

CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE NUMISMÁTICA
INTERNATIONAL NUMISMATIC COUNCIL
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DE NUMISMATIQUE
INTERNATIONALER NUMISMATISCHER RAT
CONSIGLIO INTERNAZIONALE DI NUMISMATICA

COMPTE RENDU 70/2023

PUBLIÉ PAR LE SECRÉTARIAT DU CONSEIL

Marie-Christine MARCELLESI ¹

OLIVIER PICARD (4 MARCH 1940 – 1 SEPTEMBER 2023)



Olivier Picard passed away on 1 September 2023.

The news, unexpected, spread with a speed which testifies to the prestige that he enjoyed in the scientific world in France and abroad among all those interested in coinage and in ancient Greece – prestige which is explained by the monumental work he left us, by his dedication to teaching and research institutions, by his human warmth and the sincere interest he had in each and everyone.

Youth and early research career

Born into a family of illustrious archaeologists, Olivier Picard spent his childhood between Carthage and Tunis, where his father Gilbert-Charles Picard was head of the Antiquities Department. The great sites of the region formed the backdrop to his daily life until the family moved to Strasbourg, where he discovered the harshness of the local climate at the age of fifteen. He was admitted to the École Normale Supérieure in 1960. It was there that he met Paule, a student at the École Normale Supérieure de Sèvres, who became his wife in 1965 and whom he had at his side throughout his life.

¹ Professor of Greek History – Sorbonne University, Faculté des Lettres.

At the École Normale Supérieure, after obtaining the agrégation in history, he began preparing for the competitive examination for the French School of Athens. He chose the path of Hellenism, influenced by the beauty of the Homeric poems and perhaps through admiration for his grandfather Charles Picard.

He was a member of the French School of Athens from 1966 to 1971. He was first in charge of an archaeological site at Latô in Crete, with his friend Pierre Ducrey, then at Thasos in the north of the Aegean. It was during these years that he turned definitively to numismatics, a discipline to which he had been introduced in Paris by the lectures of Louis Robert and, even more, of Georges Le Rider at the École Pratique des Hautes Études. He embarked on the one hand on the study of the coinage of Chalcis to which he devoted his doctorate, defended in 1976 and quickly published three years later², on the other hand on that of the coins found in the excavations of Thasos, entrusted to him by Georges Le Rider. From that time on, he established close and faithful friendships with a large number of Greek colleagues, in particular with Manto Oikonomidou, who was already director of the Numismatic Museum in Athens.

After his years as a member of the French School of Athens, Olivier Picard taught for ten years at the University of Paris X Nanterre, first as an assistant from 1971 to 1974, then assistant professor from 1974 to 1979, finally as university professor from 1979 to 1981.

The director of the French School of Athens

In 1981, he was appointed director of the French School of Athens and he held this position until 1992. This young director did not hesitate to modernize the School considerably. He left his mark there, notably by creating a modern and contemporary section. He considerably developed the technical services and enlarged the library with the creation of a room in the basement. The archaeological programs started under his leadership show the openness to the new methods of the time: the School launched its first underwater excavations, under the direction of Jean-Yves Empereur, in the port of Thasos, in collaboration with the Ephoria of Underwater Antiquities, as well as in the port of Amathus in Cyprus. Research on the organization of territories was developed on the basis of systematic surveys in Thasos, Delos and Malia in Crete. During these years, the recruitment of new members of the French School of Archaeology specializing in ancient Greek music and even glass also testifies to the openness to new fields of research, alongside the strengthening of more classical disciplines.

