

Copyright information

## Head, Barclay Vincent, 1844-1914.

Remarks on two unique coins of Aetna and Zancle / by Barclay V. Head.  
London, 1883.

## ICLASS Tract Volumes T.23.6

For the Stavros Niarchos Digital Library Euclid collection, [click here](#).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](#).

This book has been made available as part of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Digital Library collection. It was digitised by UCL Creative Media Services and is copyright UCL. It has been kindly provided by the [Institute of Classical Studies Library and Joint Library of the Hellenic and Roman Societies](#), where it may be consulted.

Higher quality archival images of this book may be available. For permission to reuse this material, for further information about these items and UCL's Special Collections, and for requests to access books, manuscripts and archives held by UCL Special Collections, please contact [UCL Library Services Special Collections](#).

Further information on photographic orders and image reproduction is available [here](#).



With thanks to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.



UCL Library Services  
Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7679 2000  
[ucl.ac.uk/niarchoslibrary](http://ucl.ac.uk/niarchoslibrary)





NOT TO BE  
REMOVED  
FROM THE  
LIBRARY

BOOKS

17CS



6

REMARKS ON  
TWO UNIQUE COINS OF AETNA AND  
ZANCLE.

BY  
BARCLAY V. HEAD, M.R.A.S.

REPRINTED FROM THE NUMISMATIC CHRONICLE,  
VOL. III., THIRD SERIES, PAGES 171—176.

---

LONDON :  
1883.



REMARKS ON

To the excellence  
coins of Aetna  
Baron de Hinz  
"Numismatic  
comments by v

The marvellous  
sents us on its  
respects very  
ledge not four  
adjunct symbol  
conjunction with  
the idea of Zeus  
convey.

They give in  
ordinary type  
*e.g.* on the coin  
possess.

In the first  
natural-knotted  
of upon the obverse  
shares, as the  
Arcadian Zeus  
Mount Lycaeus



REMARKS ON TWO UNIQUE COINS OF AETNA AND  
ZANCLE.

BY BARCLAY V. HEAD, M.R.A.S.

To the excellent descriptions of the two unique silver coins of Aetna and Zancle (Pl. IX. 1 and 2) which the Baron de Hirsch has contributed to the pages of the "Numismatic Chronicle," I may be allowed to add a few comments by way of further illustration.

The marvellous coin of Aetna, now first published, presents us on its reverse with a conception of Zeus in many respects very remarkable, and to the best of my knowledge not found elsewhere on coins. The attributes and adjunct symbols both on obverse and reverse, taken in conjunction with the type, may aid us in particularizing the idea of Zeus which the artist has endeavoured to convey.

They give it a local colouring, so to speak, which the ordinary type of Zeus enthroned, familiar to us all (as *e.g.* on the coins of Alexander the Great), does not possess.

In the first place the god rests his right hand upon a natural-knotted staff, bent into a crook at the top, instead of upon the ordinary royal sceptre. This peculiarity he shares, as the Baron de Hirsch has pointed out, with the Arcadian Zeus, who was worshipped on the summit of Mount Lycaenum; but on the coin of Aetna the staff is



extremely thin and slight, and exhibits the zigzag appearance which is characteristic of the growth of a stick of vine-wood, which I take it to be.

It can hardly be doubted that the Zeus here represented is the great god of Mount Aetna, the volcanic soil of which was especially favourable to the cultivation of the vine, whence perhaps the vine-staff on which the god rests his arm. See Strab. p. 269. Καθάπερ οὖν τὸ πῆγανον τῇ ξυλίνῃ σποδῶ τρέφεται, τοιοῦτον ἔχειν τι οἰκείωμα πρὸς τὴν ἄμπελον εἰκὸς τὴν Αἰτναίαν σποδόν.

Over the whole Aetna region Zeus was worshipped under the name of Ζεὺς Αἰτναῖος :—

ἀλλ' ὦ Κρόνου παῖ, ὃς Αἶτναν ἔχεις,  
ἵπον ἀνεμόεσσαν ἑκατογκεφάλᾳ  
Τυφῶνος ὀμβρίμον.

Pind. *Ol.* iv. 10.

