

Caesar, His Allies and His Enemies

Julius Caesar conquered Egypt, Gallia, Belgium and a part of Britannia – conquests, which formed the territorial foundation of the later Roman Empire. The occupation of Gallia provided Caesar with the prestige and the financial background he needed in order to pursue his ambitious goals in Rome: the reorganization the Republic of Rome.

In the year 44 BC, events rushed in Rome which also impacted coinage. At the beginning of that year – just weeks before his death – Caesar issued a series of coins that carried his portrait. For the first time, the image of a living Roman was minted on a Roman coin: this represented a milestone in Roman coinage and was perceived as a provocation by his contemporaries.

After Caesar's death, power struggle intensified. Constantly changing coalitions characterized the political climate. Because rival army commanders could not depend on funding from Rome, coins were minted more and more frequently outside Rome.

Roman Republic, L. Hostilius Saserna, Denarius, 48 BC



Denomination:	Denarius
Mint Authority:	Moneyer L. Hostilius Saserna
Mint:	Rome
Year of Issue:	-48
Weight (g):	3.97
Diameter (mm):	20.0
Material:	Silver
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

The subjugation of Gaul was a milestone in the political and military career of Caesar's ambitions. It granted him the backing of the army, prestige and, above all, huge amounts of valuable booty like gold, slaves, and livestock. All this would be useful for Caesar's future, and could easily be transformed into chinking coins so convenient for building up a network.

This denarius represents the disheveled head of a Gallic warrior with a Gallic shield behind him. He has a rope around his neck, is thus a captive. The reverse depicts a Celtic vehicle called a biga, driven by a charioteer and bearing a warrior holding a shield and hurling a spear.

Roman Republic, Imperial Issue, Gaius Julius Caesar (*100, † 44 BC) and P. Sepulius Macer, Denarius, 44 BC



Denomination:	Denarius
Mint Authority:	Imperator C. Julius Caesar and Moneyer P. Sepulius Macer
Mint:	Undefined (Traveling Military Mint)
Year of Issue:	-44
Weight (g):	3.97
Diameter (mm):	20.0
Material:	Silver
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

After Gaius Julius Caesar's victory in the Roman Civil War (49-45 BC) the question arose as to how Rome should be governed in the future. Should it be ruled by the Roman nobility, who had proved to be incompetent, or by an autocratic regime? Caesar did not dare to take on the title of a king, frowned upon by his fellow Romans. But he knew that the title of a dictator had been assigned to a leader in times of danger during the early Roman Republic. Caesar thus was appointed dictator for life, as dictator perpetuo.

This denar shows Caesar with a very special crown quoting the ceremonie of the Roman triumph. Some years later, Caesar's name will be adopted by Emperor Augustus as an imperial title. The German word "Kaiser" derives from "caesar," as does the Russian "tsar."

Roman Republic, Gaius Julius Caesar (*100, †44 BC) and Aulus Hirtius, Aureus (Imperial Issue), 46 BC, Rom



Denomination:	Aureus
Mint Authority:	Imperator C. Julius Caesar and Moneyer Aulus Hirtius
Mint:	Rome
Year of Issue:	-46
Weight (g):	8.08
Diameter (mm):	20.0
Material:	Gold
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

Aulus Hirtius fought since the mid-50s BC on the side of Gaius Julius Caesar. In 46 BC, Hirtius was Praetor (PR), and due to his office he produced the largest series of gold coins ever issued during the time of the Roman Republic. On the one hand, these aurei were used for the pay of Caesar's soldiers. On the other hand, they were presumably needed to compensate the commander's other expenses – that year, Caesar celebrated four triumphs, allocated money to his troops and to the people, and had a temple for Venus Genetrix built.

