Book Review: The Randazzo Hoard 1980 and Sicilian Chronology in the Early Fifth Century B.C. [Carmen Arnold-Biucchi]*

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Once again it was the excavator Chance to whom we owe an important coin hoard. However, while randomly discovered coin finds are usually quickly dispersed without registration, in this case scientifically interested dealers have made it possible to produce a solid publication. It would be desirable for such insight to become more widespread, to no one's detriment and to the benefit of research.

The Find

Briefly the facts. At the end of 1980, a coin hoard of at least 539 tetradrachms of Attic weight was recovered in Sicily under unknown circumstances. As was said, the findspot was near Randazzo at the northern foot of the Etna massif. Even if it cannot be ruled out that a smaller number of additional (especially relatively freshly preserved, thus younger) coins escaped processing, the documented material should nevertheless represent a representative cross-section of the original total inventory. Exclusively represented are tetradrachms from 8 mints: Rhegion (10 pieces), Akragas (8), Gela (29), Katane (29), Leontinoi (14), Messana (136), Naxos (5), Syracuse (308). On the basis of such a quantity, statistically substantiated statements are possible, which contribute new insights particularly to coin chronology. The scope and significance of the hoard fully justify its monographic documentation.[1]

*See also the article by D. Knoepfler, pp. 5–46 in this volume of SNR, which deals extensively with the Randazzo find and its dating.

[1]How important the most precise cataloging possible and the complete illustration of a coin hoard are for later research is exemplified by the find from Latakia 1759 (IGCH 1544). The admirable quality of J. Pellerin's publication from 1765 (Mélange de Médailles I, pp. 104–140 pl. 2–4), which was only reached again in the advanced 20th century, enabled H. Seyrig to reconstruct the find (Trésors du Levant anciens et nouveaux, Paris 1973, 49–56 no. 11 pl. 19–22).



The Contents of the Find

The exemplary publication by Carmen Arnold-Biucchi arranges the coins in the catalogue (pp. 48–73) in a space-saving and sensible manner.

Rhegion is to be addressed as a Sicilian polis based on its history. Of 10 tetradrachms, no fewer than 4 belong to the die combination Herzfelder no. 1.[2] The high weights of the 4 coins confirm what a specimen illustrated in direct photograph indicates: They have all not circulated for long. Increasingly coarse die breaks on the reverses attest to intensive coinage.

Akragas: 8 of the earliest tetradrachms, including 3 with additional symbols. The latest are to be regarded as 2 specimens with a common obverse die but different reverses.

Gela: 29 tetradrachms of Jenkins groups[3] 2 and (about three-quarters of the sequence of) 3. Die combinations are represented twice on five occasions, individual dies even on up to 5 coins. As Jenkins had established, production had been intensive and usually occurred at several coining tables simultaneously. The owner of our hoard apparently hoarded the coins in a short time.

Katane: Likewise 29 tetradrachms, all of the hitherto rare (45 specimens total) type Amenanos bull/Nike; they increase the inventory by two-thirds.[4] Most of the already known dies are represented, individual ones up to 9 times, die combinations up to 6 times. In Katane too, minting activity was intensive. Striking is the absence of a variant with accessory symbols water bird and fish, which clearly distinguishes itself from the present group in style and artistic execution and which is preserved in 2 specimens (London and Copenhagen).[5] This variant thus seems to have to be dated later than all other variants represented in the find. Conversationally, doubts have even been expressed about the authenticity of the London and Copenhagen specimens, which I consider exaggerated, however. Tetradrachms of the type Quadriga/Apollo head are completely absent; these were therefore issued only after the formation of the hoard.

Leontinoi, 14 tetradrachms from the first two groups, Quadriga/lion head and Quadriga with running lion/Apollo head with running lion. The mint, which only began to strike after 476,[6] was apparently inactive for a time before the beginning of the third tetradrachm group with Apollo head/lion head, which is not represented here. In my opinion, Arnold-Biucchi quite rightly concludes that Group 2 was introduced at the end of Deinomenid rule because of its typological proximity to the Damareteion. It apparently belongs at the junction between tyranny and republic, for during its coinage the transition occurred in the spelling of the legend from the Syracusan-Doric Λ to the Chalcidian-Ionic resp. .[7] In fact, the 3 tetradrachms from Group 2 (nos. 88–90) appear hardly circulated and therefore somewhat younger than no. 524 from the Damareteion series of Syracuse.

