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MISCELLANEA HIMERENSIA¹

Himera, home of the Greek lyric poet Stesichoros, founded in 649/48 BC by Chalkidians from Zankle and exiles from Syracuse in Mylae (modern Milazzo) was the most western Greek settlement on the north coast of Sicily². It lay in the fertile coastal plain along the river of the same name (Fiume Grande today), and was renowned for its thermal salubrious springs (the later city of Thermai Himerenses, modern Termini). The city flourished through the end of the fifth century BC, when in 409/8 BC, it was destroyed during the Carthaginian invasion of the island. Though life continued through the fourth and third century, with sporadic issues of bronze and silver coins, it never recovered its earlier prominence and prosperity.

Abbreviations:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| ARNOLD-BIUCCHI 1988 | C. ARNOLD-BIUCCHI, La monetazione d'argento di Himera classica. I tetradrammi, NAC 17, 1988, pp. 85–100. |
| BÉREND 1984 | D. BÉREND, Réflexions sur les fractions du monnayage grec, in: A. HOUGHTON ET AL., (eds.), Festschrift für Leo Mildenberg (Wetteren, 1984), pp. 7–30. |
| BOEHRINGER 1996 | Ch. BOEHRINGER, Ein Lot kleiner Silbermünzen von Zankle-Messana, in: R. DOTY – T. HACKENS eds.), Italiam Fato Profugi. Numismatic Studies dedicated to Vladimir and Elvira Eliza Clain-Stefanelli (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1996), pp. 51–60. |
| CLAIN-STEFANELLI 1987 | E.E. CLAIN-STEFANELLI, On Some Fractional Silver Coinages of Sicily and Magna Graecia during the Fifth Century BC, RBN 133, 1987, pp. 39–66. |
| GÀBRICI 1894 | E. GÀBRICI, Topografia e numismatica dell'antica Imera e di Terme (Naples, 1894, re-issued in RIN 1894, pp. 11–24, 143–167, 407–453, RIN 1985, pp. 11–30). |
| GUTMANN –
SCHWABACHER 1929 | F. GUTMANN – W. SCHWABACHER, Die Tetradrachmen- und Didrachmenprägung von Himera (472–409 v.Chr.). MBNG 47, 1929, pp. 101–144. |
| KRAAY 1984 | C.M. KRAAY, The Archaic Coinage of Himera (Naples, 1984). |
| MCCLEAN | S.W. GROSE, Catalogue of the McClean Collection of Greek Coins, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1923). |

¹ Silvia Mani Hurter knew of my interest in the coinage of Himera, especially in the fractional silver issues, and she never failed to signal new and interesting varieties to me, so I offer this small contribution in gratitude to the memory of a colleague and a friend whom I deeply miss.

² THUC. VI 5, 1 and 62, 2. DIOD. V 3, 4. PIND. OL. XII.

- MANGANARO 1999 G. MANGANARO, Dall'obolo alla litra e il problema del "Damareteion", in: M. AMANDRY – S. HURTER (eds.), *Travaux de numismatique grecque offerts à Georges Le Rider* (London, 1999), pp. 239–255.
- MANGANARO 2008 G. MANGANARO, Himera, ninfa "salvifica" e multiforme: a proposito di un obolo imerese degli anni di Terillos, *RIN* 109, 2008, pp. 91–104.
- PARISE 1971 N. PARISE, Oboli e litre nelle emissioni arcaiche d'Imera, di Zancle e di Nasso, *AIIN*, Suppl. Vol. 16–17 (Rome, 1971), pp. 15–20.
- WESTERMARK 1999 U. WESTERMARK, Himera: the Coins of Akragantine Type. 2, in: M. AMANDRY – S. HURTER (eds.), *Travaux de numismatique grecque offerts à Georges Le Rider* (London, 1999), pp. 409–434.

Himera issued an important and at times abundant coinage from the middle of the sixth to the end of the fifth century BC. On the whole it is well known and it has been well published, though there is no complete *corpus* of the mint³.

