

Hercules, Omphale, and Octavian's 'Counter-Propaganda'*

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Abstract

This article pays close attention to one aspect of the famous battle of images between Mark Antony and Octavian in the build-up to Actium. It challenges the common assumption that the figures of Hercules and Omphale were purposefully portrayed as Octavian 'anti-propaganda', against Mark Antony and Cleopatra, displaying the triumvir as emasculated by the Egyptian Queen. The link between Hercules and Antony was tenuous, especially in his later career, and there is little evidence that the mythological scene had propagandistic connotations. With this in mind, it seems that a political reading of the images is stretching the evidence too far.

The battle for supremacy over the Roman Empire between Octavian and Antony was as much a battle of words and images as it was one of men and ships. In these primary aspects of the war, Antony made himself vulnerable to Octavian's 'propaganda' by his 'eastern' attitude and attire. This has been expertly analysed, notably by Paul Zanker. Octavian emphasised his own preference for the west, going to great length to demonstrate the dichotomy between his own *Romanitas* and Antony's 'foreign' inclinations.¹ In the lengthy speech at the outset of the battle of Actium, Dio (50.24-30) records Octavian as explicitly mentioning how his men should not be afraid of a man who 'abandoned all his ancestors' habits of life, has emulated all alien and barbarian customs ... and finally has taken for himself the title of Osiris or Dionysos ...' (νῦν πάντα μὲν τὰ πάτρια τοῦ βίου ἦθη ἐκλελοιπότα, πάντα δὲ τὰ ἀλλότρια καὶ βαρβαρικά ἐξηλωκότα ... καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον καὶ ἑαυτὸν Ὀσίριον καὶ Διόνυσον ἐπικεκληκότα) (50.25.3-4). 'Let no one', Octavian continues, 'count him a Roman, but rather an Egyptian, nor call him Antony, but rather Serapeion' (Μήτ' οὖν Ῥωμαῖον εἶναι τις αὐτὸν νομιζέτω, ἀλλὰ τινα Αἰγύπτιον, μήτ' Ἀντώνιον ὀνομαζέτω, ἀλλὰ τινα Σαραπίωνα) (50.27.1).

According to various modern authors, this 'anti-propaganda' did not stop at comments on Antony's general attitude towards the east, or at putting emphasis on his bacchic behaviour. In the battle of images, Antony's use of Hercules as divine ancestor, too, was transformed, quite cleverly, to be of use to the later *princeps*. On this view, Octavian started to mention Hercules repeatedly sometime before Actium. But the Hercules who figured in this early-Augustan imagery was not

the great warrior - nor the saviour who through his great deeds had saved mankind. Instead, Octavian put forward imagery of Hercules enslaved by Omphale; the captured divinity in women's clothing.² If this was indeed an image that Octavian, or those surrounding him, consciously put forward to discredit Antony, one cannot help but admire the brilliance of it. Just as the Lydian queen Omphale had emasculated the powerful Hercules, the Egyptian queen Cleopatra governed the Roman warrior, who had turned into her slave. The concept fitted other counter-images perfectly. The real danger, in this description, came from the east, thus diffusing the awkwardness of promoting civil war. The evidence for this 'counterpropaganda', however, is not as strong as is sometimes supposed. It presupposes a strong association between Antony and Hercules, through which references to Hercules would make people think instantly of Antony. It also assumes that literary and artistic references to Omphale and Hercules should be read and seen in a propagandistic context, outside of any socio-cultural framework, even if they fit a clear literary pattern. Neither of these assumptions is unproblematic.

HERCULES AND ANTONY; A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP?

The relation between Mark Antony and Hercules is attested in ancient sources, though the evidence is not as overwhelming as one might think. Plutarch states that Antony 'adopted' himself into the Herculean bloodline by emphasising his mythical ancestor Anton, one of Hercules' many sons.³ Antony apparently even groomed himself in a way reminiscent of Herculean imagery:

Προσῆν δὲ καὶ μορφῆς ἐλευθέριον ἀξίωμα, καὶ

πώγων τις οὐκ ἀγγενῆς καὶ πλάτος μετρόπου καὶ γουπότης μικτήρος ἐδόκει τοῖς γραφομένοις καὶ πλαττομένοις Ἡρακλέους προσώποις ἐμφερὲς ἔχειν το ἄρρενωπτόν. ἦν δὲ καὶ λόγος παλαιὸς Ἡρακλείδας εἶναι τοὺς Ἀντωνίους, ἀπ' Ἀντωνος, παιδὸς Ἡρακλέους, γεγονότας καὶ τοῦτον ὤετο τὸν λόγον τῇ τε μορφῇ τοῦ σώματος, ὥσπερ εἴρηται, καὶ τῇ στολῇ βεβαιοῦν. (The finely formed beard, broad brow, and aquiline nose lent him a powerful, masculine look which reminded people of paintings and statues of Hercules. Moreover, there was an ancient tradition that the Antonii were Heracleidae, being descendants of Anton, a son of Heracles. And this tradition Antonius thought that he confirmed, both by the shape of his body, as has been said, and his attire) (Plut., *Vit. Ant.* 4.1-3).

