

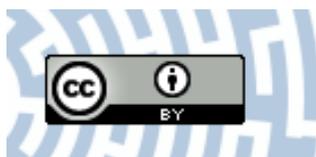


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On Alexander, Who in Carthage ‘Had Foolishly Usurped  
the Supreme Power’ Under Roma’s Sign.

Guillaume Malingue, *The Coinage of Domitius Alexander  
(308–310 AD)*, Ausonius éditions, Numismatica Antiqua 9,  
Bordeaux 2018, pp. 170

O Aleksandrze, który w Kartaginie pod znakiem Romy “nierozsądnie sięgnął  
po najwyższą władzę”. Guillaume Malingue, *The Coinage of Domitius  
Alexander (308–310 AD)*, Ausonius éditions, Numismatica Antiqua 9,  
Bordeaux 2018, pp. 170

ABSTRACT

The article discusses Guillaume Malingue’s book devoted to the coinage of L. Domitius Alexander, a usurper in North Africa (308/309–310). Moreover, the content of his coins issued in Carthage was analysed, seeking the ideological priorities of the usurper. On the one hand, Domitius Alexander emphasised African regionalism and indicated the centre of his actual power: Carthage. On the other hand, the usurper exhibited his relationship with Rome and emphasised that it was Roma who sanctioned his rule.

**Key words:** L. Domitius Alexander, usurper, Roman coin

The dissolution of tetrarchy after the withdrawal of Diocletian (C. Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus) and Maximian (M. Aurelius Valerius Maximianus) from public life in 305 led to strifing over the authority over the Roman world and another crisis of imperial reign. Then, ‘on Punic territory Alexander, who was acting as deputy-prefect, had foolishly usurped the supreme power’ ([...] apud Poenos Alexander pro praefecto

gerens dominatui stolidè incubuerat')<sup>1</sup>. Among the contenders to the imperial purple, Lucius Domitius Alexander is not a very well-known character. His name is not always present in Roman history books. In more in-depth syntheses of the imperial reign in early 4th century it is recorded with only a short profile of his usurpation<sup>2</sup>. However, for a long time the attention of researchers was attracted by the coinage of Alexander<sup>3</sup>. Recently, in this context he became a hero of a monographic study by Guillaume Malingue<sup>4</sup>.

Only a handful of literary sources cast a light on the reign of Domitius Alexander. These are the reports of Sextus Aurelius Victor (*Caes.* 40.17–18), an anonymous author of *Epitome de Caesaribus* (40.1, 40.6, 40.20) and Zosimus (2.12.1–3, 2.14.2–4). The name of Alexander among the rulers is also noted by *scriptor* in *Historia Augusta* (*HA* Hel. 35.6)<sup>5</sup> and Polemius Silvius in his *Laterculus* (p. 522, ed. 1892: 'Alexander fuit tyrannus'). A small number of inscriptions broaden the knowledge about the career and reign of Domitius Alexander<sup>6</sup>. A significant contribution to that knowledge database are coins, which Alexander issued in mint in Carthage during his reign<sup>7</sup>. These numismatic items became a subject of meticulous analyses in the book. Although there are some uncertainties regarding the identity of Domitius Alexander himself, the reason for the revolt, or the precise date the reign and the geographic extent of his territories, the conclusions of the research allowed their author to reinterpret certain questions involving usurpation and to clarify the hypotheses. To conclude, G. Malingue

<sup>1</sup> Aurelius Victor *Liber de Caesaribus* [hereinafter: *Aur. Vict. Caes.*] 40.17, transl. by H.W. Bird.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. in Polish environment e.g. R. Suski, *Tetrarchia. Cesarstwo rzymskie od uzurpacji Dioklecjana do śmierci Maksymina Dai (284–313)*, in: *Świat rzymski w IV wieku*, eds. P. Filipczak, R. Kosiński, Kraków 2016, pp. 54–55; K. Twardowska, *Polityczne dzieje cesarstwa rzymskiego w latach 306–363*, in: *Świat rzymski*, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> For example: A. Leroux, *Médaille inédite, 'Revue Africaine'* 1858, 12, pp. 505–506; L. Laffranchi, *La pagina delle falsificazioni. I. Alessandro Tiranno, 'Revue Numismatique'* 1918, 31, pp. 304–306; idem, *L'usurpazione di Domizio Alessandro nei documenti numismatici di Aquileia e di altre zecche, 'Numismatica'* 1947, 13, pp. 17–20.

