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## ***CALLIOPE AVG* - EXCESSIVELY RARE REVERSE TYPE OF ROMAN EMPEROR PROBUS**

*Very rare type of roman antoniniani with CALLIOPE AVG reverse minted in Siscia for emperor Probus is described. All known examples of this type are listed and analyzed.*

### **Introduction**

When rare types of coinage of roman emperor Probus from Siscia mint are discussed, the first type which came up to everyone’s mind is the famous SISCIA PROBI AVG reverse. Although this type is very much sought after amongst ancient coin collectors, it cannot be considered as extremely rare type, as there are well over one hundred specimens in fourteen varieties known.<sup>1</sup> Reverse types such as LAETITIA AVG, FORTVNA REDVX, MARTI PACIFERO, ORIENS AVG, PROV PROBI AVG NOSTRI, SECVRITAS PERPETVA and RESTIT ILLVRICI are much scarcer and each type is known in several dozen examples and in small number of variants. The true rarity is the CALLIOPE AVG reverse type produced for Probus in Siscia mint.

The rarity of the issue is illustrated by its absence from Banduri’s corpus on late roman and byzantine coinage *Numismata imperatorum romanorum*<sup>2</sup> in 1718 and it was firstly described by Tanini in his *supplementum* to Banduri’s *Numismata* almost a century later in 1791 (Figure 1). Realizing its rarity, Tanini<sup>3</sup> gives the first illustration (drawing) of this coin type, at the time where coin illustrations in books were expensive and very scarce (pl. 1). However, the existence of Tanini’s variant was not confirmed in modern times, from which it may be concluded that novel reverse was erroneously mixed up with incorrect obverse (radiate, cuirassed bust right). It could be that coin actually has radiate bust left in imperial mantle (holding scepter surmounted by eagle) and it is one of today known pieces, probably in the Gneccchi collection. Description of Tanini’s specimen was subsequently quoted firstly by an anonymous author in an

<sup>1</sup> Davor Margetić, Dalibor Margetić, Antoninijani cara Proba s reversnim natpisom SISCIA PROBI AVG, Numizmatičke vijesti, 2008., 61., 9.-38.

<sup>2</sup> Anselmo Banduri, Numismata imperatorum romanorum a Trajano Decio ad Palaeologos Augustos accessit. Bibliotheca nummaria, Tomus primus, Lutetia Parisiorum, 1718.

<sup>3</sup> Girolamo Tanini, Numismatum imperatorum romanorum a Traiano Decio ad Constantinum Draconem: ab Anselmo Bandurio editorum supplementum, A. Fulgonium, Rome, 1791.

Italian art periodicals in 1792<sup>4</sup> (Figure 2a), then by Mionnet<sup>5</sup> (p. 123, 12 Fr), Eckhel<sup>6</sup> (Figure 2b) and Cohen<sup>7</sup> (No. 83 p. 263, 100 Fr). Eckhel describes *CALLIOPE* type as *numus omnino singularis* (coin completely unique) and Cohen estimated its value to 100 francs, which was huge price for an antoninianus of emperor Probus, at the time when one franc or less was the value of the common types. Not surprisingly, Akerman<sup>8</sup> includes this coin type in his book on rare roman coins. This coin type is omitted by Webb from the classical corpus of roman imperial coins (RIC)<sup>9</sup>, likely due to inability of the author to verify the existence and attribute it to a specific mint in 1933. First two verified examples in modern times are provided by Alföldi in 1939 in his corpus of antoniniani of Probus of Siscia mint, *Probus sisciai antoninianusai*.<sup>10</sup> In this work, the reverse type is again illustrated only with a drawing (Figure 2b). Alföldi had very detailed knowledge on Siscian coinage, and hence could attribute this type to Siscia mint on the basis of style with certainty. Although *Der Aufbau*<sup>11</sup>, an immensely important work on the classification and dating of Probus coinage was published ten years later, Pink does not list this type. Pink was aware of Cohen and the specimen in Weifert collection, but had an opinion that this is a forgery (*Der Aufbau*, pg. 49, note 18).<sup>12</sup>

## P R O B U S .

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**\* CALLIOPE AVG . (1) Mulier stolata sinistrorsum conversa stans , sinistro pede basi imposito , laevo genu lyram sustinens , quam utraque manu leniter pulsat ; absque numeris & litteris in exergo . HT.**

**IMP C M AVR PROBUS AVG . Probus capite radiato , dextrorsum , d. spiculum humero dextro tenet , pectore loricate .**

**CONSERVAT AVG . Sol nudus cum pallio e brachio sinistro pendente , dex-**

<sup>4</sup> *Anonymous author*, Antiquaria, Antologia Romana, Volume 18, Num. X, 1791, Settembre, Zempel, Rome, 1792, pg. 75.

