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EXTRAIT

FEMALE PORTRAIT TYPES FROM THE EDFU HOARD OF CLAY SEAL IMPRESSIONS

A hoard of about 600 seal impressions was allegedly found « in a large pot at Edfu » in the winter of 1905-6. It was subsequently split into two lots by an Egyptian dealer who then proceeded to sell the first to C. T. Currelly of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. The other part was acquired by W. F. von Bissing who bequeathed it to the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam. There can be little doubt that the two collections are part of the same find : they are almost equal in size, 330 sealings in Toronto and 317 in Amsterdam, and they present remarkably similar seal types. Although unique ones appear in both collections, they seem to have been evenly shared, and when a seal is represented by more than one example care seems to have been taken for their equal distribution between Toronto and Amsterdam.

The date and function of the hoard remains a matter of speculation. As with other archives of papyri documented today solely by the clay sealings that once secured their privacy, the content of the now lost manuscripts can only be conjectured ; the fact that the hoard was illicitly excavated obscures research furthermore. Milne's original assessment is still valid in its main points (MILNE 1916). His interpretation was widely assisted by Murray's earlier study of a particular class of seal devices amidst the Toronto hoard, those with hieroglyphic inscriptions or symbols with a native Egyptian character (MURRAY 1907). Amongst the 118 sealings in all depicting 56 different « Egyptian types » there are several cartouches of individuals, but only one can be read as that of Ptolemy IX Soter II (ruled 116 - 106 BC). Murray recognised the remaining cartouches as those of priests of Isis and Hapi and conjectured that they belonged to members of the priesthood of Isis at Philae. Accordingly, she dated them (with the rest of the hoard) in the later Ptolemaic period, and more particularly after the great rebellion during the reigns of Philopator and Epiphanes which led to their losing control over Upper Egypt for a long period (207-187 BC).

The larger iconographical group in the Edfu hoard, accounting for 80% of the find, is the « Greek » and « Greek-Egyptian » one : one third of these impressions are genre or drawn from Greek and Greek-Egyptian mythology, while the rest are portraits, mostly royal, depicting members of the Ptolemaic family. The preponderance of royal portraits is a striking feature of the hoard, emphasising a strong connection of the Edfu archive with Ptolemaic administration. Although Milne recognised a

complete series of Ptolemaic portraits in the hoard, it is more likely that only the later kings of the dynasty are represented. The cartouche of Soter II giving a safe chronological indication, we would be correct to assume that the bulk of the archive consists of documents from the later Ptolemaic period. Some of the portraits have been recognised as of Ptolemy Soter, and a few more types may be found in Amsterdam (cf. **fig. 1, pl. 48**). His presence is expected in later contexts, being the founder of the dynasty. Ptolemies IV and VI may also appear, whilst several portraits of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (Physkon) can be recognised from comparison with his distinctive portrait on his coinage (cf. **figs. 12 and 13, pl. 50**). Ptolemy XII and Kleopatra VII (on the latter more below) are also identifiable, and a number of younger heads should portray Kleopatra's brothers, Ptolemies XIII and XIV, as well as her son, Ptolemy XV Kaisarion (MAEHLER 1983, 8 ; KYRIELEIS 1988, 456). A large number of unidentified portraits in both the Toronto and Amsterdam parts of the hoard presumably belong to the intervening Ptolemies IX-XI, but are difficult to identify owing to lack of coinage from that period (PARLASCA 1978 ; KRUG 1978). Several female portraits also exist, attributable to the female members of the dynasty, mainly Kleopatras II and III, both wives of Euergetes II at various times. The switches of power between the break of 132 BC and the general amnesty granted by Euergetes II and the two Kleopatras in 118 BC must have been reflected in the seal devices employed for the Edfu documents. The quality of the best among the Edfu seals is comparable to that of the finest Ptolemaic coinage (cf. **figs. 2 and 3 ; 5-6 and 7, pl. 48 ; 12 and 13, pl. 50 ; and so on**). The iconographical, but also stylistic and technical proximity of seals and coins suggests that they were mostly produced in the same centre and — presumably — by the same craftsmen.

To recapitulate on a provisional conclusion for the Edfu hoard of seal impressions, the archive to which the sealings once belonged seems to have consisted of correspondence between Philae and the Ptolemaic administration in Alexandria ; this must have taken place from some time in the reign of Ptolemy Epiphanes until after the death of Kleopatra VII (GRIMM 1970). More evidence should come from Amsterdam, and it is hoped that the presentation here of some of the female types from that part of the hoard will be a contribution in that direction. The present author is currently preparing the publication of the hoard as a whole.

