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# Reflections on Gems Depicting the Contest of Athena and Poseidon<sup>1</sup>

## Hadrien Rambach

Greek and Roman mythology tell us how the patron deity of the newly founded city of Athens was chosen in a competition between Athena and Poseidon. The gods raced to the Acropolis, where they offered gifts to Athens.<sup>2</sup> Athena caused an olive tree to spring up, whereas Poseidon struck the ground with his trident, prompting a spring of water to gush forth. Although Poseidon had reached the Acropolis first, Cecrops – the legendary king of Athens, shown in art as half-human and half-snake – favoured Athena. This displeased Poseidon, who cursed the city with a flood. Zeus intervened and allowed the Athenians to choose the goddess. This story has inspired several works of art of different periods, sizes and materials. This article examines the depiction on engraved gems – with essential detours to marble sculpture and numismatics – of the ‘dispute of Athena and Poseidon’, or rather the presentation of the gifts, with the gods facing each other.

The most famous is a cameo in Naples, formerly owned by Lorenzo de’ Medici (Pl. 1).<sup>3</sup> One of the best known items in this celebrated collection of engraved gems, this large cameo measures over 50mm in height. Believed to date from the late 1st century BC, it has been variously and controversially attributed, for example to Aspasio (although this has never been thoroughly argued), and even to Pyrgoteles (despite this evidently being impossible chronologically). This dating seems very likely, and stylistically the cameo can be compared with signed Augustan gems and contemporary coins. Part of the attraction – and mystery – of the cameo is the unexplained series of engravings in the exergue: two palm trees, two shells, two wheels (?), the ΠΥ monogram,<sup>4</sup> and another, unidentified,

object (Pl. 2). The cameo is very well composed and rich in ancillary details, such as the snake that aggressively confronts Poseidon. The earliest known reference to the cameo is the 1465 Medici inventory, which suggests that it was purchased by Piero ‘il Gottoso’ de’ Medici (1416–69). It remained in the family’s possession in Florence until the death of Alessandro ‘il Moro’ de’ Medici (1510–37), when it was taken by his widow, Margaret of Austria (1522–86) to first Rome, then the Netherlands (1559–67), and finally Ortona. Her son Alessandro Farnese (1545–92) brought it back to Rome, where it remained until 1735, when it was taken to Naples.

### The possible origins of the iconography

To what degree was this representation of the myth the personal creation of a gifted engraver as opposed to an adaptation from pre-existing iconography? If it was not original, did it derive from a single source, such as a Hellenistic relief, or does it combine influences from a variety of works of art?

The depiction of Athena is not unique: she is shown in a similar pose in other works, such as the 1st-century BC silver *Coppa Corsini*,<sup>5</sup> a marble statuette in Athens,<sup>6</sup> and a statue in the Musée Rolin in Autun.<sup>7</sup> The figure of Poseidon is not original either: he is the so-called ‘Lateran Poseidon’, resting his foot on a rock or on a prow, holding a trident and sometimes a dolphin, as shown in a marble copy of a lost 4th-century BC bronze sculpture by Lysippos (Pl. 3).<sup>8</sup> Many slight variations exist,<sup>9</sup> including a number of stone copies from the Roman period, such as a 2nd-century AD marble statuette from



Plate 1 The Medici cameo, 52 x 43mm. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale



Plate 2 Detail of Medici cameo: the exergue



Plate 3 The Lateran Poseidon, marble, H. 2m. Vatican City, Museo Lateranense



**Plate 4** Silver *denarius* of Sextus Pompey, Sicily, 40–39 BC



**Plate 5** Silver *denarius* of Sextus Pompey, Sicily, 38–37 BC



**Plate 6** Silver *drachm*, Bruttium, 216–214 BC



**Plate 7** Silver *tetradrachm* of Demetrios Poliorketes, mint of Amphipolis c. 290–289 BC



**Plate 8** Impression of garnet intaglio with Poseidon, 20 x 14mm, ex-Marlborough Collection



**Plate 9** Impression of nicolo intaglio with Poseidon, 10 x 8mm, ex-Marlborough Collection



**Plate 10** The Portland Vase, H. 245mm. London, British Museum, GR 1945,0927.1



**Plate 11** Detail of the Portland Vase

Eleusis<sup>10</sup> that is almost identical to the figure on the cameo, apart from the spear which is inclined and not vertical. The coinage of the period in which the Medici cameo was carved includes two *denarii* of Sextus Pompey with a comparable type. He issued a coin from Sicily in 40–39 BC with a complex scene on the reverse depicting Neptune (holding an *aplustre* and resting his right foot on a prow, naked but for a *chlamys* on his left arm) standing facing left between the Catanaean brothers Anapias and Amphinomus (Pl. 4).<sup>11</sup> In 38–37 BC Sextus Pompey struck a *denarius* depicting on the obverse a galley in front of the Pharos of Messana, decorated with a statue of Neptune (Pl. 5).<sup>12</sup> But I do not think that this is a reason to associate the Medici cameo with Pompey, as – even in numismatics – the use

of the ‘Lateran Poseidon’ was nothing novel: the pose had already appeared on coins of the Brettii in southern Italy (c. 216–14 BC) that show Zeus standing facing left with his right foot on an Ionic capital (Pl. 6),<sup>13</sup> and even earlier (soon after 300 BC) on Macedonian silver *tetradrachms* struck for Demetrios Poliorketes (Pl. 7).<sup>14</sup> The type is commonly found on 1st-century BC/ AD gems, and I shall not attempt to make a list here of known specimens. Two examples that illustrate the point were both formerly in the collection of the fourth Duke of Marlborough (1739–1817): one in garnet (Pl. 8),<sup>15</sup> and one in nicolo (Pl. 9).<sup>16</sup> The ‘Lateran Poseidon’, with a snake, also appears on the magnificent Portland Vase, which was certainly engraved by a gem-carver (Pls 10–11).<sup>17</sup>



**Plate 12** Glass paste with Poseidon and Amymone, 24 x 19mm. Hanover, Kestner-Museum



**Plate 13** Glass paste with Poseidon and Amymone, signed by Aulos. D. 31mm. London, British Museum, GR 1923,0401.978



**Plate 14** Glass paste probably cast from the same mould as Pl. 13. 19 x 21mm. Paris, Cabinet des médailles

Three interesting and unusually large glass gems dating from the same period as the Medici cameo show Poseidon and Amymone.<sup>18</sup> One, in Hanover, is of pale grey glass (Pl. 12);<sup>19</sup> another, in the British Museum, is in white paste and is signed by Aulos (Pl. 13);<sup>20</sup> and a third, in Paris, was probably cast from the same mould as the latter (Pl. 14).<sup>21</sup> These illustrate a well-known mythological story, in which the ‘blameless’ daughter of Danaos is saved by Poseidon from a threatening satyr at Argos.<sup>22</sup> Poseidon is standing, his right foot raised on a rock, his right hand holding the trident; his left arm, with drapery wrapped round it, is behind his back. Amymone’s *hydria* lies overturned at Poseidon’s feet. She is standing on the left, wearing a long *chiton* and *himation*, raising her veil with her left hand. The prototype for these gems was probably a Late Classical or an Early Hellenistic relief. But, as Gertrud Platz-Horster wrote, ‘you cannot argue that an image on a gem was inspired by a sculpture if that sculpture is unknown’.<sup>23</sup> It is in fact not possible to say if the inspiration was a statue, a relief or a painting. Could it simply be a coincidence that the compositions of the Athena and Poseidon Medici cameo and the Poseidon and Amymone pastes are so close? They are of the same period. Could they be from the same workshop, or could they have been engraved for the same patron? What are the connections between these two types? They were both old motifs, and we must ask why they were chosen by the 1st-century BC engravers.

