

NOTAE NUMISMATICAE

ZAPISKI NUMIZMATYCZNE



Tom XIV

MUZEUM NARODOWE W KRAKOWIE
SEKCJA NUMIZMATYCZNA
KOMISJI ARCHEOLOGICZNEJ PAN
ODDZIAŁ W KRAKOWIE

Kraków 2019



Ministerstwo Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego

Tłumaczenie tekstów oraz korekta językowa native speakerów tekstów
artykułów naukowych oraz recenzji naukowych w tomach XIII (2018) i XIV (2019)
finansowane w ramach umowy 790/P-DUN/2018 ze środków
Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego
przeznaczonych na działalność upowszechniającą naukę.

The translation and the proofreading by a native speaker of the texts
of academic articles and reviews in the volumes XIII (2018) and XIV (2019)
financed as part of the Agreement 790/P-DUN/2018 from the funds
of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education allocated for the purpose
of promoting and propagating science.

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The electronic edition of the *Notae Numismatacae – Zapiski Numizmatyczne* is treated as its original version.

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ISSN 1426-5435

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ELIZA WALCZAK

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Stefan Skowronek (1928–2019) podczas wykopalisk archeologicznych w Egipcie (1960/1961)
Ze zbiorów Ośrodka Dokumentacji Filmowej Nauki Polskiej Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego w Krakowie
Stefan Skowronek (1928–2019) during archaeological excavation in Egypt (1960/1961)
From the Center of Visual Documentation of Polish Science (Pedagogical University of Cracow)

Szanowni Państwo,

oddajemy w Państwa ręce tom XIV *Notae Numismaticae – Zapisków Numizmatycznych*. Zgodnie z przyjętymi przez nas zasadami wszystkie teksty publikujemy w językach kongresowych, z angielskimi i polskimi abstraktami. Polskojęzyczne wersje tekstów odnoszących się w większym stopniu do zainteresowań czytelnika polskiego są zamieszczone w formie plików PDF na stronie internetowej Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie (<https://mnk.pl/notae-numismaticae-zapiski-numizmatyczne-1>). W podobny sposób udostępniamy cały obecny tom oraz tomy archiwalne. Na stronie internetowej dostępne są ponadto wszelkie informacje ogólne o czasopiśmie oraz instrukcje dla autorów i recenzentów.

11 czerwca 2019 r. w wieku 91 lat odszedł prof. dr hab. Stefan Skowronek (1928–2019), nestor polskiej numizmatyki, wieloletni pracownik i kierownik Gabinetu Numizmatycznego Muzeum Narodowego w Krakowie, wybitny znawca numizmatyki antycznej, wykładowca i pracownik Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego w Krakowie, wykładowca Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, członek wielu towarzystw i organizacji naukowych, w tym członek honorowy Sekcji Numizmatycznej Komisji Archeologicznej Polskiej Akademii Nauk Oddział w Krakowie.

Jego pamięci poświęcamy XIV tom *Notae Numismaticae – Zapisków Numizmatycznych*, czasopisma, które mocno wspierał jako autor i członek Komitetu Naukowego.

Redakcja

Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that we present volume XIV of *Notae Numismaticae – Zapiski Numizmatyczne* to you. In accordance with the principles that we have adopted, our texts are published in the conference languages with English and Polish abstracts. The Polish-language versions of the texts that are more relevant to the interests of the Polish reader can be found as PDFs on the website of the National Museum in Krakow (<https://mnk.pl/notae-numismaticae-zapiski-numizmatyczne-1>). Similarly, the whole of the present volume is available online, as are previously published volumes of the journal. The website also contains general information about the journal as well as information for prospective authors and reviewers.

Prof. Dr. Hab. Stefan Skowronek (1928–2019), the doyen of Polish numismatics, died on June 11, 2019, at the age of 91. For many years, he worked as an employee – and then as head – of the Numismatic Cabinet at the National Museum of Krakow. He was also a lecturer and employee of the Pedagogical University of Krakow, a lecturer at the Jagiellonian University, and a member of numerous scientific societies and organizations, having honorary membership status at the Krakow branch of the Numismatic Section of the Polish Academy of Sciences' Commission on Archaeology.

It is to his enduring memory that we dedicate volume XIV of *Notae Numismaticae – Zapiski Numizmatyczne*, a journal that he helped to support as both an author and as a member of the Scientific Committee.

The Editors

YANNIS STOYAS

KIKPE Numismatic Collection

Social and Cultural Affairs Welfare Foundation (KIKPE), Athens

Wheat-Ears and Owls. Remarks on Thessalian Coins with Countermarks*

ABSTRACT: The existence of a number of Thessalian bronze coins minted during the late Classical and Hellenistic times, which were later countermarked at some point, constitutes an intriguing puzzle in the coin history of Thessaly. While brief reference is made to a broader chronological context of such phenomena in the area, the focus is placed on two noticeable countermark types, the wheat-ear and the owl. The present study aims at a comprehensive overview of these countermarks, which appear on bronze coins struck by various issuing authorities (Gomphoi, Gyrtion, Larisa, Metropolis, Phalanna, Pharsalos, the Thessalian Koinon). Quite interestingly, the pieces on which the said countermarks are applied span from the 4th to the 1st century BC. A number of samples of silver staters issued by the late Hellenistic Koinon (with a wheat-ear countermark only) are also taken into account, but they seem to constitute a separate occasion of countermarking.

The Thessalian bronzes under discussion bear either the wheat-ear countermark or the owl countermark or both of them; counterstamping of the owl over the wheat-ear is more common, but coexists with the rarer combination of the wheat-ear over the owl. As it seems that the two countermarks were employed largely in tandem, their synchronicity can be assumed. From the examination of the extant specimens, interesting elements can be gleaned, such as that the two-thirds of the material are constituted by coins safely or probably dated in the 2nd–1st centuries BC or that

* An initial version was presented (in Greek) during a scientific meeting in honour of Angelica Douzougli and Konstantinos L. Zachos, held at Ioannina on 1–3 November 2012. This paper is dedicated to Kostas and Angelica, for having been there at the beginning of a great archaeological journey. Sincere thanks are due to Basil Demetriadi and Nikos Goumas, as well as to Dr Panagiotis P. Iossif (Belgian School at Athens / Radboud University Nijmegen) and Dr George A. Zachos (Research Centre for Antiquity, Academy of Athens) for the constructive discussions made within the scope of this study.

probably all the pieces have been located in Thessaly. A few extraneous coins (of Pella and Amphipolis, with the same pair of countermarks) were obviously included in the sample while the countermarking of the local ones was in process.

The treatment attempts to deal with several aspects of the matter; a key factor is implied by the wheat-ear symbol, alluding to the significance of Thessaly through the ages as a major grain-producing region; at the same time, it can be argued that the resurfaced pieces were demonetised and utilized probably as tokens. Additionally, some consideration is given regarding the rather perplexing practical use of such countermarked pieces and the end-users involved. The advanced wear of many of the coins in question supports the idea that the counterstamping could have taken place some time in the 1st–2nd centuries AD. Based on scarce evidence, an appropriate historical context is sought in the form of a certain, likely one-off, incident. Towards this direction, a possible connection to a case of Thessalian wheat exported to Athens is examined; such an extraordinary episode is traced to have occurred in the 140s AD. While the precise function of the re-used bronzes remains difficult to pinpoint, a suggestion is offered for their employment in the hands of their intended users through a conceivable *modus operandi*.

KEY WORDS: Thessaly, countermarks, wheat-ear, owl, Athens

ABSTRAKT: *Kłosy i sowy. Uwagi na temat kontramarkowanych monet tesalskich*

Grupa tesalskich brązowych monet bitych w okresach późnym klasycznym i hellenistycznym, które w późniejszym czasie kontramarkowano, stanowi intrygujący problem w historii mennictwa Tesalii. W niniejszym tekście, po krótkim nawiązaniu do szerszego kontekstu chronologicznego tego zjawiska, skupiono się na dwóch znaczących kontramarkach: z kłosem i sową. Celem artykułu jest całościowe studium tych kontramarek, umieszczonych na brązowych monetach bitych przez różnych emitentów (Gomfoi, Gyrtón, Larisę, Metropolis, Falannę, Farsalos, Koinon Tesalski). Co interesujące, monety, na których przybijano wspomniane kontramarki, datowane są na IV–I w. p.n.e. Pod uwagę wzięto również grupę srebrnych staterów bitych przez późnohellenistyczne Koinon (wyłącznie kontramarka z kłosem), wydaje się jednak, że w tym przypadku kontramarkowanie związane było z inną okazją.

