

Volume 32

Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia



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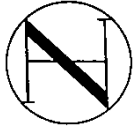
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Front cover: Photo of Mr. Billing's Gold Medal for Law (see article Figure 2 page 88).

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NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

President's Report

You are looking at Volume 32 of the *Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia* (JNAA). It is a result of authors who have been sufficiently excited about a numismatic topic to carry out original research and put 'pen to paper', reviewers who have been willing to offer constructive criticisms to make the manuscripts the best they can be and the efforts of the editor who shepherds all the articles through the whole process and adds a 'final polish'. I acknowledge everyone involved, with special thanks to Managing Editor Gil Davis and Production Editor Barrie Newman for their continued efforts at maintaining a high-quality journal.

Much has happened since the last president's report published in Volume 31. The opening up of COVID-19 restrictions saw a welcome return to the NAA conference (NAAC2023), which was held in Adelaide at the Naval, Military & Air Force Club on the weekend of 19 – 20th October 2023, and hosted by the Numismatic Society of South Australia (NSSA). The conference was preceded by the 1000th meeting of the NSSA on the evening of Friday 18th October 2023. I would like to congratulate the NSSA for reaching this impressive milestone and for their major efforts in hosting the 9th NAA conference. The conference was an outstanding success, with attendees from every state of Australia and New Zealand. The conference program consisted of an opening talk by Ms Lainie Anderson (author of the *Long Flight Home*), two plenary lectures, 12 regular talks and a short talk. All talks were of a high standard and highlighted the diverse interests of the Australian and New Zealand numismatic community.

One of the highlights of the conference was the dinner, during which the Ray Jewell Silver Medal was awarded to the JNAA Managing Editor, Associate Professor Gillan Davis. This important award for 'outstanding contribution to Australian numismatics and the Numismatic Association of Australia' recognises Gil for his services to the NAA, and his numismatic research in Australia and overseas for which he is internationally renowned. Given that Gil is only the 8th recipient since the award was first presented in 1998, I have asked Walter Bloom to prepare a separate short report based on his presentation speech, which can be found in this volume.

The AGM, held at the conference, saw a ‘changing of the guard’, with Walter Bloom and Lyn Bloom handing over the reins as president and treasurer respectively. I personally want to thank Walter and Lyn for their tireless efforts in maintaining the local and international profile of the NAA over many years, including during the difficult COVID-19 period.

The following Office Bearers were elected at the 2023 AGM:

Treasurer – Rachel Mansfield

Secretary – Bridget McClean

President – Richard O’Hair

Vice President – Walter Bloom

Managing Editor – Gil Davis

I would like to thank our sponsors for their continued support of the NAA: Noble Numismatics (Gold), Coinworks, Downies (Silver), Drake Sterling, Mowbray Collectables and Sterling & Currency.

Finally, a valuable part of NAAC2023 was a round table discussion on the future of the Numismatic Association of Australia. Prior to the conference, clubs and societies were asked to send their feedback on the following:

- Any views of the Society/Club about the NAA, especially its activities and how these serve Australian numismatics.
- What would the Society/Club like to see from the NAA in the future?

The feedback received and the discussions had at the conference were valuable and the Council will work through the issues raised. The most important issue which was identified is one with which many societies are grappling: how to maintain an active membership that is willing and able to volunteer to help out with the various activities required to maintain the society. So, I would encourage all of you to think about how you might contribute to your local club or society and the NAA. We welcome your submissions to the JNAA and hope to see you at the NAAC2025 (details to appear in 2024)!

Professor Richard A. J. O’Hair

President, NAA

27 November 2023

Report on the Silver Ray Jewell Award to Associate Professor Gillan Davis

We acknowledge the important work that Associate Professor Gillan Davis, as Managing Editor of the *Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia (JNAA)*, has undertaken for the NAA over the past 11 years. Gil has been Managing Editor of each of the Journals consecutively since 2011 – Volume 22 through to Volume 31 in 2023, and has almost completed finalising the articles for JNAA32, 2023. His contribution for all these Journals has been outstanding.

The Journal is now recognised internationally, and Gil has been instrumental in sourcing contributors and assessing their input. His attention to detail and editorial work is unsurpassed and we believe Gil should be recognised by the NAA for his support and services to the Association by being awarded the silver Ray Jewell Award.

Gil has included an Editor's Letter or Note in all the NAA Journals issued since the 2012 edition (No 23) in which he has highlighted the Journal as the showcase of the NAA, the peak body for numismatics in Australia.

He strongly promotes the NAA through each Journal and through his involvement with Macquarie University and its Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies (ACANS) and students.

Gil has sourced many of the unique articles from highly qualified Australian and international numismatic authors and supported Australian PhD students in their numismatic research in digs in Israel and the Middle East. He has ensured that there is a good mix of modern and ancients coverage throughout each Journal.

