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## THE EARLY ABBASID DINARS OF THE PETROVCI HOARD

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The Petrovci hoard is a small deposit consisting of 9 Islamic dīnārs issued by several caliphs who were early rulers of the <sup>c</sup>Abbāsīd dynasty as well as a gold torque and one gold ear-ring with two pearls. Despite its limited size the Petrovci hoard is a very important phenomenon, partly because the number of European finds containing early Islamic dīnārs is extremely small.

The Catalogue of the coins is arranged in columns. Underneath the name of the dynasty and ruler in the first column is the coin number. The second column is to identify the mint that struck the respective dīnār. Since all specimens of the hoard are anonymous, the column does not contain any mint name. Column three contains the date of coinage according to the Islamic calendar (AH= Anno Hegirae) and its equivalent according to the Christian calendar (AD= Anno Domini) obtained from Wüstenfeld's conversion tables<sup>1</sup>. Column four specifies the coin weight, diameter and die axis (Obv. : Rev.). The last column contains the Arheološki Muzej in Zagreb's inventory numbers, description of both sides of the coin, references to literature and secondary individual data of a particular specimen if needed. This method of presenting the numismatic material has been applied by the present author in several previously published articles<sup>2</sup>.

The following description and analysis of the hoard coins are based on a study of their photographs. I am greatly indebted to Ivan Mirnik of the Arheološki Muzej in Zagreb for providing me with these photographs, as well as other materials containing data on the hoard and enabling me to publish this paper.

1. F. WÜSTENFELD. *Vergleichungs-Tabellen der Muhammedanischen und Christlichen Zeitrechnung*. Leipzig, 1903.

2. Cf. Dirhams in the Collection of the Auxiliary Science and Archive Department, Institute of History, Jagiellonian University. *NotNum*, 2, 1997: 165-176, with addendum.

## CATALOGUE

No.	Mint	Date AH=AD	Weight(g) Ø (mm) Die axis (°)	Inventory number; Description; Remarks; References; <i>Secondary individual data</i>
1	2	3	4	5
<b>as-Saffāh    al-Mansūr</b> 132-136 AH= 749-753 AD    136-158 AH= 753-775 AD				
1	?	136=	753/4 4,18 19 220	30071=31311. Obv: in field وحده   لا اله الا الله الدين كله لا شريك له   الله الله ارسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الله   رسول محمد رسول ينار سنة ست وثلثين ومئة in margin legend بسم الله ضرب هذا الد Cf. Mirmik, p. 197; Ties., No. 683, p. 67; Lavoix, No. 569, p. 136; Nützel, No. 605, p. 111; an-Naqšbandī, No. 60, p. 86. <i>Small peck (?) above kalimah of Obv., two small incisions (?) beneath kalimah of Rev.</i>
<b>al-Mahdī</b> 158-169 AH= 775-785 AD				
2	?	163=779/80	4,21 18,5 35	3530072=31312. Obv. legends as No. 1, but pellet after رسول and above ر in ليظهره Rev: field legend as No. 1, central pellet; in margin legend ب ثلث وستين ومئة in legend ب ضرب Cf. Mirmik, p. 198; Ties., No. 932, p. 101; Markov, No. 210, p. 21; Nützel, No. 770, p. 128; an-Naqšbandī, No. 83, p. 96.
3	?	165=781/2	4,25 18-19. 0	030073=31313. Obv. legends as No. 1. Rev: field legend as No. 1; in margin legend ومئة ومئة خمس وستين Cf. Mirmik, p. 198; Ties., No. 965, p. 105; Lavoix, No. 680-81, p. 157; Markov, Nos. 233-4, p. 22; Nützel, No. 772, p. 128; an-Naqšbandī, Nos. 85a-85b, p. 93. <i>Above kalimah of Obv. in the field two small incisions in the shape of the letter X.</i>
4	?	165=781/2	4,22 18-19 60	6030074=31314. Obv. legends as No. 1, but pellet after رسول and above ر in ليظهره Rev: field legend as No. 1, but pellet in centre; in margin legend خمس وستين ومئة Cf. Mirmik, p. 198; Ties., No. 965, p. 105; Markov, Nos. 233-4, p. 22.
5	?	166=782/3	4,20 19	18030075=31315. Obv. legends as No. 1, but pellet after رسول and above ر in ليظهره Rev: ليظهره

