

Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia



Numismatic Association of Australia Inc.

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Front cover: Photo of Emeritus Professor John Melville-Jones AM

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President's Report

With COVID-19 in its second year, the NAA is looking to rebadge itself to adapt to the rapidly changing environment. Together with this special issue of the Journal we have already embarked on a new approach to increase our online presence; our website is in the process of being revamped and there will be a return to annual publication of the Association's journal (mainly online). We will publish the standard range of articles every even year, and every other year produce a special volume of which this is the first. We will replace the face-to-face biennial conference by online webinars in the first instance (and then progress to more conference-like activities) and hold the Annual General Meeting and Council/Executive meetings online.

I am grateful to Distinguished Professor Lee Brice of Western Illinois University for coediting with Dr Gil Davis this special volume on numismatics in the education context. It has been a pleasure having Professor Brice working with the NAA to produce a volume of international importance. It goes to the standing of our Association and Australian numismatics that we can attract such high-profile numismatists from around the world to contribute as they have.

Our next volume will be part of the standard cycle for which we take submissions at any time, and already have some under consideration. If you have an interesting piece that you would like to see published, either new material or an original observation on existing work, then please submit your article which will then be placed into the reviewing process.

Following the AGM (held online last October) the centre of gravity of the NAA Executive has moved from Perth to Victoria, with Jonathan Cohen and Lyn Bloom stepping down as Secretary and Treasurer respectively, replaced by Darren Burgess and Philip Richards. I continue as President, Richard O'Hair as Vice President and Gil Davis as Managing Editor.

The Executive are having regular ZOOM meetings to jump-start the NAA's plunge into the new world. As an easy step towards online conferences we are looking to mount webinars mid-year with topics that should have wide appeal, one on the preservation and conservation of coins, a second on grading Australian coins both for the novice and for the more experienced collector looking to submit items to Grading Authorities. We continue to enjoy sponsorship at a sustainable level, with Noble Numismatics (Gold), Coinworks and Downies (Silver), Drake Sterling, Mowbray Collectables, Sterling & Currency and Vintage Coins & Banknotes (Bronze) all contributing to ensure the Association's continued success. Membership is being maintained, and with the contribution by sponsors and members, the Association is able to function in these difficult times.

I am appreciative of the support of Council and other NAA members, and in particular our Secretary, Darren Burgess, and Treasurer, Philip Richards, who are pivotal in the running of the Association, and our Managing Editor, Gil Davis, for his ongoing work with the journal. On behalf of the NAA I thank both Jonathan Cohen and Lyn Bloom for their excellent contribution to the Association, and our auditor Mona Loo who has worked through the financial statements and associated material in forensic detail.

Professor Walter R. Bloom

President, NAA www.numismatics.org.au 9th April 2021

About the Numismatic Association of Australia Inc

The Numismatic Association of Australia was founded in the early 1980s and incorporated in Victoria (A0024703Z) in 1992. It is the peak body for numismatics in Australia with seven sponsoring societies around Australia and New Zealand and a direct (individual) membership both national and international. The Association has four main functions:

- <u>Promote the interests of numismatics in Australia</u>. It brings together collectors, hobbyists and academic scholars in a shared love of anything to do with coins, banknotes, medals, tokens and numismatic paraphernalia.
- <u>Biennial conference</u>. This major event rotates through different States. Papers are presented by invited keynote speakers and others with sessions on ancient through to modern numismatics.
- <u>Journal</u>. The annual publication of the Association features a range of articles, approximately half on Australian and New Zealand topics, and the remainder from elsewhere, but especially on the ancient world. The journal has an esteemed editorial board and submissions are double-blind peer reviewed. It is published in hardcopy and online with open access and has a wide international readership. Every second year, it will be publishing a special edition on a specific topic.
- <u>Website https://numismatics.org.au/</u>. This is the public forum of the Association hosting numismatic news, events, awards, conference details and the journal.

How you can help

- **Become a member**. If you are interested in numismatics in Australia and want to see it survive into the future and prosper, then support your national Association. It cannot function without members and you will be part of a community that shares your passion. The cost is only \$25 per year.
- **Be involved**. The Association runs on a voluntary basis. Anything you can do to help would be greatly appreciated and there is a range of roles and tasks.
- Make a donation. If you really want to help secure the future of numismatics in Australia, donate to the Association; small or large, every bit helps.
- **Support the advertisers**. The advertisers do their best to help us and, in these precarious times, where would we be without them?

Interested?

Contact Darren Burgess, <u>secretary@numismatics.org.au</u>, for any further information.

Teaching with numismatics

John Melville-Jones

Abstract

This paper explains how the author drifted into the study of ancient Greek and Roman coinage in a serendipitous way. The author has made multiple contributions to numismatics during his career. The remainder of the paper describes a number of institutions in different countries and the ways in which they handle and promote the study of this subject, closing with a discussion on how one might go about systematically introducing history students to numismatics.

Keywords

[Teaching numismatics] [ancient Greek coinage] [ancient Roman coinage] [numismatic research] [numismatic collections].

The collection of articles in this volume follows another recent publication, *Numismatik lehren in Europa*, ("Teaching Numismatics in Europe"), edited by R. Wolters and M. Zeigert.¹ The title of the Australian successor indicates that it has a slightly different approach. "Teaching **with** Numismatics" implies that numismatics, which is studied in its own right in only a few places, can nevertheless be an important adjunct to the study of a great number of other subjects. Taking one example from an area of which I have some knowledge, Roman history of the middle of the third century CE, is an area that is unclear in many respects. The written sources are either lacking or unreliable, particularly the so-called *Historia Augusta*, authorship unknown, which contains many passages that can be shown to be mere inventions.² But thanks to the coins that were issued by the emperors during this period, we have a better chronological framework and a greater understanding of the areas that these often short-lived emperors controlled.

