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A Find of a Bosporan Coin at Trębaczów, site 2, Kazimierza Wielka District (Poland)

Jarosław Bodzek, Jan Bulas and Magdalena Okońska-Bulas

Zusammenfassung: Der Artikel widmet sich einer Bronzemünze von Sauromates II., dem Herrscher des Bosporanischen Königreichs (174/175–210/211 n. Chr.). Das Stück wurde bei einer archäologischen Untersuchung der Siedlung Trębaczów (Fundstelle 2), Kazimierza Wielka Powiat, entdeckt, die in die Zeit der Przeworsk-Kultur datiert. Vom Nominal als »Dreifach Sestertius« oder »Drachme« angesprochen, gehört die Prägung zu den zwei Serien von Bronzemünzen, die in die Zeit um 186–196 n. Chr. (Zograf 1951; Frolova 1997a) oder in die Jahre um 180–192 n. Chr. (Anokhin 1986) datiert werden. Der neu entdeckte Fund erweitert eine kleine Gruppe bosporanischer Münzen, die zwischen der zweiten Hälfte des 1. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. und dem 4. Jahrhundert n. Chr. geprägt und auf dem Gebiet des heutigen Polen entdeckt wurden. Bisher waren sechs derartige Funde bekannt. Das neue Exemplar fand wahrscheinlich in der ersten Hälfte oder in den ersten Jahren der zweiten Hälfte des dritten Jahrhunderts n. Chr. durch Kontakte zwischen verschiedenen Bevölkerungsgruppen im ost- und mitteleuropäischen *Barbaricum* den Weg zur Siedlung der Przeworsk-Kultur.

Schlagwörter: Bosporanisches Reich (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/4069610-8>), Sauromates II (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/1188283529>), Münze (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/4040629-5>), Przeworsk-Kultur (<http://d-nb.info/gnd/4176107-8>), Tchernjachow Kultur

Abstract: The article is devoted to the find of a bronze coin of Sauromates II, the ruler of the Bosporan Kingdom in the years AD 174/175–210/211, during archaeological research on the Przeworsk Culture settlement (site 2) in Trębaczów, Kazimierza Wielka district. The piece, a so-called »triple sestertius« or drachm, belongs to the second series of bronze coins of the king, dated ca. AD 186–196 (Zograph 1951; Frolova 1997a) or ca. AD 180–192 (Anokhin 1986). It adds to a small group of finds of Bosporan coins minted from the second half of the 1st century AD until the 4th century AD made in the territory of today's Poland. Previously, six such finds were known. The newly discovered specimen probably found its way to the settlement of the Przeworsk culture in the first half, or the early years of the second half, of the third century AD as a result of contacts among different groups of people living in the Eastern and Central European *Barbaricum*.

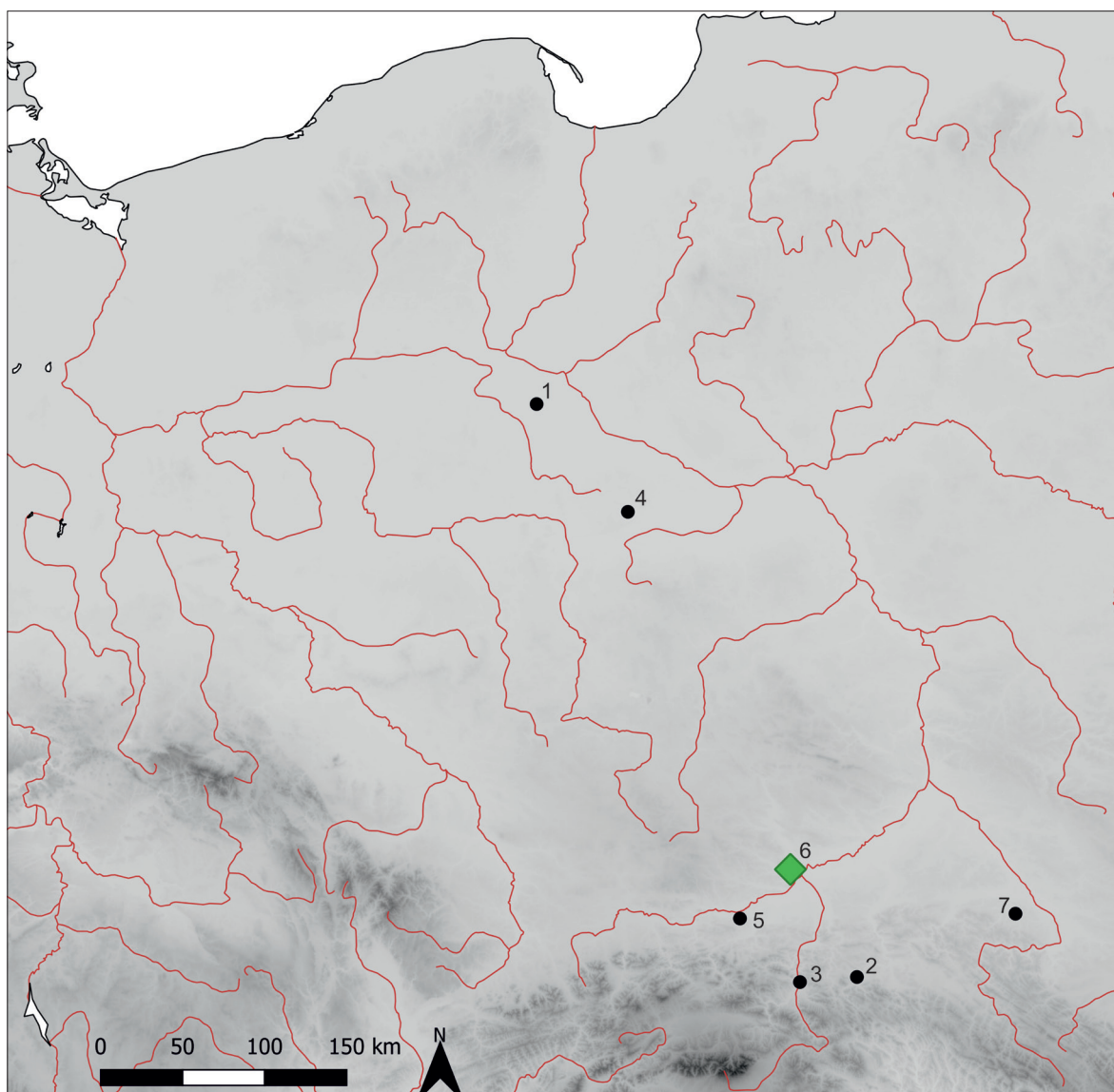
Key words: Bosporan Kingdom, Sauromates II, coin, Przeworsk culture, Cherniakhiv culture

