



FRIENDS of FLORENCE

For Immediate Release
June 10, 2021

Exhibition of Ancient Roman Coins Discovered at Tuscan Archaeological Site Debuts at Santa Maria della Scala Museum in Siena

Coins restored thanks to Friends of Florence support

Treasure of Chianti: Silver Coinage of the Roman Republic from Cetamura del Chianti

On view through September 2, 2021

Florence, Italy... A trove of 194 Roman coins dating from 169 BCE to 27 BCE discovered in 2015 at an archaeological site in Chianti, Italy, are now on public display for the first time in the Santa Maria della Scala Museum in Siena. Friends of Florence funded the restoration and preparation of the silver coins to enable historical, cultural, numismatic, and metallurgic research. This effort yielded *Treasure of Chianti: Silver Coinage of the Roman Republic from Cetamura del Chianti*, an exhibition that opened May 29 and remains on view through September 2, 2021. The presentation contextualizes the coins within the region's history and the Republican age.



The project was organized and led by Florida State University; the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per le province di Siena, Grosseto, e Arezzo; the Comune di Siena; and the Santa Maria della Scala Museum in collaboration with Friends of Florence and the Studio Arts College International (SACI) in Florence.

Found in a flask buried in what was the ancient Tuscan city of Cetamura where Etruscan fortified settlements were inhabited for centuries, researchers believe that the cache was likely a payment to a veteran soldier who fought in the Battle of Actium (31 BCE). During the pivotal sea battle, Mark Antony and Cleopatra's fleet was overwhelmed by Octavian's navy thereby solidifying his command of the Roman Empire as Augustus Caesar. A coin minted in 32 BCE depicts Mark

Antony's profile on one side and the Egyptian queen facing a ship's prow on the other while others bear images of Octavian.

The discovery was made in 2015 by a team from Florida State University (FSU) directed by Dr. Nancy de Grummond, in collaboration with Ichnos: Archeologia, Ambiente e Sperimentazione from Montelupo Fiorentino. Dr. de Grummond is the M. Lynette Thompson Distinguished Research Professor of Classics at FSU and serves as director of excavations at Cetamura that have been underway since 1973.



The coins underwent micro-excavation and conservation in SACI's archaeological laboratory under the supervision of Prof. Nòra Marosi. During the Covid-19 pandemic, they were transferred to the Santa Maria della Scala Museum's laboratories for completion. An exhibition catalogue in English is available for sale at the Museum.

The conservation process revealed new information about the artist-minters' techniques and experiments, who and what influenced them, and their patrons. The trove was unearthed yards from a large well that for almost 200 years received religious items and grape seeds, providing evidence of the Etruscan and Roman wine-growing tradition in the heart of the Chianti region.

Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda, President of Friends of Florence, said, "This extraordinary discovery attracted our attention immediately, conjuring up images of the Battle of Actium veteran and his retirement to the Chianti area. Combining history, archaeology, art, science, and the work of SACI students and Siena restorers, this project intrigued the many Friends of Florence donors and garnered their support. Their generosity made it possible to conduct the five-year campaign of analysis, restoration, and research, and develop a forthcoming publication examining this priceless heritage in depth. Our gratitude goes to our colleagues at the Museo di Santa Maria della Scala for hosting this exhibition to showcase a marvelous, multi-layered slice of history."

Project partners include:

- Dr. Jacopo Tabolli, Soprintendenza, and Dr. Andrea Muzzi, Director, Archeologia, Belle Arti, e Paesaggio per le province di Siena, Grosseto, e Arezzo
- Dr. Roberta Mari and Dr. Debora Barbagli, Conservation Laboratory of the Complesso Museale of Santa Maria della Scala
- Director Steven Brittan and Prof. Nòra Marosi, SACI
- Dr. de Grummond, Director of FSU's Archaeological Research at Cetamura del Chianti
- Frank Nero, Director of FSU's International Programs in Italy and FSU's Florence Study Abroad Center
- Dr. Lora Holland Goldthwaite, Professor and Chair, Classics, University of North Carolina at Asheville
- Museo di Rilevanza Regionale Regione Toscana
- Luigi De Mossi, Mayor of Siena

Friends of Florence

Friends of Florence is a non-profit foundation supported by individuals from around the world who are dedicated to preserving and enhancing the rich cultural heritage of Florence and Tuscany and conserving irreplaceable artistic and cultural treasures. Friends of Florence identifies significant projects spanning centuries in need of restoration, secures funding, and works in collaboration with local authorities to complete projects.

Since its founding in 1998, the Foundation has raised and donated \$10 million for conservation projects in the region. Friends of Florence works directly with Florence's famed conservation laboratories to ensure restoration is done at the highest level, has the approval of the City of Florence and the Italian Ministry of Art, and is completed on time and on budget.

Through its work, Friends of Florence creates opportunities for the study and appreciation of paintings, sculptures, architectural elements, places of worship, and collections at the Uffizi Gallery, the Accademia, the Baptistry, the Piazza della Signoria, the Museum of San Marco, and dozens of other museums, churches, and public sites.

A model of high-impact, low-overhead philanthropy, Friends of Florence is the primary source of funding for the city's conservators, a respected partner with museums and cultural authorities in Italy and the U.S., and a publisher/producer of publications, multimedia offerings, seminars, lectures, and cultural travel opportunities.

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Image captions:

Page 1 (First row, L to R)

Roman silver denarius with figure of the goddess of Victory for Octavian. RTI Photographs of Cetamura coins courtesy of Friends of Florence

Roman silver denarius with image of the deity Bonus Eventus, Good Outcome. RTI Photographs of Cetamura coins courtesy of Friends of Florence

Roman silver denarius with portrait of Mark Antony. RTI Photographs of Cetamura coins courtesy of Friends of Florence

Page 1 (Second row, L to R)

Roman silver denarius with portrait of Octavian (Augustus). RTI Photographs of Cetamura coins courtesy of Friends of Florence

Roman silver denarius with warship of Mark Antony. RTI Photographs of Cetamura coins courtesy of Friends of Florence

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Ceramic jar that contained the cache of coinage of the late Roman Republic. Photo: Kenneth Kobre