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Coinage in the Roman Economy

300 B.C. to A.D. 700



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Kenneth W. Harl : Coinage in the Roman Economy, 300 B.C. to A.D. 700 (Ancient Society and History) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Coinage in the Roman Economy, 300 B.C. to A.D. 700 (Ancient Society and History):

43 of 46 people found the following review helpful. First rate information about the role of coins in Rome By Bruce TrinkeA previous .com reviewer of Kenneth Harl's "Coinage in the Roman Economy" expressed an interest in seeing

a review of the book from the viewpoint of other than a numismatist. I suppose that I can at least partly do this.

Although I do collect some ancient Roman coins, I am quite casual in my approach to it and, in truth, I am more interested in the history and people behind the coins than the coins as objects in themselves. In looking on the Internet for information about the use and "real world" value of coins in the Roman Empire, I came across mention of Professor Harl's book. Wanting to better understand how those discolored bits of silver and bronze had come to be and how they were used, I understood that there was no better source. "Coinage in the Roman Economy" is unabashedly, unflinchingly academic in its approach to its subject. Expect no whimsical anecdotes about mad emperors; don't imagine that there will be thrilling descriptions of great battles. It is safe to say that Brad Pitt's agent is not negotiating for screen rights to the book. Page after page, Harl details the intricacies of Roman monetary policy, how emperors gradually (and sometimes not so gradually) diluted the precious metal content of the coins, reduced their weight, and repeatedly altered exchange rates in efforts to achieve financial stability. Yet, there is an oddly compelling flow and rhythm to that description of one thousand years of coin history as we watch the story of this instrument of Roman power and art play out against a distant background of civil wars, invasions, foreign wars, and calamities. To tackle this book, a reader should already be familiar with the central events and personalities in the long history of Rome. Otherwise, the information presented cannot be integrated with the larger story. But for the student of Roman history, there is much here not readily available elsewhere, including insights into the standard of living in those distant centuries. For collectors of ancient coins, of course, there is another entire realm of information contained in this book: explanations of the how those treasured bits of metal were manufactured and distributed, how much a denarius could buy under Augustus and how little under Claudius Gothicus, why new eras brought new coins such as the aurelianus and the nummus. The ideal reader of "Coinage in the Roman Economy" is one who blends interests in both Rome and the coins themselves. It is not light reading, by any means, but effort expended will be rewarded by a new appreciation of the real importance of these small pieces of metal to that complex and now-vanished world. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding! By DR Outstanding scholarly work on the subject. Harl is clear, thorough, and detailed throughout. A tremendous and reliable resource we are fortunate to have available. You won't find any fluff in Harl's work. Buy with confidence. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Coins and the Roman economy. History, economics and numismatics. By curitiba66 Excellent reference work. It helps one to better understand how coinage was so important in the daily life in both the western (Roman) and eastern (Byzantine) world.

The premier form of Roman money since the time of the Second Punic War (218-201 B.C.), coins were vital to the success of Roman state finances, taxation, markets, and commerce beyond the frontiers. Yet until now, the economic and social history of Rome has been written independently of numismatic studies, which detail such technical information as weight standards, mint output, hoards, and finds at archaeological sites. In *Coinage in the Roman Economy, 300 B.C. to A.D. 700*, noted classicist and numismatist Kenneth W. Harl brings together these two fields in the first comprehensive history of how Roman coins were minted and used. Drawing on literary and documentary sources as well as on current methods of metallurgical study and statistical analysis of coins from archaeological sites, Harl presents a sweeping overview of a system of coinage in use for more than a millennium. Challenging much recent scholarship, he emphasizes the important role played by coins in the overseas expansion of the Roman Republic during the second century B.C., in imperial inflationary policies during the third and fourth centuries A.D., and in the dissolution of the Roman Mediterranean order in the seventh century A.D. He also offers the first region-by-region analysis of prices and wages throughout Roman history with reference to the changing buying power of the major circulating denominations. And he shows how the seldom-studied provincial, civic, and imitative coinages were in fact important components of Roman currency. Richly illustrated with photographic reproductions of nearly three hundred specimens, *Coinage in the Roman Economy* offers a significant contribution to Roman economic history. It will be of interest to scholars and students of classical antiquity and the Middle Ages, as well as to professional and amateur numismatists.

"This thought-provoking work... should be important reading for scholars in a variety of disciplines. It challenges, for example, the long-held belief that a large-scale drain of Roman specie went to India and the East in the early centuries of the Roman Empire and the concept that the western provinces of the Roman Empire were never completely monetized. These reinterpretations and others, presented forcefully with careful documentation, should arouse the attention of anyone interested in ancient or medieval history, economics, or numismatics." (History) From the Back Cover The premier form of Roman money since the time of the Second Punic War (218-201 B.C.), coins were vital to the success of Roman state finances, taxation, markets, and commerce beyond the frontiers. Yet until now, the economic and social history of Rome has been written independently of numismatic studies, which detail such technical information as weight standards, mint output, hoards, and finds at archaeological sites. In *Coinage in the Roman Economy, 300 B.C. to A.D. 700*, noted classicist and numismatist Kenneth W. Harl brings together these two fields in the first comprehensive history of how Roman coins were minted and used. Drawing on both literary and documentary sources, as well as on current methods of metallurgical study and statistical analysis of coins from

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About the Author: Kenneth W. Harl, professor of history and Fellow of the American Numismatic Society, teaches classical and Byzantine history at Tulane University. He is the author of *Civic Coins and Civic Politics in the Roman East, A.D. 180-275*.