Coins minted by the rulers of the Bosporan Kingdom issued from the second half of the 1st century BC until the first half of the 4th century AD are relatively rare finds in the areas of the Roman-period Przeworsk and Wielbark cultures¹. Previously, six such finds had been recorded in the area of present-day Poland, including four in the region historically known as Lesser Poland, and two in Central Poland: one each in Mazovia and Kujavia (**table 1; map 1**)². It should be noted that only the last two discoveries have been made in recent years, since the use of metal detectors has become widespread. All the Lesser Poland finds were

recorded in the second half of the 19th century and in the first half of the 20th century. Therefore, each new discovery of a Bosporan coin is of great importance, not only because

¹ The authors would like to express their profound thanks to Dr. Kirylo Myzgin and Dr. hab. Arkadiusz Dymowski from the University of Warsaw for valuable comments and remarks on this text and to Dr. Ulrich Werz and Claire Franklin for making our English readable. At the same time, we would like to emphasize that all errors and shortcomings are borne solely by ourselves.

² Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 2018; Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 2013; Bodzek – Jellonek – Zajęc 2019, 60–62.



Map 1: Finds of Bosporan Coins in Poland: 1 – Gąski, Inowrocław District, Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship; 2 – Gorlice - Glinik Mariampolski, Lesser Poland Voivodeship; 3 – Nowy Sącz-Zabelcze, Lesser Poland Voivodeship; 4 – Skłóty, Kutno District, Łódź Voivodeship; 5 – Staniątki, Wieliczka District, Lesser Poland Voivodeship; 6 – Trębaczów, Kazimierza Wielka District, Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship; 7 – Zarzecze, Przeworsk District, Subcarpathian Voivodeship. Drawing by Jan Bulas

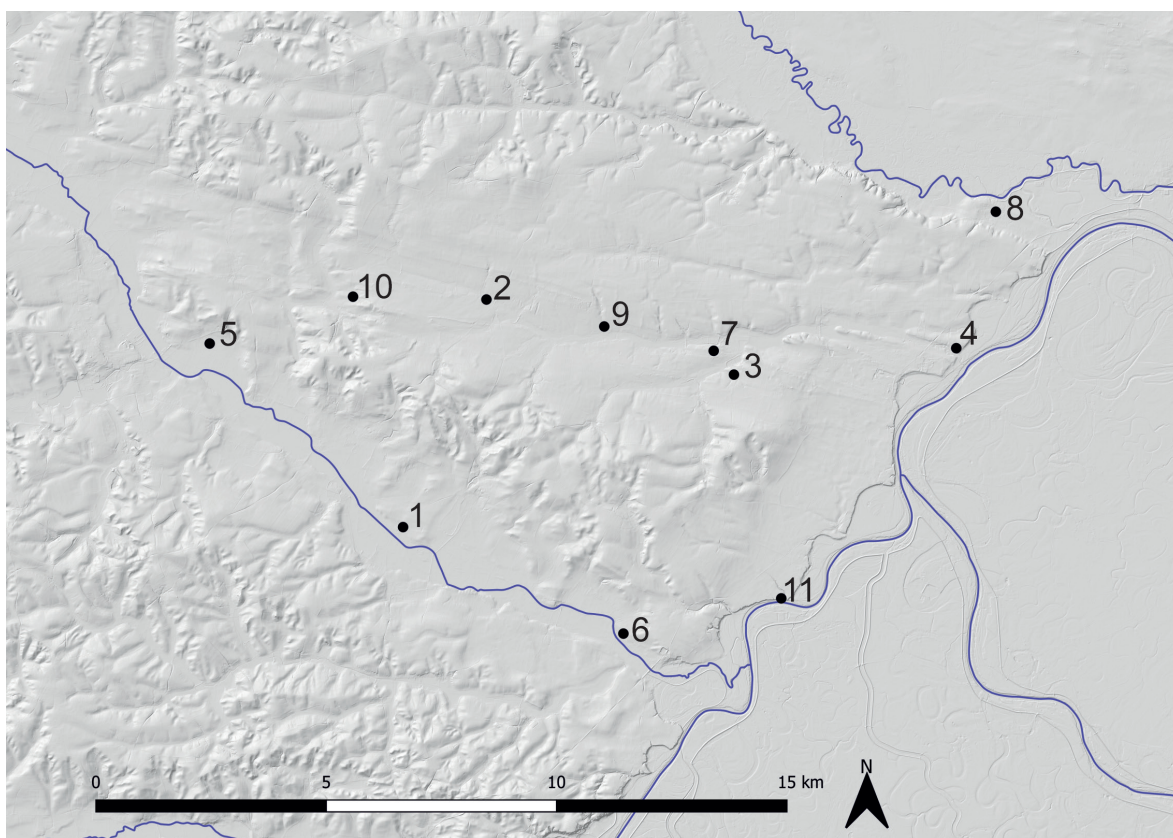
of the addition to range of source material, but because it confirms the older finds, and is particularly valuable in cases where these remain doubtful.

