

## Counter-stamping coins in Hellenistic Crete. A first approach

The practice of countermarking was popular in the mints of Crete during certain periods of their production<sup>1</sup>. This paper is a first approach of a wider project to gather, classify and present chronologically the types of Cretan counterstamps from the early 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BC down to the Roman era. The aim is to compile an updated catalogue of countermarked Cretan coins for future reference.

So far gold and silver coinages of the hellenistic period have been surveyed and some preliminary results are presented in this paper, concerning five main groups of countermarked coinage. Typology and iconography are used as a tool to identify the mints to which counterstamps may belong, while the phenomenon is examined within the historical context of each period.

### 1. *Silver coinage countermarked in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BC (300-280/70)*

A good number of coins dated in the first decades of the third century B.C. bear countermarks. In the 60s' Le Rider made a detailed study of the early third century countermarks on Cretan coins, compiling a catalogue of coins in museums, collections and in the trade<sup>2</sup>. **Table A** represents the results of limited research carried out on the application of countermarks on coins of the major mints of Crete in that period<sup>3</sup>. The study, based on a total of 157 countermarked specimens, 23 of which are new coins<sup>4</sup>, provides the following information:

1. The object of countermarking on Cretan pieces were exclusively staters with the only exception of one drachma from Knossos<sup>5</sup>.
2. Only one example of silver foreign coin is known to have been countermarked in Crete in this period, namely that of Zakynthos (stater)<sup>6</sup>.
3. The largest number of coins listed were included in hoards buried in the decade 280-70 BC, giving us a date for the countermarking between 290 and 270 BC.<sup>7</sup>

4. The study bears witness as to which coinages were the most common on Crete at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Most of the stamped coins belong to Knossos, Kydonia and Lyttos, which along with the coins from Gortyna, Phaistos, Rhaukos and Eleutherna account for more than 75% of the known countermarked specimens.

An earlier explanation for the counterstamping, according to which at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC forgeries had raised such concern on Crete, that towns had to guarantee the quality of their coinage by way of countermarking<sup>8</sup>, seems unlikely. Furthermore it is highly improbable that a town would have re-issued its own striking, since there is no knowledge of any debasement in metal or weight in that era. Besides, counterstamping was carried out on contemporary coins and not on older ones, withdrawn from circulation. Therefore the 17 different types of countermarks, appearing on staters from 17 local and 1 foreign mint without any logical sequence, are regarded as stamps from towns, which were in urgent need of supplementary resources and thus counterstamped foreign coins in their possession. In fact this counterstamping was a simple means of converting foreign coins into domestic currency, rather than overstriking them, a method more time and cost intensive<sup>9</sup>.

1. For countermarking in Crete see Stefanakis 1999, 262; Stefanakis 1997, 104-108, 128-129; Manganaro 1978, 61ff; Le Rider 1966, 199-215.

2. Le Rider, 1966, 199 ff.

3. Results reached here are based on specimens originating from the works of Le Rider 1966 and Stefanakis 1997, on published Cretan Hoards in *CH* and Touratsoglou 1995, p. 48f, as well as on Auction Sale Catalogues.

4. To the 134 specimens from Le Rider, 8 specimens are added from Stefanakis 1997 (Kydonia), and 15 from ASC.

5. Le Rider 1966, 204, no 5, pl. XXXII, 2.

6. Le Rider 1966, 206, no 34, pl. 32, 21. The circulation of coins from Zakynthos at this period is attested on Crete. One piece was overstruck at Gortyna and two other by Gortyna and Phaistos (Le Rider 1966, 127, 206).

