

## Lesson 2 Resource Types of Roman coins

### COMMON COINS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE



Aureus 200 BCE-305 CE  
7g, - 20mm



Solidus 310-693 CE  
4.5g, - 20mm



AE3 315-400 CE  
2.4g, 18mm



AE4 383-400 CE  
0.5-1.5g, - 14mm



Denarius 211 BCE-241 CE  
3g, - 19mm



Tremissis 380-367 CE  
1.5g, - 14mm



Sestertius 23 BCE-250 CE  
20-30g, - 35mm



Antoninianus 215-295 CE  
3-5g, - 21mm



Siliqua 310 - 650 CE  
1-3g, - 18mm



As 280 BCE - 250 CE  
9-12g, - 27mm



Follis 294 - 310 CE  
5-12g, - 26mm (early)



Dupondius 23 BCE - 250 CE  
11-15g, - 29mm

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Roman Coins (gold – aureus) – showing Emperors Nero, Claudius, Domitian and Titus (from left to right) from the Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery



Roman Coins (gold – aureus) – showing Emperors Hadrian and Augustus (from left to right) from the Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery

ROMAN COINS: EQUIVALENT VALUES



1 aureus = 25 denarii / 400 asses  
(gold)



1 denarius = 4 sestertii / 16 asses  
(silver)



1 sestertius = 2 dupondii / 4 asses  
(orichalcum brass)



1 dupondius = 2 asses  
(orichalcum brass)



1 as  
(copper)



1 semis = 1/2 as  
(orichalcum brass)



1 quadrans = 1/4 as  
(copper)

## **Roman Coins Information**

In Roman times, coins were made by placing a blank metal disc between two engraved metal coin dies. The top die was then struck by a hammer and the force of the hammer blow made the pictures on each side of the coin. Just as our coins have the head of our kings and queens on them, the heads of leaders of the Roman Empire were stamped on ancient Roman coins.

At first, Rome was ruled by kings and then by an elected senate. The senate was a group of people who made up part of the government. Later, senators and army generals fought to control Roman lands. Many people thought that the famous Roman army general, Julius Caesar, would become the first Roman Emperor but he was murdered. After Julius Caesar was murdered, Julius Caesar's nephew, Augustus Caesar, became the first Emperor of Rome.

Roman Emperors were very powerful men. They were worshipped like gods and temples were built all over the Roman Empire to honour them. Their heads were stamped on coins. The same coins were used throughout the whole Roman Empire. There were gold, silver and brass coins. (see resource sheet for coin values) The pictures on the coins often announced great events, just as our coins often show important events today. In those days, long before newspapers and television, Roman coins spread news of victories far and wide.

Roman coins weren't just used for buying things. Since Roman coins carried a portrait of the Emperor, they also showed the people of the Roman Empire what their Emperor looked like. The Romans believed that when they died, their spirit was rowed across the mythical river Styx to the underworld. They needed to pay the ferryman to row them across the river so, the dead were buried with a coin in their mouths, to pay the ferryman.

Many Romans, especially soldiers, liked a day at the races where they could use their pay to bet on their favourite contestants. Horses pulled chariots around a track called a 'circus'. The most famous circus was Circus Maximus. It was very dangerous! Many contestants were killed during chariot races.