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INTRODUCTION

The proper use of the Roman Republican coinage as a historical source depends on the fulfilment of three conditions – a full and accurate account must be given of its content, a chronological framework must be provided and the mints at which it was produced must be identified. The catalogue which forms the central part of this book attempts to satisfy the first requirement and the purpose of this introduction is therefore to discuss how far and on what grounds the various issues can be dated¹ and assigned to their mints.

The precious metal coinage falls naturally into two periods, the earlier with a silver coin weighing about six scruples as its unit (for Roman weights see p. 590), the later with a silver coin weighing about four scruples or slightly less as its unit. The earlier unit is the didrachm, or two drachma piece, the later unit is the denarius. It is clear, for reasons to be discussed below, that the earlier unit was suppressed because it had been debased beyond the point of acceptability and that there was no overlap in production between the earlier unit, the didrachm, and the later unit, the denarius.² A discussion of the chronology of the Roman Republican coinage can best begin by attempting to establish the date of the changeover from the didrachm to the denarius.

I THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE DENARIUS COINAGE

The first step is to consider what elements went to make up the earliest denarius coinage. These are set out in Table I and fall into three categories – the silver denarius with its related gold and silver pieces, the bronze as with its related bronze pieces and the silver victoriatus with its rare silver double and half pieces.

The silver denarius, worth ten asses (Vitruvius iii, 1, 8; Volusius Maecianus, *Distr.* 46) and therefore bearing the mark of value X, the quinarius, worth five asses and therefore bearing the mark of value V,³ and the sestertius, worth two and a half asses and therefore bearing the mark of value IIS, are plainly linked to each other,

¹ For a discussion of method see M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican coin hoards*, 1–6; the earliest systematic discussion of method is that of Th. Mommsen, *RMw*, 411–73; of his various ‘Alterskriterien’ only nos. 1, 3, 7 and 11–12 are still precise enough to be valuable.

² For decisive arguments against the view that there was an overlap between the last didrachm, the so-called quadrigatus, and the denarius, see R. Thomsen, *ERC* ii, 270–7 (the description of the Capitol hoard as a hoard including debased pieces is, however, erroneous); cf. 267 for the priority of the quadrigatus over the denarius; 328–30 for the absence of overlap between the quadrigatus and the victoriatus.

³ For the Etruscan and ultimately Chalcidian origin of these marks of value see J. W. Graham, *Phoenix* 1969, 350–2.

Introduction

TABLE I. The first period of denarius coinage – 211–207 B.C.

Anonymous	1 (<i>Rome</i>) Victoriati Mars/Eagle gold pieces Denarii Quinarii Sestertii Bronze	Anonymous	2 (<i>Rome</i>) Victoriati Denarii Bronze
Anchor	Mars/Eagle gold pieces Denarii Bronze	Crescent	Victoriati Denarii Bronze
M	Denarii	Cornucopiae	Victoriati Denarii Bronze
Apex	Denarii		
Apex and hammer	3 (<i>Central Italy</i>) Denarii Bronze	C	4 (<i>Sardinia</i>) Quinarii Bronze
Caduceus	Denarii Bronze	ΛΛ	Quinarii Bronze
Victory	Denarii Bronze	AR	Quinarii Bronze
Rostrum tridens	Denarii	Anonymous	Quinarii
Anonymous	5 (<i>Sicily</i>) Victoriati Denarii Quinarii Sestertii Bronze	Anonymous C/M Corn-ear	6 (<i>Sicily</i>) Victoriati Victoriati Victoriati Mars/Eagle gold pieces Denarii Quinarii Bronze Denarii Quinarii Denarii Quinarii Denarii Bronze
Corn-ear			
Corn-ear and ⋈		Dolabella	
		C·VAR	
		C·AL Branch	
Corn-ear and staff	7 Denarii Denarii Denarii Denarii Bronze	Spearhead (Group 1)	10 Victoriati Denarii Quinarii Denarii Quinarii Sestertii Bronze Quinarii Bronze
Staff			
Wheel		RQ	
Dolphin			
CN·CO	8 Asses	H	
Ceres/Hercules	9 Semisses		

The first period of the denarius coinage

TABLE I (cont.)

