

JUGATE IMAGES IN PTOLEMAIC AND JULIO- CLAUDIAN MONARCHY

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Introduction

The artifacts discussed in this chapter—mostly coins, seals, and engraved gemstones—carry a distinctive type of imagery, in most cases associating a male ruler with his female consort. Devised as a symbol of political strength and permanence, the conjoined depiction of the two members of a ruling couple was widely used in the Greco-Roman world, as well as its periphery, and produced some considerable spin-offs (with a pair of siblings, for example, or a divine instead of a royal pair). The examples to be discussed in this chapter cover this entire span, from Ptolemaic Egypt (where the scheme was first designed) and the Hellenistic East at large to Rome in the time of the late republic and the Julio-Claudians.

Sibling gods and mother-loving kings

Ptolemaic ideals of kingship were fashioned partly on the Pharaonic tradition and partly on the Greco-Persian model established by Alexander.¹ This meant that a Ptolemaic king served both as a Hellenistic *basileus* and as local pharaoh; as such, he embodied the state as a charismatic ruler approved of and protected by the gods, while at the same time, as pharaoh, he was seen as the earthly manifestation of Horus, invincible and ever victorious.

In both traditions, sovereignty drew its legitimacy from dynastic continuity, and the royal couple soon came to symbolize this. Ptolemy Philadelphos was the first to add the living royal couple to the cult of Alexander (possibly in 272/1 BCE), first as the “temple-sharing gods” (*Theoi Synnaoi*) and then as the “sibling gods” (*Theoi Adelphoi*);² these were Ptolemy II and his sibling-wife Arsinoë, joined in a *hieros gamos* (“holy marriage”) according to a precedent set by Zeus and Hera (or Dione; see p. 000), as well as many a pharaonic couple.³ The third Ptolemaic couple were later incorporated into the dynastic cult as the “benefactor gods” (*Theoi Euergetai*), but it was only Ptolemy IV who, retrospectively, added his great-grandparents, the “savior gods” (*Theoi Soteres*), a divine epithet established already under Philadelphos, to the cultic sequence. The result was a collective, and dynamic, dynastic cult celebrating the legitimacy and the continuity of the state in the face of its ruling couples. This was a Ptolemaic invention, later to be exported to the Seleukids and other Hellenistic kingdoms, such as Kommagene.



Figure 30.1 Gold octodrachm issued by King Ptolemy II Philadelphos / Ptolemy III Euergetes of Egypt (obverse); Jugate busts of Ptolemy II and Arsinoë II; c. 261/260–240 BCE
Source: Athens, National Numismatic Museum; inv. no. 455 (Demetriou Collection)

Doing politics through coinage was another habit the Ptolemies inherited from Alexander (and the Argeads before him);⁴ heavily politicized coin imageries, in particular, became a trademark Macedonian practice that they developed to perfection. The jugate-busts scheme itself, that is the representation of a royal or divine couple in close up, seated side-by-side and usually facing right, seems to have been invented to be employed as a propaganda device on Ptolemaic coinage.⁵ It may have been derived from earlier Greek/Macedonian art, mostly reliefs, where two individuals were shown to sit, stand, or advance side by side;⁶ pharaonic imageries, on the other hand, tomb-paintings and temple reliefs more likely, may also have provided the inspiration for this new pictorial type.⁷ Ptolemaic coins often show fuller busts of deities and rulers (that is, a complete depiction of the head, in profile, the neck, and the upper part of the shoulders in three-quarter view, customarily draped), whereas Macedonian, Seleukid, and other Hellenistic coinages tend to favor simpler depictions of heads, down to a decorative, undulating cut-line at the lower neck.

The first official, and securely dated, image of a Ptolemaic couple in jugate depiction comes from a monumental series of gold octodrachms and tetradrachms (approximately 27.8 and 14 grams respectively) introduced by Philadelphos in the 260s BCE as a means of glorifying the newly established dynasty (see Figures 30.1 and 30.2).

