

## THE FIRST MONETARY ILLUSTRATIONS OF TEMPLES AT TOMIS

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**Rezumat:** *Orașul antic Tomis rămâne în bună măsură relativ necunoscut în pofida descoperirilor arheologice importante făcute în decursul timpului. Emisiunile sale monetare, catalogate în mare parte încă de acum mai bine de o sută de ani, sunt un izvor neprețuit de informații, care acoperă multe din respectivele goluri arheologice. Cu toate acestea, decriptarea mesajelor transmise de emisiunile monetare tomitane rămâne o sarcină încă departe de a fi finalizată. În rândurile care urmează încercăm să evidențiem când au fost ilustrate primele edificii pe monedele orașului Tomis și care erau semnificațiile acestor imagini. Demersul ne-a oferit ocazia să facem și câteva observații de ordin cronologic privind unele emisiuni monetare, dar și în legătură cu unele manifestări ale propagandei imperiale romane pe monedele provinciale.*

**Abstract:** *The ancient city of Tomis remains largely unknown despite important archaeological discoveries made over time. Its coin issues, mostly cataloged from more than a hundred years ago, are an invaluable source of information, filling many of those archaeological gaps. However, deciphering the messages transmitted by the Tomitan monetary issues remains a task still far from complete. In the following lines we try to highlight when the first buildings were illustrated on the coins of the city of Tomis and what were the meanings of these images. The approach gave us the opportunity to make some chronological observations regarding some monetary issues, but also in relation to some manifestations of the Roman imperial propaganda on the provincial coins.*

The depiction of edifices on monetary issues was a common practice in the Roman imperial era. Both on the official Roman monetary issues and on the provincial ones (struck by the autonomous cities in the south-eastern part of the empire) we find represented a varied range of constructions, which can be classified into several general categories: defensive constructions (gates, towers, walls and even entire fortified precincts), triumphal monuments (triumph arches, columns, statues), sanctuaries and various civil constructions (ports, maritime lighthouses, stadiums, theaters, fountains etc.)<sup>1</sup>. Each of these categories can in turn be divided and dealt with in subcategories.

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<sup>1</sup> Starting from the century XIX a series of important works addressed the subject of

If in the case of official Roman monetary issues things are quite clear, the descriptive monetary legends usually indicate the identity of the illustrated building, and the ruins preserved in Rome or in Italy allow the comparative evaluation of the edifice depicted on the coins with the real construction, things are not the same with the edifices provincial and their monetary representations.

Not as grandiose and resistant, most of the edifices in the provincial cities disappeared in the tumult of history or were preserved in a precarious state, reduced most of the time to the foundation stage. We are mainly talking here about the cities in the West-Pontic area, cities that, from a numismatic point of view, have been the object of our concerns in recent years<sup>2</sup>. Another epigraphic impediment is added to the archaeological difficulties of identifying some edifices illustrated on provincial monetary issues: provincial coins generally lack descriptive legends. Therefore, the identification of the constructions on the Roman provincial monetary issues can only be done by evaluating and deciphering the message transmitted by the image of the monument itself.

If in the case of the defensive, triumphal or civil constructions reproduced on the provincial monetary issues things are relatively simple, they can be studied from an architectural, stylistic and even historical point of view, the same cannot be said about the religious constructions. In the case of these constructions, alongside their material, architectural and historical component, there is another, much more subtle and important, but certainly harder to decipher: the spiritual component.

This is why our desire to deal with the depictions of sanctuaries on West Pontic coin issues in a general way, has inevitably slipped into an individual treating of each individual city, each sanctuary there.

The first representations of sanctuaries, which we will focus on, are those on the monetary issues of the city of Tomis from the time of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasty.

The publication in 2015 of a "Supplement"<sup>3</sup> to the first three volumes of "Roman Provincial Coinage" also brought to the public's attention an interesting coin, issued by the city of Tomis and attributed, in the mentioned volume (not with some reservations), to the emperor Augustus<sup>4</sup>.