<sup>4</sup> G. Malingue, *The Coinage of Domitius Alexander (308–310 AD)*, Bordeaux 2018.

<sup>5</sup> '[...] addendi sunt Licinius, Severus, Alexander atque Maxentius [...]'. The name of Alexander was missing in the translation of that *HA* fragment in the issue of *Historycy Cesarstwa rzymskiego. Żywoty cesarzy od Hadriana do Numeriana*, transl. by H. Szelest, Warszawa 1966, p. 217.

<sup>6</sup> See G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, pp. 165–172: 'Corpus of inscriptions in the name of Alexander'.

<sup>7</sup> The mint in Carthage opened by Maximian operated in years 297–307/308. Before that time in 68 it operated for Clodius Macer. Cf. A. Kunisz, *L'insurrection de Clodius Macer en Afrique du Nord en 68 de notre ère*, trad. par K. Bartkiewicz, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1994, pp. 110–142.

presents a synthetic vision of Alexander's reign, in particular including his coinage, consistent with the current status of research.

First, the researcher presents the historic background against which the reign of the new contender had emerged. The conflict between Maximian and his son Maxentius (M. Aurelius Valerius Maxentius, 306–312) and the aspirations of the latter for securing Africa for himself led to a situation in which in 308 (or early 309) against Maxentius stood Alexander, *vicarius Africae (agens vices praefectorum praetorio per Africam)*. As noted by the historical author: 'soldiers, having found a suitable opportunity for revolt, bestowed the purple on Alexander'<sup>8</sup>.

G. Malingue himself justifiably doubted that the genesis of the African rebellion involved the question of loyalty to Maximian<sup>9</sup>. Nevertheless, sources do not mention that Alexander honoured Maximian or other rulers in any way. The researcher states, *ex silentio* bringing up arguments to his opinion: 'Unlike Maxentius, Constantine or even Carausius, Alexander never tried to be recognised as an official member of the college of tetrarchy. It may be possible, therefore, that political justification of the rebellion was not only a rejection of Maxentius but also of the whole tetrarchic idea'<sup>10</sup>. Especially the third name of the persons mentioned is instructive in that context. The efforts of Carausius (M. Aurelius Carausius), who ruled in Britain as usurper in years 286/287–293, are certified originally in his coinage. They were expressed in form of an inscription on the obverse of coins CARAVSIVS ET FRATRES SVI illustrated by the portraits of Carausius, Diocletian and Maximian, and reverse inscriptions e.g. PAX AVGGG, VIRTVS AVGGG, but also phrases: CONSERVATORI AVGGG, SALVS AVGGG<sup>11</sup>. There is a lack of not only similar but any declarations of cooperation or coexistence of several rulers in Domitius Alexander's coinage.

Questioning of the tetrarchic rule, as suspected by G. Malingue, also had its consequences in changing the *nomina* of the contender. There is little information about him from before the usurpation period, the biography of Alexander is difficult to recreate on the basis of laconic mentions of ancient authors<sup>12</sup>. Maybe it was him under *nomina* Valerius Alexander, in

<sup>8</sup> Zosimus *Historia nova* [hereinafter: Zos.] 2.12.3, transl. by R.T. Ridley.

