

Fifth **5**  
Edition



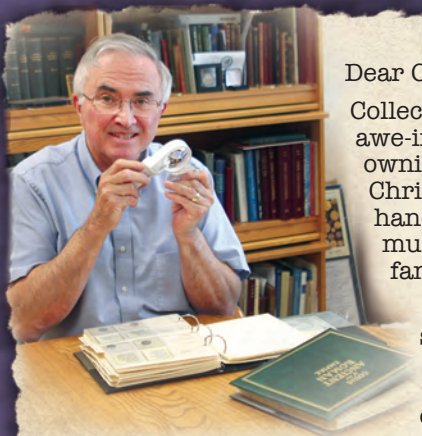
Littleton's

# HOW TO COLLECT ANCIENT ROMAN COINS



COLLECTORS GUIDE & CHECKLIST

## Introduction



*David M. Sundman*  
Chairman, Littleton Coin Co.

Dear Collector,

Collecting ancient coins can be both awe-inspiring and exciting. Imagine owning a coin struck before the time of Christ and actually holding it in your hand, instead of looking at it in a museum case. You have an object that's familiar, centuries old, and you own it!

Yet, forming a collection of those same coins can be daunting, especially if you're just entering the field of ancient numismatics. That's why we developed this handy guide and checklist. It has been used at the ANA Summer Seminars, given to collectors in the field, and will help you as you build your own collection.

### **Latest 48-page edition helps make collecting easy**

In this updated 5th edition of *How to Collect Ancient Roman Coins*, you'll find:

- Newly updated photos of the Imperial portrait coins of emperors and their wives
- All-new introduction to the Byzantine Empire and the rise of Christianity
- An updated glossary

Most collectors choose to begin with Roman Imperial coins. One of the wonderful features of Imperial coins is that they bear the portraits of the emperors who issued them over 2,000 years ago. In fact, some rulers are only known to us today because of their portrait coins, which have been used to help identify statues of emperors and empresses. Sometimes, these coins are able to provide archaeologists with a means of dating a site.

### **People have collected ancients for centuries**

The collecting of ancient coins has been going on for nearly as long as coins have been in existence. Alexander the Great gave coins to his friends, and Augustus collected them. As you build your collection of ancient Roman coins, you'll enjoy an amazing variety of portraits spanning more than 500 years, and uncover the incredible stories of the men and women that they portray!

Happy collecting,

David M. Sundman

Professional Numismatists Guild member #610

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
10 Often-Asked Questions About Ancient Coins.....	4
Denominations of Roman Coins .....	6
How to Read Ancient Roman Coin Inscriptions .....	8
Roman Provincial Coinage .....	10
Julius Caesar, Marc Antony & Cleopatra.....	12
The Emperors of Ancient Rome.....	14
Bits & Pieces .....	40
Introduction to the Byzantine Empire .....	42
A Short Glossary of Roman Terms .....	44
Reference List .....	46

### Roman Imperial coinage shown on cover:

#### Gold Aureus of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161-180)



Regarded as the last of “the five good emperors” of Rome’s golden age, Marcus Aurelius is remembered as a philosopher. He spent a good portion of his reign fending off barbarian invaders.

#### Silver Tetradrachm of Claudius (A.D. 41-54)

The infamous uncle of Caligula, Claudius was thought to be mentally deficient. In reality, he proved to be an effective ruler. He was poisoned by his wife.



#### Brass Sestertius of Trajan (A.D. 98-117)

Best known for his military prowess, Trajan increased the Roman Empire to its largest size ever. Under his direction, legions added land and riches to the coffers of Rome.



*To assist the reader in coin identification, every effort has been made to present actual-size photographs.*

# 10 Often-Asked Questions About Ancient Coins

## I. How popular is ancient coin collecting?

U.S. coin collecting has grown in popularity since the 1850s, while ancient coin collecting has been a popular hobby for centuries worldwide. European monarchs and even popes have assembled impressive collections since medieval times (and ancient coin reference books date back to the 1500s).

Many people shy away from collecting ancient coins because they think they are complicated. But ancients are the basis for all modern coinage – the majority have an obverse and reverse design. And Roman Imperial coins have portraits, making them very similar to U.S. coins. Most collectors choose coins based on obverse designs, but some enjoy collecting various reverses.

While it is possible to collect coins from nearly all of the Roman emperors, some are difficult to find because the emperors only ruled for a short time. Usurpers and self-proclaimed rulers also struck coins, and many of these are quite rare.



## II. How can some ancient coins be so inexpensive?

Ancient civilizations issued coins from about 650 B.C. to A.D. 500, a span of 1,200 years, which is six times longer than the history of the United States. And there were hundreds of mints spread over a much larger area. Since there were no banks, coins were usually buried – and for various reasons, many were never retrieved.

Numerous hoards have been found in lands of former ancient empires, especially since the advent of the metal detector. Experts estimate that one half of 1% of all ancients ever struck survive today, which is still a sizable number. Compared to people collecting U.S. coins, the number collecting ancients is still relatively small. That means there aren't as many competing for the same coins, although some are still hard to find.

## III. How do you know if coins are authentic?

Ancients have been studied and collected throughout the world for many centuries. Expertise in this field has been developed over a long period of time. All ancient coins offered by Littleton have been carefully examined by our experts and are guaranteed genuine.

## IV. How are the coins acquired?

Littleton obtains ancient coins from leading specialists throughout the world. All coins have been legally imported into the U.S. following all applicable laws and regulations.

## V. Who grades the coins and by what standards?

Ancient coins offered by Littleton are obtained from leading specialists in the field. They are then graded by our in-house experts following standards for

ancient coins. This method differs from grading of modern issues due to the nature of coin blanks, minting processes, compositions and age.

Ancient coin blanks were usually uniform in weight but irregular in shape. Because most were hand struck using dies and hammers, centering of the design and quality of the strike are factors in grading. In addition, the metals used and the aging process (up to 2,000 years or more) affect the appearance and finish of the coins in all grades – so grading standards are unique for individual issues.



## **VI. Have the coins been cleaned?**

Unlike modern issues, it is usually necessary for experts to clean ancient coins. As most are found in buried hoards, nearly all have been cleaned, even rarities worth thousands of dollars. Experts clean the ancients we offer using a variety of techniques employed by world-class museums and leading coin authorities. Coins should never be cleaned, except by experts.

## **VII. How were ancient coins minted?**

The earliest Roman coins and some Biblical issues were cast (molten metal poured into molds and allowed to harden). Ancient Roman coins were cast until about 211 B.C., then all issues were struck using hand-held dies and hammers. The design of one side was carved into a metal disk or die which fit into an anvil, and the design of the other side was carved into the base of a metal punch. A coin blank was placed on the die in the anvil, and the punch was placed over it. With one or more sharp blows of a hammer, a coin was made (as a result, ancients are sometimes weakly struck, off center or double struck).

## **VIII. What sizes and denominations are the coins?**

While ancients can range in diameter from the size of a pea to the size of a silver dollar, there were general size standards for various denominations. Among the most familiar ancient Greek coins are the *stater*, *drachm* and *tetradrachm* (equal to four *drachms*). The most familiar ancient Roman silver coin for centuries was the *denarius*, which was followed and replaced by the *antoninianus*.

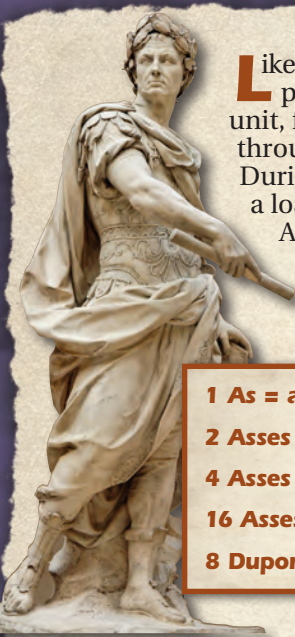
## **IX. What is on the reverse of the coins?**

The earliest Greek coins are uniface (a design only on one side with a punch-mark reverse), but most depict mythological figures and images on both sides. The obverse or “heads” side of most ancient Roman coins pictures the ruling emperor at the time of striking. The reverse usually depicts deities, mythological figures or symbols of the rulers’ authority.

## **X. What coins are classified as ancient?**

The earliest coins are attributed to Lydia in Asia Minor about 600-700 B.C., but coins may have been used earlier in China. The term “ancient” usually applies to coins from the earliest known issues to those struck during the first five centuries A.D., about 1200 years of coinage.

# Denominations of Ancient Roman Coins



**L**ike coinage of today, Ancient Rome's coins represented portions of larger denominations. The *as*, the basic unit, functioned like our penny. And like our penny, through inflation, it experienced a loss of buying power. During the time of the Roman Republic, you could buy a loaf of bread for  $\frac{1}{2}$  *as* or a liter of wine for one *as*.

A year's pay for a commander in the Roman army around 133 B.C. was 10% *asses*, by Augustus' rule (27 B.C.-A.D. 14) 74 *denarii*, and by the reign of Septimus Severus (A.D. 193-211) 1,500 *denarii*.

**1 As = a "whole" or "one" unit**

**4 Sestertii = 1 Denarius**

**2 Asses = 1 Dupondius**

**1 Antoninianus = 2 Denarii**

**4 Asses = 1 Sestertius**


**1 Cistophoric Tetradrachm = 3 Denarii**

**16 Asses = 1 silver Denarius**


**1 Aureus = 25 Denarii**

**8 Dupondii = 1 Denarius**


Below is a brief description of eleven of the most common denominations issued in the Ancient Roman Empire.



**AS:** Initially, the *as* was cast in bronze. Later, with reduction in weight, it was small enough to be struck with coin dies. With Augustus' coinage reforms in 23 B.C., this coin was struck in copper and showed the emperor with a bare or laureated head. By the rule of Valerian and his son Gallienus in the middle of the 3rd century, the *as* was infrequently struck.



**DUPONDIUS:** Worth two *asses*; literally means "two-pounder," but even during the Roman Republic, it didn't weigh 2 pounds. Though this brass coin was more yellow in color, it was still easily confused with the *as*. Under Nero (A.D. 54-68), it began to show an emperor with a radiate crown.



**SESTERTIUS:** Originally a small silver coin issued around 211 B.C., the *sestertius* was worth  $2\frac{1}{2}$  *asses*. Under Augustus, it became a large "golden" orichalcum (brass) coin worth 4 *asses*. Its large size allowed emperors to commemorate victories, triumphs or virtues as rulers. By the 3rd century A.D., the *sestertius* had become a smaller bronze coin, and after Gallienus' reign (A.D. 253-268), it was no longer minted.

**FOLLIS “Nummus”:** Emperor Diocletian first minted the *follis*, a bronze coin with a minute amount of silver (usually a wash), around A.D. 294. Because of the chaotic state of the empire, it rapidly underwent changes, decreasing in size and weight.

**REDUCED FOLLIS:** Through time, economic changes forced a reduction in size and weight of the bronze *follis*. Under Constantine, it was gradually reduced and replaced.

**CENTENIONALIS:** Introduced by Constantius II in A.D. 348, this bronze coin was larger than the *follis*, which by that time, had shrunk to about 15 mm (smaller than a dime).

