Dionysos in Roman Imperial Thrace – What Do the Coins Tell Us about Him?

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"Das ganze Altertum hat Dionysos als den Spender des Weines gepriesen."
W. F. Otto

Abstract: This paper wants to discuss the background of Roman imperial coins from Thrace which depict grapes or the wine god Dionysos in different contexts on their obverses. Such coin images mirror more authentically than other sources essential parts of Thracian cities’ identity. It is clear that already in Antiquity many areas of Thrace were planted with vines and that coins showing grapes allude to both viticulture and viniculture flourishing there. However, these pieces of money should be understood less as a reference to an important economical resource or scenic beauty, but rather more as a praise of Dionysos who, despite the resistance of king Lykourgos, donated vines to Thrace. Local lore links this epiphany of Dionysos with his coming from India and with his birth somewhere in Thrace. The coins discussed here hint at both mythic events by showing the triumphant Dionysos together with Indian animals such as the leopard, and by presenting the infant Dionysos in different sceneries. It is very interesting to see that the thematic area Dionysos and wine became very prominent especially during the sole reign of Caracalla. This should not really come as a surprise, since Caracalla was acclaimed as a New Dionysos and he himself associated his campaign against Parthia with Alexander and Dionysos, as we are told by Cassius Dio.

Key words: Caracalla, coins, Dionysos, grape harvest, Hadrianopolis / Edirne, Hermes of Praxiteles, Korybantes, Kuretes, leopard, Mesambria / Nessebar, Neos Dionysos, Nys(s)a, Pautalia / Kyustendil, Philippopolis / Plovdiv, Serdica / Sofia, Strymon / Struma, Thrace, urban identity, viniculture, viticulture.

LAND OF VINES

Today both the slopes of many hills and the terraces of several river valleys in Bulgaria are again densely planted with grapevines, so that viticulture contributes substantially to this country’s appearance and identity. This may not be very different from the situation in Antiquity. As far as we know, ancient Thrace was a land full of vines, and hence it is natural that during the whole period of Antiquity the veneration of the wine-god was one of the most traditional and most important cults of this country. Already Herodotus underlined this, and in later times inscriptions and coins show that the Thracians’ deep devotion to Dionysos continued until the end of the Classical World. Numerous scholars thought and still think that the Greek cult of Dionysos even originated from Thrace. However interesting this subject may be, this paper wants to draw the attention to a particular period and to a special aspect of this cult, which until now has not been dealt with so much. This treatise will focus on the picture that

* I am especially thankful to my friend Francis Jacquier who provided me with a very nice copy of Leon Ruzicka’s excellent, but very rare book on the coins of Pautalia, which helped me to finish this paper. By supplying so many numismatists with newly published books on coins and by tracing hard-to-find older ones he has given important support to numismatists’ research work, coin collectors and auction houses for many years now.

1 Otto 1933, 49.
2 Pomp. Mela 2.17; Strab. 10.3.16 (C 471); cf. Rapp 1882; Kazarov 1936, 488-495 (Dionysos); Chuvín 1991, 86: La Thrace est un haut-lieu du culte et des légendes de Dionysos.
3 Hdt. 5.7.1: θεοὺς δὲ σέβονται μούνους τούσδε, Ἄρεα καὶ Διόνυσον καὶ Ἀρτέμιν; for Dionysos’ connection with viticulture and for his veneration in Thrace cf. Wiesner 1963.
the Roman imperial bronze coins draw of Dionysos, furthermore on this god's asserted gifts to cities and on his identity creating functions. Just as coins almost exclusively represent the identity/identities of their minting authorities, the reverses of the so-called Greek imperials focus on urban identities, which were yet more multifaceted than those of the Archaic or even Hellenistic Greek poleis. The obverses of these coins normally show the portrait of the reigning emperor or, alternatively, of a member of his family; quite rarely the bust of a leading city deity occurs. Greek imperials in particular try to transpose an inextricable mixture of religious and political identities into images, and thereby they sometimes also reflect geographic and economic aspects of urban self-perception. Some coins minted by Thracian cities during the Roman Empire can visualise this quite obviously.

