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## SOME REMARKS ON A RECENTLY PUBLISHED VOLUME OF STUDIES ON COINS FROM PHAROS

Jasna Jeličić Radonić, Hermine Göricke-Lukić, Ivan Mirnik,  
*Faros. Grčki, grčko-ilirski i rimski novac*,  
in collaboration with Damir Doračić, Ivana Zamboni and Maja Bonačić-Mandinić,  
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The newest study of the issues of Greek colonies in Illyria, by Croatian numismatists Jasna Jeličić Radonić, Hermine Göricke-Lukić and Ivan Mirnik, in collaboration with Damir Doračić, Ivana Zamboni and Maja Bonačić-Mandinić, was published in Split in 2007 as a volume commemorating Zdenka Dukat, a Croatian archaeologist and numismatist who spent a lifetime working at the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb. She penned many important and valued books, including volumes on Illyrian coins from Croatia. The reviewed book *Faros. Grčki, grčko-ilirski i rimski novac* treats on the coin finds from the island of Hvar, known as Pharos in Greek.

The publication consists of 16 articles on a variety of topics, starting from coins struck on the island of Pharos, through of a review of the history of research and studies of coins from other Greek centers, to finds of Roman and early Byzantine coins. It is richly illustrated with quality prints, which is a welcome change from the standard of just a few years ago, although one would appreciate a bar scale or any other reference, like a ruler, in the photos. Size and weight are of significance in the case of Illyrian coins and these have been given in the list of illustrations. Nonetheless, the quality of the printed images compensates for these inconveniences.

The introductory article by Hermine Göricke-Lukić, “Nove spoznaje o ostavi grčkog novca iz Škudljivca na otoku Hvaru” (pp. 15–53, English summary: “The hoard of Greek coins from Škudljivac on the island of Hvar”, pp. 55–57) reconsiders one of the most interesting hoards of Graeco-Illyrian coins in the present reviewer’s opinion. The collection found on the island of Hvar, which contained bronze Illyrian coins, including 47 coins from Heraklea, dated to 330–320 BC, triggered interest in the coinage of Illyrian Heraklea and supplied one of the most important arguments in favor of Illyrian mints operating already in the fourth century BC. Göricke-Lukić analyzes the stylistic and typological traits of particular coins from the mints of Pharos and Illyrian Heraklea, determining the mutual connections on the grounds of a detailed study of the dies. A review of all the coins from the hoard has supplemented Josip Brunšmid’s typology from 1898, which is still an important source for the study of Graeco-Illyrian coins despite the more than a hundred years that have passed since its publication. Göricke-Lukić was able to identify

new types not present in concern Brunšmid's typology based on a detailed review of the whole set of coins from Pharos and Illyrian Heraklea in the hoard. She believes that the issues of Issa were not, as Brunšmid thought, restruck by Pharos but the other way round. New data from the present study indicate the prevalence of *hemilitria* in the hoard and reveal the presence of one example of a *trias*. Göricke-Lukić was able also to identify all the phases of development of the Pharos mint, presenting a relative chronology (as well as absolute dates) for particular coin types. She relates the issues to the rule of successive Syracusan tyrants in this part of Illyria, an obvious and essential approach, but it is her interpretation of the IONIO issues, for which the hoard is so well known, that is the most interesting and noteworthy. She argues that having reached maturity at this time, Ionios had thrown off the yoke of the Dionysii, tyrants of Syracuse, and embarked on the organization of his own domain. She also admits to difficulties in the interpretation of two coins from the hoard that had been restruck twice.

