

REVUE BELGE
DE
NUMISMATIQUE

ET DE SIGILLOGRAPHIE

IN MEMORIAM TONY HACKENS

BELGISCH TIJDSCHRIFT
VOOR NUMISMATIEK EN ZEGELKUNDE

PUBLIÉE
SOUS LE HAUT PATRONAGE
DE S. M. LE ROI
PAR LA
SOCIÉTÉ ROYALE
DE NUMISMATIQUE DE BELGIQUE

UITGEGEVEN
ONDER DE HOGE BESCHERMING
VAN Z. M. DE KONING
DOOR HET
KONINKLIJK BELGISCH
GENOOTSCHAP VOOR NUMISMATIEK

ÉDITEURS
GHISLAINE MOUCHARTE et FRANÇOIS DE CALLATAÿ,

AVEC LA COLLABORATION DE
PIERRE COCKSHAW et JOHAN VAN HEESCH

CXLV - 1999

BRUXELLES

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NOTES ON THE IMAGERY OF DIONYSUS
ON GREEK COINS

Tony Hackens' cooperation with the University of São Paulo started back in 1982. I believe he would be glad to know that he is still present among us.

Introduction

When we take a coin in our hands, be it ancient or modern, the first aspect that strikes us is, undoubtedly, its image. Eventhough its weight or its metal content can many times be more important from an economic point of view, it is just 'natural' that the image it bears catches our attention first. As it is often stressed by specialists, through the '*stamping of a sign strictly related with the issuing authority, coins reveal their provenance, express a value and guarantee their buying power*' (1).

The variety of Greek and of Roman coin types has since the beginning of scientific numismatics challenged specialists. It has been almost impossible to build up interpretative models which could account for the explanation of all these images or even establish firm criteria for their interpretation. Although coins are special emblematic objects and have usually the same format, the rules used by ancient people when choosing one or the other image are not clear to us. Political reasons, religious, artistical or conventional reasons have all been considered, depending on each case and following a very intuitive, non systematic methodology. This has oftenly taken numismatists to a relativism of interpretation, rendering very difficult the historical use of the evidence as well as creating great skepticism toward numismatic methodology (2).

In a recent Ancient Greek History manual, for example, we read that: '*Although many mainland and western Greek cities rapidly began to mint silver coins, not all cities did, and the distribution of minting cities suggests*

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(1) M. CACCAMO CALTABIANO, *Immagini/parola, grammatica e sintassi di un lessico iconografico monetale*, in E.A. ARSLAN et al., *La 'parola' delle immagini e delle forme di scrittura*, Messina, 1998, p. 57.

(2) *Ibidem*, p. 60.

that coinage was seen as serving different purposes in different places' (3). This is exactly the kind of assertion that implies a complete resignation in dealing with the evidence and is a confirmation of this relativism we just mentioned.

Moreover, most specialists when dealing with coin types don't seem to be sure what are their main interests: understanding coinage as a global socio-cultural phenomenon?; establishing the reasons for the presence of a certain type on a certain coinage?; identifying religious cults through coin types? It is not uncommon to see explanations of coin types based on the presence of specific cults which in their turn are deduced from the presence of the same coin type! Dealing with coin iconography has presented such traps and has taken not few numismatists to circular reasoning of the kind. No wonder many serious scholars have taken refuge in statistical and metrological methods, which for their precision are, in a way, much more reliable.

Leaving aside the methods employed by the already 'classical' authors such as Babelon, Head, Hill, MacDonald and Imhoof Blumer who treated coin iconography with some consistency, it is worth mentioning the efforts made by Léon Lacroix from the years 1950's on in treating coin images in a more systematic way. As a matter of fact, as is well known, this author concentrated his attention on the interpretation of Greek coin types from either the mainland or the colonial areas. His numerous articles and books are, undoubtedly, a main source of inspiration for anyone interested in coin imagery. In the conference held in Nancy in 1971 — conference meant to be the opening of the modern debate on numismatic methodology and in which organization and final publication Tony Hackens had a leading role — Lacroix was in charge of the paper concerning coin iconography (4).

