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Late Medieval Coin Finds from the St. Clement's Church of St. Panteleimon in Ohrid

- archeological campaign of 2000 -

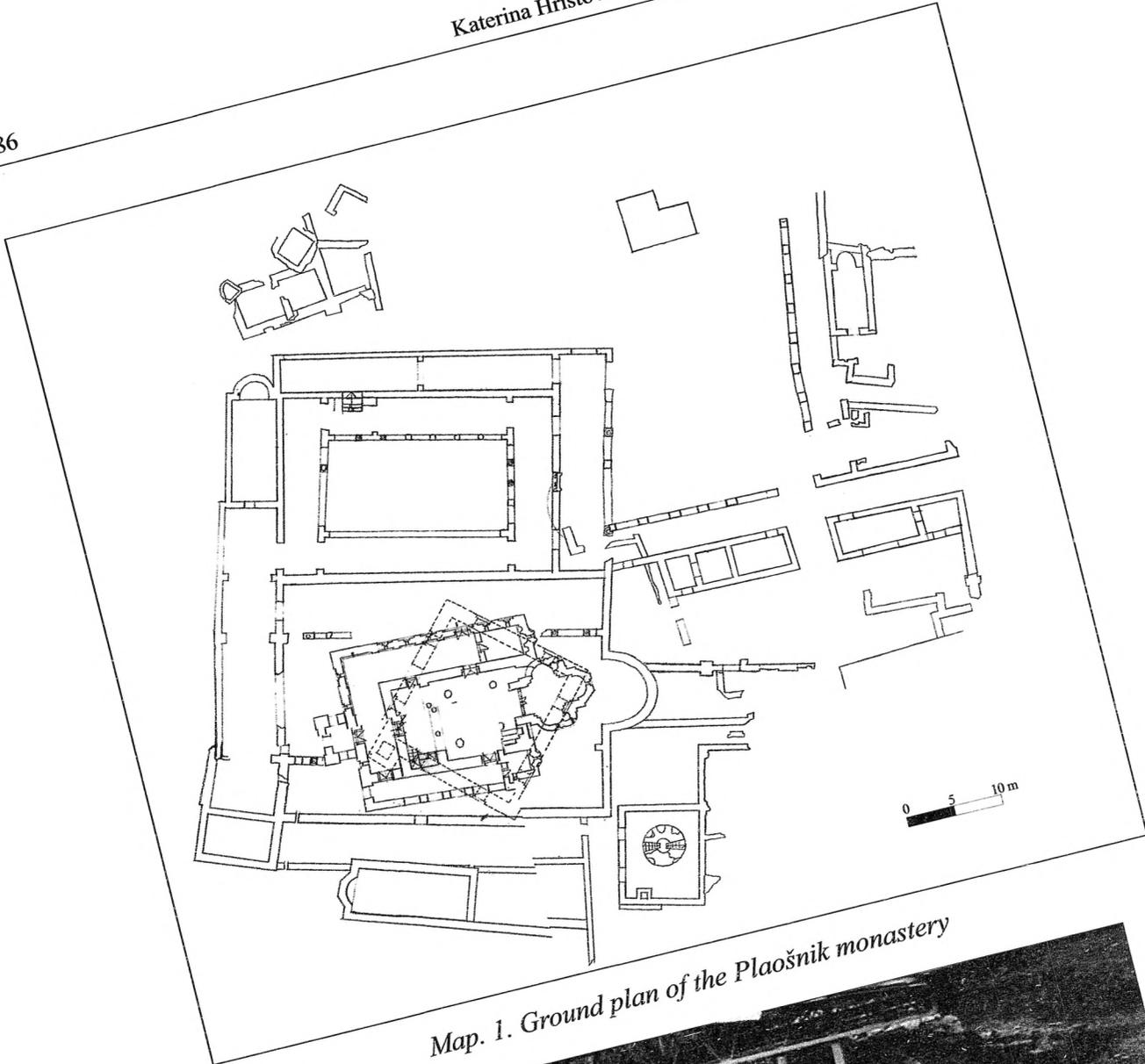
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The monastic complex of Plaošnik¹ in Ohrid, located at the plateau on the western, higher hill of the Old Town, some 100 meters south from the Ohrid Fortress, was one of the most important ecclesiastical, cultural and spiritual centres in the world of the South Slavs during the medieval period. It deservedly earned the fame as a place where St. Clement of Ohrid founded the first Slavonic Literacy School in the IX century and built the well-known church of St. Panteleimon. The church became his burial place in year 916 and a nucleus which emanated the cult and deeds of the holy teacher and saint for centuries.

The remains of the church of St. Panteleimon were excavated during the World War II, and than again in the period between 1964-67; yet, the most significant results were achieved in 1999, when systematic archaeological excavations were launched at the site of the monastery as part of a large project for restoration and rebuilding of the

¹ The excavations, headed by Vlado Malenko and Nada Počuča Kuzman (Museum of Ohrid), yielded that the church had several building phases spanning from the IX to XV century, when it was demolished and the very same site was then used for building the Sultan Mehmed mosque in 1462, which was functional until late XIX century. Upon St. Clement arrival in Ohrid in year 983, he choose the existing three-foil building, probably an earlier *martyrium* built in VII century (the complex situation include a large V-VI century five-nave basilica with *baptisterium* found bellow the *martyrium*, see Map 1), as a centre for his missionary work, and soon after he enlarged it on its west side. The core was added a cross line space, supported by four massive pillars, while the old three-foil structure obtained a liturgical function of an altar. A narthex was also built in XIV century, and the west side of the church was completed with a church bell in XV century. On the north and south side of the first three-foil, chapels were added, along with a broad outer porch around the church. On the south-west part of the church there were two more protruded parts, one of which was most probably a dining room, see in C. Grozdanov, "Reconstruction of the St. Clement's Church of St. Panteleimon", in *Plaošnik: The Reconstructed St. Clement and St. Panteleimon Church in Ohrid*, Ohrid, 2004, 5-12. I owe gratitude to archaeologists Mr. Pasko Kuzman and Nada Počuča Kuzman for the archaeological data, maps and photos provided and also for allowing me to examine the Plaošnik coins.



