

A hoard of solidi from a hypogeum at the Viminacium necropolis – Pećine (Serbia)

Zakladna najdba solidov iz hipogeuma z viminacijske nekropole Pećine (Srbija)

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Izveček

Pri novejših zaščitnih arheoloških raziskavah južnih viminacijskih grobišč je bila leta 2016 na nekropoli Pećine v eni od raziskanih monumentalnih grobnic (G 5868) odkrita zakladna najdba sedmih solidov. Zaklad vsebuje novce Honorija in Teodozija II., ki so bili kovani med letoma 403 in 408 oziroma 430 in 440. Poleg zaklada je bilo v memoriji, ki je bila žal izropana že v antiki, odkritih še 23 posamičnih novcev iz časa od Aleksandra Severa (222–235) do začetka 5. stoletja. Zaščitna arheološka izkopavanja na območju južnih grobišč potekajo z nekaj prekinitvami že od konca sedemdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja. Ta zakladna najdba zlatih novcev pa je v obdobju štiridesetih let šele druga te vrste z vseh viminacijskih nekropol.

Ključne besede: *Viminacium*; Pećine; rimsko obdobje; nekropola; zakladna novčna najdba; *hypogeum*

Abstract

During more recent rescue archaeological investigations of the southern necropolises of Viminacium, in 2016, at the necropolis of Pećine, a hoard of seven solidi was discovered in one of the investigated monumental tombs (G 5868). The hoard contains coins of Honorius and Theodosius II, ranging from 403/408–430/440. Within the memoria, which was unfortunately robbed as far back as Antiquity, besides the hoard, an additional 23 coins, ranging from Alexander Severus (222–235) to the beginning of the 5th century, were also discovered. Rescue investigations in the area of the southern necropolises have been conducted, with interruptions, since the late 1970s and, over the course of four decades, this is merely the second discovery of gold coins, not only at the southern necropolis, but also at other investigated ones.

Keywords: *Viminacium*; Pećine necropolis; Roman Empire; coin hoard; *hypogeum*

In about five centuries of life in Viminacium, several necropolises were formed, which are generally divided according to the cardinal points, and in relation to the position of the legionary camp and civilian settlements (*Fig. 1*). To date, the southern, eastern and north-eastern necropolises have been archaeologically confirmed and, to a large extent, investigated, while definitive evidence of the existence of northern and western necropolises await future research.¹ Due to the construction of the

¹ Individual graves have been discovered north and west of the city and the camp starting from the end of the 19th century, but these sites have not yet been systemati-

Kostolac 2 thermal power plant, large-scale rescue archaeological investigations were conducted between 1977 and 1990 in the area comprising the southern necropolises.² Within this area, nine necropolises were recorded, five of which belong

_____ cally investigated. In 1882, Mihailo Valtrović conducted trial trenching south, north and east of the city and the camp, in the course of which graves were noted in all the locations. He concluded that there were graves also west of the city, based on the remains of graves that peasants were robbing at the time (cf. Valtrović, 1884, 6, 10).

² Zotović 1986, 41; Zotović, Jordović 1990, 2; Korać, Golubović 2009, 12–13.

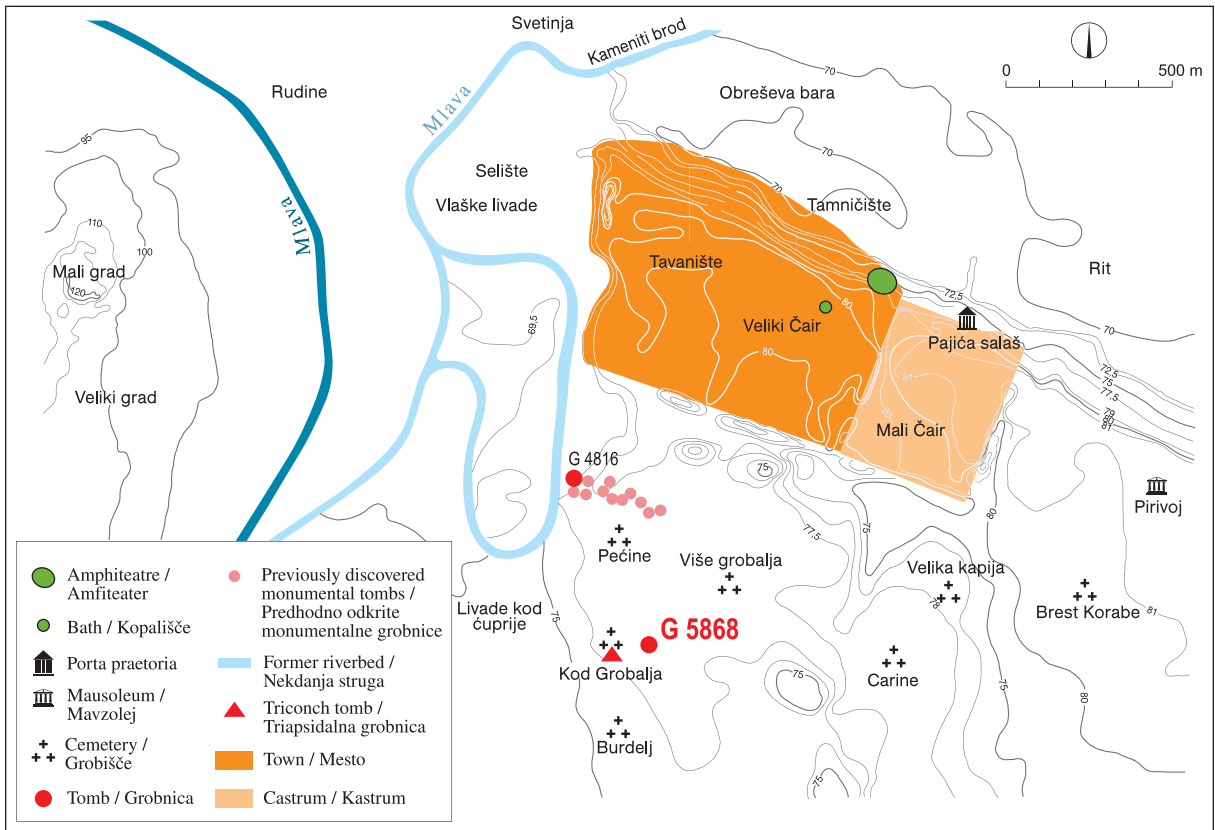


Fig. 1: General situation at the site Viminacium.
Sl. 1: Situacijski načrt najdišča Viminacij.

to the time of Roman domination, from the mid-1st to the first decades of the 5th century.³ The two earliest necropolises are Više Grobalja and part of the Pećine necropolis, established in the mid-1st century, where cremation and inhumation burials were simultaneously practised. The change in the funerary rituals, which occurred around the mid-3rd century, led to the abandonment of these two cemetery grounds.⁴ A separate necropolis, also at the site of Pećine, consisted solely of cremation burials, with the exception of some graves containing the inhumed remains of children. This necropolis was formed at the turn of the 1st and the 2nd centuries and was used until the mid-3rd

century. The cremation ritual was abandoned at the southern necropolises of Viminacium in the mid-3rd century and, from that point onward, inhumation represented the only form of burial. At that time, two additional necropolises were established in the southern area, Burdelj, and the third necropolis at the site of Pećine, the first of which was in use until the mid-4th century and the second until the first decades of the 5th century.⁵

In the course of the aforementioned rescue investigations conducted in the 1970s and '80s, at the necropolises of Više Grobalja and Pećine alone, a total of 10,769 cremation and inhumation graves were discovered, while a total of 7,026 coins were recorded.⁶ Of this number, only four gold coins (three solidi and one semmissis) of Valentinian I were discovered in one grave at the necropolis of

³ The earliest necropolis belongs to the Celtic population that lived here in the late 4th and the early 3rd century BC, whereas two later necropolises belong to the Migration Period: the Ostrogothic, used in the second half of the 5th century, and the Gepidic, from the mid-6th century. The latest is a small medieval necropolis, roughly dated between the 12th and 14th century (cf. Zotović 1986, 41, ref. 4; 54–55; Zotović, Jordović 1990, 2).

