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OCTAVIA AND CLEOPATRA AMONG RIVALS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this work follows the first suggestions made at the beginning of the studies of women in Antiquity, which is to seek, illuminate and to show that women exist in the past, in addition to raising a criticism of androcentrism of past time. In this way, this article will emphasize two women, Octavia and Cleopatra, who suffered different consequences for being in the middle of intrigues of Octavian and Mark Antony, registered through textual and material sources as well as coins exemplified here. The reconciliation between Antony and Octavian was sealed with the marriage of Octavia, Octavian's sister, to Antony. Cleopatra was characterized as a fatal influence and as an example not to be followed. In this perspective, it is through the problematics about women's current issues that this knowledge is sought in the past.

KEYWORDS: Women, Antiquity, Octavia, Cleopatra, Androcentrism.

ABSTRAIT

Le but de ce travail fait suite aux premières suggestions faites au début des études sur les femmes de l'Antiquité, c'est-à-dire chercher, éclairer et faire exister ces femmes du passé, en plus de soulever une critique de l'androcentrisme de l'époque. Ainsi, cet article mettra l'accent sur deux femmes, Octavie et Cléopâtre, qui ont subi des conséquences différentes pour avoir été au milieu des intrigues d'Octave et de Marc Antoine, qui ont été enregistrées à travers des sources textuelles et matérielles, ainsi que des pièces de monnaie illustrées ici. La réconciliation d'Antoine et d'Octave a été scellée par le mariage d'Antoine avec sa sœur, Octavie. Cléopâtre a été caractérisée comme une influence fatale et comme un exemple à ne pas suivre. Dans cette perspective, c'est à travers les enjeux de l'actualité des femmes que ces connaissances sont recherchées dans le passé.

MOTS CLÉS: Femmes, Antiquité, Octavie, Cléopâtre, Androcentrisme.

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RESUMO

A proposta deste trabalho segue as primeiras sugestões feitas no início dos estudos sobre as mulheres da Antiguidade, ou seja, procurar, iluminar e fazer existir essas mulheres do passado, além de levantar uma crítica ao androcentrismo de tal tempo. Dessa forma, este artigo enfatizará duas mulheres, Otávia e Cleópatra, as quais sofreram diferentes consequências por estarem em meio às intrigas de Otávio e Marco Antônio, que foram registradas através de fontes textuais e materiais, assim como de moedas exemplificadas aqui. A reconciliação de Antônio e Otávio foi selada com o casamento de Antônio com sua irmã, Otávia. Cleópatra foi caracterizada como uma influência fatal e como um exemplo a não ser seguido. Nessa perspectiva, é por meio das problemáticas acerca das questões atuais das mulheres que se busca esse conhecimento no passado.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Mulheres, Antiguidade, Otávia, Cleópatra, Androcentrismo.

INTRODUCTION

Gender studies in archaeology had been discussed since the mid-1970s, but it was with the work of Conkey and Spector, "Archaeology and the study of gender," from 1984, that this type of research began to grow, to present severe criticisms of androcentrism and emphasize the search for women in archaeological records and their contribution to the past (Voss, 2008; Bélo, 2014, p. 28). In 1991, there was also the publication of the work of Gero and Conkey, entitled "Engendering Archaeology: women and prehistory," which was influenced by feminist contributions from Anthropology (MESKELL, 1999). According to Wylie (1991), gender archaeology is divided into three parts: the first criticizes androcentrism; the second search for women, calling themselves, therefore, "the discovery of women," not only the prehistoric ones, but also the archaeologists, who were erased from our history; the third, finally, makes a fundamental reconceptualization (MESKELL, 1999; BELO, 2014, p. 28; BELO, 2018, p. 35).²

² Following the third feminist wave, gender studies related to age, sexual orientation and ethnicity began, bearing in mind that gender identity should have been conceived as something complex, classified by a network of meanings, varying from individual to individual along of time, joining other networks of symbolic practices located in the concepts of class and race. Hence, it was defined that female exploitation varies according to social class, race and ethnic division in which it is inserted (MESKELL, 1999; BELO, 2014, p. 29; BELO, 2018, p. 36).

Studies about the image of the ancient woman had their appearance in a timid way as a new subject, in 1962, through the work of Balsdon (1962). The feminist and revolutionary look came with the work “Goddesses, whores, wives and slave,” by Pomeroy, published in 1975. In 1980, despite all the excitement of the feminist movement, a large corpus of imperial portraits was organized, called “*Das römische Herrscherbild*,” in which the emperors had a long section, and their women were exemplified only at the end. Imperial women began to excel in academic work when Fittschen and Zanker (1986) published, in 1983, a catalogue of portraits of the people of Rome, in the Capitoline Museums of Rome, being the volume about women the first to be published. The year of 1996 was remarkable, considering that Barrett (1996) published the biography of Agrippina the Younger; Rose (1997) promulgated a study of imperial family groups while stressing the importance of women for dynastic transmission; and Winkes (1996) produced a monograph about Livia, Octavia the Younger and Julia. In addition, it is essential to mention that there was an exhibition about the imperial and ordinary women of Rome in the event called “I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome,” which portrayed the image of these women in material culture, including coins (WOOD, 1999, p. 3 - 4).³

