

A PRESUMABLY LOST COIN AND A FICTICIOUS PAGE FROM THE HISTORY OF MOLDAVIAN COINAGE AT THE END OF 14th CENTURY: SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE SO-CALLED ISSUES OF “JUGA VODĂ I”, ALIAS GEORGE KORiatovič

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A hundred and twenty years ago, in 1887, the Hungarian numismatist L. Réthy published a previously unknown type of “silver solidus” from the stupendously rich collection of Hungarian and Central and South-Eastern European medieval coins of Ignác Dobóczy, kept in the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest¹.

Because the original publication is a scarce one, and there are not many scholars interested in this topic having a good command of the Hungarian language, we will reproduce further the full translation of Réthy's description of this coin: “In Dobóczy's collection, one could first mention a silver solidus, which presents on one of its sides, in a double dotted circle, the Hungarian-Anjou coat-of-arms, surrounded by three five-rayed stars and by an inscription, of which only some parts are still legible: ...*NIDOMINI***m*..... On the other side of the coin, in a double dotted circle, is represented the image of Saint George mounted on horse, spearing the dragon, and a fragmentary inscription too: *MONETA***m*.....*irm*”².

In spite of the unclear meaning of the inscriptions (which, in fact, remained not deciphered, until fairly recently), the Hungarian numismatist did not hesitate to assert that: “Doubtlessly, the coin is of Moldavian origin, and being such, it must be attributed to the first Moldavian prince known from the domestic chancellery sources, the Lithuanian duke *George Koriatovics* [sic!]”³.

Réthy supposed that the unusual representation depicted on the “reverse” of the coin: St George killing the dragon, which, obviously, was very unusual for the common designs repertoire of the medieval Moldavian coinage, was borrowed from the late 14th century Russian coinage, where, he presumed, this monetary type was very popular.

The issuing authority, to whom Réthy assigned the coin, was a pretty elusive and mysterious ruler of the Lithuanian principality of Podolia at the end of 14th century, called Jurij or Jurg (George) Koriatovič. Jurij Koriatovič was mentioned by few Russian chronicles, as being involved the political events which took place in Moldavia during the mid 1370's and finally, being killed by the Moldavians⁴. Moreover, Réthy supposed that George Koriatovič was the first Moldavian ruler to strike his own coinage⁵.

¹ For I. Dobóczy's life and works see: J. Hampel, *Dobóczy Ignác halála*, in *Archaeologiai Értesítő*, 12, 1892, p. 184 and Mária F. Fehér and L. Huszár, *Bibliographia Numismatice Hungariae – Bibliography of the Hungarian Numismatics – Die Bibliographie der ungarischen Numismatik – A magyar numizmatika bibliográfiája*, Budapest, 1977, col. 77, 157, 173, 209, 229 and 286-287.

² L. Réthy, *A Dobóczy-féle oláh éremgyűtemény. Első közlés*, in *Archaeologiai Értesítő*, N. S., 8, 1887, p. 241, fig. no 1.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ Some Romanian historians considered that the information on Jurij Koriatovič's reign in Moldavia were entirely fictitious, see: N. Iorga, *Jurg Coriatovici și Moldova*, in *Revista Istorică*, 14, 1928, 7-8, p. 320; P. P. Panaitescu, *Iourij (Iourg) Koriatovič prince lithuanien et la Moldavie*, in *Juvilejnij zbirnik na pošanu akademika Mihajla Sergieviča Grušev'skogo*, vol. I, Kiev, 1928, p. 462-465; N. Grigoraș, *Țara Românească a Moldovei până la Ștefan cel Mare*, Jassy, 1978, p. 44; C. Cihodaru, *Din nou despre Jurg Coriatovici și Juga Vodă*, in *Acta Moldaviae Meridionalis. Anuarul Muzeului Județean Vaslui*, 1, 1979, p. 139-157 and *Idem*, *Alexandru cel Bun (23 aprilie 1399 – 1 ianuarie 1432)*, Jassy, 1984, p. 71. Other historians considered that Jurij (Jurg) Koriatovič was involved indeed in the Moldavian history, and had effectively ruled, at least, in the South-Eastern parts of the country: during the years 1375-1377, see: D. Onciul, *Juga Vodă domn al Moldovei la 1374 și 1400*, in *Convorbiri literare*, 18, 1884, I, p. 1-9; V. A. Boldur, *Die Herrschaft des litauischen Fürsten Jurii Koriat in der Moldau (1374-1379)*, in *Südost-Forschungen*, 32, 1973, p. 24-27; V. Spinei, *Moldova in secolele XI-XIV*, Bucharest, 1982, p. 327-328 and S. Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei. Probleme controversate*, Jassy, 1997, p. 117-276, passim. According to V. Spinei, quite likely, Jurij's reign in Moldavia could be dated during the years around 1375-1377.

