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KRANAOS A NEW MINT IN CARIA

Alan Walker

Recently, a pair of bronze coins were acquired on the Swiss Market, having a definite provenance of Asia Minor, specifically the area of Halicarnassus. This provenance drastically conflicts with the two identifications of the mint city hitherto proposed and calls for a re-attribution ¹.

The first example of this issue appeared in the catalogue of the Roussopoulos Collection, attributed to the island of Kranaë off the shores of Laconia ². It was dated to the fourth century B.C. and described as follows (Fig. 1):



Fig. 1

Obverse: Facing female head.

Reverse: KPAN; bunch of grapes with branch.

The description omits the large crayfish, or prawn, to the left of the bunch of grapes on the reverse. Kranaë was a very minor islet, the modern Marathonisi, just outside the port of Gythium. It is most unlikely to have had a coinage of its own in the fourth century B.C. Certainly no other town in Laconia, with the obvious exception of Lacedaemon itself, had any coinage until well into the Roman Imperial period. The attribution to Kranaë can be safely discarded.

The second specimen, from the British Museum, was published by the Reverend E. Rogers as being possibly from Krannon in Thessaly ³. His date is similar, c. after B.C. 300, and his description is much the same (Fig. 2):



Fig. 2

Obverse: Facing head of nymph ³/₄ right; border of dots.

Reverse: KPANN; bunch of grapes.

¹ I would like to thank the owner of these two coins for permission to publish them. They were purchased in Switzerland from Nomos AG during March and October of 1976. I should also like to thank M. J. Price for his helpful comments and for permission to publish the British Museum specimen.

² Sale J. Hirsch 13 (1905), 2667 (Sammlung griechischer Münzen aus dem Nachlasse eines bekannten Archäologen).

³ E. Rogers, *The Copper Coinage of Thessaly* (1932), 72, 204, fig. 86.

The crayfish is off the flan. The cast shows no trace of the second N, which would have conclusively proved the attribution to Krannon⁴, and it seems to have been a misreading on Rogers' part. Facing heads are not at all uncommon in Thessaly (though not used at Krannon)⁵ while the reverse type of a bunch of grapes is rather unusual⁶. However, what Rogers saw as a border of dots are, in fact, rays emanating from the head itself (Fig. 4). These rays indicate clearly that the head is that of Helios, a god who was worshipped neither in Krannon nor in Thessaly as a whole. While not conclusively disproving the attribution to Krannon the types make it unlikely.

The two new coins (Figs. 3 and 4)⁷ are both in excellent condition and are well-centered so there can be no doubt about the description:



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Obverse: Rayed head of Helios facing.

Reverse: KPAN; bunch of grapes on branch; to left, crayfish or prawn.

The crayfish is likely to have been a subsidiary type rather than just a magistrate's symbol especially since the small size of the issue would have made elaborate control procedures somewhat unnecessary.

The Halicarnassus provenance of these two pieces makes it very doubtful, indeed, that the mint city could be as far away as the Greek mainland. Bronze coins rarely traveled far from their city of origin in antiquity and for two coins of such rarity and in such excellent condition to appear in Halicarnassus it would seem likely that the mint was somewhere nearby.

Pleasantly enough, there is a town in Caria, admittedly rather obscure, which can be confidently identified as the mint of these four coins. Kranaos⁸ was a minor town in the mountainous uplands of Caria, probably on the south bank of the

⁴ City names beginning in KPAN are relatively rare among the ancient names preserved to us. Krannon and Kranii on Cephallonia are the only ones which obviously spring to mind. Aside from the adjective *κρανός* (see note 9 below) the only major words beginning with *κραν* are *ἡ κρανεία* (or *τό κρανόν*) with the meaning of *cornelian cherry*; *τό κρανίον*, the upper part of the head and *τό κρανός*, helmet or ship's ram. If any of these words or their forms were used as place names they would seem to be more appropriate for geographic features such as mountains or outcrops rather than large towns. Only Krannon uses a double N to my knowledge.

⁵ The only heads used on the coins which are certainly attributed to Krannon are profile heads of Poseidon and a «Thessalian youth in petasos», Rogers, *ibid.* pp. 68–72. Facing heads can be found on the bronze coins of the following Thessalian cities: Eurea, Gomphi, Gyrtion, Larissa, Meliboea, Mopsium, Perrhaebi, Phaloria, Pharsalus, Pherae, Proerna and Scotussa. The majority of these heads are female.