<sup>9</sup> Also the economic reasons for the revolt can be pointed out. See G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–19.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. H.-G. Pflaum, *Émissions au nom de trois empereurs frappées par Carausius*, 'Revue Numismatique' 1959, 2, pp. 53–73; S. Moorhead, *The Gold Coinage of Carausius*, 'Revue Numismatique' 2014, 171, pp. 221–245.

<sup>12</sup> Originating from Phrygia: *Epitome de Caesaribus* [hereinafter: *Epit. de Caes.*] 40.20; Zos. 2.12.3, or – more likely – from Pannonia: *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 40.17. Upon assuming the reign he was already quite old: *Aur. Vict. Caes.* 40.17; *Epit. de Caes.* 40.20; Zos. 2.12.3. One of

the role of *agentis praefectorum praetorio*, as seen in an inscription of 303<sup>13</sup>, and as *agens vices praefectorum praetorio* in an inscription of 307 or 311<sup>14</sup>. G. Malingue allows the possibility that this Valerius Alexander is identical to Domitius Alexander, because that is the name preserved in inscriptions. Maybe, suggests the researcher, Alexander as a ruler returned to his previous name, rejecting the one he adopted in honour of the tetrarchs, therefore expressing his disapproval to the tetrarchic system<sup>15</sup>. It is also symptomatic that his name, preserved in numismatic inscriptions in which we can see the expression of the will of the usurper himself, is in an extremely short form: Alexander (IMP ALEXANDER P F AVG or IMP C ALEXANDER P F AVG).

Alexander ruled for about two years. The centre of his domain remained in Carthage but his influence stretched further<sup>16</sup>. The events in Africa affected the situation in Rome. There were even significant riots in Rome<sup>17</sup>. After Alexander took over Sardinia, grain deliveries to Rome were reduced and the popularity of Maxentius had dropped. The reign of Domitius Alexander was put to an end by *praef. praet* Rufius Volusianus and 'general' Zenas sent by Maxentius: '[a]t the first onslaught, Alexander's troops gave way. He then resorted to a hastily levied legion, but when it was captured by the enemy, Alexander was taken and strangled'<sup>18</sup>.

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the authors provided information on the young son of Alexander (Zos. 2.12.2–3). Worthy of note is a hypothesis stating that this descendant – as a young man without a beard – was presented on the obverses of coins IMP ALEXANDER P F AVG / GLORIA EXERCITVS KARTH. See *Doctrina numorum veterum conscripta a Iosepho Eckhel*, 8, Vindobonae 1828, pp. 60–61. Cf. G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, pp. 130–131, no. 9#1.

<sup>13</sup> *L'Année Epigraphique. Revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'Antiquité romaine* [hereinafter: AE] 1942/43, 81 = AE 1946, 226 = AE 1949, 257.

<sup>14</sup> *The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*, eds. J.M. Reynolds, J.B. Ward-Perkins, Roma 1952, 464.

<sup>15</sup> G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21. Cf. also *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, eds. A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, vol. 1, Cambridge 1971, p. 43 (L. Domitius Alexander, 17) and 44 (Val. Alexander, 20).

<sup>16</sup> The extent of Alexander's reign is best reflected in epigraphic sources: inscriptions from Mauritania *Sitifensis* (1), Numidia *Militiana* (2), Numidia *Cirtensis* (2), Cirta (1), Byzacena (1), Africa *Proconsularis* (3), Sardinia (1). See G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–23. Cf. about the relations between Alexander and Constantine: S. Garraffo, IMP ALEXANDER P F AVG / VBIQVE VICTOR e il problema dei rapporti con Costantino il Grande, in: *Nomismata. Studi di numismatica offerti ad Aldina Cutroni Tusa per il suo novantatreesimo compleanno*, eds. L. Sole, S. Tusa, Ragusa 2016, pp. 296–312.

<sup>17</sup> *Chronographus anni CCCLIII*, ed. 1892 [hereinafter: *Chron. a.* 354], p. 148.