A numismatic journey

If I begin my contribution to this collection by describing my own experience of becoming a sort of numismatist, it is because I believe that it is one that has happened to a number of other people. I was led into this area of study in an unexpected way. In spite of the splendid work that is done in different ways in Vienna, Louvain, Stockholm, Sydney, and Oslo, and by the American Numismatic Society and a number of other institutions, numismatics will in most cases be a marginal subject, and few persons will engage in it as a primary subject of study until they have finished majoring in something

¹ Wolters and Zeigert 2017.

² The bibliography on the Historia Augusta is enormous; see Thomson 2012 for a recent treatment.

else. My own first university, Cambridge, did appoint one exceptional scholar, Philip Grierson, to the position of Professor of Numismatics, but when his tenure of the professorship came to an end, so did the position itself. Now the staff of the Coin Room in the Fitzwilliam Museum are always ready to assist students and other staff with inquiries into this subject, and occasionally supervise some postgraduate topics, but that is all. However, from time to time serious research in numismatics is engaged in by students there; for example, recently the degree of MPhil was awarded to Julia Trocmé-Latter who looked at the ways in which Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon Bonaparte both used Roman numismatic imagery on their coins and medals. She has subsequently established herself as a numismatist working for A.H Baldwin and Sons, a prestigious coin dealer in London.

In my case, it was only by chance that I became involved in this fascinating subject. When I was at school, and when I took my first university degree, I avoided looking at the little grey circles that appeared in the margins of the textbooks on ancient history that I was studying. I found them unattractive, and the syllabuses that we followed and the examinations that we took did not include any special mentions of coins. After this, when I was appointed to a lectureship in Classics and Ancient History at The University of Western Australia, the first lectures that I gave on historical topics did not include any references to ancient coinage.

But then things changed. When I was twenty-seven years old, I returned to Cambridge to study for a one-year Diploma in Classical Archaeology (which no longer exists), and this changed my life. One of the obligatory units in this course was ancient numismatics, and the man who taught it, the Assistant Keeper of Coins and Medals at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Graham Pollard, infected me with his enthusiasm for the subject. Although he was acting only to replace someone who was on study leave for a year, and his special subject of research was the Renaissance medal, he was able to present an inspiring account of ancient Greek and Roman coinage, and the experience of handling a number of these coins, some of them amazingly beautiful as well as being historically informative, led me to decide that I would make this a major subject of study, instead of architecture, which had been my previous plan. On my return to Australia, I was allowed to introduce a one-year unit of teaching called "Classical Art and Architecture", and ancient Greek and Roman coinage became a significant part of this subject.

However, this does not mean that I became a traditional numismatist. When it came to academic research, I realised that Western Australia was not a suitable place to investigate the sort of topic that professional numismatists would normally choose – studying the products of an ancient mint that had not been sufficiently studied before, deciding how many dies had been used to strike a given series of coins, or analysing a coin hoard and trying to extract as much numismatic and historical information from

it as possible. I chose a different approach: I would use my knowledge of ancient Greek and Latin to do what no one had done before, and collect all the written sources for this subject, literary, epigraphic and papyrological. This meant that I would be creating the sort of publication that might have been written by some German scholar in the nineteenth century (like Friedrich Hultsch's *Metrologicorum Scriptorum Reliquiae*,³ but adding translations of the ancient sources into English, and some explanatory notes). The sources relating to ancient Greek coinage have now been published under the title *Testimonia Numaria* (the second word being spelt with one 'm' because this was more common in early Latin, and as a homage to Barclay V. Head's monumental *Historia Numorum*). The first volume contains texts and translations, the second a commentary, some additional texts and an index of topics.⁴ The final volume, *Testimonia Numaria Romana*, will deal in a similar way with Roman coinage.

I had at one time thought of working on a similar collection of texts relating to Byzantine coinage, but I have abandoned this idea, not only because of the extra knowledge that I would have to acquire, but because some of the relevant material is not yet available in print and exists only in Byzantine manuscripts that can be difficult to access, and sometimes difficult to read.

In addition, I decided to write two books that would help non-numismatists to understand the terminology that was used by numismatists. These have already appeared: A Dictionary of Ancient Greek Coins in 1986, and A Dictionary of Ancient Roman Coins in 1990.⁵ I find with age these books are especially useful because they remind me of many things I have forgotten since I wrote them. While I have taught only a few students directly about ancient numismatics, I have been a teacher of another kind, helping collectors or students of ancient coinage to navigate the terminology and the ancient written sources when they exist.

ACANS

Later I became involved with the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies (ACANS), which was set up in 1999 as a part of the Department of Ancient History at Macquarie University in Sydney with the help of a generous donation by Bill and Janet Gale, and is unique in the southern hemisphere. It has not only helped numismatists in Australia, both ancient and modern, to improve their work and meet one another, but it has also provided important assistance to students of ancient history in this area, which is sometimes neglected.⁶

³ Hultsch 1864-66.

⁴ Melville-Jones 1993; 2007.

⁵ Melville-Jones 1986 and 1990.

