

Zeitschrift: Schweizerische numismatische Rundschau = Revue suisse de numismatique = Rivista svizzera di numismatica
Herausgeber: Schweizerische Numismatische Gesellschaft
Band: 85 (2006)

Buchbesprechung: Arma et Nummi [Bernhard Woytek]
Autor: Metcalf, William E.

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 25.03.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Bernhard Woytek

Arma et Nummi

Forschungen zur römischen Finanzgeschichte und Münzprägung
der Jahre 49 bis 42 v. Chr.

Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse
Denkschrift 312 = Veröffentlichungen der Numismatischen Kommission 40 =
Veröffentlichungen der Kleinasiatichen Kommission 14, Vienna 2003.
631pp., 12 plates. ISBN 3-7001-3159-3. € 147.80.

This is beyond question the most important work on any aspect of the Republican coinage to appear since Crawford's *Roman Republican Coinage* (hereafter Crawford or Cr.). The reviewer has always had the impression that Crawford's work was at its best and most incisive where his principal form of evidence – the hoards – led to new ideas; in any case, as this was the first reference work to embrace Thomsen's work on the early Roman coinage and the new dating of the earliest denarii, there was plenty novel to say about the coinage from its beginnings down to the mid-first century. By contrast the coinage from *ca.* 50 B.C. on offered less: the hoards were smaller and more equivocal, and the concept of multiple "moving mints" allowed the question of exact attributions to be skirted. The end of this period remained problematic: what to do with the IMP CAESAR and CAESAR DIVI F issues, most of which are plausibly pre-Actian?

These last fall outside the self-imposed chronological limitations of this massive work, which represents the outcome (expanded!) of a dissertation presented in 2000/2001. The period begins with the opening of the civil war, and ends with what is now a linchpin of chronology, the most satisfyingly secure of all the later republican colleges. Woytek (hereinafter W.) argues (p. 2) that these years transformed the Roman economy of state and with it the coinage. As he points out, Rome ceased to be the only or even the most prolific mint; gold came to be produced with increased regularity; there were important innovations in the base metal, some of which anticipate later imperial developments. Throughout the author has gone beyond numismatics to link the coinage to the historical record, and where we find ourselves unconvinced it is often owing solely to the lack of relevant source material.

There are three similarly-organized chapters, treating the periods 49-48 (Caesar and Pompey); 48-45 (the wars in Egypt, Africa, and Spain, and Caesar's disposition of the property of the Pompeians); and 44-42 (Caesar's absolute power to Philippi). Each of these is subdivided into sections treating at considerable length (A) the history of the period and, at somewhat greater length, (B) the coinage.

To take but one example of the nexus between coinage and military finance, W. points out (p. 28) that while Caesar, as a provincial governor, was not (at least until his return) responsible for his accounting to anyone, Pompey was officially dependent on decrees of the Senate; for the whole of the year 49, as proconsul, he was subordinate to the consuls C. Claudius Marcellus and L. Cornelius Lentulus

Crus. Much is also made of the *aerarium* and its supposed seizure in the early days of 49. From Livy 27.10.11 (209 BC) it is inferred that the *vicesima libertatis* was accumulated in the *aerarium sanctius ad ultimos casus* and not spent from year to year. The sum involved, then, was not inconsiderable. At p. 35 the chronology as presented by Caesar is criticized; it was clearly in Caesar's interest to alter this chronology, as it suggests that part of the treasury was removed. But W. (p. 37) believes that in keeping with the tradition preserved in *Att.* 7.15.3, 8.3.4 the whole treasury was left behind for Caesar. This would make sense of the order of Pompey on 7 February to deliver the treasury to him (*Att.* 7.21.2) and explain his later financial stringency. W. also supposes that in any case Caesar had plenty of cash on hand, left over from his proconsulship. Thus Shackleton Bailey¹ is right and Crawford (p. 639 n. 2) is wrong to read into Cicero's letter that "Caesar started without anything on hand." Even Suet. *Div. Iul.* 68.1, which shows the better-off financing the poorer and the soldiers serving without pay, is in W.'s view the result of illiquidity, not bankruptcy (p. 40).

