



TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte
Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Bernhard Palme
Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

Band 19, 2004

2004

WOLZHAUSEN



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H O L Z H A U S E N

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Tafeln 1–9

PETER KOS

The coin legend V·O·K·K = Caesar's *Voccio*?

Tafel 3–4

Two typologically different groups of Celtic coins predominantly found in the south-eastern Alpine region were termed the “eastern Norican” and “western Norican” groups by Robert Göbl in his fundamental study of the typology and relative chronology¹, which is debatable also from the geographic standpoint². Later, without detailed argument, he attributed the minting of the “eastern Norican” coinage to the tribe of the Taurisci, and that of the “western Norican” group to the tribe of the Norici³, which is perhaps a somewhat too simplified determination⁴. Göbl suggested that both groups of Celtic tribes (at first he referred only to Norican tribes) began to mint their own coinage only after 60 B.C.⁵. Later he moved the datings for the beginning of minting back five years for the Norici and ten years for the Taurisci⁶.

Among the numerous arguments that supposedly confirmed his dating of the beginnings of minting their own coinage among the Norici and Taurisci, Göbl cited coins with legends in northern Etruscan script, primarily represented among the Norici by coins with the inscription X, read as T, and similar ones with the names Tinco⁷ and V·O·K·K⁸. The latter legend was interpreted by Göbl as *Voccio*, and coins bearing it were first hypothetically, and later with increasingly greater certainty, attributed to the Norican king *Voccio*⁹, mentioned by Caesar in his *Gallic Wars*¹⁰. Göbl was joined

¹ R. Göbl, *Typologie und Chronologie der keltischen Münzprägung in Noricum*, Wien 1973 (further Göbl, *TKN*).

² I made this point in the article: P. Kos, A. Šemrov, *A hoard of Celtic and Roman coins from the Ljubljanica River*, *Arh. Vestnik* 54 (2003) 384, n. 6.

³ R. Göbl, *Die Hexadrachmenprägung der Gross-Boier. Ablauf, Chronologie und historische Relevanz für Noricum und Nachbargebiete*, Wien 1994, 37 (further Göbl, *Hexadrachmenprägung*).

⁴ The problem of new attributions was also noted by E. Kolníková, *Norische Münzen im Oppidum Bratislava und in seinem Hinterland*, *Slovenska numizmatika* 14 (1996) 18.

⁵ Göbl, *TKN* 59, 61. Also R. Göbl, *Münzprägung und Geldverkehr der Kelten in Österreich*, *Österr. Akad. der Wiss. Phil.-hist. Klasse Bd. 597*, Veröffentlich. der Num. Komm., Bd. 28, Wien 1992, 9 (further Göbl, *Münzprägung*).

⁶ Göbl, *Hexadrachmenprägung* 40. The dating was also cited by Kolníková, *Norische Münzen* (s. n. 4) 9–55 and M. Kostial, *Kelten im Osten. Gold und Silber der Kelten in Mittel- und Osteuropa. Sammlung Lanz*, München 1997, 19.

⁷ Göbl, *TKN* 86.

⁸ Erroneous punctuation was noted, but drawn correctly by Göbl, *TKN* Pl. 48.

⁹ See J. Šašel, *Voccio*, *Historia* 19 (1970) 628–630 (= *Opera Selecta*, *Situla* 30, *Ljubljana* 1992, 121–123).

¹⁰ Caes. *BG* I 53, 4. Göbl, *TKN* 24 („In der Folgeausgabe ist venetisch VOKK zu lesen. Hier den rex *Voccio* Caesars zu sehen, was zeitlich genau passen würde, liegt nahe“), 86.

in this reading and its interpretation by Ekkehard Weber („Sein Träger ist wohl mit dem aus Caesar bekannten König Voccio in Verbindung zu bringen ...“)¹¹ and Helmut Birkhan („VOKK kann der Name des Norikerkönigs Voccio (Caes. BG I 53, 4) sein“)¹². Göbl thus concluded: „Wenn die Identifikation des VOKK mit Voccio stimmt, was naheliegt, böte sich eine schöne Bestätigung“, and on this basis placed the beginning of minting the Norican coinage „kaum vor 60 v. Chr.“¹³. In later studies, Göbl treated this reading of the legend and its interpretation as entirely certain¹⁴, and it primarily served him as a basic chronological starting point¹⁵. His authoritative reading and interpretation were later repeated, mostly uncritically, both in numismatic and historical texts¹⁶.

