

HARPOKRATES (ZEUS KASIOS) OF PELUSIUM

(PLATE XII)

CLITOPHON and Leucippe, those lovers for whose vexation Achilles Tatius contrived so many wild and fantastic adventures, ran away together from their parents in Tyre and went to Berytus, whence they took ship for Alexandria.¹ The first disaster of their wanderings was a wreck, which cast them ashore on the Egyptian coast near Pelusium, seemingly the only survivors; for Clitophon's friend Clinias and his slave Satyrus had disappeared. The first act of the castaways was to go to worship at the temple near by, of which Clitophon, the narrator, has this to say:

At Pelusium is the sacred image of Zeus Kasios; but the statue is that of a youth, more like Apollo, so young it seemed. He has his hand stretched out holding a pomegranate, about which there is a mystical story. After praying to the god and asking for a prophetic sign about Clinias and Satyrus (for the god was said to give oracles), we went round the temple.²

Then follows a description, after the author's minute fashion, of some pictures that adorned the back chamber.

Scanty as is the information contained in this short passage, it is all that we know from literary sources about the cult-statue of the Pelusian sanctuary. Further evidence has been found in coins of Roman Egypt, and later on I shall add the testimony of four unpublished gems, three of which are certainly, and the fourth probably, of Egyptian provenance. The origin of the cult is a problem beyond the scope of this paper. What is known or reasonably conjectured about it is conveniently summarized by the learned author of *Zeus*, to whom, and to the authorities that he cites, I owe the following data.³

The epithet Kasios, given to the Pelusian divinity, is derived from another seat of the same cult, the *Κάσιον ὄρος*, a sand-dune about nine miles east of Pelusium. That cult, in turn, may have been a branch, established by seafarers, of the cult of Zeus on the Syrian Mount Kasion, a range to the south of Antioch and the lower course of the river Orontes. Since the epithet Kasios is not given to Zeus in any native Greek worship, it is likely that the god of the Syrian mountain was a Semitic

¹ For casts of the coins illustrated in this article I am indebted to the generosity of the American Numismatic Society, and in particular to the courtesy of its Secretary, Mr. Sydney P. Noe. Charles Seltman, of Queens' College, Cambridge, most kindly acted as intermediary in obtaining an impression of the gem in the Lewis Collection. For it I owe thanks to the authorities of Corpus Christi College, and of the Fitzwilliam Museum, whose technical expert made the impression. Dr. Louise Shier, Assistant Curator in our museum, made the casts of the Michigan stones, and also of that in the personal collection of President Ruthven, to whom my thanks are due for the privilege of publishing it.

² Ach. Tat., 3, 6.

³ A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, II, pp. 984-987; III, p. 1177.

deity whom the Greeks identified with their own mountain-god. The Semitic divinity, according to a recent investigator, was Baal Zephon.⁴

It is strange that any god who could be identified with Zeus should be represented by a youthful figure resembling Apollo; perhaps the best explanation is that when the Syrian deity was introduced into Egypt, he was identified, by that syncretism which had long worked in Egyptian religion, with a youthful god who had previously dominated the site, probably Harpokrates, the young Horus. Cook thinks that it may have been easier for Zeus to succeed Horus—should we not rather say, become fused with him?—because of the influence of Crete, where a youthful Zeus had long been recognized.⁵ Perhaps even more important are the indications of a solar character that have been detected in the Syrian cult of Zeus Kasios.⁶ This in itself would facilitate a fusion of the Syrian deity with Horus, the young sun-god of the Egyptians, and it will be remembered that solar deities are ever young.

The earliest object that can be plausibly supposed to represent the cult-statue at Pelusium is a coin of the Pelusiote nome (Plate XII, 1) struck in the twelfth year of Trajan (A.D. 109).⁷ Apparently only one specimen has been published, and it is so worn that part of the design is indistinct. It is not surprising, therefore, that Dattari's careful description, which follows, requires correction from other sources:

Harpokrates standing to left wearing the hemhem crown, his hair falling upon his shoulders, clothed with tunic and himation, which is wound round his body and caught up over the left forearm. In the left hand he holds a sceptre, in the right a pomegranate. On the ground level, Pan standing to right, chlamys flying behind him, arms raised in the act of grasping at the pomegranate held by Harpokrates.

