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МОНЕТНА ЦИРКУЛАЦИЯ В КАБИЛЕ ПРЕЗ
КЪСНОРИМСКИЯ ПЕРИОД (ВЪЗ ОСНОВА НА
РЕЗУЛТАТИТЕ ОТ АРХЕОЛОГИЧЕСКИТЕ РАЗКОПКИ
В СЕКТОР V)

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Coin Circulation in Cabyle During the Late Roman Period (Based on the Results from Archaeological Excavations in Sector V)

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Монетна циркулация в Кабиле през късноримския период (въз основа на резултатите от археологическите разкопки в сектор V)

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Abstract: In 2014–2019, the excavations of Late Antique buildings in Sector V of the Archaeological Reserve “Thracian and Ancient City of Cabyle” were carried out. Although limited to 3 weeks per year, they provide sufficient information on the Late Antique structures. Two buildings have been recorded, together with their adjacent streets and water supply networks, dating from the first quarter of the 4th century to c. AD 376–378. The dating of the structures is based on the extensive numismatic material of more than 600 coins discovered during the excavations. Unfortunately, due to their poor preservation, half of them could not be identified. The present study concerns the remaining 336 coins, which allows for some observation and relevant conclusions. More than 30 coin types have been identified in the period from the end of the 3rd century to the reign of Emperor Valens (364–378). Three peaks in the accumulation of coins could be distinguished clearly. The first falls in the years AD 311–324, with the largest number of coins of Licinius. The second peak coincides with the last years of the reign of Constantine the Great until the early 340s. The last peak is associated with the coinage of the FEL TEMP REPARATIO type of Emperor Constantius II and his co-rulers between AD 348–358.

Keywords: Cabyle, Excavation Coins, Coin Circulation, Late Antiquity, 4th century AD



The archaeological site of Cabyle is located at the foot of the eastern slope of the Zaychi Vrah Hill in present-day south-eastern Bulgaria. Its urban development was a result of the Macedonian activities and colonisation in the interior of Thrace during the second half of the 4th century BC. Under Roman rule, the settlement lost its status. In AD 136, a Roman military unit was stationed there and a civilian settlement developed near the camp. The city status of Cabyle was restored during the Tetrarchy. As a result, an entirely new urban planning was implemented. Crucial for the latest history of the city were the Gothic wars of the late 370s. Thick burnt layers with the latest

Coin type	Date	M I N T S														All
		Alexandria	Antioch	Arles	Constantinople	Cyzicus	Heraclea	Nicomedia	Ostia	Rome	Siscia	Thessalonica	Ticinum	Tripolis	Unknown	
IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG	285-290												1		1	
CONCORDIA MILITVM	292-299					1	2								3	6
GENIO POPVLI ROMANI	294-298						1								1	2
VENERI VICTRICI	308-310														1	1
GENIO CAESARIS	308-310							1							1	2
GENIO AVGVSTI	308-310							1								1
GENIO IMPERATORIS	308-311					1										1
SOLI INVICTO COMITI	312-313								1							1
IOVI CONSERVATORI	310-324		1			4	8	5			1	3			7	29
VOT V MVLT X CAESS	318-319											1				1
VIRTVS EXERCIT	318-320											1				1
VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP	318-320										3		1		1	5
DN CONSTANTINI MAX AVG	320-330			1			4					1	2		1	9
PROVIDENTIAE – three towers	316-324						3								1	4
PROVIDENTIAE – two towers	324-329		1			4		3			3				3	14
GLORIA ROMANORVM – Constantine	327-328				1			3								1
GLORIA EXERCITVS - two standarts	330-336		1		2	3	1	1			1	2			5	16
GLORIA EXERCITVS - one standart	336-340				11	4	1	3				2			20	41
Rome - commemorative	330-340				2			1				1			4	8
Constantinople - commemorative	330-340		1			3									1	5
PAX PVBLICA	337-340				1										2	3
Constantine on quadriga - posthumous	337-340						1								5	6
VICT AVGG	345-347														2	2
VICTORIAE DD AVGG Q NN	347-448									1					1	2
Constantine veiled - posthumous	347-348					1									3	4
VOT XX MVLT XXX	347-348				1	1		1							16	19
FEL TEMP REPARATIO - emperor	348-351				1											1
FEL TEMP REPARATIO - soldier	348-358	1	1		9	1	2	1			6	2			66	89
SPES REIPVBLICE	357-361											1			19	20
VOT V	363-364						1									1
REPARATIO FEL TEMP	365-366				1		1								1	3
RESTITVTOR REIP	364-367						1								4	5
SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE	364-378				3		1	1							7	12
GLORIA ROMANORVM	364-378				2							1			17	20
Total mints		1	5	1	34	23	27	18	1	1	14	15	3	1	192	336

Fig. 2. Attested coin types and mints.

