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Roman Age deposit from Varudi-Vanaküla

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2015, a deposit consisting of jewellery and Roman coins was found in the Lääne-Viru County near the Kunda River (AI 7484). Administratively, the find spot is located in Varudi-Vanaküla village in the former Viru-Nigula Parish. In the same village, a silver hoard came into light during construction work already in 1973. This find consisted of Late Iron Age ornaments and was hidden in an erstwhile building (see Tamla 1991, 154).

Fig. 1. *Rescue excavations of the Varudi-Vanaküla deposit.*
Jn 1. *Varudi-Vanaküla peitleiu päästekaevamised.*
Photo / Foto: Mauri Kiudsoo

Archaeologists from the National Heritage Board and Archaeological Research Collection of Tallinn University examined the find spot of newly discovered deposit and carried out salvage excavations (Fig. 1). The Roman Iron Age find was not in a compact cluster, but was scattered over the field in different soil strata. However, mapping the finds revealed that they remained within a clearly limited area with a diameter of 3 m. Both the historic maps and the information obtained from the pit indicated a former wetland. The absence of finds characteristic to a settlement site in the trench as well as in the surrounding field also suggests that a place further from dwellings had been selected for the deposition of the coins and ornaments. The nearest settlement site is at a distance of about half a kilometre south-south-west, on the other side of the Kunda River. The find from Varudi-Vanaküla fits quite well into the general pattern of Roman coin finds from Estonia. The nature of another find, which was discovered about two kilometres north-west of the Varudi-Vanaküla deposit, needs to be determined by further archaeological fieldwork (Koovit & Kiudsoo 2015, 1, 3).

For a long time the only 'entirely credible' hoard of Roman coins from Estonia was unearthed in Juminda, which could have been hidden on the seashore of the time (see Molvygin 1976, 77–78). In the last years (see Kiudsoo 2013) many single Roman bronze coins, including a hoard, were discovered in Estonia, which mostly were obtained from the western and

northern coast, marking clearly the main connection route with the West-Balt area. The above-mentioned hoard, which consisted of 17 Roman copper sestertii struck by Marcus Aurelius (AD 161–180) and his wife Faustina junior, was found in the village of Kastna in the former Tõstamaa parish. Some coins have been discovered also from the territory of the catchment basin of lakes Peipsi and Pskov. An important long-distance trade route to the River Dniepr at least since the Migration Period ran exactly along Lake Peipsi – Lake Pskov – the Velikaya River. A part of artefacts of Roman origin in Latvia may have also arrived from the eastern part of the Roman Empire via cities of the Black Sea and along the Dniepr – Daugava waterway. A presumable inflow from the east started to become more dominant already during the late 3rd and the 4th centuries of our era. A hoard from Lithuania, which can be dated to the middle of the 3rd century, confirms also far-reaching direct contacts of the Baltic tribes with eastern provinces of Rome (Kiudsoo 2013, 291–292 and references).

Varudi-Vanaküla deposit is special for its integrity – all the ornaments and coins were collected by archaeologists, reached archaeological collections and no objects were lost. After a more thorough examination of the find and attribution of the Roman coins, it became clear to the researchers that this find may be considered iconic, which allows to clarify a number of hypothetical or speculative opinions. This article provides a summary of the treasure itself as well as an overview what kind of opportunities such complete finds offer us.

The fiscal policy of Rome and especially the principles of numismatics need to be clarified, and a short overview of jewellery characteristic to the territory of Estonia is provided to comprehend the broader meaning and possible interpretations of the treasure, and to understand its uniqueness.

