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## Roman only at First Glance? The Adaptation of Imperial Iconography in the Coin Types of Mannos Philorhomaïos

**Abstract** Two rare silver drachms – one of them not yet included in the standard catalogue *Roman Provincial Coinage* (RPC) – which were presumably minted in the so-called client kingdom of Osrhoene around the year AD 165, are in the focus of this paper. At first sight, they closely resemble the iconography of Roman imperial coins with portraits of the imperial family and personifications, while the Greek legend – which names a king calling himself Mannos Philorhomaïos as the minting authority – hints at a local setting. A number of silver coin types belong to the same series, for which we provide an up-to-date list.

An in-depth analysis of the iconography of these types reveals further deviations from the Roman imperial coinage, especially when compared with the so-called *hyper nikēs*-types, presumably from same period and area, nevertheless suggesting links between both outputs.

We will discuss the extent to which these exceptional pieces provide us with information regarding the production and reception of Roman-style coinage in Mesopotamian Osrhoene, their possible historical context (being produced during the military campaign led by the Roman emperor Lucius Verus against the Parthian Empire) and their semantic frameworks at both first glance and second gaze.

Two silver drachms<sup>1</sup> illustrated in figs. 1 and 2 provide us with exceptional insights into the production and reception of Roman imperial silver coinage

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1 Both coins have been published by one of the authors of this paper, Sven Günther, in 2021 (S. Günther 2021). We will expand the thoughts presented there regarding



Fig. 1: Silver drachm of king Mannos with Lucius Verus on obverse and Providentia on reverse, not yet in RPC. 19mm, 3.59g, 7h. Obv.: ΑΥΤ(οκρατωρ) Κ(αισαρ) Μ(αρκος) ΑΥΡΗ(λιος) ΟΥΗΡΟC CΕΒΑ(στος). Rev.: ΒΑCΙΛΕΥC ΜΑΝΝΟC ΦΙΛΟΡ(ωμαιος).

Leu Numismatik AG, web auction 14 (12. 12. 2020), lot 1161. <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=1759359|4035|1161|7d42d9e4b776032343fa4c76d9981fdd>.

at one of the ‘edges’ of the Roman Empire<sup>2</sup>. More precisely, an area which was affected by the ongoing conflicts between the Roman Empire and Parthian Empire. These coins are therefore worth a close examination, in an attempt to reconstruct how they would have been viewed by their ancient audience(s) and to ascertain what information these coins may offer to modern scholars.

On the obverse of the drachm in fig. 1, we see a portrait of a bearded man in profile to the right, as it is common on Roman coins. Indeed, it is the head of a Roman emperor, strongly resembling the Antonines – in particular Lucius Verus – as indicated by the hooked nose and tense expression. The Greek legend reads ΑΥΤ(οκρατωρ) Κ(αισαρ) Μ(αρκος) ΑΥΡΗ(λιος) ΟΥΗΡΟC CΕΒΑ(στος), interestingly mixing the name of emperor Lucius Verus with the *praenomen* of his elder co-emperor Marcus Aurelius<sup>3</sup>. On the reverse,

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the issues by Mannos Philorhomaioi and the so-called *hyper nikēs*-types here, using the Second Gaze concept as well as frames and framing theory.

2 In recent years, research has gradually shifted to the more remote areas of the Mediterranean world, including the eastern kingdoms and empires, as well as their edges. See, e.g., Ruffing 2020 on the economic exchange.

3 It must, nonetheless, be Lucius Verus, since the titulature of Marcus Aurelius usually ends with ΑΥΡΗ(λιος) ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟC CΕΒΑ(στος) after the *praenomen*, not with ΑΥΡΗ(λιος) ΟΥΗΡΟC CΕΒΑ(στος). Cf. S. Günther 2021, 5f. Such deviation is furthermore only known from a Moesian inscription and, interestingly, a coin type minted in Carrhae, nearby Edessa. See S. Günther 2021, 5f.



Fig. 2: Silver drachm of king Mannos with Lucilla on obverse and Luno/Ceres (?) on reverse = RPC IV/3 online no. 6488. 18mm, 2.89g, 6h. Obv.: ΛΟΥΚΙΛΙΑ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΗ. Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΑΝΝΟC ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑΙΟC. Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18312249, 1900 Imhoof-Blumer. <https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18312249>. Photo: B. Weisser. CC BY SA 4.0.

a female figure dressed in a long tunic and a cloak is standing to the left, holding a globe in her right hand and cornucopia in her left arm. She closely follows the depiction of Providentia on the imperial coin types, something which will be discussed in more detail below<sup>4</sup>. The Greek legend is, however, highly unusual, for both imperial and provincial coinage: naming a king, Mannos Philorhomaioi, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΑΝΝΟC ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑΙΟC, as the minting authority. This Mannos is very likely to be identified with Ma'nu VIII, king of Oshroene, who likely ruled from AD 165/166–177<sup>5</sup>. Upon closer examination, the coin reveals itself to not actually be Roman and is instead closely modelled after the imperial coinage. There is thus a huge gap between this distinct 'Roman' design and the local aes coins minted by the Oshroenian king Ma'nu, which show a rather abstract portrait with tiara on the obverse and a legend in the Syriac Estrangelo naming him with affiliation on the reverse<sup>6</sup>. Interestingly, the portrait of Ma'nu on some of these aes coin types seems to adapt the hairstyle of the young and beardless Marcus Aurelius,

4 Cf. RIC III M. Aurelius no. 491. For the coin and comparisons, see S. Günther 2021, 5, tab.

5 See S. Günther 2021, 1f. with the discussion. For the complex chronology of the Oshroene kings, see Luther 1999, 197.

6 S. Günther 2021, 2f. There, see also the illustrations of the Roman coinage on p. 11f. (figs. 1–4).

which might be considered as a further argument for the identification of the king Mannos on the silver coins with Ma'nu (VIII)<sup>7</sup>.

The second coin is devoted to Lucilla (AD 149–181), as the legend reads *ΑΟΥΚΙΑΑΑ ΑΕΒΑΧΘΗ* (Lucilla Augusta) (fig. 2). Annia Aurelia Galeria Lucilla was the daughter of Marcus Aurelius and wife of co-emperor Lucius Verus (reg. AD 161–169). She was married to him probably in either AD 163 or 164 in Ephesus and thus received the Augusta-title in the very same year<sup>8</sup>. At this time, Verus was leading the Roman campaign in Parthia, and after his victory he celebrated a triumph in October AD 166<sup>9</sup>. It is thus not impossible that Lucilla, similar to her mother Faustina II, accompanied her husband during this campaign<sup>10</sup>. The portrait shows Lucilla's bust to the right. She wears a tunic with a cloak, and her hair is styled in quite a complex fashion: it is divided by a thin braid, which is indicated by a row of dots, into two compartments. In the lower part, three scale-like waves run from forehead to neck. In the upper part, the hair is braided into sections which run parallel to the dividing braid and remind one of a melon-like pattern. A chignon is placed deep in the neck and is made up of three braided layers. A curl escapes the chignon, and a second loose strand of hair is visible on her cheek. Interestingly, this coiffure is not part of Lucilla's official portraits<sup>11</sup>, which are found in four different styles on imperial coinage<sup>12</sup>. Only one of them includes a

7 See Hill 1922, p. c and S. Günther 2021, 2f. with n.9. However, the depictions of Ma'nu vary, and on some types Wa'el, probably his predecessor and supported by the Parthian king (as he is depicted on the obverse of an aes issue: Hill 1922, 91 no. 1) has an Antoninian look, too; cf. Hill 1922, 91 no. 2 and 92 no. 3, pl. XIII, 7f.

8 The sources do not inform us about the exact year, see PIR<sup>2</sup> A 707 and the discussion in Barnes 1967, 72. According to the *Historia Augusta* and Cassius Dio, the wedding took place during the Parthian War (HA Verus 7.7; HA Marcus 9.4). A dedication to Iuno Lucina (CIL VI 360) set up in September AD 166 is taken as evidence that their first child was born in this year (PIR<sup>2</sup> A 707), however, the inscription allows not to deduce the number of children (one or more). For the discussion on the number of children and their year of birth, see also Fittschen 1982, 72–75.

