

The romanization of the ager Bruttius and the evidence of coin finds. Part II

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THE ROMANIZATION OF THE *AGER BRUTTIUS*
AND THE EVIDENCE OF COIN FINDS

PART II*

Between the end of the 3rd century B.C. and the beginning of the Empire the pattern of monetary circulation in today's Calabria region of southern Italy underwent significant changes.¹ All coinage in precious metal, and much of the bronze struck by Greek, Brettian, and Carthaginian mints simply ceased to be used. Roman Republican currency and the bronze coins of the Latin colonies of *Copia* and *Valentia* became new components of the circulating medium. *Rhegium's* bronzes minted after 200 B.C. also travelled widely across the region.² On the whole, the Roman conquest of the *ager Bruttius* does not seem to have entailed the adoption of a single coinage system. The fact that these coinages coexisted (and presumably were interchangeable) is one of the defining aspects of the Romanization of *Bruttium*, even though it is still unclear to what extent each of them impacted economic transactions on a local or intra-regional scale.

Moreover, there is increasing evidence that Greek bronze coins struck before the end of the second Punic war continued to be used long after the *ager Bruttius* had come under Roman control. Recent excavations at major Greek and Italic centers such as *Croton* and *Petelia* have yielded several examples of Greek coins from late Republican contexts.³ Of particular interest are the coin finds from contrada Mella

* This is the second part of a series of articles on the coin finds from the *ager Bruttius*. The first was published in 1996, see P. Visonà - S. Frey-Kupper, *The Romanization of the ager Bruttius and the Evidence of Coin Finds*, SNR 75, 1996, pp. 77-100 (henceforth: Visonà - Frey-Kupper I). Again, we are grateful to Ermanno A. Arslan (Milan) and Federico Barello (Turin) for their useful comments.

¹ The coin finds at *Locri Epizephyrii* and Castiglione di Paludi exemplify the types of coins which circulated at major Greek and Italic sites until c. 200 B.C. See M. Barra Bagnasco, *Lo scavo*, in: *Locri Epizefiri II. Gli isolati I2 e I3 dell'area di Centocamere* (Firenze 1989), pp. 16, 22, 25-27, 29-32 (strato I a, c. 250-200 a.C.); pp. 32-37, 39-41, 43 (strato Ib, c. 300-250 a.C.); pp. 48-51, 53-55 (strato II, c. 400-300 a.C.); F. Barello, *Economia, coniazioni e circolazione monetale a Locri Epizephyrii (Bruttium)*, in: T. Hackens - G. Moucharte (eds.), *Proceedings of the XIth International Numismatic Congress*, vol. I (Louvain-la-Neuve 1993) pp. 53-64; S. Luppino - N. Parise - A. Polosa, *Castiglione di Paludi: le monete*, *AIIN* 43, 1996, pp. 9-31.

² Visonà - Frey-Kupper I, p. 90, Fig. 5. Cf. the situation in Apulia summarized by Ph. Desy, *Recherches sur l'économie apulienne au II^e et au I^{er} siècle avant notre ère* (Bruxelles 1993) pp. 127-130.

³ Unpublished information by Alfredo Ruga and Luigi La Rocca, Soprintendenza Archeologica della Calabria. Cf. E. Lattanzi, *L'attività della Soprintendenza nel biennio 1995-96*, *Klarchos* 38-39, nos. 149-156, 1996-1997, p. 256. See also E.A. Arslan, *Il ripostiglio di monete in bronzo di II secolo a. C. in Via della Salute a Strongoli*, *Klarchos* 38-39, nos. 149-156, 1996-1997, pp. 41-81 (henceforth: Arslan).