		10 (cont.)	
		Q	Quinarii Bronze
		Anchor and Q	Bronze
		V	Bronze
		Spearhead (Group 2)	Mars/Eagle gold pieces Denarii Bronze
Anonymous	11	Club	Victoriati Denarii Bronze
Torque	12	CROT	13 Victoriati
ΛΛ	14	∩	15 Victoriati
∪	16	Anonymous with incuse legend	17 (Spain) Victoriati
∨	18	B	19 Denarii
		Pentagram	Victoriati Mars/Eagle gold pieces Denarii
∨/T		Staff on reverse	Victoriati Mars/Eagle gold pieces Denarii Bronze
			Denarii
∏		C	
CΛ			
Q			
ΛΛ			
⋈			
Caduceus	20	Wreath	21 Denarii
Knife	Denarii Denarii	Λ	Bronze Denarii

the weight of the denarius being twice that of the quinarius and four times that of the sestertius. The gold coinage with the types Head of Mars/Eagle on thunderbolt displays similar marks of value. The smallest piece bears the mark of value XX and was therefore worth twenty asses (see p. 34), the piece twice its weight bears the mark of value XXXX and was therefore worth forty asses, the piece three times its weight bears the mark of value ↓X and was therefore worth sixty asses.

Introduction

The bronze as, its double piece, the dupondius, and all its fractions are similarly held together by their related weights and by their marks of value. This is the system:

	= Dupondius	= 2 Asses	= 4 Semisses	= 8 Quadrantes	= 24 Unciae
	= As	= 2 Semisses	= 4 Quadrantes	= 12 Unciae	
S	= Semis	= 2 Quadrantes	= 6 Unciae		
⊗	= Triens	= 2 Sextantes	= 4 Unciae		
⊙	= Quadrans	= 3 Unciae			
8	= Sextans	= 2 Unciae			
o	= Uncia				
ξ	= Semuncia				

In addition, the denominations of decussis (10 asses), quincussis (5 asses), tressis (3 asses), dextans (10 unciae), dodrans (9 unciae), bes (8 unciae), quincunx (5 unciae) and quartuncia were occasionally produced.

Although the bronze coinage thus forms a coherent system, this system, based on a progressively declining weight standard, was a component part of the Roman Republican coinage from the very beginning. A case must therefore be made for associating bronze of sextantal weight standard (based on an as weighing a sixth of a pound, that is two ounces) with the denarius.¹

It is certain that the advent of the sextantal standard formed a distinct stage in the reduction of the weight of the bronze coinage. From this point, all denominations were struck; in the preceding period, the smaller denominations were struck and the larger ones were cast. At this point also there began the extensive use of symbols or letters added to the types in order to differentiate issues; only one symbol, a corn-ear, and one letter, *l*, are found on bronze of heavier than sextantal standard. Here lies the link with the denarius and its related pieces. Only one differential symbol, again a corn-ear, appears on the silver coinage which preceded the denarius coinage, whereas symbols and letters occur in profusion on the earliest denarius coinage. Furthermore, the same symbols and letters frequently occur both on the sextantal as and its related pieces and on the denarius and its related pieces.

It is only possible to dissociate the denarius from bronze of sextantal standard by making a mistaken initial assumption. This is that denarii without differential symbols or letters, so-called anonymous denarii, were earlier than denarii with symbols or letters.² If this were so, anonymous denarii could in theory be associated

¹ The association was first made, as far as I know, by M. Letronne, *Considérations*, 18; for the discussions of K. Samwer and M. Bahrfeldt and of later scholars see R. Thomsen, *ERC* ii, 76–9.

² H. A. Grueber, *BMCR* i, xlv, following Th. Mommsen, *RMw*, 297; for a brief discussion of anonymous denarii see R. Thomsen, *ERC* ii, 94–5.

The first period of the denarius coinage

with bronze of heavier than sextantal standard, itself of course anonymous. But I shall show below (p. 24) that anonymous denarii and denarii with symbols and letters are contemporary.

The place of the victoriatus is less easy to decide. Although some symbols and letters are common to victoriati, denarii and bronze, the correspondence is less complete as far as victoriati are concerned, and it has been held that the victoriatus appeared earlier than did the denarius and bronze of sextantal standard and that it was the coin which replaced the didrachm.¹ I regard this view as mistaken and as incompatible with the evidence provided by a detailed consideration of all the issues which go to make up the earliest denarius coinage (see p. 28).

