Littleton's
HOW TO COLLECT
ANCIENT ROMAN COINS

COLECTOR'S GUIDE AND CHECKLIST
Introduction

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, but centuries older!

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 over 5 years ago. It has been used at the ANA Summer Seminars, given to collectors in the field, and will help you build your own collection.

In this new, expanded 3rd edition of How to Collect Ancient Roman Coins, you’ll find:

• 25 new Imperial portrait coins of emperors and their wives
• Provincial (Greek Imperial) coinage section with photos
• information on portrait and non-portrait coins
• coins of Julius Caesar, Marc Antony and Cleopatra
• an updated glossary

To further your enjoyment, this 48-page booklet contains a biography of each emperor listed.

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 1,500 years ago. In fact, some rulers are only known to us today because of their portrait coins, and sometimes these coins provide archaeologists with a means of dating a site.

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 #510
Silver Denarius of Augustus -
could this have been the legendary tribute penny spoken of in the Bible? “...Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s.” (Mark 12:15-16)

Gold Aureus of Nero -
a scarce, historically significant coin. Struck after a plot to murder this depraved emperor was discovered.

Silver Antoninianus of Valerian I -
the only emperor taken alive – the ultimate disgrace. Forced to kneel as a mounting block and footstool for his captor, Shapur I, king of Persia.

Bronze Coin of Constantine the Great -
one of Rome’s greatest emperors, who celebrated a successful reign with renewal of his vows (vota) to the gods.
10 Often-Asked Questions About Ancient Coins

I 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.

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 as long as 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 hidden underground – 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 ancients survive today, which still adds up to a considerable number. Because the number of ancient coin collectors is still relatively small, demand is fairly limited.

III 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.

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 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. Our 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.

How to Collect Ancient Roman Coins
VI 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).

VII 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.

VIII 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.

IX 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.

X How popular is ancient coin collecting?
While U.S. coin collecting has grown in popularity since the 1850s, ancient coin collecting has been a popular hobby worldwide for many centuries. European monarchs and even popes have assembled impressive collections since medieval times (and ancient coin reference books date back to the 1500s). Because ancients are the basis for all modern coinage, it is an important area of numismatics. There are enthusiasts in every country, yet the overall number of ancient coin collectors is still somewhat limited. It’s estimated that fewer than 100,000 people actively collect ancients today. Though most collectors choose coins based on obverse designs, some enjoy collecting the various reverse designs. While it is possible to collect coins from nearly all of the Roman emperors, some are difficult to find because the emperors ruled for such a short time. Usurpers and self-proclaimed rulers also struck coins, and many of these are quite rare.
Denominations of Ancient Roman Coins

Like 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\( \frac{1}{2} \) asses, by Augustus’ rule (27 B.C.-A.D. 14) 74 denarii, and by the reign of Septimus Severus (A.D. 193-211), it rose to 1,500 denarii.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dupondius</td>
<td>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, the emperor, it began to show an emperor with a radiate crown.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sestertius</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 As = a “whole” or “one” unit
2 Asses = 1 Dupondius
4 Asses = 1 Sestertius
16 Asses = 1 silver Denarius
8 Dupondii = 1 Denarius
4 Sestertii = 1 Denarius
1 Antoninianus = 2 Denarii
1 Aureus = 25 Denarii
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. It was gradually reduced under Constantine, and eventually replaced after the end of the Constantinian Era.

DENARIUS: This standard silver coin of the Roman Empire depicted an emperor wearing a laurel wreath. First issued around 211 B.C., it started with 5% alloy, and over the years the alloy was increased, until by the reign of Septimius Severus it reached 45%. The denarius disappeared from circulation around the time of 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 40% 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).

SILIQUA: A small silver coin first issued by Diocletian, originally called the argenteus. Later reintroduced as a siliqua under Constantine the Great, this coin weighed 1/96th of a Roman pound, but its exact place in the monetary system and its value are not known.

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 Byzantines, endured for seven centuries as a circulating gold coin used for commerce in Europe.

To assist the reader in coin identification, every effort has been made to present actual-size photographs.
How to Read Ancient Roman Coin Inscriptions

Silver Denarius portrait coin of Domitian
While 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.

Crowns 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.

IMP  Imperator (victorious general), received upon accession
CAES  Caesar. Inherited name of the Julian family (Julius Caesar). Used by later emperors to designate heir.
DOMIT  Domitianus, ruler’s name.
AVG  Augustus, title of the emperor.
GERM  Germanicus, a title honoring military victories in Germany.
PM  Pontifex Maximus. Highest priest. The head of state religion.
TRP XV  Tribunica Potestate. Tribune of the people. Each renewal indicated by numerals.
Bronze Quadrans non-portrait coin of Claudius

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 important event. Most bear the name of the issuing emperor.

