I

COINAGE AND IDENTITY IN THE
ROMAN PROVINCES

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Introduction

IDENTITY IS NOW SEEN NOT AS AN ETHERAL
given, but as something actively constructed
and contested in a particular historical context, based
on subjective, not objective criteria. 1 For all that it
may be a contingent construct, identity is a powerful
driver of action, as we know all too well from our
own experience. 2 Identity matters. Coins have been
described, in the words of Fergus Millar, as ‘the most
deliberate of all symbols of public identity’. 3 Yet the
Roman historian will look in vain for any good
introduction to, or systematic treatment of, the sub-
ject. That, in a nutshell, is the need which this volume
seeks to address.

It is worth emphasising the words deliberate and
public. It is relevant to recall the late second-century
BC inscriptions which states the reasons why the
people of Sestus decided to use its own bronze
coinage. 4 The first reason given is so that the city’s
coin type should be used as a current type. In this
context at least, coins were seen as a deliberate
advertisement of public identity.

What coinage most obviously provides is an enorm-
ous range of self-defined and explicit representations
of public/official/community identities, principally
civic in nature. The material thus largely allows us to
avoid the thorny problems associated with externally
defined, implicit, and private identities. A public
medium like coinage is not the place to look for overt
opposition to Roman rule. 5 And it invites, rather than
answers, the question of to what extent public identi-
ties might have been understood as covert ‘resis-
tance’ to Rome, to what extent they represented a
self-definition designed to accommodate or play up
to Roman attitudes, and to what extent they may
even have been inspired or promoted by Rome
itself. 6

Identity has been a major focus of research in
recent decades, for the obvious reason that it is par-
ticularly an issue when under threat. 7 That con-
sideration applies as much to our own scholarly
context as it does to our subject, the Roman empire. 8
The advent of the Euro has inevitably drawn attention
to money in this context. Naturally there are major
differences between now and then. We need, for ex-
ample, to think away nationalism (a pheno-
menon of the eighteenth century onwards) and also
the equation of coinage with sovereignty (which is

1 The useful formulation of Preston 2001: 87; cf. Anderson 1991: 6, all
communities are ‘imagined’; Lawrence 1998: 8, on multiple readings of

2 As argued with authority by Williamson, Chapter 2 below.

3 Millar 1993: 230; cf. 237, ‘The most explicit symbols of a city’s identity
and status were its coins.’


5 See Williamson, Chapter 2 below.

6 Swain 1996 is excellent in drawing out subsersive possibilities from
material in which opposition to Rome could not be explicit.


8 On threats to identity in the Roman world see Woolf 1996: especially
31–2; Swain 1996: passim, but e.g. 89 on the way that Roman power forced
Greeks to assert their identity in the cultural domain; Woolf 1994 on
Greek uncase.
medieval). But it will be obvious that there is potentially considerable contemporary interest in the opportunity to explore through coinage the assertion of local, regional, and imperial identities in a multi-cultural and multilingual world with overarching political and military structures.

The coinage under the Roman empire is particularly fruitful for the study of cultural history, as it includes both provincial and imperial issues, allowing the projection of provincial civic identities to be compared and contrasted with central imperial ideology. Although I hope to exploit this tension in some revealing ways, the primary focus of this chapter (and of the book) is on the provincial coinage.

It is perhaps worth emphasizing how remarkably rich the provincial coinage is: comprising, say, up to a hundred thousand coin types, from well in excess of five hundred cities, for the three and a half centuries from the death of Julius Caesar to the reign of Diocletian. The relatively even material from all places and periods in which it was produced contrasts one does not have to the patchy nature in the literary, epigraphic, sculptural, and other of the evidence, and offers a unique opportunity for comparative work.

It is not my intention to describe the familiar and characteristic expressions of civic rivalry through status and titles, the custodianship of the imperial cult (neocorates), agnostic festivals, and the apparent antithesis to competition in the form of symbolic expressions of concord (the Greek word is konon), which were themselves, of course, competitive. I leave, too, the vital issue of authority and control over the coinage, which underlies our interpretation of the numismatic evidence itself. The important chapter by Weiss in this volume addresses this topic, and confirms the appropriateness of using coinage as evidence for collective identity.

What I do want to do is to explore by means of the overall patterning of the evidence and by a few selected examples how choices had to be made in the construction of collective identity with reference to some of the more fundamental categories familiar to the cultural historian. I think in this context of Religion, the use of Monumentality, the representation of the Past (both mythological and historical), the codification of Time, the structuring and representation of Space and Place (Geography), the choice of Language, and the degree of identity/connectedness with the imperial power (‘Romanness’). From this perspective some apparently dry and familiar areas of numismatic scholarship take on a new vitality. In short, this chapter seeks to open things up a bit.

Religion

Religion was overwhelmingly the most common way in which identity was expressed on coins. As ‘religion in all societies operates to make sense of the world and of human experience’, it presents a natural vehicle for the expression of identity. Any attempt at quantification of the numismatic iconography would be heavily dependent on definition (how many images could be said not to be religious, when the emperor is the recipient of cult, and an ear of corn, say, might also be the attribute of a deity?) but the dominance of religion as a theme is, in any case, readily apparent from many of the chapters in this volume. The coinage does appear to be representative of the evidence in general, and the key role played by religion in the expression of communal identity has often been remarked. Thus: “In the east...the primary identities of Greek cities continued to be focussed on their ancestral gods,” and “The specific space created for local self assertion lies above all in religion.” It is indeed a commonplace that polytheism left space for expressions of localism. The imagery on the coinage is that of ‘polis-religion’, in other words it represents the view of those who controlled the polis. There is no room for ‘private religion’ or for the theology of immigrant minorities. There is thus almost no evidence for the spread of Mithraism, Judaism, or Christianity. The most obvious apparent exception—the

10 Heuchert, Chapter 3 below, for a characterization of Roman provincial coinage.
12 Cited from Woolf 1998: 249.
13 E.g. Peter, Chapter 8 below.
16 On the place of polis-religion, see Woolf 1997.
representation of Noah and his ark on the coins of Apamea (pl. i. 1, 1)—is more likely to be the result of an incorporation of the story into a local foundation myth or similar, rather than to represent per se a local Jewish or Christian population (whatever role such a group may have played in the myth-making). 17

Local gods were relatively common on provincial coinage in the east, where, by contrast with the west, they were not normally transformed and integrated into the Roman pantheon. 18 This raises serious doubts about the view that local elites were everywhere more interested in universal deities associated with the Roman empire than in local indigenous cults. 19 Local gods even had a place on the imperial coinage. Under the Republic they had had a consistent role in denoting the orgo of a moneyer. 20 In the imperial period there was less of a need for them, but they were used to refer to the origins of the emperor: Hercules Gaditanus for Hadrian, Hercules and Liber Pater, the gods of Leptis Magna, for Septimius Severus, Elagabal, the god-mountain of Emesa, for Elagabalus. 21 This is at least sufficient to show that the local gods were a natural and acceptable signifier of place.

