



Volume 28

# Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia



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*Front cover:* Obverse die and medallion of West Australian Newspaper Award (see article "Royal Australian Institute of Architects - WA Chapter award medals")

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# President's Report

Our seventh biennial international numismatic conference NAAC2017, which was held in Melbourne in October, was a great success. National Organiser Walter Bloom and the local Organizing Committee chaired by Darren Burgess put together an interesting program, one of the consequences of which was the marvellous selection of papers for this volume of the Journal.

This last year has seen the publication of Peter Lane's *The Coin Cabinet*, and the winning of the Paul Simon Memorial Award by Barrie Newman. Both Peter and Barrie are great contributors to the Association.

Our Vice-President, Darren Burgess, has advised that he won't be renominating at our coming AGM due to the pressure of work and the need to progress some NAV activities. I am grateful to Darren for all the work he puts into the NAA, in particular last year's biennial conference and the Facebook page, not to mention the steady stream of news items. In fact Darren is not completely off the hook as he has become the Victorian State Representative to the Association.

Stewart Wright of Status International has kindly offered us use of a room for the Association's AGM on Monday 16 April (commencing 1pm) at his new premises at 64 Parramatta Rd, Forest Lodge, close to the University of Sydney.

The NAA continues to enjoy sponsorship at a sustainable level, with Noble Numismatics (Gold), Coinworks, Downies (Silver), Drake Sterling, Sterling & Currency and Vintage Coins & Banknotes (Bronze) all contributing to ensure the Association's continued success. However expenses are rising and receipts are falling, even with the steady level of membership. On the positive side, many are taking out ten-year memberships.

I am appreciative of the support of Council and other NAA members throughout the year, and particularly our Secretary, Jonathan Cohen, and Treasurer, Lyn Bloom, who are pivotal in the running of the Association, and our Managing Editor, Gil Davis, for his work in producing this Volume 28 of JNAA.

**Walter R Bloom**

President, NAA

[www.numismatics.org.au](http://www.numismatics.org.au)

March 2017

# Editor's Note

The 28<sup>th</sup> volume of the journal is a bumper issue and my eighth as Managing Editor. There are eleven articles reflecting a remarkable range of numismatic interests. I am particularly pleased to see the balance of modern Australian and historical numismatic interests, and the excellent scholarship throughout. Many of the articles derive from presentations given at the wonderful NAA conference held in Melbourne from 21-22 October, 2017. I thank the presenters for being willing to quickly turn their talks into articles, despite the hard work this entailed, as well as the dedication of the other contributors.

This journal is the annual publication of the peak numismatic body in the country. As noted in the last volume, I have been working with the President and the Editorial Committee to ensure the standard of all articles we publish compares favourably with the best international numismatic journals. This includes a rigorous double-blind peer-review process. I thank the members of the Editorial Committee (listed below) and the two anonymous reviewers assigned to each article for their prompt and constructive help.

I also wish to express my thanks to the two key people who work quietly and efficiently behind the scenes to help me get this journal out: John O'Connor (Nobles) who proof-reads the articles, and Barrie Newman (Adelaide Mint) who carefully looks after the production process.

In this volume we have six articles on modern Australian topics. The articles by Paul Holland and Walter bloom are numismatic studies respectively of George V pennies and award medals struck by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, WA chapter. Their treatments are exemplary demonstrations of the 'arcane art' of numismatic studies combining detailed knowledge with keen observation. These are foundational studies for others to follow. Vincent Verheyen uses his expertise in chemistry to analyse surface marks on predecimal proof coins made at the Melbourne branch of the Royal Mint. He successfully demonstrates that some of the marks result from production rather than careless handling, a finding that will have implications for collectors of proofs generally. Jeremy McEachern, Barrie Newman and David Rampling show another side of numismatics – how it can be used to inform our understanding of the past. Their entertaining articles range from illuminating the story of one of Australia's earliest dealers (Rampling on Isidore Kozminsky), to the sporting achievements of one of the country's celebrated early athletes (McEachern on Richmond 'Dick' Eve and the collection of his memorabilia in the National Sports Museum), and even the sorry tale of an 'official' fraudster who nonetheless got away with his misdeeds (Newman on a Ugandan High Commissioner).

