Miltiades II and his alleged mint in the Chersonesos

Abstract: Miltiades II is credited with issuing a series of coins which play a key part in determining the nature of his rule in the Chersonesos, as well as attesting to the use of the Attic monetary standard in the region before the Ionian War. In this paper we provide a new corpus and analysis of the coins which we use to show that the coins were not minted on the Attic standard. Instead we demonstrate they were minted on the ‘heavy’ Persian standard which was only introduced c. 480 B.C. Ironically, it appears the coins were not symbols of Athenian control, but were minted at Kardia and used for trade in the Persian-dominated region sometime in the period from 478–466 B.C.

Keywords: Miltiades II – Chersonesos – mint – Attic standard – Persian standard – tri-siglos

1. Introduction

The interests of the Athenians in northern Greece during the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. have been the subject of considerable discussion. Peisistratus reportedly acquired considerable chrēmata (resources/wealth) through his activities around Mt Pangaion during his second period of exile (555–545 B.C.), before returning to Athens and deploying these resources to secure control of the polis (Hdt. 1.64.1; Ath. Pol. 15.2). The word chrēmata was taken by Charles Seltman to mean ‘money’ based on Peisistratus’ alleged exploitation of silver mines while in exile. According to Seltman, Peisistratus later established a mint in North Greece (‘Paeonia’) which used local silver to produce some of the earliest owl tetradrachms (Seltman Groups E and F). This proposal has found no
support, and the coins are now accepted as the product of Athens.\(^3\) Seltman also argued that the Philaid family consistently minted in the Chersonesos, and attributed issues to Miltiades I, Stesagoras, Miltiades II and Cimon.\(^4\) This too has been largely rejected,\(^5\) but a part of the theory devised long before Seltman,\(^6\) that Miltiades II operated a mint in the Chersonesos striking on the Attic standard, is still commonly accepted today.\(^7\) These coins are currently recognized as a rare artefact of his career as ruler of the Chersonesos.\(^8\) As we shall see, they have even played a key part in determining the nature of the state ruled by Miltiades II.\(^9\)

In this paper we argue that claims for a coinage of Miltiades II struck in the Chersonesos should be dismissed. Instead we propose that the coins were struck on the Persian standard after c. 480 B.C., and thus well after the collapse of the Ionian Revolt and the flight of Miltiades in 493 B.C. We suggest that the coins were minted at Kardia on the north shore of the Chersonesos. This highly strategic position gave access to trade from the interior of Thrace via Ainos on the Hebros River (May 1950, 3–7). We argue that the ‘stater of Miltiades’ were in fact contemporary with the first issues of Ainos; these coin appeared in the decade 470–460 B.C., and, as John May noted, were struck on the same weight standard (1950, 20). Access to this valuable northern trade, especially in grain, could well have been one of the key strategic purposes of the Peisistratids both in re-establishing Sigeion at the mouth of the Hellespont, and in allowing Philaids to rule the Chersonesos.\(^10\)

2. History of attribution of the staters to Miltiades

In the publication of the catalogue of his collection in 1829, Allier de Hauteroche proposed that a silver stater (now in Paris) with the obverse type of a roaring lion moving to right, and a reverse incuse with a left-facing helmeted head of Athena and inscribed XEP, should belong to the Thracian Chersonesos rather than the Tauric Chersonesos as had been earlier supposed.\(^11\) Mionnet remained uncertain, putting the coin in his

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\(^3\) Kraay 1976, 60–63. Isotopic analysis is raising doubts as to how much northern silver was actually used in archaic Athenian coinage – see Stos-Gale & Davis forthcoming.

\(^4\) Seltman 1924, 136–145.

\(^5\) The attribution of some of these series to the Chersonesos is being revived by van Alfen (forthcoming).

\(^6\) See details below in this paper.

\(^7\) See for example Kraay 1975, 158; Loukopoulou 2004, 901.

\(^8\) Miltiades I was the tyrant (Hdt. 6.34; 6.36) and honoured as \textit{oikistes} by the people of the Chersonese (Hdt. 6.38.1). However, Herodotus only refers to Miltiades II as having seized control (6.39.2), and being acquitted by the Athenians of behaving like a tyrant after he returned to his homeland (6.104.2).