⁶ See their website at Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies. Discussed at greater length in Ken Sheedy's contribution to this volume.

The Centre has, in the two decades of its existence, been very successful in attracting students of ancient history to study Greek and Roman numismatics (six of whom are at the moment pursuing postgraduate studies in subjects that have a numismatic content), and it has combined this with a strong research profile. Its Director, Associate Professor Kenneth Sheedy has published extensively on coinage, notably of the Cyclades and worked closely with ANSTO on metallurgical analysis of coins. He has been joined by Dr Gil Davis, the Director of the university's Program for Ancient Mediterranean Studies, who, in addition to a number of significant publications on Greek history, archaeometallurgy and coinage, has worked with Director Sheedy in creating a die-linked corpus of Athenian coinage before 479 BCE which forms the heart of a forthcoming two-volume work on the ancient Athenian *Wappenmünzen* and Owl coinages. Dr Davis and Macquarie's Professor Damian Gore have studied the chemical composition of early Attic coinage and they have published a new way of using surface chemical analyses to 'see through' the patina that accrues on the surface of coins over time. Furthermore, research which has been conducted by Dr Davis as part of a major ERC (European Research Council) grant into the sources of ancient silver based under PI Professor Francis Albarède at the ENS de Lyon (École normale supérieure de Lyon) has successfully sourced, geolocated, and isotopically identified many of the most significant mining regions in antiquity as well as devising a new methodology for lead isotope analysis and a completely new method of silver isotope analysis. The Centre has a Junior Fellowship program, which arranges for two advanced students each year to engage for three to four months in seminars with the Director, to research a topic on their own and to participate in the Centre's other activities (Fig. 1). They also have regular contact with the annual Gale lecturer. Six of these former Fellows now have established careers in academia for themselves.



Fig. 1. ACANS seminar room. From left to right: John Melville-Jones, Nikola Carsule (2012 ACANS Senior Fellow), the late Matthew Trundle (2012 Gale lecturer), Danielle Steyn (2012 ACANS Junior Fellow), Kate da Costa (ACANS Project Officer) and Clare Rowan (2005 ACANS junior fellow). Photo by K. Sheedy. Used with permission.

Now, having written more than 1600 words, what can I say about the topic on which this volume of the *Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia* is focused? In the first place, we live in a world in which electronic communication has added to, and in some cases replaced, traditional methods. So, although handling ancient coins is an experience which really brings the subject to life for the fortunate students who can do this, just as the best way of training physicians, and particularly surgeons, is by dissecting cadavers, much can be learned and enjoyed by studying photographs and electronic images, and coinage can be studied anywhere, provided that adequate guidance is given.

Secondly, it is unlikely that numismatics will ever be a major part of undergraduate study at most universities, and it will only be rarely that it will be a major part of postgraduate work, because a postgraduate student needs a supervisor who has an adequate knowledge of this subject. This means that in most cases it will be a fringe subject, or even ignored.

Numismatic education outside Australia

There are, however, some exceptions. The most outstanding example is the University of Vienna, which honours the memory of the world's greatest numismatist, Joseph Eckhel, and can benefit from the nearby Münzkabinett. This university offers a wide variety of short courses on elements of this subject at undergraduate and graduate level.



Fig. 2. Joseph Eckhel. Public Domain.

Eckhel was a Jesuit priest. In 1773 Pope Clement XIV issued a Papal Brief beginning with the benign words *Dominus ac Redemptor Noster*, 'Our Lord and Saviour', ordering that the Society of Jesus and its name should be suppressed in Western Europe and the colonies in which he had power over his church (the Society was revived by Pius VII in 1814). The reasons for the suppression are many and varied, but it may be suggested that in general the problem for the Jesuits was that they were too smart, and therefore too ready to question the established order.

Eckhel was then promptly appointed by Maria Theresa of Austria, the empress whose silver thaler is still used as a trade coin in some parts of the world, to the position of Professor of Antiquities and Numismatics at the University of Vienna, which he held until a year before his death in 1798. During that time he was continuously active, and his major publication, the *Doctrina Veterum Numorum*, "The Science of Ancient Coins" in eight volumes, published in 1792-1798, remains as a magnificent study of the subject, still occasionally useful for modern researchers, and one that no single modern scholar will ever be able to replicate. I am very pleased that four copies of this work are held in Australian libraries, one of them most appropriately in Macquarie University's ACANS.

At the University of Vienna, numismatics is taught by a number of staff for whom this subject is their primary, or at least a major, subject of teaching and research. The Department is the only autonomous university department teaching this subject in Europe (or perhaps in the world).⁷

⁷ Institut für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte, "Home page."



Fig. 3. Some of the staff and postgraduates of the Department of Numismatics and Monetary History, University of Vienna. From the left: Marc Wahl, Agnes Aspetsberger , Martin Bär, David Weidgenannt, Elmar Fröschl, Petra Vonmetz, Professor Dr Reinhard Wolters (Head of Department), Kana Tosuka, Hubert Emmerig (back), Nikolaus Aue (front), Jan Hendrik Giering. Source: Institut für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte, "Home page." Used with permission.