7. Le Rider 1966, 211-215; Garraffo 1974, 61, dates the countermarking to the years 290-80 BC.

8. Manganaro 1978, 236

9. Stefanakis 1997, 104 and Le Rider 1966, 213 ff.

Countermarks on AR staters	I	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13-14	15	16	17
	Shield	C	Bull's head	Framed	ΔA-MI	Δ-A	Δ	Letter uncertain	Framed	Plain	Two Crescents	Dolphin	Square	Skew	Uncert.	Three torques
MINTS																
1 Aptaera	*			*												
2 Axos	*															
3 Chersonesos											*					
4 Eleutherna	*			*	*				*		*					
5 Gortyna	*			*	*				*		*					
6 Knossos	*	*	*	*	*			*	*		*		*	*	*	*
7 Kydonia	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*			*	*	*
8 Lyttos	*	*	*	*	*			*	*		*					
9 Moda	*		*									*				
10 Phaiastos	*							*			*		*			
11 Phalasarna	*		*													
12 Polythemia	*	*	*				*									
13 Praisos	*	*	*					*	*					*		
14 Priansos	*															
15 Rhaukos	*											*				
16 Sybrita	*	*	*						*						*	
17 Tylissos	*	*			*											
18 Zakynthos	*		*													

Table A: Distribution of countermarks on Cretan issues in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC

Countermarking in this period seems to have been a common practice accepted and practiced by almost every mint of the island. This being the case, it renders redundant any assumption that would explain the various countermarks as personal badges of individual officials. They should rather be conceived as city symbols.

If one assumes that countermarks depict ethnic types, however in a very basic form and of a much smaller size, then attribution of countermarks to certain mints may become possible through process of elimination. The study of the different types of countermarks has led to a wide variety of interpretations, but one has to consider the countermarks in relation to current coin-types. **Table A** lists the types and numbers of countermarks on Cretan and foreign coins, using the classification established by Le Rider.

The most common countermark (fig. 1) has been identified in the past as a sun, a lebes, a pomegranate, a globe, a shield, a nail, a patera, a group of cups, a kernos or a decorative motif<sup>10</sup>, the countermark is most likely a *shield*, as Comparetti first pointed out in 1893<sup>11</sup>, if one is to compare it stylistically with the shield motive on the bronze coins of Polyrrhenia (fig. 2). However the attribution to this mint, as has earlier been suggested<sup>12</sup>, becomes doubtful, since stateres of Polyrrhenia are now known to have borne the countermark<sup>13</sup> along with the coins of almost every other mint on the island. The only exception is Chersonesos, but the type recalls nothing of the cities' coin types.

The second most common countermark after the shield is the *bull's head* (fig. 3), which could belong to Gortyna, Lappa, Moda, Phaistos, Polyrrhenia or Praisos, all considered possible candidates since they all depict a bull's head on their coins<sup>14</sup>. Polyrrhenia can be ruled out because her coins had already been stamped with the specific badge. Attribution to Praisos and Phaistos can also be overruled due to the completely different style of the type. Moda and Lappa seem to be the most likely candidates, since no coin from these mints is known to bear bull's head countermarks. While the depiction of the bull's head on the countermark is very similar to the depiction on the reverse of the stater from Moda (fig. 4), if, however, one is to discern the formation of the letter ? on top of the bull's head<sup>15</sup>, then Lappa (fig. 5) is most probably the mint that re-issued coins using this countermark type.

The *caduceus* (fig. 6) is the third most common countermark, for which five variants are known. Most frequently two pairs of letters are represented next to the caduceus, probably the letters  $\Delta$ - $\text{IM}$ , supposedly the proper name of  $\Delta\alpha\iota\mu\alpha\chi\omicron\varsigma$ , which is attested in Olous in the third or second century. On other countermarks the caduceus appears with two letters, which are interpreted as  $\Delta$ - $\text{A}$ , while in a few cases the caduceus is combined only with the letter  $\Delta$ . On several specimens the letter or the symbol cannot be identified.<sup>16</sup>

Candidate mints for the caduceus countermarks can be: Sybritos, Lato, Phaistos and Gortyna, all of which use Hermes or the caduceus as types on their coins<sup>17</sup>. The caduceus countermark has been applied though on coins of Gortyna and Phaistos, ruling those mints out. The fact also that minting did not begin in Lato until the second century BC<sup>18</sup>, leaves Sybritos (fig. 7) as the most probable mint of origin.

