









**WAR AND PEACE. SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS ON THE EARLY
LYSIMACHUS TYPE STATERS FROM THE WEST PONTIC CITIES.
SPEAR AND HERALD STAFF (POLYBIUS, IV, 52)**

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Cuvinte cheie: *Lysimach, stater, suliață, Tomis, Byzantion, Mesembria.*




Abstract: *Examining the early series of the Lysimachus posthumous staters struck at the middle of the third century BC in the West Pontic Greek cities we noticed a novel iconographical detail: the absence of the spear from the inventory of the Athena's attributes. This regards of course a restraint number of coins, all of them numismatic rarities. They appear with a certain regularity in several cities: Mesembria (staters with monograms AA and EP), Tomis (issues with monograms N and ) , Odessos (series with mintmarks  or  and the same monogram KOI) and Byzantium, issue 39, having monogram  on the reverse (years 247-245 BC). Except Byzantium (the single having an exclusive series of Lysimachus type staters), the issues without Athena's spear are the first of this recently adopted new type in all the others cities. Each time (including Byzantium) there are obverse die links between them and the next issues, having spear on goddess shoulder. This situation reflects a sudden and simultaneous adoption of this iconographic detail, as a probable consequence of a certain political context and a top level political decision making, reflecting an alliance between Byzantium and the West Pontic Greek cities, at the beginning of the third Syrian war.*

Rezumat: *Examinarea seriilor timpurii de stateri de tip Lysimach din cetățile grecești vest-pontice, datate către mijlocul secolului III a.Chr., permite observarea unui detaliu iconografic până acum neglijat: lipsa pe alocuri a sulitei zeiței Atena din inventarul atributelor acesteia. Această constatare privește, desigur, un număr restrâns de exemplare, piesele aflate în această situație fiind rarități numismatice. Cu toate acestea, staterii de acest tip se regăsesc cu o anumită regularitate în cazul mai multor cetăți: la Mesembria, pe staterii cu monogramele AA respectiv EP, la Tomis – piesele cu sigla TO și monogramele  respectiv N, la Odessos – seriile cu sigla  și monograma KOI,  și același KOI și la Byzantium, emisiunea 39, cu monograma  pe revers (datată 247-245 a.Chr.). Exceptând Byzantium, care a bătut exclusiv stateri de tip Lysimach, în cazul tuturor celorlalte cetăți, emisiunile în care Atena apare fără suliață sunt de cele mai multe ori primele de după staterii de tip Alexandru cel Mare ai acelorași cetăți, și tot de fiecare dată au legături de ștanțe de avers (chiar și la Byzantium) cu emisiunile imediat următoare, pe al căror revers*

* Numismatic Department from the Library of the Romanian Academy.

Atena este purtătoare de suliță. Aceasta probează o introducere bruscă și simultană a acestui element iconografic de altfel definitoriu pentru zeiță, consecință a unui anumit context politic și a unei decizii politice la vârf, probabil în cadrul unei alianțe între Byzantion și cetățile vest pontice, la începutul celui de al treilea război sirian.

By examining the early series of Lysimachus type staters from the West-Pontic Greek cities, we notice a significant (but almost never mentioned) iconographical detail: the repeated absence from the reverse of the coins of an essential attribute of the goddess – the spear – the situation appearing on the coins of several cities, like Tomis¹, Mesembria², Odessos³ and even Byzantium⁴. The latter struck exclusively Lysimachus type staters and not a single Alexander⁵ (because of his Ptolemaic alliance and because of the succession claims of the Ptolemies concerning Lysimachus' inheritance). A second example is Tomis – but Tomis became a polis only after the Monopoly War⁶, adopting, of course, the Lysimachus type stater due to its alliance with Byzantium. All the others – Istros, Kallatis, Mesembria, Odessos – struck Alexander type gold coins⁷. With the exception of Kallatis (the great defeated of the war), all the others suddenly struck a new (for them) gold coin type, Lysimachus one. If the reason for this dramatic change is already known today, consisting in the changing alliances after the Monopoly war⁸, we still have to explain the situation concerning the successive and repeated absence or presence of the spear, this important attribute of Athena.