The purpose of this work follows the first suggestions about women’s studies in Antiquity, which is to seek, enlighten and to show that women exist in the past, in addition to raising a criticism of androcentrism of that past time. Thus, this article will emphasize two women, Octavia and Cleopatra, who suffered different consequences for being amongst the intrigues of Octavian and Mark Antony, registered through textual and material sources, as well as coins that are exemplified here. This proposal is not disconnected from contemporary times, considering that it is through the current view, values, beliefs and behaviors experienced, and the problematics about women's current issues, that this knowledge is sought in the past. In this perspective, Shanks and Tilley (1992) emphasize that they are

³ Scott (1995) has demonstrated how the study of women is still being suppressed by the academy. Firstly, by the very exclusion, the scholar mentions that women are completely ignored due to the narratives of the Roman world, which were concentrated in activities in which men were dominant, such as politics in Rome and in the provinces. Second, the author states that there is a pseudo-inclusion, which women are included, but they only appear when they are anomalous to male norms. Third, inclusion occurs by alienation, when women are only considered in relation to men or when they threaten the male point of view as to their “correct” behaviour (SCOTT, 1995, p. 176 - 9). The difficulty is due to the Roman sources themselves, which were used to build hierarchies on an idealized discourse, instead of providing a true narrative that showed the lives of children, women or slaves. Like material culture, these sources are part of the meanings by which the Romans defined their “minorities” (REVELL, 2016, p. 2 - 3; BELO, 2018, p. 38).

aware that the reconstruction of the past is fundamentally located within the context of the present and that the policies and social issues of the present impact on the reconstruction of societies of the past (SHANKS & TILLEY, 1992; REVELL, 2016, p. 5).

OCTAVIA

After Fulvia's⁴ death and Antony's reconciliation with Octavian, the latter sees that a marriage between Antony and his half-sister, Octavia (69 B.C. - 11 B.C.), would be a way to seal their harmony. Octavia was older than Octavian and daughter of a previous marriage of their mother, Atia, to Anchoria. Plutarch characterized Octavia, widow of Gaius Marcellus, as a wonderful, beautiful, dignified and common-sense woman. Antony, on the other hand, never denied he had a strong connection with Cleopatra, although never admitted she was his wife. Plutarch made it clear that this relationship was not favorable, as he hoped the union of Octavia and Antony would set the restoration of harmony in the Roman world. The widow would have to wait ten months to remarry, but in this case the law was passed over to the occurrence of this marriage (PLUTARCH, *Life of Antony*, 31.1).

In her representations, Octavia identified herself with the role of a good mother, which was a characteristic to be celebrated by the empire. Her position, highly praised as a moral model, was not very elusive, since even coins with her image were minted only during Antony's life. In fact, the coins with their image were only minted in Eastern Greece (HARVEY, 2020, p. 39). Octavian built the *Marcellus* Theater in her name and to honor her son, and *Porticus Octaviae* as part of a policy of creating public places (BARRETT, 2002, p. 199 - 201). In addition, she was represented in coins minted to honor the union of her and Mark Antony, demonstrating that this junction represented the end of the disagreements between Octavian and Mark Antony.

⁴ Wife of Mark Antony before Octavia.



FIGURA 1: Tridrachma⁵, silver, 39 BC, Epheus (?), Turkey. On the obverse, there is the bust of Mark Antony next to the bust of Octavia, with the inscription: M ANTONIVS IMP COS DESIG ITER ET TERT (*Marcus Antonius Imperator Consul Designatus Iterum Tertium*⁶ = Emperor Mark Antony, Consul appointed for the third time⁷). On the reverse there is Dionysus on cista between two twisting snakes, holding a cup and leaning on thyrsus, with the inscriptions: III VIR R P C (*Triumvir Republicae Constituendae* = Triumvir of the Constitutional Republic for the third time⁸)⁹.
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In this tridrachma the figure of Antony is next to and superimposing that of Octavia. He is wearing an ivy crown, which associates him with his patron, the god Dionysus, who appears on the reverse standing on a cista, with a thyrsus in his left hand, flanked by two snakes entwined with upright heads. Octavia is at Antony's side, with part of her hair visible, and her position is secondary to her husband, in a portrait of positive Roman values (Harvey, 2020, p. 43). In addition, the figure of the couple on the obverse demonstrates the importance of unity, since this marriage would have brought together the relationship between Octavian and Mark Antony. Another element to take into account is the obverse inscription, M ANTONIVS IMP COS DESIG ITER ET TERT, which attributes values to Mark Antony and none to Octavia, as well as the legend to the reverse, III VIR, RP C. Octavia does not appear with characteristics related to goddesses, as Fulvia's representations previously distinguished her, as well as the figures of Livia in coins.

The figure of Octavia is clearly used in this coin and in others as part of a political agreement involving male political parties. In this sense, her image and marriage, confirmed by written sources, were not used for a particular tribute to her, but are inserted in a hierarchy of power marked by boasting an androcentric government.

⁵ Reference number: G.2206. Catalogue Number: RR2 (503) (136).

