Silver Coinage, Symmachia, and Interstate Society. Byzantion and Athens in the Classical Age

Nicholas D. Cross

Abstract: Byzantion was one of the few Greek cities that did not issue its own silver coinage until late into the Classical period. There is considerable debate over the dating of the first issues (late fifth century or early fourth century BCE), a debate with consequences for the interpretation of the politico-economic relationship between Byzantion and Athens. The first section of the article reviews the conditions under which Byzantion was an ally of Athens before the appearance of its silver coinage. The second section examines the numismatic evidence which points to an early fourth-century BCE context for the coinage. This later date is supported by epigraphic and literary evidence for the reestablishment of alliance (symmachia) ties with Athens, the subject of the final sections of the article. This historical context for Byzantion's silver coinage suggests a period of close relations with Athens. This case study generates material for the interpretation of the Classical Greek interstate society.

How was it that autonomous political entities collaborated in the interstate affairs of ancient Greece? Without a regulatory institution to oversee and manage the activity between states, why would one independent community choose to align its foreign policy with that of another? In the case of asymmetrical partnerships, what were the determining factors for the smaller powers to cooperate with larger? In those situations during the Classical period when hegemonic powers directed interstate affairs according to their own geopolitical goals, was interstate relations reduced to the aphorism, "the strong do what they will and the weak suffer what they must"? In response to such questions, one might reply that ancient Greece was an agonistic society, in which individuals and states approached all manner of life activities as though they were in constant competition. This view, however, is a generalization. Although competition was a permeable influence, the ancient Greek ethos was not entirely combative. To a significant degree, the Greeks also engaged in collaborative efforts that brought mutual benefits for the parties involved.[1] How, then, can these two forces – competitive and cooperative – be harmonized in the study of Classical Greek interstate relations? This article seeks to do this with a reexamination of the relationships between Byzantion and Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.

During the Classical period, Byzantion, situated at an economically favorable position on the Bosporus Strait, often found itself as a pawn in the designs of the larger powers (Athens, Sparta, Thebes, and Macedon). This article opens with a brief review of the history of Athens's exploitation of Byzantion, a subordinate ally within the Delian League structure in the fifth century BCE, a situation that lasted until Byzantion's successful revolt from Athenian control in 411 BCE. Byzantion makes only occasional appearances in the literary record for this time but, fortunately for the modern scholar, there is material evidence that can amplify the understanding of Byzantion's new position as a player in interstate affairs after its revolt. The second section of the arti-

[1] Giovannini 2007; Lebow 2007, 349-412; Low 2007; Ober 2015, 45-70.

cle explores Byzantion's first issues of silver coinage. There is considerable debate over the dating of these coins. Many, following Edith Schönert-Geiss, position them close to the revolt in 411 BCE. Others, following Georges Le Rider, think they appeared in the early fourth century BCE. It is argued here that the date for these coins has consequential implications for the interpretation of the relations between the two states. Although unequal in terms of geopolitical status and power, they came to establish connections of mutuality. For example, as the final sections of the article explain, there is documentary evidence for official alliance (*symmachia*) ties between Byzantion and Athens in the early fourth century BCE. This evidence confirms that the context for Byzantion's first silver coinage is one of *autonomia* and of alliance renewal with Athens in the early fourth century BCE and not of revolt in the late fifth century BCE.

Since one's theoretical preconceptions about the nature of interstate relations can have an impact on the interpretation of this first series of silver coinage, it is important at this point to make a few prefatory comments on the interstate society model. Until recently, historians and political scientists interpreted interstate relations –ancient and modern – through the lens of Realism, a model which holds that genuine collaboration is impossible because the world is in a condition of endemic conflict and competition. Dismissing ideological or moral concerns as irrelevant to the actual operation of interstate affairs, Realists assert that states view every other state as a potential rival and therefore not to be trusted. In this atomistic scenario, states, acting according to pragmatism and self-interest, only reluctantly cooperate with other states.[2] Of course, theoretical models are by nature simplifying, and not all scholars are convinced that states invariably conduct their affairs according to these zero-sum conditions. One such alternative perspective is the interstate society model (of the so-called English School of international relations theory) which calls for as much attention to cooperation as to competition between states. This model affirms the possibility of true collective interstate action. Whereas material concerns undoubtedly play a role in the direction of foreign affairs policies, ideology also figures into these complex processes. Rather than a static structure of states whose activities are systemically predetermined, this model depicts a dynamic society of states, in which members cooperate with as well as compete against one another. Through regular collaboration and intercommunication, the states of this macro-society develop common norms, institutions, and interests, which in turn stimulate further cooperation.[3] In fact, at an etymological level, 'society,' derived from the Latin *socius* (companion, ally) and *societas* (community, alliance), extends the connotation beyond the domestic community to global social networks. When applied to the subject of this article, therefore, the interstate society model offers a more comprehensive view than those of other models of the political and monetary relationships between Byzantion and Athens in the Classical period.

Fifth Century BCE: Exploitation and Revolt

Byzantion, a Greek colony founded on the Bosporus Strait in the mid-seventh century BCE, was positioned advantageously to play an important role in the interstate society of ancient Greece.[4] This role, however, turned out to be an exploitative one and not in the

[2] Examples of the various views under the school of Realism are Gilpin 1987; Mearsheimer 2001; Morgenthau 1948; Walt 1987; Waltz 1979. An explicit attempt to apply Realism to ancient Greek (and Mediterranean) interstate relations is Eckstein 2008.

[3] Bull 1977; Buzan 2004; Watson 1992; cf. Dunne 1998.