On the civic coinage in the east, local gods might also be used to incorporate external power and to respond to change in interesting ways. A few examples will serve to illustrate the point. At Laodicea, Zeus Laodiceus is depicted on a base between Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (pl. i. 1, 2). The scene must be read as a symbolic incorporation of the emperors, as there is no possibility that both emperors were actually present in the city. Under Domitian, an issue of the same city had incorporated Rome by representing Zeus Laodiceus as one of the Capitoline triad (pl. i. 1, 3). The primary reference was presumably to the restoration of the Capitol to the Capitolian games, but it is still interesting and quite exceptional to see the Roman triad represented in a non-Roman community in this way. 22 A rather different example of the incorporation of Rome is the representation in Egypt of Horus of the Sesostrite nome, who is depicted hawk-headed and wearing a shkhent, but dressed in a Roman military cuirass (pl. i. 1, 4). Such assimilations and incorporations extended beyond Rome and its emperors. In Thrace and Moesia Inferior, as Peter discusses in a fascinating chapter in this volume, local deities became syncretized with the ‘Egyptian’ Sarapis. One might also note, and wonder about the precise significance of, the widespread representation of Artemis Ephesia outside Ephesus. 23

There may well be an agenda behind the choice of how to represent the cultic symbols themselves (such as the statues of Artemis Ephesia) (pl. i. 1, 5). In many cases there are genuine questions about whether the images represented continuity, revival, or invention. 24 Even more interesting in the context of identity is how such images were used. It may be, for example, that they staked a claim to real or alleged antiquity. Archaism was indeed a popular strategy (compare, for example, the Artemis at Amnumrium with Artemis Ephesia) (pl. i. 1, 6; cf. 5). Aniconic and zoomorphic cult objects, which extended well beyond the Near East and Egypt respectively, will have been laden with cultural reference (to ‘the otherness’ of the cults, as well as to their antiquity). 25 Thus Herodian describes the cult of the stone of Elagabal at Emesa as having ‘no man-made cult statue as among the Greeks and Romans’, and Lucian mercilessly parodies the Egyptian predilection for the worship of animals. 26 By way of example only, Byblos depicts a cultic stone within an open air cult-place, characteristic of the region (pl. i. 1, 7), and Egypt displays the Apsis bull (pl. i. 1, 8), the snakes Agathodaimon and Uraeus, animal-headed (pl. i. 1, 4) or animal-bodied gods, and anthropomorphic gods with animals as attributes (pls. 15.1–2). The coinage of Egypt may well reflect the physical presence of Egyptian cults on the ground, and the participation of local elites in them, but the

18 Pease, North, and Price 1998: 119; there is, however, a danger of overstating the transformation in the west, see Woolf 1998: ch. 8.
20 RRC, p. 728.
21 Note also the representations of Hercules Deumoseres and Hercules Magnusus under Postumus, who was tacitly assimilated to Hercules on the coinage by being depicted with a club and Iunos. Here the local deities may or may not be suggestive of the emperor’s origin: Drinkwater 1997: 162–4.
22 Compare the depiction of the Capitolinian temple with the inscription CAPIT RESTIT on silver cistophori for circulation in Asia: RRC ii, p. 132.

23 Fleischer 1973: Burnett 1999: 145, 190; Price, Chapter 9 below.

iconography might also be understood as an Alexandrian take on what is noteworthy about Egypt. It does at times appear to be provocatively ‘other’ (for example, pl. 1.1, 9). The coinage of Egypt was equally able to emphasize Greek and Roman identities, and one needs to be aware that cultural communication is at work.

Monumentality

The temples which contained the cult images, and are often shown as containing them, also provide a clear demonstration of the primacy of religion in the expression of identity on the coins. A glance at the standard works for both the imperial and the provincial coinages gives a vivid impression of the predominance of religious buildings (although other structures from bridges and gates to lighthouses are also represented). This same emphasis is apparent in Pausanias, who is primarily interested in cults and the works of art in them. But it is worth considering monumentality as a separate category, as it has its own cultural dynamic.

The practice of putting buildings on coins was itself essentially a Roman innovation. In a general sense this is a reflection of a Roman preoccupation with building. Outside Rome, at least in some contexts, the built environment itself may be interpreted as a response to Rome. More particularly the representation of monuments on coins may have been suggested by the Roman view of their coins as *monumenta* in their own right.

Burnett has analysed the patterning of the evidence, so that all that is required here is to highlight a few issues. He has demonstrated that the practice of depicting buildings on coins was copied from Rome in the period up to AD 68 most readily in the west (this effectively means in Spain) and by client kings (Juba I (pl. 1.1, 10), Herod Philip, and Agrippa I); in other words where the coinage is most ‘Roman’. In the east, the depiction of monuments was at first heavily skewed towards temples of the imperial cult. The practice of depicting monuments more generally later spread to much of the Greek east, but, interestingly, it seems to have been adapted to serve a different cultural function than it performed at Rome.

At Rome the depiction of a building was usually connected to an act, past or present; for example, to the dedication or restoration of a building by a moneyer, or one of his ancestors, or by an emperor (pl. 1.1, 11). In the east this appears not to have been the case. There it seems to have been used more frequently as an allusion to the cult in general, to express collective identity, and without specific reference to building activity or some other ‘event’ (for example, pl. 1.1, 12). This is not a watertight distinction: buildings on civic coins did sometimes record repair after earthquakes, new walls, grants of necoraetes, imperial patronage, priesthoods of the individuals named on the coins, and the like. Much of the specificity may be lost on us, owing to lack of evidence. But the distinction between Rome and the east does appear meaningful. The repeated representation of particular buildings over time on civic coinage seems to come closer to a phenomenon noted in the context of nationalism, namely the ‘logoization’ of monuments to fix identity (‘heritage’). Here there is considerable scope to tie the numismatic evidence into highly productive work on monuments as locations of social memory.

Burnett traces a pattern of decline in the incidence of buildings on coins after the Severan period, both on imperial issues and on civic coinages in the East. The evidence cited for the East relates to three important cities in Asia (Ephesus, Smyrna, and Aphrodisias), and further work is likely to nuance the picture. It has been argued that in Asia Minor the emphasis somehow shifted from temples to festivals in the third century. That would indeed be the conclusion from a literal interpretation of the numismatic iconography. In whatever way these phenomena are to be linked, the generalization of the observation to the entire ‘East’ requires testing. In Syria-Phoenicia, for example, although civic festivals did become

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30 Meadows and Williams 2001. In the imperial period this attitude is reflected in the way that the types of earlier coins might be ‘restored’ (restituit); Komnick 2001.
31 Burnett 1999: especially 133–62.
34 Alcock 2001: 327.
36 On the chronology of the depiction of festivals, see Klose, Chapter 10 below.
prominent on coins of a few Syrian cities in the third century, buildings remained common until the end of the coinage. Such regional differences within the East may well repay further investigation, and are strongly indicative of the value of the type of analysis performed by Burnett.

Past (Myth/History)

Monuments on coins may have symbolized communal heritage, but the past was also present on the coinage in a much more explicit fashion in the form of allusions to myth or history. Historicity is not a concern for us here, but rather the use of the past to construct identities.\(^{37}\) The past had a double advantage: it could be specific to a locality and at the same time serve to locate the place within universal myth/history. We find an emphasis on the past already in Strabo, who finished his work under Tiberius, despite the ostensible focus of his Geography on the present. This is because 'the present identity and perception of places consisted precisely in stories about the past.'\(^{38}\)

Emphasis on the past became more intense, and manifested itself in a great variety of ways, as Greeks under the principate sought to define themselves in the face of the realities of Roman power.\(^{39}\) This dichotomy between Roman present and Greek past was matched by a marked contrast in the coinage. Under the principate the past was emphasized on the civic coinages but largely absent from the imperial coinage.