The volume also contains five articles on matters historical. Three of them deal with iconography and make fascinating reading, especially when taken together. Bridget McClean looks at Tarentine civic coinage c. 470–450 BC. Charlotte Mann and Rachel Mansfield both deal with iconography under emperors of the Severan dynasty of Rome in the early third century AD. Charlotte deals with the imperial portraiture of Caracalla, while Rachel examines the civic coinage of the eastern city of Antipatris under Elagabalus. The results of their studies are illuminating about how important coins were for disseminating propaganda, and in turn, understanding what was important to the emperors and cities that commissioned them. Christian Cuello takes us to the world of the Visigoths, best known for sacking Rome, but also producers of coinage, some of which reside in the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies collection at Macquarie University, which he catalogues and discusses. Finally, Frank Robinson provides a careful study of bank notes of the Empire of Brazil which will be of interest to aficionados of paper money.

There is something for everyone in this volume.

**Dr Gil Davis**

Managing Editor

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# The significance of the military representation of Caracalla upon the coinage of his sole reign (212-217 CE)

Charlotte Mann

## Abstract

*Obverse coin portraiture presents unique insights into the public image of a Roman emperor. This paper will use a close analysis of portraiture struck upon the imperial coinage of Caracalla to explore the degree to which the emperor's public image emphasised his associations with the imperial army. While ancient literary sources state Caracalla cultivated the public appearance of a military man, quantitative studies of his imperial coinage claim that he did not produce a higher volume of 'military' reverse types than earlier emperors, and therefore did not use coins to promote military associations. An examination of imperial obverse portraiture offers an opportunity to reconcile ancient literary and numismatic evidence. Obverse representations of Caracalla reveal a number of militarising features; strong evidence that the association between the emperor and the military described by ancient historians was indeed intentionally publicised on his coins during the period of his sole reign.*

## Keywords

[Caracalla] [Imperial coinage] [Obverse portraiture] [Roman Army]

## Introduction

Literary and numismatic evidence appears at first sight to be contradictory in the case of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (known for convenience by his nickname 'Caracalla'). Ancient literary accounts describe an emperor who wore his hair cropped and the rough garments of the ordinary soldiery to cultivate the public image of a military man. Quantitative studies of the imperial coinage produced during Caracalla's reign, however, have claimed that he did not produce a higher volume of 'military' reverse types than earlier emperors, and therefore did not use coins to promote associations with the army.<sup>1</sup>

Such uncertainty demands a reconsideration of the numismatic evidence. This paper will use an analysis of Caracalla's obverse portraiture to show that, contrary to the conclusions of earlier studies, the coinage that Caracalla issued as sole emperor did indeed promote the militaristic associations with the common soldiery that define him

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<sup>1</sup> Noreña 2011, 146-168; Manders 2012, 41-48; Rowan 2012, 112.



within ancient literature. Examining obverse representations of Caracalla at different periods reveals an increasing number of militarising features. It presents strong evidence that the association between the emperor and the military described by ancient historians was indeed intentionally publicised on his coins during the period when he ruled as sole emperor.

### **Imperial Precedent – the Emperor and the Army**

A martial public image became an established element of the imperial public identity when soldier emperors ruled at the end of the third century CE. Caracalla's strong cultivation of public military associations, however, occurred without imperial precedent and was inextricably connected with the controversial circumstances of his accession. Cassius Dio considered his adoption of a militaristic public image to be a consequence of the murder of his brother Geta in AD 212.<sup>2</sup> Caracalla had engineered a stabbing assassination of Geta by a group of loyal guards and, after the murder took place, fled to the praetorian camp for protection and entreated the army to support his position.<sup>3</sup> The army had sworn allegiance to both Severus's sons, so had to be won over by bribes.<sup>4</sup> In a speech attributed to the emperor by Dio, Caracalla secured the support of the military by identifying himself as their 'fellow-soldier': "I am one of you," he said, "and it is because of you alone that I care to live, in order that I may confer upon you many favours; for all the treasuries are yours." And he further said: "I pray to live with you, if possible, but if not, at any rate to die with you" (Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 78.3).

