

Actium and the “Legionary” Coinage of Mark Antony. Historical, Economic and Monetary Consequences in Thrace (the Coin Evidence)

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[PLATES X-X]

Historical background

Balkans witnessed the final agony of the late Roman Republic in the aftermath of Caesar’s murder.¹ The naval battle off the Actium promontory on Southern Epirote coast on 2 September of 31 BC² was a turning point for the history of the Mediterranean. Though a civil conflict of Roman Republic, it soon took an international character, with Octavian fighting to maintain Rome’s independence and interests, threatened by Cleopatra VII, queen of Egypt, and her partner Mark Antony. The opposing armies were enormous: Octavian and his admiral Marcus Agrippa – with 75.000 legionaries, 25.000 light-armed infantrymen, 12.000 cavalry, 3.000 archers and over 400 warships; and Antony – with 23 legions (strength *ca* 115.000 men), numerous auxiliary troops, 12.000 cavalry, 2.000 archers as well as a combined Roman-Egyptian fleet of over 230 warships.³ Ground military operations between the rival forces took place in the Gulf of Ambracia and around Actium. The campaign lasted more than a year, up to the eve of the final naval engagement. Meanwhile, a number of allied kings and troops participated on Antony’s side, for example Bactrians, Galatians, Egyptians, people of Cyrenaica and other nations (*variis Antonius armis*).⁴ Moreover, Thracian allies and mercenaries were also involved in the land operations in large numbers, all without real fight. Days before the battle, Rhoemetaces I, the Sapaeian king of Thrace, along with

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¹ Cf. Wilkes 1996, p. 549; more recently, *eiusdem* 2005, pp. 137-140, n. 38-42.

² D.C., *Roman History* 50.32-35; Syme 1960², pp. 294-298; Carter 1970, pp. 227ff.; Tarn 1979, pp. 100-105; for the site, see Chrysostomou – Kefallonitou 2005, pp. 6-10.

³ Plu., *Ant.* 61.1.

⁴ Plu., *Ant.* 61.1-2; D.C. 50.6.5.

his own cavalry force, deserted Antony and went to Octavian.⁵ Dicoes, chieftain of the Getae,⁶ promised large force to Antony, but his men never appeared at the battlefield. Antony himself, faced desertion en masse, was advised by his commanding general P. Canidius Crassus to retreat north to Thrace and Macedonia, to seek an issue there with the help of barbarian allies.⁷

As expected, the consequences of all these events (political and diplomatic) had a severe impact on the economic and monetary patterns in Greece, Macedonia and the areas further north. In the Thracian lands abundant archaeological artefacts (coins, jewelry, valuables, etc.) largely supplement extant historical evidence. Bearing this in mind we would like to add here new evidence concerning this dynamic period and throw a fresh light on some aspects on the monetary circulation in the area.

The specific reason for this paper is a new hoard containing coins and jewelry pieces found by chance in Northwestern Thrace, documented recently by the authors. It is a direct evidence for the dramatic historical events in the late Roman Republic. In fact, this article focuses on the monetary, economic and historical consequences after Actium – mainly in the territory of the Balkans and ancient Thrace (between the Danube and Aegean). Moreover, this text also aims to point out the specifics of the coin mass in Thrace during the 1st c. BC and its monetary reflections. It discusses mainly the period 40-20’s BC, or not long before the transformation of these territories into regular Roman provinces.⁸

Numismatic history

During the entire campaign, in order to pay salaries for his huge army for an extended period (almost 2 calendar years), Mark Antony organized a large-scale coinage. It is now widely known as “legionary”⁹ – millions of silver *denarii*,¹⁰ and a limited quantity of gold *aurei*.¹¹ Their production is localized by the numismatists at different places: in Ephesus,¹² then within movable/traveling mints in Greece, or as recently assumed, at the Antony’s winter headquarters at Patrae in Achaea. “Legionary” coinage is strictly dated between the late autumn of 32 and the spring/summer of 31 BC.¹³ Coins feature a uniform design: praetorian galley with rowers on the obverse (ANT AVG – III VIR R P C [*Antonius augur triumvir rei publicae constituendae*]) and on the reverse a legionary eagle (*aquila*) between two army standards, naming below twenty three legions (LEG PRI [*legio prima*] to LEG XXIII [*legio vicensima tertia*]),¹⁴ serving under Mark Antony.¹⁵ Three of these types por-

⁵ These politics guaranteed him a long and prosperous rule over Thrace after 31 BC; cf. D.C. 50.13.8ff.

⁶ Plu., *Ant.* 63.4; D.C. 51.22; Flor. 4.12.18.

⁷ Plu., *Ant.* 63.3; Syme 1960², p. 296.

⁸ For the establishment and early history of Moesia, see Syme 1999, pp. 193-220.

⁹ *CRI*, pp. 229-236.

¹⁰ *RRC* 544/8-39.

¹¹ *RRC* 544/1-7.

¹² *BMCRR (East)*, p. 526, n. 1.

¹³ *RRC*, p. 102.

¹⁴ For the types: *RRC* 544/13-39 and p. 743; *CRI* 348-383.

