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THE COINAGE OF PHAKION

Plates 4–6

Phakion,¹ a small city in northern Thessaly, is known from a few literary and epigraphic sources. Since the beginning of the last century travellers and historians have attempted to equate it with various ruins, sometimes in the Peneios valley and in other cases in that of the Enipeus.² Although the exact ancient site of the city has not been securely identified as yet, the latest research suggests it was located at the border of Pelasgiotis with Hestiaecotis, between Pharkadon and Atrax (*see map on p. 35*).

Our knowledge of Phakion is very limited.³ Despite its favourable location in the fertile valley of the Peneios, its economy seems never to have been fully developed and from a political point of view, the city must have been always overshadowed by more powerful neighbouring Thessalian cities. The scarce ancient sources and the total absence of archaeological data⁴ prevent modern scholars from reconstructing its history. One can assume that the foundation of Phakion, or at least its first settlement, occurred before the end of the 5th century B.C., when we have the first evidence of its existence in Thucydides.⁵ In the following centuries,

¹ Φάκιον is etymologised by the word Φάκος (=lentil). Thesaurus Graecae Linguae, IX, 597, s.v. Φάκιον; H. G. Liddell – R. Scott, 1913, s.v. Φάκιον. The name of the city originated perhaps from the ground configuration of the unidentified ancient site. A similar case is that of Φάκος (Phakos) (Plb. xxxi. 25), the fortress of Pella on a small hill in the shape of a lentil, see: D. Papakonstantinou-Diamantourou, Πέλλα. Ἱστορική ἐπισκόπησις καὶ μαρτυρίαι (Pella, a Historical Survey), (Athens 1971), 62–63.

² First W. M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, 4, (London 1835), 493, placed Phakion in Koutsocheri-Alifaca, on the right bank of the Peneios. The same identification was adopted by C. Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland*, 1, (Leipzig 1862), 53, N. Georgiades, *Θεσσαλία* (Thessaly), (Athens 1880), 235 and C. D. Edmonds, *Some doubtful points of Thessalian Topography*, *Annual Brit. School at Athens* 5, 1898/9, 20–25. On the contrary, H. G. Lolling, *Hellenische Landeskunde und Topographie*, (1889), 152 and F. Stählin, *Das hellenische Thessalien*, (Stuttgart 1924), 132–133, looked for the city in the valley of the Enipeus. The first suggested the foot of mount Phylleion and the second the ruins south-east of the village of Petrinon. Finally, J.-Cl. Decourt, *La vallée de l'Enipeus en Thessalie*, *BCH suppl. XXI*, 1990, 84–89, 98–99, 118–119, 155–158, suggests that Phakion should be placed on the left bank of the Peneios.

³ B. Lenk, *RE XIX*, 2 (1964), 1609–10, s. v. Phakion.

⁴ For excavations that took place in unidentified ancient sites in the area in which Phakion is believed to be situated, see D. Leekley and N. Efstratiou, *Archaeological Excavations in Central and Northern Greece*, (Park Ridge 1980), 130.

⁵ Thuc. IV, 78, 5; A.W. Gomme, *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, III, (Oxford 1970), 545. In the historian's narration of the Peloponnesian War, and more specifically in his description of Brasidas' expedition against Amphipolis in 424 B.C., Phakion is mentioned as the last Thessalian city through which the Spartan general passed on his way towards Perrhaebia.

although its active participation in historical events is not attested, Phakion must have been influenced by the political and social developments that made Thessaly a field of foreign activity and military conflicts.⁶

The history of Phakion in the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. can be marginally illuminated by three inscriptions which bear the name of the city or that of its citizens. The first is the list of the treasurers (ταμίαι) of the sanctuary of Delphi.⁷ From this inscription, if of course the emendation F. Stählin has suggested is correct, we are informed that in the years of the archon Πάλαιος (339–327 B.C.), a citizen of Phakion, the son of a certain Στράταγος, was a treasurer of the Delphic sanctuary.

