



Light miliarenses depicting the head of Valens and the emperor and his brother holding globe and sceptre (364-367 CE)

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[1]

Denomination:

Light Miliarenses

Date: 364 CE to 367 CE

Material:

Silver

Mint:

Constantinople

Name of Ruler:

Valens

Obverse (Image and Inscription):

Image: Pearl-diademed, draped and cuirassed bust of Valens looking right

Inscription: D N VALENS P F AVG

Reverse (Image and Inscription):

Image: Valentinian I and Valens, both in military dress, standing respectively left, head right, and right, head left, each holding globe and sceptre, under decorated arch supported by two columns with spiral fluting.

Inscription: GLORIA ROMANORVM - CONSD in ex. NISC

Weight (g): 4.41g

Commentary:

(RIC IX, Constantinople, no. 09)

This miliarenses, minted between 364 and 367 CE, depicts on the obverse the head of Valens, and on the reverse Valens and his elder brother Valentinian I, both standing in full imperial regalia under an arch supported by two columns, and holding globes and sceptres. The inscription on the obverse, "D N VALENS P F AVG," refers to Valens as Dominus Noster, "our lord," Valens, Pius Felix, and Augustus, a title which served to emphasize the emperor's sacral standing. The inscription on the reverse, "GLORIA ROMANORVM," means "the glory of the Romans." The mint mark, "CONSD" indicates that the coin was minted at Constantinople, the most important imperial residence in the East, and an important mint. This denomination is a *miliarenses*, a large coin in silver which appears at the beginning of the fourth century CE, first under the reign of Constantine. Numismatists differentiate between two categories, namely the heavy and the light *miliarenses*. The ratio between a gold solidus and a heavy *miliarenses* was one to fourteen, while the ratio between a *solidus* and a light *miliarenses* was one to eighteen. The depiction of the arch suggests that the two emperors are depicted while standing at the entrance of the imperial palace. Thus, the architectural decoration possibly reproduces the main entrance to the ceremonial suite.

The main inscription on the reverse reads *gloria Romanorum*, or the glory of the Romans, which forwards the idea



of the stability of the Roman empire. *Gloria* was an ideal closely associated with *virtus*, or bravery, and can in effect be interpreted as the reward for *virtus*. *Virtus*, a word which derived from *vir*, or man, can also be translated as “manliness,” and embodied courage in warfare. By the late Republic, with the increasing influence of the philosophical ideal of *aretè* (which in Greek referred to the notions of excellence, or moral virtue) the ethical dimensions of virtue became more prominent. In the first century BCE, Cicero stated that *nobilitas*, or “nobility,” which was entirely dependent on birth, stood antithetically to *virtus*, which could only be displayed through individual accomplishments and public merit and reward. In other words, *virtus* was confirmed through the *gloria* that a person earned (Cicero, *For Sestius* 65.136).

As the reverse depicts the two emperors, Valentinian I and Valens, the idea of glory is closely associated with them. This is further emphasized by the fact that the two emperors are depicted standing at the gate of the imperial palace in all majestic regalia. Both wear the consular *trabea triumphalis*, a garment in purple similar to the toga, which indicates that they were holders of the consulship, and they are crowned with pearl diadems, which was characteristic of the way in which Late Antique emperors adorned their heads. Perhaps most significantly, however, both emperors are depicted holding the globe, a symbol of universal rule, as well as the sceptre, which indicates their *auctoritas*, or authority and power. The association between the Roman emperor and universal rule, symbolised by the globe, is made on coins issued by numerous emperors, sometimes in relation to a recent military victory. On some coins, the emperor is presented as *rector orbis* (“world ruler”) or depicted alongside a representation of the *orbis terrarum* (“entire world”) (for example, see [Solidus depicting the head of Constantine and the emperor receiving the globe from the goddess Roma \(315 CE\)](#) [2]; [Follis depicting the head of Constantine and the globe set upon an altar \(320 CE\)](#) [3]; [Sestertius depicting the head of Valerian and the same raising the personification of the Orbis Terrarum \(256-257 CE\)](#) [4]; [Denarius depicting the head of Severus Alexander and the emperor symbolically depicted as the ruler of the orbis terrarum \(224-225 CE\)](#) [5]; [Sestertius depicting the head of Hadrian and the same raising a kneeling personification of the orbis terrarum \(123 CE\)](#) [6]).