Na opisywanych brązach tesalskich występują kontramarki albo z kłosem, albo z sową, lub obu typów. Częściej notowane jest umieszczenie kontramarki z sową na tej z kłosem, ale występuje również rzadsza kombinacja kontramarki z kłosem na kontramarcie z sową. Ponieważ wydaje się, że obie kontramarki w dużej mierze były używane jednocześnie, można założyć ich jednoczasowość. Na podstawie analizy zachowanych egzemplarzy można wysunąć interesujące wnioski, że dwie trzecie materiału to monety pewnie lub prawdopodobnie datowane na II–I w. p.n.e., oraz

że prawdopodobnie wszystkie te okazy pochodzą z Tesalii. Kilka obcych monet (z Pelli i Amfipolis, z tą samą parą kontramarek) zostało włączonych do tej grupy już podczas trwania procesu kontramarkowania monet lokalnych (tesalskich).

W artykule podjęto próbę analizy kilku aspektów tego zagadnienia. Kluczowy czynnik stanowi motyw kłosa, nawiązujący do znaczenia starożytnej Tesalii jako jednego z głównych regionów produkujących zboże na przestrzeni stuleci. Jednocześnie można przyjąć, że wytarte egzemplarze zostały zdemonetyzowane i prawdopodobnie wykorzystane jako żetony. Ponadto część rozważań poświęcono trudnemu problemowi praktycznego wykorzystania takich kontramarkowanych egzemplarzy oraz ich użytkownikom. Znaczące wytarcie wielu z opisywanych monet potwierdza tezę, że ich kontrasygnowanie mogło mieć miejsce w okresie I–II w. n.e. Opierając się na ograniczonych świadectwach, można przyjąć, że w kontekście historycznym było to prawdopodobnie jednorazowe działanie. Kierując się takim założeniem i biorąc pod uwagę kwestię eksportu tesalskiej pszenicy do Aten, można wskazać wyjątkowe wydarzenie, które miało miejsce w latach 40. II w. n.e. Podczas gdy dokładna funkcja tych ponownie użytych brązowych monet pozostaje trudna do ustalenia, sugeruje się ich wykorzystanie przez użytkowników poprzez prawdopodobny modus operandi.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Tesalia, kontramarki, kłos, sowa, Ateny

The term countermark¹ (or counterstamp²) is used for a small stamp occasionally placed *a posteriori* on a certain coin.³ It may be observed that such coins quite often have become very worn before being countermarked, although this is not necessarily always the case. A coin can bear on occasion more than one countermark, either on one side or on both sides.⁴ The circulation of coins bearing a countermark of an issuing authority different than the one (city, or king, or *koinon*, etc.) which initially produced the coins is a quite common trait. It is common, however, for the same issuing authority to choose to counterstamp old coins of its own for some reason.⁵ As the reasons for employing these practices can

¹ HOWGEGO 1985: ix: "Countermarks may be defined as stamps applied to coins by means of engraved punches". See also HOWGEGO 1985: 1–2. For some definition limitations (regarding the Roman Provincial issues, but also largely applicable *in genere*) that lead to the exclusion of certain engravings and stamps see HOWGEGO 1985: x, nn. 5–8.

² DOTY 1982: s.v. counterstamp.

³ AMANDRY et AL 2006: s.v. contremarque.

⁴ To cite only a couple of examples, see Numismatik Lanz München, Auktion 155, 10–11 December 2012, lot 291, silver stater of Aspendos, c. 380–325 BC (two wrestlers/slinger; on the reverse three countermarks: helmeted head, bovine, anchor); Münzen & Medaillen Deutschland, Auktion 30, 28 May 2009, lot 323, bronze coin of Prusias I of Bithynia, c. 230–182 BC (head of Apollon / Nike; on the obverse three countermarks: head of Artemis, tripod, *chełys*) – the latter now in the KIKPE Numismatic Collection.

⁵ PENNA 2006: 164–165, 169–170.

vary greatly from time to time,⁶ a general explanation for such phenomena should be avoided; a probable cause for the countermarked Thessalian coin issues under discussion should be sought *ad hoc*, within the chronological limits suggested by the available fragmentary evidence.

Although it is not a largely known fact, it seems that the practice of countermarking was quite widespread in the territory of Thessaly, as attested by examples from several periods. For the earliest specimens, traced to the 5th century BC, there is a comprehensive study,⁷ so only a few side remarks should be made about them. A number of Thessalian silver issues dated in the years c. 460–420 BC⁸ were the first ones to be countermarked; this practice was continued also in the first half of the 4th century BC. For certain countermarks, an intriguing interpretation has been proposed: that they could have been employed as control marks in a procedure for testing the quality of the metal or the weight of the coins;⁹ by discerning monograms or letters that they could be read as “KA” or as “AK”, interpretations were put forward that such engravings may signify the word ΚΑΛΟΝ¹⁰ or another appropriate adjective.¹¹ This theory should be examined with some caution on occasion, as e.g. in the case of the countermark perceived as a monogram consisting of a large “A” and a small “K”, whose meaning is quite uncertain.¹² Similarly, a countermark was tentatively viewed as the letter “K” with analogous connotations in another case,¹³

⁶ See e.g. DE CALLATAÿ 2000: esp. 103–125; STEFANAKIS and TRAEGER 2005; TSELEKAS 2010. See also HOUGHTON and LORBER 2002, vol. II, 37–45, and HOOVER 2008, vol. II, 157, 165, 195, 198–199; BRESSION 2018: 67–135.

⁷ LORBER 1999.

⁸ The monogram engraving on the neck of a horse on a silver obol of the early Thessalian Koinon, c. 470s – 460s BC (see BCD Thessaly II, lot 4: bust of horse / wheat grain), does not give the impression of a countermark: it is in relief, rather lacking any trace of a punch. Viewed as part of the original coin type it may have been intended for rendering a branding mark; see also BCD Thessaly I, lot 1002.

⁹ See LORBER 1999: 222, 226, 229–230, 236 (countermarks A, F, G).

¹⁰ See LSJ: *s.v.* καλός, -ή, -όν, as in καλὸν ἀργύριον (good or genuine silver, of fine quality; opp. κίβδηλον, adulterated).

¹¹ See FISCHER-BOSSERT 2000: 181, n. 9, bringing to notice the expression καθαρὸν ἀργύριον (pure silver) and moreover commenting on the matter of such a countermark being employed for a private or a state procedure; cf. also LORBER 1999: 229.

¹² See e.g. on the obverse of a silver drachm of Larisa (c. 450/440–420 BC), which appeared in Classical Numismatic Group, e-Auction 292, 5 December 2012, lot 47; ex BCD Collection; ex Sotheby’s, 9 December 1993, lot 113 (part of); “Unknown findspot” / 1989 hoard (CH IX.65) – despite a word starting with “AK” being more obvious, a connection with καλὸν is hypothesized. More close to the point might be an adjective like ἀκίβδηλον or ἀκέραιον; LORBER 1999: 229 (countermark F); see also 230, no. 3, pl. 20.3 (the same coin, auctioned later). Also cf. LORBER 1999: 222, countermark G; 224, 226, 229, 230, no. 6, 236, pl. 20.6.

¹³ See e.g. on the obverse of another drachm of Larisa (c. 400–350 BC), that appeared in Roma Numismatics, Auction 4, 30 September 2012, lot 129; ex BCD Thessaly II, lot 369.2; ex Brian Kritt, privately purchased in November 1984; ex Stack’s, 10 June 1970, lot 221 – by reading this monogram as “K”, an interpretation as καλὸν has been followed.

however this possibility is not beyond doubt.¹⁴ An interesting observation involves another countermarked Thessalian coin¹⁵ where is made use of a punch is made use of in the form of the so-called ‘skew’ pattern – with the obvious influence being the standardised reverse incuse of the Aiginetan coins,¹⁶ likely due to the infiltration and impact of the currency of Aigina.¹⁷

The practice of countermarking intensified to an extent in Thessaly during the Hellenistic period, especially if the foreign coins circulating in the region¹⁸ are also taken into account. In any case, due to the focus of this essay, only a selective reference is to be made here. As a characteristic example, the case of bronze coins of Antigonos Gonatas¹⁹ countermarked with a head of Pan²⁰ can be mentioned; more countermark²¹ types can be traced such as e.g. a prow²² or a trident.²³ Another case is the countermark of a Boiotian helmet,²⁴ again on coins of Gonatas. A different helmet type, a bell-shaped helmet with cheek-pieces and rim,²⁵ appears as a countermark on

¹⁴ There is definitely a horizontal *hasta* protruding from the upper left part of the “K”; see also LORBER 1999: 222 (countermark A); 224, 226, 230, no. 4, 236, pl. 20.4. If a monogram was meant, it does not seem to hint at the words *καλὸν* or *καθαρόν* (lack of an alpha), unless quite vaguely.

