

ABOUT SOME LATE LYSIMACHUS TYPE STATERS FROM CALLATIS AND TOMIS

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Keywords: *stater, Lysimachos, end of the 2nd century-beginning of the 1st century BC, Transylvania, Dobruja, Callatis, Tomis.*

Abstract: *Our aim is to bring a modest contribution through the information gathered to the knowledge and completion of data regarding some treasure discoveries in Transylvania and Dobruja. Three late staters of the Lysimachos-type minted at Callatis (1 pcs.) and Tomis (2 pcs.) are shown. They are coins minted in diminished Attic standard, which were intended to pay for the recruitment of mercenaries for the military purposes of Mithridates VI Eupator in the war waged against the Roman Republic. The Callatis stater comes from the discoveries in the Sarmizegetusa Regia area in the Orăștiei Mountains (Transylvania), and the two Tomis staters were found in the Schitu-Costinești area (Dobruja), although there are many circumstances that would indicate their belonging to the hoard discovered in 1992 in Cumpăna (Constanța county). Given their occurrence in contexts impossible to control due to their fortuitous character, whether older or newer, these staters are possible small parts of fabulous hoards. Of course, there always remains an inevitable note of probability, inherent in the situation of such discoveries. But the coins are very important for knowing the monetary situation in Transylvania (before the imposition of the Roman Empire) and in the territory between the Danube and the Sea, in a period when the West-Pontic colonies were located on the "frontier" of the conflicts between the Kingdom of Pontus and the Roman Republic.*

A few years ago, our late colleague Claudiu Munteanu provided us with technical and complementary information on some discoveries of three staters of the late Lysimachus series struck in the Dobruja western-Pontic mints of Tomis and Callatis¹. These gold pieces, as we shall see, could be part of hoards discovered either at least one hundred and fifty years ago or more recently in

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¹ The late researcher Claudiu Munteanu provided us with all the information with his usual generosity and delicacy. A pious thought in memory of our colleague from Sibiu.

Transylvania and Dobruja. We considered it necessary to publish and introduce these pieces into the scientific literature, given the rarity of their presence in the finds².

CATALOGUE

CALLATIS

1. AV (stater); 1 h; 8.29 g; 19.65 x 18.64 mm; Pl. I, 1.

Obverse: Diademed head of Alexander the Great, seen in profile, facing right; wearing a diadem adorned with the horns of the god Amun.

Reverse: The goddess Pallas Athena seated on a throne, facing left; on her head she wears a Corinthian helmet; in her right hand she holds an open-winged Nike displaying a wreath; with her left hand she supports a shield leaning against the throne; behind the goddess appears a spear placed obliquely; she is clothed in a himation; in exergue appears a trident between two dolphins, recumbent, facing left; below Athena's outstretched arm, on the left side of the monetary field, the initials of the monetary magistrate **H** and **P** in ligature and **O** (**HPO**); below the throne **KAA**; legend **ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ/ΑΥΣΙΜΑΧΟΥ**³.

Relatively good state of conservation; museum no. Brukenthal Museum T 6359.

References: MÜLLER 1858, pl. VI, no. 265; PICK 1898, p. 106, no. 258; MOISIL 1944, p. 12, no. 114; ILIESCU, ISĂCESCU, GRAMATOPOL & POPESCU 1961, p. 387, no. 42; POENARU BORDEA 1974, p. 109, no. 81; DE CALLATAŢ 1995b, p. 41–42; DE CALLATAŢ 1997, p. 140, years 110–90 BC; VÎLCU, ISVORANU & NICOLAE 2006, p. 65, no. 62; PETAC 2005, p. 17, no. 66; PREDA & PETAC 2006, p. 35–36, no. 126–128; SNG Stockholm 1942, no. 838; SNG Blackburn Museum 1989, pl. XV, no. 359.

TOMIS

2. AV (stater); 12h; 8.27 g; 20 x 18.5 mm; Pl. I, 2.

Obverse: Diademed head of Alexander the Great, seen in profile, facing right; wearing a diadem adorned with the horns of the god Amun; on the left side of the monetary field a globule.

Reverse: The goddess Pallas Athena seated on a throne, facing left; on her head she wears a Corinthian helmet; in her right hand she holds an open-winged Nike displaying a wreath; with her left hand she supports a shield leaning against the throne; behind the goddess appears a spear placed at an angle; she is dressed in a himation; in exergue a trident appears between two dolphins, recumbent, facing left; under the outstretched arm of Athena, on the left side of the monetary field, the initials of the monetary magistrate **ΔΙΟ**; under the throne **ΤΟ**; legend

² I would like express my gratitude to Emanuel Petac, President of the Romanian Numismatic Society, for his support in completing this article.

