

CIUS – NEW ROMAN FINDS ON THE DANUBIAN LIMES IN SCYTHIA (DOBRODJA)

BY

COSTEL CHIRIAC, CARMEN UNGUREANU

The Roman fort from *Cius* (being in our days near Gârliciu village, Constanța County) is placed not far from the right bank of the Danube, on the edge of Hassarlic Lake. In the vicinity of the Roman fortification, to its southern side, a large rural Getian settlement of Hellenistic epoch and one belonging to the Roman epoch (*vicus*?) from the 2th-4th centuries, were active in the past. *Cius* fortification is settled on the Lower Danube's *limes*, between the large centers from *Carsium* (Hârșova), at the south and the ex-residence of the 5th Legion Macedonica, *Troesmis* (Turcoaia), at the north (see the map)¹. *Cius* was mentioned in the ancient literary sources² and at the same time, from the same site are published many inscriptions, already known³. It seems that during the Principate it was the residence of *cohors I Lusitanorum Cyrenaica*⁴ and in the year 369 it was rebuilt by Valens⁵. *Notitia Dignitatum*, Or. XXXIX, 6, 14 mentions *Cius* as the stationary place of the cavalry unit *cuneus equitum Stablesianorum*⁶. A stamped brick found here mentions the name of *Fl. Rumoridus* who was *magister militum* under Theodosius I (379-395)⁷. Among other accidental finds we mention that some time ago, a bronze monetary hoard from the 4th century was found⁸.

Hereinafter, follows the presentation of a lot of 31 bronze coins and two lead seals found by chance at the beginning of the 9th decade within the territory and in the immediate vicinity of the fort *Cius*. All these pieces belonged to a private collection from Bucharest. Recently, the owner has donated them to the Museum of Archaeology from Constanța, where an inventory will be performed. Having the agreement of the former owner we have identified and studied the above mentioned coins and seals and therefore, our observations were committed to the printing procedures⁹. We have considered that there is an imperious need to make these materials known to the interested researchers, mostly if we consider the fact that they are unpublished and therefore they bring an additional information regarding an archaeological site which is not much known. Generally, the structure of the coins' lot is not different when compared to the situation of similarly finds from other sites of the Scythian *limes*. The referred seals are considered novelties for the above mentioned area.

¹ *TIR*, L, 35, P. 33; G. Forni, *Limes*, in *Dizionario di Antichità Romane* (ed. E. de Ruggiero), vol. IV, p. 1279-1280; C. Patsch, *RE*, III, 1899, col. 2624; V. Velkov, *Cities in Thrace and Dacia in Late Antiquity (Studies and Materials)*, Amsterdam, 1977, p. 67, 111, 202; *Der neue Pauly Enzyklopädie der Antike*, Band 2, *Ark-Ci*, Stuttgart – Weimar, 1997, col. 1224, s.v. *Cius*; Al. Suceveanu, Al. Barnea, *La Dobrojdja romaine*, Bucarest, 1991, p. 65, 183, 212, 228; Em. Doruțiu - Boilă, *ISM*, V, 1980, p. 136-147; A. Aricescu, *Armata in Dobrogea ramană*, București, 1977, p. 80, 81, 82, 88, 115, 148, 167, 192.

² *Itin. Ant.*, 224,5: *Cio*.

³ Em. Doruțiu - Boilă, *op. cit.*

⁴ *Ibidem*, p.136; Al. Suceveanu, Al. Barnea, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁵ *CIL*, III, 7494 = *ILS*, 770; G. Forni, *loc. cit.*; A. Aricescu, *op. cit.*, p. 115, 167, 168 and *SE* 117; Al. Suceveanu, Al. Barnea, *op. cit.*, p. 183, 212; *TIR*, L, 35, p. 33.

⁶ See foot note no. 5.

⁷ Em. Doruțiu - Boilă, *op. cit.*, p. 147, no. 125; *TIR*, L, 35, p. 33.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ We wish to express our gratitude to Mr. Ionel Matei from Bucharest, who's collection contained the coins and the seals and who agreed to their publication.

