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The Symbol of the Crescent Moon with a Star on Ancient and Medieval Coins

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Abstract

The individual phases of the moon show us this nocturnal satellite subjected to the laws of a cycle of dying and rising. In ancient times different peoples honoured the moon and the stars and felt connected to them in some way. These two symbols are present in various ways on ancient coins such as Greek, Roman or even Celtic ones. The representation of these symbols on ancient coins is sometimes different and has different meanings. The symbol of the crescent moon with the star was revived again in the Middle Ages and was depicted in different ways on many European coins, especially in the 13th century AD. The depiction of the crescent moon with the star on these coins has a new meaning that relates to Christian symbolism. This article presents the history of this symbol, its meaning in antiquity and in the Middle Ages and its possible connection with astronomical events. In particular we analyzed a Trieste's medieval coin minted in the second half of the 13th century by the bishop of the city of Trieste Arlongus, on which the symbol of the crescent moon with a six-pointed star is clearly visible.

Keywords: about Andrew II, Aphrodite Urania, Aquileia, ancient coins, Albert II, Arlongus, Augustus, Bela IV, Christianity, Crescent moon, Frederick II, Friesach, Gorizia, Hadrian, Illyria, Istria, Jesus, John the Baptist, Juno, Jupiter, Kamnik, Kranj, Lienz, Mars, Mercury, medieval coins, Middle Ages, Minerva, Muggia, roman coins, Old Testament, Origen, Otok – Gutenwerth, Pleiades, Raymond II, Raymond VI, Raymond VII, Rome, Stephen V, symbolism, Thoth, Tarpeia, Trieste, Tyrol, Uranopolis, Ur-Nammu, Venus, Vibia Sabina, Virgin Mary.

Introduction

On the top of the Stele of Ur-Nammu (Mesopotamia, end of III millennium BC) a crescent moon with a star is depicted. Similar representations of the crescent moon with the star were found on more archaeological artefacts in Middle East and Aegean area since the Bronze Age (Bruni 2017, p. 11). In the hymn to the moon-god Nanna written in old Babylonian script she is closely associated with the animal herds and is depicted as the god who insures proliferation of the herds and the abundance of dairy products (Hall 1986, p. 153).

The Greek Selena was the goddess of growth and childbirth (Lurker 1994, p. 116). Her symbol was the moon. The Egyptian moon god Thoth was considered 'lord of Time' and 'she who counts the years' (Lurker 1994, p. 116). In ancient symbolism the moon, together with the sun are the most important of the stars. It is seen mainly as a female figure (Biedermann 1999, p. 277).

The Romans worshiped the moon where it was known as Juno and was the queen of heaven and the wife of Jupiter. As a patroness, she accompanied women from birth to death. Juno had

various nicknames: Iugalis was the patroness of marriage, Lucina the patroness of pregnant women, and Matronalis the patroness of family mothers. With Jupiter and Minerva, it formed the Capitoline Trinity, which protected the Roman state and enshrined its enduring existence (Schmidt 1997, p. 117). In the syncretistic version that unites it to other divinities connected to procreation and fertility, the moon becomes a symbolic expression of femininity itself (Ercolani Cocchi 2003, p. 55).

As well as the sun, the moon was destined from the beginning to serve as a sign and measure of time (Bible, Gen 1:14). The Hebrew year was a lunar year; the new moon was a feast day, in which burnt offerings were practiced (Is 1:13; Num. 28, 11-15). About a real lunar symbolism nothing is found in the Bible, Old Testament, but the moon is still used as a term of comparison. In the Bible psalms, because of its light that lasts 'for all ages', it serves as an image of eternity of the messianic kingdom (Lurker 1994, p. 116).

In the theology of early Christianity, sun and moon become 'holders and symbols of a great mystery. In fact, the sun is the image of God, the moon of man' (Theophilus of Antioch). The first who interpreted the moon as an allusion to the church was Origen: 'the church receives its light from Christ' (Lurker 1994, p. 116).

