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**HISTRIA 100 ANS DE RECHERCHES ARCHEOLOGIQUES**  
**HISTRIA 100 YEARS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH**



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# COIN FINDS IN THE SOUTHERN AREA OF HISTRIA

THEODOR ISVORANU\*, MIRCEA DABÎCA\*\*

**Keywords:** Histria, coins, edifice, mint, Tetrarchy, Roman Empire.

**Abstract:** During the systematic archaeological investigations taking place in the southern side of Histria in 2011–2012, several dozens of ancient coins were discovered in the main trenches located between the “Southern Sector” and the “*Basilica extra muros* Sector”. Among the 37 identified ones, six were Greek coins issued before the Roman rule at Histria, 27 were Greek and Roman coins from the age of the Principate, three coins were dated to the Late Roman Empire and a single one to the Early Byzantine period. Most coins were found among the remains of a large building, constructed perhaps at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, and which was affected by the events of the “Scythian war”, being definitively destroyed by fire during the first two decades of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, as indicated by the monetary pieces captured under its ruins, the latest one from the end of the Tetrarchy. Several provincial and imperial coins bear traces of burning, melted metal depositions, sometimes portions of their surface being heavily melted. From another context comes the most recent coin, dating to Justinian I, found in the zone of the cobblestone platforms from the southern extremity of the site, presumably related to the harbor development during the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Histria, monede, edificiu, atelier monetar, Tetrarhie, Imperiul Roman.

**Rezumat:** În cursul cercetărilor sistematice desfășurate în sudul stațiunii arheologice Histria în perioada 2011–2012 au rezultat câteva zeci de monede antice, descoperite în secțiunile magistrale efectuate între sectoarele Sud și *Basilica extra muros*. Dintre cele 37 de monede identificate, șase sunt emisiuni grecești din perioada anterioară stăpânirii romane la Histria, 27 de monede grecești și romane din epoca Principatului, trei din Imperiul târziu și o piesă din perioada protobizantină. Cele mai multe piese monetare provin din zona de identificare a rămășițelor unui mare edificiu ridicat probabil la începutul secolului III, afectat de evenimentele „războiului scitic” și probabil distrus definitiv de un incendiu în cursul primelor două decenii ale secolului IV, așa cum indică monedele surprinse sub dărâmăturile sale, cea mai târzie datând de la sfârșitul Tetrarhiei. Mai multe monede provinciale și imperiale poartă urme de ardere, porțiuni topite sau depuneri de metal topit. De un alt context se leagă o monedă de la Iustinian I, găsită în zona platformelor de piatră din extremitatea sudică a sitului, bănuite a aparține unei amenajări portuare din secolul VI.

Since 2010, systematic archaeological research in the Southern Sector at Histria was focused on highlighting the ancient city life during the period of the Principate. The excavations had as main objectives: to establish the general stratigraphy of the area between the southern boundary of Histria and the *Basilica extra muros*; to fix the southern and western boundaries of the necropolis area from the immediate vicinity of the *Basilica extra muros*; to identify the northern limit of the sand area from the southern extremity of the site in which, despite the lack of archaeological vestiges, is believed to have operated at some point the harbor of Histria, or even one of its harbor basins. In this respect three parallel main sections were started, stretching from the north to the south of the mentioned area of the research<sup>1</sup>.

During the investigations of 2011–2012 a few tens of coins were collected, quite a varied numismatic material, stretching over a long period from the Hellenistic age to the Roman-Byzantine one. Monetary discoveries were made mainly in the north-west side of the studied area, mainly in the trenches S2 and S3 (north of the visitors' alley), also in the smaller S4 trench from west of the above mentioned ones (see pl. 2). In that area two phases of the Late Roman necropolis were investigated, which partially overlapped the habitation level from the time of the Principate. In this habitation level, a spectacular discovery was the identification of the remains of a large edifice<sup>2</sup>, most likely destroyed by fire, in the area where most of the coins were found. Overall, 49 coins were collected, together with several fragments of

<sup>1</sup> Dabîca 2010; Dabîca 2012; Dabîca 2013a; Dabîca 2013b.

<sup>2</sup> See a detailed presentation on this subject at Dabîca 2014.

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metal (these were in most cases unidentifiable). As a consequence of the poor state of preservation of the material (due to the corrosive action of the soil salinity on sea coast and to other factors that affected them in the Antiquity such as the burning or the melting – see pl. 3–4) only 37 of coins – some of them fragmentary – could be identified.

The earliest of the lot is a coin of the Macedonian Kingdom followed by other five small pieces issued by the mint of Istros (Histria) in the time of its autonomy. From the Principate age we recorded the most coins (27 ex. = 72.97% of the identified coins), ranging in a chronological sequence from the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD to Diocletian monetary reform. Of these, 12 were struck by the Greek cities under Roman authority and another 15 were Roman imperial coins. The Late Roman period is represented only by three coins issued in the first quarter of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. The last monetary issue belongs to the 6<sup>th</sup> century habitation at Histria.

All the Greek coins are of base metal. For minting were commonly used alloys such as bronze and *orichalcum*, and in the case of the Roman imperial ones – *denarii subaerati*, late *antoninianii* and *nummii* (except two exemplars) – one can only observe the core of bronze or billon, but not the silver layer.

We present below a detailed description of the coins:

## CATALOGUE

### GREEK COINS

#### Macedonia

##### Kingdom of Macedonia

##### *Alexander the Great*

Obv. Beardless head of Heracles in a lion's hide r.

Rev. Broken, illegible.

Cf. Price, 336–323 / 310 BC.

1. OR 3.17 g; 17.1×11 mm; burned; contorted flan, diminished by melting.

2011, trench S3b, square 1, –0.69 m; Late Roman necropolis level; in secondary position.

#### Moesia Inferior

##### Histria (Istros) – autonomous issues

##### *River god type (small module)*

Obv. Horned and bearded river god Istros half r.

Rev. Eagle on dolphin l.; above, [ΙΣΤΡΠΙΗ] or [ΙΣΤΡΠΙ].

Cf. Pick 468 (ΙΣΤΡΠΙΗ). Cf. Petac, *Coll. Sutz*, p. 8, no 16 (ΙΣΤΡΠΙ).

Around 360/50–313/280 BC. (cf. Poenaru Bordea 2001, p. 17).

2. AE → 1.00 g; 12.8×11 mm; worn, (?) partially melted.

2012, trench S3a, square 3, –0.76 m; Late Roman necropolis level; in secondary position.

##### *Apollo type (large and thin flan)*

Obv. Head of Apollo, laureate, r. Round countermark (0.53 mm); head of Hermes wearing petasos r.