⁵ L. Réthy, *op. cit.*, p. 241. Attributing the first medieval Moldavian monetary issues to George Koriatovič, Réthy collided directly with the opinions of the most important academic authority in the field of Romanian numismatics of that period: D. A. Sturdza (For Sturdza's mainly scholarly contribution in the field of the Romanian medieval coinage see: D. A. Sturdza, *Uebersicht der Münzen und Medaillen des Fürstenthums Romanien (Moldau und Walachei)*, in *NZ*, 4, 1872, later published also in a separate pamphlet, printed in Vienna, in 1874). Sturdza's ideas about the date of the beginnings of the Moldavian coinage represented the common wisdom on this topic during the entire late 19th and early 20th century. Sturdza asserted on several occasions that the first Moldavian anonymous coins were struck by an unknown ruler, who reigned before Bogdan I, the founder of the autonomous

In spite of the well established professional prestige enjoyed by the Hungarian scholar among the European numismatists during the late 19th and early 20th century⁶, and the challenging nature of Réthy's assertions regarding the beginning of the Moldavian coinage, his statements, surprisingly, triggered almost no response in Romanian numismatic circles⁷. Sturdza preferred to declare the issues as fakes, in a paper read at one meeting of the Romanian Academy, which was never fully published⁸. The only Romanian numismatist who paid more attention to the question of the so-called issues of George Koriatovič was N. Docan. He corrected Réthy's description, correctly identifying it as being the obverse of the coin the part bearing the representation of St Georges. According to Docan the obverse inscription read: **MONETA** *.....**NI**RM, meanwhile the reverse one read: ...**NDOMINI** *..... However, in spite of these small corrections, Docan accepted both Réthy's attribution and dating of this strange coin, because they seemed to confirm his own supposition regarding the chronology of the coins issued by the Moldavian Prince Peter I. Unlike Sturdza and Fischer, Docan considered that Peter's I groats bearing on the reverse the representation of a parted shield with seven lilies were, in fact, the first issues of the Moldavian ruler, and, subsequently, those with two lilies, the latest ones⁹. Docan already had remarked that such a chronological order of Peter I groats was also suggested by the hoards assembling and by the fact that all the issues of Stephen I,

Moldavian state (i. e., during the 1340's or 1350's), see: D. A. Sturdza, *op. cit.*, p. 49-50. The issue attributed by Sturdza to "an unknown Moldavian ruler from the mid 14th century" corresponds to the anonymous 1/2 groat described in the main Romanian reference catalogue, by O. Luchian, *Moldova*, in G. Buzdugan, O. Luchian and C. C. Opreşcu, *Monede şi bancnote româneşti*, Bucharest, 1977, p. 64, no 462 (thereafter abbreviated *MBR*). Sturdza also assigned some coins to Bogdan I himself, see: *Ibidem*, p. 50-51. The issue then attributed by Sturdza to Bogdan I corresponds to the issues listed in *MBR*, p. 72, nos 543-544. Sturdza's opinions about the chronology and the attributions of the early Moldavian medieval issues were later followed also by E. Fischer, *Beitrag zur Münzkunde des Fürstenthumes Moldau*, in *Jahrbuch des Bukowiner Landes-Museum*, 9, 1901, p. 3-53. (We have quoted the separate pamphlet, published in Tchernovitz, 1901, p. 15, nos 1-5, pl. I, nos 1-4). How far from reality were these early attributions is shown by the fact that now-a-days the first coin type is currently attributed to Alexander I (1400-1432) and the second one to Peter II (1443-1449). According to O. Iliescu, Alexander's anonymous "1/2 groats" of this type were struck during the last years of the reign, in the municipal mint of Chilia, see: O. Iliescu, *Émissions monétaires moldaves pour Kilia en 1426-1428*, in *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*, 4, 2001, p. 153-166. The first scholar to put under question the chronology of the first Moldavian medieval issues was the great historian D. Onciul, *Din istoria românilor*, Bucharest, 1906, p. 35. According to Onciul, the first Moldavian coins were struck only during Peter's I reign (cca 1375-1391). However, only in 1915, after Sturdza's death, C. Moisil succeeded to prove undoubtedly that the earliest Moldavian coins were struck by Peter I, see: C. Moisil, *Contribuţiuni la istoria monetăriei vechi româneşti*, in *BSNR*, 12, 1915, 23, p. 16-17. The coins previously attributed by Sturdza to an "anonymous Moldavian prince ruling before Bogdan I" were correctly assigned to Alexander I (1399-1432) by R. Gassauer, *Monede româneşti vechi*, in *Anuarul Liceului "Ştefan cel Mare" în Suceava publicat la finele anului şcolar 1929/30*, Suceava, 1930, p. 4, no 4. However, more difficult has been the identification of the real ruler who struck the coins attributed by Sturdza and Fischer to Bogdan I. In spite of his assertion that the first Moldavian issues were struck by Peter I, Moisil was not in the position to propose any new attribution to the issues previously considered as belonging to Bogdan I. The same Gassauer proved that the inscriptions of the groats with double lilies in the shield, previously attributed by Sturdza and Fischer to Bogdan I, read, in fact: **MONETA PETRI + WEIWO**, R. Gassauer, *Tipuri de monede moldoveneşti inedite*, in *Anuarul Liceului "Ştefan cel Mare" din Suceava publicat la finele anului şcolar 1932/33*, Suceava, 1933, p. 3, no 1, pl. I, no 1. Unfortunately, Gassauer was not able to establish to who's of the two 15th century Moldavian rulers bearing Peter name: Peter II (1443-1449) or Peter III Aaron (1451-1457), should assign these coins. Only during the late 1950's, Iliescu proved, that the entire series of the groats bearing on the obverse the representation of a double lily in the parted shield were struck by Peter II, see: O. Iliescu, *Îndreptări şi întregiri mărunte cu privire la unele emisiuni monetare feudale ale ţărilor române*, in *SCN*, 1, 1957, p. 236-237, fig. no 4. This attribution was followed also by O. Luchian, in *MBR*, p. 72, nos 543-544.

