

Plants, Fruits and Grains on Ancient Greek and Roman Coins

It is interesting to see the imagery of plants on various different ancient Greek and Roman coins, which you can see here. Plants played an important role in their lives and were depicted often on ancient coins. Some of the meanings they had were abundance, success, well-being, fertility and more. This article explores the various imagery seen on ancient coins. You can see the various depictions by clicking on the coins in this article.



[François-Xavier Fabre](#), c. 1808



The apple that [Venus](#) holds is the golden prize apple winning the contest between the other goddesses for winning the award for being the "fairest one". There is also the palm branch she holds, which symbolized victory and is a symbol often used on ancient coins. [Read more about the Judgment of Paris here](#)

The olive branch of [Pax](#), the goddess of peace, holds the olive branch that symbolized peace.

In [Roman mythology](#), **Pax** [paqs] ([Latin](#) for *peace*) (her [Greek](#) equivalent was *Eirene*) was recognized as a [goddess](#) during the rule of [Augustus](#). On the [Campus Martius](#), she had a temple called the [Ara Pacis](#), and another temple on the [Forum Pacis](#). She was depicted in art with [olive](#) branches, a [cornucopia](#) and a scepter. There was a festival in her honor on January 3. Daughter of [Jupiter](#) and [Iustitia](#). Pax was often associated with spring.



The Goddess of hope, [Spes](#) holds the flower on coins where she is depicted.

In [ancient Roman religion](#), **Spes** was the goddess of [hope](#). Multiple temples to Spes are known, and [inscriptions](#) indicate that she received private devotion as well as state cult.



During the Republic, a temple to "ancient Hope" (*Spes vetus*) was supposed to have been located near the Praenestine Gate. It was associated with events that occurred in the 5th century BC, but its existence as anything except perhaps a private shrine has been doubted. A well-documented temple of Spes was built by Aulus Atilius Calatinus along with Fides, as the result of vows (*vota*) made to these goddesses during the First Punic War. At Capua in 110 BC, a temple was built to the triad of Spes, Fides, and Fortuna.

Spes was one of the divine personifications in the Imperial cult of the Virtues. Spes Augusta was Hope associated with the capacity of the emperor as Augustus to ensure blessed conditions.

Rhodes the ancient Greek island city, depicted the rose on their coins.



Fruits were depicted on ancient coins also. Interesting to note how more modern artists of our times, still draw fruits to this day!

Modius - the **ancient Roman units of measurement** were built on the Hellenic system with Egyptian, Hebrew, and Mesopotamian influences. The Roman units were comparatively consistent and well documented.

Serapis would be depicted with a modius on top of his

head.



Victory the ancient Roman goddess, personifying victory, the Roman parallel to Nike

She is often depicted with the palm branch, which is a symbol of victory. The branch is depicted on coins including olympic-style athletic games, prize urns.

The wreath that is depicted is a usually laurel, and is at times of oak.



The wreath was a symbol of victory in ancient Greek and Roman times, and references to it are still used in modern English language, as some may term it to be a "victory wreath." A **laurel wreath, oak wreath or wreath** is a circular **wreath** made of interlocking branches and leaves of the **bay laurel** (as in laurel wreath) (*Laurus nobilis*, **Lauraceae**), an aromatic broadleaf evergreen; or branches and leaves of other plants. In **Greek mythology**, **Apollo** is represented wearing a laurel wreath on his head. A wreath made of oak has connections to Jupiter, the Roman equivalent of Zeus, as his sacred tree was the oak. In **ancient Greece** wreaths were awarded to victors, both in

athletic competitions, including the ancient **Olympics** made of wild olive-tree known as "**kotinos**" (κότινος), (sc. at **Olympia**) and in poetic meets; in **Rome** they were symbols of martial victory, crowning a successful commander during his **triumph**.

The wreath symbol was used often on ancient Greek and Roman coins. The wreath on ancient Roman coins is often depicted being held by Jupiter's (Zeus') sacred bird, the eagle, and also Victory (Nike) and by other deities less often; and many coins with emperors depicted wearing it; and at times, entire designs being surrounded by a wreath.

In common modern **idiomatic** usage it refers to a victory. The expression "resting on one's laurels" refers to someone relying entirely on long-past successes for continued fame or recognition, where to "look to one's laurels" encourages an individual to take inspiration from past achievements to conquer a fresh task.



[Annona](#) the ancient Roman goddess of agriculture



Annona (from Latin *annus*, year), in Roman mythology, is the personification of the produce of the year. She is represented in works of art, often together with Ceres, with a cornucopia (horn of plenty) in her arm, and a ship's prow in the background, indicating the transport of grain over the sea. She frequently occurs on coins of the empire, standing between a modius (corn-measure) and the prow of a galley, with ears of corn in one hand and a cornucopia in the other; sometimes she holds a rudder or an anchor.

There is also the goddess Ceres that is depicted on ancient coins, her Greek equivalent

was Demeter

In ancient Roman religion, Ceres was a goddess of agriculture, grain crops, fertility and motherly relationships. Her cult took many forms. She was the central deity in Rome's so-called plebeian or Aventine Triad, and was paired with her

daughter Proserpina in what Romans described as "the Greek rites of Ceres". She played an essential role in Roman marriage and in funeral rites. Her seven-day April festival of Cerealia included the popular Ludi Cerialis (Ceres' games). She was honoured in the May lustration of fields at the Ambarvalia festival, and at harvest-time. Her functions and cults were held equivalent to those of the Greek goddess Demeter, whose mythology she came to share.



In Greek mythology, Demeter was the goddess of the harvest, who presided over grains, the fertility of the earth, the seasons (personified by the Hours), and the harvest.

One of her surnames is Sito (σίτος: wheat) as the giver of food or corn. Though Demeter is often described simply as the goddess of the harvest, she presided also over the sanctity of marriage, the sacred law, and the cycle of life and death. She and her daughter Persephone were the central figures of the Eleusinian Mysteries that also predated the Olympian pantheon.

Grapes were depicted on many ancient coins, which were connected to the gods Dionysus who is often depicted holding them.

There is also a cornucopia, or the horn of plenty, a symbol of wealth which is seen being held by various different gods and goddesses. One of the goddesses is Abundantia, the goddess of abundance.

The cornucopia (from Latin *cornu copiae*) or horn of plenty is a symbol of abundance and nourishment, commonly a large horn-shaped container overflowing with produce, flowers, nuts, other edibles, or wealth in some form. Originating in classical antiquity, it has continued as a symbol in Western art, and it is particularly associated with the Thanksgiving holiday in North America.



This interesting coin of the Jewish people of Jerusalem, circa 69-70 A.D., depicts the Amphora which holds goods, such as olive oil, wine, et cetera and the vine leaf, for the wine which was important to their religious ceremonies.



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