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COLLECTION OF 48 PROVINCIAL COINS FROM NOVAE (BULGARIA), SECTOR XII. NUMISMATIC STUDY

Abstract: A hoard of provincial coins from the third century AD, coming from excavations carried out by the Antiquity of Southeastern Europe Research Center of the University of Warsaw in 2016 at the ancient site of Novae, is catalogued and studied in this paper, providing an example of coin circulation structure in the province of Lower Moesia in the early years of the reign of Gordian III. The coins were found in the substrate of a floor inside a civil building, some stuck together in a way indicative of having been packed originally in a pouch of some kind. All 48 coins in this collection were of bronze.

Key words: Novae, provincial coins, coin hoard, Nicopolis ad Istrum, Marcianopolis, Hadrianopolis, Dionysopolis, Anchialos, Deultum

A small collection of “bronze” coins was unearthed in 2016, in the course of an excavation in the Roman fortress of Novae carried out by the Antiquity of Southeastern Europe Research Center University of Warsaw. The set was made up of almost exclusively provincial issues.¹ The coins were found in the substrate of a floor of a civil building and some of the coins were stuck together, indicative of being packed together in a pouch or bag of some kind.² The collection counts 48 coins, all of them of bronze. One of the coins was issued in Rome in the times of the emperor Hadrian, but otherwise the collection, listed in catalog form below, is a highly interesting set of provincial issues. The term “hoard” is avoided here intentionally or used in quotation marks, because 48 coins is hardly enough to speak of a hoard in the traditional sense of the word. These coins were not of high value and may have been simply “current savings” that someone had lost. It is true that Kamen Dimitrov refers to sets of six or nine coins, found in the Novae camp, inside the so-called *thermae legionis*, as “hoards”,³ but in those cases we are dealing with silver coins and can readily assume the relatively high value of these few coins.⁴

The collection of 48 coins found in 2016 in Sector XII at Novae is interesting for a number of reasons. It revises current opinions about monetary circulation in the legionary camp of the mid-third century AD.⁵ It contributes new types not listed in the published collections or corpuses: just

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² <http://www.novae.uw.edu.pl/polskie/novae/novae2016.htm> (accessed: April 2018).

³ DIMITROV 2013, p. 248.

⁴ It is more surprising to find four “bronze” coins from the fourth century, which were truly of little value, called a “hoard”. Cf. DIMITROV 2013, p. 257.

⁵ CIOLEK 2017.

two coins, but it shows that there are still gaps in knowledge of Roman minting. Both coins were issued at Nicopolis ad Istrum, a mint situated nearest to the legionary camp, both are of a similar size and are surely representative of coins in circulation in the province of Lower Moesia in the early years of the rule of Gordian III when the collection in question was either hoarded away or lost.

The catalog below follows accepted standards: key data of each coin including dating, provenance (mint), type by catalog/corpus, inventory number and metrological data. Also given are descriptions of the obverse and reverse sides of the coins.

Catalog

1. Hadrian no. 1

AE sestertius	119–121	Rome	<i>RIC</i> 612b	inv. 4982 weight 25.65 g, dia. 32 × 33 mm
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Obv.: IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANVS AVG laureate bust right, cuirassed.

Rev.: P M TR P COS III SC, Spes walking left, holding flowers and raising the edge of her robe.

2. Septimius Severus no. 2

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	<i>AMNG</i> 1309	inv. 4984 weight 13.65 g, dia. 25 × 25 mm
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Obv.: AY K CEΠ CEYHPOC, laureate head right

Rev.: YΠ AY ΓΑΛΛΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΙCΤΡΩ, naked Herakles to left, struggling with the Cretan bull.

3. Septimius Severus no. 37

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Varbanov 2598 Moushmov 956	inv. 5008 weight 14.33 g, dia. 27 × 27 mm
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Obv.: AY Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: YΠ AY ΓΑΛΛΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙ ΠΡΟ C I, Septimius Severus standing to left, in military garb, holding a globe and a spear.

4. Septimius Severus no. 39

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Varbanov 2594 Moushmov 912 <i>AMNG</i> 1296	inv. 5010 weight 11.63 g, dia. 26 × 25 mm
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Obv.: ΑΥ Κ Λ ΣΕΠ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ, laureate head right.

Rev.: ΥΠ ΑΥ ΓΑΛΛ ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤ ΠΡΟΣ Ι, Athena standing to left, helmeted, offering on an altar standing to left, holding a spear and resting her hand on a shield to her right.

5. Septimius Severus no. 41

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Moushmov 941	inv. 5012 weight 11.07 g, dia. 25 × 25 mm
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Obv.: ΑΥ ΚΑΙ ΣΕ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ, laureate head right.

Rev.: ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤ ΠΡΟΣ ΙΣΤΡ, Aequitas standing left, holding a balance scale and a scepter.

6. Septimius Severus no. 44

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Moushmov 1018	inv. 5014 weight 12.02 g, dia. 26 × 25 mm
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Obv.: ΑΥΚ Λ ΣΕ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ, laureate head right.

Rev.: ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΙΣΤ, Hermes standing to front, head left, holding a caduceus and a pouch, cock on the left side.

7. Septimius Severus no. 47

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Varbanov 2606 or Moushmov 909	inv. 5016 weight 13.18 g, dia. 27 × 26 mm
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Obv.: [......] ΣΕΥΗ[...], laureate head right.

Rev.: ΥΠ ΑΥ ΓΑΛΛΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩ ΠΡΟΣ Ι, Asklepios standing to front, holding a staff with a serpent entwined around it.

8. Septimius Severus no. 9

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Type not listed in catalogs ⁶	inv. 4993 weight 11.60 g, dia. 26 × 28 mm
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Obv.: ΑΥ Κ Λ ΣΕΠ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ ΙΙ, laureate head right.

