
ȘTEFAN VASILIȚĂ

COINS ISSUED AT ISTROS, TOMIS AND CALLATIS DISCOVERED IN DOBRUDJA

Rezumat: Sunt prezentate câteva monede pontice emise de orașele Istros, Tomis și Callatis. Din punct de vedere cronologic emisiunile se întind din timpul împăratului Commodus și până în timpul domniei lui Gordian III. Monedele au ca proveniență Dobrogea, fără a putea preciza alte date. Câteva piese prezintă variante de legendă, necunoscute în cataloagele consultate.

Keywords: Istros, Tomis, Callatis, assarion.

A private collection in Bucharest contains 15 coins issued between 180 and 244 at Istros (8 coins), Tomis (6 coins) and Callatis (one coin). These coins have been discovered in Dobrudja in the early 90s and bought from Constanta. Chronologically, the oldest coins date from the reign of Commodus (a single coin issued at Istros and another one issued at Callatis). Apart from these coins, there are other monetary emissions which date from the reign of Crispina (one Tomis coin), Caracalla (2 Istros coins and one Tomis coin), Plautilla (one Tomis coin), Elagabalus (one Istros coin), Severus Alexander (2 Istros coins and one Tomis coin), Iulia Mamaea (one Tomis coin), Gordian III (2 Istros coins and one Tomis coin) and Gordian III-Tranquillina (one Istros coin).

CATALOGUE

Istros

Commodus (180¹-193)

Obv. AY[P M AV]P KOM –ANTΩNINOC. Laureated, draped and cuirassed bust to right.

Rv. ICTPIHNΩ[N] down. Sea eagle left, swooping on dolphin left.

1. AE, ⬆, 7,12 g; 24 mm.

Pick 1898:no. 489.

Caracalla (211²-217)

Obv. A[VT K] M AVP CE[V]- ANTONINΩC. Laureated bust to right.

¹ *Augustus* and co emperor since 177.

² *Augustus* and co emperor since 198.

Rv. IC-TPI-HNΩN. Tyche standing left, holding a rudder and cornucopia. On left side an altar. On the right side, a sea eagle swooping on a dolphin. In exergue, €.
2. AE, ⚡, 14,10 g; 27mm.
Pick 1898:no. 505.

Obv.[AVT K M AVP CEV]–HPO[ANTONINΩC]. Laureated bust to right.
Rv. ICT-PI-HNΩN. In exergue €. God on horseback right. Behind them, torch with eagle. Before them, an altar.
3. AE, ⚡, 14,30 g, 29 mm.
Pick 1898:no. 504 .

Severus Alexander (222-235).

Obv. AVT K M AVP.CE-BAΛE[Z]AN[ΔPO]-C. Laureated, draped and cuirassed bust to right.

Rv. I-CTPI-HNΩN. Demeter standing left, holding cornears and torch. Before her, a flaming altar.

4. AE, ↑, 5,95 g; 20 mm.

Pick 1898:no. –

Ruzicka 1917:no.-

Obv. [AVT K M]AVP CEB-AΛEΞANΔPO. Laureated, draped and cuirassed bust to right.

Rv. ICT-PI-HNΩN. Nemesis (or Athena) standing left, holding wreath in her left hand and a spear in her right hand. At her left foot, a shield. In field to left E.

5. AE, ⚡, 14,38 g; 28 mm.

Pick 1898:no. 518 but ICTPI-HNΩN.

Gordian III (238-244).

Obv. Laureated bust to right. The legend cannot be read.

Rv IC-TP-IH. In exergue [N]ΩN. God on horseback to right, small altar before the horse. On the left side an altar. Between the horse's legs E.

6. AE, ↓, 12,60 g; 29 mm.

Ruzicka 1917:no. 520y.

Obv. AVT K M A[VP]- ΓOPΔ[IA]OC. Laureated, draped and cuirassed bust to right.

