

COUNTERMARKED COINS OF THE SCYTHIAN KINGS IN DOBROUDJA

Metodi MANOV

Problems on the emergence, development and disappearance from the political scene of one enigmatic kingdom – the Scythian kingdom in Dobroudja – are more than known and clarified facts. It turns out that one of the least studied questions about this Hellenistic kingdom are the countermarks¹ upon coins of five of all six Scythian kings – Tanousas (Tanousakes), Kanitas, Akrosas (Akrosakes), Charaspes, Ailis and Sariakes.

In the literature on the problem of countermarking coins during the Hellenistic period is believed that usually this process was simple – placing small additional stamps through specially engraved images on little punches just as on coin dies. This was the cheaper way coins that were perceived as foreign in terms of a ruler or a city to be adopted in their own markets as local legal means with adequate purchasing power (Howgego 1985, 1). The process of countermarking was less expensive and simpler to implement than another – also sometimes used method – overstriking foreign coins, and the countermarks must be with a clear image-symbol of a ruler or a city (Le Rider 1975, 27; 46). As foreign were considered naturally and even coins of a certain neighbouring city, as according to some authors it was an autonomous political entity (Герасимов 1946, 51-52).

In presenting countermarked coins of the above mentioned Scythian kings from Dobroudja will be answered the most important questions:

1. What is the nature of the countermarking stamps – were they royal or placed by the authorities of several cities along the western Black Sea coast?

2. Which were the causes for countermarking the royal coins of the Scythian kings in Dobrudja?

¹ The presented article was read as a paper at the International Numismatic Congress in Brashov, Romania in 2012. Here the text is presented with some additions.

3. Which were the well identified or possible countermarking centers of these royal coins?

It is supposed the first question has been answered long ago in the older literature by other numismatists who have accepted that in fact the countermarks placed on coins of the Scythian kings in Dobroudja during the Hellenistic epoch were only city countermarks (Pick 1898; Canarache 1950; Герасимов 1946). After the presentation of all types of countermarking stamps on the coins of these kings, I will try to point out grounded reasons for the countermarking of the Scythian kings' coins and to state sure or possible centers of these processes.

Before we look at countermarks on coins of various Scythian kings, we must point out noted and definitely proven fact that virtually of all six of the Scythian kings we have countermarked coins of five of them. So far on the coins of one of them – Charaspes, is not witnessed any countermark – not even on a single specimen either of museum or private collections around the world is registered any countermarked coin of this Scythian king. It will be paid a little more attention to this fact here later.

Let us now proceed to the consideration of available countermarked coins with different types of countermarks of every one of the Scythian rulers in the Hellenistic kingdom in Dobroudja. The row of the kings will follow their supposed relative chronology of ruling.

I. Countermarked coins of Tanousakes.

From the ruler Tanousas (or Tanousakes) we have only one type of countermark "Head of Hermes with petasos." This type of countermark was placed on both types and denominations of bronze coins of Tanousakes, and the second type is of considerably smaller denomination. Both denomination coins of Tanousakes, upon which is used the countermark "Hermes with petasos", are only with the initial letters of the mint magistrate BAK (**Plate VII. 1, 2**).

Recently for the period of ruling of Tanousas (Tanousakes) it was proposed a period between c. 218 and 210 BC (Draganov 2015, 128; 140). As we can judge by only 2 types and denominations bronze coins of Tanousakes it must be supposed that his ruling was very short – probably not more than one year.

II. Countermarked coins of Kanites.

In gathering and analyzing countermarked coins of this ruler, I was able to establish the following. On coins of Kanites are found five different groups or five different types of countermarks as follows:

- 1) There is a group of Kanites' coins, which are the most numerous and are of several types, but on all of them – always on their obverse – is present one and the same type of countermark "Head of Hermes

with petasos” – which is exactly the same as the above discussed on the coins of Tanousakes. Despite being placed on three different types of coins of Kanites – “Bearded male head with a hood (tiara?)/cornucopia” (**Plate VII. 3**), “Head of Zeus (Great God?)/cornucopia” (**Plate VII. 4**) and upon one type of middle denomination – “Head of Apollo/Tripod” (**Plate VII. 5**) (Talmaçhi, Andreescu 2008, 453, No. 6), it can be noted the certain established fact that all these types bear on the reverse the abbreviation of name of only one and the same coin magistrate – BAK. The available numismatic material presented with this type of countermark put on coins of Kanites shows that in fact the countermarking was made with several different engraved countermarking punches (dies).

2) In the literature was published only one coin of Kanites such as “Head of Heracles with lion skin, right/Bow in case and club,” but only with drawing, on the obverse bearing the countermark “Wheel with four spokes” (Sutzu 1916, Pl. 1, No 3; Canarache 1950, p. 243, No 21, Tab. V, 21). Another specimen of the same coin type of Kanites, which is with the same type of countermark on the obverse appeared recently in an auction² (**Plate VII. 6**).

3) On the coins of Kanites of largest denomination – those of the type “Head of Demeter/torch and wheat ear” with an abbreviation of the name of the coin magistrate ΠΟΛΥ, on the obverse is placed only one type of countermark that can be described as “Bearded head (Great God or Zeus)” (**Plate VII. 7, 8**).

It must be emphasized here, that to the descriptions of the various types of countermarks on the coins of the Scythian kings in Dobroudja are often given different identifications of the images on the countermarking stamps, which further impedes their proper study. It is therefore necessary to pay a bigger attention in identification, as of course if it is possible, of the specific images, which will lead to more accurate conclusions when analyzing the process of countermarking of these regal coinages. For example, for the image of the type of countermark “Bearded head”, unless specified description, in the literature we meet the description “Head of a bearded satyr, r.” (see Draganov 2015, 115, note 74). From the available numismatic material gathered I found out that this type of countermark is met presumably on coins of the type described of Kanites.