¹⁵ Grant 1954, p. 200; Hill 1976, pp. 123-124; Brunt 1987, pp. 504-505 (for the numbers of Antonian legions).

tray additional legends, the number and name of a legion, as well as special units like the Antony's personal *Praetorian guard cohort* (C[O]HORTIVM PRAETORIARVM)¹⁶ and the reconnaissance squadron (c[o]horTIs SpecVlatorVm).¹⁷ It was an extremely large issue estimated in numismatic research at an immense number of 864 coin dies.¹⁸ The amount of legionary *denarii* struck vary between 25 million (Crawford)¹⁹ and 35 million (Harl).²⁰

The very first measure Octavian took after the battle at Actium was to capture the Antonian camp and his wartime treasury (both on land and at sea aboard ships).²¹ There he received the capitulation of Antony's fleeing legions and disbanded the soldiers. They soon received a share in the colonial assignments²² and payment of their accumulated wages in cash. This way, major portions of Antony's "legionary" coinage, issued in enormous quantities and disbursed to veterans, had been filtered and transferred via Epirus and Thessaly to Macedonia, Thrace and further north to Dacia,²³ where subsequently concealed.²⁴ Antony's coins circulated for long alongside with the new Imperial *denarii*. Despite their debased²⁵ silver standard (between 87.5-92%),²⁶ millions of "legionary" *denarii* were not withdrawn under Augustus, but continued to circulate in the Roman Mediterranean thereafter.²⁷ They were accepted as legal tender of payment for a very long time after minted.²⁸ Overall in later Imperial provinces, the highest number of Antony's "legionary" *denarii* was found in the Danubian zone.²⁹

Numismatic evidence in Thrace

In order to have a better idea of the monetary circulation in the area under study (namely Macedonia³⁰ and Thrace), let us examine the most common coin types from the middle of the 2nd to the end of the 1st c. BC.³¹

The majority of coins in circulation on the Balkans were in their essence coins of a pure Hellenistic type with legends in Greek. Identified according to the statistic database for both regions in Thrace they can be listed as follows:

¹⁶ *RRC* 544/8; *CRI* 385.

¹⁷ *RRC* 544/12; *CRI* 386.

¹⁸ *RRC*, table 50, pp. 699-671.

¹⁹ See *supra* n. 18.

²⁰ Harl 1996, p. 60.

²¹ D.C. 51.3ff.; Plu., *Ant.* 67.8; see now, Dillon 2007, pp. 41-43.

²² Hygin., *De limit. const.* p. 177; quoted after Syme 1960², p. 297, n. 2.

²³ For Dacia in this period, see Winkler 1967, pp. 123-156; Rodewald 1976, pp. 40-45; Crawford 1977, pp. 117-124; Chițescu 1981, *passim*; Lockyear 1996, pp. 227-229; recently, Lockyear 2007.

²⁴ Cf. below table 2 and following discussion.

²⁵ Plin., *HN* 33.46: *Miscuit denario triumvir Antonius ferrum.*

²⁶ Walker 1980, pp. 68, 72, fig. 11; Howgego 1995, p. 118.

²⁷ *RRCH*, p. 42; Crawford 1974, p. 247.

²⁸ "Legionary" *denarii* were first withdrawn under Trajan in 106/107 AD, and again later during the joint reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, ca 169 AD. At this time, exactly 200 years later both emperors commemorated the series with a restored issue for *legio VI Ferrata* (*RIC* III, 443), reminding the original issue.

²⁹ Duncan-Jones 1998², pp. 196-196, table 14.1.

³⁰ For ancient Macedonia, see Touratsoglou 1987, pp. 53-67, esp. p. 54; *eiusdem* 1993, esp. pp. 41, 43.

³¹ Further discussion, Prokopov 2000b, pp. 375-386 and *eiusdem* 2009, pp. 247-253.

Southern Thrace:³²

1. Roman Republican *denarii* – ca 7.500 coins³³ [= 7.500 silver units³⁴ = 49%].
2. Tetradrachms of Thasos, including the “Thasian type”³⁵ – >3.000 coins [= 12.000 units = 20%].
3. Athenian “New Style” tetradrachms³⁶ – ca 1.150 coins [= 4.600 units = 8%].
4. Silver tetradrachms and bronzes of Maroneia³⁷ – ca 1.300 coins [= ca 3.900 units = 8%].
5. Tetradrachms with the name of *quaestor* Aesillas³⁸ – ca 260 coins [= 1.040 units].
6. Tetradrachms of Mesembria of Alexander type³⁹ – ca 210 coins [= 840 units].
7. Tetradrachms of Odessus of Alexander type⁴⁰ – ca 200 coins [= 800 units].
8. Tetradrachms of the First Macedonian Region⁴¹ (and local imitations) – ca 270 coins [= 1.080 units].
9. Posthumous Lysimachi tetradrachms of Byzantium and Chalchedon⁴² – ca 150 coins [= 600 units].
10. Autonomous Macedonian bronze coins – ca 1.100 coins.
11. Late Thracian royal coins – ca 200 coins.
12. Drachms of Dyrrhachium and Apollonia in Illyria – ca 20 coins [= 20 units].
13. *Cistophori* (Ephesus/Pergamum) – 6 coins [= 18 units]. [Graph chart 1]

Northern Thrace (later Moesia inferior):⁴³

1. Roman Republican *denarii* – ca 14.500 coins⁴⁴ [= 14.500 units = 53%].
2. Tetradrachms of Thasos and “Thasian type” – ca 4.000 coins [= 16.000 units = 15%].
3. Drachms of Dyrrhachium and Apollonia⁴⁵ – ca 5.000 coins [= 5.000 units = 18%].
4. Tetradrachms of the Macedonian Regions (First and Second) and their imitations – ca 3.100 [= 12.400 units = 11%].
5. Tetradrachms of Mesembria and Odessus of Alexander type (“Mithridatic issues”)⁴⁶ – ca 500 coins [= 2.000 units].
6. Silver tetradrachms of Maroneia – ca 100 coins.
7. Celtic or “Danubian” drachms – ca 300 coins [= 300 units].

