

THE POSSIBILITIES OF IDENTIFYING COINS FROM THE IMPERIAL MINT AT VIMINACIUM, ON THE BASIS OF NEW FINDS*

VLADIMIR KONDIĆ

Arheološki institut, Beograd

One of the chief problems is the problem of the imperial mint at Viminacium and, to a certain extent of that in Mediolanum. The majority of solutions proposed seem to be rather superficial or even untenable. In spite of the frequent changes of opinion expressed by numismatists, on these mints and in spite of the limited factual basis for their existence, the problem was officially settled, so to say, in the book by Mattingly and Sutherland.

Though an incontrovertible solution of the problem is impossible with the evidence available, a revision of it seems both feasible and necessary; the following facts may be taken as reliable starting-points.

1. It is practically beyond doubt that the Antoniniani of Pacatian were issued in Viminacium.

2. The mint of the colony of Viminacium began to work in 239.

3. The historical circumstances — barbarian attacks on the southern part of Danube, the presence of numerous soldiers stationed in the fortresses along the limes, frequent rebellions and usurpations on the part of the legionary officers — demanded prompt financial interventions which, in turn, made a mint near to the scene of action an indispensable factor.

4. A careful analysis of hoards from the northern Balkans may detect the types of coins found only here or found here in strikingly greater quantities than in other finds.

First, we should note that the type VICTORIA AVGG (RIC 51) of Philip I has been identified by Eddy as originating from Viminacium and has been linked with the coinage of Pacatian. According to Eddy's convincing reconstruction, Pacatian began to issue silver in Viminacium with the reverse dies of Philip, found already made in the mint. This supposition, preferable to that of Mattingly that the type in question should be treated as a hybrid one, involves a beginning of the mint's work earlier than Pacatian's accession. The same is suggested by a comparison of the distribution of this type in the

* *Apparatus criticus*, literature and discussion are given fully in the monograph published meantime by the author: *Beogradski nalaz denara i antoninijana, Septimije Sever-Valerijan* (Beograd: Muzej grada Beograda, 1969) p. 185 ff.

Dorchester and Smederevo hoards: the latter reaches 92% of the former. In the total of Philip's coins from Smederevo, this type represents 4,60% of the whole; similarly is the Singidunum hoard where the Figure is 4,58%. All these indications, enumerated by Eddy, as well as his calculation of the distribution of the material discussed in Balkan and other hoards, are supported by our find. With similar arguments, Eddy also attributes RIC 226, AETERNIT IMPER, of Philip II to Viminacium. This type, again, is remarkably represented in Smederevo and other Balkan hoards, much better than in hoards from the western provinces. The proportion offered by the Singidunum hoard for RIC 226, AETERNIT IMPER, is still stronger: of the total of 118 Philip II coins in the hoard, this type numbers 17, or 14,49%, while the figures of the Smederevo find are $319 : 22 = 6,89\%$. Eddy's attribution, based on the complete statistical evidence, seems to us quite justified, obviously preferable to ascribing the type to the Roman mint, which appears arbitrary.

The Jablanica hoard provides interesting data on the coinage of Traianus Decius. It contains a specimen, otherwise unknown, with the inscriptions (Obv.) IMP TRAIANVS DECIVS AVG (Rev.) PM TR P III COS II PP (Securitas seated l., holding sceptres, with head leaning against l. hand). Because of the datable titles, this coin was used by M. Vasić as a starting-point for dating the issue bearing the shorter obverse legend IMP TRAIANVS DECIVS AVG, to the end of 250 or the beginning of 251, and that with the longer legend, IMP C M Q TRAIANVS DECIVS AVG, to 249. Though the series with the shorter obverse inscription is usually assigned to the Roman mint, M. Vasić allowed the possibility that it actually originates from a Balkan mint, probably the *moneta comitatensis*, which could have produced this unique coin. As he is of the opinion that this period was too early for the coining of silver-coins at Viminacium, he is reluctant to accept the possibility of assigning these coins to the above mentioned mint. However, there exist important indications that the mint of Viminacium was opened as early as in Philip's reign and — if this is also true of Pacatian, which is practically certain — it is quite probable that the mint continued its production under Traianus Decius. The coin from Jablanica renders such a supposition very probable.

The so-called Milan series of Traianus Decius, with the obverse legend IMPCAETRADEC/IVS/AVG, and the *Consecratio* series, though comparatively rare, are well represented in the Singidunum hoard. The same is also true of the Jablanica hoard (even 26 *Consecratio* specimens and 9 others, out of the total of 371) and that from Smederevo (123 coins, as compared to Decius' total of 1389). Such a distribution would indicate a neighbouring mint, the more so as the theory regarding the Milan mint prior to the reign of Gallienus rests upon weak arguments. If the mint responsible is really to be sought in this area, then the only possibility — so far as we can see — is Viminacium. This city possessed a mint for colonial money as early as 239, which means the presence of trained men — some members of the imperial mint's personnel must have been transferred from Rome, e. g. engravers — and the necessary apparatus. In spite of the difference in metal and size of the respective productions, the existence of the local mint in Viminacium must have given the city a considerable advantage over other possible candidates for the location of the imperial mint, an advantage clearly realized by Pacatian at least,

whose Antoniniani undoubtedly originate from Viminacium. In all likelihood, the minting that had taken place in Viminacium under the rebel was to continue for a while, at least during the period of Decius.