4) On other types of coins of Kanites we meet quite a different type of countermark, for which different sources also gave different descrip-

² Gorny & Mosch, Auktion 208, 16 October 2012, No. 1191.

tions of images that range from "Youth head" and "Head of Apollo" to "Male beardless head, right" and even "Male bearded head, right". In fact, recent image of this type of countermark was firmly determined as "Veiled head of Demeter, right" (Canarache 1950, 227, No. 1; Draganov 2010, 34, No. 16). This type of countermark is attested only on coins of Kanites such as "Head of Zeus with a diadem, right / Eagle on thunderbolt, right" (**Plate VII. 10**) and of the type "Head of bearded Heracles/Club" (**Plate VII. 10**), at least so far available numismatic material.

- 5) Recently I succeeded to see carefully few other specimens, posted in Internet, which are with a very interesting countermark – eagle standing left, in a round frame. They are put on the obverse of coins of small denomination of Kanites of the type "Veiled head of Demeter right/Corn ear" (**Plate VII. 11, 12**).

III. Countermarked coins of Akrosas (Akrosakes).

In reviewing and analyzing a relatively large number of coins of another Scythian ruler – Akrosas (or Akrosakes), from whom also are known countermarked coins, I found out the following. It was placed predominantly one type of countermark on his coins and only on larger denominations of two different types of coins – "Heads of Dioscuri jugate wearing laureate pilei, r./Two horse foreparts jugate, r." (**Plate VIII. 1**) and "Heads of Demeter and Persephone jugate, veiled and wearing corn wreaths, r./Two corn ears"³ (**Plate VIII. 2**). The type of countermark on the coins of Akrosakes can be described generally as "Head of a bearded god". From the analysis of the images on several countermarking stamps of this type I could find that the countermarks are of several different countermarking punches where there are slight differences in iconography. On most countermarking stamps deity is depicted with a thin diadem that can direct us to its identification as "The Great God with a diadem" or "Zeus with a diadem." But in a series of countermarks the bearded head seems to be without a diadem, and the head is quite large and with very big beard, that image rather reminds us of the image of a head of bearded Heracles? In fact at our disposal we have only one exception from this rule – on one specimen of coin of Akrosakes of the type "Heads of Demeter and Persephone/Two corn ears" – only on the obverse, are put 2 countermarks – "Head of a bearded god" and a second countermark – "Head of Hermes with petasos" (**Plate VIII. 3**).

³ The description of the images on the coins of the Scythian kings in Dobroudja is after the recent work of D. Draganov – cited as Draganov 2015.

IV. Here, for clarity and to illustrate the categorical fact that there is no any countermarked coin of Charaspes known, I present 2 coins of this king (**Plate VIII. 4, 5**). However – making the description of a specimen of coin of Charaspes of the only known type in that time and of the largest denomination – "Heads of Dioscuri jugate/Eagle on thunderbolt", V. Canarache described another such specimen of coin of Charaspes, but with a countermark on its obverse – "Head of a bearded god", which is held in the Archaeological Museum in Sofia, Bulgaria, citing T. Gerassimov (Canarache, 1950, 245, No. 25a). T. Gerassimov had just presented only a drawing of the obverse of that coin in his study on countermarked coins from the Hellenistic period, printed in 1946 (Герасимов, 1946, 57, No. 9, 58, fig. 28, 1). But in the collection of the Archaeological Museum in Sofia is held only one coin of Charaspes of that type, which is however without any countermark. In the same museum collection appears a coin of Akrosas (Akrosakes) of a large denomination, also with the heads of the Dioscuri on the obverse, where a countermark mentioned is placed on the obverse – down left – just like T. Gerassimov presented it in his drawing, describing it as a coin of Charaspes. Since both coins from the collection of the Archaeological Museum in Sofia – the only coin of Charaspes held there and that of Akrosas with the countermark in question were published on one and the same page in a publication of J. Youroukova (Юрукова 1992, 273, Fig. 126 and Fig. 127), well it appears that T. Gerassimov committed an error in describing the coin of Charaspes, probably simultaneously considering both coins of the two different Scythian kings – Charaspes and Akrosas, as he had mistaken due to the description of exactly the same type of obverse of the coins of the two rulers – "Heads of Dioscuri jugate". This fact proves the conclusion based on all known coins of Charaspes that there is still not registered any countermarked coin of this king.

V. Countermarked coins of Aelis.

On the coins of the Scythian king Aelis we have the following types of countermarks. From the collection of William Stancomb – a single specimen with a countermark on the reverse, which for the ambiguity and inability to be clearly identified is determined by the collector himself as "Bearded head (Great God?) r." (SNG XI 2000, No. 320), but quite possible it is a head of Heracles. Another coin of Aelis is known with a countermark, which is defined as "Head of Artemis"⁴. Also recently were published few other specimens of countermarked coins of Aelis (Talmatchi, Andreescu 2008, 471, Pl. II, 11, 12, 13).

⁴ Künker Münzenhandlung, Auction 62, 13th March 2001, Lot No. 40.

It should be noted that on the coins of Aelis for the first time we meet more than two types of countermarks placed on one and the same specimen. On his coins are placed as only one countermark as and two, and sometimes even three countermarks. Moreover – countermarks are placed both on the obverse and on the reverse of the coins of this king. Well identified types of countermarks on coins of Aelis are: "Head of Artemis" (**Plate VIII. 6**), "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet, right" (**Plate VIII. 7**), "Head of Hermes with petasos" – I style (**Plate VIII. 8**) and "Head of Hermes with petasos" of a II style, where petasos is curved at the back and the image is of a very nice style (**Plate VIII. 9**). From the same style is the image of Hermes with petasos from the countermark on a coin from the collection of the Archaeological Museum in Varna, which the Bulgarian scholar T. Gerassimov wrongly attributed to the Scythian ruler Tanousas, but this coin definitely belongs to Aelis⁵. Another very interesting countermark on the coins of Aelis is "Head of Heracles in lion's skin, right", put usually on the reverse (**Plate VIII. 10**). On some of the coins of Aelis is met only one countermark (**Plate VIII. 7, 9**), on some coins were put 2 countermarks (**Plate VIII. 8**) and sometimes on his coins were put even 3 countermarks – 2 on the obverse and one on the reverse (**Plate VIII. 10**).

