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Marguerite Spoerri Butcher

*Roman Provincial Coinage* vol. VII  
*De Gordien Ier à Gordien III (238-244 après J.-C.), 1: Province d'Asie*

British Museum Press (London) and  
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The need for a series of comprehensive catalogues of the coinages of the Roman provinces under the Empire has long been obvious, but the sheer quantity and baffling diversity of what used to be called the «Greek Imperials» have defeated all attempts hitherto to provide some equivalent of the works devoted to the Roman imperial coinage «proper» (*BMCRE* [1923-62, Augustus to Balbinus and Pupienus], based primarily on the British Museum collections, and the volumes of *Roman Imperial Coinage* [1923-, currently being updated]). Both *Die Antiken Münzen Nord-Griechenlands* (1898-) and the *Recueil général des monnaies grecques d'Asie Mineure* (1904-) foundered after a few volumes had been published, so that until now anyone working on the provincial coinages has had to hunt for information through dozens of disparate catalogues of collections ranging from Mionnet (1806-) to the *BMC Greek* to the fascicles of *SNG* as they gradually appeared. The Roman Provincial Coinage project (*RPC*) was launched in the 1980s in the hope of meeting this need; vol. I, covering the period from 44 BC to AD 69, was published in 1992,<sup>1</sup> followed in 1999 by vol. II (Vespasian to Domitian).<sup>2</sup> The courageous begetters of the project, Michel Amandry and Andrew Burnett, had to make difficult decisions about coverage, contents, format, etc., not to mention dealing with all the practicalities of publication. As well as acting as Series Editors, they co-authored vol. I and its *Supplement* (with Pere Pau Ripollès) and vol. II (with Ian Carradice). Several further volumes are in preparation: the catalogue part of vol. IV (Antoninus Pius to Commodus) is already available on-line, as is a listing of further addenda and corrigenda to vols I and II.

Vol. VII.1 is thus the third volume of *RPC* to be published, and while in general it follows the pattern set by the first two, it differs from them in several significant respects. First and foremost, it is the work of a single scholar, and Marguerite Spoerri Butcher (MSB) deserves unstinting praise for tackling on her own the daunting task of marshalling the vast amount of information presented here and then writing very thoughtful and well-informed commentaries both on the coinages of the individual cities in the catalogue and on the general topics covered in the *Étude historique*. It is an extraordinary achievement which should not be

<sup>1</sup> A. BURNETT / M. AMANDRY / P.P. RIPOLLÈS, *Roman Provincial Coinage I: From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius, 44 BC – AD 69* (London/Paris 1992).

<sup>2</sup> A. BURNETT / M. AMANDRY / I. CARRADICE, *Roman Provincial Coinage II: From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69-96)* (London/Paris 1999).

obscured by the criticisms offered later in this review – it is in the nature of reviews to focus on what is wrong rather than what is right, and I must stress at the outset that to my mind this is work of the highest possible standard. As will become clear, too, some of my critical remarks relate to aspects of the book over which I suspect that MSB had little control.

Unlike the previous volumes of *RPC*, which covered several decades and the whole of the «Greek» world, vol. VII.1 focuses on the coinage of only six years (238–244) and just one part – albeit a very important part – of the Greek East: the Province of Asia. In practical terms, probably the only sensible way to cope with the abundant third-century material is to divide it up by region, though this has its drawbacks in scholarly terms. In this case, MSB has done an admirable job of setting the Gordianic coinages of the Asian cities in the context of what preceded and followed, as well as what was going on in the adjoining regions of Asia Minor, but as she says herself, it would have been much better if she had been able to refer to other third-century volumes of *RPC*. Her work will obviously facilitate the task of producing those volumes (and also the remainder of vol. VII, apparently not yet allocated).

Although the ultimate aim was to produce another volume of *RPC*, MSB's work started out as a doctoral thesis for the University of Neuchâtel, which has led to other departures from the basic *RPC* model. Most conspicuously, the language is French and the style is rather more discursive (to anglophone eyes) than the terseness (to francophone eyes) of the earlier volumes. In the manner of theses, each topic is examined from every possible angle and much space in the catalogue is devoted to discussion of types and iconography. A major bonus is that in compiling her catalogue MSB has drawn on a far wider range of sources than the 'core collections' that the Series Editors had to choose as the only feasible way of coping with the huge amount of material scattered in public and private hands around the world. She has then analysed this material die-by-die, an enormously painstaking and time-consuming task that was not possible in the earlier volumes of *RPC* and that she has done with rare accuracy. The decision was taken (p. 20) not to illustrate all the *dies* but instead to show *coins* (with both obverse and reverse), and preference was clearly given to illustrating as many reverse *types* as possible (naturally, there were far too many reverse dies), although this meant repeating some obverse dies and omitting others (more on this below). The plates – a mix of conventional photographs of plaster casts and digital images from a variety of sources – are excellent and as legible as can be achieved for bronze coins that often lack sharp relief. One reverse is the wrong way up (Pl. 2 no. 19).

I shall start by discussing the second part of the book (*Étude numismatique*), since that has a bearing on what I wish to say about the first part (*Étude historique*).

### *The Catalogue*

In all, 71 cities in the Province of Asia issued coins for Gordian III augustus (only Prymnessus made coins for Gordian I, whose reign lasted 3 weeks; Prymnessus, Hadrianopolis and Miletus made coins for Balbinus, Pupienus and Gordian III

caesar). This is less than half the number striking for Septimius Severus and family at the beginning of the third century (as is clear from a glance at Maps 2 and 3, though Map 2 does not show all the cities in the Province that issued coins in the third century). MSB corrects the erroneous attribution of coinage for Gordian III to a further 18 cities, in particular in the charts in the Index volume to *SNG von Aulock*; some could not be found in the collections where they were alleged to be, others were misread or retooled (see below). She also corrects misreadings (e.g. of magistrates' names in Münsterberg's list).