The symbol of the half-moon was therefore already known in ancient times to venerate the Roman goddess Juno Lucina, who was invoked during births, but was also the goddess of chastity. The Virgin Mary, who in the similar manner draws the attention to the dual aspect of chastity and childbirth, is often compared to the moon in the Christian liturgy and often reproduced over the centuries upright on a crescent moon (Heinz-Mohr 1995, p. 210). This representation also refers to the sacred scriptures and precisely to the passage of Bible, New Testament, Revelation 12, 1: 'And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars'. Often in medieval depictions of the crucifixion a half-moon and a sun (or star) appear at the top right and left of the cross. Sometimes these symbols are depicted by human figures. This type of representation refers to the classical custom of placing the sun and the moon over the particularly relevant personalities to honor them or to place them in the high skies among the radios immortal creatures (Heinz-Mohr 1995, p. 210).

The symbol of the Crescent Moon and Star on some ancient coins

On some Greek coins minted in the city of Uranopolis around 300 - 290 BC, on their obverse are depicted the statue of Aphrodite Urania seated left on globe and holding sceptre with the legend ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑ ΔΕΙΟΠΟΛΕΩΣ. On the reverse of this coins a star¹ with eight rays over a crescent is minted (Fig. 1).

Aphrodite was a Greek goddess and was known with two epithets 'Urania' and 'Pandemos'. The first epithet refers to Aphrodite like a more 'spiritual' goodness and patroness of the marriage, promoter of conjugal love, caring for fertility in the house, watching over births, ensuring the fertility of the fields. The second epithet refers to the goddess as a more earthly power, which pushes to dare what one would never have dared. When somebody loves the paramour seems to lose his reason, and lets himself be carried away by passion, so Aphrodite is considered *μανία*, a madness precisely, but of a particular kind, as a great gift from the gods (Guidorizzi 2009, p. 507). On the obverse of the mentioned coin is represented the statue of Afrodite seated on a sphere that

¹ The stele was found in southern Mesopotamia (Iraq) and is now conserved at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

is not the terrestrial globe but the celestial sphere (Bruni 2017, p. 12). Aphrodite is often defined as the queen of heaven, so she is seated on the celestial sphere and holding a sceptre.



Figure 1. Greek (Macedon) AE coin minted in Uranopolis 300-290 BC (AMNG III, 2). On the obverse Aphrodite Urania seated left on a globe, holding a sceptre with the legend ΟΥΡΑΝΙΑΔΩΠΟΛΕΩΣ. On the reverse a star with eight rays over crescent moon is depicted. (Photo: Savoca, Auction 26, 2018, lot 93).

In the pantheon of Middle Eastern divinities (or more generally of the Mediterranean basin) phenomena of analogy are often present (Bruni 2017, p. 13). The female divinity linked to fertility and love is often symbolically represented by the moon. Similar examples are present in the Punic culture, where it is possible to find several Punic's stele (dated between 3rd – 1st century BC) on which the goddess Tanit with a crescent moon and a star are engraved (Fig. 2).



Figure 2: Neo-Punic Stele with dedication to god Baal, from Carthage, (Tunisia), 2nd-1st century BC. (Photo: The British Museum, Department Middle East, BM/Big Number: 125117).

On some Roman republican coins appear a crescent moon with a star over the depicting of the death of the Roman heroine Tarpeia (Fig. 3), who was the daughter of a Roman army commander

based on a hill of the Capitol (located in the present-day central Rome) and at that time besieged by the tribe of the Sabines².



Figure 3. Roman republican silver denarius, coined by L. Titurius Sabinus in 89 BC in Rome (R 1199). On the obverse the bearded head of Tazio turned to the right, under which a palm branch is engraved. To the left of the head the inscription SABIN. On the reverse is depicted the death of Tarpeia, which is buried by shields. Next to her, two Sabine soldiers are about to throw their shields on her too. Above Tarpeia the crescent moon with a six-pointed star is depicted. (Photo: Gorny & Mosch, Auction 241, 2016, lot 2047).