VI. Countermarked coins of Sariakes.

On the coins of the Scythian king Sariakes, who also by the author of this paper was categorically defined as the last king of the Scythian kingdom in Dobroudja (Manov 2001, 63-68; Манов 2004, 37; Manov 2007, 155), are found mainly three different types of countermarks: "Thunderbolt," "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet, right" and "Head of Hermes with petasos" – of utmost fine style. Some coins of one of the two biggest denomination bronze coins of Sariakes of the type "Head of beardless Heracles in lion skin, r./Bow, quiver, corn ear and monogram ΠΥΡ" are countermarked only by one countermark – "Thunderbolt" (**Plate IX. 1**) or "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet, right" (**Plate IX. 2**), some coins are with 2 countermarks – "Thunderbolt" and "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet, right" (**Plate IX. 3**) and some coins are with all together 3 countermarks mentioned above (**Plate IX. 4**). Recently appeared and 2 different countermarks on smaller denomination of Sariakes' coins – on a coin of the type "Head of bearded Heracles wearing taenia, r./Bow in case" – an incused countermark "star" (**Plate IX. 5**), and on a coin of the type "Head of Demeter veiled wearing corn wreath, r./Two corn ears" – two incused countermarks – "six-rayed star" and "ivy leaf"⁶ (**Plate IX. 6**).

⁵ Together with my colleague I. Lazarenko from the Regional Museum of History in Varna we carefully examined this specimen and we definitely identified it as a coin of Aelis.

⁶ **Plate IX. 5:** Forum Ancient Coins, No. GB39287; **Plate IX. 6:** Collection Hourmouziadis, No. SHH 3741.

After all types of countermarks presented here, we must first answer to the first question – royal or city countermarks were those? It was already mentioned at the beginning that the majority of scholars engaged in this problem have concluded that such countermarks rather were set by city governments of several Greek cities along the western Black Sea coast – particularly of the cities of Histria, Tomis, Callatis, and probably of Dionysopolis. Some scholars of the older generations were even admitting that this countermarking of royal coins was carried out and in Odessos and they even supposed Odessos had also been one of the mints for production of coins of the Scythian kings (Герасимов 1946; Герасимов 1953; Юркува 1992, 160-164).

In principle as countermarking centers are identified the Greek cities on the west coast of the Black Sea, especially those which were located in the adjacent lands controlled by the Scythian kingdom in Dobroudja. But the numismatists of previous generations believed, that although probably at least three or four of these Greek cities – Histria, Tomis, Callatis as likely Dionysopolis, produced coins of the Scythian kings in their own city mints, however, they countermarked some part of these royal coins during the reign of each of Scythian kings, so that in this way both the royal and the city coins to circulate as legal tender in the markets in the same Black Sea Greek colonies (Герасимов 1946, 57 f. with ref.; Герасимов 1953, 55 f.). This statement, however, I think, is deprived of any logic. After all, in general the presumption is that when these coins were minted in Greek mints of these West Pontic cities in a similar pattern to their division into different denominations (Draganov 2010; Draganov 2015), a priori, they were intended to circulate in the markets in these same Greek cities as equivalent to city coins. Furthermore, it could be supposed these coins had been struck by the Greek colonies with the names and the royal title for the kings perhaps as a part of the annual tax (tribute) – by a special agreement, because of the political protection to these Greek cities, given by the settled in the area of today Dobroudja Scythian rulers. Until recently it was accepted that the above mentioned West Pontic Greek cities probably had been obliged to strike the coins of the Scythian kings (Юркува 1992, 160-163 with ref.). But recently it was supposed a new situation that all the coins of the Scythian kings from the kingdom in Dobroudja had been struck in a single mint, which was and the capital of this kingdom and this was the settlement of Aphrodisias in the vicinity of Dionysopolis (Draganov 2015, 141-146).

Perhaps the reasons for carrying out countermarking were quite different. In my opinion – and my basis for this assertion is presented here with the numismatic material analyzed, composed of countermarked coins of five of all the six Scythian rulers of today's Dobroudja – processes of countermarking were carried out by the Greek cities in strictly defined

moments, but by order of a new Scythian king. Such moments could only be sudden political changes caused by the death of some of the Scythian kings. For example – after the death of Kanites could start a countermarking of his coins as for the next king were already struck new coins with the name of the new king. The situation of course changed after the last Scythian king – Sariakes – when different West Pontic Greek cities carried out the countermarking by themselves.

Which are reliable or possible centers of carrying out processes of countermarking – how to identify them more precisely? Of course that's where comes to help us the comparison with types of the city coinages of these Western Black Sea Greek cities. This approach was applied – in my opinion relatively successfully – by numismatists and from previous generations – from B. Pick and K. Regling (Pick 1898; Pick, Regling 1910), as up to now. And really – in countermarking stamps we can meet images – mainly of deities and sometimes of individual symbols, well known from some types of coins minted exactly by the Greek cities on the West coast of the Black Sea. Another postulate is also observed – countermarking was a process that typically treated only foreign in respect of a Greek polis coins. Generally countermarked coins had circulated mainly in the relative proximity of the center of their countermarking (Герасимов 1946, 51 ff. with ref.; Le Rider 1975, 39).

