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A Gold Crispus Medallion from Bukovina (Ukraine)

The unique gold multiple was discovered on 24 May 2013 by a treasure hunter in a settlement of the Cherniakhiv culture near Ivanovtsi, Chernivtsi obl. Kelment-si rai., in northern Bukovina, south-western Ukraine;¹ the very next day a photograph of the coin was uploaded to an internet forum.² Here is its description:

AU multiple of 1.5 solidi of Crispus, struck at Sirmium AD 321, weight 5.93 g, dies at 12 o'clock (Pl. 1, Fig 1-2).

Obv.: [DNCR]ISPVSNOBILISSCAES

Laur., draped, cuirassed bust, left.

Rev.: FELIXADVE N T VSCAESSNN

Emperor on horseback in military dress l., raising l. hand, holding spear in r., cloak flying.

Ex: SIRM³

The upper part of the coin above the emperor's portrait where the loop would have been is fractured, the edges are hammered and lightly curved, presumably adjusted to fit the frame. The medallion is heavily worn, especially in the lower part of reverse probably due to its extended use as a pendant.

¹ The publication is financed from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education programme in the frames of the National Programme for the Development of Humanities, 2012–2017.

² <http://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=995230>.

³ R.A.G. CARSON, C.H.V. SUTHERLAND, P.M. BRUUN, *The Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. VII, Constantine and Licinius A.D. 313–337*, London 1966, p. 470, no. 19 (= RIC VII)

Prior to the discovery of the multiple at Ivanovtsi this type was known from a single, poorly preserved specimen, weighing 6.7 g, published by F. Gnecci,⁴ now in the Museo Civico in Brescia. The slightly lower weight of Ivanovtsi multiple must be due to its being incomplete.

The medallion was struck in early 321 to commemorate the *quinquennialia* of Crispus, then residing in Augusta Treverorum (Trier) and who, on the anniversary of his reign, visited his father Constantine at Sirmium.⁵ The multiple was issued together with a relatively large series of other multiples and solidi, also commemorating the *quinquennialia* of Constantinus II, and also the second term of Crispus and Constantinus II as consuls.⁶ In 318–322, Sirmium had a very active mint owing to the presence of Emperor Constantine I, stationed in the capital of the prefecture of Illiricum with his army because of a major threat posed by barbarians, Goths in particular, watching from across the Danube.

Gold medallions of the Constantinian emperors are the largest group of multiples recorded in the territory of Barbaricum, the result, apparently, of active diplomacy pursued by Constantine I and his successors with the barbarians.⁷ The medallion from Ivanovtsi is one of the earliest in this group. The only specimens earlier than our Crispus multiple are a 2-solidi Constantine I multiple with a loop struck at Trier in 310, its provenance obscure, now in Berlin, where it passed from the von Rauch collection,⁸ a 9-solidi medallion struck in 313 at Ticinum discovered in Transylvania⁹ and a Licinius I *quaternio* issued in 317 at Nicomedia discovered in Lesser Poland.¹⁰ The first longer series of multiples recorded in Barbaricum are medallions of Constantine I struck at Nicomedia in 325 to commemorate his *vicennialia*, for which anniversary the emperor came to that city.¹¹

It is harder to establish how the 1.5 solidi medallion of Crispus struck in 321 at Sirmium, capital of the prefecture of Illiricum (now Sremska Mitrovica in Serbia),

⁴ F. GNECCHI, *I medaglioni romani*, vol. I, Milano 1912, p. 23, no. 2, pl. 8, no. 16. Cf. M.R. ALFÖLDI, *Die constantinischen Goldprägung. Untersuchungen zu ihrer Bedeutung für Kaiserpolitik und Hofkunst*, Mainz 1963; pp. 85, 94, 166, no. 122, fig. 143.

⁵ ALFÖLDI, *Die constantinischen Goldprägung...*, p. 85; P. BASTIEN, *Monnaie et "donativa" au Bas-Empire*, Wetteren 1977, p. 77.

⁶ RIC VII, pp. 470–472, nos. 18–34.

