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Studies

NUMISMATICS

THE COINS OF PAUTALIA FOR CLODIUS ALBINUS AS CAESAR (193 – 195) – A PHENOMENON OF ROMAN PROVINCIAL COINAGE

Abstract: The ancient city of Pautalia was located in the western part of the province of Thrace, in the centre of a fertile field through which flows the great river Strymon, on the site of today's city of Kyustendil in Southwestern Bulgaria. For unknown reason, in the early years of the reign of the Roman emperor Septimius Severus (193 – 211) – most likely between the second half of 193 and the first half of 195, the mint of Pautalia struck several types of bronze coins for Clodius Albinus as Caesar. These coins are of two main kinds – some of them on the obverse have double images of the emperor Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus facing each other, while the others on the obverse have only an image of Clodius Albinus. In his study on the coinage of Pautalia, Leon Ruzicka once presented only three coins of Pautalia – two with the double images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus, and one with the single image of Clodius Albinus. Here are presented some more coins. The different coin types of the two kinds, which always have on the obverse an image of Clodius Albinus as Caesar – together with the image of the emperor Septimius Severus, or alone, will be presented in a supposed but, of course, uncertain relative chronological sequence, distinguished by individual types, and each type will be presented by a single specimen. The aim of the present work is to gather and present in one place all types of coins with the image of Clodius Albinus struck at Pautalia that have become known so far.

Keywords: *Pautalia, Clodius Albinus, Roman provincial coins.*

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INTRODUCTION

The ancient city of Pautalia was located on the site of today's city of Kyustendil in Southwestern Bulgaria, at the foot of the Hisarluka hill – one of the lower hills that is part of the Osogovo mountain. A fortress was built on the same hill in the late 4th or early 5th century, which was repaired in the 6th century during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Justinian I (527 – 565). The city of Pautalia, located in the western part of the province of Thrace, in the centre of a fertile field through which flows the great river Strymon, reached its greatest economic, as well as cultural flourishing in the reigns of the Antonines and the Severans – between the middle of the 2nd century AD and the first decades of the 3rd century AD¹. Originating as a Thracian settlement in earlier times, the city was significantly improved with

¹ GEROV 1961, 256-293; GRIGOROVA 1993.

many new buildings during the Roman period – most notably in the 2nd century AD, during the reign of the emperor Hadrian, from when the earliest known inscription for the construction of a *basilica* in Pautalia dates, which also mentions data on the city government by *archons* and by a city council².

Apparently in honour of Hadrian's predecessor and adoptive father – the emperor Trajan, Pautalia, as well as five other cities in the province of Thrace, also received the designation *Ulpia* after the *nomen gentilicium* of Trajan before their main name³. But the opinion traditionally accepted in the literature that this happened in the reign of the emperor Trajan is debatable and has recently been subjected to reasonable criticism with justification for the later appearance of this epithet, added to the names of the corresponding cities in the province of Thrace⁴. That is why on the reverse of the majority of the coins of Pautalia, this epithet invariably appears, and the whole combination of the two names is in the Genitive and is represented by Greek letters such as: ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑΣ – in translation: “coin of *Ulpia* Pautalia”.

The coinage of Pautalia is one of the most voluminous provincial coinages in the province of Thrace, with a very rich repertoire of different reverse images related to religion and architecture⁵. Among the images, of course, are the main deities of the Greco-Roman pantheon, and on the reverse of a significant number of coins struck at Pautalia for the various emperors, the main patron deity of the city is represented – the health-giving deity Asclepius. In addition, on the reverse of some of the coins, the personification of the river god Strymon is presented – in honour of the river flowing through the region of southwestern Thrace, where the ancient city of Pautalia is located. On the reverse of one coin issue with several different reverse dies, struck for the emperor Caracalla, the wealth of the natural resources of the district is represented, with Pautalia as its centre, by a nymph of the district/or of Pautalia, surrounded by four boys, accompanied by the respective legends: “gold”, “silver”, “grapes”, “ear of corn”⁶.

It has long been established that the city of *Ulpia* Pautalia was among the cities in the province of Thrace that started their provincial coinage relatively early – even before the middle of the 2nd century AD – during the reign of the emperor Antoninus Pius, which is best represented in the seminal corpus work on the coinage of Pautalia by the Austrian numismatist Leon Ruzicka, published as far back as 1933 at Sofia, Bulgaria⁷. Even then, L. Ruzicka indicated in just one sentence that the coinage of Pautalia probably started already in 139 AD, when Antoninus Pius was still only Caesar⁸. However, this assumption of L. Ruzicka is some mistake, because Antoninus Pius was Caesar in the previous

year 138 BC, while from 139 AD, Caesar was his adopted successor Marcus Aurelius. In fact, until recently it seems that only the Bulgarian scholar Boris Gerov paid attention to the year 139 AD, indicated by L. Ruzicka as the starting year of the coinage of Pautalia⁹. We will return to these facts here below.