THE CATALOGUE OF THE ROMAN COINS RECENTLY FOUND AT CIUS

(The numbers in the catalogue are the same on the illustrations. Fig. 2, 3)

- Aurelianus**
Siscia
1. *Antoninianus*; AE; η ; 3,04 g; 21x22 mm. * P
RIC, V/1, p. 289, no. 220 (period II, *officina* 4).
- Constantinus I**
Siscia
2. *Follis*; AE; τ ; 2,98 g; 24x20 mm. |E
RIC, VII, p. 423, no. 3, years 313-315. SIS
- Cyzicus
3. *Follis*; AE; η ; 2,16 g; 18 mm. SMKΔ
LRBC, I, no. 1158, years 324-330.
RIC, VII, p. 647, no. 24, years 324-325.
- Licinius I**
Thessalonica
4. *Follis*; AE; η ; 2,34 g; 22x20 mm. • TS • A •
RIC, VII, p. 498, no. 2 var., years 313-316
(IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG NN).
- Constantinopolis**
Cyzicus
5. *Follis*; AE; η ; 2,40 g; 17x18,5 mm. SMKΔ
LRBC, I, no. 1233, years 330-335.
RIC, VII, p. 656, no. 92, years 331, 333-334.
- Urbs Roma**
Heraclea
6. *Follis*; AE; η ; 2,11 g; 19x18 mm. * SMHE •
LRBC, I, no. 912, years 330-335.
RIC, VII, p. 558, no. 124, years 330-333.
- Crispus**
Roma
7. *Follis*; AE; η ; 2,77 g; 19x18,5 mm. P|R
RIC, VII, p. 316, no. 181, years 318-319. RP
- Licinius II**
Roma
8. *Follis*; AE; η ; 2,85 g; 19x18 mm. P|R
RIC, VII, p. 316, no. 189, years 318-319. RP
- Cyzicus
9. *Follis*; AE; η ; 2,94 g; 21x19 mm. X
RIC, VII, p. 646, no. 18, years 321-324. II
SMKΓ
- Constantinus II Caesar**
Heraclea
10. *Follis*; AE; η ; 1,03 g; 16x15 mm; SMHB
Incision Obv.
- LRBC, I, no. 937, years 335-337.
RIC, VII, p. 561, no. 153, years 336-337.
- Constans**
Constantinopolis
11. AE4; η ; 1,28 g; 15x13,5 mm. [C]ON[SA?]
LRBC, I, no. 1056, years 337-341.
- RIC, VIII, p. 450, no. 45, years 337-340
(group II).
- Constantius II**
Heraclea
12. AE2; τ ; 4,82 g; 22,5x20 mm. SMHE
LRBC, II, no. 1893, years 351-354.
RIC, VIII, p. 436, no. 82, years 351-355
(group I).
- Nicomedia
13. AE3; η ; 2,15 g; 18x16,5 mm; SMNA
Bad preserved
LRBC, II, no. 2309, years 351-354 or
no. 2311, years 355-361.
RIC, VIII, p. 479, no. 96, years 351-355
(group III) or p. 481, no. 104, years
355-361 (group I).
- Cyzicus
14. AE3; η ; 1,94 g; 16x15 mm; SMKA
LRBC, II, no. 2496, years 351-354 or
no. 2498, years 355-361.
RIC, VIII, p. 498, no. 104, years 351-354
or p. 499, no. 110, years 355-361.
15. AE3; τ ; 2,16 g; 18 mm. *
LRBC, II, no. 2500, years 335-361. SMKB
RIC, VIII, p. 499, no. 113, years 355-361.
(first series).
Unidentified mint
16. AE4; η ; 1,31 g; 15x14 mm; [SM...?]
Bad preserved
Type VOT/XX/MVLT/XXX
RIC, VIII, years 347-348.
17. AE4; τ ; 1,08 g; 13 mm;
Bad preserved
Type VOT/XX/MVLT/XXX
RIC, VIII, years 347-348.
18. AE; η ; 1,93 g; 17 mm; fragment. ANA?
Type FEL TEMP REPARATIO
(FH3 or FH4).
19. AE3; ϕ ; 2,32 g; 17,5x16 mm; M
Bad preserved [...]

Type FEL TEMP REPARATIO (FH3).
20. AE3; τ ; 2,19 g; 17x15 mm; M
Bad preserved [...]

Type FEL TEMP REPARATIO (FH3).
21. AE3; η ; 2,06 g; 16 mm;
Bad preserved
Type FEL TEMP REPARATIO (FH3).
22. AE3; η ; 2,16 g; 16x15 mm;
Bad preserved
Type FEL TEMP REPARATIO (FH3 or FH4).