The next epigraphical evidence, dated to the 4th or 3rd century B.C., comes from the base of a statue dedicated to Ennodia, found in Oreos of Euboea.⁸ This inscription is quite valuable as it indicates the worship of Ennodia in Phakion. According to P. Chrysostomou, the dedicator Λυσανίας Κωρίλου ἐκ Φακίου, serving as a mercenary in Oreos, chose to offer his dedication to this goddess possibly because she was worshipped in his home city.⁹

The third inscription related to Phakion is the Delphic list of the «sacred envoy receivers» (Θεωροδόκοι).¹⁰ The inclusion of ἐν Φακίῳ Ἀμφαρέυς Μεγαλοκλέος in this list attests that in the 3rd century B.C. the city was visited by the «sacred envoy» (Θεωροί) of Delphi and that a citizen of Phakion was wealthy enough to offer hospitality to the visiting *theoroi*.

Another piece of information about the city's history is supplied by Livy: in the beginning of the 2nd century B.C., Phakion experienced two successive misfortunes. In Livy's narrative of the events of 198 B.C.¹¹ Phakion is mentioned as one of the Thessalian cities that Philip V destroyed in order to devastate the area and thus cut T. Q. Flamininus' line of supply. The same historian refers to the city's capture by Marcus Baebius during his expedition in 191 B.C. against

⁶ After the Peloponnesian War, Thessaly went through a period of instability. The conflicts between Larissa and the tyrants of Pherae, and the subsequent interventions of the Macedonian kings and the Boeotians in the Thessalian affairs were followed by the occupation of Thessaly by Philip II and a continuous Macedonian presence up to the time of Philip V.

⁷ E. Bourguet, *L'administration financière du sanctuaire delphique*, (1915), 176, I. 43; Syll.³, 249 B, 43. In these first publications scholars have read Φ[αλωρί]τας; however, F. Stählin (see n. 2), 133, n. 9 has suggested a correction to Φ[ακίας]τας; J.-Cl. Decourt (see n. 2), 156.

⁸ E. Legrand – G. Doublet, *Inscriptions d'Eubée*, BCH 15, 1891, 412, 25; IG XII, 9, 1193; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, 1, (Darmstadt 1955²), 171 n. 3; M. Sakellariou, *La migration grecque en Ionie*, (Athens 1958), 216 n. 9; J.-Cl. Decourt (see n. 2), 156. This inscription is now lost and known only from its initial publication by E. Legrand and G. Doublet.

⁹ P. Chrysostomou, *Η Θεσσαλική θεά Εν(ν)οδία ή Φεραία* (The Thessalian goddess Ennodia), (Thessalonike 1991), 143–148 (unpublished thesis).

¹⁰ A. Plassart, *Inscriptions de Delphes, La liste des théorodokes*, BCH 45, 1921, 16, III, 25; J.-Cl. Decourt (n. 2), 156–7.

¹¹ Liv. XXXII, 13, 9. J. Briscoe, *A Commentary on Livy*, (Oxford 1973), 190.



Map from H. Reinders, *New Halos, a Hellenistic Town in Thessalia, Greece* (Utrecht 1988), 22. Districts and cities of Thessalia in Classical and Hellenistic times. There has been the addition of *Phacion?* between Pharkadon and Atrax.

Antiochos III.¹² It is not known, however, if the destruction and capture of the city meant the end of its existence as well.

Finally, the last ancient source referring to Phakion is Stephanus Byzantius. The only information drawn from his work *Εθνικά* is that the ethnic of a citizen of Phakion was **Φακιεύς**.¹³

In a small and rather insignificant city, as Phakion appears to have been, the economy was presumably rather restricted and most of its trade confined within the borders of Thessaly. For the limited daily exchanges barter must have been prevalent and the resultant, almost non-existent, need for higher-value currency must have been satisfied by the use of «foreign» coins, perhaps those of dominant nearby cities, such as Larissa. However, Phakion during a certain period of its history, probably in the 3rd century B.C., was numismatically active with the production of a limited issue of bronze coins.

At the time of this writing the author is aware of 42 coins of Phakion. A few of them are published¹⁴ or held in numismatic museums,¹⁵ but most are in a private collection.

¹² Liv. XXXVI, 13, 3. J. Briscoe, *A Commentary on Livy*, (Oxford 1981), 239.

¹³ St. Byz., s.v. **Φάκιον**. For the suffix **-στ-** of the ethnic (**ΦΑΚΙΑΣΤΩΝ**), see J. N. Kalléris, *Les Anciens Macédoniens*, II, (Athens 1976), 336 n. 3, 337 n. 1, 341 n. 4.

¹⁴ Coins of Phakion already published with photographs or etchings and therefore included in the catalogue are 7.b, 17.c, 18; 19, 20 and 21.