³² Data and quantities are based on the Bulgarian reports of coin hoards (ca 1900-1982), *IGCH* and *CH* and own sources and they include about 100 coin hoards.

³³ *IRRCHBg*, p. 96, table 3, as well as new hoards appeared after 2001.

³⁴ All calculations are based on the ratio: 1 unit = 1 *denarius* = 1 drachm; 1 Attic tetradrachm = 4 *denarii*.

³⁵ Prokopov 2006, pp. 291-292.

³⁶ Thompson 1961, pp. 32-391.

³⁷ Schönert-Geiss 1987, pp. 64-75.

³⁸ Bauslaugh 2000, pp. 31-71.

³⁹ Karayotov 1994, pp. 13-133, pl. 1-44; de Callataÿ 1997, pp. 92-108, 111-119, pls. 27-31.

⁴⁰ de Callataÿ 1997, pp. 84-91, 108-111, pls. 21-27.

⁴¹ Prokopov 1994, as well as the updated second edition, *eiusdem* (in print a).

⁴² Marinescu (in print).

⁴³ Data are based on the Bulgarian reports of coin hoards, *IGCH* and *CH* and covers more than 150 hoards.

⁴⁴ *IRRCHBg*, p. 95, table 2 and new hoards discovered since 2001.

⁴⁵ See now, Grigorova – Prokopov 2002, pp. 651-679.

⁴⁶ de Callataÿ 1994, pp. 300-342; *eiusdem* 1997, pp. 84-108, pls. 21-31.

8. “Dacian” imitations of Roman Republican *denarii* – ca 30 coins⁴⁷ [= 30 units].
9. Athenian “New Style” tetradrachms – ca 25 coins [= 100 units].
10. *Cistophori* (Ephesus [?]) – 6 coins [= 18 units]. [= > Graph chart 2]

“Invasion” of the “Roman” money towards Thrace started immediately after the collapse of the Macedonian kingdom in 167 BC. Regardless of what may be expected, the infiltration did not start with Republican coins. Initially, the tetradrachms of Thasos, Maroneia and Macedonian Regions were coins commissioned and produced by the Roman provincial administration. They were the very first and the most popular coin type in Thrace (the territory of modern Bulgaria and Southern Romania), during the period from 167-148 BC to the end of the 2nd c. BC. Most of the hoards from the period in question are homogenous, containing Thasian tetradrachms only.⁴⁸

Apart from the Republican *denarii*, only the tetradrachms of the *quaestor* of Macedonia, Aesillas, resemble in a way the coinage of Rome. Nevertheless, a large portion of the remaining coins mentioned above was actually *Roman*, although they display the characteristic iconography and legends of the late Hellenistic coins. Moreover, they were minted in accordance to the Roman standard and were means of establishing strategic goals of the Roman invasion in the Balkans. Only a small amount of coins in circulation were either ordered or produced by Rome’s enemies (e.g. the series of Mithridates Eupator), or turned up in circulation there by chance.

The supply of Roman Republican *denarii* to Thrace starts no earlier than the first decade of the 1st c. BC.⁴⁹ Earlier *denarii* of the 2nd c. BC were part of those prefabricated shipments of coins, before they arrive in mass quantities in the Balkans. This fact accounts for the traces of prolonged circulation on earlier issues.

The distribution of hoards shows that almost no Athenian “New Style” tetradrachms and tetradrachms of Aesillas appear in the region north of Haemus (later province of Moesia). In contrast, there is abundance of drachms of Dyrrhachium and Apollonia in Illyria. A number of Celtic silver imitations also appear there. Picture shows almost complete replacing of the two types of tetradrachms. We have in mind the segment occupied by the Athenian “New Style” tetradrachms in Southern Bulgaria and the tetradrachms of the First Macedonian Region in the North. These two types of coins rank second in volume and availability after the Thasos tetradrachms and are separated on both sides of Haemus without being mixed together. The limited number of the First Macedonian Region coins circulated in Southern Thrace for a very long time. They belong to some late hoards from the middle of the 1st c. BC. That is why we believe they are not in contradiction to the conclusion that these two types are almost entirely separated on both sides of Haemus range. Very interesting feature is the analysis of the availability and the movement of the Thasian coins. Although in their outer appearance the original tetradrachms of Thasos and the tetradrachms of the “Thasian type” are difficult to tell apart, and to those who are not that experienced they look the same, it can be stated for sure that they are different in origin.

⁴⁷ See recently, Davis 2006, pp. 321-356 and his website: <http://rrimitations.ancients.info/index.html>.

⁴⁸ A full list of known hoards in Prokopov 2006, pp. 215-266.

⁴⁹ *IRRCHBg*, pp. 89-92.

During the decade 44/42-31 BC visible changes in the appearance and supply of *denarii* occurred in Thrace. A snapshot of the monetary circulation in this period shows approximately the following details:

Southern Thrace:

1. Imitations of late Thasian tetradrachms⁵⁰ – ca 1.200 coins
2. Imitations of autonomous Macedonian bronzes⁵¹ – ca 3.000 coins
3. Roman Republican *denarii* – ca 1.200 coins

Northern Thrace (Moesia):

1. Imitations of late Thasian tetradrachms – ca 1.000 coins
2. Other types of imitations – ca 200 coins
3. Roman Republican *denarii* – ca 2.100 coins

The devastating confrontation between Octavian and Antony had resulted in the battle at Actium off the Adriatic coast. The following events, the final victory of Octavian in Egypt in 30 BC and its outcomes established new economic and monetary conditions over the Eastern Mediterranean.⁵² Former marginal positions of the *denarius* were finally overtaken and it soon dominated local markets and international transactions. Achaëa, Macedonia and the entire Balkan region experienced the same trend. In practice, shortly after 32/30 BC, the heavier coins of earlier Hellenistic type, so popular in the region for the last couple of centuries, were gradually withdrawn and demonetised. Commercial exchange transactions in drachms were no longer effective. *Denarius* instead was equalized to the lightest Hellenistic denomination, the Rhodian-weight drachm (2.80-3.00 g).⁵³ In a transaction, one Attic standard tetradrachm was equivalent of four *denarii*,⁵⁴ thus instantly leading to owner's loss.

