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**Countermarks on the hellenistic coinages of the Cyclades**

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**Introduction**

The coins minted in the Cyclades during the Hellenistic period form a source of significant information for the history of the region. From the third to the first centuries BC, twenty-six mints were active at some time on twenty islands, most of them producing bronze coinages. These figures are indicative of the role that coinage should have played in the local economy and society. Due to the absence of coherent evidence, such as coin hoards and finds from precisely dated contexts, the chronology of these coinages has been broadly fixed mainly on stylistic criteria.

A common feature on these coinages, especially the bronze ones, appear to be the countermarks—i.e. the stamps applied to coins by means of engraved punches—observed on a fair number of specimens. The function of countermarks was to revalidate and provide earlier coins with the status of a legal tender. In practice, countermarking was a quick method of restriking coins and putting them afresh into circulation. Thus, countermarked coins bear more than one date of issue. The first one is when the coins were initially made; the other(s) when the countermarks were applied. In the Hellenistic world official countermarks were placed on both silver and bronze coins. As

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1 The term Cyclades refers to the islands of the central and southern Aegean, a geographical unit distinct from that of the Dodecanese and Sporades. For a concise treatment of the topic, see Sheedy 2006, 13-19.

2 For a survey of the minting activity in the Cyclades, see Sheedy 2006, 2.

3 It is the common view that the early countermarks were private marks of ownership or guarantee of worth; however, during the Hellenistic period countermarking became a monopoly of civic or royal authorities: Mørkholm 1991, 19; Carradice and Price 1988, 98-99; Howgego 1985, 1; Le Rider 1975.
far as the silver is concerned, countermarking of a state's own issues is rare, in contrast to the frequent countermarking of foreign ones. The opposite situation is observed in the bronze coins, where the issuing states often countermarked their own currency.

The purpose of this paper is to present the countermarks applied on the Cycladic coinages of the Hellenistic period and to examine their function in the local economy and society. The main argument is that countermarking is the consequence of broader economic and social circumstances attested also in other archaeological and literary sources.

Countermarks on the Cycladic coins

Countermarks have been detected on the coinages of Aegiale, Arkesine and Minoa on Amorgos, of Andros, of Ios, of Karthaia, Koresia and Ioulis on Kea, of Melos, of Naxos, of Paros, of Seriphos, of Siphnos, of Syros, of Tenos and of Thera.

Amorgos

Aegiale

Two countermarks are to be found on the coinage of Aegiale. A coiled snake was applied on the reverse of the Asklepios / cupping vessel series. A facing owl between the letters A and I was applied on the reverse of three series: (i) Asklepios / cupping vessel, (ii) Athena / cupping vessel, and (iii) Athena / owl. Both countermarks have parallels on the coinage of the city. The snake was used as a symbol while the owl was employed as a reverse type on the bronze series.

Arkesine

Two countermarks appear on the coinage of Arkesine. A facing owl was applied on the obverse, while the monogram AP and the letter I on the reverse of the Athena / ram series. The facing owl, although it is an attribute of Athena, is not included in the coin iconography of Arkesine. The combination of the monogram AP and the letter I, is an abbreviation of the ethnic of the city and appears on some of its issues.

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4 Mørkholm 1991, 19-20. This is also concluded through the cases mentioned in Carradice and Price 1988, 130-131.
6 Liampi 2004, 82-83.
Minoa
A bunch of grapes was applied on the obverse of the Dionysos / kantharos series of Minoa. The type, despite its association with the god of wine, is not included in the local coin iconography.

Andros
Three countermarks appear on the coinage of Andros. A kantharos was applied on the obverse of the Dionysos / thyrsos series. A similar countermark was applied on the reverse of the Dionysos / amphora series. A head of Dionysos was applied on the obverse of the Dionysos / thyrsos series. All the countermarks are directly connected to the local numismatic iconography. The bearded head of Dionysos was employed as the obverse type of four bronze series7. The kantharos was used as the reverse type of three bronze series8.

Ios
Two main countermarks are to be found on the coinage of Ios. A male head r. was applied on the obverse while an Athena standing r. was applied on the reverse of the Homer / Athena series. From the existence of some specimens countermarked only on the obverse, it can be argued that Athena was employed to reissue the already countermarked series with the male head. Special mention should be made on three other countermarks—a facing head of Helios, a forepart of goat r. and an Athena standing l.—all applied on the reverse of a single specimen of the Homer / Athena series. Apart from Athena, that was used as a reverse type, the other types are not in line with the local coin iconography.

Kea
Karthaia
A forepart of the dog Sirios r. was applied on the obverse of the Apollo / Sirios series of Karthaia.

8 (i) BMC, 86-87: 7-8; SNG Copenhagen 601-602. (ii) SNG Copenhagen 603. (iii) BMC, 87: 9; SNG Copenhagen 611-612.
**Koreia and Ioulis**

A female head appears on the obverse of the Apollo / bee series of Koreia as well as of Ioulis. The female head may be that of Ktesylla who was used as an obverse type of two bronze series of Ioulis dated in the first century BC9.

**Melos**

A kantharos was applied on the reverse of three series of Melos: (i) apple / bunch of grapes, (ii) apple / Athena, and (iii) apple / kantharos. Judging from the current sample, it seems that the countermarking was aiming mainly at the apple / Athena series, since it accounts for the majority of the countermarked specimens, without excluding some earlier bronzes that were still around. The kantharos was employed as the reverse type of three bronze series10.

