



AUREUS. The Birth of Roman Gold Coinage : historical study and chemical analysis of minted gold in the Western World from the end of the Hellenistic period to the first century A. D.

The AUREUS Program aims to understand the initial production and spread of a unified Gold Coinage through Western Europe : Roman Gold coinage, the result of a long tradition. The program is based on the analysis by LA-ICP-MS of nearly 1000 gold coins from various areas (Africa, Greece, Italy, the Celtic world, Spain) and jewelry from French Collections. AUREUS is made possible by the long-standing collaboration between the Centre Ernest-Babelon of the IRAMAT and the Department of Coins, Medals and Antiquities of the Bibliothèque nationale de France that will provide most of the material analysed. In the course of the program, the classification of the material will be reexamined and improved. The results will be collected into a database and studied by historians and numismatic specialists along with physicists and chemists. This pluridisciplinary approach will shed light on the evolution of gold coinages in the Western part of the Mediterranean basin between the end of the 4th century B.C. and the 1th century A.D. AUREUS will provide essential information on gold supply; on the control of gold stocks; on the role of war in the transfer of gold; on the degree of economic and political integration of the different zones in question ; on the economic, political, military and social uses of gold in Antiquity. The program includes talks and events for the general audience.

The AUREUS program will last from March 2016 to March 2018 and is supported by the Région Centre-Val de Loire.

Partners : IRAMAT - Centre Ernest-Babelon (Université d'Orléans-CNRS) ; Bibliothèque nationale de France (département des Monnaies, médailles et antiques) ; EA Cethis (Université François-Rabelais-Tours) ; EA POLEN (Université d'Orléans).

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