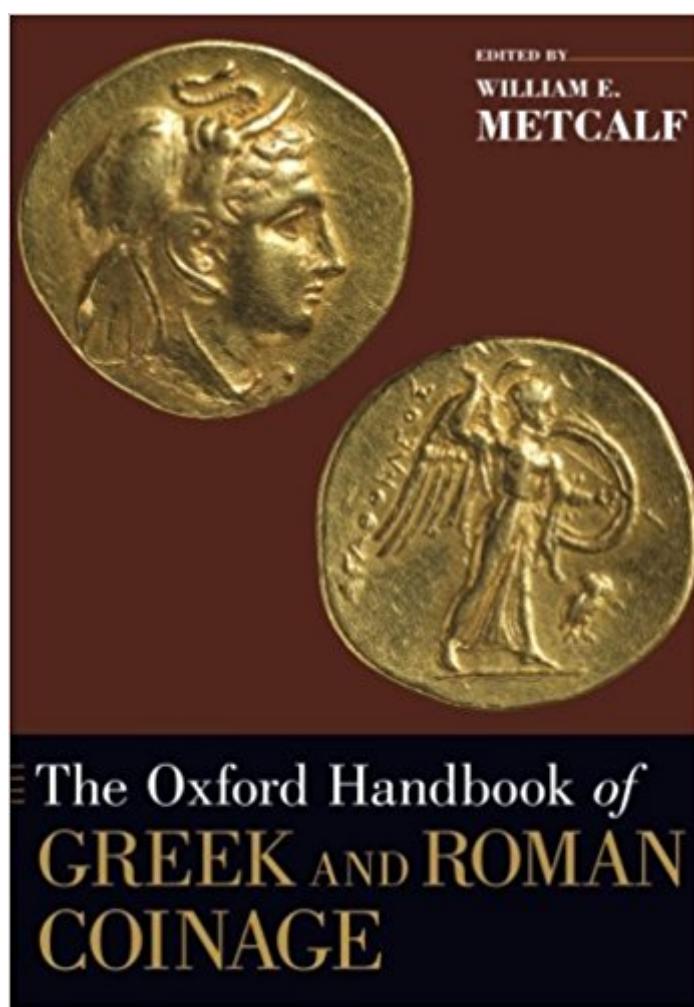


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# The Oxford Handbook Of Greek And Roman Coinage (Oxford Handbooks)



## Synopsis

A large gap exists in the literature of ancient numismatics between general works intended for collectors and highly specialized studies addressed to numismatists. Indeed, there is hardly anything produced by knowledgeable numismatists that is easily accessible to the academic community at large or the interested lay reader. The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage will fill this gap by providing a systematic overview of the major coinages of the classical world. The Handbook begins with a general introduction by volume editor William E. Metcalf followed by an article establishing the history and role of scientific analysis in ancient numismatics. The subsequent thirty-two chapters, all written by an international group of distinguished scholars, cover a vast geography and chronology, beginning with the first evidence of coins in Western Asia Minor in the seventh century BCE and continuing up to the transformation of coinage at the end of the Roman Empire. In addition to providing the essential background and current research questions of each of the major coinages, the Handbook also includes articles on the application of numismatic evidence to the disciplines of archaeology, economic history, art history, and ancient history. With helpful appendices, a glossary of specialized terms, indices of mints, persons, and general topics, and nearly 900 illustrations, The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage will be an indispensable resource for scholars and students of the classical world, as well as a stimulating reference for collectors and interested lay readers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"As Metcalf notes (xvii), it is over 100 years since the last single volume guide to Greek coinage was produced, and there has never been an equivalent work for Rome. This new handbook is, therefore, long overdue and hugely welcome. All involved are to be congratulated and, while in a project as broad as this there are inevitably some omissions, we now have something where there was nothing, and for that we should be very grateful! It is much to be hoped that students of the history of all periods will find their way to this rich new resource." --Andrew Meadows, Bryn Mawr Classical Review "This book represents an unprecedented innovation in numismatic literature and is becoming widely regarded as the best introduction to classical ancient coins. It is far more than a guide written solely for collectors. Instead, it was written to serve also as an introduction for graduate or post-doctoral students in the ancient cultures who seek training in classical numismatics. As a work in the renowned Oxford Handbooks series, this volume was written to offer an authoritative and annotated state-of-the-art survey of current thinking and research in the subject area. However, it is just that focus that makes it such a valuable text for serious collectors of ancient coins." --Roger Kuntz, Rochester Numismatic Association

William E. Metcalf is Professor of Classics at Yale University and Ben Lee Damsky Curator of Coins and Medals at the University's Art Gallery.

