CLAUDIUS’S ISSUE OF SILVER DIDRACHMS IN ALEXANDRIA
EMPEROR’S CHILDREN AND CROSSED CORNUCOPIAS

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In the third year of Emperor Claudius’s reign (AD 42/43) the Alexandrian mint issued a silver didrachms with the motif on the reverse of crossed cornucopias surmounted by confronted busts and a third bust in the middle (Fig. 1).1 The busts above the cornucopias have been attributed to the emperor’s daughters: Claudia Antonia and Claudia Octavia, daughters of Aelia Paetina and Valeria Messalina, his second and third wife respectively. The third bust facing right was the youngest of the siblings, Britannicus, son of Claudius and Messalina. The large upper part of each cornucopia has a profiled edge, the lower part is decorated with two spreading leaves. The inscription under the bust of Britannicus, between the cornucopias, AYTO/KPA, is typical of legends on coins of Claudius minted in Alexandria. The obverse bears a bare head of Claudius turned to the right and the legend TIB KAY KAI CEBAC ГЕПМ; the date in front of the head is L Г. The issue, considered as ‘experimental’ and known from a few dozen specimens (Tab. I), coincided with the issue of silver drachmas depicting a bust of Serapis on the reverse.2

The representation on the reverse side of the didrachms is paralleled closely by that on the reverse of undated copper coins minted by Patras in Achaea (Fig. 2).3 The main difference is the presence on the Alexandrian coins of the bust attributed to Britannicus in left and not right profile. On the coins of Patras the upper edge of each cornucopia is framed with two clusters of grapes and small globules (drawing unclear below the bust on the right side) to indicate fruit of some kind or perhaps a pinecone or a poppy head. The lower parts of the cornucopias were left plain. The text above the busts reads LIBERIS; below, between the cornucopias AVG; at the bottom, below the cornucopias COL A A P. On the obverse, the bust of Claudius is shown turned to the left and accompanied by the legend TI CLAVDIVS CAESAR AVG GERM. The children’s busts on the coins from Patras are more distinct and apparently better crafted, although this effect may be due to a better impression of the die on preserved examples. The number of registered specimens is approximately the same as the number of preserved Alexandrian didrachms.


Tab. 1. Alexandria, Claudius’s didrachms, year 3 (AD 42/43).

<table>
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<th>No</th>
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<th>Diam (mm)</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>6.64</td>
<td>18.5</td>
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<td>Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Münzkabinett, Löbecke Collection (TRILLMICH, Familienpropaganda, Pl. 15.16)</td>
<td>6.40</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Alexandria, Kom el-Dikka, Polish Archaeological Mission Excavations 91/91 (unpublished)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lewis Collection (Catalogue de monnaies romaines antiques composant la collection de H.C. Lewis, vente de Lucerne, le 18–20 juin 1925. Naville &amp; Cie., Ars Classica XI, Genève 1925, p. 23, No 352, Pl. 15; cf. HORNBOSTEL, Serapis, p. 346, n. 4)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

* indicates specimens listed in RPC I (see above, n. 1).

* indicates diameter taken from photographs in publications.
The representations on Claudius’s coins may have taken after a design on imperial sestertii struck in the reign of Tiberius in AD 22–23 (Fig. 3). The anepigraphic obverse of the coins shows crossed cornucopias bearing confronted children’s busts and a winged caduceus between them in the center. A cluster of grapes, probably topped by a pinecone, can be seen by the top edge of each cornucopia facing the caduceus; the cluster of grapes (?) on the opposite side appears to be smaller. The bottoms of the cornucopias are globular in shape.

The busts emerging from the cornucopias are attributed to the emperor’s grandsons: Germanicus and Tiberius Gemelli, born in AD 19, sons of Tiberius’s only son Drusus Minor and Julia Livilla, who was a daughter of Antonia Minor and Drusus Maior, a sister of Claudius. On the reverse, which bears a large S C in the centre, the legend refers to Drusus Minor, who in AD 22 shared tribunitian authority with Tiberius. It was a senatorial issue, dedicated to the ruling family and introducing symbols of prosperity in association with the young members of the domus imperii.

