

# Types

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century represent the coinage of Carthage as far as the end of series 3 along with the «quadriga» tetradrachms of Agathokles (Fig. 2). The subsequent phase both of Carthage and Syracuse is to be found only in later hoards containing together the Agathokles Kore/Nike and trophy coins (Fig. 3) and those of Carthage series 5 (Fig. 1).

### *Types*

The basic type of the horse or horse's head with palm tree was discussed for series 1 (SNR 1974, 27) as symbol of Ba'al Hammon; this does not exclude the horse as symbol of Tanit as recently emphasised by C. Picard (Karthago XVII 1976, 104). The obverse of series 2 and 3 consists of the head of a goddess. She has often been identified as Tanit, the chief female deity of the Carthaginian pantheon<sup>2</sup>; for instance, Harden calls her «Tanit in the guise of the Sicilian Persephone»<sup>3</sup>. This may be so, though others prefer to regard her simply as Kore-Persephone<sup>4</sup>. Tanit «Pene Ba'al» (= the face of Ba'al) was the consort of Baal Hammon and by her title might be thought to have been inferior to him. That she was in fact the more important of the pair is clear from the religious dedications from Carthage itself and from numerous other sites, in which she is named first, before Ba'al (the opposite being exceptional, as at El-Hofra near Constantine)<sup>5</sup>. Were the head on the coins to be regarded as Tanit, it would seem at first sight to offer a convenient expression of the same concept, the supreme goddess accompanied on the reverse by the symbols of Ba'al Hammon, the horse and palm.

In fact the matter is far from simple. A preliminary caution seems imposed by our comparative ignorance of how Tanit could be expected to be shown, at this period, in terms of any Punic iconography; here there is a considerable dearth of evidence, allowing for the fact that the sign so commonly represented on the numerous stelai is generally regarded as a symbol of Tanit, whether in its more geometrical form or a more humanised form. In any case that sign has been much discussed and good authorities have expressed great reserve as to its precise origin and significance. Anyhow the so-called «sign of Tanit» hardly helps to envisage any possible iconography in terms of figured art. What is clear however is that in Greek terms we have little option but to think of the goddess whose head is shown on the coins as being any other than Kore-Persephone, as Acquaro has recently argued<sup>6</sup>. At least in series 2 there are a number of issues, including the first ones of the series, where particular

<sup>2</sup> However Cintas, Manuel 313 questions whether Tanit and Ba'al Hammon were necessarily the chief deities of Carthage: cf. J. G. Fevrier, Cahiers de Byrsa VI 1956, 13 ff., for the view that the supreme deity was Ba'alsamin as the equivalent of Zeus in the «oath of Hannibal».

<sup>3</sup> Harden 158.

<sup>4</sup> Müller; recently Acquaro, note 6 below.

<sup>5</sup> El-Hofra, passim, esp. p. 183.

<sup>6</sup> E. Acquaro, Sulla lettura di un tipo monetale punico, RIN 1971, 25 ff.

emphasis is given to the corn-ears of the wreath; and this makes the point very clear, especially by contrast with the rarity of this feature at Syracuse whence most of the prototypes are derived<sup>7</sup>. The same head with corn-ears dominates the important gold coinage which started at the Carthage mint in the mid-fourth century and continued to be the exclusive form of the deity on all subsequent Carthaginian coinage<sup>8</sup>.

As regards Kore-Persephone, it is further to be recalled that these deities were worshipped at Carthage after 396 B.C., presumably in their Greek cult<sup>9</sup>. If Persephone was given a Punic name, we do not apparently know it; on the well-known stele from Carthage showing a figure of Persephone in Hellenistic style, dedicated by Milkyaton the suffete, the goddess is identified purely by the cornucopiae which she carries, and is not named in the accompanying inscription<sup>10</sup>. We lack evidence apparently as to which precise Punic deity would have been regarded as the nearest equivalent to Persephone. Tanit herself included a definite element of the fertility goddess and to that extent might conceivably be represented in Greek terms as Kore. But evidence is lacking.

A further point is that in the coin series here covered many of the most typical heads are evidently not of Kore after all, being imitations of the Syracusan Arethusa type in very varying degrees of faithfulness. It is possible to wonder whether these can necessarily be deemed to signify much more, intrinsically, than for instance the Athena heads on coins of the Himyarites<sup>11</sup>, namely the continuance of a customary coin design simply as such.

The types of series 4 will be discussed separately below (p. 25).

### *Legends and mint*

Before considering the question of the mint, it is necessary to summarise the occurrence of the legends on the coins. First comes an issue inscribed QRTHDST (series 2a, 49–60). Next is an issue bearing only the single letter *mem* (series 2a, 60–67). After this there is no legend for the rest of series 2 (the only exceptions being the unique *btw'l* on series 2a, 85, and the pair of letters *beth beth* on series 2c, 91–100; all of these are most probably abbreviations of personal names). In series 3a there is the regular legend 'MMHNT («people of the camp»), varied only on 176 and 187–189 to S'MMHNT; series 3b has M M (*mem mem*); series 3c is a single issue with the letter '*ayin*'; and then series 3c has the single letter *mem*. Series 4 has once again the S'MMHNT legend found on series 3a with which, as will be shown below, it is in any case closely associated.

<sup>7</sup> Tudeer 46, 47, 66 are the only heads with corn-ears in the Syracuse series.

<sup>8</sup> Jenkins-Lewis group 2 and especially group 3 onwards.

<sup>9</sup> Harden 81.

<sup>10</sup> Harden pl. 45; CIS I. i, 176.

<sup>11</sup> BMC Arabia etc. pl. VII.