

Multiple Portraits of Members of the Roman Imperial Families in Provincial Coinage*

It all started outside Rome. First coins depicting more than one portrait of representatives of the Roman administrative and political world appeared in the late forties of the late Roman republic in several western and eastern mints.

The coins depicting Octavian together with Divus Caesar, with their portraits separated on the two sides of a coin or together *capita opposita* on the obverse, are well-known: the “Divos-Julios” coinage consists of a series of leaded bronzes struck for and in the name of Octavian. The coins are supposed to originate from an unidentified mint in Italy sometime between 40 and 37 BC.¹ The display of the second triumvirate with more than one of the triumvirs was likewise to be found only on coins minted outside Rome².

Mark Antony inaugurated the depiction of a portrait of a living female Roman and that of a child on a coin, but both outside Rome. Marc Antony had issued the so-called “imperial types” including the “fleet coinage” in Achaia with his own bust and those of Octavian and Octavia³. Some coins of these issues of Antony’s Achaian mint present Antony and Octavia facing each other on the obverse⁴. Another obverse of this series even has Antony’s and Octavian’s jugate busts facing Octavia. In Fulviapolis (Eumeneia), however, Antony’s second wife Fulvia is depicted as Nike on the obverse of coins⁵, and her bust is on a reverse in Syrian Tripolis (RPC 4509). On each of the obverses, Marc Antony’s head is depicted⁶. Antony’s eponymous son is portrayed on the reverse of an *aureus*, on the obverse his father’s head⁷. The golden coins were minted somewhere in the east, in a mint moving with Antony in 34 BC.

After this short period of the late Roman Republic, the depiction of female Romans and, later on, also of children continued not only on coins minted outside Rome. After a short period of reticence, the portraits of living males and females on coins were also struck

in the mint of Rome and its branches like Lugdunum. Since Augustan times, the following three coin motives had become common in Roman imperial as well as in provincial coinage during the three centuries of imperial Rome: 1) *capita opposita* on the obverse depicting the ruling emperor and one member of the family; 2) jugate heads on the obverse depicting the ruling emperor and one member of the family; 3) portraits or busts on both sides of a coin with the emperor on the obverse and one member or sometimes more members of the family on the reverse.

These three groups of types with portraits coming out of the Roman mint –and of course there are many other types of issues of the Roman imperial mint which focus on the imperial family– have with their accompanying legends the explicit objective to propagate the *fecunditas* and *concordia* of the family, the harmony within the family, the settled rules for succession by the *providentia* of the emperor, and thus the *felicitas* temporum and the *securitas* for the empire.

However, such explicit allusions to succession do not dominate the legends on coins of the provincial coinage with imperial family members on display. Contrary to the coinage of the Roman mint, in the provincial cities’ issues coins do bear busts or portraits of more than one

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1. RPC 620-621, dated to 38 BC.

2. RRC 495 (42 BC), 517/1-2 (41 BC), 528/1-3 (39 BC) of the mints of Lepidus or moving with M. Antonius respectively. The three jugate heads on ephesian coins are without parallel, RPC I 2569-2573. Another example with three jugate heads and III VIRI RC is taken by RPC and others as a modern forgery, cf. RPC p. 432.

3. RPC I 1453-1470, Octavia.

4. RPC I 1453, 1455, 1459, 1462, 1464, 1468.

5. RPC I 3139 sq.

6. Cf. M. Crawford’s discussion in RRC p. 748 note 6 of portrait-like heads of Victoria, which might display Fulvia.

7. RRC 541/1-2 = BMCRR East 173, 174.

member of the imperial family without the emperor on show and without explicit allusions to succession of the family and duration of the empire. They may be characterised by the following three categories: 1) *capita opposita* on the obverse with two or more members of the imperial family without the emperor; 2) jugate heads on the obverse with two members of the imperial family without the emperor; 3) portraits or busts on both sides of members of the imperial family without the emperor.

In contrast to the coinage of the Roman mint, these motives without the emperor are prominent in the provincial coinage.

In the provinces there was a wide variety in the ways, in which the imperial-family themes and especially the follow-up regulations of the ruling dynasty were perceived, as it is evident by the choices of different coin types in the provinces. Some of the motives on coins, that will be presented as examples, are widespread, others are singular. Nevertheless, on the whole, the phenomenon of multiple portraits is common and popular in municipal coinages of most of the provinces.

