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COINS OF ROMAN TIMES FROM BEREZAN ISLAND – END OF 20TH – BEGINNING OF 21ST CENTURY FINDS

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The coin material of Roman times, which was found during archaeological studies of an ancient settlement on the island of Berezan, is analyzed in the paper.

The ancient settlement on the island of Berezan is primarily known as the first Greek colony in the Northern Black Sea region.

In addition to the sites of the archaic period of the 6th – 5th centuries BCE, the objects belonging to other historical epochs are studied on the island. Roman times are represented by a large number of materials: ceramics, epigraphic finds, damaged archaeological sites (remains of dwellings, utility pits, etc.). Almost all researchers of the site have singled out single artefacts from Roman times. Unfortunately, the cultural layers of the first centuries of the New Era were destroying starting from the construction of the Turkish fortress finishing the works that preceded World War II. And nowadays, the process of destruction is still in progress due to large-scale grave robbery. In recent years, during archaeological studies, the coins of Roman times have usually been found in mixed redeposited layers.

Coins of the 2nd – 3rd centuries CE are rare archaeological artefacts, found during research on the island, but at the same time, they are not unique finds.

Currently, there is no generalized work cataloguing the numismatic material of the Roman times found during more than a century of archaeological study of the ancient settlement on the island of Berezan. Information about coins can be found in archeological reports and publications only as additional material. Such finds are mentioned in the works of P.Y. Karyshkovskyi, V.A. Anokhina, M.F. Boltenko, S.B. Buiskykh, V.V. Krutilov, and others.

At the end of the 20th – beginning of the 21st century, coins of the Roman times were found at different excavation units of the archaeological research on the island headed by various scholars. V.V. Nazarov found coins at excavation units 'R-1V' and 'T', V.V. Krutilov at 'T' and 'O', and O.I. Smirnov and D.V. Bondarenko at 'HSh'. All material is clearly dated to the 2nd – 3rd centuries CE, classified by Roman and Olbia minting of bronze and silver and belongs to the reigns of the emperors Antoninus Pius, Septimius Severus, and Archon of Olbia Dada son of Satyros. This gives us the opportunity to support the assumption of Ukrainian archaeologists that in the second half of the 2nd – beginning of the 3rd century CE on the island of Berezan there was a fortification of Roman troops detachment which garrisoned in Olbia.

Keywords: *coin, island, excavation unit, Roman times, settlement, Berezan, Olbia*

The ancient settlement on the island of Berezan is primarily known as the first Greek colony in the Northern Black Sea region. In addition to the sites of the archaic period, the objects belonging to other historical epochs are studied on the island. The island is a unique site, both in terms of its archeology, history, and nature. Artifacts are represented with the finds dated to the Bronze Age, antiquity (archaic and classical periods, Roman

times), the Middle Ages (Kyivan Rus), the Ottoman period, the beginning of the 19th century, the beginning of the 20th century, and the period of World War II[1].

The island of Berezan is located in the Black Sea at the mouth of the Berezan estuary and in ancient times was connected to the mainland by a spit, forming a peninsula. It is situated in a convenient place to be a kind of a base on the sea trade routes in the Northern Black Sea region. That is why the place was liked by its first settlers – Ionian Greeks from the city of Miletus, who came there in the 7th century BCE and founded their first North Black Sea colony named Borysthenid (Borysthenes).

Archaeologists have been exploring the island for over a century. The first researcher to draw attention to the island of Berezan was academician Keller. He surveyed the island at the beginning of the 19th century and found architectural remains and archeological artifacts dating back to antiquity.

In the middle of the 19th century, Berezan was visited by Count S.S. Uvarov, who noted a large number of fragments of red clay Greek amphorae and fragments of marble and green stone, similar to jasper, just lying on the ground. He also created the first ground plan of the island with the notation of Turkish fortifications, building remains, six mounds, and two wells.

The first excavations on the island were conducted in 1884 by R.A. Prendel, following the order of the VI Archaeological Congress commission. He laid a trench on the northern part of the western shore. Excavations were also conducted in the eastern part of the island.

In 1900-1901, the works at Berezan necropolis were headed by the representative of Kherson nobility H.L. Skadovskyi. During those two seasons, in the north-western part of the island, the excavations were spread over 1,900 square meters and H.L. Skadovskyi found (in his opinion) about 800 burials located in two or three layers.

