

A LARGE NORTH AFRICAN, CARTHAGE BRONZE COIN  
FROM THE NUMISMATIC COLLECTION OF THE  
*FRANCISCAN MONASTERY IN KREŠEVO*  
(CENTRAL BOSNIA)

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The numismatic collection of the Franciscan monastery in Kreševo (central Bosnia) keeps a large North African, Carthage (*Carthago Zeugitanae*) bronze coin minted approximately in 200 BC (Fig. 1). Such coins, twenty-three whole pieces and one fragment, have already been found in coin hoards from the territory of Japodi (northern Croatia, Lika and the river Una valley in the north-western Bosnia; Map 1). Franciscan Friar Stjepan Buljan, custodian of the Monastery's collection, presumes that Kreševo coin originates from the legacy of the Bosnian Franciscan archaeologist Friar Kruno Misilo (1903-1971), who possessed a rather valuable numismatic collection\*.

*Description*

The numismatic collection of the Franciscan Monastery in Kreševo (central Bosnia) keeps one particularly large and well-preserved North African, Carthage (*Carthago Zeugitanae*) bronze coin measuring 43 x 6 mm. The coin shows no noticeable signs of damage. It is covered by a fine, dark green patina, which indicates being under earth for a long time. Good state of the relief composition both on the obverse and reverse leads to the conclusion that this example of the bronze Carthage coin was not in circulation for long. The obverse scene is made in

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\* I owe my gratitude to the Friar Stjepan Buljan and to the Guardian of the *Franciscan Monastery in Kreševo* (Central Bosnia) for letting me publish a North African, Carthage bronze coin from their collection.

a shallow relief within a circular perimeter. It shows an ear-wreathed head of the Phoenician goddess *Tanit* turned to the left. The reverse scene, also enclosed in a circular perimeter, bears a horse turned to the right standing highly upward, while a sun disc flanked with two crowned snakes (*urea*) is represented above the horseback (Fig. 1).

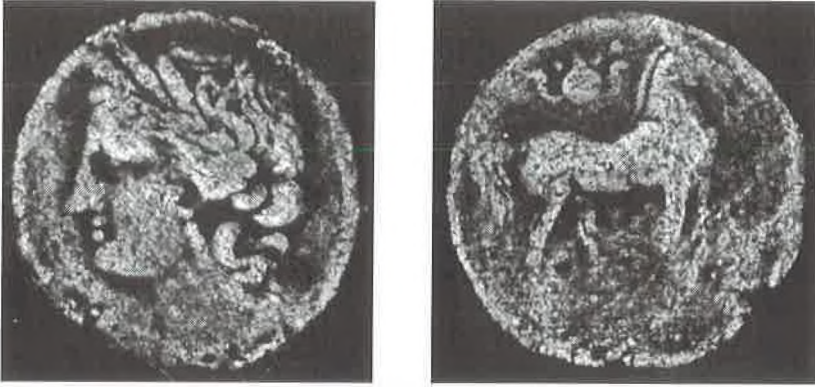


Fig. 1. Large North African, Carthage bronze coin from Kreševo (central Bosnia).

The Carthage coin from the numismatic collection of the Franciscan monastery in Kreševo has a composition typical for particularly large pieces of coins from the end of the third century BC (Fig. 2).<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 2. Typical large North African, Carthage bronze coin from the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

The Phoenician goddess *Tanit* was one of the central deities in Carthage whose cult is witnessed by, among other things, statues and stelae bearing her figure from the time before the destruction of the city by the Romans in 146 BC.

<sup>1</sup> SNG, *Cop.* 42, 399-400; *MP, Coll. Ital.*, 83, 255; *MP*, 256, 76-77; P. KOS, 1998, 173.

