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**ONCE AGAIN ON THE OLDEST EPISCOPAL COIN  
IN CENTRAL EUROPE – WHO WAS THE ISSUER:  
SAINT ADALBERT, THIEDDAG OR RADIM GAUDENTIUS?**

**ABSTRACT:** The subject of the study is an anonymous episcopal coin from the end of the 10th or beginning of the 11th century. It was formerly attributed to the bishop of Prague, Saint Adalbert (983–989, 992–995). The authors, as a result of their analysis of the coin's typology, inscriptions and finds, conclude that the issuer was Adalbert's successor at the episcopal capital in Prague, namely Thieddag (998–1017). The issue began in 998 or 999, during the lifetime of Duke Boleslav II (972–999), whose name appears on the reverse of the coin. Thus, the authors question Luboš Polanský's recent interpretation of the episcopal coin. According to this researcher, the issuer was also Bishop Thieddag, but the coins were not minted until 1003–1004, and a place of their issue was not Prague, but Vyšehrad. The authors show that this concept is based on a misreading of the reverse legend and its subsequent interpretation. The sequence of die varieties and the chronology of the finds was also not taken into account.

**ABSTRAKT:** Przedmiotem badań jest anonimowa moneta biskupia z końca X lub początku XI w. Dawniej była ona przypisywana biskupowi praskiemu św. Wojciechowi (983–989, 992–995). Autorzy, w wyniku analizy typologii monety, inskrypcji i znalezisk, dochodzą do wniosku, że emitentem był następca Wojciecha na stolicy biskupiej w Pradze – Thieddag (998–1017). Do rozpoczęcia emisji doszło już w 998 lub 999 r., jeszcze za życia księcia Bolesława II (972–999), którego imię zostało odczytane na rewersie monety. Tym samym autorzy kwestionują dokonaną niedawno przez Luboša Polanskiego interpretację omawianej monety biskupiej. Zdaniem tego badacza emitentem był również biskup Thieddag, ale do bicia monet miało dojść dopiero w 1003–1004 r., i to nie w Pradze, ale w Wyszehradzie. Autorzy wykazują, że koncepcja ta opiera się na błędnym odczycie legendy rewersowej i późniejszej jej interpretacji. Nie została również uwzględniona sekwencja odmian stemplowych i chronologia znalezisk.

**KEYWORDS:** Bohemia, Saint Adalbert (Saint Wojciech), Bishop Thieddag, Duke Boleslav II, Prague, Vyšehrad, episcopal denier

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Czechy, św. Wojciech, bp Thieddag, ks. Bolesław II, Praga, Wyszehrad, denar biskupi

The oldest episcopal coins in Central Europe, dating back to the end of the 10th century or the very beginning of the 11th century, have been known for over 150 years. However, who the issuing bishop was and where the coins were minted have not yet been determined. In the past, the coins were clearly associated with St. Adalbert, Bishop of Prague (983–989, 992–995),<sup>1</sup> and more recently also with his successor in Prague, Bishop Thieddag (998–1017).<sup>2</sup> Adalbert's half-brother, Radzim Gaudenty, the first Archbishop of Gniezno (1000–ca. 1016), was also considered<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Denier of the Bishop of Prague, Thieddag from ca. 998–999 (from the Lisówiek hoard, formerly in the collection of V. Katz, now lost), diameter ca. 20 mm

Ryc. 1. Denar biskupa praskiego Thieddaga z ok. 998–999 (ze skarbu z Lisówka, dawniej w kolekcji V. Katza, dziś zaginiony), śr. ok. 20 mm

Before attempting to contribute to this discussion, it is necessary to thoroughly familiarise oneself with historical sources from the 11th to 14th centuries, which provide the necessary background for conducting an in-depth analysis of numismatic sources.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike St. Vojtěch-Adalbert, we do not have extensive factual material in written sources that would allow for a more detailed reconstruction of the life and work of Thieddag, the third bishop of Prague. The Germanic name Thieddag was likely not common in Saxon anthroponymy of the 10th and 11th centuries, since we do not know

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<sup>1</sup> From the abundant literature on this subject, see: Skalský 1929, Gumowski 1934, Cach 1939, Hásková 1998, Petrů 1998, Petrů 2014, Suchodolski 2001–2002 [2003], Suchodolski 2002 (2017), and recently Suchodolski 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Petrů 2014, Polanský 2014, and recently Polanský 2024a; Polanský 2024b.

<sup>3</sup> Suchodolski 2018.

<sup>4</sup> See also Pauk 2010.

of any other individuals bearing this name in narrative sources or obituaries. The earliest source referring to Thieddag is the Chronicle of Thietmar, Bishop of Merseburg. He wrote his work from 1012 until his death in Merseburg on 1 December 1018

Thanks to the preservation of the Chronicle in the author's copy and the so-called partial autograph (Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek - Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. R. 147),<sup>5</sup> we have the opportunity to trace how Thieddag's name was written at the time (2 x *Thieddegus*), and also to notice slightly different variants in the Corvey recension of the Chronicle (1 x *Thieddagus*, 1 x *Thietdagus*).<sup>6</sup> According to Thietmar, Thieddag was educated in New Corvey, where he acquired skills in the art of medicine. As a monk, he was summoned to Prague by the ailing Bohemian prince Boleslav II, whom he successfully cured of paralysis.<sup>7</sup> It is believed that during this stay, Thieddag learned the Slavic language.<sup>8</sup> According to the testimony of the Prague canon Cosmas, Thieddag was also a chaplain in the court chapel of Otto III.<sup>9</sup> After the martyrdom of Adalbert at the hands of the Prussians in 997 and the unsuccessful attempt to appoint Strachkvas (*Ztrahquaz*) from the Přemyslid dynasty to the bishopric, Boleslav II turned to Otto III with a request to appoint a worthy candidate. The emperor granted Thieddag the investiture and on 7 July 998 he was consecrated by Willigis, Metropolitan of Mainz.<sup>10</sup>

After the death of Boleslav II in February 999, the bishop, together with his son and successor Boleslav III, carried out the prince's will regarding the foundation of the Ostrov Benedictine monastery, located on an island on the Vltava River (near the mouth of the Sázava River), south of Prague. The first abbot was Lambert from the Bavarian monastery in Niederaltaich, from where the other monks also came. The founding document is essentially unknown, but confirmation of the grants has been preserved in a series of records (*actus bonorum principum [...] in unum collecta*) in a document by the King Ottokar II of Bohemia, allegedly from 1205 (a forgery from the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>11</sup> Then, for unknown reasons, Thieddag fell into a bitter conflict with Boleslav III. During this time, he was expelled from the country several times, but always managed to return with the help of Ekkehard, Margrave of Meissen.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. recently: Giese [2018]; Schuffels (†), Schuffels [2018]; Kocourek [2018].