9 Kienast 2017, 138.

10 For her presence in military campaigns and the title *mater castrorum*, see Speidel 2012.

11 Wegner 1939, 75f.

12 For the four styles, see also Wegner 1939, 75f. pl. 64 (with two sub-types): (1) rather loose, wavy hair that ends up in a higher chignon made of braids, e.g., RIC III Marcus Aurelius no. 755; (2) four thick, contorted or braided strands of hair, running parallel from forehead to neck and gather in a deep chignon, e.g., RIC III Marcus Aurelius no. 756, according to the legend *LVCILLAE AVG(ustae) ANTONINI AVG(usti) F(iliae)* that occurs with this hairstyle, this ought to be the

thin braid running from the top of the head to the neck like is shown on the Mannos-coin, but in the official portrait the scale-like waves are placed above the braid, not beneath, and the upper hair runs in loose waves, not in distinct melon-like braided sections<sup>13</sup>. The hairstyle chosen for the Osrhoene coin is, instead, very close to an official coiffure of Faustina II, wife of Marcus Aurelius (see the discussion below), only deviating in the depiction of the upper part which consists of soft wavy hair rather than melon-like braids (fig. 11). This is exactly the portrait type employed to represent Faustina II on the Mannos-coins (RPC IV/3 online no. 6487; fig. 5)<sup>14</sup>.

The reverse bears the legend *BACIAEYC MANNOC ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑ(ΙΟΥ)*, similar to our first Mannos coin described above. A veiled female figure with long tunic and cloak stands to the left, holding a patera in her right hand and a scepter with two small spheres or balls on top in her left hand. She is usually identified with Ceres/Demeter<sup>15</sup>, however, the corn-ears – which are her typical attribute – are missing. The figure thus probably rather represents some not clearly defined deity or personification. We will come back to this point later.

Both coin types appear, at first glance, to be Roman. However, when examined more closely, the Osrhoenian king Mannos appears as the minting authority, not the Roman emperor. Accordingly, although the coins are modelled surprisingly close after the coinage of the (central) imperial mint – and

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earliest style: Wegner 1939, 75; (3) a thin braided or contorted band runs from forehead to neck, above scale-like waves of hair, and on top loose waves running down to a rather high chignon with fishbone-like structure, e.g., RIC III Marcus Aurelius no. 765; (4) a thin braided or contorted braided band runs from forehead to neck, above are several layers of braided hair, e.g., RIC III Marcus Aurelius no. 773. K. Fittschen divided the portraits into three types with different variants, merging type (3) and (4) as described above (Fittschen 1982, 69–81 with pl. 6).

13 Type (3) in n. 12. See also Wegner 1939, 75 with drawing and pl. 64 d and l; and see Fittschen 1982 (type 3), 70 f., dating this type to after AD 166: Fittschen 1982, 81. The dating relies on the proposed birth of a third child of Lucilla (Fittschen 1982, 74 f.), which is, however, rather speculative.

14 Type 8 according to K. Fittschen, dated by him to AD 162: Fittschen 1982, 42 f. with pl. 5, 9–11. For this type, see also Niederhuber 2022, 20, who rather sees type 8 as a development of type 7 which, he believes, was invented for the accession of M. Aurelius, not the birth of the twins Commodus and Antoninus; the dating, however, remains the same as proposed by K. Fittschen (cf. Niederhuber 2022, 48). Interestingly, type 8 is, with type 7, among the most numerous portraits in marble (Niederhuber 2022, 48) and is one of the three types used on Alexandrian coins (Niederhuber 2022, 12). See also Beckmann 2021, 61.

15 In the following, we will only use the Latin names of the respective deities for the readers' convenience.

present a fundamental deviation from local aes coins – one notices a number of ‘inaccuracies’. These ‘inaccuracies’ seen in another light, demonstrate adaptations made to ‘Roman’ coins for a non-Roman context. This includes the overall composition which follows the Roman model closely, but names Mannos on the reverse instead of the emperor or any reference to the depicted personification. Furthermore, in the case of the first drachm discussed here, it includes a strange mixture of the imperial titles of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus; overall, the use of Greek instead of Latin legends (for the whole series of these Mannos coins); and, on the second drachm, the employment of the slightly altered hairstyle of Faustina II for Lucilla. Thus, both coins offer their audience a ‘Second Gaze’, a second layer of reading which complements the first, seemingly Roman, one. They carry the potential to be read according to different frameworks which are dependent on the experiences and expectations of the people using these coins. As such they ‘frame’ their users, emphasizing both Roman and (though to a lesser degree) non-Roman elements, to create different layers or ‘gazes’<sup>16</sup>. This addresses the question not only of the purpose of this coinage, but also of the possible audience(s), which must be understood in the respective contexts in which these coins were minted.

## Context I: The coin types of Mannos Philorhomaïos

Up to now, 11 coin types with the legend *BACIΛEYC MANNOC ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑΙ(ΟΣ)*<sup>17</sup> have been published<sup>18</sup>, including one type which is not (yet) included in the RPC/PC online.<sup>19</sup> All of them are silver drachms, with a die

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16 The term “frames” means mental structures that organize human knowledge and thus perception and reception processes, according to frame theories. As defined in the seminal paper by Robert Entman, “Framing essentially involves *selection* and *salience*. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” (Entman 1993, 52). For the application of frame theories and framing to ancient sources, see E. Günther 2021; E. Günther – S. Günther 2022; E. Günther – S. Günther 2023.

17 Slightly varying the abbreviation; the omicron in “Philorhomaïos” is sometimes missing, e.g., on RPC IV/3 online no. 6493 which presents Mannos’ name in four lines (fig. 3).

18 Hill 1922, 92 f.

19 For a table including all currently known types, see S. Günther 2021, 3f. When the paper was published, two types were not included in RPC (S. Günther 2021,

axis of predominantly 6 o'clock which indicates that they were produced by the same mint<sup>20</sup>. Design and style with an edgy, woodcarving-like appearance and a border of dots framing the obverse and reverse are common features. Only one type is related to Marcus Aurelius, one to Faustina II, three to Lucius Verus and six to Lucilla. This abundance of coin types related to Lucilla is very interesting, considering the fact that in the imperial coinage, the types for Lucilla are rather limited<sup>21</sup>.

Normally, the reverses show a deity or personification; the exception being a drachm with Lucius Verus on the obverse and the legend *BACIAE/YC MANN/OC ΦΙΑΟΠ/ΩΜΑΙ(ο)C* in four lines on the reverse (RPC IV/3 online no. 6493; fig. 3)<sup>22</sup>. Two types present a military topic: the type with Marcus Aurelius on the obverse has a helmeted Mars with spear and shield on the reverse (fig. 4) (RPC IV/3 online no. 6486)<sup>23</sup>; one of the Lucilla-types shows a Victoria with wreath (?) and palm branch (RPC IV/3 online no. 9619)<sup>24</sup>. Both figures exist in the imperial coinage as well, as we will discuss below ("Context II: The Roman imperial types").

The remaining types all show a female deity or personification on the reverse. The type with Faustina II on the obverse (RPC IV/3 online no. 6487) features Iuno, showing the goddess standing to the left with long tunic and veil, holding a scepter in her left hand, a patera in her right, and with a

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5 with tab.); the type with Salus on reverse is now RPC online no. 17203. The unknown location of the mint, which is usually the feature to order and to search for provincial coinage, has in some cases prevented these coins to be perceived as a homogeneous group, at least in the current state of the RPC online database. Additionally, the Mannos Philorhomaioi-coins kept in public collections and museums have not yet gained much interest and are to date seldomly found in RPC online or other numismatic databases. Thus, one has to a certain degree rely on the data available from the auction market. We hope that this and further research stimulates interest in coinages from the 'edges' of the Roman Empire.

