

Zeitschrift: Schweizer Münzblätter = Gazette numismatique suisse = Gazzetta numismatica svizzera

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Numismatische Gesellschaft

Band: 43-47 (1993-1997)

Heft: 175-176

Buchbesprechung: Besprechungen = Comptes rendus

Autor: [s.n.]

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

Download PDF: 30.03.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Dietrich Mannsperger, Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum Deutschland, Münzsammlung der Universität Tübingen, 5. Heft, Karien und Lydien, München. Hirmer Verlag, 1994, [24] p. et [20] pl., ISBN 3-7774-6150-4.

Cinq ans après la parution du quatrième cahier, consacré aux régions de l'Asie Mineure s'étendant de la Mysie à l'Ionie, voici la publication du volume cinq de cette remarquable collection allemande, dévolu lui à la Carie et à la Lydie.

Pas moins de 580 monnaies y sont répertoriées, dont près de 30 apparemment inédites ou, du moins, prudemment qualifiées de telles («unpubliziert?»).

En majeure partie, la collection se compose de monnaies de bronze, très souvent d'ailleurs d'époque romaine. Relevons toutefois la présence d'un certain nombre de fractions de statère de Carie des V^e et IV^e s. av. J.-C. (atelier incertain), ainsi que d'une petite dizaine de monnaies du royaume de Lydie.

Géographiquement, deux ensembles plus vastes retiennent l'attention. Il s'agit d'une série assez représentative du monnayage de Rhodes, du IV^e s. av. J.-C. au III^e s. ap. J.-C. (59 exemplaires, sans compter les émissions de la Pérée rhodienne, attribuables à Mylasa), ainsi que de 54 bronzes de Sardes du II^e/I^{er} s. av. J.-C. au III^e s. ap. J.-C.

Parmi les monnaies publiées dans ce cahier, se trouve également une partie des trouvailles faites par l'archéologue allemand Rud. Herzog lors des fouilles de l'Asclépieion de Cos en 1903/4. Il s'agit de 36 bronzes de Cos même (IV^e s. av. J.-C.–II^e s. ap. J.-C.) qui lui furent remis avec quelques autres découvertes jugées de «moindre importance» par le musée ottoman de Stamboul, ce dernier ne conservant que les trouvailles plus représentatives (sculptures, etc., mais aussi monnaies), alors que la plus grande partie des inscriptions est restée au musée du site archéologique lui-même.¹

Comme pour les volumes précédemment parus, le catalogue donne une description complète des monnaies présentées, avec in-

dication des références utiles ainsi que d'éventuelles liaisons de coin. A relever encore que les publications les plus récentes dans chaque domaine sont très souvent fort judicieusement intégrées aux références citées, ce qui permet au lecteur, averti ou non, de s'orienter très rapidement sur tel ou tel sujet.

En conclusion, nous aimerions souligner ici l'intérêt de publier dans le cadre de la *Sylloge* des collections telles que celles de l'Université de Tübingen, d'importance moyenne quant à leur taille (mais ce qui signifie justement qu'elles sont publiables dans des délais et des conditions raisonnables!) et dont la composition, intéressante à plus d'un titre, justifie amplement les moyens mis en œuvre.

Marguerite Spoerri

Rodolfo Martini, Una collezione di monete romane imperiali contromarcate nel Gabinetto Numismatico di Locarno. ΚΟΙΝΩΝ Materiali e studi numismatici 1. Circolo Numismatico Ticinese/Città di Locarno, Dicastero Musei e Cultura, Gabinetto Numismatico – Casorella. Milano: Edizioni ennerre, 1993. 182 pp., 81 + 9 figs., 11 pls. No ISBN number.

This attractive volume, in Italian with a full English translation, marks both the beginning of what is intended to be a continuing series of monographs produced by the Circolo Numismatico Ticinese (*CNT*), and the start of the publication of the holdings of the newly founded Gabinetto Numismatico in Locarno. Both of these events are welcome ones.

