

# [Ancient Greek and Roman MILITARY on COINS The Weapons, Battles & Symbols](#)

**This guide explores the various types of ancient military symbolism depicted on various coins of ancient Greece and Rome**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avVTjwmegYY>

Feel the ancient military come alive on the coins of the Greeks and the Romans explored in this video. It goes from the personification of valor as Virtus to the Roman god of war, Mars the counterpart of the Greek Ares. However fighting battles takes wisdom so coins with Greek Athena and the Roman counterpart Minerva with spear and shield is depicted.

The Roman emperor would go into battle to vanquish his enemies on horseback. He did have the backing of military foot soldiers, or legions behind him carrying the legionary standards and eagles in the Roman military. One symbol the labarum actually was used in the Roman military after Constantine with the name of Jesus Christ as a monogram symbol . Constantine the Great saw this symbol in the sky before a great battle at the Milvian bridge against Maxentius, which he had painted on the shields of his army and wound up winning a great victory.

The Roman military camps were depicted with the symbolism of the camp gates on their coins. These camp gates were also used as a quick way of communication on the frontiers where they would use them as fire signal beacons to muster their military forces to defend their frontiers.

A coin with the Roman soldiers vanquishing their foes in battle driving spears through them as they lay prostrate on the floor, even the Roman emperor not being above such a military endeavor. Some ways to get around the battle field was to use chariots, including the four horse military chariot called the quadriga or the two horse type as the biga. There is also a rarely seen type of chariot which is the triga, a more widely used Greek type of war chariot.

Elephants with their huge size, magnificence and sheer strength were the ancient equivalent of the tank in ancient times. A rare large silver Greek coin of Seleukos I Nikator of the Seleukid kingdom is show here also, with a chariot drawn by elephants. This made his military a formidable force to deal with. Then a silver coin with an elephant of Julius Caesar, the most famous ancient Roman is shown. It also brings back the story of the Romans facing elephant for the first time when Hannibal Barca, the general from Carthage who crossed the Alps with these elephants. The Romans just like

many others who had to face them showed a respect for these formidable foes. Even Alexander the Great had to face elephants in his campaign that went into India.

Galleys were used in ancient Greek and Roman times to get around and to move military forces along with supplies to their destinations. Several coins are shown here, one with a full sail and the other one of Mark Antony from the battle of Actium, which had a great naval battle that shaped history to what it is today. This coin of Mark Antony shows what could be described as trireme military row ships which were used in this battle. The other side had the legionary eagle (aquila) between two standards and named the legion the coin was minted for by it's number.

Weapons were important for any battle. A coin of the kingdom of Bosphorus is shown which shown all the important militaristic symbols such as the shield, the spear, the helmet, a sword in a scabbard and even a military axe. The weapons used in the legendary tales of Hercules were the bow and the club. On a coin of Alexander the Great he is even depicted as Hercules. Hercules used the skin of the Nemean lion as a helmet and armor which was impermeable to weapons according to legend. A shield of Macedonia is shown along with the helmet they used. An important mention of the Aegis, which is the severed head of Medusa used on shields and the breast plate of armor to scare or almost turn your enemies to stone. This was used on the armor of the ancient Greeks, such as in a depiction of Alexander the Great and even the Roman emperors including Augustus.

Celebrating their victories, the Romans employed the goddess Victory whose Greek counterpart was Nike. Nike was originally a goddess of athletic Olympic style contests and she, along with her Roman counterpart is shown holding a wreath and a palm branch. The wreath would be placed on the head of the victories general, emperor or athletic contest winner and the palm branch was a symbol of victory. The Romans depicted their vanquished enemies as either bound captives or seated in a mourning position, sad over the great defeat they suffered by the Romans. The weapons, including the armor of the vanquished was used to build a trophy or a trophaion, consisting of the shields, swords, helmets spears and other military objects to be displayed in honor of a victory. The fronts of defeated ships were displayed in the Roman forum as Rostra and used also a speaker's platform along with being a great show of power to foreign dignitaries visiting Rome. There were also occasions that great architectural works that would be commissioned. A large Sestertius Roman coin of Nero is shown which has the arch. Arches are still standing in Rome to this day, one being by the Colosseum, known as the Arch of Titus which celebrated the victory over Judaea, the looting of the Great temple and the victory procession from there. The loot being used to build the Flavian Amphitheatre, known to this day as the Colosseum.

