
DAILY COIN RELIEF!

A BLOG FOR ANCIENT COINS ON THE PAS BY SAM MOORHEAD & ANDREW BROWN

Issue 1 by Sam Moorhead – 18 March 2020

Vota coins of Gratian (AD 367-83) with VOT XV MVLT XX



This issue is dated AD 379-383 (Reece Period 20). These Vota coins are what we might call Jubilee coins today. VOT XV can be loosely translated as ‘Thanks for 15 years of rule’ and MVLT XX can be loosely translated as ‘Looking forward to 20 years’. Vota coins are common in the 4th Century AD, both on bronze *nummi* and silver *siliquae*. One has to be careful using them for precise dating, because sometimes they celebrated a ‘Jubilee’ early. I think that this coin was probably struck towards the end of the period AD 379-83; if one adds 15 (XV) to the accession date of Gratian, AD 367, it comes out at AD 382/3.

The most common issue of this coin comes from the Mint of Lyon (Lugdunum) and can be described as follows:

Copper-alloy nummus of Gratian (AD 367-83)
Mint of Lyon, AD 379-83 (Reece Period 20)
Obv. D N GRATIA – NVS P F AVG¹; Pearl-diademed, draped and cuirassed right
Rev. VOT XV MVLT XV in four lines in wreath
Mintmark: - // LVGP or LVGS²
LRBC p. 52, no. 371³
RIC IX, p. 48, no. 30

¹ D[ominus] N[oster] GRATIANVS P[ius] F[elix] AVG[ustus] translates as Our Lord Gratian, pious to God and blessed by God, Emperor. Note that by now the Empire is effectively Christian so it would be God rather than Gods.

² LVG is the abbreviation of the mint name Lugdunum. P[rima] stands for the first workshop in the mint. S[ecunda] for the second.

³ For bronze coins from AD 364 to AD 395, we use LRBC where possible instead of RIC IX. RIC IX was written in 1933, LRBC in 1961 and is more up to date. David Wigg Wolf in Germany is in the process of rewriting RIC IX. Those of you who have LRBC will note that the number in the book is a mis-print – do change from 377 to 371 for this entry.

Many of these coins (c. 75) come up with this search:

<https://finds.org.uk/database/search/results/denomination/20/ruler/118/receid/20/reverseLegend/XV/objecttype/COIN/broadperiod/ROMAN>

I have edited some, but others need editing and might be re-identified as another issue. Do note that there was a VOT XV MVLX XX vota issue struck for Constantius II and Constans at Eastern Mints in AD 347-8, but these do not tend to circulate in North-Western Europe.



SWYOR-D693C1 with mintmark LVGS

There is a variety of this coin with an S in the roundel at the top of the wreath:



DENO-BE30F0 with mintmark S // LVGP

LRBC p. 53, no. 378

RIC IX, p. 48, no. 30b

Coins of the Lyon issue are the most commonly found in Britain, although there are some pieces from the Mints of Arles and Siscia as well.

Mint of Arles



BM-4A457C with mintmark - // [P/S/T]CON
LRBC p. 57, no. 552
RIC IX, p. 68, no. 24

See also BM-F05CA7 for a TCON coin

Mint of Siscia



SUR-7947A1 with mintmark - // (B?)SISC
LRBC p. 74, cf. no. 1539
RIC IX, p. 152, no. 31a

Greenwich, 18 March 2020