			180	field legend as No. 1, three pellets: one after, one above and one below <b>ر سول</b> ; in margin legend <b>ست وستين ومئه</b> . Cf. Mirnik, p. 198; Ties., No. 983, p. 107; Lavoix, No. 682, p. 157; Markov, No. 246, p. 22.
6	?	167=783/4	4,21 19,5 320	32030077=31317. Obv. legends as No. 1, but pellet above <b>ر</b> in <b>ليظهره</b> . Rev: field legend as No. 1; in margin legend <b>سبع وستين ومئه</b> , pellets below <b>ب</b> in <b>ضرب</b> and below <b>ع</b> of the unit. Cf. Mirnik, p. 198; Ties., No. 1010, p. 110.
7	?	168=784/5	4,03 19-20 320	32030078=31318. Obv. legends as No. 1, but pellet after <b>ر سول</b> , double pellet below <b>ق</b> in <b>الحق</b> . Rev: field legend as No. 1, but pellet after <b>ر سول</b> ; in margin legend <b>وستين ومئه</b> and <b>ثمان</b> , pellet after <b>بسم</b> . Cf. Mirnik, p. 198; Ties., No. 1038, p. 112; Lavoix, No. 158, p. 158; Markov, No. 286, p. 23. <i>Several small incisions (scratches?) on Rev.</i>
<b>al-Mahdī    al-Hādī 158-169 AH= 775-785 AD    169-170 AH= 785-786 AD</b>				
8	?	167  169= 783/4  785/6	4,20 19,5 210	21030076=31316. Obv. legends as No. 1, but double pellet below <b>ق</b> as No. 7. Rev: field legend as No. 1, but pellets as No. 5; in margin legend <b>سبع    تسع وستين ومئه</b> . Cf. Mirnik, p. 198; Ties., No. 1010, p. 110, No. 1057, p. 115; Lavoix, No. 690, p. 159. <i>Rev.: small incision in the shape of a triangle.</i>
<b>Hārūn ar-Rašīd 170-193 AH= 786-809 AD</b>				
9	?	172=788/9	3,21 18,5 170	17030084=31324. Obv. legends as No. 1. Rev: field legend as No. 1, beneath <b>موسى</b> ; in margin legend <b>اثننتين وسبعين ومئه</b> . Cf. Mirnik, p. 198; Ties., No. 1146, p. 126-7; type as Lavoix, No. 745, struck in 171 AH, p. 173.

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an-NAQŠBANDĪ 1953 - N. as-S. M. an-NAQŠBANDĪ. *Ad-dīnār al-islāmī fī al-Maḥaf al-ʿIrāqī. Al-ḡuz' al-awwal: Ad-dīnār al-umawī wa al-ʿabbāsī.* Bāgdād, 1372 h. (= 1953).

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SEĆ 1891 - F. SEĆ. Ruma 30. studena 1891. *VHAD*, 14/1892, 1: 22-23.

TIZENGAUZEN (TIESENHAUSEN) 1873 - V. TIZENGAUZEN. *Monety vostochnogo khalifata.* Sanktpeterburg, 1873. (= Ties.)

### COMMENTARY

Dīnār is a gold Islamic coin that evolved from the Byzantine solid. The name itself originated in Latin (*denarius*). Until the end of VIIth century the weight of the dīnār was 4.25 g<sup>3</sup>, but later on it ranged from 3.20 to 4.75 g. It was the dīnār that was the first pure epigraphic coin of the Muslim empire<sup>4</sup>.

The numismatic material of the Petrovci find is very homogeneous in terms of the depicted variants. The coins have standard ʿAbbāsīd legends containing conventional parts being quotations from the Qurʾān, completed with dates following the Islamic lunar calendar. The order of legends in the field and margin of both sides is everywhere the same. The epigraphy used is also of the same style with only some letters having been ornamented in a special way. The only difference, apart of course from the chronology of a particular coin, is the appearance of pellets and the name (cf. No. 9). The field legend of the Obverse is as follows

لا اله الا

الله وحده

لا شريك له

"There is no god but God alone. He has no associate." Cf. Qurʾān, surah 47:21 (47:19) and 6:163.

The marginal legend of the Obverse contains fragments from surahs 48:29 and 9:33

محمد رسول الله ارسله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله

"Muhammad is the messenger of God. He sent him with the guidance and the religion of truth to make it prevail over every religion."