\(^9\) See, for example, Loukopoulou 2004, 901.

\(^10\) Maitt. 6.39. May 1950, 80: “The principal export passing through the port was corn from the extremely fertile plainlands of eastern Thrace and the lower and middle Hebros”. This was closer to Athens than the Pontos and less subject to being taxed or interdicted along the way, at least until the rise of the Odrysian kingdom. For the relationship of the Philaids to the Peisistratids, see Samons 2017. See on a map at http://archive.apan.gr/en/data/Accompanying-Item/6426.

\(^11\) Dumersan 1829, 26.
work twice, firstly under the Tauric Chersonese (1822, 1), and secondly under the Thracian Chersonese where he noted de Hauteroche’s claim (524 & n.b). Comte Lucien de Hirsch (1884, 30–31) linked this coin with two others with the same types but lacking the inscription (one from his own collection now in Brussels; and the second in Berlin later in the Pozzi collection), and proposed that they were struck on the Attic standard. Friedrich Imhoof-Blumer, who had once owned the Berlin specimen, writing a little earlier in 1881, also recognized the weight standard as Attic.

In the first edition of *Historia Numorum*, Barclay Head (1886, 222) attributed these coins to a Thracian town “called anciently Cherronesus”. He associated them with the copious silver hemi-sigloi depicting a lion protome with head reverted that had been assigned in *BMC Thrace* (Poole, Head and Gardner 1877, 182) to the Thracian Chersonese, and “probably struck at Cardia” noting of the mint: “Whether this place was identical with the later Callipolis or with Cardia is uncertain”. The hemi-sigloi did not carry an inscription but they occurred in Thracian hoards. Head dated the staters c. 500–480 B.C.

J.P. Six published the first corpus and numismatic study of the staters in 1895. He followed the suggestion of the historian Adolph Holm (1895, 15, n. 11) in associating their production with the rule of Miltiades the Younger, son of Kimon (Six 1895, 88). Six (1895, 188–9) also supported Head’s proposal that the mint was at Kardia, the principal polis in the region, which was later absorbed into Hellenistic Lysimacheia. The obverse prowling lion type was said to be a reference to the coinage of Miletos, the town which had initially founded Kardia in the 7th century B.C. The reverse, showing the helmeted head of Athena, was taken as a reference to the Athenian coins with the head of Athena / owl minted (he claimed) under Hippias, and in particular to an Athenian issue which Six dated to 514 to 511 B.C.

A more elaborate account was offered by Seltman in his study of the coinage of Athens (1924, 136–145). He linked the staters of Miltiades to the Ionian Revolt, and down-dated them to 499–494 B.C. According to Seltman, the obverse lion recognised Miletos as leader of the revolt and the founder of the colony of Kardia in the Chersonesos, while the reverse type of the helmeted head of Athena acknowledged the current ruler of Kardia and the Athenian state; through this coinage Miltiades proclaimed “his sympathies with the entire Ionian cause” (Seltman 1924, 141).

The meaning of the inscription XEP, which was fundamental to the original attribution of this coinage, proved to be a continuing source of debate. Ernest Babelon (1907, 1223–8) proposed that the letters could stand for Χερρονησίων, Χερσονησίων, or Χερσονησιτέων. There was no known town in Thrace called Chersonese or Cherronesos
he claimed, so the inscription should refer to the citizens of a confederation of towns within the Chersonesos ruled by Miltiades as tyrant.16

Perhaps the most influential study of early Athenian involvement in the Chersonesos was that of Victor Ehrenberg (1946). His conclusions have been largely followed by Benjamin Isaac (1986) in his survey of Greek settlement in Thrace, and more recently by Louisa Loukopoulou (2004). Ehrenberg argued that there was a polis called Chersonesos, also known as Agora, a town known from historical sources (Ps. Skylax 67; Hdt. 7.58.2). Agora lay between Paktye and Kardia on the wall constructed by Miltiades I to secure his lands from the Thracians, and where he was later worshipped as oikistes. It was perhaps located at modern Bulair or Bolyair.17 In the Athenian tribute lists there is an entry for the Chersonesitai ap’ Agoras.18 The Chersonesians were the inhabitants of the peninsula and its towns, but the term, suggested Ehrenberg, could also refer to the inhabitants of Chersonesos/Agora.19 He recognized the (then unique) stater with XEP as critical evidence: this coin “proves that there was a State οἱ Χερσονησίται, but it does not prove that this State represented the whole united peninsula. It could just as well be a federation, a κοινόν, or one of the cities in the area.” (Ehrenberg 1946, 123).

