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## 14. Coinage between Cultures: Mediating Power in Roman Macedonia

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[Figure 14.1. Bronze coin of Macedonia, 168-166 BC, Classical Numismatic Group, Mail Bid Sale 76, lot 321 ([www.cngcoins.com](http://www.cngcoins.com)).]

Consider this bronze coin struck in ancient Macedonia soon after the Romans took control of the region in 168 BC (Figure 14.1; MacKay 1968: no. 1). As a piece of currency, the role of this object *is* one of inbetweenness, since monetary instruments mediate between different value systems and goods. Whether in the form of coinage or another object, money is one of the key media through which different cultures and social actors connect and interact with each other. Conquest, colonialism and empire-building are dependent on these media of commensuration, on objects that can render ‘epistemically equivalent and transitive once incomparable objects and ideas, signs and meanings’ (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005: 109). Money is also designed to travel between individuals, with each monetary transaction actively building social relations and an imagined community. In this way the materiality of money, its physical presence, participates in the construction and/or reinforcement of a particular type of community, whether this takes the form of a modern nation-state or larger entities like the European Union (Backhaus 1999; Helleiner 2003). Hart (2005) points out that money also has a memory function, in that it is a medium that keeps track of our ‘proliferating connections with others’, and in this sense, money also sits in between past, present and future social transactions or exchanges of value.

In exploring the use of currency by the Romans in Macedonia, this chapter identifies some of the characteristics of money that facilitate its inbetweenness. Issues of ambiguity, mobility, appropriation, unfamiliarity and acceptability form its focal themes. Notably, these characteristics can apply to both the object itself (the physical coin) and the imagery upon it (the coin type),

demonstrating the interconnectedness of numismatic iconography and the monetary instruments that carry it.

### **Ambiguity**

The imagery carried on the coin in Figure 14.1 is a mix of Macedonian and Roman motifs. On the obverse (‘heads’) side is an image of Roma. Similar iconography appears on Roman silver coinage struck at Rome in this period (Figure 14.2.a; Crawford 1974: no. 157/1); in this sense the image can be placed within a Roman iconographic tradition. But the image of Roma here could be mistaken for the hero Perseus, who was portrayed on Macedonian coinage before the Roman conquest. On several issues the hero is strikingly similar to Roma (Figure 14.2.b, with Perseus on the obverse). On Roman currency Roma was also portrayed in differing ways; while sometimes a rather feminine figure (e.g. Figure 14.2.a), this is not always the case, and she is often represented in a manner more akin to that in Figure 14.1. The complex set of possible associations surrounding the iconography on the Roman-Macedonian coin (Figure 14.1) increase when we observe that the Hellenistic king of Macedonia, Philip V, had presented himself as Perseus on coinage by adopting the griffin-head helmet (Figure 14.2.c, with Philip portrayed as Perseus on the obverse and a Macedonian shield forming a border). His son, the last king of Macedonia, was named Perseus. So the helmet worn by Roma in Figure 14.1 may also have possessed an association with the defeated Macedonian monarchy. The imagery is thus ambiguous – to a Roman eye the image could be read as Roma, but to a Macedonian glancing at the coin, the immediate association may have been Perseus, a hero associated with the kings who had previously ruled the region. As the coin travelled from person to person and context to context, individual meaning(s) would be attached to the image.

[Figure 14.2. (a) Roman silver denarius, 179-170 BC, Classical Numismatic Group, Auction 90, lot 1301 ([www.cngcoins.com](http://www.cngcoins.com)); (b) Bronze coin of Philip V of Macedon, 211-179 BC, Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 239, lot 64 ([www.cngcoins.com](http://www.cngcoins.com)); (c) Silver coin of Philip V

of Macedon, 221-179 BC, Nomos AG, Auction 6, lot 56; (d) Silver coin of Macedonia, 187-168 BC, Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 261, lot 50 ([www.cngcoins.com](http://www.cngcoins.com)); (e) Roman denarius, 127 BC, Yale University Art Gallery, 2001.87.697; (f) Roman denarius, 82-80 BC, Classical Numismatic Group, Electronic Auction 196, lot 227 ([www.cngcoins.com](http://www.cngcoins.com)); (g) Roman denarius, 126 BC, Roma Numismatics, Auction 2, lot 409 ([www.romanumismatics.com](http://www.romanumismatics.com)).]