This issue was minted at the beginning of Valens's rule. Once the army acclaimed as Augustus Valentinian I, the elder brother of Valens, as Augustus, the newly chosen emperor reverted back to the diarchic system of rule created by Diocletian, whereby the Roman empire was divided between himself and his younger brother Valens. At a ceremony held at Constantinople in 364 CE, Valentinian appointed his younger brother as Augustus. The two brothers would rule together, although Valentinian, who had more experience than his brother, and who was a valiant military commander, held a position of superiority. Valentinian chose the western territories, menaced by the barbarians, so that he could wage defensive campaigns, while Valens was given the rule of the eastern part of the Roman empire (see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, p. 22-26). By the end of 365 CE, Valens was back at Constantinople, which was chosen as the main imperial residence. This is made evident by the depiction of the palace gate on the reverse of the issue. As Noel Lenski notes, all mints issued coins depicting both Augusti with equal symbols of status. This coin does precisely this, with Valens and Valentinian I both standing holding a sceptre and globe. Such imagery helped to advertise the emperors' *concordia*. Furthermore, the names of both Augusti featured on imperial constitutions and public inscriptions, with titles assumed after military victories applied on inscriptions to both emperors regardless of whom had actually achieved it (e.g. *CIL* 6.1175) (see Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, p. 29, and n. 98). Thus, the purpose of this coin was essentially to emphasize the stability that the joint rule of the two brothers would bring. The depiction of the two emperors holding a symbol of universal rule (the globe) combined with the inscription which affirms the “glory of the Romans” made it absolutely explicit that the empire would thrive under this new strong rulership.

Keywords in the original language:

- [Dominus Noster](#) [7]
- [pius felix](#) [8]
- [Augustus](#) [9]
- [gloria romanorum](#) [10]

Thematic keywords:

- [Valens](#) [11]
- [Valentinian I](#) [12]



- [Roman rule](#) [13]
- [stability](#) [14]
- [Constantinople](#) [15]
- [palace](#) [16]
- [Romans](#) [17]
- [Roman people](#) [18]
- [glory](#) [19]
- [globe](#) [20]
- [universalism](#) [21]

Bibliographical references:

[Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.](#) [22]

Lenski, Noelbook*Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.*LondonUniversity of California Press2002

Other sources connected with this document: Numismatic item

[Solidus depicting the head of Constantine and the emperor receiving the globe from the personification of Roma \(315 CE\)](#) [23]

- [Read more about Solidus depicting the head of Constantine and the emperor receiving the globe from the personification of Roma \(315 CE\)](#) [23]

Numismatic item

[Sestertius depicting the head of Valerian and the same raising the personification of the Orbis Terrarum \(256-257 CE\)](#) [24]

- [Read more about Sestertius depicting the head of Valerian and the same raising the personification of the Orbis Terrarum \(256-257 CE\)](#) [24]

Numismatic item

[Follis depicting the head of Constantine and the globe set upon an altar \(322 CE\)](#) [25]

- [Read more about Follis depicting the head of Constantine and the globe set upon an altar \(322 CE\)](#) [25]

Numismatic item

[Denarius depicting the head of Severus Alexander and the emperor symbolically depicted as the ruler of the orbis terrarum \(224-225 CE\)](#) [26]

- [Read more about Denarius depicting the head of Severus Alexander and the emperor symbolically depicted as the ruler of the orbis terrarum \(224-225 CE\)](#) [26]

Numismatic item

[Sestertius depicting the head of Hadrian and the same raising a kneeling personification of the Orbis Terrarum, or the entire world \(119-121 CE\)](#) [27]



- [Read more about Sestertius depicting the head of Hadrian and the same raising a kneeling personification of the Orbis Terrarum, or the entire world \(119-121 CE\)](#) [27]

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[Samuele Rocca](#) [28]



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Links

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- [2] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/solidus-depicting-head-constantine-and-emperor-receiving-globe-goddess-roma-315-ce>
- [3] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/follis-depicting-head-constantine-and-globe-set-upon-altar-322-ce>
- [4] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/sestertius-depicting-head-valerian-and-same-raising-personification-orbis-terrarum-256-257-ce>
- [5] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/denarius-depicting-head-severus-alexander-and-emperor-symbolically-depicted-ruler-orbis-terrarum-224>
- [6] <http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr/sestertius-depicting-head-hadrian-and-same-raising-kneeling-personification-orbis-terrarum-or-entire>
- [7] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/dominus-noster>
- [8] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/pius-felix>
- [9] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/augustus>
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- [18] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/roman-people>



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- [20] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/globe>
- [21] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/thematic-keywords/universalism>
- [22] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/failure-empire-valens-and-roman-state-fourth-century-ad>
- [23] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/solidus-depicting-head-constantine-and-emperor-receiving-globe-personification-roma-315-ce>
- [24] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/sestertius-depicting-head-valerian-and-same-raising-personification-orbis-terrarum-256-257-ce>
- [25] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/follis-depicting-head-constantine-and-globe-set-upon-altar-322-ce>
- [26] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/denarius-depicting-head-severus-alexander-and-emperor-symbolically-depicted-ruler-orbis-terrarum-224>
- [27] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/sestertius-depicting-head-hadrian-and-same-raising-kneeling-personification-orbis-terrarum-or-entire>
- [28] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/erc-team/samuele-rocca>
- [29] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/erc-team/kimberley-fowler>