The use of northern Etruscan letters for writing a coin legend in the period around 60 B.C., to which Göbl dated the minting of these coins — thus, in the period of the considerable Romanization of the area where the coins with these legends were minted — seems somewhat unusual, although it has not aroused doubts among experts in the field. Inscriptions in Venetic writing otherwise also appear in northeastern Italy (Cadore), in Carinthia (such as on bronze plates from Gurina and scratched onto the rocks at Würmlacher Wiesen), as well as in the Soča River valley (Idrija)¹⁷. It would

¹¹ E. Weber in: Göbl, *TKN* 76.

¹² H. Birkhan in: Göbl, *TKN* 70.

¹³ Göbl, *TKN* 59.

¹⁴ Thus R. Göbl in: K. Pink, *Einführung in die keltische Münzkunde*, Wien³ 1974, 64, is entirely convinced: „... diesem folgt VOKK, in dem man wohl sicher den *rex* Voccio Caesars, da genau die entsprechende Zeitschicht, erkennen kann“. Also see Göbl, *Antike Numismatik*, München 1978, 222, Nr. 2544A: „Vokk (in nordetruskischem Alphabet) = Voccio Caesars“.

¹⁵ Göbl, *Münzprägung* 11.

¹⁶ M. Mackensen, *The state of research on the 'Norican' silver coinage*, *World Archaeology*, vol. 6.3 (1975) 251: „plate I 11 shows the 'Venetic' legend VOKK. In this caption the coinage gives confirmation of the Norican king Voccio, whom Caesar mentioned“. L. Springschitz, *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum Sammlung Dreer / Klagenfurt im Landesmuseum für Kärnten, II. Teil, Spanien – Gallien, Keltenländer*, Klagenfurt 1984, Taf. 6, 125. B. Overbeck, *Keltisches Münzwesen in Altbayern*, *Jahresberichte der Stiftung Aventinum*, Heft 9/10, Abensberg 1996, 42. G. Dobesch, *Die Kelten in Österreich*, Wien, Köln, Graz 1980, 453 n. 1: „Im Hinblick auf die numismatische Bezeugung des Namens ist die Namensform Voccio dem von Šašel ... vorgeschlagenen Buccio vorzuziehen“. G. Dembski, *Münzen der Kelten (Sammlungskataloge des Kunsthistorischen Museums, Bd. I = Kataloge der antiken Münzen. Reihe A: Griechen II: Massalia und Keltenstämme)*, Wien 1998, 87 cat. no. 789: „in nordetruskischer Schrift VOKK“. G. Bandelli, *Veneti e Carni dalle origini alla romanizzazione*, in: G. Bandelli, F. Fontana (eds.), *Iulium Carnicum. Centro alpino tra Italia e Norico dalla protostoria all'età imperiale* (Atti del Convegno, Arta Terme – Cividale, 29–30 settembre 1995), Roma 2001, 21: „... il VOKK di alcuni tetradrammi – l'identificazione del quale con il capo norico Voccio, cliente di Cesare, pare sicura ...“.

¹⁷ For the distribution of inscriptions see J. Istenič, *Zapisi v venetski pisavi na Koroškem in v Sloveniji/Venetische Schrift in Kärnten und in Slowenien*, *Zgod. časopis* 39 (1985) 313–334. A map of pre-Roman (and also Venetic) inscriptions is published in P. Jablonka, *Die Gurina bei Dellach im Gailtal. Siedlung, Handelsplatz und Heiligtum*, Klagenfurt 2001, 237, map 16. Also see A. Marinetti, *Le iscrizioni*, in: G. Fogolari, G. Gambacurta (eds.), *Materiali veneti preromani e romani del santuario di Lagole di Calalzo al*

be surprising if the names of the lords on whose behalf the coins of individual types were undoubtedly minted (as the coin legends can most probably be interpreted), would still be written on the coin legends in the Venetic script in the period around 60 B.C. (according to Göbl), when the mentioned region was already highly Romanized.

Numismatic commentary

The mentioned Venetic legends appear on the reverse of two coins, one in the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Münzkabinett) in Vienna (Pl. 3, 1)¹⁸ and the other in the Landesmuseum für Kärnten in Klagenfurt (Pl. 3, 2)¹⁹. The provenience is not known for either coin.

