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La *Revue numismatique* se réserve le droit de refuser toute publicité sans avoir à fournir de motif à sa décision.

Dario CALOMINO\*

## The Coinage of Corcyra under the Severans

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*Summary* – This paper considers the civic coinage of Corcyra from Septimius Severus to Caracalla, proposing a chronological arrangement of the coin production in three main phases and providing a historical commentary. The analysis of fabric and style of the coins, combined with the study of dies, shows that a remarkable change occurred in the mint during the reign of Severus, probably as a result of the turnover of workforce within the workshop. The main bulk of output is represented by the coinage of Plautilla, which marks the transition between an earlier phase in which the mint seems to have been influenced by a Corinthian or Peloponnesian workshop and a later one which saw the employment of much more skilled engravers, probably in cooperation with the mint of Nicopolis in Epirus.

*Keywords* – Corfu, Roman Provincial Coinage, Severan dynasty.

*Résumé* – Fondée sur l'étude du monnayage civique de Corcyre/Corfou de Septime Sévère à Caracalla, cette contribution propose un nouveau schéma de la production monétaire répartie en trois phases distinctes ainsi qu'un commentaire historique. L'analyse de la frappe et du style des monnaies, associée à l'étude des coins, montre qu'un changement majeur intervient dans les émissions durant le règne de Septime Sévère, certainement en raison du fort turnover des graveurs au sein de l'atelier. Le pic de la production correspond aux monnaies frappées au nom de Plautilla, marquant ainsi la transition entre une première phase au cours de laquelle l'atelier est influencé par des graveurs originaires de Corinthe ou du Péloponnèse, et une seconde qui voit intervenir des graveurs plus habiles, probablement dans le cadre d'une coopération avec l'atelier de Nicopolis d'Épire.

*Mots clés* – Corfou, monnayages provinciaux, dynastie des Sévères.

### Introduction

The mint of Corcyra (Greek *Κέρκυρα*, modern Corfù) boasts one of the longest minting tradition in Greece; silver coins were issued regularly from the first quarter of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>1</sup> to the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, when increasingly started to be integrated with bronze.<sup>2</sup> Profiting from a privileged geographic location along the Northern Adriatic coast of Epirus, facing the furthest tip of Puglia and the adjacent Gulf of Taranto, the island naturally became one of the main crossroads of maritime routes connecting Southern Italy with Greece,

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1. See recently NICOLET-PIERRE 2009, with further discussion and previous bibliography. About the role of Corcyrean staters in local circulation, see GJONGEJAJ 2011, p. 224-234.

2. *HN*, p. 325-327.

especially after the foundation of Brundisium (267 BC).<sup>3</sup> Since 229 BC, it served as a permanent naval base for the Romans, who granted the island a free state administration under the Republic.<sup>4</sup> The naval tradition of Corcyra is celebrated on bronze coinage from Hellenistic to Roman Age, featuring the ship as the distinctive reverse type, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC prows with names of triremes (referring to annual local ship races),<sup>5</sup> to the sumptuous representations of Roman galleys in the Severan Age.

### The Coinage of Roman Corcyra

The coins produced under the Roman Republic are mainly bronze and loosely dated to 229/48 BC, featuring exclusively Greek designs and legends, partly reporting the name of local Prytaneis.<sup>6</sup> Occasionally, Republican series were struck on the island too, i.e. some of the earliest victoriati and quinarii (possibly by *M. Valerius Laevinus* in 211/210 BC), bearing the distinctive monogram  $\overline{\text{KOP}}$ ,<sup>7</sup> and some denarii of Mark Antony during the civil wars,<sup>8</sup> when Corcyra was intensively involved in the conflicts as a crucial maritime passage.<sup>9</sup> This phase was probably followed by a hiatus from Augustus to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The opening of the mint of Nicopolis in 27 BC, the city founded only a few years before in the bay of Actium, facing the Gulf of Ambracia, changed the political-economic situation of Epirus;<sup>10</sup> the coinage of the new capital, designated by Augustus to take the leadership of north-western Greece, was intended to supplant the old Hellenistic and Late Republican bronze currency still in circulation, so it is possible that Corcyra's production ceased during 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>11</sup> After a general slowdown under the Julio-Claudians and the Flavians, the coinage of Nicopolis reached one of its major peaks of output under Trajan and Hadrian, when Epirus became an autonomous province, being the main local currency in circulation across the region.<sup>12</sup>

3. CABANES 1997, p. 114-115; ČAŠULE 2012, p. 213-217, 227-229. For evidence of coins of Corcyra found on the Italian Adriatic coast, see TRAVAGLINI 1982, p. 227-228.

4. *Plin.*, *NH* IV,12,19. See LARSEN 1938, p. 261-263, 447; LEVICK 1996, p. 648-649.

5. *HN*, p. 327.

6. *HN*, p. 327-328.

7. *RRC* 101, p. 192. For a dating to ca. 199 BC (with attribution to p. *Sulpicius Galba*), see STOYAS 2004, p. 234-236.

8. *RRC* 520-1. Woytek suggests that the denarii of *Cn. Calpurnius Piso* with the prow-reverse type (48 BC) were possibly struck in Corcyra too, as the island was a major naval base for the Pompeian fleet; WOYTEK 2003, p. 118.

9. See *Cass. Dio.*, *XLI*,44,2-3; *L*,9,2; *L*,11,1. For a vivid account of the events: LÓPEZ SÁNCHEZ 2010, p. 123-131.

10. CABANES 1997, p. 117-120.

11. *RPC* I, p. 274.

12. CALOMINO 2011, p. 234-237.

The Roman coinage of Corcyra begins under Antoninus Pius and terminates in the reign of Caracalla. A large production of issues without Imperial portrait, the so-called “pseudo-autonomous”, which was initially dated by Gardner and Head to 48 BC-AD 138,<sup>13</sup> was actually struck during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, mainly in the Antonine Age.<sup>14</sup> The resumption of civic production in this phase was perhaps the result of the need for further bronze coin supply in a period of economic prosperity in the region. Indirect evidence of imperial involvement in local affairs derives from the exceptional issue of silver series by Nicopolis in the name of Antoninus Pius and Diva Faustina in AD 141-144, which probably saw the participation of Roman imperial engravers and workforce.<sup>15</sup> The Antonine and Severan issues of Corcyra were probably also intended to integrate the contemporary Nicopolis bronze coinage circulating in the region; since part of the series of the two Epirotan mints present several common features (in fabric and style), some sort of cooperation between the workshops might have occurred in some phases of production.

No systematic study of the coinage of Roman Corcyra existed prior to the publication of an extensive catalogue by Moucharte in 2007,<sup>16</sup> which covered the whole Antonine and Severan periods without including the “pseudo-autonomous”. The corpus, arranged by coin types and based on die-combinations, provides a sample of over 940 specimens, as a result of a painstaking collection and assemblage of material from numerous museums and institutions.<sup>17</sup> The aim of this contribution is to add a historical commentary to Moucharte’s corpus, in order to discuss a number of problems of chronology and interpretation in preparation of the *Roman Provincial Coinage* catalogues.<sup>18</sup>

13. *BMC*, p. 153-158; *HN*, p. 328.

14. *RPC* I, p. 274; for *RPC* IV, see <http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/search/quick/?q=corcyra&search=>. However, some issues are very problematic and cannot be surely assigned to this period: *RPC* IV 7850 (= *BMC* 582-3), 7851 (= *BMC* 578-81), 8871 (= *BMC* 584).

15. CALOMINO 2011, p. 247-251. See recently also BECKMANN 2012, p. 80-81.

16. For a summary of the numismatic studies on Corcyra, see NICOLET-PIERRE 2009, p. 103-104.

17. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 275.

18. Whereas the Antonine issues are covered by *RPC* IV, in progress (<http://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk>, eds. C. Howgego, V. Heuchert – The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), the Severan production will be included in *RPC* V. For the use of images in this article I shall acknowledge: M. Amandry, F. Dyrat – Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (P); A. Arzone – Verona, Museo di Castelvecchio (VR); F. Barello – Torino, Armeria Reale (TAR); C. Crisafulli – Venezia, Museo Civico Correr (VCO); M.C. Dossi – Venezia, Museo Archeologico (VAR); A. Dowler, R. Abdy – London, British Museum (L); T. Giove, A. Villone – Napoli, Museo Archeologico (N); P. Giovetti – Bologna, Museo Archeologico (BO); V. Gransinigh – Udine, Musei Civici (UD); V. Heuchert – Oxford, Ashmolean Museum (O); R. Martini – Milano, Gabinetto Numismatico (MI); M. Podini – Parma, Museo Archeologico (PAR – su concessione del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Archivio Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell’Emilia Romagna); G. Riginos – Preveza, Archaeological Museum of Nicopolis (AMN); A. Schwarzmaier – Berlin, Antikensammlung Staatliche Museen (BA); P. Van Alfen – New York, American Numismatic Society (ANS); K. Vondrovec – Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum (V); K. Zachos – Ioannina, Archaeological

