THE CONSECRATIO COINS FOR COMMODUS – A RECONSIDERATION

Abstract – This article proposes a review of the consecratio coins for Commodus issued shortly after this emperor’s death. Most standard numismatic catalogues list these coins as being of doubtful authenticity. However, a typological and stylistic analysis of the several assembled specimens of the type suggests that it was issued by an eastern mint, most likely Alexandria. Furthermore, the die axis and the message content of the specimens suggest that the coins were issued in 195 AD, indicating that the emission of the coins was related to the retrospective adoption of Septimius Severus into the Antonine House.

THE CONSECRATIO COINS FOR COMMODUS ARE OFTEN USED BY MODERN scholars as authoritative source material, mainly in the discussion of Commodus’ renovatio memoriae during the reign of Septimius Severus.[1] Indeed, generally, these coins are attributed to the mint of Rome and dated to 195 AD, the year in which Commodus received the honour of deification from the Senate and in which Septimius Severus was retrospectively adopted into the Aurelian gens.[2] Three different consecratio varieties are recorded in the

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standard numismatic catalogues, such as Description historique des monnaies frappées sous l’Empire romain (Cohen), Roman Imperial Coinage (RIC), Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum (BMCRE) and the Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet (HCC). All these posthumous coins, however, are noted to be of doubtful authenticity. To this day, it is not clear when and where these three varieties were issued, and there are many doubts concerning whether the types are genuine.

In the past fifteen years, several posthumous specimens for Commodus have turned up at reliable numismatic web-auctions, and in 2005 one was even donated to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. After checking several coin museum collections, renowned numismatic databases and auction catalogues, I was able to assemble 16 silver specimens for Commodus. All 16 silver specimens depict a laureate Commodus with the legend IM COMM ANTON AVG PIVS RBIT (sic), and their reverses display an eagle on a globe with the legend CONSECRATIO. Though additional specimens may well exist, some conclusions can already be drawn from this set. Through this newly assembled material, then, this article aims to analyse the consecratio types for Commodus in order to determine whether the types are genuine, and if so, which mint issued them and when. These answers would be very helpful with a view to subsequent coin studies in general, and for scholars who work on Commodus, his deification, and Septimius Severus’ role in it, in particular.

As mentioned above, the standard catalogues Cohen, RIC, BMCRE and HCC listed three varieties of consecratio types for Commodus:

1. A silver type displaying Commodus’ laureate portrait with an eagle standing on a globe on the reverse. Based on the highly unreadable types conserved in the British Museum in London and the Hunter Coin Cabinet in Glasgow, the catalogues noted for the obverse legend M COMM ANTON AVG PIVS

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[4] Cohen, Commodus 2, 61; RIC III Commodus 263a,b; RIC IV A Septimius Severus 72a, 736a; BMCRE V, 42, 143; Robertson, HCC II, Commodus 69. In Hill 1964, the debate around the consecratio types for Commodus is omitted.

[5] Ancient Auction House, Florida; Apollo Numismatics; beastcoins.com; Bruun Rasmussen Kunstauktioner; Classical Numismatic Group; Forum Ancient Coins; Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co; Gorny & Mosch; Numismatica Ars Classica; wildwinds.com. Henri Delger donated on 17/11/2005 a consecratio type for Commodus (CM.205-2005) to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. Two specimens are known to me from the private collections of Mr. Rainer Blaeser and Mr. Doug Smith. Most likely, the publication of the article of Bickford-Smith in RIN 1994/95, p. 53-71, mentioning and dating the consecratio type for Commodus, could have triggered trade to sell these types as genuine.

[6] A list of these coin museum collections and numismatic databases is provided at the end of the article.
BRIT and for the reverse legend CONSECRATIO.\footnote{7} The other 14 assembled specimens correspond to this description, and they provide the evidence to state with confidence that the obverse legend ought to be read as IM COMM ANTON AVG PIVS RBIT.\footnote{(sic)}

2. A silver type exactly as type 1, only Commodus’ nomenclature reads M COMM ANTO AVG PIVS FEL.\footnote{8} A specimen is listed as being in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. However, following inquiry, only a specimen of type 1 was found there, which suggests that type 2 was ‘created’ by misreading the obverse legend of type 1, and subsequently found its way into the standard numismatic catalogues.\footnote{9}

