

# REVIEWS

DENARO Victor, *The Mint of Malta*. Reprinted from the "Numismatic Chronicle", Sixth Series, Vol. XV, 1955.

*The Malta Siege Ingots of 1799*. Reprinted from "Numismatic Circular", December, 1956.

In the first of these studies the author sketches with clarity the history of the Mint in Malta during the rule of the Knights of St. John. Some interesting details are presented on the position of the Master of the Mint in relation to the goldsmiths and silversmiths, the financing of the building of Valletta, and the problem of counterfeit Maltese coins. The author also discusses in greater detail Napoleon's seizure of the gold, silver, and jewels in the Conventual Church of St. John and other churches as well as the silverware in the auberges and in the Palace of the Grand Masters. Evidence is adduced to support the view that the bulk of the silver thus seized was minted in Malta and not lost on board the *Orient* at the battle of Aboukir Bay. It is interesting to note that the gold and silver coinage of the Order of St. John was legal tender in Malta as late as 1886. One of the chief merits of this study is that the author has utilized manuscript records in the Royal Malta Library. He concludes his account with a useful appendix listing the Commissioners of the Mint from 1609 to 1798.

The second study discusses in greater detail the gold and silver ingots struck in Malta in 1799 by General Vaubois, Commander of the French troops blockaded in Valletta by the insurgent Maltese. This article is based on notes left by Joseph Lebrun, the Master of the Mint at that turbulent period. The author points out that some 376 gold ingots and several thousand silver ones were manufactured in Malta in 1799. Of these it has been possible to trace only a few. Mr. Denaro concludes that probably most of these were given as pay to the French troops and that they were taken out of Malta and melted down in other lands after the capitulation of the French garrison in September, 1800.

These two studies, based on manuscript sources, are a real contribution to the study of the numismatic history of the Order of St. John. It is to be hoped that the author will give further insight on this important topic in later articles.

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\* Professor Weber was Fullbright Lecturer in the Royal University of Malta during the period October 1956 — April 1957. *Melita Historica* is greatly indebted to Professor Weber for a generous donation which made it possible for this issue to appear with an increased number of pages.