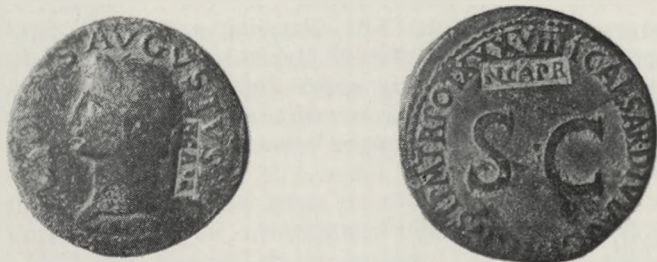


The economic context of the Roman Imperial countermark NCAPR¹

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The purpose of the countermarks that are found so extensively on the early Roman Imperial coinage still remains largely obscure, in spite of the patient researches of several scholars.² The countermarks themselves often consist of letters that are clearly intended to be an abbreviation for something longer, and there is usually little doubt about the immediate reference that they were intended to convey. Some obviously stand for imperial names



1. This paper is based on the lecture I gave to the Asociación Numismática Española in Barcelona on 18th May, 1964.

I am indebted to Dr. C. M. Kraay for giving me a note of the coins countermarked NCAPR in the ANS New York and in Copenhagen, and for drawing my attention to the finds from Augst; to Mr. L. H. Cope for discussing some of the metallurgical problems in the production of orichalcum; and to Señor Almirall Barril for his friendly help and long standing interest in the coinages of Nero.

2. M. Grunwald, *Die römischen Bronze und Kupfermünzen mit Schlagmarken in Legionslager Vindonissa*, C. M. Kraay *Die Münzfunde von Vindonissa, Veröffentlichungen der Gesellschaft Pro Vindonissa V* (1962), H. Lehner «Die Einzelfunde von Novaesium» *Bonner Jahrbücher* 1904, 246 ff., M. L. Strack «Der Münzfund auf den Selsschen Ziegeleien bei Neuss» *Ibid.*, 419 ff., M. Daniels «De antieke munten der Nijmeegse verzamelingen» *Oudheidkundige Mededeelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden* 1950, 1 ff., and C. M. Kraay «The Behaviour of Early Imperial Countermarks» in *Essays in Roman Imperial Coinage Presented to Harold Mattingly*, 113 ff.

such as TIB and TIB.C for Tiberius Caesar,⁵ or for elements of imperial titulature such as IMP for Imperator.⁴ Some seem to be the names of imperial officials — VICIN⁵ for Vicinius, VAR⁶ for Varus. Others are the mark of a legion — L VI for Legio VI Macedonica⁷ and X for Legio X Gemina;⁸ a sign of approval such as BON for Bonum⁹ and PROB for Probatum;¹⁰ or a mark of value such as DVP for dupondius and AS for As.¹¹ But it is not very obvious why these additional legends (in the abbreviated form employed) should have been added to the coins that are countermarked; and some countermarks present a really amazing puzzle. Why should countermarks of «Augustus» be applied to coins of Tiberius at the same time as countermarks of «Tiberius» are being applied to coins of Augustus?

When we know the reference of a countermark, the range of coins normally countermarked, the area in which the countermark was applied and the date of its use, we are in a far better position to suggest an answer to the puzzling question of the purpose it was designed to serve, and the detailed information now available about several countermarks considerably narrows the range of possible explanations. Some countermarks seem to have had a political context, as when P.A.B.A oblitterates the features of Nero during the Civil War of AD 68/9,¹² and countermarks of Claudius deface the features of Caligula¹³ after his *damnatio memoriae*.¹⁴ The important countermark NCAPR, however, seems to have served a very different purpose and to have had a specifically economic context, related to major changes in the metallic composition and metrology of the Roman imperial coinage. We can now establish quite closely the years in which it was applied; and it is highly significant that not only is it related to the two periods of major change in the pattern of the Julio-Claudian *aes* coinage at Rome, but it is also applied in a selective way, which reinforces the view that the countermarking process was not coincidental but played an integral role in the changed pattern of the *aes* currency.

The Julio-Claudian aes system

The monetary system of the Julio-Claudian *aes* struck by the mint of Rome has been frequently described.¹⁵ Orichalcum, that had first been introduced in the coinage of Clovius under Julius Caesar,¹⁶ was used by the Augustan moneyers for the higher *aes* denominations — the sestertius and the dupondius.¹⁷ Virtually pure copper¹⁸ was currently used for the lower

3. BMCRE I, XXXVI, and Kraay *op. cit.*

4. *Ibid.*, XXXIII.

5. *Ibid.*, XXXVII.

6. *Ibid.*

7. A. M. DE GUAND, «Sobre una contramarca inédita de la Legio VI en un sextercio de Claudio» *Numisma* XXXII, 1958, 13 ff.

8. MAC DOWALL «Two Roman Countermarks of AD 68». NC, 1960, 103 ff.

9. BMCRE I, XXXII.

10. *Ibid.*, XXXIV.

11. KRAAY «The Behaviour of Early Imperial Countermarks». *Op. cit.*, 129.

12. NC 1960, 106 ff.

13. MOWAT, RN 1903, 118 ff.

14. DION CASSIUS, LX, 22, 3.

15. Cf. MATTINGLY BMCRE I, XLVII, and C. H. V. SUTHERLAND, *Coinage in Roman Imperial Policy*, Appendix P, 119 ff.

16. Cf. GRANT, *From Imperium to Auctoritas*, 81 f.

17. For a review of analyses of Roman orichalcum coins see CALEY *Orichalcum and Related Ancient Alloys* NNM 151, and the analyses I published subsequently in SM 1966, 101 ff.

18. BMCRE I, LVII and the copper As of Nero with 99 % copper which I published in SM 1966, 103.

aes denominations of As, semis and quadrans. Newly struck orichalcum coins had an attractive yellow colour, which made them readily distinguishable from the copper denominations, and this enabled the mint to strike denominations in orichalcum at weights considerably lower than it would have done for the same denominations in copper. While coins in both metals were probably token coinages, the orichalcum was given a value almost double that of copper.

The weight standards of the system are usually described in a general way for the whole of the Julio-Claudian period, as consisting of:

<i>orichalcum sestertius</i>	c. 25 gm.
<i>orichalcum dupondius</i>	c. 13 gm.
<i>copper as</i>	c. 11 gm.
<i>copper semis</i>	c. 4.5 gm.
<i>copper quadrans</i>	c. 3.5 gm.

