

**SOME DATA REGARDING SEVERAL COIN
HOARDS FROM THE 10TH–11TH CENTURIES
DISCOVERED IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS
AT TROPAEUM TRAIANI – ADAMCLISI,
CONSTANȚA COUNTY
(SECTOR C, SOUTH DISTRICT)**

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Cuvinte-cheie: folles, tezaure, Tropaeum Traiani, secolele X–XI, Paradounavon.

Abstract: *The authors present three coin hoards/deposits consisting of Byzantine bronze coins from the 10th–11th centuries. The first hoard is made up of four pieces found in a closed complex and may be associated with a Pecheneg raid in 1027. The other two, consisting of 61 and 11 coins (the latter found in a ceramic vessel), were hidden during the context of the Pecheneg raid of 1046/1048. By analyzing the coin finds from Adamclisi, both isolated coins and hoards, the authors note the existence of habitation in the area, numismatically evidenced, chronologically framed from the 9th to the 12th century.*

Rezumat: *Autorii prezintă trei tezaure/depozite monetare compuse din monede bizantine de bronz din secolele X–XI. Primul este alcătuit din patru piese găsite într-un complex închis și ar putea fi pus în legătură cu un raid peceneg din anul 1027. Celelalte două, compuse din 61, respectiv 11 piese (cel din urmă găsit într-un vas ceramic), au fost ascunse în contextul raidului peceneg din anii 1046/1048. Analizând descoperirile monetare de la Adamclisi, atât izolate, cât și tezaure, autorii constată existența unei locuiri în zonă, probată numismatic, încadrată cronologic din secolul al IX-lea până în veacul al XII-lea.*

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conducted several archaeological campaigns in the southern district of *Tropaeum Traiani* during the 1970s and 1980s¹. These campaigns were limited in number and scope, focusing on uncovering the urban vestiges characteristic of the late Roman city. However, with the beginning of the 21st century, excavations resumed on a larger scale based on a detailed research plan aimed at revealing all urban aspects of Sector C (the southern district), along with the construction details and functional aspects of the second main street in the fortress (the *cardo* or *via principalis*). During these excavations, remains of buildings with varied construction details were found east and west of the *cardo*. The most imposing building was uncovered west of the *via principalis*, a *domus* adapted to the buildable space within the late Roman district characteristic of the 4th–6th centuries. This structure is situated south of the *basilica forensis* and not far from the city's south gate. It includes numerous interior rooms separated by earth-bonded walls, featuring an atrium, two perpendicular halls oriented north-south and west-east, entrances and exits on the outer sides, and interior spaces, among other elements². Later, from the early medieval period, traces of communities typical of that era were observed, with numismatic discoveries among the archaeological finds. Besides isolated coins, three coin hoards or deposits were identified in 2020, 2021, and 2022 in the southeastern area of the mentioned building³ (Fig. 1).

From the beginning of archaeological research at *Tropaeum Traiani* and the surrounding area, several coin hoards/deposits from various historical periods have been discovered. In 1908, a hoard of Byzantine coins with a *terminus post quem* of 587 was found⁴. Half a century later, another hoard appeared, containing Roman Republican and Imperial coins with a *terminus post quem* of 80 AD⁵. In 1968, a true hoard was uncovered, comprising over 1.500 Roman imperial denarii, hidden or lost in the early 3rd century⁶. In 1986, a new find was unearthed with a *terminus post quem* of 336⁷, and a few years later, in 1993, another deposit emerged, with a *terminus post quem* of 594/5, related to an Avaro-Slavic raid in the province⁸. It is noteworthy that both the 1908 hoard and the latter one serve as evidence of the cessation of urban life at *Tropaeum Traiani*, as well as in other sites across Dobruja⁹. In 1999, a terrace near the fortress yielded a hoard of over 400 pieces dated to the 4th century, with a *terminus post quem* of 378, the year of the Roman disaster at Adrianople. A similar lot of coins appeared the following year, also in the *extra muros* area¹⁰.

¹ SCORPAN 1972, p. 349–372; SCORPAN 1974, p. 339–362; PANAITESCU 1979a, p. 197–204; PANAITESCU 1979b, p. 247–253; PANAITESCU 1983b, p. 230–238.

