STELLAR SYMBOLS
ON ANCIENT GREEK COINS (II)

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Abstract. Continuing the systematic presentation and description of some ancient Greek coins with stellar symbols we represent some with other deities, than these presented at Part I, together with semi-gods, etc. as well as those with animals and objects. Besides, information about the place they were found, the material they are made of as well as the estimated time is also given. Finally, in some cases the Museum in which they are kept is provided.

Key words: Ancient Greek coins – ancient Greek cities – ancient Greek colonies – myths – stellar symbols.

1. PROLOGUE

In a previous paper, (Rovithis-Livaniou & Rovithis 2011; hereafter refer as Paper I), a systematic presentation of ancient Greek coins with stellar symbols started. In that paper, the principles as well as the basic elements concerning the numismatic system of the ancient Greek cities-countries were also given. So, we do not repeat them here.

In Paper I, we limited to the coins where the main gods/goddesses of the Greek Dodekatheon were presented on observe, combined with various themes on reverse, but always showing a stellar symbol on either side. Besides, in Paper I the god-Helios was included together with Apollo who took his place as god of the light. Furthermore, some coins with Dioskouroi were included in Paper I; but, as only those in which one of the main gods/goddesses was the basic subject, we shall complete their presentation here.

Moreover, in the present paper, we shall continue showing and describing coins where other gods/goddesses, semi-gods, nymphs, satyrs, heroes, animals and objects are combined with a stellar symbol limited again to Greek coins only. Besides, a short description for them will be given, since some are not widely known.
According to the subject we have divided the coins in six main categories as well as to some sub-categories, starting from those presented gods/goddesses other than these included in the Greek Dodekatheon.

2. GODS, SEMI-GODS AND HEROES

2.1. THE GODDESSES KYBELE, NIKE AND TYCHE

In Fig. 1 coins of the Mother goddess Kybele Κυβέλη[1] and goddess Nike Νίκη[2] are shown. The goddess Tyche Τύχη[3] is shown in the coins in Fig. 2.

![Figure 1](image1)

Fig. 1 – a: Coin of 1st century BC from Pessinos, Galatia[3], Attis with Phrygian cap and Kybele-Adgitis wearing crown / Lion seated, caps of Dioskouroi with stars above; b: Stater of (322–313) BC from Kyrene, Kyrenaika; Nike driving quadriga, sun above & ΚΥΡΑΝΑΙΩΝ in Greek / Zeus seating holding his eagle & ΧΑΙΡΙΟΣ (magistrate) in Greek; c: Head of Zeus / Nike placing a wreath on a trophy, sun/star; d: Coin of 2nd–1st century BC from Philomelion, Pontus, Winged Nike / Two cornucopia[4] crossed, thunderbolt between them, star inside crescent Moon (Pontiac Royal symbol), ΦΙΛΟΜΗΛ[E] above in Greek for city’s name & MEN-EMA below.

![Figure 2](image2)

Fig. 2 – a: Coin from Soloi, Kilikia[6], 2nd century BC, imperial times, Tyche / caps of Dioskouroi & stars; b & c: Coins from Silandos, Lydia[7], Head of Tyche with crown, CIAAN-ΔΟC / Star within crescent Moon, CIAAN-AΕΙΝ; b: (193–217) AD, c: (218–222) AD.

2.2. THE GODS PAN, GLAYKOS AND PRIAPOS

The god Pan, Παν[8] is shown on the observe side of the coin of Fig.3a. On the other hand, the sea god Glaukos Γλαύκος, appear on the observe side of the silver staters from the ancient city of Ίτανος Itanos, at Crete combined with the sun or a star on reverse (Fig.3c), while the god Priapos Πρίαπος[9] is shown on Fig. 3d.
In Greek mythology there are many semi-gods and heroes, but only a few were too famous to be represented on ancient coins. Besides, those combined with stellar symbols are even less. Perseus, Hercules, and Dioskouroi seem to be mostly preferred. As they came from the same royal family, and travelled a lot, we find them a) to be together on some coins, and b) to decorate the coins of various parts of Greece and Greek colonies.

