

Travel Report - Bibliothèque nationale de France 2024

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The travel grant from the International Numismatic Council allowed me to visit the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, providing me with access to one of the largest coin cabinets in the world. The reason for my trip was my dissertation, which focuses on the structure of the Roman imperial coinage under Elagabalus. To carry out such a project, examining a comprehensive collection of original coins is essential. The aim of my work is to search for new coin types and pieces not yet recorded in the Roman Imperial Coinage (RIC) and to catalog them. In the course of this process, it is also necessary to identify modern and contemporary forgeries that may have already found their way into standard reference works. Since the digitalization of museum collections has not yet reached Elagabalus' coins in some cases, it was necessary to record these specimens on the spot.

With a collection of around 700 Roman imperial coins of Elagabalus, a visit to the BnF was indispensable for my research project. Thus, in June 2024, I was able to spend a week in Paris, which was caught up in the euphoria of an ongoing European Football Championship and the upcoming Summer Olympic Games, which the city was hosting. Upon my arrival at the Département des Monnaies, médailles et antiques, I was greeted by Vincent Drost, curator of the cabinet's ancient Roman coins, who gave me a warm welcome. Provided with photographic equipment, I was able to take up my workstation for the coming days and process drawer after drawer on site. The 700 coins of Elagabalus were spread across a total of six drawers. Due to the large quantities of specimens, a certain time pressure was inherent. The first step was to gain a quick overview of the contents of each drawer and to select the pieces that needed to be documented in more detail. This selection process was particularly necessary in view of the large number of denarii. In contrast to the silver coins, the quantity of aurei and base metal denominations was more manageable and could therefore be completely photographed and recorded.

The visit to the Bibliothèque nationale de France was of great profit for me and my dissertation and not only gave me the opportunity to search for new evidence, but also allowed me to network with great colleagues in Paris. I would like to thank the International Numismatic Council for awarding me the travel grant for this unique opportunity. My thanks also go to my colleagues at the Bibliothèque nationale de France and above all to Vincent Drost, who welcomed me warmly and gave me the opportunity to view the collection.