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**ATTIC HALF MINA FROM DIOSCURIAS. ATHENIAN
Θαλασσοκρατία OVER THE EAST PONTUS**

Ἐάν τις κόπτη νόμισ[μα] ἀργυρίου ἐν ταῖς πόλεσι καὶ μὴ χρῆται νομ[ίσμασιν] τοῖς Ἀθηναίων ἢ σταθμοῖς ἢ μέτρ[οις], ἀλλὰ ξενικοῖς νομισμασιν καὶ μέτροις καὶ σταθμοῖς, [τιμωρήσομαι καὶ] ζημιώσω κατὰ τὸ πρότερον φήμισμα ὃ Κλέαρχ[ος] εἶπεν¹ – if anyone mints silver coins in the cities and does not use Athenian coins or weights or measures, but foreign coins, weights and measures, I shall punish him and fine him according to the previous decree which Klearchos proposed”.² This is what a secretary of the Athenian Council (Boule) had to add to the Bouleatic oath from the famous Athenian decree enforcing the use of Athenian coins, weights and measures within the Athenian Alliance. The Athenian officials in the cities (ἄρχοντες τῶν Ἀθηναίων) were responsible to carry out the decree, and the local officials too.³ The date of this decree is problematic, but still between 450 and 414 B. C.⁴ The text was carved on stelai and set up at Athens and the other cities – members of the League. Seven fragments of this text have been already discovered in various places.⁵ There are several attempts to interpret the decree. One thing is clear – this decree is imperialistic in tone, and if some of the cities within the Athenian “Empire” were still supposed to issue their own money, Attic weight coins had to be used only. Electrum staters remained popular.⁶ Later this decree is parodied in the “Birds” of Aristophanes.⁷

The decree seems to be very comfortable for trade and taxation—indeed, Athenians were scrupulous while collecting φόρος within the League.

Climate determines economics. Hot and less humid environment defines an early advantage of the South over the North – indeed, the Egyptian state and the crafts confront entirely the primitive clan-system which existed in fact everywhere. Then the whole situation was changed. Times after, some technical improvements towards the North created a very comfortable vegetation process, while the Egyptians still needed time to put the seed beyond the reach of the sun. In the 9th – 8th cc. B. C. the Greeks are already vanguard by means of the technics and the structures. The countries being superb before, like Egypt and Babylon, or India, now face a new hegemonic power – Hellas, already overpopulated and needing grain and the raw materials to be imported. Then the perception of Europe has appeared. Europe is a special term for the part of the earth, which stipulates or will stipulate the same level of development. Even Scythia with its rough spring was thought to be reorganized in the Greek manner, than those countries which needed the additional finances for irrigation. So the making of Europe started. The Greek pattern was as follows: 1. occupying or even frequently being invited to the keypoints of other economic structures like Caria, Thrace, Bosphorus or Colchis; 2. establishing the autonomous Greek social structures granted heavily with the technics from metropolis; 3. the natives being equipped with the best tools for agriculture; 4. the Greek industrial structures maintained on this background; 5. exporting supplies to Hellas and receiving back some industrial goods. The Aegean and the Pontic areas were supposed to form once unique economic space. Economic integration considered several stages to be realized: first it was Asia Minor, in fact mistakenly called so, to be Hellenized due

¹ A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions. To the End of the Fifth c. B.C. Edited by R. Meiggs and D. Lewis. Oxford. 1969. Printed to the University 1971, p. 113.

² T. Howgego. Ancient History from Coins. London. 1995, p. 44.

³ Selection..., p. 113.

⁴ Selection..., pp. 114-115; C. G. Starr. Athenian Coinage. Oxford. 1970, p. 68 n. 15; T. Howgego. op. cit., p. 44.

⁵ Selection..., p. 111; “Athenian Coinage Decree”. J. M. Jones. A Dictionary of Ancient Greek Coins. London. First published in 1986.

⁶ Selection..., p. 113.

⁷ C. M. Kraay. Coins of Ancient Athens. Newcastle upon Tyne. 1968, p. 5.

to climatic similarity with Greece, then – West, North and East Black Sea countries. Two major waves of the colonists passed from Hellas – first one in the 8th – 6th cc. B. C., and the next – in the 4th c. B. C. led by Alexander the Great. Asia Minor was a complete victory of Hellenism, even being integrated politically under Mithridates Eupator, king of Pontus, as far back as in the 1st c. B. C. The Roman overlordship gave a new sense to the economic prosperity of the Greek World. And at the last the Byzantine metropolis was created with all that languages like Lydian, Cappadocian etc. vanished forever. But there were the serious failures too. Colchis offered a dangerous humidity to the Greek way of life. The Greeks living there had no chance to keep their industrial spirit as the agriculture was very slow in development. Soon the Greek community became a bilingual one, and after – totally assimilated within the Colchian society. As to Bosphorus, a corn-supply from Asia Minor to Greece had broken the traditional scheme, and the region soon lost its Greek style. And the case of Thrace was a certain conflict with the new concept of Europe.