ROMAN COINAGE

In the economy of Ancient Rome, five different principles of fiscal policy were used (Hopkins 2002, 225–227):

1. Natural economy
2. Bronze and copper coins
3. Silver coins
4. Gold coins
5. Transactions based on credit.

In Roman coinage, gold and silver coins were in circulation based on their real intrinsic value or a value close to it, and the image on the coin was not important in this respect. For example, the so-called legionary silver denarii minted by Mark Antony were in circulation for over two centuries and only Marcus Aurelius withdrew them from circulation. The less valuable brass and bronze coins were in circulation on command and trust, i.e. their liquidity was directly dependent on the strength and authority of the ruling power. For example, they were nearly worthless during the civil wars of Caesar – Octavian (Augustus) and only Augustus managed to guarantee their place in circulation once again. Their liquidity was essentially lost on the internal market roughly during the Caracalla – Gordian era, i.e. at the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Coins of lower value could also be in circulation for decades or even longer (Hopkins 2002, 225–227). Their circulation was limited to the era of one or two rulers, and they were not in circulation for decades (Van Meter 2000, 3).

We cannot, therefore, say much about the minting of one or another coin other that the coin could not been in use earlier. However, a larger quantity of coins minted at the same time allows us to make conclusions, especially if these have been minted in a specific place.

The nature of the Roman coins of lesser value is important in the context of this discovery. Coins of lesser value, sestertii/dupondii and asses/half and quarter asses (semis and quadrans) – were in circulation in the empire. Although they are often generally referred to as bronze coins, this is not quite accurate. Sestertii and dupondii, as well as provincial coins on the same level, were made of copper and zinc alloy known as brass while coins of lesser value were made either of copper and tin (lead) alloy known as bronze or simply of copper (Craddock 1978, 1–16). The use of brass in one or another product during the era of the Roman Empire is clearly related to Rome. Brass was an important symbol of status for them and brass items (both domestic and cult) were always clearly more important and valuable than 'only' bronze or pure copper items (*ibid.*). Coins were no exception here.

In the case of coins – for technological reasons – brass content of sestertii and dupondii slowly diminishes over time, as during the reuse, i.e. re-melting of brass coins, the zinc component evaporates at a higher rate than tin in re-melting bronze, for example. The Romans sometimes also 'cheated' a bit. In re-melting brass coins, they often added tin (lead) to the metal mass, rather than zinc. Still, the zinc content does not disappear completely, which allows us to identify the connection of one or another item (including coins) to the Roman technology if we know the composition of its metal (Dungworth 1996, 228–234).

In fact, we would not find zinc in bronze items that were made in Scandinavia or other areas of Europe where copper and tin were found. People had experience with metal processing and, in particular, with manufacturing of bronze prior or in time of the existence of the Roman Republic or Empire.

Sestertii were mainly used in the western part of the Roman Empire. In the eastern part of the empire and in the inland regions, additionally or exclusively, a number of unconventional denominations and currencies were used. Often we do not even know their contemporary names. All we know is that sometimes they were more or less similar to sestertii in terms of weight and size and the same metal as for sestertii and dupondii was used to make them – brass. In most cases, the term 'Roman provincial currency' (or coinage) is used to refer to them (Van Meter 2000, 2).

Sometimes sestertii could be used for cross-border trade with tribes in areas outside the Empire, but for provincial currency this chance is negligible. In particular, this refers to trading routes west and north of the Empire. It is quite likely, however, that tribes outside the Roman Empire preferred silver and gold. In case of conscious export of bronze and brass (as metal), it is also assumed that Roman merchants exported metal bars rather than finished products in the form of coins outside the Empire. Metal in the form of coins had a higher self-cost price.