The earliest coin is of the IOVI CONSERVATORI type (**Plate 1, no. 1**) and was struck in Tripolis for Maximian Herculus between AD 285 and 290 (RIC V-II, 294, no. 624). It is the only coin that was minted before the reform of Diocletian in 294. There are several coins of Diocletian and Maximian of the CONCORDIA MILITVM type (**Plate 1, no. 2**), dated in the last decade of the 3rd century but minted after the monetary reform (RIC V-II, 289, no. 595; RIC VI, 531-532, no. 13-16, 21-23). Maximian is represented by another coin type (**Plate. 1, no. 3**) – GENIO POPVLI ROMANI (RIC VI, 530-532, no. 12, 17-20, 23). A coin of the same type was minted for Galerius as Caesar (RIC VI, 531, no. 17-20). The reign of Galerius as an Augustus is represented by only one coin (**Plate 1, no. 6**) (RIC VI, 562, no. 54), as well as a coin of his wife Galeria Valeria (**Plate. 1, no. 4**) (RIC VI, 562, no. 57-58). Two coins of Maximinus Daia date to the first decade of the 4th century (**Plate 1, no. 5**) (RIC VI, 562, 55-56). The earliest coin of Licinius from Cabyle is of the GENIO IMPERATORIS type (**Plate 1, no. 7**), struck in Cyzicus (RIC VI, 589, no. 63).

Starting in the second decade of the 4th century, the number of coins gradually increased. The dominant coin type for the period between 310–324 is IOVI CONSERVATORI (**Plate 1, no. 9**) (RIC VI, 540-541, no. 64-75; RIC VII, 541-542, no. 1-6). These coins were minted during the joint rule of

Licinius and Constantine. A coin from the early reign of Constantine (**Plate 1, no. 8**), produced in the western mint of Ostia, represents the god Sol (RIC VI, 409, no. 83-93). The inscription on the reverse is SOLI INVICTO COMITI. Simultaneously with the coins depicting Jupiter, another type representing a fortress gate and the inscription PROVIDENTIA AVGG was minted for Licinius (**Plate 2, no. 15**) and Constantine (**Plate 2, no. 16**), as well as for their sons as Caesars (RIC VII, 544-547, no. 14-49). After the death of Licinius, this coin type continued to be minted until 329 for Constantine and his sons (RIC VII, 647-653, no. 24-27, 34-38, 44-48, 51-53, 55-64). At the end of the second decade of the 4th century, several coins of Constantine and Crispus were minted with votive inscriptions on the reverse—such are the coins with the inscription VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC PERP (**Plate 1, no. 12**) (RIC VII, 431-437, no. 47-108), VOT/V/MVLT/X/CAESS (**Plate 1, no. 10**) (RIC VII, 508, no. 36-40), and VIRTVS EXERCIT (**Plate 1, no. 11**) (RIC VII, 508, no. 77-83). Other coins with votive inscriptions found in Cabyle were minted in the 320s for Emperor Constantine, with a reverse image of a wreath and the inscription D N CONSTANTINI MAX AVG around it (**Plate 2, no. 13**) (RIC VII, 378, no. 130). From the late 320s, one coin of the GLORIA ROMANORVM type (**Plate 2, no. 14**) with Roma on a throne was discovered (RIC VII, 572, no. 17).

Coinage in the 330s is dominated by the coin type GLORIA EXERCITVS, with a reverse image of two soldiers and military standards between them; two variations of these coins are observable: coins with two military standards (**Plate 2, no. 17**) (RIC VII, 579-582, no. 59-61, 73-86) and coins with one military standard (**Plate 2, no. 18**) (RIC VII, 589-590, no. 137-144, 149-155). The coin types in question were minted for Constantine and his sons. Commemorative coins of the capital cities of Constantinople (**Plate 2, no. 20**) (RIC VII, 654, no. 73-74) and Rome (**Plate 2, no. 19**) (RIC VII, 579, no. 62) from the period between 330-340 have been found in Cabyle. The coinage of the last three years of the decade are represented by several other types: PAX PVBLICA of Helena (**Plate 2, no. 21**), the mother of Constantine (RIC VIII, 449, no. 33, 38), and posthumous coins of Constantine in a quadriga (**Plate 2, no. 22**) (RIC VIII, 431, no. 14).