⁴ Zotović 1986, 42–45; Zotović, Jordović 1990, 1–34; Korać, Golubović 2009, 12–13, ref. 15–17.

⁵ This necropolis at the site of Pećine overlaps the territory of the earlier and already abandoned necropolises with cremation and inhumation burials (cf. Zotović 1986, 52).

⁶ The necropolis of Više Grobalja: 2,213 inhumations, 1,776 cremations, 3,161 coins; the necropolis of Pećine: 5,626 inhumations, 1,154 cremations, 3,865 coins (cf. Vojvoda, Mrđić 2015, 9; Vojvoda, Mrđić 2017, 9–10).

Pećine, which were, unfortunately, stolen from the National Museum in Požarevac (Narodni muzej Požarevac).⁷ Based on the fieldwork documentation,⁸ one of the solidi was issued by the mint of Antioch and is dated to 364,⁹ while another is from the mint of Treveri and is dated to 367–375.¹⁰ Besides the aforementioned gold coins discovered during the archaeological investigations, an additional seven aurei and solidi from the surroundings of Viminacium are kept at the National Museum in Požarevac.¹¹

Due to the need to build a number of facilities for different purposes within the TPP Kostolac, since 2007, new rescue investigations have been carried out within the southern necropolises of Viminacium, at the sites of Više Grobalja and Pećine, which are still in progress. To date, 529 graves and 326 coins have been discovered.¹² In the course of these investigations, gold coins have been recorded only in a monumental underground tomb (G 5868),¹³ which was discovered in July 2016. Unfortunately, the tomb was robbed in Antiquity; however, based on the remaining finds, mainly

coins, the time of its construction, as well as the second phase of construction works undertaken in the tomb, can be roughly chronologically determined. This monumental family tomb belongs to the sequence of those discovered at Pećine, but about 450 m south of the other 13, investigated in the 1970s and '80s, which are concentrated in the northern section of the then excavated part of the Pećine necropolis.¹⁴

These are the remains of a Late Antique underground tomb (*hypogeum*) of a cruciform base, with an entrance staircase (dromos) on the southern side and four rooms (Fig. 2). The central room has a square base, around which three burial rooms with rectangular bases are arranged (west, north and east). Each of the three side rooms contains three graves (loculus), while another two loculi are located east and west of the staircase. Some of the loculi bear traces of secondary burials (re-sealing of the opening), but osteological remains were found only in the loculi west and east of the staircase.¹⁵ Two phases in the construction of the tomb were noted. The flooring of the earlier one had a brick rubble base and was probably covered with hexagonal or butterfly-shaped bricks. The loculi belong to the early construction phase, because, in addition to architectural elements, fresco decoration painted on the walls in the earlier phase further supports this assertion as they can be traced to the early flooring. Not long after that, the central room was covered with a 40 cm thick layer of soil,¹⁶ onto which a new flooring of rectangular bricks was laid. The frescoes, which remained above the new flooring, were plastered with lime mortar at that time. The hoard of seven solidi was discovered directly under one of the bricks of the newer flooring (Fig. 2: C - 14125), in the northwest corner of the central room, near

⁷ This was the grave of an individual interred without a coffin (G 5571), laid on the back, with the arms crossed on the pelvis. After lifting the skeleton, under the left half of the pelvis, four gold coins of Valentinian I were discovered (field inv. C - 13391–13394). These were the only grave goods in the grave (cf. Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade, Fieldwork diary: 3761, 3763).

⁸ At that time, cards of the field inventories contained a drawing of an object. For two solidi (C - 1392 and 1394), there are drawings of the obverse and the reverse, from which it was possible to identify the specimens based on the reference catalogue. Unfortunately, for the other two specimens (C - 1391 and 1393), only drawings of the obverse exist.

⁹ Av. DN VALENTINI-ANVS P F AVG, Rv. RESTITV-TOR – REI PVBLICAE, ex - ANTΘ•, RIC IX, p. 272, no. 2b.

¹⁰ Av. DN VALENTINI-ANVS P F AVG, Rv. VICTOR-IA AVGG, ex - TR•OB•, RIC IX, p. 16, no. 17b.

¹¹ Closer surroundings of Viminacium: Biskuplje (Constantine I), Dobra (Claudius I), Zabela, Požarevac (Trajan), Toponica (Severus Alexander), Veliko Gradište (Valentinian I); wider surroundings of Viminacium: Žagubica (Theodosius I), Melnica, Petrovac (Theodosius II). The museum owns an additional two specimens with an unknown place of finding: Titus, Leo II. Kind thanks are due to our colleague Teodora Branković from the National Museum in Požarevac for the data provided.

¹² The necropolis of Više Grobalja: 97 inhumations, 59 cremations, 117 coins; the necropolis of Pećine: 328 inhumations, 45 cremations, 209 coins.

¹³ In the fieldwork documentation, the tomb was marked as G 5868 (Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade, Fieldwork diary).

¹⁴ Of the 13 monumental tombs previously discovered at Pećine, five were aboveground (G 2624, G 2651, G 5260, G 5336), one of which had a semi-circular apse (G 3238), and eight underground (*hypogeum* type), four of which had a rectangular base (G 3904, G 3953, G 3971, G 4006), two with an incomplete cross-shaped base (with three arms) (G 4767, G 4815) and two with a cruciform base (G 4816, G 5035) (cf. Milošević-Jevtić 2014, 324, Fig. 2).

¹⁵ In the loculus west of the staircase (labelled as K), four skulls and a small number of other bones were discovered, while in the loculus east of the staircase (labelled as J), remains of three individuals were recorded.

¹⁶ This layer of soil (of 40 cm), which was deposited over the original flooring, contained brick rubble, pieces of bricks of the earlier flooring, mortar, pieces of frescoes, human bones and fragments of ceramics and glass vessels.

the loculi of the western burial room (labelled as loculus B and C).