In the year B.C. 479 according to the Parian marble, or 475 according to Thucydides (III. 116), occurred the first great eruption of Mount Aetna of which we have any historical record, and it was about this time (B.C. 476) that Hieron took the city of Catana which stood beneath the mountain and changed its name to Aetna, expelling its ancient inhabitants and peopling it afresh with Syracusans. By the new citizens Hieron was solemnly proclaimed oekist or founder, κτίστωρ Αἶτνας. (Pind. *Fr.* 71).

The city was placed under the special protection of Ζεὺς Αἰτναῖος, to whom Pindar has addressed one of his most splendid odes (*Pyth.* I.), in which in magnificent word-painting he describes the late eruption of the volcano, "Whereout pure springs of unapproachable fire are vomited from the inmost depths; in the day time rivers (of lava) pour forth a lurid rush of smoke, but in the darkness a red rolling flame beareth rocks with a

plash to the de  
the god who  
newly founded

It is notew  
spread the ski  
beast of prey,  
reverse is unc  
which, accord  
Aetna were o  
ἐκείνους τοὺς χρ

Pind. *Pyth.* I.  
the summit o  
Pindar, "the  
wings on eithe  
back in slumb

On the rev  
staff of vine-  
represented is  
whose shadow

The obverse  
characteristic  
from Euripide  
Polyphemos, a  
savage master.  
be taken as po  
know from oth  
but, as if still  
has placed ben



plash to the deep plain of the sea;" and further he invokes the god who haunts the mountain and prays that the newly founded city may find favour in his sight:—

εἴη Ζεῦ, τὴν εἴη Φανδάνειν,  
ὅς τοῦτ' ἐφέπεις ὄρος, εὐκάρποιο γαί—  
ας μέτωπον, τοῦ μὲν ἐπωνυμίαν  
κλεινὸς οἰκιστὴρ ἐκύδανεν πόλιν  
γείτονα. κ. τ. λ.

It is noteworthy that across the throne of the god is spread the skin of a lion, or of some other mountain-bred beast of prey, but the most characteristic symbol on the reverse is undoubtedly the Pine tree, ἐλάτη or πεύκη, with which, according to Diodorus (XIV. 42) the slopes of Aetna were once richly clad: τὴν Αἴτην ὄρος γέμον κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς χρόνους πολυτελοῦς ἐλάτης τε καὶ πεύκης. So also Pind. *Pyth.* I. 53: Αἴτνας ἐν μελαμφύλλοις κορυφαῖς, and on the summit of the Pine-tree, again to use the words of Pindar, "the Eagle of Zeus sleepeth, slackening his swift wings on either side \* \* \* \* \* and heaving his supple back in slumber." (*Pyth.* I. 10).

On the reverse we note therefore two indications (the staff of vine-wood and the pine-tree) that the deity represented is the presiding god of Mount Aetna, beneath whose shadow the city stood.

The obverse type and adjunct symbol are also equally characteristic of the place of issue. Seilenos, as we learn from Euripides' Satyric drama *Kyklops*, was enslaved by Polyphemos, and dwelt in the caves of Aetna with his savage master. More generally the head of Seilenos may be taken as pointing to the cultus of Dionysos, who, as we know from other coins, was especially revered at Catana; but, as if still further to specialize the locality, the artist has placed beneath the head of Seilenos one of those huge



scarabei, *κάνθαροι*, for which Mount Aetna was celebrated. See Aristophanes, *Pac.* 73:—

εἰσήγαγ' Αἰτναῖον μέγιστον *κάνθαρον*,

and the Scholiast's remarks on this passage:—

μεγάλοι λέγονται εἶναι κατὰ τὴν Αἴτνην *κάνθαροι*. μαρτυροῦσιν δέ οἱ ἐπιχώριοι, Ἐπίχαρμος ἐν Ἡρακλεῖ τῷ ἐπὶ τὸν ζωστήρα "Πυγμαρίων λοχαγὸς ἐκ τῶν *κανθάρων* τῶν μειζόνων οὓς φασὶ τὴν Αἴτνην ἔχειν." τρόπον δέ τινα καὶ Αἰσχύλος ἐπιχώριος· λέγει δὲ ἐν Σισύφῳ πετροκυλιστῇ "Αἰτναῖός ἐστι *κάνθαρος* βία πόνων." Σοφοκλῆς Δαιδάλῳ "ἀλλ' οὐ μὲν δὴ *κάνθαρος* τῶν Αἰτναίων πάντως." λέγει δὲ πάντως εἰκάζων εἰς μέγαν. Πλάτων ἐν Ἑορταῖς "ὥς μέγα μέντοι πάνυ τὴν Αἴτνην ὄρος εἶναί φασι τεκμαίρου, ὅθεν τρέφεσθαι, τὰς *κανθαρίδας* τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐστὶν λόγος οὐδὲν ἐλάττους."

