

AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY HOARD DISCOVERED AT OLTINA, CĂLĂRAȘI COUNTY

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Cuvinte cheie: *Ragusa, Imperiul otoman, tezaur monetar, taler, altmışlik, ikilik, yüzlük, Țara Românească.*

Abstract: *The authors publish a hoard comprised of 62 eighteenth century coins discovered in the village of Oltina, Unirea commune, Călărași County, part of the Lower Danube Museum's collections. The coins were minted in the Republic of Ragusa and in the Ottoman Empire between 1755 and 1798. The most recent coin, establishing the hoard's end date, was issued in the name of Sultan Selim III in his ninth year of reign (1797/1798). The hoard was most probably hidden during Osman Pazvantoğlu's raiding expeditions into Wallachia around the year 1800. Aspects regarding the diffusion of Ragusian coinage in Wallachia at the end of the medieval age and the beginning of the modern one are discussed.*

Rezumat: *Autorii publică un tezaur alcătuit din 62 de monede din secolul al XVIII-lea, descoperit în satul Oltina, com. Unirea, jud. Călărași și care face parte din colecția Muzeului Dunării de Jos din Călărași. Monedele au fost bătute în Republica Ragusa și Imperiul Otoman între 1755-1798. Cea mai recentă monedă, care stabilește data de încheiere a tezaurului, a fost bătută în numele sultanului Selim III în anul 9 de domnie (1797/1798). Depozitul a fost ascuns, cel mai probabil în contextul expedițiilor de jaf în Țara Românească din jurul anului 1800, ale armatelor lui Osman Pazvantoğlu. Sunt discutate aspecte ale difuziunii monedei ragusane în Țara Românească la sfârșitul epocii medievale și începutul celei moderne.*

The numismatic collection of the Lower Danube Museum in Călărași holds sixty-two silver coins from a hoard discovered in the village of Oltina, Unirea commune, Călărași County. No details are known regarding its discovery or if the pieces have been fully recovered. Based on the denominations and the issuers the hoard's structure is as follows: 28 thalers issued by the Republic of Ragusa between 1755 and 1771; 34 coins of the Ottoman Empire issued during the reigns of Sultans Mustafa III (1757-1774) and Selim III (1789-1807). The Ottoman coins have the following chronological and typological distribution: 32 *altmışlik* coins (60 para) from Mustafa III, one *yüzlük* (100

* Bucharest Municipality Museum.

** The Lower Danube Museum in Călărași.

para) and one *ikilik* (80 para) from Selim III, all minted at Constantinople (Islâmbol). The oldest coin from the hoard is a thaler issued by Ragusa in 1755 while the most recent coin is the *ikilik* issued in the name of Selim III during his ninth year of reign corresponding to the years 1797/1798. The hoard's structure indicates that the lot within the museum's collection doesn't reflect its original content, as between the latest coin and the one preceding it, a timespan of seven years exists. Also, we notice the lack of coins from the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid I. Most probably the hoard wasn't fully recovered and some of the coins were dispersed immediately after its discovery.

The thaler, the large silver denomination, first appears in Wallachian circulation during the second half of the 16th century. Written documents usually don't mention their type; however, coin finds indicate the categorical presence of large numbers of thalers minted in central and western Europe¹. During the 16th century, amid the small silver denominations' devaluation, European monetary markets witnessed their gradual replacement with higher value coins of the thaler type². Toward the end of the 16th century and during the 17th-18th centuries, documentary references related to the thaler increase in Wallachia. The twenty-eight Ragusian thalers within the hoard discovered at Oltina, all in a good preservation state, highlight the existence of important trade relations between Wallachia and the Republic of Ragusa. The first mentions of this commercial relationship date back to 1349, to the treaty conclude by Tsar Stefan Uroš IV Dušan (1331-1355) with the Republic of Ragusa establishing that the traders are free to do business with any product *"only not to transport weapons in Bulgaria, nor into Basarab's land, nor in Hungary, nor in Bosnia, nor in Greece, nor in any other country except for his land"*³. Thus, the Ragusians were entitled to move goods from Serbia to Wallachia. During the 14th century, a prosperous community of Ragusan merchants existed at Târgoviște. Between the 15th and 18th centuries, the commercial relations were profitable for both sides⁴. The merchants ensured the link between western Europe and the Balkan Peninsula, transporting goods (leather, wool, wax) and silver through continental or maritime routes⁵. Foreign travelers like Franco Sivori noted that ships carrying leather and wax left the port of Constanța for Constantinople, Ragusa or Ancona. Ragusian coin issues like the grossetto, the three-groschen and the thaler are frequent in Wallachian archaeological finds, in necropoles or in hoards, from the 17th-18th centuries: the Albă-Postăvari Church, the Olari Church⁶, Tineretului Park⁷ (Bucharest), Tunari (Ilfov County)⁸, Cătălui – Căscioarele (Călărași County)⁹. However, the best represented denomination to be found in hoards is the 18th century Ragusian thaler whose presence on the Wallachian market has also been signaled at the

¹ Murgescu 1996, p. 139.