[4] Foundation: Hdt. 4.144.2; Strabo 7.6.2; Tac. *Ann*. 12.63; Robu 2014, 248-292. Russell 2017, 205-241 disccusses the Megarian colonization of Byzantium along with other foundation narratives. Geography: Polyb. 4.38. 43-44; Archibald 2013, 237-245; Russell 2017, 19-51.

colony's favor. Its location attracted more and more settlers from other areas until the original colonists – from Megara but possibly from elsewhere as well – were fighting the newcomers as well as neighboring peoples. In the first quarter of the fifth century BCE, Byzantion came under brief periods of occupation by foreigners – Histiaios of Miletus, the Persians, and the Spartan Pausanias – who recognized the commercial advantages of seizing ships sailing in and out of the straits.[5] Sometime after the Greek victory over the Persians in 479 BCE and Athens's subsequent increased involvement in the north Aegean, Byzantion became one of the first members of the Delian League. Thucydides reports, with deliberate overstatement, that the initial arrangements between Athens and its allies (*symmachoi*) were on an equal basis.[6] As for Byzantion, it first contributed ships to the League but later switched to paying tribute (*phoros*), as the Athenian Tribute Lists reveal payments from Byzantion of as much as 15 talents annually throughout the 450s and 440s BCE. The collection of *phoros* was done by Athenian authorities and permitted the Athenians to interfere in local Byzantine matters.[7] Consequently, *phoros* became a symbol of Athenian imperialism, and there is no doubt that in the mid-fifth century BCE Byzantion stood in a position of subordination to Athens. The structure of the interstate society at the time was restrictive and in the favor of Athens. Thus, in 440 BCE, along with Samos, Byzantion made an unsuccessful attempt to revolt.[8] Thereafter, the Athenians increased Byzantion's *phoros* payments to as much as 21 talents annually, one of the highest rates among the allies. Athens also stationed a garrison at the straits to protect the flow of traffic and revenue. Vincent Gabrielsen estimates that at this time the profit to Athens reached 40 to 50 talents each year, raising the total annual contribution from Byzantion to nearly 70 talents.[9] By the last quarter of the fifth century BCE, Athens prospered greatly and began to use its control of the straits to ensure a reliable access to Black Sea grain for its large population.[10] The importance of Byzantion to Athens was considerable, and when Byzantion finally succeeded in defecting, it was a great loss to the Athenians.

The next opportunity to break free came in 411 BCE. When it became known that the Athenian fleet had been destroyed in Sicily, Byzantion revolted and joined the Spartans.[11] It is precisely at this point that many scholars, following Edith Schönert-Geiss's important 1970 study of Byzantion's earliest coinage, place the origins of the city's silver coins.[12] In this dating schema, even though Byzantion accepted the equally harsh rule of the Spartans, the act of minting the new coinage was, *inter alia*, a strong assertion of political sovereignty and liberation from the economic domination inherent in an alliance with Athens. Yet, even though the relationship between Athens and Byzantion thus far was characterized as one of subordination and exploitation of the latter, the numismatic evidence, on its own, does not substantiate Schönert-Geiss's dating. One must also accept that political *autonomia* and minting coins were inextricable and that Athenian allies were never permitted to mint their own coins – two notions that have been discredited by the works of Thomas Martin and Thomas Figueira.[13] The 411 BCE context fits

[5] Early conflicts: Arist. *Pol.* 1303a33-34; Polyb. 4.45.1. Histiaios: Hdt. 6.5.3. 26.1. Persians: *ibid.* 6.33.2. Pausanias: Thuc. 1.94-95.4. 128.5-131.1; Demir 2009, 59-68.
[6] Thuc. 1.96-99.
[7] Nixon – Price 1990, 152-158. *Phoros*: Meiggs 1972, 234-254.
[8] Thuc. 1.115.5. 117.3.
[9] Gabrielsen 2007, 296.
[10] In 411 BCE the Spartan King Agis, after noticing ships from the Black Sea sailing into the Piraeus, ordered Clearchus to the Bosporus to sever Athens's connection with northern grain route (Xen. *Hell.* 1.1.35-36). On the importation of Black Sea grain into Athens during the fifth century BCE, see Braund 2007, 39-68; Moreno 2007, 144-208.
[11] Thuc. 8.80.3; Diod. Sic. 13.34.2.
[12] Nixon – Price 1990, 153-154; Russell 2017, 72. 207. 221; Schönert-Geiss 1970, 3-55.
[13] Figueira 1998; Martin 1985.

when one accepts, *prima facie*, that power politics is the primary determiner in foreign policy decisions. The interstate society model, however, would question whether the context of revolt is the only available option. Admittedly, there was resentment against Athens among certain segments of the Byzantine citizenry, but collaboration continued between the two peoples into the fourth century BCE (see below). A closer inspection of the coins and the proposed dates of their minting sheds further light on the nature of the politico-economic relationship between Byzantion and Athens in the Classical period and on the changes which the Greek interstate society underwent in the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE.

Byzantion's Silver Coinage

Although nearby cities minted coins, in various metals and denominations, from the Archaic period, Byzantion was a late-comer in the region to the practice of minting silver coinage. According to Aristophanes, Byzantion was still using iron for its domestic economic transactions even as late as the end of the fifth century BCE.[14] Throughout the fifth century BCE ships had paid tolls at the straits, and Byzantion had paid *phoros* to Athens, yet the city possessed no silver coinage of its own. It is unlikely that this is because of a prohibition against Athenian allies minting their own silver coinage, since this does not account for the nonexistence of silver coinage even before Byzantion's membership in the Delian League. Rather than the constraints of the fifth-century BCE interstate society, one likely explanation for the late appearance of Byzantine silver coinage lies in geography. There were no local silver resources available to Byzantion, with the closest being Astyra, about 250 miles to the southwest. More importantly, on account of taxes on goods passing through the straits, there was a steady flow of foreign silver, gold, and electrum coinage that came into the city and which could be employed in internal economic transactions.[15] And if this is the case, then it may be, as Thomas Figueira suggests, that Byzantion would not mint its own silver coins until the Peloponnesian War, when the combatants moved their fighting into the north Aegean, disrupted the traffic through the strait and made it necessary for Byzantion to mint its own autonomous issues.[16] But how long after that disruption would it take for the city, possessing foreign metals in reserve and remaining occupied with the vicissitudes of the prolonged war, to do that: immediately after the revolt in 411 BCE or even later? A close inspection of the coins themselves can provide more evidence upon which to pinpoint the initial date of minting.

