

Peter Franz MITTAG, *Römische Medaillons*, vol. II: *Antoninus Pius*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019, 207 pp. + 108 tables, ISBN 978-3-515-12429-4, €56.00.

2019 was a year of great importance for all scholars and collectors interested in ancient Roman imperial coins and medallions of the second century AD, because two long-awaited books appeared. *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. II, part 3: *From AD 117 to 138: Hadrian*, the standard reference work for coins of that period, was published by Spink and Son Ltd¹, and *Römische Medaillons*, vol. II: *Antoninus Pius* was published by Franz Steiner Verlag. What the two publications have in common is the long period of time that has elapsed since previous volumes have appeared: a second fully revised and expanded edition of *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. II, part 1: *From AD 69 to 96: Vespasian to Domitian* by I.A. CARRADICE and T.V. BUTTREY was published in 2007² and *Römische Medaillons. Caesar bis Hadrian* in 2010³ (second edition in 2012). The second feature that connects these two books of 2019 is the person of Peter Franz MITTAG, who is the author of a section on medallions in the *RIC* II 3 and the two volumes of *Römische Medaillons*.

MITTAG (henceforth M.) mentions in the foreword to his new book that he originally did not intend to go beyond the reign of Hadrian, but the positive response to the publication of his *Römische Medaillons* encouraged him to prepare a similar volume on medallions of Antoninus Pius (p. 7). An outstanding example of the positive reception of the publication dedicated to the period from Julius Caesar to Hadrian is a review by Cristian GAZDAC who writes that M.'s first book on medallions "is an excellent update to the works by F. Gneecchi, *I medaglioni romani* (1912), P.L. Strack, *Untersuchungen zu römischen Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts, Teil II. Reichsprägung zur Zeit des Hadrian* (1933) and J. Toynbee, *Roman Medallions* (1944)"⁴. The same can be written about *Römische Medaillons*, vol. II: *Antoninus Pius*, only the book by Paul STRACK should be replaced by his *Die Reichsprägung zur Zeit des Antoninus Pius* (1937).

While the first volume of *Römische Medaillons* opens with M.'s theoretical discourse on the term 'medallion' and the difference between 'coinage', 'medal' and 'medallion' (pp. 11–22), in the introduction to the second volume (pp. 9–13), the German numismatist discusses medallions in the context of the emperors' private lives and he claims that such little pieces of art "die (auch) an persönliche Freunde des Kaisers verteilt wurden" (p. 13) can be regarded as sources for some aspects of "personal parts" ("persönliche Seiten") of "the good emperors". The intimate character of the Antonine medallions is also emphasised in the detailed analyses of many types discussed in the next three chapters which are dedicated to the chronology ("Datierung") and historical order ("Historische Einordnung") of medallions of Antoninus Pius (pp. 14–62), of his wife Faustina I (pp. 63–73) and those issued during his reign for young Marcus Aurelius (pp. 74–85) and Faustina II (pp. 86–89). M. connects, for instance, the medallion with Aesculapius on the reverse (no. 25 in the catalogue) with Faustina I's disease shortly before her death in autumn 140 AD (pp. 25–26), while Aesculapius-Eschmūn (young deity with long hair, without a beard, but with Aesculapius' serpent-entwined wand) or Apollo Medicus on the reverse of the medallion minted for Marcus Aurelius in 147 AD (no. 232) is linked here with his daughter and granddaughter of Pius, Domitia

¹ R.A. ABDY, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. II, part 3: *From AD 117 to 138: Hadrian*. With a section on medallions by P.F. MITTAG, London 2019.

² I.A. CARRADICE, T.V. BUTTREY, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. II, part 1. 2nd fully revised edn., London 2007.

³ P.F. MITTAG, *Römische Medaillons. Caesar bis Hadrian*, Stuttgart 2010.

⁴ C. GAZDAC, *CR* LXII 2012, p. 254.

Faustina, who fell ill shortly after her birth (p. 78). This interpretation is supported by sculptures of children discovered in the temple of Eschmûn (Eshmun), but it can be confusing, because according to the older literature⁵ Domitia Faustina was not the first, but the third child of the imperial couple and she was born not earlier than 149 AD, and their first daughter, named Annia Galeria Aurelia Faustina, was born in 146, while in 147 a son was born. The study of medallions struck for Aurelius and Faustina II, carried in minute detail, shows how their conjugal joy (types with Bacchus and Ariadne) was intertwined with an anxiety for their children's health (types with Aesculapius and Salus).

The main chapter of the book by M. is the catalogue ("Katalog": pp. 90–180) of 286 types of medallions. All of them are presented in a chronological order and very well described. It should be emphasised that the German numismatist tries to find all specimens of a certain type, both kept in museum collections and put out for auctions, and he verifies older reference books, when he notes, for example, "non vidi" in the description of a Vienna specimen of the type 86, that appeared in GNECCHI's *I medaglioni romani* (p. 118). The catalogue is completed with the chapter "Nicht in den Katalog aufgenommene Stücke" (pp. 181–184), where M. lists all types noted by BANTI, GNECCHI, STRACK and TOYNBEE that he excluded because they are either coins without the abbreviation SC or (early) modern cast copies. The catalogue chapters are followed by the *addenda* and *corrigenda* to the earlier *Römische Medaillons. Caesar bis Hadrian* (pp. 185–186), concordance tables between the old classifications by GNECCHI and STRACK and M.'s newest catalogue (pp. 187–189) and Antonine medallion dies links ("Stempelkopplungen": pp. 190–191). M. also gives us a comprehensive bibliography (pp. 192–200) and useful indices of people, places and things (pp. 201–204), as well as of reverse legends (pp. 205–207). The book ends with 108 plates of high-quality black-and-white photographs depicting not only almost all main types, but often also several specimens of the same type from various collections.

Bernhard WEISSER has emphasised in his review of *Römische Medaillons. Caesar bis Hadrian* that M.'s book is "ein eindruckliches Zeugnis jahrelanger Recherche in Museen, aber auch in schwer zugänglichen Privatsammlungen und im Münzhandel"⁶. His *Römische Medaillons*, vol. II: *Antoninus Pius* is characterised by the same thorough and extensive research and I can recommend it as the most important reference book of all medallions produced during the reign of Antoninus Pius (138–161). I am looking forward for the appearance of a section on medallions by Peter Franz MITTAG in a future new, revised edition of volume III 1 of *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, devoted to this emperor.

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⁵ See e.g. A. STEIN, *Domitia Faustina*, *RE* V 1 (1903), col. 1511.

⁶ B. WEISSER, *BJ* CCXII 2012, p. 490.