

Greek and Roman Provincial Coins found at Aphrodisias: Preliminary Results from the 1998-2019 Seasons¹



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A total of 178 Greek and Roman Provincial coins were found during the excavations at Aphrodisias between 1998 and 2019. Although low in number to comment upon, when joined with a further 189 “excavated” examples from the 1961-1973 seasons at the site published by Prof. D. J. MacDonald, these provide ample evidence to understand the coins represented at Aphrodisias and their place in circulation. Coins from the other mints represented at Aphrodisias provide us with evidence for travel made on the major routes in the region.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aphrodisias, Grek Sikkeleri, Roma Eyalet Sikkeleri, Sikke buluntuları

Aphrodisias kazılarında 1998-2019 sezonlarında 178 adet Grek ve Roma Eyalet sikkesi ele geçmiştir. Bu sayı yorumlanabilmeleri için az olsa da 1961-1973 yılları arasında “kazılar sırasında” ele geçen ve Prof. D. J. MacDonald tarafından daha önce yayınlanmış olan 189 sikke daha toplama eklendiğinde, bunlar Aphrodisias kazılarında ele geçmekte olan örneklerin ve para sirkülasyonunda bunların temsil edilmesinin daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlamaktadır. Aphrodisias'ta ele geçen diğer darphanelere ait örnekler, bölgedeki önemli yol hatlarında yapılan yolculuklara dair bize ipuçları sunmaktadır.

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The on-going excavations at Aphrodisias in Karia were started by Prof. Kenan Erim (New York University) in 1961, who continued to direct the excavations until his untimely death in 1990. Since 1991, Prof. R.R.R. Smith (Oxford University) has been directing the extensive excavation, restoration and research programme at Aphrodisias¹.

The numismatic finds from Aphrodisias have been studied by several scholars over the years². Since 2013, the present author³ has been delegated the task of recording the non-Islamic coin finds and preparing the results for publication⁴. Betül and Gültekin Teoman joined the team in 2018 to study the numerous Seljuk, Beylik and Ottoman coins from the site that had never been examined before. At the moment, all the coin finds between 2000 and 2018 have been studied. Recording of the 1998-1999 and 2019 seasons has been partially completed⁵. Our aim in the 2020 season is to continue recording, going backwards while adding to the database the new finds. The aim of this article is to discuss all of the Greek and Roman Provincial coins that have been studied, although more examples from the seasons left unfinished will probably need to be added to our catalogue as work

1 For more information on the site and for a bibliography of research done at Aphrodisias see the excavation website: <http://aphrodisias.classics.ox.ac.uk/>

² Roman Coins from Aphrodisias found between 1961-1970 were the subject of a Ph.D. dissertation by David J. Macdonald (MacDonald 1972). In 1974, MacDonald published some of his results, focussing on the coin finds belonging to AD 259-305 (MacDonald 1974). He also prepared a manuscript (a copy remains in Aphrodisias Excavation Library) containing a detailed catalogue, with descriptions of every single example of the Greek and Roman coin finds from 1961 to 1973 (MacDonald 1975). This was later published but unfortunately only in a very shortened form, eliminating most of the details in the manuscript catalogue (MacDonald 1976). Erim and MacDonald published a small hoard of Alexander type drachms found in 1969 outside the ancient city, at modern Geyre (Erim and MacDonald 1974). After an article on the mint (MacDonald 1991), MacDonald published a full mint study of Aphrodisias (MacDonald 1992), which was later heavily criticized by Ann Johnston, who also proposed more plausible new dates for some types and variations (Johnston 1995). In the 1980s F. M. Lauritsen studied the Roman and Late Roman coin finds, some results of which he published in two short articles (Lauritsen 1984 and Lauritsen 1993). In the 1970s Michael F. Hendy started studying the Byzantine coin finds, a work which was not finished or published, but some results from this study were published by Cécile Morrisson (Morrisson 2017: 75, note 30, 77, Fig. 5.1; 80, fig. 5.3). Oliver D. Hoover was the numismatist at the site in 1998-1999 and published an article on three Late Roman hoards found during the excavations (Hoover 2000).

³ I would like to thank Prof. R. R. R. Smith for inviting me to study this material. My special thanks are also for Dr. Christopher Lightfoot who checked the text for mistakes and Ömer Can Taşpınar who prepared the maps.

⁴ The first work to be published is about the coin finds from the South Agora; it will appear soon. The non-Islamic catalogue to appear in that volume contains 287 coins. I would like to thank Dr. Hüseyin Köker who helped with the cataloguing of these finds and co-authored the first report. Preparation for publication the coin finds from the Tetracylon Street has also been started. Both volumes will also contain chapters on the Islamic coin finds by Betül and Gültekin Teoman.

⁵ From the 1998 to 2019 seasons a total of 1709 non-Islamic coins have been entered into the database: These include 57 Greek, 122 Roman Provincial, 64 Roman Imperial (up to AD 324), 818 Late Roman, 293 Byzantine (plus the Tetracylon Street Hoard of 338 coins), 17 Medieval to modern European coins. These numbers include coins that were partially identified or those worn/corroded ones for which the main period they were issued in could be determined by their archaeological context, coin size, and format.

progresses. Therefore, all results are preliminary.

Although Aphrodisias is visually an early imperial Roman site with the known architectural gems of the city mainly dating to this era, in reality, all of the visible standing monuments where excavations had been done, continued in active use during the Late Roman – Early Byzantine periods. Therefore, these are the best represented periods at the site with regard to finds, especially the numismatic material. Even though there are no standing Hellenistic or earlier buildings at the site, the Acropolis and Pekmez Mounds attest to the early antiquity of Aphrodisias. Classical and Hellenistic small finds, especially pottery, were excavated on the Acropolis Mound and in deep trenches at the Temple of Aphrodite and surrounding area. The sanctuary itself probably had architectural phases starting from the Archaic period onwards.

Most of the pre-Roman and Early Imperial coin finds among the recent finds were found largely in the excavation areas in the city centre, but they came from later contexts. These could very simply be results of massive reconstruction efforts including digging out or filling in of areas after earthquakes and water table rises, as evidenced by the South Agora where the area around the pool was raised almost 0.4 m. higher than the original floor level of the agora in the 5th century AD, perhaps after the damage of the AD 494 earthquake (Wilson 2018: 476-479). The closest area from which to obtain large quantities of earth to fill in this huge sector would have been the Acropolis Mound itself, which contained earlier levels with possibly, sporadic coins in them. Some of the earlier coins would have doubtless come down from the mound by natural erosion as well and some of these may also be represented sporadically in later phases of the area.

Another factor may have played a role in the presence of especially small format early coins in 5th century AD contexts. When the bronze coinage was reduced to a small size called “*minimi*”, these may have lost their relative worth through the inflation and could have been valued as low as their metal weight. This may have created a situation where anything similar looking could pass as (not so) legal tender. Older Late Roman coins that would have been normally taken out of circulation, were cut down smaller into *minimi* size. Even not minted metal disks were produced by cutting metal sheets and casting, and very old, mostly unrecognizable small format coins from the Hellenistic period or later, found their way into Late Roman purses and circulation as shown from hoard and context evidence⁶ from the Eastern Empire.

⁶ A Late Roman hoard from c. AD 400, discovered about 1 km distance outside the city walls at Aphrodisias in 1966, contained only coins of the smallest format, totalling c. 8000 coins, among which a second-century BC Rhodian coin was also recorded (Lauritsen 1984: 295). An early 5th-century AD hoard found inside an earthenware vessel, excavated by the present author at Arykanda in Lykia, contained a 4th century BC bronze coin (of the dynast Perikle of Zemuri /Limyra), the same size as the other 28 coins, all 5th-century *minimi*, with which it was found. Another hoard of 259 coins from Arykanda, buried in the AD 450s contained 4 Lykian Federation units from 1st century BC, similar in format, size and weight to Late Roman coins (Sancaktar 2012: 224). At Sardis, five coins, dating from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD

We have recorded 56 Greek and 122 Roman Provincial coins, totalling 178, found between 1998 and 2019. Although 48 coins remain partially identified or unidentified, the remainder, when combined with the data present in D. J. MacDonald's works (MacDonald 1975 and MacDonald 1976) covering the 1961 to 1973 seasons at Aphrodisias, provide a good deal of information on the coins found at the site belonging to these periods.

