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REVUE BELGE DE NUMISMATIQUE  
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## COINAGE OF THE ROMAN PROVINCES BEFORE PROVINCIAL COINAGE: THE RICHARD B. WITSCHONKE COLLECTION – VIRTUAL CONFERENCE, MARCH 23–25, 2021 – PREFACE

IN LATE MARCH 2021 the American Numismatic Society (ANS) and the Ph.D. Program in History at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (GC-CUNY), co-sponsored a three-day conference ‘*Coinage of the Roman Provinces before Provincial Coinage: The Richard B. Witschonke Collection*’. While the ongoing pandemic required the event to be virtual, the gathering embodied all the warmth, curiosity, and conviviality that made ‘Rick’ Witschonke so beloved in our numismatic communities. It was attended by over 350 students, scholars, and coin enthusiasts representing over 30 nationalities. The conference was a celebration and reflection on the importance of the roughly 4,000 coins of the early Roman Provinces from the R.B. Witschonke Collection, now part of the ANS collection, mainly dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE. We warmly thank Pierre Petit, President of the Royal Numismatic Society of Belgium, François de Callataÿ and Jan Moens, Members of the Editorial Board of its *Revue belge de Numismatique et de Sigillographie*, for their support in publishing a selection of papers presented at this conference, here more fully developed and expanded by the respective authors. This volume is best read as a companion publication to the catalogue of the collection, which itself contains additional essays focused on each region and coinage.<sup>[1]</sup> The papers in this volume are therefore organized according to the geographical criteria adopted there, while also using the catalogue’s numbering.

Like the conference itself, the following articles address the curious nature of Roman monetary policy in the early stages of the development of Rome’s dominion over the Mediterranean world, *viz.*, the fact that the Romans conquered and ruled most of it without imposing their own coinage on the conquered. As argued in this volume, this element was typical of the Romans’ pragmatic attitude to imperialism and their tendency to retain any existing forms of effective organization in newly conquered territories.

The contribution of the Roman Provincial Coinage (*RPC*) series offers an incomparable tool for the study of the coinages issued in the Roman provinces and client kingdoms from the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE onward, but it does not include the local production in those regions in the preceding decades. Together with the aforementioned *Catalogue*, this volume represents a prologue to the *RPC* series, a sort of *RPC* ‘Zero’. While exhibiting an extraordinary variety in appearance and weight, the coinages explored in the following pages illustrate the gradual transition from distinct to compatible monetary systems in the Mediterranean basin and offer a unique overview of the diverse ways in which its monetary systems responded to the Roman conquest and the related necessity of interconnectivity in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and early 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE.

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<sup>[1]</sup> L.F. CARBONE *et al.*, *Local Coinages in the Roman World, second century BC – first century AD: A Catalogue of the Richard B. Witschonke Collection of Coins in the Early Roman Provinces*, 2 vol., New York: American Numismatic Society, 2024.

These coinages have long interested numismatists and historians alike, but this volume brings a much-needed fresh perspective on the material and the current state of our knowledge.

Almost forty years ago, Michael Crawford's *Coinage and Money under the Roman Republic* (1985)<sup>[2]</sup> set the broader context of debate about the nature of the coinage and money used throughout the Mediterranean as it fell under Roman power, which was further developed in *The Coinage of the Roman World in the Late Republic* (1987),<sup>[3]</sup> edited by Michael Crawford & Andrew Burnett.

In more recent years, other studies have highlighted the Roman impact on the monetary systems of Eastern provinces beginning in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. François de Callataÿ has published several important contributions in which he detailed the idea of local coinages struck for the Romans, even if not always in their name, the so-called 'Greek Coinages for the Romans.'<sup>[4]</sup> In 2021, Richard Ashton & Nathan Badoud edited an important collection of studies on coinages in the early Roman Greek East, bridging together coinages issued in different provinces.<sup>[5]</sup>

In the last decade, the gradual adaptation of Celtic and Celtiberian coinages to the Roman monetary system has been the subject of several important contributions.<sup>[6]</sup> Among others, Pere Pau Ripollès has dedicated decades of forward-looking study of the coinage of the Iberian peninsula under Roman dominion.<sup>[7]</sup>

Despite the quality and quantity of these contributions, this volume of collected essays (and the catalogue accompanying it) represents the first study in almost forty years to bridge East and West and show how new discoveries and methodologies have changed the state of our knowledge. The number, quality, and thematic interconnections of the essays included in this volume are a testament to the scientific progress in the field and to the goodwill of the scholars who came together back in 2021 to honor a much-missed friend and colleague, Rick Witschonke.

There is still much work to be done, but these papers represent a big step in the right direction.

Lucia F. CARBONE (ANS) & Liv M. YARROW (GC-CUNY)

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<sup>[2]</sup> M.H. CRAWFORD, *Coinage and Money under the Roman Republic: Italy and the Mediterranean Economy*, Oxford, 1985.

<sup>[3]</sup> M.H. CRAWFORD & A. BURNETT, *The Coinage of the Roman World in the Late Republic: Proceedings of a Colloquium held at the British Museum in September 1985*, Oxford, 1987.

<sup>[4]</sup> See e.g. F. DE CALLATAÿ, this volume, p. 3-22 and the bibliography provided there.

<sup>[5]</sup> R.H.J. ASHTON & N. BADOUD (eds.), *Graecia capta? Rome et les monnayages du monde égéen (II<sup>e</sup>-I<sup>er</sup> s. av. J.-C.)*, Basel, 2021.

<sup>[6]</sup> See e.g. S. MARTIN, this volume, p. 56-88 and the bibliography provided there.

<sup>[7]</sup> See e.g. P.P. RIPOLLÈS, this volume, p. 23-55 and the bibliography provided there.