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THE COINS OF ELIS**

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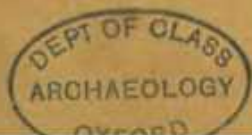
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THE COINS OF ELIS.

BY
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THE COINS OF ELIS.

BY PERCY GARDNER, ESQ., M.A.

THE Editors of the Numismatic Chronicle have allowed me to commence in the present number a series of papers which will occasionally appear, and each of which will deal with the numismatics of some Greek province or island, or some important city. Mr. Poole and Mr. Head have promised sometimes to contribute a paper.

These papers are intended less for the highly skilled in Greek numismatics than for students of history and archaeology generally. At present these are at a great disadvantage. Students of Greek history and Greek art are generally ready to believe that they might obtain real aid from the comparison of coins if they could at their leisure examine and peruse them. But by merely passing in review the trays of a coin-cabinet they do not seem to gain much. Eckhel is, although learned, both out of date and incomplete; Mionnet's descriptions of small value, and his arrangement worthless. Nor can the scattered notices contained in more recent works be brought together without a great expenditure of time and trouble.

In the present set of papers two ideas are predominant. The first is to treat numismatics in strict subordination to history. The history of every community

treated of will be divided into periods, and to each period will be assigned its proper coins. This has already been done by Mr. Head in the case of Syracuse; and it is our purpose to treat other cities upon the same plan, if at less length. The fact is that—thanks especially to the English numismatists, as well as Dr. Imhoof-Blumer and M. Six of Amsterdam—it has during the last few years become possible to determine with far greater precision the dates of coins. We can usually arrange all the series of money issued by a Greek city in chronological sequence without much risk of very serious error, except in details. Thus, for the first time, the history of a city and its coins can be placed, so to speak, in parallel columns, each of which can be called upon to support the other; or, in some cases, the testimony of coins may refute that of the ancient historians; and thus order and system will be brought into the confused chaos of coins cited by Mionnet, and many side-lights will be opened on the connections of cities and provinces.

The second idea is to present to the reader, by means of photographic plates, as exact fac-similes of the coins as possible, in order that the eye may follow the small changes in type and fabric, which to the numismatist are so important. These the most skilled modern artist will fail to seize, and usually, while producing something agreeable in itself, will partly destroy the value and meaning of the coin as a historical witness. Our great difficulty will be in the necessarily narrow limit to the number of plates; but of those limits we will try to make the most.

Our description of coins will not, of course, be limited to the rich cabinets of the British Museum; but when

we know of other important pieces cited elsewhere, they too will be mentioned. At the same time completeness from the numismatist's point of view is less an object than to form a rational scheme or pedigree of the successive coinages of a city, into which scheme coins published in the past or to be discovered in future will naturally fit. It has also been thought well not to exclude the Imperial coinage. In the series issued by Roman emperors at the various Greek cities we often find types of great interest to the artist and historian, and sometimes inscriptions of considerable importance. In a word, the papers will be like chapters of Eckhel, but brought to the level of modern knowledge, and illustrated by plates.

Of course we lay no claim to infallibility. In the classing of individual coins there are many causes, such as bad preservation of specimens or false analogies, which may lead us astray. Whole classes we may sometimes place under the wrong period. All we hope is to secure, on the whole, an advance on what has gone before in the case of each city which we discuss; and to afford a safe platform from which future writers may take their start in attempting to improve on our work in its turn.

ELIS.

The first district which I propose to discuss is the interesting one of Elis; of which the coins are in beauty and variety not inferior to any in Greece.

Combining the statements of historians with the results of numismatic study, I would propose to divide the

history of Elis in ancient times into the following fifteen periods:—

I. Before about B.C. 471.	Aristocracy; Spartan alliance.
II. B.C. 471—421.	Democracy; Spartan alliance.
III. B.C. 421—about 400.	Argive alliance.
IV. B.C. about 400—365.	Spartan and Theban alliances.
V. B.C. 365—362.	War with Arcadians.
	Coins of Pisa.
VI. B.C. 362—348.	Spartan alliance.
VII. B.C. 348—328.	Macedonian alliance.
VIII. B.C. 328—312.	Dependence on Macedon.
IX. B.C. 312.	Telesphorus.
X. B.C. 312—271.	Precarious autonomy.
XI. B.C. about 271.	Aristotimus.
XII. B.C. 271—191.	Tyrants; Aetolian alliance.
XIII. B.C. 191—146.	Achaean alliance.
XIV. B.C. 146—48.	Under the Romans.
XV. B.C. 48—217 A.D.	Imperial coinage.