### The Parthenon pediment

The 5th century BC is very significant for the Athena and Poseidon myth, as that was when the Parthenon was built. Between 438 and 432 BC a relief was carved in Pentelic marble for the west pediment. Pausanias saw it around AD 160, and he tells us that:

[on the Acropolis is a] group [of statues] dedicated by Alkamenes. Athena is represented displaying the olive plant, and Poseidon the wave

and that:

As you enter the temple [of Athena on the Acropolis at Athens] that they name the Parthenon, all the sculptures you see on what is called [...] the rear pediment represent the contest for the land between Athena and Poseidon.<sup>24</sup>

This makes it clear that there were two depictions of Athena and Poseidon on the Acropolis.

Fragments survive from the ‘violent’ depiction on the Parthenon’s west pediment – *i.e.* that in which the gods are confronting each other and preparing to strike the ground with their spears and tridents. Depicting both Poseidon’s and Athena’s torsos and the back of her head, these sculptures are divided between the British Museum and the Acropolis Museum. However, they are so fragmentary that we need to rely on modern reconstructions of the Acropolis pediment: a drawing by Ludolf Stefani (Pl. 15),<sup>25</sup> and a full-scale replica of



**Plate 15** Drawing of the Parthenon west pediment by Ludolf Stefani (1875)



**Plate 16** Detail of the Nashville Parthenon by Dinsmoor and Hart (Nashville, Tennessee)

the Parthenon in Nashville (Pl. 16).<sup>26</sup> More authentic are drawings made in 1674 by Jacques Carrey (Pl. 17).<sup>27</sup> Erika Simon has written that:

the pediment-compositions must have been so impressive that they had repercussions for various works of art.<sup>28</sup>

Nothing survives from the ‘peaceful’ group, which could have been by Phidias’ younger contemporary Alkamenes. It depicted Poseidon resting and the gods presenting their gifts to the newborn city, but Pausanias’s passing reference gives no useful information about its appearance. Simon has suggested that this might be the composition depicted on the Medici cameo<sup>29</sup> –



**Plate 17** Drawing of the Acropolis pediment by Jacques Carrey (1674)

an idea with which I agree. However, Luigi Beschi doubts this because he regards the cameo as being too late in style to relate to the Parthenon.<sup>30</sup> In such cases, ancient engraved gems and coins are essential iconographical records.<sup>31</sup> When – as is probably the case with the contest of Athena and Poseidon – the original sculpted group has disappeared, contemporary copies are major sources, as Francesca Ghedini describes:

It seems we can conclude, after comparison of the representations, that they correspond iconographically to the monument described by Pausanias, at least allusively. The Athenian coins [...], those of Hadrian’s time (better readable in the *Restitutio* of Marcus Aurelius), the neo-Attic relief, and the many gems of various provenances, allow us without any doubt to recover the original iconography of the Athenian ex-voto. At that time, it included the two affronted gods, with the twisted form of an olive tree between them. Poseidon rested his left foot on a rock from which flowed, or should flow, the sea; his torso was erect, and his right hand tightly gripped a trident. Athena stood unarmed, but not defenceless, since her martial attributes lay beside her: her feared spear was propped against an olive tree, and her shield lay on the ground, supported invisibly. And the snake lazily uncoiled, perhaps alluding to the myth remarked by Lucian as he described the holy contest.<sup>32</sup>

This motif can be found on a variety of materials and in various sizes. The fact that these depictions are of different periods raises new questions: why does this subject so often appear on gems, and what were the engravers’ sources?

The major differences between these two types, the quarrel and its aftermath, lead me to propose two distinct iconographic types: a ‘Parthenon’ type and a ‘Medici’ type. On the Parthenon type, the gods are attacking each other, with crossed weapons and feet and aggressive looks, as described by Ovid (*Metamorphoses* 6):

the Sea-God standing, striking the rough rock with his tall trident. She herself gives a shield, she gives a sharp-tipped spear, she gives a helmet for her head; the aegis guards her breast, and from the earth struck by her spear, she reveals an olive tree.<sup>33</sup>



**Plate 18** Cameo fragment with Athena and Poseidon. L. 33mm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum



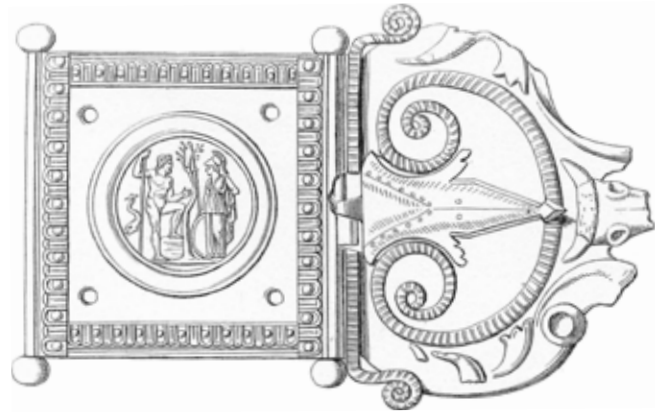
**Plate 19** Glass paste, impression, 19 x 18mm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum



**Plate 20** Carnelian intaglio with Athena and Poseidon. 18.5 x 16mm. Utrecht, Geldmuseum



**Plate 21** Red jasper intaglio with Athena and Poseidon. 14 x 11mm. Utrecht, Geldmuseum



**Plate 22** Silver belt buckle from Pompeii or Herculaneum. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale

The events on the 'Medici' type take place afterwards, when Athena has won. The Parthenon scene is therefore the more dramatic. The Medici scene is all the more peaceful in that we cannot see the pointed end of the trident with which Poseidon created the Erekhtheis sea,<sup>34</sup> only what seems to be a spear, or long pole, is visible.

### The Medici type on Roman gems

Although exceptional for its size and quality, the Medici gem is not unique in depicting Athena and Poseidon. Other Roman gems of the 1st century BC, and of the following two centuries, depict the Medici type. The Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna owns a cameo (Pl. 18), which may originally have been even larger than the Medici one (the surviving fragment is up to 33mm high, whereas the Medici cameo measures 52mm).<sup>35</sup> Equally fine in style, it is a late Republican or early Imperial piece, like the Medici cameo.<sup>36</sup> In fact, this fragment is so close in composition to the Medici cameo (for example, the position of Athena's shield and the way that Poseidon's hand is almost inside the bent trunk of the tree) that the two must be related. Although they are not necessarily by the same engraver, one certainly copies the other.

In the same period, an intaglio was carved with exactly the same type, as is evident in particular in the shape of the snake and the presence and position of the dolphin. On the basis of a comparison with the paste of a dancing Bacchus in Berlin, Erika Zwierlein-Diehl has attributed it to Dioskurides.<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, the gem seems not to have survived, and is known only from a damaged glass copy in Vienna (Pl. 19).<sup>38</sup> Although the figure of Athena has disappeared, her presence can be discerned.

In Utrecht there is a carnelian intaglio carved during the same decades (Pl. 20).<sup>39</sup> Although not particularly large (18.5 x 16mm), it is well detailed, harmoniously composed, and undoubtedly the work of a master-engraver. On the basis of a comparison with a gem in Vienna, Maaskant-Kleibrink has proposed that it might be Heius, but it does not seem sufficiently Hellenistic. As she wrote, it is a 'fairly exact replica' of the Medici cameo – in fact, it is identical, with the exception of Athena's spear and the dolphin in Neptune's hand, neither of which appears in the intaglio. The museum in Utrecht owns another intaglio of Athena and Poseidon, in red jasper, 14mm in length, poorly engraved in the 'Small Grooves Style' of the 1st/2nd century AD (Pl. 21).<sup>40</sup> The depiction of the scene is very crude, but the engraver undoubtedly understood who the two figures were, as he has included Poseidon's attribute (a dolphin) in his extended hand. I shall group it with the Medici type, although it is strictly speaking a variant with significant differences: Poseidon does not rest on a rock, and is not leaning towards Athena.