Literary depictions of his conduct during the German and Parthian campaigns conducted while he was sole emperor also reveal that he continued to model his behaviour upon ordinary soldiers long after he had departed from Rome:

He always played the soldier's part . . . Scorning luxuries, he used whatever was cheapest and issued to the poorest soldier. He pretended to be delighted when they called him fellow soldier instead of emperor. For the most part he marched with the troops, carrying his own arms and rarely using a chariot or a horse . . . For these actions Caracalla won the affection of the soldiers (Herodian, *History of the Empire* 7.1).

The military identity cultivated by Caracalla was emphatically that of an ordinary soldier, rather than a commander. This distinction is emphasised throughout Dio's description of the emperor's military conduct, which states that "the duties of a commander, however, in which he ought to have been particularly well versed, he performed in a very unsatisfactory manner, as if he thought that victory lay in the performance of the

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2 Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 78.2-3; Mattingly and Sydenham 2007, 86; Campbell 1984, 52

3 Herodian, *History of the Empire* 5.1

4 Herodian reports that each soldier received a donation of 2,500 denarii and had his ration allowance increased by one-half (Herodian, *History of the Empire* 4.4.7). See also Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 78.3.

humble duties mentioned rather than in good generalship.”<sup>5</sup> This image is compounded by the testimony of the historian Herodian, who reports that Caracalla preferred the title of ‘comrade’ to ‘commander.’<sup>6</sup>

Such displays of collegiality did not begin with Caracalla. The image of an emperor who was a ‘soldier-emperor’, involved in the day to day life of his men, was instituted by Julius Caesar, who, Suetonius reports, addressed his men as *commilitones* (companions) rather than *milites* (soldiers).<sup>7</sup> Caligula and Claudius used the same term to emphasise their personal leadership of the imperial army and foster military support for their political position.<sup>8</sup> By the second century CE, a degree of familiarity with imperial soldiers had become an inviolable aspect of an emperor’s public image. Hadrian, for instance, was said to have dined with his soldiers, while Marcus Aurelius was reputed to have addressed his son Commodus as a ‘fellow-soldier.’<sup>9</sup> The emperor’s active role as *commilito* developed further during the foreign wars and civil conflicts fought during the third century. The emperor Septimius Severus shared the work, rations and accommodation of his ordinary soldiery, and by doing so, cultivated the respect of his troops.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, an emperor who courted the affection and respect of his men was not without precedent. However, public identification as an ordinary soldier functioned as an inviolable and permanent aspect of Caracalla’s imperial image. This image relied upon his appeal to the military to ratify his claim to sole imperial authority upon his accession to sole rule, rather than the commencement of a military campaign in Gaul. This significant departure from imperial precedent is expressed by both the obverse portraiture and the reverse imagery of his coins.

### **Obverse Coin Portraiture**

In the past, insufficient attention has been paid to the fact that obverse portraiture during the different stages of Caracalla’s reign provides an important insight into the impact of Caracalla’s martial associations upon his public image.

As has been noted above, numismatic imagery had developed a broad iconographic language to denote imperial military activity by the time ‘soldier emperors’ reached their peak in the late third century CE. In the earlier years prior to Caracalla’s rule, however, martial exploits were only a single element of an emperor’s multifaceted public identity. They were acknowledged through only one obverse portraiture style – the depiction of the emperor ‘armed and draped’, wearing the military breastplate that we

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5 Cassius Dio. *Roman History*. 78.13.1-2

6 Herodian. *Roman History* 4.7.4-7.

7 Suetonius, *Life of Julius*. 67. 9

8 Suetonius, *Life of Caligula* 22.1; Suetonius, *Life of Claudius* 10; Campbell 1984, 37

9 *Historia Augusta*, *The Life of Marcus Aurelius*. 21.9; Herodian, *History of the Empire* 1.5.3-4.

