

Art of Devastation

Medallic Art of the Great War

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Dataset:

- This dataset is a collection of non-monetary numismatic items that were issued during and after the First World War. These medallions played an important role in society. Essentially, their purpose was to convey public opinion about the Great War in an artistic manner. They were no longer fundamental once other forms of communication were made available.

Question:

- My goal for this project was to analyze if the images depicted on these medallions commemorate the war or disregard it. If they did commemorate or disregard the war, how so? Who was depicted, what symbols were used, etc. Specifically, I looked at the Obverse side of the medallions and analyzed the descriptions of the medallions with the most frequently used words and the least frequently used words.

Data:

- Dataset: Is publicly available and openly licensed on the American Numismatic Society's website. These are two of the technological implications that we learned are required to have.
 - <http://numismatics.org/aod/> (Website)
 - <http://numismatics.org/aod/results> (Medallions Catalogue)
- Delimited Text-File: Thanks to the help of Professor Smith, there is delimited text-file that contains all the information about each medallion. This delimited text-file includes its ID, Label, Denomination, Metal, Authority, Mint, Region, ObvType, ObvLegend, ObvPortraitId, RevType, RevLegend, RevPortraitId, StartDate, and EndDate.
 - <https://raw.githubusercontent.com/neelsmith/nomisma/master/cex/devastation-2010-04-10.cex>

Approach Used for Analysis:

- I wanted to analyze the text on the obverse side of the medallions. I used a variety of methods to extract the information that I wanted to analyze. Some methods include: mapping, split, toLowerCase, [^a-z], filtering, groupBy, sortBy, etc.
- The methods changed the data to avoid case sensitivity, filter out the information that we do not need (at the moment), convert into vectors and columns, and ultimately to be able to extract the records that contain the most frequently used and the least frequently used words.
- Jupyter Notebook: This is the format that I used to analyze the medallions because multiple manipulations could be made to the data to make it concise. This made the medallion analysis manageable.
 - <https://mybinder.org/v2/gh/kassandramerinomuniz/clas299/master?filepath=AoDevastation.ipynb>
 - Step by step instructions can be found on the jupyter notebook

Jupyter Notebook: Analysis

- Using the class we defined earlier, apply this to the top 10 and bottom 10 words whose descriptions will be analyzed.
- Apply the toLowerCase method and write contains(“word”) to extract all the records that contain this word
- Apply the Pretty expression using the map method. Then use the println method to list all the output.
- Do this for the rest of the terms and analyze the descriptions of these records.

Results:

- These are the results that the jupyter notebook generated as the most frequently used and the least frequently used. I focused on the top 10 and bottom 10 words of the list.

```
println(sortedCounts.mkString("\n"))
```

```
(bust,581)
(holding,440)
(sword,337)
(laurel,276)
(facing,275)
(victory,260)
(wreath,251)
(crown,225)
(flaming,206)
(victors,206)
(soldier,176)
(figure,146)
(two,143)
(hand,143)
(wearing,139)
(,130)
(eagle,128)
(standing,118)
(over,109)
(bv.104)
```

```
println(sortedCounts.mkString("\n"))
```

```
(e,2)
(used,2)
(baron,2)
(sketches,2)
(firebreathing,2)
(looks,2)
(germans,2)
(airplanes,1)
(mdccccxvii,1)
(vertically,1)
(obvtype,1)
(caritas,1)
(armored,1)
(guns,1)
(nurturing,1)
(blank,1)
(vi,1)
(cars,1)
(fortress,1)
(name,1)
```

Results:

- Without the println method, we would only be able to see a few of the descriptions. This method was extremely helpful for the descriptions of the most frequently used words.

```
In [14]: val aodBustPretty = aodBust.map(bust => bust.pretty)
Out[14]: aodBustPretty: Vector[String] = Vector(
  ""AoD 7513.81516.2.a
  Authority: German Empire
  Type: Facing bust
  Legend: GENERAL FELD Marschall von Hindenburg
  Date: 1915"",
  ""AoD 19239.8217.19.a
  Authority: Switzerland
  Type: Uniformed and bearded bust facing three-quarters to r., wearing order; cityscape in background.
  Legend: ADOLPHE MAX Bourgmestre de Bruxelles 1914 - 1915
  Date: 1915"",
  ""AoD 7513.13525.4.a
  Authority: German Empire
  Type: Facing bust
  Legend: Kronprinz Rupprecht von Bayern
  Date: 1914"",
  ""AoD 19239.8217.2.b
  Authority: Switzerland
  Type: Hatted bust of General Joffre, facing.
  Legend: J.J.C. Joffre Generalissime des Armees Francaises/ in field, 1/ 9/ 1/ 4
  Date: 1914"",
  ""AoD 7513.7187.2
  Authority: German Empire
  Type: Hatted bust to l.
  Legend: Der Siegreiche General Kovess
  Date: 1916"",
  ""AoD 7513.13525.7.a
  Authority: German Empire
  Type: Busts of three emperors to r.
  Legend: . Wilhelm II . Franz Joseph I . Mohammed V .
  Date: 1915"",
  ""AoD 7513.13525.7.b
  Authority: German Empire
  Type: Busts of three emperors to r.
  Legend: . Wilhelm II . Franz Joseph I . Mohammed V .
  Date: 1915"",
  ""AoD 7513.13525.8.a
```