MacDonald's excavation finds catalogues list 151 Late Classical and Hellenistic coins (plus two hoards), and 276 Roman Provincial coins. Unfortunately, not all of these examples can be used as comparative data, because of the inclusion of "stray" coins doubtless in by workers and villagers (MacDonald 1976: 2)⁷. Although some of these coins doubtlessly would have been picked up inside Aphrodisias, we could never be sure of which ones these were unless their exact find spots had been recorded. Wherever these coins were brought from, they disrupt the picture that can be gained from "excavated" examples only. Some may have come from other sites either nearby or further away where earlier material is better represented than in the Aphrodisias city centre. Thus, when the "stray" finds are removed, the pre-Roman "excavated" examples remaining in D. J. MacDonald's work stand at 58 Greek and 70 Roman Provincial coins⁸. I have not seen or studied the coins exam-

were found in the Sardis 1982 hoard that contained 685 coins and dated to the 5th century AD (Burrell 2008: 160); one of the early coins was a Lykian Federation unit from Phellos, minted in the 1st century BC, but again with the same size and same weight as the Late Roman *minimi* among which it could be passed (Burrell 2008: 169, note 68). The same situation, where earlier small format coins of similar size and weight exist among Late Roman coin assemblages, was also observed in Israel (Bijovsky 2002: 197-202). Prof. Jane DeRose Evans recently discussed this phenomenon, referring to further examples from Greece and elsewhere, with an emphasis on Sardis: DeRose Evans 2013: 140-141; also see DeRose Evans 2018: 36-40.

⁷ In earlier days, it was the custom for some excavation directors to purchase coins and other antiquities from local people where there was not a local museum to do so. As Aphrodisias Museum was built much later, Erim also purchased some coins from his workers and villagers, and these coins have been given to the new museum with the excavated ones. Unfortunately, it would be naïve to think that all of these coins came from "inside" the site being excavated; bonus pay for coins would have created a market situation where the villagers would have collected coins from other sites in the countryside or farther away (such as Plarasa situated at Bingeç only 13 km away or Gordioteikhos which may have been at Yazır only 9.5 km away). Various coins purchased by Louis Robert between the 1930s to 1960s from Geyre (Delrieux 2011: 297), Karacasu (Delrieux 2011: 307) and other villages around Aphrodisias, like Bingeç (Delrieux 2011: 294), show that ancient coins were commodities worth collecting by villagers, to be sold to visitors or middle-men operating for the antiquities trade that had been also present in the area since Ottoman days. Although one may expect that most coins would have to come from the local vicinity, absolute find spots of these purchased coins cannot be known precisely. Therefore, such evidence should be omitted from an excavation site report, but could be more meaningful in a study of the museum collection, where there would be more material arriving in the same manner. The value of such "purchased" coins with local provenances may help in understanding the circulation of coinage in Karia in general, and even in a more regional manner, if the find spots at least at the village level are known. But using such evidence alongside scientifically excavated archaeological material would be very misleading. Archaeological finds, on the other hand, could act as control groups for such loosely provenanced finds in the museum collections.

⁸ For some coins, the original manuscript (MacDonald 1975) and published book version (MacDonald 1976) are not the same, and do not present the same exact same coins as "excavated". I have taken the original manuscript as the main reference to identify "excavated" coins and omit "stray" examples. What is especially disappointing for both works is that neither version contains any information about which sectors and

ined by MacDonald, but several new studies on Greek and Roman Provincial coinages have appeared since his work was published. Some of the dates and identifications can now be updated by cross referencing his descriptions and bibliography.

Greek Coins:

A total of 115 coins (including one Roman Republican issue) belonging to 4th to 1st centuries BC (from before 27 BC) have been uncovered at Aphrodisias. Figure 1 shows to which centuries these coins belong. Aphrodisias did not start minting its own coins (together with Plarasa) until the 1st century BC and, for that reason, even the smallest denominations had to be provided by the states that ruled the region. Most of the 4th and 3rd century BC coins used at Aphrodisias belong to the Satrapy of Karia, the Macedonian Empire (figure 9) and the Seleucid Kingdom (figure 10). For the last two, most of the coins found were minted at the Sardis mint. These are followed by a short-lived Rhodian rule between 188-167 BC, which is also represented by one coin recovered during the excavations (figure 11). Although Plarasa starts minting on its own sometime in the 2nd cen-

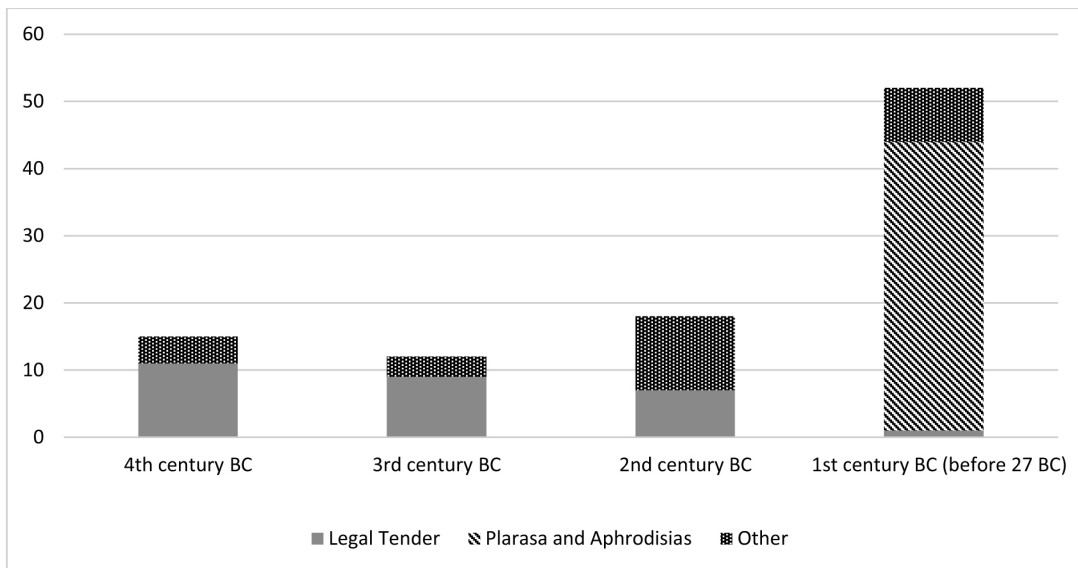


Figure 1: *Pre-Roman Imperial coin finds from Aphrodisias (calculated from 97 coins).*

thury BC (MacDonald 1992: 59, type 1)⁹, no examples of this rare coinage have so far been

trenches the excavated coins came from.

⁹ The sympoliteia (?) of Plarasa and Aphrodisias is thought to have started somewhere after 167 BC, maybe between 129 – 88 BC (see Chaonitis 2010: 456 for various dating proposals), and so these coins probably

recovered at Aphrodisias. In the 1st century BC, Plarasa and Aphrodisias started minting their joint coinage (figure 12-13) and from then on, local minting supplied the majority of the small denomination coins in circulation (figure 1). The major rise seen in the 1st century BC could be connected with loss caused by two possible destructions of the site during the Mithridatic Wars and by Labienus during the Roman Civil War and rebuilding afterwards. We barely have a hint of larger and more valuable denominations that would have been in circulation from excavation finds. No gold issues have been found, and silver coins are rarely represented.

Several mints are represented among the pre-Roman Imperial finds, which can be seen in figures 2 and 3. In addition to issues from the royal mints of the states that ruled Aphrodisias, civic coinage is represented, especially from major city mints in Ionia and Karia.

Even though there is a tendency to explain the data provided by foreign coins found at a site simply in terms of “trade”, many years ago, L. Robert explained the presence of especially foreign bronze coins at a site in terms of the movement of people for various reasons (Robert 1951: 77-78, note 8). We can elaborate further on this idea. These coins would have been for the most part worthless outside their legal circulation zones and not allowed to be used at the places they visited unless there were special agreements between cities allocating their usage. Significant trade acts would have been conducted in higher denomination units that would leave only a shadowy trace in site finds or no numismatic trace at all if goods for goods or goods for services were employed. Although some higher denomination coins would have been brought by merchants and itinerant craftsmen and reflected by the finds, the actual volume and geographical routes / origin-end points of the trade, cannot be determined only from site coins. The fact that some travellers might have been simply visiting their relatives or travelling for other private reasons other than trade obviously would cloud the “trade evidence” that can be gathered by numismatic finds.

