

Conclusions

This thesis is a mere first step into a more thorough understanding of Pisidian and even Sagalassian coinage. The data collected in this paper need to be balanced with data from other sites within the region. It is necessary to know the pattern formed by nearby sites, perhaps even the provincial pattern, so that we can isolate peculiarities from a regional background. If this is not done, there remains the risk that coins are viewed as indicative of the incidents in the history of the site, when in fact they reflect vagaries of coins supply to a large area of the empire. Not only information regarding the coinage that circulated in the cities, but also the coins that entered the hinterland needs to be gathered. This possible contrast would in itself already be an interesting point to establish. If it were true that the surrounding area differed qualitatively in coin loss from the city, then that would throw up a different set of interests and possibilities.

However, the coverage of good coin lists over the empire is very thin, without Pisidia being an exception, which leaves us little idea as to which mints supplied which areas, and also where the boundaries between different areas were. This thesis here, together with the coin lists published in the *Sagalassos* series, may help to fill up one of those voids. The number of sites from the Mediterranean where coins can be studied in context is currently extremely limited, with Jerusalem, Rome and Carthage as the only major sites. And even in those cases it concerns very restricted parts of the total excavation. The well-documented site of Sagalassos is a worthy supplement to those sites, not at least because we are dealing with a completely different background as a provincial inland city.

The value of this thesis should thus be regarded as twofold. Firstly it provides intelligible tables and graphs – not only of the total coin population, but also of some specific contexts – that are at the disposition of further researchers. Secondly it attempts to interpret this data in the light of the presented biases. This second aim of the thesis is rather presumptuous, as there is few comparable research on this topic. But this is in a way also the importance of this dissertation: being a first step in research on biased coin populations.

The first chapter is therefore an inherent and imperative part of this thesis, as it gave me – and not only me, I may hope – a more thorough insight in the formation and

interpretation of archaeological contexts. Throughout the chapter I applied this knowledge specifically to the 'artefact' coin and the 'context' Sagalassos. We encountered a lot of objections, but concluded that conclusions *can* be drawn from coins in context, given that the appropriate restrictions are borne in mind. An important issue, however, remains that coin should not be regarded as self-evident in dating contexts, not even as terminus post quem. In fact, in comparison to other artefacts, coins are more likely to appear as intrusive or residual elements in the archaeological record. Their specific features – small dimensions and a high specific gravity – will certainly account for their agile behaviour during site formation processes.

With these observations in mind, we took a closer look at the results from the different sites at Sagalassos in chapter 2. These results let us conclude that, indeed, the coin record *can* be correlated to the site's history, being it building programs, functional changes, natural disasters,...

Some of the general trends and remarkable results that we may deduct from the numismatic material are the following:

- AD 260-270: a period that might representing higher coin discard.
- AD 270-290/310: a subsequent decline that can possibly be related to the disappearance of civic coinages.
- The whole 3rd century AD may in fact be regarded as a rather troublesome period, coinciding with the traditional view of the "crisis of the 3rd CAD".
- AD 310-410: the 4th century AD is characterized by an increasing trend of coin finds, accumulating in the overwhelmingly present years AD 380-410. But from as soon as AD 350 AD onward we may foresee that the coins were kept in circulation for as long as 150 years, probably ending with the ravage and misery brought upon by the early 6th century earthquake.
- AD 410-500: the necessity of older coins maintained in circulation is complementary with the diminishing amounts of 5th century coin issues reaching the city.
- AD 500-620: the devastating effect of the 6th century earthquake was never fully recovered from and the site might even have been as good as deserted for a few years/decennia.
- AD 620-660: the 7th century AD earthquake brought a final blow to the city's existence, but the start of the final decline was set in earlier.

Some additional exercises dealt with the possible effect that biased coins would provoke on any one site. However, this possible influence appeared to be very restricted from specific contexts as the surface / top soil coins as well as from the Lower Agora. An important implication of this observation is that coins are more subject to vertical than to horizontal movement during the formation processes of the archaeological record. We notice indeed that coins from any one site – even neighbouring sites – differ very substantially from each other, while subsequent contexts within one site cannot be differentiated chronologically.

I am confident that this thesis met both aims stated above: its interdisciplinary aspect as well as the element of more profound research are included in the above chapters.

I would dare to recommend that the future coin publications of Sagalassos will also yield coin lists of the stratigraphically related coins, not only by mentioning the number of their respective feature (ex. layer 3), but also the interpretation that has been given to the feature by the archaeologist. That way the coin lists are much more open to subsequent research, even by people who have no further knowledge of the site.