Excavations headed by E.R. von Stern were started in 1903 and finished in 1909. The goals of the researcher were to identify small hills and depressions on the western and north-eastern shores, to study the recognizable mounds on a broader part of the island, and to search for the site of an ancient settlement. During that time, six excavation units of the island were explored. In 1903, the excavations were carried out at Berezan necropolis near the dig of H.L. Skadovskyi, and one skeleton with a peak in the thigh (possibly Cossack) was found there. The same year, there were excavations at the excavation unit 'A' (settlement), which lasted until 1909. Numerous remains of walls and pits of various purposes were found there.

In 1927, M. Boltenko, a student of E.R. von Stern, began his excavations on Berezan and continued them until 1931. Due to a combination of circumstances, they were resumed only in 1946-1947.

After a long break, in 1960 excavations on the island were resumed by Berezan detachment of the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, headed by V.V. Lapin together with the Odesa State Archaeological Museum, and lasted until 1980.

Since 1961, an expedition of the State Hermitage, headed by K.S. Horbunova, and in 1973-1980 by L.V. Kopeikina, joined the excavations. After the death of L.V. Kopeikina in 1981 and until 1990, the State Hermitage expedition was headed by Ya.V. Domanskyi, (in 1991, S.L. Soloviov took his place for one year), and then Ya.V. Domanskyi headed it again

[1] Смирнов О. Нові монети римського часу з острова Березань // Борисфеніка II: пам'яті В.В. Крутілова (археологічні дослідження острова Березань у контексті європейської історії), 5-6 травня 2021 р. Миколаїв: НДЦ «Лукомор'є», 2021. С. 70.

from 1999 to 2003, and from 2004 to 2018 the detachment (expedition) was headed by D.Ye. Chystov.

Regarding the expedition of the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, after the death of V.V. Lapin, in 1982=1984 it was headed by S.N. Mazarati. She studied two digs: the north-eastern 'R-1' (ukr.'P-1') and the south-eastern, later called Temenos.

After a 3-year break, V.V. Nazarov became the head of Kyiv expedition (1988-2004). He continued the excavations of S.N. Mazarati at the excavation unit 'T' (Temenos). There, in addition to the previously found round monolithic stone altar, he discovered the walls of the fence and the remains of the temple.

In 2004, V.V. Krutilov took the place of V.V. Nazarov. He continued to study the temenos found by V.V. Nazarov and enlarged the dig. Architectural remains dated to the end of the 6th – the beginning of the 5th century BCE were found on the territory of the excavation unit 'T', including the half-dugouts, utility pits, the remains of the so-called 'northern fence' of the temenos and iron workshop made of raw clay bricks. Since 2019, the expedition was headed by O.I. Smyrnov and D.V. Bondarenko.

In 2006 on the island of Berezan, a detachment that included the employees and trainees of the Laboratory of Archeology and Ethnology of V.O. Sukhomlynskyi National University of Mykolaiv began to work as part of Berezan Archaeological Expedition of the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine headed by a junior research assistant of the IA NAS of Ukraine V.V. Krutilov. They carried out work to study 'HSh' (Hrabizhnytskyi Shurf (ukr.'ГШ') / Robber's Shovel Test Pit), dug to the north of the excavation unit 'T'[2]. Today, these are the major excavation units where archaeological research has been conducting.

As for the Roman times period, it is represented by a large number of materials: ceramics, epigraphic finds, and damaged archaeological objects (remains of dwellings, utility pits, etc.). Almost all researchers of the site have singled out single artifacts from Roman times. Unfortunately, the cultural layers of the first centuries of the New Era were destroying starting from the construction of the Turkish fortress to the works that preceded World War II. And nowadays, the process of destruction is still in progress due to large-scale grave robbery.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, these layers were subjected to extensive damage by robbers, as evidenced by reports repeatedly drawn up by the heads of the expedition and the senior management of the National Historical and Archeological Reserve 'Olbia'. In recent years, during archaeological studies, the coins of Roman times have usually been found in mixed redeposited layers.

Coinage, first in the Roman Republic and then in the Empire, differed significantly from the coinage of the Greek policies[3]. The whole system did not have a great variety of weight standards but was more subject to the nominal value. Roman denarii and aurei of the Empire period were widely used in territories that were not part of the Roman state, not to mention the border areas and territories of satellite states. Roman influence on Olbia state could be attributed to the reign of Septimius Severus[4]. Olbia minted a copper coin of the Roman system and uses Roman silver in both local and foreign markets.

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[3] Казаманова Л.Н. Введение в античную нумизматику. Москва: Издательство МГУ, 1969. С. 55.

[4] Ibid. С. 120-121.

