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Hadrien RAMBACH *

JEAN-BAPTISTE GIARD (14/II/1932-18/V/2018)



Fig. 1. Jean-Baptiste Giard (1973)

It is with extreme sadness that I heard the announcement of the passing of Jean-Baptiste André Marie Joseph Giard, former curator of Roman coins in the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (1961-1997), where he acted as *conservateur en chef* from 1992. Like many other visitors, I had the chance to benefit from his welcome at the coin cabinet, from his scientific advice, and from passionate and entertaining discussions with him.

Jean-Baptiste Giard was a member of the board of the International Numismatic Commission, from the Bern meeting of 1979 until the London meeting of 1986. Most museum curators knew him, not only because he had received them in Paris, but also because he travelled extensively (even in the former Soviet Union) in order to make the casts that allowed him to later write his books on the Paris coin collection and on the coinage of the Lyon mint. He adopted a comprehensive approach, intending to build a corpus including die-studies, and his work is distinguished by its precision and depth, the result of setting a high intellectual standard – for himself as he did for others.

He started teaching Roman and Mediaeval numismatics at the École du Louvre in the late 1960s, then at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) in

* coinadvisor@yahoo.co.uk

the 1970s, and then from 1985 until c.2000 at the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (EHESS). He had also been Assistant at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton (1974–1977), where he befriended Andreas Alföldi († 1981) and André Weil († 1998).

The last of 18 children, Giard was born in 1932 to an educated catholic family from northern France. His father René, a *chartiste* like his son would later be, came from a long line of bookdealers in Valenciennes who had been in business since the 1750s). His happy childhood – educated at the Collège Sainte Odile in Lille – was interrupted by the Second World War: not long after the death of his father in March 1940, he had to flee in May–June 1940 first towards the Poitou and then to Normandy where he remained until December 1941. During this exodus he was separated from his mother – and two of his brothers died in the war. He later went back to Lille where he studied at the Saint–Joseph Jesuit school. After obtaining his baccalauréat in 1952, he moved to Paris to study at “Henri IV” and then graduated as archivist–palaeographer from the *École nationale des Chartes* in 1960. The following year, he started working as a librarian at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and he graduated in 1964 from the *École pratique des hautes études* (4th section). At the invitation of the director Henri Seyrig († 1973), whom he admired greatly, he became a resident of the Institut français d’archéologie in Beyrouth (1966–1967).

He had discovered numismatics during his studies, and his 1960 thesis was dedicated to *La Monnaie de Saint–Quentin au temps de Charles VI et de Charles VII, 1385–vers 1447*. He continued to do some research on French medieval coinage^[1], but his interests quickly turned towards Roman numismatics, in which he soon became a leading specialist. His most-used works are his books on the coinage of *Lugdunum* (Lyon), on which he published two volumes: a first one in 1983 on the period 43 BC – AD 41, and a second in 2000 on the periods AD 41–78 and AD 196–197, completing the series started by his friend Pierre Bastien († 2006); and the series *Catalogue des monnaies de l’Empire romain (collection du Cabinet des médailles de la Bibliothèque nationale)*, which he initiated with a volume on the coins of Augustus (first published in 1976, with new corrected editions in 1988 and 2001), and then continued with a volume on the coins of Tiberius to Nero (1988), and one that covered the collections down to the reign of Nerva (1998).

His vast interests, and his philological abilities, led him to deal with non-numismatic subjects: his translation of and comments on Lorenzo Valla’s denunciation of the forged “Donation of Constantine” was published in 1993 with an introduction by Carlo Ginzburg.

[1] With articles on *Deux monnaies mérovingiennes de Troyes de mêmes coins* (1961), on *La Monnaie d’Arras de 1420 à 1426* (1962), on *Un trésor de florins trouvés à Dijon* (1962), and on *Le florin d’or au Baptiste et ses imitations en France au XIV^e siècle* (1967).

Jean-Baptiste Giard did not only start and direct the publication of an important Italian hoard, the *Rispostiglio della Venèra* (vol. II/2 in 1987, vol. I and vol. II/1 in 1995, vol. IV in 2000 and vol. III.1 in 2009), he also created the series *Trésors Monétaires* – the first 12 volumes of which he edited (1979–1992), not long after the start of the British series of *Coin Hoards* (published 1975 onwards). This dedication to the publication of coin finds and hoards is significant, and is reflected in his own publications^[2]. Probably as a consequence of the study of these French finds, Giard published several articles on the Roman currency of Gaul^[3].

In 1989, he published *Médailles et antiques I – Trésors monétaires – supplément 2*, in which he aimed at studying the history of numismatics, at enlarging the fields of research by linking – for example – the development of the art of the medal in the Renaissance with the growing interest given to ancient ‘medals’. In it, he included an article on *Un camée du Roi René*, though he published otherwise little on glyptics: only an article on *Une intaille d’Auguste* (1975) and a book on *Le Grand camée de France* (1998), but he was interested in the field because of the obvious similarities in subjects and type of depictions. Like Marie-Louise Vollenweider († 2008), he understood well the connections between engraving coins and engraving gems, and the advantage that numismatists have in identifying portraits.

Indeed, portraiture was a real passion of his, and in 1980 he published *Le portrait d’autrefois*. This was followed by numerous articles^[4], and several entries for Stephen Scher’s exhibition catalogue *The Currency of Fame. Portrait Medals of the Renaissance* (1994). He also leaves an unpublished manuscript devoted to portraiture (*L’Illusion du Portrait*).

