

THE TRESVIRI MONETALES AND THE REPUBLICAN CURSUS HONORUM

CHARLES D. HAMILTON

University of Chicago

The following study on the *tresviri monetales* and their place in Roman political life during the late Republic had its origin initially in the hope that a study of the coinage in this period might prove a useful source of information about politics and propaganda. Such an expectation seemed justified by two facts: first, the recognition that politics in the Republic was controlled rather narrowly by a tight oligarchy, and that any knowledge about the identity of a group of office-holders, such as the moneyers, ought to be of value (in the way that studies of the higher magistrates, their careers, and their family connections, along prosopographical lines, have been of great importance in the last half-century); and secondly, the realization that numismatics proves extremely valuable to the historian of the Imperial Age (see M. Grant, *From Imperium to Auctoritas*, or C. H. V. Sutherland, *Coinage in Roman Imperial Policy*).

We possess a considerable body of material—almost 200 coins of individual moneyers, varying greatly in legend or type, and all bearing the name of the moneyer who struck them—for the period from 150 to 50 B.C. Surely one might expect to obtain some rather interesting information about Roman politics from the large number of moneyers whose names are known, and from the variety of types employed on their coins. The modern literature on this subject is disappointing,

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however, and historians have paid relatively little attention to this body of evidence until quite recently.¹ The reasons for this apparent neglect seem to be two. First, the numismatic material was in need of proper classification and cataloging, and little could be done until this had been accomplished. In recent years several important works have appeared, among them Broughton's *Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, Sydenham's *Coinage of the Roman Republic*, and especially Crawford's *Roman Republican Coin Hoards*, which make a more thorough examination and investigation of this material possible. The second reason for the limited use made of the coins depends largely, it seems to me, on the view taken of the coinage and its relation to Roman public life. Although some coinage was issued upon occasion by aediles or quaestors, the vast majority of Republican coinage was produced by minor officials, chosen for this purpose, and called *tresviri auro argento aere flando feriundo*, or simply *IIIviri monetales*. Harold Mattingly's *Roman Coins*, still by far the best introduction to the study of Roman numismatics, describes the post of the *monetalis* as follows:² it formed part of the *vigintisexvirate* (a collection of twenty-six minor officials), and was held by young Senatorials at the beginning of their careers, at the age of twenty-seven at the earliest, after military service; it was held immediately before the quaestorship, and marked the first preparatory step in the direction of the higher offices of the *cursus honorum*. It was an annual office, with duties shared among the three, and, at least in the last century of the Republic, the moneyer had completely free choice in the types employed for his coins. This is essentially the position, enunciated by Mattingly, to which most modern numismatists seem to subscribe, with perhaps a few exceptions in matters of detail.³ Since the post was occupied

¹ See A. Alföldi, "The Main Aspects of Political Propaganda on the Coinage of the Roman Republic," in *Essays in Roman Coinage Presented to Harold Mattingly*, edd. Carson and Sutherland (Oxford 1956), and E. Bernareggi, *Eventi e Personaggi sul Denario della Repubblica Romana* (Milan 1963).

² Harold Mattingly, *Roman Coins*² (London 1967) 29–31.

³ See, among others, T. Mommsen, *Geschichte des römischen Münzwesens* (Berlin 1860) 454–59; H. A. Grueber, *Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum* (London 1910) vol. 1, pp. lx–lxix; K. Pink, *The Triumviri Monetales* (New York 1952) 49–55; E. A. Sydenham, *The Coinage of the Roman Republic* (London 1952, rev. by G. C. Haines) xlviii–l.

largely by young men of Senatorial family who were embarking on political careers, and since they employed for the most part types reflecting ancestral fame and heroic deeds, so the argument goes, one should expect to find in the coinage a mirror of the political aspirations and political control of the state by the Senatorial nobility.⁴ Indeed, if this is the case, it is hardly surprising that the coinage has proven of only limited value as a source of knowledge about contemporary issues and propaganda.

Hans Schaefer, writing in Pauly-Wissowa on the *vigintisexvirate*, challenged the assertion of Mattingly that the post of moneyer was considered an introduction to a political career, and even suggested the contrary. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that moneyers of the Republic on the whole do not advance in the true *cursus honorum*, and perhaps may not even have had this in mind."⁵ Schaefer's remarks, although provocative, seem to have gone unnoticed: the 1967 edition of Mattingly's *Roman Coins* takes no notice of them, and Ernesto Bernareggi, in a book concerned with the study of coin-types, describes the post of *monetalis* as "the first step of the *cursus honorum*," and asserts that "the profound political sagacity of the Romans reserved the post for young men intent on undertaking political careers, and destined to direct the fortunes of the state in the near future."⁶ The entire question seems in need of clarification, and to my knowledge this has not been attempted. The object of this paper is to undertake an investigation of the literary and numismatic evidence, in order to see who the *monetales* were, and to determine what relation their post bore to the *cursus honorum* and to Roman political life in general.

There are several aspects of this question which must be discussed in order to understand the position of the *monetales* in the Roman state. First, the office of the moneyer itself—its origin, nature, and function—must be considered. Then, since the *monetales* were frequently grouped with several other minor magistrates collectively called the *vigintisexviri*, we must examine the relation of this group to the *cursus honorum* proper. Finally we shall review the data relating

⁴ Grueber (above, note 3) lxxxiv ff.; Alföldi (above, note 1) 66.