Appian also makes this Herculean link a focal point in Octavian's speech of 44 BC, which is heavy with sarcasm:

[You] would have doubtlessly been adopted by him, if he had known that you would accept kinship with the family of Aeneas in exchange for that of Hercules' (εἰ ἦδει σε δεξόμενον Αἰνεάδην ἀντὶ Ἡρακλείδου γενέσθαι) (App., *B. Civ.* 3.16).

Antony replied in similar style, retorting that he was happy that Octavian agreed that being a relative of Hercules was enough to make any man content. But these speeches are likely to have been Appian's inventions - not necessarily a good base for factual evidence.⁴ The use of Hercules, or Anton, as ancestor of the Antonii seems to be confirmed through coinage. A set of *aurei* from 42 BC by the moneyer Livineius Regulus is especially important. The obverses of the coins show the heads of Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian, whilst the reverses depict their mythological ancestors. These are, respectively, Hercules (or Anton) (*fig. 1*), the Vestal Aemilia, and Aeneas carrying Anchises.⁵ Other coins too connect Antony to Hercules, though it seems dubious, at least, to interpret reverses that show a lion as having unambiguously Herculean connotations.⁶ These coins seem unproblematic compared to some of the further evidence. Stephan Ritter brings in a Ciceronian letter from the beginning of 43 BC, which apparently mentions 'Hercules Antonianus', a statue of Hercules raised by Antony.⁷ But 'Antonianus' is a restoration from 'Hercules Antianus', which, as Ullrich Huttner rightly points out, could equally well (if not better) indicate a statue of the Hercules from Antium.⁸ A Pompeian ringstone, signed by the famous stonecutter Solon, shows a Hercules-figure whose fea-

tures have been said to be Antony's (*fig. 2*).⁹ The small size of the image, however, makes such a positive identification extremely doubtful.

Other evidence is by no means more straightforward. The torso of a headless cuirassed statue from the 1st century BC has also been brought in to illustrate Antony's preference for Hercules (*fig. 3*). This torso was found in Iria on Naxos, and was supposed by the excavators, Lambrinouidakis and Gruben, originally to have had Antony's head.¹⁰ Their argument was that the depictions on the cuirass fitted Antony's ideology perfectly well. Not only does the cuirass show Hercules fighting the Nemean lion, Dionysos, who later became so important for Antony, is also depicted, with *kantharos* and *thyrsos*-wand, accompanied by panthers. Though far from conclusive, this first part of the excavators' theory is interesting enough. Yet Hercules and Dionysos are not the only images on the cuirass. The punishment of Dirke figures prominently as well. Though at first sight there appears to be no place for this myth in Mark Antony's imagery, the excavators found a way round this.



Fig. 1. 42 BC Aureus by Livineius Regulus. British Museum inv. RR 4255. Courtesy, British Museum.



Fig. 2. Pompeian ringstone. Napoli, Museo Nazionale inv. 25218. Courtesy, Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici, Napoli.

They argued that as the original Dirke-group was brought to Rome from Rhodes, and as Antony restored the power of Rhodes after the battle of Philippi - giving them amongst other places Naxos to rule - the depiction of the punishment of Dirke should recall Antony's power in the east, and the importance he attached to Rhodos.¹¹

Such an explanation is far too complicated for viewers actually to have understood the message, and the meaning of the image must remain open to interpretation. Nor does a further argument that the excavators put forward for identifying the statue as Antony seem entirely convincing. They argued that the faces of both the deities that are depicted on the cuirass are damaged, which might have been because they originally bore Antony's features. This would cohere with indications of reworkings on the statue itself, and on a nearby inscription, which might have been part of the pedestal.¹² Neither the original faces of Hercules and Dionysos nor the original inscription can, however, be properly restored. To use this torso as evidence for an important role of Hercules in Antony's ideological programme is therefore circular. It is only because the images cohere so well with the programme that is being reconstructed that the torso is said to have been Antony's in the first place.