¹⁵ See a silver drachm of the Perrhaiboi, c. 460–440 BC, auctioned in BCD Thessaly I, lot 1232; the two countermarks appearing on the reverse (particularly the better preserved under the horse’s belly) resemble the reverse incuse of the Aiginetan coins – especially the *post* 479 BC “skew” variety; see KRAAY 1976: 46, fig. 123. For an analogous countermark see LORBER 1999: 223, countermark E (turtle); 230, no. 1, 236, pl. 20.1.

¹⁶ This pattern had become current around 500 BC and remained in use as the standard reverse type of the Aiginetan coins (KRAAY 1976: 44, fig. 117); after c. 479 BC the skew pattern took a more spacious form with thicker stripes separating the incuse compartments (KRAAY 1976: 46, fig. 123).

¹⁷ The economic background for this feature would be that, after the Persians withdrew from Greece in 479 BC, the Persian weight standard was replaced by the Aiginetan for the Thessalian coin issues; KRAAY 1976: 115.

¹⁸ For the circulation especially of the Macedonian royal bronzes in Thessaly see LIAMPI 2000, where some 10,000 coins were taken into account (published material and private collections). Although extremely few (less than 1%) come from published archaeological contexts, all of them were “certified to be of Thessalian origin but without information on the exact place of finding” (LIAMPI 2000: 221 and n. 2).

¹⁹ For the impressive presence of bronzes of Antigonos Gonatas in Thessaly see LIAMPI 2000: 220, 224.

²⁰ Head of Herakles r. / horseman r. (private collection, unpublished). It can be suggested that the same issuing authority (Antigonos) was countermarking its coins at some later stage. There is also a variation of this countermark with a smaller head of Pan.

²¹ See LIAMPI 2000: 224, remarking that various countermarks appear on about half of the “head of Athena / Pan erecting trophy” coins of Antigonos which have been found in Thessaly; based on this comment and on the numerical data provided, a bulk of approx. 1,500 countermarked pieces of this kind can be estimated. It has been also noted that coins of this issue “without countermarks are in fairly good condition, whereas those with countermarks are so badly worn that only the countermark can be detected”.

²² On Antigonos Gonatas’ bronze with head of Athena / Pan erecting trophy (private collection, unpublished).

²³ Also on Antigonos Gonatas’ bronze with head of Athena / Pan erecting trophy (private collection, unpublished).

²⁴ For this helmet type, supposedly often used by the Thessalian cavalry, see X., *Eq.* 12.3: “Κράνος γε μὴν κράτιστον εἶναι νομίζομεν τῷ βοιωτιουργέῃ· τοῦτο γὰρ αὐτῷ στεγάζει μάλιστα πάντα τὰ ὑπερέχοντα τοῦ θώρακος, ὅρᾳν δὲ οὐ κωλύει”.

²⁵ For the bell-shaped helmet (*Glockenhelm*) type *in genere* see DINTSIS 1986: 143–147.

bronze coins of Larisa.²⁶ An eagle countermark can be found on 3rd-century bronzes of Gomphoi and of Metropolis, but its origin cannot be easily pinpointed;²⁷ one more countermark of this kind (an eagle) appears later on bronzes of the Magnetes.²⁸ Another intriguing countermark is featured on bronze coins of the Athamanes: a *boukranion* flanked by A–P.²⁹ During the reign of Augustus, the countermark ΣΕΒ (Σεβαστοῦ)³⁰ is quite commonly used on late Hellenistic coin issues of the Thessalian Koinon. For providing proper commentary on all the extant countermarks found on Thessalian coins or on coins circulating in Thessaly an extensive study would be necessary.

Coming to the pair of countermarks which constitutes the focus of this essay, research was concentrated particularly on material coming from certain private collections, as well as from auction catalogues and online auctions. The present study may not be exhaustive, however, in comparison to the data available from large museum collections or from important publications, the assembled sample could be considered for the time being as representative. The variety of the bronze issues employed for countermarking can be summarily tabulated in the following manner:

TABLE 1. Wheat-ear and owl countermarks on Thessalian Æ coins (quantitative analysis by issuing authority)

<i>Issuing authority</i>	<i>Countermark(s)</i>	<i>Specimens</i>
Gomphoi nymph's head facing / Zeus Palamnaios seated l. ³¹	owl ³² (Fig. 1) owl <i>over</i> wheat-ear ³³ (Fig. 2)	2 1

²⁶ For such a specimen see Classical Numismatic Group, e-Auction 234, 9 June 2010, lot 51: head of nymph Larisa r. / horseman r. (countermark on the obverse). On most specimens there is a spike on the top of the helmet – see e.g. Classical Numismatic Group, e-Auction 342, 14 January 2015, lot 171 (similar issue); ex BCD Collection – so considering a spiked helmet would be the rule.

²⁷ BCD Thessaly II, lot 72.3 (Gomphoi); BCD Thessaly II, lot 483.1–3 (Metropolis). A suggestion has been made that this countermark could reflect a Ptolemaic involvement in the affairs of mainland Greece during the reign of Ptolemy III, however another explanation could be sought. There is also a coin of Metropolis bearing an anchor(?) countermark; see ROGERS 1932: 134–135, no. 411, fig. 220 – a connection with Antiochos III had been tentatively proposed.

²⁸ BCD Thessaly II, lot 424.2 (1st century BC). For an even later issue of the Magnetes (c. 30–27 BC) countermarked with a star, see BCD Thessaly II, lot 424.3.

²⁹ Æ issue with veiled head of Dione / standing Athena (SNG Cop. 39); two known coins, both counterstamped on the obverse. For such a countermarked piece see FRANKE 1961: 23, 24, no. 1, pl. 1, V 1; a second (unpublished) specimen lies in a private collection. Whether the letters A–P may signify, as Franke wonders, Argitheia, the Athamanian “capital” (FRANKE 1961: 23), which stood on Thessalian territory, or something different, it is quite difficult to tell. In any case, the *boukranion* countermark may hint at the reverse of another Æ issue of the Athamanes (SNG Cop. 40).

³⁰ See e.g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 902.1–2.

³¹ ROGERS 1932: 77, nos. 215–217.

³² See e.g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 72.1.

³³ BCD Thessaly II, lot 72.2.

<i>Issuing authority</i>	<i>Countermark(s)</i>	<i>Specimens</i>
Gyrton head of Zeus r. or l. / horse r. ³⁴	owl (Fig. 3) wheat-ear ³⁵ (Fig. 4)	1 1
Larisa nymph's head facing / horse r. ³⁶ (4 th century BC) ³⁷ nymph's head l. / horseman r. ³⁸ (1 st century BC?)	owl ³⁹ (Fig. 5) wheat-ear ⁴⁰ (Fig. 6) wheat-ear + owl ⁴¹ (Fig. 7) wheat-ear <i>over</i> owl ⁴² (Fig. 8) wheat-ear + floral ornament ⁴³ (Fig. 9)	4 16 1 1 1
Metropolis head of Apollon r. / forepart of man-faced bull l. ⁴⁴	owl ⁴⁵ owl <i>over</i> eagle ⁴⁶ (Fig. 10) owl <i>over</i> wheat-ear ⁴⁷ (Fig. 11)	2 1 1
Phalanna male head r. / nymph's head r. ⁴⁸	owl ⁴⁹ (Fig. 12)	1

³⁴ ROGERS 1932: 83, nos. 233–235.

³⁵ BCD Thessaly II, lot 83.13.

³⁶ ROGERS 1932: 94, no. 269ff.

³⁷ Most of the specimens seem to belong to the 4th century BC; one specimen though appears to be a later variety (cf. BCD Thessaly II, lot 396.2, “3rd or 2nd centuries BC”).

³⁸ See BCD Thessaly II, lot 398.1.

³⁹ See e.g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 389.1.

⁴⁰ See e.g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 389.2; also Roma Numismatics, e-sale 12, 1 November 2014, lot 641.

⁴¹ Roma Numismatics, e-sale 1, 31 August 2013, lot 29; accompanied by this comment: “Most likely countermarked by the Athenians 2nd–1st Century BC”. The wheat-ear countermark on the obverse is a bit flattened, mainly due to the owl countermark on the reverse which obviously followed. This is a rare case of such a coin bearing the two countermarks not on the same side. For an analogous case see Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112 (the *fifth* coin of the seventeen in this lot); on this very worn piece, which had probably been produced by the Thessalian Koinon, the wheat-ear (on the reverse) is less preserved, affected by the more clear owl punch that came afterwards (on the obverse).

⁴² BCD Thessaly II, lot 398.2. There seems to be another (rectangular) countermark on the pony tail of Artemis, but this small punch is indistinct.

⁴³ BCD Thessaly II, lot 398.3. It has been put into discussion whether this small floral ornament may be a banker's (?) mark.

⁴⁴ ROGERS 1932: 134–135, nos. 410–411.

⁴⁵ Very worn pieces, which in all probability could be attributed to Metropolis.

⁴⁶ The reverse is almost obliterated.