On the imperial coinage under the Republic myth and history had been well represented in the form of references to the origins and family achievements of the moneymakers. The semantic world to which this phenomenon belonged has been brilliantly elucidated in a study of coins as monœmenta.\(^{40}\) On the imperial coinage under the principate the past was noticeable by its absence, although in this, as in other things, the old practice persisted some way into the reign of Augustus. Subsequently myth/history appeared on the coinage only at times when earlier types were ‘restored’ (like monœmenta), at least sometimes in the context of the deliberate withdrawal of earlier coins. These are true cases of exceptions which prove the rule. Such issues from Titus to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus explicitly bore the word restituit (or its plural) (pl. 1.2, 13), but earlier repetition of types suggests that the concept goes back further.\(^{41}\) Later, the issue of c. AD 250 depicting an extensive series of deified emperors back to Augustus (named in the dedicatory dative, DIVO AVGSTO etc., and with the inscription CONSECRATIO on the reverse) looks like a clever variation on the same theme (pl. 1.2, 14): clever, because it restored the portraits of earlier emperors, at a time when their denarii were being withdrawn, and, by presenting them as divi in radiate crowns, simultaneously signified that the face value of the coins was being increased (radiate crowns had been used for portraits of deified emperors, but also for living emperors to indicate a double denomination).\(^{42}\) Otherwise the past found a place on the imperial coinage only in the mythological types which celebrated the 900th anniversary of Rome (pl. 1.2, 15). Such types were not inevitable even for this purpose, and are not found for the 1,000th anniversary in AD 247, when the emphasis was on games and monumental commemoration (the depiction of the wolf and twins is an unsurprising exception). The use of mythology under Pius for the 900th anniversary chimed well with the posturing of Pius as the (pious) Aeneas. It was also a reflection of the Hellenization of the Antonine court: this was the time of an explosion of mythology on coinage throughout much of the Greek East (and see below on Egypt). The reason for the marked absence of history/myth on imperial coins for the rest of the time is that their emphasis was on the charismatic claims of the emperor to rule, based on his virtues and his own achievements.\(^{43}\)

The provincial coinage was quite different. Local mythology abounded, as Price's chapter in this volume illustrates and analyses. The uses of mythology on coins are familiar from other contexts: the mythical past reconstructed as sacred history in processions at Ephesus, or the rooting of pan-Hellenic

\(^{37}\) Cf. the 'new' nation states with an immemorial past: Anderson 1991: 11 and 195 (on reading nationalism genealogically).


\(^{39}\) Bowie 1974; Woolf 1994c; Swain 1995: passim.

\(^{40}\) Meadows and Williams 2001.

\(^{41}\) Konnick 2001; Burrey 1972.


stories in local settings found on the theatrical friezes from Hierapolis, or the combination of mythological and historical foundations as in Aelius Aristides' speeches about Smyrna. All mythology served to claim a position within a wider world with reference to a shared past, and sometimes articulated specific relationships with other Greek cities or with Rome. Price deals with all this in an exemplary fashion.

It will suffice here to explore briefly the importance of good descent (eugeneia) as reflected on the coinage. Being Greek mattered, and mythological/historical descent was a primary criterion. The foundation of the Panhellenion in AD 131–2 was one aspect of this phenomenon, and of particular interest if it was sponsored by Rome (that is contested). Either way, the Roman rulers had a 'cultural vocation as promoters and guardians of [Greek] civilization' and the Panhellenion was a supra-provincial cultural organization which had a formal requirement that all members be Greek.

Greek descent was symbolized on the coinage most of all by the rise in the depiction of founding heroes and foundation myths. In addition, some cities in Asia made explicit claims to ethnic connections with Old Greece, even where the historicity of the claim was obviously suspect. Weiss has shown through the example of Eumenea (clearly Attalid, being named after Eumenes) how one Hellenistic foundation might play it, specifically in the context of the Panhellenion. Eumenea claimed on its coinage to be 'Achaean', precisely from the time of Hadrian onwards (pl. 1.2, 16). Synnada spectacularly claimed to be a joint foundation by Athens and Sparta, and thus, on its coins, to be both Dorian and Ionian (ΔΟΡΙΩΝ ΙΩΝΙΩΝ ΣΥΝΝΑΔΕΩΝ) (pl. 1.2, 17). Abonuteichos in Paphlagonia (which sounded barbaric) was by imperial permission renamed Ionopolis, after Ion, the eponym of the Ionians, following a petition by its famous citizen, Alexander, the 'interpreter' of the popular prophetic snake Glycon (an episode mentioned by Lucian). Coins of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus gave the city its new name (pl. 1.2, 18). There were limits to ingenuity: not all cities in the East could claim a connection with Old Greece and the early migrations, even an indirect one. The role of Alexander and his successors in founding cities was acknowledged. Macedonian descent counted and could be paraded. The citizens of Blaundus in 'Lydia' boasted of their Macedonian identity (ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΩΝ) already from the Flavian period (pl. 1.2, 19). Aegae in Cilicia not only depicted Alexander (pl. 1.2, 20), but laid explicit claim to eugeneia by virtue of Macedonian descent: ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΚΗΣ ΕΥΓΕΝΙΣ (ΟΥΣΙΩΝ).

It is interesting to look at the strategies adopted by cities where alleging Greek descent was obviously problematic. Ilium had a heavy investment in descent from Troy, and in Homer the Trojans had fought the Greeks. The coinage, not surprisingly, depicts Aeneas (pl. 1.2, 21). The citizens of Ilium may not be 'Greek' but they provided a founder for Rome and (perhaps more importantly) an ancestor for emperors. But this is a very Greek way of exploiting being Trojan, in the same vein as Dio's Oration 11, which plays with the paradox of the city being both Trojan and Greek. The cities in Phoenicia were in a somewhat similar predicament, given the repeated appearances of Phoenicians in the Odyssey. The response of Tyre and Sidon was to emphasize Kadmos. The coinage of Tyre drove home the point with inscriptions in Greek: Kadmos was the founder of Thebes (ΘΗΒΑΙ) in Boeotia and the bringer of letters to the Greeks (ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ and ΚΑΔΜΟΣ) (pl. 1.2, 22–3). These bilingual coins (otherwise in the Latin appropriate for a Roman colony) emphasize the point. Tyre may, or may not, be 'Greek', but a king of Tyre had founded a Greek city and taught the 'cultured' Greeks how to read and write in the first place. The coins are reminiscent of an anecdote in Philostratus, in which a rhetor from Tyre is said to have opened his first oration at Athens with 'Once again letters have come from Phoenicia.' But, again, this is a very

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51. Lucian, Alexander 21, 58; Swain 1996: 76, 126.
52. Hohlstein and Jarman 1985.
56. Tyre was capable of playing with the Phoenician language in much the same way; see below (pl. 1.4, 40–2).

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Greek way of exploiting being Phoenician. Real difference arguably lay in not using mythology for the purpose at all.

As Price notes, the use of mythology was much more intense on the coinage of, say, western Asia Minor than in the region from eastern Asia Minor and Syria southwards to Egypt, even after making allowance for the fact that our ignorance does not allow us to decode some mythological references.\(^\text{98}\) Price must be right that this is explicable in terms of the different position of Hellenic culture in places where the past that was recalled most was not a Greek past, and where, we might add, the past was not recalled in a Greek manner. The Fertile Crescent had an entirely different frame of reference, in which dates and places are given by the biblical flood, where the Greek heroes are almost entirely absent and time is marked by king-lists and creation stories.\(^\text{99}\) The treatment in Strabo’s Geography provides a good analogy for the local coinage, in that he treated the great sweep of land from Persia to Egypt in a different way from everywhere else, failing to cite local histories, because he could not locate the region so easily within the familiar structures of the Greek past, from Homer onwards.\(^\text{100}\)

The examples of mythology on the coinage of Tyre noted above are instructive in this regard, and were possible precisely because the city could be located in a Greek past (Kadmos founded Thebes, Dido Carthage). The coinage of Egypt displayed Greek mythology too, for a restricted period (between AD 140/1 and 178/9). The most spectacular of the ‘Greek’ themes are the pictorial scenes from mythology (the labours of Hercules, the judgement of Paris, Orpheus and the animals, Bellerophon and the chimaira, Chiron and Achilles, Lycurgus and the sacred vine, Apollo and Marsyas). This use of Greek mythology was generic, not localised. So the judgement of Paris was represented (pl. 1.2, 24), but not the presence of the ‘real’ Helen in Egypt (on one version), or Menelaus’ visit. Egypt, like Rome, caught the mythological habit at this time, but Egyptian myth and history (unlike Egyptian religion) is absent from the coinage.