A similar representation occurred on the reverse of coins of Antiochus IV of Comagene (AD 38–72), but this time the crossed cornucopias flanked an anchor with a star.
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above (Fig. 4). It is not clear whether the lower part of the cornucopias were decorated with leaves. On some specimens there are small globules, positioned by the upper edge, to the right and left of the busts, A legend, ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΥΙΟΙ, indicates, that the heads upon the cornucopias and facing each other represented the ruler’s sons. The reverse bears a representation of a tiara and an ethnikon, all in a wreath. The issues were not dated. The presence of the symbol between crossed cornucopias suggests Tiberius’s coins as a prototype. Claudius’s issues could have supplied another stimulus.

The principal difference with regard to the composition of Claudius’s coins is the replacement of the symbol between the cornucopias with a third bust. Its presence is undoubtedly important despite the lack of attribute. It takes the position of the winged caduceus, a symbol of peace and concord, on Tiberius’s coins.

Britannicus was born in AD 41, barely a month after Claudius took power, and from the start was groomed to be his heir. Claudius had refused the Senate’s move following the conquest of Britain to bestow on him the title of Britannicus, wishing instead that his son bear it; thus Tiberius Claudius Caesar Germanicus became Tiberius Claudius Caesar Britannicus. Claudius strived to ensure his popularity, while going to great measures to demonstrate family unity. Several mints produced coins depicting Claudius’s children together: their busts or three standing figures. On coins of Caesarea Paneas, Antonia and Octavia are shown holding big cornucopias, which established a frame for the representation. This composition refers to the iconography of imperial issues as well, in this case the sestertii of Caligula showing his three sisters.

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5 RPC I, p. 573, No 3860, ΚΟΜΜΑΓΗΝΩΝ and p. 574, No 3867, ΛΑΚΑΝΑΤΩΝ, Pl. 148; p. 542, No 3536, ΛΥΚΑΟΝΩΝ, Pl. 141.
6 Suet. Claud. 27.
8 RPC I, p. 243, No 1033, Pl. 57; p. 383, No 2248, cf. p. 382, Pl. 100; VAGI, Coinage II, p. 273, No 647; IMHOOF-BLOOMER, NumZ VIII, 1915, p. 89; see also head of Britannicus on the obverse with standing Octavia and Antonia on the reverse, RPC I, p. 559, No 3656, Pl. 144; VAGI, Coinage, p. 273, No 647; p. 274, No 651.
9 RPC I, p. 554, No 3627, Antonia as daughter of Messalina by mistake, Pl. 144; BMCRE I, p. 199, No 242; RIC I, p. 132, No 124, Pl. 17.
10 RPC I, p. 670, No 4842, Pl. 175.
The cornucopia, an attribute of Tyche, Plutos, was introduced on coins by the Ptolemies and it is they who combined it as well with a radiate crown of Helios, turning the two into their symbolic regal insignia. Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–205 BC) commemorated his father, Ptolemy III Euergetes, with gold octodrachms bearing his portrait in a radiate crown on the obverse, associated with a cornucopia which was bound with a fillet and surmounted by a radiate crown on the reverse.12 The cornucopia was filled with fruit of the earth with only one cluster of grapes hanging by the upper edge of the cornucopia. This design was copied by the young Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–181 BC), who ordered a self portrait in radiate crown on the obverse, adding a star right and left to the filleted cornucopia, surmounted by a radiate crown on the reverse.13 Overlapping cornucopias bound with a fillet had appeared earlier on gold octodrachms, struck around 253/252–246 BC by Ptolemy II Philadelpus for his sister-queen Arsinoe, who had died about 270–269 BC.14 The ornament on the double cornucopias was the same as on a single one, that is, tiny leaves and dots symbolizing a flowering bud, a lotus perhaps. The two horns overflowed with edibles including a single cluster of grapes from each one of them. Representations of overlapping cornucopias with common bottom, dikeras, characteristic of coins and other Ptolemaic art forms, spread to outside Egypt as well.15 This specific composition is embodied perfectly by a marble sculpture from Rodos depicting a dikeras placed on a throne.16

A different composition, that is, two opposing cornucopias emerging from a single flower bud at the bottom appeared around 160–140 BC in Lebedos in Ionia. An owl standing on a club was shown between the cornucopias (Fig. 5).17 Each horn was bound with a fillet and was filled with fruit of the earth and a single cluster of grapes hanging from each

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13 SNG. Cop. Ptol., No 196; MEADOW, ASHTON, [in: ] Walker, Higgs (Eds), Cleopatra, p. 84, No 73.


