Victoria and Victory in the Frist Punic War

Akai Luo

CC 679HB

Department of Classics

The University of Texas at Austin

May 2021

Ruban Taylor

Department of Classics

Supervising Professor

Alex Walthall

Department of Classics

Second Reader

Table of Contents

Introduction

The goddess Victoria is embedded in the Roman identity as a goddess of conquest. In the Middle Republic, she began to appear frequently in Roman iconography. After the dedication of Temple of Victoria in 294 BCE, the goddess became popular as a manifestation of Roman military power (Stek 2013, 346). Victoria's first surviving imagery in a Roman context dates to the First Punic War; thereafter, she remained a staple of Roman triumphal imagery until late antiquity.

This thesis focuses on the early decades of Victoria's introduction to Rome and reflects on the changes in Roman politics, customs, and warfare that led to the rise of her cult and the adoption of her symbolism, much of which was already widespread in the Greek world.

Introduction to the First Punic War

Rome before the First Punic War

After the Second Latin War (340-338 BCE), the victorious Romans disbanded the Latin League in 338 BCE and replaced it with treaties to bind the Latin peoples to Rome. Most importantly, these treaties now placed the Romans in control of the military of the allies (*socii*) (Serrati 22). The Second Samnite War (326-304BCE) was waged on a much larger scale. In 305 BCE, after a long and often indecisive struggle, L. Postumius Megellus led the Roman army in a successful siege of Bovianum in Samnium; the ensuing Roman victory concluded the war. In the following year, Postumius would dedicate the first temple to Victoria on the Palatine Hill at Rome. Campania, long dominated by Samnite tribes, was now secured for the Romans, who

consolidated their contacts with southern Italy. After the Third Samnite War (298-290 BCE), almost all the Italy was under the Romans' control.

The Pyrrhic War, begun in 280 BCE, further consolidated Rome's contact with Magna Graecia and brought the Romans, for the first time, into direct conflict with a Greek power. In 282 BCE, the Romans allegedly broke a treaty with Tarentum by sailing a squadron of Roman ships into the Gulf of Tarentum. Taking this as a provocation, the Tarentines attacked the Roman ships, sinking four and capturing one. It was the first naval defeat of the Romans. The Romans sent an embassy led by Postumius Megellus to negotiate with the Tarentines, but were met with derision. Tarentum then asked king Pyrrhus of Epirus for help. The ambitious Greek king agreed, launching his army into Italy in 280. The first two years of the war were mainly in Southern Italy, but Pyrrhus eventually changed his target to Sicily and took Syracuse in 278 BCE. Relying on his Sicilian Greek allies, he fought with the Carthaginians on the island. While he was there, he minted his coins in Sicily. In 295 BCE, Pyrrhus abandoned Sicily when his Greek allies started to turn against him. He retreated from Italy after the Battle of Beneventum and ended his ambition of conquering the West. Rome's victory in the Pyrrhic War acted as a proof of growing Roman power and confidence (Kent 124). These factors, along with Roman interventions in Sicily, led to the First Punic War.

The Relationships between Rome and Carthage

In the third century BCE, Rome gradually expanded its territory to the whole of Italy and parts of Sicily while Carthage slowly expanded its influence in Sicily against the Greek part of Sicily. Before the First Punic War, four treaties had been made between Rome and Carthage, which reveal the dynamics of the relationship between the two states. The contact between Carthage

and Rome started from the relations between Etruria, Rome, and Carthage (Scardigli 28-29). According to Polybius, the first treaty between the Romans and the Carthaginians dated back to 508/7 BCE (3.23). After a century and a half, Rome and Carthage signed the second treaty in 348 BCE adding more details to the first. These treaties restricted Roman trade beyond the *Cape Bello* (the gulf of Carthage) and beyond the Mastia Tarseion (Cartagena) in Spain. Carthage's military operations in Latium were restricted, but their freedom in where and how to trade was not interrupted. These two treaties show that Carthage was a more powerful polity than Rome. Carthage was concerned about holding the dominance in trade in an extensive area while Rome was only interested in minimizing Carthaginian influence in Latium (Scardigli 31). Polybius doubted the existence of the third treaty, of Philinus in 306 BCE. It regulated Roman access to Sicily and Carthaginian access to Italy. The third treaty goes beyond simply relations in trade; it involves the competition for territory. Rome's position was closer to the Carthage at this point. The fourth treaty, in 278 BCE, stressed military cooperation. It stipulated that neither Rome nor Carthage could make a separate treaty with King Pyrrhus; and if Rome or Carthage needed help in the conflict, the other must provide military assistance on sea (Scardigli 33). Rome became more or less a military threat to Carthage at the point. These four treaties reveal that Rome gradually expanded its power into a larger region, while Carthage remained a stable empire. The first and second treaties ensured the Carthaginians' dominance in major trade whereas the Romans' more limited ambition was to keep control of Latium. But the third and fourth treaties negotiated the boundaries of the territories, which goes beyond the former commercial relationship and shows Rome's desire to at least be equal with Carthage. Rome and Carthage were never really at peace, even if they were not in direct conflict; the treaties aimed to keep the danger of the use of force away (Scardigli 34). However, the suspicions and tensions were

growing between the two polities, and these eventually resulted in the outbreak of the First Punic War in 264 BCE.

Naval forces of Rome

Before the First Punic War, the Romans could not compete directly with the Carthaginians since they did not have a formal navy. They needed Carthaginian support to fight against raiders and pirates; they also relied on *socii navales,* mostly Greek cities with standing navies, due to their limited ambitions of conquering the sea in the Middle Republic. The Romans had experienced some naval campaigns, but nothing like a full-scale war. At the end of the First Samnite War in 338 BCE, the consul C. Maenius led a Roman fleet to victory against the Latins and the Volscians at Antium. After the Romans won the battle, they captured the town's port. It is the first reported naval action of the Romans (Pitassi 20). In 326 BCE, the Romans also formed a *foedus* with Neapolis. The Neapolitans provided the Romans with warships along with skilled sailors and shipbuilders. This treaty secured Rome's best base on the coastline for sea routes, which at least shows Rome's interests in sea trade at the time (Pitassi 24-25).

Carthage's sea empire, in contrast, extended back to the 6th century BCE. The Carthaginians held influence over Spain, western Sicily, Sardinia, and North Africa. The first significant-sized Roman fleet was built to fight against the Carthaginians in the First Punic War in 260 BCE. Led by C. Duilius, this considerable fleet of 120 ships caught the Carthaginian navy by surprise at Mylae, resulting in the first full-scale naval triumph in Roman history. The ships were modeled on a Carthaginian *quinquereme* and equipped with an experimental new weapon, the *corvus*. During the course of the First Punic War, the Romans demonstrated the capacity to

build new ships rapidly many times—in 260, 257/6, 254, 250, 249 and 242 BCE, in each case shortly after the destruction of ships by storms or battle (Polybius 1.20-1.59).
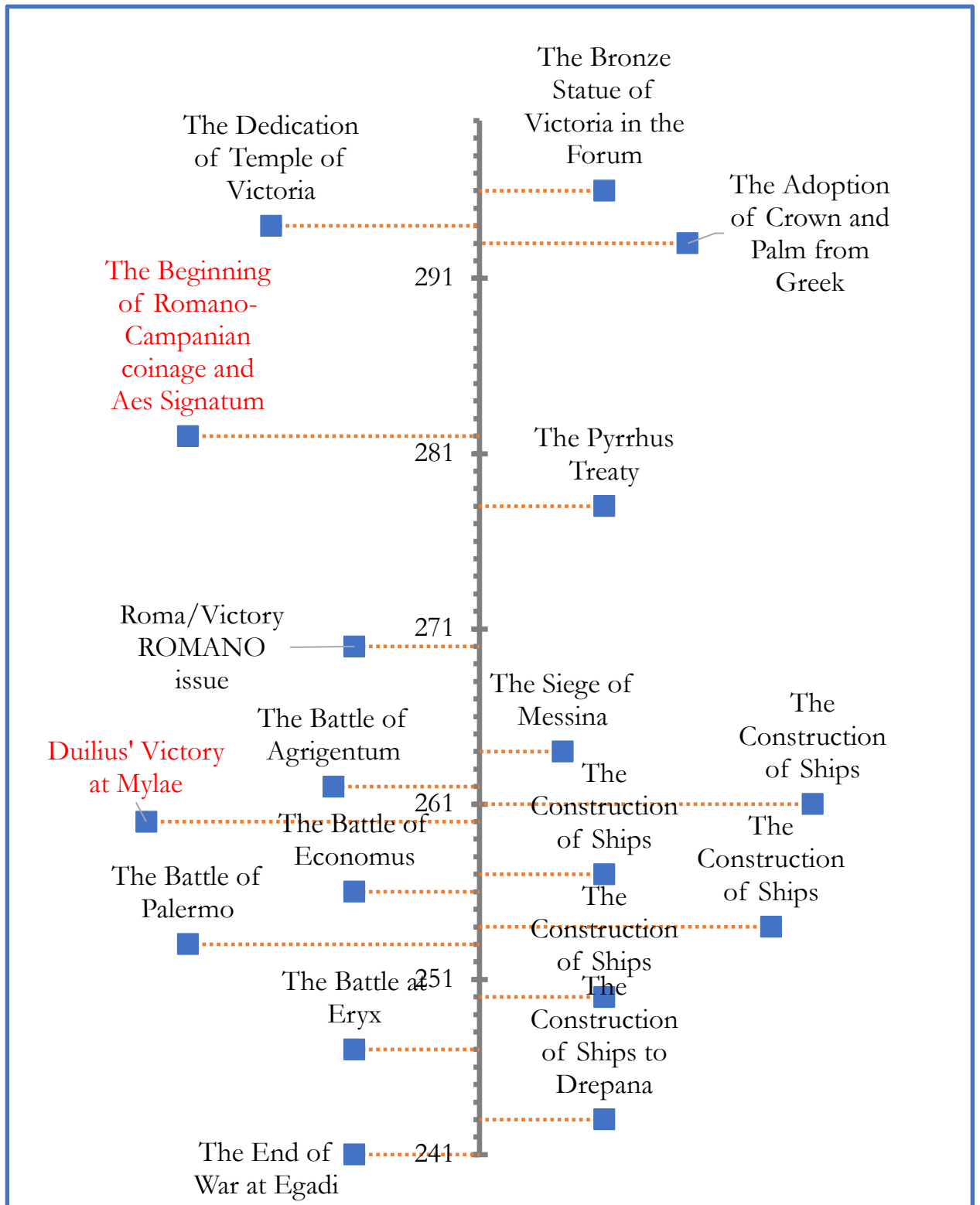
The Course of the First Punic War