⁷ A. BURSCHE, *Złote medaliony rzymskie w Barbaricum. Symbolika prestiżu i władzy społeczeństw barbarzyńskich u schyłku starożytności*. Światowit, Supplement Series A: Antiquity, vol. II, Warszawa 1998, pp. 110–119.

⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 93, 259, no. 1.

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 92, 240–241, no. 21.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 85–91, 110–112, 235–236, no. 11; IDEM, "Unikalny medalion Licyniusza I z północnej Małopolski," [in:] J. KOLENDO (ed.), *Nowe znaleziska importów rzymskich z ziem Polski I, Korpus znalezisk rzymskich z europejskiego Barbaricum, Polska, Suplement 1*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 147–54; IDEM, "The unique gold Roman numismates from the collection of the National Museum of Ukrainian History in Kiev," *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne (Polish Numismatic News)* LIII, 2009, pp. 85–104.

¹¹ BURSCHE, *Złote medaliony rzymskie w Barbaricum...*, p. 112.

fell into barbarian hands. It is almost certain that it was a tool of imperial diplomacy used in negotiations with a representative of the Gothic power elite at a time when the Goths had settled on the northern bank of the Lower Danube and posed a direct threat to the inhabitants of Illiricum and the areas more to the south-east and to the west.

On the map of medallion finds the multiple from Ivanovtsi fills the gap observed heretofore between the larger concentration in Volhynia and another, in Transylvania (Map 1). The record from the territory of the Cherniakhiv culture includes two more gold multiples: a quaternio of Gallienus (Map 2, no. 22) struck at Rome in 263, from a pre-1881 discovery made near Ivanovtsi, in the region of Khotyn (Chernivtisi obl.) which passed into the Münzkabinett in Berlin¹² and a multiple discovered in 1976 near Verkhivnia, Zhytomyr obl., an 18-solidi Constantius II (Map 3, No. 3) struck at Aquileia, presumably in 340, which like the specimen from Ivanovtsi, now misses its loop and a large fragment of its edge.¹³

The relatively small number of gold medallion finds from the Cherniakhiv culture territory is baffling, especially when compared to their large pool recorded in the Wielbark Culture territory. Similarly, there are almost no finds in this area of Constantinian solidi from the first half of the 4th century. The only exception is a Constantine I solidus discovered near the village of Nicolaevca in Moldova.¹⁴

What is remarkable in this context is the distribution map of the gold coin finds in the western and the central area of the Cherniakhiv culture settlement (Maps 2 and 3). It would seem that the Upper and Middle Dniester acted as a major barrier to their influx. To the north and north-east of the river is observed a concentration of 3rd century aurei (Map 2), whereas 4th century solidi – with one exception (Ostroh, Rivne obl.) – are not in evidence at all. In contrast, on the right bank of the Dniester we see finds of solidi from the second half of the 4th century (Map 3), but again – with a single exception (Grushevtsi, Chernivtsi obl.) – no 3rd century aurei to speak of. This fact would suggest that during the first half of the 4th century there was a significant shift of the power centres, from the north and central area of the Cherniakhiv culture territory south-westward.

It is also interesting that our multiple surfaced within a settlement, in this case, a Cherniakhiv culture settlement. Medallions mostly have been recorded in hoards, without a closer archaeological context, whereas in the northern territo-

¹² H. DRESSEL, *Die römischen Medaillone des Münzkabinetts der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Textband*, Dublin/Zürich 1973, p. 255, no. 148, pl. XVIII, 9; J. KOLENDO, "Medalion cesarza Galliena znaleziony w okolicach Chocimia w zbiorach Gabinetu Numizmatycznego w Berlinie," *Wiadomości Numizmatyczne* XXXVIII, 1994 (1995), pp. 57–63; BURSCHE, *Złote medaliony rzymskie w Barbaricum...*, pp. 85, 231, no. 4, pl. A, no. 4.

