



The Coins of Pontius Pilate (Marco Polo Monographs, 4)

By Jean-Philippe Fontanille, Sheldon Lee Gosline

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This is the ultimate book for the study of Pontius Pilate's coins. For Christians, the name Pontius Pilate is known for one reason. He has the dubious distinction of being connected with statements of faith; in the Apostles' or Nicene Creed. For Jews, Pilate was the official emblem of their foreign oppressor and this crucifixion was no different than many others the Romans performed during the subjugation of their land. The authors have gathered all available information concerning the man, his time, and his coins. In the final analysis, it is the coins themselves, except for one fragmentary inscription, that provide the most tangible evidence of his period in history. Another outstanding aspect in this research is the contribution it provides to ongoing controversy over proposed Pontius Pilate coins over the eyes of the Turin shroud. Some general awareness of these Pilate coins has developed in light of ongoing debates over the alleged coin images on the Turin shroud, but that debate has confused and even hampered close examination of the coins themselves. Jean-Phillipe Fontanille and Sheldon Lee Gosline blend their expertise into a remarkably detailed study. In the words of David Hendin, Fellow of the American Numismatic Society, "it is the first time a person has gathered, from both primary and secondary sources, all the relevant information, historic, religious, and numismatic information about Pontius Pilate."

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Editorial Review

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From the Publisher

Foreword By David Hendin

Pontius Pilate is a man of history. He was a villain to be sure, but a man whose name Christians, Jews and Moslems have become familiar. Only a single inscription mentioning him has survived. Italian archaeologists discovered it, in 1961, at the ancient Mediterranean port of Caesarea Maritima and it is inscribed with Pilate's own name and the title *PRÆFECTUS IUDÆÆ*. That stone (currently exhibited at The Israel Museum, Jerusalem), of course, was not the only contemporary written evidence that Pilate existed, because we have the New Testament itself, and also the writings of first century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. We also have the coins of Pontius Pilate. Quite surprisingly, they are rather common for historic objects nearly 2,000 years old. Reasonable examples can be bought for less than \$50, and even the best, and rarest examples, will rarely exceed \$500. In the past 30 years, I have met hundreds of collectors of Pilate coins. Of all of them, Jean-Philippe Fontanille, a French musician and composer, recently moved to Canada, has had the most burning passion, not only to possess the best and the most interesting examples, but also to thoroughly research and share his information about them. This little book is the culmination of years of work and research on the part of Fontanille and, to my knowledge, it is the first time a person has gathered, from both primary and secondary sources, all of the relevant information, historic, religious, and numismatic information about Pontius Pilate. A research project such as this book is what popular numismatics should be about, and I take my hat off to Prof. Fontanille for his excellent effort.

David Hendin, Fellow American Numismatic Society;
Author of Guide to Biblical Coins, Collecting Coins,
Celator columnist, New York, July 2001

Users Review

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