

Money in Mid Republican Rome

16-18 February 2023

Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome
Via Omero 10/12, 00197 ROMA

Programme

Thursday, February 16th

- 17.00 *Welcome*
Representative of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome
Representative of the German Archaeological Institute, Rome department
Fleur Kemmers and Marleen Termeer
- 17.30 *Introduction to the workshop*
Fleur Kemmers and Marleen Termeer
- 20.00 *Dinner for all speakers*

Friday, February 17th

Session 1: A monetizing state?

- 09.00 Philip Kay (London)
A Society without Coinage
- 09.30 Sema Karataş (Cologne)
Greek Silver and Roman Laws: The impact of 'Money' on the Roman Aristocracy
- 10.00 Seth Bernard (Toronto)
The Denominational Structure of Early Roman Coinage
- 10.30 *Coffee break*

Session 1: A monetizing state? (continued)

- 11.00 Liv Yarrow (New York)
The Creation of Rome's Cast Coinage
- 11.30 Charles Parisot-Sillon (Orléans)
Coinage, conquest and colonial activities. Procedures and strategies for monetary supply in Italy in the 2nd century BC
- 12.00 Fleur Kemmers (Frankfurt am Main)
Silver for whom? Bullion, coinage and the role of the publicani
- 12.30 Discussion Session 1
- 13.00 *Lunch*

Session 2: Rome presenting itself on a Mediterranean stage

- 14.00 Wilhelm Hollstein (Dresden)
Hannibal, Q. Fabius Maximus and Hercules: Choosing coin images at the beginning of the 2nd Punic War
- 14.30 Lucia Carbone (New York)
Opus aliquod Daedali. An integrated analysis of literary and monetary production in Italy in the first half of the third century BCE
- 15.00 Marleen Termeer (Nijmegen)
Rome and the allies: a multiplayer perspective on early Roman coinage
- 15.30 *Tea break*
- 16.00 Suzanne Frey-Kupper (Warwick)
The Sicilian prospect: Rome's coins and other coinages in the first Roman province
- 16.30 Federico Carbone (Salerno)
The coinage of Paestum after the deduction of the Latin colony (273 BC): articulation of the local currency and circulation of Roman coins
- 17.00 Melissa Ludke (Tallahassee)
Cosa Coins and Regional Economic Exchange in 3rd c. BCE Coastal Central Italy
- 17.30 Discussion Session 2
- 19.30 *Dinner for all speakers*

Saturday, February 18th

Session 3: A monetizing society?

- 9.30 Cristiano Viglietti (Siena)
The weighed-out as and its uses. The early republican tangle
- 10.00 Maria-Cristina Molinari (Rome)
Changes in the use of Roman money in the mid-republican age: from a rather weak “economic” approach to a more “rational” use of the money
- 10.30 Marion Bolder-Boos (Eichstätt)
Money for the gods – some thoughts on the dedication of coins in central Italy during the Middle Republic
- 11.00 *Coffee break*
- 11.30 Marta Barbato (Rome)
Devastation and abandonment? Some reflections on hoards containing Romano-Campanian silver didrachms (RRC 13/1) from Southern Italy during the Pyrrhic War
- 12.00 Moritz Hinsch (Berlin)
The Use and Abuse of money in Plautine Rome
- 12.30 Discussion session 3
- 13.00 Andrew Burnett (London)
Closing remarks
- Followed by closing discussion (moderators: Fleur Kemmers and Marleen Termeer)
- 14.00 *Lunch and farewell*

Abstracts

Session 1: A monetizing state?

A Society without Coinage (Philip Kay)

This paper considers the monetary and economic implications of the absence of a Roman coinage before the late fourth century BCE and of the Romans' experiments with various monetary objects during the third century BCE.

Coins are of course only one form of money and the evidence suggests that Rome, before the introduction of coinage, was already relatively financially sophisticated in many respects. A weight and monetary unit existed; weighed *'aes rude'* appears to have been used for certain payments; debt was pervasive; and Roman civil law provided practical mechanisms for concluding contractual financial agreements as well as legal remedies for financial default. The existence of this 'monetary architecture' in fourth century BCE Rome should not surprise us since many such financial techniques date back to third-millennium BCE Mesopotamia and the ancient Near East.

