

COINAGE AND HISTORY IN PANNONIA IN THE THIRD CENTURY A. D.

R. A. G. CARSON

The British Museum, London

Pl. 1: p. 482

In Roman imperial studies the second half of the third century A. D. and especially the third quarter is notoriously poor in the matter of historical evidence. This is true of the empire at large and the position as far as the frontier provinces are concerned is even more desperate. In this respect the student of Roman Pannonia encounters much the same difficulties as are met by students of Roman Britain. There are no contemporary accounts and the evidence of inscriptions is meagre. It is for this period that numismatic evidence becomes of prime importance. The evidence of the coins is of two kinds, both of considerable value for the history of this chaotic period. There is, first of all, the internal evidence of the coins themselves — their portraiture, reverse types, dating formulae, and the marks indicating mints and the officina structure of the mints. There is, also, the archaeological evidence of the coins either as finds from excavated sites or in the form of hoards. The study of hoards — their composition, their terminal date, their location and whether they are isolated hoards or part of a pattern — all these can provide valuable evidence for the history of such a frontier province.

An outline sketch of the events in Pannonia in the later third century can be derived from the evidence of the coins themselves, particularly the activity of the mint of Siscia and from the archaeological evidence of the coins.

We take as the beginning of our story the historically well-assured fact of the revolt of Pacatian (Pl. 1: 1). The historians record that he rebelled against Severianus, father-in-law of Philip I, who had appointed him governor of Moesia. If we did not know the date, the coins would determine it as 248-9; for a reverse of Pacatian is inscribed ROMAE AETER AN MILL ET PRIMO, and there is a gap in the local bronze coinage of Viminacium between Philip I and Trajan Decius.¹ In that interval the mint of Viminacium was busy producing the antoniniani of Pacatian. Though his mint was in Moesia, Zosimus² records that his area of support included Pannonia, and it was the Pannonian army which eventually in 249 proclaimed Decius who had been sent by Philip to subdue Pacatian. The proclamation of Pacatian may have been due to some local success on his part against invading Carpi in 248, and the northern

¹ RIC IV 3, 65-6, and 105, no. 6

² Zosimus I 21, 2.

frontier of Pannonia may also have been affected by these barbarian movements, and by the backwash of the Gothic invasions of 250 aimed more at the Moesian *limes*. It was in the campaign against the Goths under Kniva that Trajan Decius fell in the battle near Abrittus in 251.

There is more positive evidence that Pannonia suffered from barbarian inroads in the reign of Trebonianus Gallus. Legio II Adiutrix with its station at Aquincum saw some action at this time to judge from the fact that it is recorded with the epithet Galliana-Volusiana.³ Two hoards, also, from Brigetio and Bajot to the S. E. of Brigetio, have terminal dates of 252. When Aemilian, governor of Lower Moesia, was proclaimed emperor by his troops in 253, he was probably supported by the troops in Pannonia. For what it is worth, Zosimus⁴ calls him *παυονικῶν ἡγούμενος τάξεων*. Two hoards, one from an unrecorded site in Serbia,⁵ and the other from Intercisa⁶ closing with a late coin of Volusian were, it has been suggested, concealed later in 253 after the defeat of Aemilian and the advent of Valerian's troops.

The continuing barbarian pressure on Dacia had drastic repercussions on the northern frontier provinces and at least three hoards from Szachs,⁷ Szalacksa⁸ and Dunapentele⁹ have terminal coins suggesting concealment in 258-60. In 260 the whole fabric of empire was shaken by the disaster of the defeat and capture of Valerian by the Sassanians. The apparent inability of the state to cope with the defence of the frontier provinces led to local secessionist uprisings. A separate Gallic empire was successfully established by Postumus, and in 260 also the governor of Pannonia, Ingenuus, was proclaimed by his troops. The revolt was swiftly suppressed by the defeat of Ingenuus at Mursa before he had the opportunity to issue any coins, but almost immediately another usurper, Regalian, governor of Upper Pannonia, was proclaimed by the still dissatisfied army. The area of his control is not well defined nor is the duration of his revolt. Certainly it was of sufficient length for coins to be struck for Regalian and for his wife Dryantilla (Pl. 1: 2, 3).¹⁰ These coins are all overstruck on earlier denarii, mostly of the Severan period, presumably at his headquarters in Carnuntum where most of the recorded examples have been discovered.¹¹