Like most other token coinages in the ancient world, the Julio-Claudian *aes* was certainly struck *al marco* and not *al peso* and there are quite wide variations between the weight of coins in good condition from the same issue. But the detailed study of the metrology of the coinage, issue by issue, reveals some interesting modifications and two major changes in the standard and pattern of the coinage established by the Augustan moneyers.¹⁹

The metrological reform AD 11/12 to AD 22/23

The first major change was in the decade between AD 11/12 and AD 22/23 when the Roman mint introduced a far sharper metrological distinction between the copper As and the orichalcum dupondius. In the issues of the moneyers under Augustus, the weight range of the copper asses at 10-12 gm., seriously overlapped that of the orichalcum dupondii at 11-13 gm., and the two denominations could only be distinguished by the red colour of the copper asses compared with the yellow colour of the orichalcum dupondii, and by the distinctive obverse types (the bare head of asses and the legend inside an oak wreath of the dupondii) which remained unchanged through the issues of successive moneyers.²⁰ But in the imperial issue struck at Rome in AD 11/12 (the first issue at Rome to omit the names of the moneyers) the copper asses were struck to the lower stabilised standard of 11 gm. The process was completed in AD 22/3 under Tiberius, when the mint of Rome made a further issue of copper asses on the stabilised 11 gm. standard, with a parallel imperial issue of orichalcum dupondii struck to the increased standard of 14-15 gm. instead of the earlier 11-13 gm. of the moneyers' dupondii.

Nero's reform of AD 63/64

The second major change was in AD 63, when the mint of Rome resumed the issue of orichalcum with its interesting experiment of a comprehensive orichalcum coinage for all the *aes* denominations.²¹ The sestertii and dupon-

19. See the Table of Weights in Appendix C.

20. *BMCRE* I, XCIX f.

21. *Ibid.*, I; Sydenham *The Coinage of Nero*, 16 ff.; and discussed further in my forthcoming ANS Monograph *The Western Coinages of Nero*.

dii of this issue followed closely the standard that Tiberius had established in AD 22/3, but whereas previously the As and its subdivisions had been struck in copper, the As, semis and quadrans of AD 63 were now for the first time struck in orichalcum to constitute a single and comprehensive monetary system for the *aes*. This experiment was discontinued in AD 64/65 when the mint reverted to the earlier Julio-Claudian system with sestertii and dupondii alone in orichalcum, and with the asses and its subdivisions in copper.

Sources of orichalcum

Throughout the whole of the Julio-Claudian period the issue of *aes* at Rome was remarkably periodic and irregular, and there were periods when no *aes* was struck. Orichalcum issues were even more irregular than the copper ones. No orichalcum sestertii and dupondii were struck at Rome between c. 17 BC and AD 22/3;²² and no *aes* of any denomination was struck at Rome between the issues of Claudius with PP and Nero's first *aes* issues in AD 62.²³ An important reason for this irregularity in issuing orichalcum denominations seems to have been the shortage of zinc ores — a necessary constituent for the orichalcum coinage that Augustus had introduced. Although new sources were discovered from time to time they rapidly became exhausted. Pliny describes the successive sources utilised.²⁴

«Fit et ex alio lapide quem chalcitim appellant in Cypro ubi prima aeris inventio mox vilitas praecipua in aliis terris praesantione maximeque aurichalco quod praecipuam bonitatem admirationemque diu obtinuit, nec reperitur longo iam tempore effeta tellure. Proximum bonitate fuit Sallustianum in Ceutronum Alpino tractu non longi et ipsum aevi, successitque ei Livianum in Gallia. Ultrumque a metallorum dominis appellatum illud ab amico divi Augusti hoc a conjuge. Velocis defectus Livianum quoque, certe admodum exiguum invenitur. Summa gloria nunc in Marianum conversa quod et Cordubense dicitur. Hoc a Liviano cadmeam maxime sorbet et aurichalci bonitatem imitatur in sestertiis dupondariisque, Cyprio suo assibus contentis.»

These sources in fact seem to correspond closely with the principal groups of orichalcum issues — the Cypriot sources and Sallustianum providing the ore for the moneyer's orichalcum issues down to c. 17 BC, Livianum in Gaul providing the ore for the second Altar dupondii of Lugdunum c. AD 10 to 14, and *aes* Marianum or Cordubense «which imitates the excellence of orichalcum» providing the ore for the Julio-Claudian issues from Tiberius.

The extensive orichalcum coinage of Nero from AD 63/4 seems to have been made possible by the discovery of the important deposits of calamine at Stollberg, which Willers dates between AD 57, when Pliny seems to have been in Upper Germany, and the publication of his *Historia Naturalis* c. AD 74.²⁵

It is possible that a modified process for manufacturing orichalcum from the contemporaneous sources of materials (both zinc and copper ores) was

22. Sestertii and dupondii were only struck by four of the earlier colleges of moneyers. The latest one to do so — Censorinus, Sulpicianus and Lamia is dated to 21/20 BC by Mattingly *RIC I*, 62 and to 15 BC by Pink *The Triumviri Monetales ANS Numismatic Studies*, No. 7, 47. The next emission of sestertii and dupondii at Rome was that of AD 22/3 *BMCRE I*, 129-132.

23. Cf., *BMCRE I*, CLXVI.

24. PLINY, *Historia Naturalis* XXXIV, 2-2.

25. WILLERS, «Neue Untersuchungen über die römische Bronze-Industrie von Capua und von Niedergermanien, Jahrbuch des provincialen Museums zu Hannover, 1906-7, 64.

developed and resulted in the lower zinc content of Nero's orichalcum (compared with earlier issues) and a consequent more golden appearance of the coinage.

The three major types of metal used for the orichalcum denominations at the *mint of Rome* were therefore:

- (i) «natural» orichalcum for the moneyer's issues.
- (ii) *aes Cordubense* — the Spanish ore which imitated the excellence of orichalcum — for the middle Julio-Claudian issues.
- (iii) *Aes* prepared with a new source of calamine (from Stollberg) for the extensive issue of Nero from AD 63/4.

These different materials can be observed in the visual appearance of the three major groups of Roman imperial orichalcum coins, when examples are not heavily patinated or dirty. Sestertii and dupondii of the middle Julio-Claudians have a far brassier appearance than those of the moneyers, but the issues of Nero from AD 63/4 have a rich golden appearance which gives them a very distinct character.

A detailed analysis of the common countermark NCAPR reveals the extremely interesting fact that the application of the countermark is clearly connected with these major changes in the use of orichalcum for the *aes* coinage.

Range of coins countermarked NCAPR

The range of coins countermarked is remarkably consistent. NCAPR occurs regularly on orichalcum sestertii and dupondii, and not on copper asses, semisses and quadrantes. It occurs on all the major issues of these orichalcum denominations at the mint of Rome from Tiberius to the issues of Claudius with PP, with the noteworthy exception of coins struck in the name of Caligula. It does however occur on dupondii of Germanicus that may possibly be attributed to the time of Caligula. The exclusion of sestertii and dupondii with the name of Caligula is clearly deliberate. The explanation is no doubt to be found in the statement of Dio that after Caligula's death his memory was condemned and his coins melted down. Some scholars have been rather sceptical about this withdrawal of Caligula's coinage, but its effectiveness in Italy is amply demonstrated in the complete absence of any coins with the name of Caligula from the large *aes* hoard from Pozzarello.²⁷ The reason why no sestertii and dupondii of Caligula were countermarked NCAPR is simply that no coins of Caligula remained in normal circulation in Italy at the time NCAPR was applied. Before the issues of Tiberius, no sestertii or dupondii had been struck at Rome since the moneyers' emission of c. 17 BC. None of these much older sestertii and dupondii of the moneyers of Augustus is ever countermarked NCAPR, although the evidence of the hoard from Pozzarello clearly suggests that they continued in circulation until the Flavian period in Italy. The reason for their exclusion seems to be their much greater age (they must have been in circulation for some 80 years by the time the countermark was applied) and the fact that they were made of a different alloy and were struck to a lower weight standard.

