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# *Annotazioni Numismatiche*

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**AGGIORNAMENTI**

## Two-headed and two-tailed denarii again

Clive STANNARD

In a note in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1987<sup>(1)</sup>, I analysed the various two-headed and two-tailed issues of Republican denarii; published a new two-headed issue; and argued that obverse and reverse dies were similarly shaped, and so, that two “obverse” or “reverse” dies might be paired to strike a coin, either deliberately, or by mistake. I distinguished two-tailed and two-headed issues with a complete legend spread over the two faces of the coins from issues with an abnormal half-legend repeated on both faces.

The issues (identified by Crawford’s numbers) with which I dealt were the following:

L. SATVRN, 104 BC, Rome

317/1, two-headed, - / L·SAT

317/2, two-tailed, ROMA / L·SATVRN

C. VIBIVS C.F. PANSA, 90 BC, Rome

342/6a, two-tailed, PANSA / C·VIBIVS C·F

342/6b, two-tailed, PANSA / C·VIBIVS C·F

L. FVRI CN.F BROCCHI, 63 BC, Rome

414/-, two-headed, repeated legend: BROCCHI III VIR

MAGN. PROCOS with VARRO PROQ, 49 BC, mint moving with Pompey

447/1b, two-headed, repeated legend: VARRO·PRO·Q

To these must now be added a new type, of which I know only one specimen, which appeared in a Swiss auction<sup>(2)</sup>:

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(1) C.STANNARD, “Two-headed and two-tailed denarii in the Roman Republic”, *NC* 147 (1987), pp.160-163.

(2) Schweizerische Kreditanstalt, Auktion 8, 27.-28. Oktober 1987, number 1043. I thank Italo Vecchi for providing me with the photographs that I illustrate here.

## Q. POMPEIVS RVFVS

434/-, repeated legend: Q·POMTEI Q·F RVFVS COS,  
54 BC, Rome, *figure 1*.



1

This coin repeats the “obverse”<sup>(3)</sup> types of 434/2, which is, itself, almost a two-tailed issue<sup>(4)</sup>: one face shows a curule chair, an arrow to left, a laurel-branch to right, Q·POMTEI·Q·F RVFVS above, and COS on a tablet below; the other a curule chair, a *lituus* to left, a wreath to right, SVLLA·COS above, and Q·POMTEI·RVF on a tablet below. It is therefore likely that this issue results from a mere mistaken coupling of two “obverse” dies, which reinforces the argument that obverse and reverse dies were of similar shape, and thus interchangeable<sup>(5)</sup>.

The two specimens of 414/- that I published were from a single pair of dies. I have since identified one of the paired obverse dies of those specimens in use with a normal reverse die of 414/1<sup>(6)</sup>; I illustrate this piece as *figure 2*, and re-illustrate, for comparison, as *figure 3*, the piece published on pl. 22, no. 6, of my *NC* article. I regret that I have not yet been able to find the other die in use as a normal obverse die.



2



3



(3) I put the word in italics, because there is no technical reason to attribute either of the types to obverse or reverse. (I use “obverse” to mean the die set into the anvil, and I see no way of deciding the question for this issue. Conventionally, the obverse die carries the head; it seems that such a die was usually set in the anvil, but there are obvious exceptions to this rule. Sometimes, the surface of a reverse die is slightly convex, producing a concave reverse to the coin; this is not the case in this issue.)

(4) It is worth noting that the companion piece, 434/1, is almost a two-headed issue; one face shows a head of Sulla right, with SVLLA·COS above; the other a head of Q. Pompeius right, RVFVS·COS behind, and Q·POMTEI·RVF before. A more usual emission would have resulted from coupling each die of 434/1 with a die of 434/2.

(5) The low weight of the coin (given in the auction catalogue at 3.13 g) must also raise the possibility that the coin is plated, and unofficial, which would reduce its value for the argument, but the piece was evidently judged good by the cataloguer.

(6) *Asta Internazionale del Titano*. 42, no. 263.