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Thermai — Solus

Thermai

(Plate 22)

The inhabitants of the former Himera, after its destruction in 409 B.C., were allowed to go to settle at Thermai (modern Termini Imerese); it seems likely that the new settlement remained under Punic influence during the fourth century as is suggested by the Punic character of many of the coins³⁷.

Nos. 1–4 are typically Punic in style and general aspect. All have the altar symbol in the exergue, without any inscription; the attribution is however assured from the presence of the altar on nos. 5–6 where there is an inscription in Greek. The issue is a small and compact one which cannot have lasted for a very long time. The head on R 4 (no. 4) is of a type derived from Euainetos which might well occur in the «Carthage» series during the second half of the fourth century, and on this die there is a prow symbol. The other reverses are more remarkable for the very high degree of stylisation which is typical of Punic coins, and they have a close affinity to some of the earlier heads on the R̄sm̄lq̄rt series nos. 7–8 (Plate 15), whose head shows something of the same treatment of the hair on top as is found at Thermai in the hair in the net at the back. The dating of the Thermai coins is indicated by the presence of two specimens of no. 1 in the Gibil Gabib hoard, which as mentioned above (p. 56–57), must have the same burial date as the Nissoria hoard, c. 330 B.C.³⁸.

With nos. 5–6, where the altar symbol is accompanied by a Greek inscription, it is very difficult to determine the date or even to be sure whether these coins really follow or precede the uninscribed ones. The head R 5 could well be the work of a Punic engraver, from its style, though there are no really close parallels to hand. The obverse of no. 6 however has three letters above the exergual line ΚΛΗ which have been regarded, no doubt rightly, as the signature of an engraver, who must be Greek; the presence of such a signature could perhaps be used as an argument for an earlier date, but is in any case exceptional.

³⁷ For the earlier coinage of Himera-Thermai, cf. SNG II (Lloyd) 1025, 1038, both of which Robinson suggests may be after 409. Connected with these, there seem to be a further series of bronzes in which the types of a boar, a standing nymph and a standing Herakles recur; e.g. Gabrici, tav. X, 42, 43, 45. Another small bronze piece probably belonging to this context has obverse female head r., legend I M; reverse standing Herakles (in BM, 1,16 g, apparently unpublished). Cf. also Imhoof-Blumer 1886, taf. VI, 7, 8.

In his unpublished notes Dr. Robinson has suggested that the charioteer on the Thermai tetradrachm no. 1, who wears a Phrygian helmet, may be Pelops, whose earlier appearance at the mint of Himera is known from SNG II 1016, e.g.

³⁸ A specimen of the Thermai issue was evidently also present in the hoard from Termini Imerese of 1900 (Noe² 1092, *NSc* 1900, p. 205 ff.); but even if it were determinable which variety this was, it would not be indicative for the dating since the Termini hoard should, from such data as are available, probably have been buried during the last quarter of the fourth century; the «Carthage» type with the Horse's head reverse was represented in it.

The problem of nos. 5–6 is not made any easier by the existence of another Greek issue, of didrachms and litrai only, which is of very good style though it seems difficult to deduce from it more than a general probability that the coins should belong to the middle or later fourth century³⁹. The litra is of the same types, but has behind the head of Hera a monogram  which⁴⁰ either by chance or otherwise recalls the monogram found on a tetradrachm of Morgantina⁴¹; this may suggest a comparatively late date. But there is no way of arriving at any certainty. There are some bronze coins (Pl. 22, A–C) related thematically to the silver which should belong to the same phase though their style is less fine; so far as that goes, these bronze coins might suggest that the Greek phases of Thermai (nos. 5–6) are late rather than early.

Solus (?)

A further tetradrachm known only from two extant specimens (Plate 22 X) is of the same general type as the other issues collected here and its style is as close to Thermai (e.g. no. 4) as to anything else. The attribution is far from sure. In the exergue is a single Punic letter which could be either kaph or vav. If it were the former, it would clearly explicable as the initial of the Punic legend *k f r a* which is the Punic name of Solus on the coins of that city (Plate 23, 16–24), though it is difficult to understand why the legend should be so drastically abbreviated. However the stylistic similarity to Thermai would suit Solus very well.

³⁹ Close parallels are few; but cf. Argos (Kraay-Hirmer 518) of 370–350 B.C., and perhaps the facing Hera of Kroton, also of the middle fourth century (*PCG* III, C 2).