The cities are arranged by *conventus*, the administrative districts into which the Province of Asia was divided from the Roman Republican period onwards (and perhaps originally under the Attalids). This order was one of the original decisions of the Series Editors and one that I deplore, though I fear that we are now locked into it for all the volumes of *RPC* (the arrangement is also being used for some *SNG* volumes, e.g. Cambridge Lewis, Hunterian). I can see no justification whatsoever for adopting this infuriating arrangement rather than B.V. Head's practice in the *BMC Greek* and *Historia Numorum* of using the traditional «tribal» divisions (Ionia, Lydia, Phrygia, Caria, etc.). For many years, Louis Robert was convinced that the *conventus* was the key to understanding the patterns of coin production and circulation in Asia, but as the Editors admit in discussing the options for the geographical arrangement in *RPC I* (pp. xiv-xvii), even he eventually «more or less abandoned his previous attitude» (p. 366), and they acknowledge themselves that «the *conventus* does not, however, really seem to be a very helpful explanation for either» (p. xvi). Why, then, have they foisted it on us? Even if Strabo says specifically that the Romans did not use the tribal divisions (XIII.4.12), they clearly had some meaning for the locals (cf. the coin legends that still in the third century distinguish Metropolis ΤΩΝ ΕΝ ΙΟΝΙΑ from Metropolis ΦΡΥΓ, or Sardis calling itself ΑCΙΑC·ΑΥΔΙΑC·ΕΛΛΑΔΟC·Α·ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙC), and it is increasingly clear that civic coinages were largely a *local* rather than a Roman affair. Furthermore, cities sometimes shifted *conventus* as new districts were created or boundaries were redrawn, and sometimes there is no evidence apart from proximity for assigning a city to a *conventus*, so that a good deal of guesswork is required. Worse still, the *conventus* are not listed in the same order (even allowing for the creation of new ones) in *RPC VII.1* as in *RPC I*; within the *conventus*, *RPC I* lists the cities according to some notional geographical order whereas in *RPC VII.1* they are listed in alphabetical order (and although MSB states (p. 19) that «la graphie grecque» has been retained for placenames – hence Kadoi, Kibyra, Kyme, Akrasos – we also have Colophon, Cyzique, Ancyre). And to crown it all, there is no index of placenames: in order to find the entry for a city you can hunt for it either in the table of contents (by *conventus*) or in the «Liste des cités» (again by *conventus*) on pp. 103-4 at the beginning of Catalogue, or on the map of *conventus* (p. 310). After much cursing, I finally compiled my own alphabetical *index locorum* (using Head's latinised spellings) and I strongly urge the publishers to do likewise in the interests of the sanity of future users (cp. the insert supplied with *SNG France 2, Cilicie*).

The entries in the catalogue are grouped by emperor/magistrate/size/reverse type, so (e.g.) Gordian, archon A, 40, 35, 30mm; archon B, 35, 30, 22mm; «anonyme» (i.e. no magistrate's name), 20mm, 18mm; then Tranquillina, archon A, 30, 22mm;



archon B, 30, 22mm; «anonyme», 22mm (followed, as necessary, by «pseudo-autonomes» and then by *homonoia* issues by partner city, magistrate and size, see e.g. Smyrna), whereas *RPC II* groups all of one signed issue together, hence for Smyrna, Vespasian: M. Vettius Bolanus: 27mm Vespasian, 22mm Titus, 16mm Thea Rômê; then Italicus *et al.*: 29mm Vespasian, 26mm Vespasian, 23mm Titus, 23mm Domitian, 21mm Titus & Domitian, etc., then the issues for Domitian. I find the latter arrangement clearer than MSB's decision to present the issues only in tabular form in the introduction to each city, after a discussion of the known magistrates and denominations. For Smyrna, this gives (p. 178, modified):

|                  | 35mm                        | 30mm                        | 25mm      | 21/22mm | 19mm |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|------|
| Pollianus        | GIII<br>( <i>homonoia</i> ) | GIII<br>( <i>homonoia</i> ) | GIII/ps-a |         |      |
| G. Iul. Menecles | GIII                        | GIII<br>( <i>homonoia</i> ) | GIII/ps-a |         |      |
| Cl. Rufinus      | GIII                        | T                           |           |         |      |
| M. Aur. Tertius  | GIII                        | ps-a                        | ps-a      |         |      |
| unsigned         |                             |                             | GIII/ps-a | GIII/T  | ps-a |

One problem is that the entries in the table can become misplaced, computers being what they are, and this has indeed happened on p. 178 (the rows for both Menecles and Tertius had slipped one column to the right – the correct version is given here). Then it is up to the reader laboriously to match the laconic information in the table with the catalogue entries, rather than being able to see each signed issue at a glance in the catalogue, as in *RPC II*.

For every city, at the beginning of each section of the catalogue (Gordian, Tranquillina, «pseudo-autonomous») the obverse dies are listed and numbered (AV1, AV2...) with their legends, types and cross-references to die-numbers in any relevant monograph (e.g. Klose's on Smyrna, MacDonald's on Aphrodisias),<sup>3</sup> plus references to die-links with other cities giving either the reference to Kraft, *System* or noting «Kraft –».<sup>4</sup> The individual numbered entries are then arranged, as just mentioned, by emperor/magistrate/size/reverse type, and for each catalogue entry the reverse dies are listed (legends plus full description of types), followed by the die-combination (e.g. A1/R2) for each example with its weight, diameter and die-axis (or the average weight where several examples have already been published in a standard reference work), and a note of any countermark. Illustrated examples are printed in bold type and the typography in general makes the entries very clear and legible. The amount of work that this represents is breathtaking, yet it has been done with great care and accuracy. It therefore seems churlish to complain about what has not been done, and the remarks that follow are aimed above all at the Series Editors and authors of subsequent volumes.