Thus the use of the past to construct identity on coinage emerges as a strategy somehow correlated with ‘Greekness’, and which was borrowed by Rome and Egypt in the context of the hellenization of the Antonine court and the flowering of the Second Sophistic.

**Time**

The structuring of time itself could be a marker of identity. A spectacular modern example followed the French Revolution, when the Convention Nationale decided to scrap the Christian calendar and to inaugurate a new world-era with Year One, starting from the proclamation of the Republic on 22 September 1792.\(^\text{101}\) The use of local eras and other systems to date coins in the Roman world is clearly of interest in this context, but their pattern of use is explicable only if one considers them alongside the use of the names of magistrates and other individuals on coins.

The function of the names of individuals on coins has proved difficult to define: are they there to date the coins or to record responsibility for the minting of the coins (which might include paying for issues)? Particular formulae certainly record responsibility, sometimes embracing initiative or financial generosity on the part of the individual named, but in the vast majority of cases both possibilities are left open. Thus we have a classic problem: are the specific formulae a guide to how to interpret the non-specific evidence, or are they by their nature exceptional? It is not possible to make real progress with this question on the basis of the masterly survey of the evidence by Weiss in this volume. The reason that it has proved impossible to decide between date and responsibility for the majority of the evidence is that it is, in a sense, a false dichotomy. As Weiss argues, following Dmitriev, the ‘designation of different magistracies as eponymous in the same city is as a rule to be explained by the relevant spheres of responsibility’. Thus the function of the names of coins may be viewed as traditional dating by means of eponymous magistracies, but in a very flexible system in which the choice of the ‘eponymous’ magistrate to date the coins tended to be correlated with responsibility for the coin being dated.

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\(^{98}\) Price and Butcher, Chapters 9 and 12 below.  
\(^{99}\) Clarke 1999: 324.  
\(^{100}\) Clarke 1999: 318–35.  
\(^{101}\) Anderson 1997: 193.
This may seem a rather brave assertion, but it is strongly supported by the geographical patterning of the evidence. Many coinages do not bear dates at all, but the vast majority of those that do fall into a well-defined geographical area. In the imperial period eras or regnal years were used for dating coins, in Kushnir-Stein’s useful formulation ‘west of the Euphrates, as far as Pontus to the north, Palestine and Egypt to the south, and Cilicia Pedias to the west’.62 One might extend this delineation to the north of the Black Sea to include the client kingdom of Bosphorus and the city of Chersonesus. These are precisely the areas where the names of individuals are not normally found. Coins with names were struck to the west of the areas with eras, from Olbia on the Black Sea southwards to Asia and Africa and westwards to Spain.63 There are minor transgressions to these patterns, particularly at the margin between the two, but the strong negative correlation between the geographical range of dating by eras or by regnal years on the one hand, and of the use of names on the other, strongly suggests that both performed the same function. Thus the practice of placing names on coins may be seen as belonging to the tradition of dating by eponymous magistrates, which was continued under Rome, as it had been under Hellenistic kings.64

It is not intended to argue that all names on coins had a dating function. Any single explanation is unlikely to do justice to the totality of such a diverse phenomenon. But it is suggested that names and eras were two ways of going about the same thing. Both served to locate the coins in time within the official conceptual framework of the polis. There are remarkably few coinages which have both names and eras, and the few that do present no real challenge to this view (in any case there are explicit examples of dating by two eras at once). So, for example, the combination of the names of proconsuls and a local era on civic coins of Bithynia from 61/60 to 47/46 BC seems readily explicable as a double dating system located in relation to a local past and to the Roman present.65 Thus there is a good case for considering names and eras together.

In this light one can see considerable potential for the analysis of names on coins in the context of local epigraphy more generally. The discussion by Weiss in this volume is illustrative of the advantages of such an approach. Here all that can be done is to note some of the more obvious characteristics of the numismatic evidence.

The early coinage of coloniae often bears the names of the local duoviri. Does this represent an emphasis on the distinctive organizational structure of coloniae modelled on Rome? If so, does the disappearance of names on their coins by the Flavian period suggest that this formal differentiation of coloniae was becoming less important? Or, perhaps less likely, is the lack of names later itself a Roman feature—the imperial coinage does not mention the triumvirii aere argento avo fiando feriundo after c.4 BC—and thus a contrast with Greek cities?66 Among the Greek cities themselves there are major regional patterns to be defined and explored. Thus Asia, where civic coinage named mostly local magistrates or priests, might be contrasted with Thrace and Moesia Inferior, where the names were mostly those of Roman governors.67 The significance of the use of the names of Roman governors has proved as elusive as their local counterparts, but seems readily explicable along the same lines. Their general function of oversight made them an option for dating according to the traditional system. From the point of view of identity, it is interesting that cities in some regions opted to locate their issues in time with reference to the Roman provincial administration and in others with reference to civic magistrates.

The geographical range of the alternative practice of dating local coinage by eras or regnal years was largely dictated by Hellenistic practice. Its distribution

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62 Kushnir-Stein, Chapter 13 below. On the exceptional use of an era in Macedonia in AD 444, see below. Outside the pattern are the coinages for Provincia Moesia Superior-Colonia Vimincanum (AD 239-55) and for Provincia Dacia (AD 246-57), which were dated by new eras from AN. I. (for example, below pl. 13, 20) (Martin 1992). The precise reference of the era is unclear. The coinages may be viewed as ‘Roman’ coinages for their provinces (see below for their exceptional iconography) or as coinages in the name of the provincial assemblies (Kos 1992, citing evidence for the use of Province in that sense).

63 Münsterberg 1941-47 provides a useful, if somewhat dated, context of the evidence arranged geographically (but combined with pre-imperial evidence).

64 Leschhorn 1999: 416, 423.


66 RPC II, pp. 3, 43.

67 Peter, Chapter 8 below: of the thirty cities minting in the Roman period fifteen used the names of provincial governors: Anchialus, Augusta Traiana, Bizea, Byzantium, Hadrianopolis, Marcianopolis, Nicopia ad Istrum, Pautalia, Perinthos, Philippopolis, Plotinopolis, Serdica, Tomis, Toprnis, and Traianopolis.
convincingly demonstrates that continuity with Hellenistic bureaucratic traditions, particularly Seleucid and Ptolemaic, was the determining factor. Dating by era was a Seleucid innovation, and the use of regnal years had been taken over by Alexander from the Achaemenids (and ultimately from Babylonia and Egypt). These traditions persisted. Thus the Roman coinages of Caesarea in Cappadocia and of Egypt were dated by the regnal years of the emperor, in continuity with the coinages of the kings of Cappadocia and of the Ptolemies. The use of regnal years, not confined to these two coinages, articulated a relationship to imperial power, albeit a traditional one; the use of local eras put the emphasis more on the city.  

The most dramatic aspect of this structuring of time was when a new era was instituted. As Kushner-Stein shows in her chapter in this volume, most of the Palestinian city eras were inaugurated in Roman times, but the practice itself owed little to Rome. The city eras were modelled on Hellenistic eras of autonomy, and marked turning points in the internal histories of the cities concerned (new foundations, or the grant or restoration of the status of polis). In Palestine and elsewhere, the sheer variety of form and variability of incidence of dating systems make it clear that dating systems were not primarily the result of initiative or interference by Rome.