Ehrenberg located the mint of Miltiades II at Chersonesos/Agora (1946, 124). He accepted the roaring lion obverse type of the staters (with and without the inscription) as a reference to Miletos, but he argued it could not then be a symbol for all towns in the Chersonese, pointing instead to the single polis which they had co-settled. The helmeted head of Athena on the reverse proved that Athenian colonists had also settled there. Evidently following Seltman, Ehrenberg concluded that “the head on the coin of Chersonesus is similar to the type used by Cleisthenes; it definitely shows that the rule of the Philaidae was characterized by its bonds with Athens” (1946, 125).

Subsequently Loukopoulou (2004, 905) proposed that Chersonesos/Agora not only struck the staters of Miltiades c. 515–493 B.C., but was also the mint, from c. 350 B.C., for issues of silver half sigloi, and of bronze with the inscription XEP or XEPO. She argued that Kardia struck only bronze coins, c. 350–309 B.C., until it was incorporated into Lysimacheia (2004, 905).

3. A new study of the staters attributed to Miltiades

There are now twelve known examples of the silver staters attributed to Miltiades II. Nine staters in Series 1 (without inscription) show the head of Athena facing left, and were apparently struck from four obverse and six reverse dies. Three staters in Series 2

16 This conclusion was followed by Berve (1937, 8 ff.). Babelon also compared these staters with an obol attributed to Hippias and struck in exile (Babelon 1906, 1229 and Fig. 5).
17 ATL i. 564–5.
19 Ehrenberg 1946, 122. Loukopoulou (2004, 905) noted that “In literary sources, it is in most cases impossible to distinguish whether Χερσονησίτης is a city ethnic designating the polis of Agora (no unquestionable example) or a regional ethnic designating all the inhabitants of the peninsula”.

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show the head of Athena facing right together with the ethnic; all were struck from the same pair of dies. The dies evidently stayed in use well after they had begun to break up, for specimens such as the coin in Brussels show an advanced stage of die wear. In one instance (R2), the reverse die was recut.

Table 1 – The coins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coin No.</th>
<th>Obv. (O)</th>
<th>Rev. (R)</th>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Provenance/Publication</th>
<th>Weight (g)/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>O1/R1</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Numismatica Genevensis 14 Dec 2015, 32</td>
<td>Stack’s 14 Jan 2008, 2162; CNG Triton VIII (2005) 247.</td>
<td>16.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>O1/R2</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 18242608</td>
<td>Ex. collection of Graf Anton Prokesch von Osten – 1875. Prokesch-Osten 1872, 209 f. Nr. 1 Pl. 9,12; Babelon 1907, 1798, pl. LVII, 15; Regling 1923, 10 No. 46, Pl. 5; Regling 1924, Pl. 9, 230.</td>
<td>16.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>b</td>
<td></td>
<td>Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG 54 (24 Mar 2010) 92</td>
<td>Ex. collection of Imhoof-Blumer. Donated to the Berlin Cabinet, and sold in sale of duplicates (Hess 1906). Glendining 12.3.1958, 1095 (Lockett); Naville 1 (1921) 1100 (Pozzi); Hess 12.3.1906, 113 (Imhoof). Six 1895, 186, Pl. VII, 2; Seltman 1924, 488b; SNG Lockett 1179; Boutin 1979, 2106; SNG Ashmolean 3584.</td>
<td>15.52 Reverse die recut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>O1/R3</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 3584</td>
<td>Ex. collection of Imhoof-Blumer. Donated to the Berlin Cabinet, and sold in sale of duplicates (Hess 1906). Glendining 12.3.1958, 1095 (Lockett); Naville 1 (1921) 1100 (Pozzi); Hess 12.3.1906, 113 (Imhoof). Six 1895, 186, Pl. VII, 2; Seltman 1924, 488b; SNG Lockett 1179; Boutin 1979, 2106; SNG Ashmolean 3584.</td>
<td>17.07 Double struck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>O3/R5</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>Münzen &amp; Medaillen 31 (23 Oct 2009) 15”</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20 Some doubt was expressed by a Reader about the authenticity of this coin which is different to the others in the corpus. We have not seen it and are unable to come to a conclusion. For the sake of completeness, we prefer to include it. We note that its inclusion does not materially alter the conclusions in this paper.
As noted above, it has been claimed that while the obverse lion type acknowledged the role of Miletos, either as founding city (Six 1895, 189) or as leader of the Ionian Revolt (Seltman 1924, 141), the reverse was modelled on the reverse type of the archaic ‘owl’ coinage of Athens, and comparisons were made, for example by Seltman, with issues supposedly struck under Cleisthenes. While the lion type is rendered with real verve, the reverse helmeted head of Athena is less convincing. This is shown mostly clearly on R5 and R6 which reveal a surprisingly weak grasp of the elements of the Attic helmet. Instead of the expected crest support on top of the helmet bowl, there is a second plume row. Furthermore, the crest has a strange plant-like division in the middle of the main plume. The apparent necklace most clearly visible on R1 was not a feature of archaic Athenian coins, though a line of dots was on rare occasions used to mark the end of the neck (the tranche) on classical coins. The treatment of the helmet and the necklace seem distinctly unexpected on a rendering of Athena which has uniformly been said to have been inspired by Athenian coinage and recalls East Ionian models. The coins overall exhibit a mix of archaic and classical elements.