COMPOSITION OF THE HOARD

Roman Iron Age grave goods in Estonia are more numerous and diverse than those from earlier periods, primarily in the categories of ornaments. Most of those are characteristic to the eastern Baltic region, eastern Prussia, or even central and northern Europe in a broader sense; they reached Estonia by sea directly from the south-eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. There is evidence of communication by sea from the mouth of the Vistula River to the coast of north-eastern Estonia (and Finland) because new types of ornaments appeared first in the graves of the north-eastern coastal zone of the country, from where they later spread to inland regions. However, most grave goods found in our *tarand*-graves are locally made or modified. In contrast with the Late Bronze Age, there is little data about the manufacture of

Fig. 2. *Ornaments from the Varudi-Vanaküla deposit.*
Jn 2. *Ehteid Varudi-Vanaküla leiust.*
(AI 7484: 52–62.)
Photo / Foto: Mauri Kiudsoo

Fig. 3. *Closed finger-rings with plano- or hollow-convex cross-sections.*
Jn 3. *Lame- või õõneskumera ristlõikega tüüpi kuuluv kinnine pronkssõrmus.*
(AI 7484: 52.)
Photo / Foto: Mauri Kiudsoo

Fig. 4. *Coins from the Varudi-Vanaküla hoard.*
Jn 4. *Varudi-Vanaküla aarde mündid.*
(AI 7484: 1–51.)
Photo / Foto: Mauri Kiudsoo

bronze in the Roman Iron Age. This is mainly because settlement sites have not been extensively studied. The origin of most imported items suggests that bronze was obtained through exchange with southern tribes during the period under consideration. This period witnessed a considerable increase in the quantities of bronze available and advancements in the technologies used to manufacture bronze items (Lang 2007, 206, 256–257).

The jewellery items (Fig. 2) of Varudi-Vanaküla wealth deposit are reminiscent of products characteristic to the Estonian areas in the 2nd and 3rd century AD: spiral- and closed finger-rings, fragments of bracelets of plano-convex cross-section, etc. (Koovit & Kiudsoo 2015, 3). Such kind of bracelets emerged in the 2nd or 3rd century, and they remained a popular ornament type until the Middle Iron Age. Spiral finger-rings, which were the most common finger ornaments, appeared in *tarand*-graves of northern and central Estonia around the 3rd century. Closed finger-rings with plano- or hollow-convex (*resp.* triangular) cross-sections (Fig. 3) emerged in the eastern Baltic region in the 2nd century and they were definitely also produced in the 3rd century (reaching northwest Estonia at that time) (Lang 2007, 213–214). The dating of the ornaments or, more accurately, the time period when all the ornaments could be in use, coincides with the *tpq* of the coins in the hoard (AD 235; provided that one of the poorly preserved and worn coins in fact can be attributed to Maximinus Thrax), which means its earliest possible date of deposition.

The Varudi-Vanaküla deposit contains 51 coins (Fig. 4). 1/3 of those are identifiable as sestertii, minted between 161 and 198 (212) AD, thus dating from the eras of Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius. 2/3 of the coins are identifiable as provincial currency, the earliest minting of which was at least 198 AD (except for one, which may have Faustina the Younger depicted on it). Thus, these coins were minted from the rule of Caracalla onwards.

More specifically, 14 of the 51 Roman coins found were certainly sestertii, 30 provincial currencies and two of the coins may be dupondii. Four coins, which were too worn to identify, may be either sestertii or provincial currency, and one coin may be either a sestertius or a Lucius Verus' era tetradrachm. 27 coins could be associated with a specific ruler and/or minting place, seven of these were sestertii, two sestertii or provincial currency, one sestertius or tetradrachm and 17 provincial coins. The provincial currency found is especially interesting and even unique at times. It is quite illustrative and intriguing that we can connect nine provincial coins with a specific time and place of minting – Asia Minor i.e. Tarsus in Cilicia and one with Sparta in Greece[1] (Fig. 5), and that similar coins are not found in the treasures of the same period in Scandinavia (Herschend 1991, 33–46; Horsnæs 2006; 2013, 165–177). Firstly, how and why did the local coins used in Asia Minor (and Peloponnese) move across the borders of the Empire and for what purpose did they finally reach the territory of Estonia? Secondly, when may the latest of these coins have reached this area?