The fourth-century-BC issues of the Pharian mint are the subject of another article by Zdenka Dukat and Jasna Jeličić Radonić "Emisije farske kovnice u 4. st. pr. Kr." (pp. 64–106, English summary: "Issues of the Pharian mint in the 4th century BC", pp. 107–111). This presentation of coins of Pharos and Illyrian Heraklea, including one with the stamp ΔI, coming from excavations complements the above-mentioned article on the hoard from Škudljivac. Coins with the ΔI mark were thought to be struck in the mint of a city with a name starting with these two letters, which has never been identified and remains the object of debate, as does its exact localization. The current theory is that it was a mint on Pharos, specifically in the modern city of Hvar, which used to mark coins with the ΔI stamp. The main interest of these coins lies in the fact that they always restruck issues from other mints, most frequently coins of the Pharian mint of the type with the head of Zeus / goat. The point is that in this case entirely new dies were prepared, including the two letters, and the process covered all the stages of a regular coin issue except for the preparation of the blanks themselves. Coins already in circulation on the island were used instead. This conclusion derives from the observation that the obverse of Pharian coins usually bears the ΔI mint stamp, that is, the goat, above which one notes either two letters (ΔI) or three when a M is added (ΔIM). The ΔI stamp has also been observed, although definitely less often, on coins of the IONIO. One coin from the Zagreb collection was restruck three times: a Pharos coin of the head of Zeus / goat type was first restruck with an image referring to the IONIO type, and then with the ΔI stamp. Occasionally, ΔI appears also on coins of Illyrian Heraklea. Coins with such a minting story, ending in restriking with the ΔI mark have been found mostly on the Pharos island and the abundance of Pharian coins that were restruck also indicates production on the spot. The research propose to view ΔI as a mark of an autonomous center located on Pharos, which lost its independence about the mid-fourth century BC. P. Nisiteo and S. Ljubić had suggested a south Illyrian city ΔΙΜΑΛΩΣ (Dimalus) as the producer of coins with the ΔI stamp, whereas P. Visonà had argued for ΔI identifying the denomination of the coin, *dichalcon*, instead of being an abbreviation consisting of the first letters of the mint. Visonà proposed a reduction in the weight of Pharian issues in the end of the fourth century BC, intended to adapt the coins to the new lighter type after the reform of the third century BC, but his argument is not convincing as there is no evidence from Illyria for coin denominations to be marked with letters. However, assuming his theory would require a revision of ideas concerning the coins from the Pharian mint in general, because the hypotheses about different denominations were not correct. It would mean that the lighter coins of the Zeus / goat type were struck after the reform, which introduced the markings, that is, in the third century BC and not in the fourth century BC as hitherto accepted. I do not think that there is sufficient proof for Visonà's theory for now.

Dukat and Jeličić Radonić propose a relative chronology for the studied issues. Coins struck with the ΔI stamp occur in the first phase of the Pharos and Illyrian Heraklea minting. In the

opinion of the researchers, this indicates a local Illyrian dynasty ruling the two cities. Pharos was shortly subordinated by Ionios king of Issa, an event reflected in the coins of Pharos with his name, such as those from the Škudljivac hoard. Two series of the IONIO type distinguished by Dukat and Jeličić Radonić, reflect political change in their opinion, namely, the new situation that followed independence from Syracuse. New coin issues from this phase attested to the renewed autonomy of the local Illyrian dynasty. It may be concluded that Ionios built his realm on the ruins of the kingdom of the Sicilian tyrants, starting from Issa and then moving to Pharos. Rendić-Miočević has even suggested that Ionios reached Korčula (Korčula), a fact that certain elements appearing on the IONIO coins could suggest. This expansion must have taken a fairly stormy course in the opinion of the two researchers, giving reason for the deposition of the Škudljivac hoard. One might agree with the conclusion about the skills of this ruler and his subordination of a large territory under his rule, but one should first look at the distribution of coins with the IONIO mark. The numismatic material holds interesting information on the political situation of the period in this part of the Balkans, as well as the political trends current among the Illyrian dynasts. Assuming that Ionios was indeed an Illyrian ruler, we find that he is known solely from these particular issues of coins with the IONIO stamp from the second half of the fourth century BC. This gives an important indication for the rule of king Ballaios, whose case thus turns out not to be an isolated one: local chieftains getting rich (from piracy presumably) and expanding into new territories, introducing their own coinage on the local market.

Dukat and Jeličić Radonić have also taken upon themselves a study of 14 bronze coins of Dionysius the Elder from Syracuse from the excavation in Stari Grad (“Novac Sirakuze u doba Dionizija Starijeg”, pp. 115–127, English summary: “Coins of Syracuse in the era of Dionysius the Elder”, pp. 129–131). These coins were in circulation together with the silver coins of Corinth and Dyrrhachium in the late fifth through mid-fourth century BC, and, by all appearances, with contemporary local coinage. This observation is important in view of the current belief that nearby Issa was not colonized until the rule of Dionysius the Younger, that is, until 343 BC. The only way to explain the presence of coins of Dionysius the Elder among the local coinage is to agree that the Syracusan tyrants exerted their influence into the region already during his rule.

