

- 03/447 Bernhard WOYTEK
Arma et Nummi. Forschungen zur römischen Finanzgeschichte und Münzprägung der Jahre 49 bis 42 v.Chr.
Vienne, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2003
(Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Denkschriften 312 = Veröffentlichungen der numismatischen Kommission, 40)
30,5 x 22 cm, XIV-631 p., 12 pl., 147,80 €
ISBN 3-7001-3159-3

W.'s book is based on his PhD dissertation (Wien 2000/2001) and retains many features of a typical (European continental style) doctoral thesis, being the detailed report of a meticulous investigation into the relation between historical events and the coinage of the turbulent years between 49-42 BCE. It is important to keep this aspect in mind in judging *Arma et Nummi*. Very few people will read this book cover to cover, and I wouldn't advise anyone to do so. The merits of W. study as a tool of reference, however, are indisputable.

W.'s book is well structured. It comprises 3 major chronological parts, each subdivided in a historical section, analysing the financial history of the period (Teil A) and a numismatic section (Teil B). The first part covers the opening years of the civil war, with much attention for Caesar's handling of the debt crisis (*Der Bürgerkrieg zwischen Caesar und Pompeius (49-48 v. Chr.)*, p. 9-153). The second focuses on the years 48-45, comprising the wars in Alexandria, Africa and Spain, and Caesar's 'bloodless proscriptions' (*Caesar als 'chrèmatopoiòs anèr': Die Auseinandersetzungen von Ende 48 bis 45 v.Chr. und die Finanzpolitik des Siegers*, p. 155-310). The third and last part deals with the years 44-42, from shortly before Caesar's assassination to the battles at Philippi, with much attention for the bloody proscriptions of the triumvirs (*Von Caesars absoluter Herrschaft zur Schlacht bei Philippi: die Finanzen der Jahre 45/44 bis 42 v. Chr.*, p. 311-528). A short conclusion (*Zusammenfassende Betrachtung*, p. 529-536) is followed by three appendices. The first on the problem of army pay (p. 537-545) – in which W. argues in favour of Lo Cascio's thesis that Caesar doubled army pay from 1 to 2 sesterces a day and Augustus raised it to 2.5 HS a day. The second appendix (p. 546-549) is more trivial and concerns the exact nature of the object serving as an attribute of Saturn on some coins (rather a curbed sword (*harpa*) than a sickle (*falx*) according to W.). The third appendix lists donations to troops and citizens and the coin types presumably struck for these occasions (p. 550-552). Six tables summarise the results of W.'s (re)arrangement of the coin emissions. The changes proposed to the arrangement of Crawford are summarised in a separate table (p. 553-559). After the bibliography (ca. 500 titles), various indices are provided: a source index (p. 583-604), a coin index (p. 604-610), a hoard index (p. 610-611) and a general index (p. 611-622). 12 plates with excellent photographs of all coin types discussed by W. (with accompanying provenance list and summary notes on the weight and die axis of the specimens) close the book.

Scholars interested in the history of these years will benefit from reading W.'s historical chapters. His persistent focus on the financial worries of the war faring parties puts the traditional political and military approach in a new perspective and adds to understanding the course of events. Far from being penniless, Caesar was able to invade Italy in 49 because his victories in Gaul and his continuing control over the newly conquered territories made him financially independent. The flight of the senatorial commanders leaving the treasury behind was a severe blow for the war effort of the senatorial party. Pompey needed time not just to prepare his army but also to raise new funds. It gave Caesar the resources and the time first to deal with the Pompeian armies in Spain. After the battle at Pharsalus, Caesar went to Egypt to collect money – as claimed by ancient authors – but was overtook

by events making him lose precious time while the senatorial forces regrouped in Africa. He then spent more time in Asia than necessary for the war against Pharnakes, because he needed to raise money from Pompey's former supporters to prepare the war in Africa. The money raised by the sale of confiscated property (in so far as it wasn't immediately spent) was deposited in the temple of Ops. At Caesar's death this extraordinary fund contained 700 million sesterces that were soon appropriated by Antony. After the assassination, the failure of the conspirators to gain control over the state's financial resources or to confiscate Caesar's immense private fortune – both of which fell in the hands of Antony – made the restoration of the senatorial regime hopeless. Shortly before Caesar's death the Treasury had been emptied in preparation for the war against the Parthians, the gold- and silver stock was coined and sent to Brundisium, where other funds – coming from the provinces – were also being collected. This money fell into the hands of Octavian, providing him the financial means to build his own power base. The senate and the conspirators, meanwhile, were left penniless. Brutus and Cassius left Italy for the East where they started to collect money to build an army. After Octavian had defeated Antony the senate tried to side-step him and charged Brutus with the payment of the *donativa* promised by Octavian. It was a strike at the heart of Octavian's power, who responded by marching on Rome and allying himself with Antony and Lepidus, forming the second triumvirate. Brutus and Cassius had by now assembled a formidable army and accumulated huge financial resources by pressing the Eastern provinces hard. The resources of the *triumviri*, on the other hand, had been largely spent in the struggle between Antony and Octavian and the senate. They hastily collected new funds by organising bloody proscriptions and levying new taxes, but when they marched against Brutus and Cassius, their financial reserves were small compared to those of the Republicans. Only after the battles at Philippi, when Octavian and Antony had captured the resources of the Republicans, were they able to honour the promises they had made to their soldiers.