The existence of varied versions of this type confirms Gisela Richter's comment of 1956:

The gem engravers of the Roman age only differ from the sculptors of that time in that they did not reproduce the works that they copied mechanically. They had to copy freehand, like the painters, or like the sculptors who adapted earlier works in new compositions. And their reproductions have likewise become a valuable source for our knowledge of many lost Greek masterpieces.<sup>41</sup>

Any iconographical study of engraved gems should start with this differentiation between mechanical copies, reproductions and adaptations.



**Plate 23** Bronze medallion of Hadrian. D. 41mm. London, British Museum, CM 1857,0812.2



**Plate 24 a–b** Silver medallion with Hadrian (obverse) and Athena and Poseidon (reverse). D. 33.5mm. Private collection

**The myth in metal – silversmiths and numismatics**

Small works depicting the Medici type were created by Roman silversmiths during the late 1st century BC and early 1st century AD, such as the elegant silver belt buckle (*cingulum*) discovered in Pompeii or Herculaneum (Pl. 22).<sup>42</sup> Writing in 1970, Gertrud Platz-Horster remarked that, ‘sometimes gems and coins show strikingly similar images’.<sup>43</sup> This is the case with the Athena and Poseidon myth, both types of which appear on a number of coin reverses during the first three centuries of the Roman Empire. The Medici type can be found on the reverse of some rare bronze medallions of Hadrian. Gnecci in 1912 listed four specimens: in Venice (D. 42mm, 54g), London (Pl. 23; D. 41mm, 42.26g), Rome (D. 38mm, 42.6g) and Vienna (D. 33mm, 23.88g).<sup>44</sup>

A well-preserved silver medallion depicts the Medici type on its reverse (Pls 24a–b).<sup>45</sup> The inscription states that it was struck during the third consulate (AD 128/29–38) of Hadrian, but some numismatists consider it to be a 16th-century Renaissance work: the presence of a sceptre next to Hadrian’s draped and bare-headed portrait, reminiscent of a Cretan *tridrachm* of Caligula,<sup>46</sup> would be unique for a 2nd-century AD coin, and the reverse follows very closely the Medici type: the dolphin has been split into two and becomes meaningless, as if the engraver had copied the type mechanically, without understanding what was depicted. This would be surprising for the so-called ‘Alphaeus Master’ to whom this medallion has been ascribed. The same reverse appears on a medallion of Marcus Aurelius (Pl. 25),<sup>47</sup> but this too may in fact be a Renaissance medal (of a type derogatorily called ‘Paduans’).

However, the bronze coins of Hadrian are undoubtedly genuine, and the use of the type under that emperor is likely to be significant. Nicknamed *Graeculus* in his youth, he had by the time the coins were struck become *Hadrianos Sebastos Zeus*

*Olympios*.<sup>48</sup> He was now portraying himself as the new patron of Athens. Also during the 2nd century AD, bronze *drachms* were struck in Athens with the Parthenon type on the reverse. The earlier issue, c. AD 120s–40s, displays the type with an owl and a dolphin (Pl. 26);<sup>49</sup> the later issue of the AD 140s/50s–170s lacks the owl and dolphin (Pl. 27).<sup>50</sup> A third Athenian issue, around AD 264–7, under the reign of Gallienus (AD 260–8), uses very similar dies.<sup>51</sup> The type appeared for the last time on a bronze coin struck for Philip the Arab (AD 244–9) in Phokaia in Ionia (Pl. 28),<sup>52</sup> but the tree has become tiny, and it is not clear whether Poseidon is resting his foot on a rock or on the snake; the engraving is poor, and the figures, which have been romanised, have become very rigid. It is not surprising that Athenian bronze coins used the Parthenon type: artists there undoubtedly knew the friezes on the Acropolis. These local engravers could also have seen the group of the Medici type, and been inspired by it for their coins of the AD 120s–140s, before it disappeared. But the choice of the type in Rome for the Hadrianic medallions, and in Ionia for the coins of Philip, is more intriguing. Why illustrate the contest of Athena and Poseidon? How did they know the iconography?

Whoever he was, and there is no need to attempt to name him, the carver of the Medici cameo is likely to have been a late-Hellenistic artist, taught in Greece but active in Rome. The gem might have entered the imperial collections, and therefore have been available to court artists, as the choice of its type for the medallions of Hadrian suggests. But, more simply, the motif may have been circulating widely throughout the Roman territories, by means of glass gems in *daktyliothecæ*, seal impressions, plaster casts (of gems, stone sculptures or silverware) or pattern books, etc. It is highly implausible that artists could have created these various works independently, without a common source – which they adapted to their own



**Plate 25** Bronze medallion of Marcus Aurelius. D. 39mm. Bonn, Rheinische Landesmuseum



**Plate 26** Bronze *drachm*, mint of Athens, AD 120–40



**Plate 27** Bronze *drachm*, mint of Athens, AD 140s/150s–170s



**Plate 28** Bronze *drachm*, mint of Phokaia in Ionia, AD 244–9



**Plate 29** Attic red figure hydria, mid-4th century BC, H. 51cm. St Petersburg, Hermitage

style and time, to the scale desired, and to the material they were using. The real question, therefore, is the identity of the original Classical model: a mid-4th-century BC red-figure terracotta, such as an Attic hydria in the Hermitage depicting the Parthenon type (Pl. 29);<sup>53</sup> or a Campanian vase in Madrid with a variation of the Medici type;<sup>54</sup> a stone sculpture, such as a damaged cylindrical neo-Attic (2nd century AD) relief in Cordova depicting the Medici type but showing Poseidon resting on a prow rather than a rock,<sup>55</sup> or a bronze sculpture? In any case, the type was known and copied not only in the early Roman Empire, but also for centuries later: in the early 5th century AD the Medici type was faithfully reproduced on a silver vase found near Oradea in Romania.<sup>56</sup>

### The Late and Post-Antique gems

The theme of this symposium was Late Antiquity, and the physical reuse of ancient gems during the Medieval period is discussed elsewhere in this volume. Although so far I have discussed only Classical and Early Roman gems, I am interested in the reuse of ancient iconography: the dispute of Athena and Poseidon provides an opportunity to study the imitation of Classical gems in later periods. Indeed, as far as gems are concerned, this iconographical type did not die out in the 2nd century AD. The Medici type undoubtedly inspired an elaborate sardonyx cameo probably engraved during the 6th century AD in the 'Mythological Workshop', to use Jeffrey Spier's term (Pl. 30).<sup>57</sup> This cameo was in a Russian collection a century ago, but both its earlier provenance and present



**Plate 30** Sardonyx cameo, 6th century AD. Formerly in a Russian collection

location are unknown. According to Spier, it is part of a small group of cameos depicting mythological scenes [which] is very difficult to categorise and date. The works are highly stylised, [...] characterised by the stocky figures and the distinctive treatment of the musculature, which is outlined by shallow cutting.

There are recurring subjects in this group, such as Dionysos and Apollo. On this cameo, although the centre of the composition is the traditional Medici type, it has become part of a larger and more complex scene, in which Dionysos stands behind Athena, holding a *thyrsos* and with a panther at his feet, and Apollo stands behind Poseidon, holding a lyre and with a swan at his feet. This poses a real mystery.<sup>58</sup>

First, would the Medici type have been identified correctly at this date, and, second, why were Apollo and Dionysos introduced? It is interesting to note that on the Hermitage hydria and the Madrid crater mentioned earlier, Athena is supported by Dionysos. Although Late Antique engravers could have added figures because they did not understand what the original group depicted, it is also possible that the Medici type is a simplified version of a more complex story in which Dionysos (and possibly also Apollo) had a role.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, where was this important piece engraved? We have seen that the Medici type was well known in a variety of media: silverware, gems, casts and probably drawings. But we have no clue as to where the Medici cameo was in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods.<sup>60</sup> It has no provenance before the Renaissance, and we cannot locate it before its appearance in the inventory in Florence in 1465. It could, like most important Classical artefacts, have been lost in the first centuries AD and excavated during the Renaissance. However, it is worth considering that it may never have been buried and instead was a prized possession, passing from one court to another as a gift.<sup>61</sup> In that case, official engravers could have admired it and used it in their own compositions, which would explain how, half a millennium later, copies were made again, as soon as the art of glyptics was reborn, during the Hohenstaufen period. In southern Italy during the early 13th century at least two cameos depicting the fight of Athena and Poseidon were carved: a very large one with three layers, now in Paris (Pl. 31),<sup>62</sup> and a smaller one now in Vienna (Pl. 32).<sup>63</sup> The Paris cameo was modified at a later date, with the addition of a Hebrew inscription identifying the figures as Adam and Eve.<sup>64</sup> The Viennese gem is faithful to the traditional Medici type, but the Parisian one has a complex exergue (Pl. 33): is this a coincidence – albeit a surprising one – or was this inspired by the strange exergue of the Medici cameo (Pl. 2)?