15 Also on coins of the Seleucids, cf. L. ANSON, Numismata Graeca. Greek coin-types classified for immediate identification IV, London 1913 [= Numismata], Pls IV–VIII; see infra, n. 31; JACOBSON, Significance, p. 147, Fig. 4.

16 CH. PICARD, Un monument rhodien du culte princier des Lagides, BCH LXXXIII, 1959, pp. 409–413, Fig. 1, Pl. XXIII.

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one, in front of the owl. Lebedos, which had been named Ptolemais for a certain time (226–190 BC), issued earlier coins with overlapping cornucopias in the field, following the Egyptian pattern.\textsuperscript{18}

The motif of opposing cornucopias became a regular feature in the repertoire of Jewish coins, starting with the issues of John Hyrcanus (154–134 BC).\textsuperscript{19} Herod (40–4 BC) and his heirs from the Herodian dynasty borrowed it from the last of the Hasmonean kings, Antigonus II Mattathias (40–37 BC).\textsuperscript{20} On Jewish coins there was an additional symbol between the cornucopias: either a pomegranate, palm branch or winged caduceus. On some examples the cornucopias appeared not so much to spring from a common bottom as to be supported on a globular fruit(?), this being notable especially on the coins of Antigonus II Mattathias.\textsuperscript{21}

This kind of representation could have been the source of inspiration for denarii of Marcus Antonius struck after the treaty of Brindisium, around 40 BC.\textsuperscript{22} The Second Triumvirate gave him authority over the Eastern provinces and it cannot be excluded that the mint workers moving with him suggested an iconography based on known compositions.\textsuperscript{23} The winged caduceus here was flanked by two cornucopias, the bottoms of all three elements being placed on a globe.

Yet another representations appeared earlier on the coins of the Seleucids. A design of cornucopia bifurcated at about mid-height can be seen on some coins of Antiochus VII

\textsuperscript{18} A. Dieudonné, Ptolémæis Lebedus, \textit{JIAN} 5, 1902, pp. 45–46, 50–52, Pl. IV.18–21.
\textsuperscript{21} Meshorer, Treasury, p. 220, No 38B, Pl. 43.
\textsuperscript{23} The circumstances of this issue have been interpreted in different ways, cf. Möbius, Alexandria p. 41; Crawford, RRC I, p. 743, n. 1; Jacobson, The Significance, p. 153. No comments have been offered in the present text on the historical background of each issue, the iconographic analysis having all but exhausted the limits of space set for this volume.
Euergetes (132/1–131/0 BC). Each arm contained fruit, whereas the bottom was decorated with a globular shape. Alexander II Zebinas marked his short reign (128–123 BC) with issues depicting not only overlapping, filleted cornucopias with a single cluster of grapes, following Ptolemaic design, but also images of two interlaced cornucopias bound with a fillet. Similarly as in representations of the Ptolemaic dikeras, one cluster of grapes is hanging of each cornucopia (Fig. 6). Antiochus VIII Epiphanes (125–121 BC) revived the representation of overlapping cornucopias bound with a fillet.

The issue of Alexander II Zebina may have inspired the iconography of Nabataean coins. A design of crossed cornucopias appeared on the coins of Obodas III (30–9 BC); it became established in the rule of Aretas IV (9 BC–AD 40). On several specimens a pomegranate or caduceus was placed between the horns. Each cornucopia was bound with a fillet. Ptolemaic iconography evidently influenced the obverses of coins struck by Aretas IV carrying representations of jugate busts of the ruler and his wife. The wide diffusion of Nabataean coins may have been instrumental in popularizing the motif in the East. In similarity to Jewish coins, some Nabataean coins also showed the motif of parallel cornucopias.