Observing the way Lacroix works, we may say that he adapts the traditional archaeological methods to numismatics: his researches are based mainly on the analysis of each coin type individually; each one is studied in its relationship to the archaeological evidence of the specific mint, at the light of the legendary or religious tradition recovered through ancient written sources, epigraphical or not. Philological research of terms related to objects or *personae* depicted on coins or research about coin names has also been very much used by Lacroix. When analysing the factors considered by an issuing authority at the moment of choosing a certain type, it is generally assumed by Lacroix that 'representati-veness' is the main element. Even if this is a serious, detailed and erudite work, I believe that a broad interpretative scheme, maybe a model, no matter how gene-

(3) R. OSBORNE, *Greece in the Making, 1200-479 BC*, London-New York, 1996, p. 256.

(4) *Numismatique antique. Problèmes et Méthodes*, Nancy-Louvain, 1975. Today an obligatory reference book to any student.

ral it could be, is still missing. A scheme that could adjust content and formal explanations and that could be of value for the interpretation of all Greek coin types.

This text will undertake to make an exercise of explanation. We are interested in testing how the analysis of a coin type can help us understand why coins were adopted by the Greek city-states, how coins acted in Greek society and how can their character be better defined. Even though a model of iconographical interpretation of Greek coin types may never be built — ours is just a contribution towards this main goal — it is our intention to sketch a comprehensive framework in which coins' image repertoire could be better understood. For us, it is a matter of crossing the frontier of each Greek *polis*, with its very specific reasons to make the option of inaugurating a coinage and of choosing this or that type and not another one. We'll take here the example of Dionysus' representations on Greek coins, of his attributes and followers (5). We'll make an effort to put together some reflexions on this specific imagery, believing that the sketching of a comprehensive framework on this subject can help us understand better the nature of ancient Greek coins.

As M. Caccamo Caltabiano states, the distinctive messages expressed by coin types '*sono espressi attraverso codici iconici di antica formazione, consolidatisi nel tempo, relativamente semplici ma la cui comprensione non è sempre immediata se non se ne conoscono le regole*' (6). Our aim is exactly going out in search for the underlying reasons of the regular spread of coinage throughout the Greek world and we believe that knowing more about the 'regole' mentioned by Caccamo Caltabiano can help us in this task.

I am sure that Professor Tony Hackens who strived so much for the advance of numismatic methodology would be happy if some progress could be made on the scientific analysis of coin types.

The evidence

This wouldn't be the place to present either a complete and exhausting survey of every single coin bearing dionysian type nor a systematic study of his religion and cult in ancient Greece. The building up of a general outline of the main images of Dionysus, his attributes and followers on Greek coins will serve our immediate purposes (7).

(5) A first version of this paper was presented at the Classics Department of my University during a Conference on Dionysus in Ancient Greece. I am glad to thank here my colleague J.A.A. Torrano for the opportunity of sharing with his students some reflexions on coin iconography.

(6) M. CACCAMO CALTABIANO, 1998, p. 57.

(7) We used mainly C.M. KRAAY's chronological framework in *Archaic and Classical Greek Coins*, London, 1976. Very useful were also R. PERA, *Tipi dionisiaci in Sicilia e Magna Grecia*, in *Secta Historia Antiqua*, XV, 1986, p. 31-61, with several imprecisions

Dionysus is generally recognized on coins by what is conventionally accepted as his attributes, although they were not introduced all at the same time and several of them are not exclusively related to this deity: the ivy or vine leaf crown, the bunch of grapes and the vine tree, the thyrsus, the kantharos, the crater and the amphora, the silen or satyr, the nymphs (maenads do not appear on coins). As usually these elements were used by scholars as direct references to Dionysus and/or to his religion or cult, for the purpose of our survey we decided to consider them by themselves, *i.e.* not necessarily in association to a male deity.

Our main chronological parameters were given by the introduction of coinage in the late archaic period and the end of the classical period. As is well known, from the end of the IVth century on complicated systems of issue control were introduced polluting coin fields with not always coherent images. However, we shall also be considering, even if peripherically, some IIIrd century representations of Dionysus as main type.