<sup>18</sup> Zos. 2.14.3, transl. by R.T. Ridley. According to T. Kotula (*En marge de l'usurpation africaine de L. Domitius Alexander*, 'Klio' 1962, 40, pp. 160–177, especially pp. 175–177) the description of events resembles that written by *Herodian about the Gordian dynasty* (238), see *Herodianus Historia* [hereinafter: *Hdn.*] 7.5-6 and 9. The researcher formulated a hypothesis

G. Malingue devoted a lot of attention to the chronology of Alexander's reign. It is indeed ambiguously described in sources and causes a divide between reserchers, especially in relation to the end date<sup>19</sup>. As for the beginning of Alexander's withdrawal, it was *terminus post quem* that determined the dissolution of the alliance of Maximian and Maxentius, symbolically dated on 20 April 308<sup>20</sup>. After the removal of Maximian, who had to flee to Rome, leaving the power to his son Maxentius, the latter became the ruler of North Africa as well. His apodictic decisions and demands for confirmation of loyalty by Alexander led to a riot. The analysis of Maxentius's coins<sup>21</sup> and *curriculum* of Rufius Volusianus<sup>22</sup>, who became the *praefectus Vrbi* of Rome in October 310 after his return to the capital city of the empire, allowed to determine the *terminus ante quem* of Alexander's fall: between summer and autumn of 310. In turn the *terminus post quem* of the event allow suggesting numismatic arguments again.

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on the relation of the description on the work of Onasimos of Cyprus dedicated to Constantine. Worth noting is the description of three episodes: proclamation: Zos. 2.12.3, cf. Hdn. 7.5.1–4 i 7; defeat and death: Zos. 2.14.2–3, cf. Hdn. 7.9.3; treatment of the associates of the defeated and Carthage itself by the victors: Zos. 2.14.3–4, cf. Hdn. 7.9.10–11. Cf. also F. Paschoud, *Notes*, in: Zosime, *Histoire nouvelle*, vol. 1, texte ét. et trad. par F. Paschoud, Paris 2000, pp. 213–217, note 20; Zosimus, *New History*, transl. by R.T. Ridley, Leiden–Boston 2017, p. 153, note 30.

<sup>19</sup> For example: *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, eds. C.H.V. Sutherland, R.A.G. Carson, London 1967 [hereinafter: RIC], 6, pp. 419, 432; R. Suski, *Uzurpatorzy*, in: *Vademecum historyka starożytnej Grecji i Rzymu*, vol. I/II, *Źródłoznawstwo starożytności klasycznej*, ed. E. Wipszycka, Warszawa 2001, p. 571: 308–311; D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle: Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*, Darmstadt 1990, p. 289: after 20 April 308–late 309/early 310; R. Donciu, *L'empereur Maxence*, Bari 2012, pp. 71–76: late 308 or early 309–310; I. Lewandowski, *Komentarz do tekstu polskiego*, in: *Sexti Aurelii Victoris Historiae abbreviatae ab Augusto Octaviano, id est a fine Titi Livii usque ad consulatum decimum Constantii Augusti et Iuliani Caesaris tertium. Sextus Aureliusz Wiktor – Zarys historii cesarzy od Augusta Oktawiana, czyli od końca dzieła Tytusa Liwiusza aż do dziesiątego konsulatu augusta Konstancjusza i trzeciego konsulatu cezara Juliana*, translation, introduction and commentary by I. Lewandowski, Poznań 2010, p. 132, footnote 420: 308 – between 309 and 311.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Chron. a. 354*, p. 67; Lactantius *De mortibus persecutorum* 28.3–4.

