Coins and their use in the Punic Mediterranean: case studies from Carthage to Italy from the fourth to the first century BCE

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'Identifying the Punic Mediterranean' is not a simple task. It becomes even more complex when investigating how concepts of identity might have been understood in antiquity. Coins, however, provide a useful starting point, as one of many elements expressing the character of a culture. They provide information on the weights and measures used, and on technical and artistic skills. Legends and images reflect ways of thought and, more particularly, of transmitting messages.

The modern tendency is to approach Punic (that is western Phoenician) coinages by comparison with contemporary Greek coinages, and as a result Punic coins are sometimes considered clumsy and uninformative. They seem surprisingly silent, and are often without legends, with types frozen for long periods. But this is a partisan approach: looking beyond the masterpieces of Classical Greek and Hellenistic coinage, there are many clumsy images in Greek coinage, and the ubiquitous Punic horse is

1 I wish to acknowledge a number of persons with whom I have shared ideas on various fascinating questions that have arisen over the years, many of whom have allowed me to use their unpublished materials: Babette Bechtold (Graz) for our continuing discussion of archaeological contexts and their ceramics; Paolo Visonà (Kentucky) for his advice on Punic coins; Clive Stannard (Forcalquier) for his advice on many regular and irregular coins circulating in the Mediterranean, in particular the pseudo-Ebusitan/Massaliot issues of Pompeii discussed in this paper. They have read and commented on earlier versions of this paper. I also thank Roald Docter, Bouthaina Telmini and Fethi Chehbi (Ghent and Carthage), of the Belgio-Tunisian bilateral project at Bir Messaouda in Carthage, 2002–5; Roald Docter also directed the 2000–1 campaign of the University of Amsterdam at Bir Messaouda; Anthony Bonanno and Nicholas Vella (Malta), for the University of Malta's excavations in the sanctuary of Tas-Silġ; Hans Peter Isler (Zurich), for Monte Iato; the late Giuseppe Nenci and his successor, Carmine Ampolo (Pisa), for Rocca di Entella, who gave me access to materials from their excavations, and helped me in many ways. I owe to Clive Stannard information from his Liri database, and help with the English version of the present paper.

2 For coins as cultural indicators in general and in the Roman provinces in particular, see the work of Burnett (2005: esp. 171, and the chapter on differences between 'our' and 'foreign' coins, 174–6). For the question of cultural identity under the Roman Republic, see van Dommelen and Terrenato 2007b with van Dommelen and Terrenato 2007a.

3 Huss 1985: 490: 'The depictions on coins . . . suffer from a certain monotony, playing through variations on the standard themes of the goddess' head, the horse, and the palm tree'.

(Translated from the German.)
paralleled by Corinth’s emblematic Pegasos, and by the endless butting bulls of Syracuse and Massalia. Nor does such an approach appreciate the important political and cultural fact that much Punic coinage was ‘supra-regional’, making deliberate use of a limited range of generic types across a wide area of Carthaginian control.

In the Sicilian context (Fig. 6.1), it seems clear that Punic and Greek users recognized Punic coins for what they were. The border between the Carthaginian epocracy in the west and the Greek area dominated or influenced by Syracuse in the east fluctuated, and was fixed by a series of treaties, in 366(?), 339/8, 314 and 306 BCE (Gulletta 2006: 409–10). The massive presence of Punic bronze coinage in western Sicily, and its comparative rarity in the eastern part of the island, is clear from Figure 6.2 (Frey-Kupper 2013: 310–11, 339; cf. Puglisi 2005: 288–9, 293 fig. 8, 294 figs. 10–11). In the east, Greek bronzes prevail: although no other mass of coins comparable to those from Morgantina is available for the east, the recent publication of the coin finds from the agora of Kamarina reflect the same tendencies, with five SNG Cop. 109-19 and nine SNG Cop. 144-78 (Lucchelli and Di Stefano 2004: 55–6, 92–3 nos. 99.1–5, 100.1–9). In the west, by contrast, Punic bronzes clearly outnumber others.4 This pattern may provide evidence for a political reality, suggesting that there was little economic interaction, and few contacts, between people in the two areas. It may also reveal an aspect of Roman monetary policy: it has been known for some years that the Romans destroyed earlier silver coinage in the course of the Second Punic War (Crawford 1985: 113; Burnett 2000: 102–3; Burnett 2002: 34), and there now seems to be consistent evidence for something similar happening to Punic bronze coinage during the First Punic War (Frey-Kupper 2006: 30–4, 44; Frey-Kupper 2013: 181, 315, 340). These were specific political acts by the victors, to eradicate the coins of the defeated enemy, and we should not let them mask the broader evidence from Punic coins for the

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4 Greek coins are relatively common at Entella and at Hippana, but this is to be explained by the history of these two sites. At Entella, the most common Punic types of the period from the last decade of the fourth to the middle of the third century BCE, SNG Cop. 109–19 and 144–78, as well as other archaeological materials of the same period are virtually absent (see below). Hippana was destroyed in 258 BCE (Polyb. 1.24.10 and Diod. Sic. 23.9.5; for the archaeological remains, Vassallo 1997: 304), and after that date, no further Punic coins reached the site. A further reason for the relative scarcity of Punic coins is that the Punic type SNG Cop. 94–7 was overstruck at both sites, at Entella by the Campanians, and at Hippana by as-yet-unidentified mercenaries (Frey-Kupper 2013: 148–9). These overstrikes increase the ratio of ‘Greek’ to Punic coins there. In no other site that we analyse were Greek coins struck during this period, with the result that the proportion of Punic coins in the finds is higher.
Fig. 6.1. Sites discussed in the text. The line following the rivers Platani (Halykos) and Torto marks the border dividing Sicily between the Punic epicracy and the area under Syracusan authority or influence, and reflects the status after the treaty of 339/8 BCE.
Fig. 6.2. Percentages of ‘Greek’ and ‘Punic’ bronze coins of between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from eastern Sicily (Morgantina and Kamarina) and western Sicily (all other sites).
wide range of contacts between populations and peoples throughout the Mediterranean, beginning with those of the Carthaginians in their homeland.

The starting point for this research was the coins from the excavation carried out by the University of Zurich at Monte Iato, in the hinterland of Palermo, from 1971. To assess whether the Monte Iato coin finds had specific characteristics, it was necessary to assemble coin series from other sites, and in the process approximately 15,000 coins from other Sicilian sites – including around 2,050 Punic coins – were documented to complement the approximately 500 Punic coins from Monte Iato (Frey-Kupper 2013: 105–46, 310–17, 369, 384–6, 415–36, 566–9). During and after the Monte Iato project, collaboration with several excavations and projects in Sicily and elsewhere in the Mediterranean has made it possible to gather further materials, and formulate new questions that have pushed these studies forward. This chapter is an opportunity to report on this work in progress.

I first consider some aspects of the beginnings of Punic coinage in the west and, in the process, of ‘Punic’ identity in Sicily, on the basis of the regional and supra-regional coinages of the period between 350/340–250/240 BCE. Sicilian coin series are then compared to coin series from other Mediterranean sites, with the aim of identifying similarities and differences. Finally, questions of ritual are touched on, as is the impact of Punic iconography in non-Punic environments.

**Coins and identity as part of an economic and political framework**

**The ‘late’ beginning of coinage in Carthage: regional and supra-regional coinages in a wider context**

Coinage was ‘adopted relatively late in the Carthaginian homeland, which was virtually without coinage (even foreign) until the fourth century BCE. The Carthaginians had undoubtedly been aware of the coinages minted by the Phoenician cities in the eastern Mediterranean, the Greek cities in Cyrenaica, and the Punic and Greek cities in Sicily, long before they adopted a coinage of their own. Paradoxically, the need to pay for military expenditure rather than commercial considerations may have provided the strongest stimulus for the adoption of coinage’ (Visonà 1998: 4; cf. Visonà 1995: 170-1).

