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Ambiguity, Iconology and Entangled Objects on Coinage of the Republican World

Abstract:

The provincial coinage of the Roman Empire has proven to be a rich source for studying civic experiences of Roman rule, but the coins struck outside Rome during the expansion of the Roman Republic have, by contrast, received relatively little attention. This article aims to begin redressing this neglect by exploring the active role of coinage in conceptualising and representing Roman Republican power. A variety of approaches to this neglected material are employed in order to highlight its potential as a source. Ambiguity, iconology or the social life of images, and entanglement are used as frameworks to explore case studies from across the Roman Republican world, from Spain to Syria. This approach to coin imagery under the Republic reveals the complexity and variety in which the Roman presence, and Roman *imperium*, was represented before the advent of the principate.

Introduction

In ‘Notes towards an anthropology of money’ Keith Hart observes that communities operate through culture or meanings held in common, and that ‘money is, with language, the most important vehicle for this collective sharing’.¹ Money is a media that enables the commensuration of differing value systems (crucial to conquest or contact situations) and whose circulation defines particular political and/or social groupings. Money contributes to a sense of commonality, and its iconography encourages collective traditions, values and memory.² Money is, in short, one of several media that actively contribute to the formation and maintenance of a community and its traditions. It achieves this by being used, handled, seen and

The following abbreviations are used:

ACIP: Villaronga, L. and J. Benages, (eds). (2011). *Ancient Coinage of the Iberian Peninsula*. Barcelona.

HN *Italy*: Rutter N.K. (2001) *Historia Numorum: Italy*, London.

RPC: Burnett, A., M. Amandry and P. P. Ripolles (1992). *Roman Provincial Coinage Vol 1*. London.

RRC: Crawford, M. H. (1974). *Roman Republican Coinage (2 vols)*. Cambridge.

SNG *Cop.*: Breitenstein, N. & Schwabacher, W. (1981) *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum. The Royal Collections of Coins and Medals Danish National Museum. Vol 1: Italy-Sicily*. West Milford, New Jersey.

Svoronos: Svoronos, J. N. (1904-1908). *Ta Nomismata tou Kratous ton Ptolemaion*. Athens.

¹ Hart 2005

² There are numerous works on the role of money in society and culture but see, by way of a representative sample, Backhaus 1999, Comaroff and Comaroff 2006, Foster 1998, Helleiner 2002, Helleiner 2003, Howgego 2013, Marten and Kula 2008, and Mwangi 2002.

interpreted, and/or by becoming part of the embodied habits of daily social life: unnoticed and normative but nonetheless generating social constructions.³

These functions were also present in the Roman world. Howgego has recently demonstrated the connection between coinage and Roman expansion, and the detailed study of the site of Lattara in Gaul has revealed how Roman conquest within this one settlement lead to an increased presence of money in order to facilitate exchange and commensuration between differing value systems.⁴ Although site finds often only contain coins that have been lost or discarded, and the archaeological record is far from complete, the presence of significant quantities of coins at excavated settlements (whether they be large cities like Athens or Corinth, Roman legionary camps like Numantia, or smaller settlements like Lattara or the mining village of La Loba) demonstrates that coinage did have a role in everyday life.⁵ The extent of rural coin use is more controversial, but here new studies, at least for the imperial period, suggest coin use was higher than has originally believed.⁶

Studies of Roman coinage have demonstrated how these media enabled Roman expansion and acted as ‘monuments in miniature’ that expressed and reinforced cultural values.⁷ Imperial coins commonly carried imagery focused on the imperial family. The (mostly bronze) coinage struck by individual cities in the Roman Empire, labelled provincial coinage in modern scholarship, carried types of local significance, as well as local representations of Roman rule and the imperial family.⁸ During the Roman Republic the somewhat static imagery introduced with the denarius system in c. 212 BC gradually transformed into an extraordinary array of designs that focused on the ancestry of individual moneyers (at least on denarii), a phenomenon that might be connected to the larger role of money in as a media of memory that ‘remembers’ our transactions with others.⁹ But what type of imagery was borne by the local coinages of cities and tribes that gradually fell under Republican *imperium*? As in the imperial period, types of local significance can be found in quantity. But as a medium

³ Billig 1995, Yarrow 2013:348-9

⁴ Howgego 2013, Luley 2008

⁵ Corinth: <http://www.ascsa.edu.gr/index.php/excavationcorinth/digital-corinth>, Athens: Kroll 1993, Thompson 1954. Numantia: Hildebrandt 1979, Schulten 1914-1931, La Loba: Blázquez Martínez, Domergue et al. 2002.

⁶ Aarts 2005:6, Buttrey 1999:527, although Hollander 2007 identifies a ‘rural’ monetary zone that only saw increased demand for coin in the late Republic.

⁷ On expansion see Howgego 2013:1, who observes that the limits of coin use in Iron Age societies roughly equates to the limits of the later Roman Empire. On ‘monuments in miniature’ see Chueng 1998 for the imperial period and Meadows and Williams 2001 for the Republic.

⁸ e.g. Bland 1996 (although Alexandria remains somewhat unique), Burnett 2011, Harl 1987, Howgego 2005, Papageorgiadou-Bani 2004, Weisser 2005.

⁹ Studies on imperial coinage are numerous, but see, by way of example, Burnett 2011, Chueng 1998, Howgego, Heuchert et al. 2005, Noreña 2001, Noreña 2011, Rowan 2013c, and Wallace-Hadrill 1986. Meadows and Williams 2001 remains central for Republican coinage. Hart 2005 observes that money essentially is a medium of collective memory through which we keep track of our proliferating connections with others; the Roman conceptualization of coinage and what to place on it thus may be explicable in terms of broader monetary theory.

of commensuration, money is an item that is often at the forefront of conquest, contact or colonial situations; thus we might expect that coinage struck within the regions under Roman control in the Republic would also carry indications of how Rome, and those under her dominion, conceptualised Roman hegemony. In sum, if provincial coinage of the imperial period has proven a fruitful source for uncovering differing imperial ideologies and local reactions, then the coinage of the Republic might provide similar information.

In spite of the potential, analysis of these coins has not entered the scholarly discourse to the same extent as their imperial cousins, although the material has seen more analysis within numismatics.¹⁰ This relative neglect might be furthered by the fact that the *Roman Provincial Coinage* series begins in 44 BC, while earlier coins struck in the Republican provinces are catalogued in the *Historia Numorum* and *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* series alongside archaic and classical Greek specimens. The iconography of these coins is also not immediately ‘Roman’ and so may not immediately attract the attention of the Roman historian (although the persistence of local coin imagery in the face of growing Roman power is a topic that needs further study). This article is intended to begin to redress this imbalance, exploring what the coins struck outside of Rome might reveal about the way Roman control was understood in this period.

The highly heterogeneous nature of this material makes categorising it problematic. There can be no easy category of ‘Republican provincial coinage’, since *imperium* and *provincia* in this period referred to the particular powers of a Roman magistrate and their limits, not to a territorial Empire.¹¹ Identifying when an area became a ‘Roman province’ is inherently complicated: Numidia, for example, saw Roman presence and interference with the Jugurthine War, was awarded to several Romans as part their *provincia*, witnessed Roman settlers as part of the *lex sempronia*, but only became a ‘province proper’ under Septimius Severus.¹² The Romans did not possess a neat concept of what their Empire or *imperium* entailed, although the writings of Polybius, Cicero and others reveal that *imperium* was connected to the ability to command obedience.¹³ The nature of Rome’s relationships with other states or regions also varied over time, making any generalised statement about experience of an empire (whether ‘formal’, ‘informal’ or otherwise) impossible.¹⁴

These complexities, unsurprisingly, find a parallel in the different coinages struck during the expansion of the Republic. In addition to the coinage struck by Roman magistrates and listed by Crawford in the *Roman Republican Coinage*, this period saw numerous other types of coinage. Precious metal and non-precious metal coinage was struck at the initiative of cities or tribes, coins were struck by Roman officials in the provinces (at times in military or war contexts to meet Roman expenses, at times issued *for* use in the provinces), and other coins that may have been struck under

¹⁰ e.g. Crawford 1973, Crawford 1985, Burnett and Crawford 1987, Ellams, Morgan et al. 2014, Frey-Kupper 2013, Gozalbes 2012, Haug 2008, Jiménez 2010, Kroll 1972, Kroll 1997b, Kroll 1997a, Rowan 2014a.

¹¹ Richardson 2011

¹² Briand-Ponsart 2011

¹³ Kallet-Marx 1995:20-29,

¹⁴ Eckstein 2013

some form of Roman presence or control that is hard to define. ‘Roman’ and ‘provincial’ or ‘non-Roman’ are slippery categories when examining coinage of this period. The bronze coinage struck by Roman magistrates for local use in western Sicily, for example, has, due to its mix of ‘Roman’ and ‘Sicilian’ features attracted the term ‘Romano-Sicilian’.¹⁵ Similarly, silver tetradrachms of Thasos were originally produced by the Thasians in the second century BC before ‘imitative types’ of the same design were produced by workshops in the Roman province of Macedonia from 148-90/80 BC, presumably under Roman authority (the Romans may have influenced both sets of coinages here, it is impossible to know).¹⁶ Only the high volume of production and find spots suggest the latter series is a Roman product, characteristics that have also helped to identify many other silver coinages struck for Roman use and discussed below. Many emissions also remain of uncertain date. Embracing this complexity, variety, and uncertainty, however, provides an insight into the wider world of the Roman Republic, which in turn contributes to our understanding of the early years of the principate: the coinage of Augustus, for example, also proves difficult to divide neatly into ‘Roman’ and ‘provincial’.¹⁷

Coinage struck within the context of Roman Republican *imperium* did at times carry overt references to Roman hegemony. The Flamininus stater, carrying the portrait of Flamininus, is one of the earliest and best discussed examples, and other Roman portraits appear on coinages in the second half of the first century BC.¹⁸ References to Roman magistracies appear on issues of Romans struck in the provinces via the representation of their objects of office (*sella curulis*, *sella quaestoris*, *cista*, etc), and the names of Roman officials appear on silver coinage of local style throughout the first century BC in the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁹ Cities might also make overt references to Rome: Locri struck silver coinage with what must be one of the earliest numismatic representations of Roma known (c. 275 BC).²⁰ In Amisos (Pontus) in c. 61-58/7 BC under the governor Gaius Papirius Carbo, Roma also featured: bronze issues displayed the bust of Roma on the obverse (accompanied by the legend AMISYOY, naming the coin as an issue of Amisos) and Roma Nikephoros seated on shields on the reverse (the accompanying legend reads ΕΠΙ ΓΑΙΟΥ ΠΑΠΕΙΡΙΟΥ ΚΑΡΒΩΝΟΣ, with ΡΩΜΗ the exergue).²¹

¹⁵ Bahrfeldt 1904, Frey-Kupper 2013:204ff

¹⁶ Prokopov 2006:213, Meadows 2013:274. Some of the Thasos ‘imitative’ types carried monograms of Roman proquaestors.

