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**CYRENAICAN COINAGE FROM THE BEGINNING OF ROMAN RULE.
NEW EVIDENCE FROM PTOLEMAIS
(PL. 1-2)**

Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the so-called Villa with a View in Ptolemais, conducted by Tomasz Mikocki since 2001¹, have contributed significantly to knowledge of town history and development. Numismatics is one field in which substantial verification as well as new evidence has been collected. Current finds by the Polish mission² (Tabela 1), have helped to re-think Cyrenaican coinage in both the Hellenistic and Roman periods, especially with regard to local issues from the beginning of Imperial rule, which are presented in this article. Two things should be kept in mind: firstly, that regular research on the coins from Ptolemais is relatively limited, having started only four years ago³, and secondly, that archaeological research in Cyrenaica and the resultant publications (coins included) are lagging far behind other regions of the Greco-Roman world. Libya's long isolation on the international scene is responsible for this state of affairs and it is hoped that the present political opening up will be more permanent. Archaeological expeditions currently working in Libya have at their disposal a variety of non-invasive methods that limit traditional digging to a minimum and are invaluable especially in topographical research⁴.

Ptolemais in Cyrenaica⁵ (modern Tolmeita) was established in the first half of the 3rd century A.C. on the site of the ancient port of Barca. Its long history was a series of rises and falls. In any case, it quickly pushed out its mother city from the Pentapolis. The other towns in this long-lasting union of the five biggest urban centers in Cyrenaica, a fertile strip of land between the sea and

the Green Mountains on one side and the desert on the other, were Cyrene, invested with a leading political role, Berenice, Tocra and Apollonia.

In the troubled first half of the 3rd century A.C., one of the Ptolemies (the exact date of the foundation remains to be established)⁶ founded a big urban center, which took its name from the rulers of this Hellenistic dynasty. The new city followed an orthogonal plan, covering some 250 ha on and around the site of a port that

Tabela 1. Ancient coins from polish excavations at Ptolemais (2002-2004)

	number of items		total
	identified	illegible	
I. GREEK COINS OF CYRENAICA	37	9	46
II. GREEK COINS STRUCK OUTSIDE CYRENAICA	1	—	1
III. CYRENAICA UNDER ROMANS	13	6	19
IV. ROMAN EMPIRE	38	14	52
total	89	29	118

¹ Extensively on the excavations, Polish dailies and weeklies *Polityka*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, as well as radio and television. For a rudimentary list of references, see notes 12-13. Current news on the expedition's website: www.archeo.uw.edu.pl/ptolemais.

² P. JAWORSKI, *Ancient coins from the Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology Excavations at Ptolemais, Libya (2002-2004)*, *ArcheologiaWarsz* 56, 2005, p. 77-90.

³ Ancient coins from the American excavations were discussed in C. Kraeling's monograph of Ptolemais (C. KRAELING, *Ptolemais. City of the Libyan Pentapolis*, Chicago 1962). While interesting from the perspective of comparative studies, it lacks the overview and conclusions that would present the material against the backdrop of the region as a whole. Awaiting publication are dozens of coins collected by Libyan archaeolo-

gists during rescue work conducted in the ruins of the ancient town and necropolis since the 1970s, as well as acquired from local inhabitants, now in the collection of the local archaeological museum in Ptolemais. Thanks to the offices of Mr. Faraj A.O. Tahir, the present author was able to see the set in 2004; it is under study currently.

⁴ W. MAŁKOWSKI et al., *Non-destructive surveys of an ancient city Ptolemais at Cyrenaica (Libya)* [in:] *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Archaeological Prospection*, S. Piro ed., Rome 2005, p. 195-196.

⁵ Kraeling's excellent monograph of Ptolemais requires verification in many places, taking into account the results of fieldwork carried out since 2001.

⁶ Recently: K. MUELLER, *Dating of Ptolemaic city-foundations in Cyrenaica. A brief note*, *RepSocLibSt* 35, 2004, p. 1-10.

had been inhabited by Greeks since at least the 6th century A.C. The royal character of the foundation ensured near to two hundred years of stable development and growing importance in the region. The Roman taking of Cyrenaica appears to have had detrimental impact on the town, which was deserted for a while until new settlers were brought in, recruited most likely from among former pirates, who suffered a resounding defeat at the hands of Pompey in 67 A.C.⁷ Even so, Ptolemais must be seen as playing a role of some importance in the region during the fighting in the second half of the 1st century A.C. Let it be considered that despite having no minting traditions to its name, it began to issue coins, which together with the coins of Cyrene were introduced into circulation by Roman officials in charge of Cyrenaica. Under Imperial Roman rule, the city flourished in the reigns of the Antonine and Severan dynasties. In the times of Diocletian, after the first of two extensive earthquakes that ruined the cities of Cyrenaica (in A.D. 262 and 365), the relatively less damaged Ptolemais gradually took over from Cyrene as the capital of the *Libya Superior* province⁸. In the early years of the 5th century, Synesius of Cyrene, a Greek philosopher and Christian writer of some standing, acted as bishop here⁹. In A.D. 643, the town fell under Arab occupation, as did all of Cyrenaica¹⁰.