Rev. Eagle with raised wings on dolphin l.; above, [Ι]ΣΤΡΠΙΗ; below, ΧΑ[Ι].

SNG XI, *Stancomb coll.*, pl. IX, 190, second half of 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BC.

3. OR ↑ 4.04 g; 18.9×16.9 mm.

2012, trench S3c, square 13, –1.02 m; Late Roman necropolis level; in secondary position.

##### *Hermes type*

Obv. Head of Hermes wearing petasos r.

Rev. Eagle on dolphin l.; above, ΙΣΤΡΠΙ and [Ι]ΣΤΡΠΙ; no letters in field?

Cf. Preda 1973, p. 122–123, general type, the end of 2<sup>nd</sup>–first half of 1<sup>st</sup> cent. BC.

Cf. Poenaru Bordea 2001, p. 19, the 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BC.

4. AE ↑ 1.63 g; 12.1×10.2 mm; worn.

2011, trench S3c, square 6, –0.82 m; Late Roman necropolis level; in secondary position.

5. AE ↑ 1.10 g; 13×11.5 mm; worn; decentered effigy.

2012, trench S3c, square 12, –1.11 m; Late Roman necropolis level; in secondary position.

##### *Uncertain type*

Obv. Lacking<sup>3</sup>; the surface is perfectly flat.

Rev. Eagle on dolphin l.; above, ΙΣΤΡΠ[...]; below, ΔΙ[Ο?].

Perhaps the 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BC.

6. AE 15 mm; fragmentary (about 60 % of a coin).

2012, trench S2b, square 9, –0.70 m; Late Roman necropolis level; in secondary position.

### Histria – provincial issues

##### *Commodus*

Obv. Young bust of emperor laureate, draped, (cuirassed?), r.; ΑΥΤ Μ ΑΥΡ Κ[. . .] – ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝ[. . .].

Rev. Bearded rider-god r. (holding fullhorn?); [Ι]ΚΤ – Π[. . .].

Cf. Pick 490 (but the obverse legend as Pick 488).

AD 177–180 (?).

7. OR ↑ 4.50 g; 20.3 mm; 2 assaria; partially melted.

2012, trench S4 (the northern half), –1.78 m; found in the mortar level (the 3<sup>rd</sup>–beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD), probably coming from the ruins of western building.

<sup>3</sup> The remaining piece (the reverse side) is very thin. It seems that the coin was made by the welding of two bronze (embossed) sheets, which, under the action of a factor such as fire, were separated.

*Julia Domna*

Obv. Bust of Julia Domna draped r.; IOVΛIA – ΔOMNA  
CC.

Rev. Eagle on dolphin l.; [I]CTP – I – HNΩN.

Cf. Pick 501 (but a different distribution of the legend).

8. AE ↑ 7.23 g; 25.8×24 mm; 3 assaria; burned, double perforated.  
2011, trench S2b, square 2, –0.23 m; found in the padding of a modern pit, starting on the current treading level.

*Caracalla*

Obv. Head of bearded Caracalla laureate r.; AVT K M  
AVP C – P ANTΩNIN.

Rev. Dionysus standing l., holding thyrsos (surmounted by eagle?) and pouring wine from kantharos to panther at his feet l.; ICTPI – H[N]ΩN.

Cf. Mušmov 174 (variant of legend).

Cf. Varbanov 2005, 638 (variant of legend).

AD 209–215 (?)

9. OR √ 1.84 g; 17.7 mm; assarion.  
2012, trench S3a, square 6, –1.40 m; found in the level of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. AD street, previously known from N. Hampartumian's old excavations.

*Geta*

Obv. Head of Geta, laureate, draped, cuirassed, r.; AV K Π  
CC – ΓETAC.

Rev. Demeter draped standing l., holding corn-ears over flaming altar and long torch (or sceptre ?); [ICTP]I – HNΩN.

Cf. Pick 508 (but a different distribution of the reverse legend).

10. AE √ 5.67 g; 21.1×19.5 mm; 2 assaria.  
2012, trench S2b, square 2, –0.90 m; found above the (Late Roman) level of grave M 7, perhaps in secondary position.

*Julia Mamaea*

Obv. Bust of Julia Mamaea diademed, draped, r.; IOVΛI[A M]AM – [MAIA] CEBA.

Rev. Eagle on dolphin l.; ICTP – [IH]; in exergue, NΩN.

Pick 520.

11. AE ↓ 7.38 g; 25.6 mm; 3 or 4 assaria; burned, diminished by melting; there is a trace left by an incandescent object with whom the coin came into contact.  
2011, trench S2b, square 2, –0.56 m; found in the padding of a modern pit, starting on the current treading level.

*Gordian III*

Obv. Head of Gordian, laureate, r.; [AVT K] M ANT – ΓOPΔIANOC.

Rev. River-god reclining l., holding reed and resting on urn from which water flows; [E] in field to l.; . . . IHNΩN; in exergue, [ICTPOC].

Cf. Varbanov 2005, 680.

12. AE √ 15.23 g; 29×27.2 mm; 5 assaria.  
2012, trench S3b, square 9, box M 4–M 5, Late Roman necropolis level (perhaps from a still unexplored grave in the western profile); –0.97 m.

Obv. Bust of Gordian laureate, draped, r.; legend illegible.

Rev. Hera standing l., holding patera over flaming altar and sceptre; [Δ] in field; legend illegible.

Cf. Pick 523 (Δ in field to r.).

Cf. Varbanov 2005, 678 (Δ in field to l.).

13. AE ↓ 7.72 g; 24.3 mm; 4 assaria; strongly affected by burning, diminished by melting.  
2012, trench S3c, square 13, –1.10 m; Late Roman necropolis level.

*Tranquillina*

Obv. Bust of Tranquillina [diademed], draped, r.; [CA]BIN[IA] – [TPANKVΛINA].

Rev. Eagle on dolphin l.; [I]CTPIHNΩ[N] (below, from right to left).

Pick 529.

Varbanov 2005, 692.

14. AE √ 5.20 g; 22.1 mm; 3 assaria; strongly affected by burning, partially melted.  
2012, trench S3b, square 7, –0.92 m; Late Roman necropolis level.

**Callatis – provincial issues***Ktistes type*

Obv. Head of bearded Heracles, laureate, l.; K[TIC] – TH – C.

Rev. Kybele seated l. on rock, holding patera; by her side, tympanon; [KAA]ΛA – TIA[NΩN] (from top right).

Pick 293.

Gramaticu, Ioniță 2003, p. 54, no 4; about the second half of 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. AD (p. 68–69).

15. OR ↑ 2.52 g; 20.2 mm; fragmentary (about 40% of the coin was melted).  
2012, trench S2b, square 2, –1.10 m; Late Roman necropolis level.