Phalasarna, Priansos, Rhaukos or Rithymna could all lay claim to the countermark in the shape of a *dolphin* (fig. 8), since all these cities depict dolphins on their coins<sup>19</sup>.

The countermark of the *three crossed torches* (fig. 9) registered by Le Rider as "contremarque incertaine"<sup>20</sup>, is probably the symbol of Aptera (fig. 10), while the *skew pattern* countermark (fig. 11) can be suitably attributed to Kydonia, a loan from the reverses of the last pseudo-aiginetan issues with the circular incuse<sup>21</sup>.

10. See Le Rider 1966, 202-3 with relevant references.

11. Comparetti 1893, 359, n. 1.

12. Stefanakis 1997, 107

13. Arch. Deltion 1967, Chronicles I, 9, pl. 7, 18

14. For relevant coin-types see for example Svoronos 1890: Gortyna (pl. XIII, 17-21), Lappa (pl. XIX, 30), Moda (pl. XXII, 20-21), Phaistos (pl. XXIII, 17-23), Polyrrhenia (pl. XXVI, 1-7), Praisos (pl. XXVII, 13-20).

15. Le Rider 1966, 204, sees  $\Lambda$  or  $\Delta$  on top of bull's head.

16. On the identification and interpretation of letters see Le Rider 1966, 207-209.

17. For Hermes or Caduceus as a coin-type see for example Svoronos 1890: Lato (pl. XX, 20-22), Sybritos (pl. XXX, 16-18) and Le Rider 1966: Gortyna (pl. XI, 10), Phaistos (pl. XX, 23).

18. Picard 1990, 109-110.

19. Manganaro 1978, 237 attributes the dolphin countermark to Rhaukos. For the type of dolphin see Svoronos 1890: Phalasarna (pl. XXV, 15-18), Priansos (pl. XXVIII, 25-26), Rhaukos (pl. XXIX, 9, 21-36), Rithymna (pl. XXX, 4-9).

20. Le Rider 1966, 211, no 17

21. Stefanakis 1999, 252, fig. 5; Stefanakis 1997, 86ff., group 6.

The type of the *blank square patterns* (fig. 12) has not yet been attributed to any mint<sup>22</sup>, neither have the two variations of the *bunch of grapes* (fig. 13). It appears both on coins of Kydonia and of Sybritos, which are also the only mints on Crete using a bunch of grapes for coin-types<sup>23</sup>. It is also not

possible to suggest attributions for the *dotted C* (fig. 14) and the *two crescents*<sup>24</sup> (fig. 15) on a stater of Eleutherna.

The suggested attributions of countermarks are therefore as shown on **Table B**:

No ( <i>Le Rider</i> )	Countermark type	Probable provenance	Possible provenance
1	Shield	?	
2	C	?	
3	Bull's head	Lappa	Moda?
4-8	Caduceus	Sybritos	
9-10	Bunch of grapes		Kydonia? Sybrita?
11	Two crescents	?	
12	Dolphin		Rhaukos? Priansos? Phalasarna ? Rithymna?
13-14	Square pattern	?	
15	Skew pattern	Kydonia	
16	Uncertain	?	
17	Three torches	Aptera	

Table B. Suggested identification of countermarks of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century

Trying to find a pattern for the occurrence of counterstamped coins, the mints, coins of which were counterstamped are compared in **Table C** with:

- a. all the known Cretan mints,
- b. the cities participating in the treaties with Miletus of around the middle of third century BC and
- c. the mints, coins of which appear in the coin hoards buried around 280/270 BC. The total sum of staters, which were discovered in these hoards is stated, as well as the known countermarked specimens.