20 S. Günther 2021, n. 15. A comprehensive study of the die axis and weight is still ought to be done.

21 The RIC online lists 92 types in gold, silver and aes, including the following topics on the reverses: Concordia (11), Diana Lucifera (4), Fecunditas (9), Hilartitas (5), Iuno (3, aes only), Iuno Lucina (5), Iuno Regina (4), Laetitia (1), Pietas (7), Pudicitia (6), Salus (3), Venus (18), Venus Victrix (2), Venus Genetrix (2, sestertii), Vesta (5), Vota Publica (3), Ceres (2), Mater Magna (2, sestertii).

22 = Hill 1922, p. xcvi with pl. L no. 8.

23 = Hill 1922, p. 92 no. 5.

24 Not included in Hill 1922. One specimen is published in Fox 2007, 12 with fig. 4, one recently appeared on the market: CNG, auction 126 (28. 05. 2024), lot no. 506: <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/lotviewer.php?LotID=2382103&AucID=5854&Lot=506&Val=5ee1fb1bc4da8f92ed10d51af195c54f> (31. 05. 2024).



Fig. 3: Silver drachm of king Mannos with Lucius Verus on obverse and name of Mannos on reverse = RPC IV/3 online no. 6493. 19mm, 3.3g, 6h. Obv.: *Α(υτοκρατωρ) Κ(αισαρ) Λ(ουκιος) ΑΥΡ(ηλιος) ΟΥΗΡΟΣ Σ(εβαστος)*. Rev.: *ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΑΝΝΟΥ ΦΙΛΩΡΩΜΑΙ(ο)Σ*. Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18312234. <https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18312234>. Photo: B. Weisser. CC BY SA 4.0.



Fig. 4: Silver drachm of king Mannos with Marcus Aurelius on obverse and Mars on reverse = RPC IV/3 online no. 6486. 18 mm, 3.52g, 6h. Obv.: *ΑΥΤ(οκρατωρ) Κ(αισαρ) Μ(αρκος) ΑΥΡΗ(λιος) ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΣ Σ(εβαστος)*. Rev.: *ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΑΝΝΟΥ ΦΙΛΩΡΩΜΑΙΟΣ*. British Museum online collection, 692523001. TC,p230.1.MAMan. <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/692523001>. CC BY SA 4.0. © The Trustees of the British Museum.





Fig. 5: Silver drachm of king Mannos with Faustina II on obverse and Luno on reverse = RPC IV/3 online no. 6487. 16 mm, 2.17g, 6h. Obv.: ΦΑΥΣΤΙΝΑ ΚΕΒΑΧΘΗ. Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΜΑΝΝΟC ΦΙΛΟΡ(ωμαιοc).

British Museum online collection, 692524001. TC,p230.1.FauMan. <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/692524001>. CC BY SA 4.0. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

peacock to her left (fig. 5): matching the common type of Roman imperial coinage for Faustina II and other empresses<sup>25</sup>. Ceres is identified by corn-ears on the reverse of two types with Lucilla on the obverse, one figure standing (RPC IV/3 online no. 8629, fig. 6), one seated on a throne (RPC IV/3 online no. 6489).<sup>26</sup>

The identification of two further deities is also unproblematic: Providentia and Salus. Providentia, holding a globe in her right hand and cornucopia in her left, adorns one of the three types with Lucius Verus on the obverse and has been described above<sup>27</sup> (fig. 1). Salus with cornucopia and patera seated on a throne with a rising snake to the left appears on a coin type with Lucilla; this type has recently been added to the PRC online (IV/3 no. 17203)<sup>28</sup>.

25 = Hill 1922, 92 no. 6. Imperial types: e.g., RIC III M. Aurelius no. 695; see also the discussion below.

26 = Hill 1922, 93 no. 9.

27 S. Günther 2021, 5 with fig. 5: Leu Numismatik AG, web auction 14 (12. 12. 2020), lot no. 1161.

28 S. Günther 2021, 5 with fig. 6: CNG electronic auction 169 (25. 07. 2007), lot no. 134; a second exemplar is said to be in private possession by RPC online: <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coin/437693> (with ill.). Since it deviates in style, hairstyle of Lucilla and frame (no border of dots), as well as has a much higher weight (4.04g) and different die axis (3 o'clock), the authenticity is very doubtful in the eyes of the authors.



Fig. 6: Silver drachm of king Mannos with Lucilla on obverse and Ceres on reverse = RPC IV/3 online no. 8629. 16 mm, 1.99 g (!), 6 h. ΛΟΥΚΙΑΝ[Α CEBA[CTH]. Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥC ΜΑΝΝ[ΟC ΦΙΛ]ΟΡΩ(μαιοc).  
British Museum online collection, 692528001. G.1161. <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/692528001>. CC BY SA 4.0. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Two types with Lucilla on the obverse, however, do raise more questions. RPC IV/3 online no. 8628 has a female deity on the reverse, usually identified with Iuno (fig. 7). The goddess is standing to the left, wearing a long tunic with a cloak and a diadem on her head, holding a patera in her right hand and a scepter in her left. Unlike the Iuno who is minted on the reverse of the Faustina-type, this Iuno is neither veiled nor is her cloak draped over her shoulder. Furthermore, Iuno's usual attribute, the peacock, is missing, thus the deity of this type (RPC IV/3 online no. 8628) lacks a clear and unequivocal identification. The deity shown on the reverse of RPC IV/3 online no. 6488, also with Lucilla on the obverse, may be Ceres – if one identifies the long staff in her left hand with a torch (fig. 2). However, neither a flame nor the single sections of the torch are visible, as is usually the case in the imperial coinage<sup>29</sup>, and the corn-ears – as shown on RPC IV/3 online nos. 8629 (fig. 6) and 6489 – are missing. It is indeed possible that the staff was actually intended to depict a scepter with two spheres or balls on top – like in the case of Iuno's scepter on RPC IV/3 online no. 6487 (fig. 5) – but was cut with less precision. Regrettably, neither of the types showing Ceres with corn-ears help us in this case, since in those depictions the goddess too holds the same slim staff-like object, which might also be either a torch or a scepter.

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., RIC III Marcus Aurelius no. 668 (denarius minted for Faustina II) or no. 1619 (as minted for Faustina II).



Fig. 7: Silver drachm of king Mannonos with Lucilla on obverse and Iuno (?) on reverse = RPC IV/3 online no. 8628. 17mm, 3.03g, 1h. Obv.: ΛΟΥΚΙΜΑ CEBACTH. Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥC ΜΑΝΝΟC ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑ(ΙΟC).  
British Museum online collection, 692525001. 1853,0512.134. <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/692525001>. CC BY SA 4.0. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

A second specimen of RPC IV/3 online no. 6488 listed on the RPC website was auctioned off by the Classical Numismatic Group in 2001<sup>30</sup>. The figure, however, clearly deviates from the deity shown on the specimen from the one in Berlin illustrated in fig. 2. It wears a long dress with an overfall and a cloak which veils the head and runs over the shoulders, just like in the case of the goddess Iuno on RPC IV/3 online no. 6487 with Faustina II on the obverse. Her staff is clearly a slim scepter, not a torch. The peacock is, however, missing. Among the six specimens of RPC IV/3 online no. 6488, two distinct groups exist. Group 1 includes the coin in Berlin (fig. 2) and two pieces which were sold at auction; group 2 includes the coin sold by CNG in 2001 and also two pieces which have been auctioned off elsewhere (fig. 8). Group 2, although initially presenting as a variant of group 1, may actually represent a new coin type entirely; since the goddess of group 2 holds a scepter and not a torch, this might account also for the goddess of group 1.

A close look at the single specimen reveals that all reverses of group 1 derive from the same die; the same applies to group 2. The legend of group 1 reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥC ΜΑΝΝΟC ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑ(ΙΟC). The patera of the goddess is placed precisely at the lower edge of the epsilon, the top of the scepter/torch (?) nearly touches the omicron of Mannonos – which is cut in the same manner splitting the letter into an inner and outer circle – and the lower end of the scepter/torch (?) overlaps with the left foot (cf. fig. 2). The legend

30 Cf. <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=2639|6|916|c90e274d55309db944076afb3ff9c391> (30.04.2024).



Fig. 8: Silver drachm of king Mannos with Lucilla on obverse and Iuno (?) on reverse = RPC IV/3 online no. 6488. 17.64mm, 2.99g, 12h. Obv.: ΛΟΥΚΙΑΑ CEBACTH. Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥC ΜΑΝΝΟC ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑΙ(ο)C. Astarte S.A. web auction 2 (09.12.2023), lot no. 241. <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=2321982|5667|241|6cdac1f643a1d28c254b4bcdeff617ce>.

of group 2 reads ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥC ΜΑΝΝΟC ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑΙ(ο)C. The patera points to the upsilon, the top of the scepter touches the sigma of Mannos and the lower end touches the sigma of Philorhomaios (cf. fig. 8). Even more curious is the fact that the very same reverse die was also used for the third type which features Lucius Verus on the obverse (RPC online no. 10745, fig. 9)<sup>31</sup>.

