

# IACTVS

## THE ROMAN DICE GAME



### RULES OF PLAY

#### **The object of the game**

The object of the game is to acquire one Venus card, two little dog cards, and one Roman coin.

#### **Contents**

3 Venus cards  
6 Little dog cards  
4 Roman coins  
5 dice

#### **Preparation**

The game can be played with 2 to 6 players. However, if there are four or less players, not all the cards or coins are used.

#### **For 4 players:**

Use 3 Venus cards, 6 little dog cards and three coins only.

**For 3 players:**

Use 2 Venus cards, 4 little dog cards and two coins only.

**For 2 players:**

Use 1 Venus card, 2 little dog cards and 1 coin only.

Place the correct number of cards and coins in the centre of the table.

**To play**

The first player picks up and rolls all five dice in an attempt to obtain either;

- (a) I, I, I, I, I, a throw which allows you to claim a Roman coin; or
- (b) VI, VI, VI, VI, VI - *The Jactus Venereus* in which case you may claim a Venus card ; or
- (c) Five of any number - *The Jactus Canicula* (that is; five I's, five II's, five III's, five IV's , five V's or five VI's) in which case you may claim a little dog card.

If you do not manage to throw any of the above, the next player may take a turn. He or she may pick up and roll all *or* any of the dice in an attempt to throw one of the three combinations given above. If the second player fails to obtain any of the above, the third player may then take a turn. Again, he or she may pick up and roll any or all of the dice.

Once a player has thrown one of the combinations, he or she may claim a card or coin as specified. He or she then picks up and rolls all the dice to start the next round.

In the event that a player is entitled to collect a card or coin and all have been claimed from the centre of the table, he or she may take the card or coin required from *any* other player.

**To win**

The first player to hold a Venus card, two little dog cards and a Roman coin wins the game.

## ROMAN COINS

Roman coins were not just a means of paying for goods. The reverse of the coins was used to communicate great events. Alternatively, the reverse was used to boost the image and status of the emperor to his people. For example, the emperor may have depicted a god that had attributes with which he wished to be associated. The coins were circulated throughout the empire bringing news, perhaps, of events that had taken place far away.

Each of the four reproduction roman coins in **Jactus** depict emperors who spent time in Britain.



### HADRIAN

Hadrian came to Britain in AD 122 and ordered the building of the most impressive monument to Roman rule in Britain Hadrian's Wall. Running the 73 miles from Willsend on the River Tyne to Bowness on Solway, the wall took 15 years to build. Substantial remains can still be seen including the forts at Chester, Housesteads, Carvoran and Birdoswald that formed part of the wall system. Our coin is a *dupondius* with Hadrian's head on the front. The reverse depicts the figure of 'Aeternitas' the idea being to bring the message of peace and stability to the empire.



### ANTONINUS PIUS

In AD142 the Emperor Antoninus Pius thrust northwards from Hadrian's wall to establish a new frontier the Antonine wall. Stretching from the Firth of Forth to the Firth of Clyde it was constructed of cut turves on a stone base. It was only ten feet high, but combined with a wide ditch on its northern side, it was an effective barrier. The wall was held for twenty years and was abandoned shortly after Antoninus Pius died in AD 161. Our coin

an *as*, shows the head of the emperor on the front. The reverse shows a seated Britannia representing to the empire the victories in Britain leading to the building of the wall.



## SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS

Towards the end of the second century Northern Britain was in turmoil. The Roman legions had been reduced and Scottish tribes were raiding the Roman province. Under the strong rule of Severus the situation was restored. The tribes were driven back into Scotland. Hadrian's Wall had fallen into terrible disrepair and Severus restores a great deal of it. Much of what we see of Hadrian's Wall today is in fact the work of Severus. Severus came to Britain in AD 208 to launch a series of campaigns in Northern Scotland (Caledonia). He died in York AD 211. Our coin, a *denarius*, was minted in Rome in AD 200/201.



## CARAUSIUS

The Emperor Maximian gave Carausius command of the Channel Fleet to suppress the Saxon pirates raiding Southern Britain and Northern Gaul. He was suspected of keeping the plunder for himself and in retaliation he proclaimed himself emperor. Carausius ruled Britain and Northern Gaul for seven years, striking his own coins, such as the *antoninianus* reproduced here. The reverse shows the figure of Pax holding an olive branch and sceptre. 'Pax Aug' means 'peace brought about by the emperor.' Below the figure is 'ML' the mark of the London mint.

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