Some early examples of the presentation of more than one member of the newly established imperial family are *denarii* of imperial coinage with Augustus' portrait on the obverse and Iulia's portrait between Gaius' and Lucius' heads on the reverse⁸. However, only few issues of imperial coinage had Augustus on one side and Gaius and Lucius on the other⁹. Hence, this kind of ensemble design was widespread in the municipal coinage all over the Empire. In cities of the provinces of Hispania Tarraconensis, Africa Proconsularis, Achaia, Bithynia et Pontus, and Asia, Gaius and Lucius are combined together with Augustus. As in the Roman mint, Augustus is on the obverse whereas both princes are on the reverse in most cases¹⁰. But some pictures with the imperial family, especially with Gaius and Lucius on coins minted outside Rome, have no parallel in the Roman mint. An issue of Magnesia ad Sipylum, c. 2 BC, has Augustus and Livia with jugate heads on the obverse, and on the reverse are the heads of Gaius and Lucius Caesar, facing each other¹¹. Sometimes two portraits without the emperor, one on the obverse the other on the reverse, were depicted as for example in Pergamum Caius and Lucius¹² under Augustus, and later also Germanicus and Drusus¹³, or Britannicus and Nero¹⁴ in tiberian times. Other issues from Spain and the East have Gaius and Lucius as a pair with jugate or opposing heads on the obverse without the emperor, and few have Gaius Caesar alone with Livia¹⁵.

Germanicus, on whose death and posthumous honours we have learnt a lot through the recently found and published bronze tablets from Spain¹⁶, was represented in a different way in Rome and the imperial coinage on the one hand, and in the provinces and the local issues on the other during his lifetime. Not only in Spanish Caesaraugusta but in 19 other provincial mints, Germanicus was commemorated quite often in Tiberian times, though he was absent of the coinage of the imperial mints during Tiberius' reign. Nonetheless, in the following years Germanicus was not as present as Agrippina Maior in Caligula's issues of the imperial mints. Walter Trillmich¹⁷ underlined in his study of the portraits of Agrippina Maior, that the imperial gold, silver, and bronze coinage of Caligula did not have a special commemorative character: the depiction of Agrippina was just one integral part of the Caligulean coinage-programme. It is obvious that Caligula aimed to propagate his Julian descent of Augustus, his mother Agrippina Maior being the living link. Therefore, the image and the name of Germanicus, his dead father, the Claudian link, could be forced back slowly in the imperial coinage¹⁸.

Trillmich noted some other important differences between imperial and local coinage in the times of Caligula and Claudius. As an example consider Antonia: in Roman coinage her portraits are restrained to minting in the reign of Claudius whereas in

8. Denarii minted in Rome: BMC Mattingly I, 21 nr. 106; 22 nr. 108-109; Girad I, Nr. 526. 529. 530. The responsible IIIvir monetalis is C. Marius, C.f., Tro(mentina tribus).
9. BMC Mattingly I, 88 ff. Nr. 513; vgl. Mlasowsky, A.: Nomini ac fortunae Caesarum proximi. Die Sukzessionspropaganda von Augustus bis Nero im Spiegel der Reichsprägung und der archäologischen Quellen, *Jdl* 111, 1996, 249 ff., esp. 290 sq.
10. RPC I, 98 (Iulia Traducta), 210, 211 (Tarraco), 709 (Hippo Regia, 6/5 BC), 775, 779 (Hadrumetum), 1136 (Corinth, 2/1 BC), 2010A (Apameia), 2117-2122 (Sinope), 2337 (Methymna), 2563 (Nicaea Cilbianorum).
11. RPC I, 2449.
12. RPC I, 2363, 2365.
13. RPC I, 2367.
14. RPC I, 2371.
15. Cf. D. Boschung, Gens Augusta. Untersuchungen zu Aufstellung, Wirkung und Bedeutung der Statuengruppen des julisch-claudischen Kaiserhauses, München 2002, 159 with notes 960 (Gaius and Lucius), 962 (Gaius with Augustus in Thessalonike, Tralles, Nysa, Antiochia on the Maeander, Apameia and Cyprus) and 963 (Gaius with Livia in Tralleis, RPC I 2648).
16. Cf. Eck, W.; Caballos, A. und Fernández, F.: *Das senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre*, München, 1996.
17. Trillmich, W.: *Familienpropaganda der Kaiser Caligula und Claudius. Agrippina Maior und Antonia Augusta auf Münzen*, Berlin, 1978.
18. Trillmich (note 17) 39 ff., 46 ff., 181 with note.

Corinth, Thessalonica, and perhaps Clazomenae, she was already depicted during the reign of Caligula¹⁹.

Another imagery, without the reigning emperor but with more than one imperial woman on display on a coin, is also reduced to the local coinage of the provinces. It is the display of more than one imperial woman in one issue. In Pergamum, e.g., Livia, wife of Augustus, and Iulia, wife of Agrippa, are assembled on one coin²⁰. In Apameia, Agrippina maior is depicted together with her three daughters, Caligula's sisters²¹. As singular is the representation of a bust of Cæsonia, Caligula's wife, on the obverse, together with her daughter Drusilla, a standing figure on the reverse, minted in the Judean kingdom in 40/41 AD²². Some years later during the reign of Claudius, a bust of Messalina, Claudius' wife, was only once combined with a bust of Antonia minor, Claudius mother, on a local eastern issue²³. All these combinations of portraits were never displayed in the coinage of the city of Rome.