The obverse shows the *Adelphoi* facing right, with a shield symbol behind them (a symbol of military worthiness as well as civic safe keeping); on the reverse, Ptolemy I and Berenike are shown, also in jugate depiction. Both wear diadems, and their shoulders are draped. Ptolemy Soter is shown older (though not as old as he was when he died), with clenched lips, pointy nose, deep-set eyes and rather unruly hair. Philadelphos looks younger, and better groomed. He is sporting a sideburn, and the characteristic big, well-rounded eye that will soon become a Ptolemaic trademark. His shoulder is draped with a chlamys-like garment, possibly the *porphyna*, the purple-dyed cloak worn by royalty in Hellenistic art, though mostly on coins and gems.⁸

The two royal consorts are shown partially covered by their kings. They look significantly alike, as does Arsinoë to her brother, Philadelphos. Both women wear the “melon coiffure,”



Figure 30.2 Gold octodrachm issued by King Ptolemy II Philadelphos / Ptolemy III Euergetes of Egypt (reverse); Jugate busts of Ptolemy I and Berenike I; c. 261/260–240 BCE
Source: Athens, National Numismatic Museum; inv. no. 455 (Demetriou Collection)

a heavy, intricately massive hairstyle typical of royal women in the early Hellenistic period (though not exclusive to them). They both wear diadems and their shoulders are loosely draped. Their noses are pointy, their lips tight, their chins look rounded and their jowls are heavy. They are depicted as ideal supplements to their royal husbands—regal and, in effect, divine.⁹

The Arsinoë of the *Theon Adelphon* series—and, by extension, the portrait of her mother—is comparable to the female coin-portrait types created by the Ptolemies for their consorts. Arsinoë herself was given a long-lived series of silver decadrachms, gold octodrachms and (later) silver tetradrachms soon after her death in c. 270 BCE that continued well into the second century BCE.¹⁰ She is shown on the obverse on her own, wearing the diadem underneath a *stephane* (thin, pointy crown), and partly covered by the *apoptygma* (overfold) of her peplos by means of a “veil.” A ram’s horn decorates her ear (a reference to a Pharaonic counterpart?) and the tip of a scepter is usually discernible rising from her side and above her head. The reverse bears the symbol of the *dikeras*, a double cornucopia apparently designed for her.¹¹ This is certainly the image of a deified royal woman, a beneficent *basilissa* thanked for the prosperity and well-being of her people. Although on her posthumous coinage Arsinoë is only identified with her royal epithet (Philadelphos), Berenike II, royal consort of Ptolemy III, is called a *basilissa* (“royal woman”) on hers, where she is shown quite similar to her predecessor, though with a single cornucopia and without any direct references to deification (such as Arsinoë’s horn).¹² These regal images are also present on seals, gems, and signet rings of the period, although with these, for the lack of inscriptions or any other historical context, we are generally at difficulty to identify them with any certainty (some of those women might not be royal at all).¹³

The message of the *Theon Adelphon* series is clear to anyone handling or—better still—possessing the coins: dynastic continuity is secured through familial ties going back to the Age of Alexander, and dynastic stability guarantees the prosperity symbolized by the coin at hand. The words THEON ADELPHON (“of the sibling gods”), the cult name of Ptolemy II and his sibling-wife Arsinoë, were first placed together on the obverse of the coin, later to be divided between the two sides, THEON now seemingly referring to the Soteres, though not necessarily implying their deification.¹⁴ Though the coins were struck well below the weight implied by

their denominations (a full octodrachm ought to weigh almost 28.5 grams),¹⁵ the names they were commonly identified with suggested their political as well as fiscal importance: the gold octodrachm was called a *mnaeon*, a name that suggested it was worth a full *mna* or 100 silver drachms. Accordingly, the tetradrachm was called a *pentekontadrachmon*, that is, a piece of 50 (silver) drachms. Besides confirming that silver remained the basis for monetary exchange across the Hellenistic world, the two names also help translate their obvious worth into their irresistible street value: combined with their physical attraction, their intrinsic value reflects onto the personages of the four royal persons depicted, confirming their own worth as rulers and their potency as divinities.

The impact of the jugate scheme must have been considerable. A mysterious plaster cast, allegedly from the Fayum in Egypt, seems to confirm this, albeit in a circumspect way.¹⁶ The piece is made of stucco, and it is of irregular shape with its maximum diameter measuring just under 15 cm. It shows two jugate busts, a draped man and a veiled woman, in relief. Unlike their counterparts from coinage, these turn left. The diadem the man wears suggests the two personages are royal, and their physiognomies, as well as the piece's alleged findspot indicates they may be members of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Indeed, following the precedent of the dynastic octodrachms and tetradrachms discussed above (p. 000), they seem more likely to be either Ptolemy I and Berenike or Ptolemy II and Arsinoë. Contrary to the coins, however, the images on the cast appear heavily idealized. The noses of the two portraits have been tampered with (already in antiquity?), with that of the man leaving a visible "ghost" on the cheek of his companion. The man's strong cheek and pumped-up forehead, as well as his once pointy nose, suggest he is Ptolemy Soter rather than his son Philadelphos, which would make the piece a depiction of the *Theoi Soteres*. The piece is apparently not a show piece in itself, but a cast made to be used in the making of another, presumably metal, artifact.

