

# STELLAR SYMBOLS ON ANCIENT COINS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE - PART IV: 235–285 AD

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*Abstract.* We continue to present and describe some ancient Roman coins with astronomical symbols like the Sun, the crescent Moon, the Zodiac signs, the stars etc. Besides, information about the place they were found, or the city in which they were issued, as well as the estimated time is also given. The coins presented in this Paper correspond to the Roman Empire covering a period of 50 years: 235–285 AD.

*Key words:* Astronomy in culture – ancient Roman coins – Roman emperors – myths – stellar symbols.

## 1. PROLOGUE

In three previous papers, (Rovithis-Livaniou and Rovithis, 2015a, 2015b and 2017, hereafter referred as Papers I, II and III, respectively), some ancient coins of the Roman Empire with astronomical symbols were shown. The presentation of these coins covered respectively the time intervals: I) 27 BC - 96 AD, *i.e.* from Augustus to Domitian; II) 97 - 192 AD, *i.e.* the Nervan-Antonian dynasty and III) 193–235 AD corresponding mainly to the Severan dynasty, which ended with the murder of Alexander Severus. Thus, the basic for the Roman numismatic system has been some how been referred and is not necessary to repeat a lot of things.

Even so, it is worthwhile to be noticed that the silver contained the basic silver Roman coin, *denarius*, was slowly decline with time. For example from the 4.5 g of pure silver it originally contained, it gradually reduced to 4 g, and to 3.8g, (Nero era), while underwent two noticeable reduces during the Severan dynasty, (see Paper III).

Besides, is mentioned that the composition of the silver coin introduced by Caracalla, *antonianus*, was 1 part of silver to 20 parts of copper. That is 1/20 or simply 21, which was referred on the reverse side of the coins as: XXI or KA in Latin and Greek, respectively.

In the present work the period 235 to 285 AD is examined. During the 50y it covers, 26 different persons served as Emperors, counting separately the sons of some of them, even if reign together with their fathers. To be able to examine better





Fig. 2 – Coins issued during Maximinus regime from Phocaea<sup>[4]</sup>, left, and Anazarbus, middle and right; Obverses: Bust of Maximinus and Maxinus<sup>[5]</sup> in the left, of Maximus in middle and right, legends; Reverses, Left: Dioscourai standing holding spears, stars in left and right, legend; Middle: 10-style temple, star on pediment; Right: Arched shrine zodiac wheel within, goddess with bull below, flanked by Victories, sun above, date in exergue, legend.

### 3. THE INTERVAL 238 - 249 AD

Gordian III, grandson of Gordian I, was Emperor for almost 6 years, *i.e.* from 22 April of 238 till the 11th of February 244 AD. Then, and from 244 to 249, Philip I<sup>[10]</sup>, known as *the Arab*, and his son Philip II<sup>[11]</sup>, served as Emperors.

From the coins with astronomical symbols issued during Gordian's III regime we've chosen and give some in Figs 3 and 4, avoid showing those with similar reverses issued during previous Emperors regimes. Such is for example a coin from Carchae, Mesopotamia, with a star inside a crescent moon. Among the coins of Fig. 3 there is one from Anazarbus with Gordian's III wife, Tranquillina on obverse. This coin was included here, because in others with similar reverses only 7 stars inside or around a crescent moon were shown and not the head of goddess *Selene* herself, as in this one.



Fig. 3 – Coins of Gordian III epoch (238-244) AD, from various places; Obverses left and middle: Bust of Gordian III, with crowned or laureate his head, legend with his name in Greek; Obverse right: Bust of Tranquillina, legend with her name in Greek; Reverses, left: *Helios* facing *Selene*, as man and woman in the centre, all within a wheel of the 12 sign of Zodiac cycle, middle: Standing *Helios* with raised one hand and holding globe<sup>[12]</sup> with the other; right: Bust of *Selene* on crescent, 7 stars above, legend giving the name of the city and referring that it is a Famous Metropolis.

It is worthwhile to mention that the Romans in their old religion worshiped god *Helios* as Sol=Helios INDIGES, who later identify with Mithra. They also worship their Emperors like gods. For example Julius Caesar was deified after his assassination and a temple was dedicated to him; Augustus and his second wife Livia were presented on coins as god *Helios* and goddess *Selene*, with a star and a crescent moon

above their heads (see Papers I and II, respectively); similarly Nero and Octavia.

Besides, many Emperors appeared with crown heads, or they issued coins where on reverses the crown head of god *Helios* appears.

On the other hand, the busts of all Empresses given in the present work are shown *resting on crescent*. For this reason, only few of such coins will be presented here.

The worship of god *Helios* became one of the greatest Roman gods by Emperor Heliogabalus, (see for example Fig. 9, as well Appendix number [2], of Paper III), who constructed a luxurious temple for this god on the Palatine hill. Although there were some attempts to abolish this god's worship, it not only came back, but it strengthened by Emperor Aurelian. The latter introduced an official way for god *Helios* worship, carried his statue from Palmyra, and from now on the god was known as *Sol INVICTUS*, meaning the *Unconquered Sun*.



Fig. 4 – Coins of Gordian III epoch (238–244) AD, from various places; Obverses left and middle: Bust of Gordian III, with crowned or laureate his head, legend with his name in Greek; Obverse right: Bust of Tranquillina, legend with her name in Greek; Reverses, left: Head king Abgar X<sup>[13]</sup>, legend with his name and dignity, star behind; middle: Dionysos seated on cista mystica in a large crescent moon with 3 stars, Greek legend, coin from Magnesia ad Maeandrum, Ionia ; right: Tyche holding corn ears, Sagittarius above her head, river-god swimming down.

It is also worthwhile to notice that in our research of the Roman coinage up to now, we've found and shown many coins of god *Helios* where usually either only his radiated head, (e.g. third coin of Fig. 9, Paper III), or the god driving his quadriga were presented, (e.g. coin d in Fig. 2 of Paper II). Besides, the god was presented standing, or seating on top of mount Argaeus on coins from Cappadocia, (e.g. the right coin in Fig 6 of Paper II, or the third coin in Fig. 16 of Paper III); while from Heliogabalus era the god is presented with radiated head standing or walking, (e.g. the third coin in Fig. 9, of Paper III).

On the other hand, as we see in the middle coin of Fig. 3 the god is standing having one hand raised and *holding globe* with the other.

