

**Zeitschrift:** Schweizerische numismatische Rundschau = Revue suisse de numismatique = Rivista svizzera di numismatica  
**Herausgeber:** Schweizerische Numismatische Gesellschaft  
**Band:** 80 (2001)  
  
**Artikel:** The lotus of Aphrodite on Ptolemaic bronzes  
**Autor:** Lorber, Catharine C.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-175754>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 10.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

THE LOTUS OF APHRODITE ON PTOLEMAIC BRONZES<sup>1</sup>

## PLATES 4–6

At least two Ptolemies honored Aphrodite, the patron goddess of Cyprus, on their Cypriote bronze coinage. The head of Aphrodite appears on the earliest Cypriote bronzes in the name of Ptolemy I (SVOR. 74–82). And a bronze series of Ptolemy III (SVOR. 1005–1009) depicts an archaistic cult statue of the goddess, her right hand clasping the drapery on her breast while holding a small lotus blossom.<sup>2</sup> This association of a lotus blossom with Aphrodite Cypria dates back at least to the archaic era: several limestone statuettes from the sixth and early fifth centuries portray the goddess kore-style, her right hand holding a lotus blossom or bud before her breast.<sup>3</sup> On some fifth-century silver coins of Idalion the head of Aphrodite appears on the obverse and the lotus, her attribute, on the reverse.<sup>4</sup>

A lotus blossom occurs frequently in the left field of Ptolemaic bronzes of the standard Ammon/eagle type. It has sometimes been interpreted as a personal symbol of Ptolemy VI Philometor.<sup>5</sup> Yet Ptolemaic bronzes bearing the lotus blossom are manifestly of several different reigns. Long attributed to Cyprus is a late series (SVOR. 1621–1632) featuring a lotus and regnal dates of Ptolemy VIII ranging from year 26 to year 41 (145/4–130/29 B.C.). Smaller, undated bronzes with the lotus symbol, of similar late style and fabric, have been found in Cypriote excavations in

<sup>1</sup> *Bibliography*

BMC	R.S. POOLE, <i>A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum. The Ptolemies, Kings of Egypt</i> (London 1883)
Cox	D.H. COX, <i>Coins from the Excavations at Curium, 1932–1953</i> , NNM 145 (New York 1959)
Köln	W. WEISER, <i>Katalog Ptolemäischer Bronzemünzen der Sammlung des Instituts für Altertumskunde der Universität zu Köln</i> , <i>Papyrologica Coloniensia XXIII</i> (Opladen 1995)
Paphos II	I. NICOLAOU, <i>Paphos</i> , vol. II: <i>The Coins from the House of Dionysos</i> (Nicosia, 1990), which records coins from the 1962–1978 excavations.
SVOR.	J.N. SVORONOS, <i>Ta Nomismata tou Kratous ton Ptolemaion</i> (Athens 1904–1908, in modern Greek).

<sup>2</sup> The iconography has been clarified by B. LICHOCKA, *La statue d'Aphrodite sur les monnaies de Ptolémée III, Iconographie classique et identités régionales*, BCH Suppl. XIV (Paris 1986), p. 313 with note 10.

<sup>3</sup> LIMC II (Zurich/Munich, 1984), Aphrodite, nos. 102 (British Museum B 457, from Naukratis), 105 (Louvre, from Tricomo), and 108 (Louvre AM 1514, from Pyrgos, Cyprus).

<sup>4</sup> HN<sup>2</sup>, p. 739. For illustrated examples, see ACGC 1097–1098 and SNG Lockett 3068.

<sup>5</sup> See BMC p. lxiii, where the lotus is described as the «prevailing symbol on Philometor's copper money,» and p. lxvi, where POOLE refers to «his [Philometor's] supposed distinctive symbol the lotus.»

such numbers that their origin on the island is beyond question.<sup>6</sup> Evidence has been mounting that earlier lotus-bearing series circulated on Cyprus as well. Our purpose here is to determine whether the lotus, an attribute of Cyprian Aphrodite, served as a symbol of Ptolemaic Cyprus even before the reign of Ptolemy VIII.