The First Punic War was mainly a naval war centered on Sicily. The attack of Hiero of Syracuse on the Mamertines served as a prelude. The Syracusans besieged Messana in 264 BCE. The Mamertines sought help from both the Carthaginians and the Romans, and the Senate debated if they would wage a war against the Carthaginians. The Romans refused to offer help at first, and the Carthaginians sent troops to Messana. Later, the Mamertines asked the Romans for help again, and this time the Romans agreed to send aid. The Romans quickly "liberated" the Mamerines from the Carthaginians and Hiero of Syracuse, who had formed an alliance with them; thus did Rome obtain dominance over eastern Sicily. In 262, the Carthaginians took Agrigentum. The Romans besieged the city and after a long and bloody battle, stormed and raided three cities in 261. The following year, Diulius won his naval victory at Mylae. Then the Romans, hoping to drive the Carthaginians off Sicily, turned the whole island into a battle zone on the sea and on land. The First Punic War entered into the stage of stalemate. After Caecilius Metellus won the battle of Palermo in 251 BCE, Hiero II kept a portion of the south-east of Sicily and Rome controlled the majority of Sicily except Lilybaeum and Drepana, the harbors along the north coast. In 249 BCE, the Romans were decisively defeated at Drepana, and the terrible loss of men and ships drove them to avoid naval conflict for years. Finally, in late 243 BCE, the Romans decided to build 200 new ships and in 241 they departed for western Sicily.

The decisive last battle between the Carthaginians and the Romans was fought near the Egadi Islands off the northwest coast of Sicily. Rome, financially exhausted, exacted loans from

citizens to build a new fleet based on a recently captured Carthaginian quinquereme. The consul of 242 BCE, C. Lutatius Catulus, and the *praetor urbanus*, Q. Valerius Falto, led the fleets and set out from Rome. They intercepted Hanno's supply run for Hamilcar's army in western Sicily and won the victory, capturing a large number of ships and captives. Carthage had to yield since they had no way to supply Hamilcar now. Thus, with their newly designed ships, the Romans defeated the surprised Carthaginian navy and ended the whole war in victory in 241 BC. Catulus and Falto was awarded a naval triumph after the war.

The Bronze Statue of Victoria in the Forum

The Dedication of Temple of Victoria

The Adoption of Crown and Palm from Greek

The Beginning of Romano-Campanian coinage and Aes Signatum

291

281

The Pyrrhus Treaty

271

Roma/Victory ROMANO issue

The Siege of Messina

The Construction of Ships

The Battle of Agrigentum

Duilius' Victory at Mylae

The Construction of Ships

261

The Battle of Economus

The Construction of Ships

The Battle of Palermo

The Construction of Ships

The Battle at Eryx

251

The Construction of Ships

The Construction of Ships to Drepana

The End of War at Egadi

241

Early Roman Republican currency and coinage

The Roman economy before the third century BCE

Before the Romans started to use their own coinage, Greek coinage was the first to be used in the region. In the sixth century BCE, some Greek coins were imported; others were struck in southern Italy and Sicily by Greek colonies. The chronology of Roman coinage is controversial. According to Pliny's Natural History (33, 42-44):

> Proximum scelus fuit eius qui primus ex auro denarium signavit, quod et ipsum latet auctore incerto. Populus romanus ne argento quidem signato ante Pyrrhum regem devictum usus est. Libralis ... adpendebatur assis. ... Servius rex primus signavit aes. Antea rudi usos Romae Timaeus tradit. ... Argentum signatum anno urbis cccclxxxv Q. Ogulnio, C. Fabio coss., quinque annis ante primum Punicum bellum.

> The next crime was committed by the man to strike a coin made from gold, and even who did it is unknown. The Roman people did not even use silver coin before king Pyrrhus was defeated [= 271 BC]. A bronze unit of a pound ... passed by weight. ... Servius the king [of Rome, sixth century BC] was the first to strike a bronze coin; Timaeus records that previously the Romans used raw bronze. Silver was coined in the 485th year of the city, when Q. Ogulnius and C. Fabius were consuls, five years before the First Punic War [= 269 B.C.].

Pliny quoting from Timaeus states that Servius Tullius struck Rome's first bronze coinage, but the text may just mean a bronze metallic unit (Crawford 1976, 200). Hoards of bronze dated back to the early first millennium BCE have been found in Italy, including scraps of bronze, which may be related to the later creation of a bronze unit (Burnett 2012, 300). The appearance of military pay is earlier than the concept of coinage. *Stipendium*, the term for military pay in Latin, is derived from *pendere,* to weigh, which means the metal used for payment was initially weighed out according to a standard, not based on its fiat value (Burnett 2012, 299).

One model proposes that Rome gradually evolved from barter to a money-cattle economy and then to the exchange of bronze ingots in different forms. According to this model, the switch to ingots was stimulated by a reform in military pay in 406 BCE. However, Crawford disagrees with this system; he thinks that evaluating in the term of cattle does not mean that cattle were actually used as money for payments (1976, 201). Another model proposes that metal was a crucial form of wealth accumulation in the fifth century BCE, and that coinage as a unit of payment and exchange appeared only in the second half of the third century (Morel 497-498). Either way, in the early fourth century BCE, metal wealth accumulated in the hands of elites. To store their wealth, bronze bars were developed, which were later used for exchange as well.

In the fourth century BCE, bronze coins were used very widely in Italy with the innovation of gold coinage. Bronze coins also replaced some use of small-denomination silver coins. Specifically, Roman coinage started to develop around 300 BCE. In the decades around the turn of the century, *aes signatum, aes grave,* silver, and bronze coins started to appear. The earliest currency authorized by Rome, the so-called Romano-Campanian coinage, was Greek-style bronze and silver coinage issued by Greek cities in South Italy. The dating of early Romano-Campanian coinage is very confusing and the date of the first Roman use of silver is

controversial. In general, modern scholars agree that the earliest silver coins were minted outside Rome and predated those minted in Rome by some 50 years (Crawford 2001, 37). The silver coins were first circulated in Campania and southern Italy—hence the term Roman-Campanian. The earliest of these was the Mars/horse's head silver didrachm with the legend ROMANO around 290 BCE. The second and third issues were an Apollo/prancing horse didrachm from around 275 BCE and a Hercules/wolf and twins coin dating around 270 BCE (Crawford 2001, 40).

Aes signatum, Rome's rectangular ingot currency, was issued from about 280 to 260 BCE, mostly before the First Punic War; aes grave, the heavy circular cast coinage of Rome, was not started until around 275 BCE (fig. 1). Before the Punic Wars, the role of silver coins authorized by Rome was very limited and they were issued only in small quantities (Burnett 1998, 35). The reason behind the small issues of Romano-Campanian silvers could be the Romans' desire to adopt Greek customs since the Romans developed a cultural aspiration to imitate Greek culture in this period (Burnett 2012, 14). The issues of silver coins also could be the result of the spoils from the Pyrrhic war and the Punic wars. During the First Punic War, the increase of the production of coinage is connected with warfare (Roselaar 150). The coin issue most relevant to this thesis, the Roma/Victory ROMANO with the obverse of Head of Rome and the reverse of standing Victoria holding a palm branch connecting to a wreath appears to correspond with the First Punic War. Around 250 BCE, at about the time this coin was issued, the coinage system was reformed: bronze currency bars stopped being produced, and the quantity and quality of silver coins were improved (Burnett 1998, 35-36). After the so-called pre-*denarius* period, the first *denarius* was issued around 212 BCE.

Date	Currency bars	Aes Grave	Silver	Struck bronze
c.320				Apollo/Forepart of bull ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ
c.300			Mars/Head of horse ROMANO 7.3 g	
c.280	ROMANOM issues	*Heavy series:* 324 g Dioscuri/Mercury		
c.275	Elephant/Sow			
c.269		Apollo/Apollo (334 g)	Apollo/Horse ROMANO 7.2 g	
c.264		Apollo/Dioscurus	Hercules/Wolf ROMANO 7 g	Goddess/Lion ROMANO
c.255	Naval types			Roma/Head of horse ROMANO Roma ROMANO/Eagle ROMANO
		Light series: 280 g Roma/Roma ————	—Roma/Victory ROMANO 6.6 g	
c.240		Dioscuri/Mercury —— (sickle)	— Mars/Head of horse ROMA (sickle) 6.6 g	Mars/Head of horse ROMA (sickle)
		Apollo/Apollo (acorn)	Apollo/Horse ROMA 6.6 g	Apollo/Horse ROMA
		Roma/Roma ———— (club)	—Mars/Horse ROMA (club) 6.6 g	Mars/Horse ROMA (club) Hercules/Pegasus ROMA (club)
c.230		Wheel (inc. 3 as)————		————Roma/Dog ROMA
c.225		Janus/Prow ——	Quadrigati	

A solid line indicates a definite connection, a broken line a probable one. Some of the quadrigati seem to have been minted outside Rome, for example, in Sicily or Apulia, during the early years of the Second Punic War.

