

Whilst overall M.'s work fully illustrates his stated themes, there are three aspects which jar slightly. The first is the question of identity and agency. M. acknowledges the overlap between his work and the theories of agency and structuration, but does not necessarily acknowledge the agency of all the players within his account. Women, where they appear, are a somewhat downtrodden and homogeneous group to whom imperialism happens. Secondly, Rome is rarely set in the context of contemporary geopolitics, such as the neighbouring empires of the Hellenistic successor kingdoms and Parthia. M.'s arguments raise the question of whether Rome was exceptional at the time, and if so, in what ways. The third is a more fundamental problem in recasting the paradigm of Romanization, which is not unique to M.'s work. Whilst we have deconstructed the 'native' part, we have not yet fully come to terms with where this leaves the 'Roman' half of the pair. In discussing cultural forms, M. still retains the idea of an homogeneous and unchanging ideal of Roman culture, such as in his discussion of funerary art in ch. 9. He sets out the apparent differences between 'Roman' art and art from Ghirza; the problem is that it is possible to find parallels between them, such as the *liberti* epitaphs at Rome as parallels for the size difference in family members in fig. 9.9. In evaluating the non-conformity to Roman cultural norms as the basis for discrepancy, the question is raised of what such Roman norms were.

Nevertheless, this is an excellent read. M. is one of the leading archaeologists of the Roman provinces, both in the quality of his fieldwork and his interpretive thinking. This book demonstrates why that position is fully deserved.

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S. BÖRNER, *MARC AUREL IM SPIEGEL SEINER MÜNZEN UND MEDAILLONS: EINE VERGLEICHENDE ANALYSE DER STADTRÖMISCHEN PRÄGUNGEN ZWISCHEN 138 UND 180 N. CHR.* (Antiquitas. Reihe 1, Abhandlungen zur alten Geschichte 58). Bonn: Habelt, 2012. Pp. 371, illus. ISBN 9783774937697. €79.00.

Börner's publication of her doctoral thesis focuses on the coins and medallions struck for Marcus Aurelius by the mint of Rome. Bringing together the data gathered in existing coin catalogues (*RIC*, *BMCRE*, Gnecci, *Moneta imperii romani*), B. examines the iconography struck for Marcus Aurelius under the rule of Antoninus Pius, and then during his own reign. The book adopts a year by year analysis following Aurelius' tribunician power. For each year, B. examines the precious metal coinage, then the *aes* issues, followed by a discussion of the relevant medallions, contextualizing each numismatic motif within a broader historical context.

Though the year by year approach does allow readers quickly to find the period they are interested in, B. herself admits (154) that we cannot always know the broader context of each numismatic image, particularly in the poorly documented reign of Antoninus Pius. Consequently, some of B.'s conclusions remain more convincing than others (the suggestion that the prevalence of Minerva on Aurelius' coins while Caesar is linked to his philosophical leanings (153), for example, needs further substantiation). The format of the analysis also means that the largely undated coinage struck for the imperial women in this period does not form a significant focus of discussion.

The book arrives at several conclusions that are of interest to both numismatists and historians of this period. B. links the explosion of numismatic motifs struck for Aurelius in A.D. 149 with the birth of a son. She also suggests that the change in Aurelius' numismatic imagery from A.D. 152 might have been a reaction to an attempted coup the year before: Aurelius is represented as more formidable and militarily skilled as a result. Aurelius' transition from Caesar to Augustus after the death of Pius is accompanied by a complete change in numismatic imagery. During the co-rule with Verus, B. suggests that Aurelius' coinage bore more 'civil' motifs, while that of Verus had a more militaristic feel (192), at least until Verus' victory over the Parthians. At this point both Verus and Aurelius receive the title Parthicus, and from this stage onwards Aurelius' coinage carries more military themes. The numismatic image of Marcus Aurelius changes again after the death of Verus, with Aurelius abandoning the military titles of his previous coinage (a comparison with the relevant epigraphic record would be of interest here). Relevant issues of Commodus as Aurelius' Caesar are also discussed. B. sees Commodus' initial numismatic imagery as a reaction to Avidius Cassius; Commodus' coinage following this episode then conforms to the general types that graced

Aurelius' coins when he himself was Caesar. B. notes, however, that Commodus' numismatic image was more varied than Aurelius' was as Caesar, which she connects to the turbulent nature of the period under study (338).

