

MALTESE COINS OF THE ROMAN PERIOD

BY
EDWARD COLEIRO

REPRINTED FROM THE
"NUMISMATIC CHRONICLE"
SEVENTH SERIES, VOL. XI
1971

Maltese Coins of the Roman Period¹

EDWARD COLEIRO

[SEE PLATES 15-16]

MALTA began to coin its own money before the end of the Second Punic War, at the beginning of which she had become Roman territory. Theoretically, the highest possible date would be 218 B.C. when the Roman army occupied Malta; more likely it would be c. 212 B.C. when Sicily became a Roman province, Malta was incorporated into it, and Rome gave the Sicilian municipia the right to coin their own money.² This coinage ends more or less at the end of the first century B.C. when the Sicilian towns, of which Malta was one and to which it must have been in many ways a parallel, on orders from Rome stopped coining money. And, indeed, towards the end of the last century B.C. it must have become more convenient for Mediterranean commerce that the Roman municipia, the Sicilian and the Maltese included, should make use of Roman metropolitan coinage rather than of their own.³

¹ Since the sixteenth century a considerable number of works have been published on Maltese coins, Cfr. O. Bress, *Malta Antica Illustrata*, Roma, 1816. Among these a special mention has to be made of H. Goltz, *Sicilia et Magna Graecia*, Brugis, 1576; F. Paruta, *Sicilia descritta con Medaglie*, Palermo, 1612; F. Abela, *Della Descrizione di Malta*, Malta, 1647; J. A. Ciantar, *Malta Illustrata*, Malta, 1772; Castelli-Torremuzza, *Siciliae populorum et Urbium, Regnum quoque et Tyrannorum Veteres Nummi*, Palermo, 1781, pls. xcii, xciii, xcvi; T. Mionnet, *Description de Medailles* i, 340-3 and suppl. i, 461-2; W. Leake, *Insular Greece*, pp. 55, 56, 62, 80; A. Caruana, *Report on the Phoenician and Roman antiquities in the group of the Islands of Malta*, Malta, 1882; B. Head, *Historia Nummorum*², 1911, 883. More recent and more scientific are the works of A. Mayr, *Die Antiken Münzen der Inseln Malta, Gozo and Pantelleria*, München, 1895; C. F. Hill, *Coins of Ancient Sicily*, London, 1903; E. Gabrici, *Monetazione di Bronzo nella Sicilia Antica*, in 'Atti della Reale accademia di Scienze, Lettere e Delle Arti di Palermo', Palermo, 1927; C. Seltman, 'The Ancient Coinage of Malta', in *NC* 1946, 81-90; M. Grant, *From Imperium to Auctoritas*, Cambridge, 1946. All these studies, although profitable (especially those of Mayr and Seltman), are more or less incomplete, especially because in most cases no account has been taken in them of the weight of the coins themselves; the older works, generally, lack real critical value. Mayr has a special importance as regards the listing of the coins, because he has studied the collections of the museums of Berlin, Gotha, The Hague, Copenhagen, Vienna, Athens, Milan (Brera), Naples, and Syracuse. The coins illustrated are all from the B.M.; Pl. 16A = *Principal Coins of the Greeks* iv. A. 32 (Hierapolis-Bambyce); Pl. 16 B, C = *BMCRR* i, 2977 and 3147; Pl. 16D = *BMCRR* ii, 390, no. 27. Figs. 3-6, 9-11 are taken from D. Harden, *The Phoenicians*, London, 1966, and Figs. 7-8 from Daremberg-Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*.

² E. Gabrici, op. cit. 99, thinks that the Romans allowed bronze coinage in Sicily as from 212 rather than from 241 B.C., when Sicily became a Roman province.

³ Cf. E. Gabrici, op. cit. 99.

The Maltese coins of which we have knowledge are all of bronze, which is a corollary to the fact that Rome allowed only bronze coinage in Sicily.¹ We give them here first in tabular form with some particulars of date, value, and language; assigning to each type the weight of the heaviest specimen known to us. When it is clear that the heaviest coin contains an overweight, we give both this overweight and the weight of the heaviest specimen which does not contain an excess of weight. Then we give them in a more detailed description. We have adopted here the system based on an As of 325.4 gm. reduced to 2 oz. (c. 54.2 gm.) some time about 211 B.C. and, again, to $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. (c. 13.64 gm.) in 89 B.C., during the Social War. These Maltese coins, following the custom mostly adopted in Sicily during the Roman period, have, with a slight exception, no signs of value. But this can be determined by the weight of the coins themselves. To make sure of that we have listed the weights of all the specimens existing in the Cathedral Museum, Malta (which is a complete collection and the most numerous in the island), in the National Museum, Malta, in the British Museum, in the Copenhagen Museum, in the Palermo Museum as they are published by Gabrici, *op. cit.*, and in three private collections in Malta. In the list weights which are roughly similar are grouped together so as to show, in each denomination, the successive issues which are generally reduced.

TABLE OF COINS
PLATE 15

<i>Coin</i>	<i>Inscription</i>	<i>Based on</i>	<i>Probable successive issues with typical weights</i>
c. 211 B.C.			
1. Sextans	Phoenician	Sextantal As of 54.2 gm.	5 issues including 4 reductions: 9.49-8.58 gm. 7.44 gm.) 6.89 gm.) 5.58 gm.) 4.96 gm.) } reductions
c. 175-120 B.C.			
2. Semis (c. 175)	Phoenician	Uncial As of 27.285 gm.	5 issues including 3 reductions: 14.23 gm. 13.53 gm. 12.70 gm.) 11.94 gm.) 10.87 gm.) } reductions
3. Semis (c. 160)	Greek		5 issues including 4 reductions: 14.82-13.68 gm. 12.65 gm.) 11.79 gm.) 10.87 gm.) 9.55 gm.) } reductions

¹ Cf. E. Gabrici, *op. cit.*, 99, n. 2.

Coin	Inscription	Based on	Probable successive issues with typical weights	
4. Semis (c. 125)	Greek	} Uncial As of 27.285 gm.	6 issues including 5 reductions: 13.35 gm. 12.99 gm. 11.94 gm. 10.84 gm. 9.99 gm. 7.38 gm. } reductions	
c. 89 B.C.				
2a. As (restamped)	Fig. 1			Same coins as nos. 2, 3, 4; no further issues.
3a. As (restamped)				
4a. As (restamped)				
5. Quadrans	Phoenician	} Semuncial As of 13.64 gm.	3 issues including 2 reductions: 3.96-3.69 gm. 2.93 gm. 1.79 gm. } reductions	
6. Triens	Greek		4 issues including 3 reductions: 4.24 gm. 3.48 gm. 2.95 gm. 1.66 gm. } reductions	
c. 75 B.C.				
7. Triens	Phoenician	} Reduced semuncial As of 11.375 gm.	1 issue and, later, 3 other reduced issues indicated as no. 7a: 4.10 gm.	
7a. Triens (reduction of no. 7)	Phoenician		3 reduced issues with Astarte's face on obverse slightly changed from no. 7: 3.81 gm. 2.98 gm. 1.95 gm. } reductions	
PLATE 16				
40 B.C.				
8. As	Greek	} Antonian As of 8.30 gm.	5 issues including 4 reductions (the last issue is very numerous): 8.02 gm. 7.26 gm. 6.43 gm. 5.95 gm. 4.94 gm. } reductions	
9. Quincunx	Greek		2 issues one of which reduced (first issue very numerous): 3.96 gm. 2.27 gm. reduction	
12. Quincunx (Gozo)	Greek		2 issues, the second reduced: 4.82-3.62 gm. 2.80 gm. reduction	
13. (?) Quincunx (Gozo)	Greek		?	

