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A LATE-ROMAN BRONZE COIN
FIND AT THUBURSICUM NUMIDARUM
(NOW KHEMISSA, ALGERIA)¹

Coin finds in the Arab world often reach numismatists without detailed information on the exact location and circumstances of the discovery, which obviously limits their value for scholarly investigation. This being so, even a small number of coins unearthed at a definite location seems to deserve to be noted and passed on to researchers. This is the case with a set of 14 (or 16) bronze pieces as described below.

While in Algeria in the 70's, Mr. Paweł Kozłowski of Cracow, then a young boy, visited some ancient ruins in Khemissa (Khamissa) and found several bronze coins. They had been buried just under the surface (or scattered?) in a radius of several meters. In a mostly poor state of preservation, they presented little commercial value and may have been abandoned by the first finder. Circumstances of the discovery

¹I wish to express gratitude to Mr. Paweł Kozłowski for letting me use the coins for study and for supplying topographic information. My thanks also go to Prof. Cécile Morrisson for her help in locating specialist literature.

supply few clues as to the nature of the find. The pieces might have made up a small hoard or, more likely, an abandoned part of a larger hoard. They might have been collected over a larger area and left on the spot following a selection was performed. At any rate, there is no reason to doubt that we are dealing with specimens unearthed at Khemissa, one of the more important archeological sites in ancient Numidia, which lends the find added importance. As to the question whether it is (part of) a hoard or a bunch of stray finds, any certainty seems impossible, although its uniform composition may provide a clue, as will be detailed below.

Khemissa was identified as the ancient city of Thubursicum Numidarum based on mentions in ancient sources and Latin inscriptions. An earlier Libyan settlement at this site developed into a Roman city and held the status of a Roman colony from the latter half of the third century². In the fourth century, Thubursicum enjoyed great prosperity with many buildings being erected or renovated³. In the lower part of the city is the second, late-Roman forum⁴, near which, Mr. Kozłowski reports, the coins were found. Traces of the period's religious life include a Christian basilica⁵ and records of a interdenominational discussion of 411, where next to a Catholic bishop, a Donatist bishop of Thubursicum is mentioned⁶. A reference to a Catholic bishop of African Notitia of 484⁷ suggests survival of Numidia's hard times following 429/430 when urban centers in the area were in decline. Yet it was not rare for bishoprics to continue in settlements that had lost their significance and were

² CIL, vol. VIII/1, ed. G. WILMANN, Berlin 1881, pp. 489-507 (esp. No. 4875-4877), CIL, vol. VIII/Suppl. 1, ed. J. SCHMIDT, Berlin 1891, pp. 1630-1634; H. TREIDLER, „Thubursicum Numidarum”, RE, 2 Reihe, Halbband XI, Stuttgart 1936, col. 621-622; P. ROMANELLI, *Storia delle provincie Romane dell'Africa*, Roma 1959, pp. 239, 326; IDEM, „Topografia e archeologia dell'Africa Romana”, (in: *Enciclopedia Classica*, vol. III, Torino 1970, pp. 61-62, 65, 73-74; M. L(EGLAY), „Thubursicum”, *Kleine Pauly*, vol. 5, col. 791.

³ G.G. DILIGENSKIJ, *Severnaya Afrika v IV-V vekach*, Moskva 1961, pp. 41-42, 46.

⁴ ROMANELLI, *Storia*, pp. 558; IDEM, *Topografia*, pp. 74, 100.

⁵ ROMANELLI, „Topografia”, p. 355.

⁶ *La Conférence de Carthage en 411*, ed. S. LANCEL, vol. II, Paris 1972, pp. 792, 862 (Gesta, I, 143, 201); vol. IV, Paris 1991, p. 1492.

⁷ *Notitia provinciarum et civitatum Africae*, ed. M. PETSCHENIG [*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. VII], Vindobonae 1881, p. 120 v. 22.

reduced to villages⁸. Byzantine structures in Khemissa may have been erected after the empire was restored and need not suggest uninterrupted survival of city life⁹, yet its continuity under the Vandals cannot be ruled out either.