KLEOPATRAS IN AMSTERDAM

The portrait of a young lady wearing a wide diadem and long earrings appears on a single sealing in Amsterdam (**fig. 2, pl. 48**). It seems to be the only female portrait in Edfu, with the single exception of Kleopatra VII, not to be adorned with Isiac insignia. Her hair is done in a knot at the back of her head, kept in its place by a large pin. The bands of her diadem are seen falling down the neck. The sealing invites comparison with the coin portrait of Kleopatra I of Egypt, wife of Ptolemy Epiphanes and mother of Ptolemy Philometor, appearing on the obverse of a unique gold octodrachm in the British Museum (KYRIELEIS 1980, 17-20 ; **fig. 3, pl. 48**). The type is different here, following that of the earlier Ptolemaic queens, and notably that of Arsinoe Philadelphos in her posthumous coin

issues. Kleopatra was not a Ptolemy herself, she was a Seleucid princess, therefore one expects her to adopt the standard « Ptolemaic » portrait type in her coinage, while in the same time, as has been already noted, not to display any particular Ptolemaic features in her physiognomy (KYRIELEIS 1980, 18).

The sealing illustrates exactly the same facial features as the coin : long, well shaped eyes, rather pointed nose, small lips, protruding chin, light jowl, and thin neck. If her sole depiction on the sealing indeed suggests that Kleopatra was ruling at the time of its use, then it can be dated between the death of her husband, Ptolemy Epiphanes, in 181 BC and her own death in 176 BC, during which period Kleopatra was regent of Egypt. This is the date of the British Museum octodrachm, with Ptolemy Philometor, Kleopatra's son, appearing as a youngster on the reverse (**fig. 4, pl. 48**).

This mother-and-son couple has been convincingly recognised in a unique in many respects clay sealing in the National Museum in Athens (BOUSSAC 1989, 327-332 ; **fig. 5, pl. 48**). The bust of the queen, in a Hathor-Isis costume to which an Ammon horn has been added, is here superimposed on that of the boy, wearing the double crown. Boussac has dated the seal to the time of Kleopatra's regency, contemporary with the British Museum octodrachm and perhaps the Amsterdam sealing as well. The three portraits belong to different types, but their facial features are remarkably close.

A female portrait very similar to that in **fig. 2** appears on another sealing, showing the jugate busts of a royal couple (**fig. 6, pl. 48**). The queen is not clearly shown, but does not seem to have been given any divine attributes. The king is not deified either ; he is wearing a chlamys and a diadem, the bands of which are depicted falling down his shoulder. He is recognised as Ptolemy Epiphanes, as suggested by comparison of the sealing to his coin portrait (**fig. 7, pl. 48**). One notes in particular the short hair framing the man's forehead, the small eyes and small but rather pointed nose. Furthermore, this is a young couple, and their depiction as such is confirmed by Ptolemy and Kleopatra's respective ages : they were both at their late twenties on Ptolemy Epiphanes' death, Kleopatra being in her early thirties when she died in 176. Therefore, the seal must date before 181 BC.

Kleopatra II became the wife of Ptolemy Philometor when they both were quite young, and married Ptolemy VIII after Philometor's death in 145 BC. Her partially preserved portrait may be seen next to that of Ptolemy Philometor on another sealing in Amsterdam (**fig. 8, pl. 49**). The king, mainly recognised by his strong, curved nose and long chin similar to his coin portraits (cf. **fig. 9, pl. 49**), is depicted on the sealing wearing the traditional double crown. The headgear of the queen next to him is not discernible, she seems nonetheless to have been wearing at least a stephane. However, another representation of a royal couple clearly represents the queen as Isis, wearing a miniature Disc-and-Horns crown, next to a king with eagle headdress (**figs. 10-11, pl. 49**). The seal is represented in both the Toronto and Amsterdam parts of the hoard. None of the examples preserving the type is quite clear, it looks however as if the king is Ptolemy Physkon, with fleshy face, heavy jowl, swollen eyes and « pinched » nose, as can be seen on his coinage (**fig. 12, pl. 50**). The same king appears on another of the Amsterdam sealings in traditional Pharaonic dress and headgear (**fig. 13, pl. 50**). It seems therefore safe to assume that the rather fleshy female portrait on these sealings is that of Kleopatra II, appearing next to Ptolemy Philometor (**fig. 8**) and Ptolemy Physkon (**figs. 10-11**), her successive husbands. One should note how a technical mannerism of Philometor's portrait, namely

drilling round the nostrils in order to indicate them by means of a hole, a feature that gives to the nose a blocked, « asthmatic » effect, is also used for Physkon in both his coin and seal portraits. The same technique is used for the nose of Kleopatra on the sealing.

