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## Coins surfing? Statistical analysis of the latest finds of Roman coins from Ukraine

Since April 1, 2022, in the frames of the American Numismatic Society and International Numismatic Council scholarships, as well as in the frame of the *Barbarian fakers. Manufacturing and use of counterfeit Roman Imperial denarii in East-Central Europe in antiquity* Project (2018/31/B/HS3/00137) (Principle Investigator: dr hab. A. Dymowski), I have been recording information about the latest discoveries of Roman coins on the territory of modern Ukraine.

The main goal of my activity was to create an offline database of the most recent finds of Roman coins from the territory of Ukraine (**Fig. 1**). The search focused mainly on discoveries made since 2019, both by chance and during archaeological research, but primarily by amateurs. The search was conducted remotely, mainly using the most popular website for treasure hunters in Ukraine, Violity, as well as social media and publications of a scientific, popular science or widespread nature. As for the Violity website, which yielded the most information, the data published during 2019-2022 in particular sections of this forum were registered.

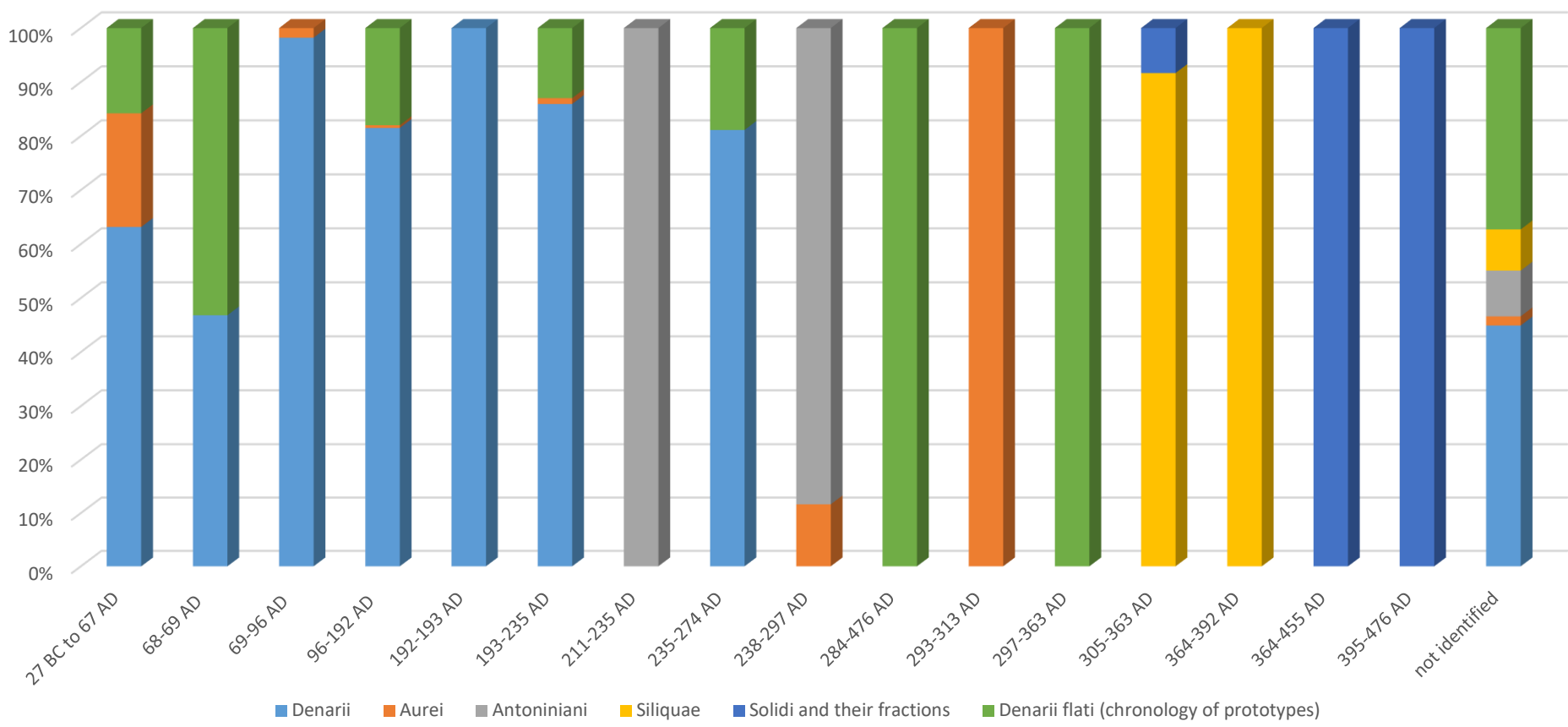


Fig. 3. Finds of Roman coins and barbarian copies of Roman coins (chronology of prototypes)

Speaking of barbarian imitations, the vast majority of coins in this group are imitations of silver Roman coins of various denominations (denarii, antoniniani, siliquae). Thus, the ratio of imitations of silver coins to gold coins is 69% to 31%.

