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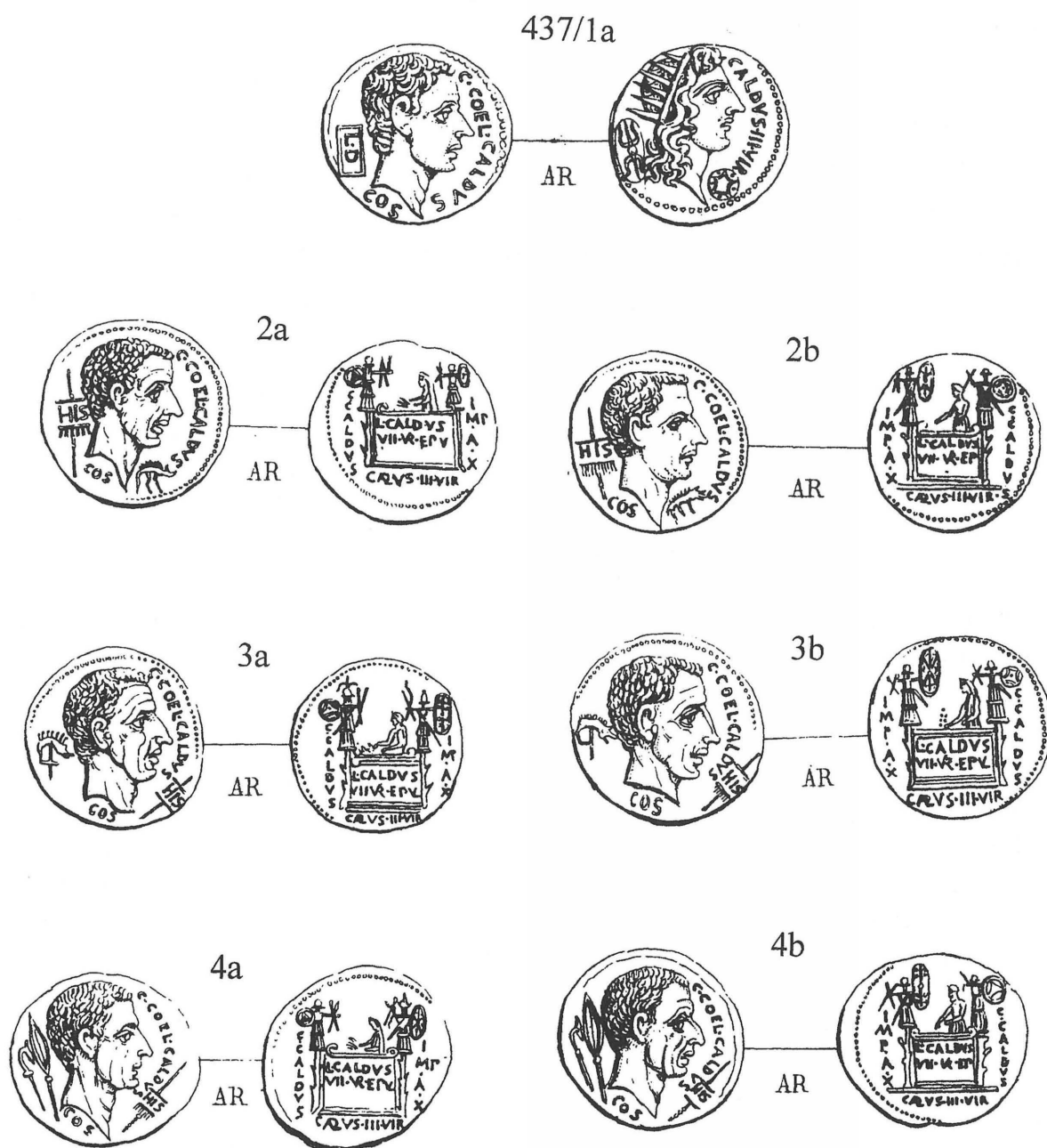
TWO NUMISMATIC PHANTOMS The false priest and the spurious son

E. BADIAN

It is well known that in the later Roman Republic many of the men coining money on behalf of the *res publica* used the opportunity to celebrate their ancestors for the sake of their own advancement. The deeds of those ancestors are naturally at times somewhat embroidered, if not downright myth. But nothing (it appears) could be claimed that would be at once recognised as fiction. Thus, to take an obvious example, no one doubted that M. (Caepio) Brutus was descended from two tyrant-killers, L. Iunius Brutus and C. Servilius Ahala. When he put their portraits on the two faces of one of his coins (Crawford, *RRC* 433/2), it amounted, as Crawford notes, to a programmatic statement directed against Cn. Pompeius Magnus, who in 54/3 BC was suspected by many of aiming at a *regnum*. Brutus was at the beginning of his career and wanted those who mattered to know where he stood.