⁶ On L. Réthy's (1854-1914) life and works see: P. Harsányi, *Dr. Réthy László emlékezete*, in *Numizmatikai Közlöny*, 14, 1915, 1, p. 22-28; Mária F. Fehér and L. Huszár, *op. cit.*, col. 19, 38, 67-68, 97, 106, 148-149, 218, 236-237, 264, 276, 324, 377, 422, 436-437, 442 and 507-508 and Hedwig Baloghné Ábrány and F. Soós, *Réthy László*, in *Százéves a Magyar Numizmatikai Társulat 1901-2001*, Budapest, 2001, p. 214-215. Réthy was not only the author of the first really scientific catalogue of the Hungarian coinage *Corpus Nummorum Hungariae*, but also the author of a series of pioneering articles on the Romanian, Serbian, Bosnian and Bulgarian medieval coinages, in a time, when the studies on such topics were at their very beginnings even in those countries, see: L. Réthy, *A Dobóczki-féle oláh éremgyűjtemény. Második befejező közlés*, in *Archaeologiai Értesítő*, N. S., 8, 1887, p. 310-319; Idem, *Redwitz Miklós szörényi bán érmei*, in *Archaeologiai Értesítő*, N. S., 11, 1891, p. 193-198; Idem, *Adalékok a havaselyv vajdaság numismatikájához*, in *Archaeologiai Értesítő*, N. S., 12, 1892, p. 433-436 and Idem, *Déli-szláv és oláh érmek a Weifert-féle gyűjteményben*, in *Archaeologiai Értesítő*, 15, 1895, p. 243-245.

⁷ Réthy's presumption about the dating of the first Moldavian monetary issues is not mentioned by D. A. Sturdza in his last publications on the Romanian medieval numismatics, see: D. A. Sturdza, *Nouă descoperiri numismatice româneşti*, in *Analele Academiei Române – Memoriile Secţiunii Istorice*, 2nd series, 8, 2nd section, Discursuri, memorii şi notiţe, 1885-1886, p. 267-281 and Idem, *Banii moldoveneşti şi munteneneşti*, in B. Petriceicu-Haşdeu, *Etymologicum Magnum Romaniae*, vol. III, Bucharest, 1974, re-ed. by Gr. Brăncuş, s. v. "ban", col. 2428-2446.

⁸ D. A. Sturdza, *Monete de la Iuga şi Despot falsificate la Suceava*, *Analele Academiei Române Partea Administrativă*, 2nd series, 18, 1895-1896, p. 71.

⁹ N. Docan, *Notiţă despre monedele lui Petru Muşat*, in *Analele Academiei Române – Memoriile Secţiunii Istorice*, 30, 1907-1908, p. 148-151.

the successor of Peter I, bear in the shield only the representation of two lilies. Consequently, he considered that the seven lilies represented on the shield of the coins attributed by Réthy and by himself to "Iuga Vodă I", should be an additional proof for the early dating of Peter's I issues with a similar reverse design.

Quite likely, as the new reading of the inscriptions suggest, Docan had the opportunity to come in touch directly with the coin, during one of his visits paid to Réthy in the National Hungarian Museum in Budapest. However, he did not mention an important detail concerning this coin: its weight, which was left unprecised previously by Réthy. Docan briefly spoke only about the size and the quality of the silver alloy used to strike George Koriatovič's groat¹⁰.

Later Romanian scholars, such as C. Moisil and O. Iliescu, mostly ignored Réthy's suppositions about the existence of a Moldavian coinage during the ephemeral rule of Jaga Vodă, alias George Koriatovič, though both of them knew the publication of the Hungarian numismatist¹¹. Only during the late 1970's the question of the Moldavian coinage of George Koriatovič arises again in the Romanian numismatics, when O. Luchian included the coin attributed by Réthy among the uncertain Moldavian issues listed in his catalogue¹². In a recent O. Iliescu's work, published in 2002, one could find an indirect mention referring the coin once published by Réthy. It happened during the review of the content of O. Luchian catalogue of the Moldavian coins published in *MBR*. On that occasion, O. Iliescu stated that the specimen no 350 a was "a 19th century apocryphal coin", without mentioning any other previous attributions or publications.¹³

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Réthy gave some other precious information about the number of the coins attributed to Jaga Vodă, alias George Koriatovič. Among others, he mentioned that Dobóczy told him that a second specimen of this kind, with blundered inscriptions too, was preserved even in D. A. Sturdza's collection. Dobóczy had the opportunity to study the coins and tried, without success, to decipher the meaning the inscriptions, comparing the two specimens¹⁴.

For 120 years the fate of this second coin attributed to George Koriatovič, as Moldavian ruler remained unknown. There were no records about it either in Sturdza's, N. Docan's, C. Moisil's or O. Iliescu's works. There was no information on the coin either in the access books of the Coin Room of the Library of the Romanian Academy, kept both before and after 1916.