Currently, we can analyze five coins from the island of Berezan, found at the end of the 20th – to the beginning of the 21st century (excavation units 'R-1 V' (ukr. 'P-1 B') and 'T', 'HSh' (Fig. 1)). Excluding the 'coin' found during the excavation unit 'O' study, headed D.Ye. Chystov, the state of which, unfortunately, does not allow analyzing its origin (anepigraphic bronze disk).

Tetrasarius of Emperor Septimius Severus (Olbia mint) (Fig. 2, *1*), which was found in 1989 at the excavation units 'R-I', in the stone wreckage, where there was mixed archaeological material dated from the archaic period of the 6th century BCE to glazed Turkish ceramics. The coin is dated to 198-201 CE.

Obverse: head of Septimius Severus to right.

Reverse: Goddess Tyche, standing to left, holding the steer wheel and the horn of plenty (Cornu Copiae).

Regarding the related material, V.V. Nazarov, based on the coin, dated the architectural remains to Roman times, but today it is necessary to point out once again the fact that the coin was found in a redeposited layer and cannot serve as a chronoindicator of the part of the dig.

Excavation unit 'T' ('Temenos') is located in the central part of the ancient settlement on the island of Berezan in sectors V-III, V-IV (ukr. 'B-III, B-IV') (according to the topographic plan of D.B. Bielienkyi, 1990). It was laid by V.V. Nazarov in 1996 in the place of S.M. Mazarati's shovel test pit of 1984. At present, about 2,000 m^2 of the area have been studied, and the remains of the temple complex of the end of the 6th – the beginning of the 5th century BCE have been discovered with the temple of Aphrodite, residential areas outside the temenos of the same period, as well as deepened into the ground constructions (dugouts and semi-dugouts), and utility pits of the end of the second – third quarter of the 6th century BCE.

The main task of archaeological research at the excavation unit 'T' was a systematic excavation of the area to the west of the temenos. In 1998-1999, V.V. Nazarov laid an additional dig there, which merged S.M. Mazarati's shovel test pit of 1984. Further work was carried out in 2010-2011, 2015, and 2017-2020. As a result of those studies, the remains of two construction periods were found on the territory of the dig. The first is represented by dugouts and semi-dugouts of the middle of the 6th century BCE, the second (the end of the 6th – the first quarter of the 5th century BCE) is represented by two (assertedly) residential blocks, synchronous with the existence of Borysthenes temenos, and included ground-based crude stone constructions, as well as the street that separated those blocks (Fig. 3).

Several coins were found at that excavation unit.

Denarius of Antoninus Pius (silver), from the upper mellow humus layer (in a redeposited state). The coin is dated to 138-161 CE (Fig. 2, *3*).

