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Grazia Salamone, 'Una' e 'molteplice': la ninfa eponima di città. Iconografie monetali e semantica [Semata e Signa. Collana di Studi di Iconografia monetale 6], Reggio Calabria: Falzea, 2013, 377 p, 31 b&w plates, 6 tables, 1 graph, 1 map, English abstract, ISBN 978-88-8296-372-8.

The on the nymphs' representations on the ancient Greek coin was a neglected topic. The scientific studies mainly focused on the topic of the *Tyche poleos* cult, broadly spread in the Hellenistic period. Therefore, the present book is covering the lack of the topic mentioned above and analyse the iconography of the eponym nymphs on the issues of the Greek cities of the Mediterranean room in the 6th-2nd centuries BC.

The most important contribution of this work is the fact that is exhaustively analysing the subject. Revealing the ideology and the beliefs behind the monetary iconography the author manages to recover a cultural patrimony applying a polysemic entity. This type of approach on is aesthetically mentioned in the book's title '*Una*' e '*molteplice*' [a multifaceted one].

This volume is a product of the Numismatic School from the University of Messina under the leadership of Professor Maria Caccamo Caltabiano – one of the most important centre in this field of research.

The author, Grazia Salamone, defended her PhD thesis at this university in 2009 with a subject on the eponym nymphs of the Greek cities. The book under review is the result of this scientific approach.

This book is the 6th volume of the series edited by Professor Maria Caccamo Caltabiano, *Semata e Signa. Collana di Studi di Iconografia monetale*. A series that focuses on the coinage as an instrument for communication in ancient societies and aims to make the monetary iconography a high valued historical evidence.

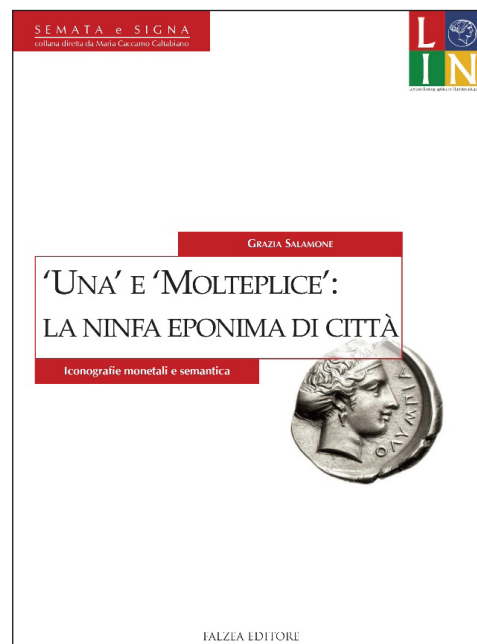
The author is a well-trained researcher in Ancient History who has been involved in numerous research projects such as *Lexicon Iconographicum Numismaticae (LIN)*. Grazia Salamone has already published over 20 studies. In 2004 she published another book in the field of monetary iconography: *L'Imperatore e l'esercito. Tipi monetali di età romano-imperiale*. A common pattern of her scientific contributions is the multidisciplinary analysis of the topics (numismatics, archaeology, anthropology and linguistics) subscribing in this way to the new trends in the research of Ancient History.

In the introduction to the reviewed book G. Salamone mentions the work of J. Larson, *Greek Nymphs. Myth, Cult, Lore* (Oxford, 2001) and raises the same question, apparently, a very simple one: *what is a nymph?* The answer creates a „*taxonomic dilemma*”, as in the Greek mythology all the female figures which cannot be identified with a certain deity are interpreted either as mortal heroes or as nymphs (p. 11). The next pages focus in offering a well-documented answer to who were the eponym nymphs.

The book structure is clear and easy to follow. The five chapters have

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subchapters followed by conclusions, tables, and graphs, bibliography an English abstract.

I. **The introduction** has three subchapters:

Some methodological notes.

The main aim of the methodology in this case is to define the iconic common code of those figures that can be framed in the category of the eponym nymphs. The criterion of selecting the coins is the depiction of nymph joined by an inscription in **singular nominative** form (p. 16). This type of representation – a certain reference to the nymph depiction – scarcely appears on the Greek coins compared to those with the inscription in plural genitive referring to the issuing community or mint. The images on coins are analysed at the level of main elements: the main figure, attributes, symbols. These elements are studied on their chronological evolution and geographic distribution as well as being compared with other iconographic evidence (terracotta, frescoes).

The historiography of nymphs and eponym 'nymphs'

The author enumerates and analyses some key works on nymphs starting from the 19th century such as: P Gardner, *Countries and Cities in Ancient Art*, 1888; F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Nymphen und Chariten auf griechischen Münzen* (1908); L. Lacrois, *Fleuves et nymphes éponymes sur les monnaies grecques* (1953); the articles in the *LIMC*; the work of J. Larson mentioned above, and the volume *Ninfe nel mito e nella città della Grecia e Roma* (2009).