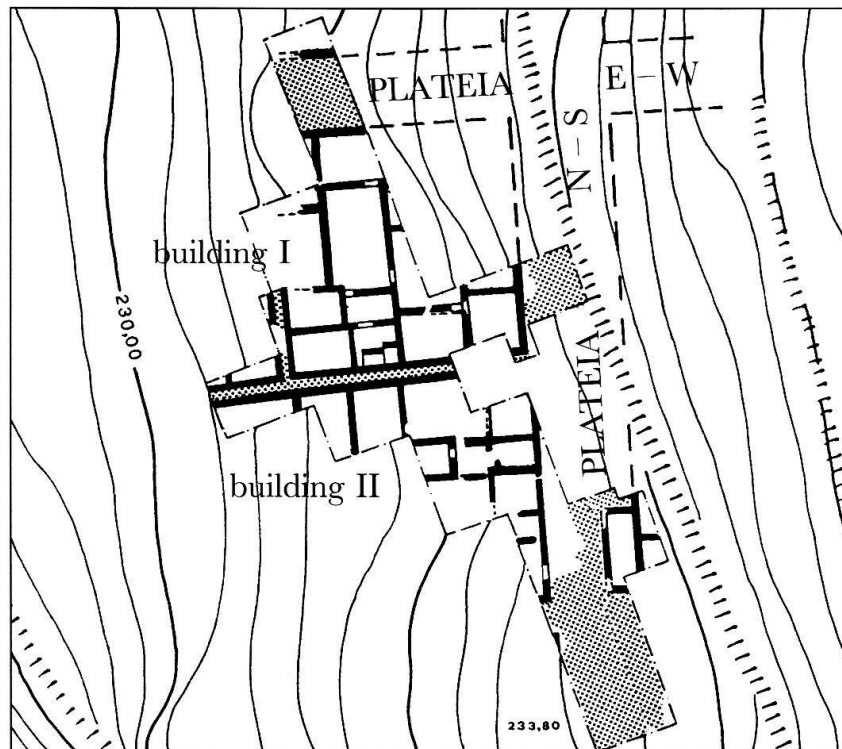


Fig. 1: American excavations at contrada Mella, Oppido Mamertina: site plan 1998

at Oppido Mamertina (ancient *Mamertion*?), an Italic settlement of the *Tauriani* in southwestern Calabria which was urbanized c. 200 B.C. and flourished until the first half of the 1st century B.C. Excavations conducted there in 1984 and 1986 by the Soprintendenza Archeologica della Calabria and, since 1987, by an American team, have been focused on a block of houses in the town's central area of habitation (Fig. 1), corresponding to less than 1 % of the extant surface of the settlement (c. 12-13 hectares). Nearly 500 coins have been found to date. Although only the materials from the first three seasons of fieldwork have been fully studied thus far, their statistical importance as a representative sample is considerable.

Most of the 243 Greek and Roman Republican coins found in the 1984 and 1986-1987 campaigns were uncovered in two houses (Fig. 2), and at least 73 of the Greek specimens (30.04 % of the total) come from stratigraphic contexts that can be securely dated between the 2nd century B.C. and the first half of the 1st century B.C. by the ceramic evidence.

Each of these Greek coins and the dating evidence from the stratigraphic contexts in which it was found are described in the list below.⁴ The grouping of the coins by

⁴ Maria Cristina Preacco Ancona and Massimo Brizzi studied the pottery and the amphorae published in OM 1 and mentioned in this essay.

Principal abbreviations used:

Morel J.-P. Morel, *Céramique campanienne. Les formes* (Rome 1981)

OM 1 L. Costamagna – P. Visonà (eds.), *Oppido Mamertina 1* (forthcoming)

Särström M. Särström, *A Study in the Coinage of the Mamertines* (Lund 1940)

stratigraphic horizons (*viz.* locus numbers⁵) begins with the finds from the two houses in the central area of habitation (*Fig. 2*), and ends with the finds from a smaller area excavated on the hilltop in 1986. The internal sequence of the finds starts with the coins from habitation layers and ends with those from abandonment and destruction layers. Any Roman coins are listed after the Greek specimens.

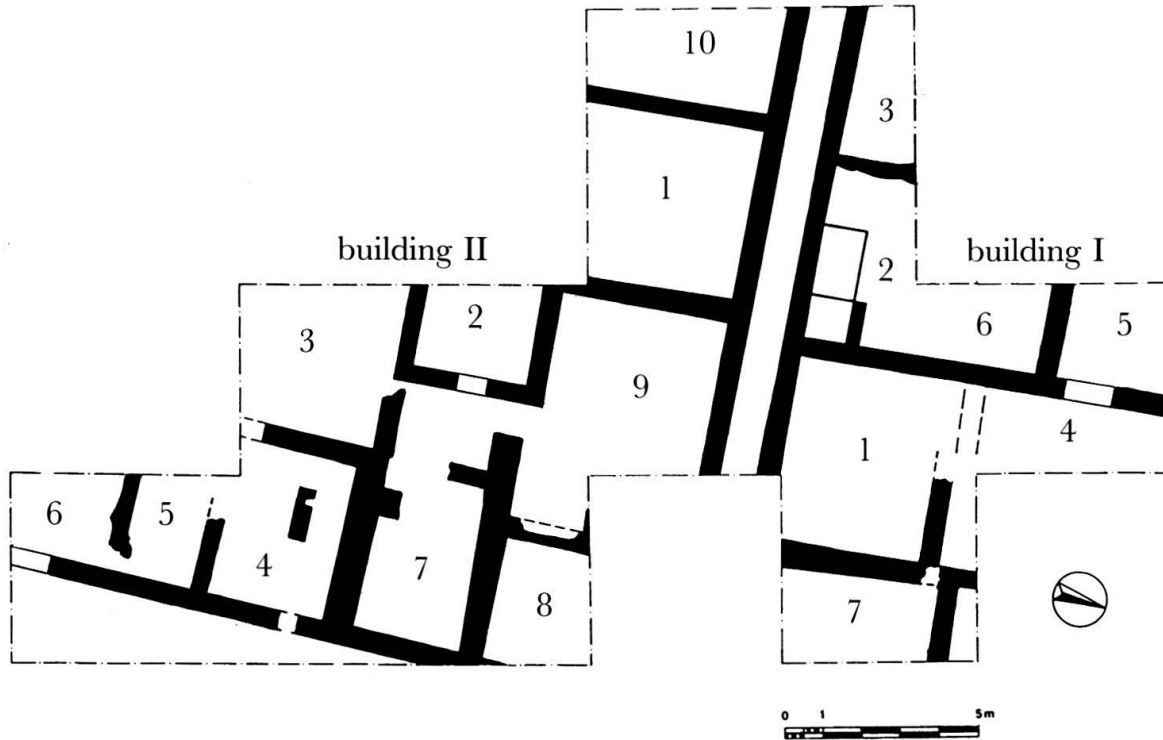


Fig. 2: American excavations at contrada Mella, Oppido Mamertina: detailed plan 1987.

