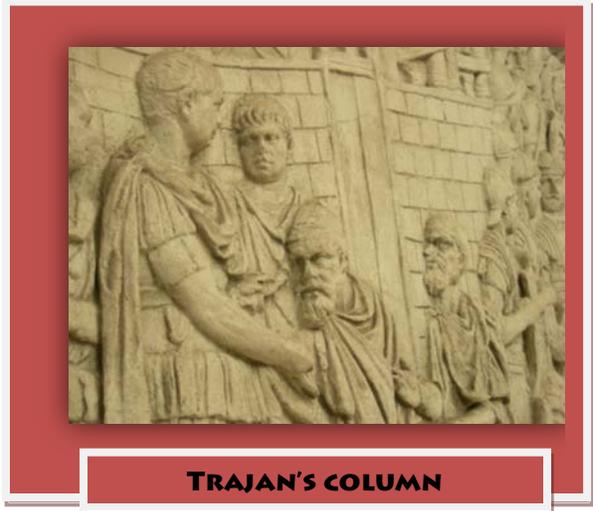


THE GOOD EMPERORS

The Grandeur That Was Rome
Six Silver Coins Collection



All coins in each set are protected in an archival capsule and beautifully displayed in a mahogany-like box. The box set is accompanied with a story card, certificate of authenticity, and a black gift box.



Edward Gibbon, the British historian and author of the landmark *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, wrote, "If a man were called upon to fix that period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the deaths of Domitian to the accession of Commodus," at which point the Empire began its slow and ineluctable decline. In that 75 year period, Rome comprised what was arguably the greatest civilization the world would ever know. Almost two full millennia later, Roman influence is still felt in the Western world in everything from place names (Britain, Provence, Naples) to regnal titles (*czar* is Russian for *Caesar*) to languages derived from Latin (the Romance languages: French, Italian, Spanish, etc.). This was the period that made Rome great.

The reign of **Trajan**, 98-117 CE, marks the zenith of Roman civilization. The borders were never as vast, the economy never as booming, the culture never as high. In an era of almost constant warfare, plague, and famine, it was a season of relative peace and prosperity within the empire's borders. And those borders were indeed vast, encompassing most of Britannia, all of Gaul and Iberia, Eastern Europe to the Danube, all of Northern Africa, Greece, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Palestine, and the Crimea. The historian Simon Sebag Montefiore writes, "Trajan, tall, athletic, stern, was the ideal emperor, perhaps the greatest since Augustus."

Born in Spain in 76 CE, **Hadrian** ascended to the throne upon the death of his adoptive father Trajan in 117. Part military man, part philosopher-king, the new emperor toured the length and breadth of his empire, establishing order, drilling troops, and engaging in battle, famously crushing a Jewish revolt in Palestine in 130. A devotee of ancient Greece, he pushed for Athens to be the cultural capital of the

Empire, constructing many opulent buildings there. In Rome, he re-built the famed Pantheon, with its distinctively Hellenistic look, and in Britain, the remains of Hadrian's Wall are still a tourist attraction.

Hadrian's adopted son and heir, **Antoninus Pius** was notable for one reason: his pacifism. Emperors of Rome tended to be brutal individuals, drawn from the ranks of the imperial army, and quick to take up arms. It was said of Antoninus that, not only did he never command an army in his 23 years on the throne, but he never so much as inspected a garrison. He build the Antonine Wall, north of Hadrian's Wall, to keep out the Picts.

Faustina the Elder was of noble blood; Trajan was her great-great-great uncle. Her marriage to Antoninus Pius helped legitimize his claim to the throne—one of many examples of Rome's matrilineal lines of succession. Their marriage was a happy one, especially by standards of royal families. When she died in 140 at the age of 40, the devastated Emperor ordered her deified; hence the inscription DIVA FAVSTINA on the coins made in her honor (*diva* means *divine*).

His wife was **Faustina the Elder**; their daughter, **Faustina the Younger**, married his heir, **Marcus Aurelius**. Thus, while the emperors themselves were men, the line of succession was matrilineal. Indeed, when Marcus Aurelius was confronted with his wife's infidelity and told to divorce her, he refused, remarking that, "If I did, I'd have to return my dowry—the Empire!"

Marcus Aurelius was probably the most brilliant ruler the Western world has ever produced. His natural genius was cultivated at a young age by the emperor Hadrian, who ensured that the boy was give the best education possible. He studied Latin and Greek, and was especially drawn to philosophy; his *Meditations* are still regarded as masterpieces in Stoic reasoning. He also served as consul to Antoninus Pius, and was himself an able and just Emperor. His aim was to expand the Empire north of the Danube. He spent years fighting the Marcomanni in what is today Hungary. This ambition was thwarted by an *actus Dei*—the Antonine Plague, thought to be smallpox, which wiped out a third of the population of the country and devastated his army.

This collection contains silver coins of the four Good Emperors, as well as the two Faustinas. Portrait and legend are on the obverse; reverses vary, but tend to feature religious or military themes. The economic health of the Empire is evident in the silver fineness of these coins.

The Coins



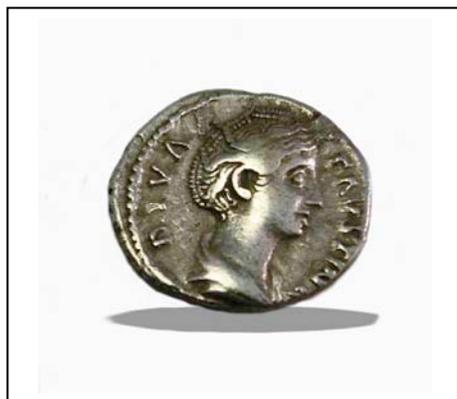
Ruler	1. Trajan
Year of issue	98-117AD
Country	Rome
Denomination	Denarius
Material	Silver
Weight	2.4-3.2 g
Diameter	17.3-19 mm
Obverse	Portrait and legend
Reverse	Various personifications or military themes



Ruler	2. Hadrian
Year of issue	117-138 AD
Country	Rome
Denomination	Denarius
Material	Silver
Weight	2.6-3.1 g
Diameter	17.3-19 mm
Obverse	Portrait and legend
Reverse	Various personifications or military themes



Ruler	3. Antoninus Pius
Year of issue	138-161 AD
Country	Rome
Denomination	Denarius
Material	Silver
Weight	2.4-3.4 g
Diameter	17-18.5 mm
Obverse	Portrait and legend
Reverse	Various personifications or military themes



Ruler	4. Faustina the Elder
Year of issue	d. 140AD
Country	Rome
Denomination	Denarius
Material	Silver
Weight	2.0-3.5 g
Diameter	17-19 mm
Obverse	Portrait and legend
Reverse	Various personifications or military themes



Ruler	5. Marcus Aurelius
Year of issue	139-180 AD
Country	Rome
Denomination	Denarius
Material	Silver
Weight	3-3.8 g
Diameter	17.5-18.5 mm
Obverse	Portrait and legend
Reverse	Various personifications or military themes



Ruler	6. Faustina the Younger
Year of issue	d. 175 AD
Country	Rome
Denomination	Denarius
Material	Silver
Weight	2.6-3.6 g
Diameter	16.5-19 mm
Obverse	Portrait and legend
Reverse	Various personifications or military themes

Box data:

Box measures: 7.25" x 5.5"

Order code: 6GOODEMPSLBOX

Image shows typical coins, not to scale