Only slightly less problematic is a type of image, which is found on an early-imperial cameo (fig. 4), an Antonine *ostothekos* from Asia Minor, and a late-imperial bronze medallion. Depicted on all of them are *trophaea*, at which a semi-nude female figure, clearly identified as Venus, probably functioning as Venus Genetrix, puts down a spear.¹³ Opposite her stands a young hero, clad only in a mantle, which he carries over his left shoulder. He is laying down a club. The presence of the club makes an identification with Hercules feasible, but Hans Peter Laubscher argued that the posture of the figure is that of Hermes - specifically that of the Hermes Andros-Farnese - and that this Hermes-posture was not coincidental. He maintains that the heroic young figure must have been Octavian, who was often alluded to as Mercury, because the scene from which the different images are derived is quite obviously not a standard mythological one, and the Venus Genetrix makes clear allusions to the Julio-Claudian family. The club that the figure puts down then comes to symbolise Octavian's victory over the 'Herculean' Mark Antony.¹⁴

The suggestion is interesting but not convincing. Connections between Octavian and Mercury are mainly poetical, and need not at all imply a 'real'



Fig. 3. Cuirassed statue, Iria (Naxos). Naxos, Archaeological Museum inv. 8761. From AA 1987, 607 fig. 47.



Fig. 4. Early-imperial cameo. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Photo Service photographique de la réunion des Musées nationaux BJ 1866.

image of the protagonist 'as' the divinity. Whether a Mercurial pose without any further divine attributes would make people recognise the divinity - let alone Octavian as 'represented' by Mercury - is open to serious debate. Furthermore, W.-R. Megow has recently suggested that the depiction of the hero was typologically connected to Polykleitos' Herakles, making it likely that the depicted hero, too, must be perceived as Hercules.¹⁵ Finally, at the time of Octavian's final victory over Antony, the latter had taken on a different divine role; that of a new Dionysus.¹⁶ It is doubtful whether a club would be the most obvious way to refer to Antony at the time. When it is uncertain whether a depiction properly calls to mind the vanquished, and dubious whether one would instantly recognise the victor, it is dangerous to use it as historical evidence.¹⁷

The coins of Regulus and the passages of Plutarch and Appian may imply that in the late 40's BC, just about the period that Antony got involved with Cleopatra, Antony was stressing his mythical ancestor Hercules. That is not the same as actual identification with the deity. Such an identification Antony appears to have reserved for Dionysus. Indeed, it seems that following the tripartite division of the empire amongst the triumvirs in 42 BC, he found the deity Dionysus a very suitable paradigm. Plutarch mentions, when talking about Antony's entry in Ephesus in 41 BC, that:

The city was filled with ivy and thyrsos, with the music of the flute, syrinx, and lyre. All welcomed him as Dionysus, bringer of joy, gentle and kind (Plut., *Vit. Ant.* 24.3).

Eventually the Roman general even came to be referred to as the 'new Dionysus', which is attested by an Athenian inscription of 39 BC and strengthened by provincial coins.¹⁸ Velleius Paterculus describes how in 34 BC:

...ante novum se Liberum Patrem appellari iussisset, cum redimitus hederis crocotaque velatus aurea et thyrsus tenens cothurnisque succinctus curru velut Liber Pater vectus esset Alexandriae ([Antony] had previously given orders that he should be called the new Liber Pater, and indeed in a procession at Alexandria he had impersonated Liber Pater, his head bound with ivy wreath, his person enveloped in the saffron robe of gold, holding in his hand the thyrsos, wearing the buskins, and riding in the bacchic chariot) (Vell. Pat. 2.82.4).

Two years later, Cassius Dio tells us, Antony had himself depicted on statues and paintings as Dionysus accompanied by Cleopatra as Selene.¹⁹

From Antony's infatuation with Cleopatra onwards, then, Dionysus rather than Hercules became Antony's model. Links between Hercules and Antony were henceforth conspicuously absent. This should make us careful in assuming that Herculean references were aimed at Antony.

HERCULES AND OMPHALE AS 'PROPAGANDA' IN LITERATURE AND ART

Those supporting the idea of the Omphale myth as an Augustan tool, use a passage in Plutarch's *Life of Antony* as one of the more important pieces of evidence:

Ἀντώνιον δέ, ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς ὁρῶμεν τοῦ Ἡρακλέους τὴν Ὀμφάλην ὑφαιροῦσαν τὸ ῥόπαλον καὶ τὴν λεοντὴν ἀποδύουσαν, οὕτω πολλάκις Κλεοπάτρα παροπλίσασα (Antony on the contrary, just like Heracles in paintings of Omphale taking his club and donning his lion-skin, was altogether disarmed by Cleopatra) (Plut., *Comp. Demetr. Ant.* 3.3).