⁶ A bunch of grapes only appears on the bronze coins of Eurea, Meliboea, Rhizus, Scotussa and Peparethus. Usually, however, these bunches of grapes are accompanied by vine leaves.

⁷ Fig. 3: 11 mm, / 1.39 g. Fig. 4: 10.5 mm / 1.65 g.

⁸ RE XI 1569, Kranaos 2.

Maeander river ⁹. Almost nothing is known of it except for the following reference in Pliny: «... Antiochia ubi fuere Symmaethos et Cranaos oppida...» ¹⁰ in which we learn that the later city of Antioch on the Maeander occupied the sites of these two earlier towns (or, perhaps, that the residents of the two towns were moved to the new foundation). Antioch itself was founded by Antiochus I Soter (281–261 B.C.) and it is clear that these two earlier towns were incorporated in it ¹¹. Thus the coinage of Kranaos has a terminus ante quem of 261 at the latest (though surely somewhat earlier). The style agrees with this and a date of c. 300–280 B.C. should be given to the coins. The existence of coins from Kranaos, of a period in which most Carian cities did not have their own coinage ¹², should indicate that Kranaos was on the way to becoming an important city in its own right. It may well have controlled the crossing of the Maeander, perhaps possessing a bridge, the forerunner of the great span often shown on the Imperial coins of Antioch ¹³. If this is the case, Kranaos was probably the major partner in the Seleucid foundation.

Catalogue of Dies ¹⁴

A 1	P 1	Roussopoulos.	Fig. 1.
A 2	P 2	BM/Rogers.	Fig. 2.
A 2	P 3	Swiss Market.	Fig. 3.
A 3	P 4	Swiss Market.	Fig. 4.

Note

Since this article went to press a further three specimens of the coinage of Kranaos have come to my attention. The first was mistakenly attributed to Myconos by Svoronos in, «Νομισματική καὶ ἱστορία τῆς ἀρχαίας Μυκόνου» BCH XVII (1893) p. 465, no. 24 (Pl. XI, 37). The M seen on the coin by Svoronos is not visible in the illustration and the dies are clearly the same as the better preserved specimen in the BM (A 2–P 2).

My knowledge of the second two is owed to the kindness of Mr. R. H. J. Ashton who discovered them in the course of his own research on the coinage of Rhodes and has very kindly allowed me to mention them. The two coins repose in the Rhodes Museum, inventory number 2238, along with 23 Rhodian bronzes of a somewhat later date. They were acquired from an inhabitant of the island of Syme who, in turn, acquired them from someone somewhere in Asia Minor. It is likely, however, given the Rhodian pieces, that the coins were found on the coast or in the hinterland opposite Syme itself. This probable provenance amply confirms the attribution to Kranaos in Caria.

⁹ The adjective Kranaos means *rugged* in poetic terminology and could easily be applied to any town in the mountains. Of course, the name Kranaos may have little to do with the Greek adjective and may simply be a homonym. The types would be suitable to such a location: Helios does appear on the coins of some other Carian cities, vines are grown in the area and crayfish live in the Maeander river. It should be noted that the BM coin had been re-attributed since the time of Rogers (presumably by E. S. G. Robinson) to «Cranaos?». This attribution was never published and I owe my knowledge of it to the kindness of M. Price.

¹⁰ Pliny, HN V, xxix, 108.

¹¹ RE I, s. v. Antiocheia 16. W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, Vol. I (1895) P. 185. Other ancient sources give the name of an earlier settlement on the site of Antioch as Pythopolis so, perhaps, there are three towns involved in the original foundation.

¹² Most Carian cities begin their coinage in the second century B.C. with only a very small number (Astyra, Caryanda?, Caunus, Cnidus, Halicarnassus, Idyma, and the islands of Cos, and Rhodes and its colonies) having any bronze in the fourth or third centuries B.C. Antioch on the Maeander does not begin its coinage until the second century B.C.

¹³ As, for example, L. Forrer, *The Weber Collection III*, 2 (1929), 6370; SNG von Aulock, 2430/1, 8058/9.

¹⁴ The author would be pleased to know of any further specimens in public or private collections and casts or photographs would be greatly appreciated.