

A new light on the early silver coinage of Teos

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A NEW LIGHT
ON THE EARLY SILVER COINAGE OF TEOS*

Plate 1

Silvia Hurter's welcome publication of an overstrike by a previously unknown Teos stater – one of three traced by her to a hoard of the '80s – on a stater of Tanagra led me to consider a drastic revision of Balcer's arrangement of the mint. The overtype is contemporary with B 103, the undertype is universally given to the period 457–447 BC.¹ Hardly had I started work than I was directed to David MacDonald's article on a second Teos overstrike – this time by B 15 on a cut-down tetradrachm of Abdera as May 72 f. I will begin with this, since it raises immediate chronological difficulties.²

I had already suspected that Balcer's c. 540–495/490 dating of his Groups III–XIII (nos. 1–22) was too high. The Asyut hoard, effectively closed c. 480–75, contained five Teos staters; the last was B 13, the others from dies like B 7,11 and 13. The later Zagazig hoard had two Teos staters, one being B 14 and the other perhaps a little earlier. From these hoards alone it is clear that Balcer's dates are fifteen to twenty years too early.³ The problem, however, goes further than this. B 15, which overstruck an Abdera tetradrachm as May 72 f., must be dated c. 465 on the probable c. 460 dating of the «Decadrachm» hoard. Balcer's placing of the Teos overtype is badly out.⁴ It certainly resembles B 13 f., but its true place must be later in the order. The griffin has two wings, which – apart from B 5 – is not

* My thanks are due to Silvia Hurter for encouragement and information.

¹ See *Florilegium Numismaticum: Studia in honorem U. Westermark edita* (Stockholm 1992), pp. 171–3. The overtype has the symbol «Apollo head»; the other two have «kantharos» and «negro head». See further n. 7. For references to Balcer see J.M. Balcer, *The Early Silver Coinage of Teos*, SNR 47, 1968, pp. 51–84.

² SM 44/174, 1994, pp. 1–4.

³ M. Price and N. Waggoner, *The «Asyut» Hoard* (London 1975), p. 86 f., 622–6 and n.137 on p. 134; H. Dressel and K. Regling, *ZfN* 37, 1927, p. 126, 236 (B 14) and 237 (Zagazig). For the hoard dates see Price and Waggoner, pp. 22 and 117–128. The great majority of Zagazig's 84 coins fall within the range of Asyut (IGCH 1644), but there are some odd later pieces as Derrones (triskeles reverse), Lycia, Salamis (as in the Larnaka hoard, IGCH 1272) and some 18 «post-Salamis» Athens. See later n. 18.

⁴ For the date of the «Decadrachm» hoard see S. Fried, J. Kagan and M. Price in: *Coinage and Administration...* (ed. I. Carradice), BAR Int. Series 343 (Oxford 1987), pp. 1–4, 21–5 and 43–7. There are at least five obverse dies between HGH (May 72 f.) and TEAE (May 83–5) – the last in the hoard, which has *four* obverses for him.

found till B 22; it then becomes a regular, though not inevitable, feature. I would suggest that B 15 should be renumbered B 21 A.⁵

Balcer made his Period II end c. 449, when he thought that Teos closed its mint in obedience to the Athenian Standards Decree. He assigned 24 obverse dies (B 84–107) to the preceding thirty years.⁶ Those 24 dies must in fact all be put after c. 465 and the total will be boosted by 8 dies from Period I (B 22–9) and another 8 from new hoards: by thorough search of sales catalogues I have found at least four more to add to the three published by Hurter.⁷ The grand total of 40 dies can not be squeezed into barely fifteen years. Teos used at most six obverse dies in the decade c. 475 to 465. Abdera, which regularly paid Athens fifteen talents to Teos's six, used only twelve obverse dies in the same period.⁸ There can no longer be any question of Teos's coinage ending c. 449; it must have continued right through the 440s at the very least.

Study of the Teos overstrike on Tanagra reinforces the point. Hurter fairly allowed that it *could* have occurred in the late 450s, but she saw it as probably fatal to Balcer's view.⁹ The Teos overtype has the griffin's left paw being lowered from the upright position, which was previously first found with B 103. It also has the full legend THION, which – apart from B 89 – is found only with B 102–4 and 108 (drachm).¹⁰ Unluckily we have no detailed study of Tanagra, which would define the place of the undertype in the 457–447 series. It has a divided Boiotian shield on the obverse and a horse protome left with TA on the reverse.¹¹

⁵ MacDonald accepted the logic of the dates for B 13 and 15 (n. 2, p. 2 f.), but did not challenge Balcer's placing of B 15. But talk of intermittent Teos coinage in the 470s and early 460s will not do. Close study of Balcer's coin descriptions and of his plates 12–13 show that B 15 *could* be B 21A.