On small bronzes of the first century AD from the Ascalon mint crossed cornucopias can be seen with an ear of corn(?) between them. In turn, some coins of a Roman client, the Judaea Kingdom, dated to AD 15 and 16, bore crossed cornucopias with a caduceus in the centre or just crossed cornucopias. On coins minted by Agrippa I in AD 40/41 in Caesarea Paneas, which were graced with a bust of young Agrippa II and the inscription ΒΑΣ ΑΓΡΙΠΠΑ ΦΙΛΟΚΑΙΣΑΡ on the obverse, the crossed cornucopias seem to be filleted.
at the point of the crossing.\textsuperscript{34} Crossed cornucopias were included among the themes of Roman provincial coin designs as well. One of the earliest issues is apparently that of Gadara, a Decapolis town; it is dated to \textit{AD} 28/29.\textsuperscript{35}

It is not clear where bronzes of Tiberius with a design of a winged caduceus between crossed branches and crossed cornucopias on the reverse were struck (possibly in Commagene).\textsuperscript{36} This coinage, dated around \textit{AD} 19–20, could have constituted an easily available model for die engravers, who prepared the Roman issue with crossed cornucopias surmounted by busts of twins in \textit{AD} 22–23.

Crossed cornucopias as an image were known in Roman art already in the reign of Augustus, as attested by a cylindrical altar from Bagnacavallo.\textsuperscript{37} The decoration of a sarcophagus of one Flavia Ianuaria constitutes another example from the early Principate.\textsuperscript{38} The motif was featured on gems as well.\textsuperscript{39}

The cornucopia, both single and double, played an important role in Augustan propaganda of the \textit{aurea aetas}. It could be read as alluding to the return of happier times, of which Virgil wrote in his Eclogue IV.\textsuperscript{40} A cornucopia or two cornucopias were added to Octavian’s zodiacal sign, the Capricorn, shown often carrying a rudder and globe. In some representations the symbols were combined to show crossed cornucopias with the bottom ending in a Capricorn head as, for example, on an altar found in Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, Inv. No 108521,\textsuperscript{41} and an altar now in Bologna, decorated with an upright winged caduceus between crossed cornucopias, the upper parts of which have not been preserved.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{34} RPC I, p. 683, No 4979, Pl. 180.
\textsuperscript{35} RPC I, p. 667, No 4813, Pl. 174.
\textsuperscript{36} BMCRE I, pp. 144–145, Nos 174–176, Pl. 26.11; RIC I, p. 100, Nos 89–90, Pl. 13; RPC I, p. 574, Nos 3868–3869, Pl. 148; T.V. BUTTREY, Vespasian’s Roman Orichalcum: An Unrecognised Celebratory Coinage, \textit{in:} Jacobson, Kokkinos (Eds), Judaea, pp. 165–166, Fig. 2.
The rich repertoire of representations connected with Augustus in the glyptic arts includes gems depicting crossed cornucopias with bottoms ending in a Capricorn head.\(^{43}\)

In turn, the representation of Octavian’s bare head between opposing cornucopias on some cameos from about 44–40 BC recalls the composition on the reverse of denarii struck by Marc Anthony; on other, less numerous cameos, the portrait of the future princeps senatus stands between crossed cornucopias.\(^{44}\) On an altar dedicated to the deceased Augustus, Palestrina, Museo Nazionale, Inv. No 23555, his portrait was flanked by two cornucopias surmounted with poppy heads supporting the ends of a garland framing the bottom and sides of the tondo containing the portrait, once in a corona radiata.\(^{45}\) The divine Augustus was honored also with a bust crowned with a corona radiata on a globe surmounting a cornucopia held by a woman with diadem and veiled head (Antonia Minor?). This small image on a sardonyx gem, London, British Museum, Reg. No 1814,0704.1 (Fig. 7),\(^{46}\) illustrates perfectly the concept of the divine nature of the deceased princeps.