The coin, which would have belonged to the first Tomitan monetary issue for Augustus, was viewed with particular interest mainly because of its reverse with an architectural theme<sup>5</sup>. Reverse depict a building with four columns and a dome-temple or (perhaps more likely) just a shrine or kiosk ("tetrastyle belvedere"<sup>6</sup>)-inside which is an altar, on which sits an eagle with its head turned to the left.

illustrations of edifices on Roman coins (DONALDSON 1859; BROWN 1940; ELKINS 2015; TAMEANKO 1999 etc.).

<sup>2</sup> Numismatics evidence of triumphal arches from Lower Moesia (BELDIANU 2021); numismatics and the place of some sculptural works (BELDIANU 2022a); defensive systems of the cities from North and West Pontic area illustrated on monetary issues (BELDIANU 2023).

<sup>3</sup> RPC I-III Supp, p. 93, nr. S-1823A.

<sup>4</sup> The coin, from the Patrick Villemur Collection, became known following its appearance in public auctions (KOVACS FPL 29 (1997), lot 29; Classical Numismatic Group. Inc. MBS 78, from 14 May 2008, lot 1173).

<sup>5</sup> BELDIANU, BELDIANU 2020, p. 53.

<sup>6</sup> Expression from the auction description Classical Numismatic Group. Inc.

Obviously, the construction could only be related to the imperial cult, and its appearance on a monetary issue for Augustus was coming to complete satisfactory the other information related to the beginning of this cult at Tomis<sup>7</sup>.

Unfortunately, things did not turn out that way. The coin in question corresponds very well with the description in AMNG II of a Tomitan coin issue for Nero: "... | ΚΑΙΣΑΡΘΣ" von aussen zu lesen-Kopf m.L.r. Pkr./"ΤΟΙΜΙ (quer) ΕΠΙΣΤΡ.. (i.A.)" *Tempelfront mit vier Säulen und Kuppeldach, auf zwei Stufen; darin Adler stehend nach vorn, etwas., zurückblickend, Flügel ausgebreitet, auf eingeschnürter Basis. Auf Nero führt der Beamtenname, das Portrait stimmt kaum zu Nero*<sup>8</sup>.

The coin, described in the well-known catalog, was not illustrated, but the "Gotha" collection was mentioned as a place of keeping.

Fortunately, the "Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften" (BBAW) keeps casts of some coins from the Gotha collection and these are digitized on the web platform [www.corpus-nummorum.eu](http://www.corpus-nummorum.eu). Therefore, the photo of the mould of the coin mentioned in the AMNG II catalog could be found in this online database<sup>9</sup>.

Moreover, the "Gotha" collection is currently going through an extensive digitization process<sup>10</sup>, and thanks to the special kindness of Michael Maliczowski (scientific assistant at the "Numismatics" department of the Gotha Museum)<sup>11</sup> we was able to benefit from a photo at high resolution of this numismatic piece<sup>12</sup>.

A comparison of the two coins, the one identified in the RPC as an issue for Augustus (**Fig. I, 1**) and the one in the Gotha collection (**Fig. I, 2–3**), shows, beyond any doubt, that they are part of the same monetary issue, the two coins being executed even with the same monetary dies.

Therefore, the attribution of the coinage to Augustus in the RPC I volume proved to be erroneous. The name of the magistrate "Epistra" (ΕΠΙΣΤΡΑ) also appearing on another monetary issue for Nero (the second issue for this emperor specified in AMNG II<sup>13</sup>). The error in RPC I was the result of a poor preservation of the coinage and the imperial effigy that "hardly matches Nero", as B. Pick and K. Regling also observed over a hundred years ago.

Recently, Mihai Dima reached the same conclusion in relation to the coin presented in the "RPC Supplement", in a material that I unfortunately found out about only after drafted this article<sup>14</sup>.

Comparing the two monetary issues, which bear the name of the magistrate

<sup>7</sup> ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 2021, p. 80–81, article that was constituted in a chapter of the recent book belonging to the same author (to be seen: ALEXANDRESCU-VIANU 2023, chapter II: Les débuts de l'art romain dans la région).

