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An offprint from

KOINE

Mediterranean Studies in Honor of R. Ross Holloway

edited by
Derek B. Counts and Anthony S. Tuck

Oxbow Books
Oxford and Oakville

© Oxbow Books 2009
ISBN 978 1 84217 379 4

Joukowsky Institute Publication 1
General series editor: Prof. John F. Cherry
Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World
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New Coin Types in Late Fifth-Century Sicily

Spencer Pope

Sicilian numismatics represents the intersection of two of Ross Holloway's particular areas of interest. His numerous contributions to this field include examinations of the mint at Syracuse, issues under the Sicilian tyrants, and the numismatic output from smaller, inland sites. Ross Holloway's work in this area astutely evaluated the numismatic evidence in light of historical circumstances, and has in this way pinpointed the origin and raison d'etre for many of the sporadic and limited issues of the island. The present work examines the mints of marginalized indigenous cities and mercenary groups in Sicily at the end of the fifth century BC in the context of Syracuse's rise to domination.

The period between the Athenian invasion and the fall of Agathocles can be considered the "long" fourth century BC in Sicily. This interval saw the fall of the democratic government in Syracuse and subsequent domination of tyrants. Greeks were engaged in nearly constant territorial warfare with the Carthaginians, who advanced from the western part of the island as far as the Ionian Sea. This period also saw radical changes in the political composition of the island; independent city-states were swallowed by larger powers that placed Greek, native, and Carthaginian cities alike into consolidated spheres of influence by Syracuse on one side and Carthage on the other. However, the Corinthian colony's rise and establishment of hegemony over Greek Sicily were neither immediate nor did they come about in one single step. Dionysius relied heavily upon mercenary labor in campaigns against Greek and indigenous cities and for battles against the Carthaginians between 398 and 392 BC (on mercenaries in Southern Italy and Sicily, see generally Tagliamonte 1994; on the role of mercenaries in the Greek world, see Trundle 2004). Archaeological, literary, and especially numismatic evidence attests to a drawn-out period of conflict, in which control was amassed not by military means alone but also through the careful orchestration of numerous population relocations that resulted in the loss of territory of Greeks and Sikels alike at the expense of the Syracusans and their mercenaries.

The Carthaginian invasion did much to change the demographics of Sicily. Carthaginians destroyed Selinus in 409 BC and then moved east, sacking Himera, Agrigento, Gela, and Kamarina in 406–405 BC (on the destruction of Agrigento, see Diod. Sic. 13.89–91; on the assault on Gela, see Diod. Sic. 13.108–10; on the destruction of Gela and Kamarina, see Diod. Sic. 14.60.4). Syracuse absorbed the population of the colonial cities of the south coast, a move that greatly expanded the city. Dionysius was elected *strategos autokrator* in Syracuse in 405 BC and soon thereafter struck a treaty with the Carthaginians (Diod. Sic.13.94–96; Arist. *Pol*. 5, 1305a). The agreement stipulated that the sacked Greek cities were to pay tribute to Carthage and were to remain without fortification wall, the territory of the Sikans – the indigenous inhabitants of central Sicily – was to be turned over to Carthage, and the Sikel cities were to be autonomous. With this agreement, the Carthaginians controlled more than half of Sicily, including inland areas heretofore possessed by the native population. The border between Greek and Carthaginian territory was set as a line drawn between Himera and Gela. The establishment of these precise boundaries changed the relationship between the two powers in Sicily; the defeat had ended a struggle for influence and trade but initiated competition for territory itself.

As preparations were made for war against the Carthaginians at Syracuse, Dionysius began a campaign to consolidate his power in eastern Sicily. The first objective was to bring the Sikels under his control, and to this end he enacted a siege of Herbessos, now identified with Montagna di Marzo, near modern Piazza Armerina (Diod. Sic. 14.7.6). Diodorus reports that the immediate motive for moving first against the Sikels was because of their previous alliance with the Carthaginians. This alliance, presumably during the years 409–406 BC, is however not otherwise attested (Herbessos identified with Montagna di Marzo, see Manganaro 1999, with preceding bibliography). Dionysius continued military action the following year. His first action was a siege of Aitna, which won him the fortress; from there he attacked Leontini, but, lacking adequate siege engines,