Map. 1. Ground plan of the Plaošnik monastery

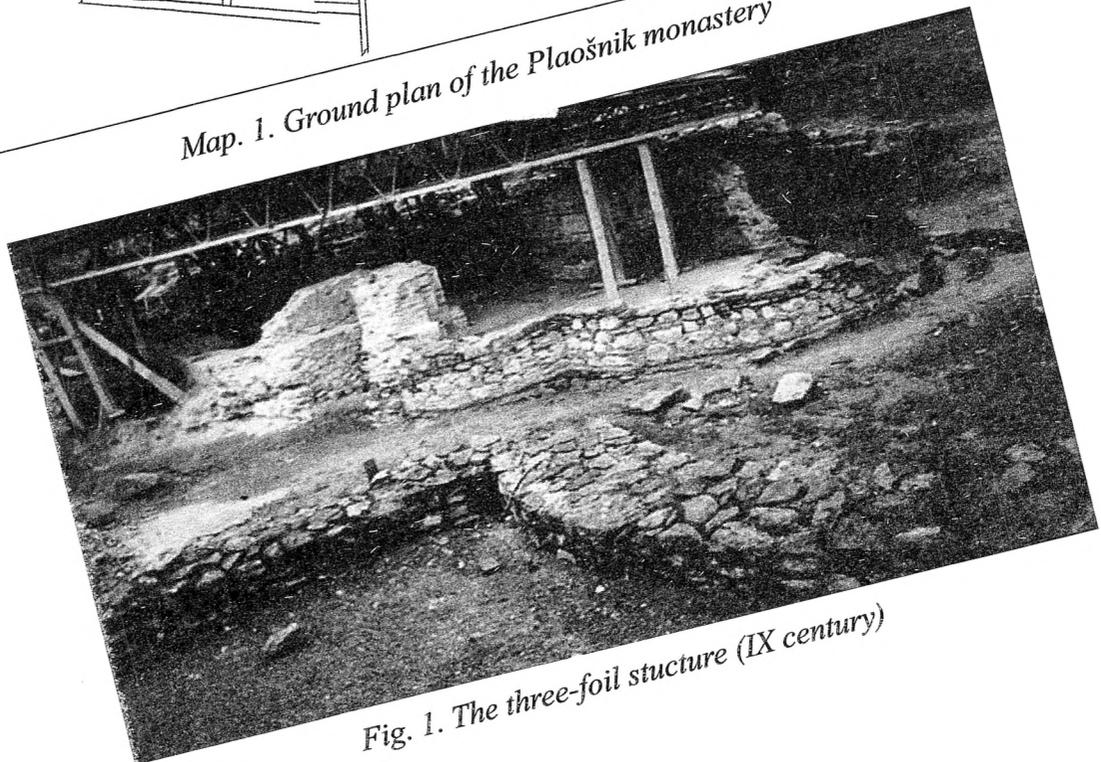


Fig. 1. The three-foiled structure (IX century)



Fig. 2. Excavated area of the naos of St. Panteleimon church



Fig. 3. Graves No. 5 and No. 29 from the naos

church that was completed in year 2001. The extensive archaeological campaigns have continued until the present, bringing to light, among many other artefacts, a number of coins that span from late XI to late XIV century. Besides the importance of this numismatic material for the archeology, now it allows for a possibility of varying types of coin evidence to be comparatively examined and accordingly, a better insight to the monetary trends and affairs in the region in the late medieval period to be gained. It is particularly valuable in relation to the numerous single finds that were found in a secular archaeological context during the systematic excavations at the Fortress (2000-2005),² as well as in several other areas in the old part of the town Ohrid (Gorna Porta, Dolna Porta, the courtyard of the cathedral church St. Sophia)³. Yet, this preliminary report on the coin finds from St. Panteleimon church covers only the specimens found in year 2000, since the other finds that have occurred after year 2000 will be available for examination after the completion of their conservation.

39 coins are from the graves found in the interior of the church, and 6 specimens were found in the stratigraphic layers in a non-burial context. The finds include electrum/silver, billon and copper trachea and grossi, minted by the following Byzantine, Latin, Nicaen, Thessalonikan and Bulgarian rulers:

Ruler	Number
Andronicus I Comnenus (1183-85)	1
Alexius III Comnenus (1195-1203)	1
Bulgarian imitative trachea	4
Latin imitative trachea (small module)	2
Theodore Comnenus Ducas (1224-30)	2
Manuel Comnenus Ducas (1230-37)	3
Uncertain attribution (John Comnenus Ducas, 1237-44)	1
John III Ducas Vatatzes (1222-54)	1
Ivan Asen II (1218-40)	7
Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82)	7
Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328)	4
Pietro Ziani (1205-29)	1
Imitation of Lorenzo Tiepolo	1
Uncertain trachy	1
Illegible coins and fragments	8
Bulgarian imitative petty currency (?), XIVth c.	1

² The examination and study of the 1600 specimens which occurred at the Fortress, have been completed by K. Hristovska, M. Hadži-Maneva, E. Pavlovska, D. Bačevska Razmovska and D. Živkova, and will be presented in the forthcoming *Coin Finds from the Ohrid Fortress: IV BC to XV AD century*, (ed. Pasko Kuzman) (2007).

³ Thanks to Mr. Pasko Kuzman, who has been heading the excavations at the Fortress and at the mentioned sites, this year I was able to examine additional 81 medieval (XIII-XIV century) coins from Gorna Porta, 7 from the site at Dolna Porta and 3 from the area of St. Sophia, all located in the Old Town (Varoš) in Ohrid, as well as 64 specimens from the site of St. Erasmus Basilica, situated on 5 km north-west from Ohrid, close to the north shores of the Ohrid Lake.

1. *Grave Finds*

The phenomenon of use of coins as burial offerings was certainly not an unknown practice in the medieval world, nor did it assume defined rules of the practice.⁴ Not

