

REVISTA CICSA

serie nouă



XI/2025

Consiliul Științific/ Scientific Board:

Prof. Dr. Paolo **Carafa** – Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

Prof. Dr. Carol **Căpiță** – University of Bucharest, Romania

Prof. Dr. Miron **Ciho** – University of Bucharest, Romania

Assist. Prof. Dr. Emna **Ghith-Hmissa** – University of Sousse, Tunisia

Prof. Dr. Andreas **Gutsfeld** – Université de Lorraine (Nancy 2), France

Prof. Dr. emer. Antal **Lukacs** – University of Bucharest, Romania

Prof. Dr. Ecaterina **Lung** – University of Bucharest, Romania

Prof. Dr. emer. Gheorghe-Vlad **Nistor** – University of Bucharest, Romania

Dr. Cristian Eduard **Ștefan** – Institute of Archaeology „V. Pârvan”, Bucharest, România

Prof. Dr. Christoph **Uehlinger** – Universität Zürich, Switzerland

Dr. Mădălina **Vârtejanu-Joubert** – Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales
(INALCO), Paris, France

Prof. Dr. Anton Carl **van Vollenhoven** – North-West University, South Africa

Lect. Dr. Daniela **Zaharia** – University of Bucharest, Romania

Comitetul de Redacție/ Editorial Board

Florica (**Bohîlțea**) **Mihuț** – University of Bucharest

Diana **Pavel** – University of Bucharest

Mădălina-Teodora **Comănescu** – Site Administrator

ISSN 2457 – 3809

ISSN – L 2457 – 3809

<https://cicsaunibuc.wordpress.com/revista/revista-online>

Cuprins/ Contents

Studii/ Studies

A. Papers of the International Colloquium on “Epistolography, knowledge, and the Ancient World”, Bucharest, October 3-4, 2025

Carlos HEREDIA CHIMENO – Letters from a Broken Republic: Cicero’s Correspondence and Constitutional Transgression (91–79 BCE)	5-17
Florentina NICOLAE – The Silence of Men, reflected in “Heroides”, the imaginary letters of love written by Publius Ovidius Naso.....	18-25
Lorenzo MONACO – L’immagine delle campagne daciche traianee e di Decebalo in Plinio il Giovane, <i>Ep.</i> , 8. 4. 2.....	26-38
Jörg VON ALVENSLEBEN – Fronto’s letter <i>De nepote amisso</i> as lament, self-consolation and self-reflection.....	39-49
Giovanni TAGLIALATELA – Die Verwirklichung des quintilianischen Lehrideals in Fronto Pädagogische Tugenden und Lehren durch Briefe.....	50-68
Mariana BODNARUK – Inscribing Senatorial Authority: Epigraphic Epistles and Senatorial Legislation from Constantine I to Theodosius I.....	69-89
Ethan CHILCOTT – <i>Varietas</i> in the <i>Variae</i> : Erudition and Audience in Cassiodorus’ <i>Epistles</i> ...90-113	
Lorenzo MONACO – <i>Licet interdum confabulationis tale conuiuium doctrinae quoque sale conditur</i> : Jerome’s letters to Marcella, and biblical exegesis in epistolary form.....	114-127
Titus SARKAR, Letters of Obligation: Debt, Trust and Moral Economy in the Lekhapaddhati.....	128-140

B. Papers of the 13th annual session of CICSA, “Circulația persoanelor, a bunurilor și a ideilor (din Preistorie în Antichitatea Târzie)”/ ‘Movement of persons, goods, and ideas (from Prehistory to the Late Antiquity)’, Bucharest, April 25-26, 2025

Ioana-Teodora STAN – The Panathenaic amphorae: an instrument for the propagation of Athens’ discourse and a subject of symbolic conflict.....	141-150
Ana-Maria BALȚĂ – When distance is not an obstacle. Several preliminary considerations on <i>Liberalitas</i> coin types of <i>Nikopolis ad Istrum</i> and <i>Marcianopolis</i>	151-166

Aurelia PARASCHIV, Alexandra-Clara ȚÂRLEA – Roman glass vessels in funerary contexts from Tomis and Callatis. A reassessment of older publications.....167-194

C. Interpretări și analize/ Interpretations and Analyses

Darius COVACIU – The ecclesiastic status of the see of Tomis between the 4th and 6th centuries. Reading notes on Ionuț Holubeanu’s research.....195-211

D. Recenzii și prezentări de carte / Reviews and Book Presentations

Sergiu Popovici, *Cultura Usatovo. Arheologia funerară a unei societăți din epoca bronzului*, Târgoviște, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2023, 475 pag., ISBN 978-606-537-623-6 – Elena FERARU.....212-214

Anthony A. Barrett și John C. Yardley, *The Emperor Caligula in the Ancient Sources*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2023, 203 pag., ISBN 978-0-19-885457-9 – Andreea Luisa MIHAL.....215-218

Eckart Frahm, *Assyria. The Rise and Fall of the World’s First Empire*, New York, Basic Books, 2023, 528 pag., ISBN: 9781541674400 – George Cătălin ROBESCU219-221

Daniel Unruh, *Talking to Tyrants in Classical Greek Thought*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2023, VIII+272 pag., ISBN 978-1-78962-123-5, ISBNe 978-1-78962-426-7 – Ioana-Teodora STAN....
.....222-224

Daniela Zaharia, Vladimir Crețulescu (coords), *Sensibilități, obsesii, fobii și istoriile lor neașteptate / Sensitivities, Obsessions, Phobias, and Their Intriguing Histories*, 2024, Editura Universității din București, 282 pag., ISBN: 978-606-16-1499-8 – Cristina POPESCU.....225-227