Central area of habitation, building I

Locus 27

A soil layer blackened by intense burning activity due to the heating of water in room 2 of the norther most house first explored in 1984 (building I), which has been identified as a bathroom. Materials from locus 27 include a rim fragment of a bowl Morel series 1313 datable possibly to the first half of the 2nd century B.C. (inv. OM 86/766, similar to OM 1, no. 428), and several fragments of Pompeian-Red ware datable to the 2nd century B.C. (OM 1, nos. 697, 701, 704, 717).

- 1 *Rhegium* (c. 203-89 B.C.)
AE, head of Athena l. / Athena Nikephoros standing l. (SNG ANS 756-760);
OM 1, no. 878

⁵ For a concise definition of locus as a discrete stratigraphic unit see e.g. W.G. Dever – H. Darrell Lance, *A Manual of Field Excavation. Handbook for Field Archaeologists* (Cincinnati/New York/Los Angeles/Jerusalem 1978), pp. 75-80.

- 2 AE, illegible / Athena Nikephoros standing l. (SNG ANS 756); OM 1, no. 879
- 3-4 *Mamertini* (c. 212-200 B.C.)
2 *pentonkia* with head of Zeus r. / Warrior r. (Särström XVI.A); OM 1, nos. 882, 887

Locus 1305

A fill inside the courtyard in building I excavated in 1987 (*Fig. 2*) representing the last phase of occupation. The ceramic finds in this locus include parts of an amphora Dressel types 2-4 datable to the first quarter of the 1st century B.C. (OM 1, no. 595).

- 5 *Brettii* (c. 215-203 B.C.)
AE, head of Nike l. / Zeus r. holding scepter and thunderbolt (SNG ANS 61); OM 1, no. 946

Locus 2213

The most recent habitation layer inside room 1 of building I. The ceramic finds in this locus include a cup handle Morel series 3221 datable to the second quarter of the 2nd century B.C., the bottom of a bowl Morel P151a1 (OM 1, no. 531) and rim fragments of bowls Morel espèce 1310 datable to the 2nd century B.C., fragments of a thin-walled beaker decorated with relief dots datable between the mid-2nd and the early 1st centuries B.C. (OM 1, no. 541), a lamp datable between the second half of the 2nd century and the early 1st centuries B.C. (OM 1, no. 559), and fragments of an amphora Dressel type 1 datable between the early 2nd and the early 1st centuries B.C. (OM 1, no. 589).

- 6 *Mamertini* (c. 220-216 B.C.)
Pentonkion with head of Ares l. / Warrior leading horse l. (Särström XI.A); OM 1, no. 983

Locus 2213 also yielded a Roman *sextans* (RRC 56/6) overstruck probably upon a Syracusan *litra* of Hieron II (OM 1, no. 1036, *Fig. 3*).



Fig. 3: Coin from locus 2213.

Locus 2209

The most recent habitation layer inside a room in building I which has not been excavated. The fine ware finds from this locus include fragments of pyxides datable to the 2nd century B.C.

- 7-8 *Mamertini* (c. 212-200 B.C.)
2 *pentonkia* with head of Zeus r. / Warrior r. (Särström XVI.A); OM 1, nos. 995-996

Locus 2208

The most recent habitation layer inside room 7 in building I. The ceramic finds in this locus include part of the bottom of a small cup (?) with foot Morel P133a1 datable to the second half of the 2nd century B.C., fragments of a pyxis datable to the 2nd century B.C., and a rim fragment of a transport amphora datable to the first half of the 2nd century B.C.

- 9 Syracuse (c. 330-316 B.C.)
AE, head of Apollo l. / Pegasus l. (SNG Cop 736-742); OM 1, no. 1006
- 10 Syracuse, Agathokles (304-290 B.C.)
AE, bust of Artemis r. / Winged thunderbolt (SNG Cop Sicily 779); OM 1, no. 1009

Locus 2212

Roof collapse inside room 1 in building I datable to the early 1st century B.C.

- 11 *Mamertini* (c. 212-200 B.C.)
Pentonkion with head of Zeus r. / Warrior r. (Särström XVI.A); OM 1, no. 1001

Locus 2212 also yielded a Roman as minted c. 211-169 B.C.; OM 1, no. 1037.

Central area of habitation, building II

Locus 16

The most recent habitation layer in room 1 of the southernmost house explored in 1984 (building II). The excavation of this locus yielded a Pompeian-Red ware rim datable to the 2nd century B.C. (OM 1, no. 716), a bronze attachment for a situla of Beaucaire type dated between the late 2nd and the first half of the 1st centuries B.C. (OM 1, no. 802), and a fragmentary bronze vessel handle dated between the 2nd century and the beginning of the 1st century B.C. (OM 1, no. 804).