Using the evolution of types and of imperial portraits as well as die combinations, it is possible to establish a relative chronology and to place it in the context of Roman Provincial coinage of Epirus. A remarkable change in fabric and style occurred between the earliest and the following stages of production. The change probably derived from the turnover of different artists, perhaps coming from new ateliers; from this point of view Coreyra is a significant case study of how such changes could markedly affect the evolution of civic coinage. In the Antonine age, the coinage of Commodus provides an example. Among the series in his name under Marcus Aurelius, two dies (*Moucharte* D1 and D7) depict him as Caesar (KAICAP Λ KOMOΔOC) and three (D5, D9, D10) as Augustus (AYT K M AYP KOMMO ANTΩN (EINOC)); the latter was therefore issued slightly later albeit showing a younger and stylistically much inferior portrait, which easily tends to be mistaken for young Caracalla or even Plautilla. Although the employment of an obsolete model could also have contributed, this shows that different engravers were responsible for each set of dies, even if they were produced within a very short time span (possibly between AD 175 and 176?), the first artist proving to be much more skilled than the second (see Appendix 1-2).<sup>19</sup>

### The Severan Coinage

A similar pattern can be seen in the Severan age. Combining the same sort of evidence with dating elements deducible from portraits and legends of the members of the family, a sequence of issues can be arranged by phases and linked to the relative chronology. Three main phases can be clearly distinguished, starting from the early reign of Septimius Severus and ending at the beginning of the reign of Caracalla as sole emperor: 1) ca. AD 195-205; 2) ca. AD 209-211; 3) ca. AD 211-212/213.<sup>20</sup> The denominations are four (Dn1-Dn4), although not always struck contemporaneously, the largest and the smallest only very rarely (see discussion and graph below).

Museum (IAM). I am very grateful to A. Burnett and M. Amandry for their comments on the draft of the article. This research has been supported by the British Academy of London (Newton Research Fellowship Scheme).

19. D1 was probably made by the same hand as Lucilla D1, whilst D5 (later even if apparently showing a younger Commodus) belongs to a different pattern of style. These anomalies can easily cause confusion; for instance, D5 of Commodus is catalogued as Marcus Aurelius in *SNG Stockholm* 1338.

20. The single specimen known of Pescennius Niger (*MOUCHARTE* 2007, n. 93, D1) looks quite dubious and could likely be a tooled coin of Commodus; in fact it features the reverse die of Commodus R24, normally combined with his obverse D3, which is very similar in style to the bust of Pescennius at issue; see for comparison *MOUCHARTE* 2007, p. 278, n. 75 = *SNG Evelpidis* 2025 (Commodus), and *MOUCHARTE* 2007, p. 279, n. 93 = *SNG Evelpidis* 2027 (Pescennius Niger).

**Phase 1: Septimius Severus, Julia Domna, Caracalla Augustus,  
Geta Caesar and Plautilla Augusta (ca. AD 195/198-205)**

**Phase 1a (ca. AD 195-198)**

*Septimius Severus*

1. Dn2(?): Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC Π AY Laureate, naked bust, l., holding shield and spear  
KOPKYPAIΩN Ares standing, r., holding spear and dagger  
*Moucharte* 239-240 (under Caracalla). Figure 1 (V.GR12272: 7.95g)
2. Dn2(?): Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC Π AY Laureate, naked bust, l., holding shield and spear  
KOPKYPAIΩN Zeus Kasios seated on throne, l., holding sceptre  
*Bastien*, pl. 77, n. 3 (under Corinth). Figure 2 (ANS.0000.999.16773: 7.77g)
3. Dn2(?): AYΤ Κ Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC Π Laureate head, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Ares standing, r., holding spear and dagger  
*Moucharte* 223-233. Figure 3 (N.34779; FIORELLI 1870, n. 76914: 8.02g)
4. Dn2(?): AYΤ Κ Λ CEΠ CEYHPOC Π Laureate head, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Zeus Kasios seated on throne, l., holding sceptre  
*Moucharte* 94-99. Figure 4 (V.GR12270: 8.98g)

**Phase 1b (ca. AD 198-199)**

*Septimius Severus*

5. Dn3: Λ [CEΠ?] CEYHPOC Π Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN (?) Ares standing, r., holding spear and dagger  
*Moucharte*. Figure 5 (VCO.676: 9.89g); Figure 5/1 (V.GR12271: 8.32g)
6. Dn3: Λ [CEΠ?] CEYHPOC Π Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Zeus Kasios seated on throne, l., holding sceptre  
*Moucharte*. Figure 6 (PAR.2556: 9.63g)

*Julia Domna*

7. Dn3: IOYΛΙΑ ΔΟΜΝΑ ΑΥΓΟ Draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Galley with or without sail and rowers, l.  
*Moucharte* 438-448. Figure 7 (N.34783: 11.97g)
8. Dn3: IOYΛΙΑ ΔΟΜΝΑ ΑΥΓΟ Draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Galley with rowers and female figure (Nike?) on prow, l.  
*Moucharte* 449-451. Figure 8 (UD.152.16: 9.62g)
9. Dn3: IOYΛΙΑ ΔΟΜΝΑ ΑΥΓΟ Draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Pegasus flying, r., holding palm branch in its mouth  
*Moucharte* 824-835. Figure 9 (TAR.21045: 10.85g)

*Caracalla Augustus*

10. Dn2: AY Κ Μ ΑΥ ANTΩNINOC (?) Laureate, draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Ares standing, r., holding spear and dagger  
*Moucharte* 280 (under Geta). Figure 10 (BO.47840: 7.57g)

11. Dn2: ΑΥΚΜΑΥΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟC (?) Laureate, draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Zeus Kasios seated on throne, l., holding sceptre  
*Moucharte*. Figure 11 (VAR.3830); Figure 11/1 (TAR.21063: 7.85g)
12. Dn2: ΑΥΚΜΑΥΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟC (?) Laureate, draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Hera standing, l. raising hand  
*Moucharte* 383-385 (under Geta). Figure 12 (P.271: 8.55g)

### *Geta Caesar*

13. Dn2: ΑCΕΓΕΤΑCΚΑΙ Bareheaded, draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Ares standing, r., holding spear and dagger  
*Moucharte* 262-272. Figure 13 (L.1866,1201.2274; *BMC* 696: 6.48g)
14. Dn2: ΑCΕΓΕΤΑCΚΑΙ Bareheaded, draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Zeus Kasios seated on throne, l., holding sceptre  
*Moucharte* 130-152. Figure 14 (L.1866,1201.2272; *BMC* 694: 8.54g)
15. Dn2: ΑCΕΓΕΤΑCΚΑΙ Bareheaded, draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Hera standing, l. raising hand  
*Moucharte* 374-377. Figure 15 (L.1866,1201.2275; *BMC* 698: 10.34g)
16. Dn2: ΑCΕΓΕΤΑCΚΑΙ Bareheaded, draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Male naked figure (Zeus?) advancing, r.  
*Moucharte* 359-360. Figure 16 (O.95: 7.32g)
17. Dn1: ΑCΕΓΕΤΑCΚ (?) Bareheaded, draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Infant Dionysus seated on panther's back, l.  
*Moucharte* 398-404. Figure 17 (P.294: 5.35g)

### **Phase 1c (ca. AD 202-205)**

#### *Plautilla Augusta*

18. Dn4: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEBACTH Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Front view of Corinthian temple, within which statue advancing, r.  
*Moucharte* 414-419. Figure 18 (TAR.21082: 9.34g)
19. Dn4: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEBACTH Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Three-quarter view of Corinthian temple, within which statue of Apollo (?) standing, l.  
*Moucharte* 420-421. Figure 19 (MI.5985: 18.08g)
20. Dn4: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEBACTH Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Group of three divinities: to l., Ares standing, r., holding spear and dagger; to r., Hera (?) standing, l., raising hand; in the middle, Zeus Kasios (?), standing facing  
*Moucharte* 387-9. Figure 20 (VAR.4393: 16.16g)
21. Dn3: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEBACTH Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Galley with sail and rowers, l.  
*Moucharte* 674-679. Figure 21 (P.279: 9.99g)
22. Dn3: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEBACTH Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Galley with sail and rowers, r.  
*Moucharte* 669-673. Figure 22 (P.278: 10.23g)

23. Dn2(?): ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEΒΑC(TH) Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Galley with sail and rowers, r., Nike on prow  
*Moucharte* 681-691. Figure 23 (O.560α: 9.32g)
24. Dn3:<sup>21</sup> ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEΒΑC(T) Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Pegasus flying, r.  
*Moucharte* 879-921. Figure 24 (P.276: 15.06g). Figure 24/1 (V.GR12296: 9.90g)
25. Dn2: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEΒΑC(TH) Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Ares standing, r., holding spear and dagger  
*Moucharte* 241-257. Figure 25 (L.1866,1201.2268; *BMC* 688: 7.11g)
26. Dn2: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEΒΑC(T) Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Zeus Kasios seated on throne, l., holding sceptre  
*Moucharte* 117-129. Figure 26 (L.1866,1201.2269; *BMC* 687: 5.01g)
27. Dn2: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEΒΑC(T) Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ/ON (*sic*) Hera standing, l. raising hand  
*Moucharte* 366-373. Figure 27 (V.GR12301: 6.60g)
28. Dn2: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEΒΑC Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Asclepius standing facing, looking l., resting on serpent-staff  
*Moucharte* 393-395. Figure 28 (TAR.21086: 6.67g)
29. Dn2: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEΒΑC Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Laureate bust of Apollo, r.  
*Moucharte* 290-298. Figure 29 (V.GR12308: 6.24g)
30. Dn2: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEΒΑC(T) Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Athena standing, l., holding spear and Nike  
*Moucharte* 405-411. Figure 30 (V.GR12310: 5.64g)
31. Dn1: ΠΛΑΥΤΙΛΛΑ CEΒΑC(TH) (?) Draped bust, r.  
ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ Bull, r.  
*Moucharte* 422-428. Figure 31 (V.GR12304: 5.32g)

Only during this first phase, issues were struck for all the five members of the family, including Plautilla; the chronology is therefore linked to the date of the Imperial marriage between Caracalla and the daughter of Plautianus, which was celebrated in the main bulk of output soon after AD 202; the *terminus ante quem* is certain, as the young bride was repudiated and exiled in AD 205, but the starting date for the production of the other members of the family varied from one series to the other. A different set of reverse dies (and, in some cases, of designs) was actually used for almost each member of the family (links occur only between Caracalla and Geta); therefore Plautilla's series were struck separately (after AD 202) and all other issues were earlier.