3. A sestertius depicting a laureate Commodus with the legend M COMM ANT P FELIX AVG BRIT P P. On the reverse, a female figure (Vesta?) is standing left by a lighted altar, holding a patera and a sceptre, with the legend CONSECRATIO SC. The sestertius was recorded in the now lost collection of count Wiczay of Hungary.\footnote{10} Although samples of this variety can still be found, it is highly unlikely that the type was genuine, because it seems to be an ancient hybrid of a Roman Commodus obverse with a Roman consecratio reverse of Faustina the Elder.\footnote{11}

Summarizing: all 16 specimens assembled from trade and museums, including the British Museum and the Hunter Coin Collection, are of type 1, depicting a laureate Commodus with the nomenclature IM COMM ANTON AVG PIVS RBIT and a consecration eagle. The other types are therefore very unlikely to have existed as proper types in Antiquity. Of course, that does not mean that the type 1 specimens themselves are genuine. In order to clarify that point, the next section focuses on the assembled specimens of type 1, in order to know when and where these specimens were issued.

Analysis shows that the 16 assembled specimens of type 1 were struck with 3 different obverse dies and 7 different reverse dies, which suggests that the

\footnote{7} Ric III Commodus 263a = Ric IV Septimius Severus 72a = BMCRE V, 42 = Robertson, HCC II, Commodus 69. The inventory numbers of the specimens are for the British Museum: 756, Coins & Medals BMK 8.618 and for the Hunter Coin Cabinet of the University of Glasgow 28.002.

\footnote{8} Cohen, Commodus 61 = Ric III Commodus 263b.

\footnote{9} The inventory number for the Bibliothèque nationale de France is FG 5944.

\footnote{10} Cohen, Commodus 2 = Ric IV Septimius Severus 736a = BMCRE V, 143. Count Wiczay of Hungary had an enormous ancient coin collection, which he, together with F. Caronni, published in two volumes: Musei Hedervarii numos antiquos graecos et latinos descriptis, Wien 1814. After Wiczay’s death in 1825, the coin dealer Rollin from Paris bought his entire collection, c.1830. Later, however, the collection was divided. Some coins were bought by the coin museums in Vienna and Paris, but the bulk of Wiczay’s collection entered trade and passed to many other private collections. Dr. Curtis Clay on https://www.forumancientcoins.com/wiczay [last checked on 28/XI/2011].

\footnote{11} Ric III Antoninus Pius 1130. Dr. Curtis Clay was so kind as to point this out to me.
issue’s output was substantial. [12] Moreover, the number of different dies involved shows that the type was no accidental hybrid made during one day’s work session. Unfortunately we do not possess information on the technical details of all assembled specimens, but those for which we do always show a die axis of 6 o’clock (†1), suggesting that they were struck in one emission. The diameter of the 16 specimens varies from 16 to 19 mm, and is on average 18 mm. Most specimens have a mass between 2.49 and 2.79 g, which indicates that the individual specimens differ significantly from each other. There is, moreover, one specimen that is much lighter, with a mass of 2.16 g, and there are three that are heavier, with masses of 3.013, 3.03 g and 3.18 g. [13] Of course, wear and corrosion over time could explain these variations in mass.

As a further point, the general condition of the specimens is quite poor. The surface of the flans has suffered from porosity, and the metal seems to be of low quality. And finally, several pronounced stylistic features can be noticed. First of all, the obverse portrait is elongated, and Commodus’ neck widens out at the base and has a pronounced indentation. Second, the eyes of the emperor are protuberant and he has a thick upper lip with a moustache. Thirdly, the eagles on the reverses are stretched too. Lastly, the obverse legends generally have one break at the top of the emperor’s head, whereas the reverse legends have several regular substantial breaks. The lettering is quite regular, although an error occurred with the B and the R in the obverse legend.

The variations in mass, the poor quality of the metal, the stylistic elongated figures with defined features and, in particular, the erroneous spelling all hint at a type that did not originate from the Roman mint. [14] In the eastern Roman provinces, the minting of imperial coins in the later second century was sporadic. In the civil war of AD 193-195, random provincial mints struck imperial gold and silver issues, mostly to pay the stationed troops of the imperial usurper who operated in that region, or to maintain the administrative structure in the provinces. [15] Moreover, the distribution of imperial precious metal issues in the eastern provinces advertised the supremacy of the issuing authority, which at that time was an object of contention among several usurpers. [16] At