⁵ H. Schaefer, "Vigintivirat," *RE Suppl.* 8A, 2, col. 2576.

⁶ Bernareggi (above, note 1) 10.

to the personnel of the office, and the further political careers of the moneyers, in order to see what conclusions can be drawn about the place of the moneyers in political life.

The sole ancient text which bears on the establishment of the *monetales* is a late passage of Pomponius in the Digest (1.2.2.30):

deinde cum esset necessarius magistratus qui hastae praessent, decemviri in litibus iudicandis sunt constituti. constituti sunt eodem tempore et quattuorviri qui curam viarum agerent, et triumviri monetales aeris argenti auri flatores, et triumviri capitales qui carceris custodiam habent.

By taking this in conjunction with a passage of Livy describing the creation of the *capitales*, we arrive at 289 as the traditional date for the establishment of the *monetales*.⁷ Several scholars have raised objections against this dating on various grounds, ranging from the argument that there was no Roman coinage in 289 to the suggestion of internal inconsistency in the passage of Pomponius. Rudi Thomsen has dealt persuasively with these objections, and the traditional date seems conclusively established now.⁸

Concerning the nature and function of the office, we know from literary and epigraphic testimony that the ordinary coinage of the Republic was entrusted to the *monetales*. There are two other categories of coinage, however, which appear from time to time at Rome. The first is that issued by other regular magistrates, such as the quaestors, and marked with some sign of special authorization, e.g. *SC*, *EX SC* (*ex senatus consulto*). The second was issued by *imperatores*, military commanders in the field, through their subalterns.⁹ This situation has given rise to some debate over where the ultimate right to issue coinage lay.

Theodor Mommsen was of the opinion that it was the sovereign right of the state, delegated to the highest and most important magistrate, the consul, who exercised it by virtue of *imperium*, or executive power. Karl Pink admits that the right to coin lay ultimately with the sovereign state, but denies that the consul ever exercised it, since the office of

⁷ Livy, *Epitome* xi. See the full discussion in R. Thomsen, *Early Roman Coinage* (Copenhagen 1957-61) 3.173.

⁸ Thomsen (above, note 7) 172-78.

⁹ See Grueber (above, note 3) lxix-lxxiv and Mattingly (above, note 2) 31-34.

quaestor, or financial official, had been created before the introduction of coinage at Rome. A possible third alternative, offered by Mattingly, is that the *right* to coin was vested in the people; the administration lay with the Senate, as the presence of *SC* on extraordinary issues suggests.¹⁰

Although we cannot speak with finality, the truth probably lies in a synthesis of these views. The right to coin surely lay with the state, but the actual job of coining was early entrusted to the *monetales*. The Senate had acquired the right to control the ordinary flow of coinage, perhaps as part of its general supervision of fiscal affairs which custom clearly recognized by the second century. The consuls also appear to have reserved the right to strike coins for payment to their troops, without any Senatorial authorization, as certain special issues attest. Thus Republican coinage falls into one of three categories: (1) ordinary issues, struck by the *monetales*, at the direction of the Senate; (2) special issues of magistrates such as quaestors or aediles, under direct Senatorial authority, for special purposes; and (3) some military issues, struck by commanders in the field, probably to pay their troops.

The post of *monetalis* seems then to have originated early in the third century, shortly after the introduction of a truly Roman coinage. It was an office subordinate to that of the quaestor, entailing the supervision of striking and distributing coins, when requested, as a routine matter.¹¹ That the post carried a measure of responsibility and prestige is indicated by the fact that the magistrates were required to "sign" their coinage in order to verify its quality, and by their freedom of choice in the types employed on the coins.¹²

The next point to be considered is the relationship of the collection of minor magistracies, known as the *vigintisexviri*, to the *cursus honorum*.¹³ What we should like to determine is whether tenure of one

¹⁰ Mommsen (above, note 3) 364-65; Pink (above, note 3) 50; Mattingly (above, note 2) 28.

¹¹ Pink (above, note 3) 63.

¹² Mattingly (above, note 2) 31 and Pink (above, note 3) 65.

¹³ The *vigintisexviri* comprised a number of *magistratus minores*, during the Republic; their number was reduced, and they were known as *vigintiviri*, under the Empire. I shall employ, somewhat incorrectly, the English "vigintiviral" for the Republic, since it is less awkward than "vigintisexviral." The offices included *decemviri stlitibus iudicandis*, a board to deal with lawsuits; *tresviri capitales*, in charge of prisons and executions; *quattuorviri viis in urbe purgandis*, who saw to keeping the streets in good

of these posts was considered an *obligatory* preliminary step to the *cursus* proper and, if not, whether it was *customary* to hold one of them at the outset of a political career.

We possess, in a passage of Tacitus relating to A.D. 20, a solid piece of evidence which affords a *terminus ante quem*. The emperor Tiberius "commended Germanicus' son Nero, who had now entered on man's estate, to the good offices of the fathers, and taxed the gravity of his audience by asking them to relieve him of the duty of serving on the vigintivirate and to allow his candidature for the quaestorship, five years before the legal age."¹⁴ Clearly, in the time of Tiberius, the vigintivirate formed a necessary introductory step to a political career, the *cursus honorum* proper. But can this situation be held for the Republic?

