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From the Deutsche Bundesbank Collection

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FOREWORD

This volume is the eighth in a series of publications on the collections in the *Geldmuseum* of the Deutsche Bundesbank. The present volume, which is devoted to ancient gold coins, is the first of three which are designed to present a selection of specimens from the museum's particularly rich collection of gold coins; the second and third volumes will deal with medieval and modern gold coins, respectively.

This first volume includes not only Greek, Roman and Byzantine gold coins, but also Celtic issues as well as specimens of a few Indian kingdoms and a number of coins struck by the Germanic peoples, all of which modelled their coinage systems on those of classical antiquity. The period under discussion ends with the ninth century AD; the coinage of the later Byzantine Empire will be included in the volume on the Middle Ages. In addition to gold issues, coins of electrum – a mixture of gold and silver – are also discussed; in antiquity, this alloy was always considered to be a form of gold. Moreover, electrum was the first metal to be employed for coinage in the Mediterranean world.

The geographical area under discussion encompasses the world known to antiquity, extending round the Mediterranean and to Britain in the north, the Iberian peninsula in the west, North Africa in the south and India in the east; the period involved spans roughly one-and-a-half millenia. The volume contains 72 coin descriptions accompanied by enlarged colour reproductions; in addition, the appendix includes a catalogue with actual-size reproductions of all of the gold and electrum coins from this period to be found in the Bank's collection.

This volume deals with the coinages of a wide variety of peoples and states; some of them are quite well known to us through an extensive body of historical knowledge, while in other cases we must rely on evidence of a strictly archaeological nature. Coins are a particularly important source of historical information, for example, on the various tribes collectively referred to as the "Celts". But even our knowledge of the coinage and monetary systems of the Greeks and Romans is far from complete, as the introductory text and coin descriptions will reveal.

The first seven publications in this series were prepared exclusively by members of our staff; however, this was not feasible in the case of the present volume. We are therefore particularly indebted to Dr. Maria R.-Alföldi, Professor of the History and Culture of the Roman Provinces and of the Auxiliary Disciplines of Ancient History at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt, who was kind enough to prepare the text for us. We wish to extend our special thanks to her.

Frankfurt am Main, December 1980

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GOLD COINS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

In the first century AD Pliny the Elder began his treatise on the origins of money in Rome with the following words: "Next in degree was the crime committed by the person who first coined a gold denarius" (Nat. Hist. XXXIII, 42). He would have perhaps taken note of, but hardly comprehended, the view expressed by Goethe in verse: "For gold contend, on gold depend, all things" (Faust I, 2802 ff). The two points of view could hardly be more divergent. Thus, in order to understand the ancient Mediterranean attitude – so foreign to us today – toward the gold coin, we should first examine the historical development of the coin as such. The following discussion deals exclusively with the Mediterranean area.

Historically speaking, the coin is a relatively recent form of money. As any reference work on the subject will tell us, any object can become "money" which serves as a generally accepted medium of exchange in a particular trading area, thereby assuming – if only temporarily – the properties of money. In other words, the coin is by no means the only form in which money appears. On the other hand, however, in its primary function as a circulating medium, the coin is always "money". This was invariably the case in the ancient Mediterranean world. Thus, its concept of money differs to some extent from that of the modern world; through the centuries, the concept of money has, understandably, continued to evolve.

In the ancient Mediterranean world, a long process of development led from "money" to the coin as a specific form. Many different stages and varieties of monetary forms were developed, utilised and finally discarded before the process came to a temporary end with the emergence of the coin. The various forms of money which preceded the coin did not come into use according to any set pattern. Older and newer forms might be prevalent in different areas simultaneously, and a return to earlier forms was always a possibility. Nevertheless, one thing seems certain: the various types of natural money, e. g. foodstuffs such as salt, or livestock such as cattle and sheep, are, generally speaking, older standards of value than metallic money in any form. Metallic money has great advantages over the natural forms: it is not subject to the vicissitudes of nature; transport is relatively uncomplicated; sizeable assets can be stored in a small space, carried on one's

person and, if necessary, hidden. Metallic money appears in a number of different forms, e. g. jewellery, which is, and always has been, a thing of value. Good tools and weapons were always items of value. The same is true of metal vessels. In the Iliad double-axes are awarded as prizes in athletic competition. The victor in a wrestling match receives a tripod, equivalent in value to twelve head of cattle, whereas the second prize in the same match – a dexterous female slave – is worth only four. Money in the form of metallic implements is obviously very durable; it is also something which many people need and use. This, too, is a necessary prerequisite for the widespread use of a particular kind of money.

Metal as such – gold, silver, copper, iron – is perhaps even more suitable as a standard of value than are finished goods. It can be hoarded, easily weighed and divided, and processed as desired. It can be cast into bars. A piece can be cut off as required, and one can exchange even the smallest remaining piece for other goods, i. e. pay with it. Here, of course, one thing is absolutely necessary: the metal must be pure; if alloys are involved, their composition must meet the customary or established standards. Therefore, it is not surprising that marks had already begun to appear on bars in prehistoric times. These were undoubtedly the marks of individual workshops, intended to guarantee the purity of the metal; but they may very well have been the marks of individual owners, as there were a great variety of forms. In the mid-eighth century BC an Aramean king in the Middle East had his mark placed on his silver bullion, thereby guaranteeing the purity of the metal. Once the users had determined the desired weight, they merely had to cut off a piece of the bar and weigh it. At this point, the true coin – a handy piece of metal whose value is certified by an official authority – was only one step away. If, in addition to ensuring the purity of the metal in recognisable form, such authorities begin to set and guarantee its weight, what we have is the coin or – if you will – "money" in coin-form. The ancient Mediterranean world used only metallic currency, although it was possible to conduct some banking transactions – occasionally even complicated ones – without using "cash".

To be sure, the coin's subsequent development continued to reflect its evolution from bars of precious metal. The value of ancient coins was determined by the weight and the type of metal involved. The system of weights was always established by the polity, which assigned to it a fundamental importance, based on and

supported by the authority of wise and venerable laws. Therefore, it was necessary for coins to conform to the weight standards of the coining authority concerned or those of a particular trading area. Despite the current resurgence of arguments to the contrary, the available accounts and references from the ancient world would seem to indicate that coins were circulated on the basis of their real value. Attempts to establish nominal values as well were, apparently, always short-lived. The historical roots of the ancient coin remained visible in still another respect. The coin always retained the latent character of money in bullion form. This has greater implications than one might initially think. Coins immediately reverted to a form of bullion whenever more sophisticated economic and financial structures, for whatever reason, entered periods of crisis or turmoil. At such times, scales once again became indispensable for monetary transactions; the metal was cut up and weighed, even if it was in coin-form. This was the case, for example, when coins of small denominations were scarce. If necessary, coins were halved and quartered in order to obtain small change. This explains the abundance of half-coins found in the military camps of the early Roman Empire in the Rhineland. But coins were also cut up and weighed during periods in which the system of nominal values could no longer be relied upon. In the years AD 260–270, the most severe period of crisis in imperial Rome, the distinctions in value between the individual gold coins became so blurred that there is a cut coin from this period for nearly every conceivable decigram unit of weight. It was no longer possible to make a clear-cut distinction between a whole and a half piece; cash assets could no longer be counted, they had to be weighed. Thus, during periods of financial crisis, the minted coin could, for a time, once again become a form of bullion.

The "monetary" properties of the coin had still other consequences. Once a standard of value had been established, it was initially valid in a particular trading area at a particular time. In other words, the metal of coinage could vary, depending upon a number of factors: the particular region and historical period involved, established tradition or the customs of the market-place. This principle applied in all parts of the ancient world. Gold was not particularly important for coinage in an area, for example, where the standard of value was based on copper or silver. For a long time, only copper and copper alloys were employed in pre-Roman cen-

tral Italy. In retrospect, then, it is not at all surprising that Pliny the Elder characterised as a crime the adoption of gold as a metal of coinage – and this at a time when the Roman aureus was the most prevalent coin in all of the known world. The fact that he used this criticism as a vehicle for denouncing the emerging trend toward ostentatiousness in Rome is beside the point. Many Greek cities preferred to employ silver as their metal of coinage; they, too, encountered great difficulties whenever they attempted to introduce other metals, even if such changes were beneficial. It took time for people to adjust. In the fifth century BC, Athens struck coins in silver. The tetradrachm, the Athenians' principle denomination, served as the basis for a set of finely differentiated denominations ranging from small to minute, which were used as change. Since the value of a coin was determined by weight and fineness, tiny pieces of silver had to be utilised, e. g. for the minting of the 1/96 drachma. A coin of equivalent value, if struck in copper or bronze, was of a practical size and easy to use. Even so, it took some time for people to get used to the bronze issues which appeared in addition to the larger silver denominations. As strange as it may seem to us today, in Athens gold was used for coinage purposes only as a last resort, as it was in the final years of the fifth century BC, toward the end of the Peloponnesian War, which Athens lost.

The "money zones" – perhaps in this case we should say "coinage-metal zones" – in the ancient Mediterranean world were at first relatively small. This did not present a problem as long as people engaged in little or no commerce beyond their own borders; nor did it pose a problem if trade was conducted with regions which still employed uncoined metal, or bullion. Despite the great wealth which it possessed well into its final years, Pharaonic Egypt did not develop coinage of its own until the mid-fourth century BC. Accordingly, a wide variety of early Lydian, Greek or Thracian coins struck in electrum, gold and silver, as well as silver bullion and scrap, have been found in the treasure troves of Egypt, particularly those in the Nile delta. Of course, these coins were struck on many different standards. This did not prevent their use in trade, however, as in Egypt, in any event, the coins were not counted; rather, value was determined according to the weight of the metal, which was of more or less uniform fineness.

While the Greeks in Asia Minor and the motherland were astute traders, they were also very dependent on commerce. The use of coins enabled ships' captains and

caravaneers to carry sizeable assets in a minimum amount of space. They not only utilised the maritime trade routes; the Greeks of Asia Minor, as well as the Lydians, also took advantage of the added opportunities afforded by the territorial expanse of the Persian Empire with its well-developed system of overland trade routes, extending far into central Asia and the Middle East. It is not surprising that the coin as such first emerged in the Lydian-Ionian region; the new medium of exchange was rapidly exploited and refined, the only basic problem being that of the great number and relatively small size of the money zones, as mentioned above. Consequently, it was not long before attempts were made to develop a means of transcending these barriers. Trade between two areas was facilitated if they employed the same metal when striking coins and their standards were compatible, in terms of the principal denominations; transactions were easier to conduct, as sums of money were either identical or readily convertible. Colonies not only carried on the customs, politics and cults of their mother-cities, but also, in most cases, retained their systems of weights and measures. Soon political alignments were reflected, not least of all, in the – voluntary or imposed – adoption of "foreign" weight standards by entities already employing the corresponding metal of coinage. Powerful Greek city-states arranged treaties to protect their systems of coinage from unwelcome competition (resorting not infrequently to coercion) – as did Athens in the fifth century BC as the leader of the First Delian League. Competing coinage was prohibited, and only smaller denominations or complementary issues struck in metals other than one's own were permitted; in addition, these had to be readily exchangeable with one's own coinage. We will have a further opportunity to observe this phenomenon in the case of electrum coinage in western Asia Minor.

One has to admire the flexibility with which Greek polities were able to adjust and readjust to new economic opportunities. The so-called Solonic coinage reform in Athens introduced a new system of coinage, weights and measures. The reform measures were clearly designed to facilitate the exchangeability of coinage not only in the immediate area, but also in more distant regions, such as southern Italy and Sicily. As a result, Athens was able to supersede Aegina, its traditional rival in the Aegean markets, as well as Corinth – if only for a time – in the western Greek markets.

In the course of time, as the use of coinage became more widespread and as trade and commerce flourished, polities became ever more aware of the fact that the adoption of a common metal and common standard of coinage could significantly enhance economic growth. Treaties providing for the minting of coins on a cooperative, alternating basis were concluded; in some cases, the texts of such agreements are recorded, in others their existence can be deduced from the issues themselves.

Beginning in the fifth century BC, the growing prevalence of the Attic standard of coinage anticipated, as it were, the process of political development which was to lead from the polis to the territorial state. The adoption of the Attic standard by the Macedonian king Philip II for his gold coinage, and then by his son, Alexander the Great, for silver as well, was decisive: the first "world currency" in antiquity emerged. The following example is indicative of the flexibility which characterised Hellenistic monetary policy in the area of silver coinage. By the third century BC, a system of coinage later known as the Rhodian standard, which deviated from the Attic standard, was gaining ground in the Aegean and Asia Minor. In the second century BC, Pergamum linked the two systems by means of a new, intermediary standard of coinage which was thenceforth referred to as the Cistophoric standard, a name derived from the coin-type employed. The type of the cistophor, which was minted exclusively in silver, showed the cista mystica, a basket which figured in the mysteries of the god Dionysius. The ivy wreath of the god encircles the cista. The Cistophoric standard guaranteed ease of exchangeability between the Attic and Rhodian standards; a cistophor was worth four Rhodian and three Attic drachmas. As Rome's influence in the eastern Mediterranean area grew progressively stronger, the Roman denarius was also incorporated into this simple system of exchange rates: a cistophor was also worth three denarii. Even the range of denominations of the Cistophoric standard served to facilitate exchangeability. No tetradrachms were struck on the Rhodian standard; the cistophor was, in effect, a Rhodian tetradrachm. On the Attic standard there were drachmas and tetradrachms, in addition to the smaller denominations, and here the cistophor was equivalent to three drachmas. Conversion was thus a very simple matter. This is perhaps the best example of the flexibility which characterised Greek monetary policy of that time.

As an outgrowth of this overall pattern of development, it was quite logical that, relatively early on, two or more metals of coinage came to be employed simultaneously. The coinage reform of King Croesus shortly after 561 BC was the first to lay the groundwork for such a system. He had coins struck in gold and silver as separate issues, instead of minting electrum coinage as had been the customary practice hitherto. Here, for the first time, gold emerged as a metal of coinage in its own right. It never attained a position of great importance, however. Elsewhere – in the Greek motherland, in southern Italy and Sicily, for example – silver was the predominant metal of coinage. Copper and/or bronze also came into use in some places during the fifth century BC. Historically, the trimetallic systems of coinage were the last to evolve; as in the late Roman Empire, they employed gold, silver, and copper alloys (brass and bronze) simultaneously. Other metals were rarely used and such deviations from the norm were always short-lived.
Thus, coinage policy in the ancient Mediterranean world was a product not only of the economic and political competition revolving around standards of coinage, but above all of the relationship of the individual metals of coinage to each other. While gold was always highly valued, it was by no means preferred as a metal of coinage. In those areas which primarily employed silver for coinage, gold was utilised only in emergencies.

We now turn to our specimens in Plates 1–72.
The question of precisely when the first coin was struck in the Mediterranean area is still the subject of debate. Earlier research set the date in the eighth century BC. Today, however, it seems most likely that the coin first emerged either around or shortly after the mid-seventh century BC.
When coinage began in the Mediterranean area, electrum – the natural alloy of gold and silver – was the metal employed. In later years, electrum was produced artificially, as we shall see below. The composition of the metal used in a coin was, of course, a crucial factor in determining its value. In the meantime, metallurgical analyses have shown that the "Phanes" stater (Pl. 1) is made of natural electrum. Although we do not yet know for sure, the alloy employed in the roughly contemporary specimens in Plate 2 might very well be the same as that used in the "Phanes" stater.

The oldest Lydian royal issues were also struck in electrum; until we have more evidence, we cannot say whether or not the alloy is artificial (Pl. 3). In the years after 561 BC, King Croesus implemented a coinage reform; the relation of gold to silver coinage was 1:13. As had been the case prior to the reform, smaller denominations of the Croesus staters – Croesioi – half and one-third pieces, were struck as well. It is still not clear why two parallel systems of weight were employed simultaneously, with heavy staters and light staters, weighing approx. 10.8 g and 8.1 g, respectively.

After the dissolution of the Lydian kingdom in 546 BC, all of Asia Minor came under Persian control. In 515 BC Darius I introduced his own coinage. In accordance with the customs of the trading area, he retained the bimetallic system of the Lydians. Darics in gold and sigloi in silver were minted on a standard based on their relationship to the Persian mina. The daric was equivalent to 1/60 of a mina, and weighed approx. 8.4 g. This long-lived and popular gold coin was the equivalent of 20 siglois in silver at 5.6 g each. Thus, the ratio of gold to silver had hardly changed; it was now 1 : 13⅓. Darics long continued to be struck in the same ratio (Pl. 10 and 14); only in the fourth century BC, toward the end of the Achaemenid dynasty, did they begin to fluctuate in value. The gradual weakening of central political authority gave the satraps increasing power over their own domains. They became ever more autonomous. Their issues – which were struck officially in the name of the Great King – were not necessarily based on the daric, but instead on standards more appropriate for use in their territories. This explains why, for example, the beautiful silver tetradrachm issued by Satrap Tissaphenes in 410 BC was struck according to the Attic standard, as clearly indicated by the owl of Athens which appears in the coin-type. Satrap Pixodarus of Caria followed a practice based on similar considerations; he had his coins struck on the Rhodian weight system, which was prevalent in his domain (Pl. 13).

The use of artificial electrum in coinage was retained to a certain extent until the reign of Alexander in the Greek trading centres of the eastern Mediterranean area (cf. Pl. 15; Mytilene on Lesbos). This triple alloy of gold, silver and copper provided an excellent means of serving both "money zones": namely, on the one hand, Asia Minor, the eastern trading areas and the Black Sea region – the "gold zone" – and, on the other, Athens and the rest of the Greek motherland, including

Corinth and the Western Greeks – the "silver zone". One impressive example of the subtle monetary policies practised by Athens vis-à-vis these fifth-century electrum currencies has been particularly well documented. After the decisive victory of the Greeks over the Persians near Salamis in 480 BC, Athens strove to attain hegemony within the Delian League. In terms of monetary policy, this meant that no other currencies could be allowed to compete with its majestic silver coinage, the Athenian "owls". Many smaller cities were obliged to discontinue their own silver coinage altogether, or at least to adopt the Attic standard and to restrict their issues to denominations used for small change. Athenian "owls" were popular and in circulation far beyond the bounds of the Greek world, as indicated by finds made along the ancient caravan road to India, in what is today Afghanistan. Imitations of this popular coin were even produced in southern Arabia. The composition of the electrum coinage of the coastal region of Asia Minor was merely adapted to the Attic standard wherever this had not already been done, and the coinage remained in circulation. This currency served as an appropriate supplement to the Attic silver in the electrum/gold zones (Pl. 5–8). Its broad array of small-change denominations also contributed to its popularity as a medium of exchange. The widespread circulation of these electrum issues in combination with Athenian silver speaks for itself. Various types of accounts have provided us with unusually detailed information on the exchange rates of the time: the electrum staters of Phocaea, Mytilene and Lampsacus were worth 24 Attic drachmas; the Persian darics, 25; and the heavier staters of Cyzicus, 27 drachmas. The ratio of gold to silver remained at 1 : 13⅓ in the area of circulation of the daric. In the territory of the Delian League, it was probably roughly 1 : 15⅔ during the period from 477 until the mid-fourth century BC. Under Philip II of Macedon, gold production increased considerably; as a result, the ratio of gold to silver dropped to 1 : 10. With the end of the Persian Empire in the years 330–320 BC, the old Persian ratio automatically fell into disuse. With the exception of Ptolemaic Egypt, which developed its own system (cf. Pl. 19; 21), 1 : 10 remained the common ratio throughout the Hellenistic era.

As has already been stated, Athens itself issued gold coins only as an emergency measure in the years following 407/406 BC, toward the end of the fateful Peloponnesian War. In order to finance a last, desperate purchase of arms, the

Athenians removed the golden statues of Nike from the Acropolis and brought them to the mint, where they were melted down for coinage. They gladly returned to the use of silver some time later.

In the west, Syracuse, too, only turned to gold coinage in times of crisis: once during the Athenian siege in 415–413 BC, and a second time during the major war against the Carthaginians, beginning in 406 BC (Pl. 9).

The currencies of the large territorial states in the Hellenistic era tended more and more to strive for exchangeability over large areas. Only Egypt was unreceptive to this development (Pl. 19; 21).

The Philip stater, and even more so, the stater of Alexander, were popular and widely circulated far beyond the borders of the Greek territories. They formed the basis for the various tribal issues in gold on the northern fringes of the Mediterranean coastal regions; these issues have been classified generally as "Celtic coinage", although the term is not, strictly speaking, accurate in all cases. These highly individual issues are a classic example of the phenomenon of the temporary orientation of local coinages to certain Greek and Roman money zones based on gold and silver (Pl. 24-27). Before the tribes developed their own coin-types, they copied those of the Greek and Roman coins which were prevalent in their trading areas: the Philip stater at first in the west; and in the east, the stater of Alexander, in addition to silver coins. To cite just one example: a striking change took place in Gaul when the Romans in the south established their first Gallic province – Gallia Transalpina (later known as Narbonensis) – in the last quarter of the second century BC. The gold currency of the tribes which inhabited the area was suppressed and subsequently fell into disuse; the tribes who cooperated with Rome modelled their issues on the denarius, the silver currency of Rome.

Rome itself did not begin to mint silver coins until a very late date. Bronze and copper bullion was the medium of exchange in the heart of what was to become the Empire, i. e. in and around Rome itself, and in central Italy. It was not until after their confrontation in the third century BC with the south Italian Greeks, who had long employed a complex coin-based monetary system, that the Romans began to strike coins in silver. Gold, which also did not play a significant role in western Greek coinage until the Hellenistic era (cf. Pl. 18; 23), was at first not even considered as a metal of coinage by the Romans. It was not until the crisis of the

Second Punic War that the first emergency issues in gold were struck. The introduction of the denarius in 211 BC marked the beginning of the decisive reform which led to a reorganisation of the Roman monetary system. During the first years of denarius coinage, parallel gold series were also occasionally issued (Pl. 30), but these were discontinued in the last decade of the third century BC, after the currency had been stabilised.

In the subsequent years, Rome arrived at a brilliant solution to its primary problem in the area of monetary policy: the city sought to become the dominant power in the Greek regions of the east, and thus had to find an advantageous means of adapting its currency to the financial conditions of that area. The denarius, the silver currency of Rome, was cleverly integrated into the coinages of the eastern Mediterranean area. This area utilised the Attic, Rhodian and Cistophoric standards.

Gold coins were issued only in exceptional cases, and only outside of Rome, namely, whenever the Roman generals (imperators) waged war in areas in which e. g. the Alexander stater was in circulation. The extensive gold issues of Julius Caesar, as well, were based on this right of coinage exercised by the Roman imperator. These issues were characteristic of the fundamental transformation which took shape during the final decades of the Republic, when Rome had already gained control over the entire Mediterranean area; for, as of roughly the mid-first century BC, Roman currency became trimetallic: gold, silver, and copper alloys were employed simultaneously. All denominations – including the aureus – were struck according to need.

The aureus – actually the denarius aureus, the gold denarius – was issued over a remarkably long period. While it did not appear until approximately one-and-a-half centuries after the silver denarius, the main Roman denomination introduced around 211 BC, the aureus was in circulation from roughly the mid-first century BC until the late third century AD. The fluctuations in weight of Roman gold were not significant; the fineness of the metal remained consistently high. During Caesar's reign, the aureus weighed $1/40$ of a Roman pound, or roughly 8.19 g; its weight tended to decline slightly in subsequent years (Pl. 31 and 32; also, Pl. 33). Nero fixed the aureus at $1/45$ of a pound, or about 7.28 g, a weight which remained in force for nearly 120 years (Pl. 36–43). The gold-silver ratio ranged

from approx. 1 : 12 to 1 : 12½. Aside from the coins themselves, we have very little information on this point. The kings of the peripheral territories allied with Rome provided for the easy exchangeability of their own issues with Roman currency, as exemplified by the coin in Plate 29. Rome's influence, which extended far into the east, is also reflected in the gold coins of the Kushana, who adopted the Roman coinage system (Pl. 57 and 58); these, in turn, became the models for the issues of the Gupta Empire (Pl. 59).

Gold coins practically reverted to bullion during the crisis of the mid-third century AD (Pl. 44–47). Roman gold coinage remained unstable until the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine around 300 AD. After a number of fluctuations, the aureus of Diocletian was fixed at 1/60 of a Roman pound, i. e. ca. 5.5 g (Pl. 48). As a result of Constantine's reforms, a new gold coin was introduced whose weight was set at 1/72 of a Roman pound, or 4.5 g (Pl. 49). The old aureus was no longer struck, and the new coin most certainly proved worthy of its name: (aureus) "solidus" = stable.

From that time on, this last gold coin of antiquity remained in circulation for some 1,000 years in Byzantium, during which time its fineness (980/1000) and weight (4.5 g) did not change (Pl. 49; 51–55; 60–66); as far as we know, the first slight fluctuations did not occur until around the end of the eleventh century, but corrective measures were taken soon thereafter.

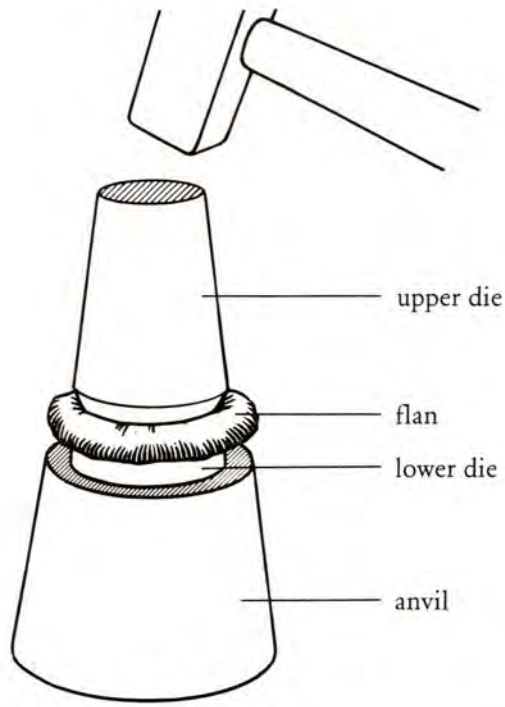
In the course of time, silver lost its earlier significance as a metal of coinage. In the fourth century, the ratio of gold to silver was probably about 1:13.9; and later, perhaps 1 : 14.4; our basis for calculating these estimates, however, is anything but reliable. The solidus, coinage of which was always the exclusive prerogative of the Byzantine emperor, was predominant during the period of the barbarian invasions (Pl. 60–66). The one-third solidus, known as a tremissis or triens, was the main denomination of the young Germanic kingdoms (Pl. 69–72). Initially, they continued the Roman coinage system in its basic elements. The characteristic attitude of the ancient world toward currency and coinage remained prevalent until the Carolingian period, which marked the emergence of a new, European civilisation. On the other hand, the Byzantine Empire upheld the Roman monetary tradition until its fall in the year 1453.

THE SOURCES OF GOLD FOR COINAGE

The information we have on the exploitation of gold deposits in the ancient world is neither comprehensive nor detailed enough for us to draw any definite conclusions as to the amount of precious metal which was extracted over any extended period of time. Metallurgical testing in the field of numismatics is a relatively new development. We can be fairly certain that stream gold was employed during the earliest phase of electrum and/or gold coinage. The Pactolus river in the kingdom of Lydia was the source of the gold supply for the Croesioi, and perhaps also for the earliest electrum issues of Ionia. The discovery of the Thracian gold vein near Crenides in the fourth century BC was no doubt important; together with the gold deposits in the neighbouring Pangaeus Mountains and on the island of Thesus, this discovery made it possible for the Macedonian king Philip II to strike in 348 BC the first in a rich series of gold issues, and also led to a temporary drop in the price of gold. In Egypt, gold was obtained for the rich coinage of the first Ptolemies both through official administrative measures and from the exploitation of the mines on the upper Nile near Aswan. The gold deposits of the western Mediterranean area were located in the northwestern part of the Iberian peninsula; they were the source of gold for Roman coinage. Gold-washing, on the other hand, which had been practised on the upper Rhine ever since Celtic times, was much less significant as a supply source.

Still another, essential method of obtaining gold for coinage had already manifested itself under the Roman Republic. Gold in all forms, including older gold coins as well, constituted highly valued spoils of war. We have reason to believe that gold in coin form was often melted down and reused. The classic example of this was the gold coinage of the western Celts; although these coins imitated the staters of Philip II, not a single Greek original has been found in their area of circulation in Gallic territory. Furthermore, the Celtic imitations were always lighter than the issues upon which they were modelled – yet another indication that it must have been common practice to melt down the Philip staters for use as raw material in coinage.

Without exception, the gold coins of antiquity were produced by the minting process. Casting was occasionally employed for coins of other metals. The drawing below indicates the procedure which was used in minting. Other preliminary operations were required, however, before actual minting could take place. First, the proper alloy had to be prepared. In most cases, the gold used in coinage was 980/1000 fine, and was consequently light in colour and relatively soft. From this alloy, the flans – lump-like or lentil-shaped pieces of raw material – were produced; later, perhaps beginning in about the mid-fourth century, flans may have



been stamped out of gold foil. Only after the size and weight of the flans had been precisely adjusted to meet the required standards were they inserted between the upper and lower dies, and struck into finished coins using a special long-handled hammer. With this type of technique, irregularities were always a possibility. The edges of the flan, which were never finished in ancient times, sometimes cracked. Depending on the size and shape of the die employed, the flans either retained their original lump-like shape or were flattened during striking into a relatively

thin, round or oval disk. Initially, the upper die was a separate tool mounted on a handle, and could be applied to the flan in any number of ways. Consequently, the position of the dies in relation to each other was variable, and therefore different for every coin. Scissor-type dies, which were fastened together like a pair of pliers, did not come into use until the mid-fourth century AD. Late Roman and Byzantine solidi were struck accordingly: the alignment of the obverse and reverse dies was either identical, or varied by 180°. Thus, one of the methods used in numismatics to characterise the relative positions of the dies is the measurement in degrees of the clockwise deviation of the vertical axis of the reverse from that of the obverse.