Messana: 136 coins, a good quarter of the hoard. All belong to the type mule biga/hare, thus to the years after 480 (hardly 484). A portion of them does not yet show the Nike above

[2] H. Herzfelder, Les monnaies d'argent de Rhégion (Paris 1957, separately printed from RN 1955–1956).

[3] G. K. Jenkins, The Coinage of Gela, AMuGS 2 (Berlin 1970).

[4] At least 24 more pieces are known to me from a find that was discovered around the same time as the Randazzo hoard in the west (not in the east, thus erroneously Randazzo 23 note 89) of the island and which must have been concealed a good decade later.

[5] a) London: BMC Sicily no. 3 = B.V. Head, A Guide to the Principal Coins of the Greeks ([2]London 1959) pl. 7, 20.

b) Copenhagen, Thorwaldsen Museum: C. L. Müller, Déscription des monnaies antiques au Musée Thorwaldsen (Kopenhagen 1851) no. 181 = O. Mørkholm, Meddelelser fra Thorwaldsens Museum 1982, 17 fig. 6d.

[6] Cf. Chr. Boehringer, JNG 18, 1968, 95f.

[7] Erroneously rendered as Λ in the text and catalogue for Randazzo nos. 88-90. Cf. A.W. Johnston, ZPapEpigr 17, 1975, 153–156.

the biga, while another portion already does. Shortly after the addition of the Nike, the legend MESSENION takes the form MESSANION. All coins still show the curved sigma (S, Ϩ) in the legend, none the later one with the 4 strokes (Ϟ). In the latest variants represented in the find, the first accessory symbols and series letters (A, B, C, D) appear, which are used in alphabetical order. Here too, a statistically significant accumulation of individual die combinations indicates that the coins in question were apparently issued only shortly before the closure of the hoarding.

As the striking date, Arnold-Biucchi assumes for the "hares" without Nike the years 480 to 461 (fall of the Anaxilids), for those with Nike the following decade. The two groups are not connected with each other; between them there was probably a brief interruption. It remains undiscussed whether the Brussels tetradrachm of the type Zeus/dolphin+shell could belong to this position in Messana itself (and not at a place of exile),[8] but it must be conceded that the coin sequence does not speak in favor of this.

Naxos: 5 tetradrachms, all from a single die linkage[9] and mint fresh, from different stages of die wear.

Syracuse: 308 tetradrachms = a good 57 percent of the hoard, with 3 new obverse dies, 8 new reverse dies, and 14 new combinations of dies already recorded there compared to the corpus of Erich Boehringer.[10] All these additions can easily be inserted into the relative order in the corpus.[11] In ever denser succession the coins concentrate up to Group III Series 12d. As if from a textbook, the multiple occurrence of die combinations: 46 times double, 19 times triple, 5 times quadruple, 4 times quintuple. Only in the last series 13 and 14a of the Ketos Group IV does the density decrease: Only 2 more double combinations – the result of more intensive selection in trade?

Arnold-Biucchi divides the tetradrachms from E. Boehringer's Group III Series 6–12d (the well-known mass series) contained in the find into three phases that follow one another chronologically, but within which production occurred simultaneously at several coining tables with the dies of different engravers. The striking table Randazzo page 36 provides an updated overview of this, although the phase division is not made optically visible: Phase A = Series 6–8a, Phase B = Series 8b–11, Phase C = Series 12a–12d. On this again below page 208.

There remains Series 12e, which is central to all questions of dating, the Damareteion series. A decadrachm is missing from the find and can hardly be expected subsequently, since exclusively the tetradrachm denomination was included and in the past decade no corresponding Damareteion appeared newly in trade. Thus Arnold-Biucchi can present only a single tetradrachm from the series (*Randazzo* no. 524); a possible second is mentioned.[12] This rarity is surprising. One will probably have to explain it – as with series 13 and 14a – by the fact that not all coins of the find became known to the editor, but that the more freshly preserved specimens were more thoroughly sifted out before they could be studied.[13]

[8] P. Naster, La collection Lucien de Hirsch (Bruxelles 1959) no. 466. – G.Vallet, Rhégion et Zancle (Paris 1958) 375f. pl. 20,5.