Figure 1. Timeline of pre-*denarius* Roman coinage. From Rutter et al., *Historia Numorum*, 45.

Victoria and Roman identity

In Italy, the cult of Victoria existed before the first use of Victoria on the Romano-Campanian coinage. By the late fourth century BCE, Roman worship of Victoria probably had already been established. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, however, claims that it was among the earliest foundations of the Arcadian predecessors of Rome, established in the age of the Trojan War (1.32):

ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ κορυφῇ τοῦ λόφου τὸ τῆς Νίκης τέμενος ἐξελόντες θυσίας καὶ ταύτῃ κατεστήσαντο διετησίους, ἃς καὶ ἐπ᾽ ἐμοῦ Ῥωμαῖοι ἔθυον

… and on the top of the [Palatine] hill, they [the Arcadians] laid out the sanctuary of Nike and established sacrifices to her throughout the year, which the Romans performed even in my own time.

According to this story, the Romans started cultic activity for Nike/Victory long before

Romulus's foundation in 753 BCE, when the town was named Pallantium and was inhabited by

Arcadians. This would place the cult of Victoria among the earliest mythological traditions.

Although the story is obviously fictional, Dionysius seems to have believed that his readers

would accept the idea that the cult was extremely ancient, and thus quite important in the city's

history and identity. At the very least, it can be supposed that an altar or a chapel dedicated to the

goddess was set in the area before the construction of the first temple (Pensabene 149). We hear

next about Victoria in Rome from Zonaras, probably by way of a lost section of Dio Cassius.

According to a reference for 296 BCE in Rome (Zonaras 8.1) [1],

> καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ Νίκης τι ἄγαλμα χάλκεον ἱδρυμένον ἐπὶ βάθρου λιθίνου αὐτομάτως
>
> εὑρέθη κάτω ἑστὸς ἐπὶ γῆς
>
> and in the Forum a bronze statue of Nike set upon a stone pedestal was found standing on
>
> the ground below, without anyone having moved it.

The passage indicates that the statue was already in place before 296 BCE, indicating that by this

time, not only did Romans recognize the goddess, but they were familiar with her iconographic

features. Indeed, the first temple of Victoria at Rome, founded by L. Postumius Megellus, the

victor at Bovianum in 305, was probably already under construction; it was finished in 294 (Livy

10.33.8-9):

---

[1] = Zonar. II p. 170 Dindorf = Cass. Dio 8, 28

... [8] quarum rerum fama, perlata Romam coegit L. Postumium consulem vixdum validum proficisci ex urbe. Prius tamen quam exiret militibus edicto Soram iussis convenire ipse aedem Victoriae, quam aedilis curulis ex multaticia pecunia faciendam curaverat, dedicavit.

(The upheaval of the Samnites)...compelled the other consul, L. Postumius (=294 BCE), to leave the City before his health was quite re-established. [9] He issued a general order for his men to assemble at Sora, and previous to his departure he dedicated the temple to Victory which he had, when curule aedile, built out of the proceeds of fines.

The temple was probably funded by Postumius' personal spoils from the sack of Bovianum to celebrate his victory over the Samnites in 305, not the fines collected during his aedileship in 307 BCE, as Livy claims (Clark 56-58). But since this permanent presentation of an individual was not welcomed, the personal meaning of the temple was erased in historical accounts (Clark 56-58). It is entirely possible that in 305 BCE, before Postumius went to battle, he made a *votum* to Victoria, and fulfilled his promise in 294 BCE. The coincidental reference by two different authors to Victoria monuments only two years apart might suggest that the introduction of the goddess and her cult happened no later than the end of the fourth century, and possibly even earlier. Furthermore, just one year after the temple's completion, in 293 BC (Livy 10. 47. 3), the following policy was set in place:

Eodem anno coronati primum ob res bello bene gestas ludos Romanos spectarunt palmaeque tum primum translato e Graeco more victoribus datae...

for the first time, those crowned for excellence in warfare attended the games [in their

crowns]; and for the first time, palms were given to victors in war, following a Greek

custom... .

The crown had long been associated with Nike in Greek iconography, and the palm frond was

already established as one of her attributes too. These attributes, like the act of inscribing, mark a

ritual ratification, as if to signal the gods' approval. The act of crowning implies a stage after a

victorious event, since the coronation itself is a gesture of an award that had long been given to

victorious athletes and charioteers (Caltabiano 284). Introducing the palm crown into the formal

celebration of Roman military victories implies the familiarity of Nike for the Romans. From this

time onward the cult of Victoria played an important role in the development of Roman religious

identity; it shows Roman confidence in military matters, and underscores the fact that Roman

arms brought the most fundamental changes in Italy (Bispham and Smith 10).

The Victoria cult was an outcome of a Roman sociopolitical process in the late fourth and

the third century BCE, which led to the popularity and the increase of cults dedicated to divine

qualities (Stek 2010, 164). Certainly Victoria, inspired by the Greek notion of Nike, was a

popular ideological concept in Rome in the third and second centuries BCE, and was usually

associated with Roman power (Stek 2010, 219; Stek 2013, 326). Her popularity is shown

through iconography, especially the Victoria issue on the Romano-Campanian coinage and

several battering rams of the Roman warships sunk at the Egadi Islands at the end of the First

Punic War.

Chapter 1: Political Careers in the First Punic War

Aristocratic competition

The Romans were rather peaceful in the beginning of the third century and showed little interest in Sicily. Without any ongoing wars of territorial expansion, the Romans paid more attention to internal politics. Political culture in the third century BCE was dominated by the conflict between the patrician and plebeian classes. The *nobilitas* in both patrician and plebeian classes shared the same common ethos and values through *mos maiorum*, and they welcomed new elites from Italy (Bleckmann 168). These elites competed for political influence, wealth and prestige; but this was far from the open warfare of the late Republic. They competed by making alliances and negotiating electoral agreements through a network of connections (Bernard 3). For the new *nobilitas*, however, it is hard to build a network system for political successes from scratch. Warfare therefore provided them with a golden opportunity to gain glory and wealth quickly. The First Punic War thus was a series of military campaigns by ambitious generals, which can be compared to the wars of expansion in the late Republic (Bleckmann 170). Aristocratic competition played a crucial role in escalating naval war, which presented a novel opportunity for glory and gain. The new *nobilitas* was in need of being more influential in politics and society. Therefore, they pushed the continuation of the war and fought its battles themselves. If successful, they amplified their military glory through triumph.

However, triumphs were not enough for those ambitious generals. Without any prestige inherited from ancestors, their achievements tended to be forgotten gradually after victory. Generals needed to find a way to keep the memory of their victories persistent throughout their political careers. They dedicated temples and monuments to commemorate their victories as

material records of their accomplishments. The audience of triumphs was limited to the people in Rome. To spread their military successes in the larger Mediterranean, the generals used the monetary system to send their messages. Roman coinage is influenced by their effort to keep the status among the *nobilitas* (Bernard 20). The extra metallic wealth acquired from the booty, when converted into currency, was then a liquid asset that could be distributed around the Republic (Bernard 3). The generals thus pushed the minting of coins in Rome to remind the public of their victories during the First Punic War, but also of their own wealth and largesse made possible by spoils. This resulted in the reconfiguration of wealth and political power among the *nobilitas* (Bernard 11). Starting from the fourth century, this new form of wealth, metallic wealth, helped new elites gain political standing, but this personal aggrandizement through material means also raised old questions of morality (Bernard 12). Two forms of celebrating the victories now existed. Old elite used metal spoils to stress the inherited authority and the symbolic prestige while the new elites without ancestors distributed metallic wealth to promote their personal successes in a substantial way (Bernard 13).

Lower-ranking magistrates, such as quaestors and *duumuiri nauales,* could also gain political influence through the supervision of the construction of the ships whenever a consul ordered a fleet to be built. From the inscriptions on the rams found at the site of the Battle of the Egadi Islands, one can know that quaestors were in charge of supervising the quality of the rams (and possibly the ships themselves) constructed during the First Punic War. *Duumuir naualis* is a specific position created to reflect Rome's growing recognition of its need to respond to naval powers. In 311 BCE, *duumuiri nauales* were elected for the first time. The responsibility of this new naval magistracy was not very clear, but it possibly was in charge of supervising the construction of the ships and the training of navies (Dart 1013). *Duumuiri nauales* had no

expected role in commanding the navy; the naval general was usually selected from among the consuls in the year of the campaign. Thus, the *duumuir naualis* was not a popular office due to its less prominent task (Dart 1013). Being a general could be an avenue toward gaining political status, but nevertheless *duumuiri nauales* and quaestors still managed to find a way of increasing their political influence, which could serve them well as they climbed the *cursus honorum.* Many questors indeed became consuls later in their careers.