The ambiguity of the imagery may have been intentional. Coinage has the power to combine image and text, and the Romans often used text on their coinage to explain unusual iconography, or to add subtle layers of meaning (Rowan 2009). The absence of an identifying inscription here would have increased the ability of the image to be subject to multiple, ‘mutually incompatible interpretations’ (each held to be correct) in a way not possible had the image been accompanied by text (Landau 2002: 18). Roma is not portrayed with prominent earrings or other features that unmistakably identify her as a female goddess, as on Figure 14.2.a. An ambiguous image would have facilitated the movement of the object between cultures, value systems and users, while simultaneously forming a focal point through which Roman and Macedonian culture could intersect. Shared usage of an image or object does not necessitate a single interpretation. On the contrary, common use of an object/image minimizes the need to insist upon shared meaning (Seligman and Weller 2012: 160-1). The iconography of Perseus on earlier Macedonian coinage may have evoked the image of Roma in the minds of the Romans, inspiring them to adopt ‘Roma’ or ‘Roma-Perseus’ as a coin type in the region. In this period the iconography of Roma was rare outside the city of Rome, and its appearance here might be explained as a reaction to local currency. In reality, however, we cannot discern whether the official or die engraver responsible for this coin intended to create a deliberately ambiguous image, or whether ambiguity arose as the coin travelled between users and cultures, as well as over space and time.

The reverse (‘tails’) side of the coin (Figure 14.1) also simultaneously has Roman and Macedonian associations. The oak-wreath which frames the reverse is taken directly from

Macedonian coinage (Figure 14.2.c), and the use of Greek rather than Latin is also more appropriate to this region than to Rome. But while the coinage of the Macedonian kings displayed the club of Hercules and gave the name of the reigning monarch on the reverse (Figure 14.2.c), the issue struck by Roman authorities has no club, and the coin gives the name of the region as well as the name and position of the Roman magistrate responsible for the coin, Gaius Publilius. As an object inbetween cultures, the coin is named as *both* a product of the Macedonians, and of the Roman government.

Hart (2005) argues that money, along with language, is one of the most important vehicles for collective sharing or common meaning (culture), and it is striking that both language and monetary iconography make use of ambiguity. Although ambiguity is less valued in the modern-day English-speaking world, it is an important (and often overlooked) communication strategy within and between cultures (Levine 1985). The vagueness of ambiguous images, objects and language can, as Levine (1985: 35, 218) notes, have a socially binding function. A more modern example is the Parthenon marbles, transported to Britain by Lord Elgin in the early nineteenth century. Here ambiguity was not the intention of the creator, but arose as audiences attempted to interpret the reliefs after their rediscovery. The elusiveness of meaning meant that they could offer numerous messages for British viewers, who were then able to use the marbles to construct differing views of British identity (Rose-Greenland 2013). Initially satirized as a mass of ‘broken arms, legs, and shoulders’ (*Examiner* 1816 cited by George 1949: 685), the marbles were eventually categorized as works of art and put on display in the British Museum. What these reliefs ‘meant’ differed according to the viewer, reflecting differing ideas of what it was to be ‘British’. Some compared the physiques of the horse-riders favourably with British athletes, others saw a representation of (British) masculinity or of military prowess that might be equated to Britain’s own power. Although originally polychrome none of the colour on the reliefs survived, meaning the marbles could also be used to make claims about white superiority (Rose-Greenland 2013: 663-7). The Elgin marbles became a focal point for the discussion of British identity, and although the imagery of the reliefs was ‘shared’, their meaning differed from person to person.

In the same way our Roman-Macedonian coin and its imagery may have attracted differing interpretations by different users, a shared object/image forming the basis for multiple ideas about what Macedonia ‘was’ after the fall of the Macedonian monarchy. Interpretations also may have changed over time as Roman power in the region developed. Images are able to move between various societal domains (imaginary, linguistic, intellectual, material) to form a concrete focal point for a community (Zubrzycki 2011: 24). As with the Roman-Macedonian coin, images, and the material objects that bear them, make abstract ideas of community and nationhood concrete (Olsen 2010: 3-5; Zubrzycki 2011).