In 51 (the date is now generally accepted) a young man who called himself Calvus IIIuir and who was hoping to be elected quaestor for the following year (as indeed he was, being assigned to Cicero in Cilicia), issued a series of coins (*RRC* 437/1–4) celebrating his rather undistinguished family, the Coelii Calvi. There was not much to be said about this new family, and as Crawford rightly put it, "The central theme of the issue is constituted, by the achievements of C. Coelius Calvus, Cos. 94" (p. 459). This much is clear, if only from the fact that his head, accompanied by various reminders of distinction, appears on the obverse of all the coins. The precise interpretation of the coins, however, has been discussed for centuries – ever since they, or at least most of them, first became known to humanists. Recently we have seen a new treatment, in Michael Harlan's book *Roman Republican Moneyers and Their Coins 63 BC – 49 BC* (1995 – significantly, published by the coin dealers Seaby). Chapter 26 of the book (pp. 160–166)

is devoted to these coins, and since both the author's defects – he knows hardly any of the vast literature on the history and the numismatics of this period and has no philological training – and his virtues (his acute observation and originality of approach, perhaps all the better for his lack of the traditional reading) are particularly apparent in this chapter, a new discussion of the coins seems indicated. This will also provide an opportunity to correct a universal, but I hope not ineradicable, error in one part of their interpretation.



First, a brief description of the coins. (I shall not note details of purely numismatic interest, but without historical relevance.¹) The consul of 94 is on the obverse, as we saw: a highly realistic portrait, facing right and identified as C. COEL. CALDVS and COS. 437/1 differs from all the rest, in that it marks the beginning of his political distinction: behind his head is a tablet inscribed L.D (= *Liberio Damno*), commemorating his passing a *lex tabellaria* in his tribunate (107). It was the last in the series, completing the process of substituting the *tabella* (written ballot) for the *suffragium* (voting by voice) by extending it to the last area in which it was still excluded, trials for *perduellio*. He did this, we are told, in order to convict an unsuccessful commander (and thus further his career): he is said (Cic. *Leg.* 3.33 ff.) to have regretted for the rest of his life that he had "harmed the *res publica*".² He was a *nouus homo*, as Cicero repeatedly tells us (e.g. *De or.* 1.117), one of the few who (like Cicero) lacked senatorial ancestors, yet got to the top of the political career, in a period when elections were dominated by *nobiles*.³ That, like others of his kind, he later came round to the side of the Optimates is quite likely. It is interesting that his grandson, at the beginning of his own

¹ The coins are described by Crawford, and a profuse selection of illustrations, with brief descriptions, can be seen in A. Banti, *Corpus Nummorum Romanorum* III (1981) pp. 368 ff. The drawings printed with this article illustrate the main types except for 1b (see n. 4).

² *Leges tabellariae* are often misconceived as laws establishing "secret ballot"; and so indeed they became, and are sometimes referred to in Latin authors, after Marius' tribunician law mandated voting bridges just wide enough for one person to pass over. That they were not inherently, and originally, meant to introduce secrecy in voting is clearly shown by Cic. *Leg.* 3.33, 38 f. The point was presumably to establish an accurate and honest count of the votes.

³ That he cannot be the *clarissimus ac fortissimus adulescens* who failed in an election for the quaestorship (Cic. *Planc.* 52) should hardly need to be repeated – but had better be, since the error is enshrined in all texts of the speech that I have seen and in *RE*. I long ago pointed out that *clarissimus* decisively excludes this *nouus homo* and suggested the reading Catulus for Caelius (an article of 1959, reprinted in *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (1964): the argument on p. 152). This was accepted by D.R. Shackleton Bailey and further elaborated (*HSCP* 83 (1979) 277 f.) and now appears in his *Onomasticon to Cicero's Speeches*² (1992) p. 63. We obviously cannot tell which Q. Catulus (the *cos.* 102 or his son, the *cos.* 79) is intended, but I think the son is more likely; he could have been quaestor *c.* 95 (the father *c.* 120) and was more likely to be remembered by Cicero's audience in 54. It should be added that Cicero's statement does not entirely exclude the possibility that the man was elected in a later year – just as the elder Catulus was finally elected consul after three failures.

career, chose to commemorate this law (which, with the fading out of *perduellio* trials, in fact had little practical importance). A *lex tabellaria* was obviously still a way to many voters' hearts. The reverse of the coin shows the head of a radiate Sol facing right, between two shields, an oval one decorated with a thunderbolt and a round one. On some dies the letter S appears, thought to identify Sol.⁴ To the right, the moneyer identifies himself as CALDVS.III.VIR.

On the other coins the consul's head is no longer accompanied by the tablet, but by two standards (2–3), or one and other symbols of war (4) and presumably victory. The standard inscribed HIS (which must mean Hispania) appears on all of them; the other, on 2–3, is in the shape of a boar. The boar is usually taken as a Celtiberian symbol, in particular referring to Clunia, which later put it on some of its coins. If so, it would be of some interest, as it would be the first reference to fighting there. (It later appears in the Sertorian War.⁵) Crawford pointed out that the boar is a Gallic symbol: he suggests that it balances HIS(pania) by referring to Calvus' victory over the Salluvii in Gaul (on which see further below). We cannot really decide, for a Celtic symbol might well be a Celtiberian one as well. In any case, while the reverses of 2–4 clearly celebrate that victory, the obverses of the coins (the spear on 4 can hardly be of local significance,

⁴ That the letter S should be used (or needed) to identify Sol seems an unpalatable idea, but may well be correct. Haverkamp (on whom, see n. 9 below) thought it a mint mark, but it has often been pointed out that no other mint marks appear on any of the other coins. Thus, e.g., B. Borghesi, *Oeuvres Complètes* I (1862) pp. 319 ff. (an article first published in 1822). The editor of the volume, Cavedoni, in a note cites the parallel of A with the head of Apollo on some denarii of C. Considius Paetus (*RRC* 465/2). It does, however, seem so absurd that one cannot help wondering whether it got on to the dies through an engraver's mistake, possibly from a note on his instructions calling for a head of Sol or Apollo respectively. It is never on the majority of dies. (It is not illustrated here.)