An extremely often discussed and in books again and again reproduced coin of Pautalia (ΟΥΛΙΑΙΟΣ ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑΚΟΣ), modern Kyustendil, prizes the resources which the city's territory yielded in the 3rd c. AD: gold, silver, corn and wine (fig. 1a-b). The coin – minted with the portraits of Caracalla (sole reign portrait) or his mother Iulia Domna – depicts the city goddess of Pautalia sitting on the ground; she is leaning against a vine, that forms a pergola from which bunches of grapes are hanging downwards, so that the impression of autumnal abundance arises. Her outstretched right hand is resting on a huge rock; a man standing on it is busy harvesting one of the bunches. The inscription ΒΟΤΠΥϹ, which means grape, leaves no room for doubt what is going on: the scenery alludes to an autumnal vintage in Pautalia's territory. By this coin image the city goddess is closely associated with viticulture and wine-making. Thus, the coin image conveys the same message as the many epithets used by Homer and other Greek writers who refer to a region or a city as ἀμπελόεις (ἄμπελος), euampelos (εὐάμπελος), polyoinos (πολύοινος), oinoplieis (οἶνοπλήης), polybotrys (πολύβοτρυς), polystaphylos (πολυστάφυλος), etc. Behind the vine, against which the city goddess of Pautalia is leaning, we see an amphora, from which water pours out. It first forms a runlet; later it becomes a proper river flowing beneath the city goddess. We should take the depiction seriously: the coin shows that the banks of a river flowing through Pautalia's territory were planted with grapevines. Already in the times of Marcus Aurelius Caesar (AD 139-161) the city of Pautalia had minted a coin that shows a river-god holding a grape vine in his right hand. His left forearm is resting on an amphora, of which water pours out, and with his left hand he holds some reeds (fig. 3). By focusing on the river and its banks overgrown with vines, in some way this coin thematises a detail of the coin image which we are debating. Since the Strymon / Struma is the most important river traversing Pautalia's territory, we can with any certainty identify the depicted river-god as the Strymon. On the coin that is being discussed here the legend ΑΠΤΥΒΟϹ is written above a huge rock, so that we may localise Pautalia's silver mines in the mountains around the city; a man having shouldered a sack seems to have just come out of a mining gallery dug into the rock. Gold / ΥΠΒΟϹ is being panned out at the upper reaches of the river, in the exergue of the coin corn / ΤΑΧΥϹ is being cut with a sickle. All these resources alluded to have been important for the economy of Pautalia, but we should not
forget that the grape vine is placed into the centre of the coin image and also by its size dominates the whole scenery.

A bronze coin minted by the neighbouring city of Serdica, i.e. modern Sofia, during the reign of the emperor Caracalla also shows a river-god holding a vine with a bunch of grapes in his right hand (fig. 4). We know a lot of depictions of river-gods, who hold special objects in their hands, e.g. tree branches, corn ears, olive trees, statues of gods, ships etc. (cf. especially Robert 1980, 85 f.). These objects may allude to the name of a river or to one of the cities' highly venerated tutelary divinities (πολιοῦχοι). In some cases, these symbolic objects may point out that a river is navigable or that it was used for floating timber. However, coins showing a river-god with a vine in his right hand occur rather rarely. Since in the case of Serdica an elucidating legend is missing, we have again to ask who the river-god is. There are two rivers which both have their sources or at least some of their main sources in the Vitosha mountain (ancient Skombros) near Serdica: the Struma / Strymon and the Iskar / Oiskos (fig. 5).

