Roman Object Image Card #1:   Propaganda

How do powerful people tell everyone else about themselves?

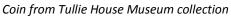| Today	Roman times
WHO spreads pictures of themselves and their success across different countries?	
HOW do they spread their images?	
WHAT sort of messages do they want people to understand?	
WHY do they want people to know this about them?	

Roman coins excavated from Hadrian's Wall

Coins were the only item circulated to every part of the Empire, and were used by all people – everybody had to pay taxes so everybody would see coins. This is why each Emperor issued new coins so they could get their own message across:

- Reinforce their right to rule. They use words like 'Imperator' (translated as Emperor or literally 'the man who gives the orders'. Coins also featured symbols from classical mythology. This Emperor is crowned with a laurel wreath demonstrating his skill and success as an army commander. The reverse shows Pegasus, about to bring forth the spring of poetic inspiration by stamping his hoof. The combination of images emphasises the unique mightiness of the Emperor.

Coin from Tullie House Museum collection

Emperors used images on the reverse of the coin that symbolised the history of Rome, restoration of order or the stability of the army in times of internal conflict. Military victories were shown by submissive images of the people they had conquered. Coin to commemorate Emperor Vespasian's conquest of Judaea. Reverse image is of a Jewess seated under a palm tree surrounded by discarded arms. *Coin from Tullie House Museum collection*

Unlike our monarchy, there was no automatic inheritance from parent to child. Rulers often showed their intended heirs on their coins. Julia Domna was the wife of Septimius Severus and was the power behind the throne during his rule and that of their children. This coin shows her in the same pose as Emperors, and the reverse has the goddess Venus the Victorious (VENUS VICTRIX), with her son Cupid alongside her. *Coin from Vindolanda Trust collection*