10 Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 74.15.3; Herodian, *History of the Empire* 2.11.2; 3.6.10.

call a *cuirass*, and a draped military cloak called a *paludamentum*.<sup>11</sup> This bust type did not appear until the reign of the fifth Roman emperor Nero (54-68 CE), and only become an established element of imperial obverse portraiture in the third century.<sup>12</sup> For example, Domitian (AD 81- 96) appeared cuirassed on only six issues of coins, despite the significant ideological emphasis placed upon military prowess and triumphal titulature after his German and Dacian campaigns (Figure 1).<sup>13</sup> Hadrian (117-138 CE) appeared cuirassed in approximately one third of his imperial coinage but wore his armour in combination with a laureate victor's crown. This gave him the appearance of wearing ceremonial garb, rather than a soldier's military attire (Figure 2).<sup>14</sup> His civilian aspect was emphasised by the fact that his hair was dressed in long, luxuriant curls and he wore a full beard that denoted his philhellenic philosophical and intellectual interests.<sup>15</sup> It seems therefore that his armour prepared him for ceremonial duties rather than long years on campaign.



Figure 1: Domitian, Rome, *sestertius*, AD 95–AD 96

**Obverse:** IMP CAES DOMIT AVG GERM COS XVII CENS PER PP. Laureate head of Domitian, right

**Reverse:** S-C across fields. Triumphal arch surmounted by two elephant *quadrigae* (RIC 2 Domitian 796, Image courtesy of CoinArchives Pro: [http://ikmk.smb.museum/mk-edit/images/n7/7628/vs\\_opt.jpg](http://ikmk.smb.museum/mk-edit/images/n7/7628/vs_opt.jpg) [accessed 15/08/2017])



Figure 2: Hadrian, Rome, *aureus*, AD 117-118

**Obverse:** IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANVS AVG. Laureate, draped and cuirassed bust of Hadrian, left

**Reverse:** M TR P COS III. Jupiter standing facing with thunderbolt and scepter

11 Hedlund 2008, 52

12 King 1999, 133

13 Example provided by RIC 2 *Domitian* 137, 656, 647, 1446, 1447, 1448

14 Example provided by Hekster 2015, 81

15 Birley 1999, 79

(RIC 2 Hadrian 63d, Image courtesy of CoinArchive Pro: [https://pro.coinarchives.com/4bbcc35f0f9e443a3eb83cba\\_5f10d86b/img/gorny/249/image00639.jpg](https://pro.coinarchives.com/4bbcc35f0f9e443a3eb83cba_5f10d86b/img/gorny/249/image00639.jpg) [accessed 15/08/2017])

Caracalla's father Septimius Severus fought campaigns in Africa and Britain. He was awarded the triumphal *cognomina Parthicus, Britannicus Maximus* and *Adiabenicus Arabicus*, and the title *imperator* eight times.<sup>16</sup> Despite this, his military endeavours were not reflected in the style of his obverse portraiture (Figure 3). He appeared with a cuirassed portrait bust upon only 27 of the 829 imperial coins produced during his reign (approximately 3%). Further, these portraits did not portray the emperor with the short military haircut worn on campaign, but rather with a 'civilian-length' head of thick curly hair and a full beard. In this regard, Severus's numismatic representation follows that of Marcus Aurelius, who also continued to be represented with long hair and beard while fighting in the Marcomannic Wars (A.D. 166-180, Figure 4).<sup>17</sup>



Figure 3: Septimius Severus, Rome, denarius, 19mm, AD 201

**Obverse:** SEVERVS AVG PART MAX. Laureate head, right

**Reverse:** RESTITVTOR VRBIS. Septimius standing left, holding patera in right hand over tripod altar, and spear in left

(RIC 4a Septimius Severus 167a, Image courtesy of CoinArchive Pro: <https://pro.coinarchives.com/1bcb821828174e7cd83c8b66fab131b5/img/gorny/249/image00757.jpg> [accessed 15/08/2017])



Figure 4: Marcus Aurelius, Rome, sestertius, AD 163/164

**Obverse:** M AVREL ANTONINVS AVG ARMENIACVS P M. Laureate head, right

**Reverse:** TR P XVIII IMP II COS III S-C. Mars standing right holding spear and resting hand on shield.

<sup>16</sup> Birley 1999, 116-117

<sup>17</sup> Example provided by RIC III1 *Marcus Aurelius* 861; Hekster 2015, 81

The significance of the military representation of Caracalla upon the coinage of his sole reign (212-217 CE)

(RIC III Marcus Aurelius 861, Image courtesy of ProCoin Archives <https://pro.coinarchives.com/1bcb821828174e7cd83c8b66fab131b5/img/gorny/249/image00757.jpg> [accessed 15/08/2017])

The first coin portraits of Caracalla produced during Severus's reign continued to emphasise 'civilian' modes of representation (Table 1).