It was a time of upheaval in Europe: communist countries were opening up to the outside world, even before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dislocation of the Soviet Union. Olivier Picard directed the School towards collabo-

² Picard 1979.

rations with the countries of the northern Balkans and the Black Sea. The most fruitful and lasting was that established with the Archaeological Institute of Tirana in Albania. Olivier Picard was personally involved and worked for many years with Shpresa Gjongecaj-Vangeli, an archaeologist specializing in numismatics who later became director of the Archaeological Institute of Tirana. Together, they worked on the coinage of Apollonia of Illyria, where Olivier Picard met questions similar to those encountered in Thasos: the relations between a coastal Greek colony and the indigenous peoples of the hinterland, at Apollonia the Illyrians, at Thasos the Thracians. This long and close collaboration resulted in a new classification of Apollonia drachms with a suckling cow³ and the publication in French, in 2019, of Gjongecaj-Vangeli's substantial work on coin hoards in Albania⁴.

Olivier Picard was greatly appreciated both by the administrative staff of the School, who never tired of praising him, and by the younger members, whose first steps in the world of research he accompanied with kindness and dedication. Until the end of his life, he continued to support the French School of Athens, notably by representing the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres on the School's board of directors and by chairing the entrance examination. Each year, his stays in Athens, in autumn, during winter or at the beginning of spring, were for him the opportunity to get to know new members to whom he provided advice and encouragement. A special place must be given here to the bonds of friendship that he was able to develop with several of his Greek colleagues, at the Numismatic Museum, in the archaeological services, universities and research institutes. The warm welcome he received in all Greek institutions is a measure of his own sense of hospitality and humanity.

From Nanterre to the Sorbonne and the Academy

After his return to France in 1992, Olivier Picard happily resumed his job as a teacher. He returned to the University of Paris X Nanterre for a year, before moving to Paris IV Sorbonne in 1993, where he succeeded Georges Le Rider as Professor of Greek History and Numismatics until 2009. He taught at all levels and was particularly involved in preparing for teaching public exams. He devoted significant time to writing several manuals which have trained several generations of students and future academics and which remain fundamental works⁵.

During these years, Olivier Picard explored new areas of research. He had always been very interested in the technical aspects of coinage and was deeply interested in the contribution of metal analyses to the discipline. The collaboration with Jean-Noël Barrandon, founder of the Centre Ernest-

³ Picard & Gjongecaj 2000.

⁴ Gjongecaj-Vangeli 2019.

⁵ Picard 1995; Picard 2000; Picard *et al.* 2003; Picard *et al.* 2008.

Babelon in Orléans, initiated at the end of the 1970s, resulted in 2007 in a book on the Hellenistic bronzes of Marseilles, where a new chronology was proposed⁶.

At the other end of the Mediterranean, the close friendship that Olivier Picard had established during his years in Athens with Jean-Yves Empereur, who had been general secretary of the French School of Athens, led him now to Alexandria. Indeed, Jean-Yves Empereur, who had become director of the Centre d'Etudes Alexandrines which he had just founded, entrusted him with the study and publication of the coins found in the Centre's excavations, which led Olivier Picard to work on Ptolemaic Egypt. Every winter since 1993, Olivier Picard went with Paule to Alexandria, which reminded him a little of the Tunisia of his childhood. After a few years, Olivier Picard invited several of his disciples to work with him and the collective enterprise resulted in an international conference⁷ and a global publication of the material from the excavations published in 2012⁸.

Olivier Picard's career was crowned in 2009 by his election as a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, of which he had been correspondent since 2001. He jointly chaired the Academy and the Institut de France in 2023. In recent years, alongside Cécile Morrisson, he thus ensured the defense of numismatics and more broadly of Greek history and civilization. It is in this context that he wrote several beautiful summary articles in the *Journal des Savants* or the *Cahiers de la Villa "Kérylos"*⁹.

Olivier Picard has never stopped investing considerably in collective tasks, allowing several institutions to benefit from his experience and his administrative talents. He was the first director of the Maison de l'Archéologie et de l'Ethnologie in Nanterre, from 1996 to 1999, and the first director of the Doctoral School "Ancient and Medieval Worlds" at Paris IV Sorbonne, from 2004 to 2009. He was very active in learned societies, notably the Association pour l'Encouragement des Études Grecques. He chaired the French Numismatic Society from 1995 to 1997 and was co-director of the *Revue Numismatique* from 1997 to 2014. There have been numerous marks of international recognition, in the Balkan countries and elsewhere. The International Numismatic Commission invited him to write the chapter on Greece and Asia Minor in the Archaic and Classical periods for the *Survey 1985-1990*, with Manto Oikonomidou, and alone for the *Survey 1990-1995*. In 1999 he was the Visiting Scholar of the summer seminar of the American Numismatic Society in New York.