## **See the coins depicted in this guide for yourself and so much more!**

The goal of this guide is to familiarize those new to the collecting of ancient coins to the wonderful types of coins available, all of which featured here and more being available in [my eBay store](#).

See all the different types accessible in my store by clicking the link, which does a search for the term in all capital letters in my store. The types to be seen are:

- [Click here to see all coins of VIRTUS personification of valor, and manliness.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins of ARES the Greek god of war.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins of MARS the Roman god of war.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins of ATHENA the goddess of military wisdom and more.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins of MINERVA the Roman counterpart of Athena.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins of EMPERORS on HORSES.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins with HORSES.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins of EAGLES which were used by Romans and Greeks.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins of ROMAN LEGIONARY STANDARDS on coins.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins of GLORY of ARMY featuring Legionary Soldiers.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins with LABARUM the Christian symbol standard.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins with CHI-RHO the Jesus Christ monogram, also known as Christogram used on the](#)

[labarum.](#)

- [Click here to see all coins with CAMP GATE the Roman legionary camp with fire signal beacons.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins of BATTLE scenes.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins with CHARIOTS.](#) Also see [QUADRIGA](#) and [TRIGA](#) and [BIGA](#).
- [Click here to see all coins with ELEPHANTS.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins with GALLEYS.](#) Also see [SHIPS](#).
- [Click here to see all coins with SPEAR and SHIELD and HELMET and BOW and CLUB and AXE and SWORD and AEGIS and GORGONEION and TRIDENT.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins with NIKE the Greek goddess of Victory](#)
- [Click here to see all coins with VICTORY the Roman counterpart of Nike.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins of VICTORY OVER a Roman enemy.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins with TROPAION which is the Greek version of trophy.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins with TROPHY.](#)
- [Click here to see all coins with ARCH.](#) See also [COLUMN](#).

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## Ancient Coins of the Military

Enjoy the collection below of the various types of ancient Greek and Roman coins presented in this article.



### **GORDIAN III 240AD Authent Authentic Genuine Silver Roman Coin VIRTUS i21683**

[Gordian III - Roman Emperor](#): 238-244 A.D. -  
Silver Antoninianus 21mm (2.56 grams) Rome mint:  
March - May 240 A.D.

Reference: RIC 6, C 381

IMPCAESMANTGORDIANVSAVG - Radiate, draped and cuirassed bust right.

VIRTVSAVG - [Virtus](#) standing left, holding [spear](#) and resting on [shield](#).



### **ANTONINUS PIUS Marcus Aurelius Father Ancient RomanCoin ARES Mars Cult i14350**

[Antoninus Pius - Roman Emperor](#): 138-161 A.D.  
Bronze 18mm (4.68 grams) of Philippopolis in Thrace

AVT K ANTΩNEINOC CEB, bare bust right.

ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΠΟΛΕΙΤ, Nude [Ares](#) standing left, holding patera and spear.



[Severus Alexander](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 222-235 A.D.  
Silver Denarius 20mm (3.01 grams) Rome mint: 222 A.D.

Reference: RIC 160; RSC 173a; SR-7884

IMP C M AVR SEV ALEXAND AVG, Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust right.

MARTI PACIFERO, [Mars](#) standing facing, head left, holding spear and branch.



## VELIA in LUCANIA 300BC Philistion group Silver Greek Coin Athena Lion i53521

Greek city of [Velia](#) in [Lucania](#)

Silver Stater 21mm (6.89 grams) Struck circa 300-280 B.C. Philistion group.

Reference: Williams 506 (O254/R355); HN Italy 1312;

SNG ANS 1387; Weber 938

Head of [Athena](#) left, wearing crested Attic helmet decorated with a dolphin, Φ on neck guard.

[Lion](#) standing right; above, Φ-I flanking ornate trident head right; YEΛHTΩN in exergue.



## DOMITIAN 92AD Ancient Silver Roman Coin Athena MINERVA Cult i21934

[Domitian](#) - [Roman Caesar](#): 69-81 A.D. Emperor: 81-96 A.D. -

Silver Denarius 19mm (3.06 grams) Rome mint: 92 A.D.

Reference: RIC 728; RSC 273

IMP CAES DOMIT AVG GERM P M TR P XI, laureate head right.

IMP XXI COS XVI CENS P P P, [Minerva](#) advancing right, brandishing javelin & holding shield.