It begins with a compulsory module as part of an Ancient History bachelor degree, in which there are two units, "Identifying and describing numismatic objects (Antiquity)" and "Ancient Numismatics and monetary history". These introductory units lead to more specialised ones at the Master's or Diploma level, where a wide range of subjects is offered, including, as an example, the following in one semester:

Archaic and Classical Greek coinage – methods and matter Coins and history: Nerva, Trajan and Hadrian The mint of Vienna within the scope of Austria's monetary history Mediaeval and modern numismatic objects, excluding coins Excursion: coin finds in the collections of Lower Austria Coin Finds and Coin Circulation in Pompeii Identifying and describing Numismatic Objects: Antiquity (Compulsory) Numismatic Practice and Cataloguing

Numismatics is of course taught actively and successfully at many European universities as a small part of the curriculum, particularly in the case of ancient Greek and Roman numismatics. The program at Vienna provides an exceptional example of what continues

to be a vibrant academic community of numismatic specialists, There are too many strong programs elsewhere to give due attention to each one.

On the other hand, at the other end of the spectrum, many short courses (sometimes called seminars) are offered by universities and other organisations. We might contrast the summer seminars that are offered by the American Numismatic Society with the much more varied short seminars that are offered by the American Numismatic Association,⁸ primarily focused on American coinage, and on grading coins and detecting counterfeits.



The 2017 ANS Graduate Seminar (left to right): Alireza Khounani, Tara Sewell-Lasater, Thomas Faucher, Kevin Feeney, Fae Amiro, Gregory Callaghan, Richard Teverson, Jesse Kraft, Layah Ziall-Bigdeli. Image Courtesy of the American Numismatic Society, used with permission.

The summer seminars consist of eight weeks of full-time teaching with students also writing research papers while in New York. ANS staff and guest lecturers introduce students, mostly junior faculty members or PhD students, to the history of the discipline and its methods.⁹

By contrast, an unusual eight-week class in numismatics, occupying two hours each week on Saturday mornings, was offered at Adelphi University in New York for a few years from 1978. It was not a regular unit in any of the university's programs, but rather one for which the university provided a venue, and students who were deemed to have

⁸ American Numismatic Association "Summer Seminar."

⁹ American Numismatic Society, "Eric P. Newman Graduate seminar in Numismatics."

passed were issued with a certificate by the organisers, recognising them as "Certified Numismatic Advisors".¹⁰ It was hoped that it would be taken over by the university, but after a few years it died. This shows that the focus of the course was on training collectors and dealers, not on what might be called numismatic research.

If we leave Europe and the USA, and investigate Asia, it is clear that the study of this subject in the People's Republic of China has received a boost in recent years, because in 1992 a Numismatic Museum, administered by the People's Bank of China, was founded in Beijing, with visits by school and university students being encouraged.¹¹ Of course, the principal focus of the exhibits is on Chinese coinage, but the museum does display coinage of over a hundred other civilisations in its Foreign Collections. For instance, its website displays some Byzantine coins (described correctly as Eastern Roman), *tremisses* of Heraclius, Theodosius II and Constantine IX.

A recent development has been the establishment of a summer school at Northeast Normal University, Changchun, Manchuria ("Normal" teaching institutions were once so called because they were focused on teaching high school graduates the norms of pedagogy and the subjects that they would be teaching). The theme of the 2019 Summer School that was organised for its Institute for the History of Ancient Civilisations by Professor Sven Günther was "Representations of Power on and with Ancient Coins". Shanghai's University of Finance and Economics also has a Museum of Modern Coins, but numismatics does not officially form a part of its teaching program.

However, this is not matched in India, where there was, at the time of submission, no university that has a member of staff employed to teach numismatics, though in recent years there has been an increase in the number of people who wish to study coinage, usually the coinage of the Indian states.¹² When (or if) an opportunity arises to study the large number of gold coins issued from many mints from the period of the Roman Empire and later, that have been discovered in the vaults of the Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuraman, India, with other priceless articles of gold and jewellery, there will be plenty of experts and students seeking to extract as much information as possible from this material.¹³

There are many missed opportunities where the teaching of numismatics could easily happen, but the situation has improved. The University of Leeds provides an example of a recent highly positive development. The university starting with a small collection of Roman coins assembled by the Department of Latin over time, acquired more coins from various sources, many of them coming from the collections of wealthy and generous

¹⁰ Adelphi University 1978.

¹¹ Chinese Numismatic Museum, "Homepage."

¹² Sircar 2008, 37-47.

¹³ Das 2016.

donors, and now has more than twenty thousand coins, tokens and medals, both ancient and modern. At the end of the last century, after the Chair of the university's Coin Committee retired, the collection was neglected for almost a generation, but recently a numismatics project has been developed under the control of Dr Simon Glenn, with the aim of making it more generally acceptable, and finding ways of integrating it into teaching and research projects – teaching *with* numismatics, in the sense that this collection of essays is examining.¹⁴

In addition to the Leeds collection there are two new summer programs that have emerged recently in Athens. The British School at Athens (BSA) has in the recent past offered a biennial two-week short course. The program has been directed most recently by Professor K. Rutter and Dr. M. Loy and is intended as a post-graduate course.¹⁵ A second numismatic summer course was initiated in 2017 by the Section of Greek and Roman Antiquity (formerly KEPA) of the National Hellenic Research Foundation. The "Summer School on Greek and Roman Numismatics" is an intensive ten-day course taught annually by Numismatists in KEPA and colleagues from other research institutes in Athens.¹⁶ Each course has a different special theme and invites foreign scholars to participate. Like the BSA program, it was cancelled for 2020 and 2021. These new Athenian courses illustrate growth in opportunities for students and teachers.

