

# Numismatic Photography

## Review by Roger Burdette

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**Title: *Numismatic Photography***

"After starting their collections, a great many coin collectors soon turn to photography as a means of documenting their collection and a vehicle for sharing their latest "find" with fellow hobby-ists. As author Mark Goodman observes, photographing coins has become more important as the visually-oriented Internet and on-line auction sites have taken hold. Yet, for all its popularity with coin collectors, making a good photo of a favorite coin has proven to be a difficult and frustrating experience for most. Problems range from getting a large, detailed image, to correcting color, understanding lighting and dealing with glare from plastic coin holders. As noted in the author's introduction, widespread availability of good quality digital cameras now allows the coin photographer to see results almost immediately. The replacement of film with electronic light detectors such as CCDs (charge coupled devices) virtually eliminates variables associated with color balance and photo processing.

Mr. Goodman's first numismatic book is an impressive addition to the coin collector's arsenal of knowledge. Through seventeen generously illustrated chapters plus two appendices, Mr. Goodman explains the selection of cameras and lenses, de-mystifies f-stops and shutter speeds, and carefully guides the novice through the numismatic photography process. Other than Gerald Hoberman's *The Art of Coins and Their Photography* (published in 1982), a scattering of articles in hobby publications and on-line, and an obligatory (usually useless) chapter in basic photography books, Mr. Goodman's book has no competition for the coin photographer's interest. Mr. Goodman concentrates on photographic technique leaving computer image adjustment for another project, or possibly a future book. The treatment of contrast is particularly good and will help collectors better understand how to approximate the in-hand "look" of a coin in their photographs.

*Numismatic Photography* is a "coin" book that should be read and re-read before the novice begins to make photos. Acquiring a basic understanding of photographic terminology, and how it applies to coins, is something few can do with a single reading. For those with some experience in photographing coins, one of the most helpful sections is Appendix B, "Troubleshooting." This includes several concise tables that deal with specific photographic problems and their solutions. There is a good index but, unfortunately, no bibliography.

Who will benefit from *Numismatic Photography*? Obviously, coin collectors are the target audience. However, this book will also be of great value to working professional photographers who are occasionally asked to photograph coins and medals. Mr. Goodman's technical understanding of the subject surpasses that found in most photography books."