<sup>21</sup> See V. Drost, *Le monnayage de Maxence (306–312 après J.-C.)*, Zürich 2013, pp. 89–92. Among the monetary types for instance aureus of Ostia (310/311), PAX AETERNA AVG N, standing emperor, Mars (?), Africa, Carthage (?), see idem, *Le monnayage d'or de Maxence à l'atelier d'Ostie: à propos de l'aureus au type Pax Aeterna Aug N*, 'Revue Numismatique' 2008, 164, pp. 269–296; idem, *Le monnayage*, O8. Nummi minted at Ostia (2. middle of 310), VICTORIA AETERNA AVG N, walking Victoria or walking Victoria and captives, see V. Drost, *Le monnayage*, pp. 205–206 and O65–69. The author recalls an interpretation, pointing out that the six captives in the iconography (O69b) personifies the six 'provinces': Tripolitania, Byzacena, Zeugitana, Numidia, Mauritania *Sitifensis*, Mauritania *Caesariensis*.

<sup>22</sup> C. Caecionius Rufius Volusianus, *corrector Italiae* 281/3–289/91 (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, [hereinafter: CIL] 06.17–7, 10.1655), *cos. suff.* 280? *procos. Africae* circa 305/6 (CIL 06.1707), *praet. praef.* 309/310 (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 40.18; Zos. 2.14.2), *praef. Vrbi.* 310–311 (*Chron. a. 354*, p. 67), *cos.* 311, *praef. Vrbi.* II 313–5 (*Chron. a. 354*, p. 67), *cos.* II 314.

It was mostly the fact of Alexander's inspiration by the first *solidus* of Constantine of Trier and the date of their 'creation' placed as 25 July 310 in relation to *quinquennialia*, or possibly at the end of 309. This hypothetically designates summer 310 as the end date of Alexander's reign<sup>23</sup>.

The major part of G. Malingue's book contains analyses, interpretations of numismatic materials and catalogue of coins. Earlier, Pierre Salama devoted his studies to the coinage of Alexander, by using the collection of the 84 coins known at the time to belong to the African contender<sup>24</sup>. Since the middle of the previous century the database grew significantly and there are 205 currently known coins with the name of Alexander. Among them 35 were considered non-authentic<sup>25</sup>. The remaining 170 are coins of various denominations – *aurei*, a single *solidus*, numerous *nummi* (1/48 f) – marked by signatures PK or P\*K, indicating the provenance of *officina* in Carthage. G. Malingue calculated that the coins were made with the use of 83 obverse dies and 107 reverse dies. He assumes that only half of the reverse stamps used in production of Alexander's coins is known. It is assumed that there were one million of them<sup>26</sup>.

Alexander's minting operation was commented in relation to various aspects. These include the typology of the coins, chronology and extent of the issues and the circulation of the coins. The book is supplemented in that area by an illustrated catalogue. It replaces older studies, including the reference issue of the publication 'The Roman Imperial Coinage'<sup>27</sup>. It verifies and supplements its data<sup>28</sup>. It also suggests a new classification of Alexander's coins<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–28.

<sup>24</sup> P. Salama, *Recherches numismatiques sur l'usurpateur africain L. Domitius Alexander (Atelier de Carthage, 308–310)*, in: *Actes du 8<sup>e</sup> Congrès international de Numismatique, New York–Washington, septembre 1973, Paris–Bâle 1976*, pp. 365–369. Before 1850, only 12 coins were known. Two phases of a significant 'growth' in number of recovered Alexander's coins: 1950 and early 21st century; see G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>25</sup> See G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–151.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 54–55.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. RIC 6, pp. 419–421 and 432–435.

<sup>28</sup> For instance, the new catalogue includes *nummi* GLORIA EXERCITVS AVGN, rider, GLORIA EXERCITVS ROMAE, rider, VBIQVE VICTOR, emperor and captive and enemy (?). See G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, no. 10–11, 13. There is no type [GLOR]IA [EX]ER[CIT...], emperor standing with a *victoriola*, see RIC 6, Carth., no. 67. Differently described was the iconography of the reverse type ROMAE AETERNAE. Silhouette of an emperor standing with a *victoriola* and a sceptre (cf. RIC 6, Cart., no. 71) was replaced by the depiction of Roma, see G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, no. 4.