Two general considerations may first be adduced. It is apparent that the victoriatus was at least in some way part of the denarius coinage. Not only do victoriatus, denarius and bronze certainly run side by side in the second period of the denarius coinage (see p. 50), but both denarius and victoriatus suffered in the first period a small reduction in weight from their initial level of four and three scruples respectively (see p. 11 for details).

It is also apparent that the victoriatus had in some sense a special status, since it bore no mark of value and had a curious later history.² It is clear from the fact that the value of the denarius was expressed in terms of asses, and not *vice versa*, that the Romans had decided (for possible reasons see p. 626) that their new silver unit was to be worth ten times their bronze unit. The resulting coin was one which, unlike the didrachm, bore no convenient relationship with the coinage of Magna Graecia. There was thus a good reason for creating in addition a coin based on the drachma. The victoriatus was precisely a drachma. But if it was itself *the* silver coin which was introduced to replace the didrachm, no sufficient reason can be discerned for creating the denarius in addition. Logically, the denarius precedes the victoriatus.

In considering the issues which make up the first period of the denarius coinage, five criteria of arrangement must be borne in mind: finds, weight standards, over-

¹ H. B. Mattingly, *Studies Robinson*, 210.

² The ancient sources on the victoriatus are confused (Pliny, *NH* xxxiii, 46—*antea enim hic nummus ex Illyria advectus mercis loco habebatur*; Volusius Maecianus, *Distr.* 45—*olim ut peregrinus nummus loco mercis . . . habebatur*); the close links between the victoriatus, its double piece and its half piece on the one hand and the denarius and its fractions on the other hand make it clear that the victoriatus was from the beginning a purely Roman coin; about this coin Pliny and Maecianus tell us precisely nothing. What they are talking about is surely the coinage of Apollonia, Dyrrhachium and Corcyra, produced on the same weight standard as the victoriatus during the period of the middle Republic; it is this coinage which was carried in triumph from Illyria in 167 (*Livy* xlv, 43, 5; cf. xlv, 27, 9). In Italy it doubtless was treated *loco mercis* and hence found no place in coin hoards. Mommsen's theory (*RMw*, 389–400, cf. 372 and 490; this discussion has formed the basis of subsequent work, see most recently F. W. Walbank, *Commentary on Polybius* i, 162) should be rejected *in toto*; it postulates, briefly, that the advent of the Romans in Illyria in 229 led to the suppression of Corcyra's silver coinage, which was replaced by no. 101, and to the enforcement of a new standard on Apollonia and Dyrrhachium; from this beginning the victoriatus is held to have developed.

Thomsen's discussion of the victoriatus is entirely vitiated by his acceptance of the theories of St. Bolin, *ERC* ii, 354–6. For the later history of the victoriatus see p. 628.

Introduction

strikes, die-links and style. Among all the hoards containing Roman Republican denarii and victoriati one group stands out because it alone includes a large number of hoards also containing Greek, Punic and Italic coins. The denarii and victoriati in this group of hoards are homogeneous and since the foreign coins with which they are found also turn up in association with the last Roman didrachms it is clear that the denarii and victoriati in question are the first of their kind. I shall first discuss each issue in turn, then attempt to assess how long this period of the denarius coinage lasted.

The mint of Rome

Within the earliest period of the denarius coinage both signed and anonymous pieces occur. About the former there is no problem of description, but the latter demand special attention, particularly as some of them have been thought to be earlier than signed pieces. The earliest anonymous denarii and victoriati occurring in the hoards both fall into two main groups and a number of smaller groups.¹ The two main groups of victoriati (nos. 44/1 and 53/1, Pl. IX and Pl. X ; see Table 1, 1–2) were first distinguished by H. B. Mattingly;² the first group, unlike the second, has a Jupiter with harsh features and normally only three locks of falling hair and a crudely executed Victory. Despite Mattingly's hesitation, the two groups are clearly contemporary, displaying identical patterns of wear in the hoards. The two groups of denarii are even more distinct (nos. 44/5 and 53/2, Pl. IX and Pl. X). The first (with which belong also quinarii and sestertii) has a Roma with splayed or curved visor, the second a Roma with peaked visor, not to mention numerous smaller stylistic differences. Like the two groups of victoriati, the two groups of denarii are clearly contemporary. Although the first group occurs alone in the Morgantina, Cheste and Locri hoards, the groups occur together in the Tivisa hoard³ and have the same weight standard. The neater victoriati, as Mattingly rightly points out, develop without stylistic break into the issues signed with a crescent and a cornucopiae (nos. 57–8) and the same is true of the denarii displaying a Roma with peaked visor (compare Pl. X, 11–12 and 19–20 with Pl. XII, 13–14). It seems reasonable in the circumstances to link the cruder victoriati and the denarii displaying a Roma with splayed or curved visor with each other.