**Obverse Design**

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

**Legend**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TI</th>
<th>Tiberius</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLAVDIVS</td>
<td>Claudius, ruler’s name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAESAR</td>
<td>Caesar. Inherited name of the Julian family (Julius Caesar). Used by later emperors to designate heir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVG</td>
<td>Augustus, title of the emperor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Augustus Bronze coin of Philippi

Issued under Augustus. Victory on the obverse with legionary standards on the reverse. Possibly refers to Battle of Actium and settlement of veterans.

Bronze Prutah of Antonius Felix, procurator of Judea 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
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 all produced their own coins. These local coins, once struck in over 500 cities, could circulate within a single city or across a region.

Today, these coins make up the group known as Provincial coinage, which some collectors call Greek Imperials. Provincial coinage now offers an affordable way to collect coinage 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 empire of Greece’s illustrious king Alexander the Great, their citizens considered themselves Greek and spoke the language. So these Provincial coins can have legends in either Greek or Latin, or sometimes both.

Provincial coinage has several features that make it very different from Roman Imperial coinage. Unlike Roman Imperial coinage, which was issued regularly and had fixed denominations like the as, sestertius or denarius, Provincial coinage was issued sporadically with a wide variety of values following Greek denominations.

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

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

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.
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.
Marc Antony, 44-33 B.C.
Antony served with Julius Caesar in Gaul and later became co-consul in 44 B.C. At Caesar’s death, he joined forces with Octavian. In 42 B.C. on a campaign to reorganize the east, he met the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra. When Antony married Cleopatra, 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.

Cleopatra, 51-30 B.C.
When ancient Rome was still a backwater town, 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.
One of the most popular ways to collect ancient Roman coins is by emperor, as most bear a portrait of the issuing ruler. This checklist 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. Note the emperor’s family or adopted name follows his historical name, then look at the progression as rulers adopt a predecessor’s names to advertise their legitimacy.

To help you track your coins, simply place a check in the box next to those you already own. We hope you enjoy collecting ancient Roman coins, and that you find this Ancient Roman Coin checklist 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 portrait - individual portraits will vary.

- **AUGUSTUS** (Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus)  
  **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. 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 (was 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 (Drusus Julius Caesar)
Born 14 B.C./Died A.D. 23
Son of Tiberius, who eventually received the tribuniciam 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 (Drusus the Elder)
Born 38 B.C./Died 9 B.C.
Brother of Emperor Tiberius. 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. When he died, the Senate gave him the surname Germanicus.

GERMANICUS (Germanicus Julius Caesar)
Born 15 B.C./Died A.D. 19
Son of Nero Claudius Drusus and very popular with the Roman legions. They wanted him to fight for the rule of the Empire, but Germanicus remained loyal. He was nephew of Tiberius, who made him 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.
CLAUDIUS (Tiberius Claudius Drusus)
Augustus A.D. 41-54
Claudius was the son of Nero Claudius Drusus. Because he suffered from infantile paralysis and was considered dull-witted, he was passed over for any serious office by his family. The legions, who took an oath in his name, forced the Senate to accept Claudius through use of arms, and Claudius proved he was indeed capable of ruling.

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)
Augustus A.D. 68-69
Emperor for only seven months, 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 in A.D. 69
The Senate accepted Otho as emperor but the two Roman armies proclaimed their generals, Vitellius and Vespasian, emperor. Even though Otho defeated Vitellius’ army three times in battle, he committed suicide when he lost the fourth battle.

VITELLIUS (Aulus Vitellius)
Ruled almost 8 months in 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 lifeless 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. The Colosseum, Rome’s largest ruin, was built by him. After ruling 10 years, and bringing calm 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 campaigns in Judea. He was a good ruler, who looked after the welfare of his people. His brother, Domitian, was thought to have poisoned him.

**DOMITIAN** (Titus Flavius Domitianus)
*Caesar A.D. 69-81  
Augustus A.D. 81-96*
Domitian, youngest son of Vespasian, followed Augustus' style in ruling the Empire, but was unpopular with the senate and upper class. He became very suspicious and cruel, and was eventually killed by members of his household.

**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 Trajanus)
*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 [Vagi])
*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. Aelius' weak and unhealthy constitution caused his death.
### Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

- **ANTONINUS PIUS**
  (Titus Aurelius Fulvus Boionius Arrius Antoninus)
  Caesar A.D. 138
  Augustus A.D. 138-161
  Adopted by Hadrian, and in turn adopted his nephew 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 and noble Spanish family, Faustina Senior married Antoninus Pius about A.D. 110. Although they had four children, only Faustina Jr. survived. 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
  Continued Rome's prosperity, but had border problems with the barbarians. A careful, moral ruler whose writing survived and showed that he should have been a philosopher instead of emperor. As promised, he raised Lucius Verus to co-emperor.

- **FAUSTINA JR.** (Annia Galeria Faustina)
  Augusta A.D. 147-175/6
  Faustina became the first daughter of an emperor to marry an emperor, give birth to a future emperor, and die naturally. 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. He died in A.D. 169 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 and 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. Later in life, Commodus was probably insane. He believed he was the reincarnation of Hercules.

