

Zeitschrift: Schweizerische numismatische Rundschau = Revue suisse de numismatique = Rivista svizzera di numismatica
Herausgeber: Schweizerische Numismatische Gesellschaft
Band: 72 (1993)

Artikel: The coinage of the Rasna : a study in Etruscan numismatics. Part IV
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-175379>

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ITALO VECCHI

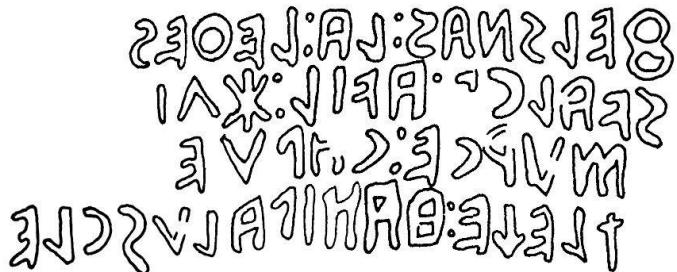
THE COINAGE OF THE *RASNA*
A STUDY IN ETRUSCAN NUMISMATICS

Plates 1–6

Part IV

The marks of value which are traditionally called Roman numerals are in fact derived from the Etruscan numbering-system which was employed on funerary inscriptions to indicate the age of the deceased and was also extensively used in legal and commercial transactions. A fine example is to be found in the inscription painted on the tomb of Larth Felsna in the necropolis of Villa Torlonia at Tarquinia¹:

felsnas : *la* : *leθes*
svalce : *avil* : *CAI*
murce : *capue*
tleχe : *hanipaluscle*



The inscription is written in Etruscan characters and consists of several lines of text. The first line contains the number 106. The second line contains the number 18. The third line contains the numbers 211 and 216. The fourth line contains the number 211. The fifth line contains the numbers 204 and 202. The text is arranged in a staggered, non-linear fashion.

signifying: «Larth Felsna of Lethe lived 106 years, *murce* (?), Capua, *tleχe* (?), that of Hannibal». The claim on the funeral inscription is that he was 106 years old and that he was either a mercenary in Hannibal's army which took Capua in 216 or that he was present its recapture by Rome in 211. Larth gives us no numismatic information other than that he was probably in the pay of Hannibal, although Etruria remained substantially loyal to Rome during the 2nd Punic War. The treason trials of 204 and 202 conducted by the consuls M. Cornelius and M. Servilius, however, indicate that some prominent Etruscan individuals had gone over to the enemy of Rome.²

The cities of Etruria, especially Populonia and Vetulonia, were by the 3rd century B.C. completely under the military, political and economic influence of the Roman Republic³. From the outset of the 2nd Punic War in Italy, Populonia struck a gold, silver and bronze coinage with marks of value that corresponded to Rome's ever declining post-semilibral standard bronze, which by 211 was stabilized at the sextantal and only some time later at the uncial *as* standard, confirmed by Pliny⁴

¹ A. J. Pfeffig, *Studi Etruschi* 25, 1967, 659 ff.; *TLE* 890.

² For further insight into this period see the fine study by A. J. Pfeffig, *Die Haltung Etruriens im 2. punischen Krieg*, *Historia* 15, 1966, 193–210.

³ For a detailed analysis of Etruscan numismatics, see *Rasna*, part I, *SNR* 67, 1988, 43–73, part II, *SNR* 69, 1990, 5–25 and part III, *SNR* 71, 1992, 91–110.

⁴ *Naturalis Historiae* 33, 45.

«asses unciales facti» in the context of the re-tariffing of denarius by the middle of the 2nd century.

Previously, and throughout the 3rd century, Etruria had been an integral part of the Roman-dominated central Italic bronze *as* currency system (with denominations clearly marked with their bronze *as* equivalents) which by 217 was subject to severe inflation⁵. By the end of the period Populonia attempted to rationalize the bronze currency system by introducing centesimal and decimal marks of value, in one case, early in the 2nd century together with Roman pellet ounce-marks of value (nos. 41–44), a system that was not to survive Etruria's total economic absorption by Rome.

CATALOGUE

POPULONIA AND VETULONIA (PUFLUNA CA VETALU)

Bronze post-semilibral as period, c. 215–211

Sextans

1 O1 Head of Sethluns r., wearing pileus decorated with laurel-wreath; to l., two pellets and prow of ship. Border of dots.