Rv. I-CTP-[I]-HNΩN. In left side up Δ. Tyche standing left, holding a ruller and a cornucopia.

7. AE, ↗, 8,43 g; 23x27 mm.

Ruzicka 1917:no. 523b.

Gordian III și Tranquillina

Obv. The bust of the emperor and of the empress face to face. The legend cannot be read.

Rv. IC-[ΤΡΗΗ]. In exergue [ΝΩΝ]. God on horseback to right. Behind him, a torch with a bird. The horse rests its front leg on an altar. In field right [Ε].

8. AE, ↑, 10,34 g; 25 mm.

Pick 1898:no. 524.

Tomis

Crispina (180-183)

Av. CH-BACTH- KPI[ΣΠΕΙΝΑ]. Draped bust to right.

Rv. ΜΗΤΡΟΠΠ-ΟΝΤ-ΟΥΤΟΜΕΩΣ. Cybele with corona muralis enthroned to left, holding a patera over a lion. Her left hand is resting on a tympanon.

9. AE, ↑, 5,62 g, 22 mm.

Regling 1910:no. 2728.

Caracalla (211-218).

Obv. [ΑΥΤ] Κ Μ ΑΥΡ-[ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟ]-[C]. Laureated bust to right.

Rv. [ΜΗΤΡΟΠ]ΠΟΝ- [Τ]ΟΥΤΟ[ΜΕΩ]-[C]. Artemis advancing right. At her feet, on the right side, a dog. In her right hand, a bowl. In field left Δ.

10. AE, ←, 8,21 g; 23x24 mm.

Regling 1910:no. 2850.

Plautilla (202-205³).

Obv. ΠΟ ΦΟΥΛΒΙΑ- [ΠΛΑΥΤΙΑΛΛΑ CCB]. Bust to right.

Rv. ΜΗΤΡΟ[ΝΤ ΤΟΥ]- [ΤΟΜΕΩ]C. Tyche standing left, holding a spear and cornucopia. In field left Δ.

11. AE, ↙, 10,18 g; 27 mm.

Regling 1910:no. 2951.

Elagabalus (218-222).

Av. ΑΥΤ ΚΑΙ Μ ΑΥΡΗ-ΑΝΤΟΝΙΝΟC (the last letter – C – is not rounded; instead it is made up of three lines). Bust to right.

Rv. [ΜΗΤΡΟ]ΠΟΝ-Τ-ΟΥ ΤΟΜ[ΕΩ]. Hermes standing left, with caduceus in left hand and bag in his right hand. On his shoulder, a mantle. In field left Δ.

12. AE, ↑↓, 9,90 g; 24x26mm.

Regling 1910:no. 3066.

Severus Alexander (222-235).

Av. [ΑΥΤ Κ Μ ΑΥΡ]CΕΥ-ΑΛΕΖ[ΑΝΔΡΟC]. Laureated and cuirassed bust to right.

Rv. ΜΗΤΡΟΠ ΠΟΝ ΤΟΥ ΤΟΜΕΩC. Hermes standing left, with caduceus in left hand and bag in his right hand. On his shoulder, a mantle. In field left Δ?

13. AE, ↙, 11,48 g; 24x25 mm.

Regling 1910:no. 3174.

³ She lived until 212 but it is hard to think that after her disgrace and exile, any other coins were minted for her.

Iulia Mamaea (222-235).

Av. IOVΛIA- MA[MAIA AVΓ]. Draped bust to right.

Rv. [MHTPOΠ ΠION TOY]-OV TOMEΩC. Hecate. In field left Γ.

14. AE, ⚡, 8,26 g; 23 mm.

Regling 1910:no. 3296 but MHTPOΠ ΠION TOY -O-VTOMEΩC.

Callatis

Commodus (180-193).

Av. [AY K – M AY KOMOΔOC]. Laureated and draped bust to right.

Rv. [KAAA- TIANΩN]. Thanatos (or Eros) winged standing right, next to a column.

