

## HOW MUCH DOES A COIN WEIGH?

(Source unknown)

A coin weighs 1.6 ounces avoirdupois or 1/10 pound American in official AD&D rules. This is, of course, just plain stupid.

I just got a catalogue of ancient and medieval coins (\$95.00 to \$2,000 plus per coin, if you're interested) and let me tell you something:

Great honking enormous coins like presented in AD&D were not at all common.

Okay, we already know that the standard unit of English currency was the penny or denier during the middle ages (penny=denier). The prototype ideal English penny was minted under William the Conqueror (some scholars may disagree with this). It was a coin that was two centimeters in diameter and made of high grade silver. It weighed, surprise, surprise, one pennyweight. How much was a pennyweight? It was legally defined as a weight equal to 1/240th a pound.

Thus, an English penny theoretically weighed 1/240th a pound. How much was a silver penny worth? Well, according to some sources I've read, you could buy what AD&D erroneously calls a "longsword" for around 20 to 40 pennies, depending on the century.

Okay, so for the sake of simplicity, we have a silver coin weighing 1/240th a pound (that's about 0.0667 common US ounces [avoir.] or 1.89 grams for our European readers). Around 20 to 40 of these silver coins could buy a "longsword".

Other common monetary units:

| Unit      | Value  |
|-----------|--|
| Groat     | 2 pennies ("tuppence")                                   |
| Shilling  | 12 pence   |
| Sovereign | Variable, depending on gold content.                     |
| Pound     | 240 pence--no pound coins were minted in medieval times. |

Gold tends to value 10 to 50 times silver per weight depending upon market pressures.