It is difficult to say which of these rivers is meant by the coin image. The famous Swiss numismatist Imhoof-Blumer thought that the depicted river was the Iskar / Oiskos (Imhoof-Blumer 1924, 246), but I feel forced to argue that it is the other one: In Antiquity the territory of Serdica included the Haimos / Balkan mountains, but no parts of the Danubian plain (Mihailov 1966, 5). In the Haimos section of the river Oiskos as well as southwards from these mountains there are nowadays no vineyards along the riverside (fig. 6), and it is quite likely

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**Fig. 1.** a Pautalia, obv. Caracalla, rev. scenery, 28 mm: Lanz 157, 9.12.2013, 335; b Pautalia, obv. Julia Domna, rev. scenery, 22 mm: Classical Numismatic Group (e-auction) 312, 9.10.2013, 148

**Fig. 2.** Pautalia, obv. Julia Domna, rev. city goddess, 22 mm: Classical Numismatic Group (e-auction) 376, 15.6.2016, 343

**Fig. 3.** Pautalia, obv. Marcus Aurelius Caesar, rev. Strymon with grapevine, 24 mm: Gorny & Mosch 200, 10.10.2011, 2097

**Fig. 4.** Serdica, obv. Caracalla, rev. river god with grapes, 30 mm: Pecunem (Gitbud & Naumann) 9, 3.11.2013, 337

10 Kazarov 1954, 542 f.: Many of the Thracian rivers, too (e.g. Hebrus), brought down alluvial gold, which could be extracted by the use of primitive gold-washing devices; cf. also the very instructive map in Archibald 1998, 23.


12 Obv. AVT Κ M ΑΨΗ Π ΖΗΡ ΚΕΨΗ — ΑΝΤΙΝΕΙΝΟC; bust of laureate Caracalla r. — Rev. ΟΒΑΠΙΗ-ΑC — ΣΕΨΗΤΑΙ-KΗC river-god reclining l., holding a grapevine with a bunch of grapes and a vine leaf in his r. hand, resting with his left arm on amphora, from which water streams out (Pecunem (Gitbud & Naumann) 9, 3.11.2013, # 337 = fig. 4; Varbanov III 2007, 260, # 2424).

13 Apart from the just mentioned coins of Pautalia and Serdica I only know of a third coin depicting a river-god who possibly holds a vine in his right hand: the Paphlagonian city of Amastris minted coins with the personified river Meles on their obverses. On these pieces of money the divine personification of this small watercourse, which the Amastrians used to support their absurd claim that Homer was a native of their city, is also holding a vine with two bunches of grapes in his r. hand (according to the author of the auction catalogue; I am not absolutely sure about this identification): Obv. ΟΜ-ΗΡΟC; draped bust of Homer r. — Rev. ΑΜΑΣΕΙΠΗ-ΝΗΝ; ΜΗΑΗC (in exergue); river-god reclining l., holding a grapevine with two bunches of grapes in his r. hand, resting with his l. arm on amphora, from which water streams out (Peus 366, 29.10.2000, # 544 [formerly in Burstein Collection, Nevada]; ‘unpublizierte Variante’).
that this was not different in Antiquity\textsuperscript{14}. Therefore, the identification of the depicted river-god with the Struma / Strymon seems to me highly probable.

During the Roman imperial period numerous cities of Thrace minted coins depicting a bunch of grapes or vines with grapes\textsuperscript{15}. In this context, it is sufficient to offer some examples, which show clearly, how some Thracian cities propagated their identity as famous wine producers by means of their coins. Such coins were for example minted by Byzantion (fig. 7a), Trajanopolis (fig. 7b) and Hadrianopolis. The last-mentioned city repeatedly minted such coins to underline the importance of viticulture for the city’s economy and identity (fig. 7c-g)\textsuperscript{16}. The same is the case with Philippopolis

\textsuperscript{14} Cf. the map of http://www.thefullwiki.org/Bulgarian_wine. The interior of Thracia was not very favourable for viticulture, cf. the statement of Pomp. Mela 2.16 that viticulture was very limited in the interior of Thrace: \textit{regio nec caelo laeta nec solo, et nisi qua mari propior est, infecunda, frigida, eorumque quae recurrit maliigne admodum patiens, raro usquam pomiferam arborem, vitem frequentius tolerat: sed nec eius quidem fructus maturat ac mitigat, nisi ubi frigora objectu frondium cothecus arcure.}

\textsuperscript{15} Coins with this design were not taken into account by Max Bernhart’s book on \textquoteleft Dionysos und seine Familie auf griechischen Münzen \textquoteright. In addition to other shortcomings, this leads to the consequence that the information we can get from this book is somewhat limited.