**Plate 31** Cameo with Athena and Poseidon, early 13th century. 95 x 78mm including mount. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale



**Plate 32** Cameo with Athena and Poseidon, early 13th century. 35 x 36mm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum



**Plate 35** Sard intaglio with Athena and Poseidon. L. 11mm. London, British Museum, GR 1913,0307.28



**Plate 33** Detail of the exergue of Plate 31

In the late 15th century, a medallion depicting the Medici type was carved in Florence for a wall in the Palazzo Medici (Pl. 34).<sup>65</sup> There can be no argument about its source: all Florentine artists of the time would have had access to the Medici art collections, and this medallion forms part of a series designed to celebrate some of the most valuable gems in that collection, so this relief can therefore be described as ‘a copy’ of the Medici cameo. In the Cabinet des médailles in Paris there is a very large (46 x 38mm) 16th-century cameo that is quite faithful to the Medici type, but its engraving is of very poor quality.<sup>65</sup> Various details, such as Athena’s hand, suggest that the engraver neither had a good model to copy, nor understood the subject. What then was his inspiration? Late Renaissance and post-Renaissance gem engravers have occasionally used ancient coins as models, as in the case of a 16th- or 17th-century intaglio of Tellus and the Seasons that was ‘evidently derived from a Roman coin type’, according to Erika Zwierlein-Diehl.<sup>66</sup> As for the modern Athena and Poseidon gems, the engravers are more likely to have been directly inspired by the Medici cameo rather than by coins, either directly or via casts or engravings.



**Plate 34** Marble medallion, late 15th century. Florence, Palazzo Medici

### The modern gems

The British Museum owns a small sard intaglio (11mm long) of good quality that has been published as a 16th-century work (Pl. 35).<sup>67</sup> Although not an exact copy, it is close to the iconography of the Medici type, even incorporating the dolphin next to Poseidon: the engraver most probably knew the Medici cameo. But the date given to this intaglio needs to be reconsidered, as it closely resembles another gem considered to be a much later work.

By the mid-18th century, large *daktyliothecæ* (collections of gem-impressions in sulphur, plaster or glass) had been formed, for instance by Stosch and (later) Tassie.<sup>68</sup> Neo-classical artists, especially those living in Italy, therefore had easy access to the best ancient gems. This was probably the iconographical source of a splendid intaglio carved by Giuseppe Cerbara (1770–1856). This gem is undoubtedly inspired by the Medici cameo, as is shown by the dolphin on the left and the position of the snake. I have failed to locate Cerbara’s intaglio, which is known from a Paoletti cast and an image in Lippold, who does not record its material.<sup>69</sup> It is not the example in the British Museum, which has a few minor differences, such as the length and waviness of the branch ‘cut’ by Athena’s spear. In addition, I discovered in a London private collection an unpublished agate intaglio (Pl. 36)<sup>70</sup> which is virtually identical to the Cerbara intaglio, and can with reasonable certainty be ascribed to the same engraver. The most significant difference is the branch above the spear, which divides into two in the unpublished gem and into three in the Cerbara intaglio. Some of the proportions differ also. A rather charming detail that the engraver has added to the Medici type is the dolphin biting a snake (the original dolphin peacefully rests on a rock).<sup>71</sup>



**Plate 36** Agate intaglio. 24.6 x 19.4mm. London, private collection



Plate 37 Sard intaglio by Louis Siriès. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum

Before concluding, comprehensiveness requires that I refer to a sard intaglio carved in 1755 by Louis Siriès (c. 1686 – c. 1757) (Pl. 37).<sup>72</sup> Although he was then in Florence, he did not copy, or even really draw inspiration from, the Medici cameo. He created a new iconographical type, in which the two central figures are surrounded by a very large and complex scene. We must hope that one day archives will reveal why Siriès decided to illustrate this theme.

Prince Stanislas Poniatowski (1754–1833) had gems carved with the myth of Athena and Poseidon, one with the fighting type, the other with the conversing type. The former, a carnelian which is now lost (number 143 in the 1841 catalogue of Tyrrell's gems), is signed by Pyrgoteles (ΠΥΡΓΟΤΕΛΕΣ) (Pl. 38).<sup>73</sup> The latter, a carnelian set in a necklace with 11 other intaglios, no. 146 in the 1839 Christie's sale catalogue, and later in the Wellington collection, is signed by Philemon (ΦΙΛΕΜΟΝΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΙ) (Pl. 39).<sup>74</sup> Both are true creations by so far unidentified artists, undoubtedly inspired by a knowledge of ancient gems.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasise the fact that the copies of the 'Medici' cameo of Athena and Poseidon prove that this type has enjoyed an unusually large audience. This ancient stone, and a number of other Roman gems, such as the so-called Seal of Nero, have had a lasting influence on art, and they can be traced in Renaissance glyptics, medals and paintings. I hope to have shown that such 'reproductions' also existed much earlier. I have raised questions, but not provided many answers: it is to be hoped that future research will help us to understand better the manner in which ancient artists drew on pre-existing compositions.



Plate 38 Carnelian intaglio signed Pyrgoteles. Ex- Poniatowski collection)



