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Additions to the corpus of the ‘heifer’ aurei (RIC Augustus I2 536-538)

Hadrien Rambach

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Hadrien J. Rambach

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HADRIEN J. RAMBACH

(Brussels)

Additions to the corpus of the ‘heifer’ *aurei* (RIC Augustus I² 536–538)

(4 Figures)

I wish to publish here some corrections and additions to the article which I published with Alan Walker some years ago (Rambach – Walker 2012).¹

Amendments

Specimen 1.3: This example was bequeathed to the Paris Cabinet des Médailles in 1913 by Anne-Léontine Smith (1839–1912) who had inherited it from her brother Alexandre-Auguste Lesouëf (1829–1906). The coin had formerly belonged to the collection of count Albéric du Chastel de la Howardries (1842–1919) and had been sold in May 1889.² Lesouëf had probably acquired it in the 1902 auction of the collection of the notary Octave Trousselle.³

It is very noteworthy, considering how few examples there are of heifer *aurei*, that Count du Chastel owned two specimens (1.3 and 4.5).

Specimen 1.6: We had written that the E.S.R. collection, sold at Hess-Leu (auction XVII on 23 March 1961), was that of Erich Alex von Schulthess-Rechberg (1914–1986), but others raised the possibility that it was instead the collection of Sir Edward Stanley Robinson (1887–1976). Alan Walker and I stand by our original indication.

Specimen 1.7: The Geldmuseum in Utrecht has since closed, and the coin is now preserved in Amsterdam, Dutch National Numismatic Collection – De Nederlandsche Bank, with the same inventory no. 1929-0077.

Specimen 1.F: This coin in the British Museum, which is genuine, was mistakenly numbered “1.F” in the text, though its correct number is “1.11” (as shown on the plates).⁴

¹ I am grateful to Arnaud Suspène and Hans-Christoph von Mosch for encouraging me to publish these additions and precisions, and to Christian Schinzel for his suggestions.

² Sold anonymously (“Collection du Comte de D***”) by Rollin & Feuarent, Paris, 27–29 May 1889, lot 193. On du Chastel, see my post-script to NAC 91.

³ Paris, Hôtel Drouot, Me. Maurice Delestre, 7–8 April 1902, lot 44.

⁴ We are grateful to Alberto Campana for noticing this mistake and letting us know. The die Rambach – Walker 2012, p. 42 R.5, which is shared by the specimens 1.11 and 2.1, is of course authentic – despite being found on forgeries too.

Specimen 2.1: This example that had been sold to Tradart (Michel-Max Bendenoun) at the 1989 N.F.A. auction, was bought by Spink in the Leu 1993 sale on behalf of Gerald Hoberman (1943–2013).⁵ The coin was since sold again, in September 2014.⁶

Specimen 3.2: This example belonged to Friedemann Heinrich Christian Ludwig Schelhaß von Schellersheim (1752–1836), and was described in Uhden 1800, p. 14. All of Schellersheim's gold coins were acquired for their weight of gold (cf. my forthcoming article) in May 1825 by the Rothschild family and inherited by Wilhelm Carl von Rothschild (1828–1901), whose daughter Adelheid presented them to the Paris coin cabinet in 1934 (archive no. MS 127).⁷

Specimen 4.2: The example in the British Museum was simply recorded as having been given in 1864 by Edward Wigan (1823–1871). An article by Jean-Baptiste Giard indicates in fact that Wigan had obtained it from Prosper Dupré (1771–1866),⁸ who had acquired it (probably directly) from Edouard Lelièvre de La Grange (1796–1876), who had bought 189 of the 196 *aurei* found during summer 1834 by a blacksmith in Ambenay (Normandy, France), who immediately had sold them to a local watchmaker.⁹ The coin was published in Madden 1865, p. 20 no. 21 and recently Johns 2011, p. 122.

Specimen 5.1: This example has since been illustrated in Pangerl 2017, p. 32 fig. 48, and p. 249 fig. 727.

Specimen 6.2: This example, which I had bought on behalf of George W. La Borde (b. 1944), was sold in May 2016.¹⁰ The coin had been previously published in Elberling 1863, p. 137 no. 1.

⁵ On Hoberman, see my post-script to NAC 91.

