

A first coinage of Lindos?

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Inhalt – Table des matières

H. Bartlett Wells: A first coinage of Lindos?, S. 29. – *Erkki Keckman:* Zwei Fundmünzen aus Kaunos in Karien, S. 34. – *Peter H. Werhahn:* Die verschollene Kleinbronze aus Ambleny, S. 35. – *Hansjörg Bloesch:* Fund von Bettswil, S. 36. – *Jean-Paul Divo:* Ein seltener Zürcher Zunft-Wahlpfennig, S. 39. – *Personalia*, S. 40. – Altes und Neues - Nouvelles d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, S. 40. – Münzfunde - Trouvailles monétaires, S. 41. – Nekrolog - Nécrologie, S. 44. – Der Büchertisch - Lectures, S. 44. – Voranzeige, S. 48.

A FIRST COINAGE OF LINDOS?

H. Bartlett Wells

A narrative account of this coin has appeared elsewhere¹ and for that reason the material offered there is repeated here only in summarized form.

The coin, apparently unique, is described as follows:

Obverse: The forehead and muzzle of a living lion facing, with open eyes; it occupies almost the entire surface of the coin blank. There are heavy brow ridges, but there is a shallow depression along the central line of the forehead. The nasal ridge is pronounced. The mouth and lower jaw lie behind the slightly puffy upper lip and cannot be seen. There are no ears.

¹ Journal of the Society for Ancient Numismatics, California 10, 1, 1979, 7-9.

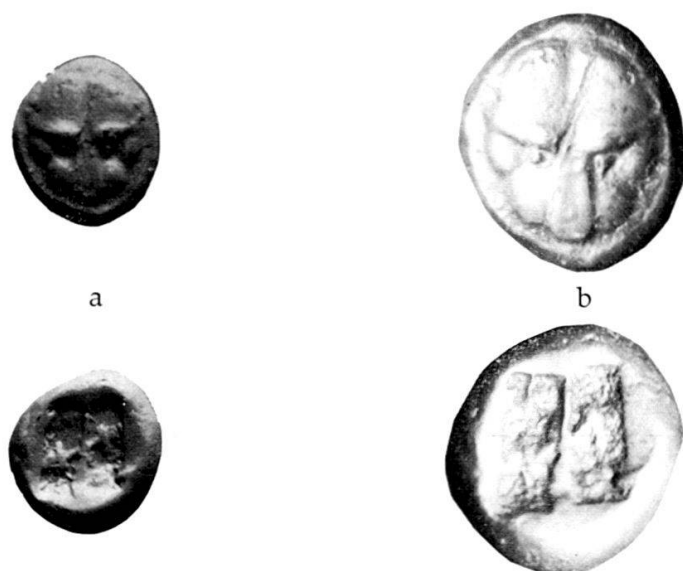


Fig. 1 a and b Private Collection USA. b = a enl. 1,5 ×.

Reverse: Incuse impressions consisting of two elongated rectangles side by side, various patternings being visible within each.

Silver. Weight 6.85 grams. Maximum diameter 17.4 mm. (Fig. 1)

The coin is reported to have formed part of an archaic hoard discovered in Turkey some score or more of years ago, and it was once attributed provisionally to Panticapaeum, but that suggestion has been rejected by Soviet numismatists on the grounds that the weight cannot be fitted into Panticapaeum metrology, and that the reverse incuse has no parallel in the emissions of that mint; they have reached this conclusion with regret, and despite interest in the coin's seeming family relationship to their own specimens.

In commencing to look elsewhere for an identification, one might deal first with appearance. The archaic execution and the facing position of the head of a living lion (with open eyes) are rare enough in ancient numismatics, but close parallels to this obverse do appear in certain fractions in an Ionian hoard, published by O. Mørkholm². Coins 19 and 20 there are a little earlier than our specimen. They appear to lie at the very beginning of the use of silver in coinage, in place of the most ancient natural electrum. Our specimen would appear to fall fewer years before the middle of the VIth century B. C.

As for the reverse, its two elongated rectangular incuse impressions have been made by separate blows with a single punch. A «die identity» exists between them, and the punch has been rotated through 180 degrees around its longitudinal axis between strokes (fig. 2). This is a characteristic of the oldest coins assigned to Lindos, as Herbert A. Cahn has pointed out³. He assigns the first of these Lindos coins to about 560–550 B. C.