R1 **VJAT31 ANVJ8V1 A↓** around hammer and tongs;^{5a} in center, 2 pellets. Border of dots.

1* 14.24 Florence, Museo Arch. = Sambon 120

2 14.10 Florence, Museo Arch. = Sambon 120

3 13.62 Milan, SNG 24

4* 16.57 Private coll. = Antikenmuseum Basel 17

2 O1

R2

1 13.46 Copenhagen, SNG 8

2* 14.44 London, BM (inv. 1907–5–1 80)

3 16.46 Munich, SNG 6

4* Private coll.

The weight standard is based on a bronze quadrantal *as* of theoretically about 81g., struck during the post-semilibral period when Populonia and Vetulonia were politically and economically allied with Rome against Hannibal.

⁵ For a detailed analysis of weight standards and metralogical parallels of the period see R. Thomsen, *Early Roman Coinage I* (Copenhagen 1957), 198–200; II (1961), 40–48; M. Crawford, *RRCA* II, 590–597 and I. Vecchi, *Rasna* part I, SNR 67, 53–55.

^{5a} Clearly *pufluna*, not *fufluna* as given in *TLE*. The Etruscan name for Bacchus, Fufluns, has its root in *pupla* «bud, shoot or offspring» and is recognizable in the Etruscan names *pupluna* and *pufluna* which in Latin are rendered as Populonia, «multiplication of the race»; this, as Moneta, was one of the titles of Juno. The cult of Fufluns Pachies was widespread in Etruria; according to Livy, the senate of Rome banned it in 186 B.C. on the grounds of public order.

POPULONIA (PUPLUNA)

*Bronze post-semilibral *as* period, c. 215-211*

Triens

1 O1 Head of Menvra r., wearing crested Corinthian helmet; to l., 4 pellets.
Border of dots.

R1 Flying owl facing between two stars; above, 4 pellets; below, **ANVVVV1V1**.
Border of dots.

1 24.65 Milan, SNG 15
2 Rome, Museo della Propaganda
3* 24.57 Spink 82, 1991, 409

2 O1
R2

1 19.08 Florence, Museo Arch. = Sambon 114
2 22.93 London, BM (inv. 1907-5-1 76)
3* 30.04 Private coll.

3 O2
R2

1 19.96 Numismatica Ars Classica 1, 1989, 19
2* 20.58 Private coll.

4 O1
R3

1* 25.62 Berlin (inv. 826/1899)

5 As above, but with countermarks:   

1* 17.80 London, BM = Sambon 114a (inv. 1907-5-1 78)
2* 14.63 London, BM (inv. 1907-5-1 79)
3* 7.83 London, BM (inv. 1913-12-4 7)
4 7.74 London, BM (inv. 1907-5-1 82)
5* 5.70 London, BM (inv. 1907-5-1 83) = Atti Napoli, p. 124,
pl. 19, 66
6* 22.61 Private coll.

The very worn state of the countermarked issue makes classification by die difficult and indicates that these coins needed to be revalidated for circulation, probably as 20 *decimae* in the uncial *as* period in ca 200 (see nos. 41-48). Sambon suggests the crescent moon may be the sign of Bes, which during a raging war against Carthage seems unlikely. The countermarks seem to be of celestial symbols

and may be associated with Uni (Juno) who under the name Populonia watched over the multiplication of the race. As Lucetia, Uni was the feminine principal of celestial light and moon goddess, of which Tinia (Jupiter) was the masculine principal, god of light, sun, moon and of celestial phenomena such as thunderbolts, interpreted in the *libri fulgoralis*. It is with the title Moneta, after having been the adviser of those about to be married that Uni became the adviser of the Roman people. Later this epithet Moneta changed its meaning, due to the installation near the temple of Juno on the Capital of the mint of the Roman State.

6 O3 Head of Turms r., wearing petasus; behind, 4 pellets. Border of dots.
 R4 Caduceus and crescent above **AVVV1V1**; below, caduceus and 4 pellets. Border of dots.
 1* 19.15 Volterra, Museo Guarnacci = Sambon 115

Quadrans

7 O4 Head of Menvra r. wearing crested Corinthian helmet; above, 3 pellets. Border of dots.
 R5 Owl with closed wings standing r., head facing; to l., two stars; above, 3 pellets; below, **AVVV1V1**. Border of dots.
 1* 17.40 Florence, Museo Arch.