² TALMAȚCHI, ȘOVA 2015, p. 137–192; TALMAȚCHI, ȘOVA 2016, p. 173–192; TALMAȚCHI 2021, p. 502–507.

³ TALMAȚCHI *et alii* 2021, p. 15–16; TALMAȚCHI *et alii* 2022, p. 17–18; TALMAȚCHI *et alii* 2023, p. 24–25.

⁴ OCHEȘEANU 1997, p. 163–182.

⁵ OCHEȘEANU 1988–1989, p. 91–97.

⁶ BARNEA 2011.

⁷ SÂMPETRU, NICOLAE 1996, p. 43–46.

⁸ BOGDAN-CĂTĂNICIU, POENARU BORDEA 1996–1997, p. 85–95.

⁹ This is the case of the settlements of *Troesmis*, *Halmyris*, *Carsium*, etc., cf. CUSTUREA 2019a, p. 16; TALMAȚCHI, CUSTUREA 2022, p. 107–108.

¹⁰ VASILESCU, CUSTUREA, TALMAȚCHI 2015–2016, p. 213–256; CUSTUREA, TALMAȚCHI, VASILESCU 2016.

Without specific information on the year and exact location of the discovery, we know of a lot of 42 Bulgarian silver coins, including four pieces from Mircea the Elder, published in 1988¹¹. There is a brief note from “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology in Bucharest about a deposit of Bulgarian silver pieces, without further details. Another lot of 118 bronze pieces from the 4th century is mentioned only as a simple note, with no additional information¹². In September 2021, a new deposit of 28 bronze coins dated to the 13th century was recovered from an area northwest of the late Roman and early Byzantine site¹³. Another recent deposit, discovered during archaeological research in sector C, southern district, behind the *basilica forensis*, in 2023, consists of bronze coins dated to the 6th century¹⁴.

Finally, in recent years (2020, 2021, and 2022), three lots in closed-deposits were found during archaeological excavations: one consisting of 61 *folleis* (*terminus post quem* year 1046/1048), another of 4 *folleis* (*terminus post quem* year 1027), and the most recent of 11 *folleis* (*terminus post quem* 1046/1048), all connected to the Pecheneg invasions of the 11th century (Fig. 2–4). These are the subject of the current contribution and analysis of the situation at the Adamclisi site within the context of that century. Of course, they will also be connected to other isolated coin finds that have surfaced accidentally and in archaeological contexts over the years in the area¹⁵. Until recently, there was limited information regarding habitation in the area specifically during the 10th–11th centuries and even later¹⁶.

To analyze the three coin lots, we have structured their compositions in the following tables, with the presentation organized by the year of discovery as follows.

Table 1. The hoard discovered in 2020, 61 AE (I), with a fragmentary bowl-type ceramic vessel.

1	2	3	4	5	6
No. crt.	Issuer	Class Type	Catalog Identification	No. exe.	Observations
1	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 5	DOC III.2, p. 652.	3	
2	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 5 (or var. 24b)	DOC III.2, p. 652 (or p. 661).	1	
3	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 6	DOC III.2, p. 653.	1	
4	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 8	DOC III.2, p. 653.	1	
5	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 9	DOC III.2, p. 654.	1	
6	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 14 (or var. 22)	DOC III.2, p. 655 (or p. 658).	1	

¹¹ KUZEV 1988, p. 112.

¹² CUSTUREA, TALMAȚCHI 2011, p. 133–134.

¹³ CUSTUREA, TALMAȚCHI 2022a.

¹⁴ The unpublished discovery is being studied.

¹⁵ CUSTUREA, TALMAȚCHI 2022b.

¹⁶ PANAITESCU 1983a, p. 157–160; BARNEA *et alii* 1998, p. 2, point VII.