### **Mobility**

The iconography of this coin and others struck from the same dies may have been subject to multiple interpretations dependent on context and user. Unlike larger monuments or other types of visual material, money is constantly in motion, travelling between one user and the next, being stored or spent, pulled out or put away (Mwangi 2002: 31-4). Spatially, money moves inbetween. While other monuments may be placed in a manner that guides the way they are experienced and interpreted (e.g. through context, juxtaposition, approach routes), coins have no such reference point. Meaning is thus generated by a changing series of contexts and social actors. Mobility has been identified elsewhere as an important feature of images that pass between cultures, in particular images that move beyond the boundaries of the signifiers that gave the objects their ‘original’ meaning (Landau 2002: 16). The physical characteristics of coinage (its small size, for example), give it (and its imagery) a mobility that is key in allowing it to travel inbetween.

This mobility affects our understanding of money as a communication media. The implications of modern technology for the interpretation, associations and dissemination of imagery have concerned scholarship since Benjamin’s essay on the work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction (Benjamin 1999). Benjamin observed that modernity’s ability to easily reproduce images or paintings fundamentally altered the way in which they are viewed, since these objects are

no longer placed within a specific context (consider, for example, the multiple contexts and associations of the image of the Mona Lisa: on key chains, billboards, mobile phone covers, posters, and elsewhere). But the mobility of money, and the fact that it was a mass-produced medium in antiquity, means that many of the factors Benjamin highlights were also present before the modern era. The ability of the internet to bring images into the households of a geographically vast section of the population has also led to a reconsideration of different contexts of ‘viewing’, but here too money formed an important forerunner (Hörisch 2004; Mitchell 2005: 309-35). We should not lose sight of money’s qualities as a *media* (of exchange). The mobility of ancient money meant that its imagery could travel and permeate different contexts; by transiting inbetween, the images carried on coinage reached a relatively large number of viewers and contexts.

Finds of the Roman-Macedonian coin (Figure 14.1) are rare, but the few find spots that do exist demonstrate the mobility of the object. No examples of this particular coin have yet been found in coin hoards within Macedonia, although two specimens of another type of Publilius were found in a hoard just outside the ancient city of Pella (Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards 2015, no. 483). One find spot is the city of Corinth, where an example of our coin was found in a manhole alongside other debris in a fill context roughly dating from the second to first centuries BC (Romano 1994: 61). How a local Macedonian bronze coin arrived in Corinth is unknown, although other Macedonian coins were also present in the fill (Romano 1994: nos. 134-8). These issues may have been brought by the Roman army (the Romans famously razed Corinth in 146 BC), or else arrived with merchants or other individuals. Whatever the particular actor(s) responsible, once these objects arrived in another city, in another region, in another context, the particular associations of the coin and its imagery would have changed. One might imagine that the play between ‘Roman’ and ‘Macedonian’ on the coin may have been lost, and instead the object might have been seen more as an object issued by the Roman government, or it may have been valued purely in terms of its materiality (a bronze coin-like object that would serve as small change, regardless of its imagery).

## **Appropriation**

Our Roman-Macedonian coin and its imagery likely had multiple associations as it travelled between Roman and Macedonian, soldier and merchant, maker and receiver. But it was not only the physical object that travelled between cultures – the imagery of coinage did as well. From the Roman perspective, the use of Macedonian imagery may have signified that, as conquerors of the region, they had also ‘conquered’ the iconography of the area. Both Romans and Macedonians may have seen the iconography of Figure 14.1 as rightfully ‘theirs’, just as both parties may have possessed mutually incompatible interpretations of the image. This phenomenon has been identified elsewhere, albeit in a more recent context. During the German occupation of the Channel Islands in the Second World War, the imagery carried on local coinage (Guernsey and Jersey crests, the king’s portrait) was used as a symbol of resistance by local inhabitants. The king’s portrait in particular was converted into small pieces of concealable jewellery that could be worn as a form of hidden rebellion. But having conquered the Channel Islands, the Germans also saw themselves as the ‘rightful’ owners of the islands’ crests. Local coins were sent back to Germany as souvenirs, or converted into pieces of ‘trench art’. The king’s portrait was increasingly utilized by the Germans in this context. As Carr (2012) details, while locals used coin imagery to make statements of local identity, the Germans appropriated the same iconography. The imagery was consequently positioned inbetween, with sometimes common, sometimes distinct associations and meanings for both sides.