But a cast of what? A general consensus among earlier scholars seems to be that the cast was taken from a piece of metalwork or a mold for the replication of some sort of metal decoration portraying the royal couple; in this case it would serve as the mold for the making further molds. Some have hypothesized on the cast being a copy of a "grand cameo" of the early Ptolemaic period, though this does not seem to be verified by either archaeological evidence or technical probability.¹⁷ At any rate, the Alexandria cast provides us with a glimpse into what an idealized depiction of the savior gods might look like in early Ptolemaic art besides coinage. The depiction need not be earlier than the dynastic coin-series; as a matter of fact, its idealization and possible reworking in antiquity seem to confirm that the portraits were posthumous and quite possibly were switched from the Soteres to (perhaps) the Philadelphoi at some point after the piece's construction (this would mean that after having served as a joint depiction of the Soteres the image was cast anew and modified to portray the Philadelphoi). In any case, the piece provides a good depiction of a "state couple" of the early Ptolemaic period: the two busts, suitably idealized, attired and coiffed, suggest their royal as well as divine nature as confirmation of their regal power and ability to rule, safeguarding their realm and their royal subjects.

A series of silver tetradrachms from the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (222–205 BCE) indicates a new twist in the jugate scheme's career: the coins represent the archetypical divine couple, Sarapis and Isis, in the way the Soteres and the Philadelphoi had been depicted in the previous decades.¹⁸ The two divinities are shown in bust, draped, facing right; their facial characteristics (despite Sarapis' beard) and expressions recall those of the kings shown on the dynastic octodrachms and tetradrachms. Sarapis is wearing a minuscule *atef* crown (once mistaken for a "lotus bud" by early students of Greek numismatics) and Isis wears the horns-and-disk crown she shared with Hathor in pharaonic iconography. The reverse shows a Ptolemaic

eagle facing left, though turning his head backward, toward a *dikeras* hovering over his back. The entire scheme seems to suggest Ptolemaic leadership in the form of a royal couple mirroring a divine one (whereas in fact it is the gods who adopt here the imagery of the kings).¹⁹ This does not mean that Ptolemaic kings were ever assimilated to Sarapis (Ptolemy Epiphanes may have been an exception, and this posthumously). The women of the Ptolemaic royal family, however, were gradually assimilated to Isis—both as a royal consort *and* a queen mother—which was crucial for dynastic continuity and stability. Inevitably, though perhaps also non-intentionally, the facial features of Isis on these depictions seem to evoke those of the ruling queen (or a dead queen mother), an intriguing suggestion to which we will turn below (see p. 000).

Signet rings were quick to adopt the Sarapis/Isis jugate scheme, as we can tell from a seal-impression found affixed on a papyrus from Elephantine (Papyrus XXIII) dating from 223/2 BCE.²⁰ A much later papyrus, from 138 CE, states that a witness to a transaction seals the document with a *glymma* (seal-impression) “of Isis and Sarapis.”²¹ A massive gold ring, now in London, is a good example of the type.²² A number of engraved gems, roughly dated to the later third, second, and first centuries BCE, as well as many later ones, also carry the scheme.²³ At a later point, the jugate-busts depiction was adopted by other divinities as well.²⁴ A variant of the scheme, two frontal busts shown side by side, may be found on a gold medallion now in New York.²⁵ The two busts recreate the divine personages as shown on Philopator’s coins (though here with Isis on Sarapis’ right rather than the other way round); the piece is difficult to date, though it must be later than the coins, possibly second or first century BCE. The Sarapis-and-Isis jugate busts were exported to the numismatic imagery of at least one other Hellenistic territory, Epirus in northwestern Greece: during the third and second centuries BCE, the jugate busts of Zeus Dodoneus alongside his (local) consort Dione are featured on the obverse of the silver staters issued by the Epeirote League, an obvious inspiration derived from Philopator’s coins.²⁶