In recent years the Harvard Art Museum acquired three coins of Himera that deserve a more detailed mention than the one given in the annual report⁴. They are not unpublished, except the obol no. 1, but they are rare and intriguing enough to be examined again.

³ GABRICI 1894. For the archaic coinage see: La monetazione arcaica di Himera fino al 472 a.C., *Atti del II Convegno del Centro Internazionale di Studi Numismatici*, Napoli 15–19 aprile 1969, *AIIN*, Suppl. Vol. 16–17 (Rome, 1971); KRAAY 1984; WESTERMARK 1999. For the classical coinage: GUTMANN – SCHWABACHER 1929; ARNOLD-BIUCCHI 1988. For the coinage of the 4th century: Ch. BOEHRINGER, Himera im IV. Jahrhundert v. Chr., in: G. LE RIDER – K. JENKINS – N. WAGGONER ET AL., *Kraay – Mørkholm Essays* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1989), pp. 29–39. Contra: A. CUTRONI TUSA, Una officina monetale a Himera? Il problema cronologico, in: N. ALLEGRO – LE BELVEDERE – N. BONACASA, *Secondo quaderno imerese* (Rome, 1982) pp. 167–174; EAD., Himera tra realtà e immaginazione, in: G. FIORENTINI – M. CALTABIANO – A. CALDERONE (eds.), *Archeologia del Mediterraneo. Studi in Onore di E. De Miro* (Rome, 2003), pp. 223–233. For the bronze coinage: C.M. KRAAY, The Bronze Coinage of Himera and "Himera", in: *Le origini della monetazione di bronzo in Sicilia e Magna Grecia*, *AIIN*, Suppl. Vol. 25 (Rome, 1979), pp. 27–47; R. CALCIATI, Himera; Le prime serie bronzee con Gorgoneion alla luce di recenti acquisizioni, *Annotazioni Numismatiche*, Suppl. 16 (Milan, 1995). For the silver fractions there is still no detailed and comprehensive study but see: G. MANGANARO, Dai *mikrà kermata* di argento al *chalkokratos kassíteros* in Sicilia nel V. sec. a.C., *JNG* 34, 1984, pp. 11–39; MANGANARO 2008.

⁴ Harvard University Art Museum, Annual Report 2004–2005, p. 13.



Fig. 1 AR, obol 0.84g, 7'; thin flan with a small piece of the edge chipped off in recent times⁵, HAM 2005.198.

Obv.: Hen standing to r. within border of dots; the feathers of the tail are rendered in a larger tuft at the bottom and four longer and thinner lines above; there seem to be two pellets right behind the head, one above the other (or possibly a letter?).

Rev.: Female bust to r., with long prominent nose, thick lips, large oval frontal eye and large ear; the hair is long tied up in a bun with a knot at the back. Circle of dots, the whole in an incuse circle.

The closest parallel for this fraction is n. 291, in Kraay's monograph on Himera⁶: the obverse does not match Kraay OF 17, though it is close in style, but the reverse seems to be from the same die as RF 13. Kraay described the obverse as a cock but G. Manganaro rightly pointed out that the rendering of the tail feathers as well as the somewhat slimmer body of the bird are characteristic of a hen⁷. Silver fractions are usually rare⁸: Kraay knew of only one other specimen with the female head on the reverse in a Swiss Italian private collection. Manganaro illustrated it in his latest contribution with another similar one⁹. The hair style is different from the one on our coin: it is rendered in long pearly braids and not pulled up, reminiscent of the small head of Arethusa in the center of the incuse square on the first group of tetradrachms of Syracuse from the end of the sixth century BC¹⁰ as Manganaro observed.

The head is no doubt female and it must be that of the nymph Himera. As Manganaro observed, it is the oldest representation of the local nymph, whose full figure will appear on the later didrachms and tetradrachms. Following Pindar's description¹¹ it can also be understood as a very early personification of the City. The type of the hen on the obverse is well known from the second group of archaic drachms, where it appears on the incuse square of the reverse, as a counterpart to the cock¹² on the obverse. Neither Kraay nor Manganaro commented upon the

⁵ Our conservator Nancy Lloyd observed that on the surface the metal presents a finely, pitted texture with a moderate layer of blackish-brown patina. The break and curved loss at the edge, half of which occurred recently reveals a bright, granular metal.

