



As depicting the head of Marcus Aurelius and Pax Aeterna Augusta (176-177 CE)

As depicting the head of Marcus Aurelius and Pax Aeterna Augusta (176-177 CE).jpg

[1]

Denomination:

As

Date: 176 CE Dec to 177 CE

Material:

Brass (Æ)

Mint:

Rome

Actual Location (Collection/Museum): British Museum: R.14783

Name of Ruler:

Marcus Aurelius

Obverse (Image and Inscription):

Image: Laureate head of Marcus Aurelius looking right

Inscription: M ANTONINVS AVG TR P XXXI

Reverse (Image and Inscription):

Image: Pax standing left, setting weapons on fire and holding cornucopia

Inscription: IMP VIII COS III PP - PAX AETERNA AVG

Weight (g): 9.26g

Commentary:

RIC III, Marcus Aurelius, no. 1202, p. 308.

This as, minted between December 176 CE and the autumn of 177 CE, depicts on the obverse the head of Marcus Aurelius, and on the reverse *Pax Aeterna Augusta*, the goddess of peace. The inscription celebrates Marcus Aurelius as Marcus Antoninus, Augustus, holder of the *tribunicia potestas* for the thirty-first time, *imperator* for the eighth time, consul for the third time, and *pater patriae*, or father of the fatherland. The inscription on the reverse refers to *Pax Aeterna Augusta*, or the eternal peace associated with the emperor.

Pax, the daughter of Jupiter and *Iustitia*, was identified with the Greek goddess Eirēnē, the goddess of peace. She was generally depicted with olive branches and a cornucopia. The latter attribute emphasized abundance or prosperity, one of the most important consequences of peace. *Pax*, or peace, was one of the most important benefits that the emperor could bestow on his subjects, and one of the attributes most often found on coins, together with *Victoria*, victory, and *Felicitas*, good fortune. Therefore, the inscription on the reverse, *Pax Aeterna Augusta*, emphasizes that the granting of *Pax* to the empire's citizens and subjects was the result of the personal action of the emperor. Moreover, the inscription claims that this peace was meant to endure forever. Therefore, on this issue, *Pax* is depicted as setting weapons on fire, a dramatic gesture meaning that there would be no more need for weapons, as peace would prevail forever.

In 177 CE, the year this issue was minted, Marcus Aurelius returned back to Rome from the Danubian front. In Rome, Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus celebrated a triumph over the Germans and the Sarmatians, to



mark the end of the First Marcomannic War (167-175 CE). Last but not least, Marcus Aurelius also began the construction of his own forum, which included a temple and a spiral column imitating Trajan's Column, which celebrated his victory in the Marcomannic War (see [Column of Marcus Aurelius \(180-192 CE\)](#) [2]). This explains the minting of an issue depicting the goddess Pax as Augusta, or bestowed by the emperor through his military achievements, and as eternal, because the emperor's accomplishments were ultimate and absolute. This bronze denomination, an as, forwarded this message to the populations of the Latin West, who had experienced the Antonine Plague, the barbarian invasions, and the subsequent war. However, peace did not last for long, and the emperor and his son and heir soon returned to the battle field.

Keywords in the original language:

- [Augustus](#) [3]
- [tribunicia potestas](#) [4]
- [imperator](#) [5]
- [consul](#) [6]
- [pater patriae](#) [7]
- [Pax Aeterna Augusta](#) [8]

Thematic keywords:

- [Marcus Aurelius](#) [9]
- [war](#) [10]
- [weapons](#) [11]
- [Germans](#) [12]
- [triumph](#) [13]
- [victory](#) [14]
- [peace](#) [15]
- [Pax Romana](#) [16]
- [eternity of the Roman empire](#) [17]

Bibliographical references: Birley, Anthony R., [Marcus Aurelius: A Biography](#) [18] (Roman Imperial Biographies; London : Routledge, 2000)

Foss, Clive, [Roman Historical Coins](#) [19] (London: Seaby, 1990)

Roman, Yves, [Marc Aurèle, l'empereur paradoxal](#) [20] (Paris: Payot, 2013)

McLynn, Frank, [Marcus Aurelius: Warrior, Philosopher, Emperor](#) [21] (London: Vintage Books, 2009)

Noreña, Carlos F., [Imperial Ideals in the Roman West: Representation, Circulation, Power](#) [22] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Other sources connected with this document: Numismatic item

[Denarius depicting the head of Trajan and Pax, the personification of peace \(98-99 CE\) \[23\]](#)

- [Read more about Denarius depicting the head of Trajan and Pax, the personification of peace \(98-99 CE\) \[23\]](#)

Numismatic item

[Sestertius depicting the head of Vespasian and Pax, the personification of peace \(71 CE\) \[24\]](#)



- [Read more about Sestertius depicting the head of Vespasian and Pax, the personification of peace \(71 CE\)](#) [24]

Realized by:

[Samuele Rocca](#) [25]



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- [2] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/column-marcus-aurelius-180-192-ce>
- [3] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/keywords/augustus>
- [4] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/keywords/tribunicia-potestas>
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- [20] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/marc-aur%C3%A8le-l%E2%80%99empereur-paradoxal>
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- [22] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/imperial-ideals-roman-west-representation-circulation-power>
- [23] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/denarius-depicting-head-trajan-and-pax-personification-peace-98-99-ce>
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