

Collection "*de face*", part 1

The fascination of frontal coin depictions

"Frontality is (...) not an arbitrary posture. It is filled with a certain, intense will to express; it therefore has a certain meaning." (Zaloscer 1969)

Coins with perspectival or frontal depictions of heads have a special appeal. On the one hand, this is because the depiction of a face *de face* demands special skill and sensitivity from the die cutter. On the other hand, the viewer feels particularly drawn to an image that speaks to him directly, i.e. "eye to eye".

The masterful control of this perspective can lead to spectacular highlights of coin art such as Kimon's Arethusa *de face*, the Apollo of Amphipolis and the sublime portrait of the provincial emperor Postumus. On the downside are derailed facial features and flattened noses, as we know them from the frontal mass coinage of Rhodes, for example. The risk of failure during die-cutting and of unsightly wear due to circulation is exceptionally high with *de-face depictions*. Taken together, these two reasons are probably decisive for the fact that the frontal perspective was only used on a small proportion of ancient coins, if we exclude the late Roman-Byzantine coins for the time being.

However, there is probably a third reason for the reluctance to depict gods and rulers *de face*. We will come across this in the course of our cursory examination.

The third dimension

The rarity and attractiveness of coins with frontal depictions makes them a popular collector's item. Surprisingly, however, only one collection has ever been offered that is explicitly dedicated to this subject, even though all major collections of Greek coins have a greater or lesser proportion of such coins. The collection "Facing Heads on Greek Coins" by David Herman was auctioned by the Classical Numismatic Group (CNG) in 2006 and 2007, spread over three auctions (cf. no. 1037). It contained 344 Greek coins, including almost all the main types of this genre (the basic essay on frontal depictions by Agnes Baldwin from 1908 comprises 363 numbers).

The present collection, comprising 507 examples, is based on an approach that differs from that of Herman and Baldwin. It began with the question of the representational intention of late antique frontality: what was to be expressed by the choice of frontal representation that did not appear possible in profile? To answer this question, it was necessary to gain an overview of these depictions, from the beginnings of Greek coinage to the Byzantine period. The scope was broadened not only in terms of time, but also in terms of representation. Coin images with depictions in half profile were considered, as well as those in so-called three-quarter profile and full frontal. In addition, not only heads and busts were collected in this style, but also full-figure depictions in which the face can be recognized in its entirety and not, as is the rule, turned away from the viewer. The decisive factor is that both eyes of the person or animal depicted are recognizable. This gives the coin image an effect that differs fundamentally from that of profile depictions. A frontal coin image has a third-dimensional effect and speaks to the viewer much more directly. Many of these images have a very haunting effect, some are almost hypnotic.

The effect of the gaze

It is only when we realize how important the depiction of the eyes is that we come to understand the ancient view of the phenomenon. Even today, we know from contemporary literature, poetry, cinema and pop poetry the most elaborate descriptions of the beauty of human eyes and the intensity of our gazes when we are in certain states of mind and spirit. But this is only a vague reflection of what ancient people, much more sensitive to detail, were able to recognize in the eyes. Not only could the Gorgon Medusa kill everything and everyone with her gaze (more precisely: petrify them), but Zeus also possessed a fiery gaze with which he could direct (and destroy) things and from which nothing on earth escaped - and he passed this quality on to most of his descendants, as we learn in passing from the Library of Apollodorus. The dangerousness of predators such as lions was not only based on their sharp claws and fangs, but was also reflected in their gaze, which was also described as "fiery" and with which they could decisively weaken their victims even before direct contact. And even some people had particularly penetrating eyes. It is recorded of Augustus that he loved it when someone could not withstand his gaze, which is why Suetonius attributed an inherent divine power to his gaze (*in esse quidam divini vigoris*, Aug. 79,3), and a panegyrist raved about the radiant brilliance of Constantine the Great's eyes (Pan. lat. VI/VII, 17,1).

There is a great deal of evidence of this kind among ancient writers, and it is all based on an assumption that modern people must first realize: While we today take it for granted that the eye is a receptive organ that receives light rays, for the ancients it was exactly the opposite: for them, seeing meant actively emitting visual rays. The majority of ancient scholars regarded the eye as an organ that produced light rays in order to virtually scan the environment with them (for fundamental information on this, see Simon 1992). Galenus, for example, provides specific information on how a "cone of vision" can be calculated: "When lions, leopards and other animals whose eyes are sufficiently luminous turn their pupil towards their nose at night, a circle of light appears on it, so that it can be calculated that the circle of light measures the amount by which the cone of vision has increased in distance from the pupil, the size of the circle being proportional to the distance from the pupil." (Gal. de plac. Hipp. et Plat. p. 613). It was not until the modern optics of Johannes Kepler, developed under the influence of Arab physicists, that the modern understanding of vision as a receptive process made its breakthrough. However, superstitious notions of the "evil eye" and even gaze magic remained unaffected by this until the recent past. This ancient understanding of seeing is most comparable to our talk of the "piercing" or "penetrating" gaze and can be felt in everyday life when you feel that a gaze is literally "piercing" you, or that you feel a gaze resting on you without immediately discovering the observer.

Previous research

Hardly any of the aspects addressed here are considered in the modern literature on frontal depictions on coins. The state of research on this subject is in any case quite poor: the last monograph on frontal coin images appeared in 1979, and after that only a handful of essays touched on the subject.

The "**law of frontality**" formulated by the Danish art historian Julius Lange, who died in 1896, was influential for a long time. It was mainly based on observations of Egyptian and Greek archaic sculpture, but claimed to be valid not only for all Mediterranean cultures, but also for the American cultures before their destruction by Europe. The period before 500 BC

(for Asia Minor even before its conquest by Alexander) was therefore the "introductory period", characterized throughout by "les mêmes traits d'impérfection et les mêmes limites étroites" in the depiction of the human form. This "primitive" mode of representation can be described as frontality, by which Lange meant sculptures and reliefs that are oriented towards the front view and are characterized by the greatest symmetry.

¹Although Lange's assertion defies all evidence (the art of the Palaeolithic knows frontality at best in sculpture, and the reliefs of the Old Kingdom are less strongly frontally oriented than those of the later Egyptian periods) and more complex descriptions of so-called primitive sculpture were very soon proposed, which allowed both a more precise analysis and more precise classifications, Lange's "law" shaped both art history and archaeology until well after the end of the Second World War. It was too appealing for the intellectual elite of the colonial powers to attribute "quelque chose de bestial" to "primitive peoples" or "Orientals" as well as their art, and the possibility of effortless categorization into East/West or early/late was too seductive.

A differentiated and more productive view of frontality developed where no direct reference to Lange seemed appropriate due to the smaller format. The first systematic examination of the "figures looking out of the frame of the picture", i.e. frontality in two-dimensional art genres, which also tended to be small-format, can be found in Moritz Hoernes' "Urgeschichte der bildenden Kunst". In it, the Viennese prehistorian offers a very subtle compilation of frontal depictions on Greek vases. In his analysis of frontality, Hoernes identifies the "formation of the eyes", which creates a "fascinating impression", as a decisive characteristic. As frontality is used quite rarely on the black-figure vases and still only sporadically on the older red-figure vases, Hoernes is able to name "perfectly clear and distinct reasons" for this. After the Second World War, such detailed studies were replaced by interdisciplinary, diachronic studies such as art historian Dagobert Frey's "The Demony of the Gaze", whose starting point is the effect of the gaze and which paved the way for a more differentiated and less prejudiced view of frontality. Finally, the French polymath Jean Paris was the first to use the analysis of the gaze to open up new levels of meaning in art. In his study "L'espace et le regard", he subjected a series of "classical" works of painting to a structural analysis based on the gaze of the sitter. Neither this work nor the method found much resonance in cultural studies.

Archaeology, on the other hand, has long been preoccupied with the question of the origin of frontality. Today, it is largely limited to classifying objects on the basis of frontality (e.g. East/West, folk culture/high culture), although it should be noted that such attributions can easily fall into Lange's trap and run the risk of using Orientalist clichés.

Numismatic research on frontal depictions largely follows the path of archaeological discourse. Even if lucid detailed observations can be found (almost always when reference is made to ancient literature - which is rarely the case), numismatics is no less strongly characterized by modern, aesthetic conjectures, sometimes combined with ancient stereotypes.

¹ Fechheimer 1914 and Einstein 1915.