All the coins described below are in poor state of preservation, whether due to corrosion, wear, dissection or fracture. This being so, some of the identifications suggested below are merely hypothetical¹⁰.

- 1 Faustine II, bronze coin (as or dupondius) (ca. 170-ca. 176), 6.60 g, 23 mm, ↑ heavy wear on both sides, illegible legends, Obv./ bust of empress with hair done up in a bun (type c according to Szaivert), Rev./ female figure being seated in a chair (prob. Venus Felix). MIR¹¹ 18, Fa 25-7/10 (?), cf. pp. 230/1. (Tab. I fig. 1)
- 2 Claudius II Gothicus, antoninianus (probably imitation)¹², post-mortem issue (270), truncated coin (ca. 2/3), 0.83 g, 12.5 mm, ↑ Obv./ emperor's bust in radiant crown, Rev./ [CONSEC]RATIO, eagle. RIC¹³ V, Claudius no. 265 or 266. (Tab. I fig. 2)
- 3 Imitation antoninianus of Victorinus (269-271), truncated coin, 1.03 g, 15.5 mm, → (?) Obv./ IMP VICT[ORINVS], ruler's bearded bust, radiant crown, Rev./ due to a shifted die the representation and legend are barely visible, in the rim a letter C or S. RIC, V, Victorinus no. 58 (?). (Tab. I fig. 3)
- 4 Constantius II, aes 3, Arelate, 355-360, truncated coin (ca. 2/3), 1.70 g, 15 mm, ↓ A/ DN CONS[TANTIVS PF AVG], emperor's bust in diadem and armor, Rev./ [F]EL TEMP/REPA[RATIO], warrior pierces with a spear a horseman who extends his right hand. RIC¹⁴ VIII, p. 224 no. 266 (the reverse representation and division of the legend are peculiar to the mint). (Tab. I fig. 4 - only avers)

⁸ Cf. C. COURTOIS, *Les Vandales et l'Afrique*, Paris 1955, p. 327; E. FENTRESS, „La Numidia”, (in:) *Storia di Roma*, vol. III/2, Torino 1993, pp. 356-358, 361-362.

⁹ TREIDLER, „Thubursicum”, p. 621.

¹⁰ The same applies to coins in other contemporary finds, cf. H. MOSTECKY, „Ein spätrömischer Münzschatz aus Karthago”, *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 102 (1994) pp. 7-8

¹¹ W. SZAIVERT, *Moneta Imperii Romani*, vol. 18, Wien 1986.

¹² A corroded obverse and partly illegible reverse render identification difficult.

¹³ *Roman Imperial Coinage* [subsequently RIC], vol. V/1, ed. P.H. WEBB, London 1927.

¹⁴ RIC VIII, ed. J.P.C. KENT, London 1981.

