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*Pompei. Rinvenimenti monetali nella 'Regio I, "Studi e Materiali" 16, Istituto Italiano di Numismatica, Roma 2013, 395 pages, numerous tables and graphics, ISBN 978-8-8859-1455-1*

The coins from the excavations conducted in the area devastated by the eruption of Vesuvius in the year AD 79 provide a wealth of information on the circulation and hoarding of money, the methods and places of storage as well as the rate of inflation processes. Examined within a broader archaeological context, they also enable multi-faceted research in the fields of both economic and social history concerning, e.g., the scale of affluence or poverty of the contemporary communities, the structure of the functioning and the degree of the monetization of the market. It is indeed one of the very few, and at the same time most spectacular, examples of the opportunity to grasp a "living culture" in its entirety thanks to the use of archaeological methods. Unfortunately, the results of over 150 years of more regular exploration have been published in fragments to date, while the coins obtained during that period have not been featured in full detail until now and we know them mostly from various annual reports, exhibition catalogues, and some more synthetic-oriented studies, including especially the articles by L. Breglia (1950) and E. Pozzi-Paolini (1975).

For this reason, it is worth taking a closer look at the commendable effort undertaken by the International Centre for Numismatic Studies in Naples in collaboration with the Archaeological Heritage Supervisory Authority in Naples and Pompeii and the Numismatics Department of the University of Naples and Salerno, i.e., their project concerning a study of the circulation of coins in the Vesuvius area. As part of this project, the series *Studi e Materiali* of the Italian Numismatic Institute (IIN) has continued to publish, since 2005, the finds of the coins unearthed in the individual *regiones* of Pompeii, presenting the overall archaeological and numismatic documentation in a possibly most uniform and complete form. The present study dedicated to Regio I is the third publication of the series. The previous one, published in 2008 by R. Cantilena, discussed Regio VI, whereas three years before M. Talierico Mensitieri published a very similar study of the material from Regio IX. Edited by the latter author, the IIN issued a publication of very interesting proceedings in 2007, from the conference entitled *Presenza e circolazione della moneta in area vesuviana*, which was held in Naples in 2003. Publications concerning Regiones III, IV, VII, and VIII are being prepared. Apart from some

short and rather contributory texts, in particular by Teresa Giove, featured mostly in various exhibition catalogues, and the above-mentioned studies by L. Breglia (1950) and E. Pozzi-Paolini (1975), this is the first comprehensive documentation of the numismatic material from Pompeii, which makes it possible to attempt a more complex view of the important question of the circulation of coins in the “Vesuvius cities.” In recent years, the same topic has been investigated by some British scholars, notably K. Painter and R. P. Duncan-Jones, as well as R. Hobbs in a recently published very thorough and well-substantiated monograph (*Currency & Exchange in Ancient Pompeii. Coins from the AAPP Excavations at Regio VI, Insula I*, London 2013).

In the introduction, the author gives a brief discussion of the history of the exploration of Pompeii, with a particular emphasis on the coin finds and excavations conducted since 1853 at Regio I, a very significant district situated in the south-eastern part of the city, with such well-known buildings as *Casa del Menandro*, *Casa del Citarista*, *Casa di Amarantus*, and *Casa del Criptoportico*, as well as a large number of houses identified as owned by craftsmen and merchants. Within the area in question, a total number of 6,717 coins have been identified, including:

- 1,975 coins on the basis of archival material and literary sources, mostly of unspecified provenance,
- 4,474 coins in the collection of the Archaeological Museum in Naples, obtained from the excavations performed up to the year 1897, which may be usually identified as items from specific *insulae*,
- 268 coins from the regular excavation conducted after 1897 within *Insulae* 5 and 9, more precisely located and with well-documented stratigraphic contexts.

In most cases, however, insufficient information regarding the location and context of an individual find would only permit a very general identification. According to Giove, about 30% of the coins have been found within the limits of the housing quarters, 62% – in sections associated with trade and/or crafts, and 18% – in the vicinity of the streets and without any precise location, i.e., not pertinent to any of the previous two categories. In the latter case, linking together those two categories is unwarranted from a methodological point of view.