Results:

- All that was left was to do was analyze the descriptions that arose when we searched for a term.

```
In [21]: println(aodHoldingPretty.mkString("\n\n"))
```

```
AoD 7513.1.11212.1051.a
Authority: German Empire
Type: Victory holding a flaming sword and victor's laurel wreath crown
Legend: GOTT SEGNETE DIE VEREINIGTEN HEERE
Date: 1914
```

```
AoD 19239.8217.3.a
Authority: none
Type: Helmeted nude figure of Gallia looking up to l., with rooster on helmet, holding flags in l. hand and stabbing crowned eagle (Germany) with sword in r. hand.
Legend: POUR LE DROIT DES PEUPLES
Date: 1914
```

```
AoD 7513.138.1.a
Authority: German Empire
Type: Hatted and nude male figure ("Michel" = Germany) walking to l. holding sword in l. hand and whip in r. used to drive forward bulldog (Great Britain), bear (Russia) and rooster (France); in exergue, stylized eagle.
Legend:
Date: 1914
```

```
In [15]: println(aodBustPretty.mkString("\n\n"))
```

```
AoD 7513.81516.2.a
Authority: German Empire
Type: Facing bust
Legend: GENERAL FELDMARSCHALL von HINDENBURG
Date: 1915
```

```
AoD 19239.8217.19.a
Authority: Switzerland
Type: Uniformed and bearded bust facing three-quarters to r., wearing order; cityscape in background.
Legend: ADOLPHE MAX BOURGMESTRE DE BRUXELLES 1914 - 1915
Date: 1915
```

```
AoD 7513.13525.4.a
Authority: German Empire
Type: Facing bust
Legend: KRONPRINZ RUPPRECHT|VON BAYERN
Date: 1914
```

```
AoD 19239.8217.2.b
```

Results:

- For the least frequently words, we won't see many descriptions appear because these words were used only once.

```
In [60]: println(aodNurturingPretty.mkString("\n\n"))
```

```
AoD 21191.13114.4.b  
Authority: United States of America  
Type: Caritas as draped woman nurturing three children  
Legend: CARITAS/ PM  
Date: 1918
```

```
In [72]: println(aodMdccccxviiPretty.mkString("\n\n"))
```

```
AoD 21191.19169.1.e  
Authority: United States of America  
Type: US shield inscribed APRIL VI MDCCCXVII  
Legend: THAT GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE SHALL NOT PERISH  
Date: 1917
```

Analyzing Results:

- After reading the descriptions of these words, I noticed that there was a lot of overlapping. The most frequently used words correlate to positive characteristics of a war. The most frequent words, for the most part, corresponded to the same description of a medallion.
 - The description was "Victory holding a flaming sword and victor's laurel wreath crown"
- The image describes a positive outcome of a war. Victory. It depicts victory as if it were a person and the items that victory is holding also represent success, triumph, and winning. This seems to honor the war as successful, but it is worth noting that the issuing authority of these medallions is the German Empire. Ironical considering the German Empire lost and suffered during WW1. It may be interesting to look at the dates when these medallions were issued and see if they correspond to times during the war when Germany was successful.



Analyzing Results:

- Another thing worth noting is that in many of the descriptions of the most frequently used words, there were images of emperors, generals, soldiers, commanders, potentially any leader that played a crucial role during WW1.
- Some examples include:
 - Paul Von Hindenburg (German military commander and president)
 - Woodrow Wilson (President who led the US during WW1)
 - John J. Pershing (General who led the American Expeditionary Force in Europe)
 - Joffre (French Commander-in-chief; defeated Germany Army)
- This indicates that they are praising the figures and acknowledging the work they did during the war.



Analyzing Results:

- Among the descriptions of the most frequently used words, different symbols were mentioned and used. An eagle, a wreath, crowns, swords, armor, etc. All symbols that indicate power, strength, authority, and possibly freedom.



- Among the least frequently used words, these descriptions seem to be small details, but they represent much bigger events and people.
 - Caritas was an association that cared for German prisoners of the war.
 - Verdun is where the longest battle of WWI took place.
 - Machinery that was used during the war.

Conclusions:

- Overall, the descriptions that I analyzed depicted WW1 in a promising light. It recognized influential leaders for their work during the war, it used symbols to represent greatness, and it depicted a positive public opinion about the Great War.
- However, I should acknowledge that the small group of words I analyzed may have affected the results. The issuing authority may affect what is depicted on these medallions and it may not be the truth. There could be potential bias.
- The coins portrayed one kind of opinion.
- There were a lot of casualties during the war so it is interesting to see that the terms soldier(s) and death were not one of the top ten words in the list. What I will conclude is that in some of the descriptions I analyzed, they depicted soldiers as courageous fighters. Only a few descriptions mentioned death. This led me to believe that a majority of these medallions depicted war in a favorable light to possibly maintain public support and not worry people about their losses.
- Lastly, the descriptions of the least frequently used may convey a greater message than what you think.

Next Steps:

- If interested, one could do the following:
 - Continue this analysis and do use than 20 words.
 - Analyze the text on the reverse side of the medallions and compare to the obverse side.
 - Analyze if there is a correlation between:
 - where the medallion was authorized and what is depicted on the medallions.
 - the dates of when the medallions were issued and what is depicted
 - where the medallions were minted and the issuing authority or with the text descriptions on the medallions.