**DENARIUS:** Standard silver coin of the Roman Empire, first issued about 211 B.C. It was used for over 450 years, and about 25 *denarii* equaled one gold *aureus*. It depicted the emperor wearing a laurel wreath. The last *denarii* were struck under Gordian III (A.D. 238-244).

**ANTONINIANUS “Double Denarius”:** Caracalla first minted the *antoninianus* around A.D. 211. It is named for him: M. Aurelius Antoninus “Caracalla.” This silver coin shows the emperor wearing a “radiate crown” as opposed to the laurel wreath of the *denarius*. Starting with 50% silver, this coin was gradually debased to a silver wash. Finally, it was abolished during the reign of Constantine the Great (A.D. 307-337).

**SILIQUE:** A silver coin struck on a broad planchet, introduced by Constantine the Great in A.D. 324. It was 1/96th of a Roman pound. In time, the weight was reduced and minting stopped all together around A.D. 410.

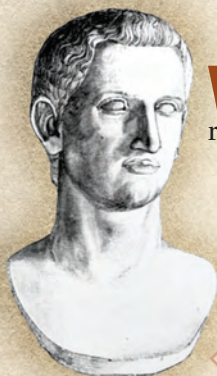
**CISTOPHORIC TETRADRACHM:** A large silver coin first struck in Pergamum around 166 B.C. These coins featured a reduced weight compared to the standard tetradrachm.

**AUREUS “Golden”:** Standard gold coin of the Roman Empire. First issued regularly under Julius Caesar around 46 B.C. Although it was reduced in weight through time, the gold content remained consistently high. The *aureus* circulated until A.D. 309 when Constantine the Great replaced it.

**SOLIDUS:** Gold coin minted by Constantine the Great, replacing and weighing less than the *aureus*. This coin, later struck by the Byzantine Empire, endured for seven centuries as a circulating gold coin used for commerce in Europe.



# How to Read Ancient Roman Coin Inscriptions



## Sestertius portrait coin of Domitian:

**W**hile not entirely realistic, coin portraits visually identified the emperor. The inscription not only named the current ruler, but also proclaimed the legitimacy of his authority.

**AVG:** Augustus, title of the emperor.

**GERM:** Germanicus, a title honoring military victories in Germany.

**COS:** Consul, a title linked to highest office in Senate, usually held by emperor.

**XI:** Reflects number of times office held

**DOMIT:** Domitianus, ruler's name.

**CENS:** Censor, a public office overseeing taxes, morality, the census and membership in various orders.

**CAES:** Caesar. Inherited name of the Julian family (Julius Caesar). Used by later emperors to designate heir.

**POT:** Tribunica Potestate. Tribune of the People, each renewal indicated by numerals.



**PP:** Pater Patriae. Father of the country.

**IMP:** Imperator (victorious general), received upon accession

*Coin enlarged to show detail*

**C**rowns were originally a mark of honor for those who had distinguished themselves in battle. The crown worn on imperial coins is one of the many ways of identifying the denomination and possible date of issue.

**Laureate:** Emperor wears a wreath of laurel, oak or ivy branches. Most common crown in first 350 years. It frequently distinguishes single denominations.



**Radiate:** Spiky crown associated with sun god Sol, primarily used on double denomination coins like Antoninianus and Dupondius (after A.D. 64).



**Diadem:** A band of metal or cloth, often decorated, used extensively starting with Constantine the Great.





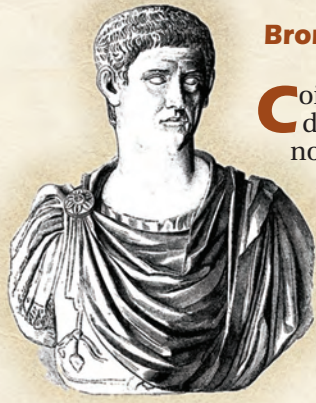
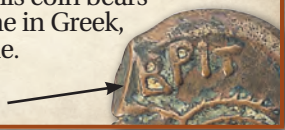
**Bronze Dupondius of the Moneyers**

Issued in 17 B.C. by Augustus, this coin celebrates his reign, and perhaps the Secular Games. The S.C. (Senatus Consulto) on the reverse is surrounded by the Moneyer's name.

**Bronze Prutah of Antonius Felix, procurator of Judaea under Claudius A.D. 52-59**

Portrait coins of Britannicus are extremely rare, yet this coin bears his abbreviated name in Greek, and is very affordable.

*BPIT = BRITANNICUS*



**Bronze Quadrans non-portrait coin of Claudius (A.D. 41-54)**

Coins without portraits were issued in various denominations by the Roman emperors. These non-portrait coins might have commemorated a family member, founding of a city or an important event. Most bear the name of the issuing emperor.

**TI:**  
Tiberius

**Obverse Design**  
**Modius**  
Traditional Roman grain measure symbolizing imperial generosity.



**CLAVDIVS:**  
Claudius, ruler's name.

**CAESAR:** Caesar. Inherited name of the Julian family (Julius Caesar). Used by later emperors as proof that they were a legitimate heir.

**AVG:** Augustus, title of the emperor.

*Coin enlarged to show detail*

# Roman Provincial Coinage



*Cicero Denounces Catiline*  
Cesare Maccari, 1889

*Imperial portrait issues of Macrinus are hard to find and expensive, but this Provincial issue makes an affordable alternative.*



As Rome spread its influence and consolidated power, lands once held by barbarian tribes, independent city-states, and Hellenistic kingdoms fell under its authority. Because the Romans left local systems like religion, rulers and coinage in place, those areas, “Roman provinces,” continued to produce coins. These local issues, once struck in over 500 cities, could circulate within a single city or across an entire region.

**Provincial coins offer an affordable way to collect scarce & rare emperors**

Today, these make up the group known as Provincial coinage, which some call Greek Imperials. Provincial coinage now offers an affordable way to collect coins of emperors whose Imperial issues are both rare and expensive.

## **Legends can be in Greek or Latin, or both!**

Because many areas once were part of the Greek Empire of the illustrious Alexander the Great, the citizens considered themselves Greek and spoke that language. So, Provincial coins can have legends in either Greek or Latin, and sometimes both.

This coinage has several features that make it different from Roman Imperial coins. Unlike Roman coinage, which was issued regularly and had fixed denominations,

Provincial coinage was issued sporadically and was based on local or Greek denominations.

At the empire’s beginnings, mints in both the East and West struck coins. But by the reign of Claudius, A.D. 41-54, as Roman Imperial issues spread, western Provincial coinage ceased. Eastern mints continued to strike coins for another 200 years because a minting tradition passed down from Alexander the Great’s successors was already in place.



*Nero silver Tetradrachm of Antioch, A.D. 63/64*

*Emperor's name & title in Greek*

NERO

CAESAR



*Eagle Reverse*

● Location of the 3 most important eastern Provincial mints



*The Shekel of Tyre could have been the "thirty pieces of silver" paid to Judas for Christ's betrayal. Struck from 126 B.C.-A.D. 58/59 in Tyre. Later, Rome moved all minting to Antioch.*

**Antioch, Tyre and Alexandria – three important Provincial mints:**

Three of the greatest eastern mints were Antioch and Tyre in Syria, and Alexandria in Egypt. The Syrian mints produced the famous coins mentioned in the Bible, like the silver tetradrachms with various emperors' portraits, and Tyrian shekels. By A.D. 60, Antioch had absorbed Tyre's coinage, and continued to strike coins until the reign of Trebonianus Gallus.



*Provincial bronze of Augustus celebrates refounding of a Roman colony*

Founded by Alexander the Great, the mint at Alexandria, Egypt outlasted all other provincial mints. When Augustus defeated Antony and Cleopatra at Actium, Egypt became the personal property of the emperor. This rich country served as the "breadbasket" of Rome, and already had a coinage system that was "closed." Under this closed system, coins were struck and circulated only in Egypt. Future emperors maintained



*Provincial bronze tetradrachm of Carinus (A.D. 283-285) struck at Alexandria for circulation in Egypt*

this system until Diocletian's reforms of A.D. 294. At that time, all Provincial coinage ended, and was replaced by Imperial issues.

# Julius Caesar, Marc Antony & Cleopatra

## Pre-Imperial Coinage:



The coins struck between the death of the dictator Sulla, 78 B.C., and the rise of Octavian (future Augustus) are transitional coinage, connecting the Republican and Imperial eras. During this time, bold generals raised huge armies, striving for the ultimate prize – power.

Three rulers stand out amid the turmoil – two men and a woman whose power was so great and stories so compelling that today they seem almost legendary: Julius Caesar, Marc Antony and Cleopatra.

## Julius Caesar, 60-44 B.C.

General, reformer and dictator... One man, Julius Caesar, rose from the chaos and brought an interval of stability, setting the Roman world on the road to imperial rule.

When Caesar crossed the Rubicon, marched on Rome and drove the great general Pompey into Greece, he financed this invasion and secured the loyalty of his troops by striking silver denarii. These historic Roman coins have his name and an elephant trampling a snake on the obverse. Many numismatists believe the snake represents Salus, god of safety, and the elephant represents Pompey.

After Pompey's defeat, Caesar was appointed to the office of dictator, renewed annually. He was assassinated on March 15, 44 B.C.



*Silver Denarius of Julius Caesar, 49-48 B.C.*



*Rare bronze Sestertius issued by Octavian (Augustus) to honor Julius Caesar*



*The Death of Caesar*  
Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1867

## Marc Antony, 44-33 B.C.

Antony served with Julius Caesar in Gaul and in 44 B.C., became co-consul. At Caesar's death, he joined forces with Octavian, becoming part of the Second Triumvirate (43-33 B.C.) While on a campaign to reorganize the East in 42 B.C., he met the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra. When the two married, his strained alliance with Octavian became a struggle for world dominance.

In 31 B.C., Octavian declared war on Cleopatra, culminating in the Battle of Actium. Although Antony and Cleopatra were defeated, the silver Denarii Antony issued to pay his soldiers still exist.

*The battle at Actium*  
Lorenzo A. Castro, 1672



*Silver Legionary Denarius of Marc Antony, 32-31 B.C.*



*Egyptian bronze portrait coin of Cleopatra, last of the Ptolemies*

## Cleopatra VII, 51-30 B.C.

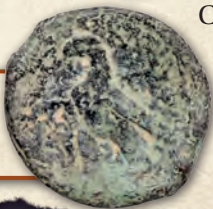
Before ancient Rome reached its peak, Alexandria was the cultural center of the ancient world, and Cleopatra was queen. While Caesar was busy conquering Gaul, Cleopatra was ruling Egypt with her brother. More than a match for Rome's greatest military minds, this highly educated, politically astute woman became Caesar's mistress and Marc Antony's wife. After defeat at Actium, Cleopatra and her maids were found dead in their apartments. Contrary to the popular asp bite story, many historians believed they took poison.



*Cleopatra*

John W. Waterhouse, 1888

*Bronze coin of Cleopatra depicts eagle (symbol of the Ptolemies) on reverse*



## Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family

One of the most popular ways to collect ancient Roman coins is by emperor, as most bear a portrait of the issuing ruler. This section includes imperial portrait coins of most of the emperors and their families, followed by a brief description of their lives. Dates for reign as Caesar as well as Augustus are included. The emperor's family or adopted name follows his historical name. As you read, look at the progression as rulers adopt a predecessor's names to advertise their legitimacy.