<i>Coin</i>	<i>Inscription</i>	<i>Based on</i>	<i>Probable successive issues with typical weights</i>
35 B.C.			
10. Semis	Greek-Latin	Semuncial As of 13.64 gm. of 89 B.C.	3 issues, 2 of which reduced: 6.71 gm. 5.95 gm. 4.96 gm. } reduction
15 B.C.			
11. Semis	Latin	As of 10.23 gm. of the Augustan Reform	2 issues, the second reduced: 6.74-5.11 gm. 4.90 reduction

We give here lists of weights of coins known to us, divided according to the denominations just given. In these lists one notices (i) that the first issue of each denomination is basically equivalent to the Roman standard weight; (ii) that in many cases the weights betray successive issues of the same coin, with gradual reduction in each issue; (iii) that in some denominations a few coins are slightly overweighted, no doubt due to faulty mint processes. In the Private Collections column, C.C. = Dr. Charles Cassar, Malta; J.G. = Joseph Galea, Malta; J.S. = Joseph Sammut, Malta.

Weight of coins in grammes

<i>Coin no.</i>	<i>Cathedral Museum Malta</i>	<i>National Museum Malta</i>	<i>British Museum</i>	<i>Copenhagen Museum</i>	<i>Palermo Museum</i>	<i>Private collections</i>
No. 1		9.64	9.49			
Sextans (9.09)		8.18	8.43			
211 B.C.	7.44		7.79 7.13	8.58 8.57		7.43 (C.C.) 7.25 (J.G.) 7.87 (J.S.) 7.15 (J.S.)
	6.89 6.00 5.58 4.96		6.57	6.53		
No. 2			14.23	14.21		
Semis (13.64)	13.53	13.44 13.03	13.06			13.56 (J.S.)
175 B.C.	12.50 12.44	12.51	12.71 12.46 12.36			
	11.98	11.99	11.57	11.57		11.65 (C.C.)

<i>Coin no.</i>	<i>Cathedral Museum Malta</i>	<i>National Museum Malta</i>	<i>British Museum</i>	<i>Copenhagen Museum</i>	<i>Palermo Museum</i>	<i>Private collections</i>
	11-33	11-94 11-22	11-44 11-09			11-175 (C.C.)
			10-87 10-82 10-40			
					8-62	
						6-60 (J.S.)
No. 3 Semis (13-64) c. 150 B.C.	14-82		13-68			
	12-18			12-65		12-64 (J.G.)
	11-05		11-79 11-10			
	10-86		10-87			10-37 (C.C.)
	10-02					10-20 (C.C.)
	9-38					9-55 (J.G.)
No. 4 Semis (13-64) c. 120 B.C.	13-35 13-24					
	12-99		12-84			12-35 (C.C.)
	12-96		12-02			12-99 (J.S.)
	12-43					
	11-94	11-88	11-18		11-89	11-50 (C.C.)
	11-84	11-56				11-48 (J.G.)
	11-50					
	11-30					
	10-84		10-48	10-76		
	10-22		10-28	10-22	10-69	10-60 (J.G.)
	10-13		10-17		10-41	
	10-06				10-30	
	9-99		9-21			9-82 (C.C.)
	9-92					
	9-85					
	9-84					
	9-09					
	8-95					
	7-38					
	7-13					
No. 2a		12-67				
	11-80					
	11-39					
	7-60					

<i>Coin no.</i>	<i>Cathedral Museum Malta</i>	<i>National Museum Malta</i>	<i>British Museum</i>	<i>Copenhagen Museum</i>	<i>Palermo Museum</i>	<i>Private collections</i>
No. 3a		13-14 13-02				
	12-26	12-13				12-20 (J.G.) 12-97 (J.S.)
		11-16			11-97	
	10-92 10-69					10-84 (C.C.)
						9-78 (J.S.)
	7-66					
No. 4a	12-96					
		11-13				
		10-98				8-56 (C.C.)
No. 5 * Quadrans (3-41) 89 B.C.	3-32 3-14	3-10	3-96 3-65 3-35 3-35 3-24	3-78	3-68	3-69 (C.C.)
	2-48	2-30			2-93 2-74	2-67 (J.S.) 2-25 (C.C.)
	1-79					
No. 6 Triens (4-54) 89 B.C.				4-24		
		3-34	3-48 3-41 3-19			
	2-67 2-46	2-02	2-95 2-90		2-54	
	1-66					
No. 7 Triens based on As of 13-64 gm. a little reduced c. 85 B.C. (4-54)	4-10	4-02 4-02				
No. 7a Triens reduction of no. 7	3-58 3-29 3-19 3-13	3-00	3-81		3-65	
	2-96		2-96	2-98	2-70	2-64 (C.C.)

<i>Coin no.</i>	<i>Cathedral Museum Malta</i>	<i>National Museum Malta</i>	<i>British Museum</i>	<i>Copenhagen Museum</i>	<i>Palermo Museum</i>	<i>Private collections</i>
	2.96		2.91	2.51	2.70	2.13 (C.C.)
	2.89		2.89			
	2.75		2.66			
	2.60		2.62			
	2.14		2.51			
			2.37			
	1.95		1.68			
	1.82					
	1.79					
	1.34					
No. 8 Antoninian As of 40 B.C. (8-30)		8.02				
	7.13	7.26				
	6.43	6.39				
	5.73		5.84	5.95	5.21	
			5.48			
	4.94	4.00	4.94			4.62 (C.C.)
	4.84		4.78			4.31 (C.C.)
	4.78		4.51			4.27 (C.C.)
	4.53		4.36			
	4.42		4.33			
	4.09					
	4.02					
No. 9 Antoninian Quincunx (3-45) 40 B.C.	3.96	3.36	3.48	3.76	3.85	3.69 (C.C.)
	3.96					
	3.81					
	3.77					
	3.53					
	3.52					
	3.41					
	3.30					
	3.27					
	3.53					
	3.52					
	3.41					
	3.30					
	3.27					
	3.24					
	3.17					
	2.67				2.68	2.97 (C.C.)
	2.54					
No. 10 Semis (6-82) 35 B.C.						
	6.71	6.16	6.62			6.64 (J.S.)
	6.40		6.45			
	6.22		6.04			

Coin no.	Cathedral Museum Malta	National Museum Malta	British Museum	Copenhagen Museum	Palermo Museum	Private collections
No. 10 (<i>cont.</i>)	6.05 6.04 5.62 5.46 5.40 5.27 4.96 4.82 4.79 4.77 4.69 4.55 4.28	5.95 5.00	5.81 5.78			
				4.05	4.71	4.92 (J.S.)
				3.95		
No. 11 Semis (5.115) 15 B.C.	5.22 4.69 4.61 4.44 4.42	5.11 4.90	6.74 5.39 5.32 4.33	5.63 4.81		
						3.62
No. 12 Gozo	3.62 3.41 2.80 2.65 2.63 2.26	4.82 3.46			3.10 3.09	3.32 (J.G.)
Quincunx based on Antonian As of 8.30 gm. of 40 B.C. (3.45)						2.78

COINS OF MALTA

1. *Obv.* Male head, r. with knotted hair and beard; on left kerykeion; dotted circle.
Rev. Priest's conical cap with long knotted apex and with hanging fillet; underneath, in Punic characters, the letters *aleph, nun, nun*; the whole is surrounded by a myrtle crown; dotted circle (22-3 mm., c. 9.49 gm.; sextans, Pl. 15).