<sup>6</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, lib. VI, c. 13 (p. 290, v. 4, p. 291, v. 5), lib. VII, c. 56 (p. 468, v. 23, p. 469, v. 23).

<sup>7</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, lib. VII, c. 56, p. 468.

<sup>8</sup> Hilsch 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Cosmas Pragensis, *Chronica Boemorum*, lib. I, c. 31, p. 56; Fleckenstein 1966, pp. 90, 102, 114–115.

<sup>10</sup> Cosmas Pragensis, *Chronica Boemorum*, lib. I, c. 30–31, pp. 54–56.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Regni Bohemiae*, vol. II, pp. 379–383, no. 359; Bistřický 1998, pp. 227–228; Leśniewska 2008, p. 405.

<sup>12</sup> *Regesta Imperii* II,3, no. 1302c; Lübke 1986, pp. 165–167, no. 329.

After Boleslav III's exile (1003), Thieddag seems to have supported his brother Jaromir.<sup>13</sup> At the beginning of September 1004 in Prague, both men solemnly welcomed the German King Henry II, who was intervening against Boleslaw the Brave.<sup>14</sup> On the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (8 September), at the request of Henry II and with the consent of Bishop Thieddag, a service was conducted by Gottschalk, Bishop of Freising, who, after the Gospel reading, urged the king to pardon Margrave Henry of Schweinfurt, who was in prison.<sup>15</sup> In addition, Thietmar noted Thieddag's hospitality and excessive drinking. The chronicler also wrote that, afflicted with paralysis, he was no longer able to celebrate Mass without the assistance of priests.<sup>16</sup>

Thieddag's death was recorded by Thietmar on 10 June.<sup>17</sup> On the same date, he was entered as *Thiedec* in the Merseburg necrology (*Necrologium Merseburgensis cathedralis capituli*).<sup>18</sup> The obituary was probably written in 1016 or 1017 and was later supplemented.<sup>19</sup> However, according to the editor, Gerd Althoff, this entry does not belong to the supplements.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the Annals of Quedlinburg (*Annales Quedlinburgenses*) also reported the death of Thieddag and the succession of Ekkehard, abbot of Nienburg (*Obiit Thaetdeg Pragensis episcopus, cui successit Eghardus Nianburgensis abbas*).<sup>21</sup> A hundred years later, Cosmas recorded Thieddag's death under the date of 11 June 1017, dedicating a warm remembrance to him.<sup>22</sup>

The Annals of Prague (*Annales Pragenses*), covering the years 894–1220, was written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is known from a manuscript – Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Msc.Patr.64. Two entries concern Thieddag:

998. Tyadagus tertius episcopus successit.

1017. Tyadagus episcopus obiit. Cui successit Meschardus<sup>23</sup>.

The Annals of Prague in its older layer, are a compilation of the Cosmas Chronicle and the Annals of Corvey and Hildesheim.<sup>24</sup>

After conducting a search of written sources through the excellent digital repository *Czech Medieval Sources online*,<sup>25</sup> I was able to establish beyond any doubt

<sup>13</sup> Gašiorowski 1977, p. 73.

<sup>14</sup> *Regesta Imperii* II,4, no. 1580a.

<sup>15</sup> *Regesta Imperii* II,4, no. 1580b.

<sup>16</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, lib. VII, c. 56, pp. 468, 470.

<sup>17</sup> Thietmar, *Chronicon*, lib. VII, c. 56, s. 468.

<sup>18</sup> *Totenbücher von Merseburg*, facsimiles (Domstiftsbibliothek Merseburg, Codex 129, fol. 3r).

<sup>19</sup> *Totenbücher von Merseburg*, pp. XXII–XXIV.

<sup>20</sup> Althoff 1984, pp. 304–305, B 56.

<sup>21</sup> *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, p. 551.

<sup>22</sup> Cosmas Pragensis, *Chronica Boemorum*, lib. I, c. 39, p. 72.

<sup>23</sup> *Annales Pragenses*, pp. 119–120.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.geschichtsquellen.de/werk/355> [date of preparation: 07.12.2020].

<sup>25</sup> <https://sources.cms.flu.cas.cz/src/index.php> [accessed 31.08.2025].

that the Germanic name Thieddag, in its Christian form *Deodatus*, *Theodatus*, and later translated as *Bohdal*, first appeared in Bohemian historiography during the reign of Charles IV of Luxembourg. That is, in the chronicles of Jan Neplach, abbot of the Benedictine monastery in Opatovice nad Labem,<sup>26</sup> and Přebík Pulka-va of Radenín (†1380).<sup>27</sup> This significant change of the name of the third bishop of Prague from Germanic to Christian, in Bohemian historiography in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, coincided with the independence of Prague from the ecclesiastical metropolis of Mainz, in connection with the establishment of the archbishopric in 1344. It is also intriguing that in more recent Czech, German, Austrian, Polish and Hungarian historiography the Germanic name of the third bishop of Prague was rendered in various spelling variants (Dydak, Thegdag, Theodag, Thiadag, Thiddag, Thiedag, Thieddag).

Let us now move on to the description of the coins. On their obverse – in a continuous border – is depicted the Right Hand of God emerging from the clouds with straight fingers; on its sides are four letters in pairs below each other: AO – VII. In the circumference, backwards (with minor errors): 'HIC D'CNARIVZ.ЄZT ЄPIZ (Fig. 1).