Gil was instrumental in introducing the Journal electronically in 2015 and it is now readily available to members and the public alike on our website. Through his efforts the Journal has now become a major teaching aid in subjects such as history and humanities, as he has highlighted in Journal No 30, 'teaching with numismatics – coins are useful teaching tools'.

Gil has truly supported the NAA in all his endeavours and is most deserving of the Ray Jewell silver award.

Gillan (Gil) Davis has given me (in my previous role as President) excellent advice on many issues arising in the NAA outside of his editorial expertise. I always value his input, and indeed continue to do so.

After Gil moved to the Australian Catholic University, where he is the Director of the Ancient Israel Program at the Australian Catholic University which offers a full major and minor in Archaeology to students in Arts, Education, Theology and the Ramsay Centre for Western Civilisation together with an annual dig in Israel and school outreach, he faced establishing a new degree programme, supervising students and liaising with ACANS, continuing with his Middle Eastern digs, and being an important member of the European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant titled ‘Silver Isotopes and the Rise of Money’, based in Lyon, which is geolocating and isotopically identifying ancient silver ore sources and matching them with coins and silver artefacts.

Gil is a personal friend and we are in frequent contact, but still I continue to be impressed about how he has managed to fit in all of these activities after a change mid-life from Real Estate to academia.



Figure 1: Presentation of the silver Ray Jewell Award by Professor Walter Bloom to Associate Professor Gillan Davis at the dinner of the NAA Conference 2023 in Adelaide, 19th August 2023.

Professor Walter Bloom
12 December 2023

Editor's note

This is an eclectic volume covering a wide range of interesting topics. The concentration is on modern material while the 'ancients' deal with Roman coins and medals. Many of the papers were also given as presentations at the highly successful Numismatic Association of Australia conference held in Adelaide earlier in the year. As always, it is a pleasure to see domestic scholarship supplemented by overseas contributors from the United States, the UK, Italy and New Zealand.

Paul Holland gives us interesting information about that perennial Australian favourite – the 1930 penny, providing details of the mint records and earliest numismatic literature. Mint records are used in another way by Eric Frazer in his analysis of the patterns of coin circulation in Australia over the last two decades. He quantifies the decline in the number of coins in circulation per person speculating on the probable phasing out of 5 and 10 cents coins. Eric provides a second and complementary article analysing the circulation of foreign coins among Australian decimal coinage and their sources of origin; the list may surprise you.

A topic that intrigues ancient through to early modern numismatists is estimating the production rate of mints. This is essential for quantification studies and it is fair to state that opinions are greatly divided. So, it is with interest that we present a detailed study by Pierluigi Debernardi on the production of denarii of Crepusius, an otherwise unknown moneyer in the Roman Republic dated to 82 BCE. The software that he has developed provides a mintage model which successfully matches the coin evidence.

While in the Roman period, we have an article by Bruce Marshall on the so-called 'Restoration' coins of the CE first century emperors Vespasian and Titus which, he argues, by reviving Augustan types, served as propaganda to justify their seizure of power. Andrew Chugg takes us into the second century with a short note updating his earlier article (*JNAA* 31) on the authenticity of some of the specimens of the medallion struck by the emperor Hadrian to commemorate his lover and favourite, the youth Antinous, who drowned in the Nile in CE 130.

Vaughn Humberstone usefully provides a comprehensive and fully referenced listing of the 45 New Zealand trade tokens issued between 1857 and 1875 together with background on the circumstances which led to them being struck despite never being legal tender and interesting details on the merchants and the dies they employed. Across the ditch and almost exactly contemporaneously, NAA President Richard O'Hair has contributed a study of the gold medal for law awarded by Mr Billing at the University of Melbourne. The research was prompted by the discovery of one of the 15 medals awarded between 1858 and 1874.

Finally we have a pair of articles dealing with remembrance by two stalwarts of the NAA. Barrie Newman, our Production Editor, shares a lovely story of his proposal to sell commemorative ingots to the United Arab Emirates for his company, The Adelaide Mint. Sadly, it did not end well. Channelling Marcel Proust à la recherche du temps perdu, Walter Bloom, President of the NAA for many years, narrates the story of his numismatic life. It is like walking through a wonderful antiquarian bookshop with a friend. Along the way, he tells the story of numismatics and coin dealers and medallists in this country, as well as his personal, often quirky, research and collecting interests.

As always, I sincerely thank the many anonymous reviewers who have reviewed the papers with special thanks to Barrie Newman for his careful attention to the role of Production Editor and John Melville-Jones for proofreading many of the articles.

On a personal note, I thank the selection committee of the NAA for awarding me the Ray Jewell silver medal which I shall always treasure.

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Articles must comprise original research on numismatic material including but not limited to Australasian numismatics (coins, tokens, medals, banknotes) or ancient or mediaeval numismatics. Manuscripts can be emailed to any member of the Editorial Board in your area of research, along with a copy to the Managing Editor.

