

DAVID W. MAC DOWALL. *The Western Coinages of Nero*. New York, The American Numismatic Society, 1979. Pp. xvii + 256. 25 plates. \$40.00 (*Numismatic Notes and Monographs*, 161)

David Mac Dowall has provided us with a thorough descriptive catalogue of the coinage produced by Nero's western mints. The variety of the coinage is great, and the author takes great care to classify and elucidate according to a sensible schema. Using die study and type analysis, M. has produced a new corpus "from coins in the principal numismatic collections." Actually the search range is far from limited and includes sale catalogues and items seen in trade.

M. begins with the chronological framework noting titulature and TRP dates and correlating them with actual issues. His emendation to TR POT VIII (5) does seem to be correct. He then proceeds with a discussion of the different mints in the west. Two tables, rather intrusively placed (10–11), represent the aurei and denarii hoard information. While M. notes that Rome was the sole mint of precious metals, this was not the case for the *aes* issues, and it is here that this work shines. The finds of sestertii, dupondii, and asses are divided into the "globe" and "non-globe" types and are then provenanced according to province. He includes an interesting discussion of the ore mines which involved the artificial alloying of orichalcum which was used for various *aes* denominations.

Chap. 4, "*Aes* without SC," is one of the most important and original in the book. He relies on the recent insight of Mattingly that the issue of Imperial coinage was not entirely controlled by the constitutional dyarchy of Senate and Emperor, and that the inclusion or absence of SC does not invariably refer to products of a Senate or Imperial mint respectively. M. finds that the problematic *aes* issues with SC are the product of the mint at Rome and fall into two chronological groups. Convincingly countering Gneecchi's argument that the omission of SC was an indication of the fact that these issues were actually medallions to be distributed to the populace during *congiaria* and games, M. uses Kraft's theory that *S(enatus) C(onsulto)* does not invariably mean "struck by order of the Senate," as assumed by the "medallionists" such as Gneecchi, Grant and Mattingly himself. Instead he notes that the formula was originally an honor to the Emperor rather than, strictly speaking, an authorization for coinage. Thus SC means "honour in the form of the *corona civica*, etc., bestowed on the Emperor *by decree of the Senate*." (Italics mine.) While not totally accepting Kraft's hypothesis, M. concludes, very sensibly noting the strained relationship between the Emperor and the Senate, that "Nero's *aes* without SC . . . should . . . be regarded as a deliberate and calculated attempt to abandon the complementary formula the reality of which had disappeared and the importance of which had considerably waned." (72). The reasoning is cogent, the conclusion rings sensible and true.

M. proceeds to catalogue the *Aes* issues from Rome, ingeniously updating Mattingly by noting that find distribution does not substan-