In the early 340s, a sharp decline in the number of coins could be observed. Only two coins of the type VICTORIAE DD AVGG Q NN (**Plate 2, no. 24**) could be dated to the first years of the decade—one of the two was eventually minted in Rome ca. 347–348 (RIC VIII, 254, no. 98); the second one is in really bad condition and has no context. Therefore, there may be no coins from the early 340s in Cabyle. Of the later issues of the 340s, several types of VICT AVG (**Plate 2, no. 23**) (RIC VIII, 433, no. 42-43) and posthumous coins for Constantine (**Plate 3, no. 25**) (RIC VIII, 493, no. 46) have been found. The usual type for the late 340s bears an image of a wreath and the inscription VOT XX MVLT XXX (**Plate 3, no. 26**) (RIC VIII, 493-494, no. 47-64). The coins were struck between 347 and 348 for the emperors Constantius II and Constans.

The gradual increase of the number of coins in the late 340s and the appearance of the new FEL TEMP REPARATIO type (**Plate 3, no. 27-28**) (RIC VIII, 453-460, no. 78-94, 106-128, 135-136), minted from 348 up to 358, led to a peak in the accumulation of coins in Cabyle. Most of the pieces found in the late antique strata of the site are of the FEL TEMP REPARATIO type. Over 50 of these coins were minted for Constantius II, and there are a total of ten for Constantius Gallus and Julian. Twenty coins of this type are illegible. The last coin type minted for Constantius II between AD 357–361 was SPES REIPVBLICE (RIC VIII, 461, no. 149-155). There are several coins of the same type for Julian as Caesar and as Augustus (**Plate 3, no. 29**). With the end of the reign of Constantius II, the number of coins found in Cabyle drops significantly. After Julian's death, Jovian ascended to the throne and ruled for only a few months—a single coin of his reign has been found in Cabyle (**Plate 3, no. 30**) (RIC VIII, 439, no. 108). After Jovian, the two brothers Valentinian and Valens came to power, the latter ruling the eastern part of the empire. While Valens was leading a military campaign in AD 365, a riot led by the usurper Procopius broke out in Constantinople. Procopius managed to mint coins with his image and two such coins have been found in Cabyle—REPARATIO FEL TEMP (**Plate 3, no. 31**) (RIC IX, 215, no. 17).

Several coin types of Valens and Valentinian have been found in Cabyle. The earliest is RESITVTOR REIP (**Plate 3, no. 32**), minted between 364 and 367 (RIC IX, 192, no. 4). The next two coin types, GLORIA ROMANORVM (**Plate 3, no. 34**) (RIC IX, 219-220, no. 40-41) and SECVRTAS REIPVBLICAE (**Plate 3, no. 33**) (RIC IX, 221, no. 42), were minted simultaneously.

In 2015 and 2016, three collective coin hoards were discovered in Sector V. The 2015 find consists of 12 coins minted during the time of Constantius II, Julian, Valentinian, and Valens. It was discovered in a destruction layer. The two other collective finds were discovered in 2016 and could be connected to the earlier phases of the buildings. The first find consists of 28 coins of Constantine and his sons minted in the 330s, hoarded in a ceramic pot (Вълчев 2019, 282). The second find consists of 21 coins, probably placed in something like a purse because they were found stuck together. The coins were minted between 317 and 340, with the earliest coin being issued under Licinius and the latest being of the commemorative type with the she-wolf and the twins Romulus and Remus. The final dates of accumulation of the two collective finds coincide (Димитров 2023).

Similar coin hoards were found in other places in Eastern Bulgaria: Varna, Karanovo and others (Божкова 1994, 43).

The Gothic invasion in the late 370s is reflected even in the coin circulation within the western parts of Thrace. There are examples from the valley of the Struma River for coin hoards connected with the last years of the rule of Valens (Филипова 2012, 38).

The numismatic material from Sector V covers the time from the late 3rd century to the end of the 370s AD. All coins belong to different bronze and copper denominations minted during this time. Throughout the first few decades of the period—up to 324—follices with a diameter of over 20-21 mm predominate. After this year, the circulation of smaller denominations (Æ3 and Æ4) began. The decrease in the size and weight of the coins could be noticed in the second decade of the century under the rule of the emperors Constantine and Licinius. The content of the metal was significantly reduced after the death of Constantine and is clearly visible in the coin issues of his sons. Exceptions are some coins from the mid-4th century. Such examples are minted for Constantius II between 348 and 350.