² Velter, Știrbu 2002, p. 273.

³ Panaitescu 1944, p. 106.

⁴ Grecu 1949, p. 105-112.

⁵ Velter *et alii* 2008, p. 157.

⁶ Velter *et alii* 2008, p. 157-158.

⁷ Velter 2005, p. 74.

⁸ Velter *et alii* 2008, p. 149-176.

⁹ Cantacuzino, Trohani 1979, p. 317.

beginning of the 19th century¹⁰. For the 18th century we note several hoards containing Ragusian thalers, usually associated with Ottoman coinage: Târnava, Dolj County¹¹; Băiculești¹² and Câmpulung¹³, Argeș County; Nucșoara¹⁴ and Jugureni¹⁵, Prahova County; unknown location in the former Vlașca County¹⁶; Roseți, Ialomița County¹⁷; Arțari, Călărași County¹⁸ and around Râmnicu Sărat, Buzău County¹⁹.

During the 17th century, the share of Ottoman coinage in Wallachian circulation had reduced compared to central and western European denominations, a situation that would change beginning with the early 18th century. The activity of the mints in Constantinople and of those in Egypt intensified especially during the second half of the 18th century amid the Ottomans' conflict with Russia and Austria when the issuing of large quantities of currency sustained the war effort. As a result of its commercial links with the Ottoman Empire, Wallachia's main circulating currency was the Ottoman one, a situation that would persist until the war of 1768-1774. An analysis of Wallachian coin hoards brought about by the conflicts between the Ottoman Empire, Russia and Austria during the late 18th century reveals that some deposits are almost solely composed of Ottoman coins issued in the name of Sultans Ahmed III, Mahmud I, Mustafa III, Abdülhamid I and Selim III²⁰.

Within the present hoard we notice the presence of the lot of 60 para coins, a monetary type (double zolota, altmışlık) first issued during the reign of Mustafa III when the Ottoman monetary system returned to the old zolota type coins and introduced the 15 para coin. Researchers attribute the emergence of this denomination to the repeated devaluations – in terms of silver content and net weight – of the kuruş and its subdivisions. This devaluation directly led to the necessity of issuing new species, with a value close to that of the 40 para coins issued during Ahmed III. Thus, the 60 para denomination appeared, with an initial net weight of 29 g²¹. These 60 para coins quickly spread on the Wallachian market and enjoyed success among the population²². The present hoard contains 32 such issues bearing the name of Sultan Mustafa III.

The lot of Ottoman coins is completed with two coins from Selim III, an 80 para coin (*ikilik*) and a 100 para coin (*yüzlük*). The former, the equivalent of the two kuruş coin, was first issued during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid I (1774-1789) with the aim of sustaining the war of 1787-1792 and became the most valuable Ottoman silver coin²³. The latter was first minted during the reign of Selim III against the backdrop of the

¹⁰ See for example the hoard from Costești, Argeș County; Maschio 2003, p. 233-239.

¹¹ Vilcu 2009, p. 279.

¹² Vilcu 2002, p. 251-260.

¹³ Smaranda, Trâmbaciu 1985, p. 329-332.

¹⁴ Vilcu 2009, p. 282.

¹⁵ Vilcu 2009, p. 284.

¹⁶ Vilcu 2009, p. 281.

¹⁷ Vilcu 2003, p. 415-417.

¹⁸ Vilcu 2009, p. 280-281.

¹⁹ Vilcu 2009, p. 280.

²⁰ Vilcu 2009, p. 212-213.

²¹ Vilcu 2009, p. 118-126.

²² Vilcu, Stancu 2005, p. 470.

²³ Vilcu 2009, p. 230.

gradual devaluation of 60 and 80 para coins. This type had real success in Wallachia as hoards containing this denomination are very numerous²⁴.

The total worth of the hoard, 2100 para, to which we add the 28 Ragusian thaler, most probably represents the result of a relatively consistent commercial transaction.