Plutarh, *Vorbele de duh ale spartanilor*, traducere din greaca veche, studiu introductiv și note de Liviu Mihail Iancu, ilustrații de Mihail Coșulețu, București, Editura Humanitas, 2024, 200 pag., ISBN 978-973-50-8647-3 – Florica (BOHÎLȚEA) MIHUȚ.....228-231

E. Rezumate teze de licență și disertație/ Abstracts of Bachelor and Master Theses

Maria-Irina SOCOLAN – *A Comparative Analysis of Mithraic Imagery: The Regional Adaptation of the Tauroctony in Dacia*, (abstract of the Bachelor’s Thesis, 2025).....232-245

Cronica activității CICSA, anul 2025, Florica (BOHÎLȚEA) MIHUȚ.....246-247

When distance is not an obstacle. Several preliminary considerations on *Liberalitas* coin types of *Nikopolis ad Istrum* and *Marcianopolis*

Ana-Maria BALTĂ,
University of Bucharest

<https://www.doi.org/10.31178/cicsa.2025.11.11>

Abstract: The present study highlights a noteworthy and atypical reverse type within Roman Provincial Coinage of *Moesia Inferior*, but also in general. It features *Liberalitas* standing and holding a counting table and *cornucopia*, a depiction commonly associated with imperial coinage. Surprisingly, *Nikopolis ad Istrum* issued coins with this image during a very specific period, the tenure of Statius Longinus under the brief rule of Macrinus and Diadumenianus (April-June/August AD 217). Still, not only *Nikopolis*, but also *Marcianopolis* produced coins with this depiction, doing so during the afore-mentioned reign (under the governor Pontianus, June/August – November/December AD 217) and the period of Elagabalus (AD 218-222). Given the exceptional character of these coin types in the case of the so-called “Greek Imperials”, this research seeks to explore a possible context for their emergence in the cities under consideration based on the currently available data (literary, epigraphic and numismatic) and to contour several preliminary observations.

Keywords: *Liberalitas*, coinage, *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, *Marcianopolis*.

I. Introduction

Roman Provincial Coinage’s iconography continues to be a consistent resource of information concerning the Empire’s cities. It could be seen as reflection of local architecture,¹ natural landscape, but also religious cults or other aspects of civic daily life.² Some numismatic representations are less typical for the so-called “Greek Imperials”³ as we would also observe in the current case study. Still, numerous examples of this kind are unknown, especially because of the specificity of each city and its representations. Consequently, for most of them a highly possible context is difficult to contour as it would also be visible in the following pages, but they are at least described, highlighted and connected to probable reasons of emission.

¹ See Drew-Bear 1974, Donaldson 1859, Burnett 2002, Burnett 2024.

² Burnett 2024.

³ For a detailed description of this category of coinage see Howgego *et al.* 2005, Amandry 2020, Burnett 2024.

Nikopolis ad Istrum and *Marcianopolis* are two of the most important cities from *Moesia Inferior* and they are no exception from the above-detailed aspects. Their beginnings in the Roman Empire date back to Trajan's reign, but their situation is slightly different. As far as *Nikopolis ad Istrum* is concerned, it was an imperial foundation on a Greek pattern and a form of commemoration for the emperor's victories during the Daco-Roman wars.⁴ On the other hand, while it is the same kind of foundation, *Marcianopolis* is considered to have been called *Parthenopolis* before the well-known moment from Trajan's reign when it received a name inspired by the emperor's sister, Marciana.⁵ At that point, both were part of *Thrace*, but during the last decade of the 2nd century AD, they were transferred to *Moesia Inferior*.⁶ Besides, the cities had a slightly different status (not inferior) (*ciuitas stipendiaria*)⁷ compared to the others of the region, this aspect being reflected through the governors' name presence in their numismatic output's reverse legend. These mentions could also be seen as an equivalent of the SC structure from the Roman Imperial Coinage.⁸

Of high importance in the current study is the moment when *Nikopolis ad Istrum* and *Marcianopolis* started minting. The first was *Nikopolis* that produced its own coins from the reign of Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161).⁹ Slightly later, *Marcianopolis* also issues its first local emissions from Commodus (AD 180-192) onwards.¹⁰ As is also clear from the brief details presented above, they produced the so-called Roman Provincial Coinage or "Greek Imperials". Still, a surprising motive appears throughout the two cities' production, an aspect that would be detailed in the following pages.

II. *Liberalitas* – between the centre and the periphery of the Roman Empire

During the brief reign of Macrinus and Diadumenianus (AD 217-218), *Nikopolis ad Istrum* and *Marcianopolis* were the only active coin-issuing cities in the region of *Moesia Inferior*¹¹ and their numismatic repertory impresses through a highly atypical reverse type (unique in the Roman Provincial Coinage of *Thrace* and *Moesia Inferior*, but also in general) depicting *Liberalitas* with

⁴ Poulter 1992, 77 ; Bottez 2009, 18.

⁵ Varbanov 2005, 110.

⁶ Boteva 1996, 174.

⁷ Bottez 2009, 18; Aparaschivei 2010, 124.

⁸ Dima 2008, 52.

⁹ Pick 1898, 348; Varbanov 2005, 201; Hristova & Jekov 2011, 21.

¹⁰ Pick 1898, 197; Varbanov 2005, 111; Hristova & Jekov 2007, 18.