The crisis of empire and the military involvement on a number of frontiers had consequences for the imperial mint system. The expenses of military campaigns and the necessity of ensuring regular payment to the troops to retain their loyalty made necessary the creation of Roman mints in the provinces. In the East, Valerian's campaign required the opening of a second mint to supplement the existing mint of Antioch. This second mint was probably located at Cyzicus.¹² Similarly, Gallienus, for his campaigns against the German invaders across the Rhine, set up a mint at Cologne. In a logical extension of this policy a site for a mint to serve the needs of the northern

³ CIL III 3421.

⁴ Zosimus I 28, 1.

⁵ Num. Zeitschr. (1924) 90 ff.

⁶ Num. Zeitschr. (1955-56) 3 ff.

⁷ Num. Zeitschr. (1914) 147.

⁸ Ibidem (1951) 7 ff.

⁹ Ibidem (1953-54) 5 ff.

¹⁰ RIC V 2, 586-8.

¹¹ Cf. R. Göbl, Der römische Münzschatzfund von Apetlon, Wiss. Arb. aus d. Burgenland 5 (1954) 6 ff.

¹² R. A. G. Carson, The Hamã Hoard and the Eastern Mints of Valerian and Gallienus, Berytus 17 (1967-68) 123 ff.

provinces was selected at Siscia which opened in 262 and continued through the third and fourth centuries to be one of the major Roman mints.

It is to O. Voetter¹³ that we owe the first scientific segregation of the coinage of Gallienus and the identification of the products of the mint of Siscia. Professor Alföldi subsequently published a more lengthy study, establishing the derivation of the mint of Siscia from Rome, determining the date of inception as 262, and arranging the coinage in three successive groups.¹⁴ More recently, Professor Göbl, while accepting Alföldi's general sequence, has produced a more detailed arrangement of the various phases, particularly of the marked series in Alföldi's third group.¹⁵

The first coinage includes a type which not only shows in the obverse portrait style the influence of the Rome mint but provides us with the identification of the mint with the clear reverse inscription SISCIA AVG and its personification of the city with the representation of the river Sava underneath. Another intriguing type in the early coinage shows a Jupiter described as *Juppiter Cantabrorum* (Pl. 1: 4). Alföldi¹⁶ ingeniously suggests that this is a reference to the *impetus Cantabricus*, the recently created force of cavalry which played such a successful rôle in Gallienus' campaigns against usurpers. He dismisses an earlier suggestion of any connection with the deity Cantabria mentioned in an inscription from Topusko and now in the Zagreb Museum;¹⁷ but some local significance for this unique and intriguing piece would have its attractions. The later coinage which shows the obverse portrait developing into a recognisable Siscian style contains the evidence for the organisation of the mint in two officinae. The initial S is accompanied by the numerals I or II, or the ordinals P or S appear alone in the field or exergue of the coin (Pl. 1: 5, 6).

The variety of reverse types recorded for only some seven years of coinage by a two officinae mint strongly suggests a prolific and important coinage. Demonstration of this still awaits further research and study. This will be much facilitated when the hoards which already exist and which will undoubtedly continue to come to light are published with the sufficiency of accuracy which will make such a study possible.

This is even more true of the coinages of Claudius II and Quintillus. The basic study and account of these was published by Mark as long ago as 1885. Alföldi included the coinage of Claudius and Quintillus in his series of studies on the mint of Siscia but without adding much of significance.¹⁸ Again, a study in depth is required here based on hoard statistics which will enable the true pattern of the substantive issues to appear and demonstrate, as it almost certainly will, the rôle of Siscia as a prolific and important mint. The principal new feature to note in these coinages is the expansion of the mint under Claudius to three and subsequently to four officinae. At Siscia as at Rome the coinage of Quintillus presents an obverse portrait scarcely distinguishable from that of his brother Claudius, and an identical series of reverse types (T. 1: 7, 8).