Some types of countermarks on coins of the Scythian kings were properly identified by other authors in earlier publications as belonging to specific countermarking city centers. Such is the case with some of the types of countermarks on coins of Kanites. For example, for the type of countermark "Wheel with four spokes" has long ago been assumed that this was a countermark of the Greek city of Histria (or Istros) (Sutzu 1916, 527 with ref.; Canarache 1950, 243 with ref.). For the countermarks presented here on the coins of Kanites and Tanousakes like "Hermes with petasos" has also long ago been assumed to belong to the mint of Tomis (Герасимов 1946, with 58 ref.). Old school numismatists mentioned and the most accurate possible parallel – one type of coins of Tomis with this very similar image from a very similar style that occurs in bronze coins with the name of the coin magistrate ΦΙΑΩ – probably ΦΙΑΩΝ. But the image of Hermes is well known and from a small denomination type coins of Kanites himself as also from the same type of coins of Sariakes (Draganov 2015, Pl 15, 214-223; Pl. 20, 304-311; Pl. 70, 1038-106). It is quite probable that the countermarking of some issues of bronze coins of Tanousakes and Kanitas with the countermark "Hermes with petasos" had been carried out by order of the king Akrosakes.

Also for the countermark "Veiled head of Demeter" have long ago been accepted to believe that it is a countermarking type of Callatis (Герасимов 1946, 60-61), although in the same chronological span of time – when the

Scythian kings ruled in Dobroudja – roughly between the end of the third century and the second quarter of the second century BC, coins of high denomination bearing on the obverse the representation of veiled Demeter occur as production of four different Greek colonies on the shores of today's Dobroudja – Histria, Tomis, Callatis and Dionysopolis. It is difficult to decide definitely which exactly from these cities has placed the countermark "Veiled head of Demeter" on some of the coins of Kanites, but most likely it could have been Callatis.

Furthermore from the countermarked numismatic material presented can be seen that in Histria it seems to have been committed very sporadic countermarking on coins of Kanites – only with the countermark "Four-spoke wheel" (**Plate VII. 6**), while in Tomis and Callatis processes of countermarking coins of Kanites were planned and well organized.

Because of the most common type of big denominational city coins of Tomis with the characteristic iconography of Zeus with a diadem on the obverse and of an eagle, right, in oak wreath – on the reverse, we should assume, that countermarking with "Bearded head" – from coins of Kanites of large denominations, had also been carried out by the mint of Tomis. Most likely it was the earliest stage of countermarking of Tomis on coins of Kanites conducted immediately after the death of this king. Here it is very important to define and the countermarking center of the countermark "Eagle facing left with closed wings" (**Plate IX. 7**). As for Histria another typical countermark is "Eagle left on dolphin, ΙΣΤΡΗ" (Lazarenko 2002, 1069, Fig. 1), we must think where from could be the image of the eagle from the countermark on some coins of Kanites here presented? According to me this image is characteristic for the reverse of the well spread big denomination bronze coins of Tomis – of the type "Diademed head of Zeus right/Eagle right, in oak wreath". The way of imaging the one wing of the eagle on these coins – the other wing seems like a bow, could be just the image we look for (see Talmatçı 2011, Pl. LXVIII, No. 9). But in the case with the countermark the eagle is turned to left, which is just in the opposite direction, than on the coins of Tomis. As a matter of fact it is known a rare issue of the same type of coins of Tomis, where on the reverse the eagle is turned just to left (Preda 1998, 81; Talmatçı 2011, 438, note 13). Another such specimen of Tomis with eagle turned to left is known from the William Stancomb collection (SNG XI 2000, No. 274) (**Plate IX. 8**). The style of the eagle on the countermark upon coins of Kanites is mostly near to the style of the eagle, imaged on the reverse of coins of Tomis with the magistrate names ΑΗ, ΑΠΟΛ, ΤΙΜΟ and ΜΗΝΟ. Probably the authorities of Tomis had been ordered probably by the king Akrosakes to countermark this type of coins of Kanites of small denomination, because in the time of countermarking they minted an autonomous type, which had been almost absolutely the same: "Head of Demeter veiled/wheat ear and two

stars (of the Dioscuri)” – one of the specimens with the initial letters of the magistrate MENE (see Petac 2005, 32, No. 235-236; Talmaçhi 2011, 752, Pl. LXX, No. 11-12).

Obviously a countermarking was carried out on both coins of Tanousas and of Kanites, caused by as it seems premature death of the first one, who managed to strike only two types of coins from two different nominal value using the same coin magistrate – in fact the first used during the lifetime of Kanites magistrate – starting with the initial letters of the name BAK. This may explain the identical type and style of the countermarks ”Hermes with petasos” on coins both of Tanousakes and of Kanites. The middle denomination coin of Kanites of the type ”Apollo/Tripod”, published recently (Talmaçhi, Andreescu 2008, 453, No. 6), which is countermarked with the same countermark actually falls in the same series of countermarked in Tomis coins of Tanousakes and of Kanites – also with the abbreviation of coin magistrate BAK. This countermarking process had been carried out most probably by order of the king Akrosakes.

From the presented sought out available material can be concluded that the countermarking of the big denomination types of coins of Akrosakes – the two types – ”Heads of Dioscuri jugate /Two horse foreparts jugate” and ”Heads of Demeter and Persephone jugate/Two corn ears”, was used only one type of countermark as though several countermarking punches have been made. Here the identification of the image can impede us to some degree. In general it can be seen as ”Head of the Great God with a diadem” or ”Head of Zeus with a diadem”, in which case we have to adopt that the process of countermarking of coins of Akrosakes was conducted only once in the mint of Tomis, but with several countermarking stamps. The most probable solution is that proposed by D. Draganov, that the image of this countermark is the same as the image of Zeus on the obverse of the biggest denomination bronze coins of Sariakes (Draganov 2015, 117) (**Plate IX. 9**) and thus the countermarking could be made in the time of ruling of Sariakes. But other solutions for this type of countermark are also possible in future.