From a numismatic perspective, B. demonstrates that coin iconography likely reacted quickly to contemporary events, and suggests that medallions were not only struck at the beginning of each year, but could also be struck at other times. In particular, B. connects the striking of several medallions with Aurelius' triumph in A.D. 176 (303). At times she reinterprets particular numismatic iconography: for example, identifying the Danube, rather than the Tiber, on a medallion of Aurelius from A.D. 180 (334). She identifies a clear prevalence of military motifs on imperial coinage in the period A.D. 169–180. Imperial women are also increasingly given a more militaristic image beginning with Faustina and the title *mater castrorum*.

B. discusses an exhaustive list of coins and medallions, including issues that were previously unpublished: for example, an adventus motif medallion from A.D. 176 (313). The sparing use of images in a book concerned with iconography is sorely felt. Although B. justifies this by observing that coin images can be found in existing catalogues (13), not all types are illustrated in these volumes, and some (e.g. Gnechi's *I medaglioni romani*) remain rare in university libraries, meaning that for many the associated images will be difficult to access. The use of bold capitals throughout the book makes it easy for the reader to skim through and find a relevant topic. Although there is a general index, an index of RIC numbers (or other relevant catalogue numbers) would have been useful for those wanting to consult the work for information about one specific coin type.

Overall, the monograph provides a detailed discussion of the coin iconography of Marcus Aurelius, one that both summarizes existing ideas and, at times, suggests new interpretations. By identifying the stark contrast between Aurelius' numismatic image as Caesar, as co-emperor with Verus, and as sole emperor, B. demonstrates the dynamic nature of coinage as a medium that reacted to contemporary events.

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C. ROWAN, *UNDER DIVINE AUSPICES. DIVINE IDEOLOGY AND THE VISUALISATION OF IMPERIAL POWER IN THE SEVERAN PERIOD*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xvi + 303, illus. ISBN 9781107020122. £65.00/US\$110.00.

This book offers a methodical and detailed study of the use of divine sanction by the Severan emperors as expressed in particular in numismatic imagery. Rowan understands coinage not only as a currency but also as a medium for both the commemoration of imperial actions and communication between emperor and subjects (through the mint in Rome) and between civic élites and the emperor (through the provincial mints). She makes a strong case for the unique importance of coinage in assessing the ideology of a particular reign. This is due not least to the possibilities offered by the much faster cycles of design and production (several times a year), compared to those for major stand-alone imperial monuments. R. uses systematic analysis to chart the changing priorities of a reign, assessing both the timing of different 'messages' through accurate dating, and their prominence through quantitative analysis of hoards to estimate the relative size of the issues (only silver hoards are used). Underlying the study are larger questions about coin production and control, in particular the close association of coin designs with the emperor. One interesting conclusion that R. comes to is that there was an archive of coin designs in Rome, which accounts for the revival of imagery of the Domitianic saecular games under Septimius Severus. She also argues convincingly that it was not only the provincial mints that adopted designs from Rome but the Roman mint was also influenced by provincial designs. The question of the impact of this coin imagery on the users is briefly considered. R. does not overstate the case but points to the importance of the larger visual language of imperial rule, which would have reinforced the imagery on coinage, and she adduces hoarding and use of coins in jewellery as evidence for close viewing and valuing of coins.

After a consideration of these broad questions and issues of methodology (chs 1–2) there follow four chapters devoted to Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Elagabalus and Alexander Severus (chs 3–6).