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Pierre-Olivier Hochard, *Les Antigonides et la Grèce égéenne: numismatique et morceaux choisis*. Numismatica antiqua, 15. Bordeaux: Ausonius Éditions, 2023. Pp. 170. ISBN 9782356135889.

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[Authors and titles are listed at the end of the review.]

In the last few years, we have seen a wave of new studies on the Antigonid dynasty. Important work has been published ranging from new royal biographies to numismatic studies, from dynastic monumental architecture to historiography and the publication of new inscriptions.^[1] The present book builds on this recently published work, consolidates the results of these approaches, and enables us to reflect further on the nature of the Antigonid empire.

The book stems from a colloquium related to the project “Des Diadoques aux Antigonides: Monnaies et pouvoir dans le royaume de Macédoine et en Grèce balkanique (315-168 avant J.-C.)”, which at its center had the analysis of the metallic composition of eighty-eight coins of Cassander and the Antigonid kings, as well as a few samples of the Macedonian “autonomous” coinage (see pp. 31-33 for the full list). By using LA-ICP-MS (laser ablation inductively-coupled plasma mass spectrometry), which is non-destructive, the project studied the chemical composition of the coins, providing depth profiles of its main components (percentage of silver and presence of other elements such as Cu, Pb, Bi, Sn).^[2] The results are very informative: metallic signatures enable the identification of the origins of the raw material and suggest melting practices at specific mints, indicating continuities and ruptures in the production of the coinage through time.

Beyond the material analysis, the book also shows how the study of the coinage lends itself to an equally fruitful approach to the imperial project of the Antigonid dynasty. Along these lines, two main themes run across most chapters. First, a resolve to study Antigonid power from a non-Macedocentric perspective, taking into account imperial (and imperialist) dynamics and the impact and interactions of Antigonid power beyond Macedonia. Such an approach forsakes the view of a rather blunt and self-effacing polity vis-à-vis its Hellenistic peers, but equally so vis-à-vis the predominance of the Greek polis as a lens of study for the history of mainland Greece during the Hellenistic period. Second, although less consistently than the first theme, there is also an attempt to evaluate the level of wealth of the Antigonids and the impact of their resources on the economy of mainland Greece and Macedonia, an approach propounded by some of the papers as a reevaluation of Rostovtzeff’s assumptions on the economy of mainland Greece and the supply of Antigonid coins, which he saw as abundant and steady.

After the introduction by the editor, the book comprises eight papers organized in three parts. Part I contains three pieces that present – and build on – the results of the studies on the metallic composition of the coinage. Maryse Blet-Lemarquand, Pierre-Olivier Hochard, Pierre Bourrieau and Clément Pinault show that Antigonid coinage of the third century had the same metallic profile as the Alexanders minted in Amphipolis between c. 323 and c. 300, which were struck using metal obtained in the East during Alexander’s conquests. The Antigonids seem to have melted old Alexanders to produce their dynastic coinage. In the second century, however, the metal employed for Philip V’s last issues and Perseus’ coinage shows a different profile, most probably Macedonian, marking a break with the practices of the third century and indicating a reorientation of the state after Cynoscephalae. Next, Clément Pinault delves further into Perseus’ coinage, examining the complex system of monograms that appear on the kings’ issues and the debasement carried out sometime during his reign. Perseus’ reforms reveal a strong state at work and an active king, who was able to implement a rather profound monetary reform before the Third Macedonian War. Perseus’s modifications, in fact, emerge as well-planned and executed, and not at all as the result of a rushed reaction to financial stress caused by the war against Rome. After these two papers, little is left of the idea, at least from a fiscal point of view, of a scattered and ineffective Antigonid power in the years leading up to its demise.

The final paper of part I by Catherine Grandjean and Maryse Blet-Lemarquand combines the results from the earlier KOINON project,^[3] which studied the metallic composition of coins from the Achaean and Aetolian *koina*, with results from the study on the metallic composition of Antigonid coinage. It is an attempt to understand the impact of royal donations and therefore their economic leverage on the *koina* of southern Greece. Outside of the literary references, it is particularly difficult to trace the material footprint of these donations, whether Antigonid or Ptolemaic. Yet the paper shows how an important part of the coinage of these *koina* was struck by recasting Alexanders originally minted in the East, sometimes mixed with Macedonian Alexanders and Athenian coins (p. 57). The initiative appears as the result of local decisions and local needs, whether civic or federal. One wonders how much of those local decisions may have been inevitable, particularly considering the economic landscape created *ex ante* by the Macedonian expansion: a sudden and substantial availability of money coming from the East, the predominance of silver tetradrachms, and the need to pay for mercenaries, among others. What remains, however, is how little we can trace of those imperial donations through the numismatic evidence.