'Restoration' Coins of the Flavian Emperors, Vespasian and Titus

Bruce Marshall

Abstract

In 2019 the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies (ACANS) at Macquarie University purchased four bronze asses of the emperor Titus (AD 79-81) from the Australian coin dealer Noble. Though one of them has the head of Augustus on the obverse, and the formula REST[ITVIT] in the legend on the reverse, consideration of this and the other coins revealed that it had no connection with Augustus' claim to have 'restored' the republic. The types belong to what are referred to as 'restoration' coins issued by the emperors of the Flavian dynasty, followed by Nerva, Trajan (who also re-issued republican types) and Hadrian.

An examination reveals that the copying of coin images was reasonably common in the Roman republican and early imperial periods. There were a variety of reasons for this practice in the early imperial period. In the case of the Flavian emperors, Vespasian and Titus, apart from what seems to be a particular antiquarian interest in earlier coins, there was also an additional motive of demonstrating a continuity with Rome's great past as a way of justifying their seizure of power.

Keywords

[denarius] [aureus] [quinarius] [sestertius] [dupondius] [RESTITVIT] [Caesar Augustus] [Vespasian] [Titus] [corona civica] [laurel branches] [clupeus virtutis] [SPQR] [EX S C]

In 2019, the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatics (ACANS) at Macquarie University purchased four bronze asses issued by the Roman emperor Titus in AD 80-81 for its collection from the Australian coin dealer Nobles.¹

1 Noble, Sale 120, 2-4 April 2019, Lots 3210-3214. Throughout, republican coins are referred to by their numbering in the definitive collection of M.H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, 2 vols, Cambridge, 1974, with the abbreviation *RRC*, and imperial coins are referred to by the relevant numbering in *Roman Imperial Coinage*, Vols 1 and 2, 2nd edn, with the abbreviation *RIC*. The images of coins are taken from the Catalogue of Roman Coins in the British Museum, from the collection of the American Numismatic Society, and from the Bibliothèque National in Paris. Copyright is gratefully acknowledged by inclusion, as requested, of the accession numbers. Some images are taken from numismatic sales catalogues, which are in the public domain.

Two of these coins in particular caught the attention of Emeritus Professor Edwin Judge. One has a bare head of Augustus on the obverse and the legend DIVVS AVGVSTVS PATER, and on the reverse the façade of the Ara Providentiae Augusti, with the legend IMP[erator] T[itus] VESP[asianus] AVG[ustus] REST[ituit] around and the initials S C across (Fig. 1). The other (Fig. 2) has a radiate head of Augustus on the obverse and the same legend, while the reverse has an eagle standing on an orb with wings outstretched, with the same legend around, and S C across.



Fig. 1: *as* of Titus, RIC 2.454, AD 80-81 [Noble, Sale 120, 2-4 April 2019, Lot 3214]

Fig. 2: *as* of Titus, RIC 2.464, AD 74 [Noble, Sale 120, April 2019, Lot 3213]

Professor Judge was interested in two aspects of these *asses*. First, he thought the word REST. (abbreviated or in full) appearing on these *asses* might have something to do with Augustus' 'restoration' of the *res publica*,² and with a topic of continued debate – what did Augustus really mean by one of the final clauses in his own account of his achievements, the *Res Gestae et Impensae Divi Augusti*,³ when he states: 'in my sixth and seventh consulships . . . I transferred [*transtuli*] the *res publica* from my own power back to the decision [*arbitrium*] of the Senate and People of Rome' (*RGIDA*, 34.1).⁴

So, Professor Judge commissioned me to investigate. Unfortunately, I had to inform him that these bronze *asses* of Titus, despite the use of Augustus' head, did not commemorate Augustus' so-called 'restoration of the republic'. Like a number of other Flavian and imperial coins, they are referred to as 'restoration' coins, because the term REST[ITVIT]

2 Among his many publications is a significant article on this question: "Res Publica Restituta": A Modern Illusion; in J.A.S. Evans (ed.), *Polis and Imperium: Studies in Honour of Edward Togo Salmon* (Hakkert, Toronto, 1974) 279-311. It was reprinted with modifications in his book *The Failure of Augustus* (2019); see also his comments in *ibid.* chap. 14, taking into account the *aureus* (BM 1995.0401.1) which came to light in 1995.

3 Most writers refer to this document simply as the *Res Gestae* (or *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* = RG or RGDA). Given the title's mention of *impensae* (expenses) and the considerable amount of space devoted to the listing of expenditure in the document (six sections out of 34, plus the Appendix), it should be called the *Res Gestae et Impensae* and abbreviated therefore as RGI(DA). See Hillard 2008: 126-7.

4 The use of 'Octavian' as the name for Julius Caesar's heir, though very widespread, is incorrect. He never wished to use that name, and always referred to himself as 'Caesar', using his adoptive father's name (mainly because of its appeal to the troops who had served under Julius Caesar – the army was, after all, the basis of their power). The ancient sources referred to him as 'Caesar' and had no difficulty distinguishing between the two. The trend now is to move away from the use of 'Octavian' to 'Caesar'. Similarly, Caesar was given the honorific name 'Augustus' in January 27 BC, so until the assumption of that name, we should refer to him as 'Caesar', and then 'Augustus'.

which forms part of the legends on such coins means simply that the coin design had been ‘revived’ (or ‘copied’) from an earlier type.