A facing head attributed to Tiberius, heir and adopted son of Octavian-Augustus, placed between crossed cornucopias, found on a bronze plaque from a belt (cingulum), Stuttgart, Landesmuseum Württemberg, Inv. No R 66.73 (Fig. 8),\(^{47}\) attests to the application of the motif in combination with a member of the ruling family.

Rome undoubtedly borrowed the symbolism of the cornucopia from the Ptolemies, but in this case failed to use the drawing of overlapping cornucopias with common bottom, which was typical of siblings in power, or even the cornucopias siding with one another, as on some Jewish and Nabataean coins.\(^{48}\) Crossed cornucopias were not conceived as a frontal depiction of a Ptolemaic dikeras\(^{49}\) – they were an entirely different composition


\(^{44}\) VOLLENWEIDER, Die Porträtgemmen, Katalog und Tafeln, p. 89, Nos 11–12, Pl. 147; MADERNA-LAUTER, Glyptik, pp. 452–453, 466, No 245.


\(^{48}\) Cf. supra, n. 31.

\(^{49}\) Cf. HORNBOSTEL, Sarapis, pp. 344–345, who like PICARD, BCH LXXXIII, p. 420, believes that the motif of crossed cornucopias originated from Alexandria; CH.B. ROSE, Dynastic Commemoration and Imperial...
selected from among a few known designs. This image appeared on coins struck in different Eastern mints earlier than those of Tiberius and definitely earlier than those of Claudius, depicting crossed cornucopias with children’s busts. Placing the symbol between cornucopias is proof of their intentional opposing arrangement. Compositions featuring a portrait in the centre, which were not used on coins however, demonstrate it just as well.

Contrary to representations of two overlapping cornucopias, the crossed cornucopias motif, was known, but never popular in Egypt. From Egypt there is a unique ivory piece with a depiction of crossed cornucopias (lower parts missing) surmounted by busts of Serapis and most probably Isis (head missing), Paris, Musée du Louvre, Inv. No MND 2083 (Fig. 9). The piece has been dated either to the middle of the second century BC (J. Charbonneaux) or to the second century AD (H. Jucker), the latter suggested also by W. Hornbostel as the more probable date. Dating of the piece based on elements of the


50 Unfortunately, terms used in the writing on the subject are frequently misleading, e.g. J. Charbonneaux, Sarapis et Isis et la double corne d’abondance, [in:] Hommages Waldemar Deonna, Collbatomus XXVIII, Bruxelles 1957 [= Sarapis], p. 138, ‘la double corne d’abondance’ regarding the object in the Louvre (cf. infra, n. 52), and p. 139, regarding Gemma Claudia, cornucopias ‘entre-croisées’, eagle in the center; cf. supra, n. 32.


52 G.J.F. Kater-Sibbes, Preliminary Catalogue of Sarapis Monuments, EPRO 36, Leiden 1973, p. 42, No 248, referred to as a scepter, Fig. 361.


image and analysis of style is difficult for it could be Hellenistic as well as Early Roman. It may be juxtaposed with much later representations from southern Gaul, in which a single cornucopia held by Tyche (Fortuna)-Isis\textsuperscript{55} and Mercury\textsuperscript{56} was topped by busts of the gods. It could have been a bifurcated cornucopia as in the case of the so-called Tyche from Mâcon,\textsuperscript{57} but it should be emphasized that it was not a case of crossed cornucopias. One can add to this group of Tychai (Tutelae) a bust between two cornucopias or above crossed cornucopias,\textsuperscript{58} considered by H. Jucker as deriving from Alexandrian art.\textsuperscript{59}

Like the coins of Tiberius, so the coins of Claudius did not show the reigning king-god and his spouse for whom the dikeras motif was adopted\textsuperscript{60} hence the different composition of the cornucopias. The absence of a fillet on the coins of Tiberius and Claudius argues in favor of interpreting the ribbon on the Ptolemaic dikeras as a royal diadem. A symbol of this sort could not be seen on a representation of a possible future princeps.