Part II takes a wider view and studies different zones of Antigonid influence. Pierre Bourrieau tackles Rostovtzeff’s view on the production and impact of Antigonid coinage and offers a study of the royal coinage in the *longue durée* and the empire’s economic standing (very helpful tables are included). Notably, the largest production of Antigonid silver coinage happened under Demetrius Poliorcetes (c. 51% of the total attested dies), with another considerable output coming under Philip V (c. 21%), dispelling Rostovtzeff’s view of constant and abundant supply. A comparison with the production of Athenian *stephanophoroi* shows that Athens minted more of its new coinage in less than a century than the Antigonid empire ever did (pp. 68-70). Two explanations are put forth: on the one hand, the wealth of the last Argeads and, on the other, the abundance of posthumous Alexanders, which provided a pre-existing stock that was enough for the Antigonids to cover their payments. The Antigonids do not seem to have struggled for cash and, economically speaking, ‘ni l’abondance ni la crise’ (p. 75) dictated their fiscal policies.

The next chapter, by Pierre-Olivier Hochard, takes the reign of Demetrius Poliorcetes as a case study to argue that the original consolidation of the Antigonid empire did not depend on the control of Macedonia. Poliorcetes’ main sources of power rested, above all, on the port cities of southern Greece and the control of the Aegean sea-lanes. Hochard contends that the conflation of the Antigonid dynasty with the territory of Macedonia has done a disservice to our understanding of the imperial state. To refer to the Antigonid polity as the kingdom of Macedonia, as it is often the case, is indeed an ‘abus de langage’ (p. 94), which hinders our understanding of the Antigonid empire and its complexity. An example of the latter is the allure that western Asia minor had on Antigonid policies throughout its history, as well as the ideological and military underpinnings dependent on the control of Corinth, the Piraeus, Chalcis, and Demetrias, the so-called ‘feters of Greece,’ and the western Aegean. The last paper of this section, by Jean-Christophe Couvenhes, traces the Ptolemaic support for Cleomenes III of Sparta as an instrument against Antigonid power in southern Greece, a policy known from Polybius and Plutarch. At the center of the paper lies the bronze coinage of Ptolemaic origin and inspiration, initially struck in Alexandria and later on imitated in Sparta. Couvenhes argues that the first Ptolemaic bronzes made it to the Peloponnese in the period from 227 to 222, when Ptolemaic support shifted away from the Achaeans to the Lacedaemonians. Their purpose, the author suggests, was to pay local soldiers (rather than Ptolemaic forces sent to the Peloponnese, as has been hypothesized by others), who in turn used that money to pay for small expenses, especially grain that came from Egypt. Such seems to have been the mechanism put in place by Ptolemy III to support Spartan forces and, eventually, bring the coinage back to Egypt.

The third and final section contains two articles with differing approaches. Following the project’s goal of looking outside Macedonia, Miltiades Hatzopoulos comments on the recently published asyilia decrees concerning Macedonian cities from Kos and on the inscription celebrating an athlete from the city of Kibyra in southwestern Asia Minor, who competed in festivals sponsored by Philip V. Hatzopoulos offers important clarifications on both the route taken by the *theodorokoi* and their interactions with both the Macedonian king and Macedonian cities, as well as on the position of Philip V in Boeotia and the presence of Heracles in Macedonia. One should complement this piece by looking at Hatzopoulos’ first publications on these texts.^[4] The final paper by Julien Olivier is a wonderful reconstruction of the history of the collection of Antigonid coins at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, presenting its origins and expansion through time, which highlights some of the potential advances that this approach can have for the study of ancient coinage, particularly regarding current interpretations, findspots, and the identification of poorly attested and even currently unknown hoards.