The second aspect which interested Professor Judge was that the image of Augustus on the obverse of the *as* in Fig. 2 is shown radiate, as is the head on another *as* of Titus (Fig. 3). This second *as* copies a type issued by Tiberius (Fig. 4). The interesting point is that Augustus had never before been shown radiate. So why was such a type produced under Tiberius? The usual view of coinage under Tiberius is that he followed the iconography of Augustus himself; while there was ‘a sharp diminution, amounting to virtual extinction, of information-content in the precious-metal coinage’ [produced at Lugdunum], this was accompanied by a very remarkable increase in the information-content of the *aes* [produced in Rome].⁵



Fig. 3: *as* of Titus, *RIC* 2².463, AD 80-81 [British Museum: 1920,0609.6]



Fig. 4: *obv. as* of Tiberius, *RIC* 1².71, AD 15-16 [British Museum: 1959,0305.3] **Fig. 4:** *rev. as* of Tiberius, *RIC* 1².82, AD 34-37 [Bertolami E-Auction 236, 2022, Lot 715]

Sutherland spreads the undated *aes* coinage of Tiberius in the extensive DIVVS AVGVSTVS PATER series throughout his rule and assigns them to the mint at Rome.⁶ The obverse of the *as* in Fig. 4 comes from early in ‘Tiberius’ rule; in front of the radiate head of Augustus there is a thunderbolt; note the star above. In the last period, c. AD 34-37, there is a type with a similar obverse to the *as* in Fig. 4, but without the star or thunderbolt; on the reverse is an eagle holding a wreath (not an orb), and larger initials S C. At the top of the obverse of Titus’ *as* there is the star (copying the Tiberian *as*), referring to Augustus’ deification (DIVVS AVGVSTVS PATER); on the reverse is an eagle, used frequently on these and other types of the Flavian dynasty. It is likely that the bronze coins of Tiberius unusually showed the radiate head of Augustus as an honour to the previous emperor, starting early in Tiberius’ rule following his predecessor’s deification.

To return to the copying found in Flavian ‘restoration’ coins. It is worth examining how some of the Flavian coins copied earlier designs, and why these emperors might have done that. The copying does suggest that the choices were deliberate, that the emperors

5 Sutherland, *RIC* 1², pp. 88 and 98 *n.

6 Sutherland, *RIC* 1².82 (Tiberius). For arguments about the dating of the *asses*, see *ibid.* p. 88. The dating is based on ‘analysis of portrait-treatment and die-axis’.

themselves approved of the images to be used on their coins, and that they were therefore produced for the purpose of publicity (or was it propaganda?).⁷

The repeating of coin images occurred occasionally in the republican period. One example: the reverse of a *denarius* issued by C. Valerius Flaccus in 82 BC (Fig. 5) has a legionary eagle, with maniple standards on either side, one for *hastati* (H) and the other for *principes* (P).⁸ This reverse design is copied on a *denarius* of Cn. Nerius in 49 BC (Fig. 6). The copying of earlier types was not intended to convey a message: it was simply a repeat of the earlier design.



Fig. 5: *denarius* of C. Valerius Flaccus, RRC 365/1a-c, 82 BC [British Museum: 2002,0102.3112]



Fig. 6: *denarius* of Cn. Nerius, RRC 441/1, 49 BC [British Museum: R.8819]

A further example: the reverse of a *quinarius* issued by P. Sabinus in 99 BC (Fig. 7) shows Victory crowning a trophy; the same image can be seen on the reverse of a *quinarius* of Cn. Lentulus Clodianus in 88 BC (Fig. 8), and of a *quinarius* of M. Antonius and M. Aemilius Lepidus in 43 BC (Fig. 9).



Fig. 7: *quinarius* of P. Sabinus, RRC 331/1, 99 BC [Bertolami, E-Auction 236, Sept 2022, Lot 541]



Fig. 8: *quinarius* of Cn. Lentulus Clodianus, RRC 345/2, 88 BC [Bertolami, E-Auction 236, Sept 2022, Lot 569]



Fig. 9: *quinarius* of M. Antonius and M. Aemilius Lepidus, RRC 489/4, 43 BC [Bertolami, E-Auction 236, Sept 2022, Lot 675]

7 There is debate over the use of the term 'propaganda' with regard to coins. Howgego 1995: 70-1 prefers 'political themes' to 'propaganda'; Levick 1982: 104-6 rejects 'propaganda' in favour of 'publicity'; Noreña 2011: 253-4 refers to coins as a 'medium of communication'; while Morstein-Marx 2004: 85 calls them 'instruments of publicity' whose 'target audience' is the Roman people themselves.