⁴⁷ BCD Thessaly II, lot 483.5.

⁴⁸ ROGERS 1932: 147, no. 446ff.; see also PAPADEVANGELOU-GENAKOS 2004: 37, 39 and esp. table 1.8.

⁴⁹ The reverse is very worn and corroded.

<i>Issuing authority</i>	<i>Countermark(s)</i>	<i>Specimens</i>
Pharsalos Athena's head facing / horseman r. ⁵⁰ Athena's head facing / horseman r.	owl (Fig. 13) wheat-ear (Fig. 14)	3 1
Thessalian Koinon head of Apollon r. / Athena Itonia r. ⁵¹	owl ⁵² (Fig. 15) wheat-ear ⁵³ (Fig. 16) wheat-ear? + owl ⁵⁴ (Fig. 17)	14 16 1
<i>Incerti</i> (mostly Thessalian Koinon?)⁵⁵	owl (Fig. 18) wheat-ear (Fig. 19) wheat-ear + owl (Fig. 20) owl <i>over</i> wheat-ear (Fig. 21) wheat-ear <i>over</i> owl (Fig. 22)	13 19 1 10 2
Uncertain (Larisa?) nymph's head facing / horseman r. (?) ⁵⁶	owl (<i>over</i> wheat-ear?) (Fig. 23)	1
Uncertain (Homolion?) head of Philoktetes r. / coiled serpent r. (?) ⁵⁷	owl (Fig. 24)	1
Uncertain (Phalanna?) male head r. / nymph's head r. (?)	wheat-ear (Fig. 25)	1
Uncertain (Triokka?) nymph's head r. / Asklepios seated r. (?) ⁵⁸	wheat-ear (Fig. 26)	1
TOTAL		117

In order to take a look at the broader picture, certain late issues of silver staters of the Thessalian Koinon can be drawn into the discussion,⁵⁹ on which a wheat-ear

⁵⁰ ROGERS 1932: 155–160, no. 488ff.

⁵¹ ROGERS 1932: 20, no. 5ff.

⁵² See e.g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 899.8.

⁵³ One of the specimens was noted to have been sold online by Herakles Numismatics (18 May 2004): “Thessalian League”, very worn (7.357 g, 20 mm); wheat-ear on the reverse.

⁵⁴ On this piece the wheat-ear(?) countermark seems very faint, while the owl countermark is clear and might have been placed at a second stage.

⁵⁵ Very worn pieces, but minor traces alongside with their fabric show that there is a strong possibility that most of them are coins of the Hellenistic Thessalian Koinon (2nd–1st centuries BC).

⁵⁶ For the issue possibly hinted by traces of the undertypes see ROGERS 1932: 95–96, nos. 284–287a; see also BCD Thessaly II, lot 393 – esp. 393.3 (3rd century BC) with a rather similar hair rendering on the obverse.

⁵⁷ ROGERS 1932: 89–90, nos. 257–258.

⁵⁸ See *Ibidem*: 177–178, nos. 554–557.

⁵⁹ For the dating of these issues see KLOSE 1998: esp. 334, 337, n. 28, 338, 345 (Stilgruppe V).

countermark appears. These emissions were struck with the following magistrate names:

- ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ – ΜΕΝΕΚΡΑΤΗΣ⁶⁰
- ΙΤΑΛΟΥ – ΑΡΝΙΑΣ (Fig. 27)
- ΠΥΘΩΝΟΣ – ΚΛΕΟΜΑΧΙΔΗΣ⁶¹
- ΠΟΛΥΞΕΝΟΥ – ΕΥΚΟΛΟΣ⁶² (Fig. 28)

Quite importantly, the well-dated coin hoard Aidona/1955⁶³ (*IGCH* 351, burial date: c. 48–44 BC) contained a stater of the issue ΠΟΛΥΞΕΝΟΥ – ΕΥΚΟΛΟΣ bearing a wheat-ear countermark;⁶⁴ accordingly a *terminus ante quem* arises for the use of this particular countermark on the said staters. It is quite possible that a countermarking episode took place in relation with the presence of Pompey and Caesar in Thessaly,⁶⁵ perhaps in order to realise some transactions linked with grain distribution to Roman troops. However, the countermarked Thessalian silver staters should rather be dissociated with the countermarked Thessalian bronzes under discussion: by examining the variety of wheat-ear countermarks at hand, there seem to be more differences than similarities between the two sets. Moreover, as it will be shown further on, the opportunity for the countermarking to have taken place in the 40s BC is rather too early for the majority of the discussed coins.

Interestingly enough, better chances of affinity can be traced in similar examples of countermarked bronzes minted by issuing authorities outside the Thessalian territory. Such close analogies can be seen for certain *Æ* pieces struck by Pella and Amphipolis:

- Pella, head of Athena r. / cow grazing r.;⁶⁶ on obv. countermarks: wheat-ear + owl (Fig. 29).
- Pella, head of Roma r. / legend within oak-wreath;⁶⁷ on obv. countermarks: wheat-ear + owl (Fig. 30).

⁶⁰ See e.g. *BCD Thessaly II*, lot 886.1.

⁶¹ See e.g. *BCD Thessaly II*, lot 887.1; H.D. Rauch, *Auktion 90*, 4 June 2012, lot 149.

⁶² By examining a number of specimens of this issue, it becomes evident that the countermark is placed on various spots of the coin's field rather than at random.

⁶³ See FRANKE 1959; found near Kalampaka, the hoard was comprised by 4 Thessalian staters (2 pieces of the issue ΠΥΘΩΝΟΣ – ΚΛΕΟΜΑΧΙΔΗΣ, one ΚΥΛΛΟΥ – ΠΙΕΤΡΑΙΟΣ, and one ΠΟΛΥΞΕΝΟΥ – ΕΥΚΟΛΟΣ) and 4 Roman *denarii* (80–46 BC; dates given here in accordance to *RRC*).

⁶⁴ FRANKE 1959: 62, fig. 1.4, 63, no. 4, n. 7.

⁶⁵ Thessalian resources in support of Caesar's campaign are referred in the *Commentarii de Bello Civili*: "Petraeus (...) suis ac suorum opibus Caesarem enixe iuvabat" (3.35); "(...) ut suis omnibus facultatibus uteretur, praesidiumque ab eo militum petierat" (3.80).

⁶⁶ SNG Cop. 266ff.

⁶⁷ SNG Cop. 261.

- Amphipolis, head of Poseidon r. / horse r.;⁶⁸ on obv. countermarks: wheat-ear + owl (Fig. 31).
- Amphipolis, head of Poseidon r. / horse r.; on obv. countermarks: wheat-ear *over* owl (Fig. 32).⁶⁹

In addition, there is a rather dated report for a worn Æ coin with an owl countermark coming from an excavation at Lamia (in the Th. Margianos' plot, 1983);⁷⁰ this uncertain piece⁷¹ may add one more example to the material examined here. À propos, a wheat-ear countermark found on a couple of coins of the Opountioi Lokroi⁷² could also be considered as having a certain similarity and might be a correlated case.⁷³

Even without including the uncertain attributions (Homolion?, Triikka?) or the peripheral additions, it is quite apparent that the countermarks under discussion were applied on a sample harvested predominantly from the coin production of several cities of Thessaly and the Hellenistic Thessalian Koinon. Illustrating the origin of the specimens could be telling, especially if it were verified that most of them, if not all, come from the territory confined by the borders of late Hellenistic and Roman Thessaly (Map 1). The preponderance of specific issuing authorities (Larisa, Koinon) may also give a hint for a possible convergence point where the countermarking could have taken place. While it would seem probable to assume a centrally orchestrated mechanism, the possibility that various private parties might have been acting separately on a local level,⁷⁴ although somehow in coordination, also cannot be excluded.

The appearance of both the owl and the wheat-ear countermarks on a number of specimens poses a matter for further discussion. Moreover, the more common counterstamping of the *owl over the wheat-ear* coexists with the more rare

⁶⁸ SNG Cop. 64ff.

⁶⁹ Besides the two Æ coins of Pella and the two Æ coins of Amphipolis cited here, there are also known three more Amphipolitan Æ pieces of the same issue and with the same countermarks (BCD Collection, unpublished). All these coins reportedly come from the area of Thessaly, except for the second coin of Pella (Fig. 30) whose provenance is unspecified.

⁷⁰ The coin had been brought in early 1994 to the Numismatic Museum, Athens; it had been found alongside with a Æ coin of Phalanna (male head r. / nymph's head r.) and a very worn Æ coin. There is only a document filed in the "Archive of Numismatic Circulation" kept in the Numismatic Museum, Athens, but no photos. See also PAPAKONSTANTINO-KATSOUNI 1983: 163, just mentioning the three Æ coins in the preliminary excavation report (proposed archaeological context: "end of 3rd century BC").