Given the low number of types and currently known specimens, the high number of die links stands out. Further investigation into this issue requires a thorough study of all specimens published; although this is yet to be done the tendency is clear. In addition to the die links of the reverses especially with regard to the Lucilla-types and the cross-link between Lucilla and Verus, one can observe that not only do all of the Lucilla obverses present the same portrait type, but that all are derived from the very same die. This becomes clear through an examination of the placement of the legend in relation to the portrait, the differing size of the letters (small omicron in ΛΟΥΚΙΑΑ, small sigma at the beginning of CEBACTH) and the broken right stroke of the second lambda of Lucilla's name (cf. figs. 2, 7 and 8)<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, as far we can tell in the current state of research and due to the state of preservation of the respective specimens, die links likely exist between the obverses of

31 The RPC online interprets the goddess to be “veiled Ceres/Demeter or Iuno/Hera (?) standing”: <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/4/10745> (30. 04. 2024).

32 Exception: <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coin/437693> (31. 05. 2024), in private possession, in our view doubtful, see n. 28.



Fig. 9: Silver drachm of king Mannos with Lucius Verus on obverse and Iuno (?) on reverse = RPC IV/3 online no. 10745. 17mm, 3.15g, 12h. Obv.: *A(υτοκρατωρ) Κ(αισαρ) Λ(υκιος) ΑΥΡ(ηλιος) ΟΥΗΡΟΣ C(εβαστος)*. Rev.: *ΒΑCΙΛΕΥC ΜΑΝΝΟC ΦΙΛΟΡΩΜΑΙ(ο)C*.

Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18312242, 1873 Fox. <https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18312242>. Photo: B. Weisser. CC BY SA 4.0.

coins with portraits of Marcus Aurelius<sup>33</sup> and Lucius Verus<sup>34</sup>. The type with Faustina II on the obverse is the only specimen known to the authors, hence no further links could be detected.

## Context II: The Roman imperial types

In the previous section, it has been emphasized that the coins minted in the name of king Mannos Philorhomaioi are modelled closely after the Roman imperial coinage. Indeed, for all types – except for RPC IV/3 online no. 6493 with a legend naming king Mannos in four lines – a comparable RIC type exists<sup>35</sup>. However, while some coins are iconographically very close to the imperial coinage, others deviate. In the following, we will have a closer look at the similarities regarding the iconography of the figures on the reverses.

<sup>33</sup> It is possible that the two specimens listed under RPC IV/3 online no. 6486 in Berlin and London have the same obverse die, but the one in Berlin is too worn out (at least judging from the photo) to establish certainty.

<sup>34</sup> With paludamentum: RIC IV/3 online no. 10745 and 6493 (both probably made from the same die); without paludamentum: Leu Numismatik AG, web auction 14 (12.12.2020), lot no. 1161, see S. Günther 2021, 5.

<sup>35</sup> See S. Günther 2021, 3–5 in the right column of the tab.



Fig. 10: Silver denarius of Lucius Verus with Providentia on reverse = RIC III Marcus Aurelius no. 491, AD 162–163. 18mm, 3,36g, 11h. Obv.: *IMP(erator) L(ucius) VERVS AVG(ustus)*. Rev.: *PROV(identia) – DEOR(um) TRIB(unicia) P(otestate) III CO(n)S(ul) II*. Bochum, Kunstsammlungen der Ruhr-Universität, ID513. <https://mk-bochum.ikmk.net/object?id=ID513>. Photo: R. Dylka. CC 1.0.

The drachm showing Lucius Verus on the obverse and Providentia on the reverse (fig. 1) is obviously modelled directly after denarii minted in Rome. RIC III M. Aurelius no. 491, a silver denarius, seems to have served as a direct model (fig. 10), matching in all details including (but not limited to) the figure's clothing and hairstyle; only the shape of the cornucopia varies slightly. According to Verus' titles, this type was minted in AD 163<sup>36</sup>, however, denarii and aurei with the very same iconography with Marcus Aurelius on the obverse run from approximately AD 161 to 164<sup>37</sup>, and those with Lucius Verus from AD 161 to 163<sup>38</sup>. The type was thus quite common in Roman imperial coinage.

Equally analogous in composition to the imperial coinage is the drachm with Faustina II on the obverse and Iuno on the reverse (RPC IV/3 online no. 6487, fig. 5); for instance, the Faustina II-Iuno drachm is closely comparable to a silver denarius minted for Faustina II in Rome (fig. 11). The goddess

36 3<sup>rd</sup> *tribunicia potestas*, which Verus held from AD 10. 12. 162–9. 12. 163. See Kienast 2017, 136.

37 Aurei: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 19–21; denarii: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 22–25. 47–52. 66–73. 95–97; quinarii: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 57; aes: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 812–816. 833. One sestertius-type dates, however, much later, AD 171–172: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 1045.

38 Aurei: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 460–462. 490 f. 497; denarii: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 463–465. 482–485; quinarii: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 467. 468. 490. 497; aes: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 1303–1306.



Fig. 11: Silver denarius of Marcus Aurelius with Faustina II on obverse and Iuno on reverse = RIC III Marcus Aurelius no. 688, AD 161–175. 17.5 mm, 3.76g, 11h. Obv.: *FAVSTINA AVGVSTA*. Rev.: *IVNO*. American Numismatic Society 1911.23.344. <https://numismatics.org/collection/1911.23.344>. Public Domain.

wears a long dress with overfall, while a veil covers her head and shoulders. She stands to the left, holding a scepter in her left hand and a patera in her right hand. To her left, a peacock is added as her typical attribute (an attribute which is missing on the Mannos Philorhomaios-types with Lucilla on obverse). The only deviation are two spherical balls added to Iuno's scepter on the Mannos-type, all other details perfectly coincide. In the imperial coinage, the standing Iuno with peacock – in the schema described – appears on several types minted for Faustina II<sup>39</sup> and Lucilla<sup>40</sup>; it is even employed for one as-type of Lucius Verus<sup>41</sup>. It complements coins showing enthroned Iuno with the very same attributes<sup>42</sup>.

The Mannos-types with military topic are modelled closely to the imperial coinage as well. Images of Victoria flying to the left (not standing on globe, as is also a common motif<sup>43</sup>), holding a wreath and palm-branch are numerous in gold, silver and aes coins among the types devoted to Lucius Verus, mostly

39 Denarii: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 688 (“Iuno”). 694–696 (“Iunoni reginae”); aureus: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 691 (“Iunoni lucinae”, without peacock!); aes: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 1645–1647 (“Iuno”). 1648 (“Iunoni reginae”). 1651f. (“Iunoni reginae”).

40 Denarii: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 772 (“Iuno regina”); aes: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 1744f. (“Iuno”). 1750–1752 (“Iuno regina”).

41 RIC III M. Aurelius no. 1496 (“Iuno”) (without ill.).

42 For Lucilla: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 770. 1746f.

43 E.g., RIC III M. Aurelius no. 520 (denarius dating to AD 164).

dating to AD 167<sup>44</sup> – also one denarius and one quinarius-type<sup>45</sup> dating to AD 164 and 165, respectively. Mars standing to the right, holding a spear and shield (RPC IV/3 online no. 6486, fig. 4) was also minted for Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in the imperial coinage from AD 164/165 onwards<sup>46</sup>.

