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Issue

Journal/Yearbook

Volume

Issue

Page

GO

Volume 142, Issue 1

ISSUES

☐ VOLUME 162 (2018)

Issue 1 (May 2018) , pp. 1-187

☐ VOLUME 161 (2017)

Issue 2 (Nov 2017) , pp. 187-353

Issue 1 (May 2017) , pp. 1-186

☐ VOLUME 160 (2016)

Issue 2 (Nov 2016) , pp. 185-378

Issue 1 (Jun 2016) , pp. 1-184

☐ VOLUME 159 (2015)

Issue 2 (Nov 2015) , pp. 197-369

Issue 1 (Jun 2015) , pp. 1-195

☐ VOLUME 158 (2014)

Issue 2 (Nov 2014) , pp. 216-373

[< Previous Article](#) [Next Article >](#)

ONOMASTICS AND RIVER-GODS IN SICILY

JAIME □. CURBERA

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JAIME B. CURBERA

ONOMASTICS AND RIVER-GODS IN SICILY¹

Documentation of Sicilian river-worship is found in short passages of Cicero (Verr. IV 96) and Aelian (V.H. II 33), on the coins of many Sicilian cities, and also in personal names. While the images of the coins have been the object of several studies², the only composite study of the names is a half page written in 1912 by Ernst Sittig³. The present paper is intended to be an up-to-date treatment on this subject, correcting the errors and omissions of Sittig and including the new material discovered after 1912. The first part is a study of every one of these names. In the second part I intend to discuss the meaning these names had in Sicily and, whenever possible, to use this onomastic evidence to extend our knowledge of the river-worship in Sicily.

I

1. The Ἐλάωρος (today's Tellaro) is the most highly praised Sicilian river in ancient times⁴. According to Hesychius, near its shores a Ἐλώριος ἄγών was celebrated⁵. It is

¹ The present paper was the topic of a seminary given in the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa in April 1995 by invitation of G. Nenci.

² F. Imhoff-Blamer, *Fluß- und Meerergötter auf griechischen und römischen Münzen*, SNR 23 (1923) esp. 187-215; L. Lacroix, *Fleuves et nymphes éponymes sur les monnaies grecques*, R. Belg. Num. 99 (1953) 5-21; C. Weiss, *Griechische Flußgottheiten in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (Würzburg 1984).

³ E. Sittig, *De Graecorum nominibus theophris* (Halle 1912 - Chicago 1981) 138. Sittig only mentions the names Ἐλάωρος (see § 1), Ἀνακτίος (see § 5) and Ἀδρανόδοκος (see § 7). On Sittig's book, see the judgement of U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Der Glaube der Hellenen II* (Berlin 1931) 99 n. 2: „Die treffliche Dissertation von Sittig ist auch nach dieser Seite eine höchst fördernde Vorarbeit, obgleich sie wesentlich die formale Seite im Auge hat.“

⁴ Pind. Nem. 9, 40, Verg. Aen. III 698, etc. (see K. Ziegler in RE VIII, 1 [1913] 199). The names Ἐλάωρος, Ἐλώριος, etc. are written either with or without aspiration, although the forms without aspiration prevail in Greek, while the form *Helorus* is more frequent in Latin. The same phenomenon has been observed in other Sicilian toponyms (cf. Ἐρνα/*Henna*), so that I will write, in Greek, Ἐλάωρος and Ἐλώριος. According to U. Sicca, *Grammatica delle iscrizioni doriche della Sicilia* (Arpino 1924) 65-9, the breathing of these words was closer to the weak Latin aspiration (h) than to the Greek breath.

⁵ It is tempting to think that this local ἄγών was in some way related to the hero Ἐλάωρος, the son of the river Istrus, who fought in Pergamum in the side of Telephus and who was killed by Ajax Telamonius (Philostratus, *Her.* II 15-6; Tzetzes, *Antehom.* 274, *Posthom.* 555). We may imagine a story similar to that of the Lycian king Glaucus, killed in Troy by Ajax and buried in Lycia at the springs of the river Glaucus (Q. Smyrn. IV 4-12).

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