

"A Study of Unpublished Coins Collection dated to the age of Septimius Severus in the Graeco-Roman Museum, Alexandria"**دراسة مجموعة عملات غير منشورة تؤرخ بعهد الإمبراطور سبتيميوس سيفيروس والمحفوظة بالمتحف****اليوناني الروماني بالإسكندرية****Mona Ashour AbdelFatah(Egypt)***Lecturer at Department of Archaeology and Graeco-Roman Studies, Faculty of Arts-Alexandria University***د. منى عاشور عبدالفتاح (مصر)***مدرس بقسم الآثار والدراسات اليونانية والرومانية، جامعة الإسكندرية*Mona.ashour@alexu.edu.eg**Abstract**

This research focuses on a study and publication of a collection of Alexandrian and Roman coins from the period of Septimius Severus's rule, which are currently preserved in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria. Septimius Severus, a Roman emperor of Phoenician descent, governed the Roman Empire during a time marked by significant historical occurrences, with the coins considered as a reflection of these events. As the inaugural emperor of the Severan dynasty, he reigned from 193 AD to 211 AD. Analysis of this coin collection reveals a variety of coin types utilized during that era. The investigation raises inquiries concerning the specific types portrayed on these coins, the investigation raises several inquiries concerning the coin types portrayed in this collection, including the rationale behind Emperor Septimius Severus' selection of specific types for the Roman coins and others for the Alexandrian coinage. It also scrutinizes the significance of these types, assessing whether these types represent particular historical events or symbolize crucial elements from the era when these coins were minted, as well as the evident Alexandrian influences in this set of coins belonging to Emperor Septimius Severus. The study furnishes interpretations for these inquiries and encompasses an elaborate examination consisting of an overview of this collection, a thorough scrutiny of the denominations, inscriptions, and types present on these coins, along with an analytical catalogue containing measurements, types, and documentation of this collection.

Keywords: Alexandrian coinage; Roman coinage; Septimius Severus; Severan dynasty; Roman empire.

الملخص:

يتناول هذا البحث دراسة ونشر لمجموعة من العملات السكندرية والرومانية التي تؤرخ بعهد الإمبراطور سبتيميوس سيفيروس، والمحفوظة في المتحف اليوناني والروماني بالإسكندرية، الإمبراطور سبتيميوس سيفيروس هو أحد الأباطرة الرومان ذات الأصل الفينيقي الذي حكم الإمبراطورية الرومانية وشهد عصره العديد من الأحداث التاريخية الهامة، وهو أول أباطرة الأسرة السيفيرية الذي حكم منذ عام ١٩٣ م. وحتى عام ٢١١ م. فمن خلال دراسة هذه المجموعة نجد طرزاً متنوعة ظهرت على هذه العملات، ويتضمن البحث بعض التساؤلات حول الطرز المصنوعة على هذه المجموعة، ولماذا اختار الإمبراطور سبتيميوس سيفيروس هذه الطرز التي ظهرت على العملات الرومانية وغيرها على العملات السكندرية، وما دلالة هذه الطرز وهل تعكس حدث تاريخي محدد أو تشير إلى رمزية لشئ هام وجد في فترة إصدار هذه العملة، والتأثيرات السكندرية التي ظهرت على هذه المجموعة من عملات الإمبراطور سبتيميوس سيفيروس. يقدم البحث تفسيرات لهذه الأسئلة، كما يتناول دراسة تفصيلية تشمل مقدمة عن هذه المجموعة ودراساتها التفصيلية من حيث الفئات والنقوش والطرز التي ظهرت عليها، بالإضافة إلى كتالوج تحليلي يتضمن المقاييس والطرز والتوثيق لهذه المجموعة.

الكلمات الدالة: العملة السكندرية؛ العملة الرومانية؛ سبتيميوس سيفيروس؛ الأسرة السيفيرية؛ الإمبراطورية الرومانية.

Introduction:

Roman coinage served as a reflection of the historical and economic events that the Roman Empire experienced throughout the Roman era. Coins were one of the most important means of political propaganda for the emperor during the Imperial Roman period. The process of political propaganda followed a specific methodology to promote and reinforce certain positive issues that the emperor wanted to convince the populace of. Through Imperial Roman coins, we can see that the emperor's political propaganda was represented by depicting specific types on his coins, such as his victories and achievements in buildings like triumphal arches, theaters, temples, altars, and other types of structures, as well as his expansions, such as the annexation of new provinces to the Roman Empire, among other themes¹. Beyond simply depicting victories and achievements, how did Roman coinage under Septimius Severus utilize subtle visual cues and symbolism to shape public perception of the emperor's piety, legitimacy, or relationship with the people?

1. Alexandrian and Roman Coinage:

This research consists of collection of coins divided into two collections of coins. The first one is the Alexandrian coinage and the second collection is the Roman coinage, the subsequent sentences will elucidate the differences between the Alexandrian and Roman coins, following that, there will be a study of the collection of coins of Septimius Severus for both the Alexandrian and Roman collections.

1.1.Alexandrian coinage:

Minted in Egypt under Roman rule from Augustus (BC 27 – AD 19) to Diocletian (AD 284 - 305), exhibited distinct characteristics. Following his conquest of Egypt, Augustus established it as a separate entity within the empire, governed by an appointed official from the equestrian order and largely inaccessible to senators. This unique status is reflected in the coinage. Alexandrian coins, struck in silver (often a debased alloy known as billon) and bronze, circulated exclusively within Egypt. Unlike their Roman counterparts, they bore Greek inscriptions and employed the Alexandrian

¹ VANEERDEWEGH, N. & VAN B. L. An African Emperor in Egypt: The Representation of Septimius Severus and his Family on the Egyptian Coinage, *Ancient Society*, 2020, 205-206.

calendar, which commenced on August 29th, aligning with the Egyptian calendar².

1.2. Roman coinage:

In contrast, Roman coinage produced in various mints across the empire, utilized gold, silver, and bronze. These coins featured Latin inscriptions on both obverse and reverse. The obverse typically displayed the portrait, names, and titles of emperors or imperial family members, while the reverse presented visual narratives of significant political and military achievements, such as the annexation of new provinces, military victories, or public works like triumphal arches, temples, and altars³.

This study investigates a collection of 31 coins from the reign of Septimius Severus housed in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria. The collection comprises 28 Roman coins (minted in Rome and Laodicea ad Mare) and 3 Alexandrian coins (minted in Egypt). All coins consistently depict Septimius Severus with a laurel wreath on the obverse, while the reverse presents a variety of types, offering insights into the diverse iconography employed during his rule⁴.

2. Alexandrian coins of Septimius Severus:

2.1. Denomination:

The Alexandrian coinage of Septimius Severus primarily featured the billon tetradrachm, the sole silver denomination. Billon was a debased alloy containing silver mixed with other metals. While bronze coinage, encompassing denominations like the drachma, semi-drachma (half-drachma), and smaller fractions, was issued under earlier emperors, these denominations became less common in the early second century AD and were largely phased out by the third century, with the drachma assuming a primarily commemorative role⁵.

² CHRISTIANSEN, E., *The Roman Coins of Alexandria: Quantitative Studies: Nero, Trajan, Septimius Severus* (Vol. 1& 2). Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 1988, 11-12.