⁶ Available at: <https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces66597.html>, accessed in 27/10/2020.

⁷ Our translation.

⁸ Our translation, 16/08/2019.

⁹ Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_G-2206, accessed in 28/10/2020.



FIGURA 2: Dupondius¹⁰ copper alloy, 38 – 37 BC, Achaea. On the obverse, the busts of Antony and Octavia facing each other, with the inscription: M ANT IMP TERT COS DESIG ITER ET TER III VIR R P C (*Marcus Antonius Imperator Consul Designatus Iterum Tertium, Triumvir Reipublicae Constituendae* = Emperor Marco Antonio, Consul appointed for the third time, Third man for the Regulation of the Constitutional Republic¹¹). On the reverse, there are two ships sailing to the right; below, a denominational mark¹²; above, two Dioscuri¹³ caps and inscription: M OPPIVS CAPITO PRO PR PRAEF CLASS F C¹⁴ (*Marcus Oppius Capito Pro Prætoꝛe Præfectus Classis*).¹⁵
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In this coin, Octavia is not behind Antony, but in front of him, showing a status almost equal to that of male members of the family, suggesting that the couple were partners in marriage and politics. The coin was minted by an Achaea mint. This type of figure, in which couples are facing each other, aims to convey an ideology linked to the divine royal couple, as had already occurred in images of Hellenistic kings and their wives, such as the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. This figure is not only linked to Hellenistic traditions, but is also politically significant for Antony (HARVEY, 2020, p. 44).

By the Octavia figure in the coin, it appears that she is wearing a necklace, which contrasts with the first figures of women in coins that appeared without jewelry in Rome. However, the fact that it was minted in an unknown mint in Achaea may run counter to the rule that it was common for coins of real Hellenistic women to appear without jewelry. This aspect could link them to a divine character, since the goddess figures on coins always

¹⁰ Reference number: R.9565; Catalog number: RR2 (518) (159).

¹¹ Our translation with verification in: https://www.davidrsear.com/academy/roman_legends.html, accessed in: 27/10/2020.

¹² Greek inscription [B] and a number, two.

¹³ Indicates the Castor and Pollux twins gathered as stars in the sky by Zeus after Castor's death and considered patrons of athletes and sailors (Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Dioscuri#:~:text=%3A%20the%20twins%20Castor%20and%20Pollux,patrons%20of%20athletes%20and%20sailors>, accessed in: 30/10/2020).

¹⁴ Indicates the mint in which it was done.

¹⁵ Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_R-9565, accessed in: 28/10/2020.

appeared with jewelry (HARVEY, 2020, p. 49), as in the next coin, where the necklace is also evident.



FIGURA 3: Tressis¹⁶ (three asses¹⁷), 38 – 32 BC, minted in an uncertain place in Greece, possibly at a naval base in Piraeus. Obverse: Mark Anthony next to Octavian and facing Octavia, with inscription: M ANT IMP TERT COS DESIG ITER ET TER III VIR RPC (*Marcus Antonius Imperator Consul Designatus Iterum Tertium, Triumvir Reipublicae*¹⁸ *Constituendae* = Emperor Marco Antonio, Consul appointed for the third time, Third man for the Regulation of the Constitutional Republic). Reverse: M OPPIVS CAPITO¹⁹ PRO PR PRAEF CLASS FC²⁰ and three galleys sailing to the right²¹. Courtesy of the WildWinds

This last coin, with Mark Antony and Octavian facing Octavia, is the great proof of a political mark identified in this type of material culture. In this way, it can be interpreted that the combination of the three would be the demonstration of imperial peace and that the image of Octavia, once again, would be used for the benefit of her brother. According to Brubaker and Tobler (2000), when a “junior” emperor appears with the “senior” emperor, the woman must be left as a tertiary position, on the right side (BRUBAKER & TOBLER, 2000, p. 574). For Barrett (2002) this type of currency is seen as an innovation (BARRETT, 2002, p. 140) due to the appearance of the three figures.

¹⁶ Reference number: 1860,0328.250. Catalogue number: RR2 (518) (154).

¹⁷ A denarius would be equal than ten asses (donkeys) (Available at: <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/denarius#:~:text=Word%20Origin%20for%20denarius,WORD%20OF%20THE%20DAY>; accessed in: 06/10/2020).

¹⁸ Our translation with verification in: https://www.davidrsear.com/academy/roman_legends.html, accessed in: 27/10/2020.

¹⁹ Coin master: M OPPIVS CAPITO (VON HAHN, 2008, p. 43 e 96).

²⁰ Indicates the mint in which it was minted.

²¹ Available at: http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/imp/marc_antony/i.html, accessed in: 16/08/2019 and https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1860-0328-250, accessed in: 15/11/2020.



FIGURA 4: Tridrachma²², silver, de 39 BC, Ephesus (?), Turkey. On the observe, there is the bust of Antony, turned to the right, with ivy crown, lituus below, wrapped by ivy crown and flowers, with inscription: M ANTONIVS IMP COS DESIG ITER ET TERT (*Marcus Antonius Imperator Consul Designatus Iterum Tertium* = Emperor Mark Antony appointed as Consul for the third time). On the reverse, there is the draped bust of Octavia, turned to the right, on a cista, between snakes, with inscription: III VIR R P C (*Triumvir Republicae Constituendae* = Triumvir of the Constitutional Republic for the third time²³).²⁴ © The Trustees of the British Museum.