\textsuperscript{16} Byzantion: Obv. ANTΩΝΙΝΟC – AVΤΟVCTOς; laureate draped bust of Caracalla r. – Rev. BVZA-ΝΤΙΩΝ; bunch of grapes with tendrill and vine leaf (Classical Numismatic Group (e-auction) 291, 21.11.2012, # 194 = \textit{fig. 7a}; cf. Schönert-Geiss 1972, 83, # 1593-1596; Varbanov II 2005, # 1768). — Trajanopolis: Obv. AVΤ KM AVPCE – ANTΩΝΕΙΝΟC; laureate bust of Caracalla r. — Rev. TΡΑΙΑΝΟ-ΠΟΛΕΙΤΩΝ; vine twig with big tripartite bunch of grapes (Pecunem (Gitbud & Naumann) 16, 4.5.2014, # 672 = \textit{fig. 7b}; Varbanov III 2005, 295, # 2790); cf. Schönert-Geiss 1991, 204, s.v. Weintraube, with further testimonies. — Hadrianopolis: Obv. AV T ΑΛΑ ΑΔΙΠΙ – ANTΩΝΕΙΝΟ; bareheaded bust of Antoninus Pius r. — Rev. ΑΔΙΠΟΑΕΙΤΩΝ; vine twig with tripartite bunch of grapes, vine leaf, and tendrill (Gorny & Mosch 229, 10.3.2015, # 1491 = \textit{fig. 7c-g}).

Fig. 8. a Pautalia, obv. Geta, rev. bunch of grapes, 19 mm: Pecunem (Gitbud & Naumann) 39, 3.1.2016, 493; b Pautalia, obv. Geta Caesar, rev. basket with grapes, 20 mm: Lanz 97, 22.05.2000, 789; c Pautalia, obv. Geta Caesar, rev. wine jug and two cornucopiae, 18 mm: Lanz 114, 26.05.2003, 522

Fig. 9. Pautalia, obv. Commodus, rev. Dionysos in a chariot, 29 mm: Gorny & Mosch 165, 17.03.2008, 1514

In the times of Geta Caesar (AD 198-209) the Pautalia mint produced a great variety of coin types depicting grapes or alluding to vintage: a vine twig with a bunch of grapes, harvesting baskets filled with grapes and other fruits, and a horn of plenty overflowing with grapes (fig. 8a-c). Evoking the grape harvest by such coins Pautalia emphasised that the autumnal vintage was a special event in the city’s annual cycle.

Most of the coins that depict bunches of grapes are of smaller denominations. Usually such loose cash does not thematise completely new issues, but falls back on details of larger-sized coins, very often by showing the attributes of a deity that occurs on the larger pieces. One may wonder whether this holds also true for the depiction of grapes. In the end of the paper we will return to this question.

Having become aware of of the considerable number of coin images showing grapes, we should not be astonished about the praise of Thracian wines in the writings of many Greek and Roman authors.

