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Sylloges Old and New

Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. The Royal Collection of Coins and Medals. Danish National Museum. Supplement. Acquisitions 1942-1996

Edited by Sabine Schultz and Jan Zahle

Copenhagen, 2002. Folio, 123 pp. including 54 plates illustrating 1341 coins.

Card covers. 29.5 x 38 cm. DK 700. ISBN 87-89384-80-6

Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum Deutschland. Staatliche Münzsammlung München. 14. Heft. Attika, Megaris, Ägina Nr. 1-601 (in englischer Sprache)

By J. H. Kroll with photographs by H. Hotter

Munich, 2002. Folio. Unpaginated but with 21 plates illustrating 601 coins.

Card Covers. 29.5 x 38 cm. ISBN 3-7774-9610-3

Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. Turkey I. The Muharrem Kayhan Collection

By Koray Konuk

Ausonius Publications. Numismatica Anatolica 1. Istanbul-Bordeaux, 2002. A4.

102 pp. (unpaginated) including 41 plates illustrating 1076 coins.

Cloth covers. ISBN 2-910023-31-1

The one numismatic reference work on Greek coins that is truly adored by all who use it is the Copenhagen Sylloge. *SNG Cop.*, *SNG Dan.*, those abbreviations have appeared in the descriptions of coins in museums, in the trade and in collections for half a century; with good reason, because for a remarkably long time this Sylloge was the only fully illustrated reference on the coins it contained. Other Sylloges only described silver and gold coins, but *SNG Cop.* included myriad numbers of bronzes as well. Of course, there were other works, which were also very comprehensively illustrated, like S.W. Grose's catalogue of the McClean coins and L. Forrer's of those of Sir Hermann Weber's, but they were relatively hard to find, and often not so easy to use. The BMC volumes were very useful, but they too were hard to find, and often lacked illustrations of the minor coins. This was especially annoying for archaeologists since the minor bronzes are the kind of coins most commonly found in any excavation. *SNG Cop.* always filled the gap. The only problem was that it was, by the 1970s, becoming increasingly difficult to find. All the great museums and universities had copies, as did all the old dealers and many collectors, but the earlier fascicles were mostly out of print and they were getting more and more expensive. In fact, by the late 1970s a complete set changed hands for the colossal sum of CHF 20,000. But then, in a remarkable act of generosity, the Royal Collection authorized an American publisher to produce a complete reprint edition in 1981, thus, making this tremendously useful reference available to a whole new generation of scholars.

The fact that the Copenhagen Sylloge exists at all is in some ways amazing. After all, the first 21 fascicles were printed during some of the darkest days of modern Denmark's history, from 1942 to 1945 while the country was under German occupation. Producing such a civilized work in such a bleak period has to testify to the Danish people's indomitable spirit of optimism.

The last of the original Sylloge fascicles, 43, was published in 1979, thirty-seven years after the first. But, of course, the publication of the museum's coins did not mean that the collection stopped growing and became fossilized. Far from it. From the late 1940s on new coins were constantly acquired by purchase or donation: some could, of course, be placed in forthcoming Sylloge fascicles, but very many, 1341 to be exact, came from areas that had previously been published. Following the unexpected death of Otto Mørkholm in 1983 it was decided that all these new coins should appear in a supplemental fascicle, and, after a number of unanticipated delays, this project has now been finally completed.

Published in the old folio Sylloge format to harmonize with the original series, the catalogue begins with a short introduction and a very clear list of abbreviations. These are followed by an absolutely fascinating list of provenances, identifying all the sources for the coins published in this volume. This list is simply extraordinary: it ranges from famous major dealers like Bank Leu, Münzen und Medaillen and Robert Hecht, to characters like Dikran Sarrafian of Beirut (renowned as the source of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Euphronios Krater), to ordinary people of every walk of life. We have school boys who gave or sold coins to the museum (one later became a librarian), an electrician who later became a numismatist (now numismatists often become electricians), artists, a farmer, some students, and even a few archaeologists (including P.V. Glob, author of the famous book, *The Bog People*, on the Iron Age people found preserved in the peat bogs of Denmark)! The volume ends with a very useful series of indices.