With regard to the time of issue it may be remarked that Catana bore the name of Aetna for about fifteen years, but in B.C. 461, its old inhabitants drove out the Aetnaeans and the city once more recovered its original appellation.

In point of style the tetradrachm of Aetna exhibits some technical peculiarities which are noticeable on certain other Sicilian coins struck apparently before B.C. 476. Thus the hard stiff folds in which the *ἱμάτιον* of Zeus falls about his body bear a close resemblance to the folds of the chiton of Nike on a tetradrachm of Catana (B. M. *Guide*, Pl. IX. 25), and the somewhat awkward way in which the eagle with closed wings sits above, but not actually touching the top of the pine-tree, may be compared with the equally unusual manner of depicting a bird (in this case an aquatic bird) with closed wings, standing, without any support, in the field of the obverse of the same coin of Catana, above the back of the bull.

In fabric, as well as in style, these two coins resemble one another so closely (cf. the circular incuse, the border of dots, &c.) that one might almost be justified in ascribing them to the same workshop of the same engraver.

Another co  
Aetnaean tet  
the cabinet of  
Pl. B. 3). O  
an ample pep  
cisely the sa  
remarkable o  
certainly alme  
coin B.C. 476  
little, of the c

Let us now  
weight (Pl. I  
metrological  
Imhoof-Blum  
ment of con  
history of Gr

From the  
striding Zeus  
to attribute i  
but according  
was no longer  
476, it having  
at the time o  
body of Sami  
164), or on t  
some time be  
τοὺς δὲ Σαμίον  
ἐκβαλὼν καὶ τῇ  
οἰκίσας, Μεσσόν  
Unless, there  
not entirely  
tion is made c  
distinct from



Another coin which in style is also extremely like our Aetnaean tetradrachm is the unique piece of Himera in the cabinet of the Prince of Waldeck (Imhoof. *Mon. Gr.* Pl. B. 3). On this coin also the Nymph Himera wears an ample peplos, the folds of which are indicated in precisely the same stiff and linear manner which is so remarkable on the coin of Aetna. All three pieces are certainly almost contemporary, and the date of the Aetna coin B.C. 476—461 may serve to fix the date, within a little, of the other two.

Let us now turn to the tetradrachm of Zancle of Attic weight (Pl. IX. 2). This coin is not only of the highest metrological interest, as the Baron de Hirsch and Dr. Imhoof-Blumer have already pointed out, but it is a document of considerable archaeological importance for the history of Greek art.

From the very advanced style of the figure of the striding Zeus on the obverse I should have been inclined to attribute it to about the middle of the fifth century, but according to our historical data the name of Zancle was no longer in use after the death of Anaxilas in B.C. 476, it having been superseded by that of Messana either at the time of the first occupation of Zancle by a mixed body of Samians and Messanians, B.C. 494 (Herod. VII., 164), or on the expulsion of the Samians by Anaxilas some time before his death in B.C. 476 (Thuc. VI. 5), τοὺς δὲ Σαμίους Ἀναξίλας Πηγίων τύραννος οὐ πολλῷ ὕστερον ἐκβαλὼν καὶ τὴν πόλιν αὐτὸς (codd. αὐτοῖς) ξυμμίκτων ἀνθρώπων οἰκίσας, Μεσσήνην ἀπὸ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ τὸ ἀρχαῖον πατρίδος ἀντωνόμασε. Unless, therefore, we suppose that the name Zancle was not entirely discarded (cf. Paus. VI. ii. 10—where mention is made of the ancient Zancleaeans at a later period as distinct from the Messanians), we are compelled to fix the



date of this most remarkable coin before B.C. 476. It may, however, be accepted as good evidence that the name of Zancle was not abandoned as early as B.C. 494. Even for a work dating from 476 the freedom of style and mastery of anatomical detail exhibited in the attitude of the figure of Zeus are, so far as I know, unexampled on any other ancient monument.