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21 Our corpus of all known archaic Athenian coins includes one coin with a dotted conclusion of the neck, but none with a necklace – BnF de Laynes 2033.
4. The weight standard

The weight standard of this coinage has been identified as Attic (or Attic-Euboic) since Imhoof-Blumer (1881). It is a standard not often found in Asia Minor or in northern Greece prior to 480 B.C. It was also a standard rarely employed by mints in Thrace. Its use in the Chersonese, as we have seen, has been ascribed to the Attic origins of colonists in the Chersonese and to Miltiades himself.

Table 2 – Weights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coin Number</th>
<th>Coin</th>
<th>Weight (grams)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ashmolean 3584</td>
<td>17.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>BM 1919, 0911.11</td>
<td>16.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Berlin 182.42608</td>
<td>16.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>MuM 31 (2009) 15</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>BnF 1966.453.812</td>
<td>16.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Alpha Bank 7278</td>
<td>16.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Brussels, Hirsch 897</td>
<td>16.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>MuM 1970, 45</td>
<td>16.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>BnF Fonds général 1540</td>
<td>16.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Numismatica Genevensis SA 2015, 32</td>
<td>16.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Alpha Bank 7277</td>
<td>15.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NAC 54 (2010) 92</td>
<td>15.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>16.39</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table demonstrates that not one of the known staters reaches the theoretical Attic weight for a tetradrachm of 17.24 g. Instead, the average is around 16.39 g, some 5% less. An early explanation was that the low weights might be explained as the result of wear (de Hirsch 1884, 31). Wear and loss of mass through chemical reactions over time are certainly factors in coins having less than their ideal weight, but the most recent addition to the corpus (coin No 1), is among the best preserved, and has the third lowest weight at only 16.21 g.

Is it possible that this mint intentionally minted underweight coins as a means of making a profit? We argue that as these staters were large denomination coins, and

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22 For Thrace see Psoma 2015. It was the favoured standard of mints in the colonies of the Euboeans, such as Mende, Torone and Scione (Van Alfen 2015).

23 Professor Kroll has suggested (per. com.) that the underweight coins were struck "as a means of conserving silver and to realize a profit when full-weight foreign coins had to be exchanged on a 1:1 basis in order to do business in the city." He noted comparanda of Aeginetic-standard staters from Kaunos and Teos being some 4% below full weight. This claim for use of a reduced Aeginetan standard needs to be tested with mint studies as Psoma (2015) suggested. We note that the thesis of an underweight Attic coinage is not
evidently meant to circulate outside the area controlled by the minting authority, they had to be close to nominal value. Another alternative is that the coins were minted on a reduced Attic standard to enable them to be exchanged with the commonly used electrum coinage of the region. The Cyzicene (Phocaic) electrum stater weighed c. 16.5 g in the late Archaic period (reduced to c. 16.15 g in the Classical period). But this is not persuasive as a primary reason for minting on this standard. There is a better alternative – the Persian weight standard.