Fig. 1: Early Byzantine Silver Drachm (5.09g) (ANS 1966.75.53).

The typology of the earliest issues **(Fig. 1)** corresponds to the city's location and history. The obverse invariably depicts a cow (or ox) standing above a dolphin, the significance of which has been a source of some disagreement. Many consider the cow to represent the wealth of the territory surrounding Byzantion, and the dolphin its maritime activity.[17] Thomas Russell, however, has recently revived the nineteenth-century view that the imagery alludes to the mythic crossing of the Bosporus (lit. 'cow crossing') by Io, who was transformed into a cow and later became the grandmother of Byzas, the legendary founder

[14] Ar. *Nub*. 249; cf. Crawford 1982, 276; Oeconomides 1993, 77.

[15] Kyzikene staters circulated widely in the region during the fifth century BCE (Laloux 1971, 31-69; Newskaja 1955, 51). On the import of metals to Byzantion and elsewhere in ancient Greece, see Bissa 2009, 67-96.

[16] Figueira 1998, 62. See note 11.

[17] Schönert-Geiss 1966, 174-182.

of the city.[18] The obverse is also often accompanied with the archaic legend BY, the first two Greek letters of Byzantion. This archaizing is continued onto the reverse with the incuse square of mill-sail pattern, with a few that are also accompanied with a trident.[19]

Scholarly debate over the dating of the earliest autonomous silver issues revolves around the sequence of the weight standards upon which the coins were minted. They were struck on either the Persian weight standard (siglos of 5.55 g) or the Chian (tetradrachm of 15.3 g). In terms of the general chronology of Greek coinage, the former appeared first, derived from the coinage of the Lydian empire, and became common throughout western Asia Minor during the Classical age. The Chian weight came later but by the early fourth century BCE it was circulating widely among Aegean cities.[20] It is noticeable that the coins were not struck on the Attic standard. It is also true that a decision to mint on a particular standard might have reflected a political or economic preference of the minting authority, much as the process of dollarization does in the modern world. Aligning the weight standard of a city's coinage with that of other cities facilitated the circulation of money; it reduced or eliminated fees and delays from currency conversion.[21] And this was the case in the choice of weight for Byzantion's ΣYN coinage (discussed below). But for the autonomous issues, the key question is chronology: which came first, the Persian or Chian weight coins? The evidence for coins on both standards comes from six hoards **(Fig. 2)**.

Four hoards contain Persian weight coins. The first, *IGCH* 1259, a hoard found in Cilicia sometime before 1914, contains 141 silver coins, five of which are Byzantine. The weight of each of the Byzantine coins, 5.35 g, equals a Persian siglos. Their typology is regular with the cow-dolphin type on the obverse and an incuse square on the reverse. Numismatist E.T. Newell supposed that they were minted before 394 BCE on the basis of comparison with the Chalcedonian coins that were in the same hoard.[22] This year – seventeen years after the

Hoard	Date of Deposition	Number of Coins	Standard	Denominations
IGCH 1259; *CH* 9.391	380 BCE	5	Persian	hemidrachms
IGCH 724	340-335 BCE	5	Persian	drachms
IGCH 725	340-335 BCE	84	Persian	drachms, triobols, and diobols
CH 1.31	mid-4th century BCE	15+	Persian	staters, drachms, hemidrachms
IGCH 716	mid-350s BCE	1	Chian	tetradrachm
IGCH 723	340-335 BCE	38	Chian	drachms, hemidrachms

Fig. 2: Hoards Containing Early Byzantine Silver Coinage.

[18] Russell 2012, 133-138; 2017, 48-51.
[19] Schönert-Geiss 1970 is the most complete collection of early Byzantine coins.
[20] Meadows 2011, 273-295. Kraay 1976, 329-330 lists the weight standards used by Greeks in the Archaic and Classical periods.
[21] For examples of joint monetary arrangements among Greek cities, see Mackil – van Alfen 2006; van Alfen 2014, 631-652.
[22] Newell 1914, 7-8.

411 BCE revolt and eleven years after Byzantion welcomed the Spartan Lysander – is also when Byzantion and Athens were enemies, supporting the notion that the impetus for this coinage was liberation from Athenian domination. As mentioned earlier, Schönert-Geiss dated the first coins, which she believed were on the Persian weight, to 411 BCE. But either date – Newell's 394 BCE or Schönert-Geiss's 411 BCE – supposes that Byzantion was prohibited from minting its own silver coinage while it was an Athenian ally and that the new coinage was emblematic of Byzantion's liberation from Athenian control.

Georges Le Rider, however, argued that the content of *IGCH* 1259 hoard was unreliable because some coins were missing and perhaps some were added before Newell inspected it. It is also possible that *IGCH* 1259 is two hoards mixed together.[23] Accordingly, Le Rider was led to dismiss this hoard's authenticity and its reliability for dating the Persian weight coins. Le Rider preferred two other hoards containing Byzantine coins on the Persian weight: *IGCH* 724 and *IGCH* 725. The first, buried in Asia Minor around the year 340 BCE, is a large hoard with about 500 silver coins. Of the five which are Byzantine, four are on the Persian weight and in excellent condition, indicating that their minting was not as far back as 394 BCE (Newell) or 411 BCE (Schönert-Geiss), but much closer to the date of deposition (i.e., the mid-fourth century BCE). Moreover, one of the five coins, a hemidrachm on the Chian weight, was significantly more worn than the others, which suggested to Le Rider that the Chian weight standard was older than the Persian for Byzantine coinage.[24] Le Rider could also point to evidence from *IGCH* 725, a hoard with the same date of deposition as *IGCH* 724, and to *CH* 1.31, a hoard of at least 15 coins of different denominations on the Persian weight, neither of which contradicts his sequence of the Chian weight coins coming before the Persian ones.[25]