CRISPINA (Bruttia Crispina)
Augusta A.D. 177-182/3
Married Commodus in A.D. 177, the 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 assassination attempt.

DIDIIUS JULIANUS (Marcus Didius Severus Julianus)
Augustus A.D. 193
One of three emperors who ruled during a 6-month span. Didius bought the office of emperor during an auction, thereby offending Rome’s citizens. They appealed to the frontier generals to rescue them. He was beheaded, a fate usually reserved for common criminals. Ruled for 66 days.

PESCENNIUS NIGER (Gaius Pescennius Niger)
Augustus A.D. 193-194
After a long military career, Pescennius became governor of Syria. When Pertinax was murdered, Pescennius’ troops proclaimed him emperor. Although he was one of the generals Rome’s citizens appealed to, word reached him too late and he was killed less than a year later.

CLODIUS ALBINUS (Decimus Clodius Septimius Albinus)
Caesar A.D. 193-195
Augustus A.D. 195-197
Coming from a military family, Clodius was well educated in geography. Became Caesar under Septimius Severus, later proclaimed emperor by his troops. Lost his life after Septimius defeated an eastern rival and returned to defeat him.

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS (Lucius Septimius Severus)
Augustus A.D. 193-211
Became emperor after defeating both of his rivals Pescennius Niger and Clodius Albinus. 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 based on political necessity, not love. Supposedly, they loathed each other so much that they wouldn't even dine together. Eventually, Caracalla divorced, exiled and murdered her.

**GETA (Lucius Septimius Geta)**  
*Caesar A.D. 198-209*  
*Augustus A.D. 209-211*  
Younger son of Septimius, was popular with the military and co-ruled with his brother, Caracalla. But at the age of 23, Geta was murdered under the direction of his cruel brother.

**MACRINUS (Marcus Opellius Macrinus)**  
*Augustus A.D. 217-218*  
Became involved in Caracalla’s death in order to save his own life. Later, the army killed him and his young son because of an unfavorable peace made with the Parthians and mutiny brought about by the grandmother of future emperor Elagabalus.

**DIADUMENIAN (Marcus Opellius Diadumenianus)**  
*Caesar A.D. 217-218*  
*Ruled for one month in A.D. 218*  
Became Caesar in A.D. 217, and at the age of 10, Diadumenian's father, Macrinus gave him the title Augustus. He was later killed in the revolt that took his father’s life.
- **JULIA MAESA** (Julia Maesa)  
  **Augusta A.D. 218-224/5**  
  Sister of Julia Domna, and grandmother of Elagabalus and Severus Alexander, Julia Maesa was a shrewd woman of wealth and courage. She bribed the Eastern legions, aiding Elagabalus’ rise. Took part in Senate proceedings, and attempted to restrain her grandson. Survived the assassination of Elagabalus, but died three years later.

- **ELAGABALUS** (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus)  
  **Augustus A.D. 218-222**  
  Elagabalus was generally disliked because of his unusual Eastern religious practices. 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 became emperor. Of the four women of the Severan dynasty, Soaemias was the least responsible in her duties. Slain 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 slain 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 directed the empire’s political decisions for over a decade. Although popular with some Romans, she was disdained by others for her greed and arrogance. Murdered by the same army that killed 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. Rose through the military to become emperor. He was noted for his cruelty. Murdered by his troops along with his son, Maximus.
MAXIMUS (Gaius Julius Verus Maximus)
Caesar A.D. 235/6-238
Maximus became proud and insolent after receiving the title Caesar from his father Maximinus I. He was hated by Roman citizens and the military, and eventually executed by his troops. His severed head was sent to Rome.

GORDIAN I
(Marcus Antonius Gordianus Sempronianus Romanus “Africanus”)
Ruled 21 days in A.D. 238
Reputed to be one of the wealthiest men in the empire, and a man of great integrity. Made emperor by his troops in Africa. Because of his age, made his son co-emperor. 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
Highly educated, with a library of over 62,000 books, Gordian II led an inexperienced, undisciplined army against supporters of Maximinus. When the two forces met, Gordian’s army fled. Many soldiers were trampled trying to escape, and he was killed. His body was unrecognizable when found.

BALBINUS (Decimus Caelius 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. 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. Rose through the ranks of the military, and as co-emperor with Balbinus, had the best interests of the country at heart. The Praetorian Guard killed him.

GORDIAN III (Marcus Antonius Gordianus “Pius”)
Caesar A.D. 238
Augustus A.D. 238-244
A popular, young emperor who was grandson of Gordian I. Fought several successful battles in Mesopotamia. Murdered at the age of 21 by his own soldiers.
- **Philip I** (Marcus Julius Verus Philippus)  
  **Augustus A.D. 244-249**  
  Known as Philip the Arab, because he was from Arabia. Philip progressed through the military ranks to become Praetorian Prefect under Gordian III. He was thought to have instigated Gordian’s murder.