<sup>8</sup> "The legend is read from the outside. Temple facade with four columns and domed roof, on two levels; inside eagle standing to front, slightly right, looking back, wings spread, on clasped base. The clerk's name leads to Nero, the portrait hardly matches Nero".

<sup>9</sup> It's about registration: cn coin 29396, in Corpus Nummorum, link: [https://www.corpus-nummorum.eu/CN\\_29396](https://www.corpus-nummorum.eu/CN_29396); plaster cast no: cn-tomis\_0454, from BBAW, Berlin [de].

<sup>10</sup> The Gotha transdigital 2027 project, funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media.

<sup>11</sup> On this occasion we once again express our thanks and gratitude.

<sup>12</sup> The coin has inventory number: SSFG 1/Co3242.

<sup>13</sup> AMNG II, no. 2588.

<sup>14</sup> DIMA 2020, p. 369–370.

“Epistra” on the reverse (written in two ways “ΕΠΙΣΤΡΑ” and “ΕΠΙΣΤΡ”) we can see that they are executed with different obverse dies and the effigy of the second issue for Nero from AMNG II (Fig. I, 6) can be easily associated with the adolescent portraits of Emperor Nero.

But neither the RPC I coin (wrongly attributed to Augustus) nor the similar from AMNG II coin preserves the obverse legend in its entirety, only the first word “ΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ” being visible. Therefore, we have no certainty that the second word was “ΝΕΡΩΝ”. However, if we compare the effigy on this monetary issue with the one on the Tomitan monetary issue for Britannicus-Nero’s half-brother<sup>15</sup>, we find a strong similarity between the two. This similarity opens the possibility that in reality the coin in question is not an issue for Nero, but (perhaps) one for Britannicus.

Unfortunately, the idealization and classicization of the portraits of those from the Julia-Claudia dynasty make the identification of the character based on the portrait a questionable and uncertain criterion<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, only future appearances of coins from this issue will be able to confirm or deny this assumption.

The observations so far open the possibility of a more in-depth analysis of the monetary activity of the city of Tomis during the time of Emperor Nero. For this emperor, the city of Tomis also minted monetary issues with the obverse legend “ΝΕΡΩΝ ΚΑΛΥΔΙΟC”, which specifies in the reverse legend the name of the magistrate “Hestaios” (“ΕCΤΙΑΙΟΥ”) (Fig. I, 7)<sup>17</sup>, but also monetary issues with the same legend of the obverse, but without specified magistrate in the legend of the reverse (Fig. I, 8)<sup>18</sup>.

If we look at the two issues, we can easily notice that they are actually made with the same obverse mold, being contemporary or almost contemporary. The imperial effigy, having a more full-bodied portrait, ensures a later dating as against of the “Epistra” magistrate issues. Also, the issue without the magistrate’s name in the reverse legend is the last issue in this sequence. The magistrate’s name completely disappearing from the reverse of Tomitian coins starting with Vespasianus. This last issue for Nero, without a magistrate in the reverse legend, can be considered a “transitional” monetary issue from the issues with a magistrate to those without.

Based on these observations and the known historical facts we can try to outline a succession of magistrates at Tomis during the time of Emperor Nero (54–68 AD.).

The first magistrate, from the time when Nero was in charge of the empire, can be supposed to be “Phaidros” (“ΦΑΙΔΡΟΥ”), who appears on a monetary issue for Agrippina II (49–59 AD.)<sup>19</sup>, but does not appear on monetary issues for Claudius (41–54 AD.), Claudia Antonia, Britannicus (dead in 55 AD.) and not even those for Nero. The next magistrate in this sequence would be “Epistra”, which appears on monetary issues for Nero (adolescent effigy) and (possibly) on a monetary issue for Britannicus, minted after the death of Claudius. The last magistrate being, without a doubt, as we have already shown, “Hestaios” (“ΕCΤΙΑΙΟΥ”).

<sup>15</sup> AMNG II, nr. 2585; RPC I, no. 1834-magistrate “Herodos?”-“Η-ΡΩ”.

<sup>16</sup> SMITH 1987, p. 100.

<sup>17</sup> Possible AMNG II, nr. 2587; RPC I, no. 1836.

