

DAVOR MARGETIĆ

Croatian Numismatic Society
Margaretska 3
10000 Zagreb, Croatia
margetid@irb.hr

PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC AND THE LAST EMISSION
OF ANTONINIANI AT THE MINT OF SISCIA¹

UDK: 737.1(497.5 Sisak)»652«
Izvorni znanstveni rad

Some questions on the last emissions of antoniniani of the Siscia mint are discussed in the light of several unrecorded tetrarchic types with PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC reverse. An entirely new type with this legend is described for Diocletian, Constantius and Galerius.

Key words: Siscia mint, antoniniani, PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC, Diocletian, Constantius, Galerius

Ključne riječi: siscijska kovnica, antoninijani, PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC, Dioklecijan, Konstancije, Galerije

Since the publication of the fifth volume of *RIC* (WEBB 1933) the issues of the third century period have been considered to be fully covered. It was expected that specimens with new mintmarks, bust types or minor variations of legends would occur, which could enrich the material. However, it is not so common that coins exhibiting major novelties in the typology are discovered. Three such unpublished antoniniani of the mint of Siscia have appeared recently (1-3). While their existence does not alter the established chronological sequence of the known Siscian issues (Table 1), it is an important addition to the numismatic corpus of this period (ŠIPUŠ 1974: 31).

¹ This paper is dedicated to Ivan Mirnik on the occasion of his 70th birthday. This manuscript is one in a series of papers on the subject of antoniniani from the Siscia mint. For the previous paper in the series, see MARGETIĆ – MARGETIĆ 2011: 31 and references cited therein.

The new types of antoniniani for Diocletian, Constantius and Galerius bear the obverse legend *PRAESIDIA REIPUBLICA* and the exergual mark 'XXI'. The coin for Galerius bears a 'T' mark for officinae in the left field, while the officinae marks are missing for Diocletian and Constantius. The first specimen was published on the internet (the Ancient Coin Forum web site, 2009) (1), the second (2) was used as an illustration in Castan's book on Roman coinage in 1996 (CASTAN – FUSTER 1996) and its source subsequently traced down in auction catalogues, while the third was offered for sale at a Freeman & Sear auction in 2011 (3).

The same obverse legend with a different type is listed for the Siscia mint for both Caesars: Galerius and Constantius *RIC* 718 (4) and *RIC* 671 (7-11). The *RIC* type has the Caesars standing facing each other and holding Victory on a globe, a kneeling captive in between, and has a different exergual mintmark 'XXIA'. According to the literature, this obverse belongs to the last emission of antoniniani at the Siscia mint before Diocletian's monetary reform. *RIC* dates this issue to A.D. 293, presumably at least partly based on interpreting it as a tetrarchic type and associating it with the appointment of the caesars in that year (LEADBETTER 2009). The same obverse is present on the unique and unrecorded specimen (13) for Maximianus in the collection of Warren Esty.²

The study of the last emission is hampered by the great rarity of these coins, as noted in the classic work on the subject by Voetter (VOETTER – GERIN 1921: 1). According to him, *PRAESIDIA REIPUBLICA* antoniniani are known by single specimens, one minted for Constantius Chlorus, in the Vienna coin cabinet, and one for Galerius in the famous Gnecci collection, today in the Medagliere, Museo Nazionale Romano in Rome. For the first and only time in numismatic literature, the depiction of the Vienna specimen is given as a line drawing (12) in Voetter's article in *Numismatische Zeitschrift* in 1899 (T. 20, nos. 34-35). This has remained the only illustration of this type in numismatic literature. Although known for over 100 years and quoted in all subsequent numismatic works, a picture of Gnecci's coin has never been published. Since the publication of the Gerin collection in 1921 (VOETTER – GERIN 1921: 1), 90 years ago, several new specimens of these excessively rare coins have appeared on the numismatic market. There are 6 new examples for Constantius (7-11) and a second known specimen for Galerius (4).³ One of these is kept in the collections of the American numismatic society (10), while the others are in private collections. The rarity of these coins is also evidenced by their absence from coin hoards of that period. Interestingly, provenance or find-spot is unknown for all of them, and their absence from the numismatic collection of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, where most of the coin finds from the nearby town of Sisak (ancient Siscia) are kept, does not help for their firm attribution to the Siscia mint.

Before Voetter, the *PRAESIDIA REIPUBLICA* type for Constantius was known to Cohen (No. 218) (COHEN 1889-1892), Mionnet, Akerman and Eckhel, all citing the same Vienna specimen, while the issue for Galerius was not known until the publication of Gnecci's article in *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica* in 1889 (GNECCHI 1889: 431). Naville, in *RIN* in 1905, lists coins for both caesars (NAVILLE 1905: 179).

