Drahý kov z moravského keltského centra Němčice

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Precious metal from the Moravian Celtic centre in Němčice

Some 31 pieces of cut precious metal (back metal) from the Moravian Celtic centre in Němčice have been analyzed. The individual pieces have been made of semi-finished products of different shape, rarely of older ancient coins. With exception for one silver specimen, all other pieces are gold. Ratio of gold in the particular pieces oscillates between 23.03% and 100% of alloy. In the case of lower gold content, basically, it is a gold alloy mixed with silver and copper. Based on analysis of the hack metal pieces, the reason for their existence was to get as closest as possible to the weight of small gold coins produced and used in the Late Iron Age period in the centre of Němčice nad Hanou in the last third of the 3rd century BC. These pieces should probably fill the gap in the series of small gold issues with Athena Alkidemos image, mainly 1/8- and 1/24-staters. It is likely that these hack metal pieces – with different content of gold – have been collected later centrally, melted and alloyed for purpose of striking of gold Celtic coins with their standard content of gold (more than 90%). The number of the smallest pieces and the cut 1/24-staters can support the thesis that high value and bad experience in use of the smallest officially struck and emergency unstruck pieces (with their weight of some 0.2 g, and diameters of 6x3 mm) caused need of new struck coins without the above-mentioned troubles. It is possible to assume that the newly struck coins were represented by small silver coins of the Roseldorf/Němčice type A with their weight between 0.7 g and 0.9 g, with diameter of some 10 mm, some time at the end of the 3rd century BC and at the break of the 3rd and 2nd century BC. The second part of this study describes two massive gold ingots found in an unknown Late Iron Age locality falling to the broader catchment area belonging to the trading and production centre in Němčice nad Hanou (42.55 g and 40.57 g), plus one smaller ingot (8.02 g) reportedly discovered in the Late Iron Age settlement near the Pravčice village (Kroměříž district).

O the Celts; coins; back metal; precious metal; mean of payment of the non-coin type; raw material; ingot.