<sup>18</sup> Savoca Numismatik on 106<sup>th</sup> Blue Auction, from 26.06.2021, lot 476.

<sup>19</sup> AMNG II, no. 2586; RPC I, no. 1835.

The monetary issues of the city of Tomis, from the time of Emperor Nero, are also important from a historical-architectural point of view, because their reverse depicts, for the first time for this city, edifices. The sequence of these illustrations (if the order of magistrates proposed by us is correct), first on the monetary issue for Agrippina Minor and only then on the issues for Nero, is not accidental and can be explained on the basis of known historical information.

After the death of the emperor Claudius, the Roman senate grants Agrippina Minor two lictors and the quality of priestess of the cult of the emperor Claudius, meanwhile deified (Tacitus, *Annales*, XIII, 2). But these honors were not enough for the ambitious empress, who had orchestrated her son's rise to power, and who claimed to rule the Roman state directly, getting involved in both internal and external politics<sup>20</sup>.

An inscription discovered in Tomis (dated between 49–59 AD.) confirms the role and status of the empress, not only in Rome, but also in cities in distant provinces: “Good luck! For the divine Agrippina (...), through the care of Antonius Arch(...), priest of Sarapis and Isis (...) towards the homeland (...) of the gods (...), raised from his own wealth”<sup>21</sup>. The first and most likely the only name in the dedication is that of the “divine Agrippina”<sup>22</sup>, a fact that shows her *dignitas* and *auctoritas*<sup>23</sup> similar to those of the emperors, lacking only the *imperium*. The inscription seems to confirm a moment of coinage at Tomis only for Agrippina (magistrate Phaidro), which we are tempted to place immediately after the death of Claudius.

Agrippina's ambitions and the way in which her role wanted to be perceived in the provinces of the empire is the best reflected by the relief discovered in Aphrodisias (Caria, Western Anatolia, Turkey) in a temple<sup>24</sup>. The temple was dedicated (according to an inscription from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.): “To Aphrodite, the Divine Augusti and the People”<sup>25</sup>.

The relief represents Agrippina Minor, carrying a cornucopia (like the goddess Tyche/Fortuna), crowning her son Nero (rendered in military attire-symbolizing military and political *imperium*) with a laurel wreath (Pl. 2)<sup>26</sup>. From this relief both the divinity, but especially the authority of Agrippina, is fully apparent. The authority that was the basis of the imperial power of the young Nero, who through the act of coronation is promoted from heir to emperor<sup>27</sup>. In this panel, Agrippina is in no way inferior to Nero, and we could even say that she is superior to him in *dignitas*, *auctoritas* and (not least) *divinitas*.

<sup>20</sup> TUDOR 1974, p. 134–138.

<sup>21</sup> ISM II, p. 69–70, 37.

<sup>22</sup> Not surprisingly, the divinization of the emperors took place in the eastern provinces during their lifetime and not only after death or as a comparison, for the emperor who was still alive as in Rome. See in this regard CIZEK 1998, p. 236–237.

<sup>23</sup> For the meaning of the concepts expressed by these words see CIZEK 1998, p. 38–39 for *dignitas* (dignity, behavior, appearance, rank, social status etc.) and p. 232–233 for *auctoritas* (authority, power, influence etc.).

<sup>24</sup> The Sebasteion complex from Aphrodisias consists of four distinct elements: a propylon, two long porticoes, and a temple. To be seen: SMITH 1987, p. 90.

<sup>25</sup> SMITH 1987, p. 90.

<sup>26</sup> SMITH 1987, p. 127–132.

<sup>27</sup> SMITH 1987, p. 129.

The appearance of an edifice on the Tomitian monetary issue for Agrippina Minor, a tholos<sup>28</sup> or monopteral<sup>29</sup> temple, with visible four columns<sup>30</sup> and a round roof with acrotera and antefixes, can be linked to the imperial cult, cult led in Rome by the empress. The empress who at Tomis was considered (as we have seen) divine. That this construction was dedicated to the imperial cult is shown by the monetary issue for Nero or (perhaps) Britannicus, which illustrates this construction, having inside, this time, an altar surmounted by an eagle.