Of course, many choose to collect coins of the empresses as well. These pieces were all issued under an emperor who wished to honor his wife, mother, daughter or other female relative. Though they never led the empire, many empresses held great influence behind the scenes.

We hope you enjoy collecting ancient Roman coins, and that you find this guide to ancient Roman coins useful and entertaining.

*Please Note: Because of the wide variety of portraits used, the photo opposite each description serves as a representation of the emperor's or empress's portrait – individual portraits will vary.*



❑ **AUGUSTUS** (Gaius Julius Caesar Octavius)  
**27 B.C.-A.D. 14**

Augustus (known as Octavian until 27 B.C.) was the first Roman to use the title *Augustus*, and was Rome's first emperor. He laid down the foundation for provincial administration, preserved republican institutions, and returned the administration of government to the Senate.



❑ **LIVIA** (Livia Drusilla)  
**Augusta A.D. 14-29**

Livia came from a noble family, and was the second wife of Augustus. Their marriage of 52 years was based on compatibility and love. Politically savvy, she was involved in conspiracies to ensure her son Tiberius' succession. She died at age 85.



❑ **AGRIPPA** (Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa)  
**Tribunician Power 18-12 B.C.**

As classmate and friend of Augustus, Agrippa had a distinguished military career and won many honors. He married Augustus' daughter and received the tribunician power (made heir to throne). He died in 12 B.C.



❑ **TIBERIUS** (Tiberius Claudius Nero)  
**Augustus A.D. 14-37**

One of the empire's best generals and an experienced administrator, shared rule during the last 10 years of Augustus' life. Tiberius ruled during Christ's life, and by continuing the policies instituted by Augustus, increased Rome's prosperity.

- ❑ **DRUSUS – the Younger** (Drusus Julius Caesar)  
Born 14 B.C./Died A.D. 23

*Son of Tiberius and Vipsania*, who eventually received the tribunician power. Compared to his father, he was inferior in almost every way. He was poisoned by his wife and her lover, Sejanus (praetorian prefect of Tiberius).



- ❑ **NERO CLAUDIUS DRUSUS – the Elder**  
Born 38 B.C./Died 9 B.C.

*Youngest son of Tiberius and Livia*. One of the greatest heroes of his time. After becoming general of the armies in Germany, he had outstanding success. Married Marc Antony's youngest daughter Antonia. After his death, the Senate honored him with the title and surname Germanicus.



- ❑ **GERMANICUS** (Germanicus Julius Caesar)  
Born 15 B.C./Died A.D. 19

*Son of Nero Claudius Drusus, brother of Claudius*. He was very popular with the legions. They wanted him to fight for the rule of the empire, but Germanicus remained loyal. As nephew of Tiberius, he became Caesar in A.D. 4. While overseeing the succession to the throne in Antioch, he was poisoned.



- ❑ **NERO CAESAR** (Nero Julius Caesar)  
(Born A.D. 7/Died A.D. 30/31)  
and **DRUSUS CAESAR** (Drusus Julius Caesar)  
(Born A.D. 8/Died A.D. 33)

*Sons of Germanicus and Agrippina*. Nero was highly educated and outstanding in character, the opposite of his brother, Drusus. He fell victim to a plot by Sejanus and Drusus, and was exiled to an island where he died.

Drusus helped plot his brother's downfall, but became a victim of political intrigue, too. He was arrested and died in prison.



- ❑ **CALIGULA** (Gaius Julius Caesar Germanicus)  
Caesar A.D. 35-37  
Augustus A.D. 37-41

*Youngest son of Germanicus and Agrippina, and brother to Nero and Drusus Caesar*. He was given the nickname "Caligula" by soldiers because as a young boy, he wore a small soldier's uniform along with the half-boot (caliga). Caligula (or "Bootsie") became emperor after smothering Tiberius. He soon became excessively cruel and was murdered by a group of praetorians.



To assist the reader in coin identification, every effort has been made to present actual-size photographs.

# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



- ❑ **CLAUDIUS** (Tiberius Claudius Drusus)  
**Augustus A.D. 41-54**

Claudius was the son of Nero Claudius Drusus. He suffered from infantile paralysis and his family considered him dull-witted, so he wasn't considered for any serious office. After Caligula's death, the legions took an oath in Claudius' name, and forced the Senate to accept him. Claudius participated in the invasion of Britain and proved to be a capable ruler.



- ❑ **NERO** (Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus)  
**Caesar A.D. 50-54**  
**Augustus A.D. 54-68**

Nero had a happy first year of rule. Eventually he killed his half-brother, mother, aunt, wife and tutors. Many noble families became victims of his murderous rage. Legend says Nero started the fire which burned ten districts in Rome. After the Praetorian Guard deserted him, he committed suicide.



- ❑ **GALBA** (Servius Sulpicius Galba)  
**Ruled about seven months – A.D. 68-69**

First of 4 rulers in what is known as "The Year of Four Emperors." Confirmed by the Senate, Galba alienated the Praetorian Guard by refusing to reward them for bringing him to power. The army eventually killed him because of his strict discipline and thriftiness.

- ❑ **OTHO** (Marcus Salvius Otho)  
**Ruled about 3 months – A.D. 69**

The Senate accepted Otho, but legions in Germany named their general Vitellius emperor. The two battled for the empire, skirmishing and later fighting at the First Battle of Bedriacum, where heavy losses occurred. When Otho learned of the outcome, he committed suicide.



- ❑ **VITELLIUS** (Aulus Vitellius)  
**Ruled almost 8 months – A.D. 69**

After becoming emperor, Vitellius gradually left the government to his freeman, Asiaticus, and focused his attention on lavish banquets and eating. Defeated by Vespasian's soldiers, his body was dragged through the streets of Rome.

- ❑ **VESPASIAN** (Titus Flavius Vespasianus)  
**Augustus A.D. 69-79**

Vespasian brought calm and sanity after years of bloodshed. He was a just ruler, from a humble background. He built the Colosseum, Rome's best-known ruin. After ruling 10 years, and bringing stability to Rome, he died at age seventy.





❑ **TITUS** (Titus Flavius Vespasianus)

**Caesar A.D. 69-79**

**Augustus A.D. 79-81**

Elder son of Vespasian, who is best known for his part in the war in Judaea. Mt. Vesuvius erupted during his reign. He was a good ruler, looking after the people's welfare. Most historians now think that Titus died from fever, not poisoning by his brother Domitian.

❑ **DOMITIAN** (Titus Flavius Domitianus)

**Caesar A.D. 69-81**

**Augustus A.D. 81-96**

Domitian was the youngest son of Vespasian, and last of the "Twelve Caesars." Taxation made him unpopular with the senate and upper class, causing plots against him. In later years, he became suspicious and cruel. Members of his household killed him.

❑ **NERVA** (Marcus Cocceius Nerva)

**Augustus A.D. 96-98**

One of the "good" emperors, Nerva tended to the poor, reorganized the empire's finances, and brought peaceful relationships into existence between the army and Senate.

❑ **TRAJAN** (Marcus Ulpius Traianus)

**Caesar A.D. 97**

**Augustus A.D. 98-117**

Trajan was popular with the army and Senate. Under his rule, the Roman Empire reached its largest size. Many public works were undertaken during his reign.

❑ **HADRIAN** (Publius Aelius Hadrianus)

**Augustus A.D. 117-138**

Hadrian was adopted by Trajan and continued his governmental policies. Hadrian's Wall in Britain is one of the many fortifications he ordered to protect the empire's frontiers.

❑ **SABINA** (Vibia Sabina)

**Augusta A.D. 128?-136**

Entered an arranged marriage with Hadrian long before he became emperor. Contemporary history paints their 36 years of marriage as unhappy, but Sabina accompanied Hadrian on most of his journeys throughout the empire.

❑ **AELIUS** (Lucius Aelius Verus)

**Caesar A.D. 136-138**

Adopted by Hadrian, stories about his character vary. Some say he was unfit to rule, and others say he was competent and fair. Always weak and unhealthy, Aelius eventually died.



# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



- ❑ **ANTONINUS PIUS**  
(Titus Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Arrius Antoninus)  
**Caesar A.D. 138**  
**Augustus A.D. 138-161**

A former senator adopted by Hadrian, Antoninus adopted his relative Marcus Aurelius to succeed him as emperor. He had a peaceful reign in which the economy flourished.



- ❑ **FAUSTINA SR. (Annia Galeria Faustina)**  
**Augusta A.D. 138-140/1**

From a wealthy, noble Spanish family, Faustina Senior married Antoninus Pius about A.D. 110. Three years after Antoninus became emperor, Faustina Sr. died and was deified on a vast number of Imperial coins.



- ❑ **MARCUS AURELIUS (Marcus Annius Verus)**  
**Caesar A.D. 139-161**  
**Augustus A.D. 161-180**

Under Marcus Aurelius Rome's prosperity continued, but there were border problems with the barbarians. A careful, moral ruler, his writings survived, showing he should have been a philosopher instead of emperor. He made Lucius Verus co-emperor.



- ❑ **FAUSTINA JR. (Annia Galeria Faustina)**  
**Augusta A.D. 147-175/6**

Faustina Jr. became the first daughter of an emperor to marry an emperor, and give birth to a future emperor. She died from natural causes. Ancient historians accuse her of numerous infidelities. She travelled extensively with her husband Marcus Aurelius, and earned the title Mater Castrorum (mother of the camps).



- ❑ **LUCIUS VERUS (Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus)**  
**Augustus A.D. 161-169**

Lucius became "Colleague in the Principate" in A.D. 161. He was almost the opposite of Marcus Aurelius in character. In A.D. 169, he died while returning to Rome from battles in Dacia.



- ❑ **LUCILLA (Annia Aurelia Galeria Lucilla)**  
**Augusta A.D. 164-182/3**

The daughter of Marcus Aurelius, wed at 16 to co-emperor Lucius Verus. Widowed at 20, her father carefully selected a respected, older senator as her next husband. When her involvement in a plot to murder her brother Emperor Commodus was exposed, she was exiled and put to death.

- ❑ **COMMODUS** (Lucius Aelius Aurelius Commodus)  
Caesar A.D. 166-177  
Augustus A.D. 177-192

Made Augustus and co-emperor in A.D. 177. When Marcus Aurelius' son Commodus came to rule, the peaceful era that had existed from Galba to Aurelius ended. Mental instability marked his later life, and he often appeared dressed like Hercules. His mistress gave him poison and an athlete strangled him.



- ❑ **CRISPINA** (Bruttia Crispina)  
Augusta A.D. 177-182/3

She married Commodus in A.D. 177, the same year he became emperor. According to contemporary historians, she was exceptionally beautiful. As Commodus' insanity progressed, she supposedly engaged in many affairs, resulting in banishment and death. Now it is believed she took part in an attempt on his life.



- ❑ **PERTINAX** (Publius Helvius Pertinax)  
Ruled about 3 months – A.D. 193

Starting as teacher, Pertinax joined the military and rose to commander, serving under Marcus Aurelius and his son. Most historians think he knew of the plot to kill Commodus, but praise his efforts to reform government corruption and stop bribes the army received. The Praetorian guard revolted, and murdered him.



