskiya arheologicheski institut / Bulletin de l'Institut d'Archéologie Bulgare* 5, 438-439.
- GEROV 1949  
Gerov, B., *Romanizmat mezhdu Dunava i Balkana. Chast 1: Ot Avgust do Hadrian / La romanisation entre le Danube et les Balkans. Partie I: D'Auguste à Hadrien* (in Bulgarian, French summary), *Godishnik na Sofijskiya universitet, Istoriko-filologicheski fakultet / Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia, Faculté historico-philologique* 45/4, 1-92.
- GEROV 1961  
Gerov, B., Prouchvaniya varhu zapadnotrakijskite zemi prez rimsko vreme, chast I / *Untersuchungen über die westthrakischen Länder in römischer Zeit* (in Bulgarian, German summary), *Godishnik na Sofijskiya universitet, Filologicheski fakultet / Annuaire de l'Université de Sofia, Faculté philologique* 54/3, 155-406.
- GIARD 1976  
Giard, J.-B., *Catalogue des monnaies de l'Empire romain, volume I: Auguste* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France).
- KABAKTSCHIEWA 2000  
Kabaktschiewa, G., *Oescus. Castra Oescensia. Rannorimski voenen lager pri ustieto na Iskar / Frühromische Militärlager bei der Mündung des Flusses Iskar* (in Bulgarian, German summary) (Sofia: Albatros).
- KUBITSCHKEK 1925  
Kubitschek, W., Münzstempel des Nationalmuseums in Sofia, *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 18, 133-135.
- LAZARENKO 2009  
Lazarenko, I., Bronzova matritsa za srebarni moneti s tipovete "kotva/svastika", otkrita kraj s. Klimentovo, Varnensko, i vazmozhnata vrazka na tova monetosechene s Odesos / Bronze matrix for striking silver coins of the anchor/swastika type discovered by Klimentovo, Varna region, and the possible relation of this coinage to Odessos (in Bulgarian, English summary). *Numismatica, Sphragistica and Epigraphica* 5, 35-49.
- MANOV 1998  
Manov, M., Kotison ili Koson / Cotiso or Coson? (In Bulgarian, English summary), *Studia Numismatica* 3-4, 14-20.
- MANOV 2002  
Manov, M., Two New Coin Dies Found in Bulgaria, *Annotazioni Numismatiche* 48, 1118-1121.
- MANOV 2018  
Manov, M., Keltski moneti ot rayona na Vratsa / Celtic coins from the region of Vratsa (in Bulgarian, English summary), *Numismatika, Sphragistica i Epigrafika / Numismatics, Sigillography and Epigraphy* 14, 245-260.
- MARTINI/PAUNOV 2004  
Martini, R./Paunov, E., Early Roman imperial countermarked coins from Moesia: first critical observations (typology, frequency, chronology and analysis of distribution), *Acta musei Varnaensis* (Numismatic and sphragistic contributions to history of the Western Black Sea coast) 2, 159-174.
- MUNTEANU 2004  
Munteanu, L., Despre descoperirile monetare de tip Koson, *Arheologia Moldovei* 25, 253-270.
- NIKOLOV/MASHOV 1976  
Nikolov, B./Mashov, S., Vratsa do idvaneto na slavyanite (Vratsa until the arrival of the Slavs). In: Buzhashki, E. (ed.), *Istoriya na grad Vratsa* (History of the town of Vratsa) (in Bulgarian) (Sofia), 33-71.
- PAUNOV 2013  
Paunov, E., *From Koine to Romanitas: The numismatic evidence for the Roman expansion and settlement in Bulgaria in Antiquity (Moesia and Thrace, ca. 146 BC – AD 98/117)*. Unpublished PhD thesis: Cardiff University. Online: <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/47428/>. Accessed 3 December 2020.
- PAUNOV 2014  
Paunov, E., Dies for Striking Republican and Early Imperial Coins from Moesia and Thrace: Ancient Forgeries or Something Else?, *Journal of Ancient History and Archaeology* 1, 29-35. DOI: [10.14795/j.v1i1.12](https://doi.org/10.14795/j.v1i1.12)
- PAUNOV/PROKOPOV 2002  
Paunov, E./Prokopov, I., *An Inventory of Roman Republican Coin Hoards and Coins from Bulgaria* (IRRCHBulg). Glaux 15 – Collana di Studi e Ricerche di Numismatica (Milano: Edizioni ennerre S.r.l.).
- PENCHEV 2013  
Penchev, V., Matritsa za litsevi strani na rimski republikanski denari / Die for obverses of Roman republican denarii (in Bulgarian, English summary). In: Rabadzhiev, K./ Popov, H./ Damyanov, M./ Katsarova, V. (eds.), *Sbornik v pамет na akademik Dimitar P. Dimitrov* (Sofia), 391-393.
- PREDA 1973  
Preda, C., *Monedele geto-dacilor* (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei).
- SUTHERLAND 1984  
Sutherland, C. H. V., *The Roman Imperial Coinage. Volume I: From 31 B.C. to A.D. 69* (Revised edition), (London: Spink and Son Ltd) = RIC I<sup>2</sup>.
- TATCHEVA 2004  
Tatcheva, M., Za rimskite provintsii Dolna Miziya i Trakiya (I – III vek) / Über die römischen Provinzen Moesia Inferior und Thracia (I – III Jh.) (in Bulgarian, German summary). In: Ivanov, R. (ed.), *Archaeology of the Bulgarian lands, volume I* (Sofia), 49-75.
- VERMEULE 1954  
Vermeule, C., *Some Notes on Ancient Dies and Coining Methods* (Reprinted from "The Numismatic Circular", 1953–1954) (London: Spink and Son).
- VÎLCU 2010  
Vîlcu, A., Sur les statères en or de type Koson. In: Băjenaru, R. / Bodi, G./Opreanu, C./Zirra, V. (eds.), *Recent Studies on Past and Present I. Human Heritage and Community: Archaeology in the Carpathians and Lower Danube Area From Prehistory to the Early Medieval Age, Transylvanian Review vol. XIX, Supplement 5/1* (Cluj-Napoca), 199-212.