⁶ Barrandon & Picard 2007. On other aspects of the collaboration between Olivier Picard and Jean-Noël Barrandon, see Picard 2010b.

⁷ Duyrat & Picard 2005.

⁸ Picard *et alii* 2012.

⁹ Picard 2010a; Picard 2012; Picard 2016; Picard 2022.

Numismatic work

Olivier Picard was interested in Greek coinage (*nomisma*) as an element of the institutions of a Greek city and its laws (*nomos*). Comparing the ancient texts and the inscriptions on coinage, he highlighted the distinction that the Greeks made between Hellenic coinage on the one hand, common to all the Greeks according to the words of Plato, used for important payments made by a State in the wider world, and the local coinage on the other hand, 'epichoric' in Greek terminology, used inside the city for the small exchanges of daily life. This is one of his greatest contributions to Greek numismatics: we must take into account all the coins struck or used by a city to understand its history and monetary organization.

As a result, Olivier Picard was a pioneer in the study of small denominations of silver and even more so in that of bronze coins, discovered mainly in excavations and which were largely neglected until then by numismatists in favor of more noble metals. Olivier Picard could thus rely on abundant material, even the absence of which, whether occasional or more lasting, could be used to retrace the history of the city-state in question. The conference he organized at the Sorbonne on the value of bronze coins in Antiquity, published in the *Revue numismatique* in 1998, is one of the first milestones in this new approach¹⁰. Finally, he produced an original reflection on money transfers and hoarding practices, which led in particular to an international conference on monetary circulation in the ancient Greek world in 2010¹¹.

Olivier Picard leaves a monumental work, within which three major pillars stand out – Chalcis, Thasos and Alexandria¹².

In the work on Chalcis, the central issue was that of the relations between the city and the Euboean confederation. The coinage of the latter had been attributed to the mint of Eretria, considered the most important city on the island of Euboea. Olivier Picard took up the question by taking into account the coins minted by the four major cities of the island as well as the contribution of coin hoards. This approach allowed him to show the link between the coinage in the name of the city of Chalcis and that in the name of the Euboeans, a link made evident by the type of the nymph's head, the nymph Chalcis on one side, her sister Euboea on the other, common iconographic details that allowed him to affirm that the two coinages come from the same workshop. Furthermore, the coinage of the city and that of the confederation are not struck in parallel, but alternate over time. With this demonstration, Olivier Picard was able to offer a masterful reconstruction

¹⁰ Picard 1998.

¹¹ Faucher, Marcellesi & Picard 2011.

¹² See the complete bibliography of Olivier Picard in Markou & Psôma 2023, pp. XXVI–XXXV. For more detail on the content of the work, see Marcellesi & Chryssanthaki-Nagle *sous presse*.

of the entire history of Euboea from the end of the Peloponnesian War to the Roman conquest.

The coinage and the history of the city of Thasos occupied Olivier Picard from the 1970s until the end of his life.¹³ The identification, the recording first on paper then on computer, the historical analysis of the thousands of coins delivered by the excavations, in addition to the gold, silver and bronze coins from public and private collections with a view to the constitution of the corpus, constituted a titanic task. But Thasos also constituted for him the laboratory for a broader reflection on the role of coinage in Greek cities, a historical reflection constantly in progress. He linked the beginning of the coinage of Thasos with the Persian conquest of Thrace, the imposition of tribute, and the exploitation of mines. The first Thasian series was an important coinage in the region and sparked imitations by Thracian tribes on the mainland. The beginning of the 4th century coincided with an extensive monetary reform and a new accounting system. The last period of autonomous coinage took place within the framework of the Roman province of Macedonia and the alliance with Rome.

