

Small Tauriscan silver coins of the Varaždin type

Mali tavrski srebrniki tipa Varaždin

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Izveček

Avtor je zbral vso dokumentacijo o malih srebrnikih tipa Varaždin. Trinajst novcev je bilo mogoče uvrstiti v tri skupine, za vse pa je na sprednji in zadnji strani novca značilna upodobitev konja, ki v vseh podrobnostih ustreza upodobitvam konja na tetradrahmah. Prvi dve skupini ustrezata tetradrahmam skupine Varaždin A, medtem ko novci tretje skupine predstavljajo drobiž tetradrahem skupine Varaždin B. Samo za dva novca tretje skupine poznamo njihovo provenienco (Celje in Győr). Mali srebrniki kot dvanajstinski del velikih novcev so bili kovani istočasno s tetradrahmami ob koncu prve polovice 2. stoletja pr. Kr.

Ključne besede: mali srebrniki Tavriskov, novci tipa Varaždin, prva polovica 2. st. pr. Kr.

Abstract

The author has collected all relevant documentation about thirteen small silver Taurisci coins of the Varaždin type. It was possible to assign them to three groups. The depiction of the horse on both sides of the coin is characteristic for all groups. It matches in all details the depictions of horses on tetradrachms. Small silver coins of the first two groups correspond to tetradrachms of the Varaždin A group, and coins of the third group to tetradrachms of the Varaždin B group. The provenance is known only for two coins of the third group (Celje and Győr). The coins correspond to one third of a drachm or one twelfth of the large silver coin of that type. Small silver coins of the Varaždin type were minted at the end of the first half of the 2nd century BC.

Key words: small silver coins of the Taurisci, coins of the Varaždin type, 1st half of the 2nd cent. BC

We have argued elsewhere that small silver coins as change for tetradrachms were minted from the very beginning of coinage of the Norican ('Kugelreiter' type) and early types of Tauriscan tetradrachms (the Đurđevac type).¹

The same can also be claimed for tetradrachms of the Varaždin type in the early stages of Tauriscan coinage.² It was possible to collect evidence for thirteen specimens that can be identified as fractions of the Varaždin type tetradrachms.

¹ Kos 2013; 2015.

² For details on the VES and the Varaždin type tetradrachms, see Kos, Mirnik 2011; Kos 2012.

CATALOGUE



1.

Unknown provenance.
Overbeck 1996, 33; Abb. 24: 10.
*Staatliche Münzsammlung, München.**

*I am indebted to Kay Ehling for photos and data.



2.

Unknown provenance.
(Possibly northwestern Hungary). Bought online
in Hungary.
Unpublished.
*Private collection.**

* Photos and data were generously provided by
Igor Vojvoda (Ljubljana).



3.

Unknown provenance.
Dorotheum, Auktion 492, 14.–16. November 2000,
10, Nr. 19.
Private collection.



4.

Unknown provenance.
Kent, Mays (eds.) 1987, 67; cat. no. 171.*
The British Museum, Department of Coins & Medals.

*Photos were kindly provided by Ian Leins.

5.

Unknown provenance.

Allen 1972, 14; cat. no. 31; Pl. III: 31.

*Kungl. Myntkabinettet, Sveriges ekonomiska museum, Stockholm.**

*For the photo I am indebted to Ulrika Bornestaf.



6.

Unknown provenance.

Allen 1975–1977, 16; cat. no. 84; Pl. 7: 84.

*Geldmuseum, Utrecht, inv. no. 1946-0459.**

*I sincerely thank Paul Beliën for all relevant data. The former Utrecht Numismatic Collection is now managed by National Numismatic Collection of the De Nederlandsche Bank in Amsterdam.



7.

Unknown provenance.

Auktionshaus H. D. Rauch GmbH, Summer auction 2011 (19. 9. 2011), lot no. 27.

Private collection (Carinthia, Austria).

8.

Unknown provenance.

Ziehaus 2010, 220; no. 580 (ex Hauck & Aufhäuser, Auction 20 (16. 10. 2007), lot no. 14).

Private collection.



- 9.**
Unknown provenance.
Unpublished.
Private collection (Carinthia, Austria).



- 10.**
Unknown provenance.
Mackensen 1972. Dembski 1998, 93; no. 944.
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien, Münzkabinett,
inv. no. GR 785.*

*Klaus Vondrovec kindly procured photos and data for this publication.



- 11.**
Unknown provenance.
Unpublished.
Private collection (Carinthia, Austria).



