



## Denarius of the moneyers P. Mucius Scaevola and Q. Fufius Calenus celebrating the bond between Roma and Italia (70 BCE)

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[1]

**Denomination:**

Denarius serratus

**Date:** 70 BCE

**Material:**

Silver

**Mint:**

Rome

Moneyer: P. Mucius Scaevola

Moneyer: Q. Fufius Calenus

**Actual Location (Collection/Museum):**

British Museum. AN622986001001.

**Name of Ruler:**

Roman Republic

**Obverse (Image and Inscription):**

Image: Jugate heads of Honos and Virtus right. Border of dots.

Inscription: HO VIRT KALENI

**Reverse (Image and Inscription):**

Image: Italia on left and Roma on right, clasping hands; between clasped hands, cornucopia; behind Italia, caduceus; Roma wears diadem, holds fasces in left hand and places right foot on globe. Border of dots.

Inscription: ITAL RO CORDI

**Weight (g):** 4.08g

**Commentary:**

RRC 403/1, p. 413.

This denarius, minted in 70 BCE, depicts on the obverse the personifications of *Honos* and *Virtus* and on the reverse the personifications of both Rome and Italy clasping hands. The inscription on the obverse refers to one of the moneyers, Calenus, and it celebrates *Honos* and *Virtus*. The inscription on the reverse celebrates Italia and Roma, whereas the legend CORD may refer to the *cognomen* of a legendary member of the *gens* Mucia from whom the probable second moneyer of the coin, P. Mucius Scaevola, wanted to claim descent (see RRC I, p. 413).

This emission celebrates the renewed bond between the Roman Republic and its Italic allies or *socii*, after the



Social War. At the very beginning of the war, the Romans made concessions to their Italic allies to avoid war. Thus, in 90 BCE, L. Julius Caesar proposed the *Lex Iulia de Civitate Latinis Danda*, which offered full citizenship to all Latin and Italic communities who had not revolted. The *Lex Iulia* was followed by a supplementary statute, the *Lex Plautia Papiria*, which stated that a member of a community or city allied to Rome could acquire Roman citizenship by presenting himself to a Roman praetor within 60 days after the passing of the law. However, as the law became effective many years afterwards, it is not surprising that the renewed alliance between the Roman Republic and its Italic *socii* was celebrated only on an emission minted in 70 BCE. *Honos* and *Virtus*, depicted on the obverse, were two closely connected concepts. While *Honos* was the personification of honor, *Virtus* was the personification of bravery. The Greek equivalent of *Virtus* was *Aretè*. The iconography of *Honos* and *Virtus* is very problematic. Although most of the representations depict both as females, they can also be depicted as men. In this case, while *Honos*, characterized by long hairs, is depicted as a woman, *Virtus*, whose head is crowned by a helmet, is probably depicted as a man.

The reverse depicts Italia and Roma together. While Italia is depicted as a *matrona*, wearing a long tunic and holding a cornucopia, Roma is depicted with a short tunic, leaving her breasts bare, holding a javelin. The depiction of Italia follows the iconography of the rebel coinage minted between 90 and 88 BCE, while that of Roma follows the traditional iconography found on the coins of the Middle Republic. Roma is, as usual, depicted wearing a helmet, a depiction which stemmed from that of the Greek goddess Athena. The political message forwarded by this emission is impressive. *Honos* and *Virtus* are by now a common heritage shared by both Italia and Rome. Also, these two allegorical personifications of Italy and Roma symbolize that by now Italia and the Roman Republic were but just one political concept. From now, onwards, the right to power and to hegemony was the prerogative of Rome and Italy together.

Keywords in the original language:

- [Italia](#) [2]
- [honos](#) [3]
- [virtus](#) [4]
- [Roma](#) [5]

Thematic keywords:

- [civil war](#) [6]
- [Roman Republic](#) [7]
- [ally](#) [8]
- [Italy](#) [9]
- [Rome \(personification\)](#) [10]
- [reconciliation](#) [11]

**Bibliographical references:** Foss, Clive, [Roman Historical Coins](#) [12] (London: Seaby, 1990)  
Crawford, Michael, [Roman Republican Coinage](#) [13] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974)  
Cary, Max, Scullard, Howard H., [A History of Rome](#) [14] (London: Macmillan, 1975)  
Gruen, Erich S., [The Last Generation of the Roman Republic](#) [15] (Oakland (Ca.) : University of California Press, 1995)

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- [1] [https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/sites/default/files/styles/large/public/an00622986\\_001\\_1.jpg?itok=Hmqctj9h](https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/sites/default/files/styles/large/public/an00622986_001_1.jpg?itok=Hmqctj9h)
- [2] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/italia>
- [3] <https://www.judaism-and-rome.org/keywords/honos>
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