Except the left coin of the previous Fig. 3, Gordian III issued another similar from Perinthos, showing *Jupiter* seated at the centre and around the 12 Zodiac signs. Besides, except the middle coin of the same figure in which on reverse god *Helios* appears holding the globe, Gordian III issued some others where *Providentia*, *Jupiter*, or even he himself, is presenting holding it. Since all these coins are very similar, and

their only difference is the person who holds the globe, they are not presented here. Similarly, and because during next Emperors' regimes issued coins showing either god *Helios* holding globe, or *Providentia* holding it, they will not be presented, except if there is something special or more on them.

Some of the coins with astronomical symbols issued during Philip I and II regimes are presented in Fig. 5, continuing our policy not giving coins with reverses similar to those issued by previous Emperors. Besides, it was not presented a coin from Perga showing Philip's I bust on globe, although it seems he was the first to be presented in such a way, with Trajan Decius being the second.

Philip's I wife, Otacilia Severa, is shown in the right coin of Fig. 5 with her bust in crescent, as goddess *Selene*, and as other Empresses had done.

On the other hand, continuing our policy not giving coins with reverses similar to those issued by previous Emperors, we did not include here these showing a Capricorn on globe.



Fig. 5 – Coins of Philip I and II from various areas of Syria; Obverse left: Busts of Philip I and II facing each other, legend, Reverse: City's goddess *Tychae*, Ram above her head, star in down left field and legend in Greek with citizens name; Obverse, middle: Crown head of Philip I, legend; Reverse: 4-column temple of *Jupiter*, Ram running down; Obverse right: Otacilia's bust, resting in crescent; Reverse: 4-column temple of *Tychae* on a walled grove in elongated view, Ram<sup>[14]</sup> down, legend.

It is also mentioned that there are coins similar to the left of Fig. 5, showing only the bust of Philip I; and similar to the middle one with the bust of Philip II having as countermark an eagle with close wings. Besides there are coins quite similar to the right of Fig. 5 with the tetra-style temple of *Tyche* where above a Ram is leaping right, while below the river-god *Orontes* is swimming. From the next Emperors Hostilian, Trebonianus Gallus and his son, as well as Valerian issued such coins, too.

#### 4. THE INTERVAL 249–268 AD

From September 249 AD and till September 268 the following persons served as Emperors: Trajan Decius<sup>[15]</sup>, his son Herennius Etruscus, Hostilian<sup>[16]</sup>, Trebonianus Gallus and his son Volusianus<sup>[17]</sup>, Aemilian<sup>[18]</sup>, Valerian<sup>[19]</sup> with his son Gallienus<sup>[20]</sup> and finally Gallienus alone.

Before see what coins with astronomical symbols issued during the regimes of the foregoing mentioned Emperors, it is worthwhile to mention that some coins from

semi-autonomous places show on their obverses not the head of the corresponding Emperor, but others. Such are for example some coins from Tralleis, or Attuda, on which the heads of Claudia Parliament, (Fig. 6 left), or the local gods *Serapis* and *Men*<sup>[21]</sup>, were presented. The Phrygian god *Men* is also appeared on coins issued during many other Emperors' regimes, but on their reverses. From the coins where god *Men* is shown, two have been chosen and given: one with the god on obverse, (Fig. 6, middle) and another with him on reverse, (Fig. 6, right). These coins were chosen because the god's Phrygian hat is decorated with stars.



Fig. 6 – left: Coin from Tralleis, 238-244 AD, semi-autonomous; Obverse: Bust of Claudia Parliament, according to the Greek legend, Reverse: Standing *Tyche* with cornucopia, star right below, legend; Middle: Coin from Attuda semi-autonomous, 240-268 AD; Obverse: Bust of god *Men* resting in meniscus and with Phrygian hat decorated with stars, legend MHN in Greek, Reverse: Altar surmounted by 2 smaller between 3 pine cones, legend; Obverse, right: Crown head of Philip II, legend, Reverse: Bust of god *Men* with crescent in shoulders, and wearing Phrygian cap decorated with stars, legend.

The coins with astronomical symbols issued during Trajan Decius epoch and coming from various parts of the Eastern Roman Empire represent either Trajan Decius, his wife Herenia Etruscila, or his son Herennius Etruscus, and in general remind these of previous Emperors. (As the coin from Perga, where the bust of Trajan Decius is shown on globe, and to which we've already referred). So, they are not given here. Especially, and regarding Herenia Etruscila in all coins she appears on obverse with her bust resting in crescent, as referred that many other Empresses had done. Concerning the reverses of these coins various different themes are shown depending on the region.

Similarly, the coins with astronomical symbols issued during Trebonianus Gallus and his son Volusianus regime, remind those of earlier Emperors; thus, they are not presented here. For Volusianus for instance, one can find coins from Aegae, Cilicia, showing a Capricorn; or goddess *Selene* and 7 stars on their reverses. From all coins issued during Trebonianus Gallus regime, only one has been chosen and given, (Fig. 7, left), because it represents *together* the heads of god *Helios* and goddess *Selene*.

On the other hand, none or very few are the coins with astronomical symbols issued during the very short Aemilian's regime. On the contrary concerning Valerian, who served as Emperor for 7 years with his son Gallienus, *joint reign*, and then

Gallienus alone for another 8 years, *sole reign*, they issued a large number of coins with astronomical symbols. The reverses of most of these coins, and especially these with the head of Valerian, are similar to those of previous Emperors. Thus, they were not included here; besides, even during the joint reign the name of Gallienus is referred on most of them. Thus, we limited to only two of the Valerian's coins, (Fig. 7 middle and right), while give more for Gallienus, (Figs. 8 and 9). Since in Figs. 8 and 9 the crowned head of Gallienus is shown, only the description of their reverses is given.



Fig. 7 – Left: Coin of Trebonianus Gallus from Sagalassus, Pisidia, (251-253) AD. Obverse: Laureate head of Trebonianus Gallus and legend in Greek. Reverse: Conjoined draped busts of Selene and Helios, crescent moon in front, legend with the citizens' name in Greek. Middle and Right: Coins of Valerian, joint reign, 253-260 AD. Middle: Rome mint. Right: Aegae, Cilicia. Obverse middle: Crown head of Emperor, legend. Reverse: Emperor seated holding globe, legend. Obverse right: Head of Valerian holding serpent entwined sceptre, Greek legend with Emperor's name. Reverse: Gorgoneion<sup>[22]</sup> in the middle of double circle, Zodiac circle around, legend with the citizens' name in Greek.