On the reverse – also within a continuous border, importantly – we see a schematic representation of a chapel of Bavarian-Bohemian type, and within it the letter O and an incomprehensible ligature composed of the letters ΛVN? On both sides of the roof are the letters: V – Λ. However, if the die is in negative, these letters should be read backwards: NVAO and Λ – V.

In the circumference is a distorted inscription, the reading of which is a matter of debate. I present it backwards, as on the obverse, starting at the top, just above the cross crowning the chapel: ЄT FAVI RCLDZAI ZTVOO. This inscription can be emended, trying to interfere as little as possible with its current structure. This is precisely what replacing or adding new letters, or even entire sets of them, does. Instead, I will supplement the letters to the closest possible form. Thus, I complete the letter R to B, the letter C to O, the inverted letter D to Є, and I read the final V as Λ. Thanks to this, I reconstruct the inscription as follows: ЄT FAVI BOLEZAI ZTA OO.

Now, the word FAVI requires explanation. Following Marian Gumowski's lead, I believe that it may be a distorted form of the word *favor* (grace).<sup>28</sup> However, unlike this researcher, I believe that we are dealing with an abbreviation: FAV and an abbreviation mark in the form of a line above the letter V. However, as this figure did not fit within the height of the circumference, the line was moved to the string of letters. This explanation seems artificial, but there are analogous examples. Thus, on Saxon deniers from the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, known as Otto and Adelaide's deniers (OAP – Otto und Adelheid Pfennige), the original legend: +DEI GRATIA REX was first shortened to: +D Ī GR A+REX, and then to: +D Ī

<sup>26</sup> Neplacha, *opata Opatovského, krátká kronika římská a česká*, pp. 464, 467.

<sup>27</sup> *Kronika Pulkavova*, pp. 32, 36, 231, 235.

<sup>28</sup> Gumowski 1934, p. 33; Gumowski 1939, p. 78, no. 178.



Fig. 2. Saxon deniers with the names of Otto III and Adelaide (according to J. Menadier)

Ryc. 2. Saskie denary z imionami Ottona III i Adelajdy (wg J. Menadiera)

GR\A+REX<sup>29</sup> (Fig. 2). In conclusion, we find that the word FAVI should be read as FAV[ore] with the abbreviation mark I. Another solution in a similar situation was used on the almost contemporary coins of Boleslav II of the so-called *Aethelred* type, minted in Prague (Cach 122, 123). Here, the word *civitas* was shortened to CIV with an abbreviation mark above the last letter V. However, as this construction did not fit within the height of the line, it was simply flattened. The effect was quite surprising: CI= (Fig. 3).

What remains to be clarified is the last part of this inscription: STV, already emended above for the form STA. It seems most likely that this is an abbreviation of the word *stabilitus* – STA[bilitus] (legitimised).

The two final signs are the most difficult to explain: OO. In my opinion, they do not belong directly to the inscription. They are perhaps an ornament inserted by the engraver at the end of the inscription when he decided that he could not fit any more text in. Or vice versa, when the engraver ran out of text to fill in the circumferential legend.

The final proposal for the reconstruction of the reverse legend is therefore as follows: ET FAV[ore] BOLEZ[I]AI STA[bilitus] OO. The key element here is the name of Duke Boleslav. Although it has been slightly emended in as many as four places, I believe that its reconstruction here is fully credible. This is supported by the fact that Boleslav II's name appears in exactly the same place and in the same arrangement, (and even with the same errors!), on his deniers (Cach 133, 135, 138, 139, 143, 1020, 1021) (Fig. 4).

29 Menadier 1891 (1975), pp. 152–162, nos 8, 14, 35, 74.



123



122



Fig. 3. Boleslav II's deniers (Cach 123, 122)

Ryc. 3. Denary Bolesława II (Cach 123, 122)



133



135



Fig. 4. Boleslav II's deniers (Cach 133, 135)

Ryc. 4. Denary Bolesława II (Cach 133, 135)

As a result, we read a meaningful inscription on the coin, which has to be read backwards on both sides. It transitions seamlessly from obverse to reverse: 'HIC D'ENARIVZ. EZT EPIZ[copi] ET FAV[ore] BOLEZ[l]AI ZTA[bilitus] OO, which can be translated: This is the bishop's denier legitimised by the grace of [Duke] Boleslav.

In terms of typology, the episcopal denier refers to Bohemian coins of Boleslav II of the younger version of the hand-chapel type from the Prague mint (Cach 133, 135). Coins of this type appeared in Bohemian hoards at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. They were most numerous in a recent, superbly elaborated hoard from Chýšť near Pardubice. It was hidden shortly after 995 and before 1000, that is at the very end of Boleslav II's reign.<sup>30</sup> The coins of both the indicated varieties (Cach 133, 135) contained in this hoard weigh on average 1.27 and 1.13 g, which is significantly less than the episcopal coins – 1.347 g (8 pieces), and in the case of only copies of the older variety – 1.362 g (6 pieces).<sup>31</sup>

The described episcopal coin was at first unique, but further examples have since been discovered, though still few in number. I have managed to register 15 specimens in all public and private collections in Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Russia and Hungary, which were struck from at least five pairs of dies.<sup>32</sup> Luboš Polanský, on the other hand, recently distinguished nine die varieties. All the inscriptions visible there are more or less distorted. The example analysed above is probably the closest to the original.<sup>33</sup> The observation of the multiplicity, diversity and progressive deterioration of the dies is indicative of a longer period of issuance of coins of this type. It could have lasted at least several months or even several years. And, by the way, it is astonishing that neither the bishop himself (whoever he was) nor anyone from his entourage took care of the representative appearance of this coin.

