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COIN FINDS FROM THE MID-14TH CENTURY IN AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT: THE PROBLEM OF TRADE ROUTES IN UKRAINE

Abstract. *The article examines numismatic data on trade routes in Ukraine in the mid-14th century. The aim of the study is to reconstruct trade routes in Ukraine in the mid-14th century based on an analysis of numismatic materials, in particular finds of Prague groschen and Golden Horde coins. The methodological basis is based on archaeological source studies, stratigraphic and typological analysis of coin complexes, as well as comparative comparison with written and cartographic sources. The work uses methods of spatial analysis of coin distribution, chronological synchronization of archaeological sites, and interpretation of coins as indicators of economic and trade contacts. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the first attempt to systematically link numismatic finds from the mid-14th century with specific trade routes, in particular with the “Lviv Road” to the Black Sea, as well as in identifying the role of the Golden Horde centers of Pobuzhzhya and Podnistria as key hubs of regional trade. Particular attention is paid to the Torhovytisia treasure, finds at the Balykley, Zelena Lipa, and other sites, which made it possible to clarify the chronological framework of trade communications and their dependence on the political situation in the region. The conclusions state that numismatic materials from the mid-14th century are a reliable source for reconstructing trade routes, as they record the real economic ties between Galicia, Podillya, the Golden Horde centers, and the Black Sea region. The spread of Prague groschen in salt-producing areas and Golden Horde cities indicates the existence of active trade routes associated with the transportation of salt, silver, and other strategic goods. It has been found that in conditions of political instability, plague epidemics, and military conflicts, it was the regional routes through the Southern Bug and Dniester rivers that became particularly important. Control over these routes ensured access to resources and shaped the strategic priorities of both local princes and the Golden Horde. The study confirms the important role of numismatics in the archaeological reconstruction of medieval trade networks.*

Key words: *numismatics, trade routes, 14th century, Ukraine, Prague coins, Golden Horde, Torgovitsa.*

МОНЕТИ ЯК ДЖЕРЕЛО ВИВЧЕННЯ ТОРГОВЕЛЬНИХ МАРШРУТІВ НА ТЕРИТОРІЇ УКРАЇНИ (СЕРЕДИНА XIV СТ.)

***Анотація.** У статті розглянуто дані нумізматики про торговельні шляхи на теренах України в середині XIV ст. **Мета дослідження** – реконструювати торговельні шляхи на території України в середині XIV ст. на основі аналізу нумізматичних матеріалів, зокрема знахідок празьких грошів та золотоординських монет. **Методологічна основа** ґрунтується на археологічному джерелознавстві, стратиграфічному та типологічному аналізі монетних комплексів, а також компаративному порівнянні з писемними й картографічними джерелами. У роботі застосовано методи просторового аналізу розповсюдження монет, хронологічної синхронізації археологічних пам'яток та інтерпретації монет як індикаторів економічних і торговельних контактів. **Наукова новизна** дослідження полягає у вперше здійсненій спробі системно пов'язати нумізматичні знахідки середини XIV ст. з конкретними торговельними маршрутами, зокрема зі «Львівською дорогою» до Чорномор'я, а також у виявленні ролі золотоординських центрів Побужжя та Подністер'я як ключових вузлів регіональної торгівлі. Особливу увагу приділено Торговицькому скарбу, знахідкам на городищах Баліклей, Зелена Липа та інших пам'ятках, що дало змогу уточнити хронологічні межі функціонування торговельних комунікацій та їх залежність від політичної ситуації в регіоні. У **висновках** зазначається, що нумізматичні матеріали середини XIV ст. є надійним джерелом для реконструкції торговельних шляхів, оскільки вони фіксують реальні економічні зв'язки між Галичиною, Поділлям, золотоординськими центрами та Чорномор'ям. Поширення празьких грошів у солевидобувних районах та золотоординських містах свідчить про існування активних торговельних маршрутів, пов'язаних із транспортуванням солі, срібла та інших стратегічних товарів. Виявлено, що в умовах політичної нестабільності, епідемії чуми та воєнних конфліктів саме регіональні шляхи через Південний Буг і Дністер набули особливої значущості. Контроль над цими маршрутами забезпечував доступ до ресурсів і формував стратегічні пріоритети як місцевих князів, так і Золотої Орди. Дослідження підтверджує важливу роль нумізматики в археологічній реконструкції середньовічних торговельних мереж.*