Graves	Coins/2000	Total	Date of deposition
Grave No.2	Pietro Ziani (1205-29) (1)	1	post 1205
Grave in the naos	Latin imitative, Type F? (1)	1	post 1205
Grave No.44	Bulgarian imitative, Type C (1)	1	post 1208
Grave No.4	Ivan Asen II (1218-41) (1) Illegible (XIII c.) (1)	2	post 1230
Grave in the naos	Ivan Asen II (1218-41) (6)	6	post 1230
Group of bones no. 28	Bulgarian imitative, Type B(b) (2) Manuel Comnenus Ducas (1230-37) (1)	3	post 1231
Grave No.5	Theodore Comnenus Ducas (1227-30) (1) Manuel Comnenus Ducas (1230-37) (1)	2	post 1236
Grave No.26	Bulgarian imitative, Type C (1) Uncertain attr. (John Comnenos Ducas) (1)	2	post 1237
Grave in the naos	Alexius III Comnenus (1195-1203) (1) John III Ducas Vatatzes (1222-54) (1)	2	post 1246
Grave No.45	Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82) (1)	1	post 1259
Grave No.45A	Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82) (2)	2	post 1259
Group of bones no. 35	Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82) (1)	1	post 1259
Grave No.7	Latin imitative (s. m), Type A (1204-61) (1) Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82) (2) Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328) (1) Illegible fragments (3)	7	post 1282
Grave in the naos	Theodore Comnenus Ducas (1224-30) (1) Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328) (2)	3	post 1282
Grave No.25	Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328) (1)	1	post 1282
Grave in the naos	Imitation of Lorenzo Tiepolo (1268-75) (1)	1	early XIV c.
Grave No.23	Illegible fragment (1)	1	/
Grave No.47	Illegible bill. trachy (1)	1	/
Group of bones at the grave no. 23	Illegible fragment (1)	1	/

⁴ A comprehensive account on the medieval coins found in a grave context from the excavations in former Yugoslavia and Bulgaria undertaken up to 1970's, in V. Jovanović, "Prilozi hronologiji srednjevekovnih nekropola Jugoslavije i Bugarske (I)," *Balcanoslavica* 6 (1977): 141-64 and Pls. I – XXXIII [with summary in French]; id, "Prilozi hronologiji srednjevekovnih nekropola Jugoslavije i Bugarske (II)," *Balcanoslavica* 8 (1979):115-157 and Pls.I – XII [with summary in French].

much different than today, it was a matter of availability and of personal choice and beliefs, a subjectivity that imposes their interpretation to remain in the sphere of suppositions.

The custom of depositing coins (Charon's obols) in the hands, at the chests or/and by the heads of the deceased was evidenced in a small number of graves in the view of the fact that about 2000 graves occurred at the site of the monastic church and its surroundings. None of the specimens found was pierced, relevant for concluding that these grave-goods did not have a function of an earlier apotropaic jewellery or dress decoration.⁵

The number of coins in individual graves, when present, varies between 1 and 7 pieces (or 30, if the 1999 grave hoard of electrum and billon trachea, also discussed below, is concerned) and these distinctions perhaps could be understood as a manifestation of the differences in the social status of the buried persons and, equally, of their families. The location of the graves in the interior of the church, along with the presence of other deposits like ceramics, knives and female jewellery, additionally implies that the deceased belonged to a higher stratum of the society.

Besides the quantitative variations in the number of the deposited coins, the other apparent feature in the cases when more coins are present in a single grave, regards the chronological discrepancy related to the date of their issuing. The only exception is a grave from the naos, where all 6 coins belong to Ivan Asen II (a small hoard?). The most obvious example of this trend involving high value coins is from a grave situated in the naos, where one clipped silver trachy Type B of Theodore Comnenus Ducas (no.10, Pl.I.7) was found together with 2 billon trachea of Andronicus II Paleologos (nos.30,33). The extraordinary hoard with a date of deposition around 1226, which occurred at Plaošnik during the excavation campaign of 1999, again in a burial context (the coins were found by the right side of the pelvic bone of the skeleton, probably kept in a purse) reveals the same pattern. There, among the 12 uncirculated electrum/silver (10 of the Type A and 2 of the Type C) and 17 billon specimens (all of the earliest Type A, minted in 1224/25?) of Theodore Ducas, 1 electrum trachy of Isaac II Angelus (1185-95) was also present.⁶ This pattern could be a consequence of the extended active circulation of the higher denomination as much as it can represent a long-term saved wealth. The coin context -- a *clipped* early XIII century Thessalonikan silver found with late XIII century Thessalonikan copper, and a *single* Isaac's II electrum with 12

⁵ H. Maguire, "Magic and Money in the Early Middle Ages," *Speculum* 72 (1997): 1037-54; With regard to the middle Byzantine coins, the large anonymous follises of X and XI century, probably because of their suitability and the represented images and inscriptions, had better served such purpose. A pierced follis of this kind is part of the Numismatic Collection of the National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia.

⁶ D. Razmovska Bačevska, "Hoard of Late Byzantine Coins of Theodore Angelus Comnenus Duca (1224-30) Found at the Site of Plaošnik St Panteleimon, Ohrid," *Macedonian Numismatic Journal* 4, (2000) 2001: 121-135; The sequence of the electrum/silver Types A and C in this hoard definitely puts the Type B last in the chronological order of his silver issues as it was proposed by Hendy, in M. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection*, Vol.4, Part II, 545-49 (hereafter *DOC IV*). The contents of the other known hoard of electrum/silver coinage (but of the Type B) of Theodore Ducas was reconstructed by Ivanišević, see V. Ivanišević, "Ostava elektron traheja Teodora Andjela iz niške oblasti", *Zbornik radova* I, Niš (2003): 47-62.

electrum/silver and 17 billion coins minted some 40 years later in these cases is perhaps more suggestive of a prolonged use of more valuable coinage. As C. Morrisson has noted, A. Laiou has shown on the basis of the written records that in the Despotate of Epiros the 1220's main circulating media were *nomismata trikephala*, sometimes termed *prattomene* (current) or *proitomena* (preferred), and on one occasion, in a judicial document of Ohrid Archbishop Demetrius Chomatianos, *angelata*.⁷ The structure of the Plaošnik hoard/1999 is a very strong *argument pro* the C. Morrisson's suggestion that the *angelata* may refer to the electrum coinage of Isaac II, showing the emperor with St. Michael.⁸

Whether the notion of prolonged circulation is valid for lower value coinage is difficult to be judged.⁹ There are many intentional chronological hybrids in these graves that could imply this; 'Bulgarian' imitative specimens Types B and C have been found together with the coinage of the Thessalonikan despots and the 'Bulgarian' Types A and B, although not in a statistically significant quantity, appeared together with Thessalonikan trachea of John III in a non-burial archaeological context at the Fortress; a Constantinopolitan trachy of Alexius III was found together with Thessalonikan John's III trachy in a grave from the naos of St. Panteleimon, Theodore's Ducas trachy has appeared with a trachy of Manuel Ducas, the later being jointly found in a same stratigraphic layer at the Fortress, as well.