The coin finds have been described in detail within the general framework of 17 *insulae* and presented in tabular form, arranged according to the information on their chronology and location, and categorized as based on the criteria of metal type and/or denomination. In the peripheral areas, i.e., *Insulae* 18–22 situated in the south-eastern part of Regio I, which were largely devastated during the Punic Wars and never rebuilt afterwards, almost no coin finds have been recorded. Within the less thoroughly and mostly much earlier explored (and only fragmentarily published) *insulae*, unidentified coins tend to prevail. Unfortunately, the general lists comprise both single (*sporadico*) and multiple finds, including hoards (*ripostiglio*), as well as the contents of diverse personal objects made of organic

material, especially purses, money-boxes, and baskets, usually found directly next to the skeletons (*gruzzolo*), which somewhat complicates the question and makes interpretation more difficult. The volume of the coin finds in the particular *insulae* is a combination of several factors: their size, the state of archaeological exploration, density of building development, and the presence (or the absence) of large hoards. The largest amount (1,603 coins) has been recorded within the limits of the well-explored Insula 8, where however more than 10 hoards have been recorded (including one that contained 1,385 bronze coins). The least amount of coins was found within the fragmentarily inhabited Insulae 15 and 17 (11 and 3 pcs, respectively). Nonetheless, small amounts of coins were also found within the limits of the densely populated Insulae 3, 7, and 12 (96, 88, and 67 pcs, respectively), which is due to the absence of large hoards there and, on the other hand, the less thoroughly explored area under consideration. Likewise, the proportions of the individual denominations depend on the presence of hoards. In the areas where the quantities of the gold and silver coins surpass that of the bronze ones (Insulae 4, 9, 10, and 14), large hoard deposits with precious metal coins (containing, at times, over 100 or even up to 382 pcs) have been found.

In the analysis section of the book, the finds from the earlier archaeological (stratigraphic) contexts and the coins remaining in circulation until the eruption of AD 79 are given a separate treatment. In the latter case, as already mentioned, there are three categories as to their provenance: residential area, district occupied by artisans and merchants, streets and without specific location. Let us have a critical look at some statistics which are extremely important to an analysis of the circulation and hoarding of currency as well as to a reconstruction of other economic and social phenomena in this wealthy city.

For 6,717 coins from Regio I, 268 specimens come from the stratigraphic contexts preceding the date AD 79. Among the remaining 6,449 pcs (comprising 61 gold, 1,713 silver, and 4,675 bronze coins), 4,054 (63%) specimens have been identified, which is a fairly good result in view of the history of the exploration of Pompeii. It is due, for the most part, to the meticulous use of the archival data concerning the research carried out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which is a remarkable advantage of this study. To compare it with Regio VI, out of 4,922 coins, it has been possible to identify only 786 (15%), while for Regio IX, 495 specimens (14%) have been determined, out of a total number of 3,639. Therefore, more than 4,000 identified coins from Regio I can be considered as a representative statistical figure.

Among 268 coins from the stratigraphic contexts prior to the year 79 and found within *Insulae* 5, 6, and 9, most items were bronze coins (there were only 15 silver coins). The most numerous group were Greek bronze coins, especially those from Ebuscus (including the so-called Pseudo-Ebuscus), Massalia, and southern Italy, pri-

marily from Naples. A majority of the Republican-era coins (63 bronze c., 15 denarii and quadrantes) were found inside the *Casa di Amarantus* in Insula 9. Besides, 24 Imperial-era bronze coins, from Augustus to Vespasian, have been recorded as well.

Among 6,449 coins determined as pieces dating from the time of the eruption, 61 (0.95%) gold and 1,713 (26.6%) silver coins have been recorded, with the remaining amount being bronze coins. As regards the chronological structure, it was impossible to determine, even approximately, as many as 2,394 (37.1%) coins, mostly known from the archival records.

Among the remaining 4,055 coins identified with various degrees of accuracy, there have been recorded as many as 42 Greek coins, and also 14 from Ebuscus and 39 from Paestum, whose presence in circulation in AD 79 is rather uncertain. Those coins would have rather represented some earlier contexts, which have not been recorded.