⁷¹ In the document traced in the "Archive of Numismatic Circulation" a question is posed if the said piece might be a coin of the Akarnanian Koinon (SNG Cop. 421); *non vidi* – it should be sought somewhere among the holdings of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Phthiotida (Lamia).

⁷² See BCD Lokris – Phokis, lots 148 and 149.2 (third quarter of 1st century BC).

⁷³ On the other hand, the case of a bronze coin of Skarpheia bearing two countermarks (owl and star; BCD Lokris – Phokis, lot 160.5) does not seem to be related to the countermarked Thessalian coins under discussion.

⁷⁴ The variety of dies observed with regard to the wheat countermarks, as well as to the owl countermarks, seems to hint at several stamps having been in use.

combination of the *wheat-ear over the owl*,⁷⁵ a fact which can suggest that the two countermarks may be synchronous. Plausibly enough, these countermarks could have been placed in tandem by the same authorities, however the possible interference of another party should be investigated.

All available evidence clearly points to Thessalian territory as a place of reference, at least as a key factor implied by the wheat-ear symbol.⁷⁶ It could be suggested that the center stage for this phenomenon was Thessaly, while such cases constituted by the extraneous pieces⁷⁷ of Pella and Amphipolis (and perhaps also of the Opountioi Lokroi) obviously hint at a supplementary and marginal involvement. Fragmentary evidence further underlines the origin of these coins: it has been officially on record that in 1994 worn coins with wheat-ear and owl countermarks were delivered by a resident of Vryotopos, in the area of Tyrnavos.⁷⁸ Apparently, for all the countermarked pieces that there is some shred of information, no direction other than Thessaly has thus far emerged.

It is well known that Thessaly through the ages was a major grain-producing region. Epigraphic evidence highlights the significance of the Thessalian wheat in relation to exports made to Athens during the late 3rd and the 2nd century BC.⁷⁹ In a remarkable inscription found at Larisa and most probably dated to c. 135/130–129/125 BC⁸⁰ the supply of wheat to Rome is reported due to some shortage. The attested volume of the exported grain is impressive, amounting to 430,000 *kophinoi* ('baskets'),⁸¹ while the reference to local currency (for a fine of 2 staters and 9 obols per *kophinos*) is also of certain interest.⁸² Furthermore, the importance of Thessalian grain for the Roman armies during the civil wars⁸³ (at least in the one

⁷⁵ There are known at least twelve pieces with the *owl over the wheat-ear* combination, compared to the *wheat-ear over the owl* variety which is represented by only three specimens (see Fig. 8, Fig. 22), third specimen (an *incertus*) not illustrated. An Amphipolitan piece adds a fourth specimen (Fig. 32).

⁷⁶ For instances of wheat or grain appearing on Thessalian coins see e.g. BCD Thessaly II, lots 1–18, 462–463, 471, 473, 727–732, 875.2–3, 903.2, 904.1, 904.3. See also STOYAS 2009; BCD Thessaly I, lot 1413.

⁷⁷ For the practice of including extraneous coins while countermarking local coins cf. HOWGEGO 1985: 7.

⁷⁸ Delivered by Ath. Gidarokostas in June 1994 (according to the "Archive of Numismatic Circulation" kept in the Numismatic Museum, Athens). Vryotopos is quite close to Larisa (c. 15 km) and actually lies within a triangle formed by three ancient sites: *Larisa* – *Kastri* (probably *Phalanna*), between *Ampelonas* and *Tyrnavos* – "*Gremoura*" (probably *Gyrton*), community of *Dendra*.

⁷⁹ IG IX.2, 506; see HELLY 2008: 25–28, 38–39, 46, 54–55, 57, 100–103, 108; SEG LVIII.525 (three decrees for the sale of grain to Athens, the earliest dated c. 220–205 BC, the second c. 196–193/2 BC and the latest in the 140s BC).

⁸⁰ It was originally dated to the mid-2nd century BC; see GALLIS 1976, as well as GARNSEY, GALLANT and RATHBONE 1984: esp. 36–44. For the redating see GARNSEY and RATHBONE 1985: 25, and SEG XXXIV.558. See also HELLY 2008: 87–89, esp. n. 134; MACKIL 2015: 501.

⁸¹ GARNSEY, GALLANT and RATHBONE 1984: 36 (lines 13–14), 37, 39.

⁸² *Ibidem*: 36 (lines 36–37), 37.

⁸³ LARSEN 1938: 420.

culminating at *Pharsalia* in 48 BC), as well as a little earlier⁸⁴ and later, cannot be overlooked.

The involvement of a military factor in connection to the use of the countermarks⁸⁵ might be an avenue for further examination, but generalizing such a hypothesis is not acceptable in recent and current research.⁸⁶ At a parallel level, there is a quite widespread practice of countermarking, with the employment of names of emperors, commanders, etc, mainly involving the Roman bronze *asses*.⁸⁷ During the first half of the 1st century AD, the annual wage of a legionary was 225 silver *denarii* (i.e. 3,600 *asses*),⁸⁸ a little later under Domitian the sum was raised to 300 *denarii* annually.⁸⁹ The weights of the above-mentioned countermarked Thessalian coins practically range between 5 and 8 g; taking the diameter (c. 20 mm in average) into account and based on the metrological data of the broader area⁹⁰ there is the possibility that the pieces in question might have been gradually re-tariffed as *assaria* after the early imperial period.⁹¹ However, during the imperial period the area of Thessaly was quite far from the main military centers, which quite logically were concentrated near the Roman *limes*. Consequently, any attempt to view these countermarks in association with the presence of troops is highly unlikely to be borne out in practice. Moreover, there is no solid clue on these pieces giving the impression that some adjusted value⁹² was applied, while a demonetised function could be argued too.⁹³

The advanced wear of many of the coins in question supports the idea that the countermarking could have taken place after quite some time, at some point in the 1st–2nd centuries AD.⁹⁴ It is also intriguing to note that the coins employed for countermarking span a significant period of time (4th–1st centuries BC) as shown in the table on the next page.

⁸⁴ LARSEN 1938: 425 (with reference to the presence of Sulla in Greece in 87–86 BC).

⁸⁵ See MAC ISAAC 1995: 23, for such a case: a countermark (open hand) affixed probably by a military authority on some 60% of the inaugural issue of the Corinthian duoviral coins.

⁸⁶ See e.g. KOS and ŠEMROV 1995: 45.

⁸⁷ See e.g. *Ibidem*: 44, 46.

⁸⁸ Every four months a legionary would receive in cash only 13 *denarii* (=208 *asses*), i.e. 52 *asses* per month; KOS and ŠEMROV 1995v 46.

⁸⁹ ANDERSON 2002: 93.

⁹⁰ See RPC I, 246, 281; RPC II, 68; cf. BURRER 1993: 61–68, esp. 62, for a different metrological analysis. See also RPC III, 24, 61. Cf. PAPAETHYMIOU 2004: esp. 66, 69, 74–75 (for the imperial coinage of the Magnetes, esp. for the period from Trajan to Commodus).

⁹¹ On this matter cf. HOWGEGO 1985: 57: “Thessaly continued to reckon in obols into the 1st century AD, but whether the coins were so-called is uncertain”.

⁹² Cf. HOWGEGO 1985: 8–10, for countermarks of denominational value.

⁹³ For this discussion see *infra*, esp. n. 114.

⁹⁴ See also the comment in BCD Thessaly II, lot 483.5. A similar remark was made more recently in the auction catalogue Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112; “BCD comments: If the average wear of the Thessalian Confederacy Apollo/Athena Itonia bronzes is taken into account, one could hypothesize a time for these countermark applications during the late first or early second century AD”.

TABLE 2. Wheat-ear and owl countermarks on Thessalian \mathcal{A} coins (quantitative analysis of issuing authorities listed by original production period)

<i>4th century BC (or later)⁹⁵</i>		
Larisa	21	
Uncertain (Homolion?)	1	
	22	18.80%
<i>4th–3rd century BC</i>		
Phalanna	1	
Uncertain (Phalanna?)	1	
Pharsalos	4	
Uncertain (Triikka?)	1	
	7	5.98%
<i>3rd century BC</i>		
Gomphoi	3	
Gyrton	2	
Metropolis	4	
Uncertain (Larisa?)	1	
	10	8.55%
<i>2nd–1st centuries BC</i>		
Thessalian Koinon	31	26.50%
<i>2nd–1st centuries BC (?)</i>		
<i>Incerti</i> (mostly Thessalian Koinon?) ⁹⁶	45	38.46%
<i>1st century BC (?)</i>		
Larisa	2	1.71%
TOTAL	117	

From the above statistical analysis, it is quite evident that *two-thirds* (66.67%) of the available material are constituted by coins safely or probably dated to the 2nd–1st centuries BC. Interestingly enough, these coins usually have a greater degree of wear,⁹⁷

⁹⁵ See *supra* n. 37.