¹³ B.B. GARBUZ, "Zolotii rims'kii medal'ion z s. Verhivni", *Arheologiya (Ukr., new serie)* 1, 1993, pp. 71–78; BURSCHE, *Złote medaliony rzymskie w Barbaricum...*, p. 252, no. 30, pl. N, no. 30.

¹⁴ A. POPA, L. CIOBANU, *Moneda romană în Basarabia (Ghid metodic)*, Chişinău 2003, p. 47.

ries some have appeared in graves or in votive deposits.¹⁵ From the settlement at Gudme I on Funen, interpreted as a ‘central place,’ comes a Constans I medallion struck at Trier in 347–348, presumably from a deposit of at least 10 solidi issued 337/40–353/55.¹⁶

The settlement of Ivanovtsi lies in an area on the Middle Dniester where there are many sites and finds associated with Cherniakhiv culture. The Chernivtsi oblast has a rich record of Cherniakhiv culture sites. G.F. Nikitina recorded no less than 112 settlements and five cemeteries of Cherniakhiv culture¹⁷ and the number is still increasing. At the same time, only a small number of sites have been investigated by archaeological excavation. Of these the best known are archaeological sites at Kiseliv,¹⁸ Komariv,¹⁹ Oselivka,²⁰ Borovtsi,²¹ Zveniachin, Makarovka.²² Investigated cemeteries include sites at Oselivka,²³ Nepokoevtsi,²⁴ Odaia, Romankovtsi and Grushevtsi.²⁵

Let us note that the Cherniakhiv culture site found closest to Ivanovtsi is the settlement at Komariv, 3–4 kilometres to the north. It gained substantial fame thanks to a 1960s investigation of the relics of a glass workshop²⁶ dated to phase C2 – D1, which dated to the 3rd–4th c.²⁷ In the eastern European Barbaricum this

¹⁵ BURSCHE, *Zlote medaliony rzymskie w Barbaricum...*, pp. 48–76.

¹⁶ A. KROMANN, “Recent Roman coin finds from Denmark, Supplement to Breitenstein and Balling,” *Nordisk Numismatisk Årsskrift* 1983–84 (1990), pp. 81–84, pl. 31.30, BURSCHE, *Zlote medaliony rzymskie w Barbaricum...*, pp. 75, 232–233, no. 7, pl. A, no. 7.

¹⁷ G.F. NIKITINA, *Mogil’niki chernyahovskoi kul’tury v Severnoi Bukovine i Bessarabii*, Moskva 1996, p. 3.

¹⁸ B.A. TIMOSHCHUK, I.S. VINOKUR, “Pamyatniki chernyahovskoi kul’tury na Bukovine,” *Materialy i issledovaniya po arheologii SSSR* 116, 1964, pp. 186–192.

¹⁹ M.YU. SMISHKO, “Poselennya III–IV st. n.e. iz slidami sklyanogo virobnytva bilya s. Komariv Chernivets’koi oblasti,” *Materialy ta doslidzhennya z arheologii Prikarpattya i Volyny* 5, 1964, pp. 67–80.

²⁰ V.N. TSYGYLYK, “Issledovanie poseleniya pervoi poloviny I tysyacheletiya n.e. na Srednem Dnestre,” [in:] V.D. BARAN, *Noveishie otkrytiya sovetskikh arheologov. Tezisy dokladov konferencii, posvyashennoi 250-letiyu AN SSSR*, Part III, Kiev 1975, pp. 44–45.

²¹ I.S. VINOKUR, *Istoriya i kul’tura chernyahiv’skih plemen Dnistro-Dniprovs’kogo mezhirichehya II–V st. n.e.*, Kiiv 1972, p. 64.

²² V.D. BARAN, “Poselennya cherniakhiv’skoi kultury poblyzu Zviniachina i Makarivki Chernivec’koi oblasti,” *Archeologichni doslidzhennya v Ukraini u 1969 roci*, Kyiv 1972, pp. 220–224.