³ GNECCHI, F., *The Coin Types of Imperial Rome*, London: Spink& Son Ltd, 1911, 144-158.

⁴ BUTCHER, K., & PONTING, M., «The beginning of the end? The denarius in the second century» *The Numismatic Chronicle* (1966-), 2012, 63-83.

⁵ GEISSEN, A. *The Coinage of the Roman Empire*, In, *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, Editor, Metcalf William E., New York, 2012, 563; MILNE, J.G., «The Alexandrian Coinage of Augustus», *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 13, Royal and British Numismatic Societies, 1927, 135-139.

This study's collection exclusively includes three billon tetradrachms of Septimius Severus; no bronze coins are present.

2.2. Inscriptions:

Following the tradition of Ptolemaic coinage, Alexandrian coins under Roman rule retained Greek inscriptions. The obverse typically featured the emperor's names and titles, while the reverse inscription identified the depicted type and often alluded to historical events. Dates were indicated by the Greek word for "year" (ΕΤΟΥΣ) followed by the year number in Greek numerals.

Interestingly, not all of Septimius Severus's imperial titles, even those prominent on his Roman coinage, appear on his Alexandrian issues. For instance, the title "Britannicus," commemorating his campaigns in Britain, is rendered in Greek (Βρεταννικός) on Alexandrian coins.

At the beginning of his reign, the obverse inscription read: ΑΥΤ(οκρατωρ) Κ(αίσαρ) Λ(ουκιος) ΣΕΠΤΙ(μιος) ΣΕΟΥΗΡΟΣ ΠΕΡΤ(ινάξ) ΣΕΒ(αστος), translating to "Emperor Caesar Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus".

In 197/198 AD, following military successes in the East, Septimius Severus adopted the titles Arabicus (Ἀραβικός), Adiabenicus (Ἀδιαβηνικός), and Parthicus Maximus (Παρθικός Μέγιστος). These victories would have likely triggered the aurum coronarium⁶, a tax levied to celebrate imperial achievements. The dissemination of such news through various channels, including coinage, played a crucial role in promoting awareness and ensuring the collection of this tax. While some Alexandrian coins from this period depict Nike placing a shield inscribed APAB ΑΔΙΑΒ (referencing the titles Arabicus and Adiabenicus) on a column, no such examples are present in this study's collection⁷.

⁶ BOWMAN, ALAN K. The crown-tax in Roman Egypt, *The Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 4, no. 3.1967, 59-74.

Aurum coronarium (crown tax) was found in Roman Egypt during the first three centuries AD. It was found for the first time during the Ptolemaic period, it performed by offering golden crowns to rulers, it was a mandatory tax, these golden crowns offered to rulers as a symbolic gesture of loyalty or in celebration of significant events, such as military victories or the accession of new emperors.

⁷ VANEERDEWEGH, An African Emperor in Egypt: The Representation of Septimius Severus and his Family on the Egyptian Coinage, 216-219.

Furthermore, Septimius Severus adopted the title Εὐσεβής (Pius), meaning "pious" or "devout," to connect himself with his adoptive father, Marcus Aurelius, and the Antonine dynasty. This title, previously used by Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, appeared on both Alexandrian and Roman coinage.

The three Alexandrian tetradrachms examined in this study (catalogued as numbers 1, 2, and 3) bear the standard obverse inscription: ΑΥΤ(ΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ) Λ(ΟΥΚΙΟΣ) ΣΕΠΤ(ΙΜΙΟΣ) ΣΕΟΥΗΡΟΣ ΠΕΡΤ(ΙΝΑΞ) ΣΕΒ(ΑΣΤΟΣ) – "Imperator Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus".

2.3. Types: Obverse Types:

2.3.1. Portrait of Septimius Severus on Alexandrian Coins:

From the beginning of Septimius Severus's reign, particularly in 195/196 AD, the Alexandria mint issued coins featuring a new portrait of the emperor. This portrait, with its curly hair and thick beard divided into three distinct sections, marked a departure from his earlier depictions. This stylistic shift served a dual purpose: it evoked the image of Greek philosophers and, more importantly, Septimius Severus's adoptive father, Emperor Marcus Aurelius, thereby linking him to the prestigious Antonine dynasty and legitimizing his claim to rule. This portrait style also appeared on Roman coins starting in 196 AD⁸.

Furthermore, the portrait bears a resemblance to depictions of the Egyptian god Serapis, who was often portrayed with curly hair and a long, multi-sectioned beard. This resemblance, particularly noticeable on coins minted between 196 and 207 AD, suggests Septimius Severus's intent to cultivate favor with the Egyptian population and secure the loyalty of Alexandria, a city of strategic importance. Controlling Alexandria was widely believed to be crucial for ruling the entire Roman Empire⁹.

This "Severus-Serapis" portrait type exemplifies Septimius Severus's strategy of blending Roman and Egyptian elements to reinforce his authority and divine status. By incorporating Serapis, a god associated with the

⁸ VANEERDEWEGH, An African Emperor in Egypt: The Representation of Septimius Severus and his Family on the Egyptian Coinage, 214.

⁹ VANEERDEWEGH, An African Emperor in Egypt: The Representation of Septimius Severus and his Family on the Egyptian Coinage, 214-215.

underworld, healing, and the Nile's fertility, into his imperial image, Severus projected an aura of universal and divinely sanctioned power. This fusion of Roman imperial and Egyptian divine iconography is evident in various sculptures and coins, underscoring his portrayal as a ruler chosen by the gods¹⁰.

In essence, the portraits of Septimius Severus on Alexandrian coinage functioned as powerful propaganda tools, carefully designed to legitimize his rule and present him as a divinely appointed emperor by visually connecting him to both the revered Antonine lineage and the divine realm of Serapis.

The three Alexandrian coins in this study exhibit this distinctive portrait of Septimius Severus, with his curly hair and dense beard reminiscent of Marcus Aurelius.

2.4. Reverse Types:

Alexandrian coins issued during the reign of Septimius Severus featured a diverse array of reverse types, drawing from Greek and Egyptian mythology, imperial motifs, symbols, tools, animals, and birds. While the broader Alexandrian coinage of this period encompassed a wide range of imagery, the collection examined in this study focuses on three distinct types: the eagle, Nilus, and Selene.

2.4.1. Eagle (Αετός):

The eagle, a potent symbol of Roman imperial power and associated with Jupiter, the king of the gods, frequently appeared on Roman coinage. Its presence on Alexandrian coins reflects the overarching Roman authority while also resonating with local traditions, as eagles were connected to solar deities and divine kingship in Egyptian mythology¹¹.

Figure no. 1: Billon, tetradrachm, on the obverse: the Greek inscription AVTK Λ CЄΠT CEOVHPOC ΠЄPT CEB, meaning Imperator Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, accompanied by head of the emperor crowned with laurel wreath. On the reverse: an eagle standing between two

¹⁰ BAHARAL, D. Portraits of the Emperor L. Septimius Severus (193-211 AD) as an Expression of his Propaganda. *Latomus*, 48 (Fasc. 3), 1989, 566-567.

¹¹ MILNE, J. G. *Catalogue of Alexandrian Coins*, Oxford: Kraay, 1971, xxxiii-xxxiv.

flags and the letters "LB" referred to that this coin was minted in the second year of Septimius Severus's reign, dated to 194-195 AD¹².