Constantius Gallus or Iulianus II Caesar

Unidentified mint

23. AE3; η; 1,79 g; 14,5 mm;
Bad preserved
Type FEL TEMP REPARATIO (FH3).

Iulianus II Caesar

Unidentified mint

24. AE3; τ; 3,30 g; 15,5 mm;
Bad preserved
Type FEL TEMP REPARATIO (FH3)



25. AE4; ι; 1,54 g; 14x14,5 mm;
Bad preserved
Type SPES REIPUBLICAE

Valens

Thessalonica

26. AE3; μ; 1,98 g; 16x16,5 mm.
LRBC, II, no.1705, years 364-367.
RIC, IX, no. 16 (b), years 364-367 or
no. 26 (b), years 367-375.

TEST

Cyzicus

27. AE3; η; 2,30 g; 17x16 mm.
LRBC, II, no. 2518, years 364-365 or
no. 2527, years 367-375.
RIC, IX, no. 8 (b), years 364-367 or
no. 12 (b), years 367-375.

SMKA

Nicomedia

28. AE3; τ; 2,24 g; 17x16 mm;
LRBC, II, no. 2327, years 364-365
or no. 2335, years 367-375.
RIC, IX, no. 9 (c), years 364-367.

SMNA

Unidentified emperor and mint

29. AE3; κ; 2,60 g; 14x14,5 mm;
Bad preserved
Type GLORIA ROMANORVM (8)

30. AE3; ι; 2,04 g; 14,5x15 mm.
Type GLORIA ROMANORVM (8)

31. AE; 0,69 g; 14,5 mm; fragment.
Av. [...]O[...]VG; head to the right, diadem of
pearls.

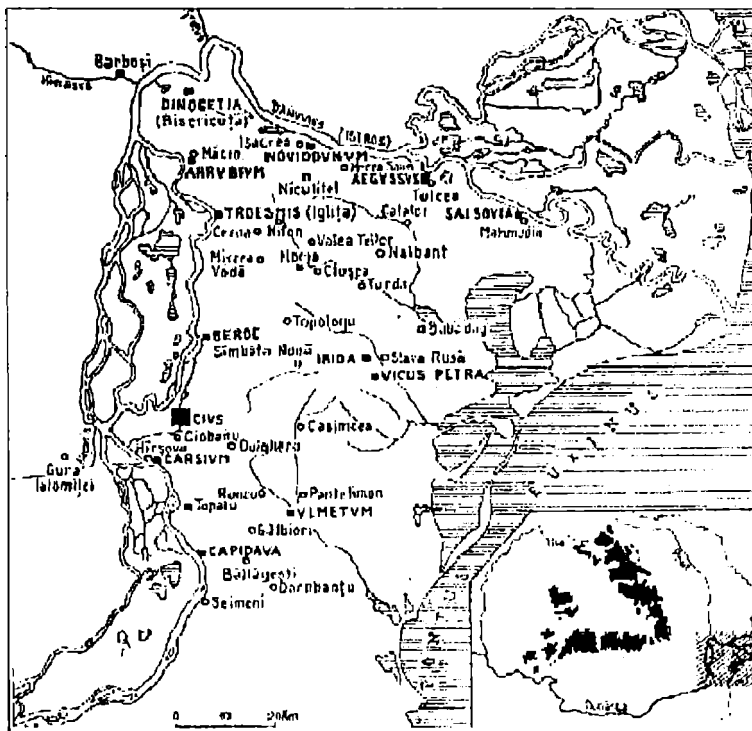


Fig. 1. The map of Roman Dobrodzja.