¹⁷ The bronzes of Lugdunum and Nemausus are perhaps the best discussed examples, though there are others as well. Like the Thasos tetradrachms, it is only the size and wide circulation of these coins that reveal them to be ‘imperial’ as well as ‘provincial’, see Sutherland 1976:29-30 and Suspène 2012.

¹⁸ de Callataj 2011:59-60, Erkelenz 2002

¹⁹ e.g. RPC 1 908, 911, 919-922 (bronze coins of Roman officials in Cyrenaica in the second half of the first century BC), and the Aesillas coinage of Macedonia, discussed in Bauslaugh 2000. For the appearance of Roman names on silver coinage in the east see the overview in de Callataj 2011.

²⁰ HN *Italy* 2347-51. Roma appears on Roman coinage for the first time at the same period (c. 275-270 BC, RRC 19/2).

²¹ Stumpf 1991:56-69

But in addition to these clear references to Rome (many dated to the first century BC), does the heterogeneous mass of surviving coinage reveal other ways in which Roman Republican *imperium* was presented or negotiated? This article focuses on less obvious references on coins struck at the authority of Roman magistrates and/or civic elites. Given the very specific definitions of *imperium* and *provincia* in the Republic, how was the Roman presence represented at a local level, if at all? What follows is a selection of examples intended to demonstrate the diversity of experience; little of a generalising or universalising nature can be put forward. The evidence is messy, diverse and at times uncertain, but so too were the differing conceptions of empire in the Republican period, and the iconography of Rome's own major currency, the denarius, from c. 130 BC. What follows then is not a definitive discussion, but is an exploration intended to highlight some of the potential of the heterogeneous mass.

A variety of methodological approaches provide the best avenue for interpreting this material, and three different approaches form the focus of the following discussion. The first section explores how ambiguity could serve as a strategy in times of change or upheaval. Iconology is then discussed to reveal the ways that Roman power may have been conceptualised by Romans and provincial elites. Finally, the concept of entanglement, and more specifically the role of entangled objects, is presented as a way of understanding and identifying (re)presentations of Roman power. These concepts are not intended as definitive approaches to the interpretation of this coinage. Like the provincial coinage of the principate, the messages and images borne by this medium are diverse, demanding a multitude of approaches. Nonetheless, the concepts outlined below provide a useful framework to begin to fully exploit this type of evidence in Republican history.

Ambiguity

Although disparaged in the modern English-speaking world, ambiguity is an important communication strategy within and between cultures, often occurring within liminal or boundary contexts.²² Ambiguity can serve a number of cultural or political purposes, including contributing to the cohesion of differing groups.²³ An ambiguous phrase, word, object or image remains open to interpretation, meaning that it can evoke a variety of responses, experiences or interpretations.²⁴ This is what makes ambiguity a good strategy for community formation: everyone might identify with an ambiguous image, for example, although all may have incompatible interpretations about what the image actually represents.²⁵ Shared usage of an object or image does not necessitate shared meaning; on the contrary, the shared use of an item minimizes the need to insist upon or create shared meaning (the object/image, rather than the meaning is the common factor), which in turn lessens cultural conflict.²⁶ An example of this is the role the Parthenon marbles played in discussions

²² Levine 1985:23-24, Seligman and Weller 2012:13-36. See Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.47-56 and 7.9 for a discussion on the ambiguity (*amphibolia*) of words.

²³ Levine 1985:20-35 for a full discussion.

²⁴ Seligman and Weller 2012:26

²⁵ Landau 2002:18, Levine 1985:218

²⁶ Seligman and Weller 2012:160-1

of British identity in the nineteenth century: because the meaning of the reliefs was not immediately apparent to British viewers, the figures could evoke different interpretations, each of which reflected (conflicting) constructions of ‘Britishness’.²⁷ But the marbles served as a shared object for differing groups within Britain, despite conflicting interpretations. Ambiguous images, by their very nature, can travel between various societal domains (imaginary, linguistic, intellectual, material) to form a focal point for a community, making abstract ideas of ‘nation’, ‘empire’ or ‘*res publica*’ more concrete or tangible for those concerned.²⁸

Close examination of coin iconography from the Republic suggests that ambiguity did play a role during Roman expansion. I have elsewhere discussed the ambiguity inherent within the bronze coinage struck after the Roman victory in Macedonia in 168 BC by the Roman quaestor Gaius Publilius and his successor Fulcinnius.²⁹ The issues, similar to the ‘Romano-Sicilian’ coins discussed below, were struck under the authority of a Roman quaestor for use in the region (might we then label them ‘Romano-Macedonian’?). The obverse of the series carried a helmeted head, traditionally identified as a representation of Roma (Fig. 1). However, the iconography of the head is also extremely similar to the head of the hero Perseus, an image that had graced Macedonian coinage before the Roman arrival (Fig. 2; Philip V had also portrayed himself as Perseus on silver tetradrachms).³⁰ It is difficult to discern whether this ambiguity was intentional on behalf of Publilius or the die engraver, but the absence of an identifying legend (which might have told the viewer whether the image was Roma or Perseus) would have contributed to the image’s ability to be read in multiple ways. Earlier Macedonian coins had also presented the hero Perseus without an accompanying legend, furthering the potential for the images to be seen as interchangeable. Even if the ambiguity was not intentional, once in circulation the meaning of the image likely changed as the coin circulated from user to user: a Roman soldier may have glanced at the coin and seen Roma, a local Macedonian Perseus, and as the coin continued to circulate over the years the identification of Roma may have become the more dominant interpretation.³¹ Due to its mobility coinage has an inherently unstable viewing context that invites multiple meanings or associations.³² Thus Romans and Macedonians shared an object and an image in the aftermath of the Roman appearance in the region without necessarily possessing a shared meaning.

²⁷ Rose-Greenland 2013, Rowan forthcoming-c

²⁸ Olsen 2010:3-5, Zubrzycki 2011:24

²⁹ MacKay 1968: no. 1, Rowan forthcoming-b. These issues were originally thought to date to 148-146 BC (the creation of the ‘province’ of Macedonia), but scholarship now leans towards a dating of 168-166 BC. See Burnett 2000, Liampi 2002, MacKay 1968, Prokopov 2012:185. Silver production also seems to have continued, with a significant increase in volume, from 168 BC, see Prokopov 2012.

³⁰ See Rowan forthcoming-b for a more detailed discussion. One of these coins was found in a Hellenistic fill context at Corinth; the excavators described the obverse as ‘Head of Roma (or hero, Perseus?)’: see Corinth Coin 1947 57 and Romano 1994: no. 133.

³¹ Just as on Hellenistic Punic coinage Melqart and Hercules might be ‘simultaneously apparent’, see Yarrow 2013:357.

³² Mwangi 2002:35



Figure 1: Bronze coin of Macedonia, 168-167 BC (?), c. 25mm. Obverse: Helmeted head, wearing helmet that ends at the top in a griffin's head. Reverse: MAKEΔONΩN TAMIOTΓAIOTY ΠOΠAIAIOTY within oak wreath. (Mackay no. 1, Reproduced courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group Inc., Mail Bid Sale 78, lot 445, www.cngcoins.com)



Figure 2: Bronze coin of Philip V, Macedon, 221-179 BC, 17mm. Obverse: Head of Perseus right, wearing winged Phrygian helmet. Reverse: Harpa, BA above, Φ below. All within oak-wreath. (SNG München 1194, Reproduced courtesy of Gitbud & Naumann, Auction 14 lot 137, www.pecunem.com).

Similarly the figure of the wolf in the Republican world could act in an ambiguous manner, referring to Roman or local cultures, or both simultaneously. The she-wolf with twins was a quintessential image of Rome, appearing on some of the earliest Roman coins (Fig. 3).³³ A wolf by itself might also reference Rome, as poignantly demonstrated by the coinage struck by the Italians during the Social War: on one issue a bull (representing Italy) is shown goring a wolf (representing Rome), an image that vividly encapsulated the rebellion of 90-88 BC.³⁴ After the Social War the lone wolf also appeared on coinage issued by Roman moneyers (Fig. 4), an iconographic development perhaps inspired by the Italian use.³⁵ These are clear, unambiguous contexts.

³³ e.g. RRC 20/1, 39/3, De Rose Evans 1992: 59-86

³⁴ e.g. HN *Italy* 420, Burnett 1998, Campana 1987, Dench 1995:213

³⁵ RRC 388 with discussion in DeRose Evans 1992:86



Figure 3: AR didrachm, 269-266 BC. Obverse: Head of Hercules, right, with hair bound with ribbon; with club and lion-skin over shoulder. Border of dots. Reverse: She-wolf, right; suckling twins; in exergue, ROMANO. (RRC 20/1, Reproduced courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, ILE2002.11.32)



Figure 4: AR denarius, 77 BC, Rome, P. Satrienus moneyer. Obverse: Helmeted head of Roma, border of dots. Reverse: She-wolf left, ROMA above, P. SATRIE in exergue. Border of dots. (RRC 388/1b, Reproduced courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, 2001.87.1594)

But the wolf also acted as a shared image for Rome and some of the communities under her *imperium*. Dionysius of Halicarnassus relates a story about an omen that appeared to Aeneas that foretold the greatness of Lanuvium: a fire broke out in the forest and a wolf appeared and threw dry wood upon it, then an eagle appeared and fanned the flame with its wings, both animals ensuring the continuation of the fire in spite of a fox that attempted to put it out.³⁶ The story is perhaps referenced on Roman *sextantes* of the third century BC, and is definitely shown on a first century denarius displaying Juno Sospita on the obverse (a reference to Lanuvium) and the two animals tending the fire on the reverse.³⁷ The wolf then was a symbol shared by both Rome and Lanuvium. Similarly Strabo reports that the Samnite colony of the Hirpini was founded by a wolf, ‘for “*hirpus*” is what the Samnitae call the wolf’, and Dench suggests that the Hirpini altered their story in the third or second century BC so that the wolf was the same animal that would go on to suckle Romulus and Remus.³⁸ The

³⁶ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.59 with discussion in DeRose Evans 1992: 63-4.

³⁷ RRC 39/3, 472/1-2.

³⁸ Strabo 5.4.12, Dench 1995:185, 210. The Hirpi possessed a significant settlement called Romulea, see Salmon 1989.

image was shared by multiple groups, although with different (simultaneously apparent) stories.