- 12 *Brettii* (c. 215-203 B.C.)
AE, head of Zeus r. / Eagle l. on thunderbolt (SNG ANS 134); OM 1, no. 862

- 13 *Locri Epizephyrii* (3rd century B.C.)
AE, head of Athena l. / Eagle l. on thunderbolt (SNG ANS 553 var.); OM 1, no. 867
- 14 AE, similar to the preceding (SNG ANS 553-554); OM 1, no. 868
- 15 AE, similar to the preceding; OM 1, no. 869
- 16 AE, illegible / Eagle r. (SNG ANS 557); OM 1, no. 871
- 17 AE, head of Persephone r. / Athena l. (SNG ANS 563); OM 1, no. 872
- 18 AE, jugate heads of Dioscuri r. / Zeus seated l. (SNG ANS 583-585); OM 1, no. 873
- 19 AE, similar to the preceding; OM 1, no. 874
- 20 *Rhegium* (3rd century B.C.)
AE, head of Artemis l. / Lyre (SNG ANS 734); OM 1, no. 876
- 21 *Rhegium* (c. 203-89 B.C.)
Pentonkion with janiform female head / Asklepios seated l. (SNG ANS 745); OM 1, no. 877
- 22 *Mamertini* (c. 212-200 B.C.)
Pentonkion with head of Zeus l. / Warrior r. (Särström XVI.A); OM 1, no. 881
- 23 AE, similar to the preceding; OM 1, no. 884
- 24 Syracuse (c. 310-290 B.C.)
AE, head of Persephone l. / Butting bull l. (SNG ANS Sicily 572-596); OM 1, no. 893
- 25 AE, similar to the preceding (SNG ANS Sicily 597-601); OM 1, no. 895
- 26-35 Group of 10 bronze coins, including:
 - Brettii* (c. 215-203 B.C.)
Head of Zeus r. / Warrior r. (SNG ANS 102); OM 1, no. 928
 - Locri Epizephyrii* (3rd century B.C.)
Head of Athena l. / Winged thunderbolt (SNG München 1521); OM 1, no. 929
 - similar to the preceding (cf. SNG ANS 444-445); OM 1, no. 930
 - Head of Athena l. / Eagle l. on thunderbolt (SNG ANS 552-553); OM 1, no. 931

3 coins similar to the preceding; OM 1, nos. 932, 933, 934

Catana (after 211 B.C.)

Head of Apollo (?) r. / Figure standing r. (?) (cf. SNG ANS 1278-1282); OM 1, no. 935

2 illegible coins; OM 1, nos. 936, 937

36-42 Group of 7 bronze coins, including:

Locri Epizephyrri (3rd century B.C.)

4 coins with head of Athena l. / Eagle l. on thunderbolt (SNG ANS 552-553); OM 1, nos. 938, 939, 940, 941

2 coins with jugate heads of Dioscuri r. / Zeus seated l. (SNG ANS 583-585);⁶ OM 1, nos. 942, 943

Rhegium (3rd century B.C.)

Head of Artemis r. / Lyre (SNG ANS 734); OM 1, no. 944

Locus 16 also yielded the following Roman coins:

- 1 plated *denarius*, c. 212-101 B.C.; OM 1, no. 913
- 1 *denarius* of Q. Pilipus, 129 a.C. B.C. (RRC 259/1); OM 1, no. 917
- 1 plated *denarius* of C. Fundanius, 101 B.C. (RRC 326/1); OM 1, no. 918
- 1 illegible bronze, 2nd – 1st century B.C.; OM 1, no. 921

Locus 6208

The most recent habitation layer in room 6 of building II excavated in 1987. The fine wares from this locus include fragments of a bowl Morel espèce 1310 datable to the 2nd century B.C., part of the foot of a bowl Morel espèce 2250 datable to the mid-2nd century B.C., and the bottom of a small cup or bowl with foot Morel P222a1 datable to the end of the 2nd / 1st centuries B.C.

43 *Brettii* (c. 215-203 B.C.)

AE, head of Zeus r. / Warrior r. (SNG ANS 102-103); OM 1, no. 948

44 *Mamertini* (c. 212-200 B.C.)

Pentonkion with head of Zeus r. / Warrior r. (Särström XVI.A); OM 1, no. 1004

Locus 6212 = 5219

The most recent habitation layer in room 5 of building II. Materials found in this locus include the bottom of a small cup Morel P222a1 datable to the end of the 2nd / 1st centuries B.C. (OM 1, no. 526) and fragments of Pompeian-Red ware.

⁶ Another specimen bearing these types was misplaced during cleaning, and may be identified with OM 1, no. 874.

- 45 *Brettii* (c. 215-203 B.C.)
AE, bust of Nike l. / Zeus in biga l. (SNG ANS 112); OM 1, no. 949
- 46 Syracuse, Hieron II (c. 240-215 B.C.)
AE, head of Poseidon l. / Trident between dolphins (SNG Cop 844); OM 1, no. 1020
- Locus 5219 also yielded a Roman Republican *as*, c. 158-146 B.C.; OM 1, no. 1046.

Locus 6213

An earlier habitational layer beneath locus 6208. The ceramic finds in this locus include the bottom of a small cup or bowl with foot Morel P133a1, datable to the second half of the 2nd century B.C., and fragments of Pompeian-Red ware.

