

COIN HOARDS FROM THE 17TH CENTURY IN SLAVONIA AND THE HOARD FINDING OF GOLD AND SILVER COINS IN VIROVITICA FROM THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY

Summary

The wars of liberation from the several centuries old Ottoman yoke in the north-eastern parts of Yugoslavia, in Slavonia and Vojvodina, resulted in a strong concentration of hoards, of which a significant part must have been buried by the Turkish part of the population with drawing from the main centers, such as Požega, Virovitica, Našice, Mitrovica, Karlovci etc., as well as from their vicinity. Such hoards can be followed as far as Kosovo.

The main cause for hiding of such hoards was the constant Turkish war, i.e. the wars of liberation 1657—1683. The first Turkish war was fought during the first part of the reign of Leopold I (1657—1705).

As can be seen from the hoards of this period from Croatia and Slavonia, Hungarian money predominates, but it is found together with Austrian and other Western European coins, as well as Italian, chiefly Venetian, and the last surviving South Slavic coinage of the Republic of Dubrovnik (grossetti of light weight and very superficial striking). Very frequently such small change in silver (Dubrovnik and the Ottoman Empire) shows holes indicating that their main use was not only as money, but also as ornaments upon various garments, which being of precious metal, were buried too.

Ottoman coins have been found in almost 25% of all the 17th cent. hoards, but it must be pointed out that an imposing number of hoards from provinces which at the time of concealment of the treasure were still in Turkish hands, contain no Ottoman currency whatsoever, a fact which was already recognized by J. Brunšmid and later by I. Mažuran. Even in some of the hoards containing such coins, their quantity is negligible. The reason for this must be sought in the decline of value and the debasement of silver in the Empire which had entered a long period of deterioration and was on the defensive in the 17th cent. Gold, on the other hand, remained a safe and precious currency.

The coin hoard unearthed in Virovitica in 1974 contained ducats, zecchini, gold florins, filurs, talers, scudi, half scudi, gulden, pieces of 15, 6 and 3 kreuzer, grossi, denarii, grossetti, akche etc. The number of coins of the Ottoman Empire predominates, not by their total value or weight, but only numerally. They were followed by issues of numerous German states, struck both by the ecclesiastical and secular lords as well as the cities; Hungary, Austria, the Netherlands (various provinces and cities under autonomous, the Imperial German and Spanish administrations); Poland (including the cities of Gdansk and Wroclaw); France; Italy (Florence and Venice) and finally Bohemia. One ought to mention that a few con-

temporary counterfeit coins of Leopold I of Austria and Hungary (1657—1705) and one douzain of Louis %IV of France (1643—1715) were among the coins.

The oldest were the coins of Poland's king Alexander (1501—1506) and one taler of Ferdinand I (1527—1564). The youngest were the Hungarian issues of Leopold I from the year 1682 and several grossetti of Dubrovnik issued in 1683. Using them as the **terminus post quem**, one might be inclined to conclude that the hoard was buried in 1684, the year when Virovitica was liberated from the Turks.