To date, eight hoards containing the episcopal coins studied here have been recorded. As far as is known, they occurred there singly. Only in the Lisówek hoard from Greater Poland were two or perhaps even three specimens found. Five of these finds were recorded in Poland and a sixth in nearby Pomerania. One find occurred in Hungary and also one in the Czech Republic. The latter location, however, is not certain.<sup>34</sup> It is striking that the episcopal coins were not present in any of the large hoards discovered in Bohemia and carefully examined (Fig. 5). This raises doubts as to whether the bishop who issued the coins in question was definitely the Bishop of Prague, and the duke by whose favour this was done was Boleslav II or Boleslav III. The bishop could also have been one of the Polish bish-

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<sup>30</sup> Lukas 2019, pp. 312, 335–336, 343–345, 358.

<sup>31</sup> Lukas 2019, pp. 333, 344; Suchodolski 2018, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> Suchodolski 2018, pp. 14–15.

<sup>33</sup> Polanský 2024b, pp. 43–73.

<sup>34</sup> Suchodolski 2018, p. 9; Polanský 2024b, pp. 35–64.

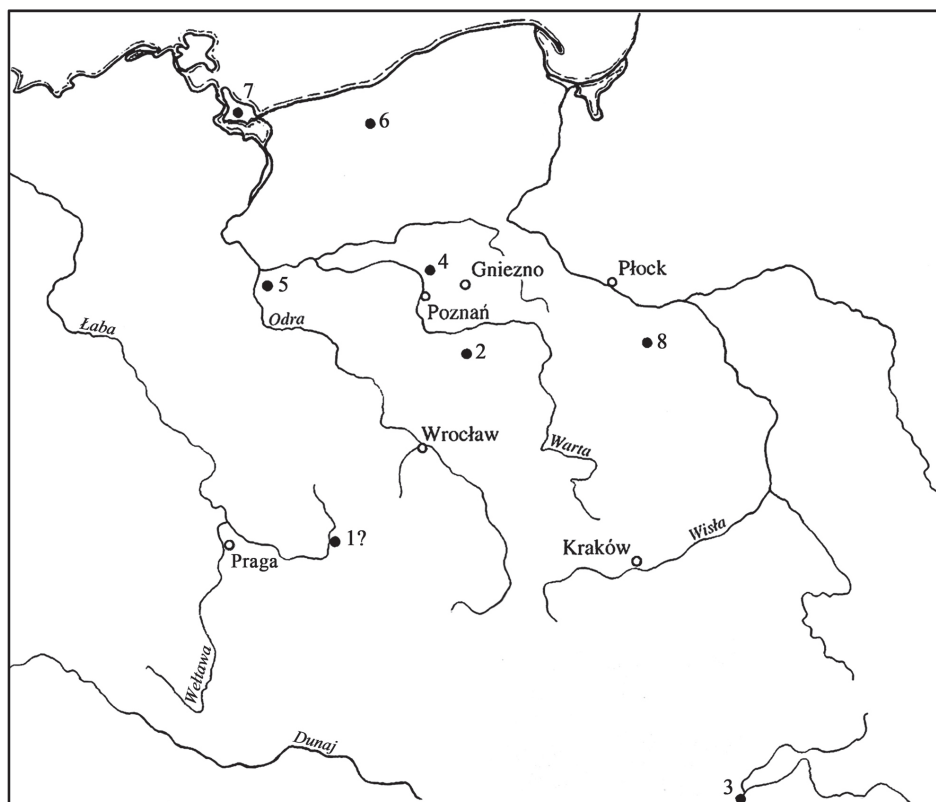


Fig. 5. Map of finds with episcopal deniers: 1. Čistěves?; 2. Jarocin; 3. Nagyarsány; 4. Kąty; 5. Lisówek; 6. Miastko; 7. Quilitz; 8. Zakrzew II

Ryc. 5. Mapa znalezisk zawierających denary biskupie: 1. Čistěves?; 2. Jarocin; 3. Nagyarsány; 4. Kąty; 5. Lisówek; 6. Miastko; 7. Quilitz; 8. Zakrzew II

ops, primarily Adalbert's brother, the Archbishop of Gniezno – Radim Gaudentius, while the duke was Bolesław the Brave.<sup>35</sup> It is paradoxical that the only argument for the presence of our episcopal denier in Bohemia in the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century is a find from Nagyarsány in Hungary (*tpq* 1006), where the examined coin – together with the denier of Boleslav II – could only have penetrated from neighbouring Bohemia.<sup>36</sup> As many as seven episcopal coins currently have no provenance.

<sup>35</sup> L. Polanský (2024a, pp. 204n.) strongly opposes such an attribution, pointing to the purely Bohemian iconography, epigraphy, fabric and, above all, the distribution of finds (Nagyarsány!) and finally, the reading of Thieddag's name. For the sake of clarification, however, it may be recalled here that the oldest Polish coins did not have a uniform iconography, epigraphy or fabrication technique. This depended on occasionally employed craftsmen, often of foreign origin, who sometimes imitated older designs. In the case of Archbishop Gaudentius, this could have been someone from his Bohemian entourage.

<sup>36</sup> Gedai 1971–1972; Gedai 1972–1973.

To resolve the problem of the issuer of the oldest episcopal coins in Central Europe, not only the distribution of finds in which they occurred, but also the chronology of these finds is important. The oldest appears to be the hoard from the village of Kały in Greater Poland (FMP I, 104). Unfortunately, it has not been thoroughly investigated and information about its composition and date of concealment is considerably incomplete. They indicate that the coins were minted in the second half and at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and the latest coin, which determines the *tpq* of the hiding of the hoard, is precisely our episcopal denier! The next two hoards already have more certain dates of deposition. In the case of the hoard from the village of Jarocin, also in Greater Poland (FMP I, 85), this is after 1004. In the case of the Nagyhasány hoard from Hungary, on the other hand, the period after 1006. The following hoards were hidden later, after 1009 (Miastko in Pomerania – FMP II, 139; Zakrzew II – FMP III, 205), after 1014 (Lisówek, Greater Poland – FMP I, 134), after 1016 (Quilitz, Pomerania).