⁶ Balcer saw that this was an unexpectedly low volume of coinage for a time of prosperity (pp. 14 and 17); he explained it by Athens' closure of the Teian mint, removing its coins from circulation and sending them to Athens for reminting. Kraay, ACGC, p. 234, rather thought that the record in the late period was still very incomplete – many issues being known only in single specimens.

⁷ For the 1980 hoard staters see Bank Leu 38, 1986, lot 117 (Apollo head); NFA 16, 1985, lot 212 (negro head); MM 64, 1984, lot 158 (kantharos I); Lanz 26, 1983, lot 255 (kantharos II); Lanz 24, 1988, lot 336 (crab); Spink, NCirc. Nov. 1991, 6996 (grape cluster and leaf). See now Coin Hoards VIII (1994), 47 with pl. 4, 23–30, pl. 5, 1–2. From another earlier hoard came MM 54, 1978, lot 296 (ivy leaf); Bank Leu 33, 1983, lot 385 (wheel). The «wheel» die had a frog added subsequently above the wheel (NAC 6, 1993, lot 167): the «grape cluster» die, though very like B 102, is certainly a new die and not just B 102 reworked.

⁸ Only B 16–21 can lie between B 13/14 and B 15 in its new position as B 21A. The latest Abdera in Asyut is May 48 (an octadrachm). Between this and HΓH (May 72 f.) there are three octadrachm dies and nine for tetradrachms (the «Decadrachm» hoard added at least one to May, see Fried, op. cit. in n. 4, p. 3). For the tribute record see R. Meiggs and A. Andrewes, *Sources for Greek History*² (Oxford 1951), p. 404 f., 18 (Teos) and 414 f., 58 (Abdera).

⁹ Op. cit. (n. 1), p. 171.

¹⁰ See Hurter, Fig. 1, and Pl. 1, 1–2. None of the other new staters have the paw lowered; they all belong to the B 84–107 period, but must be put before B 103.

¹¹ See Hurter, Fig. 3, and Pl. 1, 10.

There are some useful pointers. The series clearly starts with staters with similarly divided obverse shield – based on prototypes from c. 480 from Haliartos and Thebes – but the horse faces right, the style is somewhat rough and the legend TANA is in decidedly archaic letters.¹² This reverse pattern continues on coins with still rather rough style, but the shield is now plain and the legend TAN: this group merges into another with improving style and legend TA. This is the earliest point where the staters with horse left could be inserted. But it seems logical to let the series with horse right continue to its end.¹³ Then the staters with horse left will follow – first a small group with plain shield and then an even smaller section with a return to the divided shield of the start of the series. Only one obverse die was used, which would seem to confirm its final position. The coinage was probably suddenly terminated with the end of Athenian political dominance in Boiotia. The absence of small denominations with divided shield contrasts with their presence with other groups and further confirms the proposed arrangement.¹⁴

If I am right, the Teos overstrike can be put no earlier than c. 445 and could be considerably later. At this point I would offer some further confirmation. B 100, a stater near the end of Teos coinage, shows an owl remarkably like the bird on Athenian tetradrachms, as Balcer acutely noticed. Indeed it is not just a generalised Attic owl. It is an accurate copy of the standardised owls with prong-like tails, which Starr and Kraay dated after c. 450. They are found overstruck c. 445 at Rhegion and Messana and four specimens were included in a small hoard of the 430s from Pyrgi in Etruria.¹⁵ They flooded the eastern markets in the same period and were closely copied on a coin of the Lycian dynast Teththiveibi, with an obverse die-linked to his regular «Aphrodite»/tetraskes series. The parallel series of his contemporary Sppntaza was well represented in a Lycian hoard of c. 440–430,

¹² See *Pl. 1, 3–5*. Babelon wrongly put this Tanagra stater before c. 480; see *Traité I*, p. 975, 1373. Head, *HN*², p. 348, rightly put it with the 457–447 series.

¹³ See *Pl. 1, 6–8*. In the early phase the horse often has a wreath round its neck, but never with the later horse right or the horse left group. See A. Schachter, *Horse Coins from Tanagra*, NC 1958, pp. 43–6.

¹⁴ See *Pl. 1, 9–13*.