The weight standard of the Persian siglos created under Darius I (522–486 B.C.) was initially 5.35 g (which was also the weight of the earlier Lydian silver hemi-stater). In a slightly later reform, perhaps around 500 B.C., the gold daric of Darius I was introduced but on a standard of around 8.35 g (reflecting an earlier Mesopotamian weight standard and rejecting the standard of the Lydian gold Croesids); thus the gold and silver coinages minted at Sardis no longer shared a common standard. In the typology of Persian sigloi devised by Robinson, types I–IIIa are attributed to the reign for Darius I. Xerxes I, who came to power in 486 B.C., was evidently responsible for adjusting the weight of the siglos upward to 5.5–5.6 g (one Daric now equaled 20 sigloi). This change in weight can be associated with the creation of type IIIb late (king running, holding spear and bow, with and without two pellets beside the beard), a modification of the Robinson typology first recognized by Kraay. The introduction of the heavier siglos is well illustrated in the analysis of the Achaemenid ‘Hoard B’ by Carradice (1998, 20–23). The heavier weight sigloi of type IIIb late may be missing from the Asyut Hoard (though coins such as no.724, weighing 5.48 g could well be on the heavier standard; see also the stater of Kos from this find discussed below), but this hoard demonstrates that IIIb had appeared by c. 480–470 B.C. The analysis of Carradice which builds on the evidence of the Asyut hoard, confirms a date for the introduction of IIIb “about the 480s”. It seems supported by any evidence from the Thracian Chersonese or Thrace. Furthermore, the logic of the ‘reduced’ claim is shaky. A mint may have had to reduce the weight level in a time of need and thus might have temporarily employed a reduced standard, but how can it be deduced that a mint was always employing a reduced standard without knowing the ideal weight? If the coins match a standard used locally, then what possible evidence is there that they really intended a reduced version of another standard?

Davis 2015 (calculations n. 18) has shown how this could have worked for Athenian electrum containing c. 55% Au. If the % of gold were similar and worth 10 x silver, then a hekte – 2.75 g x 55 % = 1.512 x 10 = 15.12 + (2.75 x 45 %) 1.24 = 16.36. Exchange rates did fluctuate, a point specifically made in Dem. 34.23: “the Cyzicene stater was worth there twenty-eight Attic drachmas” (c. 330 in the Bosporus).

During the 4th century B.C. the Persian standard was commonly used by cities along the northern and southern coasts of Asia Minor and in Ionia (Psoma 2015, 102). This included settlements in the Thracian Chersonese. Le Rider proposed that the adoption of the Persian weight standard by these cities could be attributed to activities of Artaxerxes III (Le Rider 1963, 58; Psoma 2015, 106). This material is under copyright. Any use outside of the narrow boundaries of copyright law is illegal and may be prosecuted.

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then that the introduction of the heavier weight siglos standard cannot be dated before 480 B.C., but occurred around 480 or a little later.33

Under the Persian weight standard, the ‘Miltiades’ coins with their average weight of 16.39 g, would be tri-sigloi on the heavier standard of around 5.5 g – a coin with a theoretical weight of 16.65 g (the lighter standard would have produced a stater of around 16.05 g). If this is correct, they are to be dated after the introduction of this reform to the Persian weight standard c. 480 B.C., and Miltiades II could not have been responsible for their production in the Chersonese.