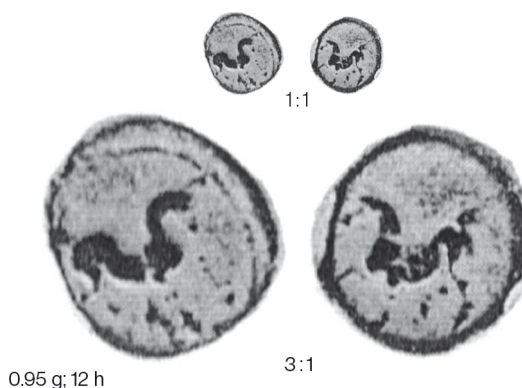
- 12.**
Provenance:
Celje – the Savinja River (Slovenia).
Unpublished.
Numizmatični kabinet Narodnega muzeja Slovenije,
inv. no. 51335

13.

Provenance:

vicinity of Győr (part of a hoard) (Hungary).

Haupt, Nick 1997, 71; Taf. 16: 25.

Private collection.**TYPOLOGY**

Small silver coins that can be qualified as fractions of tetradrachms of the Varaždin type can be divided into three groups.

First group

Six small silver coins are linked by the same characteristics, of which wavy line (crest ?) that runs from the upper part of the mane to the back of the horse pacing to the left is most evident (*Fig. 1*) and cannot be found on any reverse of the Tauriscan tetradrachms. Detailed analysis implies the use of a different obverse and reverse dies for the minting of the München specimen (cat. no. 1) than for the minting of other five coins. These seem to be minted with the same obverse and reverse dies. However, some details are apparent that require more careful scrutiny.

The London specimen (cat. no. 4) shows excellent execution of both dies. Its comparison with the specimens from Stockholm (cat. no. 5) and Utrecht (cat. no. 6) indicates, however, that the coins display some suspiciously identical characteristics that can never occur by minting different coins with the same die. Such consist, for example, of the identical shape of the coins as well as the same course of the circular pearl line and its distance from the edge on all three coins. Furthermore, the reliefs of the depictions on the Utrecht (acquired in 1946) and especially the Stockholm specimens are blurred to such an extent that could possibly point toward the conclusion that both coins are in fact casts of the London specimen, which most probably originated from the collection of George III, acquired in 1823.³

It is hard to believe that three flans of the exact same shape would be produced, and that the die would always be struck at exactly the same spot on the flan, which would consequently result in a matching course of the line of pearls on all three coins. Paul Beliën kindly checked the Utrecht coin once again and stated: 'It seems to be made of solid silver and there are no traces along the edge that would point to this coin being a cast'. However, he also was puzzled by the identical shape of the London and the Utrecht coin and the matching course of the pearl line. Ulrika Bornestaf, along with her colleague, kindly re-examined the coin in Stockholm and confirmed that it might be a cast copy.⁴

If our observations are correct there are only three silver coins of this type (München, London and private collection specimens) that can in fact be taken into consideration. Coins from the London and both private collections (cat. nos. 2, 3 and 4) were minted with the same obverse and reverse dies.

Overbeck attributed the München specimen to the group of coins of the Varaždin type.⁵ Allen defined the Utrecht specimen (at the time of the publication it was kept in the Hague collection) as 'a drachm corresponding to Warasdin hoard type'.⁶

The execution of the legs and hooves on the reverse of the München and London coins as well as on the specimen from a private collection reveals a strong similarity to the horse on the tetradrachms minted with reverse dies nos. 75 (*Fig. 1*), 80, 81 of the Varaždin A group.⁷ The sole difference is

⁴ I gratefully appreciate kind assistance of both colleagues.

⁵ Overbeck 1996, 33.

⁶ Allen 1975–1977, 16.

⁷ Göbl 1973, Taf. 19: 3–15.

³ Kent, Mays (eds.) 1987, 67.

First group / Prva skupina



1

Die no. 75
Pečat št. 75



2



3



4



5



6

Second group / Druga skupina



7



8



9

Die no. 77
Pečat št. 77



←

Fig. 1: Die comparison of small silver coins of the **first group** (cat. nos. 1–6) and tetradrachms reverse die no. 75 (Bp 6048: Kos, Mirnik 2010, 16; no. 1). – Die comparison of small silver coins of the **second group** (cat. nos. 7–9) and tetradrachms reverse die no. 77 (ZG 901: Kos, Mirnik 2011, 92; no. 4).

Scale = 3:1 (cat. nos. 1–9). Tetradrachms dies (nos. 75 and 77) enlarged.

Sl. 1: Primerjava pečatov malih srebrnikov **prve skupine** (kat. št. 1–6) in pečat št. 75 zadnje strani tetradrahme (Bp 6048: Kos, Mirnik 2010, 16; št. 1). – Primerjava pečatov malih srebrnikov **druge skupine** (kat. št. 7–9) in pečat št. 77 zadnje strani tetradrahme (ZG 901: Kos, Mirnik 2011, 92; št. 4).