Obverse Portrait Busts of Caracalla–Reign of Septimius Severus (total 311)		
Draped Bust (gold)	Draped Bust (silver)	Draped Bust (base metal)
19 issues- 30% of gold denomination coins	103 issues- 65% of silver denomination coins	47 issues- 52% of base metal denominations
Cuirassed Bust (gold)	Cuirassed Bust (silver)	Cuirassed Bust (base metal)
43 issues- 70% of gold denomination coins	57 issues- 35% of silver denomination coins	42 issues- 48% of base metal denominations
Overall Percentage: Draped Bust: 169- (54%); Cuirassed Bust- 142 (46%)		

During his adolescence, as a young co-emperor, coins depicted Caracalla on their obverses with a draped bust in the majority of cases (Figure 5). The proportion of cuirassed portraits varies according to denomination. Preference for draped, rather than cuirassed, portraiture was particularly evident among silver *denarii*, which were struck in the greatest number and featured images of the young co-emperor represented in this way in 65% of obverse portraits. Only high denomination gold *quinarii* and *aurei* featured cuirassed portraiture on the majority of types (70%). It is possible that the decision to place a cuirassed imperial portrait upon higher denomination pieces reflected their use as pay for soldiers at the time when they were honourably discharged, and that the military portrait of the emperor was therefore created for the benefit of the military as a specific social group. Overall, however, drapery rather than a military cuirass appears upon the majority of Caracalla's portrait busts produced during Severus' reign. His 'civilian' aspect was also emphasised by the appearance of his visage and hair in cuirassed portraits. In these, his cheeks are full, his skin smooth and unlined, his hair styled in the well-defined waves also worn by his father Septimius Severus, and the 'stepped' locks on the nape of his neck may be compared with those favoured by other imperial princes.



Figure 5: Caracalla, Rome, denarius, AD 119

**Obverse:** IMP CAES M AVR ANTON AVG. Bust of Caracalla, laureate and draped, right.

**Reverse:** IVVENTA IMPERII. Emperor standing left with Victory on globe & spear, captive at feet.

(RIC 4a Caracalla 20, Image courtesy of Wildwinds <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s6812.html> [accessed 15/08/2017])

Caracalla's portrait underwent a significant 'militarisation' in years that followed of Geta's death (212- 217 CE) (Table 2):

Obverse Portrait Busts of Caracalla–Sole Reign (total 275)		
Draped Bust (gold)	Draped Bust (silver)	Draped Bust (base metal)
15 (22%) of gold denomination coins	40 (36%) of silver denomination coins	25 (26%) of base metal denomination coins
Cuirassed Bust (gold)	Cuirassed Bust (silver)	Cuirassed Bust (base metal)
53 (78%) of gold denomination coins	69 (64%) of silver denomination coins	73 (74%) of base metal denomination coins
Overall Percentage: Draped Bust: 80 (29%); Cuirassed Bust- 195 (71%)		

This presentation of the imperial portrait continued without change until the end of Caracalla's reign. By this time 195 obverse portrait busts (71%) had represented him with a cuirassed bust, while only 80 portrayed him with a draped bust without a cuirass (29%). The proportion of cuirassed portraits also became relatively equivalent across all gold, silver and base metal denominations; this suggests that a militarised image of Caracalla emerged as the dominant form of obverse portraiture and was not directed at a specific social group.