On the other hand, the production of a state-sponsored coinage can stimulate economic growth. For example, from the second century BCE, an increasing supply of Roman silver coinage, minted from bullion from the Spanish mines, produced a liquid stock of financial capital that encouraged a significant wealth-creation process. Similar developments can be observed in fifth century BCE Athens, as well as in Europe in both the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries CE.

So was fourth century BCE Rome "just a different sort of society from the one that we might have expected from our modern point of view" (as Andrew Burnett and Michael Crawford put it in their review of Filippo Coarelli's 2013 monograph, *'Argentum Signatum'*)? Or are we to imagine that the functioning of the Roman economy during the Mid-Republic was in fact constrained by the lack of such a state-sponsored coinage?

Greek Silver and Roman Laws: The impact of 'Money' on the Roman Aristocracy (Sema Karatas)

Not only one but several triumphs were granted by the Roman Senate to its victorious generals in 194 BCE. As attested by Livy, one of the earlier celebrations of that year was the triumph of M. Porcius Cato after his campaign in Spain: 25.000 pounds of unwrought silver, 123.000 silver coins stamped with the biga, 540 Osca-minted coins, and 1.400 pounds of gold were carried along in the procession. Later in the year, another triumph was granted to T. Quinctius Flaminius. During that procession 43.270 pounds of unwrought silver, 84.000 Attic coins, 3.714 pounds of gold and 14.514 gold Philippics were on display. These details subsequently raise questions about the use of this wealth brought to Italy during the rapid expansion in the Middle Republic and its impact on Roman society. Victorious generals consecrated temples to the gods, statues were erected and even porticus were built to commemorate their success. Not only the public sphere but also the private sphere was affected by the increasing amount of riches: feasts not only for the public but for friends and followers, also decoration of homes with prominent statues, money used to gain political support all endangered the cohesion of the political elite. The aim of this paper is to look at the most important instrument of the Roman Senate – the spectrum of laws which were designed to mitigate the negative effects of the uncontrolled influx of wealth which jeopardized the Roman *mos maiorum*.

The Denominational Structure of Early Roman Coinage (Seth Bernard)

Economic historians recognize that a currency's denominational structure can have considerable impact on economic performance. Insufficiently large units can impede long distance trade; too few small denominations can discourage local monetization; a high standard unit or a large step-change between subunits can make wages or prices sticky. Denominational structure has received some, mostly empirical attention in the study of early Roman coinage, but these theoretical considerations suggest the topic repays a closer look. Following this, my purpose in this paper is to attempt three things: (i) use numismatic evidence to reconstruct the fractional structure of both the struck Romano-Campanian coins and the cast heavy bronze of the early third century; (ii) offer some notion of the real value of fractions relying on textual sources; and (iii) try to come to terms with the relative volume of production of different fractions. The results throw interesting light on the critical questions of why Romans first made coins and who drove that choice. We find some possible tangents between particular denominations and state needs for coin, echoing structural aspects of other Mediterranean currencies of the same period. Overall, however, the unavoidable impression is that of peculiarity: Rome produced a remarkable number of subunits, some with no clear purpose and almost no real value, from the very get go. Especially the heavy bronze denominations seem extraordinary in this regard. If anything, subsequent emissions decreased in denominational flexibility. This militates against developmental interpretations of early Roman monetization wedded to notions of economic primitivism, while at the same time challenging the state's comprehensive role in Rome's earliest coins. I offer some closing speculations on what all of this might reveal instead about which Romans were first using coins and how.

