

Archaeological News
Author(s): William N. Bates
Reviewed work(s):

4480

Source: *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Jan. - Mar., 1918), pp. 73-100

Published by: Archaeological Institute of America

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/497361>

429 - 430

Accessed: 12/11/2012 06:14

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

6476

22 p 79

6482

23 p 82-3, 429-430

An underground
Banilica



Archaeological Institute of America is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to
American Journal of Archaeology.

<http://www.jstor.org>

16

At the opening of the fifth period (88–82 B.C.) the weight of the *as* was reduced to half an *uncia*, and the relation of silver to bronze became 55:1. Within a few years the regular issue of bronze coins from the Roman mint ceased until Augustus reorganized the coinage (20–15 B.C.).

But meanwhile half a dozen sporadic issues of bronze coins (46–20 B.C.) in various places paved the way for the Augustan reform, and introduced the use of *orichalcum* (copper and zinc with a trifle of lead) and of nearly pure copper in coinage. Augustus proceeded to coin the *sestertius* and *dupondius* in *orichalcum* and the *as* and *quadrans* in copper. The value of *orichalcum* in relation to copper was $1\frac{3}{4}$:1; and a bimetallic principle was introduced into Roman coinage. The normal weights of the new coins appear to have been (in *scripula*) *sestertius*, 24; *dupondius*, 12; *as*, 10; *quadrans*, $2\frac{1}{2}$.

Origin of the Augustan Sestertius.—The late canon ARTHUR BEANLANDS essayed to answer in an ingenious article (*Num. Chron.* 1918, pp. 187–204) a number of puzzling questions regarding the nature and causes of the Augustan reforms in coinage, and the reasons why it was not more permanent, and was finally abandoned at about the end of the third century. It attempted to arrest the depreciation in value of the *as*, and to stabilize money values, by “an experiment in trimetallism,” whereby the relative value of copper to silver should be maintained by the intervention of the coins of *orichalcum*, a metal of then unknown constitution, good appearance and durability, and sufficient rarity. It also aimed to make the Roman a satisfactory world-coinage. The experiment was well-devised, and would probably have been successful, had the government not ruined it by continued degradation of the *denarius*. MESSRS. SYDENHAM and S. W. SMITH record their dissent from certain conclusions of the article.

Roman Legionary Coinage of Severus and Gallienus.—An article by C. OMAN (*Num. Chron.* 1918, pp. 80–96; pl.) does much to clarify knowledge of the numbering and history of the Roman legions, and especially sets right many errors due to blunders in the descriptions in Cohen of coins of the later Roman emperors commemorating the legions. Fourteen of Cohen’s legionary types are thus got rid of. Incidentally the author remarks that Cohen’s estimate of prices has no real relation to the rarity of the individual coins.

The Origin of the Libra.—In *Rend. Acc. Lincei*, XXVII, 1918, pp. 3–22, GIULIO DE PETRA, in discussing the oriental or Babylonian origin of the Roman *libra*, with its characteristic prevalence of the numbers 12 and 24, goes into the general question of the origin of the use of gold and silver as money, the weights of various staters and minae, and traces the course of these units, variously modified, through Lydia and Etruria to Rome.

GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

The Subterranean Basilica near the Porta Maggiore.—In *C. R. Acad. Insc.* 1918, pp. 272–275 F. CUMONT describes the underground basilica found almost intact near the Porta Maggiore (*A. J. A.* XXIII, 1919, pp. 82 f.). It was probably owned by the patron of the secret society which met in it. About 200 m. away there was a burial place for slaves of the *gens Statilia*, and it is known that about 52 A.D. Statilius Taurus, at the instigation of Agrippina, was accused of *magicae superstitiones* (*Tac. Ann.* XII, 59). The reference is probably to the rites performed in this building. Cumont conjectures that

the society was a neo-Pythagorean association. See also C. RICCI, *Rend. Acc. Lincei*, XXVII, 1918, pp. 23-24.

The Position of the Altar of Consus.—In *B. Soc. Ant. Fr.* 1917, pp. 165-168 (2 figs.) J. FORMIGÉ points out that at one end of the circus at Arles there is a horseshoe-shaped base decorated with sculptures, and in the circus at Dougga in Tunisia a similar base bearing inscriptions. A vault below served as a support for small obelisks. In this base was a horseshoe-shaped room with the curve facing the curved end of the circus. It was entered by a door in the flat side which faced the spina. This peculiar feature was probably introduced in imitation of the circus in Rome, and the altar of Consus, Formigé thinks, was placed in this room. It was thus easily accessible and at the same time protected from injury from the racing horses and chariots.

The Origin of the Roman Forum.—In *Class. Journ.* XIV, 1918, pp. 433-440, N. W. DEWITT suggests on etymological, historical, and religious grounds, that the Roman Forum was originally the private courtyard of the king, entered through the Janus gate. (See also *A. J. A.* XXIII, 1919, p. 72.)

The Porticos of the Forum Holitorium.—In *B. Com. Rom.* XLV, 1917, pp. 168-192 R. LANCIANI discusses the topography of the porticos of the Forum Holitorium and related questions.

The Gates of the Aurelian Wall.—In *B. Com. Rom.* XLV, 1917, pp. 193-217 L. MARIANI gives an account of the recent changes in the gates of the Aurelian wall made necessary by the growth of traffic. The Porta Lateranense was enlarged by the addition of four simple arches newly broken into the wall. The Porta Maggiore was restored to its former size by the reopening of two ancient arches. Remains of paintings were found on the walls and vaults of both of these. One set depicted garlands, vases, birds, etc., the other scenes from the Pelops-Oenomaus myth arranged in zones. This last group covered an earlier decoration of masks, festoons, etc. The paintings were probably made when the arches had already been closed and converted into rooms of some *caupona*. Besides opening up the side arches the administration also removed the modern "diaphragms" which reduced the size of the central arches, as well as some adjacent structures. The exterior of the Porta San Lorenzo was left in the shape it had acquired in the Middle Ages, the interior was restored as much as possible to its Augustan form. The base of what was probably a Republican aedicula, remains of a mediaeval chapel with bits of paintings of the tenth century, parts of walls, a well, etc., were discovered in the course of the work. The Porta Pinciana was repaired where necessary but not changed.

Domitian's Villa in the Alban Hills.—The article on 'Ancient Villas of the Alban Hills before the Occupation by Domitian' published by G. LUGLI in *B. Com. Rom.* for 1914 is followed *ibid.* XLV, 1917, pp. 29-78 by the same author's essay on 'The Villa of Domitian on the Alban Hills. Part 1. General Topography.' He treats of the situation of the various parts of this *massa Caesariana*, its plan, the probable architect, its relation to the Arx Albana, the roads, aqueducts, historical memories of the place, the military guard, legal questions connected with the inheritance of the estate, and the final fate of the property. Part 2, on the central structures is promised.

The Jupiter of the Palatine.—In *B. Com. Rom.* XLV, 1917, pp. 79-92 PIETRO ROMANELLI discusses the cult of Jupiter on the Palatine especially in