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The Emperors of Nicaea and
Their Contemporaries
1204–1261

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STEPHEN Ducas (Radoslav)

Tsar of Serbia

(1228 – 1233)

Stephen Ducas (Radoslav) was the son of Stephen the First-crowned and Eudocia Ducaena, the youngest daughter of Alexius III and Euphrosyne Ducaena. He married Anna Ducaena, a daughter of Theodore Comnenus-Ducas, and was thus a Ducas by both descent and marriage. He was perhaps inevitably pro-Byzantine, and as tsar too pro-Byzantine for his fellow-Serbs' liking, becoming exposed, with the fall of his powerful father-in-law in 1230, to the intrigues of the victorious Bulgarian tsar Ivan II Asen in favor of his younger brother Stephen Vladislav, himself a son-in-law of Ivan, and he was consequently deposed and exiled after a short reign in 1233.¹

Stephen's coinage consists of electrum and billon trachea, on which he is uniformly entitled **CTΕΦΑΝΟC ΠΙΖ Ο ΔΥΚΑC**, an entitulation that he is known to have utilized elsewhere.²

The electrum issue (1), known from a number of disparate single specimens, has as its obverse design a half-length figure of the archangel Michael, and as its reverse the tsar crowned by Christ. The figure of Christ is of the pattern normally termed Chalcites, but on the coins it is termed rather **Ο ΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡ**. The issue is now known also to have been the subject of a billon strike, but as the 17/18 known specimens all derive from a single hoard, it is likely to have been a very limited one.³

There are two distinct billon issues. Type A (2.1, 2) utilizes as its obverse design a seated figure of Christ, and as its reverse the standing figures of the tsar and St. Constantine. Type B (3.1, 2) utilizes a bust of Christ Emmanuel as its obverse design and the tsar crowned by the Virgin as its reverse.

What is quite extraordinary about all three issues is their clear Thessalonican derivation in repertoire and style. The electrum reverse design is very close to that of Theodore's Type C (3a.1–3c) tentatively placed at 1225/26; the billon Type A reverse design is very close to that of Manuel's Type D (6.1–4); and the billon Type B reverse design is very close to that of the same ruler's electrum Type A (1.1, 2).

The specimens of the billon strike from dies normally used for electrum (a not unknown phenomenon at Thessalonica itself)⁴ all display the same odd feature: none has the appropriate obverse design imprinted upon it, and instead all are blank. It has been plausibly deduced that the dies were actually cut at Thessalonica, and then forwarded to the Serbian mint, but that when the exhaustion of, or damage to, the obverse dies occurred, the mint could not itself replace them and merely continued to strike with an effective reverse die and a blank obverse one. It may indeed well have been this exhaustion/damage which caused the demotion of the type from electrum to billon.⁵

The discovery of this hoard, and the primitive mint in the archaeological context of which it was found, permitted the precise identification of the fortress of Ras, the early Serbian capital. Specimens of

¹ Polemis, *The Doukai*, p. 132, no. 102; Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 60, 73 notes 34–35, 122–23; Stiernon, "Les origines du despotat d'Épire," p. 110, no. 81.

² See above, note 1 (Polemis and Nicol).

³ D. Gaj-Popović, "Monnaie du roi Radoslav," in V. Kondić, ed., *Frappe et ateliers monétaires dans l'Antiquité et Moyen Âge* (Belgrade, 1976), 128–30.

⁴ See above, pp. 548, 551 (Th. Type B); 568, 570–71 (Man. Type B); 601, 604 (J. III Type A).

⁵ M. Popović, "La découverte d'un dépôt de monnaie du roi Stéphane Radoslav dans la forteresse de Ras," in Kondić, ed., *Frappe et ateliers monétaires dans l'Antiquité et Moyen Âge*, 119.

both normal billon types were also found in the same general context, and there seems no good reason why all the types involved should not have been struck there.⁶

The similarity of this coinage to that of the Bulgarian tsar Ivan II Asen suggests the operation of similar procedures in that case too.