- 47 *Locri Epizephyrri* (3rd century B.C.)
AE, head of Persephone r. / Athena standing l. (SNG ANS 563 var.); OM 1, no. 959
- 48-49 *Rhegium* (c. 203-89 B.C.)
2 *pentonkia* with janiform female head / Asklepios seated l.; OM 1, nos. 974, 975

Locus 6213 also yielded the following Roman bronze coins:

- 1 *triens*, c. 211-169 B.C.; OM 1, no. 1044
- 1 *triens*, c. 169-158 B.C.; OM 1, no. 1045
- 1 *as*, c. 158-146 B.C.; OM 1, no. 1054

Locus 5220

An earlier habitational layer beneath locus 5219 inside room 4 in building II. The fine ware finds from locus 5220 include fragments of a bowl Morel series 1313 datable to the 3rd / 2nd centuries B.C., 3 fragments of a bowl Morel series 1313 datable to the 2nd century B.C., a fragment of a bowl Morel series 1315 datable c. 250-150 B.C., a rim fragment of a bowl Morel series 2252, and a handle fragment of a cup Morel series 3120, both datable to the 2nd century B.C.

- 50 Syracuse, Agathokles (c. 310-290 a.C.)
AE, similar to the preceding; OM 1, no. 1013
- Locus 5220 also yielded a Roman Republican *as*, c. 211-169 B.C.; OM 1, no. 1039.

Locus 4312

A habitational layer inside room 9 in building II, which contained fragments of Pompeian-Red ware.

- 51 Syracuse, Hiketas (289-287 B.C.)
AE, head of Persephone r. / Nike in biga r. (SNG Cop 805-806); OM 1, no. 1019

Locus 15

A soil layer representing the phase of abandonment and collapse of room 1 in building II. Materials in this locus include a rim fragment of a bowl Morel series 1151 datable to the first decades of the 1st century B.C. (OM 1, no. 422), a rim fragment of a bowl Morel series 2252 datable to the 2nd century B.C. (OM 1, no. 444), a rim fragment of a bowl Morel espèce 1440 datable to the 2nd half of the 2nd – 1st centuries B.C. (OM 1, no. 536), a base of a footless bronze jug of Gallarate type datable to the late 2nd – early 1st centuries B.C. (OM 1, no. 798), and a handle fragment of a bronze beaker of Idria type datable to the last decades of the 2nd century – first half of the 1st century B.C. (OM 1, no. 803).

- 52 *Locri Epizephyrii* (3rd century B.C.)
AE, head of Athena l. / Winged thunderbolt (SNG Cop 1875); OM 1, no. 866
- 53 AE, head of Athena l. / Eagle l., wings open (SNG Cop 1879); OM 1, no. 870
- 54 *Mamertini* (c. 212-200 B.C.)
Pentonkion with Head of Zeus r. / Warrior r. (Särström XVI.A); OM 1, no. 883

Locus 3304

The abandonment and destruction stratum blanketing room 9 of building II and the *ambitus* (drainage alley) between the buildings. Even though the latest pottery in this layer consisted of a rim fragment of a bowl Morel espèce 1310 datable to the 2nd century B.C., locus 3304 overlay locus 3308 - 2/3506 = 14, which yielded fragments of two grey ware bowls Morel espèce 2260 datable to the second half of the 2nd / early 1st centuries B.C. (OM 1, nos. 537, 538).

- 55 Syracuse, Agathokles (c. 310-290 B.C.)
AE, head of Persephone l. / Butting bull l. (SNG Cop Sicily 860-867); OM 1, no. 1010

Locus 4303

A soil layer representing the phase of abandonment and destruction of building II in the early 1st century B.C. The ceramic finds in this locus include

fragments of Pompeian-Red ware and of a Graeco-Italic amphora datable to the 2nd century B.C. (OM 1, no. 574).

- 56 *Rhegium* (c. 203-89 B.C.)
Pentonkion with janiform female head / Asklepios seated l. (SNG ANS 745); OM 1, no. 973
- 57 *Mamertini* (2nd century B.C.)
Tetras with head of Apollo r. / Nike standing l. (Särström XIX.Ac, nos. 388-391); OM 1, no. 1005
- 58-59 Syracuse, Agathokles (c. 310-290 B.C.)
2 AE coins with head of Persephone l. / Butting bull l. (SNG Cop Sicily 860 ff.); OM 1, nos. 1016-1017

Locus 5203

The abandonment and destruction stratum inside room 4 in building II, whose ceramic contents include the bottom of a small cup or bowl with foot Morel P222a1 datable to the end of the 2nd / 1st centuries B.C. Two of the *Pentonkia* nos. 62-66 were found loose in soil together with 2 Roman *asses* of reduced uncial weight.

- 60 *Rhegium* (c. 203-89 B.C.)
Halved *pentonkion* with janiform female head / Asklepios seated l. (SNG ANS 745); OM 1, no. 966 (*Fig. 4, 1*)
- 61 *Mamertini* (c. 220-216 B.C.)
pentonkion with head of Ares l. / Warrior leading horse l. (Särström XI.A); OM 1, no. 981 (*Fig. 4, 2*)
- 62-66 *Mamertini* (c. 212-200 B.C.)
5 *pentonkia* with head of Zeus r. / Warrior r. (Särström XVI.A); OM 1, nos. 990-994 (*Fig. 4, 3*; OM 1, no. 992)

Locus 5203 also yielded the following Roman bronze coins:

- 1 *triens*, c. 211-169 B.C.; OM 1, no. 1043 (*Fig. 4, 4*)
- 3 *asses*, c. 158-146 B.C.; OM 1, nos. 1047, 1048, 1049
- 1 *uncia*, c. 169-132 B.C.; OM 1, no. 1055

Locus 5303

The abandonment and destruction stratum inside room 3 in building II, whose ceramic contents include a rim fragment of a medieval or modern bowl.