The three Punic letters are commonly taken to indicate the Punic and pre-Roman name of Malta, GHONAN, which would mean ship, with a clear allusion to the fact that the tiny Maltese islands, seen from afar, would look

very much like a number of ships moored in the centre of the sea.¹ The form of the letters is Punic as distinguished from neo-Punic. Considering that Malta was now politically cut off from Carthage and that, consequently, changes in the writing of Punic letters, especially in place-names, might easily lag behind, this should date the coin to the end of the third century or the beginning of the second century B.C.

This coin must have been issued successively at least five times, each time with further reduction. The first four issues are based on the sextantal As, and were therefore made between 211 and c. 180 B.C.; the last issue, being of c. 4.96 gm., is based on an uncial As; it must have therefore been made when no. 2 (semis), based on the uncial As, was coined, i.e. c. 175 B.C.

2. *Obv.* Veiled female head, r., wearing stephane with hanging ear-rings and tuft of hair protruding on to the cheek. The veil is thrown on to the back of the head, leaving uncovered a good part of it and the ear; dotted circle all round.

Rev. Three figures; the middle one with face turned to the left, holds a whip and a sceptre; on each side two other figures with wings turned forward (to the front) and downwards. On their heads they have a two-cornered mitre with the solar disc in between; in one hand they hold a palm branch and with the other they offer to the central figure an object which seems a sacrificial cake or, perhaps, a ritual plate. On the three figures there are the three Punic letters *aleph, nun, nun*, as in no. 1; dotted circle (28–31 mm., c. 13.53 gm.; semis, Pl. 15).

The veiled head on the obverse is rather archaic in style. This coin probably had four successive issues including four reductions. In the first issue some coins are slightly overweighted.

3. *Obv.* Female head, l., represented as the Syrian goddess (Astarte) with wig hanging on both sides of the face and on the breast, and crown of erect petals on the head. To the left the 'Sign of Tanit'; to the right legend MEAITAION; dotted circle.

Rev. Male divinity, l., kneeling on left leg; with four wings, two coming out from the upper part of the back, and two from the lower; with a two-cornered mitre with a solar disc in between, holding a sceptre in the right hand and a whip in the left; with necklace and a pinafore. As the wings are fully spread on to the sides, an impression of roundness is given to the whole (26–7 mm., c. 13.68 gm.; semis, Pl. 15).

The kneeling posture of the male divinity on the reverse is common in Punic art [Figs. 2–5].

This coin probably had five successive issues including four reductions. The first issue had some overweighted specimens.

¹ Cf. A. Mayr. op. cit., who quotes Kopp, *Bilder und Schriften der Vorzeit* ii, 193 seqq.; and Genesis, *Scripturae linguaeque Phoeniciae monumenta* 302 seqq.

4. *Obv.* Similar to no. 3, except that instead of the 'Sign of Tanit' there is an ear of corn with stem.

Rev. Male divinity kneeling, as in no. 3, but the figure is thinner, giving an impression of rectangularity rather than roundness (26-7 mm., c. 13-35-12-99 gm.; semis, **Pl. 15**).

All the coins of this type are slightly smaller than nos. 2 and 3 and, generally, have a weight a little inferior to 13-00 gm. This coin may have had six successive issues including five reductions.



FIG. 1.

2a, 3a, 4a. The three coins nos. 2, 3, 4 were at a later date restamped with a small head looking right and placed behind the head of the obverse (and, therefore, to the left of the head in no. 2, and to the right of it in nos. 3 and 4), and similar in style to the female divinity in nos. 5 and 6 [**Pl. 15** and **Fig. 1**]. These coins must have been called in and restamped and revalued as Asses at the time of the last devaluation of the As to half ounce in 89 B.C.; and, indeed, with this devaluation their weight became equal to that of an As (semuncial).

5. *Obv.* Veiled female head, r., with stephane, with hanging ear-rings and necklace. The head seems more stylish, but less archaic than in no. 2, and the veil comes forward and covers a greater part of the head and face and almost the whole of the ear; dotted circle.

Rev. Ram's head and, underneath, the letters *aleph, nun, nun*; dotted circle (16-17 mm., c. 3-96 gm.; quadrans, **Pl. 15**).

The head on the obverse is more erect and more Hellenized than in no. 2. This coin may have had three successive issues, including two reductions. A few coins in the first issue are overweighted.

6. *Obv.* Veiled female head as in no. 5 but with necklace; the style no more archaic; the veil, as in no. 5, leaves the ear uncovered; dotted circle.
Rev. Lyre, with the legend MEAI-TAIQN divided between the two sides; dotted circle (15–17 mm., c. 4.24 gm.; triens, Pl. 15).

This coin may have had four successive issues, the last three being reduced.

7. *Obv.* Veiled female head with stephane, as in no. 5, but veil comes less forward and leaves uncovered a slightly wider part of the head and face and stephane than in no. 5, but the ear-ring does not appear; necklace; dotted circle all round.
Rev. Sacrificial tripod with three handles, and double legend *aleph, nun, nun*, each flanking the tripod; dotted circle all round (16–18 mm., c. 4.10 gm.; triens, based on As of 11.375 gm., Pl. 15).

The figure is rather archaic in style and is inspired by Sicilian coin types.

- 7a. *Obv.* Veiled female head, r., with stephane; similar in everything to no. 7, but face a little longer; dotted circle.
Rev. Similar to no. 7 (15 mm., c. 3.81 gm.; triens, based on As of 11.375 gm., Pl. 15).

No. 7 may have had four successive issues, the last three of which included reductions parallel to those of no. 6, brought about by the same reasons. These three reductions are here represented by no. 7a.

8. *Obv.* Veiled female head, l., with stephane; ear partly uncovered. The style recalls the head in no. 2; linear circle, inside which, dotted circle.
Rev. Tripod with three handles, more refined than in no. 6; dotted line on each side of the central leg; divided legend MEAI-TAIQN dotted circle (20–2 mm., c. 8.02 gm.; As, Pl. 16).