The above indicates that the episcopal denier was in circulation as early as the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, (if we trust the information about the Kały hoard), or at the latest at the very beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century (if the chronology of further early hoards is taken into account). Of these, the above-mentioned hoard from Nagyhasány, hidden after 1006, but containing a coin struck from dies with even more distorted legends, deserves special attention (Fig. 6). There is therefore no doubt that it was minted some time after the coins we analysed at the beginning. We conclude that the old dies had already worn out and, as there was a need to continue issuing episcopal coins, new dies were made. However, by that time, the more experienced engraver was no longer at the mint, and a new one had replaced him. Unfortunately, we do not know whether the interval between the production of the two pairs of dies lasted a few months or a few years. Nevertheless, we can conclude that in the first decade of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, coins struck from imitative dies were already in circulation. Thus, dies serving as models must have been created either literally in the first years of that century or even in the last years of the previous century. Thus, we have obtained confirmation of the information about the relatively early metric of the bishop's denier, which seemed to be already apparent from the analysis of the Kały hoard.

I recently presented this interpretation of the episcopal denier again, concluding with the somewhat hasty conclusion, as is now apparent, that we are probably dealing here with a coin of St Adalbert.<sup>37</sup>

My line of reasoning was recently rejected by Luboš Polanský.<sup>38</sup> The starting point for his concept was a different reading of the circumferential legend on the reverse. Namely, he reads it not backwards, as on the obverse and as I and all previ-

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<sup>37</sup> Suchodolski 2018 and earlier Suchodolski 2002 (=2017 with supplement); in these works there are more details – a list of finds and die varieties.

<sup>38</sup> Polanský 2024a; Polanský 2024b.



Fig. 6. Bishop Thieddag's denier from the later issue, from the Nagyarsány hoard (according to I. Gedai)

Ryc. 6. Denar biskupa Thieddaga z późniejszej emisji ze skarbu w Nagyarsány (wg I. Gedaia)

ous researchers have done, but to the right, i.e. clockwise. The result was an inscription: TCOOVTZIAZDLCRIVAF, which he divided into two parts. He emended the first to the form: TEODATSIVS, seeing here the Latin version of Thieddag's name. The second part of the legend, on the other hand, he read backwards, correcting, rearranging and completing the letters to the form: +VVI[SE]GRAD, that is the name of Vyšehrad. From all this, Polanský concluded that the coin was minted by Bishop Thieddag, Adalbert's successor, but not in Prague, but in Vyšehrad. This was supposed to have been done in 1003–1004, i.e. at the time when Bolesław the Brave occupied most of the country. However, he failed to capture Vyšehrad, where the bishop had taken refuge. In the absence of the young dukes, it was he who "paid the faithful warriors" fighting the occupiers, and he did so precisely with his own episcopal deniers.<sup>39</sup>

The new interpretation is interesting because it offers a new line of reasoning, but it is completely unconvincing. A number of arguments speak against it. The first and most important is the reading of Thieddag's name, the third Bishop of Prague (998–1017). The form *Theodatsius* is unknown in contemporary written sources, appearing only in sources from the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century. It is therefore impossible for it to have occurred on his coin. This is convincingly justified above by the first author of this text.

The second argument against Luboš Polanský's concept, admittedly of much lesser importance, is the different reading direction of the legends on the obverse and reverse. The author cites analogous cases found on Bohemian coins. However, there is no certainty that the dies for these coins were made by the same engraver. A greater number of them worked at the Prague mint. The situation must have been different at the newly established episcopal mint. It would therefore be strange if the same man made both dies in different ways.

<sup>39</sup> Polanský 2024a, pp. 32–34 and *passim*.

The third argument is more significant, as it concerns the chronology of the episcopal coins. The fact that they were minted before the years 1003–1004 is supported by their typology and metrology, but above all by the chronology of the finds. Here it is necessary to recall the Kąty hoard, hidden no later than the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the hoard from Nagyharsány, buried after 1006. As mentioned above, this assemblage contained episcopal coin of the later variety, and therefore minted a few months or perhaps even a few years later than coins of the older variety (Fig. 6). The latter must therefore have been made earlier – probably still at the very end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century or, at the latest, in the first or second year of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

We have also already established the chronology of the patterns for the episcopal coin dies (Cach 133, 135) at the end of Boleslav II's reign (972–999). Adding later types to this set, already attributed to Boleslav III (999–1002, 1003) – Cach 213, 203, 209 – is groundless.<sup>40</sup> The proximity of the episcopal coin to the youngest coins of Boleslav II is particularly evident when one compares the depiction of a slender hand with elongated fingers. Borys Paszkiewicz even put forward a conjecture that these depictions on both dies could have been executed by the same engraver.<sup>41</sup>

And finally, the third element relates to chronology, namely metrology. It has also already been mentioned that episcopal coins were relatively heavy. Eight specimens weighed an average of 1.347 g, and in the case of just the oldest die variety, the weight rose to 1.362 g (6 pieces). Other contemporary Bohemian coins are considerably lighter. This applies both to the slightly older, pattern-serving coins of Boleslav II, as well as to the younger coins of Boleslav III. Jaromír's deniers are heavier again, but this is a completely different period of Bohemian coinage history. It is therefore difficult to imagine that the besieged people would have improved the rate of their coins during the wartime. Usually, under such circumstances, money deteriorates.

Finally, a general doubt. First of all, there is no mention in written sources of the presence and activity of Bishop Thieddag in Vyšehrad during the reign of Boleslav the Brave in Bohemia, i.e. in 1003–1004. Jiří Sláma<sup>42</sup> does mention this, but he refers to the episcopal deniers in question, allegedly bearing his name! So we have a classic *circulus vitiosus* here. However, if the coin is older, as we are trying to prove, and dates back to the very end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, a fundamental question arises: why did the Bishop of Prague mint his coins not in Prague, but in Vyšehrad?

Let us try to summarise the situation. In light of the above arguments, I be-

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<sup>40</sup> Polanský 2024a, pp. 27–30, 204–205 – where the author strongly criticises my point of view. Here he accuses me, quite unjustifiably, of linking the iconography of the episcopal denier with the “beginning of the Ætelred type.”

<sup>41</sup> Paszkiewicz 2021, p. 285.