⁶ KRAAY 1984, p. 92 no. 291 and pl. 15 = McClean 2293.

⁷ MANGANARO 2008, p. 92 n. 7.

⁸ Mainly because the chances of recovering such small coins in the ground, especially before the now wide-spread use of metal detectors, were and are very limited. This does not necessarily mean that they were originally struck in smaller quantity than the larger denominations: our present knowledge is not sufficient to draw sound conclusions.

⁹ MANGANARO 2008, p. 102, pl. I, 1 and 3.

¹⁰ E. BOEHRINGER, *Die Münzen von Syrakus* (Berlin – Leipzig, 1929), Gruppe I, Reihe I–II, pl. I and II.

¹¹ PIND., *Ol.* XII 2.

¹² The type has been interpreted in different ways and it will be discussed below with coin no. 2.

pellets behind the head of the hen: McClean 2293 clearly has two, and the obol pl. I 3 in Manganaro's RIN 2008 publication has one. On our obol it is difficult to determine whether there is one or two pellets (or perhaps something else, a letter?). What do the pellets mean? At that early date marks of value would be very unusual¹³ and they are probably purely decorative as on the early didrachms of Selinous¹⁴.

Kraay¹⁵ who saw a cock on the obverse suggested that the new reverse type of this unique issue was a later feature and should be associated with his Group VII of drachms, which he dated "c. 500 or later – 483". In fact the hen seems closer to those on the later reverses of Group V such as R93 or R94, nos. 162–163, and could be dated somewhat earlier around 500 BC or just after. This date would agree with Manganaro's comparison of the small head of Himera with that of Arethusa on the earliest tetradrachms of Syracuse.

There has been considerable discussion and disagreement, not to say confusion, about the weights and denominations of the early fractional coinage¹⁶. For our fraction, only four specimens are known and their weights are 0.74g (McClean), 0.83g and 0.88g (ex Moretti) and 0.84g. C. Kraay in his corpus of the archaic coinage of Himera included the fractions with an incuse square reverse that belong with the drachms issues, and was able to gather a more important number of specimens¹⁷ with weights ranging 0.95–0.86g. Most scholars, except for P. Gardner, A. Evans and H.A. Cahn, consider these silver fractions obols¹⁸ and I join them. As Parise¹⁹ and Clain-Stefanelli²⁰ best explained, the obol corresponded to one-sixth of an Attic drachm of 4.38g and weighed about 0.73g; it was divisible into ten chalkoi, or in Sicily, ten onkiai of 0.07g each. The litra was a Sicilian unit of weight and originally the silver equivalent of a Sicilian weight in bronze; it was worth and weighed one-tenth of a Corinthian stater of 8.56g or one-fifth of an Attic drachm, about 0.87g. It was divisible into twelve onkiai of about 0.07g each. For the sake of clarity and also because I am only discussing the above fraction of Himera, I shall leave aside the subdivisions of the obol and the litra (hemiohols, pentonkia, trientes, tetrantes, hexantes, etc.), which of course existed and when they have survived and been studied in significant numbers help clarify the weight system. At any rate these calculations are based on the Attic weight system and

¹³ See also BOEHRINGER 1996, p. 57.

¹⁴ C. ARNOLD-BIUCCHI, *The Beginnings of Coinage in the West: Archaic Selinus*, in: H. NILSSON (ed.), *Florilegium Numismaticum. Studia in Honorem U. Westermark Edita* (Stockholm, 1992), p. 14.

¹⁵ KRAAY 1984, p. 92.