- **Otacilia Severa** (Marcia Otacilia Severa)  
  **Augusta A.D. 244-249**  
  Little is known about Otacilia, wife of Philip I (the Arab). Christian historians tend to portray her as Christian, seeking penance for her part in Gordian III’s death. Most experts now believe this is untrue. She was killed by the Praetorian Guard.

- **Philip II** (Marcus Julius Severus Philippus)  
  **Caesar A.D. 244-247**  
  **Augustus A.D. 247-249**  
  Became Caesar at the age of seven. He died at the age of 12, soon after his father, Philip I, was murdered. Philip II was probably murdered by the Praetorian Guard.

- **Trajan Decius** (Gaius Messius Quintus Traianus Decius)  
  **Augustus A.D. 249-251**  
  When his soldiers revolted against Philip I, he was forced to become emperor under the threat of death. Superior to Philip in governing the Empire, he restored the office of Censor to the Senate. Trajan Decius died along with his older son, Herennius, in a battle against the Goths.

- **Herennia Etruscilla** (Herennia Cupressenlia Etruscilla)  
  **Augusta A.D. 249-253**  
  Little is known about Herennia, except that she came from an aristocratic Italian family. Whether or not she shared her husband Decius’ views on the persecuting of Christians is unknown.

- **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. Died with his father in a battle against the Goths.
HOSTILIAN (Gaius Valens Hostilianus Messius Quintus)
Caesar A.D. 250?/251
Augustus A.D. 251

Hostilian, younger son of Trajan Decius, remained in Rome, becoming Augustus under Trebonianus Gallus. Trebonianus, who became emperor after Trajan Decius’ death, adopted Hostilian and agreed to share the title of Augustus with him. His death was caused by the plague.

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

Proclaimed emperor after Decius and his son were killed. Made a disgraceful treaty with the Goths, and headed to Rome, where he discovered plague had crippled the city. Borders were under attack on all sides, and when Aemilian, governor of Lower Moesia, was proclaimed emperor, Gallus and his son were murdered by their troops.

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 Trebonianus Gallus’ life.

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

After decisively defeating the Goths, Aemilian was made emperor by his own troops. His resolute rule was the opposite of Trebonianus’ rule. Aemilian was murdered by his soldiers when marching to fight against Valerian I.

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

Remaining loyal to Trebonianus Gallus, he defeated Aemilian, becoming the 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 later became sole ruler after his father, Valerian, was captured by the Persians. He made no effort to rescue his father. The Empire suffered under attacks from the barbarians, and Gallienus was eventually assassinated.

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 during a campaign 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

The son of a general, Macrianus, who served under Valerian. Declared emperor by his soldiers, the elder Macrianus refused and appointed his sons Macrianus and Quietus. As Macrianus set out to challenge Gallienus, he 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.
From 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 became commander of the 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 fought off the barbarians, and kept peace within his borders. His own soldiers killed him because he wouldn’t allow them to sack a town after 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**  
  Marius had a reputation for having great strength in his body and hands. After Postumus’ death, he proclaimed himself emperor, but was killed shortly thereafter by his soldiers.

- **VICTORINUS** *(Marcus Piavvonius Victorinus)*  
  **Augustus A.D. 269-271**  
  Victorinus was Postumus’ colleague, and reigned in Gaul a short time after his death. After he insulted the wife of a military official, his soldiers murdered him and his son.

- **TETRICUS I** *(Gaius Pius Esuvius Tetricus)*  
  **Augustus A.D. 271-274**  
  Tetricus I was one of the few emperors who died naturally. Having been convinced to rule Gaul, he proved equal to the task, but grew tired of the constant threat of revolt by his army. He begged Aurelian to take possession of Gaul, and retired in peace. Gaul was returned to the Empire after having been separated since A.D. 259.

- **TETRICUS II** *(Gaius Pius Esuvius Tetricus)*  
  **Caesar A.D. 273-274**  
  **Augustus A.D. 274**  
  Named Caesar when his father came to rule, and eventually became co-emperor. After his father abdicated, Aurelian gave him a seat in the Senate and returned his family’s possessions.
CLAUDIUS II GOTHICUS (Marcus Aurelius Valerius Claudius)
Augustus A.D. 268-270
A brilliant soldier who fought in many battles, and received the title Gothicus from a victory against the Goths. He was proclaimed emperor after Gallienus’ death. He died of the plague.

QUINTILLUS (Marcus Aurelius Claudius Quintillus)
Augustus A.D. 270
Younger brother of Claudius II Gothicus, Quintillus was initially supported by the Senate and the army as the next emperor. When Aurelian proclaimed himself emperor, these parties shifted their support to him instead, and Quintillus committed suicide.