In all probability, the crescent moon with a star was a symbol of Aeternitas or eternity. Tarpeia and the Sabines played a very important role in the formation of the Roman nation. This is said to have originated ideally from the Trojan hero Aeneas, who is said to have fled from destroyed Troy to Rome. The motif of the heroine Tarpeia, which was also depicted during the time of emperor Augustus, is included in the cycle of state heroes such as Aeneas and Romulus. By depicting and worshipping these ancient state heroes, the Romans wanted to prove the predestination of their own nation to become the ruler of the world. The symbol of the moon and star is supposed to be in this case a symbol of eternity (Ercolani Cocchi 2003, p. 54).

We can find some Roman coins on which on the obverse the symbol of crescent moon and a big star are depicted. Probably this symbol means eternity (Fig. 4; Fig. 5).

² Based on the narration of the censor Lucio Pisone, Tarpeia allegedly agreed with the leader of the enemy Sabines to open the door to the fortress in the middle of the night and thus betray his people. As the compensation for a treason, she allegedly demanded for herself what the Sabines wore on their left arms, i.e. military defence shields. Tarpeia wanted to inform her Roman troops about her action, which was supposed to ambush the Sabines, who would find themselves without their shields at some point. But a messenger sent to inform the Roman troops betrayed Tarpeia and informed the Sabines of Tarpeia's intentions. When the Sabines came through the open door and Tarpeia demanded her payment, the Sabines murdered her for treason by covering her with their shields. There is another version of this legend that depicts Tarpeia much more shamefully than the Roman traitor, but it is wrong, as Dionysius of Halicarnassus says that the Romans worshiped Tarpeia and erected a monument to her at the site where she was murdered. She was buried in the holiest place in Rome. Every year, the Romans remembered her and gave her drinking offerings (Ercolani Cocchi 2003, p. 53).



Figure 4. Roman silver denarius minted by Emperor Augustus (27 BC-14 AD) in Rome (RIC I, 300). On the obverse, to the right, a portrait of the emperor and around him, the inscription CAESAR AVGVSTVS. On the reverse the crescent moon is depicted, above which there is a six-pointed star and around the depiction the inscription LIVIVS ... (Photo: Classic Numismatic Group, Auction 103, 2016, lot 804).



Figure 5. Roman silver denarius minted by Emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD) in the mint of Rome (RIC 200). On the obverse there is a portrait of the emperor, crowned with a laurel wreath and facing the path to the right, around there is the inscription HADRIANVS AVGVSTVS. On the reverse a lunar crescent and a big six-pointed star are depicted. Around the depiction there is the inscription COS III. (Photo: Savoca, Auction 14, 2017, lot 490).

The crescent moon with a star is also depicted on a Roman tombstone located on Magdalensberg (Austria) and can also be understood as a symbol of eternity (Fig. 6).

On some Roman republican and imperial coins, a lunar crescent with a larger number of stars also appears (Fig. 7), usually seven stars, suggesting the possibility that such a representation could be a symbol of the universe (Pudill 2007, p. 124). Marshall Faintich suggests the possibility that such depictions were related to certain astronomical signs known and taken into account by the rulers of the time. For the roman emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD) the lunar crescent is said to be located on October 29, 125 A. D. near the constellation of the Pleiades (Faintich 2008, p. 86). Faintich suggested that the two and four-star and crescent types of Hadrian may also be explained by the same planetary conjunction. The moon with Mercury, Venus, Mars and Jupiter formed the tightest grouping of the five planets, with all four coming together within a 5° circle on September 15. Between August 26 and October 28, AD 131, all four of these planets ‘danced’ with each other (Faintich 2008, p. 86).