¹³ *Num. Zeitschr.* (1900) 117 ff.; (1901) 73 ff.

¹⁴ *Num. Közl.* (1928-29) 14 ff.

¹⁵ *Num. Zeitschr.* (1953) 23-7.

¹⁶ *Num. Közl.* (1928-29) 12-13.

¹⁷ *CIL* III 10832.

¹⁸ *Num. Közl.* (1953) 9-23.

With the reign of Aurelian we come to the most intractable coinage of the whole imperial series, and a coinage in which the mint of Siscia presents particular difficulties but may well provide the key to the solution of much of the problem. The problems raised by this coinage are such that, apart from Rohde's assemblage of material, none of the great scholars who have dealt so successfully with much of the third century coinage has published anything — to my knowledge at any rate — on Aurelian.

This coinage presents several major problems for solution. There is first of all the question of the reform of the coinage. The date when the reform was instituted and what precisely was involved in and was effected by the reform still remain matters for conjecture.¹⁹ The second problem is the general shape of the coinage. There are three fairly well defined phases. An initial coinage reproduces closely the weight and fineness of the preceding antoninianus coinage of Claudius II and Quintillus. The portrait of Aurelian is scarcely to be distinguished from that of his predecessors, and at most mints an almost identical range of reverse types is also used (Pl. 1: 9). A second phase introduces what we may call a "proto-reform" coinage, presenting a new range of reverses accompanied by a new portrait (Pl. 1: 10), and in weight, fineness and fabric approximating to the coins of the last phase, the true reform coinage bearing the value mark XXI and ultimately a mint initial (Pl. 1: 11). The general shape of the coinage is clear enough but the exact sequence of issues and their dating is bound up with the most difficult problem of all, the correct attribution to mints of coins either with no mark at all or with marks indicating only officina numbers. It is with this question that the coinage of Siscia is most heavily involved.

The statistics of a large hoard of over 15,000 antoniniani of the later third century found at Gloucester in the west of England in 1959 are revealing. The coins of Aurelian amounted to over 2,000. When these were identified and arranged according to *RIC* the startling fact emerged that the coinage of Siscia amounted to some 45 % of the identifiable coins. Of western mints, 735 were of Siscia, 341 of Rome, 372 of Milan/Ticinum and 41 of Lugdunum. One can here ignore the low showing of Lugdunum which is due, of course, to the fact that this mint came into Aurelian's control only a year before his death. The significant fact is the great preponderance of Siscia over the Italian mints of Rome and Milan/Ticinum which are usually well represented in British finds, and in this same find, of the coins of Tacitus for instance, the figures are Rome 487, Ticinum 385 and Siscia only 34 (Lugdunum has 2,772).

A number of explanations suggest themselves. The Gloucester hoard may be unique in its composition, for it is the only British find to consist almost exclusively of coins of Aurelian onwards of the reform type. Analysis, however, of the few adequately recorded hoards of the period confirm the general picture. The hoard from Komin²⁰ had 53 coins of Aurelian from Siscia against 22 from Rome and 29 from Milan/Ticinum; that from Thibouville²¹ had 38 coins

¹⁹ R. A. G. Carson, *The reform of Aurelian in Revue Num.* (1965) 225 ff. and *The inflation of the third century and its monetary influence in the Near East in Proceed. of the Internat. Num. Convention* (Jerusalem 1963) 231 ff.

²⁰ Z. Barcsay-Amant, A. Komini Eremlelet, *Diss. Pann. Ser. 2*, 5 (1937) 7 ff.

²¹ P. Bastien and H. G. Pflaum, *La trouvaille de monnaies romaines de Thibouville, Gallia* 19 (1961) 71 ff.

of Siscia to 22 of Rome and 55 of Milan/Ticinum. The huge hoard from Venera,²² though published with considerable detail, is so arranged that the comparison of mint figures is difficult, but here too the general impression is that, for Aurelian, Siscia predominates.