21. A group of specimens of Plautilla with the Pegasus reverse type seem to be lighter than the others (MOUCHARTE 2007, n. 911-917, ca. 6.50-9.50g), but the diameters tend to be in the mid-range; so it is difficult to say whether they belong to the larger or to the smaller denomination (Dn3 or Dn2).



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The earliest series were probably struck only in the name of Septimius Severus. Two different portraits exist: a “military” type, showing a laureate naked bust l., with spear and shield; and an ordinary laureate head r. The former is rare and combined with the reverse types of Ares and the Zeus Kasios seated on throne;<sup>22</sup> both obverses and reverses are attested in a single die each. The second type is more common, even if only one obverse die is known for the same two reverse types, Ares and Zeus. The two typologies of busts are linked by a shared reverse die of the Ares type (MOUCHARTE 2007, R24) and belong to the same denomination (probably Dn2),<sup>23</sup> so they were likely made at the same time.

22. Moucharte reports two specimens of the Ares reverse, in Napoli (N.34780; FIORELLI 1870, n. 6915) and Vienna (V.GR12272), but they are mistakenly ascribed to Caracalla rather than to Septimius Severus; MOUCHARTE 2007, Caracalla D4 = p. 284, n. 239-240. I found three more, two within Italian collections, in Turin (TAR.21033: 6.43g, 25mm, 11h) and Udine (UD.152.23: 8,10g, 24.5mm, 11h), the third in Oxford, catalogued under Corinth (7,11g). I have found a single specimen with the Zeus reverse so far, also catalogued under Corinth in New York (ANS.0000.999.16); see BASTIEN 1992-1994, pl. 77, n. 3.

23. This early denomination looks almost like a hybrid, since the weight pertains to Dn2 (ca. 6-9g), but the size belongs to the range of Dn3 issues (22-25mm); see graph below.



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A third and hitherto unpublished portrait, laureate and draped r., is combined with the same pair of reverse designs but with different dies and is probably to be ascribed to a slightly later phase: even if based on a sample of no more than three specimens, these issues look heavier than the others, probably belonging to a different denomination (Dn3).<sup>24</sup> Since the entire coinage of Julia Domna is also of the same larger denomination, it is possible that in this phase the mint struck for Septimius and his wife simultaneously. Nevertheless, there is no link between the series of the emperor and the empress, featuring different reverse types, i.e. two varieties of galley<sup>25</sup> and a flying Pegasus, which would henceforth become the most representative of the mint repertory.

Conversely, a close parallel is visible between the contemporary issues of Caracalla Augustus and Geta Caesar, still bearing his earliest *praenomen Lucius*, each combined with the same reverse designs in three series, Ares, Zeus Kasios and Hera,<sup>26</sup> in some cases also sharing dies (see MOUCHARTE 2007, R34-Ares, R4-Hera, all under Geta); they belong to a smaller denomination (Dn2), but the stylistic pattern resembles the analogous coin types in the issues of “draped” Septimius, so they presumably were all part of the same stage of production. In which case the *terminus post quem* would be AD 198, when Caracalla gained the title of Augustus, and the *terminus ante quem* could be AD 199, when Geta changed his *praenomen* from *Lucius* to *Publius*.<sup>27</sup> Geta also features a fourth type whose identification is quite obscure: a bare-chested male figure advancing r., raising his hand or about to hurl an object (a thunderbolt?), possibly Zeus.<sup>28</sup> The most significant feature of these coins concerns Caracalla, whose series have been traditionally misattributed in sylloges and

24. Besides an unrecorded coin in Vienna (V.GR12271, Figure 5/1), I have identified two specimens in the Italian collections, in Venice (VCO.676: 9.89g, 26mm, 5h) and in Parma (PAR.2556: 9.63g, 24mm, 12h). A specimen with a draped bust in Paris (P.238) was probably tooled and belongs to the laureate bust series.

25. The ship depicted on these coins and on the larger series of Plautilla (Dn3) looks different and more slender than the proper galley on later series; it is perhaps a *liburna*, sometimes with an animal head-shaped *rostrum*, some others with a female figure on prow.

26. As described by Moucharte, the goddess raises her right hand in a “praying” attitude, just as depicted in the triad with Zeus and Ares (see below; MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 289; also *BMC* p. 166), without holding neither a bird (*SNG EVELPIDIS* 2044-2045; *SNG SCHWEIZ* 428, probably Asclepius), nor a flower (*SNG FITZWILLIAM* 2668, where she is identified as *Spes*). Conversely, she seems to hold something in her left hand, like a small sceptre, although hardly visible because placed against her chest.

27. See *RIC* IV, p. 314 (between AD 198 and 200) and *BMCRE* V, p. 318 (AD 199).

28. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 288, n. 359-360. The specimens known in Oxford and Vienna (V.GR12316) are from different reverse dies, both very worn and hardly legible (I found a third one among the “rebut” specimens in Paris); fabric and style are extremely poor and the iconography of the god looks quite unusual, although it recalls the posture of the central figure in the triad of the large denominations for Plautilla (see below), again presumably Zeus. For a possible iconographic reference in the Roman coinage of Corinth, see *BMC* 677.

catalogues; the few specimens known have been assigned either to Commodus (as they currently are listed in the provisory *RPC IV* database)<sup>29</sup> or to Geta.<sup>30</sup> The misunderstanding is caused by problems of legibility since none of the specimens known preserves the obverse legend intact, which can be possibly reconstructed as AY K M AY ANTΩNINOC. This attribution fills an anomalous gap in the production of the first phase, which proves to be consistent in fabric and style; striking analogies arise between the portraits of Caracalla and Geta, as the former can be distinguished from his brother almost exclusively for the laurel wreath.<sup>31</sup>

An isolated smaller denomination (Dn1) is probably ascribable to this phase too. The very reduced size of these coins and the poor conservation of available specimens make the identification of the imperial portrait very difficult; when legible (P.294), it certainly features bareheaded Geta. The reverse figure is infant Dionysus on panther;<sup>32</sup> although the type is rare, the Dionysian theme belongs to the Corcyrean tradition of coin designs from the Hellenistic Age onwards (not only images of the god, but also subjects related to wine, such as grapes, amphora and *kantharus*).<sup>33</sup>

That the whole production of this phase had its main focus on the figure of Plautilla Augusta (AD 202-205) is proved by the volume of issues in her name, much larger than any other member of the family, and by the variety of coin designs (10) and denominations (4), which include rare large bronze series struck exclusively for her (Dn4). This is known in three types (probably sharing a unique obverse die, MOUCHARTE 2007, D8), all featuring special religious themes, possibly related to festivals or celebrations in Epirus. Two of them depict Corinthian temples with a cult statue, perhaps referring to different buildings. The first is a hexastyle shrine seen from the front, in which a male figure stands r.; his identification is extremely problematic, since it is based on only two specimens known, both in poor condition.<sup>34</sup> The god might either wear a helmet or a kind of large rimmed hat (*petasus*?), ascribable to Mars

29. *RPC IV* 7847 (Ares: P.225), 7848 (Hera: P.226; *SNG EVELPIDIS* 2026).

30. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 285, D7 (Ares), n. 280 = *SNG Tübingen* 1542, 283 (P.225); MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 290, D8 (Hera): n. 383 = *BMC* 700; n. 384 (P.226), n. 385 (P.271). The coins of Caracalla with the type of Zeus Kasios were hitherto unpublished. My corpus includes four specimens: MI.6647: 5.06g, 22mm, 2h; TAR.21063: 7.85g, 21mm, 4h; VAR.383: 5.22g, 22mm, 3h; Harvard Art Museums Collection n. 1985.21.120: 7.36g.

31. Three obverse dies were probably employed for Caracalla in this phase: MOUCHARTE 2007, D7 and D8, although all specimens are extremely worn, besides a new die in Turin (Figure 11/1); probably three also for Geta: MOUCHARTE 2007, D1, D4=D5, D6, surely not D2, MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 280, n. 152 = ANS.1944.100.19026, which belongs to young Commodus (*RPC IV* 4591-3), just like *SNG EVELPIDIS* 2042.

32. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 291, n. 398-404 (402-403 = *BMC* 701-702).

33. *HN*, p. 327.

34. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 292, n. 420 (ANS.1928,999.107) and TAR.21072.

or Hermes respectively; but it could also be simply part of Apollo's hairstyle. The cult of Apollo in the sanctuary of Cape Actium was in fact the most popular in western Epirus, and the second large bronze struck for Plautilla almost certainly represents the cult image of the divinity, standing, l., and holding a bow or a torch, within a temple seen in three-quarter view; this building presents a distyle arcaded entrance instead of the traditional triangular pediment.<sup>35</sup> The same structure is also visible on two contemporary Nicopolis series for Septimius Severus and Plautilla, where a god is seated instead of standing.<sup>36</sup> This could possibly feature a different iconography of Apollo<sup>37</sup> (although normally not seating on throne), or perhaps another local divinity, the guardian goddess of the Aktian Games, usually holding a sceptre and an agonistic vase.<sup>38</sup> Such an analogy with Nicopolis suggests that since this phase the two mints issued jointly or at least in parallel, in circumstances of public celebration and recurrences, such as regional festivals, perhaps on the occasion of the imperial wedding and the *decennalia* in AD 202. The third coin type shows three gods flanking each other as a triad, possibly recalling a cult statue group in a local sanctuary: the figure on the left is surely Ares/Mars, standing, r. (in the identical posture of other Severan and pre-Severan series); the central naked male figure, standing facing and looking r., is depicted on a larger scale and probably represents Zeus (Kasios?), also resembling the obscure bare-chested figure in the coins of Geta; the third divinity on the right wears a long *chiton* and stands, l., raising his right hand, resembling the posture of Hera in similar contemporary issues.<sup>39</sup> This design also supports the idea of these series being issued in celebration of a sacred festival.

The second denomination (Dn3) is known in two coin types, the designs employed in Julia Domna's coinage (galley and Pegasus, in two versions each). A third and slightly smaller denomination (Dn2, also employed for Caracalla and Geta) includes the most numerous coins struck for Plautilla, in no fewer than seven reverse variants: in addition to the designs used for Caracalla and Geta (Ares, Zeus Kasios and Hera), they feature a different ship, Asclepius,

35. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 292, n. 414-418, also known in a possible variant, showing the same temple without cult statue (n. 419), although the specimen (in Berlin) is worn.

36. CALOMINO 2011, n. 232 and 317 respectively, besides a specimen which probably commemorated Augustus under the Severans (n. 258). The large issues of Plautilla with the Corinthian temple are controversial, since some specimens are suspected to be cast; anyway, I believe that they derive from a genuine die.

37. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 293, n. 14.

38. CALOMINO 2011, p. 266-267. The design also recalls the more usual iconography of Zeus or Poseidon in throne (AMANDRY 2012, p. 447), but they occur only very rarely as seated figures in the coinage of Nicopolis (CALOMINO 2011, n. 296), whereas the goddess Aktia in the same posture is extremely frequent (CALOMINO 2011, n. 91, 116, 133, 155, 178-180, 182, 196, 230, 250, 252, 272, 311, 321, 352, 396, 501, 588).

39. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 290, n. 387-389.

Athena and the bust of Apollo.<sup>40</sup> The fourth and smallest denomination (Dn1) depicts a bull. At least 10 obverse dies are attested, in combination with no fewer than 27 reverses in total; they belong to a stock which was used only for Plautilla and very distinctively present the civic name legend ΚΟΡΚΥΡΑΙΩΝ with the epigraphic variant of lower case letter omega “ω” instead of capital one “Ω”, otherwise only occasionally occurring in the others issues.

The transition from the coinage of the Severan family to the distinctive issues of Plautilla Augusta seems to mark a first significant change in the pattern of production within this first phase. The earliest series have a characteristic fabric and style and, especially in the issues of Septimius “alone”, show a number of common aspects to some contemporary Peloponnesian issues. Firstly, the stylistic pattern of the imperial portrait, unlike the ones employed in the rest of Northern Greece, looks markedly rough and shows striking similarities, for instance, with some Severan portraits of Megara (see Appendix 5-7).<sup>41</sup> Secondly, the occurrence of the Septimius bust in heroic nudity, holding shield and spear, has no parallel in Nicopolis or in the surrounding regions (Macedonia and Thessaly) or even in the Balkans (Thrace and Moesia), but is attested in several mints in Peloponnesus, including Corinth and Megara (see Appendix 4-5).<sup>42</sup> The typology presumably derives from the imperial model employed in some AD 195 bronze medallions struck in Rome after the first Parthian war and in preparation of the conflict against Albinus (Appendix 3).<sup>43</sup> The issues of Corinth could likely represent the provincial prototype for Greece; these coins also report the imperial acclamation VIII in the legend, which confirms that

40. The type of Agreus within a shrine, also assigned by Moucharte to some issues of Plautilla (MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 288, n. 355-358) is almost illegible in all specimens known, but it likely belongs to Commodus (Moucharte’s Plautilla D5 is basically identical to Commodus D9, if not the same die, which features, for instance, in *SNG Copenhagen* 274 under Plautilla, although it is surely Commodus).

41. See *BCD Peloponnesos* 51.1-2, 51.5, 52-54. See also CALOMINO 2011, p. 267-268.

42. A possible exception is in the coinage of Apollonia in Illyria, which includes some rare large bronzes featuring a naked bust of Septimius Severus, I., holding spear but no shield (*BMC* 88; see also an unpublished coin in Paris: P.98). Regardless of the minor iconographic variation, the bust type likely draws upon the same imperial model; additionally, as a Corcyrean (and Corinthian) colony, Apollonia could have been influenced by the same iconographic pattern as its home-city. For the mints of Peloponnesus showing this type of portrait, see: *BCD Corinth* 847-848, 860-861, 869-871, 874-875, 880; *BCD Peloponnesos* 51.3 (Megara), 358, 360.5 (Sycion), 618 (Pellene), 765.1 (Messene), 1442-1443 (Kleitōr), 1753 (Tegea), 1764-1765 (Thelpusa). Compare: GRUNAUER-VON HOERSCHELMANN 1982-1983, p. 39-42; FLAMENT 2007, p. 567-568, 609, n. 88-92. The similarity of busts is the reason why the specimens in Oxford and in New York (see above) were traditionally catalogued under Corinth and, conversely, it is not infrequent to find (as I did in some Italian collections) Corinthian or Peloponnesian coins with the bust of Severus with spear and shield wrongly attributed to Corcyra.

43. GNECCHI 1912, II, p. 73-75, n. 3, 19-21. See KIENAST 1996, p. 156-157. About the bust and its chronology, see BASTIEN 1992-1994, p. 468, pl. 77, n. 5, 78, n. 1.

AD 195 is the *terminus post quem* for the diffusion of this coinage in the Peloponnesus and in Corcyra as well.

The recent study of Flament (developing the earlier research of Grunauer-Von Hoerschelmann)<sup>44</sup> on the network of mints and workshops in the Peloponnesus from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD to the Severan Age, has shed much light on the system of coin production, showing that the process of engravers-sharing was a privileged form of cooperation, whereas die-sharing seem to have occurred only accidentally.<sup>45</sup> This reinforces the idea that a system of coinages which feature multiples reciprocal similarities in style and fabric even between not shared dies derived from the contribution of die-cutters travelling throughout the region rather than reflecting the use of common models.<sup>46</sup> According to such a reconstruction, it would be plausible to assume that the principal atelier of artists was in the territory of Corinth, the provincial capital of Achaia,<sup>47</sup> which would also be the most logical candidate for managing and supervising the system as the leading workshop.<sup>48</sup> Although far from the Peloponnesus, Corcyra could perhaps have been involved in this network too. The adoption of the same style-pattern and bust-types as in the Peloponnesus actually suggests that both the same “school” of engravers and the same iconographic model could have been “exported” from Corinth to other cities, such as Corcyra.<sup>49</sup> If this assumption is correct, it implies that shared models, although being probably inspired by Rome in the first place, circulated selectively and were chosen locally, depending on needs and preferences of civic administrations; accordingly, the criteria of diffusion could conform to well-defined communication routes within an established system of networks and relations among cities and workshops. Being the only proper colony of Corinth still active under the Empire, Corcyra could have been in touch with its home-city in this period; the existence of a privileged

44. GRUNAUER-VON HOERSCHELMANN 1982-1983.

45. FLAMENT 2007, p. 576.

46. See FLAMENT 2007, p. 561-562 and especially SPOERRI-BUTCHER 2006. For a broader discussion, see: JOHNSTON 1974; JOHNSTON 1983; BUTCHER 2005; For a recent summary, see JOHNSTON 2012, p. 458-460.

