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LEONTINI – SOME REMARKS ON EPICHORIC TEXTS

Several graffito texts from Leontini are definitively published by Lorenza Grasso in *La stipe del santuario di Alaimo a Lentini* (Catania, 2008), having been previously commented on by G. Rizza in *Rend.Linc.* 2003, 537–67 (though with virtually no epigraphic commentary) and G. Manganaro, *Anagrafe di Leontinoi nel V secolo*, in *ZPE* 149 (2004) 55–68, esp. 63–6. Grasso has also discussed one aspect more fully in “The deity of the Alaimo sanctuary in Leontinoi (Sicily)”, *BABesch* 84 (2009) 17–22. I note *ab initio* that Antonietta Brugnone’s excellent review of fifth century Sicilian alphabets (*ASNP* 1995, 1297–1327) only contains, or perhaps could only contain at that time, one fleeting reference to Leontini, in a footnote correcting (I would argue adding to) my citation of changes in the alphabets of Syracuse and Naxos (1309, n. 77). She has since commented usefully on some of the new finds, and here for the most part I merely summarise her conclusions while adding observations of my own (Ancora sugli alfabeti arcaici delle *poleis* siceliote, in C. Ampolo (ed.), *Immagine e immagini della Sicilia e di altre isole del Mediterraneo* (Pisa, 2009) 707–20, esp. 709–11).

The most significant piece, 301 in Grasso’s catalogue and illustrated on the cover, also mentioned by the other commentators, who call it a krater, is inscribed on a huge skyphos by the Phiale Painter, 440–30 BC. It gives us the name of the non-human owners of the sanctuary at the time, the Dioskuroi. It needs no further epigraphic comment; in the third quarter of the fifth century we would expect to find, as we do, a fairly full Ionic script in use, despite the high probability that the Euboean lambda continued in use in the coin legends of the polis until 422 or not much before.¹

Grasso argues that the Dioskuroi cult was introduced as a result of the Deinomenid control of Leontini earlier in the century, since such a Dorian cult could not have entered the colony earlier. This is plausible, though we should note firstly, on the level of myth, that the major external exploit of the twins in myth-history was the retrieval of their sister Helen from Aphidna, en route to Euboea from Athens, and, secondly and more significantly in concrete terms, that they had a temenos frequented by Ionians at Naukratis, which is curiously absent from much recent bibliography on their cults;² however it, and indeed mention of the cult on Delos, are properly included by Hermary s.v. Dioskouroi in *LIMC* III 567. These omissions are regrettable since the existence of the cult at Naukratis is as early as anything attested archaeologically elsewhere, from c. 575 BC. There is only a slight hint that either is anything but an Ionian Greek foundation, even if the antiquity of the Delos cult has been seriously questioned by Philippe Bruneau.³ Grasso admits that only one item in the finds from the sanctuary points strongly away from a cult of the twins – the bones remaining from ritual meals, which she argues are not part of the *θεοξενία* practices associated with the Dioskuroi. Although we have no good idea of what range of dedications to expect at an archaic Dioskuroi sanctuary,

¹ See, pending publication of his die study, Chr. Boehringer in *Studies in Greek Numismatics in Memory of Martin Jessop Price* (London, 1998) 43–54, esp. 50–1.

² There is little of relevance in M. Bonanno Aravantinos, *L'iconografia dei Dioscuri in Grecia*, in L. Nista (ed.), *Castores. L'immagine dei Dioscuri a Roma* (Rome, 1994) 8–25. In the next article in that volume, *I Dioscuri in Magna Grecia*, pp. 27–31, P.-G. Guzzo begins with “Dell’origine spartana degli eroici gemelli le fonti offrono abbondante e chiara documentazione”. Although discussing the Dioskuroi in Egypt, Sylvia Barnard is unaware of the Naukratis cult (*The Dioscuri on Cyprus*, *Thetis* 10 (2003) 71–5).

³ At Naukratis the earlier inscribed material consists of Ionian cups of various types, a Corinthian krater of perhaps c. 575 (W. F. Petrie, *Naukratis I* (London, 1886) no. 665, BM 1888.6–1.751; see A. Moeller, *Naukratis. Trade in Archaic Greece* (Oxford, 2000) 99) and one Chian chalice (*ibid.* no. 678, BM 1886.4–1.936) with dedications to the twins. One of the cups which probably preserves the dative dual -οις (British Museum, 1886.4–1.536, unpublished) has a wall that is nearly carinated, but is not so close to the type that does seem to have an origin in the Dorian Hexapolis (see E. S. Greene, M. Lawall and M. Polzer, *Inconspicuous consumption: the sixth-century B.C.E. shipwreck from Pabuç Burnu, Turkey*, *AJA* 112 (2008) 697 with n. 43 and 700, n. 56) to merit being called “non-Ionic”. The material from the lowest levels of the Delian Dioskureion (F. Robert, *Trois sanctuaires sur le Rivage Occidental. Exploration archéologique de Délos* xx (Paris, 1952) 37–9) is roughly contemporary, probably a little earlier, with one seemingly much earlier Protocorinthian piece, fig. 33, 1, as noted by H. Gallet de Santerre, *Délos primitive et archaïque* (Paris, 1958) 265, n. 5. However, Bruneau is extremely cautious about the identity of the site: *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l’époque hellénistique et à l’époque impériale* (Paris, 1970) 383–94.

it would seem harsh to impose on the cult very strict regulations like this, especially when recent scholarship has shown far more fluidity in practice than had previously been accepted; see especially a series of articles in R. Hägg and B. Alroth (eds), *Greek Sacrificial Ritual, Olympian and Chthonian* (Stockholm, 2005). Nonetheless, the Panhellenic role of the twins as protectors of those in peril on the sea was probably well established by the mid sixth century, while parallels for the transfer of divine or heroic ownership of a temenos (rather than any accretion or division) are not readily found.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