With this coin-type we may compare a gem in the possession of President A. G. Ruthven, of the University of Michigan (Plate XII, 2). It is a red carnelian, flecked with spots of darker red, measuring in millimeters $20.5 \times 16 \times 8$. The obverse is slightly convex, the reverse very convex. The obverse shows a youthful male figure in front view, head to left, nude except for a chlamys fastened across the chest and falling down behind the left shoulder, hemhem crown on the head.⁸ The extended right hand holds a pomegranate, the left rests, at the level of the head, on a tall sceptre. Under the right arm of the god stands a child reaching with his right hand towards the pomegranate. Apparently the child's left arm was supposed to be entirely concealed by a fold of drapery hanging from the shoulder, though there is no indication

⁴ O. Eissfeldt, "Baal Zaphon, Zeus Kasios, und der Durchzug der Israeliten durchs Meer," pp. 1-7, pp. 30-39 (*Beiträge zur Religionsgeschichte des Altertums*, I, 1932).

⁵ *Op. cit.*, II, p. 986.

⁶ A. Salač, "Zeus Kasios," *B.C.H.*, XLVI, 1922, p. 178, and note 7.

⁷ Dattari, *Monete imperiali greche: Numi augg. Alexandrini*, 6345, Tav. 34.

⁸ This Egyptian headdress was evidently recognized as a mark of Zeus Kasios, as is shown by its use in connection with the name of the god even when the deity himself is not represented; see Cook, *Zeus*, II, p. 987.

of a fastening below the neck. If this was not the engraver's intention, one can only say that the arm itself is represented dangling in an extremely awkward way. The adult figure is of mediocre workmanship; the child is clumsily and sketchily executed. An inscription on the reverse of this stone will be dealt with later.

A general resemblance between the design on this stone and that on the coin is obvious; and it seems to warrant treating the two together as variants of a single type (Type I); but there are also several differences. The god of the Ruthven gem is practically nude, the one on the coin wears both tunic and himation, and the way in which the latter garment is worn may account for still another difference. Since, in the design on the coin, the end of the himation is thrown over the left forearm, the elbow must remain at waist level and the hand cannot hold a tall sceptre in the usual way, at the height of the face. Consequently a tall sceptre would have to lean in the crook of the elbow, or else a short one would be substituted. What the designer of the coin-die intended is not clear. If what we see is the upper part of a tall sceptre, all the lower part but the bottom would be concealed by the himation and the leg of the figure; and the lower part of the coin is so worn that it is impossible to say whether the lower end of the staff was shown or not.

There is good reason, as will be shown later, to think that the cult-statue at Pelusium was nude except for a chlamys; and a lapidary might well be more faithful than a die-sinker to a sculptured type. If the god wore no clothing but the chlamys, the use of the tall sceptre is artistically more satisfactory and is to be expected. A difference in the treatment of the hemhem crown is explained by the cramped space on the coin. There the projections (reed-bundles) are very short, being in fact reduced to mere balls, while on the gem they are of normal height.

The abrasion of the coin makes it impossible to discuss the minor figure with any confidence, but in one respect the damaged condition of the surface seems to have led Dattari astray. The Ruthven gem, three others that are still to be described, and some coins of later date agree in showing the minor figure as an ordinary human child, not as a little Pan.

Before leaving the Ruthven carnelian, some attention must be given to its reverse, which shows that the gem was applied to a magical purpose. It may not have been intended to serve that purpose from the beginning, for some purely ornamental stones were inscribed on their reverse sides with magical words or designs a long time after their manufacture. In this case there is nothing to show whether the reverse was inscribed at the time when the obverse was engraved or later. A snake with his tail in his mouth (ouroboros) surrounds the reverse side. Enclosed within it are two long, narrow rectangles, evidently representing tablets, each containing an inscription. A still narrower parallelogram extends over the middle part of the upper tablet, as if it were a contrivance to fasten it in position; but the lower tablet has a similar appendage below. The inscriptions within these two tablets consist partly of Greek

letters, some written backwards, partly of magical characters that seem to be based on Greek letters. No sense can be made from them, nor from the minute letters *λαανμω* which are engraved under the upper tablet. Outside the ouroboros are four magical words, two above, two below; these are in Greek letters and are pronounceable, though unintelligible—*αιαναχθα αλθμαξα μελαχω αρηακω*. The first, with trivial variations, is often used in the magical formulas cut on amulets. All four belong to the well-known class of *voces magicae*, code words used by adepts in magic as secret and powerful names of the gods invoked to aid in their operations. There is no apparent reason why a magical charm should be connected with this particular aspect of Harpokrates, but the young god, both as an infant and a youth is a favorite type with amulet-makers, who were decidedly catholic in their choice of divine patrons.