The question of the precise identification of the West Pontic city, which carried out the countermarking of the big denomination coins of Akrosas, will stay open. Upon accumulation of a large number of countermarked coins perhaps this problem will be clarified. The coin of Akrosas with two countermarks on the obverse, shown here (**Plate VIII. 3**), can be explained as for the second countermark – ”Head of Hermes with petasos” – as this coin received its second countermark during some secondary countermarking process, when probably in Tomis had been countermarked coins of some of the autonomous issues of the neighbouring cities, because the style of this countermark reminds very much the style of the same type of countermarks, put on some

bronze coins of Tomis, Dionysopolis and of Callatis (see Talmatçı 2008; Draganov 2015, 117).

The types of countermarks upon coins of Aelis can obtain relatively accurate identification of the countermarking centers. Probably after the disappearance from the political scene of this ruler, the countermarking of his coins has started. The countermark "Head of Artemis" on the obverse of a coin of Aelis (**Plate VIII. 6**) could be connected with countermarking process in Callatis since this image is well known from the obverse of rare emissions of bronze coins of that Black Sea ancient city (Talmatçı 2011, Pl. LII, 1-2). On the obverse of two Specimens of coins of Aelis presented here we see placed two different types of countermarks. One type is "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet." Its identification as a symbol of one of the Greek colonies on the Black Sea is easy to recognize. This is basically a type for the obverse of a series of small denomination bronze coins of Callatis (**Plate IX. 10**). Therefore we can strongly assume that countermarking with this type of countermarks took place in Callatis (Pick 1898, 519 ff; Герасимов 1946, 61). Apparently after revalidation of coins of Aelis with this type of countermarks in Callatis after some time they came to the market in Tomis and the local authorities there have decided that in order to circulate these coins equally also in Tomis, they need to be revalidated and with a countermarking symbol of that Greek colony. So alongside with the countermark of Callatis this time has been set and the countermark "Head of Hermes with petasos" – by the so-called by me "first style" (**Plate VIII. 10**, obverse). After some time, it looks the same coin fell again in the marketplaces of Callatis, but since the countermark "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet" had been damaged and insufficiently clear, the authorities of Callatis have decided to revalidate this coin again, putting on the reverse a new type of countermark – "Head of Heracles with lion's skin" (**Plate VIII. 10**, reverse). We can assume that this happened precisely in Callatis because this image is typical for the obverse mostly of drachms and hemidrachms just of Callatis. This image we meet and as a typical image for the obverse of one of the biggest denomination type of bronze coins of the Scythian king Sariakes (Draganov 2015, Pl. 52, No. 774 – Pl. 56, No. 823) minted certainly also in Callatis.

Upon the coins of Sariakes appears a type of countermark unknown from other coins from the region of the West Pontic coast – "Thunderbolt", yet only on just mentioned his coins of largest denomination (Манов 2004, 36-37). The question – which city of the west Black Sea coast may have belonged to this countermark is difficult to answer categorically. This symbol – thunderbolt – is present as part of the iconography on the reverse of two types big denomination coins of Sariakes – "Head of Heracles in lion's skin/bow, quiver, corn ear and thunderbolt" and on the type "Head of Zeus laureate, r./Eagle on thunderbolt, r." (cf. Draganov

2015, 121). It is considered that the coins of high denomination of Kanites, of Charaspes and recently published for the first time another type of large denomination coins of Sariakes, with an image of an eagle on a thunderbolt (Manov 2001, 958, fig. 3), were minted in Tomis. Interestingly, though, just on the city coins of Tomis dated precisely at the time of the existence of the Scythian kingdom in today's Dobroudja, the eagle is always depicted without thunderbolt (**Plate IX. 8**)? But on the later series – those at the end of the second and in the first century BC eagle is always portrayed standing on a large thunderbolt. That's why I think it is still likely that the countermarking symbol "Thunderbolt" belonged to Tomis. Because – in one of the specimens of Sariakes' coins illustrated here – on the reverse were put both countermarks "Thunderbolt" and "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet" (**Plate IX. 3**). If the countermark "Thunderbolt" is a countermarking symbol of Callatis – why must it appear next to another countermark that with an absolute certainty belongs to Callatis from this period – "Head of Athena"? Judging from the extremely important specimen of Sariakes' coin of largest denomination, where on the reverse we can see three countermarks – "Thunderbolt", "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet" and "Head of Hermes with petasos" – by a second, finer style (**Plate IX. 4**), we have to assume, that the three different countermarks had been placed in the following sequence. Apparently soon after the death of Sariakes, this specimen has been in Tomis, but it had been known that this type of coins were minted in Callatis. Not to be withdrawn from circulation, the coin had been revalidated by the city authorities of Tomis with a new type of countermark – "Thunderbolt." After a time, getting again in Callatis however, local authorities also decided to revalidate it with a sure symbol of this period – "Athena with Corinthian helmet." And – coming for the third time in Tomis – where local authorities ordered to an extremely proficient engraver again the most popular and traditional symbol for countermarking stamp – "Head of Hermes with petasos" to be put and this coin was countermarked for the third time. Interesting thing is that until now are not known coins of Tomis that are exactly with that image of Hermes with just such a petasos. The image is closest stylistically and as iconography to one of the types of small-denomination coins of one of the earliest Scythian ruler of the kingdom – Kanites, and there is no logic to be in use until the last king – Sariakes. Probably because of the onset of major political and economic crisis since the death of the last king – Sariakes, most likely he found his death in the devastating raids of the Bastarnae returning from Macedonia in 168-167/166 BC, it seems in the first few years of crisis the city authorities in the western Pontic Greek colonies were compelled only to countermark different big-denomination coins – royal as well as of other cities, not been struck their own coin types. But they still managed to control coin circulation flow only through countermarking. For such

a phenomenon sometimes happening in some cities, speaks Howgego (Howgego 1985, 3).