The standard obverse for this type depicts Constantius and Galerius standing facing one another (both holding spears and with shields laid down at their feet), with one receiving Victory on a globe from the other, and each holding a sceptre; between them, a bound captive

² According to information obtained by the present owner, the coin was obtained in 2000 from Jonathan Kern, who found it in a hoard of 6500 pieces.

³ One specimen (Constantius) for which a picture could not be obtained appeared in ebay sale 350487137273 (2011), 4.14 g, seller: lucernae.

kneeling right. For the first time, there are enough specimens for comparison. It is evident that there are two variants for Chlorus, where the kneeling captive is facing right (4 specimens with the mark 'XXIA' in exergue made from two obverse dies, 7-9), while coins with the mark 'XXI' in exergue, depicting the kneeling captive facing left (2 pieces, 10 and 11), were struck from the same obverse dies. Similar variants are observed on the pieces issued for Galerius: the captive kneeling right (4) and left (6).

The new type of *PRAESIDIA REIPUBLICA* has an entirely different depiction on the reverse: Diocletian (or Constantius/Galerius) advancing right, holding a shield in his left hand and, in his raised right hand, a spear pointing at the captive, kneeling facing left. The best preserved of the three specimens is Freeman & Sear (3), with full details clearly visible. On these coins, the unique obverse legend is coupled with the very rare depiction. The reverse is very similar to the rare *PACATOR ORBIS* coin of Numerian from the Lyon mint struck in the 9th emission, during the Summer of A.D. 284 (*RIC*, *COH* 41, *BASTIEN*). The reverse of (14) depicts Numerian advancing right, holding shield and sword, with captive beneath (MALONE 2009: 58). The unique specimens of the new type must be closely related to the part of the *PRAESIDIA REIPUBLICA* issue with the 'XXI' mark in exergue (10 and 11), since both of them also have 'XXI', while the officinae mark is omitted. Identical obverse die breaks at D-I are present on all three coins. The scarcity of these coins may indicate a final emission, or even trial pieces. The obverse legend for Diocletian reads 'IMP C DIOCLETIANVS AVG'; for Constantius one can find 'FL VAL CONSTANTIVS NOB C', while for Galerius the legend 'GAL VAL MAXIMIANVS NOB C' was used. On specimen (6) a longer legend was used – 'GAL VAL MAXIMIANVS NOB CAE' – while Voetter erroneously gives the full legend 'GAL VAL MAXIMIANVS NOB CAES' for Gnechchi's coin (Gerin 1). This error can be corrected by inspection of Gnechchi's specimen (5). It is likely that dies for the whole *PRAESIDIA REIPUBLICA* issue are the product of the same die engraver, as indicated by the way the letter 'S' is executed. Another distinctive detail of lettering is the size of the letter 'C' in 'NOB C' of the obverse legend, being smaller than the other letters (while the same can be seen for the last letter 'E' on coin 6) – obviously the die engraver ran out of space on the small flan. While coins 4 and 6 have an identical obverse legend die-break I-P, specimen (5) has an unbroken legend.

An otherwise unknown legend in Roman numismatics, the *PRAESIDIA REIPUBLICAe*, or defence of the republic, is clearly indicated by the scene on this reverse type, which shows the two Caesars as Rome's eastern and western defenders, with the victoriola (the statuette of a crowning Victory on a globe) and the bound captive being emblematic of their assured military prowess. Eckhel thinks that the reverse legend indicates that the defence of the empire was entrusted to the valour of the soldiers (STEVENSON *et al.* 1889), as with Taylor (TAYLOR 2010: 411), who points out that coins struck in the names of both Caesars bearing the legend *PRAESIDIA REIPUBLICA* give the impression that they were to play a crucial role in the defence of the Empire. On the other hand, comment given for the *CGB* specimen (6) interprets the *PRAESIDIA REIPUBLICA* inscription as "the direction of the State or of public affairs". The choice of this reverse confirmed the direction taken by the new regime due to the creation of the Caesars in 293, the Tetrarchy, sensibly ensuring a dynastic continuity outside nepotism and heredity.

This rare iconography (two figures facing each other, one emperor receiving the victoriola from the other, a captive kneeling in between) was later used for Maxentius in the Ostia mint (DROST 2008: 269): an aureus inscribed 'VICTOR OMNIVM GENTIVM AVG N' (DROST 2008: Pl. 2, fig. 15(40), British Museum 1864, 1128.186 (coll. Wigan), *RIC* VI, 6 p 401), and nummi 'MARTI VICTORI AVG N' (DROST 2008: Pl. 3, fig. 32, *RIC* VI 55), as well as an aureus 'MARTI VICTORI AVG N' minted in Rome (DROST 2008: Pl. 3, fig. 34, *RIC* VI -).