Returning to depictions of royals, the jugate-busts scheme was soon exported from Alexandria to other Hellenistic kingdoms. Kleopatra Thea, first, herself a Ptolemaic princess (she was the daughter of Ptolemy VI Philometor), adopted the scheme when she became a royal consort and eventually a *basilissa* in Seleukid Syria.²⁷ Kleopatra became the wife of three successive Seleukid kings from 150 to 125 BCE (Alexandros Balas, Demetrios II Nikator, and Antiochos VII Sidetes), and died at the hands of her son and co-regent Antiochos VIII Grypos, who, fearing for his own life, murdered her in 121 BCE. Kleopatra’s coins, where she is accompanied by a cornucopia as were her Ptolemaic counterparts, name her a *basilissa* and a *thea eueteria* (“a goddess of fertility”). She is shown next to her first husband, Balas, and actually occupying the foreground of the representation, her bust overshadowing his.²⁸ Twenty-five years later, on an issue of 125–121 BCE, Kleopatra, who was by then sharing the throne with her son by Demetrios Nikator, Antiochos Grypos, has him appear next to her on their dynastic coinage.²⁹ She is once again shown as the senior partner in their union, a practice later to be adopted by her namesake Kleopatra VII of the Ptolemies in relation to her own co-regents, first her brothers and finally her son.

At about the same time when Kleopatra was leaving her fatherland to marry Alexandros Balas, the jugate-busts scheme was being adopted by king Mithradates IV of Pontos for an exceptional silver issue, where he is shown next to his consort (and possibly also his sister) Laodike.³⁰ The busts, conventionally showing the king in the foreground, are both draped and diademed, turning left in the Ptolemaic fashion. Brutal realism (Mithradates’ head in particular emphasizes his coarse features and facial hair) was a Pontic trait (initiated by this king’s predecessors, his father Mithradates III and brother Pharnakes I), here combined with a stately image, laden with political symbolisms. Impossibly, as was also the case with the coins struck

for Kleopatra Thea, the imagery suggests dynastic peace and stability even if those rulers' actual careers demonstrated anything but.

Farther afield, Eukratides I, who ruled the kingdom of Baktria between c. 171–155 BCE, chose a jugate depiction of his parents, Heliokles and Laodike, as a royal couple for the obverse of an exceptional silver tetradrachm he issued.³¹ As the ruling king, Eukratides is shown diademed on the reverse, self-identified as a *basileus* and as “great” (*meγas*). Intriguingly, only Laodike is shown diademed next to her bareheaded husband. It seems that, in this coin too, the jugate-busts scheme retains its state symbolism: the couple apparently constituted Eukratides' claim to the throne (possibly because Laodike was a Seleukid princess or the widow of a previous king) and their presence on their son's coinage most likely carries a clear political symbolism. Later on, the scheme would also be adopted on the coinage of the Greek kingdoms of India, namely by Strato (c. 130–75 BCE) shown next to his mother Agathokleia (who ruled as regent while he was still a minor),³² and by Hermaeus (c. 75–55 BCE) shown next to his consort, Kalliope.³³

Back in Alexandria, the jugate-busts type had last appeared in a revival of the *Theon Adelphon* octodrachms in gold, by Ptolemy V in the very beginning of the second century BCE.³⁴ The type then disappears from Ptolemaic coinage, only to re-emerge in Egyptian seals from the later second and earlier first century BCE. Official seals and signet rings generally do not survive; we do however possess some crucial, and massive, finds of clay seal-impressions from the Hellenistic and early Roman worlds.³⁵ The so-called Edfu Hoard of clay seal-impressions preserves several interesting Ptolemaic portrait types, including some jugate-bust depictions (even some triple-jugate busts).³⁶ Identification is hindered by the lack of inscriptions, the relatively bad state of preservation of most surviving sealings, and the fact that images of the late Ptolemies, as well as those of their consorts, are not otherwise known from coinage or sculpture. As the preponderance of recognizable male and female portraits from the Hoard, however, seems to point to the period from Philometor to Kleopatra VII, the Hoard is usually dated to the timeframe between the 180s and the 30s BCE, with some earlier and perhaps later inclusions.