**Tomis – provincial issues***Gordian III*

Obv. Bust of Gordian, laureate, r.; AVT K M ANT Γ – OPΔIAN [OC AVΓ].

Rev. Asklepios standing facing, head to l., holding staff in r. up which serpent twines; B in field to l.; MHTP[O ΠIO] – TOMEΩ.

Regling 3505.

16. OR √ 4.00 g; 21×19.9 mm; 2 assaria; affected by burning, partially melted (especially the obverse).  
2012, trench S3b, square 9, –1.18 m; found in the level of mortar and stones (the 3<sup>rd</sup>–beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD), near the grave M 6.

## Bithynia

**Nicaea – provincial issues***Gordian III*

Obv. Bust of Gordian, radiate, r.; [M ANT] ΓOPΔIAN[OC AVΓ].

Rev. Three (?) standards; between and beneath them, NI – K – [ . . . ]; in exergue, [E]ΩN.  
*Recueil*, 711–716, general type.

17. AE ↓ 1.98 g; 18.3 mm; worn, fragmentary.  
 2012, trench S3a, square 3, –1.15 m; found in the level of bricks and pigments of burn (the 3<sup>rd</sup>–beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD).

#### UNSPECIFIED GREEK COINS

Obv. Laureate bust r.; legend illegible.

Rev. Unspecified deity seated l.; legend illegible.

Provincial coin, second half of 2<sup>nd</sup>–first half of 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. AD.

18. AE ↑ 9.12 g; 26.7 mm; 4 assaria (?); contorted, heavily burned (the whole surface of the flan was melted).  
 2012, trench S3a, square 4, –0.82 m; Late Roman necropolis level.

Provincial coin (?), 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> cent. AD.

19. OR 3.60 g; 19.8×17.9 mm; assarion (?); strongly affected by burning; with molten metal depositions.  
 2012, trench S4 (SV), central side, –1.77 m; the mortar level (the 3<sup>rd</sup>–beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD), probably coming from the ruins of western building; found next to an arrowhead.

Unspecified period

20. OR 4.12 g; 17 mm; flan damaged by oxides.  
 2012, trench S3b, square 10, –1.74 m, found at –0.54 m deep and 0,10 m distance (to the south) from the building wall; level of the 3<sup>rd</sup>–beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD; in secondary position.
21. AE 3.81 g; 18.8×17.6 mm; one side is slightly convex. Strongly affected by burning (the whole surface of the flan was melted).  
 2012, trench S2b, square 6, –0.73 m; Late Roman necropolis level; in secondary position.

#### ROMAN COINS

##### Early Roman Empire

###### *Septimius Severus*

Obv. Head of Septimius, laureate, bearded, r.; SEVERVS – [PIVS AVG].

Rev. Trophy between two captives, seated l. and r. on ground and leaning forward to prop head on r. hand, set on knee; [PAR]T MAX P M TR P COS III P P.

BMC, 386–387, Rome, AD 202.

RIC 185, Rome, AD 202.

22. Subaerate denarius ∠ 1.81 g; 17.6×16.4 mm; only the core of bronze has been remained; molten metal deposition on the obverse; reverse exfoliated.  
 2012, trench S3a, square 3, –0.97 m; Late Roman necropolis level.

###### *Severus Alexander*

Obv. Bust of Alexander, laureate, draped, cuirassed, r.; [IM]P ALEX[ANDER PIVS] AVG.

Rev. Spes draped, advancing l., holding flower in r. hand and raising skirt with l.; SPES PVBLICA.

BMC 899, issue 15, Rome, AD 232.

RIC 254, [Rome], AD 231–235.

23. Subaerate denarius ↓ 2.35 g; 19.9×18.5 mm; on reverse, the silver layer is cracked.

2011, trench S3a, square 5, –0.39 m; Late Roman necropolis level; found in the topsoil and padding earth resulted from older excavations.

###### *Gallienus*

Obv. Radiate head of Gallienus, r.; GA[LLI]ENV[S] AVG.

Rev. Centaur walking r., drawing bow; in exergue, Z; [A]POLLINI CONS AVG.

RIC 163, Rome, the sole reign.

Göbl, *MIR*, p. 94; table 20, no 735, Rome, AD 267–268.

24. Antoninianus ↓ 2.90 g; 23×21.2 mm; the flan surface is partially melted.

2012, trench S3a, square 7, –1.14 m; level of the 3<sup>rd</sup>–beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD.

###### *Aurelian*

Obv. Bust of Aurelian, radiate, cuirassed, r.; [IMP] C AVRELIANVS AVG.

Rev. Sol walking l. between two captives, treading one down, r. hand raised, l. holding globe; in field to l., star; in exergue, PXX[T]; SO[L]I [INVICT]O.

RIC 154, Ticinum, issue 1, after reform.

Estiot, *Venèra*, 4845–4856, issue 1, Ticinum, May 274.

25. Antoninianus ↓ 3.10 g; 22.1×21.1 mm; affected by burning, partially melted (especially the reverse).

2011, trench S3a, square 10, –0.50 m; found in the topsoil and padding earth resulted from older excavations.

Obv. As last; IMP AVRELIAN[V]S [AVG].

Rev. As last, but no star; in field to r., T; in exergue, XXI; [O]RIE[NS A]VG.

Cf. RIC 62, Rome, after reform.

Cf. Estiot, *Venèra*, 775–784, Rome, issue 8, spring-summer 274.

26. Antoninianus ↓ 1.92 g; 24×22 mm; fragmentary; strongly affected by burning.

2011, trench S3a, square 4, –0.63 m; first level of the Late Roman necropolis.

###### *Probus*

Obv. Bust of Probus, radiate, cuirassed, r.; PROBVS – S P F AVG.

Rev. Jupiter standing, holding thunderbolt and sceptre; in exergue, R[OM]A; IOVI CON – S PROB AVG.

RIC 175, Rome, undated.

Estiot 1983, 997–1007, Rome, issue 6, AD 281.

27. Antoninianus ↑ 3.17 g; 21.6×20 mm; reverse partially melted (there is a trace left by an incandescent object with whom the coin came into contact).

2012, trench S3c, square 14, –1.15 m; Late Roman necropolis level; found above a still unexplored grave.

Obv. As last; IMP PROBVS P F AVG.

Rev. Emperor standing r., clasping hand of Concordia; in exergue, XXIQ; CONCORDIA MILIT.  
RIC 666, Siscia, undated.

Estiot 1983, 1463, Siscia, issue 6, AD 279.

28. Antoninianus ↓ 3.38 g; 22.4×20.3 mm.  
2011, trench S3b, square 1, -0.30 m; first level of the Late Roman necropolis.