This handbook aims to fill the gap between general reference works intended for collectors and highly specialized studies addressed to numismatics. While I appreciate the spirit of the effort I think overall the work falls a bit flat. The authors of the thirty-two chapters are all well known experts in their fields and present a summary of recent scholarship in numismatics starting from the first electrum coinage through the Roman period. I think this is where the flaw lies, most of the chapters are summaries and dilutions of current scholarly work lacking a generalist's fine prose and a specialist's enhanced detail. I would rather read a well written compendium by a more gifted author such as the editor William E. Metcalf that leaves out some of the details in the furtherance of a good story. Specialist collectors will either already have access to the key source papers in their areas of expertise or will want to read the sources in whole rather than a watered down summary. Thus in making this compromise neither the general collector nor the specialist is well served. This is not to say that the book is without merit. It is a sufficient overview for those looking to get some general knowledge on areas of numismatics they may not specialize in. The prose is readable enough to allow the more casually interested to get to the end of each chapter. Plus, the work does focus on the last two decades of research thus at least allowing the specialists to identify important papers in

numismatics for further study. On the whole I'd rather read a good general overview and then get the specific details undiluted but your mileage can vary.

This Oxford Handbook is a lovely book with generous black and white coin photos. Each chapter was written by a different specialist so their approaches vary. For example, some chapters examine the coin design typology and symbology (my core interest) in more depth than others. The attribution of illustrations range from full attribution to relatively unhelpful catalog numbers in other references. WHAT I REALLY LOVE about this book is that the illustrations depict accessible coins, ones that I can and do have in my collection. I find books that focus on rarities to be dispiriting and unhelpful. I mainly want to learn about the coins that I can collect, not worship at the altar of coins so removed from my life that they are effectively abstractions. None of the chapters is dry or boring. I find that each one captivates in its own way. I really appreciate the detailed bibliography following each chapter. For my uses these surpass any other bibliographic material that I have available to me (Ancient Greek Numismatics, Ancient Coin Reference Reviews). Overall I am very pleased with the chapter on Roman Egypt, my main collecting area. I was cheered by the author's assertion: "The chief value of the Alexandrian coinage resides in its abundance of reverse types; their importance as a source for the study of the political history, culture and religion of the province can scarcely be exaggerated." which contrasts with Poole and others who downplay the uniquely Egyptian aspects of the designs. It also corresponds to my approach to collecting, which organizes Alexandrines and other provincials by their reverse type, rather than by emperor. I have one major peeve about the Roman Egypt section: It addresses bronze and billon coins and even lead tessera, but it makes no reference to potin!! I find this to be a limitation of numismatics in general. I would love to learn more about the advent of potin for coinage in Egypt, but it is largely unremarked upon. Often potin tetradrachms are cataloged as billon, which may be literally true, they may contain a trace of silver, but it is a distinctive coinage material that deserves to be addressed in its own right. A silvery Serapis Tet of Hadrian or a Galley with leaping dolphins Tet of Nero may be beautiful, but the chocolate surfaces of a pristine potin tetradrachm of Probus (for example) have their own claim to beauty and mystery as well. Roman Provincials beyond Egypt are also well covered in this Handbook. Surprisingly so. Although the individual chapters are well done, I think classical Greece is somewhat less comprehensively covered than Rome and the Hellenistic World. I am surprised that the bronzes of Italy and Sicily did not receive specific attention. In summary: This is my new favorite book on ancients in general!!

While I have collected ancients for many years, I still consider myself a beginner. This book is an excellent overview of the different series and subdivisions of Roman and Greek coins. This is not a book to help one identify ancients, nor is it a catalogue. It is a collection of essays by different scholars, each presenting a section of ancient coinage, and delving into the development and production of coins of those issuing authorities. Much of the information is not available in catalogues, since the information does not lend itself well to that format. I found it to be a fascinating read. I also realize that, although not a catalogue, I will return to it many times in the future to review some particular aspect of the coinage of a particular region or dynasty that I did not remember from my reading the first time around. Definitely worth the money for me..

a comprehensive expert review which is severely handicapped by the the photos of the coins, Most often poorly done and difficult to use with the text for the lack of clarity.

Excellent work, including recent scholarship.

Excellent historical overview of ancient coinage, would like to have Bactrian coins included. Should be of interest to collectors of both Greek and Roman coins.

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