²³ G.F. NIKITINA, “Mogil’nik u s. Oselivka Kel’menetskogo raiona Chernovitskoi oblasti,” [in:] V.V. KROPOTKIN (ed.), *Mogil’niki chernyahovskoi kul’tury*, Moskva 1988, pp. 5–97; EADEM, *Mogil’niki chernyahovskoi kul’tury...*, Moskva 1996; G.F. NIKITINA, *Analiz arheologicheskikh istochnikov mogil’nika chernyahovskoi kul’tury u sela Oselivka*, Moskva 1995, pp. 7–12.

²⁴ B.A. TIMOSHCHUK, G.F. NIKITINA, “Pamyatniki pervyh vekov n.e. u s. Nepokoevtsi,” [in:] V.I. KOZENKOVA (ed.), *Voprosy drevnei i srednevekovoi arheologii Vostochnoi Evropy*, Moskva 1978, pp. 89–94.

²⁵ NIKITINA, *Mogil’niki chernyahovskoi kul’tury...*, *passim*.

²⁶ SMISHKO, “Poselennya III–IV st. n.e....,” pp. 67–80; YU.L. SHCHAPOVA, “Masterskaya po proizvodstvu stekla u s. Komarovo (III–IV vv.),” *Sovetskaya arheologiya* 3, 1978, pp. 230–242; A. POPA, “Romains ou Barbares? Architecture en pierre dans le Barbaricum à l’époque romaine tardive,” *Chişinău* 2001, pp. 55–66.

²⁷ POPA, “Romains ou Barbares?...,” p. 55; O.V. PETRAUSKAS, D.N. KOZAK, T.R. MILYAN, O.M. OSAULCHUK, “Komariv – virobnycha faktoriya varvar’skoi Evropy pizn’orims’kogo chasu: do pitan’ya rozrobki programy vivchennya unikal’noi arheologichnoi pam’yatki,” *Ostrogothica-Hefte* 2, Kharkov 2013, p. 23; cf. also www.komariv.in.ua.

is the only glassmaking workshop discovered so far, and this not only makes the settlement at Komariv itself unique but also lends special distinction to this region within the territory of Cherniakhiv culture. The fact that glass was produced here suggests lively contacts of the local population with the Roman provinces. And this in particular would explain some of the circumstances in which the Crispus medallion found its way to the area. Unfortunately, much of the evidence from the excavations at Komariv has yet to be published. Nevertheless, more recently research has returned to Komariv,²⁸ e.g., an investigation was made of relics of pottery manufacture and a cemetery associated with the settlement was identified nearby.²⁹

The find of a Crispus multiple in a settlement of Cherniakhiv culture at Ivanovtsi, in an area which during the 4th century appears to have been a major centre of settlement and production in the western region of Cherniakhiv culture territory, suggests that in this period the settlement played a significant role as a local power centre.

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Translated by Anna Kiniecka

Abbreviations:

RIC VII

P.M. Bruun, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. VII: *Constantine and Licinius*, AD 313–337, London 1966.

²⁸ PETRAUSKAS ET AL., “Komariv...,” pp. 23–34.

²⁹ Evidence from the new research at Komariv is now in print but some fieldwork results are already available in Ukrainian and German at: <http://komariv.in.ua>.

STRESZCZENIE

Złoty medalion Kryspusa znaleziony na Bukowinie (Ukraina)