In addition to the hoard of solidi (*Cat. nos. 1–7*), below the new flooring, in the 40 cm thick layer of soil deposited over the original flooring, an additional 15 coins were discovered (*Cat. nos. 8–22*), including parts of a marble stela, an iron bracelet, a brick with a stylised representation of a human figure, as well as fragments of the following artefacts: a glass paste bracelet, a lead object (?), an enamelled oil lamp and a glass vessel. Above the new flooring, eight coins were discovered (*Cat. nos. 23–30*), as well as cross-shaped gold sheet plating, a piece of gold jewellery (medallion ?) and a ceramic weight (?).

This remarkable find of solidi comprises three specimens of Honorius and four of Theodosius II, all of which were minted in Constantinople. Of these, the earliest solidus (*Cat. no. 1*) was issued during the reign of Arcadius, Honorius and Theodosius II (402–408), five solidi (*Cat. nos. 2–6*) were minted during the reign of Honorius and Theodosius II (408–423), while the last specimen (*Cat. no. 7*) belongs to the consecutive reigns of Theodosius II and Valentinian III (423–443).

The earliest specimen is a solidus of Theodosius II (*Cat. no. 1*), with a CONCORDIA AVGGG reverse legend (Constantinopolis enthroned front, holding sceptre and Victory on globe, right foot on prow; star in left field), dated to 403–408 AD, that is, before the death of Arcadius. Next are five solidi of the same reverse type: CONCORDIA AVGG (the reverse depiction is the same as in *Cat. no. 1*), three of which were issued for Honorius (*Cat. nos. 2–4*) and two for Theodosius II (*Cat. nos. 5–6*), all dated to 408–420 AD. On a solidus of Theodosius II (*Cat. no. 6*; detail), graffiti is discernible: ligatured letters L and B are in the right obverse field, while an X made using deep and wide incisions is on the reverse, also in the right field. Graffiti is relatively common on gold coins from the 4th to the end of the 6th centuries, and the reasons for its appearance are probably different and conditioned by the type of engraved letters or symbols.¹⁷ Letters, as in this case, are likely to be a temporary ownership mark or a

guarantee of quality.¹⁸ The latest specimen in this collective find is a solidus of Theodosius II (*Cat. no. 7*) with a VOT XXX MVLTT XXXX reverse legend (Constantinopolis enthroned front, holding cross on globe and sceptre, left foot on prow, by the throne a shield; star in right field), dated to 430–440 AD.

The most comprehensive study of Late Antique gold coins from the territory of Serbia, by Miloje Vasić, served as the basis for the analogies for the Viminacium specimens.¹⁹ In this study, there are no analogies for the earliest specimen of Theodosius II from the Viminacium hoard. However, in the collection of the National Museum in Belgrade, a solidus of the same type, minted for Honorius, was recorded.²⁰ For the Viminacium specimens of Honorius (*Cat. nos. 2–4*) and Theodosius II (*Cat. nos. 5–6*), there are analogies in the collection of the National Museum in two cases for each issuer.²¹ The latest coin in the hoard from Viminacium has most analogies, with six specimens recorded in the collection of the National Museum in Belgrade.²² Unfortunately, the location of finding is unknown for all the analogous solidi from this collection.

As is the case with the first six specimens from Viminacium (*Cat. nos. 1–6*), a total of 43 solidi in the collection of the National Museum, most of which (25) struck at the mint of Constantinople, belong to the entire period of the reign of Arcadius, Honorius, and Theodosius II (395–423).²³ The location of finding is known only for five of these solidi, one of which was discovered in Kostolac (Viminacium).²⁴ This is a solidus of Theodosius II from 420–422 AD, with a VOT XX MVLTT XXX B reverse legend.²⁵ Like the latest specimen of the Viminacium hoard, a total of 38 solidi in the collection of the National Museum, 22 of which issued by the mint of Constantinople, belong to

¹⁸ *DOC*, 35.

¹⁹ Vasić 2008. The study includes the entire collection of Late Antique gold coins of the National Museum in Belgrade, as well as a small number of specimens that are kept in other museums in Serbia.

²⁰ Vasić 2008, 271, *Cat. no. 364* (sic! the photo clearly shows AVGGG and officina E).

²¹ Vasić 2008, 270, *Cat. no. 361*; 271, *Cat. no. 363* (Honorius); 278, *Cat. nos. 382–383* (Theodosius II).

²² Vasić 2008, 283–285, *Cat. nos. 395–400*.

²³ Vasić 2008, 114 Table.

²⁴ One specimen each originates from: the surroundings of Niš, the surroundings of Predajane, Višnjica and Mačkovac near Kuršumljija (cf. supra ref. 22).

²⁵ Vasić 2008, 279, *Cat. no. 384*.

¹⁷ Christian symbols, such as, for example, a Christogram or a cross, are assumed to occur in the period of transition from paganism to Christianity. It has been noted that, since the adoption of the cross as a basic type on coins in the late 6th and the early 7th century, graffiti with Christian symbols disappeared (cf. *DOC*, 35).