- ❑ **DIDIUS JULIANUS** (Marcus Didius Severus Julianus)  
Ruled for 66 days – A.D. 193

One of 3 emperors who ruled during a 6-month span, Didius won the office of emperor during an auction at the army camp. Offended Roman citizens appealed to three frontier generals to rescue them. He was beheaded, a fate usually reserved for common criminals.



- ❑ **PESCENNIUS NIGER** (Gaius Pescennius Niger)  
Ruled less than a year A.D. 193-194

After a long military career, Pescennius became governor of Syria. When Pertinax was murdered, he was one of the generals Rome's citizens sent pleas to, but word reached him late, and Septimius Severus had acted. In the summer of A.D. 193, the two met and fought several successive battles. He died sometime in A.D. 194.



- ❑ **CLODIUS ALBINUS** (Decimus Clodius Septimius Albinus)  
Caesar A.D. 193-195  
Augustus A.D. 195-197

Served as governor in Germany and later Britain. He also received appeals from Rome's citizens. Under Septimius Severus, he became Caesar. Later when Septimius elevated his own sons and named him enemy, Clodius' troops made him emperor. Battle occurred in A.D. 197, and after losing, he committed suicide.



# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



- ❑ **SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS** (Lucius Septimius Severus)  
Augustus A.D. 193-211

The 3rd general who received appeals from Rome, he became emperor after defeating both of his rivals Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus. He adopted a military-style government, while paying little attention to the Senate.



- ❑ **JULIA DOMNA** (Julia Domna)  
Augusta A.D. 193-217

A woman of beauty, intelligence and wit, Julia Domna was matriarch of the Severan dynasty. Her staunch refusal to allow the empire to be divided between her sons was her greatest feat. She was so well respected that she retained the title of Augusta even after her sons died.



- ❑ **CARACALLA** (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus)  
Caesar A.D. 195-198  
Augustus A.D. 198-217

Elder son of Septimius and brother of Geta. His nickname, Caracalla, came from the Gallic coat he wore. He convinced the Praetorian Guard to murder his brother. Known for his extravagances and cruelties, he was murdered by his Praetorian Prefect. "Caracalla's Baths" in Rome still exist.



- ❑ **PLAUTILLA** (Publia Fulvia Plautilla)  
Augusta A.D. 202-205

Caracalla and Plautilla's marriage was a political arrangement, not love. Supposedly, they wouldn't even dine together because they disliked each other so much. After Caracalla killed her father, he divorced and exiled her, and later had her murdered.



- ❑ **GETA** (Lucius Septimius Geta)  
Caesar A.D. 198-209  
Augustus A.D. 209-211

Younger son of Septimius, who was popular with the military and co-ruled with his brother, Caracalla. Prior to turning 23, Geta was murdered by guards under his brother's command.

- ❑ **MACRINUS** (Marcus Opellius Macrinus)  
Augustus A.D. 217-218

He was involved in Caracalla's death, and ruled for about 14 months. After making an unfavorable peace treaty with the Parthians, the army revolted, killing him and his son. It was instigated by the grandmother of future emperor Elagabalus.



- ❑ **DIADUMENIAN** (Marcus Opellius Diadumenianus)  
Caesar A.D. 217-218  
Ruled for one month in A.D. 218



Diadumenian became Caesar in A.D. 217, and became Augustus at 10 years old. He was killed in the revolt that took his father's life.

- ❑ **JULIA MAESA** (Julia Maesa)  
Augusta A.D. 218-224/5



A shrewd woman of wealth and courage, Julia Maesa was the sister of Julia Domna and Elagabalus and Severus Alexander's grandmother. She bribed the Eastern legions helping Elagabalus gain power, and tried to restrain his excessive behaviors. She survived his assassination, but died three years later.

- ❑ **ELAGABALUS** (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus)  
Augustus A.D. 218-222



Elagabalus was disliked because of his unusual Eastern religious practices and extravagances. His rule was noted for cruelty, bloodshed and excesses of every type.

- ❑ **JULIA SOAEMIAS** (Julia Soaemias Bassiana)  
Augusta A.D. 218-222



Became Augusta when her 14-year-old son Elagabalus was named emperor. Of the four women of the Severan dynasty, Soaemias was the least responsible in her duties. She was slain, along with her son, by the Praetorian Guard.

- ❑ **SEVERUS ALEXANDER** (Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander)  
Caesar A.D. 221-222  
Augustus A.D. 222-235



Severus Alexander, who was adopted by his cousin Elagabalus, ruled wisely and justly with the help of his mother and advisors. He was killed by his soldiers during a German campaign.

- ❑ **JULIA MAMAEA** (Julia Avita Mamaea)  
Augusta A.D. 222-235



When her son Severus Alexander became emperor, Julia Mamaea influenced the empire's politics for over a decade. Although she was popular with some Romans, others disliked her because of her greed and arrogance. The army hung both Julia and her son.

- ❑ **MAXIMINUS I "THRAX"** (Gaius Julius Verus Maximinus)  
Augustus A.D. 235-238



Historical sources say "Thrax" had great strength and size, standing over 8½ feet tall. After he became emperor, he increased taxes, making him unpopular. Both he and his son, Maximus, were murdered by the soldiers of Legion II.

# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



- ❑ **MAXIMUS** (Gaius Julius Verus Maximus)  
Caesar A.D. 235/6-238

Maximus became proud and insolent after his father Maximinus I named him Caesar. His attitude made him hated by Roman citizens and the military. Eventually his troops executed him.



- ❑ **GORDIAN I**  
(Marcus Antonius Gordianus Sempronianus Romanus "Africanus")  
Ruled 21 days in A.D. 238

Said to be one of the wealthiest men in the empire, and a man of great integrity. His troops in Africa named him emperor, but due to his age, he made his son co-emperor. He committed suicide when he learned that his son, Gordian II, had been killed in a battle.



- ❑ **GORDIAN II**  
(Marcus Antonius Gordianus Sempronianus Romanus "Africanus")  
Ruled 20 days in A.D. 238

Although Gordian II was highly educated, with a library of over 62,000 books, he led an inexperienced, undisciplined group of "locals" against an army of Carthaginians. When the forces met, Gordian's men fled. Many were trampled trying to escape, and he was killed. When his body was recovered it was unrecognizable.



- ❑ **BALBINUS** (Decimus Caelius Calvinus Balbinus)  
Ruled 98 days in A.D. 238

The Senate named Balbinus joint emperor with Pupienus on the condition that they make Gordian III Caesar. He was murdered by the Praetorian Guard who were jealous because the Senate had named him emperor instead of one from their ranks.



- ❑ **PUPIENUS** (Marcus Clodius Pupienus Maximus)  
Ruled 98 days in A.D. 238

Joint emperor with Balbinus. He rose through the ranks of the military, and as co-emperor, had the best interests of the country at heart. The Praetorian Guard killed him along with Balbinus.



- ❑ **GORDIAN III** (Marcus Antonius Gordianus "Pius")  
Caesar A.D. 238  
Augustus A.D. 238-244

A popular, young emperor who was grandson to Gordian I. He fought several successful battles against the Sassanians. He died in the Middle East, either murdered by his soldiers or of natural causes, history is not clear.

❑ **PHILIP I** (Marcus Julius Verus Philippus)  
**Augustus A.D. 244-249**

Known as “Philip the Arab” he progressed through the ranks to become Praetorian Prefect under Gordian III, and was thought to have turned the army against him. Philip’s reign was marked by border invasions and rebellions. He died in battle against Trajan Decius.



❑ **OTACILIA SEVERA** (Marcia Otacilia Severa)  
**Augusta A.D. 244-249**

Little is known about Otacilia, Philip I’s wife. Christian historians tend to portray her as Christian, seeking penance for her part in Gordian III’s death. Now most experts think this is untrue. Some sources say she was killed by the Praetorians, one says she lived out her life in retirement.



❑ **PHILIP II** (Marcus Julius Severus Philippus)  
**Caesar A.D. 244-247**  
**Augustus A.D. 247-249**

Philip II became Caesar at the age of seven. He died at the age of 12, soon after his father, most likely murdered by the Praetorian Guard.



❑ **TRAJAN DECIUS** (Gaius Messius Quintus Traianus Decius)  
**Augustus A.D. 249-251**

Forced to become emperor when his soldiers revolted against Philip I, Decius restored the Colosseum and many Roman traditions. He died in an ambush against the Goths along with his older son, Herennius. He was the first emperor to die in a battle against the enemy.



❑ **HERENNIA ESTRUSCILLA** (Herennia Cupressenia Etruscilla)  
**Augusta A.D. 249-253 (?)**

Almost nothing is known of Herennia, except that she came from an aristocratic Italian family. Thanks to inscriptions found on coins, we know that she was Decius’ wife.



❑ **HERENNIUS ETRUSCUS**  
(Quintus Herennius Etruscus Messius Decius)  
**Caesar A.D. 250-251**  
**Augustus A.D. 251**

Herennius, the elder son of Trajan Decius, became Caesar in A.D. 250 and a year later, Augustus. He died with his father in the marshes of Bulgaria in the Battle of Arbutus in A.D. 251.



# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



- ❑ **HOSTILIAN** (Gaius Valens Hostilianus Messius Quintus)  
**Caesar A.D. 250?/251**  
**Augustus A.D. 251**

Hostilian, youngest son of Trajan Decius, remained in Rome with his mother, surviving his father and brother's death. Under Trebonianus Gallus, he became Augustus, sharing the title with him. The plague killed him.



- ❑ **TREBONIANUS GALLUS**  
(Gaius Vibius Afinius Trebonianus Gallus)  
**Augustus A.D. 251-253**

Proclaimed emperor after Decius and his son were killed, Gallus made a disgraceful treaty with the Goths, and headed to Rome. There he discovered plague had crippled the city. Borders were under attack on all sides, and when Aemilian was proclaimed emperor, Gallus and his son were unable to muster enough support among the legions and were killed.



- ❑ **VOLUSIAN**  
(Gaius Vibius Afinius Gallus Vendumnianus Volusianus)  
**Caesar A.D. 251**  
**Augustus A.D. 251-253**

Volusian was made Caesar in A.D. 251, and a year later Augustus by his father, Trebonianus. Volusian was killed in the same mutiny that claimed his father's life.



- ❑ **AEMILIAN** (Marcus Aemilius Aemilianus)  
**Ruled about three months in A.D. 253**

After a victory against the Goths, the legions made Aemilian emperor. He entered Rome and gained Senate approval, but his success was shortlived. Valerian I, commander under Gallus, marched toward the city. Aemilian's soldiers turned against him, rather than fight Valerian.



- ❑ **VALERIAN I** (Publius Licinius Valerianus)  
**Augustus A.D. 253-260**

Remaining loyal to Gallus, he defeated Aemilian to become sole emperor. Had Valerian ruled earlier, he might have been considered one of Rome's greatest emperors. He was captured by Shapur I of Persia and died in captivity.