The Creation of Rome's Cast Coinage (Liv Yarrow)

This paper returns to first principles and asks what the fabric of cast heavy bronze monetary objects can tell us about their own origins. It considers two major avenues of inquiry: metallurgical testing and physical inspection of artifacts of the casting process, primarily spues, joins, voids, and intrusions. These analyses build on the author's previous work regarding the metrology of Roman currency bars and RRC 14, 18, and 19. New, as yet unpublished, XRF analyses has been completed by the British Museum laboratory on 4 RRC 14 specimens, 4 RRC 18 specimens, and one RRC 12/1 specimen. It is anticipated that patterns suggested by this data will be given fuller context by further testing on specimens from other publicly held collections, hopefully including some non-Roman *aes grave*. These findings will be combined with previously published analyses, especially those of *aes rude* with documented archaeological provenance. The spue data is drawn from broad, diverse sources, but most notably the extensive photographic archives of Richard Schaefer as preserved by the Roman Republican Die Project (ANS) as well as unpublished specimens from the Hunterian collection. The goal is to reconstruct the nature of the casting technology employed by Rome and situate that process within a wider Italic context. A key unanswered question is whether the molds for casting could be re-used and whether they were produced using stamps of any kind. A better practical understanding the of nature of manufacture must underpin any speculation regarding why the such monetary object were produced and how they were received in their original socio-political contexts.

Coinage, conquest and colonial activities. Procedures and strategies for monetary supply in Italy in the 2nd century BC (Charles Parisot-Sillon)

The aim of this presentation is to propose an overview of the general framework and civic procedures for the minting of coinage in Rome during the 2nd century BC, with an emphasis on the institutional relationship between the Senate, the *aerarium Saturni* and the mint itself. In this period, the monetary system introduced during the Second Punic War was retained in a simplified form, while the volume of silver issues was significantly reduced. Likewise, the available numismatic data is surprisingly scarce when compared with the presumed scale of public expenses. Nevertheless, one may argue that it was in this period that Rome came up with the procedures, both ordinary and extraordinary, which were subsequently used until the end of the Republic to pay for its political expansion. Monetary production was determined by the nature and volume of public expenses, as well as by the practical consequences of the State's reliance on a wide diversity of sources of income and by the availability or lack thereof of old coins, both in silver and in bronze. The transport and distribution of coins also raised practical issues, especially in relation with the financing of military activities far from Rome. Other manifestations of Roman expansion came with specific monetary challenges, however: of special interest in this regard is the case of the *victoriatus*, the production of which continued until the 170s BC, possibly in relation with the development of Roman colonial activities in Italy. It might be understood as specific-purpose coinage, connected to the broader Roman monetary system but issued following specific procedures.

Silver for whom? Bullion, coinage and the role of the publicani (Fleur Kemmers)

Literary sources testify of the enormous amounts of booty and tribute brought home from Spain in the late 3rd and earlier 2nd centuries. Metallurgical analyses have shown that after the capture of Carthago Nova almost all Roman silver coinage was made from Iberian ores. Rome produced a large amount of silver coinage in the final years of the Second Punic War and immediately afterwards, and then again from the second half of the second century. There is, however, a discrepancy between this high output and the scarcity of these same coinages in the major theatres of war and conquest in Rome's phase of expansion. Apparently, freshly minted silver specie was not primarily used to pay soldiers in the field their stipend. This paper aims to focus on the publicani, the contractors used by the Roman state for the provisioning of the army and the construction and maintenance of public infrastructure and buildings. Given the sums involved, as handed down by Livy, this social group must have been an important motor for the supply and circulation of cash in Italic society. Can we find correlations between years of high coin output, known contracts and the distribution of coin finds and coin hoards? Furthermore, how far back can we trace these state contractors and the people responsible for letting the contracts (the censors)? And how does this relate to Rome's third century coinages? By trying to answer these questions, we might come closer to understanding the rationale behind coin production in mid Republican Rome.

Session 2: Rome presenting itself on a Mediterranean stage

Hannibal, Q. Fabius Maximus and Hercules: Choosing coin images at the beginning of the 2nd Punic War (Wilhelm Hollstein)

The designs of Roman gold, silver and bronze coins during the 3rd century BC differ markedly from those of other cities in southern Italy by their diversity. But the interpretation of the images of the various types – in contrast to the later denarius period – is not given the necessary importance, not least because of a lack of exact dating. Mostly the types are generally referred to as “public types” reflecting civic identity as well as war and victory. Further questions of who was responsible for the choice of the images or whether current events are reflected are largely ignored. However, there are some indications that, more than hitherto assumed, coin designs can also be associated with current and outstanding (military) achievements of high-ranking magistrates (e.g. consuls), who perhaps were given the right and honor to design the coins images by a decree of the senate.