47. FLAMENT 2007, p. 579.

48. GRUNAUER-VON HOERSCHELMANN 1982-1983, p. 42.

49. This also revives the very strange phenomenon of Severan Peloponnesian issues found in considerable quantity in Syria and mostly in Dura Europos. Seyrig had already noticed that, among all Greek civic issues found in Syria, there was a small group of non-Peloponnesian mints: not surprisingly (?), Megara (6 specimens), Corcyra (2 specimens) and Zacynthus (1 specimen). Besides logically explaining that Megara belonged to the Corinthian Region rather than to Attica from the economic point of view, he pointed out that all these and the Peloponnesian issues “sont exactement de la même fabrique, et appartiennent sans nul doute au même ensemble d’émissions”; SEYRIG 1957, p. 249-250. However, the presence of no more than two Corcyrean specimens in Syria (one of Plautilla, the other of the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase’s issues of Severus) is statistically irrelevant and neither supports, nor weakens the reconstruction proposed here; BELLINGER 1949, p. 101, n. 2089; SEYRIG 1957, p. 250, 257, n. 6 = MOREL 1886, p. 75, n. 748.

connection between the island and the Peloponnesian area would also explain why the same pattern and models were not adopted nearby in Nicopolis at the same time.<sup>50</sup>

A new phase begins with the production of Plautilla, for the first time showing clear analogies with the coinage of Nicopolis rather than with the Peloponnesian ateliers;<sup>51</sup> coins of the two mints in her name show significant elements of similarity, chiefly in style (definitely improved from the earlier phase of Corcyra) and the large denomination series seem to have been struck in parallel, presumably within the same socio-cultural context of some joint commemorations in Epirus;<sup>52</sup> lastly, as in Corcyra, also in Nicopolis the coinage of Plautilla could have been struck separately from the rest of the production of Septimius, his wife and his sons, because none of her coins share any reverse dies with ones of the other members of the family, and mostly have different types (see Appendix 8).<sup>53</sup>

In the light of all these arguments, the relative chronology of issues in the first phase could be summarized as follows: **Phase 1a**) Septimius Severus (“military” bust and laureate head): ca. AD 195-198; **Phase 1b**) Septimius Severus (draped bust), Julia Domna, Caracalla Augustus, Geta Caesar: ca. AD 198-199; **Phase 1c**) Plautilla Augusta: ca. AD 202-205.

50. A minor clue to support such a hypothesis is perhaps the reintroduction of the Pegasus, the most traditional symbol of the Corinthian coinage, in the coin repertory during this phase (issues of Julia Domna), after a long absence; apart from an isolate occurrence in a small “pseudo-autonomous” issue of the Antonine Age (*RPC* IV 5053 = *BMC* 598-600), the Pegasus was absent from the mint repertory since the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

51. It must be stressed that almost the entire production of Severan series in the Peloponnesian probably ends with the coinage for Plautilla, since no issue in the name of Geta Augustus is attested; see FLAMENT 2007. The exception is Patras, where coins were struck for Caracalla as sole emperor; GRUNAUER-VON HOERSCHELMANN 1982-1983, p. 46.

52. CALOMINO 2011, n. 317-318.

53. See CALOMINO 2011, n. 317-332, and p. 276. The fact that the coin types issued for Plautilla in the two Epirote mints largely coincide with those employed in the contemporary Peloponnesian series does not entail any further influence from Corinth and the network of ateliers cooperating in southern Greece, since some of them (Zeus and Ares in Corcyra, Asclepius, Nike and Tyche in Nicopolis) already belonged to their own repertoire of iconographic themes, and still a number of other designs existed which were purely local (Pegasus, Galley and bull in Corcyra, tripod and shrine in Nicopolis). With regards to this question, it is worth remarking that the system of cooperation of workshops in the Peloponnesian probably required that the cities tended to draw upon a very consistent selection of coin types, as a form of “standardization” of the production (see FLAMENT 2007, p. 574, referring to KRAFT 1974, p. 94-96). However, even if the same types were used in coeval issues of Rome, I believe there is no need to assert that this was the result of imperial supervision on local production (see HAINZMANN 1996, p. 120-122; FLAMENT 2007, p. 579; TOURATSOGLOU 2010, p. 249). The themes shared among the Severan coins are entirely religious and they belong to the ordinary repertoire of the Olympic pantheon (from Zeus to Dionysus, all the divinities are represented); no gods or personifications peculiar to the Roman tradition are included within the selection of types in Peloponnesian, whereas some properly local divinities occur, for instance Hekate in Aigeira and Argos (but not in Rome).

**Phase 2: Septimius Severus, Julia Domna,  
Caracalla and Geta Augusti (ca. AD 209/210-211)**

*Septimius Severus*

- 32a. Dn3: A K Λ CEΠ CEBHPOC Π C / Λ C CEBHPOC ΠEP CE Laureate head, r.  
KOPKYPAIQN Galley with sail, helmsman and rowers, r.; aplustre on stern,  
with or without harpoons; sometimes dolphin in waves; sometimes aplustre  
on prow  
*Moucharte* 453-546. Figure 32a (L.1866,1201.2257; *BMC* 662: 9.65g). Figure 32a/1  
(V.GR.12268: 10.00g). 32a/2 (VR.71162: 9.78g)
- 32b. Dn3: A K Λ CEΠ CEBHPOC Π C / Λ C CEBHPOC ΠEP CE Laureate head, r.  
KOPKYPAIQN Galley with sail, helmsman and rowers, r.; aplustre on stern  
with harpoons and/or Phrygian cap; Nike standing on prow, holding wreath and  
palm; sometimes dolphin/s in waves  
*Moucharte* 453-546. Figure 32b (L.1866,1201.2258; *BMC* 666: 11.04g). Figure 32b/1  
(VR.71163: 15.17g). Figure 32b/2 (L.1866,1201.2260; *BMC* 665: 10.07g)
33. Dn3: A K Λ CEΠ CEBHPOC Π C / Λ C CEBHPOC ΠEP CE Laureate head, r.  
KOPKYPAIQN Pegasus flying, r.  
*Moucharte* 713-784. Figure 33 (VR.71165: 10.69g)

*Julia Domna*

- 34a. Dn3: IOYΛIA ΔOMNA CE(BACT) Draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIQN Galley with sail, helmsman and rowers, r.; aplustre on stern,  
sometimes with Phrygian cap; sometimes dolphin in waves  
*Moucharte* 547-571. Figure 34a (L.1909,0601.1: 9.08g). Figure 34a/1  
(V.GR12279: 12.83g)
- 34b. Dn3: IOYΛIA ΔOMNA CE(BACT) Draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIQN Galley with sail, helmsman and rowers, r.; aplustre on stern;  
Nike standing on prow, holding wreath and palm; sometimes dolphin in waves  
*Moucharte* 547-571. Figure 34b (P.241: 15.55g).
35. Dn3: IOYΛIA ΔOMNA CE(BACT) Draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIQN Pegasus flying, r.  
*Moucharte* 785-823. Figure 35 (L - *BMC* 669: 14.13g)

*Caracalla Augustus*

36. Dn2: A K M A ANTΩNEINOC Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIQN Ares standing, r., holding spear and dagger  
*Moucharte* 234-238. Figure 36 (P.272: 8.27g)
37. Dn2: A K M A ANTΩNEINOC Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIQN Zeus Kasios seated on throne, l., holding sceptre  
*Moucharte* 100-106. Figure 37 (P.270: 9.64g)

38. Dn2: A K M A ANTΩNEINOC Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Asclepius standing facing, looking l., resting on serpent-staff  
*Moucharte* 392. Figure 38 (TAR.21090: 6.47g)<sup>54</sup>

*Geta Augustus*

39. Dn2: A K ΠO CE ΓETAC CE Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Ares standing, r., holding spear and dagger  
*Moucharte* 273-287. Figure 39 (L.1866,1201.2276; *BMC* 699: 6.78g)
40. Dn2: A K ΠO CE ΓETAC CE Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Zeus Kasios seated on throne, l., holding sceptre  
*Moucharte* 153-158. Figure 40 (MI.6071: 5.25g)
41. Dn2: A K ΠO CE ΓETAC CE Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Hera standing, l. raising hand  
*Moucharte* 378-382. Figure 41 (P.291: 7.68g)

In this phase, even if Nicopolis and Corcyra seem to have never shared any obverse die, they probably employed the same die-engravers. It seems clear that the coinage of Corcyra underwent a remarkable transformation in comparison with the previous phase: the fabric was very different, thicker flans with sharp-cut edges being now employed; the style was also completely new, extremely fine and accurate, not only in the rendering of imperial portraits but also in the epigraphy of legends (featuring peculiar square-shaped letters, especially lunate sigma, besides definitely abandoning the lower case letter omega “ω” in favour of capital “Ω”), and in the sumptuous engraving of reverse types (showing great precision and attention to detail). The same features are attested by corresponding (and presumably contemporary) coins struck in Nicopolis. A new workshop must have been responsible for such a change, and it seems logical to assume that it operated for both the Epirus mints at the same time, not using the same dies but the same die-models and engravers.

Impressive resemblance between portraits of the two mints is visible for Septimius Severus, Julia Domna (*MOUCHARTE* 2007, D3) and especially for Caracalla and Geta (see Appendix 9-12).<sup>55</sup> The brothers look almost identical to each other, both wearing the laurel wreath; in some cases, die-identity with Nicopolis seems inevitable, but minor variations in obverse legends ultimately confirm that such assumption must be discarded.<sup>56</sup> The use of the same model is implicit, but stylistic idiosyncrasies are so evident also among reverse dies, that some sort of cooperation between the mints is the most plausible explanation. The chronology narrows down to two years, from the elevation of Geta to the rank of Augustus in ca. AD 209-210, to the death of Septimius Severus in September AD 211.