❑ **GALLIENUS** (Publius Licinius Egnatius Gallienus)  
**Augustus A.D. 253-268**

Gallienus was co-emperor and became sole ruler after his father, Valerian, was captured. In A.D. 260 the empire was in chaos, barbarians attacked the borders, various legions revolted, and the usurper Postumus took control of Western provinces. Eight years later, Gallienus was assassinated as he put down a rebellion.



❑ **SALONINA** (Julia Cornelia Salonina Crysogone)  
**Augusta A.D. 254-268**

An ideal empress, this woman was interested in the arts and philosophy. She worked to enhance her husband's achievements and ensure the army's loyalty. Salonina died during a massacre of Gallienus' family and followers at Milan.



❑ **VALERIAN II** (Publius Licinius Cornelius Valerianus)  
**Caesar A.D. 256-258**

Valerian, the older son of Gallienus, was given the title of Caesar when his father became emperor. He died in battle on the Danube.



❑ **SALONINUS** (Publius Licinius Cornelius Saloninus Valerianus)  
**Caesar A.D. 258-260**  
**Augustus A.D. 260**

Saloninus, younger son of Gallienus, became Caesar in A.D. 258 when his brother Valerian II died. After attaining the rank of Augustus in A.D. 260, he was murdered by Postumus' soldiers.



❑ **MACRIANUS I** (Titus Fulvius Junius Macrianus)  
**Augustus A.D. 260-261**

Macrianus, the elder, served under Valerian I, and took command of legions in the East when the former emperor was captured. He made his sons Macrianus I and Quietus co-emperors. Macrianus I set out to topple Gallienus, but was killed in a battle.



❑ **QUIETUS** (Titus Fulvius Junius Quietus)  
**Augustus A.D. 260-261**

Quietus showed talent for leadership in both the government and military, and was left in charge of Eastern provinces. When both his father and brother were slain by Gallienus' troops, he escaped to Emesa, but was taken prisoner and put to death.



# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family

**F**rom A.D. 259 until A.D. 273, the provinces of Gaul, Spain and Britain were not under Roman rule. Starting with Postumus, various generals rose up to take control of the region. It was returned to Rome during the rule of Aurelian.

◆ Ruler in Gaul, Spain and Britain.



❑ **POSTUMUS** ◆ (Marcus Cassianius Latinius Postumus)  
**Augustus A.D. 260-269**

Postumus took command of legions in the Rhine under Valerian. He was considered a usurper by some, because he declared himself emperor of Gaul, Spain and Britain while Gallienus ruled. To his credit, he kept peace within his borders. His own soldiers killed him when he wouldn't allow them to sack a town after a battle.



❑ **LAELIANUS** ◆ (Ulpius Cornelius Laelianus)  
**Usurper A.D. 269**

Laelianus seized power in what is now Germany. His own men killed him during the revolt he started against Postumus.



❑ **MARIUS** ◆ (Marcus Aurelius Marius)  
**Usurper A.D. 269**

Soldier and blacksmith Marius had a reputation for having great strength. After Postumus' death, the troops named him emperor. His reign was brief – in just weeks he was killed by his soldiers.



❑ **VICTORINUS** ◆ (Marcus Piavvonius Victorinus)  
**Augustus A.D. 269-271**

A former tribune, Victorinus reigned in Gaul for a short time after Postumus' death. His womanizing caught up with him when he insulted the wife of a military official, and was murdered.



❑ **TETRICUS I** ◆ (Gaius Pius Esuvius Tetricus)  
**Augustus A.D. 271-274**

Tetricus I was one of the few emperors who died naturally. A governor in Aquitania, he was named emperor after Victorinus' death, and proved equal to the task. The constant threat of revolt by the army continued. He formally surrendered to Aurelian, and retired in peace. Once again the Roman Empire was whole.



❑ **TETRICUS II** (Gaius Pius Esuvius Tetricus)  
**Caesar A.D. 273-274**  
**Augustus A.D. 274**

Named Caesar under his father's rule, and later co-emperor. After his father abdicated, Aurelian gave him a seat in the Senate and returned his family's possessions.

❑ **VABALATHUS**

(Lucius Julius Aurelius Septimius Vabalathus Athenodorus)

**Augustus A.D. 270/1-272**

**Kingdom of Palmyra.** After the murder of his father in A.D. 267, Vabalathus governed Palmyra with his mother Zenobia. When his troops named him Augustus, Aurelian marched against him. Vabalathus was taken captive by Aurelian in A.D. 272.



❑ **CLAUDIUS II GOTHICUS** (Marcus Aurelius Valerius Claudius)

**Augustus A.D. 268-270**

A brilliant soldier who earned the title *Gothicus* for victory against the Goths. He plotted to have Gallienus murdered and was named emperor. He had many military successes. During his brief reign, he set Rome on the path to recovery, but died of the plague.



❑ **QUINTILLUS** (Marcus Aurelius Claudius Quintillus)

**Augustus A.D. 270**

Younger brother of Claudius Gothicus, Quintillus was initially supported by the Senate and the army as the next emperor. With Aurelian's success in battles support shifted to him instead, so Quintillus committed suicide.



❑ **AURELIAN** (Lucius Domitius Aurelianus)

**Augustus A.D. 270-275**

Called the "Restorer of the Empire," Aurelian brought Gaul back into the realm, and recovered Palmyra. An able defender of Roman borders, he pushed back the barbarians. While on a campaign he was assassinated by his generals.



❑ **SEVERINA** (Ulpia Severina)

**Augusta A.D. 274-275**

History has left us little to remember of Severina, wife of Aurelian, except her coins. Her family name seems to indicate she might have come from the same Spanish family as Trajan. What happened to her after the murder of Aurelian is unknown.



❑ **TACITUS** (Marcus Claudius Tacitus)

**Augustus A.D. 275-276**

The Senate and army asked Tacitus to come out of retirement. Before resuming Aurelian's campaign, Tacitus honored him and punished his killers. Historical sources are not clear about how he died – it was either through treachery or sickness.



# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



- ❑ **FLORIAN** (Marcus Annius Florianus)  
**Ruled less than 3 months A.D. 276**

As Praetorian Prefect for his half-brother Tacitus, Florian went east with him. When Tacitus died, the army named him emperor, which the Senate supported. But armies in Syria and Egypt backed Probus, so Florian's own soldiers killed him.



- ❑ **PROBUS** (Marcus Aurelius Probus)  
**Augustus A.D. 276-282**

One of Aurelius' most successful generals Probus reclaimed Egypt and Palmyra. After Tacitus' death, he became ruler. Borders were under attack on all sides, but by A.D. 281, he established peace. He was murdered in a revolt led by Carus.



- ❑ **CARUS** (Marcus Aurelius Carus)  
**Augustus A.D. 282-283**

Praetorian Prefect under Probus. As emperor Carus led a successful campaign against the Sassanians. Ancient sources say he was struck by lightning, but now most think it was foul play.



- ❑ **CARINUS** (Marcus Aurelius Carinus)  
**Caesar A.D. 282-283**  
**Augustus A.D. 283-285**

Eldest son of Carus, and ruler in the West. Successfully fought barbarians in Gaul, put down Julian of Pannonia's rebellion, and had upper hand against Diocletian, whose troops had named him emperor, but was killed by a soldier whose wife he had seduced.



- ❑ **NIGRINIAN**  
**Died before A.D. 283**

Today we only know about Nigrinian, Carinus' son, because of his coins which are very rare. Historians think he died in infancy.



- ❑ **NUMERIAN** (Marcus Aurelius Numerius Numerianus)  
**Caesar A.D. 282-283**  
**Augustus A.D. 283-284**

As Caesar and youngest son, Numerian fought in Persia with Carus, his father. After his father's death he was named Augustus. As he returned west to meet his brother, he was found dead in his litter. Diocletian, leader of guards, blamed Numerian's Praetorian Prefect.



- ❑ **JULIAN OF PANNONIA** (Marcus Aurelius Julianus)  
**Usurper A.D. 284-285**

With Numerian dead, Julian, governor in Northeastern Italy, decided to revolt. He marched against Carinus. The two met in northern Italy where he was defeated and killed.

**T**wo factors were at work in the subsequent division of the Roman Empire. At one time the Senate awarded the title of emperor, but over the years their power diminished, as the military's grew, and they began to name men from their own ranks. Because of the empire's size, the emperor needed strong, trustworthy generals, who commanded the respect of the army.

Plus, the size of the Roman state made it difficult to defend against increasing border attacks. The attacks and internal unrest caused economic upheaval. Peasants could not work the land, tradesmen lacked supplies for their crafts, and landowners had no income for taxes. As a result, these upheavals spelled economic disaster, causing dissatisfaction with the government and internal unrest.

Diocletian realized the empire was too large for one man to rule, so he established a system of government called the Tetrarchy, made up of two co-emperors and two Caesars. One co-emperor and Caesar ruled the East, and the other pair ruled the West. The empire was split into Greek and Latin-speaking portions, in the region encompassing present-day Yugoslavia southward, and including Africa. However, the Tetrarchy lasted only 20 years. After Diocletian and Maximianus retired, fighting among would-be rulers broke out. Constantine the Great finally became emperor in the West, while Licinius ruled in the East.

**E= Ruled East**

**W= Ruled West**

❑ **DIOCLETIAN** (Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus)  
**Augustus A.D. 284-305** **E**

After Numerian's death, he became emperor. An excellent statesman and military leader, he unified most of the empire except for Britain. Introducing far-reaching reforms, he officially split rule of the empire between East and West and divided it into 4 units. As one of the tetrarchs, he voluntarily abdicated and retired in peace.



❑ **MAXIMIAN "HERCULIUS"**  
(Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus)  
**Caesar A.D. 285-286**

**Augustus A.D. 286-305, 307-308, & 310** **W**

Because Diocletian trusted Maximian, and had great respect for his military ability, he made Maximian Augustus in the West. Although he abdicated at the same time that Diocletian did, he returned to rule from A.D. 307-308 at the request of his son. But in A.D. 310, he revolted against Constantine I (then Caesar) and declared himself emperor. In a matter of weeks, he was captured and put to death.



# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



- ❑ **CARAUSIUS** (Marcus Aurelius Valerius Carausius)  
**Usurper in Britain A.D. 286/7-293**

Taking advantage of his position as commander in Gaul, Carausius started pillaging the countryside. He went to Britain, where he proclaimed himself emperor. Never recognized by legitimate emperors as ruler, he was eventually slain by Allectus.



- ❑ **ALLECTUS**  
**Usurper in Britain A.D. 293-296/7**

As Carausius' chief minister, Allectus became emperor after killing him. He was known for his cruelty, and died in a battle against Constantius I from Gaul.



- ❑ **DOMITIUS DOMITIANUS** (Lucius Domitius Domitianus)  
**Usurper in Egypt A.D. 297-298**

Little is known about Domitius, the usurper who led a revolt in Egypt. This country provided grain to Rome as well as other monetary benefits. He grabbed control for about 18 months before Diocletian crushed the uprising.



- ❑ **GALERIUS** (Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus)  
**Caesar A.D. 293-305**  
**Augustus A.D. 305-311**

**E**

Caesar in the East, making his capital Thessalonica. Defeated the Sassanian king Narses in A.D. 298, and then fought in the Danube region. Became co-emperor in A.D. 305 with Constantius I after Diocletian abdicated. Galerius followed a policy of persecuting Christians. He died from a painful illness.