<sup>3</sup> Smyrna: D.O.A. KLOSE, *Die Münzprägung von Smyrna in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, AMuGS 10 (Berlin 1987); Aphrodisias: D. MACDONALD, *The Coinage of Aphrodisias*, RNS Special Publications 23 (London 1992).

<sup>4</sup> K. KRAFT, *Das System der kaiserzeitlichen Münzprägung in Kleinasien* (Berlin 1972).

Ideally, *all* the obverse dies should be illustrated, and it would be helpful if the catalogue number of an example illustrated in the plates (or ‘–’ if there isn’t one) were added to the listing of obverse dies; as it is, one has to search through the catalogue to discover whether/where each die is illustrated. Take Ephesus, for example: six of the fifteen 21/22mm obverse dies of Gordian turn out not to be illustrated. It would also be helpful to state the die-number at the ‘sharing’ city where dies were used to strike the coins of more than one city. Half of the 35 obverse dies of Gordian at Ephesus were also used at other cities (Colophon, Magnesia ad Maeandrum, Metropolis, Neapolis, Nysa, Samos), a fact that is duly noted, but it is left to the reader to work out which of the different Ephesian dies corresponds to which dies elsewhere (the information is in fact provided in MSB’s article on the organisation of coin production in *SNR* 85 (2006), of which more anon, but that does not help the user of *RPC* VII). This task is reasonably straightforward if there is a cross-reference to Kraft, but less so where Kraft did not see the die-link with Ephesus, e.g. AV23 die-link with Magnesia ad Maeandrum [AV15] and Metropolis [AV10, Kraft, pl. 18.72], the information in square brackets here is not supplied in *RPC*. (In this instance, by no means unique, the die in question is illustrated for the two other cities but not for Ephesus so that one cannot verify the link. Fortunately, MSB’s eye can be trusted, and in fact the die is illustrated in the *SNR* article, but there is no way of knowing that from *RPC* VII.)

It is also tantalising when a coin is discussed but not illustrated. MSB refers to a coin of Germe (no. 132) as having a strange Δ intercalated in the legend (p. 129), yet it is not illustrated. Ehling in his corpus of Germe<sup>5</sup> calls the letter a «Verschreibung» but MSB thinks it is part of the type. Readers might like to judge for themselves (the coin, not illustrated by Ehling, can now be found in *SNG Paris (Mysie)* 999 = P353C).

Inevitably, given a work of this scale and complexity, some slips have crept in and will come to light as the catalogue is used (see Appendix 1 for some examples).

As mentioned above, the catalogue includes some «pseudo-autonomous» coins, i.e. those without imperial portrait on the obverse. This category is always problematic and will be a major headache for *RPC* because of the difficulty of dating the coins precisely unless they happen to be signed by a magistrate or have some idiosyncratic stylistic feature that allows them to be attributed to a specific period; a few can be dated thanks to an obverse die-link with another city where the reverses provide a firm date. MSB has usually included only those coins securely datable to Gordian’s reign by a magistrate’s signature, plus those attributed in a monograph such as Klose’s *Smyrna*, where the author was able to propose dates for the «pseudo-autonomous» coins after having studied all the material. It would have required a superhuman effort to do otherwise, but it does mean that we do not always have a full picture of the coinage of 238-244, especially of the lower denominations.

MSB notes in the catalogue and illustrates a number of «false» coins: either tooled «genuine» coins which she elucidates (such as the coin of Julia Domna of Mytilene retooled as Tranquillina, or of Severus Alexander of Maeonia retooled as

<sup>5</sup> K. EHLING, Die Münzprägung der mysischen Stadt Germe in der römischen Kaiserzeit, *Asia Minor Studien* 42 (Bonn 2001).

Gordian III) or the notorious cast coins, mainly of Ephesus and Samos, apparently based on genuine originals, which H.-D. Schultz has published.<sup>6</sup>

The indexes – to the catalogue only and not, alas, to the text as well – cover obverse and reverse types, obverse and reverse legends, followed by an «index thématique» (gods and heroes, games, dates, civic titles, magistrates and their functions). There is no index of *homonoia* coins, though there is a map and a list of the cities so linked (p. 40), and none of countermarked coins.

The six maps show (1) the physical relief of the Province with the *conventus* centres, (2) the *conventus* boundaries at the time of Gordian III with all the member cities (but no indication of what is guesswork), (3) the *homonoia* links, plus all the cities that struck coins between 238 and 244 (though this is not stated explicitly), (4) the titles and functions of magistrates known from coins by city, (5) volume of issues for each city based on estimated numbers of obverse dies, (6) Gordian III's route to Persia across Asia Minor. Curiously, Samos is shown joined onto the mainland on Maps 2-4, but the maps are otherwise clear and helpful.

### *Étude historique*

The first part of the book covers the usual range of topics clearly and thoroughly, with copious references to the archaeological, epigraphic and literary evidence as well as the numismatic (the bibliography reflects the breadth of MSB's research). She begins by placing the Province of Asia in its geographical and historical setting before describing the administrative arrangements in the Province, in particular the evidence for the *conventus* and their extent at different periods. Whatever my criticism of using the *conventus* as the basis for arranging catalogues, this is a very valuable summary. MSB does not in fact make any claims for the *conventus* as anything but the framework for the administration of justice, plus arguing that they had «très certainement une importance administrative plus large, incluant des usages fiscaux ou culturels» (p. 23); she does not allude to the discussion in *RPC* I and the reservations expressed there as to the relevance of the *conventus* for the organisation of coin production.