There is a minor, probably owner's, graffito part-preserved on a late archaic Attic cup foot, 288; but four other pieces are of greater interest. 281 and 282 are Etruscan bucchero kantharoi; the latter (Fig. 1) has at least part of the graffito (only the end of ἀνέθεκε is preserved) on the bowl, seemingly cut upside down and retrograde. 281 (Fig. 2) has a text which has been ably discussed by Mangano in "false" boustrophedon on the lip; Λεύκιος μ['] ἀνέθεκε ἡ]ο ἐχσελ[εύ]θερο[ς] Mangano suggests that the name of Leukios' erstwhile owner came after the preserved text; there would have been room, especially so if the divine recipient(s), Dioskuroi or whosoever, appeared in the gap in lines 1 to 2. Euboean lambda is used, but, as Mangano notes, the nexus chi-sigma for xi is found in Attica, the Cyclades, and "in genere ... alfabeto occidentale"; he does not add that it is not seen on Euboea or in its colonies, as far as can be ascertained from extant material of the broad period concerned. Here 287 is pertinent (Fig. 3), part of the bowl of an Attic Siana cup, perhaps a generation later than 281–2.]χικρ[is all that is preserved, but it is enough strongly to suggest that the initial letter is chi, not Euboean xi; the argument cannot be pressed too far, since]ξι κρ[, with or without word division, could yield sense, though not in any normal dedicatory formulae. We should note in addition however that the tailed rho, a fairly early example of the phenomenon, is fully at home in a Euboean environment.



Fig. 4

616 adds further variety (Fig. 4), a plastic vase, foot or sandal, stylistically of the first half of the sixth century, early in it according to Grasso, which has part of the maker's name, graffito, underneath,]τιμος μ' ἐποίεσε. Here we note non-Euboean mu and sigma, pointing towards an external origin of the object. Mangano's fifth century dating is odd; perhaps he wished to see here a tendency at Leontini towards Ionic script. What we have is not particularly diagnostic, but

fits 'standard' Sicilian archaic script seen in the Doric-speaking colonies.

Overall then these graffiti are not, with respect to the alphabet, a unified set; 281 is most consistent with Attic, 287 with a probably non-local 'blue' script and 616 with 'Sicilian Doric' script, even if none of these designations can be pressed too hard.

It is not easy to posit here connection with the colonial origins of Leontini. The published record of archaic texts from the colony is at best thin, and most is in Mangano's article, which is however devoted in particular to fifth century material, after the Deinomenid take-over, and for earlier pieces contains nothing more than the *stipe* sherds from Leontini itself, though one should mention a graffito on the rim of a

krater (most fully, Manganaro, *Quad. Urb.* 1995, 96–8 with figs 20 and 20bis) which is ceramically difficult to date, but reasonably taken to be of the fifth century by M.; unfortunately it preserves no epichoric peculiarities, since the four-bar sigma and four-stroke mu could scarcely be called such in the fifth century; Manganaro uses a Euboean delta in his reconstruction of the full text, which indeed begs the question. Much the same can be said of the short text on a certainly fifth century Attic lekythos, *ibid.* figs 19–19bis, using tailed rho and four-bar sigma.

Further archaic texts are published by Massimo Frasca, Hera a Leontini, in R. Gigli (ed.), *ΜΕΓΑΛΑΙ ΝΗΣΟΙ. Studi dedicati a Giovanni Rizza per il suo ottantesimo compleanno* (Palermo, 2005) 137–45; they consist of several examples of heta-epsilon on cups and a fragmentary text on the rear of a sima, ῥῆς μν .⁴ Frasca argues reasonably that the abbreviation HE denotes HPHΣ and suggests that she appears also on the sima, HPHΣ MNHMEION (p. 143). There are difficulties with this latter reading. a) There appears no example of the range of words in μνημ- governing the genitive of the deity to whom the offering is made; the genitive is of the person commemorated (though in the unpublished material from the sanctuary of Athena at Ialysos μναμόσυνον governs δεκάτας). b) It is not easy to judge from the photograph, but the loop of the first letter is unusually full for a rho, and eta is not assured for the second (though here the lighting may be responsible for a nu to appear more likely). c) The mu is not of Euboean five-bar type, but its shape points to a date no later than late archaic, and if eta is read, its use as a vowel would be precocious. These considerations make it difficult to accept the whole of the idea that this a local Leontine dedication to Hera, although indeed it is not easy to formulate any other interpretation that covers all the points at issue. The final two letters would normally suggest μ' ἀνέθεκε or the like, and perhaps the preceding letters are a nominative PN in -ης . The cutting of the text on the rear of a sima causes difficulties, however. The remarkable Histrian dedication on a tile (most recently *SEG* 55 (2005) 805) is at least cut on the outer surface.

Therefore the scraps of evidence that we have do not chime in with the record from the other Euboean colonies. Some material from Naxos and Himera does use non-Euboean script, but the features have reasonably be explained as the result of the attested (Himera) or assumed (Naxos) mixed nature of the original population. At Leontini coinage after the Syracusan withdrawal c. 465 displays the official use of the Euboean lambda, and continues to use it perhaps till c. 420. What conservative motives may have operated here it is difficult to judge, but one suspects that, as at Athens, there was an official retention of old forms some time after other lettering had entered into general daily use. At least at Leontini there is material to debate; neighbouring Katane remains a totally unknown quantity.

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⁴ Frasca has . PHE MN . . . N, though the photograph, fig. 6, clearly rules out both ends of this text, unless joining sherds are not there included. I do not here reproduce the photograph since any copy would merely add to the uncertainties in the original.