<sup>29</sup> The catalogue part of the 20 types arranged by issuance chronology takes up few pages; for each type there are existing references in literature or, if they are missing, a number of known coins; it is supplemented by an extensive corpus with additional information and illustrations. See G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–66 and 107–145. In each

Content on Alexander's coinage is presented in an interesting way. Among other things, G. Malingue states that the coinage displays a large typological variety in relation to the monotony of the tetrarchs, which were issued between 297 and 308 in the mint of Carthage. He observed that tetrarch's coins, known by a corpus of 15–16 thousand known coins belong to only 5 reverse types<sup>30</sup>. Alexander's mint in Carthage, in turn, in about 2 years issued about 20 types. Some are known by a single coins.

Reverses of Domitian Alexander's coins were divided into two groups. The criterion was first the specifics of the reverse themes, second the chronology of issues. The first group is therefore constituted by the 'classic' themes in tetrarch coinage of the period (Carthage/ Africa/ Roma/ Jupiter). In the second group, thematically and iconographically visible is the inscription of the first of Constantine's *solidi*, however, while processing the inscriptions in order to individualise and personalise the values they display, for example: GLORIA EXERCITVS KART (instead of GLORIA EXERCITVS GALL) and VICTORIA ALEXANDRI AVG N (instead of VICTORIA CONSTANTINI AVG).

Starting from the suggestions which G. Malingue formulated in relation to the genesis and chronological order of Alexander's type, it is worth to define the themes and motifs playing a major role in his coinage and to separate those which gave that minting operation an individual character.

Alexander's issues were made both for the purpose of satisfying economic needs as well as for prestige reasons. Minting coins was one of the first activities of every new emperor, even those who ruled only briefly. There is no reason to believe, writes G. Malingue, that Alexander would abandon the practice. Therefore, the secondary goal – declaration of the ruler's position – played the key role in the early activity of the Alexander's mint (second half of 308 or early 309). Maybe it involved a small *donativum* issued in relation to assuming power<sup>31</sup>. In this context especially important are the phrases on the coins: ROMA INVICTA FELIX KARTHAGO and ROMA INVICTA FEL(ix) KARTHAGO<sup>32</sup>. Differently than in e.g. Maxentius's coinage, where the references regarding Carthage or Rome were placed in various reverses (types FELIX KARTHAGO and ROMA AETERNA<sup>33</sup>), on Alexander's coins the relation between Carthage and Rome was expressed with

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type in the catalogue possible references to RIC were pointed out. Unfortunately, there is no reverse concordance table in the book (RIC – Malingue 2018), which facilitate finding information on types/variants present in the old catalogue.

<sup>30</sup> G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 39.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 55, 58.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 1–3, 16–17 (Au/S/Num).

<sup>33</sup> V. Drost, *Le monnayage*, C1–4: FELIX KARTHAGO, C2–3 and 5: ROMA AETERNA. Also see *ibidem*, R36: ROMAE AETERNAE AVCTRICI AVG N.

a single inscription. This expresses the will of Domitius Alexander, writes G. Malingue, to, on the one hand, base his reign on the African province and, on the other, ground it in Roman tradition and therefore undermine the legitimacy of Maxentius based in Rome<sup>34</sup>.

It seems that theme *Roma invicta felix Karthago* can be even considered a 'coat of arms' of the Domitius Alexander's reign. Such a slogan on a coin had no precedent in imperial coinage. However, the same phrase appears in a known inscription found in Forum Romanum<sup>35</sup>. Also worth considering as *novum* in Alexander's coinage is an epithet used to describe Roma's qualities: *invicta* – the undefeated. This description of Rome was already in use for a long time<sup>36</sup>. However, it was Alexander who used it for the first time in monetary inscription, and afterwards others would use it as well<sup>37</sup>. Nevertheless, in context of this numismatic innovation in particular we can state both the originality and novelty embodied by Alexander's coinage.

