Guidance for using the online catalogue of coins, seals and paranumismatica

The Barber Institute's coin collection has around 16,000 coins, seals and paranumismatica. The following is a guide to help you get the most out of your research.

First of all, here's the link to the online catalogue: mimsy.bham.ac.uk.

You should see this:

Don't just rush in to type the emperor whose coinage you are looking for. You will find that searching 'Justinian I' in the simple search box you see first brings up coins of Justinian II too, and they aren't in any obvious order. If you want to search for a collection of coins for a specific purpose, you are better placed selecting the 'People' category from the toolbar on the left of the page.
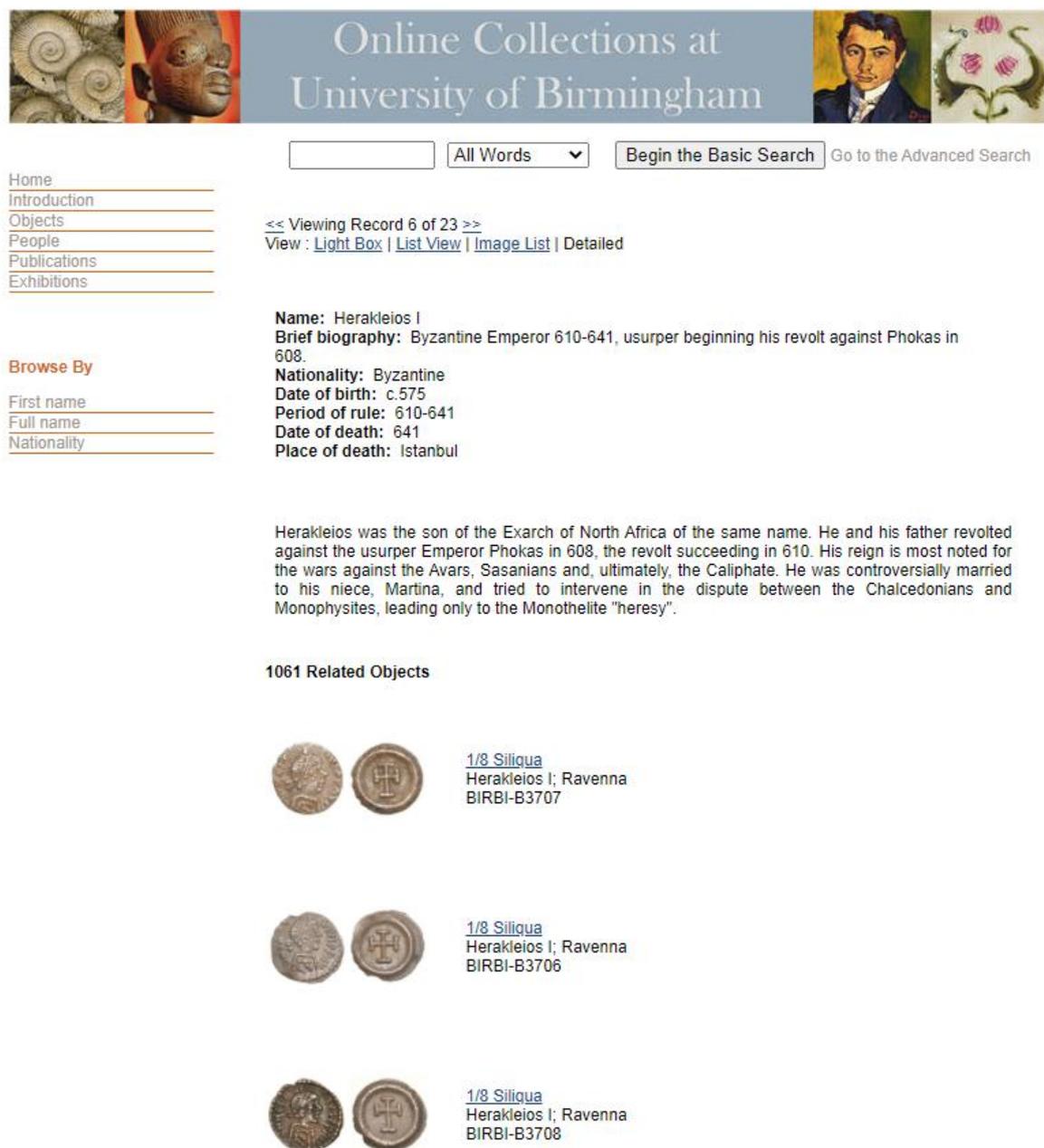
That is this bit:

Once you have selected 'People', you can use the search bar to type the group you are searching for, this includes:

- Emperor or ruler, e.g. Anastasius I or Levon II
- Moneyer, e.g. Publius Crassus
- Mint location, e.g. Constantinople or Nishapur
- Hoard
- Historic collector (forthcoming)

Your search term will bring up a list of people or groupings, from which you can select the individual you are searching, this will then bring up a page which looks like this:

The page gives you a brief overview of the individual so that you can be sure you have selected the correct one, then tells you how many objects are associated with that record followed by a list of objects. These are not in any particular order, so for particularly large groups, such as the 1061 objects associated with the Emperor Herakleios shown above, you may wish to skip ahead to the 'advanced search' section.

