

Richard Ashton, *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Volume XII. The Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow, Part VII Cimmerian Bosphorus–Cappadocia*. Hardback, 128 Pages, 51 plate pages (Oxford, 2020). ISBN 9780197266861. £75.

The collection of some 15,000 Greek coins formed by William Hunter (1718–83), now resident in the Glasgow University museum that bears his name, has been partially known to scholars since the publication first of the account by Charles Combe in 1782 and then of the massive three-volume catalogue written by MacDonald and published over 120 years ago.<sup>1</sup> Only a selection of coins were illustrated in those volumes (in the former case by drawings), however, and it was not until the 21<sup>st</sup> century that systematic publication of the Greek collection in the Hunterian Museum began, with the two volumes in the *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* series devoted to the coins of the Imperial period, prepared by John Goddard and edited by Ian Carradice.<sup>2</sup> Now, at last, thanks to the efforts of Richard Ashton, we have the first fascicle devoted to the Greek collection, containing the coins of Asia Minor.

Over the years, the collection has grown from that assembled by Hunter, principally through the acquisition of the collection of Thomas Coats (1809–1883), a local cloth manufacturer and philanthropist. For Asia Minor, the resulting collection runs to 1093 coins. All coins are illustrated (through the efforts of Richard Hodges) and meticulously catalogued in the standard *Sylloge* format, with text and images on facing pages.

At one level, the collection presents no great surprises. By accident or design, Hunter produced a collection that is broadly representative of the coin production of Asia Minor. In numerical terms, Ionia is the best represented region, accounting for precisely 25% of the collection, but this was monetarily by far the most productive region of Asia Minor. After that come Mysia and Caria, with around 12% each. In the latter case this marks something of an underrepresentation given that it was the region with the most minting authorities in the pre-Roman period, and there are some notable absences here: Aphrodisias and Mylasa, for example. Elsewhere, numbers are lower, and so patterns difficult to pick out. One might note the comparative poverty of representation of the Lycian dynasts, but this is perhaps no surprise given the relative obscurity of this region and its coinage in Hunter's day: the 'rediscovery' of Lycia would come only with Charles Fellows' travels and publications in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even more dramatic, at first sight, is the complete absence of early electrum coinage from this volume. Hunter was not averse to the metal: he owned a Cyzicene (no. 136) and a run of later issues of Mytilene and Phocaea (nos. 320-330 and 452). But he seems never to have acquired any early Lydian or Greek issues. Again, we must remind ourselves of the way in which later discoveries have changed our perception, in this case the excavations at the Artemesium at Ephesus in 1904-5, which put electrum coinage 'on the map'.

Against this background, the relatively rich holdings of Cilician silver coinages is perhaps the more remarkable (Celenderis, Mallos, Soli and Tarsos), as too a fine run of Cypriot issues (nos. 983-92, 994-9). Less surprising is the apparent interest in portrait coins. Bithynia, for example, is remarkably well covered with representations of all the kings from Ziaelas to Nicomedes IV (one might wonder if catalogue numbers 121-133 derive from one hoard – a possibility canvassed by Ashton in his note *ad* no. 37)). Similarly, there is a good run of Attalid coins (nos. 178-190) that includes a rare portrait of

---

1 Combe, C. *Nummorum Veterum Populorum et Urbium, qui in Museo Gulielmi Hunter Asservantur, Descriptio Figuris Illustrata* (London, 1782); MacDonald, G., *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection* (Glasgow, 1899-1905). The latter (i., pp. ix-xlvi) contains a delightful account of Hunter's formation of the collection, to a significant extent through the private-treaty purchase of the collections of others.

2 *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum: Great Britain 12. The Hunterian Museum University of Glasgow: Part 1. Roman provincial coins, Spain - kingdoms of Asia Minor* (2004) and *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum: Great Britain 12. The Hunterian Museum University of Glasgow: Part 2. Roman provincial coins, Cyprus - Egypt*. (2007).

Seleucus I (again one wonders if a hoard underlies the presence of some of these pieces). For the Pontic kingdom we find eight tetradrachms of Mithridates VI and what Hunter clearly will have believed was a rare tetradrachm of Pharnaces I (no. 37: Ashton provides a long discussion of the authenticity of this piece, cautiously pronouncing in favour). And there seems little other explanation for the tedious run of 81 Cappadocian royal drachms (1013-1093) than that Hunter acquired a group of these, although here the impact of the Coats collection (which accounts for 20 of these coins) has been rather more marked. The medallic quality of the second-century wreathed issues also seems to have appealed to Hunter. There are examples of Abydos (nos, 246-7), Tenedos (276), Cyme (291-3), Myrina (296-7, 299-305), Herakleia (418), Magnesia (427-8) and Smyrna (480-1, 495, 516).

Among other areas where one can suspect hoards to have been purchased in part or whole are the 39 bronzes of one type of 3<sup>rd</sup>-century Chios (nos. 563-601): conceivably this part of the same hoard of which a part was acquired from Amsterdam by the Paris cabinet in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> And one might close by pointing out two further Hellenistic highlights. The remarkable 2<sup>nd</sup> century spread-flan issue of Cos, with Head of Aphrodite on the obverse and Asklepios standing on the reverse was long the only coin known of this type. And at no. 172 we have an astonishing and apparently unique silver coin of Parion in Mysia, with a spectacular representation of Nike on the reverse. One wonders if the 4<sup>th</sup>-century date suggested for this is not a little too high.

All in all, this is an exemplary volume. Meticulously presented and documented, such Sylloges become reference works in their own right. Richard Ashton has now produced no fewer than five Sylloge volumes devoted to the coinage of Asia Minor.<sup>4</sup> They combine to create a *de facto* Guide to the Coinage of Asia Minor, with up-to-date bibliographies and, where necessary, the commentaries of a scholar who has been working on this material now for half a century. This achievement as much as the new volume deserves warm congratulations and our gratitude.

---

3 On this hoard see C. Lagos, *NC* 156 (1996), p. 277, no. 88 (*CH* 9. 221).

4 In addition to the volume under review: Westermarck, U., Ashton, R.H.J., *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum: Finland. The Erkki Keckman Collection in the Skopbank, Helsinki. Part 1. Karia* (Helsinki, 1994); Ashton, R.H.J., *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum: Finland. The Erkki Keckman Collection in the Skopbank, Helsinki. Part 2. Asia Minor except Karia* (Helsinki, 1999); Ashton, R.H.J., Ireland, S., *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum: Great Britain 5. Ashmolean Museum (Oxford): Pt. 9, Bosphorus-Aeolis* (London, 2007); Ashton, R.H.J., Ireland, S., *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum: Great Britain 5. Ashmolean Museum (Oxford): Pt. 11, Caria to Commagene* (London, 2013).