The *tholos* or monopteral temple on the Tomitan monetary issues for Agrippina II and Nero are identical to the temple of Mars Ultor<sup>31</sup> illustrated on the official Roman money issues, struck in Spanish and Pergamum mints, from the time of Augustus<sup>32</sup> (Fig. I, 4a). But on the official Roman monetary issues subsequent to Augustus, the temple of Mars Ultor, in this variant, no longer appears. This was probably also one of the reasons why the Tomitan issue was wrongly attributed to Augustus in the “RPC Supplement”.

Some official monetary issues for Nero<sup>33</sup> also illustrate a similar construction, (*tholos*), the temple of Vesta, one of the most illustrated temples in Rome on the official Roman coinage<sup>34</sup>, but the visual differences between this and the temple from Tomitan issue are substantial (Fig. I, 4b).

Did this monopteral temple exist at Tomis?

It is hard to say in the absence of archaeological evidence, but the identical illustration of the temple on the coins of the city of Tomis and the temple of Mars Ultor from the official Roman monetary issues for Augustus shows, without any doubts, that we are dealing with a local takeover of an imperial theme. In fact, researchers almost unanimously agree that a tholos temple of Mars Ultor in Rome did not exist, being only “a schematic design of an intended structure”<sup>35</sup>.

Taking over themes of imperial propaganda on provincial coins is not new. Interesting is the appearance of a Roman propaganda theme on the provincial coins quite some time after it was illustrated on the official coins.

I encountered this situation and explained it also in the case of the “triumphal procession” from the monetary issues from Nicopolis ad Istrum from the Septimius Severus-Macrinus period, which take over a propaganda theme from the medals of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus<sup>36</sup>.

The two examples mentioned here most likely indicate that provincial engravers worked with “pattern books” from which they took various themes at the request

<sup>28</sup> The tholos was a domed edifice, which could also have a commercial purpose, not just a religious one. See in this sense the tholos of Pompeii (ÉTIENNE 1970, p. 188–189).

<sup>29</sup> Circular temple where the dome is supported by columns, described by VITRUVIUS, *De Architectura*, Book IV, Chap. VIII, 3, apud TAMEANKO 1999, p. 177.

<sup>30</sup> Round temples are monetarily represented in the Roman era with two to a maximum of six columns, regardless of the number of columns actually built, BROWN 1940, p. 14.

<sup>31</sup> BELDIANU, BELDIANU 2020, p. 54–55.

<sup>32</sup> RIC I, Augustus, no. 28, 39a-b, 68–74, 103–106; 507.

<sup>33</sup> RIC I, Nero, no. 61–62.

<sup>34</sup> BROWN 1940, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> In this regard, see the recent article by David M. Jacobson, “The Temple of Mars Ultor in Rome and the Philippeion in Olympia” (JACOBSON 2020).

<sup>36</sup> BELDIANU 2022b, p. 134–135, 137.

of the city they worked for. We will return to this important aspect of provincial monetary activity in a future paper.

Returning to the Tomitian coins, we note that in the time of "Epistra" magistrate, a temple with four columns and a triangular pediment (decastyle) begins to appear, illustrated monetarily. It is an "anonymous" temple (there is no clue about the titular deity). Could be an early illustration of a temple from Tomis or rather an early illustration of the idea of a temple at Tomis. Pattern of this temple is unknown by official monetary issues, but it is found on other provincial monetary issues whose legends speak of urban associations (*koina*)<sup>37</sup>.

The increased interest in the monetary promotion in this city (and not only) of the imperial cult as a form of Roman propaganda, after the death of Emperor Claudius, it was not the result of a real belief in the divinity of the emperor and not just a natural consequence of the relations between the empire and the autonomous Greek cities. The situation is very well described by E. Cizek: *"the emperor (Nero o. n.) was not a religious spirit (...). This fact did not prevent him from pursuing a religious policy. (...) During the reign of Nero, the cult of the emperor becomes an instrument of absolute power. The providential character of the imperial mission is thus affirmed."*<sup>38</sup>. And this "providential mission" in the Pontic area was more than some words, because Nero *"would have wanted to make the Black Sea a Roman lake"*<sup>39</sup>, and the propaganda only came to give an ideological basis to military and diplomatic Roman actions, carried out in the area in the years of this emperor's reign<sup>40</sup>.