Introducing numismatics to students

What should be done when someone wishes to introduce this subject to students whose main area of study does not include it? Here are some suggestions, limited to Greek and Roman and Byzantine coinage, which those with interests in other areas can adapt as required.

First, a basic bibliography should be provided, restricted to writings that are easily accessible to students, with written notes explaining the topic that will be addressed in what is bound to be a limited number of classes. Second, it will be necessary to discuss a certain number of coins, providing the students with actual specimens, rather than images of one kind or another, so that they can have the experience of handling them.

My basic choice of ancient coins would be as follows. In the first place, an electrum coin of the sort first issued in Lydia and other places in that area would be a good starting point, particularly if a non-invasive analysis of its metal could be used to stimulate discussion of the question of whether it had been issued at a value that matched the value of the metal. Next would come a silver stater of the island of Aegina, which would lead to a discussion of where the silver came from (possibly from Siphnos, although

¹⁴ Sayers 2018; Glenn 2020.

¹⁵ British School at Athens 2018.

¹⁶ National Hellenic Research Foundation 2018.

modern analyses are suggesting that this might not be the case), the possible significance of the obverse type of a turtle being replaced by that of a tortoise, and the evidence from hoards of the extent to which these coins were exported to places outside the Greek world. An 'owl' of Athens would follow, and a stater of Corinth, and the use of these currencies could be contrasted with the fact that it was a long time before the Spartans began to strike a few coins from the end of the fourth century onwards, after studiously avoiding this practice for many years. A Persian Daric might also be included. Students could be told the story that is related in Plutarch's Life of the Spartan king Agesilaus (16.6) about the way in which a Persian satrap managed to force this king to leave his territory and return to Greece in 395 BCE by sending ten thousand of these valuable pure gold coins to different persons in Greece as bribes, to encourage them to engage in anti-Spartan activities. This explains the reported statement of Agesilaus that he had been vanquished by "ten thousand archers", because the obverse type of these coins shows a figure, probably representing the king of Persia, running while holding a bow and lance. Although many of these coins were issued, they are quite rare nowadays (perhaps because they were melted down because Greek recipients might not have wanted to show that they had received them), so they fetch high prices if they are in good condition, which is not uncommon because their high value meant they were likely to have been hoarded rather than used for everyday purposes.

Although a few more coins from the large number of separate Greek mints that issued coins before the mid-fourth century BCE might be shown to illustrate the great variety of coin types, it would be more important to show the students some silver and gold coins of Philip II and Alexander the Great, to discuss the types that were chosen to be placed on them, their significance, and explain how modern scholarship has made it possible with almost complete confidence to establish when and where they were minted. A coin of a Hellenistic king could then be used to show how as time went on the idealised ruler portrait became normal.

Since well-preserved specimens of some of these coins will be expensive, the use of copies might be considered. Some of these can be purchased inexpensively, but their quality is inconsistent so that it might be better to rely on illustrations in books, unless there is some easily accessible collection that can be visited. I have seen a few copies that were produced by the British Museum for educational purposes, using the electrotype process, made by Robert Ready, and later by his sons, between 1859 and 1931. After that the museum stopped producing them. The copies had Robert Ready's initials impressed into their edges, and even if these had not been erased, people would wander in and show them, believing that they were genuine and valuable. Also, some uniface specimens were produced, but it was possible to join them together and try to hide the join.

The electrotype process involved making a mould to copy each side of a coin or medal, then placing the moulds in an electrolytic solution until a layer of copper was deposited on the surface. The two electrotypes would then be attached in a sandwich to the sides of a base metal plate of the right thickness, and the whole would then be coated with a layer of the right metal. It would then be quite difficult to determine whether a coin was genuine without invasive investigations. The process has now been replaced by more modern ways of creating copies, an activity in which in relatively recent times forgers have excelled. I remember that more than thirty years ago someone brought to me what appeared to be a gold stater of the Hellenistic Greek ruler Antiochus VI. When I checked, I realised that no gold coins were known to have been issued for this king during his short reign, so this was either an exciting discovery – or perhaps not. Seeking advice, I consulted my friend Dr Martin Price of the British Museum's Department of Coins and Medals, and he responded with good humour, saying that he had once been in the Lebanon and had come across a similar coin. When he showed it to a local dealer of good standing, the dealer slid a drawer open, extracted a similar coin, and said, "Here you are, if you want a pair of cuff links". I decided that I had not made a remarkable discovery.

Returning to the question of teaching students about ancient Greek coins, a billon tetradrachm of Alexandria might be shown (worth in fact only about the same as the much lighter Roman *denarius* because of the low proportion of silver that it now contained, and, if it was exchanged for Roman currency, being valued at an even lower rate), and one of the bronze coins issued by a Greek city under Roman rule, the coins that used to be called "Greek Imperials", but are now usually referred to as "Roman provincial coinage". Altogether we could show the students about a dozen Greek coins, preferably in two 45-minute classes. Then around the same number of Roman coins could be used to compare and contrast the different systems of coinage.