While this is clearly right at a formal level, one should not forget that the changes in civic status which gave rise to new eras were now entirely consequent upon Roman intervention, and that ad hoc Roman involvement is possible. We are largely ignorant of the mechanisms for the introduction of a new era: it is tempting to recall in this context the role of a Roman governor in suggesting the precise date on which to start the year of a new calendar for the Province of Asia. If some cities in Paphlagonia instituted a new era on the occasion of their incorporation into the province of Galatia consequent upon the annexation of the kingdom of Paphlagonia, and the new polis of the Roman province of Arabia used the era of the establishment of that province, it is clearly too categorical to argue that Rome was entirely out of mind. Further, the coins of one city in Asia, Laodicea (pl. 1.3, 25), and two in Palestine, Gaza and Ascalon, used new eras based on imperial visits by Hadrian. These visits may well have been the occasion for a change of civic status—a refoundation has been suggested for Laodicea—but did the names of these eras really fail to mention Hadrian?

Thus the one explicit acknowledgement on coinage that Rome lay at the heart of the restructuring of time, a series of anonymous coins inscribed 'year 1 of Rome'; deserves some attention (pl. 1.3, 26). Once attributed to Gadara in the Decapolis, it has now been suggested, with some plausibility, that it may have been struck by a petty ruler in or around the south of the new province of Syria. This series may be dismissed as the exception that proves the rule ('client kings'—if, indeed, the series was struck by one—emphasized Rome in a way that cities did not) or accepted as making explicit the reality of power which informed all new eras. Epigraphic evidence adds to the impression that the latter alternative must be taken seriously. There was more room on an inscription to spell out how an era was conceived. There are some spectacular examples: the era 'of the apotheosis of the Olympian Augustus and of the reign of his son Tiberius Caesar Augustus' (Samos), or the two eras 'of the victory of the elder Caesar, the Emperor, the god, and of the younger Caesar, the emperor, the son of a god' (Apollonia), but there is a reasonable scatter of less dramatic evidence defining eras in the form 'of the victory of' or 'of the province'. The victory era for Actium is revealed as an honour for Octavian used in the context of the imperial cult. In the same vein the fact that the coinages for both the First (AD 66–70) and the Second (AD 132–5) Jewish Revolts proclaimed a new era might be seen as an aggressive reaction to Rome, rather than just as a continuation of normal Hellenistic practice. So it is not unreasonable to suggest that local eras might acknowledge Rome as well as commemorating civic status.
The occasion marked by the introduction of a new era was the most dramatic aspect of this structuring of time, but its duration and pattern of use may also be instructive. The use of an era served to keep an event within the collective memory, and was an aspect of historical consciousness. Two examples from areas where eras were not normally used on coins, and thus where causation is easier to isolate, will serve to make the point. As has been noted, Laodicea in Asia used an era based on a visit and refoundation of the city by Hadrian on some of its coins, but only from AD 275/16 following a second imperial visit by Caracalla in 214/15 (pl. 1.3, 25). At the time of his visit Caracalla restored the necorete which the city had lost, and games were held in his honour (Antoniniana). It looks as though the second imperial visit was the occasion of increased emphasis on the first, and indeed there is no evidence that the ‘Hadrianeke’ era even existed before Caracalla’s visit. In a somewhat analogous way, an imperial presence seems to lie behind the unique use of an era in Macedonia, to date coins struck for the Koinon in year 275 (of an era clearly but not explicitly based on the victory of Caesar (Octavian) at Actium (pl. 1.3, 27). The occasion was the presence of Philip I on his return from the East in AD 244 after making a pragmatic peace with Persia. It would be interesting to know the rhetoric of the situation. Was this, like Actium, presented as a victory over the East (the mint of Rome has victory types in 244)? Victory over the East was an obvious theme in Macedonia (many of the coins of the Koinon depict Alexander on the obverse).

The introduction and use of eras and the styles of eponymous dating variously emphasized and mixed Greek and Roman, past and present, in ways that were both traditional and creative. Dating systems may be seen as a codification of a conceptual world which informed much else. Thus the prevalence of eras based on changes in civic status or on Actium have their analogues in the Geography of Strabo. There the past of settlements is structured around the foundation, refoundation, renaming, and destruction of cities, and Actium emerges as a significant chronological marker.

### Geography

As with time, the structuring of space and the representation of place are potentially of great interest in the context of identity. Geographies are significant. The imperial administrative geography of Roman provinces, with which Strabo ends his Geography, is most obviously on display on the imperial coinage of Hadrian in his so-called ‘province series’ (which has an analogue under Pius). The relevant issues of Hadrian include depictions of ‘provinces’, characterized by dress and attributes (pl. 1.3, 28), of imperial visits (ADVENTVI AVG…, emperor and ‘province’ at a scene of sacrifice), of provincial armies (EXERCITVS…, emperor addressing troops), and of the emperor restoring ‘provinces’ (RESTITVTORI…, emperor raising kneeling ‘province’). These issues belong in a tradition of representation as aggrandizement, which embraces Agrippa’s map, the lists in the Res Gestae, and the Ehme in the Sebastion at Aphrodisias. Here it is the conceptual geography which is of interest.

Hadrian’s ‘province’ series is not, in fact, an attempt at representing provinces at all. The correspondence between representation and province is not exact (for example, ‘Libya’ was not the name of a province, nor was ‘Prygia’; ‘Hispania’ and ‘Gallia’ embraced more than one, and the series includes two cities, Alexandria and Nicomedia, and a river, the Nile). The series was rather an attempt to give a visual account of the empire in a flexible tradition which had its origins in the depictions of conquered peoples in Roman triumphal art. This tradition has been adapted to imperial circumstances: the emphasis has shifted from conquest towards partnership. Despite the fact that regions appear to be defined largely according to the most prominent ethnic name, in the traditional way, the inscriptions

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81. For the emphasis on Alexander in Macedonia see Kremydi-Sicilianou, Chapter 7 below.  
84. Strabo 17, 3–3.24–5; Clarke 1990: 314, 326 (noting that Strabo contrasts the world conquered by Rome with the world he describes), 335–6.  
86. On which, Nicolet 1991.  
indicate that abstract places rather than peoples are now being represented, and the correspondence with Roman provinces is high. The conceptual importance of Roman administrative geography is demonstrated precisely and emphatically in its ability to shape a quite different tradition.

It is noteworthy that the provinces with armies in the 'exercitus' series are mostly represented as armed figures in the 'province' series, and that the 'restitutor' type is reserved almost exclusively for the (peaceful?) provinces which are not represented in the 'exercitus' series (Hadrian's own Hispania alone is represented in both). These series thus represent a Roman perspective on the empire, in which the division of the empire into provinces was dominant, and in which the military/non-military division emerges as a primary principle of conceptual organization.

The Roman geography of power was present also on the local coinages, for example in the issues in the name of provincial koine (the collective focus for the imperial cult within provinces), in titular claims to be the 'first city' or 'metropolis' of a province, in the use of the names of Roman governors to date issues, and the like, but it is not very noticeable. Not surprisingly military status does not feature as a significant expression of the identity of provinces on local issues, except on those of Provincia Moesia Superior/Colonia Viminacium (AD 239–55) and Provincia Dacia (AD 246–57) (pl. 1, 29). These coinages depict personifications of their provinciae with legionary standards or emblems (or both). Neither Moesia Superior nor Dacia had a prior tradition of local coinage under Rome, and the coinages may be read as Roman coinages for the two provinces, so that the 'Roman perspective' expressed in the iconography is readily explicable. An alternative reading would be to see the coinages as struck for the provincial assemblies and their iconography as representing an internalization of the 'Roman perspective' within the provinces themselves. Elsewhere, military iconography had a different reference, particularly to veteran settlement on the coinage of coloniae, although it became increasingly generalized on civic issues after the reign of Hadrian. A correlation with cities on military transit routes has been contested, but does seem to have some validity at a very general level.