One can discern the relative coin output of the various cities. Research of the 8 known coin hoards<sup>25</sup> shows the eminent cities as anticipated: Gortyna, Knossos, Phaistos, Lyttos and Kydonia, and it is not surprising that their coins had been counterstamped most frequently. Although coins from the cities of the three alliances were predominantly countermarked, a systematic pattern for counterstamping cannot yet be recognized. As has already been shown in **Table A** almost every countermark appears on coins of more than one mint in various parts of the island, indicating an extensive circulation of all coinages in this period.

## 2. *The coinage of Hyrtakina and Lissos*

Worth mentioning here is the countermarking of the coins of Hyrtakina by Lissos. Hyrtakina minted coinage of small denominations in gold, silver and bronze and Lissos seems to have countermarked all of them. The very rare issue of gold obols and hemiobols from Hyrtakina depicting a dove flying to the right on both sides, bear a square countermark of the letters Λ and I (fig. 16) making the coins legal tender for Lissos.

22. The interpretation of Manganaro 1978, 237 as a Π is doubtful.  
 23. For the type of grapes see Svoronos 1890: Cydonia (pl. IX, 19-21), Sybritos (pl. XXXI, 15). For a western provenance of bronze coins with a bunch of grapes as reverse type see G.K. Jenkins, "the Cameron collection of Cretan coins", *NC* 1949, 51-52.  
 24. The interpretation of Manganaro 1978, 237 as an X and thus a badge for Chersonesos is improbable.  
 25. IGCH 151, 152, 153, 154; IGCH 109-CH VII, 70; Touratsoglou (1995): Central-South Crete 1991; Ceratocambos 1992 (?); Crete 1958-59.

<i>Cretan mints</i>	<i>Participants in the Treaties with Miletus*</i>	<i>Coin-Hoards of 280/70 BC</i>	<i>Qf<sup>■</sup></i>	<i>Countermarked issues</i>	<i>Qf<sup>■</sup></i>
Knossos	<b>ΚΝΟΣΣΟΣ</b>	Knossos	<b>71</b>	Knossos	<b>33</b>
Apollonia	Apollonia (K)				
Axos	Axos (K)	Axos	<b>8</b>	Axos	<b>1</b>
Chersonesos	Chersonesos (K)	Chersonesos	<b>15</b>	Chersonesos	<b>2</b>
	Dreeros (K)				
Eleutherna	Eleutherna (K)	Eleutherna	<b>21</b>	Eleutherna	<b>9</b>
	Eltyna (K)				
	Herakleion (K)				
	Istron (K)				
Itanos	Itanos (K)	Itanos	<b>12</b>		
Kydonia	Kydonia (K)	Kydonia	<b>43</b>	Kydonia	<b>34</b>
Lato	Lato (K)				
	Milaros (K)				
Olous	Olous (K)				
Phalasarna	Phalasarna (K)	Phalasarna	<b>10</b>	Phalasarna	<b>7</b>
Praisos	Praisos (K)	Praisos	<b>23</b>	Praisos	<b>3</b>
Priantos	Priantos (K)	Priantos	<b>3</b>	Priantos	<b>2</b>
Rhaucos	Rhaucos (K)	Rhaucos	<b>23</b>	Rhaucos	<b>8</b>
Tylissos	Tylissos (K)	Tylissos	<b>8</b>	Tylissos	<b>5</b>
Gortyna	<b>GORTYNA</b>	Gortyna	<b>153</b>	Gortyna	<b>8</b>
Ariaioi	Ariaioi (G)				
Arkades	Arkades (G)	Arkades	<b>1</b>		
Hyrtaikina	Hyrtaikina (Hyrtaioi) (G)				
Lyttos	Lyttos (G)	Lyttos	<b>41</b>	Lyttos	<b>12</b>
Phaistos	<b>ΦΑΙΣΤΟΣ</b>	Phaistos	<b>70</b>	Phaistos	<b>7</b>
	Matalon (Ph)				
Polyrhenia	Polyrhenia (Ph)	Polyrhenia	<b>6</b>	Polyrhenia	<b>2</b>
Allaria	(A)				
Anopolis	(A)				
Aptera	(A)	Aptera	<b>10</b>	Aptera	<b>2</b>
Biannos	(A)				
Elyros	(A)	Elyros	<b>2</b>		
Hierapytna	(A)				
Kantanos	(A)				
Keraia	(A)				
Kyrtion	(A)				
Lappa	(A)				
Lissos	(A)				
Mala	(A)				
Moda	(A)			Moda	<b>1</b>
ΠΟ..	(A)				
Polichne	(A)				
Rithymna	(A)				
Sybritos	(A)	Sybritos	<b>16</b>	Sybritos	<b>4</b>
Tanos	(A)				
Tarra	(A)	Tarra	<b>1</b>		