However, the market needs and “customers” in Thracian area had quickly reacted, by producing local imitations of popular late Hellenistic tetradrachms, most of all the type of late “Thasian” tetradrachms.⁵⁵ Analysis of hoards shows they tend to circulate no later than the last decade of the 1st c. BC.⁵⁶

The hoard evidence

At present, of the total of about 150 Republican hoards known from the territory of modern Bulgaria, we are aware of some 17 deposits closing with Antony's “legionary” *denarii* or other contemporary Roman coins. Their concealment/loss dates should be therefore set around the time of the Actium engagement and its political results.

⁵⁰ Lukanc 1996, pp. 77-119; see now Prokopov (in print b).

⁵¹ Prokopov 2000a, pp. 369-377.

⁵² Crawford 1985, pp. 254-255, App. 55.

⁵³ Ashton 2001, p. 89.

⁵⁴ Crawford 1973, p. 7.

⁵⁵ Lukanc 1996, pp. 77-119.

⁵⁶ As shown by Prokopov 2006, p. 229, no. 93 (Dolno Botevo and other hoards).

Hoard/Date	Region	Reference (<i>RRCH</i> / <i>IRRCHBg</i>)	Latest issue (<i>RRC</i> , <i>RIC</i> I ²)	Closing date	Number of coins/ <i>denarii</i>
1. Altimir 1956	Vratsa	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 1	<i>Antonia</i> (?), 42-32/31 BC	ca 35-31 BC	30+/30
2. Aprilovo I, 1951	Targovishte	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 2	<i>Antonia</i> (?), 42-32/31 BC	ca 35-31 BC	ca 110/110
3. Baurene 1965	Vratsa	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 4	1 d. – <i>Antonia</i> (?), 42-32/31 BC	ca 38-31 BC	330/330
4. Mihaylovo 1910 ⁵⁸ (= Dolna Gnoynitsa)	Vratsa	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 11	1 d. – 544/24 (LEG X)	ca 31/30 BC (or later)	ca 1000/23 examined
5. Makotsevo 1910 ⁵⁹	Sofia	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 41	1 d. – 544/15 (LEG III)	ca 31/30 BC	46/46
6. Mogila 1972	Shumen	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 43	1 d. – 544/19 (LEG VI)	ca 31/30 BC	89/88
7. Ognyanovo 1980's	Blagoevgrad	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 45	3 d. – 544/15 (LEG III)	ca 31/30 BC	5+/5
8. Ohoden 1943	Vratsa	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 47	13 D. – 544/12 (COH SPEC); 15 (LEG III?); 19 (LEG VI); 20 (LEG VII)-2; (LEG I[.]?) -1; 21 (LEG VIII)-2; 25 (LEG XI); 27 (LEG XIII); 31 (LEG XVI)	31/30 BC (or later)	277+/277
9. Teteven 1995	Lovech	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 67	1 d. – 543	ca 32 BC	12/12
10. Gradeshnitsa I, 1962	Vratsa	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 104	1 d. – 544/36 (LEG XX)	ca 31/30 BC	9+/6
11. Moravitsa 1956	Vratsa	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 119	1 d. – 544/14 (LEG II)	ca 31/30 BC	Many/13+/9
12. Rassovo I, 1921	Montana	<i>IGCH</i> 688 = <i>IRRCHBg</i> 124	Unknown number of d. – 544/(?)	ca 31/30 BC	340/?
13. “Eastern Thrace” 1941/4 ⁶⁰	Northern Greece (?)	Unpublished	1 d. – 544/23 (LEG IX)	ca 31/30 BC	16+/16
14. “Thrace/ <i>FIB</i> -2” 2003 ⁶¹	Unknown	Unpublished	6 d. – 544 (LEG II, V, X, X[...], AND XXI)	ca 31/30 BC	23+/23
15. Medkovets 1980	Montana	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 117	10 d. – M. Antony 544/17, 20(3), 26, 30, 33, 35(2), 36 (LEG V, VII, X, XIX AND XX) 1 – Octavian, 29/27 BC (<i>RIC</i> I ² , 272)	ca 29-27 BC	86/82
16. Gradeshnitsa II, 1972	Vratsa	<i>IRRCHBg</i> 26	1 – Octavian, 30-29 BC (<i>RIC</i> I ² , 274)	ca 30/29 BC	68+/67
17. Topolovo 1961	Plovdiv	<i>RRCH</i> 457 = <i>IRRCHBg</i> 131	4 d. – Octavian (<i>RIC</i> I ² , 253 (1); 267 (2) and 269a (1))	ca 30/29 BC	170/130

Table 1: *Denarii* hoards from Bulgaria closing with issues of M. Antony and Octavian, 32/31-29/27 BC⁵⁷

⁵⁷ In comparison, the most recent and comprehensive study on Republican hoards in Europe includes no hoards from Thrace from this period, see Lockyear 2007, pp. 136-137, table 5.23.