26. G. PANSÀ «Nuovo contributo alla teorica delle contremarche monetarie presso i Romani», *Rivista Italiana*, 1906, 397 ff.

27. «Le Dépôt monétaire du Pozzarello» *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, 1964, 51 ff.

Very few examples of the countermark can be found on other issues. It occurs on a dupondius of Vespasian in the Musée at Saintes, but Kraay has shown that this is a countermarked dupondius subsequently restruck by Vespasian.²⁸ It also occurs on a second Altar sestertius of Tiberius in Copenhagen, and on a dupondius of Ilici of Tiberius in Paris, both coins which might exceptionally have been regarded as Julio-Claudian bronze or orichalcum. It does not normally occur on copper denominations at all, although it is known on one copper As of Claudius (Pallas type) in the Balsach Collection.²⁹

After the issues of Claudius with PP, no orichalcum sestertii and dupondii were struck at Rome until AD 63, when Nero introduced his new general orichalcum coinage and struck asses, semisses and quadrantes in orichalcum as well as sestertii and dupondii. The countermark NCAPR was therefore applied to the denominations struck in orichalcum of all issues (except coins of Caligula) of the mint of Rome from the reform of Tiberius in AD 22/3 and prior to the introduction of Nero's general orichalcum coinage in AD 63. The significant point about this is that the countermark is not only restricted to orichalcum denominations, but to those coins of orichalcum in group (ii) produced from *aes Cordubense* — the Spanish ore that «imitates the excellence of orichalcum».

Weight of coins countermarked NCAPR

The normal weight range of coins countermarked NCAPR is equally significant. Most sestertii countermarked NCAPR weigh between 25 and 29 gm. and most dupondii with NCAPR weigh between 13 and 15 gm.³⁰ This was probably the weight range of the better preserved coins of these denominations subsequent to Tiberius' reform still in circulation, and corresponds quite well to the weight range of sestertii and dupondii in Nero's comprehensive orichalcum coinage. But it is equally clear that weight alone was not the only criterion used to select the coins that were countermarked NCAPR. In the hoard from Pozzarello, many of the sestertii of the Augustan moneyers weigh 24 to 25 gm. a weight that was acceptable for countermarking sestertii of Tiberius and Claudius with NCAPR; and many of the dupondii of the Augustan moneyers in that hoard weigh 12 to 15 gm., again a weight that was acceptable for countermarking dupondii of Tiberius and Claudius. Yet none of the moneyers' sestertii and dupondii in either the Pozzarello hoard or in general museum collections is ever countermarked NCAPR. Even if a reasonable weight within the range for sestertii and dupondii in the comprehensive orichalcum coinage of Nero were a criterion used in selecting the coins of Tiberius and Claudius to be countermarked, coins issued prior to Tiberius reform were still rigorously excluded whatever their weight.

28. «Gegenstempel auf überprägten römischen Münzen» *SM* 1956, 4 f.

29. This coin in the Balsach Collection (*RIC* Claudius 66) is worn but the countermark is clear. The punch does not have the tail to the N that can regularly be seen on well preserved examples of NCAPR; and it is placed horizontally across the field behind Claudius' head instead of the normal position vertically up or down. The suspicion that this use on an As may be irregular is reinforced by the copper As of Claudius (*RIC* 68 E) also in the Balsach collection which is countermarked NCAP with letters much larger than usual, rather irregularly formed. I am indebted to Señor Almirall for drawing my attention to these coins in the Balsach collection and for sending me photographs.

30. In Copenhagen and Paris.

See the weights cited in Appendix A, and the tables of weights in Appendix C.

Date of application

There can now be little doubt that the countermark NCAPR was applied under Nero. Several scholars have attributed it to Nero following Borghesi's interpretation of the first two letters NC as Nero Caesar. Borghesi³¹ suggested *Nero Caesar Augustus probavit*, Mowat³² preferred *Nero Caesar Augustus Princeps*. Pansa³³ suggested *Neronis Caesaris Auctoritate probatum*, and Kraay³⁴ has recently put forward *Nero Caesar Augustus Populo Romano*. But it is now possible to establish a Neronian date independently of one's interpretation of the letters. The countermark must be later than the latest *aes* issues of Claudius with PP on which it is found. Its application must equally be earlier than AD 78 because an example of the countermark has been found in excavations at Pompei, which was destroyed in the eruption of Vesuvius in that year. An earlier *terminus ante quem* of AD 72 is given by the coin in the Musée at Saintes — the dupondius of Vespasian overstruck on a flan that had previously been countermarked NCAPR. From these two *termini* we can be sure that N stands for Nero and not Nerva (as Grant suggested).

Area of application

It is now equally clear that Italy was the area in which NCAPR was principally applied. Finds of coins countermarked NCAPR³⁵ are widely distributed and have been recorded from Gaul, Britain, Germany, the Danubian provinces, Malta, Greece and Spain, but in all these areas of the empire coins countermarked NCAPR constitute a very small proportion of the total number of orichalcum coins of Tiberius and Claudius that have been found. In the case of other Julio-Claudian countermarks where the localised centre of application can be established, the countermark is found on about 50 % of the coins of the issues normally countermarked in finds from the locality in which the countermark was applied;^{35A} and the proportion of countermarked coins drops sharply in neighbouring localities. It is therefore very significant that in the hoard from Pozzarello six out of the 12 sestertii of Tiberius and Claudius i.e. 50 % of the issues of sestertii normally countermarked NCAPR do in fact have the countermark. In other Italian collections the countermark is consistently well represented. In the excavations at Minturnae 1 of the 3 Julio-Claudian sestertii is countermarked NCAPR. In the unprovenanced collections of the Museo Archaeologico at Siena which seem to have been found locally 3 out of 8 sestertii of Tiberius and Claudius i.e. nearly 40 % have the countermark NCAPR. In the rich collection of Francesco Gnechchi no fewer than 34 of the 70 countermarked coins have NCAPR. At Ostia and Pompei the countermark is represented, but not to such a marked extent, and in the second Capitol collection of rather worn coins thought to have been found in Rome, 2 out of 14 sestertii of Claudius i.e. c. 15 % have the countermark NCAPR. There is therefore positive evidence to suggest an Italian centre of application for NCAPR, and the present evidence points to northern Italy rather than the capital.

31. BORGHESI, *Oeuvres Complètes* I, 215.

32. RN 1903, 118 ff.

33. *Rivista Italiana*, 1906, 397 ff.

34. «Behaviour of Early Roman Imperial Countermarks» *op. cit.*, 133.

