

AVITUS

A.D. 455–456

Avitus was born in Gaul into a senatorial family and studied law as a young man. He paid a visit to the Visigothic court about 425 and was thereafter favoured by Theodoric. He pursued a distinguished military career in Gaul, serving under Aetius, and in 439 became Praetorian Prefect of his native province. After giving up the prefecture he retired to his country estates until Attila and the Huns invaded Gaul in 451, when he emerged from retirement to urge Theodoric to join with Aetius and the Romans against the common enemy. He was appointed Magister Militum by Petronius Maximus in 455 and was sent as an envoy to the Visigoths. After the death of Petronius Maximus, Avitus was persuaded by the Goths and the Gauls to become emperor. However, he was greatly disliked in Rome, and in the following year he was defeated and deposed by the general Ricimer. He was created bishop of Placentia, but died not long afterwards.

Obverse legend.

DN AVITVS PF AVG.

Obverse bust.

pearl diadem, draped, cuirassed, right.

For a discussion of fifth-century silver denominations and their names, see the Introduction.

	VF	EF
9 R VRBIS ROMA, Roma seated l., hldg. Victory on globe and reversed spear. Rome RMPS. siliqua (confirmation required)	2,500	5,500

MAJORIAN

A.D. 457–461

Flavius Julius Valerianus Majorianus served in the army under Aetius and saw active service in Gaul c. 447–448. Subsequently he retired from the army but was recalled by Valentinian III to appease Aetius' troops following their general's assassination. Appointed Magister Militum in 457, later the same year he was proclaimed emperor, nearly six months after the downfall of Avitus. He sent a small army against the Alamanni in 457 and defeated them. In 460 he organized a large force to attack the Vandals in Africa, but by treachery Gaiseric succeeded in destroying most of the Roman fleet before it had even left harbour, and Majorian was forced to abandon the expedition and make peace. As a result of this disaster the emperor's authority was undermined, and he was arrested by the general Ricimer and executed in northern Italy in 461.

Obverse legends.

- A. DN MAIORANVS PF AVG.
- B. DN MAIORIANVS (N reversed in name)
- C. DN MAIORIANVS AVG.

Obverse bust.

pearl diadem, helmeted, draped, cuirassed, right, spear pointing forward.

For a discussion of fifth-century silver denominations and their names, see the Introduction.

	VF	EF
8†a Ba R VICTORIA AVG, Victory stg. l. hldg. long cross. Ravenna(?) ⊥. siliqua (barbarous?)	1,500	3,500
8†b Ca R CC VIT (sic), As last. Mint? ^{••} half siliqua (barbarous)	1,250	2,750
8†c Ca R As last. Mint? ^{••} half siliqua (barbarous)	1,250	2,750
13 Aa R VOTIS MVLTIS, emperor stg. facing in mil. dress hldg. spear and shield. Ravenna(?) ⊥. half siliqua forgery		