Inscriptions on the Egadi rams – Quaestors

This thesis first examines the quaestors' mode of self-representation on a particular genre of object. Eight out of the first twelve numbered Egadi rams are inscribed with Latin text. The Latin inscriptions on the rams can be classified into three categories (Prag 79):

(1) Ram 7-10: an engraved text with a single name on one line with a Montefortino-type helmet placed on top of it

(2) Ram 4, 6, 11: a relief text with a pair of names on two lines, and bearing a figure of Victoria in relief on the upper part

(3) Ram 1: a smaller engraved text with a pair of names over four lines located on the upper part of the cowl, decorated with a pair of rosettes in relief on each side of the fin plates

The texts indicate that *quaistor* (archaic for quaestor) *probavet* (archaic for probavit) the ram— that is, the rams were approved by the quaestors (Prag 80). The act of *probatio* could mean that the quaestor let and approved the contract for public works under the order of a high magistrate,

the senate, or a general; junior magistrates following instructions from senior magistrates was a common practice (Prag 102). Consuls were in charge of the overall construction of the fleets from 260 onwards, although it is not certain how much oversight they provided (Day 13-21). According to Prag (101), the inscription on the ram can only indicate that the ram itself was approved by the questor; if he had been in charge of the construction of the entire ship, the inscription should have made that explicit. One possible reason for putting quaestors in charge of the construction of rams is that the rams are made of high-quality bronze. The process of converting bronze into a ram was similar to the preparation of metal for coins, which was the quaestor's responsibility to oversee (Crawford 2001, 617). Multiple literary sources indicate that the number of quaestors increased close to the beginning of the First Punic War (Liv., *Per*. 15; Tac., *Ann*. 11.22; Lydus, *de mag*. 1.27). This augmentation may have been deemed necessary for precisely such tasks as this, along with other preparations required for the First Punic War. The names on the rams are a way of showing personal pride of oversight, just as on other *probatio* inscriptions (Prag 103). It is also worth noting that the ram itself, in its manifestation as war spoils, was a symbol of victory. Already in 338 BCE, Maenius had set up a column to celebrate his naval victory at Antium, and the Rostra on the Forum was adorned for the first time with bronze rams from the captured enemy ships. Duilius' column combined both elements into one in 260 BCE (Prag 103). Overall, by inscribing one's name on the rams, quaestors managed to leave a permanent mark on their political achievements.

We can suppose, too, that the act of *probatio* involved a public ceremony at the shipyard in which the ram achieved particular visual prominence. And because warships were normally kept high and dry inside shipsheds or out in the open during periods of repair, maintenance, and display, the opportunities for their bronze rams to be viewed and admired were many.

A Case Study: Gaius Duilius

The hero of the First Punic War, Gaius Duilius, is a perfect example of an ambitious man gaining prestige thanks to his command of naval military campaigns as consul. Duilius persuaded the Senate to build a new fleet of 120 ships in 260 BCE, and with it he fought and overwhelmed the Carthaginians in a surprise attack at Mylae. The first-time naval victory provided Duilius with many invaluable opportunities. He was granted the first naval triumph ever and a *columna* rostrate was erected in his honor, bearing the rams from the ships he captured. He also consigned some of his war spoils to minting *aes signtum* ingots, which he distributed to Roman citizens, and dedicated a temple to Janus in Forum Holitorium. He innovated many new methods to present his personal victory and solidify his political power. After his consulship in 260 BCE, he was successfully elected as a censor for 258-257. Dulius was indeed popular among the *plebs* (Kondratieff 6).

Duilius' monument

   Although honorific monuments were not unfamiliar to the Romans at the time, Duilius was the first man to be honored with a *columna rostrata*, a column in the Forum decorated with rams captured from enemy ships. The *Elogium* inscribed on the column recorded the details of his victory, his captives, and his spoils. The existence of a second rostral column to Duilius is in debate; it was supposed to be near the gate of the Circus Maximus and was paid for with his own money (Kondratieff 7). His principal naval column was located in a prominent position in the Forum Romanum near Vulcan's altar, overlooking the Rostra, Comitium, Curia, and the Sacra Via, which was a part of the triumphal route. Although this *columna rostrata* itself was the first of its kind, the components of his column found precedent (Kondratieff 9). Nearby stood the

columna Maenia. Each column bore a statue of its honoree. The Rostra itself, decorated with the rams from Antiatene ships captured by Maenius, was a commemorative program of 338 BCE. Overlooking the Sacra Via, Duilius' monument was a perpetual reminder of his triumph. Silius Italicus describes Duilius' column in a very conspicuous manner (6.663–66):

> aequoreum iuxta decus et nauale tropaeum,
>
> rostra gerens niuea surgebat mole columna:
>
> exuuias Marti donumque Duilius, alto
>
> ante omnis mersa Poenorum classe, dicabat.

> Next to this appears a mark of maritime glory, a naval trophy,
>
> a white rostral column rising up into the sky:
>
> after he—before all others—sank a Carthaginian fleet on the waves,
>
> Duilius was in the act of declaring spoils and sacrifice to Mars.

In Silius' age, the late First Century CE, Duilius' column still played an important role in evoking Roman naval victory. Duilius made his victory permanent by erecting his column with the inscriptions of his achievements and made his victory distinctive by his innovation of a rostral column. When people passed by the distinctive column with rams, they would have thought about Dulius' victory at Mylae, which allowed Duilius to secure his political importance and even benefit his descendants.

Duilius' temple

Duilius also dedicated a temple to Janus in the Forum Holitorium probably for the fulfillment of

his vow and financed by his spoils in 258 BCE. The strategic position of the temple is very

important. It was located on the *Via Tiumphalis* and probably very near the dock where the fleet

was built (Bleckmann 173). The temple served not only as a backdrop for future victory but also

as a reminder of his own victory by its location near the start of the triumphal route (Roller 4).

The temple also likely included a painting and inscription to commemorate and publicize his

victory (Roller 4). Beginning in the late fourth and early third century BCE, a new scheme was

introduced into the decoration of the temple: paintings representing the general in the full glory

of his triumph (Davies 2013, 445).

Duilius was not the first person to dedicate a temple to advertise his personal

achievement. Postumius, we recall, dedicated a temple to Victoria in 294 BCE. He is an earlier

example of an ambitious individual trying to establish his personal political significance through

the construction of a temple, although ultimately he failed to gain the distinctions Duilius

achieved. Postumius asked for triumphs three times, but each time his request was refused by the

Senate. Even worse, he was accused of harboring troops on his own lands and was forced to pay

the highest fines ever assessed by the Roman state up to that point. His political ambition was

deemed too great, even to the point of jeopardizing his peers' power. In historical accounts, he

was depicted as a negative figure; the fact that he allegedly paid for his temple with fines he had

collected, rather than with his own spoils, was a count against him (Clark 56-58).

Postumius' Temple of Victoria shows a radical change in temple aesthetics; it applied the

first hexastyle facade since the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus built in 509 BCE, and the

first constructed of stone. The location on the Palatine offered it spectacular visibility: it

overlooked the Circus Maximus and the Forum Boarium, giving it a perch comparable to that of

the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline hill (Davies 2013, 445). The new aesthetics shows a new level of Hellenization; the design of the temple brought durability, monumentality, and implications of power that had not appeared before (Davies 2014, 31). Postumius adapted Greek elegance and refinement to Roman work to increase his visibility both on streets and in politics (Davies 2014, 31). The Greek design of the temple, and perhaps its position, perched on the edge of a hill like the famous Temple of Athena Nike in Athens, hints at the connection between Victoria and the Greek version of the goddess of victory, Nike. Duilius also applied Greek design to increase the temple's visibility and power, introducing the Ionic order into the Forum Holitorium (Stamper 2014, 216).

Duilius' use of money

In the line 14 and 16 of *Elogium* inscribed on his column, it states that Duilius' war spoils included at least 100,000 silver coins and 1.4 million in bronze. Although it is not certain if 1.4 million refers to the monetary value of the bronze or the tally of bronze, it was an enormous amount for himself and his soldiers (Kondratieff 18). Line 17 of *Elogium*, [TRIVMP]OQVE NAVALED PRAEDAD POPLOM [DONAVET], directly says that Duilius gave his war spoils to the people during his naval triumph. *Aes signatum*, large Roman bronze ingots, could have been minted specifically for this distribution (Crawford 2001, 41-42). Since Duilius now possessed a huge amount of bronze from the spoils of the war, it is entirely possible that the coinage he had seized provided most of the metal for the ingots (Kondratieff 25-26).

Three types of *aes signatum* included the symbolism of naval victory:
1) Anchor/Tripod (fig. 1)
2) Trident/Caduceus tied with fillet (fig. 2)

3) Chicken feeding with two stars /Tridents or Rams with two dolphins (fig. 3)

Left pair: Figure 1: Anchor and Tripod. From Kondratieff, The Column and Coinage of C. Duilius: Innovations in Iconography in Large and Small Media in the Middle Republic, Figure 4. Right pair: Figure 2: Trident and Caduceus. From Kondratieff, The Column and Coinage of C. Duilius: Innovations in Iconography in Large and Small Media in the Middle Republic, Figure 5.

Figure 3: Tridents (?) and chicken. From Kondratieff, The Column and Coinage of C. Duilius: Innovations in Iconography in Large and Small Media in the Middle Republic, Figure 6a.

Crawford makes clear connections between these three types and Duilius' naval victory early in the First Punic War (2001, 718). For the first type, the tripod evokes a sacrifice to Apollo and the anchor represents ships and sea. A tripod is found on contemporary coinage in south Italy and Sicily, which might have inspired this type (Kondratieff 29). For the second type, the trident and caduceus represent Neptune and Mercury respectively. Fillets may symbolize the victory brought by the divine interventions of the gods. Neptune evokes victory at sea, and Mercury symbolizes the safe path for commercial shipping. For the third type, the feeding of chickens may refer to the *tripudium,* a common form of augury by which Roman generals took the auspices before battles on land and on sea. The practice first appeared in 325 BCE (Livy 8.30.1-2). The auspice by sacred chickens for the battles on sea is revealed in the anecdote of Claudius Pulcher, who drowned the chickens when they refused to eat. In this way, he forced the chicken to eat/drink so that he could join battle. Since Pulcher insisted on fighting even if he received the bad omen, he lost his naval battle with the Carthaginians (Livy, Periochae 19.2). The two stars refer to the two Dioscuri who were the patron gods of sailors. The Dioscuri and Mercury complement each other to represent the safety and prosperity of commercial ships due to the victory he brought (Kondratieff 30). Together with the stylized-trident-shape on the other side, this type alludes to victory by sea. Kondratieff believes it was misidentified as tridents: three prongs with interstitial flanges look more similar to triple-plated *rostra* in profile (30).

