

**SYLLOGE NUMMORUM GRAECORUM, BRASIL I.
MUSEU HISTÓRICO NACIONAL, RIO DE JANEIRO.
MOEDAS GREGAS E PROVÍNCIAIS ROMANAS**

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GREEK COINS AND ROMAN PROVINCIAL COINS.

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Vol. XI | n°22 | 2014 | ISSN 2316 8412



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Keith Rutter¹

The numismatic collection of the Museu Histórico Nacional in Rio de Janeiro is the largest in Brazil. It contains 131,000 specimens from all regions and historical periods, of which many are informatively and handsomely displayed in a permanent exhibition in the museum. This volume of the *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum*, the first of a Brazilian collection, catalogues 1,750 of the coins that count as Greek. The descriptions and details of the coins are presented in the form that is usual for *SNG* volumes, with plentiful bibliographical referencing, in particular to other volumes of *SNG*. The catalogue is introduced by two essays: one, by the author Maricé Martins Magalhães on the development of the collection and the work of cataloguing it, the other by Professor Luiz Aranha Corrêa do Lago, curator of the permanent exhibition. The title of the exhibition is “As moedas contam a História” (Coins tell the [Hi]story), and Professor do Lago here provides for readers an authoritative account of the development of Greek coinage as it is extensively illustrated in the volume. In terms of chronological spread he is able to refer to coins from the very early days of coining in Asia Minor (nos. 1271-2, electrum and silver coins respectively of Lydia) right through to the later stages of the Roman provincial series in Alexandria (Maximianus Herculeus, nos. 1726-37); the geographical spread covers an area running from the Straits of Gibraltar in the west to Afghanistan in the east.

The catalogue is divided into three parts: 1) Europe (nos. 1-1207); 2) Asia (nos. 1208-1387); 3) Africa (nos. 1388-1747). Within these broad geographical areas coverage naturally varies. As might be expected the Iberian peninsula is well covered (nos. 1-183), as is Gaul and Gallic-related coinage in general: there is a good number of coins of Massalia (nos. 185-202), and also of issues of several Gallic tribes both in Gaul and on the Danube and even in one case a coin of the Iceni of Britain (no. 217). The early coinage of Rome is well represented (nos. 233-81). When it comes to Italy (and several other parts of the collection) it would be interesting to know the reasons (whether deriving from chance or from deliberate choice) that led, for example, to the collection of a varied array of coins of Taras (nos. 353-446), or the fuller representation of incuse coins of Metapontum (nos. 456-66) and Croton (nos. 567-77). There is a good range of coins of Sybaris and Thurii (nos. 493-517) and also of Hyele/Elea (nos. 518-39); the latter include coins signed by *Kleu* (*dorus*) (no. 529) and *Philistion* (530). In Sicily, the mint of Syracuse takes pride of place (nos. 682-810), with a particular strength in the bronze of all periods. Sometimes, a more accurate dating could have been

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presented. For example, a group of coins of Gela (nos. 644-9) is dated “Antes de 405 a.C.”, though references are made to Jenkins, *The Coinage of Gela*, which would have allowed a closer dating.

Moving eastwards, from the Black Sea area there are examples of “arrow head” and “dolphin” money from Istrus and Olbia respectively (nos. 908, 915) as well as a varied selection of silver and bronze coins. The history of Macedonia can be traced through the coins of many settlements there, with a particularly valuable series of coins of the Macedonian kings (nos. 984-1050). Mints of mainland Greece represented include those of Thessaly, Epirus, Acarnania, Locris, Phocis, Boeotia, Euboea, Corinth, Aegina, Sicyon, Elis and Lakonia/Messenia. The development of an elaborate denominational system can be observed through the coinage of Athens (nos. 1116-29) and for the Hellenistic period it is good to have coins from both the Achaean and Arcadian Leagues (nos. 1170-80, 1185-6 respectively). In the Asian section city coinages, for example of Amisus (no. 1209), Sinope (no. 1214), Cyzicus (no. 1220), Miletus (nos. 1240-1), Aspendus (no. 1281) and Rhodes (nos. 1257-69) are interspersed with coins of the Hellenistic kings of Bithynia (nos. 1215-17), Pergamum (no. 1225), Cappadocia (nos. 1288-98) and Syria (nos. 1303-19), and also with Roman provincial coins. The Achaemenid empire is here with a daric (no. 1363) and a siglos (no. 1364), while the eastern reach of Greek or Greek-influenced coins is illustrated by coins of several Parthian kings (nos. 1369-80), a coin of the Sassanid king Shapur I (no. 1381) and a group of Bactrian and Indo-Greek coins (nos. 1382-7) that includes a square silver drachma of king Apollodotus (no. 1385). In the African section the main focus is on Egypt, of course, with good runs of coins both of the Ptolemaic dynasty (nos. 1388-1459) and of coins minted in Alexandria from the early to the later Roman empire (nos. 1460-1737).

The above brief survey conveys something of the breadth and richness of this collection. It has already proved its worth as a teaching resource both for students and for the wider public who visit the Museu Histórico Nacional. Both the museum authorities and the authors are to be congratulated for achieving its publication and dissemination to an even wider audience.

Recebido em:02/07/2014
Aprovado em:02/09/2014
Publicado em:03/10/2014