A "new look" at frontal representations

If, on the other hand, you study the ancient theory of vision, you will gain a new understanding of frontal coin images. When rays of light emerged from the eyes, it becomes understandable that the stylistic device of eyes looking out of the coin image was used with extreme caution and that not all objects could (or were allowed to) be depicted in this way: It can be inferred from ancient literature that images (be they statues, paintings or, indeed, coin images) were not regarded as mere ab-images of what was depicted, but that they largely *embodied* what was depicted, i.e. should at least be understood as *representing* it. In this respect, classical Greek art is characterized by a certain shyness towards the powerful frontal representation, which can even extend to the tabooing of certain subjects.

At the same time, clear prevalences emerge as to which deities, animals and numina were preferably depicted in such a way that their eyes were easily recognizable. The elaborately created illustrated plates, which you will find on the following pages, clearly show this:

Depicted there are the frontal representations, sorted by object and earliest occurrence.

Lions and Gorgoneia are therefore the first (and most frequent!) frontal depictions, followed by deities such as Apollo, Dionysian figures, river gods and nymphs.

This synopsis, which largely coincides with Baldwin's essay (which, however, did not take the Gorgoneia into account) and Erhart's monograph, also enables an initial categorization.

Preference is given to frontal depictions: **Demonic** beings (e.g. Gorgo, lions, Bes, Sphinx), **deities of light** (Apollo and his lion; Artemis, Helios, Astarte), **ecstatic** deities and beings (Dionysus, Silen, Pan, nymphs), particularly **powerful** deities and beings of nature (Heracles, river gods, bulls) and particularly **charismatic** beings (emperors, Christ). In addition, there is a category that was very popular in ancient studies for a long time, but has been somewhat forgotten today: the **chthonic** deities and beings, i.e. those who are imagined as originating from the earth and in whom the animistic nature of Greek myth is particularly evident. These include Demeter, Persephone, Poseidon, but also heroes such as Hector and the Dioscuri. Hermes, if he is associated with the underworld, can also be seen as chthonic, as can other Olympian deities.

Surprisingly, although Zeus had bequeathed his "fiery" eyes to his descendants, the latter do not appear through increased frontal depictions, even though, with the exception of Hephaestus and Hestia (rarely found on coins anyway), all Olympians are represented. This may be due to a certain reverence for the power of the highest deities - comparable to the fact that the (Roman) emperor is only increasingly shown *de face* from the 4th century onwards. If the Olympians are shown *de face* after all, which occurs particularly frequently with Athena and Zeus, a special aspect may be conveyed, which in the case of Zeus is perhaps also to be sought in the chthonic, as indicated by the ram's horns of Zeus Ammon, when Zeus is depicted frontally several times.

Narrative aspects of frontal coin images

In addition to these "intrinsic" aspects, i.e. those that are predetermined by the nature of the object depicted, other motifs can be identified that prompted the "coin designers" (not idiosyncratic die cutters) to choose the frontal view.

Hoernes already recognized the following narrative motifs for frontal depictions in classical vase painting:

- a) Dead and dying (e.g. No. 1415)
- b) Physically loaded or otherwise strenuous workers (e.g. Nos. 1024, 1026, 1405-1406)

- c) Those burdened by the soul and inwardly moved (e.g. seers; Pietas)
- d) Endangered persons/fugitives (e.g. No. 1410, 1419)

According to Hoernes, the frontal view of figures on vases thus mostly serves to depict pathos, although secondary aspects, including the comical, for example in the case of flute players (e.g. nos. 1443, 1448), are also convincingly justified. Frontality is also suitable for depicting hieraticity, for example to suggest the great age of a cult image (e.g. nos. 1368, 1408).

All the coins in this collection can be assigned to one of the above-mentioned aspects. However, this classification can only be the beginning of a comprehensive historical and archaeological interpretation of a coin image. Further details of the depiction can provide decisive clues as to the intention of the image, for example a squint or a sideways gaze (cf. nos. 1046, 1406).

It will also be conceded that there were certain cycles of fashion. In the course of the 5th century BC, for example, there was a steady increase in frontal depictions and a decline from the time of Alexander the Great. In Roman times, there are virtually no frontal depictions on coin obverses until the time of Postumus. With the Tetrarchy and especially with Constantine the Great, a dynamic was triggered that led, also with breaks, to a frontal depiction convention in Byzantine times. How exactly this "Byzantine frontality" came about and what is expressed in it still awaits a conclusive explanation.

Outlook

The aim of this catalog is to supplement existing numismatic research through both the selection of material and the commentaries and thus to stimulate further study of this topic. The time is far from ripe for a synthesis of the results. The hitherto neglected epochs of Hellenism and the Roman imperial period also require their own in-depth treatment. Only then would it be possible to attempt a synthesis that explores a cross-temporal level of meaning and highlights continuities.

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Comments on the Facing Head collection translated into English

1001

Van Arsdell's assertion that the head of Medusa on the reverse was modeled on Roman coins proves to be untenable on closer inspection. The present coin follows the type of the Medusa Rondanini, which is found neither on the aurei of L. Aquilius Florus of type RIC 302 cited by van Arsdell nor on earlier denarii (e.g. Cr. 453/1, 463/2). Gorgoneia of this "beautiful type" are also rare on Greek coins, so that the inspiration for the mint masters of Tincomarus must have come from another type of object. It is true, however, that quarter staters of the type TIN2-5 are dependent on the denarii of Plautius Plancus (cf. no. 1405-1406).

1003

One of the most ambitious image combinations in Celtic numismatics, executed in masterly die-cutting.

1006

Despite the profile view, the designer of this coin has succeeded in placing the eye on the obverse in such a way that the viewer of this coin feels 'eyed'.

1007

Less than 5 examples of this coin type are known, of which only one is in a museum (BN Paris).

1009

Ziegeus tentatively interprets the head as that of a slain enemy. This would fit in with the iconology of antiquity insofar as frontality can also be used in Greek vase painting to identify the dead as such.

1014

2 further examples: MMAG list 296, 9; NY Sale IV, 2002, 17 = Auctiones 10, 42.

The Volterra find documented by Marina Martelli in 1975 (IGCH 1875) contained numerous obols that typologically correspond exactly to this piece. They can be convincingly linked to the Auriol hoard, from which the mint of Massalia can be deduced.

1025

One of the few Tarentine coin types with depictions of people in perspective on both sides. In the obverse depiction, the frontality may serve to emphasize the chthonic character of the hero; on the reverse, however, where the dolphin rider's gaze is turned back, the perspective may serve the dynamics of the depiction.

1026

Not only the obverse, but also the reverse features a de-face depiction, as the face of Heracles is clearly recognizable. Here it is probably the emphasis on the hero's immense exertion that motivated this artistic stylistic device (cf. also the diobol, no. 1024).

1029

Aelian's numerous observations on the lion may provide a clue as to why the predator's gaze was of particular interest when feeding. Among his observations from the Egyptian city of Leontopolis,

where lions were apparently kept in a temple, there is also a feeding scene: “Every day they receive meat from cattle (...); while they eat, they sing in Egyptian. The content of the chant is: 'Do not kill any of those who watch with your eyes'. The song seems to take the place of a counter-magic, so to speak.” One gets the impression that the lions' gazes are even more dangerous during the feeding than they already are. The designers of the corresponding coin images were obviously keen to depict this proverbial dangerousness in a particularly vivid way. Cf. 1030, 1143, 1332.

1036

Recent research has shown that the sharp-edged structures in the fields (e.g. the triangle between Δ and the head of Heracles in the reverse) are metal capsules that were added to the flan for reasons of adjustment. This insight is due to Wolfgang Bretz, who worked on this at the Institute for Archaeological Studies at the Ruhr University of Bochum.

1038

Contrary to what is usually claimed in the literature, the obverse depiction is by no means a “mask” of a (dead) lion. The coin image of the frontal lion's head migrated from the Samian exile coinage in Messina to Lower Italy. While it was initially an inanimate lion mask, the image changed to that of a living animal when it was adopted by Rhegion. The reason for this is probably to be found in the cult of Apollo, which was important to Rhegion: As a solar animal, the lion was a companion of this deity and could only take on this role in living form.

1045

The lateral gaze is known in Greek literature as 'lóxon ómma', meaning 'slanting gaze'. People who mastered it were considered particularly envious; in the case of animals and monsters such as the Gorgo Medusa, this gaze emphasized their danger. Cf. Haymann, *Münzen Revue* 6/2021.