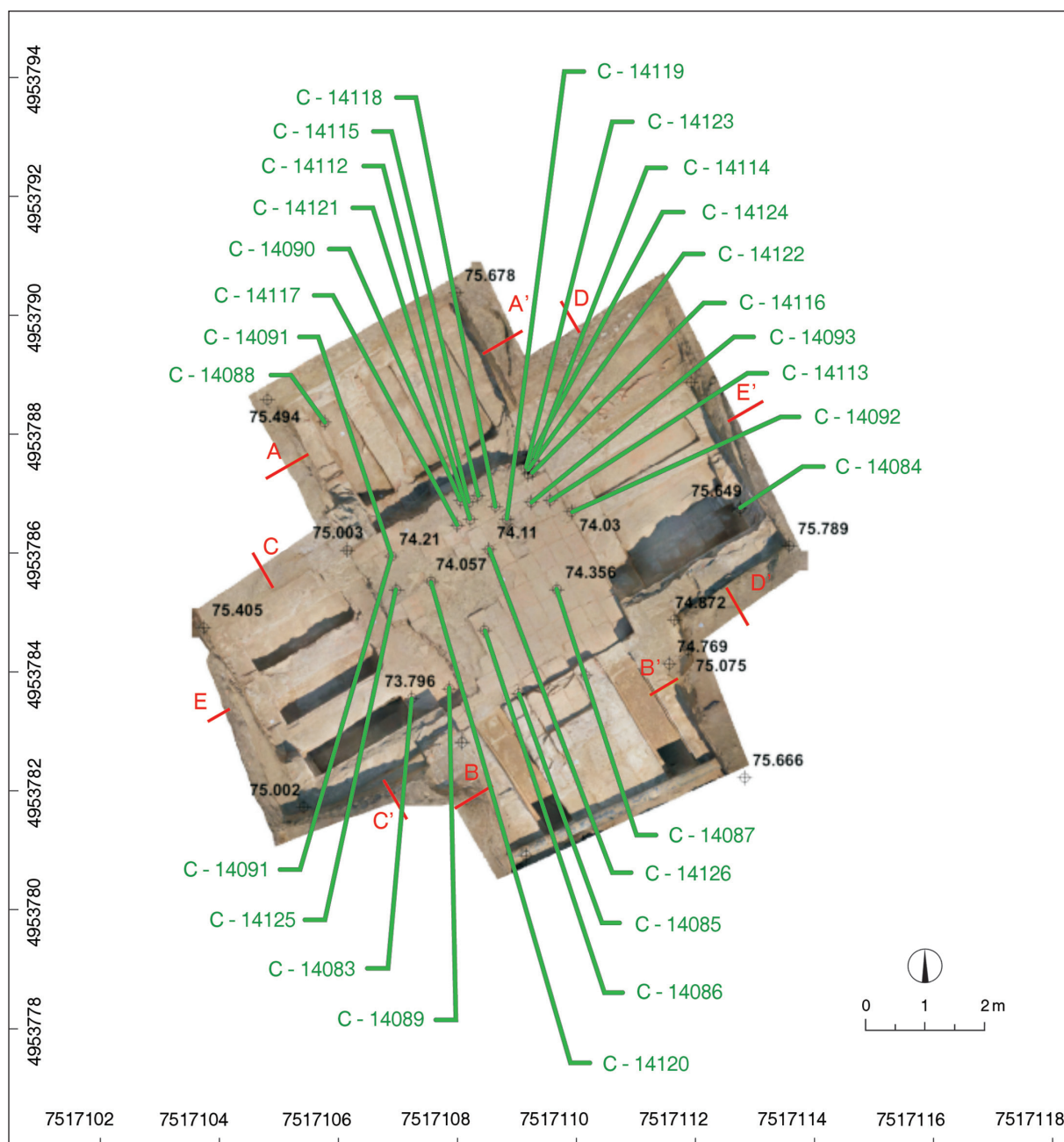


Fig. 2: 3D plan of family mausoleum (G 5868).

Sl. 2: Tloris križno oblikovane družinske grobnice (G 5868) v 3D-izrisu.

the period of the consecutive reigns of Theodosius II and Valentinian III (423–443).²⁶

The closest and chronologically analogous would be a hoard of six solidi of Theodosius II,

which was, prior to 1901, sold in the village of Braničevo (about 30 km east of Viminacium).²⁷ This information was obtained from Patsch, who

²⁶ Only in four of these 22 specimens is the place of finding known: Tanda near Bor, the surroundings of Paraćin, Kosanica near Pljevlja and Bela Palanka (cf. Vasić 2008, 118 Table).

²⁷ It is logical to assume that the hoard which was sold in the village of Braničevo was discovered in the close vicinity of Viminacium, if not at Viminacium itself. Further in the text, this hoard will be referred to as the “hoard from Braničevo”, to avoid repeating that it is the hoard sold in the village of Braničevo.

Mintinig period	“Hoard from Braničevo” (No. of pieces)	Hoard from Viminacium (No. of pieces)	Hoard from Pontes (No. of pieces)
403–408		1	
408–420	1	5	
420–424	3		
430–440	1	1	2
441–450			3

Fig. 3: Incidence of solidi from the mint of Constantinople in solidi hoards from the Serbian part of the Danube Limes. Sl. 3: Zastopanost solidov iz kovnice v Konstantinoplu v zakladih solidov z območja srbskega dela donavskega limesa.

also described all six solidi:²⁸ 1. CONCORDIA AVGG A, ex – CONOB; 2. VOT XX MVL T XXX E, ex – CONOB, no star in the field; 3–4, the same as the previous, but with a star in the field; 5. GLOR ORVIS TERRAR, ex – TESOB; 6. VOT XXX MVL T XXXX Z, ex – CONOB.²⁹ The “hoard from Braničevo” is concluded with an identical specimen as that of Viminacium, VOT XXX MVL T XXXX, and is dated to 430–440 AD. The differences between these two finds are the presence of a solidus from the mint of Thessalonica in the “hoard from Braničevo” and with the earliest specimen in the hoard from Viminacium, which is dated to 403–408 AD (Fig. 3).

Another interesting fact relates to the incidents of specific issues in these two finds. While the largest number of specimens of the Viminacium find comprises issues from 408–420 (CONCORDIA AVGG), in the “hoard from Braničevo” these are issues from 420–424 AD (VOT XX MVL T XXX), which are not present in that of Viminacium. Of course, the content of the “hoard from Braničevo” has to be taken with certain reservations considering the circumstances of finding.

The third hoard from the Serbian part of the Danube Limes originated from Pontes and was discovered during archaeological investigations

conducted on the floor of a house that had been destroyed in a fire, and therefore its composition is reliable.³⁰ The hoard from Pontes consists of five solidi of Theodosius II, with three of them of a slightly later date than the latest specimen from Viminacium: 1–2. VOT XXX MVL T XXXX, ex – CONOB; 3–5. IMP XXXXII COS XVII P P, ex – COMOB.³¹ M. Vasić dated this hoard to 443 AD and brought it into connection with the Hunnic devastations of the same year.³²

From this period, there are two other unpublished hoards of solidi from the region of the Danube Limes, from the vicinity of Prahovo (10) and from Štubik (4), although it remains unclear whether this is the same find or they are two different hoards.³³

³⁰ Vasić 1983.

³¹ 1–2. *RIC X*, p. 259, no. 257, 430–440 AD; 3. *RIC X*, p. 262, Group II, no. 307 (5 points), 441–450; 4–5. *RIC X*, p. 263, Group II, like no. 308 (4 points), 441–450 AD.

³² Vasić linked the hoard with historical events on the Danube Limes during 443 AD and, based on that and the stratigraphic situation at Pontes, he assumes that Pontes was devastated twice, in 441 and 443 AD, when it was totally destroyed (cf. Vasić 1983, 110; Vasić 2008, 119).

³³ Radić and Ivanišević mention a hoard of 10 solidi from the vicinity of Prahovo (Aquis), which is kept at the Museum of Krajina in Negotin, and present the following content: mint of Constantinople SALVS REI PVBLICAE (1 coin), VOT XXX MVL T XXXX (2 coins), IMP XXXX II COS XVII P P (5 coins); mint of Thessalonica VOT XXX MVL T XXXX (1 coin), VIRT EX ERC ROM (1 coin) (cf. Radić, Ivanišević 2006, 22, ref. 46). Vasić mentions a hoard from Štubik, which is also kept at the same museum, and has the following content: mint of Constantinople SALVS REI PVBLICAE (1 coin), VOT XXX MVL T XXXX (2 coins); mint of Thessalonica VOT XXX MVL T XXXX (1 coin) (cf. Vasić 2008, 119, ref. 558). If these were two hoards, the first, from the vicinity of Prahovo, would, with its issues, be analogous with the later find from Pontes, while the find from Štubik would be analogous with the find from

²⁸ Patsch 1902. Of these six solidi, one was repurchased for the National Museum in Sarajevo (GLOR ORVIS TERRAR). This hoard is later also mentioned by Mirnik 1981, 86, no. 331; Hahn, Metcalf 1988, 117 (which dated the hoard to 443); Radić, Ivanišević 2006, 22, ref. 43; Vasić 2008, 119, ref. 558.

²⁹ Here, the order presented by Patsch is somewhat altered and the solidi are listed chronologically: 1. *RIC X*, p. 253, no. 202, 408–420 AD; 2. *RIC X*, p. 256, no. 219, 420–422 AD; 3–4. *RIC X*, p. 257, no. 225, 423–424 AD; 5. *RIC X*, p. 267, no. 361, 424–425 AD; 6. *RIC X*, p. 259, no. 257, 430–440 AD.