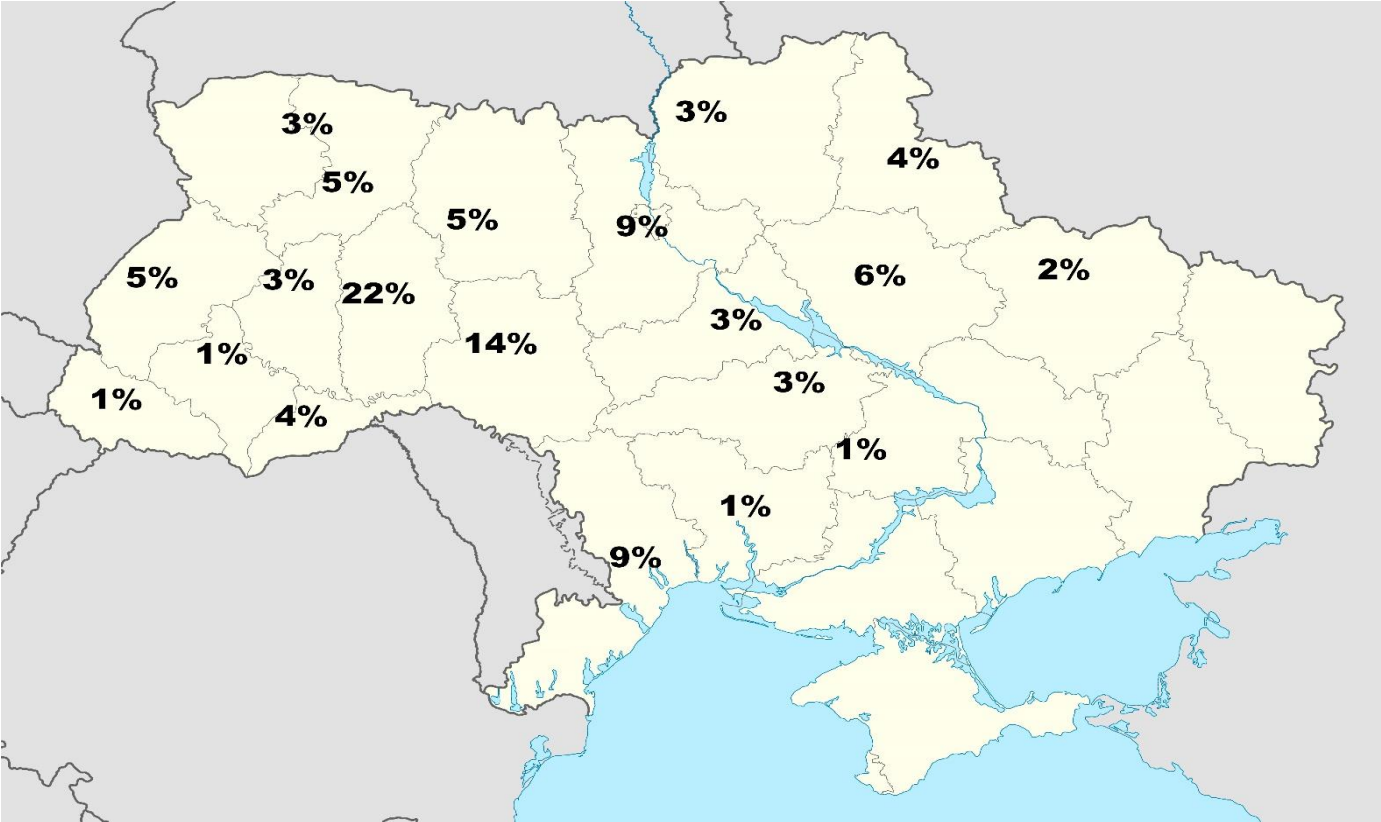


Fig. 4

**Fig. 4** shows in which regions of Ukraine the most significant number of finds were recorded: Khmelnytskyi and Vinnytsia regions. This is due, on the one hand, to the higher density of material in these regions and the more significant activity of searchers. We can also see the approximate percentage distribution of the finds on the territory of Ukraine, but it should be noted that only 11 per cent of the total number of finds are known to be located for sure.

Of particular interest are the coin hoards, mainly of denarii. I published one of these hoardings from the village of Vyrvka in the Sumy region as part of a scholarship from the American Numismatic Society (Myzgin, Filatova 2022).

Another interesting discovery is that of a large coin and object complex in the Cherkasy region that has not yet been published. The deposit was accidentally found in 2021 on the river bank. It included a large number of Roman denarii (more than 400), silver and gold jewellery of the Chernyakhiv culture (pendants, rings, bracelets, etc.), including pendants that have direct analogues in the Brangstrup hoard in Denmark (Myzgin 2019) (**Fig. 5a-b**)



Fig. 5. Hoard of denarii and jewellery from the Cherkasy region (a). Pelta-shaped gold foil pendants stamped with zoomorphic ornaments from the hoard (b)

The collected numismatic material is mainly a reflection of the circulation of Roman coins or their imitations and copies in the environment of Chernyakhiv culture. This material significantly complements the existing studies of Roman coin finds in Eastern Barbaricum and is the basis for further in-depth research, which I plan to carry out as a scholar at the National Science Centre of Poland.