In 1981, the first author of these lines saw only a galvanoplastic copy of the specimen kept at the Hungarian National Museum, while supervising the temporary transfer of a part of the coin collections of the Coin Room of the Romanian Academy to the National History Museum of Romania.

¹⁰ N. Docan stated that the specimen from Dobóczy's collection has 17.5 mm in diameter and was "struck in good silver (alloy)", *Ibidem*, p. 149.

¹¹ C. Moisil referred to L. Réthy's article in C. Moisil, *Contribuțiuni la istoria monetăriei vechi românești*, in BSNR, 12, 1915, 23, p. 16, foot-note no 1 and Idem, *Monetăria Țării Românești în timpul dinastiei Basarabilor. Studiu istoric și numismatic*, in Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională, 3, 1924-1925, separate pamphlet published in Cluj, 1924, p. 1, foot-note no 1. However, in all his contributions on the early Moldavian coinage, Moisil never criticized or even mentioned the work of L. Réthy, see: C. Moisil, *Istoria monedei în România – Expunere sumară – 5. Întemeierea monetăriei naționale*, in *Cronica Numismatică*, 1, 1920, 9-10, p. 64-66; Idem, *Istoria monedei în România – Expunere sumară – 6. Primele monede românești*, in *Cronica Numismatică*, 1, 1920, 11-12, p. 72-76. O. Iliescu referred to L. Réthy's article in O. Iliescu, *Emisiuni monetare ale Țării Românești din secolele al XIV-lea și al XV-lea*, in SCN, 2, 1958, p. 315, foot-note no 2. However, until fairly recently, O. Iliescu never mentioned Réthy's suppositions about the beginnings of the Moldavian coinage in his surveys regarding the development of the Moldavian medieval numismatics, see: O. Iliescu, *Monedele în circulație în perioada de trecere la feudalism și în feudalism. Apariția primelor monede proprii ale statelor feudale românești*, in C. C. Kirițescu, *Sistemul bănesc al leului și precursorii lui*, vol. I, Bucharest, 1964, p. 84-85; Idem, *Moneda în România 491-1864*, Bucharest, 1970, p. 25; Idem, *Monedele în circulație în secolul al XIV-lea. Apariția primelor monede proprii ale statelor române*, in C. C. Kirițescu, *Sistemul bănesc al leului și precursorii lui*, 2nd ed., vol. I, Bucharest, 1997, p. 76.

¹² O. Luchian, in *MBR*, p. 57, no 350 a.

¹³ O. Iliescu, *Istoria monedei în România (c. 1500 î.e.n. - 2000) Cronologie – Bibliografie – Glosar*, Bucharest, 2002, p. 44, foot-note no 268.

¹⁴ Presumably, I. Dobóczy inspected Sturdza's specimen during the late 1870's or the early 1880's, before 1882, when he offered his entire numismatic collection to the Coin Room of the Hungarian National Museum. For the date of the transfert of Dobóczy's collection see: Anonyme, *A Némzeti Múzeum Éremtára gyarapodása a Dobóczy gyűjteménnyel*, in *Archaeologiai Értesítő*, 5, 1885, p. 143.

However, two decades later, the coin mentioned by Réthy in 1887 was re-discovered by chance, during the selection of a significant sample of medieval Romanian and contemporary 14th-15th century Central and South-Eastern European coins. This selection was required for a large scale non-destructive analysis programme – ARHEOMET, underwent by the National History Museum of Romania and the Institute for Nuclear Physics “Horia Hulubei” in Bucharest, with the generous founding provided by the Romanian Ministry for Education and Research. On that occasion, we decided to investigate also a parcel of early Lithuanian issues. Looking in the collection for such coins, our attention was attracted by a specimen listed just as “Lithuanian coin”, having the access number *BAR M. 1734/160; MNIR pv. 632 (Jecu)*¹⁵. The coin mentioned above belonged to the old collection of the Coin Room of the Library of the Romanian Academy; which had been sent in 1917 to Moscow, to be put in “a safe place” during the political turmoil produced in Romania by the Great War. The label of “Lithuanian coin” written in pencil belongs to one of the members of the Romanian commission which was established in 1956 to supervise the reception of the former collections of the Romanian Academy returned by the Soviet Union¹⁶. To our great astonishment, the unprecised “Lithuanian coin” turned to be in fact the so-called issue of George Koriatovič, from D. A. Sturdza’s collection, once saw by Dobóczy and mentioned by Réthy.

The coin has the following description:

Obv. Retrograde inscription: **†MONETA★CONT[...]**ATIN**** St George mounted on horse, wearing breast-plate and helmet, walking to l., spearing a dragon laying under the feet of the horse.

Rv. Normal inscription: **[...]OMINI★DES[...]**OTRIC**** Parted shield, first quartier barry of six, in the second quartier, seven lilies (2/2/2/1). Five rayed stars (★) above the shield and in the l. and r. fields.

AR 1.05 g ✓ 17.6x17.4 mm (Fig. 1)

Thanks to the kindness of our friend Dr. Csaba Tóth, from the Coin Room of the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest, we have the opportunity to study also the coin kept in the former Ignác Dobóczy collection:

Obv. Retrograde inscription: **†MONETA★CO[...]**JTIN** †** St George mounted on horse, wearing breast-plate and helmet, walking to l., spearing a dragon laying under the feet of the horse.