3. F. von SCHRÖTTER. *Wörterbuch der Münzkunde.* Berlin-Leipzig, 1930: 139-142.

4. See J. WALKER. *A Catalogue of the Muhammadan Coins in the British Museum. II: Arab-Byzantine and Post-Reform Umayyad Coins.* London, 1956; Ph. GRIERSON. *The*

Monetary Reforms of ʿAbd al-Malik. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 3/1960: 241 ff.; G. C. MILES. *The Earliest Arab Gold Coinage.* *ANSMN*, 13, 1967: 205; M. BATES. *Islamic Coins.* American Numismatic Society Handbook, 2. New York, 1982: 14.

The Reverse field represents a quotation from surah 48:29

محمد  
رسول  
الله

"Muhammad is the messenger of God."

The marginal legend of the Reverse contain the date formula

بسم الله ضرب هذا الدينار سنة... 5

Belonging to the early emissions of the Caliphate, the *dīnārs* of the find, as has been mentioned before, do not have mint names mentioned in their legends. The mints start to be indicated on *dīnārs* from 198 AH<sup>6</sup>. However, judging by the fact that the majority of earlier emissions was issued in Madīnat as-Salām (i.e. Baghdad) and Misr, we can suppose the earlier gold coins to have been struck there also.

All specimens of the find in question belong to rather common <sup>6</sup>Abbāsīd emissions. The most frequent ones<sup>7</sup>, struck between 150 and 160 AH are not included in the hoard. These types of coins were so widely accepted in the Mediterranean and the adjacent territories that they became imitated with the aim of using them on local as well as foreign markets. One can mention here as an example the Anglo-Saxon *dīnārs* of King Offa<sup>8</sup>.

The specimens of the hoard make a very coherent group as far as the dates of their emissions are concerned. Only one coin (No. 1) loses touch with the others. The chronology of the remaining ones is situated between 163 AH= 779/80 AD and 172 AH= 788/89 AD. Consequently, the year 788 AD has to be accepted as *terminus post quem*. However, in setting up the exact date of burial of the whole deposit one should consider all other existing circumstances, including the context of the find.

If the 136 AH *dīnār* is taken into consideration, the span between the oldest and the youngest coin of the hoard runs to 35 years. If this coin is excluded, the span becomes as small as 9 years.

Specimen No. 1 was struck in 136 AH. This is the last year of the reign of the first <sup>6</sup>Abbāsīd caliph Abū al-<sup>6</sup>Abbās <sup>6</sup>Abd Allāh as-Saffāh and the first year of the reign of his half-brother and successor, Abū Ga<sup>6</sup>far <sup>6</sup>Abd Allāh al-Manṣūr<sup>9</sup>. For this reason it is difficult to call any of them the ruler the coin was issued by. As is shown in the catalogue part of this paper the earliest *dīnār* of al-Manṣūr mentioned by H. Lavoix was struck in 140 AH. W. Tiesenhausen put the 136 AH *dīnār* together with other emissions of al-Manṣūr. A. Markov did not mention such coins struck during the reign of al-Manṣūr at all, while H. Nützel described such a *dīnār* among as-Saffāh's issues. The Iraqi author an-Naqšbandī included the gold emissions of 136 AH among as-Saffāh's ones, too. The coin itself is an example of a standard <sup>6</sup>Abbāsīd *dīnār* with its semblance and the order of legends.

5. Cf. *Corpus Nummorum Saeculorum IX-XI qui in Suecia reperti sunt. Catalogue of Coins from the 9th-11th Centuries found in Sweden*. 3. SKÅNE 4. Maglarp-Ystad. Stockholm, 1987: 220-222.

6. M. BROOME. *A Handbook of Islamic Coins*. London, 1985: 29-30.

7. M. BROOME 1985: 29.

8. M. BROOME 1985: 29; N. LOWICK. A New Type of Solidus Mancus. *NC*, 7th series, 13/973: 173-182. [reprinted in:] Nicholas LOWICK. *Islamic Coins and Trade in the Medieval World* (Ed. by Joe CRIBB). Aldershot, 1990: 175-181.

9. E. de ZAMBAUR. *Manuel de généalogie et de chronologie pour l'histoire de l'Islam*. Hanovre, 1927: 4.

There are no pellets that were a characteristic trait of the later issues, helpful in fixing the chronology of some imitations of the <sup>ʿ</sup>Abbāsīd dīnārs.<sup>10</sup> It is also worth considering the shape of the letter *د* *dāl* in the name محمد in the Obverse's first line. N. Lowick, who commented on this matter, came to the conclusion that this letter on the early dīnārs is much shorter than on the later ones<sup>11</sup>. The evidence of the Petrovci hoard seems to confirm this statement.