8 The images on this coin are explained by Yarrow 2021: 151.

As would be expected, Caesar Augustus advertised on coins the various honours he was given as a result of his 'settlement' in 28-27 BC, when he transferred the *res publica* from his own power back to the decision of the Senate and People of Rome (*RGIDA*, 34.1). He was given the semi-divine name Augustus, while further honours included the fastening above his doorway of the *corona civica* (an oak wreath usually conferred on someone who had saved the life of a citizen in battle), the placing of laurel branches on the doorposts of his house, and the setting up of a *clupeus aureus* ('gold shield') in the senate-house listing his four 'virtues'.⁹ The legend on the obverse of an *aureus* issued in 27 (datable by the consulship noted in the obverse legend) states *Caesar cos VII civibus servateis* ('Caesar, consul for the seventh time, for citizens saved'), while on the reverse is an eagle holding an oak wreath, with laurel branches behind and with the new additional name *Augustus* and the initials *SC* (Fig. 10).¹⁰ A slightly later *denarius* dated about 20-19 BC has the head of Caesar Augustus on the obverse, and the *clupeus* on the reverse, with the legend *ob civis servatos* around and the initials *SPQR* and *CL V* inside the *clupeus* (Fig. 11).



Fig. 10: *aureus* of Augustus, *RIC* 1².277, 27 BCb [Bibliothèque National: btv1b104439583]



Fig. 11: *denarius* of Augustus, *RIC* 1².79a, 19 BC [British Museum: 1844,0425.432]

Most of the coins depicting Augustus' honours were minted in Spain, and not until the period from 20-19 BC onwards, some years after their award. This may have been because Augustus waited until the standards lost to the Parthians by the defeat of Crassus' army in 53 BC were recovered through diplomatic negotiations in 20 BC (*RGIDA* 29). This seems to be indicated by coins issued in those years, such as a *denarius* which has the *clupeus* on the reverse between two standards and the legend *signis receptis* (*RIC* 1².86a), but here the initials are *SPQR* instead of *SC*.¹¹

Augustus' coins continued to make much of the honours he received, which is to be expected. Two examples may suffice: an *aureus* (also issued as a *denarius*) showing a laureate head of Augustus on the obverse, and the *clupeus virtutis* on the reverse, between two laurel branches, and the simple legend *Caesar Augustus* with the initials

9 It is also referred to as the *clupeus virtutis* (the shield of virtue). The four 'virtues' were *virtus* (manliness), *clementia* (clemency), *iustitia* (justice), and *pietas* (duty). For recent discussions of the *clupeus*, see Welch 2019: 282-304; Rowan 2019: 125-7.

10 This type was also issued as a *denarius*. The legend *ob civis servatos* is used regularly: for some examples see below, Figs 13, 14, and 15 (the latter two coins issued by Augustus' successors).

11 Rowan 2019: 126-7.

SPQR and *CL V* (Fig. 12).¹² Another *aureus* combines the image of the two laurel branches (obv.), and an oak wreath with the legend *ob civis servatos* (rev.) (Fig. 13).



Fig. 12: *aureus* of Augustus, *RIC* 1².52a, 20 BC
[British Museum: R.5889]



Fig. 13: *aureus* of Augustus, *BMCRE* 1.317, 20-19 BC
[American Numismatic Society: 1967.153.98]

The Julio-Claudian emperors who followed Augustus continued copying these coin designs. Just a couple of relevant examples: the reverse of the Augustan coin shown above with the wreath and legend *ob civis servatos* is copied on an *aureus* issued by Gaius (Caligula) in AD 40 (Fig. 14), and on an *aureus* issued by Claudius (Fig. 15), showing the motif of the oak wreath circling the legend *ob civis servatos*.¹³



Fig. 14: *aureus* of Gaius (Caligula), *RIC* 1².27, AD 40
[British Museum: R.6336]



Fig. 15: *aureus* of Claudius, *RIC* 1².15, AD 41-42
[British Museum: R.6482]

The motif of a female figure (Pax?) sitting on a bench holding a branch (olive?), which can be seen on an *aureus* of Augustus (Fig. 16), was copied on an *aureus* of Tiberius (also issued as a *denarius*) (Fig. 17).¹⁴ A *dupondius* of Gaius Caligula has on the reverse a male figure in a similar pose holding a branch, but seated on a curule chair and facing left (Fig. 18); a *sestertius* of Claudius copies this same image on its reverse, but with a pile of weapons beneath the curule chair (*RIC*² 1.109). Of interest for this discussion of copying is the reverse of a *denarius* of Vespasian (also issued as an *aureus*) showing a male figure in a similar pose on a curule chair holding a branch but facing right (Fig. 19).

12 The use of *SPQR* instead of the more usual *SC* may have been to convey the idea that Augustus' authority was sanctioned by the whole state, whereas *SC* indicated that a coin was minted on the authority of the senate.