54. The only other specimen known is *SNG Fitzwilliam* 2667.

55. See *CALOMINO* 2011, p. 276.

56. Die-sharing was suggested by *MOUCHARTE* 2007, p. 313), but in fact there are only remarkable similarities between issues of each mint (*CALOMINO* 2011, p. 267, n. 266, p. 276).



32a

32a/1

32a/2



32b

32b/1

32b/2

33



34a

34a/1

34b

35



36

37

38



39

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41

A strict separation marks the choice of reverse designs between the coinages of Septimius and Julia Domna and of their sons. The Imperial couple have only two main types, Pegasus and Galley. The depiction of galleys (a bigger ship than on previous series) displays a master of skill with few comparisons elsewhere in the Severan Age. At least six variants are attested, deriving from the combination of multiple details in the designs of the ships: plain version with sail, rowers and helmsman; Phrygian cap and harpoons to adorn the aplustre on stern; Nike standing, r., holding wreath and palm on prow. Further variations include the apotropaic eye on the front of the ship and of one or two dolphins swimming in the waves. The issues in the name of Caracalla and Geta still present a very limited assortment of coin types, inherited by the coinage of the previous phase, focusing on the four main gods of the Corcyrean pantheon: Ares, Zeus Kasios, Asclepius and Hera.

Only two denominations are known in this phase, the larger for the emperor and his wife (Dn3), the smaller for their sons (Dn2).

### Phase 3: Caracalla and Geta Augusti as sole emperors (ca. AD 211-212/213)

#### *Caracalla Augustus*

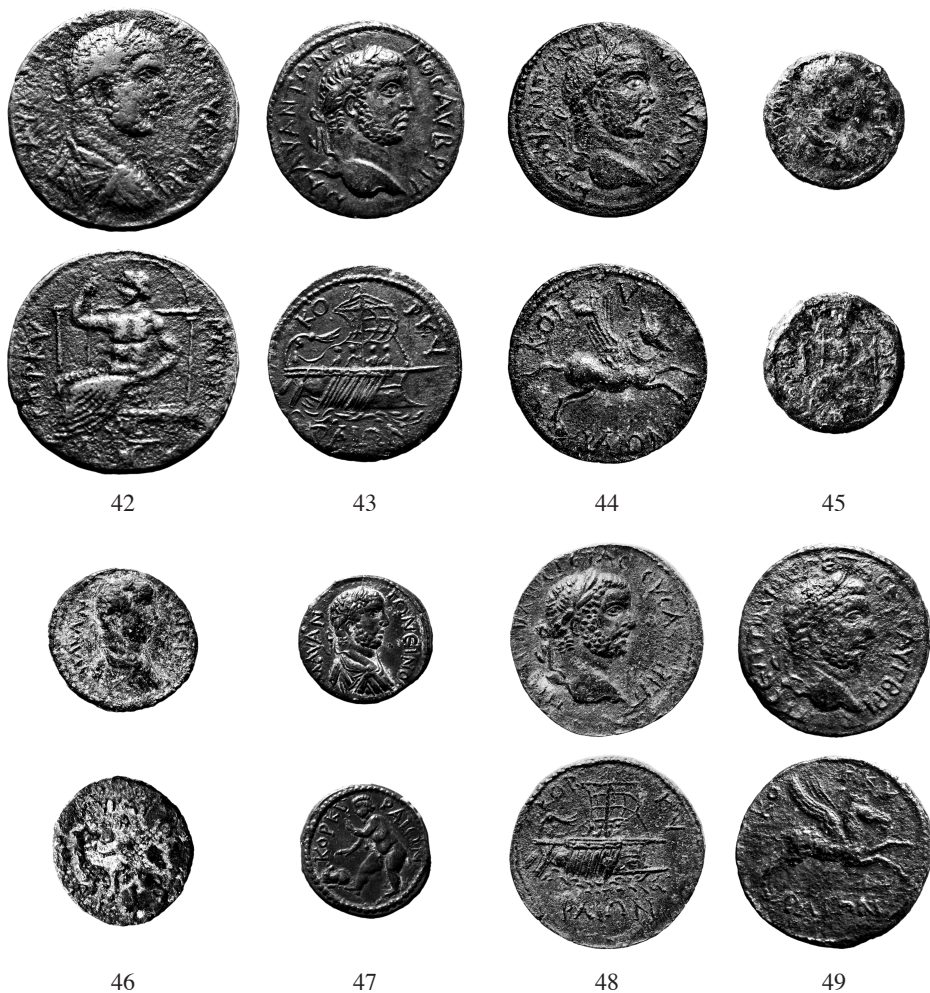
42. Dn4: M A AY ANTΩNEINOC EY AY BPI Laureate, draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Zeus Kasios seated on throne, l., holding sceptre  
*Moucharte* 107-111. Figure 42 (V.GR12280: 17.37g)
43. Dn3: M A AY ANTΩNEINOC (EY)(C) AY(Γ) BPI(T) Laureate, draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Galley with sail, helmsman and rowers, r.  
*Moucharte* 572-668. Figure 43 (V.GR12283: 12.07g)
44. Dn3: M A AY ANTΩNEINOC (EY)(C) AY(Γ) BPI(T) Laureate, draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Pegasus flying, r.  
*Moucharte* 836-878. Figure 44 (P.265: 9.47g)
45. Dn1: M AY ANTΩNEINOC Laureate, draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Zeus Kasios seated on throne, l., holding sceptre  
*Moucharte* 112-114. Figure 45 (L.1866,1201.2238; *BMC* 675: 4.58g)
46. Dn1: M AY ANTΩNEINOC Laureate, draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Infant Dionysus seated on panther's back, l.  
*Moucharte* 396-397. Figure 46 (L - *BMC* 676: 3.31g)
47. Dn1: M AY ANTΩNEINOC Laureate, draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Infant advancing, l. towards hare, holding fruit (?)  
*Moucharte* 390-391. Figure 47 (V.GR12291: 4.25g)

#### *Geta Augustus*

48. Dn3: Π CEΠTIMIOC ΓETAC EYC AYΓ BPIT Laureate, draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Galley with sail, helmsman and rowers, r.  
*Moucharte* 695-711. Figure 48 (L.1860,1231.3; *BMC* 704: 10.21g)
49. Dn3: Π CEΠTIMIOC ΓETAC EYC AYΓ BPIT Laureate, draped bust, r.  
KOPKYPAIΩN Pegasus flying, r.  
*Moucharte* 933-943. Figure 49 (V.GR12314: 8.48g)

The last phase is also the final stage of activity of the Corcyra mint.<sup>57</sup> The latest portraits of the two Severan brothers belong to a more “mature” version, in spite of poorer rendering than before; they show again uniformity and parallelism, as if they were inspired by a unique model and the only differentiation

57. See *HN*, p. 328. A single specimen of Gordian I in the collection of the Numismatic Museum of Athens (MN coll. Mourousi 88', *MOUCHARTE* 2007, p. 307, n. 944) can hardly be considered genuine; just like the Pescennius Niger coin discussed above, it could possibly derive from tooling of a 3<sup>rd</sup> phase Corcyrean coin of Caracalla, whose portrait it clearly resembles and with which the R22 reverse (Pegasus type) is normally combined. Similarly, no issues of Julia Soemia exist, because the specimen catalogued in *MOUCHARTE* 2007, p. 294, n. 452 (P.295) was tooled from a coin of Nicopolis (CALOMINO 2011, n. 460), featuring a similar galley reverse design.



between respective obverse dies consisted of their names. It seems logical to assume that their coins were contemporary and that, even if there possibly was further coinage in the name of Caracalla as sole emperor after the death of his brother, it did not last very long.<sup>58</sup>

58. According to Moucharte's catalogue, the ratio of reverse dies between Caracalla and Geta is 21:6, but none of them was ever shared even when coeval; this shows again that, as in previous phases, separate stocks of coinage were destined to each member of the family. The coinage of the senior emperor was supposed to be larger than that of his brother anyway, both in terms of output and of denominations employed (three against only one for Geta).

The legends have new dating elements, the titles of *EYC(EBEIOC)* (i.e. *Pius*) and *BPIT(ANNIKOC)*; the military title was assumed after the victorious campaign in Caledonia in AD 210, but it seems to occur in combination with *Pius* only in AD 211, referring to the new full name of Caracalla after his father's death (*M. Aurelius Severus Antoninus Pius Augustus*).<sup>59</sup> The majority of these coins can be dated soon after the death of Septimius Severus and immediately before the killing of Geta. The chronology of his assassination is still debated, shifting from late December 211<sup>60</sup> to February 212.<sup>61</sup> The last issues in his name were anyway struck in early AD 212, although the coinage for his brother could have continued a little longer.