Fig. 4: Coins from locus 5203.

- 67 *Rhegium* (3rd century B.C.)
AE with lion's head facing / Head of Apollo l. (SNG ANS 689-692); OM 1, no. 964 (*Fig. 5, 1*)
- 68 *Mamertini* (c. 212-200 B.C.)
Pentontkion with head of Zeus r. / Warrior r. (Särström XVI.A); OM 1, no. 997 (*Fig. 5, 2*)

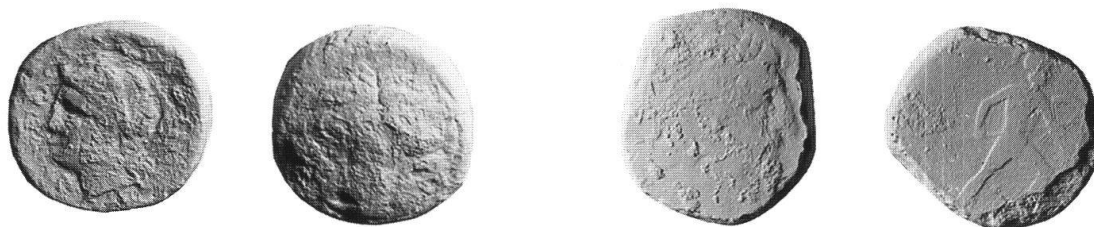


Fig. 5: Coins from locus 5303.

Locus 5304

Roof collapse inside room 3 of building II datable to the early 1st century B.C. This unsealed layer, which was contaminated by the removal of locus 5302 (colluvium) or locus 5303, yielded the foot of a glass vessel datable to the 1st century A.D. (OM 1, no. 792).

- 69 *Rhegium* (c. 203-89 B.C.)
Pentonkion with janiform female head / Asklepios seated l. (SNG ANS 745);
OM 1, no. 968

Area on the hilltop

Locus 130

A clay layer sealing a water conduit installed between the end of the 2nd and the second quarter of the 1st centuries B.C. into the street on the hilltop (excavated in 1986). The ceramic contents of locus 130 included part of a thin-walled beaker decorated with relief dots datable between the mid-2nd and the early 1st centuries B.C., and fragments of two transport amphorae Dressel type 1 and Dressel types 2-4 datable between the 2nd and the early 1st centuries, and to the first quarter of the 1st century B.C. respectively.

- 70 *Brettii* (c. 215-203 B.C.)
AE, head of Ares l. / Hera Hoplosmia r. (SNG ANS 94); OM 1, no. 861
(Fig. 6)



Fig. 6: Coin from locus 130.

Locus 140

Represents an episode of dumping of brick and tile and ceramic, metallic, and organic waste into the southeastern room of a Hellenistic house on the hilltop shortly before the house was abandoned in the early first century B. C. The fine ware fragments found in locus 140 include parts of a cup Morel series 3221 datable to the first quarter of the 2nd century B.C. (OM 1, no. 488).

- 71 *Brettii* (c. 215-203 B.C.)
AE, head of Amphitrite l. / River crab (SNG ANS 8-10, 67-68, 120-125);
OM 1, no. 856
72 AE, head of Zeus r. / Eagle l. (SNG ANS 44-59); OM 1, no. 857

Locus 145

Represents another dumping of brick and tile, pottery, scraps of metal, and organic remains into the same room of the house. The ceramic finds in this locus include fragments of transport amphorae of the second half of the 2nd century B.C.

73 *Brettii* (c. 215-203 B.C.)

AE, head of Amphitrite l. / River crab (SNG ANS 93); OM 1, no. 860

These finds clearly indicate that 4th- and 3rd-century Greek bronze coins struck by several mint-cities or minting authorities (*Locri Epizephyrii*, *Rhegium*, Syracuse, the *Brettii*, and the *Mamertini*) circulated at contrada Mella at least until the second quarter of the 1st century B.C., when our Italic town ceased to exist. Since the period between 200 B.C. and the Social war was a time of great prosperity for the *Tauriniani*, the use of «old» Greek bronzes did not hamper their commercial economy. It is also noteworthy that, in one instance, Mamertine *pentonkia* were found associated with reduced uncial *asses*, and it has been suggested that old *pentonkia* may have been equivalent to Roman uncial *semisses*⁷. In contrast, no Greek silver coins (except for a plated Corinthian stater) have hitherto been found, which would confirm that all Greek currency disappeared from circulation after the end of the Hannibalic conflict.

When one compares the number of Greek coins found in 2nd- and early 1st-century B.C. contexts (73) from the 1984 and 1986-1987 excavations with the total number of Roman coins found (39), there can be no doubt that Greek coinage played a major role in local circulation in the late Hellenistic period. Some of these bronzes admittedly could be residual or intrusive, particularly when found in unsealed layers. But the ratio of coins per mint is consistently high. Moreover, the pattern of wear of several Mamertine *pentonkia* found in contexts datable to the 1st century B.C. since 1987 attests to a prolonged use of these issues.⁸ For reasons yet to be fully

⁷ See P. Visonà, in: OM 1, p. 382 n. 9.