Plate 39 Carnelian intaglio signed Philemon. Ex- Poniatowski collection

## Notes

- This is the text of a lecture given at the British Museum on 31 May 2009, at a symposium devoted to recent research on engraved gemstones in Late Antiquity. I am very grateful to Chris Entwistle for inviting me to give this paper. I have benefitted from many critical comments and suggestions by Gertrud Platz-Horster, to whom I offer my most sincere thanks. Similarly, Olga Palagia has been of invaluable help. Arianna D'Ottone, Francesca Ghedini, Erkinger Schwarzenberg, Jeffrey Spier and Erika Zwierlein-Diehl have also very kindly helped me at various stages of my research. Finally, Edward Bigden and Michael Hall have generously tried to improve my written English. Six months after my lecture at the British Museum, Angela Gallottini published her *Studi di Glittica* (Rome, 2009) with eight illustrations of Athena and Poseidon gems. She also used two pictures of the 'seal of Nero' (on which I gave a lecture on 18th May 2010 at the Bayerische Numismatische Gesellschaft, to be published). I take this as promising auspices, and as a sign of renewed interest in these gems and iconographic researches in glyptics.
- Pseudo-Hyginus, *Fabulae* (trans. M. Grant), Lawrence KS, University of Kansas Press, 1960, 164.
- Naples, Museo Archeologico, Medici-Farnese collection, inv. no. 25837/5, onyx, 52.1 x 43 mm; see: N. Dacos, *Il tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico. Le gemme*, Florence, 1973, cat. no. 6; U. Pannuti, *Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. La Collezione Glittica*, vol. II, Rome, 1994, cat. no. 82; L. Fusco and G. Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici, Collector and Antiquarian*, Cambridge, 2006, 244, n. 40. In the 1465 inventory of Piero de' Medici it was probably the 'uno cameo legato in oro con 2 figure et uno albero in mezzo di rilievo' and valued at 180 florins. In 1492, in Lorenzo's inventory, it was valued at 800 florins and described as 'uno chammeo grande leghato in oro chon dua figure intagliate di mezzo rilievo, 1° maschio e una femina, chon un albero in mezzo che hanno a pie 2 serpe, champo nero'. The fame of this piece was always so great that, in 1787, Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807) decided to represent it as a centre-decoration of her belt in a self portrait (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi): see the description by Marta Bezzini in R. Gennaioli, *Pregio e bellezza, cammei e intagli dei Medici*, Florence, 2010, cat. no. 172.
- This monogram is not yet fully understood. I do not think that the series of engravings on the exergue is a later addition. I favour the hypothesis that it is a *pi-epsilon* monogram, rather than an *upsilon* in a three-sided frame, but any link with Alexander the Great's engraver Pyrgoteles seems improbable (as well as it being the 'Pythagorean letter' – see, T. Titti, in *Studi di glittica*, Rome, 2009, 88). It is most likely the signature of an unidentified engraver, in the style of the monograms found on a number of ancient Greek silver *tetradrachms* (e.g. Seleucus I, Susa, after 301 BC: A. Houghton and C. Lorber, *Seleucid Coins – A comprehensive catalogue*, New York, 2002, no. 173, and E.T. Newell, *The coinage of the Eastern Seleucid Mints. From Seleucus I to Antiochus III*, New York, 1938, no. 426; Lysimachos, Amphipolis, 288/282 BC: M. Thompson, 'The Mints of Lysimachos', C. Kraay and G. Jenkins (eds), *Essays in Greek Coinage Presented to Stanley Robinson*, Oxford, 1968, 163–82, no. 199.
- A kantharos in the Palazzo Corsini in Rome.
- See: F. Ghedini, 'Il Gruppo di Atene e Poseidon sull' Acropoli di Atene', *Rivista di archeologia* 7 (1983), ill. 9; W. Gauer, 'Eine

- Athenastatue des Athener Nationalmuseums: Zum Iudicium Orestis', *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1969), figs 1–3.
- 7 See: Ghedini (n. 6), n. 133; E. Espérandieu, *Recueil général des bas-reliefs, statues et bustes de la Gaule romaine*, III, Paris, 1910, 73, no. 1861.
  - 8 Vatican City, Lateran Museum, inv. no. 10315. 2.01m high, it was found in 1824 in the port of Ostia: see W. Helbig and H. Speier, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom*, Tübingen, 1963 (4th enlarged edn), vol. I, 798–9, no. 1118.
  - 9 Deciding which is the original composition (with the rock or with the prow, with or without the dolphin, etc.) is not easy. Paolo Moreno has listed a number of versions, and suggested a tentative chronology ('Una cretula di Cirene ed il Posidone del Laterano', *Quaderni di Archeologia della Libia* 8 (1976), 81–98). According to him, the depiction on the Medici cameo would be the earliest, whilst the Lateran sculpture would be a free (later) depiction. The obvious differences between the two are the torso (straight on the Medici figure), the trident-holding arm (raised high on the Medici figure), and the other hand (resting on the thigh on the Lateran figure).
  - 10 Eleusis Museum, inv. no. 5087; ht 54cm. The product of a Classicising Attic workshop, probably c. AD 140–60. Published: Ghedini (n. 6), ill. 8; K. Kourouniotes, *Eleusis. A Guide to the Excavations and Museum*, Athens, 1936, 89–90, ill. 33; E. Bartman, *Ancient Sculptural Copies in Miniature*, Leiden/New York/Cologne, 1992, 132–3.
  - 11 Denarius, 3.91g, sold Gemini (auction II, 11 January 2006, lot 278) and Stack's (ex Knobloch collection, May 1978, lot 739): M.H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, London, 1974, no. 511/3a; E.A. Sydenham, *The Coinage of the Roman Republic*, London, 1952, no. 1344; D.R. Sear, *The History and Coinage of the Roman Emperors 49–27 BC*, London, 1998, no. 334.
  - 12 *Classical Numismatic Group, auction Triton V, 15 January 2002*, lot 1847, denarius, 3.50g: Crawford (n. 11), no. 511/4a; Sydenham (n. 11), no. 1348; Sear (n. 11), no. 335; H.A. Seaby, *Roman Silver Coins*, vol. II, London, 1979 (3rd edn), no. 2.
  - 13 *Classical Numismatic Group, mail-bid auction 75, 23 May 2007*, lot 30, silver drachm, 4.55g (Attic standard), Second Punic War issue: M. Arslan, *Monetazione aurea ed argentea dei Bretti*, Glauz 4, Milan, 1989, dies 14/22; B. Head, *Historia Nummorum – Italy*, Oxford, 1911, no 1969; L. Naville, *Monnaies grecques antiques provenant de la collection de feu le Prof. S. Pozzi*, Geneva, 1920, no. 266; See F. Lenzi, 'Ripostiglio di monete d'argento dei Brutti', *Rassegna Numismatica* 11 (1914), 1–14.
  - 14 Demetrios Poliorketes (305–284 BC), silver tetradrachm, Amphipolis mint, c. 290–289 BC, 16.98g. *Bank Leu auction 83, 6 May 2002*, lot 202; E.T. Newell, *The Coinage of Demetrius Poliorketes*, London, 1927, no. 116 (obverse cxi).
