

IMITATIONS OF ROMAN COINS

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Imitations of Roman coins are an extremely heterogeneous group in geographical, chronological and functional respect. Their chronological range and geographical distribution exceed the limits of the Roman empire by far and cover areas from the Arabian peninsula (45) to China (39), from Scandinavia (32-35, 40, 69) to India (8, 70), and from the Republic to – in a remote sense – early medieval Germanic gold bracteates (47). The numerous implications of imitations not only to numismatics but also to archaeology and history have instigated a growth in scientific research in recent years, which can only be treated in a very superficial manner within this short contribution.

PETER (48) presents an overview of imitations produced within the Roman empire. MALKMUS (42) revised his important catalogue of all known ancient coin dies, many of which are ancient forgers' tools. Imitations of republican denarii in Dacia, but also the Eraviscan coins have been treated in several recent publications which have added new insights on these particular groups (17-20, 36, 41, 70-71; see also M. NICK's and B. WOYTEK's contributions in this volume). AMELA VALVERDE (2) and WOYTEK (77) discuss imitations of denarii of C. Iulius Caesar, and STANNARD (67-68) presents surprising new results concerning late republican small change circulation in central Italy where imitations of prototypes from Spain, Ebusus and Massalia played an important role. Early imperial denarii were particularly popular prototypes for imitations in various regions, as is exemplified by MUNRO-HAY's important monograph on the coinage of southern Arabia (45), but also by DUNDUA (24) in his account of the coinage in Georgia (see also KROPOTKIN, 38, and SHEROZIA, 66). Focussing on the Roman West, BESOMBES (9) puts forward a highly detailed interpretation of Claudian *asses*, imitations of which he considers to be purely private forgeries, possibly too strict an interpretation (10). WIGG-WOLF (76) examines the functions of copies of *aes* coins, too, and convincingly puts the emphasis on economic factors.

BOZZINI *et al.* (13) discuss the technology of plated coins; DEBATTY (21) publishes a die-linked group of plated Neronian denarii. Two important studies deal with cast coins: AUBIN (6) gives a thorough overview and discussion of 3rd century denarii and radiates cast in the Western provinces, and PFISTERER (51-52) provides an excellent analysis of the so-called limesfalsa, cast imitations of *aes*-coins, as well as of iron-core copies (see also 53-54). Cast imitations are also discussed by R.-ALFÖLDI (1) and ARSLAN (3), while several finds of 3rd century clay moulds have been published recently (31, 43, 50). GITLER AND PONTING (28) analyze again a group of cast silver denarii from the Levant, while the important workshops from Châteaubleau, where different groups of 3rd century imitations were produced, are studied by PILON (55-61). VIDA (74) comments on imperial imitations in Pannonia, GĂZDAC AND ALFÖLDY-GĂZDAC (27) on Dacia. GRICOURT *et al.* (29) explore lead coins. Radiate copies of the late 3rd century have been treated by several authors in numerous hoard publications (7, 12, 23, 26, 37; see also Sylviane ESTIOT's contribution in this volume).

Minimi, imitations and cast copies as part of the late Roman small change circulation are discussed by ASOLATI (4-5), BIJOVSKY (11), BURRELL (14), BUSSI (15), NOESKE (46), and PILON (62). GUEST in his monograph of the Hoxne treasure (30) also discusses groups of imitated siliquae. Several finds of plated solidi have been noted (16, 73). Finally, LIN AND METLICH (39) publish an imitative solidus of Leo I, found in Luoyang (Henan, China).

Generally there has been considerable interest in all sorts of imitations of Roman coins in the last few years. The common trait of recent research is the will to interpret this material with respect to its original function, as contemporary forgeries, part of large scale economic measures, or as objects with non-monetary use.

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