AURELIAN (Lucius Domitius Aurelianus)
Augustus A.D. 270-275
Called the “Restorer of the Empire,” he brought Gaul back into the realm, restoring the Empire to its former size. An able defender of Roman borders, he made peace with the barbarians. Eventually 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.

VABALATHUS (Lucius Julius Aurelius Septimius Vabalathus Athenodorus)
Augustus A.D. 270/1-272
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.

TACITUS (Marcus Claudius Tacitus)
Augustus A.D. 275-276
The Senate and army elected Tacitus, who was a modest and fair man. These virtues extended to his rule. The cause of his death is uncertain. Thought to have died of either a fever or treachery during a campaign.
FLORIANUS (Marcus Annius Florianus)
Ruled less than 3 months A.D. 276
Became emperor after his half-brother Tacitus died. He was supported by the Senate and most provinces. The East did not support Florianus; they supported Probus. When war broke out between the two, Florianus was killed by his own soldiers.

PROBUS (Marcus Aurelius Probus)
Augustus A.D. 276-282
Prefect of the East, and after Tacitus’ death became emperor. Protected Rome’s borders, ruled wisely and justly, was loved by all. As he marched to Persia, he was murdered by his own jealous soldiers who later regretted their actions.

CARUS (Marcus Aurelius Carus)
Augustus A.D. 282-283
Praetorian Prefect under Probus, Carus earned respect for his talents and was approved as emperor by the Senate and the army. During a campaign in Persia, he was struck by lightning.

NUMERIAN (Marcus Aurelius Numerius Numerianus)
Caesar A.D. 282-283
Augustus A.D. 283-284
Younger son of Carus, who became Caesar and upon his father’s death took the title of Augustus. Numerian was popular because he had the public’s interest at heart. While returning to Italy from a campaign, he was discovered murdered in his litter.

CARINUS (Marcus Aurelius Carinus)
Caesar A.D. 282-283
Augustus A.D. 283-285
Carinus was left in charge of the West while his father and brother, Numerian, fought in the East. Diocletian had been proclaimed emperor by his troops, and Carinus, marching against him, was victorious. His cruel disposition led to his murder.

NIGRINIAN
Died before A.D. 283
Because no records exist about Nigrinian, we only know about him today because of his coins. They are extremely rare, and inscription on his coins indicates he was son of Carinus.

JULIAN OF PANNONIA (Marcus Aurelius Julianus)
Usurper A.D. 284-285
Julian, a general under Numerian, proclaimed himself emperor of Pannonia. Rebelling against Carinus, he marched against Rome, where he was defeated and killed a year later.
Two factors were at work in the subsequent division of the Roman Empire. At one time the title of emperor was awarded by the Senate, but over the years their power diminished, and was replaced by the military. Because of the Empire's size, the emperor needed strong generals whom he could trust, and who commanded the respect of the army.

Plus, the size of the Roman state made it difficult to defend against frequent border attacks. These attacks and internal unrest caused economic upheaval. Peasants could not work the land, tradesmen lacked supplies for their crafts, so landowners had no income for taxes. Consequently, 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 method 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 became emperor in the East.

E = Ruled East
W = Ruled West

- **Diocletian (Gaius Aurelius Valerius Diocletianus)**
  - Augustus A.D. 284-305
  - After Numerian was killed, he became emperor. An excellent statesman and military leader, who unified most of the Empire with the exception of Britain. Introducing far-reaching reforms, he changed the Empire's makeup. He was one of the tetrarchs, and later abdicated rule and retired in peace.

- **Maximian "Herculius" (Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maximianus)**
  - Caesar A.D. 285-286
  - Augustus A.D. 286-305, 307-308, & 310
  - Because of Diocletian's respect for Maximian's military ability and implicit trust in him, Maximian was raised to 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, when he declared himself emperor again, he was put to death.
Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

☐ **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. 296-297/8**
   Diocletian’s monetary reform, coupled with harsh taxes, led to a revolt in Egypt by Domitian. Little is known about this usurper who was able to grab control for about 18 months before Diocletian crushed the uprising.

☐ **CONSTANTIUS I “CHLORUS”** (Flavius Valerius Constantius)
   **Caesar A.D. 293-305**
   **Augustus A.D. 305-306**
   Named Caesar of Gaul, Spain and Britain in A.D. 293, Constantius I ruled the West and was one of the tetrarchs. 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, it is said that she recovered the “true cross.”

☐ **THEODORA** (Flavia Maximiana Theodora)
   **Augusta, Posthumously**
   As daughter of Diocletian’s Praetorian Prefect, Theodora became Constantius I’s second wife shortly before he became Caesar. She was Constantine the Great’s stepmother.
GALERIUS (Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus)
Caesar A.D. 293-305
Augustus A.D. 305-311
Ruled in the East as Caesar with Diocletian, making his capital Thessalonica. Made favorable peace after defeating the king of Persia in A.D. 298. Became co-emperor after Diocletian's abdication. Galerius was extremely cruel and persecuted the Christians. His death was caused by disease.