The next 5 coins in the find are dīnārs issued during the reign of the caliph Abū <sup>ʿ</sup>Abd Allāh Muhammad al-Mahdī, son of al-Manṣūr. The earliest one is the specimen struck in 163 AH (No. 2). This piece exemplifies the middle phase of al-Mahdī's rule, when the Islamic Caliphate struggled with the Byzantine empire, and at the same time intensively developed its economy including the intensification of the coinage. This is why the dīnārs issued in 160s AD belong to the most common ones. The legends of this coin do not differ from those of the previously described specimen. What should be underlined here is the pellets that are placed in variable positions of the coin. It is supposed that pellets appeared as a result of a template as an aid to the engravers of dies of coins<sup>12</sup>. Unfortunately, only some of the references quoted here pay attention to that phenomenon. The coin in question is close to the variant registered by Nützel, but the Petrovci dīnār has an additional pellet above the letter *ر* in the word ليظهره.

Dīnārs No. 3 and No. 4 were struck in 165 AH. They are, however, of two variants of dies. The first one has no pellets at all. The references used here say nothing about this element except Nützel's work where this fact is underlined. Instead, the second coin has pellets on both sides, on Obv. after رسول and above *ر* in ليظهره and on Rev. in the centre.

Specimen No. 5 differs from all variants specified by the authors of the references quoted here as far as the pellets and their location are concerned. While the pellets of the Obverse are nothing special, three pellets appearing in such an order as on the Reverse of the specimen in question are not the most common.

The 167 AH dīnār (No. 6) has no exact counterpart mentioned in any reference quoted here. Its Obverse seems to be the same as the Reverse of the specimen listed in Lavoix's work, but the author does not mention any special feature of the Obverse. The Petrovci dīnār has a pellet above *ر* in ليظهره (cf. above).

Another specimen (No. 7) bears the date 168 AH what means that it was struck during the last period of the reign of al-Mahdī. The special feature of this coin is the double pellet below the letter *ق* as well as a pellet after بسم .

The coin No. 8 is a specimen that might have been issued during the rule of either al-Mahdī or his son, Abū Muḥammad Mūsā al-Hādī. W. Tiesenhausen adds that the 169 AH dīnār could have been struck by the successor of al-Mahdī<sup>13</sup>. H. Lavoix allows for the same possibility, but on the other hand does not mention al-Hādī's dīnārs issued in 169 AH<sup>14</sup>. There is also a double pellet below the letter *ق* as is the case for the above mentioned specimen.

The caliph Abū <sup>ʿ</sup>Gaʿfar Hārūn ar-Rašīd, son of al-Mahdī and brother of al-Hādī, is a sovereign whose coinage is represented by the dīnār issued in 172 AH (No. 9). This is the specimen whose importance lies in several factors. First of all, this is the only dīnār of the Petrovci hoard that shows any difference from the point of view of inscriptions. The difference is in the name موسی *Mūsā* that appears beneath the kalimah of the Reverse. Then, at the same time it is the case that seems to confirm N. Lowick's opinion about the scarcity of pellets on the <sup>ʿ</sup>Abbāsīd dīnārs struck in the last

10. N. LOWICK 1990: 174-175.

11. N. LOWICK 1990: 174.

12. M. BROOME 1985: 29.

13. V. TIESENHAUSEN 1873: 115.

14. H. LAVOIX 1887: 159.

decades of the II century of the Muslim era<sup>15</sup>. N. Lowick convincingly argues that these are additional inscriptions that gradually resulted in the elimination of pellets. Finally, there are some assumptions as to the place where it was struck. The name *Mūsā* refers to Mūsā ibn ʿIsā who held important posts during the rule of al-Manṣūr, al-Mahdī and ar-Rašīd. In 171 AH he was appointed governor of Egypt and in 172 AH he was dismissed and appointed governor of al-Kūfah and then Damascus<sup>16</sup>. Taking into consideration both the date of issue of the coin and the fact that Mūsā was in Egypt that year, we may suppose that the coin was struck right there. This opinion can be supported by the statement of M. Broome who points out that some ʿAbbāsīd gold struck between 171 and 187 AH has the names of viziers or governors of Egypt<sup>17</sup>.