On the other hand, the presence of foreign coins outside their circulation zones implies their deliberate transportation from those areas. Just like today, people kept coins from obscure places because they simply liked the designs, as souvenirs from places they have been to, or even for personal religious reasons and, hence, to be used as talismans. Most foreign coins may have been kept simply because of the hope of returning back to their origin one day to use them eventually, but there is always a penny or two left in the purse after every travel trip that are forgotten and not spent, thereby making an unintentional journey by the coin via accidental means. As we cannot explain which was which today, we should consider all ancient foreign coins merely by their potential to show travel patterns. People travelled for all sorts of reasons; trade is only one of them and coin finds sometimes can even illustrate mass travel, for example, by armies coming from distant

were minted before that, see Reynolds 1982: 6-20, documents 1-3 for the epigraphic evidence on jointly ruled Plarasa and Aphrodisias. Document 1 is especially interesting as it is a *homonoia* and *symmakhia* oath of Plarasa – Aphrodisias, Kibyra and Tabai taken maybe during the Mithridatic Wars (Reynolds 1982: 6-11).

places leaving numismatic traces and these may fit already known historical patterns or suggest new and unknown ones. Markets, religious festivals, major political, sport or art events would also be reasons for ordinary people to travel.

If this is the case, then pre-Roman Imperial coin finds at Aphrodisias show travel patterns to and from Aphrodisias through the Meander Valley and onward to the Aegean coast with an occasional coin brought to Aphrodisias and lost there. The locations of the mints that are represented appear on the map in figure 3. They correspond very well with known and still existing routes in the region. What we see is a very localized logical pattern, and most of the more distant mints like Antioch or Rome have obvious historical reasons to be represented. We may also expect the representation of mints like Smyrna, Kibyra or Synnada at some point in the future because they would also have fitted this pattern, but these are not yet represented among the finds. The available sample is too small to allow us see which were the more preferred travel points, but greater contact with western Asia Minor than with central or south Anatolia seems to be the case.

Map	Region	Mints represented	Total	Finds from 1961-1973 (MacDonald 1975 and MacDonald 1976)	Finds from 1998-2019
1	Macedonian Empire (various mints)	Mostly Sardis	11	7	4
2	Thrace, King Mostis	Bisanthe	1	1	-
3	Mysia	Pergamon	4	2	2
4	Ionia	Kolophon	1	1	-
5	Ionia	Ephesos	3	3	-
6	Ionia	Magnesia	1	1	-
7	Ionia	Miletos	2	2	-
8	Karia	Alabanda	1	-	1
9	Karia	Antioch	1	1	-
10	Karia	Aphrodisias	43	19	24
11	Karia	Apollonia	1	1	-
12	Karia	Halikarnassos	1	-	1
13	Karia	Rhodos	2	-	2
14	Karia	Kos	1	1	-
15	Karia	Stratonikeia	1	-	1
16	Karia	Tabai	2	-	2
17	Lydia	Magnesia	1	-	1
18	Lydia	Tralles	2	2	-
19	Phrygia	Apameia	1	1	-
20	Phrygia	Laodikeia	2	2	-
Antioch not shown on map	Seleucid	Sardis and Antioch on the Orontes	13	9	4

Not shown on map	Ptolemaic	Alexandria?	1	1	-
Not shown on map	Roman Republic	Rome	1	1	-
	Unidentified	?	17	3	14
	Total		114	58	56

Figure 2: List of pre-Roman Imperial mints represented at Aphrodisias among finds made between 1961-1973 and 1998-2019. The numbers in column 1 corresponds to those on the map in figure 3.

The earliest coin from the site is an AR tetradrachm belonging to Maussollos, the Satrap of Karia between 377-353 BC¹⁰. This is followed by 11 AE Macedonian issues dated to c. 334-323 or c. 323-310 BC¹¹ (figure 9). Seleucid rule in Aphrodisias is represented by 13 AE coins belonging to Seleucos I (figure 10), Antiochos II and Antiochos III¹². All of these coins were legal tender and officially used in Aphrodisias while the site was under Persian, Macedonian and the Seleucid rule. It is unclear whether we should consider an excavated coin of Ephesos, while it was renamed Arsinoeia under Lysimachos for his wife as a royal issue or merely as a civic one, but at least it seems to represent the period when the King ruled the region¹³. Also, a Ptolemaic coin was excavated at Aphrodisias¹⁴. Although the Ptolemies ruled the coastal regions of Karia and elsewhere in Western Asia Minor, it is not known whether their rule ever extended so far in Karia as Aphrodisias¹⁵.

¹⁰ Noted as excavated in MacDonald 1975: 5, no. 2, but not so recorded in the actual publication (MacDonald 1976: 3, no. 2)

¹¹ 1 unit, 9 ½ units, 1 ¼ unit. MacDonald 1976: no. 11-12 (Price 1991: no. 3158), no. 17 (Price 1991: no. 3159), rest, no letters or field signs visible (according to MacDonald 1975: 6, nos. 11-17), all ½ units. Among new finds, only C1998.132 has field mark visible (Price 1991: no. 419A). Although M. Price attributed the first coins to Salamis (Price 1991: 3158-3162A), recently D. S. Lenger and Ö. Tatar re-attributed no. 3158 with kerykaion symbol convincingly to Sardis through examples from Turkey (Lenger and Tatar 2019). No 3159 and especially no 419A also with kerykaion (attributed with caution to an unknown mint in Macedonia, Price 1991: no. 419A) may have been also minted at Sardis in the light of this new Aphrodisias provenance (figure 9).

¹² MacDonald 1975: 7-8, nos. 23-30; MacDonald 1976: 3-4, nos. 23-30; 4 new Seleucid coins found between 1998-2019. Seleucos I (2 coins): SC I, issues 21 and 24 (figure 10), mint of Antioch on the Orontes; Antiochos II (6 coins): SC I, issues 522 x 3, 525 and 528 x2, mint of Sardis; Antiochos III (4 coins): SC I, issues 975 and 983 x 3, mint of Sardis; unidentified Seleucid (1 coin).

¹³ Ephesos as Arsinoeia, 294-280 BC, MacDonald 1975: 54, no. 348 = MacDonald 1976: 8, no. 279, BMC Ionia, no. 72-73 = Svoronos 1904: no. 883. Another similar coin was excavated in Stratonikeia, Tek, Köker & Sariiz 2015: 140, no. 3; both examples attest to the circulation of these rare coins in Karia.

¹⁴ MacDonald 1975: 9, no. 34 = MacDonald 1976: 4, no. 34. The 22 mm. diameter (5.8 g.) given for this coin suggests a tritartermorion or obol unit, such as CPE I: nos. 387 or 398, both minted in Alexandria and attributed to Ptolemaios III, but without seeing the control symbols on the coin, absolute identification is not possible at this point.

¹⁵ In 280-79 BC, during the "Syrian War of Succession", Ptolemaios II acquired further land in Karia



Figure 3: Map showing pre-Roman Imperial mints represented at Aphrodisias. Numbers correspond to first column of the table in figure 2.

The coin may have travelled from Ptolemaic possessions close by in Karia and Ionia rather than from their actual homeland in Egypt. For the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, civic coins are represented at Aphrodisias by only few examples, all bronze: 1 coin from Kolophon dated c. 350-330 BC¹⁶; 1 from Rhodos dated c. 350-300 BC¹⁷; 2 from Miletos dated to c. 350s BC

including the inland cities of Amyzon and Stratonikeia. A dedication from Bargasa some 35 kms. west of Aphrodisias, mentions a dedication made on behalf of King Ptolemaios by Hermokles (possibly the commander of the garrison) and the soldiers to Dionysos (Malay and Riel 2017: 35-37) Another inscription dated to 11th or 12th year of Ptolemaios son of Ptolemaios (275/4 or 274/3 BC) from Xystis (Körteke Village) in the Harpassos Valley (Malay and Riel 2017: 37, note 11) some 30 kms south-west of Aphrodisias also points to the extent of Ptolemaic rule so far east in Caria. Antiochos III had to reconquer independent parts of Karia in 203 and Ptolemaic possessions in 197 BC. As the Ptolemaic ruled lands are situated so close to Aphrodisias, there may have been a period of Ptolemaic rule at Aphrodisias as well.

¹⁶ MacDonald 1975: no. 346 = MacDonald 1976: no. 277.

¹⁷ SNG Keckman I: nos. 384-425.

or slightly later¹⁸ and 1 from Kos dated to c. 260-210 BC¹⁹.