Descriptions of Phakion coins without photographs or etchings are given by T. E. Mionnet, *Description de médailles antiques*, II (Paris 1807), 20; D. Sestini, *Descrizione delle medaglie antiche greche del Museo Hedervariano, Parte Europea*, (Florence 1830), 150; A. Barthélemy, *Nouveau manuel de numismatique ancienne*, (Paris 1890), 196; E. Babelon, *Inventaire sommaire de la Collection Waddington*, (Paris 1897), nr. 7207; Hirsch 25, 1909, lot 674; Head, *HN²*, 304–305. The obverse type and/or reverse legend descriptions given by Mionnet, Sestini, Pinder and Barthélemy are inaccurate.

Unfortunately Colonel Marcom's coin, mentioned in E. Rogers, *The Copper Coinage of Thessaly*, (London 1932), 142, was not available for study.

¹⁵ Because of the rarity of these coins it was unlikely that they would be found anywhere but in the major collections. Therefore only the following were approached: I would like to express my sincere thanks to Carmen Arnold-Biucchi (American Numismatic Society, New York), F. de Callataÿ (Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels), Mary Comstock (The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), G. Dembski and Roswitha Denk (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Münzkabinett), Dominique Gerin (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), H. Kim (The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), D. Klose (Staatliche Münzsammlung, Munich), K. Konuk (The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), H.-D. Schultz (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin), I. Touratsoglou (National Museum, Athens), and Ute Wartenberg (The British Museum, London). This research yielded only 9 coins in the above 11 major public collections.

Group I (Pl. 4–5, 1–15)

Obv.: Head of Nymph r., bound with wreath of corn, wearing earring and linear (?) necklace.

Rev.: ΦΑΚΙΑΣΤΩΝ above, clock-wise. Horseman advancing r., wearing chiton and chlamys, in his l. hand he holds the reins, his r. hand is raised.

- | | | | | | | |
|----|-----|-----|--|-----|------|---------|
| 1. | O.1 | R.1 | *a) Private collection | 10h | 21mm | 5,11gr. |
| | | | <i>Obv.</i> : has been tooled. | | | |
| | | | <i>Rev.</i> : horse's head double struck. | | | |
| | | | <i>Obv.</i> : Similar. | | | |
| | | | <i>Rev.</i> : Similar, but ear of corn between hind legs of horse; exergular line. | | | |
| 2. | O.2 | R.2 | *a) Berlin, Staatliche Museen (ex Imh.-Blumer) | 12h | 20mm | 6,97gr. |
| | | | <i>Obv.</i> : Similar, but nymph wears necklace of pearls or beads; all within border of dots. | | | |
| | | | <i>Rev.</i> : Similar. | | | |
| 3. | O.3 | R.3 | *a) Private collection | 11h | 20mm | 5,26gr. |
| 4. | O.4 | R.4 | *a) Private collection | 11h | 18mm | 6,83gr. |
| 5. | O.4 | R.5 | *a) Private collection | 11h | 21mm | 5,55gr. |
| | | | <i>Rev.</i> : the bottom right leg of K is absent. | | | |
| 6. | O.4 | R.6 | *a) Private collection | 11h | 19mm | 5,04gr. |
| | | | <i>Obv.</i> : flaw on the field in front of forehead. | | | |
| | | | <i>Rev.</i> : flaw behind horse's hind legs. | | | |
| | | | <i>Obv.</i> : Similar. | | | |
| | | | <i>Rev.</i> : Similar, but no symbol. | | | |
| 7. | O.4 | R.7 | *a) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (394) | 1h | 20mm | 6,23gr. |
| | | | <i>Obv.</i> : flaw as in 6. | | | |
| | | | b) London, BMC 1, Pl. 31, 7 (etching); F. Imhoof-Blumer, Nymphen und Chariten auf griechischen Münzen, JIAN 11, 1908, 61, nr. 159, pl. IV, 38. | | | |
| | | | | 1h | 20mm | 4,83gr. |
| | | | <i>Obv.</i> : flaw as in 6. | | | |
| | | | <i>Obv.</i> : Similar. | | | |
| | | | <i>Rev.</i> : Similar, but with symbol. | | | |

¹⁶ Asterisk denotes coins illustrated on plates 4–6.