This last coin is an Ephesus tridrachma, which has a mystical cista on the reverse, and, like others similar to this one, exposes the couple with divine elements next to the mythological categories. Antony appears at times associated with Neptune, but the affinity with Dionysus is greater and better attested in art and literature. This silver tridrachma shows the connection of Antony and Octavia with Dionysus, showing the representation of religious symbols for the worship of the god. The bust of Antony is on the obverse with a crown of ivy and on the reverse is the bust of Octavia, in a smaller figure, on a mystical cista, also between serpents, which are sacred symbols of the representation of Dionysus. It could be an association of the god Dionysus and his companion, Ariadne, corresponding to Antony and Octavia, who is recognized by her hairstyle. The presence of Antony's name in coins marks him as a legal authority, while the absence of Octavia's name indicates that there would be no tribute to her. Although her image does not cease to represent that her figure was of socio-political importance, it also reveals that the Senate concession was restricted to promoting these women (HARVEY, 2020, p. 45 - 46).

According to Barrett (2002), this was a common type of figure used in the East in the Hellenistic period, when Octavia's portrait appears on the cista (BARRETT, 2002, p. 140). Octavia is once again in the background of the coin, taking into account that the reverse would be reserved for the less important figures. In addition, the captions do not even

²² Number of references: G.2204

²³ Our translation, 16/08/2019.

²⁴ Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_G-2204, accessed in: 28/10/2020.

mention her, contributing only to celebrate and characterize Antony, as evidenced in the next coin too:



FIGURA 5: Aureus, 38 BC, Roman Republic, with Mark Antony's face turned to the right, on the obverse, with the inscription: M ANTONIVS M F M N AVGVR IMP TER (*Marcus Antonius Marcus Filius Marcus Nepos Augur²⁵ Imperator Tertium* = Mark Antony, Mark's son, Mark's grandson, augur, Emperor for the third time). On the reverse is Octavia's face, turned to the right, with the inscription: COS DESIGN ITER ET TER III VIR R P C (*Consul Designatus Iterum Tertium Triumviri Rei Publicae Constituandae* = Appointed consul for the third time in the Triumvirato for the restoration of the government²⁶).²⁷ © The Trustees of the British Museum.

The coin, with Mark Antony on the obverse and Octavia on the reverse, marks the union of the couple. However, it shows, especially, the harmony between Antony and Octavian, due to the Pact of Brundisium, in 40 B.C., an alliance that marked the Second Triumvirate, which was a political agreement established through a matrimonial arrangement. The coin's inscription refers to Antony's political life, not establishing any relationship with Octavia, which demonstrates the expected ideal of female passivity in the face of the political ties established there. According to Harvey (2020), Octavia presents, in this coin, a nodus hairstyle, symbol of the status of the Roman matron, without any divine attribute, very close to the figures of Hellenistic women, whose objective was to demonstrate the promotion of family relationships. According to the style of Hellenistic women, the figures of Roman women, as well as Antony's women, such as Octavia and Cleopatra, could appear with some physical characteristics of their husband (HEKSTER, 2015; HARVEY, 2020, p. 41), but in no coin the name of Octavia is mentioned and it has no divine attributes (BARRETT, 2002, p. 140). The fact that in no caption the name of Octavia is written is a

²⁵ Mark Antony is imperator, augur and triumvir. Augur is the one who predicts, who recognizes omens. The adjective is derived from Augustus, consecrated by augure or under favorable auguries (Martins, 2011, p. 66 e 75).

²⁶ Our translation with consultation in <https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces66597.html>, accessed in: 09/11/2019.

²⁷ Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1842-0523-1, accessed in: 29/10/2020.

mark of the gender relation constituted in terms of her position in society, composing her as the one who only lent herself to that position through her brother and her husband, demonstrating the social irrelevance of this character, who seems to have been manipulated to fulfill an alliance between Octavian and Antony, without receiving special honors.

When Plutarch referred to Octavia, he claimed that she had continued to act like an exemplary woman, staying in Rome and working for her husband's benefits while he did business with Cleopatra. The virtues of Octavia exemplify the ideal Roman matron, in contrast to the decaying archetype of Cleopatra's image of the East, ensured by the Roman point of view (FISCHLER, 1994, p. 118). In this regard, Dixon (1983) presents evidence that, at the end of the Republic, women exercised patronage and used this position to influence men of their families in political matters. However, this activity was tolerable and according to the ideal, since the circumstances concerned family matters (DIXON, 1983; FISCHLER, 1994, p. 118).

CLEOPATRA

Not only imperial women, such as Livia and Agrippina, were the target of ancient writers, but the foreigners' ones like Cleopatra, characterized by Plutarch as a fatal influence (Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, 36.1). She tried to maintain her power in the Mediterranean by advertising her image, including in coins, and was later characterized by the Romans in a way to be defamed.