An interesting practice emerging from the study of the Hoard is the tendency to portray the consort of the king (ruling, recently deceased, or ruling on her own) in the guise of Isis, and the extent to which these depictions suggest actual deification.³⁷ The jugate-busts scheme is also used to portray Sarapis and Isis, in the example set by the use of the type in Philometor's coins, as discussed above (p. 000).³⁸ In an additional number of sealings, however, we find joint depictions of Ptolemaic couples (where the man is either beardless or only slightly bearded, therefore he cannot be Sarapis; see Figures 30.3 and 30.4).³⁹

These show the ruling couple in all its dynastic glory: the busts are always draped, and some female ones appear to be veiled; pharaonic insignia are carried by men and women alike (*atef* crowns for the kings, horns-and-disk crowns for their consorts, alluding to Isis and, secondarily, Hathor); the men, in particular, also wear Ptolemaic dynastic headdresses, such as elephant scalps (alluding to Dionysos and Alexander himself), falcon headdresses (alluding to Horus), or the occasional *agis* (a shawl-like mantle lined with snake-heads, typical of Zeus; cf. Figure 30.4). As the rings that created those impressions were worn by state officials—Alexandria bureaucrats, most likely, in correspondence with the indigenous priesthood ruling Edfu at the time—the depictions offer, quite expectedly, duly authorized, explicitly designed state imageries communicating the regime's political ideology and underlining its stability. Although we are in no position to identify those men and women with any degree of certainty,⁴⁰ we can be positive that we are looking, collectively, at images of Kleopatras I, II, and III next to their male consorts (Ptolemies V, VII, VIII, IX, and X); some others, on the other hand, and most notably Kleopatra VII, are more readily recognizable, either on their own,⁴¹ or next to their co-rulers. Although the later second and earlier first centuries BCE were times of relentless dynastic strife and

Jugate images



Figure 30.3 Clay seal-impression from Edfu; Ptolemaic couple, late second / early first century BCE
Source: Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum inv. no. 906.12.193. Photograph by [Dimitris Plantzos](#)



Figure 30.4 Clay seal-impression from Edfu; Ptolemaic couple, late second / early first century BCE
Source: Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum inv. no. 906.12.196. Photograph by [Dimitris Plantzos](#)

catastrophic civil war for Egypt, the stately depictions appearing on the signet rings enlist the image of the ruling, and also divine, couple in order to promote an official image of stability and power.

An exceptional representation of this category, though not one coming from Edfu, shows a deified female bust in Isis/Hathor costume and carrying an Ammon horn superimposed over the bust of a boy-king wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt.⁴² The woman has invariably been called “Kleopatra I” on the basis of her resemblance to Kleopatra’s very rare coin portraits, to which some further sealings have been compared. The accumulation of divine attributes is striking, especially for a royal person who does not seem to have been deified during

her lifetime. It might be possible to accept the image as a joint depiction of Ptolemy Philometor (“the mother-loving king”) alongside his mother, who also acted as his regent (which would mean she is depicted after her death in 176 BCE), though this might be unprovable.

From Mark Antony to the Julio-Claudians

In a world where kingship lay at the epicenter of politics, the jugate-busts scheme was easy to establish. Even when Hellenistic kingdoms succumbed, one after the other, to Rome—a polity gradually evolving into an empire governed by a family closely resembling a Hellenistic dynasty—the motif’s potent symbolism was unmistakable. Roman diplomats and generals were in close contact with the Hellenistic East from the early second century BCE on; their dealings with Egypt, in particular, uneasy and distrustful as they were, created nonetheless waves of “Egyptomania” back in Rome now and then, scandalizing the conservative though inspiring others.

A number of artifacts adopting the jugate-busts scheme in the Julio-Claudian period confirm this observation. Predominant among them are the so-called Cameo Gonzaga now in St Petersburg and the Cameo of the Ptolemies in Vienna.⁴³ Also known as “grand cameos” based on their exceptional size (15.7 cm and 11.5 cm high, respectively), the two pieces have long excited the imagination of scholars, collectors, and art enthusiasts at large. Regrettably, they both lack a reasonably secure archaeological and historical context, and we seem to know more about their post-antique afterlife than the actual conditions of their make and use.⁴⁴

Scholarly tradition persistently associates the two grand cameos with the early Ptolemies, variously recognizing in them portraits of Ptolemy Philadelphos and Arsinoë or, posthumously, Alexander and Olympias (and the plaster cast discussed on p. 000 has often been associated with them). And this has been so, even if there is no reliable evidence to suggest that cameo-cutting was practiced prior to the mid-second century BCE.⁴⁵ Even stylistically, the two cameos seem to belong to the early first century CE rather than the early Hellenistic period. Their iconography seems obscure to us, however: their heavily idealized features seem imaginary rather than portrait-like, so it might be more reasonable to argue that whoever these personages are, they are not meant to be living at the time the two cameos were created (in which case the identification of the Cameo Gonzaga in St Petersburg with a posthumous portrait of Alexander next to a much more idealized female bust might not be altogether impossible). A third “grand” cameo, today in Berlin, also carries a similar depiction of a royal or imperial couple.⁴⁶ The man on this one has been recognized as Caligula next to a female member of the Julio-Claudian family; some scholars have also dated the other two cameos to around Caligula’s time.

