

**Review of Powell, Anton and Andrew Burnett (eds.). 2020.  
*Coins of the Roman Revolution, 49 BC-AD 14.  
Evidence without Hindsight.***

Swansea: Classical Press of Wales. Pp. xviii+238, ill. ISBN 978-1-910589-76-2. £60.

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This volume originated as a panel at the Ninth Celtic Conference in Classics at University College Dublin, 22-25 June 2016. The panel was conceived by Anton Powel, with advice from Dr Kathryn Welch. It attracted seventeen papers, eleven of which are represented here. Andrew Burnett attended the panel and agreed to edit the planned volume and to write its Introduction, after news of the death of Anton Powell (1947-2020), who was an important scholar of the history and historiography of ancient Greece and Rome.

The aim of the volume is very attractive and ambitious. The long revolutionary age, which culminated in the autocracy of Octavian-Augustus, is one of Roman history's most richly documented periods, but also most misrepresented. From Roman to modern times, hindsight dominated. The main consequence was a rapid defamation or eclipsing of Octavian's rivals. Historians often have difficulty understanding the attitudes of the Romans and provincials, who at that time could not predict Octavian's final victory nor that his regime would survive for decades. Historical sources, especially after Caesar and Cicero, do not always provide adequate information regarding the various opponents of Octavian and their coins sometimes remain the only testimony of their point of view. In this book, eleven new essays explore the coinage of Rome's competing dynasts. Julius Caesar's coins, and those of his 'son' Octavian-Augustus, are studied. But similar and respectful attention is also given to the issues of their opponents, which were often coined with evident respective propagandistic intentions. I summarize and criticize below the various contributions according to their order in the volume.

1) R. Laignoux, 'Coin types as political topoi: the paradoxical proximity of numismatic discourses during the civil wars of the late Roman Republic (44-29 BC),' pp. 1-42. The author argues, pedantically and without illustrations, that the types of coinage of the various contenders were similar in approach. This is not surprising, considering the purpose of propaganda, which always exalts, without particular originality, victory, prosperity, or past familial prestige in addition to claiming to be defenders of liberty. The claim (on page 5 and note 19) that 'several literary texts ... support the hypothesis of discussion about monetary questions between the pretenders and their advisers,' is not completely correct. There are few literary sources, which marginally highlight monetary questions. Appian, *BC* 4.75, 316-17 is simply a question of an amount of coinage (Brutus received in Lycia about 16,000 talents in money which Apuleius had collected from the tribute of Asia). Dio 47.25.3 contains the well-known mention of the reverse type of Brutus' EID MAR issue: this historian simply notices, in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, the existence of this monetary type. The voluminous correspondence of Cicero with Atticus as well as the gossipy letters of Coelius with Atticus, all coeval to this revolutionary age, did not record a coin type.

2) L.F. Carbone, 'Mark Antony and the bronze revolution in the East,' pp. 43-77. The author correctly argues that Antony's monetary policy in the East represented a real 'revolution,' a turning point for the bronze coinage produced and circulating in the Eastern provinces of the Empire. The alleged portraits of Fulvia (41-40 BC, pp. 44-46) as a Victoria on a bronze of the city of Fulvia-Eumeneia and on a quinarius of Lugdunum in Gallia are very believable, while it is less certain on an aureus struck at Rome, not by Antony but by a moneyer (C. Numonius Vaala). The author is accurate in her discussion on pages relative to Triumvirs and Octavia (40-39 BC, pp. 46-51), and on those on the so-called 'fleet coinage' with Antony, Octavian, and Octavia (38-37 BC, pp. 51-53), and Cleopatra (31 BC, pp. 53-55). Rather complex, however, is the second section (pp. 55-60) dedicated to the introduction of denominational marks on Greek and Roman coinage in the East with the duoviral coinage in Corinth (42-41 BC), the 'fleet' coinage of Antonius (38-37 BC), and the C. Proculius and Leptis Minor issues after Antony (30-28 BC), as well as the third section (pp. 60-66) relative to Roman and local standards in mid-first century BC. Antony exerted power over the East and he and his magistrates introduced innovations in the bronze coinage issued by Roman provinces in the East that lasted for centuries after him, even if it is rather hazardous that these experimental issues were then supposedly 'codified' by Augustus. These eastern issues, however, were very small and of limited circulation, while the base metal coinages of Augustus were almost exclusively western.

3) C. Devoto and B. Spigola, 'Scipio and Cato in 47-46 BC: Ideals and expectations seen through coins,' pp. 79-96. These authors discuss the coinages of the Pompeians in Africa. Scipio's coins show a new language that can be defined as 'provincial,' with classical elements (usual symbols of Republican power, such as the curule chair) combined with local insertions (such as the head of Utica, the elephant skin), so celebrating Utica on his coins. In contrast, Cato's coins show conservative perceptions of Rome through the traditional Roman iconography, and for him, the importance of Utica was only a step toward traditional Republican Rome. It is a historical irony that, of the two, it was Cato who would become known as 'Uticensis.'