The collection which this book describes consists of 61 countermarked Roman bronze coins now on deposit in the Gabinetto Numismatico in Locarno: they bear a total of 82 countermarks which are all catalogued individually. Each coin is illustrated normally on the plates, and then within the catalogue with both a 1:1 view of the coin on the axis of the countermark and a blow-up of the countermark itself. Thus, a coin bearing 4 countermarks, as 6, will be illustrated five times: as pl. I, 6, and within the countermark catalogue under numbers 6, 36, 50 and 68.

M begins his very short introduction by discussing the scholars who have previously

¹ Voir à ce propos R. Herzog, *Kos. Ergebnisse der deutschen Ausgrabungen und Forschungen*, Bd. 1, Asklepieion (Berlin 1932), p. XXX.

worked on countermarks, and the problems which were encountered and need to be solved. He then describes the two basic countermark types, those with letters or monograms, and those bearing symbols. A fine selective bibliography follows. I think it is a great pity that M did not take this opportunity to produce an extensive discussion of the field as a whole; perhaps listing all the major known countermarks on Roman coins (not just those present in this collection), and giving his own up-to-date commentary on their meaning. Having such an aid in Italian and English would have been a great boon, and would have made this volume much more than just another catalogue.

The catalogue first lists all the countermarks bearing letters or monograms in alphabetical order, and then lists the symbols, again in alphabetical order after the Italian name. Considering that countermarks were primarily applied in order to validate the circulation of a specific type of coin, it is understandable that many of the host coins are extremely worn, often nearly or totally illegible. Unfortunately, in some cases the countermarks are nearly illegible too (5, 20, 23–26, 28, 32, 34–36, 59, 62, 64, 65, 68, 75, and 81), both on the 1:1 photograph and on the blow-up (though it is possible that some of the countermarks would have been clearer, given the problems inherent in the direct photography of bronzes, if they had been photographed from casts).

I can not understand why such pieces were published in full, and so lavishly, rather than just being listed, since without a secure provenance they are of little or no scholarly value (of the 61 coins in this collection 2 may be from Sardinia and 4 were acquired in Spain; the remainder seem to come from nowhere). A nearly illegible coin from an excavated context *can* have great importance, and *can* deserve being illustrated even if what can be seen only exists in the eye of the beholder, but a similar piece whose only find spot is a dealer's tray is unworthy of a serious publication. Let alone an enlarged photograph of its illegibility!

This is not to belittle M's text, since he often has many interesting things to say concerning why the countermarks were issued and, most importantly, on who issued them. He points out that not only were there considerable numbers of imitation Roman coins in circula-

tion in Julio-Claudian times, there were also numerous imitation countermarks. He would like to do a study on the countermarks by die in an attempt to ascertain which were official, and which were made in an irregular mint, or by forgers. Such a project would be most valuable if his criteria for their differentiation prove acceptable. He correctly notes, commentary to 2, that some imitation coins may have been produced by dies which already had a «countermark» as part of their design, though I think he's wrong in thinking that the die cutters simply used a countermarked coin as a model and blindly copied it.

He also errs in his commentary to 39, the retrograde *PRO* countermark. M suggests this is unique and hitherto unpublished, because while Harold Mattingly mentioned it in the introduction to BMCRE I, p. xxxiv, he provided no reference. Unfortunately, M seems to have overlooked BMCRE I, p. 187, 164, a sestertius of Nero Drusus, which has exactly this countermark. Another somewhat more bizarre mistake concerns 63, a bucranium countermark. While the horned head of a bull is clearly visible on the 1:1 photograph, the blow-up shows a fine enlargement of one of the oak-leaves which formed part of the host coin's original design, and not the countermark! It may also be noted that while M describes this countermark as being of the graffito type, and one assumes he's correct since he's seen the actual coin, the photograph shows what appears to be a normal punched symbol.

