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KATERINI LIAMPI, *Argilos. A Historical and Numismatic Study*, Kerma I, Athens, 2005, 377 p. (including 7 charts and 18 tables) + 27 pls.

For some centuries several generations of numismatists have made considerable efforts to identify and classify the numerous issues produced in the Greek cities. One can say that this difficult and long-lasting approach has not been fully finished yet. This situation is caused by the specific of Greek coinage, because – as is already known – any *polis* had the possibility of making its own coin. That is why, even today, the Greek numismatics is very dynamic and in different ways new types are recorded or the re-attribution of some older ones is being tried. This happens in the present case, in which Mrs. Katerini Liampi (K. L.) has been studying the history and, especially, the coins of Argilos.

In order to describe and analyse the coinage of the above mentioned city, K. L. uses numerous and varied information: geographic, historical, archaeological, epigraphic, mythological etc., or information belonging to “exact” sciences (mechanics, economics, statistics,

metrology a. s. o.), as well as strictly numismatic ones, such as those coming from the die-linkage study. I would like to stress that otherwise it would not have been possible to reach a credible result, because, today, numismatics has become one of the most complex and complete historical sciences.

The work about Argilos consists of an *Introduction* and four ample parts (*Geography and History of Argilos and Bisaltia*, *The Coinage of Argilos*, *General Aspects of the Coinage of Argilos* and *Numismatic Circulation*), being naturally completed by an *Appendix, Abbreviations, Indices*, a *Summary in Greek and Plates*). And, as the author herself confesses, in treating this subject the aim “was to throw light on a Late Archaic mint of the northern Greek region and to attain a definitive classification and attribution of the Pegasos coin to the mint of Argilos. The study of the Andrian colony of

Argilos establishes the political, economic and numismatic history of the city and shows it to be an important centre on the coast of Bisaltia from Late Archaic to Hellenistic times.” (p. 25)

The first significant problem treated is the one of the precise location of the city, which has been long debated. After critically examining all the ancient and modern information concerning this topic, K. L. establishes that the city was built on the Palaiokastron hillock, west of the mouth of the Strymon (not far from the place where, later, the well-known Amphipolis was built); this conclusion is strengthened by the archaeological investigations developed at Argilos after 1992, by a Greek-Canadian expedition.

The city of Argilos was set up by the colonists coming from the Andros island (situated southern of Euboea), by themselves or accompanied by other Greeks of south origin, attracted by the geographical position and especially by the rich natural resources of the region (particularly veins of silver and gold). The territory was inhabited by the Thracian tribe of the Bisaltians. The historiography has insisted a lot on the significance of the name of the city as well. From among all the hypotheses I am inclined to accept the author's demonstration, who chooses the mineral argillaceous earth accounting for the name of Argilos where, in fact, the existence of a very high quality pottery production is attested.

For a better understanding of the history of Argilos, K. L. undertakes, beforehand, a deep research on the whole region of Bisaltia, and for that she makes up real micro-monographs of the identified or presumed localities (Kerdylion, Tragilos, Berge, Brea, Himeraiion, Sykine, Bedyndia, Bisaltia, Kalliterai, Ossa, Euporia, Oreskeia and Tintos). As a result of her systematic analysis, some of these proved to be just mere names of places (without vestiges or tribal names). Among all the cities mentioned above only Tragilos (a possible Argilian colony), Kerdylion (*chorion* of Argilos), Berge, Brea, Euporia and, of course, Argilos issued coins.

During the colonization of north of Greece, the Andrians founded Argilos at the beginning of the second half of the 7th c. B. C. (p. 62), a dating which confirms Eusebius' chronology (655/654 B. C.) (see the Histria case). The new *polis* had a rapid development, and due to the mentioned favourable conditions, it could practice a flourishing trade both with the Cyclades and with the great centres of Asia Minor and of the south (Attica, Corinth). Although during the archaeological diggings local pottery has been discovered (“Olynthian”), no traces of any Bisaltian settlements which could have preceded that of the colonists, have been found. Otherwise, the relationships of the natives with the newcomers are not revealed and it seems they will not be cleared up very soon, taking into account the lack of any essential information concerning this topic.

Generally speaking the history of the city is known. The historical and archaeological sources coincide to a great extent, and the numismatic evidence completes and strengthens them. After the foundation, Argilos did not have a very long flourishing period (the 6th c. – middle of

the 5th c. B. C.). The events which took place in northern Greece after the Persian invasion, the participation of the city in the Athenian Alliance and the setting up of a new town at less than 7 km distance (Amphipolis) were elements which led to the decrease of the economic and political power of Argilos.

A very important document – The Athenian Tribute Lists – shows a gradual decrease of Andrian's *polis* contribution, which justifies K. L.'s choice – contrary to the opinions of other scholars – of upholding the idea that the evolution of the city, as it has been reconstructed by history and archaeology, can also be validated by numismatic data. At last, the Peloponnesian War contributed to the decay of Argilos.

In the first half of the 4th c. B. C. another period of flourishing of the city was recorded, a shorter one this time; during this period, (not surprisingly), the monetary workshop was re-opened.

A destruction layer, found during the archaeological researches, proves the resistance of the city to Philip II's campaign of 357 B. C.; and after the Olynthian War (352–348 B. C.), when Amphipolis was annexed to the Macedonian Kingdom, Argilos probably had the same fate. The city life – rather limited – received a new blow at the end of the 4th/beginning of the 3rd century B. C. by invasion of the Galatians. For the 3rd c. B. C., the urban population is attested only by some sporadic vestiges, and in the 1st century B. C. Argilos was abandoned.