Appendices I-III treat historical and iconographic problems, while the chronology and attributions are conveniently charted on pp. 553-559. Most attention will doubtless focus on the strikings summarized in the long table on pp. 558-559, "Verzeichnis der neuen Datierungs- und/oder Lokalisierungsvorschläge im Vergleich zu Crawford (RRC)," which provides a guide to the core of the strictly numismatic discussion. Many of these represent only slight adjustments, but all are worthy of consideration.

For Rome the chronology is essentially that of Crawford down to 44, and of course for the college of 42; but there are two linked exceptions, as follows:

1. coins of C. Clodius Vestalis, M. Arrius Secundus, C. Numonius Vaala, and L. Servius Rufus (Cr. 512-515), placed by Crawford in 41, are here assigned to 43; conversely,

2. the coins of L. Flaminius Chilo, P. Accoleius Lariscolus, and Petilius Capitolinus (Cr. 485-487), given by Crawford to 43, are here assigned to 41.

The reassignments are discussed on pp. 432ff. The case for identity of the college of Vestalis, Secundus, Vaala, and Rufus is made on pp. 433-434; the first attribution of it to 43 was made by Mommsen (*Münzwesen* p. 741 – but then Mommsen also attributed the triumviral portrait gold to 38, *ibid.* n. 6). The "restoration of the Republic" theme, following upon the coinage of 44 that is entirely devoted to Caesar, seems appropriate to this moment before the triumvirate. Further speculation has seen in the portraits images of Brutus, Antony, and even (Alföldi) Pansa. Now if these identifications are accepted, the case for 43 is proved, for Alföldi was certainly right to reject Crawford's supposition that the portrait of Brutus could have been

¹ D.R. SHACKLETON BAILEY, *Cicero's Letters to Atticus* vol. 3 (Cambridge 1968), p. 254 ad *Att.* 6.1.25.

revived as late as 41 (p. 437) and, as W. notes, others who accept that dating feel compelled to reject the identification of the portrait of Brutus (p. 439).

Crawford was driven to this extremity, however, by the evidence of the finds; with the exception of Agnona 1952, a hoard so sparse in its representation of issues after 48 that it can hardly be relied upon, the hoards uniformly confirm the Crawford chronology. W. addresses specifically the incomplete hoards Borzano and Alvignano. But there remain Pieve Quinta 1879, San Bartolomeo 1834, Potenza (Basilicata) 1902, Firenze 1873, and Avezzano 1915, all of which include the issues attributed by Crawford to 43 and none of which endorse W.'s revised chronology. This is a methodological impasse: in spite of the superficial attractions of W.'s rearrangement, it has to be resisted in the face of the finds.

3. Cn. Nerius Q Urb. (Cr. 441)

W. makes a good case (pp. 97f.) for removing this coinage from the mint of the capital. Although there is nothing remarkable about its physical production (dies continue to be oriented irregularly), the “radiate” border on the reverse stands out from contemporary products of Rome; and though both the consular dating and the military imagery have been remarked in the past, they make best sense together as a military issue under the supervision of the consuls, who of course were in Illyria at this time. The presence of five of the coins in a hoard found near Tirana, along with Cr. 445/1a-b, attributed by Crawford to Apollonia, is highly suggestive. It is perhaps worth adding one small consideration: the *harpa* on the rev. of Cr. 445/1 may provide a link to the *harpa* that accompanies the head of Saturn on the obverse of Nerius' coins.