⁶ Popović, "La découverte d'un dépôt de monnaie du roi Stéphane Radoslav," 117.

No.	Metal Weight	Size	Obverse	Reverse	Date
(1)*	El. pierced	23	ASPRON TRACHY NOMISMA		(1228–33)
			Ras		
			<div><div>X X</div><div>МН Ϡ</div><div>Half-length figure of arch-angel Michael, beardless and nimbate, wearing divitision, collar-piece, and jeweled loros of simplified type; holds in r. hand sword, resting over shoulder, and in l., sheath, point downward.</div></div>	<div><div>С IC XC</div><div>TE ON</div><div>ΦΑ ΑΝ</div><div>NOC TO</div><div>PIZ KP</div><div>OΔ ΑΤ</div><div>ΘΚ ΟΡ</div><div>AC</div><div>Full-length figure of tsar on l., crowned by Christ Pantokrator, bearded and nimbate. Tsar wears stemma, divitision, collar-piece, and paneled loros of simplified type; in l. hand holds gl. cr. Christ wears tunic and kolobion; holds Gospels in l. hand.</div></div>	
(2.1)*	Bill.	28	ASPRON TRACHY NOMISMA		(1228–33)
			Ras		
			TYPE A		
(2.2)	Bill.	30	<div><div>IC XC in field.</div><div>Christ, bearded and nimbate, wearing tunic and kolobion, seated upon throne without back; r. hand raised in benediction; holds Gospels in l. hand.</div></div>	<div><div>TEΦΑΝΟCPIZOΔ ΘΚΟCΤ</div><div>ANTN</div><div>Full-length figure of tsar on l., and of St. Constantine, with forked beard, holding between them patriarchal cross on long shaft. Tsar wears stemma, divitision, collar-piece, and paneled loros of simplified type. Saint, similarly dressed, holds labarum-headed scepter in l. hand.</div></div>	

- (1) Archaeological Museum, Belgrade
Starinar 1968, p. 204, Pl. I.7–8 This coin
This type is now known to have been struck also in billon: Gaj-Popović in *Frappe et ateliers monétaires dans l'antiquité et moyen âge*, pp. 121–32.
- (2.1) BM
Starinar 1968, p. 204, Pl. I.5–6
- (2.2) Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
H. Pl. 47.1 This coin

No.	Metal Weight	Size	Obverse	Reverse	Date
			TYPE B		
			<p>ΙC XC O ΕΜΜΑΝΟΥΗΛ, in two columnar groups. Bust of Christ Emmanuel, beardless and nimbate, wearing tunic and kolobion; holds scroll in l. hand.</p>	<p>ΤΕΦΑΝΟCΡΙΖΟΔ. ΜΡ ΘV in upper r. field. Full-length figure of tsar on l., crowned by Virgin nimbate. Emperor wears stemma, divitision, collar-piece, and paneled loros of simplified type; holds gl. cr. in l. hand. Virgin wears tunic and maphorion.</p>	(1228–33)
(3.1)*	Bill. 3.13	27	<p>ΙC XC ΟΕ ΝΘ ΜΑ ΗΛ</p>	ΤΕΦΛΙΟCΡΙΖΟΔ	
(3.2)*	Bill. 2.91	29	<p>ΙC XC ΟΕ ΝΘ</p>	ΤΕΦΛΙΟCΡΙΖ	

- (3.1) Hermitage, St. Petersburg
Starinar 1968, pp. 203–4, Pl. I.3–4 This coin
- (3.2) Private collection
Starinar 1968, pp. 203–4, Pl. I.1–2 This coin

JOHN III AND MICHAEL II

THESSALONICA



B.(1.1)



(1.2)



(2)



(3a)



(3b)



STEPHEN DUCAS (RADOSLAV)

RAS



El.(1)



B.(2.1)



(3.1)



(3.2)



IVAN II, ASEN

UNC. MINT (OCHRIDA ?)



A(1)



B.(2.2)



(2.18)