Returning now to the evidence of coins, we find another, struck in the thirteenth year of Trajan, on which Dattari recognizes Harpokrates of Pelusium;⁹ but if he is right, the die-sinker has treated his subject with great freedom (Plate XII, 3). Here the god is entirely nude, and the posture is reversed: his head is turned to the spectator's right, his right hand holds the short sceptre, the left holds a fruit at shoulder height. He stands between two large rectangular bases as high as his waist. A vase (oinochoe) rests on the base at the left. On the corresponding base at the right Dattari says there is a Paniskos running towards Harpokrates. I cannot see this on the plate. If Dattari is right in seeing a diminutive figure in that position, the type may be taken for a very free adaptation of the cult-statue of Pelusium.

In the next group of objects, also thought to represent the Harpokrates of Pelusium, the type is greatly modified. I shall refer to it as Type II. Here we have first to consider a coin of Gallienus (year 15, 267),¹⁰ of which, through the courtesy of the American Numismatic Society, I am able to offer a better illustration than has been hitherto available (Plate XII, 4). On its reverse Harpokrates stands with body to front, head to right, with diadem and hemhem crown. He wears a chlamys clasped on his right shoulder and falling in front of the left shoulder and over the left arm; except for this and the buskins on his feet, the god is nude. In his left hand he holds a pomegranate at the height of his neck, and is looking at it. The right hand, extended downwards and to the left, holds an object, indistinct on this coin, which other specimens show as a leafy branch. Towards this a small child below holds up his right arm. His body is naked and chubby, and the position of the legs suggests a frisking, dancing movement. The palm-leaf at the lower right has of course nothing to do with the central type.

⁹ Dattari, 907, Tav. 14.

¹⁰ *Brit. Mus. Cat., Alexandria*, 2213, pl. 17. It is strange that in his description (p. 288) Poole does not connect this type with the Harpokrates of Pelusium, although he does refer another coin to that divinity, namely one of Hadrian (year 22), showing only a bust of Harpokrates wearing the hemhem crown, and in front of him, a pomegranate (no. 764, pl. 17; cf. introd. lxv).

The description of this coin given by R. S. Poole differs in several details. He calls the pomegranate a vase, which is a natural error; an aryballos has a similar contour, and certain almost spherical Egyptian vessels with low lips are even more like the shape of a pomegranate.¹¹ Of the little figure he says: "At his [i. e. Harpokrates'] feet 1. Paniskos with goat's face, facing, head r., dancing, holds in r. pedum." Careful inspection of Poole's plate, together with the evidence of the New York coin, shows that the errors in his description can all be explained by the fact that the British Museum coin was less cleanly struck, and that in consequence there are misleading blurs about the head and hands of the small figure. It is likely that Poole's interpretation influenced Dattari, who describes this coin in similar terms but gives no illustration of it, and also the editor of the Hunterian Collection.¹²

Shortly afterward the same reverse type was used for a coin of Claudius II (year 2, 269), and the specimen shown here leaves no doubt that the god's right hand held a leafy branch (Plate XII, 5).¹³ How easy it is to misinterpret details of these inferior coins is shown by Feuardent's description of specimens in the Demetrio Collection of the coins of both Claudius and Gallienus. He took the god to be Mercury, and the pomegranate to be a purse; the branch he saw as a caduceus, which is shown on his illustration, a drawing.¹⁴

The same type appears again in the eighth year of Diocletian (Plate XII, 6). The coin once more makes it clear that the little figure is an ordinary child, and that the object in Harpokrates' right hand is a branch.