Rv. Normal inscription: **[...]HDOMINI★D[...]** Parted shield, in dexter, barry of six, in sinister, seven lilies (2/2/2/1). Five rayed stars (★) above the shield and in the l. and r. fields.

AR 1.15 g 17 mm

HNM inv. 105/1887.I.1. (Fig. 2).

During the classification of the coins in the very large hoard found in 1985 at Buruienesti (comm. of Doljesti, Neamt County), kept in the collection of the Bucharest Branch of the Romanian National Bank, we found another specimen of the groats of duke Constantine Koriatovič, lord of Smotrič, among the coins of this find.

The coin once kept in the former D. A. Sturdza’s collection is very well preserved, but there are some modern scratches made by abrasion with sand paper and a spot resulting from checking of its silver content with potassium dichromate, very likely, made by the experts of the Soviet commission who investigated the Romanian cultural items, before their return in 1958.

The analyses undertaken by Gheorghe Niculescu from the National Institute for Restoration and Conservation in Bucharest revealed the following composition of the monetary alloy:

¹⁵ BAR represents the Romanian acronym for the Library of the Romanian Academy and MNIR, stands for National History Museum of Romania. The name of Jecu belongs to madame Constanța Jecu, the former custodian of a part of the BAR collection.

¹⁶ During the Great War, in November 1916, the collections of the Romanian Academy were sent to Jassy, where the Romanian government took refuge before the occupation of the city of Bucharest by the armies of the Central Powers, and from there to Moscow, in 1917. After the Bolshevik take-over of Russia, the newly established Communist government of the country refused to hand-over the Romanian properties for almost 40 years. Only in 1956, the former Prime-Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, N. S. Khrushchev agreed to return the (largest part) of the items belonging to the Romanian cultural heritage seized in 1917. However, some of the cultural goods (mostly rare gold medals) sent in Russia in 1917 are still not recovered, being “kept” without any explanations by the Soviet and Russian authorities.

Obverse:

Ag – 963.4 ‰ ± 3.2 ‰

Cu – 256 ‰ ± 0.8 ‰

Pb – 4.7 ‰ ± 0.3 ‰

Sn – 6.3 ‰ ± 0.2 ‰

Reverse:

Ag – 960.4 ‰ ± 3.2 ‰

Cu – 23.7 ‰ ± 0.7 ‰

Pb – 4.8 ‰ ± 0.3 ‰

Sn – 7.9 ‰ ± 0.2 ‰

Fe – 3.1 ‰ ± 0.7 ‰

The average content of the alloy is:

Ag – 961.9 ‰ ± 3.2 ‰

Cu – 24.65 ‰ ± 0.75 ‰

Pb – 4.75 ‰ ± 0.3 ‰

Sn – 7.1 ‰ ± 0.2 ‰

Fe – 3.1 ‰ ± 0.7 ‰

Others analyses made by dr. Bogdan Constantinescu from the National Institute for Nuclear Physics and Engineering “Horia Hulubei” in Bucharest-Măgurele, using the XRF method revealed that the monetary alloy used to strike this coin contained also traces of Au, Sb and Bi.

Fairly recently, the twelve decades old mystery surrounding the real identity of the issuing ruler of this monetary type was finally solved by two Ukrainian numismatists: O. G. Pogorilec' and R. V. Savvov. In 2004, they published three new specimens of the groat once uncovered by L. Réthy. Two of the coins were found at Dunajvci (as single specimens) and the third one was discovered during the archaeological researches underwent in 1938 at Vyšgorod (the first finding place is a town situated in the territory of the historical region of Podolia, located on the Eastern bank of the middle Dniester River valley, today Hmel'nicki region, South-Western Ukraine and the second one is located near Kiev).

These new finds allowed our Ukrainian colleagues to correctly read the meaning of the monetary inscription as:

✠МОНЕТА★CONSTANTINI / DHDOMINIDESMOTRIC, i. e. *Moneta Constantini, / Ducis Heredis (et) Domini de Smotrich*.

This new reading of the inscriptions confirms also Docan's supposition that the representation of St George was actually rendered on the obverse of the coin, and not on its reverse, as Réthy asserted. The inscription engraved on the coin states that the issuer was the duke *Constantine, Hereditary Duke and Lord of Smotrič*.

O. G. Pogorilec' and R. V. Savvov proved without a doubt that the coin uncovered by Réthy was a genuine late 14th issue, and not a “19th century apocryphal coin”, as it was supposed until rather recently. They identified the *duke Constantine, Lord of Smotrič* as being Constantine, one of well-known members of the Lithuanian princely family of Koriatovič, who ruled Podolia during the late 14th century¹⁷. In light of so far preserved historical sources, the rule of Constantine as duke of the Podolian principality could be dated cca 1380-1391¹⁸.