Ptolemais occupied an approximately rectangular area, ca 1450 m by 1700 m, spliced between the coast (old port district) and the first mountain ridge. City walls encircled all of the urban area with terraces picturesquely climbing in the direction of the hills in the south. A regular street network marked out blocks of architecture, *insulae*, measuring 100 by 500 Ptolemaic feet (36.5 m by 182.5 m). Public buildings, temples, palaces and private houses gradually filled the city center. Today in ruins, these monumental structures stand even several meters high, seldom reconstructed, if at all. Capitals and fragmentary column shafts mark the position of palaces or

temples covered with sand. The general view is not much different from that which the first travelers visiting the ancient site saw in the early 19th century¹¹. Among the best-preserved ancient structures are the Arch of Constantine, city baths and residences (including the so-called Palace of the Dux, the seat of the Roman governor in Late Antiquity), all located in the main street ("Via Monumentale"). A Hellenistic bouleuterion rebuilt into an odeon, city gate opening on the road to Tocra, theater in the hills, amphitheater, stadium, so-called West Basilica, huge underground cisterns and one of the best preserved Hellenistic mausolea lying in the midst of a huge rock necropolis full of sarcophagi – these are but a few of the mute witnesses of a millennium of town development.

The Polish expedition working in Ptolemais since 2001¹² runs three research projects covering: ancient urban topography (based on non-destructive surveying), excavations of a selected urban *insula* (Villa with a View) and interdisciplinary studies of Christian Ptolemais initiated after the discovery in 2004 of a new basilica in the eastern necropolis.

Excavations of the Villa with a View have proved spectacular to the extreme, thanks to the discovery in the central part of the house of the 3rd century A.D. (built on the ruins of an older building) of an interesting set of mosaic floors and wall paintings presenting a rich geometric and figural repertory of motifs¹³. Five field seasons have also yielded a few thousand artifacts representing all categories of finds: abundant pottery, lamps – ca 600 whole and fragmentary pieces, stone objects (including statuary and inscriptions), as well as glass, terracottas, bone and metal fragments, finally coins, more than 300 in all, among which there is a set of a few dozen bronzes from the turn of the 4th century, discovered in 2005 inside a terracotta lamp production workshop operating in the ruins of the villa after the quake of A.D. 365.

⁷ J. REYNOLDS, *Cyrenaica, Pompey and Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus*, JRS 52, 1962, p. 102.

⁸ R.G. GOODCHILD, *The Decline of Cyrene and Rise of Ptolemais: Two New Inscriptions* [in:] *Libyan Studies. Select Papers of the late R.G. Goodchild*, J. Reynolds ed., London 1976, p. 225 sq.

⁹ Idem, *Synesius of Cyrene: Bishop of Ptolemais* [in:] *ibidem*, p. 239-254.

¹⁰ Idem, *Byzantines, Berbers and Arabs in Seventh-Century Libya* [in:] *ibidem*, p. 255-267. Recently: V. CHRISTIDES, *Byzantine Libya and the March of the Arabs towards the West of North Africa* [BARIntSer, vol. 851], Oxford 2000.

¹¹ *Wiadomość o Cyrenajce i o mieście Cyrene, zebrana z opisów podróży: Kapitana Beechey, P. Della Cella i P. T.R. Pacho osobno w różnych czasach odbytych*, Kolumb. Pamiętnik podróży 1829, nr 26, p. 57-68: (...) before you reach it [Cyrene – P.J.], the road leads to the mounds of Teuchira and Ptolemais. You can see there

wonderful monuments of antiquity and very finely preserved marbles.

¹² T. MIKOCKI, *Polskie wykopaliska archeologiczne w Libii. Wykopaliska Instytutu Archeologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w Ptolemais (Tolmeita). Sondáže 2001 r.*, Światowit 3, 2001 (2002), fasc. A, p. 101-120; T. MIKOCKI, P. JAWORSKI, M. MUSZYŃSKA, with contributions of K. CHMIELEWSKI M. GŁADKI, W. MAŁKOWSKI, H. MEYZA, *Ptolemais in Libya. The Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations in 2002 and 2003. Report on two seasons of fieldwork*, Światowit 5, 2003, fasc. A, p. 107-118.

¹³ T. MIKOCKI, *New Mosaics from Ptolemais in Libya*, *Archeologia* Warsz 55, 2004, p. 19-30; idem, *An Achilles Mosaic from the Villa with a View at Ptolemais*, *Archeologia* Warsz 56, 2005, p. 57-68; J. ŻELAZOWSKI, *Alcune considerazioni sulle pitture parietarie di una casa del III sec. d.C. a Ptolemais (Cirenaica)*, *Archeologia* Warsz 56, 2005, p. 69-75.

With the exception of a few silver pieces, all of the coins from the Villa with a View are bronzes. Specific geological conditions and considerable salinity due to the proximity of the sea are responsible for the poor preservation of these objects, a problem characteristic of most sites in Cyrenaica as a matter of fact. A vast majority of Hellenistic coins, including the small-denomination Ptolemaic bronzes in circulation in Cyrenaica in the first years of Roman rule in the region, as well as coins issued by the Roman administration in local mints were retrieved from destruction and accumulation layers connected with the great quakes of the 3rd and 4th century A.D. These layers consist of what the villa had been built of: mainly stone blocks and wall plaster, earth and fragmentary mud brick. The coins were lost in various parts of the building, sealed by successive quake-related damages. Today, they are of considerable assistance in stratifying the remains and determining precise dates for particular building phases.

The formal beginning of Roman rule in Cyrenaica came with the death in 96 A.C. of Ptolemy Apion, who left the entire region to the Republic in his will¹⁴. In the first twenty years, however, Rome did little to organize the new province, except granting independence to the towns of the Pentapolis. The coins in circulation were primarily bronzes struck in Cyrene in the 3rd

and 2nd centuries A.C. (**Fig. 1**)¹⁵. No gold issues had been minted since the reign of Ptolemy I and no silver ones since the revolt of Magas (ca 282-261 A.C.). Numerous finds of heavily worn silver coins from the early 3rd century A.C. are proof that they were still in circulation in the 1st century A.C.¹⁶ At the same time, coins from other Greek centers, as well as Egypt, are characteristically absent from assemblages excavated in Cyrenaica. In this light, the halved coin of Hieron II of Syracuse (275-215 A.C.) found by the Polish expedition (**Fig. 2**) takes on special importance¹⁷.