The three coins just mentioned show that the type that they present, whatever its relation to the Pelusian cult may be, maintained itself for about twenty-five years in the latter half of the third century.

A group of three engraved stones, clearly related to this coin-type or its model, must now be examined. First, one belonging to the University of Michigan (26102); a notation "Tuna" made by the dealer who sold it may indicate that it was found at Tuna-el-Gebel, a village of Middle Egypt on the Bahr Yusuf west of the site of the ancient Antinoupolis; but such information is unreliable and of no importance here. The stone, which is unusually large (mm. 40 × 34 × 6), seems to be limestone, dull grey with a large bluish area and some spots, both lighter and darker (Plate XII, 7). The obverse is slightly convex, the reverse flat and uninscribed. In its general appearance the obverse design strikingly resembles that of the coins, but there are slight

¹¹ A kneeling statuette of Thutmosis III found at Deir-el-Medineh holds a vase of this kind in each hand; see *Ann. du Service des Antiquités d'Égypte*, XIII, 1913, 37 and pl. X.

¹² Dattari, 5237; he describes the child as a Paniskos, but recognizes the pomegranate and the branch. The description in the *Catalogue of the Hunterian Collection* (III, 532, no. 941) almost exactly repeats that of Poole.

¹³ Another specimen is shown by Dattari, 5390, Tav. 14.

¹⁴ F. Feuardent, *Collections Giovanni di Demetrio: Numismatique, Égypte ancienne*, 2^{me} partie, 3107 and 3206 (pl. 33).

differences. On the stone the hemhem crown is taller because there is ample space for it. There is no clothing on the body of Harpokrates; the chlamys has become a mere scarf hanging over the elbow. The pomegranate is held at shoulder height, a little lower than on the coins. The child is light in build and well proportioned, suggesting that the small figure on the coins owes its heavy outlines to imperfect striking or even to poor work on the die-sinker's part. Here, small as the child is, the lines of its limbs are delicately balanced against the composition of the principal subject.

In his catalogue of *The Lewis Collection of Gems and Rings*, J. H. Middleton described a well-cut black jasper which seemed to belong to the series under discussion, although, since Middleton took the pomegranate for an orb, he not unnaturally conjectured that the deity might be the sun-god, thinking, apparently, of the Greek Helios rather than Horus.¹⁵ Through the good offices of Charles Seltman I have obtained an impression of this stone, which puts the connection beyond doubt (Plate XII, 8).¹⁶ Here the hemhem crown has been rendered with careful attention to details, the supporting horns, the three reed-bundles, and the disks at their tops being faithfully reproduced. The chlamys is worn as on the coin of Gallienus. Artistically considered, this gem is probably the worthiest representation of the god of Pelusium; yet it is possible, even probable, that the maker has taken a liberty with his model. Here the god is not looking at the pomegranate but in the other direction, as if his attention were caught by the child's effort to grasp the branch, though the eyes are not actually directed downward.

A still greater freedom was used by the maker of another specimen in the Michigan collection (26104), a coarsely engraved black glass paste, the surface of which has been roughened by corrosion (Plate XII, 9). Here the god's head is not only turned to the side where the child stands, but it is actually tilted forward as if he were looking at the child and teasing him with the leafy twig. But the child's posture is ill motivated, since instead of reaching up toward the twig with his right hand, he raises the left toward the god. This crude specimen is an amulet, as the inscription H XAPIC on the reverse shows. Adequate explanation of those words would require more space than the primary purpose of this article can properly claim. It must suffice to say that since $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$ is in the nominative case and has the article, the words cannot be taken as a mere prayer for favor like the common phrase $\delta\delta\varsigma\ \chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\nu\ \tau\hat{\omega}\ \phi\omicron\rho\omicron\delta\acute{\nu}\nu\tau\iota$. They are better understood as an abbreviated form of an acclamation directed to the god. The

¹⁵ J. H. Middleton, *The Lewis Collection of Gems and Rings*, p. 75, no. 177. No illustration.

