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Catalogo Completo della Collezione Dattari Numi Augg. Alexandrini

Note introduttive e indice a cura di Adriano Savio*

323 tavole con aggiunte di oltre 7000 monete rispetto al catalogo del 1901
Trieste: Giulio Bernardi, 1999. 13 pp. + 323 pls. ISBN 88-85873-09-X

Giovanni Dattari left one great monument to his collecting: the volume *i Numi Augg. Alexandrini*, published in Cairo in 1901. It includes 6411 entries for coins other than lead and glass, and is distinguished by a virtual lack of duplication. Even the large collections in New York (over 13 000 coins) and Oxford (5469 + supplement), as well as huge specialized collections in Toronto and Ann Arbor (about 25 000 coins each), suffer by comparison.

Somewhere it is said that Dattari had handled over a million coins, from which, in the atmosphere of the times, he had his choice. His acumen was beyond compare. As it celebrates its centennial his volume remains a fundamental tool for students of the imperial Alexandrian coinage.

The original catalogue has certain drawbacks. In contrast to contemporary productions its descriptions are spare, and the illustrations are highly selective. An attempt was made to illustrate portraits of each imperial figure and typical reverse types, but seldom are whole coins shown and when they are it is often on different plates. The biggest difficulty, however, is the dispersal of the collection itself, which renders it difficult to confirm the existence of pieces not on record elsewhere or to be sure that today's unique coin was not once Dattari's.¹

* Abbreviations used

BMC	R.S. POOLE, Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum, Alexandria and the Nomes (London 1892)
D.	G. DATTARI, Monete imperiali greche. Numi Augg. Alexandrini (Cairo 1901)
FEUARDENT	F. FEUARDENT, Collections Giovanni di Demetrio, Numismatique égyptienne ancienne II, Domination romaine (Paris 1872)
Hunter	G. MACDONALD, Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection (3 vols. Glasgow 1899-1905)
Karanis	R.A. HAARVEDT, E.E. PETERSON, Coins from Karanis, ed. E.M. HUSSELMAN. The University of Michigan Excavations 1924-1935 (Ann Arbor 1964)
MILNE	J.G. MILNE, University of Oxford. Ashmolean Museum, Catalogue of the Alexandrian Coins. Rev. ed. with supplement by C.M. KRAY (London 1971)
VOGT	J. VOGT, Die alexandrinischen Kaisermünzen (Stuttgart 1924)

¹ This problem is not wholly solved by the new illustrations. For example, D. 5522 was for a long time the only example of a tetradrachm of Probus' year 3 with emperor riding l. Then the British Museum acquired a specimen ex Dattari (see M.R. WEDER, Seltene Münzen der Sammlung Dattari – Neuerwerbungen des Britischen Museums, NZ 96, 1982, p. 53-71, pl. 5, 25, and E. CHRISTIANSEN, Coins of Alexandria and the Nomes. A Supplement to the British Museum Catalogue, British Museum Occasional Papers 77, 1991, no. 3445. Yet Dattari had at least one example (10612) which, though certainly from the same *rev* die as the others and possibly from the same *obu* die as well, seems to be distinct from them; its present location is unknown.

For specialists of the series the new volume will be a useful, sometimes tantalizing tool. It consists of 323 plates of rubbings, presented generally in the order of the original catalogue, but with many subsequent additions. These additions continue the numbering of the catalogue (starting at 6581) and are integrated as appropriate into the original order; they consist, in the main, of varieties Dattari had somehow missed (sometimes very common ones) or better specimens of examples he already had. But there are literally dozens and dozens of new varieties, whose novelty ranges from different placement of dates or marks to types now known for unattested dates to wholly new types.

Even this is not, of course, a perfect solution. The original sheets of rubbings must have been a nightmare to assemble, and here they have been copied photographically. The tone is about as sharp and even as one can expect, but the limitations of rubbings themselves are well known: they capture everything in relief, but only what is actually in relief. This can lead to frustration: when one compares Dattari's readings with some of the rubbings one is often no better off than before. And sometimes the absence of text is irritating, as it is impossible to determine why some coins were added. I take two examples, one insignificant, the other not. 10668 is a worn coin of Diocletian with a standard figure of Nike r. and no visible date. Why is it here? On the other hand, 10585 is a coin of Gallienus, apparently year A, with bust of Helios r., otherwise unrecorded for this date. But comparison with the immediately adjacent coin, D. 5238, suggests that the reverse dies are the same and that both belong to year 11 (IA). Still, where the reproduction is clear, one's confidence in Dattari's eye is reinforced, and from now on we can legitimately give him the benefit of the doubt.

Here are listed some examples, chosen from the later Alexandrian series, of the kinds of additions the new volume makes:

Rare and unknown coins:

10509-10, 17490: tetradrachms of Aemilian yr. 2, *rev.* Alexandria standing l. Otherwise on record at BMC 2119 and VOGT p. 150 (Berlin). The first two share a reverse die.