This coin is one of those of 8.30 gm., probably introduced in Sicily when the prefects of Mark Antony were coining money based on the As of about $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. The coins of Lilybaeum and of Entella, inscribed with the name of Atratinus belong to this time.¹

This Antonian As of 40 B.C. is coined slightly below standard. Only one coin of those weighed comes near to the standard weight, being of 8.02 gm. (this As, we repeat, is of 8.30 gm.); all the others are of 7, 6, 5, and 4 gm. and may indicate the rapid deterioration of the economic conditions of the Island due to the war which Sextus Pompeius waged on Octavian in the Sicilian seas until his defeat in 36 B.C. at Naulochus.

9. *Obv. and Rev.* Completely similar to no. 8 except in size (it being smaller i.e. 17–20 mm.—a few of 21 mm.) and in weight which is of c. 3.96 gm.; quincunx, a reduction of no. 8, because of its smaller size; in all these

¹ Cf. E. Gabrici, op. cit. 107.

Maltese coins reduction of weight never involves reduction of size except in this case. The weight of the specimens betrays two issues, each including a successive reduction. The first issue was probably very numerous and is marked by a slight overweight.

10. *Obv.* Veiled female head, l., with stephane; the veil is drawn further back than in no. 8, legend to the left ΜΕΛΙΤΑΙΩΝ; dotted circle.

Rev. Curule chair with legend around: C. ARRUNTANUS. BALB. PROP: dotted circle (20-1 mm., c. 6-71 gm.; semis, based on half-uncial As of 89 B.C.: Pl. 16).

The Curule chair symbolizes the authority of the Propraetor of Sicily of which the Maltese islands formed part. Balbus was *propraetor* there in 37-35 B.C.¹ When in 36 B.C. Sextus Pompeius was definitely defeated by Octavian and Agrippa at Naulochus and escaped from Sicily, Arruntanus, as a sign of solidarity with Octavian, may have minted a coin in which the system introduced by Antony's prefects was abandoned and a return was made to the As of 89 B.C. (13-64 gm.). The coin, indeed, being a heavier one, may have had its own propaganda value.

The successive loss of weight of this coin suggests three issues, the last two of which containing successive reductions. Might not one attribute these reductions to the adverse repercussions in the central Mediterranean of the war between Octavian and Antony between 35 and 31 B.C. culminating in the battle of Actium?

11. *Obv.* Female head, r., with stephane, ear-rings and veil as in no. 2; style refined, not archaic; dotted circle.

Rev. Tripod with three handles, with horizontal legs joined together with two superimposed circles; Latin legend MELI—TAS on sides of tripod; dotted circle all round (21-3 mm., c. 6-74-5-11 gm.; semis, Pl. 16).

This semis is based on the Augustan As of 10-23 gm. of 15 B.C.² It probably had two issues, the first having a few overweighted coins and the second being reduced.

COINS OF GOZO

12. *Obv.* Female head, r., helmeted like Juno Sospita; underneath the head a crescent and, behind, two dots of unequal dimensions; sign V underneath chin; dotted circle.

¹ Cf. Mayr, *op. cit.*, who quotes Klein, *Die Verwaltungsbeamten der Provinzen des römischen Reichs bis auf Diocletian* I, i, 90.

² Had M. Grant weighed this coin, he would not have dated it c. 44 B.C., *op. cit.* 191. The form MELITAS is not a nominative as Hill (*op. cit.* 229) seems to suggest, but an archaic genitive: apart from the well-known *pater familias*, archaic genitives in 'as' are found in Andronicus (*escas, monetas, Latonas*), in Naevius (*terras, fortunās*), in Ennius (*vias*), in Plautus (*Kolas*, in Pseud. 1100); cf. Roby, *Latin Grammar*, par. 356.

Rev. Female goddess, as Juno Sospita in battle; holding lance in uplifted right hand and a shield in the left; a star on the right in front of the left foot and, behind the goddess, on the left, legend, ΓΑΥΑΙΤΩΝ; dotted circle (16-18 mm., c. 4.82-3.46 gm.; quincunx, Pl. 16).

This and the next coin are the only two minted by Gozo, Malta's sister and smaller island. The V sign establishes its value as a quincunx. But then its weight suggests that it is a parallel coin to no. 9, and that, therefore, it was minted in the same historical circumstances as no. 9. It had two issues parallel to those of the Maltese quincunx no. 9, the second being reduced. The first issue must have contained an odd specimen with an excess of weight.

13. *Obv.* Female head, r., unveiled, with gathered hair and stephane; underneath a crescent moon; V sign; dotted circle all round.

Rev. Same as in no. 12 (quincunx, Pl. 16).

That all these coins belong to the Roman period which begins with the Roman occupation of Malta in 218 B.C. can be inferred from the fact that, with the exception of the quincunces nos. 9, 12, 13, they are all related in weight to the Roman As. The Punic style, as distinct from the neo-Punic (which developed in the Punic alphabet more or less at the beginning of the second century B.C.),¹ of the three letters *aleph*, *nun*, *nun* which formed the name of the island at the time, suggest a date about the end of the third century; the absence of value signs² suggests a time when Malta had already come, up to a point and for technical matters, under the influence of Sicily, since most of the Sicilian coins have no value marks and that time could not be earlier than 212 B.C. when Sicily was made a Roman province, and Malta, which had already been occupied by Rome in 218 B.C., must have been annexed to it. The Punic letters and the Punic symbols and figures (*kerykeion*, sign of Tanit, etc.) of the first two coins suggest a time when the language and culture of Malta was still completely Punic. The Greek legend of nos. 3 and 4 side by side with the Punic deities (see later) suggest a time when the Greek culture of Sicily was being introduced in the island. The fact that these coins are based on the Roman As and not on the Sicilian standards suggests a time long enough after the island's occupation by Rome in 218 B.C. for the islanders to have become accustomed to Roman money to the exclusion of the Sicilian, but not so long as the time when the Greek culture and influence of Sicily had definitely prevailed over the Punic. These coins then, are based on a devalued As and must have been meant to be used as small money.

Now, the weight of 9.64 gm. of no. 1 which, considering its type, and fabric (it is rather thicker than all the others, slightly recalling the thickness

¹ Cf. D. Harden, *op. cit.* 117, s.v. *nun*.

² Except for the two Gozo quincunces, nos. 12 and 13, which have the sign of the Sicilian coinage only that of the Mamertines had value signs, cf. E. Gabrici, *op. cit.* 149.

of the aes grave), stands apart from all the others, suggests a sextans based on a sextantal As (of two ounces) and, as such, this coin served well as small money. We may now safely assume that the As was reduced to a sextantal standard in c. 211 B.C.,¹ when Rome must have been financially distressed by having lost the great seaport of Tarentum and by having to maintain four war fronts, the first in Italy, the second in Spain, the third in Epirus, and the fourth in Sicily.² That fits well with the considerations made above and with known historical data. Malta must have been annexed to Sicily when the latter was set up as a province after the capture of Syracuse and when all the municipia of Sicily in 211 B.C. were allowed to coin their own money: Malta, as one of these, coined this sextans (no. 1). It did not mint new denominations of coins at this time and for some time later presumably because in c. 211 B.C. Carthaginian money must have been still abundant and must have, no doubt, continued in circulation, along with Roman and the local Maltese, for some time after. This sextans, was coined in 211 B.C. more as a token of Malta's status of a municipium than for a really practical need. The Punic style of the three Punic letters of Malta's name confirms that date since it suggests the end of the third century. The fact that this lettering continues to appear in Maltese coinage until c. 75 B.C. is no disproof of that, since the name of the island, once stamped officially on the first coin, could be expected to remain unchanged as long as it was written, although in 75 B.C. the style had become 'archaic'.