Alongside the Roman geography of power is found a local alternative geography using old ethnic names (Ionla, Lydia, Caria, Phrygia, etc.), of the type used, for example, by Philostratus. One motive behind this geography may have been the preoccupation with purity of language (avoiding Roman terms), and another an emphasis on antiquity. More subservient interpretations must remain open, but the public acceptability of such alternative geography even at Rome is guaranteed by personifications of Phrygia and the like on the imperial coinage itself.

A few examples from the province of Asia will give a flavour of the local evidence. The people of Mostene were calling themselves Lydian, perhaps even before the imperial period. In c. AD 130–44 a magnificent coinage was struck by the initiative of its archontes in honour of the 'Koinon of the thirteen cities' (that is, of the Ionian League) (pl. 1, 3, 29), and in the mid-third century Colophon explicitly named the Koinon of Ionia, and Samos claimed to be the first city in Ionia. In AD 211/12 the city-goddess of Laodicea was depicted between labelled personifications of Phrygia and Caria (pl. 1, 3, 29). This is of particular interest, because the subsequent creation of the province of Caria and Phrygia shows that this conjunction was sufficiently meaningful to receive administrative sanction later. Tralles even proclaimed itself to be the first city in Hellas. The cultural burden of the term 'Hellas' is obvious in a context in which Greek identity was paramount in the whole of the eastern half of the empire and not just in 'Old Greece'. The claim to primacy in Hellas was bolstered by the symbolic depiction of the local 'Olympic' and 'Pythian' games (pl. 1, 3, 29). Local geography as a numismatic phenomenon was not confined to Asia: in Syria, for example, civic coinages mentioned Commagene, Phoenicia, Coele Syria, and Ituraea.

Alongside this local geography, there was an increase in representations of place. Depictions of buildings have been discussed already under the heading of 'monumentality', and there were rare

88 The series are tabulated in Strack 1931–7, vol. ii: 143.
89 Above, n. 62.
90 Rebuffat 1997.
92 Swain 1996: passim, especially chs. 1–3, 'Language and Identity', 'The Practice of Purism', 'Past and Present'.
93 Gilkesie 1968; Engelmann 1972.
94 SNG von Aulock 1866; Roueché 1971; French and Roueché 1982; Reynolds, Beard, and Roueché 1986: 143.
95 SNG von Aulock 1897; see Klose, Chapter 14 below.
96 Butcher, Chapter 12 below.
views of whole cities, of acropoleis, of city walls, of bridges, aqueducts, lighthouses, and harbours.\textsuperscript{98}
Place might also be represented by personifications. City-goddesses became ubiquitous, and might be 'customized'. Thus at Side the city-goddess holds a Nike and ship's stern, and the figure is accompanied by a vexillum and a pomegranate (pl. 1.3, 33).\textsuperscript{99} It is not hard to decode references to the excellent harbour and the city's role as a naval and military base, and the pomegranate was simply a pun on the name of the city in Greek.

Personifications of river-gods were also very common, and might likewise be customized.\textsuperscript{100} In Egypt, for example, the Nile might be depicted variously crowned with lotus, holding a reed and a cornucopia, and accompanied by a crocodile or, more rarely, with a hippopotamus, water plants, the Nilometer which measured the height of the flood, and personifications of the cubits with which the Nilometer was calibrated.\textsuperscript{101} A charming jeu d'esprit shows him riding on a hippopotamus, another in a car drawn by hippopotami. The benefits of the Nile for the corn supply were made explicit by the depiction of Nilus in the company of Eutheia with her corn ears (the equivalent of Annona) and, spectacularly, of Nilus clasping hands with Tiber (pl. 1.3, 34).

Mountains were much less common on coinage, but might be depicted either by 'physical' representations (the line between 'representation' and 'cult image' is hard to draw, as on coins of Caesarea in Cappadocia with Mount Argeus (pl. 1.3, 35)), or by personifications.\textsuperscript{102} The intricate coin-type from Ephesus with Zeus raining on the mountain-god Mount Pion, which also depicts a temple, three other buildings, and a cypress tree on a hillside, related to a foundation myth, and illustrates how place served to anchor myth/history in the present (Pion was one of the silver images dedicated by Salutaris and carried in processions) (pl. 3.1, 6).\textsuperscript{103}

The increase in frequency and diversity of representations of place might be seen, alongside the ethnic geography, as an assertion of locality which served to fix a place in the world.

\textsuperscript{98} Price and Trel 1977; Peter, Chapter 8 below.
\textsuperscript{99} RPC II: 1532.
\textsuperscript{100} Imhoof-Blumer 1943.
\textsuperscript{101} A concepis may be found in Milne 1971: xxx, 143-5.
\textsuperscript{102} Some examples in Imhoof-Blumer 1888: 209-7, 'Berggotheiten, Gebiirge und Nymphen'.
\textsuperscript{103} Rogers 1991: 83; 108.

Language

The geography of the Roman empire embraced a wide range of languages.\textsuperscript{104} The proposition that language is an important marker of identity is well established, for all that it may be more important in some contexts than in others, and that the choice of language to express communal identities need not reflect what people actually spoke.\textsuperscript{105} The focus here is on the use of languages on coinages within the Roman empire, but it is worth noting that the incidence of inscriptions on coins, their content, and the language, alphabet, and styles of epigraphy used, may provide important evidence of Roman influences prior to conquest. In this vein, the significance of writing on coinage (and of coinage as evidence for writing) in pre-Roman Gaul and Britain has been brilliantly analysed by Williams.\textsuperscript{106}

Within the Roman empire, two main languages dominated the coinage: Latin in the west and Greek in the east. The principal exception to this pattern is that Roman coloniae (and municipia) used Latin in the east, on their coinage as on their public inscriptions, in recognition of their Roman status. Latin was employed even for titular coloniae, despite the fact that there had been no introduction of Latin-speaking colonists, and despite subsequent difficulties with the language even in some coloniae which had begun as genuine military settlements.\textsuperscript{107} Thus the symbolic significance of the choice of language is clear. The fact that some Severan and later coloniae in the east used Greek from the time they acquired their new title may suggest that the key emphasis was increasingly on the 'privileged status' of a colonia rather than on its 'Romanness' (after all, the extension of citizenship in 212 made everyone Roman).\textsuperscript{108}

The status of Greek alongside Latin on the coinages of the empire is not surprising. Greek language

\textsuperscript{104} For a survey of languages within the Roman empire: Harris 1989: 179-9.
\textsuperscript{106} Williams 2004b; 2004c; and Chapter 7 below.
\textsuperscript{107} Difficulties: Leick 1997: 110-12.
\textsuperscript{108} Millar 1995; Cardena minted alternately in Greek and Latin (p. 39); Millar 1994: 358 (Emesia).
was central to self-definition, in a way which was not universal, and it was permitted to operate as an official language (institutionalized, if you like, in the *ab epistulis Graecis*). In this context it is worth stating that even the mint of Rome on occasion produced coinages in Greek to be sent for use in Greek-speaking provinces (including Lycia, Cilicia, Cappadocia, Cyprus, Syria, Arabia, Egypt, and Cyrenaica) (for example, pl. 1.4, 36).  

On coinage the use of other languages on their own, rather than as an addition to Latin or Greek, was a feature confined to the period of the Republic and the very early empire. A clear example is the ‘Iberian’ coinages in silver and bronze, which have inscriptions in Iberian or Celtiberian written in Iberian script.  

Woolf argued that one of the uses of Iberian epigraphy was precisely to signal differences between different groups, which fits well with the thesis here that language was a fundamental expression of identity.  