The second line of thought is that the mint attributions of the standard works are at fault, and that some of the series attributed to Siscia really belong to other mints, most probably to Rome. Repeated examination of the debatable series using the criteria of numbers of officinae, development and variation of marks, reverse type vocabulary, and obverse portrait style has not been able to determine where the series attributed to Siscia can be logically broken and which parts excised and transferred. It appears, therefore, from the present stage of the investigation that in the coinage of Aurelian the mint of Siscia played a most important part, seemingly more important than Rome itself. It may be that the moneyers' revolt at Rome, exaggerated though it may be by the *Historia Augusta*,²³ did for a time at least curtail the activity of the metropolitan mint. This conclusion about the importance of Siscia under Aurelian can be only tentative and requires the substantiation which can be provided only by the availability of many more well recorded hoards. It will be necessary to have a strong body of material from the hoards of Pannonia in the mint area of Siscia and from other western provinces as well to determine if possible, the mint source of the debatable issues.

This lengthy discussion is not merely an irrelevant numismatic digression. If, ultimately, the rôle of Siscia in the coinage of the period can be substantiated as of this degree of importance, it will be further evidence of stability and prosperity in Pannonia in the later third century. Mócsy in his most comprehensive article in *RE*²⁴ comments that up to the time of Gallienus Pannonia was productive of revolts and usurpers, but that under the Illyrian emperors these vanish from the scene. The death of Claudius at Sirmium from the plague and later the assassination of Probus also at Sirmium were not signals for revolt. Such disturbances as are recorded are the consequences of barbarian invasion, as in 270 when Aurelian had to take the field against the Vandals, Suevi, and Sarmatians. The Komin hoard, terminating in 275 with coins of Tacitus, may reflect some similar more local incident, or it may be an instance susceptible to less dramatic explanation.

Fortunately, after Aurelian, mint attributions are less difficult to determine, even though we have not yet reached the stage where mints are consistently identifiable by their initial letter or syllable. The reign of Tacitus and Florian was short but was productive of a vast coinage, particularly in the west where the wretched coinage of the Tetrici required to be replaced. On the evidence of the Gloucester hoard, output at Siscia was considerably reduced as compared with the Italian mints, but it may be only that with the Lugdunum mint once more in full swing the products of Siscia were not being channeled towards the western provinces. In any event Siscia continued to work in the six and sometimes seven officinae to which the mint had been expanded under Aurelian. There are only two simple marks on the antoniniani,

²² L. A. Milani, *Il ripostiglio della Venera, Reale Acc. dei Lincei* 277, 3 ff.

²³ *SHA*, Aur. XXVI 38, 2 f.

²⁴ *RE*, Suppl. IX (1962) s. v. Pannonia.

either XXI or XXIP, repeating forms used by Aurelian and repeating also some of the reverse types of his coinage (Pl. 1: 12). The same mint organisation can be traced under Probus, and at Siscia, as elsewhere, frequent use is made of elaborate busts on the obverse. In this coinage, also, as in that of Gallienus, the city is again represented as a reverse type, here flanked by two river gods, the Sava and the Glinka (Pl. 1: 13).²⁵ Issues of gold, somewhat scarce in earlier reigns, become more plentiful, some marked by a clear mint signature (Pl. 1: 14). In the coinage of Carus and his family the simple mint marks noted for Probus are eventually replaced by the readily identifiable $\frac{A}{SMSXXI}$ (Pl. 1: 15).

A further rare and interesting series of antoniniani with an unusual obverse showing the confronted busts of Sol and Carus inscribed DEO ET DOMINO CARO AVG (Pl. 1: 16) has been traditionally ascribed to Siscia²⁶ but the placing of this issue in view of the unusual reverse mark requires further investigation.

