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New Evidence for the Western Asia Minor Origin of the Macedonian Royal Bronze Issue Price P2 from Nif Olympos Excavations

Abstract: The subject of this article is the Macedonian royal bronze coins which carry the head of Herakles on the obverse side and a horseman with the legends ΦΙ ΒΑ on the reverse. These coins were minted during the reign of Philip III Arrhidaios, between 323–317 B.C. Although it is almost certain that these coins originated in Asia Minor due to the examples found in the course of the Sardeis excavations, they are listed under the title of Macedonia in the major coin catalogues. Further examples of these coins, which have been evaluated under the title “Uncertain Asia Minor” only in the Winterthur Collection, were found on Mount Nif to the east of Izmir. Indeed, one example found in the archaeological excavations of the Necropolis of Karamattepe in the south of the mountain and another, found on the surface of Mount Nif and transferred to the Izmir Archaeological Museum together with four others in the museum’s collection show these coins are of Asia Minor origin.

Keywords: Mount Nif; Karamattepe; Ionia; Macedonian kingdom; Alexander III; Philip III; Bronze coinage.

Mount Nif (Olympos) is located within the boundaries of present day Izmir. To the north of the mountain there is Kemalpaşa Plain and to the south is Torbalı Plain, to the west is the city of Izmir and to the east is the Karabel Pass which divides Mount Nif from the Boz Mountain.

After the surface explorations at Mount Nif undertaken in 2004 and 2005,¹ scientific archeological excavations under the direction of Prof. Dr. Elif Tül Tulunay began from 2006 in Karamattepe, Ballicaoluk, Dağkızılca and Başpınar, lying to the south and south east of the mountain.²

Mount Nif on the route of the roads Sardeis-Smyrna and Sardeis-Ephesos in antiquity played an important role in the defence of the Ionia region from the Classical Period onwards due to its strategic position. Numerous lines of defence and forts situated in the mountain were used to protect the route, Smyrna and its territory until the end of the Hellenistic period. The fort at Ballicaoluk which has been excavated since 2006 and which overlooks the road to the Karabel Pass and to the Torbalı Plain, was a part of this defensive system, as were the other forts on the mountain such as: Adatepe, Akçakaya, Akkaya and Kaynakkale and Belkahve.³

From the masonry technique of the fort of Ballicaoluk, which was seemingly used as a garrison from Late Classical age to the Roman period, it is understood that it was built in 4th century B.C.⁴ The necropolis of Karamattepe, which faces the fort, must also have served as the necropolis for the garrison stationed at Ballicaoluk as the coins recovered during excavations in Karamattepe reveal the connection

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¹ Tulunay 2006, 189–200; Tulunay 2007, 351–362.

² For the excavations see Tulunay 2008, 79–98; Tulunay 2009, 411–426; Tulunay 2010, 287–408; Tulunay 2011, 405–423; Tulunay 2012, 147–173; Tulunay 2013, 233–253; Tulunay et al. 2014, 343–358; Tulunay 2015, 11–19.

³ Bean 1955, 43–55; Doğer – Gezin 1998, 14; Meriç 1988, 207–208; Baker 2000, 183; Meriç 2009, 68–69; Türkmen 2011, 264; Türkmen 2012, 7; Türkmen Peker 2015, 19.

⁴ Türkmen 2011, 262; Türkmen 2012, 5; Türkmen Peker 2015, 19.

between its necropolis and the garrison of Ballicaoluk. Further, the ceramics, just like coins recovered, indicate that this necropolis was in use from the 4th century B.C. to the first half of the 3rd century.⁵

In Karamattepe necropolis, which seems to have been intensively used during the reigns of Alexander III and his successor Philip III, 151 coins, 6 of which are undefined, have been found during the course of archaeological excavations conducted between 2006 and 2015. 81 of these coins are autonomous coins struck in 24 cities.⁶ 64 of these coins are Macedonian royal issues.⁷

Two Sardeis coins, one of silver, the other bronze, are dated to the reign of Alexandros III. The coins dated to the reign of Philippos III are: 2 Sardeis coins (Price 2612), 2 Kyme coins (Price 325),⁸ 30 Sardeis coins (Price 3158),⁹ 19 Kaunos¹⁰ coins and 6 Asia Minor¹¹ coins whose place of minting is uncertain. One of the last two coins (Price P2), currently considered to have been minted in Macedonia forms the subject of this article.

