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Coin with Portraits of Cleopatra and Mark Antony

c. 36 B.C.

Greco-Roman, minted in the eastern Mediterranean region

Silver tetradrachm; diam. 2.6 cm (1 1/16 in.), 15.22 g

Inscribed: *ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑ ΘΕΑ ΝΕΩΤΕΡΑ* (the younger goddess Cleopatra; obverse); *ΑΝΤΩΝΟC ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ ΤΡΙΤΟΝ ΤΡΙΩΝ ΑΝΑΡΩΝ* (Antony, imperator, third of the triumvirate; reverse)

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THIS RARE AND exquisite silver coin portrays two of the most famous figures of antiquity, the charismatic Egyptian queen Cleopatra and the ambitious Roman warlord Mark Antony.¹ Cleopatra ruled Egypt during the period when Rome was expanding its empire eastward toward the territories she controlled. By allying herself politically and personally first with Julius Caesar and, after his death, with Mark Antony, the queen hoped to maintain Egypt's autonomy and expand her own authority. The powerful political alliance between Antony and Cleopatra threatened Caesar's heir, his great-nephew Octavian, who in 33 B.C. defeated their forces in a decisive sea battle at Actium, which led to the pair's suicides.

To pay their armies and satisfy their other debts, Antony and Cleopatra minted coins bearing their likenesses. This example is remarkable in that it depicts both the general and the queen. Antony, seen here at bottom, is framed by an inscription that identifies him as a commander and one of Rome's trio of rulers. He is represented with short hair, a flat nose, a strong chin, and a long, thick neck. Cleopatra, shown at top, has a profile that is startlingly similar to Antony's, right down to the Adam's apple on her massive neck. This similarity was purposeful, since other coins issued by Cleopatra display a distinctly feminine profile. More of her figure is depicted than is Antony's, including her upper torso, which showcases her legendary pearl jewelry. An inscription and a crown circling her carefully braided hair identify her as a queen; she was, in fact, Egypt's last.

Cleopatra appears on the front of the coin, in the place of prestige, and Antony is on the back. This is unusual because, although she was queen of Egypt, her country was a subservient ally of Rome. By pairing their faces on coinage, the rulers advertised a powerful new partnership that put Egypt's enormous agricultural riches at the disposal of one of Rome's rulers. Antony and Cleopatra planned to govern Egypt equally and cooperatively—to the joint venture the queen brought her hereditary right to rule, while Antony brought Roman military power. Their coin relayed this message in its coupling of remarkably similar images and in the inscriptions circling the heads. This kind of bold statement undoubtedly offended their enemies in Rome, especially Octavian, and helped bring about their eventual downfall.

MARY GREUEL



6. Gates Potteries, *Hints for Gifts and Home Decoration*, sales cat., 1905, p. 4; and Darling (note 4), pp. 52–53.
7. Herbert J. Hall, "Marblehead Pottery," *Keramic Studio* 10, 2 (June 1908), p. 31. For more on Marblehead, see Marilee Boyd Meyer and Susan J. Montgomery, "Marblehead Pottery: Simplicity and Restraint," *American Ceramic Circle Journal* 14 (2007), pp. 153–74; Jonathan Clancy and Martin Eidelberg, *Beauty in Common Things: American Arts and Crafts Pottery from the Two Red Roses Foundation*, exh. cat. (Two Red Roses Foundation, 2008), pp. 81–93; and idem, "Marblehead Revisited: The Myth of Hannah Tutt," *Style* 1900 (Winter 2008/09), pp. 62–69.
8. "The Annual Arts and Crafts Exhibition at the National Arts Club, New York," *Craftsman* 13, 4 (Jan. 1908), p. 482. For additional commentary that compared Marblehead to "some of the best old Japanese pottery," see "Exhibition of the New York Society of Ceramic Arts," *Keramic Studio* 11, 2 (June 1909), p. 41.
9. For more on Dow, see Nancy E. Green and Jessie Poesch, *Arthur Wesley Dow and American Arts and Crafts*, exh. cat. (American Federation of Arts, 1999); and Beth Ann and Tommy McPherson, *Arthur Wesley Dow and His Influence upon the Arts and Crafts Movement in America* (Arts and Crafts Press, 1999).