¹⁶ Since this is an impression (negative), not a cast, it was necessary to reverse the print in order to show the child in the proper position. It is well known that almost all the designs that appear on magical gems were meant to be looked at directly, not by means of a wax impression, and it is likely that in Roman times this was true of a considerable number of non-magical stones also. In illustrating gems of the later period archaeologists would do well to be guided by the proper relation of the right and left sides as indicated by the objects held in the hands. Why should an Athena be shown carrying her shield on her right arm?

phrase in full is probably ἡ χάρις τοῦ αἰῶνος, which is used of the Akephalos, the headless supreme god, here identified with Osiris, who is invoked in a formula for the expulsion of a demon in Papyrus XLVI of the British Museum.¹⁷ It also occurs in the Coptic Gnostic Treatise published by Miss Baynes.¹⁸ If the phrase is to be understood thus, it is one of the few amulet inscriptions that may have Gnostic associations. But we have also the prayer ἡ χάρις συνέστω μοι, attributed to the Ophianic sect,¹⁹ and the Christian use of χάρις, with or without the article and the added τοῦ θεοῦ is well known though not always well understood.

Thus far it appears from the evidence of the coins and gems mentioned that the artists faithfully reproduced two features of the Pelusian statue, namely, the youthfulness of the god and the pomegranate in his hand, just the two points that caught the eye of Achilles Tatius. In various other matters there are marked differences. Some of these may represent nothing more than the license that both die-makers and gem-cutters allowed themselves; for example, the clothing of the figure on Dattari's coin of the Pelusiot nomen may have been due to a momentary feeling on the die-maker's part that a clothed deity presented a more majestic appearance, and hence was more appropriate for a coin-type. Yet there was no prejudice against nudity in divine types, as Alexandrian coins representing Poseidon, Hermes, Ares and Herakles abundantly prove. The changed position of Harpokrates on the Lewis gem and the Michigan paste seems to be the result of the feeling that the god should show some consciousness of the child's presence at his feet. But such differences as those between the coin of Trajan and that of Gallienus, or between the Ruthven gem and Michigan 26102, are not so readily explained.

With the data now at hand it is impossible to account for those differences by any theory that is sure to gain general consent; but certain facts and possibilities must be considered. An inscription discovered by Clédat in the course of his excavations at Pelusium refers to the foundation of a temple of Zeus Kasios at Pelusium in honor of the emperor Hadrian;²⁰ the time was 130 A.D.²¹ It is not certain, however, whether this was the first temple of Zeus Kasios to have been built at Pelusium, whether it was a new structure intended to supersede an older one, or whether the inscription refers only to a repair, restoration and re-dedication of an older building. One thing,

¹⁷ Preisendanz, *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, I, Pap. V, p. 156. The different meanings of χάρις are well discussed by A. D. Nock (Bell, Nock, and Thompson, "Magical Texts from a Bilingual Papyrus in the British Museum," pp. 27-29; *Proc. British Acad.*, XVII). The notion of power and success seems to predominate in magical texts; but as Nock says, "beauty, power, godlikeness are ideas which run into one another."

¹⁸ Charlotte A. Baynes, *A Coptic Gnostic Treatise*, p. 97 (XXVIII).

¹⁹ Orig., *contra Cels.*, 6, 31.

²⁰ J. Clédat, "Le Temple de Zeus Kassios à Péluse," *Ann. du service des ant. de l'Égypte*, XIII, 1913, pp. 83 f.; A. Salač, *B.C.H.*, XLVI, 1922, pp. 167 f.

²¹ W. Weber, *Untersuch. zur Gesch. des Kaisers Hadrians*, 246, 279.

though, is clear. If the figure on the coin of the Pelusiote nome under Trajan represents a cult-image, that image must have stood in a structure older than a temple erected in honor of Hadrian; or else it was not at Pelusium itself but was rather the cult-statue in the temple on the neighboring Mt. Kasion. It is possible that this older type is more faithful to the traditional conception of Zeus in one respect, namely that the god is given a sceptre. In any case we must associate with the type on the coin of Trajan that on the Ruthven gem, which may be truer to the original; for sculptors dislike clothing a young and vigorous body. These two agree in one point which may be important, namely the action of the child, which is better motivated in reaching for the fruit than for the leafy branch of the other type.