- 5 Constantius II, ae2s 3, Nicomedia, 351-361, truncated coin (ca. 2/3), worn out, 1.90 g, 15 mm, ↓ Obv. / D[N] CO[N]ST[AN]/TIVS PFA[VC], emperor's bust in diadem and armor, Rev./ [F]EL TEMP R[EPAR]ATIO, in exergue [S]MN, warrior pierces with a spear a horseman who extends his right hand. RIC VIII, p. 479 nos. 96, 482 no. 104. (Tab. I fig. 5)
- 6 Constantius II, aes 3, Alexandria, 351-355, truncated coin (ca. 4/5), small flan, worn out, 2.53 g, 11 mm, ↑ Obv./ D[N] CONSTANTII[V]S PF AV[C], emperor's bust in diadem and armor, Rev./ FEL[TEMP REPA]RATIO, in exergue ALEA (ALEΔ), warrior pierces with a spear a horseman who extends his right hand, obliterated representation. RIC, VIII, pp. 544-5, no. 80 or 82. (Tab. I fig. 6)
- 7 Constantius II, aes 3, unspecified mint, 351-355, truncated coin (ca. 4/5), partly obliterated, 1.98 g, 15 mm, ↓ Obv./ legend illegible, emperor's bust in diadem and armor, Rev./ [FEL TEMP REP]ARATIO, warrior pierces with a spear a horseman who extends his right hand. (Tab. I fig. 7)
- 8 Julian the Apostate, aes 3, Alexandria (?), 355-361, truncated coin (ca. 2/3), partly obliterated, 1.85 g, 16 mm, → Obv./ [DN I]VLIANV/S NOB C[AES], emperor's bust without diadem, Rev./ [FEL] TE[MP/REPARATIO], in exergue ALE., warrior pierces a horseman with a spear. RIC VIII, p. 545, no. 83 (?). (Tab. I fig. 8)
- 9 Emperor of 2nd half of 4th cent. (Valentinian I, Valens or Gratian), aes 3, Antioch, 364-375, truncated coin (ca. 2/3), worn out, 1.25 g, 14.5 mm, ↑ Obv./ legend truncated and partly obliterated, emperor's bust in diadem and armor, Rev./ SECVRITAS [REIPVBLICAE], in exergue ANT., Victory steps to left holding wreath and palm. RIC¹⁵ IX, p. 275, no. 12, p. 281 no. 36; LRBC¹⁶, II, nos. 2663-2665. (Tab. I fig. 9)
- 10 Emperor of 2nd half of 4th cent. (Valentinian I, Valens or Gratian), aes 3, Kyzikos (?), 364-375, truncated coin (ca. 1/2), 0.87 g, 8 mm, ↑ Obv./ legend truncated, in exergue [S]MKA, emperor's bust in diadem, Rev./ legend truncated, Victory steps to left holding palm. RIC IX, p. 241 no. 11 or 13 (?); LRBC, II, nos. 2519-2520, 2529-1531 (?). (Tab. I fig. 10)
- 11 Gratian, aes 3, Rome (?), 375-378, fractured coin (1/2), 1.23 g, 12 mm,

¹⁵ RIC IX, ed. J.W.E. PEARCE, London 1933.

¹⁶ *Late Roman Bronze Coinage A.D. 324-498*, ed. P. HILL, J.P.C. KENT, R.A.G. CARSON, London 1965 [subsequently LRBC].

- ↓ Obv./ DN GR[ATIANVS PF AVC], bust in diadem and armor, Rev./ [SECV]RITAS/REI PV[BLICAE], in exergue [S]MR., Victory steps to left with wreath and palm, in the left field a trace of *. RIC IX, p. 115, 122 no. 28b; LRBC, II, no. 737. (Tab. I fig. 11)
- 12 Valentinian II, aes 4, Constantinople (?), 383-393, small and thick flan, partly obliterated, 1.51 g, 12 mm, ↑ Obv./ DN VALENTI[NIANVS]PF AVC, small bust of emperor in diadem and armor, Rev./ SALVS REI [PVBLICAE], in exergue C[O]NS., Victory steps to left with trophy on shoulder leading prisoner with left hand, in the left field a monogrammatic cross († and P). RIC IX, p. 234 no. 86a; LRBC, II, no. 2177. (Tab. I fig. 12)
- 13 Arcadius, aes 4, Trier, 388-395, partly obliterated, 1.20 g, 13 mm, ↓ Obv./ [DN A]RCADI/VSPF A[VC], small bust of emperor in diadem and armor, obverse partly defaced due to overstriking, Rev./ [VICTORI]A AVC[CC or C], Victory steps to left, Rev./ incompletely struck, in exergue [T]R[.]. RIC IX, p. 32 no. 97a or 98a (dating 388-395), LRBC, II, no. 170 or 173 (dating 388-392 or 395-402), RIC X, no. 1299 (395). (Tab. I fig. 13)
- 14 Emperor of late 4th cent. or early 5th cent. (Arcadius, Honorius, Theodosius II), aes 3, Rome, 402-408, small, thick flan of yellowish alloy¹⁷, specimen incompletely struck, partly obliterated, 2.18 g, 12 mm, ↑ Obv./ [...] PF AV[VC], bust of emperor in diadem, Rev./ [VRBS] RO/[MA FELIX], in the field OF/T. Personification of Rome stands with head turned to right holding trophy and Victoriola, RIC IX, p. 135 no. 67 (erroneously 394-395), RIC X¹⁸, pp. 130-131, 327, nos. 1271-1283 (404-408). (Tab. I fig. 14)
- [It is not certain whether two more pieces found in Algeria at that time are also part of that group:]
- 15 Emperor of mid-4th cent. (Constantius II or Julian the Apostate), aes 4, Alexandria (?), 355-363, 1.93 g, 15 mm, Obv./ traces of ruler's bust, obliterated, Rev./ [SPES REI]/PVBLICE, in exergue [AL]EA (or ALEΔ), emperor stands frontally with a ball in the right and spear in the left hand, RIC VIII, p. 545, nos. 87-89 (?).