Rev.: ΥΠ ΣΤΑ ΛΟΝΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΙΣΤΡΟΝ, river god (Istros?) semi-reclining to left, resting on his left arm, raising an unidentified object in his right hand.

⁶ Type similar to Varbanov 2762, cf. AMNG 1277. The legend on the reverse runs around the edge; on the coin from Novae, it terminates in two lines.

9. Septimius Severus no. 48

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Moushmov 1001 var. ⁷	inv. 4994 weight 10.44 g, dia. 24 × 27 mm
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Obv.: AY K Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC, laureate head right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: YΠ AYP ΓAΛΛOY NIKOΠOΛIT ΠPOC ICTP, Tyche standing left, holding a rudder and a cornucopia.

10. Septimius Severus no. 28

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Varbanov 2677	inv. 5029 weight 10.63 g, dia. 25 × 25 mm
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Obv.: AY K Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC, laureate head right.

Rev.: YΠ AYP ΓAΛΛOY NIKOΠOΛITΩN / ΠPOC IC, Zeus standing left, holding a patera and a scepter.

11. Septimius Severus no. 45

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Varbanov 2606	inv. 5016 weight 13.18 g, dia. 27 × 26 mm
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Obv.: [...] CEYH[...]OC, laureate head right.

Rev.: YΠ AY ΓAΛΛOY NIKOΠOΛITΩ ΠPOC I, Asklepios standing to front, holding a staff with a serpent entwined around it.

12. Septimius Severus no. 15

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	SNG Cop. 211 Moushmov 385	inv. 4996 weight 11.94 g, dia. 27 × 28 mm
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Obv.: AY Λ CEΠTI CEYHPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: YΠ ΦAYCTINIANO MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN, Homonia standing left, holding a patera and a cornucopia.

13. Septimius Severus no. 30

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	SNG Cop. 211 Moushmov 385	inv. 5000 weight 14.84 g, dia. 27 × 26 mm
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Obv.: AY Λ CEΠTI CEYHPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: YΠ ΦAYCTINIANOY MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN, Homonia standing left, holding a patera and a cornucopia.

⁷ Coin type similar to that listed as Moushmov 1001. The coin from Novae bears the legend here presented: AY K Λ

CEΠ CEYHPOC, whereas Moushmov 1001 has the following according to the catalog: AY K Λ CEΠTI CEYHP ΠEP.

14. Septimius Severus no. 20

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	SNG Cop. 211 Moushmov 385	inv. 5002 weight 11.54 g, dia. 27 × 26 mm
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Obv.: ΑΥ Λ ΣΕΠΤΙ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: Υ ΦΛ ΟΥΛΠΙΑΝΟΥ ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ, Homonia standing left, holding a patera and a cornucopia.

15. Septimius Severus no. 35

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	SNG Cop. 211 Moushmov 385	inv. 5006 weight 9.97 g, dia. 26 × 25 mm
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Obv.: ΑΥ Λ ΣΕΠΤΙ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: ΟΥΛΠΙΑΝΟΥ ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ, Homonia standing left, holding a patera and a cornucopia.

16. Septimius Severus no. 38

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	SNG Cop. 211 Moushmov 385	inv. 5009 weight 12.91 g, dia. 26 × 26 mm
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Obv.: ΑΥ Λ ΣΕΠΤΙ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: ΥΠΙ ΦΑΥΣΤΙΝΙΑΝΟΥ ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ, Homonia standing left, holding a patera and a cornucopia.

17. Septimius Severus no. 5

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 372	inv. 4986 weight 12.35 g, dia. 27 × 27 mm
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Obv.: ΑΥΚΛΑΣΕ ΣΕΥΗΡΟ Π, laureate bust right, cuirassed.

Rev.: Υ ΑΥ ΓΑΛΛΟΥ ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ, Dionysus standing left, holding a thyrsus and a kantharos.

18. Septimius Severus no. 3

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 381	inv. 5001 weight 11.87 g, dia. 26 × 27 mm
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Obv.: ΑΥ Λ ΣΕΠΤΙ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ, Kybele enthroned to left, holding a patera, left hand resting on a tympanum, flanked by lions.

19. Septimius Severus no. 29

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 381	inv. 5005 weight 11.47 g, dia. 26 × 25 mm
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Obv.: AY Λ CEITTI CEYHPOC laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN, Kybele enthroned to left, holding a patera, left hand resting on a tympanum, flanked by lions.

20. Septimius Severus no. 46

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 381	inv. 5007 weight 12.24 g, dia. 27 × 26 mm
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Obv.: AY Λ CEITTI CEYHPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN, Kybele enthroned to left, holding a patera, left hand resting on a tympanum, flanked by lions.

21. Septimius Severus no. 34

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 381	inv. 5013 weight 11.05 g, dia. 27 × 27 mm
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Obv.: AY Λ CEITTI CEYHPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN, Kybele enthroned to left, holding a patera, left hand resting on a tympanum, flanked by lions.

22. Septimius Severus no. 42

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 381	inv. 5018 weight 12.14 g, dia. 28 × 28 mm
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Obv.: AY Λ CEITTI CEYHPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN, Kybele enthroned to left, holding a patera, left hand resting on a tympanum, flanked by lions.

23. Septimius Severus no. 36

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 381	inv. 4985 weight 10.39 g, dia. 26 × 27 mm
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Obv.: AY Λ CEITTI CEYHPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN, Kybele enthroned to left, holding a patera, left hand resting on a tympanum, flanked by lions.

24. Septimius Severus no. 10

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 394	inv. 4995 weight 9.21 g, dia. 26 × 25 mm
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Obv.: AY K Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC Π, draped and cuirassed bust right.

Rev.: Y AY ΓΑΛΛΟΥ ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ, Tyche standing left, holding a rudder and a cornucopia.