The dīnār of ʿarūn ar-Rašīd has another significant feature that should be mentioned here. This coin weighs much less than any other specimen found in the Petrovci hoard. For the purpose of comparison **Table 1** shows the weights of the Petrovci dīnārs and the weights of the specimens listed in some references. As anyone can see, the weight of the dīnār was rather stable over the whole period in which the specimens described here were struck. There are, of course, some exceptions to the rule and first of all our dīnār of Hārūn ar-Rašīd should be mentioned. What is very interesting is that the coin bears no trace of damage. This is nothing strange for the good state of preservation is another characteristic trait for the deposit in question. There are some incisions on the surface of some specimens but it is difficult to decide whether they occurred deliberately or not. Maybe only the cut on coin No. 8 could be regarded as made for the purpose of checking the quality of the gold or indicating this particular specimen.

In the light of the given data it seems to be probable that the complex of coins could have been assembled somewhere in the territory of the Caliphate or Byzantine empire. The fact that could support such an explanation is the main core of the monetary part of the hoard. Its coherence, and the presence of only one coin that was issued much earlier than the remaining ones, allows one to consider as-Saffāh's dīnār an accidental admixture. After then the coins could have been gathered with the jewellery still on the territory of the Byzantine empire<sup>18</sup> or later on in the Petrovci area. Coming back to the question of establishing the approximate date of the deposit's concealment one must admit here to difficulties. N. Lowick shows for how long anonymous dīnārs of the post-reform type circulated. In some cases such a period can be assessed at about two or more centuries<sup>19</sup>. On the other hand the good condition of the Petrovci hoard dīnārs seems to support the opinion that these coins had not been in circulation for a long time before being buried in the soil. The study on the hoard as a complex consisting of different objects can explain what territories ought to be taken into account. This may be only a hypothesis but according to the present author such a possibility cannot be completely ruled out.

15. N. LOWICK 1990: 174-175.

16. V. TIESENHAUSEN 1873: 126-127.

17. M. BROOME 1985: 29.

18. The jewellery found in the Petrovci hoard is described as a Byzantine product of the late Avarian period (the end of VIII century) which corresponds to the chronology of the coins

of the deposit in question; cf. *Tesori nazionali della Croazia. Capolavori dei Musei di Zagabria, Arheološki Muzej. Arezzo-Basilica Inferiore di San Francesco, 7 Settembre-20 Ottobre 199. Arezzo, 1991: 187-188: Centro Affari e Promozioni.*

19. N. LOWICK 1990: 175; the Ramla hoard of dīnārs which was buried after 368 AH= 979 AD contained specimens struck between 143-188 AH.

Table 1

Year	Petrovci	Lavoix	Nützel	an-Nagšbandī
136	4,18	4,06	4,26	4,240
163	4,21	-	3,90 4,04	4,229
165	4,25 4,22	4,28 3,80	4,08	4,101 3,877
166	4,20	4,24	4,08	4,057 4,263
167	4,21	3,70 4,02 4,15 4,12 4,00	4,02 4,14 4,25 4,05	3,812 4,098
168	4,03	3,90 3,42	4,20	4,145 4,265
169	4,20	3,98	4,14	4,245
172	3,21	-	-	4,193 3,702

## DESCRIPTION OF PLATES

## Plate 1

1-9 - Plate numbers correspond to those in the Catalogue.

10 - Ear-ring, gold and pearls, height 2,9 cm, weight 2,21 g. Late Avaric period, Byzantine work, late 85th c. AMZ Mediaeval Collection, Inv. No 3366. (SEĆ, F. 1892. Dopisi - Ruma 30 studeni 1891. *VHAD*, 14/1892: 22, VINSKI, Z. 1957. Arheološki spomenici velike seobe naroda u Srijemu. *Situla*, 2/1957: 30, T. 20, 68; DIMITRIJEVIĆ, D. - J. KOVAČEVIĆ - Z. VINSKI, edd. *Seoba naroda (arheološki nalazi jugoslavenskog Podunavlja)*. Zemun 1960: 76, T. XII, 3; KISS, A. 1986. Die Goldfunde des Karpatenbecken vom 5-10, Jahrhundert, *AAHung*, 38/1986: 119, Fig. 2; MENGHIN, W. - T. SPRINGER - E. WARNERS. *Germanen, Hunen und Awaren - Schätze der Völkerwanderungszeit*, Nürnberg, 1987: 229, T. XXI, 15; *Tesori nazionali della Croazia, Capolavori dei Musei di Zagabria. Arheološki muzej. Arezzo, 1991: 187, No.282; Arte e cultura in Croazia. Dalle collezioni del Museo Archeologico di Zagabria. Torino 1993: 187, Br. 282; Muzeopis 1846-1996. Zagreb, 1996: 131, No.196).*