[12] Plates of the specimens are included at the end of the article.
[13] Unfortunately I was not able to discover the mass of all specimens as not every numismatic auction database recorded this information. In appendix 4 a plot chart with the known masses is given.
the end of the second century, the following eastern mints seem to have issued imperial denarii and aurei on a temporary basis: Alexandria, Antioch, Caesarea (in Cappadocia), and two Syrian mints generally identified as 'Emesa' and 'Laodicea ad Mare'.[17]

As it happens, the variable mass, the poor metal quality and the heavy and distinctive style of the discussed consecratio coins is typical of the provincial emissions of the Alexandrian mint, as was already described by the numismatist Laffranchi in the 1920s[18], and not of that of any other contemporary mint. The three arguments together thus appear to favour the Alexandrian mint as the best candidate for having issued the consecratio coins for Commodus.[19] Beside these comparative arguments, there are other clues that hint at Alexandria as an imperial mint during the late second century, issuing imperial aurei and denarii.

Firstly, there is no doubt that the Alexandrian mint seems to have issued aurei and denarii for Pescennius Niger from the moment the latter seized power in Egypt in 193 AD.[20] These types too displayed a heavy-featured portrait of Pescennius with protuberant eyes, a characteristic attributed to the Alexandrian mint.[21] Secondly, several denarii and aurei of Septimius Severus, his wife Julia Domna and his caesar Clodius Albinus have been attributed to the Alexandrian mint.[22] After Septimius Severus defeated Pescennius Niger in Egypt in February 194 AD, the Alexandrian mint was taken over by Septimius Severus. Again, his emissions show similar stylistic characteristics, such as the protuberant


[19] Some scholars have argued against Alexandria as an imperial mint during the late second century: Pink 1933, p. 49-50 stated that the Alexandrian mint did not issue any imperial emission during the reign of Septimius Severus. Cf. Milne 1938, p. 96-98; van Heesch 1978, p. 58; Crawford 1975, p. 563-564.


eyes and the elongated figures with heavy features, which all argue in favour of the mint of Alexandria.\[^{23}\] Moreover, it seems highly possible that the conseratio denarii for Commodus were issued during the period in which the Alexandrian mint produced Severan denarii from February 194 until 195 AD.\[^{24}\] The stylistic similarities between the conseratio type for Commodus and the provincial Alexandrian tetradrachms, as well as the similar stylistic types of Pescennius Niger and Septimius Severus which are both attributed to the Alexandrian mint, strongly argue in favour of the notion that the discussed conseratio type was issued by the Alexandrian mint.\[^{25}\]

As mentioned before, several eastern mints operated at the end of the second century under imperial auspices. Unfortunately, none of them issued coins bearing mint marks. In order to strengthen our attribution to the Alexandrian mint, the significant stylistic differences with the contemporary emissions of the mints of Antioch, Caesarea (in Cappadocia) and the Syrian mints, identified as Emesa and Laodice ad Mare, will be outlined here.\[^{26}\] Unlike the Alexandrian elongated portraits, the Antiochene portraits are more rectangular in shape, and the obverse legend has no substantial break, or only a very small one.\[^{27}\] The specimens from Caesarea in Cappadocia display rounder portraits that are slightly elongated, but have no necks with a pronounced indentation.\[^{28}\] The Syrian mints issued coins with fine features and great detail, such as the narrow pointed and curly beard. The elegant style contrasts with the heavy style of the Alexandrian mint. Emesa distinguishes itself by more round headed portraits, and often its legends have forced illogical breaks, such as the gap between the E and V of SEV(erus). Often the legends show Greek forms of letters, such as € for E. The portraits on coins from Laodicea ad Mare were more elongated. Furthermore, the form of the obverse

\[^{23}\] For a specimen of Septimius Severus attributed to the mint of Alexandria, see appendix 6, fig. 28.

\[^{24}\] In his article, Bickford-Smith suggested the attribution of the conseratio type for Commodus to the Alexandrian mint. Unfortunately he omitted his customary stylistic arguments, because he was finishing a bigger study around Septimius’ Eastern mints, which was never published. None of the works of Bickford-Smith were published posthumously.


\[^{26}\] Specimens of these mints are shown in appendix 6, fig. 26, 27, 29 and 30.

\[^{27}\] Appendix 6, fig. 26; van Heesch 2000, p. 62–63; Bland, Bendall & Burnett 1987, p. 66–67 and plate 10.3–5; McAlee 2007, p. 260–261. Note: the likelihood that the examined conseratio coins for Commodus are to be attributed to the mint of Antioch is small, because Antioch’s right to issue imperial coins was revoked by Septimius as punishment for their support of Pescennius Niger. See McAlee 2007, p. 262 and Downey 1961, p. 239–241.