The earliest coins issued under Carthaginian authority were tetradrachms on the widely accepted Attic weight standard, for circulation in Sicily, in
the period between c. 410 and 392 BCE (Jenkins 1974: 26–7; cf. also Jenkins and Lewis 1963; Jenkins 1971; 1977; 1978; 1997; Visonà 1995; 1998; Günther 2000a) (Fig. 6.3). The creation of these coins, which carry the legend, ‘QRTHDŠT’ (Carthage), coincides with the conflicts between the old coastal cities of western Sicily and the Carthaginians that resulted in the destruction of Selinus and Himera in 409 BCE, Akragas in 406 BCE, and Gela and Kamarina in 405 BCE. They served to pay mercenaries, and Carthaginian mints in Sicily continued to issue the denomination until 290 BCE. Gold coins of Punic weight standard – shekels – were issued during the first half of the fourth century BCE, either by Carthage itself, or by Carthaginians in Sicily. The fact that these early silver and gold coins have never been found in North Africa clearly attests to their military purpose.

Several ‘civic’ mints in western Sicily continued producing tetradrachms, some of which also issued silver fractions based on the Sicilian litra between 350 and 300 BCE: Lilybaion(?), Ṣyṣ–Panormos, Thermai, Ršmlqrt and Solus(?). Further ‘military’ issues are known from 350/340 BCE (Jenkins 1977: 8–9). Only two minting authorities are attested in the decade after 300 BCE (300–289 BCE). Their coins bear the legends ‘people of the camp’, and ‘the financial controllers’: this points to the centralization of minting in the epocracy after the turn of the century (Jenkins 1978: 8; Visonà 1998: 8).

Carthage itself struck an enormous number of gold coins between 350 and 320 BCE, using 88 obverse and 104 reverse dies (Jenkins and Lewis 1963: 20–3, 25, 77–90 nos. 4–173). This attests to increasing monetarization and familiarity with the use of money in the homeland.⁵ Carthage also minted a significant quantity of gold after 317 BCE, in the

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⁵ An alternative interpretation and dating (Visonà 1998: 7, following Mildenberg 1989: 6–8) sees these heavy minting volumes as reflecting the war between Syracuse and Carthage after 317 BCE, as the two decades after 339 BCE were peaceful, and as there is no evidence for large-scale commercial transactions. Jenkins and Lewis (1963), whom we have followed, propose the higher dates of 350–320 BCE. These issues deserve further discussion.
context of the war with Syracuse, and in the latter part of the century Punic
gold and electrum coins were hoarded in North Africa and in Sardinia
(Jenkins and Lewis 1963: 91–100 nos. 174–306). The huge volume of
tetradrachms issued by the Carthaginians during the Agathoclean period
(317–289 BCE), struck from at least 40 obverse and 120 reverse dies, also
reflects this war: ‘The Carthaginians minted more precious metal currency
during the conflict with Syracuse between circa 317–289 BCE than in any
other period of warfare in the fifth and fourth centuries’ (Visonà 1998: 8;

The First Punic War (264–241 BCE), fought between Rome and Car-
thage in Sicily, saw large new quantities of precious metal minted both in
Carthage (Jenkins and Lewis 1963: 108–10, pl. 17; Baldus 1982: 164–70)
and in Sicily (Jenkins and Lewis 1963: 35–6, 107, pl. 16; Jenkins 1978:
36–42, pls. 15–20; Baldus 1982: 170–89). While the precious metal issues
are well known thanks to Jenkins’s complete die-studies (Jenkins 1997), the
dates and mints of Punic bronze coinage are still actively debated. Jenkins’s
studies provide a tool for approaching the bronze coinages, but these
questions cannot be resolved with the evidence from the gold, electrum
and silver alone. The anepigraphic bronze coinage, with its frozen types,
which is found throughout the Mediterranean, offers few internal clues for
dating and locating mints. There has, none the less, been considerable
progress in recent years, through the study of overstrikes, production
techniques and the symbol-systems of several coin-types (Visonà 2006b,
with earlier bibliography). Metal analyses may provide further clues, but
the possibility of extensive metal recycling has to be taken into account and
larger samples need to be investigated, given the gigantic quantities of
bronze coins produced (Attanasio et al. 2001; Frey-Kupper and Barrandon
2006b; 2007), who is preparing a corpus of Punic bronze and billon (an
alloy of silver with a majority base metal content, usually copper) coinage,
is especially promising, and his extensive research already provides a
valuable set of references.

Excavations have given us broad new evidence regarding the introduc-
tion of the large-scale bronze coinages that circulated in both Sicily and
Carthage. The SNG Cop. 94–7 type, with the male head and the prancing
horse (Fig. 6.4:1), is the earliest of a series of generic, supra-regional Punic
coin types that spread throughout the western Punic world. In assembling
parallels to the Monte Iato finds, it was possible to identify twenty-one
stratigraphic assemblages of the last third of the fourth century BCE from
ten Sicilian sites with these coins, and a further context at Bir Messaouda,
Carthage (Frey-Kupper 2013: 13–15 with table 3). The type probably came into circulation in the mid-fourth century BCE, or slightly later, and was certainly available by 330 BCE, at the latest (Visonà 2006b: 242–3, based on Frey-Kupper 1999: 403–4). These dates agree with those proposed by Jenkins (1983: 21–2) on stylistic grounds, and with the chronology of later types. In North Africa – and exclusively there – this type is complemented by lighter, smaller coins with the same obverse and reverse types: SNG Cop. 98 (Fig. 6.4:2).

In the discussion of the attribution of the bigger, SNG Cop. 94–7 type (Fig. 6.4:1), the absence of the smaller coins (Fig. 6.4:2) outside North Africa has been cited to support a Carthaginian origin for both (Visonà 1985: 673; Visonà 2006b: 241; cf. Frey-Kupper 1999: 403, 421 n. 17). Small
coins do not usually circulate far from their mint, and it would be odd to suppose a separate mint for the larger module, which is stylistically and technically identical (Visonà 2006b: 241). On the other hand, the sheer quantity of the SNG Cop. 94–7 type in Sicily makes it difficult to believe that they were all imported from North Africa. It must also be borne in mind that Sicily had a long-established and strong minting tradition of its own, the earlier Punic silver included. Moreover, Punic Sicily was largely economically independent throughout the fourth century BCE, as suggested by the fact that modest numbers of imported transport amphorae and fine wares only began to appear there (from Campania) at the end of the century (Bechtold 2007a: 59–60, 62–7). Was the SNG Cop. 94–7 type then issued both in Sicily and in Carthage? If so, the question of why the small denomination is absent in Sicily has to be addressed.

The exclusive circulation of the small, SNG Cop. 98 type in North Africa raises the question of whether smaller fractions were particularly needed in the Carthaginian homeland (Visonà 2006b: 242): a demand for a broader range of small denominations could suggest a more refined small-change economy. But interesting as this may be, well-defined Sicilian excavation strata also reveal a more complex range of denominations. Syracusan onkiai (1/12 litra, itself 1/5 drachm) depicting an octopus were imitated locally, with coins bearing a cuttlefish and struck on an open-cast flan (Gàbrici 1927: 131 nos. 42–4; cf. Boehringer 1979: 19 n. 38). These imitations were in turn compatible with Dionysian Hippocamps (bronze litrai), and remained in circulation until the second half of the fourth century BCE (Mammina 2002: 349 nos. 56–79, 71, 80–1). The same is true of the small pieces with the local, non-generic, Punic type, ‘bearded or unbearded man/crab’, which was probably struck in or near Motya or Lilybaion (Gàbrici 1927: 132 nos. 49–56) (Fig. 6.5:1). This type is associated with twelve specimens of the SNG Cop. 94–7 type in a tomb in the Punic necropolis at Marsala (320–300 BCE; Frey-Kupper 1999: 427 nos. 1–13). The widespread use of small fractions in Sicily might therefore have inspired the production of the small SNG 98 type in Carthage, where smaller denominations were not previously available.