Material culture, through Cleopatra, projected her power and sovereignty through her symbols and emblems, triggered political-ideological communication and a propaganda to help her staying in power, showing the importance of money as political-institutional environment. The introduction of the portrait in the monetary typology probably came from Alexander the Great or from Philip II of Macedonia. In this way, Ptolemy's coins generally had a pattern of types of figures similar to those of Hellenistic sovereignty: the obverse was intended for the images of sovereigns with attributes of royalty or their divinization; and the reverse presented other symbols, such as the real name, titles and protective deities (SALES, 2017, p. 11) related to religion. Hence, these are the attributes that we can also observe in Cleopatra's coins.



FIGURA 6: Copper alloy coin²⁸, Alexandria, Egypt, 51 – 30 BC. Obverse: bust of Cleopatra VII; Reverse: eagle with cornucopia and value mark (80) and inscription: BACIAICCHC KΛEOΠATPAC.²⁹ © The Trustees of the British Museum.

On the obverse of this coin, there is the face of Cleopatra VII and, on the reverse, an eagle with a cornucopia, a mark of value, and an inscription in Greek. The eagle perched on a beam of thunder refers to the bird of Zeus, on the weapon of the great Greek god. Like her Ptolemaic ancestors, Cleopatra included Zeus in her monetary issues as the proclamation and granting of power directly from the lord of Olympus, a standardized symbol by her predecessors, which became a sign of her own royalty. By becoming a recurring motif in the numismatic, the bird of Zeus ended up being a symbol of Egypt itself, even after the disappearance of the Ptolemies (SALES, 2017, p. 14).

Cleopatra was the most notable of Alexander's successors and seems to have endeavored to maintain Egypt's independence and restore the grandeur of previous centuries. However, her story was rarely told as such, since her image was always that of a woman trying to act like a man, consumed by ambition, using her sexuality to manipulate Caesar and Mark Antony (BURSTEIN, 2004, p. 88).

After marrying her brother and her ideas not being accepted by her husband's Guardian Council, she was deposed by the court and fled Egypt to the desert, in order not to be murdered. However, she saw an opportunity to ally herself with Caesar against her brother. According to Bradford (2002), such a seduction by Cleopatra was never the only reason for such involvement with leaders taking into account the potential of Egyptian lands. Caesar needed help from Egypt to defray the expenses generated in war and nothing

²⁸ Reference number: G.1117. Catalogue number: GC7 (BMC Greek (Ptolemies) (123) (5). Svoronos 1904 or 1871.

²⁹ Available at: <https://books.google.com.br/books?id=f5VuDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA90&lpg=PA90&dq=Svoronos+1871&source=bl&ots=b4fztgyc5D&sig=ACfU3U0nnj9wthtt78W7ogNGyDzXBSNb4w&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjE37ymytzjAhV7FLkGHQuaC9sQ6AEwDXoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=Svoronos%201871&f=false> and coin, accessed in: 28/10/2020. and Ptolemaic Coins Online: Svoronos (1904-1908) no. 1871, accessed on 30/07/2019.

timelier than joining his army with that of Cleopatra. This union, consequently, gave rise to the couple's son, Ptolemy Caesar, better known as Caesarion, in 47 BC. In 46 BC, Cleopatra settled in Rome, causing controversy, as they feared that she might influence Caesar and the government (VIEIRA, 2012, p. 21 - 22).

The relationship between women and power, or, more precisely, women with power, was perceived as suspicious by Roman society. In this sense, women who distinguished themselves for having access to power were supposed to be the ones who also failed to conform and accept the social construction given to them in that society, being represented as problematic and causing great tension. This view was produced by ancient authors, linked to the elite of the time, who felt threatened by those women (FISCHLER, 1994, p. 115 - 116).

Although Caesar recognized his son with Cleopatra and even asked to have a statue of them built in the Temple of Venus Genetrix, the Romans did not positively see the idea of Caesarion being the heir of the empires of Rome and the East, which would benefit Egypt more than Rome. This fact led to the assassination of Caesar by the republicans in 44 B.C. (VIEIRA, 2012, p. 22).

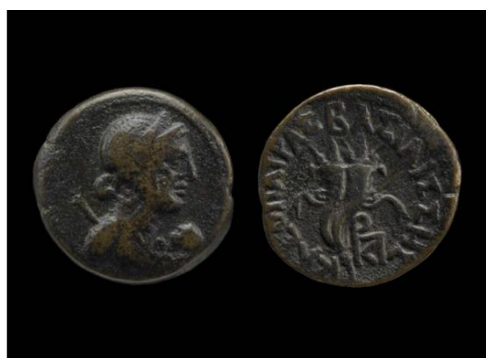


FIGURA 7: Copper alloy coin³⁰, with Cleopatra VII on the obverse, Cyprus, 47 B.C. The bust with a diadem on Cleopatra's head, like Aphrodite, with Caesarion, like Eros, in her arms; scepter on the shoulder. Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗ [Σ] – ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ, with two cornucopias with fillets. It was common to associate Cleopatra with Aphrodite, and the island of Cyprus, where there was a temple of Aphrodite, which was given by Caesar to Cleopatra in 48 BC.³¹ © The Trustees of the British Museum.