There are coins, for example, on which Perseus’s or Hercules’s head is presented on one side and Dioskouroi’s heads, or only their hats, on the other. In the first three coins of Fig. 4 Dioskouroi’s heads wearing their hats are shown, while in the rest only their hats are represented. In all cases a star is above each hat; for this, we don’t repeat it in legends.

Similarly, Dioskouroi’s hats with stars above each are shown in Fig. 5.
Fig. 5 – a: Coin from Argos, Peloponnesus, Forepart of wolf / large A & symbols in incuse square, Dioskouroi’s caps; b: Coin of 3rd–2nd century BC from Synnada, Phrygia[13]; c: Coin of 189 BC from Tenedos, Male (laureate) & female heads / Labris, i.e. double axe, grapes, Dioskouroi’s caps & ΤΕΝΕ∆ΙΩΝ in Greek; d&e: Coins of 2nd & 1st century BC from Dioskourias, Kolchis, [ΔΙΟΣ]ΚΟΥ [ΠΙΑ] / Δ-ΟΣ & ΔΙΟΣΚΟΥΡΙΑ∆ΟΣ in Greek, (Odessa Numismatic Museum).

The head of hero Perseus is shown on observe sides of the coins of Fig. 6. In most of them a cornucopia and Dioskouroi’s hats with stars above are shown on reverse.

Fig. 6. a: Tetra-drachma of the king Philip V[14], Macedonia, Perseus’s head in the middle of Macedonian shield, stars & crescents / Hercules club & ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ in Greek; b & c: Coin of (125–100) BC from Amisos, Pontus, ΑΜΙ-ΣΟΥ in Greek; d: Coin of (120–100) BC from Amaseia, Pontus, ΑΜΑΣ-ΣΕΙΑΣ in Greek; e: Coin from Amaseia, Pontus, (120–63) BC, Wing head of hero Perseus / Cornucopia between Dioskouroi’s hats, ΑΜΑΣ-ΣΕΙΑΣ in Greek.

As regards the semi-god Hercules, he was son of Zeus and Alkmene. The latter was wife of Amphitrion, but Zeus who loved her was transformed and taking her husband’s features managed to have a sexual affair with her. According to the Greek mythology Alkmene was granddaughter of the mythic hero Perseus. Thus, Hercules supposed to have double deism origin, since Perseus was Zeus’s son, too.

In Figs. 7 and 8 we can see Hercules as he is presented on some coins. On these only his head is represented, and as it is with lion’s skin in most of the cases, we do not repeat it in the legends.

Fig. 7 – a: Silver drachma of (350–336) BC, Philip II[15] of Macedonia, Hercules’s head / Horseman on horse back, crescent Moon & ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ in Greek; b: Coin of King Kassandros, Macedonia Hercules’s head / Horsemans on horse back, star & ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΚΑΣΣΑΝ∆ΟΥ, star & monogram; c: Coin from Teate, Apulia, (225–200) BC, Head of Hercules / Lion walking, crescent Moon above its head, club above lion & ΤΙΑΤΙ above club for the city’s name in Greek; d&e: Obol from Laranda, Lycaonia[14], 4th century BC, Hercules and forepart of wolf with a star.
Another mythic hero was Taras, Τάρας[18], the founder of the homonymous city in Italy, (e.g. Pausanias, Strabon). In some coins of the city his myth is shown (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9 – a: Coin of (333–330) BC from Taras, Nude warrior on horse, Τ/Λ / Hero Taras on dolphin, looking right, star on each side; b & c: Coins of (281–272) BC from Taras, Nude youth on horse, legend ΞΩ/ ΝΕΥ-ΜΗ / Hero Taras on dolphin, looking left, stars on each side, ΤΑΡΑΣ below, ΑΡΙ up in Greek; d: Coin of (281–272) BC from Taras, Helmeted warrior on horse holding shield with 8-rays star / Hero Taras on dolphin holding branch of grapes.