The publication of the material from the Alexandrian excavations in a volume that appeared in 2012 was the opportunity for Olivier Picard to deliver an innovative study of Ptolemaic coinage. Indeed, one of the most important contributions of the book is the chapter devoted to Ptolemaic coins, written by Olivier Picard and Thomas Faucher: this chapter offers a complete review of the bronze coinage struck by the Ptolemies in Alexandria, encompassing its relationship with the gold and silver issues and the use of papyrological sources. Before this book, the classification of Svoronos, by reign, was generally used. Olivier Picard and Thomas Faucher showed that, if this method of classification was suitable for the kingdoms where the coinage shows the portrait and the name of the reigning sovereign, it could not be applied to the coinage of the Ptolemies, which constantly refers to the founder of the dynasty. In Alexandria, the establishment of the different bronze series did not correspond to a change of reign but responded to another logic, the monetary policy of the Ptolemies thus having its own identity. The bronze series are distinguished by a combination of types and modules, by technical characteristics, and by a control system that are specific to each one. Once these classification principles have been established, the succession of the different series unfolds before the reader's eyes according to an impressive logic. A major change took place in 197, under Ptolemy V: the break, which is marked in the iconography by the appearance of new gods on the obverse, is the material translation of the transition from accounting in chalkous / obols / drachmas to a decimal system in which the reference remains the silver tetradrachm (called "stater"). The great contribution of the book was to show

¹³ The most important articles among those that Olivier Picard devoted to Thasos have just been brought together in a beautiful volume: Picard 2023.

that, if the years 220–200 BC undeniably constituted a period of difficulties, the rest of the monetary and financial history of the Ptolemies was not that of an irresistible decline. Through the great monetary reform of 197, the Ptolemies innovated and evolved bronze coinage while keeping the silver tetradrachm as the system's reference, which showed no sign of degradation.

Olivier Picard was very attached to his teaching and his students. He attracted numerous doctoral students, French and foreign, who came in large numbers from Greece, but also from Albania, Turkey, Syria and Canada¹⁴. This influence is at the origin of the publication of several monographs, often the studies of the coinage of a city, which is not so frequent. The titles of these works pay homage to the one chosen by Olivier Picard for his book on Chalcis, "study of numismatics and history", and perpetuate the French tradition initiated by Georges Le Rider which consists of studying coinage not for its own sake, but for its contribution to the history of ancient States.

Olivier Picard loved human contact and collaborative work. He loved training young people and he regularly took students to initiate them alongside him, in close companionship, into the arduous study of excavation coins, in Thasos or Alexandria.

He went to Thasos to work every summer, again and again. It was there, at the end of a final summer devoted to moments shared with his family and discussions with old friends, long-time colleagues and young researchers, that he breathed his last, in this place that he loved so much and which served as a guiding principle for his scientific work.

Bibliography

BARRANDON & PICARD 2007 = Jean-Noël BARRANDON & Olivier PICARD, *Monnaies de bronze de Marseille. Analyse, classement, politique monétaire (Cahiers Ernest-Babelon, 10)*, Paris.

DUYRAT & PICARD 2005 = Frédérique DUYRAT & Olivier PICARD (eds.), *L'exception égyptienne ? Production et échanges monétaires en Égypte hellénistique et romaine. Actes du colloque d'Alexandrie, 13–15 avril 2002 (Études alexandrines, 10)*, Le Caire.

FAUCHER, MARCELLESI & PICARD 2011 = Thomas FAUCHER, Marie-Christine MARCELLESI & Olivier PICARD (eds.), *Nomisma, La circulation monétaire dans le monde grec antique (BCH Suppl., 53)*, Athènes.

GJONGECAJ-VANGJELI 2019 = Shpresa GJONGECAJ-VANGJELI, *Trésors de monnaies antiques trouvés en Albanie (Recherches archéologiques franco-albanaises, 2)*, Athènes.

¹⁴ See the *Mélanges* in his honor, published shortly before his death: Markou & Psôma 2023.