1	2	3	4	5	6
No. crt.	Issuer	Class Type	Catalog Identification	No. exe.	Observations
7	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 23	DOC III.2, p. 658.	1	
8	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 24	DOC III.2, p. 659.	6	
9	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 26	DOC III.2, p. 662.	2	
10	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 32	DOC III.2, p. 663.	1	
11	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 34	DOC III.2, p. 664.	1	
12	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 39	DOC III.2, p. 665.	5	
13	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 39 (or var. 40)	DOC III.2, p. 665 (or p. 666).	1	
14	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 40	DOC III.2, p. 666.	2	
15	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 40a	DOC III.2, p. 667.	2	
16	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 41	DOC III.2, p. 668.	1	
17	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 47	DOC III.2, p. 671.	2	
18	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var.?	DOC III.2, p. 650–674.	1	
19	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var.?	DOC III.2, p. 650–674.	1	Casting piece
20	Roman III	Class B	DOC III.2, p. 676.	8	
21	Roman III	Class B	DOC III.2, p. 676.	2	Double struck on revers
22	Roman III	Class B	DOC III.2, p. 676.	2	Overstruck on revers
23	Roman III	Class B	DOC III.2, p. 676.	4	Overstruck on Class A2
24	Mihail IV	Class C	DOC III.2, p. 681.	4	
25	Mihail IV	Class C	DOC III.2, p. 681.	3	Double struck on revers
26	Mihail IV	Class C	DOC III.2, p. 681.	2	Overstruck
27	Constantine IX	Class D	DOC III.2, p. 685.	1	
28	Constantine IX	Class D	DOC III.2, p. 685.	1	Double struck on revers
			TOTAL	61 AE	

Table 2. The hoard discovered in 2021, 4 AE (II), closed complex.

1	2	3	4	5	6
No. crt.	Issuer	Class Type	Catalog Identification	No. exe.	Observations
1	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 1a	DOC III.2, p. 650.	1	
2	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 24	DOC III.2, p. 659.	1	
3	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 24	DOC III.2, p. 659.	1	The piece is cast, the legend shows the barbarized letters
4	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 41	DOC III.2, p. 668.	1	
			TOTAL	4 AE	

Table 3. The hoard discovered in 2022, 11 AE (III).

1	2	3	4	5	6
No. crt.	Issuer	Class Type	Catalog Identification	No. exe.	Observations
1	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 5 (24b)	DOC III.2, p. 652/661.	3	
2	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 9	DOC III.2, p. 654.	1	
3	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 24	DOC III.2, p. 659.	1	Double struck on revers
4	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 40	DOC III.2, p. 666.	1	
5	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 40	DOC III.2, p. 666.	1	Double struck on revers
6	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 40	DOC III.2, p. 666.	1	Molded and perforated part
7	Basil II – Constantine VIII	Class A, var. 41	DOC III.2, p. 668.	1	
8	Roman III	Class B	DOC III.2, p. 676.	1	Double struck on revers
9	Constantine IX	Class D	DOC III.2, p. 685.	1	Casting piece
			TOTAL	11 AE	

At the beginning of the 11th century, the reestablishment of Byzantine administration at the Lower Danube created favorable conditions for the development of a monetary economy. For more than a generation, the province enjoyed sustained prosperity and reconstruction. For this century, 155 locations with isolated coin finds and 55 hoards or monetary deposits have been recorded, generally marking the directions of invaders' attacks¹⁷. The Pecheneg raid of 1027, not mentioned in contemporary documents but identified through coin discoveries, seems to have had

¹⁷ CUSTUREA 2019b, p. 341–342.

a short-lived impact, affecting only certain areas in Paradoxon. Among the ten hoards hidden or lost likely due to this attack, three contain precious metal items — Obrochishche¹⁸, Tvarditsa¹⁹, and Valea Nucarilor²⁰ —, one is mixed (Durankulak)²¹, and six contain copper coins — Adamclisi, Horia²², Isaccea²³, Krapets²⁴, Odartsis²⁵, and Skala²⁶. The invasion appears to have spread southward, though the Danube line was also affected. Regarding isolated finds, their series either halts or ceases entirely in sites such as Babadag²⁷, Cobadin²⁸, *Dinogetia*-Garvă (Tulcea County)²⁹, and Valea Nucarilor³⁰.

