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**THE BOHEMIAN FINDS OF IMITATIVE COINS
WITH THE INSCRIPTION •VIDV**

ABSTRACT: This article focuses on two early medieval imitative coins found in Bohemia (one in the vicinity of Hradec Králové / Königgrätz in 1931; the other in Prague–Klánovice in 2016). The coins were probably struck in 1010–1015, and on the obverse imitate the Saxon denarii of the Otto-Adelheid type with the letters O-D-D-O in the arms of the cross. On the reverse, there is a church with the letters •VIDV, imitating Bavarian or Bohemian denarii from the second half of the 10th century. The location of most of the finds of these denarii in central Europe, including both coins found in Bohemia, indicates their Polish origin. Nevertheless, their issuer remains uncertain.

ABSTRAKT: Artykuł dotyczy dwóch wczesnośredniowiecznych monet naśladowczych odnalezionych w Czechach: jednej w 1931 r. prawdopodobnie w okolicach Hradca Králové / Königgrätz oraz drugiej z Pragi-Klánovic z odkrycia z 2016 r. Monety wybito prawdopodobnie w latach 1010–1015. Awers obu egzemplarzy naśladuje saski denar Ottona i Adelajdy z literami O-D-D-O wpisany w ramiona krzyża. Na rewersie widoczne jest wyobrażenie kaplicy z literami •VIDV imitujące bawarskie lub czeskie denary z drugiej połowy X w. Rozrzut większości znalezisk takich monet w Europie Środkowej, z uwzględnieniem obu monet odnalezionych w Czechach, wskazuje ich polskie pochodzenie. Niemniej, ich emitent pozostaje nieokreślony.

KEYWORDS: Early Middle Ages, coin finds, Polish coinage, imitations

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: wczesne średniowiecze, znaleziska monet, mennictwo polskie, naśladownictwa

In 1931, the National Museum in Prague purchased a collection of 251 early medieval coins from a hoard discovered in an unknown location near Hradec Králové (hereafter Hradec Králové 1931). This Bohemian parcel consisted of 248 denarii of Dukes Oldřich (1012–1034) and Bretislaus I (1035–1055) and three de-

narii minted outside the borders of the state of Bohemia.¹ The hoard was probably buried prior to the monetary reform which introduced the use of smaller dies, i.e. around 1050.²

The foreign component of the find included Hungarian denarii of Stephen I (997–1038) and Saxon denarii of the Otto-Adelheid type, and also another denarius on which the obverse depicts an equal-armed cross with the letters O-D-D-O in the angles, and on the reverse, a church with the letters •VIDV beneath the gable.³ The inscriptions on both sides of the coin, which is very worn, are illegible. It weighs 0.788 g and has a diameter which ranges between 17.2 and 18.6 mm (fig. 1). It contains 92 % silver, and is therefore not a forgery but an imitation, resembling the Saxon denarii of the Otto-Adelheid type on the obverse, and on the reverse the Bavarian or Bohemian denarii with cross and church minted in the second half of the 10th and early 11th centuries.⁴



Fig. 1. Imitative coin with the inscription •VIDV beneath the gable from the Hradec Králové hoard 1931 (National Museum, Prague, inv. no. H5-305899)

¹ Nálezy II/1, No. 1464; Cach 1970, p. 52, No. 9; Radoměrský D. 1992, p. 100; Vide man, Paukert 2009, p. 443, No. 82; Smejtek, Lutovský, Militký 2013, p. 107. The collection, still undocumented, is stored in the numismatic department of the National Museum in Prague, reg. no. 35/1931.

² This is evident from the absence of any denarii of Bretislaus I struck from a small die (Cach 1972, No. 322, 324). The tentative dating of the coin reform, which is related to the transition from the Caroline pound to the Prague talent and led to the minting of small-die denarii, is based on the hypothesis of Pavel Radoměrský published in 1952 (Radoměrský 1952, pp. 52–73). Some authors have recently proposed pushing the introduction of the Prague talent and the minting of small-die denarii back to the 1040s (Mašek, Videman 2019).

³ Radoměrský D. 1992, p. 100, No. 2, as undefined, probably Bavarian.

⁴ Suchodolski 1998; Bogucki 2008; Wiechmann 2013. The latest Bavarian coins with a church and inscription beneath the gable are the denarii of Henry V from his second reign (1017–1026) minted in Regensburg (Hahn 1976, No. 31, 32); the latest Bohemian coins of this type are the denarii from the early years of Bretislaus I (1035–1055) without a mint name (Cach 1970, No. 291, 292).

