

**A HOARD OF SILVER COINS OF AQUILEIA AND TRIESTE  
FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY FROM THE  
VICINITY OF ČEŠNJICA PRI KROPI**

In June 2007 a mushroom picker searching near Češnjica pri Kropi (Slovenia) in the vicinity of a fallow area called “Na kmetih” by chance came across two silver Aquileian coins lying on a small hill. When he next returned to check if there were any more coins in the soil, he collected the following twenty-one, with the exception of one that was found a month later by a friend of his with a detector. The hoard of silver

coins contains eleven coins of the Aquileian Patriarch Gregory (*Gregorio*; 1251–1269) and thirteen silver coins of the bishop of Trieste Arlongo de Voitsberg (1254–1280) and an anonymous minter (1254–1257). The coins of two mints were represented in the find. Most of the coins (54.2%) were minted in Trieste for the Bishop of Trieste, while the rest of the silver coins (45.8%) were minted for the Patriarch Gregory. Among the coins of the Trieste mint, the representation of the earlier anonymous minter was 23% (3 examples), while the coins of Arlongo de Voitsberg were represented by 76.9% (10 examples). An approximately uniform numerical distribution of the coins between the mints means that the owner came from an area of interest to both church dignitaries. The coins probably represent the contents of the purse of a travelling merchant, soldier, or noble, who lost or hid it along the route that led from Friuli through Carniola to Carinthia. The purse would have been lost after 1269 AD.

The denarii are most very well preserved and were not in circulation very long. The discovered coins are typical examples of denarii that were in circulation in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century in Carniola and also reflect other contemporary coins finds from this area. The find is thus similar to a hoard that was discovered in Kranj during the archaeological excavation in the Main Square (formerly Tito Square) in July 1965 (Šemrov 2015, 103, with relevant literature). This find, that contained 85 coins of the Aquileian type, was also divided between the Aquileia and Trieste mints, and it was also deposited after 1269. Both finds contain identical coins, although the find from Češnjica does not contain coins of Volrico (*Volrico de Portis da Cividale* (1233–1254).

The loss or burial of the purses of silver denarii from Češnjica and Kranj can be placed in the period of the death of Duke Ulrich III of Spanheim (1256–1269) and the beginning of the rule of the Czech King Ottokar II Přemysla (1269/1270–1276) in Carniola. Both finds were discovered in Carniola, a region under the direct command of Duke Ulrich and his ministerials (Kranj), and on the territory of the estates of the Counts of Ortenburg (Češnjica pri Kropi), who recognized the Duke as the lord of the province (Komac 2006, 258). The site of the Češnjica hoard is near one of the more important Ortenburg centers in Upper Carniola, Waldenberg Castle above the village of Lipnica near Radovljica (Kos 2005, 245).

Unfortunately, it is not possible to establish the reason for the burial or loss of the hoard. The discussed find was discovered in the vicinity of the Škofja Loka (Tolmin) road, which led from Škofja Loka in Carniola to Cividale/Čedad in Friuli and also passed by Kropa (Kosi 1998, 247). The Carniolan find can thus be connected to this route, as the latter in its continuation has a crossroads in the town of Kranj with the Karavanke road (Kosi 1998, 253–259).

**Key words:** Carniola, Češnjica pri Kropi, coin hoard, denarii, 13<sup>th</sup> century, analysis