⁴⁰ Jameson 619; Paris Luynes 984; Weber 1364 (now BM).

⁴¹ *ZfN* 1935, pl. IX, 3; the date of this Morgantina tetradrachm, as of the very similar Syracuse Tudeer 106, are among the most difficult to define, but I would think that there is little reason to put them very early in the fourth century. The Syracuse is an adaptation from the latest class of Euainetos decadrachms, and the thick exergual line with the ethnic below it are more in line with the practice of Agathokles' time; the thick exergual line also occurs in a late phase of the *sys* series (nos. 62, etc.).

Catalogue: Thermai

Plate 22

Tetradrachms

1	O 1	Quadriga l., charioteer wearing Phrygian helmet; in ex., altar; no legend	4	O 2	Female head l., wreath only; four dolphins; behind, prow
	R 1	Female head l., hair in net, three dolphins; no legend	16.65	Hague	16.65 Hague
		17.28 * London BMC, p. 254, no. 1	17.00	* London NC 1913, p. 226 fig. 3	17.00 * London NC 1913, p. 226 fig. 3
		17.30 London Lloyd 1040 = Nav. 10, 214	17.18	London Lloyd 1039 = Hirsch 34, 171 = Nav. 4, 282 = Samson 19. 12. 1907, 238	17.18 London Lloyd 1039 = Hirsch 34, 171 = Nav. 4, 282 = Samson 19. 12. 1907, 238
		16.51 Cambridge McC 2310	17.19	* Paris 585	17.19 * Paris 585
		16.20 Helbing 24. 10. 1927, 2722 = Ready 213	5	O 3	Quadriga l., Nike above; in ex., altar
		17.00 Syracuse, Gibil Gabib 48297	R 5	Female head r., three dolphins; legend ΘΕΡΜΙΤΑΝ	16.98 Jameson 1896 = Hirsch 30, 359
		17.65 Syracuse, Gibil Gabib 48298		17.28 * Paris 586, NC 1910, p. 223	17.28 * Paris 586, NC 1910, p. 223
		— * Uncertain (cast in BM)	6	O 4	Similar, but in ex. legend ΘΕΡΜΙΤΑΝ; above ex. line, engraver's signature ΚΛΗ
2	O 2	Similar to O 1	R 5		16.95 * Pennisi, ZfN 1935, taf. IX, 1 = Samson 19. 12. 1907 178
	R 2	Similar to R 1, but larger			16.82 MMAG 43, 55
		17.08 * ANS = Hirsch 31, 162			
		16.91 Jameson 618 = Samson 19. 12. 1907, 179			
		16.03 Priv. coll. Y = Hess-Leu 1957, 134			
		16.60 Vienna			
3	O 2				
	R 3	Similar			
		— * Uncertain (cast in BM)			

Didrachms

7	O 5	Head of Hera r., dolphin behind, legend ΘΕΡΜΙΤΑΝ	(7)	8.38 * London PCG, pl. 26, 28
	R 6	Herakles seated on rock, holding club; behind, bow and quiver, etc.		8.19 Paris Luyens 938

Bronze

A	Obv. Head of Hera l., legend ΘΕΡΜΙΤΑΝ	(B)	3.36 * London BMC 2
	Rev. Head of Herakles l. — * Priv. coll.	C	Obv. Female head with hair tied, crescent below chin
B	Obv. Head of Hera r.		Rev. Head of Herakles r., legend ΘΕΡΜΙΤΑΝ
	Rev. Head of Herakles r., legend ΘΕΡΜΙΤΑΝ		4.81 * London Lloyd 1041

Solus (?)

Plate 22

Tetradrachms

X	O 1	Quadriga r., Nike above; in ex. Punic letter (kaph or vav)	17.17	* London BMC, Sicul- Punic uncertain, p. 254, 1 Palermo
	R 1	Female head r., wreath, dolphins	-	

For other coins of Solus, see plate 23, 15-24. I have not however included there the bronze type given by Imhoof-Blumer 1886, p. 270, no. 13 (cf. BMC, p. 254, no. 1, Gabrici, p. 169, no. 38) with obverse helmeted head, reverse free horse and caduceus; the letters flanking the head seem difficult to be sure about.

Solus - Eryx Legends

Solus (?) tetradrachm, Plate 22 X 1



Solus, Plate 23, 18



Solus, Plate 23, 16



Eryx, Plate 24, 24



Solus, Plate 23, 17