The Romans too may have considered the iconography of Macedonia rightfully ‘theirs’ after the conquest. The subjugation of the region resulted in various monuments celebrating Roman military prowess and the victories of individual generals. A common motif in many of these monuments was the Macedonian shield, a symbol that had graced local silver currency before the Roman conquest (Figure 14.2.d, with a Macedonian shield on the obverse). These shields are, for example, carried by defeated Macedonians on the frieze of a monument in Delphi erected for



Lucius Aemilius Paullus, the general who led the Romans to victory in Macedonia in 168 BC (Kähler 1965). Paullus converted a monument originally intended for the Macedonian king Perseus; a Latin inscription states that Paullus ‘took it from King Perseus and the Macedonians’, a clear statement of appropriation (Russell 2012: 159). Macedonian armour, including shields, were brought back to Rome to be paraded in Paullus’ triumph (Plutarch, *Aemilius* 32.5-8; Livy 45.35.3). The Macedonian shield and its symbolism, then, had been ‘captured’ and appropriated by the Romans.

This is also suggested by the iconography of particular coins struck at Rome. In the Roman Republic, the *tresviri monetales* (a board of three men elected annually) were responsible for the Roman coinage issued each year. Moneyers normally came from elite families and the position was often the first step of their political career. While Roman coinage initially carried rather standard imagery (head of Roma on one side, the Dioscuri on the other), from the 130s BC the decoration of Roman silver coinage became more diverse, with types reflecting the historical achievements of the moneyer’s family (Meadows and Williams 2001: 37-8). In this manner Roman coinage became characterized by an ever-changing array of images, a distinctive approach to currency design. This cultural peculiarity might be connected to the fact that *moneta*, the origins of our word ‘money’, came from the Latin *monere*, which has among its meanings ‘to remember or to recall’ (Meadows and Williams 2001; Hart 2005). In the Roman Republic, coinage was a medium of exchange, but also a medium of memory that communicated and commemorated the achievements of one’s ancestors. Money was truly ‘media’ or a ‘monument in miniature’ (Chueng 1998).

Amongst the changing iconography celebrating Rome’s past, three issues are of particular relevance here. Each carries the image of a Macedonian shield. The first was released by the moneyer M. Caecilius Metellus in 127 BC, and displays Roma on the obverse and a Macedonian shield on the reverse (Figure 14.2.e; Crawford 1974: no. 263/1a-b). Metellus’ father, Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus, had quashed an uprising in Macedonia in 148 BC (Morgan 1969). The use of the Macedonian shield here by the younger Metellus alludes to the achievements of his father:

the shield has been appropriated as the spoils of victory. The image thus travelled culturally and spatially from Macedonia to Rome, becoming a symbol that referenced, and sat in between, both regions. It should be noted that the Macedonian shield is presented in a slightly modified form on Metellus' coinage: an elephant's head has been added to the centre. The elephant was the symbol of the Metelli family (Linderski 1996: 173), and its addition to the Macedonian shield here can be read as a further act of appropriation.

The son of a cousin of Caecilius Metellus became a moneyer in 82-80 BC, and again struck coinage with a Macedonian shield decorated with the Metellian elephant (Figure 14.2.f; Crawford 1974: no. 369/1). The shield also appears on coinage struck by the moneyer T. Quinctius Flamininus in 126 BC (Figure 14.2.g, with a Macedonian shield below the horse-riding Dioscuri on the reverse; Crawford 1974: no. 267/1), referring to a Macedonian victory of one of his ancestors (in this case the victory of T. Quinctius Flamininus over Philip V). These examples demonstrate that individual families in Rome appropriated the Macedonian shield as a sign of military success; as conquerors of the region, they had 'rightfully' gained the use of its local symbols. Coins may have physically moved different iconography to different contexts, but imagery could also move independently: alongside a social life of things, there is a social life of images (Mitchell 2005: 90-3).