This passage allegedly describes Augustan imagery. The images that Plutarch mentions are argued to form part of the programme of anti-propaganda by which Plutarch was influenced.²⁰ That assumption implies that Plutarch responded to contemporary sources. This indeed has been claimed by Ilse Becker. She maintains that: 'Der Vergleich Kleopatra-Omphale bei Plutarch geht also auf die zeitgenössischen Quellen zurück'; a claim that is repeated even more strongly by Stefan Ritter.²¹ Becker's argument, however, is not wholly convincing. She bases herself on the parallels between the passage by Plutarch and a line in Propertius (3.11.17), which also compares Cleopatra and Omphale. She comments how Aspasia had been similarly equated to Omphale by Plutarch because of her influence over Pericles (*Vit. Per.* 24.9). But rather than inferring that this may therefore be some kind of Plutarchian *topos*, unrelated to Propertius' poem - that whenever Plutarch wrote about a man with Herculean claims, his wife or lover was easily transformed into Omphale - Becker concludes the opposite: this is no invention by Plutarch, but a reaction to contemporary sources. Yet Propertius also draws parallels between Cleopatra and the other 'overbearing' mythological women, Medea (line 9) and Penthesileia (line 14). Cleopatra is thus portrayed as belonging to the group of 'women out of place', rather than being specifically connected to Omphale alone. The other women are absent from Plutarch's text.

Nor does Propertius' poem feature elsewhere in Plutarch's work. Of course, both authors could have

gone back independently to a common source, formed by Octavian's attacks on Antony, for inspiration for the Cleopatra-Omphale linkage. Then again, references that connected Cleopatra to Omphale are conspicuously absent in the works of other historians. Dio's Octavian, in his great pre-Actium speech, mentions a whole array of deities, and places emphasis on the dangers of the east, and on Antony's servitude to a woman. He is completely silent on the subject of Omphale, nor does he mention Hercules.²² Similarly, the Augustan 'anti-propaganda' seems to have eluded Appian and Velleius Paterculus.²³ So why would one want to see Plutarch's statement as evidence for such image-forming? Of course there are inherent risks in arguing this point *ex silentio* - yet to presume without proper evidence is at least as dangerous.

Plutarch furthermore has his reasons to depict Cleopatra (and Antony) quite negatively. In his *Life of Antony*, which is often particularly moralistic, the origins of the battle of Actium are described through placing emphasis on the dichotomy between Octavia and Cleopatra, the one a good Roman matron, the other an evil eastern queen.²⁴ The influence of the life of Demetrios is also of importance, with 'the necessity of making Antonius' eroticism correspond to that of Demetrios' perhaps a factor in embellishing the overt sexuality in the relation between Antony and Cleopatra.²⁵ The Omphale-comparison could be one of the embellishments. The relation between Hercules and the Lydian queen had strong erotic connotations. This is clear from a late 1st-century BC carnelian, now in Vienna. It shows Omphale, lying naked on the lion-skin, with Hercules sitting (and

staring) between her out-streard legs (*fig. 5*).²⁶ A papyrus from the 1st century AD even places Omphale in the role of a brothel-keeper.²⁷ Comparing Antony with the enslaved Hercules also nicely brought the comparison to a mythical level. It is surely of some importance that the representation of Antony's effeminate Hercules follows on a passage which explains how Demetrios could leave aside his bacchic activities when going off to war, to turn into 'a minister of unhallowed Ares'.²⁸

Plutarch's comparison need not have been influenced by earlier 'propaganda'. Antony's infatuation with Cleopatra was well-known, even without Octavian's interference, and the importance of the queen was well-advertised.²⁹ The popularity of the Omphale-saga, in art as much as in other respects of Roman life, was equally great. Plutarch was doubtless aware of private images of Omphale and Hercules - images that reflected the world of otium rather than the world of politics.³⁰ The connotations of the Omphale-episode were not necessarily negative. Rather than emphasising the amoral and effeminate behaviour of Hercules, his relationship with Omphale was seen in a positive light as the epitome of extreme passion and vitality.³¹ There was no absolute distinction between these positive and negative aspects. Ovid stresses Hercules' abasement in his 9th letter of the *Heroides*, the fictional love-letters by famous women, when Deianeira complains: 'You are victor over the beast, but she over you'.³² Still, in his *Ars Amatoria* (2.217-221) Hercules' effeminate behaviour is brought forward as a positive example for others to follow.