That the three coins nos. 2, 3, 4 are all of the same standard, although no. 4 is a little smaller and slightly less in weight, can be inferred from the fact that in 89 B.C. they were restamped, all three together, as Asses; one may therefore safely assume that all three were semisses,³ and for that it is imperative that they were all three coined within the period when the As was uncial. Indeed, if they had been coined during the sextantal period of the As, that would mean that between the first half of the second century B.C., say, 180–160 B.C., and 89 B.C. no new coinage was issued in Malta,

¹ G. F. Hill (*Historical Roman Coins*, London, 1901, 43 and 46) voices the opinion then current that the As became sextantal in the First Punic War and uncial in the Second; H. Mattingly ('The First Age of Roman Coinage' in *JRS* 1945; in *Revue suisse de numismatique* xxxiii, 1947; and *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1949, 61 ff.) admits two devaluations, in 217 to a sextantal and in 209 to an uncial standard; R. Thomsen (*Early Roman Coinage*, Copenhagen, 1957–61) and E. A. Sydenham (*The Roman Republican Coinage*, London, 1952) give 187 B.C. for the sextantal and c. 155 B.C. for the uncial As. But these have been superseded by M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coin Hoards*, London, 1965. Crawford's dating for the denarius (4.55 gm.) of 211 B.C. in Table II (p. 12) and in hoards nos. 71–109 (pp. 60–72) makes it imperative to date the sextantal reduction of the As (54.2 gm.) at the same time.

² Although Syracuse had been captured in 212 B.C. an occupation army was still needed in Sicily for some time.

³ In my article 'Ricerche Numismatiche', published in *Missione Archaeologica Italiana a Malta, Rapporto preliminare della campagna 1964*, Rome, 1965, I took the view that these three coins (nos. 2, 3, and 4) were quadrantes. That view is herewith abandoned.

which is difficult to imagine. Again, when one considers that during the second century B.C., owing, no doubt, to the rise in the cost of living, the semis had become small money,¹ the successive coining of these three semisses (nos. 2, 3, and 4) during the second century (say, between 175 and 100 B.C.) seems quite natural. Still, consideration of style, legend, and weight show that they were coined not together, but one after the other, with an intervening interval, which is quite natural. No. 2 must have been coined first, because the name of the island appears on it in Punic characters with no admixture of Greek words. No. 2's archaic style might be a confirmation that it was coined before nos. 3 and 4. Again, the substitution of a Greek legend for a Punic one seems to indicate that no. 3 was coined not only after no. 2 but also at a time when the Hellenic culture of Sicily was being introduced at least side by side with, if not to the exclusion of, the local Punic one.

The slightly smaller size and depreciated weight of no. 4 (generally under 13.00 gm.) might suggest that it was coined later than the other two, possibly when there was a slight devaluation, perhaps during the period of the Gracchi when the As was redivided into 16 oz. Hence one might perhaps give the following tentative dates for nos. 2, 3, 4 respectively: c. 175 for no. 2, c. 160 for no. 3, and c. 125 for no. 4.

Coins nos. 5, 6 correspond in weight to the subdivisions of the half uncial As struck in 89 B.C. under the stress of the Social War. They are consequently of 89 B.C.; the triens no. 7, and the triens no. 7a, having a smaller weight (4.10 gm. and 3.81 gm. respectively) and being based on a semuncial As of 11.375 gm. may have been coined a little later, say about 75 B.C. That was the time when piracy was blockading very effectively the trade routes of the whole Mediterranean causing commercial chaos and financial distress. That Malta was in the centre of this piratical activity can be presumed not only from Cicero's passage in the IV Verrine² but also from the archaeological evidence at San Pawl Milqi (in Malta) that rural villas, especially if they were within easy approach of the sea, were often fortified. This commercial and financial stress should be a sufficient reason for the devaluations from a basic As of 13.64 gm. to one of 11.375 gm. to which nos. 7 and 7a are related. The very marked debasement to 1.66 gm. (no. 6), to 1.79 gm. (no. 7), and to 1.34 gm. (no. 7a) may have taken place during the difficult times of the Civil War of 49 B.C.

The old semisses of c. 13.64 gm. (nos. 2, 3) and of c. 12.99 gm. (no. 4) which were still in circulation came to be automatically equivalent in weight to this new half uncial As; they must have been therefore called in from circulation, restamped, and reissued as Asses [Figs. 2a, 3a, 4a]. The sextans

¹ In the hoards quoted by M. H. Crawford, *op. cit.* 73-91, for periods c. 208-c. 92 B.C. coin denominations lower than semisses are extremely rare, while semisses are, along with the As, quite frequent and relatively abundant.

² Cf. Cicero, *Verr.* ii, 4, 103-4.

no. 1, as we have already said, was not restamped because it was too old (c. 120 years) and by that time it must have practically fallen out of circulation (and, indeed, the number of this coin found in the island is much smaller than that of the other three coins, nos. 2, 3, 4). And then it must have been a practical problem how to revalue a sextans of c. 9.09 gm. which was considerably heavier than a new semis (6.82 gm. in 89 B.C.) and quite lighter than the new As (13.64 gm. in 89 B.C.). That the semisses restamped as Asses (nos. 2a, 3a, 4a) had a second period of circulation can be seen from the fact that they are much more worn than those which were not restamped, and which, therefore, were no longer legal tender after 89 B.C., and must have survived in hoards.

Nos. 8, 9, 12, and 13, as already stated, must have been coined in 40 B.C. under the influence of the Antonian As coined in Sicily by the prefects of Antony's fleet stationed in Sicily's harbours during that year's alliance of Mark Antony with Sextus Pompeius who at the time held Sicily. No. 10 must have been coined between 39 and 35 B.C. as it bears the inscription of Arruntanus Balbus (see above). No. 11, with its legend in Latin, must have been coined in or soon after 15 B.C. since they are based on the As of 10.23 gm. of Augustus' monetary reform probably introduced in Sicily in that year.¹

The question which obviously demands attention is the identification of the images on the obverse and reverse of the various coins, Mayr,² Hill,³ and Head,⁴ have taken the male head on coin no. 1 to be that of Hercules. Seltman⁵ suggests Baal Hammon. These identifications are in our view excluded by the sign of the *kerykeion* to the left of the head. Furthermore, Baal Hammon is usually represented with a pair of bull's horns, which are here absent. In the Phoenician religion the *kerykeion* is the symbol of the god Eshmun,⁶ the great divinity of Sidon and the consort of Astarte in that city and her associate in the chthonic fertility and harvest myth recounted in the Ugarit texts and current in Phoenician times throughout the Middle East. The pair appear in Greco-Roman mythology as Venus-Adonis, in Babylonia as Ishtar-Tammuz and in Egypt as Isis-Osiris.⁷ The Greeks

¹ E. Gabrici, op. cit. 107.

