

ANCIENT GREEK COINS. IV. TERINA. (MAGNA GRAECIA)

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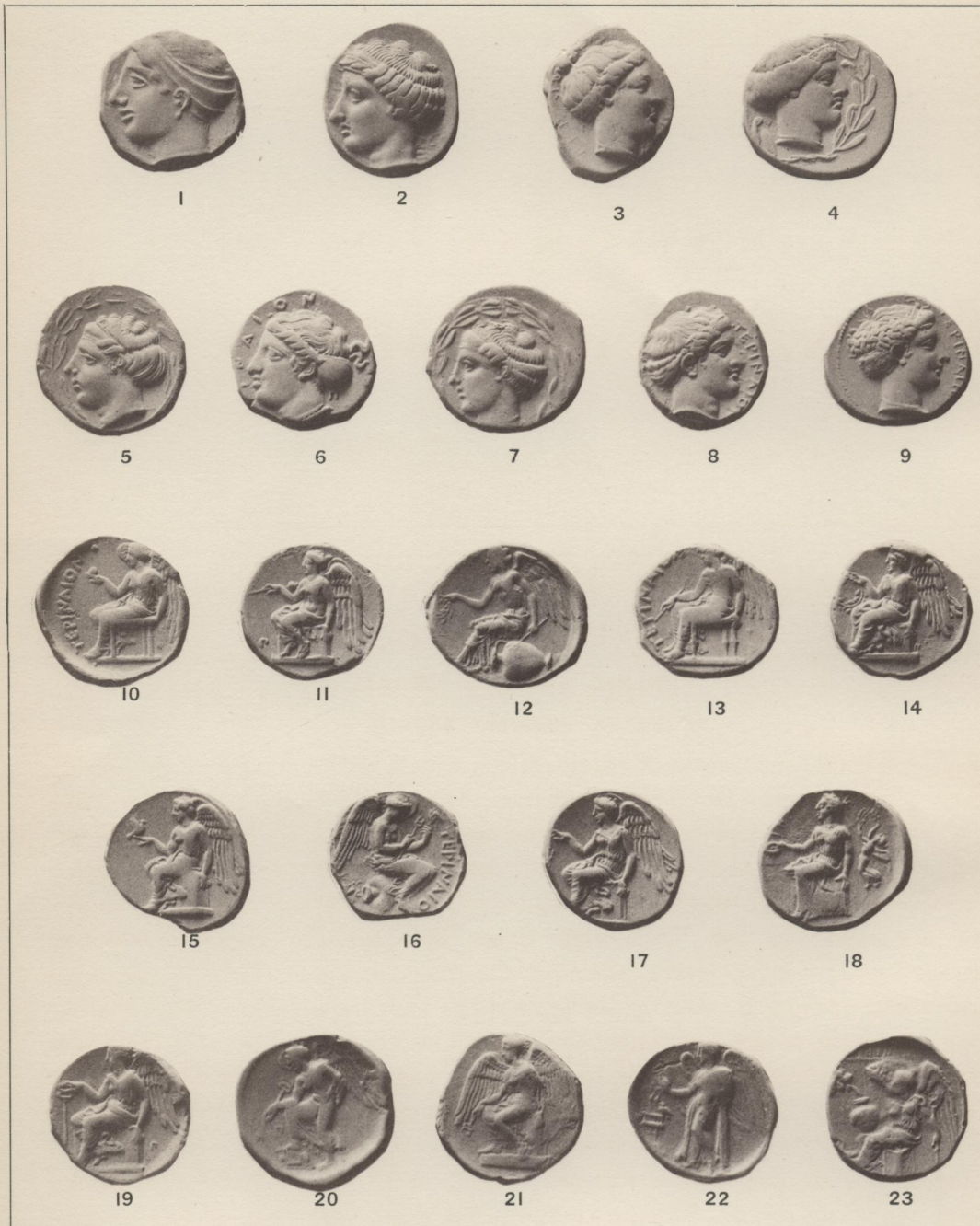
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ANCIENT GREEK SILVER COINS
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AMERICAN

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At mihi plavdo
Ipse domi, simvl ac nvmmos contemplor in arca.
—*Horatii, Sat. I, i. 66.*

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ANCIENT GREEK COINS.