M. = 3:1 (kat. št. 1–9). Pečata (št. 75 in 77) povečana.

that the right front leg of the horse is bent at a sharper angle than on the tetradrachms. The horse's head is also very similar to that represented on tetradrachm die no. 81.⁸

On this basis it can be assumed that this group of small silver coins are obviously fractures of tetradrachms of the Varaždin A group.

Second group

There are a further three coins that can also be attributed to the group of small coins of the Varaždin A type. As such all specimens were recognized by Ziegauš and in auction catalogues.⁹ On both sides a typical Varaždin type horse is depicted. The horse on the reverse shows the same position of legs as appears on the tetradrachm die no. 75 of the Varaždin A group (*Fig. 1*).¹⁰ Parts of the legs of a horse on the obverse are positioned similarly as on tetradrachms minted with die no. 77A of the Varaždin A group (*Fig. 1*).¹¹ The joints that link together separate legs are represented with small dots.

The blurred line above the back of the horse on the reverse occurred due to damage to a die rather than being intentionally engraved in the die.

All three coins were minted with the same obverse and reverse dies.

Third group

A small silver coin from Vienna (cat. no. 10) was first published by M. Mackensen who attributed it to the second phase of the Varaždin A group of tetradrachms.¹² R. Göbl embraced his



Fig. 2: Reverse comparison of small silver coin (cat. no. 10) of the **third group** and tetradrachm reverse die no. 82 (Wien 26.918: Kos, Mirnik 2011, 93, no. 9).

Scale = 3:1 (cat. no. 10). Tetradrachms die (no. 82) enlarged.

Sl. 2: Primerjava zadnje strani malega srebrnika (kat. št. 10) **tretje skupine** in pečata št. 82 zadnje strani tetradrahme (Wien 26.918: Kos, Mirnik 2011, 93, št. 9).

M. = 3:1 (kat. št. 10). Pečat (št. 82) povečan.

determination.¹³ G. Dembski, however, does not indicate the coin's attribution.¹⁴

The form of the horse's body, musculature, the positioning of the legs and the form of the hooves would rather indicate that the small silver coin corresponds to the group of tetradrachms of the Varaždin B group, die no. 82¹⁵ (*Fig. 2*).

The specimen from a private collection (cat. no. 11) is very worn but the main characteristics can still be discerned. It seems almost certain that the same obverse and reverse dies were utilized for the minting of both coins.

Both sides of the specimen from the Savinja River in Celje (cat. no. 12) are rather worn due to its finding site in the bed of the river; for that reason it has a rather low weight. However, a clear depiction of a horse can still be distinguished. The horse, pacing to the left, shows slim legs with elongated sickle-shaped hooves positioned

⁸ Göbl 1973, Taf. 19: 15.

⁹ See above, cat. nos. 7–9.

¹⁰ Göbl 1973, Taf. 19: 3,4.

¹¹ Göbl 1973, Taf. 19: 7,8.

¹² Mackensen 1972, 9.

¹³ Göbl 1973, 46.

¹⁴ Dembski 1998, 93.

¹⁵ Göbl 1973, Taf. 20: 1–9.



12

Die no. 84
Pečat št. 84

Fig. 3: Reverse comparison of small silver coin (cat. no. 12) of the **third group** and tetradrachm reverse die no. 84 (ZG 907: Kos, Mirnik 2010, 18, cat. no. 14). Scale = 3:1 (cat. no. 12). Tetradrachms die (no. 84) enlarged. Sl. 3: Primerjava zadnje strani malega srebrnika (kat. št. 12) tretje skupine in pečata št. 84 zadnje strani tetradrahme (ZG 907: Kos, Mirnik 2010, 18, kat. št. 14). M. = 3:1 (kat. št. 12). Pečat (št. 84) povečan.

in the same manner as on the reverse die no. 84 (Fig. 3) for minting tetradrachms of the Varaždin B type.¹⁶ The chest and hindquarters musculature substantiate this impression. The horse on the obverse, walking to the right, exhibits besides same constitution a typical horse's head as appearing on tetradrachms of the Varaždin B type.¹⁷ There, however, the horse is always oriented to the left. The mane is (contrary to the tetradrahms) always represented with pearl-like dots.

The photo of the specimen from the Győr hoard (cat. no. 13) is of a very poor quality due to the circumstances in which the hoard must have been documented. Still, its obverse and reverse reveal very strong similarities to the specimen from Celje and could even imply the use of the same obverse and reverse dies for minting both small silver coins.

To conclude: the minting of the first and second group of small silver coins can be related to the tetradrachms of the Varaždin A group, the small silver coins of the third group, however, represent fractions of tetradrachms of the Varaždin B group.