The Koriatovič's were members of one of the most important Lithuanian noble family, directly related to the great ducal house of the country. They were descendents of Karijotas (in

¹⁷ O. G. Pogorilec' and R. V. Savvov, *Moneta podil's'kogo knjazja Kostjantina*, in Numizmatika i Faleristika, 3, 2004, p. 1-5; Idem, *Monety podol'kogo knjaza Konstantina Koriatoviča (vtoraja polovina XIV v.)*, in Trinadcataja Vserossijskaja numizmatičeskaja konferencija Moskva, 11-15 aprilja 2005 g. Tezisy dokladov i soobščeniij, Moscow, 2005, p. 109-110 and Idem, *Geral'dika monety podol'kogo knjazja Konstantina Koriatoviča (II pol. XIV v.)*, Doklad na XIII Vserossijskoj numizmatičeskoj konferencii (Moskva, 11-15 aprilja 2005), medzhibozh@ic.km.ua or rs@ic.km.ua. Some questions related to the 15th century Moldavian heraldry in light of the newly uncovered coinage of Constantine Koriatovič was recently discussed by A. Gorodenko and Lilia Dergaciova, *Considerații privind reprezentarea călărețului pe monedele din Podolia și Moldova de la finele secolului XIV și al treilea deceniu al secolului al XV*, in Revista Arheologică, N. S., 1, 2005, 1, p. 359-363.

¹⁸ O. G. Pogorilec' and R. V. Savvov, in Numizmatika i Faleristika, 3, 2004, p. 3-5

Russian Koriat and in Polish Korybut), son of Giedymin, Duke of Novogrudsk (Novogrodek)¹⁹. During the early 1360's, after the expulsion of the Mongols of the Golden Horde from the South-Western Russian regions the Koriatovič's were given by Grand Lithuanian Duke Algirdas (Olgerd) the control of the lands of the Podolian Principality, located on the Eastern bank of the middle Dniester, neighbouring Moldavia and Red Russia (Halicz). Unlike most of their relatives of the ruling Lithuanian dynasty, who remained for longer either pagans or, later, became Catholics, the members of the Koriatovič clan embraced very early the Orthodox Christian faith and they preserved their religion even after the conversion to Catholicism of all the Lithuanians, in 1387. The first Christian member of the family was Karijatas himself, who took after his baptism the name of Michael.

The town of Smotrič mentioned in the coin inscription as the centre of Constantine's lordship is also a well known medieval settlement, mentioned by several other 14th-15th century written sources. Smotrič was a fortress situated on the escarped banks of the river with the same name, near its embouchure to Dniester River, located at 30 km of the modern town of Kameneck Podol'sk and at about 20 km of Dunajvci (the actual locations where most of his coins were found). During the late 14th century, Smotrič was the first capital of the Lithuanian Principality of Podolia, which later was transferred to Kameneck (Podol'sk).

The history of the Lithuanian principality of Podolia is a rather troubled one. Very soon after the establishment of their lordship, the Podolian Koriatovičs had to negotiate between the rising regional powers of Poland, Hungary their own native country, and the declining Golden Horde. Since 1366 they were compelled to recognise the Polish overlordship, and due to their new affiliation, the Podolian rulers were obliged to follow the anti-Lithuanian policy of the king Cazimir III. Later, during the 1370's to 1390's, the Koriatovičs not only recognised the Hungarian overlordship, but became themselves among the most faithful political partners of the Hungarian Kingdom in the entire region located East the Carpathians. In 1385-1386, Koriatovič's policy of constant loyalty toward the Hungarian Kingdom pushed them in direct conflict with the pro-Polish line of the Lithuanian ruling clan, lead by Jogailas (Jagello). In 1391, as a consequence of his persistence in following the pro-Hungarian position, even after the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian union, Constantine was defeated by his closest relative, the Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas²⁰. Expelled from Podolia, Constantine and his followers were obliged to seek refuge in Hungary, being given by Sigismund I with some estates in the region of Munkacs (Munkačevo) in Trans-Carpathia. In spite of its proximity to the Polish Red Russia, after 1391 Podolia was incorporated for almost 50 years into the Lithuanian possessions.

The coinage of Constantine Koriatovic for Podolia could be considered as being one of the most interesting monetary issues of the Lithuanian lords in the South-Western Russian territories. In spite of their complete commitment to the Orthodox culture, Constantine's coins are purely Western in conception, fabric and style. Unlike other issues of the Lithuanian lords in the area, they bear Latin inscriptions and are closely related to the Central-European Gothic style contemporary coinages (Hungary, Poland, Halicz and Moldavia). It seems that Constantine was not the only member of his family to strike his own coinage. Quite recently, some very rare deniers were attributed to his younger brother Theodore, struck as Duke of Černigov²¹.

¹⁹ Karijotas was one of the sons from the second marriage of Gedymin (1316-1341/1342), the founder of the ruling house of Lithuania and Poland (since 1386 until 1572). Karijatas had four brothers: Algirdas (Olgerd), Kestutis (Kiejstut), Luitbert and Montwid, and three other half-brothers (from his father's first marriage): Jaunutis, Narimantas and of the so-called "duke of Trokai". Michael Gediminovič Koriat had several sons, but only five of them were directly involved in the history of the Podolian principality: George (Jurij or Jurg), Alexander, Constantine, Theodore (Feodor) and Basil Koriatovič, who were associated to the power in different periods. Constantine Koriatovič and his brothers were germane cousins of Jogaila (Jagiello) (1377-1434), the Grand duke of Lithuania, who later embraced the Catholic faith and was elected king of Poland, in 1386. They were also germane cousins of Vytautas, son of Kestutis, who was granted by Jogailas with the title of (Grand) Duke of Lithuania, after his election as Polish king.