The conditions of depositing of the Viminacium hoard of solidi and its dating will again be considered in the conclusion. However, before that, it is also necessary to analyse other finds from tomb G 5868 and, therefore, both the construction phases as well as subsequent construction modifications in the tomb. As already mentioned, in the layer of the deposited soil, above the original flooring, 15 coins were discovered (Cat. nos. 8–22), none of which was found on the earlier flooring. In this regard, questions are raised as to how many times and when the tomb was robbed. Considering the content of the find in the layer of the subsequently deposited soil (the base of the younger flooring),³⁴ it can be assumed that the tomb had been used for some time before it was robbed, and then, for some reason,³⁵ the construction of the younger flooring was undertaken, for the foundation of which the soil was delivered, which was mixed with all that remained in the tomb after the robbery.³⁶ For the reasons mentioned, the depths at which the coins were found cannot be of any help, except for the general knowledge that they were in the tomb after its construction, which does not exclude the possibility that some of the coins belong to the time of the soil depositing and the construction of the new flooring.

Nevertheless, the coins discovered under the younger flooring range from Severus Alexander

to unidentified specimens from the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th century. The earliest specimen belongs to provincial issues of the Marcianopolis mint, struck for Severus Alexander (222–235 AD) (Cat. no. 8). Next is another specimen from the 3rd century, an antoninianus of Gallienus (Cat. no. 9), from the time of his sole rule (260–268 AD). Coinage from the 4th century is represented by the Caesar issues of Constans and Constantine II from the reign of Constantine I (Cat. nos. 10–11). Four coins belong to 337–348 AD (Cat. nos. 12–15), while one is from the sole reign of Constantius II (Cat. no. 16). Also present is a specimen of Theodosius I, dated to 379–383 AD (Cat. no. 17), and five unidentified specimens dated to the second half of the 4th century (Cat. nos. 18–20) or the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century (Cat. nos. 21–22). Above the younger flooring, eight more coins were discovered. The two earliest were issued for Constantius II (Cat. nos. 23–24) and dated to 340–350 AD. The next two specimens probably belong to the issues of Valentinian I and Valentinian II (Cat. nos. 25–26), while the last four unidentified coins (Cat. nos. 27–30) are roughly dated to the second half of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th century.

The construction of monumental family tombs, previously discovered at the necropolis of Pećine (13 of them),³⁷ is commonly dated from the mid-4th century, while the time of use in most of the tombs has also been confirmed as the first decades of the 5th century, that is, until 441.³⁸ These tombs were concentrated in the northern part of the necropolis of Pećine, within the Late Antique necropolis (Fig. 1).³⁹ They were aboveground (five of them) or underground tombs, of the hypogeum type (eight of them), of different sizes and bases (rectangular, with an apse, cruciform).⁴⁰ According to the shape of the base, the size and the number of loculi, the newly discovered G 5868 is completely analogous to the previously investigated G 4816.⁴¹ The same cruciform base was observed in another, thus far the largest discovered, underground tomb G 5035,

tomb G 5868 from Viminacium. Of course, this should be taken with some reservations as there is no certainty as to whether this is the same find and identical specimens were mentioned twice.

³⁴ Cf. supra ref. 16.

³⁵ The reasons for the construction of the new flooring can be the worn-out state of the early one and the need for its renovation, as the place where funerary rituals took place during burials and, later, during regular commemorative repasts, or it was constructed with the intention to accommodate new graves, after all the existing loculi were filled. This was the case in monumental cruciform tomb G 5035, where, after the spaces in the loculi were filled, an additional eight graves were built in the central room (two rows of four), which completely closed access to the loculi on that side (cf. Documentation of the Institute of Archaeology in Belgrade, Fieldwork diary, 3460; Milošević 2006, 94).

³⁶ This assumption is supported by the situation in previously discovered monumental tombs at Pećine, which were also robbed in antiquity. On the floors of these tombs, parts of skeletons thrown out of graves during robberies were discovered, including the remainder of grave goods (fragments of ceramics and glass vessels, coins, etc.), mixed with the rubble of the caved-in tomb (cf. Milošević 2006, 70–132, Vojvoda, Mrđić 2017, 34–44).

³⁷ Cf. supra ref. 14.

³⁸ Milošević 2006, 70–132.

³⁹ They stretched east–west over a length of about 250m, and north–south about 100m.

⁴⁰ Milošević 2006, 71.

⁴¹ Zotović 1994, 62–63; Milošević 2006, 72–82. After the investigation, this tomb was conserved and covered, and it remains available to researchers and visitors of the archaeological park, with special permission, as it is located within the enclosed area of TPP Kostolac 2.

in the immediate proximity of G 4816. It differs from the previous two in the number of loculi in each conch (each contained four), while with some, two levels of burials were also noted.⁴² In addition, in the central room of this tomb, after the completion of burials in the loculi of the side conchs, eight more graves were built. The construction of both previously discovered tombs is dated, based on the coin finds, to the first half of the 4th century (e.g., coins of Constantine I and Crispus).⁴³ It is known that coins provide a solid *terminus post quem* for dating graves. As the coins in question are worn, when dating, what must be factored in, other than the time of minting, is the time of their circulation before being deposited, which is usually 20 years.⁴⁴ There is, therefore, an inclination to assume that both tombs were built around the mid-4th century.

In addition to the aforementioned tombs in the northern part of the necropolis of Pećine, during previous archaeological investigations, at the site of Kod Grobalja, about 700 m south of the southern rampart of the civilian settlement, two more monumental tombs were discovered, of a rectangular base with three semi-circular apses (trefoil shaped), the construction of which is dated to the second half of the 4th century (Fig. 1).⁴⁵ These tombs are defined as isolated, as they

⁴² In the example of the northernmost loculus (no. 12) of the western conch, another loculus built above it was noted (no. 13). It can be assumed that the other loculi also had two levels, which has not been confirmed, as the tomb was devastated. In most loculi that have a double headrest on both sides, two or more individuals were noted. All this points to a planned and dense packing of burial spaces, and Milošević, therefore, assumed that this is not a family tomb and could possibly indicate the uniting of different social structures, some collegia or religious communities, and their shared investment in the construction of some graves (cf. Milošević 2006, 95).

⁴³ Zotović 1994, 62–63; Milošević 2006, 81.

⁴⁴ Cooke 1998, 13. The amount of caution required when dating graves using coins is also evidenced by coin finds from graves at Viminacium, which contain a larger number of specimens. The time span from the earliest to the latest coin in graves usually ranges from 50–100 years, although there are instances for which this range amounts to about 200 years (cf. Vojvoda, Mrđić 2015, 28).