In view of its evolution and the minting technique employed, the obverse must have been a product of the lower die. The impact of the blow from above normally caused the bottom of the flan to become somewhat convex; thus, the side whose surface curves slightly outward – the obverse – was shaped by the lower die. In the case of coins whose execution posed certain technical problems, e. g. if the design was rendered in particularly high relief, the reverse die might be mounted on the anvil, thus temporarily changing places with the obverse die. It was not until portraits of rulers – representations of sovereignty – first began to appear on coins that the "head" side definitely became established as the obverse.

The dies were usually made of bronze, with iron being the exception. In both cases, the heads of the dies were hardened. We do not yet know exactly how dies were produced. However, we cannot assume that the same method was employed everywhere and in every case. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that many different production techniques were employed. Nearly 50 different dies have been found so far.

We can only roughly estimate the lifetime of the dies. Upper and lower dies were not subjected to the same wear. Since the lower dies were mounted on the anvil, they had to withstand less pressure in striking than the upper die. Evidence has shown that when one of the dies wore out, it was replaced independently of the other. One important and valid method of establishing the sequence of coinage within a particular series is to observe the changes which can be traced to the use of various combinations of dies. We can only make a rough estimate of the number of coins which were struck with any particular pair of dies. Unfortunately, statisti-

cal estimates, which have only recently come into use in numismatics, yield unsatisfactory results; moreover, coins were very often melted down for the production of flans and, so to speak, reused. The minting process *per se* was not complicated and, in its simpler forms, required only a minimum of equipment. None the less, the issue of any given series of coins always presupposed the existence of an intricate system of organisation and administration, which is only touched upon here.

Various counterfeiting techniques were employed in the ancient world. With respect to gold coinage, the most important of these was the practice of coating a core of less valuable metal with precious metal. Even when relatively thin, the gold casings of these plated coins have been applied so skilfully that, in some cases, it is not at all easy to tell whether a particular coin is counterfeit or not. Given the relatively advanced state of metallurgy at the time of the coin's emergence, it is not surprising that such plated pieces are to be found among the earliest gold coins. There is no consensus in the literature as to how such counterfeits were produced; soldering was in all probability the technique employed. In antiquity, only the material value of coins was protected by law, i. e. alteration of the weight and/or fineness of gold and silver coins was the only form of counterfeiting which was subject to prosecution.

THE MINTS

In terms of the technical requirements involved, minting could take place in nearly any blacksmith's shop. Potentially, any smith, particularly a gold- or silversmith accustomed to fashioning minutely detailed objects, was capable of minting coins. We are fairly certain that the monetarii – or mint-masters – commissioned by the Franks to strike their coins were very often goldsmiths by profession.

The mint as an organised entity in its own right first evolved in city-states such as Athens or Syracuse which had a high volume of coinage. It is not known whether the dies were also produced in the mints. We can be more certain that permanent mints existed in the long-lived territorial states, such as the Roman Empire. Beginning in the Hellenistic era, marks employing images, monograms or inscriptions were placed on coins to identify the moneyers and, less often, the mints involved. In Roman imperial times the various mints did not begin to mark their issues with seals or other inscriptions with any regularity until the second half of the third century AD.

When the first coins appeared in the seventh century BC, metal-working techniques were already generally well known and, in some places, even highly refined. In other words, the production of coins posed no technical problems. We know relatively little about the organisation of minting in antiquity. It is likely that the city, polity, or ruler – or, as we would say today, public authorities – provided the metal to be used in coinage. We can only speculate as to their source of supply; it is quite possible that the metal was drawn from existing reserves; however, we cannot rule out the possibility that, from time to time, as a form of taxation, private citizens may have been obliged to provide metal for coinage purposes. In any event, the territorial states of the Hellenistic world established definite organisational structures for permanent mints. On the basis of excavations, we know, for example, that in the later phase of its coinage (i. e. subsequent to the second/first centuries BC) the mint of Athens was located on the agora, the central market-place of the city. In Rome, the mint was at first located on the Capitoline hill in the temple of Juno Moneta, and later on the Caelian. Ancient inscriptions

indicate that at the end of the first century, smelters which supplied the mint and were operated by freedmen of the emperor were independent workshops. In any case, when referring to pre-Hellenistic times, one should speak of "places of coinage", i. e. locations at which coins were struck from time to time, but not on a regular basis. Thus, the concept "mint" refers not only to the coining facilities, but also to the requisite organisational form, including the administrative supervision of minting activities. The earlier role of private citizens who, on a contract basis, long performed many functions which today would fall within the domain of public authorities, gradually waned. Only in late imperial times do we encounter somewhat more conclusive evidence that official mints had been established; coins bore the name of the city in which the mint was located, and series were marked with characteristic monograms, letters and symbols. As we have hardly any other sources of information as to the administrative aspects, we have tried to learn what we can about the organisation of mints and minting procedures from the evidence provided by the finished product, the coin itself. Understandably, therefore, some of the details are still a matter of conjecture and controversy. The less we know about the details of the political structure of a particular state, the fewer are our insights into the way in which minting was organised and conducted. Accordingly, our conclusions about "Celtic" coinage are based on speculation and our knowledge of the issues of the emerging Germanic kingdoms and the period of the great migrations is very limited. However, we can assume that, in both cases, coinage needs were not supplied by public institutions, but rather that rulers commissioned private citizens to mint coins, a reversion to the practice common in the early phase of Greek and Roman coinage.

COINAGE DESIGN

The emergence of coin-types was a natural outgrowth of the development of the ancient coin from bullion. The fineness of the bullion, and later the fineness and weight of the coin, had to be guaranteed. The coining authority, who assumed responsibility for this guarantee, commissioned others – who were in turn responsible to the coining authority – to actually mint the coins. As simple as this may sound, the minting of coins, in fact, involved complicated technical procedures, as well as sophisticated juridico-political and administrative measures, since minting activities from time to time transcended the boundaries of a particular polity. In such cases, the details were set down in treaties. Apparently, such agreements also occasionally provided for the use or alternation of various coin-types, as well as for the strict supervision of their execution. Our knowledge of coining in the various parts of the ancient world is still far from complete.

In principle, the coin-type served as a visible expression of the guarantee of value assumed by the coining authority. The design of coin-types – which were extremely varied in subject matter and mode of execution – was the exclusive prerogative of the coining authority, and he usually took full advantage of this right. Thus, the coin-type came to be an accurate reflection of the ideas and tendencies propagated by the coining authority, subject only to the constraints imposed by practicality, as the coin's primary function was that of a medium of exchange. But no design or inscription could survive against the will of the coining authority. It would thus be logical to assume that coin-types evolved from the characteristic marks of coining authorities. Following a brief initial period in which technical limitations precluded the striking of true images (Pl. 2), these marks did, in fact, take on the character of heraldic emblems. The early dynastic representations of the eastern Mediterranean area bear a visible resemblance to the seals which appeared on even older coins (Pl. 3 and 4). It was common practice for Greek cities to use the imagery of the primary cult of the polis; sometimes they also employed a concrete image which, in the form of a pun, alluded to the name of the polis, e. g. a harbour seal – phoke – in the case of Phocaea on the coast of Asia Minor (Pl. 5), or a celery-leaf – selinon – for Selinus in Sicily.

The Greeks were responsible for a decisive transformation in the design of coin-types. In an earlier phase of the cults, the gods were perceived as being theriomorphic, i. e. as having the form of animals. In the Odyssey, for example, Athena dons the plumage of a little owl. The sacred animals came to be seen as the constant companions of the deities with whom they were associated. Therefore, the earliest Greek coin-types often employed animal imagery, the most striking example of which is the so-called "Phanes" stater (Pl. 1). Precisely because of the fallow-deer – which was the sacred animal of Artemis Ephesia (Latin: Diana E.) – we are inclined to assign this early coin to Ephesus. It reappeared centuries later, in the obverse type of a coin whose reverse bore the image of the goddess herself. When the coin as such first appeared in the eastern Mediterranean area in the seventh century BC, this theriomorphic portrayal of the gods was still comprehensible. Unlike other peoples, however, the Greeks soon took the decisive step toward the representation of their deities in human-superhuman form. For a long time, the heads of deities predominated in coin-types (Pl. 9; 11–13). Representations of human beings, in particular portraits of living persons, did not appear on Greek coins. Persian coinage was fundamentally different in this respect: the crowned archer, the sole image employed on the coins of the Achaemenid dynasty, is widely regarded – and perhaps justifiably so – as representing the Great King *per se,* or the office as embodied by its holder (Pl. 10 and 14).

It was some time before the portrait or portrayal of a living person began to replace the images of gods on the coins, a practice which would have seemed blasphemous by earlier Greek standards. Moreover, the polis form of government – during the period of decisive change – was *a priori* hardly conducive to the glorification of individual personalities in public life. And, in fact, portraits first appeared on coins in the Persian Empire, and not in the Greek world. During the fifth century BC, the central power of the Great King grew progressively weaker, while the satraps gradually became minor kings in their own domains. They had long been obliged to mint coins in the name of the Great King, but did so according to local practice. They did not have their own marks placed on the coins; at most, the older satrap issues bore the head of a figure wearing the head-dress characteristic of the office, i. e. the satrap *per se.* A genuine portrait, magnificently executed and doubtless the work of a Greek engraver, appeared in 410 BC in

western Asia Minor on silver coins struck by and for Tissaphernes, who was satrap in Sardis and Caranus at the time; however, his name does not appear on the coin – it bears the letters BAΣ (= basileos, of the Great King). The final step in the evolution of the full-fledged portrait on coins was taken by the next generation of satraps: they had their names (Pl. 13) and, in some cases, their portraits as well placed on their issues.

In the Greek world, for political reasons, this development took shape more slowly; the Diadochi, the successors to Alexander the Great, who by 305 BC had all assumed the title of king, were the first rulers to place their images on coins. Their portraits – and occasionally those of their queens – as well as their names and royal titles, gradually began to appear in coin-types (Pl. 19, 21 and 22). These include examples of magnificently realistic portraiture, as well as slightly idealised images. The coin-portraits of Alexander the Great marked the onset of still another development. In the stylised image accompanied by the attributes of the divine hero Heracles, e. g. the lion's skin, one can discern Alexander's own features on the silver coins. This represented the first step toward deification, a step whose significance was certainly not lost on his contemporaries. Another coin-type bearing the image of Alexander – in which he is wearing the ram's horns of the Egyptian god Ammon – must at first have seemed strange to the Greek beholder. Having been declared the son of Ammon, Alexander became the successor of the Pharaohs in Egypt. The city of Mytilene on Lesbos paid tribute to him with this image (Pl. 15). In the years following Alexander's death in 323 BC, King Lysimachus used precisely this image of him – at this point, indeed, a divine image – as a political device in the power-struggle over the question of succession in the Empire of Alexander (Pl. 16).

The regal portraiture of the Hellenistic era marks that stage of development which seems most modern – and therefore most natural – to us. The obverse of the coins bore the ruler's portrait as a visual expression of the guarantee he assumed for the value of the coin.

This practice was characteristic of Roman imperial and Byzantine coinage, but not, however, of the issues of the Roman Republic. The earliest Roman coins bear the heads of gods, e. g. Hercules and Mars (Pl. 30), and most frequently that of Roma in a helmet. In the early Republic it would have been inconceivable to por-

tray a living person on a coin. A Roman magistrate could not possibly have assumed this prerogative exercised by the rulers of the Hellenistic kingdoms, as it was fundamentally incompatible with the principles of a republican form of government. In Rome, the right to have one's portrait placed on coins was one of the honorary privileges granted by the Senate. C. Julius Caesar had been officially accorded this right; consequently, even in their denunciations of his autocratic tendencies, the staunch, old-line supporters of the Republic never criticised him for placing his portraits on coins.

During imperial times the emperor was free to determine whose portrait was to appear on coins; the same was true in Byzantium. By the early Byzantine period, it had, as an example will show, become a matter of course to reserve the obverse for the portrait of the reigning emperor. At the end of the seventh century, Emperor Justinian II, a deeply pious man, wished to place his Empire under the dominion of Christ Pantocrator, the Ruler of All – as manifested in universally comprehensible form by the fact that the bust of Christ took the place of his own image on the obverse of the solidi (Pl. 66). The portraiture of "Celtic" gold coinage poses no problems of interpretation or identification. The coins initially bore reproductions of Greek and Roman types, apparently as a means of identifying the traditional denominations employed. Only gradually did autonomous designs and motifs emerge. We can only speculate as to the message they were intended to convey; the types undoubtedly depict gods and scenes drawn from mythology and legend. Around the mid-first century BC, head- and bust-portraits began to appear on coins, occasionally in combination with names, some of which are easily recognisable as the names of tribal leaders known to us from other historical sources; others, however, are known to us only from coins. Thus, for example, we can assume that the profile on small electrum coins containing scarcely any gold is that of Vercingetorix, the Arvernian chieftain, Caesar's last Gallic opponent. During the period of the great migrations, the Germanic tribes struck gold solidi and tremisses (one-third solidi), which were officially issued in the name of the Eastern Roman emperor. The quality of these copies of Eastern Roman or Byzantine coin-types varied widely. Only Theodebert, king of the Franks, dared toward the mid-sixth century to place his own image on solidi, with his name and rank in the legend (Pl. 68). It would have made little sense for him to introduce an entirely

new coin design at this point. These solidi were supposed to be recognised as being equal in value to those of Byzantium; moreover, their design also reflected the king's politically motivated wish to be portrayed in the manner of the emperor. The necessity of clearly designating the value of a coin was so important a consideration that some coin-types were used exclusively for certain denominations – above all, the smaller units of value. For example, in Roman coinage the figure of Victoria had, since republican times, always been the identifying feature of the subdenominations (i. e. half or one-third pieces). Thus, the winged figure of Victoria later came to be interpreted as that of an angel, and, via the Byzantine one-third solidi, eventually became the identifying type of the tremisses issued during the great migrations (Pl. 59 and 60; 70). Gradually, the Germanic kingdoms developed their own types. Clumsily executed bust portraits of the kings, whose images had previously been placed only on bronze and silver issues, now began to appear on gold coins as well (Pl. 69). As the power of the central political authority declined in the kingdom of the Franks, the monetarii, who were responsible for the minting of coins, began to be identified on issues: the mint-master and his patron, the latter often being a legal entity, a city, a domain, a monastery, etc. (Pl. 71). The representations employed became increasingly independent of Byzantine models and evolved a typical imagery of their own.

Thus far, our discussion has focused on the development of coin-types in general and of the obverse in particular. From the very beginning, however, the coin had two finished sides. Since the obverse always bore the mark guaranteeing the coin's value, it had to be struck with particular care. Consequently, the lump of metal had to be driven forcefully into the recesses of the lower die. Initially, the upper die, the tool used for this, was a metal rod, having an irregular, cracked striking surface; later, a raised, usually rectangular die was used. The resulting indentation is known as "the incuse square", or quadratum incusum (Pl. 1 ff). This indentation was soon transformed into a finished design which was retained for centuries in a number of areas. In other places, the incuse square was soon replaced by the second image in relief, the reverse type. In terms of content, this type was obviously less important than the obverse, and always complemented the message conveyed by the latter. In the Greek world the reverse of the coin bore the type which served to mark the denomination; a portion of the image employed on

the full-denomination pieces, such as that of a tetradrachm, characterised the fraction of that denomination. The content of the reverse types elaborated upon that of the obverse (deity – sacred animal), or conveyed an additional message. The Romans elevated the design of coin-types to the level of a fine art: because of the ease with which they could be transformed and their widespread circulation, the images proved to be unparalleled political weapons. Even so, we must bear in mind the fact that the opinions reflected in coin-types and legends were always exclusively those of the individual coining authority; they served the same purpose as do the headlines and corresponding illustrations in a modern-day official government newspaper. This, in itself, makes them an invaluable source of information for historical research.

At this point, we should briefly turn our attention to the subject of the coin-type as art. Coins of gold and electrum were the most exquisite in the ancient world. They were always executed with meticulous care and were often genuine works of art. In the late fifth and fourth centuries BC, they occasionally bore the marks of the individual die-engravers; coining authorities recognised the artistic value of their work and allowed them to sign their creations. For example, Euaenetus, an important artist of his time, was one of the select group of engravers who signed their works; his name appears in abbreviated form on the gold coin shown in Plate 9. Even without the aid of signatures, however, careful comparative analyses of coin designs have enabled us to follow the development of individual engravers, schools and groups, and to identify various styles; in addition, such analyses have even helped us to draw conclusions about details of the organisational structure of minting activities which would otherwise remain unknown to us. Coin design was by no means the only field of artistic endeavour in which Greek die-engravers were engaged. It is not at all inconceivable that they worked as sculptors, goldsmiths or lapidaries, and only occasionally executed commissions for coining authorities. This explains the great variety of designs and styles of execution, which were subject only to the constraints imposed upon the artist by the inherent properties of the small metal disk which his dies were designed to shape. The artist's commission necessarily prescribed the content, of course, but never the style to be employed in coin-types, at least not in the Greek world.

It was not until Roman imperial times that definite tendencies manifested themselves, in terms not only of the content, but also of the design of coin-types. There were periods in which the splendid realism which had often been achieved in imperial portraiture was not permitted – these were times in which the emperor wished to be portrayed as an idealised figure, representing the office itself rather than its holder (Pl. 54–57; 60 ff).

There is still much to be learned about the art of the ancient coin. The endeavour to situate and understand artistic phenomena in the historical context of the specific eras which gave rise to them is one of the most fascinating, but also most challenging, tasks of research.

As already mentioned, the earliest coins as a rule bore no inscription. Gradually, individual letters were added to the distinctive coin-types; these designated the issuing polis, e. g. the Greek letter Φ (Phi) for Phocaea, or the letter Ϙ (Koppa) for Corinth. Generally speaking, syllabic abbreviations did not appear until somewhat later (Pl. 18: Taras). Thus, legends initially served to identify the origin of issues, guaranteeing coins to be of full value. Rulers had their issues marked with their names and royal titles in the genitive case, e. g. Plate 11: Philippou, the emblem or coin of Philip. If it appeared at all, the Hellenistic royal title – basileus – was always shown in the genitive case next to the name. Included in the type was the emblem or monogram of the person (or entity) responsible for the issue (Pl. 16 and 17; 22).

The inscription ROMA (Pl. 30) on coinage of the Roman Republic identifies the city as the coining authority. After the office of mint-master was instituted in 289 BC, these officials initially signed the coins issued under their supervision with symbols and monograms, and later with the name written out. Depending on the situation, however, other parties might be responsible for a particular issue: the coin in Plate 31 was struck by the praetor; in Plate 32, by the praefectus urbi; and in Plate 33, by Mark Antony in his capacity as triumvir of a special commission. Subsequently, the Empire utilised both coin-types (obverse and reverse) as a medium for presenting the image of the reigning emperor and enumerating his various titles, as well as promoting certain of his ideas and wishes, and, last but not least, celebrating the accomplishments of the ruling dynasty. In Byzantium, all that remained of this tradition was glorification of the imperial

office, the primary vehicle for which was the visual imagery of the type rather than the inscription.

The letters on the early "Celtic" issues, which were copies of Greek and Roman coins, are barely legible. Names of chieftains did not begin to appear on the coins until the tribes developed their own types. Initially, the Germanic tribes of the period of the great migrations copied Byzantine coins, and in most cases the inscriptions were distorted in the process; presumably, the die-engravers did not understand the Latin texts. Later, as their coinage began to free itself from Byzantine models and develop a distinct visual content of its own, the clumsily rendered legends indicated, above all, the coining authority and the name of the moneyer responsible for the issue (Pl. 71); occasionally, the place of coinage was also identified (Pl. 69). The legends on the coins of the Kushana, which are in the East Iranian language, are rendered in Greek letters (Pl. 57). The issues of the southern Empire of the Kushana display the name of the king in Brāhmī (Pl. 58), the language also employed in the legends on the denarii of the Gupta Empire (Pl. 59). Our specimens of the coinage of the Kushan and Gupta Empires bear a full-length portrait of the ruler in standing position; the reverse types of the coins were reserved for the portrayals of gods.

By late antiquity the Mediterranean world was already conscious of the fact that the coin can, indeed ought to, convey information about the period of which it was a product. Thus, each and every specimen is a valuable document – the study of coins is not only worthwhile from a historical standpoint, but is also personally rewarding. One should always view a coin and the complex historical messages it conveys within the overall context of its time – the coin in its role as a widely circulated medium of exchange, as an object/instrument of monetary policy, and politics in general, and thus as an integral part of the culture of the ancient world.

GLOSSARY

Ampyx A band or plate of precious metal, sometimes ornamented, worn by Greek women over the forehead to secure their ribbons and decorative hair-nets

Weights and units of weight were also used as denominations in the ancient world, as weight systems formed the basis of coinage systems. The basic units of the systems employed in different areas might be known by the same name (e. g. mina, pound, etc.) as, in some cases, they were derived from a common ancient standard. Thus, one must always specify the origin of a given unit of weight, e. g. "Babylonian mina"

Litra: A Sicilian unit of weight, approx. 109 g; it was divided into 12 ounces. Other weights have also been given for the litra

Mina: The standard unit of weight in the Near East in ancient times; it was divided into 60 shekels and was, in turn, 1/60 of a talent. There were several local variants of the mina, and thus it is not possible to determine its exact weight; the weight of the Attic mina during certain periods is assumed to have been 436.6 g

Pound: Latin "libra", primarily an Italic unit of weight. Depending on the area in question, it was divided into either 12 or 10 parts whose weight varied. The most well-known libra was the Roman pound, which has been calculated at 327.45 g, but this remains debatable. We are fairly certain that the Oscan pound weighed 272.88 g; another variant weighing 431.10 g was called the Attic-Campanian mina during imperial times

Shekel: from "šaqual" = to weigh; 1/60 of a mina (see above)

Siglos or Siklos: The Greek word for shekel

Talent: The unit of weight of the Near East, possibly of Babylonian origin. Appropriately enough, the word actually means "scale". It is possible that talents of two different weights were employed simultaneously. This unit of weight was divided into 60 minas. Numismatists today estimate the weight of the Attic talent, for example, at roughly 26.2 kg

Coinage standard The legally guaranteed system upon which a particular currency was based. It fixed the metal of coinage, its fineness, as well as the range of denominations. References to a particular standard of coinage must always include the name of the area in which it was valid, e. g. Attic, Corinthian, Persian, Rhodian standard

Denomination is the term used to designate the subdivisions and multiples of the basic unit of coinage. The range of denominations varied according to local customs and practices (see Coinage standard)

Denarius: The principal denomination of Roman coinage, initially struck in silver, then in gold as well (aureus). As indicated by the name, the silver denarius was equivalent to 10 copper asses ("deni asses")

Drachma: Half of the Greek unit of weight and coinage known as the stater; literally, a "handful", i. e. six obols (obol originally meant "iron spit"). Multiples of the drachma were indicated by the addition of prefixes, e. g. decadrachm = 10 drachma piece

Hekte: A sixth of a stater

Hemihekte: Half of a hekte, or one-twelfth of a stater

Cistophorus: The principal denomination of a coinage standard of the same name which was introduced in the kingdom of Pergamum during the first half of the second century BC

Stater: from "statera" (the scale); designated the basic Greek unit of weight, as well as coins of this weight. To be precise, references to staters must indicate the particular area of circulation and/or emission, e. g. Daric stater, Cyzicene stater, Lampsacene stater, etc., which were struck in gold and electrum. In accordance with the image of a pair of scales, the stater was always divided into two equal parts, two drachmas, i. e. the stater was also known as a didrachm, a double drachma. Only Corinth divided the stater into three parts, these being in silver

Tremissis, triens: A third of the late Roman unit of gold coinage, namely the (aureus) solidus

THE PLATES

The following 72 colour plates are enlarged reproductions in which the coins are shown at four to ten times their actual size, depending on the dimensions of the original specimens. The black-and-white photographs in the margins of the coin descriptions show the actual size of the coins. The metal employed is only indicated in the case of electrum coins.

Today it is customary to describe the coin-type as a whole as seen from the point of view of the observer. The reverse perspective is employed only when describing the figures in the type: the right hand of a standing figure, for example, is located in the left half of the type. Ancient coins occasionally include a reference to the time of issue in the legend. Where this is not the case, the current state of knowledge in the field of numismatics enables us to establish at least a provisional chronology of issues. Such estimated dates appear in parentheses in the descriptions. These estimates, as well as the explicit chronological references, refer exclusively to the time of the coin's issue, and not to the period in which it was circulated.

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68 KINGDOM OF THE FRANKS Solidus (AD 534–548)
69 KINGDOM OF THE VISIGOTHS IN HISPANIA Tremissis (AD 621–631)
70 KINGDOM OF THE LOMBARDS Tremissis (AD 582–602)
71 KINGDOM OF THE FRANKS Tremissis (sixth century AD)
72 KINGDOM OF THE LOMBARDS Tremissis (AD 758–787)

IONIA

Stater, electrum (c. 630 BC)
Place of coinage: Ephesus (?)

Obverse: Grazing fallow deer, above which from right to left:
ΦΑΝΟΣ ΕΜΙ ΣΗΜΑ

Reverse: Oblong rectangular incuse between two almost square incuses; all three exhibiting irregular patterns of ridges

Weight: 14.30 g · Size: 16.1x24.2 mm
Literature: G. Kastner, Auktion 4, 89

The "Phanes Stater" was one of the first coins minted in the Mediterranean area. Both the date of issue of the coin and the significance of the inscription – unique for this early period – are subjects of intense controversy in the literature: "I am the badge (or: the seal) of Phanes". The coin-type, in conjunction with the inscription, doubtless serves as a mark guaranteeing the coin to be of full value. Coins with comparable marks, as well as bullion bearing imprints guaranteeing metal purity or workshop marks, have been found. The problem is how to interpret the word "Phanes". If it is a personal name, it might refer to a wealthy private citizen or a banker who vouched for the value of the coin, or a man who had been commissioned to mint the coin and assumed responsibility for the issue. But since we know that, in the ancient world, banking business – e.g. the safekeeping of valuables, loan transactions, etc. – was always conducted in large temples, there is also something to be said for an older interpretation. For many centuries, the (fallow) deer was the favourite animal of the divine huntress Artemis, whose most important temple was located in Ephesus. On later Ephesian coins the buck and the doe recur again and again. Both this specimen and a similar one kept in London were found in the same general area along the coast of Asia Minor or near Ephesus. Thus it is possible that coinage of the stater was commissioned by the temple in Ephesus, in which case "Phanes" would refer to the "shining" goddess Artemis. Business transactions conducted in the temples and involving their assets were always executed in the name of the respective deity involved. In that case, the coining authority would have been the radiant goddess Artemis herself, or, more precisely, her temple in Ephesus.
A metallurgical analysis showed that the coin contains 51.5% gold, 45% silver, 2.3% copper and a small amount of lead.

IONIA

(a) 1/12 stater, electrum (c. 600–550 BC) Place of coinage uncertain

Obverse: Flower-like ornament with a raised dot in the centre

Reverse: Irregular incuse

Weight: 1.08 g · ∅ 8.3 mm
Literature: Babelon, cf. Plate III, 7

(b) 1/24 stater, electrum (c. 600 BC) Place of coinage uncertain

Obverse: Striated

Reverse: Irregular incuse

Weight: 0.43 g · ∅ 5.7 mm
Literature: Babelon, Plate I, 13

(c) 1/96 stater, electrum (c. 600–550 BC) Place of coinage uncertain

Obverse: Crescent-shaped ornament

Reverse: Irregular incuse

Weight: 0.18 g · ∅ 4.8 mm
Literature: Babelon, cf. Plate III, 25

In attempting to attribute these three electrum coins of various denominations to particular localities, one could rely either on the coin-type or the weight, which is an indication of the weight system or standard of coinage by which they were minted. In this case, however, neither provides a clear-cut answer. The types – if they can be called that at all – provide no clues whatsoever as to a particular mint. Specimens with striated obverses such as that of the 1/24 stater are usually assigned to the monetary area of Ephesus and Miletus; however, in this case, the coin is somewhat too light to be thus classified. Had it been struck on the Milesian standard, it would have to weigh approximately 0.6 g. In terms of its weight, the 1/96 stater – the smallest of all electrum coins – conforms to the northern Ionian standard centred in Phocaea, so that this coin might have been minted in one of the Greek cities in that region. Nothing about the origin of the largest of the three coins shown here can be deduced from either its type or its weight. However, such coins are found again and again in hoards along the coast of Asia Minor, hence their tentative classification as Ionian.

Only in the enlargements at right does one see clearly that the obverses of these tiny coins do, in fact, bear true designs; the same is also true of the irregular impressions made by the reverse dies, which vary in shape as well. The numismatic term for these impressions is "quadratum incusum" (incuse square).

It is difficult to determine precisely what role these small but quite valuable coins played in monetary transactions. Their small size must have made them inconvenient to use. Perhaps they served to round off larger sums in terms of weight.

KINGDOM OF LYDIA

King Alyattes (?), 610–561 BC

1/3 stater, electrum
Mint: Sardis (?)

Obverse: Lion's head to right with open maw, on the nose a wart with rays

Reverse: Two incuse squares side by side, on the lower edge an additional pair of small punches

Weight: 4.71 g · ∅ 10.4 mm
Literature: Weidauer 89

The lion was the heraldic animal of the Mermnads, the royal dynasty of Lydia; it was seen as the earthly representative of the sun god. Thus it is highly probable that this coin is of Lydian origin. The significance of the two punches visible on the bottom edge of the reverse in the enlargement at right is unknown; perhaps they are countermarks.
Judging from the large number of these coins which have survived, they must have been part of a quite sizeable issue, extending over a prolonged period which, although it cannot be dated precisely, most probably fell within the reign of King Alyattes. Its weight indicates that this specimen is a one-third stater struck according to a weight system common in Asia Minor which is known as the Babylonian or Milesian standard of coinage. This denomination in particular seems to have been well-suited for use as a medium of exchange in trade, and thus popular, for it has survived in greater numbers than the whole staters, for example. However, as our knowledge of the early history of coinage is still very fragmentary, many things about this specimen – in particular, its precise time of issue – remain uncertain.