Rhegium provides a further example. Rhegium had been an ally of Rome from the third century BC and during the Second Punic war Roman military were stationed within the city.³⁹ Bronze coinage struck by the city (carrying the city's ethnic) at this juncture becomes remarkably 'Roman' in nature: marks of value appear, and the city releases a type with the Dioscuri on the reverse, an imitation of Roman denarii and providing a *terminus post quem* of c. 212 BC.⁴⁰ It was within this context that another bronze coin was struck, showing the head of Apollo on the obverse (a well-established numismatic type in the town) and a wolf on the reverse (Fig. 5).⁴¹ The image is ambiguous in its meaning, although, again, we have no way of knowing whether this was the intention of the die engraver or issuing authority. The wolf might be viewed as a reference to Rome (particularly given the other Roman influences on coinage of the city at this time, and the physical presence of Roman soldiers in the town), but it might also commemorate the recent victory of Rome, and Rhegium as her ally, over the *Lucani*. When striking coinage during the Second Punic War, the Lucani played on the similarity between their ethnic and the Greek word for wolf (λύκος), using of a wolf's head as a symbol on their issues, and employing a Greek translation of their ethnic that intentionally underscored the similarity.⁴² The addition of a palm leaf to the obverse of Rhegium's coin does suggest the celebration of a victory, and the small numbers in which this particular type is found within the archaeological record reflects an issue more commemorative than substantive.⁴³ The wolf image then possessed multiple possible interpretations (even if this was not the intention of the creator); different users could generate their own particular meaning, although the image is shared between Romans and locals, providing a point of connection.



Figure 5: AE tetrantes, last quarter of the third century BC (?), 23mm. Obverse: Laureate head of Apollo; palm branch behind. Reverse: Wolf, III in field right, PHII above, NQN in exergue. HN *Italy* 2562. (Reproduced courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group Inc., (Mail Bid Sale 67, Lot 200), www.cngcoins.com).

³⁹ Castrizio 1995:45-58, Liv. 23.30.9

⁴⁰ HN *Italy* 2563, Castrizio 2011:56-7, Crawford 1985:71

⁴¹ HN *Italy* 2562, Castrizio 2011:59-60, Marchetti 1978:488, 494-7. On Rhegium's role in the Second Punic War see Castrizio 1995:58-61, and Liv. 24.1.9-12, 26.39.2-7.

⁴² The translation of the Oscan should be ΛΟΥΚΑΝΟΜ, which was used on some coinages, but the appearance of ΛΥΚΙΑΝΩΝ was probably to play on the Greek word λύκος, as suggested in Rutter 2001:129.

⁴³ Silberstein Trevisani Ceccherini 2014:63-88, 176, 282

The bronzes of Rhegium formed an important source of small change within the city and more broadly within southern Italy, although finds of this wolf issue (and its accompanying larger denomination with jugate heads of the Dioscuri on the obverse) are relatively rare.⁴⁴ Known finds of Republican bronze in Rhegium mainly come from imperial period contexts, and thus the bronze coinage struck in the name of the city was likely an important currency in facilitating daily transactions in the Republican period: it is the role of Rhegium as a harbour that might serve Roman interests that probably meant the city was allowed to continue striking bronze coinage into the second century BC.⁴⁵ The city produced coinage that would be used by both locals and Roman soldiers: the types chosen, including the wolf, reflect this context.

The rarity of both the wolf and the Dioscuri issue suggest they were only struck for a short period, and both were overstruck on Brettian coins.⁴⁶ Castrizio connected the overstriking to the conquest of Taurianum by the garrison in Rhegium in 213 BC, though this is speculative.⁴⁷ In the west in this period the Romans did remove existing non-Roman precious metal currency, presumably to be converted into Roman denarii.⁴⁸ Destruction or removal of bronze issues by Roman authorities, however, is less common. The overstriking of Brettian issues here may then have been the initiative of the civic elite of Rhegium, who converted the coinage into currency more aligned to Roman ideology (similar to the way that provincial cities in the imperial period often took greater pains to enforce the *damnatio memoriae* of emperors on their civic coin issues than the Roman government, whose approach to coinage already in circulation was rather more *laissez-faire*).⁴⁹ The particular context cannot be certain, but what the overstriking does demonstrate is a monetary culture that saw money as a ‘monument in miniature’: opposing viewpoints or imagery communicated by other coin ‘monuments’ needed to be converted.

⁴⁴ HN *Italy* 2553, Castrizio 2011:57-9, for the larger denomination. IGCH 2017 was a hoard with ‘many’ of these wolf issues, though they are not found with the frequency of other types of the city: see Mastelloni 1987:93. On the finds of coinage from Rhegium within the city and elsewhere in southern Italy see Castrizio 1995:164ff, Silberstein Trevisani Ceccherini 2014:67-88 and 176, Visonà and Frey-Kupper 1996, Visonà and Frey-Kupper 1998. The presence of a specimen of the jugate Dioscuri issue (HN *Italy* 2553) in the Strongoli hoard appears to confirm scholarly thinking that these issues are from the Second Punic War: all other coins in the hoard are from the late third century or earlier, and the hoard was likely composed towards the end of the conflict or immediately after. See Siciliano 1995.

⁴⁵ On the finds of Republican bronzes in the city see Mastelloni 1987:97. Amongst the finds was a *semis* of Rome with the wolf and twins / eagle, found during the excavations of Orsi in the necropolis of S. Caterina. Crawford 1985:71 on the connection between harbors and bronze coin production within Italy after the Second Punic War.

⁴⁶ The list of specimens in Silberstein Trevisani Ceccherini 2014:282-4 reveals that the majority of these coins are overstrikes.

⁴⁷ Castrizio 1995:150, Castrizio 2011:60, Livy. 25.1.3. Castrizio identifies Taurianum with Taisia, for a discussion see Cordiano 2000:162.

⁴⁸ Burnett 1995:314-15; Rowan 2014b:82-5

⁴⁹ Harl 1987:35; Kindler 1980; Wolters 1999:317

A further example can be found on the Iberian Peninsula. Upon arrival in the region during the Second Punic War, Rome took over the production of Greek-style silver Emporitan drachms.⁵⁰ Output at the Emporion mint increased dramatically, and seems to confirm a Roman presence behind the production.⁵¹ These drachms, now struck to finance Roman military campaigns, have a different style to earlier issues, though they continue to carry the image of a female head surrounded by three dolphins on the obverse, and Pegasus accompanied by the legend ΕΜΠΙΟΠΙΤΩΝ on the reverse (Fig. 14 below). At around the same time Iberian imitations of these types were struck, including one series carrying the Iberian legend ΙΛΤΙΡΤΑΡ with a four-legged animal beneath Pegasus, traditionally identified as a wolf (this is clearer on some issues than others) (Fig. 6).⁵² The purpose of these issues is unclear, though they are likely connected to the Roman presence on the Peninsula since they date to around this period and were issued in regions under Roman control.⁵³



Fig. 6: AR drachm (19mm, 4.46g), late third century BC. Obverse: Female head right with necklace, three dolphins around. Reverse: Pegasus left, wolf and Iberian inscription below, ACIP 356. (Reproduced courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group Inc., Triton XVII lot 303, www.cngcoins.com)

Villaronga suggested that the wolf was a totemic animal of Iltirta, and perhaps had religious significance; alternatively the wolf may have referenced a foundation myth.⁵⁴ Wolves decorate other items of material culture on the Iberian Peninsula, but

⁵⁰ Gozalbes 2012:19, Ripollès 2005:80, Zarrow 2008:222, ACIP 165-78.

⁵¹ Ripollès 2012:360, Villaronga 1987:212-13

⁵² The legend could also read ΙΛΤΙΡΤΑΣΑΛΙΡ or ΙΛΤΙΡΤΑΣΑΛΙΡΥΣΤΙΝ, ACIP 343-50. On the date of these imitations see Villaronga 1998:106, 142. On the possible military use see Ripollès 2012:360.

⁵³ Villaronga 1969-70:260, Villaronga 1998:103-7 suggests the Iberian imitations were struck during Roman pacification attempts and are the *Oscensis argenti* of Livy (34.10.4). Gozalbes 2012:19, 23 suggests they were struck to finance the Roman effort, and may have continued to be produced after the completion of the war. See also Ripollès, Cores et al. 2009:166, Ripollès 2012:360-1. Without further evidence their original purpose remains speculative (although the common imagery and weight standard is suggestive of some sort of larger co-ordination); relevant to the discussion here is the fact they were issued and circulated in regions under Roman control.

⁵⁴ Giral Royo 2006, Ripollès 2010:180, Villaronga 1969-70, Villaronga 1978:16. Arévalo González 2012:13-14 notes that the settlement associated with these issues has recently been suggested as the *oppidum* of Úbeda de la Vieja (Jaén), the ancient *Lupparia* of Ptolemy's *Geography* (2.6.58).

the arrival of Rome would have given any representation of the wolf in this region further possible associations.⁵⁵ As with Emporiae, Roman military presence on the peninsula was established early in Tarraco (86 km by road from Iltirta/Illerda); what may be one of the first carvings by Roman artisans outside Italy, placed in the third century BC city-wall of Tarraco, shows Minerva with a shield decorated with a wolf's head.⁵⁶ The Romans would have brought a particular set of ideologies and images with them, and, as with the Rhegium coin, the association(s) of the wolf in this new political and cultural landscape may have changed from viewer to viewer.⁵⁷ The representation of the wolf on the pegasi of Iltirta, as well as its unusual appearance on the shield of Minerva (in place of the usual gorgoneion) suggest that, like the Hirpini, both Romans and the neighbouring tribe of Iltirta identified with the wolf, and it may have, over time, become a shared symbol.

Bronze coinage struck in the name of Iltirta from the second century BC carried a wolf as the main design on the reverse (Fig. 7).⁵⁸ On some issues male genitalia is evident, but other examples are not as clear. Again, the image has an ambiguity: the wolf may reference Iltirta or local culture, but it may also (simultaneously) reference Rome for particular viewers. Excavations from the Cabrera de Mar have demonstrated that the bronze coinage of Iltirta was present throughout the first century BC in both the Iberian *oppidum* of Buriac and the neighbouring Roman settlement: this issue, alongside other Iberian coinages and Roman denarii, were used by both populations.⁵⁹ The shared symbol became less ambiguous under Augustus when the city became the *municipium* Ilerda: at this juncture the wolf is altered to become obviously female, and hence unambiguously 'Roman'. Likewise the male head that had traditionally graced the obverse of these coins becomes, unambiguously, the portrait of Augustus (Fig. 8).⁶⁰ This change in iconography may have been intended to introduce a new association of the wolf, but it may also have merely been articulating one of the associations the image already had amongst (some) viewers.

⁵⁶ Jiménez Díez and Rodà 2015:489. It was with an archaic Latin graffito recording that the relief was dedicated to Minerva by Manius Vibius.

⁵⁷ Hoards in Iberia from the Second Punic War display a mix of Emporitan drachms, Iberian imitation drachms, and Roman denarii, suggesting that both Romans and locals used both sets of coinages. See by way of example RRCH 75, 94, 104, 107, 109.

⁵⁸ e.g. ACIP 1246-7, 1267, 1269-71, 1273-5. Burnett, Amandry et al. 1992:109

⁵⁹ Sinner and Martí Garcia 2012:66-67, Sinner 2015:23-24. Iltirta's issues are not found amongst the smaller number of coins from second century BC contexts.