The small currency in circulation that the Romans encountered taking over Cyrenaica included foremost three types of small Ptolemaic bronzes: Ptolemy I/head of Libya, Zeus-Ammon/eagle, Zeus-Ammon/headdress of Isis (**Fig. 3**). The denomination is yet to be determined, but it is obvious that these coins, which were struck in Cyrene at the turn of the 2nd century A.C., remained in use long after the arrival of the Romans, presumably until the end of the 1st century A.D. In the excavation assemblages from Apollonia¹⁸, Cyrene¹⁹, Sidi Khrebish²⁰ and Ptolemais²¹, they constitute a meaningful share of all the coin finds²². The first Roman issues in Cyrenaica did not appear until thirty years after the taking of the region and almost ten years after the actual establishment of a province in 75 A.C. (which event must have been triggered by the impunity of pirates ravaging the African

¹⁴ There is a rich literature on the beginnings of Roman rule in Cyrenaica, i.a.: A. LARONDE, *La Cyrénaïque romaine, des origines à la fin des Sévères (96 av. J.-C. - 235 ap. J.-C.)* [in:] ANRW II, 10.1, Berlin-New York 1988, p. 1006-1015; S.I. OOST, *Cyrene, 96-74 B.C.*, *Classical Philology* 58, 1963, fasc. 1, p. 11-25; D. BRAUND, *The Social and Economic Context of the Roman Annexation of Cyrenaica* [in:] *Cyrenaica in Antiquity*, G. Barker, J. Little, J. Reynolds eds [BARIntSer, vol. 236], Oxford 1985, p. 319-325. Recently: T. GRABOWSKI, *Ptolemeusz i Rzym, przyjaźń czy zależność. Stosunki polityczne w latach 273-43 p.n.e.*, Kraków 2005, p. 234-237.

¹⁵ T.V. BUTTREY, *Crete and Cyrenaica* [in:] *The Coinage of the Roman World in the Late Republic*, A.M. Burnett, M.H. Crawford eds, [BARIntSer, vol. 326], Oxford 1987, p. 165.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ JAWORSKI, op.cit., no. cat. 66: BMC 593 (R.S. POOLE, *A Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum. Sicily*, London 1876). Cf. R. ROSS HOLLOWAY, *Numismatic Notes from Morgantina II. Half Coins of Hieron II in the Monetary System of Roman Sicily*, ANS MN 9, 1960, p. 65-73. On the Ptolemies' ties with Sicily in the times of Hieron II, cf. M. CACCAMO, *La Sicilia tra l'Egitto e Roma: la moneta-zione siracusana dell'età di Ierone II. Atti del Seminario di Studi (Messina 2-4 dicembre 1993)*, Caltabiano ed., Messina 1995, passim.

¹⁸ T.V. BUTTREY, *The Coins* [in:] *Apollonia, the Port of Cyrene: Excavations by the University of Michigan, 1965-67*, J. Humphrey ed. [Libya Antiqua Suppl., vol. 4], Tripoli 1976, p. 361-370.

¹⁹ *Idem*, *The Coins* [in:] *The Extramural Sanctuary of Demeter*

and Persephone at Cyrene, Libya. Final Reports, vol. 6, D. White ed. [University Michigan Monograph, vol. 97], Philadelphia 1997, p. 1-66.

²⁰ R. REECE, *The Coins* [in:] *Excavations at Sidi Khrebish, Benghazi (Berenice)*, vol. 1 [Libya Antiqua Suppl., vol. 5], London 1977, p. 229-232.

²¹ JAWORSKI, op.cit.

²² The origin of these three types of small Ptolemaic bronzes (Ptolemy I/head of Libya, Zeus-Ammon/eagle, Zeus-Ammon/headdress of Isis) raises some controversy. Of the mentioned types, Robinson (E.S.G. ROBINSON, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Cyrenaica [in the British Museum]*, London 1927 = *BMCCyr*), was inclined to see only the coins with Libya's head on the obverse as actually coming from Cyrenaica. Earlier, Svoronos (J. SVORONOS, *Ta Nomismata tou Kratous ton Ptolemaion*, Athens 1904-1908), attributed the other two types to Egypt, while Kromann and Mørkholm, (A. KROMANN, O. MØRKHOLM, *SNG Copenhagen*, vol. 40, *Egypt: The Ptolemies*, Copenhagen 1977) believed them to come from some unidentified Cypriot mint. In the opinion of Buttrey (T.V. BUTTREY, *The Roman coinage of the Cyrenaica, first century BC to first century AD* [in:] *Studies in Numismatic Method presented to Philip Grierson*, C.N.L. Brooke et al. eds, Cambridge 1983, p. 37 and note 1) the sheer volume of finds of small Ptolemaic bronzes in Cyrenaica (confirmed also for the material from Ptolemais) points to their local provenance. The present author is inclined to agree with this view, pointing out at the same time the progressive barbarization, in both iconographic and epigraphic sense, of these coins.

coast). The first issues were linked with the conquest of Crete by Quintus Metellus in 67 A.C. and the founding of the province of Crete and Cyrenaica, combining together Greek-speaking regions that had previously had a different history, different geopolitical position and minting tradition²³. The Romans left the local denominations in each of these regions, sporadically introducing bronze coins that corresponded at first with the local weight standards and later with their own, Roman standards. The first Roman issues (dated to 67- ca 40 A.C.) emphasized the establishment of a common province. On coins of the first issue, which were modeled on Cretan coinage (type: Head of Roma/bee), Greek legends appeared: POMI or KPHT/KYPA²⁴. Second-issue coins (type: bust of Libya/bust of Crete-Artemis), which are difficult to date exactly, were struck by the otherwise unknown officials P. Licinius and P. Lepidus²⁵, and bore the full legend: AIBYH/KPHTA²⁶.

