



## Denarius depicting the head of Marcus Aurelius and the goddess Roma (165 CE)

### Denarius depicting the head of marcus aurelius and the goddess Roma\_obverse.jpg



[1]

### [Denarius depicting the head of marcus aurelius and the goddess Roma\\_reverse.jpg](#) [2]



[3]

**Denomination:**

Denarius

**Date:** 165 CE

**Material:**

Silver

**Mint:**

Rome

**Actual Location (Collection/Museum):** American Numismatic Society.

Id: 1944.100.49078

**Name of Ruler:**

Marcus Aurelius

**Obverse (Image and Inscription):**

Image: Laureate head of Marcus Aurelius looking right

Inscription: M ANTONINVS AVG ARMENIACVS

**Reverse (Image and Inscription):**

Image: Roma, helmeted, draped, seated left, holding palladium and spear



Inscription: P M TR P XIX IMP III COS III

**Diameter (mm):** 18.50mm

**Weight (g):** 3.19g

**Commentary:**

RIC III, Marcus Aurelius, no. 138, p. 224.

This denarius, minted in 165 CE, depicts on the obverse the head of Marcus Aurelius, and on the reverse the goddess Roma. The inscription, which spans from the obverse to the reverse, refers to the emperor as Marcus Antoninus, Augustus, Armeniacus, *pontifex maximus*, or high priest of the Roman state religion, holder of the *tribunicia potestas* for the nineteenth time, *imperator* for the third time, and consul for the third time. The military success of the campaign in Armenia (161-163 CE) is emphasized by the title Armeniacus assumed by the emperor. In 161 CE, Vologases IV, King of Parthia, penetrated Armenia, expelled its legitimate king, appointed by Rome, and installed his own candidate, Pacorus. In 162 CE, Lucius Verus, Marcus Aurelius's co-ruler, took the command of the war, and the next year, in 163 CE, he started the counter offensive. Armenia was re-conquered and the capital, Artaxata, was seized. The Romans appointed a new king, Gaius Iulius Sahaemus, a Roman senator of consular rank but also of Arsacid descent. While Lucius Verus assumed the title Armeniacus in 163 CE, Marcus Aurelius assumed the title only in 164 CE.

The reverse depicts the goddess Roma seated on a throne, with a helmet covering her head, a tunic, which leaves her left breast bare, and a round shield. Additionally, she holds in her right hand the palladium and in her left hand a spear. The personification of Roma first appears in the Greek East in the second century BCE. In 12 BCE, Drusus dedicated an altar to Roma and to his stepfather Augustus at the junction of the two rivers at Lugdunum. Thereafter, Roma is well attested in inscriptions and coinage throughout the western provinces. By the first half of the second century, the cult of Roma penetrated the *Urbs*. Hadrian erected the well-known Temple of Venus and Roma in the forum, a building which much displeased the Greek architect Apollodorus of Damascus, and maybe cost him his head, once he vented his displeasure to the emperor (Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.4). The largest temple in the city, it was probably dedicated to inaugurate the reformed festival of Parilia. In the temple erected by Hadrian, as on the reverse of this coin, the statue of Roma was holding the *palladium*, which symbolized the eternity of Rome, and not a small statue of Victoria, which until then characterized the iconography of Roma. On this issue, a denarius directed to the army, Marcus Aurelius probably chose to depict the goddess holding a *palladium* because it associated him with his predecessors, Hadrian, who erected the Temples of Venus and Roma, and Antoninus Pius, who had chosen him as successor.

Keywords in the original language:

- [Augustus](#) [4]
- [tribunicia potestas](#) [5]
- [imperator](#) [6]
- [consul](#) [7]
- [pontifex maximus](#) [8]
- [senatus consultum](#) [9]
- [concordia Augustorum](#) [10]

Thematic keywords:

- [Roma \(goddess\)](#) [11]
- [throne](#) [12]
- [helmet](#) [13]
- [palladium](#) [14]
- [spear](#) [15]
- [Marcus Aurelius](#) [16]
- [victory](#) [17]
- [Roman rule](#) [18]
- [Aeneas](#) [19]



- [Troy](#) [20]
- [eternity of Rome](#) [21]

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Grimal, Pierre, [Marc Aurèle](#) [25] (Paris: Fayard, 1991)

Noreña, Carlos F., [Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power](#) [26] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

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**Other sources connected with this document:** Numismatic item

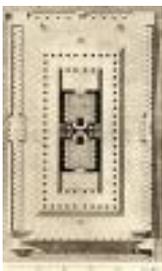
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- [Read more about Aureus depicting the head of Antoninus Pius and the goddess Roma holding the Palladium \(145-161 CE\) \[28\]](#)

Architecture

## [Temple of Venus and Roma \(135 CE\) \[29\]](#)

## [Plan of the Temple of Venus and Rome \[30\]](#)



## [Reconstruction of the Temple of Venus and Roma \[31\]](#)



## [Photo of the southern cella \[32\]](#)





- [Read more about Temple of Venus and Roma \(135 CE\)](#) [29]

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