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A Phantom City in the Troad: Aioleion and its Coinage

Abstract: In this study, it is argued that the actual minting place of coins with AIOΛE legend, which are attributed to a city assumed to be in Troas region, is Assos and that they were struck in the name of the Koinon of Aiolis between 310-280 B.C., of which the center was Assos. This suggestion is supported by numismatic data obtained during the excavations of Assos carried out between 1981 and 2015. The fact that there is no city in Troas named Aioleion, to which place these coins are attributed, is attested by first and second degree historical sources on the region such as topographical studies, archaeological researches and excavations as well as epigraphical documents.

Keywords: Troas; coinage; Assos; Koinon Aioleis; Aioleion.

Aioleion as a city name in the Troad is first recorded in the book entitled *The Coins from Maroneia and the Classical City at Molyvoti* written by S. Psoma, Ch. Karadima and D. Terzopoulou. This study publishes coins found during archaeological excavations carried out in this important city on the North Aegean coast. It is a very significant study not only for the history of Maroneia and its coins, but also for the history and numismatic of Thrace and its neighboring region.

In this context, the coins which show the city's connection with the region of the Troad are one Birytis and one Tenedos coin found on the Molyvoti Peninsula,¹ two coins from Tenedos and two from Larisa Ptolemais found in Maroneia,² as well as one from Abydos, one from Alexandria Troas and one Koinon Aiolis coin classified under the name Aioleion.³

In the explanation concerning the bronze coin with the head of Hera on the obverse and a thunderbolt with the legend AIOΛE on the reverse side it is stated that these coins are attributed by L. Robert to a city in the Troad of which name is supposed to be Aioleion. Moreover, as evidence for a Troad city, it is asserted that the silver tetrobol coins with this AIOΛE legend are of the same weight with those struck by Abydos and Assos.⁴

The name Aioleion is found for the second time in SNG Turkey 9 prepared by O. Tekin and A. Erol-Özdizbay.⁵ In the preface to this important catalogue, which includes the coins of the Troad in the collection of Ö. Arıkantürk of Edremit, the authors state that amongst the 827 coins, all of which were bought in Burhaniye, there are unique pieces from Achilleion, Aioleion, Ophryneum, Pionia, Scamandria, Thymbria and Zeleia.

There are three coins attributed to a city named Aioleion in the collection of Arıkantürk. These coins belong to the same series and emission and they bear the head of Hera on the obverse and the thunderbolt with the AIOΛE legend on the reverse. It is understood from the references provided that coins are

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¹ Psoma – Karadima – Terzopoulou 2008, 41–42, nos. PM156–157.

² These two coins (M350–M351) are by mistake classified under the heading “Ionia”. It was corrected by a note added under the Troad heading. About their attribution to Larisa in Troas, see Robert 1982, 319–333.

³ Psoma – Karadima – Terzopoulou 2008, 112–113 ve 115, nos. M339–M340, M342–343, M350–351.

⁴ Psoma – Karadima – Terzopoulou 2008, 112.

⁵ SNG Turkey 9. The Özkan Arıkantürk Collection. Volume I: Troas, Istanbul 2015.

classified under the headings Koinon of Lesbos, Koinon of Aioleis and Assos, and it is to be noted that they were attributed by Robert and then Psoma, Karadima and Terzopoulou to Aioleion.⁶

Before explaining that there is no city named Aioleion in the Troad, it seems worthwhile to relate the story of those coins with the legend AIOAE: the silver tetrobol coins with the head of Athena in a Corinthian helmet on the obverse and the thunderbolt and kerykeion symbol on the reverse and bronze coins with the head of Hera in stephanos with necklace and earring on the obverse and the thunderbolt and kerykeion of a bunch of grapes symbol⁷ which were initially attributed to a city named in Aioleion which does not exist in the Thracian Chersonese due to a misreading of a passage of Pliny (NH IV.49).⁸

The first detailed scientific research on these coins following their attribution to Aioleion was made by F. Imhoof-Blumer.⁹ Firstly, Imhoof-Blumer determined that the silver tetrobol coins with the AIOAE legend were struck in the early Hellenistic period (330–280 B.C.) based upon his observation that the head of Athena in the Corinthian helmet on the obverse side of the silver coins was copied from the Athena head placed on the obverse side of Alexander the Great's gold staters.¹⁰