GALERIA VALERIA (Galeria Valeria)
Augusta A.D. 293?-311
Daughter of Diocletian, and second wife of Galerius. Her tragic life was dictated by the politics of the time. Valeria supported Galerius' persecution of Christians, though she herself may have been sympathetic. After her husband and father died, she was put to death by Licinius.

SEVERUS II (Flavius Valerius Severus)
Caesar A.D. 305-306
Augustus A.D. 306-307
Named Caesar A.D. 305 and Augustus in the West by Galerius in A.D. 306. Equally as cruel as Galerius, he died while putting down a rebellion by Maxentius (son of Maximianus) in Italy. When his troops deserted him he was captured and killed.

MAXIMINUS II DAIA (Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximinus)
Caesar A.D. 305-310
Augustus A.D. 310-313
This cruel, uneducated drunkard was named Caesar in A.D. 305, ruling Syria. In A.D. 310, he was proclaimed Augustus by his troops. In an attempt to forestall an alliance between Constantine and Licinius, he invaded the Eastern Empire, but suffered defeat. Eventually poisoned himself, and his territory went to Licinius.

MAXENTIUS (Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maxentius)
Caesar A.D. 306-307
Augustus A.D. 307-312
When the people of Rome proclaimed him Augustus, Maxentius invited his father Maximian to come out of retirement. Together they defeated Severus II, gaining control over Italy, Africa and Spain. In A.D. 308, he quarreled with his father. During a retreat in battle against Constantine, he was drowned when the bridge of boats collapsed.
Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

☐ ROMULUS (Marcus Valerius Romulus)
   Died A.D. 309
   Son of Maxentius, who was probably named Caesar, but died at the age of four. Maxentius placed Romulus in rank with the gods after he died. All his coins were struck posthumously.

☐ LICINIUS I (Gaius Valerius Licinianus Licinius)
   Augustus A.D. 308-324
   Gained prominence in battles against the Persians. He was given the title of Augustus by Galerius following negotiations involving Maximianus, Constantine I, and Galerius. After reigning with Constantine I for about ten years, Licinius chose to attack him several times, and 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
   Constantine I shared joint rule of the Empire with Licinius. In A.D. 313 he issued the Edict of Milan, which gave all subjects religious freedom. After defeating Licinius, he became sole ruler. Attempted to instill Christianity as ruler, and in A.D. 330 dedicated the city of Constantinople. He fell sick and died near Nicomedia.

☐ FAUSTA (Flavia Maxima Fausta)
   Augusta A.D. 324-326
   In an attempt to strengthen family ties, Maximian wed his daughter Fausta to Constantine the Great. History remembers her as the wife who plotted against her step-son Crispus and caused his execution in order to secure power for her own sons. In the end, Constantine regretted his 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 an early age. Because of his stepmother’s jealousy, he was put to death on his father’s orders.
**DELMATIUS** (Flavius Julius Delmatius)  
*Caesar A.D. 335-337*  
Was a favorite nephew of Constantine the Great. He gave Delmatius part of what is now Greece and Bulgaria to rule. When Constantine died, Delmatius was put to death.

**HANNIBALLIANUS** (Flavius Claudius Hanniballianus)  
*Caesar A.D. 335-337*  
Another nephew of Constantine and brother of Delmatius. He was given part of modern-day Turkey to rule. Like Delmatius, 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 three sons of Constantine the Great and his second wife, who became emperor with his brothers after his father died. He ruled Gaul, Spain and Britain, but was killed while fighting against his brother Constans over the division of land.

**CONSTANS** (Flavius Julius Constans)  
*Caesar A.D. 333-337  
Augustus A.D. 337-350*  
The youngest son of Constantine the Great, he retook Britain for the Roman Empire after Constantine II’s death and ruled the western portion. Assassinated by his closest members in government when Magnentius usurped the power.

**CONSTANTIUS II** (Flavius Julius Valerius Constantius)  
*Caesar A.D. 324-337  
Augustus A.D. 337-361*  
The second son of Constantine the Great and his second wife. Constantius II ruled the Eastern Empire. After Constans’ death and his defeat of Magnentius, he ruled the West, also. His reign brought some peace to the Empire, and he died at the age of 44 because of illness.

**MAGNENTIUS** (Flavius Magnus Magnentius)  
*Augustus A.D. 350-353*  
As commander of troops on the Rhine, Magnentius caused the death of Constans and was proclaimed emperor. He marched against Constantius II, Constans’ brother. After withdrawing to Gaul, he was deserted by his soldiers and committed suicide.
DECENTIUS (Flavius Magnus Decentius)
Caesar A.D. 350-353
Younger brother of the usurper Magnentius, who was given command of Gaul. As Constantius’ forces regained Italy and Africa in the summer of A.D. 353, Magnentius committed suicide, and Decentius hung himself eight days later.