4. CAESAR with elephant (Cr. 443/1)

The obverse of this huge issue insists on Caesar's priestly functions – i.e. his legitimacy – and W., following both Crawford and the refinement of his argument by Backendorf, accepts the reverse as a battle between an elephant and an “unnatural animal”, i.e. metaphorically a struggle between good and evil. Various arguments for the early dating are disposed of, this time on the basis of the hoard evidence. The issue makes its first appearance alongside that of M'. Acilius in the hoards of Cadriano and Cesario, while Carbonara and San Giuliano Vecchio show these as well as a few other coins. Unlike Crawford, W. regards the continuation of the elephant issue into 48 as “a priori unlikely” (p. 127), on the ground that Crawford was driven to extend the issue by his belief that the LII denarii of Caesar (no. 7 below) do not begin until July of 48.

5. Q. Sicinius, C. Coponius (Cr. 444)

W. refines Crawford's “moving with Pompey” to “west coast of Asia Minor.” We do not know much about Coponius except that he was in command of the Rhodian contingent of Pompey's fleet. W., rightly it seems to me, recognizes the debt of the lion's skin and club reverse to the traditional cistophoric fractions; and he points

out that the Hercules references had special point for Pompey. He goes on to note stylistic development, or at least variation, in the series, which would seem to support the idea of a moving mint; in so far as it is associated with Coponius and not with Pompey this refines Crawford's attribution.

6. Magn. Procos, Cn. Piso Proq. (Cr. 446) and Varro Proq. (Cr. 447)

These too are identified by Crawford as "moving with Pompey", in 49 BC. W. prefers a date of 48 and an assignment to Illyria. W.'s attribution makes a great deal of sense if Dio 41.43.3 is to be trusted: in the absence of a *lex curiata*, the magistrates appointed by the Senate in exile styled themselves proconsuls, propraeors, proquaestors etc. (p. 116).

7. Aurei, denarii, and quinarii with LII – Trophy with CAESAR, C. 452/1-4

W. follows the old identification of the numeral as a reference to Caesar's age. Crawford had taken this to begin only with Caesar's fifty-second birthday on July 13, 48, but W. adduces evidence that the "annus coeptus" was sufficient, i.e. that any time after July 13, 49 Caesar might have used this designation of his age. W. connects this through the representations of a *securis* on 452/1-2 and a *cullulus* and *ancile* on 452/3 to the priestly theme of the Elephant denarius. From there the dating is speculative. W. sees the issue of L. Hostilius Saserna, which clearly also celebrates victories over the Gauls, as likely to be derivative from the CAESAR denarii struck in the field, and this makes the year of Saserna's magistracy, 48, a kind of *ante quem* that forces the LII coins with trophy into the early part of the year. But this idea loses plausibility with Saserna's most original type, the Gallic charioteer in retreat, which has no known antecedent. If he could devise this on his own, he was capable of coming up independently with the trophy type.

8. Denarii with Aeneas carrying the palladium (Cr. 458)

Since Crawford this issue has been attributed to Africa, and specifically to 47-46 BC., largely on the basis of its absence from the Carbonara and San Giuliano Vecchio hoards, both of which terminate with coins of the moneyers of 48. But as W. points out, 47 could be right only in a very limited sense, since Caesar did not take ship from Sicily until Dec. 25 of that year; and indeed the date and attribution, for Crawford, are interconnected (though as W. points out, p. 219, even if one accepts his dating the assignment to Africa does not follow automatically). If the one goes, so does the other, and the hoard evidence is slim enough that a return to Grueber's reading, which places the coinage after the battle of Pharsalus, is possible. Sydenham's attribution to Gaul never had the slightest thing to recommend it and is rightly dismissed. A technical point tells against association with other nearly-contemporary coins, and that is the die placement, regularly at 6:00. The "unruhige" surface of the Aeneas denarii leads W. to speculate that they might have been overstruck, albeit carefully; he claims to have an example to hand (pl. 3 no. 66). The exact placement is a matter of probabilities, which W. effectively

reduces to two: Egypt, where Caesar spent most time after Pharsalus, and Asia. W. supposes, deriving an argument from Crawford, that the absence of pontifical emblems or any reference to Gaul indicates that the coins were produced outside Caesar's direct control, and that, for him, points to Asia. This is pretty slim, but the likelihood that so substantial an issue was produced in Egypt is not great.