For the pre-Sullan period, there is very little evidence bearing on the minor magistracies. The Pomponian excerpt testifies to the establishment of several vigintiviral posts in 289, but it makes no mention of their connection with the *cursus* proper. Two laws of the Gracchan period might seem to shed some light on the question. The *lex Acilia repetundarum* and the *lex Latina tabulae Bantinae* both catalog offices which lead to a Senatorial career, and neither mentions any vigintiviral post except that of *tresvir capitalis*.¹⁵ Although Mommsen was surely wrong in concluding from this observation that the post of *monetalis* had not yet been formally established,¹⁶ it is highly prob-

repair; *tresviri monetales*; and, under the Republic, but eliminated by Augustus, *duoviri viis extra urbem purgandis* and four *praefecti Capuam Cumas*. Cf. T. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* (Leipzig 1887) 2.1.592-610.

¹⁴ Tacitus, *Annals* 3.29: "per idem tempus Neronem e liberis Germanici iam ingressum iuventam commendavit patribus, utque munere capessendi vigintiviratus solveretur et quinquennio maturius quam per leges quaesturam peteret, non sine inrisu audientium, postulavit."

¹⁵ The *lex Acilia repetundarum* regulates the composition of juries at Rome, and stringently disqualifies anyone of Senatorial rank or connection; the *lex Latina* constrains the magistrates enumerated to uphold its provisions (unknown, since the tablet is broken). The important point is that both catalog numerous offices, connected with a Senatorial career, and neither mentions the *monetales*. The *lex Acilia* reads: "dum ne quem eorum legat, quei tr. pl., q., IIIvir cap., tr. mil. l. IIII primis aliqua earum, IIIvirum a. d. a. siet fueritve, queve in senatu siet fueritve . . ." (Bruns, *FIRA*⁷, pp. 56-57). The *lex Latina*: "dic(tator), co(n)s(ul), pr(aetor), mag(ister) eq(uitum), cens(or), aid(ilis), tr(ibunus) pl(ebci), q(uaestor), IIIvir cap(italis), IIIvir a(greis) d(andeis) a(dsignandeis) ioudex . . ." (Bruns, p. 54, para. 14, 15).

¹⁶ Mommsen (above, note 3) 367.

able that one of the vigintiviral posts was not a formal requirement for advancement in the *cursus* at this time. There is, furthermore, no tradition that the Gracchi held one of these minor offices prior to their tribuneships, in spite of the fact that we are relatively well informed about their careers, and can be sure that any flaw in the regular procedure to the *cursus* would have been exposed by their many enemies. The *elogium* of C. Claudius Pulcher lists him as *monetalis* ca. 104 B.C., and after serving as quaestor.¹⁷ This is the earliest surviving reference to the post, and the suggestion that the succession of offices mentioned here is either a mistake or an exception to a supposed rule is hardly a compelling presentation.¹⁸ Finally, two recent studies of the *lex Villia annalis* strongly suggest that any formal *cursus honorum* regulated only the consulship, praetorship, and quaestorship, and that perhaps even the quaestorship was not a strict requirement before the time of Sulla.¹⁹ Down to about 104 at least, therefore, there seems to be no evidence to indicate that tenure of a minor magistracy was considered a necessary preliminary step to the *cursus honorum*.

If the establishment of the vigintivirate as such is to be dated between 104 B.C. and A.D. 20, there are three times at which one would expect such a constitutional change. These are the reforms of Sulla in 81-80, the reforms of Caesar in the mid-forties, and the reforms of Augustus after his emergence as undisputed head of state in 30 B.C. Although Sulla's legislation dealt with the reorganization of the magistracies, and re-established a fixed *cursus honorum* with time limits, there is absolutely no record that he made any change in the minor magistracies. Cicero does speak in *De legibus* of the minor magistracies as a group, and it would definitely seem that the vigintivirate existed as a recognized set of offices in his day;²⁰ but he gives no indication that tenure of one of these posts was a necessary prerequisite to the *cursus*. In fact, in another place (*Verr.* 1.4.11) he explicitly states: *quaestura*

¹⁷ CIL 1², p. 200.

¹⁸ The view of Sydenham (above, note 3) xlix, and Mattingly (above, note 2) 29.

¹⁹ See A. E. Astin, *The Lex Annalis before Sulla* (Bruxelles 1958) 46; and H. Chantraine, "Der cursus honorum des Marius und die lex Villia annalis," in *Untersuchungen zur römischen Geschichte* (Kallmünz 1959).

²⁰ Cicero, *De legibus* 3.3.6: "minores magistratus partiti iuris plures in plura sunt. militiae, quibus iussi erunt, imperant eorumque tribuni sunt, domi pecuniam publicam custodiunt, vincula sontium servant, capitalia vindicant, aes argentum aurumve publice signant, lites contractas iudicant, quodcumque senatus creverit, agunt."

primus gradus honoris. There seems no reason to assume that any formal change was made in the status of these posts under Sulla. Of Caesar's legislation concerning them, we possess a single reference in Suetonius (*Div. Iul.* 41): *magistratuum minorum numerum ampliavit*. This is borne out by the numismatic evidence which indicates that he increased the number of moneyers from three to four.²¹ There is, however, no other evidence on the point for this time. In connection with Augustus, on the contrary, we have what appears to be an explicit reference to this very question. According to Dio, "a decree had been passed that the *vigintiviri*, as they were called, should be appointed from the *equites*; and thus none of them was any longer enrolled in the senate unless he had also held one of the other offices permitting entrance to the senate."²²