On the basis of epigraphic considerations and style comparison, this reverse depiction is probably modelled from an earlier issue or struck in parallel with equally rare Siscian antoniniani with the 'VIRTVS AVGG' legend (15-17). These pieces are known for both augusti by Naville (NAVILLE 1905b: 481); however they were somehow omitted and not listed in *RIC*. The last emission of Siscia is iconographically quite uniform. On PRAESIDIA REIPUBLIC (4-13), VIRTVS AVGG (15-17), IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS AVGG/CAES (18-22) and CONCORDIA MILITVM (23-25)⁴ coinage there is a common late 3rd-century reverse depiction of two standing figures, emperor and caesar (soldier, goddess) facing each other, shaking hands or presenting Victory on a globe (cf. coinage of Aurelian and Probus: CONCORDIA MILITVM or CONCORDIA MILIT, *RIC* 244 for Aurelian, and *RIC* 665-668 for Probus). It is a continuation of the iconography present in previous Diocletianic emissions at the Siscia mint for both augusti: VICTORIA AVGG (*RIC* 277-282 for Diocletian and *RIC* 585-589 for Maximian), FIDES MILITVM (*RIC* 266 and 583), CONSERVATOR AVGG (*RIC* 259-265 and 577-582) and CLEMENTIA TEMP (*RIC* 252-255 and 287-288). The only iconographic exception in the last emissions is an excessively rare coin with 'PROVIDENTIA DEORVM' obverse (Providence standing left with globe and bevelled sceptre). Minted for Constantius I and listed by Voetter as an addendum in *Numismatische Zeitschrift* in 1920 (and Slg. Gerin no. 2), it remains unique, and as yet an illustration for confirmation of type is not available (VOETTER 1920: 101).

Contemporary with the minting of antoniniani are issues of Siscian unmarked aurei dated to A.D. 293 by Pink (PINK 1931: 1). The first series for Galerius is PRINCIPI IVVENT (British Museum, no. BNK, R. 66; Slg. Trau, Gilhofer & Ranschburg, Hess 1935 no. 3641 (auction); *RIC* VI, 8), on which the similar lettering style is probably the work of the same die engravers: a small, squeezed-in letter 'C' in 'NOB C', and the same problems in execution of the letter 'S', which can also be seen on the HERCVLI DEBELLAT aureus of Maximian (British Museum no. R.124, *RIC* VI, 2), as well as the HERCVLI DEBELLAT aureus of Constantius (Christie's sale 1238 (13 April 2000), no. 97 = Galerie des Monnaies, Los Angeles, 9 June 1978, lot 1908, *RIC* VI, 3) (ALFÖLDI 1929: 280).⁵ These stylistic similarities indicate a conclusion that the first emission of aurei attributed by Sutherland in *RIC* VI to the time after Diocletian's reform of A.D. 293-294 better fits the last emission of aurei prior to the reform, as classified by Pink. On the other hand, examination of coinage from the first emission of folles from Siscia (GENIO POPVLI ROMANI cf. *RIC* 76a,b; 81a,b in the Čentur A and C hoards) shows great differences in style (both lettering and busts), indicating that there was also a change of personnel (i.e. die engravers) in the mint.

⁴ The iconographically identical 'IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS CAES' coinage has a parallel issue in the Antioch mint for Constantius I (*RIC* 673 and 674) and Galerius (*RIC* 719) with officina mintmarks not used in Siscia, '-S-//XXI' and '-Γ-//XXI', coupled with longer obverse legends which were not used in Siscia: 'FL VAL CONSTANTIVS NOB CAES' and 'GAL VAL MAXIMIANVS CONS CAES'.

⁵ Footnote in *RIC*: certain of the earlier issues of Siscian gold, though neither exhaustively nor without the need of some correction.