FIG. 1

©Researcher's photo

Reference: Dattari/Savio 4008.

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
1.	11.94	24.3	3.8	12	N. Alex. 820

2.4.2. Nilus (Νεῖλος):

Nilus, the god of the Nile River, held a central place in Egyptian religion, embodying the life-giving force of the Nile and its vital role in agriculture and prosperity. He was typically depicted as a bearded figure, often semi-nude, reclining or seated on rocks, a crocodile, or a hippopotamus, and holding a cornucopia or other symbols of abundance¹³.

The appearance of Nilus on Alexandrian coins during the reign of Septimius Severus was widespread. He appeared in a half-naked form, sitting on rocks, or lying on a crocodile, always holding a basket of produce.

Figure no. 2: Billon, tetradrachm, on the obverse: the Greek inscription AVTK Λ CΕΠΤ CEOVHPOC ΠΕΡΤ CEB, meaning Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, accompanied by head of the emperor crowned with laurel wreath. On the reverse: Nilus depicted sitting facing left, holding grass in his right hand, and the cornucopia in his left hand, and the letters " LF", referred to that this coin was minted in the third year of Septimius Severus's reign, dated to 195-196 AD¹⁴.

¹² <https://www.acsearch.info/search.html?id=13348834> (Accessed 16-11-2024)

¹³ MILNE, Catalogue of Alexandrian Coins, xxx; Bakhoum, Soheir. Dieux égyptiens à Alexandrie sous les Antonins: recherches numismatiques et historiques. FeniXX, 1999, 510-511.

¹⁴ There are no published coins carried the depiction of Nilus on the reverse of Alexandrian coins of Septimius Severus. This coin is considered the first published example bearing this type, dated to the third YEAR of the emperor's reign.



FIG. 2

©Researcher's photo

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
2.	13.79	23.8	4.5	12	N. Alex. 819

2.4.3. Selene (Σεληνή):

Selene, the Greek goddess of the moon, was often depicted in a semi-nude form, sometimes accompanied by Helios, the sun god, and always adorned with a crescent moon upon her head¹⁵.

Figure no. 3: Billon, tetradrachm, on the obverse: the Greek inscription AVTK Λ CΕΠΤ CEOVHPOC ΠΕΡΤ CEB, meaning Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, accompanied by a depiction of the head of the emperor crowned with laurel wreath. On the reverse: Selene half-naked form, with a crescent moon on her head and the letters "LI" referred to that this coin was minted in the tenth year of Septimius Severus's reign, dated to 202-203 AD¹⁶.



FIG. 3

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Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
3.	13.66	21.7	5.5	12	N. Alex. 821

¹⁵ MILNE,, Catalogue of Alexandrian Coins, xxxiii.

¹⁶ There are no published coins carried the depiction of Selene on the reverse of Alexandrian coins of Septimius Severus. This coin is considered the first published example bearing this type, dated to the third year of the emperor's reign

3. Roman coins of Septimius Severus:

3.1. Denominations:

During the Roman era, coinage was struck in various metals, including gold, silver, and bronze. The Roman monetary system in the imperial period underwent several phases, beginning with the Augustan system established by Emperor Augustus in the late first century BC. This system laid the foundation for Roman imperial finances, with the Senate responsible for issuing bronze coinage while the emperor retained control over gold and silver¹⁷.

Roman gold coinage consisted of the aureus and the quinarius aureus (half aureus). Silver coinage included the denarius, quinarius, and sesterius. Bronze coinage encompassed the sesterius (4 asses), dupondius (2 asses), semis (half an as), and quadrans (quarter of an as). These bronze coins bore the inscription "S.C." (Ex Senatus Consulto), signifying their issuance by decree of the Senate¹⁸.

The collection of Septimius Severus coins in the Graeco-Roman Museum comprises twenty-eight silver denarii (from figure no. 4 to figure no. 31).

3.2. Inscriptions:

Roman coinage featured a variety of inscriptions. Obverse inscriptions typically identified the emperor and his titles, while reverse inscriptions often commemorated significant political and military events, such as annexations, victories, or public works. They could also refer to depicted figures, deities, allegories, or, particularly from the late third century AD onwards, indicate the mint¹⁹.

The Roman coinage of Septimius Severus reflects the evolution of his imperial titulature through its Latin inscriptions²⁰. For example, coins from the beginning of his reign (194-195 AD) bear the inscription "L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP IIII," meaning "Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus,

¹⁷ GNECCHI, The Coin Types of Imperial Rome, London: Spink & Son Ltd, 1911, 124-130; SEAR, D. Roman Coins and Their Values, London: Spink & Son, 1964, 19-20.

¹⁸ GNECCHI, The Coin Types of Imperial Rome, 124-130.

¹⁹ GNECCHI, The Coin Types of Imperial Rome, 144-158.

²⁰ VANEERDEWEGH, An African Emperor in Egypt: The Representation of Septimius Severus and his Family on the Egyptian Coinage, 220-223.

Imperator Quartum" (Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, Supreme Commander for the fourth time), (figures nos. 11, 13 and 14).

In 196-197 AD, his coins feature inscriptions like "L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP VIII" and "L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP X", indicating his acclamation as Imperator for the eighth and tenth times, respectively, (figures no. 4 and no. 17).

From 197 to 200 AD, inscriptions such as "L SEPT SEV AVG IMP XI PART MAX" appear, signifying "Lucius Septimius Severus Augustus, Imperator Undecimum, Parthicus Maximus" (Lucius Septimius Severus Augustus, Supreme Commander for the eleventh time, Great Conqueror of the Parthians), (figures nos. 12 and 16).

During the same period (197-201 AD), some coins bear the abbreviated inscription "SEVERVS AVG PART MAX" (Severus Augustus, Great Conqueror of the Parthians).

From 200 to 201 AD, the inscription "SEVERVS AVG PART MAX" continues to appear, (figures from nos. 5 to 8, figures nos. 18 and 19).

Finally, from 202 to 210 AD, the inscription "SEVERVS PIVS AVG" (Severus Pius Augustus) emerges, highlighting his piety, (figures nos. 9, 10, 15, and from nos. 20 to 31).

3.3. Mints:

Roman coinage was issued from Rome and other mints in the empire's provinces since the imperial era. From the mid of the third century AD Roman coins carrying letters and symbols of the mint in Latin and sometimes in Greek language located in the exergue on the reverse²¹.

This study's collection minted in Rome (From Figure no. 4 to 15 and from no. 17 to no. 31) except one coin minted in Laodicea ad Mare (Figure no. 16).

3.4. Types: Obverse types:

3.4.1. Portrait of Septimius Severus on Roman Coins:

²¹ CARSON, R. A. G., *Coins of the Roman Empire*, Great Britain, 1990, 247; SEAR, D. *Roman Coins and Their Values*, 20-21.

From the beginning of Septimius Severus reign, his portrait on Roman coins, with a short, curly beard, and short, curly hair falling over his forehead. He had a straight nose and a beard covering the lower part of his mouth, with eyes that conveyed a penetrating gaze filled with confidence and courage. The emperor's portrait seemed a strong, wise leader and a powerful commander of the Roman armies²².