¹¹ Dima 2008, 57.

a counting table and *cornucopia*. *Nikopolis ad Istrum* produces this kind of coins in the time of Statius Longinus' tenure in *Lower Moesia* (April – June/August AD 217) for both Macrinus (Fig. 1)¹² and Diadumenianus (Fig. 2).¹³ During the next governor of the province, Pontianus (June/August – November/December AD 217), *Marcianopolis* issues the mentioned coin types but only with the obverse depicting the affronted busts of Macrinus and Diadumenianus (Fig. 3).¹⁴ The latter is also the only city out of the two where *Liberalitas* also appears on coins issued during Elagabalus' reign (Fig. 4).¹⁵ These details suggest this type's alternative production by *Nikopolis ad Istrum* and *Marcianopolis*, as they do not issue it at the same time.¹⁶ Still, a more comprehensive analysis of this aspect would be pursued during further studies.

For a better understanding of this motive's uniqueness in the case of the above-mentioned and overall category of “Greek Imperials”, a description of *Liberalitas* and its iconographical evolution is mandatory. It is a common depiction of the Roman Imperial Coinage's world which surprises one of the most important virtues. Consequently, it was frequently illustrated when the emperor was involved in actions of generosity to people. Still, the event has its roots in the Republican era when the Ediles were the ones who shared various goods during the well-known *Congiarium*. Consequently, the Empire continued an already established custom, but the most well-known term for it in this era is *Liberalitas*.¹⁷

As far as its representations on imperial coins are concerned, its origins date back to Nero's reign (AD 62-68) when a more elaborated image (the scene of *Congiarium*) was depicted (Fig. 5).¹⁸ Still, *Liberalitas* is literally mentioned in the coins' reverse legend in this form starting with

¹² Pick 1898, no. 1779; Harlan J. Berk, Buy or Bid Sale 216 (27 July 2021), Lot 490 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=1861245|4349|490|5b754a27a82a70cdf59ceb55781e0a33> (5.09.2025).

¹³ Pick 1898, no. 1863; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 348 (8 April 2015), Lot 435 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=768470|1428|435|8d3b81d657be5ce01a0231a5837a38ff> (5.09.2025).

¹⁴ Ira & Larry Goldberg Coins & Collectibles, Auction 70 (4 September 2012), Lot 3350 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=529394|943|3350|390baec7083fdd86fa524ec83750f242> (5.09.2025).

¹⁵ Pick 1898, no. 969; Eid Mar Auctions GmbH, Auction 11 (30 March 2025), Lot 124 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=2536556|6380|124|17fd99634b850a6844238961d014ec86> (5.09.2025).

¹⁶ The possibility that *Nikopolis ad Istrum* and *Marcianopolis* issued coins in an alternative or complementary rhythm is mentioned in Dima 2008, 57.

¹⁷ Madden, Smith, Stevenson 1889, 515.

¹⁸ RIC I, no. 153; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 563 (5 June 2024), Lot 763 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=2397350|5918|763|b075adc9b2fb62e41a277ba1cb782308> (5.09.2025).

Hadrian's rule (AD 117-138) when a simplified iconography is also encountered: a female figure oriented to the right or to the left who empties a *cornucopia* in her hands (Fig. 6)¹⁹ or the same figure but holding a *cornucopia* and a counting table (Fig. 7).²⁰

The latter depiction appears as mentioned above also in *Nikopolis ad Istrum* and *Marcianopolis* during a very brief period (AD 217-221). Consequently, how could this atypical image's interference in the coinage of the Empire's periphery be explained? The current study would mainly focus on possible contexts concerning especially Macrinus and Diadumenianus' reign (AD 217-218) for which a consistent analysis is finalised based on the actual stage of research and has several preliminary observations.

III.1. An imperial visit during Macrinus and Diadumenianus' reign (AD 217-218) to the Lower Danubian region – a plausible context?

Usually, the appearance of the above-presented depictions is linked to significant events from the city's life. Taking into consideration *Liberalitas*' description²¹ which directly concerns the emperor, then it could be supposed that a possible context for the coin types under discussion could be an imperial visit to the region of *Lower Danube* with *Nikopolis ad Istrum* and *Marcianopolis* on the itinerary.

This visit's idea during Macrinus and Diadumenianus' reign (AD 217-218) was formulated in several works which propose two scenarios. One of them was advanced by Henry Jewell Basset who strongly argues that both Macrinus and Diadumenianus were present in the region of the *Lower Danube* towards the end of AD 217 and beginning of AD 218.²² The other scenario puts forward the idea that only Diadumenianus travelled there at little time after becoming *Caesar* (May AD 217).²³ The supposed reason for this event is the existence of a turbulent context in the region at the beginning of the considered reign.²⁴

¹⁹ RIC II.3, no. 959; Roma Numismatics Ltd, Auction XXV (22 September 2022), Lot 1023 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=2081857|4952|1023|9a5ab39f79d123ab339f52734b20fbad> (5.09.2025).

²⁰ RIC II.3, no. 2214-2217; Nomos AG, obolos 6 (20 November 2016), Lot 794 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=942093|1810|794|c6441681ad85188bb85c4d13d640ad4d> (5.09.2025).

²¹ Madden, Smith, Stevenson 1889, 515.

²² Basset 1920, 38-39.

²³ Boteva 1998, 78; Baltă 2025, 65.

²⁴ Basset 1920, 38; Boteva 1998, 78.