**Naxos**

Seven countermarks appear on the coinage of Naxos. Six are to be found on bronze coins and one on a series of silver drachms. An incuse rectangle containing a bunch of grapes and vine leaves was applied on a Dionysos / kantharos issue. A letter Δ or Δ was applied on the Dionysos / krater issue. A head with Corinthian helmet on the Dionysos / krater issue. A thyrsos was applied on the obverse of the Dionysos / kantharos issue. A tripod was applied on the reverse of the Dionysos / kantharos / krater issue as well as on the Dionysos / volute krater issue11. Finally, a bunch of grapes was applied on the reverse of the drachm issue signed by the magistrate ΑΡΙΣΤΕΑΣ. Only two of the countermarks are connected to the local iconography. The thyrsos was used as a reverse type12 as well as a symbol13 on bronze issues. The bunch of grapes was employed as both an obverse14 and reverse15 type as well as a symbol16 on bronze series.

The countermarked drachms of Naxos —all of them part of the ‘Naxos, 1926’ hoard— are the only Cycladic silver detected so far. The purpose of their countermarking is not clear. Oikonomos argued that the coins were countermarked in order to be in line with bronzes that bear the same reverse17.

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9 Papageorgiadou-Banis 1997, 31–32, series XI and XII.
10 (i) BMC, 104: 11–15; SNG Copenhagen 683. (ii) BMC, 104: 16–19; SNG Copenhagen 684.
11 The countermark has been identified as an apple in Oeconomides 1999, 322: 69 and as a monogram in Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 106; Nicolet-Pierre 2005, 38:20, 43:5.
13 Nicolet-Pierre 2005, 28–29 (canthare 4); 38–40 (cratère 1–2, 4–5).
However, Nicolet has dated the series with Dionysos / bunch of grapes in the second half of the third century BC, i.e. several decades before the issuing of the drachms. On the other hand, Nicolet has suggested that this was a private countermark applied on the drachms soon after their minting judging by their relatively fresh condition. If this is the case, then it stands out of the majority of the countermarks applied on the Hellenistic silver coinages.

Paros

Six countermarks are to be found on the coins of Paros. A rosette with four petals was applied on the obverse of the Persephone or Artemis / kneeling goat as well as the Demeter or Persephone / standing goat series. A star with eight radiates was applied on the reverse of the same series. From the existence of some specimens countermarked only on the reverse, it can be argued that the rosette was employed to reissue the already countermarked series with the star. A pomegranate was applied on the reverse of the Demeter or Persephone / standing goat series. Special mention should be made on three other countermarks, all to be found on a single specimen of the Persephone or Artemis / kneeling goat series. A rose was applied on the obverse while an eagle standing r. and a cithara on the reverse. Apart from the star, which was used as a symbol on the Demeter or Persephone / standing goat series, all the other countermarks have no parallel on the coinage of Paros.

Seriphos

Two countermarks appear on the coinage of Seriphos. A harpa and a thunderbolt were applied each on the obverse of the Perseus / Gorgoneion series. Only the harpa is connected to the local coin iconography; this theme was employed as a regular reverse type on the coinage of the island.

Siphnos

Two countermarks are to be found on the coinage of Siphnos. A caduceus and a five-radiated star were applied on the obverse of the female head / palm tree issue. None of them is connected to the local coin iconography.

18 Nicolet-Pierre 2005, 35.
21 The countermark has been identified as a forepart of goat in Oeconomides 1999, 325: 89.
22 The countermark has been identified as a dog in Oeconomides 1999, 325: 89.
24 The countermark has been identified as a forepart of goat in SNG Copenhagen 734.
25 (i) SNG Copenhagen 735. (ii) BMC, 120: 9; SNG Copenhagen 736–737. (iii) BMC, 119: 8; Copenhagen 738.
Syros
A bee was applied on the reverse of the Pan / goat series of Syros\(^{26}\). The bee was used as an obverse type of a bronze series\(^{27}\).

Tenos
Three countermarks are to be found on the coinage of Tenos. A dolphin r. was applied on the obverse of three series: (i) youthful Zeus Ammon / bunch of grapes, (ii) Poseidon / trident, and (iii) youthful Zeus Ammon / Poseidon. A bunch of grapes was applied on the obverse of the youthful Zeus Ammon / Poseidon series. A star with six radiates was applied on the obverse of two series: (i) Poseidon / trident and dolphins, and (ii) youthful Zeus Ammon / Poseidon with the rose symbol series\(^{28}\). The first two countermarks are connected to the local coin iconography. The bunch of grapes was used as a reverse type of the silver\(^{29}\) and bronze issues\(^{30}\) and apparently functioned as a symbol on silver issues\(^{31}\). The dolphin was employed as a reverse type on bronze issues\(^{32}\); it appears on the reverse of tetradrachms, didrachms and bronzes accompanying Poseidon\(^{33}\); it is also depicted on either side of a trident on the reverse of some bronze issues\(^{34}\).

Thera
A male head r. was applied on the obverse of the Apollo three-quarter to r. / butting bull series of the island.

\(^{26}\) The one specimen so far bearing the countermark on the obverse should be considered as a mistake in the countermarking process.

\(^{27}\) BMC, 124: 16-17.

\(^{28}\) The star was also applied on the obverse of the laureate male head / Poseidon and Amphitrite standing in temple bronze series of Tenos. This series is dated to the beginning of the first century AD according to Étienne 1990, 402 (period IV). Nevertheless, the chronology of this series seems by no means certain. Cf. RPCI, 265: 1303.

\(^{29}\) Étienne 1990, 228: 103 (drachms), 227: 105 (hemidrachms), 236: 204 (drachms).

\(^{30}\) Étienne 1990, 229-232: 108-110, 244-245: 212-213.