W.'s reconstruction is usually reliable, although in details it sometimes misses the mark. Thus, for instance, Faberius's debt to Cicero has very likely nothing to do with a loan Caesar forced on Cicero (p. 214-215) (see H.-P. Benoehr, *Das 'Faberianum Negotium'* in *ZRG* 103, 1986, p. 275-320). Despite W. enthusiastic defence (p. 336-337), the idea that Octavian's grandfather and father would have been *argentarii* should be rejected, as it generally is in recent literature. The *tessera nummularia* ILLRP 1046 mentioning a C. Octavius is irrelevant in view of the extreme commonness of the name and the uncertainty surrounding the profession of the original owners of the *tesserae* (rather *faeneratores* and/or *publicani* than *argentarii*).

But the best of what W. has to offer lies in his numismatic chapters. Better than anyone before, W. has succeeded in linking the coinage of these years to the turbulent events. His frequent rearrangements and reinterpretations are mostly convincing and always illuminating. Type by type, W. minutely surveys all arguments, theories and interpretations about emission date and place and signification of the coins' iconography, before deciding on his standpoint. 74 Crawford catalogue numbers, comprising 263 major variants, are studied individually. In 27 cases (over a third of the total), W. proposes new dates and/or mint places. The number of specimens viewed by the author (personally or on photograph) is not specified, but must run into many thousands. Every case is carefully argued, previous opinions are discussed, and hoard evidence reviewed and in some cases brought to bear for the first time.

Inevitably, not all proposed rearrangements are equally convincing. Thus for instance the new date of the RRC 446 and 447 denarii, struck under the proconsular authority of Pompey, depends on

the much debated constitutional position of Pompey in 49. At the outbreak of the war Pompey was entrusted the command against Caesar. *Stricto iure*, however, the supreme command resided with the two consuls. W. concludes that the denarii struck under Pompey's authority cannot date before Jan. 1 48, when Pompey received the sole *summum imperium*. However, Pompey's constitutional position is disputed and it may be argued that when he received the command against Caesar, he was formally endowed an equal *imperium* with the consuls. If so, Pompey could have minted on his own authority already in 49, alongside the consuls.

The typology of Republican coinage is bewildering. Usually several different types and variants were minted each year. The difficulty involved in understanding Republican coinage lies in the correct interpretation of its iconography. The repertoire available to Republican moneyers was immense, stretching from personal or family themes, over religious symbols to timeless representations of Rome's greatness. W.'s grasp of this repertoire and its intricate meaning and symbolism is vast. He is well familiar with previous literature. Whereas most scholars of Republican coinage rarely go beyond Mommsen, W. digs deep into the history of republican numismatics, making extensive use of the *Thesaurus Morellianus* (1732) and displaying an exceptional taste for doxography.

Both the strength and weakness of *Arma et Nummi* become apparent here. W. is so determined not to let any question go unanswered, that some of his answers become very speculative. Thus for instance he suggests that the depiction of a sphinx on the denarii of Carisius (RRC 464/1) might refer to a signet ring of Caesar, because we know Augustus initially used a signet ring with a sphinx he inherited from his mother Attia, who in turn may have inherited it from Caesar (p. 258-259). This is little more than speculation; even if the signet ring had belonged to Caesar, there is no obvious reason why Carisius would have been inspired by it. The only signet ring known to have been used by Caesar depicted an armed Venus.

Sometimes W.'s long arguing veils the slim evidence his interpretation rests upon. Thus for instance his 18 page long (p. 433-450) argument to date the IV-virate of Clodius Vestalis, Arrius Secundus, Numonius Vaala and Servilius Rufus to 43 BCE hinges on the identity of the portrait depicted by Servilius Rufus, presumed to be that of Brutus (RRC 515/2). Crawford dated this IV-virate to 41 BCE because the hoard evidence overwhelmingly suggests a post 42 date. W. succeeds in putting a question mark behind the reliability of the hoard evidence, but the positive evidence he adduces in favour of an earlier date remains thin and interpreting the identity of a portrait bust without any accompanying legend is almost by definition uncertain.

Be that as it may. In most cases, W.'s arguments are persuasive and there can be no doubt that his work will remain the fundamental study of the coinage of the Civil Wars of the forties BCE for years to come.

Koenraad Verboven

Research Foundation – Flanders (Ghent University)