⁶⁰ RPC 1 259-60, DeRose Evans 1992:86, Jiménez 2010:54, Trillmich 2003:628



Fig. 7: AE 22mm coin of Iltirta, c. 80-72 BC. Obverse: Male head right. Reverse: Wolf standing right, Iberian legend ILTIRTA above. ACIP 1273. (Reproduced courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group Inc., Electronic Auction 322, Lot 29, www.cngcoins.com).



Fig. 8: AE 24mm coin of Ilerda, 27 BC – AD 14. Obverse: Bare head of Augustus r., IMP CAESAR DIVI F. Reverse: ILERDA, she-wolf r. RPC 1 259. (Reproduced courtesy of Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG, Auction 64, lot 2359).

In other cities on the Iberian Peninsula the transition to the principate was more ambiguous. Many of the Iberian coinages struck during the Republic, particularly in Hispania Ulterior, carried male heads (sometimes diademed or laureate) on the obverse.⁶¹ For the mints that continue into the imperial period, this male head transforms into a portrait of the emperor, but in many instances the moment of this transition can be difficult to identify. One example is the relatively rare coinage of Osset. The majority of the city's coinage bore a male head on the obverse, and a man carrying a cluster of grapes on the reverse, with the city's name in Latin (Fig. 9).⁶² While the editors of the *RPC* believed that at some point the male head comes to have the features of Augustus (although they admit the 'identification is not certain'), others disagree and instead date the 'Augustan' coins to the first century BC (Fig. 10).⁶³ Again, a legend that would identify the image for the viewer is absent. If scholars with the full surviving corpus of Augustan portraiture at their disposal cannot

⁶¹ Ripollès 2005:85

⁶² ACIP 2463-9. ACIP 2469 is the other type issued by Osset, inspired by Roman coinage, and bearing a helmeted female head (very possibly Roma) on the obverse, and a magistrate's name in Latin, cornucopia and grape cluster on the reverse.

⁶³ Burnett, Amandry et al. 1992:76, Ripollès 2010:77

agree on whether the image is Augustus or not (although there is a definitive change in the style of the portrait from earlier issues), then one imagines the inhabitants of Osset or others faced similar difficulties, with meaning dependant on the knowledge and context of the particular viewer.⁶⁴ We cannot know the precise date of Fig. 10, but this uncertainty, and the differing views amongst current scholarship, likely reflect the different interpretations the image generated amongst users as the coin circulated over time.



Fig. 9: AE 32 mm, Osset, Iberia, c. 150 BC. Obverse: Male head right. Reverse: Human figure standing left, holding bunch of grapes in outstretched right hand. OSET. ACIP 2463. (Image reproduced courtesy of Jesus Vico S.A. (Auction 132, lot 376).



Fig. 10: AE 27mm, Osset, Iberia, reign of Augustus (?). Obverse: Male head right (Augustus?), OSSET. Reverse: Nude male figure standing left, holding bunch of grapes in outstretched right hand. RPC 1 58. (Reproduced courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group Inc., Electronic Auction 322, Lot 463, www.cngcoins.com)

⁶⁴ The location of Osset remains uncertain, although there is a suggestion that it was located somewhere in the vicinity of San Juan de Aznalfarache (Seville). See Ripollès 2010:77.

Similarly in the Iberian town of Laelia the male head that had traditionally graced the obverse of their coinage may at some point transform into the portrait of Augustus, although the *RPC* notes they make this suggestion ‘without any great certainty’.⁶⁵ Iripito is another example.⁶⁶ Many mints in Iberia struck issues that named Augustus on the obverse, making their images non-ambiguous.⁶⁷ But even here the problems of differentiating Augustan coins from those issues struck earlier may have been encountered by illiterate members of the population: this class of coin user would have seen a continuation of male portraiture but were unable to read the identifying legend (although in these cases any controversy might eventually be resolved). Over time, however, with the dissemination of the imperial portrait, these ambiguous images may have come to be ‘read’ as Augustus without question. One wonders whether the ‘male head’ types of the first century BC and earlier that were still in circulation in the imperial period may also have come to be ‘seen’ as the portrait of the emperor.

For the city of Turiaso it has been suggested that the female head on issues of the city (identified as a nymph or deity) transforms into the portrait of Livia during the reign of Augustus.⁶⁸ The legend on the obverse remains the same, however (TVRIASO), and so does not offer the viewer any clues; any identification must derive from knowledge of Livia and her portraiture. Livia does not appear on the imperial coinage of Augustus, and so if Turiaso chose to place her on their coinage, then they were moving beyond official numismatic representations. In this case the image may have been kept intentionally ambiguous to allow multiple readings. Equally the image may never have been an intentional representation of Livia but may have been ‘read’ as such by users (and subsequently modern scholars). Turiaso also employed a similar strategy on the reverse of their coinage. Before the Augustan period the city had struck the common Iberian type of a male head (obverse) and horseman (reverse); in the second half of the first century BC (perhaps after 29 BC), this horseman becomes similar to an equestrian statue, which some have interpreted as an equestrian statue of Octavian.⁶⁹ Other viewers, however, may have simply seen the continuation of traditional imagery. Coins of Turiaso, along with those of other Iberian cities, have been found along the Rhine, suggesting they, at least in a secondary context, travelled with the Roman military.⁷⁰ Like Rhegium and the issues of Iltirtia/Ilerda, the coins of these cities were used by both Romans and locals, viewed and interpreted by multiple audiences, lending themselves to multiple (re)readings during periods of political and cultural transition, and forming a concrete object through which new groups and identities could be negotiated.

Iconology, or The Social Life of Images

⁶⁵ Burnett, Amandry et al. 1992:75, *RPC* 1 54. On earlier issues see *ACIP* 2364, 2367.

⁶⁶ *RPC* 1 55 and accompanying discussion.

⁶⁷ e.g. Segobriga, *RPC* 1 472.

⁶⁸ *RPC* 1 401-2 (laureate female head), and 403 (female head identified by Grant and Etienne as Livia, see Burnett, Amandry et al. 1992:130).

⁶⁹ Earlier horseman issues: *ACIP* 1700ff. Equestrian type: *RPC* 1 401-2. See also Jiménez 2010:54, Jiménez Díez 2008:136.

⁷⁰ García-Bellido 2000:121, García-Bellido 2008:280

Just as coins circulate from user to user generating differing interpretations, so too images can move beyond their medium in what Mitchell has characterised as a social life.⁷¹ Within archaeology this approach has had some application, with object biographies tracing the social life of an object as it moves from context to context.⁷² In its travels an object may be re-valued, re-imbued with (differing) meaning, re-appropriated, or even reincarnated. So too a particular image may travel from medium to medium (even becoming a mental or verbal image for a time), gaining new associations and meanings.⁷³ Key to tracing this social life is the acknowledgement that images are not merely passive, but can also act upon their human observer. Images have the capacity to create new ways of seeing the world, and to introduce new forms of value.⁷⁴

Acknowledging that the meaning and associations of images change as they enter new contexts is vital to understanding how Republican Rome was represented on her coinage. The very first Roman coin bore the traditional imagery of Neapolis, with the head of Apollo on the obverse and a man-faced bull (likely representing a river) on the reverse.⁷⁵ The use of this imagery for a Roman coin would have given the images additional associations, although they still retained their connection with Neapolis. This complex semantic system persisted as Roman coinage continued; many of the Roman bronze coins produced outside of Rome, for example, bore iconography borrowed from Greek and Hellenistic mints.⁷⁶ This interconnectedness continued even as the quintessentially ‘Roman’ denarius system was introduced during the Second Punic War. This coinage was struck in several provinces simultaneously and was accompanied by the removal of precious metal currencies of other states, presumably to be converted into Roman issues. The imagery chosen for the denarius system was also taken from the broader Hellenistic world: the eagle on the thunderbolt selected for Roman gold is otherwise best known from Ptolemaic coinage, the Victory crowning a trophy motif that appeared on Roman *victoriati* had initially appeared on Seleucid and other Hellenistic coinages, and even the Dioscuri had earlier featured on the issues of Taras and other Hellenistic cities.⁷⁷ The prow on

⁷¹ Mitchell 2005 esp. 90-93

⁷² Kopytoff 1986, Joy 2009

⁷³ Mitchell 1998 provides an example of this type of approach, tracing the image of the ‘dinosaur’ from its ‘birth’ in the 1840s until its appearance within modern art.

⁷⁴ See Mitchell 2005:92. Mitchell’s work draws upon Wittgenstein and his ‘noticing an aspect’; see Wittgenstein 1953:194-6, 205-6, and Mulhall 1990:6-34. Cic. *de Orat.* 2.359 also observes that from the *imagines* in an orator’s memory comes thoughts or a way of thinking (*sententia*).

⁷⁵ RRC 1/1

⁷⁶ Burnett 1986, Burnett 1989, Burnett 1998, Crawford 1985:30, Meadows 1998, Williams and Burnett 1998

⁷⁷ Seleucid silver: Houghton and Lorber 2002: nos. 173-6, 195-9. Taras: HN *Italy* 898, 948, 952, 1011, although the Dioscuri also appeared on the coinage of other cities. Ptolemaic coinage: Svoronos 1904-8, Lorber 2012:213.

the reverse of Roman bronzes also had precedent in the issues of Demetrius Poliorcetes and other Hellenistic states.⁷⁸

That Rome should choose to decorate her currency with motifs recalling Hellenistic kingdoms in the third century BC and *not* the wolf and twins, or other ‘typically Roman’ imagery, at the moment she was emerging as a serious international power in the Mediterranean, reveals much about how Rome represented her growing hegemony. If images have the power to change how we see the world, can make us *see this as that*, then the numismatic iconography of Rome’s denarius system was intended to show *Rome as a Hellenistic power* like any other. As mass produced objects that circulated throughout the Roman Republican world (though significantly more in the west than the east), this particular representation of Rome would have reached a larger audience than the representations of Roman power found in literature or other media. Like other Hellenistic entities in the Western Mediterranean, Rome adopted the visual language of the Hellenistic *koine* while simultaneously localising and re-signifying the images chosen.⁷⁹

Hellenistic visual language might have travelled to Rome in multiple ways and via multiple types of media: via Sicily or other Greek cities in the west, and/or via Rome’s encounters with Hellenistic monarchs like Pyrrhus. Hellenistic bronze coinages did reach Rome and the West. Although not found in volume in the archaeological record, precious metal coinage of the Hellenistic kings may also have arrived in Rome as booty or via other mechanisms before being converted into Roman denarii.⁸⁰ The disappearance of competing precious metal currency in the west demonstrates that Rome was not averse to such conversions of coinage.

An iconological approach to Republican numismatic imagery has implications for traditional interpretations of Roman coin types. The *victoriatu*s reverse, for example,

⁷⁸ Rowan forthcoming-c. Newell 1927: nos. 34, 40, 162-3, 171-3, 175-8 for examples of the Demetrius Poliorcetes type. Ptolemy I also struck gold coins with a prow reverse (Svoronos 25).