Table 1: Last emissions of antoniniani in the Siscia mint

Emission 4	291-293	<i>RIC</i>	Source
	Diocletianus		
	VICTORIA AVGG	277-282	
	VIRTVS AVGG	-	Naville
	Maximianus		
	VICTORIA AVGG	585-589	
	VIRTVS AVGG	-	Naville
Emission 5	293-294		
	Diocletianus		
	CONCORDIA MILITVM	256-258	
	IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS AVGG	275	
	PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC (2) ^b	-	internet
	Maximianus		
	IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS AVGG	584	
	PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC (1) ^a	-	Esty <i>coll.</i>
	Constantius I caesar		
	PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC (1)	671	
	PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC (2)	-	auction
	PROVIDENTIA DEORVM	-	Voetter
	Galerius caesar		
	PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC (1)	716	
	PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC (2)	-	auction
	IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS CAES	-	Voetter

^aType 1: Caesars standing facing each other and holding Victory on a globe, with a kneeling captive in between

^bType 2: Emperor/Caesar advancing right, holding shield in left hand and, in raised right hand, spear pointing to kneeling captive

Three workshops (officinae A, B and Γ) were active during the last period of the Siscia mint prior to monetary reform, as shown by the distribution of the last emissions of antoniniani at the Siscia mint by officinae mark (Table 2).⁶ The attribution of coins without officinae mark is problematic: copper (issued for Diocletian and Constantius), and a similar problem applies to gold (minted for all tetrarchs). The small number of specimens does not allow a conclusion as to whether some obverses were minted exclusively in one of the officinae.

⁶ This pattern is in accord with the same three officinae's being active at the beginning of the reformed coinage (JELOČNIK 1958 :3).

Table 2: Distribution for the last emissions of antoniniani at the Siscia mint by officinae ^a

Reverse	Officinae	A	B	Γ	none
Emission 4					
VICTORIA AVGG		D, M	D, M	D, M	
VIRTUS AVGG			D	D, M	
Emission 5					
CONCORDIA MILITVM			D		
IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS AVGG			D	M	
IOVI ET HERCVLI CONS CAES		G			
PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC (1)		M, C, G			C
PRAESIDIA REIPVBLIC (2)				G	D, C
PROVIDENTIA DEORVM				C	

^a D = Diocletian, M = Maximianus, C = Constantius, G = Galerius

In conclusion, Voetter's remarks can be reiterated: the rarity of coins of the Caesars means that either Siscia had a break in its minting, or we should date the reform to A.D. 293. It is more probable that the small output in the last emission is due to the preparation of the mint for issuing reformed coinage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to Warren Esty for information and the kind supply of photographs of coins from his collection, as well as photos from auction catalogues. Ted Buttrely (Fitzwilliam Museum, Oxford) is thanked for photos from auction catalogues. Gabriella Angelli Bufalini (Medagliere del Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome) and Soprintendenza speciale per i beni archeologici di Roma are thanked for photos from the Gneccchi collection and permission for publication. Information on the subject from Goran Dević is also appreciated. Ivan Mirnik and Tomislav Bilić (Numismatic cabinet, Archaeological Museum in Zagreb) are thanked for permission to study related specimens from the numismatic collection and help with literature. Classical Numismatic Groups is thanked for permission to use photographs from their auctions.

ABBREVIATIONS

BASTIEN – Bastien, P. - *Monnaie et "donativa" au bas-empire*. Wetteren, 1988.

CGB – Cgb. Fr – numismatics (<http://www.cgb.fr/indexgb.html>)

CNG – Classical Numismatic Group Inc. (<http://www.cngcoins.com/>)

COH – COHEN, H. 1889-1892

JNAA – Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia. (Sydney)