Even though, in our present state of knowledge, we are unable to date the three cameos securely and identify those portrayed in them with any degree of plausibility, we must conclude that they are early imperial rather than early (or even late) Hellenistic. Although deriving from Hellenistic prototypes (and the flashy originals from which the Edfu sealings came may have provided a strong model), the three cameos cannot be placed in the Hellenistic East, where royal portraits were much more individualized. The three cameos might well represent Julio-Claudians, or even Alexander himself next to a heavily idealized Olympias, a representation not unknown in Augustan art, including gem-cutting.⁴⁷

The jugate-busts scheme was also introduced to late republican and early imperial coinage. Mark Antony’s cistophori depicting his portrait alongside the bust of his wife Octavia are demonstrably influenced by similar depictions on Ptolemaic coins and seals.⁴⁸ Octavia is shown here not as a *basilissa*, of course, but as a semi-regal consort, whose presence in the life of Antony and depiction on his coinage carries a deep political significance (given her familial relationship to

Octavian). This is made even more explicit with the so-called “fleet bronzes,” struck across the eastern Mediterranean, some of which feature the jugate heads of Antony and Octavian facing Octavia’s bust.⁴⁹ The jugate heads of the two politicians here suggest alliance and Octavia’s bust facing them, in recognition as it were, seems to be standing as a symbol of the familial ties between the two men, as guarantor, once again, of stability, peace, and prosperity.

This practice was continued under the Julio-Claudians. Female members of the imperial family are often featured on their coinage, sometimes in jugate depictions with their husbands—a practice also noticeable on the engraved gems of the period.⁵⁰ An interesting feature of these coins is that, as a rule, male heads appear truncated (following a Hellenistic tradition most notable with the Seleukids of Syria) whereas females are represented as draped busts (as with the Ptolemies).⁵¹ The iconographical disparity is striking, and may be attributable to the combination of two different, though equally strong, visual traditions. A good example is the cistophori issued by Claudius, where he is shown next to Agrippina the Younger (facing left).⁵² The two heads are impressively cut, with deep characterization of their likeness and physiognomy. Agrippina was also featured on the coinage of her son, Nero, during the first years of his reign, when she was still able to exert considerable political influence over him.⁵³ Later on, after Agrippina’s death, Nero included Poppaea Sabina in his coinage following the example of Mark Antony; in one of his provincial issues, from Ephesos, the pair are shown in the jugate-busts scheme, Nero as a truncated head and Poppaea as a draped bust.⁵⁴

A cornelian intaglio from a private collection in England portrays a Roman emperor, most likely Nero, next to the conjoined bust of a woman (Figure 30.5).⁵⁵

Following the precedent set by Roman republican and imperial coinage, the gem shows the man’s truncated head, with the cut immediately beneath the neck-line already practiced by the Antigonids, the Seleukids, and other Hellenistic monarchs, whereas the woman is portrayed in full bust, veiled. Nero is crowned with a laurel wreath, while his companion seems to be wearing a *stephane*. The Ptolemaic overtones in composition and style are unmistakable, even



Figure 30.5 Cornelian intaglio. Imperial couple (Nero and Poppaea?); c. 62–65 CE
Source: Private collection. Photography by Bob Wilkins

though the man is obviously characterized as a Roman ruler. If he is truly meant to be Nero, then he looks too old to have been paired with Agrippina, and his wife Poppaea Sabina presents herself as a plausible alternative. The Ephesos coin mentioned above (p. 000) may have provided the model for this gem, which might well have been cut in the Hellenistic East. An iconographical debt—though one of significant political symbolism—seems thus to have been repaid.

Conclusions

The jugate-busts scheme was devised in the Ptolemaic court under Philadelphos, in the early third century BCE. The representation of the conjoined busts of the ruling royal couple, as well as their predecessors, was meant to emphasize dynastic unity, stability, and prosperity. The scheme is most noticeable on coins and seals, though its diffusion in antiquity must have been wider, including sculpture and toreutics. In it, royal women appear as guarantors of peace in the realm and the well-being of their subjects through their double role as consorts of the ruling king and, more often than not, mothers of the next one. When they are ruling on their own, they often choose to be portrayed next to their siblings or sons, thus reversing the emphasis on familial ties. Adopted by the Romans, both of republican and imperial times, the scheme carries most of its original political symbolisms even though historical circumstances have changed. Busts of Roman women appear once again conjoined to those of their husbands or sons on coins or gems as an indicator of social order and political strength.