¹⁷ Yellowish bronze alloy characteristic for Western monetary issues, J.P.C. KENT, „The Fifth Century Bronze Coinage of Honorius in Italy and in Gaul”, *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica e Scienze Affini*, 90 (1988), p. 282.

¹⁸ RIC X, ed. J.P.C. KENT, London 1994.

16 Illegible bronze coin similar to item 15, probably aes 4, ca. mid-4th cent., 1.96 g, 15 mm, Obv./ obliterated traces of ruler's bust, visible line of hair as in obverses of emperors Constantius Gallus and Julian the Apostate.

Regardless of whether we include or leave aside items 15-16, which may or may not be part of the group, the structure of the coin set will remain unaffected. Most of it comes from the period ca. 270 (269/271) – 404/408 AD. A comparison with bronze hoards including material from the 4th-5th centuries suggests quite a typical composition of the group. Joint occurrence is normal for a small number of 3rd century pieces (devalued antoniniani) or their imitations, and a large number of 4th-century bronzes (aes 3 and aes 4). Most common among coins typologically belonging to the 3rd century (and their imitations) are the post-mortem issue of Claudius and imitations of Gallic emperors' coinage of either contemporary or later making¹⁹. From the time of the Constantinian dynasty comes the series often found in hoards, Fel Temp Reparatio (5 pcs.) especially from the period 351-361²⁰. Less common types in such finds include Spes Rei Publice (1 pc., uncertain inclusion in the group!). Dating to the time of the Valentinian dynasty and beginnings of Theodosian is another group of issues often appearing in 5th-century African treasures²¹. In the Khemissa find in question, the group is represented by the following types: Securitas

¹⁹ In late-Roman hoards, the most common imitations are those of coins of Tetricus, but also of Victorinus and others. Cf. R. TURCAN, „Une trouvaille monétaire à Announa (Algérie)”, *Latomus*, 31 (1972), pp. 130-145; IDEM, „Reliquat d'une trouvaille monétaire faite à Announa”, (in:) IDEM, *Tresors monétaires de Tipasa et d'Announa*, Lyon 1984; pp.45-51; H. MOSTECKY, „Ein spätrömischer”, pp. 8-9, 36. Lesser wear on imitations (no. 3, no. 2?) compared to some 4th century coins (especially nos. 5, 6, 9) suggests a relatively late date of their making.

²⁰ Cf. R. TURCAN, „Trésors monétaires trouvés à Tipasa : la circulation du bronze en Afrique romaine et vandale aux Ve et VIe siècle ap. J.-C.”, *Libyca*, 9 (1961), pp. 202-203, 206-207, 215-219; A. BOURGEOIS, C. BRENOT, „Trésor de monnaies de bronze du Ve siècle provenant d'Algérie”, *Numismatica e Antichità Classiche. Quaderni Ticinesi*, 24 (1995), pp. 304, 306-307; C. BRENOT, C. MORRISSON, „La circulation du bronze en Césarienne Occidentale à la fin du Ve siècle : La trouvaille de Rabalais-Aïn Merane”, *Numismatica e Antichità Classiche. Quaderni Ticinesi*, 12 (1983), pp. 192-196, 200; C. MORRISSON, „La trouvaille d'Aïn Kelba et la circulation des minimi en Afrique au début du VIe siècle”, (in:) *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à Jean Lafaurie*, Paris 1980, pp. 243-244; H. MOSTECKY, „Ein spätrömischer”, pp. 9-19. Monetary types from the time of the Constantinian dynasty often make up about a half of 5th-century African hoards. Yet coins of Constantine himself are rare in such finds.