The second and the third parts are the real *pièces de résistance* of the book. In the second part K. L. systematically analyses the existing numismatic material, according to a distinct scheme: coinage, chronology and historical background, catalogue. Two great production phases could be distinguished, corresponding also to the periods of the city flourishing, according to the historical and archaeological researches.

The first phase (520/515–460/455 B. C.) is illustrated by different silver denominations. The author recorded 284 coins, which are classified (according to style, typology, metrology, hoards, historical and archaeological data) into 7 periods, each of them having one or more groups. Although the scarcity of the monetary material for some periods requires subsequent completions and corrections, the solidity of the analysis makes us believe that not many changes will occur in this classification. We can also notice that most of the coins come from the first periods, especially from the fourth (129 ex., between c. 495 and c. 478/477 B. C.).

The study on a large scale of the wear of coins is used in this classification. However, we think that such estimations are subjective, as long as we do not know the speed of circulation, which could vary according to the space of utilization.

For the first phase of Argilian coinage K. L. identifies 133 die pairs with 111 obv. dies and 95 rev. ones. In regard to the study of dies, however, it would have been interesting to see the presumptive volume of coin production of the city. But the author does not consider such an estimation to be important, because “it

is useless to speculate on the basis of the coins we have, which number only 284” (p. 251).

Most of the large denominations (stater and hemistater) was meant – in K. L. opinion – for the foreign trade, such coins representing an valuable wares for export; because once they reached various eastern centres, they could be melted again in order to make up new coins or jewels (p. 252). The Ancient World knows also of other examples, which can come to support this hypothesis. At the same time one can notice that the large denominations “are almost entirely absent from the city that produced them and even from neighbouring areas” (p. 101). Consequently small denominations were produced only for home trade and for the one with the neighbouring territory.

Concerning the period of the silver coins’ issue two other remarks can be made. The first one regards the beginning of coinage in Argilos, which coincides with the extension of the Persian domination over the north of Greece. In this case the silver coins produced by the city could represent a φόρος, paid to the Persian authority (see also F. de Callatay, RBN, 157, 2006, p. 195). Otherwise, it is estimated that in the period 510-500 B. C. the relationships between Bisaltia and the Persians were peaceful (p. 114) and in the years of the fourth period (corresponding to Xerxes’ expeditions) recruitment of troops took place, roads, bridges and new ships were built, all these being accompanied by an intense activity of the Thracian and Chalkidian mints. During the years that followed the Greek-Persian wars, the production of coins drastically decreases in the whole area, including Argilos.

At last, we do not believe it to be just a simple coincidence the ceasing of the activity of Argilian mint round 460 – 455 B. C., when, as it is known, Clearchos’ decree forbade the producing of precious metal coins in the cities of the Athenian Alliance.

Since the first period (c. 520/515– c. 510 B. C., pl. 6, nr. 5, obv.) some coins show deep cuts or even cutt offs made with a sharp tool (chisel ?). Most coins of this kind are signaled in the fourth period where the obverses are usually affected. As those coins are only staters, one cannot exclude the intention of demonetization by such operations, in order to be accepted in the local circulation as bullion.

The second phase of Argilian coinage is represented only by one period, the 8th (c. second quarter of the 4th century B. C.) when only bronze coins, in a decreased number, are issued (4 ex., coming from archaeological diggings). They are small denominations, which have their iconography altered, in comparison with the previous periods. The same situation is also recorded in the rest of Bisaltia.

The third part of the study deals with the typology (iconography, symbols), the style, the legend (ΑΡΚΙ[ΑΙΩΝ]), the metrology and the technique of manufacturing. The author’s qualities (method, thorough observations, erudite and complex analysis) are ample revealed in the pages of this chapter, many of them reflecting the years spent in the numismatic school at the Institut für Alte Geschichte of Saarbrücken (Prof. Dr. Peter Robert Franke). The detailed study of the incuse square, the attribution of the Pegasos type to Argilos, or the minute examination of some details – often neglected by numismatists – such as the border of dots or the ground line, can be convincing examples for the statement expressed above. Only one observation: the physical-chemical or atomic analyses of the alloy are missing. They could be of help in establishing the origin of the metal, or they could have provided other important numismatic information.

In the last part (4) of this interesting and instructive work (a part named “Numismatic circulation” and not “Monetary circulation”) K. L. reinforces many of her previous conclusions. I will mention only that in five of the six hoards, the coins are accompanied by silver ingots, which would justify their inclusion in the category “bullion hoard” (R. Ross Holloway, RBN, 146, 2000, p. 1-8) and that could be a serious argument in the favour of the hypothesis referring to the export of large silver coins (p. 259 -265).

After reading this work and noticing the huge expenditure of energy and intelligence I asked myself a natural but delicate question: is such an effort justified only for a better knowledge on a small monetary workshop of northern Greece ? Knowledge is a never-ending problem, and science makes progress due to such great efforts. In other words due to K. L., today we know the Greek coinage better, and at the same time we are given the possibility to know more about it tomorrow.

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PAUL HOLDER, *Roman Military Diplomas V*, Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study University of London, 2006 (BICS Supplement 88), XVI+310 p. (the page numbers follow the page numbers of the previous bands, from p. 677 to 987).

The fifth volume of *Roman Military Diplomas*, published by Paul Holder, follows the same structure as the previous volumes: *Contents* (p. vii), *Foreword*

(p. ix), *List of Plates* (p. xi), *Bibliography* (p. xiii-xvi), *Tables of the Diploma in RMD V* (p. 677-679), *A Revised Chronology of the Published Diplomas* (p. 681-