Fig. 5. *The rarest coins from the deposit. 1 – Caracalla (197–217) AE33. Struck in Sparta, i.e. Pisidia located in Sagalassos. Obv: AVT K M AVR ANTWNINOC, bust to the right. Rev: LAKEDAIMWN CALAGACCEWN, Lacedaemon with a helmet is standing on the left, looking to the left, holding a spear and being crowned by Tyche, who is standing behind him on the left with a cornucopia in hand. Such a Caracalla's era coin has not been marked in catalogues thus far. 2 – Caracalla (197–217) AE 33, 20.01 g. Struck in Tarsos, Cilicia. Obv: [AUT] KAI M [AU]R SEUHROS ANTWNEINOS SEB / P-P, laureate and cuirassed bust right, seen from behind. Rev: ANTWNIANHS SEUH ADR MHTR TARSOU SEITOS G-B A MK, galley left with sail and mast with triangular top. BMC 199; SNG BN 1507 var. Analogous to: Helios Numismatik Auction 5, 25 June 2010 Lot number: 334. 3 – Caracalla (198–217) AE 35, 21.44 g. Struck in Tarsos, Cilicia. Obv: Crowned bust right, wearing robes of Demiourgos. Rev: Galley under full sail right. SNG Levante 1067 (same dies). VF, dark green patina under a light earthen encrustation. Ex Edward J. Waddell Auction I (9 December 1982), lot 524. CNG Mail bid sale #58, 18 Sept 2001, lot 953.*

Jn 5. *Peitleiu haruldasemad mündid. 1 – Caracalla (197–217) AE33. Vermitud Spartas, st Pisidias Sagalassoses. Av: AVT K M AVR ANTWNINOC, büst vasakule. Rev: LAKEDAIMWN CALAGACCEWN, Lakedaimon kiivriga seisab vasakul, vaatega vasakule ja hoiab käes oda; teda kroonib Tyche, kes seisab tema taga vasakul ning hoiab käes küllusesarve. Sellist Caracalla valitsusaja münti pole kataloogides seni mainitud. 2 – Caracalla (197–217) AE 33, 20.01 g. Vermitud Kiliikias Tarsoses. Av: [AUT] KAI M [AU]R SEUHROS ANTWNEINOS SEB / P-P, loorberipärja ja kürassiga büst vaatega paremale, selja tagant. Rev: ANTWNIANHS SEUH ADR MHTR TARSOU SEITOS G-B A MK, galeer suunaga vasakule purje ja kolmnurkse tipuga mastiga BMC 199; SNG BN 1507 var. Analoog: Helios Numismatik Auction 5, 25. juuni 2010, lott 334. 3 – Caracalla (198–217) AE 35, 21.44 g. Vermitud Kiliikias Tarsoses. Av: kroonitud büst vaatega paremale, kannab demiurgi rüüd. Rev: galeer täispurjes, suunaga paremale SNG Levante 1067 (samad münditemplid). VF, tumeroheline paatina õhukese mullast kooriku all. Ex Edward J. Waddelli oksjon I (9. detsember 1982), lott 524. CNG kirja teel esitatud pakkumistega müük #58, 18. september 2001, lott 953.*

(AI 7484: 39, 29, 22.)

Photo / Foto: Mauri Kiudsoo

[1] The attribution results of three coins are particularly interesting – these are rare coins in the general context of numismatics connected with the Roman Empire.

Table 1. *List of coins.*
Tabel 1. *Müntide loetelu.*
Compiler / Koostaja: Risto P. Koovit