4) G. de Méritens de Villeneuve, 'Quintus Cornuficius, heir of the 'Africana causa'? The testimony of coins,' pp. 97-112. The author attempts to decode the types of coinage of Quintus Cornuficius, who played a marginal role in a local civil war for the possession of Africa, and whose historical context and corpus are available in my own monograph, entitled *Q. Cornuficius. Aurei e denari in Africa Vetus (RRC 509 / 1-5), Cassino 2018*. Using the 'African and Roman' types on his gold and silver coins, the author argues that Cornuficius was trying to get all possible support for his ambitions as governor of the provinces of Africa Vetus and Africa Nova, which were later frustrated.

5) D.J. Wright, 'Sextus Pompey, Scylla, and South Italy,' pp. 113-122. The author briefly discusses the coinages of Sextus Pompeius. Curiously he supposes (p. 115) that Picenum was the hometown of the *gens Pompeia*. In truth, Picenum was a region and their hometown was Rome. The main town of Picenum, Ausculum, was besieged by Pompeius Strabo and his son inherited a *clientela* in Picenum. It is not plausible (see p. 115) that the Catanean brothers represented an Italian cause, or Aeneas, the ancestor of the Roman people, as foreign. The author then (p. 119) believes that Southern Italy was a recruiting target for Sextus Pompey, even though ancient sources speak of its 'pillaging' in the countryside. It seems to me a confused contradiction.

6) H. Cornwell, 'A place for peace in a time of war,' pp. 123-144. The author illustrates the use of the Pax type on coinage in a period of internal instability, initially as part of a much wider programmatic statement made by Julius Caesar in 44 BC and continued to the coinage of 40-39 BC as normalization of the celebration of reconciliation and peace between Romans in civil war and beyond. Most of the issues with Pax are rare, as the illustrated quinarius of L. Aemilius Buca, *RRC* 480/24 (Fig. 1 on p. 124) and, therefore, it is surprising that coinage was a 'medium of communication comparable to ... mass oratory' (page 125).

7) A. Suspène and J. Chausserie-Laprée, 'The significance of imagery in coin hoards from the time of the Roman revolution: reflections on the aurei deposit from Mantigues,' pp. 145-155. The authors discuss a curious hoard of 48 aurei (struck between 46, *RRC* 466/1, and 27 BC, *RIC* 273), found by the excavators scattered in antiquity across the floor of a room in a Roman building at Martigues in Provence; a further odd feature is that many of the coins had been hammered or bent in half (fig. 3 on p.148). The deposit had previously been disturbed by the cutting of a trench for a drain and was therefore not complete when excavated. There are no confirmations that the 'hoard' was originally of 'up to 200' pieces, as suggested by the Ambenay and Saumur hoards, nor that the 'hoard' was 'originally distributed together' in a *congiarium* (p. 149). It remains difficult to understand the real intentions of the owner of this deposit towards the images present on the aurei.

8) A. Russell, 'The SC coinage and the role of the Senate under Augustus,' pp. 157-173. The author argues that the prominent S.C. on the base metal coinage of Augustus and his successors functioned, if not actually aimed, to show that the Senate was a central part of the Roman Imperial state. A fairly obvious finding.

9) C. Rowan, 'Money, media and cultural memory under Augustus,' pp. 175-192. The author states that the issues of the moneyers under Augustus combined in each issue an Imperial and a family type. Another fairly obvious finding.

10) D. Woods, 'Re-examining the design types of the renewed college of moneyers in c.19 BC,' pp. 193-210. The author examines types represented by this college in 19 BC (*RRC* 278-322), with some questionable explanations. He argues that the type featuring a 'crab tearing apart a butterfly,' by way of *dirimere* ('to tear apart'), was a pun on the name Durmius (p. 204, sic...). Furthermore, he argues that the lyre, being derived from the Greek word '*terpein*,' was a pun both on the Turpilianus name and also Tarpeia (pp. 204-205, sic...).

11) B. Greet, 'Augustus as Eagle: analysing a symbol of Augustan coinage,' pp. 211-231. The eagle had a complex and ambiguous range of meaning on Augustan coinage, and the author considers this type to be reminiscence of a legionary standard, a veteran colony, and the standards recovered from Parthia. An eagle holding a wreath in its claws is supposed, by way of the story of the eagle that removed and then replaced the cap on the head of Tarquinius Priscus, to allude to the grant of the *corona civica* to Augustus.