Obv. As last; IMP C M AVR PROBVS AVG.

Rev. Providentia standing l., holding baton and sceptre; at foot, globe; in exergue, XXIP; PROVIDENTIA AVG.

Pink, NZ, -.

RIC 725, Siscia, undated.

29. Antoninianus ↑ 2.59 g; 22.1×20.6 mm; partially affected by burning.  
2011, trench S3a, square 6, -0.70 m; first level of the Late Roman necropolis.

Obv. Bust of Probus, radiate, draped, cuirassed, r.;

BONO IMP C PROBO P F INVICT AVG.

Rev. Sol in spread quadriga, holding whip; in exergue, K·A·Δ; S – OL – I INVICT – O.

Cf. Pink, NZ, p. 45, Serdica, issue 4, AD 277.

Cf. RIC 868, Serdica, undated (no dots).

30. Antoninianus ↓ 3.77 g; 23.1×21 mm; traces of the silver layer are visible.  
2011, trench S3a, square 8, -1.00 m; Late Roman necropolis level; found near the grave M 1 (1 m to north); in secondary position.

#### *Carinus Caesar*

Obv. Bust of Carinus, radiate, draped, cuirassed, r.; M AVR CARINVS NOB CAES.

Rev. Pontifical implements: lituus, knife, patera, jug, simpulum and sprinkler (from left to right); in exergue, KAZ; [PIET]AS AVGG.

RIC 155, Rome, undated.

Estiot 1983, 1577, Rome, issue 2, December 282.

Gricourt, *Venèra*, 2123–2150, Rome, phase 3, countersigned series, about January 283.

31. Antoninianus ↑ 3.04 g; 22.1×18.8 mm; partially affected by burning.  
2012, trench S3c, square 4, -1.24 m; Late Roman necropolis level, under the wall Z1.

#### *Diocletian*

Obv. Bust of Diocletian, radiate, draped, r.; IMP C C VA[L] DIO[CLE]T[I]ANVS AVG.

Rev. Emperor standing r., holding parazonium or sceptre, receiving Victory on globe from Jupiter standing l., holding sceptre; in lower centre, B; in exergue, XXI•; CONCORDIA MI – [LIT]VM•.

Cf. RIC 306, Cyzicus, [AD 293–295] (no dot in exergue).

[http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/diocletian/RIC\\_0306.5.jpg](http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/ric/diocletian/RIC_0306.5.jpg) (dot in exergue).

32. Antoninianus ↑ 3.02 g; 22.6 mm; missing a small fragment of edge; obverse affected by burning.  
2012, trench S3c, square 1, -1.15 m; found in the mortar level (the 3<sup>rd</sup>–beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD), probably coming from the ruins of southern building.

Obv. Bust of Diocletian, radiate, cuirassed, r.; IMP C C VAL DIOCLETIANVS P F AVG.

Rev. As last, but illegible letter in lower centre; in exergue, illegible mint-mark; CONCORDIA MILI – [TVM].

33. Antoninianus ↑ 2.76 g; 20.1×18.8 mm; obverse affected by burning.  
2012, trench S3a, square 7, -0.95 m; level of the 3<sup>rd</sup>–beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD; found “in the first level of debris”.

#### *Maximianus Hercules*

Obv. Bust of Maximianus, radiate, cuirassed, r.; IMP C M AVR VAL MAXIMIANVS P F AVG.

Rev. Jupiter et Hercules standing face to face; the former holding globe and sceptre, the latter Victory, club and lion’s skin; in lower centre, ☺ / B; in exergue, XXI; IOV ET HERCV CONSER AVGG.

RIC 622, Antioch, AD 285 to 295.

34. Antoninianus ↘ 2.45 g; 22.2 mm; missing a small fragment of edge; obverse slightly affected by burning.  
2012, trench S2b, square 4, -0.69 m; first level of the Late Roman necropolis.

#### *Unspecified, second half of 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. A.D.*

Obv. [Bust?] radiate r.; legend illegible.

Rev. Illegible.

35. Antoninianus, about 19.5 mm; fragmentary (50% of the coin); strogly affected by burning; with sand in the molten metal.  
2012, trench S3c, square 13, -0.58 m; found in the eastern profile.
36. Antoninianus, about 19 mm; fragmentary (40% of the coin); strogly affected by burning.  
2012, trench S3c, square 10, -1.05 m; Late Roman necropolis level.

#### **Late Roman Empire**

##### *Maximinus II Daza Caesar*

Obv. Laureate head of Maximinus r.; GA[L V]AL MAXIMINVS NOB C.

Rev. Genius standing l., modius on head, naked but with chlamys (falling low) over l. shoulder, r. holding patera (from which liquor flows), l. cornucopiae; in field to l., Δ; in exergue, MKV; G[ENIO CA] – ESARIS.

RIC 43, Cyzicus, AD 308–309.

37. AE ⚡ 4.53 g; 25.6×23.8 mm; partially melted.  
2012, trench S3c, square 16, -1.13 m; Late Roman necropolis level; found in the area with debris and limestone slabs, in the southern extremity of S3c.

##### *Unspecified emperor (Constantine I or Licinius I)*

Type *Soli Invicto Comiti*; in field to l., star; in exergue, PT.  
RIC 7, Ticinum, AD 313–314.

38. AE ↓ 2.20 g; 19×17.6 mm; worn, corroded.  
2011, trench S3c, square 2, -0.45 m; Late Roman necropolis level; found above the level of debris coming from the southern side of the building.

*Licinius II Caesar*

Type *Iovi Conservatori*; in field to r.,  $\text{IIIM}$ ; in exergue, [S]MH[?].

RIC 54, Heraclea, AD 321–324.

39. AE  $\nearrow$  1.46 g; 21.1 × 18.6 mm; worn, corroded.  
2012, trench S3b, square 9, –0.73 m; Late Roman necropolis level.

**Byzantine Empire***Justinian I*

M;  $\text{C}\text{H}[\text{C}\text{Y}\text{P}]$ ; Γ; X / X / X /  $\text{C}\text{I}$ .

DOW 233b, class F, Antiochia, year 37 = AD 563/564.

MIBE 150, Antiochia, y. 37.

40. AE  $\simeq$  16.09 g; 34.1 × 31.3 mm; worn obverse.  
2011, trench S3e, –0.56 m; Early Byzantine level (the 6<sup>th</sup> cent. AD); found in the area of cobblestone platforms, hypothetically linked with the existence of a harbor's improvement.