Otherwise, the presentation of the bronze provincial coinage of Pautalia was started by L. Ruzicka with coins that are precisely dated – during the time of the provincial governor Aulus (or Lucius) Pompeius Vopiscus in the years before AD 160¹⁰, whose name is inscribed only on the largest denomination coins of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius struck at Pautalia. Some clarification of the years in which Pompeius Vopiscus was governor of the province of Thrace has recently been given, and it has been established that his rule was actually in the years 155 – 158 AD¹¹. In some new studies on the coins of Pautalia, the beginning of the coinage of this ancient city is placed without any doubt precisely in the years of the rule of this provincial governor – Pompeius Vopiscus¹². However, a new paper¹³ and a monograph on the coinage of Pautalia¹⁴ have recently appeared which, in my opinion, convincingly present new observations of some portrait images of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar on bronze coins of Pautalia, compared with his portrait images from coins struck at the central metropolitan mint in Rome, suggesting that most likely the beginning of the bronze coinage of Pautalia should be moved to an earlier time, and in fact probably began as early as 139 AD – i.e. in the year of the proclamation of Marcus Aurelius as Caesar¹⁵. The same modern author Y. Tachev also made the very important observations that some of the bronze coins of Antoninus Pius struck at Pautalia, which are of the same denominations as the bronze coins struck at Pautalia for Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, were the work of the same engravers, with some of the coins even sharing common reverse dies¹⁶. After these important observations, it can now be considered with greater certainty that the beginning of the bronze provincial coinage of Pautalia began several years earlier than the traditionally accepted until recently dating in the years 155 – 158 AD¹⁷, as for some of the coins of Antoninus Pius, as well as for the coins struck for the young Marcus Aurelius as Caesar, the starting year is most likely AD 139¹⁸.

The greatest volume of the coinage of the ancient city of Pautalia in the Roman province of Thrace, accompanied by the greatest variety of images on the reverses of the coins, is observed for the coins struck during the reign of the Roman emperor Septimius Severus, as well as of his sons Geta and Caracalla¹⁹.

² GEROV 1961, 256-257; MIHAILOV 1966, IGBulg. IV, n. 2057; see also PAUNOV 2016, 28-29 with ref.

³ TOPALILOV 2016.

⁴ TOPALILOV 2016 with ref.

⁵ See RUZICKA 1933; TACHEV 2020b.

⁶ RUZICKA 1933, 34; 159, n. 634; Taf. VI, n. 19; VARBANOV 2005, 436, n. 5174; TACHEV 2020b, 438-439 with Pl. 133, nos. 346-350; GROZDANOVA 2021, 238, Fig. 1.

⁷ RUZICKA 1933.

⁸ RUZICKA 1933, 16.

⁹ GEROV 1961, 258 with footnote 3.

¹⁰ STEIN 1920, 21; RUZICKA 1933, 41-43.

¹¹ See PAUNOV 2016, 28 with ref.

¹² PAUNOV 2016, 28.

¹³ TACHEV 2020a.

¹⁴ TACHEV 2020b.

¹⁵ TACHEV 2020a, 52-53; 56-57.

¹⁶ TACHEV 2020a, 52-53.

¹⁷ See PAUNOV 2016, 28.

¹⁸ See TACHEV 2020a, 52-53; 56-57.

¹⁹ RUZICKA 1933, 90-206; TACHEV 2020b, 268-511 with Plates 48-169; PETER / GROZDANOVA 2021, 494.

For unknown reason, in the early years of the reign of the Roman emperor Septimius Severus (193 – 211 AD) – most likely between the second half of 193 and the first half of 195 AD, the mint of Pautalia struck several types of bronze coins for Clodius Albinus as Caesar, from denominations identified by L. Ruzicka as the fourth denomination and as the third denomination²⁰. These coin issues are of two different kinds – either with the simultaneously presented portrait images of the emperor Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus as Caesar facing each other on the obverse²¹, or such only with the portrait image of Clodius Albinus on the obverse²². In fact, in his work on the coins of Pautalia, Leon Ruzicka published only these three coins cited here, which were struck for Clodius Albinus as Caesar, without any images, and for many years only these coins were known and have been the subject of various comments²³. Later, in two different volumes of commercial catalogues of provincial coins published by Ivan Varbanov, respectively one of the books – in Bulgarian²⁴, while the other – in English²⁵, in that part where the coins of Pautalia are presented, this author has added several previously unknown types struck by the mint of Pautalia for Clodius Albinus – as such only with his image on the obverse²⁶, as well as a completely unknown type with the images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus facing each other on the obverse²⁷. In recent years, several other new, unknown types of bronze coins struck by Pautalia for Clodius Albinus as Caesar have appeared at various auctions. In addition, some other completely unknown types of coins with the portrait images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus, kept in private collections, were presented for the first time very recently²⁸. All types of bronze coins of Pautalia struck for Clodius Albinus that have appeared so far will be presented and commented on here.