<sup>5</sup> *Théodore Edme Mionnet*, De la rareté et du prix des médailles romaines, ou Recueil, Volume 2, Second Edition, Paris 1827, pg. 123.

<sup>6</sup> *Joseph Eckhel*, Doctrina numorum veterum, Pars II. De Moneta Romanorum, Volumen VII. continens Numos imperatorios ab Antonino Pio usque ad imperium Diocletiani, Editio secunda, Vindobonae, sumptibus Friderici Volke, 1828.

<sup>7</sup> *Henry Cohen*, Description Historique des monnaies frappées sous l'Empire Romain, Tome sixième, Paris, 1886.

<sup>8</sup> *John Yonge Akerman*, A Descriptive Catalogue of Rare and Unedited Roman Coins: From the Earliest Period of Roman Coinage, to the Extinction of the Empire Under Constantine, Volume 2, Wilson, London, 1834, page 111.

<sup>9</sup> *Percy, H. Webb*, The Roman imperial coinage Volume 5. Part II, Probus-Amandus 276-286, Spink & Son, London, 1933.

<sup>10</sup> *Andreas Alföldi*, Siscia V, Probus sisciai antoninianusai, Numizmatikai Közlöny, XXXVI-XXXVII, 1937-1938, Budapest, 1939, pp. 3-88.

<sup>11</sup> *Karl Pink*, Der Aufbau der römischen Münzprägung in der Kaiserzeit VI/1 Probus, Num. Zeitschr. 1949, 73, 13-74.

<sup>12</sup> *Der Aufbau*, pg. 49, note 18: In Coh 83 there is a Calliope, which was actually in the Weifert collection, but I think just as wrong. (Bei Coh 83 gibt es eine Calliope, die tatsächlich in der Sammlung Weifert war, die ich aber für ebenso falsch halte.)

Figure 1. Tanini's description of *CALLIOPE AVG* type

„ Alla pag. 171. descrivesi il rovescio di una medaglia coniatà in onore dell'Imperatore Probo, in cui rappresentasi una musa che suona la lira, coll'epigrafe *CALLIOPE AVG.* interpretata dall'Autore dell'opera non *CALLIOPE AVGVSTA*, ma *CALLIOPE AVGVSTI*, in quella guisa che comunemente s'interpretano le iscrizioni *FORTVNA AVG. ORIENS AVG. vel AVGG. ec. ec.* In questa nostra forse si potrebbe sottintendere *CALLIOPE AVGVSTI laudes canit*; e di tale aggiunta si dà qualche ragione nella nota in detta pagina inserita „ .

**CALLIOPE. AVG.** *Calliope stans tyra cunctumellae imposita canit, s. pede hujus basi imposito. AE. III. (Tanini.)*

Numus omnino singularis. Musarum chorum habemus in numis gentis Pomponiae, sed harum nulla nomen suum eloquitur. Lectus fuerit hic Calliope's typus, ut laudes illa Probi virtuti debitas celebraret.



Figure 2. Left: *Antologia Romana* (1792, pg. 75), Middle: *Eckhel* (1828, pg. 504) description of *CALLIOPE AVG* type, Right: *Alföldy's drawing* (1939, Plate VI, pg. 65, type 14)

The rarity of *CALLIOPE* antoniniani is evidenced by its absence from the major world numismatic collections of roman coins in museums in Vienna, London, Paris, Berlin and Zagreb, and famous collections such as Trau<sup>13</sup>, Gysen<sup>14</sup> and Missong.<sup>15</sup> The later collector has amassed a huge specialist collection of Probus' antoniniani comprising of 14.000 coins, and has claimed to have inspected over 40.000 coins during his collecting activity (Pink, *der Aufbau*). Collection is now a part of the holdings of the coin cabinet in Kunsthistorische Museum in Vienna. In addition, important hoards containing large number of coins of Probus antoniniani from Siscia such as Venera<sup>16,17</sup>, Nieder-Rentgen<sup>18</sup>, Gloucester<sup>19</sup>, Zbelava<sup>20</sup> and Šimanovci<sup>21</sup> do not contain any of the

<sup>13</sup> *Sammlung Franz Trau: Münzen der römischen Kaiser*, Gilhofer & Ranschburg/A. Hess, Wien, 22/V/1935.