Disregarding the fact that some of the coins listed above may have entered the circulation at Aphrodisias in the 5th century AD²⁰, picture that emerges out of this small amount of evidence is interesting. Some 78 percent of the finds (not including the Ptolemaic example) are coins that were officially in circulation at Aphrodisias. Foreign coins make up only 22% of the finds, and only mints in Karia and Ionia are represented, indicating travel between Aphrodisias and these coastal settlements. If this is the case, Aphrodisias, although still a minor settlement, had close ties with the Aegean world, but by no means to the extent it had later.

Control of Karia and Lykia was given to Rhodos between 188 and 167 BC. An AR Rhodian plinthophoric drachm found dated to 188-170 BC (figure 11)²¹ marks perfectly the brief period of Rhodian rule here²². Royal Pergamene coinage is represented by one example from 160-150 BC, but it was found next to two much later coins with whom it was still in circulation²³. For the 2nd century BC, the most interesting coin is a rare issue that was minted for the Thracian king Mostis,²⁴ which makes it the first example, and most unexpected, to have been found in Western Asia Minor. The coin is holed and was possibly used as a pendant. As King Mostis seems to have been an ally of Mithridates VI of Pontus, this coin could be a relic of the Mithridatic invasion of Aphrodisias, perhaps dropped by a Thracian soldier in the army.

A number of civic coins at Aphrodisias represent the 2nd century BC: 1 AE coins each from Ephesos (202-133 BC)²⁵ and Magnesia on the Meander (after 190 BC)²⁶. Some oth-

¹⁸ MacDonald 1975: nos. 378-379 = MacDonald 1976: nos. 309-310; as Deppert-Lippitz 1984: 56-57, Period II, Group I-IV, nos. 304-435, Pl. 10-13. Although dated to 313-290 BC by B. Deppert-Lippitz, Philip Kinns convincingly dates this coinage to c. 350s BC or slightly later, see Kinns 1986: 250-252.

¹⁹ MacDonald 1975: no. 342 = MacDonald 1976: no. 381; Ingvaldsen 2002: 289-303, issue XVI.

²⁰ The Rhodian bronze with its 11 mm. size and weight of 1.14g. would have been very easy to use among the minimi of the 5th century AD.

²¹ C2010.019 = Smith 2016: 19, fig. 1.9, magistrate ΑΓΑΘΑΡΧΟΣ; Jenkins 1989: 106, Group A, 14; SNG Keckman I: no. 629.

²² See also Chaniotis 2010 for epigraphic evidence for the Rhodian rule at Aphrodisias.

²³ AR, cistophoros, MacDonald 1975: 3, no. 3 = MacDonald 1976: 2, no. 3, dated 160-150 BC (Kleiner and Noe 1977: 26, series 12) but excavated together with 2 more cistophoroi dated after 133 BC and before 88 BC, which will be discussed below.

²⁴ MacDonald 1975: no. 19 = MacDonald 1976: no. 19. The coin belongs to the Type I of the Mostis's bronze coinage, of which 39 examples were known, some excavated close to Bisanthe in Turkish Thrace, see Paunov 2014: 459-461, notes 60-62 for find spots. Evgeni I. Paunov suggested Bisanthe for the location of the mint (Paunov 2014: 469); his other guess as Parium can be disregarded for the time being as no examples of Mostis's coinage have been reported from the excavations at Parium (as yet). With new evidence reported by Paunov, the reign of King Mostis is now dated to between c. 139/138 – 101/100 BC (Paunov 2014: 458).

²⁵ MacDonald 1975: no. 352 = MacDonald 1976: no. 283.

²⁶ MacDonald 1975: no. 372 = MacDonald 1976: no. 303.

er civic coins are loosely dated to 2nd century BC or later: 2 from Pergamon (after 133 BC – early 1st cent. BC)²⁷; 1 from Magnesia ad Sipylum (2nd century BC or later); 2 from Laodikeia on the Lykos (after 133 BC)²⁸; 1 from Antioch on the Meander (after 167 BC);²⁹ 1 from Alabanda (after 167 BC); 1 from Halikarnassos? (c. 120-90 BC); 1 from Stratonikeia (2nd century BC); 2 from Tabai (2nd century BC or later).

After 127 BC, Aphrodisias would have been part of the Roman Republican Province of Asia. A small group of three cistophoroi (maybe a purse hoard) and a fourée Republican denarius³⁰ excavated mark this period. Civic and later proconsular cistophoroi (valued at 3 denarii) and its fractions made up the main silver coinage of the province, supplemented by Roman Republican denarii³¹ and some local civic issues that would have tariffed as quinarii including those minted by Plarasa / Aphrodisias (figure 12), Tabai and Antioch on the Meander etc. Many cities issued and used their own bronze units to supply small exchange for the civic markets and were also issued as part of local civic pride.

The 3 cistophoroi were excavated in 1973 from the East of the Bouleuterion and consists of 1 very much worn royal Pergamenes issue dated 160-150 BC, and 2 issues of Tralles dated after 133 BC and maybe before 88 BC³². The presence of an older royal Pergamene cistophoros together with later cistophoroi is not surprising as the same situation is present in various cistophoroi hoards, and the coin, being very worn, attests to its long usage.

²⁷ MacDonald 1975: no. 425 = MacDonald 1976: no. 276 and C2004.168. Both coins are dated “after 133 BC – early 1st cent. BC”: Chameroy 2012: 110, tab. 1, type 30a and type 33.

²⁸ MacDonald 1975: no. 404-405 = MacDonald 1976: no. 406-407.

²⁹ MacDonald 1975: no. 278 = MacDonald 1976: no. 317.

³⁰ MacDonald 1975: no. 428 = MacDonald 1976: no. 428; AE core of a plated denarius of Roma / quadriga types. The coin cannot be attributed to any particular moneyer from its description.

³¹ I have been cataloguing all the Republican denarii found in Turkey for some time. The catalogue contains only 22 excavated examples, including Aphrodisias find, and 55 examples in museum collections. Although this evidence seems to show that Republican denarii were never an important denomination in Asia Minor (see also Callataÿ 2011: 56-58 for the absence of denarii in Asia Minor), this view will probably change with new evidence provided by a new hoard found at Aizanoi in 2019 (pers. Comm. E. Uğurlu and H. Köker, to whom I thank for these details) which contains many hundreds of examples, together with proconsular cistophoroi and dated to c. 3 BC, therefore an early Imperial, Augustan hoard – possibly the only one recorded from Asia Minor with such mixed material. Another hoard from 308 BC from Halikarnassos contained also cistophoroi mixed with denarii (Bernhard 1978). Our view of the Republican denarii usage in Asia Minor is clouded by the fact that they have rarely surfaced in excavations (but all silver coins are rare in excavations) and that the Republican denarii did not exist in hoards apart from the Halikarnassos Hoard that stood out as an exception. One must remember that most denarii hoards recorded from Asia Minor usually belong to 2nd-3rd centuries AD when the Republican denarii would certainly have been taken out of circulation. The implication of this new hoard from Aizanoi puts Republican denarii into the circulation pattern as it should have been and suggests that the withdrawal of Republican issues from circulation was a planned one maybe during the Julio-Claudian period or slightly later. In any case, with the local minting that could supply sufficient coins for circulation, the usage of denarii would have been very minimal in Asia Minor.

³² The Tralles issues both belong to magistrate ΔΙΟΝ (– lyre) as SNG Cop. Caria, no. 657.