An instructive example with a reliable dating, which can provide information about the subjects “choice of coin images” and “current events”, forms the focus of the lecture. In the images of the Roman bronze coins at the beginning of the Second Punic War (217 B.C.), the *prora* series in semilibral standard (RRC 38/4-8) as well as the corresponding collateral series (RRC 39/1-2) with its five different types, Hercules plays a central role. This was Rome’s response to the shekel coinage with the image of Heracles-Melqart (SNG The British Museum, Spain, 2002, nos. 97-102) issued by the Carthaginians in the run-up to the war in Spain. The concentrated Hercules theme is associated with Hannibal and Q. Fabius Maximus (dictator 217) and considered in the historical situation after the defeat of the consul C. Flaminius at Lake Trasimene in 217 BC.

Opus aliquod Daedali. An integrated analysis of literary and monetary production in Italy in the first half of the third century BCE (Lucia Carbone)

After securing control over the central and southern part of the Italian peninsula in the third century, the Romans faced the problem of having to define what was ‘Roman,’ especially in connection with the emergence of the provincial system represented by Sicily and Sardinia. The creation of a literature and of a coinage of Roman production were both pivotal in this process of self-definition.

The first literary text of Roman literature is the *Odusia*, a translation from a Greek original made by a semi-Graecus, an Italian of Greek descent, which is defined by Cicero as *opus aliquod Daedali*, an archetype for all of Latin literature, even if questionable literary quality. In the same way, the first Romano-Campanian issues (RRC 1-2) are an adapted form of Greek models made by the Neapolitan mint, a Greek mint under Roman hegemony. Only after 240 the Roman mint began to issue its own silver and bronze fiduciary coinage, instead of relying on the Campanian mints, marking the transition from coinage produced for Rome, to the one produced in Rome.

The proclaimed beginning of Latin literature in 240 also marks a fundamental watershed in Roman culture, the pivotal importance of which did not escape Roman intellectuals in the centuries to come. Literary texts and numismatic artefacts thus concur in indicating the aftermath of the First Punic War as being a transformative moment for the emergence of Roman identity. It is after this date that Roman history and Roman mythical past became worthy of literary treatment and it is only after the naval victories over Carthage that Roman coinage became a relevant element in the central and southern Italian monetary circulation patterns.

Rome and the allies: a multiplayer perspective on early Roman coinage (Marleen Termeer)

The earliest Roman coin issues were produced in a crucial period of Roman expansion on the Italian peninsula, between the late fourth and the mid third century BCE. The nature of this expansion and the ways in which the Roman state manifested itself in this period are subject of ongoing academic debate, with increasing attention for the dynamic nature of institutions and the role of non-Roman players. In this paper, I will explore the implications of this debate for our understanding of early Roman coinage.

It has been widely recognized that the variable and haphazard nature of early Roman coinage means that it hardly qualifies as a 'state coinage'. Especially the 'Romano-Campanian' coins were at least in part produced and used outside the city of Rome. Moreover, throughout Italy, a range of coinages was produced by communities with close ties to Rome, including Rome's colonies. In order to understand early Roman coinage, these other players and coinages need to be taken into account.

In this paper, I will take such a 'multiplayer perspective' on early Roman coinage. This involves an analysis of similarities, differences, and connections between the coinage of Rome and other contemporary coinages in Italy. Based on this analysis, I will reflect on the important questions of why coinage was produced and by whom, and how, in such a dynamic context, the value of coinage was secured. I hope to show that a more dynamic, networked view of coinage in Italy in this period helps to explain the variable and haphazard nature of early Roman coinage.

The Sicilian prospect: Rome's coins and other coinages in the first Roman province (Suzanne Frey-Kupper)

Sicily was one of the earliest monetized areas of the ancient world where Greek, indigenous and Carthaginian communities produced a rich array of coinages for all levels of economic use, before the island came under Roman rule (from 264/263 BC in its western part, from 211 BC in its eastern part).

This paper will investigate to what extent institutions and political contexts triggered new coinages, the kind of messages they spread through iconographies and inscriptions and how these messages related to the functions of the coins. It seems that Rome did not have a firm plan to provide coinage to its first province and that much of its development was the result of pragmatic reaction rather than action.