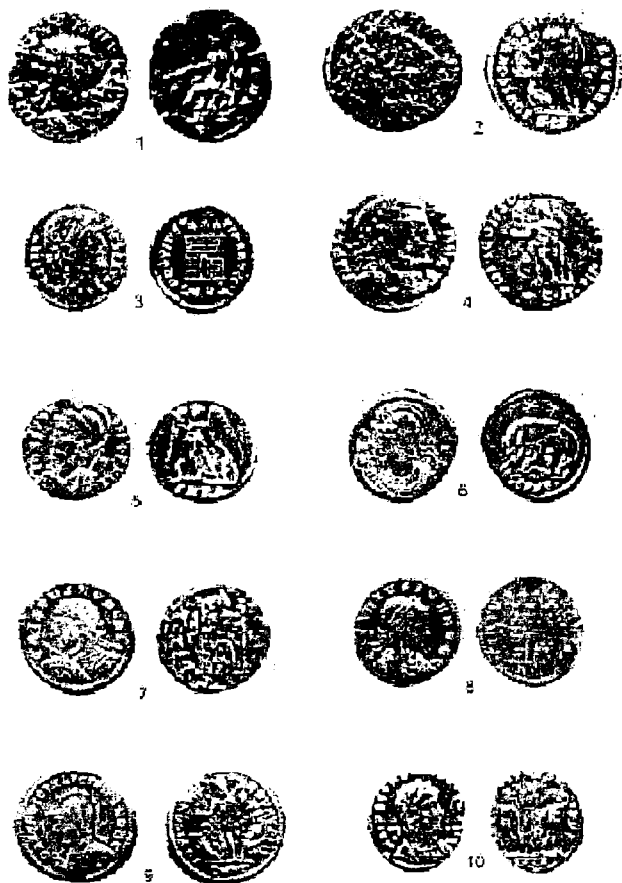


Fig. 2. Roman coins from Cius.

LEAD SEALS

The two lead seals, found by chance, are coming from the same area where the coins previously presented were found. These two unpublished seals are the first pieces of this kind found at *Cius*. Further on, we proceed to describing and commenting the two pieces.

No. 1. Commercial seal bearing the name of *Smyrna* (Asia Minor) – Fig. 4, *a* and *b*

Description: Lead almost hemispherical, of dark colour, fractured in two halves. The sealing channel is well represented. The diameter of the punched surface = 1.8 cm; lead height = 0.9 cm; weight = 8.4 gr. On the flat surface of the seal, above the sealing channel, a *quadratum incusum* with sides of 1.4 x 1.2 cm was punched. Within the *quadratum incusum*, on two horizontal rows, we find reproduced with Greek characters, in relief, the name of the micro-Asian town *Smyrna* in the graphy: CMY/PNA (Σμύρνα).

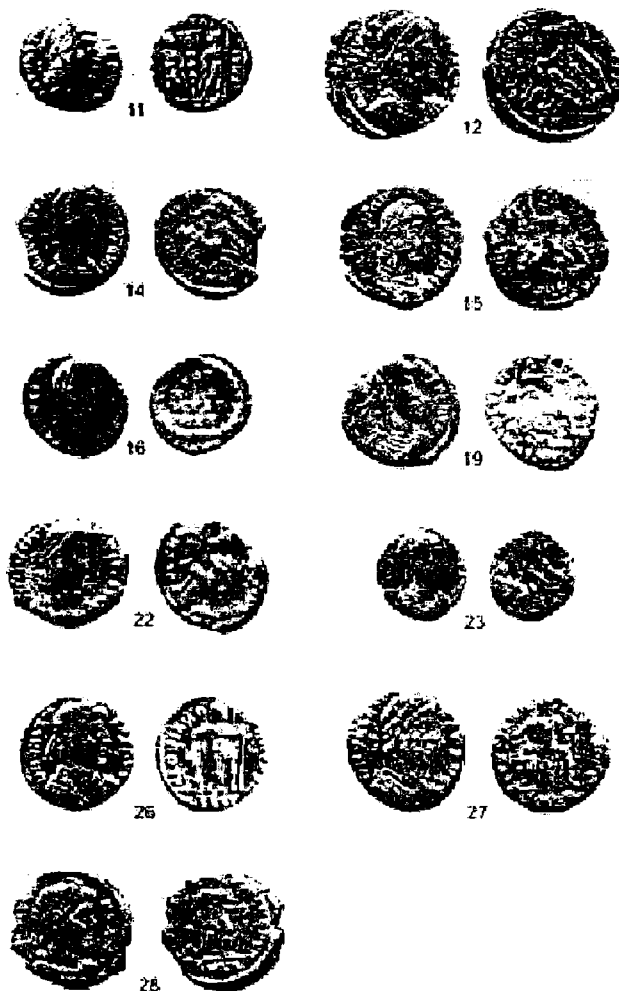


Fig. 3. Roman coins from Cius.