² A. Mayr, op. cit. 8, 17.

³ G. F. Hill, *Coins of Ancient Sicily* 288.

⁴ B. V. Head, op. cit. 883.

⁵ C. Seltman, op. cit. 82, 84.

⁶ In as much as he is identified with Asklepios whose symbol is the caduceus (Pauly-Wissowa, s.v. *Eshmun*). When the Romans rebuilt the temple of Eshmun destroyed in the capture of Carthage in 146 B.C., they dedicated it to the Virgo Caelestis (Astarte/Juno) and Aesculapius (= Eshmun) inasmuch as Juno and Aesculapius were to be now the protecting divinities of the new Carthage as they had been of old Carthage under the Phoenician names of Astarte-Eshmun (cf. D. Harden, op. cit. 86; Pauly-Wissowa, s.v. *Eshmun*). In many Punic stelai the *kerykeion* of Eshmun appears side by side with the sign of Tanit (Astarte), cf. D. Harden, op. cit. 98, fig. 24, one of which is reproduced here, Fig. 9.

⁷ Cf. D. Harden, op. cit. 86.

assimilated Eshmun with Asklepios,¹ often representing him as bearded,² and the *kerykeion* of Eshmun is one and the same as the serpentine knot of Asklepios/Aesculapius. In the Phoenician colonies throughout the western basin of the Mediterranean the Libyan god Baal Hammon was often identified both with Eshmun and with Melqart, Astarte's consort in Tyre. In this sense the identification of the image with Baal Hammon could only be accepted in terms of the identification of Baal Hammon with Eshmun.³ The *kerykeion* of Eshmun has been found lately in the Tas-Silg excavations by the Italian archaeological mission.⁴



FIG. 2.

¹ Cf. D. Harden, *op. cit.* 86. The appearance of Asklepios or of his head in some of the coins of Acragas (cf. Hill, *op. cit.* 119–210) and of his altar or symbol in those of Selinos (Hill, *op. cit.* 40, 84, 85) may well indicate a cult of Eshmun prior to Greek and Roman domination of these places.

² Cf. Daremberg-Saglio, *op. cit.*, s.v. *Aesculapius*, fig. 164.

³ In the Punic colonies in Africa and generally in the western Mediterranean, the two consorts of Astarte, Eshmun at Sidon and Melqart at Tyre, were often identified, at least since the first millennium B.C., with Hammon (cf. Pauly-Wissowa, s.v. *Eshmun*, who quotes Gsell), who was a Libyan, not a Phoenician deity, and to whom the Phoenician colonies added the title of Baal (= Lord, applicable in Phoenicia to all divinity). Indeed, Baal Hammon was also identified with El, the supreme Phoenician male divinity. All these Punic identifications brought about, at a later stage, the Roman identification of Baal Hammon with Saturn and also with Jove. Hence the equation: Jove-Juno = Hammon-Astarte = Eshmun-Astarte = Melqart-Astarte. Thus in Cornelius Nepos, *Vit. Hann.* ii, the divinity to whom the boy Hannibal is made to swear is called Jove, when without doubt he must have been Hammon/Eshmun/Melqart (for this process of identification in the Punic religion, cf. S. Moscati, *I Fenici*, Roma, 1966, 66). This process of divine male identification has its parallel in the identifications of Astarte in Greco-Roman mythology, first with Aphrodite, in the pair Astarte-Eshmun = Venus-Adonis, and, later, with Juno. Hence the goddess protectress of Carthage in the Aeneid is Juno = Astarte, and when Carthage was rebuilt by Julius Caesar, the cult that was reinstated (cf. p. 82 n. 6 above) was that of Juno-Aesculapius (= Astarte-Eshmun) as the protecting divinities of the new city. Eshmun, indeed, as already stated, had been the principal male divinity of Carthage at the time of its destruction in 146 B.C., and his great temple in the citadel had been the place of the last determined stand of the Carthaginians. (Cf. D. Harden, *op. cit.* 86.)

⁴ Cf. *Missione archeologica Italiana a Malta*, 1965, 36 and pl. 193.



FIG. 3.

This identification with Eshmun fits with the representation on the reverse of coins nos. 2, 3, 4. Mayr¹ and Hill² see in the three figures of no. 2 Osiris, Isis, and Nephthys. These scenes, however, are not Egyptian, but Phoenician. That in no. 2 is a parallel to the religious scene represented in Phoenician cameos [Fig. 2],³ and it is intimately connected with the representations of Eshmun on the Praenestine cup found in the Bernardini tomb at Palestrina [Fig. 3]. The cup was probably made for King Eshmunazar of Phoenicia and should represent the story of Eshmun after whom that king was named.

¹ A Mayr, *op. cit.* 8, 18.

² G. F. Hill, *op. cit.* 288.

³ Both Phoenicia and Egypt must have derived this standard motif of representing deity from much earlier Anatolian religious art (cf. O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites*, Penguin, 1964,

The scenes on the reverse of these three coins (nos. 2, 3, 4) all have their parallel on that cup [Figs. 4, 5]. That the central figure in no. 2 is the same divinity of nos. 3 and 4 may be inferred from the fact that in all three the figure has a sceptre in its right hand and a whip in the left. The Egyptian colour that is added to the Phoenician divinity is a common element in the representation of Phoenician religious scenes at this time and can be explained by the universal acceptance of the Egyptian culture of the Ptolemies in the Middle East and Mediterranean lands at this time.¹ Even in Sicily some coins of Syracuse and Catania, of this period, betray the same Egyptian stylistic influence.²



FIG. 4.



FIG. 5.

The reverse of no. 1 represents a Phoenician sacrificial cap with hanging cheek fillets,³ no doubt symbolizing the priests and the sacrifice offered in honour of Eshmun. Seltman's supposition that the reverse of no. 1 represents the tomb of Battus⁴ is simply fantastic. The two figures on each side of Eshmun in no. 2 are priests presenting a sacrificial offering.

Mayr⁵ and Hill⁶ think the female head to be that of Isis; Seltman⁷ puts forward the suggestion that it represents Queen Anna, Dido's sister. This latter view is a mere hypothesis, false in our view, and based only on the gratuitous assumption that the Maltese coinage is inspired on that of Libya, Cyrene, and Egypt. On the contrary, as it will be shown later, the Maltese coins, when Greek, are dependent in inspiration on those of Sicily, and when they are Phoenician they have symbolism completely foreign to Egyptian or Libyan, indeed, even to Carthaginian lore.

But the representation of Eshmun, of itself suggests the identification of the female head with that of Eshmun's Sidonian consort Astarte, identified in Roman times with Hera/Juno, as has been abundantly demonstrated by

¹ Cf. D. Harden, op. cit. 216.

² Cf. G. F. Hill, *Coins of Ancient Sicily* 204, 205.