²⁰ F. Šabul'do, *Jugo-Zapadnoj Rusi v sostave Velikogo Knjažestva Litovskogo*, Kiev 1987, passim and J. Tegowski, *Pierwszwe pokolenia Giedyminowiczow*, Poznan, 1999, passim.

²¹ S. Sajauskas and D. Kaubrys, *Lietuvos didžiosios kunigaikštystės numismatika*, Vilnius, 1993, p. 35, fig. no 20 b.

Quite likely, some of the members of the Koriatovič family also played a role in the history of the early Moldavian state, several princes of this country contracting political marriages with princesses of the Lithuanian house of Podolia²².

As the recent contributions of Pogorilec' and Savvov prove, the coins of Constantine Koriatovič, Lord of Smotrič have nothing to do with the actual Moldavian coinage. In fact, they represent a peculiar class among the rather diverse coinage struck by some Lithuanian lordships in the South-Western Russian territories during the 14th-15th century, such as Vladimir Olgerdovič (1363-1394) and Skirgailos (1394-1397), as dukes of Kiev, and Demetrius (Dimitri) Korybutovič, as Duke of Novgorod-Seversk²³.

However, in spite their very different origin, the coins of Constantine Koriatovič share a lot of common features with the first Moldavian issues, struck under Peter I. One of them is their common denomination and metrological standard. The coins of Constantine Koriatovič so far published have the following weights, finesses and diameters:

1. 0.70 g 18 mm 900 ‰²⁴
2. 1.01 g 18.5 mm 875 ‰²⁵
3. 1.02 g 18.5 mm 875 ‰²⁶
4. 1.05 g (CNBAR) 961.9 ‰ ±3.2 ‰
5. 1.15 g (NHM)

The weight of about 1 g, as well as the rather high silver content of most of the coins of Constantine, duke of Smotrič, fits well in the metrological standards followed by the second series of Peter's I groats, struck around 1382-1385²⁷. In fact, the Podolian and Moldavian coins represent local variants of the legal metrological standards used for issuing the Red Russian groats during the rule of Vladislav of Oppeln (1372-8) and Louis the Great (1378-1382)²⁸.

The use of the retrograde inscriptions is also rather common feature of the Moldavian coinage during Peter's I reign and later²⁹.

(But far the most striking common feature shared by the 14th century Moldavian and the Podolian coinage of the Koriatovič is the parted shield with lilies in the second quarter.) In the Romanian historical literature is a long term and rather harsh debate about the origin of this heraldic representation. Some of the Romanian scholars involved in these disputes asserted that the parted shield, with barries and lilies rendered on most of the medieval Moldavian coins was a grant of the Hungarian king Louis I to Peter I, in the moment when Moldavia was compelled to recognise once again the Hungarian overlordship (c. 1378). Other scholars considered that the shield with lilies of the Moldavian coat-of-arm, in spite of being of Hungarian origin, has nothing to do with the Angevin overlordship over Moldavia, being granted to Bogdan I (as Voievode of Maramureș, before his anti-Hungarian rebellion and settlement in Moldavia)³⁰.

²² A. Gorodenko and L. Dergaciova, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

²³ However, unlike most of the issues struck by the Orthodox Lithuanian rulers of the South-Western Russian principalities, which bear clumsy Cyrillic or Arabic inscriptions, and were always rather crudely struck, the coinage of Constantine Koriatovič, Lord of Smotrič, bears Latin inscriptions and was struck by rather skilled die-cutters of Central-European origine. For the coinage of the Lithuanian principalities in South-Western Russia see: S. Sajauskas and D. Kaubrys, *op. cit.*, p. 33 and 36.

²⁴ O. G. Pogorilec' and R. V. Savvov, in *Numizmatika i Faleristika*, 2004, 3, p. 2, no 3 (NHM Ukraine)

²⁵ *Ibidem*, no 1.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, no 2.

²⁷ E. Oberländer-Târnoveanu, Katiușa Pârvan and B. Constantinescu, *The Moldavian monetary metrology.*, work in progress.

²⁸ For the metrology of the Red Russian coinage during the second half of the 14th century see: A. Krizhanivskij, *Moneti galic'koî Rusi u XIV-XV st.*, in *L'viv's'ki Numizmatichni Zapiski*, 1, 2004, p. 13-17.

²⁹ The first coins with retrograde inscriptions were deciphered by Sturdza himself, see: D. A. Sturdza, in *NZ*, 4, 1872, p. 54 no 6. On the retrograde inscriptions on the coinage of Peter I see also: N. Docan, *op. cit.*, p. 121-122 and O. Iliescu, *Legende de celor mai vechi monede moldovenești*, in *AILA-Iassy*, 3, 1966, p. 209.