⁴⁵ Zotović 1994, 60–62. Zotović defined both triconch memoriae as cemetery basilicas based on the renovation of the floors, which, according to her, indicates a greater circulation in the structure compared to what would be required for paying respects to the dead. Above the southern triconch memoria, a medieval necropolis was established in the 12th–13th century (cf. Spasić 1989–1990).

do not belong to the city necropolis, but represent private sepulchral structures, built on the estate of a *villa rustica*.⁴⁶

The discovery of the tomb with solidi (G 5868) in 2016 as well as new investigations of its wider surroundings provide new data for the interpretation of the southward expansion of the necropolis of Pećine. Specifically, the tomb with solidi (G 5868) was discovered 480 m south of the aforementioned tomb G 4816 or 45 m east of the two triconch tombs at the site of Kod Grobalja (Fig. 4). It is located in the intermediate area that was not included in the previous investigations, and, as it turned out, it was dug into the layers of an earlier necropolis from the 2nd and 3rd century, at which cremation and inhumation burials were simultaneously practised.⁴⁷

A RESUMPTION OF THE DATING OF TOMB G 5868 AND THE DEPOSITION

If the aforementioned assumption with regard to the formation of the layer of deposited soil below the newer flooring is accepted, the 3rd-century coins (Alexander Severus and Gallienus) are certainly not relevant for determining the time of the tomb's construction, but they likely represented grave goods in one of the robbed loculi.⁴⁸ Six coins are dated to 333–350 AD, while seven belong to the second half of the 4th century, and two of them possibly even to the very beginning of the 5th century. A similar picture was obtained from the coin finds from tomb G 4816 (Constantine I, Crispus, Valentinian II, the second half of the 4th or possibly beginning of the 5th century).⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Milošević 2005, 180.

⁴⁷ At about 10 m north of tomb G 5868, an early medieval necropolis was established (9th–10th c.), which was investigated at the same time, and its separate publication is expected. The formation of this medieval necropolis, right next to tomb G 5868, as well as of the somewhat later necropolis from the 12th–13th century (cf. supra ref. 44), about 50 m west, above one and next to the other triconch tomb, could indicate that these structures were to some extent preserved at the time and that the medieval necropolises emerged around them out of reverence or belief that these are small early Christian churches.

⁴⁸ As already mentioned, at Viminacium necropolises, it is not uncommon for graves to contain coins even 100 or 200 years older than others in the same grave (cf. supra ref. 44).

⁴⁹ Vojvoda, Mrđić 2017, Cat. nos. 1445, 1450, 1718, 2859, 2898. Of 14 coins from this tomb, nine have been



Fig. 4: Family mausoleums G 4816, G 5868 and triconch tomb.

Sl. 4: Družinski grobnici G 4816 in G 5868 ter grobnica s tremi polkupolami.

Based on everything stated, it is believed that the time of the construction of tomb G 5868 can be dated to around the mid-4th century. Of the eight coins discovered above the younger flooring, two are dated to 347–350,⁵⁰ while the others belong to issues of the second half of the 4th or the first decades of the 5th century. This could, with a degree of caution, place the construction of the younger flooring into the first or the second decade of the 5th century.

The latest specimen of the solidi is dated to 430–440 AD and, at the same time, also represents the latest coin discovered in the tomb, but directly below one of the bricks of the younger flooring in the northwest corner of the central room (Fig. 2, C - 14125). The depositing of the hoard of solidi into tomb G 5868 can be dated to 441 AD, given the known historical circumstances. The eastern part of the empire was, from the second quarter of the 5th century, faced with the growing threat from the Huns, who were advancing towards

the Danube frontier. The gravity of the newly emerged situation is evidenced by the fact that Theodosius II, from 430, had to pay the Huns an annual tribute, which in the years that followed only increased. Nevertheless, it appears that the Huns were intent on destroying the Danube Limes in order to facilitate their incursions into the Roman territory. Thus, in 441 AD, at a time when the Eastern Empire's army was engaged on the other side, they raided across the Danube frontier. In this invasion, Pontes, Viminacium, Margum and Sirmium fell. The incursion was not confined to 441 AD, but hostilities continued until 443 AD, by which time Pontes (for the second time), Naissus, Serdica and Ratiaria had been destroyed.⁵¹

As shown, the construction of the new flooring in tomb G 5868 certainly preceded the events of 441 AD, when Viminacium was destroyed during the invasion of the Huns. The fact that the hoard was discovered directly below one of the bricks of the younger flooring indicates that it was stashed

lost (cf. Vojvoda, Mrđić 2017, 506, Table 1).

⁵⁰ Cf. supra ref. 44, 48.

⁵¹ Vasić 1983, 104–107, ref. 15–29; Vasić 2008, 117–118, ref. 546–554.

in the tomb in the face of the impending threat from the Huns in 441 AD. From all this, it can be concluded that the hoard itself is not connected with any of the graves or the tomb itself, but that the owner, probably a family member who had access to the tomb, hid his savings from danger. Since taxes in this period were paid exclusively in gold, and given that in some provinces the *limitanei*

were also paid in gold, it can be assumed that in the case of the Viminacium hoard of solidi this points to the owner having hidden it.⁵²

⁵² This has already been confirmed for Dacia Ripensis by the find of solidi from Pontes. Vasić elaborates on this in two of his papers (cf. Vasić 1983, 108–110; Vasić 2008, 37–54, 119).

CATALOGUE

The coins are kept in the Museum of the Institute of Archaeology within the Archaeological Park Viminacium.

Abbreviations:

Axis (sides of the World)

l. = left, r. = right, std. = seated, stg. = standing, laur. = laureate, rad. = radiate, diad. = diademed, dr. = bust draped, cuir. = bust cuirassed

Hoard of solidi discovered below the younger flooring

Cat. no. 1 (Inv. no.: 14125/1)



Denomination: solidus

Weight; Size; Axis: 4.46 g; 21.04 mm; S

Obverse: D N THEODO-SIVS P F AVG; helmeted bust facing, diad. (pearl), cuir., spear in r. hand hld. over r. shoulder, behind head, on l. arm decorated shield (horseman rides down enemy).

Reverse: CONCORDI-A AVGGG Γ; star in field l.; ex – CONOB; Constantinopolis enthroned front, head r., hld. sceptre and Victory on globe, her r. foot on prow.

Mint: Constantinople

Date: 403–408 AD (Theodosius II)

References: RIC X, p. 243, no. 31.

Cat. no. 2 (Inv. no.: 14125/2)



Denomination: solidus

Weight; Size; Axis: 4.45 g; 21.54 mm; S

Obverse: D N HONORI-VS P F AVG; similar.

Reverse: CONCORDI-A AVGG B; star in field l.; ex – CONOB; similar.

Mint: Constantinople

Date: 408–420 AD (Honorius)

References: RIC X, p. 253, no. 201.

Cat. no. 3 (Inv. no.: 14125/3)



Denomination: solidus

Weight; Size; Axis: 4.47 g; 21.68 mm; S

Obverse: D N HONORI-VS P F AVG; similar.

Reverse: CONCORDI-A AVGG B; star in field l.; ex – CONOB; similar.

Mint: Constantinople

Date: 408–420 AD (Honorius)

References: RIC X, p. 253, no. 201.