KINGDOM OF LYDIA

King Croesus, 561–546 BC

Stater
Mint: Sardis

Obverse: Foreparts of lion and bull confronted

Reverse: Two incuse squares side by side

Weight: 8.11 g · ⌀ 13.2 mm
Literature: BMC 32

The proverbial wealth of King Croesus – among other things, he donated a golden lion weighing more than 3,000 kg to the oracle of Delphi – was manifested in the gold coins introduced during his reign. Previously, electrum had been the metal of coinage. Under Croesus the Lydians began the minting of gold and silver coins in separate issues. It has been established that the staters were of two different weights.Whether the two weight standards were in simultaneous or consecutive use is still open to question; in any case, the lighter of the two weights continued to be employed in later issues. In the ancient world it was not uncommon for coins to be named after their creators. These were called "Croesioi". Croesus adopted the coin-type of the lion's head with wide-open maw from the coins of his father, Alyattes. He placed a bull's head opposite the lion's head. Both animals were widely regarded as symbols of power and strength, courage and stamina. Similar representations have been documented, particularly in the Near East and Central Asia. The antithetical arrangement is reminiscent of the devices on seals. The lion was the badge of the Lydian kings. In certain religions it was also a symbol of the sun. Here, then, the bull might stand for the moon; it could also be a symbol of fertility. However, we do not know for certain which ideas formed the basis for the choice of the coin-type. As all denominations in both gold and silver bear the same type, it cannot have been intended as the identifying mark of a particular face value, but rather must have had a general significance. As is the case with all early coins, the reverse bears the crude impressions of the reverse die known as quadrata incusa. Certain questions pertaining to the minting of these coins will presumably remain unanswered until a comprehensive study of the subject is undertaken.

PHOCAEA

Hekte (1/6 stater), electrum (c. 500 BC)
Place of coinage: Phocaea

Obverse: Ram's head to left, bounded to rear and on top by a band of raised dots; beneath which a harbour seal

Reverse: Incuse square

Weight: 2.54 g · ⌀ 10.2 mm
Literature: BMC 28, Plate IV, 17

The city of Phocaea, which was located on the coast of Asia Minor in roughly the same latitude as the island of Chios, minted electrum coins for nearly three centuries, all in the denomination of the 1/6 stater. The significance of these coins is evidenced by the fact that the Phocaean weight system or monetary standard was named for them. It was also employed by a number of other cities, e. g. Lampsacus and Mytilene on the island of Lesbos. Phocaea had signed a treaty with the latter which provided for coinage to alternate between the two cities on a yearly basis, so that each city was commissioned to mint coins every other year, at which time a new coin-type was created. This agreement was presumably in force almost continuously from the beginnings of coinage in Mytilene in c. 525/520 BC until its termination in c. 326. Initially, Phocaean minting activity, which had already begun by around 600 BC, was erratic.

Within the Delian League, the 1/6 staters (hektai) of the Phocaean standard served as a supplement to the silver coinage of Athens, in much the same way as the staters of Cyzicus. Their principal area of circulation, however, lay to the west of the city and their use did not extend as far east as the Black Sea.

The coin-types of Phocaea, most of which for a time employed the heads of animals (cf. our specimen), very often included a harbour seal as well. This image served as a punning badge of the city, as the Greek word for seal is Phoke. But in contrast to the hektai of Mytilene, those of Phocaea invariably have an incuse square on the reverse, and never a second type.

CYZICUS

Stater, electrum (c. 475 BC)
Place of coinage: Cyzicus

Obverse: Standing naked warrior to right, wearing Corinthian helmet, with upper torso leaning forward, knees bent, right arm extended, round shield on left arm; at right, tunny-fish head-down

Reverse: Incuse square

Weight: 15.93 g · ⌀ 19.5 mm
Literature: von Fritze 119

The design shows a warrior taking part in a race for heavily-armed soldiers, which explains his unusual pose. This representation was modelled after a large statue in Athens, of which Pausanias writes in the second century BC: "I remember seeing some other things on the Acropolis of Athens... Among the statues behind the horse (=a bronze replica of the Trojan horse), the one [of the warrior] running in armour is by Critius..." (I, 23, 7 and 9). In the years 477/76 BC, Critius also made (in collaboration with Nesiotes) a copy of the famous group of the tyrannicides, which had been captured by the Persian king Xerxes in the year 480. In 477 BC, in the aftermath of the Persian wars, Cyzicus aligned itself with Athens. The representation of the hoplite (heavily-armed foot soldier) may allude to this turn of events. The short line below the feet of the figure suggests a statue base. The tunny-fish to the right is the badge of the city; it recurs again and again on the coinage of Cyzicus.
The reproduction clearly shows the irregular, somewhat elongated shape of the coin, which deftly conforms to the design. The thickness of this early specimen is a distinct reminder of the derivation of coins from bullion. The weight of Cyzicene staters is usually about 16.0 g.

LAMPSACUS

Stater, electrum (c. 450 BC)
Place of coinage: Lampsacus

Obverse: Forepart of a winged horse in a wreath of grape leaves, beneath which Ξ

Reverse: Incuse square

Weight: 15.13 g · Size: 21.9 x 14.2 mm
Literature: Baldwin, Electrum Coinage p. 9, 1o

The Greek cities situated on the straits along the approach to the Black Sea were geared to foreign trade at an early stage. There was vigorous competition among them. Lampsacus, which was located 100 km west of Cyzicus on the southern shore of the Hellespont, was no match for its larger competitors, so it tried to complement them; in its electrum coinage – which, in any case, was short-lived (c. 525–450 BC) – Lampsacus concentrated on the minting of staters. The device on the coins showed a seahorse surrounded by grape leaves, a remainder of which is still visible on our specimen, above the animal's head. Lampsacus was famous for its wine. Accordingly, the device alludes to both the city's location on the sea and its primary export commodity.
In the fifth century BC, Lampsacus was a member of the Delian League. In return, the city was obliged to pay Athens the sum of 12 talents. In silver, this amount was equivalent to 72,000 drachmas of Attic coinage. According to the weight standards in Lampsacus, a Lampsacan stater such as the one shown above was equivalent to 24 Attic drachmas. Thus, the city's annual contribution around the year 451 BC, when the first such payment was due, amounted to 3,000 staters. Our specimen bears the Greek letter Ξ as a series mark, now hardly visible beneath the horse. We do not know for certain how long this series was issued.
After an interlude of nearly 100 years, Lampsacus resumed the minting of coins; this time, however, in addition to silver coins, it issued staters made of pure gold rather than electrum.

CYZICUS

Stater, electrum (c. 400–350 BC)
Place of coinage: Cyzicus

Obverse: Sphinx with hair tied up, wings to the back, standing on a tunny-fish, with right forefoot raised

Reverse: Incuse square

Weight: 16.04 g · ∅ 17.5 mm
Literature: von Fritze 217

This stater bearing the image of a sphinx is one of more than 220 different types which were struck in Cyzicus over a period of roughly 275 years (c. 600–326 BC). This attests to the great variety of designs in Cyzicene coinage. A comparison with the stater shown in Plate 6 clearly reveals that there is very little difference in the external shape of the two coins, even though they lie some 100 years apart. Apparently, the use of the archaic type of flan – small lumps of precious metal of varying thickness – was retained, even though by that time alternative techniques had already been devised. In this case, the electrum is an artificial alloy.
The city was advantageously situated on the southern shore of the Propontis (Sea of Marmara) on an old trade route to the Black Sea area. The city always played an important role in ancient trade. Her stater coinage complemented the silver currency of Athens quite well; consequently, its circulation extended to all those areas under the domination of the Delian League with which Athens was engaged in trade. An ancient account provides some indication of the volume and scope of coins minted at Cyzicus: during the years 418–406 BC alone, the treasurers of the League spent over 67,000 Cyzicene staters which had been paid in as tribute. Cyzicene staters are frequently found in hoards all round the Black Sea, where Athens procured a large part of its grain reserves. A specimen similar to the coin shown here was found in a treasure trove in Bulgaria, where it had been buried around 350 BC.

SYRACUSE

Stater of 100 litrae (c. 413–390 BC)
Place of coinage: Syracuse
Die-engraver: Euaenetus

Obverse: Marginal inscription to left of head: ΣΥΡΑΚΟΣΙΩΝ
Head of Arethusa, to left, with hair in sphendone embroidered with stars and ampyx over brow, ear-ring and pearl necklace; to right of head: EY [AI]

Reverse: Heracles wrestling with the Nemean lion

Weight: 5.75 g · ∅ 14.8 mm
Literature: SNG Lloyd 1422

Syracuse was founded in 733 BC as the sole colony of Corinth. The city was unquestionably the first outpost of the Greeks in Sicily. It also led the battle against the Carthaginians, who set out from western Sicily in their advance against the Greeks in the southern and eastern parts of the island. Their first major offensive was repelled in 480 BC. Having fought off the attack of the Athenian expedition launched against the city in 413 BC with only the greatest of effort, Syracuse and the Sicilian Greeks were too weak to counter a second massive offensive by the Carthaginians which began in 406 BC. Syracuse itself was barely able to defend its own territory. In the early decades of the fourth century BC, following a period of severe turmoil, Dionysius I, ruler and supreme military commander of the city, was able to deliver Syracuse and the Greeks in Sicily from the crisis.

The issues of Syracuse justifiably rank among the most beautiful of all ancient Greek coins. They began to bear the engraver's signature as early as the fifth century BC. Silver was the predominant metal used in coinage. The minting of gold coins was introduced only as an emergency measure. The literature dates its beginnings either to the time of the Athenian siege in 414 BC or to the period of upheaval in the years after 406 BC, the height of the crisis.

As was always the case in Syracuse, the obverse of the coin bears the head of a lovely maiden. It is not always clear whom the figures are meant to portray. The ornaments and attributes occasionally point to goddesses such as Athena or Nike. In the late fifth century BC, an additional inscription appears over the head – "Arethusa", the name of the nymph of the spring on the island of Ortygia in the centre of the city. Dolphins, which are images associated with the nymph, often appear around the head crowned with reeds; in most cases, we can assume that the girl's head is that of Arethusa. In terms of its symbolic value, the scene portrayed on the reverse can be seen as a reflection of the mood of crisis in 414 or 406 BC and the years thereafter, depending upon the estimated date of the particular type. This design marks the zenith of Euaenetus' artistic achievement; in the tremendous exertion conveyed in the scene one can already sense the victory of Heracles over the blind, physical force of the Nemean lion. The artist succeeded in capturing the super-human power exerted in the struggle within a very small space and in low relief.

PERSIAN EMPIRE

Great King (unspecified), fourth century BC

Daric
Mint: Babylon (?)

Obverse: The bearded king wearing crown and long robe, carrying bow and lance, in running position, pronounced bend at knees

Reverse: Irregular incuse

Weight: 8.34 g · ⌀ 15.9 mm
Literature: BMC 58

After conquering Lydia in the sixth century BC under the leadership of the Achaemenid dynasty, Persia emerged as the dominant power in the eastern Mediterranean, an everpresent threat to her neighbours. It was not until the end of the century, after Persia's advance to the west and its offensive against the Greek motherland, that King Darius I (the Great) introduced his own coinage. Gold coins, known as darics, were minted, as well as silver coins, called sigloi. The coins invariably bear the same design and are, as a rule, unsigned.
It is difficult, therefore, to attribute these coins to any particular Great King. The figure represented on the coins was long considered as portraying the Great King himself. More recent opinion suggests that it may also depict a national hero. The figure is shown in rapid, forward movement, with a pronounced bend at the knees. The incuse square – a characteristic feature of the very earliest coins – was still employed on the reverse of this issue.
The name "daric" has been traced back to King Darius I (the Great), under whose rule these pieces were first minted; it might also derive from the Old Persian word "daruyaka" which can be taken to mean "golden" or "gold coin". Toxotes ("archer"), another name for the coin, refers to the type.
The daric was the dominant currency as far as India in trade with the east. So great was the coin's acceptance as a standard of value that the term "daric" was still in use as a unit of weight for gold jewellery as late as the third century AD.

KINGDOM OF MACEDON

King Philip II, 359–336 BC

Stater (c. 323/2–315 BC)
Mint: Pella

Obverse: Head of Apollo in laurel wreath, to right

Reverse: Two-horse chariot (biga) in rapid movement to right. At lower right, cantharus. In exergue: ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ

Weight: 8.59 g · ⌀ 18.5 mm
Literature: Le Rider 458

In the course of the fourth century BC, Macedon emerged as a power to be reckoned with. The most important poleis of the Greek motherland – Athens, Corinth, Thebes in Boeotia – had become too weak to halt the Macedonian expansion. The royal house by this time showed distinct signs of Hellenisation. Philip, the son of Amyntas, proved to be an important military leader and a king who succeeded in establishing the hegemony of Macedon. Following a series of hard-fought battles, which were always accompanied by deft diplomatic negotiations, he defeated the Greeks near Chaeronea in 338 BC, resulting in a reorganisation of the political structure. Philip created the prerequisites for the power later exercised by his son and successor, Alexander.

The stater of Philip bears ample witness to that endeavour. When the minting of gold coins began, a design was chosen which would appeal to all Greeks – namely, the head of Apollo. Thus, Philip adopted and continued the type employed by Olynthus, the outpost of the Chalcidian federation which he had captured in 348. The gold for the coins came from another area under his control; in the year 357, he had conquered Pangaeum, which was rich in gold.

Of even greater significance in this context was the fact that the newly-initiated coinage of gold staters was based on the Attic standard, the most widely accepted standard of coinage in the Greek world. The Philip stater owed its enduring success not least of all to this decision, which was quite shrewd in terms of financial policy. Consequently, the staters, which were also particularly favoured by the tribes outside of the Macedonian Empire, continued to be minted long after the death of their originator.

The reverse type refers to the king's victory in a chariot race at Olympia in 356 BC.


ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ

KINGDOM OF MACEDON

King Alexander III, known as The Great, 336–323 BC

Double stater (c. 330/25–318 BC)
Mint: Sicyon

Obverse: Head of Athena in Corinthian helmet with serpentine ornament, to right, wearing a pearl necklace and ear-rings

Reverse: ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ on the right, vertical. Nike standing with wreath and stylis, slightly to left. On the left, thunderbolt, and at lower left, the monogram Λο

Weight: 17.01 g · ⌀ 21.6 mm
Literature: Newell and Noe 7

Alexander the Great was one of the most dazzling leaders in the ancient world. Within his short lifetime he conquered all of the Near East and Central Asia, as far as Egypt and India. The Greek motherland and the Aegean islands, as well as the northern hinterland of Macedon as far as the Danube were under his control. In 334 BC he had already defeated the Persian army in the battle of Granicus and, less than 18 months later, the Great King Darius III at Issus. In 332 BC he moved on to Egypt. At the oasis of Siwa the oracle of Zeus Ammon confirmed his divine descent and hence his claim to the throne of the Pharaohs. In the autumn of 331 BC he defeated the Persian king in a decisive battle near Gaugamela, subsequently ascending his throne. After thwarting conspiratorial plots on his life, he led the expedition to India, which brought him to the banks of the Hyphasis (Bias) river. He established political structures in the conquered territories which were compatible with local conditions and customs; his approach was characterised by flexibility and a spirit of compromise. In June of the year 323, while in the midst of preparing an expedition to Arabia, he died of a fever. It was not long before Alexander became a legendary figure.
Alexander's innovative policies affected the minting of coins as well: uniform coinage issued at many places within the empire replaced the wide variety of local issues. The Attic standard, already employed by his father Philip II for the stater, now became the basis for all of Alexander's coinage. He thus created the first form of "world currency" in antiquity. The designs on the gold coinage of Alexander are somewhat difficult to interpret. It is not clear which of the Athena cults is represented here; it might be the statue of Athena-Promachus in Athens, but it could also be that of Corinth or Ilium, to name only the most famous ones. The goddess of victory portrayed on the reverse is holding the stylis, the symbol of victory at sea. However, Alexander himself had no naval victories to his credit, unless one considers the conquest of Tyre, the important Phoenician seaport, to be a victory at sea. The most recent interpretations cite the oracle of Delphi, which addressed Alexander as an unvanquished leader, or refer to the classic naval victory of the Greeks over the Persians at Salamis in 480 BC. The question is open to conjecture for the time being.


ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ

PERSIAN EMPIRE

Satrapy of Caria

Satrap Pixodarus, 340–334 BC

Hemihekte (1/12 stater)
Mint: Halicarnassus (?)

Obverse: Laureate head of Apollo, to left

Reverse: Standing Zeus with spear and double-axe, to right ΠΙΞΩΔΑ

Weight: 0.71 g · ∅ 7.0 mm
Literature: SNG v. Aulock 2373

The extensive Persian Empire was subdivided into satrapies, which were governed by satraps in the name of the Great King. However, with the gradual weakening of central authority, the satraps became ever more autonomous. By the fourth century BC, they were veritable kings in their satrapies, which had become independent of the Empire in all but a formal sense. This development was particularly apparent in the far west of the Empire, in the coastal regions of Asia Minor. In Caria, for example, the satraps issued coins in their own names. Pixodarus, a younger brother of Maussollus (famous for his monumental tomb), was the last of the Carian satraps, and the only one to mint series of both silver and gold coins in four different denominations. In point of fact, he acted independently of the Great King. The head of Apollo on the obverse was modelled on a Rhodian coin-type; the statue of Zeus of Labranda with the distinctive double-axe, which referred to an important local cult, recurs in the reverse type of all coins issued by the satraps. Because of the coin's relatively small size, it must have been difficult to manufacture the die. Hence the somewhat clumsy rendering of the Zeus figure; he is shown holding both the cloak and spear in his left hand. The mint location is not given. However, it is likely that the coin was issued in Halicarnassus, which was the residence of the satraps.

EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER

Mazaeus, Satrap of Babylon, 331–328 BC

Double daric
Place of coinage: Babylon

Obverse: Great King, half-kneeling, carrying spear, bow and quiver, to right. To left of figure, ΓΡΙ; to right, torch

Reverse: Pattern of wavy lines within circle

Weight: 16.68 g · ⌀ 21.3 mm
Literature: BMC type 4

Alexander III first defeated Darius III, Great King of Persia, in the year 333 BC. At the time, Mazaeus was satrap in "Coele-Syria and between the [Tigris and Euphrates] rivers", as the area is described in ancient accounts; he had previously ruled in Cilicia. Although he had been ordered to block Alexander's path near Thapsacus, he allowed him to pass, and while remaining loyal to the Great King at Gaugamela, he subsequently opened the gates of Babylon to Alexander, who re-appointed him as satrap. He remained in Babylon until his death in 328 BC. In type and overall appearance, the double darics closely resembled the earlier darics which had been minted for centuries in the Persian Empire. This points to a characteristic phenomenon of ancient coinage. Many people who used the coins, particularly in remote areas and beyond the borders of the Persian Empire, relied on the external appearance of a coin, i. e. the coin-type, as a guarantee of its value. The coin-types involved had been known to them for generations; consequently, any new type would have seemed dubious to them, and they might even have refused to accept it. Therefore, in terms of financial policy, it was only shrewd for a coining authority to bow to local practice in his particular sphere of interest. Mazaeus, the politically astute satrap in Mesopotamia during Alexander's rule, acted according to this principle. Following the victory of Alexander, whom he now served, Mazaeus retained the old, familiar and widely circulated daric type. The type itself indicated to the user that, in terms of its value, this coin as well was part of the old line of darics dating from the Achaemenid era. During the period of transition prior to the introduction of Alexander's uniform coinage, it made more sense in the Persian territories to continue minting coins of traditional weight and design, so as to ensure uninterrupted circulation.
Only the altered and more refined design of these later darics distinguishes them from the earlier coins. The improved quality reflects the work of Greek die-cutters, whose versions of the traditional designs were more vivid and natural than those of their predecessors, the goldsmiths and glyptographers of the Great King.

MYTILENE

Hekte (1/6 stater), electrum (c. 331–326 BC)
Mint: Mytilene

Obverse: Head of Alexander the Great, to right, with horn of Ammon

Reverse: Standing eagle with head turned backward within square

Weight: 2.54 g · ∅ 11.2 mm
Literature: Bodenstedt M 80

Mytilene, the largest town on the island of Lesbos, belonged to the group of cities in Asia Minor which employed electrum as the metal of coinage over a long period of time. This was the case in Mytilene from roughly 525 to 326 BC. From the very beginning, the coins of Mytilene, unlike those of other cities, bear figural coin-types on both faces; the reverse types, which were at first incused, later also appear in relief. With one exception, the sole denomination minted was the 1/6 stater (hekte) of the Phocaean standard. Mytilene had a formal agreement with the city of Phocaea which provided for the minting of coins on an alternating, yearly basis, and a new coin-type was created for each issue (cf. Plate 5). The obverse type has been interpreted as the head of Alexander the Great. In 332 BC, the oracle of Zeus Ammon at the oasis of Siwa in Egypt declared the Macedonian king to be the son of this major Egyptian god; the ram's horn of Ammon on the head, as well as the eagle, the god's sacred animal, on the reverse type, allude to this. In choosing these representations, Mytilene was paying homage to Alexander. The topical nature of the specific images suggests that the type appeared shortly after the event to which they refer, i. e. shortly after 332 BC.

KINGDOM OF THRACE

King Lysimachus, 323–305–281 BC

Stater (296–281 BC)
Mint: Lampsacus

Obverse: Head of the divine Alexander, wearing diadem with ram's horn, to right

Reverse: ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΟΥ – ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ
Athena seated in full armour leaning on her shield, to left; on her right hand Nike, the goddess of victory; at her side a spear. To left of figure, monogram within a circle; to right, a torch

Weight: 8.46 g · ⌀ 19.3 mm
Literature: Thompson 39

Lysimachus, who had taken part in the campaigns of Alexander, served as his bodyguard during the final year of the king's life and thus was a member of his inner circle. He fought as a naval commander in Alexander's fleet, was wounded in battle and received high honours. Soon after Alexander's death, he attempted to gain autonomous power. When the Empire was divided up, he was confirmed as ruler of Thrace. A series of military operations and individual campaigns, as well as major wars, followed. Lysimachus entered into opportunistic alliances with various Diadochi and succeeded in bringing significant portions of Asia Minor temporarily under his control. In 284 BC the territories under his rule extended from the Taurus Mountains to the Danube, and from the Pindus Mountains to the Gulf of Pagasae. The last years of his life were consumed by family quarrels over rights of inheritance. After losing Pergamum and Sardis, Lysimachus was defeated and killed in battle against Seleucus in the year 281 BC. For his own coinage, Lysimachus chose types which were both contemporary and intelligible to the general populace. The horn of Ammon on the head of Alexander served as a reminder that, as the son of Ammon, he himself was divine. Athena seated on the throne was a divine image easily understood by Greeks and non-Greeks alike; she is also holding Nike, who was seen as the protectress and powerful patron goddess of victory, a symbol of great importance during those times of continuous warfare. By 305 BC, all the Diadochi bore the title of "king", as did Lysimachus. Unlike Ptolemy and Seleucus, however, he did not place his own image on coins.


ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ
ΛΥΣΙΜΑΧΟΥ

CYRENE

Magistrate Chairis

Stater (c. 322–313 BC)
Place of coinage: Cyrene (?)

Obverse: KYPANAI – ON Four-horse chariot (quadriga) moving at slow pace, to right; at upper right, the sun

Reverse: Zeus Lycaeus on throne, leaning on his elbow, to right, holding an eagle on his outstretched right hand; before him, a thymiaterion
To right: magistrate's name: ΧΑΙΡΙΟΣ

Weight: 8.63 g · ∅ 20.2 mm
Literature: Naville 83

The North African region of Cyrene was settled by Greeks from the island of Thera (known today as Santorin). In 631 BC the Thereans founded the city of Cyrene on the site of Cyre, a spring held sacred to Apollo. At first, the city was ruled by kings; in the first third of the sixth century, a new group of settlers came from Greece. In 525 BC Arcesilaus III recognised Persian sovereignty. The monarchy came to an end with the rule of Arcesilaus IV c. 456 BC. In 322 BC, Ptolemaic forces conquered the city, then a democratic polis, and imposed a new constitution by decree. Following a short period of autonomy, the area passed to Rome in the will of Ptolemy Apion and became a Roman province in 74 BC.
The reverse type is a portrayal of Zeus Lycaeus, the figure of a Peloponnesian cult which was brought to the area by the second wave of colonists. The adoption of the Attic weight standard at the time of Cyrene's assimilation into the empire of Ptolemy I was consistent with established practice under Alexander. His staters, as well, were struck according to the Attic standard. During the initial phase of his rule in Egypt, Ptolemy retained this system. In Cyrenaica the minting of coins was conducted on a co-operative basis; the individual poleis did not develop types of their own.
The quadriga on the obverse type is much too general a design to allow any specific interpretation.

TARAS

Half stater (c. 302 BC)
Place of coinage: Taras

Obverse: Head of the nymph Satyra wearing ear-ring, pearl necklace and band in hair, to left. At lower left of head, a dolphin with remains of an inscription

Reverse: TA [PAΣ] Taras riding with trident in hand on dolphin, to left, beneath which indication of waves. Nike is flying toward him, holding a wreath

Weight: 4.24 g · ⌀ 14.3 mm
Literature: Ravel 26

The city of Taras (today the Calabrian city of Taranto) was founded around 700 BC; it was Sparta's only colony. The city was extremely well-located, with a good harbour protected by an offshore island; the surrounding area was fertile. Taras was one of the most important cities in Magna Graecia. Its prosperity made it the target of repeated forays by native tribes. Taras was involved in the founding of both Thurii and Heraclea in Lucania, both settlements being the product of a combined Greek effort. Her power steadily increased during the fifth and fourth centuries BC. The unusually rich gold coinage dates from roughly 340–280 BC. Taras had to rely on mercenary forces to defend itself against the hostile Italic tribes and, later, against the Romans. The city's most important allies, Alexander the Molossian and Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, shared the financial burden involved in the coining of Tarentine gold, as did Hannibal, during the Second Punic War. Taras developed its own Tarentine standard of coinage, which consisted of many different small denominations. The standard was compatible with the Greek system of twelfths as well as the Italic system of tenths, which was one of the reasons for the popularity of Tarentine coinage.
For generations, the predominant type of Taras was the dolphin-rider. It is thought that the image was meant to portray Taras, the son of Poseidon; the mythological figure was saved by a dolphin at his father's bidding from distress at sea. The heroic figure of Taras was already known to the native inhabitants when Phalantus and the Spartans arrived on the scene. They subsequently expanded the existing settlement. The connection between the dolphin-rider and Poseidon is reflected in the trident, an attribute of the sea-god.

KINGDOM OF EGYPT

King Ptolemaeus II Philadelphus, 285–246 BC

Octadrachm, issued in the year 8 = 263 BC
Mint: Alexandria

Obverse: Portrait of Queen Arsinoe II with veil, diadem and sceptre; behind the head the letter Θ (= 8)

Reverse: ΑΡΣΙΝΟΗΣ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ
Double cornucopia, adorned with royal diadem

Weight: 27.67 g · ⌀ 27.6 mm
Literature: Svoronos 460

With the exception of certain isolated issues toward the end of the thirtieth dynasty in the mid-fourth century BC, Pharaonic Egypt had no coinage of its own. Coinage was first introduced by the Ptolemies, who succeeded Alexander as rulers of Egypt. While Egyptian issues were initially based on the Attic standard, also used in Alexander's uniform coinage, both the coinage standard and the coin-types were soon changed to meet specifically Egyptian needs. This change was manifested in, among other things, the style and choice of dynastic representations. Toward the end of the fourth century BC, the practice of placing the portrait of the current ruler on coins was introduced. From time to time, the queen's portrait also appeared on coins. The portrait of Arsinoe, the sister-wife of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, is shown here on our coin; it was the first in antiquity to bear the image of a female member of the royal family. Dynastic inter-marriage between siblings – both being of divine lineage – was typically Egyptian. Arsinoe was, moreover, an important leader in her own right who played an active role in the reforms of her brother and husband. After her death in 271 BC, she was revered as "thea philadelphos" ("brother-loving goddess").
The year of her death also marked the beginning of a new calendar, which is indicated on the coins. In her temple near Alexandria stood the double cornucopia, a technical marvel created by the engineer Ctesibius; it is shown here, with the royal diadem, as her symbol.
In the papyri this octadrachm is also called a mnaieion ("worth a mina of silver"), since its value corresponded to that of a mna of 100 drachmas.


ΑΔΕΛΦΩΝ
ΑΡΣΙΝΟΗΣ

PUNIC EMPIRE

1½ shekel (c. 260–240 BC)
Place of coinage: Carthage (?)