⁵⁸ National Archaeological Institute and Museum, Sofia, Inv. nos XII/1910 – only 12 coins. Unpublished properly since 1910, data are now available for analysis and publication courtesy of the new director Prof. Dr. M. Vaklinova.

⁵⁹ National Archaeological Institute and Museum, Sofia, Inv. nos XVI/2870-2888. Unpublished properly so far, data are available for analysis courtesy of the new director Prof. Dr. M. Vaklinova.

⁶⁰ Unpublished, apparently a fragment of a larger hoard. Now kept in the Regional Historical Museum of Russe, Inv. nos 1421-1437. Information kindly supplied by Prof. Dr. Dimitar Draganov.

⁶¹ Unpublished, recorded by Dr. I. Prokopov in Sofia, June 2003.

As one can notice, the hoards from Thrace are relatively small in size.⁶² These 17 hoards had produced a total number of *ca* 1.800 coins. Only about 60 of them (*ca* 3.5%) are “legionary” *denarii*. One of the possible reasons for this small number is that Antony’s issues continued to circulate for long and were not heavily hoarded. Most of the listed hoards show “archaic” structure of accumulation, with numerous *denarii* from the period *ca* 110–80’s BC.

Territorial distribution follows the pattern of hoarding predominantly concentrated in the region of Moesia, north of Haemus (12 out of 17).

Three hoards are closing with Octavian’s *denarii* of 30–29/27 BC, thus their concealment should be slightly later.

Province/ country	Hoards	Reference (<i>RRCH</i> , <i>IGCH</i> , <i>CH</i> , etc.)	Total coins/ <i>denarii</i>	Number of extant hoards
<i>Achaea</i> (Greece and islands)	Delos 1905 ⁵	<i>RRCH</i> 465 = Lockyear 2007, no. 380	650/648	5
	Porto Bouthallo, Eubœa 1948 ⁶	<i>RRCH</i> 467	97/97	
	Preveza = Actium 1958	<i>RRCH</i> 473 = Lockyear 2007, no. 374	41/38	
	Pantocrator/Actium 1982 ⁷	<i>CH</i> VII (1985), 226	124+/122	
<i>Dacia</i> (Romania)	Corfu/Korkyra	Lockyear 2007, no. 378	28/28	10
	Bethlen = Beclean 1903	<i>RRCH</i> 449	33/28	
	Valachia Mică 1933	<i>RRCH</i> 454; Lockyear 2007, no. 407	17/17	
	Șeica Mică 1954	<i>RRCH</i> 456; Lockyear 2007, no. 404	348/348	
	Pietroasele 1940	<i>RRCH</i> 472	3/1	
	Roșiori de Vede 1965	<i>RRCH</i> 474; Lockyear 2007, no. 387	6/6	
	Costinești	Lockyear 2007, no. 379	17/17	
	Gura Padinii	Lockyear 2007, no. 383	234/232	
	Obislav (Dâmbovița)	Lockyear 2007, no. 386	53/53	
	Deva	Lockyear 2007, no. 381	146/2	
Breasta	Lockyear 2007, no. 377	11/11		
<i>Italia</i> (Italy) ⁸	Belmonte de Sannio	<i>RRCH</i> 460; Lockyear 2007, no. 375	54/54	10
	Este 1884	<i>RRCH</i> 466; Lockyear 2007, no. 398	74/71	
	Moggio 1858	<i>RRCH</i> 470; Lockyear 2007, no. 384	149/69	
	Vigatto 1969	<i>RRCH</i> 475; Lockyear 2007, no. 408	742/740	
	“West Sicily” 1915	<i>RRCH</i> 477; Lockyear 2007, no. 389	26/26	
	Cerriolo 1821	<i>RRCH</i> 478; Lockyear 2007, no. 397	40/38	
	Maleo 1941	<i>RRCH</i> 480; Lockyear 2007, no. 391	78/65	
	Méolo 1973	Lockyear 2007, no. 401	515/510	
	“Italy” 1990s	Lockyear 2007, no. 373	528/527	
	Cologna Veneta	Lockyear 2007, no. 409	108/106	
<i>Dalmatia</i> – <i>Illyria</i> (Slovenia, Croatia)	Celje 1895	<i>RRCH</i> 462	24/24	2
	Gajine 1899	<i>RRCH</i> 479; Lockyear 2007, no. 399	107/93	
<i>Gallia</i> (France)	Segonzac 1897	<i>RRCH</i> 453; Lockyear 2007, no. 388	7/7	6
	Amiens 1908	<i>RRCH</i> 458	120/117	
	Beauvoisin	<i>RRCH</i> 459; Lockyear 2007, no. 395	246/195	
	Chantenay 1861	<i>RRCH</i> 461	588/177	

⁶² As already recorded in the Dacian hoards, cf. Lockyear 1996, p. 227.