<sup>42</sup> Sláma 2024, pp. 12n.

lieve that Luboš Polanský's reading of the reverse legend is unreliable. Therefore, it contains neither the name of the bishop nor the name of the mint. So, consequently, I see no better solution than to return to my proposal of reading. Let me remind readers that it does not require the addition or removal of any fragments, but only the completion of one letter and correcting the reading of three others, and this in addition to closely related forms. Admittedly, this reading also does not reveal the name of the issuer or the place of issue. However, it does provide the name of the ruler who made this issue possible. It was Boleslav, most likely Boleslav II, Duke of Bohemia. However, this does not explain who the issuer was. Both St. Adalbert during his second episcopacy in Prague (992–995) and Bishop Thieddag (998–1017) at the beginning of his episcopal service (998–999?) come into consideration. In the case of both clergymen, the duke may have wanted to gain their favour while rewarding their previous services. The time difference between these two proposals is very small, which makes it difficult to choose. If we accept the reliability of the chronology of the Kaṭy hoard, the scales would tip in favour of Adalbert. However, this reliability can be questioned.

Let us therefore consider this issue from the perspective of the chronology of Bohemian coin types at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century. As we know, there have been many proposals for establishing such a chronology. Recently, Luboš Polanský presented a new dating based on the results of new research.<sup>43</sup> It shows that in the years around 988/990–995, i.e. during Adalbert's renewed episcopal rule (992–995), the so-called *Ætelred* type was in use in Bohemia. The episcopal denier, on the other hand, refers to a younger type, known as the *hand/chapel* type (e.g. Cach 132–135, 142–143, 185, 226, 1017, 1021), which has been dated to 995–ca. 999. If we agree with this chronology, we can determine who issued the episcopal denier – it was Bishop Thieddag, who began his reign (998–1017) at the very end of the reign and life of Boleslav II (†999). Marcin R. Pauk also came to the same conclusion as a result of his deliberations.<sup>44</sup>

And *summa summarum*. It seems that, given the current state of knowledge about our numismatic sources and the state of research, a compromise solution can be proposed. The episcopal coins were not minted by either St. Adalbert or Bishop Thieddag in Vyšehrad during the siege by Bolesław the Brave. It was indeed Thieddag who did so, but about five years earlier and not outside his episcopal seat, but in Prague. Let us recall: Thieddag was a Benedictine monk from New Corvey, who was known as a physician. He treated Boleslav II and then became the physician of Emperor Otto III himself. It was he who, in 998, recommended Thieddag to Boleslav II for the vacant seat in the episcopal see in Prague, which had been vacated by Adalbert. The new bishop worked well with the ailing duke for only seven months. Boleslav II died in February 999. His son and successor, Boleslav III

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<sup>43</sup> Polanský 2023, especially pp. 143–144.

<sup>44</sup> Pauk 2010, pp. 560–561.

(999–1002, 1003), had a completely different attitude towards the new bishop – he openly fought against him and expelled him from the country several times.<sup>45</sup> It follows that the main part of the issue of episcopal deniers took place in a short period of time at the turn of 998 and 999. This does not mean, however, that there could not have been some sporadic minting activity in the later period. This may be evidenced by coins struck from dies bearing distorted legends.

It is also worth considering the scale of the minting of these coins. Data on this can only be provided by the number of identified dies. I have already mentioned that I have managed to identify at least five pairs. Luboš Polanský, on the other hand, has identified as many as nine, but these also include repaired dies. Assuming that at that time one pair of dies could be used to mint approximately 5,000 coins, the production volume of the episcopal mint could be estimated at approximately 20,000–30,000 coins. They entered into circulation, but interestingly, evidence of this is visible almost exclusively in the sphere of foreign trade.

Finally, we return to the question raised in the title: could Radim Gaudentius also have been the author of this coin? There are a number of arguments in his favour: the chronology of the coin, the distribution of finds and, finally, the name of the duke. The Boleslav mentioned in the legend could also have been Bolesław the Brave. The Bohemian typology of the coin cannot be used as evidence against its Polish provenance, because at that time foreign designs were commonly copied in Poland, and there were many people familiar with Bohemian coinage in Radim Gaudentius' circle. However, one could also raise a small doubt as to whether the talented engraver, whose works were recognised by Borys Paszkiewicz among the dies of both the Prague and the episcopal mints, also travelled to Gniezno. The presence of an episcopal coin – along with Bohemian coins – in the Nagyharsány hoard seems to be decisive in a negative sense. Polish coins from this period, as is known, appear only exceptionally in finds in southern Poland, while they are absent south of the Carpathians. Without definitively ruling out the Polish origin of the episcopal coin confirmed by Duke Boleslav, we currently consider it less likely than a Bohemian origin. However, this situation may change with later coin finds.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

- Cach – F. Cach, *Nejstarší české mince: I, České denáry do mincovní reformy Břetislava I*, Praha 1970; IV, *Dodatky*, Praha 1982.
- Cosmas Pragensis, *Chronica Boemorum – Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas von Prag*, B. Bretholz (ed.), MGH. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, N.S. 2, Berlin 1923.
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<sup>45</sup> Kronika Thietmara, b. VII,56; Gąsiorowski 1977, p. 73; Sobiesiak 2006, pp. 216–217; Sláma 2024.

*funde aus Grosspolen*, M. Bogucki, P. Ilisch, S. Suchodolski (eds), Frühmittelalterliche Münzfunde aus Polen. Inventar I, Warszawa.

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FMP III. 2015. D. Gorlińska, S. Suchodolski, P. Ilisch, D. Malarczyk, T. Nowakiewicz, cooperation: P. Chabrzyk, K. Mitkova-Szubert, J. Piniński, A. Romanowski, G. Śnieżko, M. Widawski, M. Zawadzki. *Frühmittelalterliche Münzfunde aus Masowien, Podlachien und Mittelpolen*, M. Bogucki, P. Ilisch, S. Suchodolski (eds), Frühmittelalterliche Münzfunde aus Polen. Inventar III, Warszawa.

MGH – Monumenta Germaniae Historica.

N.S. – Nova Series.

Thietmar, *Chronicon – Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung*, R. Holtzmann (ed.), MGH. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, N.S. 9, Berlin 1935.