13 The coin of Caligula was also issued as a *denarius* and a *sestertius*, and the coin of Claudius as a *sestertius*. It is interesting that Gaius' coin uses *SPQR* and adds the title *P[ater] P[atriciae]*, a title which embodies looking after the people, while Claudius' coin does not include that title, and uses *EX S[enatus] C[onsulto]*. For the difference in those usages, see n. 12.

14 This is the only precious metal coin to name Augustus as *pontifex maximus*: Rowan 2019: 129. The *aureus* of Tiberius copies the legend *pontif maxim* exactly. Note that the reverse legend on the *denarius* of Vespasian (Fig. 19) is the same, *pontif maxim*.



Fig. 16: aureus of Augustus, RIC 1².219, 13-14 BC
[British Museum: 1867,0101.612]



Fig. 17: aureus of Tiberius, RIC 1².25, AD 14-37
[British Museum: WT.1438]



Fig. 18: dupondius of Gaius Caligula, RIC 1².56,
AD 37-41 [British Museum: R.3597]



Fig. 19: denarius of Vespasian, RIC 2².546, AD 77
[British Museum: 1843,1024.285]

During the violent conflicts which erupted after the death of the ‘bad’ emperor Nero in AD 68, when there was murderous competition between rival military commanders to seize the ‘throne’ after ‘acclamation’ as the new emperor by their respective armies, there is an example of the copying of a famous republican type with a significant message. The reverse of the *denarius* issued by Brutus, one of the leaders of the conspiracy to assassinate Julius Caesar, has a *pileus* (the cap of liberty) between two daggers (Fig. 20);¹⁵ this image is copied on an anonymous *denarius* dated to AD 68, with a personified head of Libertas on the obverse (Fig. 21). The latter would express an expected theme to justify the removal of Nero.



Fig. 20: denarius of M. Brutus, RRC 508/3, 43-42 BC
[American Numismatic Society: 1944.100.4554]



Fig. 21: denarius anonymous, RIC 1².25, AD 68-69
[British Museum: R.10085]

The Flavian dynasty came to power out of this period of civil war and needed to justify their seizure of control. One of the mechanisms they used was ‘antiquarianism’ and ‘restoration’ of republican and earlier imperial coin designs which carried appropriate images and messages. First, an example of Vespasian’s copying of a republican image: a *denarius* of AD 77 (also issued as an *aureus*) (Fig. 23) has on the reverse the same image as the reverse of a *denarius* of L. Valerius Flaccus in 108 BC (Fig. 22): Mars standing with a trophy in his left hand and a spear point-down in his right, and a corn ear behind. The image was perhaps chosen to emphasise Vespasian’s success as a military commander.

15 A number of coins issued by Brutus and Cassius, the leaders of the conspiracy, carry the theme of Libertas, freedom from the ‘tyrant’ Caesar: numerous examples are shown in RRC 498-506. Brutus had earlier issued a coin with the theme of *libertas* when he was a moneyer in 54 BC (RRC 433/2).



Fig. 22: *denarius* of L. Valerius Flaccus, *RRC* 306/1, 108-107 BC [British Museum: 2002,0102.1152]



Fig. 23: *denarius* of Vespasian, *RIC* 2².939, AD 77 [British Museum: R.10429]

Here is another example out of many of a republican coin copied by Vespasian. The motif on the obverse of a *denarius* of Julius Caesar issued in 46 BC (Fig. 24), with a range of priestly instruments,¹⁶ is followed by the reverse of a *denarius* of Vespasian of 74 (Fig. 25), with the same types and legends.



Fig. 24: *denarius* (rev.) of Caesar, *RRC* 443/1, 49 BC [British Museum: 1970,156.31]



Fig. 25: *denarius* (rev.) of Vespasian, *RIC* 2².42, AD 71 [Amer. Numis. Soc. 1956.127.19]

Vespasian's successor Titus followed the same practice. A *denarius* of Julius Caesar in 46-45 BC has a scene of captives and a trophy on its reverse (Fig. 26), and the same design appears on an *aureus* and *denarius* of Titus in AD 80 (Fig. 27), probably issued to commemorate his victory in the Judaeen campaign.



Fig. 26: *denarius* of Julius Caesar, *RRC* 468/1, 46-45 BC [British Museum: 1904,0203.26]



Fig. 27: *aureus* of Titus, *RIC* 2².100, AD 80 [British Museum: 1908,0110.2651]

Vespasian even takes over some of Augustus' honorific symbols. Compare this *aureus* issued by Titus to honour his recently deified father, showing the *clupeus virtutis* on the reverse (Fig. 28), with Augustus' original (Fig. 29). Note that the *CL V* and *SPQR* has been replaced with *EX S C*. Both were also issued as *denarii*.

16 The obverse of the *denarius* of Caesar shows an elephant trampling a serpent (?). Crawford 1974: 2.735 interprets the image as a victory of good over evil. Nousek 2008: 294-6 points out that the implements are those of the pontificate, despite the mention of the augurate. Stewart 2018: 109-12 sees the implements as setting a ritual narrative for various priesthoods. The same design is used on a number of Vespasian's types, except that *TRIB POT* replaces *PONT MAX* on some. The example here is the only type to refer to Vespasian as *augur*: Buttrey 1972: 96.