- MARCELLESI & CHRYSSANTHAKI-NAGLE sous presse = Marie-Christine MARCELLESI & Katerina CHRYSSANTHAKI-NAGLE, Olivier Picard (1940-2023), *Revue archéologique*, sous presse.
- MARKOU & PSÔMA 2023 = Evangéline MARKOU & Sélène PSÔMA (eds.), *ΑΝΤΙΔΩ-ΠΟΝ. La monnaie grecque entre guerre et commerce. Mélanges de numismatique, d'épigraphie et d'histoire offerts à Olivier Picard (Meletèmata, 85)*, Athènes.
- PICARD 1979 = Olivier PICARD, *Chalcis et la Confédération eubéenne. Étude de numismatique et d'histoire* (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 234), Paris.
- PICARD 1995 = Olivier PICARD, *Les Grecs devant la menace perse*, Paris (1^{re} édition 1980).
- PICARD 1998 = Olivier PICARD, La valeur des monnaies grecques en bronze, *Revue numismatique* 153, pp. 7-18.
- PICARD 2000 = Olivier PICARD, *Guerre et économie dans l'alliance athénienne*, Paris.
- PICARD 2010a = Olivier PICARD, Rome et la Grèce à la basse période hellénistique : monnaies et impérialisme, *Journal des savants*, pp. 161-192.
- PICARD 2010b = Olivier PICARD, Vingt-cinq ans de recherche sur les monnaies grecques avec Jean-Noël Barrandon, *Revue numismatique*, pp. 35-39.
- PICARD 2012 = Olivier PICARD, Les Nymphes, images de l'eau sur les monnaies des cités grecques, in Jacques JOUANNA, Pierre TOUBERT & Michel ZINK (eds.), *L'eau en Méditerranée de l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge (Cahiers de la Villa « Kérylos », 23)*, Paris, pp. 55-73.
- PICARD 2016 = Olivier PICARD, La pénétration de la monnaie grecque en Orient, in Jacques JOUANNA, Véronique SCHILTZ & Michel ZINK (eds.), *La Grèce dans les profondeurs de l'Asie (Cahiers de la Villa « Kérylos », 27)*, Paris, pp. 233-255.
- PICARD 2022 = Olivier PICARD, Kallistratos d'Aphidna ou les aventures de l'exil : d'une condamnation infamante à la découverte du monde extérieur à la cité, in Jacques JOUANNA, Yves-Marie BERCÉ & Nicolas GRIMAL (eds.), *Méditerranée, mer de l'exil (Cahiers de la Villa « Kérylos », 32)*, Paris, pp. 53-69.
- PICARD 2023 = Olivier PICARD, *Thasos et sa monnaie (BCH Suppl., 67)*, Athènes.
- PICARD et alii 2003 = Olivier PICARD, François DE CALLATAÿ, Frédérique DUYRAT, Gilles GORRE & Dominique PRÉVOT, *Royaumes et cités hellénistiques de 323 à 55 av. J.-C.*, Paris.
- PICARD et alii 2008 = Olivier PICARD, Michèle BRUNET, Jean-Christophe COUVENHES, Amélie PERRIER, Franck PRÊTEUX & François REBUFFAT, *Économies et sociétés en Grèce ancienne (478-88 av. J.-C.). Oikonomia et économie*, Paris.
- PICARD et alii 2012 = Olivier PICARD, Cécile BRESCH, Thomas FAUCHER, Gilles GORRE, Marie-Christine MARCELLESI & Cécile MORRISSON, *Les monnaies des fouilles du Centre d'études alexandrines. Les monnayages de bronze à Alexandrie – de la conquête d'Alexandre à l'Égypte moderne (Études alexandrines, 25)*, Alexandrie.
- PICARD & GJONGECAJ 2000 = Olivier PICARD & Shpresa GJONGECAJ, Les drachmes d'Apollonia à la vache allaitant, *Revue numismatique* 155, pp. 137-160, pl. III-IV.