To the accurate descriptions of the other coins given by the Baron de Hirsch I have nothing to add, except that the coin of Gela (Pl. IX., 5) is not from the same die as the specimen in the British Museum (B. M. *Guide*, Pl. XVI. 24). My friend, Dr. Hermann Weber, has, however, lately acquired a specimen of this rare piece, unfortunately in poor preservation, which is from the same dies as the remarkably fine specimen photographed on the Baron de Hirsch's plate.

As it is always satisfactory to be able to trace the *provenance* of coins as important as those of Aetna and Zancle, I may mention that I have been informed that for many years past these two coins have lain in the cabinet of a well-known private collector at Catania, where they were seen some ten or fifteen years ago by Prof. Salinas of Palermo, and by Dr. Imhoof-Blumer. On the death of their original possessor they were offered for sale, with the rest of the collection, by Signor Verga, one of the heirs.

The British Museum not being in a position to give the large sum demanded for the collection, which, moreover, consisted for the most part of ordinary Sicilian coins already represented in the national coin cabinet, the whole was acquired by the late Signor Castellani, from whom the rarest specimens have passed into the cabinet of the Baron de Hirsch.

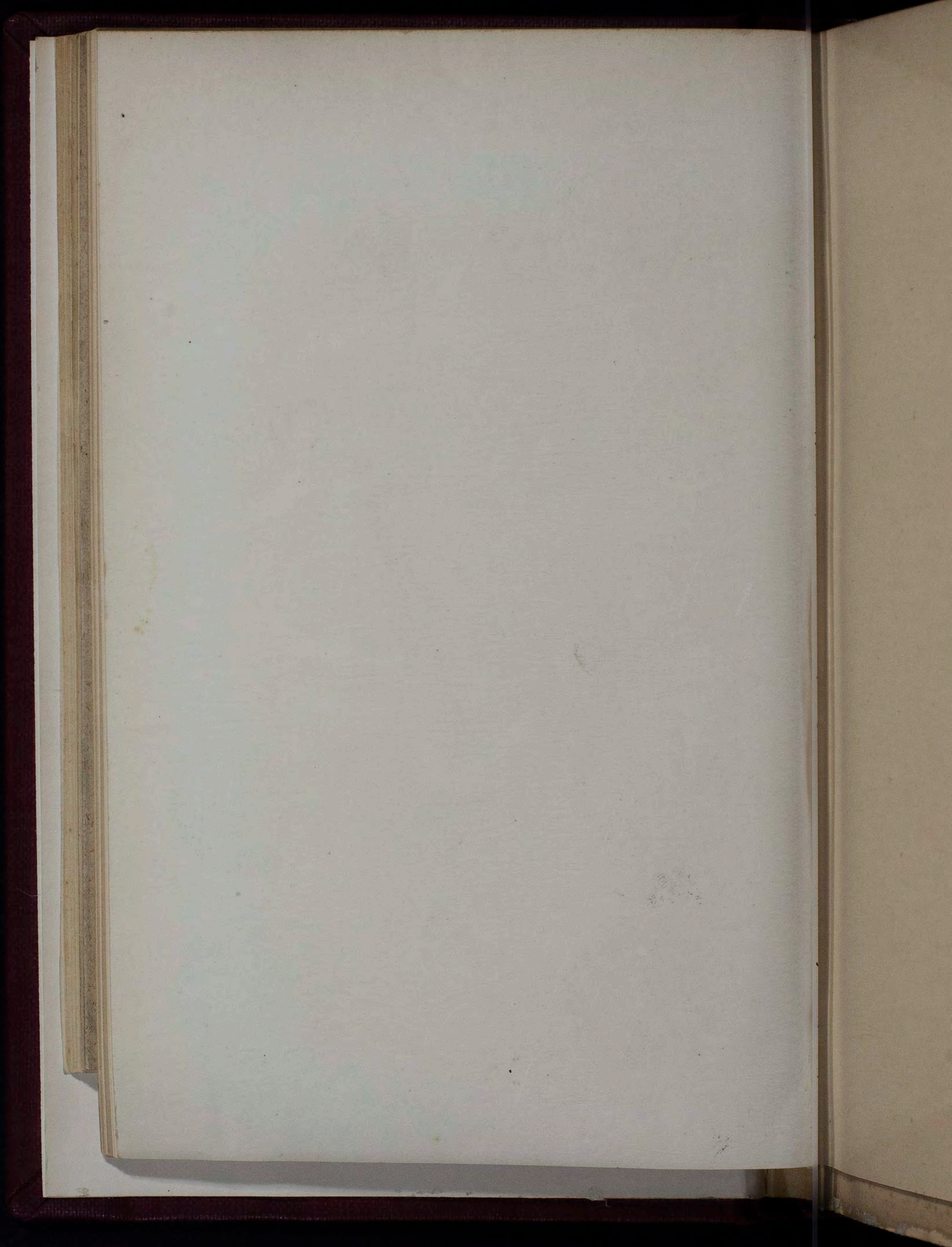




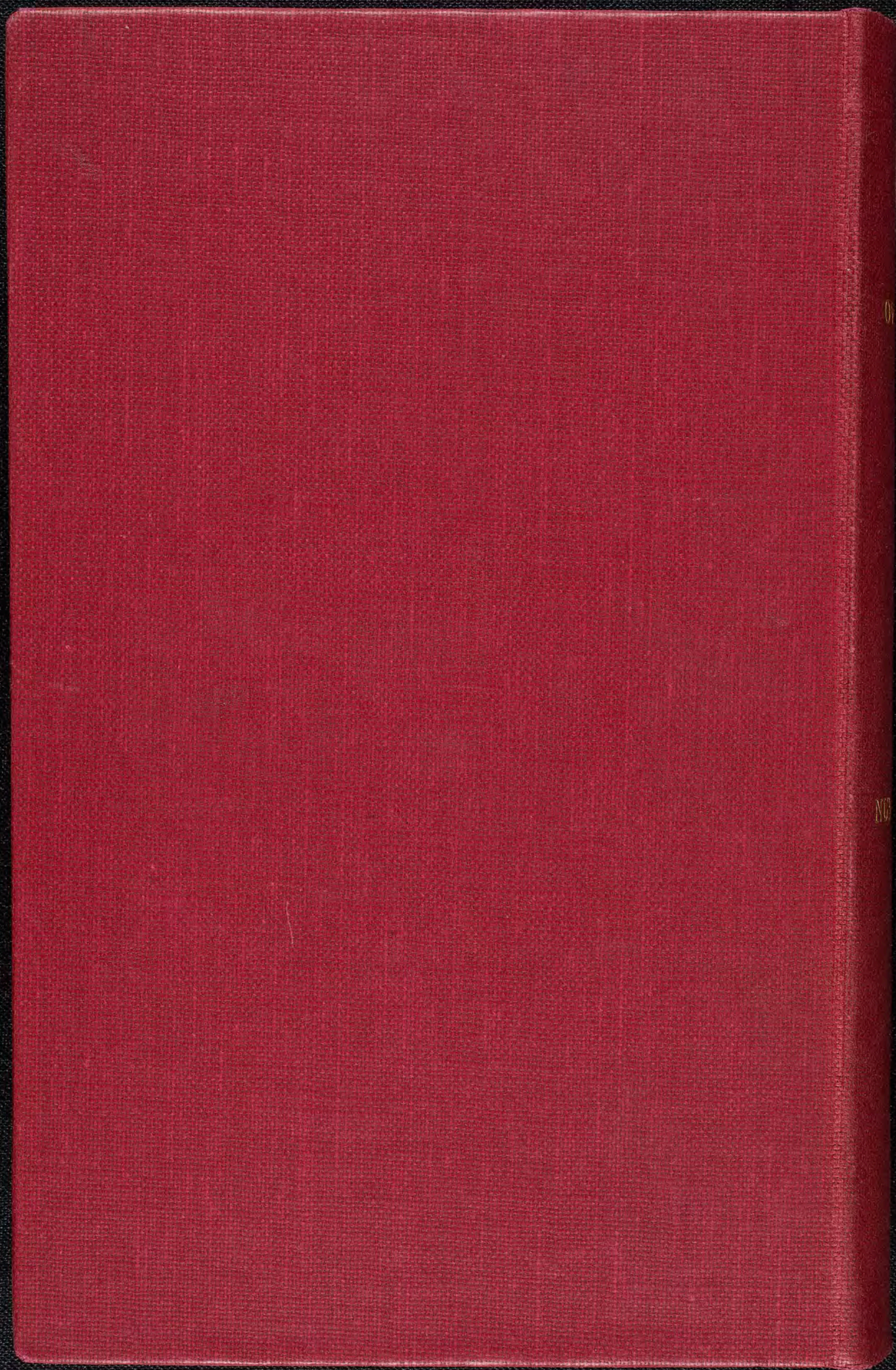


COINS OF SICILY.