Ceres standing to the left, holding corn-ears in her right hand and a scepter or long torch in her left, as displayed on PRC IV/3 online no. 8629 (fig. 6, with Lucilla on obverse), can be found in the very same scheme in the imperial mint; however, during Marcus Aurelius' reign only one denarius-type and one as-type for Faustina II carry this scheme<sup>47</sup>. On the Roman coins, she holds a torch (the different sections of the torch and its flames are always visible), while the staff on the Mannos-type shows no sections; the top of the specimen kept in the British Museum is unfortunately lost since the coin is partly broken, thus it cannot be decided whether a flame was depicted or not (fig. 6)<sup>48</sup>. The Mannos-type with Ceres seated to the left, holding corn-ears and a long torch with visible flames (RPC IV/3 online no. 6489 with Lucilla on obverse), can also be compared with a few imperial coin-types; however, they were only minted for Faustina II, and in all cases Ceres sits on a cista instead of on a throne<sup>49</sup>.

Salus, sitting on a throne to the left while feeding a snake coiled around an altar with a patera (PRC IV/3 online no. 17203, Lucilla on obverse), is also present in the imperial Roman coinage. Several types in gold, silver and aes

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44 Denarii: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 574 f.; golden quinar: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 569; quinarii: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 570. 579; aurei: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 572 f. Referring to his 7<sup>th</sup> *tribunicia potestas*, which he held from AD 10. 12. 166–09. 12. 167, see Kienast 2017, 136.

45 RIC III M. Aurelius no. 521. Referring to his 4<sup>th</sup> *tribunicia potestas*, which he held from AD 10. 12. 163–09. 12. 164, see Kienast 2017, 136; quinarius: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 538, 5<sup>th</sup> *tribunicia potestas*, which he held from AD 10. 12. 164–09. 12. 165.

46 Marcus Aurelius: denarii: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 91–93 (referring to M. Aurelius' 18<sup>th</sup> *tribunicia potestas*, which he held from AD 10. 12. 163–9. 12. 164, see Kienast 2017, 132). 119–120 (same time period). 121–124 (referring to M. Aurelius' 19<sup>th</sup> *tribunicia potestas*, which he held from AD 10. 12. 164–9. 12. 165, see Kienast 2017, 132).

47 Denarius: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 668; as: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 1619. The same figure appears on coins minted for Faustina I under Antoninus Pius: denarii: RIC III Antoninus Pius nos. 360a and d; aureus: RIC III Antoninus Pius no. 378a; aes (sestertius): RIC III Antoninus Pius no. 1128.

48 Photo available online: <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/4/8629> (31. 05. 2024).

49 Denarius: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 669; aes: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 1620–1624, among them with long torch or scepter only nos. 1621 and 1622. Same schema used for Faustina I: denarius: RIC III Antoninus Pius no. 379; aes: RIC III Antoninus Pius nos. 1169 f.



were minted for Faustina II<sup>50</sup>, and one denarius-type as well as one as-type for Lucilla<sup>51</sup>. Among the coins struck for Lucius Verus, one as-type with this iconography of Salus exists, dating to AD 162<sup>52</sup>. Interestingly, in the Roman imperial coinage, Salus never holds a cornucopia, while this attribute is added to the Mannos-type. As far as the state of preservation and quality of photos available allow to say, the shape of the cornucopia of Salus<sup>53</sup> and Providentia (fig. 1) are very close: a horn with wide opening in which several layers of spheres, representing the fruits, are depicted.

It has been suggested above that RPC IV/3 online no. 6488 with Lucilla on obverse falls into two groups (equaling two reverse dies): one with an unveiled goddess holding patera and scepter or long torch and wearing a cloak over a long tunic (“Ceres (?)”, group 1); the other with a goddess holding patera and scepter with her cloak draped on her shoulders (group 2, including the reverse of RPC IV/3 online no. 10745 with Verus on obverse). While Ceres does not appear without corn-ears in the imperial coinage (see above) – thus the identification could be questioned – the deity as shown in type 2 simply equals the representations of Iuno with patera, scepter and peacock, however leaving the peacock as an attribute aside. Such an iconography exists in the imperial coinage for Faustina II, however, only in one aureus-type<sup>54</sup>. The figure is named “Iuno Lucina” in the legend. Since it seems unlikely that the Mannos Philorhomaïos-drachm was modelled after a rare aureus-type for Faustina II, it is worth taking a further look at deities with patera and scepter on Roman imperial coins. Indeed, such a figure was employed to represent a number of personifications and deities, due to its rather undefined attributes, allowing for a certain level of polyvalency. According to the respective legends, this standing figure could represent Pietas<sup>55</sup>, Fecunditas<sup>56</sup> or Clementia<sup>57</sup>.

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50 Denarii: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 713f.; aurei: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 716f.; aes: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 1667–1671.

51 Denarius: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 782; aes (as): RIC III M. Aurelius no. 1760.

52 RIC III M. Aurelius no. 1324 (referring to his 2<sup>nd</sup> *tribunicia potestas* which he held from AD 10.12.161–09.12.162, see Kienast 2017, 136). Cf. also RIC III M. Aurelius no. 1498 (sestertius minted for Lucius Verus after his death). One denarius-type was struck for Marcus Aurelius, but later in AD 170–171: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 235.

53 S. Günther 2021, 13 fig. 6.

54 RIC III M. Aurelius no. 691 (without ill.).

55 Denarius RIC III M. Aurelius no. 380 (M. Aurelius, AD 177); aes: RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 1212. 1223 (M. Aurelius, AD 176/177).

56 RIC III M. Aurelius no. 768 (denarius for Lucilla, without ill.).

57 RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 1158–1161 (sestertii).

Summing up the observations made by iconographic analysis, one comes to the following conclusions: (1) The Mannos Philorhomaioi-types are surprisingly close to the motifs used in Roman imperial coinage and only deviate in minor details, mostly the attributes of the deities shown on reverse, and the hairstyle of Lucilla – an exception to this being RPC IV/3 online no. 6493 (L. Verus) with the legend *BACIAE/YC MANN/OC ΦΙΑΟΠ/ΩΜΑΙ(Ο)C* in four lines on the reverse (fig. 3). It is interesting to note that this type emphasizes a strong link between Mannos Philorhomaioi and Lucius Verus. (2) The coin types with Lucilla on the obverse exceed the other coin types – both in the number of types and also in the number of known specimens. Lucilla's hairstyle is a variation of Faustina II's official portrait, and all types share the same obverse die. The model employed for the Mannos-type with Faustina on the obverse – which was also present in the imperial coinage probably from AD 162 onwards – was Faustina II's 8<sup>th</sup> portrait type. (3) The iconography of some types is exactly the same as that which appears in Roman coinage, including the type with Marcus Aurelius on the obverse (Mars on reverse, RPC IV/3 online no. 6486), Faustina II on the obverse (Iuno with peacock, RPC IV/3 online no. 6487), and Lucilla on the obverse (Victoria on reverse, RPC IV/3 online no. 9619; Ceres with corn-ears standing, RPC IV/3 online no. 8629<sup>58</sup>). Others deviate in terms of attributes: Providentia and Salus have cornucopia added (L. Verus on obverse, not yet in PRC<sup>59</sup>; Lucilla on obverse, RPC IV/3 online no. 17203); Ceres sits on a throne instead of on a cista (Lucilla on obverse, RPC IV/3 online no. 6489). (4) The types with Lucilla on obverse include a deity with patera and scepter which is usually identified with Iuno, but is rather unspecific. This also includes type RPC IV/3 online no. 6488, which should be divided into two groups. The goddess of group 1 is often thought to hold a long torch and thus to possibly be Ceres. However, since Ceres does not appear without corn-ears in Roman imperial coinage, the figure should rather be addressed as an unidentifiable deity with patera and scepter, this also appears in group 2 and RPC IV/3 online no. 8628. The staff of the deity in group 1 might have been cut imprecisely – since all types share the same reverse die this cannot be decided. The goddess of group 2 was combined also with the portrait of Lucius Verus on the obverse (also same reverse die). (5) The number of die links is stunning, given the small number of specimens. (6) As far as dating is possible, the imperial coins taken

58 Although one has to note that the staff in the left hand is damaged on the only known example in the British Museum, as stated above and illustrated in fig. 6.