Sextans

8 O5 Head of young Hercole r., bound with diadem; on shoulder, club. Border of dots.
 R6 Bow and arrow above 2 pellets; below, club and **AVVV1V1**. Border of dots.

1	9.56	Berlin (Prokesch-Osten)
2	11.08	Munich, SNG 3
3*	10.72	Private coll.
4	11.20	Santamaria 1951 (Signorelli), 11
5	12.90	Spink 82, 1991, 410
6	11.22	Venturi-Ginori 24

9 O5
 R7
 1 12.50 London, BM (inv. 1922-11-15 25)
 2* 12.44 Weber 76

10 O5
 R8
 1* 11.12 Crippa, Listino 1, 1969, 220
 2 10.50 Florence, Museo Arch.
 3 11.79 London, BMC p. 5, 24

11	O5	
	R9	
1		Aes Rude, Jan. 1979, 4
2	12.15	Copenhagen, SNG 2
3	10.19	Milan, SNG 17
4	10.37	Naville 5, 1923, 121
5*	14.00	New York, ANS, SNG 92

Sextans

12	O6	Head of Menvra r. wearing crested Corinthian helmet; above, 2 pellets. Border of dots.
	R10	Owl facing with closed wings standing r., on 2 pellets ; to l., crescent between two stars; below, AMVV1V1 . Border of dots.
1	11.54	Private coll.
2	12.13	Private coll.
3*	12.77	Spink 82, 1991, 411
13	O6	
	R11	
1	6.31	Populonia Hoard = Petrillo Serafin 547
2*	9.14	Private coll.
14	O6	
	R12	
1*		Florence, Museo Arch.
15	O6	
	R13	
1*	11.94	Private coll.
2	10.07	Sternberg 11, 1981, 11
16	O6	
	R14	
1	10.64	Berlin (inv. 8199)
2*		Private coll.
17	O6	
	R15	
1	5.90	Berlin (Imhoof-Blumer)
2	14.22	Milan, SNG 16
3*	9.55	New York, ANS, SNG 93

18 O7
R16

1* 9.14 Private coll.
2 9.65 Private coll.

19 O8
R17

1* 8.94 London, BMC p. 5, 25

20 O8
R18

1* 10.94 New York, ANS, SNG 94

21 O9
R19

1* Santamaria 1951 (Signorelli), 12

22 O9
R20

1* Florence, Museo Arch.

23 O10
R21

1* 11.55 London, BM (inv. 1913-12-4 6)

The weight standards of 1–23 correspond to the same diversity of weight standards at Rome, which gradually decline from the post semi-libral to the sexantal *as* of 211 B.C.

Bronze sextantal as period, after c. 211

100 centesimae (as)

24 O11 Laureate and bearded head of Tinia r.; behind; **ΣΙΚ**. Border of dots within wreath.

R22 Incuse hippocamp r. Border of waves in incuse.

1	31.64	Berlin (Fox)
2	37.88	Berlin (inv. 561/1908)
3	30.60	Florence = Mazzolini coll. 78 (from Populonia)
4*	39.42	Hess-Leu 28, 1965, 338 = Spink 82, 1991, 430
5*	40.80	Vatican coll. = Sambon 132
6	32.00	"

50 centesimae (semis)

25 O12 Bearded head of Nethuns r., wearing pistrix-skin headdress; behind, ↑.
Border of dots within wreath.
R23 Incuse hippocamp r. Border of dots within circle of waves.
1* 24.65 London, BM (inv. 1889-8-5 2)
2 17.39 Numismatic Fine Arts 2, 1976, 4

50 centesimae (semis)

26 O12 Bearded head of Nethuns r., wearing pistrix-skin headdress; behind, ↑.
Border of dots within wreath.
R24 Incuse eagle standing r., looking l. at coiled serpent. Incuse linear border.
1 21.28 New York, ANS, SNG 71 = Strozzi 630
2* 22.84 Private coll. = Antikenmuseum Basel 20
3 21.25 Turin, Museo Arch. = Sambon 134

50 centesimae (semis)

27 O12 Bearded head of Nethuns r., wearing pistrix-skin headdress; behind, ↑.
Border of dots within wreath.
R25 Incuse griffin in incuse walking r. Wreathed border.
1* 20.85 Florence = Mazzolini coll. 79 = Sambon 135
2 19.30 Strozzi 631 (from Val d'Orcia)
3 19.10 Vatican coll.