\(^{31}\) Étienne 1990, 235: 202 (tetradrachms), 203 (didrachms).

\(^{32}\) Étienne 1990, 233: 112, 244: 208-211.


Commentary

Thirty eight countermarks have been gathered in the present study. Some appear only once on single specimens, while others are to be found on several coins.

The predominant pattern is that certain countermarks were confined to specific islands. This is a strong indication that each state countermarked its own issues. A couple of types that appear on more than one coinages—a bunch of grapes on coins of Tenos, Minoa and Naxos; a kantharos on coins of Andros and Melos—cannot alter the picture, since they are common themes in the Cycladic numismatic iconography. The case is further supported by the limited hoard evidence. The 'Naxos 1926' hoard (IGCH 255) contained 15 silver drachms and 3 bronzes of Naxos countermarked respectively with a bunch of grapes and a tripod. The 'Paros 1936' hoard (IGCH 326) consists of 560 bronzes of Paros, most of them bearing an apple countermark.

The regular use of countermarks is confirmed for the states of Tenos, Paros, Andros, Naxos, Ios, Melos and Seriphos. Countermarking was more intense on some islands, e.g Ios and Paros, and involved the application of a new type on already countermarked coins. Occasionally a type was employed to countermark more than one series, as this is testified in the cases of Aegiale, Andros, Melos, Naxos, Paros and Tenos. On the other hand, a series could have been countermarked once by two or even three types and this is the case for Paros, Tenos, Seriphos and possibly Naxos.

On iconographic grounds the countermarks can be divided into two categories. The first consists of those belonging to the repertoire of the local coin iconography. Sometimes the main type or the subsidiary symbol of an issue was employed to countermark older coins. This clearly shows the effort of the issuing authority for the re-evaluation of former editions and to equate them with the new ones. The countermarking with a thyrsos on a single worn specimen of the Dionysos / kantharos issue of Naxos is the most striking example. The second group contains the countermarks with no direct relation

35 The 'Naxos 1926' hoard consists of silver issues of Athens (13 tetradrachms and 18 drachms), Rhodes (8 hemidrachms and 13 drachms) and Naxos (17 drachms) as well as 3 Naxian bronzes. For a description of the hoard see Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 103-108. One of the hemidrachms of Rhodes is countermarked with a bunch of grapes, very similar to that applied on the silver drachms of Naxos in the same hoard. See Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 103-108 for a full description of the hoard and 105:32 for the countermarked Rhodian hemidrachm.

36 In these instances, countermarking could function as a reliable criterion for the internal arrangement of some series, like the coinage of Aigiale. A characteristic example of the employment of countermarks to equate old issues with new ones is provided by Kyme. See Milne 1913, 389-394.
to the local numismatic iconography. Most of the stamps on the coins of Naxos and Paros belong to this category.

The study of the countermarks on largely the bronze coinages of the Cyclades provides an insight to their production and circulation.

The most obvious function of the Cycladic coinages was to provide the region with small change. The pattern of their production shows that they were issues of variable sizes separated by irregular minting intervals. The production of bronzes was highly profitable, on account of their being overvalued to a great extent. At the same time, the possibility that prominent citizens, who took on the financial sponsorship of a variety of things, also assumed the cost of coin production of their cities should not be ruled out\(^\text{37}\). Thus, it would not be surprising that some states might have tried to increase their income by engaging in periodical demonetizations. The bronzes already in circulation were called in and replaced by a new issue. Under these circumstances demonetized bronze coins probably regained their former status by being countermarked. These measures resulted in old coins circulating alongside new ones, or supplementing issues of small denominations with older coins of bigger size. The use of countermarks to revalue coins and retain them in circulation indicates that this was a response to financial difficulties and to the inadequate supply of bronze coinage. It becomes evident that this practice was the outcome of the islands' effort to use coins in daily transactions without undertaking the financial cost of striking new issues. At the same time, the state might have gained additional profit from a possible fee required for the countermarking process\(^\text{38}\).

Based on the existing evidence, it cannot be argued with certainty when most of the Cycladic issues were countermarked; the main reason being that these countermarks cannot be dated with accuracy. Their chronology could be deduced from the apparent striking date of the coins as a terminus post quem as well as from establishing the period when the financial and social circumstances would require the employment of countermarks.

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\(^{38}\) Despite the frequency of the countermarked coins, there are no literary sources from antiquity mentioning this method. The only evidence is provided by the coins themselves. Therefore, important issues, like whether the coins were brought by the public to be countermarked or whether they were in public funds when countermarked or still, whether a fee was charged, cannot be answered. Nevertheless, there is a tendency to assume that a fee was charged, and even that the revenue from fees was the primary reason for countermarking. See Howgego 1985, 2.
Historical background

Throughout most of their history, the Cyclades lived under the control of an external power. In the Hellenistic period, their political fate was largely determined by the inability of the island communities to avoid domination by a constant succession of competing powers, such as the Hellenistic kingdoms, Rhodes, the pirates and the Roman Republic. Concerning the economy, their situation was determined by their ability to provide for themselves, the availability of trade goods, the movement of people, whether visitors, merchants, pirates, or soldiers and their relation to Delos. Despite the common elements in the economy among the Cyclades, there is variation in the resources of each island. This disparity on the political and economic level is reflected on each island's coin production.