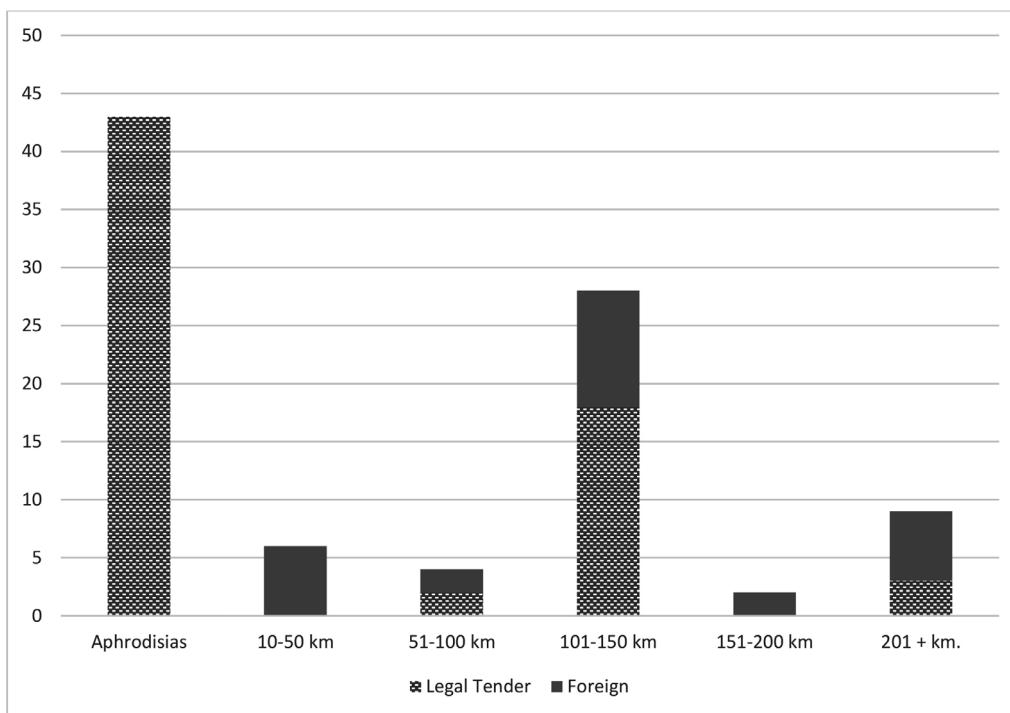


Figure 4: 4th to 1st century BC coin finds at Aphrodisias calculated by the distance of mints from 92 examples.

The loss of this small group (purse hoard?) may be related to events during Mithridatic Wars and, if that is the case, this makes the group very important for the archaeology of Aphrodisias.

1st century BC (before 27 BC) finds are dominated by the mint of Plarasa-Aphrodisias, of which a total of 43 examples have been excavated (figure 12-13)³³. Other civic coins from the 1st century BC include 4 AE coins from Ephesos (48-27 BC)³⁴, Pergamon (c.

³³ For the classification of Plarasa and Aphrodisias coins we followed RPC I: the earliest Augustan issue is under Plarasa-Aphrodisias (RPC I: no. 2837), but subsequently Plarasa was absorbed and only the ethnic of Aphrodisias was used on the coinage and also on public documents. Therefore, most of the coins without imperial heads that carry the Plarasa-Aphrodisias ethnic should be from the Late Hellenistic period.

Although not included in RPC, three types in MacDonald (MacDonald 1992: type 35-R108, type 36-R116/117 and type 37-R118) have only the ethnic of Aphrodisias on them, while earlier versions of two of the types carry the double ethnic (MacDonald 1992: type 35-R108-110, type 36-R112-115). This usage of the single ethnic suggests, that these types should also be listed as Augustan among the earliest types issued in this reign, coming after RPC I: no. 2837 and before RPC I: no. 2838. The Plarasa-Aphrodisias ethnic seen on the other and older reverses of these three types may well be contemporary with RPC I: no. 2837, that is, early Augustan or probably Octavian pre 27 BC.

³⁴ MacDonald 1975: no. 353 = MacDonald 1976: no. 284.

80-10 BC)³⁵; Apollonia Salbakes (c. 100-30 BC)³⁶ and Apameia (1st cent BC)³⁷. Although Phrygian Hierapolis is not yet represented among Hellenistic finds at Aphrodisias, 1 Plarasa-Aphrodisias bronze has been excavated there (Travaglini and Camilleri 2010: 69, no. 174).

Figure 4 sums up the pre-Roman Imperial finds at Aphrodisias from a different perspective. Even though the mint at Plarasa/Aphrodisias only operated during less than a quarter of the time period examined, it provided 46.7% of the total finds; in fact, 82.6% of the finds from the 1st century BC (before 27 BC) when the mint was in operation. However distant the mints may have been (Rome, Antioch etc.), 72% of the pre-Roman coins found at Aphrodisias were the official coins that were in circulation from either the local mint or the mints of the states that ruled the city. Disregarding the official nature of the coin, 88% of the pre-Roman coin finds at Aphrodisias (including the civic mint) came from within a 150 km. diameter distance from the city, with more distant mints being represented by 12%, of which 4% was again official coinage.

Roman Provincial Coins

In regard to the Roman Provincial Coinage excavated at Aphrodisias, 67 coins were listed as found during the excavations in the 1961-1973 seasons (data compiled from MacDonald 1975 and MacDonald 1976) and a further 122 coins were recorded from the 1998-2019 seasons, making a total of 189 coins with 47 among them too corroded or worn to be identified fully. To these we can add Roman Imperial coins from Augustus up to the end of the reign of Gallienus: 24 coins came from excavations in the 1961-1973 seasons and 13 more from the 1998-2019 seasons; almost all are denarii and antoniniani. In comparison to the original building dates of the Early Roman Imperial Period in the city centre, this sample number is very low but, as mentioned above, all of the buildings remained in use during the Late Roman and Byzantine periods, long after their construction dates, and hence, those periods are the best represented among the coin finds and some of the small format Roman Provincial coins were found among Late Roman material where they had secondary usage.

³⁵ C2015.032; Chameroy 2012: 108-112, tab. 1, type 37; Chameroy 2016: 170-173, tab. 1, type 37.

³⁶ MacDonald 1975: no. 305 = MacDonald 1976: no. 244.

³⁷ MacDonald 1975: no. 392 = MacDonald 1976: no. 401. Ashton 2016: type 2; without a magistrate name the coin cannot be dated more narrowly than the 1st century BC.

Map	Region	Mints represented	Total	Finds from 1961-1973 (MacDonald 1975 and MacDonald 1976)	Finds from 1998-2019	
1	Pergamon	Province of Asia	Pergamon or Ephesos	1	-	1
2	Aeolia	Kyme	1	1	-	
3	Ionia	Ephesos	8	7	1	
4	Ionia	Kolophon	1	1	-	
5	Ionia	Metropolis	1	1	-	
6	Karia	Alabanda	2	1	1	
7	Karia	Antioch	12	6	6	
8	Karia	Aphrodisias	82	26	56	
9	Karia	Apollonia	2	-	2	
10	Karia	Bargasa	4	3	1	
11	Karia	Harpasa	1	1	-	
12	Karia	Herakleia	1	-	1	
13	Karia	Kidrama	1	-	1	
14	Karia	Orthosia	1	-	1	
15	Karia	Mylasa	1	-	1	
16	Karia	Tabae	1	-	1	
17	Karia	Trapezopolis	1	-	1	
18	Lydia	Dioshieron	1	1	-	
19	Lydia	Hypaepa	1	-	1	
20	Lydia	Nysa	1	-	1	
21	Lydia	Philadelphia	2	-	2	
22	Lydia	Sardis	1	-	1	
23	Lydia	Thyateira	1	1	-	
24	Lydia	Tralles	1	-	1	
25	Lydia	Tripolis	1	-	1	
26	Phrygia	Eukarpeia	1	1	-	
27	Phrygia	Eumeneia	1	-	1	
28	Phrygia	Hierapolis	2	1	1	
29	Phrygia	Hydrela	1	-	1	
30	Phrygia	Laodikeia	3	2	1	
31	Phrygia	Traianopolis	1	-	1	
32	Pamphylia	Perge	2	-	2	
33	Pisidia	Termessos	1	1	-	
	Unidentified	?	47	13	34	
	Total		189	67	122	

Figure 5: List of Roman Provincial mints represented at Aphrodisias among finds made between 1961-1973 and 1998-2019. The numbers in column 1 corresponds to those on the map in figure 6.