1046

The attribution to Kamarina is not certain, as there is no agreement on the correct reading and combination of the letters in the reverse (ΣΙΚΑ, ΑΚΙΣ, ΝΙΚΑ?). The most recent suggestion in this debate comes from Dieter Salzmänn, who uses the retrograde reading ΑΚΙΣ and recognized the name of a river in eastern Sicily.

1047

See the commentary on no. 1410 for the death-threatened looking out from the coin image. Cf. also the repetition of this coin motif under Sextus Pompeius.

1052

The rare didrachms with “panther head design” are an expression of the latent urge to breathe life into inanimate objects by means of a pair of eyes (cf. also 1042, 1398, 1417).

1056

This coin type marks the first appearance of an aegis on coins: the goatskin with the gorgoneion, which Zeus, Apollo and Athena used to produce thunder, lightning and clouds. The appearance of the aegis marks a turning point in the numismatic history of the gorgoneion, as it opens up another level of meaning. The aegis establishes a direct reference to a high deity, and at the same time it is a concrete object, or more precisely: an irresistible weapon. Its effectiveness is more clearly related to an individual person than is the case with the gorgoneion, behind which the heritage of a polis is

usually concealed. It is perhaps no coincidence that the aegis appears on coins at the time when the Syracusan despot Dionysius seized power. It is certainly no coincidence that it was so important in the age of autocracy, from Alexander the Great to Caesar (cf. in particular our no. 1407) and his epigones, i.e. the Roman emperors.

1082

The underweight and crude style of the gorgoneion indicate an imitative coinage. Ziegeaus considers this coin type to be a Celtic imitation in his treatment of the Flesche Collection.

1086

The far more common type shows a helmet (without eyes).

1092

The animal's back can be seen above the head. Since no mane is indicated, it can be clearly identified as a lioness.

1096

The French archaeologist Pierre Amandry (1912-2006) was best known as the excavator of Delphi. He was honored several times for his services and became an officer of the Legion of Honor and Commander of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques. He was also an officer of the Order of George I and the Order of the Belgian Crown.

1099

While older scholars regarded the Parthenos (meaning "virgin") shown here in a frontal-archaizing manner as a spin-off of Athena or Artemis, more recent research recognizes her as an independent deity. In her capacity as Kourotrophos, Parthenos was apparently responsible for the survival, upbringing and well-being of adolescents, which was certainly primarily a concern for women, but was also of fundamental importance for men and the entire city: "Parthenos, as the divine virgin, is (...) primarily to be interpreted as the protector of adolescent women, whose inevitable destiny was marriage. However, this certainly does not make her a "goddess of women". She has a close relationship with marital and civil life, and not only for women. Her sphere of influence consists mainly in the process of integrating women into the community through marriage and motherhood, which is of central importance for all its members, especially for men." (A. Prokova, The figurative clay votives from the sanctuary of the Parthenos in the ancient city of Neapolis)

1101

Since the study by Sophia Kremydi, which our dating follows, the common explanation that the head of Silen is an allusion to a Roman mint master named Silanus has become obsolete.

1102

In contrast to his father Patraos, who has a horseman appear as the victor over a warrior with a Macedonian shield, King Audoleon here openly shows himself to be an ally of Athens.

1115

Basil C. Demetriades wrote about this coin type: "Stratos (...) has produced some of the most desirable coins of Akarnania. All the silver is very rare; the earliest issue being quite remarkable in that it features two facing heads, one on each side of the coin."

The present specimen is - it is hard to believe - the best specimen that has come onto the market since the BCD collection and is on a par with it.

1122

The gorgoneion here is the trophy of *gorgophónos* Athena. The defensive power of the polis is concentrated in its deadly gaze. In his study on the political relevance of this motif in Athens, Kim Hartswick was able to elicit a further aspect from the coin image: "These Gorgoneia are not only a reference to the Athenian goddess and the Argive Perseus, but a reflection of the very real alliance between Argos and Athens under the Peisistratids". The fact is that the Peisistratid dynasty, which ruled Athens at the time, enjoyed the support, not to say the backing, of the tyrants of Argos. Perseus, who gave Athena the Gorgoneion, was known to be an Argive. The Gorgoneion could therefore also be understood as an internal threat: In the event of an uprising against the Attic tyranny, Argos would come to the rescue.

1123

What is this coin doing in a special collection of frontal depictions? Well, for one thing, we encounter the owl on the reverse from the front -- as is invariably the case with this animal. On the other hand, and this is the most important reason, the archaic eye of Athena (who is also apostrophized as the "owl-eyed one"), which is aimed directly at the viewer, creates an effect that comes close to a frontal depiction.

1124

As the "mother" of the miracle horse Pegasus, Medusa played a central role in the local myth of Corinth, which is why it may initially come as a surprise that the city only began to occasionally mint a Gorgoneion on its (small) coins in the second half of the fifth century. However, it seems that this motif reflects on a small scale what Stefan Ritter has described for the competition between Athens and Corinth for the main goddess of both cities, Athena: the gorgoneion probably only appeared in Corinth when the Attic wappenmunzen with gorgoneion had long since been replaced by the 'owls'. It is possible that the equally tense relationship with Argos, the hometown of Perseus, also contributed to the hesitant use of the gorgoneion by the 'Pegasus city' of Corinth.

1126

The Gorgon's head is to be interpreted here as the emblem of Athena Alea. Originally, Alea was an autochthonous deity. Over time, she took on more and more distinct features of the Hellenic Athena, including her typical attributes, the weaponry, the owl and the gorgoneion.

1130

The image of the spear-breaking lion was introduced by Amyntas (393-370 BC) and was almost emblematic of the Argead dynasty. Roland Baldus suggested that one of Alexander the Great's signet rings bore this 'coat of arms'. Most recently on this coin design: J. Nollé, in: NZ 128, 2022, 9-62.

1131

Among the Hellenistic rulers, it is Lysimachus who forms a particularly close connection with the lion. Curtius Rufus points out that, on the basis of a joint lion hunt with Alexander, Lysimachus built up a *fabula* which consisted essentially of the claim that Alexander had Lysimachus locked in a cage with a lion and that the *somatophylax* had killed the leu. The story of Lysimachus' victory over the lion undoubtedly served to emphasize his *aretè* and to elevate it to the truly Herculean, perhaps even to

surpass the deed of Hercules, since most writers following Curtius report that the lion was killed with his bare hands. However, the Macedonian also made use of a certain cunning and coldly exploited the animal's supposed weaknesses. Pliny links the episode with the observation that a lion is defenceless in the circus arena if a blanket is thrown over its head, thus disrupting its sense of sight: "All its strength lies in its eyes. It is therefore less to be admired that Lysimachus, who was locked together with a lion at Alexander's command, strangled it." (Plin. nat. 8, 21). The first sentence finds its ideal expression in the coin image in question here, the urgency of which is largely conveyed through the eyes. It was undoubtedly intended to express the danger to which Lysimachus found himself exposed in the cage. At the same time, the coin illustrated that the (later) king had the ability to defy such danger through the wise guidance of his patron goddess Athena.

1134

The eyes are reminiscent of those of owls.

1136

The mint attribution for this interesting coin type is still up in the air. Recently, the attribution in the auction literature has increasingly narrowed down to Methymna (Lesbos), but this should be rejected for a number of reasons: Firstly, the lion's head on the lion diobols from Methymna added for comparison is designed differently and is in a dotted incusum. Secondly, the die position of the Lesbian coins with double-sided coin images is always regular, which is not the case for the present coin type. Thirdly, Lesbos is not a suitable area for horse breeding, to which the obverse obviously refers. The earlier attribution to the Thracian Maroneia, on the other hand, would be worth resubmitting, as the horse depiction, the coin foot and the die position would fit in well there. It must be conceded that the pattern of occurrence of this coin type in more recent times points most likely to Asia Minor as the minting region.

1141

The attribution by the editor of the SNG Tübingen was undoubtedly based on the reverse motif, which is common for Pergamon. Otherwise, however, nothing on this coin points to this mint, which is why the circle of presumed mints must be extended to western Asia Minor.

1142

Only a few examples of this still cryptic coin type show so clearly that it is a frontal bust. As Imhoof-Blumer (NZ 1912, p. 184) explained, the coin image developed from the combination of the coin image bashlyk with the countermark pan bust.

