The present study concerns the bronze coinages of the Roman provinces in the eastern Mediterranean during the last century BC. In geographical terms it embraces the areas that were turned into administrative provinces by the Romans before the battle of Actium and the beginning of the reign of Octavian in 31/0 BC, namely the province of Macedonia, Asia, Cyrenaica-Crete, Bithynia-Pontus, Syria and Cilicia-Cyprus.

The main aim is to offer a comparative overview of those provincial coinages in the frame of the newly established Roman provincial administration and the developing (idea of the) Roman hegemony over the Greek East. More specifically, the purpose is to detect continuities and changes in the bronze coin production of the eastern provinces under Roman rule through the symbolic language (iconography and legends) and the economic value (metrology) of the coins, in a constant interplay with the Roman currency.

Although some regions became provinces already during the 2nd century BC (Macedonia, Asia), the study focuses on the 1st century since it presents a totally different character than the previous one. During this period, almost every Roman interest and aspiration seems to be directed to the East, with great military campaigns that consolidated the Roman power in this part of the world through the systematic creation of provinces and colonies in a large geographical area. The Mithridatic Wars (88-84; 83-81; 75-63 BC) triggered a more engaging policy of Rome towards the eastern territories, mobilizing a great number of Roman legions and permanently transforming the attitude of Rome towards the Greek East.

The bronze coinage, being the one mostly used in everyday transactions, is suitable for detecting possible changes in the monetary life of the cities on a microeconomic level. In contrast to silver coinages that can more profoundly be linked to the initiatives and needs of a supreme authority, bronze coinages are acting in the background in a more localized way, providing interesting insights into perceptions of a changing reality through the lenses of local administration. On the other hand, in matters of iconography, the localized bronze coinages with their little economic effect in larger transaction spheres could actually be more susceptible to overt changes than the silver coinages; the high value and broad circulation of silver coins made them dependent on a wider acceptability which had to be ensured by the use of a currency familiar and trustworthy to the various parties involved.

In previous research the production of both silver and bronze provincial coinages has been continuously and variously linked with the Roman Civil Wars of the latter half of the 1st century (40s-
30s BC), most notably with Marc Antony and his military and political activities when the Greek East came under his dominion. However, the Roman legions that were sent to the East in the combat against Mithridates were numerous and active for a long period of time, while Pompey’s army was present in the eastern Mediterranean for approximately a decade, *grosso modo* the same time lapse that Antony was active in the same area later. Pompey himself was intensely involved into fundamental administrative changes, with the creation of three new provinces.

It is, therefore, clear that Marc Antony’s actions did not arise suddenly and out of nowhere, but they were rather based on previous events. The coherent establishment of new administrative units within such a short period of time, reflecting Rome’s shifting view of herself and her *imperium* in the Mediterranean, needs to be taken into consideration in matters of coin production. Consequently, it seems legitimate to focus the study of provincial bronze coinages on the first half of the 1st century in order to realize how the stronger influences of the Roman currency detected during the second half of the century with Caesar, Marc Antony and Octavian-Augustus came into being.

Despite the fact that the potential of provincial coinages under the Roman Republic as a rich, though neglected, source for studying provincial experiences of the early Roman hegemony has been occasionally detected, it has so far taken the form of isolated case-studies from both the East and the West, or it has been incorporated into larger studies that treat one specific province diachronically from its foundation all the way through the Imperial times.

Acknowledging the coinages minted in the provinces as an integral part of the Roman Republican economy, this thesis intends to adopt a broader comparative perspective encompassing all the eastern provinces, in order to offer a more systematic and contextualized overview of the provincial bronze coin production and to discern civic/provincial attitudes towards the Roman hegemony. By adopting a specific focus on bronze coinage and setting a concrete chronological, geographical and administrative framework, it gathers the published numismatic material of the eastern Republican provinces and aims to put coinage into the historical and archaeological context of the Roman *imperium* as (trans)formed by Rome’s crucial intervention in the East starting with the war against Mithridates.

After an introductory chapter that outlines the motivation and research scope of the current study, the monograph is divided into eight main chapters. Chapter 2 gives the historical and numismatic background of the political and minting situation in Rome during the last century BC, as well as its attitudes and links to the Greek East. Chapters 3-8 present and discuss the analytical material of the six Republican provinces in the eastern Mediterranean. Chapter 9 offers the comparative cross-regional/provincial overview of the numismatic material discussed in the previous chapters, followed by the conclusions where the main points and the results of the thesis are pinpointed and summarized. A catalogue listing the coin issues presented in Chapters 3-8 and plates with the images of selected coin issues are attached in the end.
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