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Festal and Dated Coins of the Roman Empire, Four Papers by Aline Abaecherli Boyce

Review by: Walter Emil Kaegi, Jr.

*The Classical Journal*, Vol. 62, No. 4 (Jan., 1967), pp. 181-182

Published by: [The Classical Association of the Middle West and South](#)

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mends it, an impression hardly supported by Thompson's review (*Archaeology* 18 [1965] 305f.). Another example of this sort is the advertisements for the completely antiquated 1916 dissertation of B. C. Rider which often do not state that it is simply a reprint (with updated bibliography), and with quotes from newspaper reviews, evidently of the original edition, which leave the reader with the impression that it is packed with the latest information on the topic, "another book for which specialists will be grateful," or "now the general reader profits from the results of the archaeologist's spade." Yet of the houses of Olynthus, which completely altered the picture of the classical Greek house nearly forty years ago, there is of course no mention (except in the bibliography). The Argonaut Press is performing a useful service in bringing out reprints of older books, but they should be clearly advertised for what they are.

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**Festal and dated coins of the Roman empire, four papers**, by ALINE ABAECHERLI BOYCE. (Numismatic notes and monographs 153.) New York: American Numismatic Society 1965. Pp.x,102; plates. \$4.00.

THIS WORK CONTAINS four significant and worthwhile papers. The first essay, "A new Augustan aureus of 17 B.C.," publishes and discusses a unique new aureus which the moneyer M. Sanquinius struck. The obverse shows a young male bust surmounted by a star and flame and may represent the *Saeculum* or *Genius* of the *Ludi saeculares*. At any rate, this is the first known publication of an aureus which combines a cometed head with the head of Augustus; previously only denarii of this type were known. Mrs. Boyce also concludes that M. Sanquinius was the chief moneyer of 17 B.C. She deserves congratulations for publishing this new aureus, and her explanation of its iconography seems persuasive.

The second study, "Dated coins of Pompeiopolis," corrects the Imhoof-Blumer and Bosch lists of these issues. The most important contribution here is a major revision of the chronology of these coins. She concludes, on a new reading of the earliest year of these issues as 96, not 16 (year since the founding of Pompeiopolis), that this coinage began under Tiberius, not Pompey. Therefore (and again her argu-

ments are convincing) no known dated coinage of Pompeiopolis exists from the republican era.

The title of the third paper is "The ninth consulship of Diocletian and the consular reverse." Mrs. Boyce analyzes the significance of a unique aureus of 304 the reverse of which depicts Diocletian standing togate with a globus and short scepter as he enters his new consulate (*processus consularis*). The author perceives renewed emphasis on the office of consul by Diocletian. She notes the substitution of a scepter for the ritual roll in the consul's hand by his sixth consulate, and she concludes that this relates to a more elaborate and monarchical court ceremony. Thus this essay contributes still more information to the growing scholarly literature on imperial dress.

The fourth study, "A new solidus of Theodosius II and other vota solidi of the period," is longer. This important paper examines and unquestionably demonstrates the value of numismatics for an understanding of relations between the Eastern and Western Roman Empires in the obscure fifth century. The author publishes a hitherto unnoticed vota solidus of Theodosius II which dates from the years 408-11 (probably closer to the latter year). The obverse shows a helmeted and diademed head of Theodosius with a spear in his right hand.

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The reverse depicts Constantinopolis seated facing on a throne against which rests a shield containing the inscription X VOT XX. She notes the existence of a similar Constantinopolitan gold piece of Honorius, and concludes that these issues were struck for the synchronous celebrations of the decennalia of Theodosius II and the vicennalia of Honorius. The issues demonstrate the cordiality of East and West in that time of grave crisis for the West.

Mrs. Boyce also discusses the long cross solidi which Western authorities struck and argues that they reflect Eastern influence. On pp.78-9 she analyzes a new type of Valentinian III which portrays Valentinian treading upon a serpent with a facing head "that now seems human, now beast." On p.85 she comments that this human-headed serpent was "doubtless representing the barbarian world," and she observes that Honorius had struck solidi which depicted himself treading on a lion which represented a captive. She regards this new solidus of Valentinian as a modified continuation of the series which Honorius had initiated. This is indeed one explanation for the appearance of this human-headed serpent. One might argue that it is a generalized representation of evil. Babelon believed, erroneously, that the head represented Attila. In my own opinion there is a still more plausible historical explanation. This human-headed serpent first appears on the coronation solidus of Valentinian, who secured the Western throne only after the Eastern Roman troops of Theodosius II had crushed the usurper John, who had established himself in Italy (425). John was captured at Ravenna, paraded on an ass in the hippodrome after his hands had been severed, exposed to public abuse and humiliation and then decapitated (display in the hippodrome: Procopius, *De bello Vandalico* 1.3.9; decapitation: Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 12.13). I believe that the human head with serpentine body which appears on the coronation solidus may well be the head of the hated usurper John, on which Valentinian triumphantly rests his cross scepter. This human-headed serpent continues to appear on subsequent Western Roman reverses.

Mrs. Boyce also offers a competent survey of late vota issues. She concludes that the vota figures gradually lost meaning after the reigns of Theodosius II and Valentinian III. The vota inscriptions slowly disappear and the vows cease to designate specific periods of an emperor's reign, and instead come to denote an "indefinite idea of imperial eternity." She concludes by observing that dated vota coinage had ceased to exist by the reigns of Anastasius I, Justin I and Justinian (who substituted regnal years). In all, this assessment of the waning of the vota issues

is of the greatest utility to those who concern themselves with the complex problems of the Roman vota coinage. To summarize, Mrs. Boyce provides four stimulating and noteworthy contributions on four diverse periods of Roman imperial coinage.

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**The Medes and Persians**, by WILLIAM CULICAN. (Ancient peoples and places 42.) New York and Washington: Praeger 1965. Pp.260. \$7.50.

THE "PREFACE" begins with the palace at Persepolis, built by Dareios and Xerxes and burned down by Alexander the Great; this was the first great imperial monument. A chronological table, "Iranians in the first millennium BC," extends from 1100 to 547, when Cyrus established the Achaemenid empire.

Culican divides his story into nine chapters, from the first incursions into Iran to the conquest of the Persian empire by Alexander. He adds the genealogy of the Achaemenids to Xerxes, a well selected bibliography, and a simple index. The book is illustrated by seventy-six plates of excellent quality, fifty-two line-drawings, and two maps.

The series of which this is a part is by now firmly established. Each volume is written by a known scholar and aims at the intelligent layman. *The Medes and Persians* is a good example of the service rendered to scholars in peripheral fields. Few classicists will speak of Iranian affairs with authority. Here they may read a pleasant account written by the Senior Lecturer in Semitic Studies at the University of Melbourne. No special linguistic knowledge is required.

The emphasis throughout is placed on the physical remains, especially art and architecture (including inscriptions). History, in fact, does not seem to be Culican's strong point, if one may judge from the extraordinary distortions on pp.156-8 ("Corinth and Aegina were locked in a private war" about 460; "throughout the archonship of Pericles, Athens pursued a policy friendly to Persia . . . soon a state of open war between the Ionians and Pisuthnes . . . who had won back the allegiance of many of the Athenian cities" before 431; "members of the Delian League accepted Persian garrisons and switched tribute" before 405).