Fortuna Redux

The Fortuna Redux was an ancient Roman tradition first introduced in 19 BC to mark the return of the great Emperor Augustus from Asia Minor. Fortuna Redux was widely disseminated in the Western Empire as the tutelary of the emperor’s safe return to the city when he traveled abroad, an event that reaffirmed Rome as the center of the Imperial world. The concept widened to include thanks for overseeing the return from a long or perilous journey, many of which involved business.

The coin depicts the Roman God Mercury, the patron god of financial gain, commerce, eloquence (and thus poetry), messages/communication (including divination), travellers, boundaries, luck, trickery and thieves. In other words, a perfect fit for the Fortuna Redux.

Mercury had essentially the same aspects as Hermes, wearing winged shoes (talaria) and a winged hat (petasos), and carrying the caduceus, a herald’s staff with two entwined snakes that was Apollo’s gift to Hermes. Mercury was also considered a god of abundance and commercial success, and archeological evidence from Pompeii suggests that Mercury was among the most popular of Roman gods. The god of commerce was depicted on two early bronze coins of the Roman Republic, the Sextans and the Semuncia.

Designed by Polish artist, Urszula Walerzak, the transition from six to three ounces in size has been handled with ease and the coin remains a fantastic object. The obverse (above-right) carries an image of Mercury, next to it an effigy of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the face value: 25 DOLLARS. In the background – a map of the world with elements symbolising travelling. Along the rim – the inscriptions: 2013 (the year of the issue), NIUE ISLAND (the issuer), Ag 999 (the alloy).

The reverse shows an image of a gold coin with the effigy of Mercury, in the background – a map of galaxy.