No. / Nr	Denomination and attribution / Nominaal ja omistamine	Cat. no. / Kataloogiviide	Weight / Kaal
1	Sestertius	n/a	21.15 g
2	Roman provincial	n/a	16.80 g
3	Caracalla (AD 198–217), sestertius	n/a	20.89 g
4	Caracalla, provincial	n/a	19.32 g
5	Caracalla, sestertius	n/a	21.75 g
6	Faustina Younger (AD 161–176), sestertius	RIC 1654; Cohen 149; BMC 924	21.65 g
7	Caracalla, Tarsos, provincial	Ziegler 703	13.47 g
8	Roman provincial	n/a	17.60 g
9	Roman provincial	n/a	17.38 g
10	Julia Paula (AD 218–222), Tarsos, provincial	BMC 209; SNG Righetti 1666	15.87 g
11	Crispina (AD 180–182), sestertius	Sear 6009; RIC 672b	20.39 g
12	Sestertius	n/a	20.99 g
13	Sestertius	n/a	24.37 g
14	Elagabalus (AD 218–222)?, provincial	n/a	16.76 g
15	Caracalla, sestertius	n/a	20.48 g
16	Faustina Younger?, provincial	n/a	19.35 g
17	Caracalla, Tarsos?, provincial	n/a	16.14 g
18	Roman provincial	n/a	18.13 g
19	Caracalla, Tarsos, provincial	n/a	17.61 g
20	Provincial	n/a	17.67 g
21	Provincial	n/a	19.81 g
22	Caracalla, Tarsos, provincial	SNG Levante 1067	18.08 g
23	Sestertius	n/a	19.94 g
24	Marcus Aurelius / Lucius Verus (163–165), sestertius	n/a	18.63 g
25	sestertius?	n/a	20.69 g
26	dupondus?	n/a	12.79 g
27	Lucius Verus (161–169)?, tetradrachm (Alexandria)?	n/a	22.82 g
28	Provincial	n/a	19.25 g
29	Caracalla, Tarsos, provincial	BMC 199; SNG BN 1507	19.53 g
30	Lucius Verus or Marcus Aurelius?	n/a	18.17 g
31	Caracalla, provincial	n/a	17.76 g
32	Maximinus (235–238)?, Tarsos, provincial	n/a	13.46 g
33	Caracalla, provincial	n/a	17.47 g
34	Faustina Younger, sestertius (or provincial)?	n/a	18.83 g
35	Caracalla, provincial	n/a	16.74 g
36	Caracalla, Tarsos, provincial	n/a	18.79 g
37	Faustina Younger, sestertius	n/a	22.75 g
38	Caracalla, Tarsos, provincial	n/a	19.32 g
39	Caracalla, provincial	n/a	17.73 g
40	provincial	n/a	19.18 g
41	provincial	n/a	15.18 g
42	Caracalla, Sparta, i.e. Pisidia, provincial	not listed	20.18 g
43	provincial	n/a	15.84 g
44	sestertius (or provincial)?	n/a	17.49 g
45	sestertius	n/a	21.62 g
46	sestertius	n/a	19.94 g
47	provincial	n/a	17.82 g
48	dupondus?	n/a	8.36 g
49	provincial	n/a	17.68 g
50	sestertius (or provincial)?	n/a	21.86 g
51	provincial	n/a	17.36 g

One of the reasons for the movement of less valuable coins of the Marcus Aurelius era can be the wars in the areas populated by Germanic peoples, known as the Marcomanni Wars, which were held with variable intensity between 166 and 180 AD. It is quite likely that the spoils also included brass and bronze coins of lesser value, which did not move across the border *en masse* before that in the context of trade. With a certain time lag, these also reached the territory of Estonia, e.g., from the area populated with the Prussians (see Kiudsoo 2013, 290–292). We currently do not know the reason behind the cross-border movement of coins of lesser value as well as provincial coins of Emperor Caracalla's era and the era following him. Such coins were normally not seen in western provinces or other parts of the Roman hegemony, except in the proximity of their minting place. They are a rare find. While it is also likely that the coins reached the Estonian areas from the Black Sea and the Dniepr waterways, the reason why these coins were brought across the border of the Roman realm is not known.