The uncertainty over the portrait types of Ptolemies IX-XI has been mentioned above. The Amsterdam sealings do not seem to add much to this discussion. Only types already known from Toronto can be found here. The most convincing view has been put forward by Maehler (1983, 10). According to this view, the two commonest male portrait types in Edfu (**figs. 14-15, pl. 50**) have to represent Ptolemy IX Soter II and Ptolemy X Alexandros I. Further identification is not possible, and is indeed pointless. For convenience, the slimmer type (**fig. 15**) will appear here as « Ptolemy IX Soter II » and the plumper one (**fig. 14**) as « Ptolemy X Alexandros I ».

A king with an eagle headdress appears next to a queen in one of the Edfu sealings (**fig. 16, pl. 50**). The king's face is not preserved, and he might well be Physkon (cf. **figs. 10-11**), or indeed « Ptolemy IX Soter II ». What can be certain however, is that the female portrait, with the emphatically pointed and « pinched » nose and heavy jowl, as well as the big, swollen eyes, is a quite different one from what we have seen so far. Therefore, she must be one of the other Kleopatras, most likely Kleopatra III, wife to Physkon and co-ruler to her son, Soter II, or one of the latter's wives, Kleopatra IV or Kleopatra Selene. This however becomes an indeed tedious task. More significant remarks can be made towards the quite frequent representations of Ptolemaic queens in the guise of Isis.

ISIS BUSTS

Several of the queens seen in joint representations with their husbands (cf. **figs. 10-11, 16, 21-22**) are depicted wearing the Isiac crown. At the same time, the kings in the same representations do not display any obvious divine attributes ; instead, they are depicted in a range of royal headgear (eagle or lion headdress in **figs. 10-11, 16, 21** and elephant scalp in **fig. 22, pl. 52**). A large proportion of the Edfu sealings bear single representations of Isis. Two types can be roughly distinguished, the simpler, « Greek » type (cf. **fig. 17, pl. 51**) and a fuller, « Egyptian » one, where insignia and attributes are clearly and completely shown (**fig. 18, pl. 51**). Although these heads have been widely accepted as portraits of Ptolemaic queens in the guise of Isis, this remains highly speculative. It is true that the Isis heads from Edfu show features that could be seen as « individual », and some, like the bust in **fig. 18**, display stylistic mannerisms met with the portraits. Nonetheless, this evidence is not conclusive.

Isis busts became extremely popular in Ptolemaic glyptic of the later 2nd and early 1st century BC (cf. **figs. 19-20, pl. 51**) ; some of them might have been portraits of the ruling queen, or indeed treated as such by their owners. On the other hand, the only certain representations in glyptic of Ptolemaic queens in the guise of Isis are those in the joint representations of royal couples. The process of assimilation of a living Ptolemaic queen with Isis, as indeed the whole pattern of the deification of the Ptolemies, was not straight forward and for the historian is difficult to follow.

Generally, a simple adoption of attributes and epithets would eventually lead to the full identification of the queen with the divine personality chosen (FRASER 1971, 236). Isis, being related to Osiris, the god of the underworld, was herself furnished with chthonic attributes and powers. No living Ptolemaic queen seems to have been accepted into the Isiac cult before Kleopatra I. Arsinoe Philadelphos was prominently connected with Isis after her death (THOMPSON 1973, 64-72). In later periods prompt identification of the living queen with Isis was not seen as a problem. The case of Kleopatra I is more delicate: her youthful depiction on a number of faience oinochoai is a likely representation of the queen as Isis, but it may well be a posthumous one (THOMPSON 1973, nos. 123 and 276). The Benaki sealing (**fig. 5, pl. 48**) offers positive evidence on Kleopatra's appearance as Isis-Hathor, a deification emphasised by the addition of the Ammon horn over the ear, in the manner of Arsinoe Philadelphos' coin portrait. It cannot be used, however, to suggest that other youthful Isis busts are also portraits of Kleopatra I. At any rate, the frequency of the Isis busts in a corpus of seals with an obvious Alexandrian connection suggests their significance for Ptolemaic imagery. The types are specific, their content however seems to have been loose enough so as to accommodate several explanations and perhaps multiple functions. It looks as if, for Ptolemaic glyptic as well, content lay pretty much in the eye of the beholder.