Moreover, 1,169 Republican-era coins have been identified (28.8% of the determined coins), including, interestingly, only 121 (10.4%) bronze coins, the rest being silver coins. Once again, it should be noted that the latter group includes a high share of hoards. Nonetheless, such an insignificant proportion of bronze coins is an important indication of the comparatively low monetization of the market during the Republican period. A major part of trade, even in this relatively affluent city, must have been effected by means of barter. In terms of chronology, a great majority of the coins, 811 (69.3%), are specimens dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, including as many as 431 (36.9%) devalued legionary denarii of Mark Antony.

However, the most represented group, i.e., 2,791 pieces (68.8%), are imperial coins; the specimens dating to the Julio-Claudian dynasty amount to 1,360 (33.5% of the identified pcs), including 31 aurei (2.3%) and 78 denarii (5.7%), the rest of them being bronze coins. There is also, in total, 1,129 coins (27.6% of the identified pcs) dating from the reign of Vespasian, including 26 aurei (2.3%) and 221 denarii (19.5%), the remaining part being bronze coins.

In terms of the categories based on the coin find locations, the largest amount, namely 3,960 pieces (61.4% of the total number of coins), was registered within the limits of the buildings occupied by craft and trade, while 2,014 coins (31.2%) in residential quarters. These proportions, however, should be weighed according to the size of the area occupied by the respective zones. It is notable that in the residential quarters the amount of the gold coins recorded was proportionally four times greater than in the craft and trade buildings, whereas the amount of silver coins was around two times larger. As we can see, the hoards that contained those coins were much more frequently stored in homes than in the work-place, which should not be surprising at all.

Overall, 120 houses have been recorded for Regio I. Aurei (41 specimens, in total) have been recorded in 8 households, usually as part of hoard deposits. The highest number of gold coins has been found at the *Casa del Menandro*, in three hoards: 13 AV along with 33 denarii, 3 AV with 298 denarii and 2 AV with 90 denarii. The latter deposit was unearthed inside the adjoining outbuildings, close to the body of a man. The further 12 aurei were stored in a container (*gruzzolo*) that also included 10 denarii and 5 bronze coins. The object was found next to a skeleton at the entrance to the *Casa di Cerere*. Finally, 7 AV along with 14 denarii and 54 bronze coins were found at the *Casa Della Venere in bikini*.

In total, 862 silver coins have been recorded for the houses, of which 560 pieces were part of 18 hoards, 278 pieces were found inside 11 containers discovered beside skeletons, while only 24 specimens were single finds. The proportions for the bronze coins are entirely different. For an overall number of 1,111 pieces, 369 were part of 25 hoards, 189 were found inside 18 containers, while as many as 553 pieces were single finds. This is indicative of the fact that bronze coins would have been lost in much larger amounts than coins struck from precious metal.

Giove has also made a conventional calculation of the values of the deposited currency in sesterces. Without a doubt, the greatest wealth, amounting to around 2,000 sesterces, has been noted for the *Casa del Menandro*; at the *Casa del Bell'Impluvio*, it was equivalent to roughly 1,500 sesterces, while for the *Casa di Cerere* – around 1,250. As can be seen, those were definitely considerable amounts of money.

The craft and trade district comprised the following identified structures: 25 *cauponae*, 9 *thermopolia*, 9 *hospitia*, and 48 of various buildings used by craftsmen and merchants, predominantly *officinae*. Overall, 20 aurei assembled in two deposits were found there: 7 AV along with 97 denarii and 3 bronze coins, next to a skeleton found at the *Fullonica di Stephanus*, and 13 AV along with 141 denarii stored inside a small wooden box at the *Thermopolium I*, 14, 15.

Out of 842 silver coins, 592 were part of 4 hoards, 309 were stored in 5 containers (*gruzzoli*), and only 4 were single finds. The largest hoard, with 382 denarii, was found at *Thermopolium I*, 14, 8.

Out of 3,098 bronze coins, 2,675 were part of 21 hoards, 97 were found stored in 9 containers, while 362 were single finds. The largest hoard, with as many as 1,385 bronze coins (with a value equivalent to 600 sesterces), was found inside a *dolium* at the *Thermopolium L. Vetutius Placidus et Ascula*, in the *Via dell'Abbondanza*.