* * *

During the VIth century we could observe a certain fluidity in the definition of Dionysus as a deity for he is rarely represented on coin types. On the other hand his attributes had, at this time, some success having been depicted by several mints.

This deity's most complete representation comes from a sporadic coinage of the so-called MEP mint in South Italy (*c.* 500 BC) where he appears in full body, bearded, crowned by ivy leaves and carrying a kantharos and a bough of vine with a bunch of grapes. In Naxos (Sicily), where it seems that Dionysus was represented for the first time on coins, he appears also bearded with the ivy leaf crown and associated to a bunch of grapes (*c.* 550-490 BC). A dolphin rider from a reverse of a Pepparethan (Aegean) coin is sometimes interpreted as Dionysus due to a bunch of grapes depicted on the obverse.

Many other VIth century coins from Greek *poleis* bear elements related conventionally to Dionysus. Some of them come from the Cyclades and are related to the production and consumption of wine: the kantharos in Naxos, the amphora in Cartheia, the bunch of grapes in Iulis. Still in the Aegean, Tenos' coins depict the bunch of grapes also used as secondary type on Abderan coins. From the Thraco-Macedonian area come remarkable coin types depicting a satyr or a complete centaur carrying away a nymph (Thasos, Lete, Zaeilioi, Orrescii); an ithyphallic ass having a vine

and the important reference: M. BERNHART, *Dionysos und seine Familie auf griechischen Münzen. Numismatischer Beitrag zur Ikonografie des Dionysos*, in *JNG*, I, 1949. For the development of the cult and religion in general, we followed mainly J.-P. VERNANT, *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, São Paulo, 1991, vol. II, p. 27-46 (Brazilian ed.); C. GASPARRI, *Commento a Dionysos*, in *LIMC*, III/1, Zurich, 1986, p. 496-514; A. VERNI, *Dionysos*, in *LIMC*, III/1, Zurich, 1986, p. 414-496.

tree with bunches of grapes at the background (Mende); two nymphs carrying an amphora (unknown Macedonian mint).

In the Vth century the representation of Dionysus himself occurs with much more frequency on coins. His association with the bunch of grapes the ivy leaf crown, the vine branch, the satyr and the kantharos is recurrent. He is usually depicted bearded and as an elderly man. In Naxos (Sicily), Dionysus continues to be depicted, now in company of a drunken satyr with kantharos and sometimes thyrsus (403 BC) on the reverse. For the first time he appears on coins from Galaria (Sicily) with the kantharos and thyrsus (460 BC?) and from Thasos and Maroneia (*c.* 400 BC). A most extraordinary representation of the god comes from the coinage of Mende: the ithyphallic ass now brings Dionysus lying on its back, carrying a kantharos and sometimes a thyrsus (460 BC) (8). Moreover, in this epoch, dionysian symbology is present in many other towns: the satyr in Aetna and Catania (Sicily), the satyr bathing in a fountain on a coin from Himera, the kantharos in Boeotia, the amphora in Chios, the vine tree in Maroneia, the bunch of grapes in Soli (Southern Asia Minor).

It is worth noting that the thyrsus was introduced on coins after the adoption of the attributes relating specifically to the production and consumption of wine: the ivy leaf (9), the vine, the grapes, the kantharos, the amphora.

By the end of the Vth century and throughout the whole IVth century Dionysus is represented on coins without the beard and with a much younger aspect. Naxos (Sicily) mints a coin in which Dionysus appears beardless and with a fancy headdress in a very effeminate way (403 BC), although the pattern followed is the same as the one chosen by the town in the preceding years. Other cities such as Maroneia, Thasos, Mende, Lamia and Thebes in Boeotia, Metapontum (South Italy) also minted coins using a much younger depiction of Dionysus. In Corcyra (Corfu) and in Sybrita the deity is associated to a panther; and in Corinth he is depicted as secondary type (maybe a issue control symbol?).

At this point his attributes seem to be more precisely connected to him although the kantharos and the satyr keep always some independence, being depicted several times alone.