While both coins were minted with different obverse dies, it is possible to establish that the same die was used to mint the reverse. The coin from the museum in Klagenfurt was minted later than the coin from the Viennese cabinet, as is indicated by the evident greater wear on the die. The die for the obverse of the coin from Klagenfurt was most probably made with a “refreshed” version of the coin die used to mint the specimen from Vienna²⁰.

Several years ago a hoard of Celtic and Roman Republican silver coins was found in a bronze situla at Enemonzo near Zuglio in Friuli²¹. On the basis of detailed analysis of the coins in the find, Gorini rightfully concluded that the earliest emissions of large silver coins were minted by the Norici in the second half of the 2nd century B.C.²². All the Celtic silver coins in the find belonged to the somewhat later group of coins of the Kugelreiter C2 type, which included 6 specimens with the Venetic letter T on the reverse. The 40 silver coins of the Kugelreiter C2 type in the Enemonzo hoard also include 5 specimens that have not yet been documented in Göbl's fundamental corpus²³. One die was used for minting the obverse of these five specimens, on which signs of use could be noted (e.g. the coin on Pl. 3, 5), while three dies were used for the reverses (Pl. 3, 3–5)²⁴.

Lacking comparative material, Gorini mistakenly sought parallels to this die in the die on the obverse of A1d, which was in use in the earliest group of coins of the

Museo di Pieve di Cadore, Roma 2001, 337–370. Cf. G. B. Pellegrini, A. L. Prodocimi, *La lingua venetica*, Padova 1967; M. Lejeune, *Manuel de la langue vénète*, Heidelberg 1974.

¹⁸ Dembski, *Münzen der Kelten* (s. n. 16). I would like to thank Günther Dembski, director of the Münzkabinett in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, for kindly providing the photograph.

¹⁹ Springschitz, *Sylloge* (s. n. 16) Taf. 6, 125. I would like to thank Franz Glaser of the Landesmuseum für Kärnten for kindly providing the photograph.

²⁰ Göbl, *TKN* 87.

²¹ G. Gorini, *Ripostiglio celtico da Enemonzo (Friuli – Italia)*, Int. Num. Newsletter 33, Printemps, Été 1999, 4–6. G. Gorini, *Il ripostiglio monetale di Enemonzo*, in: S. Vitri, F. Oriolo (eds.), *I Celti in Carnia e nell'arco alpino centro orientale: atti della giornata di studio: Tolmezzo 30. aprile 1999*, Trieste 2001, 173–193.

²² Gorini, *Il ripostiglio monetale* (s. n. 21) 182.

²³ Göbl, *TKN*. Gorini, *Il ripostiglio monetale* (s. n. 21) coins cat. nos. 2, 21–23 and 30.

²⁴ I would like to thank Dr. Serena Vitri, director of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cividale del Friuli, for permission to view the coins and for the photographs of them.

Kugelreiter type (A1)²⁵, which was otherwise not represented in the Enemonzo hoard²⁶. Detailed analysis shows that Gorini's classification of these coins was incorrect, as an identical die was used for minting both of the above mentioned coins with the Venetic legend VOKK²⁷. The mentioned 5 coins from the Enemonzo hoard therefore belong to the Kugelreiter C2 group, as the obverse of at least one coin from Enemonzo (Cividale 37019; Pl. 3, 6) was minted with die 3b1²⁸, thus with the same die for the obverse that was used for minting the coin with the Venetic legend in the Münzkabinett in Vienna (Pl. 3, 7). The basic characteristics (primarily the row of pearls and the leaves of the laurel leaf, as well as details of the eyes and ears) indisputably prove that the same die was used for minting these two coins. Comparison of the Viennese coin and the coin from the Enemonzo hoard (Cividale 37019) further shows that the die for the obverse of the former was somewhat more worn than it had been at the moment of minting the coin from the Enemonzo find. The coin with the Venetic legend was, consequently, minted somewhat later than the coins from the Enemonzo hoard.

The reverse of the coins of the cited group from the Enemonzo hoard with this obverse is also exceptional in terms of the quite unusual depiction of the horse and rider, in a form that Göbl did not document specifically (Pl. 4, 1)²⁹. A very similarly formed die („völlig groteske Ausformung des Kugelreitertypus“³⁰) appeared in the Kugelreiter group on reverse die no. 30 (Pl. 4, 2), which is tied to obverse die no. 3b1³¹. In front of the belly of the horse is an inscription in northern Etruscan writing, about which, primarily on the basis of an analogous example from the Dreer collection³², Göbl concluded, „... einwandfrei gesicherte Legende in nordetruskischem Alphabet, die wohl VOKK (kaum VONN) zu lesen ist“, further citing the reading by Ekkehard Weber³³.