### The Triumphator from India

In strict opposition to modern mentality, the people of the Thracian cities, like those of other wine-growing regions, explained the quality of their wines not with environmental factors like soil and climate, with the varieties of their vines or with the applied celllar technology, but with divine interference, or to say it more precisely, with the epiphany of Dionysos in their cities. The Thracians were convinced that they owe Dionysos their excellent wines. For Thrace we do not have such elaborated mythical traditions about the introduction of both viticulture and viniculture as we do with the Ikarios myth for Attica. However, the tale of the Thracian King Lykourgos tells us the myth of an unsuccessful attempt to hinder Dionysos from bringing viticulture to Thrace. Thereby it does not matter whether Dionysos had come triumphant from India or had been born in Thracian Nysa. The message is always the same: a mortal is not able to oppose the will of a god successfully, and so viticulture has been introduced into Thrace. Thus the Lykourgos-myth forms the literary background for coins showing the victorious Dionysos who has brought viticulture to Thrace.

Coin images rendering the sceneries of Indian leopards (or their melanistic species, the panther) drawing Dionysos’ triumphal chariot or serving as a mount for the god, are a conspicuous indication that Thracian cities had assimilated the myth of Dionysos’ coming from India to Thrace. As a matter of course, pictures of Dionysos having subdued wild and dangerous animals and made them subservient to him may have also propagated the idea that Dionysos is the master over nature. Thus, such coins were well suited to underline the god’s omnipotence. Originally, Indian tigers had drawn Dionysos’ chariot, but in the eastern parts of the Mediterranean region tigers were very often replaced by leopards, since leopards can also represent India and were better known in the areas westwards from India. It may be that in Antiquity leopards even lived in the forests and woody mountains of Thrace; in Thrace’s neighbouring country Turkey leopards could be observed until very recently.

The depiction of a scenery, which shows Dionysos riding in a chariot, is quite difficult to produce, in particular when it comes to
carving such a complex picture into a small object like a coining die. Accordingly, this image is very rarely found on coins, and this applies, above all, to the coins minted by Thracian cities. For the moment I can present only one specimen coined by the city of Pautalia (fig. 9)\textsuperscript{26}.

In this case the die cutter failed in reproducing the leopards’ natural appearance correctly: the animals drawing the carriage have ears like asses, but on the other hand the rosettes on their coat and the paws leave no doubt that leopards are meant\textsuperscript{27}.

Therefore it is not surprising that we quite often come across more simply designed coin images, which show Dionysos riding on a leopard\textsuperscript{28}. For example, coins minted by Hadrianopolis (fig. 10a), Bizye (fig. 10b), Serdica (fig. 10c) and Philippopolis (fig. 10d) render such a scenery. On the coins of the two first-mentioned cities Dionysos is lying visibly relaxed on the back of the feline predator\textsuperscript{29}, whereas on the samples of Serdica and Philippopolis he is riding the panther like a horseman; on the image of the Serdica coin he also pours out some wine to feed his mount\textsuperscript{30}.

The last-mentioned scene, Dionysos feeding a leopard, is very often depicted on Thracian coins. Samples from Pautalia (fig. 11a) and Serdica (fig. 11b) may suffice\textsuperscript{31}. More interesting is a coin of Hadrianopolis showing Dionysos pouring out wine from a kantharos;
he is flanked by both a dancing satyr or Pan on his right side and a leopard on his left. The satyr holds a bunch of grapes and a *lagobolon* in his hands (fig. 11c). There is a certain probability that the scenery alludes to a wine festival on the occasion of the autumnal vintage, which was characterized by excessive drinking and boisterous dancing performed by people who were disguised as satyrs and maenads.32 A coin of Pautalia showing an invitation to dance should be also mentioned in this context.33 The scenery goes back to a Hellenistic sculptural group, but as Hans-Christoph von Mosch has demonstrated in a very profound study, these coin images reflect experienceable reality of city life during the Roman Empire (fig. 12a-b; von Mosch 2007, 117).

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32 Obv. ΑΥ Κ Μ ΑΥ – ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟC, laureate bust of Caracalla r. — Rev. ΑΔΡΙΑΝΟΠΟΛΗΣ – ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ, standing in front, head turned l., holding *thysos* in his raised right hand, pouring out wine from a *kantharos*, at his feet a dancing *silens* or Pan, r. a leopard (Gorny & Mosch 215, 13.10.2013, # 950 = fig. 11c; cf. Jurukova 1987, 176, # 353 with pl. XXXIII; Varbanov II 2005, 288, # 3493 f.).