11 - Torc, gold, diameter 11,0 cm, weight 29,97 g. Upper part missing. Late Avaric period, Byzantine work, late 8th c. AMZ Mediaeval Collection. AMZ Mediaeval Collection, Inv. No. 3372 (SEĆ, F. 1892. Dopisi - Ruma 30 studeni 1891. *VHAD*, 14/1892: 22; KISS, A. 1986. Die Goldfunde des Karpatenbecken vom 5-10, Jahrhundert. *AAHung*, 38/1986: 119, Fig. 1; *Tesori nazionali della*



*Croazia, Capolavori dei Musei di Zagabria. Arheološki muzej. Arezzo, 1991: 187, No.281; Arte e cultura in Croazia. Dalle collezioni del Museo Archeologico di Zagabria. Torino 1993: 187, Br. 281; Muzeopis 1846-1996. Zagreb, 1996: 130-131, No. 195).*

Plate 2

The position of Donji Petrovci on the road map of 1909. *Kilometričke karte i skrižaljke Kraljevina Hrvatske i Slavonije.* [Kilometer maps and tables of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia.] Zagreb, 1909: Gradjevni odsjek kr. hrv.-slav.-dalm. zemaljske vlade. [Department of Construction of the Royal Territorial Government of the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia.], map No. 65.

Plate 3

The position of Donji Petrovci on the 1:50.000 map of 1951, section 89,1 (Obrenovac; enlarged), with the find spot indicated (°).

Plate 4

The archaeological site at Donji Petrovci with the find spot indicated (°).