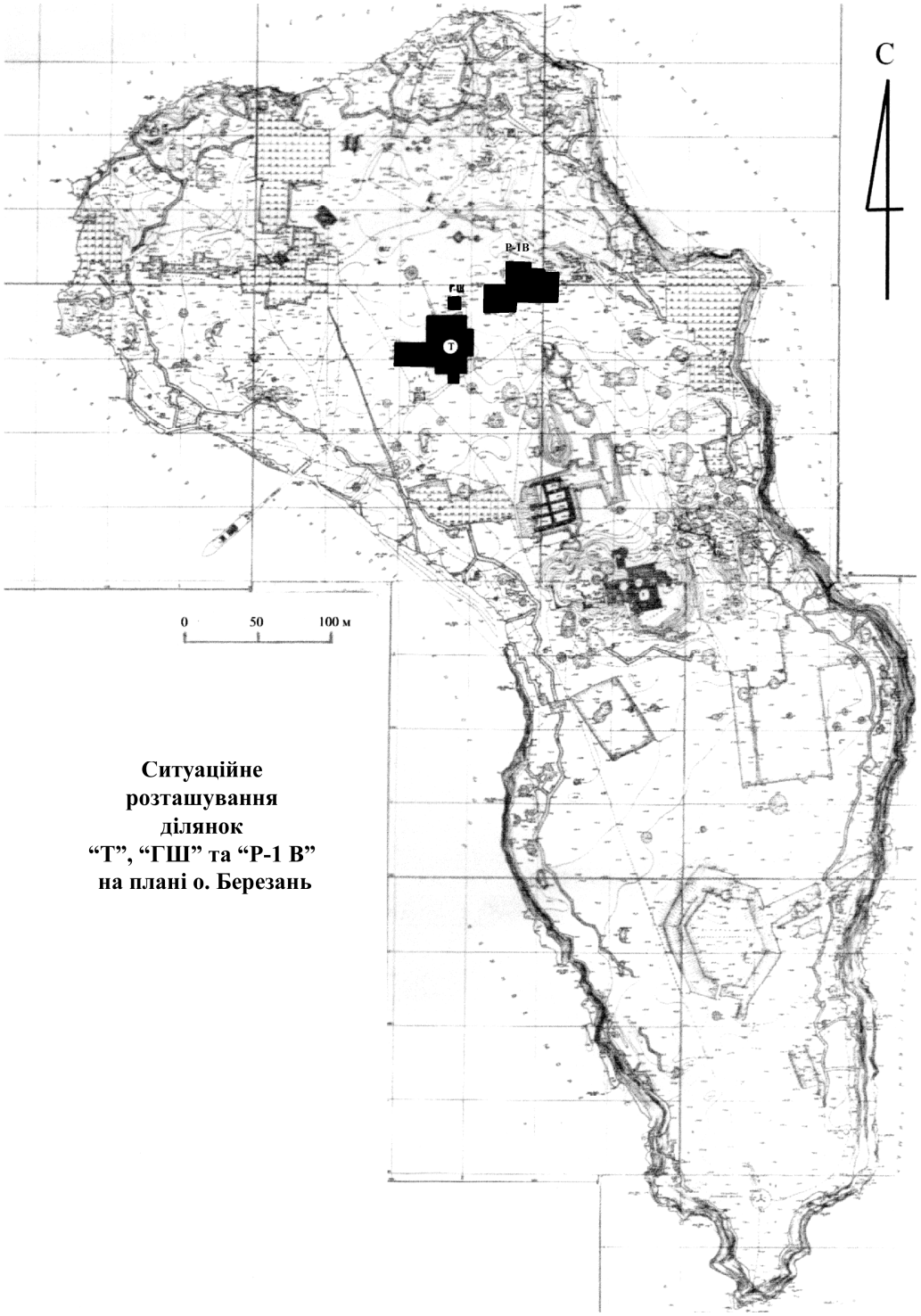
Obverse: Head of Antoninus Pius, laureate, to right.

Reverse: Goddess Vesta?

Dupondius (Olbia mint) (Fig. 2, *2*), an accidental find in a humus layer (in a redeposited state) at the excavation unit 'T' in 2017. The coin is dated to 196-197 CE according to V.O. Anokhin.

Obverse: Bull standing, to left.

Reverse: Eagle holding wreath in beak, to left.



Ситуаційне розташування ділянок "Т", "ГШ" та "Р-1 В" на плані о. Березань

Fig. 1. Situational plan of Berezan Island with excavation unit "T", "HSh" and R-1V.

Fig. 2. Coins from excavation units “T” and R-1V.

Fig. 3. Excavation unit "T"-2020.

In the assemblage of archeological artifacts from the study of Berezan Island in 2004 (works headed by V.V. Nazarov, excavation unit 'T', studied by O.I. Smyrnov and D.V. Bondarenko in the Laboratory of Archeology and Ethnology of V.O. Sukhomlynskyi National University of Mykolaiv), a copper coin of Roman times was found – dupondius (Olbia mint) (Figs. 4, *2*), minted in 170-180, Archon Dada son of Satyros.

Obverse: Head of Apollo, to right, OLBIOΠO to left.

Reverse: Facing archer, holding unclear object in right hand, bow and arrow in left hand, unreadable inscription.

In 2006, a dig 'HSh' was laid in the place of one of the robber's shovel test pits in the north-eastern part of the island[5]. In 2021, this excavation unit was the main area for the study of ancient Borysthenes (Fig. 5).

During the season of 2020, a silver coin, a denarius of Antoninus Pius (silver, Rome mint), Size: 16 mm, was found in the upper mixed layer at the mentioned excavation unit (in a redeposited state).

Obverse: ANTONINVS AVG. PIVS P.P. IMP. II. Head of Antoninus Pius, laureate, to right.

Reverse: TR. POT. XX COS III – Annona (Harvest) standing to right, left foot on the ship's bow, holding the modius of grain on foot, holding steer wheel in right hand, the reign of Antoninus Pius 138-161 (Fig. 4, *1*). The coin is dated to 156-157.

[5] Крутілов В., Смирнов О., Бондаренко Д. Керамічні обпалювальні печі Борисфена середини VI ст. до н.е. // Емінак. 2014. № 3-4 (9) (липень-грудень). С. 30-31.

Fig. 4. Coins from excavation units “T” and “HSh”.

Fig. 5. The excavation unit “HSh”-2021.

