

DATING

For reasons hard to fathom, the date of virtually all weights that are considered classically Byzantine belong to the sixth and seventh centuries. Since we have little direct evidence for dating, what we have must suffice.

The earliest weights which concern us are those of solidus size that were officially struck. These were introduced in 363 by the Emperor Julian who promulgated the following law:

EMPEROR JULIAN AUGUSTUS TO MAMERTINUS,
PRAETORIAN PREFECT

“The buying and selling of solidi is impeded if anyone clips down or diminishes or - to use the word proper to such avarice - nibbles them away, for some persons refuse them as light or inadequate. It therefore pleases Us to appoint a *zygostates* [weigher] as the Greek word terms him, in each city, who on account of his faithfulness and industry will neither deceive or be deceived, so that if a dispute shall have arisen between a seller and a buyer of solidi, it may be settled according to his judgement and reliability.”

Given 23 April at Salona in the Consulships of Julian Augustus (for the fourth time) and Sallustius.

It is possible to identify those weights which were issued between 363 and 491 since most of them, rare though they are, depict emperors who can often be identified, especially those who reigned in the second half of the fifth century. Weights of Marcian and Leo, for example, bear their monograms, similar to those on their coinage.

Struck coin weights, with the exception of four types, are anonymous. Type 1 can certainly be attributed to Julian II because of the bearded effigy. Type 5 bears the name of Honorius while types 13 to 15 bear the monograms of Marcian and Leo. Types 2, 3 and 4 to 12 can only be identified by the number of emperors depicted. Thus those types showing two emperors can only represent the following joint reigns:

Valens and Valentinian I	364-367
Gratian and Valentinian II	Aug - Dec 375
Theodosius I and Arcadius	May 392
Arcadius and Honorius	395-401
Honorius and Theodosius II	408-423
Theodosius II and Valentinian III	426-450

Weights with three busts will fall in the following joint reigns:

Valens, Valentinian I and Gratian	367-375
Valens, Gratian and Valentinian II	375-378
Gratian, Valentinian II and Theodosius I	379-383
Valentinian II, Theodosius I and Arcadius	383-392

BYZANTINE WEIGHTS									
COMMERCIAL					COIN				
lb	ozs	SYMBOL	SCRIPTURA GRAMMATA	SOLIDI	SYMBOL	SILIGUAE KERATA	GRAMS		
1	12	LIBRA LITRA	Λ Λ	288	72	Λ NO B	327.45		
			ROMAN			ROMAN			
1/2	6	SEMISS	8 ϣ	144	36	Λ SOL XXXVI	163.7		
1/3	4	TRIENS	-III 8 Δ	96	24	Δ SOL XXIII	109.1		
1/4	3	QUADRANS	-III 8 Γ	72	18	Γ SOL XVIII	81.9		
1/6	2	SEXTANS	-II 8 B	48	12	B SOL XII	54.6		
1/12	1	UNCIA	-I 8 Δ	24	6	Δ SOL 6	27.2		
		SEMUNCIA	1/2 XII IB	12	3	IB SOL III	13.6		
		BINE SEXTULE	1/3	8	2	II SOL NB	9.1		
		SICILIUS	1/4	6	1 1/2		6.82		
		SEXTULA	1/6	4	1	I SOL N	4.55		
				2	1/2	IB	2.27		
				1 1/3	1/3	H or T	1.52		

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