Successive issues, bearing names of Roman officials nominated to serve in the province, introduced Roman weight standards in Crete as well as in Cyrenaica²⁷ (uncial at first, later semuncial, finally complying with Augustus' reform). The coins of L. Lollius (Fig. 4)²⁸, and later also P. Canidius Crassus²⁹, were struck parallel for Crete and Cyrenaica. They have the same types of obverse and reverse, differing solely in the legend: Greek for Cyrenaica, Latin for Crete. The coins for Cyrenaica were struck presumably in Cyrene, those for Crete at Knossos. Denominations in circulation must have corresponded with the Roman *as*, *semis* and *quadrans*. Lollius' issues (with the characteristic curule chair featured on the reverse) preceded those of Crassus, but cannot be dated

easily. The crocodile symbolizing Egypt's rule on Crassus' coins indicates that they were struck after 37 A.C.³⁰, when Marc Anthony offered the joint province (with the exception of Knossos, where a Roman colony was established a year later) to Cleopatra. Crassus' issues, struck mainly in the mints in Knossos and Cyrene (but also Ptolemais³¹), are the last joint coinage of Crete and Cyrenaica. Even so, local coins continue to circulate between the two parts of the province, as indicated, among others, by a unique find from the Polish excavations at Ptolemais (Fig. 5): halved *as* of Kydas³², allegedly Anthony's man, who took the highest office in Knossos in 37 A.C. Despite its rarity, the find is not surprising, considering that both Cretan and Cyrenaican issues were being adapted to Roman weight standards³³.

The first Roman official to strike a coin with Greek legend exclusively for Cyrenaica was A. Pupius Rufus³⁴. His ases bear a head of Zeus-Ammon and the curule chair between two *fasces*, already featured on Lollius' coins (Fig. 6). A ram is represented on the reverses of Pupius' *semis*, a coiled serpent on the quadranses.

In 2005, the Polish excavations at Ptolemais yielded the most unique find in this context: a *quadrans* of Pupius Rufus with a previously unknown legend on the obverse (Fig. 7). Only a few bronzes of this type are known³⁵; the obverse features a head of Libya with the Latin letter L (signifying Libya) and the reverse a coiled serpent between letters reading Pupius in Greek (ΠΟΥΠΙΟC). The coin from the Polish excavations at Ptolemais³⁶, preserved in good condition, shows the Greek letters ΠΤ instead of the L on the obverse. This

²³ For coinage of Crete and Cyrenaica in the 1st century A.C., see i.a.: BUTTREY, *Crete and Cyrenaica*, op.cit., p. 165-174; A.E. CHAPMAN, *Some First Century B.C. Bronze Coins of Knossos*, NumChron 8, 1968, p. 13-26; G. PERL, *Die römischen Provinzbeamten in Cyrenae und Creta zur Zeit der Republik*, Klio 52, 1970, p. 319-354 (cf. also: Nachträge, Klio 53, 1971, p. 369-379).

²⁴ BMCCyr, op.cit., p. ccii-cciii; p. 113 (no. 1, pl. XXXIX.4). Cf. BUTTREY, *ibidem*, p. 168.

²⁵ Some believe these issues to have been struck in the late 40s A.C. The P. Lepidus from the coins can be identified with Paullus Aemilius Lepidus: R.D. WEIGEL, *A Note on P. Lepidus*, Classical Philology 73, 1978, fasc. 1, p. 42-45.

²⁶ BMCCyr, op.cit., p. cciii; p. 113 (no. 2, 2bis, pl. XXXIX.5-6).

²⁷ The case of local Cyrenaican coinage of the 1st century A.C. being adapted to Roman weight standards was analyzed in depth by Buttrey: BUTTREY, *The Roman coinage of the Cyrenaica*, op.cit., p. 33 sq. The present author follows Buttrey's proposition of local coinage denominations in circulation in Cyrenaica at the time.

²⁸ BMCCyr, op.cit., p. cciii-ccvii; p. 114-116 (no. 3-23, pl.

XXXIX.10-XLII.7).

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. ccvii-ccviii; p. 117 (no. 24-26, pl. XLII.8-12).

³⁰ BUTTREY, *The Roman coinage of the Cyrenaica*, op.cit., p. 31.

³¹ See below.

³² Discovered in 2005. Unpublished coin: BMC 53-59 (W. WROTH, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Crete and the Aegean Islands [in the British Museum]*, London 1886) – erroneously dated issue of Kydas. See CHAPMAN, op.cit., p. 21 sq.; BUTTREY, *Crete and Cyrenaica*, op.cit., p. 171.

³³ Two ases of Crassus originating from Crete and overstruck by Kydas, now in the British Museum: CHAPMAN, op.cit., p. 21.

³⁴ BMCCyr, op.cit., p. ccxxii-ccxxiii; p. 117-119 (nos. 27-35, pl. XLIII.1-6).

³⁵ Among others: BMCCyr 35: *ibidem*; SNG Copenhagen, vol. 41, *Alexandria – Cyrenaica*, Copenhagen 1974, no. 1317; C.H.V. SUTHERLAND, C.M. KRAAY, *Catalogue of Coins of the Roman Empire in the Ashmolean Museum*, vol. 1, *Augustus (c. 31 BC-AD 14)*, Oxford 1975, no. 835.

