

# Roman Republican Coinage

(Plates 27–33)

The publication of Michael Crawford's *Roman Republican Coinage* in 1974 marked a new era for the study of this coinage.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent scholarship has worked to refine our understanding of chronology and mint attribution, as well as to determine meaningful criteria by which to disambiguate individual issues among the many early anonymous coin types.<sup>2</sup> The Roman republican coins in this collection reflect Richard B. Witschonke's engagement with these issues and his special interest in the bronze coinage. All are rarer types often underrepresented (and misidentified) in major museum collections.

Anonymous bronzes, especially those of the Second Punic War, have proved some of the most challenging material to correctly group by issue and assign to likely geographical mints, but this work has significantly progressed in the last decade.<sup>3</sup> Andrew McCabe's B1 group comprises coins with close parallels with the Roman coinage struck in Sicily during the Second Punic War but they lack the usual grain ear. Unmarked variations of known Sicilian issues are well represented here (nos. 562–564, 567–568, 583). The association of these anonymous coins with Sicily is further strengthened by the numerous overstrikes on Syracusan coins of Hiero II (nos. 562–564). Likewise, the collection well illustrates the bronze types struck in southeastern Italy during the Second Punic War. The specific mints and correct division into issues has caused much confusion, but McCabe's work has helped establish clearer groupings and attributions. In particular, he has demonstrated that some of the issues marked with L ought not be associated with Luceria itself, but rather a semi-permanent military camp near Herdonia; for this distinction one can compare nos. 569 and 593 with nos. 594 and 595. McCabe has also shown that Venusia is probably the mint not only for the V series (no. 592) but also the ROMA monogram series (no. 591), as well as the H series and anchor and Q series.<sup>4</sup>

For the anonymous *victoriati*, Crawford's division into issues has been augmented and refined by Richard Schaefer and Kenneth L. Friedman's detailed explanation of the characteristics of each issue and sub-groupings within each issue.<sup>5</sup> The Richard B. Witschonke Collection provides clear examples of three such types (nos. 570, 582, 585). Likewise, Crawford's two star issues (RRC 113 and 196) are often confused with each other, but Schaefer and McCabe have since provided clarity on the distinguishing characteristics of each and again this collection provides exemplary specimens (nos. 608, 609, 643).<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Crawford himself conflated the bird and TOD series, which appears on both silver and bronze coinage (RRC 141), and the legionary eagle and wreath series known only in bronze (RRC 141/3a).<sup>7</sup> The *semis* of the latter series illustrated here demonstrates how the lower portion of the legionary eagle and the wreath could be misread as a TO at first glance, especially when the eagle itself is off-flan (no. 619).

Confusion over dating and mint attribution is not limited to the anonymous issues. Recent finds have shown that the CN COR series (RRC 81) is probably best attributed to Spain, not Sicily (nos. 587–588).<sup>8</sup> But whereas Russo would have moved this series into the second century BC, the balance of evidence still holds for a date in the Second Punic War. The moneyer is probably Cn. Cornelius Dolabella, who was made *rex sacrorum* in 208 BC. This priesthood required the postholder to forgo military and political roles and thus provides a *terminus ante quem* for the coinage. The SEX IVL bronze issue (no. 589) is closely related to the CN COR issue in style, fabric, and findspots. Only one specimen was known to Crawford, and he dismissed it as a probable imitation. Although clearly made by one Sextus

1. Crawford saw his work as complementing rather than replacing that of Grueber and helped ensure that Grueber's 1910 catalogue of the British Museum collection was reissued with critical updates in 1970. The two should be consulted in tandem.

2. Hersh and Walker 1984 significantly revised the dating of coins later in series (ca. 70–50 BC) based on the Mesagne hoard; and the same material was reconsidered by Hollstein 1993 and Mattingly 1995. Mattingly 1998 revisited the dating of 150–90 BC; our understanding of this period has also been improved by Molinari 2016 on the Banzi hoard. The relative chronology, that is the sequence of issues, has been critiqued and improved by Lockyear 2018. Debernardi 2014 and Debernardi and Brinkman 2018 on the early *denarius* are also critical. Currently, *Coinage of the Roman Republic Online* (CRRO) retains Crawford's chronology and typology, but as *Coin Hoards of the Roman Republic Online* (CHRR) and *Roman Republican Die Project* (RRDP) are updated, it is likely CRRO will also need to be updated to reflect these new developments.