\[^{28}\] Appendix 6, fig. 27; van Heesch 2000, p. 62; Zedelius 1977; Bland, Bendall & Burnett 1987, p. 66–67 and plate 10.1–2.
legends is parallel to that of the Roman mint and the last section of the obverse legend is always completed to the right of the bust of the portrait.[29]

In contrast to the Antiochene mint, whose right to issue imperial coins was revoked by Septimius as punishment for Antiochia’s support to Pescennius Niger[30], the Alexandrian mint remained in charge of striking imperial types for Septimius and his family, and that until 196 AD. [31] It is likely that temporary circumstances required that Alexandria continue issuing imperial coins. After Septimius Severus defeated his opponent Pescennius Niger at the battle of Issus, Septimius left for Rome. Most likely the emperor, being physically absent in Egypt, needed to secure the support of the Roman legions based in Egypt, and therefore, let the Alexandrian mint produce imperial aurei and denarii for the soldier’s stipendia and prospective donatives.[32]

Now that Alexandria is named as the potential mint which issued consecratio type 1, its issue date can be examined. [33] Remarkably, the obverse legend of the consecratio type recaptures the nomenclature which Commodus bore early in his reign: IM COMM ANTON AVG PIVS RBIT (sic)[34], whereas the reverse legend CONSECRATIO and the depiction of the eagle strongly suggest that the specimens were actually issued posthumously. [35] Around the spring of 195 AD, Septimius Severus retrospectively adopted himself as the son of Marcus Aurelius, which is confirmed by several ancient literary accounts, honorary

[29] Appendix 6, fig. 29 and 30; RIC IV A, p. 56-58; BMCRE V, pp. cxviii and cxxii.


[31] RIC IV A, p. 56-57; Bland, Bendall & Burnett 1987, p. 65-83; Bickford-Smith 1994/ 95, p. 54-57. Cf. Savio 1985, p. 137 demonstrated too that Septimius issued denarii at the Alexandrian mint, but argued that these coins were meant for circulation outside Egypt and Christiansen 1988, pp. 296-297 and 301 stated that Septimius issued denarii for his public expenditure, possibly as a by-product of the scarce number of provincial coins being struck at Alexandria.

[32] Before, in the first and second century, the Alexandrian mint had been active issuing a few series of imperial coins during the early reign of Vespasian, most likely, also for his eastern military campaigns and their aftermath. See Metcalf 1982, p. 323-324 and Carson 1990, p. 274.

[33] Unfortunately the Festschrift for Alexandrian-born scholar Soheir Bakhoum on the Alexandrian mint does not include any discussion of it during the second century: Gerin, Geissen & Amandry 2008.

[34] Commodus received the title of Britannicus in the second half of 184 AD. The obverses with this legend, issued in Rome around 184 AD, are definitely different from our examined consecratio types, so we can refute any suggestion that the Roman obverse dies were reused.

[35] In the consecration performance, an eagle flew from the funeral pyre towards the sky which symbolically had to represent the elevation of the soul of the emperor. For more see Gradel 2002.
inscriptions and coin legends. [36] Around the same time, Commodus was deified by the Senate, which made Septimius Severus brother to divus Commodus. Several ancient literary sources and honorary inscriptions confirm Commodus’ divine status. [37] Consequently, the type seems to have been issued to commemorate his deification in 195 AD, a suggestion that is lent persuasion by the fact that all assembled specimens had a 6 o’clock (11) die axis. In his unpublished corpus about the Alexandrian denarii, Bickford-Smith noticed that the imperial coin output of the Alexandrian mint in 194 AD mainly had an upright die axis (11), whereas the specimens of 195 AD all had a reverted die axis (11). [38] Most likely, therefore, the emission of the consecratio type for Commodus can be linked to Septimius’ retrospective adoption into the Antonine House, which is generally dated to the first half of 195 AD.