Both perspectives mention several coin types which could be reflective of this supposed visit, and which align well with the *Liberalitas* emissions of *Nikopolis* (Fig. 1, 2)²⁵ and *Marcianopolis* (Fig. 3).²⁶ In *Nikopolis ad Istrum*'s case, some of them are dated during Statius Longinus' tenure in *Moesia Inferior* (April-June/August AD 217) and they have reverses depicting the emperor who sacrifices over an altar (Fig. 8)²⁷ and also holding globe and spear (Fig. 9)²⁸ or on horseback as *aduentus* (Fig. 10).²⁹ Here, the image of an imperial visit is even better contoured by types issued during the governor Marcius Claudius Agrippa (November/December AD 217-AD 218) such as one showing Macrinus in a *quadriga* (Fig. 11).³⁰ To this, we could also add the representation of the city's gate (Fig. 12)³¹ which could be interpreted as an iconographical symbol of the concerned episode.³²

Passing towards *Marcianopolis*, the double-portrait coins dated to the tenure of Pontianus (June/August – November/December AD 217) are considered to be signs of this visit together with reverses showing the emperor holding a reversed spear and with Nike standing on the globe (Fig. 13)³³ or a triumphal arch surmounted by four statues (Fig. 14).³⁴ Still, not only the two concerned cities' numismatic repertory is mentioned in previously mentioned studies. *Deultum* is also integrated in the imperial itinerary by reference to coin types which surprise the emperor as

²⁵ Pick 1898, no. 1779; Pick 1898, no. 1863.

²⁶ Ira & Larry Goldberg Coins & Collectibles, Auction 70 (4 September 2012), Lot 3350.

²⁷ Varbanov 2005, no. 3495; Basset 1920, 45; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 348 (8 April 2015), Lot 433 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=768468|1428|433|4ab78c8d6314e56c35ce258f80458b63> (6.09.2025).

²⁸ Moushmov 1912, no. 1258; Varbanov 2005, no. 3456 accessed at https://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/macrinus/_nikopolis_AE27_Moushmov_1258.jpg (6.09.2025).

²⁹ Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung, Auction 129 (8 March 2004), Lot 226 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=71447|76|226|b5d56cc87f52f188dbe0f92074a49304> (6.09.2025); Basset 1920, 38-39.

³⁰ Pick 1898, no. 1713; Roma Numismatics Ltd, E-Sale 79 (14 January 2021), Lot 574 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=1772048|4080|574|3005c37338b9d25a1cf44886089863bd> (6.09.2025); Basset 1920, 46; Baltă 2025, 65.

³¹ Varbanov 2005, no. 3345; Roma Numismatics Ltd, E-Sale 84 (16 June 2021), Lot 1198 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=1844114|4292|1198|1c30c19b5f1132cbbd417470889754ad> (6.09.2025).

³² Harl 1987, 54.

³³ Pick 1898, no. 778; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 278 (25 April 2012), Lot 179 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=507273|909|179|a55f4a2e44eb05ab023781088ff2ee7d> (6.09.2025); Basset 1920, 45; Baltă 2025, 65.

³⁴ Pecunem/Numismatik Naumann, Gitbud & Naumann Auction 1 (10 March 2013), Lot 89 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=561077|1001|89|596c62681abf5690e2c6af4ec5c0bb4b> (6.09.2025).

adventus (Fig. 15)³⁵ or crowned by Nike (Fig. 16)³⁶ and which are dated towards the autumn of the end of AD 217.³⁷

Even if the numismatic overview of this possible visit is considerably convincing, a proper analysis of other categories of information (literary, epigraphic, numismatic – for example, coin hoards) regarding the concerned period (AD 217-218) and the region's status in the same timeframe is highly important. This is mandatory for establishing whether this supposed visit has a high degree of certainty or not and, consequently, if it could be a suitable context for the *Liberalitas* coin types of *Moesia Inferior* or not.³⁸

As far as literary sources are concerned, a better image of the Macrinus and Diadumenianus' reign and of our region of interest could be reflected through the narrative of Cassius Dio:

*Moreover, the warfare carried on against the Armenian king, to which I have referred, now came to an end, after Tiridates had accepted the crown sent to him by Macrinus and received back his mother (whom Tarautas had imprisoned for eleven months) together with the booty captured in Armenia, and also entertained hopes of obtaining all the territory that his father had possessed in Cappadocia as well as the annual payment that had been made by the Romans. And the Dacians, after ravaging portions of Dacia and showing an eagerness for further war, now desisted when they got back the hostages that Caracallus, under the name of an alliance, had taken from them.*³⁹

The current passage already contours a brief chronological overview of the years AD 217-218. Consequently, Cassius Dio narrates how after the agreement with the *Armenians* was made, the so-called *Dacians* also stopped from their attacks. These specific negotiations (with the *Parthians* and *Armenians*) could be dated during autumn AD 217/winter AD 217-218. As a result,

³⁵ Jurukova 1973, no. 53; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 559 (3 April 2024), Lot 274 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=2363314|5801|274|b28054cc8d45fb3e6725d3b197402472> (6.09.2025).

³⁶ Jurukova 1973, no. 77; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 559 (3 April 2024), Lot 276 accessed at <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=2363316|5801|276|c30a2211a6c6b4674c797555fcf397a2> (6.09.2025).

³⁷ Draganov 2007, 56; Baltă 2025, 65.

³⁸ The two scenarios' analysis was realized as part of my dissertation thesis *Nikopolis ad Istrum through the lens of its coinage. Notes on its numismatic iconography's reliability for reconstructing historical landscapes and narratives (AD 193-235)* defended during the summer session of 2025 at the University of Bucharest.