We thus have two roughly contemporary issues, the first consisting of victoriati, denarii, quinarii and sestertii, the second of victoriati and denarii. To the first issue

¹ The smaller groups in question are nos. 45–8 and 54–5. They are stylistically distinct from each other and from other issues of this period; their weight standards suffice to attribute them to it. Since I cannot at the moment link any of them with signed issues or attribute any of them to a particular mint, they are listed after each of the two anonymous issues of the mint of Rome, according to where the closest resemblance lies. All the groups in question may eventually find a home somewhere and may indeed be parts of other issues; I do not believe that style alone suffices to individuate an issue and regard the listing of the groups I have been discussing as provisional.

² *Studies Robinson*, 212 with n. 3.

³ *Coin hoards*, nos. 72, 75, 76 and 94.

The first period of the denarius coinage

belongs the anonymous Mars/Eagle gold coinage,¹ to each issue belongs part of the prolific production of anonymous bronze.² The second issue may certainly be assigned to the mint of Rome, since it develops into the mainstream Republican coinage, beginning with the issue with crescent. The first anonymous issue should also be assigned to the mint of Rome, which had once already produced two separate groups of bronze coinage at the same time (see p. 43 n. 5). This first anonymous issue is followed by the issues with anchor, *apex* and *M*, after the production of which the workshop apparently closed.

As for the beginning of the two anonymous issues, it seems to me certain that the *victoriatus* begins no earlier than the denarius. Mattingly's argument to the contrary depends on the assertion that the Morgantina hoard from the American excavations³ contains specimens of the developed *victoriatus* coinage and of only the earliest denarius coinage. It would in any case be rash to place much weight on a hoard consisting of only nine coins, but the assertion is in fact untrue. The denarius in the hoard resembles my Pl. IX, 16, which is not the earliest of the issue to which it belongs. It is apparent that the denarii belonging to the two anonymous issues under consideration were produced on the same large scale as the *victoriati* and went through a considerable stylistic development. To assign them a later beginning is hardly reasonable.

The denarii, quinarii and sestertii of the first anonymous issue show a considerable range of styles (Pl. IX, 10–24). The earliest pieces are presumably those on which the head of Roma shows the greatest affinity with the head of Roma on unciæ of the preceding period (compare Pl. IX, 10 with Pl. VIII, 4). From this point the issue develops in two directions: in the hands (presumably) of one artist, the visor becomes more splayed and the hair more abundant, to acquire finally a curious and distinctive lock falling all the way down from behind the ear (Pl. IX, 16–17 and 19–21); in the hands of another artist the visor becomes more rounded and the whole head more elegant. Two further arguments may be adduced to confirm the correctness of this arrangement. As it stands, the incuse legend, presumably derived from *quadrigati* of the preceding period, occurs at the beginning and gradually disappears;⁴ and the quinarius and the sestertius, which were not struck after the issue came to an end, appear in progressively decreasing quantities.

The development undergone by the denarii of the second issue is illustrated on

¹ Although the anonymous Mars/Eagle gold coinage is stylistically very diverse, such die-links as I have been able to discover make it impossible to divide the coinage into two stylistic groups; I therefore assign it all to one workshop. To some of it Mars/Eagle gold with anchor is astonishingly close (for a near die-link see Pl. IX, 7 and Pl. X, 5); I therefore assign all the anonymous Mars/Eagle gold coinage to the workshop which produced gold, denarii and bronze with anchor.

² For a tentative indication of the two groups see Pls. XI, 4–XII, 3 and XII, 4–12.

³ *Coin hoards*, no. 72.