Next follows an account of the political events of 238 to 244, starting with the attacks on the Empire at the end of Severus Alexander's reign. Curiously, the revival of the (debased) antoninianus by Balbinus and Pupienus is relegated to a footnote (p. 26 n. 40), despite the significance of this event for subsequent monetary history. The emphasis instead is mainly on the military history and the Eastern campaign(s) for which troops and the emperor crossed Asia Minor.

Chapter II, «L'autorité impériale», looks at the obverse types, with a discussion first of the portraits and titulature of the emperors and Tranquillina, then of the «pseudo-autonomous» types. MSB notes that the radiate crown was not used consistently to indicate a particular denomination or double value (as on the Roman imperial *aes*) since it is found on coins of many different sizes. She sees a definitely warlike significance in the types showing Gordian III wearing a cuirass or aegis, holding a shield and/or spear or lance; on such types the emperor often

<sup>6</sup> H.-D. SCHULTZ, Fälschungen ephesischer Münzen, *MÖNG* 35, 1995, pp. 7-14.

wears a radiate crown, as he never does on the imperial coinage, and she suggests that this may be intended to portray him as a «new Helios», a title ascribed to him on inscriptions from Ephesus. There may be some truth in the military connotations of the type with shield, but in most instances I would be reluctant to see in the radiate crown more than a wish to differentiate denominations within an issue, as at Dorylaeum (where, incidentally, none of the reverse types is remotely warlike):

|             |             |                |             |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| <b>35mm</b> | <b>30mm</b> | <b>23/25mm</b> | <b>19mm</b> |
| radiate     | laureate    | radiate        | radiate     |

I am even sceptical about Acmonia, where MSB (perhaps influenced by Lindner's *Mythos und Identität*, which she cites) dates at least one of the issues to the period of the Persian campaign because of the «attributs prophylactiques». In any case, it should be noted that the 'warlike' obverses are in fact few (bust radiate left, holding shield and spear: Miletropolis AV4, Germe AV15, Sardis AV7, Alia AV1; similar but bust laureate: Saïtai AV2; lance over shoulder: Miletropolis AV1, Acmonia AV1, Hadrianeia AV2 = Germe AV4; add Germe AV7, which Ehling describes as lance over shoulder but MSB does not, presumably reading the hand and lance as a die-break).

I would point out that radiate portraits are extremely rare at any time at Ephesus and Smyrna or at the cities supplied by the «Ephesus» and «Smyrna» workshops, where the denominations were well defined by size and reverse type so that there was less need to differentiate them by obverse design (the exception in this period is Tralles AV3). By contrast, radiate busts (both left- and right-facing) were much used by «Nicaea» from Gordian onwards, hence the instance at Alia (AV1 = Kraft pl. 102.31a).

The discussion of the «pseudo-autonomous» types by category (personifications, gods, and heros or legendary ancestors) is characteristically clear and thorough. (Germe should be added to the list of cities showing their City Tyche on p. 34: Ehling's monograph was published after MSB's cut-off date of 2000, and although she has taken account of it in the catalogue, she understandably has not done so in the text.)

Chapter III, «Le monde des cités», turns to the reverse legends and types: ethnics, titles (e.g. neocorate(s), rank in Asia), *homonoia* linkages, dates, magistrates, (pictorial) countermarks, iconography. Again, the facts and the commentary are laid out with admirable clarity and this could well serve as a model for other third-century volumes of *RPC*, though to my mind the section on *homonoia* linkages belongs better at the end of the chapter. Inevitably, new work has been published since the chapter was written, notably Barbara Burrell's book on neocorates<sup>7</sup> and Howgego and Heuchert's *Coinage and Identity*,<sup>8</sup> which includes Peter Weiss's important paper on magistrates and magistracies. While we await the commentary

<sup>7</sup> B. BURRELL, *Neokoroi: Greek Cities and Roman Emperors* (Leiden/Boston 2004).

<sup>8</sup> C. HOWGEGO / V. HEUCHERT / A. BURNETT (eds.), *Coinage and Identity in the Roman Provinces* (Oxford 2005).

volume of Franke and Nollé's study of *homonoia* coinages,<sup>9</sup> MSB's discussion of the possible reasons behind the issues is especially valuable. She is, as almost always, admirably cautious and nuanced in her interpretations. In particular, having presented the types and probable dates of the issues, she finds little evidence for the hypothesis that the *homonoia* coinages were linked to Gordian's Persian campaign. The section on magistrates is an exhaustive treatment of the formulae (*epi* + genitive, *para* + genitive, etc.) and the functions of those named (summarised in a useful table and shown on Map 4, which brings out the geographical pattern – *strategoí* mainly in the north and west, *grammateis* along the Maeander valley, first archons from Sardis eastwards). MSB notes the three instances of what appear to be boards of *grammateis* at Magnesia ad Maeandrum (12 names plus 3 iterations), Nysa (6) and Tralles (4 + the president); at Magnesia there are many more names than regnal years, but it is not possible to determine from the plentiful die-links how many magistrates acted together there or at Nysa and Tralles, where multiple magistracies were also the norm. MSB avoids the difficulty of how to transliterate the names by giving them in Greek throughout.

The section on pictorial countermarks is not user-friendly because in most cases readers have to discover for themselves the examples on which the countermarks occur (as mentioned, there is no index of countermarked coins) and consult Howgego, *GIC*, to ascertain the date of the latest coin known with each countermark.<sup>10</sup> The most interesting addition is the variant of *GIC* 198 with an M (for Magnesia ad Sipylum) beside the Tyche head on no. 286.1 (not 268.1 as given in n. 174). MSB is mainly concerned with the circulation patterns revealed by the countermarks. The value countermarks are treated separately in Chapter VII on metrology.