Were the latest coins in the graves fresh cash taken out from active circulation? The physical condition of the specimens would naturally be the starting point in answering this question, a difficult task when one is faced with acid soil and badly struck coin. In this particular case, the fact that several different chronological phases of the remains of the fresco-paintings were defined on the basis of the style and partially preserved ktitorial portraits (the end of XII century and prior to year 1300)¹⁰ is a very important evidence for the breaks in the life of the church as confirmed by the archaeological data, too. The span of the coin issues found there overlaps with these time margins and this was a period when the church was probably not functional continuously (the interruptions might have been an occasion for the burials of laymen to take place in its interior). Equally, the single finds from the near-by excavated sites confirm that Plaošnik coins actually represent a quite accurate cross-section of XIII and early XIV century currencies in circulation in the broader Ohrid region: the gold is expectedly absent, electrum/silver coinage is restricted on the Thessalonikan issues from the first half of XIII century (and the Isaac's II electrum coinage!) and on the Venetian grossi of XIII, and more often, of XIV century, while the billon/copper currency is very modestly

⁷ A. Laiou, "Circulation and Use of Coins in the Despotate of Epirus", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 207-15; C. Morrisson, "The Emperor, the Saint and the City: Coinage and Money in Thessalonika from the Thirteenth to the Fifteenth Century", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 57 (2003): 175-203 (hereafter "The Emperor, the Saint and the City").

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See J. P. C. Kent, "Interpreting Coin Finds", in *Coins and Archeologist*, (eds. J. Casey and R. Reece), Oxford, 1974, 184-200; C. Morrisson, "Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation, in *The Economic History of Byzantium* (ed. A. E. Laiou), Washington, D.C., 2002, 909-66, especially 950-54.

¹⁰ I am grateful to Professor Cvetan Grozdanov for the information given.

represented with the old Comnenian coinage and Bulgarian and Latin imitative issues and with a comparatively plentiful XIII century Thessalonikan billon and late XIII/early XIV century debased copper issues.¹¹ With respect to the above, it is reasonable to propose that the latest specimens from the graves were turned into Charon's obols soon after they arrived from Thessalonika.

2. Single Casual Losses

The second group of coins consists of 6 single finds that were found in different stratigraphical layers in the inner space of the church. They are much less in number in comparison with the finds from the graves and can be perhaps considered as single casual losses (with an exception of the billon trachy of Manuel Comnenus Ducas, the others are coins with a small diameter). However, they span chronologically in a similar way

Context of the single finds	Coins	No.
The entrance of the earlier three-foil structure, on the floor level	Andronicus I Comnenus (1183-85), tetarteron	1
North-west angle of the north column of the earlier three-foil structure, 0.50 m from the floor level	Manuel Comnenus Ducas (1230-37), bill. trachy	1
In the diagonal central part of the 4 basis, at the sole wall construction, on 0.45 m from the floor level	Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82), bill. trachy	1
The central space between the two octangular basis and the tribilon, 0.50 m from the floor level	Imitation, Bulgaria, XIV century?, petty copper Trachy, uncertain	2
In a layer of the north conch, under the marble floor, during the demolition of the floor of the XIII-XIV c.	Illegible fragment, bill. trachy	1

¹¹ Summary of K. Hristovska, Ivanišević, "Currencies and Coin Circulation in Western Balkans 13-15 Centuries", paper read at the Numismatic Panel, 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London 21-26 August 2006; see also for the hoard and stray finds in Ohrid, in D. Razmovska Bačevska, "Coin Circulation in the Ohrid Region in XIII and XIV Century", *Coins and Mints in Macedonia, Skopje*, 113-24, but with a disputable interpretation of the finds; *ibid*, "The Coins of the Paleologians from the Numismatic Collection of the Museum of Ohrid", *Coins and Mints in Macedonia*, 125-44; *ibid*, *Numizmatički naodi od jugozapadniot del na Republika Makedonija od V vek pr.n.e do IV vek*, Ohrid, 2002, 231-41 (the author was given the opportunity to re-examine the two early XIII century hoards of Konjsko and Velestovo, published by Bačevska under the title "Dve docnosrednovjekovni depoa od ohridsko-prespanskiot region" and reattribute the specimens that were erroneously identified as intrinsic specimens of the Comnenian-Angelid dynasties); D. M. Metcalf, *Coinage in South-Eastern Europe 820-1396*, London, 1979, 119-138.

to the grave finds, that is to say, from the 9 decade of XII century to the early XIV century. The presence of Comnenian petty currency at Plaošnik, although insignificantly, contributes to the pattern already seen at the Fortress. There, 1 tetarteron of Alexius I, 1 tetarteron and 1 half-tetarteron of Manuel I and 1 tetarteron of Andronicus I were found.

The Types

The diversity of currencies and coin types that were in circulation here, primarily reflects the unstable political situation of XIII and the first half of XIV centuries, when the town of Ohrid, like the largest part of Macedonia, was under changeable control of the Epirote Despotate, Thessalonikan Empire, Bulgarian Empire, Nicaean rule, the rule of restored Byzantium and of the Serbian medieval state. A common characteristics of the finds is that almost all of them were products of XIII century Thessalonikan mint. Strangely enough, the Latin Thessalonikan imitative issues, especially Types A, B and C are missing at Plaošnik and at the Fortress.¹² So far, only 2 specimens appeared in the face of the most common small module trachea Type A (no.7, Pl.I.5) and the Type F (no.8, Pl.I.6), respectively. Ordinarily, the small module Type C is absent.

The XII century coinage, as mentioned, is restricted only on two specimens -- a tetarteron of Andronicus I (no.1, Pl.I.1) and a billon trachy of Alexius III (no.2, Pl.I.2). With regard to the so called 'Bulgarian' imitative trachea¹³ and contrary to the structure of the early XIII century hoards containing these issues found in Macedonia¹⁴

¹² With regard to the Latin imitative series assigned to Thessalonika, one would naturally expect them to circulate in larger quantities in the hinterland, but, if present at all, only the earliest Types A and B occur on a very modest scale. For example, in the Konjsko hoard (Prespa) (see note no.8.), Thessalonikan imitative issues in the view of the Type A constitute 1.19% (7 out of 589) of the contents, while Type B, the only large module in the Nova Bolnica hoard (Bitola) (unpublished hoard of 1396 small module trachea of Types A, B, D and G), participates with 0.21% (4 specimens). The reluctance about the proposed Thessalonikan origin and dating was argumentatively expressed in D. M. Metcalf, "The Peter and Paul Hoard: Bulgarian and Latin imitative trachea in the time of Ivan Asen", *Numismatic Chronicle*⁷ 13 (1977): 144-72 (hereafter, "The Peter and Paul Hoard"); idem, "The Value of Amorgos and Thira Hoards as a Test Case for the Interpretation of Sub-Byzantine Trachea in the Years around 1204, Νομισματικά Ηρονικά 8 (1989): 49-67; S. Bendall, "A Latin Coinage for Thessalonika?" *Numismatic Circular* 105 (1997): 74-75; I. Touratsoglou, "La monnaie byzantine aux XIIe - XIIIe, siècles et le témoignage des trouvailles de Grèce: A propos d'un ouvrage récent", *Revue Numismatique* 158 (2002): 385-403.