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A	B	C	D	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
No	Issuer (emperor or member of his family)	Quantity	Denomination	Notes	Mint	Material	Manufacturing technology	Preservation	Category of find	Weight (g)	Find spot	Link	Date of publication	Author of topic	Title of topic	Foto	Notes 2
219	Flavius Claudius Julian	1	provincial		Kizik	Bronze	struck	good	single	1,41	Odesa, Odesa region, Ukraine	<a href="https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=2271380">https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=2271380</a>	Jan 23, 2022 11:49 am	Dima777	Чья монета, император?	219_A 219_R	<a href="https://violity.com/110135188">https://violity.com/110135188</a>
502	Marcia Otacilia Severa	1	provincial			Bronze	struck	good	single	16,4	Vinnitsia region, Ukraine	<a href="https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=2263667&amp;sid=5b0a4e370a104460c67885fa518085">https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=2263667&amp;sid=5b0a4e370a104460c67885fa518085</a>	Dec 08, 2021 10:36 am	chelovek777	Бронзовая монета Боспор	502_A 502_R	<a href="https://violity.com/108719932">https://violity.com/108719932</a>
521	Limes coin	1	Limes coin			Alloy	cast	good	single	3,55		<a href="https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=22631158&amp;sid=5b0a4e370a104460c67885fa518085">https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=22631158&amp;sid=5b0a4e370a104460c67885fa518085</a>	Dec 06, 2021 3:15 pm	karinus	монеты на определение	no	<a href="https://violity.com/109638809">https://violity.com/109638809</a>
522	Antoninus Pius	1	Limes coin			Alloy	cast	good	single	2,8	Vinnitsia region, Ukraine	<a href="https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=22631158&amp;sid=5b0a4e370a104460c67885fa518085">https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=22631158&amp;sid=5b0a4e370a104460c67885fa518085</a>	Dec 06, 2021 3:15 pm	karinus	монеты на определение	no	<a href="https://violity.com/109638809">https://violity.com/109638809</a>
523	Barbarian imitation	1	Limes coin			Alloy	cast	good	single	0,83		<a href="https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=22631158&amp;sid=5b0a4e370a104460c67885fa518085">https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=22631158&amp;sid=5b0a4e370a104460c67885fa518085</a>	Dec 06, 2021 3:15 pm	karinus	монеты на определение	no	<a href="https://violity.com/109638809">https://violity.com/109638809</a>
624	Severus Alexandrus	1	provincial		Nikea Epiphany	Bronze	struck	good	single	4,7	Lutsk, Volyn region, Ukraine	<a href="https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=2260002">https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=2260002</a>	Nov 30, 2021 11:49 am	luchanka	Монета Рима?	624_A 624_R	<a href="https://violity.com/109638809">https://violity.com/109638809</a>
732	Publius Septimius Geta	1	provincial		Istria	Bronze	struck	good	single	4,64	Odesa, Odesa region, Ukraine	<a href="https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=2260002">https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=2260002</a>	Nov 20, 2021 7:15 pm	Dima777	Римская Истрия	732_A 732_R	<a href="https://violity.com/109638809">https://violity.com/109638809</a>
753	Octavianus Augustus	1	Limes coin			Bronze	cast			2,45	Khmelnytskyi region, Ukraine	<a href="https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=2259881">https://forum.violity.com/viewtopic.php?t=2259881</a>	Oct 18, 2021 5:46 pm	Serga	Монеты на определение и оценку	753_A 753_R	<a href="https://violity.com/109638809">https://violity.com/109638809</a>

Fig. 1. Screen-shot of the offline database

Of course, collecting information from such sources requires a cautious, critical approach. Therefore, another of my goals was to create a methodology for the necessary processing of data obtained from open sources or directly from treasure hunters. So far, such a methodology for Roman coin finds from open sources in Ukraine has been developed mainly in the works of K. Myzgin (cf. Myzgin 2015; 2017). However, these developments can hardly be called systematic. For example, the Polish experience in this matter is more thorough (Dymowski 2011), not to mention the experience of Danish (cf. Hosnaes 2010) or British colleagues (Bland 2017).

I registered and entered such finds into the database in several stages:

1. Finding data ("Internet-surfing");
2. Entering primary information into the database (data provided for public use, including information about the author-owner of the coins and photos of the coins);
3. Primary identification of coins (issuer, technology, dating);
4. Search for information about the place (region) of coin discovery;
5. If possible, find out whether the place of discovery is connected with the location of existing archaeological sites in Ukraine.

In total, I collected information on 7314 finds of ancient coins, of which 6837 are Roman coins. The latter include the following categories by metal (single finds and hoards): silver denominations (denarii, siliquae, argentei), gold coins (aurei, solidi in their fractions), bronze coins (central mint issues and provincial coins). The products of barbarian craftsmen, namely gold, gold-plated and silver barbarian imitations of Roman coins and copies of denarii, should be singled out separately. It should be noted that the vast majority of registered coins are of silver denominations, followed by slightly fewer bronze and copper coins, various alloys, and the smallest number of coins minted in gold. More detailed statistics on the denominations and their number and ratio can be seen in **Figure 2**.