15. AE, ⚡, 4,01 g; 20 mm.

Pick 1898:no. [300].

The coin issued by Commodus for Istros is quite rare. Besides piece no. 1 in our catalogue, another variant of the obverse legend is known and in this variant the name of the emperor appears under the form AVT M A KOMOΔO⁴. On the reverse, the emblem of the city reappears. The eagle on the dolphin is a symbol encountered on most of the coins which date from the autonomous period as well as on those of the imperial period issued by Iulia Domna⁵, Iulia Mamaea⁶ and Tranquillina⁷. The iconography of the imperial coins is different from that of the similar coins of the autonomous period. The legend is written on the lower part of the coin and the eagle, in this case drawn with bigger wings, seems to be more dynamic. A coin which resembles the one presented in our catalogue can be found in William Stancomb's collection⁸, but it is designed with other dies. Five other coins which have been discovered at Istros⁹ can be mentioned here, along with another coin from the Sutz collection¹⁰. Coins, similar with coin no. 2 in our catalogue – issued by Caracalla, have been discovered at Istros¹¹.

In the case of coin no. 3, which depicts a god on horseback, the pattern is common for Istros emissions; in fact, it is known that it existed during the reign of Septimius Severus¹². This pattern also appears on coins issued by Iulia Domna¹³, Caracalla together with Iulia Domna¹⁴, Elagabalus¹⁵, Severus Alexander¹⁶, Gordian

⁴ Pick 1898:no. 489. SNG XI Stancomb, no. 877 for reverse.

⁵ Pick 1898:no. 501.

⁶ Pick 1898:no. 520.

⁷ Ruzicka 1917: no.529a and 529b.

⁸ SNG Stancomb XI, no. 877.

⁹ Preda, Nubar 1973:126, no. 673-674 and 127, no. 675-677.

¹⁰ Petac 2005: 9, no. 31.

¹¹ Preda, Nubar 1973: 129, no. 700 quoting Poenaru Bordea 1971: 108, no. 12. Actually, the coin of reference is coin no. 11.

¹² Pick 1898:no. 492 and Ruzicka 1917: no.493var, 493a and b, 494a.

¹³ Ruzicka 1917: no.500a.

¹⁴ Pick 1898:no. 503.

¹⁵ Pick 1898:no. 509-511.

¹⁶ Pick 1898:no. 516.

III¹⁷, Tranquillina¹⁸ and Gordian III together with Tranquillina¹⁹. The research on the coins issued at Istros²⁰ in the period 193-217 allows us to date coin no. 3 as being issued in the interval 210-214.

Coin no. 4, an emission made by Severus Alexander (222-235) at Istros, is unknown to B. Pick and L. Ruzicka. The respective type of reverse appears on a coin issued during the reign of Caracalla²¹ but also on a coin issued for Gordian III²². This monetary type was first mentioned in 1915²³. Another coin appears in the archaeological findings from Istros²⁴, but in this case the divinity on the reverse is Demeter. Other similar coins have to be mentioned here, but with slight differences such as those with sceptre²⁵.

In the case of coin no. 5, the divinity on the reverse appears to be Nemesis according to B. Pick, but the respective divinity can also be Athena²⁶. A similar coin can be found in William Stancomb's collection, the reverse having the same die. Two other coins are at the Romanian Academy and they come from M. C. Sutz's collection²⁷ and another coin was discovered at Istros²⁸.

Coins no. 6 and 7 are unknown to Pick but can be found in Ruzicka's catalogue²⁹. The emission for Gordian depicts Tyche and a similar coin can be found at Budapest³⁰. The monetary type no. 8 is quite common, but due to the coin's conservation it is difficult to establish if the legend is ICTPIH-NQN³¹ or ICTPI-HNQN³². There is also the possibility that in exergue the value E is written and not the last part of the city's name³³. Three similar coins have been discovered at Istros³⁴. Two of them are in Budapest³⁵ and the other one, which has the same pattern only on the reverse, can be found in the Sutz collection³⁶.

