
Suzanne Frey-Kupper

*Die antiken Fundmünzen vom Monte Iato 1971–1990.
Ein Beitrag zur Geldgeschichte Westsiziliens.*

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text including 80 tables and 120 figures, plus 65 plates
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Most studies of ancient coins have focused on the fine specimens housed in the many collections across the world, and numismatists have in general paid little attention to the low denominations and frequently corroded bronze coins found in excavations. Archeologists, for their part, have most often published coins from excavations as brief, summary lists, except when relying on a coin to date a specific archaeological context. This artificial dichotomy has fortunately begun to break down during recent decades. Suzanne Frey-Kupper's publication is an excellent example. She has successfully integrated specialized numismatic understanding into the overall archaeological and historical analysis.

The study presents and closely analyses the 1425 ancient coins found during excavations at Monte Iato, about 25 km from Palermo, and 20 km north of Entella.¹ It furthermore draws on some 15,000 coins from other sites in Sicily for comparative purposes, not only the important material from Morgantina in inland eastern Sicily, but a wide range of material from minor sites, mainly in western Sicily, which Frey-Kupper has assembled.

The book is three parts. Part I is the main text, to which I will return. Part II consists of two catalogues. The first (pp. 359–465) lists all coins from the site, by mint, date, a description of the types, metal, weight, diameter, degree of wear and corrosion, and reference, making it easy for numismatists to use these materials. The brief introduction to the catalogue describes the strict methodology followed, and gives the information necessary for scholars less familiar with numismatics to be able to use the data. The second catalogue presents and discusses each stratigraphic unit (layer) where one or more coins were found. The stratigraphy, the relationship to architectural remains, as well as the presence of other classes of finds, in particular datable pottery, are considered. For each layer, the coin finds are cross-referenced to the catalogue. Part III (pp. 525–813) comprises six appendices, Italian and English summaries, concordances, the bibliography and rich indexes. Appendixes 1 and 2 provide and discuss data from the comparative sites (stratigraphic contexts and large coin series from sites with known dates of destruction or abandon), and Appendix 3 analyses the geographical distribution of 28 individual coins types. Appendix 4 updates the previously published die

¹ Christian Weiss is preparing a publication of the 570 medieval coins from Monte Iato.

catalogue of Iaitas' "Acheloos / ear of corn and barley-leaf" type.² Appendix 5 gives average weights and standard deviations for more than 47 coin types from better-preserved materials held in museums, and Appendix 6 provides metal analyses. Together, the catalogues and appendices form an extraordinarily large and well-presented data set, which in itself will be an invaluable resource for future studies.

The main text (Part I) is in six chapters. Chapter 1 (pp. 3–8) gives the background, and the aims and methodology of the study. Chapter 2 (pp. 9–12) is a brief introduction to the excavations at Monte Iato, the composition of the coin finds, and the area with finds. Chapter 3 (pp. 13–59) is an extremely rich analysis and interpretation of the coins in their contexts, concentrating on the period after the Second Punic War. It builds on the catalogue of stratigraphic units, and the coin list, and shows a deep understanding of archaeological methodology, which enables Frey-Kupper to draw important chronological conclusions on the sequence and dates of a number of the coin types.

Chapter 4 (pp. 61–307) is by far the longest. It reviews all Greek, Punic and Roman coins from Monte Iato, divided into six main periods. Frey-Kupper analyses each coin type, considering both chronology and distribution. Diagrams and illustrations are of great help to the reader. The discussion is enriched by considering together the evidence from comparative sites and from the excavations on Monte Iato, and a short summary follows the analysis of each chronological period. It is not possible to adequately summarize or even discuss this chapter in detail. Each section is packed with information and acute observations, and several of the sections might easily have been published as independent studies, for example, section 4.2.3. (pp. 80–96 and Appendix 4) on the early coinage of Iaitas, which updates and extends previous studies³.

Chapter 5 investigates the structure of the finds from Monte Iato, in relation to the situation in the comparative sites, and Chapter 6 draws the conclusions, which are largely repeated in the Italian and English summaries.