## ILLEGIBLE COINS

41. AE 4.42 g; 25.8 × 21.9 mm; strongly affected by metal oxides; with mineral depositions.  
2012, trench S2b, square 1, –0.98 m; Late Roman necropolis level.
42. AE 3.99 g; 21 mm; strongly burned, covered by a layer of slag.  
2012, trench S2b, square 1 (the north–western corner of S2b, above the level of graves M8 and M9), –1.30 m; Late Roman necropolis level.
43. AE, fragmentary (about 50% of the coin); 23 mm; broken, corroded.  
2012, trench S4 (the south–western corner), –1.06 m; Late Roman necropolis level; found with a piece of molten metal.
44. AE 2.30 g; 15.5 mm; broken, corroded, damaged by metal oxides.  
2012, trench S3d, square 5, –0.65 m; Late Roman necropolis level; found between the debris of wall Z6.
45. AE, fragmentary (about 30% of the coin); 15.6 mm; worn; with molten metal depositions.  
2012, trench S2b, square 6, –0.80 m; Late Roman necropolis level.
46. AE 1.34 g; 14 mm; worn, corroded.  
2012, trench S3a, square 2, –1.49 m; level of the 3<sup>rd</sup>–beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD.
47. AE 0.71 g; 13.1 mm; fragmentary, worn, corroded.  
2011, trench S3a, square 1, –0.32 m; Late Roman necropolis level.
48. AE 0.25 g; 10.8 mm; fragmentary, strongly burned; very thinned flan.  
2012, trench S3a, square 2, –1.50 m; level of the 3<sup>rd</sup>–beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> cent. AD.
49. AE 0.44 g; 10.4 mm; fragmentary, worn.  
2012, trench S2c, square 2, –1.06 m; Late Roman necropolis level.

The earliest coins of our lot are traditionally dated to the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, e.g. the coin from Alexander the Great and the Histrian coin of “river god” type (nos 1–2). The poor preservation state of the first one – the reverse was totally destroyed – hampers us from determining whether it was issued during the life of the *basileus* or whether is a posthumous one, as both categories had been attested by discoveries in Dobrudja. The “river god” coins, especially of the small variant present in the above catalogue, are well represented at Histria and its territory. They are usually dated at the latest in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, or no later than 280 BC.<sup>4</sup> Other autonomous monetary types of Histria were till now irresolutely dated by the numismatic studies dedicated to this mint, over a long period between the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> / the first half of the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. Therefore, for the case of the coins from the Southern Sector we maintained the traditional order. Less common for Dobrudja, but with a recent attestation<sup>5</sup>, is the coin from the late series of the Apollo type, having a countermark with the head of Hermes on the obverse, and the abbreviated name XAI on the reverse (no 3). The group of coins from the time of the autonomous mint of Histria also comprises two small items of the Hermes type (nos 4–5) and another one in a fragmentary status, of which only the reverse, with the eagle on dolphin and the abbreviated name ΔIO, is still preserved (no 6). Although the last piece's thinness would seem to indicate a monetary technique which is still not attested for that period – namely the minting of a coin through the welding the two sides perhaps already imprinted<sup>6</sup> – would require confirmations in this regard, based on the study of a larger sample of material. Establishing a relative chronology for the various types of Histrian autonomous bronze coins, with main and divisional denominations, whose relation has not yet been elucidated, is still a controversial aspect. Better chronologically assigned seem to be the coins of the Apollo type (the earlier series) and of

<sup>4</sup> Preda 1998, p. 67; Poenaru Bordea 2001, p. 17, notes 75–76.

<sup>5</sup> An identical exemplar but of significantly lower size (2.70 g, 16 mm, maybe intermediate between the two phases of the Apollo type) was found at Izvoarele, Constanța County: Talmațchi 2003a, p. 375, no 170.

<sup>6</sup> See above the note 3.

the “river god” type<sup>7</sup>, these appearing to be the oldest bronze coins bearing the traditional iconography with an eagle on a dolphin. However of this type are known several coins with the abbreviations ΔIO<sup>8</sup> or XAI<sup>9</sup> on the reverse. The name ΔIO engraved in the same style, has been noted also on coins of the Helios<sup>10</sup>, Demeter<sup>11</sup>, Hermes<sup>12</sup>, Dionysus<sup>13</sup> and Athena types<sup>14</sup>. We think it is not a coincidence that the acronym XAI – if we refer only to the two identified magistrate names on our coins – has been attested in the case of the types with Helios<sup>15</sup>, Apollo (the late series)<sup>16</sup>, Demeter<sup>17</sup> and Dionysus<sup>18</sup>. It would be an indication that, in a certain period, coins of these types were simultaneously issued and circulated, even if some of them continued the earlier identical series, of which they cannot yet be distinguished. Nevertheless it is very difficult to determine this particular period. At this stage of the numismatic research, we believe that a periodical repeat of these types in successive series, maybe with some breaks in the issuing process, could be taken into account, at least for the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, perhaps later.

The Greek coins issued during the Roman authority age were minted, except one, in the coastal cities of Moesia Inferior. Eight of the 12 provincial determined coins were issued at Histria (nos 7–14) and represent the period between Commodus and Gordian III. Also from this province came coins of Tomis, Callatis and of an unspecified mint. Another coin was issued at Nicaea in Bithynia.

In our case the coins of low and medium nominal values are prevailing (there are each three

pieces of 1, 2 and 3 *assaria*), compared to only two pieces of 4 *assaria* and a single one of 5 *assaria*. The earliest one could be a pseudo-autonomous coin from Callatis, of Ktistes type (no 15), attributed by a recent work<sup>19</sup> to the period of the Antonin emperors from the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. It is the first coin of this kind discovered *in situ* at Histria. It was chronologically succeeded by a *diassarion* minted at Histria for Commodus, of the “rider-god” type, known in the reference catalogues of Pick and Ruzicka but extremely rarely attested in discoveries<sup>20</sup> (no 7). A comparison of the coins bearing the effigies of the empresses Julia Domna (no 8), Julia Mamaea (no 11) and Tranquillina (no 14), all with the traditional iconography of the eagle on a dolphin, shows a maintenance of the weight standard for the pieces of 3 *assaria* until the end of the Severan dynasty, this suffering a severe decrease in the last phase of operation of the Histrian mint. A definite rarity at Histria represents one *assarion* of Dionysus type minted for Caracalla after 209 or 211 (no 9), now edited<sup>21</sup> as the first such coin found here *in situ*. Also the coins of Gordian III issued in Histria and Tomis (nos 12, 13, 16) belong to some types so far attested on the Histrian market only through collection catalogues.

In the most part, in varying proportions, the provincial coins were affected by fire, having the flans partially molten or deformed, and sometimes a flattened relief. The coin of Julia Domna presents a double perforation, indicating a reuse, but not as a coin, perhaps long after its withdrawal from circulation.