In January 2016, a metal detectorist found a denarius similar to this imitative coin with the inscription •VIDV near the village of Prague-Klánovice. No other archeological artifacts have been discovered in the vicinity that would indicate a settlement or other contemporary context. The coin is privately owned, and has not been analyzed. It weighs 1.50 g and the diameter is 18.0 mm (fig. 2).

Numismatists started showing an interest in the imitative coinage with the inscription •VIDV in the 1990s. The first to list, discuss and date the type was Peter



Fig. 2. Imitative coin with the inscription •VIDV beneath the gable, found in 2016 in Prague-Klánovice (private collection)

Iilisch in 1994. In his work,⁵ he cited 13 specimens known to him, including eight with more or less precise find-spots in Poland and others from the islands of Bornholm and Gotland in the Baltic (see the Catalogue below). Based on their presence in the Polish Ulejno hoard of 1890,⁶ he dated their minting prior to 1006. All but one of the coins described by Iilisch were minted from a single pair of dies. The exception is the denarius from the Stora Sojdeby find of 1910 from Gotland,⁷ the obverse of which bears a cross with the letter D in three of the quadrants and three points in the fourth. A denarius from an unknown hoard, part of the collection of Ulrich Zwicker (currently in the collection of FAU Erlangen-Nuremberg), was the only one analyzed for its silver content; it contained 95.8 % silver.⁸ According to Iilisch, a possible Polish origin of the imitative deniers with the inscription •VIDV is supported by the presence of a number of examples in hoards from the northwest of Poland and a small number in Scandinavian finds; they were also more often than not found together with Polish denarii of Boleslaw the Brave.⁹

⁵ Iilisch 1994, pp. 65–67.

⁶ Iilisch 2007; FMP I, p. 742, No. 496.

⁷ Hatz 1974a, No. 354; Malmer 1982, p. 111, No. 184. Brita Malmer attributed this denarius to an unspecified mint in lower Lotharingia.

⁸ Hatz et al. 1991, p. 70.

⁹ Peter Iilisch was the first to associate the imitative coins with the inscription •VIDV with the imitative coins of a similar type (also a combination of Otto-Adelheid denarii and

Another researcher who studied the imitative coins with the inscription •VIDV was Mateusz Bogucki at the beginning of this century. In 2006, he published a paper on Polish imitative coinage, briefly summarizing Ilisch's hypothesis and increasing the number of known hoards containing this type of imitative coins to twelve.¹⁰ In a more detailed paper examining coinage imitating Saxon coin types,¹¹ he quoted 23 coins known to him, including 17 from 16 specific finds,¹² and in a subsequent article he cited 26 known specimens, including 20 from 19 specific finds.¹³ The presence of a single coin with the inscription •VIDV in the Ulejno hoard of 1890 led him to date its minting after 1009, most likely between 1010 and 1015. According to Bogucki, these imitative coins were struck in Poland, under the authority of either the king or a representative of the local aristocracy.¹⁴

In 2013–2017, the Polish Academy of Sciences published a monumental work – a detailed list and description of early medieval coin finds in the territory of Poland, in five volumes (*FMP I–V*). It describes 19 imitative coins with the inscription •VIDV. 17 of these were discovered in 12 hoards; the two others were found separately (one as a stray find and one deposited in a grave). Most of the coins come from hoards discovered in Greater Poland (five coins in four finds), central

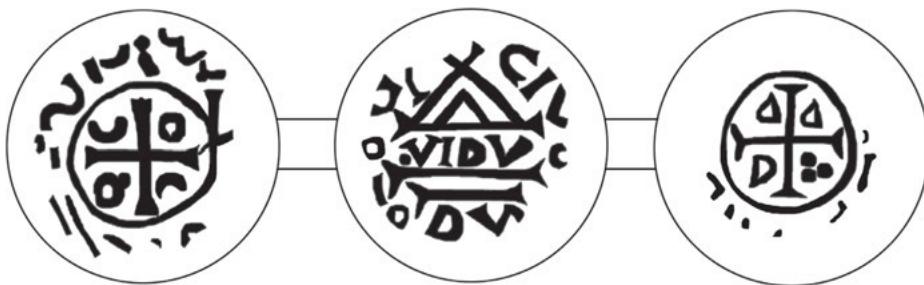


Fig. 3. Reconstruction of the design of imitative deniers with the inscription •VIDV according to M. Bogucki (2012a, p. 114, fig. 2).