METROLOGY

Mackensen has already stated that the Vienna specimen represents one twelfth of a tetradrachm.¹⁸ The same was warily also assumed by D. Allen

for the Stockholm specimen.¹⁹ Göbl, on the other hand, was even more cautious and warned not to rush to conclusions without further more extensive evidence.²⁰

The weights of small silver coins of the Varaždin type are as follows:

First group

0.90 g
0.96 g
0.78 g
0.84 g
0.96 g (cast ?)
0.91 g (cast ?)

Second group

1.0 g
0.86 g
1.0 g

Third group

0.94 g
0.86 g (worn)
0.66 g (worn in the river bed)
0.95 g

The average weight of ten small silver coins (cat. nos. 5, 6 and 12 were not taken into consideration) of the Varaždin type amounts to 0.91 g. The average weight of thirteen tetradrachms of the Varaždin A type catalogued by Göbl (VES type excluded) amounts to 12.49 g.²¹ 12.69 g is the average weight of the three Varaždin A type specimens from the Varaždin hoard.²² The weight data for small silver coins of all three groups comply entirely with the assumption of Mackensen.

CHRONOLOGY

Small silver coins of the Varaždin A and B type must have without any doubt been minted simultaneously with tetradrachms of this type. Their minting followed the short-lasting coinage of tetradrachms with the Venetic inscription VES that commenced the Tauriscan coinage.²³ The minting of tetradrachms and their fractures should therefore

¹⁶ Göbl 1973, Taf. 20: 12.

¹⁷ Göbl 1973, Taf. 20.

¹⁸ Mackensen 1972, 8.

¹⁹ Allen 1972, 14.

²⁰ Göbl 1973, 46.

²¹ Göbl 1973, 126.

²² Kos, Mirnik 2011, 92.

²³ Kos, Mirnik 2011, 102; Kos 2012, 356.

be dated to the last decades of the first half of the second century BC.²⁴

According to the publishers, it seems certain that the hoard from the vicinity of Győr also contained small silver coin cat. no. 13. The hoard, of which only one third of its original composition could be documented, contained almost exclusively Eraviscan denarii dated between the end of the forties and the end of the thirties in the 1st century BC.²⁵ It was assumed that the coins had originally been kept in a purse that belonged to a traveller or a merchant.²⁶ Its loss could therefore have occurred even later. This could in principle determine the time when small silver coins of the Varaždin type could still be in circulation. Since the composition of the hoard (as well as the circumstances of the find) is not entirely clear (it should contain also Republican denarii)²⁷ the presence of a small silver coin of the Varaždin type in the purse must be taken into consideration with a considerable amount of scepticism. It is often argued that Tauriscan and Norican coins were in general mainly limited in their distribution and use to rather small areas,²⁸ although single finds can also be found in more distant areas, as is the case with tetradrachms of the Varaždin group.²⁹ The presence of this small

silver coin in the north-western part of modern Hungary therefore cannot be excluded. It is, however, hard to believe that the coin still had any function more than 100 years after its minting.

Appendix

When the volume had already been completed, I was informed that an additional specimen of a small silver coin (cat. no. 14) of this type had been acquired by a Slovenian coin collector.

14.

Provenance:
Hungary (?)
Unpublished
Private collection.



The coin corresponds to the second group of small silver coins of the Varaždin type (cat. nos. 7–9). Its obverse and reverse were executed with the same dies as the other three coins.

Translation: Barbara Smith Demo

²⁴ Kos, Mirnik 2011, 102.

²⁵ Haupt, Nick 1997, 64.

²⁶ Haupt, Nick 1997, 43.

²⁷ Haupt, Nick 1997, 42.

²⁸ See, for instance, the distribution of tetradrachms and small silver coins of the 'Kugelreiter' type: Kos 2010, 97; Kos 2013, 364–365.

²⁹ Kos, Mirnik 2011, 103–105.

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Mali tavrški srebrniki tipa Varaždin

Povzetek

Pri sistematičnem dokumentiranju zgodnjega drobiža keltskih Norikov in Tavriskov smo uspeli dokumentirati tudi 14 malih srebrnikov tipa Varaždin. V vseh primerih je na njihovi sprednji in zadnji strani upodobljen konj. Žal le za dva primerka poznamo najdiščne podatke. Male srebrnike tega tipa je mogoče razdeliti v tri skupine, ki tipološko in stilno odgovarjajo srebrnim tetradrahmam tipa Varaždin (poimenovanem po zakladni najdbi Škarje pri Križovljanu Radovečkem v bližini Varaždina). Mali srebrniki predstavljajo

dvanajstinski del tetradrahem, kovali pa so jih v zadnjih desetletjih prve polovice drugega stoletja pr. Kr. sočasno s tetradrahmami.

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