The excavations on the island of Hvar yielded also a set of 24 bronze coins from Dyrrhachium (Jasna Jeličić Radonić, “Novac Dirahija”, pp. 132–143, English summary: “Coins of Dyrrhachium”, pp. 145–147) and 14 coins from Illyrian Heraklea (Jasna Jeličić Radonić, “Novac ilirske Herakleje”, pp. 148–159, English summary: “Coins of Illyrian Heracleia”, pp. 161–165). The latter collection is of particular significance as the sources for this Greek colony are scarce indeed; it is mentioned solely as a Hellenistic harbor town in the *Periplus* of Pseudo-Skylax (Ch. 22) and there are a few coins preserved, altogether 366 before the present 14 according to this reviewer’s count. Coins with the legend ΗΡΑΚΛΕ (and abbreviated versions) have been recorded all along the Dalmatian coast and, primarily, on the island of Hvar, which entitles one to think that the colony was situated on the island, most likely in the vicinity of the town of Hvar according to the results of recent research. Branko Kirigin rejects this idea in favor of modern Trogir or Zadar as the location of ancient Heraklea. It is generally assumed that Illyrian Heraklea struck coins in the fourth century BC; in style and metrology, these coins draw upon the products of the Pharian mint and that of the neighboring island of Issa, which is dated to the fourth century BC as well. Some researchers would point specifically to the years immediately before the middle of the fourth century BC as the time for the working of the Heraklea mint. Moreover, the IONIO and ΔΙ type coins were restruck using Heraklean coins, which could suggest a collapse of the colony’s autonomy and very likely a complete destruction of the city. No younger coins of Illyrian Heraklea are known and the written sources are silent after that.

Jeličić Radonić is also the author of an extensive article on the issues of all the Pharian mints from the third century BC (“Emisije farske kovnice u 3. st. pr. Kr.”, pp. 166–201, English summary: “Issues of the Pharian mint in the 3rd century BC”, pp. 202–207). These were bronze coins struck on Pharos and by King Ballaios. A single type of coin with the legend ΦΑ (in three variants) was in circulation in the second half of the third and second century BC. The reverse bore a kantharos, the obverse a male head, “mladolika glava” (“head of a youth” – transl. RC), that has yet to be identified conclusively. The head bore no ornaments and appeared in several versions, from a well executed image to a fairly barbarous representation, making interpretation difficult at best. Considering that no other type was struck on Pharos in the said period and in view of the booming development of Greek mints in this age, one would expect large numbers of these coins in many different variants. And yet finds of coins from Pharos have yet to be satisfactorily counted and data on Pharos minting to be collected for study. It would appear that the count of type VIII recorded coins does not exceed 200, hardly a staggering quantity considering the timeframe involved.

The poor state of preservation of the coins, as shown by the photographic record presented in the paper, makes a study of the dies and the links between them difficult at best. The Pharos mint could not have operated in 219 BC when the Roman army razed the city to the ground and not before 229 BC when Agron stationed his army there. They had to be issued in large quantities between 229 BC and 219 BC, during the rule of Demetrius, who was literate and who needed money to pay his mercenaries. The quality of the representations worsened after that, in the second century issues. Jeličić Radonić is of the opinion that the representations of the head of Ballaios and the iconography of Pharian coins indicate ties between the two issues and their parallel circulation. Citing D. Rendić-Miočević, she supports the view that the coinage of Ballaios cannot be attributed to a single king considering the variety of extant portrait heads. She also speaks of coins with a kantharos and a portrait head of Ballaios. The present reviewer finds this interpretation somewhat surprising. On one hand, the immense variety of the portrait representations is emphasized and, on the other hand, similarities are sought between the coins said to be from Pharos and the coinage of Ballaios. The variety of portrait representations of Ballaios is indeed considerable and were we to follow this line of reasoning, it would turn out that Ballaios’s coinage was struck by many different rulers, hundreds of them as a matter of fact. However, Illyrian coinage of the period is not excessively proficient in execution, starting from the metal alloy, through the craftwork of the engravers, to the actual striking of the coins. The age of the ruler is also an issue to be considered. Ballaios appears to have lived a long life and during his lifetime not only did the political situation change and the monetary system evolve, but the ruler himself aged over the years. These two aspects should not be connected here in this reviewer’s opinion. The reviewer also needs to flag the conclusion that coins with a “barbarous” portrait (“barbarski portret”) are younger than those with the well executed version of the image. The huge hoard from Risan, which counts 4566 coins, contains most probably one of the last, if not the last coins produced in the Rhizon mint as attested by the archaeological record (layer of burning denoting destruction of the city). There is just a few percent of these “barbarous” coins in the hoard. The present reviewer refers to these coins as simply Illyrian, seeing no reason not to call them by name. The coins from the hoard were for the most part struck rather efficiently and there is little to speak of their “barbarization”.