IV. TERINA. (MAGNA GRAECIA.)

BY FRANK SHERMAN BENSON.

THE great wave of colonization, which in the course of the eighth century B. C. rolled westward from Old Greece, seems to have expended its force on the eastern coasts of Sicily and South Italy, and to have had no reserve power for penetrating through the Sicilian strait to those fertile and attractive shores which bordered on the Tyrrhenian Sea. This sudden check to colonial enterprise finds simple explanation in the race jealousies which prevailed among these energetic growing settlements of various origins. The narrow, turbulent current which separates the main land from the great island, was carefully guarded on either side by Rhegion and Messana (Zankle), — both of Ionic descent like the neighboring Sicilian towns, — and their watchful hostility prevented the hated Achaian states of Magna Graecia from obtaining any access to the further waters: while, on the other hand, the prevalence of Etruscan piracy, and the dangers, fabulous and real, of the navigation, discouraged even the Ionians from penetrating far beyond their own twin guardian cities.

But the beauties and advantages of this coast, with its rich alluvial plains sheltered on the north and east by mountain ranges, with an equable climate tempered by sea-breezes, mild in winter, cool and refreshing in summer, and with many a sheltered river-mouth where the shallow bark of the Greek coaster might be drawn up in safety against the cruelty of man or of

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the tempestuous sea, could not long remain unrecognized or neglected. Thus we find those great rival cities of the eastern shore, Sybaris and Kroton, establishing here, during the sixth century, several sea-coast colonies, which should extend and protect their already active trade in these western waters.

Among the most important of these, in commerce, in civilization, and in art, must have been the subject of this paper. It is fortunate that, as I have shown, numismatic evidence is of such value in corroborating and supplementing history; for few cities are so dependent upon coins for even a general idea of their civic life and conditions as Terina, of which there is hardly any mention by ancient writers during the flourishing period of Magna Graecia. We read that it was colonized from Kroton; that as an ally of the Tarentines it took part in the war with the Thourians about 435 B. C., and again that it fell into the hands of the conquering Dionysios together with so many of the South Italian towns, in 388, — an important date, as this conquest terminated the local coinage. We feel therefore little interest in its subsequent story, which indeed in no way differs from that of its Italiot neighbors, — capture by the Bruttii, deliverance by Alexander of Epeiros, and recapture after his death. Even its site has not been positively identified, although it was undoubtedly some spot on the gulf called Sinus Terinaeus.

Since it is in the beauty, variety and copiousness of its coinage — comparative, that is, for Terina could never have been a large place — that we find attested the high state of this city's artistic refinement, as well as the flourishing condition of its trade, we should give even more than usual care to our consideration of the charming specimens on Plate IV.

It will be noticed that the arrangement of coins on this plate differs from that adopted for the former three; all obverses being shown first, and the reverses by themselves below. The reason for this is two-fold; it is found principally in the simplicity, or if it may be so termed, the unity of the companion types, each of which continued with absolutely no alteration, except in treatment, for the century of the city's coinage. Such sameness of subject seemed to require that the obverse heads should be placed together so as to display to the best advantage those gradual changes from the severity of the transitional to the ornateness of the fine-art period; while the many charming attitudes and occupations of our Nike are best appreciated and enjoyed when there is no contrasting obverse type to break the spell.