he instead plundered the territory (Diod. Sic. 14.14.2–4). In an attempt to delude the Naxians and Catanians, Dionysius engaged in affairs of the Sikels, first installing Aeimnestus as tyrant of Henna and then assisting in overthrowing him, in an effort to gain confidence of the citizens of Henna. He then set out to sack Herbita, but was unsuccessful and instead struck a treaty with the city (Diod. Sic. 14.15.1). Diodorus's narrative has Dionysius passing from Enna to Herbita before turning to Katane, suggesting Herbita lies on the road between the two cities. The precise identification of Herbita remains unresolved but must be located in the area north of Enna and west of Etna, in the Nebrodi Mountains. Possible locations include Nicosia, Gangi Vecchia/Monte Alburchia, or closer to the coast at Mistretta or S. Stefano di Camastra (on the identification of the site, see G. Bejor, BTCGI, 1985).

Next to fall to Syracuse were Katane and Naxos, both of which were betrayed to Dionysius in 403 BC. The former, once in the hands of Dionysius, was turned over to and settled by a group of mercenaries. The latter was surrendered by Prokles, the commander of the Naxians, in exchange for gifts and kinship. Dionysius razed the city, sold its inhabitants into slavery, and handed the territory over to the Sikels (Diod. Sic. 14.15.2–4). Treaties with the prominent Sikel cities Agyrion, Kentoripe, and Assoros were made, while Kephaloidion (modern Cefalù) and Solunto were obtained through treachery, and the settlements at Menai and Morgantina were taken by force (Diod. Sic. 14.78.7). With the relocation of the population of Leontinoi to Syracuse and the capture of Messana, Syracuse remained the only independent city – Sikel or Greek – of the Ionian coast in the opening years of the fourth century BC. Mercenaries were eventually settled at Leontinoi to remove them from the city of Syracuse itself (Diod. Sic. 14.78.2). After an aborted march against Syracuse by Rhegions and Messenians. Dionysius feared that the cities of the straits would align themselves with Carthage and sought to win favor with the city by presenting them with a "large piece of territory" (πολλὴν τῆς ὁμόρου χώραν) (Diod. Sic. 14.44.4). This indicates that Syracusan territory was contiguous with that of Messana.

Syracuse further consolidated its territorial acquisitions with the foundation of new cities in the hinterland of the island. The colonies had a twofold purpose: first, to ensure a Greek presence in areas traditionally held by the indigenous population, and second, to provide a home and territory for exmercenaries, who were settled in large numbers. Tyndaris, located on the north coast of Sicily on territory subtracted from the *chora* of the Sikel city Abakainon (near modern Tripi), was founded with refugees from Peloponnesian Messana and enjoyed a rapid growth, undoubtedly receiving exmercenaries (Diod. Sic. 14.78.5–6. It is worthwhile to note that Carthaginian Magon used Abakainon as a base for attacks on Messene in 393 BC; Diod. Sic. 14.90.4). Taormenion, modern Taormina, was refounded as a colony by Dionysius following a second peace treaty with the Carthaginians in 392 BC. Although previously inhabited by Sikels, the Syracusan tyrant settled mercenaries at the site, while a more formal foundation came in 358 BC with oikist Andromachos and the removal of the last inhabitants of Naxos to the city (on the foundation with mercenaries, Diod. Sic. 14.96.4; later under Andromachus, Diod. Sic. 16.6.7, 16.7.1). Adranon, founded *c.* 401 BC and identified with modern Adrano, located just beyond the slopes of Mt. Etna, served as an advanced outpost against the Carthaginians along the upper Simeto River, bordering the territory of the Sikel cities of Agyrion, Assoros, and Kentoripe. The foundation itself may have replaced the Sikel cities at Contrada Mendolito and Paternò-Civita as a population center (on the foundations of Adranon, see Diod. Sic. 14.37.5). G. Lamagna (1994, 173 n. 3; 1997–98, 75) astutely indicates that Centuripe had sided with the Athenians in 414 BC. The latest material from Mendolito dates to the mid-fifth century BC (Lamagna 1992; 1993–94; on Mendolito, Franco 1999, on Paternò- Civita, Lamagna 1994). One additional colonial foundation occurring in these years should be noted: the indigenous city Herbita founded a colony, Halaesa Archonidion, named for Archonides, the tyrant of the metropolis. This colony, located on the north coast of the island near modern Tusa, was established in reaction to population pressure at Herbita, caused in part by a multitude of mercenaries (Diod. Sic. 14.16.1; De Vido, 1997).