Bavarian/Bohemian coins) with the inscription +JIVA beneath the gable on the reverse (Ilisch 1994, pp. 67–69).

¹⁰ Bogucki 2006, p. 186. The list of finds does not include references to earlier literature (Bogucki 2006, p. 186, note 18).

¹¹ Bogucki 2012a.

¹² Most of them are only mentioned based on the information published by Ilisch in 1994.

¹³ Bogucki 2012b, pp. 96–98.

¹⁴ Bogucki 2012a, p. 126; Bogucki 2012b, pp. 108–109. Bogucki similarly associated the imitative coins with the inscription •VIDV with the imitative coins of the same type with the inscription +JIVA (Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, pp. 114–116; Bogucki 2012b, pp. 96–98).

Poland and Masovia (eight coins in five finds). The two single finds were also from this region. Imitative coins with the inscription •VIDV were also present in a hoard from Pomerania and one from Lesser Poland.¹⁵ No coins were found in Silesia (see the Catalogue). Ten of the hoards discovered within Poland which included imitative coins with the inscription •VIDV also contained denarii of the Polish kings Boleslaw the Brave and Mieszko II; only three hoards contained the type without these royal issues.¹⁶ With only one exception the coins have all been preserved intact, and all of them are struck on both sides, unlike many official Piast denarii.¹⁷

As for the iconography of the imitative deniers with the •VIDV legend, it is important to note the design of the upper part of the church, with both ends of the gable projecting, and three small points in the reverse inscription. This does not correspond to the reverse of any Bavarian, Bohemian or even German denarius depicting a church. On all these coins, the church is surmounted by a cross that projects into the inscription and marks its beginning and end.¹⁸ The three points above the roof can only be based on the reverse of Otto-Adelheid denarii with a stylized cross atop the church roof, the typical Saxon form.

These facts suggest that the denarii with the inscription •VIDV were part of a coinage type imitating the Otto-Adelheid denarii on the obverse and the Bavarian or Bohemian denarii on the reverse which was minted between 1010 and 1015, probably in Greater Poland. The absence of the name of any ruler or moneyer, as well as the poor, shallow striking (which was, however, also typical of many official Piast coins), indicate that the denarii were not produced in the official Piast mint. The issuer remains unknown, due to the degraded and illegible inscriptions.¹⁹

If we accept the hypothesis advanced by Ilisch and Bogucki of a Polish origin of the imitative deniers with the •VIDV inscription, then the two denarii of this type found near Hradec Králové in 1931 and at Prague-Klánovice in 2016 are the only Polish coins from the late 10th and early 11th centuries discovered in the territory of Bohemia.

¹⁵ The Kraków VIII hoard – Nowa Huta-Pleszów 1961 was, according to Bogucki, imported to this part of Lesser Poland through trade with Greater Poland.

¹⁶ Ten hoards also contained Bohemian denarii produced before the coinage reform of *circa* 1050.

¹⁷ Suchodolski 1967.

¹⁸ Comparable church designs with a projecting gable and three points in the inscription are otherwise found only on imitative coins of a similar type with the inscription +JIVA beneath the gable (Ilisch 1994, pp. 67–69; Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, pp. 114–116; Bogucki 2012b, pp. 96–98).

¹⁹ This hypothesis is also supported by the fact that imitative coins which were probably struck in Bohemia imitate the Bavarian denarii minted by Henry I (948–955, with three points), Henry II (955–976, nine points) and Otto (976–985, four points). The imitations of later versions of Bavarian denarii (Henry II, 985–995, with three points and a ring) and coins imitating Otto-Adelheid denarii were not present in Bohemian hoards (except the two aforementioned imitations with the VIDV legend) (Bogucki 2012b, pp. 89–94; Videman 2017). It means that the imitative coins combining Bavarian and Saxon types were minted not in Bohemia but in Poland.