¹⁶ F. IMHOOF-BLUMER, *ASFN* 6, 1882, pp. 89–95; H.A. CAHN, *Die Münzen der sizilischen Stadt Naxos* (Basle, 1944), pp. 75 ff.; E.S.G. ROBINSON, *Rhegion, Zankle-Messana and the Samians*, *JHS* 66, 1946, pp. 13–14; PARISE 1971, pp. 15–20; KRAAY 1984, pp. 19–21; G. MANGANARO, *JNG* 1984 (above n. 3); BÉREND 1984, pp. 7–30; CLAIN-STEFANELLI 1987, pp. 39–66; MANGANARO 1999, pp. 239–255; WESTERMARK 1999, pp. 430–32.

¹⁷ KRAAY 1984, pp. 89–94, nos. 274–307, pl. 15.

¹⁸ The clearer explanations are those of ROBINSON, CLAIN-STEFANELLI 1987 and KRAAY 1984.

¹⁹ PARISE 1971, p. 15, based in part on CAHN (above n. 16), pp. 74–78.

²⁰ CLAIN-STEFANELLI 1987, pp. 42–43.

the litra is always heavier than the obol. In Sicily, as Manganaro has convincingly demonstrated²¹, the silver litra was most likely introduced around 460 BC, after the fall of the tyranny in Syracuse and after the Demareteion issues, when the entire island was striking coins on the Attic weight system.

It is for the earlier period that confusion seems to reign. The earliest mints to strike coins in Sicily were the first Chalkidian colonies of Naxos and Zankle, and its foundation Himera, and Megarian Selinous. The latter adopted its own weight system and did not issue a large coinage of drachms in the sixth century and therefore we shall leave this mint aside in this discussion. All three Chalkidian cities produced a sizeable coinage of drachms weighing 5.40–5.80g. This system has been called “Euboic”²², and it basically corresponded to the Corinthian weight standard. I reproduce here Parise’s calculations:

- 1 Corinthian stater of 8.8g = 10 litrai of 0.88g
- 2 Corinthian staters = 1 Euboic stater of 17.6g = 20 litrai
- 1 Euboic tetradrachm = 3 drachms of 5.86g = 20 litrai

This third equation, it seems to me, is confusing and fallacious: it is certainly true that three drachms of 5.86g equal one Euboic tetradrachm of about 17.6g (or one Attic tetradrachm). But to my knowledge the only coins of that weight struck in Sicily in the archaic period were the coins of the Samians at Zankle (494–488 BC), and the first issues of Anaxilas at Rhegion and Zankle/Messana with lion’s and calf’s head (494/3–480 BC). In the sixth century and before Syracuse started its coinage on the Attic weight standard around 510 BC, no mint issued coins heavier than didrachms of about 8.5g to 8.7g (see Selinous and Akragas). As Robinson and Parise and others pointed out, the idea of a litra worth 3/20 of a drachm would be very problematic. In fact if the litra equaled one fifth of the drachm in the Attic system, it must have had the same value within the “Euboic” system and therefore the last line of Parise’s table above should perhaps be read as:

- 1 Euboic tetradrachm = 3 drachms of 5.86g = 15 litrai

Calculations, I would think, have to be made within one system of weights to be valid.

The Chalkidian cities issued drachms of about 5.86g and fractions that can only be obols, a sixth of their weight. A “Euboic” litra would weigh about 1.1g but such a coin does not exist. Subdivisions of the obols are extremely rare before 500 BC. They are known in Zankle²³ for instance. Kraay only knew two coins of about 0.18g, his 306 and 307, and they belong just before 483 BC. I would call the weight standard “Chalkidian”²⁴ to avoid the confusion and argue further that the silver litra in Sicily did not exist as a coin until after the issues of the Demareteion and the fall of the tyranny in Syracuse in 467 BC, as Manganaro has shown.

²¹ MANGANARO 1999.

²² ACGC, p. 330; ROBINSON (above n. 16), pp. 13–14 and PARISE 1971, p. 15.

²³ See for instance BOEHRINGER 1996.

²⁴ BOEHRINGER 1996, p. 55, called it “westchalkidisch”.