During the period under scrutiny, several peaks in the coin accumulation could be distinguished (**Fig. 3**). The first peak falls in the years AD 311–324. The second period with a significant number of coins is between 336 and 340. It includes the coin types GLORIA EXERCITVS, posthumous coins of Constantine, coins of Helena, and commemorative coins of the city of Constantinople. This period is followed by a decline in the number of coins in the first half of the 340s and an increase towards the end of the decade. The third peak is between 348 and 358. It coincides with the minting of the type FEL TEMP REPARATIO for Constantius II and his co-rulers. There is a de-



Fig. 3. Chronological distribution of the discovered coins with outlined peaks.

cline in the number of the coins from the next type, SPES REIPVBLICE, dated in the last years of Constantius II and under Julian. Most numerous during the last years of the existence of the late Roman buildings in sector V are the coins of the type GLORIA ROMANORVM, minted for Valentinian I and Valens between 364 and 378.

The mints for more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total number of coins could be identified. The most active mint from the end of the 3rd century to the end of the 320s was Heraclea in Thrace (formerly Perinthus). With the opening of the mint in Constantinople, the number of the coins from the new capital quickly took precedence, while the coins of Heraclea declined sharply. The coins of two other mints are well represented in Cabyle – those of Cyzicus and Nicomedia, although after the mid-4th century the number of their coins drops significantly (**Fig. 4**). Almost equal in number are the coins of Thessalonica and the western mint of Siscia. From the mint of Antioch there are only five coins, and from the western mint of Ticinum there are three. Several distant mints like those of Alexandria, Arles, Ostia, Rome, and Tripolis are represented by only one coin each.

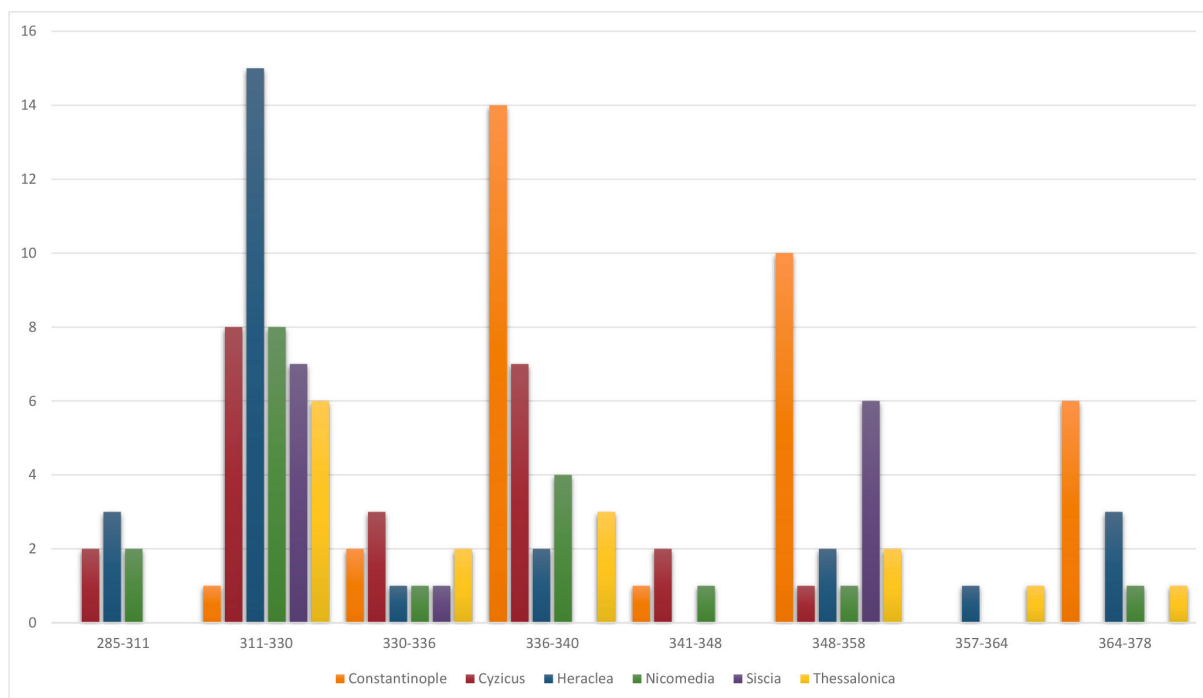


Fig. 4. Quantitative distribution of the most active mints.

Similar is the situation with other coin finds from Bulgaria. The most active mints in the 4th century are Heraclea, Constantinople, Thessalonica, Cyzicus, Siscia, and others (Божкова 1994, 44-45). One of the important studies for late Roman coin circulation in the territories of modern day Bulgaria is concentrated on the coins from the valley of the Struma River. The mints on these coins are the same, and in the last decades of the 4th century there is a decline in the monetary circulation of this region. However, coins from the 5th century continue to be found in many of the sites in the Struma Valley (Филипова 2012, 49).