Fig. 8 – Antonianus of Gallienus from various parts of the Empire; Left: Antioch mint, sole reign / Soldier, or *Mars*, holding shield and spear, star in exergue; Middle: Asia mint / *Hercules* holding lion's skin and leaning on club set on rock, star in the up right field; Right: Antioch mint, sole reign / goddess *Roma* seated left on shield, holding spear and *Victory*, head of *Helios*/star in upper field, legend ROMAE AETERNAE.

Some of the forthcoming Emperors appear standing, or seated, *holding globe*, as Valerian in the middle coin of Fig. 7. Among them Gallienus, Florian, Numerian and Carinus are referred; while, from the previous Emperor Marcus Aurelius is presented seated and holding globe wreathed by *Victory*, on a coin from Heriopolis-Kastabala. Concerning the corresponding coin of Florian, it is possible not the Emperor himself, but *Virtus* to hold the globe, as its legend refers. Because there is a similar coin of Florian for which it is considered that *Aeternitas* is holding the globe, according to its legend.

For completeness of our task, it is mentioned that there are also exist coins similar to the left and right of Fig. 8, but *without* a star. Coins similar to the right one of Fig. 8 issued during Tacitus' regime, with or without a star; besides, in those from Tyre, goddess *Athena* is shown on reverse instead of *Roma*. Furthermore, there are coins similar to the left one of Fig. 8, where *the star is in the exergue* instead of being in the right field. All these coins were not included here for the reasons earlier explained.



Fig. 9 – Coins of Gallienus from various parts of the Empire; Reverses, (a): *Jupiter* standing, holding sceptre and thunderbolt, star in right field (*joint reign*), legend IOVI STATORI; (b): *Providentia* holding baton and cornucopia, star in right field, legend PROVID AVG G; (c): *Aeternitas* standing left holding scales and cornucopia, star in left field; (d): *Kore, Persephone*, wearing polos and veil, standing front between 2 grain-ears, crescent moon and star at upper left and right representing goddess *Selene* and god *Helios*, Greek legend around with magistrate and citizens' name in two circles.

Coins similar to a and b of Fig. 9, in which the star is down instead in the position it appears in the mentioned figure. These coins were not shown. For completeness is referred that there are Siscia mint *mentallon* of Gallienus, where on obverse the Emperor appears in lion skin and on reverse there is the head of god *Helios*.

Concerning Gallienus' wife, Salonina, a huge number of coins, coming from various Provinces of the Empire there exist where she following tradition is represented on obverse with her bust resting on crescent. Many different themes are found on the reverses of these coins depending on the place. From all these, we've chosen and present only one, (Fig. 10, left), while two coins with clear astronomical

symbols, a star, were found and given in the same figure (middle and right).



Fig. 10 – Coins of Salonina from various Provinces; Left: Coin of 256-57, Rome mint. Middle: Coin from Paundylia, 253-268 AD, Samosata. Right: Coin of 255-58 AD, Samosata. Obverses: Bust of Salonina resting in crescent, legend, while in the right coin there is a star above her head. Reverses, left: Salonina seated, two children standing before her, a third child at her side, legend PIETAS AVG G. Middle: Gallienus standing right, clasping hands with Salonina standing left, star/sun between them. Right: Goddess *Athena* standing holding spear in right and thunderbolt in left hand over forwards-leaning shield with palm branch on ground, legend gives the citizens' name in Greek.

#### 5. THE INTERVAL 268–285 AD

During interval 268–285 AD the following persons served as Emperors: Claudius II Gothicus<sup>[23]</sup>, Quintillus<sup>[24]</sup>, Aurelian<sup>[25]</sup>, Tacitus<sup>[26]</sup>, Florian<sup>[27]</sup>, Probus<sup>[28]</sup>, Carus<sup>[29]</sup> and his sons Numerian<sup>[30]</sup> and Carinus<sup>[31]</sup>. From them, Aurelian and Probus reigned for 5, and 6 years, respectively.

In Fig. 11, three coins of Claudius II with astronomical symbols are given. It is noticed that all are from the same area, and on the reverses of two of them, (left and right), Dioscouroi with stars above their heads, and a crescent moon between them is shown.

Claudius II issued also coins in which god *Helios* appears *holding globe*, *i.e.* as others have done, and which are not given here.



Fig. 11 – Three coins of Claudius II, Gothicus, from Cagalassa, Pisidia; Obverses: Bust of Claudius II, legend with his name in Greek; Reverse, left: Dioscouroi standing holding spears, their horses behind them, stars above their heads, crescent moon between them, legend with the citizens' name in Greek written in two lines; Reverse, middle: Tetra-style temple with Tychae, pyramid shaped object on roof surmounted by globe and crescent and flanked by two figures (Dioscouroi?) holding spears, Greek legend in two parts, counter mark rosette; Reverse, right: Dioscouroi on their horses, stars above their heads, crescent moon between them, legend into two lines with the citizens' name in Greek.

Concerning Claudius' II brother Quintilus during his short regime issued coins

similar to previous Emperors, mainly with standing god *Helios holding globe*.

On the other hand, Aurelian issued many coins with astronomical symbols during his regime lasted 5 years. Thus, among them there are many in which a star/sun is shown, or used as mintmark. This is very probably come from his preference in the worship of god *Helios* for whom he introduced an official worship way. In coin a of Fig. 12 for example there is the head of god *Helios* between Aurelian and Severina clasp hands. Besides, there are other coins with clear astronomical symbols, from which we've chosen and show some in Figs. 12 and 13. Since in all of them Aurelian's head is shown on obverse, as usual, only the reverses are described in the corresponding legends of these figures.



Fig. 12 – Coins, antonianus, of Aurelian from various places, (270–275) AD; Reverses, (a): Aurelian and Severina clasp hands, radiate bust of god *Helios* between, legend; (b): *Genius*<sup>[33]</sup> standing left holding patera and cornucopia, star over S in left field, legend GENIVS ILLVR; (c): God *Helios* standing holding globe and treading dawn an enemy, star in the left field, legend SOL INVICTVS<sup>[34]</sup>; (d): *Victory* walking left, star in left field, legend.