⁷⁹ Yarrow 2013:350

⁸⁰ A bronze of Alexander the Great and one of Cassander are just two of the non-Roman coins that form part of the Sottosuolo Urbano 2 assemblage in Rome, currently in the process of being published by Marta Barbato. Bronze issues of Hellenistic kings also form part of the Liri assemblage: Rugg and al. 1995:66 and Clive Stannard *pers. comm.* Textual evidence suggests Rome absorbed and utilised Hellenistic precious metal coinage: see Crawford 1985:124, de Callatäy, Depuyrot et al. 1993, De Callatäy 2005, Rowan 2013a:114-16, Rowan 2013b: 11-19. That these silver coins arrived as booty is further suggested by the Poggio Picenze hoard (IGCH 2056), which included two tetradrachms of Lysimachus and has been identified as the possible pay of a soldier of Sulla (de Callatäy 1997:311). The coinage of eastern Hellenistic monarchs arrives on the Iberian peninsula during the Second Punic War, and the plausible conclusion is that this type of coinage arrived with the Romans: see Ripollès 2008, and van Alfen, Almagro-Gorbea et al. 2008:268. Trace element analysis of Roman Republican gold coinage suggests that the reuse of coinage coming from eastern Hellenistic monarchs is possible (Duyrat and Olivier 2010) but from the time of Augustus the gold sources for Roman *aurei* had changed (Blet-Lemarquand, Suspène et al. 2015).

showing Nike crowning a trophy (Fig. 11), is traditionally thought to commemorate the gifting of a gold statue of Nike to Rome by Hieron of Syracuse in 217/16 BC.⁸¹ It is uncertain why the gifting of a gold statue of Nike would be represented by the image of Nike crowning a trophy, and why this image would have been chosen when Hieron also gifted wheat, barley and archers. Even if this image evoked Hieron's gift *for some viewers* (as it has for modern scholars), for others the image might have been read as a statement made within the broader context of the Hellenistic *koine*, with near identical representations seen on coins of the Seleucids, Agathokles (Fig. 12), Capua, and the Brettii (Fig. 13), amongst others.⁸² Victory had previously appeared on Roman coinage (there was a temple to Victory in Rome from 294 BC) but this particular representation had never before been seen on Roman coinage. The appearance of Nike/Victory in this particular style signified that Rome was now presenting herself in a manner similar to other Hellenistic powers; the adoption of the iconography need not reflect any particular historical event, nor was it likely to generate only one interpretation.



Fig. 11: AR victoriatus, mint of Luceria, 211-208 BC. Obverse: Laureate head of Jupiter. Reverse: Victory crowning trophy, mark in between. ROMA L in exergue. RRC 97/1b. (© Yale University Art Gallery, 2001.87.149).



Fig. 12: AR tetradrachm, Syracuse, Agathokles, c. 310-304 BC. Obverse: Head of Kore right, crowned with barley-wreath, ΚΟΡΑΣ. Reverse: Nike fixing helmet to

⁸¹ Liv. 22.37.1-9, Meadows 1998:127-8, Zehnacker 1973:345-6

⁸² Rowan 2014b:79. Seleucids: n. 77 above. Agathokles: SNG *Cop.* 764-6. Capua, Atella and Calatia: HN *Italy* 467, 474, 493. The Brettii: HN *Italy* 1975-7.

trophy, monogram to left, triskeles to right. ΑΓΑΘΟΚΛΑΕ in exergue. SNG *Cop.* 764. (© Yale University Art Gallery, 2001.87.4788)



Fig. 13: AE double 27mm, Bretti, c. 214-211 BC. Obverse: Head of Ares, bearded and helmeted. Reverse: Nike standing left crowning trophy, caduceus symbol in field, BPETTIQN. HN *Italy* 1975. (©Yale University Art Gallery, 2001.87.2321).

Similarly, an iconological approach undermines the idea that the eagle on a thunderbolt image was placed on Roman gold coinage as a public statement of Ptolemaic financial support during the Second Punic War.⁸³ The eagle on the thunderbolt first appeared on the bronze of Ptolemy I in c. 323-305 BC, but it had also been present on Roman coinage from c. 280-250 BC.⁸⁴ Since this first appearance, the image represented Roman power as much as it did Ptolemaic, with both dynasties claiming the support of Zeus/Jupiter. Indeed, this image had also been used by numerous other cities and kings in the Hellenistic world, including the Bretti during the Second Punic War.⁸⁵ Though the image may have continued to possess Ptolemaic associations, it had gained additional meanings as it was used in new contexts by other cities or kings. It cannot be interpreted unequivocally as a sign of Ptolemaic support for Rome.⁸⁶ That the eagle and thunderbolt represented Roman power can also be seen on the so-called ‘Bocchus monument’, one of the rare Republican monuments surviving today. Whether we connect the monument to Sulla or date it to the second century BC, it is a public statement of Roman power from the Republican

⁸³ Meadows 1998:129-34. No source states that Ptolemy actually provided material support, though embassies were sent, see Plb. 7.2.2 and 9.5.11a (the latter a request for corn). Crawford 1974:720 suggests the type was borrowed from the Mamertines, but that it now ‘bore an entirely Roman air and symbolised the expected triumph of Roman arms’.

⁸⁴ RRC 4/1a, Svoronos 28

⁸⁵ HN *Italy* 1942, 1971-4, 1978-81, 1995-6, 2006-2010 (the last two series an eagle without the thunderbolt). The complexity of this image is also indicated by the fact that a Ptolemaic mint produced eagle on thunderbolt coinage on Sicily for Hieron II, before Hieron himself struck coinage bearing the name and types of Ptolemy II (Wolf and Lorber 2011).

⁸⁶ HN *Italy* 788-9

period, and significantly its reliefs carry the image of an eagle on a thunderbolt alongside other Hellenistic motifs.⁸⁷

The complexity of the situation might be seen within the city of Agrigentum (Akragas) in Sicily. In the second century BC the quaestor Manius Aquilius struck, as part of the coinage issued for use in western Sicily, a type that carried an eagle on a thunderbolt on the reverse (Fig. 14), part of the ‘Romano-Sicilian’ coinage mentioned above.⁸⁸ The issue may have been meant for use within Agrigentum, which struck the same obverse and reverse type carrying their ethnic (Fig. 15).⁸⁹ Although the dating of these two particular types remains uncertain, they are thought to be roughly contemporary. At this particular moment in time, then, Agrigentum contained two sets of coinages with identical imagery, one carrying the name of a Roman magistrate in Latin and the other the name of the city in Greek.⁹⁰ The city’s earlier coinage had also borne eagle types (most commonly an eagle attacking a hare), and during the occupation of the city by the Carthaginians in the Second Punic War, silver half and quarter shekels were struck in the name of the city with an eagle on a thunderbolt on the reverse.⁹¹ The image then would have had multiple possible meanings, and possessed significance for both Roman and Agrigentine users. The coin was a shared image and object that didn’t necessitate shared meaning.



Fig. 14: AE 22mm ‘Romano-Sicilian’ coin, western Sicily, c. 190/170-130/120 BC. Obverse: Head of Zeus, dotted border. Reverse: Eagle on a thunderbolt with wings outstretched, MN (ligate) ACILI. Bahrfeldt 1904: no. 7. (© Trustees of the British Museum 1955,1107.48)

⁸⁷ The scholarship on the monument is large, but see Kuttner 2013:248-70 (arguing it is a Numidian monument erected in Rome in the second century BC), Schäfer 1989:74-83, and Mackay 2000 (who argue it refers to Sulla).

⁸⁸ Bahrfeldt 1904, Bahrfeldt 1928, Frey-Kupper 2013: 204-32

⁸⁹ Frey-Kupper 2013:219, 248. Although for this issue and others there has been some controversy as to the date (see Puglisi 2009: no. 41), Frey-Kupper’s recent study, places the issue between c. 190/170 BC – 130/120BC. Kupper observes there is an obverse die link between one of Manius’ issues and an issue of another magistrate, NASO (p. 249 Abb. 51 no. 2 and 5, p. 253). One specimen of the Zeus/eagle on thunderbolt type is overstruck by a Head of Janus/name within wreath type (Frey-Kupper p. 253 Abb. 55). The issue is this connected to the ‘Romano-Sicilian’ issues, c. 190/170-130/120 BC. For the archaeological data supporting the dating of these issues see Frey-Kupper 2013:262-265.

⁹⁰ Frey-Kupper 2013:366 no. 36, suggests a date for the Akragas issue of 170-130?BC.

⁹¹ Burnett 1983:5-6



Fig. 12: AE 23mm, Agrigentum, c. 170-130 BC? Obverse: Laureate head of Zeus, dotted border. Reverse: Eagle on a thunderbolt with wings outstretched, ΑΚΡΑΓΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ. Gabrici no. 154. (© Yale University Art Gallery, 2001.87.2677).

As a medium designed to make differing value systems commensurate, and which is often at the forefront of any contact between cultures, it is no surprise that money should carry responses and presentations of Roman *imperium*. The interaction and interplay between coin types in the Republican world reveals how Romans and local elites interacted within the framework of Republican *imperium*, a concept of ‘empire’ focused on influence and power rather than territory. From the second century BC, for example, elites in Gaul selectively imitated Roman denarius types, in all likelihood to commemorate alliances between particular tribes and individual Romans, striking coins on the Roman standard. There is little other archaeological evidence to suggest influence from the Roman world at this time, and the issues are small in number, suggesting a political, rather than an economic motive for their minting.⁹² As Rome adopted images from the broader Hellenistic *koine* to demonstrate their power and status, so too did this recur at a smaller level, with elite individuals adopting Roman imagery to create statements about their own power and prestige. The resulting coins reveal how regions entered into the sphere of Roman *imperium* before they were ever officially ‘conquered’.