⁸ P. Visonà, Gli scavi americani a contrada Mella (Oppido Mamertina), 1987-1991: Risultati e prospettive, *Klarchos* 32, nos. 125-128, 1990 [1992], p. 82; Visonà – Frey-Kupper I, p. 84, n. 29. Worn Mamertine *pentonkia* have been found at Monte Iato in contexts of the second quarter of the 1st century A.D.: see S. Frey-Kupper, La circolazione monetaria a Monte Iato dall'inizio della dominazione romana fino all'età tiberiana, in: Giornate internazionali di studi sull'area elima. Gibellina, 19-22 Settembre 1991, Atti (Pisa/Gibellina 1992), p. 286, n. 22. However, a more detailed study of the stratigraphic horizons (early imperial layers) at Monte Iato suggests that some of these *pentonkia* might be considered as residual coins. The Morgantina excavations have yielded several Mamertine *pentonkia* in deposits ranging in date from 210 B.C. to the second half of the 1st century B.C.: see R. Ross Holloway, Catalogue of Stratigraphically Related Coins: 1955-1962, in: T.V. Buttrey *et al.* (eds.), *The Coins. Morgantina Studies II* (Princeton 1989), pp. 170-182; T.D. Groves, Catalogue of Stratigraphically Related Coins: 1963-1981, *ibid.*, pp. 192-196.

understood (The Tauriani's political autonomy after 200 B.C. ? The impracticality of replacing a mass of «old» Greek bronze coins with Roman Republican denominations ? Problems with the supply of Roman bronze coinage to this corner of the *ager Bruttius* after the conquest ?⁹), the circulation of coinage at contrada Mella during the Romanization seems to have become – at least partly – immobilized.

Additional evidence that would support this conclusion has come to light from the exploration of a Roman building which was constructed above the central north-south street after the abandonment of the Italic settlement, and was occupied at least until the mid-1st century A.D. The excavation in 1996 in one of the rooms of this building yielded a *litra* and a *tetras* of Agathokles, a *dilitron* of Hieron II, a Mamertine *pentonkion*, 2 Brettian bronzes, a Roman Republican *as* of uncial or reduced uncial weight, and a *semis* of *Valentia*, in association with fragments of Italian sigillata pottery and of Roman glass vessels datable to the 1st century A.D. The least circulated coin was the specimen of *Valentia*.¹⁰ Since these coins were found (mostly lying flat) within a dirt floor sealed by a thick layer of roof and wall collapse, it seems quite plausible that all or most of them were still being used in the Julio-Claudian period. To argue that they were already in the fill which was brought in to make the floor when the building was constructed would fail to explain both their horizontal position within the clay matrix of the floor, and their association with Roman materials. It seems safe to infer from these data that 4th- and 3rd-century Greek bronze coins continued to be a large percentage of the circulating medium at contrada Mella at least until the beginning of the Empire.

How widespread may have been the use of subsidiary Greek bronze coinage in *Bruttium* during the Romanization is still unclear. At Locri, which kept its Greek identity throughout the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C., albeit within an unceasingly smaller urban area,¹¹ virtually no Greek bronze coins are known to have been found in late Hellenistic deposits.¹² However, archaeologists may have paid little attention

⁹ Cf. Arslan, pp. 53-54. It is perhaps premature to suggest that the use of «old» Greek coins was in response to, or to offset «una progressiva e sempre maggiore difficoltà per Roma nel rifornire di moneta bronzea il territorio sempre più vasto dei propri domini», or a scarcity of «forti contingenti di divisionali dell'*as*» (*ibid.*, p. 54). Virtually all the fractions of the *as* are represented among the coin finds from contrada Mella.

¹⁰ See P. Visonà, Continuità di circolazione di moneta greca nell'*ager Bruttius* in epoca tardo-repubblicana. I dati stratigrafici da contrada Mella (Oppido Mamertina), *Klarchos* 38-39, nos. 149-156, 1996-1997, pp. 237-241.

¹¹ See M. Rubinich, Tracce di età tardo-ellenistica a Locri Epizefiri: il contributo dei recenti scavi al tempio di Casa Marafioti, *Klarchos* 38-39, nos. 149-156, 1996-1997, pp. 189-199.

¹² F. Barelli, Le monete, in: M. Barra Bagnasco (ed.), Locri Epizefiri IV. Lo scavo di Marasà Sud. Il sacello tardo arcaico e la «casa dei leoni» (Firenze 1992, p. 344: «La moneta greca più recente rinvenuta, un *trias* di *Rhegion* [...], è forse l'unica testimonianza di una frequentazione della necropoli d'età romana imperiale.» Barelli excludes the possibility that this coin, which was found in the fill of a Roman tomb of the early Empire, was still in circulation when the tomb was closed: see *ibid.*, n. 58.

to these contexts until the 1970s.¹³ Since nearly 50 bronzes of *Rhegium* minted ca. 203-89 B.C. come from the excavations conducted at this site, and from its surroundings, there is hardly any doubt that Greek coinage continued to circulate after the end of the Hannibalic war.¹⁴ A similar situation may have occurred at *Petelia*, as the contents of a pot hoard unearthed at Strongoli in 1996 would suggest.¹⁵ Smaller towns, such as the *Tauriani*'s hillsite at contrada Mella (*Mamertion*?), would have followed a common practice rather than being trend-setters.