59 Leu Numismatik AG, web auction 14 (12.12.2020), lot no. 1161, see S. Günther 2021, 5.

as models were mostly circulating around AD 163–165. The coins with the reverses with Mars and Victoria, especially, point the dating more towards AD 165. Although one must be cautious about postulating too confident a dating, since both motifs were already present under Antoninus Pius<sup>60</sup>, this fits the assumption that Mannos Philorhomaïos is to be identified with Ma'nu VIII and that he became Roman-installed king of Oshroene from around AD 165 onwards.

This all points to the fact that the Mannos Philorhomaïos-types were indeed designed to look Roman at first glance – to frame their audience in such a way – but not to just reproduce the Roman imperial coinage with a little local taste. Rather at second gaze, they seem to follow an original concept with regard to both legend and imagery. This assumption is confirmed once one compares the iconography of the reverses linked with Lucilla on the obverse and the spectrum of coins minted for Lucilla by the imperial mint. In the imperial coinage, Lucilla appears with the following deities: Ceres (2 types in aes<sup>61</sup>, one with a seated Ceres is very different from RPC IV/3 online no. 6489), Concordia (11 types), Diana Lucifera (4 types), Fecunditas (9 types), Hilaritas (5 types), Iuno (12 types, including Iuno Lucina and Iuno Regina), Laetitia (1 type), Magna Mater (2 types), Pietas (7 types), Pudicitia (6 types), Salus (3 types), Venus (22 types, including Venus Victrix and Venus Genetrix) and Vesta (5 types)<sup>62</sup>. This choice of deities is rather typical for the wife of an emperor during the later 2<sup>nd</sup> and early 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, especially Concordia – the embodiment of harmonious marriage – and Venus, Fecunditas, Hilaritas, Pietas and Pudicitia which would ascribe the ideal qualities of the imperial family to the respective woman on the obverse. The Mannos Philorhomaïos-types, in contrast, display quite a different spectrum. Iuno, as the second frequent goddess linked to Lucilla in the Roman coinage, appears without the peacock – instead being transformed into a multipurpose deity. Victoria (RPC IV/3 online no. 9619) is usually not combined with Lucilla's portrait; however, she appears on provincial coins for Lucilla and Faustina II<sup>63</sup>.

The question remains why the portrait type used for Lucilla does not align with her official hairstyle, in particular as the die cutter(s) seem to have been so well informed about the contemporary Roman imperial coinage.

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60 Cf., e.g., RIC II Antoninus Pius no. 113A (aureus) and 609 (denarius).

61 Seated: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 1728 (sestertius); standing: RIC III M. Aurelius no. 1729 (as).

62 Cf. also n. 22.

63 S. Günther 2021, 4 with references.

Furthermore, they modified Faustina II's 8<sup>th</sup> portrait type in a unique way. It appears that the die cutter(s) created a new type which did not connect to the Roman imperial coinage, using instead Faustina II on the Mannos Philorhomaios-coins as a point of reference. While it might not have been obvious for the audience that Lucilla's hairstyle was a deviation from her official portrait, at least those seeing the portraits of Faustina II and Lucilla jointly in this group of coins would be framed to understand them as closely belonging together, Lucilla being something like a younger version of Faustina II, which might also be reflected in Lucilla's calmer facial expression. The name and title of both empresses are indeed parallelized and even placed accordingly with each other, with the *CEBACTH* starting at the forehead, with a small sigma at the beginning of the word.

If one compares the portraits of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, as displayed on the Mannos Philorhomaios-types, they are also modelled extremely close after each other; in respect to hairstyle and beard (with single strands loosening from the mass of hair) as well as to their facial features.

This impression of a finely tuned system of visual and textual references is confirmed by the reverses chosen. Mars, arguably the most important god with relation to the Parthian war, adorns the coin with Marcus on the obverse; Iuno, as the highest goddess, depicted on the coin with Faustina II. The figure of Iuno without peacock, leaving space for polyvalency, was used for Lucilla. The higher number of types and the combination of Victoria on the reverse of RPC IV/3 online no. 9619 – a goddess significantly important in the military context and somehow corresponding to Mars – indicates that Lucilla is not presented to be less important than her sister-in-law. The fact that Lucius Verus does not stand behind his brother and co-emperor Marcus Aurelius, is made clear by the coin type with Mannos' name in four lines on the reverse (RPC IV/3 online no. 6493). The reverse deities combined with Verus and Lucilla (Ceres, Iuno (?), Providentia, Salus) easily fit into the imperial scope of the Mannos Philorhomaios-coins.

### Context III: The *hyper nikēs*-types

Given the fact that there is strong evidence but no definite proof to identify Mannos Philorhomaios with Ma'nu VIII and the location of the mint remains uncertain, a comparison of both coinages on a local level is problematic. Nevertheless, there is a group of coins which bears strikingly similar design features; namely, the so-called *hyper nikēs*-coins – said to be minted



Fig. 12: Silver drachm, *hyper nikēs*-type with Marcus Aurelius on obverse and Mars on reverse. Not yet in RPC. 16.5 mm, 2.6 g, 6 h (?). Obv.: ΑΥΤ(οκρατωρ) Κ(αισαρ) Μ(αρκος) ΑΥΡ(ηλιος) ΑΝΤΩΝΙΝΟΣ. Rev.: ΥΠΕΡ ΝΙΚ-ΗΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ. Pecunem | Numismatik Naumann (formerly Gitbud & Naumann), Gitbud & Naumann Auction 6 (04. 08. 2013), lot. No. 303. <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=592306|1066|303|9980f64c8127a57a55471d1e1a5ab464>.

in Carrhae, or at least in Mesopotamia<sup>64</sup>. This group consists of silver coins (aes coins of that type appear only later for Commodus) with either the legend ΥΠΕΡ ΝΙΚΗΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ or ΥΠΕΡ ΝΙΚΗΣ ΤΩΝ ΚΥΠΡΙΩΝ *vel sim.* on the reverse<sup>65</sup>, and either Marcus Aurelius, Faustina II, Lucius Verus or Lucilla on the obverse. The range of reverse types is broader compared with the Mannos Philorhomaioi-types<sup>66</sup>, including a reverse type which is modelled after the depiction of defeated Armenia on the reverse of the coins minted for Lucius Verus in and after AD 163<sup>67</sup>. A number of types are iconographically very close to the Mannos Philorhomaioi-coins, although showing some deviations. The type with Marcus Aurelius on the obverse and Mars on the reverse (RPC IV/3 online no. 6486; fig. 4), which was also common in the imperial coinage, has an equivalent amongst the *hyper nikēs*-types<sup>68</sup> (fig. 12).

The same is to be said regarding the type with Iuno holding scepter and patera next to a peacock on the reverse and Faustina II on the obverse (RPC

64 See S. Günther 2021, 6–11, with n. 16. For the types, see Hill 1922, p. xcviif. and p. 137–139, and in RPC online (“uncertain mint in Mesopotamia”).

65 See Hill 1922, p. xcix.

66 For a list of the known types, see S. Günther 2021, 7–9.

67 Hill 1922, p. xcix, p. 137 no. 2 with pl. XIX, 6. Modelled after, e.g., RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 498–506.

68 Not yet included in the RPC. Pecunem | Numismatik Naumann, Gitbud & Naumann auction 6 (04. 08. 2013), lot. no. 303, not yet in RPC (M. Aurelius): fig. 12.



Fig. 13: Silver drachm, *hyper nikēs*-type with Lucilla on obverse and Ceres on reverse, not yet in RPC. 18mm, 3.03g, 6h. Obv.: ΛΟΥΚΙΜΑ CEBACTH. Rev: ΥΠΕΡ ΝΙΚΗΣ ΤΩΝ ΚΥΠΙΩΝ.

Auctiones GmbH, eAuction 50 (11.09.2016), lot no. 136. <https://www.coinarchives.com/a/openlink.php?l=1710690|3876|136|279f2d62ff02066e15f65515a48579d3>.

