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Kasolaba, a New Mint in Karia?

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Kasolaba, a New Mint in Karia?

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(Abstract)

A tentative attribution to a new mint in Karia is presented here for a prolific series of Classical silver fractions. Their legend in the Karian script and some recorded provenances would indicate Kasolaba, a city which is mentioned in the Athenian Tribute Lists but whose precise location is uncertain.

Long ascribed to Abdemon of Salamis on Cyprus,¹ a prolific series of silver fractions was rightly identified as Karian by Troxell who had access to a number of specimens reportedly found in Karia.² Besides the provenances, she also pointed out that one of the letters found on these fractions (ϡ) is only known in the Karian script.³ Subsequent studies followed, and some confirmed, her firm attribution to Karia, but determining the mint remained an uncertain task.⁴

These fractions have a head of a ram on the obverse and a young male head in profile on the reverse. A late variant depicts the Persian hero-king instead of the ram. Those coins which have the legend in Karian have weights which cluster in the 0.45-0.50g range.⁵ This would represent a hemiobol in the reduced Milesian standard used in that part of Karia.⁶

What follows is a type catalogue of all the varieties known to me; each illustrated by a specimen.

1. *Obv.* Head of ram right.

Rev. Young male head left; on the upper-left corner, ϡ (z) on the lower-left corner, α (a); all within incuse square.

Private collection (0.43g; 09H); ca. 450-400 BC.

¹ The attribution to king Abdemon goes back to J. P. Six, *Monnaies grecques inédites et incertaines*, NumChron 10, 1890, 256-259. With no provenance at his disposal, Six considered the two-letter legend to be Phoenician with an odd upside-down and backward orientation. He also postulated a third missing Phoenician letter, which turns out to be a ghost as it does not appear on any of the known specimens. Because of its types, Kebren in Troas was also suggested as the mint and standard catalogues such as BMC Troas, 44, no. 14 and *Traité II.2*, no. 2336 follow that attribution when they do not prefer at the same time a Cypriot origin: BMC Cyprus, 54, nos. 42-44; *Traité II.2*, no. 1143.

² H. A. Troxell, *Carians in Miniature*, in: A. Houghton et al. (eds.), *Studies in Honor of Leo Mildenberg* (Wetteren 1984) 253-255 (hereafter cited as Troxell 1984). The coins described as belonging to a Finnish collector were published in *SNG Keckman*, 865-902.

³ This letter, known as sign 36, is a sibilant and has the value z according to the latest research on Karian, see I.-J. Adiego, *The Carian Language* (Leiden-Boston 2007).

⁴ *SNG Kayhan*, 993-998 were all found in Karia or southern Ionia.

⁵ Troxell 1984, 253 lists 34 coins with weights ranging 0.34-0.54g; the average being 0.44g (one specimen is 0.29g, no. 2 in the present type catalogue). In my own file, specimens over 0.50g are not uncommon, but they tend to be early issues of the square incuse type.

⁶ For a discussion of this standard, see K. Konuk, *The Coinage of the Hekatomnids of Caria* (D.Phil. diss. University of Oxford 1998) 31-34.

Types 1 and 2 show a distinctive archaic style; the deep incuse square of the reverse also indicates an early issue. The initial letter, **A** on later issues, takes a rather odd shape on these early examples.

2. *Obv.* As last.

Rev. Young male head right; on the upper-right corner, **Ϛ** (*z*); on the lower-right corner, **⤵** (*a*); all within incuse square.

SNG Keckman, 865 (0.29g; 06H) = Troxell 1984, no. 8; ca. 450-400 BC.

3. *Obv.* As last.

Rev. Young male head right; on the upper-right corner, **Ϛ** (*z*); on the lower-right corner, **⤵** (*a*); all within incuse square.

Hauck & Aufhäuser 15 (2000), 206 (0.52g); ca. 450-400 BC.

The shape of the initial letter establishes a link between the first phase of this coinage and the later issues (type 4 onwards)

Same types from the next coin to no. 11 unless otherwise indicated:

Obv. Head of ram right.

Rev. Young male head right; on either side, **4** (anepigraphic) **5** (*za*); **6** (*za*); **7** (*za*); **8** (*az*); **9** (*az*); **10** (*azo*); **11** (*azo*); all within square or round incuse.

4. Anepigraphic with square incuse.

Private collection (0.50g; 12H); ca. 420-400 BC.

Besides early issues with square incuse (4), there are also later ones with round incuses (4bis): private collection (0.31g; 06H).

5. **ϐ** **Λ**

Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology, 31-9-85 (0.42g; 01H); ca. 420-400 BC.

Only the incuse square variety is known. The letter on the right also has the shape **Λ** on a specimen (5bis) in Oxford, Ashmolean Museum (0.43g; 09H). There is also a specimen with **Ϛ** **Ϛ** (5ter) in the Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology, 9-19-91 (0.51g; 12H).

6. **ϐ** **Δ**

Private collection (0.34g; 02H); ca. 420-400 BC.