The only real problem with this book is its English translation which is an embarrassment to the author, to the Gabinetto Numismatico in Locarno and to the *CNT*. There is no sign of any proof-reading at all, nor is there any indication that anyone familiar with the English language was called upon to compare the English translation with the original Italian text. This is especially strange considering that among the *CNT* there is at least one person who not only has perfect Italian, but also has an English far more refined and elegant than that of this reviewer.

Many of the English and proof-reading mistakes are merely amusing, like changing the German scholar M. Mackensen to a Scot, M. «Jock» MacKensen (pp. 18 ff.), and changing the English K. Butcher to the Tyrolese Butchner (p. 25). Others are idiotic, such as

the nearly constant use of plural nouns with singular verbs (and vice-versa: s's are added to or taken away from the ends of nouns for no obvious reasons); or the inability to form adjectives from Roman names (thus, «the Augustus era», p. 19, rather than Augustan). Others are ridiculous, like having the words *countermak* and *countermak* in the same sentence (p. 18)! Obviously, much of this is totally unimportant, though it is sad that carelessness of this type, long a source of amusement to holiday-makers when found on menus, should appear under the imprimatur of a Swiss museum! The English-speaking reader can generally easily figure out what M means. However, other mistakes quite literally make the English version of M's perfectly clear Italian text at best incomprehensible or, at worst, completely misleading and absolutely the contrary of what M intended. An example of the first type is the following (p. 102).

«Il tipo retrogrado è chiaramente di imitazione ed in questa forma non era precedentemente noto, anche se il Mattingly citava, senza esempi, anche il tipo retrogrado come non sembra essere particolarmente attestata l'associazione tra la *PRO* e la (*IMP*), contromarche entrambe d'epoca claudiana.»

Which turns into:

«The retrograde type in an obvious imitation and was previously unknown in this form, although Mattingly quoted, without providing examples, the retrograde type. The association between the *PRO* and the (*IMP*), both belonging to the Claudius period, does appear to be particularly either.»

But far, far worse is the use of the English *engrave* or *engraved* to render the Italian *battuto*, *è stata apposta*, etc. As on pp. 55–56, «... sia per la posizione dove *battere* la contromarca sulla moneta.» «... and for the position where the countermark had to be *engraved* on the coin.» In other words, a reader with no ability to check what the Italian text really says, and one who believes that a translation in such a lavishly produced book has to accurately reflect its author's thoughts, will assume that M thinks normal countermarks were individually cut into the coin by hand, rather than being stamped into it using a punch die. Since just looking at the photograph of the coin and its countermark shows how unlikely this is (elsewhere M talks about some countermarks, a sign of a small operation, which were *scratched/graffita* into a coin's surface) the reader may well believe that if M is «guilty» of such a mistake, his other observations will be equally suspect. This is most unfair to M: he can be blamed for his own errors, but to be criticized for those made by his translator goes too far!

In summary, this is an interesting little book, which presents a relatively minor collection in a professional way. It can be faulted for being overly ambitious, given the quality of the coins themselves; for having a very poor translation; and, frankly, for being rather expensive. Yet it is also the first volume of a new series, and I think we should both congratulate the members of the *CNT* for their enthusiasm, and look forward to further publications on a higher standard.

Alan Walker

ABKÜRZUNGSVERZEICHNIS – LISTE DES ABRÉVIATIONS

AA	Archäologischer Anzeiger
ACNAC	Ancient Coins in North American Collections
AIIN	Annali dell'Istituto Italiano di Numismatica
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AJN	American Journal of Numismatics (Fortsetzung von MN)
AMuGS	Antike Münzen und Geschnittene Steine
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt (Berlin 1972 ff.)
ANS	American Numismatic Society
BCH	Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique
BMC	British Museum Catalogue
BNF	Berliner Numismatische Forschungen
BSEFN	Bulletin de la Société Française de Numismatique
BSSN	Bulletin de la Société Suisse de Numismatique
C	H. Cohen, Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l'empire romain ² (Paris/Londres 1880–92)