Table C. Cretan mints, alliances, hoards and countermarks

\* (K) = allied with Knossos, (G) = allied with Gortyna, (Ph) = allied with Phaistos, (A) = autonomous (?)

■ based on limited research

Exactly the same applies to the silver obols of Hyrtakina with a dolphin on the obverse and a flying dove on the reverse (Weber Coll. 4497, pl. 163). After the application of the countermark the coin bears two ethnics. The letters  $\Upsilon\text{P}$  for Hyrtakina on the obverse and the letters  $\Lambda\text{I}$  for Lissos on the reverse. This is something that was soon to happen on the common coinage of Hyrtakina and Lissos, without the need of a countermark.

Apparently the countermarked denominations are to be considered as the earliest coinage of the alliance between the two cities dating some time within the first half of the third century, leading to the Orioi Confederacy. A precise date for the alliance, however, remains to be determined<sup>26</sup>.

3. *Gortynian silver drachms countermarked in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. BC.*

A great number of light (ca. 4.60 gr.) gortynian silver drachms (fig. 17) –depicting the head of laureate Zeus to the right on the obverse, and an unveiling Europa on the back of the galloping bull on the reverse– dated around or shortly after the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century<sup>27</sup>, have undergone intensive and multiple countermarking<sup>28</sup>.

Whenever marked, the obverse of the coin always bear a countermark of a butting bull to the right

(fig. 18), and the reverse always bears the head of a laureate Apollo r. with a quiver on his shoulder (fig. 19)<sup>28</sup>. Of 24 specimens recorded from trade, 18 carry the countermarks. 2 more countermarked specimens were contained at the Gortyna/1966 hoard<sup>30</sup>, dated to the second half of the second century BC (IGCH 338).

Jackson believes that the small bronze series of Apollo/butting bull (fig. 20), issued originally after 250<sup>31</sup>, continued for a number of years after the Lyttian war, while the silver drachms were possibly minted to commemorate the alliance of 221 BC.<sup>32</sup> The countermarking of some of them with butting bull and head of laureate Apollo with quiver naturally suggests a connection with the smallest silver pieces of this type<sup>33</sup>. Jackson suggested that silver was countermarked soon after issuing, possibly by a “moneyer putting out an issue of small Apollo/butting bull bronzes, perhaps in the period soon after the Lyttian war”<sup>34</sup>.

4. *Foreign coins countermarked in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC*

An interesting phenomenon occurred sometime towards the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, when a number of foreign coins are found to bear Cretan countermarks. The following cases are known today:

<i>Foreign coin</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Countermark</i>	<i>Cretan mint</i>
Miletian drachm (Alexander) <sup>35</sup>	3,95 gr.	ca. 323	Square labyrinth within circular incuse	Knossos
Miletian didrachm (local) <sup>36</sup>	10,50 gr	3 <sup>rd</sup> century	Square labyrinth within circular incuse	Knossos
Hecatompylos or Artacoana tetradrachm (Seleucos II) <sup>37</sup>	17,07 gr	246-226	Square labyrinth within circular incuse	Knossos
Rhodes tetradrachm (Alexander) <sup>38</sup>	17,17 gr	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of 3 <sup>rd</sup> century	Square labyrinth within circular incuse	Knossos
Pixodaros of Caria (didrachm) <sup>39</sup>	6,88 gr.	340-334	Triton/Glaucus	Itanos