On the obverse of this coin is the head of Herakles, and on the reverse the depiction of a horseman to right and the legends ΦΙ / ΒΑ. This coin is attributed to Philippos IV, son of Cassander, by Gaebler.¹² Gaebler dates it to 297–296 B.C. Although Price indicates the origin of this coin was almost certainly Asia Minor by reporting that 11 of these coins were found during the Sardeis excavations, he evaluated these coins under the title of Macedonia.¹³ Price attributes these coins to Philippos III, the successor of

⁵ Bilgin 2015, 31–33.

⁶ These cities are: Athens, Mykonos, Gambreion, Parion, Elaia, Kyme, Erythrai, Ephesos, Chios, Clazomenai, Colophon, Lebedos, Leukai, Magnesia, Miletos, Phokaia, Priene, Samos, Smyrna, Teos, Halikarnassos, Knidos, Mylasa and Rhodos and, almost all of them are of chalkous denomination. All of them, except for 5 Smyrna coins, are dated to the 4th century B.C.

⁷ More than 40% of the coins are Macedon issues and are directly related to the Macedonian troops deployed in the region. As is known, mercenaries were paid in two ways; firstly by *sitarkhia* that is prepaid, pay known to have been given to the soldiers so they could meet their daily needs; the other is *opsonion* that is payment after service. See Griffith 1935, 264–273; Liampi 2000, 225; Nankov 2009, 272; Psoma 2009, 3–38.

⁸ Although this coin is known to be of Asia Minor origin, it was classified by Price (1991, 117) under the title of Macedonia. Another example was published in SNG München 853 (“unbestimmte makedonische Münzstätte”). At first, the coin is stated as a Kyme issue in SNG Marc Bar 436. 3 examples found during the Sardeis excavations (Bell 1916, 7 nos. 70–71 and Johnston 1981, 17 no. 10) and two recovered during the Mount Nif excavations confirm that this coin was of Asia Minor origin and struck in Kyme between 323 and 310 during the reign of Philippos III. See Ashton 2014, 25–26.

⁹ Coins attributed to Miletus by Liampi (Liampi 1986, 62, 6th Group, nos. 170–192 (Miletos?)) were evaluated under the title of Salamis (Price 1991, 3158 (Salamis)). 30 examples recovered in the Nif excavations between 2006 and 2015 and the iconographic connection with the Macedonian issues struck in Sardeis show these coins were minted in Sardeis, not Salamis. See Lenger 2013b, 371–387.

¹⁰ 2 Miletus (Price 2612, 3158), 12 Miletus-Mylasa (Price 2064, 2068, 2072) and 5 Asia Minor coins whose minting place is unknown (Price 2801, 2806) were attributed to Kaunos by Ashton on the basis of coins in the Afyonkarahisar and Fethiye museum collections. See Ashton 1998, 43–47; Ashton 2004, 33–46.

Quantitative density of the coins found in Mount Nif, Karamattepe Necropolis area that have been attributed to Kaunos suggests to us that some series and emissions today given to Kaunos do not belong to Kaunos. See Lenger 2013a, 1–8. The fact that not one single example of the aforementioned series and emission was found during the course of the Kaunos excavations supports this suggestion. See Çizmeli Öğün – Marcellesi 2011, 321–322.

¹¹ It is thought that 5 of these coins, except for the one included in Price 2800 group, are of Macedonian origin. SNG Cop 1137; Liampi 1986, 282 (Macedonia). Price attributed these coins to Amphipolis. See Price 419A (Amphipolis). We see the coins as Asia Minor issues in SNG Marc Bar. The fact that 5 examples were found in the Mount Nif Karamattepe Necropolis area shows these coins are of Anatolian origin. No other example has been recovered in excavations in Western Anatolia.

¹² Gaebler 1935, pl. XXXII 18.

¹³ Price 1991, 117. For Sardeis findings see Johnston 1981, 17 nos. 20–21 (there are 8 similar examples).