The coins of Trebonianus Gallus from our hoard provide some further indications for a neighbouring mint, speaking, it seems, against Mattingly's assumption of the Milan mint functioning in these years, or against his identification of the Milan production. We shall begin with the specimens, otherwise unknown, which appear both in the Jablanica and Singidunum hoards:

Obv. IMP CAE C VIB TREB GALLVS
Rev. PAX AETERNA

The type PAX AETERNA, among the issues of Trebonianus Gallus has so far only been found on RIC 71, with the same reverse representation, but with a different obverse legend, IMP CC VIB TREB GALLVS AVG (assigned to Milan in RIC). According to Mattingly-Sutherland, the obverse of RIC 71 would be Roman, the reverse characteristic of Mediolanum. However, our specimen demand a revision of such an attribution, and throw doubt upon the assumption of a Milan mint under Trebonianus Gallus. It could hardly be taken for a simple coincidence that, not far from Viminacium, two identical, otherwise unknown specimens were found. All this speaks in favour of a state mint in Viminacium. M. Vasić, also, surmised a local mint in this connection, but we think that the attribution should be more precise, in view of the arguments adduced above in favour of the Viminacian mint.

The hoards from Jablanica and Singidunum list two more new specimens of Trebonianus Gallus, which suggest similar conclusions. The first is from Jablanica: (Obv.) IMP CC VIB TREB GALLVS, (Rev.) PAX AETERNA. According to Mattingly-Sutherland, the obverse would be from Milan, the reverse unknown. That from Singidunum reads as follows: (Obv.) IMP CAE C VIB TREB GALLVS, (Rev.) PIETAS AVGG (Pietas standing, with head l., both hands raised; altar). According to RIC, no Antoninianus with such a combination of the obverse and reverse is known. A similar representation, without altar, is found on the variety RIC 41. The reverse with Pietas and the altar, identical to ours, is described on specimens, usually derived from Milan, with a different obverse legend, IMP CC VIB TREB GALLVS AVG. These two specimens, as well as some others treated by Mattingly-Sutherland as combinations produced by Milan with aid of Roman reverses actually represent rare coins. Taking into consideration, especially their provenance, we think that the two *unica* described must have originated from Viminacium. The same is suggested as probable, though not certain, for other types which occur in greater quantities in Moesian hoards, in spite of their having been assigned to Mediolanum. In any case, a revision of the Milan hypothesis is required, and its early opening at least seems dubious.

The last emperor whose coins — four Antoniniani — are found in the Singidunum hoard is Valerian. R. Göbl, in the well-known part V/1 of the "Aufbau der römischen Münzprägung in der Kaiserzeit", presents a convincing identification and chronological arrangement for Valerian's imperial issues from Viminacium. Completely accepting his results, we may note that they are corroborated by the evidence of the Singidunum hoard. Our No 1, with the reverse inscription VIRTVS AVG, has been defined by Göbl as a variant of

the first Viminacian issue and dated in the months before Gallienus was appointed Augustus, i. e. before October 253. The specimens with VIRTUS AVGG would belong to the second Viminacian issue, being coined before the end of the year. It is true, they appear (two of them) in our hoard with the legend identical to those published by Göbl and others, but with a different representation. However, the same type occurs on a coin from the first Viminacian issue and nowhere else during Valerian's minting. The stylistic resemblance of the portraits and the reverses of these two variants, as well as the fact that the reverse type of Nos 2 and 3 has been registered only on the Viminacian coinage, clearly locate the mint of this variety, so far unknown. It must have been produced — in a rather small quantity, judging by its rarity — at the very beginning of the second issue, as it directly follows the reverse type of the first issue. The third type, with FIDES MILITVM has also been ascribed by Göbl to the second Viminacian issue, before the end of 253. The last months of 253 would consequently represent a *terminus ad quem* of the hoard's burial. The interval between the output of Nos 1—4 and their arrival in the hands of the owner of the Singidunum hoard may have been short, in view of the negligible distance between Viminacium and Singidunum.

Our discussion of the problem of the imperial mint in Viminacium gives no definitive results. However, though the grounds for the majority of our attributions may seem unsatisfactory or insufficient, they are supported by a broad set of indications, which should not be neglected. New finds will, doubtlessly, enrich our evidence, and provide a better base for further research.

*Mogućnosti identifikovanja proizvoda carske kovnice u Viminacijumu
na osnovu novih nalaza*

Povzetek in delni prevod tega predavanja je avtor objavil medtem v monografiji: *Beogradski nalaz denara i antoninijana, Septimije Sever-Valerijan* (Beograd: Muzej grada Beograda, 1969) na straneh 47 ss, kjer sta navedeni tudi literatura in diskusija.