The military associations communicated by depictions of Caracalla as sole emperor wearing the cuirass were heightened by the inclusion of additional military features in his hair, visage, posture and expression. His curly hair and beard were now shown roughly shorn close to the skin (Figure 6).<sup>18</sup> Furrows creased his forehead, neck and the skin between his eyes, which were narrowed into a wary squint. He now seemed hostile and vigilant and, although only twenty-three years old, seemed weathered by years on campaign. Together, the inclusion of such details served as an 'iconographic sign system,' that created a formulaic emphasis which heightened the overall impression of militarism

<sup>18</sup> A literary description of Caracalla's short haircut appears in Herodian with a somewhat amusing explanation. Caracalla arranged for the funeral of his freedman Festus to be celebrated in the manner of the Greek hero Patroclus. This ceremony required the family and close friends of the deceased to cut their hair and lay it upon the burning funeral pyre. "Since he was almost entirely bald, he made himself ridiculous when he wished to place his curls upon the blaze; he did, however, shear off what little hair he had." (Herodian, *History of the Empire* 4.8.5).

The significance of the military representation of Caracalla upon the coinage of his sole reign (212-217 CE)

and personal involvement with the Roman army suggested by the cuirassed portrait that appears upon these coins.



Figure 6: Caracalla, Rome, aureus, AD 214

**Obverse:** ANTONINVS PIVS AVG GERM. Bust of Caracalla, laureate, draped and cuirassed, right

**Reverse:** P M TRP XVII COS IIII P P, Caracalla standing left, sacrificing before the Temple of Vesta, two Vestal virgins standing before, child between them, two togate men standing behind

(RIC 4a *Caracalla* 249v. Image Courtesy of the British Museum. [http://www.britishmuseum.org/collectionimages/AN00659/AN00659014\\_001\\_1.jpg](http://www.britishmuseum.org/collectionimages/AN00659/AN00659014_001_1.jpg) [accessed 15/08/2017])

The emperor's military haircut, weathered face and severe expression were not limited to numismatic portraiture. Instead, they also served as the characteristic features of Caracalla's public image in contemporary sculpture. Busts of the emperor discovered in Rome portray his hair and beard as closely cropped (Figure 7). They also emphasise the stern expression and weathered countenance shown in coin portraiture, and depict his 'frown' as knitted brows and a pair of deep creases on his forehead. Several accentuate the impression of vigilance and hostility created by the coin portraits in that they depict the emperor with his head cocked to one side, creating the impression that the viewer has caught him in the momentary action of looking over his shoulder.<sup>19</sup> This transitory pose (although since it appears at a time when a cult of the great Greek hero Alexander the Great was represented in art with his head slightly bent to one side [Plutarch *Life of Alexander* 4.1-4], it may also have been intended to link the emperor with this famous figure of the past), lent immediacy to Caracalla's weathered countenance, so that his severe expression now seemed hostile and suspicious.<sup>20</sup>

19 E.g. Bust of Caracalla from Altes Museum Berlin, Sk 384; Kleiner 2004, 324

20 Kleiner 2004, 324



Figure 7: Rome, portrait bust, marble, AD 212, Naples National Archaeological Museum.  
Accession number Inv. 6603.

Caracalla's military image must have bolstered his claim to sole imperial authority, which he acquired with the support of the army, in the aftermath of his brother's death. The association between the emperor and the army was expressed in a numismatic context by the presentation of him with a military haircut, weathered features and a posture that suggested wariness. However, this mode of representation presents such a radical break from numismatic precedent that it raises questions of whether it was real or idealised – either veristic, following the emperor's actual appearance, or employing a new form of idealism, that consciously roughened the young emperor's features in order to communicate his military involvement.

Roman coin portraiture up to that time had drawn upon two established stylistic traditions: verism, a 'warts and all' style, favoured during the Late Republican period, and classicising idealism, established by Augustus in the early years of the Roman Empire.<sup>21</sup> In the late republican period, veristic portraiture that emphasised the lined neck and hollow cheeks of Caesar, or the protuberant chin and shaggy hair of Antony, enabled numismatic imagery to communicate the personal nature of the triumvir's power.<sup>22</sup> This allowed his coinage to express political authority in an age more accustomed to group governance. Augustus broke from the veristic portrait style in favour of classical Greek models that rejected short hair, age and wrinkles in favour of a neutral, ageless countenance, one that also bore a hint of a resemblance to Apollo, the god whom he claimed had supported him when he defeated his opponents at the battle of Actium.<sup>23</sup>