Most finds date from two distinct periods: the mid-/late fourth to the mid-third centuries, and the second to the late first centuries BC. Frey-Kupper stresses the information that the finds provide on circulation in Sicily, and, in particular, on the role of Punic coinages. She distinguishes Punic coins with regional and supra-regional circulation areas, and combines the numismatic with the ceramic evidence to identify specific, small economic areas. She shows that the provision of Punic bronze coins was usually adequate, and that supply was interrupted only at the time of the Roman conquest. Under Roman rule, Panormos was clearly the most important mint in Western Sicily, and it dominates the finds at Monte Iato, as elsewhere in the region. The much smaller local mint of Iaitas struck some tight series of small denomination bronze coins from a few dies. At Monte Iato, Iaitan coins are second in number to Panormitan coins, though extremely rare

² S. Frey-Kupper, Ein 'neuer' Acheloos der Iaitiner. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der frühen Münzprägung von Iaitas, in: S. Buzzi, D. Käch, E. Kistler, E. Mango, M. Palaczyk and O. Stefani, *Zona archeologica. Festschrift für Hans Peter Isler zum 60. Geburtstag* (Antiquitas, Reihe 3, 43), Bonn 2001, 159–173.

³ See the previous note.

on other sites. The finds testify to the local production and use of the smallest bronze denominations, while larger denominations come from the chief town of the region, and reflect Iaitas' political affiliation. Coins from Rome make never up more than 20% among the finds, and other non-Sicilian coins (Carthage, Malta, Corinth) are extremely rare.

The major part of the numismatic analysis concerns Sicily under the Roman Republic, following the Second Punic War. Frey-Kupper distinguishes three main phases. The first covers the years of the war. The second lasts until the First Servile War. The third runs from the late second century to the end of the Republic. Romano-Sicilian bronze coinages with the names of magistrates in Latin characterize phase 2, while phase 3 sees a shift towards coinages with the ethnic in Greek. There is a particularly important discussion of what Bahrfeldt called the "Romano-Sicilian" series (his Groups 1 and 2)⁴, with the names of Roman magistrates and "Janus/wreath" or "Zeus/warrior" types on the larger denomination, but on local weight standards. Frey-Kupper draws an understanding of the inner chronology of the series, and the location of organization of the coinage, from a close study of the magistrates' names. She demonstrates that the names provide a rare insight into the Roman administration in Sicily, but that we have no information on any of the magistrates in the literary sources. She associates the shift in phase 2, when the coins with Magistrate's names disappear and coins with Greek ethnics appear with administrative changes at the time of Servile Wars. At that period, the local civic administration becomes stronger, as the public building programme at Iaitas shows, with the construction of a new and larger bouleuterion in the agora.

Roman coins of the Early Imperial period are poorly represented, but a close analysis of the find contexts suggests that the local issues continued in circulation (coins of Panormos struck under Augustus and Tiberius, and coins of the later first century issued by other mints) until the destruction of the site in the mid-first century AD.

Frey-Kupper suggests four fields that may prove fertile for future research: a close study on east Sicilian coins, a die study of the Romano-Sicilian issues (which she has already begun), a study of the contrasts between precious metal and bronze coinages, and finally a study of the find gaps. The period between the First and the Second Punic Wars is, for example, one of contraction in general, and a decline in coin use. Frey-Kupper suggests that we should consider these finds gaps as important "hinge periods", rather than "dark ages".

Monte Iato was not a major power in ancient history. However, it is situated at an important crossroads in the central Mediterranean, and it existed in a crucial period of the struggle for Mediterranean supremacy between two great powers, Carthage and Rome, and of the subsequent consolidation of Roman control. *Studia Ietina X* is both a study of the finds from Monte Iato and a "contribution to the monetary history of Western Sicily", as the title states. But it is also an analysis

⁴ M. Bahrfeldt, *Die römisch-sicilischen Münzen aus der Zeit der Republik*, SNR 12, 1904, pp. 331–407, pl. 1–5; M. von Bahrfeldt, *Die römisch-sizilischen Münzen aus der Zeit der Republik. Eine Nachlese*, SNR 24, 1928, 218–232.

of similarities and differences between the eastern and the western parts of the island, and, on another level, these two areas can be studied as examples of the conflict between the two major powers of the Central Mediterranean, between the late 4th and the mid-2nd centuries. The importance of these excavations and of the analysis of the finds therefore reaches much further than merely local history. This work will be of interest to archaeologists and historians alike, studying both Mediterranean cultures in general and the development of Roman institutions, and I highly recommend it. It also forms an important basis for *Historia Numorum*³, *Sicily and Adjacent Islands*, which Frey-Kupper, Keith Rutter and John Morcom are currently preparing. Unfortunately, the monograph is published in German, which may be an obstacle for some scholars, both in the English- and French-speaking worlds and in Italy itself. However, the many analytical presentations will be easily understood by specialists with little or even no knowledge of German, as will the lists of finds, tables and illustrations. Furthermore, Frey-Kupper's text is clear and well structured, and her German is not difficult to read. Finally, the most important aims and results (drawn from chapters 1 and 6) are presented in substantial Italian and English summaries, which are recommended reading, for their own value, as well for an introduction to the work.⁵

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