25. Septimius Severus no. 19

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 394	inv. 4999 weight 10.57 g, dia. 26 × 27 mm
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Obv.: AY K Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC, draped laureate bust right.

Rev.: YΠ ΦΑΥCTINIANOY ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ, Tyche standing left, holding a rudder and a cornucopia.

26. Septimius Severus no. 17

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 394	inv. 5015 weight 11.97 g, dia. 27 × 27 mm
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Obv.: AY K Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC Π, draped and cuirassed bust right.

Rev.: Y AY ΓΑΛΛΟΥ ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ, Tyche standing left, holding a rudder and a cornucopia.

27. Septimius Severus no. 11

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 387	inv. 4997 weight 15.30 g, dia. 27 × 27 mm
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Obv.: AYKACEΠ CEYHPOC, draped laureate bust to right.

Rev.: ΦΑ ΟΥΛΠΙΑΝΟΥ ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ, Concordia in a kalathos, standing to front, head turned left, kindling a fire on an altar, holding a patera and a cornucopia.

28. Septimius Severus no. 18

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 377	inv. 4998 weight 13.26 g, dia. 26 × 27 mm
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Obv.: AY K Λ CEΠTI CEYHPOC ΠE, laureate bust right.

Rev.: [...] ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ, Zeus standing to front, head turned left, holding thunderbolts.

29. Septimius Severus no. 32

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 378	inv. 5003 weight 11.08 g, dia. 26 × 26 mm
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Obv.: AY K Λ CEITTI CEYHPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: YΠ OYΛΠIANOY MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN, figure of the emperor in a short tunic standing left, holding a globe and a scepter.

30. Septimius Severus no. 33

AE	193–211	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 368	inv. 5004 weight 11.62 g, dia. 26 × 27 mm
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Obv.: AY Λ CEITTI CEYHPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: YΠ OYΛΠIANOY MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN, Apollo standing right, nude, right arm raised above the head, holding a bow, a quiver on the right.

31. Septimius Severus no. 24

AE	211–217	Thracian Anchialos	Varbanov 244 var. <i>AMNG</i> II 483 var.	inv. 5023 weight 10.82 g, dia. 25 × 26 mm
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Obv.: AY K Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC, laureate bust right, cuirassed.

Rev.: OYΛΠIANΩN AΓXIAΛEΩN, galley to left, figure of the emperor standing left, facing the oarsmen, holding a patera and a scepter.

32. Septimius Severus (Julia Domna) no. 8

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Varbanov 2897 Moushmov 1033	inv. 5011 weight 13.17 g, dia. 26 × 26 mm
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Obv.: IOYΛIA ΔOMNA CEB, draped bust to right.

Rev.: YΠ A AYΠ ΓAΛΛOY NIKOΠOΛ ΠPOC ICTP, Dionysus standing left, holding a bunch of grapes and a thyrsus, a panther at his feet on the left side.

33. Septimius Severus (Julia Domna) no. 40

AE	187–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Varbanov 2897 Moushmov 1033	inv. 5028 weight 12.64 g, dia. 27 × 27 mm
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Obv.: IOYΛIAΔO MNA CEBA, draped bust right.

Rev.: YΠA AYΠ ΓAΛΛOY NIKOΠOΛ ΠPOC ICTP, Dionysus standing left, holding a bunch of grapes and a thyrsus, a panther at his feet on the left side.

34. Caracalla no. 22

AE	193–211	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Moushmov 1094	inv. 5017 weight 13.58 g, dia. 26 × 26 mm
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Obv.: AY K M AYP ANTΩNINOC, laureate head right.

Rev.: / YΠ AYP ΓΑΛΛΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ / ΠΡΟΣ IC, Zeus sitting left, holding a patera and a scepter.

35. Caracalla no. 14

AE	211–217	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Moushmov 1116	inv. 4989 weight 11.27 g, dia. 27 × 25 mm
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Obv.: AY K M AYP ANTΩNINOC, laureate bust right, cuirassed and in paludamentum.

Rev.: YΠ AYP ΓΑΛΛΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤ ΠΡΟΣ I, eagle standing left, on an altar, between two standards, holding laurel wreath in his beak.

36. Caracalla no. 26

AE	211–217	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 438	inv. 4990 weight 10.79 g, dia. 26 × 25 mm
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Obv.: AY K MAP AYPH ANTΩNINOC, laureate head right.

Rev.: Y Φ ΟΥΛΠΙΑΝΟΥ ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤ, Concordia in a kalathos, standing left, holding a patera and a cornucopia.

37. Caracalla no. 25

AE	211–217	Marcianopolis	Moushmov 438	inv. 5024 weight 10.94 g, dia. 26 × 27 mm
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Obv.: ANTΩNINOC ΠΙΟC AYΓΟΥCΤΟC, laureate head right.

Rev.: YΠ KYNTIΛΙΑΝΟΥ ΜΑΡΚΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΙΤ / Ω / N, Concordia standing left, offering from a patera on an altar, holding a cornucopia.

38. Caracalla no. 13

AE	211–217	Hadrianopolis	Varbanov 3569	inv. 4988 weight 11.75 g, dia. 27 × 26 mm
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Obv.: AYT K M AYR CEY ANTΩNEINOC, laureate head right.

Rev.: ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟ ΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ, Poseidon standing right, one leg on the prow of ship, holding a scepter and an unidentified object.

39. Caracalla no. 02

AE	211–217	Thracian Anchialos	Moushmov 2853	inv. 4987 weight 11.56 g, dia. 26 × 26 mm
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Obv.: AYT M AYP ANTΩNEINOC, laureate bust right, cuirassed.

Rev.: OYAPIIANΩN AΓXIAAEΩN, city gate, no doors, two towers.

