

The University of Warsaw conducts extensive archaeological research all over the world. Two of the excavation projects are run by the Center for Research on the Antiquity of Southeastern Europe. They are located in the Balkans, in Novae and in Montenegro. The research in Novae in Bulgaria has a 50 year history and the Roman army camp which has been the object of investigations there is among the best known legionary camps with new and important information being regularly provided on the life and functioning of a Roman army camp in the times of the Roman Empire. The other excavations, in Risan in Montenegro, are on a site in Kotor Bay known since the late 19th century when it was discovered by the British archaeologist Arthur Evans. The research objective of the proposed grant is a full scientific publication of the coin finds from the two sites in question. The coins cover a period from the 4th century BC to the 5th century AD and are witness to the historical events taking place during this period in the Balkans. The two sites are well known in archaeological, numismatic and historical scholarly circles. They represent different cultural spheres, different time periods and different functionalities, the only thing shared by them being the fact that they are excavated by the Center. The outcome of the research will be two separate monographs on the coin finds from the excavations, which adds value to the information provided by these coins as it is rare to find coins in context during regular archaeological research. Thus, these coins are witness to everyday life of people in specific historical periods. In excavations it is possible to identify groups of coins coming from occupational layers, separating them from those found in disturbed layers or burning, which indicates a time following each time of occupation. Studies made of these specific sets of coins can help to date the use of given archaeological features, such as the building in which they were found. The coins from excavations in Novae (Bulgaria) give data on the circulation patterns in the ancient Roman province of Moesia in the period from the 1st through the 5th century AD. The excavations in Risan in Greek Illyria also concern a Roman province, but a much longer period of time, from the 4th/2nd century BC through late Antiquity. There, one of the most interesting issues is the coinage of the Illyrian King Ballaios, who is unknown to the historians, but who struck a huge number of coins. In both cases, the idea is to study all the coins found at the two sites: Greek, Roman and modern.

Every year the excavations at the two sites yield a combined total of at least 300–400 coins. The finds are catalogued and identified according to professional standards in the field of numismatics. The issues or center issuing the coins has to be determined for each coin, as well as the date and place of issue. The coins need to be weighed and measured, as well as photographed on both sides. The next stage is a careful analysis of the find context, which requires the numismatist's participation in the excavations in order to be aware of the specificity of the site in general and of particular archaeological contexts, including the depth at which the coins were found and which cultural layer they are assigned to in terms of the site stratigraphy. This is essential in order to understand the character of the finds and the role of the coins.

The site currently excavated at the fortress in Novae is of an entirely different nature than the sector explored earlier, giving the principal investigator in this grant the opportunity to participate in the excavation process from the beginning and permitting a better understanding of site deposition circumstances right from the start. At Risan, on the other hand, personal acquaintance of the archaeological excavations gives the numismatist the opportunity to cross-check her data on the otherwise undated coins of King Ballaios with the dating provided by non-monetary finds from given contexts. The principal investigator has been involved in this research from the start.

The principal investigator in this grant has been involved with the OBA UW excavation projects for the past 15 years, practically all her career so far as a numismatist. This has given me a good knowledge of the material, the specificity of the two sites as well as knowledge of the state of research on coin circulation issues in the Balkans from the 4th century BC through the 5th century AD. Unfortunately, it is impossible to bring the coins from study in Poland, as was the case in previous years, and there is need to work on the material at the respective sites of their storage in Bulgaria and Montenegro.

The publication of coins from the two sites in Risan and Novae will be largely of a pioneer nature. Coin finds are known from many sites tested archaeologically, but the general state of research and publication of coins from the ancient Roman provinces is referred to as poor. The present publications will fill the gap to the extent that is covered by the Polish excavations on these two sites. In one case, the publication will refer to one of the greatest numismatic finds in recent history, the great hoard of King Ballaios, but there are also many smaller hoards and loose finds from excavations to be discussed. The publication will be unique in that it will present an important category of archaeological finds against a broader historical and cultural context.