

AN ALLIANCE COIN OF DIONYSOPOLIS WITH CALLATIS AND TOMI?

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A bronze coin of Dionysopolis in the author's collection is illustrated here and might be of some interest:

AE. *Obv.* Dionysus r. wearing ivy wreath in border of dots. *Rev.* From l. to r.; club downwards, pilei of the Dioscuri capped by stars, filleted thyrsus: above, ΔIO.

1. ii 1.34 *Rev.* In exergue, ΔIOTI.

The general type was not known to Canarache¹ but was included by Dr. Draganov in a poster display shown at the Berlin Congress in 1997². An article based on this exhibition was published in the *Numismatic Circular* in December 1997³. Draganov noted all known Hellenistic bronze coins of Dionysopolis together with unpublished Roman Provincial coins of the city known to him. In the article (henceforth, *Dionysopolis*), no. 15 has the types with magistrates' names ΔIONY and EYKΛEOY the latter being illustrated. The same types are repeated for no.16 but here three names are given, AKOP, HPAKΛEI and ΔIOY? and HPAKΛEI and AKOP are illustrated, in that order. He subsequently confirmed to me (*pers. comm.*) that the ΔIOY? not illustrated is indeed our ΔIOTI above.

A club, the stars of the Dioscuri and the thyrsus appear on earlier coins of Dionysopolis in the third and second centuries BC. However, it is most unusual for these three 'attributes' of three different gods to be shown on the reverse of a coin with Dionysus on the obverse.⁴ I therefore suggest that these three 'attributes' represent the principal deities of the cities of Callatis, Tomis and Dionysopolis respectively. We consider that the cities must have made a short-lived political or economic arrangement such as an alliance⁵. On the small group of coins illustrated in the *Dionysopolis* article, the dies of magistrates' AKOP and HPAKΛEI are more delicately engraved by a skilled die engraver while those of EYKΛEOY and ΔIOTI have a head of Dionysus and symbols which are rather larger and somewhat cruder.

Of particular interest are the letters AKOP as a magistrate's part name on coin 16. The four letters makes it highly probable that this is Akornion son of Dionysios the well-known statesman from Dionysopolis, who among his many civic virtues acted for the Dacian ruler Byrebista and who is commemorated on the important inscription found at Balchik, now in Sofia⁶. Akornion, possibly a non-Greek name, is itself very rare. The authors of the recently published *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* know of one other example⁷.

¹ V. Canarache, *Monede autonome inedite din Dionysopolis și cronologia lor relativă*, in SCN, 1, 1957, p. 61-78.

² D. Draganov, *The bronze coins of Dionysopolis: typology*, in XII Internationaler Numismatisches Kongress, Berlin 1997, p. 16-17.

³ Idem, *The Bronze Coinage of Dionysopolis*, in NCirc., 105, 1997, 10 (December), p. 371-7.

⁴ I use the term 'attribute' here to define the additional symbol to make clear the deity represented on the obverse or reverse of a coin.

⁵ SNG XI, *The William Stancomb Collection of Coins of the Black Sea Region*, Oxford, 2000, for late coins of Callatis, nos. 99-102, Tomis, nos. 276-82.

⁶ IGB I² 13, 44 Akornion, son of Dionysios.

⁷ P. M. Fraser and E. Mathews (eds.) *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Name., IV, Macedonia, Thrace, Northern Regions of the Black Sea*, Oxford, 2005. With this volume, Greek names from Europe, Cyprus and Cyrene have now been covered. Asia and Egypt are still to be published, but the database for these areas accumulated so far by the compilers does not indicate a further Akornion. The other known Akornion is 2nd cent AD from Tomis, ISM II 125, 14, Akornion son of Lysimachos.

The date of this inscription from Balchik has been given to c. 48 BC due to Akornion's known dealings with Byrebista and the Romans. The traditional practice for Greek parents was to name their first-born son after his paternal grandfather and their second after the maternal grandfather, so there might be a possibility that another relative of the historical Akornion could be the name on the coin. Assuming that Akornion is the statesman on the inscription, then the date of these coins must fall to the years close to 48 BC.

Three of the above magistrates' names also appear among others on a heavier series:

Obv. Demeter r. veiled and wearing a turreted stephane and corn wreath. *Rev.* Demeter wearing turreted stephane seated l. on throne, holding patera and corn ear; to r.: ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟ; in exergue, one of the following,

ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΔΟΥ *Dionysopolis 29 Canarache 25-8*
ΕΥΚΑΕΟΥ *Dionysopolis 29*
ΑΚΟΡΝ *Dionysopolis 30 Canarache 43 ΑΚΟΡΝΙ*

Dionysopolis does not record coin weights but there is a range between 8.5 to 5.5 g, so we can confidently call these double units. Here, we have a further letter, N of the name Akornion according to Draganov and Canarache 43 reads it as **ΑΚΟΡΝΙ**.

The author has not seen sufficient material to take this matter any further, but suggests that the date of our coin is just before c.48 and that an alliance between Callatis, Tomi and Dionysopolis is quite feasible during the difficult times when Byrebista was seeking to conquer them.