In the conclusions, Giove presents an analysis of the coin finds in chronological arrangement, and categorized into gold, silver, and bronze coins. Among 61 aurei from Regio I, the largest number (43%) is represented by the specimens from

the period of the Flavian dynasty, especially from the reign of Vespasian; there is a very large percentage (41%) of coins issued under Nero (following the monetary reform), while slightly less than 8% are coins dating from the period of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. For comparison, among 105 identified aurei from Regio VI, about 50% are Flavian coins, 29% – Nero’s coinage, 13% – coins dating from the Julio-Claudian dynasty. These proportions are not essentially different, and a certain margin of difference may be attributed to disparate time-spans of the hoarding. Also evident are the effects of Nero’s reform (AD 64), which had triggered off a relatively rapidly occurring (effectively, in less than 15 years) withdrawal of the older coinage from circulation. Out of 1,363 identified denarii, 77% dated from the Roman Republic (with 41% being legionary denarii of Mark Antony), and only 23% were imperial coins. Among the latter group, 25% dated from the Julio-Claudian (for the most part, denarii of Augustus) and 70% from the Flavian dynasty (predominantly, issued under Vespasian). Finally, among 4,675 bronze coins, 2% were Greek, 2.5% – Republican, and 95.5% – imperial coins. Among the latter group, 56% dated from the period of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and 38% from the Flavian dynasty. In terms of denominations, asses and dupondii constitute as many as 77%, sesterces – 17%, quadrantes – only 6%.

Another noteworthy question refers to the proportions of the individual coin categories within the limits of Regio I and Regiones VI–IX. These figures are basically quite similar, but it seems that due to a much larger amount of the determined coins from Regio I than from the published Regiones VI and IX, they may perhaps best reflect the actual proportions. It will be of particular significance to make a comprehensive comparison with Regiones VII–VIII (accounting for a total number of 13,546 coins), following their eventual publication. There is no doubt that final conclusions will be possible after the publication of the remaining coin finds from Pompeii.

The catalogue of over 250 pages is definitely a very solid and thoroughly documented work, listing the items according to the individual *insulae*. The coins have been identified and described on the basis of the RRC and RIC (wherever possible), which makes further analysis and statistical study much easier.

Additionally, two annexes feature the coin finds from the excavations conducted inside the *officina corariorum* of M. Vesonius Primus (authored by R. Vitale) and in the *Casa di Amarantus* (by C. Stannard). Greek coins had been found in considerable numbers at both of these locations.

The work contains some relatively clearly structured tables and statistics, even though some of them may seem to have been conceived without much insight, making it somewhat difficult to formulate more profound conclusions and having more of a “bookkeeping” character. Many of the calculations mentioned in the

present review I have made myself. Certainly, the single finds, which are indicative of circulation, and the hoards, defining the nature of hoarding, should have been featured and analyzed separately. It would have been of particular interest to know the results of an overall comparison of the coin assemblies known as *gruzzolo*, i.e., those which had originally been the contents of the private containers for storing coins. The methodological basis for identifying that group and distinguishing it from the hoards (*ripostiglio*) is vague and should be the subject of a separate discussion.

There are some discrepancies between the information listed in the tables and the data that are presented in the text as well as certain errors. For example, on p. 14, the table does not specify the undefined imperial coins, listing instead the undefined Republican coins twice. Moreover, histograms of the chronological structure of the coins are missing, which is a noticeable flaw of the present publication.

Unfortunately, the book does not include even a very brief summary in English (the addition of such a text should be already treated as a standard in modern-day academic publishing), considering the fact that it deals with such a world-famous archaeological site. Another drawback is the placement of the table of contents in the end section of the book; it is followed by 16 pages of advertisements of different IIN publications.

It is very likely that in a relatively short period we will have at our disposal an almost complete listing of the coins found during the explorations at Pompeii. There is an urgent need to create a digital, and publicly available, database of the numismatic finds from the Vesuvius region, which would facilitate statistical and cartographical analysis. Nevertheless, thanks to the recent publications of the coin finds from the first *regiones* of Pompeii, we could say, even at the present moment, that we know much more than we did ten years ago about the circulation and hoarding of money in this Campanian city and, consequently, throughout the Roman Empire during the reign of the Flavian dynasty. The IIN as well as all the other concerned institutions and scholars certainly deserve much appreciation and recognition for their efforts.

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