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Plate 1

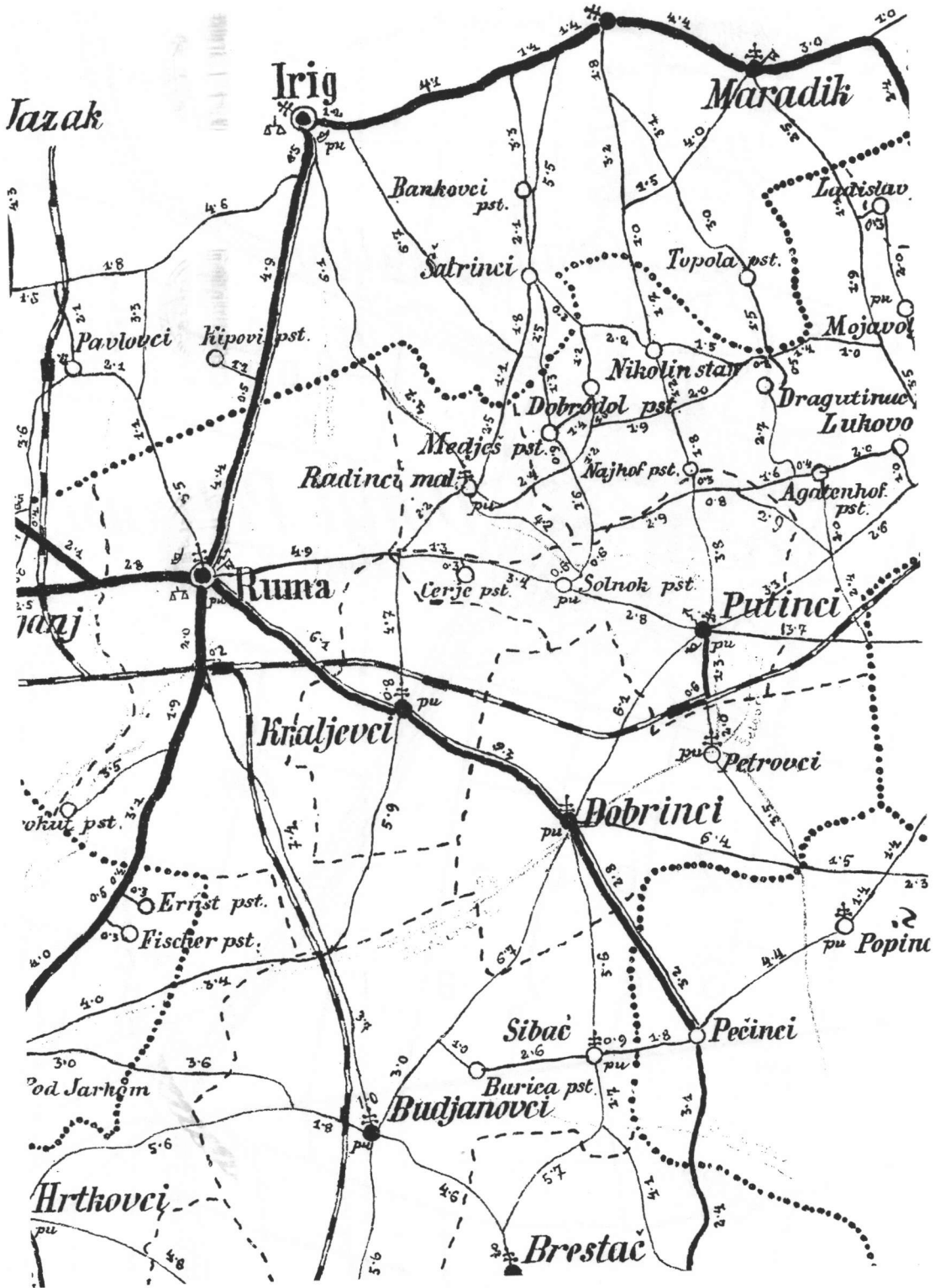