30 centesimae

28 O13 Bearded head of Hercl r., wearing lion's skin; behind, XXX. Border
of dots within wreath.
R26 Incuse ray (not a donkey's head) swimming to r. Border of waves in
incuse.
1 11.77 New York, ANS, SNG 72
2 12.85 Stockholm, SNG 50
3* 13.42 Vatican coll., cast 24 = Sambon 136
4 14.02 Vatican coll., cast 25

25 centesimae (quadrans)

29 O14 Helmeted head of Menvra r.; to r., ΛXX; to l., XX. Border of dots
within wreath.
R27 Incuse cock standing l. Linear border within wreath.
1 11.52 Copenhagen, SNG 41
2 11.45 Berlin (von Rauch)
3 8.93 Berlin (inv. 500/1871)
4 11.17 Florence, Museo Arch. = Strozzi 632
5* 11.98 London, BM (inv. 1922-3-17 127)

30 O15
 R28

1* 10.24 Ars Classica 16, 1933, 10 = Spencer Churchill, SNG 2 =
 Pozzi 47
 2 Cesano 26

31 O14
 R29 Incuse dolphin between two fishes to l., in incuse. Border of waves in
 incuse.

1* 11.93 Spink 82, 1991, 431

20 centesimae (quincunx)

32 O16 Laureate and bearded head of Tinia r.; behind; **XX**. Border of dots
 within wreath.

R30 Incuse eagle standing l., with wings spread and head to r. Wreathed
 incuse border.

1 Venturi Ginori 31
 2* 8.61 Vatican coll.

33 O16
 R31

1 11.35 Berlin (Imhoof-Blumer)
 2* 8.61 Copenhagen, SNG 42
 3* 10.70 Paris, de Luynes 12

12 1/2 centesimae (sescuncia)

34 O17 Laureate and bearded head of Aplu r.; behind, **X**; below, **II>**. Border
 of dots within wreath.

R32 Incuse coiled serpent within oval .

1* 6.49 Florence, Museo Arch.

35 O17
 R33 Incuse fish swimming to r. Border of waves.

1 5.77 Berlin (Imhoof-Blumer)
 2 6.78 Cambridge, McClean 140
 3 5.45 Oxford, Ashmolean, SNG 21
 4* 6.26 Private coll. = Antikenmuseum Basel 21

10 centesimae

36 O18 Laureate and bearded head of Tinia r.; behind; **X**. Border of dots within wreath.

R34 Incuse fish swimming to r. Border of waves.

1	5.35	Copenhagen, SNG 43
2	4.20	Florence, Museo Arch. = Strozzi 633
3	4.35	London, BM (inv. 1953-12-1 1)
4*	6.49	Private coll.
5	4.98	Private coll.
6	5.67	Spink 82, 1991, 432

5 centesimae

37 O19 Head r., wearing Phrygian helmet; behind, **Λ**. Border of dots within wreath.

R35 Incuse cross. Linear border.

1*	2.49	Florence, Museo Arch. = Mazzolini coll. (from Cecina)
2	3.59	Paris, BN 44
3	3.77	Spink 82, 1991, 433

5 centesimae

38 O19 Head r., wearing Phrygian helmet; behind, **Λ**. Border of dots within wreath.

R36 Incuse six-pointed star. Linear border.

1	3.04	London, Lloyd, SNG 29 = Ratto, 25.1.1926, 78
2	3.48	New York, ANS, SNG 73 = Hirsch 30, 1911 (Baron), 33
3*	3.08	Private coll.
4	5.08	Spink 82, 1991, 434

2^{1/2} centesimae

39 O20 Young male head r.; to r., **<II**. Border of dots within wreath.

R37 Six-pointed star, in incuse. Linear border.

1*	2.49	Berlin (von Rauch), cat. 16, pl. 1, 9 = Sambon 142
2	2.10	Florence, Museo Arch. (scavi Vetulonia)
3	2.16	Spink 82, 1991, 435

2^{1/2} centesimae

40 O20 Young male head r.; to r., **<II**. Border of dots within wreath.

R37 Spiral within linear border.