⁹⁶ See *supra* n. 55.

⁹⁷ The coins originally produced in the 4th–3rd centuries BC, on the other hand, have on occasion a better state of preservation, for which certain factors should be considered (e.g. thicker flan, higher relief), with the more significant being that they may have been withdrawn at some point after a shorter period of circulation. An analogous remark was made recently in the auction catalogue Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112; “BCD comments: (...) the civic coins, as a whole (including Amphipolis and Pella, the only non Thessalian mints), are generally better preserved than the Confederacy bronzes. (...) Nevertheless, it would be safe to say that, for almost the same period of time, the latter saw much more circulation and handling than the former”.

which points to an extended period of circulation.⁹⁸ Cases of prolonged numismatic lifespan are not unusual, however each of them should be examined carefully, as the presence of coins varies regarding their more or less intense use, their occasional withdrawal and sometimes their reinstatement into circulation,⁹⁹ as well as their incidental hoarding.¹⁰⁰ It is fairly acceptable to consider certain portions of the coins in the discussed material as having survived for long intervals of time, while some others for even longer. Whether their countermarks might have been applied at different points of time or if they were rather employed for a single occasion constitutes a knotty question.

Based on the overview and the analysis of the countermarks presented above (Tables 1 and 2) one might wonder if a focal point could be sought for the countermarking process: perhaps Larisa, being the federal mint both in the Hellenistic and the Roman times, could have operated as such. It seems tempting to consider that the Thessalian authorities were involved in the counterstamping of these bronze pieces.¹⁰¹ Taking into account the places of origin of the coins,

⁹⁸ It may be likely for one to assume that the federal coins were in use for a long time, while the civic coins could have been drawn into the countermarking “pool” after having gone through a slightly different process: older coins with occasionally less wear could have been located, for instance, in certain sanctuaries. Two major sanctuaries in Thessaly were the one of Athena Itonia near Philia and that of Zeus Eleutherios at Larisa; it has been suggested that after 196 BC they were administered by the Thessalian Koinon, playing an important role at least until the end of the 1st century BC; GRANINGER 2011: 43–86, esp. 43.

⁹⁹ In a discussion that may be lengthy, an array of examples can be brought up, more or less representative for several variations of such phenomena. See e.g. MAC ISAAC 1995: 21: some Corinthian bronzes Pegasos / trident (4th century BC) which are considered as “resurrected coins” because of their survival down to the 1st–2nd centuries AD and their reinsertion in the economic arena in the late 4th century AD. For more such cases see PICARD 1989: 176 (Thasian bronzes of the 2nd century BC continuing to circulate during the imperial period); BUTCHER 2003: 27–29 (discussing also the occasional residuality of coins), 30–31, 75, 99, 113 (“mixed” contexts from excavations in Beirut); BUTCHER 2004: 187–191, esp. 189 (Syrian coins with countermarks); PARKS 2004: esp. 154–156, 158 (countermarked Cypriot coins of the Roman times); IOSSIF 2016: 266, n. 21 (Seleucid coins found in excavation strata of the 2nd and the 4th century AD at Apamea). On the matter of the longevity of coins see also KNAPP and MAC ISAAC 2005: 21; BUTCHER 2008; KATSARI 2011: 22–23.

¹⁰⁰ Extending the discussion from the previous note, here follow certain cases of coin hoards mentioned as indicative. The Berbati hoard/1953, containing one iron coin of Argos (4th century BC) and 14 bronze coins ranging from Arcadius (AD 383–408) to Manuel I (3 imitative tetartera, *post* c. AD 1160); HAHN 1996: 445–449; PENNA 1996: 200, 223, 236, 238, 269, 288, no. 17. The Livanates hoard/1970, containing 1,089 AE coins: 9 coins dated before Christ (among them 1 coin of Antigonos Gonatas, 277–239 BC, and 3 coins of the Opountioi Lokroi), supposedly used on the basis of their weight; the majority of the identified coins is dated from AD 337 to AD 572/3; four Komnenian coins are deemed to be intrusive; VLACHAKI 2007: esp. 131–132, and nn. 8 and 12. The Krnova hoard/1950 (Hroznová, Czech Republic), containing four AE coins: 1 ancient coin of Carthage (c. 241–146 BC) and three Byzantine coins of the same mint, suggesting a burial date c. AD 668/9; POPOVIĆ 2006: 84, 420, no. 356. The Athenian Agora hoard/1971, containing 341 AE coins: two Athenian coins, one of the 2nd(?)/1st century BC and one of the late 1st century BC were found alongside pieces dating from Justinian I to Tiberius II (burial date: AD 580s); KROLL, MILES and MILLER 1973: 301–309. The Athenian Agora “South House” hoard *a*, containing 58 AE coins: the earliest is an Athenian piece of the late 1st century BC, while the burial date is placed either in the 250s or the 260s AD; KROLL 1993: 303.

¹⁰¹ This supposition does not exclude of course the possibility of certain persons with authority being in cahoots with wealthy individuals for the sake of profitable private activities.

a tendency *a prima vista* to associate the wheat-ear countermarks with the center and the owl countermarks with the more outer areas of Thessaly should be discarded as largely unsubstantiated. A valid observation is that the wheat-ear countermarks clearly outnumber the owl countermarks: 56 to 43, if only counting the pieces with a single countermark, or 74 to 61, if the pieces combining the two types are also included.

Having to deal with the wheat parameter, it is worth remembering the remark that “[a]gricultural produce, particularly corn, played a significant role alongside coin in taxation, rents, wages, and credit”.¹⁰² This practice was not necessarily connected with some periodic lack of coinage; the use of corn represents a substantial economic factor to be taken into account in the broader picture, emerging prominently, beyond the matter of how and to what degree “money use was embedded in the structure of the economy”¹⁰³ of the Graeco-Roman world.

There is an innate difficulty in understanding the precise nature of these countermarked coins, although it may be supposed that this was not the case for the people who used the pieces in question.¹⁰⁴ Pinpointing a suitable instance which could be linked with these countermarks as a *raison d’être* for their application emerges as a challenging task.¹⁰⁵ Towards this direction a more or less plausible hypothesis could be advanced in connection with a philological testimony by Philostratos, which involves the sophist Publius Hordeonius Lollianus¹⁰⁶ of Ephesos. Lollianus lived and taught in Athens in the times of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius; during the reign of the latter, probably in the 140s AD (in connection to epigraphic evidence),¹⁰⁷ besides being the first to hold the chair of rhetoric,¹⁰⁸ the sophist undertook also the office of στρατηγὸς ἐπὶ τῶν ὀπλῶν. At that time this practically

¹⁰² HOWGEGO 1992: 29. Based on this view, some emphasis may be given here to the use of corn for credit.

¹⁰³ *Ibidem*: 29. This perspective should be regarded within the framework of the old primitivist–modernist controversy, as well as the substantivist–formalist debate, concerning the character of ancient economies. For just a couple of overviews on these rather tangled matters see BRESSON 2007: 17–30; MORLEY 2007a: 1–16.

¹⁰⁴ As it has been remarked, “(...) in the context in which they were applied the countermarks would have been common, and easy to recognize and interpret” (see HOWGEGO 1985: 7).

¹⁰⁵ Recently a proposal was put forward in the auction catalogue Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112; “BCD comments: (...) We know that in AD 99, Trajan ordered that grain be sent from Rome to Egypt. It could well be that during that time a compulsory grain donation was enforced on some Thessalian farmsteads that showed a surplus for the season. This would be a convenient way for the local officials to obtain the emperor’s favor at no cost to themselves”. The Egyptian famine of AD 99 and Trajan’s shipment to Egypt is reported by Pliny the Younger (*Panegyricus*, 31.2–5); see also SMELIK and HEMELRIJK 1984: 1924–1925, n. 459; GARNSEY 1988: 251. This seems a bit like a long shot, but it is still an interesting suggestion; due to lack of strong evidence it is questionable though if the said event can fit well with the appearance of the Thessalian countermarked pieces.

¹⁰⁶ Lollianus’ full name (Πόπλιος Ὀρδεώνιος Λολλιανὸς ὁ σοφιστής) is attested in IG II² 4211.

¹⁰⁷ IG II² 1764 B1 (AD 141/2 or 142/3); see AVOTINS 1975: esp. 313, n. 3.