40. Caracalla no. 16

AE	193–211	Thracian Anchialos	Moushmov 2849 Varbanov 340 <i>AMNG</i> 528	inv. 4991 weight 12.03 g, dia. 27 × 28 mm
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Obv.: AY K M AYP ANTΩNINOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: OYAPIIANΩN AΓXIAAEΩN, figure of emperor in military garb, standing left, holding a globe and a scepter.

41. Caracalla no. 21

AE	209–212	Anchialos Tracki	<i>AMNG</i> 524-2 Varbanov 408	inv. 5021 weight 13.70 g, dia. 26 × 26 mm
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Obv.: AYT M AYPH ANTΩNEINOC, cuirassed laureate bust right, in paludamentum.

Rev.: OYAPIIAN AΓXIAAEΩN, Tyche standing left, holding a rudder and a cornucopia.

42. Caracalla (Plautilla) no. 27

AE	211–217	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Varbanov 3183 Moushmov 1153	inv. 5019 weight 12.68 g, dia. 25 × 25 mm
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Obv.: Φ OYΛ ΠΛΑΥΤΙΑΛΛΑ CEB, bust right.

Rev.: YΠ AYP ΓΑΛΛΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ / ΠΡΟC I, Athena standing left, helmeted, offering on an altar standing on the left, holding a spear and resting her hand on a shield to the right.

43. Macrinus no. 42

AE	217–218	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Type not listed in catalogs	inv. 5020 weight 14.85 g, dia. 27 × 28 mm
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Obv.: AY K OΠΠΕΛ CΕΥΗ ΜΑΚΡΕΙΝΟC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: YΠ CΤΑ ΛΟΝΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ ΠΡΟC ΙCΤΡΟΝ, equestrian figure of emperor right, hand raised, Mars striding before him, holding a trophy.

44. Heliogabalus no. 43

AE	218–222	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Type not listed in catalogs ⁸	inv. 5022 weight 12.34 g, dia. 26 × 25 mm
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Obv.: Y T K M AYPH ANTΩNINOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: YΠA NOB POYΦOY NIKOΠOΛITΩN ΠPOC ICTP, Nemesis in a kalathos, standing to left, holding a balance scale and a parazonium, wheel by her foot on the left.

45. Alexander Severus no. 31

AE	222–235	Marcianopolis	AMNG 1043	inv. 5025 weight 10.92 g, dia. 25 × 25 mm
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Obv.: AY T K M AYP CEY AΛEΞANΔPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: YΠ ΦIP ΦIAOΠAΠΠOY MAPKIANOΠOΛITΩN, Homonia standing left, holding a patera and a cornucopia.

46. Alexander Severus no. 46

AE	222–235	Dionysopolis	Moushmov 101 SNG Cop. 188	inv. 4983 weight 10.87 g, dia. 26 × 24 mm
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Obv.: AY T K M AYP CEY AΛEΞANΔPOC, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: ΔIONYCOΠOΛEITΩN, Zeus standing left, holding a patera over an altar and a cornucopia, Δ in right field.

47. Maximus Caesar no. 23

AE	235/6–238	Deultum	Jurukova 209 Varbanov 2461	inv. 5026 weight 8.65 g, dia. 25 × 25 mm
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Obv.: C IVL VER MAXIMVS CEAS, laureate bust right, draped and cuirassed.

Rev.: COL FL PAC DEVL T, Apollo standing left, holding a branch and a lyre resting against a tripod.

48. Gordian III no. 48

AE	238–244	Hadrianopolis	Varbanov 3717	inv. 4992 weight 10.31 g, dia. 29 × 28 mm
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⁸ A similar coin type is known (Moushmov 1402), but here Nemesis holds a cornucopia. None of the known coins of Heliogabalus from Nicopolis ad Istrum bear a representation of Nemesis with a parazonium in her

hand. Such images are found on coins issued in Marcianopolis, but our coin is indubitably from Nicopolis ad Istrum.

Obv.: ΑΥΤ ΚΜ ΑΝ ΤΓΟΡΔΙΑΝΟC ΑΥΓ, cuirassed laureate bust right.

Rev.: ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ, Apollo striding right, shooting a bow.

Statistical data

Issuer	Number of examples		%	Mint	Coins from a given mint
Hadrian	1		2.08%	Rome	1 pc / 2.08%
Septimius Severus	30	32	66.6%	Marcianopolis	19 pcs / 39.5%
	2 (Julia Domna)			Nicopolis ad Istrum	12 pcs / 25%
				Thracian Anchialos	1 pc / 2.08%
Caracalla	8	9	18.7%	Nicopolis ad Istrum	3 pcs / 6.25%
	1 (Plautilla)			Marcianopolis	2 pcs / 4.1%
				Hadrianopolis	1 pc / 2.08%
				Thracian Anchialos	3 pcs / 6.25%
Macrinus	1		2.08%	Nicopolis ad Istrum	1 pc / 2.08%
Heliogabal	1		2.08%	Nicopolis ad Istrum	1 pc / 2.08%
Alexander Severus	2		4.1%	Marcianopolis	1 pc / 2.08%
				Dionysopolis	1 pc / 2.08%
Maximus Caesar	1		2.08%	Deultum	1 pc / 2.08%
Gordian III	1		2.08%	Hadrianopolis	1 pc / 2.08%
Total	48		100%	7 mints	48 pcs / 100%

Table 1. Number of coins in the collection: chronological structure and provenience