1143

The far more common brass coins from Amisos bear the same reverse, but it is coupled with the obverse motif of a Dionysus head. This type, minted from only a few obverse dies, shows the leopardess as a "representative" of the god. The type of depiction and the choice of gender indicate that the animal is particularly bloodthirsty -- an often overlooked aspect of Dionysus, who is usually seen as a "god of wine" and who is also known in ancient literature as a "man-tearer" (Ail. NA 12, 34, in Tenedos), "eater of raw meat" (Plut. Them. 13) and "who delights in iron and bloodshed" (Orph. hymn. 44, 3).

1144

The 'Alexander of Pontus', Mithradates VI, had immense quantities of brass coins minted in various cities on the Black Sea coast between around 90 and 85. All of them bear the aegis in its octagonal form on the obverse, while the reverse shows a palm-branch-bearing Nike. This combination of images is strikingly similar to the coinage of Antimachus II of Bactria (Bopearachchi Série 2A) in its emphasis on the certainty of victory. Even more astonishing is the fact that Mithradates VI chose a different type of aegis, the octagonal one, which is larger in size. It is thus exactly the type that Mairi Gkikaki also reconstructed for the south wall of the Acropolis on the basis of the message in Pausanias (M. Gkikaki, *The Seleucids' aegis on the Acropolis southwall*, p. 233). The fact that Pontic coins were influenced by Athenian art is no coincidence: in his struggle against Rome, Mithradates had forged firm diplomatic ties with the former great power Athens. In the years 89 to 87, he seems to have exerted a direct influence on Athens, which in turn is reflected in the Attic tetradrachms, which bear the Mithradatic pegasus as an emblem. Pontic Aegis coins are also found in the company of Attic bronze coins in the 'Piraeus Hoard' - a rare mixture of bronze money from widely separated regions. It is possible to connect them with a monument that Pausanias had seen above the Theater of Dionysus on the south wall of the Acropolis. A 'golden' aegis was attached there, which a king named Antiochos had given to the Athenians.

1148

According to a description by Philostratus, Cheiron's eyes reflect his wisdom. This observation is probably the reason why the designer of the coin design attached importance to a frontal depiction of the reverse, which was also consistently executed by the die cutters.

1154

In Greek coin art, rings and dots on felids serve to identify leopards (cf. no. 1143). On the present specimen, the pellets are set in pairs in small depressions, separated by a nose-like ridge, giving the impression of pairs of eyes.

1160

The palladion as a powerful, god-sent instrument is an object that - similar to the gorgoneion - must be depicted from the front in order to unfold its effect.

1167

The lion's head has a distinctive furrow on the forehead, a particularly narrow chin and an almost heart-shaped outline, making it difficult to associate it with a real animal. However, the generic designation as a lion is confirmed by the fact that other coins of Antandros show a lion that is clearly recognizable as such. It appears here as a companion animal of the Mater Deum Magna Idaea, as which the image of the god on the obverse was recently identified (J. Nollé, in: *Gephyra* 2017, 62) and which ultimately conceals the Asia Minor "Mistress of the Animals" (*potnía therôn*).

1170

This coin type is unknown in the literature. The attribution to Dardanos can be considered certain due to the rooster, which is characteristic for this city, but especially due to the incuse reverse design in small silver, which is also typical for Dardanos.

1172

Part of the essence of a sibyl is the ecstatic and contemplative quality, which is expressed on this little coin by the sideways, absent gaze, as with other seers (cf. no. 1402).

1176

In contrast to the Zeus depicted on the Aigeatic *stephanophoroi*, this one stands frontally and wears a wreath. This appears to be neither a crown of rays (SNG Arikantürk) nor a laurel wreath. Rather, different leaves seem to have been used for the wreath, which protrude from the head in pairs. In Aigai, Zeus was worshipped under the *epiclese* Bollaios (= Boulaios), i.e. as the god of good advice. It is striking that Zeus is always associated with chthonic deities in this capacity (Cook, Zeus, 1925, vol. 2,1, 528f.). It is possible that the wreath and the frontality indicate that Zeus is also to be thought of here as a chthonic deity.

1178

The sanctuary of Apollo at Gyryneion, also known as Gryneion by ancient authors, was of supra-regional importance. According to Strabo (13,3,5), the temple is said to have been particularly elaborately designed. The sanctuary also included an oracle and a sacred forest. A good 300 years after this coin was minted, Pliny (NH 32.59) praised the mussels from the lakes near Gyryneion and Myrina.

1179

Io is shown here, indicated by the horns, on the way to her transformation into a white cow. In Aeschylus' Prometheus she will then exclaim (877f., transl. Droysen): "It bursts my heart in horror the breast, and in circles wildly roams the feral gaze!" It is possible that the frontal depiction was intended to express both.

1186

The dating follows I. L. Lazarini, A contribution to the study of the Archaic billon coinage of Lesbos, online publ. 2011.

Archaic coinage is rich in experimentation in terms of minting techniques and the design of coin images. One of the experimental trends involved the design of complex picture puzzles such as this one, which composes a larger lion, a veritable monster, from two lions facing each other.

Although lions were certainly never indigenous to the island of Lesbos, we learn from ancient literature of a "Lesbian lion" that roamed the island and was killed by Heracles (Theocr. Hyl. Schol. XIII 6b). It is very likely that the present coin image refers to this, as this composite lion is an beast worthy of Heracles.

1187

This coin is at best roughly comparable with the 1/72 billon staters from Lesbos, which have a more sharply contoured and differently structured incus and are also minted from poorer silver.

1188

The attribution to Lesbos is based on alloy, style of the incuse and obverse motif. Cf. also auction CNG 41, 1997, 536, but in contrast Naumann 77, 2019, 34 ("Pantikapaion").

1189

Dating according to Lazzarini.

While Hoover also considers the depiction of (barley) grains in addition to the eye, Matthias Steinhart has no doubt that these are eyes. However, he does not attribute any deeper meaning to

the coin image: “Rather, the eye appears on coins like other parts of the body.” We do not agree with this view, but neither can we offer a convincing interpretation of this coin design.

1193

In the original Greek art, the LIMC knows of no depiction of Apollo with a necklace. In contrast, there is some corresponding evidence in Etruscan art (LIMC, Aplu 41, 42). These are particularly effeminate depictions of Apollo. This aspect of Apollo was probably also intended to be indicated by the necklace in Colophon.

1201

The attribution of this coin type to Miletus is not yet fully confirmed. If it is correct, we must understand the lion as the companion or symbolic animal of Apollo. Both god and beast are characterized by a special proximity to the sun, which resonates, for example, in the adjective *aíthôn* (fiery, burning) used by Homer to refer to the lion and is represented in the coin image by the excessively large eyes from which the lion sends out its “fiery” gaze. Cf. Haymann 2023, esp. 89-90.

1202

Due to the great importance of the cult of Apollo for Miletus, these depictions of lions, whether they are in profile or frontal, whether they capture the whole animal or only parts of it, have been associated with Apollo since Herbert Cahn at the latest. The frontal lion heads place such a strong emphasis on the oversized, “fiery” eyes and the aureole-like mane that their editors must have been primarily concerned with the fiery-solar aspect of the lion, as it also resonates, for example, in the adjective *aíthôn* (fiery, burning) used by Homer to refer to the lion.

1203

The scorpion had a close relationship with Artemis, the sister of Apollo, who was indirectly evoked by the lion on the front. The cult of Artemis, who bore the epithet Kithone in Miletus, has been documented for this city since the Ionian colonization. Her temple was completely excavated on the Kalabaktepe in 1989-1999. An earlier Milesian coin motif, the deer's head, had already referred to Artemis. However, the electron small coins minted in quite large numbers offer a much more pleasing and probably also effective allusion to the significance of the divine sibling for the city.

1209

The chlamys visible here is an atypical attribute for Artemis. It may have been borrowed from Apollo, who wears it in the Belvedere type to emphasize his qualities as an archer.

1224

In contrast to the Apollo type recorded by the *Historia Nummorum*, our specimen clearly has a gorgoneion, recognizable by the curled snake hair and the missing neck section.

1235

The diagonally cut neck lends the portrait a special dynamic, making Helios appear as if he is just turning his head towards the viewer.

1248

Only recently, Johannes Nollé suggested recognizing the seal of Alexander the Great in the reverse (cf. no. 1130) and reading the entire coin iconography as a reference to the liberation of the city of

Sardeis from Persian suzerainty. However, given the iconology of the image, which is very nuanced and strongly dependent on the time and place of minting, this seems doubtful.