Unlike earlier sylloges, the coins have all been photographed directly and not from casts. In most cases this has been very successfully done, though the plates can be somewhat uneven in tone. Also uneven is the quality of the coins themselves, yet this is understandable since some of them came from donations, some were purchased to fill major gaps, and still others were acquired in order to further the research interests of the curators.

An example of one of those donations is 90, a very poor tetradrachm of Byzantium given by a schoolboy in 1950: not the kind of coin most numismatic museums would want, but one can imagine the pride that boy must have had in giving it. Some of the 'prestige' purchases are another matter. Acquired from Jacob Hirsch in 1948, 81 is one of the very best early Kimon dekadrachms in existence, and there are a number of Hellenistic tetradrachms, one of the late Otto Mørkholm's great loves, which are breathtaking: as 280 (Mithradates III of Pontus), 282 (Mithradates IV of Pontus), 316 (the Athena Nikephorus issue with the gorgoneion from Pergamon), and 326 (Mytilene). Another exceptional coin, perhaps a donation, is the amazing archaic tetradrachm from Cyrene (1330) with the running lion beneath a silphium plant on the obverse and a double stellate square incuse on the reverse (like those of Corcyra). Published by OM in 1981 in Danish, this piece definitely should be better known.

The remarkable number of lifetime and posthumous issues of Alexander III and Philip III that entered the collection since 1944 (112-211) can, perhaps, be explained by that Danish fascination with Alexander the Great, going back to the pioneering work of L. Müller in the mid-19th century, but a number of other major groups of new acquisitions come from the interests of three great scholars who worked with the Royal Collection: Rudi Thomsen, responsible for the acquisition of some remarkable Italic cast bronzes and a few exceptional coins from Magna Graecia and Sicily (the stater of Sirinus and Pyxus, 53, and the Kimon mentioned above); Otto Mørkholm (the extensive Seleucid series, 956-1184, the Ptolemaic material, 1278-1327, and a, frankly, too massive group of Cappadocian coins, 629-942); and Jan Zahle, who, first jointly with OM and then later on his own, was responsible for the marvelous series of Lycian coins, which are such an ornament of the Copenhagen cabinet (366-508).

The catalogue was basically the responsibility of Sabine Schultz, and overall she has done a very commendable job. Since Athens is an area of personal interest I was surprised to find that three of the five new acquisitions are misdated. The two New Style tetradrachms (260-261) cannot be merely dated «c. 2nd-1st century B.C.»: the first, one of the earliest issues of all, dates to c. 163/2 (at the latest), and the second, one of the very rare issues in the name of the Athenian Demos, is post-Sullan, c. 86-84 and possibly minted outside of Athens (see the new SNG Munich 230). The one bronze (262)¹ is more correctly dated to c. 120-140 A.D. I have had a very hard time finding any typographic errors: the photographs of coins 327a and 328 have been switched on the plates. As for modern forgeries sneaking in, I can only suggest that 497 looks extremely weird.

With the exception of all those Cappadocian drachms, many museums would be proud to have coins like these as their *entire collection*: as «merely» the record of 54 years of new acquisitions they simply go to show how splendid the material in Copenhagen is, and I for one am truly grateful to the authorities in Copenhagen for making these coins available to the numismatic community.

The Munich cabinet began publishing the *Sylloge* of its remarkable collection of Greek coins in 1968, and some 13 varied fascicles have appeared to date (the early ones are now mostly out of print). After the first seven, Italy through parts of Thrace, the fascicles no longer appeared in geographic order but as the various experts responsible for different areas finished them: thus while a number of fascicles devoted to regions of Asia Minor have already been published, and one on the kings of Macedon arrived in 2001, the volume under review is the first devoted to any of the coinages of the Greek mainland.

In choosing Prof. J. Kroll of the University of Texas at Austin to write this fascicle, the Munich Cabinet was very wise, indeed, since he is the world's greatest authority on Athenian coinage. The order of the Athenian coins is that established in *Agora XXVI* (see n. 1), with every issue clearly dated, the lay-out is clear and the photographs (luckily taken from casts: what they lose in liveliness they gain in

¹ J.H. KROLL with A.S. WALKER, *The Athenian Agora XXVI. The Greek Coins* (Princeton 1993), 183.

clarity) are mostly clear and useful (though a number of tiny silver fractions are illegible).