Similarly towards the end of the third century BC the Iberian Saetabi began to strike coinage for the first time, perhaps to cover costs incurred as part of a relationship with Rome, or for other local expenses. The reverse type was an eagle copied directly from contemporary Roman gold coinage; as in Gaul, there is little other material evidence to suggest Roman influence.⁹³ Ripollès characterises the image at this juncture as one of power and military triumph; given the issue was struck when Rome was establishing her hegemony in the region, it is uncertain whether the eagle here specifically referenced Roman power, or whether the Saetabi selectively adopted this particular image and its associations from Roman coinage to represent themselves and their aspirations. But it was a Roman coin, and the Roman arrival on the Iberian Peninsula that sparked the adoption of coinage and the use of this image. Like the broader Hellenistic world, the material culture and images of the Roman Republic are

⁹² Martin 2015:51-84

⁹³ Ripollès 2007:33, Group I, 109 on the possible context of the issue. The Roman prototype and two specimens found in hoards (the Valeria hoard and the X4 hoard) provide a date range of c.212-200 BC.

characterised by constant movement between the ‘universalising’ and ‘particularising’. The Roman Empire has recently been characterised as a process of increased cultural connectivity (particularly after 200 BC), with Versluys proposing that, archaeologically speaking, Rome is a ‘series of objects in motion’.⁹⁴ We might state that Rome was, additionally, constituted by a series of images in motion. Here the ‘universal’ image (the eagle) is made ‘particular’ by its appearance on a coin of the Saetabi, accompanied by the name of the tribe in Iberian script and an obverse showing the ‘universal’ Herakles, made local through the addition of dots around the god’s neck, which may represent a torque.⁹⁵

Studies of colonial or contact situations in the more modern world have demonstrated that while initially the dominant power creates a vision of the new order via currency, the adoption of this vision by those under the hegemonic power’s control is the moment that ‘your’ money or ‘the government’s money’, becomes ‘our’ money.⁹⁶ And it is at this moment that an ‘imagined community’ is created, when people begin to accept the message, communicated via media, that they belong to a larger community that exists beyond their everyday interactions or experiences.⁹⁷ The proliferation of the imperial image on coinage was key to the development of the ‘imagined community’ of the Roman Empire,⁹⁸ but what of the Republic? There is no single unifying image as in the later period, but the active role played by coinage, and coin imagery, can still be identified. A demonstrative example is provided by the ‘Romano-Sicilian’ bronzes, struck by the Romans for use in western Sicily, specifically in the region encompassing the cities of Panormos, Iaitas, Solus, Lilybaion and Agrigentum. Amongst the designs of these coinages were issues decorated with the head of Zeus on the obverse and a ‘soldier’ or ‘warrior’ on the reverse (an ambiguous image open to multiple interpretations), and head of Apollo on the obverse with a kithara on the reverse.⁹⁹ Panormos, Iaitas, Solus and Lilybaion later struck coins carrying their ethnics which reproduce the images of these particular coins, which circulated in their respective regions: the money of the Roman magistrates had become the money of the cities.¹⁰⁰

The adoption and use of the denarius as a denomination also contributed to the creation of a community. The introduction of a new type of currency and its acceptance in the western Mediterranean represented, in physical form, Rome’s authority in these regions, although the example of Gaul demonstrates that elites elsewhere may have decided to adopt the denominational system as a political statement of alliance with Rome.¹⁰¹ The circulation of this type of currency in the western Mediterranean would have spatially delineated Roman influence. The exchange of currency, as it passed from user to user would have reaffirmed the sense

⁹⁴ Versluys 2013, Versluys 2014

⁹⁵ The suggestion of Ripollès 2007:31. On ‘global’ and ‘local’ meanings of Herakles see Yarrow 2013.

⁹⁶ Foster 1998:70

⁹⁷ Anderson 1991, Foster 1998:70

⁹⁸ Noreña 2011:265

⁹⁹ Frey-Kupper 2013:231-232

¹⁰⁰ Frey-Kupper 2013:257-8

¹⁰¹ Martin 2015:82, although after the initial adoption Gallic quinarii were probably minted for commercial rather than political purposes.

that both individuals belonged to the Roman political economy, with each monetary exchange ‘a momentary recognition of a common ‘imagined community’’.¹⁰² Notably though this phenomenon was confined to the West: denarii would not penetrate east into Greece and beyond until the final decades of the Republic, and in Syria they only circulated extensively in the late first and second centuries AD.¹⁰³

The denarius denomination was also produced in quantity in Hispania Citerior by Iberian tribes (Hispania Ulterior, by contrast, struck no silver). The resulting coins are known as ‘Iberian denarii’. These silver denarii all bore similar iconography, albeit with some slight variation: on the obverse a male head (sometimes bearded, sometimes surrounded by dolphins or other symbols), and on the reverse a horseman, often carrying a lance or a palm-branch, accompanied by the name of the tribe in local Iberian or Celtiberian script (Fig. 13).¹⁰⁴ Iberian denarii were issued during the second century BC and ceased after the Sertorian wars, and are found mainly in the south of the peninsula.¹⁰⁵ Precisely when in the second century these denarii began to be produced (either early or middle second century BC) remains the subject of debate, as do their purpose.¹⁰⁶ The fact that they are only struck in Hispania Citerior and bear very similar iconography, although struck by different tribes suggests some form of Roman tolerance or permission, while the types and script suggest local involvement.¹⁰⁷ Like the adoption of the imagery of a ruling power, the adoption of the denomination of the ruling power and making it one’s own is significant in community formation. Scholarship to date has focused on the possible uses and contexts of this coinage, but the most significant thing about these issues is perhaps their very existence. A shared coin denomination and iconography within Hispania Citerior would have contributed to a shared sense of common identity within the region within the context of expanding Roman hegemony.



Fig. 13: AR Iberian denarius, Bolskan-Osca, second century BC. Obverse: Bearded male head with collar, BON in Iberian script behind. Reverse: Horseman right

¹⁰² Mwangi 2001:765, Mwangi 2002:35

¹⁰³ Burnett 2002:116, Kay 2014:96, Kroll 1997a:140-1

¹⁰⁴ Crawford 1969, Crawford 1985:84-99, DeRose Evans 2013:118-20, Gozalbes 2012, Keay 2003:160-1, Knapp 1977, Knapp 1987, Ñaco del Hoyo 2005:379

¹⁰⁵ Chaves Tristán 2002:210

¹⁰⁶ DeRose Evans 2013:118-120, Gozalbes 2012:20-27, Keay 2003:160-1, Ripollès 2012:362-4

¹⁰⁷ Ripollès 2005:85

holding spear. Iberian inscription BOLSKAN below. ACIP 1412-17, 1422-3. (© Yale University Art Gallery, 2001.87.7291).

The eastern Mediterranean instead used different silver currencies, which also may have changed meaning in response to Roman presence. Rather than shipping or minting denarii in the East, Rome made use of existing silver currencies: Athenian stephanophoric tetradrachms, Macedonian and Thasian tetradrachms, Achaean league hemidrachms, cistophori of Asia Minor, and tetradrachms of Philip Philadelphos.¹⁰⁸ Some issues show only stylistic differences to earlier coins, while others, like the cistophori, carry monograms or legends that refer to Roman magistrates. Many of the latter are struck in the first century BC: from 60 BC the cistophori of Ephesus and Pergamon began to carry monograms and the letter Q, referring to Roman quaestors, similar to the appearance of the letter Q and the name of Aesillas on the tetradrachms of Macedonia struck from c. 90-70 BC.¹⁰⁹ Before the denarius Rome had also made use of local precious metal currency in the West: upon arriving in Iberia, she took over the existing mint of Emporion, and struck drachms carrying the Greek ethnic of the town, albeit with a change in the style of Pegasus' head (Fig. 14).¹¹⁰ It is impossible to define the precise nature of the Roman involvement in these mints, but an iconological approach to the material leads us to ask: did a Roman presence or context at these precious metal mints, marked by an increase in output, lead to a change in the associations of the coinage and its imagery for the user? The increase in volume, and the fact that these coins (and their imagery) were now struck for Roman contexts, must have affected the associations of these coinages in the minds of at least some users.



Fig. 14: AR drachm, Emporion, c. 218-212 BC. Obverse: Female head right, grain ears in hair, three dolphins around. Reverse: Pegasus right, ΕΜΠΙΟΠΙΤΩΝ. ACIP 186. (Reproduced courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group Inc., (Mail Bid Sale 64, lot 12) (www.cngcoins.com))

¹⁰⁸ Baldus 1987:123, Benner 2008:19, Butcher 2004:51-2, Burnett 2002:115-16, de Callatay 2011, Warren 1999

¹⁰⁹ Bauslaugh 1997. The find spots of Aesillan tetradrachms reveals that they were likely struck as tribute payments to Thracian tribes in order to keep the Via Egnatia free during campaigns against Mithridates VI (Bauslaugh 1997:127-129, Rowan forthcoming-b).

¹¹⁰ Gozalbes 2012:19, Ripollès 2012:360, Villaronga 1987:212-13

After the Roman conquest of Syria in 68 BC, the mint at Antioch produced silver Philip Philadelphos tetradrachms, with a small alteration to the original design: a monogram was added that referred to the autonomous city of Antioch.¹¹¹ With the arrival of the Roman governor Aulus Gabinius in c. 57 BC, the monogram changed to refer to Gabinius (Fig. 15), and then the successive governors Crassus (54/3 BC), and Cassius (53/2 BC).¹¹² A Caesarian era was then adopted on issues from 47/6 BC, and the obverse showing the head of Philip Philadelphos was replaced by one showing and naming Augustus in 5 BC.¹¹³ As in other mints, the Roman presence resulted in a higher volume of silver production. Again, while some may have merely seen continuity, other coin users may have associated the Philadelphos tetradrachms with their new governor.¹¹⁴ During Gabinius' governorship several cities in the region adopted the name *Gabinia* and Nysa-Scythopolis struck coins that probably bear his portrait accompanied by the letters ΓΑ (the first provincial representation of a Roman on a coin since Flamininus).¹¹⁵ Find evidence demonstrates the Philadelphos tetradrachms of Gabinius and his successors circulated well into the imperial period; over time the issues, and their imagery, must have come to be seen as products of the Roman government, whether Republican or imperial.¹¹⁶



Fig. 15: AR tetradrachm, Antioch, Aulus Gabinius, 57-55 BC. Obverse: Diademed head of Philip Philadelphos. Reverse: Zeus seated left holding Nike and scepter, monogram of AYTGB to left. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΙΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ on either side. RPC 1 4124 (© Yale University Art Gallery, 2005.6.47).

That Roman involvement in local silver coinages may have changed the association of these issues can be seen in references to ‘Lucullan’ coinage. Plutarch records that during Sulla’s campaigns Lucius Lucullus was in charge of the mint, and most of the

¹¹¹ McAlee 2007:60. Philadelphos had ruled the city from 88-83 BC, before the region fell to Tigranes.

¹¹² McAlee 2007:61

¹¹³ RPC 1 4124-34 and 4150 for the shift to Augustus, Butcher 2004:52.

¹¹⁴ Gitler and Stein-Kushnir 2004: 92-3

¹¹⁵ RPC 1 4825-8, Gitler and Stein-Kushnir 2004, Erkelenz 2002:73-5

¹¹⁶ Silver hoards are listed in Burnett, Amandry et al. 1992:610-11, and a hoard of 677 ‘posthumous Philips’ that appeared on the market may be from a Julio-Claudian (or later) date, see McAlee 1999:10-11.

coinage used in the Peloponnese during the Mithridatic Wars was struck by him, and ‘called Lucullan after him’.¹¹⁷ A first century BC inscription from Delphi mentions the sum of 105 ‘flats of Lucullus’ (πλάτεων Λευκολλίω[v]), confirming Plutarch’s statement (Plutarch further observes that the coins circulated for a while).¹¹⁸ As de Callataÿ observes the price of 105 ‘Lucullan’ pieces for enfranchisement suggests that the inscription (and hence Plutarch) are referring to tetradrachms or a large silver denomination.¹¹⁹ These coins have traditionally been identified as the Athenian tetradrachms struck after Sulla’s sack of Athens: these coins carry the imagery of Athens, but instead of an ethnic (AΘE) they carry monograms referring to Marcus Lucullus, one of Sulla’s commanders (Fig. 16).¹²⁰ Rarer types bear the trophies of Chaironeia, Sullan monuments that also decorated Roman aurei and denarii (Fig. 17).¹²¹ Cistophori in Asia were also struck in quantity at this time (84/3-80/79 BC), particularly by Ephesus, and de Callataÿ suggests these may in fact be the ‘Lucullan coinage’ of our sources (Fig. 18), although overstruck tetradrachms of Thasos are also possible.¹²² Whatever we identify as ‘Lucullan’ coinage, they are not Roman denarii, but issues struck with local designs by a Roman magistrate. In spite of their local imagery and denomination, they are named by two sources as ‘Lucullan’, indicating that the imagery, and the coinage it graced, had gained new associations.