The Roman imperial coins resulted from the archaeological research at Histria till now were partially published and identified. The exemplars added by our study to the existing statistics provide important information, being fully described, generally dated and with the identification of the issuers and mints.

<sup>7</sup> Poenaru Bordea 2001, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Talmațchi 2011a, p. 704, pl. XXII, no 7; p. 705, pl. XXIII, nos 10–11.

<sup>9</sup> Talmațchi 2011a, p. 705, pl. XXIII, no 14.

<sup>10</sup> Pick 466; Talmațchi 2003b, p. 276–277, nos 134–138.

<sup>11</sup> Talmațchi 2011a, p. 710, pl. XXVIII, nos 2, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Preda 1973, p. 42; p. 122, no 524; p. 123, nos 532, 540; Talmațchi 2000a, p. 23, no 99.

<sup>13</sup> Talmațchi 2003b, p. 277, no 147.

<sup>14</sup> SNG XI, *Stancob coll.*, pl. IX, no 211; Talmațchi 2000b, p. 207, no 247.

<sup>15</sup> SNG XI, *Stancob coll.*, pl. IX, no 195.

<sup>16</sup> SNG XI, *Stancob coll.*, pl. IX, no 190; Talmațchi 2003a, p. 375, no 170; Talmațchi 2011a, p. 701, pl. XIX, no 8.

<sup>17</sup> Pick 473; Preda 1973, p. 41; p. 121, nos 507, 511; SNG IX, *B.M.*, pl. IX, no 261; Talmațchi 2000a, p. 22, no 90; Talmațchi 2011b, p. 455, no 4.

<sup>18</sup> Talmațchi 2003b, p. 277, no 148; Talmațchi 2011a, p. 708, pl. XXVI, nos 10, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Gramaticu, Ioniță 2003, p. 54, no 4; p. 68–69, note 13.

<sup>20</sup> Pick 490; Ruzicka 485, but our piece has a different legend of obverse. From the discoveries at Histria a single coin of the type Pick 490 was published: Poenaru Bordea 1971, p. 330, no 10.

<sup>21</sup> This type is known by publishing of some collectible exemplars in the reference catalogues Mușmov and Varbanov 2005. In the collection of “Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology, inv 1674/144 is preserved an exemplar struck with the same die of obverse as the one above described: Dima 2007, p. 566, no 244.

The two *denarii subaerati* from the first and the last of the Severan emperors (nos 22–23) fall between their latest issues recorded at Histria, where are prevailing the *denarii* from the early reign of Septimius Severus and those of before 131<sup>22</sup>. The coin of Severus Alexander preserved almost intact the layer of plated silver.

These are followed by a compact group of late *antoninianii*, starting with a coin from the end of the reign of Gallienus, 267–268 AD (no 24). From Histria were retrieved also at least 15 *antoninianii* from after 260 AD of this emperor, but only a few pieces have been published, four of them dating from 266 and 267–268 AD<sup>23</sup>. The two *antoninianii* minted after Aurelian's monetary reform (nos 25–26) confirm the good representation of his coins at Histria (about 50 pieces were discovered, not all published, with only a few post-reform exemplars)<sup>24</sup>. They enrich the previous information, with the first piece from Ticinum, respectively the second one from Rome<sup>25</sup> known from this site. The coins of Probus (nos 27–30) add to the ca. other 35 already known, among which the issues from Rome and Siscia were prevailing<sup>26</sup>. Piece no 30, minted at Serdica, is better preserved and shows traces of the thin silver layer, which in most cases is no longer visible on the late *antoninianii*. Six coins from the reign of Carus and his sons were previously recorded<sup>27</sup>, mostly from Siscia, this number being now completed by the *antoninianus* issued in Rome for Carinus Caesar (no 31). The three coins (nos 32–34) of the co-emperors Diocletian and Maximian date before the reform of 294 AD that introduced a new monetary system, conventionally called "Late Roman". The coin no 32 belongs to an

uncommon series with a dot in exergue, unknown in RIC. At least 12 *antoninianii* from 285–294/295 AD, discovered in Histria, had been published, two of them being of the Concordia Militum type<sup>28</sup>.

The coin finds of the Tetrarchy period (after 294 AD), of the condominium Constantine-Licinius and of the House of Constantine the Great are well documented at Histria<sup>29</sup>. However during the 2011–2012 in the researched zone were found only three Late Roman coins (nos 37–39), contrasting to the large percentage of *antoninianii* from the last decades of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD: a *foliis* ("heavy" *nummus*) of Cyzic, issued for Maximinus Daza Caesar in the late Tetrarchy, a western coin from the beginning of the joint reign of Constantine and Licinius (313–324 AD), respectively a *nummus* minted between the two civil wars that ended with the victory of Constantine in 324 AD.

As in case of provincial coins, the conservation status of the Roman Imperial ones was considerably influenced by the external factors from their circulation era, most of pieces bearing traces of burning and melting. Three coins seem not to have been so affected: the *denarius* of Severus Alexander, an *antoninianus* of Probus (no 30) and the two *nummii* from AD 313–324.

The latest coin described in the catalogue is a *foliis* minted at the end of the reign of Justinian I at Antioch-Theupolis (no 40).

At this stage of research, we are able to make the following remarks:

As noted above, in the north-western side of the investigated area the foundations of a great edifice were discovered, which was overlapped by the Late Roman necropolis and partly by the *Basilica extra muros* (see Pl. 2)<sup>30</sup>. Around this structure the majority of Greek and Roman coins were found, either in its debris, or in the immediate vicinity. The latter were moved with the leveled earth and

<sup>22</sup> Nubar 1973, p. 163, nos 1104–1113; Poenaru Bordea 1982, p. 150, no 21.

<sup>23</sup> Nubar 1973, p. 165–166, nos 1140–1144; Poenaru Bordea 1982, p. 150, nos 23–24; p. 163, no 61.

<sup>24</sup> Poenaru Bordea 1971, p. 330, nos 12–13; p. 334, no 58; Nubar 1973, p. 166–168, nos 1153–1169; Poenaru Bordea 1982, p. 151, nos 28–34; p. 163–164, nos 65–67; Poenaru Bordea, Dima 2007, p. 163, nos 60–63; p. 164, no 66.

<sup>25</sup> From Rome is also edited a post-reform *antoninianus* of Severina: Poenaru Bordea, Dima 2007, p. 164, no 66.

<sup>26</sup> Nubar 1973, p. 168–169, nos 1171–1190; Poenaru Bordea 1982, p. 151, nos 35–43; p. 164, nos 68–70; Vertan, Custurea 1996, p. 316, no 1577; Mihăilescu-Bîrliba, Poenaru Bordea 2000, p. 316, no 11; Poenaru Bordea, Dima 2007, p. 164, no 67.