One observes in the representations of crossed cornucopias surmounted by busts components derived from both Graeco-Roman\textsuperscript{61} and Eastern, including Egyptian, models.

Representations of busts of young members of the imperial family manifested the continuity of the dynasty and the benefits deriving from this. They recall representations of busts of Serapis and Isis(?). Claudius’s coins are the only ones in the series of monetary images of busts with crossed cornucopias to depict three busts and in any case, the cornucopias support girls’ busts. Naturally their role in dynastic politics was different from that assigned to the male progenitors. Their marriage and offspring were of importance, as was their loyalty to the ruler, understood to be Britannicus once he would have become the princeps. The message emphasized harmony and fertility. Claudius struck his coins especially for the inhabitants of Achaea, a province he valued in particular,\textsuperscript{62} and Egypt, the religion and art of which was spreading and inspirational also for official Roman art. Britannicus was placed between his sisters, as in the figural representations on coins.\textsuperscript{63} This

\textsuperscript{55} Berl., Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Inv. No Fr. 1988, S. BOUCHER, Recherches sur les bronzes figurés de Gaule pré-romaine et romaine, BEFAR 228, Paris-Rome 1976 [= Recherches], p. 150; LICHOCKA, L'iconographie, p. 55, n. 336; p. 58, with n. 348, Fig. 507.

\textsuperscript{56} H. GRAILLOT, Mercure panthée. Bronze gallo-romain d’Autun, RA 3\textsuperscript{e} sér. XXXVII, 1900, pp. 220–237, Pl. XII; BOUCHER, Recherches, p. 125, Pl. 47, No 213.

\textsuperscript{57} London, British Museum Reg. No 1824.0424.1, 4.-24.1, buried after AD 260, H.B. WALTERS, Catalogue of the Silver Plate (Greek, Etruscan and Roman) in the British Museum, London 1921, pp. 9–10, No 33, Pl. V; PICARD, BCH LXXXIII, 1959, p. 425, Fig. 8; S. WALKER, Roman Art, London 1991, p. 70, Fig. 88; BOUCHER, Recherches, p. 125, Pl. 55, No 264; LICHOCKA, L'iconographie, p. 34, cornucopia described as a double one, Fig. 518.

\textsuperscript{58} PICARD, BCH LXXXIII, 1959, p. 427, Fig. 11; BOUCHER, Recherches, p. 152, Pl. 56, Nos 267–268.

\textsuperscript{59} JUCKER, Bildnis, p. 163; see Boucher’s reservations, BOUCHER, Recherches, p. 152.


\textsuperscript{61} A relief representing Mars holding a cornucopia with two boys sitting on the top, Cleveland, Museum of Art Reg. No 1925.947, has not been taken into consideration, L. POLLAK, Mars Ultor, ÖJh XXVI, 1930, pp. 137–139; a forgery according to CH. BAUCHENESSI-THÜRIEDL, Das Marsrelief in Cleveland und die Ikonographie des Mars Ultor, AKorrBl 8, 1978, pp. 45–49, Pl. 10; cf. E. SIMON, s.v. Ares/Mars, LIMC II, 523, No 146; cf. JUCKER, Bildnis, p. 153, n. 5.

\textsuperscript{62} Suet., Claud. 42.

\textsuperscript{63} See supra, nn. 9–10.
bust of a child destined to become a ruler, therefore a special child, in the company of sisters whose nature was special as well considering their position upon the cornucopias, manifested their combined role for the good of the Empire.

Children were not an accepted theme on coins of Ptolemaic Egypt. Cleopatra was the only one to depict the child, Caesarion, with her own portrait on bronze coins minted probably in Cyprus. Busts of Ptolemaic princes with agrarian symbols, which M.-L. Vollenweider interpreted as associated with Dionysos or Ploutos, occurred on glass cameos dated to the third century BC. They may have been intended as gifts announcing future kings, presenting them as a symbol of prosperity, ensuring an annual revival of nature. Roman representations of children belonging to the imperial family depicted with crossed cornucopias could have carried a similar message.