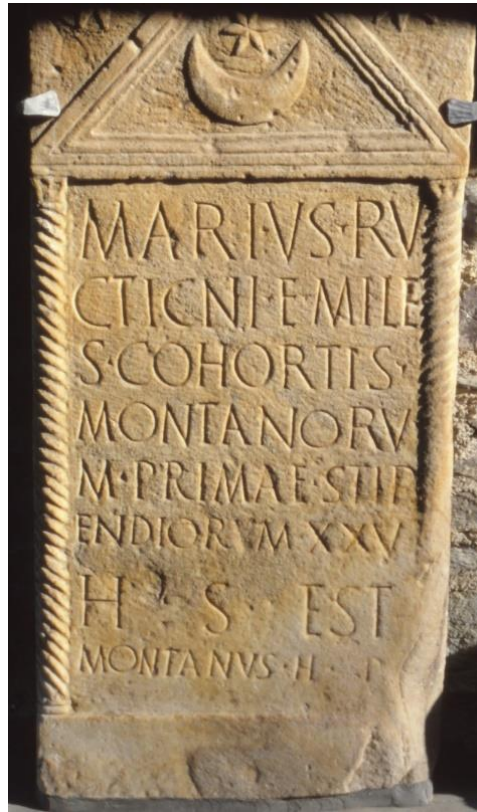


Figure 6. A Roman tombstone located in Archäologische Park Magdalensberg (Austria) on which the symbol of the crescent moon with a star is clearly visible on the top (Photo: A. Štekar).

The seven stars depicted on the Hadrian coin could also have a symbolical meaning. In classical antiquity the seven classical planets mean the seven astronomical objects visible in the sky to the naked eye: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. In the antiquity the number seven means the fullness, the perfection (Lurker 1994, p. 191). The seven candles of the Jewish menorah that burned in the Tabernacle symbolized the Creation (number symbolism – 7 /Britannica).



Figure 7. Roman silver denarius minted by Emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD) in the mint of Rome (RIC 202). On the obverse there is a portrait of the emperor, crowned with a laurel wreath and facing the path to the right, around there is the inscription HADRIANVS AVGVSTVS. On the reverse a lunar crescent with seven stars is depicted. Around the depiction there is the inscription COS III. (Photo: Numismatik Naumann, Auction 47, 2016, lot 559).

The symbol of the Crescent Moon and Star on some medieval coins

In the Middle Ages, the symbol of the lunar crescent with a star reappeared on some coins. One of the first coins that depicted the lunar crescent with a star (Fig. 8) was minted by Raymond II, Count of Tripoli³ (c. 1116-1152). On the obverse of this coin there is a crescent moon and over it a big eight-pointed star. Points are minted between one star ray and the next. Around this figure there is an inscription CIVITAS TRIPOLIS. On the reverse there is a big cross in the middle and an inscription CO.....MUNVS.



Figure 8. Medieval silver denar minted by Count Raimund II (1116-1152) in County of Tripoli (Metcalf 508). On the obverse there is a lunar crescent with an eight-pointed star with small points between star's rays. Around the depiction there is the inscription CIVITAS TRIPOLIS. On the reverse, there is a big cross with two points in the right quarters of the cross and around the inscription COMES RAIMVNDVS (Photo: Auktionshaus Emporium, Auction 80, 2018, lot 274).

At the beginning of 13 century the symbol of lunar crescent appeared on more coins. We can find the crescent moon with star on French coins minted by Raymond VI (1197-1222) or Raymund VII (1222-1249) of Toulouse (Fig. 9). Hungarian King Andrew II (1205-1235) forged an imitation of the Friesach coin commonly known as Luschin 6⁴, which has a representation of a lunar half-moon with a star on the front and a typical motif of the Friesach coins⁵ on the back, namely the facade of the church with two bell towers (Fig. 10).

The symbol of the moon and star also appears on another coin minted by Hungarian king Bela IV (1235-1270) (Fig. 11). Also, the Emperor Frederick II (1194-1250) minted some coins that are known in very few samples that carried on the reverse the symbol of crescent moon and an eight-pointed star (Maucieri 2007, p. 39-41). The symbol of crescent moon and star appears differently on some coins that were minted in Otok – Gutenweth (now Slovenia) (Fig. 12) and Lienz (now Austria) (Fig. 13). This type of coins has on their reverse a representation of a great cross with alternating five-pointed stars and crescent moons in the quarters.