The monetary issues of Tomis from the time of the Flavians continue to illustrate anonymous decastyle temples, but with a grandeur specific to the Roman power<sup>41</sup>. The significance of the monetary illustrations of temples at Tomis, in the time of the Flavians, can only be understood by looking at the monetary issues minted by this city, during this dynasty, as a whole.

The chronological ordering of the Tomitian monetary issues from the time of the Flavians does not raise particular problems. The first is a monetary issue for Vespasianus, on the reverse of which are the effigies of his sons, Titus and Domitianus. It is a dynastic propaganda monetary issue. The three members of the imperial family bear in the legend only the title of Caesar "KAICAP" (Fig. III, 1).

Chronologically, there follows an issue for "Avtokrator" Titus, is datable between 79 and 81 AD. On its obverse appears a temple (represented "full-front simple type"<sup>42</sup>) with four columns, placed on a height, as shown by the four rows of steps (Fig. III, 3). In the case of Roman monetary representations of the temples, the steps, when they existed, were always illustrated, even if the number of steps on the coins did not correspond to the archaeological reality<sup>43</sup>. Contemporary with this

<sup>37</sup> Ex. "Koinon of Galatia" (RPC I, no. 3563).

<sup>38</sup> CIZEK 1986, p. 318.

<sup>39</sup> CIZEK 1986, p. 304, where footnote 9 provides an extensive bibliography on the subject.

<sup>40</sup> CIZEK 1986, see chapter VII, p. 304–309.

<sup>41</sup> Monetary issue for Titus (AMNG II, no. 2591; RPC II, no. 403) and for Domitian (AMNG II, 2594–5; RPC II, no. 404).

<sup>42</sup> For the ways of illustrating temples on official Roman coins see: BROWN 1940, p. 20.

<sup>43</sup> BROWN 1940, p. 16.

issue can be suspected to be the issue for Domitianus "Caesar", which has (on the reverse) the name of the city (*TO-MI*) written in a crown (**Fig. III, 5**)<sup>44</sup>.

The last monetary issues from the time of the Flavians are minted by Tomis for Domitianus "*Avtokrator*", in two different chronological stages. To the first stage (81–83 AD.)<sup>45</sup> corresponds an issue with Nike/Victoria on revers<sup>46</sup> and another that illustrates, again, a temple with four columns (**Fig. III, 6**)<sup>47</sup>. The temple is this time on a high base, but no steps are visible. On either side of the roof of the temple are rendered two symbols: a *pileus* and a star. The *pileus* has been linked to the Dioscuris<sup>48</sup>, but no explanation has yet been found for the star.

This temple, which appears to be a neater reiteration of the decastyle temple illustrated by the last Tomitan monetary issues for Nero, is illustrated in a realistic manner, seen from the front, with elements to individualize the construction, as if it were intended to illustrate an edifice from the city (*the full-front ornate type*<sup>49</sup>) and not in an abstract manner, as in the case of the temple on the Tomitan monetary issue for Titus, in which, through thick lines, only the idea of the temple is expressed, the only detail meant to personalize it being the stair from underneath. It can be assumed that this could be a first monetary illustration of a temple that really existed in the city of Tomis.

The last stage is represented by a monetary issue in which the obverse legend for Domitian also mention the title of "*Germanicus*", a title assigned in 83 AD., assumed in the monetary legends starting from 84 AD.<sup>50</sup>. The reverse of this issue is occupied by Nike/Victoria, with crown and palm branch, standing on a globe (**Fig. III, 7**).

Returning to the representations of the temples, we note the unusual illustration for Tomis of the temple from the monetary issue for Titus. Primarily surprise the desire for abstraction, but also for individualization through the pronounced marking of the four massive steps on which the temple stands.