In art, the distinction is not clear-cut either. Kampen believes that there was a development in the way the Omphale-myth was interpreted; negatively in the 1st century AD, with a transition in the second century towards a more positive view. Her evidence, however, is not conclusive. She mentions how in the first century most of the visual representations show an 'abased Hercules and a coy or aloof Omphale', yet the examples brought forward show the couple looking each other in the eye.³³ More clearly, two images from the 1st centuries BC and AD do not show any form of degradation, but rather depict the protagonists' faces, looking at each other in love, on the verge of a kiss. Zanker rightly stresses how different connotations can be simultaneously expressed.³⁴ That means that they are extremely difficult to use in supporting the claim of an Augustan anti-propaganda, which Plutarch is claimed to have reproduced.



Fig. 5. 1st-century BC Carnelian. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum inv. IX B 1364. Museum photo III 10.272.

Indeed, the image used to support the idea of a centrally-promoted connection between Omphale and Cleopatra is not decisive. It is transmitted through a number of clay impressions and bowl sections of the high-quality pottery of Perennius, and is said to have originated on a lost Arretine silver bowl of the early Augustan period (fig. 6).³⁵ The scene depicted shows Hercules sitting in woman's clothing in a chariot drawn by centaurs, looking back. He is followed by two girls carrying a parasol and fan. Omphale sits in a different chariot, wearing the lion skin and carrying the club. A girl hands her an oversize drinking cup.³⁶ Hercules and Omphale have been unequivocally identified with Antony and Cleopatra.³⁷ Even more minor details in the image have been interpreted as political statements. Thus the 'enormous drinking cup' which is handed to Omphale, 'is aimed directly at Cleopatra, who was ridiculed by Octavian and his circle for her bibulousness'.³⁸ Of course, that is a possibility. But one should not forget that, at least on the *terra sigillata* that survives, the features of the mythological figures are not recognisably those of Mark Antony and Cleopatra.³⁹ Nor is bacchic imagery wholly unsuitable for drinking bowls. The scene itself is reminiscent of depictions of Hercules in a chariot drawn by centaurs - depictions that often show

Bacchus accompanying Hercules, and can show the latter holding the *kantharos*.⁴⁰ Though the choice for a 'centaur-scene' may still have been a (very indirect) slur on Cleopatra's drinking habits, the fact that the queen is handed a drinking cup follows rather naturally from the reversal of attributes that is inherent in the Omphale-saga.

Without any direct evidence that the figures on display refer to Mark Antony and Cleopatra, and without any evidence that the design originated from Augustus or the circle surrounding him, it becomes hazardous to use the motif on the pottery as evidence for a grand Augustan programme. The fact that, especially for the period after joining with Cleopatra, there is little evidence for the connection between Antony and Hercules and that this relation was never one of actual identification in the first place, should make one even more careful in proclaiming the Omphale-episode as yet another illustration of the battle of images. Hercules and Omphale were a favourite motif in art and literature of the late Republic and early Empire. The interpretation of the episode could be many-faceted. It should not be simply seen as political, unless there are undeniable references to politics of the time. There are no unambiguous images showing Antony-Hercules and/or Cleo-



Fig. 6. Impressions of a lost Arretine silver bowl? Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reproduced with permission © 2003 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All Rights Reserved.

patra-Omphale. References to Omphale and Hercules in literature need no earlier 'propaganda' to explain their existence. It is also very doubtful whether the link between Hercules and Antony was sufficiently strong to make references to Hercules reflect on Antony. All in all, it seems that the role of Omphale and Hercules in the battle of images is a myth - in all senses of the word.