Except coin a of Fig. 12, on reverse of which Aurelian is clasp hands with his wife Severina, there are similar in which he is clasp hands with *Concordia*. Such coins are either Rome, or Siscia mint and a star combined with various letters, like P, S, T or Q, are used as mintmarks in their exergues. Besides, except coin c of Fig. 12, there are similar where god *Helios* treading dawn *two enemies* instead of *one*; while, is mentioned that coins with similar reverses issued during Probus' regime. None of these coins is shown here.

It is also mentioned that except coin c of Fig. 13 that is Rome mint, 272–274



Fig. 13 – Coins of Aurelian from various places, (270–275) AD; Reverses, (a): Woman<sup>[35]</sup> standing right, presenting a wreath to Aulerian who is standing left, holding sceptre with his left hand, star in lower centre, legend RESTITVT ORBIS, (b): Woman, (*Orient=East*), kneeling right, being raised by the Emperor standing left, holding sceptre, mintmark: star, Q; Reverses, (c): Aurelian receiving globe from *Jupiter*; (d): Coin, tetra-drachmae of Alexandria, Egypt, LE to left of *Elpis*<sup>[36]</sup> standing left, holding flower and raising hem of robe, crescent moon at upper left.

AD, and in which Aurelian appears *receiving globe from Jupiter*, there are others in which the *Victory on globe* is offered to the Emperor by a soldier, very probably *Virtus* in military uniform. Besides, except the tetra-drachmae (coin d of Fig. 13) there are others from the same place where on reverse an eagle with open wings is presented, while a star there is in the upper left field, (thus, their reverses are similar to those of coins c and d in Fig. 14 of Paper I).

Besides, it is worthwhile to mention that the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra, which is said to have been constructed by king Solomon, become Roman Province during Septimius Severus era. Palmyra's kingdom broke away from the Roman Empire during the so-called *Crisis of the Third Century*, when the Roman Empire almost collapsed. Then, the son of Zenobia or Vhabalatus, with her support named himself *Augustus* at Palmyra, in 271 AD, and issued coins similar to those of Aurelian. The latter marched against him and finally regained the control of this Province, which included, large part of Asia Minor, Palestine, Arabia Petra and part of Egypt.

The coins issued by Vabalathus show on their obverse his crown head while a legend refers his name IMC VABALATHUS AVG. On the reverse of these coins one can see: a) the radiated head of god *Helios*, in tetra-drachma from Alexandria, Egypt; b) *Aequitas* holding cornucopia and scale, with a star in the left field, in antonianus

Antioch mint; c) *Helios holding globe*, or *Jupiter* with sceptre and globe, or *Hercules* with his club and a star in the left field; d) goddess *Venus*, or *Virtus* in military form, or *Victory*, with a star to be shown either in the left or the right field.

As regards Tacitus, coins with astronomical symbols issued during his regime some of which are given in Fig. 14. Only the reverses of these coins are described, since on the obverse of all of them the crown head of Emperor is shown.



Fig. 14 – Coins of Tacitus from various places (275–276 AD); Reverses, (a): *Pax* standing left, holding olive branch and sceptre, star in the right field, legend PAX AETERNITAS; (b): *Salus*<sup>[37]</sup> standing right feeding serpent, C in left, star in right field, legend SALVS AVG; (c): *Felicitas* holding caduceus and cornucopia, star in right field, legend TEMPORVM FELICITAS; (d): *Fides* standing right holding 2 standards, star in the lower field, legend FIDES MILITVM.

Concerning Florian during his short regime issued a few coins with astronomical symbols that being similar to those of previous Emperors are not presented here. Thus, only the coin with *Providentia* facing god *Helios* and a star between them is given, Fig. 15 left, together with one of Florian and another of Probus, since their reverses are similar.

Except the above shown coin, (Fig. 15, right), Probus, issued many others with astronomical symbols, especially with god *Helios*. Thus, coins with reverses showing either the radiated head of *Helios*, or the god standing with one hand raised and *holding globe* with the other were not included here; and in Figs. 16 and 17, other coins issued during Probus' regime are presented, for which we are limited to the description of their reverses only since on the obverse of all of them Probus' bust is shown, except coin a of Fig. 16, on which the heads of Probus and god *Helios* are presented together.



Fig. 15 – Coins, *antonianus*, of Florian, Tacitus and Probus, respectively from various parts of Empire. Obverses: Bust of the corresponding Emperor, crown head, legend with Emperor's name; Reverses: *Providentia* standing and holding 2 standards facing *Helios* with one hand raised and holding globe with the other, star below between them, legend PROVIDEN DEOR, various mintmarks in exergue.



Fig. 16 – Coins, *antonianus*, of Probus from various parts of the Empire; Reverses (a): *Securitas* seated holding sceptre, legend; (b): Emperor receiving globe from Jupiter, star in the centre below, legend CLEMENTIA TEMP; (c): Probus on horse, legend, various mintmarks; (d): Lion walking, star in upper centre.



Fig. 17 – Coins, *antonianus*, of Probus from various parts of the Empire; Reverses, Left: Ticinum mint, 278 AD, *Helios* in his 6 columns temple, legend; Middle: Rome mint, *Roma* seated in her 6-style temple holding Victory and sceptre, mintmark R, star, Γ, legend ROMAE AETER; Right: Ticinum mint, *Securitas* standing, star in left field, legend.

Finally, some of the coins with astronomical symbols issued by Carus and his sons Numerian and Carinus are given in Figs. 18 and 19.



Fig. 18 – Coins of Carus and his sons from various parts of the Empire; Left: Double antonianus of Carus, Siscia mint 282 AD, Radiated head of *Helios* and Emperor's facing each other, legend / *Felicitas* standing, legend; Middle: Radiated head of Carinus, legend / Princeps<sup>[38]</sup> in uniform, star and T to right, legend PRINCIPI IV VENT; Right: Antonianus of Numerian, Antioch mint, Radiated head of Emperor, legend / Numerian standing right, holding sceptre and receiving Victory from Carus, standing left, holding sceptre, star above Γ in lower centre.