Fig. 16: AR tetradrachm, pseudo-Athens, 86-84 BC. Obverse: Head of Athena Parthenos right. Dotted border. Reverse: Owl right, head facing, wings closed, standing on amphora which lies on its side. Monogram on either side, which reads MAPKOY TAMIOY. All within a wreath of olive. Thompson 1923a. (Reproduced courtesy of Numismatica Ars Classica AG, Auction 48, lot 79).

¹¹⁷ Plut. *Luc.* 2.2

¹¹⁸ FD III 3:281. The coins themselves are thin and ‘flat’ in fabric.

¹¹⁹ de Callataÿ 1997:310

¹²⁰ Thompson 1961:435-8 and nos. 1273-1329.

¹²¹ Thompson 1961:431-9 and nos. 1341-5, RRC 359/1, 359/2. See Camp, Ierardi et al. 1992 on the trophy itself.

¹²² de Callataÿ 1997:329, de Callataÿ 2011:72, 116



Fig. 17: AR tetradrachm, pseudo-Athens, Sulla, 86-84 BC. Obverse: Head of Athena Parthenos right. Dotted border. Reverse: Owl right, head facing, wings closed, standing on amphora which lies on its side. Trophies of Sulla on either side, all within a wreath of olive. Thompson 1341-5. (© Trustees of the British Museum, 1893,0406.1).



Fig. 18: AR cistophorus, Ephesus, 82-81 BC. Obverse: Cista mystica with serpent within ivy-wreath. Reverse: Bow case between two serpents; between serpents Hermes standing left holding kerykeion. NA above, EΦE to left, torch to right. (© Yale University Art Gallery, 2001.87.222).

Although Hieron struck Ptolemaic types in Syracuse (n. 85 above) and occasionally smaller Hellenistic rulers struck imitative types of other kings, the continued striking of existing precious metal currencies by Rome is unusual for its longevity; tetradrachms of Philadelphos, for example, were struck until 17/16 BC, well after Rome had introduced her own currency system.¹²³ In the west silver imitations of local issues ceased after the introduction of the denarius, but the practice continued well into the very end of the Republic in the east. Local silver denominations continued to be produced in the imperial period, but with different imagery (the portrait of the reigning emperor). The widespread and continued use of local coinages by the Romans indicates some of the complexities behind the representation of the Roman presence in the Republican period. Rome might represent her *imperium* through images that originated at Rome, but might equally transform existing imagery of a particular region.

¹²³ Wolf and Lorber 2011:3, Butcher 2004:54. Meadows 2014 notes that imitative silver coinages are characteristic of the Roman presence in the region in the first century BC.

Entangled Images and Objects

Objects, as well as images, transformed in meaning during Roman Republican expansion. Like images, objects can play an active role in communicating or conceptualising particular abstract concepts, in communicating different relationships and in making (imagined) communities ‘concrete’. In recent years this role has been explored through the idea of ‘entanglement’.¹²⁴ The concept was developed within Thomas’ work *Entangled Objects*, which emphasised how objects can embody, symbolise and clarify different human relations.¹²⁵ In particular Thomas identifies the way a particular object can gain value and significance through previous connections with peoples and cultures. A good example of an entangled object is an engagement ring: once given, it is inalienable, removed from the sphere of commodities, and not to be sold or given away. The ring signifies the relationship between two people to such an extent that the ending of an engagement is achieved by the handing back of the ring: the signifier and signified are that closely connected.¹²⁶ Here and elsewhere material culture supports social interaction, contributing to the perception and understanding of one’s place in the world.

While coinage functioned as a media of commensuration that simultaneously went between cultures and value systems as it bound them together, the imagery carried by these coins also offers an insight into the entangled objects that might have defined relations between Rome and local cities. One example is the Sicilian city of Thermae, which Cicero states was founded by the citizens of Himera after the destruction of their city by the Carthaginians in 409/8 BC.¹²⁷ After the Roman conquest of Sicily Thermae struck six bronze coin types. One issue bore the bust of Tyche on the obverse and the poet Stesichorus on the reverse (Fig. 19), another the head of Hercules on the obverse and what is likely three nymphs on the reverse. Other issues displayed the head of Herakles (obverse) and a standing Tyche (reverse) (Fig. 20), the bust of Demeter (obverse) and Pallas holding Nike (?) (reverse), and a female head or Hermes (obverse) with a goat on the reverse (Fig. 21).¹²⁸ While the dating of these issues is difficult to determine beyond being of the ‘Roman era’, Frey-Kupper has recently argued that the issue with the three nymphs, as well as the issue showing Tyche on the reverse, belong to the period 90-50/40 BC.¹²⁹ The other issues lack

¹²⁴ e.g. Dietler 2005, Dietler 2010, Hodder 2012, Stockhammer 2012, Versluys 2014, Whitley 2013

¹²⁵ Thomas 1991

¹²⁶ Thomas 1991:20-21

¹²⁷ Cic. *Ver.* 2.2.86. Diod. Sic. 13.79.8 states that the town was founded by Carthage.

¹²⁸ Gabrici 2006:140-1, nos. 5-17. Gabrici 17 records that the obverse of the goat type is a female head. The coin shown in Fig. 21 is a new addition to this catalogue.

¹²⁹ Frey-Kupper 2013:369 no. 54, citing technical, metrological and stylistic grounds, as well as the analogy of these types to those struck by Panormus. Puglisi 2009: nos.117-118 dates these issues instead to the period 206-190, and 208-200 BC. Three issues of the nymph series were found in a hoard with a *terminus post quem* of 122 BC (Monte Cane bei Caccamo (1888) discussed in Frey-Kupper 2013:55), and the Hercules/Tyche issue is found at Monte Iato in Room 17 of the Peristyle House, likely

stratigraphic or hoard data that could be used for dating, although numismatists agree they were struck after Sicily became a Roman province.



Fig. 19. AE 24mm, Thermae, after 241 BC. Obverse: Turreted and veiled head of Tyche right, cornucopia behind. Reverse: The poet Stesichorus standing right, leaning on staff and reading book. ΘΕΡΜΙΤΑΝ ΙΜΕΡΑΙΩΝ. Gabrici 5-6. (From Heritage World Coin Auctions, Long Beach Signature Sale 3035, lot 32026).



Fig. 20. AE 22mm, Thermae, after 241 BC. Obverse: Head of Hercules right, wearing lion-skin. Dotted border. Reverse: Tyche wearing turreted crown, holding patera and cornucopia. ΘΕΡΜΙΤΑΝ ΙΜΕΡΑΙΩΝ. Gabrici 11-15. (Reproduced courtesy of Numismatica Ars Classica AG, Auction P, lot 1199).



Fig. 21. AE coin of Thermae, after 241 BC. Obverse: Draped bust of Hermes wearing winged petasus, caduceus in front. Dotted border. Reverse: Goat resting.

swept or washed down to an imperial period destruction level of the first century AD from the level above (Frey-Kupper 2013:273, 499). Coins could circulate for long periods of time, but the current find evidence to date suggests a later, rather than an earlier dating.

ΘEPMITAN. (Reproduced courtesy of Numismatica Ars Classica AG, Auction 46, lot 823).

The representation of Stesichorus, Tyche, and the goat are of particular interest since they recall the bronze statues of the city detailed by Cicero in his *Verrine Orations*. Cicero and other Roman orators acknowledged the power of images (verbal or mental), and often used them to evoke emotion or response from an audience.¹³⁰ In the fourth part of his second speech against Verres, Cicero details the statues and monuments stolen by the praetor from Sicily; in doing so Cicero aims to arouse the indignation of his Roman audience.¹³¹ But Cicero goes one step further by including an example of works that Verres *unsuccessfully* attempted to remove from Thermae.

Cicero details that Verres was taken by certain statues of the city and pressed a local, Sthenius, to help him obtain them. The statues included a figure of Himera, represented as the figure of a woman (the Tyche of the city), a statue of the poet Stesichorus ‘represented as an old man leaning forward and holding a book’, and the statue of a she-goat.¹³² Sthenius’s response was that Verres could not acquire the objects, since these statues were *monumenta* of Scipio Aemilianus and they ‘could not by any possibility be carried away from the town of Thermae so long as Thermae and the *imperium* of the Roman people (*imperioque populi Romani*) remained intact’.¹³³ Here we glimpse the function of these statues as entangled objects: like an engagement ring, they came to embody the relationship between Rome and Thermae to such an extent that their removal would signify the destruction of the relationship. Cicero elaborates by summarising a speech Sthenius gave against Verres’ proposal: ‘better, he said, for them to abandon Thermae than to allow the removal from Thermae of those memorials of their fathers, those trophies of victory, those gifts of their illustrious benefactor, those tokens (*indicia*) of their alliance and friendship with the Roman people’.¹³⁴ Verres’ desire to obtain the statues is thus not only an affront to the city of Thermae, but to the descendants of Scipio and the *res publica* more generally. Cicero makes Thermae’s statues matter for his Roman audience.

The object biographies of these statues as related by Cicero reveal the multiple meanings these objects possessed. Cicero states that the statues had originally been located in Himera, had been taken by the Carthaginians, and then returned to the citizens of Thermae by Scipio Aemilianus.¹³⁵ After the destruction of Carthage and his subsequent triumph in 146 BC, Scipio invited the cities of Sicily to come and claim their stolen cultural heritage.¹³⁶ Cicero observes that in addition to Thermae, Agrigentum, Gela, Himera, Tyndaris and Segesta reclaimed property that had previously been stolen by the Carthaginians.¹³⁷ Mummius, who also celebrated a triumph in 146 BC, also distributed spoils to cities outside of Rome. Whether Scipio

¹³⁰ Vasaly 1993:95-9

¹³¹ Vasaly 1993:88ff.

¹³² Cic. *Ver.* 2.2.87

¹³³ Cic. *Ver.* 2.2.85. On *imperium* in Cicero see Richardson 2011:66-79.