However, as noticed before, the obverse legend bears no divus legend, but recaptures a nomenclature Commodus bore during his lifetime, suggesting that the type was issued before Commodus’ deification. [39] Die links with a peculiar silver type for Commodus, however, which recently appeared in trade, suggest that the obverses of the consecratio type were struck by reused dies. [40] This rare silver emission was probably issued by the Alexandrian mint during Com-

[36] Dio 76.7.4; HA, Vita Severi 10.6, 11.4; Aurelius Victor, Liber de Caesaribus 20.30; BMCRE V, p. xci; RIC IV-a Septimius Severus 65-66, 686, 700-702a, 712. Although Dio’s text suggests that the posthumous self- adoption of Septimius Severus and the deification of Commodus happened after the defeat of Clodius Albinus in 197 AD, most scholars agree that those facts happened around the spring of 195 AD. Cf. Baharal 1996, p. 21; Hekster 2002, p. 189-191; Kienast 2004, pp. 148 and 156. We must note the article of Lovotti 1998, p. 221-227, in which she suggests that Commodus was unofficially deified in 195 AD, but that it was not officially recognized until 197 AD.

[37] AE 1951 75 = CIL VIII 27374; CIL VIII 1333, 5699, 5700, 9317, 23707; ILS 420, 422, 431; IRT 389, 393. No divi Commodi frater coin types are known. Previously, Commodus had been condemned by the Senate to a damnatio memoriae: Dio 74.2.1. Birley 1999, pp. 184-188, 198-199. For more about Septimius Severus’ claim to be the brother of the divine Commodus, see Merkelbach 1979, p. 189-190; Rubin 1980, p. 212-214; Baharal 1996, p. 21-22; Hekster 2002, p. 189-191 and references; von Saldern 2003, p. 144-145.

[38] The reference to Bickford-Smith’s unpublished monograph about the Alexandrian denarii of 193-195 AD, finished in July 1993, was mentioned to me by Dr. Curtis Clay. The die axis of the other eastern Severan mints in this period are not known to me.

[39] Commodus received the title of Britannicus in the second half of 184 AD, and from 185 AD onwards the title Felix was added to Commodus’ nomenclature; see Kaiser-Raiss 1980, pp. 27-28 and 57-58; Hekster 2002, p. 93-95.

[40] See appendix 1-3 for die links. The references to the specimens of the silver type are: Type from private collection of Mr. Doug Smith from the Michael Kelly Collection (Spink, 18/th/1997, lot 1052); Forum Ancient Coins no. 33842; Forum Ancient Coins no. 14688; http://www.beastcoins.com from the Michael Kelly Collection, March 2008; Fitzwilliam Museum: CM.204-2005 (donated by Henri Delger (17/III/2005) no. 97456); British Museum, collected by Roger Bickford-Smith: RAB-S coll. no. 454.
modus’ reign. The circumstances surrounding the issue are unclear, but they could have been struck in response to the alleged proposed imperial visit of Commodus to Africa as mentioned in the Historia Augusta and suggested by some Alexandrian tetradrachms showing Commodus and a female figure personifying Alexandria next to each other.[41] Furthermore, it is remarkable that the Alexandrian type of 192 AD referred to the nomenclature which Commodus bore around 184 AD, before the title FELIX was added to his official nomenclature.[42] This fact suggests that in 192 AD, the Alexandrian mint seems not to follow the policy concerning types of the Roman mint, which at that time issued increasingly more excessive types assimilating Commodus more and more with the divine.[43]

In the appendix, seven specimens are brought together of the rare and unpublished silver type mentioned before, whose reverses bear the legend LIR AVG RM TR P XVII COS VII PP (sic) and display Libertas.[44] At least three of these obverse dies, in items 1a, b and c, seem to have been reused to strike the obverses of the consecratio type. The reused obverse dies suggest that in 195 AD no priority was given to engraving new obverse dies referring to Commodus’ newly consecrated status. The absence of the DIVVS COMMODVS legend could have several explanations. Firstly, the specimens could have been struck at the Alexandrian mint at a time at which Commodus was not yet officially deified, but expected to be so soon. Communication between the central power in Rome and mints in the provinces could sometimes fail, as other emissions demonstrate[45], and if it is true that the Alexandrian mint had its

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[41] HA, Vita Commodi 9.1; Dattari 1901, nos. 3854–3855, plate 8. ric does not attest any coin type of Commodus from Alexandria and explicitly states that the mint of Rome is the only one issuing imperial coinage during Commodus’ reign.


[44] Through personal communication, Mr. Doug Smith suggested to me that these Libertas types were issued after the death of Commodus, when the Alexandrian mint was not ready to declare a side in the Severus-Pescennius affair. However, it seems unlikely that a mint could independently issue imperial denarii.