¹⁵ See Balcer, *op. cit.* (n. 1), pp. 18 and 17 (a drachm with the same symbol: B 108). The drachm must be a little later, the griffin's left paw is lowered, the symbol is *above* the paw as with B 107. *Pl. 1, 14* shows a specimen of B 100 with a clearer owl than in Balcer's plate: on *Pl. 1, 15* I offer the reverse of a standardised Athenian tetradrachm for comparison. For these see C.G. Starr, *Athenian Coinage 480–449 B.C.* (Oxford 1970), pp. 64 and 70–5 with *Pl. 21–23*; Kraay, *ACGC*, p. 66 f. For the overstrikes see Kraay, *AIIN Suppl.* 12–14, 1969, pp. 141–50; for Pyrgi see G. Colonna, *Congresso Int. di Numismatica*, Roma 1961, Vol. II *Atti* (Rome 1966), pp. 167–77 with *Pl. 13*. The four owls are of a type developed only c. 440; see Colonna, p. 170 f., and Starr, p. 89. The hoard can be dated after c. 435 by its latest Syracusan coin (Boehr. 670). In the Selinunte hoard of c. 435 – see Jenkins, *The Coinage of Gela* (Berlin 1970), pp. 66 and 159 for the date – the latest Syracusan coin was Bohr. 604.

which also contained standardised owls of the types present at Pyrgi.¹⁶ No standardised owls were found in the Jordan hoard with its strong affinities to the «Decadrachm» hoard of c. 460. But, whereas that had only the very beginning of Starr V A, the Jordan hoard had two splendid specimens of V B; it also had a more recent Lycian stater than any in the other hoard and a two-shekel piece from Tyre's first coinage of the late 450s. Its last three Athenian coins may have reached the Cypriot/Syrian area in 454 after the disastrous defeat of the great allied armada to Egypt; Cypriot, Phoenician and Cilician units had served in the Persian campaign and must have gone home well rewarded.¹⁷ The strange Zagazig hoard is the first eastern deposit that contained standardised owls. They might have come to the Delta in 449, when Kimon detached sixty ships from the main force at Cyprus to help the rebel Egyptian leader Amyrtaios.¹⁸ This evidence suggests that standardised owls became known in the east only after c. 449. It would take some considerable time for them to become familiar enough to invite imitation. The copying in Lycia and in Teos should probably be dated c. 440.¹⁹

Three separate lines of enquiry indicate that Teos struck coinage throughout the 440s and probably beyond. Teos then begins to fall in line. The major north Aegean mints of Abdera, Ainos, Maroneia, Akanthos and Mende are now thought

¹⁶ For Teththiveibi's owl (*Pl. 1,16*) see E.S.G. Robinson, NC 1936, p. 194 f. with Pl. 13,6, and BMC Lycia, Pl. 5,8; Kraay, ACGC, p. 270 f. with Pl. 12,208; H.B. Mattingly, Annual British School of Athens 65, 1970, p. 144; O. Mørkholm and J. Zahle, Acta Arch. 43, 1976, p. 54 n. 8. For the Kas (Antiphellos) hoard (IGCH 1251) see Mørkholm and Zahle, Acta Arch. 43, 1972, p. 79, and 47, 1976, p. 75. The owl reverse type was strongly continued by Kheriga in his «Aphrodite» series (*Pl. 1,17*), see Acta Arch. 43, 1972, p. 47 f. with Pl. 1. They prefer to identify his younger contemporary Kherêi as the hero of the famous Xanthos stele (pp. 87 f.), whose activity extended from c. 430 to at least 400, see R. Meiggs and D.M. Lewis, Greek Historical Inscriptions (Oxford 1969), p. 282 f., no. 93 (also for Kherêi); they therefore put Kheriga c. 450–410 (p. 59). E. Laroche, Fouilles de Xanthos V., 1974, pp. 142–8 and J. Bousquet, CRAI 1975, p. 139, however, champion the claim of Kheriga and I suspect that they may be right. Kuprlli, c. 485–440, re-used a die introduced by Kheriga, as Mørkholm and Zahle shrewdly noted (pp. 59 and 54). But this could fix him in power c. 440, no more than a decade before the first exploit recorded on the Xanthos stele.

¹⁷ On the Jordan hoard see C.M. Kraay and P.R.S. Moorey, RN 1968, pp. 181–220 (p. 187, no. 62, Lycia; p. 191, no. 88, Tyre). For its Athenian element see Fried, op. cit. (n. 4), p. 5 f. and Starr, op. cit. (n. 15), p. 88. The «Decadrachm» hoard could be linked with the great campaign of Athens and allies against Cyprus in 460, which was diverted to Egypt. See on this and its fate Thuc. 1, 104 and 109 f. and Diod. 12,75 and 77; A.W. Gomme, An Historical Commentary on Thucydides I (Oxford 1959), pp. 305–7 and 320–3; S. Hornblower, Commentary on Thucydides (Oxford 1991), I, pp. 163 f. and 176–8.