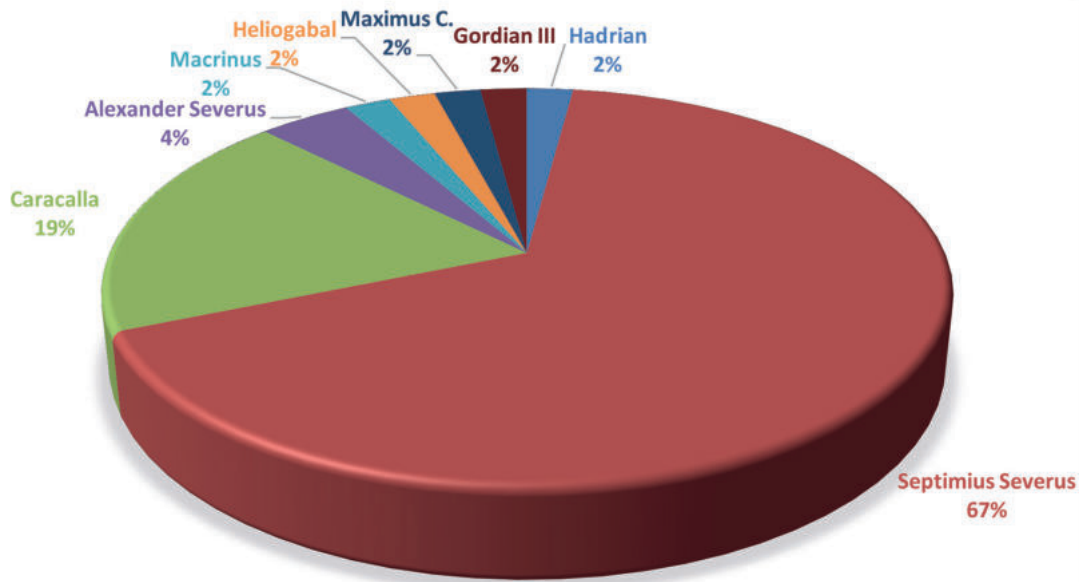


Chart 1. Percentage share of provincial coins in the collection from Novae

The chart above clearly demonstrates that coins struck in the reign of Setimius Severus constitute the core of the collection. There are 32 pieces, including two with a bust of the emperor's wife Julia Domna, making up close to 67% of the collection [Table 1; Chart 1]. Most of the Severan issues come from Marcianopolis (19 coins) with coins from nearby Nicopolis ad Istrum, including the two with a bust of Julia Domna, counting for most of the rest of the set (12). A single coin of Septimius Severus was issued at Thracian Anchialos. Another example of a coin from this mint and period was discovered in Sector IV at Novae.⁹ Coins from Anchialos are seldom encountered; for example, not one is known from the *thermae legionis*.¹⁰

The next group in size, although definitely less numerous, is made up of issues of Caracalla [Table 1; Chart 1]: eight of the emperor and one issued for his wife Fulvia Plautilla. Thus, Caracalla's provincial "bronzes" constitute 19% of the "hoard". This percentage is substantial despite the colossal quantitative difference compared to coins of Septimius Severus. Beside this there are two "bronzes" of Alexander Severus and singular examples of issues of the emperors Macrinus, Heliogabalus, and Maximus Caesar. The most recent coin in this set is one from the early years of Gordian III, marking thus the period when the collection was deposited.

Not fitting in this "hoard" is the sestertius of Hadrian, the oldest coin in this collection, dated from the first quarter of the third century AD. It is much larger than the other coins, at least 5 mm larger from the biggest provincial piece. It is worn but the legibility of the representations on the obverse and reverse indicate that it could not have been long in circulation or else was little circulated. The question arises what makes it so special in this context. By the first half of the third century AD when this collection was put away, these sestercii from the beginning of the second century AD were no longer in circulation. Its presence in the set under consideration may thus be a total discrepancy (for instance, due to disturbed context) or it may have been a rare find by a legionary, who included it them in his savings. Its occurrence in the collection is not impossible albeit intriguing and not easy to justify form the point of view of monetary circulation.

⁹ CIOLEK, DYCZEK 2011.

¹⁰ DIMITROV 2013.

The share of different provincial mints in this collection is shown in Chart 2 [see also Table 2]. The most numerous group are coins from Marcianopolis: 22 coins (44%), that is, nearly half of the collection. A smaller set is made up of coins from the nearby mint of Nicopolis ad Istrum (17 coins = 35.4%), differently than in hitherto studied coinage from the legionary camp in Novae in which coins from this mint always constituted a clear majority. One could even risk generalizing this majority at 2:1 in favor of the coins from Nicopolis ad Istrum compared to those from Marcianopolis.¹¹ It was the case of the coin finds from the areas of the army hospital (Sector IV of the excavation)¹² and legionary baths.¹³ The *valetudinarium* yielded 13 “bronzes” from Nicopolis ad Istrum and six from Marcianopolis, the *thermae legionis* 21 to 18, respectively.¹⁴ The total from these two areas is 34 AE from Nicopolis ad Istrum to 24 from Marcianopolis, which gives us proportions that are the reverse of those established for the presently discussed “hoard”.

Coins from Thracian Anchialos form the next group in terms of quantity: 4 pieces (= 8.5% [see Table 2]). Hitherto, the excavation in Sector IV had yielded just two coins of this provenance, one each of issues of Septimius Severus and Gordian III.¹⁵ The collection in question gave one coin of Septimius Severus and three of Caracalla [see Table 1]. Other areas in Novae have not yielded any coins identified as coming from this mint.

The “hoard” included singular coins from the mints at Dionysopolis, Deultum and Rome (the latter is the sestertius of Hadrian), and two pieces from Hadrianopolis, including the youngest coin in the collection, issued in the reign of Gordian III. Issues from the reign of Gordian III, coming from the mint in Hadrianopolis, have been identified also in the legionary baths and *valetudinarium*.¹⁶ Compared to the picture provided by a study of coin finds from the *valetudinarium*¹⁷ and *thermae legionis*,¹⁸ these singular issues from more distant provinces are not a surprise. One or two coins at the most were recorded there from the mints of Dionysopolis, Deultum and Hadrianopolis. The *valetudinarium* also yielded a trace representation of coinage issued by the mints at Tomis and Nice, whereas coins from the *thermae legionis* included issues from Heraklea, Odessos, Pautalia, Istros and Augusta Trajana. None of these are represented in the collection currently under study.