Fig. 28: *aureus* of Titus, *RIC* 2².358, AD 80-81
[British Museum: R.10753]



Fig. 29: *aureus* of Augustus, *RIC* 1².52a, 20-19 BC
[British Museum: R.5989]

We can see even closer copying on the reverse of this *denarius* issued by Vespasian in AD 74 (Fig. 30), compared to an *aureus* issued by Augustus in 20-19 BC (Fig. 31), with the legend on the obverse between two laurel trees.



Fig. 30: *denarius* of Vespasian, *RIC* 2².681, AD 74
[British Museum: 1842,0214.62]



Fig. 31: *aureus* (obv.) of Augustus, *BMCRE* 1.317, 20-19 BC [American Numismatic Society: 1967.153.98]

Even more interesting are the 'restoration' bronze coins of Titus. They are called 'restoration' because the legend on the reverse contains the word *RESTITVIT* (in full or abbreviated to *REST.*), as explained earlier.¹⁷ The formula is needed to identify the issuer, because the obverse has the head of a Julio-Claudian emperor or family member, and not of the issuer. There are *asses* of Titus which portray Augustus' son-in-law Germanicus and the emperors Tiberius and Claudius.

An example of a bronze 'restoration' coin, an *as* of Titus, was discussed at the beginning (Fig. 3), which had similarities to an *as* of Tiberius (Fig. 4): Augustus' radiate head on the obverse, and an eagle holding a wreath on the reverse.¹⁸ There are similar obverses to this *as* of Tiberius on later *asses* of Titus (e.g. *RIC* 2².194); the reverses have a seated female figure, either Ceres, Concordia, Pax, or Salus, etc., holding a patera and cornucopia or sceptre.

An eagle also appears on coins of Augustus, like this *aureus* (Fig. 32), as well as on those of Vespasian, Titus' father, like the *as* in Fig. 33, where the eagle is standing on an orb, not holding a wreath. Both have the initials *S C*, but in different positions.¹⁹

17 Howgego 1990: 17 notes: 'The formula *restituit* is not found on coins until the reign of Titus but the deliberate imitation of earlier types under Vespasian suggests that the idea goes back further [to Vespasian himself].'
18 The mystery, mentioned earlier, is why Tiberius used a radiate head of Augustus (not seen before), and why he used it throughout his reign. Howgego 1990: 79 sees it as a mark of emperors being *divi*, even while alive.
19 The legend on the obverse of the Augustan *aureus* reads: *CAESAR COS VII CIVIBVS SERVATEIS*, and on the reverse: *AVGVSTVS* and *S C*. Note the emphasis on 'saving citizens'; the coin was issued in the year in which the Senate awarded (*S C*) him the *corona civica* (Figs 12 and 13).



Fig. 32: aureus of Augustus, RIC 1².277, 27 BC, [Bibliothèque National: btv1b104439583]



Fig. 33: as of Vespasian, RIC 2².322, AD 71-78 [British Museum: R.10557]

There are just two more coins to comment on. First, the obverse of the Vespasian *as* just discussed appears as another type issued by Titus, similar to the *asses* in Figs 2 and 3 above, but the *as* in Fig. 34 has no star on the obverse (as in Fig. 4), and on the reverse the eagle is standing on an orb, not holding a wreath (as in Fig. 3). The obverse legend reads: DIVVS AVGVSTVS PATER, and that on the reverse reads: IMP[erator] T[itus] AVG[ustus] REST[ituit]. The *as* in Fig. 34 is from the small collection purchased by ACANS mentioned at the beginning.



Fig. 34: *as* of Titus, RIC 2².463, AD 74 [Noble, Sale 120, April 2019, Lot 3213]



Fig. 35: *sestertius* of Vespasian, RIC 2².395, AD 74 [British Museum: R.10672]

And the last one: a copper alloy *dupondius* of Vespasian and Titus, issued in AD 74 (Fig. 35). On the reverse is a helmeted Roma seated on a cuirass, holding out a wreath in her right hand and a parazonium in her left, with S – C either side. Note also the legend ROMA in the exergue.²⁰ As noted, there are a number of variations of the reverse images of these various types over the period of the Flavian rule, all with ROMA in the exergue, and all these variations were copied frequently in subsequent years (e.g. Vespasian in 78, Titus in 76, and Domitian in 81).