Again, the Terinaian coins, to a greater extent perhaps than is the case with any other Greek series, show the disfiguring marks of carelessness on the part of the coin-striker. In a majority of instances these coins are not well centered; some are double-struck; and of many, the dies must have been badly oxidized. So that, as it is the rarest occurrence to find a specimen of which both sides display an equally fine state of preservation, I thought best to select for illustration the most perfect obverse or reverse, regardless of

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the condition of its companion type. Three coins, however, are complete, Nos. 6 and 11; 7 and 12; 9 and 17. But this very absence of care in the production of its coinage is still another evidence of the high development attained in all branches of art by the dwellers in once prosperous but long forgotten Terina. And, as in other cities where we find the same conditions, such a spirit of indifference is only one of many indications that the Greek workman did not labor to create artistic and beautiful designs, which should hand down his name and fame to future ages. His principal object was commercial; to furnish a coinage suitable for use in trading, and distinguished by the well-known civic types; while it was only the superabundance of his artistic ideas, his intense passion for beauty of all kinds and in all things, which inspired the humble die-engraver to the production of works rivalling, if allowance be made for their minute and restricted sphere, the compositions of renowned sculptors and painters.

TERINA (BRUTTII).

37–45. Staters, wts. 124–110 grs. B. C. 470–388. Obv. TEPINAION or TEPINAIΩN Head of nymph to right or to left, with varied arrangement of hair, and sometimes with a border of olive-wreath or of dots; artists' initials Φ, Π or Δ. (Pl. IV: 1–9.)

46–59. Rev. TEPINAION Winged Nike seated or standing to left or to right, on various supports, in different attitudes, and engaged in a variety of occupations; artists' initials Φ or Π. (Pl. IV: 10–23.)

(From the Montagu, Bunbury, Evans and other sales.)

We must first briefly survey the sub-divisions of this century of coinage. The earliest issue (B. C. 480–470) presents obverse and reverse types similar to those on our plate, but of archaic design and with a wingless Victory (Nike Apteros). This coin is of the highest rarity, and unfortunately no example has yet been secured for our collection. An interesting and probably earlier Terinaian coin will however be examined at length when we come to consider the subject of Alliance coins. It is of the *incuse* variety, and bears on each side the Krotoniat type, a tripod; the relief of the obverse dividing the inscription ϘPO-TE. This has usually been considered an alliance coin of Kroton and Temesa; but Sir Edward Bunbury, from whose grand collection it came, and whose authority on ancient geography and numismatics was unquestioned, always claimed that TE were the initials of Terina. This attribution seems by far the more plausible when we consider the greater importance of Terina, and its probably closer relations with the protecting mother-city. As additional proof we find that the few coins of Temesa itself bear for inscription TEM, and for type a helmet.

The next period extending from B. C. 470 to 440, includes coins (Nos. 1, 2, 5 and 7) of which the heads show the usual traits of severity and simple

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strength; while the reverse type (No. 12) bears marks of technical uncertainty — an inheritance from the archaic age — and of groping after a perfection attained only in the succeeding period. This latter, embracing the next forty years, brought the fifth century to a close; and in its heads (notably No. 8) we are struck with the more careful design and finish; while the reverse type with its varied, charming, graceful treatment of the youthful Nike — all but 17 and 18 belong to this time — displays the freshest imagination and the perfection of technique.

The head No. 9 and the reverses Nos. 17 and 18 are examples of the detailed elaboration which prevails for the remaining twelve years of civic freedom, from 400 to 388, the year when Dionysios in the course of his irresistible career throughout Magna Graecia captured Terina. Of this final period one specimen (Nos. 9 and 17), is worthy of special attention, both as showing in its inscription the change from O to the Ionic Ω, and as presenting by its doubly perfect state a rare exception to the usually poor condition, already noted, of one or the other side of a Terinaian coin.

Of the nymph Terina we find no mention in the Greek mythology, and it must be confessed that when the representations of this goddess as pictured in the imagination of these doubtless reverent die-engravers are placed side by side, it would seem that even to her ancient votaries she did not present a distinct and unchanging personality. The same criticism can however be passed upon the charming collection of heads of the Syracusan goddess Persephone or of the nymph Arethousa, each of which varies in feature and expression according to the conception of the individual coin-artist; while just as in these latter instances, the variety here shown in the modes of arranging the hair possesses a certain human as well as archaeological interest. Especially is this the case when we compare the changes from the formal, severe saccos of No. 1 to the wavy, luxuriant and yet well-ordered tresses of No. 9, confined by a graceful star-spangled sphendone.