Na terenie osady kultury czerniachowskiej w Ivanovcach na obszarach północnej Bukowiny w południowo-zachodniej Ukrainie w maju 2013 r. poszukiwacz znalazł złoty medalion Kryspusa, wagi półtora solida, wybity w Sirmium w 321 r. Multiplum, znane dotąd z jednego egzemplarza, pierwotnie zaopatrzone było w – obecnie odłamane – uszko, a być może również ramkę. Medalion został wyemitowany z okazji *quinquennalia* rezydującego w Trewirze Kryspusa, który z okazji rocznicy panowania odwiedził swojego ojca Konstantyna I w Sirmium, stolicy prefektury Illiricum. Złote medaliony z czasów dynastii Konstantynów stanowią najliczniejszą grupę multipla występujących na obszarach Barbaricum, co związane jest z aktywną dyplomacją, jaką prowadził Konstantyn I i jego następcy wobec barbarzyńców. Jednak na terenach kultury czerniachowskiej złote medaliony są znajdowane zadziwiająco rzadko i egzemplarz z Ivanoviec jest do tej pory trzecim zarejestrowanym multiplum. Wśród monet złotych dominują znaleziska aureusów z III w., natomiast znaleziska solidów z 1. poł. IV w. są bardzo nieliczne. Tym większego znaczenia nabiera napływ pojedynczych złotych multipla, będących istotnym narzędziem w rękach rzymskiej dyplomacji i trafiających do rąk przedstawicieli gockich elit władzy. Osada kultury czerniachowskiej w Ivanovcach leży w pobliżu Komariva, gdzie odkryto warsztaty wykonujące naczynia szklane datowane na IV w. W okolicach leżącego w pobliżu Chocimia znaleziono także złote *quaternio* Galliena, wybite w 263 r. Na prawobrzeżnym dorzeczu Dniestru są znajdowane ponadto solidy z 2. poł. IV w. Wszystkie te znaleziska wskazują, że w omawianym regionie w 2. poł. III, a zwłaszcza w IV w. musiało być zlokalizowane lokalne centrum władzy.



1



2

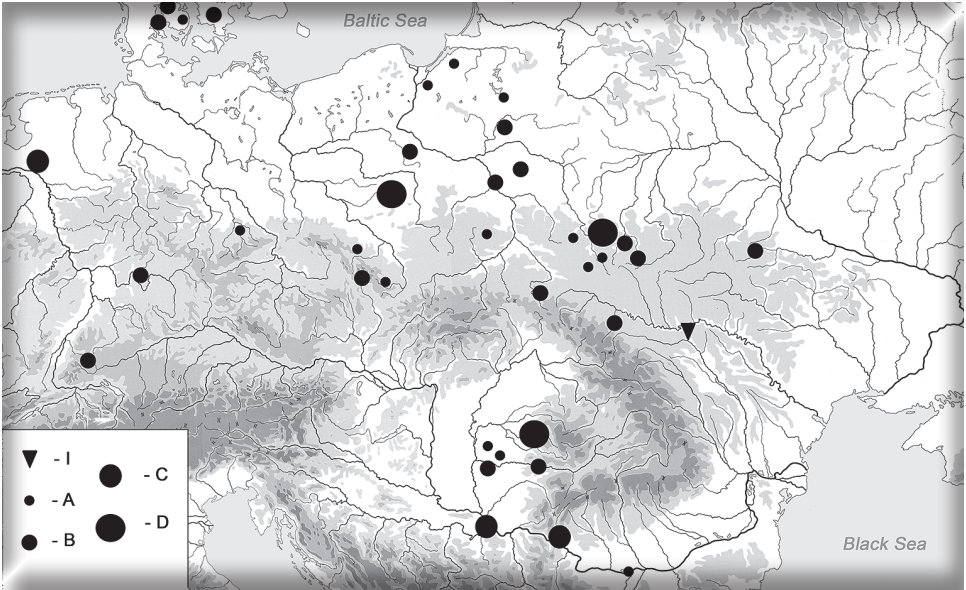
Ivanovtsi, Chernivtsi obl. Kelments rai., Ukraine, gold multiple of Crispus, scale approx.