Catalogue:

Finds containing imitative deniers with the inscription •VIDV
(in chronological order)

POLAND:

Ulejno, 1890, 1010–1015

References: Ilisch 1994, p. 65; Ilisch 2007, p. 159, 165; Bogucki 2006, p. 186;
Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b, p. 96; FMP I, p. 742, No. 496
Weight: 1.08 g

Current location: Westfälischen Landesmuseum Münster

Poland, before 1965, after 1012 or 1014

References: Albrycht-Rapnicka 1966, p. 242, No. 115; Ilisch 1994, p. 65;
Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b, p. 96.
Weight: 0.97 g

Current location: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie

Gosyczynno – Sierpow II – Łęczyca II, 1850, 1855, after 1016

References: FMP III, p. 150, No. 45–46

Weights: 0.82 g, 1.08 g (2 coins)

Current location: not specified

Poznań XXI – vicinity, 1964, after 1017

References: Klinger 1966, p. 247, No. 29; Ilisch 1994, p. 65; Bogucki 2006,
p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b, p. 96; FMP I, p. 601, No. 23
Weight: 0.94 g

Current location: K. Klinger collection, currently in the FAU Erlangen-Nuremberg
collection

Rokitno–Kotowice, around 1994, after 1017

References: Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b,
p. 96; FMP III, p. 357, No. 37–38

Weights: 0.82 g, 1.08 g (2 coins)

Current location: private collections

Żukowo, prior to 1984, after 1024

References: Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b,
p. 96; FMP III, p. 535, No. 650–651

Weights: 0.935 g, 1.309 g (2 coins)

Current location: Muzeum Mazowieckie in Płock

Kujawy I, 1914, after 1027

References: Ilisch 1994, p. 67; Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 115;
Bogucki 2012b, p. 96; FMP III, p. 543, No. 484

Weight: 0.75 g

Current location: not specified

Poland, after 1024

References: Ilisch 1994, p. 67; Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b, p. 96

Weight: 1.22 g

Current location: Westfälischen Landesmuseum Münster

Kinno – Skubarczewo, 1900, after 1021

References: Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b,
p. 96; FMP I, p. 387, No. 744–745

Weights: – (2 coins)

Current location: not specified

Konin – vicinity, before 1993, after 1028

References: Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b,
p. 96; FMP I, p. 405, No. 228

Weight: 0.59 g (fragment)

Current location: Zamek Królewski w Warszawie

Łask II, 1942/1943, after 1035

References: Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b,
p. 96; FMP III, p. 219, No. 12

Weight: 1.22 g

Current location: private collection

Kraków VIII – Nowa Huta-Pleszów, 1961, after 1035

References: Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b,
p. 96; FMP IV.A, p. 73, No. 498–499

Weights: 1.387 g, 0.951 g (2 coins)

Current location: Muzeum Archeologiczne w Krakowie

Greater Poland province, 1st half of the 11th century

References: Bogucki 2012b, p. 96

Weight: –

Current location: –

Dobra, prior to 1894, after 1040, or 1060

References: FMP II, p. 144, No. 114

Weight: –

Current location: Münzkabinett Berlin

Poland II, prior to 1960, after 1056

References: Ilisch 1994, p. 65; Bogucki 2012a, p. 115; Bogucki 2012b, p. 96; FMP V.B, p. 272, No. 48

Weight: 0.99 g

Current location: Muzeum Archeologiczne i Etnograficzne w Łodzi (inv. No. 8744)

Giecz V, 2007, grave find

References: Syty 2015, pp. 44, No. 54; Bogucki 2012b, p. 96; FMP I, p. 180, No. 39

Weight: 0.94 g

Current location: Muzeum Pierwszych Piastów na Lednicy (inv. no. Gz4 230/07)

Poszewka, 2008, single find

References: FMP V.B, p. 240, No. 1

Weight: 0.92 g

Current location: private collection

BOHEMIA:

Hradec Králové, 1931, prior to 1050

References: Nálezy II/1, No. 1464; Cach 1970, p. 52, No. 9; Videman, Paukert 2009, p. 443, No. 82; Smejtek, Lutovský, Militký 2013, p. 107.