A more accessible piece of evidence is provided by a sizeable series of joint representations of Isis and Sarapis (**figs. 23-24, pl. 52**). The type was invented by the Ptolemies and served their royal imagery throughout their history. Although such representations on rings are widely taken to be representations of Ptolemaic couples, it would yet seem clear that it is just the Isis heads on such depictions that resemble the portrait types for Ptolemaic queens seen here. Both sealings in **figs. 23 - 24**, for example, display some of the features already met with the portraits of Ptolemaic queens from the hoard (cf. **figs. 10-11, 16, 21-22**). The representations of Sarapis remain general and non-individual, faithful to their « Father-God » model, therefore they do not seem to be portraits of royalty. During the years of dynastic strife in Egypt, when the Kleopatras were constantly fighting against their husbands, brothers and sons, the cult of Isis seems to have been gradually identified with the person of the queen or the queen mother.

It seems therefore probable that portraits of the Kleopatras in the guise of Isis were employed in Ptolemaic state seals next to Sarapis. It would be impossible to identify each one of them with a particular queen, but the general type is that employed for queens after Kleopatra I: the faces look quite fleshy and chubby, the features are harsh, ugly even, and exaggerated. Several versions of this type appear in statues and statuettes of the period, many of which have been plausibly identified with one of the later Kleopatras (KYRIELEIS 1975, nos. M1-M12). Some glyptic works can find their place here as well.

A gold ring in the British Museum (**fig. 25, pl. 52**) represents Sarapis in his traditional, Zeus-like attire, next to an Isis very similar to some of the Ptolemaic queens in Isiac costume we have seen so far (cf. **figs. 10-11, 16, 21-22**). This resemblance stands out more than with other glyptic examples of the same type, and — it would seem — of the same date (MARSHALL 1915, no. 95).

Similarly, a cameo in the Content Collection (**fig. 26, pl. 53**) presents the same type of female figure, queen or goddess is not certain, because the gem was re-cut and the attributes removed or modified. It seems quite certain, nonetheless, that the male figure was wearing a modius once, in which case the couple would be recognised as Sarapis and Isis. Its stylistic relationship with the seals

represented in Edfu makes it likely that the cameo was cut and used in Alexandria (HENIG 1990, no. 86).

Finally, a sardonyx cameo in the Hermitage (**fig. 27, pl. 53**) presents technical and stylistic features met in the Edfu sealings. The mouth has been worked in exactly the same way, by means of a deep line between the lips, and a hole drilled at its end, as with the Content cameo (**fig. 26**), producing the same effect as several of the Edfu sealings. The shaping of the nostrils is similar to that employed for the portraits of Philometor and Physkon, but also the Kleopatras after the Ist. And, quite significantly, the eye is detailed by means of a double engraved line and heavy eye-brow, as seen in several of the sealings from Edfu (cf. **fig. 22, pl. 52**).

KLEOPATRA VII

To conclude with the last Kleopatra. Her tight, clean-cut portrait, deprived — apart from a diadem — of any regalia or divine insignia, is easily identified on several of the sealings of the hoard (cf. **figs. 28-29, pl. 53**). The Amsterdam part offers several examples of types already known from Toronto. Kleopatra's coin portraits facilitate the identification of these sealings (**fig. 30, pl. 53**). The Republican version of Kleopatra's portrait, employed in the coinage of Marc Antony and in issues that the pair struck outside Egypt (**fig. 31, pl. 53**), seems to have never reached Edfu. Its stern, firm and austere look, influenced by trends in Republican portraiture current at the time, would have been rather inappropriate for use by the Alexandrian bureaucrats.

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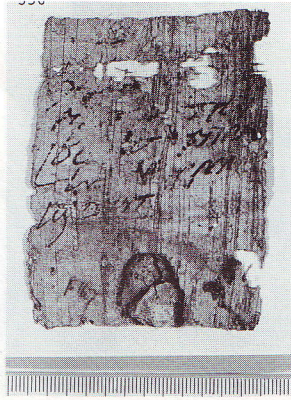


Fig. 9. — Customs house receipt from the Fayum, bearing a seal below the text (211 A.D.).

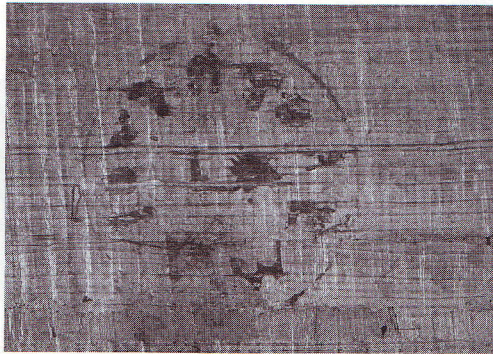


Fig. 10. — Red stamp on the verso of a Ptolemaic bank receipt (78 B.C.).