Fig. 19 – Coins of Numerian, left and middle, and Carinus, right, from various parts of the Empire; Left: Billon tetra-drachma from Alexandria, Egypt, 383/4 AD, Head of Numerian, legend / goddess *Athena* seated left holding small *Nike* and sceptre, shield at side, star at upper right A-B across fields; Middle: Quinarius<sup>[39]</sup> of Numerian, Rome mint, Head of Emperor, legend / Naked *Mercury* standing left, holding purse and winged caduceus, mantle over left shoulder, legend PIETAS AVG G, star in exergue; Right: Antonianus of Carinus, Tripolis mint, crown head of Emperor, legend / Carinus receiving globe from Carus or *Virtus*, as legend refers, star above and between them.

## 6. DISCUSSION

In this work and in 19 figures, coins with astronomical symbols issued by the Roman Emperors from 235 to 285 AD were presented, avoiding show coins where on their reverses themes already presented in Papers I, II, and/or III. In this interval of 50 years, 26 different persons served the Roman Empire, starting from Maximinus and ending with Carinus.

Concerning Maximinus except the coins shown in Figs. 1 and 2, those issued during his regime and not presented here are for example two coins from Claudiopolis where one has a star as countermark on obverse and the other a star on the pediment of a four-column temple presented on its reverse, (as left and right coins in Fig. 13). Similarly, there were not presented coins: a) from Thyateira, Lydia, with *Selene*, *Artemis Phosphorus*, *Diana Lucifera* in Latin, or *Ecate*<sup>[39]</sup> on reverse with crescent moon above her head. (From the next Emperors, Gordian III issued coins with *Diana Lucifera*, which was not shown, too); b) from Kolba with a star inside crescent moon, or c) with the bust of Maximinus' wife, among which there is one from Anazarbus, Cilicia, with a crescent moon and 7 stars.

Regarding Gordian's III regime, some of the coins with astronomical symbols were presented in Figs 3 and 4. Besides, there were some others that were not shown, among which the following are mentioned: a) a coin from Kobla with a star inside crescent moon; b) some drachma and tri-drachma from Cappadocia with mount Argaeus on top of which there was either god *Helios* or a star; c) one from Macedonia, where on reverse a horse man is presented and a star under the horse. The latter is similar to these issued by the king Phillip B' (see Rovithis-Livaniou and Rovithis 2011), and from its Greek legend *KOINON MAKEΔONΩN* is obvious that Macedonia was semi-autonomous at that time. Similarly, it was not shown a coin from Tarsos, Cilicia, with goddess *Selene* driving her biga of bulls.

Moreover, except the milde coin of Fig. 3, in which on reverse god *Helios* appears holding globe, as already mentioned, Gordian III issued some others where *Providentia*, *Jupiter*, or even he himself is presenting holding it. Besides, it is worthwhile to mention that from here on and during next Emperors regimes coins with similar reverses were issued. Thus, Valerian, Gallienus, Claudius II, Quidilus, Probus and Numerian issued coins with god *Helios* holding globe, while Claudius II and Probus with *Providentia* to hold it, too.

Furthermore, from Gordian's III era god *Helios* is shown not only standing or walking, but *holding globe*; while *Jupiter* or *Providentia* are presented holding it, too, as already mentioned. On the other hand, concerning the coins on which Gordian's III wife, Triaquillina, is presented she appears with a meniscus around her shoulders. This may denote her wish to appear like goddess *Selene*, and Gordian III like god *Helios*, as other Emperors had done in the past, and as previously referred. Since, on the other hand, these coins are from the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire, like Cilicia, Lydia etc it is also possible, although less, this to be connected with the appearance of the local god Men, who was presented with a meniscus around his shoulders.

Philip I and II, except the coins presented in Fig. 5, they issued coins similar to previous Emperors. For this reason they were not included here. Even so, it is mentioned that such coins present on their reverses: a) a Capricorn on globe, coming from various parts of the Empire; b) busts of the Emperor and the local king of Bosphorus; c) goddess *Selene* accompanied by 7 stars, from Aegae, Cilicia; d) the statue of *Artemis* of Perga inside her two column temple, with a star left and a crescent moon right, from Perga, being similar to coin d of Fig. 4 in Paper II, while is mentioned that Emperors Gallienus and Aurelian issued coins similar to this.

It is also referred that on the reverses of coins with Philip's I wife, Otacilia Severa, various and many are the themes they show. From these, there is one with goddess *Selene*, or *Artemis*, driving her chariot of bulls and having a crescent moon above her head, as usually. This coin was not shown. Similarly, were not included here almost all other coins of Otacilia's since there was not any other astronomi-

cal symbol, except her bust resting on meniscus, (supposing that she wanted to be considered as the goddess *Selene*).

Concerning Trajan Decius and his son Herennius Etruscus, Hostilian, Trebonianus Gallus and his son Volusian, as well as Aemilian, and Valerian, one can find coins from Antioch ad Orontem similar to these of Philip I and II, given in Fig. 5. Besides, as they issued coins similar to those of other previous Emperors they were not included here, except one of Trebonianus Gallus, (Fig. 7, left). Because on it there is a unique presentation with the joint heads of god *Helios* and goddess *Selene* and a crescent moon in front. Similarly, none or very few are the coins with astronomical symbols issued during Aemilian's regime, which is natural as it was very short, (only two months).

On the contrary, many coins with astronomical symbols issued during Valerian and his son Gallienus regimes that were given in Figs. 7 and 8. Besides, it was not shown a coin from Hieropolis-Kastabala, Cilicia, with god *Helios* on its reverse.

As regards the coins where Trajan Decius' wife, Herenia Etruscila, is presented on obverse, they come from various places of the Empire, as: Colophon, Ionia; Philadelphia and Tripolis, Lydia; Mallus and Tarsus, Cilicia etc, while a variety of themes is shown on their reverses. None of these coins was given here, as there was not any other astronomical symbol. On the contrary, in two coins of Gallienus wife, Salonina, there is a star, (Fig. 10, middle and right). Besides, there is a huge number of coins from different places of the Empire, like Rome; Antioch; Aspendos, Pamphylia; Ephesus, Ionia; Hypaepa, Lydia; Kyzikos, Mysia; Synnada, Phrygia, etc in which Salonina is shown on obverse with her bust resting on crescent. The themes on reverses of such coins are: the Roman goddesses Romae, Aeterna, Venus Victrix, Vesta Aeterna etc. From all these coins, only one was chosen and presented, (Fig. 10, left).