Imhoof-Blumer excluded the possibility of Aioleion in Chalcidice and Aioleus in Thessaly as mint places because these coins are always found in Asia Minor and collected from this region.¹¹ As a result of the connection he established with Mytilene and Methymna, he suggested that these coins may belong to a Koinon formed by the cities of Lesbos island, probably including the cities of Aiolis.¹² According to Imhoof-Blumer, the mint of these coins was Methymna.¹³ Imhoof-Blumer's attribution was accepted as the most suitable one by Wroth and nine examples in the British Museum collection were published under the title "*Coins of Lesbos Inscribed AIOAE (Struck at Methymna?)*"¹⁴

On the other hand, E. Babelon who prepared the publication of the Waddington Collection stated that the coins with AIOAE legend are attributed to Methymna in BMC Lesbos; however he found it more suitable to list them under the title of *Æolia (ville d'Æolide?)*.¹⁵ But Head prefers the title Koinon of Lesbos for these coins.¹⁶

In his study of Lesbos, H. Pistorius suggested that these coins might belong to a confederation formed by Aeolic cities rather than the Koinon of Lesbos. This was due to the fact that in the period (330–280 B.C.) when coins with AIOAE legend were struck, new entities were established by Alexander the

⁶ SNG Arıkantürk 339–341.

⁷ BMC Lesbos 171–172 nos. 1–9; Weber coll. 5645–5648 (Koinon of Lesbos); McClean coll. III 7981–7982 (Koinon of Lesbos); SNG Marc Bar 707 (Koinon Aioleis); SNG Soutzos 1399 (Koinon of Lesbos); SNG Kipke 826 (Lesbos ? Koinon of Aioleis); SNG Arıkantürk 339–341 (Aioleion); SNG v. Aulock 1732 (Koinon von Lesbos); SNG v. Aulock Nachtrage II 7742 (Koinon von Lesbos); SNG Cop 331–335 (Koinon of Lesbos); SNG München Lesbos 689–691 (Koinon von Lesbos); Lenger 2009, 51–52 nos. 1–25 (Coins of the Koinon of Aiolis struck in Assos).

⁸ Plinius NH IV.49: "delubrum Protesilai et in extrema Cherronesi fronte, quae vocatur Aeolium, oppidum Elaeus." For the localization, see L. Müller, Friedländer and Prokesch von Osten, cited by Imhoof-Blumer; for more details, see Robert 1951, 92 n. 4. Aioleion is located in the Chalkidike peninsula, see Robert 1951, 92

⁹ Imhoof-Blumer 1876, 312–321.

¹⁰ Imhoof-Blumer 1876, 318; Robert 1951, 93.

¹¹ Imhoof-Blumer 1876, 316; Robert 1951, 95.

¹² Imhoof-Blumer 1876, 316–317; Robert 1951, 93; Robert 1966, 96. A Koinon is known from inscriptions as Λέσβιοι which was formed in Lesbos by the island cities in the Hellenistic period. See Robert 1925, 29–43. For Koinon Lesbiaca, see Robert 1951, 93–94; Labarre 1994. For the coins of the Koinon of Lesbos, see Vavliakis – Lyrou 2010.

¹³ Imhoof-Blumer 1876, 316–317; Robert 1951, 93.

¹⁴ BMC Lesbos: introduction (Coinage of Lesbos) xviii; 171–172 nos. 1–9.

¹⁵ Wadd. coll., 1359.

¹⁶ Head 1911, 559.