Cat. no. 4 (Inv. no.: 14125/4)*Denomination:* solidus*Weight; Size; Axis:* 4.47 g; 21.21 mm; S*Obverse:* D N HONORI-VS P F AVG; similar.*Reverse:* CONCORDI-A AVGG L; star in field l.;
ex – CONOB; similar.*Mint:* Constantinople*Date:* 408–420 AD (Honorius)*References:* RIC X, p. 253, no. 201.**Cat. no. 5** (Inv. no.: 14125/5)*Denomination:* solidus*Weight; Size; Axis:* 4.46 g; 21.01 mm; S*Obverse:* D N THEODO-SIVS P F AVG; similar.*Reverse:* CONCORDI-A AVGG A; star in field l.; ex –
CONOB; similar.*Mint:* Constantinople*Date:* 408–420 AD (Theodosius II)*References:* RIC X, p. 253, no. 202.**Cat. no. 6** (Inv. no.: 14125/6)*Denomination:* solidus*Weight; Size; Axis:* 4.47 g; 21.35 mm; S*Obverse:* D N THEODO-SIVS P F AVG; similar.*Reverse:* CONCORDI-A AVGG Z; star in field l.; ex –
CONOB; similar.*Mint:* Constantinople*Date:* 408–420 AD (Theodosius II)*Notes:* Graffiti: obv. LB in lig.; rev. X.*References:* RIC X, p. 253, no. 202.**Cat. no. 7** (Inv. no.: 14125/7)*Denomination:* solidus*Weight; Size; Axis:* 4.47 g; 20.93 mm; S*Obverse:* D N THEODO-SIVS P F AVG; similar.*Reverse:* VOT XXX – MVLTVS; star in field l.; ex
– CONOB; Constantinopolis enthroned front, head to
l., hld. cross on globe and sceptre; her l. foot on prow;
by the throne a shield.*Mint:* Constantinople*Date:* 430–440 AD (Theodosius II)*References:* RIC X, p. 259, no. 257.

Other coins discovered below the younger flooring

Cat. no. 8 (Inv. no.: 14092)

Denomination: AE

Weight; Size; Axis: 9.15 g; 25.43 mm; N

Obverse: AVT K M AVP CEV AΛEΞANΔΠOC; bust r., head laur.

Reverse: VII TIB IOVΛ ΦECTOV MAPIKIANOΠOΛIT; ex – ΩN; eagle stg. l. on rod, head l. with wreath in its beak.

Mint: Marcianopolis

Date: 222–235 AD (Severus Alexander)

References: Mušmov 1912, no. 714.

Cat. no. 9 (Inv. no.: 14129)

Denomination: Ant.

Weight; Size; Axis: 1.60 g; 18.07 mm; S

Obverse: GALLIE[NVS AVG]; head rad. r.

Reverse: [FIDES MILI]TVM; fides stg. r., hld. standard and sceptre; N in field l.

Mint: Rome

Date: 260–268 AD (Gallien)

Notes: Fragmentary

References: RIC V.1, p. 147, no. 192A.

Cat. no. 10 (Inv. no.: 14083)

Denomination: AE3

Weight; Size; Axis: 2.64 g; 18.00 mm; S

Obverse: [FL CONST]ANS NOB CAES; bust dr., cuir., l., head diad.

Reverse: [GLOR]-IA EXERCITVS ex – •CONSI[.]; *Gloria exercitus* type with two standards.

Mint: Constantinople

Date: 333–335 AD (Constans)

References: RIC VII, p. 582, no. 83.

Cat. no. 11 (Inv. no.: 14120)

Denomination: AE3

Weight; Size; Axis: 1.21 g; 17.00 mm; N

Obverse: FL IVL CONSTANTIVS NOB C; bust dr., cuir. r., head laur.

Reverse: GLOR-IA EXERCITVS; ex – ISIS; *Gloria exercitus* type with one standard.

Mint: Siscia

Date: 335–336 AD (Constantius II)

References: RIC VII, p. 458, no. 240.

Cat. no. 12 (Inv. no.: 14119)

Denomination: AE3

Weight; Size; Axis: 1.16 g; 16.11 mm; S

Obverse: D N CONSTANTINVS P F AVG; bust dr., cuir. r., head diad.

Reverse: GLOR-IA EXERCITVS; ex – SMKA; *Gloria exercitus* type with one standard.

Mint: Cyzicus

Date: 337–before April 340 AD (Constantine II)

References: RIC VIII, p. 490, no. 15.

Cat. no. 13 (Inv. no.: 14128)

Denomination: AE3

Weight; Size; Axis: 1.72 g; 15.98 mm; N

Obverse: CONSTANTI-[VS P F AVG]; bust dr. cuir. r., head diad.

Reverse: GLORI-A EXERCITVS; ex – SMTSA; *Gloria exercitus* type with one standard.

Mint: Tesselonica

Date: 337–340 AD (Constantius II)

References: RIC VIII, p. 407, no. 56.

Cat. no. 14 (Inv. no.: 14137)

Denomination: AE3

Weight; Size; Axis: 1.80 g; 16.39 mm; S

Obverse: CONSTAN-S P F AVG; bust dr. cuir. r., head diad.

Reverse: VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN; ex – BSIS; two Victories stg. facing one another, each hld. wreath, between them upright palm branch.

Mint: Siscia

Date: 347–348 AD (Constans)

References: RIC VIII, p. 363, no. 189.

Cat. no. 15 (Inv. no.: 14127)

Denomination: AE3

Weight; Size; Axis: 1.43 g; 14.60 mm; NW

Obverse: Illegible; bust r.

Reverse: VOT X•X MVLV XXX; in wreath, medallion on top of wreath; ex – Illegible.

Mint: Unknown

Date: 347–348 AD (Constans or Constantius II (?))

References: -.

Cat. no. 16 (Inv. no.: 14118)

Denomination: AE3

Weight; Size; Axis: 1.67 g; 16.89 mm; N

Obverse: Illegible; bust dr., cuir., r., head diad.

Reverse: Illegible; ex – Illegible; falling horseman.

Mint: Unknown

Date: 350–361 AD (Constantius II)

Notes: Fragmentary

References: -.

Cat. no. 17 (Inv. no.: 14116)

Denomination: AE4

Weight; Size; Axis: 0.86 g; 15.98 mm; N

Obverse: D N THEODO-SIVS P F AVG; bust dr., cuir., r., head diad.

Reverse: VOT X MVLV XX ; in wreath; ex – SMKT

Mint: Cyzicus

Date: 379–383 AD (Theodosius I)

References: RIC IX, p. 244, no. 21(c).

Cat. no. 18 (Inv. no.: 14113)

Denomination: AE4

Weight; Size; Axis: 1.19 g; 13.88 mm; N

Obverse: Illegible; bust dr., cuir., r., head diad.

Reverse: Illegible; ex – Illegible; *Salus reipublicae* type Victory adv. l. (?)

Mint: Unknown

Date: Second half of the 4th c. (Gratian / Theodosius I ?)

References: -.

