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South-Liburnian pre-imperial numismatic finds from Southern Italy and Sicily

Former southern Liburnia which corresponds to northern Dalmatia in spatial terms is the most fertile region in the coastal part of the Republic of Croatia. Diverse and abundant numismatic finds from the Late Iron Age have been found in this densely populated region. Unfortunately most of these finds have not been published. They are kept in museums and private collections1. These are mostly individual, chance finds with known findspots and circumstances of discovery. Coins from four hoards have also been included in the analysis. Presently we have information about 1838 coins from roughly last four centuries BC. Generally coins from Carthage and Numidia are dominant making 70% of the total number of numismatic finds followed by currency of the Roman Republic and the Ptolemies. There are much less coins from the Greek colonies on the eastern Adriatic coast, coins of the Illyrian rulers, Celts and examples from Hispania2.

One hundred and thirty one examples originate from southern Italy and Sicily which is about 7% of the total number of numismatic finds from the pre-imperial period. These coins were mostly struck from copper alloy. Only few were made of silver. They were found at 16 archaeological sites of the hillfort type in southern Liburnia (Map 1)3. Most types of coins have not been previously known in this region rich in archaeological heritage reflecting the state of exploration which is evidently not satisfying. We will start the overview of the southern Italic coins with finds originating from Apulia. There are eleven coins from Arpi, mostly with depictions of the head of Zeus and Chalcedonian boar (Fig. 1). City of Asculum is represented with one example, with depictions of the head of Hercules and Nike with a palm branch (Fig. 2). Then there are two coins from Luceria, quincaux with depictions of the head of Athena and a wheel4, and a quadrans with depictions of the head of Poseidon and a dolphin (Fig. 3). Two coins were attributed to Salapia, one of which bears depictions of the head of Zeus and Chalcedonian boar (Fig. 4). Eleven examples with depictions of the head of Athena and an owl belong to the city of Teate, represented with quincauxes (Fig. 5) and quadrantes (Fig. 6). Total of 27 coins originates from these five Apulian cities.

There are eight coins from Bruttium, six of which belong to the Italic population of Brettii. We can single out their large coin with depictions of the head of Ares and Hera Hoplosomia (Fig. 7). There are two coins from the city of Croton5. One of them bears depictions of the head of Heracles and a crab.

Twenty seven coins originate from Calabria. The city of Brundisium is represented with an example of the head of Poseidon and a dolphin with a rider6. There are nine coins from Graxa, regularly with depictions of the head of Zeus and two eagles (Fig. 8). City of Tarentum is represented with 17 different coins, two of which were made of silver. Stater with depictions of dolphin riders and horsemen was pierced indicating that it was worn as a pendant in secondary use. Then there is a diobol with depictions of the head of Athena and Heracles fighting with a lion. Fifteen coins made of copper alloy also originate from Tarentum. There are three types. Laurate head of Zeus was depicted on the obverses of larger examples. On their reverses is Nike holding a thunderbolt (Fig. 9) or putting a shield on the trophy (Fig. 10). Depictions of Athena Pallas with a Corinthian helmet and Heracles with a club are on the smaller examples (Fig. 11). All these coins were found at the site of Cosina gradina, about 25 km east of Zadar. They were located in the area of about ten square meters so we can assume that it was a small scattered hoard. To the best of our knowledge such coins made of copper

1 All presented coins are kept in private collections. We would like to thank their owners for allowing us to publish them. We would also like to express our gratitude to Tomislav Bilić, senior curator in the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb for helping us with relevant numismatic publications.

2 Šešelj, Ilkić 2014; 2015.

3 On the map it is evident that coins from southern Italy and Sicily are missing in coastal centers of southern Liburnia, such as Zadar and Nin, which definitely played an important role in distribution of imported goods, including coins, to their hinterland. Probably such situation should be associated with different causes, such as poorly preserved documentation from older excavations, different historical circumstances such as destruction during the Second World War etc. Archaeological Museum in Zadar is in possession of a number of coins from southern Italy and Sicily but without precise information about the findspot. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that at least some of them originate exactly from these important coastal centers of southern Liburnia.