As the book progresses, some of the initial coherence is lost and some fragmentation comes to the fore. Yet it successfully offers a reassessment of important issues, both big and small, pertaining to the nature of the Antigonid empire. A general picture emerges, if by aggregation rather than design (perhaps one of the limitations of bringing together *morceaux choisis*), in which the dynasty takes the center stage and becomes the driver of historical change. Bourrieau’s and Hochard’s papers in section II are important analyses structured around penetrating questions, which highlight some of the consequences of rethinking the nature of the Antigonid state.

The book is beautifully illustrated and handsomely produced. Coin images and charts are all printed in color, as are the maps, which are excellent. Everyone working on the Antigonid dynasty, Hellenistic coinage, and the history of mainland Greece and the Aegean in the Hellenistic period will greatly benefit from reading this book.

Authors and Titles

Pierre-Olivier Hochard, “Introduction”

[Partie I. Comprendre les frappes monétaires à l’aide de la composition élémentaire des monnaies du royaume antigonide](#)

Maryse Blet-Lemarquand, Pierre-Olivier Hochard, Pierre Bourrieau, Clément Pinault, “Analyse élémentaire de monnaies d’argent antigonides. Premiers résultats et commentaires”

Clément Pinault, “La réforme monétaire de Persée de Macédoine (179-168 a.C.) : une lecture iconographique et statistique”

Catherine Grandjean and Maryse Blet-Lemarquand, “Les Antigonides et les *koina* de Grèce méridionale, une approche monétaire”

[Partie II. Vers une autre histoire de la dynastie et des zones d’influence antigonides : l’apport de la numismatique](#)

Pierre Bourrieau, “La fin de l’abondance ? M. Rostovtzeff, les monnayages antigonides et l’apport des études caractérisocopiques”

Pierre-Olivier Hochard, “Et si la Macédoine n’était pas le cœur du royaume antigonide ? Retour sur le règne de Démétrios Poliorcète”

Jean-Christophe Couvenhes, “Les bronzes lagides mis en circulation par Cléomène III de Sparte”

[Partie III. Variations antigonides](#)

Miltiade B. Hatzopoulos, “Nouveautés antigonides : l’apport des inscriptions *extra fines regionis*”

Julien Olivier, “Les Antigonides au Cabinet des Médailles (d’Antigone Gonatas à Andriscos). Esquisse d’une histoire (xviiie-xxie s.)”

Discussions conclusives

Notes

[1] For example, see Sophia Kremydi, ‘Autonomous’ Coinages Under the Late Antigonids (Athens, 2018); Monica D’Agostini, *The Rise of Philip V. Kingship and Rule in the Hellenistic World* (Alessandria, 2019); Dimitris Bosnakis and Klaus Hallof, “Alte und neue Inschriften aus Kos VI”, *Chiron* 50 (2020): 287-326; Francesco Maria Ferrara, *Basileus e basileia. Forme e luoghi della regalità macedone* (Rome, 2020); Katerina Panagopoulou, *The Early Antigonids: Coinage, Money, and the Economy* (New York, 2020); Pat Wheatley and Charlotte Dunn, *Demetrius the Besieger* (Oxford, 2020); Robin Waterfield, *The Making of a King: Antigonus Gonatas of Macedon and the Greeks* (Chicago, 2021); Koray Komuk, “New Antigonid Inscriptions from Euromos”, *Philia* 9 (2023): 135-55; Emma Nicholson, *Philip V of Macedon in Polybius’ Histories: Politics, History, and Fiction* (Oxford, 2023).

[2] See, for instance, Guillaume Sarah, Bernard Gratuze, and Jean-Noël Barrandon, “Application of laser ablation inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) for the investigation of ancient silver coins”, *Journal of Analytical Atomic Spectrometry* 22 (2007), 1163-67.

[3] Catherine Grandjean (ed.), *The “Koina” of Southern Greece: historical and numismatic studies in ancient Greek federalism* (Bordeaux, 2021).

[4] Miltiades Hatzopoulos, “Quatre nouveaux décrets d’asyilie macédoniens: géographie historique et institutions”, *REG* 134 (2021): 199-213, and Miltiades Hatzopoulos, “Une nouvelle fête macédonienne dans une inscription de Kibyra”, *Tekmeria* 16 (2021-2022): 1-18.