G. Salamone emphasizes that the analysis of coin iconography in these works remained at a basic level except the few article in the *LIMC* written by M. Caccamo Caltabiano. These paragraphs offer quite a complete iconographic scheme on the nymphs Himera, Hyele, Kamarina, Messana and Terina (p. 24).

The ancient literary sources on nymphs and eponym 'nymphs'

The subchapter is based on the semantic approach done by V. Andò in his study *Nymphe: la sposa e le nimfe* (1996). This part of the book under review presents the cultural background as it proved to be a key in understanding why certain iconographic types and motifs were selected in the illustration of the eponym nymphs. The study of ancient literary sources referring to nymphs over centuries – the first mention of nymphs comes from the Homeric period – outlines the nymph as a multiform female figures. A woman desired by the all men, a female person who through her erotic charisma transforms the young *parthenos* in *gyne* – wife (p. 28).

The first written mention of an eponym nymph – Kyrene – is in a work of Hesiodos, partially preserved and consisting of many later interpolations. In the Pindar's odes the eponym nymphs are the bearers of civic identities counterparts to the elitist groups that claim their position through a hero-male lineage. Thus, the eponym nymph is 'invented' within a favourable political context and became the official crest of the polis (p. 31).

II. **The iconographic analyse. Subjects with toponymic/onomastic inscription.**

The structure of this chapter presents macro-areas where the macro-areas are organized from north to south while the cities of each macro-area follows a chronological order according to the first monetary mention of the eponym nymph. A very useful structure The 27 cities/eponym nymphs are grouped by following regions:

Cyrenaica: *Kyrene*

Magna Grecia: Kyme, Hyele, Terina, Pandosia, Medma, Thouria

Sicily: *Himera, Aigeste, Katane, Kamarina, Messana, Syra, Kronia, Tyndaris*

Thessaly: *Larissa, Triikka, Perrha, Pelinna, Phalanna*

Ionian Islands and Mailand Greece: *Theba, Korkyra, Histiaia, Olympia, Leukas*

Bithynia: *Herakleia*

Paphlagonia: *Kromma*

Each city benefits of a subchapter that presents the typological features of the eponym nymphs on coins. The detailed analysis made possible the chronological development of the monetary iconography as well as to establish the spreading network and the connections with other minting centres.

III. **The catalogue.**

Due to the fact that the catalogue was the first part to be completed for this book, the author followed the *SNG* model. Therefore, the structure of the catalogue is slightly different from chapter II. Instead of a chronological display of the cities are geographically displayed within region from north to south.

The catalogue is based on a typological classification of nymphs. There are seven basic elements:

1. The head
2. Figure standing
3. Figure walking
4. Figure sitting
5. Figure kneeling
6. Figure flying
7. Figure in biga/quadriga

These main types have subtypes of more specific iconographic schemes that allow an analytical exploitation and a future quantification of the various *sema* noticed on coins. For instance, the type of 'figure seated' includes the following subtypes:

1. Seated with attributes
2. Sitting and tossing the ball into the air
3. Sitting and touching the water
4. Sitting and crowned by Nike
5. Seated and tying her sandals.
6. Each item is illustrated with photo.

IV. **Common iconographic schemes from various areas. A diachronic and diatopic synthesis.**

This complex chapter analyse the chronologically and geographic development of each iconographic type. In fact, the author reconstruct the 'story' for each scheme and, furthermore, frames the 'history' the iconographic code within the political and cultural of the period. Referring to numerous ideological trends, social changes, political events, G. Salamone successfully manages to make the coinage a

true historical source.

V. *Other eponym nymphs. Proposals for identification.*

This chapter refers to those nymphs mentioned as eponyms by Imhoof-Blumer in the *LIMC* and the *SNG* but they were mentioned with inscription on coin in singular nominative form. In the absence of this fundamental criterion, the author prudently restrains the number of uncertain nymphs. G. Salamone suggests an identification of these nymphs based on the evidence provided by the literary sources and the iconographic analogies with other certain depictions of eponym nymphs. Following this methodology 13 more cities may have their nymphs depicted on coins: *Parthenope* (Magna Grecia), *Aitne*, *Entella*, *Motya* (Sicily), *Abdera* (Thrace), *Arne/ Kierion*, *Meliboia* (Thessaly), *Chalkis*, *Salamis* (Mainland Greece), *Sinope* (Paphlagonia), *Kyme*, *Mytilene* (Eolida), *Rhodos* (Caria).

Conclusions

At the end of the book the author defines the semantic character of the eponym nymphs' representation on coin within the political and cultural context and a chronological. Thus, the presence of the eponym nymphs on coins appeared and developed on the territories of Greek colonies dominated by either 'royal' (Kyrene) or tyrannical regimes (Segesta, Himera, Kyme, Hyele) (p. 328). The eponym nymph played a double role. On one side, applying a religious investiture the issuing authority could send a well-defined propagandistic message. On the other side, the creation of a figure to represent the *polis* itself and a bearer of the Greek civilization one can see the assertion of sovereignty by the city-state (p. 328).