On any chronology these coinages were struck in the second and first centuries BC and were thus an innovation under Roman control. The inscriptions cannot be dismissed as a linguistic survival from before the provinces were created, but represent deliberate ‘choices’ of the Roman period.  

Why are similar phenomena not found later? It may be that the key development was the creation of a ‘Roman Provincial Culture’ in the triumviral and Augustan period (sometimes called the Roman Cultural Revolution).  

From that time onwards, but not markedly before, the material culture of the provinces, embracing a wide range of artefacts and structures, became recognizably Roman. Before that time there was little impetus to follow a Roman model, even supposing there was one to follow, and the use of indigenous languages on coinage thus causes no surprise.  

That the period from the middle of the first century BC to the middle of the first century AD marked a critical change might also be argued from the contrast between the impact of conquest on coinages in Gaul and in Britain. In Gaul, the production of coinage in a local tradition continued for some decades after the conquest, perhaps until the time of Augustus, Gaulish (a Celtic language) was still used for some numismatic inscriptions (pl. 1.4, 37), and both Gallo-Greek and Gallo-Latin (Greek and Latin scripts adapted to write Gaulish) continued to spread onto the coinage in new areas within Belgica after the conquest.  

Even more persuasive than this contrast is the simple fact that there are no post-Tiberian monolingual coins in languages other than Greek and Latin anywhere in the empire (there were monolingual issues in neo-Punic in Africa up to Tiberius).  

The Hebrew of the coinage of the two Jewish Revolts thus seems all the more pointed, and this impression is supported by the stentorian nature of the slogans and the deliberate use of palaeo-Hebrew script (presumably to emphasize the antiquity of the Jewish people).  

Although monolingual coins (except in Greek and Latin) came to an end, bilingual coins persisted. Bilingualism has proved a rich topic, and the coinage has something to add.  

There are a few bilingual issues in Greek and Latin from Greek cities, probably under the influence of imperial or provincial Latin issues circulating in their areas (for example, pl. 1.4, 38),  

but other languages are present too. Bilingual coinages display different forms of language mixing or ‘code-switching’, ranging from simple translations to interesting cases of culturally specific functional differentiation between the languages. In other words two languages were used to express a double identity with a different content. A few examples will make the point more clearly. The coins of Sabratha in Tripolitania were regularly bilingual: the head of the

110 Ripollès, Chapter 6 below; Burnett 2002c: 36–9.  
116 Goodman, Chapter 14 below.  
118 This is the kind of bilingualism described by Adams among centuries: Adams 1999: 128–34 where he demonstrates that the distinction was not necessarily between public and private identities. For example, Latin might be used to record a position in the army, and Greek to indicate a Greek cultural tradition.
emperor is labelled CAESAR in Latin, but the local deities are accompanied by the local ethnic and sometimes also the name of the local magistrate in the local language, neo-Punic (pl. 1.4, 39).119 At the Roman colonia of Tyre in Phoenicia, there is now evidence (something of a surprise)120 for the use of Phoenician as late as the reign of Gallienus.121 The titles of the Roman emperor and of the colonia were invariably in Latin, but on a few issues a local mythical figure is labelled 'Pygmalion' in Phoenician (he was either the king of Tyre, brother of Dido, or alternatively a young hero hunter) (pl. 1.4, 40). The most spectacular example of this phenomenon is a trilingual issue under Gordian III depicting Dido founding Carthage. Again the titles of the Roman emperor and of the colonia are in Latin, but the local mythical figure is given her Greek mythological name in Greek (Dido) and her Phoenician name (Elishar) in Phoenician (pl. 1.4, 41–2).

This late use of Phoenician, even though it is minimal, is very striking, and may reflect an unusual interest in Phoenician identity.122 Other languages are not evident on coinage as an aspect of the increased visibility of local cultures from the third century AD onwards, for all that language is normally given a place in the description of the emerging changes in cultural patterning (notably with the rise of Syriac and Coptic as major literary languages).123 On the coinage of the empire as a whole a Latin triumph, even over Greek, as we will see.

‘Romanness’

The use of Latin was not the only way in which identity or ‘connectedness’ with the imperial power might be exhibited through coinage. There was first

119 RPC I, pp. 204–6; Adams 2003: 207–9; Burnett 2002c: 35.
120 Millar 1993: 295; cf. 279 on the paucity of evidence for Phoenician in the imperial period. Not a single connected sentence survives from after the Augustan period.
121 Gitter and Bijovsky 2002; Bijovsky 2000; Robinson 1997a; 1997b; 1999.
123 Cameron 1993: 9–10, 167; Swain 1996: 200–1 on Syriac as a cultural phenomenon. Edessa, while under Roman control (from c.160) had a small bronze coinage in Syriac under King Ma‘nu (164.5–167) and his successor Abgar, but the silver naming Ma‘nu, the larger bronzes of Abgar, and all subsequent coinage was in Greek alone. On Edessa: Millar 1987: 190–62; 1993: 465–67, 472–81.

124 Howgego 1996: 88–9; Burnett, Chapter 16 below.
127 Geissen, Chapter 15 below.
case of Egypt copying Rome, which does not work even at a chronological level, but more importantly is the kind of approach towards 'Romanization' which is rightly criticized as being influenced by the modern colonial experience. Nor does it mean that the representation of Greek mythology and 'Egyptian' deities should be re-categorized as 'Roman' phenomena (although it does make it harder to interpret them as anti-Roman, or even as non-Roman). But the broadly parallel developments in Rome and Egypt are indicative of a wider cultural interaction, and serve to problematize literal readings of iconography as 'Roman', 'Greek', or 'Egyptian'.

Nevertheless, it does seem worth examining the structure of the iconography of the local coinage from the perspective of identity. There is something of a typological continuum, but a brutal simplification is adopted here for the purposes of analysis. The types of most coinage may be characterized by obverse and reverse as imperial/local, local/local, or imperial/imperial.

The imperial/local mode—emperor, wife, or Caesar on the obverse, local image on the reverse—is the norm. Such iconography served to locate the community in relation to both Roman power and local tradition and was normal in other media too. Statuary in public spaces and temples, festivals, and processions all mixed the Hellenic past with the Roman present.

Countless images here and elsewhere bear witness to this mode. The other modes are much less common, but are potentially revealing.

The local/local mode is made up of two quite distinct categories. The first, the so-called pseudo-autonomous coins, are not quite what they might seem. The term has been used by numismatists to describe local coins of the imperial period which do not portray an imperial image on the obverse. In most cases there is a denominational significance. Within a given issue the denominations in descending order may bear the heads of the emperor, empress, Caesar, and then, for example, the Roman senate (pl. 3.2, 14), or the local Boule, or Demos (pl. 3.2, 15). It is clearly wrong to interpret these coins as rejecting, or even ignoring, Roman power, as the hierarchy of the denominational structure clearly expresses the subordination of local to imperial. The high frequency of use of the bust of the Roman senate on the obverse of coins of the province of Asia also speaks clearly against any such interpretation. Pseudo-autonomous coins are interesting in showing another way in which imperial and local were accommodated.

The second category—coins of mints which did not depict the emperors or Rome at all—is much harder to explain. The phenomenon is confined to a few free cities: Athens, Chios (pl. 1.4, 43), Rhodes (until Nero), and Tyre (pl. 1.4.1, 4). That status is a relevant consideration is suggested by the fact that Tyre abandoned this mode for the normal imperial mode when it became a colonia (thus pl. 1.2, 22–3; 1.4, 40–2).