In 315/4 BC many of the Cyclades had been organized in the Nesiotic League under the protection of Antigonus I Monophthalmos and his son Demetrius I Poliorcetes. In the mid 280's BC Ptolemy I assumed the patronage of this confederation and the islands remained under Ptolemaic control until the death of Ptolemy II Philadelphus in 246 BC. It appears that during most of the second half of the third century BC the Cyclades enjoyed an interval from foreign domination. Towards the end of the century the Macedonian presence in the region was asserted by Philip V when he briefly had the control of Paros, Andros and Kythnos. In 200 BC Rhodes became increasingly attracted to the islands, taking the opportunity presented by the Second Macedonian war to seize them and create a new Nesiotic League headquarters at Tenos. The Cyclades remained under Rhodian control at least until 167 BC. It is within the period of short independence and especially during the period of the Rhodian-led League that most of the islands minted coins in bronze, and some of them in silver.

The presence of the Roman authority in the Aegean since the second century BC raises the question of the status of the Cyclades during the following centuries. The hypothesis that all the islands appear not to have the same political fortunes until the establishment of the Empire could be argued with certainty. Thus, Andros originally was subjected to the Attalids of Pergamon and was later included in the province of Asia; Delos was returned

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39 For an account of the political history of the Cyclades, from 314 to 167 BC, see Reger 1994a, 16–20.
40 On this topic, see Reger 1994a, 49.
41 The topic is discussed in detail in Reger 1994b.
to Athenian control and after 167 BC became a free port; Tenos was annexed to the province of Asia in 129 BC\textsuperscript{43}; Amorgos was handed over to the Rhodians by Sulla in 83 BC\textsuperscript{44}. Despite dedications by Roman magistrates exercising provincial authority in Asia found on the islands, the recruitment of judges from Cyclades attested in the cities of Asia Minor and the recorded presence of Roman tax collectors in the region, little can be positively said about the status of the Cyclades as an entity until Vespasian's reign, when they were apparently annexed to the province of Asia\textsuperscript{45}.

Cyclades should have reached a peak in terms of prosperity during the second half of the second and early first centuries BC, when the Roman-Levantine trade at Delos brought the material wealth of the island to its apex\textsuperscript{46}.

Another factor that has to be taken into account is piracy. Throughout the Hellenistic period pirates put at risk sea-trade, raided islands, and were readily enlisted as freebooters in war\textsuperscript{47}. They presented a genuine threat to the ruling power and to the residents of the Cyclades\textsuperscript{48}. Hence, both claims and acts to suppress piracy repeatedly recurred. Moreover, some states, like Kea, Paros, Tenos, Andros, Melos, Astypalaia and Anaphe made arrangements, either with the Aetolians or various Cretan cities—both most notorious pirate groups—in order to prevent raids and guarantee their own safety\textsuperscript{49}. On the other hand, piracy may have had a positive aspect for the local economy. Not only did it provide a kind of alternative employment for poor islanders, but pirates sold their wares on Delos and other economic centres\textsuperscript{50}.

Nonetheless, the situation worsened during the first Mithradatic war (88–86 BC). Mithradates VI of Pontus proceeded to conclude an alliance with the Cyrenean pirates in order to use their naval force as part of his own military machine against Rome. The theatre of war was to take place in the

\textsuperscript{43} Nigdelis 1990, 161.
\textsuperscript{44} Nigdelis 1990, 218.
\textsuperscript{45} The annexation of the Cyclades to the province of Asia has been argued by Étienne 1990, 127–149. The partition of the islands among the provinces of Achaia and Asia has been suggested by Accame 1946, 234–241.
\textsuperscript{46} For the prosperity of Delos after 166 BC, see Sherwin-White 1984, 32–33; Gruen 1984, 299 and 311–312.
\textsuperscript{47} A detailed analysis of the piracy in the Hellenistic period is provided in de Souza 1999, 43–96.
\textsuperscript{48} Nigdelis 1990, 15, for a decree of the end of second century BC, from Arkesine at Amorgos suffering a severe piratical raid.
\textsuperscript{49} For these contacts, see Nigdelis 1990, 214 and 218; Reger 1994a, 43–44 with previous bibliography.
\textsuperscript{50} The traditional view that piracy was the destructive counterpart of shipping trade as well as a major factor that overly only negative effects on the economy is questioned in Gabrielsen 1999 and Reger 1994a, 30–31 and 261–263.
Aegean, thus causing a lot of disturbance and pressure to the islanders. Military garrisons were installed on many of the Cycladic islands, by both adversaries, in order to impose their will and safeguard important strategic points. It was then that general Archelaos seized control of the Cycladic islands and Delos was sacked by the troops of Mithradates and again in 69 BC by Athenodoros. This proved to be a severe blow to the economic life of the Aegean. At the same time pirates continued using some of the islands as their headquarters and several times Roman squadrons had to intervene, occasionally with success, to prevent them from ravaging an island.

The Roman civil wars burdened even further the Cyclades. Pompey forced the islanders to contribute ships in his fleet during his conflict with Caesar. In 42 BC, Mark Anthony gave Andros, Tenos and Naxos to Rhodes as a reward for its friendship and help against his opponent Cassius, while Kea was assigned to the Athenians.

The continuous and fierce military operations held in the Aegean, as well as the greed of certain Roman authorities, caused a severe and long lasting economic and social crisis in the region. This is observed in most of the Cycladic islands. Even when peace prevailed, the majority of their commerce and relevant activities was already in the hands of Roman negotiators; the latter probably enjoyed special treatment and status but did not give to the cities what they ought. The cities facing economic problems were forced to apply to other cities, sanctuaries and bankers for loans, often too difficult to be repaid. The simplistic nature of the civic budgets left the local communities vulnerable in such crises and therefore dependent on the flexibility of private individuals. The predominance of private over public wealth resulted in a handful of rich families assuming eventually all public offices, liturgies and benefactions. Even though the inscriptions referring to such instances are not many, they do reveal the eagerness of wealthy people to fund festivals and public constructions.