	Mont-Beauvray, Bibracte 1894	RRCH 471	44/33	
	Fos-sur-mer, <1898	RRCH 450	110/93	
Noricum – Raetia (Austria, Switzerland)	Lampersberg 1956	RRCH 468; Lockyear 2007, no. 400	56/56	2
	Vidy = Lausanne 1945	RRCH 482	45/45	
Germania (Germany)	Niederlangen 1884	RRCH 452; Lockyear 2007, no. 402	62/62	3
	Stühlingen	RRCH 481; Lockyear 2007, no. 405	15/14	
	Kempton-Lindenberg	RRCH 451	12/12	
Hispania – Lusitania (Spain, Portugal)	Citânia de Sanfins 1950	RRCH 463; Lockyear 2007, no. 404	288/288	6
	Cortijo El Álamo 1957	RRCH 464; Lockyear 2007, no. 394	131/121	
	Mertola 1958	RRCH 469	1000/132	
	Guiães 1986	Lockyear 2007, no. 382	10/10	
	Castro de Alvarelhos 1978	Lockyear 2007, no. 396	3554/3547	
	Monte Mozinho	Lockyear 2007, no. 385	4/4	
Britannia (Britain)	Weston 1852	RRCH 476; Lockyear 2007, no. 390	303/3	1
Armenia (Armenia)	Sarnakunk 1945	RRCH 455	178/95	1
Moesia – Thrace (Bulgaria)	(see Table 1, above)			17

Table 2: Overall distribution of *denarii* hoards deposited ca 32/31-29 BC (per province)

Further evidence: a new hoard from Moesia

A recently discovered hoard containing 67 *denarii* and couple of silver pieces of jewellery is also included in this article for the sake of discussion and comparison. Not surprisingly, again it originates from the Vratsa district in Northwestern Bulgaria, an area abundant of coin deposits.⁶⁷ Found in 2006 somewhere not far from an ancient road in Haemus (near the Petrohan pass), it is now part of a private collection. Apart from coins, the hoard consists of a pair of massive silver bracelets (**fig. 2a-b**; weight 112 and 117 g, respectively) and a torque of twisted silver wire (**fig. 3**) decorated with three strung spiral rings (finger-rings [?]; weight ca 60 g).⁶⁸ The torque seems to be deliberately squeezed to fit into a container. Bracelets (bearing traces of prolonged use) of this type are usually interpreted as Roman armlets (*armillae*)⁶⁹ – military decorations of soldiers rewarded for bravery or simply who took part in a campaign.⁷⁰

⁶³ See now, Papageorgiadou-Bani 2003, pp. 291-306, pl. 13-39.

⁶⁴ Tsourti – Papageorgiadou-Bani 1996, pp. 161-176.

⁶⁵ Chrysostomou 1987, pp. 23-56.

⁶⁶ For the Italian hoards closing in 31-29/27 BC, see also Dillon 2007, pp. 39-41.

⁶⁷ *IRRCHB*g, pp. 9-10 and 93-95; for the region, see in general Theodossiev 2000, *passim*.

⁶⁸ Similar torques from East Serbia, cf. hoards from Bara and Tekija (*Transdierna*) of jewellery and coins (both Flavian); see Popović – Borič-Bresković 1994; Jaskanis 1994, p. 190, no. 36.

⁶⁹ Cf. Liv. 10.44; Smith 1857, pp. 95-96.

⁷⁰ Maxfield 1981, pp. 88-89.

Coin no.	Moneyer/issuer	RRC no.	Date	Number of coins
1.	P. CREPUSIUS	361/1c	82 BC	1
2.	C. NAEVIUS BALBUS	382/1b	79 BC	2
3.	L. FARSULEIUS MENSOR	392/1a	75 BC	2
4.	CN. CORNELIUS LENTULUS	393/1a	76/75 BC	1
5.	C. POSTUMIUS	394/1a	74 BC	1
6.	Q. FUFIVS CALENUS/MUCIVS CORDVS	403/1	70 BC	1
7.	C. HOSIDIUS GETA	407/2	68 BC	1
8.	M. PLAETORIUS CESTIANUS (AED. CVR.)	409/2	67 BC	2
9.	L. FURIUS CN.F. BROCCIVS	414/1	63 BC	1
10.	L. AEMILIVS LEPIDVS PAVLLVS	415/1	62 BC	1
11.	L. SCRIBONIUS LIBO	416/1b	62 BC	2
12.	L. MARCIUS PHILIPPVS	425/1	56 BC	2
13.	Q. CASSIVS LONGINVS	428/3	55 BC	1
14.	M. IUNIUS BRVTVS	433/1; 2	54 BC	2
15.	Q. POMPEIVS RVFVS	434/2	54 BC	2
16.	Q. SICINIUS	440/1	49 BC	2
17.	MAN. ACILIVS GLABRIO	442/1a; 1b	49 BC	2
18.	C. IVLIVS CAESAR	443/1	49/48 BC	2
19.	Q. SICINIUS/C. COPONIUS	444/1 a	49 BC	2
20.	L. HOSTILIVS SASERNA	448/1a	48 BC	1
21.	C. VIBIVS C.F. C.N. PANSA CAETRONIANVS	449/1a; 2	48 BC	2
22.	C. IVLIVS CAESAR	452/2	48/47 BC	1
23.	A. PLAVTIVS PLANCVS	453/1a	47 BC	2
24.	C. IVLIVS CAESAR	458/1	47/46 BC	2
25.	MN. CORDIVS RVFVS	463/1b – (2); 2 – (1); 3 – (2)	46 BC	5
26.	T. CARISIUS	464/1	46 BC	1
27.	LOLLIVS PALICANVS	473/2b	45 BC	1
28.	L. VALERIVS ACISCVLVS	474/2b	45 BC	1
29.	C. IVLIVS CAESAR/M. METTIUS	480/3	45 BC	2
30.	L. LIVINEIVS REGULVS	494/27; 28	42 BC	2
31.	P. CLODIUS M. F. TVRRINVS	494/23	42 BC	2 (plated)
32.	C. VIBIVS VARVS	494/36	42 BC	2
33.	CAESAR OCTAVIANVS IIIVIR	497/3	42 BC	1
34.	M. IUNIUS (Q. CAEPIO) BRVTVS	501/1	43/42 BC	1
35.	MARCVS ANTONIVS/CAESAR OCTAVIANVS	517/2	41 BC	5
36.	T. SEMPRONIUS GRACCHVS IIIVIR	525/4	40 BC, or later	1
37.	Q. VOCONIVS VITVLVS Q. DESIGN.	526/2	40 BC, or later	1
38.	MARCVS ANTONIVS M.F. M.N. IIIVIR	533/2	38 BC	2
39.	MARCVS ANTONIVS/CLEOPATRA REGINA	543/1	32 BC	2
TOTAL:				67