¹⁷ Ruzicka 1917: no.520 y and z.

¹⁸ Pick 1898:no. 530.

¹⁹ Pick 1898:no. 524-526.

²⁰ Boteva 1993: 253-257, Boteva 1994: 253-254.

²¹ SNG München, vol VII, no. 242.

²² Preda 1968: 224, no. 1.

²³ Preda, Nubar 1973: 132, no. 735. quoting C. Moisil in an article appeared in *Creșterea Colectțiilor* from 1915. (*non vidi*)

²⁴ Preda, Nubar 1973: 132, no. 735 but the goddess on the reverse is presented as Demeter.

²⁵ Preda, Nubar 1973: 132, no. 733-734.

²⁶ Petac 2005: 11, describing coins no. 37-38. The coins are identical with the piece that we describe (see the corresponding numbers in the tables).

²⁷ Petac 2005: 11

²⁸ Preda, Nubar 1973: 131, no. 730.

²⁹ Ruzicka 1917: no.520y, similar with 520 z but different with respect to the legend. For the second piece, see no. 523b.

³⁰ SNG Budapest vol. III: 18, no. 57.

³¹ Pick 1898: no. 524= SNG Budapest vol. III, p. 18, no. 58.

³² Pick 1898:no. 525.

³³ Like Pick 1898:no. 526.

³⁴ Preda, Nubar 1973: 133, no. 749-751.

³⁵ SNG Budapesta, vol III: 18, no. 58 and 59.

³⁶ Petac 2005: 13, no. 45.

Coin no. 9, issued for Crispina Augusta (180-183), has a reverse similar with that of a coin issued for Commodus³⁷ but also with one issued for Lucilla³⁸. A similar coin in terms of iconography was issued at Istros during the reign of Commodus³⁹. The legend on the reverse is read clockwise and it starts from the part where the goddess's head is. Moreover, the letter M in MHTPOII resembles II. Cybele's cult is attested all across the region due to the coins which depict the goddess⁴⁰ but also due to the inscriptions⁴¹ dedicated to her. Two similar coins can be found in the Sutzu collection⁴².

The obverse of the coin issued at Tomis for Caracalla (no. 10 in our catalogue) is not artistically well executed. The reverse depicts Artemis in a hunting scene, aspect which is also present on other coins from the period of the Severic dynasty issued for Iulia Domna⁴³, Elagabalus⁴⁴, Iulia Paula⁴⁵, one of his wives, Maximius Trax⁴⁶ and Gordian III.

The next coin issued for Caracalla's wife, Fulvia Plautilla, has the reverse similar with that of a coin issued for her husband⁴⁷ and depicts the goddess Tyche with a spear and a cornucopia. The coins issued during the reign of Elagabalus and Severus Alexander (no. 12 and 13) depict on the reverse Hermes with a bag and a caduceus. The cult of this divinity was very popular in Tomis and as a result a large number of coins which depict Hermes on the reverse was issued by this city⁴⁸.

The emission for Iulia Mamaea can be found in Regling's catalogue; it has on the reverse the following description: MHTPOII ΠION TOY-OV TOMEΩC, but the coin published in this paper displays a variant of the legend - MHTPOII ΠION TOY-O-V TOMEΩC.

The coin issued at Callatis for Commodus corresponds to the value of one assarion⁴⁹. The weight of the coin presented above, despite the high degree of conservation, is bigger than indicated, namely 4,01 g as compared to 2,55-3,75 g.

³⁷ Regling 1910:no. 2701 and 2707.

³⁸ Regling 1910:no. 2681.

³⁹ Pick 1898:no. 486.

⁴⁰ There is evidence for Tomis since the second century A.C. (a coin for Lucilla, type Regling 1910:no. 2681-2682) and with other coins until Phillipus I and his son, Phillipus II (for the latter, type Regling 1910:no. 3604-3605)

⁴¹ Pippidi 1983: no. 57, 115, 126, 127, 128, Stoian 1987: no. 2, 72, Avram 1999: no. 247.