9. Denarii with Ceres/pontifical implements (Cr. 467)

A similar argument is used, to less effect I think, with respect to these coins, which remarkably lack the name of Caesar. The titles provide a linkage to the African War that would seem to carry an attribution in their wake, but Crawford had inferred, apparently from the unusual typological content, that "the issue was struck on Caesar's behalf by an underling without his actually being present at the mint himself" (p. 93; cited by W. p. 249), and in this he is followed by W. For him this makes an attribution to Africa itself "unglaublich." But if that is all there is to it, the reasoning is flawed. *All* minting is done by "underlings", and what general ever had time to supervise the activities of the mint? The authority for the issue is unmistakable: who else was DICT ITER, much less COS TER? Today we do not have the aid of context; but if these coins are indeed connected with the African War, their distribution to Caesar's troops will have been sufficient to identify their source and their authority.

10. L. PLANC PRAEF VRB, C. CAES DIC TER (Cr. 475)

Here Crawford worked from the *ante quem* provided by the end of Caesar's third dictatorship and settled upon 45 B.C.; and proceeded from the *post quem* provided by Plancus' term as *praefectus urbi* – which is itself unknown. But W. would count Plancus among those prefects appointed by Caesar before his departure for Spain, hence in late 46. But Plancus' term of office is not in any case necessarily congruent with his striking of this issue. The adjustment is as minor as the proof is wanting.

11. C. CLOVIVS PRAEF, CAESAR DIC TER (Cr. 476)

These bronzes were assigned to an uncertain mint by Crawford and the editors of RPC (at no. 601, with incomplete bibliography), but to Rome by almost everyone else. W. reminds us that the attribution goes back to Haverkamp in the 16th century, and has been endorsed by the likes of Bahrfeldt. Clovius is seen here as another of the eight prefects appointed by Caesar; the issue is therefore part of his adjusted chronology (see on 10 above) and subject to the same limitations. But this may be wrong: Crawford is surely right to observe, p. 94 n. 1, that one would expect the full title, PRAEF VRB *vel sim.*

12. SEX. MAGNVS PIVS IMP/ SAL (B)/PIETAS (Cr. 477)

W.'s treatment of this issue is not very satisfying. The general placement of the coinage is not in doubt: it belongs to Sextus Pompey and was produced in southern Spain. The legend on the obverse was interpreted by Buttrey as Sal(pensa), by Bahrfeldt as sal(utatus, sc. imperator); the B that appears on one die would be an iteration. But the Latinity of this, already questioned by Buttrey, is more doubtful than W.'s footnote (776, p. 490) would make it appear. We should not make, with him, allowance for "Spanish" Latin, unless we suppose a quite different authority for the issue; and of the two citations from Tacitus, only one is possibly in point, since *salutavit* at *Ann.* 2.18.2 cannot have the technical meaning of *appellavit*.

13. MAGNVS PIVS IMP and variants/EPPIVS LEG asses (Cr. 478)
and MAGNVS and variants/PIVS IMP (Cr. 479)

Here W. marshals the arguments – many of them already brought forward by Martini,² for attribution of the whole group to Sicily. These consist in dissimilarity of fabric and die axis to the asses with CN. MAG IMP (Cr. 471) attributed to Spain, and the Morgantina find. Cr. 479 is the much larger series and it displays a progressive degeneracy of style that suggests its striking over a lengthy period, which W. admits is difficult to specify but which must end with Sextus' second imperial acclamation in 38. The two groups belong, in just about everybody's view, to different mints.

14. NEPTVNI/Q. NASIDIVS (Cr. 483)

Crawford reasoned that the issue, which lacks mention of Sex. Pompeius' tenure of the office of *praefectus classis*, must antedate 43, and he placed the beginning of the issue in 44. W. takes the tack that technically the issue is in the name of Nasidius, so no such title should be expected; and if that is so the *ante quem* disappears. The chronology, for W., is further complicated by his own reassignment of the issue of L. Flaminius Chilo to 41 rather than 43 (see (2) above), for the presence of one example of Cr. 483/2 in the Pasquariello hoard, which otherwise terminates with issues of Chilo, would suggest the near-contemporaneity of the two. For W. then the inaugural date is 42; and though the series might extend down to 38, his clear preference is for an earlier date between the termini (p. 505).