But when did Byzantion first mint on the Chian weight? Examples of these coins are in two hoards: *IGCH* 716 and *IGCH* 723. Of a total of 41 silver coins in *IGCH* 716, there is one Byzantine tetradrachm (15.27 g). Its obverse has the cow-dolphin type with the unique addition of a trident under the cow's front leg, and an incuse square on the reverse. Numismatist E.S.G. Robinson established that this hoard, which was from either Thrace or Thasos, was buried in the mid-350s BCE, when Philip II of Macedon was campaigning in the north.[26] He also suggested that the origin of this issue comes just after 386 BCE and the conclusion of the King's Peace, a treaty that provided autonomy to most Aegean Greek cities and thus greatly influenced the shape of the new interstate society of the fourth century BCE. The post-386 BCE date for the Chian weight coins is most probable, though it must be pointed out that Robinson derives it from the supposition that the operation of a mint was prohibited without political autonomy – thus, Robinson concluded, the coins could not appear before the peace in 386 BCE. The second hoard, *IGCH* 723, contains 134 coins, of which 3 drachms and 35 hemidrachms are Byzantine coins on the Chian weight.[27] The obverse imagery is regular, except one drachm has the trident under the cow's front legs. The reverse of the drachms contains an incuse square, and the hemidrachms the trident **(Fig. 3)**. This hoard was buried in Thasos around 340 BCE, the year of Philip II's failed attack on Byzantion. There is nothing in this last hoard that contradicts the proposed date for the

[23] Davesne 1989, 162-165; Le Rider 1963, 46-47.
[24] Le Rider 1963, 11-15. 46-47. Schönert-Geiss 1970, 39 disputes Le Rider's attribution of the Persian weight standard.
[25] Le Rider 1971, 149 also based much of his case on the evidence of *IGCH* 1365, a hoard of 219 Byzantine hemidrachms, but its date of deposition is much later in the fourth century BCE to have bearing on the present argument.
[26] Robinson 1934 251. 253; cf. Figueira 1998, 58-59; Le Rider 1963, 47-48.
[27] Le Rider 1956, 2-4.

beginning of the Chian weight issues falling sometime after 386 BCE, before the Persian weight issues that came later in the mid-fourth century BCE. In short, the numismatic evidence strongly suggests that the first issues emerged within the context of general autonomy in the fourth-century BCE interstate society and are not specifically symbolic of the revolt from Athens.

Fig. 3: Byzantine Silver hemidrachm (1.93 g) (CNT 1664).

Early Fourth Century BCE: Rapprochement

Le Rider, whose chronology for the weight standards was the inverse of Schönert-Geiss's, did not use historical evidence, which would have reinforced his dating and have offered an explanation for the context of the coins. This section adds that historical support and seeks to broaden the implications of the numismatic evidence to an understanding of the interstate society of the early fourth century. If the revolt during the Peloponnesian War is not the correct context, then under what circumstances did Byzantion make the decision to mint their first silver coins? After the 411 BCE revolt, the Spartan Clearchus administered affairs in Byzantion for three years until pro-Athenian citizens turned the city over to Alcibiades. Athenian control lasted until the end of the Peloponnesian War.[28] In 405 BCE the Spartan Lysander recaptured the city, installed a harmost, and imposed an oligarchic constitution. The pro-Athenians fled the city, and Lysander allowed the Athenians to return to Athens and experience the sufferings confronting their city at the end of the war. Those remaining in Byzantion grew dissatisfied with the Spartan administration, especially during Clearchus's second period of tyrannical rule in 403 BCE.[29]

The situation remained thus into the next century. But the structure and character of the interstate society was undergoing a significant change which brought a greater level of cooperation between Byzantion and Athens. In 389 BCE, during the so-called Corinthian War, when the Athenian Thrasybulus of Steiria sailed into the region, the leading Byzantines expelled the Spartans and welcomed the Athenian general. Thrasybulus restored democracy to the Byzantines and reestablished a customs house (*dekateuterion*) for the collection of a tax on ships sailing in and out of the straits.[30] A number of scholars are convinced that Thrasybulus (and the Athenians generally) was interested in reviving the fifth-century BCE empire.[31] His return to the Aegean, it is argued, was an opportunity to restore the old alliance network, under the same oppressive terms as under the empire, and to profit from exploiting those ties. Thrasybulus was certainly motivated by personal political aggrandizement, but the interpretation of his actions in Byzantion as revanchism is based more on the theory that interstate affairs is essentially a matter of power politics. In a speech delivered ca. 388 BCE, the orator Lysias spreads the rumor that Thrasybulus considered establishing a tyranny at Byzantion.[32] But that is all it was: a rumor. Thrasybulus did no such thing. He continued his expedition and died in Pam-

[28] Xen. *Hell*. 1.3.14-20; Diod. Sic. 13.64.2-3. 66.3-6; Plut. *Alc*. 31.

[29] Lysander: Xen. *Hell*. 2.2.1-2. Clearchus in 403 BCE: Diod. Sic. 14.12.2-3; cf. Xen. *An*. 6.2.13. 7.2.5-12.

[30] Xen. *Hell*. 4.8.27; Dem. 20.60. *Dekateuterion*: Figueira 2005, 111-117; Rubel 2001, 39-51. Democracy: Robinson 2011, 146-149.

[31] Badian 1995, 80-86; Buck 1998, 115-118; Cawkwell 1976, 270-277; Harding 2015, 27-30; Pébarthe 2000, 57; Russell 2017, 65. But see Accame 1951; Asmonti 2015, 155-178; Cargill 1981; Griffith 1978, 127-144.