The coins for Clodius Albinus as Caesar struck at Pautalia can be divided with certainty into two main kinds. The first kind are the coins that have the two portrait images facing each other on the obverse – respectively of the emperor Septimius Severus on the left, looking to the right, and the portrait image of Clodius Albinus on the right, looking to the left. Recently, several new types of Pautalia coins of another variety have appeared, in which the portrait images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus are with changed positions, which will be presented here below in the catalogue. In addition, apparently the mint of Pautalia struck several types of bronze coins, which on the obverse have the portrait image only of Clodius Albinus as Caesar. The different coin types of the two kinds, which always have on the obverse an image of Clodius Albinus as Caesar – together with the image of the emperor Septimius Severus, or alone, will be presented in a supposed but, of course, uncertain

²⁰ RUZICKA 1933, 122, nos. 439-441.

²¹ RUZICKA 1933, 122, n. 439 and n. 440.

²² RUZICKA 1933, 122, n. 441.

²³ See BOTEVA 1997, 143 with ref.; 145 with ref.; BOTEVA 2002, 235 with ref.

²⁴ VARBANOV 2002.

²⁵ VARBANOV 2005.

²⁶ VARBANOV 2002, 223, n. 2970 and n. 2971; VARBANOV 2005, 394, n. 4614 and n. 4615.

²⁷ VARBANOV 2005, 414, n. 4866.

²⁸ TACHEV 2020b, 272-273 with pl. 50, nos. 18-25.

relative chronological sequence, distinguished by individual types, and each type will be illustrated by a single specimen. The aim of the present work is to gather and present in one place all types of coins with the portrait and name of Clodius Albinus struck at Pautalia that have become known so far. Here are presented mostly coins in very good condition, except in cases where we only have a single specimen. The first to be presented are the coins of Pautalia with the double portrait images on the obverse – of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus, some of which were published for the first time by Leon Ruzicka only with descriptions, but with some inaccuracies, as will be seen below. Next, the coins of Pautalia will be presented with the single image of Clodius Albinus on the obverse.

CATALOGUE

BRONZE COINS OF PAUTALIA FOR CLODIUS ALBINUS AS CAESAR – TOGETHER WITH SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS – WITH TWO IMAGES FACING EACH OTHER:

Variant 1: Bust of Septimius Severus, left, facing bust of Clodius Albinus, right:

1.



Fig. 1. (image: CNG Mail Bid Sale 70, 21.09.2005, lot: 540; with permission of www.wildwinds.com):

AE 25 mm; 8.97 g.

Obverse: AYT K A CE CEYHPOC Π ΚΛΩΔ ΑΛΒΕΙΝΟC K. Laureate bust of Septimius Severus, right, facing bare-headed bust of Clodius Albinus, left.

Reverse: ΟΥΛΠΙΙΑC ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑC. Eagle standing facing on wreath, head left, with wings spread, holding a palm (or a laurel?) branch in his beak.

Reference: Mushmov 1912, 235, n. 4149 – no image; Ruzicka 1933, n. 439 – no image, in fact = Ruzicka 1933, n. 440; Varbanov 2005, n. 4867; Tachev 2020b, 272-273 with pl. 50, n. 22.

Ruzicka's description is incorrect – "Eagle facing, head left, standing on thunderbolt and holding a wreath in his beak", while Mushmov's gives – "Eagle standing on wreath".

2.



Fig. 2. (image: Hirsch Nachfolger, Auction 266, lot 2099; with permission of www.wildwinds.com):

AE 26 mm. Same obverse die.

Reverse: ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑΣ. Apollo standing facing, head left, holding patera in right hand, making sacrifice over altar, with laurel branch in left hand.

Reference: Tachev 2020b, 272-273 with pl. 50, n. 18.

3.



Fig. 3. (image: Helios Numismatik GmbH, Auction 1, 17.04.2008, lot 486):

AE 25 mm; 10.51 g. Same obverse die.

Reverse: [ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ] ΠΑΥΤΑΛ[ΙΑΣ]. Helios right, naked, facing, head left, wearing radiate crown, right hand outstretched, holding his mantle in his left hand.

Reference: Tachev 2020b, 272-273 with pl. 50, n. 19.

4.



Fig. 4. (image: photo archives of Y. Tachev):

AE 24 mm; 9.28 g. Same obverse die.

Reverse: ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑΣ. Nike walking right, holding wreath in her right outstretched hand and palm branch in her left hand.

Reference: Tachev 2020b, 272-273 with pl. 50, n. 20.

AE 25 mm; 10.13 g.

5.



Fig. 5. (image: Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung, Auction 273, 19.11.2020, lot 303):

Obverse: ΑΥΤ Κ Λ Σ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ Π ΚΛΩ[Δ](?) ΑΛΒΕΙΝΟΣ Κ. Laureate bust of Septimius Severus, left, facing bare-headed bust of Clodius Albinus, right.