Also from the end of the Vth century on and throughout the IVth and IIIrd centuries, Dionysus is definitively one more deity among many others that were chosen to figure on coins. The god and his attributes

(8) This iconographic scheme appears on attic black-figure painted pottery around 540 BC (see T.H. CARPENTER, *Dionysian Imagery in Archaic Greek Art. Its Development in Black Figure Vase Painting*, Oxford, 1986, p. 26) and is also common on red-figure vases. In the words of Lissarrague, Dionysus is on a 'lit mobile'. See J.-L. DURAND, F. FRONTISI-DUCROUX and F. LISSARRAGUE, *L'entre deux vins*, in J.-P. VERNANT (ed.), *La cité des images. Religion et Société en Grèce antique*, Paris, 1984, p. 125.

(9) See PLUT., *QR*, 291 a-b; *Moralia*, 648 b and e; 649 a-b concerning the intoxication effects of the ivy leaf and its association to Dionysus.

appear frequently associated to Herakles and Hermes (as in Thebes and Sybrita) but also with Pan and Aphrodite (Lampsacus and Nagidus).

During the IIIrd century, dionysian coin imagery is indeed very common and as we said above we shall not comment it in this text. However, we would like to call the attention to an extensive group of coins minted in Sicily, using dionysian typology during Roman domination, from the middle of the IIIrd century on. In fact, several Sicilian towns such as Enna, Tyndaris, Cephaloidion, Kaleakte, Alontion, Amestratos, Leontinoi, Megara Hyblaia, Entella, Lipari minted bronze coins in this period with the representation of Dionysus and his attributes, many times related to the representation of Demeter and/or Persephone⁽¹⁰⁾.

* * *

This general panorama of the development of coin types depicting Dionysus in the Greek world poses some very precise problems.

The first one concerns the elements related to Dionysus. How far can we accept that the mere presence of a kantharos — to take the most conspicuous dionysian attribute — indicates the presence of the deity or of his cult? The kantharos as a ceramic form has, for sure, a long story: boeotian origin, etruscan origin, attic adaptations⁽¹¹⁾. In the VIIth century it appears on painted pottery, for instance, as a simple indicator of drunkenness. To mention just one example, in the neck of a famous eleusinian vase dated 650 BC, Polifemos is shown being blinded by Odysseus and his drunkenness is pointed out by the depiction of a kantharos at the background⁽¹²⁾. The kantharos is also the 'badge' of Naxos (Cyclades), common on the town's coinage from the VIth century until the beginning of the Vth. A late source (Suda, s.v. *ναξιουροργής κάλυθαρος*) mentions that Naxian ships were known as kantharoi. In fact, the attribution of these coins to Naxos is based on this passage plus the scraps of written tradition that refer to Naxos as Dionysus' island as well as material traces of dionysian cult that goes back to the VIIth century⁽¹³⁾. Eventhough most specialists accept the attribution of these archaic coins to the mint of Naxos⁽¹⁴⁾, it is worth remembering that not one of these coins were found in the island and that also other islands in the Aegean minted coins in the archaic period using as 'badges' dionysian typology such as the bunch of grapes in Iulis (Keos) or the amphora in Cartheia (Keos), the amphora, the bunch of grapes and the vine leaves in Terone (Chalcidice),

(10) See R. PERA, 1986, p. 39.

(11) See T.H. CARPENTER, 1986, with precedent bibliography.

(12) J. BOARDMAN, *Greek Art*, London, 1997, p. 87.

(13) C. GASPARRI, 1986, p. 497.

(14) For an up-to-date catalogue and discussion on these coins, with precedent bibliography see H. NICOLET-PIERRE, *Naxos (Cyclades) archaïque: monnaie et histoire. La frappe des canthares de la fin du VI^e siècle*, in *NumAntClas*, 26, 1997, p. 63-121.

the bunch of grapes in Tenos and so forth. Are all these types always a sure indication of Dionysus' presence/cult or do they have a meaning of their own?

And how is the satyr on Himeran coins to be interpreted? Bathing in a fountain beside the nymph Himeria sacrificing close to a small altar he may be much more a reference to the reversion of the feminine world than a strict reference to Dionysus⁽¹⁵⁾. The satyr beautifully depicted on the Aetnan coinage is with much probability a formal influence from Naxos' mint⁽¹⁶⁾. The satyrs that carry away a nymph on Thracian coins are probably references to the very archaic rural and vegetation rituals which antedate — as is known⁽¹⁷⁾ — the consolidation of all these natural powers in a single deity, Dionysus.