Alexandros III and he dates them to 323–317 B.C.¹⁴ Another two examples of this coinage were published in SNG München volume and evaluated under the title of Macedonia, as Price did in his catalogue.¹⁵ We see only in Winterthur collection these coins given as, “Asia Minor Coins whose Minting Place is unknown”.¹⁶

A similar coin was found by the head of the Forestry, Durmuş Sulu and delivered with other examples, collected from the north slope of the mountain, to the Izmir Archaeology Museum in 2000.¹⁷

Furthermore, there are four of these coins within the Izmir Archaeology Museum Collection.¹⁸ On the reverse sides of the two of these coins, there are countermarks showing the kerykeion head, just like the other examples found in the course of the Mount Nif excavations and also found by Durmuş Sulu on Mount Nif.

Both the Mount Nif finds and the examples in the Izmir Archeology Museum confirm that these coins were not minted in Macedonia and that they are of Asia Minor origin. Even though further evidence is needed, an attribution to Sardeis should be entertained.

CATALOGUE

ASIA MINOR

Philippos III Arrhidaios (323–317 B.C.)

Obv. Head of Herakles right

Rev. ΦΙ Horseman right, (BA)

Price 1991: P2 (Macedonia); Gaebler 1935: 18, plate XXXII; SNG München 978–980

Mount Nif, Karamattepe Necropolis Finding:

1. AE, 19mm., 5,7g. 12h. NIF S.10–7

Rev. Kmc: kerykeion



Example Found by Durmus Sulu at Mount Nif:

2. AE, 19mm., 5,28g. 12h. Env.n. 32567

Rev. Kmc: kerykeion



In Izmir Archeology Museum Collection:

3. AE 20 mm, 5,15g. 12h. Env. n. 34059

Rev. Kmc: kerykeion



4. AE 20 mm, 6,15g. 12h. Env. n. 21202



¹⁴ Price P2.

¹⁵ SNG München 978–980.

¹⁶ Bloesch 1987, 1584c.

¹⁷ Lenger 2016, 644–656. For the coin p. 647, no. 2 (Env. N. 22).

¹⁸ Inv. nos. 21202, 33970, 22672, 34059. Information from R. A. Ömer Tatar who is working on a master thesis entitled, “Macedon Royal Bronze Issues of Alexander III and Philippos III Arrhidaios in Izmir Archeology Museum” and who shared this information with me, for which I thank him.

5. AE 19 mm, 5.10g. 12h.

Env. n. 33970



6. AE 20 mm, 5.79g. 12h.

Env. n. 22672

Rev. Kmc: kerykeion



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Özet

Makedon Krali Darplarından Price P2'nin Küçük Asya Kökenine Dair

Nif Olympos Kazılarında Yeni Veriler

Makalenin konusunu ön yüzünde Herakles başı, arka yüzünde atlı tasviri yer alan $\Phi I / BA$ lejandlı, bronz, makedon krali sikkeler oluşturmaktadır. Sikkeler Philippos III Arrhidaios Dönemi'nde, M.Ö. 323–317 arasında darp edilmişlerdir. Söz konusu darpların Küçük Asya kökenli olduğu Sardeis kazılarında ele geçen örnekler sayesinde neredeyse kesin olmasına rağmen, bu sikkeler genel geçer kataloglarda karşımıza Makedonia başlığı altında çıkmaktadırlar. Sadece Winterthur Koleksiyonunda “Nerede Basıldığı Bilinmeyen Küçük Asya” başlığı altında değerlendirilmiş olan bu darpların yeni örnekleri İzmir'in doğusunda kalan Nif Dağı'nda ele geçmiştir. Dağın güneyindeki Karamattepe Nekropolis'inde yürütülen arkeolojik kazılarda ele geçen bir, Nif Dağı yüzeyinde bulunup İzmir Arkeoloji Müzesi'ne teslim edilen bir ve müzenin koleksiyonunda bulunan dört örnek söz konusu sikkelerin gerçekten de Küçük Asya kökenli olduklarını göstermektedir. Bu sikke serisinin Sardeis darphanesinde üretilmiş olabileceği tahmin edilmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Nif Dağı; Karamattepe; Ionia; Makedonia Krallığı; III. Aleksandros; III. Philippos; Bronz Sikke Darbı.