The spread of this phenomenon during the 5th century BC coincides with the diversification and increase of iconographic schemes on coins. It is in this period when the nymph's head from profile – the largest iconographic type on the obverse – became more and more elaborated. The hair is tied with ribbons while various jewellery emphasize the *charis* of the wife-nymph (p. 330). The various iconographic prototypes, in many cases coming from the same mint, reflects the complex nature of this figure. The representation of the nymph as a nude or semi-nude figure sitting on swan points out her the erotic feature (Aphrodite). On the contrary, when the nymph is depicted as being dressed with chiton with long sleeve is a reference to her statute as wife – *meter* (Kamarina, Terina). The double nature of the character is also documented by the alteration of the iconographic scheme winged-wingless on the coins of the cities of Terina (winged *Potnia* – master of nature, Oriental model), Katana, Kamarina, Himera.

This period is the peak for the flourishing of the Greek city-state in the West. The goddess has multifaceted aspects ('*una*' e '*molteplice*') as she embodies: a scared wife – to legitimate the political power; mother – the representative of fecundity and the renewal of the natural cycle and life; the person that regulates the biological and social transformations.

G. Salamone identifies the main prototype that established the iconographic scheme in the context of

political changes within the Pan-Hellenic. This prototype is Athena *Polias* on the tetradrachmas, issued at Athens starting in the second half of the 6th BC: Helmeted goddess protecting the city wearing earrings and necklace, attributes that brings *charis* to portrait. This representation symbolizes both *nymph* and *meter*, the female person that ensures the *polis*' prosperity and protection (p. 331).

Another valuable aspect revealed by this work is to point out the interferences of figurative and semantic meanings. Analysing each iconographic prototype in its evolution in time and space the author noticed that the eponym nymphs borrow attributes of major divinities. There are three main models – Aphrodite, Athena, and Artemis that influenced the iconographic *sema* of the eponym nymphs. The nymph Hymera depicted in the attitude of undressing (*anakalypsis*) similar to Aphrodite. Other nymphs wear helmet and armour (Kyme, Hyele, Syra, Trikka) resembling to the image and role of Athena – protector of the *polis*. The Artemis-*Potnia* prototype can be noticed in the representations of the winged nymphs of the cities of Kyrene, Katana, Kamarina, Himera, Terina and Herakleia (pp. 334-335).

On conclusion, the image of a major goddess born under oriental influence (e.g. Aphrodite-Astarte for Kyrene) became the personification of a territorial entity and the key of prosperity of this community. Following various socio-political changes in the history of the city the figure was periodically modified but kept the physiognomy of a high goddess multifaceted. The importance of eponym nymphs for the *polis* precedes the spreading and popularity of the so-called *Tyche poleos* and the Italic *Fortunae*.

The scientific analysis of the coins is another strong point of this work. While studying the coins, G. Salamone did not limit to use the data from previous works on the coins' chronology but in many cases provides new dating of coins based on comparative iconography (e.g. Himera, pp. 131-132), and, where available, takes into account the archaeological evidence, too. Another aspect worth mentioning here is the detailed and accurate analysis of the images on coins. The scholar points out each detail with the figures, gestures and objects. The author's skill to see all the details – the figures and objects on coins are regarded and interpreted beyond their solid shape – has allowed her to decrypt some deep symbolic concepts. For instance, the act of libation at altar, mainly depicted on the coins from Sicily (Himera, Aigeste and Entella), refers to the „*trait d'union*” between the Earth (the human sphere) and the Heaven (the divine sphere).

The literary style is perfectly chosen to fit with the subject. It is rich in epithets and Ancient Greek consecrated terms smoothly combined with well-defined expressions from modern languages: English (*background, input, trend, leadership*), French (*tout court, fil rouge*).

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One of the many merits of this book is its quality to understand and present the imagery of the ancient man as well as to emphasize the constitutive elements that guide the life of a *polis*. G. Salamone successfully managed to avoid filtering ancient life through the modern way of thinking. This aspect make this book an extremely pleasant lecture!

The convincing argumentation, the socio-cultural and anthropological approaches allow the reader to understand the mentality and the activity at both community and individual level in Ancient Greece and Hellenistic period. Everything had a religious connotation for the ancient man, especially the nature to whom he belonged and whom ensured his existence. Thus, the geo-topographic places were items to be worshipped (e.g., a cave, a water source). In the Archaic period the spring was seen as a sacred female entity (the source of life!). This female will then gave the name to the entire urban room and became the symbol of a whole community (e.g. Kyrene, Himera, Terina, Medma).

The intellectual trip done by Grazia Salamone allowed the understanding of what the female *charis* meant in a world dominated by men. No doubts, the woman's beauty and attractiveness were a leitmotif in Antiquity directly connected to the fertility and continuity of life. Therefore, there is no surprise that on an official documents like the coinage – created by the 'men's society' – was frequently depicted the figure of a female divinity in all her splendour.

On the basis of all the above mentioned aspects this book is strongly for those who love ancient history, arts and numismatics.