This is the whole story about the Greeks shaping Europe. Macedonia contributed much as a recruitment area, but earlier Athens had been thought to be a leader. It was merely a frustration – indeed, if the best city had to be striped from a population, nothing would be created at all. While the Greeks still in this mistake, Athenians made a good deal – seizing the markets and imposing taxes.

Athenians cared much for the Black Sea areas; and Pericles even launched a special expedition (Plut. Pericl. 20). Then numismatic visage of Colchis was changed as Athenian tetradrachms came in sight together with the Attic ceramics.⁸ Moreover, Milesian, Aeginetan and Persian standards used for the autonomous issues now disappear and Attic standard becomes unique.

The types appearing on the coins of Graeco-Colchian bilingual community, Phasis, were the following /Pl. I-II/:

- I. Lion's head /Rev. Winged Pegasus in quadratum incusum
- II. Lying hermaphrodite lion /Rev. Kneeling female figure with a bull's head in quadratum incusum
- III. Archaic female head /Rev. Two identical heads, facing one another, each in quadratum incusum
- IV. Archaic female head /Rev. Two bull's heads, facing one another, each in quadratum incusum
- V. Lion's head /Rev. bull's head in quadratum incusum
- VI. Lion's head /Rev. Lioness's foreparts in quadratum incusum
- VII. Archaic female head /Rev. Bull's head
- VIII. Archaic female head /Rev. Crane.⁹

The first design seems to be used for, at least, three times. Phasis produced the staters of Milesian (13 gr.), Aeginetan (12.7 gr.) and Persian (10.4 gr.) standards.

The second design was applied, perhaps, twice for a stater of the Persian system (the weights range from 10 gr. to 11.4 gr.) and a didrachm of the Attic standard (the weights range from 7.9 gr. to 9.4 gr.).

This scheme fits the third design too with the weights 9.6 gr., 9.9 gr., 10.4 gr. for the Persian standard and 8.7 gr., 9.2 gr. for the Attic one.

We are completely ignorant of the weight of the fourth design.

The fifth type is siglos (5.5 gr.); the sixth – Attic hemidrachm (the weights range from 1.7 gr. to 2.6 gr.); the seventh – the same (the weights range from 1.2 gr. to 2.6 gr.), and the last one – hemitetartemoron.¹⁰

The result is as follows /Pl. III-IV/:

Lion's head /Rev. Pegasus type forms the first Graeco-Colchian series.

Then the hermaphrodite lion type appears first issued as a Persian stater together with a siglos, i. e. the fifth design.

After the third design was established as a Persian stater.

The hermaphrodite lion type seems to be restored later as Attic didrachm accompanied by lion type hemidrachm.

Then we do have to revert to the third design as Attic didrachm.

On the one hand, the seventh design follows the Attic standard, on the other hand, it is a simplification of the fourth design. That does mean that the fourth design should be considered as something

⁸ G. F. Dundua, T. G. Dundua. *Les Relations Économiques de la Colchide aux Époques Archaïque et Classique D'Après le Matériel Numismatique. La Mer Noire Zone de Contacts. Actes du VII^e Symposium de Vani. Paris. 1999, p. 111 N23; Очерки Истории Грузии. т. I. 1989, p. 228.*

⁹ T. Dundua. *Georgia Within the European Integration as Seen in Coinage. Catalogue of Georgian Coins. Tbilisi. 1999, pp.7-8*

¹⁰ T. Dundua. *op. cit., pp. 7-8.*

within the Attic system first issued together with a small denomination, which is alone prolonged after up to the 3rd c. B. C.

Here is the whole story about Graeco-Colchian issues, and Attic standard being victorious.

Dioscurias was a splendid Greek city dominated by a mercantile oligarchy, a foundation of Miletus, sometimes – being troubled by the natives from hinterland. Then it seems to be completely assimilated. History of Dioscurias is packed with tremendous events and clashes. And the clashes were back again in summer of 1993 as the civil war had broken out in Abkhazia. Still one missile was especially lucky as it buried itself deep in the earth and showed coin-shaped white metal. The description is as follows: weight – 300.37 gr. d=70mm. Head of Athena wearing crested helmet (the fashion is that of “old style” coinage)/Owl. Obviously Athenian weight, it was offered for sale, and witnessed by the Section of Numismatics, Tbilisi State Museum, together with special expert, Prof. Dr. G. Dundua (Centre for Archaeological Studies, Tbilisi). 1993 is a dark hour for Georgia; and the weight was neither bought, nor fixed properly.

The greatest number of the marked weights found in the Agora are small roughly square lead plaques. Sometimes this official weights are marked with the same symbols as the coins – head of Athena/owl.¹¹ Large circular stamp with helmeted head of Athena appears on the lead weight of the Roman time.¹² /Pl. V. N 1/. Bronze weight too of some 69.9 gr. has an owl incised. This seems to be a coin weight, 1/6 of mina¹³ /Pl. V. N 2/. Even countermarks for the weights represent double-bodied owl and helmeted head.¹⁴ Dry measure also has two stamps: the double-bodied owl and helmeted head of Athena¹⁵ /Pl. V. N 3/.