⁶ DNW, London, 22 September 2014, lot 3499. Estimated GBP 300,000–350,000, sold for GBP 400,000 plus 20 % premium. Much attention was given to this coin by the British daily press.

⁷ For the history of Rothschild's collection of coins and medals, see BNF 2016.

⁸ Frederic Madden wrote that "the collection of M. Dupré [...] was bought by Mr. Wigan" (Madden 1865, p. 1). Dupré's Greek coins were auctioned by Hoffmann on 24–26 April 1867, but the sale contained no Roman coins (I am grateful to David Hill for confirming this): Dupré's non-gold Roman coins were dispersed in an unorderly manner, as suggested by Jean de Witte in his eulogy (RN 1867). Considering that Madden quotes an autobiographical letter by Dupré, dated 20 March 1854, it must be assumed that this is when Wigan's acquired the coins.

⁹ La Grange 1834, p. 22; Giard 1974, no. 22.

¹⁰ Numismatica Ars Classica, auction 91, Zurich, 23 May 2016, lot 5. Estimated CHF 30,000, sold for CHF 32,000 plus 20 % buyer's premium.

New examples

Specimen 1. forgery 2: A (fake) example was offered by Art Coins Roma in October 2014.¹¹ It is struck with the dies O.4 and R.5, measures 19 mm diameter, weighs 7.89 grams, and shows a 12:00 die-axis.



Fig. 1: Specimen 1.13

Specimen 1.13: This example was sold in May 1982 to a German dealer (Fig. 1),¹² and it reappeared at auction in October 1992.¹³ It is struck with the dies O.1 and R.2, its diameter and die-axis are unknown, and it weighs 7.93 grams.

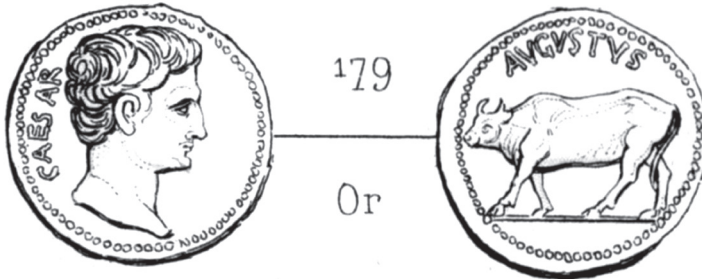


Fig. 2: Specimen 1.14

Specimen 1.14: This example, from the collection of Auguste de Belfort (1824–1907),¹⁴ was sold in February 1888.¹⁵ It is struck with the dies O.1 and possibly R.2, its diameter,

¹¹ Art Coins Roma, auction 12, Munich, 29–30 October 2014, lot 603. Estimated EUR 70,000, withdrawn before the sale. The example in the Tyrant Collection, published online under: <https://theyrantcollection.com/portfolio-item/augustus-av-aureus/>, seems to be of same dies.

¹² Sold by Kölner Münzkabinett, auction 32, Cologne, 4–5 May 1982, lot 342. Estimated DM 16,000 and sold DM 19,000 plus 15 % buyer's premium.

¹³ Sold by Spink Taisei, auction 44, Zurich, 22 October 1992, lot 22. Estimated CHF 7,000 and sold CHF 15,000 plus 15 % buyer's premium. The catalogue indicates "Traces de monture sur la tranche (?)".

¹⁴ On Belfort, see my post-script to NAC 99.

¹⁵ Sold by Maurice Delestre auctioneer and Henri Hoffmann expert, Paris, 20–25 February 1888, lot 179.

weight and die-axis are unknown.¹⁶ Its appearance is fortunately preserved by a precise engraving by Léon Dardel (Fig. 2).¹⁷



Fig. 3: Specimen 1.15

Specimen 1.15: This example was sold on 20 May 2015 (Fig. 3).¹⁸ It is struck with the dies O.2 and R.4, and weighs 7.96 grams.