H. Cahn further remarks that the Lindos coins have an unusual normal weight of about 13.85 grams. He considers that this reflects not the Phoenician standard preferred by Head nor the Aeginetic one suggested with a query in SNG Fitzwilliam

² O. Mørkholm, *Une trouvaille de monnaies grecques archaïques*, RSN 50, 1971, 84 ff.

³ H. A. Cahn, *Die archaischen Silberstatere von Lindos, Charites*, Festschrift für E. Langlotz (1957), 18 ff.

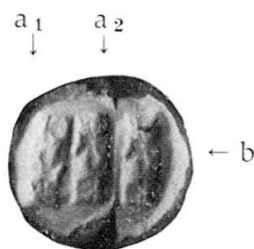


Fig. 2 $b = a_1$ rotated through 180° .

(No. 4777, 0.99 grams), but an independent Asia Minor standard which is not linked with any world standard: and he finds that it did not long outlast the VIth century B.C. He says that it appears not only at Lindos on Rhodes but also on Carpathos, and it thus has a strong insular character; but it also appears in archaic didrachms of Erythrae and Clazomenae, and in smaller coins of Ephesus, Miletus, and Cnidus at the same period.

The parallelism of this standard with the present unknown specimen is striking – 6.85 grams is almost exactly one-half of 13.86 grams. This relates our coins to ones of a little before the mid-VIth century from the Dodecanese group of islands including Rhodes, with Lindos, and from Caria and the southern part of the Ionian coast, but it is not definitely from any of these places.

A matter of detail should be considered. H. Cahn points out the fact that the faces of the punches used to create the parallel incuse impressions on the reverses of the earliest Lindos coins are not irregular quite at random, but that they bear what appears to be a Greek letter Λ with its vertical axis perpendicular to the long dimension of the punch impression. Since in later specimens the name of the community of Lindos appears in this position in increasingly more complete form, the original Λ may be considered to reflect the same name. On our unknown specimen there is an apparent Λ , as the illustration shows, in the punch impression, but its vertical axis is parallel to the long dimension of the impression. This Λ is marked distinctly enough to convey the impression that it was meant to stand out among the more casual unevennesses of the remainder of the punch face.

One must face a hypothesis that the unknown coin may be an issue of Lindos. A strong argument in favor of that thesis, for the moment, is the fact that no other specific place where it might plausibly be assigned has been hit upon. That may of course go up in smoke once the whole available material has been reviewed.

Another argument is that if the coin's lion-head were in profile to the right and were reasonably close in style to the standard Lindos coins, an observer would assign it to Lindos without further ado. And conversely, the coin of 0.99 grams in the Fitzwilliam Museum (SNG Fitzwilliam 4777, illustrated here in fig. 3) has been assigned to Lindos evidently without objection, even though one might find from the photograph of the reverse that the single square incuse is quite different from the double bar on the standard Lindos reverses and that it is extremely difficult to read the letters Λ_1 within that reverse as the cataloguer did.

Testing the hypothesis that the unknown coin may be of Lindos thus requires that we determine what we think about the contrast of its style with that of the standard Lindos coins.

In the first place there can be no question of its being a contemporaneous half to the unit represented by the earliest standard Lindos coin. It is clearly earlier in date.

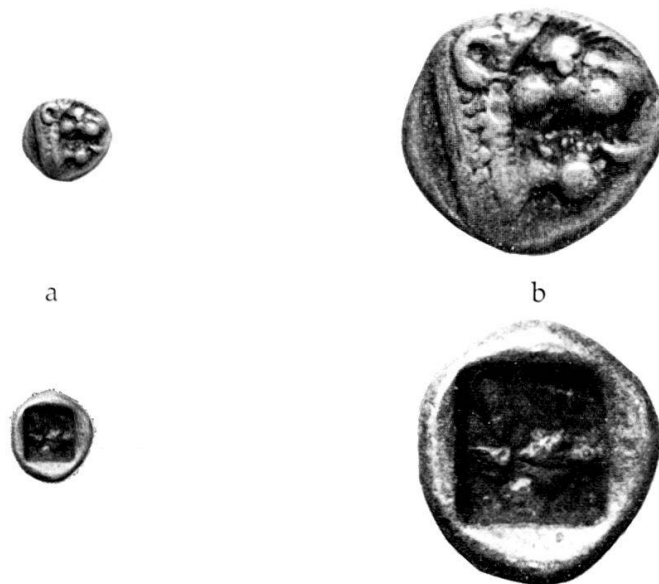


Fig. 3 Obol, Fitzwilliam Mus., Cambridge. a natural size; b enl. 3 \times .