Obverse: Head of the goddess Tinit, to left, wearing a garland of wheat-ears, lavish ear-ring and jewellery around the neck

Reverse: Standing horse, to right, with head turned backward

Weight: 12.48 g · ⌀ 23.2 mm
Literature: Jenkins and Lewis 377, 2

The powerful Carthaginian Empire did not begin to mint its own coins until a very late date, which is all the more surprising in view of the many trading outposts which it had founded all along the Mediterranean coast. It was not until the latter half of the fifth century BC, following many years of armed conflict with the Sicilian Greeks, that the minting of coins began. The first issues were modelled on Greek coins; indeed, it is known that the Carthaginians periodically engaged the services of Greek die-engravers. In later years, however, the gold coinage was strictly Punic. These issues were in circulation during the First Punic War with Rome and were subsequently continued in the form of electrum coinage. By that time, the coin-types employed were typical of Carthage itself and its history. The goddess shown on the coin is Tinit, a deity second in importance only to Ba'al-Hammon; she was probably rather more North African in origin than Phoenician. There is little evidence of her cult in the Phoenician city of Tyre, the mother city of Carthage. In later years, she became the dominant figure in Punic religion. The garland of wheat-ears is an indication of her affinity with Demeter, the Greek goddess of fertility and motherhood. The horse in the reverse type recalls the saga of the founding of Carthage: when the Tyrians arrived at the site of their future settlement, the goddess – referred to as Juno in Virgil's Aeneid – assigned to them the symbol of the horse's head. The horse is not bridled; it is free.

KINGDOM OF EGYPT

King Ptolemaeus II Philadelphus and Queen Arsinoe II, 284–247 BC

Octadrachm
Place of coinage: Alexandria

Obverse: ΑΔΕΛΦΩΝ The busts of Ptolemaeus II and Arsinoe II wearing diadems, to right. At left, an oval shield

Reverse: ΘΕΩΝ The busts of Ptolemaeus I and Berenice I with diadems, to right

Weight: 27.75 g · ⌀ 27.2 mm
Literature: BMC 2

Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the son of Ptolemy I Soter and Berenice I, was one of the great reformers to emerge from the Lagid dynasty founded by his father. A series of wars enabled him to establish the security of his domain and expand his sphere of influence. He had the remains of Alexander the Great brought to Alexandria and founded the divine cult of his parents. Ptolemy I had already initiated a return to economic autarchy, the traditional Egyptian system. Philadelphus consummated the policy of isolation and estrangement from the other Diadochi which had been initiated by his father. There is evidence that measures designed to stabilise his own reserves of precious metals were implemented on a large scale, and that these had a restrictive effect on imports. He no longer seemed interested in promoting, or even maintaining, a widespread circulation of his coins; indeed, the percentage of Ptolemaic issues in circulation beyond his borders declined noticeably. While it was unusual to find an 8-drachma piece in other Diadochi states, it was apparently necessary to mint such a denomination in Egypt. Ptolemaic gold coinage also employed a distinctive range of denominations; in addition to the tetradrachms, there were pentadrachms, didrachms and drachmas.

Arsinoe, the sister-wife of Philadelphus, was elevated to divine status after her death in 271 BC, like her parents before her. It was a matter of course for the royal houses of Egypt to establish their own divine lineage, and the cult initiated by Ptolemy II was in keeping with this tradition. While still quite lifelike, the portraits gradually begin to lack the quality and vitality of those in earlier types, as we can plainly see from the busts of Soter and Berenice on our specimen.

EMPIRE OF THE SELEUCIDS

King Seleucus II Callinicus, 246–226 BC

Stater (244–240 BC)
Mint: Antioch on the Orontes

Obverse: Diademed head of the king, to right

Reverse: ΣΕΛ – ΕΥΚΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ
Apollo standing, to left, leaning on his bow and holding arrow. At left, Y

Weight: 8.47 g · ⌀ 19.9 mm
Literature: WSM 987

Of all the states which succeeded the empire of Alexander, the empire of the Seleucids proved to be of longest duration. For a time, Seleucus I Nicator, the first of the Seleucid kings, held sway over the entire Middle East and Central Asia as far as the Indus. However, under the reign of Seleucus II, son of Antiochus II, the eastern territories broke away: around the middle of the century, Bactria and the surrounding territories became autonomous; and under the leadership of the Arsacid dynasty, the areas which had once formed the core of the Persian Empire became independent as well. However, Seleucus was quite able to hold his own against Egypt in conflicts along the always hotly contested southwestern border of Syria. Around 241–239 BC, while entangled in an internal war with his younger brother, Antiochus, he also suffered setbacks in Asia Minor. Syria progressively emerged as the core of the Seleucid Empire.
In all of their coinage, regardless of the metal employed, the Seleucids adhered to the Attic weight standard, and Seleucus II was no exception. This practice was wise, in view of the vast territory and its important trade routes, which were now part of the Seleucid Empire; the Attic weight system was the predominant standard in the ancient world. Gold coinage was now centred in Antioch on the Orontes river; previously, the minting of gold had, for the most part, taken place in Bactria, now independent of the Seleucids. The early Seleucid coin-types rank among the period's most realistic regal portraits, and the images of Seleucus II Callinicus are a particularly fine example of this type of portraiture.

SYRACUSE

King Hiero II, 275–269–215 BC

Drachma
Mint: Syracuse

Obverse: Head of Persephone wearing garland of wheat-ears, to left. At right, sea-horse swimming upward

Reverse: Two-horse chariot (biga) in rapid movement, to left, driven by female figure. At lower left, the monogram ΑΓ. In exergue: ΙΕΡΩΝΟΣ

Weight: 4.24 g · ⌀ 16.5 mm
Literature: Walter Niggeler Collection 172

Hiero apparently began his career serving in the Syracusan forces during the campaigns of King Pyrrhus of Epirus in south Italy and Sicily. He established himself as military tyrant of Syracuse with mercenary help in the course of a campaign against Carthage in 275–274 BC. From 271–269 BC he fought as supreme military commander in the field against the Mamertines, who posed a constant threat to Syracuse. Emerging victorious from that conflict, he was proclaimed king by his soldiers in 269 BC. With the exception of Messana, a city against which he continued to wage war in the 60s, all of eastern Sicily was under his rule. While at first adopting an anti-Roman position, he signed a peace treaty with Rome in 263–262 BC and entered into an alliance with her. As a result of the consistently pro-Roman policy which he subsequently pursued, Syracuse and eastern Sicily enjoyed many years of relative peace and a revival of economic growth. Not even the initial Punic victories during the second war with Rome could shake Hiero's steadfast commitment to the alliance. He died an old man in the year 215 BC.

In all probability, the gold coins of Hiero were issued during the first half of his long rule. At the time of this issue, Hiero did not yet bear the title of king, which appeared on his later coins. The representation was modelled on a portrait by Agathocles, but is less vivid than the original. The type shows the head of Persephone, daughter of Demeter, the great goddess of motherhood and fertility, hence the garland of wheat-ears. Both deities had long been particularly revered in Sicily. The design of the reverse type reflects old Syracusan tradition. The chariot in slow or rapid movement had been a popular and frequently used device ever since the beginnings of the city's coinage. Other gold issues with this type show the winged goddess Nike driving the biga. It is not clear, however, to whom the wingless female figure on this coin refers.


ΣΥΡΑΚΟΣΙΩΝ

"CELTIC" COINAGE

Lower Danube

Stater (third/second century BC)
Place of coinage: unknown

Obverse: Head with graphic detail, to right, with round eye and large, pointed nose

Reverse: Crudely executed seated figure, to left, with spear slanted diagonally upward. On both sides, vertical pattern of lines in place of legend

Weight: 4.78 g · ⌀ 21.2 mm
Literature: Dessewffy Collection 1307

The large group of issues usually referred to as "Celtic coinage" is composed of types which, at least initially, were more or less exact imitations of Greek and Roman models. In spite of the somewhat crude imitation shown here, we can still discern the model upon which the coin was based, namely the gold stater of the Thracian king Lysimachus (cf. Plate 16). Some of the original detail is missing. The die-engravers saw no reason to include the diadem or curved line of the horn of Ammon from the head of Alexander, for example, as these images had no meaning for them. On the other hand, we can still perceive the deft upward turn of the hair, in spite of the alteration in design. On the coin's reverse, other features of the original are also discernible: the seated Athena; the spear, which forms a striking diagonal; and the tiny figure of Nike on the outstretched hand of the seated figure. What was a legend on the original has been transformed into an ornamental pattern. Earlier opinion held that a copy tended to be less and less faithful to the original, the further removed it was in time and space from its model, and scholars attempted to construct an approximate chronology of consecutive issues on this basis. However, today we know that the aesthetic development of these issues did not follow a straightforward linear pattern. The approximate dates assigned to these coins were arrived at on the basis of a wealth of evidence gleaned from analysis of the various hoards.
We do not know exactly where the coin-type originated. It was widely circulated throughout the Lower Danube area, as was its model, the Lysimachus stater. Today, such coins are attributed to the Dacian and Gaetian tribes which inhabited the area.

"CELTIC" COINAGE

Vindelici

Stater (second/first century BC ?)
Place of coinage: Manching (?)

Obverse: Bulge surrounded by remains of a wreath

Reverse: Torque and five raised dots

Weight: 7.31 g · ⌀ 17.0 mm
Literature: Forrer cf. Plate 12, 30

The "Celtic" imitations were usually struck in the metal of coinage predominant in the particular ancient trading area to which the territory of the issuing tribe belonged. If the model was a gold coin of Greek origin, such as the Alexander stater in Plate 12, then the derivatives were also struck in gold for many years. We can no longer actually discern the type which served as the model for our specimen. The bulge is little more than an allusion to the Corinthian helmet of the original with its boldly delineated calotte; in fact, the type represents the end result of a long period of development in which the original image was gradually transformed. The torque, an open collar-ring with reinforced ends, was a typical piece of men's jewellery in the late Iron Age.
The Vindelici of the Alpine foothills adopted their "rainbow cups" *(Regenbogenschüsselchen)* from Boii gold coinage, which was concentrated in Bohemia after the Boii tribes migrated there from northern Italy. The series are quite varied. Many variant types have come down to us. A rich array of denominations ranging from small to minute complemented the stater coinage. Plates of fired clay with series of hemispherical depressions – so-called *"Tüpfelplatten"* ("stippled plates") – have been found at the sites of many Celtic settlements, including Manching (in Bavaria), which was an oppidum of the Vindelici. Gold dust was melted down in these plate moulds, thus producing the distinctive cup-shape of the flans. The name "rainbow cups" comes from an old folk legend. It was said that one would find the little gold cups at the spot where a rainbow touched the earth.

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Flavius Claudius Iulianus, known as Apostata
AD 355–360: caesar; AD 360–363: augustus

Solidus (AD 361–363)
Mint: Antioch

Obverse: FL CL IVLIA – NVS P F AVG (Flavius Claudius Iulianus pius felix augustus)
Bust of the emperor wearing pearl diadem, armour and robe, to right

Reverse: VIRTVS EXERCI – TVS ROMANORVM
The emperor in full armour and helmet, marching to right. He is shouldering a trophy and clutching a half-kneeling prisoner with his right hand. In exergue the mint-mark: ANTΓ (Antioch, third officina)

Weight: 4.23 g · ⌀ 21.6 mm
Literature: Cohen² 79

Julian was a nephew of Constantine the Great. After Constantine's death in 337, nearly his entire family was eradicated in a massacre. He himself and his step-brother Gallus survived the difficult years which followed. Julian was filled with hatred for the Constantinian dynasty. Although he was raised in the faith of Arian Christianity, as a young man he became ever more attracted to ancient pagan rhetoric and philosophy. When the rule of the usurper, Magnentius, came to an end, the Gallic provinces were overrun by Germanic tribes. The situation became precarious, and Emperor Constantius II sent Julian to the west as his caesar. Julian later wrote an account of his long campaigns against the Germanic tribes, which he was finally able to drive out of Roman territory. When Constantius demanded that Julian place large numbers of troops at his disposal for a war against the Persians, the soldiers mutinied and, in the year 360 in Paris (Lutetia Parisiorum), proclaimed Julian emperor. He set out against Constantius, who died in 361, however, before it came to a fight. As sole ruler, Julian embraced paganism and placed himself under the protection of Mithras, the god of sun and light. Barely two years later, in the midst of a Persian campaign, for which he had assembled all available Roman forces at his headquarters in Antioch on the Orontes in Syria, he died in battle knowing that his attempt to reinstate the ancient religions had failed.
The gold coin shown here, which was issued at the time of the great assembly of troops for the Persian campaign, refers directly to these forces. The valour and endurance of the Roman armies are acclaimed in the coin-type and legend. The vanquished enemy is shown in Persian attire. Thus, the type clearly does not celebrate Virtus as such, but rather the concrete preparations for war. This interpretation is also supported by the inordinately large output of gold coinage in Antioch, the site of Julian's headquarters.


FL CLAUDIUS IULIANUS PF AVG


VIRTVS EXERCITVS ROMANORVM
ANTG

"CELTIC" COINAGE

Treveri

Stater (first century BC)
Place of coinage: Tetelbierg (?)

Obverse: Pattern of lines forming an open triangle, in centre of which a large "eye" composed of concentric circles around a raised dot

Reverse: Horse galloping to left, beneath which circular ornament

Weight: 6.06 g · ∅ 16.7 mm
Literature: Scheers 229

The types employed in the gold coinage of the Treveri evolved from those of the Ambiani in a series of transformations at the hands of other tribes, such as the Suessiones. The large eye is all that remains of the original profile that appeared on Greek coins. The horse was a popular motif which recurred again and again on "Celtic" coins. The "eye-stater" has long been attributed to the Treveri, an assumption supported by the research thus far. We have found a strong concentration of the coins in the areas settled by the Treveri, centring round Tetelbierg in Luxembourg, which was most likely their main settlement. We can assume, therefore, that the staters were minted there.
The Treveri played an important part in Caesar's war against Gaul. In 58 BC, soon after the onset of the fighting, they began to provide him with intelligence on the activities and intentions of the neighbouring Germanic tribes. Their relations with Caesar and the Romans took many turns, and they also had constant problems with their Germanic neighbours. The tribe's history is reflected in the development of its gold coinage. The successive series of coins gradually became lighter, a universal phenomenon. Their weight standard was basically the same as that of the other Belgic tribes, which is why Treveri staters of the older series were circulated in all parts of the area settled by the Belgae. After an initial period of pro-Roman sentiment, the anti-Roman faction prevailed in 54 BC, which led to a revolt. It was only after a series of battles that Rome succeeded in placing its candidate, Cingetorix, at the head of the tribe. The later staters were circulated only in the tribe's own territory. After the defeat of the anti-Roman faction toward the end of the Gallic war, the gold coinage of the Treveri declined in fineness and weight.

"CELTIC" COINAGE

Parisii

Stater (c. first century BC)
Place of coinage: unknown

Obverse: Crudely executed head, to right

Reverse: Horse leaping to left, above which a netlike pattern. Beneath the horse, a rosette composed of five raised dots

Weight: 6.95 g · ⌀ 22.5 mm
Literature: de la Tour 7777

The earliest gold coinage in Gaul was relatively uniform in terms of weight and design. It was modelled on the stater of Philip II, king of Macedon. The uniformity of Gallic coinage can be attributed to the influence of the powerful Arvernian Empire. In other words, given the relative freedom of movement and commerce which the various tribes enjoyed under Arvernian hegemony, we can assume that they found it practical to employ coinages of uniform appearance. This made it possible for them to exchange their coins easily, provided they were of equal or nearly equal weight. Moreover, the uniform type served as a visible guarantee of their exchangeability. After the fall of the Arvernian Empire, signalled by the defeat under King Bituitus at the hands of the Romans in 121 BC, a new monetary system evolved. Coinage ceased to be uniform. The individual tribes now pursued their own interests. The choice of metal and type was governed by the nature of their subsequent trade relations. The coin-types continued to develop, based on Greek and Roman models, until truly Gallic designs (referred to in the older literature as "national types") began to emerge. This explains why certain of the tribes continued to mint gold coins. Others, particularly the east Gauls, looked to the newly established Roman province of Gallia Transalpina (later Narbonensis) and thus adopted the denarius, the Roman silver currency. The Parisii remained part of the "gold zone". Their types are similar to those of the Ambiani, who inhabited the area around the present-day city of Amiens in northwestern France.
Following the Gallic war in the mid-first century BC, not only the weight, but above all the fineness of west Celtic gold coins deteriorated. Coinage ceased altogether in the final years of the conflict with Rome, around the middle of the century.

"EASTERN CELTIC" COINAGE

Dacian (?) king Kozon or Cotison

Gold coin (second half of first century BC)
Place of coinage: unknown

Obverse: ΚΟΣΩΝ in exergue; three men walking to left, the first and the third with shouldered staffs (?)

Reverse: An eagle on a staff with a wreath in its talons

Weight: 8.28 g · ⌀ 19.7 mm
Literature: Winkler 173 ff

Ancient accounts have provided us with some information concerning King Kozon or Cotison. He is said to have ruled over the Dacii and the neighbouring Getae tribe in the lower Danube region around 40 BC. Horace tells of one of his defeats, the date of which is known to be 29 BC. Thus, we can estimate the approximate time of issue of this rare gold coin bearing his name.
This gold piece is an interesting example of the transformation of a Roman model. Around 60 BC, a denarius type bearing what was probably the image of Brutus in his later years appeared in Rome; in any case, its type showed a Roman magistrate accompanied by two minor officials, the lictors, who are carrying the fasces, or bundle of rods, the magistrate's emblem of authority. On the type shown here – which certainly reflects the meaning of the original image –, the central figure without visible symbol of office is accompanied by two others, carrying staffs. Below them, the king's name appears in the genitive case, meaning that the image (and the coin) is "of Kozon", i.e. the badge of the king. The reverse represents a complete departure from the Roman model, the head of a goddess with the legend: LIBERTAS. Here, an eagle, wreath and sceptre are used to symbolise the power of the king.

KINGDOM OF BOSPHORUS

King Rheskuporis II, AD 78–93

Aureus, AD 83
Place of coinage: unknown

Obverse: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΡΗΣΚΟΥΠΟΡΙΔΟΣ from lower right, counter-clockwise. The bust of the king wearing diadem and robe, to right

Reverse: Head of the Emperor Domitian wearing laurel wreath, to right. In exergue the numerical symbol: ΠΓ

Weight: 7.80 g · ∅ 20.0 mm
Literature: BMC cf. 1

The kingdom of Bosphorus was situated on the northern coast of the Black Sea. The Greek cities along both shores of the strait of Kerch (Cimmeric Bosphorus) were the heart of the kingdom, which flourished under the rule of the indigenous Spartocid dynasty, particularly during the fourth century BC. There was significant trade and local industry, especially the manufacture of clay and metal articles; it also exported large amounts of grain, salted fish and meat, and actively engaged in slave trading as well. Athens was one of Bosphorus' most important trading partners. Attacks by nomadic tribes, which posed a constant threat, became more frequent during the second half of the third century BC. Because of the increasing danger of conquest by the Scythians, King Pairisades ceded his throne to Mithradates VI Eupator, the king of Pontus. Despite the ensuing rebellion, Mithradates was able to incorporate the Bosphoran kingdom into his own Pontic domain. After his fall in 63 BC, the region north of the Black Sea came under the influence of Rome. In the second and third centuries AD, it entered a new era of prosperity. Its trade with both Asia Minor and Scythia flourished.
Its dependence on Rome, a constant source of support, finds concrete expression in the design of its rich coinage. On one side of the gold coins, we see the image of the Bosphoran king – in this case, Rheskuporis II – and, on the other side, the portrait of the Roman emperor in power at the time. On our coin it is Domitian (AD 81–96). While the style of execution is good, reflecting a distinct Greek influence, the type strikes us as being of somewhat unfamiliar design.


ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ
ΡΗΣΚΟΥΠΟΛΙΣ


ΠΤ

ROMAN REPUBLIC

Aureus worth 20 asses (211–209 BC)
Place of coinage: Roma

Obverse: Head of Mars in Corinthian helmet, to right, behind which XX

Reverse: Eagle with wings slightly spread, to right, standing on thunderbolt; in exergue: ROMA

Weight: 1.13 g · ⌀ 10.4 mm
Literature: RRC 44, 4

Pliny the Elder, who was killed while observing the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, denounces the introduction of gold denarii (denarius aureus) in his controversial treatise on the beginnings and development of Roman coinage. He claims that hitherto only copper and silver were used. There is no doubt that Rome resorted to issuing gold coins as an emergency measure during the Second Punic War. Livy reports that the Senate was obliged to draw upon the last remaining gold reserves in the treasury. The entire series of gold issues, however, was not of long duration. Aside from an anonymous series (bearing no sequence-mark), specimens of which are fairly numerous today, the only other Roman gold coin which has come down to us from this period is one bearing the anchor as a sequence-mark. The Mars-eagle gold coinage bore a mark of value indicating the equivalent worth in asses, i.e. copper or bronze, as did the denarius, which was introduced at the same time. Value was measured in units of 60, 40 or 20 asses. The introduction of marks of value represented a fundamental innovation in Roman coinage and a departure from the common Greek practice.
Both coin-types reflect the prevailing state of war: on the obverse we see the helmeted head of Mars, the god of war; on the reverse, the eagle, the bird of Jupiter, standing on the god's thunderbolt. These two powerful gods were invoked to ensure the victory of Roman arms.


ROMA

ROMAN REPUBLIC

Aureus (46 BC)

Aulus Hirtius praetor
Place of coinage: Roma

Obverse: C·CAESAR – COS·TER (Caius Caesar consul tertium)
Bust of woman with veiled head, to right

Reverse: A·HIRTIVS·PR (Aulus Hirtius praetor)
From left to right: augur staff, ewer, axe

Weight: 7.81 g · ⌀ 20.6 mm
Literature: RRC 466, 1

Exercising his right as imperator, in the year 48 BC Julius Caesar ordered that a series of gold coins be issued. His closest aides, who were entrusted with carrying out this order, placed their own names on the coins, in the manner of mint-masters. Aulus Hirtius was one of Caesar's closest associates, having been at his side ever since the Gallic wars. In 46 BC, in his capacity as praetor, he moved to exclude the supporters of Pompey from public office. His appointment as consul (43 BC), to which office he had been nominated by Caesar, marked the zenith of his career. As supreme commander of Octavian's armies, he fought against Mark Antony and was killed in the battle of Mutina.

We know that, as a general rule, coin-types were meant to be readily intelligible to the general populace; this was particularly important in Rome. Numismatic research indicates that Roman types were, in fact, easily understandable. Nevertheless, what may have been easy for people to understand at the time can seem obscure or even incomprehensible to us today. In cases in which the coin-type does not readily lend itself to interpretation, examination of parallel issues may offer some insights. A coin was always a work of series production in a dual sense: it was invariably produced in fairly large quantities and was usually also part of a series reflecting certain themes which employed parallel images and legends to express the immediate concerns of the coining authority. It is difficult, for example, to identify the female image on our specimen solely on the basis of this type. The parallel issues bear the head of Ceres and other female deities. Thus, the image here might be that of Vesta. All the reverse types in the series display utensils of the high priests, sacrificial paraphernalia. The uniform selection of types included the images of the most important goddesses and alluded to their cults.


IMP CAESAR
COS TER


A·HIRTIVS·PR

ROMAN REPUBLIC

Aureus (45 BC)

L. Munatius Plancus praefectus urbi
Place of coinage: Roma

Obverse: C · CAES – DIC · TER (Caius Caesar dictator tertium)
The bust of Victoria, to right

Reverse: L · PLANC – PRAEF · VRB (Lucius Plancus praefectus urbi)
A ewer

Weight: 8.07 g · ⌀ 21.4 mm
Literature: RRC 475, 1a

Julius Caesar's war with Pompey and his supporters began on the 10th of January in the year 49 BC, the day on which Caesar led his legions into Italy by crossing the river Rubicon. He engaged Pompey's forces first in the western provinces, and then in the east, where he decisively defeated his rival near Pharsalus in 48 BC; Pompey then fled to Egypt and was murdered shortly thereafter. Caesar brought political order to Egypt, and in 47 BC defeated King Pharnaces of Pontus in Asia Minor. Following a brief stay in Rome, where he was proclaimed dictator for one year's time, he set out against the Pompeians in North Africa, defeating them near Thapsus in 46 BC. On the 25th of July in the year 46 BC, having returned to Rome to celebrate his victory, he was granted dictatorial power for 10 years. On the 17th of March, 45 BC, he defeated the last of the Pompeians in Hispania. Upon his return to Rome in October of the same year, he was made dictator for life. This was his third investiture with dictatorial power, as stated in the legend on the obverse.
The coinage of these years always bears the name of Caesar, and references to events of the day. The image of Victoria alludes to his decisive victory over the Pompeians in the Civil War. L. Munatius Plancus was Caesar's legate in the Gallic wars. He also fought at his side during the civil war. In the year 46 BC, he was one of the eight praefecti urbi who, under M. Aemilius Lepidus, were in charge of conducting official business. In this capacity, Plancus was responsible for the minting of coins. He was also one of the *epulones*, an official body whose duty it was to prepare the ceremonial banquets in honour of Iuppiter Epulo. The ewer in the type is probably an allusion to this.


DIVVS AVGVSTVS PATER


PROVIDENTIA

ROMAN REPUBLIC

Aureus (38 BC)

Triumvir Marcus Antonius
Place of coinage: auxiliary mint of Antonius

Obverse: M · ANTONIVS · M · F · M · N · AVGVR · IMP · TER
(Marcus Antonius Marci filius Marci nepos augur imperator tertio)
The head of Mark Antony, to right

Reverse: COS DESIGN · ITER · ET · TER · III · VIR · R P C
(consul designatus iterum et tertium, triumvir rei publicae constituendae)
The head of Octavia, to right

Weight: 7.99 g · ⌀ 19.8 mm
Literature: RRC 533, 3a

The death of Julius Caesar was followed by many years of civil war. The Senate finally appointed a triumvirate to restore political order: Mark Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus. The official name of this body was: III VIR (triumvir) R(ei) P(ublicae) C(onstituendae), as we can see from the coin. Lepidus displayed restraint in the exercise of his duties. However, a power struggle developed between Octavian, Caesar's adopted son, and Mark Antony, who had been Caesar's most trusted friend. The rivalry between the two men was aggravated by the totally divergent nature of their personalities: Octavian tended to be more of an organiser, whereas Mark Antony was the successful, experienced, popular military leader. The first step toward a reconciliation was taken in Brundisium (known today as Brindisi) in 40 BC, when Mark Antony married Octavian's sister, Octavia.

Among other things, Roman generals were responsible for organising the minting of gold and silver coins in the field in order to provide for the supply of their armies; this was the legal basis for the issue involved here. The date of the coin was formerly thought to be 40 BC, the year of the marriage. However, in view of the coin's relatively poor workmanship, more recent studies have set the date of its issue in the years subsequent to the marriage. Its appearance suggests that the coin was issued in the field by order of the imperator, and the urgency of the undertaking might very well explain the mediocre quality of the finished product: the lower portion of the coin appears to have been flattened inadvertently; this, however, did not in the least detract from its value as a piece of money.

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Caius Iulius Caesar Octavianus Augustus, 30 BC – AD 14

Aureus (20–16 BC)
Place of coinage: Colonia Patricia

Obverse: CAESAR – AVGVSTVS
Head of the emperor, bare, to right.
The legend runs from upper left to right, round the type

Reverse: OB / CIVIS / SERVATOS in three lines within a wreath

Weight: 7.83 g · ⌀ 19.9 mm
Literature: RIC 290

The transition from Republic to Empire was a long, gradual process: abrupt changes in the system of government were unknown in Rome. By the time of his assassination on the 15th of March in the year 44 BC, Caesar had, as dictator perpetuo, already acquired autocratic power for life. In his will he adopted his great-nephew Caius Octavius, who himself was called Caesar (Octavianus). On the 2nd of September in the year 31 BC, Octavian defeated his most powerful rival, Mark Antony, in the naval battle in the Gulf of Actium, and thus became the sole ruler of Rome. On the 13th of January, 27 BC, he relinquished the extraordinary power which had been vested in him. The Senate induced him not to withdraw from public life. He was given the name Augustus – for which "the magnificent one" is hardly an adequate translation, as the name is of religious origin. Step by step, Augustus was granted the full range of sovereign powers.
Numerous honours were conferred upon him. The reverse of the aureus shows the civic wreath, the corona civica. The wreath was always awarded for delivering Roman citizens from peril in times of war: ob civis servatos, as the legend on the coin reads. Augustus wrote in his res gestae that the civic wreath was hung above the entrance to his house.
The right to have one's portrait placed on coins was an honorary privilege already enjoyed by Julius Caesar. In imperial times, coins regularly bore the portrait of the emperor or of those personages to whom he accorded this privilege.
It is commonly thought that these series were struck not in Rome itself, but in Hispania. In order to avoid having to transport money over the long distances between many points in the Roman Empire, it became necessary to establish temporary mints outside the capital as well.


CAESAR AVGVSTVS


OB
CIVIS
SERVATOS

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, AD 41–54

Aureus, AD 41
Mint: Roma

Obverse: TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG GERM P M TR P (Tiberius Claudius caesar augustus germanicus pontifex maximus tribunicia potestate)
Laureate head of the emperor, to right

Reverse: CONSTANTIAE – AVGVSTI
The personified figure of Constantia is seated on the sella curulis, the chair of the Roman magistrates, to left; beneath her feet a stepped footrest. Her right hand is raised, with her left arm she is holding a cornucopia

Weight: 7.81 g · ⌀ 18.5 mm
Literature: RIC 2

Because of his physical shortcomings (slight stutter, limp), Claudius was at first deemed unfit to rule. He devoted his time to the study of the history of his family and Rome, and he learned languages as well. It is said that he was the last person who could speak fluent Etruscan. In AD 41, following the assassination of Caligula, his young nephew and imperial predecessor, he was proclaimed emperor – albeit against his will – by the Praetorian Guard. He was the first Roman emperor to bestow monetary gifts upon the Guard after taking office. The image of Claudius in the ancient accounts has been tainted by the animosity harboured against him in certain higher circles of the court and Senate. However, if one considers the development of the Roman Empire under his rule, one is obliged to see him in a different light. During his reign, which lasted barely 14 years, he created the organisational basis for the prosperity of later decades. At the court, the malevolent influence of his last two wives, the frivolous Messalina and, following her execution, the ambitious Agrippina iunior, made itself felt during his last years.