If Duilius was really behind the issues of these three types of *aes signtum*, his intentions were not only to give gifts to show his generosity to the Romans and other people in the province, but also to remind them of his naval victory and the prosperity on the sea due to the safe commercial path he had secured (Kondratieff 32). With the additional help of his temple and his columns, Duilius maximized his political profit from the naval victory by producing both

fixed and circulating memorials to his achievements. Thus, Duilius not only created many firsts, but also set an example for how to use naval victories for self-promotion and the advancement of political power (Kondratieff 34). But, as we shall see, his use of currency as a propaganda machine for military victory was not in itself a novel idea; he learned from the previous Greek monarchs and even perhaps from contemporaneous Romano-Campanian coinage, which showed a mix of both Greek and Roman ideas. And while Duilius himself did not adopt Victoria imagery in any of his propaganda, he developed new visual formats within the Roman political sphere that would enable the goddess' adoption by subsequent generations.

Chapter 2: Nike on Greek Coinage

As mentioned in the introduction, the Romans represented Victoria on Romano-Campanian coinage. The fourth silver issue, depicting Roma/Victoria, is supposed to be contemporaneous with the First Punic War, roughly four decades after the foundation of Temple of Victoria (Crawford2001, 40). By considering the historical context and Romans' aspiration to learn from the Greeks, this chapter discusses how Greek kings applied the deity to celebrate and propagandize the victories they had already achieved, thus providing a precedent for Roman generals to follow.

In the art of the Classical period (480-323 BCE), Nike was usually connected with the ratification of victories already achieved; statues of Nike were frequently erected in conjunction with monuments commemorating military events in Greek sanctuaries (Töpfer 2). The most famous example is the Nike of Paionios at Olympia dating to 425 BCE (fig. 4). The goddess advances with her left leg stretching forward and she lands her left foot gently. Her pose suggests she alighting from flight (Palagia 74). She wears a *himation* which flutters behind her (Palagia 74). Nike of Paionios commemorated two victories in 425 BCE, the victory of the battle of Sphakteria and the campaign against Akarnania, both involving the Messenians (Palagia 79-80).

Figure 4: Nike of Paionios at Olympia. From
https://museum.classics.cam.ac.uk/collections/casts/nike-paionios.

The first coin bearing Nike on the reverse is from Elis/Olympia and dates to around 510 -

471 BCE (fig. 5).[2] On the obverse, Nike strides left extending a wreath crown with her left hand.

Her wings spread out to either side of her body, which remains in profile. She may be on her way

to crown the victor. What she wears is not distinguishable, but her dress flutters backward,

showing rather swift forward motion.

---

[2] Seltman dated the first group of coins at Olympia from 510 – 470 BCE and the second group of coins from 471-
452 BCE in *The temple coins of Olympia*.

Figure 5: Silver coin with Nike running on the reverse and Eagle flying on the obverse. From https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1866-1201-3025.

The second group of coins with Nike, dated to 471-452 BCE, is also from Elis/Olympia. It shows the goddess striding forward to the right (fig. 6). She wears a *chiton*, which features thin and closely spaced linen pleats (Lee 106). She holds a wreath crown in her extended left hand and strides forward by stretching out her left leg widely, in a manner resembling the first Nike issue but in mirror image. The wreath crown in her hand is shown clearly with dots. With her right hand she gathers up her trailing dress. Either she wears a helmet crowned by a finial, or her hairstyle is distinctly helmet-like, culminating in a topknot. Both Nike issues probably symbolized victory not in warfare, but in the Olympic games—a meaning that is reinforced by the reverse image representing an eagle, the bird of Olympia's patron god, Zeus.

Figure 6: Silver coin with Nike running on the reverse and eagle feeding on the obverse. From https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?lang=en&id=18214833&view=rs.

Around 460 BCE, the iconography of Nike spread to Terina. On the reverse of a silver stater from this city, the *peplos*-wearing goddess holds forth a wreath crown languidly in her right hand; a *taenia* trails from her lowered left hand (fig. 7). One wing is half-opened in profile at her back. Unlike the much stiffer and stylized Nikai on the coins of Elis/Olympia, which show an uncompromisingly Archaic style that prefers complete frontality of torso and wings blended with other body elements in complete profile, this Nike stands in a thoroughly Classical three-quarters-view *contrapposto* pose.

Figure 7: *AR* stater of Terina with nymphy on the obverse and Nike standing on the obverse. From http://www.magnagraecia.nl/coins/Bruttium_map/Terina_map/descrTer_HJ-003.html.

Although the concept and iconography of Nike had been established since the sixth century BCE, Nike initially only referred to specific events; the goddess was understood as a messenger of victory. Likewise in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, when represented as a statue in a Greek sanctuary, Nike commemorated a particular victory (Töpfer 2). But also in the Classical era, her function became less strictly temporal; she thus appears frequently on Greek coins hovering over a charioteer to place a crown on his head; soon the hovering Nike was even crowning various creatures, hybrid gods, and things. Alexander the Great adopted Nike into his official art (Töpfer 3). Since he and the rulers who succeeded him wanted to advertise their military success and individual value and strength, she was depicted in a close relationship with them. This connection resulted in making the rulers themselves guarantee the presence of the goddess, and consequently the victory (Töpfer 4). Thus, Nike became an enabler or harbinger of victory as well as its herald after the fact. She developed into a tool of political propaganda on Alexander the Great's coinage, which documents his authority (Dahmen 41). Series of the coins

with Athena on the obverse and Nike on the reverse were minted from 336 to 323 BCE in his name (fig. 8, fig. 9, and fig. 10).

Figure 8: Gold Coin of Alexander III of Macedon, Sardis, 334 BCE - 323 BCE. SNG. 210. Left: Obverse: Athena. Right: Nike. From American Numismatic Society, http://numismatics.org/collection/1944.100.30155.

Left: Figure 9: Revers of a gold Coin of Alexander III of Macedon, Miletus, 325 BCE - 323 BCE SNG.157. From American Numismatic Society, http://numismatics.org/collection/1944.100.31782.
Right: Figure 10: Reverse of a gold Coin of Alexander III of Macedon, Miletus, 336 BCE - 323 BCE. SNG.65. From American Numismatic Society, http://numismatics.org/collection/1944.100.29474.

On the reverse, Nike holds a wreath crown in her right hand and a distinctive cruciform scepter in her left (fig. 8). Standing at roughly a three-quarters angle in a half-stride or contrapposto stance, she extends the crown outward, to the viewer's left. On the earlier type, die-specific symbols such as a small tripod or a cantharus appear below the crown (fig. 8). Another die-specific symbol appears as a person, as if Nike is crowning him (fig. 9). Nike's head is in profile, looking toward the wreath. Her weight rests on the right leg and the left leg bends slightly at the knee. The goddess also wears a distinctive hairstyle with a prominent topknot that is strikingly reminiscent of Nike on the second coin issue of Elis/Olympia. The *contrapposto* stance recalls the Terina type; it is characteristic of the Greek statue in the fifth century BCE and is meant to embody physical and spiritual beauty (Damaskos 116). This tradition continued on into the fourth century; thus the cult statues in new temples of the Late Classical period followed it (Damaskos 117-118).

Nike wears the Attic type of the girdled *peplos* (Lee 100). The girdling of the Attic type creates an hourglass-shaped figure, enhancing the hips with the overfolded (Lee 103). Below the overfold, the drapery continues down to the feet. The upper part of the *peplos* is simple and sleeveless. This type of *peplos* is the common wardrobe of virgin goddesses, including Nike (Lee 103). On a vase of the late fifth century BCE, two Nikai with wings stand on each side of a tripod set on a two-stepped base (fig 11, 12). Both wear the Attic type of girdled peplos with a necklace and a bracelet on each arm. Interestingly, the Nike on the right appears to be holding a wreath in her slack left hand, but it is not easy to read. Her companion on the left wears her hair in the signature topknot.

Figure 11: Red figure pottery. From http://agora.ascsa.net/id/agora/object/agora%20xxx%3a656.
Figure 12: Details of the pottery. From
http://agora.ascsa.net/id/agora/object/agora%20xxx%3a656.

After Alexander's death in 323 BCE, Seleucus I Nicator copied Alexander's coinage to claim his legitimacy as an heir (Erickson 29-30). The standing Nike on the reverse is a continuation of the Nike on Alexander's gold coinage (fig. 13). Seleucus also minted coins representing on the reverse Nike crowning a trophy, and perhaps also erecting or inscribing it (fig. 14, 15). The topknot, though less clearly defined, is still visible on some types.

Left: Figure 13: Gold Coin of Seleucus I Nicator, Seleucia on the Tigris I, 300 BC - 295 BC. From http://numismatics.org/collection/1944.100.44868?lang=en.
Middle: Figure 14: Silver Coin of Seleucus I Nicator, Susa, 301 BC - 295 BC. From http://numismatics.org/collection/1944.100.74108?lang=en.
Right: Figure 15: Silver Coin of Seleucus I Nicator, Susa, 301 BC - 295 BC. From https://www.numisbids.com/n.php?p=lot&sid=2945&lot=34057.