Such a small number of Roman times coins is caused by robbers’ looting. But even this number provides an opportunity to try to reconstruct life on the island in Roman times and to continue the discussion about the role of settlement in the system of defense and trade.

All coins can be nominally localized in one area of the island. The dating of the finds falls within fairly narrow chronological boundaries – the middle and end of the 2nd century CE, which confirms the conclusions and assumptions of O.M. Zograph and P.Y. Karyshkovskyi[6] on the ways of getting Roman silver into the Olbia state, primarily as a payment to the Roman military men (theoretical possibility of the presence of a Roman garrison on the island). Also, the coin finds indicate the spread of Olbia bronze coins outside the city (trade operations in the settlement and economic unity with the local Olbia market)[7]. This gives us the opportunity to support the assumption of the existence of Berezan Roman military fortification (S.B. Buiskykh), subordinate to the detachment of Roman troops garrisoned in Olbia in the second half of the 2nd – the beginning of the 3rd century CE.

[6] Карышковский П.О. Монеты Ольвии. Киев: Наукова думка, 1988. С. 124-125.
[7] Карышковкий П.О. Монеты острова Березань по материалам раскопок 1928 г. // Краткие сообщение Института археологии АН УССР. 1959. Вып. 9. С. 85-89.

This type of archaeological component will allow us to reconstruct more precisely the Roman times historical events on the island of Berezan.

Further archaeological research should enlarge the Roman times source base, which will allow researchers to continue the scientific discussion on the military, religious and economic role of Berezan island in the life of the Lower Buh region during the Roman times. Speaking about the place of Berezan in the structure of relations in the region in the 2nd – the beginning of the 3rd century, we point to the need of revising the Roman times archaeological material of all years of research on the island. Classification of all types of artifacts (ceramics, epigraphy, numismatics, etc.) and their interpretation in the context of the modern development of archaeological science taking into account the updated information will help to reconstruct the Roman times history of the region.

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Монети римського часу з острова Березань – знахідки кінця XX – початку XXI ст.

У статті розглядається монетний матеріал римського часу, який був виявлений під час археологічних досліджень античного поселення на острові Березань.

Античне поселення на острові Березань, у першу чергу, відоме як перша грецька колонія Північного Причорномор'я. Крім архаїчного періоду VI-V ст. до н.е. на острові досліджуються об'єкти, які відносяться до різних історичних епох. Римський час репрезентований великою кількістю матеріалів: кераміка, епіграфічні знахідки, порушені археологічні об'єкти (залишки жител, господарчі ями й ін.). Майже всі дослідники пам'ятки відокремлювали поодинокі артефакти Римського часу. На жаль, культурні шари перших століть нової ери зазнали знищення під час будівельних робіт, починаючи з будівництва турецької фортеці й закінчуючи роботами, які передували Другій світовій війні. На сучасному етапі культурні шари знищуються масштабними

грабіжницькими роботами. За останні роки в ході досліджень, як правило у змішаних перевідкладених шарах, були знайдені монети римського часу.

Монети II-III ст. н.е. є рідкими археологічними артефактами під час досліджень на острові, але, у той же час, не є унікальними знахідками.

На сьогодні не існує жодної праці узагальненого плану стосовно каталогізації нумізматичного матеріалу римського часу виявленого більше ніж за сторічну історії археологічного вивчення античного поселення на острові Березань. Монети зустрічаються в археологічних звітах і публікаціях як додатковий матеріал. Такі знахідки вказані у працях П.Й. Каришковського, В.А. Анохіна, М.Ф. Болтенка, С.Б. Буйських, В.В. Крутілова й ін.

Наприкінці XX – початку XXI ст. були виявлені монети римського часу на різних ділянках досліджень острову та під керівництвом різних дослідників. В.В. Назаров виявив монети на ділянках «Р-1В» і «Т», В.В. Крутілов на ділянці «Т» і «О», О.І. Смирновим і Д.В. Бондаренко на ділянці «ГШ». Увесь матеріал чітко датується II-III ст. н.е. та класифікується римською й ольвійською чеканкою з бронзи та срібла. Відноситься до періодів правління імператорів Антоніна Пія і Септимія Севера й Архонта Ольвії Дад с. Сатіра. Це дає нам можливість підтримати припущення українських археологів про існування у другій половині II – на початку III ст. н.е. на острові Березань римського укріплення, що підпорядковувався загону римських військових, які розміщувалися в Ольвії.

Ключові слова: монета, острів, ділянка, римський час, поселення, Березань, Ольвія

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