<sup>27</sup> Nubar 1973, p. 169, nos 1191–1192; Poenaru Bordea 1982, p. 151–152, nos 44–45; Poenaru Bordea, Dima 2007, p. 164, nos 68–69.

<sup>28</sup> Noteworthy is that the coins dated before AD 290 come from western mints, but those of the years 290–294/295 are issued by the eastern mints. Nubar 1973, p. 172, nos 1251–1254; Poenaru Bordea 1982, p. 152, nos 46–51, 63–65; p. 164, no 71; Custurea, Vertan, Talmăţchi 1999, p. 353, no 2039; Poenaru Bordea, Dima 2007, p. 165, no 70.

<sup>29</sup> Even only from the period 294–324 AD over 100 coins are known: Poenaru Bordea 1971; Nubar 1973; Poenaru Bordea 1982; Ocheşeanu 2006; Poenaru Bordea, Dima 2007.

<sup>30</sup> See above the note 2.

rubble after the demolition of the building (the numismatic material from the trenches S2B, S3a, S3B, S3C and S4).

Towards the southern end of the main trenches, south of the visitors' alley, no coins were identified from the Principate era, the discoveries consisting only of two small and poorly preserved pieces – that remained undefined – and of the *follis* of Justinian I (the trenches S2C, S2D, S3D and S3E being made in the stone platforms area in the southern extremity of the site)<sup>31</sup>.

The coins bearing traces of burning and melting were concentrated between and around the ruins of the edifice and appeared to be linked to its destiny. It is plausible that they were caught and affected by the fires that destroyed the building, the molten portions betraying contacts with torched beams or some incandescent metal objects (especially in the case of coins nos 11, 14, 15, 25, 27, 32–34, 37). Some pieces have slag deposits (nos 22, 42) or also of molten metal (no 19) which sometimes show embedded sand or other mineral particles (no 35).

As can be seen from the detailed description of the conditions of discovery (see the catalogue), many coins were found in a secondary position. It is the case of the Greek coins minted before the Roman age (nos 1–6), which unfortunately do not have a stratigraphic importance, being relocated with the earth excavated from habitation levels prior to the Roman ones, maybe even during works at the foundations of the “imposing” building. Some pieces were deranged and relocated at digging of tombs in the Roman-Byzantine necropolis (nos 10, 12, 27, 30, 42) or in other circumstances, others were found in the filling earth of some modern pits (nos 8, 11). Several coins appeared in a clearer stratigraphic position, in the level of debris, mortar or bricks; they could be chronological clues (nos 7, 16, 17, 19, 32–33, 37). Thus, the *assarion* of Caracalla (no 9) was found on the level of the Early Roman street, also identified by the earlier research. The coin struck at Tomis for Gordian III (no 16), discovered in a level of mortar and stone, could be linked to a potential destruction of the building in the “Scythian war” era, perhaps to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The *assarion* of Nicaea, from the same period

(no 17), comes from a level of debris with bricks and burning pigments. The *antoninianii* from Diocletian (nos 32–33), both found in the first level of debris, and especially the coin of Maximinus Daza (no 37) recovered in a similar context, could date the final destruction of the edifice.

The numismatic material confirms a hypothetical lifting of the great edifice sometime during of the first ones Severan emperors, when some coins such as the pseudo-autonomous one from Callatis and the Histrian one for Commodus were in circulation. The provincial coins, whose issuing ceased in the whole Thracian-Moesian area during the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, were often kept in circulation for a long time, in parallel with the *antoninianii* of billon. Our catalogue describes exemplars in both categories, with burning marks and molten portions. We can not be sure if all of the provincial pieces were affected by fire around the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, in the Gothic attacks that caused *excidium Histriae* – it seems even in the reign of Gordian III – or if some of the provincial coins, still in circulation with post-Gallienus *antoninianii*, suffered much later the action of another devastating fire, which finally has put an end the use of the edifice. Its partial restoration after a first phase of destruction (perhaps in the interval Aurelian-Probus) and an reuse at least until the end of the first decade of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, are both indicated by the late *antoninianii*, that constituted the base of currency even after the reform of Diocletian, also by the coin of Tetrarchy from 308–309 AD. The fact that these coins circulated together is revealed by their conservation status. Most of them have traces of burning or melting, but they appear to be very little worn, an indication that they had circulated a short time before being buried under the ruins. By comparison, the two *nummii* issued after 313 AD shows an advanced state of wear and corrosion; they cannot be, in our opinion, use as *termina*, although the finding circumstances were almost the same like in case of the coins from 2<sup>nd</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD. Therefore we think they should be assigned to another context, most likely to the first necropolis which overlapped the surface previously occupied by the Early Roman edifice. This even if a dating of its devastation in the epoch of riots and civil wars between the two co-emperors seems quite plausible to us.

<sup>31</sup> Dabica 2014, for more information on the discovery conditions of the materials.

A final observation concerns the Early Byzantine coin found to the southern boundary of the Southern Sector, which could be taken into account as a *terminus ante quem* for the stone platforms identified here, presumably attributable to the harbor facilities of the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