Recently, a new, seventh find of a Bosporan coin was registered in western Małopolska in Trębaczów, commune of Opatowiec, Kazimierza Wielka district (**map 1**). The discovery was made in March 2020 during a surface prospection, carried out with a metal detector in a Roman period settlement by a team of archaeologists from the Arch Foundation³. The

research, conducted on the basis of permit No. 3493/219 issued by the Provincial Conservation Office in Kielce, is part of the »Ekspedycja Rzemienowice« (Rzemienowice Expedition) project, focused on the study of sites from the Roman period in the valley of the Młyńska

³ The research is conducted by Jan Bulas, MA, Michał Kasiński PhD, an employee of the Jagiellonian University, and Magdalena Okońska-Bulas, MA.





Map 2: Important sites of Roman coin finds in the region: 1 – Bejsce; 2 – Charbinowice; 3 – Chrustowice; 4 – Chwalibogowice; 5 – Jakuszowice; 6 – Morawianki; 7 – Rzemienowice; 8 – Stary Korczyn; 9 – Trębaczów; 10 – Zagórzycy; 11 – Wyszogród.

Drawing by Jan Bulas

stream, a tributary on the left bank of the River Vistula. Annual surface prospecting, analysis of satellite images, and aerial prospecting have led to the discovery of many settlements of the Przeworsk culture in this area. Numerous Roman imports have been discovered in all the researched sites, mainly coins and brooches. This pattern corresponds with the finds from the famous settlement (site 2) in Jakuszowice, located 8.5 km as the crow flies from Trębaczów⁴. The aforementioned Młyńska valley is located between the valleys of two much larger tributaries on the left bank of the Vistula, the Nida and Nidzica rivers. The position of the Młyńska stream and the settlements on it had undoubted advantages, among them its location on the extension of one of the most important routes leading from the south to the north, along the River Dunajec. This area was undoubtedly part of an important nexus of cultural and commercial contacts. It should

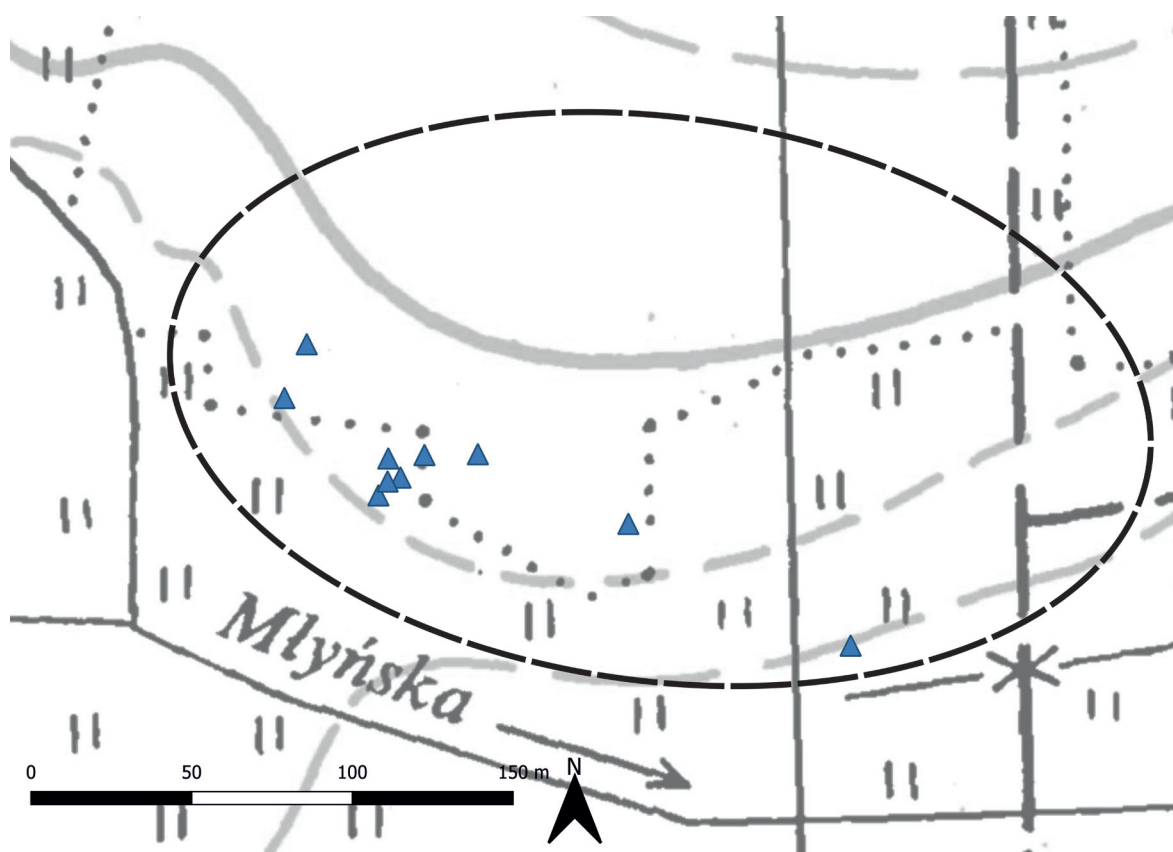
be added that in the same microregion there are other excavated sites where Roman coins have been discovered (including Bejsce and Zagórzycy)⁵, and places where accidental discoveries of such items have been recorded (Chwalibogowice, Stary Korczyn, Uściszowice, Wyszogród)⁶.