This specimen has a round incuse. The letter on the right also has the shape **Δ** on a specimen in SNG Keckman, 870 (0.46g; 09H); a die-duplicate is in Oxford, Ashmolean Museum (6bis, 0.48g; 08H).

7. **Ϛ** **A**

Muharrem Kayhan collection, MK 1236 (0.49g; 06H); ca. 410-390 BC.

The incuse on the Kayhan specimen is square; the round variety is also attested (e.g. SNG Keckman, 869 [0.46g; 09H]). A variety with **ϐ** is also known, see e.g. SNG Keckman, 877 (0.39g; 03H).

8. **A** **Ϛ**

New York, ANS (0.41g; 06H) = Troxell 1984, no. 9B; ca. 410-390 BC.

On nos. 8-10, when the shape of the incuse can be determined, it is circular, and on some very shallow. Issue 8 is the most common of the series and my catalogue numbers close to 200 specimens.

9. A Ϛ

Obv. Head of ram right; below, A (*a*).

Private collection (0.36g; 10H); ca. 410-390 BC.

10. A ϚO

SNG Kayhan, 997 (0.38g; 12H); ca. 410-390 BC.

11. A ϚO

Obv. Persian hero-king right, in running-kneeling position, holding dagger in the right hand and bow in the left; groundline.

London (BM), CM 1999-10-7-1 (0.34g; 6H); ca. 410-390 BC.

In the absence of an ethnic, there can be no certainty in the attribution of nos. 12 to 18 to the mint which struck the previous coins. However, many features would suggest that they belong in fact to the same mint (similar types, same weight standard, finds reportedly including both coinages (in Bodrum and Milas museums).

12. *Obv.* Head of ram left.

Rev. Young male head left within round incuse.

Hemitetartemorion. Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology, 63-15-85 (0.05g [sic, specimen in good shape]; 12H).

13. *Obv.* Head of ram right.

Rev. Young male head right.

Tetartemorion or hemitetartemorion? Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology, 62-15-85 (0.08g; 12H).

14. *Obv.* As last.

Rev. As last, but EK in right field.

Tetartemorion or hemitetartemorion? Muharrem Kayhan collection, MK 1629 (0.09g; 12H).

This unique specimen differs from the previous issue by the two-letter Greek legend which clearly refers to Hekatomnos, satrap of Karia from ca. 392 to 377 BC. Mylasa also issued silver fractions in the name of Hekatomnos with the letters E, EK or EKA, see SNG Kayhan, 867.

15. *Obv.* As last.

Rev. Head of roaring lion right; forepaw extended, in square incuse.

Tetartemorion. SNG Kayhan, 989 (0.22g; 12H).

The lion is sometimes turned to left (15bis): Bodrum Museum of Underwater Archaeology, 21-9-85 0.19g; 03H).

16. *Obv.* As last.

Rev. Head of roaring lion right in round incuse.

Tetartemorion. Private collection (round incuse, 0.14g; 06H).

17. *Obv.* Head of ram left; double-axe above.

Rev. Head of roaring lion left in roughly square incuse.

Tetartemorion. SNG Kayhan, 999 (0.12g; 12H).

The stylistic evolution suggests that these fractions were issued over a long period of time, perhaps over a century. The legend must therefore refer to an ethnic rather than a dynast. The later issues bear three letters: AϺO, which at first glance are not easy to match with an ethnic.⁷ The first (A) and the last letters (O) do not represent any difficulty for they have the same values as in Greek. As for the second letter (Ϻ or Ϻ), its value was only established recently. For a long time it was taken as a cursive equivalent of another sign (ϫ),⁸ which Schürr argued should be read as a sibilant.⁹ As the value of that letter was being discussed, I wondered whether the coin legend might not be connected with the beginning of the word *alosharnos* and its variants.¹⁰ Adiego had suggested that this name may have something to do with the toponym of Halikarnassos.¹¹ It seemed that a possible connection with our fractions made sense given the fact that their reported find spots are mainly from the area which falls between Halikarnassos and Mylasa.¹² In addition, the uncertainty concerning the value of Ϻ made me wonder whether there might not be scope to regard it as some form of L.¹³ This led me to tentatively suggest Halikarnassos as the mint of our fractions.¹⁴ Now that the new reading of Ϻ no longer supports that attribution, there is a need to reconsider the evidence.

The decipherment of Karian has made significant progress over the past few years and a number of difficult signs have been given more accurate values. This is the case of Ϻ which has received confirmation that it should be read as a sibilant and is today transcribed with

⁷ As Troxell 1984, 254 rightly observed, the occasional presence of the O in the inscription, always next to the Ϻ, shows that A is the initial letter of the legend.

⁸ Cf. I.-J. Adiego, *Studia Carica*. Investigaciones sobre la escritura y lengua carias (Barcelona 1993) 270.

⁹ D. Schürr, Bastet-Namen in karischen Inschriften Ägyptens, *Kadmos* 35, 1996, 60.

¹⁰ Verbal communication presented and commented by J. D. Ray, *Aegyptio-Carica*, *Kadmos* 37, 1998, 127.

¹¹ Adiego loc. cit. (n. 8) 245.