Great and his successors in Asia Minor, such as the confederation of Athena Ilias and the Ionian Confederation.¹⁷

Robert also disagreed with the Koinon of Lesbos idea. That is because the coins which are assumed to have been struck in Methymna circulated in the Troad region, rather than on Lesbos. Moreover, it is not plausible for Lesbos to use AIOAE as a legend for its coins as there was already a Koinon of Lesbos, whose existence in the Hellenistic period is attested by inscriptions.¹⁸

Robert did not reject the Pistorius' suggestion that coins with the legend AIOAE were struck by a Koinon formed by Aeolic cities in Asia Minor, but he approached the idea with caution.¹⁹ Because not only those in Aiolis, but also almost all of the cities of the Troad are of Aeolic origin, and this is something also attested by inscriptions. If there was really such an Aeolic confederation, it is not certain which cities belonged to it. Further, there are hitherto no inscriptions that have been found mentioning any such confederation. In this context, Robert did not find it right to state the existence of such a confederation, which is not known from historical sources and which is not attested by any epigraphic find, but is solely based on coins with the AIOAE legend.²⁰

Robert observed that these coins with the AIOAE legend generally circulated within the region of the Troad and he went further by suggesting that these coins might belong to a city in the Troad not yet known, rather than to an Aeolic confederation and adds that this unknown city may have been called after the Aiolians.²¹ By his suggestion Robert refers to the fact that the coins in question were found by excavations in Assos and Ilion as well as in Kebren,²² that these cities in the region are mostly of Aeolic origin as well as to the existence of cities like Birytis and Gertinos whose presence is solely based on coin finds.²³ Nevertheless, despite the fact that Robert mentioned such an unknown city in Troad, he named these coins "Airoleis" rather than suggesting a name for the likely city. Robert believed this problem could only be solved with new evidence from found in the Troad.²⁴

Cook, who studied the topography and archaeology of the Troad rejected the idea of Robert that these coins may belong to an unknown southern Troad city near Assos, stating that there is no suitable place in the region for any such city.²⁵ Cook, relied on the fact that out of seventeen coins with the AIOAE legend from the Troad and in its vicinity, eleven were found in Assos, which led him to suggest that they might have been struck in Assos in the name of a small union established by neighboring cities, such as Polymedion and Lamponia, Assos being the center of the union.²⁶

Lazzarini agreed with Cook and rejected the possibility of there being an unknown city in the southern Troad, as, above all, had a city struck silver tetrobol coins with the AIOAE legend (see p. 99) in the Early Hellenistic period in the Troad, it could not possibly have been a small and unimportant city. Moreover, as Cook established through his topographic and archaeological studies in the Troad, there is no

¹⁷ Pistorius 1913, 125–128; Robert 1951, 94–95.

¹⁸ Robert 1951, 92–96; Labarre 1994, 417.

¹⁹ Robert 1951, 96–98.

²⁰ Robert 1951, 96–97.

²¹ Robert 1951, 98–99.

²² Assos: Bell 1922, 306, nos. 164–170; Robert 1951, 92; Robert 1966, 97. Kebren: Calvert 1865, 55–66; Robert 1951, 83; Robert 1966, 96; Cook 1973, 340. Ilion: Bellinger 1961, 166, no. 163; Robert 1966, 96. Cf. Cook 1973, 248.

²³ Robert 1951, 96–100.

²⁴ Robert 1951, 99–100.

²⁵ Cook 1973, 248.

²⁶ Cook 1973, 248–250; Cook 1988, 9.

proper settlement area in the south Troad for any such mid or large scale city.²⁷

Lazzarini suggested that these coins were struck in Assos in the name of the Koinon of Aiolis, rather than a local Koinon.²⁸ For the mint, in addition to reasons Cook put forward, Lazzarini stated that the coins bearing the head of Hera on the obverse and the thunderbolt, ΑΣΣΙ legend and monograms on the reverse, carried the same iconography as the bronze coins bearing ΑΙΟΛΕ²⁹ and also their metrological system were very similar to each other.³⁰ Lazzarini interpreted the Α letter found under the kerykeion symbol on some of the silver coins with the ΑΙΟΛΕ legend, as representing the initial letter of Assos.³¹

Lazzarini argued that the coins with the ΑΙΟΛΕ legend emerged as a result of significant socio-political regulations made right across the Troad region in the last decade of the fourth century B.C. He lays emphasis on the possibility of an Assos centered Aiolis Koinon in the southern Troad, just like the Ilios centered Troad Confederation³² and the founding of Antigoneia/Alexandria Troas which was formed by Kolonai, Larisa, Hamaxitos, Chyrsa, Neandria, Kebren and Skepsis.³³ All in all, Lazzarini suggested that it would be more suitable to argue for 310 B.C. as the date of minting, rather than 330 B.C.³⁴

Evidence to support Cook's and Lazzarini's suggestions came from the Assos excavations. Data obtained from Hellenic and Roman Provincial coins which were found between 1981 and 2004³⁵ prove that these two scholars were correct.