³ County of Tripoli (northern Lebanon) was one of the Crusaders states and was founded in 1102 by Frankish crusaders and fell to muslim sultan Qalawun in 1289.

⁴ Arnold Luschin von Ebengreuth (1841-1932) was a university professor and prominent Austrian numismatic who studied and catalogued medieval Friesach coins.

⁵ The Friesach type coins were firstly minted in Carinthian town of Friesach (now Austria) and then this type was copied in other mints like Sankt Veit, Villach, Griffen, Volkermarkt (Austria), Ljubljana, Kamnik, Slovenj Gradec, Brežice, Ptuj, Rajhenburg, Sv. Križ, Otok, Kostanjevica, Čatež (Slovenija) and Aquileia (Italy) This coin was minted from 12th to 14th century from very fine silver. For this reason, they were accepted in all Central Europe (now Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and north-eastern part of Italy).



Figure 9. Medieval silver denar coined by Raymond VI or VII of Toulouse (1197-1222-1249) (BF 787). On the obverse there is a lunar crescent with an eight-pointed star. Around the depiction there is the inscription DVX.MARCIo.PV. On the reverse, there is a Cross of Toulouse (or Occitan cross) and around the inscription + R: COMS: PALACI (photo: Vico, auction 137, 2014, lot 940).



Figure 10. Hungarian silver denar minted by King Andrew (1205-1235) (F.: H.17.2). On the obverse there is a crescent moon with a six-pointed star and around the depiction the inscription ANDREAS. DI... On the reverse, the facade of the church with two bell towers. Between the bell towers a six-pointed star. (Photo: Pannonia Terra Numizmatika, Auction n. 9, 2006, lot 81).



Figure 11. Hungarian silver denar minted by Hungarian King Bela IV (1235-1270) (F.: H.18.41). On the obverse there is a big griffin to the left. On the reverse, in the middle, the symbol. IIII. between a star above and a crescent below. Around the legend + MONETA.BELE. REGIS. (Photo: Marcinak, Auction 10, 2020, lot 6246).



Figure 12. Silver coin Friesach type minted by Aquileia's patriarch Bertoldus (1218-1251) in the mint Otok - Gutenwert (L 337, P 328, CNA Cj58). On the obverse the figure of the bishop with a ferule in his right hand and the Gospel in his left hand are engraved. On the reverse a great cross with alternating five-pointed stars and crescent moons in the quarters are engraved. Around the cross there is a vague inscription + CASMCVP. (Photo: Baumgartner, 1961, Tafel V).



Figure 13. Silver coin minted by count of Gorizia Albert II (1271-1304) in the Lienz mint (CNA K15). On the obverse the Gorizian coat of arms with inscription + ALBERTV'. COMES.GORICIE. On the reverse, a great cross with alternating six-pointed stars and crescent moons in the quarters: Around the cross the inscription *DE* *LV* *ON* *ZE*. (Photo: Gorny & Mosch, Auction 205, 2012, lot 4170).

The first one (Fig. 12) has been attributed by Baumgartner to the Patriarch of Aquileia Bertoldo, who would have coined it in one of the mints of the Dolenjska region, probably in Otok – Gutenwerth (Baumgartner 1961, p. 45). Recently, Oražem has tried to attribute this coin to the counts of Gorizia, who would have coined it in Kranj between the years 1246 and 1250 (Oražem 1998, 635). The second coin of this group undoubtedly belongs to the count of Gorizia Albert II (1271-1304) (Fig. 13). According to Rizzoli, the symbol of the crescent moon and six-pointed star has to be attributed to those coins that the counts of Gorizia coined for their own southern possessions (Gorizia and Istria). According to the same author, another similar Gorizian coin with a lion depicted on the reverse was coined for their northern possessions (Eastern Tyrol now in Austria) (Rizzoli 2002, p. 200). Lorenzo Passera opposed to this thesis and with a careful analysis demonstrated that the two typologies circulated mixed indistinctively on the entire territory of the counts of Gorizia (Passera 2004, p. 314). Saccocci, who kept in mind that in the '70s of the 13th century the mint of Aquileia made 4 *renovationes monetarum*, concludes that these *renovationes* were probably adopted also by the Gorizian mint masters, who, in order to differentiate the various emissions, used different symbols (Saccocci 1998, p. 56).