PERIOD I.—BEFORE B.C. 471.

According to Greek belief the earliest inhabitants of Elis were of a race kindred to the Aetolian. The chief city of the district was Pisa, which lay close to the sanctuary of the Olympic Zeus. Olympia and Pisa had from the earliest times been connected together in myth and history. Both were concerned with the story which attributed the foundation of the Olympic festival to Heracles; and when Pelops came to the country which was to bear his name, he found Oenomaüs, King of Pisa, as supreme ruler in the district. In the chariot-race of Pelops and Oenomaüs we may see the foreshadowing of future Olympian contests.

To Pisa, then, at an early period, belonged the cult of the Olympian Zeus, and the right of presiding at the games which the Greeks traced back far beyond the first his-

torical Olympiad into the mist of the past. It was variously said that the gods had contended at the first celebration of the festival ; or that Heracles had won in every competition.

When the Dorians invaded Peloponnese they assigned the district of Elis to Oxylus and his Aetolians. He was said to be of kindred race with the people ; nevertheless, there seems to have been constant feud between Pisa, which appears to have continued as the ancient capital of the district, and the new city, or rather fortress, of Elis, fortified by Oxylus at a considerable distance to the north of Olympia, at the spot where the Peneius breaks forth from the Arcadian hills.

When the invaders had attained a sure footing in Elis, they soon managed to secure to themselves the presidency of the Olympic games ; and under their presidency the games gained wider and wider fame, until they were one of the chief bonds which held Hellas together, and until the great deity of Olympia was recognised as the father of the gods and of Hellenic men.

Thrice did the people of Pisa, profiting by their nearness to Olympia, and the necessities of the Eleans, succeed in wresting from them for a short time the coveted presidency : once when they were supported by the powerful Pheidon of Argos ; and once when the Spartans, the close allies of the Eleans, were occupied with the second Messenian war. Of the third occasion I shall have to speak presently. But the Eleans gained the upper hand more and more, and about the 52nd Olympiad, Pisa was finally worsted, and disappears from history for the time.

From this period (B.C. 570) dates the prosperity of the people of Elis. Their stronghold was on the banks of the Peneius, but the people were spread by villages and farms

over the fertile plain, and led a country life, rich in flocks, herds, and corn-fields. The government was an aristocracy, as usually happened in the plains of Greece; the country was quiet and wealthy, and regarded by all Greece as sacred to the deity of Olympus, so that it escaped for ages all hostile ravages.

The next landmark offered us is afforded in or about the year B.C. 471, when the constitution of the country was modified in a democratic direction, and the inhabitants of several villages drawn together to people a new city on the slopes below the old Acropolis on the Peneius, which, however, was still maintained as a fortress. Curtius reckons the settling of the new Elis as one of the most important of Greek establishments, and a landmark in Peloponnesian history.

Before the building of new Elis the Eleans had begun to strike coins. Of these there is no class with the mere punch-mark on the reverse; indeed, there is no class which we can with confidence assign to the period before the Persian wars. Elis was behind Argos and Sicyon in the adoption of a coinage. But there are a few pieces in a thoroughly archaic style, which we may give to the period B.C. 500—471.

As the land of Elis was sacred to Zeus, and derived its honour from its close connection with the Olympic festival, so every piece of money the Eleans issued in early times bore the effigy or the symbols of their Zeus, and contained allusions to the games.

Professor Curtius remarks, with complete justice, that Zeus was worshipped at Olympia under a twofold aspect: first, as god of sky and weather, under which aspect he received the epithets *ἑτίος* and *καταβάτης*; secondly, as the lord and giver of victory.