Using the evidence of coins from Monte Iato and other sites in Sicily, it is possible to define and to investigate a group of Punic coins produced and used in Sicily, of which the crab type is one. Although often anepigraphic, they may be associated with the silver ‘civic’ tetradrachms. Some do, however, bear mint legends, and all share with the silver ‘civic’ coins a particularly Sicilian iconography: river gods; the protome of the man-headed bull (Gàbrici 1927: 196 nos. 53–4) (Fig. 6.5:2) and the horned head
of a young river god (Calciati 1983: 273 nos. 13.1–2) (Fig. 6.5:3–4); the crab (Fig. 6.5:1). The heads of gods and heroes also appear on these coins, including Apollo(?) (Gàbrici 1927: 196 nos. 44–52) (Fig. 6.5:5), Hera and Herakles (Gàbrici 1927: 140 nos. 1–4) (Fig. 6.5:6). In contrast to these ‘regional’ types, the ‘supra-regional’, generic Punic types bear stereotypical images: a male head and the prancing horse (SNG Cop. 94-7) (Fig. 6.4:1); and a palm tree and a horse’s head for the type that followed (SNG Cop. 102-5) (Fig. 6.4:3). Both the horse – sometimes linked to the foundation myth of Carthage and a sun god – and the palm tree, φοῖνιξ – a fertility symbol and pun on ‘Phoenician’ – are highly emblematic (Jenkins 1974: 27). These types were intended for interregional circulation, and standardized images facilitated exchange.

The regional local bronzes described above have not previously been discussed as a group, although several types have been published.6 The circulation areas have become clearer in the light of the data assembled for comparison with Monte Iato, and archaeological contexts have helped to establish dates. The anonymous coins with the crab (Fig. 6.5:1) are found mainly in westernmost Sicily, near Motya or Lilybaion, while the type, ‘male head/horse’s protome’ and variants (Calciati 1983: 273 nos. 13/3 and 14) (Fig. 6.5:3–5), are typical of the northwestern corner of the island and may have been minted at Panormos or nearby (Frey-Kupper 2006: 42; Frey-Kupper 2013: 110–15, appendix 3, nos. 5–6, figs. 103–4). Other series

\[6\] Several of them were illustrated but not discussed by Jenkins (1971: pl. 23–4, along with silver litrai). See however 71–2, pl. 22, A–C, for a brief discussion of the bronzes issued in Thermai (here Fig. 6.5:6), which are probably contemporary with the silver tetradrachms and didrachms. For the type with the male head and the horse’s protome, see Tusa Cutroni 1999.
centre on Eryx (Gàbrici 1927: 131 nos. 11–21), Solus (Gàbrici 1927: 169 nos. 14, 39–47; Calciati 1983: 311–12 no. 16) and Thermai (Gàbrici 1927: 140 nos. 1–4) (Fig. 6.5:6). Although in most cases mint attributions are premature, it is interesting to see that several concentrations seem to correlate with locally produced ceramics, such as amphorae. It also seems that these circulation areas (at least for the main types) largely overlap with those of the main coin series put into circulation by Roman magistrates in the second quarter of the second century BCE, suggesting a continuity of circulation areas over time. The relative importance of the regional types in Sicily should not be underestimated: in the materials from Monte Iato, 49 coins with the supra-regional prancing horse type (SNG Cop. 94–7) are outnumbered by 57 regional type coins. Although there are by contrast fewer regional than supra-regional types (13 to 43) at Montagna dei Cavalli (near Prizzi, ancient Hippana), the presence of regional issues is still significant.

The significant presence of regional and supra-regional Punic bronzes in Sicily after the middle of the fourth century is directly connected to the island’s economic revival after the treaty between Syracuse and Carthage of 339/8 BCE (Talbert 1974: 147–8; Hans 1983: 76–81. Individual sites: Bechtold 1999: 259; Käch 2006: 272; Bechtold 2008a: 544–8; Bechtold 2008b: 226–7, 270–1). In Carthage itself, the impressive gold output between 350 and 320 BCE mentioned above (Jenkins Group iii) probably also points to prosperity and commercial success.

In Sicily, the regional types end around 300 BCE, and it is certainly not by chance that this coincides with the large-scale production of new supra-regional types, probably in the 310s BCE. The coins with a horse standing before a palm tree (SNG Cop. 109–19) were created and produced in Sicily, but were of supra-regional importance. In western Sicily, they

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9 Although it was possible to obtain an initial picture of circulation areas through the study of Monte Iato, these deserve further research and interdisciplinary collaboration.

10 Manfredi (2006a: 272; cf. Manfredi and Francisci 1996: 33) suggests an attribution to Carthage, which does not take into account the abundance of the type in Sicily and its rarity in North Africa.
outnumber any other coin-type. The huge volumes of these coins undoubtedly reflect a continuity and the aforementioned new period of general prosperity in both Punic and Greek Sicily, which is also clear from the quantity and quality of other classes of archaeological materials. These new types are paralleled, for instance, by the production of the new Sicilian amphora type, Ramon T-7.1.2.1. (for as yet unknown contents) that was shipped across a wide area and is attested on the Aeolian Islands, in Italy (from Campania to Lucania and Basilicata), in Libya, and perhaps in Andalusia (Bechtold 2007a: 64; 2008a: 556–8).

Tomb deposits rich in imported goods are a further index of prosperity.11 A general Sicilian feature of the period is a high degree of ‘hellenization’:12 it is noteworthy that several of the new bronze coins look stylistically more ‘Greek’ than before, particularly some with a head of Kore on the obverse, and the horse standing before a palm tree on the reverse (SNG Cop. 109–19). The last regional types follow the same trend; the style of both tetradrachms and bronzes intimately recall Agathoclean coins. For example, the latest tetradrachms minted by Śyṣ-Panormos and Rśmlqrt bear quadrigas and triskeles (Jenkins 1971: 41, 69), as do the litrai of Śyṣ-Panormos of c. 320–300 BCE (Jenkins 1971: 75 nos. 20–1).

Shortly afterwards, two series of a larger module, with the horse’s head type, came into circulation, produced either in Sicily or Carthage (SNG Cop. 144–53) as well as in Sardinia (SNG Cop. 154–78; Visonà 1992: 124; Frey-Kupper 1999: 405). The former series is distinguished by a head of Kore with a convex neck-truncation and a pendant necklace (Fig. 6.4:8); the neck-truncation of the latter series is concave, and the necklace is plain (Fig. 6.4:9).13 The two series circulated concurrently, alongside the coins with a horse before a palm tree (SNG Cop. 109–19) (Fig. 6.4:4) and the Sicilian type with palm tree and Pegasos (SNG Cop. 107–8; Fig. 6.4:5). These types together then comprise the bulk of small change in western Sicily until the Roman conquest.