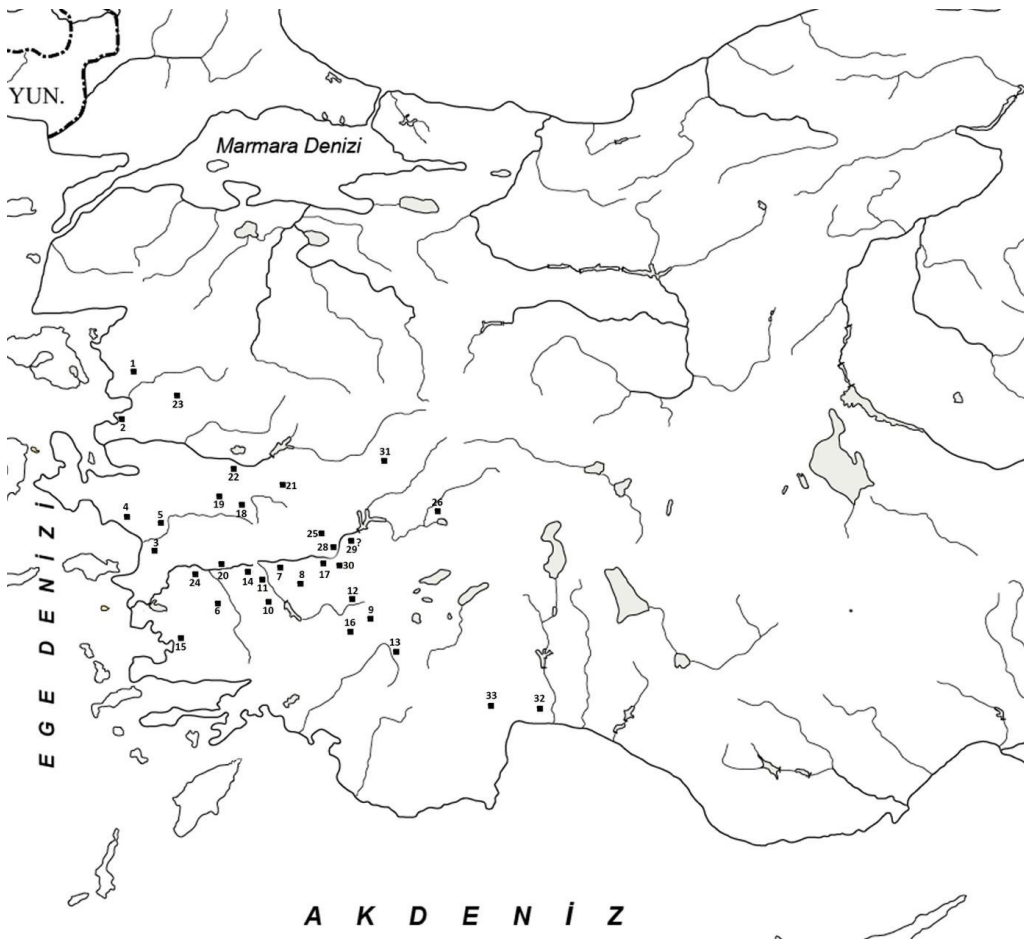


Figure 6: Map showing Roman Provincial mints represented at Aphrodisias. Numbers correspond to the first column of the table in figure 5.

Figure 5 lists which provincial mints are represented at Aphrodisias with the amount of coins identified per each mint. Figure 6 shows the locations of these mints. Keeping the Roman Imperial coins aside for the moment, among the provincial finds, 142 coins were identified with certainty and 82 of these belong to Aphrodisias, while a further 60 coins are from other mints.

The Aphrodisias mint has supplied 58% of the Roman Provincial finds. Among finds the present author has studied (unpublished), in Lydian Tripolis the local mint is represented by 41%. In Phrygian Hierapolis, the local mint is represented by 54% (calculated from Travaglini and Camilleri 2010: 11-12, tab. 3a-3c). At both of these sites, foreign coins are dominated by issues of Laodikeia, which was both in very close geographical proximity and also had special relationships with these cities. At Sardis the local mint is represented by 54% (calculated from Johnston 1981 and DeRose Evans 2018); at Priene by 49% (Johnston 2007: 5, note 22); at Pergamon by 84% (calculated from Voegtli 1993);

at Ilion by 80% (Johnston 2007: 5, note 22); at Arykanda by only 16%, since the city only minted under Gordianus III, but rises to 42% in total of Roman Provincial issues when compared to coins of Gordian III from other Lykian cities at the site (calculated from Tek 2002); at Side by 53% (Tek 2016: 237, fig. 3); and at Athens by 94% (Johnston 2007: 5-6, note 22).

What do these fluctuations in percentages at various sites mean? There could be many factors in operation. While referring especially to the Sardis finds, Ann Johnston warned that: *“the find coins are unlikely to be representative of the full range of bronze in circulation (they tend to be small, mostly 25 mm or less), just as they include only a fraction of the types and denominations known to have been produced by the city. There must always be a suspicion that some or all of the ‘foreign’ coins were simply discarded because worthless. Yet the picture from all the published excavations is remarkably consistent for the imperial period, regardless of the nature and extent of the sites”* (Johnston 2007: 5).

These comments should be elaborated and discussed further. The dimensions of the coins lost in antiquity and found today may not be a decisive factor, and could be misleading, depending on the quality of the archaeological methods employed at a site. At any site where the excavations are done in a rapid way specifically to uncover architecture regardless of contexts, the excavated earth would not be fully or partly sifted. This means that most of the small coins would not be recovered at all, only some of the bigger sized coins would be noticed and picked up. Most of the older excavations were done in this way, which is evident from the numbers of coins recovered from those sites in sharp contrast to the amount of earth removed: Priene is a good example of this and Aphrodisias seems to be also in this category with regard to the 1961-1973 finds from the site in contrast to amount of excavated areas and earth removed. Of course, some areas would have been excavated with great care, but especially with large-scale public buildings, emphasis was on the architecture, not on contents of the fill inside. Johnston was referring to the situation at Sardis mostly in her comments above, and Sardis has been an exemplary excavation in terms of archaeological methodology and detailed context recording since the 1950s. Excavations at Aphrodisias also reached a similar level only after 1991 when Prof. R. R. R. Smith started directing the excavations and changed the methodology employed entirely.

Any excavations where only a limited area is excavated cannot provide an overall picture for a site. Ilion is such a site where the percentage is gathered from only 4 seasons of the excavations concentrated at the mound, which had been covered with sanctuaries and other official buildings in Roman times and where coin usage and loss may have differed from the rest of the site. The lower city where most of the residential units and trade centres were situated was not excavated in those seasons. The Athens is probably not representative of the whole city, as we only see the coins found from the Agora of the city and little else only around this area, regardless of the large size of the excavated areas. Usage of foreign coins may have been closely controlled and prohibited at the Agora: at least, this would be the place where we would expect local money changers to drive them out

of circulation.

Suspicion of the discarding of foreign coins because they were worthless can also be disregarded as an hypothesis in view of overwhelming evidence for countermarking collected by C. J. Howgego, who listed coins from several different mints usually of similar size flans and units countermarked by a local authority and allowed back in the civic circulation at that particular point where the countermark had been employed (Howgego 2005). The question here should not concentrate on how these coins first got to that point, which is explainable by routes of travel visible from maps in his book, or excavation evidence such as those presented in this paper, but on how they were brought together and countermarked. Evidence from a few recorded mixed hoards of Provincial issues too shows that similar (size and unit) coins from usually neighbouring mints with few from further afield were collected and saved together, possibly to be used together.

Countermarking the foreign coins would make them valid inside the city and its territory. Two countermarks (Howgego 2005: 46-47; countermark 228 and 667, maps 23 and 24) were applied at Aphrodisias specifically on foreign coins. Howgego, for countermark no. 228, recorded coins of Kolophon, Samos, Antioch on the Meander, Harpasa, Trapezopolis, Nysa, Tripolis, Bria, Kibyra, Hierapolis, Laodikeia and Magnesia (Howgego 2005: 147) and for no. 667, Herakleia Salbake, Tripolis, Kibyra, Hierapolis and Laodikeia. In return, coins of Aphrodisias were countermarked at Tralles (Howgego 2005: 165, no. 324); at Tabai (Howgego 2005: 266-267, no. 765); and at unknown places together with coins of Lykia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Kilikia etc. (Howgego 2005: 241, no. 681 and 267-268, no. 767); and maybe at Tarsus (Howgego 2005: 166, no. 326). The mints represented from first two countermarks applied at Aphrodisias are almost similar to mints of examples excavated at the site (many without these countermarks).

Kraft in 1972 revolutionized the study of Roman Provincial issues by proving the existence of common dies pointing to the existence of various but a limited number of workshops producing for different cities (Kraft 1972). Although production of the coinage may have little effect on the circulation, the existence of a limited number of workshops still shows that the production could be controlled tightly by imperial agencies. Although we have no evidence for this, we may expect this control to be partly regulating the sizes of units minted, but more importantly the volume of coins minted regardless of the reasons for the mintage, thereby controlling inflation that would be caused if too many were minted and exchanged with higher silver and gold denominations.