Roman Republic, Imperial Issue, Gaius Julius Caesar (*100, † 44 BC) and P. Sepulius Macer, Denarius, 44 BC



Denomination:	Denarius
Mint Authority:	Imperator C. Julius Caesar and Moneyer P. Sepulius Macer
Mint:	Undefined (Traveling Military Mint)
Year of Issue:	-44
Weight (g):	3.74
Diameter (mm):	19.0
Material:	Silver
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

This denarius was minted only a few days before Gaius Julius Caesar was murdered. The obverse portrays the great commander, and the inscription reads CAESAR DICT PERPETVO (Caesar, dictator for life). The reverse depicts Venus with a scepter and a little Victory on her hand.

Caesar was the first living Roman to have himself portrayed on a coin. This behaviour breached a Roman convention that only the ancestor of the Romans were worth it to be pictured in coinage. The goddess on the reverse alludes to Caesars origin, because the gens Julia claimed descent from Venus (the Greek Aphrodite). This was nothing new. Other Roman politicians had proclaimed before that they were of divine descent.

Roman Republic, Imperial Issue, M. Junius Brutus, Denarius, 43-42 BC



Denomination:	Denarius
Mint Authority:	Imperator M. Junius Brutus
Mint:	Undefined in Asia Minor (Traveling Military Mint)
Year of Issue:	-43
Weight (g):	3.71
Diameter (mm):	19.0
Material:	Silver
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

Brutus took himself for the saviour of the Roman Republic when, together with some accomplices, he murdered Julius Caesar on the ides of March in 44 BC. Yet Brutus had to escape, and fled to Asia Minor where he built up an army and had coins minted in order to pay his soldiers.

The reverse of this denarius shows diverse religious insignia: a sacrificial axe, a ladle and a sacrificial knife over the name BRVTVS. They allude to the fact that Brutus was a member of the pontifices, the most renowned Roman priesthood. He eventually lost the struggle against Mark Antony and Octavian (the later Emperor Augustus) nevertheless: in 42 BC he was defeated at the Battle of Philippi, and subsequently committed suicide.

Roman Republic, C. Cassius Longinus and Cornelius Lentulus Spinther, Denarius, 43-42 BC



Denomination:	Denarius
Mint Authority:	Imperator C. Cassius Longinus and Moneyer Cornelius Lentulus Spinther
Mint:	Western Asia Minor, Smyrna? (Traveling Military Mint)
Year of Issue:	-43
Weight (g):	3.89
Diameter (mm):	17.0
Material:	Silver
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

Gaius Cassius Longinus was one of the prime movers in the conspiracy against Julius Caesar. When the murderers had to flee Rome after the assassination, Cassius Longinus went to Syria, where he recruited a strong army. To pay the mercenaries, he had large amounts of denarii minted. Their obverse bore the head of Libertas, the personification of liberty. Indeed, Cassius and his fellow conspirators referred to themselves as the "Liberators" (Liberatores), arguing that they had acted on behalf of republican freedom.

Lentulus Spinther, named on the reverse, was engaged in the conspiracy as well. The design shows a pitcher (sitella) and a crooked wand (lituus), both augural symbols. Augurs were priests studying the flight of birds to interpret whether an undertaking suited the gods, or not. In this case, their prediction might not have been good: In 42 BC, Cassius was defeated in the Battle of Philippi. He committed suicide, and Lentulus Spinther supposedly lost his life shortly thereafter.

Roman Republic, Imperial Issue, P. Servilius Casca Longus and M. Junius Brutus, Denarius, 43-42 BC



Denomination:	Denarius
Mint Authority:	Imperator M. Junius Brutus and Moneyer P. Servilius Casca Longus
Mint:	Undefined, in Greece? (Traveling Military Mint)
Year of Issue:	-43
Weight (g):	3.96
Diameter (mm):	19.0
Material:	Silver
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

Marcus Junius Brutus and Publius Servilius Casca Longus both belonged to the conspirators against Gaius Julius Caesar, who was murdered in 44 BC. After Marcus Antonius and Octavian formed their alliance and absorbed Rome, the conspirators had to flee. Brutus and Casca went to Greece, where they recruited troops. To pay the mercenaries, Brutus and Casca minted their own coins.

The obverse of this denarius depicts the bearded head of Neptune, the god of the sea, with his trident over his shoulder. The reverse shows Victory with a palm-branch, stepping on a broken scepter and ripping a royal diadem. The broken scepter and the torn diadem are strong symbols of the Republicans' aversion against kingship.