But it is the treatment of their reverse type which stamps the issues of Terina as of the highest artistic merit, and which seizes and holds our willing attention. We see the winged Nike — chosen, for what reason it is unknown, as the city's type — in various graceful and natural postures; now seated on a four-legged stool, a cippus, or an overturned hydria; now standing against a supporting column, — a device so often adopted for sculpture in the round, — or leaning forward with one foot raised upon a step. Nor do her occupations show less variety and grace. Sometimes she is practicing a playful legerdemain, alternately tossing into the air, and catching on the back of her hand two balls; sometimes she bears a wreath, or more often as the herald of victory, the caduceus of Hermes; or she caressingly smiles at a bird which lightly rests on her extended finger.

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But surely the most charming of all these pleasing figures is No. 16, where the enchanting youthful goddess, delicately poised on an overturned hydria, seems absorbed in the task of training a bird, confidingly perched on her left forefinger, and playfully threatened with the raised caduceus which she holds in her right hand. The exquisite pose, the sportive gesture, the tender, feminine outlines, accentuated by the semi-transparent drapery blown backward by a light breeze or the rapidity of her descent, embody our highest ideals of refined purity and poetic grace. As by an inspiration the artist has so disposed the upper part of the left wing as to form a nimbus for the dainty goddess head; while a final touch of harmonious spontaneity is given by a flower which springs up from the watered earth at the mouth of the hydria. In this figure, as in fact in all those of the series, we see proof of the Greek aptness in seizing upon favorable artistic conditions; the inner side of the wings where the feathers are longer and more gracefully arranged, being always shown.

In No. 23, the Nike of the fountain, we find a more elaborate work, encroaching it must be confessed too closely upon the realm of painting to win our entire approbation from the standpoint of pure numismatic art. The oxidation of the die from which most existing examples of this special type were struck — this being the clearest and most presentable of three in our collection, and the British Museum specimens being equally unsatisfactory — should make us charitably eager to use the forbearance already petitioned for, as well as to exercise that "sympathetic imagination," which would reproduce the design fresh from the die-sinker's tool. Nike seated on a square cippus balances, by leaning on a caduceus held in her left hand, the weight of a hydria supported on her right knee. Into the mouth of this jar water pours from a lion-head fountain, in the basin of which a swan is swimming; while in the background are visible the interstices of a stone wall; its cornice being utilized to bear the inscription TEPINA, an unusual form. The whole completes a composition which, while well-balanced and pleasing, is too detailed and complicated to give us the true satisfaction with which simpler and more appropriate designs fill our minds.

On the side of the cippus can be read — clearly when one examines the actual coin — a vertical inscription ΑΓΗ, which the suggestion of Mr. Millingen would refer to the stream Ares flowing near Terina, and symbolized by the fountain. I venture to propose a simpler, and in my opinion, more probable explanation. The cippus, used principally as a sepulchral monument, was of Latin origin, and doubtless familiarity caused its adoption by the Italiots in place of the upright slab or *stele* peculiar to the mother-country. The inscriptions, however, would be in the tongue of Magna Graecia; and it seems not unlikely that this word ΑΓΗ may have thus appeared on cippi in its sense of "awe or reverence," most fitting in any con-

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nection with the Greek's undefined and dread-inspiring ideas of a future state. Thus our coin-engraver thought to complete his design of a cippus by this word, to him a familiar and suitable one.

No. 18, easily identified as of the latest period, displays a different character. Here the figure may be the nymph Terina holding forth a patera, as she offers a sacrifice; while the flying Nike, subordinated to a painful degree, and diminutive in size, finds occupation in meekly crowning the nymph, who dominates the composition. This latter displays the charms of a ripe maturity, and is wholly wanting in the airy grace which has been such a constant and fascinating trait of Nike.