Let us first look at the front motif, the head of Dionysus, which Nollé interprets with reference to modern literature as a reference to Alexander. In the specific case of Sardeis, however, the Greek Dionysus conceals the ancient Anatolian god Zagreus-Sabazios, whom Nonnos describes as *keróen bréphos*, meaning that he was born with horns. In the episode described by Nonnos, he also transforms into a *dasplètes léôn*, a fearsome lion. On these bronze coins, therefore, we do not see a Dionysian 'panther' (or, more correctly, a leopard), but Dionysus himself in his embodiment as a horned lion, as he was probably familiar to the local myth based on Sabazios. When Dionysus, who was one of the *prokathézómēnoi theoí* at this time, is shown in this wild pose, it expresses the defensiveness and combativeness of the polis. The ferocity of the Sabazios lion fighting the Titans is iconographically emphasized in the coin design by the bitten spear.

1252

With the laurel wreath, the chlamys and the dolphin, the ruler is depicted with attributes of Apollo -- a fact that is not taken into account in the extensive literature on this very early portrait of a ruler. The interpretation of the dynast as a "heroized Greek" (Cahn in SMBI 1975, 90) is misleading.

1253

Wilhelm Müseler saw the portrait of Hermes in the obverse. In our opinion, however, it is the head of Athena, for whom the long hair and the upturned helmet are characteristic (cf. also the portrait on the unique coin Roma e55, 396).

1256

Even if Eleuthera, as the Anatolian mother goddess, shares some characteristics with the Koine Greek Artemis, the term "Artemis-Eleuthera" used in numismatics is misleading, as Eleuthera bears independent epithets such as *archegetäs*, which is attested in inscriptions for Myra. Fundamental to this: L. Robert, Hiérapolis, p. 52.

Eleuthera is now known from the Lycian cities of Rhodiapolis, Kyaneai, Telmessos and Termessos as well as from Kaunos in Caria. Her chthonic character is expressed in the scorpion, which is part of many of her statues, as well as frogs.

1258

Another example of this apparently unpublished type: Auction Savoca 12, 2017, 233.

The motif is unusual, as lion masks are usually only found as a single motif, but not with legs attached.

1259

The term "panther" is an archaeological term of endeavor that covers cats of prey that are not clearly identified as lions. However, while Greek coins generally have clear codes for lions and leopards and thus the zoologically meaningless category of "panther" is rarely useful numismatically, here we have a case in which real artificial creatures are obviously depicted: They are not lions, because the mane is missing; they are not lionesses, because no teats are recognizable. Nor can they be leopards, otherwise a patterned coat would be indicated (cf. nos. 1019, 1143, 1154). The proportions of the tail and neck and the surprising gesture for (predatory) animals also suggest that these are more likely to be artificial creatures. These friendly-looking panthers are most likely to be

understood as “heraldic animals” of the coin's owner, i.e. as a pure symbol of power, as they are also to be understood in the well-known Lycian monuments such as the lion tomb pillar of Xanthos.

1278

Contrary to Edoardo Levante's opinion and that of most of the later authors of this coin type, the bust on the obverse does not show a “collier” but a chlamys. Moreover, since these coins, also contrary to Levante's descriptions, never feature earrings, the deity depicted on the obverse is not necessarily female. Due to the rarity of chlamys-bearing frontal busts, one should not rule out the possibility that Apollo Hekebolos is depicted here (cf. also no. 1209).

1292

A second specimen with identical dies on both sides: Auction GM 176, 1280. Hoover's attribution to Methymna is not convincing, because on the one hand the obverse is not a Silenus' head with the knobbed nose typical of Methymna, and on the other hand it is clear on our specimen that an O can be read in the right reverse field (no crescent moon, as observed by Hoover). It thus fits into the mint series of Soloi.

1294

Greek art knows of no Gorgoneion with eardrops, which the present coin design undoubtedly shows. The coin image of Aphrodite de face, which was also widespread in Cilicia, undoubtedly contributed to the creation of this unusual depiction.

1296

Contrary to Göktürk's description, which the international coin trade seems to agree with, the obverse is by no means an indeterminable, possibly female head: both the laurel wreath and the star make it possible to identify it as Apollo. However, there is no indication that the head is female.

1301

The reverse probably depicts the ancient oriental god of war, Nergal. On larger denominations he is depicted standing on a lion, which here has been reduced to two frontal, superimposed heads.

1309

The 2nd specimen: Nomos 26, 2023, 527 (with reference to our specimen). There, Dionysus is suggested as the name for the bearded head on the reverse. We prefer the tentative identification with Heracles, who is more closely related to the lion's head and typically does not wear a head crest, which is, however, always present on Dionysus.

1314

The reverse is reminiscent of a note in Pliny (nat. 37, 66): the emerald eyes of a marble lion on the tomb of Hermias of Cyprus are said to have been so brilliant that the fish in the sea were greatly irritated by them.

1315

The remarkable depiction on the reverse, which unusually replicates the image of the goddess on the front, is probably influenced by the Cyzicene staters (von Fritze 67), which, however, do not show a bust but only the frontal head of Athena in a Corinthian helmet.

1324

Considering the exceptionally close connection of the child king Antiochus VI to Dionysus, which is expressed in the title Theos Epiphanes Dionysus handed down by Flavius Josephus, one might want to recognize the king himself in the leopard, which is to be thought of as the epiphany of the god. It is possible that the iconography of the broken spear, which was known at this time from depictions of the Nemean lion, was also intended to evoke Heracles, from whom Antiochos VI was supposedly descended on his father's side (cf. nos. 1130, 1248).

1326

Contrary to the information given by Hoover/Lorber, this coin type does not have a regular die position of 6 or 12h, but there are more examples with 3h. Hoover/Lorber (SC, p. 317) interpret this coin type as a "symbol of victory".

1330

The rare coinage of the temple state of Bambyke-Manbog, in which the sun goddess Astarte was predominantly worshipped, features several frontal depictions, of which the present one is probably the most interesting, as it has not yet been possible to name the person depicted on the obverse.

1331

Unusual depiction with a particularly accentuated bull's head.

1335

The reverse motif has no precedent in Greek coinage, which is unusual for Philistine coinage. In their frontal pose, the two lions are reminiscent of grave guard lions. The overall demonic character of the coin imagery is also reflected in the obverse, the frontal head of Bes. Overall, one is inclined to associate this coin type with the "obol of Charon" which is known in Greek literature as *danákä* and, according to Pollux (IX 82), was a Persian coin that weighed slightly more than the Attic obol.

Wyssmann, on the other hand, feels that the reverse motif, p. 197, is reminiscent of the side parts of a throne.

1337

It is by no means a bucranion in the lapel, but the head of a living gazelle, recognizable by its eyes.

1347

For the Bactrian kings, Poseidon was not the god of the sea, as their kingdom had no access to the sea. Rather, we can assume that the 'earth shaker' appears on this coin as the patron god of horses and thus stands for the victorious nature of the Bactrian cavalry. As the god of the deep, Poseidon is a chthonic deity par excellence. This aspect is often expressed through frontality, for example in Demeter and Asclepius.

1348

Presumably to emphasize the chthonic-heroic character of the Dioscuri, one of the two brothers is usually looking at the viewer. Only a few coin images break this "rule".

1350

Indian coinage has a strong preference for frontal depictions of gods, which is only indicated here by a few examples.

1354

Libya was known in ancient times for its large population of lions, which naturally gave rise to a wealth of myths. These myths are partly interwoven with stories from Samos and Crete. It is striking that depictions of facing lion heads can also be found on both islands, and in the case of Gortyn (Crete) there is even a certain typological relationship.

Pliny mentions a Dionysus *kechănô̄s* (the gaping one) in connection with a Samian foundation story set in Libya (Plin. nat. 8,21,56). According to the story, a Samian named Elpis ended up there, where he encountered a lion that presented its open mouth to him without threatening him. The animal asked for help from the man, who removed a bone that had become caught in its teeth. Out of gratitude for having survived the encounter with the lion, Elpis founded the temple of Dionysus *kechănô̄s* in Samos (Clem. Al. 2,38 with reference to Polemon fr. 71 FHG III p. 135; cf. Athen. VIII p. 346 B).