On This study's collection, the Roman coins carried on the obverse, portrait of Septimius Severus with short, tight curly hair falling over his forehead and a short, curly beard²³.

3.5. Reverse types:

According to Vaneerdewegh and Van Bouwel, the types on Roman imperial coins, particularly from 193 AD to 284 AD, were classified into thirteen categories according to their frequency of appearance on Roman coins its explanation in the following sentences²⁴.

Dynastic classifications included representations of the emperor, his deification, and his depiction as a divine entity, alongside types of his family. Military classifications included victories, military types, and depictions of captives. Imperial religious classifications accentuate the emperor's role as a priest or in a divine representation. Euergetia classification "εὐεργεσία" types depicted the economic and societal contributions rendered by the emperor. In addition to the "παράδειγμα" classification depicted the rulers represented as their predecessors via analogous symbols. Virtue classification highlighted the ruler's role in protecting the Roman people. Restitutor types illustrated the emperor's religious and economic roles. Elevation classification depicted the emperor or one of his family members in a divine representation. Non-specific classification the depiction of emperor carried symbols. Also, Aeternitas types are meaning the personifications. Geographical classifications depicted the personification of cities, provinces, or Rome itself.

²² VANEERDEWEGH, An African Emperor in Egypt: The Representation of Septimius Severus and his Family on the Egyptian Coinage, 214-215.

²³ The statues of Septimius Severus in the British museum in London, the portrait of the emperor has the same features which appeared on his Roman coins. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1802-0710-2 (Accessed 5-12-2024).

²⁴ VANEERDEWEGH, An African Emperor in Egypt: The Representation of Septimius Severus and his Family on the Egyptian Coinage, 209-210.

Unica classification included symbols, animals, birds, and commemorative types.

3.5.1. Sample of coins of Military types

The second classification: Military types of the Emperor played an important role in the reverse types on the Roman coins, starting from the reign of Septimius Severus, dated from 193 AD to 284 AD. We notice an increase in imperial types compared to the era before this period, the emperor appeared in various forms. Imperial types began to be depicted more frequently than other representations, such as gods and the rest of types. Therefore, imperial types included military, social, economic, and religious types.

Figure no. 4: silver, denarius, on the obverse, head of Septimius Severus crowned with a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP VIII," which means "Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax, emperor, supreme commander for the eighth time". On the reverse, the inscription "ADVENTVI AVG FELICISSIMO" meaning "The most auspicious return of the emperor (Augustus)", Accompanying by depiction of Septimius Severus is wearing military attire, riding a horse, and raising his right hand in a gesture symbolizing the peace that reigns throughout the Roman Empire. This coin is dated to 196-197 AD.

If we followed the political events during the year 196-197 of Septimius Severus's reign, we find that in this year, he waged war against the Parthian Empire in the East, aiming to defeat them and expand the Roman Empire. Therefore, he was depicted on this Roman coins in a military attire to herald his return after defeating the Parthians in the East, accompanied by the inscription indicating the auspicious and victorious return of the emperor²⁵.



FIG. 4

²⁵ GRADONI, MARK K. the Parthian Campaigns of Septimius Severus: Causes, and Roles in Dynastic Legitimation, *American Journal of Ancient History (AJAH)*, 2013, 9-10.

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 74

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
4.	3.23	17.9	2.4	12	N. Alex. 2237

Figures nos. 5, 6, and 7: silver, denarius, on the obverse, the head of Septimius Severus with a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS AVG PART MAX", meaning "Severus Augustus Parthicus Maximus," (Severus, emperor, the greatest conqueror of the Parthians). On the reverse, Septimius Severus in military attire, standing left, sacrificing out of a patera in his right hand over a tripod and holding a spear in his left hand. Accompanying this depiction is the inscription "RESTITVTOR VRBIS," is meaning "Restorer of the city (Rome)". This coin is dated to 200-201 AD.

During this date 200-201 AD Septimius Severus indeed achieved victory in the East over the Parthian Empire and expanded the eastern borders to the Euphrates River, annexing it to the Roman Empire (Restorer of the city "Rome"). He took the title "Conqueror of the Parthians", this victory followed by celebrations are depicted on his coinage accompanying by his new titles in this year, and symbols of triumph and peace²⁶.

As for the depiction of Septimius Severus on the reverse in military attire, offering sacrifices and holding a spear, this may symbolize the emperor's gratitude to the gods for their assistance in his victory over the Parthians, aiding in the expansion, protection, and stability of the Roman Empire.



FIG. 5

©Researcher's photo
Reference: RIC IV 167A



FIG. 6

©Researcher's photo
Reference: RIC IV 167A

²⁶ According to the RIC IV online, we see the Roman coins in this year (200 -201 AD) carried reverse types refer to the victory, like RIC IV online 170, personification of victory, RIC IV online 171A, personification of Virtus and RIC IV online 176, depictions of captives. <https://numismatics.org/ocre/results?q=septimius%20severus&start=260> (Accessed 12-12-2024)



FIG. 7

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 167A

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
5.	2.86	18.6	2.1	6	N. Alex. 2230
6.	1.98	18.6	2.1	6	N. Alex. 2231
7.	2.02	18.9	1.9	12	N. Alex. 2232

3.5.2. Sample of coins of Imperial religious types:

These types depicted the emperor as a priest alone or with deities, referred to as "sacerdos" or divine association.

Figure no. 8: Silver, denarius, on the obverse head of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS AVG PART MAX," meaning "Severus Augustus Parthicus Maximus" (Severus, emperor, the greatest conqueror of the Parthians). On the reverse depiction of Septimius Severus, veiled, wearing a toga, standing left, holding a branch in his extended right hand and a roll in his left hand, with the inscription "FVNDATOR PACIS," meaning "Founder of peace", this coin is dated to 200-201 AD.



FIG. 8

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 160

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
8.	2.19	28.2	2.7	6	N. Alex. 1133

Figures nos. 9 and 10: Silver, denarius, on the obverse head of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS PIVS AVG," meaning "Severus Pius Augustus" (Severus, the pious emperor).

On the reverse, depiction of Septimius Severus, veiled, wearing a toga, standing left, holding a branch in his extended right hand and a roll in his left hand, with the inscription "FVNDATOR PACIS," meaning "Founder of peace", this coin is dated to 202-210 AD²⁷.

In 202 AD Septimius Severus and Caracalla serving as consuls and was followed by imperial festivities in Rome. In the month of April, Severus commemorated his decennalia, refers to the tenth anniversary of his ascension to power, which was concomitantly celebrated with an official triumph commemorating the victory over the Parthians. Various celebrations were held in Rome. Thereafter, likely in June, the nuptials of Severus' elder son, Caracalla, to Plautilla, the daughter of the praetorian prefect, C. Fulvius Plautianus took place in Rome. The wedding festivities comprised processions through the Roman Forum and an opulent banquet hosted in the imperial residence on the Palatine Hill, to which senators and their families were graciously invited²⁸.

The festivals and celebrations in Rome were depicted on Septimius Severus coin, and he adopted the title "Founder of Peace," the legend prominently appeared on his coinage.