³⁶ Ptolemais museum, inv. no. cn/90/05; diameter: 16 mm, weight: 3.09 g.

form of abbreviation of the name of the town of Ptolemais has been recorded on two bronze coins of the popular type with the head of Ptolemy I and the head of Libya³⁷. Also known in two examples³⁸, a coin of Crassus with the Tyche of a town³⁹ on the obverse and a crocodile on the reverse (Fig. 8), features the full form of the name of the city: ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙ. Because of the rareness of the find, the possibility that Crassus actually established a mint in Ptolemais has been treated by some scholars with due caution. Unlike its mother town, Barca, Ptolemais does not seem to have had, apart from these examples, any minting tradition of its own.

The *quadrans* discovered by the Polish expedition in 2005 could be held as evidence for a mint in Ptolemais, established by Crassus and still operating in the times of his successor, Pupius Rufus. Following this line of reasoning, it would seem that just like in the times of Crassus, there were two versions of the coin in circulation simultaneously: those from Cyrene marked with the letters L and Λ and those from Ptolemais with the letters ΠΤ.

The discovery has also focused attention on a number of issues that require detailed study and further discussion.

- For one, has the head on the obverse of Pupius Rufus' quadrans been identified properly as Libya⁴⁰, or is it perhaps Apollo (no characteristically feminine features make the representation very much akin to the images of Apollo on earlier semises of Lollius⁴¹ and Crassus⁴²)?

- Is the coiled serpent on the reverse a depiction of Agathodaimon⁴³ (the form on the coin is distant from the well-known Alexandrian iconography, while approaching

the local iconographic tradition⁴⁴)? After all, ever since Alexander the Great, who was worshipped in Alexandria in his own temple, as well as in a temple dedicated to this "good deity", considered as the patron deity of the metropolis, the Ptolemies were known to establish temples of Agathodaimon as places of their own cult⁴⁵. For example, Ptolemais in Upper Egypt was a center of worship of its founder, Ptolemy I Soter and Psoi, the Egyptian name of the town, correspondent to the Greek *agathos daimon*⁴⁶.

- Was the mint in Ptolemais issuing all the denominations in circulation in the times of Crassus and Pupius Rufus, or only this denomination introduced by these officials (as by Crassus and quadrans by Pupius Rufus)?

- What were the circumstances of the founding and operating of the mint in Ptolemais? What role did political events and military action in the region play? How often were these issues struck, what was their volume and territorial range?

To return to the history of Roman coinage in Cyrenaica, the year after Actium, bronze *as* (Fig. 9) and *as semis* coins with legends referring solely to Cleopatra and Marc Anthony on either side (ΑΝΤΩΝΙΑΝΗ//ΒΑΣΙΛΙΑ/ΘΕΑ/ΝΕ)⁴⁷ were struck in Cyrenaica, which remained under Cleopatra's control at the time. The attribution of these coins, which were nothing but carriers of official titles⁴⁸ and bore no connection with local iconographic tradition, had been heavily discussed in older literature⁴⁹. Today, there is no doubt as to the attribution of these coins, found in Cyrenaica also as halved examples⁵⁰, to Cyrene.

³⁷ SVORONOS, *op.cit.*, no. 859 (pl. XXXIV.11); SNG Copenhagen, vol. 40, *op.cit.*, no. 438. The letters ΠΤ were attributed to Ptolemais by E.S.G. Robinson, who included the coin as his group four of the Ptolemy I/head of Libya type, dated to 221- c. 140 A.C.: *BMCCyr*, *op.cit.*, p. cxlv, clx.

³⁸ SVORONOS, *op.cit.*, no. 1901a (from Athens) and 1901b (from Vienna), pl. LXIII.27-28; *BMCCyr*, *op.cit.*, p. ccvi, pl. XLII.10 (from Vienna). More on the mints of Crassus: BUTTREY, *The Roman coinage of the Cyrenaica*, *op.cit.*, p. 25; he mentions seeing a coin of this type in the office of the Department of Antiquities in Shahat (Cyrene), where Tyche's head was accompanied apparently by the letters (K)Y(P)A.

³⁹ F. CANCELANI, *Ptolemais II*, [in:] LIMC, vol. 7, fasc. 1, Zürich-München 1994, p. 588; cf. L. GUERRINI, *Tyche della città in Tolemaide di Cirenaica*, *QuadALibia* 10, 1979, p. 15-26.

⁴⁰ Robinson was the first to remark on the practical impossibility of differentiating Libya from Apollo on Cyrenaican coins from the Roman period, cf. ROBINSON: *BMCCyr*, *op.cit.*, p. ccxlix-ccl.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 116, no. 21-23, pl. XLII.2-3 and XLII.5.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 117, no. 25, 25bis, pl. XLII.9.

⁴³ F. GRAF, *Agathos Daimon* [in:] *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, vol. 1, Stuttgart-Weimar 1996, col. 242-243;

F. DUNAND, *Agathodaimon* [in:] LIMC, vol. 1, fasc. 1, Zürich-München 1981, p. 277-282.

⁴⁴ A stone altar with similar image of a coiled serpent is found in the Museum in Cyrene. It is linked with the worship of Isis and originates from the sanctuary in Martuba: *Cirene*, N. Bonacasa, S. Ensoli eds, Milano 2000, p. 213. E. S. G. Robinson is of the opinion that the serpent could have been connected with the worship of Asclepius or Zeus-Amon: *BMCCyr*, *op.cit.*, p. ccxxiii.