Reverse: ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑΣ. Nike standing left, placing wreath on trophy with right hand, palm branch in her left hand.

Reference: Tachev 2020b, 272-273 with pl. 50, n. 21.

Variant 2: Bare-headed bust of Clodius Albinus, left, facing laureate bust of Septimius Severus, right:

6.



Fig. 6. (image: photo archives of N. Malchev, Florida, USA):

Obverse: ΑΥΤ Κ Λ Σ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ Π ΚΛΩ ΑΛΒΕΙΝΟΣ Κ. Bare-headed bust of Clodius Albinus, left, facing laureate bust of Septimius Severus, right.

Reverse: ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑΣ. Eagle standing facing on wreath, head left, wings spread, holding a palm (or a laurel?) branch in his beak.

Reference: Tachev 2020b, 272-273 with pl. 50, 23.

7.



Fig. 7. (image: Helios Numismatik, Auction 5, June 2010, lot 304, with permission of www.wildwinds.com):

AE 23 mm; 12.23 g.

Obverse: ΑΥΤ Κ Λ Σ ΣΕΥΗΡΟΣ Π ΚΛΩ ΑΛΒΕΙΝΟΣ Κ. Bare-headed bust of Clodius Albinus, left, facing laureate bust of Septimius Severus, right.

Reverse: ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑΣ. Eagle standing facing, wings spread, stepped with both claws on the tail of a serpent upright to left.

Reference: Tachev 2020b, 272-273 with pl. 50, 24.

8.



Fig. 8. (image: photo archives of I. Varbavov, Bulgaria):

AE 27 mm. Same obverse die.

Reverse: ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑΣ. Coiled serpent, right. In front of the serpent – a flaming altar, behind the serpent – a (pine?) tree.

Reference: Varbanov 2005, n. 4866; Tachev 2020b, 272-273 with pl. 50, 25.

BRONZE COINS OF PAUTALIA STRUCK FOR CLODIUS ALBINUS AS CAESAR – ONLY WITH HIS IMAGE

9.



Fig. 9. (image: Helios Numismatik, Auction 5, June 2010, lot 293; with permission of www.wildwinds.com):

AE 23 mm; 10.30 g.

Obverse: ΚΛΩΔ ΑΛΒΕΙΝΟΣ ΚΑΙ. Bare-headed bust right.

Reverse: ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑΣ. Apollo standing facing, head left, right hand holding patera, making sacrifice over altar, laurel branch in left hand.

Reference: Ruzicka 1933, n. 441; Varbanov 2002, n. 2969; Varbanov 2005, n. 4613; Tachev 2020b, 334-335 with pl. 81, n. 1.

10.



Fig. 10. (image: Leu Numismatik, Auction 4, 25.05.2019, lot 411):

AE 24 mm; 11.90 g. Same obverse die.

Reverse: ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ ΠΑΥΤΑ (in circle) | ΙΑΙΟΝ (in horizontal position). Coiled serpent with open mouth, right, in front of a flaming altar, behind the serpent – an ear of corn (Varbanov 2005, n. 4614), but – a (pine?) tree – (Tachev 2020b, 334, n. 2).

Reference: Varbanov 2005, n. 4614; Tachev 2020b, 334-335 with pl. 81, n. 2.

11.



Fig. 11. (image: photo archives of I. Varbavov, Bulgaria):

AE 22 mm. Same obverse die. ΟΥΛΠΙΑΣ ΠΑΥΤΑΙΟΝ (the legend in circle)

Reverse: Coiled serpent with open mouth, right, in front of flaming altar, behind the serpent – ear of corn – after Varbanov's description (Varbanov 2005, n. 4615).

Reference: Varbanov 2005, n. 4615.

But, in my opinion, it appears that on the reverse of this issue of coins there is a tree, as well as possibly a peacock represented. But the coin is not in good condition, which possibly gives the illusion of a peacock image.

DATING AND INTERPRETATION

The several different types of bronze provincial coins struck for Clodius Albinus as Caesar at the mint of Pautalia in the province of Thrace – both with double images of the emperor-Augustus Septimius Severus and his Caesar Clodius Albinus, and several types with the single image of Clodius Albinus, is a phenomenon of Roman provincial coinage that is not found in other mints in the Roman provinces of the Balkan Peninsula, and in Europe in general²⁹. Bronze provincial coins with the image of Clodius Albinus are also known from several cities in Asia Minor: Hierocaesarea³⁰; Saitta³¹; Sardes/Sardis³² – all these three cities in Lydia; Smyrna in Ionia³³; Side in Pamphylia³⁴; Elaëusa Sebaste in Cilicia³⁵.

As can be seen from the coins presented in the catalogue here, they are some of the rarest issues struck at Pautalia. For some of the types we still have only one specimen, such as the coins presented here under numbers

3, 4 and 11, while for others of the types we have only a few specimens.