To be sure, this decree does not make tenure of a *vigintiviral* post a requirement for eligibility to the Senate, but the phrase "one of the other offices permitting entrance" implies, at least, that there existed some connection between the *vigintiviral* posts and a Senatorial career. It is very possible that Dio is less than precise here, and in any event the likelihood is that tenure of a *vigintiviral* post was made a requirement for a Senatorial career under Augustus.²³ It is clear, on the basis of the literary evidence, that tenure of a *vigintiviral* post was *not* a formal prerequisite to entrance on the *cursus honorum* in the late Republic. The question still remains, however, whether or not tenure of a *vigintiviral* post was a *customary* introductory step to political life in the late Republic.²⁴

An investigation of the careers of the *monetales* from 150 to 50 B.C. should shed some light on the relationship between the tenure of this

²¹ Sydenham (above, note 3) p. 180, no. 1089.

²² Cassius Dio 54.26.5: καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πρότερον μὲν, ἀποδημούντος ἔτι τοῦ Αὐγούστου, δόγμα ἐγένετο τοὺς εἴκοσι καλουμένους ἄνδρας ἐκ τῶν ἱππέων ἀποδείκνυσθαι· ὅθεν οὐκετ' οὐδέις αὐτῶν ἐς τὸ βουλευτήριον ἐσεγράφη, μὴ καὶ ἑτέραν τινα ἀρχὴν τῶν ἐς αὐτὸ ἐσάγειν δυναμένων λαβῶν.

²³ This view has been adopted by Mommsen, *R. Staatsrecht* 1.544, and H. S. Jones, "Senatus Populusque Romanus," *CAH* 10.162 note 1.

²⁴ Unfortunately we possess very little evidence for any of these posts except that of *monetalis*, so any full discussion of this question is necessarily precluded. Nonetheless, since it is my object to determine whether the post of *monetalis* specifically served as a customary introductory step to a political career, a consideration of the relatively abundant evidence for *this* post will still prove valuable.

office and a successful future in Roman politics. This particular period has been chosen for study because the first really identifiable moneyers' names begin to appear on coins about the middle of the second century, and therefore it becomes possible to determine who the moneyers are and to trace their careers from this time on. This is also a fruitful period to investigate because it corresponds with the century of political turmoil that culminated in the outbreak of civil war between Caesar and Pompey, and the collapse of normal political activity in the Republic. For the purposes of this study, I have used the lists of *monetales* and the dates provided in Crawford's recent study of Republican coin hoards,²⁵ since this work clearly supersedes the less satisfactory chronological arrangements of Sydenham and Pink.

The method followed was to consult the "Index of Careers" in *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, as well as the *Supplement* to this work, and the "Appendix on Monetales" contained in vol. 2. Broughton's work proved extremely valuable in bringing together the available information about any given *monetalis*, as well as in providing a conspectus for the careers of other members of the same family (where these exist). Special studies in the older works of Mommsen, Babelon, and Grueber also proved helpful on occasion. Since the primary purpose of the investigation was to determine whether or not *monetales* generally proceeded to considerable further careers, and hence whether the office of moneyer seems to have been a customary or coveted position for beginning one's political career (as the traditional view has it), I have listed as "successful" anyone known to have held one or more of the following Republican magistracies: quaestorship, aedileship, praetorship, consulship, or censorship. Only in two or three cases have I suggested a new identification of a *monetalis* with a magistrate of similar name (usually where Crawford's new chronology makes this advisable), so that the vast majority of those listed as "successful" have their careers assured in *MRR*.²⁶ A secondary object of the inquiry was to determine the quality of the families

²⁵ The tabular chronological arrangement of M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coin Hoards* (London 1969), is based on the only really reliable evidence, viz. the type sequences according to hoard distribution. On the merits of Crawford's study, see my review of his work in a forthcoming volume of *Classical Philology*.

²⁶ The documentation for those *monetales* listed in Crawford who have further careers can be found in Broughton's *MRR*.

which supplied *monetales*, so I was interested to note whether there were several *monetales* from any given family, and whether the family was otherwise politically prominent. The study has yielded interesting results, and certain patterns among the *monetales* can, I think, be discerned.

The first observation concerns the quality (prominence, *nobilitas*, etc.) of the families which supply *monetales*. In the first chronological period, from 150 to 125 (see Appendix, Table 1), the *monetales* can be divided into three categories. The first comprises those from families which are otherwise totally unknown, or hardly prominent in politics, e.g. Cn. Gellius, C. Renius, L. Antestius Gragulus, C. Aburius Geminus and his brother Marcus, M. Fabrinus, M. Vargunteius, P. Maenius Antiaticus, and others. The second group includes those who apparently represent families in which successive generations hold the post of *monetalis*, but no other office, e.g. C. Curiatius Trigeninus, C. Titinius, Cn. Lucretius Trio, C. Minucius Augurinus, L. Opimius, C. Servilius, etc. It is not possible to prove such connections in every possible case of this sort, but a sufficient number of *monetales* with uncommon names, or who use a filiation, exists to indicate that there may have been a class of families which traditionally supplied Rome with moneyers, but no other officials. The third category comprises those who apparently come from prominent families, and among them there are about as many who are otherwise unknown, hence presumably lesser members of the *gentes*, as those who have important subsequent careers. Among the successful, we may note Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus cos. 122, Q. Fabius Maximus cos. 116, and C. Caecilius Metellus Caprarius cos. 113. Only a handful of *monetales* have successful careers, however, and for this early period, at least, the evidence can hardly be said to support the suggestion that "young Senatorials began their careers with this post." Because of the relatively minor role which this office played in Roman political life, the same exclusive jealousy toward it was not practiced by the *nobiles* as toward the higher offices. The presence of numerous *monetales* of unknown family surely indicates this to be so.