⁴⁵ L.R. TAYLOR, *The Cult of Alexander at Alexandria*, *Classical Philology* 22, 1927, fasc. 2, p. 162-169.

⁴⁶ *Eadem*, *Alexander and the Serpent of Alexandria*, *Classical Philology* 25, 1930, fasc. 4, p. 377.

⁴⁷ SVORONOS, *op.cit.*, nos. 1899-1900, pl. LXIII.26.

⁴⁸ Cf. T.V. BUTTREY, "Thea neotera" on coins of Anthony and Cleopatra, *ANS MN* 6, 1954, p. 95-109.

⁴⁹ Discussion on this issue reported by Buttrey: BUTTREY, *The Roman coinage of the Cyrenaica*, *op.cit.*, p. 26-27.

⁵⁰ Two halved ases of this type are known from the region of Cyrenaica, one from the American excavations in Cyrene: BUTTREY, *The Coins*, *op.cit.*, cat. no. 742, and the other from the Polish excavations in Ptolemais: JAWORSKI, *op.cit.*, cat. no. 49.

A wartime incident, when Scarpus⁵¹ issued in Cyrenaica in 31 A.C.⁵² *denarii* (later also *quinarii*), first for Marc Anthony and then for Octavian, to satisfy army demand, can hardly be considered as part of the history of local coinage in Roman times despite the head of Zeus-Ammon appearing on these coins. Examples of this group of coins have yet to be found in Cyrenaica.

Local issues of the last quarter of the 1st century A.C. complied with the monetary reform introduced by Augustus. Denominations like the *dupondius*, *as*, *semis* and *quadrans* were brought into circulation (the latter two only at the beginning). They already bore Latin legends, including imperial titles. While they reveal clear borrowings from Roman bronzes⁵³, they are at the same time much more awkward in the drawing style used for the dies. The *as* of an official named Scato⁵⁴ (Fig. 10), struck after 23 A.C., featured a portrait of Augustus on the obverse (double portrait of Augustus and Agrippa on the obverse of the *dupondius*) and the traditional motif of the curule chair on the reverse. It is noteworthy that Scato borrowed from Pupius Rufus the *semis* with a ram on the obverse and the *quadrans* with the serpent.

The bronzes of successive officials, Capito⁵⁵ and Palikanus⁵⁶ (Fig. 11), are not well researched as a group⁵⁷; it is certain, however, that they were the last to be struck in Cyrenaica in the 1st century A.C. On the obverse of the *dupondius* and *as* minted at their order, the imperial titles were framed in a wreath, while the reverse featured the well-known motif of curule chair. The letters PR by the officials' names could be understood as meaning an abbreviation from *praetor* or *pro consul*.

The last episode in the Roman coinage of Cyrenaica in the studied period is connected with the three different denominations, struck in the reign of Tiberius⁵⁸ (Fig. 12). Greek legends returned in these issues, but the "barbarization" of the style had gone even further. The head of Drusus appeared on the obverse of the *dupondius* and *as*, and a standing camel on the

obverse of the *semis* (motif on the Greek *semis* of Lollius). On the reverses of all the denominations, there were portraits of Drusus' twin sons, Tiberius and Germanicus. These issues have been dated to the period prior to A.D. 19 (the twins' birth) and A.D. 23 (death of Germanicus).

Interestingly, a vast majority of large bronze denominations from the discussed period, originating from the Polish excavations at Ptolemais, has been halved. Getting smaller denominations (*semis* in this case and less often *quadrans*) by dividing ases into halves or even quarters, and thus meeting the demand for small currency on the internal market is a phenomenon that is well known to specialists and described, especially in reference to the western parts of the Empire⁵⁹. In Poland the issue was treated in detail by A. Kunisz, who however marginalized its occurrence in the East⁶⁰. It is interesting to note that the halved coins from Ptolemais included not only Roman issues (*as* of Tiberius and two ases of Caligula)⁶¹, but also and in superior numbers, coins from local Greek mints (Cyrene, but also Syracuse and Knossos). This was made possible by the process of adapting the local weight system to Roman standards, which occurred in the 1st century A.C. A halved coin of Hieron II of Syracuse is irrefutable proof for coins of the 3rd century A.C. remaining in circulation for long periods of time.

The numismatic finds from Ptolemais constitute the biggest yet collection of identified coins documenting this phenomenon from Cyrenaica (Tabela 2)⁶². Barring one exception⁶³, all the big bronzes from the end of the 1st century A.C. and beginning of the 1st century A.D., excavated by the Polish expedition, are cut examples. Certain trends can be noted despite the fact that the few dozen finds from Cyrenaica, as a whole cannot yet support statistical analysis. The issue of halved coins in Cyrenaican economy requires further study, offering the opportunity to fill in gaps in the knowledge of the economic and political life of Ptolemais and Cyrenaica in the early Imperial period, especially as each new field

⁵¹ M.H. CRAWFORD, *Roman Republican Coinage*, vol. 1, Cambridge 1995, no. 546 (p. 542-543), pl. LXIV.

⁵² Cf. BUTTREY, *The Roman coinage of the Cyrenaica*, op.cit., p. 32.

⁵³ Ibidem, p. 28.

⁵⁴ BMCCyr, op.cit., p. ccxxiii-ccxxiv; p. 119-120 (no. 36-43, pl. XLIII.7-10).

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. ccvii-ccviii, ccxxv (no. 48b-c, pl. XLIV.5-6).

⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. ccvii, ccxxiv-ccxxv; p. 120-121 (no. 44-48, pl. XLIV.1-4).