If you were not able to find what you were looking for in the 'people' search, here are some tips:

- Use the wildcard '%'. If you are looking for the products of the mint of Thessalonica/ Thessalonike/ Thessaloniki, but are not sure how we have spelled it on the system, try 'Thessalon%'. This can go in the midst of words, so 'Ni%or%s' if you are uncertain of how we have spelled Nikephoros/ Nicephorus/ Nikiforos, etc.
- Try a broader search and selecting from a longer list, e.g. search 'Sasanian emperor' if you are uncertain of the spelling we have used.
- Check the below spelling guide.
- Check the below list of what is online, we may have coins of that group, but they are simply not online yet.
- Search 'hoard' and select from the longer list.
- Check the below list of past collectors.
- Try the 'advanced search' advice section, though this search should be the more straight forward.

Spelling

For Roman and Byzantine emperors, we have spelled all names up to 610 AD with Latinised spelling, that is to say ending 'us' instead of 'os', using 'c' instead of 'k', and using sound-alikes instead of direct transliterations. Names after 610 use the Hellenised spelling, e.g. 'Herakleios', not 'Heraclius' and 'Eirene', not 'Irene'.

For Armenian kings, we have followed the convention used by Paul Bedoukian based on Western Armenian pronunciation, so 'Levon', not 'Leo', 'Godstadin', not 'Constantine', etc.

For Sasanian Emperors we use the spellings Artashir, Varhran, Hormizd, Yazdgird, Kavadh and Khusrau. Though given the complexities of spelling, you may be better advised searching 'Sasanian emperor' and selecting from the list. The same is true for Sasanian mints, search 'Sasanian mint' and select from the list, the attributions are consistent with Göbl.

For Arabic names of caliphs, we have use standard Arabic-English transliteration, so "Abd al-Malik' with the beginning inverted comma to denote the ayn letter.

For Turkmen names, when more coins from this section go online, we will use Turkic pronunciation in the transliteration, so 'Shems ud-Din', not 'Shams al-Din'.

Past Collectors and Collections

As there is no simple way to search for a list of these, below is a list of those we know we have and will be creating entries for. As this is a forthcoming facility, more will be added to this explanatory page as they are noted.

- The British Museum (includes those listed as 'acquired through the British Museum')
- Prince Mikhail Cantacouzene
- The Dumbarton Oaks Museum (Dumbarton Oaks duplicates)
- The Fitzwilliam Museum
- Earl Fox
- E. Gans (not to be confused with below)
- Rev. E. Gantz (not to be confused with above)

- Lord Grantley
- Edgar Guest
- Geoffrey Haines
- L. G. P. Messenger
- Colonel Montague
- Nordheim
- Michael O'Hara
- Prof. Sir Charles Oman
- Mr. C. C. Oman
- R. G. Peckitt
- Leslie de Saram
- Edward Shepherd
- James R. Stewart
- Rev. E. A. Sydenham
- Philip Whitting
- Apostolo Zeno

Advanced search

If the above tips are not useful to your search, try returning to the 'Objects' tab on the toolbar on the left and selecting the 'Advanced search' button beside the search box. This should bring up this screen:

Online Collections at University of Birmingham

| Home |
| Introduction |
| Objects |
| People |
| Publications |
| Exhibitions |

[ ] [All Words ▼] [Begin the Basic Search] Go to the Advanced Search

Browse By

| Category |
| Culture |
| Institution |
| Named collection |
| Object type |

Advanced Search

Advanced Searches allow you to query on the field or fields of your choice. Type what you want to find in the blank fields or click on the "Choose a value" link to see a list of data present in the museum's collections. Press the 'Begin the Advanced Search button at the top or the bottom of this page to run your query.

[Begin the Advanced Search]

Institution	[ ]	Choose a value
Named collection	[ ]	Choose a value
ID Number	[ ]	Choose a value
Category	[ ]	Choose a value
Object type	[ ]	Choose a value
Maker / Artist	[ ]	Choose a value
Title / Object name	[ ]	Choose a value
Place made	[ ]	Choose a value
Culture	[ ]	Choose a value
Provenance	[ ]	Choose a value
Place collected	[ ]	Choose a value
Collector	[ ]	Choose a value

Here you can combine aspects through manual searches, or select predefined values from the list pop-up given by selecting 'Choose a value' beside the given criterion. The lists are often long and unwieldy, but will guarantee results from the engine.

While mint place is listed as a person in the 'maker' field with its historic name, it will be listed with the modern name of the city in 'place made', so 'Lugdunum' in maker, 'Lyons' in place made, for example.

Collection numbers

You will note that all of our entries begin with the prefix 'BIRBI-', this is simply an indicator that the object is held by the BIRmingham Barber Institute, as distinct from other users. If you are searching for an object published in a book or article, place the prefix 'BIRBI-' in front of that number in the simple object search bar. If you are requesting an image for publication, please note that the credit line should appear without this prefix used on the website.