In the next two chronological periods, according to Crawford's arrangement, covering 124 to 79 (see Appendix, Tables 2 and 3), the same general picture holds true. Most of those successful are from

consular families, and reach at least the praetorship. There now seem to be more *monetales* from prominent families who succeed to significant subsequent careers than those, apparently also from similar families, whose careers can be traced no further. Well over half the *monetales*, however, continue to come from obscure families, with no obvious political connections or influence, and almost all of these men have no other documented political careers.

There is a striking change, however, in the quality of the personnel of this office in the last three decades considered, from 78 to 49 (see Appendix, Table 4). In the first decade, there is only one *monetalis* from a prominent *gens*, L. Cassius Longinus. The other four who secure offices later all seem to be new aspirants in Roman politics: L. Rutilius Flaccus, C. Egnatius Maximus, Q. Fufius Kalenus, and T. Vettius Sabinus. The remainder are unknown *monetales* from obscure or unknown families. For the next decade, 69 to 58, there are only three *monetales*, otherwise unknown, from obscure families: Hosidius Geta, Pomponius Musa, and L. Furius Brocchus. On the other hand, seven *monetales* are apparently from prominent *gentes*, and six of them are later successful in their careers (M. Aemilius Lepidus, L. Manlius Torquatus, L. Cassius Longinus, Paullus Aemilius Lepidus, L. Scribonius Libo, and C. Calpurnius Piso). Finally, there are three successful *monetales* from obscure families: L. Roscius Fabatus, P. Plautius Hypsaecus, and M. Nonius Sufenas. In the final decade, eight *monetales* are from prominent families, and were obviously destined for political careers, e.g. L. Marcius Philippus, son of the consul in 56, Faustus Cornelius Sulla, son of the Dictator, P. Licinius Crassus, son of the triumvir, and Q. Caepio (M. Iunius) Brutus, the tyrannicide. There are only two or three *monetales* from obscure families, two of whom apparently representing families which had supplied *monetales* earlier. There are relatively few traces throughout this period of lesser members of prominent *gentes* holding the office, in contrast to the period before 78, and the numbers and proportions of those from obscure families decrease markedly as well. In fact, the position of *monetalis* appears to change in Roman public life after about 78. In the 70's, the nobility show very little interest in it, while several individuals from unimportant families hold this post and then continue in political life. In the 60's and 50's numerous

scions of prominent families begin to manifest interest in the post of *monetalis*, and fewer individuals of humble origins hold the office as its importance is enhanced.

If we consider the statistical evidence available for the *monetales* and their careers, the picture of a growing interest in the post of *monetalis* as a first step in politics is confirmed. For the period 150 to 125, Crawford lists 46 *monetales*, only 5 of whom appear to have later successful careers (11%). For the period 124 to 92, I find evidence for 17 successful subsequent careers out of 68 *monetales* listed (25%). For the period 91 to 79, there are only 6 successful out of 30 (20%). In the last period, however, from 78 to 49, there is a significant change: some 25 out of 46 have subsequent successful careers, or about 54%. If we examine the evidence decade by decade for this period, the quantitative increase is even more marked: from 78 to 69, 5 out of 16 (30%); from 68 to 58, 9 out of 13 (70%); and from 58 to 49, 11 out of 16 (70%).

To be sure, the utmost care must be exercised in dealing with this kind of statistics. It is a fact that we are much better informed concerning the lesser magistrates in the later decades of the Republic than earlier. For example, Broughton lists only 12 aediles and 31 quaestors for the entire period from 124 to 91, while we can identify 19 aediles and 26 quaestors between 68 and 59, and again 19 aediles and 30 quaestors between 58 and 49. These figures clearly indicate that it would be unwise to build a case for significant change on the basis of the available statistics alone.²⁷ On the other hand, it is obvious

²⁷ This statistical approach alone can hardly be considered conclusive, especially in view of the relatively scanty state of our knowledge of aediles and quaestors in this period, as Professor L. R. Taylor so kindly cautioned me in conversation. The words of Aristotle may aptly be recalled on this point (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1.3): "Our discussion will be adequate if it has as much clearness as the subject matter admits of, for precision is not to be sought for alike in all discussions, any more than in all products of the crafts . . . ; for it is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the subject admits." I also quote E. Badian, "Caesar's Cursus and the Intervals between Offices," in *Studies in Greek and Roman History* (New York 1964), where the difficulty of dealing with incomplete information on careers etc. arises, and Badian writes, p. 147: "We must constantly remember, in any investigation of this difficult subject, that we depend on a balance of inadequate literary sources and imperfectly known careers: certainty is unattainable, but we must be guided by the facts such as we know them." This seems to me an eminently reasonable observation. The alternative to drawing cautious conclusions would be to make no attempt to employ

that the scions of more and more distinguished houses were aiming at election as *tresviri monetales* after 78, and especially after 70. This fact, with the growing exclusion of representatives of lesser known houses from the office, would go far to explain the kind of statistical increase which is noticeable after 78. Since the quality and influence of one's family (number of clients, political connections, etc.) counted for a great deal in Roman political life, the poorer quality of the *gentes* of most *monetales* before 78 would of itself militate against the degree of success which we find later on. The evidence, both of the changing quality of those who hold the post of *monetalis*, and the ever increasing numbers and proportions of those who succeed in future careers, seems to suggest that a change had taken place in the importance of the office in political life from the 70's on.

