

LETTERS APPEARING ON BYZANTINE COINS

Byzantine Inscriptions on Coins.
 from Speck's "Numismatic Circular" June 1927.

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Latin and Greek letters and words are mixed up on Byzantine coins in the strangest fashion and it is not always easy to say to which alphabet a letter should be assigned. The ignorance, or carelessness, of the engraver, too, has often added to the confusion. An attempt is made here to reproduce letters in the actual form found upon the coins, but the following may be found useful in deciphering the inscriptions.

A	A, B, Δ, A, Λ, A, Δ, Λ.
B	B, B, b, b, R.
C	C, C.
D	D, O, o, d, σ, σ, Δ, Δ.
E	E, E, E, F, H.
G	C, C, C, f, 4, 3, G, Γ.
H	H, h.
K	K, C.
L	L, L, Λ.
M	M, m, M, M.
N	N, h.
P	P, Π, Π.
R	R, P, I.
S	S, Σ, C, 2, f.
T	T, Z.
U	V.
V	V, 4.
Θ	Θ.
Ξ	Ξ, Z, Q, I, s, Z.
Υ	Υ.
Φ	Φ.
Ω	Ω, ω, ω.
ϝ	= ou.

Abbreviations, etc.

Abbreviations,	S, f. S = et or xxi (and). C = S = et or xxi (and). CE = KE = xxi (and).
Omissions	⊖ e.g. $\overline{MP} \overline{OY} = \overline{MHTHP} \overline{\Theta EOY}$ (mother of God). • e.g. $\overline{EN} \overline{XOW} = \overline{EN} \overline{XPICTW}$ (in Christ).
Other marks	⊙ = (A) = ὁ ἅγιος before name of Saint e.g. Θ $\overline{\Theta EO} \overline{\Delta WPOC}$ (St Theodore).

INSCRIPTIONS.

The inscriptions appearing upon Byzantine coins often demand considerable scholarship for their elucidation, but it is hoped that the following examples may prove of assistance to the collector for whom these notes are mainly intended.

Taking the obverse legends first, we shall find that in the time of Arcadius the name of the Emperor is preceded by the letters **D N** (Dominus Noster) and followed by the letters **P F AVG** (Pius Felix **AVG**ustus — Pious, Happy, Augustus). In the case of Empresses the **D N** is omitted and **P F AVG** stands for Pius Felix Augusta.

In the reign of Leo I **PP**, or other abbreviations of the word Perpetuus, take the place of Pius Felix, and on the coins of the joint reign of Zeno and his son we find the two sovereigns for some unaccountable reason described as **NOV CAES**. Here we have an instance of the letter **V** taking the place of the letter **B**, a not uncommon occurrence in antiquity, the letters **NOV** being in reality an abbreviation of the word **NOBILISSIMI** and meaning "the most noble Caesars". Heraclius, when wearing the consular robes, uses the title **CONSVLI**, followed by Greek numerals. In his reign, too, we meet with Constantine's famous motto **EN TΩTO NIKΑ** (In this conquer).

With Justinian II we get the interesting innovations **SERV CHRISTI**, (**SERV**us **CHRISTI** — Servant of Christ) and **MHLTHS AN** (**MVLTOS ANnos** — for many years).
 Then under Leo III comes **ONO** and **PA MHL**, which may be