³ For the obverse and reverse descriptions see ILIESCU 2000, p. 379; MARTINI & VISMARA 1996, p. 109; PREDA 1998, p. 112.

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ/ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΟ(Υ); under the name of the monetary magistrate a globule⁴.

Relatively good state of conservation.

References: MÜLLER 1858, pl. VI, no. 277; AMNG II, p. 650, no. 2476; MOISIL 1915, p. 12, no. 92; MOISIL 1936, p. 63, no. 540; DE CALLATAŸ 1995b, p. 40; DE CALLATAŸ 1997, p. 141, years 90–80 BC; PETAC 2005, p. 32, no. 233; PREDA & PETAC 2006, p. 37, no. 132; VÎLCU, ISVORANU & NICOLAE 2006, p. 65, no. 56; SNG Danish 1943 II, pl. 21, no. 1093; SNG XI 2000, pl. XIII, no. 286.

3. AV (stater); 12h; 8.19 g; 20 mm; Pl. I, 3.

Obverse: Diademed head of Alexander the Great, seen in profile, facing right; wearing a diadem adorned with the horns of the god Amun.

Reverse: The goddess Pallas Athena seated on a throne, facing left; on her head she wears a Corinthian helmet; in her right hand she holds an open-winged Nike displaying a wreath; with her left hand she supports a shield leaning against the throne; behind the goddess appears a spear placed obliquely; she is clothed in a himation; in exergue appears a trident between two dolphins, recumbent, facing left; under Athena's outstretched arm, on the left side of the monetary field, the initials of the monetary magistrate ΘΕΟ; below the throne ΤΟ; legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ/ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΟΥ⁵.

Relatively good state of conservation.

References: MÜLLER 1858, pl. VI, no. 279; AMNG II, p. 652, no. 2481; MOISIL 1936, p. 63, no. 541; MOISIL 1944, p. 29, no. 255; ILIESCU, ISĂCESCU, GRAMATOPOUL & POPESCU 1961, p. 387, no. 43; DE CALLATAŸ 1995b, p. 41; DE CALLATAŸ 1997, p. 142, years 90–80 BC; PETAC 2005, p. 32, no. 234; PREDA & PETAC 2006, p. 37–38, no. 136–138; VÎLCU, ISVORANU & NICOLAE 2006, p. 65, no. 57; SNG Fitzwilliam Museum 1972, pl. XXVII, no. 1599.

The first stater in the catalog is part of the numismatic collection of the Brukenthal National Museum, coming from the former collection of Dr. Friedrich Mauksch, ophthalmic surgeon in Sebeş. In 1900, his collection was already known outside the city, having been created in his youth and organized in three directions: numismatics, archaeology and ethnography⁶. The numismatic collection was gathered according to two criteria: the beauty and the value of the pieces. Unfortunately, most of it was gradually sold off during the Second World War when financial needs took over the Mauksch family. We note that the pieces in the archaeological collection came from the communes near the cities of Sebeş and Alba Iulia⁷.

What remained of the former numismatic collection was donated by Dr. Mauksch's descendants to the Brukenthal National Museum in 2003, on the

⁴ For the obverse and reverse descriptions see AMNG II, p. 605–606, 649–653, no. 2471–2486; PREDA 1998, p. 112.

⁵ For the obverse and reverse descriptions see AMNG II, p. 605–606, 649–653, no. 2471–2486; PREDA 1998, p. 112.

⁶ STREITFELD & BERCIU 1974, p. 676.

⁷ STREITFELD & BERCIU 1974, p. 677.

200th anniversary of its foundation, the archaeological collection having been donated to the same institution since 1938. The collection, which is now back in Sibiu, includes 1990 coins and medals, chronologically belonging to the ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary eras. Unfortunately, as in other cases, not enough attention has been paid to the place of discovery of the pieces, some of them coming from exchanges made by the owner with other collectors in Germany and Austro-Hungary. Of the 1990, approximately 800 pieces belong to the Greek, Hellenistic, Roman and Medieval epochs, as well as so-called barbarian, modern and contemporary coins⁸. Those catalogued as ancient seem to have been collected, as already mentioned, for their quality and value, among which we list tetradrachms from Philip II, those of the new style from Athens, Macedonia Prima, Aesillas – quaestor of Macedonia, drachms from Rhodos and Istros, etc.⁹.