Concerning Valerian, he issued coins with reverses shown astronomical symbols, but as many are similar to those of previous Emperors we did not include them here. Such are for example the coins of Valerian presenting on their reverse: a) head of god *Helios*; b) goddess Artemis, *Diana*, or *Selene*, with a meniscus on her head or around her shoulders, as usually; c) Capricorn on globe; d) god *Helios* raised one hand and holding globe with the other, (e.g. similar to the middle coin of Fig. 3; while, such coins are either from Hieropolis-Kastabala or Tarsus, Cilicia, or from Tralleis, Lydia; e) Valerian and Gallienus facing each other holding sceptre, globe and Victory.

Similarly, were not shown coins of Gallienus, either during *joint* or *sole reign*, where on their reverses present: a) Capricorn on globe, Milan mint during joint reign and Rome mint during sole reign; b) *Helios*, *Mars*, or *Virtus* on military dress, holding globe. It is mentioned that these include *aureus*, Milan mint, or *antonianus* Milan or Lyons mint and that on those presenting *Helios*, there are some with a star in ex-

ergue; c) eagle on globe between two standards, or Victory on globe between two captives, the symbolism of the latter being obvious; d) goddess Artemis, *Diana* in Latin, from Antioch with crescent moon above her head, as usually; e) statue of Artemis from Ephesus between two stags, and a star above. Similarly, were not shown some tetra-drachmae from Alexandria, Egypt, issued during *sole reign*, with either god *Helios* or goddess *Selene* and a large meniscus in the right field.

Besides, there are Siscia mint *mentallon* of Gallienus, where on obverse the Emperor appeared in lion skin and on reverse the head of god *Helios* is presented.

It was already mentioned that from Gordian's III era, the gods *Helios*, *Jupiter* or *Providentia* are presented holding a globe, while later other gods appear to hold it, too. Besides, in some cases the Emperor himself is shown holding a globe, as for example Valerian, (Fig. 7, middle); while, in others Jupiter or another person is offering it to the Emperor, as to Aurelian, (Fig. 13, coin c). From the next Emperors that issued coins with similar reverses, ie receiving globe from Jupiter, Tacitus, Probus and Carinus are mentioned. Regarding the coin of Carinus some think that his father Carus and not *Jupiter* offers the globe to him. This is quite possible, as Carus made him co-Emperor, but as *VIRTVS* is written on the reverse of this coin it seems more likely to be *Virtus*. Besides, except *Jupiter*, *Mars* and *Clementia* are shown to offer the globe to Tacitus and Probus, respectively. This might be related with the feeling of omnipotence, which reinforced especially after a victory at battle fields, and appeared showing *Victory on globe*, as we've seen in some of the presented coins.

Regarding the coins with astronomical symbols issued during Claudius' II, *Gothicus*, regime it is mentioned that there are similar to the middle of Fig. 11 with a rosette as mintmark. All coins of this figure are from the same region, and the crescent moon between Dioscouroi in two of them, might have not accidentally put. It might denote Dioscouroi's sister the so-called *beautiful Helen*, who in Greek mythology was considered daughter of *Zeus* and goddess of *Selene*, (Rovithis-Livaniou and Rovithis, 2014a). Besides, there were not shown his tetra-drachmae from Alexandria, Egypt, where on reverse either the head of god *Helios* or goddess *Selene* was represented. Similarly, there were not shown the antonianus issued during his brother, Quintilus, regime where on reverse god *Helios holding globe* was presented.

Concerning Aurelian, we've presented many of the coins he issued with god *Helios*, *Sol*, or *Sol Indictus* to appear in most; and according to some: the *rising sun* denotes the *rising star* of the Emperor. Besides, in some of these coins there is a star in the left field. This is mentioned, because there have been found similar coins, ie with the same themes, but without any star in the field. Furthermore, except the coin in which Aurelian clasping hands with his wife, there are other in which the clasping is made with *Concordia*, and other in which various letters are combined with the star as mintmarks in the exergue.

Regarding the coins with astronomical symbols issued during Tacitus' regime,

(275–276) AD, these not shown present on their reverse *Mars* in uniform walking right, holding spear and trophy, and a star in the right field.

On the other hand, during Probus' regime except the coins given in Figs. 16 and 17, there are other similar to previous Emperors that were not presented. Such are for example some *aureus* having on reverse either the radiated head of *Helios*, or showing him standing and *holding globe*, as well as coins showing on their reverse: a) *Helios* in his quadriga, where what is new in these coins are the various letters used as mintmarks combined with either a star or a meniscus (with or without a dot above it); b) Probus *receiving globe from Jupiter*; c) *Salus* standing feeding snake, star in right field, as coin b of Fig. 14; d) a soldier or *Virtus* in military form and star in exergue, like Gallienus' coin, (Fig. 8, left); e) *Victory* presenting wreath to Emperor and a star in the lower centre, similar to Aurelian's coin, (Fig. 13, coin a). It is worthwhile to mention that almost all of these coins have various mintmarks like R, a star, B or E etc.

As regard Probus, during his regime, except the coins previously presented, he issued many where on reverse the *Helios* in his quadriga is shown. What is new in these coins is that various letters are used as mintmarks combined with either a star or a meniscus (with or without a dot above it).

Besides, except the coin a of Fig. 15 with seated *Securitas*, there is a similar where she is standing and a star there is in the left field. Similarly, except the middle coin of Fig. 17 with *Roma* in her 6-style temple, there are many similar with different mintmarks as: R, star, E; R, meniscus, Γ or E etc. In some of these coins there is a dot above meniscus. Furthermore, there are coins showing on reverse Probus on horse, while various mintmarks like these referred above, there exist in exergue.

During Tacitus regime, except the presented coins, there are some similar to those of previous Emperors that were not shown. Such are for example coins where on their reverse appear: a) *Salus* and a star in the right field; b) *Fecilitas* holding caduceus and cornucopia with a star in the right field, while there are similar without star; c) Emperor *receiving globe from Jupiter* or *Mars*; d) *Fides* standing, star in the lower field; e) *Providentia* and *Helios* standing, with or without a star between them down below.

Concerning Florian during his short regime issued a few coins with astronomical symbols that being similar to those of previous Emperors are not presented here; while, as already referred Florian or *Virtus*, as well as *Aeternitas* are shown holding globe.