<sup>14</sup> *Paul-Francis Jacquier*, Numismatique Antique, Kehl am Rhein, Bedeutende Sammlung von Antoninianen u.a. (253-294) Sammlung Philippe Gysen, Auction 45, 14/IX/2018 Part I, and Auction 46, 20/IX/2019 Part II

<sup>15</sup> *Günther Dembski*, Collectionneurs célèbres. Der Missong-Kreis im Wien des zu Ende gehenden 19. Jahrhunderts: sechs engagierte Sammler von römischen Kaisermünzen des 3. Jahrhunderts. *Compte rendu* 2007, 54, pp. 38-41.

<sup>16</sup> *Luigi Adriano Milani*, Il ripostiglio della Venèra. Monete romane della seconda meta del terzo secolo, Salviucci, Roma, 1880.

<sup>17</sup> *Jean-Baptiste Giard, Denise Modonesi, Jean Guillemain*, Ripostiglio della Venèra: nuovo catalogo illustrato, Volume III, 1, La monetazione di Probo a Roma (276-282 d. C.), Quasar, Roma, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> *H. v. Hammerstein, K. Wichmann, C. Wolfram*, Der Münzfund von Nieder-Rentgen, *Jahrb. f. Ges. f. Lothring. Geschichte u. Altertumskunde* 8, 1896, p. 1-46.

<sup>19</sup> *Richard Abdy, Edward Besly, Fernando López-Sánchez*, The Gloucester hoard and other coin hoards of the Britannic Empire, *CHRB XIII, Moneta*, Wetterren, 2010.

<sup>20</sup> *Spomenka Težak*, Skupni nalaz antoninijana iz Zbelave, *VAMZ* 2010, XLIII, 531-544.

<sup>21</sup> *Josip Brunšmid*, Nekoliko našašća novaca na skupu u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji XXXVII. Nahodjaj rimskih bakrenih novaca iz druge polovine trećeg stoljeća iz Šimanovaca (kotar Zemun), *VHAD* 1913/14, NS

CALLIOPE specimens. We need to wait to ascertain whether CALLIOPE type is present within 1643 antoniniani of Probus from Siscia<sup>22</sup> in yet unpublished Petrijanec hoard<sup>23, 24</sup>.

Alföldi has listed two specimens of CALLIOPE AVG type: in collections of famous numismatists Francesco Gnechi<sup>25</sup> and Georg Weifert<sup>26</sup>. Today the first specimen is kept in Museo Nazionale in Rome and the second is in the collection of the University of Belgrade. As far as we are aware, both coins were never illustrated in the numismatic literature and we were unable to obtain their photos. The first documented photo of CALLIOPE AVG type was given in the inventory of the Kulcs hoard found in Hungary in 1990 (although photo is of low quality). In spite of being a relatively small hoard, (667 coins of Probus, 237 from Siscia) Kulcs hoard<sup>27</sup> contains one specimen (pl. 7). The next illustration appeared in Harlan J. Berk auction catalogue in 1996 accompanying the sale of new coin specimen (pl. 4). In this auction, the obverse is described in detail and supplemented with short but very informative article by Clay<sup>28</sup>, which was the basis of the similar text given in Lanz sale catalogue in 2000. Furthermore, Oliva<sup>29</sup> dedicated one internet article on the type and illustrated the text with several photos of additional unpublished specimens. Both texts were immensely useful for us during the preparation of this article. Finally, Lerquet<sup>30</sup> has selected CALLIOPE AVG type in her article on Probus coinage and gave some general information.

The type with bust wearing imperial mantle (radiate bust left in imperial mantle, holding scepter surmounted by eagle) is the first type known to Alföldi (classified as type 14/1). It could be inserted in new edition of Roman Imperial Coinage, volume 5/II before RIC number 641. The list of known specimens (from Gnechi and Weifert collections) was enriched with four coins that have emerged in recent times (pl. 3-6). The second type known to Alföldi (type 14/2), with radiate, cuirassed bust right is specimen reported by Tanini's, but not confirmed by Alföldi. In addition, new variant present

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13, 269-294.