Human sacrifices were offered to her honour, judging by the pots with the remnants of sacrificed children from the ruins of her temple.<sup>2</sup> Horse representation appears as an accompanying symbol on the majority of the Carthage coinage.<sup>3</sup>

Striking of the Carthage coinage began in Sicily at the end of the fifth century and continued to the fourth century BC. At the beginning the Carthaginians struck silver tetradrachms weighing about 17 g and smaller denominations weighing about 1 g. In Sicily they struck bronze coins from the late fourth up to the early third century BC, and at Carthage between 350 and 241 BC the gold ones comprising staters weighing about 9.3 g of gold and some smaller gold denominations. In addition, electrum coins and silver tetradrachms were also struck at Carthage. Bronze coinage in Carthage coincided with the commencement of its own political and economic downfall. Most of it was struck in the period between the defeat Carthage suffered from Rome during the First Punic War (246-241) and its final fall caused by the same adversary during the Third Punic War (149-146). The Carthage bronze coins are decorated with the standard features, the head of the goddess *Tanit* and a horse turned to the right.<sup>4</sup>

The bronze coins of Carthage are found in significant quantity in the area controlled by the Japodic tribal association, i.e., in the territories of Dalmatia, Lika and western Bosnia, where the prehistoric communications traversed connecting the Adriatic with Pannonia and central Europe (Map 1). Most of the Carthage coins comes from coin hoards, together with Egyptian, Hispanic, Macedonian, Numidian, and Roman coins, Italic hard currency (*aes formatum*, *aes signatum*, *aes grave*), jewelry, bronze fragments and lumps or bars of raw bronze (*aes rude*).<sup>5</sup> The earliest currency of Romans consisted of crude bronze pieces of various weights and irregular shapes.

*Aes rude* and *aes infectum* had no decorative features, their value being exclusively in their weight<sup>6</sup>. During the Early Republic this currency type was replaced by cast round heavy bronze coins with designs of deities, animals or other symbols on both sides (*aes grave*), the appearance of which marked a major progress in the development of Roman economy. In addition, plain bronze bars of inconstant weights (*aes formatum*) were simultaneously in use; their value was proportionate to their weight, so are often found in parts. Cast rectangular bronze plates marked with animal or symbolic motifs on both sides weighing up to 1350 g (*aes signatum*) that were in use between 300 and 255 BC, were treated in the same way: their value was proportionate to their weight and often are found in parts.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> V. ZAMAROVSKI, 1985, 313.

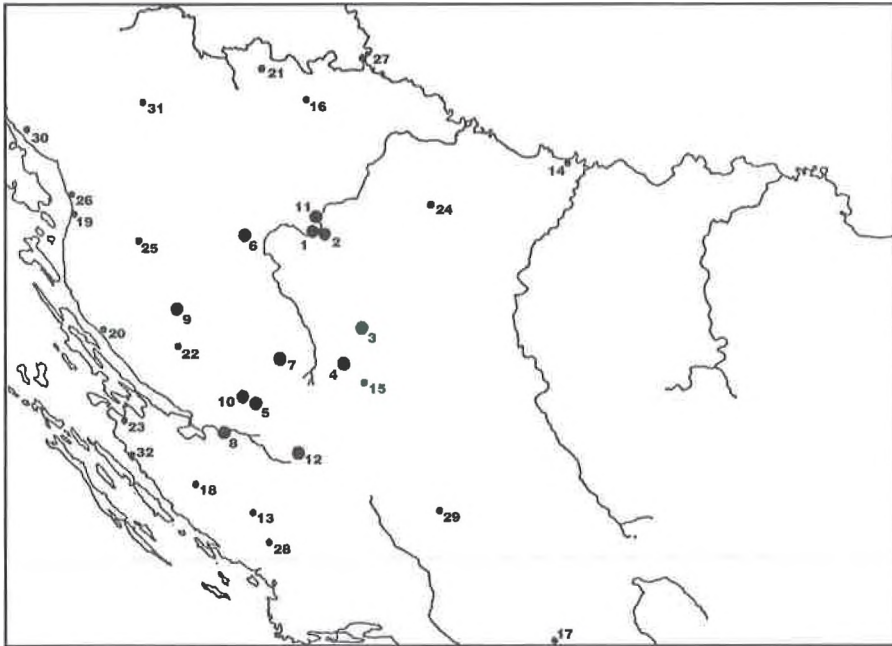
<sup>3</sup> SNG, *Cop.*; MP, *Coll. Ital.*; MP; P. KOS, 1998, 173-174.

<sup>4</sup> P. KOS, 1998, 173-174.

<sup>5</sup> Z. DUKAT - I. MIRNIK, 1978, 149-167.