[9] H. A. Cahn, Die Münzen der sizilischen Stadt Naxos (Basel 1944) no. 54.

[10] E. Boehringer, Die Münzen von Syrakus (Berlin/Leipzig1929).

[11] In the only case where a correction was necessary (Randazzo nos. 307–309), E. Boehringer had not had an illustration of the obverse available: His no. 271E (R 187E) should in reality be classified after no. 144. The die combination had, however, already been registered, although not illustrated anywhere: Siracusa, Museo Regionale, Inv.no. 31112, from the find of Monte Bubbonia, which urgently should be published as solidly as the find of Randazzo. Another specimen in 1958 in the stock of Bank Leu.

[12] Randazzo p. 35 note 166. Such a coin is not listed in the auction catalogues Sotheby's New York 19.06.1990 and 21.–22.06.1990 (N. B. Hunt Coll.).

[13] As the plates show, the commercially more marketable coins of the find are mostly illustrated in original



Date and Character of the Find

How securely can the date of the find of Randazzo now be determined? Arnold-Biucchi deduces from the closing coins of the various mints the years around 450 B.C.: Not before 455 because of the presence of "independence issues" from Rhegion, Katane, Messana, Naxos, and hardly after 445 because of the absence of tetradrachms from Messana with four-stroke sigma and the Apollo types from Katane and Leontinoi. Thus the date seems well considered, although I can also imagine it at the upper limit.

Whether the find must, however, be designated as a savings hoard, as the author (p. 35) believes, seems doubtful to me. Against this speaks first the numerous late coins from most of the represented mints. Against this speaks further the absence of any didrachms, which because of their striking volume form a substantial portion in all older finds and which, the earlier they are, were less easy to avoid. If some Syracusan tetradrachms from Groups I and II – Arnold-Biucchi points to nos. 232–243, whereby her date 510–500 (p. 35) for nos. 232–235 seems too early – are fresh and little circulated, this fact merely proves that a (small) lot of coins hoarded at an earlier time was incorporated into a later circulation find. This phenomenon can be observed again and again,[14] without the find as a whole therefore losing its significance as a circulation find. So also the find of Randazzo.

Chronology and Interpretation of the Coins

If the catalogue of the find of Randazzo had shown what is contemporaneous, then through a comparison of finds in a broader context it becomes clear which coin series are earlier and which are later. Arnold-Biucchi undertakes the comparison in a concluding chapter (pp. 41–47) specifically under the aspect of Syracusan chronology.

Table 4 on pages 42 and 43 offers a quite logical picture in itself of the sequence of the contents of relevant finds up to approximately 435 B.C. Only one poorly documented hoard from Sicily 1890 (the "Seltman hoard", *IGCH* 2076) does not fit properly into this sequence, as the author rightly emphasizes; its testimony may therefore only be evaluated with reservation.

The picture drawn can be completed by an extensive and still unpublished coin hoard recovered near Comiso at the end of 1970.[15] This contained

- Rhegion: 1 tetradrachm type mule biga/hare quasi fdc.
- Akragas: only didrachms up to Group IV (ephebe head r.; CAΣ; A)[16]
- Gela: up to Jenkins no. 110 (beginning of Group II)
- Himera: didrachms of Akragantine type up to V. 8 (of a total of 15 obverse dies)[17]
- Leontinoi: no coins, however Syracuse no. 118 with R 42 present still before the reworking of the legend letters,[18] thus immediately before the beginning of striking in Leontinoi.
- Messana: 2 tetradrachms, 2 didrachms type mule biga/hare, quasi

photographs, the other 479 pieces from plaster casts.

[14]Compare for example the bull/Nike tetradrachms of Katane in the find of Ognina 1923 (IGCH 2120), cf. C. Boehringer, SNR 57, 1978, 135.

[15]Perhaps mentioned CH 1, 1975, no. 10 s.v. "Gela". Shortly in this review.

fdc.