The most recent coin from the hoard discovered at Oltina is the 80 para coin issued at the Empire's capital in the name of Sultan Selim III during the ninth year of his reign corresponding to the years 1797/1798. The hoard's end date offers an indication regarding the moment of its burial during Osman Pazvantoğlu's raiding expeditions into Wallachia²⁵ around the year 1800.

Catalogue

THE REPUBLIC OF RAGUSA

Thaler

SCWC 2002, 1055, KM#18

1755

Av. RECTOR REIP – RHACVSIN. Bust to the left.

Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1755 / C – B. Coat of arms.

1. Inv. 11891; 28,03 g; 41 mm.

1756

Av. RECTOR REIP - RHACVSIN. Bust to the left.

Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RHAC 1756 / C – B. Coat of arms.

2. Inv. 11892; 28,35 g; 42 mm.

1758

Av. RECTOR REIP - RHACVSIN. Bust to the left.

Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1758 / C – B. Coat of arms.

3. Inv. 11893; 28,51 g; 41 mm.

4. Inv. 11894; 28,29 g; 40 mm.

1759

Av. RECTOR REIP - RHACVSIN. Bust to the left.

Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1759 / C – B. Coat of arms.

5. Inv. 11895; 28,24 g; 41 mm.

1762

Av. RECTOR REIP - RHACVSIN. Bust to the left.

Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1762 / G – B. Coat of arms.

²⁴ Vîlcu 2009, p. 231.

²⁵ Bălan 2002, p. 488-489.

- 6. Inv. 11904; 28,56 g; 42 mm.
- 7. Inv. 11901; 28,55 g; 42 mm.
- 8. Inv. 11902; 28,32 g; 42 mm.
- 9. Inv. 11903; 28,24 g; 42 mm.
- 10. Inv. 11905; 28,06 g; 41 mm.

1763

- Av. RECTOR REIP - RHACVSIN. Bust to the left.
- Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1763 / G – B. Coat of arms.
- 11. Inv. 11906; 28,18 g; 42 mm.

1765

- Av. RECTOR REIP - RHACVSIN. Bust spre stânga.
- Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1765 / G – B. Coat of arms.
- 12. Inv. 11908; 28,18 g; 41 mm.
- 13. Inv. 11907; 28,11 g; 42 mm.

1766

- Av. RECTOR REIP - RHACVSIN / G – B. Bust to the left.
- Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1766 / G – M. Coat of arms.
- 14. Inv. 11910; 28,41 g; 41 mm.

- Av. RECTOR REI - RHACVSIN / G – B Bust to the left.
- Rv. DVCAT ET SE - M REI RAC 1766 / G – A. Coat of arms.
- 15. Inv. 11909; 28,41 g; 40,5 mm.
- 16. Inv. 11911; 28,20 g; 41 mm.

1767

- Av. RECTOR REI - RHACVSIN / G – B. Bust to the left.
- Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1767 / D – M. Coat of arms.
- 17. Inv. 11912; 28,40 g; 41 mm.
- 18. Inv. 11913; 28,32 g; 40 mm.

- Av. RECTOR REI - RHACVSIN / D – M. Bust to the left.
- Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1767 / D – M. Coat of arms.
- 19. Inv. 11914; 28,02 g; 40 mm.

1768

- Av. RECTOR REI - RHACVSIN / G – A. Bust to the left.
- Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1768 / G – A. Coat of arms.
- 20. Inv. 11917; 27,89 g; 40 mm.

- Av. RECTOR REI - RHACVSIN / D – M. Bust to the left.
- Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1768 / D – M. Coat of arms.

21. Inv. 11916; 28,63 g; 40,5 mm.

Av. RECTOR REI - RHACVSIN / G – B. Bust to the left.

Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1768 / D – M. Coat of arms.

22. Inv. 11915; 28,12 g; 40 mm.

1769

Av. RECTOR REI - RHACVSIN / G – B. Bust spre stânga.

Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1769 / D – M. Coat of arms.

23. Inv. 11918; 28,10 g; 41 mm.

1771

Av. RECTOR REI - RHACVSIN. C – A. Bust to the left.

Rv. DVCAT ET SEM - REIP RAC 1771 / D – M. Coat of arms.