FIG. 9

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 265



FIG. 10

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 265

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
9.	2.59	18.9	2.4	6	N. Alex. 2233
10.	2.28	19.8	2.3	12	N. Alex. 2234

3.5.3. Samples of coins of "Aeternitas-messages"

Types depicting the perpetuation of the emperor's reign or specially gods, goddess and the types which called the personification such as the

²⁷ RIV IV Septimius Severus 265 (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.4.ss.265> Accessed 16-10-2024)

²⁸ Lusnia, S. S. Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, Lucius, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 2013, 2-3.

depiction of Rome, peace, hope, happiness, security, and the depiction of general peace in the empire and the imperial household.

3.5.3.1.First, Gods and goddess:

3.5.3.2.Mars:

The god of war and protector of Rome in Roman mythology, Mars often depicted as a mature, bearded man wearing military attire with a helmet on his head and holding weapons such as a spear and shield. Sometimes, he is accompanied by the symbol of victory, Trophaeum. Occasionally, Mars is depicted naked with only a helmet. He is a common type on Roman coins. Mars is depicted twice in this study's collection²⁹.

Figure no. 11: Silver, denarius, on the obverse head of Septimius Severus, accompanied by the inscription "L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP IIII," an abbreviation of "Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, Imperator Tertium," (Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax, emperor (Augustus), supreme commander (Imperator) for the fourth time). On the reverse depiction of Mars with a helmet on his head, naked, with a cloak draped over his left arm. He holds an olive branch in his right hand and a trophy in his left hand, accompanied by the inscription "MARS PACATOR", meaning "Mars at peace", this coin dated to 194-195 AD³⁰.



FIG. 11

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 45

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
11.	3.12	17.6	2.2	6	N. Alex. 2240

Figure no. 12: Silver, denarius, on the obverse depiction of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "L SEPT SEV AVG IMP XI PART MAX," an abbreviation of "Lucius Septimius Severus

²⁹ JONES, J. R. M. A dictionary of ancient Roman coins, London: Seaby, 1990, 175.

³⁰ RIC IV Septimius Severus 45 (<https://numismatics.org/ocri/id/ric.4.ss.45> Accessed 16-11-2024)

Augustus, Imperator Undecimum, Parthicus Maximus", (Lucius Septimius Severus, emperor (Augustus), supreme commander (Imperator) for the eleventh time, great conqueror of the Parthians). On the reverse a depiction of Mars wearing a helmet and military attire, leaning on the shield fixed to the helmet, holding spear in his left hand, accompanying the inscription "MARTI VICTORI," meaning "To Mars, the victorious", this coin dated to 197-200 AD³¹.



FIG. 12

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 134

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
12.	1.97	17.7	2.4	6	N. Alex. 2239

3.5.3.3.Minerva:

In Roman mythology, Minerva is the goddess of war, often depicted holding a spear and wearing a helmet and the Aegis shield. Sometimes she carries Victoria or an owl on her hand. Among her duties is guiding soldiers in war, as victory is gained through wisdom and courage. She was also considered a goddess of wisdom, there are two coins depicting Minerva in this study's collection³².

Figures nos. 13 and 14: Silver, denarius, on the obverse depiction of Septimius Severus wearing laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP IIII", an abbreviation of "Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, Imperator Tertium", (Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax, emperor (Augustus), supreme commander (Imperator) for the fourth time). On the reverse Minerva, wearing a helmet and holding a spear in her right hand and a shield in her left hand, accompanying her the inscription "P M TR P II COS II PP," an abbreviation of Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate Secunda, Consul Secundum, Pater Patriae, (the high priest, holder of

³¹ RIC IV Septimius Severus 45 (<https://numismatics.org/ocri/id/ric.4.ss.45> Accessed 16-11-2024)

³² JONES, A dictionary of ancient Roman coins, 185-186.

tribunician power for the second time, consul for the second time), father of the nation, dated to 194-195 AD³³.



FIG. 13

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 49



FIG. 14

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 49

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
13.	1.57	18.2	1.7	6	N. Alex. 2235
14.	1.5	16.8	1.7	12	N. Alex. 2236

3.5.3.4. Neptune:

The Roman god of the sea is typically depicted semi-nude, holding a dolphin and a trident. Sometimes, he is shown alongside the prow of a ship, with his right foot resting on it, or riding a chariot pulled by sea creatures³⁴.

Figure no. 15: Silver, denarius, on the obverse depiction of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS PIVS AVG," which is an abbreviation of "Severus Pius Augustus" (Severus, the pious emperor). On the reverse Neptune, depicted nude with a cloak draped over his left shoulder, he rests his right foot on a sphere and holds a trident, accompanying the inscription "P M TR P XVIII COS III P P," which is an abbreviation of Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate Octava Decima, Consul Tertium, Pater Patriae (high priest, holder of tribunician power for the 18th time, consul for the third time, father of the nation), this coin dated to 210 AD³⁵, the depiction of Neptune on the Roman coinage refers to "the protector of the Emperor".

³³ RIC IV Septimius Severus 49 (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.4.ss.49> Accessed 16-11-2024)

³⁴ JONES, A dictionary of ancient Roman coins, 209-210.

³⁵ RIC IV Septimius Severus 234 (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.4.ss.234> Accessed 16-11-2024)



FIG. 15

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 234

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
15.	1.84	19.5	1.8	12	N. Alex. 2238

3.5.3.5.Second, personifications:

Personifications represent a range of natural phenomena, personal qualities, conceptions, this idea appeared on Roman coins from the Republican era particularly the second century BC onwards, this personification aimed to promote essential values among the Roman people.

The widespread presence of personifications on Roman coins indicates their significant role in Roman thought, where the idea of embodiment was associated with the attributes of the gods, thus representing a part of religious life. Fully embraced during the Imperial era to glorify emperors and showcase their virtues, personifications were closely linked to propaganda for the emperor and the imperial family. Most of these were embodied in female personifications, with few depicted as male personifications³⁶.

3.5.3.6.Moneta:

Moneta is a personification of the mint and coinage itself, typically depicted holding scales and a cornucopia. Moneta appeared frequently on coins during the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and also on coins of Septimius Severus in both the Alexandrian and Roman coinage³⁷.

Figure no. 16: Silver, denarius, minted in the Laodicea ad Mare mint, on the obverse depiction of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "L SEPT SEV AVG IMP XI PART MAX," abbreviated of Lucius Septimius Severus Augustus, Imperator Undecimum,

³⁶ GRANT, M. Roman history from coins: some uses of the imperial coinage to the historian. Vol. 549. CUP Archive, 1958, 149-151.

³⁷ SEAR, D. Roman Coins and Their Values, 19; GNECCHI, The Coin Types of Imperial Rome, 51-52; JONES, A dictionary of ancient Roman coins, 199-200.

Parthicus Maximus, (Lucius Septimius Severus, emperor (Augustus), supreme commander (Imperator) for the eleventh time, great conqueror of the Parthians). On the reverse Moneta is depicted seated, holding scales in her right hand and a cornucopia in her left hand, accompanying the inscription "MONETA AVGG," abbreviated of Moneta Augustorum, (the mint of the emperors (Augusti)), this coin dated to 198-202 AD³⁸.

Howgego discusses that the appearance of the embodiment of Moneta signifies the mint's reconstruction, reorganization, or relocation. Consequently, this appearance of Moneta on the coins of Septimius Severus at the beginning of his reign proves that reorganization of the mint. Also, the appearance of Moneta on coins means that a large number of coins were issued in the following year³⁹.