⁵⁷ BUTTREY, *The Roman coinage of the Cyrenaica*, op.cit., p. 28-29.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 29; BMCCyr, op.cit., p. ccxxv-ccxxvi; p. 121 (no.

49-52, pl. XLIV.7-10).

⁵⁹ Cf. T.V. BUTTREY, *Halved coins, the Augustan reform, and Horace, Odes I.3*, AJA 76, 1972, p. 31-48.

⁶⁰ A. KUNISZ, *Pieniądz zastępczy i jego rola w ekonomice państwa rzymskiego w początkach Cesarstwa (27 r. p.n.e.-68 r. n.e.)*, Katowice 1984, p. 115, 133.

⁶¹ JAWORSKI, op.cit., cat. no. 67-69.

⁶² Finds of halved coins from Cyrenaica were listed by Buttrey: BUTTREY, *The Roman coinage of the Cyrenaica*, op.cit., p. 30, 36-37. The present author has been able to trace 36 coins, including the examples from Polish excavations, belonging to this group.

⁶³ *As* of Marc Anthony and Cleopatra VII: JAWORSKI, op.cit., cat. no. 48.

season of the Polish mission adds to the number of known halved coins.

After Drusus struck his coin, Roman coinage in Cyrenaica disappeared for close to a century. Numerous finds in Cyrenaica (also a few dozen from Ptolemais) of silver and bronze coins of Trajan, followed by only bronze coins of Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius, the latter mostly with a characteristic image of Zeus-Amon on the reverse, point to a second important period in the history of local coinage in Roman times. Erroneous assumptions have led to these coins being attributed to a mint in the

distant Cappadocian Caesarea⁶⁴. Numismatists working in Cyrenaica have questioned this opinion in view of the fact that every dig in the region regularly yields from a few to a few dozen examples of this group of coins. Nonetheless, they have still to explain the circumstances of the introduction of these issues into circulation in Cyrenaica. That however is a question exceeding the chronological framework of this presentation.

Translated by Iwona Zych

Abbreviations

ANS MN	American Numismatic Society Museum Notes
SNG Copenhagen	Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum

PIOTR JAWORSKI (*IA UW*)

CYRENAICAN COINAGE FROM THE BEGINNING OF ROMAN RULE. NEW EVIDENCE FROM PTOLEMAIS

SUMMARY

Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the so-called Villa with a View in Ptolemais, have contributed significantly to knowledge of town history and development.

Numismatics is one field in which substantial verification as well as new evidence has been collected.

Current finds by the Polish mission, have helped to re-think Cyrenaican coinage in both the Hellenistic and Roman periods, especially with regard to local issues from the beginning of Imperial rule, which are presented in the article.

⁶⁴ This status was fixed further still by Sydenham's otherwise valuable publication: E.A. SYDENHAM, *The Coinage of*

Caesarea in Cappadocia, London 1933, issued again in 1978 with partly revised attributions for this group of coins.

Tabela 2. Cut coins (1/2 and 1/4) found in Cyrenaica

		n u m b e r o f i t e m s				total
		BERENICE ¹	PTOLEMAIS ²	CYRENE ³	APOLLONIA ⁴	
HELLENISTIC	Cyrene ⁵	–	1	1	–	2
	Syracuse	–	1	–	–	1
	Phoenicia	–	–	1 ⁶	–	1
	Knossos	–	1	–	–	1
	other ⁷	2	–	–	–	2
ROMAN REPUBLIC		2	–	–	1	3
ROMAN CYRENAICA	L. Lollius	–	1	1 ⁸	–	2
	Crassus	–	–	–	–	–
	A. Pupius Rufus	6	2	3	–	11
	M. Anthony and Cleopatra	–	1	1	–	2
	Scato	–	1	2	1	4
	Capito	–	–	–	–	–
	Palikanus	–	1	–	–	1
	Tiberius (Drusus)	–	–	–	–	–
ROMAN EMPIRE	Tiberius	(3) ⁹	1	–	–	6
	Caligula		2	–	–	
total		13	12	9	2	36

¹ R. Reece, *The Coins* [in:] *Excavations at Sidi Khrebish Benghazi (Berenice)*, vol. 1, London 1977, p. 229-232. ² P. Jaworski, *Ancient coins from the Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology Excavations at Ptolemais, Libya (2002-2004)*, *Archeologia Warsz* 56, 2005 (includes unpublished finds from the 2005 season). ³ T.V. Buttrey, *The Roman coinage of the Cyrenaica, first century BC to first century AD* [in:] *Studies in Numismatic Method presented to Philip Grierson*, Cambridge 1983, p. 30, 36-37; idem, *The Coins* [in:] *The Extramural Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone at Cyrene, Libya. Final Reports*, vol. 6, Philadelphia 1997, p. 7, cat. no.: 199, 737, 742. ⁴ Ibidem, *The Roman coinage of the Cyrenaica*, p. 30. ⁵ Type Soter/Libia, 221-140 A.C. ⁶ 1/4 of Phoenician didrachm, 261-258 A.C.: Buttrey, *Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone*, op.cit., cat. no. 199. ⁷ 1/2 and 1/4 of uncertain Hellenistic coins ("large horse's head on the obverse, and possibly a prow on the reverse"): Reece, op.cit., p. 230. ⁸ 1/4 of as: Buttrey, *Sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone*, op.cit., cat. no. 737. ⁹ 1 cent. A.D., illegible: Reece, op.cit., p. 230.