[32] Lys. 28.5.

phylia. Nevertheless, the Athenians were not displeased with what he had accomplished in the north: the assembly approved his arrangements and inscribed them on *stelai* for public display.[33]

Furthermore, the institution of a *dekateuterion* and the establishment of democracy are not incompatible. In restoring these, it is significant that Thrasybulus reached back to fifth-century BCE practices but without the oppressive measures associated with the old empire. Instead, the collection was not of tribute (*phoros*) but of a ten percent tax (*dekate*), of which Thrasybulus farmed out the collection to the Byzantines, an arrangement that significantly curtailed Athenian interference in Byzantion's internal affairs. Xenophon even says that the common people of Byzantion, at least, were not burdened by the presence of Athenians in their city again.[34] When seen through the lens of the interstate society model, Thrasybulus's activities in Byzantion are both political, in the context of the Corinthian War, as well as social, in terms of (re)constructing ties with the Byzantines. Rather than a return to the exploitation of the fifth century BCE, the situation now between Byzantion and Athens – in economic, military, and political affairs – was more equitable.

This restored relationship transcended the exigencies of the Corinthian War. Isocrates adds that even after the signing of the King's Peace in 386 BCE, which brought an end to the war, Byzantion, along with Chios and Mytilene, remained aligned with Athens.[35] Their ties, therefore, persisted even after the peace ensured general autonomy in the Greek interstate society. It is very likely that it was within this context, the guarantee of *autonomia kai eleutheria*, that Byzantion minted its first autonomous silver coins, the ones on the Chian weight standard. The historical evidence reinforces Le Rider's position on the coinage. It also underscores the mutual association existing between Byzantion and Athens.

This conclusion is further confirmed by the subsequent official alliances (*symmachiai*) between Byzantion and Athens. Demosthenes says that in about 385 BCE, after a brief oligarchic revolt in Byzantion, the Athenians provided refuge to the exiled Byzantine democrats.[36] Then, sometime after their restoration – which probably came about with Athenian backing – the democrats solicited a *symmachia* with their benefactors. The Byzantine embassy to Athens was led by the pro-Athenian Cydon, who had collaborated with Alcibiades in 408 BCE, and who during Lysander's occupation had fled to Athens, perhaps receiving citizenship there.[37] The extant inscription for this *symmachia* (*IG* II^2 41) is fragmentary. It mentions only an unrecorded oath, an invitation for the Byzantine ambassadors to enjoy a meal of hospitality (*xenia*) in the Prytaneion, instructions for the erection of the alliance *stele*, and the selection of Athenian ambassadors to go to Byzantion and confirm the alliance terms. The restoration of *kathaper Chiois* on line seven indicates that the *symmachia* would operate under the same conditions as the recent one concluded in 384 BCE between Athens and Chios. This one, the first since the King's Peace, was a mutual defense *symmachia* that explicitly upheld the provisions of *autonomia kai eleutheria*.[38] One might suspect that after observing firsthand the formation of the alliance with Chios, the exiled Byzantine democrats proposed to the Athenians a similar *symmachia* if they were returned to power at home. Seen in this way, the new *symmachiai* reflected the new shape of the interstate society. It also represented Athenian support for the

[33] *IG* II^2 21, 22, 24.
[34] Xen. *Hell*. 4.8.27. *Dekate*: Figueira 2005, 120-129; Gabrielsen 2007, 293-296; Kallet 2001, 200; Kellogg 2004/2005, 65-68; Russell 2017, 81-88.
[35] Isoc. 14.28.
[36] Dem. 20.60.
[37] *IG* II^2 41, line 23; Xen. *Hell*. 1.3.18. 2.2.1. Another Byzantine ambassador, Philinos, was a *proxenos* and benefactor of the Athenians (*IG* II^2 76).
[38] *IG* II^2 34; cf. Dušanić 2000, 21-30; Occhipinti 2010, 24-44.

restored Byzantine democracy and was a manifestation of their recent cooperation in military, political, social, and economic activities.

In 377 BCE Byzantion and Athens made a second bilateral *symmachia*, or rather reaffirmed the previous one as a part of Byzantion's membership in the Second Athenian League.[39] This renewed organization of the Aegean Greeks had a different character from the Athenian empire in the previous century. It was not a matter of imperialistic recrudescence. Its *raison d'être*, at its inception, was to aggregate the capabilities of its members to effectively block Spartan encroachments on Greek freedom. There is no evidence of Spartan interference in Byzantine affairs at this time, although it would come as no surprise if the Spartans orchestrated the oligarchic coup there in 385 BCE.[40] The *symmachiai* between Byzantion and Athens, therefore, appear to rest more on the strength of their military, political, social and economic ties established since the Corinthian War. These Athenian *symmachiai*, with Byzantion, Chios, and others, became the model for the Second Athenian League, an association of Greeks joined together by the observance of the principles of the King's Peace and in opposition to Spartan imperialism. It was in this environment, an interstate society founded upon *autonomia kai eleutheria*, that Byzantion minted its first autonomous silver coinage.[41]

ΣΥΝ coinage and Autonomous Issues

Finally, one may ask, even if the first autonomous issues originated after 386 BCE, within the context of the *autonomia kai eleutheria* of the King's Peace, how does this harmonize with the famous ΣΥΝ coinage? About eight Greek cities, including Byzantion, minted silver coins following the new Chian weight standard (tridrachm of slightly over 11 g). Each coin had a common type on the obverse: an infant Heracles strangling snakes (*Herakliskos Drakonopnigon*) with the legend ΣΥΝ (short for *symmachia*). The reverse of the two extant examples of Byzantion's ΣΥΝ coins contains the cow-dolphin type, recognizable from the obverse of the autonomous issues **(Fig. 4)**. Typological correspondence such as this was nothing new for the Greeks. During the age of colonization, new colonies often continued to place on their coinage the familiar types of their *metropoleis*. Throughout the fifth century BCE, members of new confederacies adopted common types for their federal coinage. A contemporary example with the ΣΥΝ coinage is the common coinage that symbolized the Rhodian synoecism of Camirus, Ialysus, and Lindus in 408 BCE.[42] But the ΣΥΝ coinage is unique in that the participating cities did not have shared origins nor, as far as can be known, were they organized around a central federal institution.