In my opinion, because of this big crisis moment in the history of the Scythian kingdom and the cities of Dobroudja could be due the following very interesting fact, to which I will draw attention here. With the latter types of countermarks presented here had been carried out countermarking of coins apparently at the same time both of Aelis (**Plate VIII. 7-10**) and of Sariakes (**Plate IX. 1-4**). Moreover, we find the use of the same countermarking punches (or countermarking dies) for both kings (**Plate VIII. 9**, obverse; **Plate IX. 4**, reverse). This fact proved and something else. If once on the coins of Aelis and of Sariakes were used even the same types of countermarks "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet" – belonging to Callatis and "Head of Hermes with petasos" – belonging to Tomis, and for both types of countermarks we have the same countermarking punches, this may indicate that since Sariakes is firmly established – especially by me, as the last king of the kingdom, then Aelis was his predecessor, and not Charaspes. The countermarking on coins of the two kings shows a clear and direct link following the carefully analyzed and presented by me countermarked coin material of Aelis and Sariakes. And this is a clear evidence of the relative chronology of these two kings. If Charaspes was the predecessor of Sariakes – then with the same types of countermarks would be countermarked his and of Sariakes coins. But from Charaspes is not known any countermarked coin, which at this stage of research is difficult to explain. Perhaps because of some political reasons the West Pontic cities failed to submit to countermarking coins of Charaspes. Probably countermarking the coins of the king Charaspes was forbidden because of unknown reasons to us. On the other hand – if Charaspes shared a common monogram or abbreviation of coin magistrate name ME with Aelis, then obviously he had been the predecessor of Aelis.

Because of the nature of coin types and style of the images on the coins of Akrosas (Akrosakes), which approaches him to the first two kings of the Scythian kingdom – Tanousas (Tanousakes) and Kanites, and for isolated type of countermarks, put on his coins – not among the first stages of countermarking and not among the last processes of countermarking of West Pontic cities, we may now also with more certainty say that he was the third ruler in the series of six Scythian kings. After review and analysis of countermarked coin material of five of all the six kings of the Scythian kingdom can be confirmed the arrangement in relative chronological order of the six Scythian rulers of Dobroudja, suggested recently (Draganov 2015, 64-68; 126-140) and it is: Tanousas (Tanousakes) – Kanites – Akrosas (Akrosakes) – Charaspes – Aelis – Sariakes.

In analyzing all countermarking stamps on coins of the Scythian kings of Dobroudja, compared with processes of countermarking city

coins carried out by individual Western Pontic Greek colonies of coins among themselves, I found that most of the types of countermarks and countermarking punches for the Scythian royal coins are quite different from the city countermarking punches. These facts prove that the Scythian royal coins were subject to special treatment by the city authorities of the colonies – especially of Tomis and Callatis, which must have been the main mints, initially producing coins of the Scythian kings.

The countermarking of the royal coins had been very well organized and explicitly only for coins of the separate Scythian kings. It was carried out in several stages – after the death of Tanousas and of Kanitas, after that – a new stage appeared after the death of Akrosakes. Apparently coins of the next ruler Charaspes were never countermarked – due to unclear reasons for us today. Probably one phase of countermarking was effected immediately after the death of Aelis, but after the death of Sariakes and virtually with the demolition of the Scythian kingdom in today's Dobroudja – most probably by the Bastarnae (Манов 2008, 201; Манов 2015, 431; 434-435; Draganov 2015, 138), as it seems, in a more mass process of countermarking were included again coins of two kings – of Aelis and of Sariakes.

Although some types of countermarks seemingly are of the same type, moreover put on city coins (see Talmaçhi 2008) that are synchronous in minting with some of coins of the Scythian kings, yet these countermarking stamps are different in style. For example countermarks like "Hermes with petasos" we find on coins of Histria, or of Dionysopolis, but it is hard to say exactly when they were placed as they are of a different style. Huge series of large denomination coins of Callatis for example – the type of head of Apollo on obverse, and the types of Demeter veiled or with head of Dionysos – were countermarked with completely different types of countermarks, although one of them is a countermark "Hermes with petasos" – but by another variant and style – "Hermes with a winged petasos"⁷.

For the sake of clarity here I represent almost all different types of countermarks known up to now on coins of the Scythian kings of Dobroudja, with listed the exact or probable countermarking centers – presented in their relative chronological order (**Plates X-XI**).

Probably we can consider the incused countermarks upon the little denomination coins of Sariakes – "star", "six-rayed star" and "ivy leaf" (**Plate IX. 5 and 6**) – as quite later countermarks, put during some countermarking process of city coins, and perhaps "star" or "six-rayed star" – belonging to Tomis, and the "ivy leaf" – put in Dionysopolis.

⁷ Such different types of countermarks on the practically adopted for synchronous with Scythian kingdom in Dobroudja city coins of Callatis were presented in the paper of the colleague Stelutsa Gramatiku at the Numismatic conference in Brashov in 2011.

After the comprehensive review and analysis of the presented countermarked coins of five of the six Scythian kings in Dobroudja, it can be firmly ascertained and another conclusion – previous opinions that by countermarking the value of countermarked coins was usually reduced to the value of a smaller denomination of some next type of bronze coin of a city, practically is not correct. Because on the small denomination coins – as those of the second type of Tanousakes, we see that countermarks like "Hermes with petasos" could be the same as those put on large denomination coins. Apparently, through the processes of countermarking merely has been extended circulating life of certain coins that were not demonetized and were revalidated by the city authorities in order to assist circulating coin flow in a city or to serve the city governments themselves for any payments. In this countermarking – at least in the case with the countermarking coins of the Scythian kings, obviously the value of the nominal has not been changed.

In conclusion – the study presented here sought the opportunity through typological and statistical analysis of countermarks to obtain a systematic picture related to the circulation of coins of the Scythian kings, which would be helpful to the establishment of a relative chronology of ruling of all six known Scythian kings in the West Pontic area. I did try to point out the sure and possible centers making processes of countermarking, in this regard, highlighting the special role of the West Pontic Greek cities – Histria, Tomis and Callatis and with great deal of probability – Dionysopolis. It was already pointed out that some of the countermarks were made not only by the cities, but the countermarking of the royal bronze coins had been carried out in the West Pontic cities by special orders of the Scythian kings themselves – after changing the power from one king to another.