3. KABEIROI, SATYRS AND NYMPHS

According to mythology Kabeiroi were deities or daemons related to mystery worship that came to Greece from East. There, it was combined with other mystery worships like these of Demeter, Hermes or Dionysus; thus, in some cases the two male deities were identified with Hermes & Dionysus and the two females with Demeter & her daughter Persephone. At the island of Lesvos they were connected with god Hephaestus, while at Samothrace the famous Kabeirian mysteries were carried out.

Fig. 10 – a: Silver obol from Biryts, Troas[19], 4th century BC; Head of Kabeiros with hat and two stars / Club within laurel wreath & B I/P Y in Greek for city’s name; b: Elektron hekte[20] of (377–326) BC from Mytilene, Kabeiros head with wreathed cap & two flanking stars / Head of Persephone; c: Silver obol from Biryts (350–300) BC, Head of Hercules / Head of Kabeiros, stars.
On the other hand, the satyrs, Fig. 11a, were mountains’ and forests’ daemons, with animal characteristics and brutal behaviour. It is supposed that they were brothers of the nymphs or children of Hermes, although there are various acceptations concerning their mother. The nymphs were lower female deities representing the mountains’, forests’, areas’, lakes’, or even simple trees’ forces. They were daughters of some of the main gods with who had good relations, while they avoided satyrs who annoyed them sexually. In Fig. 11 b, c, d we can see some of them.

![Fig. 11](image)

Some others, well known or not, nymphs are shown in Fig. 12.

![Fig. 12](image)

4. VARIOUS MALES AND FEMALES

Except the coins shown so far – where gods, semi-gods or heroes were presented – there are others where one can see some known kings, as are the coins of Fig. 13. There, king Evagoras II head with Persian tiara from the city of Salamis[26], Cyprus, is shown, (Figs. 13 a,b and c), while the Macedonian king Philip V is presented in Fig. 13d.
Other known or unknown males or females combined with a stellar symbol can be seen in Figs. 14 and 15.

**5. MONSTERS AND ANIMALS COMBINED WITH STELLAR SYMBOLS**

According to in the Greek mythology Medusa was one of the 3 gorgons. She was beheaded by Perseus, and her head, the so called Τοπύοιοε Ιούοιον, appears combined either with the sun/star, or with a cow and a star below it, on some coins from Πάριον (Fig. 16 a&b). The other coins of Fig. 16 show the sea Monster, known as Cetus, and the Griffin; while, Capricorn is shown in Fig. 17e together with Scorpio.
Concerning animals, *lions* and *bull/cows* are those mostly used on ancient coins. On some of the oldest coins of Miletus, and other *cities-countries* the *lion/sun* (or *lion/star*) combinations are found. We have already shown some of these coins in Paper I, as the *lion* was combined in many cases with god *Apollo*. Here, in Fig. 17a, b, c & d we present some other coins where *lion*’s head is the main subject.

On the other hand, there is many *bull/star*, or even *Taurus/star* combinations, some of which are shown in Fig. 18.

In Fig. 19 the *bull/sun*, *bull/star* or *bull/god-Helios* are shown.
Moreover, *Sirius, i.e. the dog of Orion or Ikarios*, was shown on the bronze coins of the island of Kea with radiated head (Fig. 20a). In the same figure, we can see *sea turtles* combined with symbols similar to *crescent Moon*, as well as other animals like *dolphins* or *wolfs*.

The animal/stellar symbols combination continues with the coins of Figs. 21 and 22.
5.1. ANIMALS AND DOUBLE STAR COMBINATION

On the coins of Corfu and of some ancient Greek cities in Illyria, as Epidamnos\textsuperscript{33} and Apollonia\textsuperscript{34}, we see the same astronomical symbol on reverse consisting of a double star (Figs. 23 and 24).