FIG. 16

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 510A

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
16.	2.71	22.8	2.2	12	N. Alex. 1131

3.5.3.7.Pax:

Pax, the personification of peace, is always depicted holding an olive branch and a scepter or a cornucopia. Pax appeared once on this study's collection⁴⁰.

Figure no. 17: Silver, denarius, on the obverse depiction of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "L SEPT SEV PERT AVG IMP X," abbreviated to Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, Imperator Decimum, (Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax, emperor (Augustus), supreme commander (Imperator) for the tenth time). On the

³⁸ RIC IV Septimius Severus 510A (https://numismatics.org/ocrc/id/ric.4.ss.510A_denarius Accessed 16-11-2024)

³⁹ HOWGEGO, C. & BUTCHER K. & PONTING M. *Coinage and the Roman Economy in the Antonine Period: the View from Egypt*, Oxford, 2010, 25.

⁴⁰ SEAR, *Roman Coins and Their Values*, 19; GNECCHI, *The Coin Types of Imperial Rome*, 53-54.

reverse Pax is depicted seated, holding an olive branch in her right hand and a scepter in her left hand, accompanying by the inscription "PACI AETERNA" meaning the eternal peace, this coin dated to 197-198 AD⁴¹.

Pax is consistently depicted on coinage as a symbol denoting overall tranquillity within the Roman Empire, particularly following the incorporation of a new territory. This signifies the Emperor's accomplishment in fostering and disseminating peace across the empire's expanse.



FIG. 17

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 118

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
17.	3.06	17.6	2.4	12	N. Alex. 2244

4. 5. 3. 8. Victoria:

Victoria, the embodiment of victory, is depicted with wings, often holding an olive branch or a laurel wreath. Sometimes she holds a shield or is accompanied by the symbol of victory. She is often depicted standing, sitting, or flying, and frequently appeared alongside emperors. Sometimes she carries a shield, or inscribed shield. Roman emperors sometimes represented with her as a symbol of victory⁴².

Victoria appears on six coins in this study's collection.

Figure no. 18: Silver, denarius, on the obverse depiction of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS AVG PART MAX," meaning Severus Augustus Parthicus Maximus. On the reverse Victoria depicted winged in flight holding a laurel wreath with both hands placed on a shield, accompanied by the inscription "VICTAETE RN", this coin dated to 197 to 200 AD⁴³.

⁴¹ RIC IV Septimius Severus 118 (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.4.ss.118> Accessed 16-11-2024)

⁴² SEAR, Roman Coins and Their Values, 20; GNECCHI, The Coin Types of Imperial Rome, 62-63.

⁴³ RIC IV Septimius Severus 170 (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.4.ss.170> Accessed 16-11-2024)



FIG. 18

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 170

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
18.	1.77	27.8	2.4	12	N. Alex. 1132

Figure no. 19: Silver, denarius, on the obverse depiction of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS AVG PART MAX". On the reverse Victoria depicted winged in flight holding a laurel wreath with both hands placed on a shield, accompanied by the inscription "P M TR P VIII COS II P P," meaning Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate Quarta, Consul Secundum, Pater Patriae. ", this coin dated to 200 AD⁴⁴.



FIG. 19

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 150

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
19.	3.3	17.7	2.2	12	N. Alex. 2227

Figure no. 20: Silver, denarius, on the obverse depiction of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS PIVS AVG". On the reverse Victoria depicted standing on a globe holding a palm branch, accompanied by the inscription "VICTORIAE AVGG" meaning to the victory of the emperors (Augusti). ", this coin dated to 202-210 AD⁴⁵.

⁴⁴ RIC IV Septimius Severus 150 (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.4.ss.150> Accessed 16-11-2024)

⁴⁵ RIC IV Septimius Severus 299 (https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.4.ss.299_denarius Accessed 16-11-2024)



FIG. 20

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 299

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
20.	3.24	18.7	2.1	12	N. Alex. 1134

Figures nos. 21 and 22: Silver, denarius, on the obverse depiction of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS PIVS AVG". On the reverse Victoria depicted standing on a globe holding a palm branch, accompanied by the inscription "VICT PART MAX," meaning great victory over Parthia. ", this coin dated to 202-210 AD⁴⁶.



FIG. 21

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 295



FIG. 22

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 295

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
21.	1.67	16.4	1.9	6	N. Alex. 2225
22.	2.26	18.9	1.1	12	N. Alex. 2226

Figure no. 23: Silver, denarius, on the obverse depiction of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS PIVS AVG". On the reverse Victoria depicted winged with her upper body bare until her waist, facing right with her left foot resting on a globe and holding a shield with inscriptions leaning against a palm tree, accompanied by the inscription "P M TR P XV COS III P P," meaning high priest, holder of tribunician power for the 15th time, consul for the third time, father of the nation. ", this coin dated to 207 AD.

⁴⁶ RIC IV Septimius Severus 295 https://numismatics.org/ocri/id/ric.4.ss.295_denarius Accessed 16-11-2024)

When Septimius Severus became emperor in the year 193 AD, he was immediately faced a series of formidable challenges, which included the rival for the throne and the looming threat of the Parthian Empire, an entity that had once been a rival to Rome and had since evolved into a significant regional power. To overcome these threats, Severus planned to strengthen his rule and weaken the Parthians in order to secure Rome and fortify his position within the empire. As a part of this strategy, he launched a military campaign in 197 AD, when he initiated an invasion of Armenia, an important ally of the Parthians. Unlike his predecessors, most notably Trajan, Severus aimed to bring Armenia under Roman control, boosting his reputation as a formidable military commander and a shrewd strategist⁴⁷.

As Severus continued his military campaign, he made significant gains in Mesopotamia, he was successfully capturing important cities such as Babylon and Seleucia. His efforts reached a turning point in 198 AD when he besieged Ctesiphon, the capital of the Parthian Empire in the year 198 AD. This victory obtained him the title "Parthicus Maximus", the recognition of his military prowess and strategic acumen. With this triumph, Septimius Severus secured Rome's eastern borders of the empire and establishing himself as a protector of the newly acquired territories.

From the beginning of Septimius Severus's reign until 210 AD, victory depicted on the Roman coins as a symbol emperor's victory and triumph and was associated with his title Parthicus Maximus.



FIG. 23

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 211

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
23.	2.88	18.2	2.3	12	N. Alex. 2228

⁴⁷ GRADONI, MARK K. the Parthian Campaigns of Septimius Severus: Causes, and Roles in Dynastic Legitimation, 10-12.

4.1.1.1.Liberalitas:

Liberalitas, a valued virtue in Roman culture, is shown on imperial medals celebrating emperors' generosity. Initially is called "Congiarium"⁴⁸. This personification depicted during the Republic, and continued under imperial period, on Roman coins recalled "Liberalitas", it is personification of imperial kindness, when the emperor made monetary gift or extra payments or food distributions, liberalitas depicted as a woman who carried a tessera⁴⁹ for measuring coins and a cornucopia for abundance⁵⁰.