²¹ Cf. BOURGEOIS, BRENOT, „Trésor”, pp.304, 306; BRENOT, MORRISSON, „La circulation”, pp. 192-193; H. MOSTECKY, „Ein spätrömischer”, pp. 10-11.

Rei Publicae (3 pcs.), and Victoria Auggg (or Augg) (1 pc.). The only Urbs Roma Felix coin in the set was struck in the early 5th century, now being dated at 404-408. Similar coin sets from Algeria and Tunisia reach up to the middle or late 5th century (Aïn Merane, Carthage, El Djem, Tipasa 3-4), yet occasionally to the early 5th century (Tipasa 1-2). In the Khemissa find, the coin series ends unexpectedly early, in the century's very first years. If this group were an entire hoard, this would make it an isolated instance among African treasures²². Chronologically closest, dated at the first quarter of the 5th century, two other hoards come from Tipasa. Fifth-century issues (after AD 408) make a vestigial presence in them. Yet the presence of such coins grows rapidly in hoards assembled from mid-fifth century on. This is illustrated in the table below²³:

	Hoard	Date	Coins after AD 408
	Tipasa, Amphitheatre	c. 420	4.3 %
	Tipasa Villa des fresques (a)	c. 420	3 %
	Carthage (Byrsa)	c. 440	6 %
	Tipasa, Villa des Fresques (b)	c. 440	26 %
	El Djem	c. 450	63 %
1	Southern Algeria	c. 450	26.8 %
	Rabelais-Aïn Merane	c. 490	32.5 %
	Tipasa, Villa des Fresques (c)	c. 490	40 %
	Aïn Kelba	Early 6 th cent.	95 %

Owing to the modest size of the Khemissa find, it may not be altogether representative. Later pieces (struck after AD 408) could possibly

²²Outside Africa, an analogy may be the hoard of Rome - Porta Collina (RIC X, p. CLVII). Major issues occurring in this hoard are: FEL TEMP REPARATIO, SECVRITAS REI PVBLICAE, SALVS REI PVBLICAE and VRBS ROMA FELIX. All these types are represented in the Khemissa find. Yet in Porta Collina, J.P.C. Kent suggests, unrecognizable pieces might conceivably be of later origin; J.P.C. KENT, „The Italian Bronze Coinage of Valentinian III and the Hoard of Fifth-Century Roman Bronze Coins from El-Djem, Tunisia,” (in:) *Studia numismatica Labacensia Alexandro Jeločnik oblata*, Ljubljana 1988, pp. 190-191.

²³Data based on: TURCAN, „Trésors” (1961), pp. 201-257; MORRISSON, „La trouvaille”, pp. 239-248; BRENOT, MORRISSON, „La circulation”, pp. 191-211; TURCAN, „Trésors” (1984); J.P.C. KENT, „The Italian”, pp. 185-195; MOSTECKY, „Ein spätromischer”, pp. 5-165; BOURGEOIS, BRENOT, „Trésors”, pp. 303-337; dates corrected after: RIC X, pp. CXXIX, CXXXIV, CXL, CLXI-II.

occur in it, especially if they made up a few per cent of the set's original composition, as is the case in hoards created about AD 420 and even up to 440. Yet it is difficult to imagine that no trace remained of them if they originally constituted 25-95 per cent of the set as is true of treasures dating back to about mid-fifth century. It therefore seems that the hoard from which derives the group in question originated soon after AD 408, although a later chronology, up to about 440, cannot be ruled out completely²⁴.