5. Regional comparisons – Ainos and Kos

There is strong regional evidence supporting the contention that the ‘Miltiades’ coins were Persian tri-sigloi. The first example is Ainos, the regional centre to the north (Isaac 1986, 138). In 1912 Max Strack (132; 150–5) argued that Ainos had minted its silver coinage on a reduced Attic-Euboic standard of around 16.5 g. He noted that the same weight standard had been employed to strike the neighbouring Chersonese coinage of Miltiades.34 But in his 1950 mint study of Ainos, John May (20–25; 265–66) demonstrated that the 5th century B.C. ‘tetradrachms’ and fractions with which Ainos began minting ca.474/3 B.C. were not struck on a light or reduced Attic-Euboic standard but on the Persian standard, since the examples typically weighed between 16.20–16.50 g. He identified the Ainos tetradrachm as “roughly equivalent to a three-unit piece on the Persian standard (3 x 5.50–3.40 g)” (May 1950, 19) – this was the siglos standard known from the silver of Darius I and Xerxes (May 1950, 267).35

May agreed with Strack that the staters of Miltiades, although minted earlier than the coinage of Ainos, were struck on the same weight standard. May (1950, 268) believed that the Miltiades issues “had been introduced in accordance with the Persian system, perhaps as early as 515 B.C., with coins of 11.79–11.49 g (182–177 gr.) equivalent to two Persian sigloi ...”. He also proposed that Persian weight fourths (2.75–2.57 g), the weight of Ainos tetrobols from the second half of the 4th century B.C., were struck at the same time by this mint in the Chersonese (May 1950, 268). He believed that the five staters of Miltiades then known (listed by Seltman) were rather light for Attic tetradrachms “but at the same time somewhat heavier on average than the Ainos tetradrachms, the equivalent of 3 sigloi” (May 1950, 268, n. 4). As they seemed to fall at a midway point he suggested that “political expediency may have led him to try and raise his weight towards the Attic level, instead of being content with a 3-unit piece on the same system”; the fractions of Miltiades, in contrast, adhered closely to the Persian standard (May 1950,
With the current corpus of twelve coins, it is now clear that the Miltiades staters have the same average weight as the tri-sigloi of Ainos.

May’s study highlighted the relationship between the earliest coinage of Ainos and the coins attributed to Miltiades, but the acceptance of the claim that these issues from the Chersonese had been struck by the Athenian tyrant obscured the exact nature of this relationship. Now that the weight standard of these Chersonesian coins has become evident, our attention is drawn to the 20-year gap between the final departure of Miltiades from the Chersonese in 492 B.C. and May’s dating of the first issues of Ainos. The evidence for the weight standard adjustment to the heavier Persian siglos, an adjustment which did not occur until 480 B.C. at the earliest, demonstrates that the first coinage of Ainos and that attributed to Miltiades both occurred after 480 B.C. and are likely to be contemporary.

Ainos was not alone in minting tri-sigloi. The second example is Kos. In his study of the fifth century B.C. diskoboloi of Kos, John Barron (1968) demonstrated that these silver staters, which until then had also been identified as Attic tetradrachms, were in fact tri-sigloi. They mostly weighed between 16.30 g and 16.50 g, and are thus on the heavier siglos standard. Barron had observed that this denomination was struck at Ainos during the 5th century, and that the Persian standard was still in use, following the creation of the Delian League, by eastern Aegean poleis such as Halikarnassos (obols) and Kolophon (sigloi). The minting of tri-sigloi from Kos demonstrated that the island’s “commercial ties were with the Persian sphere of influence” (Barron 1968, 87). Barron argued, mostly on the evidence of stylistic comparisons with Attic vase-painting and sculpture, that the Kos tri-sigloi belonged to the second quarter of the 5th century B.C.; the discovery of one example (from Barron’s first group: Group A, P3) in the Asyut hoard now shows that the series had begun by 475/470 B.C. (Barron 1968, 88). This coin also provides further evidence for the date of the adoption of the heavier siglos standard. Kos did not join the Delian League until 450 B.C., and Barron (1968, 83) proposed that the Persian weight coinage should be dated to the years before she joined the League.

6. The identity of the mint and purpose of minting

As noted above, Ehrenberg argued that the staters of Miltiades were produced at Agora. There is, however, some evidence that these issues in fact belong to Kardia, and that this was the capital of Miltiades (even though we maintain he did not operate a mint).

36 A Reader wondered whether, based on the iconography, the coinage was associated with the Triopian festival, and therefore the weight might be explained by a special function the coins served for the festival, rather than to align with the Persian system for trade. We do not believe the Triopian festival dictated the choice, and the fact remains Kos did strike tri-sigloi in large quantities. The Hellespont in general was well within the reach of the Persian empire, and the Reader’s further argument that some distinction should be made between the north and south sides of the Hellespont is not convincing. Cf. also discussion in section 7.