¹³ The debate about the Bulgarian origin of the imitative trachea (Types A, B and C) has been raised again recently, in the view of the identified sub-variants of the Types A and B, which suggests their Constantinopolitan post 1204 provenance, in K. Hristovska, "The 'Bulgarian' Imitative Coinage in the Context of the Finds from the Republic of Macedonia", read at *Coinage in the Balkans, 9th-14th c. - Forty Years on, Symposium in Honour of D. M. Metcalf*, Oxford, 1-3 September 2005 (forthcoming publication).

¹⁴ The author was able to examine 21 early XIII century hoards found in R. Macedonia, which contain 'Bulgarian' imitative specimens. Interestingly enough, they do not contain any coin of the Thessalonikan Ducae. This pattern, characteristic for the hoards from the wider geographic region, however, have exceptions, such as 1. (Bulgaria) Petrič hoard, in V. Penčev, *Kolektivna nahodka ot medni (bilonovi) skifati ot prvata polovina na XIII v., namerena kraj Petrič (A Hoard of Copper (Billon)*

otherwise widespread Type A is absent here, while the Types B and C are represented with 4 specimens (nos. 3-6, Pl.I.3-4). The same pattern exists at the finds from the Fortress (the late Type C outnumbers the B and A).

As for the issues of the Thessalonikan despots,¹⁵ the abundance and sequence of types found in Ohrid, suggest that they were arriving continuously from Thessalonika between the year 1224, when Thessalonika was conquered by Theodore Ducas and the year 1246, when the city was occupied by the Nicaean emperor John III. The main characteristics of the circulation pattern of the coins of Theodore Ducas in Ohrid, an Epirote possession already in year 1215, is the predominance of his pre-coronation issues. Namely, the circulation of silver trachea is largely marked by the earlier Types A and C, as it is the case with his billon coinage: 17 specimens of the earliest Type A, as mentioned above, constitute part of the Plaošnik hoard of year 1999; earlier Types D(3) and E(2) occurred as single finds at the Ohrid Fortress; Type B(1) appeared at the site of the Ancient Theatre; Types A(1), and F(1) at the St. Erasmus site; Types D(1) and B(1), said to originate from the Ohrid area, are part of the Numismatic collection of the Museum of Ohrid. Being the third such specimen found in the wider Ohrid region, the trachy Type F (1227/28) from the grave no.5 (no.10; Pl.I.8) is actually the latest of his billon issues that circulated in this area.¹⁶ This coin was found together with a trachy Type D (no.12, Pl.I.10) minted in 1231/32 by his successor Manuel Ducas. Two more trachea of Manuel found at Plaošnik belong to the Type C(1) (no.11, Pl.I.9) and to the Type F – an overstrike on the Type D(1) (no.13, Pl.I.11). Here his earliest Type B is missing, opposite to the circulation pattern at the Ohrid Fortress, where it largely outnumbers his other types, for example. For some reasons, it seems that the distribution of Theodore coinage in Ohrid ceased after his coronation, and resumed during the rule of his successor Manuel Duca.

The context of the finds from Plaošnik and at the Fortress reveal that the coinage of Manuel Duca was circulating in parallel with the billon trachea of the Bulgarian

Scyphati from the First Half of the 13th Century Found Near Petrič), Sofia, 2003; Three Vodici hoard, in M. Hendy, *Coinage and Money*, 391-93; Preslav, grave find, in *Coin Hoards* 7 (1985): no. 367; Dorkovo hoard, in M. Hendy, *Coinage and Money*, 337-8; Peter and Paul hoard, in D. M. Metcalf, "The Peter and Paul Hoard", 144-72.; 2. (Greece) Serres/1977, in *Coin Hoards* 4 (1978): no.208; Serres 7 hoard/1960 and Seres 8 hoard /1960?, in I. Touratsoglou and K. Loverdou-Tsigarida, "Ρωμαϊκοὶ καὶ βυζαντινοὶ νομισματικοὶ 'θησαυροὶ' ἀπὸ το βόρειο ἐλλαδικὸ χῶρο στὴν ἐφορεὰ βυζαντινῶν 'αρχαιοτήτων Θεσσαλονικῆς", *Αρχεολογικὸν Δελτίον* 31 (1976): 25-30; Thebes hoard/1967, in M. Oekonomidou "Three Hoards of the 13th Century at the Numismatic Museum of Athens, *Byzantina* 132 (1985): 983-97.

¹⁵ For the coin types of Thessalonikan despots, see Hendy, *DOC* IV, and especially S. Bendall, "Notes on Coinage of John Comnenos-Ducas of Thessalonika (AD 1237-44)," *Numismatic Chronicle* 162 (2002): 253-64.

¹⁶ Further on the south, in the areas of Mikri Prespa, Arta and Ioannina, the finds show presence of all types of Theodore Ducas (without the Type B), but with a dominance of his post-coronation issues, see M. Oikonomidou, I. Touratsoglou and H. Tsourte, "Συμβολή στὴν ἐρευνα τῆς κυκλοφορίας τῶν βυζαντινῶν νομισμάτων στὴν Ἠεπειρο, 1204-1332", *Πρακτικὰ Διεθνούς Συμποσίου γιὰ τὸ Δεσποτάτο τῆς Ἠπειροῦ, Ἀρτα 27 –31 Μαΐου, Ἀρτα 2002*, 101-23; I. Touratsoglou, "Θσαυροὺς ἀσπρον τραχέων/1983 ἀπο τὴν Ἀρτᾶ", *Αρχεολογικὸν Δελτίον* 36 (1981): 209-26; for a recent overview of the published finds of Thessalonikan coinage, C. Morrison, "The Emperor, the Saint and the City", 175-203.