## NERO on HORSE with SOLDIER 67AD Rome Sestertius LARGE



## Ancient Roman Coin i53830

[Nero](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 54-68 A.D. -  
Bronze Sestertius 34mm (24.93 grams) Rome mint: 67  
A.D.  
Reference: RIC-170

NERO CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GER P M TR P IMP P P, Laureate head of Nero wearing aegis facing right.  
Nero and soldier panathesis [on horse](#)back right; DECVRSIO in exergue; S C across fields.



## PROBUS on horse spearing barbarian 278AD Authentic Ancient Roman Coin i53272

[Probus](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 276-282 A.D. -  
Silvered Bronze Antoninianus 23mm (3.25 grams)  
Serдика mint 278-282 A.D.  
Reference: RIC 877g(var.), C 912

IMPCMAVRPROBVSPAUG - Helmeted, radiate, cuirassed bust left,  
holding spear over shoulder and shield.  
VIRTUSPROBIAVG Exe: KAT - Probus riding [horse](#) right, spearing barbarian;  
shield under horse.



## MAXIMINUS II DAIA 312AD Rome Rare Aquila Standards Ancient Roman Coin i52865

[Maximinus II 'Daia'](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 308-313 A.D. -  
Bronze Follis 18mm (3.00 grams) Rome mint, circa 312-

313 A.D.  
Reference: RIC 350b (VI, Roma)  
IMP MAXIMINVS P F AVG, Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust right.  
SPQR OPTIMO PRINCIPI Exe: RT, [Aquila](#) (legionary [eagle](#)) flanked by two [standards](#).

**CONSTANTINE I the GREAT**



## 335AD Ancient Roman Coin Glory of Army Legions i27304

[Constantine I 'The Great'](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 307-337

A.D. -

Bronze AE3 16mm (2.59 grams) Antioch mint: 335-337 A.D.

CONSTANTINVS MAX AVG - Rosette-diademed, draped and cuirassed bust right.

GLORIA EXERCITVS Exe: SMANT - Two soldiers standing either side of two standards.

Numismatic Note\* The reverse legend dedicates this coin to "[the glory of the Army.](#)"



## Theodosius I the Great with labarum 379AD Authentic Ancient Roman Coin i52710

[Theodosius I](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 379-395 A.D. -

Bronze AE3 16mm (3.03 grams) Aquileia mint 379-395 A.D.

Reference: RIC 45b

D N THEODOSIVS P F AVG, pearl diademed, draped & cuirassed bust right

GLORIA ROMANORVM, emperor advancing right, holding [labarum](#) & dragging captive, SMAQP in ex.



## CONSTANTIUS II son of Constantine the Great w labarum Ancient Roman Coin i51167

[Constantius II](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 337-361 A.D. -

Son of [Constantine I the Great](#)

Bronze AE2 20mm (3.98 grams) Cyzicus mint 348-351

A.D.

Reference: RIC 70 (Cyzicus), LRBC 2474

DN CONSTANTIVS P F AVG - Diademed, draped and cuirassed bust left, holding globe.

FELTEMPREPARATIO Exe: \*/SMKΔ - Constantius II standing left, holding [labarum](#) topped with the [Chi-Rho](#) and resting hand on shield; two captives to left. Star in left field.



**CONSTANTIUS II 324AD Arelate Mint OPEN DOOR CAMP GATE Rare Roman Coin i51101**

[Constantius II](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 337-361 A.D. - Bronze AE3 20mm (2.67 grams) Arelate mint: 324-325 A.D.

Reference: RIC 297

FL IVL CONSTANTIVS NOB C, Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust left.

VIRTVS CAESS Exe: QA(crescent)RL, [Camp gate](#) with open doors and four turrets; star above.

\* Numismatic Note: Rare type with the open doors.



**CONSTANTIUS II Constantine the Great son Ancient Roman Coin Battle Horse i46699**

[Constantius II](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 337-361 A.D. - [BATTLE SCENE COIN](#)

Bronze AE2 23mm (4.98 grams) Struck in the mint of

Aquileia circa 337-361 A.D.

Reference: RIC VIII Aquileia 95.

DN CONSTAN-TIVS PF AVG, pearl diademed, draped, cuirassed bust right

FEL TEMP RE-PARATIO, soldier standing left, knee raised, spearing fallen horseman who is wearing a Phrygian helmet, falling forwards on the ground on his hands and knees. Star in right field. Mintmark AQT. (The dot at far right is not part of the mintmark).



