

Book Review: *Ancient Coin Collecting* by Wayne Sales

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This book is destined to be the one of two you see most often in the hands of collectors at shows. It is the most complete and compact volume for ancients. The other is the Klawans reprint which surpasses this book for depth on Hellenic Greek and Imperial Roman. However, this book provides an impressive breadth of data. This is far more than a handbook for attribution -- although it can serve that purpose. Just when I think I have seen every book on ancients, I find another one in a small public library or a used book store. Except for Klawans (and of course Sears), none of them comes close to Sayles's work. He takes the time to explain the details, to develop his thoughts, to expand on the smaller points that just about every other book glosses over, ignores, or treats superficially.

This is the information age. Wayne Sayles earned a master's degree in art. Combine the two and you approach complex data from the proper perspective.

This book is loaded with graphs, charts, diagrams, and distilled presentations of bulky information. One chart shows the Roman emperors (and usurpers) in chronological order with the additional benefit of gray shading to indicate the Flavians, the Severans, and the other families, knots, clumps and clusters. In addition, there is a similar chart for the Romaion or "Byzantine" rulers. Other charts show the Imperial mintmarks, the attributes of the Personifications, the geographical and dynastic divisions of the Greek world, ancient alphabets and much more. How much more? If you are ever interested in buying used books about ancient coins, you might want to know what "buckrum" and "foxing" are. He defines 21 more "Book Terms" along with another chart showing what sizes folio, quarto and octavo are. There seems to be no end to the ancilliary data in this book.

Ancient Coin Collecting also provides the reader with a healthy dose of Wayne's own evaluations and recommendations. I was impressed with the illo on page 169, showing "Some VF coins of exceptional appeal."

If you are a beginner, you need this book. If you are an old hand, you can make good use of this book. From Websites to deducting donations from your taxable income, *Ancient Coin Collecting* is a extremely fine work that is worth its weight in electrum staters.

Ancient Coin Collecting is the first volume in a series that will cover the wider ancient world. Now, in early 1998, the works that focus on Greek coins and Roman numismatics, are also available. The show all of the same characteristics as the first book: lots of graphics, tables, and charts, along with insightful text and memorable narrative.