In ethnographic studies of consumption, appropriation has been used to describe the process by which a 'global' object becomes 'local'. Hahn (2004), for example, identifies four stages to the appropriation of objects: material appropriation (when the commodity becomes the personal possession of someone), objectification (in which objects are categorized or classified in relation to other objects), incorporation (the creation of a local way of 'correctly' using something), and transformation (when the object becomes fully integrated into the local context). Importantly, these stages are never completed; rather appropriation is an on-going process as objects are continually assigned new contexts, meanings and functions. In the archaeological record the stages of material appropriation and incorporation are easier to identify than objectification or transformation

(Stockhammer 2012: 49). Although Hahn focuses on material objects, the concept can equally be applied to images: in this instance we can spot the ‘material appropriation’ of the Macedonian shield as it is removed from its ‘global’ (Hellenistic) context and transformed into a ‘local’ (Roman) possession, ‘owned’ by particular elite families. Hahn (2004: 220) notes that material appropriation can include changes to the form of an item, and we can see this too in our example through the addition of the elephant’s head. Other aspects of appropriation remain more difficult to identify given the incomplete nature of the record from the ancient world, but it is important to note that Hahn emphasizes the ambiguity of the appropriation process, in which original and new meanings can exist simultaneously.

It was not just the Macedonian shield that was appropriated by the Romans: the portrait of the Macedonian king was also used. In 113 or 112 BC, a moneyer in Rome released a coin issue showing the portrait of the deceased Macedonian king Philip V on the obverse, accompanied by a monogram of the word ROMA (Figure 14.3.a; Crawford 1974: no. 293/1). The image is made ‘readable’ to its audience by the presentation of the king in a helmet with goat’s horns (in Roman literature this is the traditional headdress of a Macedonian monarch; Livy 27.33.2-3; Plutarch *Pyrrhus* 11.5), and by the presence of the Greek letter phi (ϕ) before the bust, the first letter of Philip’s name. The image has at least two levels of association, both of which submit the Hellenistic monarch to a very Roman context. The first is that the coin type uses the monarch’s portrait as a pun: the moneyer responsible for the coin issue was named L. Philippus. The use of visual ‘puns’ (called ‘canting’ types in numismatics) was a well-established tradition in antiquity. The image of the king may also refer to the activities of one of the moneyer’s ancestors – a Q. Marcius Philippus led an embassy to King Perseus of Macedon in 172 BC, where he famously tricked the monarch into believing peace was possible, thus giving Rome time to improve her military position (Livy 42.37-47; Briscoe 1984: 151). From either perspective, the image of Philip V was appropriated by the Romans – either as a reference to a trick allowing Rome to conquer the region, or as a pun, or both.

[Figure 14.3. (a) Roman denarius, 113 or 112 BC, Yale University Art Gallery, 2001.87.779; (b) Bronze coin of Macedonia, 168-166 BC, Yale University Art Gallery, 2004.6.1438; (c) Bronze coin of Macedonia, 187-168 BC, Yale University Art Gallery, 2004.6.1374; (d) Bronze coin of Macedonia, 166-165 BC, Yale University Art Gallery, 2001.87.10903; (e) Silver tetradrachm of Macedonia, c.90-70/65 BC, Yale University Art Gallery, 2007.182.360; (f) Tetradrachm of Athens, 86-82 BC, Yale University Art Gallery, 2004.6.1978.]

‘Macedonian’ imagery thus did not remain ‘Macedonian’; it moved from ‘global’ to ‘local’, becoming an iconography that sat between both (see Yarrow 2013 for other examples). Returning to Figure 14.1, Gaius Publilius (the Roman official responsible) struck several other coin types in addition to this design (MacKay 1968: nos. 3-6). The iconography of these coins is largely identical to the imagery of pre-conquest Macedonian currency, the only difference being the addition of Publilius’ name and official position in ancient Greek (compare Figures 14.3.b, a coin of Publilius, and 14.3.c, a Macedonian coin struck before the Roman conquest). But the addition of Publilius’ name communicates the fact that this Macedonian coin type is being struck by a Roman, making the resultant object a product that sits in between two cultures. The use of Macedonian imagery by Publilius again may be interpreted as the appropriation of iconography by the conqueror (transforming the image into one that sat between cultures), or its intention may have been to ensure that these pieces integrated easily into the existing economic system and were accepted by the Macedonian population (facilitating the coin as an object to move between users).