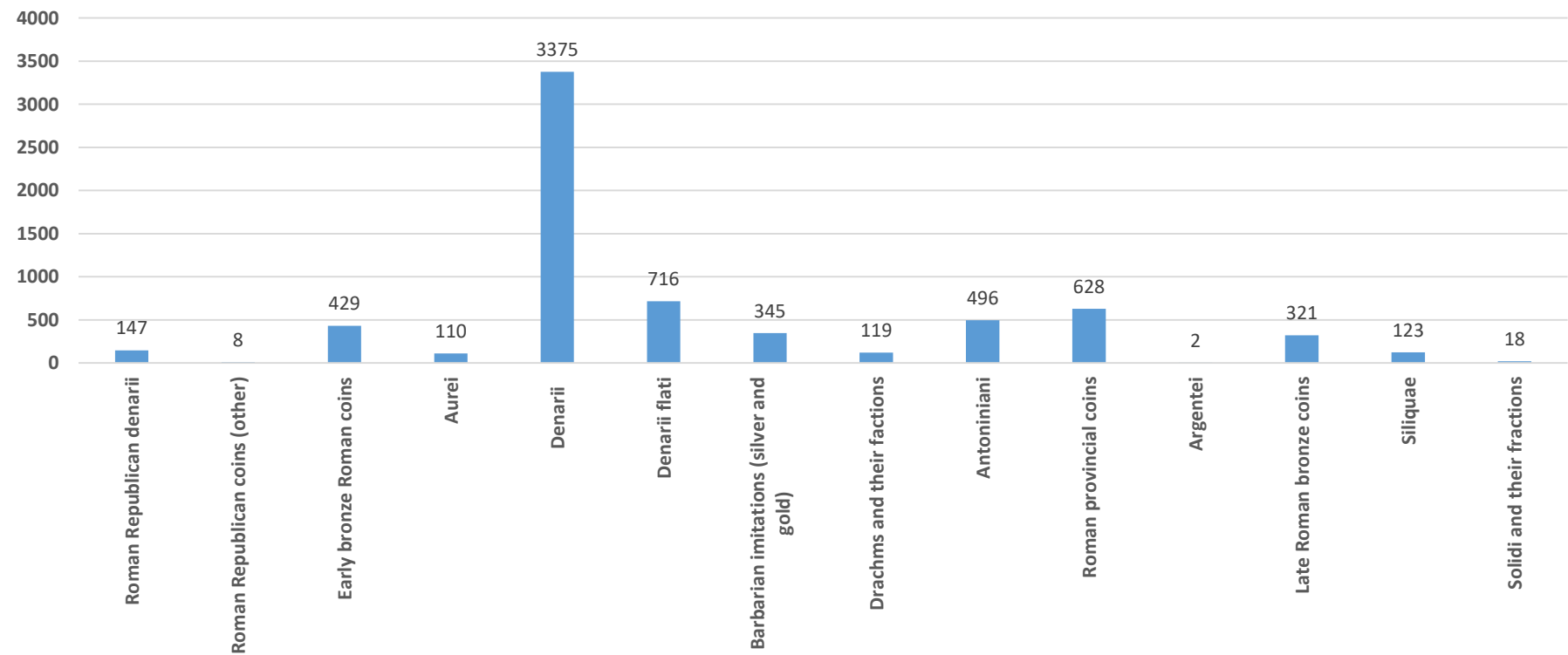


Fig. 2. Distribution of recorded finds by denominations of the Roman coinage system

These statistics generally confirm previous data on the distribution of Roman coins in Eastern Europe (Myzgin 2018, 87), but also provide new data, for example, on the relative number of coins of unofficial production: barbarian imitations and barbarian copies. Also noteworthy is the high percentage of coins of provincial Roman minting.

We can also conclude the chronology of certain groups of coins. For example, quite expectedly, most denarii are from the Antonine dynasty. Among the aurei and antoniniani, coins from the second quarter to the middle of the 3rd century predominate. Among the siliquae and solidi are issues from the Constantine dynasty. Special attention can be drawn to the cast copies of denarii, where the bulk of the prototypes are from the Antoninus dynasty. (**Fig. 3**).