- ❑ **GALERIA VALERIA** (Galeria Valeria)  
**Augusta A.D. 293?-311**

Daughter of Diocletian, and second wife of Galerius. Following the politics of the time, she supported his persecution of Christians. After Galerius and her nephew died, she was put to death by Licinius I.



- ❑ **CONSTANTIUS I "CHLORUS"** (Flavius Valerius Constantius)  
**Caesar A.D. 293-305**  
**Augustus A.D. 305-306**

**W**

Constantius I ruled as Caesar in the West – Gaul, Spain and Britain – and was one of the four tetrarchs. He was the father of Constantine the Great. Upon Diocletian's abdication, he became Augustus, reigning as co-emperor with Galerius. He died in Britain of natural causes.



❑ **HELENA** (Flavia Julia Helena [*Saint Helena*])  
**Augusta A.D. 324-328/30**

A remarkable woman who began life as a barmaid and ended as a Christian saint. Helena was the first wife of Constantius I, and mother of Constantine the Great. While on a Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem, it is said that she recovered the “true cross.”



❑ **THEODORA** (Flavia Maximiana Theodora)  
**Augusta, Posthumously**

The daughter of Diocletian’s Praetorian Prefect, Theodora became Constantius I’s second wife shortly before he was named Caesar, and they had six children. She was Constantine the Great’s stepmother.



❑ **SEVERUS II** (Flavius Valerius Severus)  
**Caesar A.D. 305-306**  
**Augustus A.D. 306-307**

**W**

A friend of Galerius, Severus was named Caesar in the West and later Augustus. When he decided to tax Italy and Rome and get rid of the Praetorian Guard, the guard revolted. They threw their support to Maxentius (son of Maximian), and Severus’ troops deserted him. Although he surrendered, he was later executed.



❑ **MAXIMINUS II DAIA** (Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximinus)  
**Caesar A.D. 305-310**  
**Augustus A.D. 310-313**

**E**

The nephew of Galerius, he was named Caesar in A.D. 305, ruling in Syria. Passed over twice for Augustus by Galerius, his troops finally named him ruler in A.D. 310. He attempted to foil an alliance between Constantine and Licinius by invading Thrace. Defeated by Licinius in A.D. 313, he managed to survive for 6 months before discovery and death.



❑ **MAXENTIUS** (Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maxentius)  
**Caesar A.D. 306-307**  
**Augustus A.D. 307-312**

Proclaimed Augustus by the people of Rome, Maxentius asked his father Maximian to come out of retirement. They defeated Severus II, gaining control of Italy, Africa and Spain. His father attempted to overthrow him in A.D. 308. Four years later, in a battle against Constantine, he drowned when the bridge of boats over the Tiber River collapsed during retreat.



# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



- ❑ **ROMULUS** (Marcus Valerius Romulus)  
**Died A.D. 309**

The son of Maxentius and grandson of Maximian and Galerius. Romulus became consul at a young age. His exact age at death ranges from three to fifteen. All coins were struck posthumously.



- ❑ **LICINIUS I** (Gaius Valerius Licinianus Licinius)  
**Augustus A.D. 308-324** **E**

Gaining recognition in battles against the Persians, he was adopted by Diocletian, and received the title of Augustus, instead of Maximinus Daia, or Constantine the Great. He married Constantine I's sister and the men attempted to reign peacefully. Over time, war broke out and Licinius was eventually killed.



- ❑ **LICINIUS II** (Flavius Valerius Licinianus Licinius)  
**Caesar A.D. 317-324**

Son of Licinius I, who was made Caesar in A.D. 317. As a prince he showed great promise, but after his father's death he was killed at the age of nine.



- ❑ **CONSTANTINE I "THE GREAT"** (Flavius Valerius Constantinus)  
**Caesar A.D. 306-310**  
**Augustus A.D. 310-337** **W**

Constantine the Great shared joint rule with Licinius, until the fall of A.D. 324, when he became the sole ruler. In A.D. 313 he issued the Edict of Milan, giving all subjects religious freedom. He was a good general and administrator, and tried to instill Christianity as the dominant religion. He dedicated the city of Constantinople in A.D. 330 as the eastern capital. While preparing to campaign against Shapur II, he fell sick and died in May 337.



- ❑ **FAUSTA** (Flavia Maxima Fausta)  
**Augusta A.D. 324-326**

In an attempt to strengthen political ties, Maximian wed his daughter Fausta to Constantine the Great. History remembers her as the wife who plotted against her stepson Crispus and caused his execution to secure power for her own sons. In the end, Constantine regretted his hasty actions and executed her.



- ❑ **CRISPUS** (Flavius Julius Crispus)  
**Caesar A.D. 316-326**

Crispus, the popular son of Constantine the Great, had many talents and showed military skill at age 20. Four years later, he won a great naval victory, but shortly after, because of plotting by Fausta, his stepmother, he was put to death by his father.



❑ **DELMATIUS** (Flavius Julius Delmatius)  
Caesar A.D. 335-337

The nephew of Constantine the Great. He gave Delmatius part of what is now Greece and Bulgaria to rule. After Constantine's death, his sons ordered Delmatius' execution.



❑ **HANNIBALLIANUS** (Flavius Claudius Hanniballianus)  
Caesar A.D. 335-337

Younger brother of Delmatius and nephew of Constantine I, he was given the title "King of Kings" and part of modern-day Turkey to rule. Like his brother, he was put to death after Constantine died.



❑ **CONSTANTINE II** (Flavius Claudius Julius Constantinus)  
Caesar A.D. 316-337  
Augustus A.D. 337-340

Eldest of Constantine the Great's three sons, by his second wife Fausta, he became emperor of Gaul, Spain, Britain and North Africa after his father died. His provinces were poorer, so he demanded lands from Constans. In A.D. 340, he initiated an attack against Constans, but was killed during battle.



❑ **CONSTANS** (Flavius Julius Constans)  
Caesar A.D. 333-337  
Augustus A.D. 337-350

**W**

The youngest son of Constantine the Great, who became the last legitimate emperor to visit Britain. After Constantine II's death, he ruled the West. The soldiers despised him because of the way he treated them. He was overthrown by Magnentius, his field commander, and killed.



❑ **CONSTANTIUS II** (Flavius Julius Valerius Constantius)  
Caesar A.D. 324-337  
Augustus A.D. 337-361

**E**

The middle son of Constantine the Great, who ruled the rich Eastern lands. After his father's death, he acted to wipe out Delmatius and Hanniballianus and other relatives. He later defeated the usurper Magnentius, and ruled the West, too. As he prepared to march against his cousin, Julian, he died of illness.



❑ **MAGNENTIUS** (Flavius Magnus Magnentius)  
Augustus A.D. 350-353

As commander of troops on the Rhine, Magnentius caused the revolt that killed Constans. After peace talks with Constantius II failed, he marched against him. One of the bloodiest battles of the century occurred. He withdrew to Gaul, was deserted by his soldiers and committed suicide.



# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



## ❑ **DECENTIUS** (Flavius Magnus Decentius) **Caesar A.D. 350-353**

Younger brother, or relative, of the usurper Magnentius, he was given command of Gaul. As Constantius' forces regained Italy and Africa in the summer of A.D. 353, Magnentius committed suicide, and Decentius, learning of the defeat, hung himself eight days later.



## ❑ **VETRANIO** **Augustus A.D. 350**

After Magnentius seized power, the sister of Constantius asked the legions of Pannonia to name the elderly soldier Vetranio emperor. Loyal to Constantine the Great, Vetranio maintained the borders, abdicated 10 months later and lived out his life in peace.



## ❑ **NEPOTIAN** (Constantinus Flavius Popilius Nepotianus) **Augustus A.D. 350**

Nepotian, half nephew of Constantine the Great, managed to escape the massacre which killed most of his family. He lived most of his life in exile in Italy, until Magnentius seized power and a crowd of Romans hailed him as emperor. He ruled about a month before another rival killed him.

## ❑ **CONSTANTIUS GALLUS** (Flavius Claudius Constantius Gallus) **Caesar A.D. 351-354**

Another nephew of Constantine the Great who also survived the family massacre. Little is known about him until Constantius II appointed him ruler in the East, in A.D. 351. Because of his cruel and disdainful attitude, he became unpopular with the public and army. When Constantius II sent officials to investigate Gallus' brutalities, they were hung. Gallus was arrested and beheaded on the emperor's orders.



## ❑ **JULIAN II "The Apostate"** (Flavius Claudius Julianus) **Caesar A.D. 355-360** **Augustus A.D. 360-363**

The last member of the ill-fated branch of Constantine the Great's family that escaped the massacre. Known as Julian "the Apostate," he attempted to restore the pagan religion, perhaps because of what he saw his "Christian" relatives do as a child. He led successful campaigns in Gaul and Asia. After Constantius' death, he was sole emperor. Julian II died on the banks of the Tigris while engaging in war against Persia.



❑ **JOVIAN** (Flavius Jovianus)  
**Augustus A.D. 363-364**

Proclaimed emperor by troops both from Gaul and the East. To safely retreat from Persia, he gave up lands East of the Tigris. As emperor, Jovian restored rights to Christians, his predecessor had taken away. But at 33, while traveling to Constantinople, he was found dead in his room, most likely caused by accidental suffocation by fumes from a charcoal heater.



❑ **VALENTINIAN I** (Flavius Valentinianus)  
**Augustus A.D. 364-375** **W**

Rose through the military ranks to become emperor upon Jovian's death. After leaving his brother Valens in charge of the East, he returned to Italy. He looked after the common man and spent much of his time protecting his borders against the barbarians. He died of a rage-induced stroke in A.D. 375.



❑ **VALENS** (Flavius Julius)  
**Augustus A.D. 364-378** **E**

Younger brother of Valentinian I and co-emperor in the East. Almost immediately after accepting rule, he had to put down rebellions by the usurpers Procopius and Theodorus as well as deal with the Visigoths and Huns. In the battle of Adrianople against the Visigoths in A.D. 378, two-thirds of the Roman army were killed. Valens died either in battle or during a fire, set in the farmhouse he sought refuge in to dress his wounds.



❑ **PROCOPIUS**  
**Usurper, ruled eight months A.D. 365-366** **E**

A commander in the East, and distant relative of Julian II, he withdrew from public life after Valentinian and Valens became rulers. When Valens left to fight in the Middle East, he reappeared in Constantinople. Named emperor by the army, he enjoyed success for about 8 months, but was defeated in battle and executed.



❑ **GRATIAN** (Flavius Gratianus)  
**Augustus A.D. 367-383** **W**

Gratian, son of Valentinian I, became Augustus at age 7 and eventually ruled the entire West. His time was spent defending the borders against the barbarians. After Valens' death, he appointed Theodosius, a general, to rule in the East. He was killed after his soldiers deserted him in a battle against Magnus Maximus.



# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



- ❑ **VALENTINIAN II** (Flavius Valentinianus)  
Augustus A.D. 375-392 **W**

Son of Valentinian I, and half-brother of Gratian, who at 4 became co-emperor with his brother. By about 12, he ruled the entire West. After the usurper Magnus Maximus revolted, Valentinian II moved his government to Milan, but when the usurper invaded again, he fled to Greece. Theodosius I helped him regain power. Valentinian either killed himself or was strangled on orders of Arbogast.