1356

According to the reverse legend, which only mentions Juba and his title, the lion here represents the king. As a Roman client king, Juba may have used an allusion to the Latin vocabulary in his choice of coin design: lat. *iubatus* means “with mane”, which was obviously intended to be picked up on by the lion's head turned towards the viewer. Indeed, judging by the growth of his hair and beard, the king seems to have had a real “lion's head” (Cic. de leg. agr. II 58. Suet. Caes. 71).

Alexandropoulos' assumption (p. 179) that these coins were Billon coins is supported by our specimen in that it has a slightly silvery luster, especially on the obverse, and the X-ray fluorescence analysis shows clear traces of silver. However, it is less likely to have been billon than a wafer-thin layer of silver, as we know it from late Roman folles.

1358

A closer look at this unique coin design, which is documented in only one die, casts doubt on Ivan Varbanov's naming: for a bear's head, the head lacks roundness. The contour is more reminiscent of the head of a fox or lynx. It is also noticeable that there is a gap to the left and right of the nose, which is not consistent with a bear's or any other animal's head.

Rather, it appears to be a structure composed of several animal heads, comparable to the one we find on the lesbian billon stater (no. 1186): In the center, the frontal head of a boar, framed by two heads of cattle depicted in profile.

1360

The classification of this coin design, which was widespread in Thrace at this time, as Thanatos is misleading (J. Bazant, in: LIMC VII.2, 908). Fundamental to this coin design: H. Riggauer, Eros auf Münzen, ZfN 8, 1881, esp. 96: “I am unable to give a reason for the strangely frequent appearance of this type in Thrace; however, the fact must be stated.”

1365

The frontally depicted goddess of victory Nike is a coin image borrowed from Greek coinage (cf. no. 1059) and found its way into Roman coinage via the provincial coins: extremely rare antoniniani of Gallienus (RIC 450) are modeled on the local bronzes minted almost simultaneously in Parium, as

both coin types show Victoria standing frontally on a globe. However, the Roman coin designer opted for a goddess of victory carried by two other Victories. In his study of Roman Victoria, Tonio Hölscher dealt with the frontality that occasionally appears on her. He saw this mainly as a “tendency of the time”, but at the same time stated that imperial glory (or the aspect of gloria) was at the forefront of the frontal depictions.

1367

The gesture of the god is not that of a pleading infant, but that of someone praying. We can recognize in this a reaction to the strengthening of Christianity in Asia Minor in the 3rd century. The depiction of Dionysus in the form of the child of God is the pagan counter-image to the child of God from Bethlehem. The city of Magnesia thus also presents itself as a “terra sancta”, because after all it was chosen by the god as the place of birth and thus as a “holy place”. The orans gesture in turn calls for a koinè of the faithful and attempts to bring together Christianity (prayer) and the old religion (altar sacrifice) (cf. nos. 1430, 1438, 1450).

1368

In the first century AD, the temple of Aphrodite Stratonikis in Smyrna was a refuge for runaway slaves and criminals. The Roman Senate demanded a statement from the Smyrnaeans. They justified the maintenance of the asyilia with an ancient oracle of Apollo, who had once instructed them to build the temple as a place of refuge. The frontal view is more suitable than any other depiction for expressing the venerability (Greek: *archaiótes*) of the cult associated with Aphrodite and thus underpinning the Smyrnaeans' claim. It should also be noted that in Hellenistic times, when the asyilia was not yet under pressure to be legitimized, the same coin image was still shown in profile.

1372

The herm is not named in the RPC. Due to the clearly recognizable corkscrew curls on our specimen, however, it appears to be Apollo. A somewhat later coin type (RPC IV.2 485 temporary) shows a Priapos herm in profile, with a much shorter hairstyle.

1375

Hecate was an epithet of Artemis, and so this deity, who sometimes appears in three forms, sometimes simply, can initially be understood as a split-off from Artemis, with whom she shared the aspect of a goddess of light and the moon. However, Hecate was an ancient Anatolian deity with a wider area of responsibility, as is indicated in the cult image depicted here with its frontal central figure. In this case, she was invoked as SOTEIRA (= savior, helper), as can be seen from the coin inscription.

1381

The reverse shows a shepherd carrying out a typical activity: looking out (Greek: *apóskepein*) for stray animals. However, this is no ordinary shepherd, but the city's founding hero, as can be seen from his nakedness.

1382

The coin design is a clear declaration of war. The image appears twice on the coins of Sagalassos: first under Philip I (244-249 AD), then under the reign of Emperor Claudius II (268-270 AD). Roman troops operated in the east during both periods, with Sagalassos probably playing a role in army logistics. Under Arabs in 244/245, the withdrawal of troops from Mesopotamia via Asia Minor had to be

organized. The Sibylline Oracles, which were written at around this time and are characterized by their encapsulated depiction of contemporary events *post festum*, speak of a sun-sent, wild, fearsome and flame-spitting lion that had defeated the Persians (Or. Syb. 13, 165 and 171). There are also historical reasons for the second appearance of the coin image in Sagalassos. At the time of Claudius, several bands of Gothic groups were not only wreaking havoc in Italy and Greece, but also in large parts of Asia Minor. In the course of the year 270, bands of Goths reached southern Asia Minor and besieged the Pamphylian town of Side, which was located around 240 km from Sagalassos. A certain part of the minting program that Sagalassos issued under Claudius II is presumably linked to this situation, as the coin reverses show numerous motifs that emphasize the city's readiness to fight and its loyalty to Rome.

1383

The city name Ikonion, certainly of Anatolian origin, was popularly associated with the "*eikon*" par excellence, the Gorgoneion, which is why almost all of the city's coins bear this image or allude to the Perseus myth.

1385

The torch is to be understood as an allusion to the name Pyramos, in which the word "*pyr*" (Greek: fire, torchlight) is hidden. That's why the rivergod is holding a torch.

1386

Later repetitions of the coin image show Artemis with her head turned to the side.

1390

The reverse legend explicitly names the deity depicted as Zeus Kataibates. This is a common Zeus epiklese, which means "the one who descends (in thunder and lightning)".

1395

Frontality has always been used extremely rarely on Alexandrian coins. On the present coin it may serve either to highlight the *archaiotes* (respectability) of Apollo of Didyma or to emphasize his quality as an archer.

1397

The effort to depict Castor and Pollux *de face* can often be recognized on coins (cf. no. 1348). Only on a few examples of the present coin type, however, are the facial features reasonably satisfactorily recognizable.

1398

The Greek poets of the classical period already speak of "dark-eyed ships" (Aisch. Pers. 559; Bakch. ep. 13, 160), which always refers to warships, thus documenting the custom of painting eyes on the prow of ships. According to Philostratus (eik. 1,19,1ff.), they were intended to scare off enemies by giving the ship the appearance of an animal.

1401

The rider's face is rarely satisfactorily recognizable on this mass coinage. The depiction seems to have been inspired by the sestertii of Emperor Claudius (cf. no. 1424), which depict him not only in the same pose but also with a clearly recognizable face on his triumphal arch. Stephanie Böhm

unfortunately does not take the orientation of the face into account in her interpretation of the image type, which she derives from the tomb of Dexileos.

1402

The fortune-telling oracle of Fortuna of Praeneste was known throughout the region and also incurred the wrath of Cicero, who considered the procedure celebrated there to be deception and swindling (*de divinatione* 2.85). The mint master, however, evidently wanted to use this image to draw attention to his home town in a positive sense, as so often happened in Republican coinage. He showed a child with a lot board (lat.: *sors*). The chosen perspective, a frontal view with the gaze averted to the side, is also found on oracle deities (cf. nos. 1171-1172) and probably expresses deep contemplation.

1405

The strong politicization of the motifs gorgoneion and aegis is also noticeable in the coinage of the late Roman Republic. What is initially striking -- after neither of the two motifs had played an independent role in Roman coinage -- is their concentrated occurrence in the years 47 and 46, starting with the 47 Rome denarii of L. Plautius Plancus, who sided with the Caesarians. The reverse was convincingly interpreted by Gerold Walser as a reproduction of a painting by Nicomachus of Thebes, which was owned by the Plancii. Nike is shown surrounded by four horses, which she holds by the reins, leading a quadriga to victory. The fact that the viewer can recognize the face of the goddess of victory is by no means due to a whim of the die-cutter, but is based on the proximity of the coin image to the original by the early Hellenistic painter Nicomachus, who wanted to use this detail to emphasize the immense effort that Nike undertook. According to Walser, "the Plautii coins not only praised the ancient greatness of the *gens*, but also their artistic sense".