So, from the point of view of iconographical analysis what is valuable to retain if one is interested, as we are, on the nature of ancient Greek coins?

Approaching dionysian imagery

According to some authors, dionysian imagery was an invention of Attic potters from the VIth century onwards⁽¹⁸⁾. Even if this might prove not true, attic painted pottery had an important role in the visual definition of this god. The acceptance of his cult in the context of the tyrannies and his process of integration in the city order through the dramatic performances created a perfect ambiance for the development of a visual language regarding his physical aspect and main attributes⁽¹⁹⁾. Moreover, in an interrelated world as Greece, attic pottery travelled all over being a fundamental vehicle for the diffusion of cultural traits.

A systematic study of the material evidence concerning the image of Dionysus demonstrates how his anthropomorphic representation is late, dating only to the end of the VIIth century. The very first marble monumental formulation of this deity comes from Naxos (Cyclades) and is an unfinished daedalic sculpture of the god holding a kantharos (first half of the VIth century)⁽²⁰⁾. In ceramics, the first allusive references to Dionysus, are the representations of komos scenes, satyrs, nymphs, kantharos (in Corinthian pottery or in Attic pottery like, for instance, the Eleusi-

(15) J.-L. DURAND *et al.*, 1984, p. 118.

(16) C.M. KRAAY, 1976, p. 217.

(17) See C. GASPARRI, 1986, p. 497 ff.

(18) T.H. CARPENTER, 1986, p. xvi.

(19) See especially J.A.D. TRABULSI, *Dionysisme. Pouvoir et Société*, Besançon, 1990, ch. 10 : 'Éléments pour une histoire des images dionysiaques' and also J.-P. VERNANT, *Mask Images in Ancient Greece*, in *Myth and Tragedy in Ancient Greece*, São Paulo, 1991, vol. II, p. 27-46 (Brazilian ed.).

(20) C. GASPARRI, 1986, p. 498.

nian vase mentioned above) ⁽²¹⁾. Actually these are references to the powers of wine and to rural festivities connected to fertility rituals and not to the god himself. The depiction of Dionysus in an anthropomorphic aspect takes a while to appear and when it does the god is portrayed as the 'bringer' of wine connected to the vine and grapes (Sophilos vase, 580-570 BC, and François vase, 570-560 BC). Soon after this, Attic pot painters (especially the Heidelberg painter and the Amasis painter) added to this god's imagery the main elements that were to be his recurrent attributes later on: the kantharos, the ivy leaf, satyrs and female companions. The thyrsus, was introduced on a second moment: it appears only exceptionally on Vth century black-figure vases, and its first depiction is on a red-figure vase by Oltos dated to 510 BC. Here the thyrsus is on a maenad's hand. The first images with Dionysus carrying the thyrsus is by the Berlin painter some time after 500 BC. The representation of the ithyphallic ass carrying Dionysus is also attested on Attic ceramics already during the VIth century in connection to Hephaistos' return to the Olympus ⁽²²⁾. From the Vth century onwards, dionysian pottery iconography becomes very varied: the production and consumption of wine, the rural and urban rituals, thyasos scenes, omophagic scenes, banquet scenes, theatrical scenes are all explored by pot painters with richness of detail in association to Dionysus and his cult and religion ⁽²³⁾. With regard to Dionysus' physical aspect, until the last quarter of the Vth century he is depicted as an old bearded man; then he assumes a more delicate aspect, with short fancy hair and no beard. He also seems totally incorporated in the town's order, occupying a place as important as any other god's ⁽²⁴⁾.

The development of dionysian imagery on Attic painted pottery and on Greek coins have many elements in common: the appearance first of alusive features and afterwards of the image of the god himself; the introduction of the same attributes including the thyrsus on a later date; the changing aspect of Dionysus who at first had a beard and later did not.