Cat. no. 19 (Inv. no.: 14117)*Denomination:* AE3*Weight; Size; Axis:* 1.94 g; 14.28 mm; N*Obverse:* Illegible; bust dr., cuir., r., head diad.*Reverse:* Illegible; ex – Illegible; figure (?) stg.*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* Second half of the 4th c.*References:* -.**Cat. no. 20** (Inv. no.: 14112)*Denomination:* AE3*Weight; Size; Axis:* 3.07 g; 15.88 mm; -*Obverse:* Illegible; bust r.*Reverse:* Illegible; ex – Illegible; worn.*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* Second half of the 4th c.*References:* -.**Cat. no. 21** (Inv. no.: 14114)*Denomination:* AE4*Weight; Size; Axis:* 1.02 g; 13.65 mm; -*Obverse:* Illegible; bust r.*Reverse:* Illegible; ex – Illegible; worn.*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* End of the 4th c. or beginning of the 5th c.*References:* -.**Cat. no. 22** (Inv. no.: 14115)*Denomination:* AE4*Weight; Size; Axis:* 0.30 g; 10.22 mm; -*Obverse:* Illegible; bust r.*Reverse:* Illegible; ex – Illegible; worn.*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* End of the 4th c. or beginning of the 5th c.*Notes:* Fragmentary*References:* -.**Coins discovered above the younger flooring****Cat. no. 23** (Inv. no.: 14089)*Denomination:* AE3*Weight; Size; Axis:* 1.33 g; 14.48 mm; N*Obverse:* CONSTANTI-VS P F AVG; bust dr., cuir., r., head diad.*Reverse:* VICTORIAE DD AVGGQ NN; ex – SMTS[A]; two Victories stg. facing one another, each hld. wreath, between them upright palm branch.*Mint:* Thessalonica*Date:* 347–348 AD*References:* RIC VIII, p. 411, no. 104.**Cat. no. 24** (Inv. no.: 14085)*Denomination:* AE3*Weight; Size; Axis:* 0.95 g; 12.56 mm; S*Obverse:* Illegible; bust dr., cuir., r., head diad.*Reverse:* Illegible; ex – Illegible; similar.*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* 340–350 AD (Constantius II)*Notes:* Fragmentary*References:* -.**Cat. no. 25** (Inv. no.: 14087)*Denomination:* AE3*Weight; Size; Axis:* 1.69 g; 15.94 mm; N*Obverse:* Illegible; bust dr., cuir., r., head diad.*Reverse:* Illegible; ex – Illegible; figure (?) stg. front.*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* Second half of the 4th c. (Valentinian I?)*References:* -.**Cat. no. 26** (Inv. no.: 14084)*Denomination:* AE3*Weight; Size; Axis:* 1.51 g; 15.93 mm; S*Obverse:* [VALENTI]ANVS IVN P F C; bust dr. cuir. l., head diad.*Reverse:* VOT V MVLT X; in wreath ex – [..]SΔ*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* 378–383 AD (Valentinian II)*References:* -.**Cat. no. 27** (Inv. no.: 14090)*Denomination:* AE3*Weight; Size; Axis:* 1.36 g; 14.81 mm; -*Obverse:* Illegible; bust r.*Reverse:* Illegible; ex – Illegible; worn*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* Second half of the 4th c.*References:* -.**Cat. no. 28** (Inv. no.: 14091)*Denomination:* AE4*Weight; Size; Axis:* 1.29 g; 12.63 mm; -*Obverse:* Illegible; bust r.*Reverse:* Illegible; ex – Illegible; worn.*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* Second half of the 4th c.*References:* -.**Cat. no. 29** (Inv. no.: 14088)*Denomination:* AE4*Weight; Size; Axis:* 1.31 g; 12.54 mm; -*Obverse:* Illegible; bust r.*Reverse:* Illegible; ex – Illegible; worn.*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* End of the 4th c. or beginning of the 5th c.*References:* -.**Cat. no. 30** (Inv. no.: 14093)*Denomination:* AE4*Weight; Size; Axis:* 1.07 g; 13.5 mm; -*Obverse:* Illegible; bust r.*Reverse:* Illegible; ex – Illegible; worn.*Mint:* Unknown*Date:* End of the 4th c. or beginning of the 5th c.*Notes:* Fragmentary*References:* -.

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Zakladna najdba solidov iz hipogeuma z viminacijske nekropole Pećine (Srbija)

Povzetek

Pri zaščitnih arheoloških raziskavah na območju južnih viminacijskih grobišč (Pećine) so leta 2016 naleteli v okviru poznoantične podzemne grobnice, hipogeja (*hypogeum* G 5868), na zakladno najdbo sedmih solidusov (*sl. 1*). V tej izjemni najdbi so trije novci cesarja Honorija in štirje cesarja Teodozija II., vsi kovani v Konstantinoplu. Novce so našli tik pod eno izmed opek mlajšega tlaka (*sl. 2: C - 14125*) v severozahodnem vogalu osrednje grobne kamre ob zahodnem prostoru.

Najstarejši novc je solidus Teodozija II. (*kat. št. 1*) z legendo na reverzu CONCORDIA AVGGG (Konstantinopolis sedi na prestolu frontalno, drži scepter in Viktorijo na globusu, desna noga na premcu; zvezda v polju levo), datiran v čas med letoma 403 in 408 oziroma v obdobje pred Arkadijevo smrtjo. Sledi pet solidusov z enakim reverzom CONCORDIA AVGGG, od katerih trije pripadajo Honoriju (*kat. št. 2–4*) in dva Teodoziju II. (*kat. št. 5, 6*), datirani so v obdobje od leta 408 do 420. Na solidusu Teodozija II. (*kat. št. 6*, detajl) so vrezani grafiti: na averzu sta desno v polju črki L in B v ligaturi in na reverzu tudi desno v polju X. Slednji je narejen z močnejšim in globokim vrezom. Najmlajši novc v tem zakladu je solidus Teodozija II. (*kat. št. 7*) z legendo na reverzu VOT XXX MVLX XXXX (Konstantinopolis sedi na prestolu frontalno, drži scepter in križ na globusu, leva noga na premcu, ob prestolu ščit; zvezda v polju desno), datiran v čas med letoma 430 in 440.

Na podlagi primerjav z drugimi monumentalnimi družinskimi grobnicami, že prej odkritimi pri arheoloških izkopavanjih v Viminaciju, ter tudi na osnovi drobnih arheoloških najdb je mogoče

gradnjo grobnice G 5868 datirati v sredino 4. st. Na osnovi presenetljive najdbe solidov lahko obnovo tlaka v grobnici s previdnostjo postavimo v čas prvega ali drugega desetletja 5. st. Shranitev zlatnikov v osrednji kamri grobnice (*sl. 2: C - 14125*) ni bila vezana na obnovo, saj je najmlajši solidus datiran v obdobje med letoma 430 in 440. Najdbo lahko povežemo z dogodki iz leta 441, izpričanimi v virih, ko so prebivalci in mesto Viminacij ob maščevalnem pohodu Hunov utrpeli veliko škodo. Kraj najdbe in datacija nakazujeta, da solidusi niso bili položeni v grobnico kot grobni pridelek. Zakop je mogoče povezati z lastnikom grobnice ali z bližnjim družinskim članom, ki je imel prost dostop do grobnice in je tam skrnil prihranke pred nevarnostjo.

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Slikovno gradivo: Sl. 4 (izvedba: Jasmina Živković); – Katalog (foto : Nemanja Mrdić).

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