Figure no. 24: Silver, denarius, on the obverse head of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS PIVS AVG," meaning Severus Pius Augustus (Severus, the pious emperor (Augustus)). On the reverse, liberalitas is depicted standing, holding an abacus in her right hand and a cornucopia in her left hand, accompanying by the inscription "LIB AVG III P M TR P X COS III P P," which abbreviated to Liberalitas Augusti Tertia, Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate Decima, Consul Tertium, Pater Patriae (the third liberality of the emperor (Augustus), high priest, holder of tribunician power for the tenth time, consul for the third time, father of the nation), dated to 202 AD⁵¹.

Septimius Severus set out on an expedition that took him to several notable cities, including Carthage, Thugga, and Utica, as well as the military encampment at Lambaesis. The journey likely ended with a stop at his birthplace, Leptis Magna. In 204 AD upon returning to Rome, Severus managed the "Ludi Saeculares" (Secular Games), which were inspired by those conducted by Augustus 220 years prior in 17 BCE. The festivities took

⁴⁸ CONGIARIUM: A gift made to the people by the emperors, and the reason for this gift is presented on Roman coins, accompanied by the legend which refers to the occasion, <https://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=Congiarium> Accessed 16-11-2024.

⁴⁹ A tessera, a small square object marked with points, served as a ticket or voucher and was made from materials such as wood, bone, ivory, or bronze. Tesserae were used for various purposes and named accordingly, including theatrical, gladiatorial, frumentary (grain-related), convivial, military, and hospitable tesserae. Often resembling coins or counters, many tesserae are preserved in numismatic collections. During the imperial period, they were primarily used for public distributions, allowing individuals to present them and claim assigned gifts such as corn, oil, money, or other items of varying value. For this purpose, they were referred to as "tesserae liberalitatis". <https://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=Tessera> Accessed 5-12-2024.

⁵⁰ JONES, A dictionary of ancient Roman coins, 168.

<https://www.forumancientcoins.com/numiswiki/view.asp?key=LIBERALITAS&srsId=AfmBOopQIr6Uasuv0eumuvXodppzcEIgbCyRa5y0xWoeUKTEvd6ccpYo> Accessed 16-11-2024.

⁵¹ RIC IV Septimius Severus 278A, https://numismatics.org/ocri/id/ric.4.ss.278A_denarius Accessed 16-11-2024.

place over three continuous days and nights, from May 31 to June 2 in 204 AD, and were followed by an extra seven days filled with chariot races and theatrical shows.

These occasions were commemorated in inscriptions on fragments of marble stelae that were unearthed near the Tarentum in Rome, the location of the nightly sacrifices linked to the games; consequently, the coins of Liberalitas featured in his Roman coinage for this year indicate that these festivals were accompanied by numerous gifts, vouchers and provisions such as grain, oil, and money presented by the emperor himself to the populace⁵².



FIG. 24

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 278A

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
24.	3.01	28.4	2.1	12	N. Alex. 2241

4.1.1.2.Fortuna:

Fortuna is the embodiment of luck, often depicted holding a rudder and a cornucopia, and sometimes standing on a globe. Occasionally, she is depicted alongside a wheel, and among her attributes are an olive branch and a vessel⁵³. In this study's collection, there is one coin carried the type of Fortuna.

Figure no. 25: Silver, denarius, on the obverse head of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS PIVS AVG," meaning Severus Pius Augustus (Severus, the pious emperor (Augustus)). On the reverse, Fortuna is depicted seated on a throne, holding a rudder supported by a globe in her right hand and a cornucopia in her left hand, beneath the throne is a wheel, accompanying Fortuna by the inscription "P M TR P XI COS III P P," which abbreviated of Pontifex Maximus,

⁵² Lusnia, Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, Lucius, The Encyclopedia of Ancient History, 2013, 2-3.

⁵³ JONES, A dictionary of ancient Roman coins, 120-121.

Tribunicia Potestate Undecima, Consul Tertium, Pater Patriae (high priest, holder of tribunician power for the eleventh time, consul for the third time, father of the nation), dated to 203 AD⁵⁴.

After Septimius Severus's tours around the Roman provinces and his hometown Leptis Magna, along with his celebrations in Rome and gifts for the citizens, Fortuna depicted on his Roman coins symbolized the tranquility and fortune of the emperor who expanded and enhanced the luxury of the empire.



FIG. 25

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 189b

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
25.	2.3	19.4	2.2	12	N. Alex. 2243

4.1.1.3. Dea Caelestis:

The patron deity of the city Carthage, attributes include a lion, a thunderbolt, and a scepter, and she is often depicted riding a lion. Depicted on coins wearing an elaborate high headdress and draped clothing. She is seated facing forward on a lion that is running to the right, near waters that appear to gush from beneath a rock on the left. Her right hand rests on a drum balanced on the lion, while she holds a transverse scepter in her left hand⁵⁵.

Figures nos. 26, 27, 28: Silver, denarius, on the obverse head of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription SEVERVS PIVS AVG meaning Severus, the pious emperor (Augustus). On the reverse Dea Caelestis, draped, riding right on lion, holding thunderbolt in right hand and sceptre in left hand; below, water gushing from rock, and the inscription INDVLGENTIA AVGG IN CARTH the abbreviation of the Indulgentiae

⁵⁴ RIC IV Septimius Severus 189B (https://numismatics.org/ocri/id/ric.4.ss.189B_denarius Accessed 16-11-2024)

⁵⁵ JONES, A dictionary of ancient Roman coins, 82-83.

Augustorum in Carthagina. Senatus Consultum (the indulgence of the emperors (Augusti) in Carthage), dated from 202 to 210 AD⁵⁶.

The imperial family, alongside the praetorian prefect, undertook an expedition through the African provinces during the latter part of that year 203 AD and the early part of 204 AD. Throughout this excursion, the emperor conferred elevated status upon several urban centers, notably CARTHAGE, THUGGA, and UTICA, and conducted a visit to the military encampment at LAMBAESIS. This journey likely culminated in a visit to Leptis Magna, the emperor's birthplace, wherein he presumably initiated a comprehensive construction program that encompassed a newly designed basilica-forum complex, the restoration of the port, the establishment of a colonnaded thoroughfare, and the erection of a monumental nymphaeum. A quadrifrons arch, dating approximately to the year 204, serves to commemorate the imperial family's visitation to the city⁵⁷.



FIG. 26

©Researcher's photo
Reference: RIC IV 266



FIG. 27

©Researcher's photo
Reference: RIC IV 266



FIG. 28

©Researcher's photo
Reference: RIC IV 266

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
26.	3.13	18.8	2.1	12	N. Alex. 2245
27.	2.54	19.6	1.7	6	N. Alex. 2246

⁵⁶RIC IV Septimius Severus 266 (https://numismatics.org/ocri/id/ric.4.ss.266_denarius Accessed 16-11-2024)

⁵⁷ Lusnia, Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus, Lucius, *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 2-3.

28.	2.12	19	2.2	12	N. Alex. 2247
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4.1.1.4.Roma:

Roma is the embodiment of the city itself, often depicted standing, sitting, or in half-figure, wearing Amazonian clothing with a helmet and holding a shield, her appearance look like Athena "the goddess of the war"⁵⁸.