  - 15 Foiled almandine garnet intaglio, set in gold as a seal, 20 x 14mm, from the Marlborough collection. See: J. Boardman (with D. Scarisbrick, C. Wagner and E. Zwierlein-Diehl), *The Marlborough Gems: Formerly at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire*, Oxford, 2009, cat. no. 402.
  - 16 Worn nicolo intaglio, 10 x 8mm, from the Marlborough collection: Boardman (n. 15), cat. no. 599.
  - 17 Glass cameo: H. 245mm, Max. diam. 177mm (93mm at mouth); handle: ht. 96mm, W. 18mm. Possibly from Rome, early Imperial (c. AD 5–25) or Augustan (27 BC–AD 14). Supposedly found in 1582 on the Monte del Grano, a property owned by Fabrizio Lazzaro, who claimed that it came from a sarcophagus containing the body of Severus Alexander (AD 222–35). Recorded in 1601 in the collection of Cardinal Francesco Maria Bourbon del Monte (1549–1626). Bought after del Monte's death by Cardinal Antonio Barberini (1607–71) for 500 scudi (or 200 only?), and first published in 1642 by Girolamo Teti in his *Aedes Barberinae*. Kept in the Barberini family until its purchase in 1778 by Sir William Hamilton, who sold it for about £2,000 to Margaret, dowager Duchess of Portland in 1784, in whose family it remained until its purchase for £5,000 by the British Museum in 1945 (inv. no. GR 1945.0927.1: H.B. Walters, *Catalogue of the Engraved Gems and Cameos, Greek, Etruscan and Roman, in the British Museum*, London, 1926, no. 4036). It has been most recently published by: K. Painter and D. Whitehouse, 'The History of the Portland Vase', *Journal of Glass Studies* 32 (1990), 24–84; S. Walker, *The Portland Vase*, London, 2004; H.-C. von Mosch, 'Outdoorsex' unter dem Pfirsichbaum? Die Portlandvase im Lichte einer sensationellen Neuentdeckung', *Quaderni Ticinesi. Numismatica e Antichità Classiche* 39 (2010), 195–223. I am grateful to Simone Michel for bringing the figure of Poseidon on the vase to my attention, and to Susan Walker for her help in writing this note. All interpretations of the scene have been contested; the figures have no attributes, and it is proving a challenge to identify the subject of the carving: Greek mythology, Roman historical allegory, universal theme? Most theories identify the 'Lateran' figure as Poseidon, but it has also been suggested that this bearded figure could be Augustus's mythical ancestor Anton (son of Herakles). Also, the snake has been believed to be Cleopatra's asp, and not a mythological figure such as Cecrops. Very interestingly, it has been (unconvincingly) argued that the Portland vase is in fact a forgery, dating back to the Renaissance (J. Eisenberg, 'The Portland Vase: a glass masterwork of the later Renaissance?', *Minerva*, 14.5, Sept./Oct. (2003), 37–41) – a thesis similar to that held for some of the medallions presented below in this paper.
  - 18 E. Simon, 'Amymone und Poseidon', *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. I.1 (1981), 745–7 (hereafter LIMC).
  - 19 It measures 24 x 18.9 x 4.8mm: P. Zazoff et al., *Antike Gemmen in Deutschen Sammlungen, Band IV: Hanover, Kestner-Museum*, Wiesbaden, 1975, cat. no. 244.
  - 20 Diam. 31mm; inscribed ΑΥΛΟC\ΛΕΞΑΕΠΙΟΙΕΙ. From the Barberini collection. See: A. Furtwängler, *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologisches Institut* IV (1899), pl. 2.3; Walters (n. 17), no. 3723; M.-L. Vollenweider, *Die Steinschneidekunst und ihre Künstler in spätrepublikanischer und augusteischer Zeit*, Baden-Baden, 1966, pl. 30, ill. 1–2. Son of Alexas (ΑΥΛΟC ΑΛΕΞΑ ΕΠΙΟΙΕΙ), Aulos was the brother of Quintus ([ΚΟ]ΙΝΤΟC ΑΛΕΞΑ ΕΠΙΟΙΕΙ). It is remarkable that Francesco Vettori (1693–1770) owned gems by both Aulos and Quintus: he owned not only the Venus and Cupid intaglio by Aulos, found in a sarcophagus in 1735 and purchased by Charles Townley (1737–1805) for £50 in 1773 (since 1815 in the British Museum [O.M. Dalton, *A Catalogue of the Engraved Gems of the Post-Classical Periods in the British Museum*, London, 1915, cat. no. 643, where it is erroneously described as a neo-classical forgery]), but also a magnificent carnelian engraved with a dancing figure of Mars by Quintus (*Christie's South Kensington. Antiquities. Including an English Private Collection of Ancient Gems, Part II, London, 29 October 2003*, lot 299 [Todhunter Collection]) probably wrongly believed to have been sold by Vettori to Gian Gastone de' Medici (1671–1737). No provenance is known for the Quintus, but it does not show the same fire damage as the Aulos intaglio, and it is unlikely that Vettori would not have given the place of discovery had he known it, so it must be ruled out that they were found together.
  - 21 A blue and white paste fragment, 19 x 21mm, found in Rome. See: E. Babelon, *Catalogue de la collection Pauvert de La Chapelle*, Paris, 1899, cat. no. 162; G. Richter, *Engraved Gems of the Romans. A Supplement to the History of Roman Art*, London, 1971, ill. 649.
  - 22 Amymone, the 'blameless' one, was one of the 50 daughters of Danaus, the brother of Aegyptus. Danaus married his 50 daughters to his brother's 50 sons and instructed them to kill their husbands on their wedding night. All complied but Amymone, who refused because her husband Lynceus honoured her wish to remain a virgin; thus she received the epithet 'blameless'. Amymone and Lynceus went on to found a dynasty of Argive kings that led to Danaë, the mother of Perseus. While at Argos she went to collect water and was rescued from a threatening satyr by Poseidon.
  - 23 G. Horster, *Statuen auf Gemmen*, Bonn, 1970, 46.
  - 24 Pausanias, *Description of Greece* (trans. W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Omerod), London, 1918, I.24.2–5.
  - 25 L. Stefani, 'Erklärung einiger im Jahre 1871 im Südlichen Russland gefundenen Kunstwerke', *Compte-rendu de la Commission Impériale Archéologique pour l'année 1872*, St Petersburg, 1875, 142.
  - 26 This reconstruction was started in Tennessee in the 1890s, by William Dinsmoor and Russell Hart. The current building dates from the 1920s.
  - 27 The marble statues were already fragmentary when seen by Jacques Carrey (1649–1726), even though he drew them before the 1687 Venetian bombardment. In 1749 Richard Dalton (c. 1715–91) could still see 12 figures on the west pediment when preparing his *A Series of engravings, representing views of places, buildings, antiquities, etc.* (London 1752). In any case, in the first years of the 19th century, when Giovanni Battista Lusieri (c. 1755–c. 1821) came