Graeco-Roman Egypt preserved the rebirth-cult tradition, manifested in particular by houses of birth, the mamisis. The king was an incarnation of Harpokrates. In this fashion his position was legitimized. Images on a lotus, even if only of the head, symbolized the

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64 A. Meadow, S.-A. Ashton [in:] Walker, Higgs (Eds), Cleopatra, p. 178, No 186; cf. Rose, Dynastic Commemoration, p. 13; Lichocka, Il ruolo, pp. 208, 210, Fig. 13.
66 See wooden head of a young king on lotus flower found in Tutankhamon’s tomb, Cairo, Egyptian Museum JE 60723, J. Yoyotte, Les jeux des enfants et des adolescents en Égypte, DossArch 168/2–7, 1992, p. 2; Jucker, Bildnis, pp. 180–181, 190, Fig. 75; Schwentzel, Reutilisation, p. 500.
birth and resurrection of the sun god and the ruler as well. Harpokrates shown on a lotus flower, which was replaced in a sense by the acanthus of Graeco-Roman times, embodied the idea of a repeated life cycle. Busts, sometimes on a sheaf of corn, appeared next to figural representations. Busts of Serapis and Isis were also shown on the acanthus, as was the triad of Osiris, Horus and Isis. Serapis flanked by Isis and another female bust, Harpokrates between Isis and Serapis. These representations were especially typical of stone votive vessels. The busts of another triad, that is, Harpokrates between Isis, the two shown on an acanthus leaf springing from a chalice, and her sister Nephthys, depicted upon another chalice without leaves, decorated a gold finger ring, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Inv. No 56.504 (Fig. 10).

Another possible source of inspiration, this time of Greek origin, cannot be overlooked. A red-figured hydria from the fourth century BC presents an image of the newly born Ploutos,
Claudius’s Issue of Silver Didrachms in Alexandria ...

the Divine Child of the Eleusinian Mysteries, on a horn of plenty, which Ge hands to Demeter (Fig. 11). There is neither fruit nor ears of corn springing from the cornucopia, as it is Ploutos who embodies everything the cornucopia has to offer. The representations of busts upon cornucopias on Alexandrian coins is close to this ‘convention’.

The child in the iconography of Nilus, leading to Graeco-Roman Egypt, also comes to mind. A Roman copy of a type presumably created in Hellenistic Alexandria, Rome, Musei Vaticani, Braccio Nuovo, Inv. No 2300, shows a reclining god accompanied by 16 figures of children, one of which emerges from among fruit of the earth filling a cornucopia. A small statue of a reclining Nilus with a single child figure (preserved lower part) sitting on the top of a cornucopia, found in Sidi Bishr, Alexandria, and held in the collections of the Graeco-Roman Museum, Inv. No 29448, currently on display in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Antiquities Museum, Reg. No BAAM Serial T 0002, is probably closer to the original. A child seated or emerging from a cornucopia is present on coinage minted in Roman Alexandria starting from the reign of Trajan. A bust of Nilus with a cornucopia over his right shoulder had appeared earlier on coins of Claudius, AD 49/50, 50/51. The

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79 DATTARI, Nos 138–139, noted two cornucopias and ‘busto di genius’, Pl. XIX; JENTEL, Pécheis, 213, No 14, also EAD., Neilos, 724, No 60, describes cornucopias as crossed, figure of the child identified as ‘Péchus’.
design on the opposite side is not clear. A small naked torso can be discerned, but it is not clear on all examples whether a second cornucopia was actually depicted (Fig. 12).

This composition is close to an image on a sardonyx cameo, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet de médailles 277 (Fig. 13). A large draped female bust in the center is accompanied on the right by a cornucopia surmounted by a small boy’s bust and on the left by a second bust. The identification of these busts have raised great controversy. The attribution of the busts to Messalina, Britannicus and Octavia or to Livilla and her twin sons are but two of the proposed identifications. It has also been suggested that it was Agrippina Minor with a bust of Nero emerging from a cornucopia and dea Roma.
Regardless of which attribution is assumed there can be no doubt that the motif of a bust upon a cornucopia was an important motif in official art associated with the ruling family in the time of the early Principate.