³ Cf. Pl. 16D showing coin of Julius Caesar containing a similar flamen's cap, cf. Daremberg-Saglio, s.v. *flamen*, fig. 3097, and also figs. 3095, 3098, 3108 *et passim*.

⁴ Seltman, op. cit. 82, 84.

⁵ Cf. A. Mayr, op. cit. 9.

⁶ Cf. Hill, *Coins of Ancient Sicily* 229.

⁷ Cf. C. Seltman, op. cit. 85.

the above-mentioned excavations at Tas-Silg, where votive plates have been found inscribed with the Phoenician name of Astarte and, side by side with them, others with that of Hera inscribed on them. This identification with Astarte is confirmed by the sign of Tanit on the obverse of no. 3 and by the representation of the goddess on coins nos. 3, 4 as the *Dea Syria* (Astarte) with a wig flowing on to the shoulders and chest and with a crown of upturned



FIG. 6.



FIG. 7.

petals on the head [Pl. 16A, Figs. 6 and 7].¹ The crescent in the obverse of nos. 12 and 13 is also an indication of Astarte and it is commonly found on her stelai.² The ear of corn on the obverse of no. 4 recalls Demeter, who, in her turn, was identified with Astarte/Hera/Juno. The ram on the reverse of no. 5 was one of the prolific animals sacrificed to Aphrodite/Venus who was also identified with Astarte in the equation Astarte-Eshmun = Venus-Adonis, and here rebaptized as Hera/Juno.³ The star on the reverse of no. 12 not only recalls Aphrodite/Venus as identified with Astarte⁴ but it is also found on some coins along with Juno, and the helmeted representation of the goddess

¹ Cf. D. Harden, op. cit. 205, fig. 70, p. 89; Daremberg-Saglio, sv. *Syria Dea*, figs. 6698, 6699.

² Cf. D. Harden, op. cit. 98, fig. 24, already quoted and here reproduced in Fig. 10.

³ G. F. Hill erroneously denies any connection between the types on the obverse and those on the reverse, *Coins of Ancient Sicily* 228.

⁴ Cf. Daremberg-Saglio, s.v. *Juno*, fig. 4168.

on the obverse of no. 12 is similar to that of Juno Sospita [Fig. 8],¹ and her fighting attitude on the reverse of the same coin is, again, that of Juno Sospita as in the coinage of the *gens Procilia* [Pl. 16C], not to mention the fact that in Phoenicia Astarte was often represented as armed, and, at Carthage, with a spear in her hand. In coins nos. 2, 5, 6, 7, 7a, 8, 9 10, 11, 11a, Hera is veiled as Juno of the Buoncompagni Museum and, like her, she has on her head the *decus regale*, the stephane of the queen of the gods.² All these identifications are based on the equivalence, in Punic-Egyptian-Greek-Roman mythology, of Astarte = Aphrodite/Venus; Astarte = Isis; Astarte = Hera/Juno.³



FIG. 8.

In all these coins one can easily see the depth of the religious convictions of the people of the Maltese islands during the second and first centuries B.C. They all have a religious type; only the reverse of no. 10 has a non-religious symbol. All these coins have the head of a divinity on their obverse and in all but one that divinity is Astarte/Juno. On the reverse the god Eshmun appears on three coins; the ram of no. 5 suggests the sacrifice offered to the goddess; the tripod of nos. 7, 7a, 8, 9, 11 suggests the priest or priestess who must have presided at the goddess's sacrifice; the lyre in no. 6 suggests the singing during the religious service. The frequency of the representation of Astarte/Hera makes it clear that this goddess was the principal

¹ Cf. Daremberg-Saglio, s.v. *Juno*, fig. 4187 for obverse, and fig. 4186 for reverse.

² Ibid., fig. 4175.

³ Cf. D. Harden, op. cit. 87; W. Smith-G. E. Marindin, *A Classical Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography, Mythology and Geography*, s.v. *Hera, Syria Dea, Aphrodite, Isis*.

divinity of the Maltese islands during this period. That indeed tallies with the results of the archaeological research conducted recently at Tas-Silg and with Cicero's submissions in the IV Verrine.¹

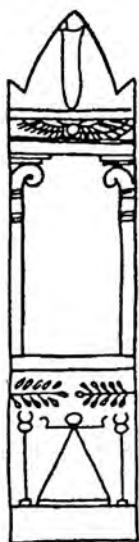


FIG. 9.



FIG. 10.

The presence of Eshmun in coins nos. 1-4 and his absence from the subsequent coinage seems to suggest that between the end of the third century B.C. and the end of the second (before 89 B.C.) the goddess was venerated rather as a Punic divinity, having therefore, associated with her, her Punic (Sidonian) consort, but that with the gradual Romanization of the island, by 89 B.C., Astarte had ceased to be looked upon as a Punic divinity and had come to be identified with the Greek Hera and the Roman Juno, and as such she lost her Punic consort. The appearance of Eshmun in these first four coins does not exclude that the other associate of Astarte, Melqart, may not have had his cult also on the island, but it certainly points out to the pre-eminence of Eshmun and his cult, and this may possibly suggest a Sidonian origin of the Phoenician colonization of Malta since Eshmun was Astarte's associate at Sidon while Melqart occupied that position in Tyre.

That which strikes one is the absence of any element which might connect these coins with those of Carthage, which must have been current in the island before the Roman occupation, and which in fact have been abundantly found on the island as has already been noted. The reason for this might have possibly been the severity of the Carthaginian rule which might have brought

¹ Cf. p. 81 n. 2.

about a reaction in favour of Rome and against the earlier rule when municipal institutions were granted in or after 212 B.C. But then the Romans, having newly occupied the land, would hardly look with favour on anything that might savour of the earlier domination. Add to that the fact that although Malta had been for a long time under Carthaginian rule it had originally been colonized by Phoenicians coming direct from Palestine, not from Carthage, and therefore the Phoenicians of Malta had their own individual national traditions independently of Carthage. Hence it is no wonder that these coins of Malta, far from linking themselves with those of Carthage, recall the new political ties established with the province of Sicily. The veiled female head had already figured on the Sicilian coins of Syracuse, Segesta, Thermae, Leontini, Tyndaris, and on those of the Sicilian Allies (Sikeliotes); the tripod recalls the coins of Acragas, Croton, Halaesa, Leontini, Lilybaeum, Morgantina, Syracuse, Tauromenium, and Zancle; the lyre reminds us of the coins of Syracuse,¹ and some of the coins of Acragas and of Syracuse have the figure or the head of Aesculapius.² These reminiscences of Sicilian coin types and the intimate historical connection of coins nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, 11a with Sicilian events make untenable the opinions which connect these coins with those of Libya, Egypt, and Cyrene.