8.	O.4	R.8	*a) Private collection	11h	20mm	7,80gr.
			b) Private collection	11h	21mm	4,81gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : flaw as in 6, 7a and 7b, further developed.			
9.	O.5	R.8	*a) Private collection	5h	20mm	6,42gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : first letter of ethnic has been tooled.			
10.	O.5	R.9	*a) Private collection	11h	21mm	7,11gr.
11.	O.5	R.10	*a) Private collection	11h	19mm	7,04gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> and <i>Rev.</i> : badly corroded.			
12.	O.5	R.11	*a) Private collection	11h	20mm	6,98gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : two flaws on the tip of the nose.			
			<i>Obv.</i> : Similar.			
			<i>Rev.</i> : Similar, but no symbol.			
13.	O.6	R.7	*a) London, BM (G 0616)	11h	20mm	4,52gr.
14.	O.6	R.12	*a) Private collection	11h	18mm	5,88gr.
15.	O.6	R.13	*a) London, BMC 2	7h	21mm	5,30gr.

Group II (Pl. 5–6, 16–30)

Obv.: Similar.

Rev.: Similar, but with symbol; legend divided by the horseman's head and horse's leg: ΦAKI-AΣΤΩ-N.

16.	O.7	R.14	*a) Private collection	11h	19mm	4,84gr.
			b) Private collection	11h	18mm	5,34gr.
			c) Private collection	11h	18mm	5,54gr.
17.	O.8	R.14	*a) Private collection	4h	19mm	5,04gr.
			b) Private collection	4h	19mm	5,32gr.
			c) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (394A); E. Rogers, The Copper Coinage of Thessaly, (London 1932), 145–146, fig. 242	11h	20mm	5,17gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : Similar.			
			<i>Rev.</i> : Similar, but legend ΦAKI-AΣΤΩN.			
18.	O.8	R.15	*a) Private collection; A. Moustaka, Kulte und Mythen auf thessalischen Münzen (Würzburg 1983), pl. 8, 130	5h	19mm	6,95gr.
19.	O.8	R.16	*a) Berlin, Staatliche Museen (ex Herrmann); M. Pinder, Numismata Antiqua Inedita, (Berlin 1834), 24–25, pl. I, 11 (etching)	12h	21mm	6,30gr.

20.	O.8	R.17	*a) Athens, National Museum (Empedocles), ex Hirsch 17, 1907, lot 1411	6h	19mm	6,01gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : Similar. <i>Rev.</i> : Similar, but legend ΦAK-IAΣΤΩΝ.			
21.	O.8	R.18	*a) Private collection, ex Colosseum Coin Exchange, Mail Bid Sale 71, 1993, lot 231	11h	21mm	5,20gr.
			b) Private collection	11h	19mm	4,86gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : Similar. <i>Rev.</i> : Similar, but legend ΦAKIA-ΣΤΩΝ.			
22.	O.8	R.19	*a) Private collection	11h	19mm	6,83gr.
			b) Coll. PRF.	11h	20mm	5,04gr.
23.	O.8	R.20	*a) Private collection	10h	19mm	5,60gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : Similar. <i>Rev.</i> : Similar, but legend ΦAK-IAΣΤΩΝ.			
24.	O.8	R.21	*a) Private collection	5h	21mm	7,38gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : two tiny flaws in the field in front of the nose.			
			<i>Obv.</i> : Similar. <i>Rev.</i> : Similar, but legend ΦAKI-AΣΤΩΝ.			
25.	O.8	R.22	*a) Private collection	5h	21mm	7,43gr.
			b) Private collection	5h	20mm	6,34gr.
26.	O.8	R.23	*a) Private collection	11h	20mm	5,34gr.
			b) Private collection	11h	19mm	5,05gr.
			c) Private collection	11h	20mm	5,53gr.
			d) Private collection	11h	19mm	4,96gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : flaw on the eyebrow.			
27.	O.8	R.24	*a) Private collection	5h	19mm	5,59gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : flaw as in 26.d.			
28.	O.8	R.25	*a) Private collection	5h	20mm	6,96gr.
			<i>Obv.</i> : flaw as in 26.d and 27, more protruding eyeball, possible re-engraving; flaw on tip of the jaw. <i>Rev.</i> : badly struck.			
29.	O.9	R.25	*a) Private collection	5h	19mm	5,62gr.
			<i>Rev.</i> : horse's head double-struck.			
30.	O.9	R.22	*a) London, BM (1933 2-14-68), ex E. Rogers, ex Vlastos	5h	20mm	7,19gr.

