

# A DORIC-IONIC CAPITAL WITH LIZARD FROM HISTRIA

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**Keywords:** Doric-Ionic capital, decorated canalis, decorated cushion, lizard on the balteus

**Rezumat:** Un capitel doric-ionic descoperit în anul 2007 în sectorul *Extra Muros Poarta Mare - Turnul Mare* de la Histria se remarcă, pe lângă particularitatea tipologică, prin utilizarea cuzinetului, decorarea canalului și a cuzinetului, dar și prin sculptarea pe balteus a unei șopârle. Deși prelucrarea sculpturală a capitelului este mai puțin riguroasă, decorul bogat al canalului și cuzinetului ar putea fi o transpunere romană a imaginii unor capiteluri ionice mai speciale, întâlnite în zona apropiată a litoralului vestic al Mării Negre la finalul epocii elenistice și începutul epocii romane.

Modul particular de amplasare a reptilei, pe partea superioară a balteus-ului, într-o zonă invizibilă, ar putea reprezenta un simbol-protector al locuinței, dispus în zone în care aceste creaturi se ascund, precum celor descrise de Pliniu, deasupra cornișelor ușilor și ferestrelor.

**Abstract:** Discovered in 2007 in the *Extra Muros Poarta Mare - Turnul Mare* sector in Histria, a Doric-Ionic capital stands out, in addition to its typological peculiarity, for the use of a cushion, the decoration of the canalis and the cushion, but also for the carving of a lizard on the balteus. Although the sculptural processing of the capital is less rigorous, the rich decoration of the channel and the cushion could be a Roman interpretation of the image of more particular Ionic capitals found in the nearby area of the western Black Sea coast at the end of the Hellenistic and beginning of the Roman era.

The particular way of placing the reptile, on the upper part of the balteus, in an area inaccessible to the viewer, could suggest a protective symbol of the dwelling, placed in areas where these creatures hide, like those described by Pliny, above the cornices of doors and windows.

During the 2007 archaeological campaign, a Doric-Ionic capital with a decorated canalis and cushion and a lizard carved on the balteus was discovered within the *Extra Muros Poarta Mare - Turnul Mare*<sup>1</sup> sector in Histria (Figs. 1, 2).

The capital is particular for a number of reasons. It belongs to a rare type of capitals called Doric-Ionic,<sup>2</sup> similar to the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC capital in Selinunte<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 3). It is the first known Ionic configuration in Histria with a cushion. Given the micro-Asian influence, the cushion element is not present.<sup>4</sup> It is also the second known capital with a decorated canalis found on the coastline of the Romanian Black Sea.<sup>5</sup> In the case of this capital, the tendency to invade the architectural body by applying the decoration to the canalis extends to the cushion, which is decorated separately. In addition to all these features, there is the zoomorphic motif (lizard) placed in an area that is difficult to see – at the top of the balteus.

*Inventory MNIR:* No. 353048 (Figs. 4-5)

*Materials:* limestone

*Dimensions* (cm; \* reconstructed) : **A** (length) = 48.7; **B\*** (baluster width) = 40.2; **C** (abacus length) = 38.6; **C1\*** (abacus width) = 39.2; **D** (volute length) = 10.2; 10.4; **E** (distance between the volutes) = 28.1; **F** (distance between the central eyes of the volutes) = 38.3; **G** (volute height) = 11.1; **H** (resting surface diameter) = 29.8; **I** (height of the eye-platform) = 5.9; **J** (Ionic cymatium height) = 5.9; **J1** (cushion height) = 1.9; **K** (canalis height) = 2.9; **L** (canalis + cushion + cymatium height) = 10.7; **M** (abacus height) = 1.2; **I** (Ionic echinus diameter) = 44.7; **DsEd** (superior Doric echinus diameter) = 40; **DiEd** (inferior Doric echinus diameter) = 32.3; **Doric echinus height** = 4.6; **total height** = 16.5.

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<sup>1</sup> CCA 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Ginouvez *et alii* 1992, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Tusa 1977, *apud* Ginouvez *et alii* 1992, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> Mărgineanu Cârstoiu 2006, p. 97, no. 253.

<sup>5</sup> Along the coastline of the Romanian Black Sea, the first known capital decorated on the canalis originates from Callatis. Mărgineanu Cârstoiu 2011, p. 59. For the northern Pontic regions, see Bujskih 2010, p. 31- 33, pl. 25/1-3; pl. 26./1-2.