The collection of 48 coins from Novae is thus characterized by the presence of coins from Thracian Anchialos, or rather their quantity to be more precise, the reversed proportions of coins from the two provincial mints, Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis, situated nearest to the legionary camp at Novae. a seldom encountered coin with a Latin legend from Deultum. A “bronze” of Alexander Severus from Deultum was noted among the coins from the baths, but not from the army hospital.

The assemblage thus demonstrates many of the characteristics of the coin supply in circulation in Moesia Inferior in the first half of the third century, even as it revises our current views on this issue regarding the legionary camps on the Lower Danube. Until now it was a given that the largest number of coins that reached the camp at Novae came from Nicopolis ad Istrum, not an unlikely thing considering that the mint was located nearest to the camp. The assemblage under study indicates an equal and even greater share of coins from the mint at Marcianopolis, which is not simply explained by a larger issuing capacity in the latter mint. Both mints were capable of striking many coins and this they did on occasion, for instance, in the reign of Septimius Severus as reflected by the finds from the “hoard”. The coinage of this emperor was so richly represented that his coins continued to be circulated long after his death. Interestingly, not one of the coins of Septimius Severus found in the area of the *valetudinarium* came from Marcianopolis, while these

¹¹ CIOLEK, DYCZEK 2011, pp. 241–244.

¹² CIOLEK, DYCZEK 2011.

¹³ DIMITROV 2013.

¹⁴ DIMITROV 2013.

¹⁵ DIMITROV 2013.

¹⁶ DIMITROV 2013, pp. 247–248.

¹⁷ CIOLEK, DYCZEK 2011, pp. 241–244; CIOLEK 2017, pp. 49–54.

¹⁸ DIMITROV 2013, pp. 247–248.

issues are in a definite majority in the “hoard”. The coins from Marcianopolis constitute close to half of the collection. In the set of coins struck for Septimius Severus, they account for 19 of the coins to the 12 coming from Nicopolis ad Istrum, that is, close to 40% of all his coins. For the sake of comparison, the area of the *valetudinarium* did not yield any,¹⁹ while the break up of this emperor’s issues from the bath is eight for Nicopolis ad Istrum and five for Marcianopolis. Coins from the mint closer to camp are obviously in the majority, but the results are nonetheless very close.

Thus, the coin circulation structure from the mid-third century that emerges from a study of the present collection is not so much new as substantially revised. The small number of coins in the set leads the present author to think that the coins were someone’s small savings rather than representing truly substantial value for the owner.

In terms of the “iconographic” structure of the collection, the presence of two coins of Septimius Severus issued for Julia Domna is intriguing. These two coins represent the same type and they seem to have been struck using the same die, although their worn surfaces make it impossible to be certain. Even so, it is interesting that they represent the same type with very similar characteristics. There are five other coins representing a single type — Pick 580, *SNG Cop.* 211, Moushmov 385 — struck for Septimius Severus in the Marcianopolis mint (see the Catalog, nos. 9–14). In this case, however, different dies were used. Thus, it seems probable that the coins with portraits of Julia Domna, so strikingly similar, were struck with the same die.

Another series of six coins representing a single type, Moushmov 381, was also struck by Septimius Severus in Marcianopolis. The reverse of one of these coins is poorly preserved, but the others, which are in better condition, do not show similarities of the dies. Their state of preservation is similar, suggesting that they were used more or less simultaneously and with similar intensity.

Two of Caracalla’s coins represent the same type with Concordia offering on an altar (cf. Catalog, nos. 36–37), but the obverses and reverses are very different. Two evidently different dies for the obverse and reverse were used to strike these coins.

Another exceptional characteristic of the studied collection are series of coins of the same type [cf. Table 4], three of Septimius Severus and one of Caracalla. The coins of Heliogabalus are also quite rare in this set compared to what has been determined for the pools of provincial coins from other areas of the fortress in Novae, where at least a few dozen of these coins were noted. The question is how this changes determinations regarding monetary circulation in Lower Moesia in the first half of the third century.

Mint	Number of coins	%
Rome	1	2.08%
Marcianopolis	22	43.62%
Nicopolis ad Istrum	17	35.4%
Hadrianopolis	2	4.1%
Dionysopolis	1	2.08%
Thracian Anchialos	4	8.3%
Deultum	1	2.08%
Total	48	100%

Table 2. Percentage share of coins from particular mints in the collection

¹⁹ CIOLEK, DYCZEK 2011.