All of these coins represent on observe a small calf nursing from a cow. Besides, in most of the cases there are also legends in Greek, denoting the name of the city, and magistrate’s name. So, we can read: ΜΕΝΙΣΚΟΣ, ΞΕΝΩΝ, ΝΙΚΩΝ etc. on observe and ∆ΥΡΡΑΧΙΟΝ, or simply ∆ΥΡ, or ΑΠΟ-[-?]ΤΟ-ΒΟΥΛΟ, K-O etc. on reverse together with the double star symbol.
6. SUN, MOON AND STARS WITH OTHER COMBINATIONS

It seems that the use of the sun/star and crescent Moon was quite popular as we find it combined with many objects of every day’s life as seen in Fig. 25 and Fig. 26. In the first four coins of Fig. 25 a typical amphora/star combination is shown, while in the last one, the cantharos/cantharos, κάνθαρος, with two stars (Fig. 25e).

![Fig. 25](image)

In Fig. 26, on the other hand, we see two staters from the island of Melos, where the city’s symbol, i.e. an apple, because apple = μήλο in Greek, is combined with: a) the crescent Moon, with the word ΜΑΙΟΝ in Greek to denote the island’s name: ΜΗΛΙΩΝ, since it is well known that the Dorian’s, used $\Lambda$ instead of $H$; b) a star formed by 4 grains of wheat. Similarly, in Fig. 26c, three grains of barley are combined with the radiated head of god-Helios, while in Fig. 26d, e a star is combined with a tripod and a bow case, respectively.

![Fig. 26](image)

Moreover, on some coins from Boiotia and Thessaly the famous Thessalian shields are represented, as is shown in Fig. 27.
Similarly, some Macedonian coins represent the Macedonian shields. They have rich decoration with stars and crescents, as we’ve already shown in Fig.3b and Fig.6a, and various themes at centre. Similar coins issued when Macedonia had become Roman province.

Besides, except the apple we show on the coins from Melos, other local fruits were chosen to be the subject for the coins of other cities-countries, as these of Fig. 29a,b. In the same figure, two more coins with astronomical symbols on both sides are also exhibited.
7. DISCUSSION

In this second part, Part II, of our work about ancient coins with stellar symbols, we started with these representing some other gods than those of the Greek Dodekatheon. So, we show coins with the goddesses Kybele, Tyche, and Nike. Coins with the latter goddess had been also presented in Paper I, too, as Nike is usually shown flying and crowing many persons, as is shown for example in Fig. 12b here. Besides, some coins of the gods Pan, Glaukos and Priapos were presented, too.

Moreover, coins with semi-gods, Kabeiroi, Satyrs, Nymphs, heroes as well as some other males or females were shown, too. Since, the well-known heroes combined with a stellar symbol were also semi-gods, as sons of gods, and since some of them – like Perseus, Dioskouroi, and Hercules – had familiar connections they were combined together in some coins. So, we show coins with Perseus’s head on observe and the hat’s of Dioskouroi with stars above on reverse. The head of hero Perseus is also shown in some coins representing the Macedonian shield, especially on coins of Philip V, and his son Perseus. The latter was the last king of Macedonia before the Roman conquest. It is pointed out that the Macedonian kings like very much stellar symbols, and especially the star, as we find it not only on their coins, but on others objects (e.g. the 16-rays star, Vergina’s Sun, decorated the king’s Philip II burial larnax). As regards Hercules, we had shown him in some coins of Paper I, too, together with his father Zeus. Here, we saw him on the coins of various places, as he is usually presented, i.e. wearing the lion’s skin, and combined with diverse of themes. For example, in Fig. 8c,d he was combined with the royal Pontic symbol, i.e. a star within a crescent Moon. This symbol is found in many other coins; we’ve seen it in Part I, and will be presented in the following Parts.