² R. MARTINI, *Monetazione bronzea romana tardo-repubblicana II. Sextus Pompeius. Le emissioni hispaniche del tipo CN. MAG, le serie di Eppius e gli "assi" siciliani*, *Glaux Series Speciale I* (Milan 1995).

15. M. ANTON(I) COS or IMP/M. LEP(ID) (COS) (IMP) (denarii and quinarii) (Cr. 489/1-3); M. ANT IMP alone (quinarius); unsigned (quinarius, Cr. 489/5) or ANTONI IMP III VIR RPC (quinarius, alone)

These are attributed broadly by Crawford to Gallia Transalpina and Cisalpina, 43-42 BC. As W. observes, a *terminus post quem* is provided by the joining of Antonius' and Lepidus' forces on 29 May 43; as he points out, the types of the denarii show their respective priestly accoutrements, those appropriate to the augurate for Antonius and the high priesthood for Lepidus. That Antony was the senior partner in the coinage is suggested by his name alone on the accompanying quinarius. The quinarius with LVGV DVNI and XL (Cr. 489/5) seems to refer to Antony's age, as does the last which reflects the creation of the triumvirate and advances his age to XLI. W. engages in a long discussion of the interrelationship of these issues, arguing the separation of Cr. 489/1-4 from Cr. 489/5-6; only the first of these latter is assigned confidently to Lugdunum, and there is a detailed treatment of the complications of this assignment as it connects to the foundation of the colony of Copia there. In the end we emerge not far from Crawford's view. It is worth observing that if the numerals XL and XLI do indeed represent Antony's age (and no other interpretation seems plausible), they represent the modern system of counting rather than that employed earlier by Caesar (above no. 7).

16. LEPIDVS PONT MAX IIIVR R P C/(C) CAESAR IMP III VIR R P C (Cr. 495/1-2).

This substantial issue, which is known, from a piece lost in the Paris theft, to have included gold, was regarded by Crawford as "struck from the proceeds of the proscriptions in preparation for the campaign of 42" and dated to 42. W. takes the date back to 43, on the ground that it responds to the joint issue of Antony and Octavian and its omission of the title COS, which would be expected if it were struck in 42 (p. 487). This places the beginning of the issue right after the formation of the triumvirate on 27 November 43 – a fine distinction, but one worth making in a context of numismatic dialogue among the triumvirs. The attribution, given the style and rough execution, is no clearer than before.

17. M. ANTONIVS IMP III VIR R P C with Sol or temple of Sol (Cr. 496)

W. first departs from the view of Alföldi and Bernareggi (cited p. 489) that Cr. 496/2 was struck in Rome, or at least that its dies were cut by the engraver of dies for C. Vibius Varus. For him the question becomes whether these coins would have been struck in Italy or across the Adriatic. An answer of sorts can be sought in the stylistic differences between Cr. 496/2 and 496/3, as well as the presence, on Cr. 496/3, of the title IMP, which seems to establish the relative chronology of these two; this is reinforced by the absence of a beard on Cr. 496/3, which for W. signifies the watershed of Pharsalus: the end of mourning and the new beginning. So that striking, for him, belongs in Greece; Cr. 496/2 he assigns to Italy, following Newman and Sear, without really being able to defend this as any more than an instinct

(p. 491). As for the temple type, it is also found at Buthrotum in the Augustan period. Crawford hedged his attribution: “it perhaps portrays a local temple, and if it does, there is a strong presumption that at least this part of the issue was struck at Buthrotum” (Crawford p. 100). W. is right to resist this reasoning; on the whole it is as plausible that the type was copied later. But the rejection of this identification does not lead inexorably to acceptance of Panvini Rosati’s proposal that this is the temple of Sol in the Circus Maximus. The question of localization of this piece is left open.

