

The Vinkovci treasure of Late Roman silver plate: preliminary report

Hrvoje Vulić, Damir Doračić, Richard Hobbs and Janet Lang

The hoard of silver plate known as the Vinkovci treasure (or the *Cibalae* treasure, after the Roman name for the town) was discovered on March 23, 2012, during rescue excavations in the town of Vinkovci (*Colonia Aurelia Cibalae*) in the Vukovar-Srijem county of E Croatia (fig. 1). It is one of the most significant late Roman discoveries of the new millennium, and the first major 4th-c. A.D. assemblage of silver plate to be unearthed for at least half a century (the Seuso treasure was probably found in the late 1970s,¹ and although new pieces of the Kaiseraugst treasure emerged in the 1990s² the original discovery was made in 1961). This interim report on the treasure is based upon the results of research conducted by the authors in the 4 years that have passed since it came to light.³

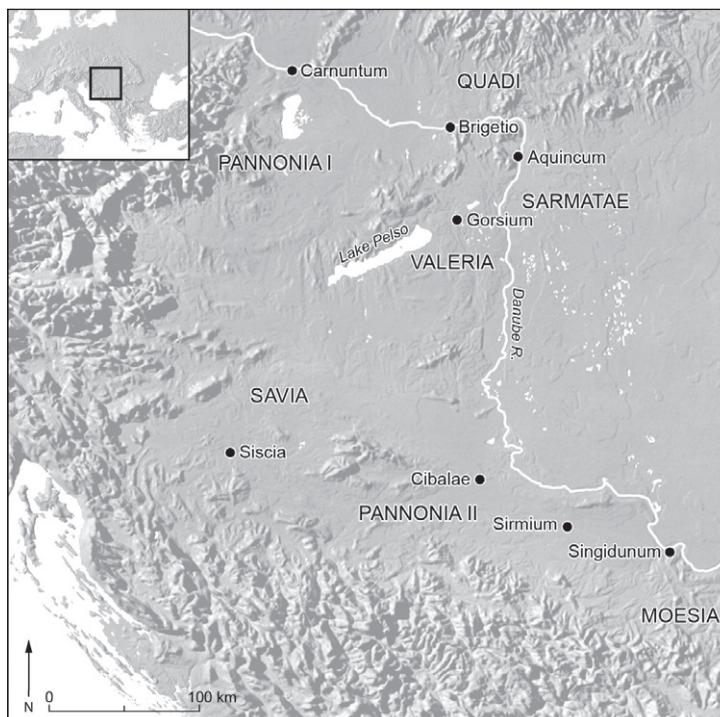


Fig. 1. Map showing the location of Vinkovci (*Cibalae*) in eastern Croatia (del. Craig Williams, British Museum).

Discovery, display and subsequent actions

The treasure was discovered during rescue excavations conducted by a private archaeological contractor (Geoarheo LLC) under the direction of Šime Vrkić. The unit was excavating a site in the centre of modern Vinkovci in advance of the building of a New Yorker clothing store.⁴ The settlement of *Cibalae* was founded in the late 1st c. B.C. after the Roman conquest of *Pannonia*; during the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117-38) the town became a *municipium*, and then under either Septimius Severus or Caracalla a *colonia*. Its most

1 M. M. Mango and A. Bennett, *The Seuso Treasure. Part 1* (JRA Suppl. 12.1; 1994); Z. Visy (ed.), *A Seuso-Kincs és Pannonia* (Pécs 2012).

2 M. A. Guggisberg and A. Kaufmann-Heinimann, *Der spätrömische Silberschatz von Kaiseraugst. Die neuen Funde* (Forschungen in Augst Bd. 34, 2003).

3 An embargo was in place until March 2014 under Croatian laws that give the excavator exclusive right to first publication within two years of discovery. Š. Vrkić, the excavator, published a short report in *Hrvatski Arheološki Godišnjak* 9 (2012) 63-68, and a more comprehensive one with G. Skelac subsequently: "Vinkovačko blago: rezultati preliminarne analize kasnoantičke ostave srebrnih predmeta," *Vjesnik Arheološkog Muzeja u Zagrebu* 49 (2017) 145-218 (Croatian + English).

4 At no. 26 Duga Ulica.