<sup>6</sup> E. J. HAEBERLIN, 1910, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup> P. KOS, 1998, 11-16.



Map 1. Coin hoards of so-called Mazin type with the large North African, Carthage bronze coins in Croatia and Bosnia (I. Mirnik).

All of the large Carthage bronze coins<sup>8</sup> that come from the Japodic territory, twenty-three whole pieces and one fragment, were found within *coin hoards* of the so-called Mazin type. Seven coins were found within the large coin hoard discovered in 1896 at *Mazin* near Gračac in Croatia (Fig. 3),<sup>9</sup> five within the coin hoard discovered in 1887 in *Vrankamen* (Perna) near Bosanska Krupa in western Bosnia (Fig. 4),<sup>10</sup> four whole coins and one fragment within the coin hoard discovered in 1926 in *Gračac* (Fig. 5),<sup>11</sup> four coins within the coin hoard discovered in 1976 at *Ričica* (Štikada) near Lovinac (Gračac in Croatia) (Fig. 6),<sup>12</sup> two within the coin hoard discovered in 1932 at *Vodženica* near Bosanska Krupa (in older literature "*Kruinwa*"),<sup>13</sup> and one within the coin hoard discovered in 1907 at *Izačić* near Bihać.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> SNG, *Cop.* 399-400; *MP, Coll. Ital.*, 83, 255; *MP*, 256, 76-77.

<sup>9</sup> J. BRUNŠMID, 1897, 64, T. XIV, 1; J. BRUNŠMID, 1900, 85; M. H. CRAWFORD, 1985, 222, 321; I. MIRNIK, 1981, No. 76; I. MIRNIK, 1987, 381.

<sup>10</sup> Č. TRUIHELKA, 1889, 42-43; Č. TRUIHELKA, 1893, 187-188; I. MIRNIK, 1981, No. 93; I. MIRNIK, 1987, 382.

<sup>11</sup> I. MIRNIK, 1981, No. 24; I. MIRNIK, 1987, 380-381; I. MIRNIK, 1987a, 57, Nr. 363-367, Tab. 6.

<sup>12</sup> I. MIRNIK, 1981, No. 88a; I. MIRNIK, 1982, 152, 155, Nr. 5-8, 166, Tab. I, 5-8.

<sup>13</sup> I. MIRNIK 1981, Nr. 30; I. MIRNIK, 1987, 379-380; M. H. CRAWFORD, 1985, 222, 321.

<sup>14</sup> I. MIRNIK, 1987, 381.



Fig. 3. Large North African, Carthage bronze coin from the Mazin coin hoard.

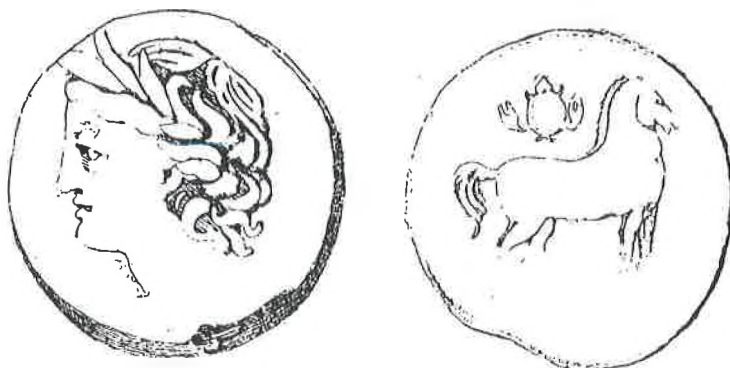


Fig. 4. Large North African, Carthage bronze coin from the Vrankamen coin hoard.