### **Unfamiliarity?**

After the release of the ‘Roma-Perseus’ coins by Gaius Publilius, and similar issues struck by his successor, Lucius Fulcinnius (MacKay 1968: no. 7), a new coin type was released carrying iconography that was neither traditionally ‘Roman’ nor ‘Macedonian’ (Figure 14.3.d; MacKay

1968: nos. 8-9). The obverse of this coin series carries a frontal image of the god Silenus, the companion and tutor of the wine-god Dionysius. In classical mythology Silenus exists in an almost constant state of inebriation. The reverse of the coin type has an ivy-wreath (a reference to Dionysius) rather than the traditional oak variety, and the name of the Roman official is absent. Instead there is a reference to Macedonia in Greek, with the Latin letter 'D' above. The mix of alphabets again marks the object as neither wholly Macedonian nor Roman. The choice of Silenus is odd since the god had never before appeared on Roman or Hellenistic-Macedonian coinage (though he would later make an appearance on Roman silver coinage in 91 BC, Crawford 1974 no. 337/1).

Silenus had appeared on coinage of the Thraco-Macedonian region several hundred years earlier, in the sixth and fifth centuries BC. On these issues he is shown either drinking, pursuing a nymph, squatting, or in the company of a donkey (e.g. Gaebler 1935: 115 nos. 8-9). The god may also have been portrayed frontally on a silver issue from an unknown mint in the region in this early period (Gaebler 1935: 138 no. 26). Were the Romans referencing this archaic money when selecting Silenus as a coin type? At first glance it seems doubtful, but the Romans do seem to have had an interest in older coin types. For example, during the first century BC in Roman Athens a coin type was released showing a gorgoneion, a possible reference to the coinage of Athens struck in the sixth century BC, knowledge of which was likely preserved in literary texts (Kroll 1972: 98). If a similar phenomenon is occurring here, the Silenus imagery is local to the region, but its selection and presentation is performed within Roman memorial and archaizing monetary culture. The image sat between the heritage of archaic Macedonia and the monetary-culture of Republican Rome, as the object it graced moved between different users and contexts.

If the Roman authorities did choose to make a reference to the archaic coinage of the region through the Silenus type, it is likely that the reference was lost on most of the coin users, who probably would have considered the iconography unusual for this medium. Obscure and unfamiliar imagery can play an important role in cultural mediation; like the ambiguous image, an unfamiliar

or unusual one is also malleable in its interpretations, attracting multiple understandings or associations depending on the viewer and context (Landau 2002: 18). Rather than hybrid or creole imagery, inbetweenness here may have been facilitated by an obfuscation of imagery, which mediates by being non-symbolic or unusual to all concerned.

Unlike the Silenus simile discussed by Razzall in this volume, this Silenus image exists on a particular object. Whereas the unusualness of Silenus here attracts multiple meanings, in Razzall's study it is the ambiguity associated with a material metaphor that seems to have no corporeal existence that makes it attractive for authors of the early modern period. Again we find similarities between language and images. Whether it is physical, verbal, or something that exists only in the mind, 'an image is not a text to be read but a ventriloquist's dummy into which we project our own voice' (Mitchell 2005: 140). Images are something that must be interpreted; a picture is worth a thousand words since 'the exact words that can decode or summarize an image are so indeterminate and ambiguous' (Mitchell 2005: 140). It is perhaps this inherently ambiguous nature of images, be they mental, verbal or physical, which aid their inbetweenness.

The varying discussions of the Socrates-Silenus discussed by Razzall are paralleled by the multiple interpretations our Silenus has received in modern scholarship. The god was initially believed to be a pun on the name of a Roman official called D. Junius Silanus Manlianus. This proposal has since been disproved as the coin issue is now dated to an earlier period (MacKay 1968: 8-9). Gaebler (1935: 9) observed that one specimen was overstruck on an earlier Roma-Perseus type and concluded that the Latin D stood for *decreto*, a Roman senatorial decree that allowed the recall and conversion of the earlier 'Roma-Perseus' series. Some specimens of the Silenus coins appear to be overstruck on other coin types and both Gaebler and MacKay believed the 'Roma-Perseus' coin series was the target, since the presence of Roma wearing the helmet of Perseus might have proven offensive to the local population. A more detailed study of this series is needed before any firm conclusions about this hypothesis can be reached.