33 Obv. ΑΥ Κ Μ ΑΥ – ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟC, laureate draped bust of Caracalla (sole reign) r. — Obv. ΠΑΥΤΑΛΙΑC – ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ, male figure (likely a satyr) turned r. asks a female figure (likely...
The Iliad of Homer, translated with an '...

σεῦε κατ’ ἠγάθεον Νυσήϊον· '...

ὅς ποτε μαινομένοι Διωνύσοι τιθήνας ἦν, ὅς ῥα θεοῖσιν ἐπουρανίοσιν ἔριζεν· |

Δρύαντος υἱὸς κρατερὸς Λυκόοργος | δὴν...

Il.

.. ' Eustathios, Comm. in

There is one city in Thrace which even associates its founding with Dionysos’ arrival34. A pseudo-autonomous coin of Bizye shows Dionysos sitting in a pergola. He holds a vine twig with bunches of grapes in his right hand, perhaps a drinking vessel in his left one. The legend around the coin image tells us unambiguously that this piece of money is dedicated to Dionysos the founder (fig. 13). The coin gives special importance to the fact that Dionysos simultaneously with this constitutive act had endowed Bizye with grapevines. In this case the coming into existence of a city and the introduction of winegrowing melt together. No other mythic tale could be better suited to emphasise the close connection between Thracian cities and viticulture35.

Brought up in Thrace

Not alternatively, but additionally, the Thracian cities used still another kind of myth for linking their quality wines with Dionysos. The story goes that Dionysos donated excellent vines to this country after he was born under severely adverse conditions and brought by Hermes to a hiding place in Thrace in order to be nurtured and educated there by nymphs and sileni, as well as protected by armed men called Korybantes or Kuretes36. In the Greek and Roman World a considerable number of cities claimed that the wine god was brought up in their territories. Already the so-called Homeric Hymn to Dionysos and in Late Hellenistic times the historian Diodorus described this phenomenon and gave a few examples for cities which asserted that Dionysos was reared in their city territory: ἀψηφητότης τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ γενέσεως, καὶ τὴν Νῦσαν καὶ τἄλλα τὰ περὶ αὐτοῦ μυθολογούμενα παρ᾿ ἑαυτοῖς δεικνύουσι γεγενημένα, και πολλὰ τεκμήρια τούτων μέχρι τοῦ καθ᾿ ἡμᾶς βίου διαμένειν κατὰ...

They should not be primarily viewed as a reference to a well known statue type which could be admired in the city that minted such coins, but as an allusion to quasi-religious dancing activities performed during celebrations in honour of Dionysos.

The idea that Hermes took the baby Dionysos to Thrace, where he handed it over to the Nysean nymphs, is already a tradition known to Homer. Homer tells us that the Thracian king Lykorougos persecuted Dionysos’ foster mothers on Mount Nyseios37. Already the ancient scholars who annotated Homer’s writings, were convinced that this Mount Nys(s) was situated somewhere in Thrace38. Paul Perdrizet has identified this Nysa with the Pangaion mountains or at least located Thracian Nysa within this region (Perdrizet 1910, 50; Kazarov 1936, 489; Wiesner 1963, 105). However, it was just this lack of clarity about the exact localisation of the place where Dionysos was brought up that Thracian cities used to adopt this myth for their purposes.

Homer was a splendid starting point for them to localise Dionysos’ upbringing in Thrace. Being called ὁ ποῖητης, that means the poet, he...
was the ancient world’s most reliable witness. That is why we should not be surprised that several Hellenised Thracian cities made use of this mythic tale and transferred Dionysos’ childhood to mountains in their own territory. In this way they transformed a widely spread tradition into local lore.