- ❑ **THEODOSIUS I "THE GREAT"** (Flavius Theodosius)  
Augustus A.D. 379-395 **E**

Rose through the military to eventually become co-emperor with Gratian. Led successful campaigns against the Goths, and defeated Magnus Maximus and Eugenius. Upon his death, he split the empire between his two sons – it was never reunited. He was one of the more effective rulers of the late empire.



- ❑ **MAGNUS MAXIMUS** (Flavius Magnus Clemens Maximus)  
Augustus A.D. 383-388 **W**

Rising through the military ranks, Magnus was named emperor by his soldiers in Britain. He invaded Gaul and usurped Spain, defeating Gratian. In A.D. 387, he invaded Italy, but a little over a year later was killed by Theodosius.



- ❑ **FLAVIUS VICTOR** (Flavius Victor)  
Augustus A.D. 387-388 **W**

Young son of Magnus Maximus, was made Augustus in A.D. 387. Flavius was executed after Theodosius I's victory.



- ❑ **EUGENIUS** (Flavius Eugenius)  
Usurper A.D. 392-394 **W**

Although Eugenius was a Christian, he allied himself with the pagans to gain support. He served as a puppet emperor for Arbogast, the Frankish general. Eugenius seized Italy, angering Theodosius who defeated him, executing both him and Arbogast.



- ❑ **ARCADIUS** (Flavius Arcadius)  
Augustus A.D. 383-408 **E**

Elder son of Theodosius I, who became emperor in the East at 16 after his father's death. His wife and ministers held the real power during his reign. The Eastern Empire was generally at peace while he ruled. He died at age 31 of natural causes.

❑ **HONORIUS** (Flavius Honorius)

Augustus A.D. 393-423

**W**

Younger son of Theodosius I, who ruled the West from Ravenna. During his rule, the city of Rome was sacked in A.D. 410. It was the first time the city had fallen in 800 years, and marked the collapse of the Western Empire. He died after reigning 30 inglorious years.



❑ **CONSTANTINE III** (Flavius Claudius Constantinus)

Usurper in Gaul and Britain A.D. 407-411

**W**

A soldier, named emperor by legions in Britain, Constantine III crossed the channel to Gaul, and helped Honorius against the Goths. His success was short-lived because his own general revolted, capturing and killing Constantine III's son. Constantius III, a commander of Honorius, put down the rebellion, and later killed Constantine III. Rome gave up all claims to Britain.



❑ **PRISCUS ATTALUS**

Augustus A.D. 409-410 & 414-415

After the Goths invaded Rome, Gothic king Alaric set Priscus Attalus up as a puppet ruler. Under Attalus, Rome was pillaged for the first time in 800 years, and he was taken prisoner. He returned as emperor again in A.D. 414, but after a short rule, was banished by Honorius.



❑ **CONSTANTIUS III** (Flavius Constantius)

Augustus A.D. 421

**W**

Appointed general of the armies under Honorius, and later made Augustus. He married Honorius' sister, and was father of Valentinian III. The Eastern government, under Theodosius II, refused to recognize him. He died after a reign of seven months.



❑ **JOHANNES** (John)

Usurper A.D. 423-425

After the death of Honorius he proclaimed himself emperor of Italy, Gaul and Spain, but Theodosius II refused to acknowledge him and sent an army to defeat him. After his capture, he was put on display and later executed.



❑ **THEODOSIUS II** (Flavius Theodosius)

Augustus A.D. 402-450

**E**

The grandson of Theodosius "the Great," who was named Augustus before age one, and became sole ruler in the East at age seven. In A.D. 434, he bought peace with the infamous Attila the Hun. *The Theodosian Code* (books compiling all the laws written since A.D. 312) was created during his reign. A fall from a horse is thought to have killed him.



# Emperors of Ancient Rome & Family



- ❑ **VALENTINIAN III** (Flavius Placidus Valentinianus)  
Caesar A.D. 424-425  
Augustus A.D. 425-455 **W**

The son of Constantius III, he was named emperor in the West by Theodosius II. The empire was continually under siege from barbarians, and Africa was lost to the Vandals. He was murdered by two bodyguards of a general he had killed.



- ❑ **MARCIAN** (Flavius Valerius Marcianus)  
Augustus A.D. 450-457 **E**

A distinguished soldier who was chosen to be Theodosius II's successor. He is remembered for his refusal to pay Attila his annual tribute of gold. Marcian did not stop the Vandals from sacking Rome, and under his reign, Roman lands enjoyed six years of peace. He died of natural causes.



- ❑ **LEO I "THE GREAT"** (Flavius Valerius Leo)  
Augustus A.D. 457-474 **E**

Emperor in the East, who squandered the treasury built up by Marcian. He built a fleet that was destroyed by the Vandals. He died of illness in his 70s.



- ❑ **LEO II**  
Caesar A.D. 473-474  
Augustus A.D. 474 **E**

Grandson of Leo I, who was made Caesar and later Augustus, at age 7, after Leo I's death. He was a sickly child who died after reigning less than a year. His father, Zenon, was named co-emperor.



- ❑ **MAJORIAN** (Flavius Julius Valerius Majorianus)  
Augustus A.D. 457-461 **W**

Following a period of unrest, Majorian claimed the throne. He dealt with invading tribes in Gaul, and pushed back Vandals in southern Italy. Perhaps he was too successful, because Ricimer, a general who helped him become ruler, double crossed him, and had him executed.



- ❑ **SEVERUS III** (Libius Severus)  
Augustus A.D. 461-465 **W**

For more than three months the West had no emperor until Ricimer, Master of Soldiers, named the puppet emperor Severus III. During his reign borders were under attack and Vandal raided the coastlines. Some sources say he died of natural causes, but others think it was poisoning.

❑ **ANTHEMIUS** (Procopius Anthemius)  
**Augustus A.D. 467-472** **W**

An Eastern general who had many victories over the Huns and Goths. Appointed emperor by Leo I as the Western Empire began to deteriorate. A bad relationship with his father-in-law, Ricimer, led to a civil war. Eventually Anthemius was murdered.



❑ **ZENO** (Tarasicodissa)  
**Augustus A.D. 474-491** **E**

Through marriage to Leo I's daughter, Zeno became his ally against the barbarian general Aspar. After Leo's death, and the death of Zeno's son, he became emperor. Soon he became victim of a plot hatched by his mother-in-law and lived in exile for 19 months. Upon his return in A.D. 476, he ruled for another 17 years before dying of natural causes.



❑ **BASILISCUS**  
**Augustus A.D. 475-476**

Basiliscus was encouraged to rebel against Zeno by his sister, the former empress Aelia Verina (wife of Leo I), and gained control of Constantinople. Not having Zeno's military strength, and alienating the religious community and his leading generals, he became unpopular. When Zeno regained control, Basiliscus was exiled to Cappadocia, where he was starved to death.



❑ **ANASTASIUS I**  
**Augustus A.D. 491-518** **E**

Rose from a simple officer in the emperor's household to ruler by marrying Zeno's widow. During his reign of 27 years, Anastasius set the empire on firm financial footing. Under his direction, the Long Walls of Thrace (an outer defense around Constantinople) were built to protect the city from invaders. With his monetary reforms, Byzantine bronze coinage began. After a long life, he was struck by lightning and killed.



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**A**ncient Roman and Greek coins have been studied by scholars for more than 600 years, and systematically so for the last 300 years. One ancient scholar noted, “Coinage of all ages may inform us on the art, the social and political concepts, the aims and achievements and the economics of the states for which they were produced.” This observation is still true today, and now you have another five reasons to collect coins.

### Neptune’s Steeds

**I**n ancient Rome, the seahorse probably inspired the mythical creature called a Hippocampus. Hippo (horse) + campus (sea monster). While in New Orleans, I spotted this reference at a seahorse exhibit in the Aquarium (also a Roman word). Romans believed seahorses had the power to cure baldness and a seahorse boiled in wine was poison.

Some sources describe the hippocampus as having the head and forequarters of a horse and the tail and hindquarters of a dolphin. Neptune’s chariot was pulled through the ancient seas by several of these creatures. Sometimes Neptune was seen riding one.

Here’s a hippocampus appearing on the reverse of a bronze antoninianus of Roman emperor Gallienus, issued circa A.D. 267-268, with a reverse legend referring to Neptune, NEPTVNO CONS AVG (*Neptuno Conservatori Augusti*).

This roughly translates as “Neptune, the Preserver,” and was a cry for help from Gallienus to Neptune to preserve Gallienus against the usurper general Aureolus, an ally of Postumus. It didn’t work, as Gallienus was lured to his death by his own troops, including Claudius II Gothicus, Marcianus and Aurelian, as Gallienus led them against Aureolus. Claudius became emperor in his place.



Neptune driving a chariot of hippocamps  
Roman mosaic





Floor mosaic of a child and a donkey  
Great Palace Mosaic Museum

## Constantine the Great's Palace

In July 1998, an article in *The New York Times* reported that archeologists in Istanbul, Turkey believed they had uncovered the ruins of the Great Palace, from which the Byzantine Roman emperors ruled much of the known world nearly a thousand years ago. The vivid green, yellow and red paint pigment was still adhering to the walls. Constantine the Great built the core of the Great Palace after he made then Constantinople, the capital of the Roman Empire in A.D. 330. The palace was home to more than 50 emperors over the centuries. In 1453, Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks. The ruins are just across the street from Hagia Sophia, which was the largest and most important church in Christendom, but after 1453 became a mosque.

When I hold a coin of Constantine the Great in my hand, I can just imagine him in his palace. Someday I would like to travel to modern-day Turkey, and visit the many ancient archeological sites of the Greek and Roman and Byzantine civilizations, including this one! Until then, I can just hold up a coin and imagine...



**DOMITINVS:** In this legend the "a" in DOMITIANVS is missing



## Ancient Error Coin

The Roman coin shown at left with the error legend "DOMITINVS" is an example of a tired old die cutter's misspelling of "DOMITIANVS." In this example, the "A" has been left out. I wonder if Emperor Domitian (A.D. 69-96) allowed the die cutter to keep his head?

While an error like this would be a significant design mistake on a U.S. coin, with so few error collectors of ancient coins, the coin is without any added significant value! However, I am keeping it for our reference collection as a curiosity. I doubt I could easily find another.

Coins enlarged to show detail

# Introduction to the Byzantine Empire



Bronze follis of  
Constantine the Great



## The Fall of Rome & the Rise of the Byzantine Empire

The end of the reign of Theodosius marked the end of a united Rome – upon his death, he divided the territory between his sons. Over the next 8 decades, various invading tribes began tightening their grip on the western portion of the Roman Empire.

What saved the Roman Empire was an advantageous maneuver by Constantine the Great. He recognized that the empire was too large to continue to be governed from Rome. So, in A.D. 330, Constantine moved the capitol to the East, to the former ancient Greek city of Byzantium. He renamed his “new Rome” as Constantinople, and the people called themselves *Romaioi* (Romans).