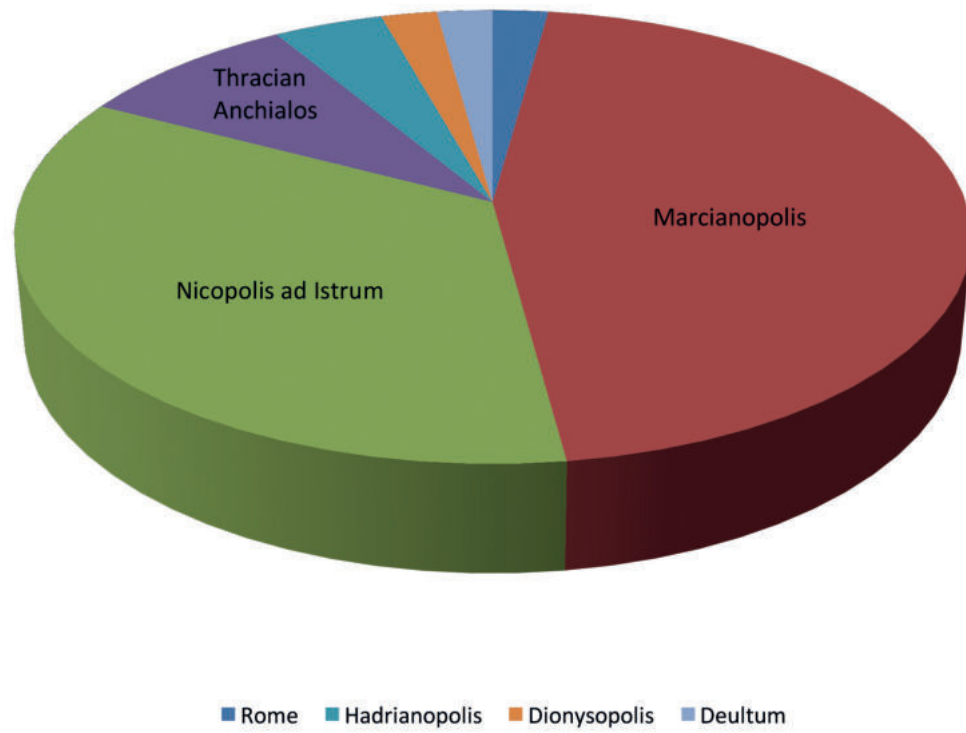


Chart 2. Percentage distribution of coins from particular mints in the collection

	Rome	Martiano-polis	Nicopolis ad Istrum	Hadriano-polis	Thracian Anchialos	Dionysopolis	Deultum	Total
Hadrian	1							1
Septimius Severus		19	12		1			32
Macrinus			1					1
Caracalla		2	3	1	3			9
Heliogabalus			1					1
Alexander Severus		1				1		2
Maximus Caesar							1	1
Gordian III				1				1
Total	1	22	17	2	4	1	1	48

Table 3. Quantitative representation of coins from particular mints in the collection by chronological period

Characteristics \ Area	Collection of 48 coins	<i>Valetudinarium</i>	<i>Thermae legionis</i>
Majority of coins of Septimius Severus	X	X	X
<input type="checkbox"/> definite majority	⊗	—	—
Second set of coins of Heliogabalus	—	—	<input type="checkbox"/> X
Second set of coins of Caracalla	⊗	—	—
Second set of coins of Gordian III	—	<input type="checkbox"/> X	—
Relatively many coins of Heliogabalus	⊖	X	X
Relatively many coins of Caracalla	X	X	X
Relatively many coins of Alexander Severus	—	—	<input type="checkbox"/> X
Occurrence of coins of Geta	⊖	X	X
Occurrence of coins of Macrinus	⊗	X	X
<input type="checkbox"/> numerous	—	—	<input type="checkbox"/> X
Majority of coins of Nicopolis ad Istrum	—	X	X
Majority of coins of Marcianopolis	X	—	—
Occurrence of coins of Anchialos	X	X	<input type="checkbox"/> —
Occurrence of coins of Deultum	X	X	—
Occurrence of coins of Hadrianopolis	X	X	X
<input type="checkbox"/> numerous	—	—	—
Occurrence of issues of mints, 1 example each	X	X	X
Series of coins of the same type	X	—	—
Unknown types of coins	⊗	—	?
Number of existing characteristics	12	11	11
Characteristics specific to each collection	⊗ 8	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Table 4. Characteristics of the coin distribution patterns within the legionary camp at Novae in the first half of the third century based on the structure of the collection of 48 coins, coins from the areas of the *valetudinarium* and the *thermae legionis*

Key:

- characteristics specific to the collection of 48 coins from Novae
- ⊗ – characteristics specific to selected areas of excavation within the legionary camp at Novae

Bold – characteristics common to all sets of coins

The monetary system of the Roman Empire around the middle of the third century AD, when the “hoard” was hidden, was highly specific.²⁰ There were three zones of circulation for “bronzes” in the Roman state: the western zone and Italy, the provinces on the middle Danube and the eastern provinces. Coins from the central mint predominated in the first of these three zones; in the second, there was a balance of coins from the mint in Rome and the provincial mints, and in the third, provincial “bronzes” were in the majority to the practical complete exclusion of coins from Rome. The province of Moesia stood on the border between the second and third zones. Coins from the Roman mint were rare here, whereas local mints were well represented. The data in Table 4 demonstrate this trend during the reign of Gordian III. The most common coin in circulation was that of Septimius Severus, whom the *legio I Italica* supported in his quest for imperial power and who implemented an active monetary policy. This is well reflected in the pool of coins discovered in the legionary camp in Novae.

The central mint could not meet the huge demand for coinage in the third century AD. Provincial mints had their work cut out for them during times of special need as when preparations were being made for important actions, particularly of a military nature, as well as events of lesser importance, such as an emperor’s passage through the territory of a province. The camp in Novae, expectedly, drew its supply of coinage from the nearest mint in Nicopolis ad Istrum, but, as it turns out, an almost equal measure of coins came from Marcianopolis.²¹ The Nicopolis mint alone was apparently unable to produce enough coinage to cover the needs of the local monetary market. Supplementing these two mints, which dominated the local market, were mints in Hadrianopolis, Thracian Anchialos, Deultum, as well as the occasional (one coin each) issues of mints in Dionysopolis, Perinth, Tomis, Nice, Odessos, Pautalia, Istros, Heraklea.

Circulating at the same time with the dominant issues of Septimius Severus were the coins of Heliogabalus and Caracalla, not to mention Gordian III, which is hardly surprising considering that we are dealing with the reign of this emperor. His issues must have surely supplied current coinage. Also in circulation were the coins of all of Rome’s rulers from the third century AD up to the years 238–244, that is, issues of Geta, Macrinus, Diadumenian (in the *thermae legionis*), Alexander Severus and Maximus Caesar (coin from the collection, cf. Catalog, no. 47).