Among these ancient coins, there is also a stater struck at Callatis. The Callatis mint issued posthumous coins of the Lysimachus type in two series (the first of a good style, the second of an inferior style), being able to produce a coin of good artistic quality, an activity which is part of a general monetary phenomenon¹⁰. However, this specific activity was considered to be marginal¹¹.

From a chronological point of view, Constantin Preda places most of the Lysimachus posthumous type staters between the years 90–72 BC, with the possibility that a small number were issued in the 2nd century BC¹². Gh. Poenaru Bordea, analyzing the same staters, considers that the early ones are issued in the middle of the 2nd century BC, while the late ones (of lower style) are struck during the rule of Mithridates VI Eupator over Pontus¹³. A persistence of the style of the first group until around 90 BC is not excluded and then, quite quickly, the second group is minted¹⁴. Francois de Callataÿ considers the issue of the staters of the posthumous Lysimachus type to be compact in character, having been made in a short period of time. He notes the existence of an impressive quantity of staters in the finds, their number being connected with the increased need for the recruitment of mercenaries to support the Mithridatic military campaigns¹⁵. Therefore, he considers these staters as "mercenary coins"¹⁶.

For the discovery place of the Callatis stater, we should not look for a point in the areas around the present cities of Sebeș (Alba County) or Alba Iulia (Alba County). In the numismatic collection from Sibiu is not recorded any information about the exact place of discovery. Rather the stater belongs to one of the hoards discovered in the area of Sarmizegetusa Regia (Grădiștea Muncelului-Cioclovina Natural Park, Hunedoara county). We know that most of these hoards have been dispersed and that the doctor also received coins in exchange for his medical

⁸ DUDĂU 2008, p. 182.

⁹ DUDĂU 2008, p. 182–183.

¹⁰ SEYRING 1958, p. 615.

¹¹ NEWEL 1919, p. 126.

¹² PREDA 1998, p. 113.

¹³ POENARU BORDEA 1997, p. 62.

¹⁴ POENARU BORDEA 1997, p. 62.

¹⁵ DE CALLATAÿ 1997, p. 147 and 150.

¹⁶ DE CALLATAÿ 1995a, p. 55–58.

services. Over time, in the area of Sarmizegetusa Regia in the Orăștie Montagne, several discoveries are known, for example the hoard consisting of about 40,000 gold coins found in 1543 or in 1551 in the Sargetia River (today's Strei River or rather Grădiștea River)¹⁷, which was part of the great treasure of King Decebal, and which was buried before the Roman occupation¹⁸. We add several hundred other gold coins of the posthumous Lysimachos and Koson type which were discovered consecutively in the 19th century, in 1802, 1803 and 1804, at the fortress of Costești (Costești, Orăștioara de Sus commune, Hunedoara county), at Sarmizegetusa Regia, at Grădiștea Muncelului etc¹⁹.

The next two coins in the catalog were struck at Tomis.

The Tomitan centre is considered to be the most important mint on the west coast of the Pontos Euxeinos for posthumous Lysimachus type staters²⁰ in terms of volume and quality²¹. For these staters are known, from the point of view of the style, two categories of coins, the order of presentation being also chronological: the first one is the one that presents a good style, very close to the one used on tetradrachms and staters from Byzantion (with the trident flanked by two dolphins)²², and the second one of an inferior style²³, some pieces being even barbarized, even without some attributes²⁴.

From a chronological point of view, we find in the bibliography several proposals, most of them similar. Octavian Iliescu proposed the years 130–55 BC for the issuance of posthumous Lysimachus-type staters²⁵. More precisely, the coins with a neat style are struck around 130–110 BC, and those with an inferior style are struck around 90–55 BC²⁶. Gh. Poenaru Bordea considers that the same posthumous issues can be divided into two groups: an earlier one (dated around 90/80 BC) and a later one (between 80–72 BC)²⁷. This researcher does not support the hypothesis of the minting of the western-Pontic Lysimachus type staters after 71 BC²⁸. Today there are specialists who support the possibility of the striking of these staters after 71 BC²⁹, perhaps even before the expedition of Burebista³⁰. François de Callataÿ considers the first phase of issue of the posthumous Lysimachus-type staters as belonging to the 2nd century BC, perhaps around 150 BC (according to style, weight and circulation), and the second one as

¹⁷ MUNTEANU 2002, p. 253–255; MUNTEANU 2005, p. 237–238; MITREA 1945, p. 125–128; PREDA 1973, p. 353–361; WINKLER 1972, p. 173–199; PREDA 1998, p. 226–232; PETOLESCU 2011, p. 16–18 and 51–57; PETAC 2018, p. 14.