It might fall approximately to the period 575–560 B. C. That does not, however, make it easier to argue that the coin is a hitherto unknown first issue specifically of the Lindos mint. The mere difference in the positions of the lions' heads might arise from a difference in denominations; but the whole artistic outlook of the engraver of this coin diverges radically from that displayed on the standard Lindos coins. H. Cahn terms the style of these latter *additiv*, which I take to mean built up of separate relief elements in the manner of one modelling in clay; and I would add that the earlier specimens seem pictorial and sketchy, form being indicated more by linear outline and decoration than by relief. By contrast, in the unknown coin the image is concentrated into a single prominence or boss, with sacrifice of detail that might detract from this forceful impression – the lower jaw, teeth, and tongue are masked by the snout and the upper lip, there is no representation of whiskers or mane, and the ears are eliminated outright. One would compare this approach with that of a sculptor working in very hard stone.

We usually take it that a sharp change in the familiar features of a coin type at a given numismatic center is to be explained by an event of some emphatic character. For example, the change at Aegina from the marine turtle type to the land tortoise type is referred to the results of the Athenian conquest of the island in 457 B. C. Yet late changes did occur in the coins of Lindos itself without their causes being firmly blazoned on the pages of history. The little Fitzwilliam coin referred to above has a square instead of a double-bar incuse reverse; the incuse becomes a single rectangle, with the city name spelled out in full and a porpoise introduced along its longitudinal axis, in the latest issue of the standard coin (Cahn, op. cit., H 1 and H 2); and finally on another small coin (SNG Lockett 2940, 2.14 grams) the lion's head, now facing left, goes into a reverse incuse square having a double outline while the obverse is occupied by the forepart of a horse. But a change from our present facing lion's head to the usual lion's head in profile right would be an abrupt one, stylistically and historically of far greater moment than these three gradual shifts in the epigonic phases of a traditional coinage.

We may examine other Lindos art to learn what it has to tell us about lions. Archeological field work was carried out by a Danish expedition from 1902–1914, and the results were published in six large volumes during the 1950's by the Carls-

berg Foundation at Copenhagen⁴. The illustrations and descriptions of major sculptural objects offer nothing on the subject of lions, but the two volumes (text, and plates) on minor objects, prepared by Chr. Blinkenberg, provide material of interest⁵. In the description of the objects from the first archaic periods running down to 525 B.C. there appears (on page 452 of the text volume) a statement that lions and falcons make up the most numerous classes among the stone statuettes of Lindos. Among a total of about 700 figurines there are about 150 lions and 90 falcons (or other birds). This is a far greater proportion than, for example, on Cyprus. Lions evidently meant a great deal to the people of Lindos, probably as the companions of Apollo and as a general apotropaic figure. The lions are considered to have been imitated from Egyptian prototypes by carvers who had never seen a living lion. The plates (for example Plate 77, and Plate 78, No. 1834; also for a slightly later date Plate 113, No. 2397) show free-standing three-dimensional lions or fragments thereof. Their heads, frequently illustrated in profile, do look rather like those on the standard Lindos coins; but if the heads were to have been illustrated from the same angle as is used for our unknown coins they would probably look rather like it, too, save that they were all designed with ears and the coin lacks them (see particularly in this connection Plate 113, No. 2397 despite its later date). But there is no selectivity, or preference for the one sort of expression over the other. We conclude that kown art on Lindos tells us nothing further.

We must turn to what there is of Lindos VIth-century history. No outstanding event appears to have been recorded. But there was one personality of great importance – Kleobulos of Lindos, son of Euagoras, one of the Seven Sages, «tyrant» in the Greek sense for forty years according to Plutarch⁶. He is most extensively discussed by the biographer Diogenes Laertius⁷, who devotes his Chapter 6 to the writings of this man, saying that Kleobulos died at the age of seventy and quoting among other matters a letter he is supposed to have written to Solon upon the latter's proposing to leave Athens when disappointed through the establishment of the first tyranny of his former friend Peisistratos:

«You have many friends and a home wherever you go; but the most suitable for Solon will, say I, be Lindos, which is governed by a democracy. The island lies on the high seas, and one who lives here has nothing to fear from Peisistratos. And friends from all parts will come to visit you⁸.»