35. Cf. KRAAY *op. cit.* and MAC DOWALL NC 1966, 125 f.

Expansion of the abbreviation

To carry conviction, therefore, any explanation of the cryptic letters NCAPR must give a full and satisfactory account of five key facts in the behaviour of the countermark:

- 1) Its application in Italy — probably northern Italy.
- 2) Its application under Nero.
- 3) Its use on sestertii and dupondii only — the orichalcum denominations.
- 4) Its use on these denominations subsequent to Tiberius' reform and prior to Nero — the coins that were struck in *aes Cordubense*.
- 5) Within these limits, its use on coins within the weight range of the denominations concerned in Nero's comprehensive orichalcum coinage.

The north Italian centre of application removes the plausibility from topographical interpretations like:

*Narbone Capitolium Restitutum*³⁶
*Nummus Cusus Capreis*³⁷

It might just have been argued that an obscure local reference was intelligible in its own locality, but none of these topographical suggestions is relevant enough nationally to warrant interested comprehension in other parts of the empire.

The application of NCAPR under Nero heavily reinforces those interpretations of NCA as Nero Caesar Augustus in one form or another. They give the cryptic letters a direct and immediate relevance that is not found in the rather tautologous expansions into:

*Nummus cusus a Populo Romano*³⁸
*Nota cusa a Populo Romano*³⁹
*Nummus concessus ad publicas rationes*⁴⁰
*Nobis concessum a Populo Romano*⁴¹

«Nero Caesar Augustus» was Nero's regular form of titulature down to mid 66 when he assumed the praenomen imperator. His earlier gold and silver issues dated TRP to TRPX have NERO CAES AVG IMP⁴² while the undated gold and silver of the reformed standard struck in AD 64 to 66 has NERO CAESAR AUGUSTUS.⁴³

PR is a major problem. Borghesi⁴⁴ suggests «probavit» on the analogy of the PROB and PRO-countermarks that are also found commonly on sestertii and dupondii of Claudius.⁴⁵ If the analogy of PROB is pressed we should really have to follow Pansa in interpreting PR as «probatum» and the initial

36. Cf. PANSÁ, *loc. cit.*, 410 fn. 3.

37. HARDOUIN, *Opera Selecta*, 717.

38. MAHUDEL, *Histoire de l'Académie Réale des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* XIV, 1743, 137.

39. *Ibid.*

40. F. DE SAULCY cited by PANSÁ *loc. cit.* 410 fn. 3.

41. TORELLI-SARAYNA, ENEA VICO, ANGELONI etc., cited by PANSÁ *loc. cit.*

42. *BMCRE* I, 201 ff. nos 9 to 51.

43. *BMCRE* I, 208 ff. nos 52-76 etc.

44. BORGHESI, *Oevres Complètes* I, 215.

45. *BMCRE* I, XXXIV.

letters NCA as «Neronis Caesaris Auctoritate». Mowat's objection⁴⁶ that the emperor did not have any constitutional power to approve the *aes* is of course as much or as little valid against Pansa as against Borghesi. But Mowat's own alternative of «Princeps» is open to the even more serious objection that the earlier emperors assiduously avoided the use of «Princeps» as a title on coin and in inscriptions until Trajan's OPTIMO PRINCIPE.

Most other solutions interpret PR in its normal reference to Populus Romanus. This is the obvious interpretation of the letters PR⁴⁷ used in the Civil War group of countermarks along with SPQR⁴⁸ (SENATUS POPULIQUE ROMANI) and SPR⁴⁹ presumably SENATUS POPULI(QUE) ROMANI. In Roman abbreviations, as we see them on coins and inscriptions, each letter may stand for a complete and independent word like SPQR; it may stand for the first letters of a word like IMP for Imperator; or for the key letters of a word like COS for Consul. Roman practice in abbreviations seems to have been just about as varied as modern practice, and really affords no help in deciding between expanding PR into «probatum» or taking it as «Populus Romanus». While Populus Romanus is perhaps the obvious candidate, the difficulty about the interpretations using it has been their expansion of NCA into rather tautologous statements of the obvious. With considerable ingenuity Kraay has suggested⁵⁰ an amalgam of the two basic approaches combining the relevance of NCA as the expression of Nero's titulature with the normal well known interpretation of PR as Populus Romanus to give Nero Caesar Augustus Populo Romano; and he suggests that such a countermark would have been appropriate to Nero's congiarium of AD 57, for at that time no *aes* currency in Nero's own name had yet been minted and his instinct for self advertisement might have rejected the idea of merely handing out coins of his predecessors.

Kraay's context explains well enough NCAPR's Neronian date and its application in Italy, although it does not very readily explain its greater frequency in northern Italy. But it fails completely to account for the highly selective way in which the countermark was used — being limited to sestertii and dupondii (the orichalcum denominations), and its use exclusively on those denominations subsequent to the reform of Tiberius.

It is however possible to combine the two elements in a slightly different manner, which gives considerable point to the selective way in which the countermark was applied. I would therefore interpret NCAPR as NERONIS CAESARIS AUGUSTI POPULIQUE ROMANI. The absence of a Q in the formula is a perfectly legitimate form as we see from SPR used apparently to mean the same as SPQR. Many countermarks seem to define a coin's status in one way or another. This is certainly the purpose of PROB(ATUM), BON(UM), DUP(ONDIUS) and AS. Some countermarks seem to contain a reference to the name of an imperial official responsible for some fresh authorisation like APRONIUS, VAR(US) or VICIN(IUS). Some countermarks seem to be replacing one old authority or status with a new or different one —such as

∇ (ie VITELLIUS), or S(ENATUS) P(OPULIQUE) R(OMAN) or ∇A (VESPASIAN) instead of the original issuer (NERO), in the same way that TIB(ERIIUS) in various forms is used as a countermark on the earlier series.

46. *RN* 1903, 118 ff.

47. *BMCRE* I, XXXIV.

48. *Ibid.*, XXXV.

49. On asses of Nero of the Lugdunum mint in Reims Musée (*RN* 1887, 394) Oxford (*RIC* 329) the Hague (*RIC* 329 two examples), and the Museum Carnuntinum, Bad Deutsch-Altenburg (*RIC* 329).

50. *Op. cit.* 132 ff.

The common feature in most Roman imperial countermarks is the replacement and change of status effected by the countermarking process.

NCAPR is only applied to orichalcum sestertii and dupondii. These were the only two *aes* denominations of the earlier *aes* system from Tiberius to Claudius to remain basically unaltered in the comprehensive orichalcum coinage Nero introduced in AD 63/4. In this new coinage Nero issued a complete range of *aes* denominations — sestertii, dupondii, asses, semisses and quadrantes all in orichalcum, marking the dupondii, asses, semisses and quadrantes with marks of value to make their value clear beyond all doubt.⁵¹ The earlier copper denominations of asses, semisses and quadrantes had no place in the new system. Most of the sestertii with NCAPR weight between 25 and 28 gm., and would therefore be acceptable metrologically in the new system.