Figure no. 29: Silver, denarius, on the obverse head of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription "SEVERVS PIVS AVG," meaning Severus, the pious emperor (Augustus). On the reverse, Roma is depicted wearing a helmet, seated on a shield, holding a palladium in her right hand and a spear in her left hand, accompanying Roma by the inscription "RESTITVTOR VRBIS," which is Restitutor Urbis, meaning the restorer of the city Rome, dated to 202 to 210 AD⁵⁹.

Rome (ῥώμη) means "power" and its appearance on the coinage is refer to the embodiment of power, the power of the Roman Empire derived from the power of the emperor (Septimius Severus) and his control and good command over the army and Roman states.



FIG. 29

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 288

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
29.	2.96	19.2	1.9	6	N. Alex. 2229

4.1.1.5.Trophy:

A trophy, or tropaeum, was a monument formed from enemy spoils, set up to commemorate victories by the Greeks and Romans. Initially, it consisted of a tree trunk with a crosspiece adorned with the vanquished's armor, such as a cuirass, helmet, and buckler. The first recorded Roman trophy was

⁵⁸ GNECCHI, The Coin Types of Imperial Rome, 21-22.

⁵⁹ RIC IV Septimius Severus 288 (https://numismatics.org/ocri/id/ric.4.ss.288_denarius
Accessed 16-11-2024)

erected by C. Flaminius in 224 B.C. and was made of gold, placed in the Capitol. Notable examples include the marble trophies believed to have been erected by Marius in Rome, commemorating his victories over Jugurtha and the Cimbri. During the later republic, trophies were carried before the triumpher's car and later constructed from durable materials like stone or brass. From Augustus onward, such monuments multiplied, with Trajan and Antonine columns serving as grand-scale trophies.

Spanheim's notes depict a trophy attributed to Trajan, featuring a tree trunk adorned with military symbols and mythological figures. Trophies frequently appeared on Roman denarii, often accompanied by other military insignia or figures of kneeling captives. Coins from the early and lower empire, from Julius Caesar to Gallienus, commonly featured trophies. On coins of Julius Caesar, a trophy might display body armor, a buckler, and a military lituus, while coins of Augustus showed a trophy within a temple⁶⁰.

Figure no. 30: Silver, denarius, on the obverse head of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription SEVERVS PIVS AVG meaning Severus, the pious emperor (Augustus), on the reverse two captives, bound, seated back to back, left and right of central trophy, and the inscription PART MAX P M TR P X the abbreviation of the Parthicus Maximus, Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate Decima, which meaning the greatest conqueror of the Parthians, high priest, holder of tribunician power for the tenth time, dated to 202 AD⁶¹.

Figure no. 31: Silver, denarius, on the obverse head of Septimius Severus wearing a laurel wreath, accompanied by the inscription SEVERVS PIVS AVG meaning Severus, the pious emperor (Augustus). On the reverse central trophy, consisting of helmet, cuirass, spears, shields, and greaves; to right, captive, wearing peaked cap and long robe, standing right, hands bound behind back; to left, captive, wearing peaked cap and long robe, seated left, resting head on right hand, right arm propped up on bent knee, and the inscription P M TR P XV COS III P P, the abbreviation of the Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate Quinta Decima, Consul Tertium, Pater Patriae,

⁶⁰ JONES, A dictionary of ancient Roman coins, 309.

⁶¹ RIC IV Septimius Severus 184 (<https://numismatics.org/ocri/id/ric.4.ss.184> Accessed 16-11-2024)

which meaning high priest, holder of tribunician power for the 15th time, consul for the third time, father of the nation, dated to 207 AD⁶².



FIG. 30

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 184

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
30.	2.23	18.9	2.5	12	N. Alex. 1130



FIG. 31

©Researcher's photo

Reference: RIC IV 214

Number	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Thickness (mm)	Axis (h)	Inv. Num
31.	2.7	20	2.1	12	N. Alex. 2242

Conclusion:

This research primarily concentrates on the collection of coins dated to the reign of Septimius Severus, which are currently preserved in the Graeco-Roman Museum located in Alexandria. This numismatic research is divided into two groups of collections: The first one includes the Alexandrian coinage, consists of three billon coins (figures nos. 1, 2, 3) that are classified as tetradrachms. The three Alexandrian coins have inscriptions in Greek that explain the names and titles of the emperor, the common inscription is ΑΥΤ(ΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ) Λ(ΟΥΚΙΟΣ) ΣΕΠΤΙΜΙΟΣ ΣΕΒΟΥΗΡΟΣ ΠΕΡΤΙΝΑΧ(ΙΝΑΧ) ΣΕΒ(ΑΣΤΟΣ), translates to Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus Pertinax Augustus. The obverse types for the Alexandrian coins included representations of the emperor's head and bust, while the reverse types carried depictions of Selene

⁶² RIC IV Septimius Severus 214 (<https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.4.ss.214> Accessed 16-11-2024)

the goddess of the moon (figure no. 3), Nilus the personification of the Nile (figure no. 2) and an Eagle (figure no. 1).

The second collection is the Roman coinage, which comprises twenty-eight silver coins (figures from no. 4 to no. 31), classified as denarii. The inscriptions on these Roman coins were rendered in Latin and encapsulated the names and titles acquired by the emperor throughout his reign, such as Parthicus Maximus, meaning Severus as the Emperor, the preeminent conqueror of the Parthians, alongside pius meaning the pious emperor. All Roman coins in this study were minted in Rome, with the exception of a singular coin minted in Laodicea ad Mare. Each Roman coin of Septimius Severus prominently featured the head of the emperor on the obverse, and the reverse types that were evident on his Roman coins were characterized by a variety of representations, including deities such as Mars (figures nos. 11 and 12) and Minerva (figures nos. 13 and 14), which refer to that the gods and goddess help the emperor on his war against the Parthian.

Moreover, the personifications occupied a large part of the depictions on the reverse, such as Moneta (figure no. 16) which appeared on Septimius Severus coins between 198-202 AD meaning that there was reorganising process on the Roman mint during this period, and the appearance of Liberalitas (figure no. 24) featured in his Roman coinage for this year indicate that these festivals were accompanied by numerous gifts, vouchers and provisions such as grain, oil, and money presented by the emperor himself to the populace, and symbols such as a trophy which refer to the victory.

Also, Victory, the common type on Septimius Severus coins (figures from no. 18 to 23), She represents both victory and triumph. Additionally, these coins highlight the emperor's crucial influence in spreading victory in the empire. Additionally, the personification of Dea Caelestis, the patron deity of the city Carthage (figures nos. 26, 27, 28), In 203–204, the imperial family, accompanied by the praetorian prefect, toured the African provinces, granting elevated status to key cities like Carthage, Thugga, and Utica. The journey ended with a visit to Leptis Magna, the emperor's birthplace. The significance of this imperial tour was commemorated by depicting these cities on coins.

In the previous study of the collection of Alexandrian and Roman coins of Septimius Severus, the inscriptions on Roman and Alexandrian coins hold

significance in dating the coins and highlighting the names and titles adopted by the emperor throughout his reign. Coins consistently reflect the economic state and historical events experienced by the Roman Empire which appeared on the reverse. Furthermore, the research reached several interpretations based on the types and inscriptions featured on the coins. These interpretations confirm that the types depicted on the coins were chosen by the emperor to serve as messages directed to the people or as symbols referring to specific events experienced by the Roman Empire during the issuance of the coins.

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