The reverse type and legend of the aureus shown here were meant to serve a specific purpose: they glorify a new imperial virtue. Whereas Augustus had spoken of virtus, clementia, iustitia and pietas – mercy, justice, loyalty to Roman traditions – the virtues considered to be male attributes, Claudius now introduced constantia – the virtue of steadfastness, perseverance in upholding principles which one has arrived at. The figure of Constantia is seated on the sella curulis, the chair occupied by the Roman magistrates while administering their office. This in itself implies that "constantia" should be practised in government.

The term of office of the tribunus plebis was one year. In imperial times, the emperor himself held this office. The years of the tribunicia potestas were numbered; thus, the abbreviation TR P in the obverse legend refers to the emperor's first year in office.


TI CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER PM TR P


CONSTANTIAE AVGVSTI

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, AD 54–68

Aureus (AD 64–68)
Mint: Roma

Obverse: NERO – CAESAR
Laureate head of the emperor, to right

Reverse: AVGVSTVS – GERMANICVS
Colossal statue of the emperor in radiate crown and toga, facing slightly to right. In his right hand he is holding a branch, in his left hand a statuette of Victoria on the globe

Weight: 7.37 g · ⌀ 18.2 mm
Literature: RIC 42

Nero, the great-grandson of Augustus by maternal descent, was adopted by Emperor Claudius at the instigation of Nero's mother, Agrippina the Younger. The poet Seneca became his tutor and thus he had every opportunity to develop his various outstanding talents. These won him great favour in his youth. In AD 54, following Claudius' death by poisoning, Nero ascended the throne. The power struggle which developed between the emperor and his mother Agrippina ended in her murder. Nero's dissoluteness provoked numerous conspiracies against him. In the year AD 64, a terrible fire broke out in Rome. In order to divert the seething anger of the populace, Nero initiated the first major persecution of the Christians. In the annals of Roman history the image of Nero is a sinister one indeed. He persecuted the upper classes and his profligacy knew no bounds. His artistic activities – poetry, acting – were considered a disgrace to his high office. Having been declared a public enemy (hostis publicus) in the early summer months of the year AD 68, Nero committed suicide. He was just 31 years of age. His thoroughly negative image is partly offset by the success of his internal reforms, which included the reorganisation of the Empire's coinage system: the aureus shown here was struck on the new standard.
The building of a royal palace – domus aurea, "the Golden House" – was probably the most important of all the Neronian construction projects undertaken in Rome. A colossal statue of Nero (over 35 m high) was erected in the vestibule, and it is quite possible that this colossus appears in the type on our aureus. In view of the fact that, as a rule, the obverse and reverse complemented each other in terms of content – in this case, the imperial title even continues on the reverse – we can assume that the statue is, indeed, that of the emperor. The branch and statuette of Victoria in the emperor's hand are readily intelligible; he is wearing a toga, as he always did when in Rome. However, the radiate crown on his head is an attribute of the sun-god.


NERO CAESAR


AVGVSTVS GERMANICVS

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Titus Flavius Vespasianus, AD 69–79

Aureus (AD 73)
Mint: Lugdunum

Obverse: IMP CAESAR VESPASIANVS AVG
The legend begins at lower right, running counter-clockwise round the type. The laureate head of the emperor is facing right

Reverse: VES – TA
Circular temple on podium approached by steps, some of which are delineated at front. Statues stand between the four columns in the middle and at both sides of the structure. The roof is crowned

Weight: 7.33 g · ⌀ 19.8 mm
Literature: RIC 304

Vespasian, whose prior career had been noteworthy, if not brilliant, was proclaimed emperor by his soldiers in the summer of AD 69, while in the midst of quelling the Jewish insurgency. The eastern regions of the Empire and, shortly thereafter, the Danube provinces declared their support for him. By December of the same year his forces had entered Rome, and Vitellius, another pretender to the throne, was subsequently murdered.
Vespasian was confronted with a number of serious organisational problems. Discipline in the army was poor. The civil wars of AD 68–69, the so-called year of the four emperors, had clearly demonstrated its unreliability as an instrument of imperial power. In addition, the Empire's finances were in need of improvement. In just a few years, Vespasian succeeded in bringing peace to the Roman Empire and in carrying out a comprehensive reorganisation of the army. He was considered a miser, but he restored order to Rome's finances. He also began implementation of extensive plans to expand the sphere of Roman dominion. During the ten years of his rule, he created the basis for a favourable course of development which was to continue for nearly 100 years.
One of his main concerns was the expansion of the architectural development of Rome itself. He regulated the Tiber, for example, and began construction of the Flavian amphitheatre, which still stands today. In the type of the aureus we see another important building: the temple of Vesta in the Forum Romanum. The delicate circular structure was, in fact, built upon a stepped podium, and in this respect, the coin-type is quite realistic. Cult statues, of course, never stood on the threshold, but rather in the cella of the temple. Here, a conscious distortion of proportion was used to emphasise the central feature of the image. The cult of Vesta and her temple in the Forum are among the oldest in Rome. The temple of Vesta was also the repository of the Palladium, an ancient statue which the Trojan Aeneas rescued from the flames of Troy and brought to Italy in spite of myriad dangers. The Palladium was said to guarantee the safety and continued existence of Rome. Vesta holds the small statue in her hand.


IMP CAES VESPASIANVS AVG


VESTA

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Titus Flavius Domitianus, AD 81–96

Aureus (AD 88–89)
Mint: Roma

Obverse: DOMITIANVS – AVGVSTVS
Laureate head of the emperor, to right

Reverse: GERMANICVS COS XIIII
The personification of Germania weeping, with bare upper torso, turned to right, seated on a shield, beneath which a broken spear

Weight: 7.55 g · ⌀ 19.8 mm
Literature: RIC 127

Following the sudden death of his brother Titus in AD 81, Domitian, the younger son of Vespasian, ascended the throne. His policies were a continuation of those of both his predecessors. Over the years his rule increasingly took on the form of an autocratic exercise of power directed, above all, against the higher nobility and the Roman Senate. Consequently, the accounts of him are negative and tendentious.

During the period of his reign a state of unrest developed along both of the northern riverine borders, the Rhine and Danube rivers. In AD 83–84, the emperor himself was obliged to join his legions at their camp in Mogontiacum (Mainz) to wage war against the Germanic tribe of the Chatti. This tribe inhabited the area located between the Fulda and Eder rivers in what is today Hesse. They were known for their military prowess. From his position in Mainz, Domitian succeeded in taking the Wetterau region and driving out the Chatti. It was this accomplishment, no doubt, for which he was accorded the honour of a triumphal procession and the victor's title of Germanicus in the final months of the year AD 83. Beginning in AD 84, this title appeared on his coins, as it does on the aureus here, issued some years later.

The reverse bears a typical image of imperial triumph. The personified figure of Germania is seated on a Germanic shield, now of no avail. Her posture and bearing in general are expressions of despair and mourning. A broken spear, an eloquent sign of defeat, is lying on the ground at her side.

Only the emperor could be accorded the honour of a grand triumphal procession and the epithet of victory, as the imperial office itself was seen as the victor. The generals claimed victory only in the name of the emperor, and the triumph was never celebrated in their honour, or at most they were awarded medals of victory. In other words, the emperor did not have to take part in a campaign personally (as Domitian had in the war with the Chatti) in order to be accorded the triumph and receive the epithet of victory. In some cases, the acclamations of victory were repeated or even enumerated in the emperor's title. In conjunction with other numerical elements of the imperial title which referred to the years elapsed in a particular term of office (tribunicia potestas, if indicated, and the consulate), such epithets are very helpful in the dating of specific issues.


DOMITIANVS AVGVSTVS


GERMANICVS COS XIIII

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Publius Aelius Hadrianus, AD 117–138

Aureus (AD 134–138)
Mint: Roma

Obverse: HADRIANVS – AVG COS III P P
(Hadrianus augustus consul III pater patriae)
Clothed bust of emperor, to right

Reverse: RESTITVTORI – AFRICAE
The emperor, in tunic and toga, is standing at right, turned slightly to left. He is helping the personified figure of Africa, who is wearing an elephant scalp on her head and holding a bundle of wheat-ears, to her feet.
Between the figures, corn-ears

Weight: 6.93 g · ⌀ 18.9 mm
Literature: RIC 322

The Emperor Hadrian was an intriguing, complex figure. In his early years, he pursued a career which was typical for a young Roman aristocrat: he proved himself to be a capable soldier, mastered the most difficult administrative duties, and yet always retained his preference for the arts and culture, particularly those of Greece. He declined to pursue the policy of conquest implemented by his predecessor and adoptive father, Trajan. He stabilised the borders with a view to the future, and he instituted a series of reforms whose impact was to be felt in the Roman Empire for many years to come.
His extensive travels over the years led him to all parts of the Empire. All told, he spent nearly ten of the 21 years of his reign outside of Rome. His two major journeys in the years AD 121–125 and 128–132 enabled him, among other things, to gain first-hand knowledge of the provinces and the imperial borders. These journeys were, in effect, tours of inspection which brought Hadrian's subordinates praise or reprimands, as the case might be; they resulted in the implementation of vigorous reorganisation measures and construction plans, but they also afforded the emperor an opportunity to visit historical sites and famous places. Hadrian climbed Mt. Etna, for example, and visited the so-called Colossi of Memnon near Thebes in Egypt, where at dawn he heard the curious sounds emitted by the northernmost of the two statues at sun-rise.
The coin-types of his reign, e.g. the aureus shown here, also contain many references to his travels. The province of Africa, symbolised here by a female figure wearing an elephant scalp on her head, is greeting the emperor on bended knee. He extends his hands to her, to help her on to her feet; he is, as the legend says, the "restitutor", restorer, of the province.


HADRIANVS AVG COS III P P


RESTITVTORI AFRICAE

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Titus Aelius Antoninus Pius, AD 138–161
for his daughter Annia Galeria Faustina

Aureus (AD 145–147)
Mint: Roma

Obverse: FAVSTINA AVG – PII AVG FIL
(Faustina augusta Pii augusti filia)
Clothed bust of Faustina, to left. Her hair is tied in a bun at the back of her head, adorned with strings of pearls

Reverse: CONCORDIA
Dove, to right

Weight: 7.26 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
Literature: RIC 503 (b)

During imperial times the right of coinage was fundamentally the prerogative of the emperor. Laws did not apply to him and he was free to determine coin design as he saw fit. Therefore, the names, titles and images of other persons appeared on coins only if the emperor so wished. Consequently, not every empress was accorded the honour of a coin bearing her name and portrait. The image of Faustina the Younger, daughter of Antoninus Pius and wife of his successor, Emperor Marcus Aurelius, appeared on coins during her father's lifetime. However, as far as we know, the series to which our specimen belongs was merely a special issue struck to commemorate her wedding, as indicated by the obverse legend: while bearing her title "augusta", she is referred to as Pii Aug(usti) Fil(ia), daughter of Emperor Pius. If she had been an ordinary Roman citizen, her name would have been followed by that of her husband. In this case, however, the legend reflects her special legal status. The ruling emperor decreed that his daughter's image be placed on coins. The portraits of her, particularly as a young woman prior to her husband's accession to the throne, are among the most delicate and beautiful female portraits to appear on Roman imperial coins. Concordia – harmony – and the dove are characteristic types on the coins bearing female images. They refer to the pillars of marriage, concord between husband and wife, and love. The dove is the sacred animal of the goddess Venus. This series was in all probability issued on the occasion of the wedding of Faustina and Marcus Aurelius in the year 145.


FAVSTINA AVG PII AVGVSTI FIL


CONSECRATIO

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, AD 161–180

Aureus AD 177–178
Mint: Roma

Obverse: M · AVREL · ANTO – NINVS · AVG ·
Bust in laurel wreath, armour and robe, to right

Reverse: TRP XXXII · IMP VIIII COS III · P · P (tribunicia potestate XXXII imperator VIIII consul III pater patriae)
Annona standing with wreath, long robe and stola facing, head to left. In her right hand she is holding a bundle of wheat-ears, in her left hand a cornucopia. Next to her is a basket (modius) with corn-ears, at right behind her the prow of a ship

Weight: 7.22 g · ⌀ 20.2 mm
Literature: RIC 388

Marcus Aurelius came from a noble Hispanic family. In his "Meditations" he tells of his upbringing and education. He studied rhetoric, as did all noble Romans preparing themselves for a career in public life; but while still a young man, his interest turned to Stoic philosophy. He was already nearly 40 years of age when he succeeded his adoptive father and father-in-law, Antoninus Pius, to the throne. Immediately thereafter, Marcus Aurelius appointed his adoptive brother, L. Aurelius Verus, to the throne and gave him the hand of his daughter Lucilla in marriage. They were equal in power and status. Marcus Aurelius retained for himself the office of "pontifex maximus", the chief priesthood of Rome, which apparently remained indivisible. Unlike L. Verus, Marcus Aurelius fulfilled his duties as emperor faithfully, despite increasing difficulties. In the eastern and western parts of the Empire, powerful enemies rose up against him: the Parthians in Persia and Mesopotamia, the Germanic tribes on the northern borders and their allies, the Sarmatians. By 166, under the leadership of L. Verus, the wars in the east had been won; Roman dominion over Armenia had finally been established, and the security of the Empire was restored. L. Verus died in 169. Victory over the Empire's adversaries in the north was more difficult. A disastrous plague epidemic broke out. Only after spending year after year at the Danube front was Marcus Aurelius able to turn the tide. At the time of his death in 180 in Vindobona (Vienna), the war had still not come to an end.
The problem of supplying the city of Rome was one of the chief concerns of every Roman emperor, including Marcus Aurelius. Annona personified the provision of corn and oil to the imperial capital, an exclusive right of the urbs. This concept is personified in the coin-type as well; in the centre we see the figure of Annona with a cornucopia, holding wheat-ears. To her right we see the modius, the bushel of wheat-ears – an appropriate symbol in this context; to her left, the prow of a ship. The grain came primarily from Egypt; Rome had a special corn-fleet which provided for the city.


M·ANTONINVS AVG


TR·P XXX IMP VIII COS III P P

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus, AD 177–180–192

Aureus AD 181–182
Mint: Roma

Obverse: M · COMMODVS · ANTONINVS AVG
Bust in laurel wreath and scale armour, to right

Reverse: TR P VII – IMP IIII – COS III P · P, in exergue: LIBERAL · V ·
(tribunicia potestate VII imperator IIII consul III pater patriae, liberalitas V)
The emperor in toga is seated on an estrade. He extends his hand to the Roman citizen who has just begun to climb the rungs of the ladder to the estrade. Standing at the emperor's right is his escort, the praefect of the guard. To the left, also on the platform, we see the personified figure of Largitio (largesse) in long robe and stola. She is holding the cornucopia in her left arm, and in her right hand a small tablet with a long handle

Weight: 7.22 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
Literature: RIC 37

Marcus Aurelius and Faustina the Younger had at least 12 children, but Commodus was the only son to survive. From an early age he was groomed for the throne, and in 177 was made co-regent. He inherited a number of difficult problems. The great wars had left the Empire weakened, there were economic problems, and the population was in a state of decline. All references to Commodus in the ancient accounts are negative. He displayed tyrannical tendencies which became more pronounced toward the end of his reign. In 192 he was murdered; a struggle broke out over his succession and continued over a number of tumultuous years.

Every Roman emperor had to be sensitive to the overall mood of the populace. The military was an important factor here, as were the masses of the city of Rome, the plebs urbana, and in the background, the Praetorian Guard. The provision of grain to the populace of the city was only one of the benefits they enjoyed. The emperor's generous bestowal of gifts upon the common people of the city – called Liberalitas – involved other things as well. The reverse of the aureus shows a distribution scene. The emperor is seated on the estrade, wearing a toga, as he always did when performing his official duties in Rome; behind him is his escort. A citizen – representing the plebs urbana – is just mounting the steps to receive a token entitling him to receive a donation. The nature of this donation, and the amount involved, are shown on the tablet held up by the personification of Liberalitas. Like Annona, she, too, is carrying in her arm the cornucopia, as a distinguishing attribute. The great imperial largesses, the liberalitates, were enumerated as a means of glorifying the image of the emperor. This type commemorated the fifth such distribution by Commodus.


COMMODVS ANTONINVS AVG


IMP VIII
COS VIII P P
LIBERALITAS

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus, AD 193–211
for his wife Iulia Domna

Aureus (AD 193–196)
Mint: Roma

Obverse: IVLIA · DO – MNA AVG
Clothed bust, to right. The hair is bound up into a large, delicately braided bun at the back of her head. The empress is not wearing any jewellery

Reverse: VENERI · VICTR (Veneri victrici)
Venus, wearing a veil round her hips, is leaning on a low pillar, to right. In her right hand she is holding the apple of Eris, and on her left arm a large palm branch

Weight: 7.15 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
Literature: RIC 536

If he so chose, the emperor could bestow upon his wife the title of "augusta" and the right to be portrayed on coins. Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus, was of the royal lineage of the high priests of the sun-god of Emesa in Syria. Her beauty and intelligence drew genuine praise. She was one of the most outstanding women ever to become the consort of a Roman emperor. Therefore, it is not surprising that when Septimius Severus ascended to the throne, he conferred upon her the title of empress with all of its honorary privileges.
The first series of gold and silver coins to bear her full name and the title of augusta at the same time acclaim her as the worthy companion of the emperor and the first lady of Rome. Images of Venus always appear in the reverse types of coins devoted to women of the imperial family. The series as a whole, however, tells us more. On the aureus shown here, the victory of Venus is acclaimed. According to the Greek legend, the Trojan prince Paris was to decide which of the three rival goddesses – Hera, Aphrodite and Athena (Latin: Iuno, Venus, Minerva) was most beautiful. Eris, the goddess of discord, offered a golden apple as the prize. Venus, the winner, is shown holding the palm branch and apple as symbols of her victory. Parallel coin-types, however, also show "Venus Genetrix" and "Fecunditas". They are references to the empress' two sons, and accordingly the certain line of succession to the throne within the dynasty of Severus. Still another type of gold and silver coins bears the image of Vesta, the highest official goddess of Rome; the empress was charged with attending to the cult of Vesta above all others.
Hence, the series as a whole is impressive evidence of the imperial dynasty's conception of its role in the Empire.


IVLIA DOMNA AVG


VENERI VICTRICI

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, known as Elagabalus, AD 218–222

Aureus (AD 218–222)
Mint: Roma

Obverse: IMP ANTONINVS PIVS AVG
Bust in laurel wreath and scale armour, to right. The cloak is fastened at the left shoulder

Reverse: CONSERVATOR AVG
A quadriga is moving at a slow pace to left. It bears the sacred stone of Emesa, guarded by the divine eagle with spread wings. Above the quadriga, a six-pointed radiate star

Weight: 6.55 g · ⌀ 20.7 mm
Literature: RIC 61 (d)

On the 16th of April in the year 218, Varius Avitus was proclaimed emperor by Syrian units of the Roman army. Upon ascending the throne, he adopted the name of his uncle, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (Caracalla), who had been murdered shortly before. He then soon prevailed over the rebellious praefect of the Guard, Macrinus, who had assumed the throne after Caracalla's murder. At first, this young member of the house of Septimius Severus enjoyed the trust of his subjects. However, shortly after his arrival in Rome from the east, disappointment set in. The young emperor was the high priest of the Emesa sun-god Elagabal. By the end of the fourth century, historians had begun to refer to the emperor himself as Elagabal. Not only did he introduce the strange cult and peculiar rites of the Emesa god in Rome; he even attempted to compel his subjects to accept this Sol Invictus Elagabal in place of Jupiter as the supreme deity of the Empire.
Elagabal brought the cult stone of Emesa, a conical meteorite, with him to Rome. The eagle, the sacred animal of Jupiter, now served this Syrian god. The Romans watched embittered as the Black Stone was ceremoniously brought to the Palatine Hill on the occasion of Elagabal's entry into the city in the summer of 219. The young emperor himself took part in the procession, marching backwards and facing the cart with the stone. The coin-type shows the key element of the ceremony, the quadriga bearing the Black Stone, before which the eagle stands with spread wings. Elagabal placed himself and his reign under the protection of the Emesa god. This is the meaning of the legend on the reverse of the aureus: CONSERVATOR AVG(usti) – Protector of the emperor.
Cults of the sun were actually quite popular in Rome. However, the Emesa god and his Oriental rites were never accepted, and Elagabal's imposition of the cult was deeply resented. The dissoluteness of life at court did not exactly help matters. Barely four years after his accession to the throne by enthusiastic proclamation, Elagabal was assassinated.


IMP ANTONINVS AVG


CONSERVAT ORBIS

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Publius Licinius Egnatius Gallienus, AD 253–268

Aureus (AD 262–268 ?)
Mint: Roma

Obverse: GALLIENAE – AVGVSTAE
Head of the emperor wearing wreath of wheat-ears, to left

Reverse: VBI – QVE PA – X
Victoria riding in biga, to right

Weight: 6.12 g · ⌀ 20.7 mm
Literature: RIC 74 (sole reign)

The reign of Gallienus in the middle of the third century marked the nadir of Roman power. The situation along the borders had become so critical that, immediately after he was proclaimed emperor by the military, Valerian made his son Gallienus co-emperor with equal powers. They divided up the Empire and the army, with Valerian ruling in the east and Gallienus in the west. The borders had become utterly insecure. The economy was in a catastrophic state, and even gold coinage had become so erratic that it was no longer possible to distinguish among the various denominations. In the east, Valerian's initial confrontations with Persia, Rome's traditional – and now very powerful – enemy, were partially successful. However, in 259 or 260, Valerian was defeated and taken prisoner by the Great King Shapur I and died shortly thereafter in humiliating captivity. Presumably in reaction to the news of this disaster – a catastrophe of hitherto inconceivable proportions – the entire west as far as the Rhine rose up in arms, choosing Postumus, a successful military leader, as its emperor. In turn, the Germanic tribes and the Sarmatians launched a direct attack on Italy. From this time on, Gallienus was in nominal control of the entire Empire, and although he was able to restore order in some parts of the east, he did not succeed in recovering the renegade "Gallic Empire". Decisive action in the early years of his sole reign enabled him to bring the situation somewhat under control. Around the mid-60s, at any rate, his domain was relatively peaceful.
The image of Gallienus is problematic, due to the unfavourable and unreliable nature of the available accounts. Nevertheless, he was one of Rome's most interesting leaders. The aureus shown here also long contributed to his negative image in the literature. The name of the emperor is shown on the obverse in a feminine form – Galliena Augusta – baffling, at first glance. Yet this is merely the faithful expression of a religious practice common in antiquity. Anyone initiated into the mysteries of Demeter in Elysia was assimilated into the being of this great goddess, which is all that is meant by this unique legend. The imperial mystes is consequently wearing Demeter's wreath of wheat-ears on his head. VBIQVE PAX – universal peace – an unbelievable miracle in those years – was attributed to the emperor's initiation.


GALLIENVS AVGVSTVS


VICTORIA AVG

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Marcus Aurelius Carinus, AD 283–285
for his wife Magnia Urbica

Aureus
Mint: Roma

Obverse: MAGNIA VR – BICA AVG
Clothed bust with diadem, to right. The hair is bound at the neck, with braids arranged along the parting and turned under above the forehead

Reverse: VENERI V – ICTRICI
The goddess in diadem and long robes, facing. Her head is turned to right. In her left hand she is holding the globe, with her right hand she is pulling the light cloak up over her right shoulder

Weight: 4.83 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
Literature: RIC 340

During the tumultuous years of the third century, the military regularly decided the question of who would ascend the throne. Emperors of those years were recruited from among the high-ranking officers, and were not infrequently commanding generals of the army. In 282 Marcus Aurelius Carus was proclaimed emperor. He appointed his sons Carinus and Numerianus as caesars. When he was obliged to lead the war against Persia, he elevated his elder son, Carinus, to the status of augustus and entrusted him with power over Rome and the west. A bronze commemorative medallion of Carus has come down to us, whose reverse bears a portrait of Carinus' wife, Magnia Urbica, with the title "augusta". Therefore, it is clear that she must have received this title in conjunction with her husband's accession. We know scarcely anything about her, other than her name and what she looked like. After the death of Carus in 283, Carinus and Numerianus became co-emperors. Their brief reign was consumed by border conflicts and internal power struggles with pretenders to the throne: upon hearing the news of Carus' death, Marcus Aurelius Julianus, the Praetorian praefect, attempted to take power, but was defeated by Carinus. Following the death of his brother Numerianus in the autumn of 284, the army proclaimed Diocletian emperor. While victorious in the decisive battle which ensued, Carinus was later betrayed and assassinated. No further mention is made of Magnia Urbica in subsequent accounts.
The coin-type showing Venus Victrix, the victorious goddess of love, is the image typically associated with empresses. The portrait shows a delicate young woman with mobile features.


MEDIOMD BIQAAIC


AEMILI IQTRIQAI

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Caius Valerius Diocletianus, AD 284–305

Aureus (c. AD 284)
Mint: Cyzicus

Obverse: IMP C C VAL DIOCLETIANVS P F AVG (imperator caesar Caius Valerianus Diocletianus pius felix augustus)
The bust with laurel wreath, armour and robe, to right

Reverse: IOVI CON – SERVATORI ORBIS
Jupiter standing, facing, with robe draped over left shoulder and right forearm. He is looking to the left and leaning on a long sceptre. In his right hand he is holding the statuette of Victoria with the victory wreath and palm branch on the globe

Weight: 4.67 g · ⌀ 20.0 mm
Literature: RIC 299

The name of Diocletian is associated with the beginning of the reorganisation of the Roman Empire. Like several of his predecessors, he came from the military, which helps to explain many of his views and decisions. Soon after his accession to the throne in 284, he decided to share his imperial power, making Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus his co-augustus. Maximian governed the west, while he himself took charge of the east; the army and the administrative system were also divided. Realising that the Empire's borders could not be defended from centrally located garrisons, and that after so much upheaval it was imperative to settle the question of imperial succession once and for all, Diocletian proceeded to implement even broader administrative reforms. In 293 each augustus appointed a caesar. Henceforth, the augusti were to resign after 20 years in office, with the caesars succeeding them and, in turn, designating suitable public figures to take their places as caesars. In addition to these decisive changes, there were other, no less important reforms which, at least in their initial form, can be attributed to Diocletian: taxation, the military, territorial administration, the administrative system in general, and, in particular, the finances of the Empire, all underwent fundamental change. The attempt was made, for example, to control prices by legislation.
Diocletian was a deeply religious man in the pagan sense of late imperial Rome, and he placed himself and his reign under the guardianship of the traditional gods. The first augustus enjoyed the protection of Jupiter and bore the epithet "Iovius". Hercules was the patron of the second augustus, who was himself known as "Herculius". The caesars as well had their tutelary gods. At the very beginning of his reign, Diocletian used a coin-type to invoke his personal deity, Iuppiter Conservator, Jupiter the Protector. On our coin, the god is holding in his hand the symbol of Roman power – the statuette of Victoria on the globe – which he is about to present to the emperor. The earliest of Diocletian's portraits on coins are striking examples of the austere, realistic style of the late third century.


IMP C VAL DIOCLETIANVS P F AVG


IOVI CONSERVATORI AVGG

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Flavius Valerius Constantius I, known as Chlorus,
AD 293–305: caesar; AD 305–306: augustus

Aureus (c. AD 295–305)
Mint: Treviri

Obverse: CONSTAN – TIVS NOB C (Constantius nobilis caesar)
Laureate head of the emperor, to right

Reverse: VIRTVS HERC – VLI CAESARIS
Constantius in officer's garb on horseback, holding spear in his right hand, to right. In exergue, the mint-mark: TR

Weight: 5.42 g · ⌀ 18.8 mm
Literature: RIC 86

Under the system of Diocletian tetrarchy, Constantius I was entrusted with the administration of the western provinces. He resided in Treviri, the Roman predecessor of the modern city of Trier, which had formerly been the seat of fiscal administration for the Gallic provinces and the residence of the so-called Gallic emperors during the third century AD. As a matter of course, a mint was established there in AD 293, which was in constant operation well into the first decade of the fifth century. Conditions in the territory under Constantius' rule were troubled. The borders in Britain and along the Rhine as well were the targets of repeated attacks by the restless neighbouring tribes. A peasant uprising and a large-scale rural exodus in the Gallic provinces had disastrous consequences. Large areas had become depopulated. Within a short time, Chlorus succeeded in re-establishing respect for Roman arms along the Rhine borders. Moreover, he was able to ameliorate conditions in the impoverished rural areas. After conquering the various Germanic tribes east of the Rhine, he had the captives and their families settle in the depopulated regions – a policy which was to become a frequent practice, and one which found the whole-hearted support of the Gallic rhetors. At the beginning of the reign of Diocletian and Maximian Britain split off from the Empire under the rule of Carausius, a usurper whose rule was ultimately tolerated. Constantius Chlorus was charged with recovering the British provinces. In 297 he defeated Allectus, Carausius' successor. The striking, vivid portrait on the beautiful aureus shown here, struck toward the end of Constantius Chlorus' life, celebrates the military virtues of this great late imperial Roman ruler. Following the abdication of Maximianus Herculius, he ruled as augustus over the west for hardly more than a year.