Fig. 4: Byzantion's ΣΥΝ Silver Tridrachm (11.29 g) (CNT 1410)**.**

[39] *IG* II^2 43, line 83; Diod. Sic. 15.28.3.

[40] As suggested by Stylianou 1998, 174.

[41] Byzantion eventually abandoned Athens when the latter returned to its imperialistic policies in mid-century. In 364 BCE Byzantion offered a warm welcome to the Theban general Epaminondas (Isoc. 5.53; Diod. Sic. 15.78.4-79.2) and may have concluded a *symmachia* with him (Lewis 1990, 72; Russell 2016, 65-79; Ruzicka 1998, 60-69; Stylianou 1998, 412-413). In 357 BCE Byzantion joined the so-called Social War against Athens and at the end of the war seceded from the Second Athenian League (Dem. 15.26; Isoc. 15.63-64; Diod. Sic. 16.22.2; Ruzicka 1998, 60-69). Byzantion seems to have collaborated with Thebes in the coming years (*IG* VII 2418, lines 11-12. 24) before briefly rejoining Athens against Philip (Dem. 18.87-89. 244; Aeschin. 3.256).

[42] Common coinage: Mackil 2013, 247-255; Mackil – van Alfen 2006. Rhodian coinage: Ashton 2001, 79-115.

There have been different dates proposed for the ΣΥΝ coins, with interpretations that they were either pro-Spartan or pro-Athenian. Since a unified Rhodes participated in the coinage, a date of 408 BCE, when the three cities united, is a *terminus post quem*. Stefan Karwiese and Andrew Meadows think the coins were minted in 405 BCE and that the *Herakliskos Drakonopnigon* type symbolizes Lysander (Heracles) liberating the Greeks from the fetters (snakes) of Athenian economic and political oppression. John Manuel Cook and Roberta Fabiani, too, consider the coins to be pro-Spartan but they advance the date of minting to 395 and 394 BCE, during the Spartan king Agesilaus's short expedition to Asia Minor against the Persians.[43] On the other hand, Fabrice Delrieux has revived George Cawkwell's idea that the coins were pro-Athenian, appearing after the Athenian victory at Cnidus in 394 BCE, and thus represent solidarity against Spartan imperialism.[44] Finally, both Schönert-Geiss and Le Rider are agreed that the ΣΥΝ coins were minted c. 386 BCE, and that for Byzantion these coins were its first issues on the Chian standard.[45] No attempt will be made here to settle this complicated issue, which perplexes even the brightest of numismatists, but for the purposes of this essay, no matter which date one follows, it is clear that Byzantion's ΣΥΝ coinage falls after the revolt in 411 BCE and predates its civic coinage. That is, Byzantion's ΣΥΝ coins, a sign of autonomy in some sense, should be seen as precursors to the autonomous issues minted after the King's Peace rather than descendants of a putative coinage influenced by revolt. This coinage, too, therefore, reflects the dynamics of cooperation emphasized by the interstate society model.

[43] Cook 1961, 66-72; Fabiani 1999, 118-123; Karwiese 1980; Meadows 2011, 286-293. Russell 2017, 218-221 discusses Lysander's position in Byzantion.
[44] Cawkwell 1956, Delrieux 2000, 185-211. Thanks to the anonymous reviewer for calling attention to the latter article.
[45] Le Rider 1971, 147-148; Schönert-Geiss 1970, 36.

This chronology is consistent with the numismatic evidence and with the historical narrative. When Lysander sailed into Byzantion in 405 BCE, the Athenians abandoned the city as did the pro-Athenian Byzantine citizens. During the next two decades, leadership in the city fluctuated between the pro-Spartan oligarchs and the pro-Spartan democrats, both of whom would have been amenable to joining a monetary collective that filled an economic need for the postwar Aegean. After the pro-Athenians returned to power and restored the alliance with Athens, they minted autonomous issues that signified Byzantion's *autonomia* as well as its close connections with Athens. The relationship between Byzantion and Athens, and indeed the larger Greek interstate society, had drastically changed from the fifth century BCE. Byzantion's first silver coinage, therefore, emerged at a period when the city was engaged to a much greater extent in interstate cooperation.In conclusion, this article has explored the politico-economic relationship between Byzantion and Athens in the Classical age through an approach that integrates literary and material evidence, along with the lens of the interstate society model. Ever since the Archaic age, Byzantion relied on foreign currency and did not mint its own silver coinage, until the latter stages of the Peloponnesian War disrupted traffic through the Bosporus straits. At the end of the war, Byzantion aligned with other Aegean Greeks and minted silver coins (the ΣΥΝ coinage) on a common weight (the new Chian standard). Renewed war in the 390s BCE, however, disrupted the ΣΥΝ collective. In 389 BCE Byzantion welcomed the Athenian Thrasybulus and merged its military, political, and economic interests with those of the Athenians. Their new association was unlike the exploitation which Byzantion had previously experienced at the hands of Athens. In the early fourth century BCE, the two had formed something closer to a square deal. This is further substantiated by the *sym-*

machia that the two concluded in the late 380s and 370s BCE and by the appearance of Byzantion's first autonomous issues of coinage at some time after the King's Peace. This coinage, therefore, was tied to its newly confirmed position of *autonomia* in the interstate society. This conclusion removes the origins of Byzantine silver coinage from the context of revolt from Athenian domination to a context of alliance renewal with Athens.[46]