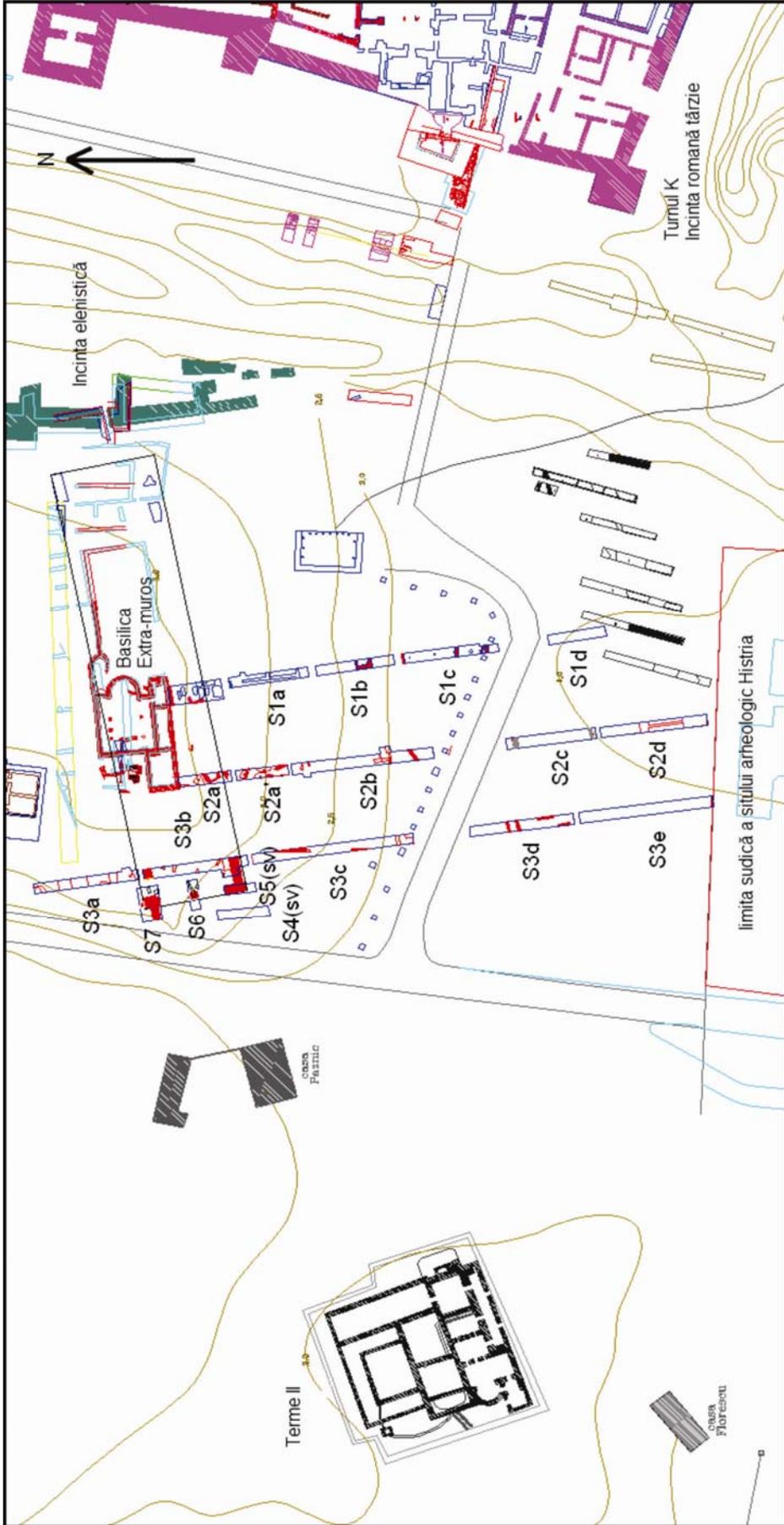
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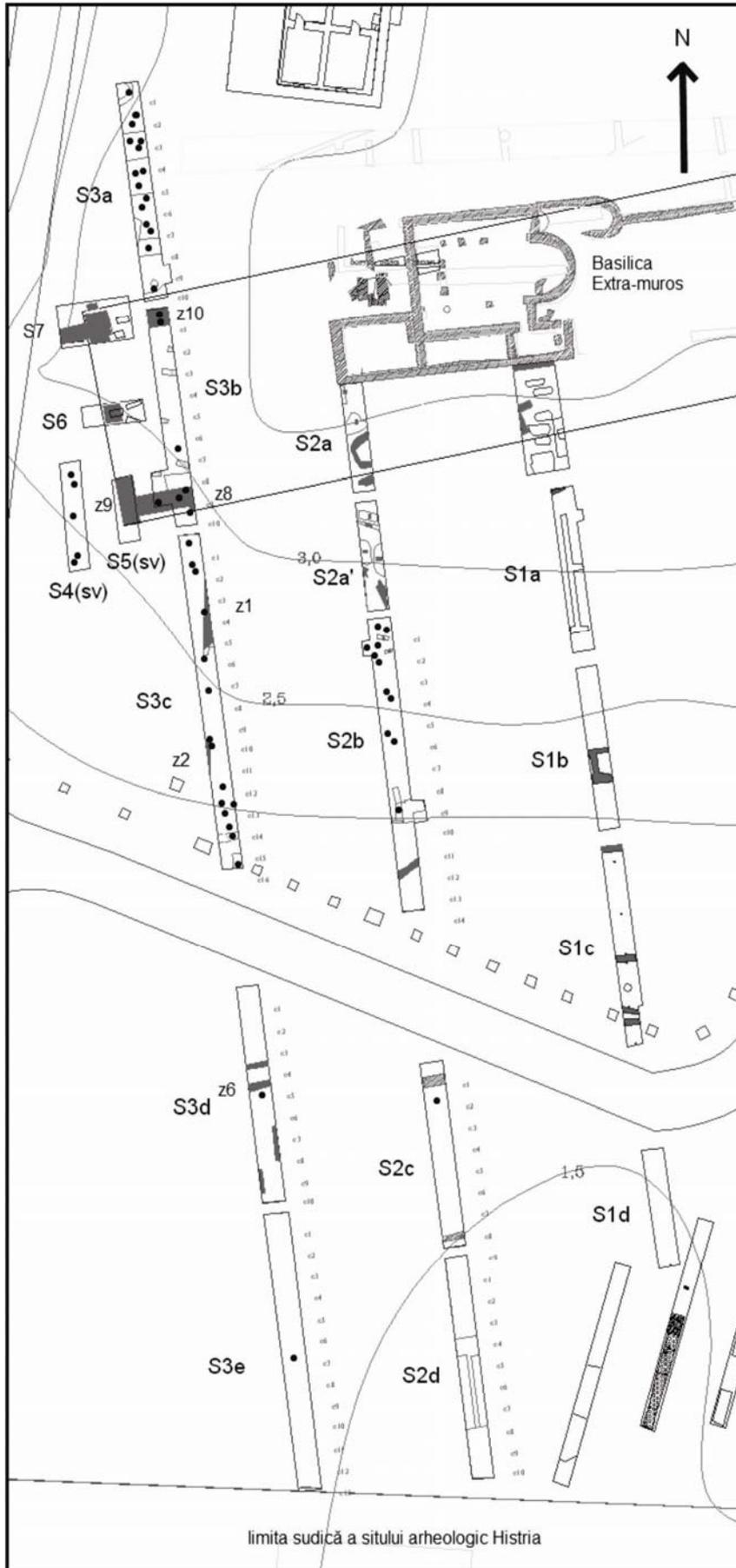
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Pl. 1. Histria. General plan of archaeological excavations in the south side of the site. Presumptive limits of "the imposing edifice" from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century A.D. are marked.



Pl. 2. Histria. Plan of the magistral sections in the "Sector South" and "Sector Basilica extra muros".  
Distribution of the coin findings *in situ*.



Pl. 3. Greek (1-18) and Roman (22-23) coins found in the magistral sections from the south side of site Histria.



Pl. 4. Roman (24-39) and Early Byzantine (40) coins found in the magistral sections from the south side of Histria site.