⁵ For Clunia see the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* (1976) p. 228. For coins showing the boar see Burnett, Amandry and Ripolles, *Roman Provincial Coinage* I (1992) nos. 453, 455, 458 (Tiberius), illustrated in Part II of the volume. The boar or boar's head is exclusively found as a countermark on coins of Clunia (pp. 139, 809). (I thank Dr. William E. Metcalf for the reference.) Haverkamp thought it a symbol of Spain: he describes several coins of the Empire on which it appears (pp. 102 f.). Harlan's notion (p. 162) that it "might actually be the standard of the Roman legion in Spain" is not attractive. The oddest interpretation was contributed by Perizonius (quoted by Haverkamp): he thought it commemorated the consul's killing a wild boar. For Clunia in the Sertorian War, see C.F. Konrad, *Plutarch's Sertorius* (1994) pp. 93, 176 ff.

although attempts have been made to assign it one) refer to a success in Spain and quite likely to one in Gaul as well. For Spain we have no direct attestation: he may have served there after his praetorship (100 or 99: *MRR* II 1 and 3 n. 2) or, as some have thought, after his consulship. If the latter (and we shall see that it cannot be excluded), we know nothing about his praetorship or subsequent command. Fortunately, the victory over the Salluvii was recorded by Livy and was of sufficient interest to his epitomator to rate an entry in *Per.* 73 (90 BC).⁶

The crowded, but beautifully designed, reverses of 2–4 all have the same central design: a table, inscribed L. CALDVS / VII.VIR. EPVL (or EP), on which a man, *capite uelato* (it seems), is setting out a meal: obviously the *epulo* performing his sacred duty. (Some early numismatists took it to be Jupiter actually enjoying the feast; but the person is clearly standing up, not reclining.) On either side of this table there are again symbols of military victory: on one side a trophy with two spears and a round shield, on the other a trophy with an oval shield, decorated with a thunderbolt, and a *carnyx*. Each is sometimes on the left and sometimes on the right of the table. Beyond the trophy, in each case, there is on one side the name C. CALDVS, on the other the letters IMP.A.X, both set out

⁶ Harlan's philological ignorance has here created confusion, which must be cleared up, embarrassing though the task is. Noting that "the name of the victor [in *Per.* 73] is usually read Caecilius", he adds: "Badian cited a variant reading of Caelius, another form of Coelius [*sic*], as perhaps the correct reading and assigned the victory to Caldus". Had he actually looked at what I wrote (an article of 1958, reprinted in *Studies* (cit. n. 3), at pp. 90 ff.), or at least at *MRR* II and III – let alone the standard edition of the *Periochae* by O. Rossbach – he would have seen that Caecilius is a fiction of the *deteriores*, taken over by older editions. According to Rossbach, who for the first time examined and sorted the manuscripts, the only three (at this point) that have real authority divide between Caelius (N and the apograph π) and Coelius (P). For reasons I fully set out, the latter deserves preference, and this is accepted in *MRR* III. Rossbach honestly printed C. Cae<ci>lius. Unfortunately, as I have had other occasions to point out, he was not as familiar with Republican prosopography as with manuscripts: he identified his Cae<ci>lius as C. Caecilius Metellus Pius – a non-entity. In the Loeb edition, presumably Harlan's main authority, Caecilius does stand in the text and a footnote states that the name "may have been" Caelius, with a reference to *MRR* II (where Caecilius is rightly ignored). That editor, it appears, was also unaware of Rossbach's edition. In P. Jal's edition of the *Periochae* in the Budé series, the editor prints Caelius, but (careless as too often: see the review by Briscoe, *Gnomon* 57 (1985), with more than a page of examples), fails to note the reading Coelius in P. Since that edition may be widely used, especially in France, this serious omission had to be noted. For a tribute to Rossbach, see Briscoe p. 419.

vertically. As Crawford observed, the legend including the imperial title is always on the side of the trophy with the *carnyx*: he concludes that the imperial acclamation was won (and was known to have been won) in Gaul and not in Spain. Below the table, in what might be called a pseudo-exergue (indeed, Babelon and Banti described it as an exergue, but it is not quite that on any of the coins I have seen depicted), the moneyer again describes himself as CALDVS.III.VIR.