[46] This article extends from a project for the 2013 Eric P. Newman Summer Seminar at the American Numismatic Society. Thanks to Peter van Alfen for his guidance in that research. An early version of this article was presented as a paper on the "Sovereignty and Money" panel at the 2017 Archaeological Institute of America and Society for Classical Studies Joint Annual Meeting. Thanks to Lucia Carbone and Irene Soto Marin for organizing that panel. Thanks also to Emyr Dakin, Irene Morrison-Moncure, and Giorgos Tsolakis for their comments and suggestions on early drafts of this article.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

CH = M. Price (ed.), Coin Hoards I (London 1975)

IG = J. Kirchner (ed.), Inscriptiones Graecae (Berlin 1913-1940)

IGCH = M. Thompson – C.M. Kraay – O. Mørholm (eds.), An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards (New York 1973)

Literature

Accame 1951
S. Accame, Richerche intorno alla guerra corinzia (Napoli 1951)

Archibald 2013
Z. Archibald, Ancient Economies of the Northern Aegean: Fifth to First Centuries BC (Oxford 2013)

Ashton 2001
R. Ashton, The Coinage of Rhodes 408–c. 190 BC, in: A. Meadows – K. Shipton (eds.), Money and its Uses in the Ancient Greek World (Oxford 2001) 79-115

Asmonti 2015
L. Asmonti, Conon the Athenian: Warfare and Politics in the Aegean, 414-386 B.C. (Stuttgart 2015)

Badian 1995
E. Badian, The Ghost of Empire: Reflections on Athenian Foreign Policy in the Fourth Century BC, in: W. Eder (ed.), Die Athenische Demokratie im 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr. Vollendung oder Verfall einer Verfassungsform? (Stuttgart 1995) 79-106

Bissa 2009
E. M. A. Bissa, Governmental Intervention in Foreign Trade in Archaic and Classical Greece (Leiden 2009)

Braund 2007
D. Braund, Black Sea Grain for Athens? From Herodotus to Demosthenes, in: V. Gabrielsen – J. Lund (eds.), The Black Sea in Antiquity: Regional and Interregional Economic Exchanges (Aarhus 2007) 39-68

Buck 1998
R. Buck, Thrasybulus and the Athenian Democracy: The Life of an Athenian Statesman (Stuttgart 1998)

Bull 1977
H. Bull, The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics (London 1977)

Buzan 2004
B. Buzan, From International to World Society?: English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation (Cambridge 2004)

Cargill 1981
J. Cargill, The Second Athenian League: Empire or Free Alliance? (Berkeley 1981)

Cawkwell 1956
G. Cawkwell, A Note on the Herakles Coinage Alliance of 394 B.C., Numsimatic Chronicle 16, 1956, 69-75

Cawkwell 1976
G. Cawkwell, The Imperialism of Thrasybulus, Classical Quarterly 26, 1976, 270-277

Cook 1961
J. M. Cook, Cnidian Peraea and Spartan Coins, Journal of Hellenic Studies 81, 1961, 56-72

Crawford 1982
M. Crawford, Sidareoi at Byzantium, Athenaeum 70, 1982, 276

Davesne 1989
A. Davesne, La circulation monétaire en Cilicie à l'époque achéménide, Revue des Études Anciennes 91, 1989, 157-168

Delrieux 2000
F. Delrieux, Les ententes monétaires au type et à la légende ΣΥΝ au début du IV siècle, in: O. Casabonne (ed.), Mecanismes et innovations monétaires dans l'Anatolie achéménide. Numismatique et Histoire (Istanbul 2000) 185-211

Demir 2009
M. Demir, Pausanias' Actions in Byzantion after the Victory at Plataea: A Reconsideration, Athenaeum 97, 2009, 59-68

Dunne 1998
T. Dunne, Inventing International Society: A History of the English School (Basingstoke 1998)

Dušanić 2000
S. Dušanić, The Attic-Chian Alliance ("IG" II^2 34) and the 'Troubles in Greece' of the Late 380's BC, Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 133, 2000, 21-30

Eckstein 2008
A. Eckstein, Mediterranean Anarchy, Interstate War, and the Rise of Rome (Berkeley 2008)

Fabiani 1999
R. Fabiani, La questione delle monete ΣΥΝ: per una nuova interpretazione, Annali dell'Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici 16, 1999, 87-123

Figueira 1998
T. Figueira, The Power of Money: Coinage and Politics in the Athenian Empire (Philadelphia 1998)

Figueira 2005
T. Figueira, The Imperial Commercial Tax and the Finances of the Athenian Hegemony, Incidenza dell'antico 3, 2005, 83-133

Gabrielsen 2007
V. Gabrielsen, Trade and Tribute: Byzantion and the Black Sea Straits, in: V. Gabrielsen – J. Lund (eds.), The Black Sea in Antiquity: Regional and Interregional Economic Exchanges (Aarhus 2007) 287-324

Giovannini 2007
A. Giovannini, Les relations entre états dans le Grèce antique du temps d'Homère à l'intervention romaine (ca. 700-200 av. J.-C.) (Stuttgart 2007)

Gilpin 1987
R. Gilpin, The Political Economy of International Relations (Princeton 1987)

Griffith 1978
G.T. Griffith, Athens in the Fourth Century, in: P.D.A. Garnsey – C.R. Whittaker (eds.) Imperialism in the Ancient World (Cambridge 1978) 127-144

Harding 2015
P. Harding, Athens Transformed, 404-262 BC: From Popular Sovereignty to the Dominion of the Elite (New York 2015)

Kallet 2001
L. Kallet, Money and the Corrosion of Power in Thucydides: The Sicilian Expedition and its Aftermath (Berkeley 2001)

