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THE COINS OF KING RADOSLAV

The First Serbian Coins.

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At the end of the 12th and in the first half of the 13th century, a period of political and economic crisis started in the Byzantine Empire which resulted in the establishing of new states on the Balkan Peninsula. This is the time when the feudal state of Serbs was established.

Its first rulers, Stefan Nemanja and Stefan The First Crowned, did not mint any coins of their own. After the unexpected death of Stefan the First Crowned in September 1228, his son Radoslav (his firstborn son), born in the marriage with Evdokia, daughter of Emperor Alexius III, Angelus-Comnenus (1195-1203), succeeded to the throne.

Being educated under a strong influence of Byzantium, Radoslav completely relied on the Empire of Epyr and Thessaloniki during his reign, which caused a great dissatisfaction in the circles of the Serbian aristocracy (landowners). Their dissatisfaction was fully expressed after the battle of Klokočnica in 1230, where the Emperor of Thessaloniki Theodor II, Comnenus-Ducas was defeated by the Bulgarian Emperor John Asen II.

The sudden changes in the balance of political powers also influenced the position of King Radoslav who lost the support of his father-in-law.

In the late autumn of 1233, a change took place on the Serbian throne: the dissatisfied aristocracy dethroned Radoslav. He and his wife Ana left Serbia, taking refuge in Dubrovnik. One year later, deserted by his wife, he came back to Serbia where he became a monk, taking the monastic name of Jovan.

According to the regulations of the Middle Ages, only a crowned ruler had the right to mint coins. King Radoslav was not only crowned - he was also the grandson of one emperor and the son-in-law of another. All of this gave him the right to mint coins of his own. The favorable family relations he had, as well as his own political ambitions, brought about the appearance of the first Serbian coins. Since the right to mint coins was acquired by becoming crowned, there is no doubt that the first issue of his coins could have been minted only after 1228. Since they were very similar to the coins of Theodor II, they were probably minted in Thessaloniki.

After the defeat of Theodor II in the battle of Klokočnica, King Radoslav probably moved the mint to his capital, Ras. This is confirmed by a number of little plates prepared for minting coins which were found. This period could not have lasted long, because he was forced to give up the throne and leave Serbia in 1233.

The coins of King Radoslav differ from the subsequent Serbian coins not only in their shape and size, but also by the inscriptions which were written in Greek.

The first to classify these coins properly was the famous numismatist K. Stockert.¹ He compared the inscriptions on two specimens of these coins from his private collection, with the title and the signature of King Radoslav on his charters.

Rudolph Munsterberg and a number of other numismatists wrote about these coins after him and showed, undoubtedly, that they were the coins of King Radoslav.² For a long time only a few specimens of these coins were known.

However, after the excavations on the site of The Ras Fortress in 1971 and later years, this brought to light new specimens of this money so that nowadays there are now about 40 specimens or more.³

Properly prepared metal plates, ready to be minted, were also found during the excavations. This made it possible for us to undoubtedly prove that the mint of King Radoslav was, at least for a time, located in Ras. For a long time until these findings were made, it had been believed that he had minted his coins only in Thessaloniki.

At the time he was issuing his coins, King Radoslav made the coins of three types (scyphate coinage): one of silver and the other two of copper.

First type, Ag:



Av.: The ruler in emperor's clothes, with a crown. He is holding a sphere with a cross in his right hand, while his left hand is on his chest. Jesus Christ is standing beside, crowning him. By the figure of Christ the initials: X X
IC - XC

The inscription is on the right and left side:

C	ΟΠ
TE	AN
ΦΑ	TO
NOC	KP
PIZ	AT
ΟΔ	OP
YK	
AC	

Rv.: The bust of Archangel Michael with halo around his head. He is holding a sword in his right hand and its sheath in the left. By his head the initials: MH - AP.

Second type, Cu:



Av.: The ruler with a crown on his head. Virgin Mary is standing beside him, crowning him. On the right and the left side of her head: MP - ΘV.
The inscription by the ruler: ΤΕΦΑΝΟC ΡΙΖ.

Rv.: The bust of Christ Emanuel with a nimbus. He is giving blessing with his right hand while holding a scroll in the left. By his head the initials:
IC XC
OE NY
M HA

Third type, Cu:



Av.: The ruler and Saint Constantine holding a cross between them, standing. The saint is holding a sceptre with a cross. The inscription on the coin says:
ΤΕΦΑΝΟC ΡΙΖ (ΟΔ) - ΚΟΝ (C) ΤΑΝΤ.

Rv.: Jesus sitting on a throne without a back, blessing with his right hand. By his head the initials: IC - XC.

Notes.

1. Stockert, Karl, "Zwei unedierte Bronzemünzen von Serbien", *Numismatische Zeitschrift*, N.F. VII. Wien 1915, p.195-196.

2. Rudolf Munsterberg, "Neuerwerbungen der Sammlung antiker Münzen 1924-1926", *Numismatische Zeitschrift*, N.F. 18, 1925, p.35.

Mihailo Laskaris, *Vizantijske princeze u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji. Prilog istgoriji vizantiskosrpskih odonosa od kraja XII do sredine XV veka.* Beograd 1926, p.44-45.

B. Saria, "Numismatischer Bericht aus Jugoslawien", *Numismatische Zeitschrift*, N.F. 20, 1927, p.16-17.

Michael F. Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire 1081-1261*, Dumbarton Oaks, 1969, p.297.

Dobriła Gaj-Popović, *Monnaie du Roi Radoslav, Frappe et ateliers monetaires dans l'Antiquite et Moyen Age*, Belgrad, 1976, p.121-132.

3. M. Popović, *Nalaz novca kralja Stefana Radoslava iz utvrdenja Gradina u Rasu, Novopazarski zbornik I*, Novi Pazar, 1977, p.35-55.

M. Popović, *Srednjovekovni Ras, Gradina-utvrdenje, Arheološki pregled*, Beograd, 1980, p.172-173.

PUN

PUN, s. A certain number of cowries, generally 80; Hind. *paṇa*. The Skt. *paṇa* is 'a stake played for a price, a sum,' and hence both a coin (whence **fanam**, q.v.) and a certain amount of cowries.

1683.—"I was this day advised that Mr. Charnock putt off Mr. Ellis's Cowries at 34 **pund** to ye Rupee in payment of all ye Peons and Servants of the Factory, whereas 38 **punds** are really bought by him for a Rupee."—*Hedges, Diary*, Oct. 2; [Hak. Soc. i. 122].

1760.—"We now take into consideration the relief of the menial servants of this Settlement, respecting the exorbitant price of labor exacted from them by tailors, washermen, and barbers, which appear in near a quadruple (pro)portion compared with the prices paid in 1755. Agreed, that after the 1st of April they be regulated as follows:

"No tailor to demand for making:

1 **Jamma**, more than 3 annas.

* * * * *

1 pair of drawers, 7 **pun** of cowries.

No washerman:

1 corge of pieces, 7 **pun** of cowries.

No barber for shaving a single person, more than 7 gundas".—*Ft. William Consns.*, March 27, in *Long*, 209.

(From *HOBSON-JOBSON, A glossary of colloquial Anglo-Indian words and phrases, and of kindred terms, etymological, historical, geographical and discursive*, by Col. Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, Originally Published, 1903, Reprint, February, 1968.)