

# COIN FINDS IN THE SOUTHERN AREA OF HISTRIA

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**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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