The coinage continues to be silent about contemporary events, and in the Siscian coinage of Carus there is no mention of the emperor's successful repulse of an invasion by the Sarmatians at the beginning of his reign. There is, however, a bronze medallion of Numerian showing on its reverse two emperors in triumphal quadriga with the inscription TRIVMFV QVADOR.²⁷

It is not clear to what extent the revolt of Julian, the *corrector Venetiae*, was supported by the troops in Pannonia, but the mint of Siscia certainly passed under his control.²⁸ His rare gold coinage (Pl. 1: 17) does not bear the mint signature but the billon antoniniani include as part of the mint mark the initial S, as on the issue showing the figures of the two Pannoniae (Pl. 1: 18). It was not in this province itself but in nearby Moesia, close to Viminacium, that Carinus, though victorious in battle against Diocletian in 285 was murdered by one of his own officers.

The advent of Diocletian which was shortly to produce a reconstruction of the empire and of the mint and coinage systems at Siscia as elsewhere seems an appropriate point to end this sketch of coinage and events in Pannonia in the late third century. This paper has propounded more problems than it has offered solutions, but it may serve to indicate the contribution which the coin evidence from Pannonia can make to the reconstruction of the events of the third century in this province.

Novčarstvo in zgodovina Panonije v tretjem stoletju

Pisano izročilo za zgodovino rimskega imperija v drugi polovici tretjega stoletja je zelo skromno. To velja za imperij kot celoto, še bolj pa za obmejne province, med njimi tudi za Panonijo. Poročil sodobnikov nima, pričevanje napisov je pičlo, zato je za to razdobje numizmatična evidenca osnovne važnosti. Ta pa je dvojna. Najprej izpovedna moč novcev samih s portreti, tipi reverov, datumi in kovniškimi

²⁵ RIC, V 2, Probus 764-6.

²⁶ RIC V 2, Carus 99.

²⁷ Gnechchi, *I medaglioni Romani* II,

²⁸ RIC V 2, 593-3; E. Pegan, *Imperator Marcus Aurelius Julianus*, *Num. vijesti* 26 (1968) 45 ff.

Tav. 123, 8.

priznaki. Dalje arheološka vrednost novcev z najdišči, predvsem pa najdb, katerih sestav, datacija in lokacija morejo doprinesti dragocene podatke.

Oris dogodkov v Panoniji v kasnem 3. stol. pričenjamo s Pakacijanovim uporom v Meziji za vlade Filipa I. Legenda na Pakacijanovem novcu — *an mill et primo*, določa čas kot 248–249, v viminacijskem kovanju lokalnih bakrencev pa je med Filipom I. in Trajanom Decijem vrzel, saj v tem času Viminacium kuje antoninijane za Pakacijana. Proklamacijo Pakacijana so verjetno povzročili vojaški uspehi nad Karpi leta 248, katerih vpadi so morda prizadeli severne meje Panonije. Za vdore barbarov v Panonijo za časa vlade Trebonijana Gala govorita med drugim tudi novčni najdbi Brigetio in Bajot, ki zaključujeta v l. 252. Ko so guvernerja Spodnje Mezijske Emilijana oklicale čete za cesarja l. 253, ga je verjetno podprla tudi vojska v Panoniji. Dve najdbi, ena nelokalizirana iz Srbije, druga iz Intercise, sta bili zakopani verjetno l. 253 po porazu Emilijana. Stalni pritisk barbarov na Dacijo je drastično odjeknil tudi v severnih mejnih provincah. Najdbe Szachs, Szalacksa in Dunapentele so bile zakopane v l. 258–260. Poraz in zajetje Valerijana v Perziji sta pretresla imperij. Nesposobnost države za obrambo meja je vedla do uporov in odcepitve. Postumus je osnoval ločen galski imperij in l. 260 so panonske čete oklicale guvernerja Ingenua za cesarja. Upor je bil hitro zatrt, a že je sledila uzurpacija Regalijana, ki se je obdržal na oblasti nekoliko dlje, saj je koval zase in za ženo Dryantilo verjetno v Carnuntu.

