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OCRE – Online Database of Coinage of the Roman Empire becomes Bigger, Multi-Contributor and Multi-Lingual

In collaboration with New York University’s Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, the American Numismatic Society (ANS) is pleased to announce the release of a new version of OCRE (Online Coins of the Roman Empire) (numismatics.org/ocre/). The OCRE project is creating a revolutionary new tool designed to help in the identification, cataloguing, and research of the rich and varied coinage of the Roman Empire. It aims to provide a comprehensive online resource encompassing every known Roman Imperial coin type. The end result will be:

- A database of 50,000 coin types
- A resource that collectors can use to identify their coins, estimate their rarity, and discover unknown varieties.
- An online reference tool for researchers to help in new research on this important series.
- Easy to use, downloadable catalogue entries for the coinage of every Roman Emperor from Augustus in 31 BC, until the death of Zeno in AD 491.

The new version of the tool contains important new improvements.

OCRE’s first version drew only on the collection of the American Numismatic Society, but the database now has multiple contributing collections, with the addition of the Roman Imperial collection of the Münzkabinett of the State Museum of Berlin and the University of Virginia Art Museum. Between these three collections, OCRE is now able to illustrate 50% of the imperial coin types that it contains. “Such a joint collaborative effort between major public and private collections should lead to a comprehensive catalogue that will eventually incorporate and display almost all recorded Roman Imperial coin-types,” explains ANS Executive Director, Ute Wartenberg Kagan. More collections will follow soon, bringing OCRE closer to that aim.

Along with adding new specimens, the database has grown since its launch in July 2012 to contain descriptions of known types through the emperor Septimius Severus. To date, more than 15,000 coin types are described. “The time range covered by OCRE is now incorporating 250 years of monetary and numismatic history, from 30 BC until AD 211, effectively covering the entire High Empire. We should very soon include the entire Severan dynasty and then the later 3rd century,” explains OCRE project manager, ISAW Research Associate and ANS Romanist, Gilles Bransbourg.
In a further development, OCRE can now link to another ANS developed resource, *Coin Hoards of the Roman Republic* ([numismatics.org/chrr/](http://numismatics.org/chrr/)). This enables OCRE to draw on findspot data for some early imperial coin types, and map their distribution.

As ANS database developer, Ethan Gruber, notes, “the new version of OCRE is a significant step forward over the previous in that the architecture for linking coin types to physical coins and hoard data has been completely rewritten to use Linked Open Data technologies. SPARQL is the backbone for new geographic and quantitative visualizations.”

OCRE also allows users to search in 10 languages other than English. This is made possible by multilingual labels provided by [nomisma.org](http://nomisma.org)’s identifier. “This was a clear prerequisite in order to allow OCRE to become a truly international platform,” notes Andrew Meadows, ANS Deputy Director. Spanish, German, French, Russian, Greek, and Italian are among the languages offered by OCRE, alongside Romanian, Bulgarian, Swedish, and Dutch.

The American Numismatic Society, organized in 1858 and incorporated in 1865 in New York State, operates as a research museum under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is recognized as a publicly supported organization under section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) as confirmed on November 1, 1970.

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