It was seen even by the earliest commentators (though not by all of them) that the moneyer is C. Calvus, Cicero's quaestor in 50. How the septemvir fits into the family is not made clear on the coin: it must have been assumed to be known to all who mattered. We, however, could not have been sure, but for the fortunate survival of Cicero's letter addressed to his quaestor (*Fam.* 2.19), where his name appears as C. Coelius L.f. C.n. Hence the septemvir is his father – a fact, as we noted, that did not need to be made explicit. Ursinus, perhaps the first scholar who tried to sort these coins (or those of them known to him),⁷ already saw this, as well as the fact that the moneyer must be the consul's grandson: the difference in age (in fact about sixty years) makes this clear. Not all were as perspicacious. Pighius, admittedly in a work that appeared after his death,⁸ thought that the moneyer and the septemvir were brothers and had together issued these coins: he made them both grandsons of the consul. Fortunately, this seems to have been ignored. He also, in a confused argument, rejected the Spanish victory as fictitious, since not recorded in the *Fasti* or mentioned by Cicero. (However, we do not know how much of this he would have retained, had he lived to see the volume through the press.) For this he was severely and properly taken to task by Haverkamp, in an important discussion of the coins;⁹ Haverkamp assigned the victory to a Spanish proconsulate after the

⁷ *Familiae Romanae quae reperiuntur in antiquis numismatibus*. I used the edition Rome 1577, where it is bound in with Augustinus' (then Bishop of Lérida) *De Romanorum gentibus et familiis* – unfortunately silent on the Coelii. These coins on pp. 66–67. As is to be expected, the discussion contains numerous errors, not worth discussing, but is nevertheless important for what it does contribute.

⁸ *Annales Romanorum qui commentarii vicem supplent in omnes veteres Historiae Romanae Scriptores* (Antwerp 1615). The third volume, here used, is marked as posthumous and edited by Andreas Schott. The editor gives no indication of precisely what work he did on the text. Discussion of the coins of the Coelii is on pp. 136 and 202.

⁹ *Thesaurus Morellianus* [a collection, in one folio volume, of all the Republican coins known, anonymous and by families], *sive Familiarum Romanarum Numismata Omnia ...*

consulship. He thought that it was there that C. Calvus won his imperatorial acclamation (as we have seen, this may be unlikely, to judge from the design of the coins); he also regarded the boar as a Spanish symbol, which he had noted on some Spanish coins (unfortunately not shown),¹⁰ and he thought that Sol (on the reverse of one coin) was a Spanish reference, since he owned some Spanish coins showing Sol (one of them radiate). Naturally, Haverkamp, whose general scholarship has been severely denounced,¹¹ could not know about the Salluvian victory, hence could not make the Gallic connection which we have now recovered.

Haverkamp took it for granted that the C. Calvus named on the reverse and credited with the distinctions there listed was identical with the consul shown on the obverse. But this had already been denied (though without any discussion) by Ursinus. He thought that the C. Calvus of the reverse was a son of the consul and brother of the septemvir, though he at once noted the fact that he knew of no other references to such a man. Ursinus' interpretation was strongly revived by Joseph Eckhel. Volume 5 of his great work *Doctrina Numorum Veterum* (1795) deals with the coins of the Roman Republic. When he came to these coins (p. 176), he denied that the C. Calvus of the reverse could be identical with the homonym on the obverse, and for the first time he supported this opinion with an important argument: he knew of no Republican coin where the same man is named on both faces of the same coin. The argument was accepted by B. Borghesi, who throughout delights in a running polemic against any notion advanced by Haverkamp.¹² Borghesi's *auctoritas* seems to have made this view

juxta ordinem Fulvii Ursini et Caroli Patini disposita ... Nunc primum edidit & Commentario perpetuo illustravit Sigebertus Havercampus. Amsterdam 1734. Ch. Patin, *Familiae Romanae in Antiquis Numismatibus*. Paris 1663, is described as another Ursinus on the reverse accompanying his frontispiece portrait. This is true in the sense that he copies Ursinus, often *verbatim* and including the errors, to which he adds (on these coins) an error in Latinity. He is here noted only because of the reference in Haverkamp's title. Morell's *Thesaurus*, which forms the first volume of this edition (with Haverkamp's Commentary the second), is still worth looking at.

¹⁰ See n. 5. The Commentary is useful, i.a., because it quotes long passages from some of Haverkamp's predecessors *in extenso*. His own contributions are never absurd and often of value. In this work, at any rate, he does not deserve the contempt evinced (e.g.) in the reference cited n. 11.

¹¹ See the atrabilious description (referring, it seems, mainly to his work on texts) by J.E. Sandys, *History of Classical Scholarship* II (1908) p. 447.