3. McCabe 2013, cf. 2017 and 2018.

4. McCabe 2017.

5. Schaefer and Friedman 2009.

6. Schaefer and McCabe 2011.

7. Russo 1998, esp. no. 56.

8. As suggested in *RBW*, 82, no. 331, by Witschonke and further argued by McCabe in the sale catalogue for CNG Electronic Auction 432, 14 Nov. 2018, lot 215.

Julius Caesar, this bronze issue cannot be associated with the later *denarii* of ca. 129 BC as Russo originally proposed. Instead, the probable moneyer is the *praetor* of 209 BC, grandfather of the moneyer of RRC 258, who then served as *praetor urbanus* in 123 BC. In his *praetorship* of 208 BC he was assigned what remained of the legions from Cannae and served primarily in Sicily, but we also hear of him attending the wounded *consul* Crispinus before the *consul's* death in southern Italy, probably in the vicinity of Venusia.<sup>9</sup> Given the strong Spanish association for finds of both the SEX IVL and CN COR issues, we may perhaps imagine that the *praetor* of 208 BC served there as *quaestor* or in another role before his election. We might speculate that both Sextus and Cnaeus served under the command of P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus in 210 and 209, before being sent back to Rome ahead of the elections for 208 BC.<sup>10</sup>

Other highlights of this collection include a number of types not listed in RRC, but part of issues already listed there: a *sextans* and a *triens* of the CN COR series (RRC 81; nos. 587–588), an *uncia* of the ROMA monogram series (RRC 84; no. 591); and a *triens* of the CN DOM series (RRC 147; no. 625). There are also numerous overstrikes including examples of retariffing, and reuse of the coinage of both allies and enemies in the Second Punic War. The retariffing examples both change *unciae* into *sextantes*, one from the semilibral standard to the post-semilibral standard (nos. 558–559), and the other from a post-semilibral standard to the sextantal standard (no. 571). The overstrikes on Syracusan coins of Hiero II are *quadrantes*, *unciae*, and *sextantes* (nos. 560–566, 573). In the Second Punic War bronzes, we typically find overstrikes on Sardo-Punic types to be on *quadrantes*, but this collection gives a good selection of such overstrikes on *unciae* and *sextantes* (nos. 572, 574, 577–579, 595).<sup>11</sup>

Finally, the reader of this catalogue needs to be aware of the debates and revisions of dating since Crawford. Andrew Burnett and McCabe have shown that the Minerva/eagle bronzes (no. 555) must have been struck in Sicily and after 240 BC, whereas Crawford had proposed a date closer to 264 BC.<sup>12</sup> Based on the Banzi hoard, Maria Cristina Molinari has revisited the dates of signed issues from the mid- to late second century BC, in some cases confirming Crawford's original dating but in other cases demonstrating that the chronology must shift. This has improved on the earlier work of Harold B. Mattingly to revisit the dating of this same period. Using correspondence analysis of previously known hoards, Kris Lockyear has also revisited questions of dating and made important observations on how the relative sequence of moneyers needs to be shifted. The following table lists specimens in this catalogue relevant to these questions.<sup>13</sup>

Moneyer	RRC no.	Catalogue no.	New Date	Crawford Date
L. Saufeius	204	645–646	149—Mattingly	152
Cn. Gellius	232	653	138—Confirmed	138
C. Curiatius Trigemini	240	654–655	Prior to 131–130 BC, and probably 135 BC—Molinari, <i>contra</i> Mattingly	135
L. Trebanius	241	656	Prior to 131–130 BC, and probably 135 BC—Molinari, <i>contra</i> Mattingly	135
C. Minucius Augurinus	242	657	Prior to 131–130 BC, and probably 135 BC—Molinari, <i>contra</i> Mattingly	135
C. Numitorius	246	658	134—Molinari	133
Q. Caecilius Metellus	256	661	132—Molinari and Mattingly	130
M. Metellus and C. Servilius	263–264	662–663	125—Mattingly	127
M. Herennius	308	666	"Later in sequence"	108 or 107

9. Livy, 27.22 and 29.

10. Russo 1998; cf. McCabe's note at CNG Electronic Auction 432, 14 Nov. 2018, lot 215.

11. On overstrikes and their importance for understanding the Roman republican series, see McCabe 2018.

12. Burnett and McCabe 2016.

13. See n. 2 above.