

Emperor Tiberius ruled between 14 and 37 CE, and was the immediate successor of Caesar Augustus. Studying the coins that were created during his reign allows us to better understand what Tiberius himself wanted to convey to the people of Rome. This specific coin from the St. Olaf collection features, on the obverse, the face of Tiberius, with the letters “TI CAESAR DIVI AVG F AVGVST IMP VIII” on it. Roman coinage often features many abbreviations . These specific ones mean “Emperor Tiberius Caesar, 7, son of the divine Augustus¹.” The reverse features a rudder on top of a banded globe, with another small globe on the bottom right, all of which is enclosed by the letters SC, and features the letters “PONT MAX TR POT XXXVII.” The rudder over the world symbolizes the ability to properly steer the state in a good direction, as the rudder is what steers the ship. The letters mean “pontifex maximus,” which is a title given to Roman Emperors, followed by “tribunitia potestate 37,” which translates to “with tribunitian power² being 37th.” This number refers to the year 35 CE which is during Tiberius’ reign, while the number on the obverse refers to the year 12 CE.³ The letters SC, which stand for *senatus consulto*, mean “by Decree of the Senate,⁴ and simply signify that the senate ordered these coins to be made.

This coin, as well as some others in the St. Olaf collection, show clearly how hard Tiberius was trying to connect his reign to that of Augustus. On this coin, he calls

¹ Rawlings, G.B, *Ancient Medieveal Modern Coins and How to Know Them*. Ammon Press, Chicago, 1966. 160.

² Rawlings, G.B, 163.

³ This information is written on the protective cover of the coin itself.

⁴ Dr. Sutton’s Roman Coin Legend Translation, on cointranslator.com.

Augustus divine, while also calling himself Augustus' son. This elevates Augustus, and the state that he ruled over, while also giving Tiberius himself an almost demigod status.