Table D. Foreign coins countermarked on Crete in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century

26. On the Orioi Confederacy see Stefanakis 2000, 251-252; Chaniotis 1996, 421-422; Mikroyannakis 1967, 68-71; Faure 1959, 202; Van Effenterre 1948, 120-7; Guarducci 1938, 50-55; Svoronos 1888, 380-387.  
 27. Le Rider 1966, 245 and n. 1, pl. XLII, 17-18.  
 28. Such drachms are met in the coin trade quite frequently over the last ten years or so, are liable to come from an unknown large find.  
 29. See for example CNR 19.2, 1994, 85; CNG 41, 19.iii.1997, 503; Svoronos 1890, 172, 116-118.  
 30. Price 1966, 136-137.  
 31. Jackson 1971, 42.  
 32. On the pancretan alliance of 221 against Lyttos see Chaniotis 1996, 36-38.

The only provenance recorded for the above coins, is that of the Rhodian tetradrachm piece, and that is Crete<sup>40</sup>, while the appearance of the Pixodaros coin in an auction among a collection of Cretan coins, makes its Cretan provenance most likely<sup>41</sup>.

The type of square labyrinth (fig. 21) is undoubtedly the civic badge of Knossos, and especially during the years after 300 (fig. 22)<sup>42</sup>.

The type of *Triton* or *Glaucus* (fig. 23), the bearded sea-god with the body of a fish, holding a trident, is a unique type for Crete and the badge of Itanos (fig. 24), situated in the far north-east of Crete. This countermark has been therefore attributed to that city<sup>43</sup>.

The Miletian drachm of Alexander dates in the second half of the fourth century (ca. 323), and would nicely fit among the countermarked Cretan coins of the early third century, along with the foreign coin of Zakynthos. The labyrinth countermark, however, binds it to a larger group of countermarked coins originating from south-west Asia Minor, where the much later Seleucid coin (246-226) and the posthumous Alexander of Rhodes (2<sup>nd</sup> half of 3<sup>rd</sup> cent.) set the chronological context for the countermarking to the second half of the third century.

Although the same argument cannot justify a later date for the countermarking of the Pixodaros didrachm, it is possible to downdate it to the second half of the third century based on the characteristic it shares with the above mentioned group of coins: they all represent diverse weight standards, which do not comply with the known Cretan standard of the early third century<sup>44</sup>. Such coins would only be accepted for circulation on Crete after the pause of silver minting by Cretan cities, sometime around 270/50, and before the resuming of silver minting at the beginning of the second century<sup>45</sup>.

Looking for a period suitable for the acceptance of the coins from south-west Asia Minor, by Knossos and Itanos, one would suggest the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, a period poor in bullion, during which lower weight or debased coins were randomly minted by only a handful of Cretan mints<sup>46</sup>, and especially the years following the political disturbances that led to the fall of Lyttos (221)<sup>47</sup>. Besides, towards the end of the third century large numbers of Cretan colonists, previous mercenaries,

are known in Milet, Aspendos, and in the Seleucid kingdom<sup>48</sup>. In Miletos only, 3000-4000 Cretans are estimated to have settled<sup>49</sup>. In addition, 3000 Cretans are reported to have served in the army of Ptolemy IV Philopator and fought in the battle at Raphia, in 217 BC, under the command of Knopias of Allaria (Polyb. v 65, 3.6; 7, 10), while 2500 Cretans under Eurylochos and Zelys of Gortyna served in the opponent army of Antiochos III (Polyb. v 79.10)<sup>50</sup>. The relation of Crete to Cretan settlers in Asia Minor and the return of mercenaries to Crete, would account for the import of diverse "eastern" coins, which, due to lack of silver and the needs of the times, would be countermarked and used as legal tender by the recipient cities.

