The Hellenistic World

Coinage is one of our key sources for the rich and fascinating history of the Hellenistic world (323–31 BC). This book provides students of the period with an up-to-date introduction to Hellenistic gold, silver and bronze coins in their cultural and economic contexts. It also offers new perspectives on four major themes in contemporary Hellenistic history: globalization, identity, political economy and ideology. With more than 250 illustrations, and written in a lucid and accessible style, this book sheds new light on the diverse and multicultural societies of the Hellenistic world, from Alexander to Augustus. The author assumes no prior knowledge of Hellenistic history, and all Greek and Latin texts are translated throughout.

Peter Thonemann is Fellow and Tutor in Ancient History at Wadham College, University of Oxford. His first sole-authored monograph, The Maeander Valley (Cambridge, 2011), was awarded the prestigious Runciman Prize in 2012. More recently, he has published a large corpus of inscriptions from Roman Asia Minor (Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua XI: Monuments from Phrygia and Lykaonia, 2013) and has edited two collections of essays on the history of Asia Minor in antiquity (Attalid Asia Minor, 2013 and Roman Phrygia, Cambridge, 2013).
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General Editor
Andrew Meadows, *University of Oxford*

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Titles in the series
The Hellenistic World: Using Coins as Sources

*by Peter Thonemann*
The Hellenistic World
Using Coins as Sources

PETER THONEMANN
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<td>‘New Style’ wreathed tetradrachm of Athens (130/29 BC), from the Agrinion hoard.</td>
<td>16.79</td>
<td>ANS 1963.31.270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.27</td>
<td>Roman denarius in the name of M. OPEIMI(US) (c. 131 BC), from the Agrinion hoard.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>ANS 1963.31.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.28</td>
<td>Roman denarius in the name of Q. PILIPUS (129 BC), from the Agrinion hoard.</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>ANS 1963.31.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.29</td>
<td>Tetradrachm of Amyntas of Galatia (c. 37/6–25 BC).</td>
<td>15.96</td>
<td>ANS 1944.100.62286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>Tetradrachm of Side (c. 185–170 BC).</td>
<td>16.43</td>
<td>ANS 1944.100.50927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.31</td>
<td>Late Republican imitation tetradrachm of Side (c. 40–20 BC).</td>
<td>15.85</td>
<td>ANS 1944.100.50929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.32</td>
<td>Bronze coin of Apamea in Phrygia, struck under Severus Alexander (AD 222–35).</td>
<td>20.22</td>
<td>SNG Von Aulock 3506. Photograph © the author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.33</td>
<td>Gold stater of Sauromates I of the Cimmerian Bosporus (AD 120).</td>
<td>7.80</td>
<td>ANS 1944.100.41026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.34</td>
<td>Drachm of Artabanus IV of Parthia, struck at Ecbatana (AD 216–24).</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>ANS 1944.100.83566</td>
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9.37. British 50 pence piece. Photograph © the author. 189

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10.1. The minting of ancient coins. 200
This book is an introduction to the coinages of the Hellenistic world, from the campaigns of Alexander the Great in the late fourth century BC to the Roman conquest of the eastern Mediterranean. Rich and fascinating as it is, this period poses particular challenges for historians. For much of the Hellenistic era, narrative sources are entirely lacking. The Hellenistic historian therefore has to master a wide range of different kinds of source material: inscriptions, papyri, archaeology, Alexandrian poetry, and of course coinage. The aim of this book is to show how coins can help us to understand the varied societies and cultures of the Greek-speaking world during the last three centuries BC.

The book is structured around four main themes, all of them concepts of central importance in recent work on the period. The first theme (covering Chapters 1 and 2) is globalization. The Macedonian conquest of the Near East created a new monetary ‘world-system’, stretching from northern Gaul to the central Asian steppe. The coinages of Alexander the Great and his early successors served as a kind of common language for monetary cultures throughout this ‘big’ Hellenistic world. Chapters 3 to 5 explore the second major theme of identity. Greek cities, regional leagues, and Hellenized peoples on the fringes of the Graeco-Macedonian world all used coinage as a means of representing their distinctive cultural and political identities. The third theme, discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, is political economy. The use of coined money underwent radical changes during the Hellenistic period, both at the macro-level of state and civic economies, and at the micro-level of coin use by individuals. The fourth and final theme is ideology. In Chapters 8 and 9, we shall look at the representation of power on Hellenistic coins, first by the rulers of the major Graeco-Macedonian kingdoms, and finally by the Romans who succeeded them across much of the Greek-speaking world during the second and first centuries BC. The book also has an unobtrusive forwards motion, travelling from the decades after Alexander’s death (Chapter 1) to the organization of Rome’s eastern provinces in the last decades of the Roman Republic (Chapter 9).
Like all specialist disciplines, ‘numismatics’ (the study of coins, *nomismata* in Greek, *nummi* in Latin) has its own technical jargon: obverse and reverse, dies, weight-standards, denominations and so forth. The reader is urged to make use of the Appendices on pp. 193–200 (Glossary of numismatic terms; Denominational systems; The manufacture and material of ancient coinage). All ancient sites and mints mentioned in the text will be found on the maps on pp. xxvii–xxx.

I am grateful to Volker Heuchert, Chris Howgego, Lisa Kallet, Jack Kroll, Sarah Thonemann and Liv Yarrow for their critical comments on earlier drafts of this book. Volker Heuchert (Ashmolean Museum), Victor England (Classical Numismatic Group), Paul Hill (Baldwin’s), Shanna Schmidt (Harlan J. Berk), Alain Baron (Numismatica Genevensis), Philip Kinns, Rick Witschonke and Richard Ashton kindly assisted with coin images. Financial support was generously provided by the Leverhulme Trust and the American Numismatic Society. I am once again indebted to Michael Sharp, my editor at Cambridge University Press. My warmest thanks are reserved for Andrew Meadows (American Numismatic Society), *il miglior fabbro*. The book is dedicated to Sarah, with love.
Abbreviations

Abbreviations of Greek and Latin authors and works follow *The Oxford Classical Dictionary, Third Edition Revised*, eds. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (Oxford, 2003). The following special abbreviations are also used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.Délos</td>
<td>Inscriptions de Délos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IG</td>
<td><em>Inscriptiones Graecae</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAC</td>
<td><em>Numismatica Ars Classica</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEG</td>
<td><em>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNG</td>
<td><em>Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Maps
Map 1 The Peloponnesian and southern Greece
Map 3 Western Asia Minor
Map 5 Western Europe