[45] For example, under Gaius’ reign, Tiberius’ nameless portrait on Lugdunum’s first emission was refigured to the portrait of divus Augustus in later emissions. BMCRE I Gaius 1; Mattingly 1920, p. 37; Erhardt 1984, pp. 45 and 52–53; Wolters 1999, p. 303–304. Contra: Brilliant 1969, p. 13–17; Barrett 1989, p. 247–248. Also, at his accession, Hadrian, who was in Antioch at the time, did not accept the title pater patriae, but on his first coin series minted by Rome the title was added to Hadrian’s nomenclature. The PP disappeared in the second series, minted after Hadrian’s return to Rome, suggesting that Hadrian intervened directly in the coin imagery. Carson 1990, p. 42; Wolters 1999, p. 305; Stevenson 2007, p. 129–130. Finally, Trajan’s first two emissions, which lasted for three weeks, were both stopped at the mint of Rome, because he preferred a
own policy concerning coin types, this suggestion is even more plausible. As such, the consecratio type symbolised hope that Commodus would be deified, a message that could please the new emperor Septimius as he wanted to link himself to the Antonine House. Secondly, it is possible that the Alexandrian mint masters had no resources for engraving new dies or found it more practical to reuse old dies. In Christiansen’s technical study of the Severan Alexandrian tetradrachms, dies lying idle for a year or two, waiting to be reused for a similar emission or even for an issue with another denomination, are fairly common; therefore, the second explanation seems quite plausible.[46] Thirdly, although more unlikely, it cannot be excluded that the emission of Commodus’ Libertas type and the consecratio type for Commodus could be the result of illegal sideline activities of the mint masters, using the same dies. In 2003, the numismatists Gitler and Ponting exposed in their research on the silver coinage of Septimius Severus an eastern workshop producing cast denarii, which copied Septimius’ official denarii between 197 and 211 AD.[47] It is not unlikely that there were more ateliers.

To conclude, the analysis of the consecratio type for Commodus indicates that only one type was struck to commemorate Commodus’ deification, instead of the three types recorded by several renowned numismatic catalogues. The obverse portrays a laureate Commodus with the legend IM COMM ANTON AVG PIVS RBIT (sic); the reverse displays an eagle standing on a globe with the legend CONSECRATIO. Although most of these catalogues questioned the authenticity of this type, the presented typological and stylistic analysis suggests that the type was issued by an eastern mint, most likely Alexandria. The six o’clock (11) die axis as well as the type’s message suggest that the consecratio type for Commodus was issued in 195 AD, most likely in relation to the retrospective adoption of Septimius Severus into the Antonine House. The reused obverse dies of the consecratio type still leaves some doubts about the authenticity of the type, although other specimens of the Alexandrian mint could have been struck with reused dies as well. We can nevertheless not entirely exclude the possibility that the reused obverse dies of Commodus for these consecratio specimens could indicate that the type is an ancient forgery. But I hope this article gives more cause to believe that the consecratio type for Commodus was genuine.

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APPENDIX – THE CONSECRA TIO COINS FOR COMMOS

The illustrated coin specimens are published by the courtesy of:

- the museum collections of Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris; © Trustees of the British Museum, London; Fritzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge; Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow; the Coin Cabinet of the Royal Library of Brussels and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
- the auction houses the Ancient Auction House, Florida; Apollo Numismatics; Beastcoins.com; Bruun Rasmussen Kunstkauktioner; Classical Numismatic Group (CNG); Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. KG, Osnabrück; Gorny & Mosch; Leu Numismatik AG, Zürich; Numismatica Ars Classica
- the numismatic online databases CoinArchivesPro; Forum Ancient Coins; Wildwinds.com
- the private coin collections of Mr. Rainer Blaeser and Mr. Doug Smith.

1. Description of the different varieties of the obverse and reverse types of sections 2 and 3

**Obverse type varieties**

\[\text{\textit{A}1\textit{A}}\] Bust Commodus laureate, right, bearded; I M COMM ANTO–N AVG PIVS RBIT
\[\text{\textit{A}1\textit{B}}\] Bust Commodus laureate, right, bearded; I M COMM ANTO–N AVG PIVS RBIT
\[\text{\textit{A}1\textit{C}}\] Bust Commodus laureate, right, bearded; I M COMM ANTO–N AVG PIVS RBIT
\[\text{\textit{A}1\textit{D}}\] Bust Commodus laureate, right, bearded; no natural neck; [I M] COMM ANTO–N AVG PIVS RBIT