VETRANIO
Augustus A.D. 350
After the death of Constans, the sister of Constantius persuaded the soldiers of Illyrian to proclaim Vetranio emperor. Upon hearing Constantius II’s appeal to the troops as son of Constantine the Great, Vetranio gave up his claim and was allowed to live out his life peacefully.

NEPOTIAN (Constantinus Flavius Popilius Nepotianus)
Augustus A.D. 350
Because Nepotian was half nephew to Constantine the Great, he was a potential rival to the throne. He managed to escape the massacre of his family members by Constantine's sons, and lived most of his life in exile, until he was proclaimed emperor in A.D. 350. He put down a rebellion, but was killed by another rival.

CONSTANTIUS GALLUS (Flavius Claudius Constantius Gallus)
Caesar A.D. 351-354
One of the three grandsons of Theodora who survived the massacre of his family by Constantine the Great’s son. Little is known of him until he came to power in A.D. 351, appointed by his cousin Constantius II as ruler in the east. Because of his cruel and cavalier attitude, he became unpopular with the public and army. When Constantius II sent officials to investigate Gallus’ brutalities, the officials were hung. Gallus was arrested and beheaded on the emperor’s orders.

JULIAN II (Flavius Claudius Julianus)
Caesar A.D. 355-360
Augustus A.D. 360-363
A nephew of Constantine the Great, but because of an aversion to Christianity he restored the pagan religion and became known as Julian “the Apostate.” After Constantius died in A.D. 361 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
After Julian II’s death he was proclaimed emperor by his troops. To obtain peace he had to give up lands east of the Tigris. As emperor, Jovian restored rights to the Christians. But at the age of 33, while journeying to Constantinople, a brazier of charcoal placed in his bed chamber caused his accidental suffocation.

VALENTINIAN I (Flavius Valentinianus)
Augustus A.D. 364-375
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 favored the poor 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 Valens)
Augustus A.D. 364-378
Became co-emperor with Valentinian and was responsible for the eastern provinces. Skillfully put down rebellions by usurpers, Visigoths and Huns. In a battle against the Visigoths in A.D. 378, two-thirds of the Roman army was ambushed and Valens died either in battle or during a fire, set in the farmhouse he sought refuge in to dress his wounds.

PROCOPHIUS
Usurper, ruled eight months A.D. 365-366
A commander from the East, and a distant relative of Julian II, he withdrew from public life when Jovian became emperor. However, when Valentinian became emperor, he reappeared in Constantinople where the army proclaimed him emperor. He was defeated by Valens and executed.

GRATIAN (Flavius Gratianus)
Augustus A.D. 367-383
Gratian, son of Valentinian I, became Augustus at age 7 and eventually ruled the entire West. After Valens’ death, he appointed Theodosius, a general, to help rule in the East. He was killed after his soldiers deserted him in a battle against Magnus Maximus.
Checklist of Ancient Roman Emperors

- **VALENTINIAN II** (Flavius Valentinianus)
  Augustus A.D. 375-392
  Younger brother of Gratian, who after Gratian’s death ruled the entire West. His reign was troubled by religious disturbances. He was forced to flee from Magnus Maximus, but Theodosius helped him regain power. Valentinian II was strangled under the orders of Frankish Master of Infantry Arbogast.

- **THEODOSIUS I “THE GREAT”** (Flavius Theodosius)
  Augustus A.D. 379-395
  Rose through the military ranks to eventually become co-emperor with Gratian. He successfully campaigned against the Goths, and defeated Magnus Maximus and Eugenius (another usurper). Upon his death, he divided the Empire between his two sons, and it was never reunited.

- **MAGNUS MAXIMUS** (Flavius Magnus Clemens Maximus)
  Augustus A.D. 383-388
  Rising through the ranks of the army, Magnus rebelled against Gratian at his soldiers’ prompting. He became emperor of Gaul, Spain and Britain after Gratian’s death. While trying to invade Italy, he was killed by Theodosius.

- **FLAVIUS VICTOR** (Flavius Victor)
  Augustus A.D. 387-388
  When Magnus became emperor his young son, Flavius, was made Augustus. Flavius was executed with his father after Theodosius I’s victory.

- **EUGENIUS** (Flavius Eugenius)
  Usurper A.D. 392-394
  Even though Eugenius was a Christian, he allied himself with the pagans to gain support. He served as a puppet emperor for Arbogast, a Frankish general who formerly had been co-regent with Valentinian II. Eugenius occupied Italy until Theodosius I defeated his army and executed him.

- **ARCADIUS** (Flavius Arcadius)
  Augustus A.D. 383-408
  Elder son of Theodosius, who became co-emperor with his father at age six and ruled the East 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. Died naturally.
HONORIUS (Flavius Honorius)
Augustus A.D. 393-423

Younger son of Theodosius, 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 of disease after reigning 30 inglorious years.