⁴ The group of denarii under discussion was picked out by M. Bahrfeldt, *ZfN* 1878, 30–5; he also argued (35–7) that the earliest denarii had an incuse legend (the rest of the article is no longer of interest).

Introduction

Pl. x, 13–20. A curious feature of many examples of this issue and of its immediate successors is the appearance of the further horse's tail in front of the nearer horse's hind legs.¹ Apart from isolated instances,² the feature also occurs consistently on nine closely related issues from Sicily (nos. 72–80, see below), and on two late issues, one anonymous and one with anchor (nos. 164–5, see p. 52). In the anonymous issue under consideration and its immediate successors the feature seems to be gradually disappearing. It is always present on the early coins with head in high relief and prancing horses; it remains as the relief diminishes and the horses change to a galloping action; on the last coins of the issue it is sometimes present, but usually not, while on denarii with crescent it is usually present and on denarii with cornucopiae it is usually absent.

To resume, we have two parallel anonymous issues from the mint of Rome, the first of which is followed by issues signed with anchor, *apex* and *M*, the second of which is followed by issues signed with crescent and cornucopiae. Victoriati of both anonymous issues occur with didrachms of the preceding period in the Canosa hoard, denarii of both anonymous issues in the Tivisa hoard with coins of Emporiae and Saguntum,³ denarii of the first anonymous issue in the Cheste and Valera hoards, notably with Hispano-Punic coins; denarii with crescent and cornucopiae occur in the Drieves hoard, which includes one Hispano-Punic piece, denarii with cornucopiae in the Valera hoard; anonymous bronze occurs with Sardo-Punic issues of the latest period⁴ in the Marseille and Perdás de Fogu hoards, with a Punic issue presumably of the Second Punic War in the Tortoreto hoard.⁵

¹ This is a feature to which H. B. Mattingly, *Studies Robinson*, 216 n. 5, draws attention.

² In the issues with *C* (no. 107, Vatican 376), caduceus (no. 108, Montecarotto hoard) and owl (no. 135, Turin, F533).

³ L. Villaronga Garriga, *Arse-Saguntum*, Cat. 21 and 25.

⁴ L. Forteleoni, *Le emissioni monetali*, ser. vi; the date is disputed—236–231 (Forteleoni, pp. 54–68) or 216 (G. K. Jenkins, *NC* 1963, 243–4); apart from the evidence provided by the association of Sardo-Punic coins with Roman coins, whose date is itself under discussion, the only argument is that of Jenkins, who draws attention to the improbability of the revolt of 216 being without coinage.

⁵ Canosa – *Coin hoards*, no. 86; Tivisa – no. 94; Cheste – no. 75; Valera – no. 109; Drieves – no. 107; Marseille – no. 79; Perdás de Fogu – no. 100; Tortoreto – no. 101.

J.-C. M. Richard in *Bull. Comm. Arch. Narbonne* 1968, 10 n. 25 and in *JNG* 1970, 59–60 nn. 55–9, has expressed doubts about the Valera and Drieves hoards; the first may not be a hoard at all, both may be 'trésors de récupération' of the late second century. Both hoards are probably silversmiths' hoards, but that does not make them any the less hoards. The fact that the Valera hoard was found scattered on the surface does not prevent it from being a hoard either; it could have been in a perishable container and the coins could have been scattered by soil movement or by cultivation. The earliest report emphasises that there was no trace of pottery or buildings on the site; this fact, together with the amount of precious metal involved, excludes the possibility that Valera is a site find. Against the view that Valera and Drieves are 'trésors de récupération' may be urged the sheer improbability of Carthaginian issues, drachms of Saguntum and Saetabi and a Rhodian tetradrachm of Ameinias being available in the late second century (the tetradrachm of Ameinias is to be dated before 200—a piece of information I owe to M. J. Price). It is also necessary to point out that the chronology of the Gallic 'monnaies à la croix' in which Richard is interested should be determined by the dated hoards in which they occur; these hoards should not be explained away in the interests of an *a priori* belief that 'monnaies à la croix' begin with the Roman occupation of Gaul. The 'monnaies à la croix' in the Valera and Drieves hoards are regarded as belonging 'near the beginning of the coinage' by D. F. Allen, *NC* 1969, 40–1, 63 and 68 (cf. postscript on p. 62 for Allen's acceptance of a Second Punic War date for the Valera and Drieves hoards).