The resulting picture – even with the limitations imposed on it by the fragmentary nature of the evidence – is that of a very dynamic use of small value currency in the *ager Bruttius* after the Roman conquest. Far from being an indicator of economic stagnation, the movement of old and current Greek bronze coins within the region, concurrently with the influx of Roman coinage, and the production of colonial issues of *Copia* and *Valentia*, could reflect the demands of an active and fully monetized economy in the last centuries of the Republic.

Résumé

Dans un premier article déjà consacré à la circulation monétaire dans l'*ager Bruttius* sous domination romaine, les mêmes auteurs avaient présenté un recensement des trouvailles de monnaies émises après la fin de la deuxième guerre punique (RSN 75, 1996, pp. 77-100). La présence, aux côtés des monnaies romaines, de pièces frappées par les colonies de *Copia* et de *Valentia* ainsi que par la ville de *Rhegium* permettait de conclure à une circulation monétaire à caractère mixte.

La présente étude poursuit la recherche en se concentrant sur les trouvailles monétaires d'un site particulier, à savoir Mella à Oppido Mamertina (*Mamertion*?). Parmi les 243 monnaies découvertes au cours des fouilles de 1984 et de 1986-1987, seules celles qui proviennent des couches stratigraphiques des deux derniers siècles avant J.-C. sont ici analysées. Sur 89 pièces, on ne compte que 16 monnaies romaines contre 73 grecques, dont une bonne partie remonte aux IV^e et III^e siècles avant

¹³ Several unpublished Greek coins from the Locri excavations in the collection of Reggio Calabria's Museo Archeologico Nazionale, including Mamertine and Brettian issues, may have circulated locally in the late Hellenistic period: see E. Pozzi Paolini, *La moneta a Locri*, in: D. Musti (ed.), *Le tavole di Locri. Atti del colloquio sugli aspetti politici, economici, culturali e linguistici dei testi dell'archivio locrese*, Napoli 26-27 aprile 1977 (Roma 1979), pp. 162-163. A bronze specimen of the Illyrian King Ballaios found at Centocamere in 1952 probably arrived at Locri before the Empire: see P. Visonà, *Coins of Ballaios found in Italy*, *Vjesnik za Arheologiju i Historiju Dalmatinsku* 78, 1985, p. 120, no. 17.

¹⁴ Visonà – Frey-Kupper I, pp. 98-99.

¹⁵ Arslan, pp. 45-47; for a similar hoard from Strongoli (complete ?) see also *ibid.*, p. 44, n. 18. The presence of Greek bronze coins in late Hellenistic contexts in *Bruttium* casts doubt on F. Van Keuren's claim, based mainly on the composition of a hoard from Policoro including 381 bronze coins of *Heraclea* in Lucania and 8 *denarii* minted between 138 and 122 B.C., that *Heraclea* struck bronze coins in the late 2nd century B.C. See: P. Visonà, review of F. Van Keuren, *The Coinage of Heraclea Lucaniae*. Città di Castello 1994, *JRA* 10, 1997, p. 335.

J.-C. (Ce sont notamment des bronzes de Locres, *Rhegium*, Syracuse, des *Brettii* et des Mamertins).

Même s'il est probable que quelques-unes de ces monnaies font partie d'un matériel résiduel, la forte proportion des monnaies grecques, ainsi que leur usure, suggère que le rôle joué par ces dernières dans la circulation monétaire était plus important qu'on ne le pensait jusqu'à présent. Ainsi, de nombreux indices témoignent d'une utilisation prolongée de ces pièces, au moins jusqu'au deuxième quart du I^{er} s. av. J.-C. quand l'habitat italique des *Tauriani* cesse à Mella. La découverte de monnaies dans le sol en terre battue d'une maison construite après cet abandon fournit d'ailleurs des arguments supplémentaires pour corroborer l'interprétation proposée. Le sol scellé par une épaisse couche de destruction contenait une *litra* et un *tetras* d'Agathoclès, un *dilitron* de Hiéron II, un *pentonkion* des Mamertins, deux bronzes des *Brettii*, un *as* de la République romaine et un *semis* de *Valentia* ainsi que des fragments de terre sigillée et de verre du I^{er} s. ap. J.-C. De plus, les trouvailles récentes à *Petelia* (Strongoli) mènent à des conclusions semblables. Il est pourtant impossible, pour l'instant, de préciser l'étendue de l'utilisation de monnaies grecques comme numéraire subsidiaire dans le *Bruttium* à l'époque romaine.

Les raisons exactes de l'utilisation prolongée des bronzes grecs dans le *Bruttium* restent à éclaircir (l'autonomie politique des *Tauriani* après 200 av. J.-C., l'impossibilité de remplacer la masse de pièces grecques par des monnaies romaines ou encore la difficulté de repourvoir l'*ager Bruttius* après sa conquête avec du numéraire de la République romaine ?). Aucun indice, cependant, ne permet d'interpréter ce phénomène comme un signe de marasme économique. Au contraire, la période entre 200 av. J.-C. et la guerre sociale, pendant laquelle on observe la circulation de vieux numéraire à Mella, témoigne d'une grande prospérité. L'utilisation contemporaine de monnaies grecques des IV^e et III^e s. av. J.-C., de pièces de la République romaine et des émissions de *Copia* et de *Valentia* pourrait refléter les besoins d'une économie active et dynamique, friande de petit numéraire en bronze.

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