- to draw the Parthenon at Lord Elgin's request, he found only four figures left. See: O. Palagia, *The Pediments of the Parthenon*, Leiden, 1993, pl. 3; *eadem*, 'Fire from heaven: pediments and akroteria from the Parthenon', in J. Neils (ed.), *The Parthenon: from Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge, 2005, 228.
- 28 E. Simon, 'Poseidon', *LIMC*, vol. VII.1 (1994), 473.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 L. Beschi, *Pausania, Guida della Grecia Libro I, L'Attica*, Milan, 1982, 35: 'esso è una tarda realizzazione di tipo classicistico sia per la presenza di un albero naturalistico di ulivo, sia per il reimpiego di precedenti e noti tipi statuari'.
- 31 The groundwork for this research has been laid by Ludolf Stefani (n. 25), 5–142 (the section on gems is at 136–42), when he found, published and commented on the ancient literary sources. His work was continued by Carl Robert ('Das Schiedsgericht über Athena und Poseidon', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Institutes in Athen VII* (1882), 48–58. I am grateful to Elisabeth Furtwängler for finding a copy of this publication for me). Both Stefani and Robert also studied the iconography, but more examples have since been found, and the standard work on the west pediment of the Parthenon is now that by Olga Palagia (n. 27), whilst that on the other group is the article by Francesca Ghedini (n. 6), 12–36, pls 1–9).
- 32 Ghedini (n. 6), 17. I owe the translation into English, and many suggestions, to Massimiliano Tursi.
- 33 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (trans. A.D. Melville), Oxford, 1986, 6, 7off.
- 34 Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* (trans. J.G. Frazer), Cambridge (MA), 1921, 3, 14.1.
- 35 Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Collection of Greek and Roman Antiquities, Inv. No. IXb 8. Chalcedony, opaque white over uncoloured background, max. length 33mm, the break possibly reworked. See: F. Eichler and E. Kris, *Die Kameen im Kunsthistorischen Museum*, Vienna, 1927, cat. no. 37.
- 36 We should not be misled by its probably having been restored in the Renaissance, when it was given its perfectly smooth shape.
- 37 E. Zwierlein-Diehl, *Antike Gemmen in deutschen Sammlungen, Band II: Berlin*, Munich, 1969, no. 445 (white paste; 35.2 x 26.5 x 4.9mm).
- 38 Light yellow-brown paste, fragment; 19.0 x 18.2 x 3.8mm: E. Zwierlein-Diehl, *Die antiken Gemmen des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien*, vol. II, Munich, 1979, cat. no. 565 (inv. no. 1821.169 Nr25).
- 39 Utrecht, Geldmuseum, RCC inv. no. 129, bright red carnelian, 18.5 x 16mm. See: M. Maaskant-Kleibrink, *Catalogue of the Engraved Gems in the Royal Coin Cabinet*, The Hague, 1978, no. 1156; this intaglio, mistakenly said to be in The Hague, is nicely illustrated in Gallottini (n. 1), 65. Maaskant-Kleibrink compares it to a carnelian intaglio of c. 60–50 BC, depicting Asklepios and Hygieia, signed HEIOY, and measuring 19.0 x 13.8 x 6.1mm in Vienna (E. Zwierlein-Diehl, *Die antiken Gemmen des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien*, vol. I, Munich, 1973, cat. no. 205 [inv. IX.B.1550]).
- 40 Utrecht, Geldmuseum, RCC inv. no. 130, pale orange-red jasper, 14 x 11 x 2.5mm: Maaskant-Kleibrink (n. 39), cat. no. 749.
- 41 G. Richter, *Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Catalogue of Engraved Gems*, Rome, 1956, XXXIII.
- 42 Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 5689 (inv. Sangiorgio 117): 48 x 48mm, diam. of medallion 25mm, W. 81mm. See: E. Künzl, 'Cingula di Ercolano e Pompei', *Cronache Pompeiane* 3 (1977), 180, pl. 3. The drawing from G. Finati, *Real Museo Borbonico*, Naples, 1831, vol. VII, pl. 48 (Ferd. Mori del. et sculp.). Künzl's article was kindly drawn to my attention by Jeffrey Spier.
- 43 Horster (n. 23), 4.
- 44 The Venetian specimen is bi-metallic, as is the Viennese one (Certosini collection). The Roman specimen, from the Vitali collection, is in the Vatican. The London specimen is in the British Museum (Inv. no. 1857.0812.2). See: F. Gnechi, *I medaglioni romani, descritti ed illustrati*, Milan, 1912, vol. III, 20, cat. no. 100, pl. 146.8–9.
- 45 It is a magnificent, and unique, silver piece. It measures 33.5mm in diam. and weighs 24.11g, which is roughly the weight of 8 *denarii*. The coin is believed to have been struck in Rome. The dies have been attributed to the Alphaeus Master (i.e. possibly Antoninianus of Aphrodisias?) – notably on the basis of the very characteristic letter shapes. From the G. Mazzini collection (*Monete Imperiali Romane*, Milan, 1957, vol. 2, 92, pl. XXXII d. 475). After his death, it was acquired by Ratto in Milan and sold to Leo Biaggi (photo plate no. 2398) in the late 1950s. After his death, when his collection was dispersed, it returned to Ratto, and later appeared as *Numismatica Ars Classica (Auction 18, Zurich, 29 March 2000)*, lot 519; most recently, on 4 January 2009, it reappeared in *Heritage (Auction 3004, New York, 4 January 2009)*, lot 20075. I am grateful to Alan Walker for helping me to trace the coin's provenance, and for his advice on the Athenian coinage.
- 46 Caligula (AD 37–41), silver *tridrachm*, Crete. The British Museum owns a specimen: CM 1842.0726.4: W. Wroth, *British Museum. Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Crete and the Aegean Islands*, London, 1886, no. 2 (23mm, 7.55g); this provincial issue was kindly brought to my attention by Richard Abdy. On this coin, the image of Caligula with a sceptre likens him to the local 'Dictaeon Zeus' (Zeus of Mount Dicte). Hadrian is occasionally depicted as Zeus, with an aegis cloak, but never with a sceptre. The bust of the emperor holding a sceptre would become common under Probus.
- 47 Bronze medallion of Marcus Aurelius, Bonn, Rheinische Landesmuseum, inv. no. RLMB 3327, 39mm, 41.48g. See: F. Imhoof-Blumer and P. Gardner, 'A Numismatic Commentary on Pausanias', *Journal of Hellenistic Studies* (1885–7), 130, pl. Z.15; Ghedini (n. 6), ill. 2; C. Klages, 'Athena gegen Neptun. Ein Medaillon des Antoninus Pius', *Das Rheinische Landesmuseum Bonn. Berichte aus der Arbeit des Museums* 4 (1990), 55–7.
- 48 A. Birley, *Hadrian the Restless Emperor*, London, 2001, 220. Interestingly, the silver medallion does indeed portray Hadrian as Zeus.
- 49 *Classical Numismatic Group, auction 'Triton V'*, 15 January 2002, lot 363, 12.19g. Cf. Imhoof-Blumer and Gardner (n. 47), 130, pl. Z.11/12/14; J. Svoronos, *Trésor des monnaies d'Athènes*, Munich, 1923–26, pl. 89.6–10; J. Shear, 'The coins of Athens', *Hesperia* II.2 (1933), 276, cat. no. C.1; J. Kroll and A. Walker, *The Athenian Agora. XXVI. The Greek Coins*, Princeton, 1993, 174; H.-C. von Mosch, *Bilder zum Ruhme Athens*, Milan, 1999, 16. Based on a mistake by Josephine Shear ('Athenian imperial coinage', *Hesperia* V (1936), 297, pl. 8.1), Francesca Ghedini erroneously considered some of the Athenian coins to predate the gems, and therefore concludes that the gems were copied from the coins. Nonetheless, she knew that Shear was contradicting other numismatists (Ghedini [n. 6], n. 46), and Shear's theory is now rejected.
- 50 *Künker (Osnabrück), auction 124*, 16 March 2007, lot 7961, 7.61g. Cf. Imhoof-Blumer and Gardner (n. 47), pl. Z.16; Svoronos (n. 49), pl. 89.11; Kroll and Walker (n. 49), 261.
- 51 Cf. Shear 1936 (n. 49), 297, pls 8.9–8.11; Kroll and Walker (n. 49), 355.
- 52 *Gorny & Mosch (Munich), auction 159*, 8 October 2007, lot 300, 25.73g.
- 53 From the Panticapaeum Necropolis. Last quarter of the 4th century BC, 51cm high. Excavations of A.E. Lyutsenko, 1872.
- 54 Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, inv. no. 11095. See: Ghedini (n. 6), ill. 4.
- 55 Cordova, Museo Arqueológico. See: Ghedini (n. 6), ill. 3; C. Picard, *Manuel d'archéologie grecque. La sculpture*, vol. IV.2, Paris, 1963, 495, pl. 205; A. García y Bellido, *Esculturas romanas de España y Portugal*, Madrid, 1949, pl. 409. Picard also refers to a relief from Smyrna, but gives no details.
- 56 See, S. Dumitrescu, *Tezaurul de la Tauteni-Bihor*, Oradea, 1973, pls 34–42.
- 57 Sold at the Parke-Bernet Galleries in New York (*Part II of the Notable Art Collection belonging to the Estate of the Late Joseph Brummer*, 11–14 May 1949, lot 227), it was formerly in the collection of Prince Nicholas Gagarine (1822–1905). Mistakenly said to be at the Walters Art Museum, where exhibited in 1947, by Gallottini (n. 1), 70, pl. 3. See: *Early Christian and Byzantine Art. An Exhibition held at the Baltimore Museum of Art April 25–June 22* (exh. cat., Walters Art Gallery), Baltimore, 1947, 113, no. 551, pl. 67; J. Spier, 'Late Antique cameos', in M. Henig and M. Vickers (eds), *Cameos in Context*, Oxford and Houlton, pl. 3.7; *idem*, *Late Antique and Early Christian Gems*, Wiesbaden, 2007, no. 759.
- 58 Ghedini (n. 6), n. 64, believes that these two figures could be the Dioscuri; she noticed that Poseidon was associated with the Dioscuri on the lost base of Poseidon's statue at the Isthmus of Corinth (Pausanias II.1.7–9; see, C. Picard, *Revue d'Etudes Latines* 35 (1957), 299).
- 59 A similar hypothesis (that the Medici type is a simplified one) was made by Goffredo Bendinelli (*Sulle tracce di opere fidiache andate perdute*, Turin, 1954), who saw the Madrid crater as being more