Table 3: Contents of the “Vratsa Region 2006” hoard

Two *denarii* in this hoard are apparently silver-plated (*fouurrées*). They were struck in the name of P. Clodius M. f. Turrinus, IIIVir,⁷¹ dated to 42 BC.⁷² Though they appear genuine in style, coins were struck with cores made of yellowish lead-based alloy (fig. 4), being unofficial forgeries.⁷³

The latest coins are 2 portrait *denarii* of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, *Armenia Devicta* type, struck in 32 BC.⁷⁴ Most of the coins in this hoard were never in circulation and concealed shortly after their production. At a careful examination, it appears that dies used for striking of latest coins were quite worn, thus the coin surface looks weak at high areas. The absence of “legionary” *denarii* of Antony might be explained with the fact that the owner did not attend in the final stage of the Actium campaign.

Most probably, this new hoard must be related with the dramatic events around the battle at Actium. It might be suggested it was concealed during the return home of a Thracian mercenary to the north of Thrace.

Coin dies

Significant elements in clarifying the monetary patterns of the Imperial period in the Balkans are the so-called “travelling mints” with their production accessories, including original dies to strike coins.⁷⁵ No less than two dies for Augustan *denarii* originate from Western Thrace and Moesia. The first (fig. 5) was found in 1898 in a Roman fort in the Vratsata pass in Haemus (near Vratsa);⁷⁶ the second near the village of Dolna Dikanja (Pernik district; on the road *Serdica – Pautalia*).⁷⁷ Both obverse types correspond respectively to the mint at Lugdunum in Gaul, series dated to 15 BC (*RIC I*², 170-171a-173) and to the mint assigned at Tarraco in Spain, dated to 17/16 BC (*RIC I*², 144-150a).⁷⁸

A third obverse die of the same period comes from a neighbour area in the Balkans. It was designed for obverse *denarii* of Mark Antony,⁷⁹ found near the town of Sremska Mitrovica (Roman *Sirmium*) in Serbia.⁸⁰ It is an obvious forger’s die made by casting of a genuine denarius. Most modern scholars agree in considering all these (including the famous hoard of 14 dies from Tilișca in Transylvania)⁸¹ as contemporary ancient forgers’ dies.⁸²

Recently two more similar coin dies became known. These are two massive iron

⁷¹ Sydenham 1952, no. 1115; *RRC* 494/21.

⁷² On the chronology of *quattuorvires monetales* in 43/42 BC, see recently Woytek 2003, pp. 432-449.

⁷³ For plated Roman *denarii*, cf. Crawford 1968, pp. 55-59; *RRC* I, pp. 560-562 and the Warren W. Esty’s website on ancient forgeries, <http://esty.ancients.info/imit/imitRR.html>.

⁷⁴ *RRC* 543/1; *CRI* 345.

⁷⁵ A *corpus* in Vermeule 1954, pp. 20-26, comments on pp. 38-41ff.

⁷⁶ Kubitschek 1925, pp. 134-135, pl. 13/A-3; Vermeule 1954, p. 23, no. 21; Bojkova 1984, pp. 15-19.

⁷⁷ *Traité* I, col. 908-909, fig. 27; Kubitschek 1925, pp. 134-135, pl. 13/A-2; Vermeule 1954, p. 23, no. 22.

⁷⁸ It seems that Babelon (in *Traité* I, op.cit.) had confused the find-spots of these two dies in Bulgaria, as did later Bojkova 1984, pp. 15-18, copying his error.

⁷⁹ *RRC* 544.

⁸⁰ Pegan 1965, pp. 435-436, pl. 30.1; Popovič 1988, p. 150, n. 919.

⁸¹ Lupu 1967, pp. 101-110, pl. 5-7.

⁸² Vermeule 1954, p. 23; *RRC*, p. 562, n. 3 and no. 246.

shafts, ending in bronze with the legend engraved in retrograde, both for Mark Antony’s legionary *denarii* (figs 6-7). Few years ago they simultaneously appeared in the American coin market, sadly with no provenance noted.⁸³ According to anonymous sources, this obverse die was found around year 2000, somewhere in Northwestern Bulgaria.⁸⁴ The possibility that both iron dies form a single pair seems likely and desirable, but some experts doubt that.⁸⁵ The find-spot of these dies indicates military purpose use, most likely during the march in the very same region of M. Licinius Crassus, the pro-consul of Macedonia, to Moesia and the Danube in 29/28 BC.⁸⁶

Conclusions

The coin pattern of the region experienced a notable change after the major confrontation in the late Republic, following Caesar’s death. Southern Thrace and Macedonia became the arena in the struggle for domination between assassins Brutus and Cassius at one hand, and Antony and Octavian on the other. The Senate at Rome granted Brutus command and he ruled Macedonia and Southern Thrace between 44/42 BC.⁸⁷ With the pact of Brundisium in September of 40 BC, the whole area was left under Mark Antony’s control.⁸⁸

Shortly after the two decisive battles at Philippi in October of 42 BC, changes are clearly visible in terms of coins; the *denarii* are now penetrating in Thrace en masse.⁸⁹ Earlier Republican series were scarce, but the Caesarian and the *quattuorvires monetales* issues, largely predominated. Thrace and its client kingdom were finally and entirely monetised and a slow, but constant process of Romanisation began.