CONSTANTINE III (Flavius Claudius Constantinus)
Usurper in Gaul and Britain A.D. 407-411

Constantine III promised to defend the West against the Goths. A general of Honorius captured Constantine III and his son, killing both of them. As a result of his usurpation, Rome gave up all claims to Britain, and it was later conquered by the Saxons.

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 in exchange for command over the military. Attalus proved an ineffective leader and was deposed in A.D. 410. Proclaimed emperor again in A.D. 414, but after a short rule, was banished by Honorius.

CONSTANTIUS III (Flavius Constantius)
Augustus A.D. 421

Appointed general of the armies under Honorius, and later made Augustus. When Honorius died, he became emperor, controlling the whole Western region, but the Eastern government refused to recognize him. Died of disease after ruling only 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

The grandson of Theodosius “the Great.” He was made Augustus at Constantinople before age one. Later in life, he made peace with the Persians, which lasted 24 years. He died from a fall from a horse.
VALENTINIAN III (Flavius Placidus Valentinianus)
Caesar A.D. 424-425
Augustus A.D. 425-455
The son of Constantius III. He was made emperor of the West by his cousin Theodosius II. The Empire was continually under siege from barbarians, and Africa was lost to the Vandals. He was murdered by a man whose wife he had offended.

MARCIAN (Flavius Valerius Marcianus)
Augustus A.D. 450-457
A distinguished soldier who was chosen to be Theodosius’ successor. Although Marcian did not stop the Vandals from sacking Rome, 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
Emperor in the East, who was known for his high morals, leniency, unselfishness and piety. He destroyed a portion of German military which threatened the Eastern Empire. He died of illness.

LEO II
Caesar A.D. 473-474
Augustus A.D. 474
Grandson of Leo I, who was made Caesar and then Augustus after Leo I’s death. He was a sickly child and died after reigning 9 months. His father, Zeno, was made co-emperor before Leo II died.

MAJORIAN (Flavius Julius Valerius Majorianus)
Augustus A.D. 457-461
From an old Roman family, he rose through military ranks. Following a period of about six months with no Western emperor, he claimed the throne. Executed by the general Ricimer after an unsuccessful campaign in Africa.

SEVERUS III (Libius Severus)
Augustus A.D. 461-465
A puppet emperor under the influence of the German general Ricimer. During his reign, almost every province except Gaul was lost to the barbarians.
ANTHEMIUS (Procopius Anthemius)  
Augustus A.D. 467-472  
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  
Through marriage to Leo I’s daughter, Zeno became his ally against the barbarian general Aspar. After Leo’s death, and 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  
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.
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**, 280 B.C.-A.D. 96, by David R. Sear  
Highly acclaimed reference that catalogue over 4,300 Roman coins. Information on denominations, reverse types and mints.

**Roman Silver Coins**, vol. 5, by C.E. King, with valuations by David R. Sear  
Vol. 5, Carausius to Romulus Augustus  
Illustrated throughout with 295 coin photos. With coin values.

**Roman Silver Coins**, vols. 3 & 4, by H. A. Seaby  
Vol. 3, Pertinax to Balbinus & Pupienus  
Illustrated throughout with 382 coin photos. With coin values.  
Vol. 4, Gordian III to Postumus  
Illustrated throughout with 253 coin photos. With coin values.

**Roman Provincial Coin References**

**Greek Imperial Coins and Their Values**, by David R. Sear  
Coverage of Greek coins 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. This is the standard handbook on Byzantine coins for the 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, moneyers, 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
Describes over 525 coins in detail with current values, charts, line drawings and translations. Interesting and easy to follow. New extended coverage of New Testament and Christian-related coins.

ANCIENT COIN PERIODICALS
The Celator, Publisher/Editor Kerry Wetterstrom
Subscription Information:
The Celator, P.O. Box 839, Lancaster, PA 17608
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: In the empire, the office of consul was the highest in the Senate, 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.”

Optimate: Conservative faction in the Senate.

Optimus Maximus: “The greatest and the best.”

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: An area outside Italy ruled by Rome.

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.
Ancient 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.

In 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.
An article in The New York Times reported that archeologists in Istanbul, Turkey believe they have 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 still adheres 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 newly discovered 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 newly discovered one! Until then, I can just hold up a coin, and imagine...

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.
Collecting ancient coins can seem intimidating to a new collector. This fascinating, well written, and beautifully illustrated little booklet contains just the right information to get a newcomer started in this wonderful area of numismatics.

Christopher T. Connell
Instructor of Byzantine Numismatics at the ANA Summer Seminar

I recommend the attractive little booklet How to Collect Ancient Roman Coins: Collector’s 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, American Numismatic Society
Former Curator, American Numismatic Association

How to Collect Ancient Roman Coins: Collector’s 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
Editor/Publisher, The Celator
Instructor of Greek and Roman Coins at the ANA Summer Seminar

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
Instructor of Greek and Roman Coins at the ANA Summer Seminar