

Die Sharing in Asia Minor : another phantom link

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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Schweizer Münzblätter = Gazette numismatique suisse = Gazzetta numismatica svizzera**

Band (Jahr): **66 (2016)**

Heft 264

PDF erstellt am: **27.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-632492>

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Die Sharing in Asia Minor: another phantom link

Our knowledge of obverse dies shared between two or more cities of Asia Minor in the period of the Roman empire was greatly increased by the work of Konrad Kraft, shortly before his death¹. Prior to this work, it was generally believed that obverse dies were only shared between neighbouring cities, but Kraft was able to show a number of obverses shared by cities separated by hundreds of kilometres². Kevin Butcher has since shown that one of those long distance links was a “phantom link” created by the tooling of the reverse legend³. I wish to suggest here that another of the long distance links listed by Kraft is also a phantom, also created by modern tooling.



Fig. 1: Supposed coin of Laranda

The link in question concerns the use of an obverse die showing Philip II at both Perge in Pamphylia and Laranda in Lycaonia, two cities separated by around 210 km as the crow flies⁴. The use of the die at Perge is well attested, and can be seen in a number of published specimens⁵. The use of the obverse at Laranda is known by only one specimen (Fig. 1). This coin first appeared in print at the sale of the collection of Athanasios Rhousopoulos in 1905⁶. Kraft referred to this auction catalogue in his work, without illustrating the coin. In his corpus of the coins of Lycaonia, Hans von Aulock also referred to the Rhousopoulos auction and reproduced the image of the coin from that catalogue⁷. The coin was also published, independently of these, by Carlo Fontana, as part of a series illustrating Roman provincial coins from his collection and the collections of other members of the Società Numismatica Italiana⁸. Although only Fontana gives a weight, it is clear that this coin is the same as that from the Rhousopoulos sale. Fontana does not seem to have been aware of the coin's earlier provenance, using a different photo, and nor was von Aulock aware of Fontana's publication.

There are a number of reasons to doubt that this is a genuine coin of Laranda. The first regards the reverse legend, which, as the coin stands, reads ΛΑΡΑ-ΝΑΕΩΝ. Every other currently known piece struck by the city under Philip bears some reference to the city's title as *metropolis*, and our coin is the only one to omit this title. Whilst Laranda had long been *metropolis* of Lycaonia, its status was upgraded to *sebeste metropolis* under Philip, presumably on that emperor's passage through the region on his journey to Rome from the eastern front in 244, shortly after having been raised to the imperial purple⁹. It is therefore very unlikely that the city would have omitted the title on its coinage.

The reverse image, of a standing figure of Tyche, also provides reason to doubt the authenticity of the coin. Whilst this type is very common across most of Asia Minor, it is in fact rare in Lycaonia. Only two Lycaonian issues show this image, both paired with Faustina II, one at Derbe and one at Laranda¹⁰. The pre-

1 K. KRAFT, *Das System der kaiserzeitlichen Münzprägung in Kleinasien: Materialien und Entwürfe* (Berlin 1972).

2 E.g. M. GRANT, *Phrygian Metropolis in the early Principate*, NC⁷ 9, 1949, pp. 157–65 at p. 160; L. ROBERT, *Villes d'Asie Mineure. Études de géographie ancienne* (Paris 1962), pp. 188–91.

3 K. BUTCHER, *Die Sharing in Asia Minor: a phantom link*, SM 55, 2005, pp. 67–8.

4 KRAFT (n. 1), p. 79 no. 350.

5 E.g. SNG v. Aulock 4706–7; SNG Copenhagen Pamphylia 345–8; SNG Paris 3.504–8; SNG PIPs 4.389–91.

6 J. HIRSCH (Munich) XIII, 15th May 1905, lot 4305.

7 H. VON AULOCK, *Münzen und Städte Lykaoniens* (Tübingen 1976), p. 72 no. 140.

8 C. FONTANA, *Note su alcune monete inedite o poco conosciute della serie urbana greca coniate durante l'impero romano: III parte*, RIN⁵ 15, 1967, pp. 39–62, no. 25.

9 M. PEACHIN, *Philip's Progress: From Mesopotamia to Rome in A.D. 244*, *Historia* 40.3, 1991, pp. 330–42 at p. 335.

10 VON AULOCK (n. 7), p. 67 no. 78 & p. 70 nos. 113–5.

ferred imagery of the Lycaonian revival of coinage under Philip is of Heracles and a seated figure of Tyche. By contrast, the reverse type of a standing Tyche is extremely common at Perge, and I am aware of eighteen reverse dies of this type used at that city during the reign of Philip alone.

It appears that these irregularities have come about because the coin has been tooled. Although neither available photo is of a very high quality, it is just about possible to make out some signs that the reverse legend has been tampered with. On the image shown by Fontana and reproduced here, one can make out an extended upper crossbar at the top of the initial *lambda*, which may be the remnants of an original *pi*.

The style in which the reverse legend is engraved is notably different from that of the obverse lettering, a fact that Butcher noted in his discussion of the other tooled coin¹¹. This should not, however, be a concern to us. There are numerous instances of obverse dies being shared between multiple cities and in some places being coupled with reverses cut by a different engraver¹². More compelling is the fact that neither the reverse image nor the reverse legend seem appropriate for Laranda.



