

## PREFACE

Enormous coin hoards have always been discovered, and very large quantities of coins are also found in archaeological excavations carried out in urban areas. All these great amounts of coins can be dated either to a restricted period or distributed along many centuries. However, these findings put the researchers in front of complicated issues mainly concerning the methodology of their study, which necessarily conditions the results of the numismatic research. We should refer, for example, to a series of important large coin discoveries such as the Misurata's hoard, the Tomares's hoard, the Roman hoard of Frome in Somerset, the Celtic hoard buried near Seaton Down, as well as the well-known Čentur hoard. The modern coin finding of The Big Sky Hoard in Montana, Eisenhower \$ is also very interesting. In all these cases it is/was not really easy to examine such large monetary findings. How to deal with them? How many time can we dedicate to this kind of studies? In fact, we have several options: a full study or a partial research, or also a statistical survey and archeometric or georeferenced analysis.

Several colleagues who agreed to discuss this topic met in Trieste between 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 at the Department of Humanistic Studies of the University of Trieste (see the *Appendix* with abstracts of communications). It should be remembered that the conference program was realized under the kind patronage of the International Numismatic Council and the Friuli Venezia Giulia Museum Centre, which we would like to sincerely thank.

The speakers of the first session of the meeting dedicated their studies to the complexity of the argument and the abundance of the material to be analyzed, but also to the potential of large numismatic collections of some museums, such as, for instance, the National Archaeological Museum of Aquileia or the Red Castle of Tripoli (Libya), the historical-numismatic collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna and even a (only) apparently marginal collection of the Museo Histórico Nacional of Parque Lazama in Buenons Aires. Among the biggest archaeological finds of coin hoards, including many thousands of specimens, were examined and discussed especially the case-studies of the treasures of Le

Catillon II (Jersey Museum), The Frome (British Museum), Porte Chaioullet à Troyes (France) (Tetricus I and Tetricus II), Saint Germain-lès-Arpajon (France), Juillac-l'Isle-Jourdain Gers (France), El-Zaudín-Tomares Sevilla (Spain), Misurata (Libya), Saint-Germain-de Varreville (France), Čentur-Maresego (Slovenia), Al-Djem (Tunisia), Reka Devnia (Bulgaria), Dzierżnica (Poland), Haza del Carmen/Cruz Conde y Jaén (Spain), finally concluding with the Medieval hoard called “Aiello” now preserved at the American Numismatic Society. Such a significant exemplification has allowed to develop and put in evidence different methodologies of research, from the 3rd century B.C. up to Middle Ages, with interesting cases concerning also Islamic coinage at the fringes of the Mediterranean area (Spain) and along the European eastern border, in Poland.

During the third session, the projects still in progress were clearly illustrated by gathering a large amount of numismatic data, in particular, the Coin Hoards of the Roman Empire of the Ashmolean Museum and the Oxford Roman Economy Project of Oxford University, the Database of Roman Coins in the “Barbaricum” and also the great relevance of the Cyrenaica Database for the protection and study of ancient coins that unfortunately have undergone a process of dispersion as consequence of war events.

There are, of course, some statistical and mathematic contributions, essential tools for the study of ancient dies applied, in a specific case-study, to the Roman “victoriatu”, but also in more general terms through the implementation of mathematical-statistical methods used in presence of large quantities of coins.

Great coin numbers, different methods, exemplary projects, therefore, have merged in the final debate: “Big is beautiful?”, with the consequent question: “Faut-il VRAIMENT étudier les ‘mégadépôts’ monétaires?”.

This is exactly the crucial question that marked the three days of discussion, and this is reflected in the Proceedings, where almost all the contributions made by those who had given their adhesion are collected, some of them in fact were unable to personally intervene during the conference due to sudden difficulties in flight connections.

The present writer has had the opportunity to appreciate the frankness of the discussion, the deep common interest in the projects still underway and believes that the publication of the various reports will contribute to the common research in the study of ancient and medieval currency as a primary source of history and economy.

Finally, I would like to state that a confident serenity always characterized our days in Trieste; for this reason, too, I deeply express my thanks to everyone, with a friendly remembrance.

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