**PROBUS 276AD Authentic Ancient Roman Coin Sol Sun God on horse quadriga i44286**

[Probus](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 276-282 A.D. -

Bronze Antoninianus 23mm (4.27 grams) Struck circa 276-282 A.D.

Reference: RIC 861.

IMP C M AVR PROBVS P F AVG - Radiate and mantled bust left, holding eagle-tipped sceptre.

SOLI INVICTO Ex: KAΔ - [Sol](#) driving facing [quadriga chariot](#), head left, holding whip.



**Roman Republic 104BC Roma  
Victory Chariot Authentic Ancient  
Silver Coin i49087**

[Roman Republic](#) C. Coelius Calvus moneyer  
Silver Denarius 19mm (3.82 grams) Rome mint, circa  
104 B.C.  
Reference: [Coelia 3](#); B.M.C. 1463-92; Syd. 582a; Craw.

318/1b  
Head of Roma left.  
Victory in [biga](#) ( [chariot](#)) left, CALD below horses, letter below.



**SELEUKOS I Nikator  
Tetradrachm Athena ELEPHANT  
Silver Greek Coin Seleukid i46301**

Greek Coin of [Seleucid Kingdom](#)  
[Seleukos I, Nikator](#) - King: 312-280 B.C.  
Silver Tetradrachm 26mm (17.27 grams) Struck circa  
312-280 B.C.

Reference: Sear 6831 var.; HGC 9, 18  
Laureate head of Zeus right.  
Athena, brandishing spear and holding shield, standing in chariot drawn right by four horned [elephants](#); on left,  
BAΣIΛEΩΣ; in exergue, ΣEΛEYKOY.



**JULIUS CAESAR Elephant  
Serpent 49BC Authentic Ancient  
Silver Roman Coin i47254**

[Julius Caesar](#) - Roman Dictator  
Silver Denarius 19mm (3.66 grams) Struck 49-48 B.C.  
Reference: RSC 49j B.9; B.M.C., Gaul, 27; Syd. 1006;  
Craw. 443/1

[Elephant](#) walking right, trampling on serpent, CAESAR in exergue.  
Sacrificial implements: Simpulum, sprinkler, [axe](#) and priest's hat.

The obverse type may symbolize victory over evil, whereas the reverse refers to Caesar's office of Pontifex Maximus.





**GORDIAN III 238AD Deultum  
Thrace GALLEY SHIP Ancient  
Roman Coin BEAUTY i52771**

[Gordian III](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 238-244 A.D. -  
Bronze 23mm (5.66 grams) of Deultum in Thrace  
Reference: Jurokova 274

IMP C GORDIANVS PIVS FEL AVG, Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust right.  
COL F L PAC DEVL T, [Galley](#) under full sail, sailing right.



**MARK ANTONY Cleopatra Lover  
32BC Actium Ancient Silver  
Roman Coin LEG XIX i53492**

[Mark Antony](#)  
Silver Denarius 18mm (3.09 grams)  
Struck at Actium 32-31 B.C. for Mark Antony's XIX

Legion  
Reference: RSC 55; B.M.C. 214; Syd. 1242; Craw. 544/35  
ANT AVG III VIR R P C, Praetorian [galley](#) right.  
LEG XIX, Legionary [eagle](#) between two [standards](#).



**RHOEMETALKES 136AD  
Bosporus King Shield Sword Axe  
Horse Helmet Greek Coin i53539**

Kingdom of [Bosporus](#)  
[Rhoemetalkes](#) - King, circa 131-154 A.D.  
Bronze '48 Units' 22mm (5.48 grams) Struck circa 136

A.D.  
Reference: Anohin 495; Sear GIC 5467; MacDonald 456  
BACIAECOC POIMHTAAKOY, His diademed and draped bust right; [trident](#) before.  
Circular [shield](#) between battle [axe](#) (on left) and [sword](#) in scabbard; [spear](#) in background; above, [horse's](#) head and [helmet](#); beneath, denomination mark M H.



**Alexander III the Great as Hercules  
336BC Ancient Greek Coin Bow  
Club i44200**

[Alexander III the Great](#) - King of Macedonia 336-323 B.C.

Bronze 19mm (6.18 grams)

Struck under Alexander the Great 336-323 B.C.

Reference: Sear 6739 var.

Head of Alexander the Great as [Hercules](#) right, wearing the lion-skin headdress.