Trophies accompanying Nike date back to the fifth century in Greece (see Appendix), but they began to appear on coinage only in the fourth century BCE. In this period, the trophy acted as a symbol of military virtue (Kinnee 49). The ambitious Hellenistic kings, starting from Alexander the Great, aimed to conquer larger territories, which led to a rather unstable military strength and dominance (Hölscher 28). Needing to find a way to solidify their power, legitimize their rule, and transform their military victories into concrete concepts, they minted coins with Nike and the trophy acting as symbols of victory and military virtues (Hölscher 28). The trophy on coins served as propaganda to remind people that they were in the hands of a capable king

bringing victories to them through payments to soldiers (Kinnee 49). The kings chose to combine

the iconography of Nike and trophy together since the two iconographies stressed two aspects of

victory in complementary ways. The trophy represented the actual victory on the battlefield and

Nike represented the divine recognition of the victory. The motif of Nike constructing or

inscribing a trophy was relatively new to coinage. It first appeared on a rare gold issue at

Lampsacus dating to 360-350 BCE (fig. 16). The issue is significant because of its innovative

iconography: Squatting before a trophy, a seminude Nike, again with the characteristic topknot,

inscribes the helmet atop the trophy with a chasing tool in her left hand and a hammer in her

right.

Figure 16:G136 A Rare Greek Gold Stater of Lampsakos (Mysia), One of Two Known, Nike crouching on the obverse and winged Pegasus on the reverse. From https://www.flickr.com/photos/antiquitiesproject/4848363626.

Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse between 317 and 289 BCE, styled himself as a leader

comparable to the Macedonian kings during and after his war with the Carthaginians. He

maintained good relations with Greek kings and crowned himself king in 305 BCE; yet his years

as tyrant and king were often chaotic and precarious. His tetradrachms mainly circulated in the southeast of Sicily, but also spread into southern Italy (De Lisle 1966 15). As with Seleucus I Nicator and the gold coin of Lampsacus, Agathocles evidently chose to depict Nike *inscribing* a trophy, a gesture of divine ratification that would later find a close parallel in the Roman motif of Victoria inscribing a shield as well.

Kore/Nike appears on Agathocles's second type, issued during his war with Carthage. With this coin, the first of its type in Sicily, we see that the iconography of Nike was spreading westward (De Lisle 1966 21). On the reverse, Nike is shown wielding a hammer and chasing tool, engraving a victory inscription on a helmet at the top of a trophy. A triskeles symbol appears behind her (fig. 17). This motif, which first appears on the coins of Agathocles, served both as a symbol of Sicily and as his personal marker. Standing in a *contrapposto* pose, with the right leg trailing, this Nike is half-naked; some loose fabric drapes over her lower body. In the post-Praxitelean Greek world, Nike—like Aphrodite—would now often be represented as nude or seminude. Her action and dress are similar to the Nike on Lampsacus's gold issue (fig. 16).

Figure 17: Syracuse. Agathocles (317-289 BC). AR tetradrachm (26mm, 17.01 gm, 12h). Struck ca. 310/08-306/5 BC. From https://www.numisbids.com/n.php?p=lot&sid=1369&lot=31007.

After Agathocles' death in 289 BCE, Syracuse began another round of political and military anarchy. During the Pyrrhic War, King Pyrrhus, Agathocles' son-in-law, was invited to Syracuse to confront the marauding Mamertines and Carthage's threats. His campaigns were initially successful in Sicily, but he left Syracuse in 276 BCE because the Sicilian Greeks refused to provide him with manpower and money to support his campaigns. Pyrrhus' military ambitions in Italy and Sicily were largely influenced by Alexander the Great's vision of conquering as many territories as possible (Kent 15-17). According to various literary sources, Pyrrhus' character and martial skills were comparable to those of Alexander the Great. His coinage too shows a degree of similarity to Alexander's Nike in his official art. During his year in Sicily, he minted a gold issue of the Artemis/Nike type (fig. 18). On the reverse, Nike faces three-quarters to the viewer's left walking with her right leg bent backwards and her left leg advancing slightly. Her hair features the now-familiar topknot. She holds a trophy in her left hand and a wreath (of ivy?) in her right. Various die-specific motifs, such as a thunderbolt or a bucranium, appear below the ample wreath. Nike's clothing is very typical of the Attic image of the goddess in the fifth century BCE (Damaskos 119). She wears a thin chiton adhering closely to the body to reveal her breasts and abdomen as if the cloth were wet. Her dress clings to the beautiful body revealingly and its lower portion floating behind her gives a sense of elegance. These swirling billows reflect the style that would later become a favorite motif of Roman neo-Attic reliefs. With this coin, we have arrived at a time and place that were both of urgent interest to the Romans as they turned their eyes toward Sicily and the island's internal chaos, which must have looked more and more like an opportunity.

Figure 18: Gold 10 drachm (decadrachm) of Pyrrhus, Syracuse, 295 BC - 272 BC. From British Museum, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_RPK-p56B-2-Pyr.

Chapter 3: Victoria in Italy

Tarentum (Taras), we will recall, played a key role in precipitating the Pyrrhic war when it asked Pyrrhus for help against the Romans in 280 BCE. Tarentum was founded in the fifth century BCE. It is located in a magnificent natural harbor that provided great wealth from fishing and commence. In the late fourth century BCE, the Tarentines divided into two factions, the pro-Greek and the pro-Roman, when Italians started to conduct frequent raids into Greek territory in Italy (Kent 29). Pyrrhus' control of Tarentum was a major step for his hegemony in southern Italy in the Pyrrhic War (Kent 88). His coinage significantly influenced that of Tarentum, which mimicked his favored iconography, including such imagery as Zeus, thunderbolts, and elephants (Kent 116). The first Victoria on any coin of the Italian mainland presumably was minted in Tarentum, perhaps under the influence of the Nike coins of Agathocles and Pyrrhus (Bellinger and Alkins 44-45). This bronze coin, found in Tarentum, dates to roughly 280 BCE (fig. 19). The head of Zeus appears on the obverse. On the reverse, Nike stands left, almost in profile, extending her right arm limply forward. In front of her appears a vertical thunderbolt; her gesture toward this fieature is not entirely legible, but it clearly lies just beyond her grasp. She stands in a *contrapposto* pose with the right leg bent backwards and the weight on the left leg and looks toward her right hand. Her left hand gathers up her dress. She is fully dressed with a single wing in profile at her back.

993

Figure 19: Bronze coin with Head of Zeus on obverse and Nike on reverse. From *Historia Numorum*, Plate 20, 993.

Sometime during the First Punic War, Victoria appeared on the fourth issue of Romano-Campanian coinage. On the reverse, the goddess, assuming an exaggerated *contrapposto* stance at a three-quarters angle, faces right towards a standing palm frond, which she grasps with her left hand (fig. 20). With her right arm she reaches forward as if to grasp a wreath that already hangs from the frond by a diadem. To the left, one half-folded wing appears in profile behind her back. Her upper body angles backwards, and her right foot bends back to counteract the weight. She seems to be nude except for some drapery loosely hanging on her left arm and hips, like a *Huftmantel*, and hanging down almost to the floor.

Figure 20: Silver Didrachm, Rome, 265 B.C. - 242 B.C. 1969.83.35. S 21a. From American Numismatic Society, http://numismatics.org/collection/1969.83.35.

This Victoria may be influenced by Nike on the Tarentine coin (fig. 19), but the almost-naked appearance of Victoria on this coin seems to be inspired more by Agathocles' model of Nike (Caltabiano 283). In any event, her graceful, sinuous contrapposto pose is quite distinct from both. Agathocles minted the Nike type of reverse in Syracuse, which circulated in Sicily but—like other iconic Syracusan designs of stunningly high quality—was known far beyond its zone of circulation. Alexander the Great's coinage plays a crucial role in developing the political function of the Roman coinage. He was very popular among the Romans, and the imitation of Alexander among Roman aristocrats contributed to the Hellenization of Roman culture. As Burnett theorizes, Roman iconography of war and victory, and specifically representations of Victoria on Roman coinage, were heavily influenced by the iconographies appearing under Alexander, whose coinage disseminated the Greek embodiment of the goddess widely (1998, 22). Therefore, as with his coinage, the Romans utilized Romano-Campanian coinage to publicize victory and power. Crowns and palms awarded to military victors gained new

prominence in Rome in 293 BCE.[3] Thus, when this image of Victoria on Romano-Campanian coinage appeared sometime between 265 and 242, its palm and crown represented not just a casually borrowed Greek visual motif, but a genuine Roman practice that had now been in place at Rome for several decades.

A statuette dating to the second century BCE from Tarentum shows a striking similarity to Victoria on the Romano-Campanian coinage (fig. 19). Though her stance is somewhat different, the disposition of her drapery is almost identical to that of the Victoria on the coinage. Again, the fabric wraps around her hips, hanging loosely over her right thigh and left arm, leaving her left leg and torso exposed. She extends her right arm in a similar manner, but she probably once held a pitcher in her right hand, and a handled *phiale* in the other as if to pour a libation (LIMC 588). Her head faces down and she leans slightly forwards instead of backwards like the Victoria on the coin. Interestingly, this Nike, like so many we have seen already, wears a topknot. Whether or not this statuette is earlier or later than the Victoria on the Romano-Campanian coin, the similarity and its innovations reveal a degree of cultural contact between Rome and South Italy—and particularly Tarentum, which came under Roman control in 272 BCE.

---

[3] Eodem anno coronati primum ob res bello bene gestas ludos Romanos spectarunt palmaeque tum primum translato e Graeco more victoribus datae (Livy 10. 47. 3). Also see Introduction.

Nike 588

Figure 21: Standing Nike. From LIMC, part 6, Nike 588.

