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A New Lycian Coin Type of Pinara

Abstract: Attribution of a new Lycian coin type to the mint Pinara probably struck by Kherēi c. 400 BC.

Keywords: Lycia; coins; numismatics; dynasts; Pinara; Wekhssere; Kherēi.

Among the constant flow of new Lycian coins appearing on the market, a stater sold recently allows us a firm reading of the legend of a coin type that presented difficulties. Both the mint place and the issuing authority can now be made clear. It appears that only one specimen of this coin type was hitherto known whose reverse legend was difficult to read (fig. 1).¹ Its obverse depicts the ubiquitous head of Athena to right wearing a crested Attic helmet, and the reverse, a female head to right wearing an ampyx with her hair in sphendone; along the right edge features a legend in Lycian characters. On the basis of its weight standard (light, also called Attic) and the style of the Athena head, it was issued towards the end of the 5th century BC.



Fig. 1.

In his recent catalogue of Lycian coins, Müseler stated that the mint place of the present coin type could either be Xanthos or Pinara and that a definitive attribution could only be made with a specimen featuring a clear legend.² A die-break has obliterated the beginning and the end of the legend, but a couple of centrally placed letters can nonetheless be read: ΛΛ. These letters should have been enough to rule out Xanthos since its name is usually written as ΠΞΝΠ+↑ or ΠΞΝΠ+Π, sometimes abbreviated to its first letters. The attribution to Xanthos goes back to E. Babelon who published two staters from the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris (fig. 2) similar to the new stater, but with the mint name Xanthos.³



Fig. 2.

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¹ Roma Numismatics Ltd, auction 9 (London, 22.03.2015), lot 375; weight: 8.24g; die axis: 10H; diam.: 19mm.

² Müseler 2016, 157, VII,28.

³ Babelon 1910, 289–290, pl. C, fig. 18-19. Babelon describes the female head on the reverse as Artemis or Leto. Stater n° 289 (fig. 18) has in addition a diskeles behind the neck of the female head.

A specimen with a full legend came up for sale in 2015, the same year as the previous coin and was sold by the same dealer.⁴ The cataloguer could not make sense of the legend described as “garbled”. However, the legend can be read without any difficulty as: Ψ – PEΛΛΛFE *kh – pillewi* (Pinara in Lycian). The same coin was again sold recently and this time the cataloguer correctly identified the mint as Pinara, although the legend was misread as *pillen* and the mint name wrongly transcribed as Pilleñni.⁵



Fig. 3.

It is tempting to see in the first letter Ψ (*kh*) the initial of the dynast Kherēi who may have minted until the end of the 5th century BC. Being not aware of the specimen with the initial *kh*, Müseler ventured an attribution to Wekhssere II on the basis of the date he assigned to this issue: “400/380 v. Chr. (Zeit des Dynasten Wekhssere II)”,⁶ but the weight of evidence points now to Kherēi who is known to have minted other issues in Pinara.⁷

Abbreviated Literature

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|--------------|---|
| Babelon 1910 | E. Babelon, <i>Traité des monnaies grecques et romaines II: description historique II</i> , Paris 1910. |
| Konuk 2016 | K. Konuk, <i>On Some New Lycian Coin Types</i> , <i>Philia</i> 2, 2016, 20–27. |
| Müseler 2016 | W. Müseler, <i>Lykische Münzen in europäischen Privatsammlungen</i> , <i>Gephyra Monographien</i> 4, Istanbul 2016. |

Özet

Pinara'nın Yeni Sikke Tipi

M.Ö. 400 civarında muhtemelen Kherēi tarafından basılmış olan yeni bir sikke tipi yapılan inceleme sonucu Pinara'ya atfedilmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Lykia; Sikkeler; Dinastlar; Pinara; Kherēi; Wekhssere.

⁴ Roma Numismatics Ltd, E-Sale 18 (27.06.2015), lot 421; weight: 8.33g; die axis: 8H; diam.: 19mm. It is likely that these two coins were part of the same find.

⁵ Classical Numismatic Group, electronic auction 409 (08.11.2017), lot 271.

⁶ Müseler 2016, 157.

⁷ I do not believe that there was a Wekhssere II at that time and some issues that were attributed to him have been shown to belong to other issuers, see Konuk 2016. Wekhssere II should belong to a later period as I hope to demonstrate in a future study.