When were these coins brought to or rather when were they buried in Estonia? Jewellery, which was found in the same find spot, originated exclusively from a time no later than the 2nd and 3rd century AD. Therefore, it is likely that the treasure was hidden no later than at the end of the 3rd century. Why did the coins get here? To answer this, we decided to analyse the local jewellery in the whole treasure as well as the brass coins at the laboratory of the Centre for Materials Research of Tallinn University of Technology (Viljus 2015).

ANALYSIS

While all the 13 coins analysed were made of a copper alloy, the composition of the different items varied. The main additives were zinc (Zn), tin (Sn) and lead (Pb). In the case of six coins, we can use the term brass, as the main additive in their composition was zinc. The composition of the second group of also six coins remained between brass and bronze, as zinc, tin as well as lead had been added to them. One coin was made of pure leaded tin bronze (Viljus 2015).[2]

As we know, sestertii were originally (beginning of the 1st century AD) made of brass (*orichalcum*), which has a zinc content of 20 to 25%. Repeated re-melting caused the zinc content of the coins to decrease over time, because zinc as a metal with a lower melting temperature than copper, tends to partially evaporate during melting. Starting with the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–180 AD) and thereafter such re-melting started to be more deliberate and widespread than during the earlier periods (Dungworth 1996, 228–234; Carter *et al*. 1978, 69–88).

The dating of the coins of the Varudi-Vanaküla to the end of the 2nd century or the beginning of the 3rd century, allows us to see a representative cross-section of the composition of such coins for a longer period. Namely, some coins are made of brass (although with reduced zinc content), others of a mix of brass and bronze.

After analysing the bronze rings found in Varudi-Vanaküla, Aa, Mõigu and comparing the study results of coins, we can claim that the composition of some of the jewellery is very similar to the coin metal of the sestertii of the treasure. In some cases, it is in fact brass, not bronze. The composition of one ring of Varudi-Vanaküla (zinc content nearly 27% and no other additives) shows that the ring was most likely made of a specific early sestertius of good quality brass. The composition of these items (zinc content over 10%, other additives

[2] A more detailed publication of the results is in preparation.

below 2%) probably excludes an origin other than Roman coins because allegedly, production of brass as a valuable metal in Europe was under the control of the Roman Empire (Viljus 2015, 2 and references).

Other bronze rings of the same period that were analysed had quite a high zinc content (2 to 8%) in addition to tin and lead, which positions them somewhere between brass and bronze in terms of their composition, like some of the sestertii. For these as well, the source of zinc is most likely Roman brass (bronze) coins.

All items were heavily corroded. For the analyses, a small spot was cleaned from corrosion and thereafter, the surface of metal was removed revealing the metal content below surface for a few mm². From this cleaned area, several different spectrum samples per item were collected and the obtained results were meaned.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the analysis presented above, we are more confident that Roman bronze (brass) coins reached Estonia as metal supply and their primary task was to offer quality material for local jewellers. Currently it remains unclear whether brass (as a more valuable metal) and simple leaded tin bronze were distinguished here similarly to the areas near the Roman Empire.

The ornaments in the Varudi-Vanaküla hoard disproves an earlier hypothesis (Leimus 1996, 40) that the Balto-German scholars of the 19th century attempted to counterfeit history and prove their theories by Roman 'finds'. For the historians of that time it would have been impossible to obtain rings typical to North Estonian *tarand*-graves from the Mediterranean countries, to bury them somewhere on the premises of their estate together with bronze coins that were rarely found even in Italy.