**Reverse type varieties**

\[\text{\textit{R}1\textit{A}1\textit{B}1\textit{C}}\] Libertas, standing, holding a pileus and a long scepter, star in the field; LIR AVG RM TR F XVII COS VII PP (192 AD)
\[\text{\textit{R}2\textit{A}}\] Eagle with bulging eyes, long tail, wings closed, standing on a globe with two crossed circles; CON–S–E–CRATIO
\[\text{\textit{R}2\textit{B}}\] Eagle, long neck, with long tail, wings closed, standing on a globe with two crossed circles; [CONSE] CRATIO
\[\text{\textit{R}2\textit{C}}\] Eagle, long neck, with short tail, wings closed, standing on a globe with (two crossed circles ?); [CONSE] CRA–TI–O
\[\text{\textit{R}2\textit{F}}\] Eagle, short neck, with short tail, bending his knees, wings closed, standing on a globe (with two crossed circles ?); CON–S–E–CRATIO (low craftsmen quality)
\[\text{\textit{R}2\textit{G}}\] Eagle, short neck, with short tail, wings closed, standing on a globe (with two crossed circles ?); CON–S–E–CRATIO (low craftsmen quality)
2. The Alexandrian silver issue of Commodus (~192 AD)

Fig. 1: AV1AR1A - 3.24 g - 18 mm - ¶
Private collection of Doug Smith from the Michael Kelly Collection (Spink, 18/02/1997, lot 1052)

Fig. 2: AV1BR1B - 1.796 g - 18.6 mm - ¶
Forum Ancient Coins 3342

Fig. 3: AV1BR1B - 2.844 g - 18.7 mm - ¶
Forum Ancient Coins 14688

Fig. 4: AV1BR1B - 3.00 g - 18 mm - ¶
Classical Numismatic Group (cng), E-Auction 126, lot 311

Fig. 5: AV1CR1A - 2.93 g - ? mm - ¶

Fig. 6: AV1DR1C - 3.44 g - 16/18 mm - ¶
Fitzwilliam Museum: cm.204-2005 (donated by Henri Delger (17/03/2005) no. 97456 - © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK)

Fig. 7: AV1DR1B - 3.14 g - 17 mm - ¶
British Museum: collected by Roger Bickford-Smith, RAB-8 coll. no. 454
(© Trustees of the British Museum)

3. The consecratio coins for Commodus (~195 AD)

Fig. 8: AV1AR2A - 2.49 g - 16/17 mm - ?
cng 61 (25/02/2002), lot 1828 from the Marc Melcher Collection, placed on wildwinds.com.Commodus

Fig. 9: AV1AR2A - 3.03 g - 18.2 mm - ?
Apollo Numismatics; VCoins 2006
Fig. 10: A1A|R2A – ? g – ? mm – ?
Ancient Auction House, Florida through Ebay, placed on wildwinds.com/Aurelius 274
(wrong identification)

Fig. 11: A1A|R2B – 2.69 g – 17/18 mm – ?
CNG 66 139/V/20048, lot 1522

Fig. 12: A1B/D|R2B – 2.77 g – 18 mm – !

Fig. 13: A1A|R2C – 2.60 g – 17.0 mm – !
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Inv.-No. Rö 40.615 (donated by Georg Elmer in 1928)

Fig. 14: A1A|R2D – 2.67 g – 16/17 mm – ?
CNG 64 (24/X/2003), lot 1120

Fig. 15: A1C|R2D – 3.18 g – 16/17 mm – ?
CNG 60 (22/V/2002), lot 1730

Fig. 16: A1C|R2D – 2.59 g – 16/17 mm – ?
CNG 70 (21/IX/2005), lot 1038

Fig. 17: A1C|R2D – 2.16 g – ? mm – ?

Fig. 18: A1A|R2E – 2.64 g – 17 mm – !
Private collection of Rainer Blaeser from Ebay: ‘Numismatik Lanz, Munich’, 2010

Fig. 19: A1B|R2E – 2.63 g – 16/17 mm – ?