It will be noticed that certain of these reverses as well as several of the heads are the work of artists who sign themselves Φ and Π. The former is already familiar to us (No. 28, Thourioi), and Mr. R. S. Poole in a most interesting paper on "Athenian Coin-Engravers in Italy" (*Numismatic Chronicle*, 1883), has shown that the engravers of many of these works of the third period — after 440 B. C. — were doubtless those Athenian die-sinkers, who had initiated the charming coinage of Thourioi, and who following the example set by their home-city in all the artistic and literary creations of Hellas, exercised a powerful and wide-spread influence over Italiot civic coinages. The learned author goes indeed further than this, emphasizing the likeness which these Terinaian winged Victories bear to the graceful figure-poses on the balustrade of the contemporaneous temple of Nike Apteros at Athens. The strength of this comparison will at once forcibly impress one who compares Nos. 16 or 20, for instance, with the Athenian Victory binding her sandal, a bas-relief made so familiar to us by casts. There are the same lightness and perfection of pose, the same graceful drapery disposed in transparent floating folds which veil but do not hide the forms and contours, with the same variety and yet harmony in posture and occupation. Not that our Italiot coin-artists in designing their own compositions copied these Athenian bas-reliefs. Such servile imitation was reserved for the later and weaker periods of Greek coinage. It is probable that, as Mr. Poole suggests, the treatment of both these classes of art, coins as well as reliefs, was the expression of some marked peculiarity of style or school, which, remaining impressed upon the far-distant yet still home-loving workmen, exercised an influence as strong as it was unconscious upon their productions.

Returning for a moment to the Terinaian artists, we find in the work of Π a certain imitativeness and a want of originality which stamp him as probably a pupil and copyist of the greater Φ, whose versatile productivity has been extolled under Thourioi.

We have already when discussing the interesting Kauloniat reverse No. 11 (Pl. II: 3), touched upon the Greek devotion to nature, — a feeling, the strength of which, among the ever-youthful and pleasure-loving denizens

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of Magna Graecia and Sicily, is displayed most fully in these delicate compositions of Terina. Their subtle and peculiar fascination cannot be more happily expressed than in the words of Professor Percy Gardner, when himself under the charm of this Nike. "She seems in fact at Terina to embody the fresh gladness of nature, and the sportive joy of open-air life in a soft and genial region. Above all Greeks the people of South Italy seem to have loved birds and insects and flowers, all of which actually swarm on their coins, just as they do in the seventh Idyll of Theocritus, the scene of which is laid most appropriately at Velia."

And we must complete our illustration by the addition of a few lines from this Idyll, in the tuneful and sympathetic English of Mr. Lang's prose translation; who however places the scene in the isle of Kos and not in Magna Graecia:

"And high above our heads waved many a poplar, many an elm tree, while close at hand the sacred water from the nymph's own cave welled forth with murmurs musical. On shadowy boughs the burnt cicalas kept their chattering toil; far off the little owl cried in the thick thorn brake, the larks and finches were singing, the ringdove moaned, the yellow bees were flitting about the springs. All breathed the scent of opulent summer."

One cannot claim for these charming designs the strength and majesty of Elis, the power, variety and dignity of Syracuse; but in these days of a fierce struggle for material gain, when a sordid and selfish utilitarianism is the motive-power, the watchword, and almost the religion of so large a part of mankind, can we not dwell with pleasure and profit upon these evidences of grace, purity and refinement which have been preserved to us from a distant age; and should we not with thankful hearts hope and feel that even such seemingly delicate qualities may give strength and courage to those who would strive in defence of divine righteousness against the ceaseless assaults of rampant, malignant evil?

This sketch of the Terinaian series, the most beautiful, taken as a whole, in Italy, completes our consideration of the coinage of Magna Graecia; and we shall next, following the accepted numismatic arrangement, proceed to a study of Sicilian coins. Their issues will be found to possess no less variety and interest than those of the mainland, and even to surpass the Italiot examples in boldness of design, beauty of style and delicacy of treatment. But one among Sicilian cities, — the great, powerful, magnificent Syracuse, — shows so decided a pre-eminence in these features, as well as in historical and literary interests, as naturally to claim our first attention; and to its coinage — as exemplified in my collection — the next five papers will be devoted.

[To be continued.]

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