Another reason for the confusion is the fact that at Himera, there are two groups of fractions, one with a cock and one with a hen on the obverse, for approximately the same period. D. Bérend²⁵ has argued logically and convincingly that since the fractional coinage usually consisted of very small denominations of weights that differed only a couple of decigrams from each other, the only way to distinguish them, was by their types. When Syracuse introduced the silver *lira* it put an octopus on the reverse to distinguish it clearly from the earlier *obol* with a wheel, and most mints followed the same practice. Kraay at the beginning of his book in the discussion of the weight system observed that: “The hen series weighs 0.95–0.86 gm, which is only minimally below the ideal weight of an *obol* (0.96 gm) of a *drachma* of 5.80 gm. The main series with cock ... has a slightly lower peak from 0.92–0.76 gm, while the later cocks spread from 0.82–0.59 gm. ... It is preferable to link the difference in weight with the difference in type, and therefore to regard the hens as *obols* and the cocks as *litrae*.”²⁶ In other words he considered the heavier series *obols* and the lighter *litrai*, which seems contradictory, if we accept that the *lira* always equaled one fifth of the *drachm* and the *obol* one sixth within one weight standard. I can’t help wondering whether this is what Kraay really meant or whether it is a mistake or confusion that he would have caught, had he lived long enough to read the galleys of his book. As R.R. Holloway stated in the preface: “As printed now, it is not the ultimate version the author would have made and includes some inevitable errors”. In the catalogue of the fractions (p. 89), Kraay in fact wrote: “All the smaller coins except two belong to the same denomination, variously described as *obol* or *lira*, the weights of which range at best from about 0.80–0.95 gm. There are two main series, one with cock and one with hen on obverse respectively. The issues with the hen would most naturally belong to the period after the reverses with the hen had been adopted for the *drachmae*...”.

In conclusion, our little coin is a very rare *obol* of Himera, struck on the “Chalkidian” weight standard, between 500 and 483 BC.



Fig. 2 AR, drachm, 4.11g, 3', HAM 2002.282.9²⁷.

Obv.: Cock standing to l., with crest and spread tail feathers; letter Λ (?)²⁸ between the head and tail. Circle of dots.

Rev.: Knucklebone; around inscription IME/R/AION.

²⁵ BÉREND 1984.

²⁶ KRAAY 1984, p. 21.

²⁷ Numismatic Fine Arts 6 (1979) lot 55; M&M Deutschland, Auktion 11, 7–8 November 2002, lot 487.

²⁸ No letters are mentioned by either JENKINS or WESTERMARK, only striations on some of the specimens, yet there really seems to be one on this coin. The letters AY in Chalkidian alphabet appear on the archaic drachms, see KRAAY 1984, pp. 17–18, who suggested that they might be the initials of mint magistrates, and MANGANARO 2008, pp. 96–97, who read $\lambda\upsilon(\alpha\iota\omicron\varsigma)$, epithet of Dionysos, the liberator.

The second coin (*Fig. 2*) is well known and far less problematic than the previous one. It has been thoroughly published and I only present it here to publicize the fact that it has now found a home in a museum. It is a drachm of Himera that belongs to the coinage of Akragantine type. U. Westermark published a complete catalogue and die study based on the previous study by G.K. Jenkins²⁹ and this drachm is listed: 126.3. The coinage is dated circa 480–470 BC in the period when Himera fell under the domination of Theron of Akragas and thus became part of the Emmenid empire. This is reflected in the coinage: the obverse maintained the type of the archaic drachms, the cock, but the reverse was replaced by that of a crab, the emblem of the city of Akragas. The small issue with an astragalos on the reverse is die linked to the drachms of group II with the crab on the reverse. There are only two reverse dies known, R11 and R12, coupled with three different obverses, O3, O4 and O5. It was accompanied by an even smaller issue of hexantes or dionkia with an astragalos on the obverse and two pellets on the reverse. No other fractions are known for this period and the lack of obols is surprising. The drachms and the dionkia must be placed with the didrachms of Series 1, as Jenkins and Westermark showed, since the type of the crab is similar to that of the early didrachms. They probably began around 480 BC and cannot have ended much later than 475 BC³⁰.

