

Numismatic Terms and Definitions

<i>Casting</i>	A common method for producing coins by pouring molten metal into a mould. The normal method in China, sometimes used for official coinages in India, and for unofficial coins elsewhere. Also frequently used to prepare flans for die-struck coinages.
<i>Clipping</i>	The illegal trimming of material from the edge of a precious metal coin for profit, usually in association with counterfeiting
<i>Control mark</i>	See Mint mark
<i>Countermark</i>	A small device punched on the face of a coin. Countermarks are sometimes applied to revalue a coin, revalidate an old coin, or validate a coin entering a new area.
<i>Die</i>	An engraved stamp used to impart a design to a coin with a hammer blow. Known as striking this is the normal method for coin production in the Roman and Greek worlds (NB in Medieval times this is usually called 'hammered coinage').
<i>Die axis</i>	The relationship between the position of the obverse and reverse dies, recorded with the obverse at the 12 o'clock position.
<i>Die link</i>	Two or more coins are considered die-linked when their obverses or reverses share a common die.
<i>Die pair</i>	The obverse and reverse dies used to strike a coin are considered a die pair.
<i>Die sinker</i>	Mint operative who creates the dies, usually employing the punches created by the skilled engraver.
<i>Die study</i>	Analysis of coins focused on identifying the dies used to strike a series of coins and determining the sequence in which coins were minted.
<i>Ethnic</i>	A place or people-name inscription. Can be abbreviated. In Greek this is generally in the genitive case, e.g. 'of Alexander.'
<i>Fineness</i>	The precious metal content of a coin, e.g. sterling is technically 92.5% fine silver and 'crown' gold is 22 carat, i.e. just under 92% fine gold.
<i>Flan</i>	A blank piece of metal (sometimes also known as a 'blank') prepared to be struck as a coin.
<i>Graffito</i>	Scratches on a coin, usually letters applied after the coin has left the mint. Plural: graffiti.
<i>Hacksilver</i>	Silver coins, ingots or jewelry which have been cut into pieces to be used as fractions reliant on their intrinsic value. A common feature of archaic period hoards in the Greek world and of hoards on the periphery of coin using areas such as the Viking world. The German term Hacksilber is also used.
<i>Hoards</i>	A group of coins hidden or lost as a group. Hoards are distinct from coins lost separately even if they are found together. Hoards are dated based on

the latest coin present: this date is known as the *terminus post quem* or tpq (literally 'limit after which [the hoard could have been buried]').

<i>Incuse punch</i>	The rough punch used as a reverse die. Particularly seen on archaic coins.
<i>Ingot</i>	Piece of metal (usually precious) traded by weight. Ingots can be any shape but commonly in bar or round shapes. The latter are known as 'bun' ingots.
<i>Initial mark</i>	Symbol placed at the start on the legend on either or both sides of many medieval and early modern coins. They almost always have a chronological significance, with one initial mark succeeding another, and so are different from mintmarks.
<i>Inscription</i>	Writing on a coin which has been engraved into the die and struck as part of the design (see also Legend).
<i>Intrinsic Value</i>	The value of the metal used to produce coins. Most often used to refer to precious metal coins (gold or silver) where the weight of metal is the same as the face value of the coin.
<i>Legend</i>	Term frequently used for coin inscriptions (the obverse legend, reverse legend).
<i>Metallurgy</i>	Study of the metal composition of a coin. Some studies focus on determining the purity of the metal. Others attempt to correlate the presence of trace elements with metal sources and mints. Common techniques include X-Ray Fluorescence, Neutron Activation, Lead Isotope Analysis, Specific Gravity (technically a metric).
<i>Metrology</i>	Study of the weights of coins, normally conducted on closely related coins. Most metrological studies attempt to determine on what weight standard a coin was minted.
<i>Milled coinage</i>	Term used for coinage struck from early mechanised techniques, from the mid-16 th century, typically from screw-presses.
<i>Mint</i>	The place where coins are produced. Not necessarily a fixed location within a city: travelling mints are recorded from military activity, for example.
<i>Mintmark</i>	A symbol, part of the design of the obverse or reverse die, which distinguishes a particular mint from another when the main design remains constant. A control mark is another type of mint mark, which distinguishes between series of coins at a particular mint and privy mark is another term used to indicate marks with an internal mint purpose. (See also initial mark).
<i>Mint signature</i>	The inclusion of all or part of the name of the place of manufacture on a coin.
<i>Moneyer</i>	Individual responsible for the production of coinage; in different times and contexts the moneyer can be an individual with managerial responsibilities in coin production, or else the employed labourer who strikes the coins. In the Roman Republican and medieval periods moneyers' names are included in the legends of many important coinages.

<i>Monogram</i>	Collection of letters, usually joined together, which stand for a name (of magistrate or city, for example). Often used as a mint or control mark.
<i>Obverse</i>	The side of a coin struck with the fixed (anvil or lower) die. The lower die is often known as the pile in the medieval context.
<i>Officina</i>	Latin for 'workshop', often used for a subdivision of a mint responsible for a particular group of coins or the official in charge of that subdivision.
<i>Overstrike</i>	A coin struck using another coin as a flan, often leaving visible traces of the undertype. Overstrikes are powerful tools for building chronologies as the minting of the undertype must precede the striking of the oertype.
<i>Pattern</i>	Coin created for internal mint purposes, to trial new designs or techniques, and never issued into currency.
<i>Peck-mark</i>	See test-cut.
<i>Plated coin</i>	One of the methods employed in antiquity to produce a counterfeit coin. Plated coins were produced by manufacturing a flan made up of a thin layer of a precious metal wrapped around a base metal core and then striking the flan with forged dies.
<i>Punch</i>	In medieval and early modern context, a tool used to create an element of the design of a coin when creating the die: punches can be simple shapes (lines, crescents), letters and, probably from the 14 th century, larger design elements, including ships, animals and portraits.
<i>Punchmark</i>	A technique for manufacturing coins used in Northern India from the fifth to the second century BC.
<i>Reverse</i>	The side of a coin struck with the movable (punch or upper) die. Once a reverse has developed from a simple punch to a recognizable design, this is called a 'true reverse'. The upper die is also known as the trussel in the medieval context.
<i>Test-cut</i>	A chisel cut applied to a coin to detect whether a coin was made of a solid precious metal or was plated. In the medieval context, pecking and peck-marks are the terms more usually encountered.
<i>Undertype</i>	See overstrike
<i>Weight Standard</i>	A series of weights to which a coin (or ingot) and its lower denominations conform. These tended to be used regionally or applied by kingdoms or empires to regulate the weights of their precious metal coins. Most were born from the weight standards already used for precious metal trading.