This is evident in the examples of Paros and Tenos, two of the most important islands. A source of wealth for Paros were the agricultural products – such as wine – exported to various places, as it is testified by a great number of

51 Nigdelis 1990, 117 and 218.
54 Nigdelis 1990, 219.
55 Nigdelis 1990, 220, for the case of Andros who suffered by Gaius Ouerus.
56 Nigdelis 1990, 141.
57 The case of a certain Theodosia (daughter) of Philip at Arkesine is indicative of this attitude. She promises to repair the agora, which was εκ πολλών χρόνων ήμελημένην καὶ πεπτωκυία, or embellish the temples and other constructions of the city. See Nigdelis 1990, 42.
amphorae found in many places, from Athens to Bosporus and Alexandria\textsuperscript{58}. In addition, Paros was also known for its good quality marble. Although the exact income provided by the relating enterprises is not known, it is quite possible that the marble operation was the most profitable for the island\textsuperscript{59}. However, in spite of these sources of wealth, which had attracted Italian negotiators\textsuperscript{60}, the city appeared to ask for loans during harsh times. In the middle of the first century, in order to pay the debts caused by the Mithradatic and the Civil wars as well as the demands of \textit{demosiones}, the city received a loan from individuals in Crete. Unfortunately, the economic situation did not improve and the city not being able to pay off its debts, sent a noble citizen, Timisifon son of Epianactos, to negotiate the terms of repayment\textsuperscript{61}.

Tenos, on the other hand, owned an important harbour on the Aegean sea-routes, where a lot of bankers, entrepreneurs and other negotiators were attracted, especially after the destruction of Delos\textsuperscript{62}. Unlike most of the Cycladic islands, Tenos has produced a great number of inscriptions concerning its external and internal history during the first century BC. A long decree honouring the Roman banker Leukius Afidius Bassus, provides all the details on the misfortunes fell on the island. According to this decree, during the twenty years period, from the first Mithradatic war to the war of Pompey against the pirates, the Tenians were obliged to get heavy loans in order to pay for their defences and their contributions in money or kind to the Pompeian army\textsuperscript{63}. The Tenians had the opportunity to receive a loan from the family of the Aufidii, who helped the city greatly in paying back its debts after a long period of time\textsuperscript{64}.

\textit{Conclusions}

The countermarks applied on the coinages of the Hellenistic Cyclades are a valuable piece of evidence for the society and economy of the region. Their study reveals that many island states made regular use of them. The pattern of their employment is not uniform throughout the Cyclades. This is partly due to both the issues available on each island and the needs that

\textsuperscript{58} Nigdelis 1990, 138.
\textsuperscript{59} Nigdelis 1990, 138-139.
\textsuperscript{60} Nigdelis 1990, 141-142.
\textsuperscript{61} Nigdelis 1990, 117, 132 and 134.
\textsuperscript{62} Nigdelis 1990, 183-184.
\textsuperscript{63} Nigdelis 1990, 161-162.
\textsuperscript{64} Nigdelis 1990, 160-162.
each of them had to respond to. The exact date of their application cannot be specified, since they do not bear any chronological indications. Nevertheless, if this practice was mainly associated with introversion and hard times, then the majority of countermarks must have been employed during the first century BC.

In that period, society and economy in the Cyclades declined as a result of the Mithradatic and Civil wars, piracy and chaos that afflicted the area. The destruction of Delos and the long lasting obstruction of the sea-routes had negative effects on the islands' trade. According to the epigraphic evidence, borrowing and benefactions appeared as the major solutions for the impoverished cities in order to meet their needs and their obligations to the ruling power. Nevertheless it seems that these actions were not the only way out from the economic depression. Under these critical circumstances the cities would have taken certain financial measures in order to ensure a stable income for the public treasury. The reissuing of their fiduciary coinages may have been such an alternative procedure. Hence, it is highly probable that certain series of countermarked coins—especially those surviving in large numbers as well as those bearing multiple punches—could be attributed to this tactic. The employment of countermarking in the Cyclades could be compared with similar measures observed in the province of Asia. Many cities found themselves in terrible financial difficulties when they had to pay the indemnity imposed on them by Sulla, after his victory in the first Mithradatic war. Their attempt to raise money included total or partial reissuing of their bronze issues. The clearest evidence of this is provided by the many examples of overstriking and countermarking observed in the coinages of the region.

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66 For the cities of Ionia, see Crawford 1985, 196; Kinns 1987, 110. For the cities of Lesbos and especially Mytilene, see Tselekas (forthcoming).
Catalogue of countermarks

The following catalogue is provisional and by no means claims to be exhaustive. It is based on the collections of the Numismatic Museum, the Museum of Cycladic Art and the Alpha Bank, all based in Athens, as well as on various publications such as catalogues of major collections and mint studies. The material is arranged geographically, with the islands in an alphabetical order. Each type of countermark—in bold—is followed by the series it was applied on and the date when these series were allegedly issued. Illustrated coins are indicated with **. The following abbreviations are used:


Amorgos

Aegiale


*Series*: Bearded head of Asklepios with laurel wreath r. / Cupping vessel with a suspension ring; A-I.

*Date of issue*: Late third - early second century BC.

- Athens AB, 749M; Walker 1978, 55: 749; Liampi 2004, 97: 8d.**
- Athens NM, Soutzos Collection 1199; Liampi 2004, 97: 8e.
- Paris; Liampi 2004, 97: 8c.


*Series*: Bearded head of Asklepios with laurel wreath r. / Cupping vessel with a suspension ring; in field l., extended snake.