Nevertheless, all these features are defined *before* on pottery and *afterwards* on coins. The two media run in different timing as far as the main traits are concerned. Dionysus has already a well defined visual aspect on painted pottery by the middle of the VIth century whereas on coinage we'll have to wait until the middle of the Vth to have him with all his attributes. This probably stems from the differences between coins and ceramics as means of communication and vehicles of artistic expression.

(21) *Ibidem*, p. 499 and J.A.D. TRABULSI, 1990.

(22) T.H. CARPENTER, 1986, p. 60.

(23) See J.-L. DURAND *et al.*, 1984, where the authors expound how this mass of information can be used to reconstruct dionysian religion and cults step by step.

(24) C. GASPARRI, 1986, p. 504 and 507.

Coins are official documents issued by recognized authorities while pottery is produced and consumed privately and, as far as composition is concerned, space available for the image on both media is a determinant factor. Coins' fields urge the engraver to create figures using only the main identifying features: simple images stand for complex ideas. That is the reason why coins are of no use in the characterization of dionysian cult or religion. Worth noticing too is the fact that in the places where Dionysus was most worshipped — Attica and Boeotia — his image is not preferred on coins.

On the other hand, dionysian images are quite clear in respect to what kind of subject are convenient for coin types: deities that are already well established and accepted in the *polis* order or their attributes. This matters many times more than the relative representativeness of the image for this or that city.

Dionysian coin types in a wider context

When we use an approach to Greek society that privileges interaction between peer *poleis* it is much easier to understand why and how coinage took up in the Greek world and iconographical schemes (or, to be more precise, conventionalised patterns of non verbal language) were shared East and West ⁽²⁵⁾. Looking at the Greek world as a set of polities that maintained a strong interrelationship which allowed the spread of new cultural traits can be, as a matter of fact, rewarding.

We may say that interaction in the Greek world was informed by two main forces: the strong sense of individuality each *polis* had at the same time that pan-hellenism was cultivated, making people feel as part of a larger universe. The strong sense of competition that pervaded Greek life was also a fundamental characteristic of all this interaction: competition between *poleis* and individuals operated great changes inside and out the city-state ⁽²⁶⁾.

Considering this network of Greek cities, the newly founded communities had a delicate position. Located most of the time on the edge of the barbarian world and suffering from this pressure, they were eager to mark their ethnic identity. Competition and the awareness that a position in a larger interrelated world could bring all sorts of advantages were important factors on their adoption of cultural traits.

(25) The concept of peer polity interaction was developed mainly by C. Renfrew in order to explain the emergence of the State. It was applied to Greece by A. Snodgrass and can be seen in use in R. OSBORNE, 1996. See especially C. RENFREW and J.F. CHERRY (ed.), *Peer Polity Interaction and Socio-political Change. New Directions in Archaeology*, Cambridge, 1986, p. 1-18 by C. Renfrew and p. 47-58 by A. Snodgrass.

(26) See R. OSBORNE, 1996, esp. ch. 8: '*Inter-relating cities: the short VIth century (600-520 BC)*', p. 243-291.

If we are able to account also for the fact that a phenomenon like coinage in ancient Greece was not a specifically 'economic' phenomenon⁽²⁷⁾ and that economy was not an autonomous sphere with its own rules, it should be possible to get closer to the meaning of coin types. The role played by superstition and religion in all spheres of life including 'economic' activities has long been stressed by scholars⁽²⁸⁾, and the reciprocity background in which coinage was introduced during the VIII century⁽²⁹⁾ all made coinage a social-cultural phenomenon enclosing economic, political, juridical, religious aspects.

How can the composition of Greek coin types be influenced by such framework?

In the last International Numismatic Congress, Prof. Maria Caccamo Caltabiano proposed an approach to coin iconography based on a comparison between grammatical analysis and iconographical analysis⁽³⁰⁾. She exemplified her methodology through some examples where the main types were considered as nouns which were qualified by secondary types considered as adjectives. Unfortunately this approach is not very helpful for our study on dionysian types as it can be for the analysis of very unclear type compositions. She herself remarks this difficulty concerning dionysian types (p. 63) for it is very clear that when the representation of Dionysus is the main type, he is recognized as such due to the presence of his qualifying features: the ivy leaf crown, the vine, the grapes, the satyr and so forth.