The Maltese coinage under review is a perfect reflection of the double culture of the island during the last two centuries B.C.: the fundamental Punic one resulting from the basic ethnic character of the population which was Punic and the Roman one introduced by the conquerors in 218 B.C. This latter element, in Sicily and in southern Italy, had always been Hellenic in colour and expression. On coins nos. 2, 3, 4 Astarte is a Punic goddess with her Punic consort on the reverse; in nos. 3, 4 she is indeed represented with a wig and crown in the Phoenician way. In these same coins Eshmun on the reverse is represented in Phoenician style [Pl. 15, 3 and 4], and in no. 1 there is the Phoenician *kerykeion* [Pl. 15, 1], and in no. 3 the sign of Tanit [Pl. 15, 3]; the legend in nos. 1, 2, 5, 7, 7a is in Phoenician; in nos. 12 and 13, underneath the head of the goddess there is the Phoenician Astarte's crescent [Pl. 16, 12-13]. On the other hand, the Greco-Roman culture is revealed in the Hellenized representation of the head of bearded Eshmun/Asklepios in no. 1,³ in the Roman representation of Astarte/Hera/Juno in as much as she is veiled on the obverse of nos. 2, 5, 6, 7, 7a, 8, 9, 10, 11, helmeted on the obverse of no. 12, and armed in Roman fashion (as Juno Sospita) on the reverse of nos. 12 and 13. The ram's head in no. 5, the tripod in nos. 7, 7a, 8, 9, 11, the lyre in no. 6 are all associated with Greco-Roman religious cults. Greek legends are found on the obverse of nos. 3 and 4 on

¹ Cf. G. F. Hill, *Coins of Ancient Sicily*, 163, fig. 46. In the Syracusan coin the figure on the reverse is Athena (to whom the great temple of Syracuse was dedicated), but in the Gozitan one the star identifies the figure with Astarte/Hera.

² Ibid. 199, 205, 210.

³ Cf. Daremberg-Saglio, s.v. *Aesculapius*, figs. 161, 162, 163, 164.

whose reverse there is a Punic legend; Greek legends accompany types which are completely Greco-Roman in nos. 6, 8, 9, 12, 13; no. 10 with a Roman reverse (the curule chair) has a Greek legend on the obverse and a Latin one on the reverse; in no. 11, the legend is only in Latin. These elements indicate that between 218 B.C. and 170 B.C., approximately, Punic culture prevailed in Malta; between c. 160 B.C. and 75 B.C. Punic and Hellenic culture were more or less on the same footing; after 75 B.C. Punic rapidly lost ground to Greek which must have prevailed by 50–40 B.C.: about 35 B.C. we find Latin culture asserting itself side by side with the Greek one, and, towards the close of the first century B.C., practically prevailing over Greek, stressing the fast Romanization of the islands.

The coinage of 40 B.C. (nos. 8, 9, 12, 13) has a special interest. Sextus Pompeius and his ally, the triumvir Mark Antony, were preparing during that year for the invasion of Italy, which, in actual fact, never materialized because of the peace of Brundisium, and Antony's fleet was making use of the Sicilian harbours in preparation for that invasion. Lepidus, Octavian's ally, held the province of Africa and might be expected to make some move to help Octavian. In that event the excellent harbours of the Maltese islands might be made use of by Lepidus. Hence it was both in Sextus' and Antony's interest that the inhabitants of the Maltese islands should be completely attached to them; and for that purpose Sextus Pompeius must have granted to Gozo, Malta's sister island, municipal rights constituting that island a municipium, which included the right to coin money. The two Gozitan coins (nos. 12, 13) minted during that year and the warlike significance of both the obverse and reverse of these coins might be an indication of that. The inhabitants of Gozo, to demonstrate their solidarity with Sextus and with Antony, represented Astarte/Juno helmeted in no. 12 and in battle attitude on the reverse of both nos. 12 and 13.

The fact that the first coinage of the end of the third century B.C. was a sextans minted as small money, shows that in spite of the distress of the Second Punic War, the cost of living was still quite low, but not so low as to need the uncia. The wealth resulting from the conquest of the eastern Mediterranean, after the victories over Macedonia and Antiochus of Syria, must have brought about a rise in the cost of living, for between c. 175 and c. 100 B.C. the coins minted as small money are all semisses (nos. 2, 3, 4). This economic situation must have remained stable more or less throughout the whole of the second century B.C. since no higher denominations are minted until 89 B.C.; although the slight depreciation of no. 4 and the slight debasement of nos. 2 and 3 may point out to a small but gradual deterioration of the economic situation possibly due to the third Punic War, the Sicilian slave war, and the Jugurthan war. But the putting into circulation of the three Asses nos. 2a, 3a, 4a, and of a triens in 89 B.C. shows that the cost of living had suffered a sharp increase at or by that time, possibly

as a result of the Social War in Italy and of the slave wars in Sicily and Italy. The minting of three quincunces in 40 B.C. and of semisses in 35 B.C. and in 15 B.C., again, surely, as small money, shows that the cost of living was gradually becoming higher, which is itself an indication of a gradual increase of economic prosperity of the Maltese islands towards the end of the first century B.C. In particular, these quincunces, based on a semuncial As, are equivalent to the *pentonkion* of the Greek cities of Sicily at the time¹ and must, in view of this correspondence, have been coined to facilitate commercial transactions with Sicily, and these must therefore have become quite considerable at this time, i.e. in the second half of the last century B.C. It might perhaps also be argued that the population may have increased to the extent that local agriculture and farm produce were not enough for its needs, and that consequently Malta began to look for such needs in Sicily; and also, that a more sophisticated way of life, engendered by increased prosperity and by the introduction of Roman standards, created the need for imports from Sicily which Malta at that time did not produce.

The continuous and rather marked debasement of coinage after 75 B.C., in spite of the higher living standards, may be due, as already noted, to periodic economic distress consequent on the piratical activities or war conditions of the seas around Malta. They may also have been due to the very material reason that in times of war (e.g. the Civil War of 49 B.C., the war of Sextus Pompeius which ended at Naulochus in 36 B.C., the war between Octavian and Antony which ended at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C.) the seas around Malta were periodically closed and metal consignments for coinage became short of what was needed at the time of minting. Another possible reason which may be added to the others may be that coinage had by this time (after the semuncial reduction in 89 B.C.) become rather token money than money of real value, and the Maltese municipium, keeping standard values for first issues, availed itself of that to economize on the bronze value of further issues of the same type.

In conclusion, these Maltese coins, struck during the last two centuries B.C., are intimately related to the historical development of the Maltese islands during this period. Indeed, in this sense, they are a valuable complement to the scanty information we have from literary and archaeological sources, and along with them they go a considerable way to the building up of a picture highly fraught with political and social significance.

¹ The Sicilian bronze *lira* of 28 gm. of 212 B.C. was reduced to a semuncial standard in 89 B.C. (= 13.64 gm.) and, again, to roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. (about 8.30 gm.) in 40 B.C. in the Antonian coinage. This *lira* of 8.30 gm. gives a *Pentonkion* of 3.54 gm. which is equivalent to the Maltese quincunx of 3.585 gm. coined at this time, cf. E. Gabrici, op. cit. 106.



1



2



2a



3



4



4a



5



6



7 - 7a





8 - 9



10



11



11



12



12



13



13



A



Dea Syria
(Astarte)

B



Juno
Sospita

C



D