11 For the necropolis of Lilybaion, this is a ‘golden’ period (Bechtold 1999: 259–60).
12 For example, Bechtold (1999: 280): ‘Greek influence in the Lilybaion necropolis becomes particularly tangible from the last twenty years of the fourth century BCE, when the ‘hellenic’ repertoire begins to appear, at first only in the prestigious hypogeum burials . . . its broad diffusion during the first half of the third century BCE distinguishes the Lilybaion cemetery from Punic burial areas of the same period in Sardinia, the Iberian peninsula, as well as from the tombs of the African metropolis itself’. (Translated from the Italian.)
13 For further technical and stylistic criteria, see Visonà 1992: 124; Frey-Kupper 1999: 405. In catalogues, these series are often not distinguishable, because inadequately described and illustrated.
Punic coin series from sites in the Mediterranean of the period 350/340–250/240 BCE

I now consider Punic coins from various sites that were issued in the century between Timoleon’s campaigns against the Carthaginians in Sicily (350/340 BCE) and the end of the First Punic War (250/240 BCE). This is the only period for which there are large sets of comparable data from all over the western Mediterranean, although there is much more information from Sicily than from elsewhere (Figs. 6.6–6.9; Appendix, Tables 6.1a and b–6.2).

Western Sicily

It is instructive to compare the Punic series from Monte Iato in the period between the introduction of the supra-regional bronzes (SNG Cop. 94–7 left) and the First Punic War (350/340–250/240 BCE) with those from other Sicilian sites (Fig. 6.6/Plate 4; Appendix, Table 6.1a and b). The pattern at Monte Iato is similar to that at most other sites (cf. Frey-Kupper 2006: 32–4, 51, figs. 3–4). The regional types are a typically Sicilian phenomenon, and appear on the right of Figure 6.6 (from CNS 1 273 onwards, illustrated in Fig. 6.5), in small but still apparent quantities. The left side of the figure shows the generic, supra-regional types (illustrated in Fig. 6.4). The prancing horse type (SNG Cop. 94–7) (Fig. 6.4:1) accounts for about 10% of coins at Monte Iato, and 10–20% in other sites. The type is commoner at Morgantina in eastern Sicily, which departs from the usual western pattern, but is not a Punic epicracy town. Rocca d’Entella presents a further unusual pattern, consisting almost exclusively of the male head/prancing horse type (SNG Cop. 94–7), associated with some rare contemporary regional types, and one horse before a palm tree coin (SNG Cop. 109–19) (Fig. 6.4:4): this is probably connected to the specific history of the site (Frey-Kupper 2000; Frey-Kupper 2013: 112, 546–7). The ceramic assemblage, also specific to the site, deserves further research and cross-referencing with the historical data (Frey-Kupper 2006: 33–4; Bechtold 2008b: 370 n. 244). At all other sites, the bulk of the coins belong to the Sicilian type with the horse before a palm tree (SNG Cop. 109–19) (Fig. 6.4:4), and the type with the horse’s head (SNG Cop. 144–78) (Fig. 6.4:8–9).

Carthaginian coins proper are almost absent in Sicily. The early small fraction (SNG Cop. 98, of 350–320 BCE) (Fig. 6.4:2) is, as noted above, entirely lacking. The later SNG Cop. 120-3 type (Fig. 6.4:6), datable to the first quarter of the third century BCE and systematically struck over the
Fig. 6.6. Punic bronze coins of between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from western Sicily, comparing Monte Iato 1971–91 excavation materials (black line) to materials from other sites (grey lines). (Plate 4.)
Sicilian SNG Cop. 109–19 type, is attested only in Punic towns where Carthaginian goods, especially amphorae, have been found: this seems to be a testimony to individual Carthaginians among the populations, and their contacts with the North African homeland (Frey-Kupper 2013: 315–6). This may be the case at Lilybaion, with its unusually high percentage of Carthaginian SNG Cop. 120–3 types (3.3%; Fig. 6.4:6) and Sardinian SNG Cop. 220–3 types (4%; Fig. 6.4:7): proportions similar to those found in Carthage itself (Fig. 6.7/Plate 5).

To summarize, the overall pattern of coin circulation in Sicily is of a small number of regional Sicilian types, with the bulk of the coinage made up by supra-regional types. Most of the supra-regional types were struck in Sicily (SNG Cop. 109–19). Others may have been struck in either Sicily or Carthage (SNG Cop. 94–7, 144–53) and some were issued in Sardinia (SNG Cop. 154–78). Carthaginian coins proper are rare and found only in Punic towns (SNG Cop. 120–3 and 224–5), where they probably attest to direct contacts with Carthage.

New excavation materials, published and unpublished – from Carthage, Tas-Silġ on Malta, and Tharros in Sardinia – now make it possible for the first time to compare the Sicilian data with data from sites beyond the island (Figs. 6.7–6.9). The number of coins involved is still relatively small compared to Sicilian sites, but the following preliminary comments constitute a first attempt to outline some trends and identify characteristic features of the circulation of bronze coins in each area.

**Carthage**

Although many foreign excavation teams have worked at Carthage over the last decades, only 97 coins are known from the city itself (Fig. 6.7; Appendix, Tables 6.1a and b–6.2). This is due partly to the fact that many teams worked in areas associated primarily with late antiquity. Where earlier levels were reached, the 146 BCE destruction strata are the contexts most commonly investigated (Docter 2007b: 41, figs. 3–4). The scarcity of coins reported from the period discussed here is due also to the often poor preservation of the material and to the fact that sieving was not always practised. Recent studies suggest, however, that the 'apparent under-representation of precise third century BCE contexts may correspond to a real scarcity of archaeological remains of this period' (Bechtold 2010: 37–8). Of the coins found at Carthage (Fig. 6.7), the SNG Cop. 94–7 type is the most common (24% of the coins; Fig. 6.4:1). Its fraction, SNG Cop. 98, accounts for 14.5% (Fig. 6.4:2). The presence of the SNG Cop.
Fig. 6.7. Punic bronze coins of between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from Carthage (various excavations) (thick black line), compared to coins from Sicilian sites (grey, except for Lilybaion, in thin dash line). (Plate 5.)
120–3 type (12.5%; Fig. 6.4:6) is also noteworthy, and strongly suggests a Carthaginian origin: this is new information, derived from these finds.\textsuperscript{14} These Carthaginian types together form about half of the circulating bronzes of the period 350/340–250/240 BCE (if the coins SNG Cop. 94–7 are, in fact, from Carthage). If the SNG Cop. 102–5 (‘palm tree/horse’s head’, 8%; Fig. 6.4:3) and 224–5 (‘head of Kore/horse’s head’, 2%; Fig. 6.4:10) types were also minted at Carthage – and at least the latter probably was\textsuperscript{15} – the Carthaginian coins amount to nearly 61%. This percentage could be larger, if the SNG Cop. 144–53 type (10%; Fig. 6.4:8–9) – which may be from either Carthage or Sicily – in fact proves to be from Carthage.

The Sicilian SNG Cop. 109–19 type (21%; Fig. 6.4:4), the Sardinian SNG Cop. 220–3 and 192–201 types (6%; Fig. 6.4:7 and 2%; Fig. 6.4:11) and the Sicilian/Carthaginian or Sardinian SNG Cop. 144–78 type (10%; Fig. 6.4:8–9) together form only around 39% of the assemblage. Just as with the western Sicily coin finds, the finds from Carthage have their own regional characteristics, with, in particular, a total lack of Sicilian regional types.

