

Answer Key #1: Reading & Understanding Images

Coin 35: Silver Denarius of Tiberius

Livia (58 BC-29 CE) was the wife of Augustus, the first emperor of Rome. Imperial women were often associated with goddesses who represented Roman ideals. On this coin, minted by Tiberius (c. 15 CE), Livia is assimilated with the attributes of Pax, the female personification of peace.

1. What does the olive branch represent?

Peace/Pax

2. What is the significance of the laureate? (Hint: what famous Roman was known to wear a laureate to cover his bald spot?)

Trend started by Caesar became marker of an emperor

3. Why is Pax Romana being commemorated at this time?

The Pax Romana (Roman Peace) was a period of peace and minimal expansion after the Republican civil wars. It began with the accession of Augustus in 27 BC and lasted until the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 AD.

4. What can this coin tell us about public depictions of women in the imperial family?

- **Roman imperial women could not become divine during their lifetimes**
- **Livia has become a public figure who is associated with the features of a goddess who represents ideals of the period – propaganda tool**
- **The *Augusta* could be honoured like a goddess and associated with divinities (important step which led to deification after death)**
- **This does NOT tell us that women were considered equal to men!!! Or that women could hold any formal power!!!**

Answer Key #2: Legends, Titles, and Dating

Coin 35: Silver Denarius

1. Obverse

- a. What image do you see on the obverse of this coin?

Head of Marcus Aurelius, r. wearing laureate

- b. What does the obverse legend say (as written)?

ANTONINVS AVG IMP ARMENIACVS

- c. What does the legend mean (using abbreviations handout)?

ANTONINUS AVGVSTVS IMPERATOR ARMENIACVS

2. Reverse

- a. What image do you see on the reverse of this coin?

Mars standing, r. holding reversed spear and leaning on shield

- b. What does the reverse legend say (as written)?

P. M. TR. P. XVIII IMP. II COS. III

- c. What does the legend mean (using abbreviations handout)?

**Pontifex Maximus Tribunician Power 18 Emperor 2
Consul 3**

3. Dating

- a. What sorts of resources would you use to determine the date of this coin?

**Sear (see handout and Instructor Notes section B)
<http://www.jhecoins.com/obverselegends.htm> (see below)**

- b. What do you think is the date?

164 CE

4. Titles

- a. What does the title ARMENIACVS mean?

He conquered Armenia.

Marcus Aurelius was actually persuaded to take the title as a shared honor with Lucius Attidius Cornelianus, a governor of Syria who held it originally during the war. In 164 CE, during a lull in the war when Rome had gained firm control over Armenia, Lucius gained the title and

persuaded Marcus to share it through an official dispatch to the Senate.

- b. So...who is this guy? If you aren't sure what his name is, describe his position, dates, and how he is portrayed (e.g, appearance, associations, etc.).

Marcus Aurelius

One helpful source is <http://www.jhecoins.com/obverselegends.htm>, where one can type in one or more abbreviations or words found in a coin's legend and see where those abbreviations or words appear and what dates they apply to. For example, a search for ARMENIACVS turned up:

Results for: armeniacvs

| Legend | Emperor |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ANTONINVS AVGARMENIACVS | Marcus Aurelius A.D. 161-180 |
| LAVRELVERVS AVGARMENIACVS | Lucius Verus A.D. 161-169 |
| LVERVS AVGARMENIACVS | Lucius Verus A.D. 161-169 |
| MANTONINVS AVGARMENIACVS | Marcus Aurelius A.D. 161-180 |
| MANTONINVS AVGARMENIACVSPM | Marcus Aurelius A.D. 161-180 |
| MAVRELANTONINVS AVGARMENIACVSPM | Marcus Aurelius A.D. 161-180 |

- c. What is happening in the Roman Empire at the time this coin was minted?
The Romans were fighting the Roman-Parthian War over Armenia and Upper Mesopotamia. The war lasted from 161-166 CE.

Answer Key #3: Mint Marks

Coin 64: Commemorative Coin of Crispus

Crispus was the first son of Constantine by the concubine (or first wife) Minervina. He was declared Caesar in 317 CE, along with his brother Constantine II and his first cousin Licinius Iunior. In 326, Crispus was killed by his father under suspicious circumstances, which are still disputed today, after which he suffered a *damnatio memoriae*, a removal of his name from all official documents and monuments.

1. What does the mint mark on this coin say?

PLN

2. What does the mint mark mean (i.e., where was the coin minted)?

The coin was minted in Londinium/London

3. What do you see on the reverse of the coin? How might this be significant in connection with the mint mark?

Two Victories standing facing one another, holding shield inscribed VOT PR on altar decorated by a wreath with cross inside.

Legend reads: VICTORIAE LAETAE PRINC. PERP. (“Victory to the Joyful Eternal Princeps”)

Constantine was declared emperor in Britain eleven years earlier (probably a few years after Crispus was born). Constantine is now declaring Crispus’ power with this coin minted in the place where he himself was declared emperor.

OR

When Crispus was given a *damnatio memoriae*, he should theoretically have been removed from all coins minted in the Roman Empire; however, it seems that, since this coin was not re-struck with a different image, either the memo of the *damnatio memoriae* never made it to Britain or, perhaps more likely, that the coin was never returned in order to be re-struck.

4. What does VOT PR mean, and what does it have to do with Crispus?

VOTA POPVLI ROMANI – “vows of/to/for the Roman people”

Crispus was taking the vow to be Caesar of the Roman people

5. How might we be able to date this coin?

This coin is actually quite easy to date because it explicitly commemorates the appointment of Crispus as Caesar, which we know happened in 317 CE.