So, we have from Tomis a significant and homogenous pre-trident Lysimachus type staters series: 1. O₁-R₁, on the reverse,  inner left field,  in the exergue and Athena with spear⁹ (pl. I, 1; 1,5×1); 2. O₁-R₂, on the reverse, TO inner left field, AP legate, in the exergue and unarmed goddess¹⁰ (pl. I, 2; 1,5×1); O₂-R₃, TO inner left field, N in the exergue, unarmed goddess¹¹ (pl. I, 3; 1,5×1); O₃-R₄, inner left field , TO in the exergue and also unarmed Athena¹² (pl. I, 4; 1,5×1). Moreover, we have even an early sample with trident in the exergue, from Tomis, having on the reverse Athena without spear (O₄-R₅, ΠA legate inner left field, TO

¹ Petac, Vilcu 2012, p. 53, nrs. 3-5; Petac, Vilcu 2016, p. 499-508; Petac 2016, p. 106-107.

² Petac 2011, p. 8.

³ Petac, Vilcu 2013, p. 310-311, nrs. 4-7

⁴ See Classical Numismatic Group, Mail Bid Sale 84, lot 142, 5 May 2010, Byzantium, issue 39, for staters (if it is this issue, not known by Marinescu 1996, p. 65, issue 39, where only tetradrachms).

⁵ Marinescu 1996.

⁶ See Petac, Vilcu 2012, p. 51-63, Petac, Vilcu 2016, p. 499-508 and Petac 2016, p. 105-110; for the Monopoly War, see Avram 2003, p. 1181-1213.

⁷ For Istros, see Price 1991, p. 180 and Vilcu, Petac 2012, p. 21-28; for Kallatis, Price 1991, p. 175-179; for Mesembria, Price 1991, p. 180-182; for Odessos, Price 1991, p. 191-192.

⁸ Marinescu 1996, p. 426; Avram 2003, p. 1212; Petac 2011, p. 12.

⁹ A. Tkalec AG (27.10.2011), lot 46; Roma Numismatics, Auction 3, 31 March 2012, lot 183; Roma Numismatics, Auction 7, 22 March 2014, lot 484; cf. Petac, Vilcu 2016, p. 501, nr. 6.

¹⁰ Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung, Auction 158, 8 October.2007, lot 67; cf. Petac, Vilcu 2016, p. 501-502, no. 8.

¹¹ Collection of the Romanian Academy, Numismatic Department, inv. AV.A. 156; cf. Petac, Vilcu 2016, p. 502, no. 9.

¹² Agora Auction, Numismatic Sale 49, February 2, 2016, nr. 49-013; cf. Petac 2016, p. 107, fifth series.

under the throne, trident with dolphins in the exergue; pl. I, 5; 1,5×1)¹³. Excepting the situations from the first issues, where we have obverse die-links between the tetradrachms belonging to the 1st and 2nd series and also between the staters from the 2nd and 3rd series, no other die-link was later found, reflecting, of course, an episodically activity¹⁴.

Considering the situation from Mesembria, we have from this city only five Lysimachus type staters struck using four obverse dies and five reverse dies¹⁵ as follows: 1. O₁-R₁, on the reverse, left figure helmet / ΛΑ and unarmed Athens¹⁶ (pl. I, 6; 1,5×1); 2. O₂-R₂, left figure helmet, EP in the exergue and no spear¹⁷ (pl. I, 7; 1,5×1); 3. O₃-R₃, left figure helmet, EP in the exergue and no spear¹⁸ (pl. I, 8; 1,5×1); 4. O₃-R₄, left figure helmet, M in the exergue and Athena with spear¹⁹ (pl. I, 9; 1,5×1); 5. O₄-R₅, left figure helmet, ΔΙ in the exergue and also armed goddess²⁰ (pl. I, 10; 1,5×1). It seems to be clear now that the armed goddess appears only on the last two coins, at the end of a very restraint, short and homogenous series of gold coins. None of them came from a certain hoard. However, the homogeneity of the series is proved by the die-links and monograms succession and also by the Mesembrian tetradrachms having exactly the same monograms EP, ΔΙ and ΛΑ and coming all of them from the same hoards: EP (Price 983) from Koseir²¹ and Propontis²², ΔΙ (Price 1000 from Propontis²³ and Price 1001 from Propontis²⁴ and Mektepini²⁵ and ΛΑ (Price 1029) from Mektepini²⁶ and Propontis²⁷.

We have from Odessos the largest sample of Lysimachus type staters from the 3rd century B.C. After significant issues of Alexanders' staters – like Istros, Kallatis, Mesembria (few) – the city struck consistent series of Lysimachus type gold coins²⁸ – again like Istros, Tomis, Mesembria (few) and Byzantium. For the first time, we have four series struck with the same obverse die, O₁, paired with three different reverse

¹³ Müller 1858, nr. 280; Petac 2016, p. 107, sixth series.

