

## **The Amber Route 琥珀之路**

Sopron is located on the *Bernstein (Amber) route*, connecting the Baltic and Italy, and was an important center of trade before the Romans conquered Pannonia.

[http://www.powercoin.it/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=95\\_65&products\\_id=398&language=en](http://www.powercoin.it/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=95_65&products_id=398&language=en)

<http://world.people.com.cn/BIG5/1031/4929601.html>

Forty or fifty million years more ago, resin dripped down the trunks of prehistoric pine trees, which the ancient Greeks called the "tears of gods". Insects, plant seeds, little frogs, even small lizards got trapped in the tacky surface of it and covered by it which hardened with time to be seen today in the "gold of the sea." The waves of the Baltic Sea have thrown this "gold" of the sea ashore and man carried this gold south along routes that became known as the Amber Road.

Like the Silk Road in Asia the Amber Road connected different cultures and nations between the Baltic and the Adriatic Sea. It was really a series of roads and waterways that for centuries led from Europe to Asia and vice versa, and from northern Europe to the Mediterranean.

A vital component of ornamental objects, amber was transported overland on rivers from the North Sea and Baltic Sea coasts to Italy, Greece, Black Sea and Egypt. The Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun had Baltic amber among his burial goods, and amber was sent from the North Sea to the temple of Apollo at Delphi as an offering. From the Black Sea, trade could continue to Asia along the Silk Road. The amber road went

different directions, depending upon whom was in power.

In 225 BCE, the Romans inflicted their first major defeat upon the Celts, who at this time occupied the entire Po valley. Whatever amber managed to get into Italy came by way of the sea, or as trade through the Celts. During the first millennium BCE, Rome was beginning to push the Celts back into upper Germany. However, the amber source, the Baltic Sea, still remained out of Rome's direct control. By now routes were open to the Danube valley, and an overland amber route established. This went from the head of the Adriatic Sea around the east flank of the Alps and through Austria and Poland to the Baltic.

As demand for amber grew, Rome became more interested in cutting out the middlemen and dealing direct with the source, wherever that was. Emperor Nero sent a small exploration party up the amber trail with orders to seek out the source. When the soldiers returned, they carried with them a huge load of amber, and the news that the source was so far away that Rome could never protect those sent to take it. Over half the route was through the lands of their ancient enemy, the Celts. While at the moment they were peaceful, they could not be trusted, especially if Rome was to take away such a lucrative source of income. If Rome could not control the source, they could at least make the distance as short as possible and cut the price of amber down a bit. With this in mind, Emperor Claudius set out to pave a road across the Alps.

# A Rota do Âmbar



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amber\\_Road](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amber_Road)

## The "Amber Route" silver coins

These antique finish silver coins, produced by the Mint of Poland, trace the ancient Roman "Amber Road" from the south shore of the Baltic Sea, in northern Europe, all the way to Roman Italy. The Amber Route follows the path of merchants who travelled these areas to buy amber, these travels started as early as the 1st century BC. The Amber Route is also a cover name for the multiple commercial relationships between the Mediterranean and Baltic countries.



The coin reverse depicts in the center, a Roman covered wagon pulled by two horses. The bust profile portrait of a Roman legionnaire oversees the transport. In background a map of the Baltic Sea, indicating the coastline and location of Kaliningrad. A profile portrait of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II is depicted on the coin.



Kaliningrad (Königsburg), Russia

In the center of the coin observe is the inscription for the town of Kaliningrad. Beneath the

inscription is the image of a Pugio; a small dagger used as sidearms by Roman soldiers. In the background is an image of Königsberg Castle, the name sake of the town that became known as Kaliningrad in 1946. In the top right portion of the coin is an image of an ancient coin, the type used to pay for amber in those times, while next to that is a genuine amber insert. At the bottom of the coin in a semi-circle, is the inscription "SZLAK BURSZTYNOWY" (Amber Route).



Gdansk (Danzig), Poland

The coin obverse depicts medieval crane Zuraw sits behind a Roman coin and the statue of Neptune in the city's central market square, with a circular piece of Polish amber inlaid. A portrait Roman coin complete the design. The legend above reads "GDANSK and SZLAK BURSZTYNOWY ("Amber Route").

of St. Nicholas, located in old town Elblag, with a circular piece of Polish amber inlaid. A dual portrait Roman coin and a Roman wine cup complete the design. The legend above reads "ELBLAG and SZLAK BURSZTYNOWY" ("Amber Route").



Wroclaw (Breslau), Poland

The coin observe depicts impressive Wroclaw historic City Hall built in a typical fourteenth century Brick Gothic and the statue symbol of city, with a circular piece of Polish amber inlaid. A portrait Roman coin complete the design. The legend above reads "WROCLAW and SZLAK BURSZTYNOWY ("Amber Route").



Elblag (Elbing), Poland

The coin obverse depicts a medieval Roman Catholic cathedral