### 5. *Rhodian and pseudo-Rhodian drachms at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. BC.*

Pseudo-Rhodian drachms, imitating the then current Rhodian coinage were minted on Crete, around 200 BC, either by Rhodian generals and magistrates or by local mints of eastern or central Crete, related to or controlled by Rhodians, in order to cover the expenses of the "Cretan war" and pay mercenaries<sup>51</sup>. Such an urgent need for money would justify their debased metal<sup>52</sup>. As such, Cretan imitation would only be

33. Jackson 1971, 46

34. Jackson 1971, 47

35. Berlin Cabinet. Le Rider 1966, 266, pl. XXXV,44, following M. Thompson and A.R. Bellinger, "A Hoard of Alexander Drachms", *Yale Cl.St.* XIV (1955), 25, 38, no 69.

36. Florence Cabinet. Le Rider 1966, 266

37. Berlin Cabinet. Le Rider 1966, 266, pl. XXXV, 45, following Newell 1938, no 735  $\delta$  (for type see BMC Ionia pl. XXI, 13).

38. The British Museum Cabinet. Le Rider 1966, 266, pl. XXXV, 46; W. Worth, "Greek Coins acquired by the BM", *NC* 1893, 10-11, no 18.

39. *Münzen und Medaillen* 66, 22.x.1984, 145. Konuk 1993, 240-241, fig 3, 3a

40. Le Rider 1966, 266.

41. Konuk 1993, 240.

42. Le Rider 1966, 195.

43. Konuk 1993, 240.

44. For the Cretan standard see Stefanakis 1999, 260-264.

45. On the pause of minting for Crete see Stefanakis 2000, 202.

46. On lack of silver on Crete and eastern Mediterranean in general see Stefanakis 2000, 201ff. Stefanakis 1997, 148-166.

47. On the period see Chaniotis 1996, 32-38.

47. Launey 1949/50, I, 277ff; Brulé 1978, 163ff.

49. Brulé 1978, 168

50. On the battle of Raphia see Launey 1949/50, I, 257; Gehrke 1990, 112, 207ff.

51. Barrandon & Bresson (1997), 146-147; Ashton (1987a), 33-34.

52. On the low consistency in silver for the pseudo-Rhodian coinage see Ashton 2001, 88, n. 47; Barrandon et Bresson 1997.

accepted by specific cities and it seems that these coins, and Rhodian coinage in general, was not that preferred in central and western Crete. Many specimens originating in the west half of the island underwent countermarking or overstriking in order to become legal tender. However it should be more a rejection of the Rhodian types rather than an adjustment problem to the Rhodian weight standard<sup>53</sup>.

Pseudo-Rhodians bear a number of countermarks: Pan, Monogram  $\text{P}\Delta$ , a bull's head, and a bust of Nike<sup>54</sup>. These countermarks have been attributed with more or less certainty to specific mints: Pan (fig. 25) to Kydonia (fig. 26), monogram  $\text{P}\Delta$  (fig. 27) to Aptera (fig. 28)<sup>55</sup>, bull's head to Polyrrhenia(?)<sup>56</sup>, the bust of Nike (fig. 29) to Kydonia(?) (fig. 30) or Gortyna(?)<sup>58</sup>.

Since the majority of attributions is considered secure, that shows scepticism of certain mints towards the acceptance of the pseudo-Rhodian series, which they attempt to legalise by countermarking<sup>59</sup>. In Kydonia for example the pseudo-Rhodians are countermarked with the head of Pan in order to supplement as a higher denomination the pan-hound silver trihemibols (Seager 1924, pl. V, K-L), minted in massive quantities at the beginning of the second century BC.<sup>60</sup> It is not coincidental that this practice applies to mints of the western part of the island (Polyrrhenia, Kydonia, Aptera), which are situated far away from the site of the Cretan War, and which may not be well acquainted with the circulation of Rhodian coinage.