I think this approach to the research of countermarked coins of the Scythian kings mentioned, who ruled during the Hellenistic period over the lands north of Haemus and the area of today Dobroudja, brings new details in the overall study of the coinage of these kings, helping to further order of the enigmatic puzzle that is this Scythian kingdom in historical aspect.

Finally, I would like to say that so far there is still the notion that the Greek poleis on the Western coast of the Black Sea north of Haemus to the Danube delta – from Odessos to Histria – were independent cities that were placed under the protectorate of the Scythian kings, having paid tribute to these kings (Draganov 2015, 30; 149). In my opinion, these Greek poleis were not independent, but were an integral part of the state of the six Scythian kings north of Haemus who had been granted the right also to strike their own types of bronze coins and naturally they also paid taxes to that same state of the Scythian kings by

the development of trade through their ports.

Moreover, the hypothesis that the ancient settlement Aphrodisias was probably the capital of this Scythian kingdom in Dobroudja has recently appeared and as an argument has been used the evidence of finding many coins of the Scythian kings in the area of ancient Aphrodisias – localized very close to the ancient Dionysopolis (Balchik) – to the north of Balchik at the modern village of Topola (Draganov 2015, 144-146). According to me, however, Aphrodisias was one of the main ports on the western shores of the Black Sea, where the trade of grain from Dobroudja was predominant and other commodities were imported by sea, which is mentioned in an inscription from later times, where the name is mentioned as Aphrodeision (Slavova 1998, 99-106). In my opinion, the capital of the Scythian kingdom in Dobroudja was one of the major Greek cities on the West coast of the Black Sea – but this capital will be the subject of a presentation in another publication of mine.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Герасимов 1946:** Т. Герасимов. Антични монети с контрамарки от Долна Мизия и Тракия. – Известия на българския археологически институт XV, 1946, 51-81.
- Герасимов 1953:** Т. Герасимов. Монети на Канит, Тануза, Харасп, Акроза и Сариа. – Известия на Варненското археологическо дружество IX, 1953, 53-58.
- Манов 2004:** М. Манов. Нов тип контрамарка върху бронзови монети на скитския владетел Сариак. – Нумизматика, сфрагистика и епиграфика I, 2004, 33-39.
- Манов 2008:** М. Манов. Скитските царе в Добруджа. – Анали 2-4, 2008, 195-203.
- Манов 2015:** М. Манов. Скифские цари в Добрудже. – SCRIPTA ANTIQUA (Moscow) IV, 2015, 424-436.
- Юркуова 1992:** Й. Юркуова. Монетите на тракийските племена и владетели. София, 1992.
- Canarache 1950:** V. Canarache. Monetele Scitilor din Dobrogea. – Studii și cercetări de istorie veche I, 1950, 213-257.
- Draganov 2010:** D. Draganov. The Coinage of Scythian Kings in the West Pontic Area: Iconography. – Archaeologia Bulgarica 3, 2010, 29-52.
- Draganov 2015:** D. Draganov. The Coinage of the Scythian Kings in the West Pontic Area. Sofia, 2015 (Bobokov Bros. Foundation).
- Howgego 1985:** C.J. Howgego. Greek Imperial Countermarks. Studies in the provincial coinage of the Roman empire. (Royal Numismatic Society, Special publication No. 17), London, 1975.
- Lazarenko 2002:** I. Lazarenko. In Which Towns Are Countermarked Coins of Lysimachus with "Owl upon a Line, Turned to the Left" and "Owl, Turned to the Right". – Annotazioni Numismatiche (Milan, Italy), XII, series IV, 46, 2002, 1066-1072.

- Le Rider 1975:** G. Le Rider. Contremarques et surfrappes dans l'Antiquité grecque. – In: Numismatique antique – problèmes et méthodes. Nancy-Louvain, 1975, 27-56.
- Manov 2001:** M. Manov. Two new types of bronze coins of the Scythian ruler Sariakes. – *Annotazioni Numismatiche* (Milan, Italy), XI, series III, 41, 2001, 956-959.
- Manov 2007:** M. Manov. The Scythian Kingdom in Dobroudja – Problems of Its Chronology. – In: *Jubilaeus VI: Proceedings of the International conference in memory of the brothers Karel and Hermenegild Škorpil* (22th of May, 2004, Sofia University), Sofia, 2007, 154-157.
- Petac 2005:** E. Petac. La Collection M. C. Sutz (Bibliothèque de l'Académie Roumaine, Bucarest). I. Istros, Kallatis, Tomis. Wetteren, 2005.
- Pick 1898:** B. Pick. Die antiken Münzen Nordgriechenlands. Die antiken Münzen von Dacien und Moesien. Band I. Berlin, 1898.
- Pick, Regling 1910:** B. Pick, K. Regling. Die antiken Münzen Nordgriechenlands. Die antiken Münzen von Dacien und Moesien. Band I². Berlin, 1910.
- Preda 1998:** C. Preda. Istoria monedei în Dacia preromană. București, 1998.
- Slavova 1998:** M. Slavova. Lines 26–32 of the Horothesia of Dionysopolis (IGBulg V 5011). – *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Band 120, 1998, 99-106.
- Sutz 1916:** M. C. Sutz. Contribuțiunea numismatică la istoria antică a României Transdunărene. – *Analele Academiei Române, seria II, Tomul XXXVIII*. Bucuresti, 1916, 523-531.
- SNG XI 2000:** *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Volume XI: The William Stancomb Collection of Coins of the Black Sea Region*. Oxford University Press and Spink & Son Limited, 2000.
- Talmațchi 2008:** G. Talmațchi. Despre contramarcarea monedelor orașelor vest-pontice dobrogene în epocă autonomă. – *Cercetări numismatice*, XIV, București, 2008, 155-188.
- Talmațchi, Andreescu 2008:** G. Talmațchi, G. Andreescu. Monede de "tip Scitic" aflate într-o colecție particulară din Constanța. – *Pontica*, 41, 2008, 451-472.
- Talmațchi 2011:** G. Talmațchi. Monetăriile orașelor vest-pontice Histria, Callatis și Tomis în epocă autonomă. Cluj-Napoca, 2011.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