⁴ On the settlement from the Roman period and the early phase of the migration period in Jakuszowice see Godłowski 1986; Godłowski 1991; Godłowski 1995; Kaczanowski – Rodzińska Nowak 2010. On monetary finds at this site: Bursche 1997a; Bursche – Kaczanowski – Rodzińska-Nowak 2000; Bodzek 2021; further bibliography there.

⁵ Zagórzycy: Grygiel – Pikulski – Trojan 2009a; Grygiel – Pikulski – Trojan 2009b; Bodzek 2009; Bodzek et al. 2016; Bejsce: Opozda 1967; Kunisz 1985, 24 f. no. 4; Kaczanowski – Margos 2002, 9 no. 13; Kasiński – Bulas – Okońska 2019.

⁶ Cf. Kaczanowski – Margos 2002, 36 nos. 88–89; Komołowska 2014, 10 (Chwalibogowice); Kaczanowski – Margos





Map 3: Coin finds at the site 2 in Trębaczów, Kazimierza Wielka District. Drawing by Jan Bulas

Site no. 2 in Trębaczów was discovered in 2017 as a result of analysis of satellite images and vertical aerial photos taken with an unmanned aerial vehicle (a so-called drone), which revealed the presence of characteristic vegetation anomalies correlating with the remains of sunken or excavated structures typical of the Przeworsk culture settlements. These observations were confirmed in 2018 during surface surveys. The settlement in question is situated on a gentle slope in a slightly elevated position above the river valley. During the research, a large amount of ceramic material was registered, including hand-made fragments of Roman-period phase B pottery and Roman-period phase C pottery made on a potter's wheel. Finds of metal objects allow for a more precise determination of the functioning of the settlement between phase B1 (beginning of the 1st century AD) and at least the end of phase C1 (around the middle of the 3rd century AD). In addition to the aforementioned Bosporan coin, ten other

Roman coins were found at the site. These are denarii, including one republican, and nine imperial specimens from the 1st–2nd century AD (**map 2**). The oldest coin is the republican denarius, an issue of Q. Titus, minted in 90 BC ([RRC 341/1](#)), and the youngest is a denarius of Commodus from AD 187–188 ([RIC III 162](#) or [167](#))⁷. It should be added that in Trębaczów there is another settlement (site 1), located about 400 meters in a straight line from site 2, where also during surface prospecting one denarius was discovered, minted during the reign of Nerva.

The Bosporan coin from site 2 was found in the form of a corroded and completely shapelless metal lump, and was thus originally inclu-

2002, 306–307 no. 728 (Stary Korczyn); *ibidem* 338 no. 822 (Uściszowice); *ibidem* 353 no. 875 (Wyszogród). Further bibliography there.

⁷ Roman denarii found in the Przeworsk culture settlement in Trębaczów will be the subject of a separate study.





Fig. 1: Photo by Anna Olchawska. Trębaczów site 2
Cimmerian Bosphorus, Sauromates II (174/175–210/211)
AE, denomination PMΔ
Obv. Diademed and draped bust of Sauromates; r.; BACIAEWC
CAYPOMATOY; dotted border
Rev. Eagle standing l., head turned back, with wreath in beak;
[PMΔ]; dotted border
11.88 g; 29.4 mm; 12 h
Cf. Frolova 1997a, Pl. XCI, 17; Anokhin 1986, 165 no. 618a, Pl. 29;
[RPC IV,1 Temp. no. 3879](#)



Fig. 2: Cimmerian Bosphorus, Sauromates II (174–210/211)
AE, denomination PMΔ
The National Museum in Krakow; donation of Lech Kokociński;
Inv. no. MNK VII-A-6899. Photo courtesy of the National Museum in Krakow

ded in the group of insignificant ›junk‹ finds⁸. As a result, exact data relating to the place and time of the discovery were not recorded. Only later, careful inspection of the material and the conservation undertaken resulted in the cleaning of the object and its proper identification. Nevertheless, the precise location of the discovery spot, and thus the detailed context of the find and its possible relationship with other coins discovered at site 2 are not clear.