***Ключові слова:** нумізматика, торговельні шляхи, XIV століття, Україна, празькі гроші, Золота Орда, Торговиця.*

Many works are devoted to medieval trade routes. They are associated with the emergence and development of cities, cultural, political and economic ties between nations. The 14th century was marked by the struggle for trade routes and the right to control them, for sources of monetary income. After all, the rapid development of feudalism and constant military conflicts required significant funds.

Problem Statement one such route is considered to be the main road connecting Lviv with the cities of the Black Sea coast. The route of this important highway is usually traced mainly from written and cartographic sources of the 15th–17th centuries. Various reconstructions of the main sections of this road have been proposed, due to frequent changes in the military-political and economic situation in the region during the 14th–17th centuries. [1, p. 160–166; 2, p. 32–33; 3, p. 67; 4, p. 58–59, 607–608].

There are assumptions about the existence of a route between Lviv and the cities of Crimea as early as the 13th century. The 'Lviv Road' – the route of Genoese merchants from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea (towards Flanders to Bruges via Lviv) – is mentioned in the Genoese portolan of 1339. In 1343, an embassy from the Venetian Senate travelled through Lviv to Tana to meet with Khan Janibek.

The main points of reference along the route and its direction across the vast territory during the first half of the 14th century remain unclear. The direction is mostly reconstructed based on documents from the early 15th century: through Kamianets-Podilskyi, then through Podillia and the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region to Crimea and Kafa. The route to the Tatar lands is repeatedly mentioned in documents from the 70s and 80s of the 14th century [4, p. 57–58]. Modern researchers rightly

draw attention to the existence of several such routes through the territory of Podillia [5, p. 238–239]. Many communications there are also recorded in later sources [6].

The purpose of the article numismatic finds can be of considerable assistance in reconstructing ancient routes. These include, first and foremost, a series of Prague groschen from the first half to the middle of the 14th century: Wenceslaus II (1300–1305), John I of Luxembourg (1310–1346) and the first issues of Charles I (1346–1378). Prague groschen, coins of a new design and type, appeared in Bohemia in 1300 and spread throughout many European countries during the 14th century. Such coins – recognised as the ‘currency of Central Europe’ [7, p. 129] – are perhaps the only group of European coins found on the territory of Galicia-Volhynia, where they have been discovered in dwellings, cultural layers and treasures. They also outline the routes of European silver distribution to the east and south-east, where Czech coins became widespread as early as the 15th century. Such finds are recorded in the area of the largest fortress cities of the Galician and Volhynian lands.

Presentation of the main research material there are reports of finds of individual clipped Prague groschen coins from the first half of the 14th century in Podillia, which also indicates a connection with Galicia and Lviv, where finds of clipped Prague groschen coins from the first half of the 14th century are concentrated. [8; 9, p. 619; 10, p. 131]. Silver rings, clipped Prague coins of John I of Luxembourg (2 copies) and a Golden Horde pul with the double-headed eagle of Uzbek (1312–1342) were found in a field near the 14th-century settlement near the village of Polnyi Makariv in the Dunayevetsky district. The discovery of signet rings with images of birds characteristic of the Galician-Volhynian state also indicates a certain connection and chronological correspondence with the monuments of the Galician-Volhynian Rus [11, p. 106]. A copper Golden Horde coin with a double-headed eagle indicates military presence, administrative subordination or connection with the cities of the Golden Horde. Such coins are well known from the cities and settlements of the Golden Horde in the Dniester, Bug, Crimea, Azov and Volga regions. A clipped Prague groschen of Wenceslaus II was found in the vicinity of Bar in the Vinnytsia region [12, p. 81].