NOTES

- * My gratitude, as so often, goes to Fergus Millar for commenting on an earlier draft of this article. Criticism by Jaś Elsner and Stephan Mols on some of the ideas that I put forward has strengthened the argument enormously. It goes without saying that all remaining errors and inconsistencies are my own.
- 1 P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor 1988), 50, 52-3, 57-65 ('Antony betrayed by his own image'), with references.
 - 2 S. Ritter, *Hercules in der römischen Kunst von den Anfängen bis Augustus* (Heidelberg 1995), 81-85, 87; Zanker, *Power of Images*, 55-56; H. P. Laubscher, 'Motive der augusteischen Bildpropaganda', *Jdl* 89 (1974), 242-259; 248-250; N. Kampen, 'Omphale and the Instability of Gender', in eadem (ed.), *Sexuality in Ancient Art. Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy* (Cambridge 1996), 233-246; 235; I. Becker, *Das Bild der Kleopatra in der griechischen und lateinischen Literatur* (Berlin 1966), 55 n. 3. On the Omphale myth in Rome: F. Wulff Alonso, 'L'Histoire d'Omphalè et d'Héraklès', in C. Jourdain-Annequin/C. Bonnet (eds.), *Il^e rencontre héracléenne. Héraclès les femmes et le féminin* (Bruxelles-Rome 1996), 103-120; J. Boardman, 'Omphale', *LIMC* 7.1, 45-52; 45-46.
 - 3 Plut., *Vit. Ant.* 4.1-3, 60.3; U. Huttner, 'Marcus Antonius und Herakles', in Ch. Schubert/K. Brodersen (eds.), *Rom und der Griechische Osten. Festschrift für Hatto H. Schmitt zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart 1995), 103-112; 104, n.7; W. Derichs, *Herakles. Vorbild des Herrschers in der Antike* (PhD-Köln 1950), 37-8; T.P. Wiseman, 'Legendary genealogies in Late-Republican Rome', *G&R* 21 (1974) 153-164; 157.
 - 4 App., *B. Civ.* 3.19. G.K. Galinsky, *The Herakles Theme. The adaptations of the hero in literature from Homer to the 20th century* (Oxford 1972), 141 completely misses the protagonists' irony when he states: 'Appian (B.C. 3.16) writes that Caesar reluctantly gave up his plan to adopt Antonius because Antonius was unwilling to exchange kinship with Herakles for the Julian descent from Aeneas'. On Appian's speeches: A.M. Gowing, *The Triumphal Narratives of Appian and Cassius Dio* (Ann Arbor 1992), 65-70. Cf. E. Gabba, *Appiano e la storia delle guerre civili* (Florence 1956), 155-159.
 - 5 British Museum inv. RR 4255. Crawford, *RRC*, no. 494.2a (= Sydenham, *CRR*, nos. 1103-a); *LIMC* 4, 'Herakles', no. 994; Zanker, *Power of Images*, 45 fig. 34 a-b; D.R. Sear, *The History and Coinage of the Roman Emperors 49-27 BC* (London 1998), 95 no. 143; Huttner, 'Marcus Antonius und Herakles', 105-106. There is discussion on whether the figure depicted is either Anton or Hercules. For a short synthesis and further references, Ritter, *Hercules in der römischen Kunst*, 74-75 nn. 147-152, Taf. 5.7a-b.
 - 6 Crawford, *RRC*, I, nos. 494.37-8 Pl. 60 (= Sydenham, *CRR*, nos. 1139-40); Ritter, *Hercules in der römischen*