¹² *Op. cit.* (n. 4) p. 323.

canonical. Grueber, citing Borghesi in the context (though not on the precise point), followed it in *CRRBM* I 474 f., without further argument.¹³ It still turned up half a century later, in *MRR* II (following Grueber), in the Index, though it had been overlooked in the text, where C. Calvus is not assigned a praetorship. For this Broughton was taken to task by Syme, in his review of the work in *CP* 50 (1955) 134; and Broughton duly took note and inserted the praetor in his *Supplement* (later remodelled for his vol. III). That is not yet the end of the story. Erich Gruen, in *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (1974), a work stuffed with useful prosopographical information, followed Syme almost *verbatim* on this (p. 164 n. 2): "The praetorship is certain from his description as *imperator* on coins." Oddly enough, it was in the same year that Crawford, pushing all this to one side, assumed the identity of the two C. Calvi named, thereby restoring this view to respectability. Unfortunately he offered no relevant discussion.¹⁴

Technically, Eckhel's argument is unassailable. There are still no relevant coins known on which his principle is violated. (He did not, of course, mean to apply it to the names of actual moneyers.) Borghesi's editor, Cavedoni, at once entered a caution: he pointed to coins of Pinarius Scarpus, which do indeed name M. Antonius (not, we ought to add, with his full name) on both faces. (Now *RRC* 546/2–3; we might add a slightly earlier coin of Antonius', *RRC* 542/2.) However, it has to be admitted that what

¹³ Sydenham, Crawford's less competent predecessor (*The Coins of the Roman Republic*, 1952, pp. 117 f.), in a brief note on these coins, assumes the identity of the two C. Calvi and refers to Grueber, who of course assumed the opposite.

¹⁴ It is characteristic of Harlan that he is totally unaware of this debate, with its history now stretching over more than four centuries, and has read Grueber (the only author he cites) with insufficient care. Pompously introducing the subject ("Not so fast. Another eye had a different interpretation" [*sic*]), he credits Grueber with "feeling" that the reverse commemorates two sons of the consul, and he goes on to produce a supererogatory stemma to illustrate this simple relationship (pp. 162–163). In the end he rejects this theory. Grueber, whatever he "felt", was merely following Borghesi, whom (as I noted) he cites quite close to the discussion of this point. Harlan is right to correct a slip by Crawford: on p. 324, on an earlier coin of a Coelius Calvus, he accidentally calls the consul the father of the later moneyer. Presumably Crawford knew that this was impossible and had never been proposed, but he fails to give the correct relationship among the men named on p. 459. Various other interpretations ascribed by Harlan to Grueber in fact merely follow earlier commentators. (Thus, Harlan states that "Grueber assumes" that the L. Calvus shown on the reverses was the moneyer's father – a correct interpretation that, as we saw, goes at least all the way back to Ursinus in 1577!) There is no evidence that Grueber had much time to think about these coins.

was practised in the late 30s, just before the war of Actium, cannot serve as a valid parallel for 51.

We shall deal with the legend on Calvus' coins in due course. For the moment, it must be pointed out that, on what appears now to be the standard interpretation of IMP. A. X, Imperator, Augur, Decemvir s.f., it cannot possibly apply to an unknown son of the *cos.* 94, indeed not even to the consul himself. Not having studied the whole of the discussion, I cannot at present say when this version of the decemvirate entered the tradition. Ursinus does not specify its nature. Haverkamp, on the other hand, already takes it for granted. Yet Pighius had advanced a different and more plausible version: *decemvir agris dandis*. This was revived (as *agris dividundis*) by Eckhel, who regarded it (and the augurate) as *ex epigraphe certum*. Borghesi again did not specify, but Mommsen (*Gesch. des röm. Münzwesens* (1860) pp. 636–7) cautiously stated "vermuthlich *sacris faciundis*". Mommsen should have known better, and somewhat later well might have. Syme, who must have known better, unfortunately did not comment on the alleged priesthoods in his note on *MRR*. Both Grueber and Sydenham accept the priesthoods. Crawford was cautious about them: "apparently" a claim that the man was augur and *Xvir sacris faciundis* (p. 459). Needless to say, Harlan has no hesitation: both are accepted without any uneasiness (p. 165). Yet this is totally unacceptable, as indeed should have been clear to specialists in Republican history; and it can now be checked in G.J. Szemler, *The Priests of the Roman Republic* (1972). Szemler cautiously describes the identification of the office from coins as uncertain (p. 191), yet on his list of decemvirs C. Calvus appears (p. 164) as "Xvir before 62/54". I do not know what the dates can be based on, but Szemler must have known, what is clear from his lists, that Sulla increased the number of these priests to fifteen: it would therefore have to be before 81/80. However, what Szemler explicitly shows (pp. 190–191) is that no one, with the exception of men who seized control of the *res publica* (probably Sulla and certainly Caesar), is known to have held two of the highest priesthoods at any time after the Second Punic War. Not only a supposed son of the consul of 94, but the consul himself, a *novus homo*, ought never to have been credited with these two priesthoods. A decemvirate *a.d.(a.)* is indeed less absurd: there was an opportunity under a law of M. Livius Drusus in 91 (see *Inscr. It.* XIII 3, p. 74), and although the consul was probably not available, a son of his, now perhaps twenty-four, just might have been considered. But there is, of course, another

obvious possibility, not so far mentioned: the decemvirate *stlit. iud.* (see *ILS* 6 for a highly respectable man on whose *cursus* it appears). It is puzzling that, despite these obvious alternatives, one of them known to two eminent scholars at least (and regarded as "certain" by one of them), the absurd idea of a second priesthood seems to hold the field.