The coins presented here struck at Pautalia for Clodius Albinus as Caesar – both these together with the image of Septimius Severus on the obverse and with the image of Albinus alone – pose two main questions for solution. The first question is related to their precise dating. When exactly should these coins be dated? The second question is even more difficult to answer. What was the reason that these bronze coins for Clodius Albinus as Caesar were struck precisely at the mint of Pautalia in the Roman province of Thrace?

As to the first question, some acceptable answers have already been given. L. Ruzicka, based on the achievements and hypotheses of some numismatists who wrote before him as early as the 19th century, gave the most general and possible accurate dating in the years between 193 and 196 AD, when Clodius Albinus was with the title of Caesar – before assuming the title of Augustus in AD 196³⁶. However, recently regarding the dating of issues of bronze coins struck at Pautalia for Clodius Albinus, citing only the three coins published by L. Ruzicka with only a description – two with the double images of Severus and Albinus on the obverse³⁷, as well as one with only the image of Albinus³⁸, a more precise dating was proposed – between mid-193 and mid-195 AD³⁹. For it was most likely already after the middle of 195, and not in 196, that the emperor Septimius Severus announced his elder son Caracalla, although underage, to be Caesar⁴⁰.

On the difficulties in precisely dating these coin issues, it has been rightly pointed out that because these issues are of different denominations – from the fourth denomination – these with the double portrait images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus on the obverse, which is Ruzicka's opinion⁴¹, as well as from a third denomination⁴² – these with the single image of Clodius Albinus on the obverse, while the name of the provincial governor was written only on the reverses of the coins of Pautalia of the largest – fifth denomination, it cannot be said with certainty at the time of which provincial governor of Thrace they were struck⁴³. However, it is most likely that these coins were struck during the time of the provincial governor of Thrace, Caelius Oneratus (193 – 195 AD)⁴⁴. His rule in Thrace has until recently been placed at most before 196, because there is no other record of him than the presence of his name on provincial coins of Perinthos, Philippopolis, as well as of Pautalia⁴⁵. In my opinion, the new clarifications made recently on the placement of the coins struck at Pautalia for Clodius Albinus as Caesar in the even more precise

³⁶ Ruzicka 1933, 12 with ref. in footnote 5.

³⁷ Ruzicka 1933, nos. 439-440.

³⁸ Ruzicka 1933, no. 441.

³⁹ Boteva 1997, 143 with ref.; 145 with ref.

⁴⁰ See the discussion on the dating in: Boteva 1997, 42 with ref.; 143 with ref.; 145 with ref.; Boteva 2002, 235 with note 11; see also Tachev 2020b, 88 with footnote 131.

⁴¹ Ruzicka 1933, nos. 439-440.

⁴² Ruzicka 1933, no. 441.

⁴³ Boteva 1997, 143; 145.

⁴⁴ Boteva 1997, 143; 145; Tachev 2020b, 86; 88 with ref.

⁴⁵ Stein 1920, 40-41, but his names given mistakenly as Caelius Honoratus (sic!). On the coins his last name is written Oneratus.

²⁹ See Ruzicka 1933, 11-12; Boteva 1997, 143; Boteva 2002, 235.

³⁰ Kurth 2020, Vol. II, 194-195 with pl. 85, n. 111.

³¹ Kurth 2020, Vol. III, 270-271 with pl. 257, nos. 98-100.

³² Kurth 2020, Vol. IV, 56-57 with pl. 300, nos. 465-466.

³³ BMC Ionia, nos. 360-362; Klose 1987, pl. 57, nos. 1-5.

³⁴ BMC Pamphylia, n. 129; SNG France 3, n. 813.

³⁵ Niggeler Collection, Part 2, lot 648.

chronological framework between mid-193 and mid-195 AD are the most plausible⁴⁶. Among the considerations for this dating was the fact that until now no coins struck at Pautalia for Caracalla as Caesar are known⁴⁷. But very recently several coins struck at Pautalia for Caracalla as Caesar have been successfully identified, being of the smallest denomination⁴⁸. This situation, however, does not alter the well-conjectured, also in my opinion, dating of the coins here considered precisely between the middle of 193 and the middle of 195 AD, because after the middle of 195 the relationship between Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus had become worse, probably mainly due to the proclamation as Caesar of the of Septimius Severus' elder son – Caracalla, only seven years old, which was taken by Clodius Albinus as a declaration of war⁴⁹. These events certainly led to the continued deterioration of the further relationship between Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus⁵⁰.

