



Summary :

The mint of Kyzikos that was founded by Justin I (518-527), though the frequent breaks during its activity, continued its coin production until 629 under the reign of Herakleios (610-641). Its activity concerned only issuing bronze coins. Its production is closely connected with the minting of its nearby mint of Nikomedeia, as well as of the mint at the capital city.

Date

Reign of Justin I (518-527) – 629

Geographical Location

Kyzikos, Asia Minor

1. Introduction

The mint of [Kyzikos](#) was founded by [Justin I](#) (518-527), in order to reinforce the production of bronze issues whose demand had been raised after the public's familiarization with the new system introduced by Anastasios I (491-518) in 498.¹ During the whole period of its mint activity, which was interrupted several times, it was restricted to the issue of bronze coins. Its last issues are dated in 629/30 under [Herakleios](#) (610-641). Its production is closely connected with the one of the nearby [mint of Nicomedia](#), whereas both of them followed in general the standards of the [capital's mint](#).

2. Production

During the whole period of its activity the mint of Kyzikos – as well as the one of Nicomedia– was composed by two *officina* (workshops), producing mainly *folles* and *eikosanummia*, and smaller denominations as well (*decanummia*, *pentanummia*), even *triakontanummia* under Tiberius II (578-582) and Phokas (602-610). The usual *mint-mark* was KYZ or KY, often though on *eikosanummia* the initial K was replaced by the value mark ([fig. 1](#)).²

Although, as we have already mentioned, the mints of Propontis, mainly of Kyzikos and of Nikomedeia, were closely connected with each other, the coin production of Nikomedeia was at least twice as much that of Kyzikos, as a recent study has pointed out, based on *coin hoards* from the Balkans and Asia Minor of the period 491-713. This seems to be related to the significant military importance of the dioceses of Pontos, which the mint of Nikomedeia provided with coins.³ The secondary/supplementary role of Kyzikos is also obvious from the continuous breaks on its activity.

3. Issues

3.1. Justin I (518-527)

During the first phase of its activity the mint struck only folles and *eikosanummia*. At the beginning, the issues of both the *officinae* were discerned through secret marks (e.g. asterisks), soon though regular *officina marks* were introduced – A and B respectively. The production must have started soon enough during the reign of Justin – probably before the change of indiction in 522 – and although there are five types of folles, the issues must have been of a small scale, as we can deduce from their rarity.⁴

Towards the end of the reign of Justin, at Kyzikos as much as at Nikomedeia, folles appeared bearing the year of the *indiction*. We know 20 such folles from the mint of Kyzikos, which are dated to the fourth (525/6) and the fifth year of the indiction (526/7), as the inscriptions INSA and INSE show ([fig. 2](#)) respectively.⁵ It is not certain if it is about experimental issues or if they were struck for a certain purpose.⁶



During the short period of co-regency between Justin I and Justinian I (527) only folles were struck that bore Justin's bust, while mentioning the co-emperor on the accompanying inscription. These were the last issues of the mint of Kyzikos before the monetary reform of 538/9.⁷

3.2. Justinian I (527-565)

After an eleven-year break on its activity, the mint of Kyzikos restarted its production in 538/9 in order to support [Justinian's](#) monetary reform, which among other things led to the rise of the weight of folles and to the date of the coins by recording the year of reign.⁸ As the mint of Nicomedia did, the one of Kyzikos produced very large quantities of folles and eikosanummia ([fig. 1](#)) during the period 539/40 - 545/6 (13th to 19th year of Justinian's reign); the issues, however, were interrupted in 557/8.⁹ At the same time the issuing of decanummia and pentanummia started for the very first time, which was continued up until the end of Justinian's reign.¹⁰

3.3. Justin II (565-578) - Phokas (602-610)

During the first year of Justin's II reign the mint of Kyzikos, as well as those of Constantinople and of Nicomedia, struck only decanummia. During the following two years, however, it started the issue of other denominations as well (from folles to pentanummia).¹¹ The two highest ones bore on the **obverse** the imperial couple enthroned, while the decanummia and the pentanummia bore, because of their size, only the emperor's portrait.¹²

During the first years of [Tiberius' II](#) reign (578-582) the mint of Kyzikos remained inactive. It resumed its activity in 578/9 - 579/80 by issuing a full series of denominations, to which triakontanummia were added ([fig. 3](#)), whereas the Greek numbers (M, K, I, E) of the **value marks** were replaced by the Latin ones following closely the model of the Constantinopolitan issues.¹³ For that reason the attribution of those decanummia and pentanummia that do not bear any mint marks to any of the three central mints (Constantinople, Nikomedeia, Kyzikos), is difficult.¹⁴

Under [Maurice](#) (582-602) the mint functioned normally and continued issuing the same denominations— except the one of triakontanummia – based on the iconographic models of Constantinople, which were followed, however, by the mint of Kyzikos with a slight delay.¹⁵ [Phokas](#), finally, brought back the issues of triakontanummia according to Tiberius' III example.¹⁶

3.4. Herakleios (610-641)

Herakleios' reign marked the end of the issues at Kyzikos – as well as at Nicomedia and at Thessalonica.¹⁷ During the first years of his reign the mint of Kyzikos struck folles, eikosanummia and decanummia. The [Persian occupation](#) of Asia Minor, however, interrupted the issuing of coins in 614/5. The mint restarted its activity in the period 626-629/30 with issues of folles and eikosanummia; it was finally shut down, however, in 629/30.¹⁸

1. During the same period of time the mints of Thessalonica and Alexandria were opened. W. Hahn (with the collaboration of Metlich, M. A.), *Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire (Anastasius I – Justinian I, 491-565)* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien 6, Wien 2000) (hereafter MIBE) p. 33.