Numerous cities minted coins that show Dionysos as a child in different situations and various pictorial representations. All of them mirror the claims of these cities that they were the place where the motherless Dionysos was reared.

In Thrace we come across at least four ways to transpose the epiphany of the newborn Dionysos into pictures. Philippopolis, which was particularly interested to stylize itself as such a place, minted a
The citizens of Philippopolis were not satisfied with showing Hermes on the way to Philippopolis. They minted another coin with the portrait of Septimius Severus’ wife Iulia Domna on its obverse. This coin shows the continuation of the before mentioned story on its reverse. There we can see the baby Dionysos sitting on the left arm of a woman, who holds a thysros with her raised right hand. To the right of her, beneath the child, there is an animal that, like the woman, was misinterpreted by the numismatists. Scholars who know the myth of Dionysos and its pictorial representations quite well, will have no problem to identify the scenery correctly. There are similar images on coins minted by cities in Asia Minor. The woman is the wet nurse of Dionysos, who has different names at different places (fig. 16). The animal at her feet is a goat which, like goat Amaltheia in the case of Zeus, provided the divine child with milk. The myth tells us that not only a foster mother, whatever her name be, looked after the child, but also sileni and satyrs.
A third type for the announcement of Dionysos’ birth is the depiction of the wine god as a child sitting in a liknon; coins of Serdica and Pautalia show such a scenery (fig. 18a-c)43. In the Greek and Roman civilisation the liknon was not exclusively used for separating the grain from the chaff, but also as a kind of cradle, especially beyond the threshold season. So it had become a symbol for the fertility of men and nature44. The ancient forms and the handling of a liknon as a child sitting in liknon r., in his outstretched right hand bunch of grapes, in his left arm thyrsos (Pecunem (Gitbud & Naumann) 12, 2.2.2014, # 340 = fig. 18a; cf. Varbanov III 2007, 234, # 2067 f. who took the liknon for a prow). — Pautalia: Obv. AVT K M AVP – ANTΩΝΙΝΟC; barheaded draped bust of Marcus Aurelius Caesar r. – ΠΑVΤΑΛΙ-[; baby Dionysos sitting in liknon r., holding with left hand thyrsos, leaning with the right hand on the edge of the liknon (Classical Numismatic Group (e-auction) 146, 23.8.2006, # 120 = fig. 18b). — Obv. AVT K M AVP – ANTΩΝΙΝΟC; as before. — Rev. ΠΑVΤΑΛΙ-ΑΙΩΝΩΝ; newborn Dionysos sitting in liknon r., both arms outstretched, behind him thyrsos with large ribbon (Pecunem (Gitbud & Naumann) 6, 4.8.2013, # 266 = fig. 18c). By calling the liknon ’Wiege‘ Bernhart has not understood the symbolic meaning of this coin image. For the liknon cf. Harrison 1904; Nilsson 1953, 178 f.; Nilsson 1957, 21-45: III. The Liknon, IV. Dionysos Likkites; Horn 1972, 56-62; Die Perlhühner und das Liknon; Krauskopf 2005.45

The 45th Orphic Ἡμνός is dedicated to Ἀκυνίῃς Διόνυσος.

Cf. rice winnowing in India.46 Obv. AVT KM AVP – ANTΩΝΙΝΟC; laureate draped bust of Caracalla r. — Rev. MECAM-B-P-IANIN; two dancing Kuretes, holding in their right hands swords and with their left hands shields above their heads (Classical Numismatic Group (e-auction) 131, 18.1.2006, # 137 = fig. 19a; cf. Varbanov II12005, 147, # 4159).

Hier wird wohl erstmals auf den 'thrakischen' Dionysos angespielt, in einer Stadt mit ebenfalls reichem Weinbau.

Caracalla with Dionysos.

The Thracians were prone to associate Dionysos, so that in this time this god's cults got a political significance which they had not had at any time before.


Мушмов, Н. 1912. Античните монети на Балканския полуостров и монетите на българските царе. София.

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