The final section of Chapter III focuses mainly on the emperor, war and athletic contests as the three general themes chosen by several Asian cities for their reverse types – most of the types had predominantly local significance and are therefore discussed city-by-city in the catalogue – with a short introduction about other common themes such as foundation myths and the gods who were widely venerated throughout the Province (e.g. Artemis Ephesia), if not the whole Greek world. Note that the coins of Sardis proclaiming the city as first in Asia, Lydia, Greece, etc. (nos. 244-246) show not the Senate (as stated on p. 54) but the City Tyche on the obverse. MSB is laudably cautious about reading too much into the reverse types with imperial and military themes, and she notes that the numismatic evidence underrepresents the full range of civic athletic contests. Aphrodisias was the only city to institute *Gordianeia* (*Attaleia Capitolia*), and continued to celebrate the event – at least on its coins – under Philip (MacDonald, *Aphrodisias* R445, omitted by MSB on p. 239), Trajan Decius, Valerian and Gallienus.

<sup>9</sup> P.R. FRANKE / M. NOLLÉ, *Die Homonoia-Münzen Kleinasiens und der thrakischen Randgebiete I: Katalog*, Saarbrücker Studien zur Archäologie und Alten Geschichte 10 (Saarbrücken 1997).

<sup>10</sup> C. HOWGEGO, *Greek Imperial Countermarks (GIC)*. Studies in the Provincial Coinage of the Roman Empire, RNS Special Publication 17 (London 1985).



Chapter IV, «Production monétaire», is the least satisfactory part of the book. The second section, on «volume des émissions», goes into detail that is of doubtful value and it is highly regrettable that the third section, on the organisation of production – an investigation of Konrad Kraft's work on the role of ateliers supplying dies (and perhaps coins) to more than one city – has been deliberately omitted; it has now been published instead in *SNR* 85 (2006), pp. 97-128. The reason given («afin de ne pas surcharger outre mesure les planches») seems feeble in view of the fact that the 38 images of obverse dies that make up the two plates in *SNR* could have fitted onto the blank 1½ pages at the end of the *RPC* plates, though admittedly it would have been desirable to illustrate more than this bare minimum. The volume makes frequent reference to Kraft's work, in both text and catalogue, so that the omission is extremely frustrating – all the more so because MSB's article helpfully pulls together material that is scattered through Kraft's book, adds significantly to it and draws interesting conclusions. Ultimate responsibility for this choice lies with the Series Editors and it is to be hoped that they will avoid any similar lacuna in other volumes of *RPC*.

The chapter starts with an overview of how many cities in the Province issued coins for each emperor from Severus Alexander to Claudius II (222-270) in order to set the coinage for Gordian in context and to test the hypothesis that there was a peak of production during his reign. The raw data for reigns other than Gordian's are derived from Leschhorn's Index volume to *SNG von Aulock* and his subsequent article in *PACT* 5 (1981). (It should be noted that not only are these figures now 25 years old, as MSB points out, but for Gordian, she herself has eliminated nine cities from that source alone, i.e. a 10 % overestimate should perhaps be allowed for the other reigns until more refined figures become available. Also, the coinage of Gallienus' sole reign cannot at present be separated from that of the joint reign with Valerian and the combined figure is misleading.) Once the crude totals have been adjusted for length of reign, it transpires that the 73 cities striking between 238 and 244 did not represent a peak, though the figures do not indicate the *scale* of the issues. Before trying to find a means of estimating the total volume, MSB breaks down the same data by *conventus* in order to capture changes in the geographical distribution between 222 and 270; for what it is worth, this reveals the greatest rise to be in the *conventus* of Apameia, i.e. central Phrygia, but once again she is unwilling to see the Persian campaign as the cause of many Phrygian cities making issues after an interval without coinage, given the highly sporadic nature of most provincial coinage. She does not discuss whether this might reflect workshop activity, a topic to which I shall return.

Next, MSB looks at «émissions» for Gordian per city, estimated where possible in terms of magistrates or, if there are no signatures but few dies per denomination, on the assumption that there was just a single issue. The results are set out in Table 5 by city and *conventus*, and by rough date. She observes that there seems to be little correlation between a city's political or economic importance and the frequency of its issues. Almost half the cities struck at least one issue after 241, but she concludes later that this was not related to the Persian campaign.

We then reach the section on «volume des émissions». Quite apart from the debate about whether it is ever worthwhile to estimate coin production statistically



from numbers of dies and surviving examples, the exercise is particularly meaningless for the Roman provincials: bronze coins in a wide variety of modules produced sporadically by individual city mints or workshops. Few Asian cities appear to have struck coins regularly, Ephesus being the one probable exception. Output was determined by factors other than die use or wear – probably above all the quantity of metal allocated for coinage by the city or paid for by a benefactor, the range of images and denominations chosen (plus the budget to pay for dies and/or the availability of competent engravers), perhaps even the marketing skills of the supplying workshop. The fact that obverse dies were commonly used for more than one city indicates that dies were rarely worked very hard.

