

## BOOK REVIEW

*Sculpture and Coins: Margarete Bieber as scholar and collector*. Loeb Classical Monographs 16. Edited by CARMEN ARNOLD-BIUCCHI AND MARTIN BECK-MANN. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018. Pp. xviii + 148; 24 plates. Hardback, \$30.00. ISBN: 978-0-674-42837-9.

The impetus for this book, with a collection of essays, was the acquisition of Margarete Bieber's coin collection by the Harvard Arts Museums in 2005. The contributions originate from a conference held at the Harvard Art Museums on April 28-29, 2011, at the Ilse and Leo Mildenberg Symposium, honoring Bieber as a scholar and collector. Seven papers from the Symposium are included in this volume, with the Barbara Borg's keynote address on "Emperor among the Crowd: Form and Format in Roman Imperial Portraiture" and Karsten Dahmen's talk on "King in a Small World: Depictions of Alexander on His Shields and Armor" missing. Borg, however, does offer the foreword, which consists of a very short summary of the papers.

As a starting point, the qualities of the Bieber collection should be considered; after all, the volume celebrates the acquisition of Bieber's coin collection (xiii). Arnold Biucchi's "Introduction" chapter sets the stage for the conference and volume. In the "Introduction" as well as the first essay, "The Relationship between Sculpture and Coins," Arnold Biucchi outlines, in a cursory summary, the acquisition history of the 352-coin collection. 14 of the 66 (= 21%) coin figures in the book are of the Bieber collection, and although the book is not a catalog of the collection, one cannot help but overlook the number of non-Bieber coins illustrated. There is a near equal number of coins (9) that belong to the Yale Numismatic Collection(!). Only two of the seven essays illustrate coins of the Bieber collection, and when used, their sole function is to demonstrate the general and thematic collecting preferences of Bieber, not to make any poignant scholarly argument. Alexandridis notes (93) that Bieber cared "less about the quality and state of preservation than about the documentary value of the pieces." This is apparent from the illustrations. The true value of the acquisition therefore lies with

the insight we can gain from Bieber as a scholar and collector, preserving her legacy, but not from the coins themselves.

In the first chapter, Arnold-Biucchi addresses “The Relationship between Sculpture and Coins: the Coin Collection of Margaret Bieber.” One can again find reference to the purpose of Bieber’s collection “to present characteristic specimens from the Classical Greek to the Late Roman period” (5). Much of the chapter provides an overview of Bieber and underscores her important contribution to numismatics in the United States. Bieber joined the American Numismatic Society in 1968 and became Curator of Greek Coins in 1979, working there until 1988. Although Bieber formed a small personal collection, she was first and foremost an academic, and not a collector. Some of her personal coins were used in her scholarship for illustrative purposes, a point that can be picked up from several of the essays in the volume citing Bieber’s publications.

In the second chapter, “Remembering Margaret Bieber in New York,” Bonfante offers personal insights into Bieber’s personality, bringing to life the person behind the scholarly pursuits and coin collection. Bonfante, herself a formidable scholar in a male-dominated sphere, was able to see this article published shortly before her own passing in August 2019.

The third chapter, “The Impact of Margaret Bieber on Twentieth-Century Scholarship,” sees Recke detail the “extraordinary impact” of Bieber in four realms: historical restorations of ancient sculpture, the illustration of cultural history with archaeological material, the study of Roman copies to date originals and the methodology for the study of the classics. Recke has published extensively on the subject and the contribution here provides a useful summary of the impact Bieber had on the study of the ancient world in the United States. It provides a timeline of Bieber’s work (also note the long list citations to Bieber’s publication in the Works Cited, 43), as well as the challenges she faced but nevertheless was able to overcome, establishing herself as a pioneer in multiple areas of Classical research. This chapter, together with the preceding two, help shape a fuller picture of Margaret Bieber as the remarkable person she was.

Mittag’s “Honos and Virtus. Marcus Aurelius and Antoninus Pius” is the fourth chapter in the book. The impetus here is one of Bieber’s articles on the same subject which sought “to find an explanation of certain personifications on cameos” (47). The contribution here focuses on Honos and Virtus on Roman coins, offering a sketch of the two personifications prior to the reigns of Antoninus Pius, the presence of the two on coins during the reign of Antoninus Pius, past interpretations and a new interpretation. The key take-away is that Honos does not have

military connotation but rather signals the attainment of high office on the coins of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius as Caesar.

In a short contribution, Metcalf focuses on coins celebrating “Dead Emperors.” His contribution, however, also highlights the number of empresses commemorated in similar fashion but is omitted from the title. The paper, per Metcalf (69, n. 14) is only a discussion of the broad outlines of the subject for non-specialists. In this, Metcalf succeeds, and hones in on several salient examples, including funeral rites and the restitution issues of Trajan Decius (r. A.D. 249-251) in which deified emperors from Augustus through Severus Alexander were restruck. Not a single cited example from the Bieber collection is employed; rather, Metcalf’s lushly illustrated article employs specimens from the market or the Ben Lee Damsky collection at Yale.

In the sixth chapter, Beckmann considers “Faustina the Elder and Younger in Coins and Sculpture” to offer a perfect tribute to Bieber and the subject of the conference. It is also the only article in the volume to use non-coin illustrations. The coin output of Faustina I and II was immense during the reigns of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. Their coin types speak well and closely to sculpture as Beckmann highlights with the Capitoline effigy of Faustina, found by Rome’s Termini railway station in 1862. The paper is detailed, and Beckmann has established himself as the preeminent expert on Faustina I and II through other works; he ends with a consideration regarding whether the conclusions drawn in his paper could be applicable elsewhere.

The seventh and final chapter is also the longest of the book. Alexandridis picks up the thread from Beckmann and considers “The Women of the Severan Dynasty: Coining Female Power?” Alexandridis examines Julia Domna and seeks to link Bieber with the Severan women, arguing that she identified with them. Alexandridis makes great effort to include Bieber in the article through inclusion of Bieber’s unpublished coin (ticket) notes. The role of “orientalism” in scholarship is lucid and there is worthwhile close analysis about it in the extensive bibliography. A table of all the coin types for Severan women is included (based upon BMCRE, RIC and the Hunterian).

This volume of essays has been carefully and meticulously edited with numerous color plates. The images of some of the coins could have been better rendered (either by enlarging or lightening) but their illustrative purposes for the authors’ argument is unhindered. The papers collectively bring a wonderful group

of related subjects together while paying respects of Margaret Bieber, a preeminent scholar and woman of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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