The production of the Phakion mint, as it is obvious from the size of the above coins (diameter 18–21mm), consisted of only one denomination. The weight of the coins fluctuates between 4,52 gr. and 7,8 gr. and the average weight is 5,74 gr. (for the distribution of weight in each group see *Fig. 1*). The flan is quite thick with very few exceptions (a general characteristic of the Thessalian coinage of this period) and there is a tendency for most of the coins to have adjusted dies. It has also been observed that almost all die-duplicates have identical die-positions.

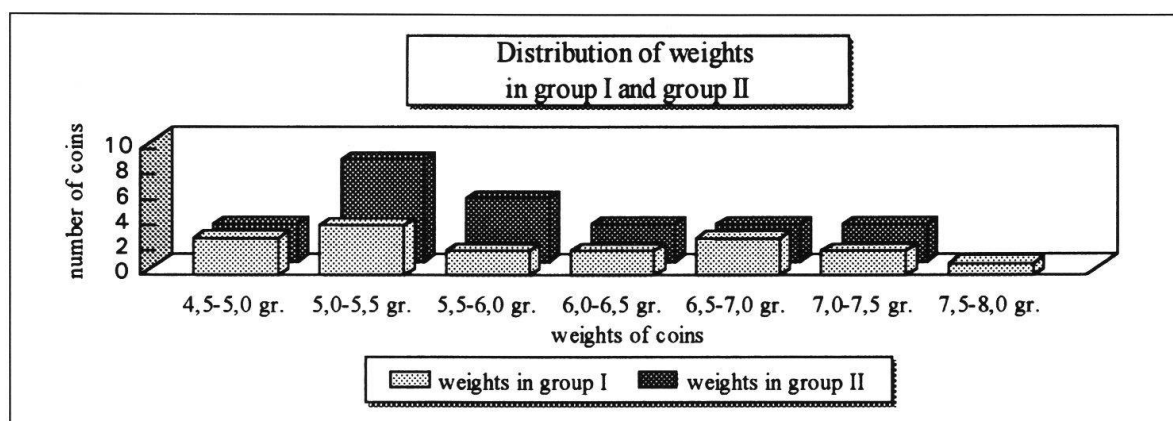


Fig. 1.

From the typological point of view the coinage of Phakion is restricted; the types initially adopted for the obverse and reverse remained unchanged throughout the minting activity of the city. Concerning the female head of the obverse, there is no inscription, distinctive characteristic or symbol that would identify it as a certain deity. Based, however, on its strong typological similarities with heads of nymphs on other Thessalian obverses, the safest interpretation would be that of a «local nymph». Phakion must have been amongst the numerous Thessalian cities which, influenced by the dominant coinage of Larissa, imitated its typology and style adopting for their currency a head of a local nymph.

On the reverse of the coins, the horseman cannot be connected with any known hero or a founder of the city. However, a similar type of a horseman wearing petasos and holding sometimes a spear or a whip, is known from many other Thessalian coinages.¹⁷ He has been conventionally named «Thessalian horseman» and has been considered as a reference to the Thessalian cavalry. Therefore, an analogous interpretation must be given to the Phakion horseman even though he is unarmed, wears no petasos and has his right hand raised, perhaps in greeting. Regarding the symbol that occurs on most of the Phakion reverses, the ear of corn, it is an apparent reference to the rich agriculture of the fertile valley of the Peneios: corn must have been the main product of the city.

¹⁷ Larissa, Phalanna, Krannon, Methyion, Pharsalos, and Pelinna have all adopted this type for their silver or bronze coinage. For a possible interpretation of this type as the «Thessalian hero» see K. Liampi, LIMC, s.v. Thessalos (in print).

A thorough stylistic analysis resulted in the division of the 42 Phakion coins into two groups which must have been produced successively. On the obverses of the first group (*Pl. 4–5, 1–15*) the idealised portrait of the nymph recalls late classical models. It exudes a serenity due to the avoidance of abrupt and excessive mass transitions, the only exception being the strong line between face and neck. The wide eye shaped by the bold lines of the eyelashes under the smooth eyebrow, the small mouth formed by thick lips and the notably round jaw are all stylistic elements of the 3rd century B.C.

