

Defeat at Hadrianopolis

The Beginning of the End of the Roman Empire



Valens became the Eastern Roman Emperor in 364 CE. Although a fine administrator, Valens was not an effective military man, leading a series of unsuccessful campaigns against the Goths. In 378, at Hadrianopolis, he stubbornly refused to wait for reinforcements led by his nephew Gratian, hoping not to share the glory of victory. Instead, Valens' attacking army was slaughtered, and he perished.

Gratian ascended to the throne of the Western Empire in 375 CE. An able military leader in his youth, he lost the faith of the army soon after the disaster at Hadrianopolis. He was killed in a coup in 383.

The decisive defeat at Hadrianopolis heralded the disintegration of the Empire, which continued to lose territory and influence until the city of Rome was finally sacked by the Visigoths in 410.

Like most ancient Roman bronze coins, these late fourth century coins were crudely struck by hand. Both coins show a bust of the respective Emperor on the obverse, with his Latinized name and abbreviated titles. The reverse inscriptions and iconography are varied. Military and political themes predominate—most frequently the coins feature the winged goddess Victory, holding a wreath and palm or the Emperor, standing, in full battle regalia, holding the labarum and dragging a captive. Mint marks in the form of letters are often found below the reverse image.

Data:

Weight range: 1.5-3.5g; Diameter range: 15-19.5mm

Box measures: 3.87" x 3.87" x 1.25"

Order code: 2HADRIANOPOLISBOX

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 embossed gift box.

Coin type and grade may vary somewhat from image