Another type of representation of the crescent and star is the figure of a building (church, tower, etc.) or of a cross with the crescent moon and a star on the sides. We can find this type of representation on a Friesach-styled coin coined in the mint of Kamnik (Slovenija) probably by the Czech king Otokar II Přemysl (1230-1278) in the second part of 13 century (Fig. 14). On this coin a central tower is depicted above a small rose. On the left side of the tower, there is a six-pointed star, while on the right there is a crescent moon. Otorepec explains that the symbol of the tower is connected with the local patron Saint Margaret (Marina) of Antioch, who was confined in a tower. Such symbol is represented in more elaborate and unequivocal way on some later seals of the city of Kamnik. The same author states that the half-moon with a star is also depicted on different Croatian and Hungarian heraldic coats of arms (Otorepec 1988, p. 53). On some Slavonic coins that were minted by Hungarian king Bela IV (1235-1270) we can find on the obverse, two facing crowned heads with above a letters S and R. In the middle, is represented a big patriarchal cross with a six-pointed star and a crescent with a small cross (Fig. 15).



Figure 14. Friesach type silver coin minted by Czech king Otokar II Přemysl (1230-1278) in the mint of Kamnik (L 151, P 41, CNA Cb 37). On the obverse there is a central tower above a small rose. On the left side of the tower, there is a six-pointed star, while on the right there is a crescent moon. On the reverse there is a badly minted lion. (Photo: Emporium Hambrug, Auction 73, 2015, lot 1496).



Figure 15. Slavonic silver denar minted by Hungarian king Bela IV (1235-1270) (M 83). On the obverse there is a marten to the left with one six-pointed star above and below. Around the figure the inscription + MONETA REGIS P SLAVONIA. On the reverse there are two facing crowned heads with above a letters S and R. In the middle there is a big patriarchal cross with a six-pointed star and a crescent with a small cross. (Photo: Rauch, Auction 89, 2011, lot 3117).

A very beautiful coin with a representation of crescent moon and a six-pointed star was minted in Trieste (Italy), by the bishop Arlongus (+1281) in the second half of the 13th century (Fig. 16). Several numismatics tried to explain the symbol of the crescent with star on this coin. Kandler believed that the crescent moon with a star referred to the coat of arms of the bishop (Kandler 1863, p. 215). Benedetti also shared the same opinion (Benedetti 1953, p. 30). A similar coat of arms is still visible on the cathedral of Muggia, which was consecrated by the bishop Arlongus (+1281). Borri has demonstrated that this symbol does not refer to Arlongus, but to a Venetian nobleman that between the 14th and 15th century contributed to build the church (Borri 1970, p. 113). Bernardi saw in the crescent moon with a star a reference to the trades that Trieste had with the Middle East (Bernardi 1995, p. 81). Keber underlined that different families from Illyria⁶ included in their coats of arms the symbol of the crescent moon with a star, but it also exposed, that in the morning of May 23rd 1270 in Trieste a partial sun eclipse occurred and that this event has perhaps been later depicted on this coin (Keber 2016).



Figure 16. Silver coin minted by Trieste's bishop Arlongus (+1281) in the mint of Trieste (BTS: AL). On the obverse there is the figure of the bishop with a pastoral in his right hand and the gospel in his left hand. Around the bishop there is the inscription ARLONGVS. EP. On the reverse crescent moon is depicted, above which there is a six-pointed star and around the depiction the inscription + CIVITASTERGESTVM. (Photo: A. Štekar).