U. Westermark remarked that there is still no convincing definitive interpretation of the characteristic obverse type of the cock. L. Breglia in her study of the type in the Naples colloquium argued that the cock could be associated with almost all the great gods, and Westermark favored an association with the goddess Athena, based on Diod. V 3.4, according to whom the whole territory of Himera was dedicated to Athena, and also because the panathenaic amphorai consistently show Athena flanked by two columns surmounted by a cock³¹. The etymology of ἡμέρα – the day – since the cock announces the new day – from ἡμέρα, as Westermark pointed out, has been both accepted and rejected. I was going to agree that it seems a somewhat forced and constructed interpretation by modern scholars in order to create one of the puns so dear to the Greeks, but I went back and checked my Greek dictionary: it is actually Plato who first suggested this derivation³², as J.H. Eckhel clearly explained³³. So perhaps the pun is indeed one of the meanings for the coin type³⁴. The cock was used in oracles and as such can be associated with several gods, like Apollo,

²⁹ WESTERMARK 1999.

³⁰ WESTERMARK 1999, pp. 424–427.

³¹ Much has been written on the topic, see: GÀBRICI 1894, pp. 154–158; L. BREGLIA, *Il gallo di Himera*, in: *Suppl. AIN* vol. 16–17 (above n. 3), pp. 37–51 and H.A. CAHN in: *Interventi*, pp. 114–115 in the same volume and TUSA CUTRONI, p. 81, n. 40. in favour of Athena; G. VALLET, *La représentation du coq dans la céramique grecque du VI^e siècle*, in the same volume pp. 52–66; WESTERMARK 1999, pp. 428–430; MANGANARO 2008, pp. 91–92 and n. 2 with a complete bibliography.

³² *Crat.* 418 c.

³³ J.H. ECKHEL, *Doctrina Numorum Veterum I* (Vienna, 1792), p. 212.

³⁴ The Greek word for cock is ἀλεκτρούων, ἀλεκτρούαινα for hen, so there is no possible pun here.

Asklepios or Hermes³⁵, but as Eckhel already observed, for Himera there are no clear attestations. The cock was also often offered as a present, as depicted on vase painting.

The reverse type of this drachm is equally ambiguous and difficult for us to understand. The astragalos is a knucklebone and was used in games or to draw lots³⁶. Young girls and nymphs are often represented playing with knucklebones, so on this issue it can perhaps be interpreted as a toy of the nymph Himera³⁷.



Fig. 3 AR, tetradrachm. 17.10g, 2', HAM 2005.92³⁸.

Obv.: Quadriga of horses at the walk to r.; a small Nike flying above crowns the charioteer. In exergue: IMEPAION.

Rev.: Nymph Himera standing on exergue line, facing, with head turned l., holding a phiale in her r. hand and pouring a libation on a flaming altar, set on a two-steps base; she is draped in a fine himation that reveals her breast and legs in *contrapposto*; her long hair is pulled up in a chignon and she is wearing a turreted crown; to r. a naked Silenos is washing himself in front of a fountain with a lion spout from which water spurts out; in field l. a swastika, and in field r. a grain kernel.

In 1988 I wrote a very schematic article on the tetradrachms of Himera³⁹. I knew the above tetradrachm only from the very poor photograph in the Burgan catalogue and I dismissed it as a modern forgery: the symbol of the swastika didn't seem right to me at the time. Examination of the original published here, however, leaves no doubt about the authenticity of the coin. In fact two other specimens

³⁵ E. CIACERI, *Culti e miti nella storia dell'antica Sicilia* (Catania, 1911, reprinted Brancate, 2004), p. 106 and 131; L. LACROIX, *Monnaies et colonisation dans l'Occident grec* (Brussels, 1965), pp. 126–127.

³⁶ F. VON SCHRÖTTER, *Wörterbuch der Münzkunde* (reprint Berlin, 1970) s.v. astragalos.