We must return to the question of the identification of the two C. Caldi when we have discussed the legend in detail. The debate is obviously still going on, and the elimination of the dual priesthood at least raises it to a rational level. But another item has to be eliminated: an imaginary Eastern campaign, deduced from the trophies. Crawford, without expressing either any doubt or any positive reason, describes the round shields as "Macedonian", and believes that both they and the depiction of Sol indicate an unknown "military success in the East". Oddly enough, Borghesi (pp. 321 f.) had decreed that *only* the round shields could be Spanish: he refers to the coins of Publicius (Malleolus: *RRC* 335/1–2) and Carisius (presumably 464/6) for parallels, but does not say why he thinks that those coins should refer to Spain. For the oval shields he refers to the coins of Antonius IMP. TER, which, following Eckhel, he assigns to victories over tribes in the Caucasus. However, the shape of the shields on those coins (*RRC* 536/1–4) does not even come close to resembling those on our coins. (For Sol, one might cite the radiate Sol of Antonius, 533/2; but it gives no indication of referring to the East: the obverse shows him as a Roman priest!)

We must here turn to Harlan, for some ideas on both the shields and the god. He gives evidence, both literary and archaeological, for round shields in Spain (p. 164) and he also cites a coin of Albinus Bruti f(ilius) (450/1) as combining an oval and a round shield, which, following Crawford (most recently), he regards as commemorating Caesar's Gallic victories.¹⁵ In fact, more can be added: the actual round shield depicted on 450/1, as shown in Crawford's illustration, is precisely similar to the shield in his illustrations of the round shields in 437; and the larger number of

¹⁵ For the coins of Albinus Bruti f. see Banti (cit. n. 1) VII pp. 265 ff. The oval shield is in a saltire of *carnyces*, between their heads turned inwards. Reference to Caesar (and Brutus himself) in Gaul is highly plausible. The round shield stands between the stems of the *carnyces*, visibly not so closely associated with them. (If wanted, it could hardly have been put anywhere else on the coin.) We should not exclude the possibility that it refers to Caesar's victory in Spain (not, officially, a civil war), at most a few months before these coins were minted.

illustrations in Banti (VII pp. 265 ff. and III pp. 168 ff.) confirm the similarity or identity. There is no need whatsoever to describe these shields as "Macedonian".

As for the Sun on the reverse of 437/1, Pighius already suggested a connection with the *cognomen*: "*Caldi a calore caeli et Solis appellari voluere*" (p. 136); and he thought that the round shield, with its *convexitas* and *caelatura*, suggested the sky. This was frequently repeated in later discussions, at least as one possibility. Harlan takes this interpretation one step further. He suggests that Sol is not merely "a punning allusion to the moneyer's name" but "a full portrait bust of his divine ancestor, the god Sol, from whom we are to assume that the Coelii Caldi claim descent and hence came their *cognomen* Caldus (hot)" (p. 165). The suggestion is worth serious consideration, for such representations were by then not unknown. (Cf., e.g., *RRC* 320/1, 346/1, 425/1.) On the other hand, punning allusions had also been used before (e.g. 317/2, 337/1). I find it difficult to imagine that the Coelii Caldi, well known to be a junior branch of an aristocratic *gens* whose senior branch were the Antipatri, with a *cognomen* probably derived from a Macedonian War¹⁶ – that this family would expect to be taken seriously if it claimed descent and a *cognomen* from the Sun. The punning allusion still seems far more likely, especially since the name could also be interpreted *in deterius* (Cic. *Inv.* 2.28), a handicap the family had no doubt encountered and had to overcome. (The Cicero passage is already cited by Haverkamp.) However, I agree with Harlan (and, for that matter, Haverkamp) that it is as far-fetched to seek an Eastern allusion in the Sun as in the round shield. As Pighius put it, the Caldi would like to think (and would like others to think) that they were named after the Sun.

We must now, finally, turn to the legend on the reverses of 2–4. The interpretation we have been discussing has, throughout the history of the treatment of these coins, been taken over by each scholar from his predecessors. As far as I am aware, the only difference has been over the nature of the posited decemvirate; and here, the least plausible interpretation has prevailed.

It is surely a basic principle, in interpreting ancient texts, to start with trying to see what the text would have meant to contemporaries. It is only

¹⁶ See G.V. Sumner, *The Orators in Cicero's Brutus* (1973) p. 57, with an adventurous stemma.

after this that the task of commenting and explaining can begin. The legend corresponding to the name of C. CALDVVS reads (we remember) IMP.A.X. IMP looks straightforward and needs no immediate discussion. But when we turn to A and X, it is surely quite extraordinary that these *litterae singulares* (at most, the monogram **A** can take the place of plain A) have, without any discussion, been interpreted, ever since Ursinus, as Augur and Decemvir. I am not aware of any inscription or coin legend of the Republic that would provide a parallel. We do not find decemvirs denoted by X any more than we find triumvirs denoted by III. Nor is A for Augur a recognised abbreviation: as far as I know, the word, when not written out in full, is abbreviated AVG. No Roman of the late Republic (indeed, I would suggest, no Roman of any period, though this generalisation is not important to the case) would have read A as Augur and X as decemvir. Neither abbreviation is listed, for example, in Dessau's *Compendia Scripturae* in *ILS* III 2; indeed, X is not listed as an abbreviation at all, and I am not aware that it in fact can be one.