CONSTANTINVS AVG


VIRTVS EXERCITVS
TR

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Flavius Valerius Constantinus I, known as The Great, AD 306–337

Solidus (AD 313–315)
Mint: Treviri

Obverse: CONSTANTI – NVS P F AVG
Laureate head of the emperor, to right

Reverse: VICTOR OMN – IVM GENTIVM
The emperor is standing in military garb, surrounded by kneeling, cowering figures with arms raised, pleading for mercy. His head is turned to the left. He is holding a battle standard in his right hand, and leaning on a shield with his left hand. In exergue the mint-mark: PTR

Weight: 4.35 g · ⌀ 19.4 mm
Literature: RIC 30

Constantine the Great was one of the most important emperors of late antiquity. Originally, he had no place in the line of succession established by Diocletian. He was proclaimed emperor by his father's army in Eburacum/York in Britain after the latter's death. In two internal wars he gained control over Italy, then North Africa, and finally the Danube region and the Balkans; as from AD 324, he held exclusive power. The individual sections of the Empire were now governed by his sons and nephews alone, in his name. He continued and expanded the reforms of Diocletian. As a rule, Constantine maintained his residence in the vicinity of the areas of conflict along the northern border. After defeating Licinius, he moved his primary residence to Byzantium, which he lavishly expanded and renamed Constantinopolis. Very early on, he came into contact with Christianity. His own conversion to the faith is associated with his first victory over a rival to the throne, Maxentius, at the pons Milvius north of Rome. We have every reason to assume that the emperor was a devout Christian, even though his late Roman, superstitious mode of practising his new religion would certainly seem strange to us today.

Shortly after coming to power, Constantine established the weight standard for gold coinage as 1/72 of a Roman pound. This new aureus coin was known as a solidus. The mint-mark can be deciphered as P(ercussa) TR(everis), meaning the coin was struck in Trier.

The rich gold coinage of Constantine provides many insights into the general trend of his policies and sovereign exercise of imperial power. The theme of military victory had progressively come to dominate the imagery of coin-types; a shift in emphasis occurred during the reign of Constantine. In addition to portrayals of concrete victories, the emperor himself was celebrated ever more frequently as "semper victor" over the barbarian peoples. As stated in the legend round the over-sized figure of the emperor, he is "victor omnium gentium".


CONSTANTI
AVGSPFAVG


VICNORQMN
IVMGENTIVM
PTR

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Valerius Licinianus Licinius, AD 308–324

Aureus (AD 317–318)
Mint: Nicomedia

Obverse: LICINIVS – AVGVSTVS
Laureate head of the emperor, to right

Reverse: IOVI CONS – LICINI AVG
On a pedestal inscribed SIC X/SIC XX Jupiter is facing, with head to left. He is leaning on a long sceptre, his robe hanging from his left shoulder. In his right hand he is holding Victoria on the globe. Next to his right foot stands his eagle with its wings spread and a wreath in its beak, head turned to Jupiter. At the right a wreath, in exergue the mint-mark: SMNΔ

Weight: 5.21 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
Literature: RIC 19

The system of tetrarchy established by Diocletian collapsed soon after his abdication in 305. Maxentius and Constantine, own sons of the augusti, rebelled against the artificial line of succession; Maximianus Herculius, co-augustus of Diocletian and the father of Maxentius, returned to the throne as "senior augustus". In 308, Diocletian made a final attempt to reinstate the tetrarchic order by virtue of his authority, but these efforts also failed. Only Licinius, the most recently appointed augustus, was recognised. He allied himself with Constantine, who had defeated Maxentius in the west, and married the former's sister Constantia. A first civil war left only two augusti in power: Licinius in the east of the Roman Empire, and Constantine in the west. In 317, his own son, Licinius iunior, as well as two sons of Constantine, were appointed caesars. Further political problems began to emerge as early as 320, culminating in 324 in the outbreak of the second civil war, which ended in the defeat of the Licinians. Licinius the Elder died shortly thereafter.
Licinius remained a devout pagan. Iuppiter Conservator was invoked again and again in the cointypes, as in the specimen shown here. The legend on the pedestal – SIC X/SIC XX – is a highly abbreviated version of a "Vota" legend. It had long been the practice of Roman emperors to celebrate vows to the gods at certain intervals and on certain occasions. The late Roman emperors did so at the end of each five years of their reign. They vowed to make sacrifices to the gods if the subsequent five-year period was one of success and prosperity; at the same time, such celebrations also served to confirm that the previous set of vows had been kept. In full, the inscription on the coin might read as follows: sic vota decennalia soluta, sic vicennalia devota, or: "Thus was the ten-year vow fulfilled; thus was the vow for twenty felicitous years of rule undertaken". Our specimen was struck in the fourth officina in Nicomedia: S(acra) M(oneta) N(icomedia) Δ (4).


CONSTANTINVS AVG


VICTORIA LAETAE PRINC PERP
SIC
SIC
SMNA

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Flavius Claudius Iulianus, known as Apostata
AD 355–360: caesar; AD 360–363: augustus

Solidus (AD 361–363)
Mint: Antioch

Obverse: FL CL IVLIA – NVS P F AVG (Flavius Claudius Iulianus pius felix augustus)
Bust of the emperor wearing pearl diadem, armour and robe, to right

Reverse: VIRTVS EXERCI – TVS ROMANORVM
The emperor in full armour and helmet, marching to right. He is shouldering a trophy and clutching a half-kneeling prisoner with his right hand. In exergue the mint-mark: ANTΓ (Antioch, third officina)

Weight: 4.23 g · ⌀ 21.6 mm
Literature: Cohen² 79

Julian was a nephew of Constantine the Great. After Constantine's death in 337, nearly his entire family was eradicated in a massacre. He himself and his step-brother Gallus survived the difficult years which followed. Julian was filled with hatred for the Constantinian dynasty. Although he was raised in the faith of Arian Christianity, as a young man he became ever more attracted to ancient pagan rhetoric and philosophy. When the rule of the usurper, Magnentius, came to an end, the Gallic provinces were overrun by Germanic tribes. The situation became precarious, and Emperor Constantius II sent Julian to the west as his caesar. Julian later wrote an account of his long campaigns against the Germanic tribes, which he was finally able to drive out of Roman territory. When Constantius demanded that Julian place large numbers of troops at his disposal for a war against the Persians, the soldiers mutinied and, in the year 360 in Paris (Lutetia Parisiorum), proclaimed Julian emperor. He set out against Constantius, who died in 361, however, before it came to a fight. As sole ruler, Julian embraced paganism and placed himself under the protection of Mithras, the god of sun and light. Barely two years later, in the midst of a Persian campaign, for which he had assembled all available Roman forces at his headquarters in Antioch on the Orontes in Syria, he died in battle knowing that his attempt to reinstate the ancient religions had failed.
The gold coin shown here, which was issued at the time of the great assembly of troops for the Persian campaign, refers directly to these forces. The valour and endurance of the Roman armies are acclaimed in the coin-type and legend. The vanquished enemy is shown in Persian attire. Thus, the type clearly does not celebrate Virtus as such, but rather the concrete preparations for war. This interpretation is also supported by the inordinately large output of gold coinage in Antioch, the site of Julian's headquarters.


FL CLAUDIUS IULIANUS PF AVG


VIRTVS EXERCITVS ROMANORVM
ANTG

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Flavius Valens, AD 364–378

Solidus (AD 364–367)
Mint: Treviri

Obverse: D N VALEN – S P F AVG (dominus noster Valens pius felix augustus)
Bust of the emperor wearing pearl diadem, armour and paludament, to right

Reverse: RESTITVTOR – REIPVBLICAE
The emperor standing in diadem and military attire facing, head turned to right. In his right hand he is holding the labarum, and in his left hand, Victoria on the globe. In exergue the mint-mark: TR ·

Weight: 4.46 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
Literature: RIC 1(c)

Both Valentinian and his brother Valens had completed military careers when, early in the year 369, the former was proclaimed emperor. Shortly thereafter, he elevated Valens to the status of co-augustus in the east, retaining rule of the west for himself. Valens resided in Constantinopolis, and was entrusted with providing for the security of the territories under his rule. The areas along the Black Sea near the mouth of the Danube were most vulnerable to attack. Under pressure from the Huns, the Germanic tribes pushed forward to the west and posed an increasing threat to the Roman frontiers. In 367, Valentinian elevated his elder son, Gratian, to the status of co-emperor. He himself succeeded in fortifying his borders and led a number of major and minor campaigns. Following a period of intensive warfare in 374–375, he died of a stroke while receiving the Quadi emissaries who had come to declare their surrender. Valens subsequently proclaimed the younger son of his deceased brother, Valentinian II, emperor. In 376, Valens acceded to the persistent demands of the Visigoths and other Germanic tribes, allowing them to settle in Roman territory. It was not long before problems arose, however, and Valens decided to take military action against the Goths. The ensuing battle near Hadrianopolis (Edirne – European Turkey) ended in disaster, claiming the life of Valens himself. Ammianus Marcellinus, the chronicler of this period, has harsh words for Valens, whose ruthlessness and brutality made him generally unpopular. His nickname, we are told, was "sabaiarius" – beer-guzzler.
The gold coinage of the final years of Constantine's reign had already lost the force of expression which characterised earlier issues; the style had become rigid and coin-types had degenerated into lifeless portraits of the emperor. On our coin, as well, neither type nor legend refers to contemporary events; both are devoted solely to the imperial figure as such. As a Christian ruler, he is shown bearing the labarum, formerly the imperial standard (vexillum); the banner now bears the monogram of Christ, consisting of the two Greek letters X (Chi) and P (Rho). In the obverse legend he is referred to in the Byzantine manner, as were his successors: D(ominus) N(oster).


D N VALENTINIANVS P F AVG


RESTITVTOR REIPVBLICAE
TRP

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Flavius Theodosius I, known as The Great, AD 379–395

Solidus (AD 383–388)
Mint: Constantinopolis

Obverse: D N THEODO – SIVS P F AVG
Bust of the emperor wearing rosette diadem, armour and paludament, to right

Reverse: CONCORDI – A AVGGG (Concordia augustorum)
The symbolic figure of Constantinopolis on the throne, wearing helmet, to right. Her thyrsus is held erect in her right hand, in her left hand is a shield with the inscription: VOT/X/MVLT/XV. At left behind her is a ship's prow.
Mint-mark: A at the end of the legend, in exergue: CONOB

Weight: 4.46 g · ⌀ 20.1 mm
Literature: RIC 71(b)

Theodosius I, known as The Great, was the last Roman emperor to maintain rule over the Empire as a unified entity. He ruled with an iron hand in an attempt to preserve peaceful conditions in the Empire. In one particular case, he was obliged by the Church to atone for the extreme severity of his actions, and he did penance before Bishop Ambrose. At first, he was unable to take effective countermeasures against Maximus, who had rebelled and eliminated Gratian, Theodosius' co-emperor in the west; however, when Maximus subsequently laid claim to still more territory, Theodosius used military force against him and prevailed over the rival emperor. His attempt to place the Empire under the rule of his two sons, who held equal power, led to the permanent division of Rome into the eastern and western Empires.
Gold coinage of the period was issued in conjunction with the donatives, which came due on the occasion of the imperial "Vota" ceremonies which marked the completion of a certain number of years of the reign. The coin-types of the period contain regular references to the "Vota". The "Vota" series presumably were issued on the occasion of the ceremonies, even though we have no concrete evidence to that effect, and can assume that the issues were struck over an extended period of time. The specimen here is particularly rich in chronological references. By Roman count the year 388 marked the end of the 10-year period. In this type the end of the preceding period is signalled and a new vow for the next ten years is proclaimed. The reverse legend speaks of the spirit of agreement – Concordia – among the three augusti. Valentinian II, Theodosius I and his son Arcadius – the reigning augusti at the time of the coin's issue – thus documented their Concordia on the 19th of January in the year 388, the day marking the tenth anniversary of the accession of Theodosius. At about the same time, he took Galla, the sister of Valentinian II, who had been deposed by Maximus, as his second wife. As history shows, the reigning augusti resolved unanimously to take action against the usurper. An innovative measure was the appointment of a special imperial official, the comes obryziaci, to administer the coinage of obryzum, fine gold; his mark – CONOB – appears on the coins.


D N THEODOSIVS P F AVG


VOT
X
MVLT
XV
CONOB

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Flavius Arcadius, AD 383–408

Solidus (AD 402–408)
Mint: Constantinopolis

Obverse: D N ARCADI – VS P F AVG
Bust of the emperor wearing armour and helmet, shouldering spear, turned slightly to left

Reverse: CONCORDI – A AVGG
The symbolic figure of Constantinopolis is seated, wearing helmet and robe, facing. Her head is turned to right, toward the statuette of Victoria on the globe, which she is holding in her left hand. Behind her, the prow of a ship.
Mint-mark: S at end of the legend, with CONOB in exergue

Weight: 4.43 g · ∅ 19.9 mm
Literature: Ratto 43

Arcadius, the elder son of Theodosius the Great, ruled over the eastern part of the Empire after his father's death in 395. His reign marked the beginning of the final division of the realm into an eastern and a western Empire. Therefore, he is sometimes referred to as the first Byzantine emperor. The period of his reign was dominated by two main concerns: defence of the Empire's borders against foreign attack, particularly by Germanic tribes, as well as the attempt to bring various internal difficulties – problems with the Germanic peoples who had settled within the Empire, disputes within the Church – under control. Harsh decrees were issued against paganism. Whenever the interests of the eastern Empire were at stake, ruthless measures were employed, e.g. in countering the attempts of the Germanic tribes to settle within the boundaries of the Empire. The coin-types contained fewer and fewer references to contemporary events; they tended to focus on celebrating the imperial office, and not on the emperor's specific efforts to further the interests of the realm. Concordia – the spirit of accord between two emperors, which is invoked on our coin – does not lend itself to concrete representation when used in a political context of this nature. It was customary to issue a Concordia-type at the beginning of a new phase of a particular reign – after the death of a co-regent, for example, or on the occasion of the co-optation of a new emperor. Here the type refers to two augusti (AVGG = augustorum duorum); from the time of Arcadius' accession in 383 until his father's death in 395, there were always more than two emperors in office. Beginning in 395, he shared the Empire with his younger brother, Honorius. In 402 he appointed his son Theodosius II as co-regent in the east. The same type continued to be issued thereafter, the only change being a reference to the new co-emperor in the east, as indicated by AVGGG (= augustorum trium). In the west, Honorius had parallel series struck bearing the image of Roma. In all probability, Concordia refers to the agreement between the emperors in the matter of the appointment of Theodosius II.


DN VALENTINIANVS PF AVG


CONCORDI A AVGGG
CONOB

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Flavius Theodosius II, AD 408–450

Solidus AD 443
Mint: Constantinopolis

Obverse: D N THEODOSI – VS P F AVG
Bust of the emperor wearing helmet and armour with shield and shouldered spear, turned slightly to right

Reverse: IMP XXXXII COS – XVII P P
The symbolic figure of Constantinopolis on throne, wearing helmet, holding sceptre in her left hand and orb in her right hand, turned to left. Her shield is leaning against the throne. Mint-mark: star at left, in exergue COMOB

Weight: 4.45 g · ⌀ 21.1 mm
Literature: Ratto 154

The reign of Theodosius II began while he was still a child, first as the co-regent of his father Arcadius, and then, after the latter's death in 408, as sole ruler of the eastern Empire. He was a rather colourless leader. The main concerns of the period were the defence of the northern borders against the Huns and the maintenance of internal peace through arbitration of the disputes over questions of ecclesiastical policy. The Christians of the fifth century were intensely concerned with preserving the purity of Church doctrine, and Theodosius himself took a great interest in the controversies which arose in the councils of the Church. However, he never really developed positions of his own with respect to these questions or any of the pressing defence issues. None the less, his name is associated with a number of structures in Constantinople, such as the Great Wall protecting the city (which can still be seen today) and one of the systematic collections of Roman law, which he had issued in 438: the Codex Theodosianus. The obverse and reverse legends combine to form an impressive imperial appellation. The title D(ominus) N(oster), "our lord", had long been in use, as had the epithets P(ius) and F(elix), meaning "pious" in the sense of loyalty to tradition, and "felicitous", and AVG(ustus). It was a new practice to mark the date on the reverse in the form of imperatorial acclamations. The army had traditionally greeted the victorious imperator on his return from battle with jubilant acclamations. In imperial times, however, all battles were won in the name of the emperor and he himself was considered the victor, even if he had not taken part in the fighting.
Initially, these acclamations referred to actual victories; it was only in late antiquity that the abstract quality of victoriousness came to be seen as an essential attribute of the emperor *per se.* Accordingly, the years of an emperor's reign were apparently enumerated in terms of imperatorial acclamations. Since Theodosius II became emperor in 402, the 42nd acclamation took place in the year 443, as the Romans included the first year of rule in such acclamations. The consulate of an emperor, on the other hand, could extend over a period of several years. Theodosius was COS XVII in the year 439, and COS XVIII in the year 444. The legend ends with the traditional title of P(ater) P(atriae).


DN THEODOSIVS PF AVG


VICTORIA AVGGG
COMOB

ROMAN EMPIRE

Emperor Marcianus, AD 450–457

Semissis (AD 450?)
Mint: Constantinopolis

Obverse: D N MARCIA – NVS P F AVG
The bust of the emperor wearing diadem and robe, to right

Reverse: VICTORIA AVGG
Victoria is seated on a chair surrounded by spoils (armour, helmet, shield), turned to right. She is holding a shield in her lap, upon which she is writing XVXXX. Mint-mark: star at left, at right the monogram of Christ, in exergue CONOB

Weight: 2.22 g · ⌀ 17.6 mm
Literature: Ratto 223

Marcian worked his way up through the ranks of the army; all we know of his lineage is that he was of either Thracian or Illyrian descent. On his deathbed Theodosius II appointed him as his successor. As a matter of form, he married Aelia Pulcheria, the sister of Theodosius, who had been given the title of augusta in 414. They reigned together over the eastern Empire. In 451 he convened the fourth ecumenical council in Chalcedon, which ordained, among other things, that the patriarchate of Constantinopolis should rank second only to that of Rome. Attila, the mighty king of the Huns, died in 453, thus ending what had been a constant threat to the northern borders. Marcian initiated preparations for the reconquest of the North African provinces, where the Vandals had been entrenched for a generation. He died at the age of 65, while still in the midst of assembling his forces.
The semissis, or half solidus, is a rare variant of the fifth-century issues struck on the occasion of the accession of new emperors. A long reign of 40 years is prophesied for the new emperor by the ancient goddess of victory; the Christians retained the concept of Victoria, as well as the traditional "Vota" of imperial times, the vows for preceding and forthcoming periods of imperial reign. The benevolent wishes are being inscribed on a shield. Similar forms of salutation were employed in the acclamations of the emperor by the people and the Senate in Constantinople. The two regents referred to here – AVGG – are Marcian and Pulcheria.


AELIA EVDOXIA AVG


VICTORIA AVGVSTORVM
CONOB

EMPIRE OF THE GREAT KUSHANA

Great King Kanishka I, AD 232–260

Dinar
Mint: Bactra

Obverse: Legend from bottom and round coin: PAONANOPAO KA – NHPKI KOPANO (ŠAONANOŠAO KA – NEŠKI KOŠANO)
Great King with long beard, girded sword, elephant goad and lance-sceptre, at sacrificial altar

Reverse: The four-armed god Śiva with nimbus, standing, in his hands a flask, thunderbolt, trident and goat; at left, the Kushan symbol; at right, the god's name (OESO)

Weight: 7.95 g · ⌀ 19.7 mm
Literature: Göbl, Antike Numismatik 3373

In the course of the migrations which began about AD 130, various nomadic tribes left Central Asia, moving westward. They merged with native populations, giving rise eventually to the Empire of the Kushana. At its height, the Empire extended from Bactria across the Hindu Kush to Benares (Varanasi) on the Ganges, thus including portions of what is now southern Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and northwest India.
The legend, which is in the East Iranian language, has been transcribed in Greek letters. It identifies the coining authority as the "King of Kings Kanishka of the Kushana", the most important ruler of this Empire. The obverse type shows the image of the Great King, facing. The head is too large for the body, the nose is aquiline – probably an accurate likeness of Kanishka. The rendering of the figure as a whole, however, is somewhat clumsy. The Great King is wearing the round decorated headdress and is turned toward the altar at left. He is wearing typical nomadic dress: trousers tied at the ankles, a loose overgarment, and a long cloak fastened at the chest with a brooch. As befits the king, he is portrayed with the attributes of the mighty elephant-rider, his shoulders fringed with flames and carrying the ankus, the spiked elephant goad.
The reverse bears the image of a Hindu deity – Śiva – rather than one of the many Greek, Babylonian and Iranian gods which were also worshipped in the Empire of the Kushana.
The Kushana struck coins in copper and, following the conquest of India, in gold as well. The Roman aurei which poured into the region via maritime trade routes and the Silk Road were the source of coin metal for the whole dinars of the Kushana as well as their double- and quarter-pieces. The weight of the dinar was based on the standard of the early imperial aureus, which weighed 7.8 g. Thus far, we have not been able to assign all of the issues to specific mints of the Empire, one of which was located in Bactra on the Silk Road.

SOUTHERN EMPIRE OF THE KUSHANA

King (unspecified), late fourth century AD

Dinar
Mint: unknown

Obverse: King wearing domed crown with nimbus, girded sword, and sceptre in his left hand, standing at sacrificial altar; behind the altar the trident with ribbon of Śiva, at right the Brāhmī syllables "Vasu"

Reverse: The goddess Ardokšo with nimbus on the throne, in her right hand a ribboned wreath, in her left a cornucopia; at upper left, the Kushan symbol

Weight: 7.80 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
Literature: B. Peus Nachf., Auktion 296, cf. 213 ff.

Following the division of the realm around AD 325/330, the southeastern part of the Empire had its centre in India, in the area along the upper course of the Ganges, near what is today Delhi. The division of the Kushan Empire was also reflected in the coinage. Whereas in the northern half of the Empire coins became cup-shaped, those of the southern, Indian part remained flat.
While the syllables "Vasu" refer to a king called Vāsudeva, our coin is presumably an imitation of an issue struck by an earlier king of that name. The use of a somewhat thicker, smaller flan was characteristic of the dinars of the later period; the surface is no longer large enough to accommodate the entire type. The legends are missing on both sides of our coin; on the obverse, the altar and the upper portion of the – presumably – pointed crown were left off; the upper segment of the Kushan symbol, as well as the left side of the throne, are missing from the reverse. The syllables in Brāhmī next to the king and the robe tapering to two long points at the end were typical of the later issues. The nimbus around the head was introduced during the reign of the Great King Huvishka (260–292). It emphasises the elevated status of the ruler.
The reverse shows Ardokšo, an Iranian goddess who was very popular among the Kushana and thus often portrayed; it was only after the division of the Empire that coins issued in the south portrayed her as seated on the throne. The cornucopia indicates her affinity with Fortuna.

GUPTA EMPIRE

King Chandragupta II, AD 380–414

Dinar
Mint: unknown

Obverse: Legend from top running round the coin, transcribed: Deva – Śrī Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Candraguptah
Standing king with nimbus, bow and arrow; at right behind him, the standard with the Garuda bird, under his left arm, the Brāhmī syllables "Candra"

Reverse: The goddess Lakshmī seated on a lotus, in her hands a long-stemmed lotus blossom and ribbons, next to her, from top to bottom the legend: Śrī vikkramah

Weight: 7.90 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
Literature: Allan 88

The Gupta Empire was founded in the early fourth century AD along the middle course of the Ganges. At its height during the reign of King Chandragupta II, it extended over all of northern India from the western to the eastern coast.
The portrayal of the king as an archer was the most frequently used type on the gold coins of this ruler. The Gupta not only adopted the weight standard of the Kushana – which had been derived from that of the Romans – but also modelled their types on Kushan issues, as is revealed by certain details of our coin. As was the case with the kings of the Kushana, Chandragupta II is shown standing, turned to the left with feet spread. His stance is not rigid, however; the curve of his body, which is accentuated by his thin, close-fitting garment, makes the king seem much more lively and elegant than comparable royal types of the Kushana. Here, as well, the nimbus surrounds the head. The trident has been replaced by a standard with the Garuda, the bird ridden by the god Vishnu. His wife Lakshmī appears in the reverse type of our coin, which is quite indistinct. The Kushan goddess Ardokšo served as the model for this image.
The inscription, which is divided between the obverse and reverse, states the king's name and title in Brāhmī.

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Emperor Anastasius, AD 491–518

Tremissis
Mint: Constantinopolis

Obverse: D N ANASTA – SIVS PP AVG (dominus noster Anastasius perpetuus augustus)
Bust of the emperor wearing pearl diadem, to right

Reverse: VICTORIA AVGVSTORVM
Victoria walking to right, with head turned backward. In her right hand she is carrying a wreath, in her outstretched left hand, the orb; in exergue, CONOB

Weight: 1.50 g · ⌀ 14.3 mm
Literature: CMB Paris 23

Although Rome had in fact been divided into an eastern and a western Empire for nearly a century at the time of Anastasius' accession, the period of his reign is generally regarded as the initial phase of the evolution of the Byzantine Empire as an autonomous entity. Earlier numismatic literature dated the onset of that development in the fifth century. To be sure, Diocletian and Constantine the Great had already laid the groundwork around the year 300. In terms of its political consciousness and sense of identity, however, Byzantium perceived itself as part of a continuum, i. e. as the Roman Empire *per se.* As the last emperor of the Isaurian dynasty, Anastasius brought to a close a period of unrest characterised by religious disputes and various other internal economic and organisational problems. The Germanic tribes and other such groups continued to press their demands for areas of settlement, bringing war and pillage to the territories in question. It took many years for Anastasius to prevail over his rivals, who were partisans of his predecessors. Religious strife persisted. The emperor gave his support to the Monophysites, one of the factions involved. The two major Circus parties, the Blues and the Greens – both of whom were active in the political arena as well – openly demonstrated their power; the Blue faction publicly declared its opposition to him. The final years of the emperor's rule were marked by internal unrest. Of the many organisational reforms attempted by Anastasius, his reform of the coinage system, which reintroduced a finely differentiated range of small denominations struck in copper, endured longest.
The third-solidus, known as triens or tremissis, was the most prevalent gold denomination of the time. The image of Victoria, which had appeared on the half-pieces and other denominations of Roman coinage for centuries, was retained as the characteristic reverse of the Byzantine tremissis.


D N VALENTINIANVS P F AVG


VICTORIA AVGVSTORVM
CONOB

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Emperor Justinianus I, known as The Great, AD 527–565

Solidus (AD 538–547)
Mint: Constantinopolis (?)

Obverse: D N IVSTINI – ANVS PP AVG
Bust of the emperor in armour, facing. In his right hand the orb, in his left a shield

Reverse: VICTORI – A AVGGG
Victoria facing, in her right hand the long cross, in her left the globe.
Mint-mark: at right, a star; in exergue, CONOB

Weight: 4.41 g · ⌀ 21.0 mm
Literature: CMB Paris 9

Justinian – whose full name, Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Justinianus, however, never appeared on coins – was of humble origin. He was brought to Constantinopolis by his uncle, Justinus, who provided for his education. After becoming emperor, Justinus made his young nephew one of his advisors, appointing him co-emperor shortly before his death. Justinian championed the idea of a Christian Empire which would encompass all of the Roman Empire, as evidenced by his reforms and, in particular, by his energetic implementation of measures to reconquer the provinces which had broken away from the Empire – a very difficult task. At the same time, he had to defend the northern borders against the Avars and other peoples, and the eastern frontiers against the Persians, the traditional enemies of Rome. His other primary concerns were the implementation of internal reforms and the resolution of ecclesiastical problems. The second great Byzantine legal code, compilation of which began in 528, bears his name. More than any of his predecessors on the throne, he proved to be master of the Church. In the space of just a few years, he built the church of St. Sophia (Hagia Sophia) in the capital city. He eliminated the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy as well as that of the Vandals in North Africa. His reforms had a favourable effect on the economy; commerce flourished as seldom before, with a system of trade routes reaching as far as China and Aksum, in what is today Ethiopia.
The Empire of this last Roman imperator to occupy the throne of emperor had long since become Christian. The absolute power of the Christian emperor, who ruled by the grace of God, finds concrete expression in a new coin-type: Justinian is shown in armour and helmet, with a shield bearing the image of the barbarian foe, who has been ridden down; the orb, a familiar symbol since the late fourth century, is no longer held by Victoria, but is in the hand of the emperor himself. The appellation has also undergone change. Instead of the Roman epithets P(ius) and F(elix), it reads P(er) P(etuus) AVG(ustus) – "everlasting emperor"; by virtue of his divine mission, he now transcends the older form of piety (pius) – the sense of loyalty to tradition as a virtue of the earlier Roman emperors – and is no longer subject to the vicissitudes of fortune (felix). Our coin has been assigned to the mint at Constantinopolis, but this is still open to question.


DN CONSTANTINVS PF AVG


VICTORIA AVGGG
CONOB

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Emperor Justinus II, AD 565–578

Solidus
Mint: Constantinopolis

Obverse: D N IVSTI – NVS PP AVG
Bust of the emperor in armour and helmet, facing. He holds Victoria on the globe in his right hand, and in his left a shield

Reverse: VICTORI – A AVGGG
Constantinopolis on the throne, facing, with helmeted head turned to right. She is holding the orb with cross in her left hand, and in her right hand she is holding a spear erect. Mint-mark: I at end of legend; in exergue, CONOB

Weight: 4.32 g · ⌀ 20.4 mm
Literature: CMB Paris 2ff. type with I; DOC 4i

Justinian I had restored the lost territories to the Empire and greatly expanded its power. However, he did not succeed in revitalising the antiquated system of government. His nephew and successor to the throne, Justinus II, was unable to maintain rule over the territories conquered or recovered by his uncle; the Lombards invaded Italy and in Hispania the Visigoths were on the offensive. Cordoba fell in 584, and only a few decades later the entire region was under the control of the Visigoths. However, Justinus faced his most critical challenge on the eastern frontier, in the war with the Persians. As so often in the past, Armenia was at stake. Byzantium could no longer rely on the Germanic tribes for military support. Armenia was seen as a new source of mercenaries. After twenty years of tough fighting, the war finally ended in Byzantium's favour in 591, owing largely to internal turmoil in the Persian Empire.
In the meantime, the wide range of denominations of earlier years had grown smaller. Only the basic units – the solidus and its third-piece, the triens or tremissis – were still struck in gold, the latter being particularly popular beyond the Byzantine borders. The volume of the issues was very large. Our specimen bears an interesting variant type; such portrayals are actually quite rare, for, in Byzantium, the vivid, expressive types of earlier Roman issues had evolved into rigid, unimaginative images. Even victories in battle, which were of crucial importance for the emperor's image, rarely found adequate expression in coin-types. The type on our coin, however, reveals the desire to document such a victory – or rather, the emperor's essential quality of victoriousness – no doubt because the situation at the time was so critical. In place of the usual imperial insignia, the emperor bears martial symbols of victory – the shield and Victoria on the globe; on the reverse type, on the other hand, Constantinopolis, the personification of the imperial capital, bears his insigne, the orb with cross. Emperor Justinus, for whom military successes were crucial, invokes victory in much the same way as had his pagan predecessors. Here, however, the invocation makes use of neutral imagery which lends itself to Christian interpretation; in his hand the emperor holds the Victoria figure, who extends to him the wreath of victory.