Dionysius's policy of centralization is reflected in the coinage circulating in eastern Sicily. The Carthaginian invasion caused a cessation in the production of coins at nearly all of the principal cities of Greek Sicily apart from Syracuse. At this point, the well-known bronze Athena Head/Hippocamp type begins to be issued; these coins would serve as the primary currency for the duration of the tyrant's reign. Although heavily overstruck by smaller poleis and ethnic groups in Sicily, this coin remained in circulation until the introduction of the Kainon type under Dionysius II (on the overstriking and countermarking of the Syracusan bronzes, see Garraffo 1993; on the Kainon coinage, Holloway 2007). However, outside of Syracuse there appeared a limited number of issues with small outputs, most often litra and hemilitra, occurring both in silver and in bronze. These issues not only brought new types into the island but also often displayed dual legends representative of displaced, relocated, changing, or fluid population groups that bring into the question the relationship between the issuing body and the named polis. The most notable of these issues appear with a butting-bull reverse, a type that appears in limited contexts in Sicily.

The introduction and distribution of the butting-bull type in Sicily merits a brief discussion. The type initially appears in Sicily at Gela, on bronze issues dating to the last two decades of the fifth century BC (Fig. 15.1) (Jenkins 1970,



Fig. 15.1. *Bronze Tetras from Gela, Jenkins Group 8 (SNG ANS 4, 106).*



Fig. 15.2 *Silver Stater from Thurii (SNG ANS 2, 878).*

group 8). In these issues, a left-facing bull appears on the obverse of the coin below the legend ΓΕΛΑΣ. Its appearance here is certainly derived from the most characteristic type in Geloan coinage, the man-faced bull, which is identified as the eponymous river god. Distinct from the man-faced bull, a case can be made that the ordinary bull was also used to represent a river god (Jenkins 1970, 170, *cf.* Head 1911, 87). The legend accompanying the butting bull is unchanged from the man-faced bull issues, ΓΕΛΑΣ, and would identify the figure rather than indicate a citizen body (ΓΕΛΩΙΩΝ, the ethnic, appears below the exergue of the quadriga obverse; Jenkins group 9). The butting bull from Thurii, interpreted as the representation of the eponymous river Thurios, is accompanied by a fish in the exergue, a symbol that has been associated with river gods (Fig. 15.2) (appearing also at Gela, Jenkins group 7); however, the reverse legend ΘΥΡΙΩΝ provides the ethnic rather than an identity for the image.

Following its initial appearance at Gela, the butting-bull coin type is next seen at Katane. The relevant issues of Katane (Figs. 15.3–4) (Manganaro 1996, 311, table VII, 68–71):

Two-litra (Ag) =
Obverse: head of Silenus, l.
Reverse: Butting bull, r., KATANAIΩN

Litra (Ag) =
Obverse: head of female divinity, l.
Reverse: Butting bull, r., shrimp in ex., KATANAIΩN

Hemidrachm (Ag) =
Obverse: head of Apollo, l.
Reverse: Butting bull, r., fish in ex., KATANAIΩN

Hemidrachm (Ag) =
Obverse: head of Apollo, l., ΛΕΟΝ (Katane/Leontinoi)
Reverse: Butting bull, r., fish in ex., KATANAIΩN

The issues date to the last decade of the fifth century and demonstrate a departure from the Amenanos/quadriga type that had directly preceded it. While the obverse types for this series are all familiar to the coinage of Katane, the butting-bull reverse, accompanied by a fish or shrimp in the exergue, makes its first appearance. The right-facing bull,



Fig. 15.3 *Silver two-litra coin from Katane (After Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, Griech. Munzen aus Griechenland und Sizilien, 1988, 340).*



Fig. 15.4 *Silver litra from Katane (SNG ANS 1270).*

with head lowered to the ground, both sets of legs crossed, and its tail looping in the air, so closely emulates the style of the Thurii issues that their inspiration need not be sought elsewhere. The motion indicated in the piece contrasts with the static bull of the Geloan issues. In this case, the legend does not correspond with the type presented: ΚΑΤΑΝΑΙΩΝ is the ethnic and is not to be confused with the river god Amenanos, personified on earlier types. The historical circumstances suggest that the new type was adopted after the destruction and repopulation of Katane in 403 BC, when the city had been given over to mercenaries of Dionysius. A logical terminus ante quem for the issues is 396 BC, when the mercenaries were removed to Aitna, giving the production a window of nearly ten years (Diod. Sic. 14.58.2). The similarity with the Thurii bulls may confirm the southern Italian origin of the mercenary group.