Purpose of the countermark

I would suggest therefore that the NCAPR countermarking process was part of an associated review c. AD 63/4 of the existing orichalcum coinage — a process designed to assess and mark for continued circulation sestertii and dupondii which met the requirements of the mint's new policy. Copper asses, semisses and quadrantes, ultimately destined to be withdrawn from circulation, would not be countermarked because it was intended that they would ultimately be replaced by the new orichalcum coins in those denominations; and some measure of selection may have been exercised against very heavy, very light or very worn orichalcum sestertii and dupondii that were not entirely consistent with the new orichalcum system. The exclusion of sestertii and dupondii of the Augustan moneyers is clearly deliberate — no doubt the result of a specific mint instruction. By AD 64 they had been in circulation for more than 80 years (whereas the oldest Tiberius issue countermarked had only been in circulation for 40 years). They were struck in a distinctive alloy, and apart from wear through circulation they had originally been issued to a lower weight standard. It is clear from finds that NCAPR was probably applied only in northern Italy, that part only of the sestertii and dupondii from Tiberius to Claudius in circulation at the time were actually countermarked and that both uncountermarked coins and those with NCAPR continued to circulate side by side. The explanation may possibly lie in the external circumstances that frustrated Nero's ambition for a unified orichalcum coinage and forced him to abandon the experiment before it could be fully implemented.

That N(ero) C(aesar) A(ugustus) and P(opulus) R(omanus) should be cited together as the new authority to impart to the earlier and acceptable sestertii and dupondii of issues from Tiberius to Claudius the new status of the comprehensive orichalcum coinage of Nero need occasion no surprise. Many countermarks used in the Rhine and Danube frontier provinces in the Julio-Claudian period had used some form of imperial titlature or name in countermarks to impart a new status. NCAPR is of course distinct from all these countermarks used in the frontier provinces and is distinctly *sui generis* in that it seems to be the only countermark to be used in Italy to any significant extent. In Italy, where the *aes* coinages throughout the first century normally

51. Cf. BMCRE I, I, Sydenham *The Coinages of Nero*, 16 ff. and my forthcoming ANS Monograph *The Western Coinages of Nero*.

carried a reference not only to the emperor but also to the senate's authorisation in its explicit and prominent «SC», one might well have expected any countermark to carry a reference to both emperor and senate. But while Nero had been so meticulous at the beginning of his principate with senatorial courtesies and had introduced a new and direct reference to the senate in the EX SC on the dated gold and silver issues from TRP to TRP X⁵² (the precious metal coinages had not previously carried a senatorial reference), the good relations which he had initially fostered soon turned sour. By AD 64 he not only dropped the complimentary EX SC from the gold and silver, but omitted the SC and *all* reference to the senate from the first two issues when Rome resumed production of *aes*;⁵³ and one of these was in fact the initial emission of the comprehensive orichalcum coinage. When Nero restored the SC to the *aes* in the third issue, it was much less prominent than it had been on the earlier Julio-Claudian issues. On the other hand the reverse types used by Nero on the *aes* at Rome are full of reference to Roma and the Populus Romanus. Various forms of the ROMA type⁵⁴ and of the Janus Temple PACE PR TERRA MARIQUE PARTA IANVM CLUSIT type⁵⁵ are used on successive issues of sestertii and dupondii to the end of his reign. The seated ROMA is one of the two types used for the semisses,⁵⁶ and the PACE PR Janus Temple⁵⁷ and Victory holding a shield inscribed SPQR⁵⁸ are the two types used for all the copper asses at Rome from AD 65 to 68, after he had abandoned the experiment of a comprehensive orichalcum coinage, for all the *aes* denominations.

Evidence for the product of the Mint of Rome

The identification of the date and locality at which a countermark was applied contributes to our knowledge of the Roman Imperial coinage in other ways. Perhaps most significantly of all, it gives us for the categories of coins countermarked a cross section of the types in circulation in the area of application at a known time—the date of the countermark's use. As NCAPR is such a common countermark, it gives us invaluable information about the relative frequency of different types and issues circulating in northern Italy about AD 63/4, and hence by implication a good idea of the relative volume of their original emission by the mint of Rome, as distinct from any western mint in Spain or Gaul. The most significant feature about the coins countermarked is that coins of Claudius both with and without PP are equally represented, whereas the great majority of Claudian *aes* found in the western provinces like Britain, Gaul and Germany are issues without PP.⁵⁹ In this we have at last an important objective piece of evidence for mint criteria under Claudius. The inclusion of PP in Claudian *aes* titulature was clearly a normal development at the mint of Rome and was used on about 50 % of its total production; but it was not followed by the Claudian *aes* of Gaul,

52. BMCRE I, CLXXI ff. and Sutherland, *Coinage in Roman Imperial Policy*, 152 ff.

53. I argued this context in my paper to the Royal Numismatic Society on 21st March 1956 RNS Proceedings 1955-6, 11. There is a full account of this series in my *Western Coinages of Nero*.

54. SYDENHAM *op. cit.*, 78 to 83.

55. *Ibid.*, 91 to 97.

56. *Ibid.*, 83 to 87.

57. *Ibid.*, 94 to 97.

58. *Ibid.*, 101 to 103.

59. In finds from Britain, Gaul and Germany, the great majority of both official and copied *aes* of Claudius have no PP. At Vindonissa only 11 of 259 Claudian *aes* have PP, and at Mayenne only 72 out of 3806.

Britain and Germany produced perhaps from a western mint — or by the local imitations derived from the western emissions.

Summary of conclusions

We can therefore establish some extremely significant facts about the behaviour of the common Roman Imperial countermark NCAPR. It occurs on orichalcum sestertii and dupondii of Tiberius and Claudius — all the middle Julio-Claudian issues subsequent to the metrological reform of Tiberius and prior to the general orichalcum coinage of Nero (except for Caligula). These are the denominations and issues struck in *aes Cordubense*, the Spanish ore that imitates the excellence of orichalcum. The countermark seems to have been applied in north Italy subsequent to Claudius issue with PP and prior to AD 72 — almost certainly under Nero in AD 64/66. I suggest that the countermark should be interpreted as NERONIS CAESARIS AUGUSTI POPULI-QUE ROMANI, and was the device used in N. Italy to replace the earlier imperial authority with that of Nero and the People of Rome on post-Augustan orichalcum denominations that were acceptable to the pattern of the new and comprehensive orichalcum coinage of Nero.

APPENDIX A. COINS COUNTERMARKED NCAPR⁶⁰

SESTERTII

2nd Altar Series

RIC p. 91 no 365 or 369 Copenhagen

Tiberius

RIC 19	British Museum 73	23.91
	Glasgow 16	26.71
	Paris	22.51
RIC 20	*Pozzarello hoard	25.8
RIC 37	British Museum 131	27.83
	Oxford	27.17
	Oxford	26.66
	Oxford	21.56
	Munich	—
	Munich	—
	Blackburn	—
	Viena	—
	*Pozzarello hoard	24.7
	*Pozzarello hoard	24.45
	Gnecchi	—
	Gnecchi	—
RIC 41	British Museum 111	26.11
	Cambridge	24.53
	Paris	24.89

60. Entries with a number after the collection refer to the published catalogues of these collections — British Museum, Glasgow, Milan and Vindonissa. Coins of Claudius are included in my list only where I have been able to determine whether or not they have PP. For the collections cited I have noted coins countermarked NCAPR in each issue, except in the case of Madrid where my detailed notes cover only the issues of Claudius.