On the second question that arose here – why precisely at Pautalia were coins minted for the emperor Septimius Severus and for his Caesar Clodius Albinus, the assumptions can be many and different. One of the reasons for the rapprochement and sharing of supreme power in the empire is probably also due to the fact that both Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus were born into Roman families in North Africa. Septimius Severus was born in Leptis (Lepcis) Magna (modern Al-Khums in Libya)⁵¹, while Clodius Albinus was born in Hadrumetum (modern Sousse in Tunisia)⁵². Clodius Albinus was a legionary legate in Dacia in the 180s, and was later appointed governor of Britain even before the assassination of the emperor Commodus⁵³. It is likely that the decision of Septimius Severus to appoint as Caesar the governor of the Roman power at that time in Britain – Clodius Albinus, was imposed by the troubled times for the Roman Empire in 193. Then as the leader of the Roman troops in Pannonia – in present-day Austria and in present-day Hungary, shortly after the assassination of the elderly emperor Pertinax in Rome by the Praetorian Guard, Septimius Severus was proclaimed emperor at Carnuntum (in present-day Austria) by his troops and had gone to Rome to effectively take power there, presenting himself as the avenger of Pertinax's death, adopting his cognomen as his own⁵⁴. In Rome, by order of the Roman Senate, Didius Julianus was killed in June 193⁵⁵. The new emperor Septimius Severus probably well assessed the complex political situation with the presence of appetites for imperial power, as well as the danger of the claims of the far east based general of the Roman troops in Antioch in Syria – Pescennius Niger, who soon after the death of Pertinax, already in the spring of that year 193, was proclaimed emperor by the troops in Syria⁵⁶.

In the same year 193, Septimius Severus appointed as his Caesar the governor of the Roman power in Britain – Clodius Albinus, who also took the emperor's family name – Severus, received various privileges and was favoured to the greatest extent by Septimius Severus⁵⁷. In this direction, as carrying out propaganda of Septimius Severus for the support in his political and military endeavors by Clodius Albinus, we could only to a certain extent and partially explain the coins struck at Pautalia – these with the double portrait images of the two – the emperor Septimius Severus and his Caesar – Clodius Albinus, as well as the several issues of coins with the single portrait image of Clodius Albinus on the obverse⁵⁸.

As for the second most important question that arose – why or for what exact reason these Albinus' coins were struck at Pautalia, it seems that the best answers were given years ago by Leon Ruzicka, because in later times this question is not sufficiently commented on by other authors and no meaningful or acceptable answers have been presented. That is why I will present in detail the assumptions of L. Ruzicka on this issue, based on other authors who wrote on this topic before him. Leon Ruzicka believes that certain circumstances suggest that separate issues of coins struck with the portrait and name of the emperor Septimius Severus were struck precisely at the time of his stay at Pautalia. As serious arguments for this assumption, L. Ruzicka points out the special appearance of the coins with double images of the emperor and Julia Domna with their children, as well as the coins with the double portrait images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus. In addition, Ruzicka suggested that probably Septimius Severus was on a campaign against Byzantium as early as 193 AD, as it is likely that in this campaign of his towards Thrace, he did not take the well-known route through Singidunum (present-day Belgrade) to Byzantium, but first passed through Macedonia, and the first battles of his troops against Byzantium probably took place after he first passed through Pautalia⁵⁹.

Leon Ruzicka further presented his various assumptions about the coins of Pautalia struck for the emperor Septimius Severus and for Clodius Albinus as Caesar in the following way. In his opinion, because of a passage in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* which states that Severus was ill during the campaign against Pescennius Niger, one could suggest that the emperor Septimius Severus was probably considering being succeeded by Clodius Albinus⁶⁰. However, it is not yet possible to say from the available information exactly where Severus was staying during the battles that took place in AD 194 in front of Byzantium⁶¹. Since there were warm healing mineral springs at Pautalia, which, as evidenced by the numerous coins with images of healing deities, enjoyed great attention and veneration, it can be assumed that the sick emperor stayed at Pautalia to recover his health. This is supported by the fact that the first imperial Roman coin of Severus with Salus (SAL. AVG)

⁴⁶ BOTEVA 1997, 143 with ref. 145 with ref.; TACHEV 2020b, 86; 88 with ref.

⁴⁷ BOTEVA 1997, 143.

⁴⁸ TACHEV 2020b, 358-359 with pl. 93, nos. 1-4.

⁴⁹ BIRLEY 1999, 117-118; 121; see also BOTEVA 1997, 143 with ref.; 145 with ref.

⁵⁰ BIRLEY 1999, 121-128.

⁵¹ BIRLEY 1999, 1.

⁵² BIRLEY 2003, 351.

⁵³ BIRLEY 2003, 351.

⁵⁴ BIRLEY 1999, 97-104.

⁵⁵ BIRLEY 1999, 102.

⁵⁶ BIRLEY 2003b, 1148.

⁵⁷ BIRLEY 1999, 98; BIRLEY 2003a, 351.

⁵⁸ See BOTEVA 1997, 145 with ref.

⁵⁹ RUZICKA 1933, 11 with footnotes 2 and 3.

⁶⁰ RUZICKA 1933, 11 with footnote 4.

⁶¹ RUZICKA 1933, 11 with footnote 5.

appears from AD 194 (TR. P. II COS II), which was struck only to mark the emperor's healthy recovery. Similarly, the coins struck with the double images of Severus and Albinus, which in the whole province of Thrace are found only at Pautalia, most likely confirm the plans for the appointment of Albinus as successor, which may also give us an idea of the possibility of Severus' presence in this ancient city⁶².