Fig. 1. Bronze coin struck in Cyrene (Koinon, ca 250-246 B.C.). Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the Villa with a View in Ptolemais, drawn by A. Dłuska

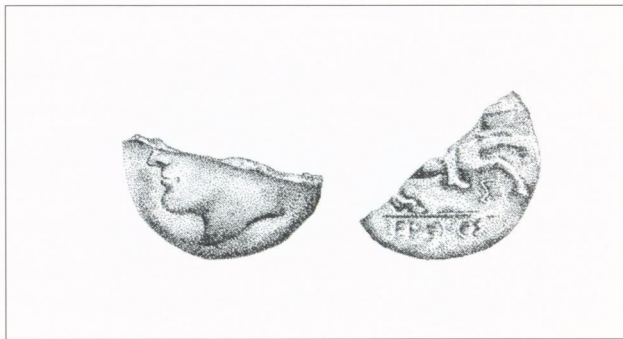


Fig. 2. Halved coin of Hieron II (275-215 B.C.), struck in Syracuse, Sicily. Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the Villa with a View at Ptolemais, drawn by A. Dłuska



Fig. 3. Reverse types of small Ptolemaic bronzes struck in Cyrenaica, remained in use long after the arrival of the Romans. Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the Villa with a View in Ptolemais, drawn by A. Dłuska

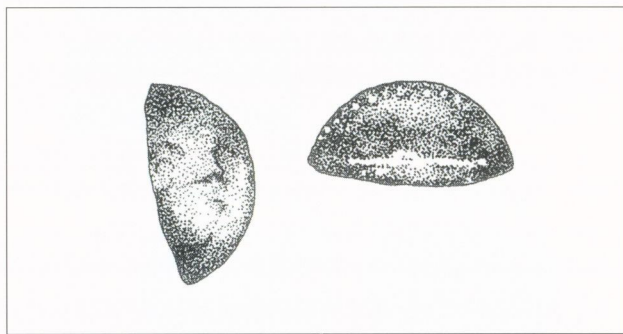


Fig. 4. Halved as of L. Lollius, struck in Cyrene. Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the Villa with a View in Ptolemais, drawn by A. Dłuska

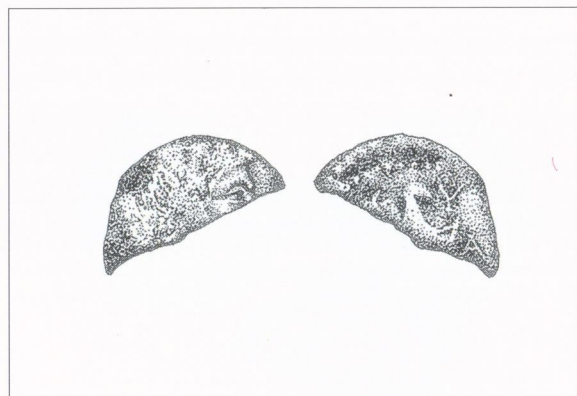


Fig. 5. Halved as of Kydas (37 B.C.), struck in Knossos, Crete. Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the Villa with a View in Ptolemais, drawn by A. Dłuska



Fig. 6. Halved ases of A. Pupius Rufus, struck in Cyrene. Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the Villa with a View in Ptolemais, drawn by A. Dłuska

PLATE 2



Fig. 7. *Quadrans* of A. Pupius Rufus, struck in Ptolemais(?). Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the Villa with a View in Ptolemais, drawn by A. Dłuska



Fig. 8. *As* of P. Canidius Crassus struck in Ptolemais, features the name of the city: ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙ. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, drawn by A. Dłuska



Fig. 9. *As* of M. Anthony and Cleopatra VII, struck in Cyrenaica. Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the Villa with a View in Ptolemais, drawn by A. Dłuska

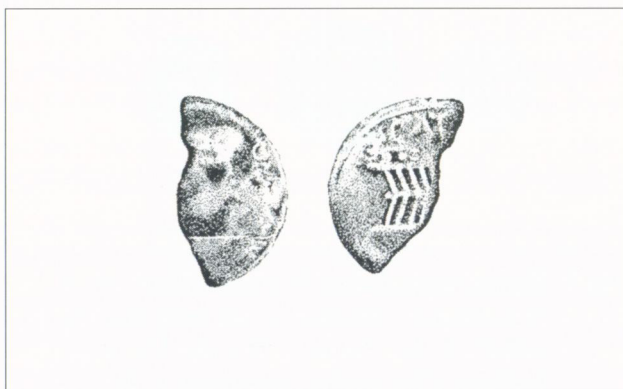


Fig. 10. Halved *as* of Scato, struck in Cyrene. Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the Villa with a View in Ptolemais, drawn by A. Dłuska

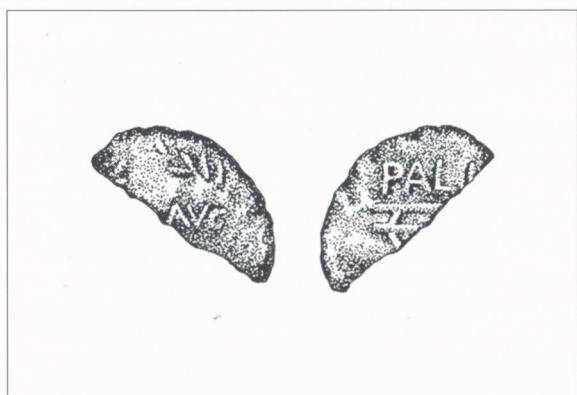


Fig. 11. Halved *as* of Palikanus, struck in Cyrene. Warsaw University Institute of Archaeology excavations at the Villa with a View in Ptolemais, drawn by A. Dłuska



Fig. 12. *As* of Drusus struck in Cyrenaica. Ptolemais museum, drawn by A. Dłuska