*Date of issue*: Early second century BC.

- Athens AB, 748M; Walker 1978, 55: 748; Liampi 2004, 100: 20h.
- Paris; Liampi 2004, 100: 20i.**
• Paris; Liampi 2004, 100: 20k.

Series: Head of Athena with crested Corinthian helmet r. / Cupping vessel with a suspension ring; in field r., coiled snake.
*Date of issue:* Early second century BC.

Series: Head of Athena with crested Corinthian helmet r. / Owl standing r.
*Date of issue:* Early second century BC.
• Liampi 2004, 100: 19c; Lindgren 1993, 93: A131c.**

Arkesine
1. Owl facing (obv).
*Series:* Head of Athena wearing crested Attic helmet r. / Ram standing r. on ground line; APK.
*Date of issue:* Late third – early second century BC.
• Athens NM, Artemis Collection; Liampi 2004, 102: 26f.**
• Berlin, 28955; Liampi 2004, 102: 27b.

*Series:* Head of Athena wearing crested Attic helmet r. / Ram standing r. on ground line; APK.
*Date of issue:* Late third – early second century BC.
• Athens NM, Artemis Collection; Liampi 2004, 102: 26f.**

Minoa
1. Bunch of grapes (obv).
*Series:* Bearded head of Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Kantharos; above, bunch of grapes; M-I N-Ω.
Date of issue: Late third - early second century BC.
- Berlin, Ross; Liampi 2004, 104: 41c.**

Andros

1. Kantharos (obv).
Series: Head of youthful Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Thyrsos; in field l., bunch of grapes; A-N-Δ-P-I.
Date of issue: Third - first centuries BC.
- Athens MCA, 14; Oeconomides 1999, 319: 12.
- Athens NM, 4728; Paschales 1898, 314: 28ε.
- Berlin, 25; Paschales 1898, 314: 28α.
- Berlin, 26; Paschales 1898, 314: 28β.
- Berlin, 27; Paschales 1898, 314: 28γ.
- Copenhagen; SNG Copenhagen 609; Paschales 1898, 314: 28δ.
- London; BMC, 87: 11; Paschales 1898, 314: 28στ.**
- London; BMC, 87: 12; Paschales 1898, 314: 28ζ.

Series: Head of youthful Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Amphora; A-N-Δ-P-I.
Date of issue: Third - first centuries BC.
- Berlin, 16; Paschales 1898, 315: 30ε.**
- Berlin, 20; Paschales 1898, 315: 30β.
- London; BMC, 86: 5; Paschales 1898, 315: 30γ.

3. Head of Dionysos r. (obv).
Series: Head of youthful Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Thyrsos; in field r., bunch of grapes; A-N-Δ-ΠI.
Countermarks on the hellenistic coinages of the Cyclades

Date of issue: Third - first centuries BC.
• Athens AAM, OO-97a; Kroll 1993, 249: 823b.
• Athens NM, 4730; Paschales 1898, 318: 46ε.
• Athens NM, Christomanos Collection.
• Berlin, 29; Paschales 1898, 318: 46γ.
• Berlin, 30; Paschales 1898, 318: 46δ.
• Berlin, Lübbecke; Paschales 1898, 318: 46α.**
• London; BMC, 87: 17; Paschales 1898, 318: 46ζ.
• Milan; Paschales 1898, 318: 46β.
• Paris, 3103; Paschales 1898, 318: 46τ.

1. Male head r. (obv).
Series: Bearded head of Homer r.; ΟΜΗΡΟΥ / Athena advancing r., holding shield and spear; ΙΗΤΩΝ.
Date of issue: Second - first centuries BC.
• Athens MCA, 40; Oeconomides 1999, 320: 25.
• London; BMC, 101: 1.
• Athens NM, 4770β.
• Athens NM, 4773.
• Athens NM, Soutzos Collection 1227.
• London; BMC, 101: 2.**
• London; BMC, 101: 3.
• Athens MCA, 43; Oeconomides 1999, 320: 27.

2. Athena standing r. (rev).
Series: Bearded head of Homer r.; ΟΜΗΡΟΥ / Athena advancing r., holding shield and spear; ΙΗΤΩΝ.
Date of issue: Second - first centuries BC.
• Athens NM, 4770β.
• Athens NM, 4773.
• Athens NM, Soutzos Collection 1227.
• London; BMC, 101: 2.
3. Head of Helios facing (rev).
*Series:* Bearded head of Homer r.; OMHPOY / Athena advancing r., holding shield and spear; IHTΩN.
*Date of issue:* Second - first centuries BC.
- Athens MCA, 43; Oeconomides 1999, 320: 27.**

*Series:* Bearded head of Homer r.; OMHPOY / Athena advancing r., holding shield and spear; IHTΩN.
*Date of issue:* Second - first centuries BC.
- Athens MCA, 43; Oeconomides 1999, 320: 27.**

5. Forepart of goat r. (rev).
*Series:* Bearded head of Homer r.; OMHPOY / Athena advancing r., holding shield and spear; IHTΩN.
*Date of issue:* Second - first centuries BC.
- Athens MCA, 43; Oeconomides 1999, 320: 27.**

Kea

*Karthaia*

1. Forepart of the dog Sirios r. (obv).
*Series:* Head of Apollo with laurel wreath r. / Forepart of Sirios l.; beneath, bee; KAPΘA.
*Date of issue:* Third century BC.
- Cambridge; Papageorgiadou-Banis 1997, 99: 106c.**
**Koresia**
1. Female head l. (obv).
_Series:_ Head of Apollo with laurel wreath r. / Bee; KO-PH.
_Date of issue:_ Late third century BC.
- Copenhagen; Papageorgiadou-Banis 1997, 81: 82.
- Hague, 4842; Papageorgiadou-Banis 1997, 81: 79.**

**Ioulis**
1. Female head l. (obv).
_Series:_ Head of Apollo with laurel wreath r. / Bee; IOY-AH.
_Date of issue:_ Late third century BC.
- Athens NM, 4753δ.