<sup>22</sup> *Sylviane Estiot*, L'Empereur et l'usurpateur: un 4e atelier oriental sous Probus, in Band Roger, Dario Calomino (eds.), Studies in ancient coinage in honour of Andrew Burnett, Spink, London, 2015, 259-276.

<sup>23</sup> *Marija Šiša-Vivek, Tino Leleković, Hrvoje Kalafatić*, Ostava rimskog novca i srebrnog posuda iz Petrijanca, Opusc. Archaeologica 2005, 29, 231-243.

<sup>24</sup> *Davor Margetić*, Značaj ostave iz Petrijanca za proučavanje novca cara Proba i njegova optjecaja u Panoniji, Obol 2008, 60, 5-7.

<sup>25</sup> *Giovanni Gorini, Francesco Gnechi* (1847-1919), *Compte rendu* 2002, 49, pp. 65-67.

<sup>26</sup> *Vladislav Popović*, Tri numizmatička legata Univerziteta u Beogradu: Zbirka Vajfert, Zbirka Ljubomira Kovačevića, Zbirka Filipa Ferarija: odabrani primerci, Centar za arheološka istraživanja, Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, Beograd, 1991; Bogdan M. Koprivica, Đorđe Vajfert, Dinar 2012, 32, 47-48.

<sup>27</sup> *Fitz Jenő, Bakos Miklós* et al. Die Fundmünzen der römischen Zeit in Ungarn, Bd. 1. Komitat Fejér, zusammengestellt von Vera Lányi, Bonn, Habelt, Budapest, Kultura International, 1990, 247-265.

<sup>28</sup> *Curtis Clay*, The muse Calliope on an extraordinary antoninianus of Probus. Harlan J. Berk auction 91 (25. June 1996), lot 478.

<sup>29</sup> *Christophe Oliva*, Un faux type CALLIOPE AVG de Siscia regravé sur un Aurélianus SALVS PVBLIC de Ticinum. August 15, 2010. <http://lesmonnaiesdeprobus.blogspot.com/2010/08/un-faux-type-calliope-avg-de-siscia.html>

<sup>30</sup> *Isabelle Lerquet*, Le monnayage de Probus, empereur romain au destin tragique, Numibec 2016, 4(2), Octobre 2016, 13-30.

in Kulcs hoard (Alföldi type 14/1var) is identified (with radiate, helmeted, cuirassed bust left, holding spear and shield) (pl. 7-8). This count brings a total of *CALLIOPE* specimens to eight and six of them are illustrated in this paper.

Description of types:

1) *Alföldi type 14/1 (pl. 3-6)*

*Obverse:* IMP PROBVS P F AVG

Radiate bust left, wearing consular robes, holding eagle-tipped scepter in right hand

*Reverse:* CALLIOPE AVG -/-/--

Calliope standing right, playing lyre set on her left knee, left foot propped on rock(?).