Victoria on the Egadi rams

The Egadi Project has salvaged a total of 23 rams so far. Three of the rams (Egadi 4, 6, and 11) bear a winged female figure, which Oliveri identifies as Victoria. The figure strides left at a three-quarters angle in a manner resembling the Pyrrhic Nike, her left leg almost straight and her trailing right leg bent (fig. 22, 23). But the narrow vertical field requires her to hold the crown aloft using her right arm, rather than forward; her head tilts to gaze at it. Her left arm holds a palm branch vertically in front of her left wing. The figure wears a sleeveless chiton with rich drapery, giving her a feeling of elegance (Oliveri 126). Victoria on Egadi 6 wears a more sophisticated dress with more articulated folds than Victoria on Egadi 4. Across her chest she wears a distinctive X-shaped sash bearing a circular ornament at the junction. Though her lower

dress is double-belted or overfolded more in the manner of the *peplos,* it billows like the Pyrrhic

Nike's himation. Unusually, the overfold is slit, revealing the thigh beneath, which is clothed in

the form-hugging sheer fabric reminiscent of the famous Nikai on the Acropolis of Athens.

Figure 22: The female figure on Egadi 4. From Tusa and Buccellato *La Battaglia Delle Egadi*, 28.

Figure 23: The deatil of Egadi 6. From https://historia.nationalgeographic.com.es/a/hallados-diez-espolones-guerras-punicas_7371.

The uncommon wardrobe of this Victoria leads to the possibility of another interpretation of the figure, although crown and wreath distinctly signify her dominant identity. Royal suggests that she could also evoke Vanth, an Etruscan goddess (142). Her duty is to protect the dead during the journey to the underworld. Vanth usually is represented as a winged figure wearing a short skirt a cross-band intersecting in the middle of the chest (fig. 16). The evidently intentional ambiguity in the identification of the female figure on the Egadi rams can be understood as a reflection of a similar kind of ambiguity shown in certain kinds of multivalent coin iconography, some of which played an important role in the Roman expansion (Rowan 22). The identification of a deity struck on the coins might depend on who was looking at it. Whether the ambiguity was

intentional or not, it allowed viewers to interpret the figure according to their own cultures (Rowan 28). As for the figure on the rams, it is clear that her predominant identity is that of Victoria since she holds a crown, as her prototype Nike had already been doing since at least the sixth century BCE. By contrast, Vanth never holds a crown. However, the irregular X-shaped sash offers a little bit of leeway, perhaps as a kind of insurance policy if Nike proved to be fickle. It is not very surprising that the Egadi rams reveal Etruscan influence. *Socii navales* were allied troop units serving as marines in the Roman army, and both Greek and Latin colonies provided troops to fight for the Romans (Lomas 76). Also, Egadi rams 3 and 7 are each inscribed with Etruscan numerals, which may have conveyed dimensional information; and the bronze composition of the rams characterizes Roman-Etruscan workmanship (fig. 25; Royal 225, 287). It was common for Etruscan craftsmen to live in the towns controlled by Rome; thus, it is no wonder that the Egadi rams were made with the cooperation of Roman and Etruscan craftsmen.
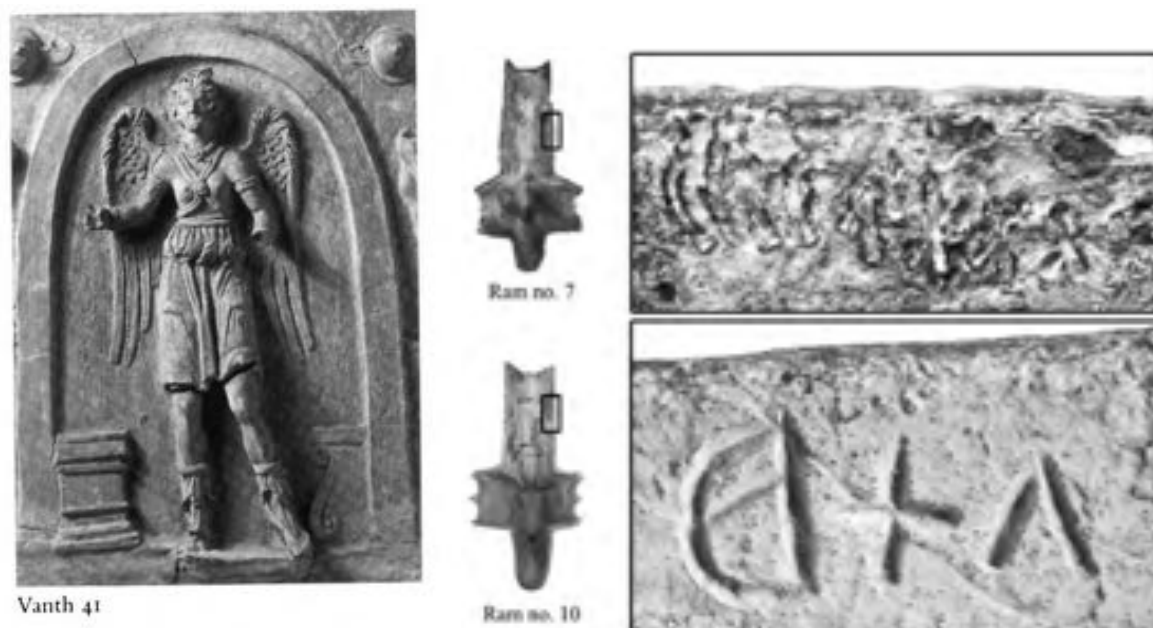

Figure 24: Vanth 41. From LIMC, part 7, 126.
Figure 25: Location and detail of inscriptions on the cowls' inner starboard sides of rams nos. 7 and 10 (Soprintendenza del Mare – Sicilia / S. Emma). From Royal, "Ram manufacture and the nature of bronze objects," fig.10.3..

Through the ambiguity of the iconography, the Romans and the non-Romans read the iconography in the context of their own cultures. Thus, a Roman marine probably interpreted the female figure as Victory to wish him victory in battle, and probably also as an apotropaic device comparable to those on Greek warships. The existence of the iconography and cult of Victoria may further imply an apotropaic function. By putting Victoria on the rams, the Romans naturally asked for her help to win the battles. The inscription on Ram 3, the only Punic ram inscribed with text, reads as "[. . .] wrath pour out on him/it, O Baal; opposite Greece may a lightning storm and its waters pull our enemy dow[n . . .]."[4] The Carthaginians called for divine help to overwhelm the Romans. The Romans who learned the design of the rams from the Carthaginians might also have learned the practice of asking for divine intervention through rams, although by visual rather than textual means. This function would nevertheless have represented an evolution in the meaning of the goddess Victoria; for she would have passed from a messenger or ratifier of military victory to an agent in it.

A marine with Etruscan origin would surely have understood the Greco-Roman meaning, but he may also have seen the female figure as Vanth, and thus as a guarantor of a safe journey to the underworld. The navies going to battle during the First Punic War would have known that the journey on the sea was immensely dangerous; by this time in the war, several Roman fleets had been destroyed by storms even before they reached the battlefield (Polybius 1.37, 39). In addition, by the time of this concluding battle in the war, its grim toll, amounting to thousands of lives, would have been plain to everyone. It is likely that both meanings of Vanth and Victoria could be understood by many Roman soldiers with Etruscan ancestors. While

---

[4] See P. C. Schmitz 121. Another reading of the inscription suggested by Garbini is that "And that the lance cause much harm. Baal launch this (rostrum) against his objective with fury, so that the shield is debilitated, weakened at the center », which may be from a mythological poem (117).

different audiences led to multiple understandings, through repeated re-reading the Romans were able to achieve cultural transitions and provide a negotiable new identity through a concrete object in order to solidify their control and unite the Republic (Rowan 50). Allowing different audiences the opportunity to read iconography differently through intentional ambiguity was a strategy that allowed the Romans to control large regions inhabited by different cultures. Under the circumstances, it seems at least plausible that all the soldiers and mariners who manned these warships were given an opportunity to view the ship out of water, perhaps in its shed, before it was launched for battle. Except in placid, clear waters, that provided the best opportunity to view the ram clearly.

Both the Victoria on the Egadi rams and the Victoria on the Romano-Campanian issue are associated with both crown and palm. Crowns and palm fronds had been an established iconography for glorifying the achieved victories since long before their public acceptance in Rome in 293 BCE. But that moment, probably enabled by Postumius' completion of his newfangled Greek-style stone temple just one year before, seems to have turned the tide toward the Roman embrace of Victoria and her symbolism.

The Function of Trophy from the Sixth to Fourth Century BCE

In the 6ᵗʰ century, the trophy began to stand as a marker to victory. The standard "mannequin" form of trophy, a branching tree trunk dressed as a soldier in weapons and armor, was the consistent favorite of trophy monuments for both the Greeks and the Romans (Kinnee 6). The term *τρόπαιον* itself suggests a trophy was a physical artifact of ritual designated for the hoplite phalanx (Kinnee 35). The erection of a trophy acted as a religious ritual honoring Zeus Tropaios as a token act representing the lives sacrificed in exchange for victory (Kinnee 27). The literary sources confirm that stripping the dead, making a trophy from the weapons, and erecting it at a prominent site on the battlefield were a necessary part of declaring victory (Kinnee 36-37). Later in the Classical period, the new motif of Nike erecting or decorating a trophy showed a more potent way of glorifying a victory symbolically (Töpfer 3). It was a common motif on Athenian pottery in the fifth century. On an Attic *pelike* dated to the middle of the fifth century BCE, Nike is shown finishing up her work on a trophy (fig. 26). The trophy is decked out in a short chiton, a cuirass, and a baldric with sword and bow. A shield with an eye in the middle is placed at the side of the trophy. Nike appears to be incising a delicate inscription into the helmet with an engraving tool, perhaps in the manner of the famous Etruscan bronze helmet from Olympia commemorating the Syracusan victory over the Etruscans at the Battle of Cumae in 474 BCE (fig. 27).