L. Ruzicka noted that the coins with the double images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus struck at Pautalia are remarkable and new for the province of Thrace⁶³. Ruzicka believes that the legend on the obverse allows the interpretation that these coins were struck either when Albinus was given the title of Caesar in 193 or when Septimius Severus exercised his consulship with him for the second time in 194⁶⁴. He has also made the important clarification that the portrait of Septimius Severus on these coins is presented with the same early image as on the coins of the highest denomination with the names of the provincial governors of Thrace at that time – Caelius Oneratus and Titus Statilius Barbarus (196 – 198)⁶⁵.

The only coin with the single image of Albinus, which was known to L. Ruzicka at the time when he published his work, was placed in the period between his position as Caesar and emperor (193 – 196)⁶⁶. But until 1933, and until recently, only one such type of coin was known. Two other similar coins of two different types, which were first published years ago by Ivan Varbanov⁶⁷, are already presented here.

CONCLUSION

The bronze coins for Clodius Albinus as Caesar – such as those with the double busts of the emperor Septimius Severus with a laurel wreath and the bare-headed Clodius Albinus as Caesar, together with all three different types with the single image of Clodius Albinus, were struck at Pautalia probably in the period between mid-193 and mid-195 AD. These are the times of the wars of the emperor Septimius Severus against the pretender to the Roman imperial throne, the governor of Syria – Pescennius Niger, proclaimed emperor by the eastern legions as early as April 193, as well as against the city of Byzantium occupied by him in 193 – 194 AD. In this early period of Septimius Severus' reign as emperor in Rome, he sought the support of Clodius Albinus in removing Pescennius Niger⁶⁸. That is why the coins struck at Pautalia presented here are precisely a reflection of the favouring of Clodius Albinus as the most important assistant to the emperor Septimius Severus. After Pescennius Niger was killed in 194, then around the middle of 195 Septimius Severus proclaimed Caesar the eldest of his sons, Caracalla, giving him the new names Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, then the relationship with Clodius Albinus began to become worse⁶⁹.

As a corresponding reaction to the actions of Septimius Severus, in late 195, or early 196 AD, according to other views in the older literature on the subject⁷⁰, Clodius Albinus declared himself emperor – Augustus, which already foreshadowed his fate. Septimius Severus declared war on Clodius Albinus, while Clodius Albinus crossed with his troops into Gaul, making the ancient city of Lugdunum (modern Lyon) his residence⁷¹. On February 19, 197, the vast troops of the two met on the battlefield of Lugdunum in Gallia (modern France), and Clodius Albinus's forces were routed, while he was killed, the same fate being shared by his family⁷². The most important ancient sources for the events related to the relationship between Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus are Cassius Dio (Cass Dio 73-75), Herodian (Herod. 2-3), as well as some of six ancient writers known as *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (SHA), but the latter are considered insufficiently reliable⁷³.

The first three coins of Pautalia presented here – these with the double images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus – were struck by the same obverse die (figs. 1 – 3). Apparently, all three bronze coins with the single image of Clodius Albinus were struck with the same obverse die (figs. 9 – 11). The various reverses of the bronze coins presented here seem as related to the successive actions of Septimius Severus after his seizure of the Roman throne in June 193 and his wars against Byzantium and against Pescennius Niger from 193 to 194 AD. The coins with an eagle standing on a wreath on the reverse (fig. 1 and fig. 6) probably symbolise the newly acquired imperial power by Septimius Severus after the assassination of the emperor Didius Julianus by order of the Roman Senate in early June 193. Some of the reverses of the bronze provincial coins struck for the emperor Septimius Severus and for his co-ruler Caesar Clodius Albinus in the ancient city of Pautalia in Thrace have well-represented military symbolism. Such are the coins with the image of Nike with a laurel wreath in one hand, walking right (Fig. 4) or standing left and crowning a trophy (Fig. 5), which goddess of victory should certainly be associated with the military actions of Septimius Severus against Pescennius Niger, which as early as the spring of 194 had ended with the victory of Septimius Severus in two consecutive battles – at Issus in Cilicia and at Antioch in Syria⁷⁴. While the eagle stepping on the snake facing him (fig. 7) should most likely be interpreted as the victory of Septimius Severus (symbolically represented by the eagle) over Pescennius Niger (symbolically represented as a standing snake). Other of the coin types presented here show some more conventional for the provincial coinage of Pautalia images such as Apollo before an altar (fig. 8), or a coiled snake before an altar (figs. 9 – 10). On the reverse of the coin 11 presented here (fig. 11), appears to show a peacock rather than a coiled snake before an altar, but the coin is not in good condition. What exactly the image is –

⁶² RUZICKA 1933, 11.

⁶³ RUZICKA 1933, 12.

⁶⁴ RUZICKA 1933, 12.