That may be true. Nevertheless, Michael Crawford is to be agreed with when he assumes that the victory team on the reverse could have been related primarily to Caesar's victoriousness. The British scholar argues that this motif can also be found on gems from the late Republic. The same applies to the head of Medusa, which always shows different facial expressions depending on the stamp and conveys the engravers' delight in the gruesome and grotesque. There are further indications that the gorgoneion can be interpreted as a sign of Caesar's victory. Firstly, there are the brass coins that a C. CLOVI had minted for Caesar in the year 45, on the reverse of which Minerva bears a shield with an oversized gorgoneion. Finally, there are the denarii of Manlius Cordius Rufus from the year 46 (no. 1407).

1406

Under L. Plautius Plancus, gorgoneia of the "beautiful type" were minted, like the previous example, as well as grimacing gorgon heads. To heighten the horror, the "oblique gaze", which was feared in antiquity, was used on some of the dies in addition to the bared teeth (cf. the commentary on no. 1045).

1407

Crawford interprets the minting program of this mint master as "Caesarian" throughout, with the exception of a Dioscuri motif, which is due to the family history. If one follows this interpretation, the obverse with the owl and the Corinthian helmet refer to Athena's wisdom and fortitude, while the reverse with the *aegis* shows her deadly armament. These characteristics could then be attributed to Caesar, as the political circumstances in Rome at the time hardly allow any other interpretation.

1408

The dating proposal by Woytek, *Arma et nummi*, who wanted to move the date of minting to the year 41, was rejected by G. D'Angelo and A. Martín Esquivel (*Ann. Ist. Ital. Num.* 58, 2012).

The reverse shows the cult image of Diana of Lake Nemi, which was described by Horace as *triformis* and by Vitruvius as Etruscan. The frontal perspective chosen here is intended to emphasize the antiquity of the cult image and thus the venerability of the cult.

1409

Two pairs of eyes look out at the viewer from this coin. On the obverse it is the sun god Sol, on the reverse the eyes of the left statue can be recognized on well-preserved specimens. The obverse is taken up a good 110 years later on *denarii* of Vespasian, cf. Ziegert 2020, 128. This coin type (RIC II.2, 689) has only survived in one specimen and possibly represents a link between the early Vespasian and Neronian Sol ideology (Mittag 2008). On the coins of Longus, Sol can be interpreted as a reference to the latter's adherence to M. Antonius (Fuchs, *Architekturdarstellungen*, p. 31).

1410

According to an old convention dating back to black-figure vase painting, people in mortal danger are often depicted looking out of the picture. This undoubtedly also applies to Anchises, who is rescued from the flames of the burning Troy. Another convention, also known from vase painting, may be responsible for the hero Aeneas looking out of the picture: Particular physical exertion could also be expressed through the use of this stylistic device. In any case, it seems remarkable that each of the repetitions of this motif on coins was made with frontality in mind (cf. nos. 1047, 1413). This could also be an indication that it was based on a group of statues.

1413

This is an example in which all the characters and their frontality are clearly recognizable. The latter serves to emphasize the oppressed and those threatened by danger, similar to classical Greek vase painting. For the same reason, this stylistic device can also be found on thematically related *denarii* (no. 1410).

1414

With his earliest, independent coinage as a triumvir, M. Antonius presents himself as the ruler of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, for which Sol is symbolic. The remarkable reverse motif can also be found on very rare bronze coins from Buthrotum in Epiros (RPC 1383).

1415

Only rarely, as in this example, is the person depicted in the temple satisfactorily recognizable. The depiction of Divi in a frontal pose seems to follow a convention. Divus Julius is also depicted from the front, with a recognizable face, on the *denarii* of the type RIC 279 (Augustus).

1416

Only rarely is the face of the herm of Jupiter Terminalis recognizable on this difficult coin type.

1417

The helmet of the recently defeated Celtiberians was probably so impressive in its foreignness that it was depicted frontally in order to bring out the full effect of the face carved into it. Here, as in the language of classical Greek art, frontality serves to mark the foreign, the barbaric.

1418

Mars is one of the few Roman deities to appear frontally on coin reverses with some regularity (cf. here no. 1455). The need to depict the eyes of the god of war is already indicated by Homer, who describes the gaze of Ares as equal to that of Gorgo when he writes about Hector: "Looking like Gorgo or the man-killing Ares." Some Attic vase painters depicted the deadly gaze of Ares, although the frontal view never became standard, unlike that of Gorgo. When Mars looks at the viewer on some coins, the aspect of his deadly gaze mentioned by Homer seems to be expressed. The fact that this means was used very sparingly certainly also has to do with a great reverence for the effectiveness of images, which is a characteristic of antiquity.

1419

As on the denarii of L. Titurius Sabinus (no. 1400) minted seventy years earlier, the victim stands *de face* to the viewer. The coins of Turpilianus depict the suffering of Tarpeia in a particularly vivid way, with her arms raised in supplication and her mouth open, presumably screaming in horror. The motif can also be found on the frieze of the Basilica Aemilia, and it is no coincidence that the scene is also depicted there in exactly the same frontal view, which sets it apart from the rest of the pictorial program based on the profile view. Both the frieze and the coin thus follow a depiction convention already familiar from classical vase painting, namely the depiction of threatened and dying persons with their faces turned towards the viewer.

1420

If we follow Konrad Kraft's well-founded assumption that the bull on these coins symbolizes Mars, the god of war, the use of the stylistic device of frontality results in an even closer connection between the god (cf. no. 1418) and his companion.

1421

The so-called Gaius Lucius denarii, which were minted between 2 BC and 4 AD, refer to the plans for succession to the throne that were acute at the time. Both the shields and the bodies and faces of the designated heirs to the throne are completely oriented towards the viewer. The coin type, a true mass coinage that also includes aurei, also demonstrates the risks of this method of depiction, as the faces of the princes can only be recognized on examples that are in above-average condition. At the same time, they are only attractively cut on the very best dies. This coin type represents the prototype of the *Princeps Iuventutis* type, which was very popular at times. However, a coin that also adopts the frontality can only be found on the Ephesian denarii that Vespasian had minted for his successors.

1422

Research (most recently Woytek, NC 177, 2017, p. 83-92) associates the rare and conspicuous coinage with honors that were offered to Tiberius. Decorated shields of honor were presented to him for observing the imperial virtues of *moderatio* ('moderation') and *clementia* ('grace'). The depiction of an emperor on coins in the form of such an *imago clipeata* has its only parallel in the rare denarii of Augustus (RIC 356f.).

1424

The reverse of the sestertii from the last years of Claudius' reign shows a triumphal arch with an equestrian statue of his father Drusus. The face of the spear-throwing horseman is drawn particularly large in relation to the other pictorial elements in order to make subtleties recognizable. In its orientation and pose, the equestrian depiction is exactly the same as on the denarii of P. Crepusius (no. 1401).

1425

One of the rare coin types on which an emperor is depicted standing frontally. The background to this issue may have been the erection of a colossal statue depicting Nero in the same way as the image on the coin.

1426

The entire figure decoration is aligned frontally towards the viewer.

1427

It was probably no coincidence that Vespasian was the first emperor after Augustus to decide to depict Jupiter de face again: Under this emperor, whose coinage is known to have many references to the Augustan minting program, a type of denarius was developed dedicated to IOVIS CVSTOS. The epithet emphasizes Jupiter's role as guardian (or watcher), so it seems only logical that the god is depicted with an oversized head whose eyes miss nothing.

1428

One of the numerous Augustan borrowings in Flavian coinage. The reverse depicts a coin from the triumphal series of Augustus (RIC 271), which depicts the emperor in the same way.

1429

While an epigram by Diotimos (Anth. Palat. 2, p. 674, no. 158) praising the "courageous gaze" of Artemis-Diana explains well why the frontal depiction of her - after all, the sister of the sun god Apollo - is obvious, the few written records of the reign of Nerva do not reveal any prevalence for the goddess of the hunt that would explain why she was emphasized in this way due to her special importance for the emperor. Elkins 2017, 65-69 pays no attention to the frontality of the depiction. He considers a connection of the coin motif with the institution of animal hats, which Malalas ascribes to it (chron. 10.349), a direct reference to a dianacult or an Augustus reverence.

1430

Stefan Heid recognizes in this unusual and rarely used coin image the tendency towards a "universalization of the idea of God", i.e. the invitation "that everyone should pay homage to his God, whom he believed to be present in heaven". At the same time, he sees this as an indication of a profound religious change under the influence of Christianity away from votum or sacrificium towards prayer as the central religious act.