It is the opinion of the author of the article that Ballaios’s activity peaked in the times of Agron. According to her, it is then that the ruler’s portrait appears on the coins from Pharos. The conclusion about the good relations with neighboring Illyrian chieftains derived from the presence of a coin of Mithylos on the island is also somewhat surprising. Only four coins of this king, who ruled presumably about 270 BC, are known and there are absolutely no grounds for thinking that Mithylos struck his coinage solely for the purpose of bestowing gifts upon friendly Illyrian

dynasts. Would it not be economically more justifiable to consider the distribution of these coins to be the result of regular commercial contacts?

Jeličić Radonić evidently places Ballaios's stay on the island with the times of Agron. And yet there is much to say that in the times of Agron Ballaios was already in Kotor Bay. She also suggests that the portrait head on coins with a kantharos on the reverse was that of Demetrius of Pharos. The portrait with a long pointed nose was indeed a representation that may be considered as depicting a notable person, most certainly no Illyrian divinity, hence quite possibly Demetrius, who was an educated man and a good strategos, courageous but ill-advised to believe Polybius (III 18, 1–13, 19). Thus, the author's suggestion in this respect is quite likely.

The monograph in question include also information on finds of coins of Issa, Arpi and Sikion on the island of Hvar (Z. Dukat, J. Jeličić, "Novac grčkih gradova — Issa, Arpi, Sikion" / "Coins of Greek cities — Issa, Arpi, Sikyon", p. 208), an overview of the collection of Greek and Graeco-Illyrian coins from the storeroom of the Dominican monastery at Stari Grad (Z. Dukat, I. Mirnik, "Grčki i grčko-ilirski novac numizmatičke zbirke dominikanskog samostana u Starom Gradu", pp. 235–247, English summary: "Greek and Graeco-Illyrian coins in the Numismatic Collection of the Dominican monastery at Stari Grad", pp. 248–249, including many images of top quality), and a study and catalogue of Roman coins found in the territory of Pharos (H. Göricke-Lukić, "Nalazi rimskog novca u Starom Gradu", pp. 250–252, English summary: "Finds of Roman coins in Stari Grad", pp. 291–293; Z. Dukat, I. Mirnik, "Katalog rimskog novca s arheoloških istraživanja Pharosa" / "Catalogue of Roman coins from archaeological researches into Pharos", pp. 253–272; M. Bonačić-Mandinić, "Ostava kasnoantičkog novca s lokaliteta 'Remetin vrt'" / "Late Roman coin hoard from the archaeological site of Remeta Garden", pp. 273–287; Z. Dukat, I. Mirnik, "Katalog rimskog novca numizmatičke zbirke dominikanskog samostana u Starom Gradu" / "Catalogue of Roman coins from the Numismatic Collection of the Dominican priory in Stari Grad", pp. 288–289). Of utmost significance are the metal laboratory analyses of the coins excavated in Pharos (D. Doračić, I. Zamboni, "Analiza elementnog sastava grčkog i grčko-ilirskog novca s arheoloških istraživanja Pharosa", pp. 215–225, English summary: "Elemental composition analysis of Greek and Graeco-Illyrian coins from the archaeological excavations in Pharos", pp. 227–233). This analysis will be the basis of comparative studies once the elemental composition analysis of the coins of Ballaios from Risan has been completed.

In conclusion, the volume is interesting in its subject matter and very nicely published with many photographs of good quality, the conclusions are often provocative and in many cases acceptable in part, if not in whole. The most recent dating of the reign of King Ballaios has been assumed (260/250–230/229 BC), but in a few points I am not entirely clear on the interpretation of the coins of this ruler (I have presented my doubts above). Last but not least, none of the critical remarks above can take away from the importance of this volume. Its publication is extremely commendable and personally appreciated by this reviewer, for the data new and old that it marshals open the way to a dialogue between researchers on the history of Illyria. It illustrates explicitly and highlights the role of coin finds for reconstructing the history of Illyria and the Illyrian ruling dynasties, especially this little known or entirely unknown ones.