Hercules' weapons, bow in [bow](#)-case and [club](#), ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ in between.



**DEMETRIUS I Poliorcetes 294BC  
Ancient Greek Coin HELMET  
SHIELD i27042**

Greek - [Macedonian](#) Kingdom - King Demetrius I Poliorcetes - 294-288 B.C.

Bronze 17mm (4.54 grams) Struck 294-288 B.C.

Reference: Sear 6774; Newell 131 -

Macedonian [shield](#), with monogram of Demetrios at center.

BA ΣΙ either side of crested Macedonian [helmet](#), in field to left, anchor.



**AMISOS in PONTUS  
MITHRADATES VI the GREAT  
Gorgon Aegis Nike Greek Coin  
i30066**

Greek city of [Amisos](#) in [Pontus](#)

Bronze 21mm (7.67 grams) Struck under

[Mithradates VI the Great](#) circa 105-90 B.C. or circa 90-85 B.C.

Reference: HGC 7, 242; Sear 3642; SNG Black Sea 1177-1191; B.M.C. 13. 20,74

[Aegis](#), with Gorgon's head at center.

[Nike](#) advancing right, carrying palm-branch; ΑΜΙ - ΣΟΥ across field; monograms to left and to right.



## AUGUSTUS Victory Over Brutus Cassius Assassins of Julius Caesar Roman Coin i53144

[Augustus](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 27 B.C. - 14 A.D.  
Bronze 18mm (4.47 grams) from the city of [Philippi](#) in Northern Greece,  
Macedonia circa 27 B.C. -10 B.C.

Reference: BMC 23; Sear 32  
VIC AVG, [Victory](#) standing left.  
3 legionary [Standards](#), 'COHOR PRAEPHIL'



## TRAJAN victory over DACIA 103AD Ancient Silver Roman Denarius Coin Rome i53511

Trajan - Roman Emperor : 98-117 A.D. -  
[VICTORY OVER DACIA](#)  
Silver Denarius 17mm (3.36 grams) Rome mint: 103-

111 A.D.  
Reference: RIC 219  
IMP TRAIANO AVG GER DAC P M TR P COS V P P, laureate head right.  
S P Q R OPTIMO PRINCIPI, [Dacia](#) seated right in mournful attitude on shield; below, curved [sword](#).

Trajan celebrates his victory over [Dacia](#) on this coin.



## CONSTANTINE I the GREAT RARE Ancient Roman Coin Victory Over SARMATIANS i39763

[Constantine I 'The Great'](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 307-337 A.D. -

Victory Over SARMATIANS  
Bronze 19mm (3.24 grams) Sirmium mint 324-325 A.D.  
Reference: RIC 48 (VII, Sirmium)  
CONSTANTINVS AVG - Laureate head right.  
SARMATIAE DEVICTA Exe: SIRM - [Victory](#) advancing right, stepping on captive,

holding [Trophy](#) and palm.



**SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS 194AD**  
**Emesa Trophy Quality Ancient**  
**Silver Roman Coin i12586**

[Septimius Severus](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 193-211 A.D. -  
Silver Denarius 17mm (3.21 grams) Emesa mint: 194-  
195 A.D.

Reference: RIC 389, BMC 365, S 6288, C 232  
IMPCAELSEVPERTAVGCOSII - Laureate head right.  
INVICTOIMP - [Trophy](#) with weapons at base.



**NERO Arch Chariot & Mars 65AD**  
**Lugdunum Ancient Roman Coin**  
**Architecture i36665**

[Nero](#) - [Roman Emperor](#): 54-68 A.D. -  
Bronze Sestertius 36mm (25.42 grams) Lugdunum mint:  
65 A.D.

Reference: RIC 393; Cohen 306; BMCRE 330; BN 69; WCN 414; F.S. Kleiner, The Arch  
of Nero in Rome. A study of the Roman honorary arch before and under Nero,  
Archaeologica 52 (Rome, 1985), 51a

NERO CLAVD CAESAR AVG GER P M TR P IMP P P, laureate head left, globe at point of bust.  
S C across field, Triumphal [arch](#), hung with wreath across front and left side; above, Nero in facing quadriga escorted  
on right by Victory holding wreath and palm and on left by Pax holding caduceus and cornucopiae; just below the  
quadriga on extreme left and right, two small figures of soldiers; on left side of arch in niche, figure of Mars standing  
facing, holding spear and round shield; ornamental reliefs on the faces and plinths of the arch.



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