¹⁰⁸ It can be assumed that Lollianus had already given private classes in Athens during the reign of Hadrian, but that he received the public professorship only in the time of Antoninus Pius; HENRICHS 1972: 24, n. 2.

meant that he was responsible for the distribution of corn¹⁰⁹ in the city – similarly to the responsibilities of a *praefectus annonae*. During his tenure of office, he had to deal with a famine incident; the source even recounts that a mob, considering the *strategos* liable for this scarcity, was ready to stone him. The outbreak of violence was dissuaded by Pankrates the Cynic, who used humour in a timely fashion to defuse the high tensions, by uttering the witticism that “Lollianus is not a bread-monger, but a word-monger”.¹¹⁰ The whole affair was eventually resolved through the arrival of ships carrying grain from Thessaly at the harbour of Piraeus.¹¹¹ Moreover, an interesting detail is also noted: due to the fact that the public treasury was empty, Lollianus collected a large sum from his *gnōrimoi* (τοῖς αὐτοῦ γνωρίμοις), i.e. his circle of friends, in order to handle this matter. Quite obviously, he turned to his rich pupils for assistance, as it is stated that he did not pay back the money to them later, but he reciprocated by remitting the fees for his lectures.¹¹²

In this outstanding episode two crucial elements can be underlined: the grain coming through Thessalian intervention¹¹³ and acting after a fashion like a *deus ex machina*, as well as the lack of money in the Athenian treasury. How Lollianus managed to handle the resulting payment is not so evident; to buy some time, if possible, he might have resorted to an arrangement involving credit, enacting perhaps some practical solution so that to ease the transaction until the sum was collected. Nevertheless, since no countermarked coins of the kind under discussion are known to have been found in Athens, to make a claim that the owl counterstamping might have taken place there would be unfounded.

The provenance of the countermarked pieces seems to imply that Thessalian authorities (working together with private individuals?) deployed old and worn coins in such an instance and probably utilized them as tokens.¹¹⁴ One could only guess

¹⁰⁹ Philostr., VS, 1.23: “Λολλιανὸς δὲ ὁ Ἐφέσιος προὔστη μὲν τοῦ Ἀθήνησι θρόνου πρῶτος, προὔστη δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἀθηναίων δήμου στρατηγήσας αὐτοῖς τὴν ἐπὶ τῶν ὀπλῶν, ἡ δὲ ἀρχὴ αὕτη πάλα μὲν κατέλεγέ τε καὶ ἐξῆγεν ἐς τὰ πολέμια, νυνὶ δὲ τροφῶν ἐπιμελεῖται καὶ σίτου ἀγορᾶς”.

¹¹⁰ Philostr., VS, loc. cit.: “... Παγκράτης ὁ κύων (...) εἰπὼν «Λολλιανὸς οὐκ ἔστιν ἀρτοπώλης, ἀλλὰ λογοπώλης» διέχεεν οὕτω τοὺς Ἀθηναίους”.

¹¹¹ Philostr., VS, loc. cit.: “Σίτου δὲ ἐκ Θεσσαλίας ἐσπεπλευκὸς”.

¹¹² For a description of this episode see HERTZBERG 1868: 320–321; WATTS 2006: 28–29, nn. 21–23. See also STOYAS 2009: 455, n. 24. Additionally, for Lollianus see HERTZBERG 1868: 315–316, n. 39, 319; WATTS 2006: 32–33, n. 44.

¹¹³ For the continuing role of Thessaly as a grain-producing area see LARSEN 1938: 478, 483. By association, one can bring to notice the comment that in the Roman Mediterranean “the costs of transport tended to restrict large-scale trade in cheaper, bulkier goods like grain to special cases like Athens and to emergency famine relief”. (MORLEY 2007b: 574, and n. 13).

¹¹⁴ It has been stated that “[t]he category of exnumia (coin-like objects) should be inclusive of those items which started their existence as coins but were later converted to tokens” (MAC ISAAC 1995: 24). See also HOWGEGO 1985: x, 11, 12, 14; cf. the *tesserae* found at the Corinth excavations (EDWARDS 1933: 9, 40, nos. 228–231, pl. VI); there are certain similarities, with the difference being the use also of letters (DD or COR) – Corinth, however, had the status of a Roman colony after its refoundation in 44 BC.

that they may have been employed in a way to mark a monetary value (as *tesserae nummariae*) or rather a quantity of grain (as *tesserae frumentariae*),¹¹⁵ with the second case being more probable.¹¹⁶ From the perspective of an entirely demonetised function, a proposal is put forward here that the wheat-ear and owl countermarks could have been applied both in order to signify their end-users.¹¹⁷ In this case this would mean that the wheat-ears may mark the producers and the place of origin, while the owls possibly denote the customers and the place of destination. The little owls on the countermarked pieces bear some affinity to the owls appearing on the Athenian small change of the early 120s AD, as well as on the similar pieces dated from the 140s to c. 175 AD.¹¹⁸ The whole procedure could have been easier to explain if there was only the more common combination of the *owl over the wheat-ear*,¹¹⁹ it could be argued that the rare pieces with the *wheat-ear over the owl* might have come to be due to some temporary disruption in the transaction process because of some confusion or haste, but one should remain skeptical of such an explanation. In any case, the use in parallel of the two combinations seems to indicate their synchrony and their possible perception as practical ‘trademarks’ of a sort.¹²⁰

Keeping in mind the probability that either the countermarked pieces may not have left Thessaly or that perhaps all of them were brought back, some further notion could be offered for their function in the hands of their intended users. This may be associated with the practice attested for the Hellenistic *koinon* to levy a harbour tax, known as ἡ (ε)ἰκοστά, i.e. an *eikostē* or 5%, on imports and exports.¹²¹ Could the applied countermarks possibly have had something to do with custom

¹¹⁵ AMANDRY et AL 2006: s.v. tessera frumentaria, tessère.

¹¹⁶ For the discussion on the *tesserae frumentariae* and the *tesserae nummariae* see NICOLET 1988: 200–202, esp. 412, n. 49 (“just as *tessera frumentaria* means a token entitling the holder to receive corn, so a *tessera nummaria* could be exchanged for money”). On this matter see also VIRLOUVET 1995: 11–17, esp. 310–327, 340–351, 369–371.

¹¹⁷ For an analogous idea cf. APERGHIS 2010: 84 (“Countermarking with either symbols or monograms simply identifies the new end-users for whom old coins were reissued”); also 58 (“When two symbols are present, this is often an indication of two end-users who are to be the intended recipients of a particular issue together”); the comment refers generally to the symbols used on Seleucid coins as control marks. For a critique to this approach (concerning the control marks, not the countermarks) see DE CALLATAÿ 2012: esp. 47.

¹¹⁸ See KROLL 1993: 116 (Period VA, c. AD 120–124; Period VB, c. AD 125/129–140s/150s; Period VC, c. AD 140s/150s – c. 175), nos. 162–167, 226–230.

¹¹⁹ In such a case, the Thessalian and the Athenian authorities could have made an agreement in order to deal with the famine situation, by the use also of credit. The Thessalian corn-producers could have applied on the tokens first the wheat-ear countermark upon dispatch to the distribution center; then the owl countermark could have been applied on occasion upon the realisation of the shipment and in expectation of the payment.

¹²⁰ A different theory could be advanced, e.g. accepting the existence of two Thessalian corn-producers involved: one using the wheat-ear countermark while the other the owl countermark. In this case things would turn out to be very complex with regard to the significance of each stamp (marking a quantity, just the corn owner or something else?) and particularly with the cases of the two stamps appearing in tandem. In another scenario one could wonder if the presence of the countermarked pieces in Thessaly could perhaps mean that a collective shipment failed eventually to be paid, but this would remain in speculation.

¹²¹ See HELLY 2008: 29 (*IG IX.2*, 506b, l. 29 and l. 47), 91–96; MACKIL 2015: 496, 497.

duties collected in some harbour in Thessaly (such as Pyrasos,¹²² the *epineion* of Phthiotides Thebai,¹²³ or Echinos,¹²⁴ or even Demetrias) at least in part? In the suggested context of the mid-2nd century AD, the Thessalian Koinon was probably part of the province of Macedonia,¹²⁵ while Athens belonged to the province of Achaia. Arguably, the application of an export tariff for the benefit of the *koinon* could be valid even if such an export and the relevant transaction were to be made between parties operating in the same province. In this approach, the wheat-ear countermarks would state the corn-producers operating under the Thessalian authorities; the owl countermarks may have been applied in connection with the grain having to be shipped from a Thessalian harbour to Athens and with the expected revenues deriving from the harbour tax. The *owl over the wheat-ear* pieces could have been subjected to a sample check performed by customs officials, perhaps indicating that the tax had been paid. Adding this factor in the equation could even provide a more suitable explanation, also taking into account the apparent ‘anomaly’ of the *wheat-ear over the owl* countermarks: these tokens could mean that the shipment of certain quantities of grain could have been validated a posteriori, given a series of procedures regulated by the Thessalian authorities.