The theory that the cities could overvalue their local coins individually as they wanted as these coins were only intended to be used in that city is partly plausible maybe for the earlier Roman Imperial period during which local mints tend to be represented in greater quantities among finds. This may imply tighter local control prohibiting the usage of foreign coins and flushing these out of circulation. But this fails to explain the situation in the 3rd century AD where exists common marks of value on the coins, countermarks and circulation patterns between neighbouring cities especially. Such is the case in greater

Pamphylia (meaning the enlarged province that contained Pisidia and the very west part of Kilikia) in the 3rd century AD, where common marks of value appear on the coins as part of the type and as countermarks of several cities. This points to a common usage of these coins between these cities or maybe at a provincial common set of tariffs applicable equally at each city. Circulation evidence shows that majority of the 'foreign' coins found at, for example, Side were in fact such coins from different mints, sometimes produced at the same workshops and marked with similar units on them, which points to a provincial level of control than a limited civic one.

We also do not know what agreements there were in place regarding coin usage between neighbouring cities; allowance of the usage of each other's coinage seems a plausible one. Although a few such agreements exist from Classic and Hellenistic times, to my knowledge, no such agreement is known from Roman Asia Minor in the imperial period that refers specifically to the usage of coinage between cities. On the other hand, existence of such an agreement between cities of the Lykos Valley (Tripolis, Hierapolis, Laodikeia etc.) can be suspected both from their common *homonoia* coinage and the noticeably high numbers of these mints represented among excavation finds at each other. From coins we understand that Aphrodisias had *Homonoia* issues with Neapolis, Keretapa, Ephesos, Kolossai and Antioch on the Meander. These *homonoia* agreements would have been more religious in character but also showed political and economic ties between the cities. Although no coins of three of these cities have been recorded yet at Aphrodisias, the other two (Ephesos and Antioch on the Meander) are represented by the most numerous examples among all the issuing cities recorded. At least between neighbouring Antioch and Aphrodisias, an agreement allowing the usage of each other's coinage can be suspected strongly with regard to the representation of Antioch at Aphrodisias.

There were also different zones of monetary usage effecting circulation. Lykia, for example differs sharply from Pamphylia, Pisidia and Western Kilikia, although they were all in the same province. The different zones of travel necessitated by geography and different levels of imperial control seems to place Lykia apart from the rest. Whereas the Lykian cities did not mint Provincial issues at all (apart from issues under Gordian III), cities in other areas of the same province minted continuously (i.e., in Pamphylia) or intermittently but still sufficiently enough to have a continuous supply in circulation (i.e., in some smaller cities in Pisidia and Western Kilikia). Lykian cities were instead supplied directly from the mint of Rome for their coinage which may have something to do with the *Annona* (grain shipment from Egypt to Italy), with Lykia in direct contact with Rome through Ostia and Alexandria. Colony cities like Antioch in Pisidia may have preferred to use imperial aes through tradition together with its substantial local issues (which were in fact minted in the same units with imperial aes coinage until the mid 3rd century) and while the imperial aes penetrated Pisidia in noticeable numbers (possibly through Lykia), these are extremely rare in Side.

The province of Asia seems to have acted as a different zone of monetary usage with

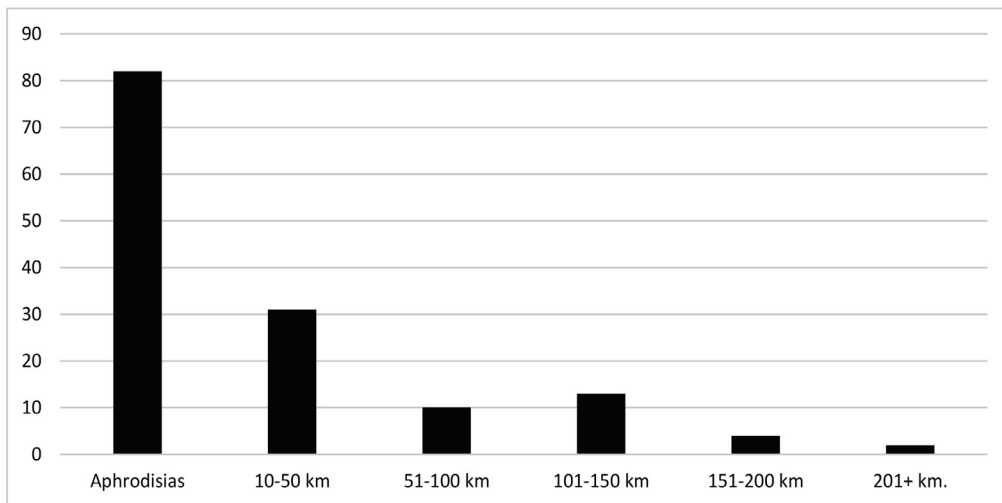


Figure 7: Roman Provincial coin finds (27 BC – AD 268) at Aphrodisias calculated by the distance of mints (calculated from 142 examples).

perhaps small fluctuations at conventus level (possibly to do with workshops). Here Johnston found several common denominations among coins produced in ca. AD 200-275 for different cities (Johnston 2007) and more such evidence is visible in the material in the *RPC* volumes for earlier periods. Therefore, there are no more ‘quasi-autonomous issues,’ meaning civic coinage without imperial portraits that was thought to imply an independent coinage in circulation that only belonged to the city itself and thereby was quasi-autonomous. The term is entirely wrong as there was nothing autonomous about them as they were part of the same denomination system. Apart from style, it may be possible now to date some of these issues more precisely by finding where they fit among dated issues with imperial portraits by checking their sizes and weights (if enough specimens are known) to identify lower denominations without portraits. Aphrodisias was legally a true autonomous free city and not part of the province of Asia, but its coinage shows no difference from the rest of the issues of the Roman province that surrounds it. In fact, it looks as if it was very much part of the same system.

Returning to the finds from Aphrodisias, it would not be logical to see next which coins from mints in which region (eg. Phrygia, Lydia) are best represented here, as this is pointless. These areas defined cultural borders, not political or monetary units in the Roman period. Aphrodisias was situated directly on the border of Karia with Phrygia and Lydia, some of whose cities are in closer geographical proximity than many of the Karian ones. Instead, once again the distances of foreign mints represented would show more meaningful results (figure 7) and, as the case with pre-Roman evidence presented above, these would not show ‘trade’ patterns. Most trade would have been done with *denarii* valid everywhere but, being a valuable unit, would not be visible in its actual usage volume. Roman trade was as complex as that in modern times and therefore other methods of trade would also be in operation: goods, loans, bills, bonds, notes etc. against goods, none

of which would leave any coin evidence. Instead, once again we are seeing from site finds travel patterns of the populace for any reason including trade.

While the civic issues of Aphrodisias itself supplied 58% of the finds, 22% of the coins came from cities like Bargasa (figure 18) and Orthosia (Figure 20) in the immediate vicinity inside a 50 kms sphere of distance, with Antioch (figure 17) notably providing 12 coins by itself. From this small group, it is possible to see that these show a very localized travel pattern around Aphrodisias, especially around the Salbakes mountains. Cities further away but inside a 51-100 km. sphere are represented with 7%, a 101-150 km. sphere with 9%, which includes the large Ionian ports, like Ephesos (represented by 8 coins), but any city beyond 151 km distance like Perge (figure 21) is represented with only 4%. Just like the Greek coin finds, once again we are seeing a closed system corresponding to roads in the region. This time the routes are better visible on the map in figure 6 because of the new mints like Kidrama (figure 19) which did not produce any Hellenistic issues but only Roman Provincial ones. A major route in the Meander Valley towards the port of Ephesos, where an Aphrodisian coin was also excavated, is very noticeable. The travel route towards the northwest passing through Sardis where another coin of Aphrodisias was found and onwards to Pergamon, a route southeast towards Pamphylia, and another towards the northeast into Phrygia are also visible. This picture is also supported by countermarks applied at Aphrodisias or on Aphrodisias coins elsewhere. The mint of Rome and other Imperial mints, with *denarii* and *antoniniani* as the legal tender are not taken into consideration here.

Circulation of the coins of Aphrodisias elsewhere has been studied by Macdonald, who cites a number of excavation and hoard finds: coins of Aphrodisias were found at Sardis; at Ephesos; in a hoard found around Bayındır (İzmir), between Metropolis and Hypaepa; in a hoard possibly from Pamphylia; possibly at excavations at the sanctuary of Men near Antiochia of Pisidia³⁸; excavations in Massalia in France and at Ricciacus (Dalheim, Luxembourg) (MacDonald 1992: 15-16)³⁹. Another coin of Aphrodisias was published from the Terrace Houses at Ephesos (Schindel 2016: 437, no. 15) and a further coin of Aphrodisias was mentioned to have been found at Haydere / Bargasa (Delrieux 2008: 171). To these, three unpublished examples recorded among excavation finds at Lydian Tripolis by the present author can be added. Finds at these locations, apart from those from Western Europe, fit the pattern of mints represented among the Aphrodisias finds. The Western European examples are harder to explain but are not unexpected; other Roman Provincial coins originating from various mints in Asia Minor are known to

³⁸ Unfortunately, the publication also includes several coins purchased during the journeys of the author and the excavator and therefore should be considered with caution (Hill 1914: 312).