Coins marked with an asterisk are from known find spots and are also cited in Appendix B.

	Paris	23.75
	Paris	25.72
	Paris	22.92
	Milan 592	25.2
	Spink stock (1968)	—
	Gnecchi	—
<i>RIC 42</i>	British Museum 128	22.57
	Paris	27.82
	Paris	26.14
	Paris	25.50
	Munich	—
	Vienna	—
	Vienna	27.20
	Milan 595	23.20
	Hague	24.05
	Sienna	—
<i>CLAUDIUS WITHOUT PP</i>		
<i>RIC 60 D</i>	British Museum 116	25.31
	Munich	—
	Munich	—
	Milan 1001	25.4
	Vienna	—
	Madrid	—
	Madrid	—
	Nimes	—
	Hague	26.64
	Hague	28.60
	Hague	24.74
<i>RIC 62 D</i>	British Museum 123	26.00
	Paris	28.60
	Paris	24.74
	Copenhagen	—
<i>RIC 64 D</i>	British Museum	26.23
	British Museum 127	22.78
	British Museum 128	26.59
	Oxford	23.26
	Oxford	26.65
	Paris	27.48
	Paris	26.82
	Paris	26.90
	Vienna	—
	Vienna	—
	Vienna	—
	Madrid	—
	Madrid	—
	Hague	24.4
	*Minturnae excavations	—
	Spink stock (1966)	25.2
	Spink stock (1966)	27.1
	Spink stock (1967)	31.01
	Nimes	—
<i>RIC 78 D</i>	Oxford	28.14
	Oxford	23.14

	Cambridge	23.18
	Cambridge	28.38
	Paris	25.06
	Paris	21.59
	Paris	28.14
	Paris	25.27
	Paris	26.86
	Munich	—
	Milan 910	25.1
	Vienna	—
	Vienna	—
	Vienna	27.5
	Hague	26.23
	Hague	27.2
	Spink stock (1966)	27.5
<i>CLAUDIUS WITH PP</i>		
<i>RIC 60 E</i>	Munich	—
	Dublin, Trinity College	—
<i>RIC 61 E</i>	British Museum 185	28.50
	Paris	25.69
	Paris	19.35
	Paris	26.68
	Vienna University	—
	Madrid	—
	Perpignan	—
<i>RIC 62 E</i>	British Museum 190	28.95
	British Museum 191	29.03
	Paris	27.78
	Munich	—
	Spink stock (1966)	24.14
	Vienna	—
<i>RIC 64 E</i>	Oxford	29.42
	Dublin, Trinity College	—
	Vienna	—
	Glasgow 80	29.46
	Paris	26.64
	Paris	26.47
	Madrid	—
	Madrid	—
	Spink stock (1966)	29.6
<i>RIC 79 E</i>	British Museum 210	27.88
	Oxford	27.19
	Glasgow 88	27.26
<i>RIC 85 E</i>	British Museum 222	27.34
	British Museum 223	24.69
	Oxford	27.20
	Oxford	26.95
	Glasgow 93	25.05
	Paris	26.12
	Munich	—
	Milan 979	26.70
	Milan 981	28.00

	*Pozzarello hoard	28.14
	Hague	25.20
	Hague	28.35
	Leeds University	24.80
	Almirall	23.99
	<i>DUPONDII</i>	
<i>ILICI OF TIBERIUS</i>	Paris	—
<i>TIBERIUS</i>		
<i>RIC</i> 22	Oxford	11.20
<i>RIC</i> 23	Oxford	13.18
	Paris	12.83
	Paris	12.89
	Paris	12.76
	Paris	12.82
	Paris	13.02
	Hague	12.05
	Bonn	11.94
	Mac Dowall	11.46
	Almirall	13.29
<i>RIC</i> 24	Paris	12.23
	Hague	12.60
	*Vindonissa 3250	—
<i>DIVUS AUGUSTUS</i>		
<i>RIC</i> p 95 no 4	Paris	13.96
	Vienna	16.10
	Baldwin stock (1939)	12.08
<i>RIC</i> p. 95 no. 7	British Museum 145	12.59
	Paris	10.88
	Paris	11.04
	Paris	13.12
	Hague	13.00
<i>RIC</i> p. 96 no. 9	Paris	13.74
	Paris	14.80
	*Hofheim	—
	Tarragona	15.00
	Copenhagen	—
	Copenhagen	—
	Bonn	12.52
<i>RIC</i> . p. 96 no. 10	*Bern	12.52
<i>GERMANICUS</i>		
<i>RIC</i> p. 108 no. 36	British Museum 98	14.59
	British Museum 99	17.68
	British Museum 100	14.20
	Oxford	14.61
	Oxford	14.24
	Oxford	12.14

	Paris	14.14
	Paris	13.65
	Paris	16.68
	Paris	10.90
	Paris	11.93
	Paris	13.36
	Vienna	—
	Hague	12.10
	*Vindonissa 3494	—
	*Ludwigshafen	—
<i>CLAUDIUS WITHOUT PP</i>		
<i>RIC 82 D</i>	British Museum 167	14.28
	Oxford	14.27
	Cambridge	13.38
	Cambridge	14.88
	Glasgow 73	11.32
	Paris	13.82
	Milan	12.7
	Hague	14.23
	Perpignan	—
	Copenhagen	—
	Balsach	—
<i>RIC 67 D</i>	Oxford	14.84
	Paris	11.56
	Vienna	14.78
	Vienna	11.6
	Vienna	—
	Madrid	—
<i>CLAUDIUS WITH PP</i>		
<i>RIC 82 E</i>	Oxford	15.65
	Oxford	11.36
	Paris	16.86
	Vienna	—
	Vienna	—
	Vienna	—
	Madrid	—
<i>RIC 67 E</i>	Paris	13.77
	Paris	15.56
	Paris	11.71
	Paris	15.24
	Madrid	—
	Zagreb	—
<i>ASSES</i>		
<i>CLAUDIUS</i>		
<i>RIC 66</i>	Balsach	—

APPENDIX B. DISTRIBUTION OF COINS COUNTERMARKED NCAPR

		Percentage countermarked
SPAIN		
La Rioja ⁶¹	Hoard of some 50 Claudian dupondii found by lorry driver, of which one (<i>RIC</i> 82) was countermarked NCAPR.	2
Pollensa ⁶²	on a dupondius of Claudius.	—
GAUL		
La Mayenne ⁶³	2 out of 766 dupondii of Claudius both <i>RIC</i> 67.	0.3
RHINE-DANUBE FRONTIER		
Nijmegen ⁶⁴	1 sestertius of Claudius.	—
Hofheim ⁶⁵	1 out of some 25 possible coins.	4
Vindonissa ⁶⁶	2 dupondii of Tiberius (<i>RIC</i> 24 and 36) out of some 235 possible coins.	1
Augst	2 sestertii of Claudius in Historisches Museum Basel.	—
Deidesheim ⁶⁷	Sestertius of Claudius <i>RIC</i> 60, and dupondius of Tiberius <i>RIC</i> 36.	—
Rheingonheim Kastel Kempten ⁶⁸	1 dupondius of Tiberius <i>RIC</i> 36 out of 13 and 1 sestertius of Claudius out of 15 sestertius of Claudius.	7
Ersingen, Bern ⁶⁹	1 dupondius of Divus Augustus <i>RIC</i> p. 96, 10.	—
BRITAIN		
Bourton-on-the-Water ⁷⁰	Sestertius of Claudius <i>RIC</i> 64.	—
GREECE		
Corinth ⁷¹	Sestertius of Claudius <i>RIC</i> 64.	—
MALTA		
R. W. Douglas collection Cheltenham	Dupondius of Antonia <i>RIC</i> 82 in a batch of Roman coins from Malta.	—
ITALY		
Pompei ⁷²	Dupondius of Claudius reverse smooth - presumably <i>RIC</i> 67.	—
Ostia ⁷³	Sestertius of Claudius reverse smooth.	—

61. I am indebted to Dr. A. M. DE GUADAN for this information.

62. Hallazgos Monetarios, IX, 673.

63. *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie, Sciences Arts et Belles-Lettres de la Mayenne* 1865, 31.