Concerning the monsters Medusa and Cetus they related the first to the myth of Perseus and the second to Perseus, and Hercules. The mythic Griffin, on the other hand, originated at the Middle East, used mainly as decoration, (see for example pictures from Knossos Palace), and became universal. Finally, as regards Capricorn that is not a monster, but a Zodiac sign, it appeared together with another Zodiac sign: Scorpio. The coin shown here, dated 27 BC, is from Cyprus; but, there is another very similar, dated 70 AD, from Cammagene, Arsameia.
Furthermore, some *animals* are found on ancient Greek coins together with a *stellar symbol*, where in some cases the animal was the «talking symbol» of the city. For example, the symbol of Αιγαί, *Aigai*, in Macedonia was a *goat*, because the Greek word αίγα means *goat*. On the other hand, *lion*, being the king of animals and declared strength, was used as symbol on the coins of many ancient cities probably to denote their power. So, except the first gold coins of Lydia, where *lion* was presented on their observe side, *lion* was also the symbol of Miletus, Pantikapeion, and other ancient Greek cities. So, we had seen *lion* in Paper I, too, because it was combined with god *Apollo*; while here, we show the coins in which *lion* was the main subject presented on their observed sides. Other animals often used are *bulls*. Very probably because *bull* is the strongest among the domestic as *lion* is the strongest among wild animals. Besides, as *Lion*, *Taurus*, *Ram*, *Capricorn*, and *Scorpio* belong to the Zodiac signs one could result that because of this fact they are combined with a *star*. But, what can somebody suppose for the *double stellar symbol* shown in some coins? As it was shown here, this *double stellar symbol* appears in the coins of some Greek colonies at Illyria, like Epidamnos (Dyrrachion), and Apollonia, as well as at the island of Corfu, which is opposite them in the Ionian Sea. Similarly, another question put in Paper I, and concerns the presence of a *star* or *crescent Moon* below an animal can be put here, too.

On the other hand, except of mythical, wild or domestic animals we saw here coins with some *fruits*, *grains* of wheat and barley etc, as well as objects like *amphora*, *tripod* etc, all taken from every day life. The imagination and capability of the craftsmen together with the development of tools made these coins really *pieces of art* with their fine and rich decoration. The simple and frugal coins from Boiotia representing the *Thessalian shields* can be equally competed to the richly decorated ones shown the *Macedonian shields*, because both are real and fantastic. Many other coins similar to these presented there exist, too; but, it was impossible to show all of them here. The interested reader can find them either in the various Museum collections, or in the internet cites of their cities-countries, or areas.

Finally, there are others coins representing a *stellar symbol*, too. Such are some coins from Armenia, Syria, Egypt as well as some Roman and Chinese coins. These, are out of the scope of the present communication but can be the theme of another publication.

**REFERENCES**

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Παπακυριάκου-Αναγνώστου Ελ.: Νομίσµατα του Άργους, html, in Greek language.
APPENDIX

Short information is given here, for a) general help and b) quick and easy localization of the places where Greek colonies had been established in antiquity.

[1] Κυβέλη, Kybele, known with many other names, was worshiped mainly at Phrygia, in Asia Minor. She was considered similar to Rea, because of which she was called the Great Mother. She was the goddess of the wild nature and its producing forces. Her name is related to Agdistis and the semi-deity Attis; while, her priests were supposed to be eunuchs, because Attis castrated. Kybele was followed by the Corybantes and it was said that she discovered the drums and cymbals they play following her. Main place for her worship was Pessinos, a city close to the river Saggarious, while other temples for her were in many other cities of Asia Minor. From there her worship transferred to Thrace, and then to the main Greece. Later, Kybele and Attis were worshiped at Rome, too.

[2] Νίκη, Nike: Ancient Greek goddess before the Olympians. It is supposed to be daughter of Styga and titan Palas. When Zeus won titans she moved to his side. She is also referred as co-player to Athena, and later she was identified with her. Originally she was represented without wings.

[3] Τυχή, Tyche: The Greek deity that governed the fortune, mainly of a city. For this, in her personalization was represented with a crown that reminded the walls of a city. She was considered as daughter of Hermes and Aphrodite, or Oceanus and Tethys, or even of Zeus.


[5] Cornucopia: So it is called Amaltheia’s horn.


[8] Παν, Pan: Ancient agricultural god native of Arcadia. He was ugly with his horns and his she-goat horns. According to Greek mythology Pan was god Hermes’s son, but we are not sure who his mother really was. It was considered to be shepherd and hunter but also teacher of divination, and soothsayer. Besides, he liked to move from hill to hill playing his flute.