³⁰ Reference number: Svoronos 1874 e pl. LXII, 26. RPC 3901.9.

³¹ Available at: <https://www.acsearch.info/search.html?similar=1286255>, accessed in: 26/07/2019 and https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_GC7p122-2, accessed in 28/10/2020.

Cleopatra appears on coins minted in Cyprus, around the year 47 BC, which showed her bust with little Caesarion in her lap, demonstrating the greatness of Caesar's son with the Egyptian queen. In addition, it was to demonstrate her motherhood and her devotion to Caesar's successor, in order to make Cleopatra the archetype of the ideal Roman matron, glimpsing her beauty, wealth, fertility, faithfulness to her husband and ability to run the home. On the reverse side of the coin are two cornucopias, a Greek symbol linked to prosperity, emphasizing Cleopatra's fertility, wealth and opulence, as well as exploring motherhood efficiently. The coin shows both Greek and Egyptian attributes, such as a round face and a prominent nose, characteristic of the Ptolemies, and a diadem on the head, demonstrating that the intention was the propaganda of royal and familiar dignity.

After Caesar's death, Octavian claimed Caesar's testament, which declared him to be an adopted son. Caesar was proclaimed a god in Rome, which gave Octavian the powerful status of *divi filius*, but Caesar's divinization conferred a divine aura also on Caesarion (KLEINER, 2005). The new triumvirs divided the Roman government, leaving Mark Antony with the eastern provinces, Octavian with the western provinces and Lepidus with a small piece of North Africa. Cleopatra proposed financial aid for Antony to conquer Parthia in exchange for Cyprus. Antony returned to Rome because his wife Fulvia had raised a rebellion against Octavian and left Cleopatra pregnant with twins, strengthening her ties with Rome (VIEIRA, 2012, p. 23).

In 40 BC, Octavian and Antony sealed the Pact of Brundisium, ending the conflict between them, in which Octavia, Octavian's sister, was given in marriage to Antony. However, in 37 BC, he resumed his relationship with Cleopatra at the beginning of the war of Parthia and she demanded command of the eastern lands. However, Antony was defeated in Parthia, but conquered Armenia, and Cleopatra was crowned Queen of Kings, with Caesarion, Caesar's legitimate son, Cleopatra Selene, his daughter with Antonio, as queen of Cyrenaica and Libya, Alexander Helios, his other son, king of Armenia and Media, and, finally, Ptolemy Philadelphus, who was crowned king of Phoenicia and Cilicia. Antony separated from his Roman wife, Octavia, and married Cleopatra. With the end of the triumvirate in 33 BC, Octavian attacked Mark Antony and declared an action against Cleopatra, starting a war against the East. Mark Antony wanted to control the Orient, so he

stayed with Cleopatra, having been skilled and used strategies that favored his position (VIEIRA, 2012, p. 23 - 28).

Coins minted in the East, with the bust of Cleopatra on the obverse and that of Mark Antony on the reverse, express the agreement between the couple to conquer the East as a celebration of their union. They could also denote something that is within the concept of ideal matron for the Romans, demonstrating Cleopatra as a woman of Mark Antony, who is always by his side, supporting him, which means loyalty and fidelity to her husband. However, the most important side of the object, in this case the obverse, is Cleopatra's, not Mark Antony's, showing his surrender to the Queen of Egypt as opposed to the demonstration of a subordinate woman. On the other hand, she would never have been seen as a matron in the Roman mold, since she was a foreigner, that is, a "barbarian," possessing great political and governmental power, which led the Romans to consider her as something abnormal. In this way, the coin celebrates Cleopatra as the newest queen Seleucid and Antony as a Roman magistrate and general (BUTTREY, 1954, p. 109).



FIGURA 8: Silver tetradrachm³², 36 BC, Syria, with Cleopatra's draped bust on the right on the obverse, with a diadem on the head and the bust of Marco Antonio on the right on the reverse. With caption from the obverse: ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΑ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑ ΘΕΑ ΝΕΩΤΕΡΑ, and transliteration: BASILISSA KLEPATRA THEA NEOTERA = "The newest goddess Queen Cleopatra"³³; and reverse inscription: ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟC ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΤΡΙΤΟΝ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΑΝΔΡΩΝ, transliteration: ANTONIOS AUTOKRATOR TRITON TRION ANDRON = "Third proclamation of Antônio emperor"³⁴.³⁵
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³² Reference number: TC, p 237.1. CleMA. Catalogue number: GC20 (BMC Greek (Galatia) (158) (56).

³³ Available at: <http://www.moneteromane.info/corrisp/b174/b174.html>, accessed in 29/07/2019.

³⁴ Available at: <http://www.moneteromane.info/corrisp/b174/b174.html>, accessed in 29/07/2019.

³⁵ Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_TC-p237-1-CleMA, accessed in: 29/10/2020.