³⁹ Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, LXXIX, 27.4-5 translation in English by Earnest Cary accessed at https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/79*.html (6.09.2025).

the episode concerning *Dacians* might be integrated in the chronological sequence of the last quarter of AD 217 and the first segment of AD 218.⁴⁰

Still, the reason why this mentioned conflict might have begun could be traced back to Caracalla's reign, and more exactly to the moment of AD 214: *Then he made ready for a journey to the Orient but interrupted his march and stopped in Dacia [...] Then he journeyed through Thrace accompanied by the prefect of the guard.*⁴¹ Then, it is considered that the emperor intervened because the Carpi attacked *Moesia* and *Pannonia*.⁴² In the end, an agreement was reached, and it also included hostages' returning.⁴³ Consequently, the difficult context during Macrinus and Diadumenianus' reign (Caracalla's murder and the Eastern campaigns) could have determined the actions of the *Dacians* who could have had more hostages to receive.⁴⁴

From ancient authors' perspective, the turbulent context that could have determined an imperial intervention in the area under discussion is somehow contoured. Still, coin hoards could shed even more light on the topic, depending on their content and grade of preservation.⁴⁵ At the moment, only 3 examples are attested in the region for the years AD 217-218.⁴⁶ The Srebarna hoard has as its last piece a coin dated in AD 217 but it's of Caracalla.⁴⁷ Another one consisting of 4 bronze coins was found near Belogradets in 2020.⁴⁸ To these we could also add a coin hoard from *Histria* which was discovered in a burned archaeological context and it has 34 denarii.⁴⁹ More surprisingly, in *Dacia* there are no attested coin hoards for the reign of Macrinus and Diadumenianus.⁵⁰ This is in relative contrast to Cassius Dio's words that consider *Dacia* the main affected zone by the concerned turbulences.⁵¹ These mentioned examples are clearly not enough

⁴⁰ Scott 2018, 81; Baltă 2025, 67.

⁴¹ *Historia Augusta, Antoninus Caracalla*, 5.4 translation in English by David Magie accessed at https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Historia_Augusta/Caracalla*.html#note30 (6.09.2025).

⁴² CIL III, no. 3660, 14416; Gerov 1977, 125; Găzdac 2010, 75.

⁴³ Scott 2018, 81; Baltă 2025, 67-68.

⁴⁴ Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, LXXIX, 27.4-5 translation in English by Earnest Cary accessed at https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/79*.html (6.09.2025); Scott 2018, 81.

⁴⁵ Scott 2018, 81; Baltă 2025, 67-68.

⁴⁶ Varbanov 2012, 3.

⁴⁷ Varbanov 2021, 63; Dima 2023, 145.

⁴⁸ Dima 2023, 145.

⁴⁹ Varbanov 2021, 63.

⁵⁰ Dima 2023, 145.

⁵¹ Petac 2010, 182-183.

⁵¹ Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, LXXIX, 27.4-5 translation in English by Earnest Cary accessed at https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/79*.html (7.09.2025).

for contouring a possible hoarding horizon in the region during the specified timeframe (AD 217-218).⁵²

Still, a consistent category of information is the one given by epigraphic sources. For example, two dedicatory inscriptions are attested at *Histria* for both Macrinus (ISM I, 92)⁵³ and Diadumenianus (ISM I, 91).⁵⁴ Both of them are dated towards the summer – autumn of AD 217.⁵⁵ The same type of inscription is attested for *Thrace* where Macrinus receives a dedication from *Cohors II Lucensium*.⁵⁶

Even more detailed aspects of this type were pointed out by Henry Basset who reconstructed the mentioned emperors' possible itinerary between the last part of AD 217 and the beginning of AD 218.⁵⁷ In his endeavour, he combines different particularities identified in coinages' legends with milestones. Consequently, for *Macedonia*, he mentions the emergence of the title *νεωκορος* from late AD 217.⁵⁸ Passing towards *Cilicia*, Basset observes how the emperor is named *Μακρινουπο* on the numismatic issues from the end of AD 217 and first part of AD 218.⁵⁹ Further, in *Dalmatia* one milestone is identified for the same timeframe.⁶⁰ *Noricum* also has 5 such artifacts which are dated through the presence of *Trib. Pot. II*.⁶¹ *Pannonia Inferior* surprises with a few 11 milestones on the path to *Aquincum* from AD 217 based on the formula *Trib. Pot.*⁶²

The currently available data puts into light several preliminary observations. First, strictly from a chronological point of view, there is a higher degree of probability that if this visit took place, it did so towards the end of AD 217 and the first part of AD 218.⁶³ In the case of the other perspective⁶⁴ concerning the visit, most sources (literary, epigraphic, numismatic) point out towards the above mentioned timeframe, and not to an early one.⁶⁵ Only the two *Histran* inscriptions (ISM I, 91; ISM I, 92) could be linked to a date around May AD 217 together with the

⁵² Petac 2010, 182-183; Varbanov 2021, 63; Dima 2023, 145; Baltă 2025, 68.

⁵³ ISM I, no. 92.

⁵⁴ ISM I, no. 91.

⁵⁵ ISM I, 232-234.

⁵⁶ CIL III, no. 12339; Basset 1920, 47; Baltă 2025, 69-70.

⁵⁷ Basset 1920, 42.

⁵⁸ Basset 1920, 39.

⁵⁹ MacDonald 1901, no. 7, 526.

⁶⁰ CIL III, no. 8307; Basset 1920, 41.

⁶¹ Basset 1920, 41.

⁶² CIL III, no. 3714, 3720, 3724, 3725, 10618, 10629, 10635, 10637, 10644, 10647, 10658; Basset 1920, 43; Baltă 2025, 69-70.

⁶³ Basset 1920, 38-39.

⁶⁴ Boteva 1998, 78.

⁶⁵ Baltă 2025, 69-70.

Nikopolis ad Istrum's coin types, including the *Liberalitas* ones, dated during Statius Longinus' tenure in *Moesia Inferior* (Fig. 1, 2).⁶⁶ Here, it should also be pointed out that there are higher chances of a joint imperial visit of Macrinus and Diadumenianus especially because of the young age of the latter (only 9 years old).