The specimen found in Trębaczów was minted in the name of Sauromates II (174/175–210/211), the king ruling at the turn of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (**fig. 1**); for a similar, better preserved piece cf. **fig. 2**). During his long reign, the ruler minted copious issues. The coin in question belongs to a series of large bronzes with a portrait of the ruler and the royal title on the obverse, and an eagle and the denominational mark (PMΔ = 144 units) on the reverse. According to the classifications of Aleksandr N. Zograph and Nina A. Frolova, such coins belong to Sauromates II's second series of bronze coinage and were minted in the years AD 180–196⁹. Vladilen A. Anokhin also includes the type in question in the second series of bronze coins of this ruler, although he dates it to the reign of the Roman Emperor Commodus (180–192)¹⁰. The researchers have defined the denomination of the issue as a triple sestertius, equal to $\frac{3}{4}$ of one denarius (Zograph, Anokhin), or as a drachm (Frolova).

Among the relatively infrequent finds of Bosporan coins in Poland, no discoveries of specimens minted by Sauromates II have been recorded so far (cf. **table 1**)¹¹. The closest chronologically to the coin from Trębaczów are the middle bronze (›denarius‹) of his successor Rhescouporis III (211/212–228/229) discovered in Staniątki, Wieliczka district (**table 1, no. 5**)¹² and the so-called ›denarius‹ of Inintimaeus (234/235–238/239) found in Skłóty, Kutno district (**table 1, no. 6**)¹³. When analyzing the overall chronological structure of the finds of Bosporan coins discovered in Poland, two groups can be distinguished. One is made

⁸ Nota bene, it is worth considering to what extent similar situations affect the level of registration of finds. This especially applies to discoveries made by so-called detectorists, who when making uninteresting finds such as such shapeless corroded copper nuggets might simply throw them away. We thank Dr. K. Myzgin for this remark.

⁹ Zograph 1951, 204–205; Frolova 1997a, 149–153, especially p. 152 type 16.

¹⁰ Anokhin 1986, 116, 165 no. 618a.

¹¹ It cannot be ruled out that the bronze found in Gaški, Inowrocław district (cf. **table 1, no. 7**) should be dated to the reign of Sauromates II. A precise definition of this poorly preserved coin, known to the authors of the present text only from photographs, is not possible cf. Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 2018, Cat. 1.

¹² Ibidem, Cat. 5.

¹³ Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 2013; Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 2018, Cat. 4.



up of coins minted in the 1st century AD, effectively consisting of issues from the second half of the century: a bronze of Cotys I (45–68) found in Zarzecze, Przeworsk district (**table 1, no. 2**)¹⁴ and a sestertius of Rhescouporis II (68/69–91/92), which is part of the alleged hoard discovered in Glinik Mariampolski (now part of Gorlice)¹⁵. The other group includes the aforementioned coins from the 1st half of the 3rd century AD and the newly discovered coin of Sauromates II. In addition to these groups, there is also a small bronze of Polemon (15–9 BC) from the vicinity of Nowy Sącz (**table 1, no. 1**), (Nowy Sącz-Zabełcze)¹⁶ and, due to the lack of a precise description, a large bronze (sestertius) of an unspecified Bosporan ruler minted in the 1st or 2nd/3rd century AD, found in Gąski, Inowrocław district (**table 1, no. 7**)¹⁷. In the latter case, the exact identification of the coin would allow an attribution to the first or second group. It should be noted, however, that the different chronological structure of the groups of finds of Bosporan coins does not necessarily have to be significant in the context of the chronology of their influx into the area of today's Poland (see below). What is noteworthy, however, is the lack among Polish finds of Bosporan coins minted in the second half of the 3rd and 4th century AD (see below). Unless this is the result of the state of research, the lack of these coins may be important for determining the time of the influx of Bosporan coins into present-day Polish territory¹⁸.

The chronology of Bosporan coins found in Poland is closely related to their denominational structure (cf. **table 1**). The finds consist only of bronze coins. Furthermore, apart from the coin from Nowy Sącz-Zabełcze (**table 1, no. 1**), these are items that can be classified as medium (>denarii<) or large bronzes (sestertii, triple sestertii/drachms) and therefore similar in size to large imperial bronzes. This gives rise to a thesis that at least some of these coins performed a similar function in the Barbaricum as large imperial bronzes¹⁹. The latter are relatively rare in finds from the Przeworsk culture area, compared to the finds of dena-

rii or their imitations. It is also worth recalling that so far no finds of gold, electrum, silver or bronze Bosporan staters have been registered in the area of today's Poland.

All the finds of Bosporan coins recorded in contemporary Poland so far come from the areas covered by the settlement of the Przeworsk culture during the Roman period. One can only perhaps consider whether in the case of the find from Nowy Sącz-Zabełcze (**table 1, no. 1**), based on the date of the influx of the Polemon coin, it should not be associated with the Puchov culture. So far, we do not know of such discoveries from the settlement area of the Wielbark culture or the Masłomęcz group. It seems, however, that this is an effect of the state of the research rather than a reflection of the real situation. Recently, Dr. Kirylo Myzgin identified a find of a coin minted in Chersonesus, possibly from the area of the Masłomęcz group, which potentially confirms the presence of coins from the region of the northern Black Sea shores in the territory of contemporary Poland covered by Gothic settlement during the Roman period²⁰.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that numerous finds of coins of the rulers of the Bosporan Kingdom have been registered in today's Ukraine and Russia, mainly in the Cherniakhiv Culture area²¹, and also, less numerous, in today's Moldova, Belarus, and Lithuania²². With a small number of finds of such coins in the Roman Balkan provinces and their practical lack in the territories of today's Slovakia, the Czech Republic and the eastern

¹⁴ Ibidem, Cat. 6.