emperor Ivan Asen II. Numerous single finds that have recently come to light from the Fortress (21 specimens), the area of Gorna Porta (1), St. Erasmus (11), and now from Plaošnik (6 specimens from a naos grave (nos. 16-21; Pl. II. 13) and 1 from the grave no. 4 (no. 22), significantly contribute the list of the already registered finds from this area,¹⁷ definitely the place of their most intensive circulation in the Balkan hinterland. It is commonly accepted that the gold and billon coinage of Ivan Asen was introduced after the battle at Klokotnica of year 1230 after he defeated Theodore, and were aimed to circulate in the newly conquered territories in Macedonia. The stylistic and iconographic similarities that his sole type of billon coinage share with those of Theodore's (Type A),¹⁸ definitely puts his coinage in a close relation with the Thessalonikan mint. Still, the highest concentration of his coinage in Ohrid, advances Hendy's hypothesis that his coinage was produced in the town.¹⁹ The dies were engraved by Thessalonikan masters, and most probably minted locally in Ohrid, a practice that was not unknown at the court of the contemporary Serbian state in Ras.²⁰

The type termed "Uncertain Thessalonikan Attribution", an issue that can be placed in the Series III of John Comnenos Ducas, from the grave no. 26 (no. 14, Pl. I. 12.), has modestly occurred at the other excavated sites in Ohrid (1 specimen at the Fortress, 1 from St. Erasmus), too.

At Plaošnik, the coinage of the Nicaean emperors is evidenced with a single Thessalonikan specimen of John III Ducas Vatatzes (Type C) (no. 15, Pl. II. 13.) minted between years 1246 and 1248.²¹ John's Thessalonikan coinage represents the largest portion of the single finds from the Fortress (91), which is not surprising in the view of the military campaigns he undertook in Macedonia during the 1240s. He took control of the town in 1252, which by that time was again in the hands of the Epirote despot Michael II.

Nicaean-Epirote hostility culminated in year 1259 at the battle at Pelagonia, after which Macedonia was again dominated by the restored Paleologian Byzantium. Large amounts of cash were certainly distributed in the area in the late sixth and early seventh decade of the XIII century as a result of the Nicaean and Paleologian military campaigns and this was probably the reason why the early issues of Michael VIII largely

¹⁷ A hoard of 29 billon trachea from Ohrid is mentioned in T. Gerasimov, "Kolektivni nahodki na moneti prez 1965", *IAI XXX*, 213, in I. Iurukova and V. Penčev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni pečati i moneti*, Sofia, 1990, 82. (hereafter I. Iurukova and V. Penčev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni pečati*); 4 specimens from St. Achilleus at Prespa, M. Hendy, *Coinage and Money*, 296-7; 23 pieces in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection Hendy, *DOC IV/2*, 639-43.

¹⁸ M. Hendy, *DOC IV*, 639-40; I. Iurukova and V. Penčev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni pečati*, 83.

¹⁹ M. Hendy, *DOC IV/2*, 640; For different opinion, that is, an attribution of his coinage to the mint of Thessalonika, see V. Penčev, *Kade bile kovani parite na Ivan Asen II [Where Have the Coins of the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Asen II Been Struck?]*, *Makedonski numizmatički glasnik 2* (1996): 105-112; I. Iurukova and V. Penčev, *Bulgarski srednovekovni pečati*, 78-84; K. Dočev, *Moneti i parično obreštenie v Turnovo XII-XIV v.*, Veliko Turnovo, 1992, 65-8 (hereafter *Moneti i parično obreštenie*).

²⁰ V. Ivanišević, "Novac kralja Radoslava", *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta 37* (1998): 87-95; *ibid*, *Novčarstvo srednjevekovne Srbije*, Beograd, 2001, 87 with the quoted literature.

²¹ Judging upon the number of jewels (9) present on the emperor's collar piece on the reverse, it should be pointed out that at least two sub-variants of this type were produced.

marked the coin circulation in the Ohrid region in the second half of the XIII century. 7 specimens of Michael VIII (nos.23-29, Pl.II.15-20) and 4 of Andronicus II (nos.30-33, Pl.II.21-22) were found in 2000, while 24 specimens and 30 are from the Fortress, respectively. The coinage of Michael VIII and Andronicus is overwhelmingly of a Thessalonikan provenance. A further study on the Paleologian coinage on the territory of Republic of Macedonia and the types present is needed in order the circulation areas to better defined. Unfortunately, there is no hoard of Paleologian copper so far registered in the wider region.

The town of Ohrid was under Paleologian control until year 1334, after which, the circulation of Byzantine gold and copper literary ceased and gave way to the Serbian and Venetian silver. The Venetian grosso of Pietro Ziani from a grave in the naos (no.36, Pl.II, 25) is but another proof of the well-known presence of the Venetian silver coinage in the hinterland of Macedonia. According to the coin evidence in the Ohrid area (Plaošnik hoard 1965, Dolni Saraj hoard, single finds from the Fortress),²² it seems that the town largely benefited from the trade with the Venetians during the XIII and XIV centuries. Pietro Ziani's specimens from the hoards of Dobrište, Gostivar (c.1310) and Staro Korzo, Prilep (c.1340), suggest that Venetian silver started to circulate in western Macedonia soon after the grosso was introduced in Venice, perhaps in a quick response to the Charter of Ivan Asen II from year 1230, by which he, alike the Byzantine emperors, granted Raguzan merchants to trade in his newly occupied lands free of paying the taxes.

The appreciated Venetian coinage soon became a matter of counterfeiting. A number of hoard finds from Macedonia (Staro korzo, Prilep, Dobrište, Kičevo, Stobi, Plaošnik/1965, single finds from Golem grad-Prespa area) and Bulgaria (Tiševica, single find from Turnovo)²³ has shown that this early XIV/late XIV century practice was of a local character, revealing that there were at least two places where they were minted. So far, no counterfeiters are registered from the inland Greece.²⁴ Two series of heavier and lighter imitations has been distinguished, the first being of an earlier date, probably produced in Bulgaria. Distribution of the finds containing imitations suggests that the town of Ohrid could be a possible place of issuing of the lighter series.²⁵ A heavy specimen that imitates grosso of Lorenzo Tiepolo was found in a grave from the

²² For a comprehensive list of Venetian hoards found in Macedonia, see B. Jovanovska, "Coin Hoards from the Second Half of the IX Century," *Coins and Mints in Macedonia*, Skopje, 2002, 143-56; see also A. Stahl, *Zecca, The Mint of Venice in the Middle Ages*, Baltimor, 2000; cf. the finds from Greece in I. Touratzoglou and J. Baker, "Byzantium of the Venetians, Greece of the Grossi, in *Bisanzio, Venezia e il mondo franco-greco (XIII-XV)*, (eds. Ch. Maltezou and P. Schreiner), Venice, 2002, 204-27.