Even without the regnal date, the less convincing motivation of the child's gesture marks Type II (i. e., from the coin of Gallienus on) as later than Type I (coin of Trajan and Ruthven gem). But the close relation of the two is proved not only by the marks that they have in common, the Apolline figure and the pomegranate, but also by the fact that the artist of Type II took over the child as a part of the composition. This shows that the later type is not only subsequent to that shown on the coin of Trajan, but is also a successor to it. The points that remain obscure are the location of the statue shown on Trajan's coin of the Pelusiote nome—whether in an older temple at Pelusium or in the sanctuary at Mt. Kasion, and whether in the former case it continued to exist after the Hadrianic temple was built, or was somehow destroyed and only approximately reproduced in the type which is recorded from Gallienus on, though possibly as old as Hadrian's reign.

Unfortunately the evidence of Achilles Tatius about these questions is inconclusive. The fact that he mentions the pomegranate held by the god but says nothing about a branch suggests that the statue he describes resembled our Type I rather than Type II. Yet, since he seems to have written in the latter half of the third century, we should expect him or his authority to have seen the later cult-image, which, as seems likely, the coins of Gallienus and his successors represent. Could the older image have existed up to a time so near 267 A.D. that it could have been seen by Achilles Tatius or by an older contemporary who told him of it? Possibly, for the statue shown on the coin of Gallienus may have been quite new when it was first used as a reverse type; furthermore, a recent opinion which carries much weight places the composition of Achilles' work well before the end of the third century.²² But con-

²² Grenfell and Hunt thought that P. Oxy. 1250, which contains some chapters of Achilles Tatius, was probably written early in the fourth century, and consequently the composition of the romance could not be put much later than 300 A.D. Medea Norsa now thinks that the fragment was written at about the same time as P. Oxy. 412 (Julius Africanus), that is, not later than 275 (Norsa is quoted to this effect by H. Dörrie, *De Longi Achillis Tatii Heliodori memoria* [1935], p. 21). Since Achilles Tatius borrowed from Heliodorus, he must be placed after the period assigned to the latter, namely 220-250 A.D. (see the article by Münscher, in Pauly-Wissowa, VIII, 20-23; also *Heliod. Ethiop.* ed. Rattenbury and Lumb, Introd. xiv: Budé series, 1935).

jectures about the exact relation of Achilles' description to the archaeological evidence are of little use, since the romancer is an unsatisfactory witness. His failure to mention the child shows how little attention he or his informant gave to the composition, and it is not safe to argue from his silence about its details.

A suggestion may be offered about the leafy branch that the god of Type II has in his right hand. Held by a youthful divinity of Apolline characteristics, such a branch might well call to mind the laurel, which the poets often gave the Delphic god, as an appropriate attribute, when in the act of delivering his oracles.²³ Perhaps it was made a part of the new sculpture-type as a reminder of the prophetic powers that Achilles Tatius ascribes to the Pelusian deity. This addition made it necessary to re-arrange the composition; and it may have prompted gem-cutters to modify the cult-type in such ways as would make it more natural and convincing in their eyes.²⁴

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²³ Ar., *Plutus*, 213; Call., *Hymn. in Del.*, 94; Call., *Iamb. (Oxy. Pap.*, VII, 1011, 222 f.); Lucr., 1, 739.

²⁴ Since this article was sent to the editor another specimen of Type II has come to my attention among the magical objects gathered by Mr. S. Ayvaz at various Syrian sites. The greater part of that collection was sold to the University of Michigan in 1941; but it now appears that several pieces were retained by the previous owner or sold elsewhere. In the *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*, XXV, 1942-3, pp. 105-128, R. Mousterde, S. J., published an account of the Ayvaz Collection with the title "Objets Magiques: Recueil S. Ayvaz." No. 19, described at p. 112 of this publication, with a drawing on plate VII, 19, is a haematite with a fragment broken away from the right side. The fracture caused the loss of the god's right arm and the pomegranate; in other respects the design closely resembles Mich. 26104, although on the Ayvaz stone the chlamys is partly visible, while in the Michigan specimen the god is nude. This item of the Ayvaz Collection was not included in the sale to the University of Michigan. Fr. Mousterde described it tentatively as Horus-Apollo, but did not connect it with the god of Pelusium. A long inscription on the back of the Ayvaz stone is the common magical palindrome beginning Iaeobaphrenemoun.

PLATE XII



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