Also the content of other type of coins express an ideological unity of the basis of Alexander's reign, which also define the geographic foundation of his rule. The connection with Rome as the centre of the empire is demonstrated with slogans: ROMAE AETERNAE, ROMAE AETERNAE AVG N, GLORIA EXERCITVS ROMAE, but also through an inscription SPQR OPTIMO PRINCIPI, which appreciates the role of Roman Senate<sup>38</sup>. A regional significance, in turn, has the AFRICA AVG N phrase, illustrated by the likeness of Africa and also GLORIA EXERCITVS KART<sup>39</sup>. But these motifs did not have a separatist meaning. Just as the promoted name of Carthage, it was an emphasis on the interim base of Alexander's operation: an African province and centering the reign in Carthage. The tendency can be seen also in relation to other issuers of

<sup>34</sup> G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>35</sup> CIL 06.29850a.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. e.g. Seneca *Epigrammata* 69.5; Lucanus *Pharsalia* 3.334. Cf. *Roma victrix*: Ovidius *Fasti* 4.389; Claudius Claudianus *De Bello Gildonico* 48.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. in Priscus Attalus's coinage (409–410): INVICTA ROMA AETERNA, Roma sitting with a statuette of Victoria and a spear – RIC 10, pp. 344–345, no. 1403–1408, 1411–1412; in Ostrogothic coinage (early 6th century) INVICTA ROMA, Roma's bust – W. Wroth, *Catalogue of the Coins of the Vandals, Ostrogoths and Lombards and of the Empire of Thessalonica, Nicaea and Trebizond in the British Museum*, London 1911, pp. 102–105, no. 6–33; cf. F.F. Kraus, *Die Münzen Odovacars und des Ostgotenreiches in Italien*, Bologna n.d., p. 65 and catalogue p. 90 sqq. See also contorniates (early 5th century?): INVICTA ROMA FELIX SENATVS, Roma's bust – A. Alföldi, E. Alföldi, unter Mitwirkung von C.L. Clay, *Die Kontorniat-Medailles*, Berlin 1976, 1, pp. 21–22, no. 74–78; 2, pp. 90–91.

<sup>38</sup> G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, no. 4, 14, 19 (Num): ROMAE AETERNAE, 15, 20 (Num): ROMAE AETERNAE AVG N, 11 (Num): GLORIA EXERCITVS ROMAE, 12 (Num): SPQR OPTIMO PRINCIPI.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 5 (Num): AFRICA AVG N, no. 9 (Num): GLORIA EXERCITVS KART.

his time. Constantine's coins, which provided inspiration to Alexander, were the ones which expressed the slogan: GLORIA EXERCITVS GALL<sup>40</sup>. At the same time Alexander regarded himself as the Roman emperor and contended to rule the whole empire<sup>41</sup>.

The legitimacy of Alexander's position was also promoted with the content of reverses: SPQR OPTIMO PRINCIPI, legionary eagle and *vexilla*<sup>42</sup>. This type resembles those already introduced in Trajan's coins (98–117)<sup>43</sup>, but it was also used in Constantine's coinage<sup>44</sup>. In this example though Urbs, and therefore Roman Senate as well, remained in the direct zone of Maxentius influence, yet the relation Rome and Alexander was highlighted. He was the *optimus princeps*, whom the Senate acknowledges (implicitly). At the same time – in relation to the fact that Rome was occupied by the enemy – the loyalty of the army was crucial to Alexander. Since the beginning of his reign he drew his power from the support of soldiers stationed in Africa<sup>45</sup>. Military subject matter was therefore one of the main ideological motifs noticeable in his coinage. It was not just appealing to the glory of the units in his army. It also involved honouring Victoria, which was done both in iconographic layer by presenting the image of the goddess and in the inscription by calling her by name. Personified victory became an attribute of the emperor of sorts as proclaimed by slogans VICTORIA ALEXANDRI AVG N and VICTORIA AVGVSTO NOSTRO, illustrated by the likeness of Victoria<sup>46</sup>. He is a true champion: VBIQVE VICTOR<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> RIC 6, Trev., no. 812.