**Melos**
_Series:_ Apple / Bunch of grapes.
_Date of issue:_ Third century BC.
- Classical Numismatic Group Mail Bid Sale 60 (22/05/2002), lot 597b.**

_Series:_ Apple / Kantharos with bunch of grapes hanging from each handle.
_Date of issue:_ Third - first centuries BC.
- Athens MCA, 44; Oeconomides 1999, 321: 51.**

_Series:_ Apple / Athena advancing r., holding shield and spear.
_Date of issue:_ Third - first centuries BC.
- Athens AB, 784M; Walker 1978, 57: 784.
- Athens MCA, 50; Oeconomides 1999, 321: 53.
- London; _BMC_, 105: 27.
• Classical Numismatic Group Mail Bid Sale 60 (22/05/2002), lot 597a.**

Naxos

1. Bunch of grapes and vine leaves in an incuse rectangle (rev).
Series: Head of youthful Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Kantharos; above, bunch of grapes; Ν-Α-Ξ-Ι.
Date of issue: Third - first centuries BC.
• Berlin; Nicolet-Pierre 2005, 32 and pl. IV, canthare 6.**

2. Λ or Δ (rev).
Series: Head of youthful Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Krater between two thyrsi; Ν-Α-Ξ-Ι.
Date of issue: Third - first centuries BC.
• Athens NM, 278; Nicolet-Pierre 2005, 40: 2.**

3. Head with Corinthian helmet (rev).
Series: Head of youthful Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Krater between two thyrsi; Ν-Α-Ξ-Ι.
Date of issue: Third - first centuries BC.
• London; BMC, 111: 16; Nicolet-Pierre 2005, 40: 5.**

4. Monogram (obv).
Series: Head of youthful Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Bunch of grapes; Ν-Α-Ξ-Ι.
Date of issue: Second half of third century BC.
• London, Fox 1920, 1577; Nicolet-Pierre 2005, 35: 9.**
5. Thyrsos, N-A / Ξ-I (obv).
*Series:* Bearded head of Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Kantharos.
*Date of issue:* Third - first centuries BC.
- New York, 166; Nicolet-Pierre 2005, 31, pl. III, 10.**

*Series:* Head of youthful Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Krater and thyrsos; N-A-Ξ-I.
*Date of issue:* Third - first centuries BC.

*Denomination:* Drachm
*Series:* Head of youthful Dionysos with ivy wreath r. / Krater with wreath; in field l., ΑΡΙΣΤΕΑΣ; in field r., horse head and ΝΑΞΙ.
*Date of issue:* Second half of second century BC.
- Athens NM, ‘Naxos 1926’ hoard; Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 102 and pl. XX, 56.
- Athens NM, ‘Naxos 1926’ hoard; Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 102 and pl. XX, 57.
- Athens NM, ‘Naxos 1926’ hoard; Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 102 and pl. XX, 58.
1. Star with eight radiates (rev).

*Series*: Head of Persephone or Artemis r. / Goat kneeling r.; ΠΑΡΙ.

*Date of issue*: Third - first centuries BC.

- Athens MCA, 75; Oeconomides 1999, 322: 82.
- Athens NM, AE 682.
- Athens MCA, 74; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 83.
- Athens NM, Artemis Collection.
- Athens NM, Artemis Collection.

2. Rosette with four petals (obv).

*Series*: Head of Persephone or Artemis r. / Goat kneeling r.; ΠΑΡΙ.

*Date of issue*: Third - first centuries BC.

- Athens MCA, 76; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 84.
- Athens NM, 4796.
- Athens NM, 4797.
- Athens NM, 1897-8 ΚΔ 8.

- Athens NM, ‘Naxos 1926’ hoard; Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 102 and pl. XX, 63.**
- Athens NM, ‘Naxos 1926’ hoard; Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 102 and pl. XX, 64.
- Athens NM, ‘Naxos 1926’ hoard; Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 102 and pl. XX, 68.
- Athens NM, ‘Naxos 1926’ hoard; Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 103 and pl. XX, 70.
- Athens NM, ‘Naxos 1926’ hoard; Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 103 and pl. XX, 72.
- Athens NM, ‘Naxos 1926’ hoard; Nicolet-Pierre 1999, 103 and pl. XX, 73.
• Athens NM, AE 682.

*Series:* Head of Demeter or Persephone r. / Goat standing r.; ΠΑΠΙ.

*Date of issue:* Third – first centuries BC.

• Athens MCA, 76; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 84.**
• Athens NM, 4796.
• Athens NM, 4797.
• Athens NM, 1897–8 ΚΔ 8.


*Series:* Head of Demeter or Persephone r. / Goat standing r.; ΠΑΠΙ.

*Date of issue:* Third – first centuries BC.