Coming back to the scenario with a higher degree of probability, there are still numerous elements which only give a moderate to low level of certainty to this supposed visit. Here, we could mention the contradiction between Cassius Dio's narrative⁶⁷ and the lack of any attested hoards for *Dacia* in AD 217-218.⁶⁸ In the same registry, the situation is not so different when it comes to the other hoards mentioned above which are not reliable enough for sustaining a powerful turbulence.⁶⁹

The same uncertainty is also identified in the case of the presented coin types from *Nikopolis ad Istrum*. Its numismatic issues dated during Marcus Claudius Agrippa's tenure (November/December AD 217 - AD 218) (Fig. 11, 12) that show a complex triumphal image could be easily associated with the narrative of Cassius Dio and also with the majority of epigraphic data included here. On the other hand, the coin types from Statius Longinus' government in *Lower Moesia* (April – June/August AD 217) (Fig. 1, 2, 8, 9, 10) are correlated chronologically only with the two inscriptions from *Histria* (ISM I, 91; ISM I, 92), but are not in accordance with Cassius Dio's words which point towards a later part of AD 217 and the first quarter of AD 218⁷⁰ or with a great part of epigraphic data pointed out by Henry Basset.⁷¹

Consequently, the image of this supposed visit during Macrinus and Diadumenianus' reign (AD 217-218) to the *Lower Danube* and its neighbouring space still has consistent lack of information. Despite this, the already illustrated sources show a moderate probability of happening but for the above-mentioned period (end of AD 217-first part of AD 218) which should remain under some uncertainty until further discoveries and research would clarify this brief reign even more.⁷²

⁶⁶ Pick 1898, no. 1779 (Macrinus); Pick 1898, no. 1863 (Diadumenianus).

⁶⁷ Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, LXXIX, 27.4-5 English translation by Earnest Cary accessed at https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/79*.html (7.09.2025).

⁶⁸ Petac 2010, 182-183.

⁶⁹ Varbanov 2021, 63; Dima 2023, 145; Baltă 2025, 69-70.

⁷⁰ Scott 2018, 81.

⁷¹ Basset 1920, 39-45.

⁷² Baltă 2025, 71.

As far as the imperial presence in *Nikopolis* and *Marcianopolis* in this period is concerned, it should be highlighted that the previous analysis demonstrates that certain cities should not be seen as part of an itinerary only based on their coin types, but through a detailed overview of all types of data (literary, epigraphic, numismatic). Consequently, outside of the presented numismatic data, there is no reliable argument in the favour of an imperial visit which also included the studied cities. Still, the current observation is based on the actual stage of research as future discoveries could shed more light on the topic.⁷³

III.2. Preliminary concluding remarks concerning *Nikopolis*' and *Marcianopolis*' *Liberalitas* coin types

Based on the above-detailed analysis, only several preliminary observations could be made regarding a probable context of the concerned *Liberalitas* coin types from *Nikopolis ad Istrum* (Fig. 1, 2)⁷⁴ and *Marcianopolis* (Fig. 3).⁷⁵ Their link with the supposed visit of Macrinus and Diadumenianus to the *Lower Danube* is under consistent uncertainty. Only the *Marcianopolis*' coin type (Fig. 3) could be linked to the scenario proposed by Henry Basset which has a moderate to low degree of probability.⁷⁶ Still, this consideration is subject to change as further discoveries could develop even further the chronological overview of Macrinus and Diadumenianus' reign. Consequently, *Nikopolis*' *Liberalitas* coin types (Fig. 1, 2) seem to remain outside of this proposed context, their dating being fixed during Statius Longinus' tenure (April – June/August AD 217). Considering the numerous gaps in reconstructing this brief period (AD 217-218), future research could significantly contribute to elucidating the context surrounding the appearance of these *Liberalitas* types in the two cities.

Another possible explanation could have been that they (Fig. 1-3) reflect an act of generosity from the emperor, but which did not necessarily happen in the two cities or in their neighbourhood. For Macrinus and Diadumenianus' reign (AD 217-218), one such act is mentioned as in April AD 218 a largesse was given to the people of *Antioch*.⁷⁷ Still, this date is far later than the one of *Nikopolis ad Istrum*'s and *Marcianopolis*' *Liberalitas* coin types (Fig. 1-3) which cover

⁷³ Baltă 2025, 71.

⁷⁴ Pick 1898, no. 1779 (Macrinus); Pick 1898, no. 1863 (Diadumenianus).

⁷⁵ Ira & Larry Goldberg Coins & Collectibles, Auction 70 (4 September 2012), Lot 3350.

⁷⁶ Basset 1920, 39-45; Baltă 2025, 70-71.

⁷⁷ RIC IV.2, 2; Halfmann 1986, 230.

the period of April-November/December AD 217. In this context, even a possible imitative behaviour as explanation for this motive's appearance in the case of the concerned "Greek Imperials" is difficult to contour.

Considering the current stage of research and also the above-detailed aspects, it could be stated that a highly probable context for the *Liberalitas* emissions under discussion is far from being established. On the other hand, further studies would bring even more light to the brief reign of Macrinus and Diadumenianus. Subsequently, the pointed problematic remains an open question which highlights once again the complexity of Roman Provincial Coinages' iconography which could not be explained in all circumstances.

List of abbreviations:

CIL III = Mommsen, Th. (ed.), *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Vol. 3, Parts 1-2. *Inscriptiones Asiae, provinciarum Europae Graecarum, Illyrici Latinae* (1873).

ISM I = Pippidi, D., *Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris Graecae et Latinae, I: Inscriptiones Histriae et Vicinae* (1958).

RIC I = Mattingly, H., Sydenham, E. A., *The Roman Imperial Coinage, Volume I. Augustus – Vitellius (31 BC – AD 69)* (1923).