– Syracuse: up to Boehringer Series 10 (beginning) no. 230.

If one inserts this find into the table, the following conclusions can be drawn:

a) The find of Gela 1956 is set too high with a date of 490/485 B.C. 482 would seem the earliest possible dating; I consider 480 more correct.

b) The comparison with the find of Passo di Piazza shows that in Gela the striking intensity clearly slowed toward the end of (didrachm) Group I, while at the same time it increased significantly in Syracuse.

c) Rhegion and Messana start their mule biga/hare type shortly after 480, as rightly concluded by Arnold-Biucchi.[19]

d) At the time when Leontinoi had not yet begun its coinage at all or had just begun it, already half of all didrachm dies of the series of Akragantine type were in use in Himera.

e) The find of Comiso is to be classified between the finds of Passo di Piazza and Monte Bubbonia; it was closed around 475. In Syracuse at this time no. 230 had already been struck. Gela now accelerates its coinage again somewhat, while Syracuse soon thereafter slows down its own again.

f) The date of the find of Monte Bubbonia lies around 470 or shortly thereafter.

For Syracuse the following consequences can be grasped:

1. Group I is – apart from no. 1 – only struck at the beginning of the 5th century, not already from 510 onward.

2. Approximately with Series 7 (no. 89) begins the coinage of Hieron. In it the enormously increased significance of Syracuse since the victory of Himera comes fully into play.

3. The "mass series" of Syracuse may not be distributed evenly over the years. With Series 12 a somewhat slower phase of coinage seems to begin.

4. As already argued at the time[20] and as was taken up by Arnold-Biucchi for good reason, I see the Damareteion series struck before 467/466 and not only after the fall of the Deinomenids.

I would now like to set the dates of the early Syracusan coinages as follows:

[16]On the chronology cf. G. K. Jenkins, (here note 3) 162ff. – U. Westermark, in: Greek Numismatics and Archaeology, Essays in Honor of Margaret Thompson (Wetteren 1979) 287–293.

[17]Cf. G. K. Jenkins, in: La monetazione arcaica di Himera fino al 472 a.C., Atti del II Convegno del CISN Napoli 1969 (Rom 1971) 21ff.

[18]Cf. E. Boehringer (here note 10), p. 22. 79f.

[19]NACOTic 12, 1983, 55ff.

[20]JNG 18, 1968, 93ff. – The Arthur S. Dewing Collection of Greek Coins, ACNAC 6 (New York 1985) 50f. no. 780, commentary.

No. 1	end of 6th cent.
Series 1–2:	500 to before 485. Interruption.
Series 3–4:	485–480
Series 5–6:	480–478
Series 7–10:	478–475
Series 11–12d:	475–470
Series 12e (Dam.):	around/shortly after 470
Series 13:	after 466
Series 14ff.	from about 460

But how did the Damareteion come by its name? That the literary reports are to be related to the early decadrachm can hardly be denied. If one grants a historical core to the story transmitted by Diodorus (XI 26, 3), then one cannot avoid interpreting its two most important details each on its own, a) that Damarete received a significant gift from the Carthaginians after Himera, and b) that her fortune was used around 470 – after her death? – in Syracuse for the striking of those decadrachms that bear her name. But before we venture too far into the realm of speculation, we had better break off.

The foregoing remarks should underscore how important the monograph on the find of Randazzo is. If I occasionally represented a slightly different opinion here, this only became possible on the basis of the publication by Carmen Arnold-Biucchi. Superfluous to emphasize that this belongs in every relevant library because of its content and methodology. The printing is clean,[21] the plates leave hardly anything to be desired.

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[21] Some printing errors are disturbing:
p. 32 table: for Group 3: "(nos. 244-523)" instead of "(nos. 244–533)";
for Group 4: "to Series 14a" instead of "to Series 16a";
p. 32, line 12, end: "and 15 to the" instead of "and 5 to the";
p. 42, Gela-Fund, Akragas: "410 didr. grp. 3,1" instead of "2,1";
p. 47, line 7: "Group 3, where" instead of "Group 2, where".
Furthermore on p. 23 para. 1 last line these are obols of Aitna, not litrae.