In this group O.3 and O.4 (*Pl. 4, 3 and 4–8*) may well have been engraved by the same hand. All obverses are characterised by a uniformity in the engraving. However, there is also an apparent stylistic development. On the last two obverse dies, O.5 and O.6 (*Pl. 4, 9–12 and Pl. 5, 13–15*) the nose and jaw become more protruding, a feature also encountered in the second group.

Regarding the reverses, an analogous homogeneity of style has been observed. The rendering of the horseman indicates a rather careless engraving and lack of interest in details. There is an apparent awkwardness in the way the inscription is arranged in full (ΦΑΚΙΑΣΤΩΝ) and in the rendering of the rider. He is depicted in a smaller scale and non-symmetrical to the body of the horse.

In the second group (*Pl. 5, 16–24, Pl. 6, 25–30*) the «idealised conception» of the obverses is abandoned and replaced by «vigorous Hellenistic realism». The firmly restrained hair, the emphasis of the eyebrow, the protruding nose, the fleshy lips and the addition of a pronounced dewlap, give a severity to the nymph's head and render her characteristics almost man-like. The well proportioned features, the prominent outlines and the high relief, which causes the head to stand sharply away from the background, reveal a superior engraving quality. The style of this group is even more homogeneous than that of the first, as the three obverse dies appear to have been engraved by the same hand.

The engraver's attention to detail is also observed on the reverses. The rider is well proportioned while the horse's body is lengthened. The articulations and anatomic details of the horse are well emphasised. The engraver here concentrates on the figure and does not hesitate to separate the ethnic by means of the rider's head (ΦΑΚΙ-ΑΣΤΩΝ or ΦΑΚ-ΙΑΣΤΩΝ) or the horse's leg (ΦΑΚΙ-ΑΣΤΩ-Ν).

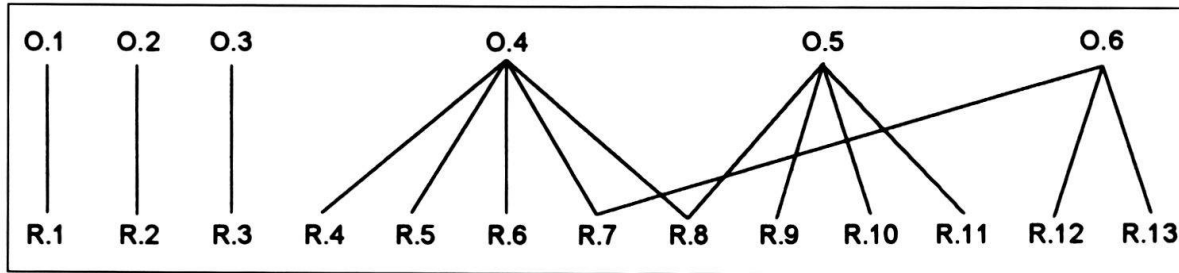
Moreover, on the reverses of both groups there has been observed a particularity of the morphology of the legend. The shape of the letters Φ and Ω and the abundance of apices are all characteristics of inscriptions dated after the beginning of the 3rd century B.C.¹⁸

From the stylistic analysis of the Phakion coinage as well as from the differing arrangement of the legend, it is obvious that the two groups stand apart and that the second group is subsequent to the first. This is further supported by the increased overall circulation-wear of the first group coins as compared to those of the second group. Moreover, another element that argues for this distinction as well as for an interval in the coinage production is the change of technique that occurs

¹⁸ M. Guarducci, *L'epigraphia greca dalle origini al tardo impero*, (Rome 1987), 81 ff.

in the second group: the reverses are characterised by a pronounced concavity which is absent from the first group.

Group I



Group II

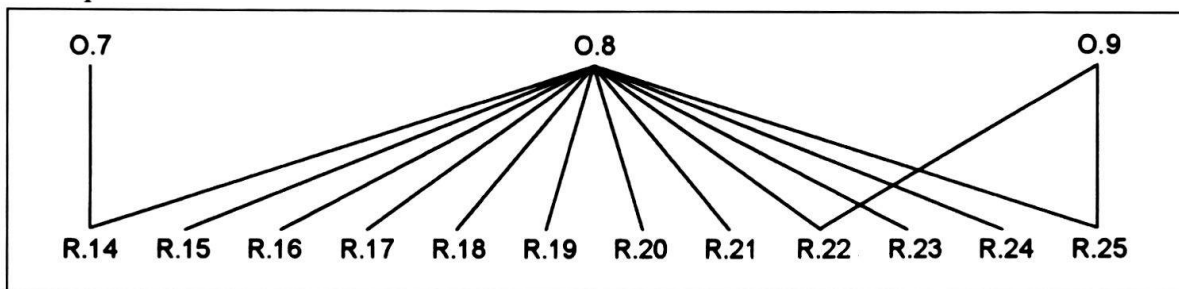


Fig. 2: Die-linking.

