

Roman Bronze Coins

From Paganism to Christianity 294-364 A.D.

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News & Comments

Thanks for the Failmezger book!! Its great. I'm learning to use it. There is some really great information in it. 364U certainly looks like it (the coin I have). I had never seen one like this before.

Tory, I received the CD today. It's great! I wasn't aware of the fact that Doug's entire website was part of it. I have two 3-ring binders of Doug's web pages I had started printing about 4 years ago. With the CD, maybe I can make some room on my bookshelf. Once again, in my opinion, I think You and Doug have done a great job. I believe your efforts, in an extremely affordable area of ancient coin collecting, will increase interest in this fascinating hobby. Thanks again, Mike

*Hi Tory, got the book and started reading through it. A bit confusing at first, but after about two hours I got the hang of a lot of it. As a note, the book talked about a CD but there was none in the package. Is that extra I need to contact the company to order? I am anxious to take some time and compare my few Roman coins to the book. It will also give me an idea of what I may want to buy in the future. The book is an incredible step forward for a beginner like myself, I am finally moving ahead.
Stan*

Hi Stan, glad you like the book, just click on the "order the CD tab" and the details are all there.

The more I dig into Tory Failmezger's new book, the more interesting collectible variations I find are well documented. The VRBS ROMA series of the Late Roman Empire (AD 330-340) under Constantine and his sons is an affordable standard type with enough discernable variations to keep the minutiae collectors out here happy. Page 92 in his new book outlines 50 different variants of the Wolf & Twins type by the mint cities that struck them. It's not quite campgates, with their rows and columns to count, but there are specific markings (assumed to be mint series marks) located between the reverse stars, left or right fields of the wolf, and on the wolf's shoulder. Many of these same types are documented in the 1961 Guido Bruck book, "Die Spatromische Kupferprägung". I have put an image of a portion of the page in Bruck's book here: <http://www.chi-rho.com/VRBSbruck2.jpg> Perhaps new collectors and old will find these easily affordable coins interesting enough to continue to fan the flames of ancient coin collecting, as they study this diverse series in detail. Tom From Stan: Can you tell me what is in the book? I have avoided books that are mostly "picture books" in many hobbies. I want something that gives good historical background to the coins right under the picture, discusses which are common and which are rare (collector values not really needed by myself) and why (unpopular image, short reign, etc.). Also, a discussion of mint marks, map where mints were, near what modern city, which were highly productive, which not, when...all the kind of detail that a beginner can follow. Also, sociological background. Assuming reader know only the basics about an emperor. Also others depicted on coins, etc. I am intrigued by a book on bronze coins from this era.

Hi Stan:

Should you purchase this book, I don't think you will be disappointed as your questions cover the same topics that I, and my major collaborators also what to know about coins. Three of us have together more than 90 years experience in ancient coin collecting. To start with, chapter one is a historical overview of the entire 70 year period with coins listed that correspond to the events described. Chapter two is a listing of the more than 470 distinct types, again broken up by time periods (and in three major periods according to RIC). Rarity is also listed for each of these coins. Chapter three is a discussion of mint marks and other letters, etc. listed on the reverse of the coins. In this same chapter is a mint by mint breakdown of these letters by year, so that you can accurately date your coin (map included). The next two chapters discuss major varieties of the coins with check lists to help the collector. This includes descriptions of persons, places, things, etc., illustrated on the coins. The final chapter covers the obverse and the various names and titles of the personages depicted. There is an appendix that deals with coin attributes, size, weight, etc. and another which lists which emperor controlled which mints and when. The index contains, not only where to find the coins in the major list, but very accurate translations of the meanings of the

reverse legends. I was helped in this by a recognized Latin scholar. Finally the bibliography runs to seven pages of additional books and articles that were consulted to write the book. The pictures are located in 42 plates at the end of the book and they are in fact very beautiful.

Regards,
Victor

P.S. Stan bought the book, now I hope he likes it.

From Bob: Love the book, illuminates a collecting area that I've been active in for about five years. Did spot something though, on Page 7 the reference to Galeria Valeria should, I believe, say that she was the widow of Galerius. She spurned Maximinus Daia which was the starting point of her unfortunate demise.

Hi Bob: Some sources say that after Galerius died, Maximinus took Galeria Valeria to wife (hence my reference) others say he just wanted to. The reason of course was to strengthen his hand now that his uncle, Galerius, had died. But you're right it's not for certain and in the next edition, I'll correct the entry on page seven to read, daughter of Diocletian, wife of Galerius and perhaps wife of Maximinus II. Thanks for your comment and glad you loved the book. Best Tory

From Jack: Just wanted to let you know that I received your book this week from Jerry Walker (I have gotten several recent numismatic books from him) It is very evident that you put a lot of work, care and love into the book. Great result. Re: # 274 CI EXTREMELY INTERESTING COIN - especially if it is an official issue. I have never seen this bust type with a watchtower reverse. I have several RIC unlisted/unusual bust types in combination with a watchtower reverse - but mostly from the Rome issue of 318-19 (RIC 165-191). I have never seen nor am aware of any references of a "fides militum" reverse legend on a watchtower reverse. I have never seen nor am aware of any references of a 3-beacon watchtower from Siscia. Very neat and unusual coin! Again, congratulations on your excellent book.

Thanks Jack, one object of the book was to find coins that have never been published before, glad you like the book.