- complex and the most original, since it is the oldest version of the composition.
- 60 As Antje Krug kindly remarked after my paper at the British Museum, the Byzantine court liked relics, but not especially ancient jewels, and we have no reason to think that the cameo ever travelled to the Eastern Empire.
- 61 On the subject of gift giving and gem replicas in the Renaissance, see: L. Clark, 'Transient possessions: circulation, replication, and transmission of gems and jewels in Quattrocento Italy', *Journal of Early Modern History* 15.3 (2011), 185–221.
- 62 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des médailles, 95 x 78mm including gold mount, mid-13th century. It was in the royal collection in 1379, from which it passed to 'une des plus anciennes églises de France', from which it was acquired c. 1685 according to Marc-Antoine Oudinet (Keeper, 1689–1712). As is well known, Hohenstaufen gems have long been misidentified: for example, the Paris cameo was considered by Gisella Richter (n. 21), no. 65, to be Roman and to have simply 'suffered some retouching' in the Renaissance, whilst Erika Zwierlein-Diehl (n. 38), cat. no. 565, considered it to be possibly Claudian and heavily re-engraved after antiquity. See: J. Labarte, *Inventaire du mobilier de Charles V, roi de France*, Paris, 1879, 308: 'Item, un cadran d'or, où il a ung grant camahieu, ouquel il a ung homme, une femme et ung arbre ou mylieu, et aux cins dudit cadran, a, par embas, ung saphir et ung balay, chascun environné de trois perles, et deux perles à l'un des costez, pesant quatre onces cinq estellins'; E. Babelon, *Catalogue des camées antiques et modernes de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Paris, 1897, cat. no. 27; Dacos (n. 3), pl. 62; R. Haussherr et al., *Die Zeit der Staufer*, Stuttgart, 1977, vol. 1, cat. no. 886, 693–4, vol. 2, pl. 660; R. Distelberger, *Die Kunst des Steinschnitts*, Vienna, 2002, 60–2, cat. no. 17).
- 63 Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Inv. no. XII 143; 35 x 26mm, 62 x 50mm including gold mount. The mount is typical of the courtly jewellery made in Prague for the Habsburgs around 1600; it first appears in a 1750 inventory. See: Haussherr (n. 62), vol. 1, cat. no. 887, 694–5, vol. 2, pl. 659, vol. 5, 497; Dacos (n. 3), pl. 63.
- 64 I am most grateful to Shua Amorai-Stark for examining the Hebrew inscription engraved in Sephardic letters on this cameo. It reads וְכִי תֵאָדָה הוֹיָא לְעֵינַיִם וְהָמִיד הָעֵץ וְתָרָא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל and is the first half of a sentence in Genesis 3:6. A study of the script reveals spelling mistakes and miscomposed letters, due to the incompetence of the engraver (and/or the incorrectness of his model). Indeed, and I quote Dr Amorai-Stark, 'the mistakes in the writing of certain letters, for example of the ש (sh) in הָאִשָּׁה (the woman) or the ט (t) in טוֹב (good); and some of the words are divided into units all show that the engraver did not know Hebrew', which indicate that neither engraver nor patron were Jews. The tradition of non-Jews introducing Hebrew words into works of art intensified in the late Renaissance (Rembrandt's paintings are an example), and Dr Amorai-Stark considers that this inscription is likely to have been added in the 16th or 17th century, and is not contemporary with the engraving of the gem.
- 65 Dacos (n. 3), pl. 81. This relief was formerly considered to be by Donatello (c. 1386–1466), because of Vasari having written that 'in the first court of the Casa Medici [i.e. the Palazzo Riccardi] there are eight marble medallions containing representations of antique cameos' by him (G. Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, London, 1970, vol. I, 306). Some scholars have believed that it is in fact by Donatello's studio (U. Wester and E. Simon, 'Die reliefmedaillons im Hofe des Palazzo Medici zu Florenz', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* VII–I (1965), 15–91), but it now seems that they are not related to Donatello at all: indeed, on 2 July 1452 Maso di Bartolomeo (1406–56) was paid for drawing these medallions (I. Hyman, *Fifteenth century Florentine Studies: the Palazzo Medici and a Ledger for the Church of San Lorenzo*, New York and London, 1977, 208–9).
- 66 A. Chabouillet, *Catalogue général et raisonné des camées et pierres gravées de la Bibliothèque impériale*, Paris, 1858, cat. no. 425: 'imitation grossière'; Babelon (n. 62), cat. no. 462: 'travail médiocre'.
- 67 E. Zwierlein-Diehl, 'Tellus and the Seasons: Gem Copies of a Roman Medallion type', in M. Henig and D. Plantzos (eds), *Classicism to Neo-classicism: Essays dedicated to Gertrud Seidmann*, Oxford, 1999, 67–77.
- 68 Ex-Blacas collection, 1866. Cast Cades VI-78. See: Dalton (n. 20), cat. no. 591. I should add to this list of 16th-century works of art and gems that the reverse of a 1527 bronze medal by Giovanni Maria Pomedelli (1478/9 – after 1537) for Giovanni Ermo (c. 1483–1542) is inspired by the Athena and Poseidon scene (J. Klauß, *Die Medaillen-sammlung Goethes*, Band I, Berlin, 2000, 33, no. 40; J.G. Pollard, *Renaissance Medals*, Washington DC, 2007, vol. 1, 217, cat. no. 200). I am not certain whether the reverse of a 1572 bronze medal by Antonio Abondio (1538–91) for Jacopo Nizzola da Trezzo (1514?–89) is also inspired by the same design (S. Scher, *The Currency of Fame: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance*, New York, 1994, 170, ill. 60).
- 69 On the subject of *daktyliothecæ*, see the exhibition catalogue by V. Kockel and D. Gäppler, *Daktyliotheken, Götter und Caesaren aus der Schublade: Antike Gemmen in Abdrucksammlungen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 2006.
- 70 No signature is visible on the cast, and the ascription to Cerbara is based on the hand-written catalogue by Tommaso Cadès (book 70, no. 659); I would like to thank Getrud Platz for confirming this. According to the biographies by Forrer, the theme of this gem seems closer to the type of subjects engraved by his brother Niccolò Cerbara (1793–1869). See: G. Lippold, *Gemmen und Kameen des Altertums und der Neuzeit*, Stuttgart, 1922, pl. CII-4; L. Pirzio Biroli Stefanelli, 'Fortuna delle gemme Farnese nel XVIII e XIX secolo', in C. Gasparri (ed.), *Le Gemme Farnese*, Naples, 1994, pl. 144; *eadem*, *La collezione Paoletti II*, forthcoming, VI-232.
- 71 From the collection of Raphael Esmerian (1903–76), then S.J. Phillips, then Richard Trescott, now in a private collection. The intaglio measures 24.6 x 19.4 x 6.6mm; 3.54g.
- 72 This applies to the privately owned piece: the British Museum gem is too worn to be certain, and the picture in Lippold is not detailed enough.
- 73 Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, AS inv. no. XII 683, *Catalogue des pierres gravées par Louis Sirtiès orfèvre du roi de France*, Florence, 1757, p. 30, no. 38. See: A. Bernhard-Walcher, 'Geschrittene Steine des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts in der Antikensammlung des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 59.2 (1996), 163. Mention should also be made of a neo-classical basso-rilievo with Athena and Poseidon, in the fourth wall of the entrance hall of the Villa Borghese (Rome), commissioned by Marcantonio IV Borghese (1730–1800), which features 'cameo' stuccoes by Vincenzo Pacetti (1746–1820), Francesco Carradori (1747–1825), Massimiliano Laboureur (1767–1831), Tommaso Righi (1727–1802), Luigi Salimei (1736–1817) and A. Brunetti.
- 74 See: *Catalogue des Pierres Gravées Antiques de S.A. le Prince Stanislas Poniatowski*, Florence, 1830–2, cat. no. I.218; J. Prendeville, *Explanatory catalogue of the proof-impressions of the antique gems possessed by the late Prince Poniatowski, and now in the possession of John Tyrrell, ... an essay on ancient gems and gem-engraving*, London, 1841, cat. no. 143.
- 75 Poniatowski (n. 74), cat. no. I.217; Berlin Daktyliothek Poniatowski (a set of 419 plaster impressions presented to the King of Prussia by the prince himself in 1832), no. 32; *Christie's, London, sale of the Poniatowski gems, 29 April–22 May 1839*, cat. no. 146, bought by Norton; S.J. Phillips, *The Wellington Gems published on the occasion of an exhibition*, London, 1977, cat. no. 418.9.