4 Šešelj, Ilkić 2014, p. 48, Fig. 16.

5 These two coins are not published and they are kept in the Archaeological Museum in Zadar.

6 Šešelj, Ilkić 2014, p. 48, Fig. 18.

7 The same type of coins is represented in Croatia with only one more example recovered in the recent archaeological research at the site of Bačine near Ploče (southern Dalmatia). We would like to thank Damir Klišić and Mario Radaljac from the Archaeological Museum in Split for sharing this information with us.
alloy from Tarentum have not been found at other sites in Liburnia. Campania is represented with a coin of the city of Capua with laureate head of Apollo on the obverse and lyre on the reverse. The Frentani are represented with two coins. They belong to the city of Larinum. Head with a helmet and a galloping horseman with a spear and shield are represented on the quincunx (Fig. 12). Depictions of the head of Heracles and centaur are on the quadrants (Fig. 13).

There were also some coins from three cities in Lucania. City of Laos is represented with coins bearing frontal depictions of a female head on the obverse and two birds on the reverse\(^8\). Coins with heads of Leucippus and Demeter\(^9\) originate from the city of Metapontum as well as those with depictions of the head of Hera and ear of wheat (Fig. 14). Small coin with depictions of the head of Athena and an owl probably originates from the city of Velia.

Fifty seven coins from Sicily were found in the region of southern Liburnia. An example with depictions of the head of Apollo and head of a warrior belongs to Messana i.e. to the Mamertines. All other specimens are from Syracuse such as two coins i.e. litrae with depictions of the head of Athena and a hippocampus. Coins with the head of Poseidon and trident are more numerous and of somewhat later date. This type was minted during the reign of Hieron II (Fig. 15).

Most coins from southern Italy and Sicily found in southern Liburnia are dated to the second half of the 3rd century BC. We believe that these numismatic finds, scattered on a series of sites of residential type, testify wide acceptance of coins as means of payment by the Liburnians in that period. Good representation of coins of Syracuse, Tarentum and Apulian region is not unexpected (Graph 1). Namely aspirations of the Syracuse rulers regarding control over the Adriatic were evident from the end of the 5th and beginning of the 4th century BC, particularly in activities of Dionysius of Syracuse in central Dalmatia, and coin circulation in the 3rd century BC (Hieron II of Syracuse) indicates to the renewal of trade connections or mediation of the Romans in their distribution\(^10\). Strong trade connections can be confirmed much easier with the southern Italic region, particularly with Apulia and Calabria where Tarentum stands out as strong production center.

Depictions of the communities from both sides of the Adriatic were evident from the end of the 5th and beginning of the 4th century BC. We believe that these numismatic finds, scattered on a series of sites of residential type, testify wide acceptance of coins as means of payment by the Liburnians in that period. Good representation of coins of Syracuse, Tarentum and Apulian region is not unexpected (Graph 1). Namely aspirations of the Syracuse rulers regarding control over the Adriatic were evident from the end of the 5th and beginning of the 4th century BC, particularly in activities of Dionysius of Syracuse in central Dalmatia, and coin circulation in the 3rd century BC (Hieron II of Syracuse) indicates to the renewal of trade connections or mediation of the Romans in their distribution\(^10\). Strong trade connections can be confirmed much easier with the southern Italic region, particularly with Apulia and Calabria where Tarentum stands out as strong production center. Namely, the region of northern Dalmatia as well as entire Liburnia exhibit strong communication links, with the western Adriatic coast, particularly with Picenum and southern Italic region throughout the entire Iron Age. Constant relations with southern Italy can be monitored on the basis of ceramic ware import from the region of Apulia which was found almost regularly in the Liburnian settlement context. During the Late Iron Age when burial rites in the Liburnian society changed such objects are frequently found in graves\(^11\). Finds of the analyzed coins in northern Dalmatian settlement contexts are another confirmation of traditional contacts of the communities from both sides of the Adriatic.