2) *Alföldi type 14/2 (pl. 1) - not confirmed*

*Obverse:* IMP PROBVS P F AVG

Radiate, cuirassed bust right

*Reverse:* same as Alföldi type 14/1

3) *Alföldi type 14/1var (pl. 7-8)*

*Obverse:* IMP PROBVS P F AVG

Radiate helmeted, cuirassed bust left, holding spear and shield

*Reverse:* same as Alföldi type 14/1

The presence of Calliope on roman coinage is excessively rare and this is the second coin type with her depiction. Calliope, a muse of epic poetry was depicted for the first time on the republican silver denarius in 66 BC, by the moneyer Quintus Pomponius Musa (Crawf.<sup>31</sup> 410/2b, Syd.<sup>32</sup> 812, for illustration see Gemini auction II (2006) lot 252 (pl. 2)). This issue was a part of the whole series of nine muses (goddesses of literature, science, and the arts) on his denarii struck in 66 BC, where moneyer has cleverly played with his cognomen *MVSA* (*lat.* *mvsa* = the muse) for advertising: (Crawf. 410): Urania (Crawf. 410/8, Syd. 823, Zagreb<sup>33</sup> 538:ZAG B2037), Melpomene (Crawf. 410/4, Syd. 816, Zagreb 538:ZAG B808), Euterpe (Crawf. 410/5, Syd. 815, Zagreb 538:ZAG B809), Terpsichore (Crawf. 410/7a, Syd. 819a, Künker auction 124 (2007) lot 8365), Thalia (Crawf. 410/9b, Syd. 821, Künker auction 124 (2007) lot 8367), Polyhymnia (Crawf. 410/10a, Syd. 817, Busso Peus auction 388 (2006) lot 929), Clio (Crawf. 410/3, Syd. 813, Roma Numismatics auction XVIII (2019) Lot 892) and Erato (Crawf. 410/6, Syd. 814, CNG Triton XIII (2010) Lot 281). Apart for this appearance on the roman coins, the only reference of Calliope is the depiction of her son Orpheus on roman provincial coinage of Gordian III from Hadrianopolis in Thrace (Jurokova 449 (V227/R436), Varbanov 2198, CNG MBS 70 (2005), Lot 539).

The reason for the appearance of Calliope on the coinage of Probus is intriguing and several theories were proposed. The time when barbaric invasions in 278 AD have

<sup>31</sup> Michael H. Crawford, *Roman Republican coinage*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1974.

<sup>32</sup> Edward A. Sydenham, *The Coinage of the Roman Republic*, Spink, London, 1952.

<sup>33</sup> Tomislav Bilić, *Coins of the Roman Republic in the Archaeological museum in Zagreb / Zbirka rimskog republikanskog novca Arheološkog muzeja u Zagrebu. Catalogues and monographs of the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb 13*, 2015.

been suppressed by military campaigns in Gaul against the Alamanni and Longiones and in Rhetia against Goths, Franks and Burgundians<sup>34</sup> looks quite unsuitable for the flourishing of culture, literature and poetry. The artistic theme is not going along with the military emperor Probus as noted by Eckhel. He viewed that the type is a general accolade to Probus' greatness. In his opinion, placing Calliope on the coins, could be in order that she is praising the Probus' virtue. Other authors suggested that Calliope associates to the emperor's own literary inclinations which, are historically questionable and unproven. The possibility that Probus authored poetry and possibly performed and played on the lyre, in manner similar to Nero, in the first century. Emperor Nero had poetry recitals and literary ambitions, and this is well documented on his coinage, such as the Apollo, the divine lyre-player adorned his coins<sup>35</sup> (for instance BM 1921,0612.5, RIC 79, p. 158, Rome 62 AD, Nero, in the robes of Apollo Citharoedus, playing lyre). It is clear that Probus' literary and theatrical pretensions would not have made emperor favored with the troops and the Roman upper classes. For that reason, it would not be surprising that the *CALLIOPE AVG* type did not receive consent of the emperor or mint officials and was shortly discarded. Anyhow, the type is obviously unusual since it lacks the exergual value and officina marks that are regularly engraved on almost all of Siscian antoniniani of this emperor. Instead of being connected to Probus' literary ambitions, it is more likely that another poet of the time has made a poem which celebrates Probus' military accomplishments.

The more probable reason for *CALLIOPE* issue could be suggested by the indicative bust type on obverse and the attribution to the mint of Siscia.<sup>36</sup> The consular bust suggests that this issue was struck in association with the assumption to the office of consul (COS II), whereas the presence of the eagle-tipped scepter (aquila) and the radiate crown (which now takes the place of the more traditional wreath) may indicate a triumph connected to the event. Triumphs were usually commemorated on coins such as on emperor Claudius aureus RIC I, 33). The attribution of coin to Siscia is also significant, as being the nearest imperial mint to Probus' home town of Sirmium. Siscia honors Probus as one of their own with the inscription "NOSTRI" and likely to visit Siscia on his march to the east. The assumption of Probus to the second consulship reinforced by military successes would certainly be marked by celebrations and the ceremonies connected to this event very likely included an epic panegyric (speech of praise, over which the Muse Calliope would oversee). The Calliope's image fits well into this setting by singing about the military achievements of Probus and giving them perpetuity. The special coins to people present at the event would be distributed, thus giving the reason for extreme rarity of this issue and explains the lack of mintmark.