In the decade following Actium, the coin circulation in Thrace has been entirely changed. The previously popular Hellenistic and local coins in silver were used no later than 20-10 BC, slowly but virtually seized, to be entirely replaced by the Augustan *denarius*. This was the long-term result of Rome’s regulation of local coinages and of the monetary reform, introduced by Octavian Augustus. It is illustrated in a brilliant manner by the famous advice of Maecenas to the emperor in 29 BC, as retold by Cassius Dio: *μητε δὲ νομίσματα ἢ καὶ σταθμὰ ἢ μέτρα ἰδίᾳ τις αὐτῶν ἐχέτω, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἡμετέροις καὶ ἐκείνοι πάντες χρῆσθωσαν*. In other words: “Let none of them have currency or weights or measures of their own; instead let all of them use ours”.⁹⁰

⁸³ CNG Triton V, 15 January 2002, no. 1849; Gemini 1, 11 January 2005, no. 299.

⁸⁴ Subsequently seen by collectors in Montana and Sofia, 2001.

⁸⁵ Thanks to Mr Phil Davis, H.J. Berk Ltd, Chicago for his comments on M. Antony’s die.

⁸⁶ D.C. 51.23-25; Liv., *Perioch.* 134-135; Flor. 4.12.13-16.

⁸⁷ Wilkes 1996, p. 549.

⁸⁸ D.C. 51.23.2. For the period, see now Boteva 2007, pp. 80-85.

⁸⁹ Crawford 1985, p. 236.

⁹⁰ D.C. 52.30, quoted after Rodewald 1976, p. 89, n. 112.

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Abstract

After the battle at Actium promontory on south Epirote coast on September 2, 31 BC the course of history in the Mediterranean was dramatically changed. During or before the conflict between the armies of Mark Antony and Octavian active involvement of foreign troops occurred. Thracian mercenaries and allies participated in the ground operations on both sides, all without actual fight. Days before the final battle king Rhometalces I of Thrace with his own cavalry force, had deserted Antony’s side and joined Octavian. Dicoes, chieftain of the Getae (NE Thrace), promised support to Antony but never appeared at Actium. In order to pay his army Mark Antony organized a large scale coinage in silver, the so called “legionary” *denarii*, minted in the camp at Patrae in the winter of 32/31 BC. Subsequently, large quantities of this coinage appeared all around the Roman world, including north – in Thrace and Macedonia.

This paper treats aspects of the historical and economic consequences for the northern Balkan kingdoms and tribes after the 30’s BC, resulting in quick transformation of these territories into Roman provinces. A major portion of the “legionary” issue was filtered and transferred via Epirus and Thessaly to the north. These coins continued their circulation among soldiers, mercenaries and merchants in Thrace and other areas long after the defeat of M. Antony.

Paper also aims to present the main types of coin mass in Thrace and its monetary reverberations in the 2nd – 1st c. BC.

All extant coin hoards from Thrace (modern Bulgaria) with closing dates around or shortly after Actium (32/31-29/29 BC), are selected and analyzed for the needs of study – 17 deposits in total (table 1). A summary table of coin hoards with “legionary” *denarii* in Europe (table 2) is also given. Further, a newly discovered coin hoard of 67 Republican *denarii* from Vratsa area (Northwestern Bulgaria), with couple of silver pieces of jewelry (2 bracelets, torque, 2 finger-rings), is also included for illustration and discussion (table 3, figs 2-4). It closes with issues of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, *Armenia*

devicta type, dated to 32 BC. Finally, all finds of ancient coin dies for late Republican and early Imperial coins from the Balkans are discussed (figs 5-7).

Illustration captions

Fig. 1. Map of the Balkans, ca 80 BC – AD 14 (after Wilkes 2005).

Fig. 2a-b. Silver bracelets from “Vratsa Area 2006” hoard. Photo: I. Prokopov.

Fig. 3. Silver torque, with rings, from “Vratsa Area 2006” hoard. Photo: I. Prokopov.

Fig. 4. Plated *denarii* of P. Clodius M.f. (RRC 494/21) from “Vratsa Area 2006” hoard. Photo: I. Prokopov.

Fig. 5. Obverse die for *denarii/aurei* of Augustus, after 15 BC (30x28 mm). Found in Vratzata pass near Vratsa, 1898. Incuse – AVGVSTVS/DIVI F (National Archaeological Museum, Sofia, Inv. no. 165). Photo: K. Georgiev.

Fig. 6. Mark Antony, obverse die, bronze within iron sheath (26x24 mm, 57.61 g). Incuse – ANT. AVG. III VIR. R. P. C., galley r. (CNG Triton V, 15 January 2002, no. 1849). Photo: courtesy of CNG/Seaby.

Fig. 7. Mark Antony, iron reverse die (33x20 mm; 77.46 g). Incuse – LEG VI, eagle between two standards (RRC 544/19, CRI 356), (Gemini 1, 11 January 2005, no. 299). Photo: courtesy of H.J. Berk & Gemini Ltd.

Chart 1. Basic coin types in Southern Thrace, 2nd – 1st c. BC.

Chart 2. Basic coin types in Northern Thrace (Moesia), 2nd – 1st c. BC.