\textit{Tas-Silġ (Malta)}

At first sight, the data regarding the coins from the Punic sanctuary at Tas-Silġ on Malta (Fig. 6.8/Plate 6; Appendix, Table 6.1a and b) may appear to reflect its geographical position, lying between Sicily and Carthage, but this needs to be nuanced. The proportions of the two main types – SNG Cop. 94–7 and 109–19 (Fig. 6.4:1, 4) – are equal (31.2%), and together with the type SNG Cop. 144–78 (21.3%) (Fig. 6.4:8–9) they make up 84% of the whole. The relatively high proportion of the Sicilian type, SNG Cop. 109–19 (Fig. 6.4:4), might appear to indicate a Sicilian pattern, but the 5% of the Carthaginian SNG Cop. 120–3 type (Fig. 6.4:6) and the 6.7% of the probably Carthaginian SNG Cop. 224–5 type (Fig. 6.4:10) show the link to North Africa. Not too much should be made of the absence of the small module (SNG Cop. 98) (Fig. 6.4:2), as these coins could have passed through the sieves of older excavations. On the other hand, the high


\textsuperscript{15} In 2004, I was able to document seven coins of this type in the Musée de Carthage. Although no provenances are noted for these coins they are probably local finds. Elsewhere, with the exception of Malta (where they may attest to contacts with North Africa), the type is rare; see below and Appendix, Tables 6.1a and b–6.2.
Fig. 6.8. Punic bronze coins of between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from Tas-Silġ (Malta) (black dash line), compared to Sicilian sites (grey) and Carthage (thick black line). (Plate 6.)
proportion of the SNG Cop. 144–78 type (21.3%; Fig. 6.4:8–9) is closer to the Sardinian pattern. As the total sample of 61 coins from the site is still modest, more certain interpretations are premature, and further questions were addressed in the context of the recent studies of the other archaeological materials (Frey-Kupper forthcoming a). It is also possible that coin finds from a sanctuary have a pattern that differs from those of the settlements discussed here. Finally, as far as we know, Malta itself did not coin in the period we consider here.

**Tharros (Sardinia)**

Caution is also needed in interpreting the 64 coins from Tharros on the west coast of Sardinia (Fig. 6.9/Plate 7; Appendix, Table 6.1a and b). The large proportion of the SNG Cop. 94–7 type (27%; Fig. 6.4:1) suggests an early and consistent supply of coins from, or preferential contacts with, Carthage, if the type is indeed Carthaginian. On the other hand, the small proportion of the SNG Cop. 109–19 type (12.5%; Fig. 6.4:4) – if not due to the hazard of a small series – might point to the paucity of contact with Sicily, perfectly reasonable given Tharros’s geographical situation.\textsuperscript{16} The large number of SNG Cop. 144–78 coins (Fig. 6.4:8–9) – which include the Sardinian series 154–78 (45%; Fig. 6.4:9) and 192–201 (12.5%; Fig. 6.4:11) – reflects a strong local supply of bronze small change. The lack of the Sardinian variant of the type with a horse before a palm tree and an alef or a caduceus in front of the horse (SNG Cop. 220–3; Fig. 6.4:7) may be due to the limited data available at this stage.

Further finds from Tharros may help clarify the pattern. The availability of substantial coin series from other Sardinian sites in the south, an area with an early and intense Punic presence (Nora, Sant’Antioco, Monte Sirai), or in the north (Olbia), could also contribute to further progress in classifying Punic small change (cf. Visonà 1992: 128–31; Manfredi and Francisci 1996).

In comparing Sicilian Punic series with those from other Mediterranean sites, the widespread circulation of the most common Punic coin types – SNG Cop. 94–7, 109–19 and 144–78 – does not make it easy to identify local circulation patterns. It is impossible, for example, to know if one or

\textsuperscript{16} Manfredi 2006a: 266: ‘In Sardinia, Tharros seems to have become the predominant settlement as a result of its privileged position with respect to trade routes between Carthage and Spain, the economic system that integrated the Gulf of Oristano with its hinterland, and the enormous economic potential arising from the reorganisation of the territory in the fourth century BCE.’ (Translated from the Italian.)
Fig. 6.9. Punic bronze coins of between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from Tharros (Sardinia) (black dotted line), compared to Sicilian sites (grey), Carthage (thick black line) and Tas-Silġ (Malta) (black dash line). (Plate 7.)
several coins with the prancing horse (SNG Cop. 94–7) found on Sardinia came directly from Carthage, from Sicily, Malta, Pantelleria (Kossyra), or from Punic Spain or Ebusus, where the types are attested as well (Alfaro Asins 2000: 25–7 fig. 7, 29 fig. 11; Frey-Kupper forthcoming b). Such as it is, the evidence – especially the presence of types such as SNG Cop. 98, 120–3 or 191–201 – points to there being identifiable regional patterns.

The political message of Punic types

Visonà (2009) examines seven groups of Punic coins issued in southern Italy, Sicily and Carthage. He describes a regional pattern of coin circulation, within and between these areas, as well as an iconographic programme characterized both by the reuse of earlier Punic coin types and the creation of new types. The new types, he notes, drew on the coin types of other peoples in the areas where Carthaginians were conducting military campaigns, showing both an awareness of other cultures, and a desire to stress the common struggle against Rome. It is tempting to consider the regional and supra-regional coins dealt with in this chapter in a similar light, in order to see what kind of political message, if any, they carry.

The regional types refer back to the iconography of Greek Sicily, but do not simply reproduce them. Instead, they blend Sicilian and Punic themes, and in so doing locate Punic culture within the wider context of Greek culture. It is likely that the Carthaginians in northwestern Sicily adopted the Greek gods and heroes on their coins into their pantheon, perhaps assimilating them to Punic gods (Fig. 6.5). Characteristic Sicilian types including the man-headed bull and the horned head of a young river god (Fig. 6.5:3–4) were never picked up in North Africa, nor used there or elsewhere in the Punic world on coinage.17 In Punic Sicily they seem to be associated – at least conceptually – with the ‘civic’ rather than the ‘military’ silver coinages. Confined to the area of the towns in the westernmost and northwestern part of Sicily, they form a bridge between local Greek and subsequent Punic traditions. Likewise, Greek Sicilian coinage also inspired the iconography and style of the Punic Kore head on the obverse of a number of supra-regional types produced in various Punic minting areas (Fig. 6.4:7–11).

At the same time, the imagery on the coins can be seen as a response – perhaps even a polemical one – to other groups. As we have seen, the supra-regional types issued in Sicily, Carthage and Sardinia frequently use

17 The crab appears only on late Punic coins of uncertain attribution: SNG Cop. 475–88.
the horse and the palm tree, types that are emblematic of the widespread Punic community. The origins of the prancing horse that appears on the oldest bronze coins (SNG Cop. 94–7; Fig. 6.4:1) may be tied to Greek coinages. The type – as Jenkins and Lewis (1963: 12, 18; cf. Bérend 1993: 102–8) already pointed out – was earlier used on the 50-litra gold coinage of Dionysios I (c. 405–400 BCE). It was adopted for the earliest Punic tetradrachms of the early fourth century BCE (the latest issues of Jenkins’s series 1, c. 410–392 BCE) and gold issues of the first half of the fourth century BCE (Jenkins 1974: 30–1, 39–40 nos. 38–48; cf. Jenkins and Lewis 1963: 18–19, 76 nos. 1–3; Visonà 1998: 5; Visonà 2009: 179). As used by the Carthaginians who opposed Dionysios’s invasion of western Sicily and the destruction of Motya in 397 BCE, the prancing horse type may there express anti-Syracusan feelings. The Nike crowning the horse on the tetradrachms (Fig. 6.3) also points to the assimilation of this type for anti-Syracusan purposes. The bronze coins that use the same horse (SNG Cop. 94–7), which were issued in large numbers between c. 350/340–330 BCE, undoubtedly carry a similar message18 in a period characterized by antagonism between the Punic west and the Syracusan east of Sicily.19 Similarly, the prancing horse continues to appear during the politically tense periods of the First and Second Punic Wars on coins issued in Sicily and in Carthage (Visonà 2009: 177–80), continuing an iconographic ‘struggle’ which had its roots in the conflicts between Dionysios I of Syracuse and the Carthaginians in the early fourth century BCE.