Fig. 1. scale of 1:1

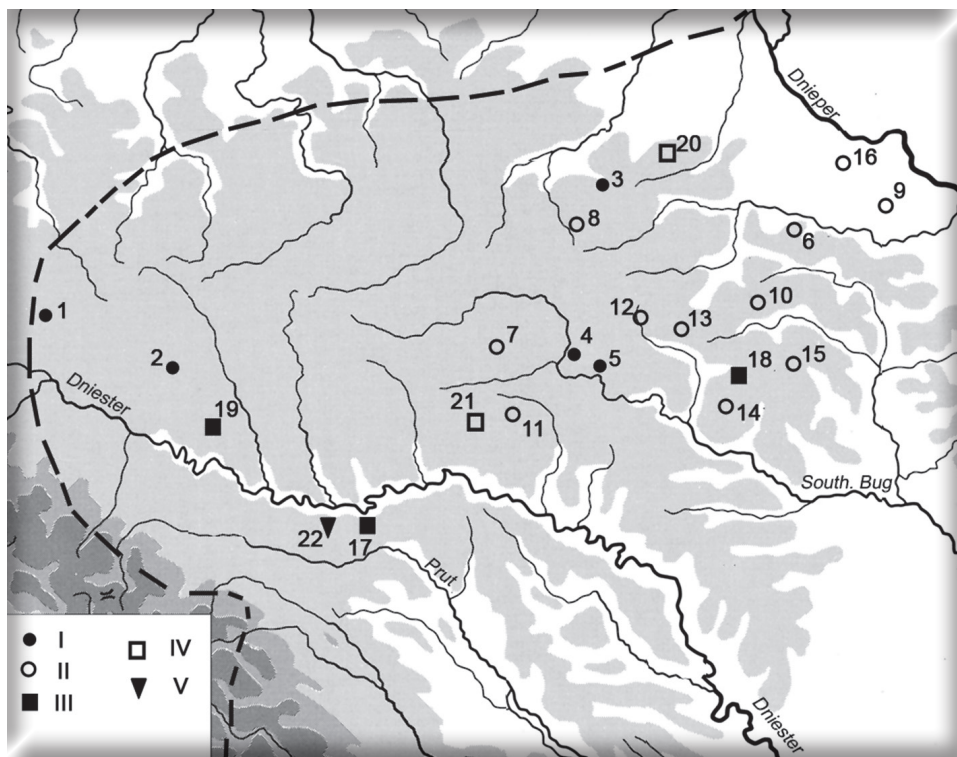
Fig. 2. scale of 2:1

(author of photograph unknown)

MAP 1



Finds of Roman gold medallions from Barbaricum: I – Ivanovtsi; weight of multiples in a find: A – up to 15 g; B – up to 50 g; C – up to 200 g; D – over 200 g; (after Bursche 1998, 367, map 1, supplemented)



Finds of 3rd century aurei and a medallion from central and western territory of Cherniakhiv culture:
 I – aurei from the first half of 3rd c.; II – aurei from the first half of 3rd c. (exact findspot unknown); III – aurei from the second half of 3rd c.; IV – aurei from the second half of 3rd c. (exact findspot unknown); V – Gallienus quaternio; 1 – Krasnoe, Lviv obl.; 2 – Cherneliv-Russkii, Ternopil obl.; 3 – Berdychiv, Zhytomyr obl.; 4 – Bronnitsa, Vinnytsia obl.; 5 – Shushentsi, Vinnytsia obl.; 6, 9, 16 – Kiev obl.; 7 – Podillia; 8 – Berdychiv rai., Zhytomyr obl.; 11, 20 – Khmelnytsk obl.; 10, 12–15 – Vinnytsia obl.; 17 – Grushevtsi, Chernivtsi obl.; 18 – Uman', Cherkassy obl.; 19 – Mliniska, Ternopil obl.; 21 – Zhytomyr obl.; 22 – Khotyn, Chernivtsi obl.



Finds of 4th century solidi from central and western territory of Cherniakhiv culture: I – a solidus and medallions from the first half of 4th c.; II – solidi from the second half of 4th c.; 1 – Nicolaevca, Moldova; 2 – Ivanovtsi, Chernivtsi obl.; 3 – Verkhivnia, Zhytomyr obl.; 4 – Soroca, Moldova; 5 – Nimereuca, Moldova; 6 – Temeleuți, Moldova; 7 – Coadă-Iazului, Moldova; 8 – Popencu, Moldova; 9 – Criuleni (solidi hoard), Moldova; 10 – Mezhihortsi, Ivano-Frankivsk obl.; 11 – Beleluia, Ivano-Frankivsk obl.; 12 – Ostroh, Rivne obl.