MSB limits herself to concluding from her calculations that her corpus appears to be a representative sample as regards the obverse dies, less so for the reverse dies because cities tended to opt for a variety of reverse types. Sensibly, she refrains from attempting to calculate production per city from the die figures but she does rank the cities by the estimated numbers of obverse dies used according to the Good formula (also shown on Map 5). Ephesus leads her ranking because of the large issue celebrating *homonoia* with Alexandria. A glance at the (actually recorded) dies and types shows how difficult, if not impossible, it is to make general statements about this material beyond a vague «more dies must reflect larger output» (as she herself remarks at the end of the section, in n. 220).

| Ephesus         | 35mm     | 30mm          | 21/22mm  | 19mm | 16/17mm  | total     |
|-----------------|----------|---------------|----------|------|----------|-----------|
| «civic»         |          |               |          |      |          |           |
| obv. dies       | G5 (∞ 3) | G3 (∞ 2) + T2 | G6 (∞ 4) | T1   | G3 (∞ 1) | 20 (∞ 10) |
| rev. dies       | 4        | 17 + 14       | 20       | 1    | 6        | 62        |
| rev. types      | 3        | 11 + 8        | 9        | 1    | 4        | 36        |
| <i>homonoia</i> |          |               |          |      |          |           |
| obv. dies       | G6 (∞ 1) | G3 (∞ 3)      | G9 (∞ 4) | –    | –        | 18 (∞ 8)  |
| rev. dies       | 10       | 26            | 15       | –    | –        | 51        |
| rev. types      | 8        | 8             | 3        | –    | –        | 19        |

(Not shown: one obverse and one reverse die for the 50mm *homonoia* «medallion») As this table shows, a high proportion of the obverse dies for both the «civic» and *homonoia* issues at Ephesus were used at other cities (indicated by her useful shorthand ∞; only two dies, AV2 and AV26, were used for both «civic» and *homonoia* issues, which appear to be largely separate). For the «civic» issue(s), though roughly the same number of obverse dies was used for each of the three highest denominations, many more reverse dies were used for the 30 and 22mm sizes than for the 35mm, as one might expect if the need for small change was a factor in the decision-making (by this period, the smallest denominations had been abandoned at many cities, though Ephesus continued to strike some into the 250s). For the *homonoia* issue, the pattern is quite different, with many more reverse types and dies for the 35mm size (presumably the most prestigious, apart from the exceptional 50mm) than for the «civic» coinage, the same number of reverse types for the 30mm as for the 35mm, and only 3 reverse types for the (least prestigious) 22mm. More reverse

dies were employed to strike the 30mm and 22mm denominations than the largest size, just as we have seen for the «civic» coinage, but twice as many dies per type were required for the *homonoia* issues (on average 3 dies per type for the 30mm and 5 per type for the 22mm). Given these differences, do the total figures reveal anything meaningful? I am extremely doubtful.

At Smyrna, four magistrates signed «civic» issues, two of whom also signed *homonoia* issues with eight other cities and with the *koinon* of Asia; in addition, there are «pseudo-autonomous» and unsigned 25mm, 21mm and 19mm dies. The pattern of die use has few similarities with that at Ephesus, even though roughly the same number of obverse dies was used for the «civic» issues (one 35mm die was also used for the *homonoia* with the *koinon* of Asia, hence G1\*). Note the very large number of reverse dies (again, the table shows known, not estimated, dies).

| Smyrna          | 35mm     | 30mm                 | 25mm                 | 21/22mm                | 19mm   | total    |
|-----------------|----------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------|----------|
| «civic»         |          |                      |                      |                        |        |          |
| obv. dies       | G3 (∞ 2) | T1 (∞ 1) +<br>ps-a 1 | G1 + ps-a 5<br>(∞ 3) | G4 (∞ 2) +<br>T5 (∞ 1) | ps-a 3 | 23 (∞ 9) |
| rev. dies       | 8        | 4 + 2                | 9 + 37               | 8 + 24                 | 16     | 108      |
| rev. types      | 5        | 2 + 1                | 4 + 10               | 1 + 1                  | 3      | 27       |
| <i>homonoia</i> |          |                      |                      |                        |        |          |
| obv. dies       | G1*      | G2                   | –                    | –                      | –      | 2        |
| rev. dies       | 1        | 8                    | –                    | –                      | –      | 9        |
| rev. types      | 1        | 8                    | –                    | –                      | –      | 9        |

Much further down the ranking, Sardis (with 10 obverses) appears to score below the small Phrygian cities of Bruzus and Lysias (11 each), which gives a misleading impression of the scale of its output because Sardis produced a wider range of denominations – six, as against four and three respectively – in its two signed issues (the addition of the «pseudo-autonomous» types not included in *RPC*, in italics here, makes little overall difference in this case). With 10 obverse dies used exclusively for the city's coinage and 60 reverse dies, Sardis' output for Gordian is not that different from the «civic» issues at Ephesus.

| Sardis     | 40mm    | 35mm     | 30mm          | 25mm | 21/22mm                    | 18mm           | total    |
|------------|---------|----------|---------------|------|----------------------------|----------------|----------|
| obv. dies  | Tyche 1 | G2 (∞ 1) | G1 + T1 (∞ 1) | G4   | T1 (∞ 1) +<br><i>Mén 2</i> | <i>Tyche 1</i> | 13 (∞ 3) |
| rev. dies  | 3       | 2        | 3 + 2         | 32   | 8 + 7                      | 3              | 60       |
| rev. types | 3       | 2        | 2 + 2         | 6    | 2 + 2                      | 2              | 21       |

The chapter should have ended, as in MSB's thesis, with a discussion of the role of ateliers in production. Instead, we are left in suspense. The existence of the workshops was far more relevant to patterns of production in the third century than the *conventus*, as MSB concludes in her article (*SNR*, p. 120), yet we are not told anything about them here. The spotlight on a single short reign offers a splendid opportunity to examine all the material, to identify the geographical

extent of each «Lieferbezirk» and to suggest answers to questions about the way the workshops operated. This MSB has done very intelligently in her article, which I urge everyone to read. There she sets out the obverse die-links, workshop by workshop, clearly in tabular form (by size and obverse type: Gordian, Tranquillina, «pseudo-autonomous») with full cross-references to the die and catalogue numbers in *RPC*. She was naturally unable to illustrate all 563 (!) obverse die-links that she identified and has had to limit herself to a few from the main workshops which were not illustrated in *RPC*. There is also a helpful map showing the geographical extent of the workshops, including stylistic similarities as well as die-links (for example, no actual die-links have been found for «Aphrodisias», though it is obvious that the same engravers, one more competent than the other, supplied the dies for Aphrodisias, Harpasa and Attuda). She concludes that the workshops did not all operate in the same way: some appear responsible for a greater degree of homogeneity in the choice of denominations and reverse types than others.