Out of twenty-three whole pieces of the large Carthage bronze coins found in the Japodic territory, the numismatic collection of the *Zemaljski muzej* in Sarajevo keeps eight pieces: five from the Vrankamen coin hoard (Inv. No. 5.006, 5.007, 5.008, 5.009, 11.935), two from the Vodženica ("Kruinwa") coin hoard (Inv. No. 12.458, 12.967) and one from the Izačići coin hoard (Inv. No. 8.800), while the numismatic collection of the *Archaeological museum* in Zagreb keeps pieces from the Mazin coin hoard (Inv. No. 4.222, 4.223, 4.224), as well as from Ričice (I. MIRNIK, 1982, 155, T. I, 5-8) and Gračac coin hoards (Inv. No. 10.777, 10.778, 10.779, 10.780, 10.781). Furthermore, *Zemaljski muzej* in Sarajevo (Inv. No. 5645) keeps a large Carthage bronze coin from Strupnić near Livno that was acquired in 1900 from the local gendarme Marko Kovačević.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> G. KRALJEVIĆ, 1983, 152.

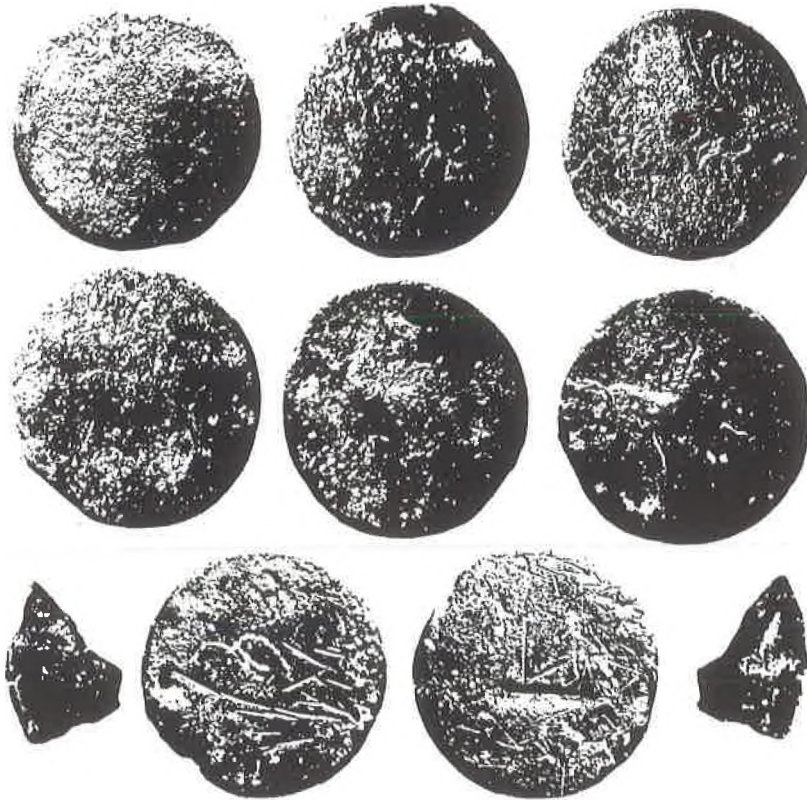


Fig. 5. Large North African, Carthage bronze coins from the Gračac coin hoard.

Typical features of the large Carthage bronze coins are large diameter, thickness and weight. The diameter of some of them reaches up to 46 mm (pieces from Mazin<sup>16</sup> and Stikada<sup>17</sup> coin hoards). The piece found in Vodženica ("Kruinwa") that is kept in the numismatic collection of the *Zemaljski muzej* in Sarajevo (Inv. No. 12.458) weighs 112,50 g, while one piece from the Vrankamen coin hoard is 7,5 mm thick.<sup>18</sup> The Kreševo example of the large Carthage bronze coin discussed in this paper shows highest similarities in dimensions and preservation to those from the Mazin coin hoard that are kept in the numismatic collection of the *Archaeological museum* in Zagreb, especially with the piece Inv. No. 4223.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> J. BRUNŠMID, 1897, 64, T. XIV.

<sup>17</sup> I. MIRNIK, 1982, 155, Nr. 7, T. I, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Č. TRUHELKA, 1889, 42.

<sup>19</sup> I wish to express my gratitude for all the help that I have received from Dr Ivan Mimik from the *Archaeological Museum* in Zagreb.