The beginning of Roman coinage would be harder to illustrate, because of the nature of it and the rarity of some of the earliest specimens. All Roman coinage was originally in bronze (the Latin word *aes* which the Romans used to describe this currency sometimes, because of the context in which it is found, clearly means copper, but more often it seems to mean bronze). And before the Romans issued any coins, they seem to have made payments of stored up wealth in shapeless crude lumps of cast bronze (which we call *aes rude*), or cast bronze bars with representations of animals, birds or other objects. We are accustomed to describe these ingots as *aes signatum*, or "*aes* marked with a sign", because of a statement by the Elder Pliny in his *Natural History* (33.13.43) that has been considered reliable, even though this author often recycled incorrect information: *Servius rex primus signavit aes. Antea rudi usos Romae Timaeus tradit. Signatum est nota pecudum, unde et pecunia appellata* ("King Servius was the first to put a mark on

aes. Previously they used crude [*aes*] at Rome, as Timaeus reports. It was marked with a design of domestic animals [*pecus*], for which reason it is called *pecunia*").

We then move to the first real Roman coins, circular cast ones. The Romans used an expression *aes grave*, "heavy bronze, or bronze by weight", and in some contexts this phrase appears in ancient texts to describe fines that were imposed before any coins were issued, when payments would have had to be paid in the weight of metal that had been decreed. However, modern numismatists have become accustomed to use this expression to describe the earliest Roman cast coinage before its weight and size were decreased and the coins began to be struck. Some also use the phrase *aes formatum (aes* that has been given a form) to describe some early lumps of bronze that have been given a shape, such as that of a shell, but this name is not found in any ancient source. As with the later term *antoninianus*, which will be mentioned shortly, these inaccurate terms have become embedded in numismatic literature, and it is probably impossible not to use them in the way in which they have now established themselves.

In order to instruct students briefly in early Roman coinage, since there are so many more later coins to show them, we might start with an early bronze coin with a weight that showed it to be on the *libral* standard (based on an *as* that weighed one Roman pound or *libra*), following this with a silver coin from the middle of the third century BCE, bearing the legend ROMANO, or a *quadrigatus*, showing a four-horse chariot on the reverse, and then an early *denarius*, followed by one with the numeral XVI on its obverse to show that it had been retariffed at sixteen *asses*, rather than the original ten which had given it its name. After this, there is an enormous variety of Roman coin types as the mint magistrates who each year had the honour of administering the issuing of coins began to choose ways of alluding to the deeds of their ancestors. One coin with types that have an interesting historical explanation should be selected as an example of the way in which this was done.

We then come to the time when the Republic began to suffer from the competition of ambitious men, ending with C. Julius Caesar's having received the dictatorship for life, *Dictator Perpetuo*, and the issuing of coins with his portrait, something that might have contributed to his assassination on the Ides of March 44 BCE. It is unlikely that any of these coins can be purchased except for large sums of money, unless they are in poor condition, but a good website with clear and correct descriptions of his coinage and good illustrations is available on the ACANS and ANS websites.¹⁷

The coins of Antony and Octavian (before 27 BCE when he received the name Augustus) are historically important, and it is hard to decide which of them should be selected. The most interesting one might be the denarius issued for Antony in 32

¹⁷ Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies, "A New Honour"; American Numismatic Society, "Mantis."

BCE which advertised his victory in Armenia on the obverse by combining his portrait with the legend ARMENIA DEVICTA, and showing a portrait bust of Cleopatra on the reverse. This coin can be used to show how, like many later rulers, Antony was advertising a victory rather than the defeats that he had suffered in his Parthian campaign. The head in profile shows that Cleopatra did not resemble Elizabeth Taylor, but it is still important for the projection of her image. The reverse legend, CLEOPATRAE·REGINAE·REGVM·FILIORUM·REGVM, "of Cleopatra, queen of Kings, and of (their) sons who are kings", is also something that can be usefully discussed with students of ancient history.

With hundreds of years of imperial coinage to come, only a few more coins can be added unless the introduction to ancient coinage that I am imagining can be given more time. So here are four more examples of coins that would be educational from different points of view. In the first place we might look at a sestertius of Nero showing his portrait and titles on the obverse, and on the reverse a roofless, walled building. This needs to be interpreted, because ancient artists were usually unable to use linear perspective to represent objects or buildings. What we see on this coin appears flat at first, but the left part of the design shows the side wall of the building, and the less wide right part shows two doors, meeting in the middle to show that they are closed. This building was the Janus of ancient Rome. It was roofless, and was not a temple, as so many modern writers insist on calling it though only Plutarch (Numa 20) among ancient writers calls it a temple. The reverse legend, PACE P(opulo) R(omano) TERRA MARIQUE PARTA, "Peace created for the Roman people on earth and sea", marked the end of hostilities with Parthia (Tac. Ann. 14-15) and alluded to another cessation of hostilities with the Parthians during Augustus' reign (RG 29). This type clearly shows that Nero was presenting himself as the new Augustus. In addition, this coin could be used to discuss the meaning of the abbreviation S(enatus) C(onsulto), "by a resolution of the Senate", which was used only on the aes coinage during the time of the empire, except for a few years at the beginning of Nero's reign, using a slightly variant form EX S(enatus) C(onsulto) on the gold and silver coins, which suggests that the Senate had taken over from the young emperor the formal control of the issuing of precious metal coins, as well as the *aes* issues. This sestertius would also be a good example of the fine style of portraiture that was developed by die engravers at this time.