¹⁸ PETOLESCU 2011, p. 57–58; OBERLÄNDER-TÄRNOVEANU 2013, p. 411.

¹⁹ MUNTEANU 2003, p. 263; MUNTEANU 2005, p. 241–244; PETAC 2018, p. 15.

²⁰ POENARU BORDEA 1975, p. 20; TALMAȚCHI 1995, p. 24; TALMAȚCHI 2004, p. 182.

²¹ POENARU BORDEA 1974, p. 124; POENARU BORDEA 1997, p. 63.

²² MARINESCU 2004, p. 131.

²³ DE CALLATAÿ 1995b, p. 44–45.

²⁴ ILIESCU 1961, p. 388, no. 44; ILIESCU 1979, p. 6, no. III.

²⁵ ILIESCU 2002, p. 52–53.

²⁶ ILIESCU 1979, p. 6–7; ILIESCU 1998, p. 158; ILIESCU 2000, p. 385.

²⁷ POENARU BORDEA 1979, p. 48.

²⁸ POENARU BORDEA 2000, p. 85.

²⁹ VÎLCU, ISVORANU & NICOLAE 2006, p. 9.

³⁰ ILIESCU 2000, p. 385.

belonging to the beginning of the 1st century BC³¹. He also considers that the reverse dies are characterized by a striking stylistic homogeneity, which would suggest a short period of time of issue³².

Returning to the two coins minted at Tomis from the catalog, they were discovered, according to one version, in the Schitu-Costinești area (Constanța county), in the last decade of the 20th century (in 1992–1993), during some construction works carried out by the local authorities in the area³³. The ceramic material collected from the site was taken to Sibiu, entered the collections of the Brukenthal National Museum and was recently published³⁴.

However, in the course of a relationship established between the owner of the two staters and our fellow C. Munteanu, it was later admitted that, in fact, the two staters had come into his possession through purchase from a previous owner who knew that they came “from a hoard discovered in 1992, *not far from Tomis*”. It is hardly in the nature of the finds known to date in Dobruja to appear grouped in twos, threes, etc., especially for the early 1st century BC period for late Lysimachus type staters. From the numismatic bibliography we know, still at the stage of possibility, the discovery in 1992 of a monetary hoard at Cumpăna (Cumpăna commune, Constanța county), consisting of several hundred gold coins struck in the mints of the western Pontos Euxeinos, *north of Callatis*³⁵. From this hoard, four late Lysimachus staters were sold to the National History Museum of Romanian in 2000, coins issued by Istros and Tomis, respectively in 2002, coins issued by Tomis and Callatis³⁶.

Is it possible that the two Tomis staters in the catalog do not actually come from Costinești but from Cumpăna? There is a good chance of this. On one hand, Costinești is not so near to Tomis, as we know from the last account. It is located north of Callatis, but not near Tomis. On the other hand, Cumpăna is located close to Tomis, very close to the town, at approximately 4 km and at only about 6 km from the seashore forthright. The discovery of the hoard in 1992 at Cumpăna and of the two coins separately at Costinești in 1992–1993, seems too coincidental to separate them, given the fact that not many discoveries of this type are known in Dobruja and at a very close distance from each other. In our opinion we affirm with a high index of probability that we are in the position to publish two more coins of the Cumpăna hoard discovered in 1992, next to the four already preserved in the numismatic collection of the National History Museum of Romania.

In conclusion, our approach comes to make a modest contribution through the information gathered to the knowledge and completion of data on some discoveries of hoards in Transylvania and Dobruja. Given their emergence in contexts that are impossible to control due to their fortuitous nature, either older or newer, these staters are possible small parts of fabulous hoards. Of course,

³¹ DE CALLATAȚ 1995b, p. 44.

³² DE CALLATAȚ 1995b, p. 44.

³³ During a field survey of the Hellenistic settlement located in the place called “Pescărie”, Claudiu Munteanu recorded and photographed the two coins.

³⁴ BUZOIANU & MUNTEANU 2019, p. 195–212.

³⁵ POENARU BORDEA 2001, p.18–19; PETAC 2018, p. 17.

³⁶ PETAC 2018, p. 17, n. 32 and 33.

there always remains an inevitable note of probability, inherent in the situation of such discoveries. But they are very important for the knowledge of the monetary situation in Transylvania (before the imposition of the Roman Empire) and in Dobruja, at a time when the West Pontic colonies were situated on the "frontier" of the conflicts between the Kingdom of Pontus and the Roman Republic.

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Pl. I. Late Lysimachos-type staters struck at Callatis (1) and Tomis (2 and 3).