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Emperor Heraclius I and his sons, AD 610–641

Solidus (AD 632–638)
Mint: Constantinopolis

Obverse: In the centre, the standing figure of Heraclius with long beard. At right, Heraclius Constantinus, and at left, the young Heracleonas. Two of the figures are wearing the diadem with cross, all three are wearing the chlamys and holding the orb. At left, a cross

Reverse: VICTORIA AVSꞀ
Cross potent on base with three steps. Mint-mark: Δ at end of legend, at right the monogram of Christ; in exergue, CONOB

Weight: 4.49 g · ⌀ 21.5 mm
Literature: CMB Paris type 41 with *A*

The reign of Heraclius, who eventually shared power with his sons, was marked by intense efforts to revitalise the Byzantine Empire, and, at the same time, by bitter warfare. The Slavs began their incursions in the north, where Byzantium was still fighting to defend its territory against the Avars. In the east, after an extremely difficult war, it finally succeeded in defeating Persia once and for all. As far as we can tell from the few historical sources available to us, Heraclius implemented a thorough-going reorganisation of the Byzantine Empire. The administrative system and the military were completely restructured. A long period of development was necessary before these institutions evolved into their definitive forms; they were the basis for the expansion of imperial power in the mid-Byzantine period. Initially, Asia Minor was the focus of the new reforms. The central administration in the capital underwent significant changes as well. The Church supported Heraclius both in his reforms and in his military campaigns.
The obverse types of the solidi, with their precise representation of the individual phases of the reign within the imperial family, allow us to date the issues with a great deal of accuracy. While understandable from the dynasty's point of view at that time, it is unusual in antiquity for images of three regents to be placed on the obverse of coins. The reverse reflects the profound changes which had taken place in the Byzantine state. Aside from the Victoria legend, nothing on the coin recalls its late Roman predecessors. The cross on a base with three steps, which had already been used during the reign of Tiberius II Constantinus (578–582), now became the dominant feature of the reverse type. Cursive letters are utilised for the first time in the inscription round the coin.


VICTORIA
CONOB

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Emperor Constans II Pogonatus, AD 641–668

Solidus (AD 647–651)
Mint: Carthage

Obverse: D N CONS – TANTIN
Bust of the emperor wearing diadem with cross and chlamys, facing. In his right hand he is holding the orb

Reverse: VICTORI – AVGG
Cross potent on base with three steps. Mint-mark: ΔB at end of legend; in exergue, CONOB

Weight: 4.42 g · ⌀ 10.7 mm
Literature: CMB Paris cf. 4

Constans (a diminutive of Constantinus, his actual name) was the grandson of Heraclius by his first wife. He was only 11 years old when he took the throne, as a result of palace intrigues. Government was in the hands of the Senate, which in the seventh century had regained the power it had lost during the reign of Justinian I. Arab expansion constituted a growing threat to the Empire. A defeat off the Lycian coast in 655 put an end to Byzantine maritime supremacy. The situation would have become ever more precarious, had internal turmoil within the caliphate not forced the Arabs to make peace with Byzantium. In 658 Constans turned his attention to the western part of the Empire. He even entertained the anachronistic idea of moving the seat of his government from Constantinopolis back to the west. His plan was to reign from Sicily. He was the last of the Byzantine emperors to set foot on Italian soil with military forces; from there he advanced on Rome. His despotic attitude vis-à-vis the Church was only one of the reasons for his growing unpopularity. In 668 he fell victim to a conspiracy organised by members of his inner circle.
In line with the western orientation of his policies, he had gold coins struck in Carthage, although the minting of gold coinage was a privilege reserved primarily for the seats of government, in particular Constantinopolis. The obverse shows a portrait of the emperor with the beginnings of a beard. Later he had a very long beard, which accounts for his cognomen Pogonatus – "the bearded one"; thus, this coin probably dates from the early years of his reign. Moreover, he was joined on the throne by his son Constantinus IV in 654, and by his two younger sons in 659. During the reign of Constans the grecianisation of the administrative system continued unabated; the legends on coins appeared more and more frequently in Greek. As a product of the earlier phase of coinage, our specimen still bears the Latin inscription as well as the familiar image of the cross on the stepped pedestal. The flan used in minting this coin was significantly smaller – but, on the other hand, much thicker – than those of the solidi struck in Constantinopolis.

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Emperor Constans II Pogonatus and his sons Constantinus IV, Heraclius and Tiberius, AD 654–659–668

Solidus (AD 659–668)
Mint: Constantinopolis

Obverse: D N CONST – ANЧCI
Two busts, facing; at left, Constans II with long beard, at right, smaller, Constantinus IV, both wearing diadem with cross and chlamys. In the centre, a cross

Reverse: VICTORIA – AVSЧ
To left of the cross potent on base with three steps, Heraclius standing; at right, smaller, Tiberius, both wearing diadem with cross and chlamys; each holds an orb in his right hand. Mint-mark: I at end of legend; in exergue, CONOB

Weight: 4.48 g · ⌀ 18.9 mm
Literature: CMB Paris type 63

Constans II was not only confronted with problems of foreign and domestic policy; he also had to deal with conflicts within the dynasty. In this area, as well, he was ruthless and despotic. In 654 he appointed his elder son, Constantinus IV, as co-regent, thus passing over his brother Theodosius. After proceeding to appoint his younger sons augusti in 659, he forced his brother into the priesthood in 660, in order to prevent him from asserting any claim to the throne. Nevertheless, the emperor had him murdered shortly thereafter for allegedly plotting his overthrow. The people of Constantinopolis were outraged by this act of fratricide; they called the emperor "Cain" and he became the target of their undisguised hatred. This is said to have been Constans' primary motivation for moving his residence from Constantinopolis to the west.
The preceding specimens of Byzantine gold coinage have shown us that the types employed were limited in their imagery to conveying imperial power – the power of an emperor who rules by divine right. These images seem completely devoid of the earlier delight in narrative portrayal. And yet, one element – the dynastic theme – while personal in nature, continued to find vivid expression. The emperors were concerned with resolving the ever-present question of succession during their own lifetimes and in accordance with their own interests; all too often, they chose members of their families as successors to the throne, employing whichever legal form best suited their purposes. Thus; young princes were made official co-regents who shared the power of the emperor. In Byzantium, the style of portraiture was not at all inclined to be realistic. While children of the imperial family could not be portrayed as childlike figures, it was indeed possible to convey their age-related differences in rank. Accordingly, in such dynastic types, the younger co-regents were shown in terms of varying heights, resulting in a "group portrait" which strikes us as somewhat peculiar today.

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Emperor Justinianus II, AD 685–695; 705–711

Solidus (AD 692–695)
Mint: Constantinopolis

Obverse: JESUS CHRISTUS REX REGNANTIUM (transcribed)
Bust of Christ in stola and colobium, his right hand raised in blessing. In his left hand he holds the Gospels. Behind his head, a cross

Reverse: DOMINUS JUSTINIANUS SERVUS CHRISTI (transcribed)
The type is off-centre; as a result, the left half of the legend is missing. The emperor is standing, wearing diadem with cross and the embroidered ceremonial robe, facing; in his right hand he is holding the cross potent on base with three steps. Mint-mark: G (?) at end of legend

Weight: 4.46 g · ⌀ 18.8 mm
Literature: CMB Paris 08

In 685, when he was only 16, Justinian II succeeded his father Constantinus IV, who died prematurely. His lust for power and extremely despotic nature soon became manifest. None the less, he saw himself as the representative of the great tradition symbolised by the name he bore, and had a keen perception of the exigencies of his time. Peace on the Arab frontier in the east allowed the emperor to turn his attention to the Balkans. In the years 688–689 he broke through the Slavic forces massed to the west of Constantinopolis, proceeding on toward Thessalonike; he subsequently had the conquered Slavs settle in Asia Minor. Other settlement measures followed, which were designed to further the growth of the "themes" or provinces in question. The emperor also gave preferential treatment to independent small farmers, to the disadvantage of the proprietors of the latifundia, the great feudal landlords. In the process, he introduced fundamental changes in the taxation system, again to the advantage of the small landowners. Revolt was imminent. The Circus party of the Blue faction proclaimed the strategus Leontius emperor and deposed Justinian. Justinian's nose was cut off; this mutilation was considered a sign that he was unfit to rule. He was banished. However, in 705, he returned "rhinotmetos" – with a mutilated nose, as his cognomen says – and took merciless revenge on his enemies.
Justinian II was a deeply religious ruler. During his first reign he committed himself completely to the service of Christ, who is portrayed on the obverse of the coins as the "King of Kings", blessing and teaching mankind. The emperor chose for himself the humble appellation "servus Christi", the servant of Christ; his image appears on the reverse of the coin, symbolic of his subordinate position. The inscription is written exclusively in cursive letters.

KINGDOM OF THE OSTROGOTHS IN ITALY

King Theoderic, known as The Great, AD 474–526

Solidus (AD 518–526)
Mint: Roma

Obverse: D N IVSTI – NVS P F AVG
Bust of the emperor in armour and helmet, facing. He is shouldering a spear and holding a shield

Reverse: VICTOR – I – A AVGGG
Victoria standing, turned slightly to left, with long cross. Mint-mark: A at end of legend, at left, a star; in exergue, COMOB

Weight: 4.37 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
Literature: MIB 24

Theoderic, son of the Amalian Thiudimer, was held hostage in Constantinopolis from 461 to 470/71. After becoming king in 474, he led his people out of Macedonia to the lower Danube region. Emperor Xenon placed territory at his disposal for settlement purposes. Probably at about the same time, Theoderic was also appointed to the rank of patrician in Constantinopolis; this was only one of the positions he held in this period. Troubled years followed. The Ostrogoths invaded the Balkan peninsula, advancing as far as Dalmatia, at times as the eastern Empire's allies and at other times as its foes. In 488 Theoderic took his people to Italy, where, on behalf of the emperor, he led them in battle against Odoacer, whom he finally defeated in 493, after years of battle. It was not until 497 that Emperor Anastasius I recognised Theoderic as the king and administrator of Italy in his name, and conferred high honorary privileges upon the Ostrogoth ruler. Under his administration, settlement of the Goths in Italy was accomplished in relatively peaceful fashion, and he laid the groundwork for the co-existence of his people with the Romans. His policy of tolerance and friendly relations with Rome brought peace and prosperity to his domain. His political astuteness in arranging marriages for his offspring soon made him the undisputed leader of the Germanic kings. The last years of his reign were marked by growing animosity toward the Goths in Italy, eliciting a harsh reaction from the king; as an Arianist, he now ordered the persecution of orthodox Christians. He died in 526 and was interred in the mausoleum that he had constructed in Ravenna.
The right to strike gold coins was, in principle, a prerogative of the emperor. While, in effect, relatively autonomous, the kings of the various tribes abided, with few exceptions, by this rule. Thus, the gold coinage of Theoderic always bore the types of the imperial issues and the name of the reigning emperor.

KINGDOM OF THE FRANKS

King Theodebert I, AD 534–548

Solidus
Mint: Mogontiacum (?)

Obverse: D N THЄODЄ – BЄRTVS C
Bust of the king in helmet and armour, facing, shouldering a spear and holding a shield

Reverse: VICTOR – A AVGGG
Victoria standing, facing. She is holding a long cross in her right hand and an orb in her left hand. Mint-mark: at right a star, beneath which M;
in exergue, CONOB

Weight: 4.35 g · ⌀ 18.0 mm
Literature: Prou 44

Theodebert was a son of the Frankish king Theuderic. He distinguished himself in battle at an early age. As king, he pursued a policy of expansion; among other things, he invaded northern Italy in 539. Apparently, however, his Italian campaign was meant to be only the first step in a much more ambitious plan of conquest. In any event, he boasted that he was the ruler over all the territories from the ocean to the border of Pannonia. Gaul in particular enjoyed relative peace and prosperity under his rule.
By issuing gold solidi such as the one pictured here, Theodebert violated the rule that only the emperor's name and portrait might be placed on gold coins. Byzantium did indeed protest against this action, as can be gathered from the irate account of Procopius, the Byzantine chronicler of the time. And the practice was, in fact, not continued by Theodebert's successor. With the exception of the obverse legend, Frankish issues continued to employ the same designs as those which appeared on Byzantine coinage, if only because such immediately recognisable types guaranteed their acceptance. One cannot help noticing the rather poor workmanship of the dies employed. The abbreviation M on the reverse is perhaps the first reference to a mint in Mainz. On a comparable solidus which also bears the name and bust of King Theodebert, Cologne, the seat of his court, is given as the mint location.

KINGDOM OF THE VISIGOTHS IN HISPANIA

King Svinthila, AD 621–631

Tremissis
Mint: Barbi

Obverse: + SVINTILA REI
Schematic bust of the king, facing

Reverse: + PIVS BARBI
Same as obverse

Weight: 1.43 g · ⌀ 20.4 mm
Literature: Miles 224 h (I at end of obverse legend)

The emperor initially granted the Visigoths a settlement area in what is today southwestern France. Tolosa (Toulouse) was their seat of court. By 507, they expelled the Franks from their territory, driving them into the region south of the Pyrenees, and by the early seventh century, they had taken possession of the entire Iberian peninsula.
Svinthila had distinguished himself as a general under King Sisebut, and later became his son-in-law; in 621 he was elected king of the Visigoths. He expelled the Byzantines from southern Spain and secured the northern borders against attack. In 625 he appointed his son, wife and brother as his co-regents. This aroused discontent in his domain. The nobility rose up in protest against his expropriatory policies; in Sisenand they found a capable leader for their revolt. He succeeded in defeating Svinthila, whereupon he deposed him and took the throne himself.
Very early on, the Visigoths developed extensive coinage of their own. Their issues declined in value during the late fifth century. In Hispania it was some time before Visigoth coinage regained its former position. Minting activities had already been decentralised during the reign of King Leovigild; the place of coinage was quite clearly indicated. At one time, 32 different mints were in operation, roughly ten of which – larger cities, bishoprics, regional centres – were still in existence by the end of the seventh century. The designs of the issues were extremely varied, depending on the place of coinage. All Visigoth coins, however, are characterised by a rough fabric and bold, clear-cut lines. The die-cutters obviously employed very sharp tools; the dies were probably made of iron which had been either poorly hardened or not hardened at all.

KINGDOM OF THE LOMBARDS

Reign of Emperor Mauricius Tiberius, AD 582–602

Tremissis
Place of coinage: unknown

Obverse: Two-part legend composed of pseudo-letters. The bust of the emperor wearing pearl diadem and robe, to right

Reverse: Continuous legend composed of pseudo-letters. Standing figure of Victoria, facing; orb in left hand. In exergue, pseudo-letters approximating to CONOB

Weight: 1.43 g · ⌀ 16.8 mm
Literature: Arslan 4

In 567, the Lombards migrated from Pannonia to Italy, and initially they continued the Germanic tradition of coinage in Italy by copying the prevalent Byzantine types. In contrast to the gold coins of the Ostrogoths, the coins of the Lombards were true copies. The legends were completely corrupted in the process, as the die-cutters obviously did not understand Latin, and were perhaps even illiterate. None the less, among the imitation characters, one can make out the characteristic shape of the letter M of "Mauricius Tiberius" to the left of the bust on the obverse; one can also "decipher" the long Victoria-Augustorum legend on the reverse. The coin impressions on the gold-leaf cross of Novara (now in Nuremberg) can be assigned to an even earlier period, the reign of Justinus II (565–578). We can be certain that the Lombards began to strike their own (barbarised) versions of Byzantine tremisses immediately after arriving in Italy.

These Lombard imitations of Byzantine trients are similar to the "Celtic coinage", in so far as the written elements of the type – legends, inscriptions, monograms – were the first to be distorted. The local engravers may have understood the language involved (e.g. Greek, Latin), but probably could not read or write; most likely, however, they did not even know the language they were copying. When making a copy, particular attention was paid to the familiar marks or images which served to guarantee the coin's value: for example, the bust of the emperor, while perhaps clumsy, was always rendered in such a way as to be a recognisable figure. The letters of the inscription, on the other hand, soon degenerated into decorative images, devoid of their original meaning. Whenever the individual letters which inspired the designs are still discernible, these are referred to as "pseudo-letters" (false letters). They take the place of the legend.

KINGDOM OF THE FRANKS

Merovingians

Tremissis (sixth century AD)
Mint-master: Gennigisil...?
Place of coinage: unknown

Obverse: + SILVIAV. Head, to right

Reverse: + GENNIGI~IL. Anchor cross

Weight: 1.23 g · ⌀ 11.1 mm
Literature: Prou 2634

When the Franks began minting their own coins, they struck very few solidi; the tremissis was their main denomination. As the central power of the monarchy gradually declined, the right to mint coins was exercised by any number of other authorities in any number of places. It was common practice to appoint a moneyer to carry out the minting of coins. As he was always responsible for the production process, he had his name placed on the coins. He was responsible for seeing to it that the coins were of the correct weight and purity. Larger cities, large landowners, bishops, monasteries, royal domains, the treasury and many other entities as well had their own moneyers. Some were permanent officials who served a particular coining authority, while others operated workshops and minted coins on a contract basis. A mid-eighth century edict stipulated that a moneyer was entitled to keep one of every 22 solidi he struck, in order to defray the costs of minting.

Despite the wide variety of types employed, the so-called Merovingian moneyer issues retained a certain uniformity of design. The variations on the basic head and cross designs are standard features of the Merovingian types. The inscriptions, while occasionally difficult to make out, are generally legible. Toward the end of the sixth century, the purity of the gold progressively declined. In the second half of the seventh century, silver gradually replaced gold as the metal of coinage. Denarii were reintroduced and the name "dinarius" already appeared on the initial series of silver issues.

KINGDOM OF THE LOMBARDS

Duchy of Benevento

Duke Arichis II, AD 758–787

Tremissis
Mint: Beneventum (?)

Obverse: + DNS VI – CTORIA
Bust of bearded figure wearing diadem with cross and robe, facing

Reverse: VITIRV – PRINPI
Cross potent, above which four dots, dividing the legend.
Mint-mark: at left, A; in exergue and/or at beginning and end of legend: C·ONO·B

Weight: 1.28 g · ⌀ 15.5 mm
Literature: Arslan 92

The Lombards, who according to legend originally came from Gotland or Scania, inhabited the lower Elbe region around the time of Christ's birth. In the fifth century, following an eventful period in which the Lombards were a part of a federation of Germanic tribes, some of the Lombards migrated southward. Around 490 they occupied parts of Noricum (in what is today Austria), extending their domain as far as Pannonia, the neighbouring territory to the east. They adopted the faith of Arian Christianity. Emperor Justinian I gave them parts of lower Pannonia. From there they migrated to Italy under the leadership of their king, Alboin, in 567. Pavia eventually became the centre of their kingdom. Further south, the duchies of Spoleto and Benevento emerged. In the seventh century the Lombards embraced Catholicism. Lombard rule in Italy came to an end in 774, as a result of the victory of the Frankish king Charles, who was to become the emperor Charlemagne.
Their coinage – or, more specifically, their gold coinage – continued to be patterned on the familiar Byzantine models. In particular, the Byzantine denominations were retained to ensure exchangeability. The tremissis (one-third solidus) was still the most popular denomination in gold. The bust on the obverse of our coin is reminiscent of the later types of the dynasty of Heraclius, and the reverse image is also based on the type with the cross potent on the stepped pedestal. Economically speaking, the domain of the duchy of Benevento was more closely tied to the Byzantine trading area than it was to the core of the kingdom in Lombardy. Therefore, it is easy to see why the Byzantine coin-type was adopted. Otherwise, Lombard issues clearly reflected the growing autonomy vis-à-vis the Byzantine Empire which characterised the transition to the Middle Ages. Although there is no concrete evidence of economic problems at the time, the light gold colour of our coin might be an indication that a relatively low-grade alloy containing silver was used for this issue.

CATALOGUE OF THE ANCIENT GOLD COINS IN THE COIN COLLECTION OF THE DEUTSCHE BUNDESBANK

All coins are shown at their actual size. With the exception of the specimens in the colour plates, all coins less than 9 mm in diameter are illustrated at three times their actual size at the end of the catalogue.

The coins of the Greek world are listed in a geographical rather than a chronological sequence, beginning with Italy in the west and running clockwise around the Mediterranean.

GREEK WORLD


Etruria

Populonia?

1 25 litrae (c. 400 BC), Populonia?
1.41 g · ⌀ 12.1 mm
Sambon 2. – Inv. 221/79


Calabria

Taras

2 Obol (c. 334/333 BC), Taras
0.66 g · ⌀ 8.5 mm
Ravel 1864. – Inv. 511/62


3 Half stater (c. 302 BC), Taras
4.24 g · ⌀ 14.3 mm
Ravel 26. – Inv. 3528

PLATE 18


Lucania

Metapontum

4 1/3 stater (c. 330 BC), Metapontum
2.89 g · ⌀ 12.5 mm
BMC 1. – Inv. 2450


Sicily

Syracuse

5 Stater of 100 litrae (c. 413–390 BC), Syracuse
Die-engraver Euaenetus
5.75 g · ⌀ 14.8 mm
SNG Lloyd 1422. – Inv. 2193/68

PLATE 9


6 50 litrae (c. 413–390 BC), Syracuse
Die-engraver Euaenetus?
2.89 g · ⌀ 11.3 mm
Collections Roger Peyrefitte 32. – Inv. 2989


Agathocles, 317–289 BC

7 40 litrae (317–310 BC), Syracuse
2.83 g · ⌀ 13.4 mm
BMC cf. 343. – Inv. 98/62


8 25 litrae, electrum (304–289 BC), Syracuse
3.49 g · ⌀ 15.1 mm
Jenkins O 18/R 34. – Inv. 362/79


Hiero II, 275–215 BC
9 Drachma, Syracuse
4.24 g · ⌀ 16.5 mm
Walter Niggeler Collection 172. – Inv. 643/65

PLATE 23


Kingdom of Macedon
Philip II, 359–336 BC
10 Stater (323/2–315 BC), Pella
8.59 g · ⌀ 18.5 mm
Le Rider 458. – Inv. 1876

PLATE 11


11 Stater (323/2–315 BC), Pella
8.50 g · ⌀ 19.0 mm
Le Rider 548 var. – Inv. 1102


12 1/4 stater (323/2–310 BC), Pella
2.15 g · ⌀ 11.3 mm
Le Rider 129. – Inv. 295/66


Kingdom of Macedon
Alexander III, known as The Great, 336–323 BC
13 Double stater (c. 330/25–318 BC), Sicyon
17.01 g · ⌀ 21.6 mm
Newell and Noe 7. – Inv. 2029/61

PLATE 12


14 Stater of the year 18 (Σ) = 316/315 BC, Sidon
8.85 g · ⌀ 18.3 mm
Newell, Sidon 49. – Inv. 1774/61


15 Stater of the year 19 (T) = 315/314 BC, Sidon
8.62 g · ⌀ 18.8 mm
Newell, Sidon 51. – Inv. 1773/61


16 Stater, Babylon
8.55 g · ⌀ 18.0 mm
SNG Berry cf. 181/182. – Inv. 1772/61


17 Stater, Susa
8.41 g · ⌀ 18.0 mm
SNG Ashmolean Museum 3106. – Inv. 2211


18 Stater
8.58 g · ⌀ 17.6 mm
Müller 1593. – Inv. 7/60


19 Drachma, Paphos
4.31 g · ⌀ 14.7 mm
Bank Leu AG, Auktion 13, 122. – Inv. 272/75


20 1/4 stater, Miletus
2.12 g · ⌀ 10.1 mm
Müller 585. – Inv. 10/65


Philip III Arridaius, 323–317 BC

21 Stater, Acanthus
8.59 g · ⌀ 18.3 mm
Müller 23. – Inv. 1875


Kingdom of Thrace

Lysimachus, 323–305–281 BC

22 Stater (297/6–282/1 BC), Lampsacus
8.46 g · ⌀ 19.3 mm
Thompson 39. – Inv. 395/67

PLATE 16


Mysia

Cyzicus

23 Hekte (1/6 stater), electrum (550–c. 475 BC), Cyzicus
2.61 g · ⌀ 10.1 mm
von Fritze 85. – Inv. 223/63

24 Hekte (1/6 stater), electrum (550–c. 475 BC), Cyzicus
2.64 g · ⌀ 10.4 mm
von Fritze 46 (as stater). – Inv. 104/62

25 Hekte (1/6 stater), electrum (550–c. 475 BC), Cyzicus
2.69 g · ⌀ 10.8 mm
von Fritze 103. – Inv. 105/62

26 Stater, electrum (c. 475 BC), Cyzicus
15.93 g · ⌀ 19.5 mm
von Fritze 119. – Inv. 1937/71

PLATE 6

27 Stater, electrum (c. 400–350 BC), Cyzicus
16.04 g · ⌀ 17.5 mm
von Fritze 217. – Inv. 106/62

PLATE 8

Lampsacus

28 Stater, electrum (c. 450 BC), Lampsacus
15.13 g · Size: 21.9 x 14.2 mm
Baldwin, Electrum Coinage p. 9,1 o. – Inv. 107/62

PLATE 7

29 Stater (before 350 BC), Lampsacus
8.42 g · ⌀ 18.2 mm
Baldwin, Gold Staters, p. 23 f, 17, Pl. II, 3. – Inv. 515/62

Island of Lesbos

Mytilene

30 Hekte (1/6 stater), electrum (c. 331–326 BC), Mytilene
2.52 g · ⌀ 10.4 mm
Bodenstedt M 69. – Inv. 649/65

31 Hekte (1/6 stater), electrum (c. 331–326 BC), Mytilene
2.54 g · ⌀ 11.2 mm
Bodenstedt M 80. – Inv. 12/60

PLATE 15

Ionia


32 Stater, electrum (c. 630 BC), Ephesus? PLATE 1
14.30 g · Size: 16.1 x 24.2 mm
G. Kastner, Auktion 4, 89. – Inv. 346/74


33 1/12 stater, electrum (c. 600–550 BC) PLATE 2
1.08 g · ∅ 8.3 mm
Babelon cf. Pl. III, 7. – Inv. 571/74


34 1/24 stater, electrum (c. 600–550 BC)
0.68 g · ∅ 7.3 mm
SNG v. Aulock 1778. – Inv. 769/73


35 1/24 stater, electrum (c. 600 BC) PLATE 2
0.43 g · ∅ 5.7 mm
Babelon Pl. I, 13. – Inv. 745/71


36 1/96 stater, electrum (c. 600–550 BC) PLATE 2
0.18 g · ∅ 4.8 mm
Babelon cf. Pl. III, 25. – Inv. 466/72


37 1/96 stater, electrum (c. 600–550 BC), Ephesus?
0.16 g · ∅ 4.0 mm
BMC 27. – Inv. 347/74


38 1/96 stater, electrum (c. 600–550 BC), Cos?
0.13 g · ∅ 4.3 mm
BMC 29. – Inv. 348/74


39 1/12 stater, electrum (sixth century BC)
1.37 g · ∅ 8.5 mm
Babelon Pl. V, 3 (Phocaea); Balcer Pl. 3, 15 (Phocaea). –
Inv. 744/71


40 1/48 stater, electrum (sixth century BC)
0.29 g · ⌀ 5.2 mm
BMC 19 (Phocaea). – Inv. 465/72


Phocaea

41 Hekte (1/6 stater), electrum (525–480/475 BC), Phocaea
2.55 g · ⌀ 9.6 mm
Bodenstedt P 36. – Inv. 3570


42 Hekte (1/6 stater), electrum (c. 500 BC), Phocaea
2.54 g · ⌀ 10.2 mm
BMC 28, Pl. IV,17. – Inv. 650/65

PLATE 5


Miletus

43 Hekte (1/6 stater), electrum, Miletus
2.37 g · ⌀ 9.8 mm
BMC –; Head cf. p. 584. – Inv. 435/73


Kingdom of Lydia

Alyattes?, 610–561 BC

44 1/3 stater, electrum, Sardis?
4.71 g · ⌀ 10.4 mm
Weidauer 89. – Inv. 2992

PLATE 3


Croesus, 561–546 BC

45 Stater, Sardis
8.11 g · ⌀ 13.2 mm
BMC 32. – Inv. 2191/68

PLATE 4


46 1/12 stater, Sardis
0.66 g · ⌀ 5.8 mm
Münzen und Medaillen AG, Liste 330, 27. – Inv. 52/72


Empire of the Seleucids

Seleucus II Callinicus, 246–226 BC

47 Stater (244–240 BC), Antioch on the Orontes
8.47 g · ⌀ 19.9 mm
WSM 987. – Inv. 109/62

PLATE 22


Empire of Alexander

Mazaeus, Satrap of Babylon, 331–328 BC

48 Double daric, Babylon
16.68 g · ⌀ 21.3 mm
BMC type 4. – Inv. 543/74

PLATE 14


Persian Empire

Great King (unspecified), fourth century BC

49 Daric, Babylon?
8.34 g · ⌀ 15.9 mm
BMC 58. – Inv. 2994

PLATE 10


Pixodarus, Satrap of Caria, 340–334 BC

50 1/12 stater, Halicarnassus?
0.71 g · ⌀ 7.0 mm
SNG v. Aulock 2373. – Inv. 459/76

PLATE 13

Kingdom of Egypt

Ptolemaeus II Philadelphus, 285–246 BC

51 Octadrachm, issued in the year 8 = 263 BC, Alexandria
27.67 g · ⌀ 27.6 mm
Svoronos 460. – Inv. 516/62

PLATE 19

Ptolemaeus II Philadelphus and Arsinoe II, 284–247 BC

52 Octadrachm, Alexandria
27.75 g · ⌀ 27.2 mm
BMC 2. – Inv. 14/60

PLATE 21


Cyrenaica

Cyrene

Magistrate Chairis

53 Stater (c. 322–313 BC), Cyrene?
8.63 g · ⌀ 20.2 mm
Naville 83. – Inv. 556/64

PLATE 17


Magistrate Chairis

54 1/2 stater (c. 322–313 BC), Cyrene?
4.26 g · ⌀ 15.1 mm
Naville 106. – Inv. 2995


Magistrate Poliantheus

55 1/10 stater (litra) (c. 322–313 BC), Cyrene?
0.86 g · ⌀ 5.7 mm
Naville 120. – Inv. 300/62


56 Obol (308–305 BC), Cyrene?
0.73 g · ⌀ 7.9 mm
Naville 186. – Inv. 11/65


Punic Empire

57 Stater (350–320 BC), Carthage?
9.31 g · ⌀ 18.8 mm
Jenkins and Lewis 34 var. (8 pieces on necklace). –
Inv. 1849/61


58 1/10 stater (350–320 BC), Carthage?
1.00 g · ⌀ 7.9 mm
Jenkins and Lewis 136–155. – Inv. 3575


59 1 1/2 shekel (c. 260–240 BC), Carthage?
12.48 g · ⌀ 23.2 mm
Jenkins and Lewis 377, 2. – Inv. 2196/68

PLATE 20


60 1/4 stater (c. 241–218 BC), Carthage
1.70 g · ⌀ 13.0 mm
Jenkins and Lewis 466. – Inv. 5/65

"CELTS"


Eastern Celts

Lower Danube

61 Stater (third/second century BC)
4.78 g · ⌀ 21.2 mm
Dessewffy Collection 1307. – Inv. 2033/61

PLATE 24


Dacian(?) king Kozon or Cotison

62 Gold coin (second half of first century BC)
8.28 g · ⌀ 19.7 mm
Winkler 173 ff. – Inv. 2201

PLATE 28


Kingdom of Bosphorus

Rheskuporis II, AD 78–93

63 Aureus AD 83
7.80 g · ⌀ 20.0 mm
BMC cf. 1. – Inv. 3476

PLATE 29


Western Celts

Vindelici

64 Stater (second/first century BC), Manching?
7.31 g · ⌀ 17.0 mm
Forrer cf. Pl. 12, 30. – Inv. 524/60

PLATE 25


Treveri

65 Stater (first century BC), Tetelbierg?
6.06 g · ⌀ 16.7 mm
Scheers 229. – Inv. 1/60

PLATE 26


Parisii

66 Stater (c. first century BC)
6.95 g · ⌀ 22.5 mm
de la Tour 7777; Colbert de Beaulieu Class V. – Inv. 2/60

PLATE 27


Ambiani

67 Stater (58–50 BC)
6.23 g · ⌀ 16.1 mm
Scheers p. 336, Pl. VI, 153. – Inv. 575/74


Britannia

Catuvellauni

68 Stater, Whaddon Chase type (c. 40–20 BC), Verulamium?
5.77 g · ⌀ 15.7 mm
Mack 135. – Inv. 55/60


Trinovantes

Addedomarus, 15–1 BC, chieftain of the Trinovantes?