While the production of silver coinage was clearly the privilege of Rome, bronze coinage was issued by different political actors, such as the so-called Romano-Sicilian coins by magistrates of the Roman provincial authorities (coinage which must be defined as the first 'Roman provincial coinage', before those coinages included in RPC), or by local administrations of the cities. The evolution was in both parts of the island different, reflecting the former political belonging of the western part to the Carthaginian epicracy and of the eastern part to the former kingdom of Hieron II and areas under its influence. The production of local Sicilian bronze coinage seems to have been efficient, resulting in a range of fractions allowing differentiated everyday transactions. The part of coins from Rome made up no more than between 15% and 20% of the monetary stock in circulation. The provision of local coinage was indeed so strong that even after the Tiberian period when Panormus as the last Sicilian mint closed its doors, local coinage continued to prevail in circulation. Indeed, Roman coinage from Rome probably prevailed only from the Flavian period.

The coinage of Paestum after the deduction of the Latin colony (273 BC): articulation of the local currency and circulation of Roman coins (Federico Carbone)

The Latin colony of Paestum continued the production of coinage, having already the tradition handed down from the mint of Poseidonia. These represent a special case because the first silver and bronze coins were immediately issued, characterised by their Roman iconographic and weight system. After this first phase, to be placed in the years of the colony's deduction around 273, the monetary context of Paestum is closely linked to that of Rome. An analysis of this allows us to determine the local specificities of the production and use of bronze coinage, as well as the circulation of coinage produced in Rome.

The contribution intends to analyse the characteristics of local production in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, cross-referencing knowledge on the coinage of Paestum with data on coin finds from Rome in the urban area and neighbouring areas, considering both single finds and hoards of bronze and silver coins.

Cosa Coins and Regional Economic Exchange in 3rd c. BCE Coastal Central Italy (Melissa Ludke)

Cosa, a Latin colony on the coast of Central Italy, was founded in 273 BCE just after the fall of nearby Vulci in 280. Bronze coins of a small denomination bearing the legend of COZA or COSANO have been discovered throughout the coast, and at two other sites beyond Etruria, which are attributed to this colony and seemingly were minted at the city's foundation or shortly thereafter. While several scholars, such as Buttrey, Crawford, and Vecchi, have debated about the denomination, iconography, and purpose of the Cosa coins, the use and function of this coinage, beyond their civic nature as small change, has not yet been fully examined within either archaeological or numismatic scholarship. An additional lacuna in the studies of Cosa lies in the economic nature of the city, and its relationship with its non-Roman neighbors at a time of socio-economic and political transitions throughout the peninsula.

Although the issues are small, their circulation pattern suggests that these coins clearly functioned as indicators of regional economic exchange within which Cosa sought to situate itself as a new city founded in a region with old, strong socio-economic ties. As a result, this research examines overlapping patterns of coin circulation in the Central-South Etruria region, as well as how Cosa's coins fit into both pre-existing and novel regional circulation networks. Therefore, this project also compiles all of the known coins circulating in this region during the third century to provide a clear picture of the monetary economy within which Cosa is situated. In investigating these overlapping circulation patterns that also include foreign coinage, this paper explores how this new colony both adapted to pre-existing regional economic exchange and potentially altered itself to fit those same networks.

Session 3: A monetizing society?

The weighed-out as and its uses. The early republican tangle (Cristiano Viglietti)

Since the mid-nineteenth century, most scholars addressing the earliest phases of Roman money have maintained that during the archaic age, and notably in the fifth century BC, the more “primitive” form of Roman money, namely cattle, was completely replaced by a more advanced means of payment in weighed bronze.

This linear representation of the evolution of Roman money – which to a certain extent finds its model in Varro and in his follower Pliny the Elder – can be challenged not only by archaeological evidence that indicates circulation of “pre-monetary” bronze in *Latium Vetus* at least from the ninth century BC, but also by re-assessment of a long-neglected group of juridical and learned sources. These sources show, first, that fines levied in cattle were still imposed well after the fifth century BC, likely until the end of the republican age. Moreover, in the archaic age those fines were part of a complex, hierarchical and developing system in which, depending on the nature and gravity of the crime, different (and continuously shifting, based on historical and political circumstances) forms of payment were expected. Notably, when especially heavy fines were levied, the archaic Roman juridical system provided for the possibility of converting the amount to be paid, usually valued in asses, into specific goods (land, houses, slaves), consistently with what also happened, in the same historical period, with private debts.