The coin on Pl. 4, 1 (Cividale 37019) documents the reverse, which is completely similar in all individual elements that appear on the reverse of both coins with the Venetic legend. It is possible to conclude that the die, with which at least one coin from the Enemonzo hoard was minted, had been somewhat “refreshed” or the legend had been subsequently engraved with Venetic letters, which the die engraver placed up against the chest and belly of the horse.

The somewhat later minting of both coins with Venetic legends is also indicated by the data about the weights of the coins. The five coins from Enemonzo have an average weight of 11.47 g, the coin from the Viennese cabinet weighs 10.32 g, and

²⁵ Göbl, *TKN* Pl. 1, 7.

²⁶ Gorini, *Il ripostiglio monetale* (s. n. 21) 176.

²⁷ Göbl, *TKN* Pl. 4, 6.

²⁸ Göbl, *TKN* Pl. 4, 6.

²⁹ Gorini, *Il ripostiglio monetale* (s. n. 21) coins cat. nos. 2, 21–23 and 30.

³⁰ Göbl, *TKN* 86.

³¹ Göbl, *TKN* Pl. 4, 6 and 7.

³² Springschitz, *Sylloge* (s. n. 16).

³³ Göbl, *TKN* 86: „In dieser ... Lesung auf VOKK ... und im sofortigem Versuch hierin naheliegenderweise — da zeitlich völlig synchron — den rex Voccio Caesars zu erkennen, hat mich jetzt ... E. Weber ... sehr bestärkt ...“.

the coin from the museum in Klagenfurt weighs 9.62 g. These data confirm the results of analysis of the dies, which show that the coins from the Enemonzo hoard were first minted, followed by the minting of the Vienna example, with the coin from Klagenfurt even later.

On the basis of these findings, we also acquire more accurate support for a further detailed chronological placement of both coins with Venetic legends.

Only with the publication of the Enemonzo hoard do we finally have available well-argued proof that the Norici minted their own coinage in the mid 2nd century B.C., as Gorini justifiably dated the burial of the hoard to the period between 140 and 130 B.C. on the basis of the Roman Republican victoriati in the find³⁴. The Celtic tetradrachmas of the Kugelreiter C2 type had thus already been minted in this period, including 6 specimens with the northern Etruscan letter T on the reverse. The die for minting at least one coin out of the group of the mentioned five coins in the Enemonzo hoard was also in use in this period. With the same die the obverse of the coin from Vienna was also minted. The reverse of both coins with Venetic legends was minted with an improved die with which slightly earlier the reverse of Enemonzo coins had been minted. It is possible to conclude on the basis of firm arguments that the coins with the Venetic legend “VOKK” were also minted in the period of the hoarding of the Enemonzo find, thus in the fifth decade of the 2nd century B.C. The use of the Venetic script in coin legends in that period would be considerably more logical and understandable.

Epigraphic commentary

Göbl read the legend as V·O·K·K, establishing that „die hier vorkommende K-Form ist zwar in den Formen des nordetruskischen Alphabets nicht belegbar, aber auch die N-Formen sind dort, mit Ausnahme von Idrija di Bača und Magre (dort aber seitenverkehrt), anders“³⁵. The inscription is read from the outer edge of the coin from left to right. The punctuation is presented incorrectly (Pl. 4, 3).

The legend of the coin should be read, in my opinion, from the inner side of the coin, similarly to the chronologically comparative tetradrachmas of Philip II, and from left to right. In that case, the letters are entirely normal: we have two normal Venetic letters N, which were never changed³⁶, while the letter O appeared in such an angular form in the third period³⁷. The last letter could be read as U, although in that case it would be smaller by half than the other letters. As in the upper part of the letter it is possible to note a thin line between both dots, the last letter must most probably be read as the letter L from the third period of Venetic writing (300–150 B.C.)³⁸. This

³⁴ Gorini, *Ripostiglio celtico* (s. n. 21) 4–6. Gorini, *Ripostiglio monetale* (s. n. 21) 173–193.

³⁵ Göbl, *TKN* 86.

³⁶ Lejeune, *Manuel* (s. n. 17).