Observations: The same kind of commercial seals from the 4th-6th centuries, bearing the name of *Smyrna*, found in public or private collections, were also discovered in Dobrodja, at *Sucidava* (Izvoarele- Pârjoaia, Constanța County) and *Tomis* (Constanța)¹⁰. They are clearly attesting, as it was already pointed out, the strong

¹⁰ I. Barnea, *Plombs byzantins de la collection Michael C. Soutzo*, in *RÉSEE*, VII, 1969, 1, p. 23-24, no. 1-3; I. Barnea, *Relațiile provinciei Scythia Minor cu Asia Mică, Siria și Egiptul*, in *Pontica*, 5, 1972, p. 253, fig. 2, no. 1,2; V. Culică, *Plumburi comerciale din cetatea romano-bizantină de la Izvoarele (Dobrogea)*, 1, in *Pontica*, VIII, 1975, p. 244-245, no. 49-56, pl. V; idem, *Plumburi comerciale din cetatea romano-bizantină de la Izvoarele*, in *Pontica*, IX, 1976, p. 118-121, pl. V, no. 49-56; Al. Suceveanu, Al. Barnea, *op. cit.*, p. 240-241.



Fig. 4 (a and b). The seal of the town Smyrna.

commercial connections, of ancient tradition, of the province of *Scythia* with the towns of *Asia*, among which, with the exception of *Smyrna*, we would like to mention: *Ephesus*, *Metropolis*, *Hypaipa*, *Koloë*, *Laodicea*, *Pamphylia*, *Magnesia*, *Meanter*, *Tereie*, etc.¹¹. Unfortunately, we are not able to specify, in this moment, what kind of goods, stamped and sealed in the custom-offices of *Asia Minor*, arrived in *Scythia* (*Dobrodja*), mostly in the military centers, situated on the *Danubian limes*¹². The period of maximum presence of commercial leads of such kind seems to be the 4th century, especially after the peace established by Valens and Athanaricus, the king of Goths, in the year 369¹³.

Our seal belongs to the 4th-5th centuries.

No.2. Private seal- Fig.5, a and b.

The second seal presented below, was found in similar conditions and in the same area as the previous one.



Fig. 5 (a and b). Roman private seal.

Description: The seal, with an approximate oval shape, is flat, has a whitish colour and cast imperfections. The seal is double faced and one of the faces (the obverse) is crossed through the middle and on the surface

¹¹ I. Barnea, *op. cit.*, in *RÉSEE*, VII, 1969, 1, p. 24-26, no. 4-6 = *Koloë*, no. 7 = *Ephesus*, no. 8-9 = *Metropolis*; *idem*, *op. cit.*, in *Pontica*, 5, 1972, p. 253, fig. 2; no. 3 = *Ephesus*, no. 4 = *Koloë*; V. Culică, *op. cit.*, in *Pontica*, VII, 1975, p. 244, no. 46-48, pl. IV = *Hypaipa*, p. 246, no. 57-60, pl. V = *Ephesus*; p. 246, no. 61, pl. VI = *Magnesia*, p. 246, no. 62, pl. VII = *Laodicea*; *idem*, *op. cit.*, in *Pontica*, IX, 1976, p. 118-121, 131-133, pl. IV-VI; I. Barnea, *Uneditierte byzantinische Bleistigel aus Tomis-Constanța*, in *Pontica*, XXV, 1992, p. 284, no. 3 = *Meanter*, p. 284-285, no. 4 = *Tereie*.

¹² V. Culică, *op. cit.*, in *Pontica*, IX, 1976, p. 131-133; Al. Suceveanu, Al. Barnea, *op. cit.*, p. 240-241.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 241; V. Culică, *op. cit.*, in *Pontica*, IX, 1976, p. 130; I. Barnea, *op. cit.*, in *RÉSEE*, VII, 1969, p. 23-24.

by the trajectory of the sealing channel. This means that either the application of the seal over the wire-cord stretching the package and the merchandise itself was superficial, or the piece was abandoned after casting, being considered a waste.

Diameter of the seal = 2 cm; lead thickness is 0.2-0.5 cm, weight = 5.9 gr. Preservation condition: bad.

Obverse: To the right, the bust of a feminine character, with diadem and loop. One can observe the traces of three or four letters of a circular legend on the left upper side, but they are difficult to read under the actual preservation condition of the piece.

Reverse: The frontal image of a lion head within a circular frame. The mane is shown by small lines radially disposed. The animal's head, cheek bones and mouth are made in high relief.

Observations: Even though the image of the feminine character from the obverse resembles the ones from many monetary pieces from the 3th-4th centuries, we are not able to specify the name of this character or her social or political position. We do not know, at least in Dobrodja, similar pieces to the one presented above. Our opinion leads to a seal dating of 3th-4th centuries, based mainly on certain iconographic considerations.