From Terry (also see his other comments below): I have just finished a first quick read of a new book by Victor Failmezger titled "Roman Bronze Coins - From Paganism to Christianity". It covers the period 294-364 AD. I am impressed with the large amount of effort that has obviously gone into this work -the detailed dating of coins provides one good example of that effort. Color photos (by Doug Smith) of both the obverse and reverse of more than 600 coins are included. Anyone who has a real interest in this period should consider getting a copy. The basic principles of organization that Failmezger uses are different from those used in RIC - so some investment of time in learning his system will be needed. His approach provides a different perspective on this group of coins and I think that is a good thing. I have a special interest in the Falling Horseman series of coins (and know more about that group than the other types covered) and I learned some new and useful information about those coins that were already quite familiar to me.

From Tom: Does this book replace LRBC?

Hi Tom, I can only answer your question with that depends. LBRC covers more years, but my book goes into greater detail and benefits from decades of scholarship by many experts in the field (see the bibliography). I used as a base for the book the series of Roman Imperial Coins volumes VI, VII, and VIII and as you are aware LBRC was the early organization for these later volumes.

From Beast: Just a quick note to congratulate Tory Failmezger and Doug Smith on their absolutely wonderful book "Roman Bronze Coins from Paganism to Christianity 294-364 AD". My copy just arrived today and I haven't had a chance to read much of it, but it looks incredible! The photos are top notch and I already learned of a campgate type I had never seen. Listed as 274CI on Plate 16, a campgate of Constantine I, helmeted bust left with spear and shield and a reverse of FIDES MILITVM from Siscia. Brilliant! A whole different campgate type I've not seen until now. Jolly good work and I'm happy to be a part of the coin collecting community during this Golden Age of information sharing. Congrats again gentlemen!

From Steve: I just received my copy of Victor Failmezger's book, Roman Bronze Coins. As a collector of Constantine era coins, my first brief glance through the book makes me think that it is going to be a helpful research tool. Great info, and, of course, Doug Smith's great photography. If you have an appreciation for these humble coins, it would be worth your time to pick up a copy. Now I'm going to have to divide

my time between packing up the household and reading the book.

From Bill: I just received my copy of your new book yesterday and wanted to congratulate you on it. It's wonderfully thorough, and it's going to be a huge benefit to collectors of this period. What a tremendous effort it must have been. I also have one question. I was surprised to see a wolf & twins sequence mark of a scorpion on the wolf's shoulder. Most of the other marks were fairly simple, so I was a bit surprised to see this. But now you have given me a new objective, since I collect scorpions on ancients. What is the relative rarity? I have never seen an example in 25 years, but this period hasn't been my focus, either. Most importantly, do you have or know of any examples? My sleep will not be sound until I locate one! :-))

Hi Bill thanks for the nice words...As to the scorpion that is one of my biggest mistakes. I have only seen one, but I held it in my hand and didn't buy it. This was about 1996 at the offices of a (west coast dealer, actual name deleted). I could have had it for about \$100.00 but I had already spent a lot that day, so there you go. Anyway he did illustrate it in one of his catalogs and somewhere I have a copy. I believe it is very rare, but there was no doubt it was a scorpion. I have been looking for another example ever since, so hope you find one. Warm regards

From Mike: Yes! It arrived yesterday, and I was going to write you about it. It looks wonderful! I love the color plates; there are some beautiful coins! I would like to order a copy of the book for our university library. Can we purchase a copy from you direct, or who is handling it?

Hi Mike: you can order the CD direct from me, go to www.romanbronzecoins.com Click on order the CD. Sorry but I have to charge two dollars (three dollars for international mail) for duplication and postage. Thanks

From Tom: Just got your book from Mike...Even though I don't collect this series, there's plenty in here to learn. So, just wanted to tell you that the book looks good! PS - There's apparently a CD of photos that goes with the book. Who has these? And are they separately priced or do they come with the book?

Hi Tom: thanks, see comments above.

From Terry: Received my copy of Roman Bronze Coins on Saturday and finished a first quick reading of it on Sunday. I am very impressed - especially with the effort that you have put into dating these coins. I am sure that this will be a valued resource for everyone interested in this period (and I have ordered a copy for my daughter who is a teacher of ancient history). The first thing that I looked for was a Constantius II Falling Horseman that I recently acquired which is not in RIC. Alas, it appears to also be absent from your book (although it is possible that I have overlooked something since I am not yet really familiar with your classification system). I have attached two photos of moderate resolution. Three high resolution photos of this coin are available at <http://www.pbase.com/terryf/coins> (you click on the image at pbase to get the hires version) The one not attached is lit to show the mintmark more clearly (no single angle of lighting made both the field letter and the mintmark equally clear. It is the "C" in the field that presents an attribution problem. The first three letters of the mintmark are clearly SMH and the fourth is probably an epsilon. The coin is 16mm and 2.52g in size. Neither RIC nor your table on page 119 recognize such a variety for Heraclea. My current theory is that the "C" may actually be an incomplete epsilon. RIC 92 for Heraclea and your 464b21 are coins of Julian II with an epsilon in the field. I am assuming that this is an unrecorded coin of Constantius II that is from the same issue as the Julian II coin. That seems simpler than finding a place for a coin with a "C". I would be interested to know if you have a different explanation.

Hi Terry, glad you liked the book and that it is useful. Clearly you have an unrecorded piece. I believe you are right when you say that it is an unfinished E. I would now record it as a 463a15a FH3 Heraclea with C (because that what it has) with a footnote that it was supposed to be an E in the field, It will show up in the next edition, if there is one, meanwhile with your permission I will post it on my website romanbronzecoins.com as received, warm regards