APPENDIX 14

THE USE OF EGYPTIAN MOTIFS AS CONTROL-MARKS ON ROMAN REPUBLICAN COINS (Ch. V, nn. 23, 24, 26)\(^1\)

During the first half of the first century B.C. Egyptian motifs were occasionally used as control-marks on Roman coins. I shall list those Egyptian motifs which are known to me, but it must be noted that a search through Crawfords lists of control-marks may yield further examples. It happened with the lotus which was once used by M. Plaetorius Cestianus\(^2\). The motifs which appear most frequently are the lotus and the Isis crown. The lotus is represented by a lotus bud between two leaves which curve outwards and may be supported by a horizontal stripe. When this last detail is present the figure may represent the stylised lotus head-gear of Isis, but usually the motif is simply called lotus. The Isis crown is normally depicted by the sundisk between two horns; and surmounted by two feathers, it may be supported by corn-ears or ram’s horns. Because of the small scale of control-marks the lotus and the Isis crown tend to look rather similar, both consisting essentially of a conical object between two curled leaves or horns. Therefore the interpretations do not always agree and it is not always clear if a lotus or an Isis crown is represented\(^3\). Those of L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi dating to 90 B.C. possibly depicted both a lotus and an Isis crown\(^4\). In the same year C. Vibius Pansa used

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\(^1\) For the Egyptian motifs used as control-marks see A. Alföldi, Isiskult und Umsturzbewegung im letzten Jahrhundert der römischen Republik, Schweizerische Münzblätter 5 (1954) Heft 18, 25 ff.; A.S. Fava, F. Scafile, I simboli nelle monete argentee repubblicane e la vita dei Romani (1969) 71 f.; Malaise I, 238 f. who discusses only those motifs which, in his opinion, are more strictly religious, i.e. Isis crown, lotus and sistrum.

\(^2\) Crawford 417.

\(^3\) For the lotus see e.g. Crawford, pl. LXVIII, 51, and cf. above Ch. III, nn. 105, 137; Ch. IV, n. 155. For the Isis crown see Ch. III, n. 151 and figs. 93, 97. For some uncertain cases see e.g. some of the references given by Malaise I, 238 f., in the case of L. Papius, and below n. 4.

\(^4\) See Crawford 340 ff., no. 342, 23, mentioning a lotus; H.A. Grueber, Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum (1910) 1978, mentioning a 'head-dress of Isis'. Actually Piso may have used both. L. Babelon, Description historique et chronologique des monnaies de la république romaine (1886) I, reproduces on p. 293, no. 66, an object which could be a lotus while no. 230
In 85 L. Julius Bursio used an Isis crown, a lotus and a crocodile. In 81 C. Marius Capito used a sistrum, a lotus and an ibis. In 79 L. Papius used pairs of control marks, i.e. a sistrum and a patera with fruit, a lotus and an Isis crown, a hippopotamus and a crocodile, a snake and a mongoose. In 69 M. Plaetorius Cestianus used a lotus. In 67 C. Calpurnius Piso Frugi, Cicero’s son in law, used an Isis crown. Finally in 64 L. Roscius Fabatus used, in pairs, an Isis crown and a peacock, a lotus and a sistrum, a pygmy and a heron, and a crocodile and a mongoose. The over-all list of these motifs appears to be rather limited: Isis crown, sistrum, lotus, crocodile, hippopotamus, ibis, mongoose and snake, pygmy and heron. The Isis crown, the lotus and the sistrum are fairly frequently found, while the pygmy and the characteristic Nilotic animals appear rarely. Only the Isis crown and the sistrum are, strictly speaking, objects from the cult of Isis. The lotus may represent the lotus head-dress of Isis, but also may simply be a Nilotic motif in general terms, like the remaining motifs.

Sydenham has suggested that control-marks in general referred to various trades and professions and to their corporations, which for the greater part favoured the Populares. The Egyptian motifs could be tokens of Caesar’s imperialistic interest in Egypt. To this it may be objected firstly that the very wide variety of motifs that occur will have made any reference to specific trades or corporations obscure, and secondly that the Egyptian motifs on p. 294, represents what may be an Isis crown.

5 See respectively Alföldi, (o.c. in n.1) fig. 3, and Crawford 346, no. 342.1; 349.
6 See Crawford 368 f.; for the Isis crown see Alföldi (o.c. in n. 1) fig. 4, Babelon (o.c. in n. 4) II, 7, no. 129; for the lotus Grueber (o.c. in n. 4) 2531.
7 See Crawford 392 ff., 394 f.
8 See Crawford 398 f., resp. pls. LXVI, 91; LXVII, 143 (cf. Babelon (o.c. in n. 4) 281, no. 65); pl. LXVI, 29 (Alföldi (o.c. in n. 1) fig. 8); pl. LXVII, 122, it is clear that a hippopotamus is represented and not a pig as it is called in the text. For hippopotami and crocodiles, see Ch. III, n. 114; for the snake and mongoose Ch. III, n. 74.
9 See Crawford 417.
10 See Crawford 419, no. 420, 12; Alföldi (o.c. in n. 1) fig. 5.
11 See Crawford 459 f., respectively pls. LXVIII, 50, 51, 69, LXIX 141.
12 For the motif of a pygmy fighting a heron see Ch. III, n. 17; for the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the mongoose and the snake see the references given in n. 8.