RIC II.3 = Abdy, R.A., P. F. Mittag, *Roman Imperial Coinage II. 3: From AD 117 to AD 138 – Hadrian* (2019).

RIC IV.2 = Mattingly, H., Sydenham, E. A., Sutherland, C.H.V., *The Roman Imperial Coinage IV.2: Macrinus to Pupienus* (1938).

Bibliography:

Primary sources:

Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, translation in English by Earnest Cary accessed at

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Cassius_Dio/home.html.

Historia Augusta, *Antoninus Caracalla*, translation in English by David Magie accessed at

https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Historia_Augusta/Caracalla*.html#note30.

Epigraphic sources:

Mommsen, Th. (ed.) 1873, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Vol. 3, Parts 1-2. *Inscriptiones Asiae, provinciarum Europae Graecarum, Illyrici Latinae* accessed at <https://objects.auxiliary.idai.world/Tei-Viewer/cgi-bin/teiviewer.php?manifest=BOOK-ZID878792>.

Online resources and databases:

Coin Archives Pro, accessed at <https://pro.coinarchives.com/a/>.

Wildwinds, accessed at <https://www.wildwinds.com/>.

Numismatic catalogues:

- Behrendt, P. 1898, *Die antiken Münzen Nord-Griechenlands: Dacien und Moesien. Band I. Dacien und Moesien*, Berlin: Georg Reimer.
- Draganov, D. 2007, *The Coinage of Deultum*, Sofia: Bobokov Bros. Foundation.
- Hristova, N.; Jekov, G.; Hoeft, H.-J. (ed.) 2007, *The Coins of Moesia Inferior I-III c. A.C. Marcianopolis*, Blagoevgrad: Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" Press.
- Hristova, N.; Jekov, G.; Hoeft, H.-J. (ed.) 2011, *The Coins of Moesia Inferior I-III c. A.C. Nicopolis ad Istrum*, Blagoevgrad: Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" Press.
- Jurukova, J. 1973, *Griechisches Münzwerk: Die Münzprägung von Deultum*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
- MacDonald, G. 1901, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection University of Glasgow. Volume I. Italy, Sicily, Macedon, Thrace, and Thessaly*, Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons.
- Moushmov, N. 1912, *Античните монети на Балканския полуостров и монети на българските царе (Ancient Coins of the Balkan Peninsula and the Coins of the Bulgarian Monarchs)*, Sofia: Petchatnitsa na Grigory Gavazovy.
- Varbanov, I. 2005, *Greek Imperial Coins And Their Values, Volume I: Dacia, Moesia Superior & Moesia Inferior*, Bourgas: Adicom.

Secondary literature:

- Amandry, M. 2020, "Des <<impériales grecques>> aux <<provinciales romaines>> : un concept ancien réinventé = From Greek imperials to Roman provincial coins: a reinstatement of an old conception" in *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne. Supplément : 20. De la drachme au bitcoin : la monnaie, une invention en perpétuel renouvellement* edited by Catherine Grandjean, 81-88, Besançon: Presses Universitaires de Franche-Comté.
- Aparaschivei, D. 2010, *Orașele romane de la Dunărea Inferioară (secolele I-III p. Chr.)*, Iași: Editura Universității "Al. I. Cuza".
- Baltă, Ana-M. 2025, *Nikopolis ad Istrum through the lens of its coinage. Notes on its numismatic iconography's reliability for reconstructing historical landscapes and narratives (AD 193-235)/Nikopolis ad Istrum prin lentila monedelor sale. Note asupra credibilității iconografiei numismatice în reconstituirea peisajelor și narativelor istorice (193-235 d. Hr.)*, Master's thesis, Faculty of History, University of Bucharest.
- Basset, H. 1920, *Macrinus and Diadumenianus*, Dissertation thesis, University of Michigan accessed at <https://archive.org/details/macrinusdiadumen00bass/mode/2up>.
- Boteva, D. 1996, "The South Border of Lower Moesia from Hadrian to Septimius Severus" in *Roman Limes on Middle and Lower Danube (Cahier des Portes de Fer, Monographies 2)* edited by Petar Petrović, 173-176, Belgrade.
- Boteva, Dilyana 1998, "On the way to Tetrarchy: The role of the Lower Danubian Limes for the Roman Defense system – AD 193-217/218" in *Studia Danubiana, Pars Romaniae Series Symposia I: The Roman Frontier at the Lower Danube 4th-6th centuries – The second International Symposium: Murighiol/Halmyris, 18-24 August 1996* edited by M. Zahariade, Ioan I.C. Opriș, 77-80, Bucharest.