[9] Πρίαπος, Priapos: God of fertility whose worship started from the city of Lampsakos at Hellispodus, and it was later extended to the main Greece and especially at Argos. He was worshiped at gardens and yards, and his statues were scarecrows.


[12] Bruttium: So it was named in antiquity the Calabria in southern Italy.


[14] Philip V, Φίλιππος Ε': King of Macedonia. Father of Perseus, the last king of Macedonia before the Roman conquest.

[15] Philip II, Φίλιππος Β': King of Macedonia and Alexander’s the Great father. His race horses
won at the Olympic Games of 356 BC. For this reason, he issued coins showing a horse like this presented here, or included in Rezhantsi treasure at Bulgaria.

[16] **Ionia:** Central part of W coasts of Asia Minor.

[17] **Kappadokia:** Central west part of Asia Minor.

[18] **Τόρας, Ταράς:** According to the Greek mythology, Taras was son of the god Poseidon, and the nymph Sisyraia or Satyra. While Taras was sailing, he was ship-wrecked and he saved by Poseidon, who sent a dolphin to carry him in the coast. There, Taras established the colony which named after him.

[19] **Troas:** N-W part of Asia Minor, at Hellespont.

[20] **Hekte, Ἑκτή:** Coin valued 1/6 of stater.

[21] **Terre, Τερρίνα:** Nymph of the Greek mythology from which the homonymous ancient Greek colony, at the West coasts of Italy was named. She was one of Naiads loved by god Ares.

[22] **Triskeles:** The consisting of 3 members. From the Greek words τρία =3 & σκέλος=foot, member, part.

[23] **Ἀρέθουσα, Ἀρέθους:** Nymph of the springs and forests, daughter of the old god of sea Nereus and Doris according to Greek mythology. The Peloponnesian god-river Alfeios loved her; so, goddess Artemis helped her, transforming her to fountain and putting her at Syracuse, Sicily. Then, Alfeios became an underwater river and crossing the between Peloponnesus and Sicily sea joined his waters with those of his beloved. This myth tries to explain the same name given to two springs and the «sweet» water stream there exists in the sea outside Syracuse.

[24] **Σατύρα, Σατύρα:** Nymph from which the ancient Greek colony Σατύριον, Satyrion at Calabria was named. It is also supposed to be protector of the city and hero’s Taras mother.

[25] **Hestiaia, Ἡστιαία:** Nymph from which the ancient Greek city Ἡστιαία, Histiaia was named. According to mythology she was Yriea’s and Alcyone’s daughter. Yrieas was son of Poseidon.

[26] **Salamis:** City on the East coasts of the island of Cyprus.

[27] **Ariadne, Αριάδνη:** King’s Minus of Knossos, Crete, and Pasiphae’s daughter. She gave to Theseus the ball of thread to find his way out from Labyrinth, after killing Minotaurus.

[28] **Pasiphae, Πασιφάη:** Wife of King Minus of Knossos, Crete.

[29] **Bithynia:** N-W coasts of Asia Minor.

[30] **Sinope, Σινώπη:** Nymph from which the ancient Greek colony Sinope at Black Sea was named. According to mythology she was river Asopus daughter.

[31] **Magnesia ad Maender:** So it was called the Greek colony at Ionia founded by Cretan and Magnes from Thessaly to distinguish it from the Lydian homonymous city (Magnesia ad Sipy lum).

[32] **Pisidia:** South central part of Asia Minor (far from the coast).

[33] **Epidamnos, Ἐπίδαµνος:** Greek colony, established by Corinthians and people from Corfu at the Illyrian coasts in the 7th century BC. The Roman Dyrrachion, Δυρράχιον. During the Roman Empire it was an important centre for goods and people transportation from Italy to Illyria, and then via Egnatia road to Macedonia and Thrace.

[34] **Apollonia, Ἀπόλλωνια:** Name of many Greek cities and colonies, which named so after god Apollo. This Apollonia at the Illyrian coast was founded by colonists from Corinth and Corfu around 600 BC.

[35] **Κάνθαρος, cantharus:** Type of amphor