Some hints on the dating of the Khemissa find may be provided by the metrology of its content. Many specimens in it were deliberately reduced in size. In an attempt to adjust the old denominations to the new monetary system in which denominations were reduced, older coins were truncated by cutting or breaking, a not uncommon practice in the late-Roman monetary economy²⁵. Thus, though the weight and dimensions of the coins varied significantly²⁶, we may use them (especially weight) to attempt to identify the monetary system prevailing at the time the hoard was assembled. Leaving aside the largest piece as a remote 2nd-century antecedent and an untypical case (more on which below), the average weight of the remaining 13 pieces is 1.54 g. Yet this characteristic alone does not reflect the real metrological structure of the entire set as the coins fall into two weight groups: 0.83-1.51 g (7 pcs. – average 1.13 g) and 1.70-2.53 g (6 pcs. – average 2.03g) which seem to match two denominations issued in the 4th and 5th centuries and weighing, according to J.P.C. Kent: Ae 3 – 4.00-1.50 g and Ae 4 – below 1.50 g. For the latter half of the 4th and first half of the 5th centuries, their weight should be narrowed down to 2.4/1.6 g (Ae 3) and 1.5/0.9 (Ae 4), with the higher values persisting in the West, where, however, with the exception of Rome, bronze issues especially the Ae3, had become

²⁴ Partial wear of later pieces from Khemissa (nos. 12, 13, 14) suggests a date later than the beginning of the 5th century.

²⁵ S. SUCHODOLSKI, „Moneta i obrót pieniężny w Europie zachodniej” [Money and Monetary Circulation in Western Europe], Wrocław 1982, pp. 42-43; MOSTECKY, „Ein spätrömischer”, pp. 7, 41.

²⁶ According to J.P.C. Kent's work (RIC X, p.17), the diameter should be below 14 mm for Ae 4 and 14-18 for Ae 3. This approximates the figures in the group in question although some pieces are disproportionately heavy for their diameter (no. 6, 14). Yet according to Kent (*ibidem*): „Diameter alone is not a reliable guide to the classification of bronze coinage”.

rare. Meanwhile in the East, from AD 402 a smaller weight was in use²⁷ and that was what caused older bronzes to be reduced in weight. AE 3 issues ceased here after about AD 425. Importantly, with a stream of money from the East, its monetary system was a significant factor in African realities²⁸. It is thus hardly surprising that there was a link between the composition of the group in question and Eastern monetary metrology in the first quarter of the 5th century. It should be added that in later hoards, coins of the weight of those in Khemissa still appear (even into the 6th century)²⁹, yet an ever-growing role was played by *minimi* weighing approx. 0.5 g and less, which did not really become popular until the last quarter of the 5th century. They are both contemporary issues and antoninianus imitations, as well as truncated larger coins from the 4th and early 5th centuries³⁰. In the Khemissa find, the last two kinds are represented, but their weight does not go below 0.83 g. This suggests an early origin of the find, although it is not impossible that the lightest *minimi* were subsequently lost as they are not many in hoards of up to

²⁷J.P.C. KENT, RIC X, pp. 17-19: for the 5th century the author assumes an average for Ae 4 of 0,80-1,50 with a minimum average for the West of 1.25 g, and for the East from AD 404 an average of 0.90 g. Compare: P. GRIERSON, M. MAYS, *Catalogue of Late Roman Coins in the Dunbarton Oaks Collection*, Washington 1992, pp. 44-47 (Ae 3 - 2,27 or 2,4 g (West)/1,6 g (East); Ae 4 - 1,2/0,91 g); M.F. HENDY, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300- c 1550*, Cambridge 1985, pp. 474-475 (Ae 3 - about 2,4/1,7 g; Ae 4 - 1.5/over 1,0 g).

²⁸J.-P. CALLU, P. SALAMA, *L'approvisionnement*, pp. 110-115. P. SALAMA, „Économie monétaire de l'Afrique du Nord dans l'Antiquité tardive”, *Bulletin Archéologique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques*, n.s., 19 (1983)”, p. 191. In the hoard of Carthage-Byrsa, dating to about AD 440, coins weighing more than 1.85 g constitute a mere 8.08 % of the whole, while pieces in the 0.78-1.85 g range (corresponding to the metrology of Eastern issues) as much as 77,75 %. MOSTECKY, „Ein spätromischer”, pp. 26-27.