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21 King 1999, 130

22 Examples- RSC 22 and BMC 264; King 1999, 128

23 King 1999, 128



This mode of representation created an impression of timelessness, and thus remoteness, which allowed the portrait of the emperor to become a blank canvas, able to present him as a leader favoured by the gods, the dispenser of liberalities, a rightful successor and a successful general, while still remaining recognisable.<sup>24</sup>

Idealism continued to be employed by emperors who wished to project a particular political image with all the ideological resources at their disposal. Portraits of the adopted family of the Antonine emperors adjusted the shape of their skulls, chin and noses to create the familial resemblance expected of biological fathers and sons, and ageing emperors such as Augustus and Nerva maintained an ageless quality in imperial portraiture in their later years.<sup>25</sup>

A return to verism occurred upon the conclusion of the civil wars that followed Nero's death, and again in the third century AD, with the rise of 'soldier emperors'.<sup>26</sup> It can hardly be considered a coincidence that veristic portrait styles emerged as a dominant form of official representation in such periods, or that Caracalla stands as the tipping point between the generals who rose to power in the second century and the phenomenon of 'soldier emperors' that occurred during the third. The same veristic portrait styles that had enabled coins to express the personal nature of triumviral power in an age that had glorified group rule allowed these coin portraits to establish a clear association between the emperor and military activity. The image of a rugged soldier emperor would allow coin portraiture to bear witness to his personal involvement in the daily business of war, and thus give him full credit for a victory or justify a protracted absence from Rome. Further, it allowed an emperor whose power rested upon the influence of the army to publicly align himself with the social group to which he owed his accession to power. Militaristic imperial portraiture could be more effective than the vague allusions to Victory, *virtus* and military security that had come to serve as a standardised aspect of imperial identity during the imperial period.<sup>27</sup>

It is also notable that this emphasis upon military representation did not create an iconographic precedent; wearing a cuirass became very common only from the first 'proper' coin-series struck for Aurelian and later.<sup>28</sup> This suggests that this mode of representation was not idealistic, but rather was based on each emperor's actual activities.<sup>29</sup>

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24 Zanker 1988a, 98-100; King 1999, 128-129, 131

25 Hekster 2015, 81

26 Nodelman 1993, 17; King 1999, 128

27 Hedlund 2008, 93

28 Ibid

29 A parallel is presented by Hadrian, the first Roman emperor to wear a beard, who was faithfully depicted with facial hair. That the imperial mint chose to represent him as he appeared, rather than 'shave the emperor' in order to follow imperial convention, presents a compelling precedent for veristic portraiture during the second century (Hekster 2015, 81)

## Conclusion

It seems clear, therefore, that the imperial mint depicted Caracalla after he became sole emperor in a highly militaristic manner, even though this style of representation broke with imperial precedent, because it accorded with the emperor's wishes. The men responsible for initiating the tone of the coinage were either the mint masters (*tres viri monetales*) or slaves or freedmen of the emperor who held administrative positions, and they may sometimes even have chosen the types without consulting the emperor himself. Levick offers an interesting further interpretation of this process. She suggests that the people for whom coins were produced were not the only audience for the imperial images they bore; in her view, coin types might also address, cultivate and flatter the emperor by basing their representation of him on his own view of himself.<sup>30</sup> In this way, coins could then communicate the emperor's preferred image of himself to the people who used his coinage, and this would play an important role in shaping or changing the perceptions of the public.<sup>31</sup> In this sense, the portraits of Caracalla as a military man that appeared upon, and were propagated by, imperial coinage, were intended to flatter the emperor as well as communicating his martial associations to the people that used them.<sup>32</sup> This new way of representing him when he became the sole ruler, with a new prevalence of cuirassed obverse portraiture, and the inclusion of a military haircut, weathered features and a wary look, sent a strong message to the Roman people.

## About the Author

*Charlotte Mann is completing a doctorate at the University of Warwick and Macquarie University. She has held a Junior Fellowship at the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies and has completed an internship at the Coins and Medals Department at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.*

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<sup>30</sup> Levick 1999, 44

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

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