18. Venus/Q. OPPIVS PR with Victory facing (Cr. 550/1) or walking l.
(Cr. 550/2-3c)

Crawford was clearly mystified by this issue and elected to associate it with the only known Q. Oppius of the Republic, who governed Cilicia in 88 BC. In support he cited a known provenance from Cilicia, discarding the Roman provenance of another piece as unimportant. W. adds some further western provenances and disputes Crawford’s contention that metal content shows no similarity to the coinage of Clovius, with which this has always been associated. On W.’s reconstruction – entirely speculative – these precede the more unified issue of Clovius, in which the weights are stabilized and only one major type is struck. If this is correct the Praetor Oppius (for so W. expands PR) must precede the praefecti among whom he numbers Clovius (above, no. 10), and his term of office must be put back to 46. The problem with the coinage of Oppius and Clovius as products of the mint of Rome is the types; if the coins belong to these years and to the capital, we must suppose a reversion to traditional prow reverses in the later coinage of the 40s and 30s, which were in fact, quite apart from the widespread use of portraits, the most innovative period of the whole pre-Augustan coinage. But it is hard to know where to look for evidence that would materially advance the question, failing hoards and more extensive find evidence; for the moment W.’s return to the traditional chronology seems a step in the right direction, attribution to Rome perhaps a step too far.

19. MAG PIVS IMP ITER PRAEF CLAS ET ORAE MARIT, various types
(Cr. 511)

These are not discussed in detail here, since the author’s earlier discussion and the treatment of Evans have removed them beyond the chronological limits of the current investigation.

* * *

This review has been confined to the most important part of the numismatic content of this massive work: the reattributions. Of these nos. 1 and 2 above are to be rejected, 3-8 are plausible, 9-12 a little less so, 13-14 are very likely to be correct, 15-17 clarify our understanding of these issues, and 18 raises new concerns about the attribution. If this sounds spotty, it is not: even where W. is wrong (as at 1-2) he

lays out the evidence fully, and thus has insured the continued utility of his work. And this is to say nothing of the expanded treatment of issues where he accepts earlier chronologies and attributions: there too the incorporation of discoveries and studies new since 1974 make rewarding reading. W. has, in short, set new parameters for the discussion, and that is no mean achievement in the wake of Crawford's *magnum opus*.

Whether the author has succeeded fully in linking coinage to military necessity is another question. For example, the detailed discussion of the *aerarium* and the *aerarium sanctius* at the beginning of the Civil War (pp. 33ff.) is used to argue a case (*viz.* that Pompey was impoverished and Caesar enriched by the consuls' failure to take the treasury with them). But we have no idea how much money was in the treasury, and in any case it is a long step from this observation to identifying a coinage struck from its contents, if any. For when Caesar arrived, he had to promise a donative rather than give one; he settled it only in the following year, according to W. from the almost incredible proceeds of the African War (pp. 182ff.). Even where a donative per head is given by our sources, none of them contemporary, the number of heads is a matter of guesswork.

From the side of the Liberators, it is also hard to know what Cicero means when he says (*ad Brutum* 1.18.5) "maximus autem, nisi me forte fallit, in re publica nodus est inopia rei pecuniariae;" or Brutus when he says "duabus rebus egemus, Cicero, pecunia et supplemento" (*ibid.* 2.3.5). What is clear, e.g. from D. Brutus' remarks in *Fam.* 5.20, is that the Liberators, like Caesar before them, traded in promises as much as in coinage to secure the loyalty of their troops.

With the numismatic evidence placed in a context that historians are likely to appreciate, these questions can get the kind of systematic attention they deserve; and whether or not we agree with his views in detail, we owe a great debt to the author for boldly addressing this Herculean task.

William E. Metcalf
Professor (Adj.) of Classics and
Curator of Coins and Medals
Yale University
william.metcalf@yale.edu