Even if combined with the emperor, you will not find two imperial women on a coin coming from the Roman mint.

Of course, there is at least one exception to this rule. On an *aureus* minted in Rome, there are two portraits of imperial women. On the obverse the bust of Plotina and on the reverse the bust of the empress Matidia are depicted²⁴. This exceptional *aureus* type with Plotina and Matidia is singular for the Roman mint. I do not know of any other imperial coin of this type with two imperial women and no emperor on display²⁵, though there are medallions and cameos which have such an iconography²⁶.

The depiction of more than one living imperial woman on a coin or to have the subject of living imperial women on obverse and reverse without explicit illusions (in word or picture) to the reigning emperor does in general not coincide with the images and propagation on imperial coins. Concluding from the numismatic evidence, it seems likely that at least in some of the cities of the western and eastern provinces the imperial women as well as male members of the imperial family were seen as full representatives of the new power in Rome. This form of representation was only of relevance in the first and early second centuries. Though under the severan dynasty inscriptions in cities of the provinces quite often named more than one imperial woman (Iulia Domna and Plautilla for example) and the Caesars, there are not two of these empresses or an empress with the *Caesares* without the emperor on one coin, neither in the imperial issues nor in the provincial coinages.

The evidence presented here illustrates the recently published hypotheses expressed by Peter Weiß²⁷ and Johannes Nollé²⁸. Considering the influence of Roman authority on provincial coinage in the East, they demonstrate that a permission of the emperor or governor in general was not necessary for minting bronze coins²⁹.

The cities were not only quite free to choose from a wide range of themes and types of the imperial denarii and other denominations as paragons for their bronze coinage. They could also have or keep their own subjects, the so called "pseudo-autonomous" coinage. Moreover, even in their choice of imperial themes, the local aristocracies of the cities had their own focal points. The local elites' understanding of governance and monarchy as seen in the varieties and freedom in the displays and presentations of members of the imperial family in Asia Minor and the south-eastern provinces might reflect an echo of their understanding of a different (Hellenistic ?) kingship.

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19. Trillmich (note 17) Nr. 1 = RPC I, 1176; Trillmich (note 17) Nr. 6 = RPC I, 1573-1575; Trillmich (note 17) Nr. 8 = RPC I, 2501, in contrast to the "vielleicht" Caligulean assignment of Trillmich's interpretation of the last coin, the editors of RPC classify this coin to the reign of Claudius. For additional differences in the presentation of Antonia on Roman and provincial coins cf. N. Kokkinos, *Antonia Augusta. Portrait of a Great Roman Lady*, London², 2002, 87-104.
 20. RPC I, 2359 On the obverse Livia is presented as Hera, on the reverse Julia as Aphrodite. That makes it likely that the issue was out before 2 B.C., when Julia fell in disgrace.
 21. RPC I, 2012. On the obverse are busts of Agrippina, Drusilla and Iulia, on the reverse Agrippina is seated, the coins legend describing her as *Agrippina C. Caesaris Aug. Germanici mater*.
 22. RPC I, 4977. The coin was minted by order of Agrippa I of Iudaea.
 23. RPC I, 3657 (Caesarea in Cappadocia).
 24. RIC II Nr. 344 Nr. 34. The aureus is convincingly dated to 117/8 A.D.
 25. A silver denarius of Diva Faustina (maior) und Faustina minor (RIC III 76 Nr. 407a) is no exception to the rule, as there is only one living member of the imperial family on display. The denare has the legend *Diva Faustina* on the obverse and *Faustina Augusta* on the reverse. Both have their busts depicted on each side respectively. It is only known from one single coin, which has been in an auction of Naville in 1925. No photo seems to exist.
 26. E.g. cf. medallions of Marc Aurel's children Commodus and Annus Verus, which were minted in 166, with busts of the five-year-old Commodus on the obverse and his younger brother Annus Verus on the reverse, when both had been declared *Caesares*. Nevertheless, the boys are not depicted together (without the emperor) neither in imperial nor in provincial currency-coinage.
 27. Weiß, P.: Zu Münzprägungen mit den Formeln ΑΙΤΗΣΑΜΕΝΟΥ und ΕΙΣΑΝΤΕΙΑΝΤΟΣ, in: *Asia Minor Studien* 8, Bonn 1992, 167-180.
 28. Nollé, J.: Städtisches Prägerecht und römische Kaiser. Suchten die Städte Kleinasien beim römischen Kaiser um das Recht nach Bronzemünzen zu prägen?, *RIN* 95, 1993, 487-504.
 29. However, in late-Augustan and Tiberian times, the emperor Augustus' and the proconsuls' permissions in context with minting are well attested on coins from western mints.