The appearance of the new type at Katane may perhaps be paralleled by issues at Naxos. Although Diodorus Siculus indicates that the city was destroyed and the population sold into slavery, there is archaeological evidence for continued occupation at the site (Lentini 2002). It is to this period that a small output of Naxian silver litrai with the legend ΝΕΑΠΟΛΙ[ΤΑΝ] may be attributed (Cahn 1944, 86–88). The coin features the well-known obverse/head of Apollo and reverse/Silenus types, but the single legend suggests a new beginning and political discontinuity at the Chalcidian colony. Political reorganization is also is cited as the motive behind a single silver hemidrachm containing the obverse legend ΛΕΟΝ (obverse type head of Apollo facing left) and reverse legend ΚΑΤΑΝΑΙΩΝ. The coin has been interpreted as an indicator of *sympoliteia* between the two poleis (Kraay 1976, 229; Manganaro 1996, 311). However, any formal association between the two Chalcidian cities must have been extremely short-lived, as Leontinoi was presumably uninhabited in the period between the removal of the population to Syracuse and the placement of mercenaries at the site, a period of time that roughly corresponds to the mercenary presence at Katane prior to their relocation to Aitna. An alliance between the Chalcidian cities of Sicily in the years prior to the Carthaginian invasion has been proposed based on a collective reference in Diodorus Siculus (13.56). If the coin is representative of a political union of the two colonies, such an alliance ultimately carried little weight in the face of Syracusan machinations, given the eventual depopulation of both cities.

The butting-bull type appears at Kephaloidion at the same time with the following issues (Jenkins 1975, 97–99):

litra =
Obverse: head of Herakles with lionskin, r., ΕΚ ΚΕΦΑΛΟΙΔΙΟΥ
Reverse: Butting bull, r., fish in ex., ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΩΤΑΝ

The silver litrai were struck shortly after 400 BC. The obverse and reverse legends together appear to make two statements: the obverse, ΕΚ ΚΕΦΑΛΟΙΔΙΟΥ, reverse ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΩΤΑΝ. S. N. Consolo-Langher (1961) argued that the legend should be read as "Herakleans living at Kephaloidion." The reference is likely to mercenaries from Herakleia in Lucania settled at Kephaloidion. Rather than a political union as theorized for Katane and Leontinoi, it appears that the dual legend refers to a new people taking over a preexisting city; Kephaloidion was taken by Dionysius *c.* 400 BC (Diod. Sic. 14.78.7) and likely settled exmercenaries there. The adoption of the same reverse type for the short-lived coinage of the city (butting bull, fish in ex.) may have the same inspiration as the Katane types, if not the work of the same die engraver. The relationship between the legend and the image on the reverse is the same as at Katane: ΗΡΑΚΛΕΙΩΤΑΝ unambiguously refers to the issuing body – Herakleans – and is unrelated to the coin type. The dual ethnic on the coin finds many parallels in western Sicily. Campanian mercenaries, immediately following their service to Dionysius, moved to Entella, modern Rocca di Entella, and were absorbed into the city until they possessed it (Diod. Sic. 14.9.9). The Campanian presence is seen in the numismatic record with silver drachma and hemidrachma issues overstruck on Sicilian coins and containing the obverse legend ΕΝΤΕΛΛΑΣ and reverse inscribed ΚΑΜΠΑΝΩΝ (Garraffo 1978, 29, nos. 1, 2; cf. Garaffo 1987, 218; the practice of overstriking these coins demonstrates the provisionary nature of the issues). Corresponding issues may also be found at Nakone (legends ΚΑΜΠΑΝΩΝ/ ΝΑΚΟΝΑΙΩΝ and ΚΑΜΠΑΝΩΝ/ΝΑΚΩΝΕΣ) (Tusa Cutroni 1970; on Nakone, see Facella 2002). In the case of Kephaloidion, it appears that the Heraklean mercenaries were in control of the city, and it is with them, rather than the polis of Kephaloidion, that the minting authority should be found.