<sup>41</sup> In regards to that Alexander can be counted as one of the 'descendants' of emperors and usurpers of the 3rd century whose coinage referred to Roma and specific parts of the empire from which they came or which provided a foundation of their reign, cf. A.A. Kluczek, *VNDIQVE VICTORES. Wizja rzymskiego władztwa nad światem w mennictwie złotego wieku Antoninów i doby kryzysu III wieku – studium porównawcze*, Katowice 2009, pp. 70–127.

<sup>42</sup> G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, no. 12.

<sup>43</sup> B. Woytek, *Die Reichsprägung des Kaisers Traianus (98–117)*, Wien 2010, no. 295 (As, 107–108), 418–419 (Au/D, 113–114).

<sup>44</sup> RIC 6, Trev., no. 815 (S, 309–313), Rzym., no. 345–352 (F, 312–313), Ost., no. 69 (S, 312–313), 94–99 (F, 312–313). Among issues from Rome and Ostia there were also coins with the name of Maximinus and Licinius.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Zos. 2.12.1.

<sup>46</sup> G. Malingue, *op. cit.*, no. 7, 18 (Num): VICTORIA ALEXANDRI AVG N, 8 (Num): VICTORIA AVGVSTO NOSTRO.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, no. 13 (Num). Cf. CIL 08.7004 = 19419 = *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, ed. H. Dessau, Berolini 1902, 674: inscription at the base of Alexander's statue dedicated to 'restitutori publicae libertatis ac propagatori totius generis humani nominisque romani'. Cf. A. Mastino, *ORBIS, κοσμος, οικουμενη: aspetti spaziali dell'idea di impero universale da Augusto a Teodosio*, in: *Popoli e spazio romano tra diritto e profezia. Atti del III seminario internazionale di studi storiche 'da Roma alla terza Roma'*, 21–23 aprile 1983, III, Napoli 1986, p. 107.

That last phrase remains one of the most original in coinage of the period<sup>48</sup>.

It can therefore be seen that coinage of Domitius Alexander is dominated by individualised and personalised messages. His issuances accentuated African regionalism and the centre of his actual power, Carthage. Nevertheless, he ruled as stated on his coins, under the auspices of Roma. She was the one to sanction his rule and no one else's.

It is the proclamation of the most obvious message in the content of Domitius Alexander's issues. However, they can be analysed in many different contexts which stem from the overlap of his usurpation with the reign of others, and among them were somewhat heroic characters of the 4th century, Maxentius, Constantine but also significant political transformations being the result of the dissolution of tetrarchy as well as phasing out of monetary traditions of the previous period and new developments in visual and phrasal communication. Consulting the study of Alexander's coinage by G. Malingue shall become indispensable not only in such iconographic-ideological studies but also in nummometric analyses.

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. in coinage of Constantine, Maximinus and Licinius: RIC 6, Trev., no. 816: VBIQVE VICTOR, no. 798–800, 817: VBIQVE VICTORES.

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## STRESZCZENIE

W artykule omówiono książkę Guillaume Malingue'a, poświęconą mennictwu Lucjusza Domicjusza Aleksandra, uzurpatora w Północnej Afryce (308/309–310). Ponadto przeanalizowano treści jego monet emitowanych w Kartaginie, szukając w nich odzwierciedlenia ideologicznych priorytetów pretendenta. Z jednej strony Domicjusz Aleksander akcentował afrykański regionalizm i wskazywał centrum swej rzeczywistej władzy: Kartaginę. Z drugiej strony eksponował swój związek z Rzymem i podkreślał, że to Roma daje sankcję jego rządóm.

**Słowa kluczowe:** L. Domitius Alexander, uzurpator, moneta rzymska

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