The Sicilian regional and supra-regional types thus on the one hand attest to the high degree of acculturation to Greek models of Punic

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18 The contemporary Carthaginian fraction, SNG Cop. 98 (Fig. 6.4:2), and the later Carthaginian type, SNG Cop. 120–3 (struck on the Sicilian SNG Cop. 109–19; Fig. 6.4:6), carry the same pro-Carthaginian message. These bronze coins have, on the obverse, a male head either wearing a crown of corn ears (SNG Cop. 94–7 and 98) or flanked by corn ears (SNG Cop. 120–3). The head may be Triptolemos (Jenkins 1983: 26), who appears again on Sicilian silver coins issued by Carthaginians in the Second Punic War (Visonà 2009: 179). The earring that the man wears is an element of Punic iconography which reinforces its Carthaginian character. It is interesting to note that the earring is also worn by the male heads on the regional types with the crab and the horse protome (Fig. 6.5:1, 3–4).

19 It should be noted that Syracuse and other Greek communities in eastern Sicily, for their part, continued to issue coins with the free horse: for example, the post-Timoleonic, Third Democracy coins of Syracuse (Gàbrici 1927: 173 nos. 83–9), preceded by the coins with the legend KAINON, now plausibly attributed to Dionysios II of Syracuse (Holloway 2007); the coins of Gela of 339–310 BCE (Jenkins 1970: 283 no. 553, Group xiii); the coins of Kamarina, c. 339 to late fourth century BCE (Westermark and Jenkins 1980: 226–8 nos. 207–16, pl. 37); the mid-fourth century coins of Aitnai (Gàbrici 1927: 112 no. 1; CNS iii: 141–6 nos. 1–4). I am grateful to John Morcom for comments on these types.
communities living in the Carthagian epicracy in the west. On the other hand, the appropriation of the Syracusan prancing horse type on Sicilian supra-regional types to denote opposition first to Syracuse, and then, as Rome entered into growing conflict with Carthage and the Punic community throughout the western Mediterranean, to Syracuse supported by Rome. The limited concentration on a small number of anepigraphic supra-regional types also appears to suggest the relative cultural and political unity of the Punic world. This limitation of the iconographic repertory of Punic coin types should not therefore be read as weakness or backwardness, but as a sign of cultural strength.

The use of coins in non-economic contexts

I now turn to non-monetary use of coins, and three subjects that are of interest in our context: links between the homeland (Carthage) and the Punic epicracy in Sicily; the continuity of Punic ritual practice; and Punic cultural identity, expressed through Punic coin images in a non-Punic environment. I shall try to illuminate broader problems through these three case studies.

Links between the homeland (Carthage) and the colonies (Sicily)

The Punic tomb T. 13, from via Cattaneo 1987 in Marsala, contains twelve coins of the prancing horse type (SNG Cop. 94–7; Fig. 6.4:1) and a coin of a smaller module with the crab type (Frey-Kupper 1999: 427 nos. 1–13; cf. Fig. 6.5:1). It is interesting to note that deposits of twelve coins are a feature in contemporary tombs in the Carthaginian homeland, where deposits with a thirteenth coin also sometimes occur (Frey-Kupper 1999: 427 nos. 1–13). The deposition of twenty-four coins (double the twelve coin set) is also attested in Carthage; Delattre (1903: 593; cf. Visonà 1994: 138 no. 64) described finding such a group in an ivory or wooden box placed upon the chest of the deceased in the so-called ‘sarcophagus of the Priest’, an obviously rich tomb. Lilybaion was founded after the destruction of Motya by Dionysios I with colonists from Carthage, and throughout its existence was marked by Punic culture. The burial practice of depositing twelve or thirteen coins may therefore be a custom brought from North Africa. The number twelve looks like a symbolic number, of significance in a funerary context, and it occurs often in Semitic culture and religion (for example, the twelve tribes of Israel). Perhaps the thirteenth coin (which in the case of
T. 13 is smaller) may be an ‘extra something’, just to ensure or ‘top’ completeness. This, of course, is a mere hypothesis.

**Continuity of Punic ritual practice**

Another coin from the same necropolis testifies to the survival of Punic ritual practices into Roman times. The coin in question, of the type ‘head of Kore/horse’s head’ (Fig. 6.4:10, this very specimen), is probably of Carthaginian origin (Frey-Kupper 1999: 477 no. 154). It was found with the remains of a horse sacrifice, near the animal’s skull. The coin dates from between 290 and 260 BCE, but the sacrifice is of 180–150 BCE. Everything – the stratigraphic context, the iconography, and the early date of the coin – points to an intentional deposit in a Punic environment of Roman times (Frey-Kupper 1999: 416). The continuity of Punic ritual practice into Roman times has been demonstrated elsewhere, in Sardinia for instance (van Dommelen 2007: 61–4), but this is one element more in the overall picture of the Punic Mediterranean.

**Punic coins in non-Punic environments**

*Punic coins in Greek towns in the Sicilian Punic Epicracy*

Monte Iato (ancient Iaitas) was a Greek town, although it belonged to the Punic epicracy. There is virtually no evidence for the presence of a Punic population (Isler 1993: 88–92; 2009: 104–5; Käch 2006: 273–5). The Punic coins circulating in the town were a tool for commercial transactions in the specific political environment of the epicracy. The Punic horse on them was
not part of Iaitas’s Greek culture, and how the Iaitinoi interpreted this image is difficult to evaluate: the obverse female head, which Punic art had drawn from the Greek iconography of Kore, could have been assimilated back into that iconography. Iconographic meaning therefore may have cycled around between the Greek and Punic worlds, creating rather complex patterns.

_Ebusitan coins in the Vesuvian area: Bes_

A similar example of a Punic icon in a non-Punic context arises with the massive presence of Ebusitan coins and their imitations in the Vesuvian area (Fig. 6.10:1–4). The identification of this imitative coinage has opened a new and unexpected chapter in central Italian monetary history. Clive Stannard has identified, described and dated these coins (1998; 2005a; 2005b: 64–79; cf. also Stannard and Frey-Kupper 2008: 366–75, 378–84; Frey-Kupper and Stannard 2010). The prototypes and most of the imitative issues carry a standardized image of the Punic god Bes (ultimately of Egyptian origin) on both sides of the coins; such repetition of a type on obverse and reverse is most unusual in Greek coinage.

Let me sum up briefly what we now know about this phenomenon. The same mint that struck pseudo-Ebusitan coins also struck coins imitating Massalia, and there are die-links between the two groups. The Ebusitan prototypes are small bronze coins of the second century BCE (Fig. 6.10:1). Stannard and I have recently argued that they probably reached the Vesuvian area in a single shipment for an unknown reason – there are no military or trade factors that can adequately explain the massive presence of these coins (Stannard and Frey-Kupper 2008: 373; Stannard 2013; Frey-Kupper and Stannard forthcoming). On the prototype coins (Campo 1976: Group xviii), Bes is represented frontally, nude, a hammer in his raised right hand and a snake in his left; Punic letters sometimes appear on the coins. The image on the imitative coins is often very perfunctory, and, in many cases, Bes raises his left hand, rather than his right, because the engraver has copied mechanically and failed to invert the types on the dies (Stannard 2005b; Fig. 6.10:2).

The imitative coins were produced by a mint that mixed types copied from Ebusus, Massalia, Rome and other mints. They probably began in the 130s or 120s BCE, as recent stratigraphic contexts in Pompeii suggest, and appear to have been produced in Pompeii, whence they spread.