The fifth emission of Siscia had extensively commemorated the victory celebrations. Besides the base metal antoniniani, a large array of gold medallions was produced. These are marked by special bust types and unusual depictions on the reverse, as well as bearing epithets such as *RESTITVTOR ORBIS* and *INVICTVS* and even by comparing

<sup>34</sup> *Ilkka Syvännö*, Military History of Late Rome, 284-361, Pen & Sword Books, Barnsley, 2015.

<sup>35</sup> *Edward Champlin*, Nero, Apollo, and the poets, Phoenix, Vol. 57, No. 3/4 Autumn - Winter, 2003, pp. 276-283.

<sup>36</sup> Triton auction IX (2006/1/19), Lot 1582, comment

his victories with deeds of Hercules (HERCVLI ARCADIO, HERCVLI INMORTALI, HERCVLI ERYMANTHIO).<sup>37</sup>

Unmarked coins sometimes appear in Siscia during the rule of Probus and are classified in different emissions. Unmarked are 4 coin types which are classified in the 2nd emission (Alf 9/6, 56/1var, 73/30, 74/2), 3rd emission (Alf 32/var2), while three types are not classified with the certainty, either in 4th or 7th emission (Alf 96/171v, 96/232v, 96/252).

The attribution to Siscia mint is not questionable, as specimens often bear characteristic Siscian letter G.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, Probus' radiate bust left, wearing consular robes, holding eagle-tipped scepter was executed in unmistakable siscian style, as well as helmeted bust with dotted shield. The short titulature IMP PROBVS P F AVG is not common in the 5th emission, whereas IMP C PROBVS P F AVG and IMP C M AVR PROBVS P F AVG are more frequent. The analysis of our database of photos has showed that out of 1456 specimens which belong to the 5th emission only 66 coins bear IMP PROBVS P F AVG titulature (4.4%). Here we could find 16 examples (1.1%) with Adlerzepter bust type and only 5 coins (0.34%) with helmeted, cuirassed bust holding spear and shield type. Within IMP PROBVS P F AVG coins, bust type Adlerzepter dominates (24.2%), whereas helmeted is present in much smaller proportion (7.6%). This bust type proportion is reflected in *CALLIOPE* specimens described in this article.

Datation of the issue into 278 AD seems to be the most plausible on the basis of the historical information given above and various authors agree on: Oliva<sup>39</sup>, Kryszczuk<sup>40</sup>, and Clay, whereas Pink assumes it as a false and according to him, RIC and Rosenbaum<sup>41</sup> do not list this coin type.

Very small size of the issue is indicated by the number of recorded dies which is rather small (Figure 3). Only 3 obverse dies were found for Alf 14/1: coins **3** and **4** are die-linked, with the most indicative damaged or not well struck letter M in IMP), whereas coin **5** has smaller bust and specimen **6** does not have waving line on the top of the collar of the imperial robe under the neck (and lettering slightly differs). Both Alf 14/1var specimens share the same obverse die. All six genuine specimens in this article were struck by the same die with indicative distance between letters C and A in *CALLIOPE*. The comparison with specimens known to authors from the 5th emission did not yield die-match, which would support the attribution to this emission. For instance, identical very thick border on the shield of Alf 14/1var, as well as the consular obverse (Bastien bust code: H2) of Alf 14/1 were not identified in our photo-files.

<sup>37</sup> Lanz auction 100 (2000/XI/20), Lot 419, comment

<sup>38</sup> *Alföldi, Andreas*, Zur Münzkunde der späteren römischen Kaiserzeit, Blätter für Münzfreunde 1923, 58, 351-355, tabl. 255-257.

<sup>39</sup> *Christophe Oliva*, Probus coins (276-282 apr. J.-C.) Moteur de recherche et d'identification des aureliani de Probus. <https://probuscoins.fr/>

<sup>40</sup> Grzegorz Kryszczuk <https://probvs.net/probvs/>

<sup>41</sup> *Rosenbaum, Malte*, Die Münzprägung des Kaisers Probus (276-282) Struktur und Organisation, Diplomarbeit, Universität Wien, Wien 2013.