An identical representation, a decastyle temple, with four trapezoidal steps underneath, is found in the case of Cistophoric Tetradrachms, minted in Ephesus or Rome, starting from 80–81 AD., to circulate in Asia (**Fig. III, 4**)<sup>51</sup>. The legend from revers ("*CA-PIT/RESTIT*") clarifies the message of this monetary type: the restoration of the Capitoline temple of Jupiter in Rome, burned down in 69 AD., during the civil war of the year of the four emperors and destroyed again in a fire (after it had been restored by Vespasianus) in 80 AD.<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> AMNG II, no. 2596; RPC II, no. 407.

<sup>45</sup> From the obverse legend (*„ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΔΟΜΕΤΙΑΝΟΣ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ"*) of this issue, the title of „Germanicus" is missing.

<sup>46</sup> AMNG II, no. 2592; RPC II, no. 405.

<sup>47</sup> AMNG II, no. 2594–5; RPC II, no. 404.

<sup>48</sup> In AMNG II the *pileus* is called *dioskurenmütze*, p. 679, no. 2595.

<sup>49</sup> BROWN 1940, p. 16.

<sup>50</sup> RIC II, p. 237, 244–245.

<sup>51</sup> Issue for Titus (RIC II, no. 515; RPC II, no. 860) and for Domitianus (RPC II, no. 864 and 867).

<sup>52</sup> LINDSAY 2010, p. 177, with the observation that the cistophoric tetradrachms for Titus show that the restoration of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus began in his time and not after 81 AD.-in the time of Domitianus.

The connection between the themes of the Tomitan issues and those on the cistophoric tetradrachms is also ensured by the existence of other “ephesian” monetary issues from the time of the Flavians, identical thematically and imagistically to the contemporary Tomitan ones: the monetary issue for Vespasian having on the reverse the confronted effigies of Titus and Domitian (**Fig. III, 2**)<sup>53</sup> and the monetary issues for Vespasianus, Titus and Domitianus, which depict Nike/Victoria bearing a crown and palm branch (**Fig. III, 8**).

Seen from this perspective, the Tomitan monetary issues seem to have been part of the same propaganda horizon, promoted by the monetary issues minted for Asia.

Therefore, it becomes very likely that the temple illustrated by the issue struck by Tomis for Titus is in fact an illustration of the Capitoline temple of Jupiter (**Fig. IV**<sup>54</sup>) or rather a symbolic illustration of the idea of its restoration.

And the “Ephesian” and Tomitan issues are not the only ones that illustrate this ideational edifice in the era. Monetary issues of the city of Panticapaeum, dated in 69–79 AD., also illustrate an identical temple, located on a sequence of high steps arranged trapezoidal, but having 5–7 columns<sup>55</sup> (**Fig. III, 9**).

The propagandistic theme of the restoration of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was intended to ensure, for the regime of Vespasian and his sons, an element of continuity and connection with the origins and history of Rome<sup>56</sup>.

The presence of this theme on a monetary issue of Tomis for Titus seems to be the result of a probable requirement of the Roman authority to illustrate the subject for propaganda purposes or (maybe) a situation similar to that which led to the presence of the *tholos* or *monopteral* temple on the Tomitan monetary issues for Nero and Agrippina, that is, taking over a Roman monetary theme from a “pattern book”.

At the same time, there are no indications that the decastyle temple from the Tomitan monetary issues for Domitian are actually an image taken from Roman monetary types or propaganda. Most likely being a monetary depiction of a temple in Tomis.

After Domitian the monetary issues of the city of Tomis no longer depict temples until the time of Septimius Severus<sup>57</sup>. The first monetary illustrations of constructions at Tomis, respectively of cult edifices, from the time of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasties are closely related to the cult of imperial Rome.

The appearance of temples from Rome on the provincial coins is not a novelty<sup>58</sup>, but it is meant to show, in the case of the city of Tomis, the degree of integration of this in the Roman world, since the time of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasty, and at the same time importance of this city for the Empire.

<sup>53</sup> RPC II, no. 831.