The constitutional historian, at a point such as this, searches for some legal development or innovation which might explain the apparent increase of interest in the post of *monetalis*. One cannot help but notice that the change begins after the reforms of Sulla, and the inference that there may be some causal relationship between the two is easily made. Unfortunately, as we have seen above, no record of any constitutional change affecting the minor magistracies under Sulla has been preserved. Nonetheless, there is some reason to speculate that Sulla may well have laid more emphasis on the tenure of a vigintiviral post, or even have made this a formal prerequisite to a further political career. It is beyond question that Sulla regulated the succession of offices from quaestorship through consulship, and that he forbade iteration of the same office before ten years had elapsed. It appears also that he raised the minimum age for the quaestorship to thirty.²⁸ Prior to this a young political aspirant could stand for the quaestorship immediately after his military service; Astin shows that this was done at the age of twenty-five, and that the minimum required age must have been as low as this, if indeed it existed at all.²⁹ Under the Principate as well, a candidate could stand for political

the information we possess, in order to avoid "imprecision"; a much less satisfactory alternative indeed.

²⁸ See the discussion on this point in J. Carcopino, *Sylla, ou la monarchie manquée* (Paris 1931) 70, and Badian (above, note 27) 147.

²⁹ Astin (above, note 19) 46.

office immediately after the completion of his military duty.³⁰ It is rather improbable that Sulla would have required young Senatorials to wait for three or more years after leaving the army before they could stand for election to a public office. It is much more likely that he either established or gave greater prominence to the minor magistracies as an introductory step to political life.³¹ Clearly, though, this would have been on a voluntary, rather than an obligatory basis.³² Such a practice would have several effects: to regulate even more closely those who would sit one day in the Sullan Senate (a desire ever close to the heart of the Dictator); to afford young aspiring politicians an additional opportunity to gain experience and to cull popular favor; and to guarantee the efficient performance of the duties of these posts, since a man's future success in a public career might depend in part on his early record here. Since we know virtually nothing about the personnel of any of these posts, except for the *monetales*, there is no way of judging the correctness of this suggestion, and, in the absence of any explicit evidence on this point, it must remain merely a possibility.

Another possible, and more plausible, reason for the increased importance of the *monetalis* is that the Romans were becoming aware of the inherent potentialities of the office in the field of propaganda, and that consequently they gave more emphasis to it. The usefulness of the coinage in advertising the programs or goals of political factions will have made control of a *monetalis*, or at least a compliant attitude

³⁰ L. Homo, *Roman Political Institutions from City to State* (New York 1929, tr. M. R. Dobie) 345.

³¹ This has been suggested by Chantraine (above, note 19) 74 note 35: "Sulla setzte das Alter für die Quästur um drei Jahre herauf, vielleicht deshalb, damit vorher der Vigintivirat bekleidet werde. Gesetzlich vorgeschrieben hat er ihn nicht, aber durch den Aufschub von drei Jahren vermutlich einen Anreiz schaffen wollen."

³² The objection that Sulla could not have made tenure of a vigintiviral post a formal requirement for further office, because this would make election to the quaestorship, and entrance to the Senate, a mere formality dependent upon prior tenure of a vigintiviral post, cannot stand, since there were twenty-six posts at this time, and only twenty openings for quaestors. The emphasis on tenure of a vigintiviral post would still have provided a certain measure of selection for the first rung of the *cursus*, the quaestorship. That it was a legal requirement must be denied on other grounds, e.g. the careers of Cicero and Caesar, well documented cases where no record of their having held such posts exists. See Broughton, *MRR*, "Index of Careers."

on his part, a political desideratum for certain politicians. As Lily Ross Taylor has written, "it was in the votes on laws and not in the elections that the program served as a political device for building a personal party in the urban plebs." To be sure, she is writing of the period from 70 to 40, and Sir Ronald Syme thinks of the clients and personal adherents whom great individuals such as Pompey, Caesar, and Octavian gathered, when he writes of party politics.³³ The rise of personal and factional politics, however, did not happen only after the advent of Pompey to power. Such movements do not arise at a stroke; some time is needed for their development, and what better time to seek their roots than the very period of turmoil following the death of Sulla? What would be more logical, moreover, than to witness a corresponding change in the types and legends of Republican coins, away from the ancestral motifs of the great *gentes*, to contemporary references, often anticipatory and with the intent to advertise and gain support for one's political goals. The rising politician, forming a personal faction, or the pressure group with some special interest, may well have enlisted the services of a *monetalis* who aspired to a political career himself. In return for his cooperation in making his position available for the propaganda of the lobbyist or faction leader, the *monetalis* may have secured the promise of the faction's support and influence in his own further career, or may have been rewarded in some other manner.³⁴

If this suggestion has any merit, we should expect to discern two trends in the coinage: first, the beginnings of true propaganda, i.e. references to contemporary events or issues for immediate political purposes, before 80; and an increased exploitation of the coinage for this purpose after that date. It is clear from recent studies that in the period from 110 to 80, and culminating especially in the coinage of Sulla himself, the Romans were developing a certain level of sophistication in referring to contemporary events, issues, or ideas on their

³³ L. R. Taylor, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* (Los Angeles 1949) 23; R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford 1939) 28 ff.