24. Inv. 11898; 28,48 g; 40 mm.

25. Inv. 11900; 28,40 g; 40 mm.

26. Inv. 11896; 28,30 g; 40 mm.

27. Inv. 11899; 28,13 g; 40 mm.

28. Inv. 11897; 28,01 g; 40 mm.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Mustafa III (1757-1774)

Altmışlık (60 para)

İslâmbol

Nuri Pere 632

Year 3 = 1759/1760

Av. Essultan Mustafa bin Ahmed han dame mülkühu duribe fi Islâmbol 1171

Rv. Sultanül berreyni ve hakanül bahreyni essultan bin (3) essultan

29. Inv. 11882; 28,25 g; 44 mm.

30. Inv. 11874; 28,09 g; 42 mm.

31. Inv. 11885; 27,90 g; 43 mm.

Year 8 = 1764/1765

Av. Essultan Mustafa bin Ahmed han dame mülkühu duribe fi Islâmbol 1171

Rv. Sultanül berreyni ve hakanül bahreyni essultan bin (8) essultan

32. Inv. 11887; 28,35 g; 42 mm.

33. Inv. 11857; 28,26 g; 42 mm.

34. Inv. 11860; 28,14 g; 44 mm.

35. Inv. 11879; 27,83 g; 42 mm.

36. Inv. 11868; 27,56 g; 43 mm.

37. Inv. 11883; 27,49 g; 41 mm.

Year 9 = 1765/1766

Av. Essultan Mustafa bin Ahmed han dame mülkühu duribe fi Islâmbol 1171

Rv. Sultanül berreyni ve hakanül bahreyni essultan bin (9) essultan

38. Inv. 11873; 29,16 g; 43 mm.

39. Inv. 11871; 28,23 g; 43 mm.

40. Inv. 11875; 28,02 g; 43 mm.

41. Inv. 11862; 27,93 g; 42 mm.

42. Inv. 11886; 27,90 g; 41 mm.

43. Inv. 11877; 27,70 g; 43 mm.

44. Inv. 11881; 27,37 g; 43 mm.

Year 80 = 1766/1767

Av. Essultan Mustafa bin Ahmed han dame mülkühu duribe fi Islâmbol 1171

Rv. Sultanül berreyni ve hakanül bahreyni essultan bin (80) essultan

45. Inv. 11861; 28,65 g; 43 mm.

46. Inv. 11866; 28,53 g; 44 mm.

47. Inv. 11884; 28,36 g; 44 mm.

48. Inv. 11880; 28,20 g; 43 mm.

49. Inv. 11870; 28,12 g; 44 mm.

50. Inv. 11869; 27,84 g; 43 mm.

Year 81 = 1767/1768

Av. Essultan Mustafa bin Ahmed han dame mülkühu duribe fi Islâmbol 1171

Rv. Sultanül berreyni ve hakanül bahreyni essultan bin (81) essultan

51. Inv. 11864; 29,28 g; 45 mm.

52. Inv. 11872; 28,84 g; 43 mm.

53. Inv. 11888; 28,74 g; 42 mm.

54. Inv. 11858; 28,26 g; 43 mm.

55. Inv. 11863; 28,23 g; 43 mm.

56. Inv. 11867; 28,18 g; 43 mm.

57. Inv. 11878; 27,84 g; 43 mm.

58. Inv. 11865; 27,38 g; 43 mm.

Year 82 = 1768/1769

Av. Essultan Mustafa bin Ahmed han dame mülkühu duribe fi Islâmbol 1171

Rv. Sultanül berreyni ve hakanül bahreyni essultan bin (82) essultan

59. Inv. 11876; 28,77 g; 41 mm.

60. Inv. 11859; 27,98 g; 43 mm.

Selim III (1789-1807)

Yuzluk (100 para), Year 3 = 1790/1791

Islâmbol

Nuri Pere 705

Av. Tuğra. Duribe fi Islâmbol 1203

Rv. Sultanül berreyni ve hakanül bahreyni essultan bin essultan (3).

61. Inv. 11889; 31,92 g; 43 mm.

Ikilik (80 para), Year 9 = 1797/1798

Islâmbol

Nuri Pere 706

Av. Tuğra

Rv. (9) Duribe fi Islâmbol 1203

62. Inv. 11890; 25,20 g; 41 mm.

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Planşa I-XI: Monede din tezaurul descoperit la Oltina, com. Unirea, jud. Călăraşi.

Plate I-XI: Coins from the hoard discovered at Oltina, Unirea commune, Călăraşi County.



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Plate I.



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Plate II.



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Plate III.



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Plate IV.



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Plate V.



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Plate VI.



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Plate VII.



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Plate VIII.



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Plate IX.



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Plate X.



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Plate XI.