Fig. 2: Coin of Perge (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge)

I thus suggest that this apparent coin of Laranda is in fact a specimen from Perge that has been tooled to appear to be from the Lycaonian city. I have not been able to identify an untooled example from the same reverse die at Perge, but illustrate here a coin of the same type, struck from the same obverse die (Fig. 2).

Were the Perge-Laranda link genuine, it would be something of an exception to the other die sharings involving Perge. The conspectus of known sharings involving that city, listed below, reveal a very local pattern, with obverses rarely travelling more than 50 km.

Obverse portrait	Cities	Examples	Distance (approx)
Maximinus	Perge – Sillyum	H. Grün (Heidelberg) 52 (Nov 2009) 166 – CNG (online) 147 (Sep 2006) 94	12 km
Maximus	Perge – Sillyum	SNG Paris 3.491-3 – SNG Leypold 1955	12 km
Philip	Perge – Panemoteichus	Unpublished (Cambridge) – SNG von Aulock 5131	45 km
Gallienus	Perge – Sillyum	KRAFT (n. 1) p. 79 no. 352	12 km
Salonina	Perge – Sillyum	BMC Pamph p. 138 no. 93-4 – SNG Glasgow 2084	12 km
Salonina	Perge – Pogla – Sagalassus	KRAFT (n. 1) p. 79 no. 353	65 km, 80 km
Valerian II	Perge – Sillyum	KRAFT (n. 1) p. 79 no. 356	12 km

11 BUTCHER (n. 3), p. 67.

12 A. JOHNSTON, New Problems for Old: Konrad Kraft on Die-sharing in Asia Minor, NC⁷ 14, 1974, pp. 203–7 at p. 205. See also, G. WATSON, The system of coin production in Roman Asia Minor: new light on an old problem, in: Proceedings of the XVth International Numismatic Congress Taormina 2015 (forthcoming).

Local transfers are the pattern for most shared dies and, although Kraft laid great weight on long distance shares because of their novelty, they are in fact the exception rather than the rule¹³. We should therefore be particularly wary of any new long distance shares that come to light, and check that both pieces are genuine.

The reason that any coin of the Roman provincial series, including the one under discussion here, might be tooled surely lies in the desire of collectors to have pieces from many rare cities. Coins of Laranda are found far less frequently than those of Perge, and thus by tooling one of the latter, a more desirable piece could be created.

Both the tooled coin under discussion here and the one examined by Butcher are coins of Philip, and it is worth asking whether this is more than just coincidence. Indeed, SNG Paris 3.550 is a coin of Perge under Valerian, where the obverse legend has been tooled to read Philip's name, giving another example of modern attempts to create different coins of that emperor. Although this is by no means a statistically significant sample, it is tempting to speculate that there was a particular attempt to modify coins of Philip because of the long held view that he was the first Christian emperor¹⁴.

Tooling of Roman provincial coins in the early modern period was by no means uncommon¹⁵. The tooling of this coin not only created another specimen of a rare city for a historically interesting emperor, which might well have been appealing to collectors of the past, but also created the false impression of an obverse being used at two unconnected cities, and this latter must now be corrected in the historical record.

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13 The list of dies genuinely shared over a distance greater than 150 km, although longer than that given by BUTCHER (n. 3) p. 67 n. 2, is very short: Smyrna-Temnus-Hyrgaleis (KRAFT (n. 1), p. 28 no. 037; 190 km), Sardis-Daldis-Ephesus-Amblada (KRAFT (n. 1) p. 52 no. 228; 340 km), Smyrna-Philadelphia-Eriza (KRAFT (n. 1), p. 55 no. 250; 220 km), Nicaea-Sagalassus (KRAFT (n. 1), p. 67 no. 310; 315 km), Amastris-Neocaesarea (KRAFT (n. 1), p. 67 no. 315; 405 km), Caesarea Germanice-Prusantium (KRAFT (n. 1) p. 68 no. 339; 295 km).

14 This view, now largely rejected but still held by some academics, was held throughout the middle ages and renaissance, on the basis of a number of ancient texts that are summarised by I. SHAHID, *Rome and the Arabs* (Washington 1984), pp. 65–93. The first serious dismissal of Philip's Christianity appears to have been made by F. SPANHEIM, *Opera II: Miscellaneorum Ad Sacram Antiquitatem Et Ecclesiae Historiam Pertinentium Libri Decem. Appendix Pars Tertia* (Leiden 1703), pp. 405–36. A balanced modern view is given by G. BOWERSOCK, *Byzantium and the Arabs*, CR 36.1 (1986), p. 113.

15 Cf. V. HEUCHERT, *A Tooled Coin and Forgery of the "Koinon of the Thirteen Cities"*, in: K. DORTLUK – O. TEKIN – R. BOYRAZ SEYHAN (Eds.) *First International Congress of the Anatolian Monetary History and Numismatics*, 25–28 February 2013, Antalya. *Proceedings* (Antalya 2014), pp. 297–306.