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\(^{8}\) All five coins from Laos were found in southern Liburnia but without information about the findspot. One of the coins is kept in the Regional Museum Biograd na Moru, and the remaining four in the Archaeological Museum in Zadar.

\(^{9}\) Ilkić, Kožul, Ćurković 2014, p. 77, Cat. n. 6.

\(^{10}\) Šešelj 2009, pp. 514-518.

\(^{11}\) Batović 1976; Peroni 1976; Nijboer 2010, p. 4-6; Čelhar, Borzič 2016; in particular about southern Italian imported pottery in Liburnia in the Late Iron Age: Šešelj 2009, pp. 53-55, 432-440, 478-483, 513-528; Miše 2010, pp. 85-112, 143-152, 156-164.
Fig. 1 Apulia, Arpi, third century B.C., AE, 23.2 mm, 8.99, 4 h, SNG Cop 603-605, Gradina, Prndelji (Kaštel Žegarski).
Fig. 2 Apulia, Asculum, third century B.C., AE, 18.5 mm, 4.54 g, 1 h, SNG Cop 615, Smokovac.
Fig. 3 Apulia, Luceria, before 217 B.C., sextans, 22 mm, 10.69 g, 5 h, SNG Cop 661, Gradina, Prndelji (Kaštel Žegarski).
Fig. 4 Apulia, Salapia, third century B.C., AE, 21 mm, 5.92 g, 6 h, SNG Ita 127; Ljubljana, Ljubač.
Fig. 5 Apulia, Teate, c. 217 B.C., quincoinx, 26.5 mm, 14.94 g, 10 h, SNG Cop 692, Gradina, Prndelji (Kaštel Žegarski).
Fig. 6 Apulia, Teate, c. 217 B.C., quadrans, 23 mm, 10.83 g, 11 h, SNG Cop 695, Gradina, Prndelji (Kaštel Žegarski).
Fig. 7 Bruttium, Brettii, c. 282-203 B.C., AE, 26 mm, 13.40 g, 9 h, SNG Cop 1635, Gradina, Prndelji (Kaštel Žegarski).
Fig. 8 Calabria, Graxa, c. 200-170 B.C., AE, 15.3 mm, 3.73 g, 3 h, SNG Cop 747-748, Gradina, Prndelji (Kaštel Žegarski).
Fig. 9 Calabria, Tarentum, third century B.C., AE, 21 mm, 8.34 g, 9 h, SNG Cop -; SNG Ita -; BMC 473 var.; Ćosina gradina, Jagodnja Gornja.
Fig. 10 Calabria, Tarentum, third century B.C., AE, 20.5 mm, 6.51 g, 1 h, SNG Cop 1083, Ćosina gradina, Jagodnja Gornja.
Fig. 11 Calabria, Tarentum, third century B.C., AE, 16 mm, 4.48 g, 3 h, SNG Cop 1084, Ćosina gradina, Jagodnja Gornja.
Fig. 12 Frentani, Larinum, after 268. B.C., quincoinx, 25.5 mm, 11.54 g, 7 h, SNG Cop 269, Gradina, Prndelji (Kaštel Žegarski).
Fig. 13 Frentani, Larinum, after 217. B.C., quadrans, 21 mm, 6.42 g, 1 h, SNG Cop 272, Gradina, Prndelji (Kaštel Žegarski).
Fig. 14 Lucania, Metapontion, fourth-third centuries B.C., AE, 14.5 mm, 1.17 g, 1 h, SNG Cop 1252-1253, Smokovac.
Fig. 15 Sicilia, Syracuse, Hieron II (274-216 B.C.), AE, 19 mm, 5.94 g, 2 h, SNG Cop 844-856, Smokovac.
Map 1 Sites with numismatic finds from southern Italy and Sicily in southern Liburnia: 1. Bribirska glavica, 2. Budim (Pose-

Graph 1 Coin distribution by provenance.