A third example of the butting-bull reverse is found in the enigmatic issues of Piakos (Jenkins 1962; 1975, 92):

Litra =
Obverse: head of female divinity, r., ΠΙΑΚΙΝΟΣ (two examples) or ΠΙΑΚΙΝΩΝ (one example)
Reverse: Butting bull, r., fish in ex., ΑΔΡΑΝΟΣ

Hemilitra =
Obverse: head of female divinity, r., ΠΙΑΚΙ
Reverse: forepart of butting bull, r., ΠΙΑΚΙ (one example only)

The identification of the site is uncertain. The toponym ΠΙΑΚΟΣ is mentioned only by Stephanus of Byzantium, although a reference to the city in the index to book 12, chapter 29, by Diodorus Siculus included "ὡς Συρακόσιοι στρατεύσαντες ἐπί Πικηνούς την πόλιν κατέσκαψαν" (How the Syracusans campaigned against the Pikenians and razed their city) (Steph. Byz., *s.v.* Πίακος, πόλις Σικελίας. οί πολίται Πιακίνοι; Diod. Sic., index to bk. 12, ch. 29, Loeb

translation with modifications). The chapter in discussion does not, however, mention Piakos but a city named Trinakie that was destroyed in 440 BC. This city is also not otherwise attested, so the text has been emended to read Paliké (Π[αλ]ικηνούς), the city founded by Ducetius and the ostensible center of the Sikel Federation (see Maniscalco-McConnell 2003, 153 n. 42; McConnell, this volume). The emendation is convincing, since Diodorus notes that Paliké was destroyed shortly after its foundation in 453 BC. The archaeological record reveals no evidence for either the foundation or destruction of the city in the mid-fifth century BC (Pope 2006, 162–226, esp. 225–26). Otherwise, Piakos has been identified with the anonymous settlement at Contrada Mendolito, Paternò-Civita, or modern Adrano, ancient Adranon (Jenkins 1962; Franco 1999, 198–202).

Silver coinage at Piakos is attested by six extant examples, three litrai and three hemilitra. Although the legends vary among the extant examples, both the obverse and reverse types are copied directly from the Katane issues discussed above (see Figs. 15.3, 15.4). The fractional ethnic ΠΙΑΚΙ on the hemilitra (three extant specimens) introduces a more complete reading found on the litra, which is also known in only three examples: the legend appears as ΠΙΑΚΙΝΟΣ on two of the specimens, and ΠΙΑΚΙΝΩΝ on the other (the first specimen was published by Jenkins 1962; a second by Manganaro 1984, 34, table 6, no. 89, who also references the third specimen, now in the collection of the American Numismatic Society [ANS 1999.31.1]). The appearance of the proper noun in the genitive plural clearly establishes the term as the ethnic. The appearance of the name in the nominative singular, ΠΙΑΚΙΝΟΣ, is unusual in Sicilian numismatics, and among indigenous cities is paralleled at only Morgantina (ΜΟΡΓΑΝΤΙΝΑ retrograde) (Erim 1975; 1989, 5–6).

The reverse of the litra contains the legend ΑΔΡΑΝΟΣ, fully legible only on the example now in collection of the American Numismatic Society (Fig. 15.5) (ANS 1999.31.1). G. K. Jenkins published the first example with obverse ΠΙΑΚΙΝΟΣ and the legend ΑΔΡΑΝ[. . .] on the reverse, which he restored as ΑΔΡΑΝΟΝ, a reference to the Greek city. The seemingly double ethic on the coin was taken to be evidence for a *syntelia* between Piakos and Adranon (Jenkins 1962, 17). The full reading clearly indicates a noun in the masculine singular, and not "Adranon," the common name for the Dionysian colony. The reference may still be to the new foundation, however, since the city's name alternatively appears in the masculine (*Adranos* rather than *Adranon*) in Aelian, writing in the second century AD: Ἐν Σικελίᾳ Ἀδρανός εστι πόλις; but the reference is late and cannot be taken as conclusive (Ael. *NA* 11.20; cf. Morawiecki 1995, 40–41, who also proposes a reading of ΑΔΡΑΝΙΤΩΝ for the silver litra, although this reconstruction may be precluded on the basis of available space). The appearance of the two names together has even been taken as an indication that Adranon was constructed on the site of Piakos, thus an indigenous site would have been refounded as a Greek colony, with its first numismatic issues reflecting the names of both civic organizations (the attribution is based on the presence of archaic pottery uncovered at the site. Constructions dating to the period have not been uncovered, making the possibility less likely; Franco 1999, 203).