How would a contemporary Roman have read A.X? That is the question, as we saw. And the answer seems obvious, once the question is asked without prejudice. A is a standard abbreviation of forms of *annus*, and X, of course, is a simple numeral. A.X can only be read as A(nnis/os) (decem). Borghesi, at a time when only coins reading A were generally known, discovered "support" for the interpretation as "Augur" (the only time, to my knowledge, that anyone has even bothered to argue for it!) by citing a coin with an AV monogram (obviously **A**, although he does not illustrate it) in his possession. Cavedoni knew of two more examples. There are now far more, and a good selection can be inspected in Banti, pp. 172 ff. That AV is not an abbreviation for Augur has already been noted. How, then, is the **A** to be interpreted? What has to be pointed out is that it need not stand for AV: it can equally well stand for AN. This is (or ought to be) well known to numismatists. An instructive example is *RRC* 221, a coin inscribed **A** **R****V**, with a ligature in each part of the name. This had long and (I think) universally been read as Aurelius Rufus, a combination unknown in the upper class of the Republic, so that the moneyer could not be identified. Crawford, following a suggestion of mine, decided to read Annius Rufus – and at once plausibly identified him as the later *cos.* 128, a *nobilis* who gained fame as a builder of roads. There is no objection to taking **A**, followed by X, as again standing for A(nnis/os). The abbrevia-

tion is duly listed by Dessau (AN = anno, annos, annis). I think it is safe to claim that any contemporary Roman would have read the message of these coins as referring to a C. Calvus who was *imperator* for ten years.

Before we go any further, we should note that this solves the problem of identity: if the claim is to be at all plausible, it can only refer to the consul, not to his putative and undocumented son. Since the consul was born in 140 (possibly 139), his son is unlikely to have been born before 115. He would be of praetorian age in the middle seventies, a time when it is safe to state that no one could have been *imperator* for ten years (i.e. until the mid-sixties) and escape all literary notice. No one could even have commanded an army for that length of time without attracting a great deal of notice: witness L. Lucullus. The identity of the C. Calvus of the reverse with that of the obverse cannot be in doubt, despite the technical impediment discovered by Eckhel. Historical possibilities must take precedence. By 51 BC, many numismatic conventions had been abandoned. And here C. Calvus *needed* to be identified as the man to whom the legend on the other side of the reverse referred, since it would otherwise inevitably have referred to L. Calvus, the VIIvir, the only man named apart from the moneyer. This necessity required the abandonment of precedent, if the consul's claim to distinction was to be set out and understood.

What are the facts behind the claim made by his grandson? It is obvious that he cannot have been *imperator* for ten years. As Crawford has made likely, he only got the acclamation in 90, and he had certainly disappeared from the scene by 80: no prominent commander, certainly not one in Gaul, could have escaped notice during the *bellum Sullanum*. Moreover, we know that C. Flaccus was in Gaul by 85, when young L. Flaccus fled to him after the assassination of the elder L. Flaccus by Fimbria (Cic. *Flacc. ap. Schol. Bob. p. 96St., Quinct. 28.*).

As I pointed out,¹⁷ C. Flaccus' *provincia* was Spain – certainly Citerior, quite likely the whole of Spain: in 85, as Cicero's careful avoidance of the term makes clear, he was in charge in Gaul, but not its proconsul. I suggested that he had been asked to take charge of the important province in an emergency, when the Roman government could not find many reliable men of senior standing to send to provincial commands. We can now try to specify the nature of the emergency: since we do not hear of any

¹⁷ *Studies* (cit. n. 3) pp. 92 f.

commander in Gaul between 90 and 85, we may suggest that C. Coelius Calvus had stayed there all this time, and had died in 86 or 85.

When did he arrive? This brings up the question of his Spanish command. As we have seen, it is usually (and quite plausibly) assigned to his praetorship and/or the year after. But we do not in fact know of any commander in Citerior after T. Didius, who triumphed in June 93. Was C. Coelius asked to look after Citerior when Didius left, presumably early in 93? It is not impossible that, as I pointed out,¹⁸ Citerior and Gallia Transalpina could be connected, as they certainly were in the last years of Flaccus' command. If so, even if his *provincia* was Gallia, he may have fought and won a battle in Celtiberia. We cannot tell with any degree of confidence. Nor can we be sure when he went to Gaul, except that he must have been there by 93, *ex consulatu*, the very year when Citerior, before C. Flaccus' arrival some time in 92 (presumably – though some time in 93 is not impossible) needed temporary attention. But it now seems to me likely that he went there in 94, certainly before the end of his consulate.