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20 Clive Stannard encouraged me to discuss these coins here, and we have been mulling possible ways of understanding this iconography in an Italian context. The following comments result from this discussion.
into Latium (particularly Minturnae) and other areas of Italy and Sicily (Stannard and Frey-Kupper 2008: 371 fig. 3; Frey-Kupper and Stannard 2010: 130; Ribera i Lacomba et al. 2013: 189–92; Stannard 2013: 139–41). At Pompeii, the coins of Ebusus and their imitations are the most common element in the monetary stock found under the Vesuvian disaster layer (Roman Republican and Imperial coins included), and account for around 30–50% or more of the whole (Hobbs 2005: 378; Stannard and Frey-Kupper 2008: 367–8 fig. 2). Canonical Ebusus and pseudo-Ebusus circulated together; at both Pompeii and Minturnae, about half of the ‘Ebusitan’ coins are imitations. These quantities suggest that the imitations were not fraudulent, but ‘simply . . . topped up the supply of these types’ (Stannard and Frey-Kupper 2008: 383) after the large, initial injection of the block of Ebusitan coin that led to this type being copied.

The citizens of Pompeii in the early first century BCE daily handled coins with a specifically Punic icon on them. How, then, did they perceive the inescapable image of Bes dancing as the main image on their small change? Did they consciously identify the image with its Punic origin? What was the balance between direct iconographic influences from Egypt itself (from whence the Punic world ultimately derived Bes) and those that came through the Punic world, and how was this perceived? As an Egyptian god of protection, Bes was also a god of childbirth, although he seems earlier to have been a god of war, able to strangle snakes, which are a common element of his iconography (Wilkinson 2003: 102–4). What was the perceived relationship between the Bes iconography and the Isis cult at Pompeii, and how was the original Punic or Egyptian icon tamed and assimilated into the Italian repertoire? Some of the imitative issues, indeed, show images of Bes that have little to do with the foreign prototypes (Fig. 6.10:3–4), and the image of a facing, seated Bes in the painting from the north wall of the sacrarium of the temple of Isis in Pompeii is stylistically and iconographically far from the originals (Naples, National Museum inv. 8916; De Caro 1992: 58 no. 1.72) (Fig. 6.11/Plate 8); such images ‘Italianize’ the Punic image, and presumably the associated concepts as well.

Iconographic transfers need also to be considered diachronically, as the process will differ from period to period, and, once we move outside Pompeii, from place to place. Bes became very popular and widespread during the Hellenistic period, and was adopted by the Romans. This process of the assimilation of Bes, in the garb of a Roman legionary, continued well into the Empire.21

21 Shaw and Nicholson (1995: 54): ‘In the Roman period, Bes was perhaps adopted as a military god since he was often portrayed in the costume of a legionary brandishing a sword.’
In addition to the direct Egyptian and Ebusitan Punic channels of transmission for the Bes cult and its icons, as well as other Egypto-Punic cult elements (including architecture: Wilson 2005: 134), into central Italy, other possible channels need to be considered. For example, images of Bes in glyptic art (Bonnet and Xella 1985: 328), frescoes, monumental reliefs and statues (Agus 1983) are found in Sardinia and elsewhere in Italy itself, attesting widespread familiarity with the god. ‘Egyptian’ types appear on Katanean and other Sicilian coinages in Roman times (Mattingly 2000: 36–41; 2006: 219–20). A further channel by which Egypto-Punic iconography in general may have reached central Italy is through the Punic islands between Sicily and Italy, particularly Malta and Kossyra, which used such types on their coins (SNG Cop., North Africa, nos. 447–52, 458–66). The coins of these islands are relatively common amongst the foreign coins found in the River Liri at Minturnae.22

Fig. 6.11. Fresco from the north wall of the sacrarium of the temple of Isis at Pompeii. (Plate 8.)

22 At 30 October 2008, Stannard’s Liri database included 1.74% (21 of no. = 1206) coins from Melite, Gaulos, Kossyra, and coins with a crab, of one or more yet uncertain mints, but usually attributed to ‘islands off Tunisia’ (SNG Cop., North Africa, nos. 475–88), or to Lopadusa (Calciati 1983: 369–70).
Conclusions

I hope to have been able to outline here some features that may be useful in better ‘identifying the Punic Mediterranean’. The limited range of iconographic elements on Punic coins – the horse, the palm tree and the head of Kore – is part of a deliberate policy: the widespread use of standardized types facilitated exchange and expressed some form of cultural homogeneity in an area that spread (at various times) from North Africa to Sicily, Sardinia, Ebusus, the islands between Africa and Sicily, Spain, and, in the Second Punic War, the Italian mainland. While the coins are mostly anepigraphic, the images are highly symbolic and emblematic. They are of a wider import than the ordinary Greek ‘ethnic’: the punning type of the palm tree, at least, stands for the large community of Phoenicians spread all over the Mediterranean and in some way expresses ‘punicity’. That does not mean that Punic coins were employed exclusively by Punic users. They were a tool for transactions in territories under Carthaginian control or for financing military campaigns, independent of the ethnicity or cultural background of the users.

The almost entire lack of coin legends and the wide circulation of ‘supra-regional’ coins, particularly bronze small change, contrast with contemporary Greek coinages. This is particularly true for a set of bronze coins produced between the middle of the fourth and the middle of the third centuries BCE. Nor did Rome create such a deliberately supra-regional coinage, and the use of Roman coinage did not spread massively throughout the Mediterranean until the conquests of the late Republic and the early Empire.

We have seen that in Sicily in the second half of the fourth century BCE, a set of ‘regional’ types distinguished by a particularly Sicilian iconography circulated together with the ‘supra-regional’ types, and that the regional types included small fractions. Punic coinage in Sicily developed against the background of Sicily’s long monetary tradition, which in turn played a key role in creating new coinages outside Sicily – in Carthage and later in Sardinia – where there was no earlier tradition of minting. For Carthage, contact with Sicilian Greeks in its western epicracy was decisive not only in the general adoption of coins, but also for the use of tetradrachms based on the widespread Attic standard and the striking of small fractions.

Such phenomena also complicate the tasks of attributing Punic coins to mints and of studying the flow of coins between Punic areas. Yet the systematic cataloguing and comparison of coin finds from contexts, and coin series from sites, shows that much information can be gleaned from Punic coins, providing nuanced patterns of coin circulation for the various areas of the Punic Mediterranean. This information, in some cases, further helps to identify the mint or minting area of specific types, which in its turn contributes to characterizing coin circulation at individual sites.
We have also seen the interplay between generic Punic bronze coinage intended for supra-regional use and coins bearing local types in Sicily in the fourth century BCE. The regional types of Punic coinage in Sicily with their characteristically Sicilian items, which were never exported, attest on the other hand to a high degree of acculturation of Punic communities in the epicracy.

In his study of the Punic bronze of the Second Punic War, Visonà (2009) has demonstrated the development of an iconography that combines earlier types with new types that draw on local foreign coinages in the areas of conflict, with the aim of suggesting a communality of purpose between Carthage and its allies. It is intriguing to see that coin iconography was used from the beginning of Punic coinage for political purposes. The prancing horse, drawn from coins of Dionysios I, appears on the oldest Punic coins in gold, and is later used on the supra-regional bronze coins (SNG Cop. 94–7) to carry an anti-Syracusan message. It was used again during the First and Second Punic Wars, and at that stage aimed at Rome, Syracuse’s main ally and Carthage’s main enemy.