The coin finds from the village of Torgovitsa in the Novoarkhangel'sk district of the Kirovograd region deserve special attention. The Torgovitsa treasure of 1894, found on the banks of the Sinyukha River, consisted of 173 coins: Juchid dirhams from Tokta (1290–1312) to Navruz (1360) and six Prague groschen of Wenceslaus II (1300–1305), John I of Luxembourg (1310–1346) and Charles I (1346–1378) [13, p. 200]. The absence of references to the coins of Kildibek (1361–1362) and Abdullah (1361–1369) allows us to date the treasure quite accurately to the late 1350s–1360s. This may also indicate that it contains only the first issues of Charles I's Prague groschen. This is the first and only evidence of the presence of Prague groschen in Central Ukraine in the middle and early second half of the 14th century.

Systematic research in Torgovitsa over the last few decades allows us to identify the site with a significant Golden Horde centre [14; 15]. Although only some of the numismatic finds have been introduced into scientific circulation, they indicate the dating of the site: the end of the first – beginning of the second half of the 14th century. Copper coins – purely urban coins – are represented exclusively by types of Golden Horde pulas with a double-headed eagle and a floral rosette, as well as their imitations. Silver dirhams date from the same period [14, p. 44–45, 60–61, 72, 82].

In addition to Torgovitsa, there are a number of Golden Horde settlements in the Dniester-Dnieper interfluvium. Most of them are concentrated in the Southern Bug basin: the Balykley settlement at the confluence of the Chychiklia and Southern Bug rivers, Ak-Mechet near the village of Prybuzhzhya in the Domanivsky district of the Mykolaiv region, Argamakli-Saray on the right bank of the Hromoklia River (a right tributary of the Inhul), Solone on the river of the same name, a right tributary of the Hniloy Yelanets, near the village of Kuybyshivka in the Yelanets district, Bezimenne settlement near the crossing over the Southern Bug at the confluence of the Kodyma and Sinyukha

rivers, Velyka Mechetnya on the right bank of the Southern Bug near the village of the same name, as well as Mayaky on the left bank of the Dniester estuary [1, p. 162–167; 16, p. 123–125]. Unfortunately, with the exception of Torgovitsa, other Golden Horde cities have not been studied. New numismatic finds confirm the existence of several cities in the Pobuzhzhya region at the end of the first and beginning of the second half of the 14th century.

Numerous Golden Horde coins (several treasures and a significant number of individual finds) recently introduced into scientific circulation from the Balykley settlement near the village of Pokrovka in the Veselynivsky district of the Mykolaiv region confirm the location of a significant Golden Horde centre there, which already existed in the 1450s. [17, p. 13–17]. However, in addition to the copper (city) and silver coins of Uzbek, Janibek and Berdibek, the site also features a large number of coins minted by Kildibek and ‘Mamaev Khan’ Abdullah, which indicates that the city was still active in the 1460s. [17, p. 15–26]. Analysis of the finds makes it possible to approximately synchronise the emergence of this settlement (locally known as Gorodok) at the confluence of the Chichikilia and Southern Bug rivers with the Golden Horde centre near Torgovitsa. The strategic importance of this point, which covered the road to Ochakiv, is also mentioned in later documents, the *yarlyks* of Tokhtamysh and the Crimean khans [1, p. 165–166].

A coin complex from the Zelenaya Lipa settlement in the Khotyn district of the Chernivtsi region attracts attention. Eleven coins were found at the site, originating from the following objects and cultural layers: Czech Republic – clipped Prague coins of Jan I of Luxembourg and Charles I, imitations of Golden Horde dirhams and pulas (two copies of each); Hungary – denarius of Louis I (1342–1382); Northern Italy, Aquileia – denarius of Bertrand (1334–1350) [18, pp. 78–100; 19, p. 369]. One of the two silver Horde coins – a tiny imitation of the Gulistan dirhams of Janibek from 752 AH (1351/1352) or 753 AH (1352/1353) – is a fairly common type of imitation in many regions of Eastern Europe. Such coins are associated with the beginning of coinage in the feudal centres of Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Golden Horde, in particular in the Kyiv Principality. The tiny size and weight of the coins (variants of about 0.02 g are found) may indicate an acute shortage of silver.