1	1.89	Private coll.
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The sextantal revaluation at Rome, with a theoretical weight of the bronze *as* of about 54 g, was adopted by Populonia but with subdivisions tariffed in centesimal

unit marks of value. The dies of this special issue are carefully engraved and characterized by wreath-bordered obverses and incuse reverses. The wreath may be an indication of victory in connection with the Second Punic War.

Bronze uncial as period, after c. 200

10 decimae-triens

41 O21 Head of Sethlans r., wearing pileus decorated with laurel-wreath; between **X** and **A**. Border of dots.

R38 Hammer and tongs either side of 4 pellets; below, **ΑΜΒΒ1Β1**. Border of dots.

1 8.22 Copenhagen, SNG 7

2 9.21 Milan, SNG 19 (overstruck on sextans of Athena/owl, type 12)

3* 8.95 Private coll.

42 O21

R39

1* 10.29 Spink 82, 1991, 412

43 O21

R40

1 9.48 Berlin (Fox)

2 7.98 Berlin (Löbbecke)

3 7.42 Berlin (inv. 5052)

4 8.16 Berlin (inv. 5066)

5 7.18 London, BMC p. 5, 26 (overstruck on sextans of Athena/owl, type 12)

6 9.55 Milan, SNG 18

7 7.01 Milan, SNG 20

8 10.28 Munich, SNG 4

9 9.68 Munich, SNG 5

10 9.78 New York, ANS, SNG 97 (overstruck on sextans of Athena/owl, type 12)

11* 9.02 Private coll.

12 10.99 Private coll.

13 11.21 Weber 77 (overstruck on sextans type 12)

44 O21

R41

1 10.96 Berlin (Imhoof-Blumer)

2 Florence, Museo Arch.

3 Florence, Museo Arch.

4* 6.72 London, BMC p. 6, 28

Following the collapse of the sextantal *as* standard and its fine Etruscan centesimal series, Populonia followed Rome and produced poorly engraved bronze uncial trientes with a weight standard based on an *as* of about 27 g. In keeping with Populonia's decimalisation policy, to the traditional 4 pelleted triens a 10 units mark of value was added on the obverse.

The **X** to the left and **A** to the right of Sethlans seems to be a local attempt to decimalize uncial trientes, many of which are overstruck on Menvra/owl sextantes type 12 of lighter than average weight. Similar but heavier restruck sextantes type 12 are tariffed in the following series at eleven units, see note to nos. 45–48.

11 decimae

45 O22 Bust of Turms r., wearing winged petasus; to l., crescent. Border of dots.
R42 **AVVV1V1** above **/X** between two filleted caducei. Border of dots.

1* 14.68 New York, ANS, SNG 96
2 Aes Rude, Nov. 1978, 7

46 O22
R43

1 12.50 Berlin (inv. 827/1899)
2* 11.79 London, BMC p. 397, 3

47 O22
R44

1* 11.27 Ars Classica 16, 1933, 9 = Spencer Churchill, SNG 4
2 9.58 Berlin (inv. 21352), cat. 33 (overstruck on sextans of Athena/owl, type 12)
3 11.99 New York, ANS, SNG 95 (overstruck on sextans of Athena/owl, type 12)

48 O22
R45

1 7.59 Berlin (inv. 8200), cat. 34 (overstruck on sextans of Athena/owl, type 12)
2* Florence, Museo Arch.

Many coins of this issue have been restruck making use of sextantes of Menvra/owl of type 12, but bear no Roman pellet-marks than of value and are on average heavier the host sextantes of series 41–44 with a 10 unit-mark of value. The weight standard of the Populonian bronze unit, as the average of the 26 recorded specimens of both issues (41–48), is of about 1 g., indicating that the reverse mark of value means eleven tenths of an uncial triens.

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PLATE 1



Italo Vecchi, The coinage of the *Rasna*, part IV

PLATE 2



Italo Vecchi, The coinage of the *Rasna*, part IV

PLATE 3



12/3



13/2



14/1



15/1



16/2



17/3



18/1



19/1



20/1



21/1

PLATE 4



22/1



23/1



24/4



24/5



25/1



26/2



27/1

PLATE 5



Italo Vecchi, The coinage of the *Rasna*, part IV

Italo Vecchi, The coinage of the *Rasna*, part IV