Only very few contemporary Nicopolis series can be compared in the style of the portrait with the last ones of Corcyra (the great majority of them do not even have the distinctive *Britannicus*), perhaps because no further direct link existed between the two mints.<sup>62</sup> The capital of Epirus continued a large production in the name of Caracalla over the following years, reaching its highest peak of output ever and becoming the sole mint for the entire province.<sup>63</sup>

The designs at Corcyra in this last phase tend to be the most traditional, Pegasus and Galley, for the first time being used for the younger members of the Severan dynasty. Even if the fabric is rather similar to the bronzes of the previous phase, the engraving style looks harsher in both imperial portraits and reverse designs; the very skilled hand who had designed the galleys for Septimius and Julia Domna was replaced by another one, sticking to a soberer and more standardized pattern.

This is the only phase when a clearly defined three-denominations system was employed. Besides the very common middle-size bronzes (Dn3), there is also evidence for a rare larger denomination (Dn4), depicting the traditional Zeus Kasios on throne,<sup>64</sup> and three even rarer small submultiples (Dn1), featuring respectively the same Zeus type,<sup>65</sup> infant Dionysus on panther<sup>66</sup> and an enigmatic figure, whose identification is particularly obscure and deserves further discussion.<sup>67</sup> A naked infant advances l., holding a fruit or a flower and playing with

59. KIENAST 1996, p. 162-167. See also *RIC* IV, p. 84-86, 237-239 (*trib. pot.* XIII).

60. See BARNES 2012, p. 51.

61. See AMANDRY 2012, p. 446.

62. CALOMINO 2011, p. 271.

63. CALOMINO 2011, p. 271-275.

64. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 279, n. 107-111.

65. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 279-280, n. 112-116.

66. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 291, n. 396-397 = *BMC* 676.

67. MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 290, n. 390-391. Of the two specimens recorded by Moucharte, I could only see the one in Vienna (V.GR12291), which fortunately is in excellent condition, not the one in Berlin; two more unpublished pieces (though very worn) are in the Armeria Reale of Turin (TAR.21060) and in the Civic Museum of Verona (VR.72514). About the coins of Corcyra in the collection of Verona, see CALOMINO 2005.

(or trying to catch) a hare before him (Appendix 13). A similar iconography, otherwise unattested on coins, only occurs in paintings and minor arts; although there is no obvious reference to facilitate the interpretation of the scene, various elements recall the cult of Aphrodite. Hares also appeared in classical depictions of infant Hermes in the episode of the theft of Apollo's cattle, serving as a symbol of the god's slyness,<sup>68</sup> but the most frequent occurrence of the animal in association with a boy is on conventional images of Eros, especially on gems and cameos. They belong to the wide repertory of genre scenes that show the god playing with (or chasing) animals;<sup>69</sup> even if wingless, the infant on the coin could be Eros trying to catch a hare.<sup>70</sup> The most similar depiction to the coin type is on a Roman gem in the Berlin collections dating from 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (Appendix 14).<sup>71</sup> If the identification with the love-god son of Aphrodite is correct, the vegetal item in his hand could be a crab apple branch (or a pomegranate),<sup>72</sup> one of the sacred fruits to the goddess, and the other hand could either just be extended toward the animal or perhaps holding a stick (a lagobolon?) to hit it.<sup>73</sup> Most similarly, a winged Cupid covertly approaches a rabbit from behind in order to catch it in a mural painting of Pompeii; he raises his right hand and possibly holds something in the other one too, perhaps

68. Hermes is normally reclining in his cradle (although sometimes already wearing petasus and holding caduceus) while Maia, Apollo and Zeus discuss about the theft; *LIMC* (Hermes), p. 309-310, n. 241, 242b. Hermes is also reported to have created the constellation of the hare (BONAUDO 2004, p. 58-63, 240, 248-249) and, in some terracotta plaques from Opus, he actually holds the animal and wears a myrtle wreath, perhaps similarly to the child in the coin; *RE* (Hermes) 739; TORELLI 1977, p. 169.

69. Some numismatic evidence can also be found. The figure of a *putto* holding a dead hare is the personification of Winter in the four seasons depiction of some bronze imperial medallions reverses (the other three also being embodied by children, each holding a different attribute), celebrating FELICITAS TEMPORVM. See for instance the issue for Commodus and Annius Verus caesares; GNECCHI 1912, II, p. 44, n. 1. A winged Eros holds a bow and a dead hare in some provincial issues of Cyzicus in Mysia during the Antonine Age; see *RPC* IV 765.

70. Albeit the absence of wings in the coin type could be simply due to lack of space between the figure and the legend, wingless Eros is not uncommon. Examples can be found on sarcophagi, frequently associating the "boy" with a hare; see for instance a 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD child's sarcophagus from San Cesareo in Palatio, Rome (British Museum, 1805,0703.132), featuring the marriage feast of Cupid and Psyche, where he holds a bunch of grapes and plays with a hare on his leg (for a further example of Eros using grapes to lure the animal, see HENIG 2007, p. 105, n. 113).

71. The gem shows Eros creeping behind the hare and rising his right hand (holding something?) exactly as on the coin type (FURTWÄNGLER 1896, p. 164, taf. 30, n. 3858); the similarity between the respective scenes is so striking that they seem to draw on the same iconographic model; I am very grateful to M. Henig for spotting this reference for me.

72. See *LIMC* (Eros), p. 865, n. 116.

73. About the use of *lagobolon* for chasing hares, also by Eros, see NANKOV 2010. Comparison for Eros/Cupids holding lagobolon still come from the decoration of late roman sarcophagi; see for instance the one featuring a Dionysiac Procession in the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MS.4017), dated to late 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD; BALD ROMANO 2006, p. 267-270, n. 124.

a plant (Appendix 15).<sup>74</sup> Whatever the explanation, the coin type was presumably intended to recall a mythological scene, perhaps a minor local tradition, or also a famous sculptural group on the island. Again, cultural links with Corinth seem to re-emerge: on some Corinthian issues of Plautilla, either Eros stands in front of Aphrodite offering her an apple, or two Erotes flank her, one holding a wreath, the other an indistinct object, possibly a vase (or a hare?).<sup>75</sup>

## Conclusions

Distinctive aspects of the Severan coinage of Corcyra (limited variety of coin types assigned to different members of the imperial family, remarkable variations in fabric and style through various stages of production) allow a plausible reconstruction of the chronology and the evolution of the mint. The three main phases I have proposed span approximately from AD 195 to AD 212/213, showing considerable transformations in production, presumably due to changes in the mint. This could result from the turnover between a workshop which seems to have been influenced by (or involved in) the wider system of ateliers and engravers operating (and travelling) across the Peloponnesus, and another one which probably cooperated with both Corcyra and Nicopolis at least in AD 202-210. Not long after the death of Geta, the mint on the island closed and the whole bronze coin supply of the province was to be provided exclusively by Nicopolis, whose coinage in the name of Caracalla as sole emperor was one of the largest in 3<sup>rd</sup> century Greece.<sup>76</sup>

The general mint output of three main phases over a period of approximately 17 years of activity is ultimately not so small if considered within the framework of civic coinage in the provinces, and particularly in Roman Greece, which was generally rather modest. During phase 1 it seems that minting activity tended to coincide with imperial anniversaries or other events of public interest, such as the AD 202 celebrations for Caracalla's marriage and perhaps the *decennalia*, but in the following phases there is no apparent echo of imperial policy in the coinage. The overall picture suggests that coins were mainly intended to provide base metal currency for local expenditure; such provision looks more regular in Nicopolis than in Corcyra, where the need for new issues was probably not particularly pressing also because a large proportion of old coins could have stayed in circulation from the Antonine age, when the mint in the island seems to have produced more than the capital of Epirus.<sup>77</sup> Corcyrean bronzes of this period probably had a more limited circulation than those of

74. Naples, Archaeological Museum n. 9218; see *LIMC* (Amor, Cupido), p. 992, n. 301.

75. See *BMC* 664, 696 and IMHOOF-BLUMER, GARDNER 1964, p. 25-26, pl. G, CXXI-IV, both referring to sculptural groups in Corinth.

76. See CALOMINO 2011, p. 270-275.

77. CALOMINO 2011, p. 260; CALOMINO 2012, p. 106.

Nicopolis: according to the main excavation reports so far published (although very limited), finds are not attested in other centres of Epirus apart from Nicopolis itself (like Dodona, Butrint and Phoenice), nor any isolated specimens are recorded in excavations in the major cities of Roman Greece (such as Corinth, Athens and Nemea) except Patras.<sup>78</sup>

Metrology represents, as always, a problematic issue, especially because the weight range of the coins is extremely inconsistent.<sup>79</sup> The monetary system in the Severan Age was probably in four denominations: the value of these bronzes in *assaria* could plausibly be 4 (Dn4), 3 or 2 (Dn3), 2 or 1 (Dn2) and 1 or ½ (Dn1) respectively; the most plausible figure is 4, 3, 2 and 1 *assaria* (see graph below). Only during the first phase all the four denominations were struck, albeit not necessarily at the same time.<sup>80</sup> Besides the largest one, issued exclusively for Plautilla, the 3/2 *assaria* series were initially struck only for Septimius and Julia Domna, and afterwards only for Plautilla, whereas the two smallest denominations were dedicated to the younger members of the family. The last phase hinges on a system of three clearly differentiated denominations, probably just like in Nicopolis from the reign of Caracalla as a sole emperor onward.<sup>81</sup> If my identification of three sub-phases is correct, it follows that denominations were produced selectively for different members of the family, possibly also to facilitate the distinction from one to the others. The main denomination is clearly represented by the Dn3 bronzes, which maintain a preeminent role in the system and are permanently marked by the two most representative coin types, Galley and Pegasus.