In 476 A.D., the western portion of the empire fell to invading Germanic tribes. Thanks to the strength of the Eastern Roman Empire and its central capitol, it continued to thrive for another 1,000 years – preserving the knowledge and classical heritage that would have otherwise been forgotten.

## The growth of science, religion & architecture

Coinage underwent a shift during this time period. The use of emperor’s portraits on coins became less popular, with more pieces featuring depictions of Christ. A new coin – the gold Solidus – was introduced under Constantine the Great. This denomination became the “gold standard” during most of the Byzantine Empire. Another move by Constantine nurtured and promoted the growth of Christianity. Thanks to his efforts, the religion was able to take root and remains an important belief system to this day.



Hagia Sofia mosaic  
of Constantine IX



The gold Solidus – like this coin,  
issued from A.D. 602-610 under  
Emperor Phocas – served as the  
“dollar” of its day.



*Struck from A.D. 527-565 under the reign of Justinian I, this Copper Follis features a number of Christian symbols.*



*Large Copper Follis of Maurice Tiberius (A.D. 582-602)*



*Bronze 12 Numi struck from A.D. 610-641 under Heraclius*

Science and technology also flourished and a magnificent feat of architecture – the famed Hagia Sophia church – was constructed during the reign of Emperor Justinian I.

Over time, Constantine's "new Rome" became known as the Byzantine Empire – the most sophisticated civilization of its age. The empire fell to Ottoman invaders on May 29, 1453.

*The new empire started with...  
**A surprising victory that changed history forever!***

**I**n 312 A.D., the armies of Constantine and Maxentius were vying for control of the Western half of the Roman Empire. Shortly before the troops took to the battlefield at Milvian Bridge (on the Tiber River), Constantine claimed he had a vision. While watching the sun set, a symbol appeared in the sky before him with the Latin phrase "In hoc signo vinces" (With this sign, you shall conquer). Though Constantine was a pagan, he hurried to have the sign of his vision (the labarum) painted on the shield of each of his soldiers.

Following his triumph at the Milvian Bridge, Constantine embraced Christianity. He attributed the win to his army's religious display, believing it had provided the protection they needed. His victory – though it was unexpected (his soldiers were outnumbered by as much as 10 to 1) – gave us Christianity as we know it today. By defeating Maxentius, Constantine was free to establish his new religion throughout the Western half of the empire.



**Battle of the Milvian Bridge**

## A Short Glossary of Roman Terms

**Augustus:** “Honor majestic” A word related to the priestly arts. The Senate granted this title to Octavian, who then adopted it. It placed him above the rest of the state as protector of Rome. Used by emperors that followed him. Shown as AVG on coins.

**Barbarian:** At the height of the Roman Empire, Romans looked at everyone outside their domain as strange and uncivilized foreigners.

**Caesar:** Heir to the throne, junior emperor. First used by Octavian to advertise his connection with Julius Caesar, and then used by later rulers. Shown as C or CAES on coins.

**Centurion:** Soldier in charge of a century of men (80 men), smallest unit in the Roman army.

**Citizen:** Any male 15 or older who was a free man within the Roman republic. Citizenship gave voting, religious and social rights along with required military service.

**Consul:** An annually elected office – the highest and most coveted – in the Senate. It was sometimes held by the emperor himself. While there was no political power attached to the position, it commanded respect. Shown as COS on coins, followed by numbers indicating times office held.

**Emperor:** “A man who rules an empire.” Comes from the Latin word *imperator*.

**Germanicus:** A title honoring military successes in Germany. Shown on coins as GERM.

**Gloria Exercitus:** Glory to the Army, first used by Constantine the Great.

**Imperator:** Commander, leader. Title of honor awarded to a victorious general. Later, granted to emperors for military victories. Shown as IMP on coins.

**Legion:** A legion was made up of 10 cohorts (480 men to a cohort) or 4,800 men.

**Magnus:** “The great.”

**Maximus:** “Greatest” – a term used in the later Roman Empire.

**Optimus:** “Best,” a title used on coins of select emperors, sometimes posthumously.

**Praetor:** A leader – literally means “goes before” or “leads.”

**Praetorian Guard:** Usually the emperor’s personal bodyguards.

**Praetorian Prefect:** Commander of the Imperial Guard, usually the best legal mind in the government and responsible for the emperor’s safety.

**Prefect (Praefectus):** Overseer, civil or military officer. Title given to a person of standing in the Roman world.

**Princeps:** First citizen, leader or best leader.

**Province:** Areas outside Italy ruled by Rome; Britain, Gaul, Spain and Egypt were just a few of the many provinces in the empire.

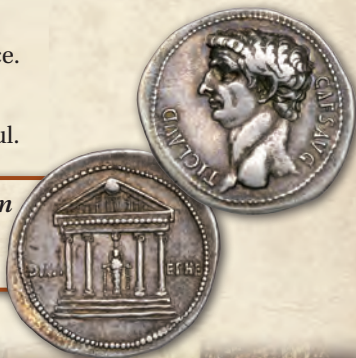
**Senate:** A council of senior men selected from civil offices who directed the Roman state.

**Tribunicia Potestas:** Tribune of the people. Gave emperors veto power and right to convene the Senate. Shown on coins as TRP, usually followed by numbers. Indicated renewal.

**Vota:** Vows taken by the emperor upon taking office.

**Usurp:** To seize control by force or illegal means, as of the Roman Empire or a portion of, such as Gaul.

*Shown: Cistophoric Tetradrachm of Claudius, minted at Ephesus A.D. 41-42*



Proclaiming Claudius Emperor  
Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1867



# Ancient History & Numismatic Reference Books

*The books listed below will help you learn about the history of the ancient world, as well as interpret the designs and legends on the ancient coins in your collection.*

## ROMAN COIN REFERENCES

***Ancient Coin Collecting***, vols. 1-4, by Wayne Sayles

Four separate volumes that give an in-depth overview to collecting ancient coins.

***Coinage and History of the Roman Empire***, vols. 1 & 2, by David Vagi

Invaluable study of more than 550 years of Roman history and numismatics, in a two-volume set. Biographies of the emperors and their families based on current historical information. An indispensable set, destined to be a classic!

***Dictionary of Ancient Roman Coins***, by John Melville Jones

Traditional A-Z format, this dictionary lists deities, denominations, titles and many other topics.

***History and Coinage of the Roman Imperators***, 49-27 B.C.,

by David R. Sear Exceptional book that covers 435 coin types during this turbulent period of Roman history. Contains a wealth of historical and numismatic information.

***Roman Coins and Their Values, Millennium Edition (in five volumes)***, by David R. Sear

One of the most highly acclaimed multi-volume, comprehensive references that catalogues thousands of Roman coins, spanning nearly eight centuries. Useful information on emperors, denominations, reverse types and mints.

**Volume I:** The Republic & the Twelve Caesars, 280 B.C. - A.D. 96

**Volume II:** Adoptive Emperors to Severans, A.D. 96-235

**Volume III:** The Third Century Crisis and Recovery, A.D. 235-285

**Volume IV:** The Tetrarchies and the Rise of the House of Constantine, A.D. 284-337

**Volume V:** The Christian Empire: the Later Constantinian Dynasty and the Houses of Valentinian and Theodosius and Their Successors, Constantine II to Zeno, A.D. 337-491

## ROMAN PROVINCIAL COIN REFERENCES

***Greek Imperial Coins and Their Values***, by David R. Sear

Coverage of coins issued by Greek cities as part of the Roman Empire during the 1st century Roman period, as well as Judean and Parthian coins.

***Tetradrachms of Roman Egypt***, by James W. Curtis

Essential reprint of a long unavailable reference that lists over 2,100 tetradrachms. Supplemented with article reprints, price lists and auction catalogues.

## BYZANTINE COIN REFERENCES

***Byzantine Coins and Their Values***, by David R. Sear & Simon Bendall  
New comprehensive revision of the 1974 edition. Over 2,500 coins listed with extensive illustrations. Includes coins issued from the reign of Anastasius I (A.D. 491-518) through the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. This is the standard handbook on Byzantine coins for the collector.

***The Beginner's Guide to Identifying Byzantine Coins***, by Prue Morgan Fitts. Over 133 pages of useful information for the emerging Byzantine coin collector.

## GREEK COIN REFERENCES

***Coinage in the Greek World***, by Ian Carradice & Martin Price  
Good general introduction to Greek coins linking history with the evolution of coin denominations.

***Dictionary of Ancient Greek Coins***, by John Melville Jones  
Dictionary of terms relevant to denominations, moneymakers, types, mythology, games, economics and much more.

***Greek Coins***, by Ian Carradice  
Easy to follow overview of Greek coins and their regions of origin, from the 7th to the 1st century B.C.

***Greek Coins and Their Values***, vols. 1 & 2, by David R. Sear  
Volume 1 catalogues European Greek Coinage. Over 3,300 coins listed, with 1,500 illustrations. Volume 2 catalogues coins of Asia Minor, Africa and the Hellenistic Empires. Over 4,500 coins listed, with 2,000 illustrations.

## BIBLICAL COIN REFERENCES

***Guide to Biblical Coins***, by David Hendin  
Fifth edition of the most widely used reference in the field of ancient Judaeon and Biblical coins. Describes over 525 coins in detail with current values, charts, line drawings and translations. Interesting and easy to follow.

If you would like to obtain one of the references listed above, please contact Littleton Coin Company at 1-800-645-3122 Monday-Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 9:00 P.M., or visit us online at [www.LittletonCoin.com](http://www.LittletonCoin.com). We also recommend these fine book sellers:

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# What they say about Littleton's

## How to Collect Ancient Roman Coins:

Rather than filling your car with the 100 or more books it takes to do proper research of Roman coins when you are going to a coin show, the Littleton pocket field guide is the perfect alternative.

*Harlan J. Berk, Professional Numismatist and Author of:*

*100 Greatest Ancient Coins; Roman Gold Coins of the Medieval World, 383-1453 A.D; and Eastern Roman Successors of the Sestertius*

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I recommend the attractive little booklet *How to Collect Ancient Roman Coins: Collectors Guide and Checklist* for anyone beginning an interest in the coinage of the Roman Empire. It includes some good, basic information and is distinguished by handsome color photographs of representative coins of nearly all the emperors... Littleton Coin Company and David Sundman have performed a fine service for numismatics.

*Robert W. Hoge, Curator Emeritus, American Numismatic Society and member of the Citizens Coinage Advisory Committee, Former Curator, American Numismatic Association*

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*How to Collect Ancient Roman Coins: Collectors Guide and Checklist* is an excellent tool for the beginning (and advanced) collector seeking a simple, straightforward introduction to Roman coins with answers to the most often asked questions about them. One of the most popular methods of collecting Roman coins is by emperor, and this booklet provides a convenient checklist that you can carry with you to your favorite shows!

*Kerry K. Wetterstrom, President Elect of the Ancient Coin Collectors Guild; Staff Numismatist at Classical Numismatic Group; Instructor at the ANA Summer Seminar*

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The most difficult part of collecting ancient coins is getting started. This fine introductory booklet gives all new collectors the head start they need.

*David L. Vagi, Author of Coinage and History of the Roman Empire; Ancients Director for NGC*



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