Type	Obverse	Reverse	References	Dies	Examples
1	Head bare right	Heifer left	Calicó 168, Cohen 26, RIC 538	O.1,2,3,4 / R.1,2,3,4,5	15 + fakes
2	Head laureated right	Heifer left	Cal. 169, C. –, RIC 536	O.5 / R.5	1
3	Head laureated left	Heifer left	Cal. 170, C. –, RIC –	O.6 / R.6	3
4	Head laureated left	Heifer right	Cal. 171, C. 27, RIC 537	O.6 / R.7	6
5	Head bare right	Heifer right	Cal. 172, C. –, RIC –	O.7 / R.8	1
6	Head bare right	Bull right	Cal. 172a, C. –, RIC –	O.8 / R.9	3

Two auction references for the type I must be added: there was one specimen in the collection of the judge Gennaro Riccio (before 1836 – before 1874), auctioned in 1868,¹⁹ and there was one specimen in the collection of Adélaïde Edouard Le Lièvre, marquis de La Grange (1796–1876), auctioned in 1877.²⁰ Neither catalogues were illustrated, so they cannot be identified amongst (or in addition) to our known examples.²¹

¹⁶ Despite some minor differences, such as the shape of the “S” and the ears on the back of the head, it makes little doubt from the drawing that the obverse-die is our number O.1. Identifying the reverse-die instead is more complex. I am grateful to Michel Amandry for his advice.

¹⁷ On Dardel and the question of illustrating numismatics, see Rambach 2017, p. 40.

¹⁸ Sold by Numismatica Ars Classica, auction 84, Zurich, 20 May 2015, lot 875. Estimated CHF 250,000 and sold CHF 375,000 plus 19 % buyer’s premium.

¹⁹ Sold by Rollin & Feuardent on 29 June – 2 July 1868, lot 750. I am grateful to Federica Missere Fontana for confirming that this coin was not elsewhere published by Riccio.

²⁰ Sold by Rollin & Feuardent on 19–20 February 1877, lot 170, “B” condition.

²¹ It is noteworthy that both collections, Riccio and La Grange, were good enough to contain examples of such rare and valuable coins, and that not a single coin on the database CoinArchives.com

	Specimens																
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.13	1.14	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.15	1.12	1.10	1.11	forgery 1	forgery 2
Diameter	?	20.6	?	?	?	20	20	22	21	?	20.4	?	20–21	20.5	20.8	?	19
Weight	7.95	7.92	7.95	7.93	?	7.89	7.62	7.98	7.91	?	?	7.96	7.92	7.88	7.98	8.02	7.89
Axis	12.00	12.00	12.00	?	?	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	?	?	?	12.00	1.00	1.00	6.00	12.00
Dies	O.1									O.2			O.3		O.4		
	R.1			R.2			R.3			R.4				R.5			

Specimen 4.5: This example is preserved in Brussels, at the Cabinet des Médailles de la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique (cf. article von Mosch, Abb. 4). It comes from the collection of Count Albéric du Chastel de la Howardries (1842–1919) and was published in Callataÿ – van Heesch 1999, no. 367. It is struck with the dies O.6 and R.7, measures 18.5 mm diameter, weighs 7.98 grams, and shows a 12.00 die-axis.



Fig. 4: Specimen 4.6

Specimen 4.6: This example, from the collection of Prospero Sarti (1854–1904), was anonymously sold by Jacob Hirsch, Munich, in his auction VIII, 18 May 1903 and following days, lot 2138 (Fig. 4).²² It is struck with the dies O.6 and R.7, its diameter, weight and die-axis are unknown.

	Specimens					
	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6
Diameter	19	19.7	?	20.5	18.5	?
Weight	8.02	7.91	7.89	7.93	7.98	?
Axis	12.00	12.00	?	12.00	12.00	?
Dies	O.6 / R.7					

Finally, on the bronze statuette – preserved in the Paris cabinet and formerly found in Herculaneum – in which the count of Caylus wanted to recognize Myron’s cow, I wish

reports them as provenance: once more a proof that the absence of known provenance is no proof of the absence of provenance.

²² “Sammlung des Herrn Ingenieurs S. in R.”. Sold for 470 Lire plus 5 % buyer’s premium.

to refer to the article by François Chamoux, who refuses to recognize Myron's cow even as a model, because the quality is too high to be a copy rather than a creation.²³ On the contrary, the large marble sculpture (185 cm wide and 99 cm high) preserved in Rome (Centrale Montemartini, inv. no. 921) since its discovery on the Esquiline, is presented by Brunella Germini and Jean-Charles Balty as undoubtedly a replica of Myron's original.²⁴

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²³ Chamoux 1991.

²⁴ Balty, Review on Germini 2010, p. 730.

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