The Zelenaya Lipa settlement, identified as the remains of a Hungarian fortress, dates back to the 60s–70s of the 14th century [19, p. 369]. The fortress could indeed have existed until the early 1880s. However, its construction probably dates back to the mid-14th century, as indicated by coin finds. Copper (city) Golden Horde coins with a double-headed eagle and a floral rosette from the 40s–50s of the 14th century are widely represented in the Golden Horde centres of Pobuzhzhya and Podnistria (Saryi Orkhei, Kosteshchi, Torgovitsa, Balikleii). Isolated finds are also known in the cities of Galicia and Podillia, which can be explained by the presence of merchants who had direct ties with the Golden Horde centres. Imitations of such coins date back to the 50s and 60s of the 14th century. It is assumed that they were manufactured in many cities of the Golden Horde, including the north-western regions bordering Crimea.

Finds of Prague groschen from the first half to the middle of the 14th century are widespread in the cities of Galicia, Volhynia and Podolia. However, they are also found in the cities of the Golden Horde (Saryi Orkhei, Kosteshta, Torgovitsa) and on the roads leading to them, which may indicate the existence of conditions and needs for the inflow of European silver, primarily from the cities of Galicia and Lviv. This can be explained by the direct links between the cities of Galicia, Podolia and Bukovina and the western Golden Horde centres in the basins of the Southern Bug and Dniester rivers.

The 1440s and 1450s saw significant changes in the western regions of Eastern Europe. After the death of the last Galician-Volhynian prince, Boleslav II Yuri, in 1340, a fierce struggle broke out between the Polish and Hungarian kings, various branches of the Lithuanian Gediminids, the Golden Horde khans, and the Moldavian voivodes over the division of the Galician-Volhynian inheritance.

The question of when the Koriatovychi established themselves in Podillia is debatable: in the 1440s or 1450s [5, p. 108–110]. However, sources indicate that around the middle of the 14th century, a number of Gediminids established themselves in the southern and western outskirts of Galicia-Volhynia, among whom the sons of Mykhailo-Koriat and their wives constituted the strongest and most consolidated group. These still small principalities, located somewhere between the Dniester and Southern Bug rivers and surrounded by powerful and aggressive neighbours, had to take care of their own defence and fortifications, as well as securing the necessary material resources. It is known that in Podillia, the Lithuanians used the fortifications of ancient Russian structures, and many monuments contain materials from the late 13th to the first half of the 14th century [5, p. 70–93; 20, p. 81–85]. The salt-producing regions, which traditionally supplied a significant part of Right-Bank Ukraine with this vital product and which, as a result of the campaigns of the Polish and Hungarian kings, came under their control, certainly played an important role in the struggle for Galicia. Later sources indicate that the Chumak routes to Kolomyia salt and the salt marshes of the Lower Bug estuaries ran through Podillia [21, p. 330; 22, p. 55].

On medieval sea charts, the toponym SALINE (salt, salt production) ranks first among names related to economic activity in terms of frequency of mention. Caravanning is considered the most important factor in the development of Ukraine's transport system and commodity production from the 12th to 13th centuries [23, p. 100; 24]. There are several major routes in Ukraine whose names are associated with the transportation of salt [21, p. 330]. Salt was such an important commodity that the vast majority of communications at that time were related to its delivery.

Feeding people and livestock, producing leather, leather clothing and footwear requires a significant amount of salt. It is an important element in the production of porcelain, earthenware and stoneware. Therefore, the emergence and development of many cities is associated with salt deposits, extraction and transportation. The name of the capital of the Galicia-Volhynia state, Halych, is associated with salt deposits [23, p. 100; 25, p. 44–51]. It is noteworthy that a significant concentration of the oldest Prague groschen coins has been found in salt-producing areas (Kalush, Halych, near Kolomyia, Peremyshl). A significant number of new random (unverified) widely dated finds of Prague groschen coins also come from these areas [26, p. 251–256; 27].