A short digression on imitations

It might be interesting, and educational from another point of view, to consider examining one of the imitations of Roman *sestertii* that were produced by the Paduan artist Giovanni da Cavino in the middle of the sixteenth century.¹⁸ Their fine style has led many persons to fail to recognise Cavino's products as being not genuine Roman

¹⁸ Lawrence 1883; Kurz 1973, 78-79.

coins (the principal points of difference are the slightly exaggerated modelling of the faces and bodies, the insistence of centring the designs on the flans, and the rather broader serifs, like fish tails, that appear at the ends of some letters). It is not surprising therefore that in the catalogue of a prestigious modern collection published some sixty years ago a *sestertius* of Titus was not recognised as being his work. Also, imitations actually produced by Cavino are almost impossible to find (the best place to see them is in the Museo Bottacin at Padua), because after his death his son and perhaps others used his dies (which are now held in the Cabinet des Médailles in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris) to strike more imitations, which are on larger, slightly thinner, flans. Many modern writers do not realise this. For example, Michael Matzke, writing recently in *Schweizer Münzblätter*, that no one could tell nowadays which ones were the original work of the sixteenth century.¹⁹

Some similar medals produced by other artists at about the same time are called 'Paduans' because of him. For instance, one that shows a head of Julius Caesar blown up from an ancient portrait on a *sestertius* with the legend VENI VIDI VICI on the reverse, is certainly not his work. The style is different, and it is impossible to believe that Alessandro Bassano would have let him produce something that had no precedent in imperial coinage.

Cavino is sometimes described as a forger, but the truth is different. He lived at a time when, at the height of the Renaissance in Europe, many artists and architects and writers were fired with a desire to equal the works of the ancients, the Greeks and Romans who had provided a basis for so many things in European civilisation. If anyone still doubts his honourable intentions, they should go to the Basilica of Saint Antony in Padua and look at his tombstone there. The writing on the tombstone includes the statement, *priscorum praesertim Caesarum multorum* . . . *imagines cudendo expressit* ("In particular, by striking, he produced images of many of the early Caesars"). This suggests that he was not trying to hide what he was doing.

Although nowadays there are so many photographs of high quality that can be viewed in printed publications or on the internet, handling coins makes the study of them more exciting, and in this case, showing the students how good an imitation can be, and how it can be distinguished from an original coin, adds something to the educational process.²⁰

Moving on to later Roman coins, it is difficult to select a few more when there is such a wealth of artistical and historical material that can be extracted from them. Perhaps students could be shown a specimen of one of the 'Province' series of coins that were

¹⁹ Matzke 2016, 22.

²⁰ On this point, see the articles by Brice and Kopestonsky, Gettel, and McIntyre and Orchard.

issued for Hadrian as he moved around his empire in a manner that reminds one of Pope John Paul II, who until he was in his seventies broke all previous records.

Then there should certainly be a specimen of the so-called *antoninianus*, a coin incorrectly described by some modern writers on the basis of an incorrect use of this term by the writer of the *Historia Augusta*. To give artistic verisimilitude to what might otherwise have been a bald and unconvincing narrative, the author inserted into his text a number of quotations of supposed documents, and mentioned payments made in different kinds of coinage, using terms that were mostly invented. In fact, the proper description of this coin, which was first issued by Caracalla, and continued to be issued until the end of the third century CE, was a double *denarius* and the fact that it weighed only approximately one and a half *denarii* can lead to some discussions of monetary inflation and the nature of fiduciary currency.

As a contrast, we might jump a century and use a gold *solidus* of some emperor in the fourth century. The name of this coin, meaning "entire, complete, unvarying" (which inspired sorely needed confidence), was first applied to an *aureus* issued by Diocletian, who was attempting to stabilise a currency that had become increasingly unsatisfactory over the preceding decades, even after a valiant attempt by Aurelian to improve it. But it is normally reserved for a slightly lighter gold coin (72 to the Roman pound) that began to be issued by Constantine the Great in 309/10 CE and within a few years had replaced the *aureus*. This coin can be used to discuss with students the effect of having a coinage that in at least one metal has a stable value. As for deciding which solidus to use for teaching, it would be interesting to look for one that shows somewhere the design that is called a Christogram, combining the first two Greek letters *chi* and *rho*, the beginning of the Greek title Christos that was applied to Jesus. As an example, a solidus of Constantius III's wife Galla Placidia, issued in 421-22, shows on its reverse a Christogram being inscribed by Victory on a shield. It could be used to discuss the extent to which Christianity was gradually gaining power in the Roman Empire. It could also be used to explain the legends CONOB or COMOB that had begun to appear on Roman gold coins, the first indicating that the coin was obrussus (a word that had come to mean of pure gold) of the purity that had been established at Constantinople, and the second (like this one) that it was issued at a "companion" or comitatensian mint, accompanying the emperor.

Finally, the term *solidus* could be used, with some other words, to explain why in English coinage the abbreviation that was used until recently to describe sums of money in pounds, shillings and pence – £sd. These letters stand for the Latin words *librae, solidi, denarii*, 'pounds, shilling, pence' (the first is an ornamental form of the letter L, written with a line across the middle (or two in the case of the Italian *lira*). These terms go back to Rome. Before the Romans began to mint coins, they were using lumps of bronze as

currency, some of them clearly intended to weigh a pound, or *libra*, and some of the earliest coins also weighed a Roman pound, about 324 grams (actually, up to 1% more, but 324 is easy to divide when fractions are needed). The weight of the bronze coinage was then reduced, and the word *libra* was not used of coinage except occasionally when a large sum of silver coinage minted on a weight standard different from the Roman was being described. However, in the late Roman Empire, when major sums were being paid in gold, in bullion or coinage, they were likely to be measured in pounds, and this continued until mediaeval times. However, in the later eighth century in England and in Charlemagne's reign the word began to be used to describe a weight of silver, since a shortage of gold had led to this metal's becoming the principal medium of exchange in northern Europe. After World War I the Bank of England began to issue notes that were printed, not written, and they bore on them the declaration, "I promise to pay the bearer on demand the sum of one pound". This declaration remained on the £1 notes until they ceased to be issued in 1984, although anyone who went to the Bank of England and asked to be paid one pound for his note would either have been turned away, or just given a banknote, perhaps his own returned to him.