The Room No. VI, pp. 18–19

1. These conditions made the Black Belt the subject of intense scrutiny. Photographers like Russell Lee documented its conditions for the Farm Security Administration, while St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton published their seminal study *Black Metropolis* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1945).
2. For more on Cortor, see Romare Bearden and Harry Henderson, *A History of African-American Artists from 1792 to the Present* (Pantheon Books, 1993), pp. 272–79; and *Three Masters: Eldzier Cortor, Hughie Lee-Smith, Archibald John Motley, Jr.*, exh. cat. (Kenkeleba Gallery, 1988). For more on *The Room No. VI* in particular, see Sarah E. Kelly, "The Room No. VI" in *American Modernism at the Art Institute of Chicago: From World War I to 1955*, ed. Judith A. Barter (The Art Institute of Chicago/Yale University Press, 2009), cat. 169, pp. 330–34.
3. Cortor also cited a 1941 Art Institute exhibition of French art as being a particular influence. He admired these works' treatment of everyday subjects in an "epic style," a combination that he felt endowed them with gravity and beauty. This was a synthesis that he hoped to achieve in his own work. See *Masterpieces of French Art Lent by the Museums and Collectors of France*, exh. cat. (Art Institute of Chicago, 1941).
4. In June 2007 Cortor described *The Room No. VI* as his showpiece painting, which he intended to have represent him at exhibitions in the late 1940s and early 1950s; Michael Rosenfeld, e-mail to Sarah E. Kelly, June 26, 2007. Curatorial files, Department of American Art.
5. Eldzier Cortor, quoted in *University of Illinois Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, exh. cat. (University of Illinois Press, 1951), p. 168.

Okavango Delta Spa, Botswana, pp. 20–21

1. The Durst Lambda printer is a laser-based, large-format device for printing high-resolution images. The digital print illustrated here belongs to a suite of six.
2. For more on Roy, see Joseph Rosa, *Roy: Design Series I*, exh. cat. (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2001); idem, *Figuration in Contemporary Design*, exh. cat. (Art Institute of Chicago/Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 12–13, 48–51; and Kristine Synnes, *Lindy Roy: Architecture of Risk*, Michigan Architecture Papers 11 (University of Michigan, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, 2004).

New Busan Tower, Busan, South Korea, pp. 22–23

1. For more on Mies and the Glass Skyscraper, see Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, eds., *Mies in Berlin* (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2001); and Phyllis Lambert, *Mies in America* (Abrams, 2001).
2. The digital print illustrated here belongs to a suite of three. The other two show a section and a detail. All measure 61 x 91 cm (24 x 36 in.).
3. For more on PATTERNS, Inc., see Kurt Forster, ed., *METAMORPH: 9th International Architecture Exhibition/Venice Biennale* (Rizzoli, 2004); Joseph Rosa, *Next Generation: Folds, Blobs, +Boxes* (Rizzoli, 2003); idem, ed., *Glamour: Fashion + Industrial Design + Architecture* (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art/Yale University Press, 2004); and idem, *Figuration in Contemporary Design* (Art Institute of Chicago/Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 16–17, 70–73.

Ordos 100, Lot 006, Inner Mongolia, China, pp. 30–31

1. For more on MOS, see Aaron Betsky, ed., *Out There: Architecture Beyond Building*, 11th International Architecture Exhibition/Venice Biennale (Marsilio, 2008); Michael Meredith, ed., *From Control to Design: Parametric/Algorithmic Architecture* (Actar, 2008); and Michael Meredith, ed., *Notes for Those Beginning the Discipline of Architecture* (YouWorkForThem, 2006).