It is these political connotations that made the jugate-busts scheme a strong political symbol and guaranteed its survival during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. And even after the Ptolemies, the Seleukids, or the Julio-Claudians had long ceased to exist, the type was revived, once again on coins and medals, by royals across Europe or even political figures in America (suffice to mention, here, as an example, the Monroe Doctrine Centennial half dollar struck by the USA Mint in 1923, bearing jugate depictions of former US Presidents James Monroe and John Quincy Adams, which however failed to impress critics, if we are to judge by Cornelius Vermeule's dismissive view that the piece was "an aesthetic monstrosity," "a bad pun in art").⁵⁶ In most other cases, however, a politically charged pairing, usually a royal marriage, remained the point of the depiction, as is evident, for example, in the coins and medals issued during the joint reign of William of Orange and Mary II of England, Scotland, and Ireland between 1689 and 1694.⁵⁷ Struck in gold, silver, or bronze, the monumental issues emphasize the couple's union, as if to drive the point of their "Glorious Revolution" closer to home. At a time when reigning over England was at least as precarious as ruling over Ptolemaic Egypt or Seleukid Syria, Queen Mary (who was, in fact, senior to her husband in the line of succession) revives an old iconographic precedent, laden with political meaning and ideological authority, as a means of establishing her rule in the face of war abroad and rebellion at home, not to mention threats from her own family. At once intimate and authoritative, the jugate depiction of the royal couple seemed to carry the same political substance in the London of the 1680s as in the Ptolemaic Alexandria of the third century BCE.

Notes

- 1 See Koenen 1983; 1993; also Hölbl 2001: 90–123, and Pfeiffer 2016 for an overview.
- 2 Hölbl 2001: 95, 171, 285–8; cf. IJsewijn 1961: 119–21; Pestman 1967: 134–57. See also Green 1990: 145, 180, 190; and Chapter 9 in this volume.
- 3 Cf. Frandsen 2009. See Chapter 29 in this volume.