Figure 26: Two-handled jar (pelike) of about 450-440 BCE depicting Nike inscribing a helment on a trophy. From https://collections.mfa.org/objects/153838/twohandled-jar-pelike-depicting-nike-setting-up-a-trophy?ctx=332b6c3e-bbb0-4d37-8904-6daf67a8b986&idx=0.

Figure 27: An Etruscan helmet dedicated at Olympia recording the victory of Hieron I of Syracuse over the Etruscans in the Battle of Cumae in 474 BCE. From https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1823-0610-1.

Since Nike announces the victory, the trophy becomes her counterpart in the announcement (Kinnee 48). Due to the decline of the trophy's appearance in literature and its concomitant increase on coinage in the Hellenistic period, the object was transformed from a hoplite ritual object to an icon of power (Kinnee 49). Moreover, as the tactics and strategies of warfare grew more complicated, a prominent place to erect a trophy was no longer needed; thus, the trophy evolved to represent power and rule (Hölscher 31).

Bibliography

Bellinger, Alfred and Marjorie Alkins. *Victory as a Coin Type*. New York: American

      Numismatic Society, 1962.

Bernard, Seth. "The Social History of Early Roman Coinage." *Journal of Roman Studies* 108

      (2018): 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0075435818000497.

Bispham, Edward, and Christopher Smith. *Religion in Archaic and Republican Rome and Italy*

      Evidence and Experience. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2014.

Bleckmann, Bruno. "Roman Politics in the First Punic War." In *A Companion to the Punic Wars*,

      edited by Hoyos Dexter, 167-183. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Burnett, Andrew. "The Romano-Campanian silver." *La Monetazione romano-campana. Atti del*

      X Convegno del Centro Internazionale di Studi Numismatici, (1998): 19–48.

Burnett, Andrew. "Early Roman Coinage and Its Italian Context." In *The Oxford Handbook of*

      Greek and Roman Coinage, edited by William Metcalf. Oxford: Oxford University Press,

      2012.

Caltabiano, Maria. "La Nike/Nymphe di Agatocle e l'ideologia della Vittoria." *Tyrannis,*

      Basileia, Imperium. Forme prassi e simboli del potere politico nel mondo greco e

      romano, (2010): 277-302.

Clark, Anna. *Divine Qualities: Cult and Community in Republican Rome*. Oxford: Oxford

      University Press, 2007.

Crawford, Michael. "The early Roman Economy, 753-280 B.C." *L'Italie préromaine et la Rome*

      républicaine. I. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Heurgon, (1976): 197-207.

      https://doi.org/10.3406/befar.1980.1225.

Crawford, Michael. *Roman Republican Coinage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

    2001.

Dahmen, Karsten. *The Legend of Alexander the Great on Greek and Roman Coins*. Florence:

    Routledge, 2007.

Damaskos, Dimitris. "Free-Standing and Relief Sculpture." In *A Companion to Greek Art*. Edited

    by Smith, Tyler Jo, Demetres Plantzos, and Dimitris Damaskos. Malden, MA: Wiley

    Blackwell, 2018.

Dart, Christopher. "'*Duumuiri Nauales'* and the Navy of the Roman Republic." *Latomus* 71, no.

    4 (2012): 1000–1014.

Davies, Penelope. "The Archaeology of Mid-Republican Rome: The Emergence of a

    Mediterranean Capital." In *A Companion to The Archaeology of The Roman Republic*,

    edited by Jane DeRose Evans. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Davies, Penelope. "Rome and Her Neighbors: Greek Building Practices in Republican Rome."

    In *A Companion to Roman Architecture*, edited by Ulrich, Roger Bradley, Caroline K.

    Quenemoen et al.. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.

Day, Christopher. 2014. "Fleets and Prouinciae in the Roman Republic: Institutions,

    Administration and the Conceptualisation of Empire between 260 and 49 B.C." PhD thesis,

    Oxford University, UK.

De Lisle, Christopher. "The Coinage of Agathokles of Syracuse: Sicilian and Hellenistic

    Influences." *Numismatic chronicle* 177 (2017): 9–28.

Erickson, Kyle. *The Early Seleukids, Their Gods and Their Coins*. London: Routledge, Taylor &

    Francis Group, 2019.

Holscher, Tonio. "The Transformation Of Victory Into Power: From Event To Structure."

    In *Representations of War in Ancient Rome*, edited by Sheila Dillon and Katherine E.

    Welch, 27–48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Lee, Mireille M. "Garments." In *Body, Dress, and Identity in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge,

    London: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae (LIMC). Zürich: Artemis, 1981.

Lomas, Kathryn. *Rome and the Western Greeks, 350 BC-AD 200 Conquest and Acculturation in*

    Southern Italy. London: Routledge, 1993.

Kent, Patrick Alan. *A History of the Pyrrhic War. 1st ed*. Milton: Routledge, 2020.

Kinnee, Lauren. *The Greek and Roman Trophy: from Battlefield Marker to Icon of Power*. New

    York, NY: Routledge, 2018.

Kondratieff, Eric. "The Column and Coinage of C. Duilius: Innovations in Iconography in Large

    and Small Media in the Middle Republic." *Scripta Classica Israelica*, vol. XXIII (2004):

    1-39.

Morel, Jean-Paul. "Early Rome and Italy." Chapter. In *The Cambridge Economic History of the*

    Greco-Roman World, edited by Walter Scheidel, Ian Morris, and Richard P. Saller, 485–

    510. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

    doi:10.1017/CHOL9780521780537.019.

Oliveri, Francesca. "Iconographic and epigraphic considerations on the Egadi rostra." In *The Site*

    of the Battle of the Aegates Islands at the End of the First Punic War Fieldwork, Analyses

and Perspectives, 2005-2015, edited by Jeffrey Royal and Sebastiano Tusa, 125-136. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2020.

Palagia, Olga. Art as Trophy: the Nike of Paionios." *Naupaktos* (2016).

Pensabene, P.. "Victoria, Aedes." *Lexicon topographicum urbis Romae*, edited by Eva Margareta Steinby, 149-150. Roma: Quasar, 1993.

Pitassi, Michael. *The Navies of Rome*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2010.

Prag, Jonathan. "Bronze rostra: the Latin inscriptions." In *The Site of the Battle of the Aegates Islands at the End of the First Punic War Fieldwork, Analyses and Perspectives, 2005-2015*, edited by Jeffrey Royal and Sebastiano Tusa, 77-105. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2020.

Roselaar, Saskia. *Italy's Economic Revolution: Integration and Economy in Republican Italy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Roller, Matthew. "The Exemplary Past in Roman Historiography and Culture." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Historians*, 214–230. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Royal, Jeffrey. "Iconographic elements on the warship rams." In *The Site of the Battle of the Aegates Islands at the End of the First Punic War Fieldwork, Analyses and Perspectives, 2005-2015*, edited by Jeffrey Royal and Sebastiano Tusa, 137-146. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2020.

Royal, Jeffrey. "Ram manufacture and the nature of bronze objects." In *The Site of the Battle of the Aegates Islands at the End of the First Punic War Fieldwork, Analyses and*

Perspectives, 2005-2015, edited by Jeffrey Royal and Sebastiano Tusa, 219-234. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2020.

Royal, Jeffrey. "The warships: construction and tactics." In *The Site of the Battle of the Aegates Islands at the End of the First Punic War Fieldwork, Analyses and Perspectives, 2005-2015*, edited by Jeffrey Royal and Sebastiano Tusa, 257-294. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2020.

Rutter, N. K., Andrew Burnett et al.. *Historia Numorum - Italy*. London: British Museum Press, 2001.

Scardigli, Barbara. "Early Relations between Rome and Carthage." In *A Companion to the Punic Wars*, edited by Dexter Hoyos, 28-35. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Schmitz, P. C.. "Egadi ram no. 3: proposed Punic text and translation 119." In *The Site of the Battle of the Aegates Islands at the End of the First Punic War Fieldwork, Analyses and Perspectives, 2005-2015*, edited by Jeffrey Royal and Sebastiano Tusa, 119-124. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2020.

Seltman, Charles Theodore. *The Temple Coins of Olympia*. Foreword by Sir William Ridgeway. Review by G.F. Hill. New York: Attic Books, 1975.

Serrati, John. "The Rise of Rome to 264." In *A Companion to the Punic Wars*, edited by Dexter Hoyos, 9–27. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Stamper, John. "Urban Sanctuaries: The Early Republic to Augustus.". In *A Companion to Roman Architecture*, edited by Ulrich, Roger Bradley, Caroline K. Quenemoen et al. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.

Stek, Tesse. *Cult Places and Cultural Change in Republican Italy: a Contextual Approach to Religious Aspects of Rural Society after the Roman Conquest*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010.

Stek, Tess. "Material Culture, Italic Identities and the Romanization of Italy." In *A Companion to the Archaeology of the Roman Republic*, edited by Jane DeRose Evans, 337-353. Oxford: Blackwell Publ., 2013.

Töpfer, Michael. The Goddess of Victory in Greek and Roman Art. *Spirits in Transcultural Skies* (2015). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-11632-7_1.

Tusa, Sebastiano, and Cecilia Buccellato. *La Battaglia Delle Egadi: Atti Del Convegno, Favignana, Ex Stabilimento Florio*. Palermo: Regione Siciliana, Assessorato dei beni culturi e dall'identità siciliana, 2015.