This series of tetradrachms shows Cleopatra's bust on the right and her head with a diadem and pearl necklace. Mark Antony's bust is also turned to the right. These tetradrachms were elaborated after the separation of Antony and Octavia, announcing the political alliance between the triumvir and the Egyptian queen. During this period, Antonio was already in the East at the battle of Parthia. Consequently, these coins could have been designed to facilitate payment for their soldiers. The caption on the obverse indicates: BACILICCA KLEOPATRA QEA NEWTERA = "The newest queen goddess, Cleopatra," demonstrating her connection with the goddess Isis; on the reverse: ANTWNIOC AYTOKPATWP TRITON TPIWN ANDPWN = "Third proclamation of Antony emperor." According to Barrett (2002), this coin breaks with the parameters of other coins minted with women, because it was the first time that coins with Mark Antony indicated the name of his wife, Cleopatra (BARRETT, 2002, p. 141).

According to Suetonius, the Mark Antony and Otavian alliance was always doubtful and the reconciliations only served to reestablish it and to prove that Antony had degenerated the customs. Octavian made him read in the assembly the testament he had left in Rome in which his heirs would be the children he had with Cleopatra, which led Octavian to declare him as a public enemy and to dismiss his relatives and friends (SUETONIUS, *The life of the twelve Caesars, Augustus*, 17.1). Plutarch even commented that the greatest shame for Antony's countrymen was that he bestowed all his honor on Cleopatra (PLUTARCH, *Life of Antony*, 36.1). Octavian used Octavia against Antony, because he allowed her to meet her husband in Athens, not to give pleasure to his sister, but to give himself a plausible reason for pretext, in order to declare war if she was neglected by Antony (PLUTARCH, *Life of Antony*, 53.1).

In any position taken by Fulvia or Octavia in relation to Mark Antony, Plutarch indicated as if it were something to affect Cleopatra, making her also act in some way to seduce Antony to go against his Roman wives. He characterized Octavia as the ideal Roman matron, mentioning that if she could once again add the charm she had in the society on a daily basis and her affectionate attention, she could completely overcome control over her husband and make her position unattainable (PLUTARCH, *Life of Antony*, 53.2). Plutarch claimed that Octavia only married Antony for political reasons, for the

interests of his brother, but Cleopatra, being a sovereign of several nations, was content to be his lover (PLUTARCH, *Life of Antony*, 53.3). Even though Antony refused going to see Octavia in Athens, she continued to live in his house, taking care of her children and Fulvia's, while Octavian considered Antony's attitude outrageous and wanted Octavia to leave his house, which was denied by her (PLUTARCH, *Life of Antony*, 54.1). Antony

proclaimed Cleopatra the queen of Egypt, Cyprus, Libya and Syria. In addition, he declared Caesarion his consort.



FIGURA 9: Copper alloy duponium, 9³⁶ – 3 BC, Neumausus, current Nimes, France. It has on the obverse the bust of Augustus and Agrippa, facing opposite sides, with the inscription: IMP DIVI F (*Imperator Divi Filius* = son of the divine Emperor³⁷). On the reverse, there is a crocodile chained to a palm tree, with the inscription: COL NEM (*Colonia Nemausus*)³⁸.

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Furthermore, for the son he had with Cleopatra, Alexander, he left Armenia, Media and Parthia and, for his son, Ptolemy, Syria and Cilicia. Plutarch did not quote the couple's daughter, Cleopatra Selene. Antony sent a message for Octavia to leave his house, with all her children, however she left the one he had with Fulvia, Antillus (PLUTARCH, *Life of Antony*, 57.1). Octavian declared war on Cleopatra and withdrew Antony's powers since he had handed them over to a woman (PLUTARCH, *Life of Antony*, 60.1).

Octavian won the battle of Actium, and then, Antony went to Libya and Cleopatra returned to Egypt. Later, Octavian took Alexandria without resistance, marking the end of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Octavian took power in Egypt and started to build his proper image in the traditional local temples. He fixed the Principality in Rome maintaining a republican appearance so that the Senate could persist although the final decisions were his own

³⁶ Number of references: 1935, 1102.9.

³⁷ Our translation.

³⁸ Available at: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/C_1935-1102-9, accessed in: 29/10/2020.

(VIEIRA, 2012, p. 31 - 34) and, in order to justify his power, he always used personal advertisements through coinage.

This series of coins produced by Augustus is called AEGVPTO CAPTA and was used by Roman veterans, who were part of the war campaign against Egypt, which was minted where these former combatants lived, in the *colonia Nemausus*, in Gaul (DRAYCOTT, 2012, p. 46). Octavian's mark was modified after Actium's victory – since his coins represented him as a figure similar to the god Apollo, the god of the bow and lyre, of the arts and of war – and started to bring the crocodile, demonstrating his domination over Egypt and the end of the alliance with Mark Antony (MARTINGS, 2011, p. 184). In this coin, it is possible to see Augustus and Agrippa on the obverse and a crocodile on the reverse, the symbol of Egypt chained in a palm tree, which suggests the idea of Egypt subdued by the Roman Empire after Egypt became a Roman province.