The observed instances of overstriking suggest that, for whatever reason, the earlier Roma-Perseus coin was deemed unsatisfactory. Perhaps the type of Roma was thought too bold by the Romans, whose conquest of Macedonia had been presented as ‘liberation’ from the tyranny of kingship. It would only be in 148 BC that the region would be converted into a ‘province’ proper (Kallet-Marx 1995: 11-56). It is worth noting here that the Roman Republican concept of Empire was quite different to our own territorial model. For the Romans of the Republic, to be *sub imperio* was to be ‘under Roman sway’ or obedient to Rome (Kallet-Marx 1995: 25). ‘Empire’ or *imperium* was the power held by an individual magistrate, while *provincia* or ‘province’ referred to the area or sphere in which that power was to be exercised (Richardson 2011). The Roman Republican Empire was thus not a territorial one, but an empire of power, influence and control. It is thus difficult to pinpoint the ‘moments’ when a particular Roman province was created. The contemporary Greek writer Polybius, for example, certainly believed that the Romans had power or *archē* in Macedonia from 168 BC, and the Romans probably also believed Macedonia to be under their influence or *imperium* from this time (Kallet-Marx 1995: 30).

Nonetheless, the use of Roma and the titles of a Roman magistrate may have been considered unsuitable. The names of Roman officials do not appear on the Silenus issue, nor do they appear on other bronze coins struck in Macedonia in the succeeding decades. There thus may have been a period of negotiation in the selection of appropriate coin types.

### **Acceptability**

As an object that travels inbetween, coinage continued to reflect the changing relationship between Rome and Macedonia. This contribution has thus far focused on bronze coinage or small change. These coins generally had a localized circulation, meaning these denominations were often used to make statements about local identity (Howgego et al. 2005). The lower face value of bronze coins meant that if someone did not accept the coin because they did not recognize the design the economic loss was not significant (although, admittedly, we have very little concrete evidence of

this in antiquity). There was a lower inherent risk in changing the iconography of this type of coinage. But the Romans also continued the production of Macedonian silver coinage after the conquest, and the high value of these pieces meant that their acceptability to a variety of parties had to be ensured. This, in turn, led to a different strategy in order to ensure the ability of these objects to move inbetween.

The Romans struck silver coin issues that displayed the bust of the goddess Artemis within a Macedonian shield on the obverse, and a club within an oak wreath on the reverse, accompanied by a reference to Macedonia and the region in which the coin was struck. Although the precise dating of these coins is difficult, the most recent suggestion is that this particular coinage began to be struck before the Roman conquest, and the Romans continued its production (Prokopov 2012: 23-31). As a currency used for transcultural, large-scale payments, the Romans may have been reluctant to change the imagery of silver coinage. In many of the regions Rome conquered, local precious metal currency continued to be produced unaltered, although it was now being produced for, and used by, Rome (de Callataj 2011).

It was only in the first century BC that the iconography of Macedonian silver coinage was altered. The obverse now carried the image of Alexander the Great accompanied by a legend referring to Macedonia, while the reverse displayed a club within a laurel wreath, accompanied by the name of a Roman official in Latin (AESILLAS), a reference to his position as *quaestor* (Q), as well as the insignia of his office: the *sella quaestoria* (magistrate's chair) and *cista* (money chest) (Figure 14.3.e; Bauslaugh 2000). This is the first time since the issues of Publilius and Fulcinnius that a Roman magistrate is named on coinage in this region, and the first time direct reference is made to Roman hegemony since the use of Roma. The new iconography was struck over a number of years, with some issues being struck under the authority other officials (Bauslaugh 1997: 118-20).

Again we see a mixture of Roman and Macedonian motifs. Like Figure 14.1 the coinage was issued in the name of the Macedonians, under the authority of a Roman official. Alexander the



Great was one of the most famous Macedonians (particularly in Roman eyes) and the use of the club and the wreath recall earlier Macedonian coinage. But at the same time, the reference to Aesillas and his position allude to Roman control; the *quaestor* would have served under a governor or Roman consul. Analyses of currencies issued within more modern ‘contact’ situations have demonstrated that money often carries elite visions of the conquering Empire, as well as an elite understanding of the region conquered (Mwangi 2002; Rowan 2014). From this perspective, the Aesillas coin type communicates an elite Roman understanding of Macedonia. Alexander the Great had great appeal and interest to the Romans, and it is very likely that the dominant elite continued to associate their province with its legendary hero. The find spots of these coins, however, suggests another level of interpretation.