On the other hand, exploring a bit the works of those specialists in Greek pottery imagery may be of valuable help. C. Bérard and J.-L. Durand, for instance, assert that one of the main principles when analysing Greek pottery imagery is to consider the '*répertoire des unités formelles minimales*'⁽³¹⁾. This repertoire is common to the artisans and known by the public. In these authors' view, what gives sense to the image is the combination of the several unities and not each trait individually. If the analogy between noun/adjective and main type/secondary type as played by Caccamo Caltabiano can help us understand many specific coin types,

(27) No matter how hard this task may be for us, children of a highly developed market economy. See on this matter K. POLANYI, *The Livelihood of Man*, New York, 1977 (IInd part on '*Trade, Market and Money in Ancient Greece*').

(28) See for instance J.-P. VERNANT in his 'Introduction' to *The Greek Man*, Lisbon, 1995 (Portuguese ed.).

(29) M. B. FLORENZANO, *Coins and Value Conception in the Greek Polis*, in *Boletim do Centro do Pensamento Antigo*, 4, 1997, p. 185-196; F. DEL LONGO, *Rapporti economici premonetari nella società greca descritta da Omero*, in *NumAntClas*, 24, 1995, p. 73-96.

(30) *XIIIth International Numismatic Congress. Abstract of Papers*, Berlin, 1997, p. 59. The *Proceedings of the Congress* are not yet published but M. Caccamo Caltabiano's article (1998) is much of what was said on that occasion.

(31) C. BÉRARD and J.-L. DURAND, *Entrer en imagerie*, in J.-P. VERNANT (ed.), *La cité des images*, 1984, p. 23.

we believe that Bérard's methodology can help us elucidate the meaning of Greek coin types in general.

Taking the example of Dionysus' image we would say that it is composed by several minimal unities that combine themselves differently in each part of the Greek world: the male figure, the ivy or vine leaf crown, and the grapes. The satyrs and the kantharoi which occur also with frequency, have often an independent meaning. The recurrence of the same traits *together* marks what we may call a dionysian image. When we consider the interrelationship between peer cities in the Mediterranean, it is easy to understand the diffusion of a formal trait. These traits travel among the cities and are rearranged composing new images that may or may not have the same original meaning. Many times they are rearranged according to criteria of representativeness as has been pointed out already by Lacroix and others⁽³²⁾. After all coins are media capable of expressing the particularisms of each *polis* in the Greek world. But many other times, for sure, these traits are reorganized forming new images that express not individuality but simply pan-hellenism. It might be more important to a community to stress its pertaining to the Greek world than its own independence. This may be the case of the wine related images of the Cyclades and the Aegean and of the Thracio-macedonian coin types with satyrs, nymphs, ass and so forth. The Aetnan coin with the satyr is a mark of belonging to a Naxian sphere and has probably nothing to do with the 'fertile slopes of the Aetna' as is usually stated.

Thus the import of a coin image or of a simple trait may have no underlying meaning except pointing out the issuer's kinship to a wider world. In this sense if the combination of the several traits — or formal unities — is made according to criteria that attend the specificity of a particular issuing authority, the single units are informed by a conception which is common to a larger reality.

By approaching coin types from this angle we have no intention of denying the importance of the achievements of traditional numismatic scholarship. Our intention is to contribute to the discussion on the analysis of coin types by looking at them through a different lens, one that focalizes the whole set of Greek *poleis* and their connections instead of single particular city-states.

In this context it is still important to stress that the choice to adopt coinage in general and the selection of a coin type specifically expresses the tension between particularism and pan-hellenism that characterizes so much the Greek world from late archaic period to the beginning of the hellenistic. This marks the ambivalent nature of coins.

Furthermore, we believe that coinage as a social-cultural phenomenon is an important medium used by the Greeks to express their ethnical ori-

(32) See R. OSBORNE, 1996.

gins, their contrasting differences in respect to others that were not Greek. Herodotus (I, 153) makes Cyrus say: 'I have never yet been afraid of any men, who have a set place in the middle of their city, where they come together to cheat each other and forswear themselves'. And then he continues: 'Cyrus intended these words as a reproach against all the Greeks, because of their having market-places where they buy and they sell, which is a custom unknown to the Persians, who never make purchases in open marts, and indeed have not in their whole country a single market-place'.