⁶⁵ RUZICKA 1933, 12.

⁶⁶ RUZICKA 1933, 12, with footnote 5.

⁶⁷ VARBANOV 2005, nos. 4614-4615.

⁶⁸ See BIRLEY 1999, 108-120.

⁶⁹ BIRLEY 1999, 117- 118; 121; BIRLEY 2003a, 351 with ref.

⁷⁰ BIRLEY 1999, 121, BIRLEY 2003a, 351.

⁷¹ BIRLEY 2003, 351.

⁷² See BIRLEY 1999, 125; BIRLEY 2003a, 351.

⁷³ See BIRLEY 1999, 203-206 with ref.; BIRLEY 2003a with ref.; BIRLEY 2003b with ref.

⁷⁴ BIRLEY 2003b, 1148.

this will remain debatable for now, better to say when other specimens of the same reverse die appear.

It only seems that the coin types with the double images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus of both variants – respectively with the image of Septimius Severus on the left, or with changed positions – with the image of Clodius Albinus on the left, were struck earlier, while the other three types of coins – with the single image of Clodius Albinus on the obverse – later. But more recently, the important observations have been made that, in fact, some of the reverse images on the coins presented here actually share the same common reverse dies with other Pautalia coin issues, which only have the image of the emperor Septimius Severus on the obverse⁷⁵. Such are certainly coin 6 here (fig. 6) – with an eagle on a wreath on the reverse⁷⁶, as well as another coin issue of Pautalia with the single portrait image of the emperor Septimius Severus⁷⁷, which share the same reverse die. While coin 2 (fig. 2) – with the double images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus on the obverse, with Apollo before an altar on the reverse, shares the same common reverse die with one of the issues with only the image of Clodius Albinus on the obverse – coin 9 (fig. 9)⁷⁸. These facts show that the coins presented here struck at Pautalia for Clodius Albinus as Caesar were struck at the same time as other issues with only the image of the emperor Septimius Severus⁷⁹.

The exact years that Caelius Oneratus was provincial governor of Thrace have recently been established – between 193 and 195 AD⁸⁰. It can now be considered certain that the Pautalia bronze coins of Clodius Albinus as Caesar presented here – both with the double images together with Septimius Severus and with the single image of Clodius Albinus were struck during the tenure of the provincial governor of Thrace – Caelius Oneratus (193 – 195 AD)⁸¹. A coin issue appears as further confirmation of these observations and conclusions. A coin with the single image of Septimius Severus on the obverse of the largest – fifth denomination, struck at Pautalia, has the name of the provincial governor Caelius Oneratus on the reverse⁸², which has the same image of Nike as the coin 4 presented here (fig. 4).

Leon Ruzicka once represented the coins of Pautalia with the double images of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus as of the fourth denomination, while the coins with the single image of Clodius Albinus as of the third denomination⁸³. Lately, however, all these coins of all types have been presented with greater grounds only as such of the third denomination, because all these coins have similar metric data⁸⁴.

Most likely, the striking of the presented bronze coins at Pautalia is connected with the assistance provided

by Clodius Albinus to the emperor Septimius Severus during the wars against Pescennius Niger at Byzantium and to the east in Asia Minor, as well as in Syria. It is likely that the ancient city of Pautalia also provided some support in these wars, mostly with food supply or with some auxiliary troops, which could also be one of the reasons, apart from the above, presented by Leon Ruzicka⁸⁵. These coins are a phenomenon of Roman provincial coinage not found in other ancient cities in the provinces of the Roman Empire in Europe.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BMC Ionia = Head, B.; Poole, R. S. (ed.). A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum. Catalogue of the Greek coins of Ionia (London: Printed by Order of the Trustees of the British Museum, 1892).

BMC Pamphylia = Hill, G. F. A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum. Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycia, Pamphylia, and Pisidia (London: Printed by Order of the Trustees of the British Museum, 1897).

SNG France 3 = Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, France, Volume 3, Cabinet des Médailles: Pamphylie, Pisidie, Lycaonie, Galatie (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France / Numismatica Ars Classica, 1994).

Niggeler Collection = Sammlung Walter Niggeler. 2. Teil. 21-22 Oktober 1966 / Bank Leu.

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- ⁷⁵ TACHEV 2020b, 88.
⁷⁶ TACHEV 2020b, 272-273 with pl. 50, n. 22.
⁷⁷ TACHEV 2020b, 270-271 with pl. 49, n. 17.
⁷⁸ TACHEV 2020b, 88.
⁷⁹ TACHEV 2020b, 86; 88.
⁸⁰ BOTEVA 1997, 145 with ref.; 331.
⁸¹ TACHEV 2020b, 86; 88 with ref.
⁸² TACHEV 2020b, 268-269 with pl. 48, n. 2.
⁸³ RUZICKA 1933, 122.
⁸⁴ See TACHEV 2020b, 88.
⁸⁵ RUZICKA 1933, 11-12 with ref.

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