Kriza imperija in vojaški konflikti na mejah so vplivali tudi na novčarstvo. Redno izplačevanje vojaštva je terjalo nove kovnice v provincah. Na vzhodu je Valerijan osnoval kovnico Kyzikus, enako Galijen v Kölnu. Za kritje potreb severnih provinc je bila l. 202 osnovana Siscija. Portretni stil začetnih kovov izdaja vpliv rimske kovnice. Posebej zanimiva sta napisa reverov *Siscia Aug* in *Juppiter Cantabrorum*. Postopno se razvija za Siscijo svojski stil in kovanje je organizirano v dveh oficinah. Številni tipi reverov kažejo na obilno kovanje. Potrditev te domneve je pričakovati od solidnih objav obstoječih in bodočih najdb. Isto velja za kovanje Klavdija II., ki je razširil kovniški obrat v Sisciji najprej na tri, nato na štiri oficine.

Kovanje Avrelijana postavlja številne nerešene probleme. Tako za datum kot vsebino njegove novčne reforme razpolagamo zgolj z domnevami. Razlikovati moramo tri faze kovanja. Začetna kaže enake teže in čistino kot za časa Klavdija II. Avrelijanov portret je malodane isti kot pri predhodnikih in vse kovnice imajo isto vrsto tipov. Druga faza uvaža nove revere in nov portret. Po teži, izdelavi in čistini se približuje novcem poslednje faze, ki kažejo vrednostni znak XXI in končno že začetnico kovnice. Eksaktno zaporedje emisij in njih datacija predstavljata najtežavnejši problem, enako točna dodelitev kovnicam tako nesigniranih novcev kot onih z znaki za oficine. Važna je britanska najdba Gloucester, ki je prinesla med 15.000 antoninijani 2000 Avrelijanovih. Med njimi kar 735 (45 %) iz Siscije. V Rimu je bilo kovanih 341, v Milanu-Ticinu pa 372. Za tako nenavadno razmerje se vsiljuje več razlag. Ena med njimi je, da za časa Avrelijana igra Siscija dominantno vlogo. Druga možnost je, da nekaj doslej Sisciji dodeljenih novcev spada v druge kovnice, predvsem v Rim. Študij novcev samih pa govori proti tej možnosti (stil, priznaki, tipologija in oficine). Vse kaže, da je za časa Avrelijana Siscija igrala izjemno važno vlogo, vsekakor važnejšo od Rima samega. Zaključek o pomembnosti Siscije v tem času bodo seveda mogle utrditi le nove solidno objavljene najdbe, predvsem iz Panonije. Če bo tako mogoče potrditi izjemno vlogo Siscije v kovanju tega časa, bo to nadaljnji dokaz za stabilnost in prosperiteto Panonije v kasnem tretjem stoletju.

Po Avrelijanu je dodeljevanje kovnicam manj težavno, čeprav še ni signiranja z začetnicami. Za vlade Tacita in Florijana je bila novčarska produktivnost obilna, zlasti na zahodu. Po pričevanju najdbe Gloucester je produkcija Siscije v primerjavi s kovnicami v Italiji upadla, možno pa je tudi, da spričo kovanja Lugduna v polnem obsegu, produkcija Siscije ni bila več usmerjena na zahod. Vsekakor kuje Siscija naprej v 6 ali 7 oficinah kot pod Avrelijanom. Isto organizacijo kovnice srečamo pod Probom. Emisije zlata so v primerjavi s predhodnimi razdobji obilnejše in nekatere že jasno signirajo kovnico. V kovanju Kara in njegove družine zamenja preproste priznake iz časa Proba (XXI, XXIP) jasno signiranje _____^A. Kovanje o so-

SMSXXI

dobnih dogodkih še vedno molči, z izjemo Numerijanovega medaljona z napisom *Triumfu Quador*. Upor Julijana je zajel tudi Panonijo in Siscija je prišla pod njegovo oblast. Julijanovi redki zlatniki so nesignirani, antoninijani pa v priznaku označujejo kovnico z začetnico S. Oris kovanja in dogajanj v Panoniji v kasnem tretjem stoletju zaključujemo z nastopom Dioklecijana, ki je kmalu reorganiziral imperij, kovniški in novčni sistem, tako v Sisciji kot drugod.



Coinage in Pannonia in the Third Century A. D.
Novčarstvo Panonije v tretjem stoletju