Weight: 0.788 g; 18.6 x 17.2 mm

Current location: National Museum in Prague

Praha-Klánovice, 2016, separate “lost” coin

References: –

Weight: 1.50 g; 18 mm

Current location: private collection

UKRAINE:

Andruszewka, 2009–2012, after 1024

References: Michelson, Trostyanskiy 2011; 2019, p. 161 Bogucki 2012b, p. 96

Weight: 0,56 g

Current location: –

BORNHOLM:

Enegråd, 1862, after 1035–1042

References: Galster 1980, p. 84–99; Ilisch 1994, p. 65; Heijne 2004, p. 318; Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 116; Bogucki 2012b, p. 96

Weight: 1.22 g

Current location: Den Kgl. Mønt- og Medaillesamling, Nationalmuseet Copenhagen

GOTLAND:

Stora Sojdeby I, 1910, after 1089

References: Hatz 1974a, No. 354; Malmer 1982, p. 111, No. 184 (as an unspecified coin of Lower Lotharingia); Ilisch 1994, p. 67; Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 116; Bogucki 2012b, p. 96.

Weight: 1.08 g; 18.6 mm

Current location: Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm

Burge 1967, after 1143

References: Berghaus et al. 1969; Hatz 1974a, No. 375; Hatz 1974b; Ilisch 1994, p. 65; Hatz and Hatz 2001; Bogucki 2006, p. 186; Bogucki 2012a, p. 116; Bogucki 2012b, p. 96.

Weight: 0.88 g

Current location: Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm

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CZESKIE ZNALEZISKA DENARÓW Z LEGENDĄ •VIDV

(Streszczenie)

W 1931 roku we wschodnich Czechach (prawdopodobnie w okolicach Hradca Králové / Königgrätz/) odnaleziono skarb składający się z 251 denarów, wśród których większość (248 sztuk) stanowiły monety czeskich książąt Oldrzycha (1012–1034) i Brzetysława I (1035–1055). Wśród monet obcych znalazły się denar węgierski Stefana I (997–1038) i saski denar typu Otto-Adelajda i wreszcie moneta, gdzie na awersie znajduje się krzyż równoramienny z literami ODDO w kątach jego ramion; zaś na odwrociu kaplica z literami •VIDV pod szczytem. Denar tego samego typu odkryto w 2016 roku jako pojedyncze znalezisko w Klánovicach, na wschodnich obrzeżach Pragi. Wysoki udział srebra w egzemplarzu z Hradec Králové (92%), wskazuje jasno, że nie było to współczesne fałszerstwo, lecz naśladowictwo, imitujące saskie denary typu Otto-Adelajda na awersie i bawarski lub czeski denar z krzyżem i kaplicą z drugiej połowy X i początku XI wieku.

W Inwentarzach zbierających dotyczących znalezisk monet wczesnośredniowiecznych z obszaru Polski (FMP I–V) odnotowano 19 egzemplarzy naśladowictw z legendą •VIDV. 17 z nich stanowiło wchodziło w skład 12 skarbów, dwie sztuki odnaleziono pojedynczo (jedna jako znalezisko luźne, drugą jako element wyposażenia grobowego). Większość monet znaleziono w skarbach odkrytych na terenie Wielkopolski (5 egzemplarzy w 4 znaleziskach oraz 2 monety pojedyncze), Mazowsza i Polski środkowej (8 egzemplarzy w 5 znaleziskach). Naśladowictwa z legendą •VIDV wystąpiły również w jednym skarbie pomorskim i jednym małopolskim. Nie stwierdzono ich natomiast w znaleziskach ze Śląska. Poza terytorium Polski denary tego typu znajdująły się w skarbach odkrytych na Gotlandii (Stora Sojdeby I 1910; Burge 1967), na Bornholmie (Enegård 1862), a także na Ukrainie (Żytomierz). Rozrzut znalezisk zdaje się potwierdzać opinię badaczy – P. Ilischa (1994) i Mateusza Boguckiego (2006; 2012a; 2012b), którzy uznają piastowską proveniencję tego rodzaju monet.

Biorąc pod uwagę powyższe fakty, denary z legendą •VIDV można uznać za jednorazową emisję monet naśladowczych, wybitych w latach 1010–1015, prawdopodobnie na terenie Wielkopolski. Brak nazwy emitenta, a także płytkie niechlujne bicie może świadczyć o tym, że denarów nie wykonano w oficjalnej mennicy piastowskiej. Emitent pozostaje nieokreślony ze względu na barbaryzację i nieczytelność napisów.

Jeśli przyjmiemy hipotezę o polskim pochodzeniu denarów naśladowczych z legendą •VIDV, to wspomniane wyżej monety znalezione w okolicach Hradca Králové oraz Pradze-Klánovicach są jedynymi polskimi monetami z przełomu X i XI wieku odkrytymi do dziś na terenie Czech.

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