This use of ROMA is uncommon on Julio-Claudian and 68-69 civil war coins, but more common on Flavian ones. There is one type issued under Nero, in both *sestertii* and *dupondii*, showing Roma helmeted and in military dress, holding a spear, with

20 There are a number of variations of the reverse image of this type over the period of the Flavian rule, all with ROMA in the exergue: for example, Roma seated holding a Victory instead of a wreath in her right hand and holding the parazonium in her left (RIC 2².394), and Roma seated, holding a Victory and a spear (RIC 2².585). Other types with ROMA in the exergue include: Roma standing, holding Victory and a spear (RIC 2².318); and Roma leaning on a trophy, holding Victory and an eagle (RIC 2².106). There are further types with an image of Roma, and ROMA in the exergue. The reverse of a *sestertius* issued by Vespasian in 71 shows Roma seated on the seven hills, with the wolf and twins and the river Tiber (RIC 2².108); a *dupondius* issued in the name of Titus, with Roma holding out a wreath, instead of a Victory (RIC 2².438). A *sestertius* issued by Titus in 80 has the same reverse as the 72 *dupondius* (RIC 2².163). Cf. the various coins of Vespasian mentioned in the next note.

S – C on either side and ROMA in the exergue (*RIC* 1².356).²¹ Galba copied this same reverse image on a number of coins: for example, a *sestertius* (*RIC* 1².311). This use of the additional legend ROMA segues nicely into considering why the Flavians issued so many coins looking back to the republican and earlier imperial eras.

ROMA was the legend which appeared on every republican *denarius* from the time of its introduction c. 211 until c. 100 BC, and occasionally after that. Commonly the legend appeared in the exergue on the reverse (just as here). Numismatists have long held the view that the Flavian emperors had an ‘antiquarian’ interest and produced so-called ‘restoration’ coins, copying images of earlier coins. This unusual use of ROMA on Flavian coins demonstrates that these emperors did have a conscious antiquarianism. Theodore Buttrey calls it ‘a love of numismatics itself’.²² Were they the stamp-collectors of the early Roman empire?

But there may also have been a deeper purpose: to publicise the new regime. Harold Mattingly (the elder) drew this conclusion: ‘The fact that Vespasian was founding a new dynasty and needed to find a strong basis on which to rest it gave an extra point to this restoration policy... He could associate himself in the popular imagination with the glories of the free Republic and with the dazzling prestige that still clung to the Julio-Claudian line.’²³ Buttrey does not disagree with this conclusion, but he does suggest that the mint officials had some influence on the choice of designs and manufacture. Mattingly’s conclusion is followed by Holger Komnick and Bernhard Woytek,²⁴ and it seems to hit the mark. The echoes of republican, Julio-Claudian, and 68-69 civil war coins were an attempt to show continuity with Rome’s great past. The civil war contenders of 68-69 needed to advertise the rightness of their attempt to remove an emperor and seize power. The Flavian dynasty likewise tried through their coin images and other mechanisms to communicate the justification for their taking of control and

21 With republican coins the legend ROMA most commonly appears in the exergue on the reverse. There are some variants of the Nero type later in his rule: Roma holding out a small Victory in her right hand, or a victory wreath (*RIC* 1².296). A *denarius* issued under Vespasian has a reverse showing Roma seated and holding out a small Victory and the legend ROMA PERPETUA around (not in the exergue) (*RIC* 2².1359), and a *sestertius* and *aureus*, with the legend ROMA RESURGE(N)S depicting Vespasian standing and raising a kneeling Roma (*RIC* 2².195 and 1360). These legends reinforce the point being made here about Flavian coinage, that it seeks to emphasise continuity with the past and restoring the state.

22 Buttrey 1972: 109. Buttrey also says that Vespasian had ‘an antiquarian fascination with old coins, rather than an obsession with historical parallels cultivated to political ends’ (p. 96). Buttrey’s article is a full analysis of all of Vespasian’s gold and silver issues (but not the bronze); his list on pp. 92-4 adds a column for the likely earlier issues which were copied or imitated.

23 Mattingly, in Introduction to Mattingly and Sydenham 1926: 6.

24 Komnick 2001: *passim*; Woytek 2022: 255-6. Flavian coin legends and images also publicise the restoration of peace and the revival of Rome: for example, an *aureus* and *sestertius* issued by Vespasian in 71 have an image on the reverse of Vespasian raising up a kneeling personification of the city of Rome, with the armed goddess Roma standing behind, and the legend ROMA RESURGENS with S C in exergue (n. 21). Other legends include ROMA PERPETVA (n. 21), and ROMA VICTRIX (*dupondius* of Titus: *RIC* 2².439).

establishing a new dynasty. Even Titus, ten years after his father assumed power, was still attempting to legitimise the Flavian dynasty and to suggest by his *asses* that there was continuity with the Julio-Claudian dynasty and their right to rule.

Author

Bruce Marshall retired as an Associate Professor from the University of New England in 1995 after nearly 30 years there. He was an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at Macquarie University from 1996-2016. His particular area of research was – and still is – the late Roman republic, on which he has published extensively. Since retirement his interest has focused on late Roman republican and early imperial coinage. For many years he was Honorary Secretary of the Australasian Society for Classical Studies, and for his work on behalf of the Society, and for his general promotion of the Humanities at the secondary and tertiary levels in Australia, he was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2011.

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