- 4 See Heinrichs 2017.
- 5 See, chiefly, Kyrieleis 1975: 6; Troxell 1983; Mørkholm 1991: 101–11; Plantzos 1999: 42–54; Carney 2013: 78–80. For a recent overview of Ptolemaic portraiture and its significance, see Queyrel 2019.
- 6 Some of the figures on the Parthenon frieze, for example, like the advancing *peplophoroi*, seem to be setting a telling precedent (see e.g. Boardman 1985: fig. 96.15), or many of the figures on burial reliefs (as on the gravestone of Lykeas and Chairedemos from Salamis; Boardman 1985: fig. 152).
- 7 See, among many examples, the seated couples in the banquet scene depicted in the wall-painting from the Tomb of Nebamun in Egypt (Thebes); Parkinson 2008: 56.
- 8 Smith 1988: 34.
- 9 On the intricacies of deification of Ptolemaic royal women, see Carney 2000: 33–40, with earlier bibliography.
- 10 See Troxell 1983; Mørkholm 1991: 103; Carney 2013: 78–80. A recent re-examination of the series revives an old, and rather farfetched theory, according to which Arsinoë's portrait on the second-century issues of the type is modelled on the actual likeness of the actual *basilissa* at the time, taking this to suggest an "assimilation," successively, of Kleopatras I, II, and III to her, something not corroborated by any existing evidence, historical or other (Lorber 2018).
- 11 Kyrieleis 1975: 78–94; Brunelle 1976: 10–29; Plantzos 1991–92; for images, see, e.g. Mørkholm 1991: nos 294–5; Stanwick 2002: no. 215.
- 12 Images: Mørkholm 1991: no. 307; Stanwick 2002: no. 217.
- 13 Plantzos 1999: 47–52.
- 14 E.g. Mørkholm 1991: nos 297–8.
- 15 Ibid.: 104; see also von Reden 2007: 50–6.
- 16 Alexandria, Greco-Roman Museum inv. no. 24345. See Kyrieleis 1975: 6–7; Plantzos 1996: 122–3 (with earlier bibliography); *La gloire d'Alexandrie* 1998: 79 no. 37 [Queyrel].
- 17 See Plantzos 1996.
- 18 Mørkholm 1991: 109; pl. 317.
- 19 See Plantzos 1999: 82–3.
- 20 Plantzos 1999: 27, 25 fig. 1.32. Alternatively, the seal may be showing a royal couple, as the old drawing of it I was able to consult seems quite unclear on the male bust's features.
- 21 Plantzos 1999: 82 n. 125.
- 22 London, British Museum inv. no. GR 1865.7–12.55. Boardman 1970: 362, pl. 1011; Plantzos 1999: 82–3; Walker and Higgs 2001: no. 35; Plantzos 2011: 402, 409 fig. 4.
- 23 Plantzos 1999: nos 367–74.
- 24 E.g. Plantzos 1999: 83 no. 375.
- 25 *La gloire d'Alexandrie* 1998: 244 no. 181 [Ballet].
- 26 Mørkholm 1991: 152, pl. 522.
- 27 Davis and Kraay 1973: 215–19 figs. 108–15. Other female members of the Seleukid dynasty using the scheme were Laodike IV next to her son Antiochos (see Ager and Hardiman 2016: 145 fig. 1) and Kleopatra Selene, also next to her son Antiochos XIII (see Ager and Hardiman 2016: 170). For an overview, see Meyer 1992/93.
- 28 Green 1993: 442–7 fig. 143; see also Meyer 1992/93: 114–25, and Ager and Hardiman 2016: 169–71 for a recent discussion.
- 29 Davis and Kraay 1973: figs. 110–11; 115; Mørkholm 1991: 177, pl. 635.
- 30 Davis and Kraay 1973: figs. 204, 206; Mørkholm 1991: 175, pl. 624.
- 31 Davis and Kraay 1973: 238–9, figs. 146–7, 149.
- 32 Davis and Kraay 1973: 247–8, figs. 168–9, 172.
- 33 Davis and Kraay 1973: 249, figs. 176–7, 179.
- 34 Mørkholm 1991: 110, pl. 327.
- 35 See Plantzos 1999: 22–32 for a survey; also Bousac and Invernizzi 1996 for individual studies.
- 36 See Lorber and van Oppen de Ruiter 2017 for a recent account; see also Plantzos 1996a; 1999: 27–8; and 2011 for study and interpretation. The sealings were affixed onto papyri presumably sent from Alexandria to Edfu or signed and sealed locally; the documents were destroyed by fire at some point in antiquity, and the "baked" sealings were thus preserved in order to be found in the early 1900s, by looters, who sold them to western collectors.
- 37 See Plantzos 1996a; 2011; *contra* Lorber and van Oppen de Ruiter 2017 and van Oppen de Ruiter and Lorber 2017, who seem to be placing too much emphasis on what they understand as "stylistic criteria" and not enough on historical evidence or probability.

- 38 See, e.g. Plantzos 2011: figs. 2b and 2c.
 39 See, e.g. Plantzos 2011: figs. 2d, 2e, 2f, 8, 9; 1996a: pls. 48.5–6, 49.8, 49.10–11, 50.16, 52.21–2.
 40 On the problems of identification and chronology, see Plantzos 1999: 27–8; 1996a.
 41 E.g. Plantzos 1996a: pls. 53.28–9; Walker and Higgs 2001: no. 176.
 42 See Plantzos 1996a: 309, pl. 48.5.
 43 See chiefly Plantzos 1996b: 123–7 with extensive discussion and bibliography.
 44 Cf. Brown 1997.
 45 See Plantzos 1996b: 127–30.
 46 Platz-Horster 1997; also cf. Plantzos 1996b: 127–8.
 47 Kyrieleis 1971: 178.
 48 Burnett et al. 1992: no. 2202; see also Woytek 2014: 55–6, fig. 27.
 49 E.g. Burnett et al. 1992: no. 1463.
 50 See Zwierlein–Diehl 2007: no. 613 (Augustus and Livia?); no. 624 (Tiberius and Livia?), and so on.
 51 See the discussion in Woytek 2014.
 52 Burnett et al. 1992: no. 2224; see also Woytek 2014: 56, fig. 29.
 53 Sutherland 1984: Nero 6–7.
 54 Burnett et al. 1992: no. 2230.
 55 See Plantzos 1993.
 56 Vermeule 1971: 165.
 57 See Pincus 2011; for an example of William and Mary’s jugate coinage, see British Museum 2019.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient authors, works and document collections are those found in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (online at <https://oxfordre.com/classics/page/abbreviation-list/>).

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