69 Stater, Camulodunum?
5.57 g · ⌀ 18.7 mm
Mack cf. 267. – Inv. 3009


70 Aureus worth 20 asses (211–209 BC), Roma
1.13 g · ⌀ 10.4 mm
RRC 44, 4. – Inv. 111/62

PLATE 30


71 Aureus (46 BC), Roma
Aulus Hirtius
7.81 g · ⌀ 20.6 mm
RRC 466, 1. – Inv. 192/66

PLATE 31


72 Aureus (45 BC), Roma
Lucius Munatius Plancus
8.07 g · ⌀ 21.4 mm
RRC 475, 1a. – Inv. 2996

PLATE 32


73 Aureus (42 BC), Roma
Publius Clodius
8.09 g · ⌀ 19.6 mm
RRC 494, 20a. – Inv. 4192


74 Aureus (41 BC), auxiliary mint of M. Antonius
Marcus Antonius, Marcus Nerva, Lucius Antonius
8.02 g · ⌀ 19.7 mm
RRC 517, 4b. – Inv. 44/62


75 Aureus (38 BC), auxiliary mint of M. Antonius
Marcus Antonius
7.99 g · ⌀ 19.8 mm
RRC 533, 3a. – Inv. 45/62

PLATE 33

ROMAN EMPIRE


Caius Iulius Caesar Octavianus Augustus, 30 BC – AD 14

76 Aureus (30/29 BC), minted in the east
7.63 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
BMC 594; RIC 31. – Inv. 2470


77 Aureus (20–16 BC), Colonia Patricia
7.83 g · ⌀ 19.9 mm
RIC 290. – Inv. 518/62

PLATE 34


78 Quinarius AD 7/8, Lugdunum
3.95 g · ⌀ 15.4 mm
BMC 505; RIC 354. – Inv. 1412/72


Tiberius Iulius Caesar Augustus, AD 14–37

79 Aureus (AD 16–21), Lugdunum
7.92 g · ⌀ 18.4 mm
BMC 30; RIC 3. – Inv. 2178


Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, AD 41–54

80 Aureus AD 41, Roma
7.81 g · ⌀ 18.5 mm
BMC 11; RIC 2. – Inv. 117/67

PLATE 35


for his father Nero Claudius Drusus Germanicus, d. AD 9

81 Aureus (AD 41–45), Roma
7.70 g · ⌀ 17.1 mm
BMC 104; RIC 77. – Inv. 3589


Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, AD 54–68

82 Aureus (AD 64–68), Roma
7.37 g · ⌀ 18.2 mm
BMC 56; RIC 42. – Inv. 3328

PLATE 36


83 Aureus (AD 64–68), Roma
7.21 g · ⌀ 19.0 mm
BMC 56; RIC 42. – Inv. 2


84 Aureus (AD 64–68), Roma
7.15 g · ⌀ 19.3 mm
BMC 67; RIC 45. – Inv. 1


Marcus Salvius Otho, 15 January–25 April AD 69

85 Aureus AD 69, Roma
7.30 g · ⌀ 19.2 mm
BMC 13 var. (Obv.: IMP OTHO…, Rev.: SECV – RI – TAS PR), RIC 11. – Inv. 18/60


Titus Flavius Vespasianus, AD 69–79

86 Aureus (AD 73?), Lugdunum
7.33 g · ⌀ 19.8 mm
BMC 413; RIC 304. – Inv. 2181

PLATE 37


for his son Titus Caesar

87 Aureus AD 76, Roma
7.16 g · ⌀ 19.2 mm
BMC 185; RIC 187. – Inv. 2183


Titus Flavius Domitianus, AD 81–96

88 Aureus AD 82, Roma
7.75 g · ⌀ 18.6 mm
BMC 33 var. (Minerva without sceptre); RIC 33b. – Inv. 197/66


89 Aureus AD 88/89, Roma
7.55 g · ⌀ 19.8 mm
BMC 143; RIC 127. – Inv. 2198/68

PLATE 38


Publius Aelius Hadrianus, AD 117–138

90 Aureus (AD 125–128), Roma
7.12 g · ⌀ 19.9 mm
BMC 429; RIC 186 (c). – Inv. 2184


91 Aureus (AD 134–138), Roma
6.93 g · ⌀ 18.9 mm
BMC 870; RIC 322. – Inv. 198/66

PLATE 39


for his adoptive father Divus Traianus, d. AD 117

92 Aureus (AD 117/118), Roma
6.90 g · ⌀ 18.4 mm
BMC 49 (as denarius); RIC 28. – Inv. 4193


for his wife Vibia Sabina, d. AD 136

93 Aureus (AD 134–136), Roma
7.11 g · ⌀ 19.5 mm
BMC 953; RIC 397 (b). – Inv. 4194


Titus Aelius Antoninus Pius, AD 138–161

94 Aureus (AD 145–161), Roma
7.27 g · ⌀ 19.0 mm
BMC 542; RIC 140. – Inv. 2305


for his wife Diva Faustina, d. AD 141

95 Aureus (AD 141–161), Roma
7.37 g · ⌀ 19.5 mm
BMC 403 var. (Rev.: AVG – V – S – TA); RIC 357 a. – Inv. 2187


for his daughter Annia Galeria Faustina, d. AD 176

96 Aureus (AD 145–147), Roma
7.26 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
BMC 1090; RIC 503 (b). – Inv. 2938

PLATE 40


for his son-in-law and successor
Marcus Aelius Aurelius Verus, d. AD 180

97 Aureus AD 157/158, Roma
7.16 g · ⌀ 19.7 mm
BMC 917; RIC 474 (c). – Inv. 4195


Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, AD 161–180

98 Aureus AD 168, Roma
7.31 g · ⌀ 17.7 mm
BMC 466; RIC 190. – Inv. 2472


99 Aureus AD 177/178, Roma
7.22 g · ⌀ 20.2 mm
BMC 771; RIC 388. – Inv. 2997

PLATE 41


Lucius Aelius Verus, AD 161–169

100 Aureus AD 165, Roma
7.28 g · ⌀ 20.0 mm
BMC 391; RIC 543. – Inv. 2939


for his wife Annia Lucilla, d. AD 183

101 Aureus (AD 164–169), Roma
7.17 g · ⌀ 20.2 mm
BMC 328; RIC 790. – Inv. 4197


Marcus Aurelius Commodus Antoninus, AD 177–180–192

102 Aureus AD 181/182, Roma
7.22 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
BMC 74; RIC 37. – Inv. 4196

PLATE 42


103 Quinarius AD 181, Roma
3.56 g · ⌀ 14.5 mm
RIC 20b. – Inv. 186/73


Lucius Septimius Severus, AD 193–211

104 Aureus AD 198–200, Roma
7.02 g · ⌀ 19.2 mm
RIC 142(b). – Inv. 2030/61


for his wife Iulia Domna, d. AD 217

105 Aureus (AD 193–196), Roma
7.15 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
RIC 536. – Inv. 2474

PLATE 43


Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, known as Caracalla, AD 198–217

106 Aureus AD 200, Laodicea?
7.08 g · ⌀ 21.3 mm
BMC 715 var. (Rev.: P MAX TR – P III); RIC 342(b). – Inv. 21/60


Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, known as Elagabalus, AD 218–222

107 Aureus (AD 218–222), Roma
6.55 g · ⌀ 20.7 mm
RIC 61 d. – Inv. 1466/72

PLATE 44


Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander, AD 222–235

108 Aureus AD 222, Roma
6.10 g · ⌀ 20.3 mm
BMC 12; RIC 4. – Inv. 294/63


Marcus Antonius Gordianus III, AD 238–244

109 Aureus AD 241–243, Roma
4.49 g · ⌀ 19.1 mm
RIC 102. – Inv. 1198/76


Publius Licinius Egnatius Gallienus, AD 253–268

110 Aureus (AD 262–268?), Roma
6.12 g · ⌀ 20.7 mm
RIC 74 (sole reign). – Inv. 165/69

PLATE 45


111 Aureus (AD 263/264), Roma
3.53 g · ⌀ 22.7 mm
RIC 95 (sole reign). – Inv. 2199/68


Marcus Aurelius Carinus, AD 283–285
for his wife Magnia Urbica

112 Aureus, Roma
4.83 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
RIC 340. – Inv. 519/62

PLATE 46


Caius Valerius Diocletianus, AD 284–305

113 Aureus (c. AD 284), Cyzicus
4.67 g · ⌀ 20.0 mm
RIC 299. – Inv. 3603

PLATE 47


Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus,
known as Herculius, AD 286–305

114 Aureus AD 290–293. Cyzicus
5.18 g · ⌀ 19.1 mm
RIC 596. – Inv. 3604


115 Aureus (AD 294–305), Treviri
5.62 g · ⌀ 17.5 mm
RIC 43. – Inv. 200/66


Flavius Valerius Constantius I, known as Chlorus, AD 293–306
116 Aureus (c. AD 295–305), Treviri PLATE 48
5.42 g · ⌀ 18.8 mm
RIC 86. – Inv. 22/60


Flavius Valerius Constantinus I, known as The Great, AD 306–337
117 Solidus (AD 313–315), Treviri PLATE 49
4.35 g · ⌀ 19.4 mm
RIC 30. – Inv. 379/63


118 Solidus (AD 330/331), Thessalonica
4.07 g · ⌀ 19.4 mm
RIC 175. – Inv. 2998


Valerius Licinianus Licinius, AD 308–324
119 Aureus AD 317/318, Nicomedia PLATE 50
5.21 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
RIC 19. – Inv. 201/66


Flavius Iulius Constans, AD 337–350
120 Solidus, Antioch
4.56 g · ⌀ 20.7 mm
Cohen² – cf. 141 (with VOT X MVLT XX); cf. Cohen² (Constantius II) 243. Hybrid issue. – Inv. 115/62


Flavius Iulius Constantius, AD 337–361
121 Solidus AD 343–352, Antioch
4.38 g · ⌀ 21.2 mm
Cohen² 108. – Inv. 3606


122 Solidus AD 353–356, Constantinopolis
4.38 g · ⌀ 21.0 mm
Cohen² 112. – Inv. 3607


Flavius Magnus Magnentius, AD 350–353

123 Solidus, Treviri
4.55 g · ⌀ 21.7 mm
Cohen² 46. – Inv. 559/64


Flavius Claudius Iulianus, known as Apostata, AD 360–363

124 Solidus (AD 361–363), Antioch
4.11 g · ⌀ 20.3 mm
Cohen² 78. – Inv. 3050


125 Solidus (AD 361–363), Antioch
4.23 g · ⌀ 21.6 mm
Cohen² 79. – Inv. 2200/68

PLATE 51


Flavius Iovianus, AD 363–364

126 Solidus, Antioch
4.43 g · ⌀ 21.6 mm
Cohen² 8. – Inv. 9/61


Flavius Valentinianus I, AD 364–375

127 Solidus (AD 364–367), Nicomedia
4.27 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
RIC 2 (b). – Inv. 3051


Flavius Valens, AD 364–378

128 Solidus (AD 364–367), Treviri
4.46 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
RIC 1 (c). – Inv. 91/60

PLATE 52


Flavius Gratianus, AD 367–383

129 Solidus (AD 378–383), Thessalonica
4.48 g · ⌀ 19.7 mm
RIC 34 (a). – Inv. 2999


130 Solidus (AD 367–383), Treviri
4.46 g · ⌀ 19.9 mm
RIC 17 (g). – Inv. 3053


Flavius Valentinianus II, AD 375–392

131 Solidus (AD 378–383), Treviri
4.49 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
RIC 49(c). – Inv. 3054


Flavius Theodosius I, known as The Great, AD 379–395

132 Solidus (AD 383–388), Constantinopolis
4.46 g · ⌀ 20.1 mm
RIC 71(b). – Inv. 2940

PLATE 53


Flavius Arcadius, AD 383–408

133 Solidus (AD 393–395), Sirmium
4.36 g · ⌀ 19.9 mm
RIC 15(b). – Inv. 3/63


134 Solidus (AD 402–408), Constantinopolis
4.43 g · ⌀ 19.9 mm
Ratto 43. – Inv. 131/66

PLATE 54


Flavius Honorius, AD 393–423

135 Solidus, Ravenna
4.45 g · ⌀ 20.0 mm
Cohen² 44. – Inv. 3610


Flavius Theodosius II, AD 408–450

136 Solidus AD 421, Constantinopolis
4.40 g · ⌀ 21.1 mm
Ratto 166–168 (officina mark Γ). – Inv. 427/60


137 Solidus AD 443, Constantinopolis
4.45 g · ⌀ 21.1 mm
Ratto 154. – Inv. 132/66

PLATE 55


138 Semissis, Constantinopolis
2.25 g · ⌀ 18.2 mm
Ratto 182. – Inv. 316/60


Marcianus, AD 450–457

139 Solidus, Constantinopolis
4.34 g · ⌀ 21.0 mm
Ratto 217. – Inv. 133/66


140 Semissis (AD 450?), Constantinopolis
2.22 g · ⌀ 17.6 mm
Ratto 223. – Inv. 411/68

PLATE 56


141 Tremissis, Constantinopolis
1.47 g · ⌀ 14.1 mm
Ratto 225. – Inv. 412/68


Leo I, AD 457–474

142 Solidus, Constantinopolis
4.47 g · ⌀ 20.6 mm
Ratto 243. – Inv. 134/66


143 Tremissis, Constantinopolis
1.50 g · ⌀ 14.0 mm
Ratto 256. – Inv. 428/60


Zeno, AD 474/75, AD 476–491

144 Solidus, Constantinopolis
4.50 g · ⌀ 20.3 mm
Ratto 287. – Inv. 135/66


Basiliscus, AD 475/76

145 Solidus, Constantinopolis
4.46 g · ⌀ 20.3 mm
Ratto 301. – Inv. 413/68

KUSHAN AND GUPTA EMPIRES


Empire of the Great Kushana
Kanishka I, AD 232–260
146 Dinar, Bactra
7.95 g · ⌀ 19.7 mm
Göbl, Antike Numismatik 3373. – Inv. 981

PLATE 57


Northern Empire of the Kushana
Vāsudeva II, AD 330–356
147 Dinar
7.90 g · ⌀ 21.2 mm
Göbl, Antike Numismatik 2347. – Inv. 982


Southern Empire of the Kushana
King (unspecified), late fourth century AD
148 Dinar
7.80 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
B. Peus Nachf., Auktion 296, cf. 213 ff. – Inv. 2/63

PLATE 58


Gupta Empire
Chandragupta II, AD 380–414
149 Dinar
7.90 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
Allan 88. – Inv. 14 994

PLATE 59

BYZANTINE EMPIRE


Anastasius, AD 491–518
150 Solidus (AD 491–498), Constantinopolis
4.44 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
DOC 3 f; MIB 4. – Inv. 3


151 Tremissis, Constantinopolis
1.50 g · ⌀ 14.3 mm
CMB Paris 23; DOC 10 a; MIB 12. – Inv. 414/68

PLATE 60


Justinus I, AD 518–527

152 Solidus (AD 519–527), Constantinopolis
4.37 g · ⌀ 19.1 mm
DOC 2 f; MIB 3. – Inv. 4


153 Tremissis, Constantinopolis
1.48 g · ⌀ 15.7 mm
DOC 4; MIB 5. – Inv. 3056


Justinianus I, known as The Great, AD 527–565

154 Solidus (AD 538–547), Constantinopolis
4.41 g · ⌀ 21.0 mm
CMB Paris 9; DOC 7; MIB 22. – Inv. 5

PLATE 61


155 Tremissis, Constantinopolis
1.49 g · ⌀ 15.3 mm
DOC 19; MIB 19. – Inv. 136/66


Justinus II, AD 565–578

156 Solidus, Constantinopolis
4.32 g · ⌀ 20.4 mm
CMB Paris 2 ff (type with I); DOC 4 i. – Inv. 137/66

PLATE 62


Tiberius II Constantinus, AD 578–582

157 Solidus (AD 579–582), Constantinopolis
4.33 g · ⌀ 19.8 mm
DOC 4 f; MIB 4. – Inv. 139/66


Mauricius Tiberius, AD 582–602

158 Solidus (AD 583–601), Constantinopolis
4.43 g · ⌀ 21.1 mm
DOC (5 h); MIB 6 E. – Inv. 8827


Phocas, AD 602–610

159 Solidus (AD 607–610), Constantinopolis
4.13 g · ⌀ 19.7 mm
DOC 10 j. 1–5; MIB 9. – Inv. 6


Heraclius, AD 610–641

160 Solidus (AD 610–613), Constantinopolis
4.45 g · ⌀ 20.2 mm
DOC (3 c). – Inv. 140/66


161 Tremissis (AD 610–613?), Constantinopolis
1.42 g · ⌀ 16.4 mm
DOC 53 b. 3. – Inv. 141/66


Heraclius and his son Heraclius Constantinus, AD 613–641

162 Solidus (AD 616–625), Constantinopolis
4.50 g · ⌀ 20.5 mm
DOC 13 d. 1. – Inv. 2475


Heraclius and his sons, AD 610–641

163 Solidus (AD 632–638), Constantinopolis
4.49 g · ⌀ 21.5 mm
CMB Paris 41 (with A); DOC 33 a. – Inv. 143/66

PLATE 63


Constans II Pogonatus, AD 641–668

164 Solidus (AD 641–646), Constantinopolis
4.39 g · ⌀ 18.5 mm
DOC 1 f. – Inv. 84/62


165 Solidus (AD 648/649), Constantinopolis
4.48 g · ⌀ 20.4 mm
DOC 13 c. – Inv. 144/66


166 Solidus, thick flan (AD 647–651), Carthage
4.42 g · ⌀ 10.7 mm
CMB Paris cf. 4; DOC cf. 107. – Inv. 415/68

PLATE 64


Constans II Pogonatus and his son Constantinus IV, AD 654–659

167 Solidus, Constantinopolis
4.34 g · ⌀ 19.9 mm
DOC (25 b). – Inv. 145/66


Constans II Pogonatus and his sons Constantinus IV, Heraclius and Tiberius, AD 659–668

168 Solidus (AD 659–668), Constantinopolis
4.48 g · ⌀ 18.9 mm
CMB Paris type 63; DOC cf. 30 i. – Inv. 146/66

PLATE 65


Constantinus IV and his brothers Heraclius and Tiberius, AD 668–681

169 Solidus (AD 668–673), Constantinopolis
4.49 g · ⌀ 18.9 mm
DOC (6 b). – Inv. 147/66


Constantinus IV, AD 668–685

170 Solidus (AD 681–685), Constantinopolis
4.47 g · ⌀ 18.1 mm
DOC cf. 12. – Inv. 148/66


Justinian II, AD 685–695, 705–711

171 Solidus (AD 685/686), Constantinopolis
4.47 g · ⌀ 18.3 mm
DOC I (with Θ). – Inv. 3399


172 Solidus (AD 692–695), Constantinopolis
4.46 g · ⌀ 18.8 mm
CMB Paris 08; DOC cf. 7. – Inv. 149/66

PLATE 66

PERIOD OF THE GREAT MIGRATIONS AND THE GERMANIC KINGDOMS


Italy
King Odoacer, AD 476–493
in the name of Emperor Zeno, AD 476–491

173 Solidus (AD 476–c. 481), Mediolanum
4.42 g · ⌀ 21.3 mm
Kraus cf. 2. – Inv. 312/62


Kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy
King Theoderic, known as The Great, AD 474–526
in the name of Emperor Anastasius I, AD 491–518

174 Tremissis (c. AD 492–518), Mediolanum
1.46 g · ⌀ 13.0 mm
MIB 22 c. – Inv. 529/60


in the name of Emperor Justinus I, AD 518–527

175 Solidus (AD 518–526), Roma
4.37 g · ⌀ 20.9 mm
MIB 24. – Inv. 528/60

PLATE 67


King Athalaric, AD 526–534 and
King Theodahat, AD 534–536
in the name of Emperor Justinianus I, AD 527–565

176 Solidus (AD 526/527–536), Roma
4.43 g · ⌀ 20.7 mm
MIB 28. – Inv. 532/60


Kingdom of the Visigoths in Gaul
King Alaric II, AD 485–507
in the name of Emperor Anastasius I, AD 491–518

177 Solidus (AD 491–507), Burdigale
4.38 g · ⌀ 21.1 mm
Reinhart cf. 123. – Inv. 313/62


Kingdom of the Visigoths in Hispania
King Reccared, AD 586–601

178 Tremissis, Ispali
1.49 g · ⌀ 16.5 mm
Miles 86 d. – Inv. 536/60


King Witteric, AD 603–609

179 Tremissis, Emerita
1.49 g · ⌀ 17.7 mm
Miles 143 a var. (Rev.: EMER/ET/ΔPIVS). – Inv. 664/73


King Svinthila, AD 621–631

180 Tremissis, Caesaraugusta
1.35 g · ⌀ 17.1 mm
Miles 213 b. – Inv. 538/60


181 Tremissis, Barbi
1.43 g · ⌀ 20.4 mm
Miles 224 h var. (I at end of obv. legend). – Inv. 537/60

PLATE 69


Kingdom of the Franks
King Theodebert I, AD 534–548

182 Solidus, Mogontiacum?
4.35 g · ⌀ 18.0 mm
Prou 44. – Inv. 2201/68

PLATE 68


183 Tremissis (sixth century AD)
Mint-master Gennigisil…?
1.23 g · ⌀ 11.1 mm
Prou 2634. – Inv. 542/60

PLATE 71


King Chlotar II, AD 613–629

184 Tremissis, Massilia
1.03 g · ⌀ 15.2 mm
Münchner Münzhandlung Karl Kreß, Versteigerung 116, 1359. –
Inv. 541/60


Unspecified

185 Tremissis
1.20 g · ⌀ 12.0 mm
Prou 1139. – Inv. 20


186 Tremissis
1.34 g · ⌀ 13.6 mm
Prou –. – Inv. 15 210


187 Tremissis
1.19 g · ⌀ 12.4 mm
Prou –. – Inv. 15 209


188 Tremissis
1.15 g · ⌀ 14.0 mm
Prou –. – Inv. 19


189 Tremissis
1.42 g · ⌀ 13.5 mm
Prou –. – Inv. 21


Kingdom of the Lombards

Reign of Emperor Mauricius Tiberius, AD 582–602

190 Tremissis
1.43 g · ⌀ 16.8 mm
Arslan 4. – Inv. 2941

PLATE 70


Perctarit, AD 672–688

191 Tremissis, Ravenna
1.22 g · ⌀ 13.3 mm
BMC cf. 1. – Inv. 539/60


Duchy of Benevento
Arichis II, AD 758–787

192 Tremissis, Beneventum?
1.28 g · ⌀ 15.5 mm
Arslan 92. – Inv. 17

PLATE 72


Grimoald III, AD 788–806

193 Tremissis, Beneventum
1.20 g · ⌀ 15.4 mm
BMC 15. – Inv. 18


Sicardus, AD 832–839

194 Tremissis, Beneventum
1.21 g · ⌀ 16.7 mm
Arslan 103. – Inv. 540/60

ANCIENT IMITATIONS AND COUNTERFEITS


Imitation
Roman Empire
Marcus Antonius Gordianus III, AD 238–244

195 Aureus AD 240, Roma
4.08 g · ⌀ 19.2 mm
RIC 80. – Inv. 224/63


Counterfeits
Roman Empire
Flavius Iulius Constantius, AD 337–361

196 Solidus AD 343–352, Antioch
2.85 g · ⌀ 21.5 mm
Cohen² 108. – Inv. 103/76


Byzantine Empire
Anastasius I, AD 491–518

197 Solidus (AD 491–498), Constantinopolis
2.95 g · ⌀ 19.1 mm
DOC 3 (a); MIB 4. – Inv. 818/64

ENLARGEMENTS (3:1)


2


34


37


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40


46


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Right: LIST OF MINTS AND MAP OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

LIST OF MINTS

Ancient Place-name	Modern Place-name	Ancient Place-name	Modern Place-name
Acanthus		Miletus	
Alexandria	Alexandria	Mogontiacum	Mainz
Antioch	Antakya	Mytilene	Mitilini
Babylon		Nicomedia	Izmit
Bactra	Balkh	Paphos	Pafos
Barbi		Pella	
Beneventum	Benevent	Phocaea	
Burdigala	Bordeaux	Populonia	Populonia
Caesaraugusta	Saragossa	Ravenna	Ravenna
Camulodunum	Colchester	Roma	Rome
Carthage		Sardis	
Colonia Patricia	Cordoba	Sidon	Saida
Constantinopolis	Istanbul	Sicyon	
Cyrene		Sirmium	Mitrovica
Cyzicus		Susa	Šuš
Emerita	Mérida	Syracuse	Syracuse
Ephesus		Taras	Taranto
Halicarnassus	Bodrum	*unknown*	Tetelbierg
Ispali	Seville	Thessalonica	Thessaloniki
Lampsacus	Chardak	Treviri	Trier
Laodicea	Latakia	Verulamium	St. Albans
Lugdunum	Lyon		
unknown	Manching		
Massilia	Marseille		
Mediolanum	Milan		
Metapontum	Metapont		

Camulodunum
Thames
Verulamium
Rhine
Oder
Treviri
Mogontiacum
Seine
Tetelbierg
Manching
Dnieper
Don
Mediolanum
Lugdunum
Po
Danube
Burdigale
Ravenna
Rhône
Massilia
Populonia
Sirmium
Ebro
Caesaraugusta
Roma
Beneventum
Emerita
Metapontum
Taras
Colonia Patricia
Ionia
Ispali
Barbi
Syracuse
Carthage
Antioch
Laodicea
Paphos
Sidon
Cyrene
Alexandria
Nile
Kura
Araks
Tigris
Euphrates
Babylon
Susa
Persian Empire
Syr-Darya
Jaxartes
Amu-Darya
Oxus
Bactra
Kushan Empire
Indus
Gupta Empire
Ganges
Narbada
Constantinopolis
Pella
Thessalonica
Nicomedia
Acanthus
Cyzicus
Lampsacus
Hermus
Mytilene
Phocaea
Sardis
Pactolus
Sicyon
Ephesus
Miletus
Halicarnassus