While the possibility that the inhabitants of Piakos were transferred to the new foundation and constituted, along



Fig. 15.5 *Silver litra from Piakos (ANS, 1999.31.1).*

with vast numbers of exmercenaries, a segment of the population of Adranon cannot be excluded, the civic reference is unlikely. In Sicily in the Classical age it was customary to place the ethnic in the genitive case, so the legend ΑΔΡΑΝΙΤΩΝ would be expected, rather than Adranon or even Adranos. In fact, the only other issues from the city, dating to the time of Timoleon, contain the legend in the genitive (a bronze litra with the head of Apollo on the obverse and a seven-string lyre on the revere bore the legend ΑΔΡΑΝΙΤΑΝ). Important to note, there is little archaeological evidence for activity at Adranon at this point; the earliest remains of the urban settlement date to the late fourth/early third century BC, so it is unlikely that the reverse legend refers to the foundation of the city (Lamagna 1997–98, 78).

To interpret the legend, one must keep in mind that the coin type is a reproduction of the issues of Katane, and for this reason the iconography of both the bull and river nymph has limited resonance for the city of Piakos. Therefore, the legend on the reverse, ΑΔΡΑΝΟΣ, cannot be controlled by the device. The reference most likely brought to mind by the legend is the Sikel god whose sanctuary was located in the vicinity of Mendolito and Adranon, and not a local river god. Examining the hemilitrai, Manganaro reconstructs the obverse legend as the ethnic ΠΙΑΚΙ [ΝΩΝ] and the reverse legend ΠΙΑΚΙ [ΝΟΣ], identifying the river god personified in the forepart of a bull with the reverse legend. An eponymous Piakinos River could easily be hypothesized as one of the many tributaries of the upper Simeto at the base of Mt. Etna (contrary to Manganaro, Morawiecki 1995, 39–42).

The connection to both the god and the dependence on coinage of Katane are already observed at Piakos in the last quarter of the fifth century BC with bronze issues. The bronze issues of Piakos (Jenkins 1975, 91–92):

Hemilitra and Tetrans =
Obverse: head of a river god wreathed, with horns, l; Π •I•A•K•I•N•
Reverse: dog attacking stag

Uncia =
Obverse: head of river god, Π •I•A•K•
Reverse: dog

G. E. Rizzo (1946, pl. VII A) identified the bronze coinage of Piakos as the work of the "Maestro della foglia" who was responsible for the head of Apollo on the coinage of Katane in the last quarter of the fifth century BC. The bronze issues, therefore, create a precedent for the copying of the types used for the silver issues. One further note on the bronze issues is warranted. The reverse contains a unique composition: a dog attacking a stag. The type has been interpreted as a reference to the shrine of Adranos, protected by guard dogs (Ael. *NA* 11.20). In this way, too, the appearance of Adranos as the reverse legend on the silver issues is forecasted in bronze issues. A representation of the deity also appears in the third century BC on coins produced by the Mamertines: obverse/head of Adranos, ΑΔΡΑΝΟΣ; reverse/dog, ΜΑΜΕΡΤΙΝΩΝ.

While the appearance of the new type at Katane and Kephaloidion may be interpreted as signs of political upheaval and the appearance of a new population, the reverse legend at Piakos emphasized the city's connection with a venerable Sikel establishment at a time in which discrete indigenous identity begins to wane. The political subjugation caused by Dionysius left few differentiating characteristics of the Sikel population (Holloway 1990). Perhaps the most important element of a discrete ethnic identity was religion; indeed, the most sacred Sikel site, the Sanctuary of the Divine Palikoi located on the edge of the Plain of Catania, flourished at this time. Indigenous religion was intimately tied to Ducetius's Sikel Federation of the mid fifth-century BC, which revolved around the Sanctuary of the Palikoi (McConnell, this volume; Maniscalco and McConnell 2003; Pope 2006). In this late fifth-century example of coinage from Piakos, Sikel religion is again brought out as an important indicator of identity.

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