³⁰ For the previous literature on this topic, see: D. Cernovodeanu, *Evoluțiile armeriilor Țărilor române de la apariția lor și până în zilele noastre (sec. XIII-XX)*, trans. from French by L. Sârbu, Brăila, 2005, p. 99-139, especially 119 and 139. The most representative scholars for the first point of view were: C. Moisil, *Contribuțiuni la istoria monetăriei vechi românești*, in *BSNR*, 12, 1915, 23, p. 22; Idem, *Istoria monetei în România – Expunere sumară – 5. Întemeierea monetăriei naționale*, in *CNA*, 1, 1920, 9-10, p. 64-6; I. N. Mănescu, *Stema Moldovei*, in *Magazin Istoric*, 1972, 5, p. 38; Idem, *Sur l'origine des armoires des principautés roumaines*, in *RRH*, 26, 1987, 4, p. 359-360; D. Cernovodeanu, *Știința și arta heraldică în România*, Bucharest,

Quite likely, the presence of a similar coat-of-arms on the coins of Constantine Koriatovič should solve also the century long debate over the origin of the parted shield with lilies in the Moldavian medieval coinage. In the case of the Lithuanian rulers of Podolia, there is no doubt that this coat-of-arm was a Royal Hungarian grant of Louis I, as recognition of the faithful services rendered by the Koriatovič's to the Polish and later, to the Hungarian Crowns. One could suppose that the new coat-of-arms, as well as the right to strike coins was granted to Constantine Koriatovič soon after the anti-Lithuanian campaign of the united Hungarian and Polish armies led by Louis I in 1378. There are also strong reasons to consider that situation was similar in Moldavia too. After the accomplishment of the Polish-Hungarian union in 1370, in the context of the rapid decline of the Golden Horde position in the area of Dniestr-Pruth regions, as well as the temporary set-back of the Lithuanian power the Moldavian rulers had a very limited possibility of manoeuvring and finally, they were compelled to accept or to renew the Hungarian overlordship.

Quite likely, about 1378, when the last hope of foreign help vanished with the defeat of the Lithuanians, Peter I, as well as his predecessor was obliged to look for a settlement with the powerful Hungarian king Louis I of Anjou. As a part of this political arrangement, in exchange of the recognition of the Angevin suzerainty, Peter I was granted not only a new coat-of-arms, inspired from that of his Royal overlord, but also the right to strike coins, which were normal provisions of such feudal deals. The presence of similar grants in Podolia show that the settlement of the difficult Hungarian-Moldavian "dossier" was only a part of an overall settlement taken in consideration by the Hungarian king for the entire area located Eastward of the Carpathians, in the buffer zone with the enemies of the Hungarian-Polish Kingdoms: the Muslim Mongols and the Pagan Lithuanians.

By these deals a new monetary "Commonwealth" was created in Central-Eastern Europe, pushing far to East the boundaries of the (Western) European medieval coinage. This "monetary union" under the Angevin aegis reunited during the second half of the 1370's the territories inhabited by Orthodox Christians in Red Russia (Halicz), Moldavia and Podolia. It was based by the legal standards then in use in Red Russia, governed also by another vassal of Louis I, the duke Vladislav of Opeln. The metrology of the Red Russian "groats" of Vladislav of Opeln became the monetary model for the newly established mints in Suceava and Smotrič.

In spite of these common features, there is a quite important difference in the very nature of the Moldavian and Podolian coinages of Peter I and Constantine Koriatovič, quite likely, reflecting the huge differences between the resources of the two countries. Meanwhile the coinage of Constantine had a very limited extent, being confined mainly to a political and propagandistic role, the coinage of Peter I had a mass character, being struck in a large amount (some millions of pieces) until the end of his reign. Since the first moment, the coinage of Peter I was produced in several officinae, their production bearing mint-marks, consisting in devices (lilies, crosses, dots, crescents, and stars) rendered on the reverses of the coins, and a sophisticated marking system of the successive issues struck by the same officina, using devices put in the obverse and reverses inscriptions. The extreme to day rarity of the coins of Constantine Koriatovič is an indication that the coinage was a limited one (may be some thousands), struck with a few pair of dies, all produced by an officina, which used as mint-mark the five rayed stars, rendered on the reverse of the coins, above and by the heraldic shield. First at all, the Moldavian coinage of Peter I was based on the large silver resources of a thriving country, located on the most important Central-Eastern commercial road connecting the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea.¹ Unlike the contemporary Podolian coinage, the plentiful issues of Peter I were not restricted to the political payments, but also were intended to fuel an expanding economy of a country in emergence during the late 14th century.

1977, p. 106 and 110 and L. Bătrîna and A. Bătrîna, *Mărturii heraldice cu privire la începuturile statului feudal independent Moldova*, in *Constituirea statelor feudale românești*, ed. N. Stoicescu, Bucharest, 1980, p. 205. For the second opinion see: C. Moisil, in his later works, such as *Stemele primelor monede românești*, in *Academia Română-Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice* 21, 1939-1940, p. 77-88; Șt. S. Gorovei, *Dragoș și Bogdan I, întemeietorii Moldovei*, Bucharest, 1977, p. 113; Idem, *Cu privire la data primelor monede moldovenești*, in *Suceava Anuarul Muzeului Județean*, 5, 1978, p. 570; Idem, *Armoires et rapports politiques: le "cas" des princes de la Moldavie du XIV^e siècle*, in *RRH*, 23, 1984, 2, p. 117-128; Idem, *Întemeierea Moldovei. Probleme controversate*, lassy, 1997, p. 300-316. According to J. Sýkora, *Poziția internațională a Moldovei în timpul lui Iațcu: lupta pentru independență și afirmare pe plan extern*, in *Revista de Istorie*, 1976, 8, p. 1135-1152, after 1372 Moldavia was once again forced to accept the Hungarian overlordship. This situation lasted at least until 1382.



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