Our considerations of the use of Punic coins in non-economic contexts posed the question as to whether Punic types shared features with non-Punic coinages and monetary practices in the foreign areas where they were circulating. In Sicily, the area with the best documentation, we have seen a case of direct links to the homeland in the use of coins in funeral contexts, and a continuity of ritual practice into Roman times at Lilybaion, the most ‘Punic’ settlement on the island. Iconographic borrowing and the reinterpretation of coin images in the appropriating culture followed complex patterns cycling iconographies between the Greek and Punic world, as in the case of Kore’s head on Sicilian coins. The example of the adoption of the Ebusitan Bes types at Pompeii raises many questions as to how the image was incorporated into the contemporary iconography of central Italy, and of the relative importance of the many channels through which Egypto-Punic images may have passed.

In concluding, I should like to stress the danger of falling into banality by drawing over-general conclusions regarding the similarities and contrasts between Punic and other coinages. It is better to consolidate the picture, topic by topic, and in precise chronological and geographical contexts. The major challenges of research into the Punic world include not only its wide chronological range, but also the wide geographical areas and number of other peoples involved.24 I have touched in this chapter on a few periods only, and a limited number of areas and sites. Properly understood, coins offer a window to make progress in identifying the Punic Mediterranean, though looking at monetary history, types and legends, at what they tell us

24 For Spain see, for example, Garcia Bellido 1992; or Mora Serrano 2011 (with further bibliography).
or omit to tell us, at where they are present and where they are absent, and at how they were produced and used. Much work still lies ahead.

Appendix

Preliminary note

The numbers given in the tables cover single finds. Hoards from the sites in question have not been taken into account because they are made of specific types, chosen deliberately, of a specific date. They would distort the proportions. Finds from necropoleis are avoided for the same reason. In the case of Lilybaion and Tharros, however, materials from the necropoleis are included because coins from settlement contexts alone would be too few. In both cases, tombs exceeding three to five coins, and thus assimilable to a hoard, are extremely rare, with the exception of T. 13 from Lilybaion, discussed above.

Sicily (Fig. 6.6/Plate 4)

The Sicilian data are taken from my study on the coin finds from Monte Iato and western Sicily, where details and more information can be found (Frey-Kupper 2013: 566–7, appendix 2 tables 68–9). The bibliographical references to the original publications or databases are given below:


Carthage (Fig. 6.7/Plate 5)

The most comprehensive data from Carthage are given by Visonà (1994: 131–47; cf. Visonà 1985: 671–2). This list assembles a huge amount of
information, including from articles on the excavations conducted by the French in the early twentieth century, and has a thorough commentary. The description of contexts and the identification of specific types are of particular interest.

Only coins from recent excavations are taken into account here in order to ensure adequate quality in the data (Table 6.2): identifications in older publications are sometimes garbled and hard to substantiate, as Visonà repeatedly points out. The available data, published or not, derive from the work of the following international excavation teams:25

French excavations, Byrsa, 1974–6: Lancel 1979: 68–70, 76–7, 81, 84; Lancel and Thuillier 1979: 239, 247, 250. For unpublished coins from the same excavations, according to a manuscript of Pierre Gandolphe provided by G. Kenneth Jenkins, see: Visonà 1985: 671 n. 8; 1994: 144 nos. 88–90. The numbers given here in Table 6.2 are based on the completed and corrected data listed by Visonà (1985: 672 table A), to which the coins of the 1983 campaign are added.
Ghent University and Institut National du Patrimoine, Bir Messaouda 2002–5: documentation by Suzanne Frey-Kupper (publication in preparation, in the final report of the excavations). For the coins of the 2000–1 campaign conducted at Bir Messaouda by the Amsterdam University, no data are yet available; the coins are being studied by Lofti Rahmouni.26
Harvard University and University of Chicago, Punic Port and Tophet 1975–8: Betlyon 2008: 331 nos. 1–3, 6. Nos. 4–5 and 7–10 are partly illegible or not precisely described (the coins are not illustrated). I had the opportunity in July 2014 to personally examine photographs and originals of a part of the coin finds kept at the Semitic Museum in Harvard. I thank Joseph Greene and Brien Garnand.
Michigan excavations, in the area between the south slope of Byrsa and the Circular harbour, the area of the Circus, a Byzantine cemetery and Bir El Knissia, 1975–83 and 1993: Buttrey 1976: 167 no. 6; Buttrey and Hitchner

26 Information kindly provided by Roald Docter.


Tas-Silġ, Malta (Fig. 6.8/Plate 6)


Tharros, Sardinia (Fig. 6.9/Plate 7)

The most comprehensive list is by Manfredi (1999), who gives an overview of finds up to 1999, and distinguishes finds of various natures (necropoleis, tophet, settlement and specific findspots, hoards, finds from the ‘territorio’, and the Camedda collection).28 Of these, we have taken into account all but hoards (for the reasons given above). There is some uncertainty about the finds from the territory and the coins in the Camedda collection, particularly as to whether the latter in fact come from Tharros. The data assembled here are more complete than any previously published data that I was able to find. Of later excavations at Tharros, only those conducted in 2001 in the southern cemetery have been published so far.


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27 The slight differences between the entries in the original publications up to 1982 (for the totals, see also Visonà 1994: 132 nos. 39–40, 146 nos. 99–102), which list twelve coins, and Visonà’s count of sixteen coins discovered up to 1982 (1985: 672, Table A) is due mainly to the unpublished 1979 and 1982 season specimens the author quotes. The small differences in the types listed (three SNG Cop. 94–7, one SNG Cop. 98, four SNG Cop. 109–19, no SNG Cop. 120–3 in the original publications up to 1982, against four SNG Cop. 94–7, two SNG Cop. 98, three SNG Cop. 109–19 and three SNG Cop. 120–3 in Visonà 1985: table A) is explained by the difficulty in distinguishing SNG Cop. 94–7 from SNG Cop. 98, and SNG Cop. 109–19 from SNG Cop. 120–3, and by the corrections made by Visonà in reviewing the originals.

Table 6.1a. Punic bronze coins of the period between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from various sites in Sicily, Carthage (North Africa), Tharros (Sardinia) and Tas-Siľ (Malta): numbers per type. (The dates given for the various sites are of their destruction, conquest by Rome, or of their going over to Rome.)

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<th>SARDINIA</th>
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<td>Montagnola di Marineo</td>
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<td>MALTA</td>
<td>SARDINIA</td>
</tr>
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Table 6.1b. Punic bronze coins of the period between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from various sites in Sicily, Carthage (North Africa), Tharros (Sardinia) and Tas-Silġ (Malta): percentage per type (cf. the graphs Figures 6.6–6.9). (The dates given for the various sites are of their destruction, conquest by Rome, or of their going over to Rome.)

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<th>HIPPANA (n = 197)</th>
<th>IAITAS (n = 488)</th>
<th>SOLUS (n = 118)</th>
<th>LILYBAION (n = 123)</th>
<th>SELINUS (n = 984)</th>
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Table 6.2. Punic bronze coins of the period between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from various excavations in Carthage: numbers per type.

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<td>–</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>–</td>
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</table>
4. (Figure 6.6) Punic bronze coins of between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from western Sicily, comparing Monte Iato 1971–91 excavation materials (red line) to materials from other sites (grey lines).

5. (Figure 6.7) Punic bronze coins of between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from Carthage (various excavations) (red), compared to coins from Sicilian sites (grey, except for Lilybaion, in thinner red).
6. (Figure 6.8) Punic bronze coins of between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from Tas-Silġ (Malta) (blue), compared to Sicilian sites (grey) and Carthage (red).

7. (Figure 6.9) Punic bronze coins of between c. 350/340 and 250/240 BCE from Tharros (Sardinia) (orange), compared to Sicilian sites (grey), Carthage (red) and Tas-Silġ (Malta) (blue).

8. (Figure 6.11) Fresco from the north wall of the *sacrarium* of the temple of Isis at Pompeii. Naples, National Museum, inventory no. 8916.