The isolated finds indicate a continuity of monetary penetration until the mid-11th century, when the province became the site of Pecheneg raids in the years 1046–1048. The two hoards containing 61 *folles* and 11 *folles*, respectively, were hidden or buried due to these events. The fortress at Adamclisi and its surrounding area join other sites in a similar situation, such as *Dinogetia*-Garvă³¹ and Păciul lui Soare (with two deposits)³². At the same time, in 18 sites, there are interruptions or even a cessation of monetary circulation, as seen at Abrit³³, Babadag³⁴, Batovo³⁵, Bărăganu³⁶, Beștepe³⁷, Boiana(?)³⁸, Capidava³⁹, Cernavodă(?)⁴⁰, Chilia Veche⁴¹, Cobadin⁴², Dorobanțu⁴³, Enisala⁴⁴, Histria⁴⁵, Oltina⁴⁶, Ostrov (Constanța County)⁴⁷, Slava Rusă⁴⁸, Valea Teilor⁴⁹ and Valu lui Traian⁵⁰.

¹⁸ PARUSHEV 1993, p. 164, no. 59.

¹⁹ IVANOV 1995, p. 312, no. 11.

²⁰ MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2001, p. 212.

²¹ IVANOV 1995, p. 312, no. 10.

²² MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 1992, p. 51–52.

²³ MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU, POLL 2006, p. 435–439.

²⁴ IVANOV 1995, p. 312, no. 12.

²⁵ PARUSHEV 1999, p. 134, no. 913–919.

²⁶ YOTOV, ATANASOV 1998, p. 130.

²⁷ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 131, no. 125.

²⁸ CUSTUREA, ADAMESCU 2013, p. 492, 498, no. 23–30.

²⁹ MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2018, p. 649.

³⁰ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 156, no. 125.

³¹ OBERLÄNDER-TĂRNOVEANU 2018, p. 78–105.

³² MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2017b, p. 269–271, 278–279.

³³ PARUSHEV 2015, p. 120.

³⁴ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 131, no. 4.

³⁵ PARUSHEV 1993, p. 151, no. 12; PARUSHEV 2015, p. 121–122.

³⁶ CUSTUREA, ADAMESCU 2013, p. 497, no. 5–19.

³⁷ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 135, no. 10.

³⁸ PARUSHEV 1993, p. 153, no. 22–23.

³⁹ MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2017a, p. 450–470.

⁴⁰ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 135, no. 21.

⁴¹ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 135, no. 22.

⁴² CUSTUREA 2000, p. 136, no. 25; CUSTUREA, ADAMESCU 2013, p. 497–498, no. 20–30.

⁴³ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 138, no. 35.

⁴⁴ MĂNUCU-ADAMEȘTEANU 2016, p. 90–99.

⁴⁵ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 140, no. 47.

⁴⁶ CUSTUREA 2009, p. 618, no. 96–101 and the summary table.

⁴⁷ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 147, no. 72.

⁴⁸ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 153, no. 105.

⁴⁹ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 156, no. 126.

⁵⁰ CUSTUREA 2000, p. 157, no. 127; CUSTUREA, ADAMESCU 2013, p. 507, no. 224.

After the economic and social collapse of the province at the beginning of the 7th century⁵¹, the resumption of habitation in the area is observed sometime during the 9th century, with evidence from two issues from Leo V and Basil I. The series of issues from Leo VI to Constantine IX suggests the presence of significant habitation in this territory, proven by a continuous coin series likely disrupted by the Pecheneg raids of 1046–1048. This set of coins, along with the hoards described above, situates the fortress at Adamclisi within the model of provincial monetary circulation⁵². After the mentioned major raid, monetary penetration resumes at a lower level; however, there remains a continuity of issuers for approximately a century, from Constantine X to Manuel I⁵³.

Through the discoveries presented here, the site at Adamclisi–*Tropaeum Traiani*, previously known for its importance from the 1st to the 7th centuries, now emerges as a significant point in the mid-Byzantine history of the Danubian-Pontic province, alongside those on the Danube line that have been known for several decades.

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⁵¹ CUSTUREA 2019a, p. 16–17.

⁵² CUSTUREA 2000, p. 103–123.

⁵³ CUSTUREA, TALMAȚCHI 2022b.

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Fig. 1. Aerial view of the archaeological excavations in Sector C from the year 2023, indicating the locations where the 10th-11th centuries coin hoards were discovered.



Fig. 2. Group of Byzantine coins and the ceramic vessel fragment belonging to the hoard discovered in 2020.



Fig. 3. The four Byzantine coins discovered in a closed context (temporary dwelling with hearth) in 2021.



Fig. 4. The context of the discovery of the hoard composed of 11 Byzantine coins (2022).