³⁹ MacDonald considers these last two with some doubt; “perhaps it was carried west at some much later date” (MacDonald 1992: 16, note 55) but, while not overruling this possibility, other coins from various mints in Asia Minor have been recorded at several locations in Western Europe, and these may well be indicative of army movements.

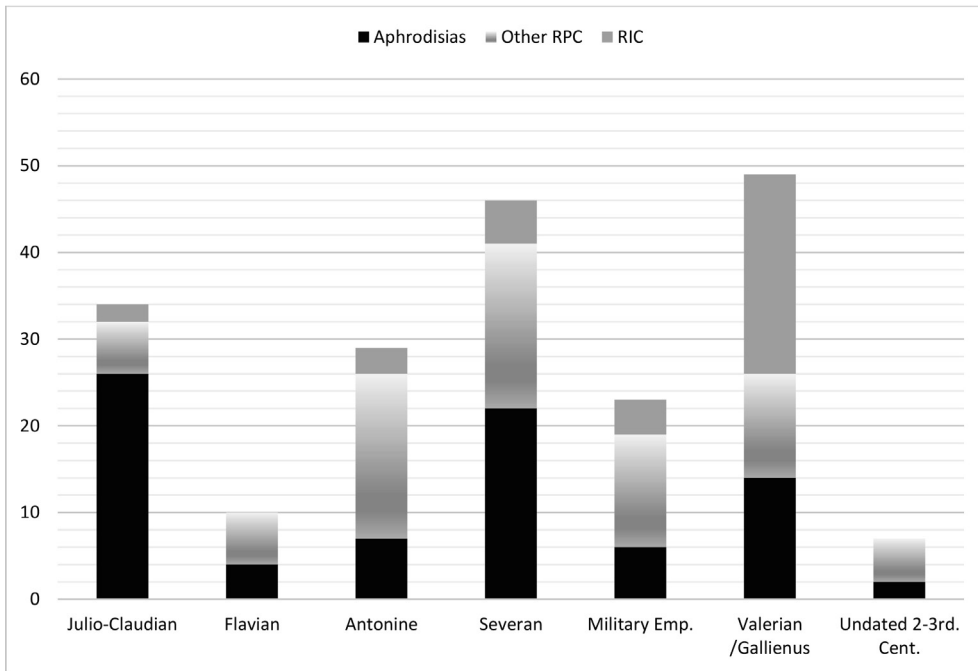


Figure 8: *Historical distribution of the Roman Provincial and Imperial (27 BC – 268 AD) coin finds from the 1961-1973 and 1998-2019 seasons (total: 179 coins) excavated at Aphrodisias (Aphrodisias mint: 82 coins; other RPC: 60 coins; RIC: 37 coins).*

have been found in Western Europe, where excavation finds are better published. These again probably imply random very long-distance travel – perhaps marking the movement of Roman troops.

Figure 8 shows the historical spread of all the Aphrodisias coin finds (1961-1973 and 1998-2019 seasons) from 27 BC to AD 268 with the Aphrodisias mint, other Roman Provincial issues and Roman Imperial issues marked. The finds representing the Aphrodisias mint correspond well to active minting periods during especially the Julio-Claudian (figure 14), Severan (figure 16) and Valerianus / Gallienus periods, visible in the numbers of types and examples in MacDonald’s study of the mint (MacDonald 1992). As some of the Julio-Claudian (figure 14) issues of Aphrodisias are usually in same units as the Late Hellenistic issues of Plarasa – Aphrodisias, we should further expect most of those Hellenistic coins (figure 1) also to have been still in circulation at that time. This would mean that the Julio-Claudian period is actually better represented than any other. This fits with the other archaeological evidence from the site, especially with most of the architectural monuments built in Julio-Claudian period. A sharp drop during the Flavian period is visible both among the mint output (figure 15) and the finds. Once again, some of the Julio-Claudian issues would still be in circulation during this period. The Antonine period is better represented with more ‘foreign’ coins than the civic Aphrodisias mint. Could this imply more travel during this peaceful era? The Severan period is represented by a high

mint output for most cities in Western Asia Minor; the Aphrodisias finds merely reflect the situation of these times. Most of these Severan issues would have remained in circulation during the reigns of the military emperors because the same units continued. Finally, the vast output during the Valerianus – Gallienus period at Aphrodisias is paralleled by other Provincial examples, but there is also a high representation of antoniniani, which had by then lost most of its purchasing power.

During the last years of Gallienus and later, the monetary system collapsed in Western Asia Minor. The cities could not cope with rising inflation and most, including Aphrodisias, abandoned minting Provincial issues. Gothic attacks on Western Asia Minor, and the effects of plague would have also played their part in the economic collapse. We are not sure what happened at Aphrodisias either on a local level or inside these general events, but the last decades of the 3rd century AD are not represented well among the finds. This is not a local phenomenon but part of a general pattern. The coinage used at Aphrodisias and elsewhere in Western Asia Minor sharply changes during this time; the cities of the region clearly faced problems of production and supply.



Figure 9: C1998.132; AE ¼ unit; 1.80g; 12 mm.; 12b; Macedonian Empire, Sardis?, c. 325-310 BC; Macedonian shield / helmet; Price 1991: no. 419A.



Figure 10: C2007.017; AE; 9.15g; 20 mm.; 11b; Seleucos I, Antioch on the Orontes, late 280s BC; Medusa / bull; SC I: no. 24.2



Figure 11: C2010.019; AR plinthophoric drachm, 2.30 g; 17 mm.; 12b; Rhodos, 188-170 BC; Helios / Rose ΑΓΑΘΑΡΧΟΣ; Jenkins 1989: 106, Group A, 14.



Figure 12: C2010.041; AR drachm; 2.90 g; 17 mm.; 12b; Planasa and Aphrodisias, 1st cent BC; Aphrodite / Eagle on thunderbolt ΜΥΩΝ ΔΙΟΓΕΝΗΣ ΑΝΤΙΠΛΑΤΡΟΣ; MacDonald 1992: 60, type 4, O4 R7.



Figure 13: C2008.644; AE, 1.12 g.; 10/11 mm; 12b.;
Plarasa and Aphrodisias, 1st cent BC; Double axe / cuirass;
MacDonald 1992: 69, type 30.



Figure 14: C2003.095; AE, 2.76 g.; 19 mm; 12b;
Aphrodisias, AD 37-41; Augustus / Aphrodite of Aphrodisias;
MacDonald 1992: 77, type 46; RPC I: no. 2844.



Figure 15: C2011.432; AE; 10.81 g.; 25/27 mm.; 12b;
Aphrodisias, AD 81-96; Domitianus and Domitia (?) /
Tykhe of Aphrodisias holding cult statue; MacDonald
1992: 78, type 47; RPC II: 1225.

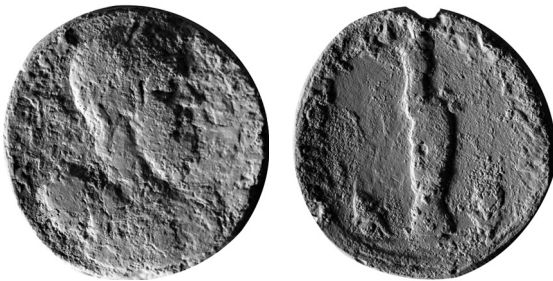


Figure 16: C2016.093; AE; 16.15 g.;
33/35 mm; 6b; Aphrodisias, AD 217-218;
Macrinus / Aphrodite of Aphrodisias;
MacDonald 1992: 121, type 160.



Figure 17: C2002.151; AE; 9.87 g.; 27 mm; 5b;
Antioch on the Meander, AD 253-268; Gallienus /
Three athletes.



Figure 18: C1998.401; AE; 2.96g.; 19/20 mm; 6b; *Bargasa,*
2nd century AD (Antonine); Boule / Telesphoros; Delrieux
2008: 26, BP/29; RPC IV: 2290 (temp).

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