XST.30

OVERBECK'S  
TRACTS

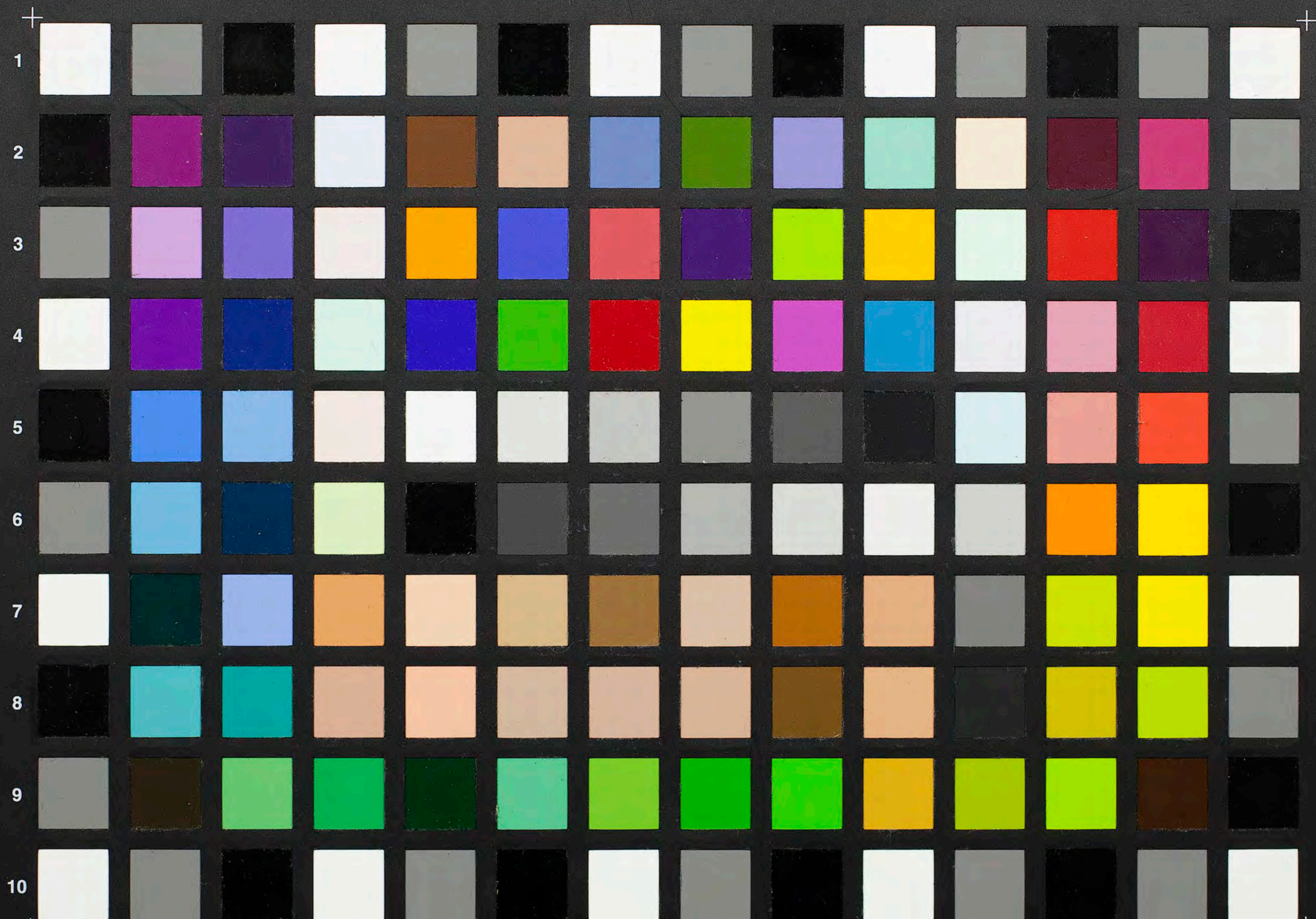
23

NUMISMATICS





# Digital ColorChecker® SG



**gmb**  
GRETAGMACBETH

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 mm