IV/3 online no. 6487)<sup>69</sup>. Iuno without peacock and without veil – as shown on RPC IV/3 online no. 8628 and 6488 (group 2) with Lucilla on obverse, and 10745 with L. Verus on obverse (figs. 7–9) – which exists in the RIC only in one aureus-type (see discussion above), is present on three *hyper nikēs*-types: RPC IV/3 online nos. 8030 (M. Aurelius on obverse), 6499 (Faustina II on obverse) and 10707 (Lucilla on obverse). A Ceres with patera and long torch neither exists in RIC nor in *hyper nikēs*-types, which re-affirms the assumption that the goddess on the reverse of RPC IV/3 online no. 6488 group 1 (Lucilla on obverse, fig. 2) should likely not be identified as Ceres. While a seated Ceres is missing among the *hyper nikēs*-types, a standing Ceres with corn-ears is combined each with Lucius Verus, Marcus Aurelius and Lucilla on the obverse<sup>70</sup>. The reverse iconography is strikingly similar to the Mannos Philorhomaïos-types (cf. fig. 13).

The cornucopia, which were added to the Mannos Philorhomaïos-coins in contrast to the imperial types, are also present on the *hyper nikēs*-types

69 Not yet included in the RPC. CNG, electronic auction 322 (12.03.2014), lot no. 483; CNG electronic auction 444 (15.05.2019), wrongly attributed to Mannos (Faustina II).

70 RPC IV/3 online no. 6501 (L. Verus, with altar added on the left); Leu Numismatik AG, web auction 14 (12.12.2020) lot no. 1158 (M. Aurelius), see S. Günther 2021, 8 n. 44; Auctiones GmbH, eAuction 50 (11.09.2016), lot no. 136 (Lucilla), see S. Günther 2021, 9 n. 56.



Fig. 14: Silver drachm, *hyper nikēs*-type with Faustina II on obverse and Providentia on reverse = RPC IV/3 online no. 10749. 17 mm, 2.75 g, 6 h. Obv.: ΦΑ[ΥCTINAN?] [C]EBACTHN. Rev.: ΥΠΕΡ ΝΙΚΗC Ρ-ΩΜΑΙΩΝ.  
Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18312525, 1900 Imhoof-Blumer. <https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18312525>. Photo: B. Weisser. CC BY SA 4.0.

with Providentia<sup>71</sup> (fig. 14) and Salus; however, the horn-of-plenty of Salus is standing on the ground (with Faustina II, not Lucilla on the obverse)<sup>72</sup>.

Besides an enthroned Salus, a standing Salus feeding the snake is also to be found among the *hyper nikēs*-types<sup>73</sup>, while this type does not exist amongst the Mannos Philorhomaioi-coins – or at least it is currently not known to have existed in the production of the Mannos Philorhomaioi-coins. A type with flying Victoria is possibly related to the *hyper nikēs*-reverses, however, standing on a globe (as it is common in the Roman imperial coinage)<sup>74</sup> and facing right instead to the left<sup>75</sup>. A reverse similar to the four lines legend on the obverse of RPC IV/3 online no. 6493 is not known for the *hyper nikēs*-types.

Similar to the result in the previous section, the Mannos Philorhomaioi-types are surprisingly similar in design to the *hyper nikēs*-types. This gives more weight to the assumption that both groups were minted in relative geographical proximity and that the Roman imperial coinage was a model for both groups. However, there are clear differences. The die axis of

71 RPC IV/3 online nos. 9577 (M. Aurelius); 10747 (M. Aurelius); 8028 (M. Aurelius); 6496 (M. Aurelius); 10749 (Faustina II); 11634 (Faustina II); 6498 (Faustina II); 8036 (Lucilla); Numismatik Lanz, auction 106 (27.11.2001) lot no. 478 (Faustina II), see S. Günther 2021, 8 n. 50; CNG electronic auction 322 (12.03.2014) lot no. 484, see S. Günther 2021, 8 n. 54 (L. Verus).

72 RPC IV/3 online no. 10754 (Faustina II).

73 RPC IV/3 online no. 9919 and 10753.

74 See n. 43.

75 RPC IV/3 online no. 6494 (M. Aurelius). The reverse legend is *H ΝΕΙΚΗ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ*.

the *hyper nikēs*-coins is generally set at 12 o'clock, while the one of the Mannos-coins is usually set at 6 o'clock. This suggests that they were not minted in the same workshop, or at least not in the same production chain<sup>76</sup>. Furthermore, the Mannos Philorhomaioi-coins are very homogeneous in style; their woodcarving-like strokes are particular and differ from the style of the *hyper nikēs*-coins which are closer to Roman imperial coinage; comparing the types with Mars on the reverse may illustrate this clear difference (fig. 4 vs. fig. 12). In addition, the extraordinary number of die links between the Mannos Philorhomaioi-types are missing among the *hyper nikēs*-types.

Let us take a further look at the spectrum of reverses in combination with Lucilla in the *hyper nikēs*-coinage. They are (1) standing Venus with apple and sceptre<sup>77</sup> (fig. 15); (2) standing Iuno (?) with patera and scepter<sup>78</sup>; (3) Providentia with globe and cornucopia<sup>79</sup> (fig. 14); (4) standing Venus with apple, lifting her clothes;<sup>80</sup> and (5) standing Ceres with corn-ears and scepter<sup>81</sup> (fig. 13). In accordance with the Roman coins, Venus is the prevalent goddess chosen. The coiffeurs of Lucilla are not part of Lucilla's official portraiture – as in the case of the Mannos Philorhomaioi-types – but instead follow Faustina II. While some are close to Faustina II's first type<sup>82</sup>, others align with her 8<sup>th</sup> type<sup>83</sup>, which is also a parallel to the Mannos Philorhomaioi-coins<sup>84</sup>.

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76 S. Günther 2021, 9.

77 RPC IV/3 online no. 6502, see S. Günther 2021, 8 n. 40.

78 RPC IV/3 online no. 10707, see S. Günther 2021, 8 n. 41.

79 RPC IV/3 online no. 8036, see S. Günther 2021, 8 n. 42.

80 Not yet in RPC: Leu Numismatik AG, web auction 14 (12. 12. 2020), lot no. 1162, see S. Günther 2021, 9 n. 55.

81 Not yet in RPC: Auciones GmbH, eAuktion 50 (11.109.2016), lot no. 136, see S. Günther 2021, 9 n. 56.

82 RIC IV/3 online nos. 6502 (fig. 14) and 17214.

83 But without variation like it is the case on the Mannos Philorhomaioi-coins (melon-like structure on top); cf. RIC IV/3 online nos. 10707 and, probably, 8036 (very worn out); and the specimen referred to in ns. 81 and 82. For Faustina's first type, see Fittschen 1982, 44–48, who dates it to AD 149 (see Fittschen 1982, 43). For the 8<sup>th</sup> type, see n. 14.

84 The hairstyles of Faustina II on the *hyper nikēs*-types are the following: (1) rather loose wavy hair running from top to neck in parallel lines, low knot (cf. RPC online no. 10719), resembling the 5<sup>th</sup> type of Faustina II as defined by K. Fittschen (Fittschen 1982, 40f., dating it to AD 162: Fittschen 1982, 43); cf. Niederhuber 2022, 48: 153/154, p. 36: very close to Lucilla's second type. (2) bundles of wavy hair running from top to neck in parallel lines (cf. RPC online no. 10753), resembling the 7<sup>th</sup> type of Faustina II as defined by K. Fittschen (Fittschen 1982, 42f., dating it to AD 161, since it is linked, as also in the *hyper nikēs*-types (RPC online no. 3498)





Fig. 15: Silver drachm, *hyper nikēs*-type with Lucilla on obverse and Venus on reverse = RPC IV/3 online no. 6502. 18 mm, 3.51g, 6h. Obv.: ΛΟΥΚΙΛΛΑ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΗ. Rev: [ΥΠΕΡ] ΝΙΚΗΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ.