The above-mentioned distinction between the two issues is further supported by the die-linking (*Fig. 2*).¹⁹ The coins of the first group were struck by six obverse and thirteen reverse dies. This group is partly die-linked as only three out of the six obverse dies share reverses. There are three cases of die-breaks, observed on O.4 in the combinations 6, 7 and 8, on O.5 in coin 12 and on R.6 in coin 6; which however do not reveal the exact order of striking.

The second group is completely die-linked. Only three dies have been used for the obverses, while twelve for the reverses. The second die O.8 has been combined with all twelve reverse dies and during its long life was variously injured. The first breaks of the die appear on coin 24 (*Pl. 5, 24*). However, the excellent condition of the rest of the die and the fact that these die-breaks do not occur on any other O.8 obverses lead to the conclusion that the die must have been repaired.²⁰ Furthermore, another flaw was observed on the die in coins 26.d, 27 and 28: the upper eyelash of the nymph has totally disappeared and the eyebrow seems to be

¹⁹ Die-linking as well as the observation of the gradual wear of dies is based on a limited number of known coins and consequently the exact minting sequence is not securely established for the entire series. The fact therefore that the two groups do not die-link between them does not necessarily mean that there was a significant interval or interruption in the minting production of Phakion.

²⁰ This is further supported by the fact that the die-breaks (two tiny dots in front of the nymph's nose) are in the field of the die.

thicker, thus distorting the features. The last coin to be struck by O.8 must have been 28 where, except from the above mentioned flaws, some re-engraving is apparent and one more die-break appears beneath the jaw of the nymph.

An interesting phenomenon occurring in both groups has also been observed. For a reason unknown to us, perhaps because the mint has been short of reverse dies, two old dies were re-employed. The first case is that of coin 13 (O.6/R.7) and the second that of coin 30 (O.9/R.22).

The relatively small number of known coins and dies employed,²¹ the restriction of the output to one denomination and one pair of coin-types as well as the stylistic homogeneity of each group seem to argue for Phakion having only a small and brief numismatic output.²² This, in addition to the total absence of coins from well dated excavational data and hoards,²³ makes the dating of the coinage particularly difficult.

Based on the style of the engraving as well as the morphology of the legend, both groups must be dated to the 3rd century B.C.²⁴ This dating is further supported by their resemblance to neighbouring Thessalian coinages.²⁵ From a comparative stylistic study there has been observed that the stylistic principles adopted by the obverses of the first group are also met in issues of Larissa, Triikka, Metropolis and Pelinna; while the reverses resemble those of an Atrax issue.²⁶ Therefore, Phakion must have been minting its first group concurrently with the above Thessalian cities which were numismatically active in this period.

²¹ There is no way to determine the actual amount of coins produced by the mint of Phakion. 9 obverse and 25 reverse dies are known, 30 die combinations and 42 specimens. With a few exceptions, only one coin of each combination has survived. The average of specimens per obverse die is 4,66.

²² The coinage must have been destined to satisfy the local transaction of the citizens of Phakion. It seems to have circulated only within the borders of Thessaly as there is no information for any coins found outside them.

²³ The inclusion of one Phakion coin in a hoard (IGCH 116) possibly from Thessaly, does not throw more light on the case. The absence of coin photos reduces the usefulness of the hoard which at any rate cannot be studied as it was dispersed in trade. The hoard consisted of 26 bronze coins issued by Atrax, Larissa, Metropolis, Orthe, Pelinna, Pharsalos, Elea in Epirus, Pyrrhos (as king of Epirus), Philip II, Kassander and Phakion. Furthermore, its actual composition raises suspicions that it is more likely a random gathering of surface-found coins than a real hoard. According to Th. R. Martin, *Sovereignty and Coinage in Classical Greece*, (Princeton 1985), 54, this is the only 4th century B.C. hoard in which a bronze coin of Philip II was found. Perhaps this is a further indication that we are not dealing with an actual hoard.