As Lazzarini has stated, the mint of the coins with the legend ΑΙΟΛΕ is Assos. The fact that these coins are found both in Behram village and in its vicinity, and that they are frequently found during excavations support this attribution. Seven coins were found and registered during the excavations carried out by the Americans between 1881 and 1884.³⁶ On the other hand, the number of coins with the legend ΑΙΟΛΕ found during the excavations from 1981 to 2004 under the directorship of Ümit Serdaroğlu was thirteen.³⁷ Four of them have the owl countermark on the obverse side, which is a design found on other coin series from Assos.³⁸

When it is taken into consideration that during the excavations: two Series I coins (2 %), twenty one Series II coins (17 %) and ninety Series III (70 %) were found, the number of coins with the ΑΙΟΛΕ legend which are named as Series IV is pretty high. And they form 10 % of all of Assos' coins. What is surprising is that there is not even a single specimen that has been found bearing the head of Hera on the obverse and the thunderbolt, monogram and ΑΣΣΙ legend on the reverse. On the other hand, the number of coins of the last series which was struck before the city's annexation by the kingdom of Pergamum is

²⁷ Cook 1973, 248; Lazzarini 1983, 14.

²⁸ Lazzarini 1983, 13–14.

²⁹ Bell 1921, 48; Weber coll., 5331; Sear, 4055; cf. Lenger 2009, 52 n. 26–28 (Series IV).

³⁰ Lazzarini 1983, 13.

³¹ Lazzarini 1983, 13.

³² Robert 1966, 15–41; Boffo 1985, 102–106; Cohen 1995, 152–157.

³³ IK Alexandria Troas: 2–11; Rici 1997, 91–106; Cohen 1995, 145–148; Tenger 1999, 143–165; Akalın 2008.

³⁴ Lazzarini 1983, 15.

³⁵ Bronze Greek and Roman provincial coins found during the excavations carried out under the directorship of Ümit Serdaroğlu were the subject of a doctoral thesis prepared by D. S. Lenger in Paris IV–Sorbonne under the supervision of O. Picard, see Lenger 2009.

³⁶ Bell 1921, 306, 164–170. It is known that, besides the excavation, the Americans took coins from neighboring villages, even from Lesbos. In this case, it is not possible to know exactly the origin of the seven coins that were published by Bell. Nevertheless, the presence of these seven coins was used by Robert to support the idea that these coins are of Troas origin.

³⁷ See. Lenger 2009, 51–52, 116–118. Cfr. Lenger 2016, 9–16 (as the four coins in Çanakkale Archaeology Museum were not included, there are nine coins in the study).

³⁸ Lenger 2009, 51–52, nos. 6, 10, 21–22.

three (2 %).³⁹

During the second term of Turkish excavations conducted under the directorship of Nurettin Aslan following the death of Serdaroğlu, seven new examples of coins with the legend AIOAE were found and registered.

To return to the matter of Aioleion, there is neither a city in the region of the Troad named Aioleion nor has this been ever suggested.⁴⁰ In fact, what is in question is a misreading that led Robert to attribute the coins with the AIOAE legend to a city named Aioleion. Actually, Robert suggested they might belong to a hitherto unknown city in the southern Troad.⁴¹ However, in none of his studies on this subject did he offer the name of a city.⁴² He preferred the title “Aioleis” to refer to a Koinon.⁴³ Such that he recorded two of his own coins, one of which bought from Balıkesir market in 1960 and another from Çanakkale Behramkale village (Assos), under the heading Aioleis/Troade.⁴⁴ For this reason, the name Aioleion is not used in the works of Cook, Lazzarini and Lenger.