¹³⁴ Cic. *Ver.* 2.2.88

¹³⁵ Cic. *Ver.* 2.2.86

¹³⁶ Diod. Sic. 32.25, Liv. *Per.* 51

¹³⁷ Ferrary 2014:578-88, Miles 2008:96-99

was in competition with Mummius or motivated by some other cause is hard to know: he may have wished to capitalise on the idea of defence of ‘hellenism’ against the Carthaginians and the possible parallels with Greek wars against the Persians, or Scipio may have wished to improve his client base in Sicily. As the words of Cicero so eloquently demonstrate, his actions would also serve to improve his reputation amongst the Roman elite.¹³⁸

Cicero argues that by returning the statues to Thermae Scipio achieved a form of immortality since, if they had gone to Rome, they ‘would be called Scipio’s for a short while only’ and then gain the names of those who inherited them, but by placing them in Thermae they will ‘be Scipio’s always; and so indeed they are described’.¹³⁹ Two statue bases from Thermae (both imperial period copies) demonstrate that statues were publicly named as spoils given back to the city by Scipio.¹⁴⁰ The statues thus could evoke multiple (simultaneous) associations in the viewer/listener: they were symbols of the city’s ancient Himeran past, the town’s past glories (Stesichorus), and embodied the town’s relationship with Romans (Scipio) and Roman *imperium*. The biographies of these objects made them inalienable, and Cicero concludes that Thermae was almost the only place in the world that prevented Verres from removing their treasures.¹⁴¹ Cicero’s speech and the subsequent publication of the *Verrines* would only add extra levels of meaning to these objects: they are described within the Roman gaze of the conqueror (as charming or beautiful works of art) and become symbols of Verres’ tyrannical actions.¹⁴² Indeed, since Cicero presents two contrasting approaches to Roman rule within this work (one of exploitation, embodied by Verres, and another more lenient approach, embodied in the actions of Scipio and others), the statues of Thermae become a case study in how Rome should govern the regions under her control.¹⁴³

The multiple, simultaneously existent, associations of these statues would also have been present when looking at Thermae’s coinage: as the coins circulated from user to user, one, several, or even perhaps none of the meanings discussed above would be evoked. If the coins are dated to before Scipio’s actions (although it seems odd to choose to portray stolen statues on one’s coinage), then their imagery would have gained additional meanings after 146 BC; the few archaeological contexts for these pieces suggest that they did continue to be used until the imperial period (see n. 129 above). If the pieces were struck after 146 BC, then the designs were likely chosen to acknowledge the return of these pieces to Thermae. These particular types (showing Stesichorus, Tyche and the goat) appear to be rare in the archaeological record, suggesting that they may, in fact, have been more celebratory or commemorative in

¹³⁸ The suggestion that this was an intentional *aemulatio Alexandri* is perhaps pushing the evidence too far; see Miles 2008:98.

¹³⁹ Cic. *Ver.* 2.2.87.

¹⁴⁰ IG XIV.315 = *Syll.*³ 677, NSA 1935, 201-2, Brugnone 1974:227-9, Prag 2007a:251. Verres’ theft of other statues from Sicily would have left the statue bases empty, meaning they transformed into objects that reminded local populations (and indeed Cicero) of their loss. Verres reportedly responded in the case of Segesta by removing the statue base as well. See Cic. *Ver.* 2.4.78-79, Miles 2008:98.

¹⁴¹ Cic. *Ver.* 2.2.88

¹⁴² Vasaly 1993:108

¹⁴³ Vasaly 1993:119-20

nature, although future findings may change our understanding.¹⁴⁴ These bronze coins were struck to interact with and work alongside the silver currency of Rome, which is found in *Thermae* alongside Roman bronzes, and the coins carried imagery embodied local-Roman points of interaction. Ironically then inalienable objects came to decorate a medium whose function is to make all things alienable.

That these coins show statues is not immediately apparent; none of the figures have statue bases that would communicate this fact to the viewer. Indeed, without Cicero we would not know the broader significance of these images, and the statues they reference. Other cities may have had similar statues or other objects. The case study of *Thermae* demonstrates that conceptualisations of Roman power could be very local. None of the other cities mentioned by Cicero in his work placed the statues named by Cicero on their local coinage (that is, none of the Roman-era coins of these cities carry types that match the descriptions of the statues provided by Cicero); the precise visualisation of each city and its place in the Roman world differed.

Entanglement is an active process whereby ‘foreign’ goods are appropriated, transformed and/or manipulated by individuals or social groups, resulting in new meanings and uses.¹⁴⁵ In this process ‘Roman’ and ‘local’ can be difficult to separate.¹⁴⁶ A contrast to the entangled objects of *Thermae* is the entangled imagery found on a coin issue of Gnaeus Domitius Calvinus, struck on the Iberian Peninsula in 39 BC (Fig. 22).¹⁴⁷ Unlike *Thermae*, this issue was not a civic coin with imagery chosen by the elite, but a precious metal coin that was a joint product of *Osca* and Domitius Calvinus (at least, this is the official statement of the coin itself, although in reality Domitius Calvinus may have ordered the issue). Calvinus had been a supporter of Caesar and was sent to Spain in 40 BC by Octavian. The obverse of the coin series bears the Latin legend *OSCA*, and the male head of local *Oscan-Bolskan* Iberian *denarii* (Fig. 13 above). The reverse bears Domitius Calvinus’ titles as consul for the second time and imperator, and displays pontifical emblems. The result is an issue that is analogous to ‘double-portrait’ types: depending on which side of the coin you look at, the authority behind the coin changes (*Osca*, or Calvinus). The coin itself is both ‘Roman’ and ‘Oscan’, a physical manifestation of the entanglement between Rome and her provinces in this period.



¹⁴⁴ Cutroni Tusa 1991-1994, Tusa Cutroni 1958-1959 on the finds of these coins.

¹⁴⁵ Dietler 2010:55

¹⁴⁶ Dietler 2010:59-60, Olsen 2010:5, Versluys 2014:14-18

¹⁴⁷ RRC 532/1

Fig. 22: AR denarius, mint of Osca, 39 BC. Obverse: Bearded male head right, wearing collar. OSCA behind. Reverse: *Simpulum*, *aspergillum*, axe and *apex*. DOM COS ITER IMP. Border of dots. RRC 532/1. (© Trustees of the British Museum, 1860,0328.86).

Although Crawford interpreted the iconography as a reference to Calvinus' position as a member of the Roman priesthood, the reverse image likely had more than one association.¹⁴⁸ In fact the reverse image is reproduced exactly from a coin issue of Julius Caesar struck in c. 49-48 BC (Fig. 23).¹⁴⁹ In the midst of the scholarly dispute surrounding the meaning of the elephant on the obverse of Caesar's issue, the extraordinary nature of the reverse (the first time all these symbols had been portrayed together on a single coin) can be overlooked. It is clear that both the obverse and reverse types came to reference Caesar himself; both the elephant and the pontifical emblems were used by supporters of Caesar on their own coins to proclaim their allegiances, initially to Caesar himself, and then to Octavian.¹⁵⁰ On Fig. 22 then, there are potential references to the local region, Calvinus' titles and office, his previous support of Caesar, and his current support of Octavian. Examples of this coin are found in Spain, but also in Italy and France.¹⁵¹ As the coin travelled its Oscan iconography would likely have been read as 'Roman', a representation of Roman power.



Fig. 23: AR denarius, mint moving with Caesar, 49-48 BC. Obverse: Elephant trampling snake (?) right, CAESAR in exergue. Border of dots. Reverse: *culullus*, *aspergillum*, axe, *apex*. Border of dots. RRC 443/1. (Reproduced courtesy of the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies).

Conclusion: Imperial Ideologies in the Republic

¹⁴⁸ Crawford 1974:297

¹⁴⁹ RRC 443/1. Although the Calvinus issue is described as containing a *simpulum* and the Caesar issue a *culullus* in the standard reference works, the iconography is the same.

¹⁵⁰ e.g. RPC 1 501 (Hirtius), 879 (Roman Mauretania), Mazard 1955:nos. 403-4 (King Ptolemaios). A fuller discussion is forthcoming in Rowan forthcoming-a.

¹⁵¹ CHRR online shows the issue was found in four hoards: Gallignano, Italy (RRCH 505 =GAL); Maille, France (RRCH 448 = MAI); Castro de Alvarelhos, Portugal (CDA); and Linares, Spain (LIN). See <http://numismatics.org/chrr/>.

The above case studies demonstrate the variety of ideologies that developed within the Roman Republican world before the principate, and the potential of coinage from this period as a source base. The above is only a selection of the large mass of material that survives, but these coins and others suggest that while there were some points of commonality, (re)presentations of Roman power were (re)negotiated at each point of contact. In a sense, the variety of strategies and ideologies that can be traced on coinage (and this article only provides a beginning) is not surprising, given that Roman coinage itself increasingly bore a multiplicity of messages created within the context of aristocratic competition and self-display.¹⁵² What the Roman Republican hegemony ‘looked like’ could vary from region to region and from year to year, a picture that conforms to other recent work on the Republic focused on other types of evidence.¹⁵³

Those who found themselves under Roman *imperium* often conceptualised their world within existing frameworks, derived from the broader Hellenistic *koine* or from local contexts. Given the previous experiences of Hellenistic kings, it is no surprise that both Rome and provincial elites framed Roman control inside a Hellenistic framework. As elsewhere throughout history, images and material culture provided a basis for making abstract notions of Roman *imperium* concrete, for conceptualising new political or cultural orders, with coinage and its imagery proving an important medium. Images and objects can have ambiguous, multiple meanings, and those within the Republic utilised this to great effect in order to communicate and/or negotiate Roman hegemony.

At what point then do we find a point of transition, a movement towards the ideologies and images that we typically associate with the provincial coinage of the principate? Burnett’s exploration has demonstrated that the Augustan ‘revolution’ on coinage was a slow process that lasted into the Julio-Claudian period, and was one that also had great diversity.¹⁵⁴ But a key transitional moment, in numismatic terms, may be the elephant coin of Julius Caesar (Fig. 23 above). Caesar had acquired the Roman treasury before striking this issue and it was one of the largest denarius issues the Republic had ever seen.¹⁵⁵ For the first time, a coinage that carried direct allusion to the position and achievements of one living individual was struck in large enough quantities to operate as a medium of mass communication on an empire-wide scale. It is surely no coincidence that this issue, carrying the image of an elephant on the obverse and the symbols of Caesar’s priesthood on the reverse, is the first clear example of Roman numismatic imagery adopted on provincial coinage in multiple provinces across the Empire.¹⁵⁶ Before this, Roman coinage was characterised by a multitude of differing ideologies and images. It was a chameleon that responded to different moneymen and regions, lacking the focal point of the emperor that would come to dominate imperial currency. In this context, the coinage of the regions that fell under or encountered Rome’s *imperium* also reflected multiple conceptualisations of Roman hegemony, multiple ‘Roman Republics’.

¹⁵² Hölscher 2014:31

¹⁵³ e.g. Gardner 2013, Hingley 2010, Kallet-Marx 1995, Prag 2007b

¹⁵⁴ Burnett 2011

¹⁵⁵ Woytek 2005:644

¹⁵⁶ See above, n. 154 and Rowan *forthcoming b*.

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