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# JESZCZE RAZ O NAJSTARSZEJ MONECIE BISKUPIEJ W EUROPIE ŚRODKOWEJ – KTO BYŁ EMITENTEM: ŚW. WOJCIECH, THIEDDAG CZY RADZIM GAUDENTY?

(Streszczenie)

Omawiane tu monety biskupie znane są już od 150 lat. Przez długi czas były one przypisywane biskupowi praskiemu św. Wojciechowi (983–989, 992–995, †997). Od niedawna jednak badacze czescy za emitenta uważają kolejnego biskupa praskiego – Thieddaga (998–1017). Badacze polscy natomiast w rachubę brali również przyrodniego brata Wojciecha – Radzima Gaudentego, który był pierwszym arcybiskupem w Gnieźnie (1000–ok. 1016).

Na stronie głównej opisywanych monet przedstawiona jest, wyłaniająca się z obłoków, Prawica Boża o wyprostowanych palcach. W otoku wstecznie (z drobnymi błędami): *·HIC D·ENARIVZ·CZT CPIZ* (Ryc. 1).

Na stronie odwrotnej widzimy schematycznie przedstawioną kaplicę typu bawarsko-czeskiego. W otoku zniekształcony napis, którego odczyt jest przedmiotem dyskusji. Przedstawiam go wstecznie, tak jak na awersie: *ET FAVI RCLDZAI ZTVOO*. Inskrypcję tę emenduję, stosując uzupełnianie liter do postaci najbardziej zbliżonej. I tak literę R uzupełniam do B, literę C do O, odwróconą literę D do Ć, a końcowe V odczytuję jako Λ. Dzięki temu napis rekonstruuje następująco: *ET FAVI BOLEZAI ZTA OO*. Wyjaśnienia wymaga jeszcze słowo FAVI. Uważam, że jest to skrót słowa *favore*, zapisanego jako FAV ze znakiem abrewiacyjnym I. Znak ten powinien być oczywiście umieszczony nad literą V. Ponieważ jednak nie zmieścił się w wysokości otoku, dołożono go na końcu. Analogiczne przypadki abrewiacji znane są ze współczesnych monet saskich (Ryc. 2), a w pewnej modyfikacji też z monet czeskich Bolesława II (Ryc. 3).

Końcowa propozycja rekonstrukcji legendy otokowej rewersu przedstawia się zatem następująco: *ET FAV[ore] BOLEZ[I]AI STA[bilitus] OO*. Kluczowym elementem jest tu imię księcia Bolesława. Imię to, dokładnie w takim samym miejscu i w takim samym układzie, występuje na denarach Bolesława II (972–999) (Cach 133, 135, 138, 139, 143, 1020, 1021) (Ryc. 4).

W rezultacie odczytujemy na monecie sensowny napis, który z obu stron należy odczytywać wstecz. Przechodzi on płynnie z awersu na rewers: *·HIC D·ENARIVZ·CZT CPIZ[copi] ET FAV[ore] BOLEZ[I]AI ZTA[bilitus] OO*, co można przetłumaczyć: To jest denar biskupa łaską [księcia] Bolesława utwierdzony.

Pod względem typologicznym denar biskupi nawiązuje do monet czeskich Bolesława II młodszej wersji typu ręka – kaplica z mennicy praskiej (Cach 133, 135) (Ryc. 4). Monety tego typu pojawiają się w skarbach czeskich w końcu X w. Najliczniej wystąpiły w nowym, znakomicie opracowanym skarbie z miejscowości Chyšť pod Pardubicami (*tpq* 995).

Omawiane monety biskupie znane są obecnie w liczbie 15 sztuk, wybitych co najmniej pięcioma parami stempli. Okazy te pochodzą z ośmiu skarbów, odkrytych głównie na terenie Polski. Jednego znaleziska dokonano na terenie Węgier i jednego na terenie Czech (informacja niepewna). Najstarsze są skarby z miejscowości: Kąty (*tpq* 992, informacja wątpliwa), Jarocin (*tpq* 1004) i Nagyharsány (*tpq* 1006) (Ryc. 5). Monety są przechowywane w muzeach Polski, Czech, Niemiec, Rosji i Węgier. Dla datowania

denara biskupiego bardzo istotny jest skarb z terenu Węgier. Jak widać, nie jest on najstarszy, ale zawierał monetę o napisach bardziej zepsutych, a więc odmiany późniejszej (Ryc. 6). Odmiana pierwotna musiała zatem powstać wcześniej, jeszcze w końcu X w., albo najpóźniej w pierwszych latach XI w.

Przedstawioną tu interpretację denara biskupiego zanegował ostatnio Luboś Polansky. Punktem wyjścia dla jego koncepcji był odmienny sposób odczytania legendy otokowej na rewersie. Czyta ją mianowicie nie wstecz, jak na awersie i jak to czyniłem ja oraz wszyscy dotychczasowi badacze, ale w prawo, czyli zgodnie z ruchem wskazówek zegara. W rezultacie otrzymał napis: TEOOVTZIAZDLCRIVAF, który podzielił na dwie części. Pierwszą emendował do postaci: TEODATSIVS, widząc tu łacińską wersję imienia Thieddaga. Drugą część legendy natomiast odczytał wstecznie, poprawiając, przedstawiając i uzupełniając litery do postaci: +VVII[SE]GRAD, czyli nazwy Vyšehradu. Z tego wszystkiego Polansky wyciągnął wniosek, że moneta została wybita przez biskupa Thieddaga, następcę Wojciecha, ale nie w Pradze, tylko na Wyszehradzie. Miałoby to nastąpić w latach 1003–1004, czyli w czasie zajęcia większości kraju przez Bolesława Chrobrego. Nie udało mu się jednak zdobyć Vyšehradu, gdzie się schronił biskup. Wobec nieobecności młodych książąt, to właśnie on „opłacał wiernych bojowników” walczących z okupantem, a czynił to właśnie za pomocą własnych, biskupich denarów.