³⁷ The political interpretation of P. BICKNELL, *The Drachms of Himera with Astragalos reverse*, *Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia* 5, October 1990, pp. 32–33, who attributed this short issue to the revolt of Himera against the Akragantine overlords in 476/75 BC, attested by DIOD. XI 48, 6–8, brutally put down by Theron, is ingenious, but somewhat far fetched: the revolutionaries would have taken control of the mint briefly and changed the type. A dice does not seem a very revolutionary type!

³⁸ Bought from Leu Numismatics in 2005, ex Claude Burgan, 30 June 1987 lot. 259.

³⁹ ARNOLD-BIUCCHI 1988, pp. 85–100 (above n. 3): the main purpose was to publish the two new specimens of the Pelops group. I had made an effort to collect all the specimens that came to light after GUTMANN – SCHWABACHER 1929 but I did not have time to publish the detailed catalogue.

from the same pair of dies are known and can now be added⁴⁰. The dies are the same as those of Gutmann – Schwabacher 19 and Arnold-Biucchi 21, Q7 and H 16, (see *Fig. 4*: HAM 1.1965.616 from the Dewing collection also from the same reverse die) but the reverse die has been recut and the swastika added. The symbol is not unknown in western Sicily and Silvia Hurter commented on it in her book on Segesta⁴¹: the swastika is understood as an ancient near-eastern solar symbol (perhaps from as far as India according to Hurter)⁴² that was used for decorative and/or symbolic purposes. She showed that it may have been transmitted to western Sicily through the imported eastern pottery and that it is found on some Punic mints, such as Motya and Panormos. She also mentioned the Himera tetradrachm, which of course she knew.



Fig. 4 AR, tetradrachm. HAM 1.1965.616.

I should not have been skeptical of the added swastika symbol since earlier tetradrachms of Himera had been recut to add the symbol of a wheel⁴³. The re-cutting or repairing of ancient dies has long been known and Gutmann – Schwabacher commented on it⁴⁴. The production and the engraving of dies must have been a laborious and time-consuming process about which we can only deduce from observation of the coins themselves since no ancient literary sources describe die manufacturing or mint procedures. So when a die broke down, it could be repaired, or mistakes could be corrected by cutting down deeper into the die and re-engraving details, as must have been the case at Himera with the swastika and the wheel⁴⁵. Gutmann – Schwabacher did not know any examples of the tetradrachm with reverse H 16 recut with a swastika but it is interesting to

⁴⁰ Bayerische Vereinsbank, FPL 61, April 1974, lot 13, 16.9g = Stack's, 6/7 September 1973, lot 333 (probably the same as Superiors Stamp & Coin Inc. 15, 18 June 1972, lot 162) and Superior Galleries Inc. 12/14 December 1987, lot 110, 17.38g.

⁴¹ S. MANI HURTER, *Die Didrachmenprägung von Segesta, mit einem Anhang der Hybriden, Teilstücke und Tetradrachmen sowie mit einem Überblick über die Bronzeprägung*, SSN 1 (Bern, 2008), p. 45.

⁴² VON SCHRÖTTER (above n. 36), p. 251 s.v. Hakenkreuz.

⁴³ GUTMANN – SCHWABACHER 1929, 7 and 8; ARNOLD-BIUCCHI 1988, 12 and 13: the recut reverse is H10.

⁴⁴ Cf. p. 123 and n. 1. See also G.F. HILL, *Ancient Methods of Coining*, NC 1922, pp. 24–26; J.G. MILNE, *Two Notes on Greek Dies*, NC 1922, pp. 43–46 discussed recut dies of Roman Alexandria; W. SCHWABACHER, *Zwei sizilische Tetradrachmen*, in: Georg Habich zum 60. Geburtstag (Munich, 1928), pp. 5–9; P. LEDERER, ZfN 38, 1928, p. 300 n. 1.; C. STANNARD, *Two-headed and two-tailed denarii in the Roman Republic*, NC 147, 1987, pp. 160–163. One would wish more recent studies on the subject.