- Kunst*, 75, Taf 5.8-9. Reverses with lions: Sear, *History and Coinage of the Roman Emperors*, 83 no. 122, 85 no. 126, and for a lion holding a sword: 168 no. 266 (= Crawford, *RRC*, I, no. 533.1).
- 7 Cic., *Epist.* frg. 4.7 (= Non. 437 L); Ritter, *Hercules in der römischen Kunst*, 71; O. Weippert, *Alexander-Imitatio und römische Politik in republikanischer Zeit* (Augsburg 1972), 198 n.1 with references; R. Schilling, 'Der römische Hercules und die Religionsreform des Augustus', in G. Binder (ed.), *Saeculum Augustum II. Religion und Literatur* (Darmstadt 1988), 108-142; 118-119.
 - 8 Cf. Plin., *HN* 3.81 for the use of 'Antianus' as an adjective from Antium; Huttner, 'Marcus Antonius und Herakles', 109. Huttner also proposes a possible link to the gens Antia (109 n. 57).
 - 9 Napoli, Museo Nazionale, inv. 25218; Ritter, *Hercules in der römischen Kunst*, 79-80; Palagia, 'Imitation of Hercules', 144; Zanker, *Power of Images*, 45 fig. 35; M.-L. Vollenweider, *Die Steinschneidekunst und ihre Künstler in spätrepublikanischer und augusteischer Zeit* (Baden-Baden 1966), 47-55; Laubscher, 'Motive der augusteischen Bildpropaganda', 251-252.
 - 10 Naxos, Arch. Mus. Inv. 8761; V. Lambrinoudakis/G. Gruben, 'Das neuentdeckte Heiligtum von Iria auf Naxos. Zur Baugeschichte des 2. Tempels', *AA* (1987), 604-614; 608-614, Abb. 47-49; Ritter, *Hercules in der römischen Kunst*, 77-78; fig. 6.1.
 - 11 V. Lambrinoudakis, 'Neues zur Ikonografie des Dirke', in H.U. Cain et al. (eds.), *Festschrift für Nikolaus Himmelmann* (Mainz am Rhein 1989), 341-350; 343-347.
 - 12 Lambrinoudakis, 'Neues zur Ikonografie der Dirke', 341; Lambrinoudakis/Gruben, 'Das Neuentdeckte Heiligtum von Iria', 610.
 - 13 Laubscher, 'Motive der augusteischen Bildpropaganda', 241 n.1, 244 nn. 8-9, 246 n. 14, Abb. 3-6.
 - 14 *Ibidem*, 247 n. 20, 248, 250: 'der ins Mythische transportierte ... allgemeine Triumph über Marc Anton'.
 - 15 W.-R. Megow, 'Zu einigen Kameen späthellenistischer und früh augusteischer Zeit', *Jdl* 100 (1985), 445-496; 484-485.
 - 16 See further *infra*.
 - 17 Though the suggestion of Huttner, 'Marcus Antonius und Herakles', 106, that it depicts a joint victory monument of the two triumvirs for the battle of Philippi in BC 42 has some appeal, and would complement Livineius Regulus' *aurei* well, still has some appeal.
 - 18 IG II2, 1043, 22-4. Cf. Dio, 48.39.2: Διόνυσος νεός. In the same period (39/8 BC) Ephesian *cistophoroi* depict Antony with bacchic attributes; Sydenham, *CRR*, nos. 1197-8 Pl. 29; Sear, *History and Coinage of the Roman Emperors*, 165 nos. 262-263; W. Trillmich, 'Münzpropaganda', in *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik* (Berlin 1988), 474-528; 481, 503, nos. 311-312.
 - 19 Dio, 50.5.3. These lines also mention Antony and Cleopatra presenting themselves as Osiris and Isis.
 - 20 Ritter, *Hercules in der römischen Kunst*, 81-85; Zanker, *Power of Images*, 55-56; Weippert, *Alexander-Imitatio*, 198-199; Kampen, 'Omphale and the Instability of Gender', in eadem (ed.), *Sexuality in Ancient Art. Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy* (Cambridge 1996), 233-246; 235.
 - 21 Becker, *Das Bild der Kleopatra in der griechischen und lateinischen Literatur* (Berlin 1966), 55 n. 3; Ritter, *Hercules in der römischen Kunst*, 81: 'mit Sicherheit auf zeitgenössische Quellen zurückgreifend'. The only support for the 'certainty' is the above-quoted statement by Becker. Plutarch did use some contemporary material for his life of Antony, and the first half of the work