Nowa interpretacja jest zupełnie nieprzekonująca. Przeciw niej przemawia szereg argumentów. Pierwszym i najważniejszym z nich jest odczyt imienia Thieddaga, trzeciego biskupa praskiego (998–1017). Forma *Theodatsius* nie jest znana w źródłach pisanych jemu współczesnych, a pojawia się dopiero w źródłach z połowy XIV w. Nie jest zatem możliwe, aby wystąpiła na jego monecie. Przekonująco uzasadnia to wyżej pierwszy z autorów niniejszego tekstu.

Przeciw koncepcji Luboša Polanskiego przemawiają też: odmienny kierunek odczytu legendy na awersie i na rewersie, a także względy chronologiczne. Już wyżej była mowa o tym, że pierwotna wersja stempli denara biskupiego musiała powstać przed latami 1003–1004. Nie przekonuje też rekonstrukcja nazwy Wyszehrad oraz łączenie biskupa praskiego z tym ośrodkiem. Brak jest informacji źródłowych o tym, że biskup ten miał z nim jakiś bezpośredni związek. Jeśli biskup praski wybijał monety, to niewątpliwie przede wszystkim w swojej stolicy.

W świetle przytoczonych wyżej argumentów odczyt legendy rewersowej dokonany przez Luboša Polanskiego jest niewiarygodny. Nie ma tu więc ani imienia biskupa, ani nazwy mennicy. Nie widzę zatem lepszego wyjścia niż powrót do propozycji mojego odczytu. Przypomnę, że nie wymaga on, aby jakiś fragment dodawać albo odejmować, a jedynie trzeba uzupełnić jedną literę i poprawić odczyt trzech innych, i to w dodatku do form mocno zbliżonych. Co prawda, również i ten odczyt nie zdradza imienia emitenta ani miejsca emisji. Przynosi natomiast imię władcy, dzięki któremu do tej emisji doszło. Był nim Bolesław, najprawdopodobniej książę czeski Bolesław II. Nie wyjaśnia to jednak, kto był emitentem. W rachubę wchodzi bowiem zarówno św. Wojciech w czasie swoich powtórných rządów biskupich w Pradze (992–995), jak też biskup Thieddag (998–1017) na początku sprawowania tej samej funkcji (998–999?). W przypadku obu tych duchownych mogło zależeć księciu na pozyskaniu ich życzliwości przy jednoczesnym wynagrodzeniu dotychczasowych zasług. Sprawę rozstrzyga fakt, że denar biskupi nawiązuje do typu zwanego ręka / kaplica (m.in. Cach 132–135, 142–143, 185, 226, 1017, 1021), który został wydatowany przez L. Polanskiego na lata 995–ok. 999. Jeśli zatem zgodzimy się z tą chronologią, to uzyskamy wiadomość, kto był emitentem denara biskupiego – był nim bp Thieddag, który rozpoczął swoje rządy (998–1017) w samym końcu

panowania i życia Bolesława II (†999). Do takiego samego przekonania doszedł również M.R. Pauk w wyniku swoich rozważań.

Przy obecnym stanie poznania źródeł numizmatycznych i stanie badań można zaproponować rozwiązanie kompromisowe. Monety biskupie nie zostały wybite ani przez św. Wojciecha, ani przez bp Thieddaga na Wyszehradzie w czasie oblężenia przez Bolesława Chrobrego. Dokonał tego rzeczywiście Thieddag, ale około pięć lat wcześniej i nie poza swoją siedzibą biskupią, lecz w Pradze. Przypomnijmy: Thieddag był benedyktyńskim zakonnikiem z Nowej Korbei, który był znany jako lekarz. Leczył Bolesława II a następnie został lekarzem samego cesarza Ottona III. On to właśnie w 998 r. polecił Thieddaga Bolesławowi II na zwolnione po Wojciechu miejsce na biskupiej stolicy w Pradze. Nowy biskup dobrze tu współdziałał z chorym księciem jedynie przez siedem miesięcy. Bolesław II zmarł bowiem już w lutym 999 r. Natomiast jego syn i następca – Bolesław III (999–1002, 1003) reprezentował wręcz odmienny stosunek do nowego biskupa – jawnie go zwalczał i kilkakrotnie wypędzał z kraju. Wynika z tego, że główna część emisji denara biskupiego nastąpiła w krótkim czasie na przełomie lat 998 i 999. Nie znaczy to jednak, że również w okresie późniejszym nie mogło dochodzić do jakiejś sporadycznej działalności menniczej. Jej śladem mogą być właśnie monety wybite stemplami ze zniekształconymi legendami.

Na koniec jeszcze sprawa ewentualnego autorstwa tej monety Radzima Gaudentego. Za jego osobą przemawia istotnie szereg argumentów: chronologia monety, rozrzut znalezisk i wreszcie imię księcia. Wymienionym w legendzie Bolesławem mógł być bowiem również Bolesław Chrobry (992–1025). Przeciw polskiej proveniencji tej monety nie może świadczyć jej czeska typologia, ponieważ w tym czasie w Polsce powszechnie kopiowano wzory obce, a w otoczeniu Radzima Gaudentego nie brakło ludzi obeznanych z czeskim mennictwem. Rozstrzygająca w sensie negatywnym wydaje się natomiast być obecność monety biskupiej – wraz z monetami czeskimi – w skarbie z Nagyarsány. Polskie monety tej doby, jak wiadomo, tylko wyjątkowo pojawiają się w znaleziskach w Polsce południowej, brak ich natomiast na południe od Karpat. Nie wyłączając w sposób definitywny polskiego pochodzenia monety biskupiej utwierdzonej przez księcia Bolesława, uważamy je obecnie za mniej prawdopodobne od pochodzenia czeskiego. Ale sytuację tę mogą odmienić późniejsze znaleziska monet.

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<sup>46</sup> The first author examined the problem in the light of written sources, while the second in the light of numismatic sources, and he is also responsible for the results of this research. This is a supplemented version of the text: *Boleslav nebo Thiddag? Ještě jednou k nejstaršímu biskupskému denáru ve střední Evropě*, Numismatický Časopis, 3–4, 2025, pp. 7–12.