^[2] He devoted articles to coin finds in Clamecy (1961), Allonnes (1962), Saint-Mesmin (1962), Châtenay-sur-Seine (1963), Maillé (1963), Caudebec-lès-Elbeuf (1964), Puy-de-Dôme (1964), Petit-Couronne (1965), Étaples (1965), Landebaëron (1965), Sougères-sur-Sinotte (1965), Malicorne and Bonneuil-sur-Marne (1966), Port-Haliguen (1967), Thiais (1968), Condé-sur-Aisne (1968–1969), Landebaëran (1970), Montereau (1972), Ambenay (1974), and Paris (1982).

^[3] *Pour une étude systématique des imitations du IIIe s.* (1962), *La monnaie locale en Gaule à la fin du IIIe siècle* (1965), *La monnaie locale en Gaule à la fin du IIIe siècle, reflet de la vie économique* (1969), *Pouvoir central et libertés locales. Le monnayage en bronze de Claude avant 50 après J.-C.* (1970), *Nîmes sous Auguste* (1971), *Le monnayage antique de Nîmes* (1971), *Le soulèvement de 68 et le réveil du monnayage local en Gaule* (1973), *La pénurie de petite monnaie en Gaule au début du Haut-Empire* (1975), *Les émissions d’or et d’argent de Caligula dans l’atelier de Lyon* (1976), *La pénurie monétaire en Occident au début du Haut-Empire romain* (1977), *La monnaie coloniale de Narbonne en 40 avant J.-C.* (1983), *La monnaie coloniale d’Orange* (1984), and *La monnaie de Carausius à Rouen* (1995).

^[4] *Inventions et créations numismatiques de la Renaissance* (1974), *Images de l’Antiquité romaine et de la Renaissance française* (1977), *Signis receptis. Armenia Capta. Images de reconquête à Rome* (1977), *L’illusion du portrait* (1978), *Images de l’antiquité romaine et de la Renaissance française* (1978), *Le double du prince* (1983), *Médailles incolores* (1985), *L’image d’Alexandre le Grand à la Renaissance* (1991), *Médailles et portraits, ou, La recherche de l’individu à la Renaissance* (1993), *Faux deniers de Caligula de la Renaissance* (1994), *Le portrait dans le monnayage romain* (1994).

His articles on portraiture show clearly a transition from the Roman period, his main interest, to the Renaissance, and this was what led to him becoming an authority on the history of numismatics^[5].

In addition to those books and articles, Giard published a great number of book reviews: at least 91 of them, mostly in the French *Revue numismatique* 1962–1997 (he acted as the *Revue's* secretary from 1962 until 1972 and then as one of its directors from 1974 until 1996), but also in the *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* (1964–1973), and in the *Revue des Études Anciennes* (1983). His reviews show his deep understanding of many subjects, as well as his mastery of many languages such as Italian, Spanish, English and notably German, which he had studied in his teenage years despite the trauma of the war. This dedication to reviewing books is an example of his constant desire to remain up to date with current research, and to exchange points-of-view with colleagues.

In addition to his historical interests, Jean-Baptiste Giard was also dedicated, notably in later years, to political and social issues. Few people were aware of it, but his life was devoted to helping others: for many he was a stable support, providing help to those experiencing difficulties – financial or of any sort –, sharing his intelligence and thought-provoking criticism to students like myself. Without judging or ever telling anyone what to do, he would encourage the young to develop their interests, their ideas, their studies. He embodied the concepts of kindness and of humanity, which were the bases of his friendships. He kept his private life separate from his professional one, and his extreme discretion resembled timidity, but it was in fact the expression of a deep respect of and interest in the others. Few images remain of Jean-Baptiste Giard, but he can be seen in two TV-interviews for the documentaries “Les Monnaies et l'Histoire” in 1973 and “Les Vrais Monnayeurs” in 1979. He attended only three International Numismatic Congresses, in Rome in 1961, in New York in 1973, and in London in 1986 – all three cities which he knew well and liked much. It was therefore a great pleasure for him, especially considering his admiration for the work of Harold Mattingly († 1964) on Roman Imperial Coinage, to be awarded the medal of the Royal Numismatic Society in 1998. Already in 1980, he had been made honorary member of the Societatea Numismatică Română. Previously, he had received the Prix Duchalais of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1968 (for his work on the florin d'or), the Prix Allier de Haute-roche of the Académie in 1983 (for his work on Roman coins) and again in 2001 (for his second book on the Lyon mint), and was made Chevalier des Palmes académiques in 1977.

^[5] With essays on *Critique de la science des monnaies antiques* (1980), *L'évolution de la numismatique antique au XIX^e siècle* (1986), *Valentin Jamerey-Duval : un numismate exemplaire du XVIII^e siècle* (1989), *L'édition numismatique au XVII^e siècle* (1994), *La génération numismatique de 1760* (1995), *Le trésor d'antiquités à la fin du XVII^e siècle* (1995), *Collectionneurs et savants numismates à la Renaissance* (1996), *Scipion l'Africain héros de la Renaissance* (2000), *La numismatique à la Renaissance : fondements érudits et imagination* (2004), *Numismates et antiquaires dans la première moitié du XVII^e siècle* (2005).