Interesting data about the coins from late antiquity is offered by the sanctuaries of Asclepius near Slivnitsa and Pernik, both of them in south-west Thrace. Out of the ca. 600 coins from the sanctuary near Slivnitsa, almost 400 were minted in the period of time from the rule of Diocletian until the beginning of the 5th century (Колев 1985, 169). The number of coins from the sanctuary near Pernik is even larger. Out of 2,221 coins, 2,107 date back to late antiquity, but only 1,166 of them are legible. Most of the coins were minted for Constantine (88 coins), his son Constantius II (220 coins), Valentinian I (59 coins), and Valens (73 coins). Around 50 coins of Theodosius I and Arcadius were minted after the Battle of Hadrianopolis in 378 (Филипова 2010, 104-107), a period which is not represented in Sector V of the Cabyle Archaeological Reserve.

There are several publications about the coin circulation in Augusta Traiana-Beroe and this city's administrative territory in late antiquity. It is noteworthy that, just like in Cabyle, the most

popular coin types in Augusta Traiana – Beroe are GLORIA EXERCITVS and FEL TEMP REPARATIO, with the larger number of coins from the 4th century being illegible. Out of the coins identified, the most numerous are the issues for Constantine the Great (306–337) and Constantius II (337–361). Most of the coins are of small denominations, and their mints are similar to the ones of the coins found in Cabyle (Минкова 2005, 92-93; Минкова 2015, 34-35). At the site of Kara-sura “Kaleto,” the coins of the 4th century are the most represented from late antiquity, especially the issues for Constantine the Great and Constantius II (Минкова 2012, 60-61).

The market in Cabyle was regularly supplied with coins. The only significant decline is in the early and mid-340s. This phenomenon has been documented elsewhere in the Eastern Balkans and could not be explained by some peculiarities of the history of Cabyle, or even of the diocese of Thrace. Unfortunately, there are no complete publications of the coin finds from the neighbouring urban centres such as Hadrianopolis, Deultum, and Tuida, and the specifics of the coin circulation in Cabyle are difficult to recognise. Some similarities in the rates of coin accumulation with centres from the limes zone in Scythia Minor—such as Axiopolis, Troesmis, Noviodunum, and Histria—could be noted (Торбатов 2002, 188-195). The reasons which determined the peculiarities of the coin circulation in the Scythian cities and military camps could be very different from those in the interior of Thrace, and we restrain ourselves to merely noting those similarities.

The devastation of Cabyle during the Gothic wars of Emperor Valens put an end to the coin circulation in Sector V of the archaeological site. At present there is not even a single coin which could be attributed to Gratian, Valentinian II, or Theodosius the Great.

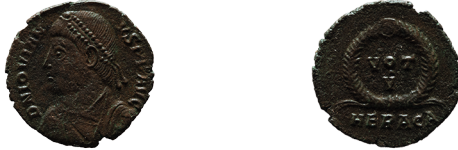


¹ All coins are to scale. The photos are by the author of the article.

PLATE 2

DN CONSTANTINI MAX AVG Constantine – Heraclea  13	GLORIA ROMANORVM – Constantine Constantine – Constantinople  14
PROVIDENTIAE – three towers Licinius – Heraclea  15	PROVIDENTIAE – two towers Constantine – Cyzicus  16
GLORIA EXERCITVS - two standarts Constantine – Antioch  17	GLORIA EXERCITVS - one standart Constantine – Unknown  18
Rome - commemorative Rome (commemorative) – Unknown  19	Constantinople - commemorative Constantinople (commemorative) – Cyzicus  20
PAX PVBLICA Helena – Unknown  21	Constantine on quadriga - posthumous Constantine (posthumous) – Unknown  22
VICT AVGG Constantius II – Unknown  23	VICTORIAE DD AVGG Q NN Constantius II or Constans – Rome  24

PLATE 3

Constantine veiled - posthumous Constantine (posthumous) – Unknown  25	VOT XX MVLT XXX Constantius II – Unknown  26
FEL TEMP REPARATIO - emperor Constantius II – Constantinople  27	FEL TEMP REPARATIO - soldier Constantius II – Constantinople  28
SPES REIPVBLICE Julian – Thessalonica  29	VOT V  30
REPARATIO FEL TEMP Procopius – Constantinople  31	RESTITVTOR REIP Valentinian – Heraclea  32
SECVRITAS REIPVBLICAE Valentinian – Constantinople  33	GLORIA ROMANORVM Valens or Valentinian – Unknown  34

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