Wine Flask (Hu), pp. 32–33

1. Wine in ancient China was fermented from grain rather than fruit and is more accurately described as millet ale.
2. So pervasive were these changes that they are generally termed the Ritual Reform or Ritual Revolution. For various perspectives on their source, timing, and pace, see Lothar von Falkenhausen, *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000–250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence* (Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California–Los Angeles, 2006), p. 64; and Edward L. Shaughnessy, "Western Zhou History," *The Cambridge History of Ancient China, from the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.*, ed. Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy (Cambridge University Press, 1999) esp. pp. 323–38. The virtual disappearance of wine vessels may also be explained, at least in part, as a repudiation by Zhou rulers of the indulgent drinking habits of Shang worshippers; see Jessica Rawson, *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, vol. IIA (Arthur M. Sackler Foundation/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, 1990), p. 102. For the stylistic

- origin of this form and its place in ritual sets, see Rawson (above), pp. 100–02, 105, fig. 147.
3. A medley of stylized birds with cleverly manipulated and distorted features dominated Chinese bronze decoration from c. 975 to c. 850 B.C. For more on their evolution from other zoomorphic motifs, including dragons, see Rawson (note 2), pp. 75–83. The possible significance of these birds eludes modern interpretation.
 4. These lids and rings are preserved on a pair of flasks very similar to the Art Institute's in the Nezu Museum, Tokyo. One of the pair is illustrated in *Zhongguo qing tong qi quan qi [Complete Compendium of Chinese Bronzes]* (Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), vol. 6, pl. 133; the other in Rawson (note 2), vol. IIB, p. 611, fig. 95.3. Like many contemporary vessels, the latter flask is cast with an inscription indicating that its commissioner intended it to be passed down through future generations: *Mei Xian makes this treasured hu flask / May for ten thousand years grandsons' grandsons / And son's sons eternally treasure and use [it]*; translation by Edward L. Shaughnessy in an e-mail to Elinor Pearlstein, Apr. 2009.
 5. This darkened surface likely accounts for the flask's initial misidentification as a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century version of an ancient vessel when it was auctioned in Germany in 2007. See Kunsthaus Lempertz, Cologne, *Aisatischen Kunst*, sale cat. (Kunsthaus Lempertz, Dec. 7–8, 2007), lot 939. The flask's true age was verified by thermoluminescence testing of its clay core at Oxford Authentication Ltd., on Apr. 25, 2008, and by detailed analysis by conservation scientist Dr. John Twilley. See "Technical and Scientific Examination of a Bronze Hu of the Middle Western Zhou Dynasty, 9th Century B.C.," Sept. 4, 2008, curatorial files, Department of Asian Art.

Coin with Portraits of Cleopatra and Mark Antony, pp. 34–35

1. The date and mint of this coin is uncertain. It is thought that these Antony and Cleopatra coins were struck at Antioch, though there is good reason to believe that they were produced further south, in Cleopatra's Phoenician territory. See Numismatica Ars Classica, Zürich, *The Barry Feirstein Collection of Ancient Coins, Part IV, Numismatica Ars Classica*, sale cat. (Numismatica Ars Classica, Apr. 2, 2008), p. 22, lot 55.

Four-Armed Dancing God Ganesha with His Rat Mount, pp. 38–39

1. For images of gilt repoussé and carved wood doorway surrounds see Pratapaditya Pal, ed., *Nepal: Old Images, New Insights*, Marg 56, 2 (Marg Publications/National Centre for the Performing Arts, 2002), pp. 12: 4, 112: 7–9.
2. For a discussion of Ganesha in Nepal, see Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley* (Princeton University Press, 1982), vol. 1, pp. 261–63.
3. Ibid. As Nepal and India share a border, many cultural and economic exchanges occurred throughout history. In particular, Nepal's earliest dynasty, the Licchavis (c.