64. DANIELS, *op. cit.*

65. E. RITTERLING, «Das frühromische Lager bei Hofheim im Taunus», *Annalen des Vereins für Nassauische Altertumskunde*, XXXIV and XL.

66. KRAAY, *Die Münzfunde von Vindonissa*, 104 f. nos 3250 and 3494.

67. *Frankf. Münz.* 1932 no 30, 446.

68. *Fundmünzen römischer Zeit in Deutschland, Schwaben* 1. 7 nos 300 & 604.

69. *SM* 1965, Heft 60, 159.

70. *Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 1935, 234 ff.

71. EDWARDS, *Corinth VI*, pt. 3, 76.

72. In the antiquarium at Pompei.

73. In the Museum at Ostia Scavi.

Minturnae ⁷⁴ excavations	Sestertius of Claudius RIC 64 D, one of 3 Julio-Claudian sestertii.	33
Pozzarello Hoard ⁷⁵	Six out of 12 Julio-Claudian sestertii.	50
Siena Museum	3 sestertii (Tiberius RIC 42, Claudius RIC 60 & 64) out of 8 sestertii of Tiberius & Claudius	40
Capitol 2nd Collection [Gnecchi collection ⁷⁶	2 out of 14 Claudian sestertii. 34 out of the 70 countermarked coins in the collection of Francesco Gnecchi were countermarked NCAPR.]	15

74. J. JOHNSON, *Excavations at Minturnae*. (Philadelphia, 1935.)

75. *Mélanges d'Archeologie et d'Histoire* 1964, 51 ff.

76. Listed by G. Pansa in the appendix to his article in *Rivista Italiana*, 1906, 397 ff.

APPENDIX C. TABLE OF WEIGHTS - AES DENOMINATIONS
MINT OF ROME

AUGUSTUS

GM.	Moneyers	Imperial issue AD 10-12
32		
31		
30		
29	S	
28	SS	
27	SSSS	
26	SSS	
25	SSSSSSS	
24	SSSSSSSS	
23	SS	
22	S	
21	S	
20	S	
19	S	
18	D	
17	S	
16	D	
15	D	A
14	DD	A
13	DDDDDDDDDDDDDD	AA
12	DDDDDDDD	AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
11	DDDDDDDDDD	AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA AAAAAAAAAA
10	DDDD	AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA AA
9	DDDD	AAAA
8	DD	AA
7		A
6		

S = Sestertius

D = Dupondius

A = Copper As

O = Orichalcum As

This frequency table is based on the weight of coins in the *BMCRE I* and *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet I*. Imitations are excluded. Divus Augustus Consensu and Germanicus dupondii have been attributed to AD 34/5 to 36/7. The coins of Nero are those which I attribute to issue III - the general orichalcum coinage with marks of value on dupondii and asses - but the entry for copper asses is the subsequent issue IV immediately after the general orichalcum coinage was abandoned.

APPENDIX C. (contd.)

	TIBERIUS	CALIGULA
	AD 22/23	AD 34/5 to 36/7
GM.		
31		S
30		SSS
29	S	SSSS
28	SSSS	SSSS
27	SSSSSSSSS	SSSS
26	SSS	SSSSSSSS
25	SS	SSS
24	SS	SSS
23		SS
22		S
21		SS
20		
19		
18		D
17	D	DD
16		DD
15	DDDDDDDDDD	D
14	DDDDDDDD	
13	DDDDD	AAD
12		AAAAAAA
11	AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA	AAAAAAAAAAAAA
10	AAAA	AAAAAA
9		
8		AA
7		
6		

APPENDIX C. (contd.)

CLAUDIUS		NERO	
without PP	with PP	general orichalcum issue	
GM.			
31			S
30	SSS	SS	S
29	SSS	SSSSSSSS	SSS
28	SS	SSSSSSSSSS	SS
27	SSSSS	SSSS	SSSSSSSSSSSS
26	SS	S	SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
25	S	SSS	SSSSS
24			SSS
23	S		S
22			
21	S		
20			
19			
18			
17	D	D	D
16	DD	DDD	DDDDDDDD
15	DDDDD		DDDDDDDDDD
14	DD		DDDDDDDD
13	DDDD	A	DD
12	A	AAAA	D
11	DAAAAAA	AAAAAA	O
10	AAAAA	AAAA	O
9	AAAAAA	AA	OOO
8			OOOOO
7	A		OO
6			O
			AA
			AAAAAA
			AAAAA
			AAAA
			AA

