



## Denarius depicting the head of Trajan and Pax, the personification of peace (98-99 CE)

### Denarius depicting the head of Trajan and Pax, the personification of peace (98 CE)



[1]

**Denomination:**

Denarius

**Date:** 98 CE to 99 CE

**Material:**

Silver

**Mint:**

Rome

**Name of Ruler:**

Trajan

**Obverse (Image and Inscription):**

Image: Laureate head of Trajan looking right

Inscription: IMP CAES NERVA TRAIAN AVG GERM

**Reverse (Image and Inscription):**

Image: Pax standing facing, head left, holding olive branch and cornucopia

Inscription: PONT MAX TR POT COS II

**Commentary:**

RIC II, no. 17, p. 246.

This denarius, minted in 98-99 CE, depicts on the obverse the head of Trajan, and on the reverse Pax, the goddess or personification of peace. The inscription reads *imperator, Caesar, Augustus, Germanicus, pontifex maximus*, or high priest of the Roman state religion, holder of the *tribunicia potestas*, and consul for the second time. As this coin was minted at the beginning of Trajan's reign, Trajan assumed the name of Nerva, who had been forced by the army to adopt him, in order to emphasize his legitimacy.

Originally named Marcus Ulpius Traianus, Trajan was probably born in the city of Italica in 53 CE in the province of Hispania Baetica. His father Marcus Ulpius Traianus took part in the Jewish War under Vespasian and Titus, as the *legatus* of the Legio X Fretensis. In 76-77 CE he was appointed governor of Syria, *legatus pro praetore Syriae*. Trajan started his *cursus honorum* as *tribunus legionis* in 76-77 CE in Syria, under the command of his father. He was appointed consul under Domitian in 91 CE. As he took part in the Germanic wars of Domitian, he could assume the name Germanicus. At the accession of Nerva in 96 CE, he was in command of the Rhine frontier. In 98 CE, once he was adopted by Nerva, Trajan was appointed consul, together with the ailing emperor. The fact that Trajan shared the consulship with the reigning emperor bestowed an aura of legitimacy upon the future ruler in the eyes of the Roman Senate, and thus in the eyes of the Roman elite. Civil war was thus avoided. Therefore, the message of the new emperor is a message of peace. The idea of *pax* had a dual meaning, both the absence of civil strife and the idea of *Pax Romana*, the peace imposed by the Romans on the conquered territories. In this



case, however, it is probable that *pax* refers to the absence of civil strife, and to the relative peace that prevailed inside the empire. The representation of Pax as holding an olive branch and a cornucopia is traditional, and reflects the association between peace and prosperity.

Keywords in the original language:

- [imperator](#) [2]
- [Caesar](#) [3]
- [Augustus](#) [4]
- [Germanicus](#) [5]
- [pontifex maximus](#) [6]
- [tribunicia potestas](#) [7]
- [consul](#) [8]

Thematic keywords:

- [Trajan](#) [9]
- [Germania](#) [10]
- [peace](#) [11]
- [prosperity](#) [12]
- [succession](#) [13]
- [imperial virtues](#) [14]
- [Domitian](#) [15]
- [Nerva](#) [16]
- [Roman army](#) [17]
- [civil war](#) [18]
- [concord](#) [19]
- [cornucopia](#) [20]
- [branch](#) [21]

**Bibliographical references:** Bennett, Julian, [Trajan: Optimus Princeps](#) [22] (Roman Imperial Biographies; London: Routledge, 2000)

Noreña, Carlos F., [Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power](#) [23] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

**Source URL:** <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/denarius-depicting-head-trajan-and-pax-personification-peace-98-99-ce>

### Links

[1] [https://www.judaism-and-](https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/sites/default/files/styles/large/public/traianus_denarius_98_862835.jpg?itok=v3iF3ZtV)

[rome.org/sites/default/files/styles/large/public/traianus\\_denarius\\_98\\_862835.jpg?itok=v3iF3ZtV](https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/sites/default/files/styles/large/public/traianus_denarius_98_862835.jpg?itok=v3iF3ZtV)

[2] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/imperator>

[3] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/caesar>

[4] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/augustus>

[5] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/germanicus>

[6] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/pontifex-maximus>

[7] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/tribunicia-potestas>

[8] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/consul>

[9] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/trajan>

[10] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/germania>

[11] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/peace>

[12] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/prosperity>

[13] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/succession>



[14] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/imperial-virtues>

[15] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/domitian>

[16] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/nerva>

[17] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/roman-army-0>

[18] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/civil-war>

[19] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/concord>

[20] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/cornucopia>

[21] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/branch>

[22] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/trajan-optimus-princeps>

[23] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/imperial-ideals-roman-west-representation-circulation-power>