This set of countermarks should be examined further as part of a wider framework dealing with such phenomena. The proposed Athenian connection should be investigated more thoroughly, hopefully by finding some more clues from the excavation material coming to light in Thessaly and in Athens as well. Furthermore, a number of certain coins of Pergamon are known to have been countermarked with an owl,¹²⁶ but those pieces cannot be assessed at the moment as a parallel phenomenon or as a case study emerging from a totally different context. Nevertheless, the broader picture for the wheat-ear countermarks and the owl countermarks found on coins produced in the territory of Thessaly may seem now less puzzling, even though certain aspects of this riddle might remain unresolved. Be that as it may, it seems clear enough that a certain, likely one-off, incident¹²⁷

¹²² For Pyrasos see ZACHOS 2016: 34–37.

¹²³ *Ibidem*: 32–33.

¹²⁴ Ἐχέινος or Αἰχίνος in Claudius Ptolemaeus (3.13.17); see ZACHOS 2016: 42–46.

¹²⁵ Based on the testimony of Claudius Ptolemaeus (3.13.6), by the time of Antoninus Pius Thessaly had been annexed to the *provincia* of Macedonia; a similar conclusion comes also from *ILS* 1067. It is a matter of debate when Thessaly was detached from the province of Achaia, e.g. one view is in favour of AD 67 under Nero; BOWERSOCK 1965: esp. 288; CHERF 1987: 135. For a comprehensive overview see ZACHOS 2016: 19–20.

¹²⁶ See e.g. G. Hirsch, Auktion 293, 25–26 September 2013, lot 2337 (Pergamon); Savoca, Live Online Auction 4, 30 August 2015, lot 270 (Pergamon); Busso Peus, Auktion 423, 7–9 November 2018, lot 109 (Pergamon?); Busso Peus, Auktion 423, 7–9 November 2018, lot 110 (Philetairos).

¹²⁷ The sample of just 117 countermarked pieces, compared to the tens of thousands of Thessalian bronzes that circulated in the 4th–1st centuries BC, is very small, supporting a logical assumption for a single case in the economic history of Thessaly when the application of the two countermark types took place. One can recall the case in the 190s BC when Athens requested an exemption from the 5% tariff and instead obtained a reduction

prompted the appearance of the showcased pair of countermarks in Thessalian context, in all probability, at some point in the 2nd century AD.

ABBREVIATIONS

BCD Lokris – Phokis = Numismatica Ars Classica, Auction 55, The BCD Collection, Lokris – Phokis, 8 October 2010.

BCD Thessaly I = Nomos AG, Auction 4, Coins of Thessaly, the BCD Collection, 10 May 2011.

BCD Thessaly II = Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XV, BCD Thessaly, 3 January 2012.

CH IX = A. MEADOWS and U. WARTENBERG (eds.), *Coin Hoards*, vol. IX: *Greek Hoards*, London 2002.

IGCH = M. THOMPSON, O. MØRKHOLM and C.M. KRAAY (eds.), *An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards*, New York 1973.

LSJ = H.G. LIDDELL, R. SCOTT and H. STUART JONES, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1996.

RPC I = A. BURNETT, M. AMANDRY and P. P. RIPOLLÈS, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. I: *From the death of Caesar to the death of Vitellius (44 BC–AD 69)*, London–Paris 1992.

RPC II = A. BURNETT, M. AMANDRY and I. CARRADICE, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. II: *From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69–96)*, London–Paris 1999.

RPC III = M. AMANDRY, A. BURNETT, in collaboration with J. MAIRAT et AL, *Roman Provincial Coinage*, vol. III: *Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian (AD 96–138)*, London–Paris 2015.

RRC = M.H. CRAWFORD, *Roman Republican Coinage*, Cambridge 1974.

SNG Cop. = *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals. Danish National Museum*, Copenhagen 1942–1979.

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to 1% (IG IX.2, 506b; HELLY 2008: 39; SEG LVIII.525). *Mutatis mutandis*, perhaps a change in the customs policy of the Thessalians that could have occurred for a brief while at some point in the imperial times (probably before the middle of the 2nd century AD) might have been the cause for the extraordinary employment of such a countermarking process.

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MAP 1

Map of ancient Thessaly, illustrating the origin of the countermarked coins

Note:

Each citation to an auction denotes that this specific coin is shown here. All coins illustrated here are at the 2x scale.

PLATE 1

Fig. 1. Gomphoi, Æ coin countermarked with owl; 7.06 g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 72.1

Fig. 2. Gomphoi, Æ coin countermarked with owl over wheat-ear; 8.22 g.
BCD Thessaly II, lot 72.2

Fig. 3. Gyrton, Æ coin countermarked with owl; 7.22. Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112 (*first* coin of the seventeen in this lot); *ex* BCD Collection

Fig. 4. Gyrton, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear; 6.07 g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 83.13

PLATE 2

Fig. 5. Larisa, Æ coin countermarked with owl; 5.95 g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 389.1

Fig. 6. Larisa, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear; 7.11 g. Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112 (*ninth* coin of the seventeen in this lot); *ex* BCD Collection

Fig. 7. Larisa, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear and owl; 6.57 g. Roma Numismatics, e-sale 1, 31 August 2013, lot 29

Fig. 8. Larisa, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear over owl; 9.64 g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 398.2

PLATE 3

Fig. 9. Larisa, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear and floral ornament; 8.34 g.
BCD Thessaly II, lot 398.3

Fig. 10. Metropolis, Æ coin countermarked with owl over eagle; 8.07 g. BCD Collection

Fig. 11. Metropolis, Æ coin countermarked with owl over wheat-ear; 8.13 g.
BCD Thessaly II, lot 483.5

Fig. 12. Phalanna, Æ coin countermarked with owl; 6.31 g. BCD Collection

PLATE 4

Fig. 13. Pharsalos, Æ coin countermarked with owl; 5.74 g. Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112 (*seventh* coin of the seventeen in this lot); *ex* BCD Collection

Fig. 14. Pharsalos, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear; 7.04 g. Wolf Collection

Fig. 15. Thessalian Koinon, Æ coin countermarked with owl; 6.25 g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 899.8

Fig. 16. Thessalian Koinon, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear; 7.39 g. BCD Collection

PLATE 5

Fig. 17. Thessalian Koinon, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear (?) and owl; 6.31 g.
BCD Collection

Fig. 18. Uncertain Æ coin (Thessalian Koinon?), countermarked with owl; 5.01 g. Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112 (*thirteenth* coin of the seventeen in this lot); *ex* BCD Collection

Fig. 19. Uncertain Æ coin, countermarked with wheat-ear; 5.70 g. KIKPE Numismatic Collection

Fig. 20. Uncertain Æ coin, countermarked with wheat-ear and owl; 6.75 g. Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112 (*third* coin of the seventeen in this lot); *ex* BCD Collection

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- PLATE 6
- Fig. 21. Uncertain Æ coin, countermarked with owl over wheat-ear; 7.20 g. Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112 (*fourth* coin of the seventeen in this lot); *ex* BCD Collection
- Fig. 22. Uncertain Æ coin, countermarked with wheat-ear over owl; 6.16 g. BCD Collection
- Fig. 23. Uncertain Æ coin (Larisa?), countermarked with owl (over wheat-ear?); 7.67 g. Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112 (*eighth* coin of the seventeen in this lot); *ex* BCD Collection
- Fig. 24. Uncertain Æ coin (Homolion?), countermarked with owl; 8.45 g. BCD Collection
- PLATE 7
- Fig. 25. Uncertain Æ coin (Phalanna?), countermarked with wheat-ear; 7.14 g. Wolf Collection
- Fig. 26. Uncertain Æ coin (Trikka?), countermarked with wheat-ear; 6.36 g. BCD Collection
- Fig. 27. Thessalian Koinon, silver stater, countermarked with wheat-ear; 6.29 g. BCD Thessaly II, lot 877.2
- Fig. 28. Thessalian Koinon, silver stater, countermarked with wheat-ear; 5.91 g. Classical Numismatic Group, e-Auction 229, 10 March 2010, lot 105
- PLATE 8
- Fig. 29. Pella, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear and owl; 5.83 g. Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112 (*seventeenth* coin of the seventeen in this lot); *ex* BCD Collection
- Fig. 30. Pella, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear and owl; 8.40 g. Offered by SBC coins for online sale (www.ebay.de) in 2015
- Fig. 31. Amphipolis, Æ coin countermarked with owl over wheat-ear; 6.50 g. Classical Numismatic Group, Triton XIX, 5 January 2016, lot 112 (*sixteenth* coin of the seventeen in this lot); *ex* BCD Collection
- Fig. 32. Amphipolis, Æ coin countermarked with wheat-ear over owl; 5.24 g. Wolf Collection





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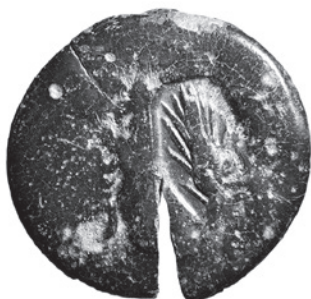
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