By no means all free cities adopted the local/local mode, and those that did seem to be on the privileged end of the spectrum. This mode should not be automatically read as subversive, then, nor as inevitably consequent upon status. There are likely to be particular circumstances which escape us. Perhaps, by way of example only, proposals by these cities to strike coins with imperial heads were met by a threatening imperial recusatio. It is also possible that we should construct an explanation which locates this phenomenon in a cultural world in which the novel and much other literature ignores Rome. Whatever the explanation, what is perhaps most interesting is that this is an option rarely taken up.

The imperial/imperial mode is most common among coloniae and client kings, and in Egypt. The symbolic structures of coloniae in general mirrored their status as 'mini-Romes'. But their Roman status was fully compatible with the existence of local myths and cults of 'Greek' or other origin, and the coinage of coloniae may equally well be imperial/local. Client kings had obvious reasons for advertising their connections to Rome. Not only was their

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132 On the absence of imperial images at Tyre: Millar 1993: 289–90, suggesting that it expressed an attachment to the Phoenician identity of the city. The status of Tyre before it became a colonia is unclear: Millar 1993: 288 questions whether it was free in a formal sense.
135 For the complex identities of coloniae—incorporating Greek myth and creating founders—see Weiss 1986 on Alexandra Troas (playing on Roman foundation, supposed Helenistic foundation by Alexander, and (Homeric) Trojan myth.

Heuchert, Volthker. Coinage and Identity in the Roman Provinces. 
Oxford University Press, UK, p 32
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power dependent on Rome, but in some cases they had spent time in Rome and were well connected at court. The coinages of Agrippa I and Agrippa II are obvious cases in point (pl. 1.4, 44). The coinage for the province of Egypt was capable of stressing Roman themes, as well as ‘Greek’ and ‘Egyptian’. The appearance of Roman themes is readily explicable: this was a genuinely Roman provincial coinage (it was not the civic coinage of Alexandria) and was, in continuity with Ptolemaic practice, dated by the regnal years of the emperor. Egypt was not, perhaps, quite a ‘normal’ province. Connections with Rome were strong and frequent, the nature of control exceptional, and the security of the corn supply paramount.

The imperial/imperial mode was unusual for Greek cities, but it is found. Sometimes indeed the coinage appears to be very ‘plugged in’ to developments at Rome, and the explanation may well lie in particular elite involvement. For example, at Nysa a portrait of Domitian is paired with the Nike of the emperor Domitian (NEIKH AYTOPRATOPOΣ DOMITIANOY), who is depicted as a winged Minerva, thus demonstrating awareness of the emperor’s particular emphasis on that goddess (pl. 1.4, 45). The influence of Roman governors is a possible explanation for cases such as this, but it needs to be remembered that the Greek elite itself was increasingly a Roman elite too.

In this context, it is interesting that the ‘universal’ extension of citizenship by Caracalla’s edict of AD 212 had no automatic impact on the nature and balance of iconography, in marked contrast to grants of colonial status, presumably because citizenship represented a change in the status of individuals rather than of communities. There was no noticeable general shift towards imperial/imperial types at the time.

The third century did, however, see the gradual demise of local coinages. The explanation will have been complex: alongside a degree of economic disruption, political instability, and military crisis, a significant role will have been played by the changing cultural preferences of the elite in how they devoted their energies and deployed their surplus wealth. The demise of local coinage needs to be viewed in the context of the decline of civic euergetism, of civic building, and of monumental inscriptions, and a marked increase in the ‘privatization’ of display.

This process culminated under Diocletian, with the end of the last regional coinage (in Egypt). Henceforth there was to be only a standardized imperial coinage struck at decentralized mints. From the perspective of identity the choice of type for what was presumably the commonest denomination is quite stunning. The nummus at all mints portrayed the Genius of the Roman people (GENIO POPVLI ROMANI) (pl. 1.4, 46). Here we have the Genius of the Roman People in Latin chosen as the symbol for the whole empire. This marks the real end of our story: the civic coinage of the Roman world was gone for good. Henceforth, the coinage speaks only of imperial Roman identities.

Whose Identity?

This chapter took as a starting point Millar’s description of coins as ‘the most deliberate of all symbols of public identity’. The significance and complexity of private and other forms of social identities are stressed by Williamson’s chapter in this volume. Coinage is not well suited to addressing such identities, although Williams in his chapter brings a lesson from Iron Age archaeology about one way in which this might be done (by looking at trends in ritual coin-deposition at sanctuary sites). In the sense that identity is not an innate quality but is constituted in representation, the identities on the coinage are by definition those of the elite. The explicit representations on the coinage, and the identities implicit in the patterning of the iconography and in the structure of the coinage, belonged to those who controlled the coinage. Butcher in this volume stresses the self-reflexive nature of the evidence. Thus

136 Burnett 1987b; 2002at; 121; RPC II, p. 309.
137 Burnett 1991; Bland 1990b.
138 This observation can be overstated or misplaced, as observed by Bowman and Rathbone 1992.
139 RPC II, no. 1110 with p. 38.
140 The only noticeable impact of the edict on coinage was the subsequent high frequency of the names of individuals beginning with the praenomen and nomen Marcus Aurelius, a demonstration that substantial numbers gained their citizenship under Caracalla.
143 Note also the comments in the same vein by Williams and Butcher, Chapters 1 and 2 below.
it is true that the public identities of the coinage presented the 'surface expression of the dominant cultural system', but that does not mean that its symbolism was relevant only to the elite. The coins themselves do not permit a balanced assessment of the relative importance to different social groups of the identities which they express.

Considerations of coin use and coin circulation have a contribution to make here. Our understanding of coin use in the Roman world is that more or less everybody used coins to some extent. Coin circulation is indicative of the geographical range over which the symbolism it bore was available, and also of its penetration into, for example, domestic contexts. We may at least ponder whether the coins themselves, as a mass-produced and circulating medium, handled by everyone, may have had an active role in spreading and fixing notions of identity. Reception is a difficult topic, but a start might be made by considering the extent to which the type of imagery found on coins was taken up, and 'internalized', in private contexts (on figurines, furniture decoration, jewellery, terracotta lamps, or tombs, etc.). This has scarcely been attempted even for the imperial coinage, and remains a project for the future.

What does seem secure already is that the numismatic evidence, both in its iconography and its structure, is of a piece with the other ways in which the elite represented collective political identity. To this end, an attempt has been made in the foregoing discussion not to leave the numismatic evidence isolated, but to make comparisons with other expressions of elite collective identity: with festivals and processions, with public buildings and spaces, with sculpture and epigraphy, with rhetoric, and with a wide variety of other literary genres. The other papers in this volume bolster this impression. The influence of an individual on the choice of what to put on a coin can be detected in some cases, and no doubt was more prevalent than we can know. This is not surprising given the central place of euergetism in civic life, and in no way undermines the case that collective identity is represented. Individual influence consisted in making choices within an accepted canon.

It is impressive that, despite a context in which the focus was primarily on the civic polity or province, broader cultural identities emerge: those associated with religious commonality, with ethnicity, with shared historical and geographical outlooks, with language, with 'Romanness', and, above all, with Hellenism. Substantial difference emerges most clearly not from analysis of variations in how the game was played, but from the failure to play it at all. In the west, difference is seen most of all in the lack of any local coinage after Claudius. Likewise in the east, the Greek poleis and metropoleis of Egypt never produced coinages, even after the reform of AD 200/1 which granted each metropolis a Boule. This is one way in which the urban communities in Egypt certainly did not function like Greek cities in other provinces. And where is the civic coinage of Palmyra, either before or after it became a colonia under Severus or Caracalla? Splendid Palmyra produced only vast quantities of very small and badly made bronzes, which some have thought to be tesseræ rather than coins, but which may rather belong within a Parthian tradition of small change (pl. 1.4, 47–8). Only a very few of the coins name the city at all (in Greek), none depict or name a Roman emperor, and none reveal the status of the city. Now that is different.

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