Finds of coins from the first half of the third century AD from Novae indicate that the fort’s demand for coinage in this period was satisfied exclusively by the nearby Moesian and Thracian mints. It should be kept in mind that the pool of coins available for study is merely a small section of “living culture” and that there must have been many more coins from local mints. It also indicates that soldiers’ pay in this period was made in provincial bronze coinage, especially in view of the intensity of military actions, which required money outlays even as the state treasury suffered from a shortage of silver. Hence the greater number of coins issued by Septimius Severus, who contended for the highest power with four other pretenders and whose success was assured thanks to the support of 15 legions, the *legio I Italica* included. The emperor issued a series of legionary denarius in gratitude,²² but so far not a single coin of this type has come from the excavation in the camp in Novae.

Mint operations were very sensitive to political events taking place in Moesia. A relatively greater number of provincial bronzes from the two major mints in the region, Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis, recorded among the finds from Sector IV, reflects the time of Heliogabal’s presence in Moesia in 218.²³ Another rise in the number of provincial coins in the pool coming from Sector IV coincides with the reign of Gordian III and may be explained by the passage of troops through the Balkans in 241 on their way East. The decline of minting operations in most

²⁰ Cf. FITZ 1978, *passim*.

²¹ Cf. GEROV 1975.

²² CIOLEK, KOLENDO 2008, pp. 225–226.

²³ SCHÖNERT-GEISS 1967, p. 226.

Moesian and Thracian mints in this period is also connected with political events, primarily the specificity of the monetary system in the second half of the third century AD. The rapid and definite debasement of the silver antoniniana in this period made bronze coin issues no longer profitable. The outcome is a turn in the finds from the camp, which are for the second half of the third century limited to extremely debased silver antoniniana.²⁴

In recapitulation, the collection, which was deposited in the rule of Gordian III (238–244), demonstrates many characteristics that are not typical of the most obvious structure of coins in circulation in the legionary camps on the lower Danube. The most important unique feature is the superiority of coins from Marcianopolis over those from Nicopolis ad Istrum. Next is the superior number of “bronzes” issued by Septimius Severus, which dominate the current issues completely. Another exceptional characteristic are the numerous series of the same type, as if the owner had been selecting them intentionally, although there does not seem to be any reasonable criteria, like better quality of the metal, higher value or a more interesting representation, if nothing else, behind this. These coins were not struck with one die, hence the conclusion is that they must have simply been the most common ones in circulation. Finally, there are two coin types (cf. Catalog, nos. 8 and 43) not listed in the published catalogs of coins from the Moesian and Thracian provincial mints. There is a certain gap in studies of provincial Roman minting and the two mints in question, Nicopolis ad Istrum and Marcianopolis, both important and resilient centers in certain periods, merit more detailed research into their minting operations.

Abbreviations

AMNG	<i>Die Antiken Münzen Nord-Griechenlands (ANMG)</i> , vol. I/1: <i>Dacien und Moesien</i> , ed. B. PICK, Berlin 1898.
Jurukova	J. JURUKOVA, <i>Griechisches Münzwerk. Die Münzprägung von Deultum</i> , vols. I–II (= <i>Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur der Antike</i> 8), Berlin 1973.
Moushmov	N. A. MOUSHMOV, <i>Antični moneti na Balkanskija poluostrvo i monetite na bälgarskite care</i> [Ancient coins from the Balkan Peninsula and coins of the Bulgarian czars], Sofia 1912.
RIC	<i>The Roman Imperial Coinage</i> (H. MATTINGLY, E. A. SYDENHAM, C. H. V. SUTHERLAND, R. A. G. CARSON, P. H. WEBB, J. W. E. PEARCE, P. M. BRUUN, J. P. C. KENT), vols. I–X, London 1923–1994.
SNG Cop.	<i>Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum</i> , Copenhagen 1942 ff.
Varbanov	I. VARBANOV, <i>Greek Imperial Coins</i> , vols. I–II, Burgas 2005–2007.

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CIOLEK, DYCZEK 2011	R. CIOLEK, P. DYCZEK, <i>Novae. Legionary Fortress and Late Antique Town</i> , vol. II: <i>Coins from Sector IV</i> , Warsaw.

²⁴ CIOLEK, DYCZEK 2011.

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Streszczenie

Zespół 48 monet prowincjonalnych z Novae (Bulgaria), odc. XII. Analiza numizmatyczna

W 2016 roku w Novae, podczas wykopaliisk prowadzonych przez Ośrodek Badań nad Antykiem Europy Południowo-Wschodniej Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, doszło do odkrycia niewielkiego zespołu monet „brązowych”, składającego się prawie wyłącznie z emisji prowincjonalnych. Monety znaleziono w warstwie podpodłogowej budowli cywilnej, niektóre z nich były zlepione, co wskazuje, że mogły być pierwotnie opakowane, np. w sakiewce. Zespół liczy 48 monet, wszystkie „brązowe”. Jedna z nich wybita została w mennicy w Rzymie za panowania cesarza Hadriana, pozostałe zaś tworzą bardzo ciekawy zbiór egzemplarzy bitych przez lokalne mennice prowincjonalne. W artykule przedstawiony został katalog monet wchodzących w skład omawianego zespołu.

Zespół ten jest ciekawy z wielu powodów. Po pierwsze rewiduje on poniekąd ustalenia, jak wyglądał obieg monetarny w obozie legionowym około połowy III wieku. Kolejną ważną sprawą są monety, których typy nie są dotychczas znane z publikowanych kolekcji czy z korpusów. Chodzi wprawdzie o dwie monety, ale wskazuje to, iż mennictwo nadal nie jest w pełni poznane. W obydwu przypadkach monety zostały wybite w Nicopolis ad Istrum, a zatem mennicy znajdującej się najbliżej obozu legionowego w Novae. Wszystkie monety, poza emisją Hadriana, są zbliżonej wielkości. Z pewnością są one reprezentacją monet będących w obiegu w prowincji Mezja Dolna na początku panowania Gordiana III, a zatem w momencie ukrycia/straty zespołu.

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