¹⁵ Ibidem, Cat. 2.

¹⁶ Ibidem, Cat. 3

¹⁷ Cf. note 11.

¹⁸ Cf. Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 2018, 56–57.

¹⁹ Cf. Bodzek – Jellonek – Zajac 2019, 69.

²⁰ Personal communication; the piece is stored in the St. Staszic Hrubieszów Muzeum.

²¹ Beidin 2017; Beidin 2018; Myzgin – Beidin 2012; Myzgin – Beidin 2015.

²² Sidarovich 2011; Sidarovich 2014; Michelbertas 2001, 58.



German Länder, the eastern or south-eastern direction of their influx into today's Poland seems to be the most likely²³. The Polish lands seem to constitute the western border of the influx of coins of interest to us in the area of the European Barbaricum. Several finds that form a cluster in the area of today's Saarland, Hessen, and Baden-Württemberg, i.e. the western and south-western German Länder, should rather be associated with a different historical and cultural context²⁴.

Among the various hypotheses concerning the circumstances of the influx of Bosporan coins into present-day Polish lands, the most probable seems to be one that links them with internal Barbarian interactions, primarily between the Sarmatians and/or people of the Cherniakhiv, Wielbark and Przeworsk cultures²⁵. This type of contact is certainly evidenced by non-numismatic phenomena present in the archaeological material²⁶. They intensify from the second half of the 2nd century AD. At that time a clear movement of the Przeworsk and Wielbark Culture population to the east and south-east occurred²⁷. Those migrations are widely connected with movements of the Vandals and the Goths which are recorded in the historical and led to the significant changes in the cultural situation in Central and Eastern European Barbaricum during the 3rd century AD²⁸. The nature of any contacts, however, remains unclear, at least for the time being, and the question of whether they were commercial, social, or political contacts remains open. Perhaps they were of a complex and varied nature.

In their studies on finds of Bosporan coins in the Cherniakhiv Culture area, Georgiy Beidin and Myzgin distinguished among them three chronological groups. The first consists of coins minted before the so-called Gothic Wars, the second of issues struck during those wars, and the third of coins minted after their conclusion²⁹. As a consequence, they proposed a three-phase influx of Bosporan coins, where the individual phases are represented by coins they classified into the three groups

mentioned above. Relating this division to the finds from Poland (which it should once again be emphasized were much less numerous) we can confirm that they are made up of coins corresponding to the first and second groups of Beidin and Myzgin. With the small sample of ›Polish‹ finds, it is difficult, however, to assign precisely particular discoveries to the first or second group, and thus to differentiate the time of their influx according to the time of their release³⁰. In fact, perhaps, apart from the very early coin of Polemon, allegedly discovered in Nowy Sącz-Zabęcze (**table 1, no. 1**), it is difficult to place the influx of any Bosporan coin from a ›Polish‹ find into a period earlier than the 2nd half of the 2nd century AD. In the case of the coins that we have classified in the second chronological group, this is self-evident, because they were minted in the last quarter of the 2nd century AD or later. The

²³ Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 2018, 73–77. The Dacian direction of the influx is less likely, although not entirely ruled out. In today's Romania, Bosporan coins were registered in Horia, Tulcea County – bronze of Sauromates I (Mitrea 1964, 380 no. 52; Kunisz 1992, 158) – and in Poiana, Galați County – bronze of Aspurgos (Mitrea 1978, 366 no. 63), gs. 2: 2–3 (367).

²⁴ Cf. Bodzek – Myzgin 2021.

²⁵ Cf. Dobrzańska 1999; Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 2018, 73–77. Among the numismatic evidence of interactions between the populations of the aforementioned archaeological cultures is the recording of finds of imitations of Roman denarii, minted with the same dies, in the areas of all three cultures; cf. Dymowski 2019a.

²⁶ Cf. *ibidem*, especially 73–79.

²⁷ Andrzejowski 2019; Andrzejowski 2021. Further bibliography there.

²⁸ Bulas 2020.

²⁹ Myzgin – Beidin 2012, 60 f.

³⁰ G. Beidin (2017, 4) pointed to the possibility of assigning coins formally classified to the first group to group 2 on the basis of the presence of countermarks. Countermarks testifying to long circulation would make it possible to distinguish between coins used before (in this case, coins without countermarks) and during the Gothic Wars (countermarked). However, this theory is difficult to apply in relation to Polish finds, among which no countermarked specimens have been registered so far. As shown below, despite the lack of countermarks, most of the Bosporan coins probably came to the present-day Polish lands only at the end of the 2nd–1st half of the 3rd century AD.