Cleopatra and Antony also used the crocodile and placed it as a mark of the couple's daughter, Cleopatra Senele, in the provinces they left for her: Crete and Cyrenaica (DRAYCOTT, 2012, p. 43). The crocodile was used by the Ptolemies since the beginning of the dynasty, but other Greek symbols were preferred, such as the eagle and the cornucopia. The crocodile is important to the Ptolemies because when Alexander the Great died in 323 BC, Ptolemy Soter, who stayed with the lands of Egypt, captured Alexander's body and transported it to Egypt to be buried in Alexandria. This fact led Pediccas to invade Egypt and, crossing the Nile to reach Memphis, where the body was, half of his troops were eaten by crocodiles (DRAYCOTT, 2012, p. 53 - 54).

Suetonius mentions that young Antony, the oldest son Mark Antony had with Fulvia, was a refugee and, after many useless pleas at the feet of the statue of Caesar, was killed by Octavian. Caesarion, who according to Suetonius, Cleopatra boasted of having had with Caesar, was arrested and handed over to torture. In relation to the other children that Antony had with Cleopatra, Octavian spared them and dismissed them (SUETONIUS, *The life of the twelve Caesars, Augustus*, 97 - 99). Cleopatra was characterized by Cassius Dio as a woman of surprising beauty and her voice had an unparalleled charm, and that she knew how to please everyone. The author comments that she was brilliant to be seen and heard, with the power to subdue. He said that Cleopatra was insatiable passion and greed, with a celebrated ambition, but excessive presumption. She won the title of queen of the Egyptians and wanted to be the queen of the Romans (DIO, *Roman History*, 42.34.4-6). According to

Plutarch, she used a bold flirtation, which captivated Caesar in the first instance (PLUTARCH, *Caesar*, 49.3). Furthermore, he added that, as she had already conquered Caesar, she had hopes that she would easily conquer Antony. Caesar met her when she was young and with little experience, but during the flirtation with Antony it was when she already had the most brilliant beauty (PLUTARCH, *Life of Antony*, 25.1).

With these characterizations, Cleopatra was the scene of criticisms that were easily directed at a woman with power, always leading her to a sexual character and greed for power. It also adds the fact that, based on these authors, she could only increase her power through the help of a man, and not by herself.

CONCLUSION

Regarding the criterion of power relations, it was essential to refer jointly to material culture the written resources, because the last ones prove and explain the gender relations of the emperors and their women. In this perspective, Octavian only minted coins from Octavia after he married her to Antony and legitimized the pact of Brundisium. Her name is not mentioned in any of the coinage, but there is a tribute in captions to Antony in addition to his job description. The images of imperial women, such as Octavia, were generally minted subordinated to men, as emperors, who generally were their husbands, sons, brothers, and so on.

Regarding Cleopatra, the ancient authors invested against her, adopting the traditional Roman idea concerning the dangerousness of women in power, demonstrating that this was not an ideal model to be followed, which led to the creation of the image of a dangerous and seductive East. The figure of Cleopatra was constructed as that of a fatal, wicked, and corrupted woman, described as a beautiful and seductive ingenious. However, this image of a seductive and all-powerful woman was used as propaganda to mask a civil war (VIEIRA, 2012, p. 38 - 40) initiated by Octavian and Antony.

From this point of view, the ancient authors demonstrated a tension in the power and gender relations between Augustus and Cleopatra, which intentionally impacted on Antony. They also took advantage of the rejection of Cleopatra to build a negative image of her,

using her place of power, ethnicity and gender, in addition to her political position, in favor of Mark Antony, to demoralize her, valuing the figure of Augustus and demonstrating the reception of Roman society before a foreign woman with power. Cleopatra's position apprehended an identity complexity, which through these ancient authors gave rise to an agency that resulted in the reproduction of a stigmatized Cleopatra. Thus, it can be inferred that the effectiveness of manipulating Cleopatra's image had an intersectional³⁹ consequence in her reproductions, which were disseminated over time and spread until nowadays.

In this work, the position of two women was placed, who witnessed the same episode in the History of Rome. Taking into account the different positions in which they found themselves, it is possible to repair the incompatibility of female use and its disapproval in categories of power in a society that privileged the androcentric position.

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³⁹ The problem of “intersectionality” was first raised in Anglo-Saxon countries from the Black Feminism heritage, since the early 1990s, within an interdisciplinary framework, by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1994, 2002, 2010) and other English, American, Canadian and German researchers (Hirata, 2014, p. 62). According to Hirata (2014), quoting Bilge (2009), intersectionality refers to a transdisciplinary theory that comprises an identity complexity and social inequalities through an integrated approach. It refutes the confinement and hierarchy of the main focus of social differentiation, which are the categories of sex/gender, class, race, ethnicity, age, disability and sexual orientation (Bilge, 2009, p. 70; Hirata, 2014, p. 62 – 63). In this way, norms and values that may have been of considerable significance for the formation of social identities can be based on gender, age, tatus, and so forth (Sjöberg, 2014, p. 320). The intersectional approach goes beyond simply recognizing the multiplicity of systems of oppression that operate from these categories and postulates their interaction in the production and reproduction of social inequalities (Bilge, 2009, p. 70; Hirata, 2014, p. 62 – 63). Intersectionality as a means of understanding multiple oppressions has been applied by scholars, such as Sjöberg (2014), focusing mainly on textual evidence within the realm of the (Sjöberg, 2014, p. 316) Ancient World.

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