• Athens MCA, 79; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 85.
• Athens MCA, 80; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 89.**
• Athens NM, 4798.
• Athens NM, 4799.
• Athens NM, 4800.
• Athens NM, 1893–4 ΚΣΤ 1.
• Athens NM, 1896–7 IB 576.
• Athens NM, 1896–7 IB 579.
• Athens NM, 1898–9 Θ 1.
• Athens NM, 1898–9 Θ 2.
• Athens NM, 1904–5 IA 68.
• Athens NM, Empedokles Collection.
• Athens NM, Artemis Collection.
• Leipzig: *SNG Leipzig* 1042.
• London; *BMC*, 116: 35.
• London; *BMC*, 116: 36.
• Lindgren 1989, 1803.
4. Rose (obv).
*Series:* Head of Persephone or Artemis r. / Goat kneeling r.; ΠΑΠΙ.
*Date of issue:* Third - first centuries BC.
- Athens MCA, 80; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 89.**

5. Eagle standing r. (rev).
*Series:* Head of Persephone or Artemis r. / Goat kneeling r.; ΠΑΠΙ.
*Date of issue:* Third - first centuries BC.
- Athens MCA, 80; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 89.**

*Series:* Head of Persephone or Artemis r. / Goat kneeling r.; ΠΑΠΙ.
*Date of issue:* Third - first centuries BC.
- Athens MCA, 80; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 89.**

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**Seriphos**

1. Harpa (obv).
*Series:* Head of Perseus with winged helmet r. / Gorgoneion; beneath, harpa; ΣΕ.
*Date of issue:* Second - first centuries BC.
- Athens AB, 784M; Walker 1978, 57: 797.
- Athens MCA, 84; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 94.**
- Athens NM, Artemis Collection.
- Athens NM, Empedokles Collection.
- Copenhagen; *SNG Copenhagen* 734.

2. Thunderbolt (obv).
*Series:* Head of Perseus with winged helmet r. / Gorgoneion; beneath, harpa; ΣΕ.
*Date of issue:* Second - first centuries BC.
- Athens NM, 579.
- Athens NM, 580.
- Athens NM, 1915-6 E 1.
- Athens NM, Artemis Collection.
- Athens NM, Artemis Collection.
Siphnos

1. Caduceus (obv).
   *Series*: Head of Artemis (?) r. / Palm tree; ΣΙ-ΦΝ.
   *Date of issue*: Third – first centuries BC.
   - Athens MCA, 92; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 100.**

2. Star with five radiates (obv).
   *Series*: Head of Artemis (?) r. / Palm tree; ΣΙ-ΦΝ.
   *Date of issue*: Third – first centuries BC.
   - Athens MCA, 92; Oeconomides 1999, 323: 100.**

Syros

1. Bee (rev).
   *Series*: Bearded head of Pan r. / Goat standing r.; in front, wheat-ear; ΣΥ-ΠΙ.
   *Date of issue*: Third – first centuries BC.
   - Athens NM, Artemis Collection.
   - Copenhagen; *SNG Copenhagen* 755.
   - London; *BMC*, 124: 10.**
   - London; *BMC*, 124: 11.
   - London; *BMC*, 124: 12.

1a. Bee (obv).
   *Series*: Bearded head of Pan r. / Goat standing r.; in front, wheat-ear; ΣΥ-ΠΙ.
   *Date of issue*: Third – first centuries BC.
   - Athens NM, 589.

Tenos

1. Dolphin r. (obv).
   *Series*: Head of youthful Zeus Ammon with laurel wreath r. / Bunch of grapes; in field l., trident; T-H-N-I.
Date of issue: 288–250 BC.
- Hague, 4888; Étienne 1990, 231: 109.47.**

Series: Head of Poseidon with laurel wreath r. / Trident; on each side of its handle, dolphin; T-H-N-I.
Date of issue: Late third century – 188 BC.
- Athens NM, Empedokles Collection.
- Leipzig; **SNG Leipzig** 1045.**
- Paris, 482; Étienne 1990, 240: 205.63.

Series: Head of youthful Zeus Ammon with laurel wreath r. / Poseidon standing l., holding dolphin and trident; in field l., rose; THNΙΩΝ.
Date of issue: Late third century – 188 BC.
- Milan, Rosa Collection; Étienne 1990, 241: 207.22.

2. Bunch of grapes (obv).
Series: Head of youthful Zeus Ammon with laurel wreath r. / Poseidon standing l., holding dolphin and trident; in field l., rose; THNΙΩΝ.
Date of issue: Late third century – 188 BC.
- Athens NM, 1908–9 Λ12 9; Étienne 1990, 241: 207.8.
- Munich; Étienne 1990, 241: 207.10.
- Berlin, 9068; Étienne 1990, 241: 207.12.**
- New York; Étienne 1990, 242: 207.32.
- Copenhagen; **SNG Copenhagen** 785; Étienne 1990, 242: 207.38.
- New York; Étienne 1990, 242: 207.42.
- Athens NM, Π 516; Étienne 1990, 242: 207.48.

**Series:** Head of Poseidon with laurel wreath r. / Trident; on each side of its handle, dolphin; T-H-N-I.

*Date of issue:* Late third century – 188 BC.

- Munich; Étienne 1990, 240: 205.80.**
- Tenos; Étienne 1990, 240: 205.88.

**Series:** Head of youthful Zeus Ammon with laurel wreath r. / Poseidon standing l., holding dolphin and trident; in field l., rose; THNΙΩΝ.

*Date of issue:* Late third century – 188 BC.

- Munich; Étienne 1990, 241: 207.27.
- Paris, 477; Étienne 1990, 242: 207.34.
- Hague, 4903; Étienne 1990, 242: 207.35.
• Tenos, 229; Étienné 1990, 243: 207.114.
• Winterthur; Bloesch 1988, 218: 2320.

Thera

1. Male head r. (obv).

*Series* Head of Apollo three-quarter facing to r. / Bull butting r.; ΘΗ.

*Date of issue*: Third- second centuries BC.

• Athens NM, 4822.
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