Coins were then as they are now an instrument of the market, even if in the first half of the Vth century, when Herodotus wrote, this relationship was not completely outlined. The existence of coins as of markets signalized a big difference between Greeks and no Greeks, and the consciousness of this fact may have influenced the choice of types.

Although Dionysus' presence in Greece goes back to the Bronze Age, his primitive chthonic nature caused his late acceptance by the *polis*. His visual anthropomorphic form was not defined, as we saw above, until the VIIth century BC. Contradictory as it may seem, the representation of this deity on coins, with the main attributes was still used by not few Greek cities in the IIIrd century BC and expressly to stress 'Greekness' in confrontation of what was not Greek, in this case Roman. In Sicily, several small and insignificant towns (Enna, Tyndaris, Cephaloidion, Kaleakte, Alontion, Amestratos, Leontinoi, Megara Hyblaia, Entella, Lipari) used dionysian coin types to mark their Greek identity and their desire for liberty⁽³³⁾. Coincidentally or not, Greek Theatre knew an incredible expansion from the IVth century on, fact that has been frequently interpreted by scholars as a manner to preserve Greek culture in a changing world⁽³⁴⁾.

(33) See R. PERA, 1986, p. 52ff.

(34) See R. GREEN and E. HANDLEY, *Images of the Greek Theatre*, London, 1995 (esp. ch. 6).

CHRISTOF BOEHRINGER (*)

BRONZE - SILBER - GOLD.
 ÜBERLEGUNGEN ZU DEN NOMINALLEN
 EINIGER SIZILISCHER GOLDMÜNZEN

(Pl. VI-VII)

Im Dialog und in mehreren Sprachen sprühend einen Gedanken entwickeln — wer tat es hierin Tony Hackens gleich? Wie seine Schüler und Freunde und viele Kollegen hat es der Schreibende erfahren, besonders anlässlich einer Sizilienreise im fernen 1977, als wir zu dritt — T. Hackens, Ross Holloway und ich — Probleme der frühen sizilischen Bronzeprägung studierten. Sein wichtiger und impulsgebender Artikel in den Neapler Atti 1977 über *Les équivalences des métaux monétaires argent et bronze en Sicile au v^e s. av. J.-C.* legt hiervon Zeugnis ab⁽¹⁾. Die folgenden Überlegungen⁽²⁾, die dem Andenken von Tony Hackens gewidmet sind, schlagen die Brücke zu dem einst Begonnenen. Ich muss um Nachsicht bitten, wenn ich dabei zunächst Bekanntes wiederhole, um einige Voraussetzungen meines Gedankenganges deutlich zu machen.

1. Bronze und Silber

Dass die prämonetäre 'Währung' der indigenen Einwohner Siziliens auf dem Grundmetall Bronze beruhte, ist allgemein anerkannt. In ihr war die Litra die Rechnungseinheit, das Pfund Bronze, auch wenn man den Gegenwert in Silber zahlte. Ihr Alter kann aus den Bezeichnungen einiger miteinander zusammenhängender Münzwerte abgeleitet werden, die dem festlandsgriechischen Gebrauch fremd waren, der Litra, ihren Teilwerten, ihren Mehrfachwerten, schließlich der Art ihrer Teilung. Die Griechen

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(1) T. HACKENS, *Les équivalences des métaux monétaires argent et bronze en Sicile au v^e av. J.-C. Plaidoyer pour une métrochronologie*, in *Le Origini della Monetazione di Bronzo in Sicilia e in Magna Grecia. Atti del VI Convegno del Centro Internazionale di Studi Numismatici - Napoli 17-22 Aprile 1977* (Supplemento al volume 25 degli *Annali, AIIN*) Neapel, 1980, S. 309-340.

(2) Dieser Beitrag wurde zur Diskussion gestellt auf dem XII. Internationalen Numismatischen Kongress in Berlin im September 1997, auf dem ich Tony Hackens zum letzten Mal sah.