Plutarch wrote only at the beginning of the 2nd century A.D. and Diogenes Laertius perhaps in the reign of Severus Alexander, so it may be questionable how much reliance ought to be placed on the reliability of their accounts; but the man's memory lived green, and it may well be that he was in fact a contemporary of Solon, presumably the younger man by some years. Peisistratos won his first tyranny in the archonship of Komeas, placed either in 561/60 or in 560/59 B.C. (RE, XIX, column 164), and Solon is supposed to have died at an advanced age some time after 561 B.C., perhaps about 558.

Kleobulos may have been approaching the end of this forty years' «tyranny» (or «democracy» as he is quoted as having termed it), and indeed the end of his own live of seventy years, at the time when he wrote to Solon. If this is conceivably

⁴ Lindos, Fouilles et Recherches (1931–1960).

⁵ Chr. Blinkenberg, Lindos, Fouilles de l'acropole 1902–1914, I Les petits objets (1931).

⁶ Plutarch de EI 385.

⁷ I, 89–93.

⁸ op. cit. I, 93.

so, it would have been his successors who first issued the standard Lindos coins round about 560 B.C.; and in that event one might find it tempting, of course, to imagine Kleobulos as the philosopher who was responsible for our present unknown coin.

But these are not facts – merely fancies. One may venture another – that after the death of Kleobulos his facing lion-head came to be seen as old-fashioned, and that his successors saw new coins of Carian Chersonesus and of Cnidus that bore lion-heads in profile right. As they had frequently stood upon the acropolis of Lindos contemplating the bird's-eye-view outlines both of the town's major harbor northward from that eminence, and of the minor harbor southward, they had observed how much – with open gapes partially enclosed by fangs, small craggy islets, and various snouth- and forehead-like elevations on shore – the plane views of these harbors were like lions' heads in profile, the new magistrates took such lion-heads to characterize one or the other or both of those harbors, and thereby the community of Lindos itself.

ZWEI FUNDMÜNZEN AUS KAUNOS IN KARIEN

Erkki Keckman

Nicht wenige kleinasiatische Münzserien des späten 6. und des frühen 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. kennen keinen gesicherten Prägeort, und sie werden bald der einen bald der anderen Stadt zugewiesen. Zwei im Sommer 1979 gefundene Münzen können wenigstens für eine Stadt diese Zuweisungsprobleme einer Lösung näher führen.

1. Silberstater (persischer Doppelsiklos), Gewicht: 11,05 g (Abb. 1 a).

Vs. Vorderteil einer n. l. springenden Löwin, die Protome endet in einer Perlleiste zwischen zwei flachen Leisten. Auf der Schulter Monogramm: χ

Rs. Zweiteiliges Quadratum incusum mit unregelmässigen Erhöhungen.

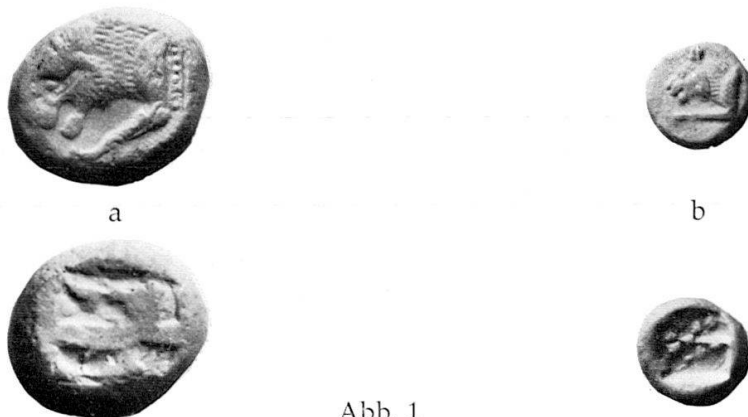


Abb. 1

2. Diobol, Silber, Gewicht: 1,63 g (Abb. 1 b).

Vs. Vorderteil einer n. l. springenden Löwin.

Rs. Zweiteiliges Quadratum incusum mit unregelmässigen Erhöhungen.