- Plate VII. 1.** Coin of Tanousakes with countermark "Head of Hermes with petasos" – CNG, Auction 60, 2002, Lot No. 422. (d. 24 mm)
- Plate VII. 2.** Coin of Tanousakes with countermark "Head of Hermes with petasos" – private collection. (d. 15 mm)
- Plate VII. 3.** Coin of Kanites with countermark "Head of Hermes with petasos" – M&M, Auction 17, 2005, No. 488. (d. 25 mm)
- Plate VII. 4.** Coin of Kanites with countermark "Head of Hermes with petasos" – private collection. (d. 23 mm)
- Plate VII. 5.** Coin of Kanites with countermark "Head of Hermes with petasos" – after Talmațchi, Andreescu 2008, 453, No. 6. (d. 18 x 17 mm)
- Plate VII. 6.** Coin of Kanites with countermark "Wheel with four spokes" – Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung, Auktion 208, 16 October 2012, No. 1191. (d. 22 mm)
- Plate VII. 7.** Coin of Kanites with countermark "Bearded head, r." – CNG, Triton V, 2002, No. 311. (d. 23 mm)

- Plate VII. 8.** Coin of Kanites with countermark "Bearded head, right" – From hourmo.eu, No. SHH c1814, (Collection Hourmouziadis). (d. 24 mm)
- Plate VII. 9.** Coin of Kanites with countermark "Demeter veiled" – CNG Electronic Auction 157, 31.01. 2007. Lot 19. (d. 23 mm)
- Plate VII. 10.** Coin of Kanites with countermark "Demeter veiled" – CNG, Electronic Auction 101, November 10, 2004, Lot 26. (d. 23 mm)
- Plate VII. 11.** Coin of Kanites with countermark "Eagle left" – posted in Internet. (d. 16 mm)
- Plate VII. 12.** Coin of Kanites with countermark "Eagle left" – posted in Internet. (d. 17 mm)
- Plate VIII. 1.** Coin of Akrosakes with countermark "Bearded head" – SNG Vol. XI, No. 318, William Stancomb Collection. (d. 25 mm)
- Plate VIII. 2.** Coin of Akrosakes with countermark "Bearded head" – private collection. (d. 24 mm)
- Plate VIII. 3.** Coin of Akrosakes with countermark "Bearded head" and "Head of Hermes" – Numismatik Lanz München, Auction 125, November 28th, 2005, Lot No. 201. (d. 23 mm)
- Plate VIII. 4.** Coin of Charaspes – CNG, Mail Bid Sale 57, April 4th, 2001 Lot No. 236. (d. 24 mm)
- Plate VIII. 5.** Coin of Charaspes – Numismatik Lanz München, Auction 150, 13.12.2010, Lot No. 83. (d. 21 mm)
- Plate VIII. 6.** Coin of Aelis with a countermark – "Head of Artemis" – Fritz Rudolf Künker Münzenhandlung Auction 62, 13th March 2001, Lot No. 40. (d. 22 mm)
- Plate VIII. 7.** Coin of Aelis with countermark "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet" – private collection. (d. 21 mm)
- Plate VIII. 8.** Coin of Aelis with two countermarks – "Head of Hermes with petasos" from the I style and "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet" – private collection. (d. 23 mm)
- Plate VIII. 9.** Coin of Aelis with countermark "Head of Hermes with petasos" – from the II style – private collection. (d. 23 mm)
- Plate VIII. 10.** Coin of Aelis with three countermarks, two on the obverse – "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet" and "Head of Hermes with petasos", and one on the reverse – "Heracles in lion skin" – Forum Ancient Coins, CM 39286. (d. 23 mm)
- Plate IX. 1.** Coin of Sariakes with countermark "Thunderbolt" – Courtesy of Ancient Resource Auction, May 23rd, 2009, Lot 27 (from www. wildwinds.com). (d. 24 mm)
- Plate IX. 2.** Coin of Sariakes with countermark "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet" – Collection Hourmouziadis SHH 2774. (d. 22 mm)
- Plate IX. 3.** Coin of Sariakes with two countermarks on the reverse – "Thunderbolt" and "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet" – Forum Ancient Coins, GB 17649. (d. 25 mm)
- Plate IX. 4.** Coin of Sariakes with three countermarks on the reverse – "Thunderbolt", "Head of Athena with Corinthian helmet" and "Head of Hermes with petasos" – of "the II style" – private collection. (d. 25 mm)
- Plate IX. 5.** Coin of Sariakes with a countermark "star" on the obverse – Forum Ancient Coins, No. GB39287. (d. 17 mm)
- Plate IX. 5.** Coin of Sariakes with two countermarks on the obverse – "six-rayed star" and "ivy leaf" – Collection Hourmouziadis, No. SHH 3741. (19 x 20 mm)

Plate IX. 7. Countermark "Eagle left" on a coin of Kanites – enlargement.

Plate IX. 8. Bronze coin of Tomis – "Diademed Zeus r./Eagle left in oak wreath" – SNG Vol: XI, William Stancomb Collection, No. 274. (d. 23 mm)

Plate IX. 9. Coin of Sariakes – Hourmouziadis Collection, No. SHH 3875. (24 x 25 mm)

Plate IX. 10. Bronze coin of Callatis – Head of Athena right, wearing Corinthian helmet / KAAA between club and grain ear (www.wildwinds.com). (d. 12 mm)

Plates X, XI. Possible countermarking authorities.