¹⁴ Petac, Vilcu 2016, p. 501-502; Petac 2016, p. 106.

¹⁵ Petac 2011, p. 10.

¹⁶ Numismatic Department from the Library of the Romanian Academy, Romanian Academy collection, inv. M. 73; cf. Petac 2011, p. 8.

¹⁷ Numismatik Lanz, Auction 106, 26-27 November 2001, lot 59 and Numismatik Lanz, Auction 125, 28 November 2005, lot 164; Petac 2011, p. 8.

¹⁸ American Numismatic Society collection, 1944.100.81608; Rogalski 1982, p. 95, no. 16; Karayotov 1994, p. 114, no. 16; Petac 2011, p. 8.

¹⁹ British Museum collection, CM 1978-10-23-1; Rogalski 1982, p. 95, no. 15; Karayotov 1994, p. 114, no. 15; Petac 2011, p. 8.

²⁰ The original in Hermitage Museum, Sankt Petersburg, Russia; cast at the American Numismatic Society, New York, USA; Müller 1858, pl. V, no. 236; Rogalski 1982, p. 95, no. 17; Karayotov 1994, p. 114, nr. 17; Marinescu 1996, XXI. no. 76; Petac 2011, p. 7.

²¹ IGCH 1537; Seyrig 1973, p. 32, no. 6.

²² IGCH 888; Waggoner 1979, p. 11, no. 29.

²³ IGCH 888; Waggoner 1979, p. 11, no. 19.




²⁴ IGCH 888; Waggoner 1979, p. 11, nrs. 16-18.

²⁵ IGCH 1410; Olcay, Seyrig 1965, p. 7, nrs. 16-19.

²⁶ IGCH 1410; Olcay, Seyrig 1965, p. 7, no. 20.

²⁷ IGCH 888; Waggoner 1979, p. 11, nrs. 20-25.

²⁸ Petac, Vilcu 2013, p. 309-326.

dies – R₁²⁹, R₂³⁰, R₃³¹ (pl. II, 1-3; 1,5×1), all of them having the same mintmark () , the same signature (KOI) and an unarmed goddess on the throne. The next moment reveals significant changes: together with a new pair of dies – O₂-R₄³² (pl. II, 4; 1,5×1), keeping the same mintmark  and the same signature (KOI) on the reverse – appears also a new attribute of Athena, the spear, visible over the helmet. The next two issues (5th and 6th, O₁-R₅³³ and O₃-R₆³⁴; pl. II, 5-6; 1,5×1) show an unexpected but interesting reuse of the old die O₁ (pair with R₅) and a new pair of dies (O₃-R₆), both of them with a new mintmark () and having on the reverse an armed goddess, spear being visible over the helmet (5th issue) and over the shoulder (6th issue). It seems to be the sign of an extensive minting activity, these staters being struck in the same time, in two officinae, at a specific moment, under a serious pressure, reflecting needs for massive – probably military – payments. This situation seems to continue in the same circumstances during the next issues (7th-8th) each time with the same features (one of them striking coins having the spear visible over the helmet, the other one with the goddess' spear being visible over the shoulder). After this moment, from the 8th to the 12th issue, a single officina works until the end of the odessitan Lysimachus type gold issues striking coins with an armed goddess on the reverse, having each time the spear visible on the shoulder³⁵. This significant coincidence of the sudden introduction of the spear almost together with the second officina cannot be ignored.

Byzantium is one of the rare cities from the region striking in gold exclusively Lysimachus type staters³⁶ as a direct consequence of its alliance with the Ptolemaic Egypt, the last one claiming the inheritance of Lysimachus' kingdom of Thrace.

So, we have from Byzantium a specific issue of Lysimachus type staters having on the reverse an unarmed goddess. Following Marinescu's arrangement, this is the 39th issue³⁷ (pl. II, 7; 1,5×1), struck around 247-245 BC – a very significant landmark. It means that even Byzantium – the great regional winner following the Monopoly War – struck before the 3rd Syrian War (Laodicean War) some staters having on the reverse an unarmed Athena.

Considering all these findings we cannot ignore a story of Polybius's (IV, 52). Writing about a regional conflict from 220 BC between Byzantium and Rhodes (not only) and telling about the mediation of the Celtic king from Tyllis, Cavarus, he states

²⁹ Petac, Vilcu 2013, p. 310, nr. 1; Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques de la Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Fonds général, no. 77; see also on BNF site and Gallica <http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb41823963h>

³⁰ Petac, Vilcu 2013, p. 310-311, no. 4; Classical Numismatic Group, Auction 72 (14.06.2006), lot 209

³¹ Petac, Vilcu 2013, p. 311, nr. 5; British Museum, Department of Coins and Medals registration no. RPKp86A.7.Lys.