²⁴ Scholars have dated the Phakion coins from the beginning of the 3rd century to the first decade of the 2nd. This is the fifth period of Thessalian coinage according to Gardner, BMC, *Thessaly to Aetolia*, Introduction, xxx f., from 302 B.C. (when Demetrios Poliorketes invaded Thessaly and declared some of the cities free) to 197 B.C. (when Philip V was defeated by T. Q. Flamininus at Cynoscephalae).

²⁵ None of these coinages, however, has been studied and therefore, it is quite difficult to establish a more precise dating for the brief coinage of Phakion.

²⁶ Compare Phakion O.3 and O.4 with the Larissa obverse (Rogers, see n. 14, 100, nr. 306, fig. 151), the Triikka obverse (*Pl. 6, a*) and the Metropolis obverse (*Pl. 6, b*); O.5 with the Pelinna obverse (*Pl. 6, c*); R.2 to R.13 with the Atrax reverse (*Pl. 6, d*).

The second group however, is stylistically related only to Atrax.²⁷ The reverse type of the Atrax horseman is so similar to the one of Phakion that perhaps the same engraver is involved. The adoption of the same reverse type, stylistic affinities as well as size similarities (same denomination), thickness of flan and reverse concavity argue for the two groups of Phakion being closely connected to this particular Atrax issue.

Furthermore, the Phakion coinage is also closely related to the bronze Macedonian Regal coinage. Its stylistic resemblance to the bronze issues of the Antigonids is another point in favor of a 3rd century B. C. date.²⁸ It also has been noted that a typologically identical reverse type, the horseman with his hand raised in greeting, appears on the bronze coins of Philip II, Cassander, Antigonos Gonatas and Philip V.²⁹

It must be noted that only Phakion and Atrax amongst the Thessalian cities adopted (perhaps concurrently) this «Macedonian» reverse type. The Phakion coinage could thus have been the result of political relations with Macedonia.³⁰ Thessaly was an area of vital importance as it secured the communications between northern and southern Greece. The Macedonian garrisons first established by Philip II in strategic locations in Thessaly were strengthened during this period and the presence of the Macedonian kings was characteristically intense. In the beginning of the 3rd century B.C. Demetrios Poliorketes founded Demetrias and the successive wars between Antigonos Gonatas and southern Greeks (especially the Chremonidian war) resulted in the constant presence of the Macedonian army and in the extensive circulation of Macedonian bronze regal coinage in Thessaly.³¹

The existence of the Phakion coinage provides evidence that Phakion, a small city, was economically important enough to operate a mint for a short period of time, perhaps before the Macedonian Wars, in order to satisfy the pride or the local transactions of its citizens. A *terminus ante quem* for the mint's activity may be furnished by the city's destruction by Philip V in 198 B.C. and its seizure by Marcus

²⁷ Compare O.7 to O.9 with the Atrax obverse (*Pl. III, e*) and R.14 to R.25 with the Atrax reverses (*Pl. 6, f and g*).

²⁸ Compare the first group's reverses with the Antigonos Gonatas reverses (*Pl. 6, h and i*) and O. 3 with the Philip V obverse (*Pl. 6, j*).

²⁹ The horseman in a greeting posture makes its first appearance in Macedonian coinage with the tetradrachms of Philip II where he wears a kausia.

³⁰ Phakion is the only city in northern Thessaly that begins to mint coins for the first time in the 3rd century; whereas the other cities including Atrax were numismatically active also in the past. This leads to the conclusion that there must have been certain political and economic circumstances that allowed or led the city to produce coins.

³¹ K. Liampi, *The Circulation of the Bronze Macedonian Regal Coins in Thessaly*, 13th International Bronze Congress, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., 28 May–1 June 1996, (unpublished paper).

Baebius in 191 B.C. However, as there is no evidence that would permit the connection of the city's coinage with a particular historical event, a more refined chronology than «3rd century B.C.» cannot be suggested.

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Key to Plates 4–6

Pl. 4–5, 1–15	First group of Phakion bronze coins
Pl. 5–6, 16–30	Second group of Phakion bronze coins
Pl. 6, a–j	Comparanda (all bronze coins, Private collection)
a	Trikka
b	Metropolis
c	Pelinna
d–g	Atrax
h–i	Antigonos Gonatas
j	Philip V

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1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



TAFEL 5
Second group



13



14



15



16



17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24





25



26



27



28



29



30



Comparanda



a



b



c



d



e



f



g



h



i



j