Plate 2

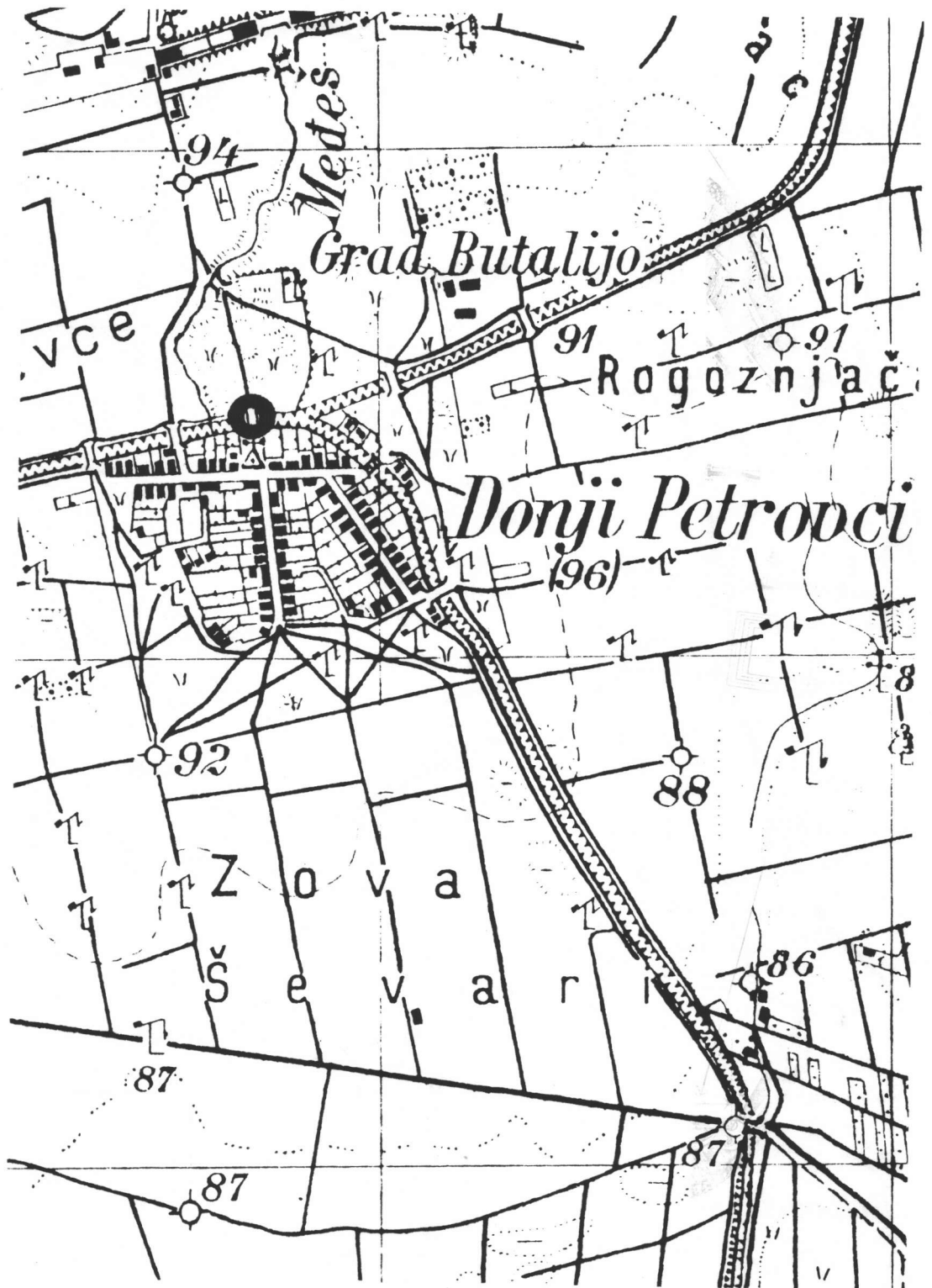


Plate 3

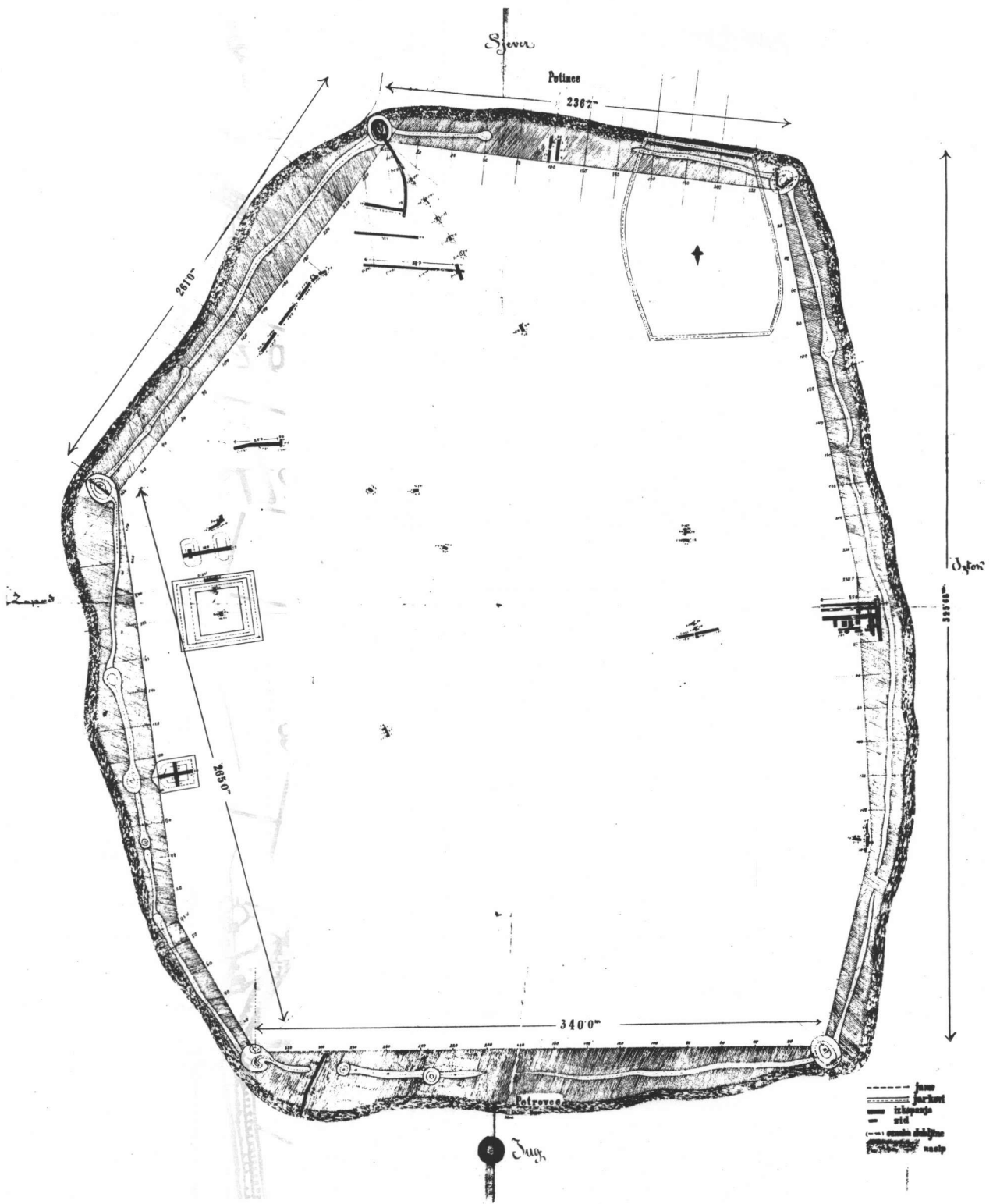


Plate 4