RIC (V/2) – WEBB, P.H. 1993

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALFÖLDI, A. 1929 – The first gold issues of the tetrarchy at Siscia. *NC*, 5th series, 9/1929: 280-284, Pl. XXII.
- CASTAN, C. – FUSTER, C. 1996 – La Moneda Imperial Romana: Julio Cesar, 100 A.C. – Romulo Augusto, 476 D.C. Madrid, 1996: (No. 861).
- COHEN, H. 1889-1892 – Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'empire romain communément appelées Médailles Impériales. Paris, 1888-1892.
- DROST, V. 2008 – Le monnayage d'or de Maxence à l'atelier d'Ostie: à propos de l'aureus au type *Pax Aeterna Aug N*. *RN*, 164/2008: 269-296.
- GNECCHI, F. 1889 – Appunti di numismatica romana VII, Contribuzioni al corpus numorum. A collezione Gneccchi a Milano. *RIN*, 2/1889: 431-476.
- JELOČNIK, A. 1958 – Prvi follesi iz kovnice Siscia. Les premiers folles de l'atelier monétaire de Siscia. *NumVest*, 1/1958: 3-8.
- LEADBETTER, B. 2009 – *Galerius and the will of Diocletian*. London, 2009.
- MALONE, C.W. 2009 – Violence on Roman Imperial Coinage. *JNAA*, 20/2009 (2010): 58-72.
- MARGETIĆ, D. – MARGETIĆ, D. 2011 – Antoninijani carice Magnije Urbike iz kovnice Siscia. Summary: Antoniniani of Empress Magnia Urbica from the Siscia mint. *NumVij*, 64/2011: 31-59.
- NAVILLE, L.
– 1905. Monnaies inédites de l'empire Romain (coll. Lucien Naville) IV. Quelques monnaies de Gallien en or et en bronze (suite). *RIN*, 18/1905: 179-200.
– 1905b. Monnaies inédites de l'empire Romain (coll. O. Voetter). VII. Monnaies en bronze de la Tétrarchie Dioclétienne et de Carausius, *RIN*, 18/1905: 481-484.
- PINK, K. 1931 – Die Goldprägung des Diocletianus und seiner Mittregenten (284 bis 305). *NZ*, 24/1931: 1-59.
- STEVENSON, S.W. – SMITH, C.R. – MADDEN, F.W. 1889 – *A dictionary of Roman coins, republican and imperial*. London, 1889.
- ŠIPUŠ, N. 1974 – Antoninijani cara Dioklecijana i njegovih suvladara iskovanani u kovnici Sisciji. Summary: Antoniniani of Emperor Diocletian and his co-regents struck in the Siscia mint. *NumVij* 32/1974: 31-36.
- TAYLOR, T.S. 2010 – *Usurpation in the Roman Empire, 68-305 C.E.*. PhD thesis, Yale University, 2010: 411.
- VOETTER, O.
– 1899. Die Kupferprägungen der Diokletianischen Tetrarchie. *NZ*, 31/1899: 1.
– 1920. Die Kupferprägung der Diocletianischen Tetrarchie. Siscia. *NZ*, 53/1920: 101.
- VOETTER, O. – GERIN, P. 1921 – *Die Münzen der Römischen Kaiser, Kaiserinnen und Caesaren von Diocletianus bis Romulus 284-476*. Katalog der hinterlassenen Sammlung und Aufzeichnung des Herrn Paul Gerin. Vienna, 1921.
- WEBB, P.H. 1933 – *The Roman imperial coinage, Volume 5, Part II, Probus-Amandus 276-286*. London, 1933.

PRAESIDIA REIPUBLIC
I POSLJEDNJI ANTONINIJANI SISCIJSKE KOVNICICE

U članku autor diskutira neka neriješena pitanja o posljednjoj emisiji antoninijana u kovnici Siscija, na osnovu nekoliko nepubliciranih tipova novca tetrahije sa *PRAESIDIA REIPUBLIC* reversom. Posve nepoznati tip sa ovom legendom je opisan za Dioklecijana, te Konstancija i Galerija.

Key to plates

- 1) Forum topic=55083 (2009)¹
- 2) Sternberg 13 (1983), no. 984 = TradArt The Numismatic Auction 1 (Dec. 1982), no. 454 = Castan (1996), pg. 333, no. 861
- 3) Freeman & Sear Manhattan 3 (2011), no. 215, 3.61 g = Goldberg 70 2012 3397
- 4) vbidz 275 (2012), no. 613, 2.6 g
- 5) Ghecchi collection, Rome, 3.58 g
- 6) Empire auction 9 (30 April 1988), no. 410, 3.76 g
- 7) CNG 84 (2010), no. 1440, 3.19 g, 12 h, now coll. Warren Esty
- 8) CGB 43 (2010), no. 698, 3.73 g, 12 h
- 9) Gorny & Mosch 134 (2004), no. 3069, 4.51 g
- 10) ANS 1944.100.38292, 4.07 g, 6 h (bequest of E.T. Newell)
- 11) vcoins (2010) (Walter), no. 298, 3.71 g, now coll. Dević (Sisak)

¹ <http://www.forumancientcoins.com/board/index.php?topic=55083.0>

- 12) Voetter NZ 1899, Pl. XX, no. 34-35 (line drawing)
- 13) Warren Esty collection, 22 mm, 3.47 g, die axis 6:30
- 14) vcoins (2012) (Roman Lode), no. 5577, 3.51 g
- 15) Naville RIN 1905 178, Pl 8, Fig. 29,30
- 16) Naville RIN 1905 481, Fig. 2
- 17) Naville RIN 1905 481, Fig 3
- 18) NAC D (1994), no. 2112, 3.94 g
- 19) vcoins no. 4890 (incitatus coins), 3.4 g
- 20) vcoins no. 4554 (beast coins), 3.77 g
- 21) tesorillo no. 6, 3.0 g (www.tesorillo.com)
- 22) CNG 135 (2006), no. 177, 3.40 g (*Douglas O. Rosenberg coll.*)
- 23) CGB no. 182160, 3.96 g, 5h
- 24) ancient coin forum, no. 29424
- 25) LEcoins (2009), no. Ra208a



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14





15



16

17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24



25