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ARKADIUSZ DYMOWSKI

Nummi serrati, bigati et alii. Coins of the Roman Republic in East-Central Europe North of the Sudetes and the Carpathians. Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press, 2016, 430 pages, 85 plates; ISBN 978-83-235-2462-5

KYRYLO MYZGIN

Roman Republican Coins and Their Imitations from the Territory of Ukraine and Belarus (Римские республиканские монеты и их имитации с территории Украины и Беларуси). Warsaw: University of Warsaw Press, 2017, 290 pages, 31 plates; ISBN 978-83-235-2720-6

The publishing house of the University of Warsaw has recently issued two important books. Their subject matter concerns finds of Roman Republican coins in East-Central Europe, particularly north of the Sudetes and Carpathians, from areas in present-day Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. The publications are the result of research conducted as part of the project *Coins of the Roman Republic in Central Europe*, which commenced in the year 2014 and is financed by the National Science Centre.

In recent years, we can see intensification with regard to research on the recording of finds of ancient coins. Thanks to the project *Roman Coin Finds in Poland* (FRCPL), which is under the direction of Prof. Aleksander Bursche of the University of Warsaw, an extensive database has been created, which contains a large number of the recorded finds of ancient coins. The creation of the database is the result of collaboration between many Polish numismatists. The recording of ancient coins on a large scale began in the 1950s, with the inauguration of the project *Coin Finds of the Roman Period in Germany*. This project resulted in a number of catalogues but also in co-operation between many academic centres in Europe, e.g. in the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, and Poland. Because many of the assemblages of ancient coins found in the territory of present-day Poland have been described and published in Polish, it has been difficult to make their presence known on the international academic scene. Forthcoming catalogues, which are due to be published as part of the project, as well as the presently reviewed monographs, which have been published in English, shall be a significant source of information and an incentive for further research and discussion. Also worth recalling is the important contribution that these two scholars have made in the recording of coins recovered with the use of metal detectors by so-called prospectors. Thanks to these

scholars' activity, we now possess a substantial amount of information. It may be that some of it is still incomplete, but it certainly supplements our current knowledge of the numerous, often essential, coin finds which have not been included as part of any formalized recording and inventory. It is also worth stressing that the international conferences, workshops, projects, and publication of numerous articles and monographs on various aspects of numismatics are all a testimony to the position of Poland as an important and growing centre for research on the inflow of Roman imports into the area that is called the Central-European Barbaricum.

The authors of these publications are experienced scholars, ones who have researched the subject of finds of ancient coins for many years. Their work has resulted in the publication of numerous articles, often concerning new finds, hitherto unpublished, and the analyses thereof, focused mainly on the chronology of the arrival of coins to particular territories.¹ To date, finds of Roman Republican coinage have not been discussed in the form of a more thorough and in-depth study that would also embrace a broader context.² It is therefore worth noting that these two publications will be a valuable resource of knowledge to all those interested in the topic. Both titles are now being published in English, which should make it easier to popularize, at an international level, the updated information on recent finds of Roman Republican coins. Additionally, the monograph by Myzgin is provided with the original text in Russian.

The way in which the content has been arranged in the two books is clear and well-structured. The monograph by Arkadiusz Dymowski opens with a foreword written by Professor Aleksander Bursche, who stresses how important it is that these coin finds were recorded, and the current state of the research into this issue, with reference to the historical, archaeological, and numismatic evidence. There is also an introductory chapter by the author, who comments on the project called *Coins of the Roman Republic in Central Europe* (p. 15) and goes on to present the fundamental facts on the subject, discussing the relevant chronological details, territorial extent, and the state in which the coins were found. The author gives us a summary account of the history and the characteristics of Roman Republican coinage, presenting the basic information in an accessible way, which makes the publication useful not only to scholarly circles, but also to the general public. A wider cultural context, specifically regarding the area where the coins in question appear, is provided in the next chapter. The author speaks from a somewhat broader chronological and territorial framework, with the aim of explaining the settlement location of the particular cultures, their influences and interrelations, incorporating a number of relevant historical events,

¹ E.g. DYMOWSKI 2011; DYMOWSKI and MYZGIN 2014.

² E.g. DYMOWSKI 2013; DYMOWSKI 2014; MYZGIN 2015; MYZGIN 2016.

especially as regards the relations between the Romans and the Barbaricum (pp. 39–44). From a fairly general and broad view of the cultural context, the author arrives at the more specific subject of ancient coins in East-Central Europe. This chapter includes information about finds of Greek and Roman coins, as based on the reported pieces' essential sources and catalogues. References to these Greek coins (in the names of Philip II and Alexander III) are significant with respect to the determined prototype for many imitation coins of Barbarian tribes (pp. 49–50). In the same chapter, the author cites and discusses particular hypotheses on the inflow of ancient coins into the territories of present-day Poland and some of Poland's neighbouring countries as well as the timeline horizons of these inflows. On account of the complex nature of this matter, it is not easy to determine the circumstances in which many of the individual pieces arrived, but the primary reasons were economic and political (pp. 54–55). In this regard, it would be difficult to avoid reflecting on the mention made of this by Tacitus in his *Germania* (p. 58).³ The finds of Roman Republican coins have been categorized according to the alloys and metals used to mint them. The first category consists of bronze coins, which are found only rarely; their presence could be attributed to the activity of Celts and the influx of Greek coinage (pp. 66–69). The author's interpretation of the significance of this bronze coinage is definitely of interest. The following chapter deals with a similar subject: finds of Roman Republican and early Imperial silver coins. Compared to the bronze coinage, there are many more coins of this kind available for analysis (664 pieces). That is discussed in the light of the latest finds, with such notable examples as the hoards found at Połaniec and Nowa Wieś Głubczycka (pp. 73–74), but also much more commonly represented single coin finds (p. 76). The data is presented in a clear way, in the form of maps, graphs, and tables. This information about the coins is explained in detail, with the possible reasons for – and directions of – the inflows also discussed. The author points to certain problems in this respect, ones which are mostly due to the limited number of finds in some of the regions, and stresses that it is necessary to obtain more information on new finds of Roman Republican coins. His analysis ends with a recapitulation in reference to the broader cultural context. The published material is complemented by a thoroughly prepared catalogue, which contains all the relevant information, including that which the author has come to on his own as well as that which he has obtained from various sources. As much as possible, tables with photographs of the coins have been added as well. The present monograph is of great value to specialists and the general public alike. The cultural, archaeological, and historical contexts, which are thoroughly addressed, serve two main purposes: to introduce the reader to each aspect, including a discussion