³² Petac, Vilcu 2013, p. 311, no. 9; Classical Numismatic Group, Auction 60 (22.05.2002), lot 446.

³³ Petac, Vilcu 2013, p. 311, no. 10; Numismatic Department from the Library of the Romanian Academy, inv. AV. A. 162 (1978).

³⁴ Petac, Vilcu 2013, p. 312, nrs. 11-12; Numismatic Department from the Library of the Romanian Academy, Orghidan collection, no. 47 (no. 11) and Auktionshaus H. D. Rauch 71 (28.04.2003), lot 110 (no. 12).

³⁵ Petac, Vilcu 2013, p. 312-314, nrs. 13-24 and p. 316-320.

³⁶ Marinescu 1996.

³⁷ Marinescu 1996, p. 65.

that the king proposed a meeting in Byzantium. In this context, the Rhodians sent to Byzantium a certain Aridices as ambassador, altogether with Polemocles with three triremes, intending so to send to those from Byzantium “the spear and the herald’s staff in the same time”. The symbolic value of the two elements (war and peace) seems to be evident for everybody.

So, it seems obvious also that the repeated presence or absence of the goddess’ spear from the reverse of the Lysimachus type staters in many cities from the Black Sea (Tomis, Odessos, Mesembria) or from the Hellespont (Byzantium), in the same period, is not a simple coincidence. It is clear today that the adoption of certain monetary types depends on specific alliances³⁸. The Seleucid allies struck Alexander types staters; meanwhile, the Ptolemies’ allies use the Lysimachus type gold coin. As far as we know, the main event of the mid-3rd century BC in the Black Sea region was the Monopoly War, opposing Byzantium to Kallatis and Istros, but probably also Mesembria and Odessos, having as a main objective to maintain the monopoly of the Seleucid alliance (Istros and Kallatis) over the Tomis harbor³⁹, the latter being until then not a polis, but an emporium, with no right to strike its own coins. It is not surprising in these circumstances to see that there is a single city in the area never striking Alexander type staters, but only huge quantities of Lysimachus staters – and this is Byzantium – and several cities striking a lot of Alexander type gold coins – Kallatis especially, but also Istros, Mesembria and Odessos. After tByzantium’s victory in the Monopoly War, it was not a surprise at all to see a sudden change of the gold coins’ type from Alexander to Lysimachus at Istros, Mesembria and Odessos – but not at Kallatis, the main and strongly defeated party of the war. It is also not a surprise to see Tomis becoming now a polis, striking his own Lysimachus type staters. All these show changing alliances after the end of the Monopoly War in the Black Sea region, the great winners being Byzantium and Tomis. If the reason of the high level political decision concerning the large scale and sudden adoption of the Lysimachus type stater in several of the most important cities from the Black Sea seems to be clear, it is not the case when we speak about the successive presence or absence on the coins of such a significant attribute of Athena as it is her spear. Observing that Odessos and Mesembria start striking the new monetary type having an unarmed goddess on the reverse, followed by Athena with spear, we notice also that from Istros we have only samples with the spear on Athena’s shoulder. In the city of Tomis, the series begin with an armed goddess, followed by an unarmed one and again Athena with spear. It is not necessary that all of these samples to be absolutely contemporary, so probably it will be not prudent to make any political considerations. Probably we have from Odessos the most significant situation, the Lysimachus series starting without spear, but when the armed goddess appeared, the mint seems to work in two officinae, the armed goddess appearing probably in a moment in which large scale payments in gold were necessary, as a part of a possible war effort.

Observing these successive and widespread features, we can ask ourselves whether they are a reflection of an attitude concerning a certain political or military

³⁸ Le Rider, Callataÿ 2006, p. 72-73, p. 105-107 and p. 121.

³⁹ Avram 2003, p. 1181-1213.

context, a peace or war option in some specific circumstances of the Third Syrian war linked to the struggle for hegemony in the Black Sea between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies.

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Plate I. 3rd century BC staters from Tomis (1-5) and Mesembria (6-10); unarmed goddess on the reverse: Tomis (2-5) and Mesembria (6-8)



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2



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4



5



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7



Plate II. 3rd century BC staters from Odessos (1-6) and Byzantium (7); unarmed goddess on the reverse: Odessos (1-3) and Byzantium (7).