The coins of Arlongus show a connection with those issued in the same period by the counts of Gorizia. The most similar coin is absolutely the one with a rose, which was minted by bishop Arlongus and except for the number of petals, is identical to a similar Goriztian coin minted by the count Albert II. Arlongus minted also a coin with a big star. This coin and the one with the crescent moon and a star have some symbols that can be found on the Goriztian coins with the great cross and the alternating crescent moons and stars (Fig. 12). These similarities with the Goriztian coinage should not surprise us, because in the second half the 13th century the power of the counts of Gorizia was growing and so did their influence on the government of the city of Trieste⁷. According to the historian Štih, the bishop Arlongus belonged to the family of the Goriztian ministerials of Rašpor, a small village of Istria's inland, which represented a strategic area along

⁶ Illyria was a region that in classical antiquity refer to the western part of Balkan Peninsula (now Albania and Montenegro). In the 27 BC The Romans formed the Illyricum province (now Dalmatia in Croatia). The name Illyria revived by Napoleon that formed the Illyrian provinces in which were included part of today Austria, Slovenia and Croatia.

⁷ Trieste and Gorizia are approx. 60 km from each other.

the main communication road that connected the Gorizian possessions on the Karstic plateau with the Istrian ones (Štih 1994, p. 97). Therefore, Arlongus acted within the political sphere under the Gorizian influence.

The numismatic Friedensberg devoted an entire chapter to the explanation of the crescent, moon and star depicted on medieval coins. According to him, the star can illustrate the Virgin Mary as 'stella mattutina' or 'stella maris' or the Holy Spirit, who shines above the saints in the image of the star (Friedensburg 1913, p. 31). Friedensburg explains in some detail the meaning of the depiction of the sun and the moon, which in his opinion can represent a pair in which two persons (or two concepts) are symbolically represented together, where the main person emits light and the other receives it. Examples of such couples can be found in Jesus and John the Baptist or Mary and Magdalene, faith and hope, gold and silver (Friedensburg 1913, p. 34). Among other numismatics, Travner and Baumgartner described the symbol of a star reminiscent of the beauty of heaven, of the star of Bethlehem, of Virgin Mary (stella mattutina, stella maris, etc.). In the sacred sense they wrote that, a star means power, dignity, etc. but they did not write anything about the crescent moon (Baumgartner, Travner 1930, p. 7).

Conclusions

In the article, only some of the many coins depicting the crescent moon and the star were considered. Of course, there are still many other coins with this representation.

In ancient times, the symbol of the crescent moon with a star may refer to a female divinity. In some cases, however, it is the symbol of eternity and glory. In some cases when the crescent moon appears on the coin with more stars this could be the symbol of the sky and or the cosmos. It is more difficult to attribute this symbol to the real phenomena to such as eclipses, conjunctions of several planets and similar cosmic phenomena.

In the Middle Ages this symbol reappeared again and many coins depict the crescent and the star which by themselves occupy almost the entire side of the coin. On other medieval coins the lunar crescent with the star is alternated in the four fields created by a cross. Finally, on other medieval coins, the crescent with a star is placed on the sides of a structure, a building or a cross.

Probably on medieval coins the crescent moon with the star was initially coined as a symbol of Virgin Mary, and then over the centuries its meaning changed somewhat. In cases where the crescent moon and the star are depicted on the sides of a structure, a building or a cross, they are to be understood as the symbol of the glory and the fame of that structure, place or cross. The positioning of the crescent moon and star in the four fields delimited by a cross can be understood both as the symbol of glory and fame, but also as the symbol of the cosmos. Finally, this symbol became part of a heraldry and was widespread especially in the regions of ancient Illyria which roughly correspond to today's Dalmatia (Croatia) and Istria (Croatia and Slovenia).

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