In addition to the above mentioned coins, there is a Rhodian tetradrachm (*BMC Caria*, 125, pl. XXXVIII, 2, 13.26 gr) of the end of the third century BC, signed by Eukrates, which bears a bull's-head countermark. Because the provenance of the coin is not recorded and the countermark is different in style from the relevant Cretan, the attribution of the countermark to Crete is doubtful. Head notes that the countermark on the Rhodian tetradrachm might be of Knidos, since the bull's-head is among the coin types on the city's bronze issues of the period<sup>61</sup>.

## Conclusion

It is certain that the coinage of Crete presents very interesting features of countermarking during the Hellenistic era. The phenomenon can be explained in many different ways: as an easy solution towards the limited silver resources of the island, or the urgent need for coinage in periods of emergency, as upgrading or legalisation of older or foreign issues to circulate along new ones, or as a result of alliances.

Extremely challenging remains the study of the countermarking of the bronze coinages on the island and of the Roman era coinages<sup>62</sup>. These however remain to be closely examined in the near future.

53. Stefanakis and Stefanaki (forthcoming).

54. While some of them, retrieved in Asia Minor, bear countermarks of Lyra, Cithara + K-Y, and Chimera. See Ashton 1987b, 14-24 and Stefanakis and Stefanaki (forthcoming).

55. Ashton assigns the three known examples (Ashton 1987a, 32, n. 7 and 33) of the head of Pan countermark to Eleutherna (Ashton 1987a, 20), based on similar types attributed to that mint by Le Rider (1966, 245-8, esp. 248, n. 1). Pan however, as main coin-type is attested on the numerous silver trihemibols of Kydonia of the beginning of the second century. See Stefanakis 1997, 195-200, esp. 195-6, 198.

56. For the monogram of *Aptera* see Svoronos 1890, *Aptera* nos 22, 32, 38, 62, 72. On the Apterean monogram as a countermark, applied on bronzes of Eleutherna and the possible relation of the two cities at the beginning of the second century, see Stefanakis 1997, 238, n. 21, Svoronos 1890, *Eleutherna* no 39. Ashton (1987a, 34) mentions two examples of pseudo-Rhodian drachms bearing the Apterean monogram as a countermark.

57. Bull's-head, however, is a coin-type for many more Cretan mints. Ashton (1987a, 32, n. 7 and 35 and Ashton 1987b, 20) mentions two such countermarked examples. It is worth mentioning here that the only known, to date, overstrike on pseudo-Rhodian coin of Ashton's 6? series, is attributed to Polyrrhenia (Ashton 1987a, 32).

58. The countermark is attributable to Gortyna only on the grounds of provenance for many of the countermarked coins of  $\text{I}\text{O}\text{P}\text{T}\text{I}\text{O}\Sigma$  (Price 1966, 128-130). The type of the countermark however has neither parallel on the coinage of Gortyna, nor is used to counterstamp other Gortynian issues. Kydonia, on the other hand can be the mint of origin for the countermark since it is the only city on Crete to mint a bronze series with Nike on the obverse. See Svoronos 1890, pl. IX, 41.

59. The same happened to the Rhodian and pseudo-Rhodian coins which circulated in Lycia under Rhodian occupation in 180-170 (Ashton 1987b, 14-18, 22-24). They underwent countermarking, possibly in order to become legal tender for the revolted Lycian cities. see Ashton 1987b, 20.

60. For the coins and the contents of the Chania 1922 hoard see Stefanakis 2002.

61. On the bronzes of Knidos with the bull's-head type see: *BMC, Caria*, pl. XV, 19.


62. There is no study of the countermarks on bronze Cretan coins whatsoever, while the countermarking of Roman provincial coinage on Crete has been talked by Metenidis 2000.

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