²³ K. Hristovska, "A Contribution to the Fourteenth Century Venetian Imitative Coinage Found on the Territory of the Republic of Macedonia, *Makedonski numizmatički glasnik* 2 (1996): 139-67; for the imitations found in Bulgaria", S. Avdev, "Imitacii na venecianski grošove ot Bulgaria", *Numizmatika* 1 (1982): 19-27; V. Penčev, "Kolektivna monetna nahodka (XIV v.) ot s. Tiševica Vračanski okrg", *Numizmatika* 2 (1983): 27-41; D. M. Metcalf, "Echoes of the Name of Lorenzo Tiepolo – Imitations of Venetian Grossi in the Balkans", *Numismatic Chronicle* (1972): 183-91.

²⁴ J. Baker, "Coin Circulation in Early 14th Century Thessaly and South-Eastern Mainland Greece", *Money and Markets in the Paleologan Era* (ed. N. G. Moschonas), Athens, 2003, 293-336.

²⁵ K. Hristovska, "A Contrubution", 187.

naos (no.37, Pl.II.26), and it was stuck probably in the first half of the XIV century in Bulgaria.

A curious imitative specimen of a small diameter and concave fabric, showing a cross on the obverse and a bust of an emperor with open stemma, wearing (panelled?) loros and scepter (cross?) on the reverse, according to Penčev and Dočev, was a mid-XIV century imitative issue, minted in Bulgaria.²⁶

In general, the numismatic material from Plaošnik chronologically and typologically is in line with the other late medieval finds from the excavated sites in the town and its close surrounding. The common characteristics of the circulation pattern is the virtual absence of the billon coinage of Comnenian and Angelid dynasties of XII century, difficult to be explained in the view of the fact that the town of Ohrid was stable part of the Byzantine Empire until year 1204, and particularly in the context of the large quantities of late Comnenian coinage in the late XII and early XIII century hoards from Macedonia. Moreover, it can be hardly understood in the context of the scholarly perception of the Byzantine provincial economy as expanding one during XII century.²⁷ The evidence for the active circulation and use of coins in Ohrid are far more numerous for the XIII century. It seems that due to the frequent distributions of cash in the region, once present, they quickly gained the role of media of exchange in the local economy just as they did in the burial practices of the local population.

²⁶ V. Penčev, "Imitacioni monetosečenia v Bulgaria prez XIV v.," *Numizmatika* 2 (1984): 14-30; K. Dočev, *Moneti i parično obreštenie*, 124-27; This coin was found in a same layer with a trachy of a small diameter that I was not able to identify.

²⁷ On mechanisms of coin distribution, in A. Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire 900-1200*, Cambridge, 1989, 80-119; D. M. Metcalf, *Coinage in South-Eastern Europe.*, 88, 119-25; K. Hristovska, "Byzantine Coins on the Territory of the Republic of Macedonia: Aspects of Circulation and Distribution", *Coins and Mints in Macedonia*, Skopje, 2002, 101-112.

CATALOGUE OF THE FINDS

1. Tetarteron noummion
Andronicus I Comnenus (1183-85)
Thessalonika, Type A
Obv. MP ΘV
Rev. ΑΝΔΡΟ [ΝΙΚΟC]
AE; 3.38 g; 19 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.XVIII, 6.1
MO, 2000/12, Plate I.1
2. Aspron trachy nomizma
Alexius III Angelus (1195-1203)
Constantinople, Type B(b)
Obv. ΚΕΡΟ ΗΘΕΙ
Rev. [ΑΛΕΞΙΩΔΕC Ο ΩΚΟΜΝΗΝΩ]
Bill; 3.57 g; 27 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.XXIII, 3e.1
MO, 2000/5.1, Plate I.2
3. Aspron trachy nomizma
Bulgarian imitative, Type B(b)
Obv. MP ΘV
Rev. ΙCΑΑΚΙΟC ΔΕCΠΙΟΤΗC
Bill; 2.20 g; 25 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.XXVI, 2.4
MO, 2000/22.1, Plate I.3
4. As previous
Bill; 1.90 g; 24 mm
MO, 2000/22.2
Aspron trachy nomizma
5. Aspron trachy nomizma
Obv. [ΚΕΡΟ ΗΘΕΙ]
Rev. [ΑΛΕΞΙΩΔΕC Ο
ΩΚΟΜΝΗΝΩ]
Bill; 3.14 g; 24 mm
DOC 4/II, XXVI, 3a.1
MO, 2000/26, Plate I.4
6. As previous.
Bill; 2.33 g; 27 mm
MO, 2000/19
7. Aspron trachy nomizma
Latin imitative, Type A (sm.module)
Obv. MP ΘV
Rev. [ΜΑΝΟΥΗΛΔΕCΠΙΟ]
Bill; 0.94 g; 17 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.LII, 30.2
MO, 2000/10.1, Plate I.5
8. Aspron trachy nomiza
Latin Imitative, Type F (small module) ?
Bill; 1.03 g; 19 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.LIII, 35.1
MO, 2000/8, Plate I.6
9. Aspron trachy nomizma
Theodore Comnenus Ducas (1224-30)
Thessalonika, Type B (clipped) (1227?)
Obv. ΜΡ ΘV ΗΑΓΙΟCΩΡΗΘΗCΑ
Rev. ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟCΔΕCΠΙΟ
ΟΛΟΓΙΟCΑΙΜΙΤΡΙΟC
AR; 0.99 g; 20 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.XXXVIII, 2.b
MO, 2000/4.1, Plate I.7
10. Aspron trachy nomizma
Theodore Comnenus Ducas
(1224-30) Thessalonika, Type F (1227/28?)
Obv. Ο ΛΓΙΟC ΔΗΜΙΤΡΙΟC
Rev. ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟCΔΕC. ΜΡ ΘV
Bill; 2.56 g; 29 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.XXIX, 9.2
MO, 2000/23, Plate I.8
11. Aspron trachy nomizma
Manuel Comnenus Ducas (1230-37)
Thessalonika, Type C (1236/37)
Obv. ΜΡ ΘV
Rev. ΜΑΝΟΥΗΛΔΕCΠΙΟ
ΟΑΓΙΟC ΑΙΜ
Bill; 1.85 g; 24 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.XLI,5.1
MO, 2000/17, Plate I.9
12. Aspron trachy nomizma
Manuel Comnenus Ducas (1230-37)
Thessalonika, Type D (1231/32)
Obv. ΧΑΡ ΧΜ
Rev. ΜΑΝΟΥΗΛΔΕCΠΙΟ
ΟΚΩΝCΤΝΤΙΝΟC
Bill; 3.77 g; 31 mm
DOC 4/II, XLI,6.1
MO, 2000/22.3, Plate I.10