37 Barron 1968, 83; May 1950, 265–9; Kolophon, Milne 1941.
Kardia was an important port in the Chersonese, which gave access to the Thracian coast. It was for this reason that Lysimacheia was later established at this location. Kardia was founded by the Milesians during the 6th century B.C., and then re-founded by Miltiades I. Its Milesian origins, as earlier scholars beginning with Six have pointed out, would explain the adoption of the lion as the main type for coinage, if these silver tri-sigloi (and possibly fractions) were minted at this city. The roaring lion seems to have no immediate connection with Chersonesos/Agora, an Athenian settlement founded by Miltiades I. The reverse image of Athena may recognize the injection of Athenian settlers when Kardia was re-founded by Miltiades I, but it could just as likely refer to a cult and temple of Athena in the city which the Athenians may or may not have introduced; Athena was an important deity in many of the Greek cities in Thrace, the Black Sea and eastern Asia Minor.

Given the probable commercial relationship between Kardia and Ainos to its north across the Gulf of Melas, it seems likely that the minting of these tri-sigloi, once attributed to Miltiades, was in fact the result of trade dominated by Ainos which encouraged the adoption of a common weight system (May 1950, 269).

7. Conclusions

The historical attribution of the lion / Athena head staters to Miltiades II dates back to the 19th century and rests on shaky Atheno-centric foundations. The coins do not have an exclusively Athenian iconography, and were not minted on the Attic standard. A more reasonable explanation is that at the time they were minted, the Chersonese was in the Persian sphere of influence, and the purpose of this large denomination, bullion-like coinage was to facilitate trade with their immediate neighbours in the Hellespontine and Propontic region who operated on the same standard. This must date the issues to post 480 B.C. when the Persian standard was raised to 5.5–5.6 g for a siglos, and the coins would thus be tri-sigloi.

Russell Meiggs in his influential volume *The Athenian Empire* (1972, 80) doubted the account in Plutarch (*Cim.* 14.1) that “the Persians would not leave the Chersonese” and had to be dislodged by Cimon in the 460s since Sestos had been captured in 479/8 (Hdt. 9.11.4). Nevertheless, he conceded that epigraphic evidence (*IG* 1 928) attested to fighting “in or near the Hellespont” and Thasos from 465–3 B.C. (Meiggs 1972, 80). In fact, relatively little is known about the history of the area in the decades from 478 B.C. However, the Persians did build up the fleet destroyed by Cimon’s forces at Eurymedon (probably in 466 B.C.; Meiggs 1972, 81–2); the Persian king decreed c. 465 B.C. that Lampsakos was to contribute to the support of Themistocles then in exile (Diod. 11.57.7; Plut. *Them.* 29.11); and Herodotus (7.106–7) states that the Persians retained their stronghold at Doriscus (near Ainos and north of Kardia).

We propose that the staters were minted at Kardia during the years after 478 B.C. and prior to the expedition of Kimon in 466 B.C. which brought the Chersonese firmly into the Delian League and the Athenian sphere of influence. It appears that these
coins, rather than being symbols of Athenian control in the Chersonese during the era of Miltiades II, were minted during that brief period prior to the expedition of Kimon in which the Chersonese was free of Athenian control.  

Bibliography


Samons 2017 has reviewed the evidence and concluded that the rule of the Philaids was dependent upon the ongoing goodwill of the Persian kings down to the Ionian War.

38
Miltiades II and his alleged mint in the Chersonesos


Van Alfen, P. (forthcoming), ‘Ambiguities in Monetary Authority: the Archaic Coinages of the Thracian Chersonese’.

Annexure: Coin Images

Numismatica Genevensis 2015, 32

Berlin 18242608

NAC 54 (2010) 92

Ashmolean 3584

BM 1919, 0911.11

BnF 1966.453.812

MuM 31 (2009) 15

Brussels, Hirsch 897

Alpha Bank 7277

BnF Fonds général 1540

Image supplied by Stacks Bowers from their prior auction of this coin, Stack’s, 14 Jan 2008, lot 2162.
Miltiades II and his alleged mint in the Chersonesos

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