The repertoire of designs also has some very characteristic features. The themes adhere to prevalently local traditions and the selection of types is extremely limited and conservative. Subjects are almost entirely religious, not only divinities of the classical Olympic pantheon, but also local variations of traditional cults of the island, such as Zeus Kasios.<sup>82</sup> If we extend this analysis to the Antonine Age, not only such figure is confirmed, but it looks also enhanced by the large production of “pseudo-autonomous” coins, possibly the most genuine expression of civic cultural instances, still insisting on the same sample

78. Also in Moucharte's catalogue there is no evidence of Corcyrean coins found outside Corfu. For a comparative figure see CALOMINO 2011, p. 311.

79. The diameter ranges of denominations reported in Moucharte can be slightly smaller than the actual sizes of the coins; see MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 309-311.

80. In Nicopolis only the three larger denominations (Dn2-Dn4) seem to have been struck in the Severan age; see CALOMINO 2011, p. 290.

81. CALOMINO 2011, p. 290-293.

82. The cult of Zeus Kasios was historically worshipped in the sanctuary of Cassope, a harbour city on the North-Eastern extremity of the island (*Cic., Fam.*, XVI, 9); in Roman Imperial Age it became popular for hosting one of Nero's poetic and singing performances during his celebrative journey to Greece (*Suet., Nero*, XXII; *Plin., NH* IV, 12, 52); see *RE* (Kasios), p. 2265-2268. See also MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 281, n. 7.

of select themes (additionally Agreus, another local divinity worshipped as an epiclisis of Aristaios).<sup>83</sup> This iconographic conservatism perhaps also has a numismatic aspect, since the occurrence of the main types of Pegasus and the galley under the Severans recalls a tradition going back to the 5<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC civic coinage, as a sort of tribute not only to the mother-town Corinth and the maritime vocation of the island, but also to the monetary history of pre-roman Corcyra.<sup>84</sup> In this regard the difference with the coinage of Nicopolis is rather striking. The production of the capital of Epirus boasts a more extensive repertory of coin types; without considering minor iconographic variations, Corcyra has 16 subjects, Nicopolis 35, only partly drawing on Epirus traditions, partly also celebrating “foreign” cults (Isis, Cybele, Artemis Ephesia) and expressly the Emperor, such as in the *adventus* coin types of Caracalla saluting on horseback.<sup>85</sup>

| Phases   | Dn1: ½ or 1 Assarion         | Dn2: 1 or 2 Assaria                  | Dn3: 2 or 3 Assaria                        | Dn4: 4 Assaria                 |
|----------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Phase 1a |                              | 22-25mm, 6-9g<br>(Septimius Severus) |  |                                |
| Phase 1b | 18-19mm, 3-4g<br>(Geta)      | 23-24mm, 6-9g<br>(Caracalla, Geta)   | 24-26mm, 7-12g<br>(Septimius, Julia Domna) |                                |
| Phase 1c | 20-21mm, 4-5g<br>(Plautilla) | 22-23mm, 5-9g<br>(Plautilla)         | 25-26mm, 7-11g<br>(Plautilla)              | 29-31mm, 17-18g<br>(Plautilla) |
| Phase 2  |                              | 23-24mm, 5-9g<br>(Caracalla, Geta)   | 25-27mm, 9-12g<br>(Septimius, Julia Domna) |                                |
| Phase 3  | 18-20mm, 4g<br>(Caracalla)   |                                      | 25-26mm, 7-11g<br>(Caracalla, Geta)        | 30-31mm, 14-17g<br>(Caracalla) |

Coin denominations in Corcyra under the Severans

83. *Apoll. Rhod.*, II,507; see *RE* (Aristaios) 854-855. The image of the rural god is very frequently adopted as coin type in Corcyra under the Antonines (also standing in a shrine), sometimes with legend ΑΓΡΕΥΣ (see *RPC* IV 4582-4583, 4588, 4597-4598).

84. From this point of view, Moucharte’s hypothesis that the bull-coin type employed under Plautilla was intended to revive the iconographic tradition of the cow/bull on reverses of the archaic, classic and hellenistic series of the mint, is surely intriguing (MOUCHARTE 2007, p. 293).

85. See CALOMINO 2011, p. 335-342; CALOMINO 2012, p. 109-110. It is possible that the civic administration and elites responsible for the coinage in the capital of Epirus were more bound and/or keen to celebrate the emperor (see also the large commemorative series of Augustus) than in Corcyra, both for political reason and because a significant proportion of the population in Nicopolis (probably a “double” community) could be Roman. See CALOMINO 2012, p. 104.

## APPENDIX

(images not included in the catalogue)

1. Commodus Caesar: AE, Corcyra,  
ca. AD 175 (L.1866,1201.2278: 5.52g; *RPC IV* 4593)
2. Commodus Augustus: AE, Corcyra,  
ca. AD 176-177 (?) (ANS.48.147.11: 8.13g; *RPC IV* 7846)
3. Septimius Severus (naked bust with shield and spear, I.): Bronze Medallion, Rome,  
ca. AD 195 (L.1865,0606.3: 64.67g - GNECCHI 1912, II, p. 75, n. 20)
4. Septimius Severus (naked bust with shield and spear, I.): AE, Corinth,  
ca. AD 195 (P.987: 9.03g - *BCD Corinth* 870)
5. Septimius Severus (naked bust with shield and spear, I.):  
AE, Megara, AD 193-211 (*BCD Peloponnesos* 51.3: 8.29g)



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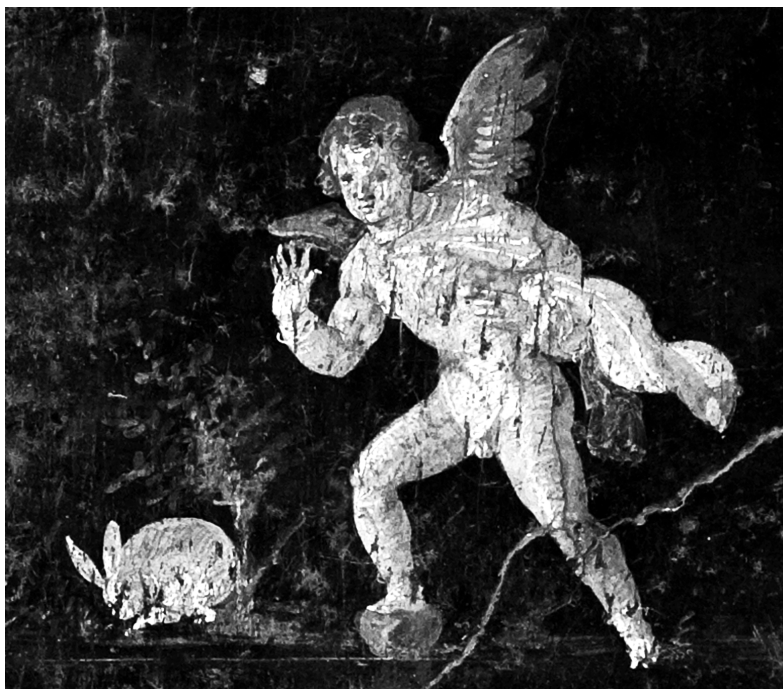
12



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6. Septimius Severus (laureate bust, r.): AE, Megara, AD 193-211  
(*BCD Peloponnesos* 51.2: 6.01g)
7. Septimius Severus (draped bust, r.): AE, Megara, AD 193-211  
(*BCD Peloponnesos* 54: 7.25g)
8. Plautilla Augusta: AE, Nicopolis,  
ca. AD 202-205 (IAM.47: 7.38g; CALOMINO 2011, n. 319)
9. Septimius Severus: AE, Nicopolis,  
ca. AD 205-211 (AMN-Odeon.238: 7.76g; CALOMINO 2011, n. 248)
10. Julia Domna: AE, Nicopolis,  
ca. AD 205-211 (ANS.1944.100.18782: 5.47g - CALOMINO 2011, n. 262)
11. Caracalla Augustus: AE, Nicopolis,  
ca. AD 209-211 (BO.21142: 4.74g; CALOMINO 2011, n. 297)
12. Geta Augustus: AE, Nicopolis,  
ca. AD 209-211 (L.GC6p107.40; *BMC* 40: 6.40g - CALOMINO 2011, n. 351)
13. Caracalla Augustus: AE, Corcyra, ca. AD 211-13 (V.GR12291: 4.25g;  
MOUCHARTE 2007, n. 391 – enlargement of reverse type)
14. Roman Gem: glass (9 × 10 × 1mm), ca. 1<sup>st</sup> century BC-1<sup>st</sup> century AD  
(FG.3858; © Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Photo: J. Laurentius)
15. Mural painting, predella - Pompei VII.6,28, Cubiculum 8 (43 × 108cm):  
ca. AD 25-45 (N.9229; *Pittura pompeiana*, p. 254, n. 102)

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