The Gemma Claudia, which was made probably for the wedding of Claudius with Agrippina Minor in AD 54, today in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum AS Inv. No IX A 63 (Fig. 14), shows this even more distinctly.\(^8^3\) It depicts a pair of opposing cornucopias joined on the bottom, surmounted by busts of the emperor and his wife on one side and the esteemed parents of the new empress, Germanicus (Claudius’s brother) and Agrippina Maior (granddaughter of Augustus himself) on the other. Each pair of busts recalls the jugate busts of Serapis with Isis and Hellenistic rulers with their spouses, quite common since the issue of Ptolemy II Philadelphus showing Ptolemy I Soter with Berenike, accompanied by the inscription \(\Theta\varepsilon\Omega\varepsilon\), and of Ptolemy II with Arsinoe II and the inscription \(\Lambda\Delta\varepsilon\varepsilon\Phi\Omega\varepsilon\).\(^8^4\)

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\(^8^3\) MEGOW, Kameen, pp. 200–201, No A 81, Pl. 31; E. SIMON, Kunst und Leben in Rom um die Zeitenwende, München 1986, p. 83, Fig. 106.

\(^8^4\) SNG. Cop. Pot., Nos 132–133, 197–198; CHARBONNEAUX, Sarapis, Pl. XXVI, Fig. 1, Ptolemy IV; P. CALABRIA, A: *Capita Iugata*, [in:] CALABRIA, FINOCCHI, Le donne, [in:] Bonacasa et al. (Eds), Faraoni, pp. 179–183, 185, 190–191, Figs 1–7; cf. SCHWENTZEL, Reutilisation, p. 500; J.J. POLLITT, Art in the Hellenistic Age, Cambridge-New York 1986, p. 36, Fig. 28b, p. 171, Fig. 293; p. 24, Figs 11–12.
Claudius appears to have been commemorated with a portrait upon a cornucopia already in the times of Nero. This portrait bust, on a gem from the once Beverley collection, has the head in a *corona radiata* and was placed between ears of corn and poppy heads emerging from a cornucopia, of which only the top was depicted.

The significance of images of human beings shown on the top of a cornucopia is attested as well by a sardonyx cameo, London British Museum, Reg. No 1772.0314.112, showing Livia as Demeter/Ceres(?), sitting on a throne placed on a cornucopia filled with edibles.

Whether the issues of Alexandria and Patras were simultaneous and, if not, which mint preceded the other in striking the discussed type, cannot be ascertained today. It is not by chance that the images are so similar. The mints probably received instructions from some central authority, but it is not to be excluded that each mint prepared its own dies. The different treatment of the horn of plenty attests to this, as does the slightly different arrangement of the busts. Contrary to other issues depicting the emperor’s children, there are no names in the legends, just as Tiberius’s grandchildren’s names are absent from his sesterii. The idea perhaps was to imbue the image with a more universal character, as manifested on the coins of Antoninus Pius.

In AD 148–149 the mint in Rome took up again the motif of two busts of children upon crossed cornucopias to commemorate the birth of the twin boys of Faustina the Younger and

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85 Zwierlein-Diehl, Divus-Augustus-Kameo, pp. 44–45, Pls 13, 78.
86 Walters, Catalogue, p. 337, No 3580, Pl. XXXIX.
Marcus Aurelius Caesar (Fig. 15). Two ears of corn spring from each of the leaf-decorated cornucopias and between them there is a cluster of grapes seen on the surface of the horn. The legend, TEMPORVM FELICITAS, underscores the message of the composition.87

The motif of crossed cornucopias supporting busts was to return on provincial coinage, with an ethnikon in the legend. The bronzes of Tios (Paphlagonia) with a portrait of Julia Domna on the obverse, show crossed cornucopias topped by heads facing one another and a winged caduceus in between (Fig. 16),88 as on sestertii struck under Tiberius. Coins of Gallien,89 produced in Antioch in Pisidia, bear confronted busts slightly above the top of cornucopias, which are crossed so low that they appear to be joined (Fig. 17).*

(Translation: Iwona Zych)

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