The Athenian coin mina, consisting of 100 drachms, weighted \approx 436.6 gr. There was also another mina, used for weighting market produce, equal to 138 coin drachms, or 602 gr.¹⁶

So, the piece from Dioscurias should be considered as Athenian trade - weight – half mina.

What conclusions are we to draw from all this?

1) Dioscurias had to receive or was glad to receive the official Athenian weights as the city became a subject of the Alliance.

2) And Phasis should had accepted even a coin mina and Attic standard too while already in the Alliance. Was there any legislation in the favour of democracy; what does a maintenance of “Archaic smile” on the Athenian (“Old Style” coinage) and Phasian (the seventh design) coins mean? We shall never know.

3) One thing is clear – Attic standard was installed in Colchis between 450 and 414 B. C. And the effect was that of introducing Euro within the European Community.

¹¹ The Athenian Agora. v. X. Weights, Measures and Tokens by M. Lang and M. Crosby. Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Part I. Weights and Measures by M. Lang. Princeton. New Jersey. 1964, p. 6.

¹² op.cit., p. 31, pl. 9 LW (lead weight) 66.

¹³ op.cit., p. 26, pl. 1 BW (bronze weight) 5.

¹⁴ op.cit., p. 28, pl. 6 LW 26, p. 30, pl.8 LW 46.

¹⁵ op.cit., pl. 14 DM (dry measure) 44, 45; pl. 18 DM 44, 45.

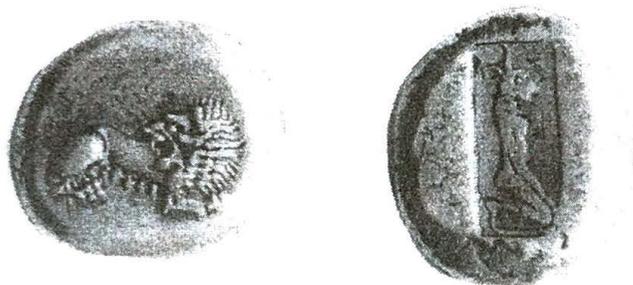
¹⁶ “Mina”, “Attic Weight Standard”. J. M. Jones. op. cit.

PL. I

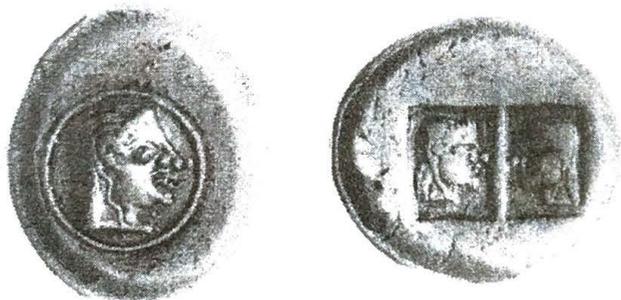
I



II



III



IV

head/bull's heads

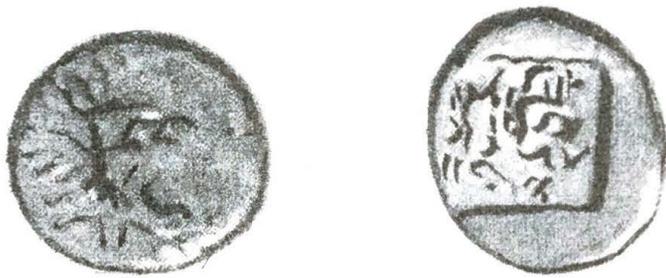
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Pl.II

V



VI



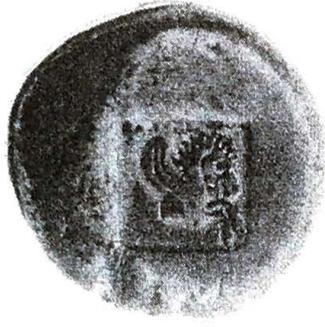
VII



VIII



Pl. III



I issue. Milesian standard

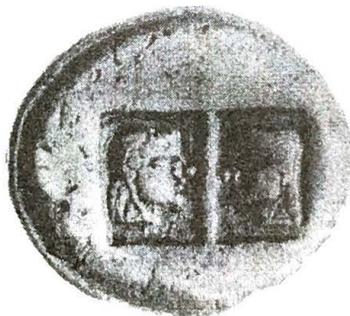


II issue. Aeginetan standard

III issue. Persian standard



IV issue. Persian standard



V issue. Persian standard

PL. IV



VI issue. Attic standard

VII issue. Attic standard

head/bull's heads



VIII issue. Attic standard

Series. Attic standard

Pl.V

1.



2.



3.