²⁹E.g. in Carthage-Byrsa (c. 440): 319 pieces (8.1 %); in Aïn Merane (c. 490): 1 piece (0.3 %); Lebanon/Syria (c. 525): 26 pieces (5.5 %); MOSTECKY („Ein spätromischer”, p. 29). The same author (*ibidem*, p. 27) includes in hoards from about mid-5th century a large number of *minimi*, yet by *minimi* he simply understands Ae 4 with a diameter of about 12 mm.

³⁰*Minimi* weighing about 0.5 g and less (0.59-0.24 g) become common in the last quarter of the 5th century (M. F., HENDY, *Studies...*, p. 475). Greek hoards from the second half of the 5th century suggest their sparse occurrence (8-15 % in the Volo hoard) among post-408 issues; H.L. ADELSON, G.L. KUSTAS, *A Bronze Hoard of the Period of Zeno I*, New York 1962, pp. 17-39. With an *al pezzo* production system and concurrent reduction in average weight, the number of smallest pieces must have grown. In the African Carthage (Byrsa) hoard from about AD 440, such pieces make up 3.98 % (including imitations and older issues) - MOSTECKY, „Ein spätromischer”, p. 26-30. Such coins predominate in the Announa hoard (in the neighborhood of Khemissa), where the weight of 85 pieces oscillates between 0.848 and 0.109 g, with 60 % of pieces weighing between 0.31 and 0.55 g. The hoard's publisher associates those *minimi* with the period AD 450-550; TURCAN, „Une trouvaille”, pp. 130-145; IDEM, „Reliquat”, pp. 45-51, esp. 45; cf. SALAMA, „Économie...”, pp. 196-198.

the third quarter of the 5th century. In sum, therefore, metrological evidence supports the dating at the first quarter of the 5th century, although it does not rule out a later origin, up to about AD 475.

The attribution of these coins being uncertain and the number of pieces small, it is difficult to perform a broader statistical analysis of their geographical origin. What we know is that mints are represented from Trier to Alexandria, which seems understandable in a situation where Africa did not have a mint of its own at the turn of the 5th century and had to be supplied by other centers³¹. A relatively large Eastern coin content (Antioch - 1, Alexandria - 2), also from around the Eastern capital (Nicomedia, Kyzikos and probably Constantinople, one each), with a small representation of Rome (2), and even smaller of Gaul (Trier - 1), seems to differ from the proportions seen in other hoards from the same period. This opinion should be treated as a hypothesis owing to an uncertain representativeness of the coin group under discussion. At the same time, the geographic mint break-up is not much different from that of other African hoards. In the immediate environs of Khemissa, the same characteristic is discernible in two bronze treasures of Tipasa deposited in the early 5th century³².

Only one piece does not seem to fit into the overall characteristic of Khemissa coins: it is the large bronze of Faustine, too early and too large for Africa's monetary situation in the first half of the 5th century. This coin must have found its way into the group by accident although it may be worthwhile to note that even in the first half of the 5th century (418 r.?) an isolated issue of Aes 2 REPARATIO REI PVBL was produced by the Roman mint, intended perhaps for the military force in Spain. Its weight of ca. 7.0 g and diameter of ca. 23 mm nearly match those of Faustine's piece (6.60 g, 23 mm)³³. It is highly probable that former large coins, even those from the 1st-3rd centuries, survived in some number to the late antiquity

³¹ BRENOT, MORRISSON, „La circulation”, pp. 196; SALAMA, „Économie”, pp.185-188; MOSTECKY, „Ein spätrömischer”, pp.40-41.