³⁴ We can readily observe an analogous situation in the late Republic; it was frequently to the advantage of the faction leader to be assured of the services of a tribune who would himself receive the support of the political "patron" in seeking further office, e.g. Pompey and Gabinius.

coins, evidently for propaganda purposes.³⁵ Specifically, in the decade of the 80's, coinage was employed by the Italian allies in the Social War, by various rival factions in Rome, and by Sulla and his lieutenants, to influence public opinion and to advertise political aspirations. A very preliminary investigation indicates that this trend continued from 80 to 50, and was the forerunner of the propaganda of Caesar, the Tyrannicides, and Octavian. An intensive study of the coinage of this period, in conjunction with what can be learned about the *monetales* and their political connections, ought to prove of value.

It seems reasonable to conclude from this study that the office of *monetalis* was a regular minor magistracy, established early in the third century. It was held, at least after the time of the Gracchi (or a few decades earlier, when we can identify the names of the *monetales* with some certainty) and until about 80, more by people of obscure or unknown family than by members of prominent noble *gentes*. Furthermore, many of the *monetales* from prominent *gentes* must have been lesser members who were given this post to satisfy their birthrights; the juicier plums of office, meanwhile, were reserved for favored sons.³⁶ Although there is no evidence to assume that tenure of this post, or of any which formed the *vigintisexviri*, was ever a formal requirement for entrance to the *cursus honorum* during the Republic, in the period after Sulla, and in increasing proportion, the *monetales* seem to succeed to rather significant political careers. The reason for this development, I would submit, is the usefulness of the post in advertising the programs and propaganda of political factions, and the consequent interest in the office as an important introductory step to Roman public life.

³⁵ See, in addition to the works cited in note 1, S. L. Cesano, "Silla e la sua monetà," *Rendiconti della Pont. Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, 1945-46, 187 ff.; R. J. Rowland, Jr., "Numismatic Propaganda under Cinna," *TAPA* 97 (1966) 407-20; T. J. Luce, "Political Propaganda on Roman Republican Coins: circa 92-82 B.C.," *AJA* 43 (1968) 25-39; and C. D. Hamilton, "Political Propaganda on Roman Coins, 133-70 B.C.," unpublished M.A. Thesis (Cornell University 1965).

³⁶ Schaefer (above, note 5) suggests something along these lines. "Sollte sich diese Feststellung als richtig erweisen, so scheint sich mir die Erklärung anzubieten, dass es oft zweitgeborene Söhne oder solche Mitglieder senatorischer Familie waren, die weder Aussicht hatten noch Wert darauf legten, eine grosse Laufbahn zu beginnen." An analogy with Medieval practice also comes readily to mind: in noble families, where the title would go to the eldest son, younger sons often had to be content with a career in the Church, or with a life of adventure in the service of some other powerful noble.

APPENDIX OF SUCCESSFUL MONETALES

This Appendix contains the names and careers of the *monetales* for whom there is any evidence in Broughton's *MRR*. The names are grouped according to the tabular arrangement in Crawford, and the total number of *monetales* in each given period is indicated. All dates are given as they appear in *MRR*, except for those of the moneyership, where Crawford's suggestions are preferred. The number in parentheses after the name is that of the listing in Pauly-Wissowa. The abbreviations for offices after a man's name are those employed in *MRR*.

Table 1. c. 150–c. 125 B.C. (46 Mon. listed)

- M. Caecilius Q. f. Metellus (77) Mon. c. 128, Pr. by 118, Cos. 115, Procos. Sardinia 114–111.
 Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus (20) Mon. c. 130, Leg. lieut. 129–126?, Pr. by 125, Cos. Transalp. Gaul 122, Procos. 121–120, Cens. 115.
 Q. Fabius Maximus (Eburnus) (111), Q. 132, Mon. c. 126, Pr. 119, Cos. 116, Procos. Macedonia? 115, Cens. 108.
 Q. Caecilius Balearicus (82), Mon. c. 132, Pr. by 126, Cos. 123, Procos. Balearic Islands 122–121, Cens. 120.
 C. Caecilius Metellus Caprarius (84), Mon. c. 125, Pr. by 117, Cos. 113, Procos. Macedonia 112–111, Cens. 102.

