

Romanization at Paestum in the 3rd c. B.C.: a note on the chronology of the ΠAISTANO coins and the interpretation of the wall-paintings from the Spinazzo cemetery

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In 1954 a cemetery was discovered in *loc.* Spinazzo, some 100 m southeast of Paestum. The area had been known archaeologically only from a few sporadic finds,¹ among them a triple disc breastplate recovered in the mid-19th c.² and a painted chamber tomb (now known only from the drawings made at the time of the discovery³), but the excavations in 1954 and again in 1972-73 brought to light more than 170 tombs. The majority are dated in the 4th and early 3rd c. B.C. Among them are 10 chamber tombs, of which 6 are adorned with wall-paintings.

The painted tombs quickly became known, first in short notices,⁴ later in relation to discussions of social changes in Poseidonia/Paestum from the late 5th to the early 3rd c.⁵ In the initial notes, M. Napoli (cf. n.4 *infra*) dated them in the period 280-260 — i.e., around or shortly after the date of the establishment of the Roman *colonia* in 273. Pontrandolfo (1979), however, dated the painted tombs in the first quarter of the 3rd c., regarding them as the latest Lucanian élite burials of the city. In 1983, Pontrandolfo discussed her dating of the chamber tombs more explicitly in an article dealing with ΠAISTANO coin issues found in tombs 11 and 29 at the Spinazzo cemetery in 1972 and in tombs 52 and 58 of the neighbouring Santa Venera cemetery in 1976.

The ΠAISTANO coins

M. H. Crawford (1973) believed the ΠAISTANO issue (head of Poseidon r./dolphin rider l., below ΠAISTANO) to be the first Roman issue of the newly founded *colonia*, and suggested that it should be dated to the time of the First Punic War (264-241). Crawford admitted there was no “decisive evidence for this date. Certainly the coinage may in principle antedate the foundation of the Roman colony of Paestum in 273”, but he pointed to close stylistic affinities with the coinage of Pyrrhus. For the absolute chronology of the 3rd-c. bronze issues of Poseidonia/Paestum, Crawford based himself on the (now generally-accepted) absolute chronology of the Roman Republican coinage developed by himself (1974).

Pontrandolfo, on the other hand, argued (1983) that the ΠAISTANO issues started before 280. Her main argument was the context of the ΠAISTANO coins found in one of the 4 tombs mentioned above — tomb 58 of the Santa Venera cemetery. The roof of the chamber tomb had fallen in, but the tomb seemed otherwise undisturbed. It was possible to distinguish two burials in the chamber. The one to the right of the door produced only pottery and terracottas, while the one to the left produced pottery, a silver *fibula*, and a total of 10 coins: 1 silver coin of Velia, 3 coins (1 silver, 2 bronze) of Neapolis, and 6 from Paestum, all the ΠAISTANO issue. The coins were found in a corner together with 5 vases, and had evidently been placed in one of them.⁶

1 E. Greco, A. Stazio and G. Vallet, *Paestum, Città e territorio nelle colonie greche d'Occidente I* (Taranto 1987) 39-40 no. 59.

2 *BollArchNap* n.s. 4 (1854) 177; cf. also A. Bottini (ed.), *Armi. Gli strumenti di guerra in Lucania* (Bari 1993) 172.

3 References in Pontrandolfo 1983, n.83.

4 *Atti Taranto* (1972) 300-3 and tav. XII-XVI; *Atti Taranto* (1973) 360-61 and 365-69, tav. LVI.1 and LXII-LXIII.

5 Pontrandolfo 1979.

6 Pontrandolfo 1983, tav. VIII, nos. 6-21; Prisco 1995, 260.