Only roughly a third of the cities seem to have produced all their own dies, and it is not clear whether the workshops supplied the flans as well as the dies (she does not mention overstrikes, though she notes the use of a centring tool by the «Cyzicus» workshop). My quibbles are few and trivial. It seems improbable that cities should ever have been given only written descriptions of the emperor's appearance (suggested (*SNR*, p. 124) as the reason for the lack of similarity between the portraits of Gordian from «Cyzicus» and «Acmonia»). Where cities seem to have used dies of the «wrong» size, it is unlikely to have been because they were physically or financially incapable of producing dies of the «right» size (*SNR*, p. 121) – in the case mentioned of the obverse die-link between Acrasus, Stratoniceia Lydiae (both 25mm) and Hypaepa (21/22mm), the reverse dies are of appropriate size (and flans anyway were not always carefully made).

Reference is made to the (unexplained) workshops in Chapter V, on metrology, though MSB chooses to arrange the material according to *conventus* and plays down the role of the workshops – wrongly, in my view. In some cases the area supplied by a workshop and the corresponding *conventus* were roughly coterminous at this period (e.g. «Cyzicus», «Pergamum», «Smyrna», «Ephesus»), so that they reveal much the same picture, whereas the boundaries of the «Sardis» workshop area, for instance, were less stable – cities on the periphery, such as Germe and Thyatira, switched supplier during the third century and their denominations are less obviously connected with their source of dies. MSB uses the example of Thyatira (p. 72) to show that the supplying workshop was not significant since Thyatira did not follow the same pattern of obverse types/denominations as Sardis and Saïtta despite being supplied by the same atelier, but there is in fact little difference apart from the «pseudo-autonomous» obverse types of the 30mm:

|         | Sardis       | Saïtta        | Thyatira                 |
|---------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| 40mm    | ps-a (Tyche) | ps-a (Senate) | ps-a (Senate)            |
| 35mm    | GIII         | GIII          | GIII                     |
| 30mm    | GIII/T       | T             | ps-a ( <i>homonoia</i> ) |
| 25mm    | GIII         | GIII          | GIII                     |
| 21/22mm | T            | T             | –                        |

The denominations can be distinguished by diameter rather more readily than by weight, and in my view MSB attaches too much significance to the weights. The averages can hide wide variations – as MSB acknowledges, the coins were struck *al marco* in the first place and suffered varying degrees of wear – and I suspect that what mattered was that a coin was recognisably denomination X rather than Y. After examining the diameters and weights within broad regions, MSB tentatively identifies two systems, a western (the Aegean coast plus the Maeander valley, Sardis and Thyatira) and an eastern (inland Mysia and Caria, Phrygia), set out in Table 7. She cautiously suggests that the eastern flans may have been slightly smaller than the western, and the weights sometimes lower too. Yet even within these «systems» there is considerable variation in the average weights and the choice of denominations struck (from among eleven in the western or nine in the eastern, ranging in diameter from 15mm to 50mm). I am not convinced by this breakdown, and I would have liked to see an analysis by workshop, with the main emphasis on the choice of denominations struck rather than on weights. MSB herself perceives that «Smyrna» and «Ephesus» determined which denominations were made in their areas, and it would have been interesting to see whether the others had a similar influence on the cities they supplied. (Also, what happened at the cities that did not rely on workshops? How far did they align their denominations on their neighbours'?)

The main reason for her «réponse nuancée» to the question of the workshops' influence is the variation in the average weights of coins at cities supplied by the same workshop, e.g. 35mm coins of Cyme (25.72 g) and Temnus (19.52 g), both supplied by «Smyrna». In fact, she has picked the two extremes: the corresponding figures for the other cities whose 35mm coins were die-linked with those of Cyme and Temnus are Magnesia ad Sipylum 24.15 g, Phocaea 22.86 g, Smyrna 22.13 g. A similar spread can be observed for the 30mm (15.55 g at Magnesia to 11.29 g at Cyme), but little difference (10 %) for the lower denominations. Admittedly Temnus comes out bottom almost every time, and I like her point that these variations may suggest that the production of dies was separate from that of flans and coins. Out of curiosity, I checked the range of weights at four cities supplied by «Ephesus» (Colophon, Ephesus, Magnesia ad Maeandrum, Metropolis) and found them consistently much lower than for «Smyrna» for both the 35mm (17.41–19.30 g) and 30mm (9.05–10.56 g), though not for the lower denominations. Is this significant?

The next step after the denominations have been differentiated is to try to attach values to them – a step that MSB prefers not to take, quite understandably in view of the lack of evidence. The only clues that we have for the Province of Asia are the labelled but undated coins of Chios and some value countermarks, mostly applied much later than Gordian's reign. She quotes my own preliminary suggested denominations for Sardis and Smyrna and finds them in general convincing, apart from the smallest (average weight 2.88 g), which I called a half-assarion but which she thinks must be worth more than that because the labelled hemiassarion at Chios in the second century weighed around 2 g and it is unlikely that the weight would have increased when all other weights were declining. This is a valid point, yet I am reluctant to accept the idea of a three-quarter-assarion and would simply reiterate my argument that precise weights mattered less than recognisability, which was often indicated by the types as much as by the size.