⁴² Petac 2005: 62, no. 476 și 477.

⁴³ Regling 1910:no. 2793.

⁴⁴ Regling 1910:no. 3058.

⁴⁵ Regling 1910:no. 3121.

⁴⁶ Regling 1910:no. 3309.

⁴⁷ Regling 1910:no. 2897.

⁴⁸ Iacob 2003-2004: 409-419. Hermes is attested especially for the Severic period. As for the representation, it is considered to be the standard. Iacob 2003-2004: p. 412-413.

⁴⁹ Pick 1898: p. 95-96 idea also sustained by Gramaticu, Ioniță 2006: 51.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Avram 1999:** Avram, Al. *Inscriptions de Scythie Mineure III. Callatis et son territoire*, Ed. Enciclopedică, București – Paris, 1999.
- Boteva 1993:** Dilyana Boteva *The coinage of Histria for Septimius Severus and his family* in *Pontica XXVI*, 1993, p. 253-257.
- Boteva 1994:** Dilyana Boteva *The coinage of Histria for Septimius Severus and his family. Addenda et corrigenda* in *Pontica XXVII*, 1994, p. 253-254.
- Iacob 2003-2004:** Mihaela Iacob *Culte și zeități în Moesia Inferior. 2. Hermes evidență numismatică*. in *Pontica XXXV-XXXVI*, 2003-2004, p. 409-419.
- Gramaticu, Ioniță 2006:** Steluța Gramaticu, V. Ioniță *Monedele callatiene cu reprezentarea Cybelei pe leu(Lucilla, Crispina, Iulia Domna)* in *Simpozion de numismatică Chișinău 2003, 2006*, p. 51-63.
- Petac 2005:** E. Petac *La collection M. C. Sutz(Bibliotheque de l'Academie Roumaine, Bucarest). I Istros, Kallatis, Tomis*. Weteren, 2005.
- Pick 1898:** B. Pick *Die antiken Münzen von Dacien und Moesien* , vol I. Fasc I, Georg Reimer druck, Berlin 1898.
- Pippidi 1983:** D.M. Pippidi *Inscripțiile Scytiei Minor I: Histria* Ed. Academiei RSR, București, 1983.
- Poenaru Bordea 1971:** G. Poenaru Bordea *Numismatica și distrugerea Histriei în sec. III e.n.* in *SCN V*, 1971, p. 91-111.
- Preda 1968:** C. Preda *Monede coloniale rare și inedite – Histria, Callatis și Tomis – din tezaurul de la Mangalia* in *SCN IV*, 1968, p. 223-237.
- Preda, Nubar 1973:** Preda C, Nubar H. *Histria III. Descoperiri monetare (1914-1970)*, Ed. Academiei RSR, București, 1973.
- Regling 1910:** Regling K. *Die antiken Münzen von Dacien und Moesien* , vol I. Fasc II, Georg Reimer druck, Berlin, 1910.
- Ruzicka 1917:** Ruzicka L. *Inedita aus Moesia Inferior* in *NZ*, 50, 1917, p. 72-125.
- SNG Budapesta III:** *Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum*, vol III, Budapest, 2000
- SNG München VII:** *Staatliche Münzsammlung München VII. Taurische Chersones - Moesia Inferior* , Munchen 1980.
- SNG XI Stancomb:** *The William Stancomb collection of coins of the Black Sea region*, Oxford, 2000.
- Stoian 1987:** Stoian, I *Inscripțiile Scytiei Minor II:Tomis*, ed. Academiei RSR, București, 1987.



Pl. I: Coins issued at Istros, Tomis and Callatis discovered in Dobrudja



Pl. II: Coins issued at Istros, Tomis and Callatis discovered in Dobrudja