- shows obvious influences from Cic. *Phil.* II (not mentioned by Ritter), but for the second half of the work there is not such a clear source. Possibly Plutarch drew on material transmitted orally; C. B. R. Pelling, 'Plutarch's Method of Work in the Roman Lives', in B. Scardigli, *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* (Oxford 1995), 265-312; 297, 300.
- ²² Dio, 50.24.3; 50.24.7: γυναικὶ ἀντ' ἀνδρὸς δουλεύοντες; 50.25.1-4; 50.27.1-5. Cf. Dio, 49.34.1; 50.5.1. Whether Dio did or did not use original Octavianic (propagandistic) sources is disputed. F. Millar, *A Study of Cassius Dio* (Oxford 1964), 85-92 argues for multiple sources, but also stresses Dio's own contribution. For an explicit comment on the speeches: M. Reinhold, *From Republic to Principate. An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History. Book 49-52 (36-29 B.C.)* (Atlanta 1988), 84: 'Dio drew the contents of these two speeches skilfully (whether directly or indirectly) from the polemical literature of the 40s and 30s'. If one assumes that Dio followed Octavian's propaganda directly, the absence of Omphale is all the more noticeable.
- ²³ On the importance Appian places on Cleopatra's negative influence on Antony in general, see O. Hekster / T. Kaizer, 'Mark Antony and the raid on Palmyra: reflections on Appian, *Bella Civilia* 5.9', *Latomus* (forthcoming).
- ²⁴ C.B.R. Pelling, 'Plutarch's Adaptation of his Source-Material', in Scardigli, *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, 125-54; 148. Pelling (148 n. 61) notes that this dichotomy 'seems to be Plutarch's own elaboration'.
- ²⁵ F.E. Brenk, 'Plutarch's life 'Markos Antonios': A Literary and Cultural Study', *ANRW* II.33.6 (1992) 4347-4469; 4381.
- ²⁶ Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, IX B1364; *LIMC* 7 'Omphale', no. 34. Cf. also a carnelian from the same period with a similar composition, showing actual copulation; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, IX B1365, *LIMC* 4 'Herakles', no. 1558.
- ²⁷ *P. Oxy.* 53, 3700; V.N. Jarcho, 'Zu dem neuen Mimosfragment (P. Oxy. 53, 3700)', *ZPE* 70 (1987), 32-34; 33-34.
- ²⁸ *Plut., Comp. Demetr. Ant.* 3.2-3. Cf. also Athenaeus 6. 253d-f. This hymn on Demetrios, transmitted by Plutarch's near-contemporary Athenaeus, gives an indication on the familiarity of the Roman public with Demetrios' divine associations. Hercules and Omphale were often seen in bacchic connotations, even taking on specific bacchic iconography; Kampen, 'Omphale and the Instability of Gender', 242. This makes Plutarch's mythical comparison between Demetrios, who can step out of his orgiastic revels, and Antony, who cannot, more striking.
- ²⁹ Dio, 49.41.1; Wallmann, *Triumviri Rei Publicae Constituendae*, 252. Famously, Cleopatra is described as the 'Queen of Kings' (CLEOPATRAE REGINAE REGUM) on a coin-type of Mark Antony; Crawford, *RRC*, I, no. 543.1.
- ³⁰ Ritter, *Hercules in der römischen Kunst*, 177. It is striking that Ritter shows meticulously how one should not try to interpret images of Omphale and Hercules in the Augustan period from a purely political point of view (171-181), but still monolithically emphasises such a political view (81-85). Only in one footnote (85 n. 255) in the 'political' passage does he refer to his own arguments against a political interpretation of much of the evidence. Ritter in fact promotes a more polyform interpretation of the Omphale-myth in his later 'Ercole e Onfale nell'arte romana dell'eta tardo-repubblicana e augustea', in Jourdain-Annequin/Bonnet, *II^e rencontre héracléenne*, 89-102; 102.
- ³¹ P. Zanker, 'Eine römische Matrone als Omphale', *RM* 106 (1999) 119-131; 123-124.
- ³² *Ov., Her.* 9.114: *tuque feri victor es, illa tui*. Cf. *Ov., Her.* 9.53-118.
- ³³ Kampen, 'Omphale and the Instability of Gender', 235-237, 237 fig. 98 (= Naples, Mus. Naz. 6406 (299) [*LIMC* 7, 'Omphale', no. 23]).
- ³⁴ Naples, Mus. Naz. 9004 (*LIMC* 7, 'Omphale', no. 14); Vienna, Kunsthist. Mus. IX B1560 (*LIMC* 7, 'Omphale', no. 16); Zanker, 'Eine römische Matrone', 124.
- ³⁵ Zanker, *Power of Images*, 59. But see Ritter, 'Ercole e Onfale nell'arte romana', 99-100, who argues that the hypothesis of an exact prototype cannot be proved.
- ³⁶ Boston, MFA, Inv. 98.870; Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, Inv. 106292. There is also an example of pottery by Tigranus showing the scene; Paris, Louvre, Inv. 436; Ritter, *Hercules in der römischen Kunst*, 173 nn. 331-334. The different images show slight variation as to the secondary figures, such as cup- and spear-bearers, but the composition of the depiction remains essentially the same. Ritter (173 n. 331) also uses as evidence a mould from New York, Metropolitan Museum, Inv. 19192.21, but cf. Boardman, 'Omphale', *LIMC* 7, 49 no. 36.
- ³⁷ This equation originates with A. Oxé, 'Römisch-italische Beziehungen der früharrhetinischen Reliefgefäße', *BjB* 138 (1933) 81-102; 94-96, Taf. 14.2c-d, and is followed (amongst others) by Zanker, *Power of Images*, 59-60 fig. 45a-b; Kampen, 'Omphale and the Instability of Gender', 235, 236 fig. 97 a-b; J.-P. Morel, 'Das Handwerk in augusteischer Zeit', in *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik*, 81-92; 87, Abb. 29-30.
- ³⁸ Zanker, *Power of Images*, 59-60.
- ³⁹ Ritter, 'Ercole e Onfale nell'arte romana', 99 nn. 45-6 for references and discussion.
- ⁴⁰ *LIMC* 4, 'Herakles', no. 1430. Cf. *LIMC* 4, 'Herakles', no. 1431 (= *LIMC* 3, 'Dionysos/Bacchus', no. 246). Both images derive from the 3rd century AD. A mosaic from roughly the same period also shows Omphale with a drinking cup; Madrid, Arch. Mus. 2/1943; *LIMC* 7, 'Omphale', no. 39 (= *LIMC* 5, 'Herakles', no. 1741).

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