¹⁸ On this see Thuc. 1,112.2–4. Kraay published photographs of three Zagazig coins, all standardised owls, from Berlin; see Miscellanea Graeca (Ghent 1975), p. 147 and Pl. 1–3. On Zagazig see H. Dressel and K. Regling, ZfN 37, 1927, pp. 104–38; IGCH 1645; Price and Waggoner, op. cit. (n. 3), pp. 22 and 130, n. 18; Kraay, RN 1968, p. 207 f. (c. 450).

¹⁹ Conceivably B 100 copied Teththiveibi or one of Kheriga's early owls, which are mirror-images of an Athenian coin. See Mørkholm and Zahle, Acta Arch. 47, 1976, Pl. 1,2–3; my *Pl. 1,17*.

to have carried on busily minting through all this period. A new hoard seen in commerce clinches the argument. It is now no longer possible to believe in an Athenian Standards Decree of c. 449 and this measure must be restored to the 420s.²⁰

Appendix: A new fifth-century Greek hoard

Jeffrey Spier and Ute Wartenberg both kindly informed me of this find. A thorough search of sales catalogues suggests its basic composition: fine tetradrachms of Akanthos and Mende. Akanthos goes down to Desneux²¹ 95–103 (fish in exergue) and 104–6 (two laurel branches in exergue) – with many new dies. Mende goes down to Noe²² 55, 58, 61 and 62, again with new dies and combinations. Noe 62 must actually go before Noe 60, with its more advanced style; its obverse is close to Noe 55 and 56 and one of the two hoard specimens known to me has the reverse die of Noe 56 – a variant not listed by Noe. Noe 55 was overstruck by a tetradrachm of Gela (J 343).²³ The Gela overtype comes only two obverse dies earlier in actual striking before J 350, the last Gela coin in the Villabate hoard (IGCH 2082). Villabate should be dated c. 440.²⁴ The new hoard on its Mende content should probably be dated c. 440 also. It shows Akanthos progressing well beyond Desneux 90, the last issue represented in the «Decadrachm» hoard. Akanthos and Mende were still both vigorously issuing coinage that was circulating alongside Athenian standardised owls²⁵ – and both had plenty of uninterrupted coinage ahead of them.

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²⁰ See Kagan and Price in op. cit. (n. 4), pp. 24 f. and 43–7; U. Wartenberg, NC 152, 1992, pp. 195–7 (Maroneia). For the hoard see my Appendix. In 1933, M.N. Tod, Greek Historical Inscriptions I (Oxford 1932), was quite happy to date the decree c. 423 (pp. 163–6, no. 67)!

²¹ J. Desneux, Les tétradrachmes d'Akanthos, RBN 95, 1949.

²² S.P. Noe, The Mende (Kaliandra) Hoard, ANSNNM 27 (1926).

²³ See S.P. Noe, ANSMN 7, 1957, pp. 37–9 with Pls. XIII–XIV; G.K. Jenkins, Congresso Internazionale di Numismatica, Roma 1961. Vol. II Atti (Rome 1966), p. 133 f. with Pl. X, 10–14.

²⁴ See C.M. Kraay, Greek Coins and History (London 1969), pp. 34–40; H. Mattingly, NC 152, 1992, p. 189 f.

²⁵ See now Coin Hoards VIII (1994) 63 (+Athens).

Key to Plate 1

For help with the plate my thanks are due to Ute Wartenberg and Jonathan Williams, Mark Blackburn and Mando Oeconomidou.

- 1 NFA 22, 1989, lot 316 (Teos)
- 2 BMC Ionia, Teos 19
- 3 Hess-Leu 31, 1966, lot 301
- 4 Paris (photo from *Traité I*, pl. 41, 6)
- 5 Bourgey 1957 (Chandon de Briailles), lot 322 (Tanagra)
- 6 BMC Central Greece, Tanagra 22
- 7 McClean 5557 (Tanagra)
- 8 Bank Leu 42, 1987, lot 224 (ex Niggeler)
- 9 Athens, Numismatic Museum, from the Myron Karditsa Hoard
- 10 BMC Central Greece, Tanagra 24
- 11 BMC Central Greece, Tanagra 25
- 12 Leu 59, 1994, lot 106
- 13 BMC Central Greece, Tanagra 26
- 14 NFA 14, 1984, lot 151 (Teos)
- 15 BMC 54 (Athens)
- 16 BM (photo from NC 1936)
- 17 BMC Lycia... 105 (Kheriga)



