

SWITZERLAND

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The period 2002-2007 in Switzerland witnessed campaigns by the Cabinet de numismatique of the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Neuchâtel, and the Musée monétaire cantonal, Lausanne, to recuperate thousands of historic dies and puncheons belonging the Huguenin company in Le Locle (NE) employed in the production of medals for their respective cantons. The efforts of the Neuchâtel cabinet inspired an exhibition, *L'art au creux de la main: la médaille suisse aux 20^e et 21^e siècles* at the Musée d'art et d'histoire in that city (29 April to 23 September 2007), afterwards shown at the Münzkabinett und Antikensammlung, Winterthur (3 November 2007 to 24 August 2008). The show was accompanied by a juried section of contemporary Swiss work organised by the two cabinets in collaboration with FIDEM. A small book of essays accompanied the exhibition in both cities (44). Following an introduction by PERRET (ZÄCH for the Winterthur version in German) and a preface by JACOT (48), GATTI (46) discusses the manner in which contemporary Swiss medallists (particularly those from the French-speaking region) liberated themselves from the traditional round form and commemorative function of their art. DELBARRE-BÄRTSCHI (43) considers the evolution of the commissioned medal in Switzerland from the Art Nouveau period to the present, outlining the impact of trends in painting, the graphic arts and design on this development. EVEN (45) traces the history of the two leading medal ateliers in the canton of Neuchâtel, Huguenin and Kramer, providing insights into the enlightened social policies of the former. ZANCHI's text (58) pays tribute to the popular medal in Swiss society, revealing how these objects radiated out from the elite towards consumption by a larger public. GIRARDIN-CESTONE concludes the essay section with a discussion of the medallion form in art, suggesting links between medals, prints and paintings sharing a round or oval format (47). The final section is an illustrated catalogue of the prize-winning entries in the competition. It is hoped that this stimulating little volume will lead to further and more comprehensive research.

Among other contributions, one should cite SCHÄRLI's essay on the painter Arnold Böcklin as the subject and author of medals (40). Mention should also be made of CAMPAGNOLO's note on the employment of Théodore Bonneton's late eighteenth-century die in the production of the bicentenary medal (1912) of Jean Jacques Rousseau's birth in Geneva (42). CAMPAGNOLO likewise collaborated with ROPP on a survey of tokens representing the lake front of that city (39). LURASCHI deserves to be commended for his numerous brief notes published in the *Numis-Post & HMZ* on the medallic heritage of the Canton Ticino, the majority of which are conveniently accessible in a collective volume (1). Welcome additions to the numismatist and collector's library are comprehensive new catalogues of Swiss shooting medals and jetons by RICHTER, with hundreds of good colour photographs (2, 3).

The most important gift to the country's museums was a significant collection of high quality Art Nouveau works donated by a major medal scholar, Peter Felder, to the Schloss Lenzburg Museum of the Canton Aargau (6). The occasion was marked by the publication of a very useful and well-written survey of the subject by the donor (5).

The author's own involvement with the art and history of the Swiss medal continued during the period. With the enthusiastic support of his own institution, the Musée monétaire cantonal, Lausanne, and the Cabinet de numismatique of the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, he was able to complete the two-volume catalogue raisonné of the Dassier workshop, one of the most important ateliers of the eighteenth century (9). In this work, encompassing over 750 pages and 1,700 illustrations, and in a number of articles (10-16), he considers the subject in the light of the art, politics, culture, economy and society of the period. An identical interdisciplinary approach was applied to studies of medals and their impact in the Canton Vaud in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (17, 18, 22, 24). This methodology is also employed in an essay published in *The Medal* on objects associated with the American Civil War, struck on the press of the Bovys of Geneva, prestigious successors to the Dassiers (23). In this instance, work commemorating Abolitionist heroes served to link kindred spirits among advocates of freedom in Switzerland, France and America.

Notwithstanding the endeavours cited above, one is obliged to lament the relative paucity of serious research in the field in this country.

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