<sup>54</sup> Depiction of the temple of Jupiter Capitoline on one of the relief panels from the time of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, now in the Capitoline Museum in Rome. The high base on which the temple stood, although invisible, can be inferred due to the illustration of the three doors of the temple above the heads of the participants in the imperial ceremony.

<sup>55</sup> ANOKHIN 2011, no. 1474–1476. The odd and imprecise number of columns is meant to show that the engraver was not illustrating a temple in the city, but an abstract idea.

<sup>56</sup> TAMEANKO 1999, p. 139–145; LINDSAY 2010, p. 176–180.

<sup>57</sup> AMNG II, no. 2768.

<sup>58</sup> BROWN 1940, p. 5, footnote 11.

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**Fig I.** Monetary issues of the city of Tomis (1–3; 5–8) and Rome (4) from the time of the Julia-Claudia dynasty; 1. Coin attributed in RPC to Emperor Augustus (photo source: *Classical Numismatic Group. Inc.*<sup>59</sup>); 2. Monetary issue for Nero, magistrate “Epistra”-model of the coin in the Gotha collection (*Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*<sup>60</sup>); 3. Photo of the coin from the Gotha collection<sup>61</sup>; 4a. Revers of denarius for Augustus which illustrates the temple of Mars Ultor (*Leu Numismatik*<sup>62</sup>); 4b. Revers of an aureus for Nero which illustrates the temple of the Vestals (*Classical Numismatic Group. Inc.*<sup>63</sup>); 5. Monetary issue for Agrippina Minor, magistrate “Phaidros” (*Helios Numismatik GmbH*<sup>64</sup>); 6. Monetary issue for Nero, magistrate “Epistra” (*Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung*<sup>65</sup>); 7. Monetary issue for Nero, magistrate “Hestaios” (*Jean Elsen & ses Fils S.A.*<sup>66</sup>); 8. Monetary issue for Nero without specified magistrate (*Savoca Numismatik*<sup>67</sup>).

<sup>59</sup> Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., Auction MBS 78, from 14.05.2008, lot 1173.

<sup>60</sup> Plaster Cast No: cn-tomis\_0454, de la BBAW, Berlin [de], photo taken from web platform Corpus Nummorum, direct link: [https://www.corpus-nummorum.eu/CN\\_29396](https://www.corpus-nummorum.eu/CN_29396).

<sup>61</sup> The coin with inventory number: SSFG 1/Co3242-photo source: “Gotha transdigital 2027 project.

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**Fig. II.** Relief depicting Nero and Agrippa Minor from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias-Caria (photo credit: Carlos Delgado; CC-BY-SA).



**Fig. III.** Monetary issues from Flavian times; 1. Tomitan monetary issue for Vespasianus with facing busts of his sons Titus and Domitianus on the reverse (photo source: *Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung*<sup>68</sup>); 2. Roman monetary issue for Asia, with Vespasianus on obverse and Titus on reverse (photo source: *Numismatica Ars Classica*)<sup>69</sup>; 3. Coin struck by Tomis for emperor Titus with a idealize temple on reverse (photo source: *Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung*)<sup>70</sup>; 4. Cistophor for Titus, from year 81 AD., which celebrate the restoration of Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus<sup>71</sup>; 5. Tomis monetary issue for "Domitianus Kaisar"<sup>72</sup>; 6. Tomis monetary issue for "Autokrator Domitianos Kaisaros", with a decastyle temple on reverse, between pileus and star<sup>73</sup>; 7. Tomis monetary issue for "Domitianos Kaisaros Germanikos", with flying Nike/Victoria on reverse<sup>74</sup>; 8. Denarius struck by the Ephesus mint for Vespasian<sup>75</sup>; 9. Monetary issue of the city of Panticapaeum<sup>76</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung, Auction 265, from 14.10.2019, lot 787.

<sup>69</sup> Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG, Auction 125, from 23.06.2021, lot 551.

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**Fig. IV.** Relief in the Capitoline Museum (Rome), depicting the emperor Marcus Aurelius during a sacrifice made in front of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus (photo source: [wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marcus_Aurelius_sacrificing.jpg), author user: MatthiasKabel (CC-BY-SA-3.0,2.5,2.0,1.0)).