13. Aspron trachy
Manuel Comnenus Ducas (1230-37)
Thessalonika, Type F (1235/36)
Obv. XAP XM
Rev. ΜΑΝΟΥΗΛΔΕCΠΟ
OKΩNCTNTINOC
Bill; 2.10 g; 29 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.XLI,8.1
MO, 2000/13, Plate I.11
Note: Overstrike on the Type D
14. Aspron trachy nomizma
Uncertain attribution
(John Comnenos Ducas?), (1237-44)
Thessalonika, Series III/small module
Bill; 0.80 g; 22 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.XLIV,1.1
MO, 2000/21, Plate I.12
15. Aspron trachy nomizma
Jonh III Ducas Vatatzes (1222-54)
Thessalonka, Type C (1246-48/49?)
Obv. IC XC
Rev. Ω N [ΔEC]ΠIOTH
Bill; 2.78 g; 25 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.XLIV, (5)
MO, 2000/5.2, Plate II.13
16. Aspron trachy nomizma
Ivan Asen II (1218-40)
Obv. IC XC
Rev. IOACTA
Bill; 3.11 g; 29 mm
DOC 4/II, Pl.XLVII,2.2
MO, 2000/3.1
17. As previous.
Bill; 2.99 g; 29 mm
MO, 2000/3.2
18. As previous.
Bill; 2.35 g; 29 mm
MO, 2000/3.3
19. As previous.
Bill; 3.32 g; 28 mm
MO, 2000/3.4
20. As previous.
Bill; 3.36 g; 27 mm
MO, 2000/3.5, Plate II.14
21. As previous.
Bill; 2.05 g; 31 mm
MO, 2000/3.6
22. As previous.
Bill; 1.73 g; 28 mm
MO, 2000/14.1
23. Trachy
Michael VIII Paleologos
(1259-82)
Thessalonika, Class VII
Obv.
Rev. XA [...]
Cu; 3.08 g; 27 mm
DOC 5/II, Pl.10
MO, 2000/20, Plate II.15
24. Trachy
Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82)
Thessalonika, Class VIII
Obv.
Rev. [MIXAHA ΔECΠ ΔEM]
Cu; 1.43 g; 24 mm
DOC 5/II, Pl.10
MO, 2000/24.1, Plate II.16
25. Trachy
Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82)?
Thessalonika,
Obv.
Rev.
Cu; 1,88 g; 24 mm
MO, 2000/24.2, Plate II.17
26. Trachy
Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82)
Thessalonika, Class IX
Obv.
Rev. [XMΔECΠIOY OAGIΔI]
Cu; 0.75 g; 21 mm
DOC 5/II, Pl.10,159-160
MO, 2000/10.3, Plate II.18
27. Trachy
Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82)
Thessalonika, Class XV
Obv.
Rev. XM
Cu; 1.00 g; 19 mm
DOC 5/II, Pl. 12, 186-190
MO, 2000/6, Plate II.19

28. Trachy
Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-82)
Thessalonika, Class XXV
Obv. XM
Rev. [ΧΜΔΕΠΙΟΤΣ ΟΠΑΛΕΟΛΓΣ]
Cu; 2.49 g; 24 mm
DOC 5/II, Pl.7,114-122
MO, 2000/25,
Plate II.20
29. As previous.
Cu; 2.75 g; 25 mm
MO, 2000/10.2
30. Trachy (fragment)
Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328)
Thessalonika, Class XIV
Obv.
Rev. [ΑΝΔΡΟΝΙ]
Bill; 1.29 g; 20 mm
DOC 5/II, Pl.43, 752-54
MO, 2000/4.2
31. As previous.
Cu; 0.90 g; 23 mm
MO, 2000/11, Plate II.21
32. Trachy
Andronicus II Paleologos
(1282-1328)
Thessalonika, (T.27)
Obv. Cross
Rev. Emperor on l., wears divitision
Cu; 1.12 g; 23 mm
BD, 222, no.27
MO, 2000/10.4, Plate II.22
Note: Reverse overstrike (on Christ)
33. Trachy (fragment)
Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328)
Thessalonika, Class ?
Cu; 0.68 g; 19 mm
MO, 2000/4.3
34. Trachy
Uncertain attribution (imitative issue)
Bulgaria, XIV century?
Obv. Bust of an emperor
Rev. Cross
Cu; 0,58 g; 16 mm
Penčev, TXL, 2
MO, 2000/7.1, Plate II.23
35. Trachy, uncertain attribution
Cu; 1.68 g; 19 mm
MO, 2000/7.2, Plate II.24
36. Grosso
Pietro Ziani (1205-29), Venice
Obv. P ZIANI SM VENETI
Rev. IC XC
AR; 1.91 g; 21 mm
Papadopoli, T.V,11
MO, 2000/1, Plate II.25
37. Grosso, contemporary imitation
Lorenzo Tiepolo (1268-75)
Obv. LATEVPLO DVX SM VENETI
Rev. IC XC
AR; 1.79 g; 21 mm
MO, 2000/2, Plate II.26
38. Illegible trachy
(XIII century)
Bill; 1.03 g; 23 mm
MO, 2000/14.2
39. Illegible trachy
MO, 2000/10.5
40. Trachy,
Illegible fragment
MO, 2000/10.6
41. Trachy,
Illegible fragment
MO, 2000/10.7
42. Trachy,
Illegible fragment
MO, 2000/15
43. Trachy,
Illegible fragment (burnt)
MO, 2000/16
44. Trachy,
Illegible fragment
MO, 2000/28
45. Trachy,
Illegible fragment (burnt?)
MO, 2000/18

Plate I



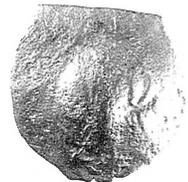
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Plate II



13



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