Fig. 20: A1B|R2F – 2.79 g – 16.8/18.2 mm – !
Bibliothèque nationale de France RG 5944

Fig. 21: A1A|R2G – 3.013 g – 19 mm – !
British Museum 756, Coins & Medals: BNK, R.818
(© Trustees of the British Museum)
4. Plot chart of masses of *consecratio* specimens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mass range (in g)</th>
<th>Number of coin types</th>
<th>Specimens (= R&lt;sub&gt;21…&lt;/sub&gt;)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[2.10 – 2.20]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2.20 – 2.30]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2.30 – 2.40]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2.40 – 2.50]</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>C D G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2.50 – 2.60]</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>B D E E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2.60 – 2.70]</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>B F G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2.70 – 2.80]</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2.80 – 2.90]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[2.90 – 3.00]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[3.00 – 3.10]</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>A F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[3.10 – 3.20]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Bronze specimen of the provincial mint of Alexandria (193/194 AD)

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**Fig. 22:** A<sub>T</sub>1A|R<sub>2G</sub> – 2.74 g – 18 mm – ⌂
*Numismatica Ars Classica (NAC) AG, Auction 42 (20/31/2007), n° 366*
*From the Barry Feinstein Collection Part III*  
(Privately purchased from Harlan J. Berk)

**Fig. 23:** A<sub>T</sub>1A|R<sub>2G</sub> – 2.53 g – 18 mm – ⌂  
*NCC 28002; Robertson ii Commodus 69*

**Fig. 24:** 9.74 g – 30 mm – ⌂
*A VTK & CE!TCE OYHPOC!EPTCEB*, laureate head of Septimius Severus right  
R<sub>B</sub>, Nike with chiton walking, holding palm branch  
Savio (1997) no. 1623 = Dattari 4012 (<ÆS>) = Vogt ii.116 = Christiansen, Coins i, 284
6. Coin specimens issued by eastern mints (194-196 AD)

Fig. 25: 6.65 g – 20 mm – Æ (Alexandria)
A: IMP CAES PESC NICER IVSTVS AVG, laurate, draped and cuirassed head of Pescennius Niger right
R: VICORIAE AVG PP, Draped female standing, holding long staff and figure of Victoria
Leu Numismatik AG, Zürich, Auction 87 (6/2003), lot 47. RIC –

Fig. 26: 3.69 g – 20 mm – Æ (Antioch)
A: IMP CAES C PESC NIGER IVS AVG COS II, laurate head of Pescennius Niger right
R: BONAE SPEI, Spes advancing left, holding flower
cnx, E-auction 202, lot 335 (White Mountain Collection). RIC IV 3d

Fig. 27: 3.21 g – 18 mm – Æ (Caesarea in Cappadocia)
A: IMP CAES C PESC NIGER IVST AVG, laurate head of Pescennius Niger, cuirassed, right
R: SALVTI AVGYSVTI, Salus standing, carrying a snake and holding a patera
Coin Cabinet, Brussels II.59575. RIC –

Fig. 28: 2.98 g – 18 mm – Æ (Alexandria)
A: IMP CAE L SEP SE-V PERT AVG, laurate head of Septimius Severus right
R: ET IA II, female figure seated left, holding pallaedium and sceptre
cnx, E-auction 248, lot 387. RIC IV 348

Fig. 29: 3.252 g – 17.4 mm – Æ (Emessa)
A: IMP CAE L SEP SE-V PERT AVG COS II, laurate head of Septimius Severus right
R: INVICTO IMP, trophy and arms
Forum Ancient Coins 15154. RIC IV 389

Fig. 30: 3.145 g – 18.4 mm – Æ (Laodicea ad Mare)
A: IMP L SEPT SE-V PERT AVG IMP VIII, laurate head of Septimius Severus right
R: FORT REDVC, Fortuna standing left, holding cornucopia in each hand
Forum Ancient Coins 28923. RIC IV 477a

7. The following museum collections had no consecratio specimens for Commodus

The Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, UK
Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, UK
Münzkabinett, Berlin, Germany
Historisches Museum, Bern, Switzerland
Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Münzkabinett, Dresden, Germany

Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna;
Collezione Numismatica, Bologna, Italy
Colección de Monedas Santander, Madrid, Spain
Geldmuseum, Utrecht, the Netherlands
Penningkabinet, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België/Coin Cabinet, Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, Belgium
Knester Museum, Hannover, Germany  
Kunstgeschichtliches Museum, Osnabrück, Germany  
Gabinet Monet i Medali, Warsaw, Poland  
Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, Danish National Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Universitetes Myntkabinett, Oslo, Norway  
Il Gabinetto Numismatico dei Civici Musei, Udine, Italy  
American Numismatic Society, New York, USA  
Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, University of Ann Arbor, USA  
The Ottillia Buerger Collection of Ancient and Byzantine Coins, Lawrence University, Appleton, Wisconsin, USA  
Princeton University, Princeton, USA  
Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies, Gale Collection, Sydney, Australia

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