As with the pound, the history of the *solidus* shows a decline in value. It started as a Roman gold coin, and lasted for several centuries, being taken over by the Byzantine emperors, and called a *nomisma* or *holokottinos* ("completely cooked") meaning that it was of pure gold, and a *bezant* in Western Europe, acknowledging its Byzantine origin. In the early eighth century, by which time gold coinage was hardly being issued in Europe, it became the name of a sum of money, no longer a coin, but one-twentieth of a silver *libra*, although the Italian version of its name, *soldo*, came to be the name of a silver coin issued in many Italian cities from the end of the twelfth century onwards.

The *libra* was also divided into 240 silver *denarii*, called *deniers* in French, *pfennig* in Germany and *pen(n)ing* and *penny* in English. This is why the last letter in £sd means 'pence'. This arrangement of 1 pound-twenty shillings-twelve pence remained in force until February 15, 1971, the saints' day of Jovitus and Faustina of Brescia (decimal coinage had been introduced in Australia five years earlier on St Valentine's day in 1966). It could be quite complicated to add up sums of money in these different values. I remember that my father, who had a business of selling woollen cloth, worked in his early days with a little booklet which enabled him to sell so many yards of something at four shillings and seven-pence halfpenny a yard, perhaps even deducting five per cent if paid in cash. Nowadays, of course no one needs to make calculations of this kind, and few young people can add up sums of money unless they have a calculator to do it for them, so with credit cards and other means of transferring money, we seem to be approaching a monetary world very different from that of the ancient Greeks and Romans, one in which many people do not carry coins or paper money with them. If

this trend continues, the only people who will want to have coinage and paper money continue to be issued will be criminals and, of course, numismatists.

Author

Professor John Melville-Jones joined The University of Western Australia in 1957. From 1963 he included numismatic content in some of the units that he taught. Although numismatics was not the only subject in which he conducted research, he published a number of books and articles relating to this subject, including two volumes (so far) of Testimonia Numaria as well as two dictionaries on ancient Greek and Roman coins and it was one of the reasons for his being appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) on Australia Day 2021. (john.melville-jones@uwa.edu.au)

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Ray Jewell Award Recipients

Silver Medal (for services to the NAA)

Raymond T N Jewell (posthumously), 1998Leslie J Carlisle, 2011John Hope, 2003Walter R Bloom, 2013W James Noble, 2004Peter D Lane, 2015John R Melville-Jones, 2011Value R Bloom, 2015

Bronze Medal (for best article from two journals)

John Sharples. Vol 7, *Catalogue of Victorian trade tokens*.
Paul M Holland. Vol 9, *Master die types of Australian halfpennies*.
Peter Lane and Peter Fleig. Vol 12, *London private museums and their tokens*.
Richard A J O'Hair and Antoinette Tordesillas. Vol 13, *Aristocrats of crime*.
Peter Lane and Peter Fleig. Vol. 15 *William Henshall*.
Christopher Addams. Vol 18, *Counterfeiting on the Bermuda convict hulk* Dromedary.
Mark Stocker. Vol. 19, *The Empire Strikes Back*.
Helen Walpole. Vol 22, *The role of sporting medals in a sports museum*.
Peter Lane. Vol 23, *S. Schlank & Co Ltd: medal and badge makers of Adelaide 1887-1971*.



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3.	1977, R M Greig	SA	27.	2001, D Junge	Vic
4.	1977, R V McNeice	Tas	28.	2001, F Dobbins	NSW
5.	1977, G D Dean	Qld	29.	2001, G Farringdon-Davis	Vic
6.	1977, S J Wilson	WA	30.	2003, P Lane	SA
7.	(Allocated as the silver award to Ray	Jewell)	31.	2004, F Gare	WA
8.	1978, O C Fleming	NSW	32.	2006, M C Williams	Qld
9.	1978, M B Keain	SA	33.	2006, J A Hanley	NSW
10.	1979, T M Hanley	NSW	34.	2007, G Shea	Qld
11.	1979, A Ware	NSW	35.	2007, W R Bloom	WA
12.	1981, C J Tindall	SA	36.	2008, R Sell	NSW
13.	1983, D G Sandeson	Qld	37.	2008, G D Snelgrove	Qld
14.	1984, R L Henderson	Vic	38.	2009, M P Vort-Ronald	SA
15.	1985, L J Carlisle	NSW	39.	2010, J W Cook	Qld
16.	1986, H Powell	WA	40.	2011, P Fleig	SA
17.	1987, N Harper	Tas	41.	2013, B V Begley	Qld
18.	1989, T W Holmes	Tas	42.	2014, S Appleton	Qld
19.	1990, D G Stevens	Qld	43.	2015, T J Davidson	Qld
20.	1991, L T Pepperell	Vic	44.	2016, F J Robinson	Vic
21.	1991, C Heath	Tas	45.	2017, B M Newman	SA
22.	1993, C E Pitchfork	NSW	46	2018, M Carter	Qld
23.	1994, L P McCarthy	Qld	47	2019, G Petterwood	Tas
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