British Museum online collection, 692539001. G.2425. <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/692539001>. CC BY SA 4.0. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Due to the higher number of reverse types, it seems that although the Mannos Philorhomaïos-types are linked to the *hyper nikēs*-types, they were created as an independent, closed group with special emphasis on Lucius Verus and Lucilla. It has even been suggested that it is possible that they were designed to celebrate the wedding of Verus and Lucilla in Ephesus<sup>85</sup>. However, the date of this event is unclear. It might have taken place in AD 163 or 164 (see introduction with n. 8). The same chronological uncertainty applies to the period in which the Mannos Philorhomaïos-types were minted. If we assume that the workshop adopted the current reverse types in the imperial Roman coinage, we might come to a period between AD 163–165 (most likely AD 165), which fits to the assumed chronology of Mannos Philorhomaïos/Ma’nu VIII. A connection to the (successful) end of the Parthian war and Lucius Verus’ triumph (AD 165/166), however, is also possible. What is striking with regard to the iconography of the Mannos Philorhomaïos-coins for Lucilla – especially in comparison to the Roman imperial coinage and the *hyper nikēs*-types – is that motifs usually linked to marriage are missing,

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with the birth of the imperial twins. This dating is also confirmed by Niederhuber 2022, 48, who, however, links it with Marcus Aurelius’ accession.

85 This was the hypothesis of the oral presentation “The Antonine Denarii from Mesopotamia” by Edward Dandrow (University of California) in section “S 49. Rome 15. Finds and Circulation 2” at the XVI International Numismatic Congress 2022 in Warsaw, see: <https://indico3.conference4me.psn.pl/event/6/contributions/516/> (30.04.2024).

particularly Concordia, but also Venus and Fecunditas. The polyvalency of some figures may have allowed them to fit into varying occasions. It is therefore likely that the Mannos Philorhomaïos-coins did not only honor the imperial family – especially Lucius Verus and Lucilla being ‘present’ in that region at that time – but also, economic needs being prevalent, is connected to the presence of Roman troops in Mesopotamia<sup>86</sup>.

## Conclusion

The Mannos Philorhomaïos-types form a distinct group, standing out due to their homogeneous design and carving style, establishing a system of subtly balanced visual and textual elements. Only the portraits of the imperial family – Marcus Aurelius, Faustina II, Lucius Verus and Lucilla – are present, and on the reverse a limited number of deities. One type for Lucius Verus with the title of Mannos Philorhomaïos on the reverse stands out and emphasizes the importance of Verus. Lucilla is also in focus since a relatively high number of types bear her portrait on the obverse (6 out of 11) and more specimens for these than for any other type are known to date. It seems likely, therefore, that the coins were produced in relation to the Parthian war since Osrhoene – provided that Mannos Philorhomaïos is identical with Ma‘nu VIII – was affected by the conflict of these two powerful empires on its borders.

The reason for Mannos Philorhomaïos minting these distinct coins is unclear and cannot be verified. A hint, however, may lie in the surprisingly high number of die links. It may be an indicator of a high production rate within a short time span. This might have taken place, as the comparison with the reverse types with Roman imperial types suggests, between AD 163–165 – while AD 165 seems more likely to the authors, an even later date cannot be excluded.

A possible explanation for the production of this distinct coinage output is the need of Mannos Philorhomaïos, having been probably installed by the Romans as Osrhoenian king, to pay Roman troops with silver, produced in a local mint; a connection to the marriage of Lucius Verus and Lucilla cannot be denied, although the iconography (especially the selection of personifications) does not fully fit such an occasion. Notably, however, neither explanation is mutually exclusive. Whether the die cutter(s) were trained by the Romans (e.g., being delegated by the Roman army), or whether they used

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86 S. Günther 2021, 10.

coins in circulation as models or possibly pattern books, cannot be answered. This we understand as the ‘First Gaze’, i.e. the adaptation of the framework of Roman imperial coins, likely addressing the soldiers as a (primary?) Roman audience.

At the same time, whoever composed the Mannos Philorhomaïos-types, did not wish or need to fully follow the Roman model, as minor deviations in the portrait types and the attributes of the reverse deities indicate. These deviations from the imperial coinage should therefore, not be understood as mistakes or misunderstandings of the respective types, but as their own creations – aligning with the practice we find on the *hyper nikēs*-types and in the Roman provincial coinage in general<sup>87</sup>.

Thus, a ‘Second Gaze’ from a local – or non-Roman – perspective on the coins is intended, framing a respective audience. Such an audience could be local clients of the kind, e.g. a local elite or even non-Roman troops – here we can only speculate.

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87 Cf. RPC IV/4 online no. 3096; Howgego 2023, 446 f. no. 3096 with pl. 233, an aes coin minted in Alexandria with Lucilla on obverse, dating to AD 167/168. The reverse shows a standing figure holding corn-ears, closely following the iconography of Ceres as discussed above. The cornucopia is, however, added as additional attribute, held in her left arm. The legend refers, nonetheless, to *ΕΥΘΗΝΙΑ* (Fecunditas). The unusual high degree of adaption of Roman imperial coin imagery in the provincial coinage of Egypt is discussed by Chris Howgego in the printed version of RPC IV/4: Howgego 2023, 104–112. Overall, the connections between the imperial mint in Rome, the provincial mint in Egypt and the mints used during the Parthian campaign awaits further investigation.

## Appendix: Comparison of reverse iconography between the Mannos Philorhomaios, RIC and *hyper nikēs*-types

Reverse iconography	Mannos-type	RIC-type	<i>hyper nikēs</i> -type
Mars with helmet standing to the right, holding spear and shield	RPC IV/3 online no. 6486 (M. Aurelius on obverse)	e. g., RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 91 –93. 119 –124 (denarii for M. Aurelius; also minted for L. Verus)	not yet in RPC; Pecunem   Numismatik Naumann, Gitbud & Naumann auction 6 (04. 08. 2013), lot. no. 303
Veiled Iuno with scepter and patera, peacock	RPC IV/3 online no. 6487 (Faustina II on obverse)	e. g., RIC III M. Aurelius no. 688. 694–696 (for Faustina II)	not yet in RPC; CNG, electronic auction 322 (12. 03. 2014) lot no. 483; CNG electronic auction 444 (15. 05. 2019), wrongly attributed to Mannos (Faustina II)
Iuno with scepter and patera; without peacock	RPC IV/3 online no. 8628 (Lucilla on obverse); RPC online no. 6488 group 2 (Lucilla on obverse); 10745 (L. Verus on obverse)	RIC III M. Aurelius no. 691 (" <i>Iunoni lucinae</i> ", aureus for Faustina II)	RPC IV/3 online no. 8030 (M. Aurelius); 6499 (Faustina II); 10707 (Lucilla)
Ceres (?) with patera and long torch (?)	RPC IV/3 online no. 6488 group 1 (Lucilla on obverse)	–	–
Ceres standing with corn-ears and scepter (?)	RPC IV/3 online no. 8629 (Lucilla on obverse)	RIC III M. Aurelius no. 668 (denarius for M. Aurelius); RIC III M. Aurelius no. 1619 (as for Faustina II)	RPC IV/3 online no. 6501 (L. Verus, altar added to the left)
Ceres seated with corn-ears and scepter	RPC IV/3 online no. 6489 (Lucilla on obverse)	RIC III M. Aurelius no. 669 (denarius for Faustina II) Ceres seated on cista	–
Victoria with wreath and palm-branch to left	RPC IV/3 online no. 9619 (Lucilla on obverse)	RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 520 f.	RPC IV/3 online no. 6494 (M. Aurelius; standing on globe and flying to the right)

Reverse iconography	Mannos-type	RIC-type	<i>hyper nikēs</i> -type
Providentia standing with cornucopia and globe	Leu Numismatik AG, Web auction 14 (12. 12. 2020), lot no. 1161 (L. Verus on obverse)	e. g., RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 22–25 (L. Verus)	RPC IV/3 online nos. 9577. 10747. 8028. 6496 (M. Aurelius); 10749. 1163. 6498 (Faustina II); 8036 (Lucilla)
Salus seated, feeding snake with patera in right hand, scepter in left hand	PRC IV/3 online no. 17203 (with Lucilla on obverse) cornucopia in left arm	e. g., RIC III M. Aurelius nos. 713 f. (denarii for Faustina II); e. g. RIC III M. Aurelius no. 782 (denarius for Lucilla) no cornucopia	RPC IV/3 online no. 10754 (Faustina II) cornucopia standing on ground

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