Numerian issued coins with Sol having one hand raised and holding globe with the other, which were not shown, being similar to those of previous Emperors. Similarly, there were not presented coins with the radiated head of *Helios*, or these in which goddess *Venus* holds Victory with one hand and globe with the other, or those with the Emperor, or *Princeps*, holding it.

Finally, on reverses of some coins where on their reverses god *Helios* is presented with one hand raised and *holding globe* it is written: ORIENS AVG G, meaning *the rising sun/star of Augustus*. This can be seen in some of the *aureus* of Nume-rian for example.

It is in general noticed that in many of the coins presented here god *Helios* appears. In some cases only his radiated head, in others standing holding globe, or offered it to the Emperor. A possible explanation to all these, and what was their symbolism tried to be given either inside the text, or in Appendix.

## 7. APPENDIX

[1] *Maximinus*, 173–238 AD: Roman Emperor, 235–238 AD, also known as *the Thrax*, because he was born in Thrace by semi-barbarians parents. He looked horrible with his terrible face and huge body, although for these specific qualifications Emperor Septimius Severus engaged him in his guard. He served as Perfectos during Alexander Severus regime, but he murdered Alexander in 235 AD and proclaimed Emperor by the army of the Rene region; while, a year later, the Senate was force to recognize him. Although he confronted successfully the attacks of Germans, Sarmateans and Daces, he was unable to bend the Senate and people' reactions for the way he climb to power. Thus, firstly Africa, and then Italy revolted, and finally he was killed by his soldiers, together with his son, in 238 AD.

[2] It gives the name of unification of all cities in the area of Thessaly, Greece. It was established either in 363 or in 367 BC, and included all cities of the area except *Pherae* that remain independent. The Roman general Flamininus re-established this coalition in 194 BC that kept till 148 BC, when Thessaly together with Macedonia consistent the Roman Province of Macedonia.

[3] Meaning: Tomis Metropolis of Pontus.

[4] *Phoecaea*: An ancient Greek city, one of the Ionian cities in Asia Minor, Φώκαια, in Greek. It is worthwhile to mention that colonist from Phoecaea founded Massalia, (modern Marseille in France).

[5] It could also be coins of Pupienus, as his full name was Marcus Clodius Pupienus Maximus, but we think they are of Maximus, son of Maximinus.

[6] *Gordian I*, (157–238) AD: Roman Emperor for only 3 weeks in 238 AD, coming from the Grachoi family, the whole name of whom was Marc Antony Gordianus. He appointed his son, Gordian II, as co-emperor, and remained in Cartage, while the general of Numidia, being faithful to Maximinus, came against them. In the battle, Gordian II was killed and Gordian I was suicide in hearing this.

[7] *Gordian II*, (192–238) AD: Son of Gordian I, co-emperor with him for only 3 weeks in 238 AD.

[8] *Pupienus and Balbinus*: They succeeded Gordian I and II and governed together the Roman Empire from April till July 238 AD, when replaced by Gordian III. The full name of Pupienus was Marcus Clodius Pupienus Maximus. For this, he is sometimes wrongly referred as Maximus, name usually used for the son of Emperor Maximinus.

[9] *Gordian III*: Roman Emperor from 238–244 AD, the whole name of whose was Marc Antonius Gordianus Pius. Born in 225, he was grandson of Gordian I as son of his daughter Antonia Gordiana, whose name adopted when he become Emperor. Gordian III was married to Tranquillina, who appears in some of the coins they issued.

[10] *Philip I, the Arab*: Roman Emperor (244–249) AD, the whole name of whose was Marcus Julius Philip. He was born in the city Shahba of the Roman Province of Syria, and from an aristocratic family of some distinguished officers of the Roman cavalry, of Arabian origin. For this reason, he was known as *Philip the Arab*. Philip became member of the Praetorian Guard when Emperor was Alexander Severus, prefect during Gordian III's regime, and after the latter's murder he was proclaimed Emperor by the Senate. According to some information, he was the first Christian Roman Emperor.

[11] *Philip II*: Son of Philip I, and co-Emperor with him during 248–249 AD. Philip I and II carried out an extraordinary and exceptional festival at Rome in 248 to celebrate the 1.000 years anniversary from the foundation of the city.

[12] The word globe has the meaning of Earth, that is the world. The Roman Empire was powerful at that time, since not only all of the old cities / countries, and kingdoms around Mediterranean were occupied by the Romans, but many other places both in East and West, and areas up to England. Besides, as is known world maps assuming a spherical earth were firstly appeared during the Hellenistic period.

Furthermore, it is worthwhile to notice that in up to now presented coins, Aeternitas was shown to hold the Sun and the Moon, personalized by god Helios and goddess Selene, respectively. Here, god Helios appears to hold globe (Earth). Besides, in other coins issued during the examine period not only god Helios, but also god Jupiter appears either holding globe or offering it to the Emperor who reign during the corresponding time interval. Except Jupiter other gods/goddesses and in some cases even the Emperor himself appeared holding it. Thus, the *Earth passed* from the hands of immortals, as Helios, Jupiter, Mars, Venus etc, to the hands of a mortal as an Emperor. This fact may be due to the custom of the Romans to deify their Emperors, although it is certainly connected with the feeling of omnipotence, especially after a victory.

[13] *King Abgar X*: He belonged to the dynasty of Edessa, an ancient city in upper Mesopotamia.

[14] We think it is a Ram, although is referred as Hippocampus by some.

[15] *Trajan Decius*: Roman Emperor, 249–251 AD, the first from Illyria. He is known from his decree, *Orders*, against Christians', considering them enemies of the Empire.

[16] *Hostilian*: Son of Trajan Decius and Roman Emperor for only a few months in 251 AD, (June to Sept/Oct of this year).

[17] *Trebonianus Gallus*: Born in 206, he served as Roman Emperor between 251–253 AD together with his son Volusian(us). His complete name was Gaius Vibius Trebonianus Gallus.

[18] *Aemilian*: Roman Emperor for only 2 months in 253 AD, (August to October), assassinated by his own troops in favour of Valerian.

[19] *Valerian*: Roman Emperor for 7 years, 253–260 AD, together with his son Gallienus. He was proclaimed by the Dune legions after defeating the Goths; while he was accepted after the death of Trebonianus Gallus.