That depends on the date of L. Crassus', his predecessor's, tenure. The sources are contradictory, and I have myself been confused about this in the past. It needs reconsideration. What we know is that L. Crassus, after a minor victory in Cisalpina, went home and tried to obtain a triumph, and that his colleague Q. Mucius Scaevola prevented it. Valerius Maximus (3.7.6), in an improving anecdote, says that he went to Gaul *ex consulatu*. Cicero (*Inv.* 2.111) says it was during his consulate; and this is confirmed by Asconius p. 15C, who reports that his triumph was prevented by the *intercessio* of his colleague Scaevola. One might not attach too much importance to the *De Inventione*, but Asconius must have got his version from a different source (perhaps a lost later work of Cicero's). B.A. Marshall in his commentary on the passage,¹⁹ has pointed out the significance of the word *intercessit*: it must refer to a time when the two consuls were still in office. L. Crassus therefore returned from his province in the course of 95, their joint consulship, and there is no reason to think that he went back. It is perhaps best to regard Valerius' statement as his own explanation, in the light of what he considered common practice at this time. If we prefer Cicero and Asconius, then Gallia had no known commander in

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, see also *Mél. A. Piganiol* (1966) pp. 906 ff.

¹⁹ *Historical Commentary on Asconius* (1985) pp. 109 f.

94, and it becomes quite likely that C. Coelius was sent to assume his command during his consulship, just as L. Crassus must have been in 95.

When we next come across him there, fighting the Salluvii (see above), it is 90. What had detained him for so many years, we simply cannot tell. He ought normally to have been able to return by 92. One guess (it cannot be more) is that the man assigned to Gallia in 92 could not take it up, whether through illness or death or through a more urgent posting elsewhere. If C. Coelius had to stay until 91, for whatever reason, he would be caught up in the desperate shortage of commanders caused by the prospect of the Social War which I disengaged and documented in my article (cit. n. 17). As I there pointed out, we have the example of C. Sentius, praetor in the year of C. Coelius' consulship, who went to Macedonia *ex praetura* and stayed until he was chased out by Sulla in 87. Again, we do not know why he was forced to stay in 92–1, but the example must be taken to heart. In any case, we may regard it as certain that C. Coelius was there continuously through 90. In 87, when C. Flaccus was still busy in Spain,²⁰ there are good reasons for thinking that C. Coelius was still in Gaul.²¹ But by 85, as we saw above, C. Flaccus was looking after Gaul and able to receive his nephew there. C. Coelius presumably died in 86 or 85: as I once put it, we hope it was a natural death.

If C. Coelius went to Gaul in 93 and died in 86 (the minimum period we have to assume), he was there for eight years, or very nearly. That is as far as I got when I wrote my article in 1958, at that time still in ignorance of these coins and their possible relevance. But as we saw, it is quite possible that he in fact went to Gaul during his consulship in 94, and his death cannot be documented until 85. If so, he could be said to have been there for ten years, even if they were not a full ten years.

Let us return to the coins. As we saw, the *prima facie* meaning of the legend IMP. A.X is that the man commemorated was *imperator* for ten years. It is only by special pleading (or, to be precise, by no pleading at all!) that this meaning can be evaded and the traditional expansion into an augurate and a decemvirate substituted. It is time we returned to the plain meaning of the Latin, as every Roman would read it. Of course, the

²⁰ As shown by his attention to the dispute recorded in the *tabula Contrebiensis* (see *MRR* III p. 21).

²¹ Made probable by the story of the *legatus* P. Coelius (see *SGRH*, cit n. 3, pp. 92 f.).

implication of IMP is that the man received an imperatorial acclamation and, in conjunction with A.X, the impression is given that he held it for ten years – which we saw was not the fact in the case of C. Coelius, who only received it in 90. But we must remember that there was no special virtue or distinction attached to holding the imperatorial title, in that sense, for ten years – without triumphing. It could happen, in special political circumstances, as perhaps in the case of C. Flaccus (although we cannot be sure when he received his acclamation): he triumphed only under Sulla, when he at last returned to Rome. We must also remember that, despite its specialisation in the meaning we have noted, the word *imperator* never lost its original sense of one commanding an army, especially a Roman army as a holder of *imperium*. Instances of this are probably at least as numerous as the use of the specialised meaning. I refer to a small random selection in a note.²²

We can now see that, in this primary sense, C. Coelius, the moneyer's grandfather, could very probably – although our evidence is defective, as usual in this period – be justly claimed to have been *imperator* (i.e., to have commanded an army, holding *imperium*) for ten years, during the unusual time when commands had to be prolonged owing to the shortage of commanders created by the Social and the Civil Wars. And in fact, of course, C. Coelius probably *was* acclaimed *imperator*, although only several years into his tenure: even in this sense, his grandson was not telling an outright lie. But we must in any case restore to him the unusual (though not quite unparalleled) distinction explicitly claimed for him by his grandson, who did not have many family honours to record, and made the most of what material he found.²³

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²² The showpiece is Cic. *De or.* 1.210, with a long definition of an *imperator* (it starts with his being *administrator belli gerendi*); cf. *Div.* 1.102, where the *imperator* has the duty of ritually purifying (*lustrare*) his army; and numerous casual references in the speeches (e.g., *prov. cons.* 5,9) that can be found in the *Lexicon*. For Caesar, see, e.g., *BC* 3.51.4: *aliae ... sunt legati partes atque imperatoris*.

²³ I dedicate this study to the distinguished memory of Professor Iiro Kajanto. I wish he had lived to read it and enjoy it.