1431

In Roman coinage, it is extremely rare for Hercules to be depicted frontally, so that even his face is recognizable. The best-known example of this are the denarii struck by Q. Metellus Scipio and Eppius Legatus had minted in Africa in 47 BC (no. 1412). In the search for a motivation for this particular style of representation under Trajan, one quickly comes across Hercules Gaditanus, who played a special role for this emperor. It is possible that the unusual depiction was intended to underline the

importance that this Hercules had for Trajan. In principle, however, it seems to be above all the strength of the hero that was to be conveyed by the “firm gaze”.

1434

While Calicó and RIC pay no attention to the direction of the genius' gaze, Woytek lists the coin as an independent type with full justification due to its frontality. So far, only one reverse die has become known, from which all eight known specimens were struck.

1435

At the beginning of his reign, Hadrian had a series of aurei minted that depicted some of the central Roman deities from the front. In addition to Jupiter, these include Virtus, Mars and Minerva.

The depiction of Jupiter stands out due to its fine die-cut, which perfectly captures the complex turn of the body. The depiction differs fundamentally from Vespasian's Jupiter stator coins (no. 1427). Consequently, the pictorial message was also completely different: This seems to be a depiction of a classical statue, namely the Zeus of Myron, which we know Augustus had erected in a small temple on the Capitoline Hill (cf. LIMC VIII, no. 127). This simultaneously emphasizes the emperor's philhellenism, erects a worthy monument to Rome's highest god on coins and, as can often be observed with Hadrian, ties in with Augustus' ideology.

1436

This is the first appearance of Pudicitia, the personification of female chastity. The type chosen here was already replaced under Hadrian by the later one in which Pudicitia sits on a throne looking sideways. With one exception (no. 1442), Pudicitia never appears frontally.

1437

This is the first appearance of Hilaritas, the personification of cheerfulness and merriment. The type chosen here was already replaced under Hadrian by the later type with palm branch and cornucopia, which never appears frontally.

1439

This is the only frontal depiction of Janus on Roman coins.

1440

The frontality was deliberately used here in order to perfectly realize the epithet of Jupiter (“the steadfast”).

1444

Ancient art had a long tradition of depicting “foreigners”, “barbarians” and “outsiders” in a frontal manner, especially on vase paintings. The veiled person in the long robe cannot be clearly identified, but is in any case un-Roman (characterized by her costume and frontality) and could be the personification of Britain.

1446

On Roman coins, most of the gods stand frontally, but turn their sacred faces away from the viewer. Only a small group of deities look at the viewer (under special circumstances). These are often deities

that were of particular importance to the respective emperor, which is obvious in the case of Aesculapius, whom Caracalla worshipped in an almost grotesque manner.

1448

Already in black-figure vase painting, flute players are very often depicted frontally, while the figures surrounding them are shown in profile. The reason for this emphasis on perspective is not clear, but the present coin image is in precisely this tradition. It is possible that this was intended to suggest the shrillness of the wind instrument.

1449

Of the 10 specimens listed by OCRE, only one has the rare variety with a frontal goddess.

1450

The name of this goddess is derived from lat. *sei, seges* (engl.: to sow). *Segetia* is responsible for ripe grain, i.e. a happy harvest. Erika Simon (LIMC VII.1, p. 705) reads the coin image as *Segetia* grasping a veil with her raised hands and recognizes in it an "aura of the numinous". However, Simon confuses the round arch in the temple pediment with a veil. Closer study of the various dies reveals that the goddess is depicted in the *orans* gesture, i.e. with her hands raised to the sky (cf. *Pietas*, nos. 1430, 1438). In this way, she acts as a role model for the rural people: she prays for a good harvest. She wears a nimbus-like headdress from which two stalks protrude.

1452

The ideological core of the tetrarchy lay in the close relationship between its founder, Diocletian, and Jupiter. Consequently, it was Diocletian who once again depicted Jupiter, addressed here as *Conservator* ([protector]), *de face*: enthroned and ruling, albeit only on a very small group of coins. The last Jovian, Licinius, took up precisely this depiction scheme and refined it into a coin type that has almost iconic qualities and expresses the emperor's unbreakable relationship with his god through double-sided frontality.

1453

The eye looking sideways out of the profile image is a peculiarity of the eastern mints, particularly striking in Antioch from around 312-326. Although it appears to be primarily a stylistic peculiarity, the pictorial statement is surprisingly close to the panegyric literature of the time, which ascribes a special *vigilantia* (vigilance) to the emperor, which manifested itself through a penetrating, almost sharp gaze that repeatedly fascinated the panegyrists (cf. *Pan. Lat.* XII 19,6; VI 17,1). In 297, for example, Maximianus Herculius was compared to Jupiter, who "in constant vigilance observes the change of all things" (*pervigil servat*; *Pan. Lat.* XI 3,4).

1454

The only depiction on coins that shows both *Tyche* and *Orontes* from the front. Cf. the numismatic prototype (no. 1316), in which *Tyche* is seated in profile. This is also the last occurrence of a river god on Roman coins.

1455

Of the 13 specimens of this type currently recorded by OCRE, 4 show *Mars* standing frontally. Our specimen differs from these pieces by its particularly fine die cut and the fact that the god's face is turned slightly to the side.

1456

The turn of the sun god's head, which the author of the RIC did not notice, has the impressive effect that the viewer feels directly addressed by the gesture of greeting performed by the right arm.

1457

In this extremely common coin motif, it seems to have been of fundamental importance that the she-wolf is facing the viewer (and not the twins). The frontality is presumably intended to signalize that a group of figures was depicted here.

1459

Constantine the Great stood in the Herculian tradition established by Diocletian and Maximianus (Herculus). After his victory over Maximianus in 310, however, he made little use of this ideology, although in 313 Arelate Solidi with the same Herculian reverse as on our example were produced. In 318, Constantine then had a series of small bronzes issued in Rome that took up the Herculian lion motif of the solidi. They are dedicated to the MEMORIA AETERNA of the divi Claudius II, Constantius and Maximianus Herculus. The reference to the latter in particular underlines Constantine's lasting interest in portraying himself as a Herculian. Johannes Wienand offers a convincing interpretation of the program of these small bronzes, which were probably used as scatter coins: After the relationship with Licinius, who constantly appeared as Iovian, had deteriorated once again, Constantine was keen to accentuate his deep dynastic roots. Maximianus, who had apparently been rehabilitated and elevated to divus, played an important role in this. It is remarkable that the lion solidi from Arles served as a model. The close iconographic relationship can be seen in the club hovering above the lion on one part of this issue. There is also the variant of these coins presented here, on which the lion is also looking at the viewer. This detail, too, would be inconceivable without the arelatic coin images.

1461

By no means all the dies of this issue show the bull looking at the viewer. In the few that do, it may have been the sanctity of the Apis bull that prompted the die-cutter to do so.

1462

Earlier frontally depicted Nikai/Victoriae: Nos.1059, 1365.

1463

The reverse legend dissolves into exagium solidi sub Viro inlustri Johanni Comite sacrarum largitionum.

1464

On this coin, the frontality of Pietas gives the empress special expression. This is related to the fact that the personification of Pietas occasionally shown in earlier times was also depicted frontally (cf. nos. 1430, 1438).

1467

The reverse depiction illustrates that frontality could express different aspects in a single coin image: triumphant superiority or *majestas* in the case of the emperor, inferiority in the case of the serpent creature.

1468

For the variant of the mint sigla RN, see *Auctiones* 18, 2013, 89.

While at the time of minting the Eastern coinage made extensive use of the frontal depiction, the profile view was still dominant in the Western coin designs before Anthemius. It would appear that Anthemius, who grew up in Constantinople as the son of the Eastern Roman emperor Marcianus, deliberately brought frontality, which appears particularly innovative in the almost devout lapel depiction, to the West.

1469

This coin was struck on the occasion of the reconquest of Italy in 424. For the first time, a Roman emperor is depicted here with the globe of the cross, which is perhaps why it is shown particularly large on our example. The frontality emphasizes the imperial *maiestas*.

1497

This is a Christian amulet bearing the formula "*heis theos*" (meaning "One God!") (starting at 12h, clockwise). The meaning of the other letters is not clear. The frontal depictions on amulets of this type can often also be interpreted as a womb.