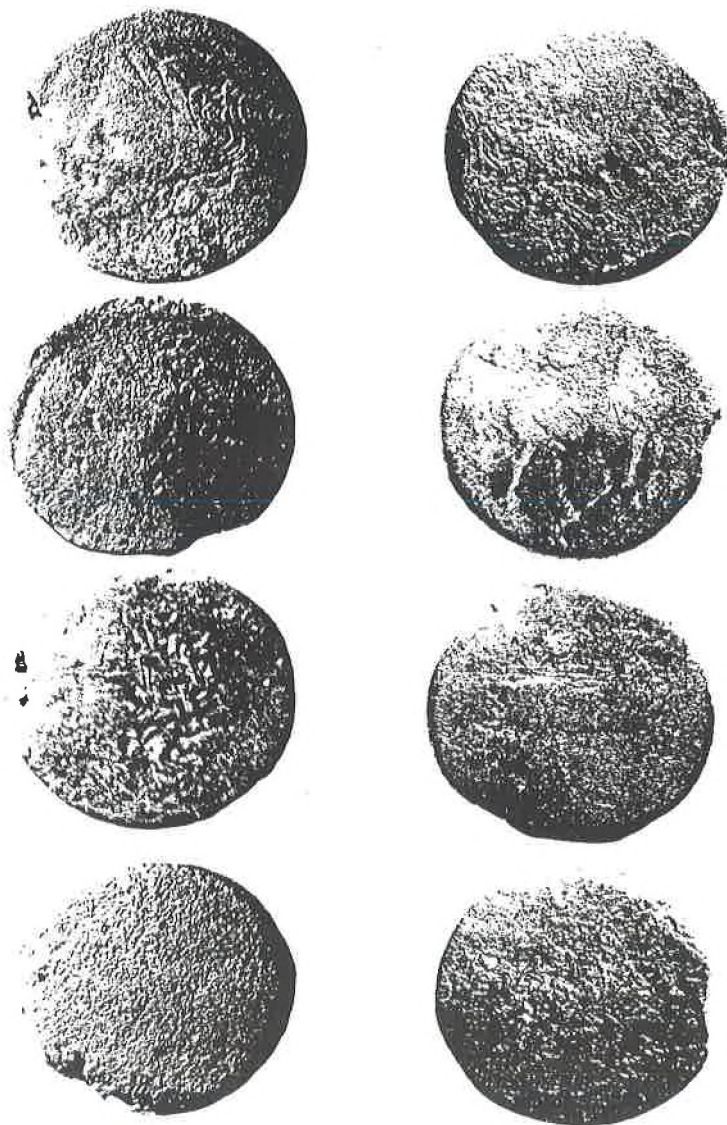


Fig. 6. Large North African, Carthage bronze from the Štikada coin hoard.

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*Ante Škegro*: EINE GROßE BRONZMÜNZE VOM NORDAFRIKANISCHEN  
CARTHAGO AUS DER SAMMLUNG DES FRANZISKANERKLOSTERS  
IN KREŠEVO IN MITTELBOSNIEN

Z u s a m m e n f a s s u n g

In die numismatische Sammlung des *Franziskanerklosters* in Kreševo (Mittelbosnien) gelangte eine große Bronzmünze von nordafrikanischen Carthago (*Carthago Zeugitanae*), aus der Zeit um 200 v. Chr. (Fig. 1). Solche Münzen wurden schon früher in Schatzfunden in den iapodischen Gebieten (im Norddalmatien, in Lika und im Tal des Flusses Una in Nordwestbosnien) gefunden (Mape 1). Aus diesen gebieten stammen noch 23 solche Münzen und ein Bruchstück.

*Ante Škegro*: JEDNA VELIKA BRONCA SJEVERNOAFRIČKE KARTAGE IZ  
NUMIZMATIČKE ZBIRKE FRANJEVAČKOG SAMOSTANA U KREŠEVU  
(SREDIŠNJA BOSNA)

S a ž e t a k

U numizmatičku zbirku *Franjevačkog samostana* u Kreševu u središnjoj Bosni dospjela je jedna velika bronca sjevernoafričke Kartage (*Carthago Zeugitanae*) iz vremena oko 200. g. prije Krista (Sl. 1.). Takvi su novci već ranije pronalazeni u ostavama na iapodskom području (u sjevernoj Dalmaciji, u Lici te u dolini rijeke Une u sjeverozapadnoj Bosni). S tih područja (Karta 1.) potječu još 23 primjerka ovog novca te jedan ulomak.