³⁷ Lejeune, *Manuel* (s. n. 17) 27, 276 (e.g. inscription no. 208), (letter o₁).

³⁸ Lejeune, *Manuel* (s. n. 17) 13 (letter l₂). See also A. Marinetti, *Caratteri e diffusione dell'alfabeto venetico*, in: *AKEO I Tempi della Scrittura. Veneti antichi. Alfabeti e documenti*, Montebelluna 2002, 48.

letter with an exceptionally local tradition is documented only on inscriptions from Lâgole and belongs chronologically to group C, but cannot be classified more exactly in terms of an absolute chronology³⁹. The use of punctuation was as usual⁴⁰. On the basis of this letter L it is possible to establish that the legend on the coins belongs to the group of Venetic inscriptions characteristic for Valle di Cadore⁴¹. The legend must be read as .n.no.l. (Pl. 4, 4).

The legend cannot be interpreted satisfactorily. Usually the names of rulers or princes who had minting rights appear on the legends on Celtic coins. This would agree with the finding that 50% of the Venetic inscriptions mention the name of an individual⁴². In all probability in this case a Celtic name was mentioned in the coin legend⁴³. Patrizia De Bernardo considers that this is the regional formula N() NoI(), or even N() No() L(). It seems unlikely to her that it would be Nno() L(), as the random doublings of the nasals usually appears in the middle of the word and not at the beginning. Göbl's reading of the legend as V·O·K·K can thus be irrefutably rejected, which means that we must also reject his interpretation of the legend.

Conclusion

The above analysis unequivocally connects both coins documented to date with Venetic legends to coins nos. 2, 21–23, and 30 from the Enemonzo hoard. Thus it is possible to conclude that coins with Venetic legends were minted in the period of deposition of the Enemonzo hoard, i. e. in the fifth decade of the 2nd century B.C. The Venetic inscription in the coin legend can be read as .n.no.l. and agrees chronologically with the suggested period of minting.

Thus the chronological placement of the minting of both coins with Venetic legends to the 2nd century B.C. proves through the analysis of the legends that a connection of coins of this type with the Norican king Voccio, mentioned by Caesar in connection with the Suebian ruler Ariovist, to whom he gave his sister in marriage (BG I 53, 4), is quite impossible. The Norican king Voccio hence is not documented on the coins of the Norici⁴⁴.

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³⁹ Lejeune, *Manuel* (s. n. 17) 260; 276 (inscription nos. 207–213). The inscriptions are reproduced in Pellegrini, Prosdocimi, *La lingua venetica* (s. n. 17): inscriptions Ca 18, Ca 68, Ca 65, Ca 15, Ca 19, Ca 11, Ca 64. A. Marinetti, *Il venetico di Lagole*, in: Fogolari, Gambacurta (eds.), *Materiali veneti* (s. n. 17) 62.

⁴⁰ Lejeune, *Manuel* (s. n. 17) 35ff.; A. L. Prosdocimi, *Trasmissioni alfabetiche e insegnamento della scrittura*, in: AKEO (s. n. 38) 36; Marinetti, *Caratteri* (s. n. 38) 45.

⁴¹ Marinetti, *Il venetico* (s. n. 39) 66 („tradizione locale con l, p recenti“).

⁴² Lejeune, *Manuel* (s. n. 17) 41.

⁴³ I gratefully thank Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel (Univ. of Victoria) for help in attempting to interpret the legend. She considers that this was the “final portion of a Celtic name”.

⁴⁴ Overbeck, *Münzwesen* (s. n. 16) 42: „König Voccio ist auf Münzen belegt“.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

Tafel 4



1



2



3



4

Captions to plates:

Tafel 3

1. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Münzkabinett, inv. no. W 26828 (1:1)
2. Landesmuseum für Kärnten, Sammlung Dreer, Klagenfurt, inv. no. 104 (1:1)
3. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cividale, inv. no. 37017 (1:1)
4. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cividale, inv. no. 37019 (1:1)
5. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cividale, inv. no. 37021 (1:1)
6. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cividale, inv. no. 37019 (2,5:1)
7. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Münzkabinett, inv. no. W 26828 (2,5:1)

Tafel 4

1. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Cividale, inv. no. 37019 (2,5:1)
2. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Münzkabinett, inv. no. W 26828 (2,5:1)
- 3., 4. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Münzkabinett, inv. no. W 26828 (enlarged detail)