⁴⁵ The same re-cutting of symbols occurred at Messana around 450 BC, see C. ARNOLD-BIUCCHI, *The Randazzo Hoard* (New York, 1990), pp. 28–29.

note that they hypothetically suggested that the obverse die Q5 might have been repaired and recut into Q7⁴⁶. Such re-cuts may not only have been performed on worn dies but also for reasons of accounting at the mint: we usually interpret subsidiary symbols on coins not only as religious or personal emblems but also as “administrative” marks that allowed the mint to more easily keep track of the exact amount of silver that was minted. The tetradrachm of Himera with reverse H16 is known in more than thirty examples; it must have represented a very large issue and perhaps at some point, the need was felt to add a distinguishing symbol as a measure of accounting.

As Gutmann – Schwabacher already pointed out, this tetradrachm of Himera (H 16) stylistically represents the high point of the mint production: the rendering of the nymph on the reverse with the almost ethereal drapery, standing in perfect *contrapposto*, is a masterpiece of high classical art around 430–420 BC⁴⁷. Our newly acquired specimen is very well preserved: I had never noticed before that the nymph Himera is wearing a turreted crown as befits the personification of the city. Eckhel of course did notice: “*mulier capite radiato*”⁴⁸ but to my knowledge none of the later descriptions mentioned this important detail. Pindar in his XIIth Olympian Ode sang Himera as daughter of Zeus Eleutherios, protecting Tyche and savior of the city – ΣΟΤΗΡ as some rare didrachms describe her⁴⁹.

She is one of the first personifications of cities, the earliest representation of Tyche on coins, a type that will become so popular in the Hellenistic age⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ GUTMANN – SCHWABACHER 1929, p. 130 n. 1. I have not been able to re-examine enough original examples to confirm the re-cutting of the obverse.

⁴⁷ For the dating of the issue cf. the discussion of the hoard evidence and the style in ARNOLD-BIUCCHI 1988, pp. 90–96.

⁴⁸ Above n. 33. It is not really a radiate crown but one composed of floral ornaments and small towers, and they appear on specimens without the swastika too.

⁴⁹ GUTMANN – SCHWABACHER 1929, p. 117, 3.

⁵⁰ See the comments of M. TORELLI, I culti di Imera tra storia e archeologia, in: G. FIORENTINI – M. CALTABIANO – A. CALDERONE, Archeologia del Mediterraneo. Studi in onore de Ernesto de Miro (Rome, 2003), pp. 678–679. M. CACCAMO CALTABIANO, Himera/Aphrodite. L'iconografia monetale di una dea della Città nella prospettiva del *LIN*, in: Corona Laurea – Studii in onore a Lucia Teposu Marinescu (Bucarest 2005), pp. 129–140, argued that the representation of the female figure on the reverse is Aphrodite; because of the rendering of the figure in this particular die, with the transparent himation revealing the feminine forms, this interpretation may have some validity: there is often some ambiguity between local nymph and city goddess as in Syracuse with Arethusa and Artemis.

Abstract

This article presents three coins of Himera, Sicily, recently acquired by the Harvard Art Museum: a hitherto unpublished Chalkidian obol (cf. Kraay, Himera no. 291) allows some clarifications on the weight standards of the fractional coinages of archaic Sicily. The known drachm of Akragantine type suggests some further thoughts on the types, and the recut classical tetradrachm provides an interesting example for die manufacture.

Zusammenfassung

Drei vom Harvard Art Museum neu erworbene Münzen von Himera werden vorgestellt: ein bisher unedierter chalkidischer Obol (vgl. Kraay, Himera, Nr. 291) erlaubt es, Fragen zum Gewichtsstandard archaischer Fraktionen Siziliens zu klären. Anhand der bekannten Drachme Akragantinischen Typs können weiterführende Überlegungen zu den Münztypen angestellt werden und die klassische Tetradrachme mit nachgeschnittenem Rückseitenstempel stellt ein interessantes Beispiel für technische Eingriffe an Stempeln dar.

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