Fig. 11. — Stamping object of white limestone, preserving traces of red ink (5/6 A.D.).



Fig. 1. — Ptolemy I Soter. Clay seal impression, Amsterdam. Fig. 2. — Kleopatra I. Clay seal impression, Amsterdam. Fig. 3. — Kleopatra I. Gold octodrachm (Alexandria), British Museum. Fig. 4. — Ptolemy VI Philometor. The obverse of Fig. 3. Fig. 5. — Kleopatra I and Ptolemy Philometor. Clay seal impression, Athens. Fig. 6. — Ptolemy V Epiphanes and Kleopatra I. Clay seal impression, Amsterdam. Fig. 7. — Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Gold octodrachm.



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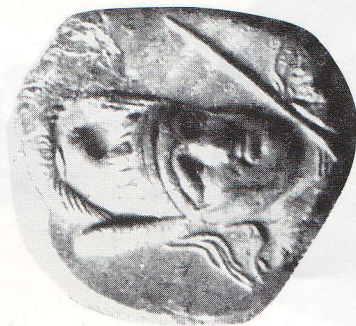
Fig. 8. — Ptolemy VI Philometor and Kleopatra II. Clay seal impression, Amsterdam. Fig. 9. — Ptolemy VI Philometor. Silver hemi-drachm (Alexandria 138/7 BC), Athens. Fig. 10. — Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (Physkon) and Kleopatra II. Clay seal impression, Amsterdam. Fig. 11. — Other example of Fig. 10 (Amsterdam).



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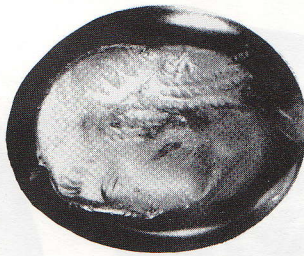
Fig. 12. — Ptolemy VIII Physkon. Silver didrachm, New York, American Numismatic Society. Fig. 13. — Ptolemy VIII Physkon. Clay seal impression, Amsterdam. Fig. 14 — « Ptolemy X Alexandros I ». Clay seal impression, Toronto. Fig. 15. — « Ptolemy IX Soter II ». Clay seal impression, Toronto. Fig. 16. — « Ptolemy IX Soter II » and queen. Clay seal impression, Toronto.



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Fig. 17. — Isis bust. Clay seal impression, Amsterdam. Fig. 18. — Isis bust. Clay seal impression, Toronto. Fig. 19. — Isis bust. Peridot ringstone, Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery. Fig. 20. — Isis bust. Cornelian ringstone, once in London, the Ralph Harari collection.



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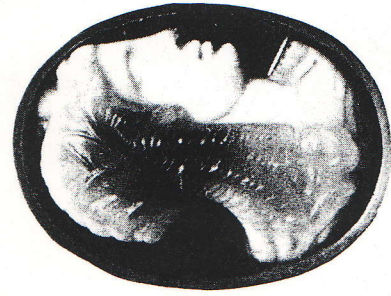


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Fig. 21. — Ptolemaic Couple. Clay seal impression, Toronto. Fig. 22. — Ptolemaic Couple. Clay seal impression, Toronto.
Fig. 23. — Sarapis and Isis. Clay seal impression, Amsterdam. Fig. 24. — Sarapis and Isis. Clay seal impression, Amsterdam.
Fig. 25. — Sarapis and Isis. Gold finger ring, British Museum.



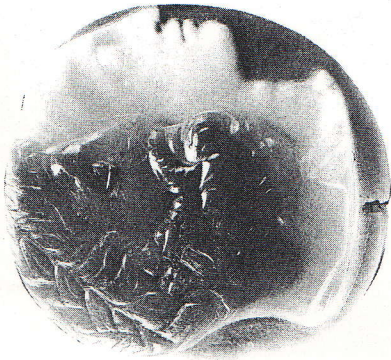
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Fig. 26. — Sarapis and Isis. Cameo, from the Content Family Collection. Fig. 27. — Isis bust. Cameo. St. Petersburg.
Fig. 28. — Kleopatra VII. Clay seal impression, Toronto. Fig. 29. — Kleopatra VII. Clay seal impression,
Amsterdam. Fig. 30. — Kleopatra VII. Silver tetradrachm (Askalon 39/8 BC). Fig. 31. — Kleopatra VII. Silver
tetradrachm (? Antioch 37 BC).