Hoardings containing these coins are mostly found in the region of the river valleys that lead from northern Macedonia into Thrace. The lack of wear of the specimens in these hoards suggests that the coins did not circulate for long – instead they must have been hoarded and buried rather quickly (Bauslaugh 1997: 129). These coins were probably struck in the period from c.90-65 BC, which, in conjunction with their limited area of circulation, provides a clue to their purpose. It was at this point in time that Rome fought a series of wars against Mithridates VI of Pontus; the Aesillas coins may have been struck to pacify the Thracian tribes that lived in the region of the Via Egnatia (an important strategic road), or for some other military purpose connected with these campaigns (Bauslaugh 1997: 129). These ‘Macedonian’ coins, therefore, were not intended for circulation within Macedonia. Rather they are objects that carry the image of Alexander the Great and the name of Macedonians, struck by or for the Romans, in order to function as payment for a third group, the Thracians.

That these coins were used as bribes for barbarian tribes may explain the high number of known specimens that were converted into jewellery (Dahmen 2010: 61). The use-context of these coins also explains the iconography. The portrait used by the Romans, showing Alexander adorned with the horns of Ammon, was the same portrait used by the Hellenistic King Lysimachus on his

coinage in Thrace in the late fourth and early third centuries BC. This particular image of Alexander the Great was thus an established one in the region, though the Romans chose to omit the diadem (referring to Alexander's position as king) on their representation (Dahmen 2010: 61). The image thus falls at the intersection of several cultures: it references Macedonia's past glories, and the traditional numismatic iconography of Thrace, but in a manner that conformed to Roman aesthetics and ideology. The Romans needed a coinage that would be acceptable as payment within the region of Thrace, one that could physically go between cultural, value and governmental systems with relative ease, and this likely influenced the selection of this particular iconography.

The entanglement of cultures and imagery witnessed in the Aesillas coinage can be demonstrated with another silver issue. Hoard finds demonstrate that in the second half of the second century BC Athenian silver coinage circulated in Macedonia (de Callatay 1991-2). These 'Athenian' coins may have been shipped to Macedonia to pay the Roman troops stationed in the region; but equally they may have been produced in Athens for use by Rome (de Callatay 2011: 70, 77). While occupying Athens in 87 BC, the Roman general Sulla also struck coins of this type, though the reference to Athens was removed in favour of monograms referring to different magistrates (Figure 14.3.f). The complexity of imagery (Athenian), coining authority (Athenian and/or Roman), and coin use (Macedonian) on this particular example is suggestive of an entangled network involving multiple traditions and cultures.

## **Conclusions**

As the myriad of approaches within this volume demonstrate, images and things continue to resist a single interpretative philosophy, leading some to adopt a 'bricolage' approach, an eclectic mix of methodologies that may be better suited to the complexity that objects present (Olsen 2010: 13-14). Indeed, the complexity with which objects interact with each other and with people has led to the label 'entanglement'. Rome, and the Roman Empire, was constituted by an entanglement of objects, cultures and social actors; a community formed by 'objects in motion' (Versluys 2014). Money, as

both an object and a medium carrying a particular design, formed a key part in this process. The complexity of the coin imagery studied here suggests that by ‘going between’, money and the imagery it carried connected and transformed the cultures it came into contact with, switching between ‘global’ and ‘local’ (and then back again).

Money is a medium designed to be in a state of inbetweenness – to travel between different social actors and cultures, to act as a form of stored or realized value, to be in between past, present and future interactions. Money is the method by which contrasting cultural systems of value are made commensurate, and the medium is thus at the forefront of mediation between different cultures and political powers, a phenomenon that influences the iconography placed on money. This chapter has highlighted some of the strategies that assisted coinage in going inbetween in Roman Macedonia. The meanings attributed to the images discussed here are only some of the possible associations the iconography may have had. The fact that coins exist in quantity and move between people and contexts, means that the imagery a coin bears can change meaning; as an object, a medium, and an image, it remains in a state of inbetweenness.

But in addition to facilitating inbetweenness, the mobility of money also produces a unifying effect. As money circulates, it generates a sense of belonging and shared identity: the circulation sphere of a particular type of currency often coincides with the area under the control of the money’s issuing authority. The exchange of money between two social strangers affirms that they both belong to the same political economy; it is, as Mwangi states, ‘a momentary recognition of a common “imagined community”’ (Mwangi 2002: 35). The Romans understood this concept, and used coinage as a tool to generate identity and belonging, as well as to disseminate ideology. Coinage and its imagery, in this sense, went inbetween in order to cross cultural boundaries, but also to remove them.

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