Karwiese 1980
S. Karwiese, Lysander as Herakliskos Drakonopnigon: (‘Heracles the Snake-Strangler’), The Numismatic Chronicle 20, 1980, 1-27

Kellogg 2004/2005
D. Kellogg, The Athenian Decree Honoring Hebryzelmis of Thrace Reconsidered, American Journal of Ancient History 3-4, 2004/2005, 58-71

Kraay 1976
C. Kraay, Archaic and Classical Greek Coins (Berkeley 1976)

Laloux 1971
M. Laloux, La circulation des monnaies d’électrum de Cyzique, Revue Belge de Numismatique 117, 1971, 31-69

Le Rider 1956
G. Le Rider, Trésor de monnaies trouvé à Thasos, Bulletin de correspondance hellénique 80, 1956, 1-19

Le Rider 1963
G. Le Rider, Deux trésors de monnaies grecques de la propontide (Paris 1963)

Le Rider 1971
G. Le Rider, Sur le monnayage de Byzance au IVe siècle, Revue numismatique 13, 1971, 143-153

Lebow 2007
R. N. Lebow, Coercion, Cooperation, and Ethics in International Relations (New York 2007)

Lewis 1990
D.M. Lewis, The Synedrion of the Boeotian Alliance, in: A. Schachter (ed.), Essays in Topography, History and Culture of Boiotia (Montreal 1990) 71-73

Low 2007
P. Low, Interstate Relations in Classical Greece: Morality and Power (Cambridge 2007)

Mackil 2013
E. Mackil, Creating a Common Polity: Religion, Economy, and Politics in the Making of the Greek Koinon (Berkeley 2013)

Mackil – van Alfen 2006
E. Mackil – P. van Alfen, Cooperative Coinage, in: P. van Alfen (ed.), Agoranomia: Studies in Money and Exchange Presented to John H. Kroll (New York 2006) 201-247

Martin 1985
T. Martin, Sovereignty and Coinage in Classical Greece (Princeton 1985)

Meadows 2011
A. Meadows, The Chian Revolution: Changing Patterns of Hoarding in 4th-Century BC Western Asia Minor, Bulletin de correspondance hellénique supplement 53, 2011, 273-295

Mearsheimer 2001
J. Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics (New York 2001)

Meiggs 1972
R. Meiggs, The Athenian Empire (Oxford 1972)

Moreno 2007
A. Moreno, Feeding the Democracy: The Athenian Grain Supply in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BC (Oxford 2007)

Morgenthau 1948
H. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace (New York 1948)

Newell 1914
E. T. Newell, A Cilician Find, The Numismatic Chronicle 14, 1914, 1-33

Newskaja 1955
V. P. Newskaja, Byzanz in der klassischen und hellenistischen Epoche (Leipzig 1955)

Nixon – Price 1990
L. Nixon – S. Price, The Size and Resources of Greek Cities, in: O. Murray – S. Price (eds.), The Greek City from Homer to Alexander (Oxford 1990) 137-170

Ober 2015
J. Ober, The Rise and Fall of Classical Greece (Princeton 2015)

Occhipinti 2010
E. Occhipinti, Political Conflicts in Chios between the End of the 5th and the First Half of the 4th Century B.C., Ancient History Bulletin 24, 2010, 24-44

Oeconomides 1993
M. Oeconomides, 'Iron Coins': A Numismatic Challenge, Rivista Italiana di Numismatica e Scienze Affini 95, 1993, 75-78

Pébarthe 2000
C. Pébarthe, Fiscalité, empire athénien et écriture: retour sur les causes de la guerre du Péloponnèse, Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 129, 2000, 47-76

Robinson 1934
E. S. G. Robinson, A Find of Coins of Thasos, The Numismatic Chronicle 14, 1934, 244-254

Robinson 2011
E. W. Robinson, Democracy beyond Athens: Popular Government in the Greek Classical Age (Cambridge 2011)

Robu 2014
A. Robu, Mégare et les établissements mégariens de Sicile, de la Propontide et du Pont-Euxin: Histoire et institutions (Bern 2014)

Rubel 2001
A. Rubel, Hellespontophylakes – Zöllner am Bosporos? Überlegungen zur Fiskalpolitik des attischen Seebundes (IG I3 61), Klio 83, 2001, 39-51

Russell 2012
T. Russell, The Land of Inachus: Byzantium's Early Coinage and Two Bosporus Toponyms, Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 180, 2012, 133-138

Russel 2016
T. Russell, Diodorus 15.78.4-79.1 and Theban Relations with the Bosporus in the Fourth Century, in: S.D. Gartland (ed.), Boiotia in the Fourth Century B.C. (Philadelphia 2016) 65-79

Russell 2017
T. Russell, Byzantium and the Bosporus: A Historical Study, from the Seventh Century BC until the Foundation of Constantinople (Oxford 2017)

Ruzicka 1998
S. Ruzicka, Epaminondas and the Genesis of the Social War, Classical Philology 93, 1998, 60-69

Schönert-Geiss 1966
E. Schönert-Geiss, Der Io-Mythos auf den Silbermünzen von Byzanz, Helikon 6, 1966, 174-182

Schönert-Geiss 1970
E. Schönert-Geiss, Die Münzprägung von Byzantion I: Autonome Zeit (Berlin 1970)

Stylianou 1998
P. J. Stylianou, A Historical Commentary on Diodorus Siculus Book 15 (Oxford 1998)

van Alfen 2014
P. van Alfen, Metoikêsis and Archaic Monetary Coordination: Teos-Abdera and Phokaia-Velia, in: K. Dortluk – O. Tekin – R. Boyraz Seyhan (eds.), First International Congress of the Anatolian Monetary History and Numismatics (Antalya 2014) 632-652

Walt 1987
S. Walt, The Origins of Alliances (Ithaca 1987)

Waltz 1979
K. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (Reading 1979)

Watson 1992
A. Watson, The Evolution of International Society (London 1992)