Figure 3. Die-links

### Forgeries

A consequence of the rarity and intrinsic market value of *CALLIOPE* antoininiani are the attempts of fraudulent people to forge them and gain financial profit. The forgeries of this type range from crude to very sophisticated ones which are difficult to distinguish from original pieces. We are aware of the existence of four forgeries (pl. 9-12) and all of them were produced by the most easier method of regraving the reverses of original antoininiani of Probus. For this purpose, the best start are the reverses with female standing figure right. The poor knowledge of the forgers caused by their inability to consult original specimens is evident by the wrong obverse legends: *IMP C PROBVS P F AVG*, *IMP C M AVR PROBVS AVG*, wrong obverse bust types (radiate, cuirassed bust right) and thirdly by style which does not resemble Siscia mint. The analysis of the frequency of the obverse types present in the 5th emission presented earlier in the paper suggests that forgers could not have an easy access to original siscian coins with identical obverse and titulature. Therefore, coins produced in other mints were used for alteration instead.

Four tooled coins (pl. 9-12) are apparently regraved genuine coins from other mints (Lugdunum and Ticinum). The specimen in (pl. 9) is regraved *SALVS PVBLIC* from Ticinum, RIC 571 (such as Naumann 74 (2019), No. 454) or *SALVS AVG* from Ticinum, RIC 499 (for instance Savoca 6 blue (2018), No. 1334) or RIC 498 (pl. 14). This coin was discussed at ancient coin forum<sup>42</sup> and it was indicated there that the letter V (now altered to the letter I) does still show part of itself, or the letter S (changed to the O) has the top of the letter S clearly visible. Further, the coin weight is 2.9 g, which is not very unusual, but highly suspicious when considering that some of metal could have been removed by tooling. Forgery which was put on sale at auction NAC 106 (2018), No. 1032 (pl. 10) could be regraved antoininianus from Ticinum. The last forgery is of the most crude execution and appearance which is easy to recognize (pl. 12). It is illustrated at Ancient coin forvm in 2011<sup>43</sup> and is a retooled antoininian from Lugdunum

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.forumancientcoins.com/board/index.php?topic=65034.0>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.forumancientcoins.com/board/index.php?topic=74335.0>



mint with TEMPOR FELICI reverse (Felicitas standing right, holding caduceus and cornucopiae), RIC 104 (such as Gloucester hoard No. 917, pl. 13). Forgery has some strange and suspicious areas on the reverse which might be remains of erased caduceus and cornucopia.

### Key to plates

- 1 Tanini 1791, p 171, RIC-, Alf 14/2
- 2 Gemini auction II (2006/I/11), No. 252, Q. Pomponius Musa denarius, 3.82 g, Craw. 410/2b, Syd. 812, Rome, 66 BC
- 3 Lanz auction 100 (2000/XI/20), No. 419, 4.67 g, 22 mm, coll. L. Benz RIC-, Alf 14/1
- 4 CNG auction Triton IX (2006/I/9), No. 1582, 4.74 g, 11h = H. J. Berk auction 91 (1996/VI/25), No. 478. RIC-, Alf 14/1
- 5 Lanz auction 159 (2014), No. 573, 3.65 g = forvm gallery 131804 coll. Barnaba Skibniewski, 3.63 g, 21-22 mm, 12h, RIC- Alf 14/1
- 6 Oliva 64c = forvm (2006/VI/20) 29338 RIC- Alf 14/1, went on eBay in 2006 for about 1700 US\$ = <https://www.forumancientcoins.com/board/index.php?topic=29338.0> = <https://www.forumancientcoins.com/board/index.php?topic=65034.0>
- 7 Kules hoard (1990), No. 556, weight not given, RIC- Alf 14/1var
- 8 Oliva 64b = forvm (2008/XII/23) 50132 RIC- Alf 14/1var coll. Rupert eBay = <https://www.forumancientcoins.com/board/index.php?topic=50132.0>
- 9 Oliva 64 = forvm (2011/VIII/11) 65034, 2.9 g, regraved <https://www.forumancientcoins.com/board/index.php?topic=65034.0>
- 10 NAC auction 106 (2018/V/9-10), No. 1032, 3.79 g, regraved
- 11 Savoca auction 38 (2019/XI/2), No. 376, 3.50 g, 22 mm = eBay (2020/II/15), No. 233493169483 Lanz, 3.46 g, 22 mm, regraved
- 12 forvm (2011/IX/12) 74335, regraved
- 13 Gloucester hoard (2010), No. 917, 3.74 g, Lugdunum, RIC 104
- 14 Roma auction 44 (2018), No. 757, 3.48 g Ticinum, RIC 498



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