Table 2. c. 124–c. 92 B.C. (68 Mon. listed)

- Mn. Acilius Balbus, very probably (26), Mon. c. 124, Pr. by 117, Cos. 114.
 Q. Fabius Labeo (92), Mon. 123, possibly Pr. in Spain, late 2 cent.
 C. Porcius Cato (5), Mon. 123, Pr. by 117, Cos. 114, Leg. 110.
 M. Papirius Carbo (39), Mon. 122, Pr. in Sicily c. 114 (?).
 M. Aurelius Scaurus (215), Mon. 118, Q. c. 117, Pr. by 111, Cos. Suff. 108, Leg. lieut. 106–105.
 Q. Caecilius Metellus Nepos (95), Mon. c. 116, Pr. by 101, Cos. 98.
 Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus (21), II vir col. ded. Narbo 118, Mon. c. 116, Tr. Pl. 104, Pr. c. 99, Cos. 96, Cens. 92, Pont. Max.
 L. Marcius Philippus (75), Mon. c. 106, Tr. Pl. 104, Pr. 96, Cos. 91, Cens. 86.
 T. Didius (5), Mon. c. 105, Tr. Pl. 103, Pr. by 101, Cos. 98.
 C. Claudius Pulcher (302), Q. c. 105, Mon. 104, Aed. Cur. 99, Iud. 98, Pr. 95, Cos. 92.
 L. Valerius Flaccus (178), Mon. c. 102, Tr. Pl. before 100, Aed. Cur. 99, Pr. by 92, Cos. Suff. 86.

- M. Herennius (10), Mon. 101, Pr. by 96, Cos. 93.
 L. Cornelius Scipio Asiagenus (338), Mon. 101, Leg. 90, Pr. 86, Cos. 83, Pont. 88-82.
 Q. Minucius Thermus (66), Mon. 96-94, Q.? 89, Leg. pro pr. 86.
 L. Sentius C.f. (6), Mon. 96-94, Pr. uncertain date, perhaps brother of C. Sentius C.f. (3) Pr. urb. in 94?
 L. Caecilius Metellus (74), Mon. 91, Pr. 71, Promag. 70, Cos. 68.
 C. Publicius Malleolus (19), Mon. 91, Q. 80.

Table 3. 91-79 B.C. (30 Mon. listed)

- L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi (98), Mon. 91, Tr. Pl. 89, Pr. 74.
 Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus (228), Mon. 87, Q. 74?, Leg. lieut. pro pr. 67-, Pr. 60, Cos. 56.
 C. Licinius Macer (112), Mon. 83, Tr. Pl. 73, Pr.? 68, Promag.? 67.
 C. Cassius Longinus (58), Mon. 83, Pr. by 76, Cos. 73, Procos. 72.
 L. Procius (2), Mon. 79, Senator before 56 (as Q.?).
 Ti. Claudius Nero (253), Mon. 79, Pr. before 63.

Table 4. 78-49 B.C. (46 Mon. listed)

- L. Cassius Longinus (64), Mon. 78, Pr. de maiestate 66.
 L. Rutilius Flaccus (16), Mon. 77, Senator in 72.
 C. Egnatius Maximus (27), Mon. 76, possibly the Senator in 74?
 Q. Fufius Kalenus (10), Mon. 69, Tr. Pl. 61, Pr. 59, Cos. 47.
 T. Vettius Sabinus (14), Mon. 69, Pr. 59, Promag. 58.
 C. Calpurnius Piso Frugi (93), Mon. 67, Q. 58.
 M. Aemilius Lepidus (73), Mon. 66, Aed. Cur. 53, Interrex 52, Pr. 49, Cos. 46, *iiivir r.p.c.* 43-38, etc.
 L. Manlius Torquatus (80), Mon. 65, Pr. 49, Promag. 48, 46.
 L. Roscius Fabatus (15), Mon. 64, Tr. Pl. 55, Pr. 49, Leg. 49, 43.
 L. Cassius Longinus (65), Mon. 63, Procos. 48, Tr. Pl. 44, probably was at least Q. before 48.
 Paullus Aemilius Lepidus (82), Mon. 63, Cos. Suff. 34, Augur.
 L. Scribonius Libo (20), Mon. 61, Senator in 56, Pr. by 50, Leg. lieut. 49-48, Cos. 34.
 P. Plautius Hypsaecus (23), Q. 66?, Proq. 65-, 63, 61, Mon. 60/59?, Aed. Cur. 58, Pr. by 55.
 M. Nonius Sufenas (52), Mon. 60, Q. c. 62?, Tr. Pl. 56, Pr. by 57 or 52, Promag. 51-50, 49.
 L. Marcus Philippus (77), Mon. 59, Tr. Pl. 49, Pr. 44, Cos. Suff. 38.
 Faustus Cornelius Sulla (377), Mon. 57, Q. 54, Proq. pro pr. 47-47.
 C. Memmius (1), Mon. 57, Cos. Suff. 34.

Q. Cassius Longinus (70), Mon. 56, Tr. Pl. 49, Propr. 49-47.

P. Licinius Crassus (63), Praef. Eq. 58, Leg. 57-56, 54-53, Mon. 55. Although he holds no further office, I take it we may put this down to his unforeseen death in Parthia, and regard his designation for a political career as certain.

Q. Servilius Caepio (M. Iunius Brutus) (53), Mon. 55, Q. 53, Pr. 44, Procos. 43-42, Cos Desig. 41.

M. Valerius Messala (261), Mon. 54, Leg. 43-42, Pr. Suff. ? 40, Cos. Suff. 31, Augur.

L. Vinicius (*2), Mon. 52, Tr. Pl. 51, Cos. Suff. 33.

C. Coelius Caldus (14), Mon. 51, Q. 50, Q. pro pr. 50-49.

Ser. Sulpicius (20), Mon. 51, Senator in 49 (Q. in 50?).

P. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus (232), Mon. 50, Q. 48.