[20] *Gallienus*: (Publius, Licinius, Egnatius), co-Emperor with his father Valerianus, 253–260 AD, *joint reign*, and alone, 260–268 AD, *single reign*. As co-Emperor he controlled the army enterprises against the Goths and managed to win the Alamanians at Milan in 258. From his epoch starts a gradually decreasing of the political control in the army, while after his death the command of the Roman legions passed from the Senate to professional militaries. During Gallienus regime, there was an interval of peace, 262–267, and with the royal support there was a huge development in arts and spirituality. Besides, a significant School of Neo-Platonic, *Neo-Plato*, philosophers was developed, with Plotinos being the most distinguished of its members.

[21] *Men*: Phrygian lunar god worshipped in all East, (Strabo *Geographics*, XII.3.31). The god appears with crescent moon on his shoulders and he had many adjectives, as Askaeanos, Carus, Farnakou, Tiamou *etc.* He was considered as god with curative, *therapeutics*, abilities, patron of tombs and oracles receiver. In Greece and particularly in Attica the god was worshiped by the immigrants and the slaves since fourth or third century BC, while very little information there exists for his worship in the islands of Rhodes, Delos and Thassos.

[22] *Gorgoneion*: So is called the cutting head of gorgon Medusa.

[23] *Claudius II, Gothicus*: (214–270), Roman Emperor for 1 year and 4 months, (Sept. 268-Jan. 270 AD), who had passed from various other distinguished positions before being Emperor. He managed to put things in order at Rome, to regain Spain, to confront successfully the Alamanians (268) and the Goths (269), and for this reason he was named *Gothicus*. On the other hand, he failed in Galatia and he was enabling to bring the peace in Egypt and to subdue the queen of Palmyra Zenobia. Finally, he died ill at Sirmio, while he was prepared to confront the Empire's enemies at Dune.

[24] *Quintillus*: Roman Emperor for a few months in 270 AD.

[25] *Aurelian*: Roman Emperor, (270–275) AD, who managed to control the revolution of moneyiers and to confront the Goths. Furthermore, he moved against the kingdom of Palmyra that wanted to be further extended. For this reason he was named *Restitutor Orbis=This who arranged the World*. He had a special preference in the god Helios, because his mother was priestess of this god. Thus, he introduced an official worship way of this god, while he himself got the title *Dominus et Deus=Ruler and God*, which was written in the coins issued during his regime. Aurelian was murdered from a team of disagreeable officers, while he was prepared an expedition against the Persians in the summer of 275 AD.

[26] *Tacitus*: Roman Emperor for 9 months, (Sept 275-Jun 276 AD), the whole name of whose was Marcus Claudius Tacitus Augustus. He was chosen by the Senate and then the army recognized him. This being the first time the Senate had elected somebody as Emperor before the army. Tacitus, with the help of his half-brother Florian, managed to defeat the Eroulous and Goths, for which he named Gothicus Maximus.

[27] *Florian*: Roman Emperor for 3 months in 276 AD.

[28] *Probus*: Marcus Aurelius Probus was the whole name of this Roman Emperor, (276-282) AD, who gave too many privileges to Senate making it higher and stronger than himself. He tried to make the Vastarns going and stay in various desert areas in Thrace and Moesia, but he did not succeed. Furthermore, he encouraged the soldiers during the periods of peace to cultivate earth. Thus, he contributed in the expansion of vine-growing in Galatia and Spain. Unfortunately, the legions, because of his discipline rules, uprising and they proclaimed Emperor of Eastern Empire, Satornin(us) in 277/78, and Proclus and Vonosus at Galatia in 280. Finally, Probus was murdered by his soldiers in 282 AD.

[29] *Carus*: His complete name was Marcus Aurelius Carus Augustus. He was moving against Probus, when he was informed that he had been murdered. Then, he proclaimed Emperor by the army in 282, while got the names *Persian* and *Parthicus*, because he had succeeded in the corresponding expeditions. It is said that he lost his life during a fire due to a thunderbolt that ruined his scene in 286, although some think that he was murdered by his soldiers. He was succeeded by his sons Carinus and Iumerianus, who had made co-Emperors before the expedition to Persia.

[30] *Numerian*: The younger son of Carus, whose whole name Marcus Aurelius, Numerian. He was appointed *Caesar* in 282 and *Augustus* in 283 AD. He took part in the expedition against Persia, with his father, but later he retired because of his inexperience. He finally died in 284, under mysteries conditions going towards Nikomedia. Then, the army chose as leader Diocles, who later became Emperor, known as Diocletian.

[31] *Carinus*: Roman Emperor 283-285 AD, son of Carus, who made him co-Emperor for the West Provinces of the Empire. After his father Carus was murdered,

(or burned in his scene, as referred above in [29]), the legionaries made *Augustus* his brother Numerian. Thus, the Empire was divided into two parts, and the civil war was averted because Numerian was murdered, (probably by his father in law, Aries Apper, who was Praetorians' leader). From the other hand, the generals in Chalcedon proclaimed Emperor Diocles, who was recognized at East, but he had to fight Carinus to be in West, too. The two armies met in the place where the rivers Istrus and Moraves met, and while Carinus gained in the battle he was murdered by a general in 285 AD.

[32] *Genius*: So was named by the Romans the guiding spirit, or tutelary deity, who followed a man from the moment of his birth till his death. The corresponding person for women was the Juno spirit.

[33] *Sol invictus*: The name of god Helios for whom Aurelian introduced an official way of worship in 274 AD. There is not agreement if this god was a new one, or the same Heliogabalus had brought from Emesa, Syria. The god and the legend SOL INVICTVS was appeared on coins till the time of Emperor Constantine I, Constantine the Great.

[34] *Woman*: Supposed to be either *Victory* or *Nike*.

[35] *Elpis*: Personification and spirit of Hope, SPES in Roman. Well known was the triad: Spes, Fides and Fortuna.

[36] *Salus*: Personification of Security.

[37] *Princeps*: In Romans had the meaning of Chief, first in order.

[38] *Quinarius*: Roman coin equal to half denarius.

[39] Each one of them was considered goddess of the Moon. Especially in the case of Artemis, she was known as Artemis Phosphorus, *Diana Lucifera* in Latin. Coins of the latter from the same place, except of Maximinus I, issued during Gordian's III regime, too.

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