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НУМИЗМАТИЧНИ ОТКРИТИЯ В БОЖЕНИШКИ
УРВИЧ ПРЕЗ 2025 Г.

НИКОЛАЙ ДИМИТРОВ

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Numismatic Finds in Bozhenishki Urvich during 2025

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Нумизматични открития в Боженишки Урвич през 2025 г.

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Abstract: The ancient and medieval fortress of Bozhenishki Urvich is located about 20 km north of the city of Botevgrad. It was actively researched in the 1970s and 1980s, but was never fully explored. In 2023, excavations were resumed, and new numismatic finds were discovered in the area during three archaeological seasons. In 2025, two gold solidi of Emperor Justinian I were found in the remains of a Late Antique building from the 6th century. In addition to the gold coins, 11 bronze coins were also discovered in that year.

Keywords: Bozhenishki Urvich, Late Antiquity, Solidus, Solidi, 6th Century.



At the end of July 2025, the third season of renewed excavations at the Bozhenishki Urvich fortress began, led by Metodi Zlatkov (NAIM-BAS) and Reni Petrova (director of the Historical Museum – Botevgrad). Within two working weeks, sections of two fortress walls were studied, as well as a building from the 6th century, dated based on the materials found there.¹

Three bronze coins from the 4th century were found in deeper layers, proving an earlier cultural layer on which the 6th-century building was constructed. The 4th-century coins are heavily worn, with only one of them showing a female bust, probably of Helena, and on the reverse a standing figure with a sceptre – possibly of the PAX PVBLICA type from 337-340 AD (RIC VIII, p. 449, no. 33). The other two 4th-century coins can be dated to around the middle or third quarter of the century.

All other coins from the 2025 excavations are from 6th century, mainly folles and two half folles. One of the 20 nummi coins bears the image of Anastasius, minted between 512-518 (MIB I, № 33; MIBE, 33), and the other the bust of Justin I, issued between 518-527 (MIB I, № 18; MIBE,

¹ This is a preliminary publication of the numismatic material from 2025 of the fortress Bozhenishki Urvich, which aims to announce the discoveries without providing a comprehensive summary of the information or compiling a catalogue.

18). They are not well preserved.

Of the 40-nummi coins, one is of Anastasius, minted in Constantinople between 512 and 518 (MIB I, № 27; MIBE I, 27), three belong to Justin I, two of which were minted in Nicomedia between 518-522 (MIB I, № 35a; MIBE I, № 35a) and one in Constantinople (MIB I, № 12; MIBE I, № 12), and two belong to Justinian I.

Justinian's folles were made after his reform, which makes it possible to determine their minting year more accurately. One of them was minted in Constantinople during the 15th regnal year of his rule, 541-542 (DOC I, № 40a.1; MIB I, № 95a; MIBE I, № 95a). The second was made in Cyzicus in the 21st regnal year of Justinian, i.e., 547-548 (DOC I, № 173a.1; MIB I, № 95a; MIBE I, № 95a).

More impressive finds in 2025 are the two gold solidi of Justinian I (**Fig. 1**)², which are almost identical, minted in Constantinople between 542 and 565 (MIB I, № 7). They mainly differ in the officina where they were produced, one solidus in the first, the other in the third officina of the capital's mint.

The numismatic discoveries in 2025 in Bozhenishki Urvich, although few in number, confirm the currently accepted hypothesis that the site had two phases of habitation in Late Antiquity – one in the second half of the 4th century to the beginning of the 5th century, and a second in which the fortress flourished during the first half of the 6th century AD (Димитров 2025, 90).



Fig. 1. Two gold solidi of Justinian I.
(Photography: Nikolay Dimitrov)

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² The coins were digitally photographed using the quickPX system, provided by the scientific project no. BNSF КП-06-H80/6 from 07.12.2023.