I must admit that while the Athenian material is quite extensive, ranging from the archaic 'Wappenmünzen' through the Imperial bronzes struck in c. 264-267, and including almost all possible silver types (no dekadrachm, alas, and, somewhat surprisingly, no gold) and a very good selection of bronzes, the collection as a whole is somewhat disappointing. There is one marvellous Group H tetradrachm (25), one of the very rare hemidrachms with the head of a goddess (27), and a very attractive didrachm (45),² but for a numismatic collection, rather than one based on archaeological finds, there is a surprising lack of really attractive coins. For example, despite the fact that Munich is virtually the capital of the European coin trade and that fine quality Athenian tetradrachms of the period ca. 454-404 are always to be found there, not one is in the Munich cabinet (see 46-59 and most of those are imitations). Perhaps this is being picky and unfair, but it does seem odd. However, Munich does have quite a few ancient forgeries and imitations, which are of real interest and include some unusual pieces.

But, of course, there are not only Athenian coins in this fascicle. There is a decent series from Megara and a good group from Aegina (though most of the earlier coins are in surprisingly poor condition). One intriguing piece is 533, a plated Aeginetan stater with chisel cuts across it. Is it possible that this coin was cut prior to plating (like Agora 659 and another found in Olympia)? If so one might wonder whether there was an ancient atelier specializing in making such forgeries.

This is, actually, a rather minor fascicle, but it does contain quite a large amount of mostly well illustrated material, and its accurate dating will be a great help for anyone who needs a quick overview of Athenian coinage.

While the Copenhagen supplement completes one of the greatest of all Sylloges, fifty years after it first began to be published, and Munich Fascicle 14 is part of a work in progress, the slim, blue-cloth, A4 volume containing the Muharrem Kayhan collection inaugurates a whole new series, that of the SNG Turkey, the country from which so many of Copenhagen's greatest treasures undoubtedly came. M. Kayhan is a very knowledgeable and public spirited collector who lives in Söke, a modern town in southern Ionia south of ancient Smyrna, and his main collecting interests lie in the coinages struck, used and found in Ionia and Karia. He has, in fact, amassed a specialized collection of no little interest, which has been well catalogued by Koray Konuk, a young Turkish numismatic scholar.

The slim volume begins with a short laudatory *préface* by G. Le Rider followed by Konuk's equally short introduction. One of the important things about this collection is that, unlike those recently published from a number of Turkish museums, almost all of the coins have recorded provenances: unfortunately, these are not listed here but KK promises another volume of studies devoted to them in the future. At least we know they are available.

² C.G. STARR, *Athenian Coinage 480-449 B.C.* (Oxford 1970), 102 a.

MK's desire to acquire coins from his local area seems all inclusive: he has purchased locally found and offered material, including hoards and fragments of hoards, as well as coins from his area now on the international market. Scholars will be pleased to have illustrated records of so many finds (though illustrating the many nearly illegible bronzes from the Phygela hoard, 147ff., 543ff., etc., seems of questionable utility), and those interested in rare types will find a few fascinating surprises (as the lovely coin from Phygela – the denomination has been left out but I would suppose it is a triple siglos). However, what I personally find most interesting about this collection is the remarkably extensive selection of archaic issues it contains: those from Miletos (440ff.), Samos (628ff.), and from Uncertain Mints in Ionia (673-745) are particularly important.

Whenever possible KK has provided references for the coins (all found in a concise four-page bibliography at the end of the volume), and the book is well laid out in the usual way (while many of the photographs are uneven – some are much too dark and are hard to see – most are perfectly usable and the provision of 2x enlargements for many of the smaller coins is a very welcome touch). In addition to the bibliography, there is also a geographical index, lists of rulers and magistrates, clear lists of monograms, letters and letter-like symbols, and a list of those hoards from which coins in this collection come. All in all this is a very creditable volume, and both the author and the owner deserve congratulations for their efforts, all the more because this was a private project, not one undertaken by the government. If more Turkish private collectors would produce sylloges, it might shame the great Turkish museums to do so as well. And wouldn't that be nice?

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