³² TURCAN, *Trésors* (1961), pp. 219, 235-255; RIC X, p. CLXI-CLXII. As a general trend in the hoards of the day, Gaul, while amply represented in the 4th century, loses its sway in the next. In the 5th century, the role of Rome is on the rise, according to: MOSTECKY, „Ein spätrömischer”, pp.17, 19-25. Cf. BRENOT, MORRISSON, „La circulation”, pp. 196-200; BOURGEOIS, BRENOT, „Trésor”, pp. 313-315; SALAMA, CALLU, *L'approvisionnement*, pp. 98-115.

³³ RIC X, pp. 31, 337, no. 1354; J.P.C. KENT, „The Fifth Century”, pp. 285-286 (the example in the National Museum, Copenhagen - 6,31 g, one in the British Museum - 7.93 g).

in the West if they were in circulation in the 6th (perhaps from the end of the 5th) century with characteristic countermarks, supplementing the official money in Africa and elsewhere³⁴.

The composition of the group of coins from Khemissa discussed here well matches the information we have on late-Roman monetary circulation in Africa. If the group were part of a hoard, it would be the type of hoard that extended to the first half of the 5th century, i.e. to the time when Vandals arrived in Africa putting an end to the prosperity of cities located further inland, especially in the interior of Numidia. The fact that the composition of the coin group does not go beyond the decline of Roman dominion in Africa does not help substantiate hypotheses on the vicissitudes of Thubursicum following the Vandal conquest. Nor is it possible to rule out the possibility the coins of Khemissa may also have been used under Vandal rule. In this region, hoards reaching up to the early 5th century occur next to those including much later issues. Monetary economy in Numidian interior must have been quite steady to have kept in circulation coins of quite different epochs that stood in good stead of non-existent local coinage³⁵. Coins from the Khemissa provide evidence to confirm that such was the case.

Translated by Tadeusz Stanek

³⁴C. MORRISSON, „The Re-use of Obsolete Coins: The Case of Roman Imperial Bronzes Revived in the Late Fifth Century,” (in: *Studies in Numismatic Method Presented to P. Grierson*, Cambridge 1983, pp. 95-111, esp. 97-100). Cf. also: BRENOT, MORRISSON, „La circulation”, p. 200.

³⁵As exemplified by three hoards from Villa des Fresques in Tipasa (Tipasa is located near Khemissa) containing coins of: (a - c. 420) Constantinian dynasty - Honorius, (b - c. 440) 3rd century - Dominis Nostris (probably 440's/430's), (c - c. 490) 3rd century - Vandal, TURCAN, „Trésors” (1961), pp. 202-203, 206-208, 215-216.

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ZNALEZISKO PÓŻNORZYMSKICH BRĄZOWYCH MONET Z THUBURSICUM NUMIDARUM (OBECNIE KHEMISSA, ALGERIA)

W latach siedemdziesiątych XX wieku w algierskiej miejscowości Khemissa (starożytne Thubursicum Numidarum) znaleziono 16 monet brązowych, z których przynajmniej 14 należało zapewne do rozproszonego skarbu późnorzymskiego. Poza 1 większą monetą Faustyny II wszystkie pozostałe są małych rozmiarów. Są to 2 naśladownictwa zdewaluowanych antoninianów galijskich z 2 poławy III wieku oraz 13 małych brązów (Aes 3 i 4) od Konstancjusza II do Arkadiusza. Wiele monet jest obciętych lub ułamanych, stan zachowania egzemplarzy jest najczęściej zły. Jakkolwiek monety ze względu na niewielką liczebność mogą nie być w pełni reprezentatywne dla całości zespołu, z którego pochodzą, to jednak, odwołując się do analogii znalezisk afrykańskich, można zaproponować datację skarbu na niedługo po 408 roku, najpóźniej zaś na ok. 440 roku. Zestaw reprezentowanych emisji jest dość charakterystyczny dla obiegu monetarnego Afryki V wieku i dopełnia obraz uzyskany na podstawie innych, znacznie większych znalezisk. Afryka, jako kraina pozbawiona własnej mennicy, zmuszona jest do korzystania z dawnych emisji, naśladownictw lub z produkcji obcych mennic.



Tab. I