APPENDIX D. WEIGHT OF COINS COUNTERMARKED NCAPR

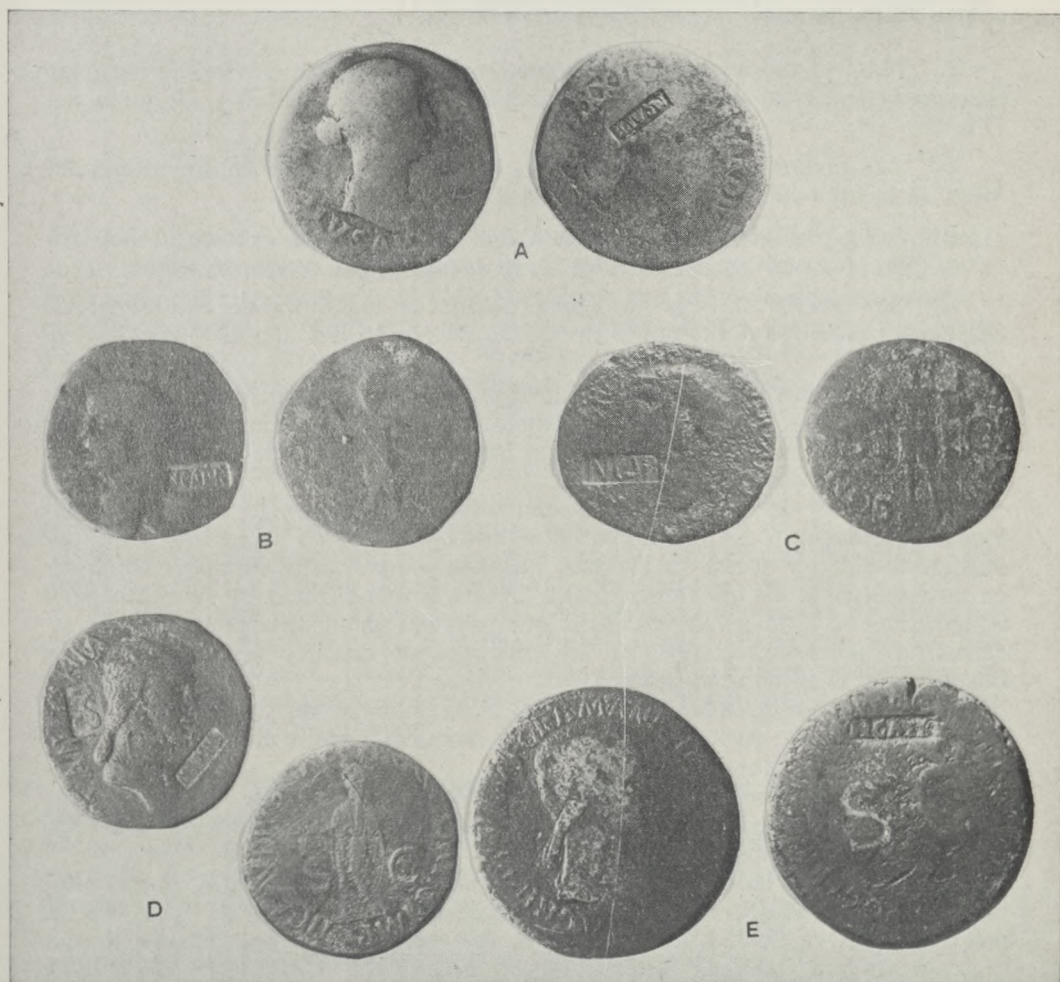
GM.	TIBERIUS	CLAUDIUS	
		without PP	with PP
32			
31		S	
30			S
29		SS	SSSSS
28	SS	SSSSS	SSSSS
27	SSSS	SSSSSSSSS	SSSSSSSSS
26	SSSSS	SSS	SSS
25	SSSS	SSSSSSSSS	SSSS
24	SSSS	S	S
23	SSSS	SSSS	
22	S	S	
21			
20			
19			S
18	D		
17	D		D
16	D		DD
15	DDDD	DDD	D
14	DDDDDD	DDDD	D
13	DDDDDDDDDDDDDD	DD	
12	DDDDDD	DD	D
11	DDDD	D	D
10			
9			

This frequency table is based on the coins cited in Appendix A.

RESUMEN

A diferencia de algunas contramarcas romanas imperiales, que tienen un significado político definido, NCAPR parece tener un sentido económico, referido a los dos períodos más importantes de cambio en el sistema Julio-Claudio del AES de la ceca de Roma.

Los magistrados monetarios de la época de Augusto, emitieron sestercios y dupondios en oricalco y ases y quadrantes en cobre, pero su as de cobre (con el valor de medio dupondio) era de un peso muy similar al del dupondio y sólo se podía distinguir de él, por el color del metal y los distintos tipos de anverso y reverso.



A. Dupondio Tiberio-Livia, *R.I.C.* 23, Colección Almirall (Barcelona). B. As de Claudio, reverso Minerva, *R.I.C.* 66, Col. Balsach (Sabadell, Barcelona). C. As de Claudio, reverso CONSTANTIAE AVGVSTI, *R.I.C.* 68, Col. Balsach. D. Dupondio Claudio-Antonia, *R.I.C.* 82, Col. Balsach. E. Sestercio Claudio-Agrippina (senior), *R.I.C.* 85, Col Almirall.

La primera y mayor modificación en el sistema augústeo, fue la introducción de una más aguda distinción entre el peso de estos dos valores, en la década entre 11/12 d. C. y 22/23 d. C. El peso del as de cobre fue reducido a 11 gr. en la emisión imperial de Augusto en 11/12 d. C. y en la siguiente emisión de oricalco en 22/23 d. C., Tiberio aumentó el peso del dupondio a 14/15 gr.

El segundo cambio importante en el sistema *Julio-Claudio* del AES fue la introducción por Nerón de una unificación de la acuñación en oricalco para todos los valores del AES en el año 63 d. C. Este experimento fue pronto abandonado y Nerón volvió en 64/65 al sistema primitivo de emitir sestercios y dupondios sólo en oricalco y los ases y otros divisores en cobre.

En el período Julio-Claudio las emisiones de AES fueron muy irregulares y parece que en parte fue debido a las dificultades en asegurar un suministro de oricalco. Plinio relaciona varias fuentes que se agotaron y sus sucesivas explotaciones parecen corresponder con los mayores bloques de las acuñaciones Julio-Claudias.

a) Mineral chipriota y Aes Sallustianum (del norte de Italia) para las emisiones de oricalco de los magistrados augústeos de Roma, después del 17 a. C.

b) Aes Livianum (de la Galia) para la segunda emisión de dupondios del Altar de la ceca de Lugdunum en 10-14 d. C.

c) Aes Cordubense (de Hispania) «el cual imita la excelencia del oricalco» para las emisiones centrales de la época Julia-Claudia de Roma.

d) Aes preparado con la nueva fuente de calamina de Stollberg (en Germania) para las abundantes emisiones de Nerón del año 63 d. C.

Hay de hecho una evidente diferencia entre los principales grupos de estas acuñaciones. Los sestercios y dupondios del período central de la época Julia-Claudia parecen como de bronce, mientras que los de Nerón son más dorados en apariencia.

El conjunto de monedas contramarcadas NCAPR forman un grupo notablemente compacto. La contramarca se encuentra en los sestercios y dupondios de oricalco y nunca en los ases, semises y cuadrantes de cobre. Aparece en la mayoría de las emisiones desde Tiberio a Claudio con PP (excepto para aquellas con el nombre de Calígula, que parecen haber sido retiradas por su *damnatio memoriae*) como son las emisiones de oricalco acuñadas con aes Cordubense, el mineral hispánico.

La contramarca debe ser posterior a la emisión de Claudio con PP y anterior a 72 d. C., fecha de una moneda reaçuñada sobre una que lleva esta contramarca, del Museo de Saintes.

Los hallazgos son escasos y sólo en los del norte de Italia, existen en alta proporción las monedas contramarcadas. Y nuestra interpretación debe basarse en estos hechos.

Su aplicación bajo Nerón explica la interpretación de NCA por NERO CAESAR AVGVSTVS, su titulación normal hacia mediados de 66 d. C. La referencia PR es POPVLVS ROMANVS. En consecuencia podría sugerir que la contramarca pudiera interpretarse: NERONIS CAESARIS AVGVSTI POPVLIQVE ROMANI, y fue la fórmula usada en el norte de Italia para reemplazar la primitiva autoridad imperial por la de Nerón y el pueblo de Roma, en los post-augústeos valores de oricalco, que eran aceptados en el nuevo sistema de acuñación total de oricalco de Nerón en 63 d. C.