I have been foolhardy enough to extend my work on denominations to the whole of Asia Minor in the third century (a publication is imminent), but I share MSB's misgivings about attributing values blindly across the board. There were significant variations from city to city and from region to region, as the data assembled in her Table 8 show, and discretion is required. Nevertheless I believe that it is possible to identify the main denominations, though the task is obviously much easier if one can look at the whole of a city's coinage and not just that of a single reign.

MSB does not comment on the very large pieces beyond stating that the 50mm, and perhaps also the 45mm and 40mm, are «certinement à considérer comme des médaillons» (p. 77) «non destinés à la circulation» (p. 80). The term «medallion» is now viewed with disfavour in English since in most cases the large sizes merely extend the top end of the normal range of denominations (as MSB observes) and many show signs of wear suggesting that they did circulate like other coins. Whatever their function, more cities in Asia seem to have produced denominations larger than 35mm for Gordian than for any other emperor (with the possible exception of Caracalla). Why? Or is this just an accident of survival? I had hoped that MSB might offer some answers. Some of the reverse types of these large coins explicitly show the emperor or could be interpreted as alluding to his strength (e.g. Heracles), but many others have no imperial connotations and some even have the Senate or City Tyche rather than Gordian on the obverse. Very puzzling.

The chapter concludes with a table noting the occurrence of value countermarks on coins of the period. The table is arranged, once again, by *conventus* and city, and the information about countermarks is added against the background of selected denominations so that one can see at once that, for instance, at Ephesus the CAP Δ countermark (*GIC* 561) is found on both 35mm and 30mm coins; Γ countermarks occur on both 35mm (*GIC* 776) and 22mm (*GIC* 774) flans; and B (*GIC* 763) and two η countermarks (*GIC* 811, 812), as well as CAP Δ, occur on the 30mm size. The result is confusing rather than enlightening, and the few lines of commentary on p. 90 do not attempt to offer any interpretation. No catalogue references are supplied (and, as already mentioned, there is no index of countermarked coins), so readers have to chase them up for themselves. Four countermarks are accorded «remarques».

(i) *GIC* 560 (CAP Γ) on Bruzus is alleged to be quite unlike the punch illustrated in *GIC* and a footnote sends us to another footnote in the catalogue, which states that Howgego identified the countermark as CAP Δ. The countermarked coin (no. 707.7 = Vienna 30285) is unfortunately not illustrated so that there is no way of judging who is correct. (ii) *GIC* 561 (CAP Δ): the punch found on the 35mm examples of Ephesus is said to be larger than other countermarks of the same type – there is no catalogue reference, but searching revealed n. 573 attached to no. 362, where we learn that all the known examples on 35mm flans are cast pieces, probably all derived from the same model; none of the recorded examples of no. 362 has the countermark. This surely also merited a cross-reference.

(iii) *GIC* 812 (5): MSB identifies an example of this countermark for the first time on a coin of Ephesus, which she says confirms Howgego's suggestion that 812 may have been a variant of 811. Howgego hesitated to include the only example of 812, on Bria, with the 91 examples of 811 because the style of the numeral was



«unparalleled» and because Bria lies «on the edge of the area from which coins were drawn for *cmk* 811». Since there were several styles of 811 and many punches, one would like to be sure that this is indeed the same punch as 812 but the coin is not illustrated (no. 415.4 = Falghera 2125, there read as Γ?). In fact MSB appears to be correct: the numeral is small and neat, as 812. However, *GIC* 811 was probably not Ephesian, even though large numbers of Ephesian coins are known with the countermark, because the value  $\eta$  does not fit the standard there at the time of countermarking. *GIC* 811 and 812 could have been applied almost anywhere north of the Maeander.

Chapter VI examines how far the coinage reflects the two major political events of the period: the revolt of Gordian I and II in 238 and the Persian campaign of Gordian III. On the first point MSB makes the wise general observation that the Roman provincials cannot be taken as a reliable indicator of the recognition of an emperor in a province or region because issues were too sporadic and the accession of a new emperor was not in itself an adequate reason to strike coins. On the second, she summarises the evidence offered by other scholars for Gordian's route across Asia Minor before rehearsing the arguments already presented in earlier chapters and her conclusions, *viz.* that other, purely local factors were far more significant in determining coin types, *homonoia* issues and pattern of output. The whole chapter is a welcome example of how not to push the numismatic evidence too far.

The Conclusion is a very lucid summary of her main findings, ending with a brief discussion of the possible motives for the issues, which mostly appear not to be related to economic, political or commercial considerations.

All in all, this is an impressive piece of work and one for which scholars will be grateful for many years to come.

#### *APPENDIX 1: corrigenda*

1. Colophon: there are confusing errors on pp. 189-190 and Plate 30. The coin illustrating no. 348 is not Paris 323 (348.1) but the Berlin example (348.2, illustrated by Milne and by Kraft pl. 17.65); the die-combination is AV2/RV1 (not RV2). AV1 (= Kraft pl. 19.76a-c, the link with Colophon not noted in Kraft) is illustrated by the obverse of no. 350, but it is not the correct photograph of the Winterthur coin, which has the same obverse die (AV2) as 348.2 (see Schulten, March 1990, lot 872); the reverse is correctly shown. Presumably the stray photograph of AV1 is in fact of Paris 323; the reverse (RV2, not RV1) is not illustrated.
2. Metropolis, no. 452: the example illustrated is not 452.2 (AV6/RV1) but the other Boston example, 452.7 (AV9/RV3).
3. Miletus: entries for Aur. Minnion in table of denominations on p. 226 have slipped one space to r.

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*APPENDIX 2: RPC VII.1 Index of cities*

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|                        |                |         | Tralles               | <b>480-509</b> | 213-18 |
| Iasus                  | –              | 245     | Trapezopolis          | –              | 248    |
| Ilium                  | <b>36-45</b>   | 112-14  | Tripolis              | <b>739-43</b>  | 269-70 |