Accordingly, the available documents rule out the possibility of any linear evolution “from cattle to bronze”, but suggest the existence in archaic Rome of a complex and integrated but unsteady “tangle” of different forms of payment, where the use of weighed bronze was in fact mandatory only in a relatively small number of circumstances.

Changes in the use of Roman money in the mid-republican age: from a rather weak “economic” approach to a more “rational” use of the money (Maria-Cristina Molinari)

During the third century BC, important Roman permanent deposits in the foundations of sacred contexts have been detected in the recently Romanized areas; these large hoards were found starting from *Latium vetus*, maritime Etruria and in foundation deposits of the temples of Sardinia. Such circumstance evidences a rather weak “economic” approach to the use of money by the Roman State. This attitude will change with the break out of the Second Punic War, when a more “rational” approach emerges in the use of coinage metal, documenting that the dedicating authority had become aware of the “quantitative” assessable value implicit in the gift destined to the divinity.

Money for the gods – some thoughts on the dedication of coins in central Italy during the Middle Republic (Marion Bolder-Boos)

Votive deposits from sanctuaries in mid-republican Italy usually contain various groups of findings. Coins can frequently be found among them, although they usually do not make up the majority of the excavated material. Scientific publications on the interpretation of votive assemblages often do not pay much attention to these coins beyond using them as a reference point for the dating of the find contexts. This has to do with the function of coins as an instrument of payment. While many other types of votives can supply us with additional information beyond the pure value of an object – figurines may represent deities or dedicants, pottery may hint at feasting practices, representations of body parts might indicate

a connection with health and healing, and so on – coins are a largely silent category and do not say much about the deity in whose sanctuary they were deposited. Nonetheless, as they constitute gifts for the gods, they played a significant part in votive practices. These practices apparently differed from place to place, as concentrations of coin dedications greatly vary between individual cult sites.

Focussing on Etruria, Latium, and Campania, where many cult sites have been excavated, the paper presented here will give an overview of the extent and frequency of coin dedications in mid-republican sanctuaries and their respective contexts, in order to get a better understanding of why coins may have been considered a suitable votive gift.

Devastation and abandonment? Some reflections on hoards containing Romano-Campanian silver Didrachms (RRC 13/1) from Southern Italy during the Pyrrhic War (Marta Barbato)

The recent and complete publication of the San Chirico Nuovo hoard (Potenza, Italy) opens a few (new) considerations on the first phase/circulation/use of the Romano-Campanian silver (RRC 13/1) in the light of the archaeological data available for that recovery.

An in-depth evaluation of some of the hoards containing the first ROMANO silver didrachms, along with their archaeological context when this is available, coming from a restricted geographical area in Southern Italy, all dated to the turbulent years of the Pyrrhic war and its aftermath, seems to point towards the belief, already supported by many scholars whether they are numismatists or economic historians, that the first Romano-Campanian silver coinage not only does not circulate widely in peninsular Italy, but it originates from mainly 'cultural' rather than economical reasons in the Roman world.

The Use and Abuse of money in Plautine Rome (Moritz Hinsch)

Money is a constant issue in Plautine Rome. Some people don't have it, but want to spend it: Spendthrift adolescents, hungry parasites, hen-picked husbands. Others have it, and want to keep it: merchants, moneylenders and well-dowered matronae. And then there are those people who don't have any money themselves, but know how to get it for others: slaves. Plautus' plays present us with a Roman society surprisingly monetized already around 200 BCE. But money is also a problem in Plautine Rome. Having no money to spend, and having money to spend both may corrupt morals and threaten the social order. Starting from this observation, this paper looks at Roman comedy to better understand the social dimension of money in a transactional system both sophisticated and foreign to a modern observer. How did money relate to power? How did the materiality of money relate to its cultural value and perception? And did monetization change Roman society?