

Money Talks: Undergraduate Research in the Literary, Political and Social Value of Roman Coins

The papers presented at this panel are the products of a two-year experiential/research project designed to bring together applied research and classical studies and to do so with a medium that would bring the participants closer to daily life in the ancient world. Handling ancient coins, tracing their origins, speculating on their value apart from monetary value, and following their post-classical reception were key reasons for choosing this project. The department chose students who demonstrated competency in reading Latin and who intend to pursue professions where they will incorporate their classical training into their careers.

The four papers being presented in the panel treat numismatic studies in a unique way. Instead of focusing on the composition, equivalencies or economics, the papers consider the reception and reasons (apart from monetary value) for minting coins. Students were tasked with considering the possible literary and historical significance of the imagery found on Roman coins.

The papers examine the following areas: engaging the coin holder through types images that create a narrative; exploring how the imagery on coins may compel us to reconsider the significance of events in Roman history; developing a theory about how certain images may have been minted only in specific areas and why such selective minting took place; and tracing the reception and use of coins as objects without specific monetary value. It is the hope of the department that the papers presented at this panel will draw the audience's attention to the value of considering Roman coins in a literary, political and historical context.