- Bottez, V. 2009, *Cultul imperial în provincia Moesia Inferior: Sec. I-III p. Chr.*, București: Editura Universității din București.
- Burnett, A. 2002, "Buildings and Monuments on Roman Coins" in *Roman Coins and Public Life under the Empire*, edited by G.M. Paul and M. Ierardi, 137-168, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.
- Burnett, A. 2024, *The Roman Provinces, 300 BCE-300 CE. Using Coins as Sources*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dima, M. 2008, *Circulația monetară în zona Durostorum în secolele I-III p. Chr.*, PhD thesis, Institutul de Arheologie "Vasile Pârvan", Academia Română.
- Dima, M. 2023, *Circulația monetară la Durostorum în secolele I-III*, Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun.
- Donaldson, Th. L. 1859, *Architectura numismatica. Ancient architecture on Greek and Roman coins and medals*, London.
- Drew-Bear 1974, "Representations of Temples on the Greek Imperial Coinage" in *ANSMN 19 (1974)*, 27-63.
- Harl, K. W. 1978, *Civic coins and civic politics in the Roman East, 180-275 A.D.*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Găzdac, Cristian 2010, *Monetary circulation in Dacia and the provinces from the Middle and Lower Danube from Trajan to Constantine I (AD 106-337)*, Cluj-Napoca: Mega Publishing House.
- Gerov, B. 1977, "Die Einfälle der Nordvölker in den Ostbalkanraum im Lichte der Münzschatzfunde, I. Das II. Und III. Jahrhundert (101-284)" in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, 6, 1977, 110-181.
- Halfmann, H. 1986, *Itinera principum: Geschichte und Typologie der Kaiserreisen im Römischen Reich. Heidelberger althistorische Beiträge und epigraphische Studien; Bd. 2*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden.
- Howgego, Cr., Heuchert, V., Burnett, . (eds.) 2005, *Coinage and Identity in the Roman Provinces*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Madden, Fr. W., Smith, Ch. R., Stevenson, S. W. 1889, *A Dictionary of Roman Coins, Republican and Imperial*, London: G. Bell and Sons.
- Petac, E. 2010, *Aspecte ale circulației monetare în Dacia Romană (106-275 p. Chr.) / Aspects de la circulation monétaire en Dacie romaine (106 - 275 après J.-C.)*, Wetteren: Moneta.
- Poulter, A. G. 1992, "Nicopolis ad Istrum: The Anatomy of a Graeco-Roman City" in *Die römische Stadt im 2. Jahrhundert n. Chr.: Kolloquium in Xanten vom 2. bis 4. Mai 1990* edited by Hans-Joachim Schalles, Henner von Hesberg and Paul Zanker, 69-87, Köln: Rheinland-Verlag.
- Scott, A. G. 2018, "Book 79(78): Macrinus" in Andrew G. Scott, *Emperors and Usurpers: An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History*, 24-101, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Varbanov, V. 2012, "Barbarian invasions in the Roman provinces of Lower Moesia and Thrace in the mid-3rd c. AD and the coin hoards from that period" in *The Lower Danube Roman Limes (1st-6th C. AD)* edited by Lyudmil Vagalinski, Nikolay Sharankov, Sergey Torbatov, 289-311.
- Varbanov, V. 2021, "Roman Coin Hoards from Moesia Inferior and Thrace (From Hadrian to Diocletian). Current stage of research)" in *International Numismatic Symposium "Coin hoards in Southeastern Europe (1st-6th century*

AD) Coin Hoards in Southeastern Europe (1st–6th century AD), Rousse, Bulgaria, June 20–23, 2019, edited by Nikola Rusev, Varbin Varbanov, 59–95.

List of illustrations:

Fig. 1 – *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, Macrinus (Statius Longinus, April-June/August AD 217), Pick 1898, no. 1779, Harlan J. Berk, Ltd, Buy or Bid Sale 216 (27 July 2021), Lot 490.

Fig. 2 – *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, Diadumenianus (Statius Longinus, April-June/August AD 217), Pick 1898, no. 1863; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 348 (8 April 2015), Lot 435.

Fig. 3 – *Marcianopolis*, Macrinus & Diadumenianus (Pontianus, June/August – November/December AD 217), Ira & Larry Goldberg Coins & Collectibles, Auction 70 (4 September 2012), Lot 3350.

Fig. 4 – *Marcianopolis*, Elagabalus & Iulia Maesa (Iulius Antonius Seleucus, AD 220–221), Pick 1898, no. 969; Eid Mar Auctions GmbH, Auction 11 (30 March 2025), Lot 124.

Fig. 5 – *Rome*, Nero, RIC I, no. 153 (AD 62–68); Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 563 (5 June 2024), Lot 763.

Fig. 6 – *Rome*, Hadrian, RIC II.3, no. 959 (AD 128–129), Roma Numismatics Ltd, Auction XXV (22 September 2022), Lot 1023.

Fig. 7 – *Rome*, Hadrian, RIC II. 3, no. 2214–2217 (AD 130–138), Nomos AG, obolos 6 (20 November 2016), Lot 794.

Fig. 8 – *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, Macrinus (Statius Longinus, April-June/August AD 217), Varbanov 2005, no. 3495; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 348 (8 April 2015), Lot 433.

Fig. 9 – *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, Macrinus (Statius Longinus, April-June/August AD 217); Moushmov 1912, no. 1258; Varbanov 2005, no. 3456, Wildwinds.

Fig. 10 – *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, Macrinus (Statius Longinus, April-June/August AD 217), Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung, Auction 129 (8 March 2004), Lot 226.

Fig. 11 – *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, Macrinus (Marcus Claudius Agrippa, November/December AD 217 – AD 218), Pick 1898, no. 1713; Roma Numismatics Ltd, E-Sale 79 (14 January 2021), Lot 574.

Fig. 12 – *Nikopolis ad Istrum*, Macrinus (Marcus Claudius Agrippa, November/December AD 217 – AD 218), Varbanov 2005, no. 3345; Roma Numismatics Ltd, E-Sale 84 (16 June 2021), Lot 1198.

Fig. 13 – *Marcianopolis*, Macrinus & Diadumenianus (Pontianus, June/August – November/December AD 217), Pick 1898, no. 778; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 278 (25 April 2012), Lot 179.

Fig. 14 – *Marcianopolis*, Macrinus & Diadumenianus (Pontianus, June/August – November/December AD 217), Pecunem/Numismatik Naumann, Gitbud & Naumann Auction 1 (10 March 2013), Lot 89.

Fig. 15 – *Deultum*, Macrinus (AD 217–218), Jurukova 1973, no. 53; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 559 (3 April 2024), Lot 274.

Fig. 16 – *Deultum*, Diadumenianus (AD 217–218), Jurukova 1973, no. 77; Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 559 (3 April 2024), Lot 276.

Fig.1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

