The Hellenistic World

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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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The Hellenistic World: Using Coins as Sources
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The Hellenistic World
Using Coins as Sources

PETER THONEMANN
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<td>ANS 1963.31.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.28</td>
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<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>
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<td></td>
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Preface

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, *nomisma* 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–xxxi.

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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:


**FGrHist** F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin and Leiden: 1923–.

**I.Délos** *Inscriptions de Délos*.


**IG** *Inscriptiones Graecae*


**NAC** *Numismatica Ars Classica*


**SEG** *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*

**SNG** *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*