³ Tac. *Germ.* 5.

of the coins' history, but also to allow the author to examine each detail in order to formulate plausible hypotheses.

Complementing the book by A. Dymowski, the second title addresses problems related to the coins of the Roman Republic, including their imitations, and the recording of these finds in areas of present-day Ukraine and Belarus. This publication is very important in terms of its up-to-date research on finds of ancient coins in Eastern Europe. To date, the information on this subject has been based mostly on some older published material.⁴ K. Myzgin's monograph is focused on the current state of knowledge and the methods by which the relevant data has been obtained. Due to the large number of new coin finds (as a result of the use of metal detectors by many private prospectors, among other things), it has become essential to monitor, on a regular basis, all the information that is emerging on the finds of ancient (including Roman Republican) coins in this territory. Thanks to the international collaboration that has resulted as part of the above-mentioned project dedicated to finds of Roman Republican coinage, it has been possible to draw a more detailed view of the inflow of ancient coins into East-Central Europe.

The monograph begins with a discussion of the research conducted in the past, with reference to the related sources and publications, as well as certain problems and inaccuracies that the reader may be confronted with. It was a useful idea to add reference links to the websites where more information can be found on new coin finds from areas within present-day Ukraine and Belarus (pp. 16–18). Unfortunately, as the author observes, it is not always possible to obtain precise data on the actual location of each find. In turn, the lack of a definite archaeological context makes it more difficult to interpret the recorded material correctly. These issues are then elaborated on in subsequent chapters. Having obtained data from private sources, the author submits each find to critical analysis and proceeds to classify their authenticity according to four categories (p. 18). A very important part of the publication consists in statistical research based on the quantity of coins in the individual regions. Through the use of specific research methods and the presentation of the data by means of maps and diagrams, the author offers interesting insights into the distribution of the coin finds. In the following chapters, the author describes verified numismatic evidence from the period of the Roman Republic (325 silver coins, including imitations; no recorded bronze coins, p. 21). The precise descriptions of the archaeological context and the publications referring to the individual coin finds are also noteworthy. Each item of information and the coin find location have been thoroughly verified. A separate chapter gives an analysis of imitations of Roman Republican denarii. Sixty-seven coins have been classified

⁴ E.g. KROPOTKIN 1951; BRAICHEVSKII 1959; MAJEWSKI 1949.

into three types: the Geto-Dacian, the Eravisci, and the so-called “Mala Kopanya” type (p. 33). Having discussed the categories of the finds in detail, the author concentrates on the culture situation and the inflow of the coins into the individual territories, distinguishing four zones of distribution (p. 45). Also noteworthy, as the author emphasises, is the fact that these coin types are represented more in the Zolochiv micro-region; he also makes reference to the observations of Arkadiusz Dymowski, who gave his interpretation of the inflow of those coins (pp. 47–48). In conclusion, the author mentions the diversity of the finds in the particular regions and the possibility that analytical changes will be made in the light of successively emerging numismatic evidence. He calls attention to the need for further explorations as well as the need to draw an up-to-date map of the finds in East-Central Europe in order to view the specific pieces in a wider perspective. The question of the function of coins in Barbaric communities is not discussed, but this topic has already been partly addressed by A. Dymowski in his publication. The presentation of the subject is complemented by a catalogue in which the author makes an effort to provide, as much as possible, all the important details on the finds of Roman Republican coins from within areas of present-day Ukraine and Belarus. The analysis is complete with maps, tables, and diagrams showing chronological profiles of the finds from the individual regions. Tables with photographs of the coins are also provided. Another addition is an article by Yevhen Tkach regarding the culture situation in the region called the “Banks of the Zolochivka” and the prospective exploration of this area, in the valley of the Zolochivka River, north of the Upper Dniester, where the Przeworsk, Zarubintsy, and Lipitsa cultures lived adjacent to one another (p. 257).

The two monographs presently under review should be acknowledged as works of great value, works which attempt, for the first time, to offer a comprehensive view of the above-stated problems, so far only outlined in several articles. Both publications are the result of systematic work by the authors over a period of three years. The extensive catalogues delineating the finds, which catalogues were prepared on the basis of many pieces of information submitted for critical analysis, confirm each particular statement. A. Dymowski has produced a study of problems hitherto largely ignored, problems connected to the finds of Roman Republican coins in East-Central Europe, notably in territories north of the Sudetes and Carpathians. On the basis of the information that he obtained and through thorough analysis, he proposes some innovative methods for interpreting the distribution of these ancient coins. Myzgin’s volume is the first updated and verified study of the finds of Roman Republican coins in territories within present-day Ukraine and Belarus and is complementary to A. Dymowski’s publication from a broader perspective. We should also keep in mind that their research efforts will be updated with each new verified coin find.

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