No	Reign	Metal	Denomination	Dates	Find spot	References
1	Polemon (15–9)	AE		15–9 BC	Nowy Sącz –Zabełcze	Frolova 1997a, 42, type III, Pl. XV, 15–16a
2	Cotys I (45–68)	AE		AD 63–68	Zarzecze, Przeworsk District	Frolova 1997a, 10 f., Pl. XIV, 7–10; RPC I no. 1930
3	Rhescuporis II (68/69–91/92)	AE	Sestertius	AD 80–93	Gorlice-Glinik Mariampolski	Frolova 1997a; 105, 1st group, Pl. XXXI, 4–15; RPC II no. 469
4	Sauromates II (174/175–210/211)	AE	Triple sestertius	AD 180–196	Trębaczów, Kazimierza Wielka District	Frolova 1997a, Pl. XCI, 17; RPC IV,1 Temp. no. 3879
5	Rhescuporis III (211/212–228/229)	AE	›Denarius‹	AD 211–215	Staniątki, Wieliczka District	Frolova 1997b, 10 f., Pl. XIV, 7–10
6	Ininthimeus (234/235–238/239)	AE	›Denarius‹	234/235–238/239	Skłóty, Kutno District	Frolova 1997b, 37, 232, Pl. XXXVII, no. 13; RPC VII,2 – (unassigned; ID 3499)
7	Undetermined ruler	AE	Sestertius	End of 1st to beginning of the 3rd cent. AD	Gąski, Inowrocław District	Cf. Frolova 1997a, Pls. XLIV–LXI

Table 1: Finds of coins of Bosporan Kings in Poland

coin of Rhescuporis II (68/69–91/92), which was assumed to be part of the hoard found in Gorlice-Glinik Mariampolski (**table 1, no. 3**), could have reached the Polish Carpathians not earlier than around the middle of the 2nd century AD, as indicated by the current dating of this deposit³¹. In fact, uncertainty remains only in the case of finds from Zarzecze, Przeworsk district (**table 1, no. 2**) (the coin of Cotys I (45–68) and Gąski, Inowrocław district (**table 1, no. 7**) (an undefined king of the 1st, 2nd or 3rd century AD). It seems, however, that in these cases there are also some reasons not to exclude them from the influx in the second half of the 2nd century AD, or even later. The coin from Zarzecze (**table 1, no. 2**) was discovered along with a coin minted in Ascalon in the 1st or 2nd century AD³². As for the piece from Gąski (**table 1, no. 7**), it cannot be ruled out that it was minted as early as the second half

of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Therefore, it seems that most of the Bosporan coins found their way to today's Poland in the second half of the 2nd or more probably in the 3rd century AD.

Other monetary finds also provide a point of reference for dating their influx.

Simplifying and briefly describing the issue of the influx of Roman coins to the Central European Barbaricum, we can summarize this problem as follows: most Roman coins minted

³¹ Cf. Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 2018, 67.

³² The problem in this case is the very unclear relationship between these finds. In principle, it is not known whether the coins in question were found together, whether the finds were made on the same day, or whether they were simply acquired on the same day. Cf. Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 1999; Bodzek – Madyda-Legutko 2018, 71.



at imperial mints in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD found their way to the present Polish lands in the last decades of the 2nd and/or the beginning of the 3rd century AD³³. Some of them, however, could also have arrived even later, in the next two centuries, as a result of the redistribution of the pool of, mainly, denarii and, to a lesser extent, other coins in the Barbarian environment comprising the populations of various archaeological cultures (Przeworsk, Wielbark and Cherniakhiv Cultures) identified in the area of Central and Eastern European *Barbaricum*³⁴. During the later phases of the 3rd century AD, denarii and antoniniani of the 3rd century minted after the reign of Septimius Severus, gold aurei and imperial AEs from the 1st–3rd centuries AD, debased radiates from the 2nd half of the 3rd century AD, as well as smaller numbers of subaerati and other categories of counterfeits, copies and imitations of Roman coins³⁵. Again, some of these objects, mainly the copies and imitations, could have come to today's Polish lands even later. Therefore, even given that certain groups of coins – Greek, Roman Republican issues and Celtic, and maybe even Dacian imitations – found their way to the Central European *Barbaricum* earlier, it is difficult to accept the thesis that the Bosporan coins arrived before the main mass of Roman coins³⁶. Again, a possible exception could be the coin of Polemon found near Nowy Sącz-Zabełcze. Another interesting point of reference for the chronology of the finds of Bosporan coins is the chronological structure of coins minted in the Provincial mints and found within the borders of modern Poland state³⁷.

Of course, bearing in mind the various possible circumstances of the influx of the Roman provincial coins found in Poland, it is important to note that the vast majority of them were minted in the 3rd century AD, during the reigns of the Severan dynasty or later. It can therefore be assumed that it was during the third century AD that the greatest influx of provincial coins into the territory of contemporary Poland occurred³⁸. This is confirmed by the broader perspective of finds from the

areas of the settlement of the Cherniakhiv Culture, where numerous provincial coins were discovered, most of which were minted in very similar periods to those most frequently represented in Polish finds³⁹. As already mentioned,

³³ A. Bursche (cf. e.g. Bursche 1994, 472–475; Bursche 2004, 196–198; Bursche 2006, 222) and M. Erdrich (2001, 127 f.) date the beginning of the aforementioned wave to the time of the Marcomannic Wars (167–180 CE). According to R. Wolters (1999, 385–386), the influx of denarii may have started under Antoninus Pius (138–161) or Marcus Aurelius (161–180), and T. Lucchelli (1998, 160 f.) indicates the period from Trajan (98–117) to Antoninus Pius as the beginning of the great wave of Roman silver. A. Dymowski allows for three possibilities of the arrival of the first imperial denarii: 1) in the final period of Trajan's reign (in connection with the Dacian Wars [101–106]); 2) in the final years of Hadrian's reign (117–138) or during the reign of Antoninus Pius; or 3) the beginning of a first large wave in the middle of the reign of Antoninus Pius or under Marcus Aurelius, and another great wave in the first years of the reign of Septimius Severus (Dymowski 2013, 111–114). The end of the influx of the great wave of denarii would have taken place according to various concepts at the time of Commodus (177–192) or at the beginning of the reign of Septimius Severus (193–211) (e.g. Bursche 1994; Bursche 2006, 222; Lucchelli 1998, 160–162; Wolters 1999, 385–386; Erdrich 2001, 127 f.; Dymowski 2013, 113).