Roman Republic, Imperial Issue, Marcus Antonius (*c. 82, †30 BC) and Vibius Varus, Denarius, 42 BC



Denomination:	Denarius
Mint Authority:	Imperator Marcus Antonius and Moneyer Vibius Varus
Mint:	Undefined
Year of Issue:	-42
Weight (g):	3.97
Diameter (mm):	19.0
Material:	Silver
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

After Caesar's assassination Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony) and Octavian (the later Emperor Augustus) instituted the Second Triumvirate to secure their power against the Senate and the assassins of Caesar.

Mark Antony was one of the main figures in the struggle for power. He became famous for his marriage with Cleopatra. Octavian accused him to have betrayed the Roman Republic to the Egyptian queen. When the tensions between the two Triumviri grew, war broke out. Mark Antony was defeated in the Battle of Actium, and had to escape to Egypt. Octavian followed him, and with no other refuge to go to, Mark Antony committed suicide on August 1, 30 BC.

This coin shows Fortuna with her cornucopia. She holds Victoria in her hand, the goddess of victory, who proffers her a laurel wreath. Here the moody goddess is still on the side of Mark Antony who is beautifully portrayed on the obverse.

Roman Republic, Imperial Issue, Sextus Pompeius, Denarius, 42-40 BC



Denomination:	Denarius
Mint Authority:	Imperator Sextus Pompeius
Mint:	Undefined in Sicily (Traveling Military Mint)
Year of Issue:	-42
Weight (g):	3.99
Diameter (mm):	18.0
Material:	Silver
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

The members of the Second Triumvirate had an antagonist: Sextus Pompeius, the youngest son of the famous Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus.

After Caesar's death, Sextus Pompeius recruited an army and conquered Sicily in 42 BC. Like his enemies, Sextus minted coins to pay his mercenaries. This denarius depicts the head of Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Sextus' father. The reverse shows Neptune, the god of the sea, between Anapias and Amphinomus. Those two were brothers who, as legend had it, had once saved their parents from an eruption of Aetna.

Sextus Pompeius was finally defeated after many political and military battles in 36 BC; the following year, he was executed in Miletus.

Roman Republic, Imperial Issue, Octavian, Denarius, 42 BC



Denomination:	Denarius
Mint Authority:	Imperator Octavian
Mint:	Undefined in Italy (Traveling Military Mint)
Year of Issue:	-42
Weight (g):	4.07
Diameter (mm):	19.0
Material:	Silver
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

This denarius was issued by Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, the later Emperor Augustus. It was struck in a traveling military mint somewhere in Italy. The obverse depicts Octavian and the inscription CAESAR III VIR R P C (Caesar, triumvir rei publicae constituendae – Caesar, triumvir for the reestablishing of the republic). With this design, Octavian propagated his fidelity towards his adoptive father. The reverse shows a curule chair bearing the legend CAESAR D I C P E R (Caesar dictator perpetuo), alluding to the murdered Julius Caesar, who had adopted Octavian by will after his death.

Roman Republic, Q. Voconius Vitulus, Denarius, 40 BC



Denomination:	Denarius
Mint Authority:	Moneyer Q. Voconius Vitulus
Mint:	Rome
Year of Issue:	-40
Weight (g):	3.84
Diameter (mm):	20.0
Material:	Silver
Owner:	Sunflower Foundation

Of Quintus Voconius Vitulus it is only known that he was a moneyer in the year 40 BC and a factionis of Octavian, the later emperor Augustus. This we can deduct from the motive he has chosen for the obverse of his coin: Caesar. After his death, the Senate had deified Caesar. On this denarius, he is depicted under the designation "divus" (DIVI IVLI) for the first time. The staff behind his portrait is evocative of Caesar's status as a member of the priestly collegium of Augurs.

The reverse of our coin refers to the moneyer himself. The inscription VOCONIVS VITVLVS is in line with the design, for Vitulus denotes a male calf in Latin.