2. Grierson, Ph., *Byzantine Coins* (London 1982) p. 64.

3. Morisson, C. – Popović, V. – Ivanišević, V. et collaborateurs, *Les trésors monétaires byzantins des Balkans et d'Asie Mineure (491-713)* (Réalités byzantines 13, Paris 2006) p. 54.

4. MIBE, p. 36. Hahn, W., *Zur Münzprägung des frühbyzantinischen Reiches. Anastasius I. bis Phocas und Heraclius-Revolution, 491-610* (Wien 2005)



p. 38. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, p. 64.

5. The initials INS correspond to the Latin genitive *indictionis*.

6. *MIBE*, p. 35, 36. Hahn, *Zur Münzprägung*, p. 38. Ph. Grierson, however, doubts whether this is indeed a date based on the indiction or not. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, p. 64.

7. *MIBE*, p. 41.

8. For this reform see for example Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, pp. 60-61.

9. *MIBE*, p. 60. Hahn, *Zur Münzprägung*, p. 64-65. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, p. 64.

10. *MIBE*, p. 60.

11. It is quite interesting to mention that during this particular reign the production of the mint of Nikomedeia was three times that of Kyzikos. Morrisson et al., *Les trésors monétaires*, p. 54.

12. Hahn, *Zur Münzprägung*, pp. 116-117.

13. Hahn, *Zur Münzprägung*, pp. 141-142.

14. Hahn, *Zur Münzprägung*, pp. 141-142. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, p. 65.

15. Hahn, *Zur Münzprägung*, p. 164.

16. Hahn, *Zur Münzprägung*, p. 191.

17. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, p. 105-106.

18. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, p. 105-106.

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	Grierson P. , <i>Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection 2. Phocas to Theodosius III, 602-717</i> , Washington D.C. 1968
	Bellinger A.R. , <i>Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection 1. Anastasius I to Maurice, 491-602</i> , Washington D.C. 1966
	Hahn W. , <i>Moneta imperii Byzantini, Rekonstruktion des Prägeaufbaues auf synoptisch-tabellarischer Grundlage, Band I-III</i> , Wien 1973-1980
	Hahn W., Metlich M.A. , <i>Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire (Anastasius I – Justinian I, 491-565)</i> , Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien 6, Wien 2000
	Hahn W. , <i>Zur Münzprägung des frühbyzantinischen Reiches, Anastasius I. bis Phocas und Heraclius-</i>



	<i>Revolte, 491-610</i> , Wien 2005
	Morrisson C. , <i>Catalogue des monnaies byzantines de la Bibliothèque Nationale</i> , v. 1-2, Paris 1970
	Morrisson, C., Popović, V., Ivanišević, V. , <i>Les trésors monétaires byzantins des Balkans et d'Asie Mineure (491-713)</i> , Paris 2006, Réalités byzantines 13

Glossary :

	Decanummi , pl. -a
	Copper coin worth 10 nummi.
	Eikosanummi , pl. -a (20 nummi)
	Copper coin worth 20 nummi, also known as half follis.
	follis
	(pl. folles) A Latin word originally meaning a purse, but used in the Byzantine period for the largest denomination of copper coin, initially worth 40 nummi.
	indiction
	A 15-year cycle according to which a year was assigned in the Middle Ages. Initially it denoted an extraordinary agricultural tax; later on (under Constantine I) it was a tax of which the amount remained unchanged during a 15-year cycle. It gradually acquired a chronological meaning, which it kept even after the tax ceased to exist. The chronological system based on indictions became mandatory under Justinian I. The system was not absolutely precise, since it was the years of the indiction that were reckoned (first indiction, second indiction and so on, until the fifteenth), while the cycles themselves were not numbered.
	mint-mark
	Letters or symbols placed on a coin to indicate where it was struck. In the Byzantine period they are usually a shortened version of the mint name.
	obverse
	The face of the coin which bears the more important device. Due to ambiguities that sometimes exist, many numismatists prefer to use the term for the side struck by the lower (anvil) die.
	officina mark
	Letters or symbols placed on a coin to indicate the workshop (officina), where it was struck.
	pentanummi , pl. -a
	Bronze or copper coin worth 5 nummi.
	Thesaurus [1. treasure (archit), 2. hoard (archaeol,numism.)]
	Space for storing, repository or treasure. 1. (archit.) Temple like structure of votive character. It was dedicated by different cities to famous sanctuaries (Delphoi, Olympia, Delos). It was used to store the cities' valuable offerings as well as the smaller offerings of their citizens. 2. (archaeolog, numism.) Collection of valuable objects or artifacts, coins and metal objects buried in the ground.
	Triakontanummi , pl. -a (30 nummi)
	Copper coin worth 30 nummi.
	value mark
	Letters or symbols placed on a coin to indicate its value.
	workshop (officina)
	Subdivision of a Roman or Byzantine mint.

Auxiliary Catalogues

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1: Mint of Kyzikos. Eikosanummion of Justinian I (527-565).

Hahn, W., *Zur Münzprägung des frühbyzantinischen Reiches. Anastasius I. bis Phocas und Heraclius-Revolte, 491-610* (Wien 2005), p. 63, no. 121a1.

Fig. 2: Mint of Kyzikos. Follis of Justin I (518-527) bearing the year of the indiction as a way of dating.

Hahn, W., *Zur Münzprägung des frühbyzantinischen Reiches. Anastasius I. bis Phocas und Heraclius-Revolte, 491-610* (Wien 2005), p. 39, no. 53.2.

Fig. 3: Mint of Nikomedeia. Triakontanummion of Tiberius II (578-582).

Hahn, W., *Zur Münzprägung des frühbyzantinischen Reiches. Anastasius I. bis Phocas und Heraclius-Revolte, 491-610* (Wien 2005), p. 144, no. 42.