³⁴ Cf. Dymowski 2019a.

³⁵ A. Bursche and A. Dymowski date the influx of third-century denarii to the years 30–40 of the 3rd century AD. Cf. Bursche 2004, 201; Dymowski 2013, 113–114); on the problem of the influx of Roman coins minted in the 3rd century AD and later see Bursche 1996; Dymowski 2012; Dymowski 2013; the issue of subaerati, copies and imitations of Roman coins in Poland are discussed in Bursche 1997b; Bursche – Kaczanowski – Rodzińska-Nowak 2000; Dymowski 2017; Dymowski 2019a; Dymowski 2019b; Dymowski 2020; Dymowski 2021; Romanowski – Dulęba 2018; Więcek 2019. Of course, we cannot exclude the production of some subaerati, imitations or copies in the area of Wielbark or the Przeworsk culture (cf. Dymowski 2020). Dymowski 2018 presented general comments on the influx of Roman coins to the area of Lesser Poland.

³⁶ On finds of Greek coins minted before the 1st century BC see Mielczarek 1989; Mielczarek 1996; Mielczarek 2008; about Celtic and other barbarian coins, e.g. Rudnicki 2012a; Rudnicki 2012b; Rudnicki 2013; Rudnicki – Miłek 2009; Rudnicki – Miłek 2011; Florkiewicz 2009; Dulęba – Wysocki 2017; on coins of the Roman Republic Dymowski 2016; Dymowski – Rudnicki 2019.

³⁷ Cf. Bodzek – Jellonek – Zając 2019.

³⁸ Cf. Bodzek – Jellonek – Zając 2019, 68.

³⁹ Cf. Myzgin 2011; Myzgin 2012; Myzgin 2015; Myzgin 2017; Myzgin 2018.



the contacts among the Przeworsk, Wielbark and Cherniakhiv cultures played an important role in the redistribution of Roman coins.

Taking all this into account, it can be hypothesized that the majority of Bosporan coins found in Poland, regardless of the date of their minting, arrived in the 3rd century AD, perhaps along with some provincial coins and imitations of denarii from area of the Cherniakhiv Culture⁴⁰. This also applies to the coin found in Trębaczów (**table 1, no. 4**) that is presented here. At the same time, it is impossible to answer unequivocally the question whether the influx of Bosporan coins was the result of events directly related to the Gothic Wars, or whether a different, perhaps more complex reason is behind it. On the other hand, these coins could not have arrived in present-day Poland very late. The lack of finds of Bosporan coins, mainly staters, minted in the 2nd half of the 3rd and in the 4th century AD, seems to provide indirect evidence for. It is true that their absence may be the result of the state of research, but currently we do not know of a single find of such a coin in Poland, although such finds are recorded in the Cherniakhiv Culture area⁴¹. Adding to this the fact that so far the latest Bosporan coin from Poland is a ›denarius‹ of Ininthimeus (234/235–238/239), we can cautiously assume that the influx of Bosporan coins to the Polish lands ended at the latest in the middle, or possibly in the early years of the second half, of the 3rd century AD.

The find of the coin of Sauromates II in Trębaczów (**table 1, no. 4**) is very important for a further reason. It is the first discovery of a Bosporan coin from Poland made during regular archaeological research. Because of this, it confirms the influx of such coins to Polish lands in the Roman period, and gives credibility to other finds made accidentally or by so-called detectorists. Although the coin does not have a strict archaeological context, its connection with a Roman period settlement is indisputable. It is therefore, like other so-called imports, including coins, testimony to the interregional connections between the settlement in

Trębaczów, the microregion in which the settlement was located, and the broader context of the western Małopolska settlements inhabited during the Roman period by the people of the Przeworsk culture. Furthermore, in this context, it is worth mentioning the Roman provincial coins found in the famous settlement in Jakuszowice, located, as mentioned, only 8.5 km away (site 2)⁴². Together with other sorts of imports they proof links between western Małopolska and other regions of *Barbaricum* and Rome. The nature of these links has been not fully explained, but regardless of whether they were direct or indirect contacts, their interregional nature is not open to discussion.

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⁴⁰ On the possibility of influx to the Barbaricum of the 3rd century AD denarii and antoniniani thanks to the contacts between the Roman Empire and the Goths (i. e. de facto the Cherniakhiv culture), see Dymowski 2013, 114; Dymowski 2017; Dymowski 2018, 46; Dymowski 2019a.

⁴¹ Myzgin – Beidin 2012.

⁴² Cf. Bodzek – Jellonek – Zając 2019, 70; Bodzek 2021.



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