¹² A large number of these coins occur in the collections of the archaeological museums of Bodrum and Milas.

¹³ Ray loc. cit. (n. 9) 127 considered the possibility that Ϻ may be better seen as a cursive equivalent of sign 7, which is known to be λ.

¹⁴ SNG Kayhan, 993-998; K. Konuk, Karun'dan Karia'ya, Muharrem Kayhan Koleksiyonundan Erken Anadolu Sikkeleri. From Kroisos to Karia, *Early Anatolian Coins from the Muharrem Kayhan Collection* (Istanbul 2003) 102: "Many of these coins have been found in or near Halikarnassos, but finds have also been reported from around Mylasa. The word Alisharnos is attested by a Karian inscription and may well be the Karian form of Halikarnassos. One is tempted to associate the three letters of the coin with that word, but there can be no certainty."

some confidence as *z*.¹⁵ Our coins would thus have a Karian ethnic beginning with *azo*. As a matter of fact, there is an eligible ethnic which falls precisely in the area in which these coins are commonly found. By studying the Athenian Tribute Lists and the recently discovered inscription from Sekköy (north of Keramos), Descat convincingly demonstrates that the city of Kasolaba ought to be located between Halikarnassos and Mylasa.¹⁶ Mention should be made of another city in the area whose name has a similar beginning: Kassosos.¹⁷ It is located between the villages of Çamköy and Ulaş. Its inland situation is probably the reason why it was not subjected to the Athenian tribute. Early coinages were usually issued by coastal cities and Kassosos does not appear to be a credible candidate for our mint. At this stage, it is not possible to exactly pinpoint where the Kasolabeis were established.¹⁸ There are several ancient settlements in the area. Descat considered the village of Kemer as a suitable candidate for Kasolaba. Another possible identification is Güvercinlik Tepesi which Zäh unconvincingly identifies as Karyanda,¹⁹ a city which ought to be located on an island, at least partly.²⁰ Given that there are several other eligible sites in the area, it would be better to leave the task of identifying the site of Kasolaba until new evidence is discovered.²¹ Concerning the reading of our coin legend, *azo*, it shows a remarkable similarity to the Greek ethnic of Kasolaba. The omission of a guttural initial in the Karian legend should not be surprising since examples of ethnics like Kyromos / Hyromos / Euromos, Kydai / Hydai and Kyblissos / Hyblissos in the same district testify that such variations were frequent. Kasolaba is the Greek transcription of a Karian ethnic whose native spelling remains uncertain. It has been suggested, however, that $\nabla\text{MO}\Delta\Gamma\text{O}$ (*ksolbś*) found in an inscription from Egypt (Memphis, M 35) may have been the genitive form of Kasolaba in Karian. Whether or not this is the case,

¹⁵ See now I.-J. Adiego, *The Carian Language* (Leiden-Boston 2007).

¹⁶ For the inscription, see W. Blümel, *Zwei neue Inschriften aus Mylasa der Zeit des Maussolos*, *EpigrAnat* 16, 1990, 30-36 and P. Debord – E. Varinlioğlu (eds.), *Les hautes terres de Carie* (Bordeaux 2001) 216-217. Dating from the reign of Artaxerxes III, the inscription describes the grant by Kindya of a piece of land to Zeus Osogollis of Mylasa. Delegates from several neighbouring cities are invited to supervise this deal. They are listed in the inscription and its sequence appears not to be random. The order is quite valuable from a topographical point of view. It transpires that Kasolaba must be very close to Kindya, it might even be its direct neighbour. For the demonstration, see R. Descat, *La géographie dans les listes de tributs attiques: Lepsimandos et Kasôlaba en Carie*, *ZPE* 104, 1994, 66-68.

¹⁷ L. Robert, *Rapport sommaire sur un premier voyage en Carie*, *AJA* 39/3, 1935, 334; W. Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Mylasa. Teil II: Inschriften aus der Umgebung der Stadt* (Bonn 1988), 252-260.

¹⁸ They appear in the Athenian Tribute Lists and contributed 2500 drachms, which is a notable sum compared to the contribution of neighbouring communities of comparable size.

¹⁹ A. Zäh, *Zur Lokalisierung von Karyanda in Karien*, *ÖJh* 73, 2004, 327-338.

²⁰ Ps.-Scylax 99; Descat loc. cit. (n. 16) 64; R. Descat, *Plinie et la Carie*, in: P. Arnaud – P. Counillon (eds.), *Geographica Historica* (Bordeaux 1998) 117. Salihadası and Konel Adası are the most likely candidates.

²¹ The fourth campaign of our Archaeological Survey in the Ceramic Gulf, held in September 2006 (University of Bordeaux – Ausonius CNRS), focused on the area in question. Several unrecorded sites have been identified, one of which located next to the village of Tepecik (Asar Tepe) and overlooking the fertile coastal plain of Karaova from the northwest, would appear to be a further possible site for Kasolaba.

the coins suggest that the Karian ethnic started with *azo*. It would not be far-fetched to expect that a new Greek inscription with the form Hasolaba may one day come to light.