The list of twenty bronze coins, which were found during archaeological excavations carried out in Assos between 1981 and 2015, struck by the Koinon of Aiolis, with Assos as its centre, is given below:

310–280 B.C.

Obv. Head of Hera right.

Rev. AIOAE. Thunderbolt.

Emission: bunch of grape in lower field (N)

Trikalkon

1.AE	16mm.	3.50gr.	5h.	*Çanakkale 85/4330
2.AE	17mm.	3.10gr.	9h.	*Assos 196/1996. Countermark (cmk.): obv. Owl
3.AE	16mm.	3.66gr.	6h.	*Assos 239/1997
4.AE	17mm.	2.90gr.	--	*Assos 23/1989

Khalkous

5.AE	13mm.	1.24gr.	9h.	*Assos 275/2003
6.AE	10mm.	0.93gr.	9h.	*Assos 168/1995
7.AE	12mm.	1.61gr.	9h.	*Assos 114/1993
8.AE	9mm.	0.90gr.	6h.	*Çanakkale 04 ET 2/61
9.AE	12mm.	1.36gr.	9h.	*Assos S.09.011

Emission: kerykeion in lower field (NN)

Trikalkon

1.AE	17mm.	3.53gr.	9h.	*Assos 290/2004
2.AE	16mm.	3.60gr.	--	*Çanakkale 85 ET 110/9b. Cmk.: obv. Owl
3.AE	19mm.	3.27gr.	3h.	*Assos 141/1993. Cmk.: obv. Owl
4.AE	17mm.	3.21gr.	3h.	*Assos S.08.049
5.AE	17mm.	3.95gr.	--	*Assos S.08.064
6.AE	17mm.	3.82gr.	--	*Assos S.12.248
7.AE	17mm.	3.04gr.	12	*Assos S.15-231

³⁹ Lenger 2017, 12 (when the coins in the Çanakkale Archaeology Museum are added, the rate increases from 9 % to 10 %).

⁴⁰ For the cities of Troas, see Cook 1973; Mitchell 2004; Barrington Atlas; Tombul 2015.

⁴¹ Robert 1951, 98–99.

⁴² Robert only once completed the legend AIOAE as Αἰολέ(ων), see Robert 1966, 96.

⁴³ Coins are as Aioleis: “monnayage et son attribution, provenances”, 92 in Robert’s index of 1951 and as “Aioleis, leur monnayage”, 95.111. in his index of 1966.

⁴⁴ F. Delrieux published all the coins Robert bought during his trips and he listed two coins with the legend AIOAE which are thought to have been struck in Assos under the heading Aioleis with a question mark, see Delrieux 2011, 82, nos. 244–245.

Khalkous

8.AE	10mm.	0.80gr.	9h.	*Assos 216/1996
9.AE	9mm.	0.90gr.	9h.	*Çanakkale 96 ET 613/31
10.AE	11mm.	0.90gr.	12h.	*Assos S.10.208

Unknown Emission (NNN)

1.AE	12mm.	1.37gr.	12h.	*Assos S.15.134
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Özet

Troas'da Bir Hayalet Kent ve Sikke Darbı

Bu çalışmada Airoleion adında, Troas bölgesinde bulunduğu düşünülen bir kente atfedilen AIOAE lejantlı sikkelerin asıl darp yerinin Assos olduğu ve sikkelerin Assos merkezli Koinon Airoleis adına MÖ 310–280 arasına basıldığı üzerinde durulmuştur. İddia 1981–2015 yılları arasında Assos Kazılarında

ele geçen numismatik verilerle de desteklenmiştir. Atıflarının yapıldığı Aioleion adlı kentin Troas'da var olmadığı ise bölgeden bahseden birinci ve ikinci derece tarihsel kaynaklar, topografik çalışmalar, arkeolojik araştırma ve kazılar ile epigrafik belgeler ile ateste edilmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Troas; Sikke; Assos; Koinon Aioleis; Aioleion.



N1



N2



N3



N5



N6



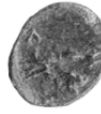
N7



N8



N9



NN1



NN4



NN5



NN6



NN7



NN8



NN9



NN10



NNN1