10520, Valerian I yr. 8, *rev.* Nike standing facing: the type, also known for Saloninus and Gallienus, is given to the sole reign of Gallienus for the latter by MILNE.

10522, Valerian I yr. 7, *rev.* conjoined busts of Isis and Sarapis – otherwise recorded only for Saloninus.

10524, Gallienus yr. 2, *rev.* Nike standing facing: otherwise on record only at ANS 1944.100.67387.

10527, Gallienus yr. 1, *rev.* Tyche seated l. on throne, not recorded at all for this year; a variant of D. 5213, Tyche reclining l., which itself is known only from ANS 1944.100.67382 and Karanis 43043.

10528, Gallienus yr. 10 (?), *rev.* emperor riding r.: otherwise recorded only by WEDER, NZ 1982, no. 20 and CHRISTIANSEN (n. 1) no. 3321 on the basis of the B.M. coin (ex L.A. Lawrence).

10529, Gallienus yr. 9 (L Θ to l.), *rev.* Athene seated l. on throne, otherwise quoted by VOGT only from FEUARDENT 3058.

10533, Gallienus yr. 11, *rev.* Canopus r., to r., palm; otherwise known only at Hunter 926.

10534, Gallienus yr. 11, *rev.* Dikaiosyne seated l.: heretofore recorded only for Salonina.

10538, Gallienus yr. 9, L Θ, *rev.* Isis bust r.: unique.

10540, Gallienus yr. 9, L Θ, *rev.* Nike advancing r.: otherwise known only from specimens in Berlin and New York.

10565, Saloninus yr. 8, *rev.* Homonoia standing l.: otherwise documented only by F. 3184 and ANS 1944.100.67568.

10585, Aurelian yr. 5, *rev.* Euthenia (?) or Demeter (?) standing l. head r.?

10587, Aurelian yr. 4, *rev.* Isis Pharia r. is otherwise unrecorded.

10590, Aurelian yr. uncertain, *rev.* Nike standing r. inscribing shield. This is probably identical with D. 5460, illustrated at pl. xviii of the original edition and described in the text as having the date λ ε. The original plate is not convincing for the date. D. 5460 is missing from the supplement.

10591, Aurelian yr. uncertain, *rev.* Sarapis (?) seated l. holding small figure of Victory.

10625, 10626: add to the evidence for double-busted coins of Diocletian and Maximian, already attested by D. 5618.

10635-6: the *rev.* Dikaiosyne seated l. of Diocletian yr. 12 is otherwise unpublished, though known from ANS 1932.16.13. The plates may suggest a star to r. on both pieces.

10642, *rev.* Eirene standing l. of Diocletian yr. 12, otherwise unpublished though represented by a specimen in Cambridge (Mossop collection).

10657, *rev.* Helios bust r. of Diocletian yr. 12, is otherwise documented for this year only on coins of Constantius (D. 6066) and Galerius (D. 6136).

10659, *rev.* Hermanubis bust r. of Diocletian yr. 10, is wholly new.

10679, *rev.* Zeus seated l. of Diocletian yr. 9, unpublished.

«5737» (pl. 285); the number is entered in a different hand and breaks the sequence. The *rev.* type consists of two Nikai facing, clasping hands and holding a wreath (?) with date L IB above. The obverse legend is not wholly legible. The type is known for Galerius in this year (of course with date 4) but not otherwise for Diocletian.

The catalogue vindicated:

D. 5357, Saloninus yr. 3, seems to be confirmed by the plate: legend clearly terminates -KCEB, and there is no character with which the *gamma* of the date can be confused.

D. 5356, Saloninus yr. 8, *rev.* Helios bust r.: apparently unique, confirmed from the plate.

D. 5359, Saloninus yr. 8, *rev.* Nike standing front, palm to r.: apparently unique, confirmed from the plate.

D. 5465: Aurelian yr. 4, *rev.* Tyche standing l.: unique; now confirmed from the plate.

The catalogue corrected:

D. 5466: the description in text can now be corrected by the addition of a star, otherwise documented by M. 4408, Cologne 3094, and 2 ANS specimens, as well as the adjacent 10595.

D. 5474: the illustration in the plate, with L Γ , does not match the text, which has L Δ ; the adjacent 17493 has L Δ .

D. 5661: the entry has «davanti L^{IS} (sic)»; the coin shows S to l., L (retrograde) to r. If the coin and entry have not been mismatched Dattari may have misinterpreted the fold of Eirene's drapery as part of the date.

D. 5695, Diocletian yr. 10, *rev.* Harpokrates standing l.: the text has «davanti, una palma» which is not evident from the rubbing; 10656 however shows the palm.

Dr. Savio and the publisher are to be thanked for an act of *pietas* that preserves for posterity Dattari's labor of love.

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