The export of Polish salt was one of the main factors in Krakow's economic rise in the 14th century [28, p. 128–130]. Trade in salt played an important role in the development of Kaczybiej in the 15th–16th centuries.

Salt is also associated with the production of silver, a strategic metal in the Middle Ages. It is an essential element in the chlorination process, one of the most common methods of extracting silver from ore.

It is believed that the development of the salt industry was the stimulus and catalyst for the spread of Prague groschen in neighbouring Poland [29, p. 291–292].

The route along the Southern Bug was known to the population of the Right Bank forest-steppe even before the beginning of Greek colonisation and is considered one of the most important in Eastern Europe. During the Golden Horde period, its strongholds were the aforementioned cities along the Southern Bug and the most important fords near them [17, p. 163]. The word 'chumak' is associated with the Tatar word 'ferryman' [24]. Nine ferries are known in the lower part of the Southern Bug alone, and a significant number of them are also mentioned on its tributaries [30, p. 37]. In the 15th century, the first Lithuanian customs centres were established in the area of these crossings. Undoubtedly, the existence of significant Golden Horde centres in the area of the crossings on the Southern Bug and its tributaries must have brought considerable profits to the Horde rulers in the 14th century. For example, in the 16th century, taxes on crossings over the Tisza River provided perhaps the largest revenue to the Turkish treasury in the captured part of Hungary.

There are reports of salt deposits and extraction in the upper reaches of the Sinyukha River near Torgovitsa until the 19th century. Somewhere nearby lay the 'Sacred Roads' of Scythia, which modern researchers identify with the salt marshes in the upper reaches of the Sinyukha and Visi. It was probably through the centres of Pobuzhzhya that the road to the 'Tatar lands' passed. The military campaign of Olgerd and Koriatovich in 1362 was directed at the vital areas and cities of Pobuzhzhya.

This does not contradict the movement of trade caravans and individual merchants from Lviv or other cities of Western Ukraine to Crimea and Caffa as early as the first half of the 14th century. We have unverified evidence of the discovery of cut Prague groschen coins of John I of Luxembourg in Caffa. Among the inhabitants of Tana in 1359–1360, a Czech and four Germans are mentioned. Four silver Venetian coins come from near Kamianets-Podilskyi (the village of Dolzhok) – two from Doge Ranieri Zeno (1252–1268) and two from Francesco Dondolo (1328–1339) [31, p. 24, No. 9], which may indicate the route of Italian silver from Crimean cities to Kamianets.

From the second half of the 14th century, a significant number of sources have been preserved about the stay of Lviv merchants in Kafa and Kafa merchants in Lviv. But in the middle of the 14th century, the Golden Horde cities of Pobuzhzhya, Podnistria, and Podniprovia were probably the most accessible for the inhabitants of Podillia and Galicia.

As a result of the war between the Italians and Janibek in the 1340s, trading conditions for all European nations deteriorated significantly. The importance of regional routes probably increased after the terrible plague epidemic, which spread along trade routes from China (around 1333) through India and Central Asia to the country of Uzbek. In 1346–1347, it struck Crimea. Eastern Europe suffered most from the plague due to a reverse wave from Western Europe to the east in the 1350s. The formation of the Golden Horde cities of the Dniester region is associated with the consequences of the plague.

The importance of local and regional communications in the Bug and Dniester regions probably increased due to the policy of road closure implemented by the Polish king from the 1450s [4, p. 30–35, 40]. One of the latest works correctly emphasises river basins as the main borders of the state formations of that time, but the importance of the Southern Bug is underestimated [32, p. 141]. The Southern Bug basin, as a traditional route from Western Ukraine (Podillia) to the salt marshes of the Black Sea, was probably also a very important border landmark for many peoples of Ukraine. Control over it provided vital salt and silver. However, the final resolution of this issue will undoubtedly be possible through systematic and qualitative study of Ukrainian cities of the 14th century.

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