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VARUDI-VANAKÜLA ROOMA RAUAAEGNE PEITLEID

Risto P. Koovit ja Mauri Kiudsoo

2015. aasta kevadel avastati Lääne-Viru maakonnast Varudi-Vanakülast Rooma rauaaegne peitleid, mis koosnes müntidest ja ehetest. Kuigi aare oli segamini küntud u 3 m² suurusele alale, õnnestus leid arheoloogiliste päästekaevamiste käigus (jn 1) siiski tervikuna kätte saada. Peale põhjalikumat tutvumist leiumaterjaliga ja Rooma müntide atribueerimist sai uurijatele selgeks, et Varudi-Vanaküla peitleiu avastamist võib käsitleda kui üht märgilise tähtsusega sündmust, mis täpsustab nii mitmeidki seni oletusliku iseloomuga või lausa spekulatiivseid väiteid. Käesolev artikkel tutvustab ülevaatlikult nii leidu ennast kui ka seda, milliseid võimalusi selliste tervikleidude ilmnemine meile annab.

Rooma impeeriumis olid käibel peamiselt kahest metallist vähemväärtuslikud mündid – sestertsid/dupondiused ja assid, pool- ning veerandassid (semis ja quadrans). Kuigi sageli on kasutusel üldistav nimetus "pronksmündid", ei ole see päris täpne väide. Sestertse ja dupondiusi, nagu ka nendega samal tasemel provintsiaalmünte, valmistati vase-tsingi sulamist ehk messingist, samas kui neist väiksema väärtusega münte valmistati kas vase-tina (plii) sulamist (pronks) või lihtsalt vasest. Kui sestertsid olid põhiliselt kasutusel impeeriumi lääneosas, siis ida pool võis lisaks kohata tervet plejaadi nn "võõraid" münte, kuid ka rahasid, mille puhul me ei tea teinekord isegi nende omaaegset nimetust. Oma kaalult ja suuruselt olid viimased enam-vähem vastavad sestertsidele ja nende valmistamiseks kasutati sama metalli, mis sestertside ja dupondiuste puhul – messingit. Taolisi münte tuntakse provintsiaalidena.

Varudi-Vanaküla leitud 51 Rooma mündist (jn 4, 5) on 14 münti kindlasti sestertsid, 30 provintsiaalid ja kaks on arvatavasti dupondiused. Nelja täiesti kulunud mündi puhul võib tegemist olla nii sestertside kui ka provintsiaalidega. Ühe mündi puhul tuleb kõne alla nii sesterts kui ka Lucius Veruse aegne tetradrahm. Just leitud provintsiaalid on oma olemuselt kõige põnevamad ning unikaalsemad. Üheksat neist on võimalik siduda Väike-Aasiaga ehk Tarsosega Kiliikias, üht Spartaga Kreekas. Nii nende erandlikud valmistamiskohad kui ka asjaolu, et taolisi verminguid ei esine mujal Põhjamaades, on kõnekas ja intrigeeriv fakt. Ühest küljest võisid

konkreetsed mündid sattuda siia nn Markomanni sõdade tulemusena (166–180 pKr). Sama tõenäoline on ka variant, et mündid jõudsid Eesti aladele hoopis Musta mere ja Dnepri veetee kaudu.

Tänu Varudi-Vanaküla leius sisalduvatele ehetele (jn 2, 3) on meil nüüd võimalik lõplikult kõrvale lükata üks varemalt levinud hüpotees, mille järgi tegelesid 19. sajandi baltisaksa õpetlased ajaloo võltsimisega, proovides Rooma "leidude" läbi anda kinnitust oma teadusteooriatele. Nimelt ei oleks tollastel ajaloolastel olnud parimagi tahtmise juures võimalik hankida Vahemeremaadest Põhja-Eesti tarandkalmetele iseloomulikke sõrmuseid, et need siis koos Itaalias endaski harva leitavate pronksmüntidega kuhugi oma mõisa maadele maha matta. Tallinna Tehnikaülikooli materjaliuuringute keskuse laboris vanemteadur Mart Viljuse poolt mõnedest Varudi-Vanaküla müntidest ja Põhja-Eestist leitud sõrmustest võetud analüüsid osutavad üsnagi üheselt sellele, et Rooma pronksmünte kasutati siinmail ehete valmistamiseks, st need rahad jõudsid Eestisse toormetalli tagavarana.