Our investigation will draw heavily on provenance information.<sup>7</sup> The excavations at Curium and Nea Paphos show that bronze coins minted at Alexandria circulated on Cyprus in the early third century, but they also suggest that after the reign of Ptolemy II very few Alexandrian bronzes entered the island. At Curium, which yielded 197 identifiable Ptolemaic coins later than the reign of Ptolemy II, only two are of undoubted Alexandrian mintage.<sup>8</sup> The more than 453 identifiable post-Philadelphus bronzes from the 1962–1978 Nea Paphos excavations include only three certainly Alexandrian issues.<sup>9</sup> All remaining coins catalogued as Alexandrian by Nicolaou bear the lotus symbol in left field, and their mint attribution will be reconsidered below. Thus if we discount the doubtful cases, it appears that Egyptian bronzes virtually did not circulate on Cyprus after the reign of Ptolemy III. With fitting symmetry, there is scant evidence for the circulation of Cypriote bronzes in Egypt until the return of Ptolemy IX from Cyprus to Egypt in 89/8 B.C. Recorded Egyptian hoards include no coins of Cypriote origin before IGCH 1716 and 1717. Lotus-bearing bronzes have not, to my knowledge, been reported from Egyptian excavations.<sup>10</sup> A recent commercial lot from Egypt, comprising more than a thousand Ptolemaic bronzes, contained not a single lotus symbol.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to determining the geographic origin of lotus-bearing bronzes, we shall consider some problems of classification in the standard references, and seek to establish dates for a number of lotus-bearing series.<sup>12</sup> The results, while only provisional, may serve as a framework for future study.

<sup>6</sup> SVOR. 1639 = COX 107 [8 specimens] and Paphos II, 214–308; SVOR. 1705 = Paphos II, 214–308.

<sup>7</sup> Including the Gunther collection, formed in Cyprus and now reposing in the trays of the American Numismatic Society. My thanks to Carmen Arnold-Biucchi for allowing me to examine these coins and for drawing my attention to the origin of the collection.

<sup>8</sup> COX 84 (SVOR. 1004), struck under Ptolemy III; and COX 90 (SVOR. 1382), struck during the regency of Cleopatra I. Other possibly non-Cypriote issues include COX 83 (SVOR. 1056, possibly Phoenician) and COX 86 (SVOR. 1193, possibly Phoenician, more likely Alexandrian).

<sup>9</sup> Paphos II, 58–59 (SVOR. 967 and 970), both belonging to the common series of Ptolemy III Euergetes with the control ⌘; and Paphos II, 573 (SVOR. 1384), an Isis head bronze with the control ⌘, from the regency of Cleopatra I or the early sole reign of Ptolemy VI. Another possibly non-Cypriote issue is Paphos II, 57 (SVOR. 1056, possibly Phoenician).

<sup>10</sup> This has been explicitly noted with respect to the excavations of the Centre d'études alexandrines, see O. PICARD, *Un monnayage alexandrin énigmatique: le trésor d'Alexandrie 1966*, in: M. AMANDRY and S. HURTER, eds., *Travaux de numismatique grecque offerts à Georges Le Rider* (London 1999), p. 320.

<sup>11</sup> Thanks to Jonathan Kern, who made the lot available for study in September, 1997.

<sup>12</sup> Space considerations preclude a systematic review of previous scholarly opinion, which in most cases was formed without benefit of the evidence now available.

*Series I* (SVOR. 841–843)

The following series is marked by a lotus blossom in left field, with no other controls. It is distinguished from a later series with similar markings (Series VII) by the early style of the eagles, whose legs are bare of feathers except for a tuft at the top. Svoronos greatly confused matters by creating multiple listings for the middle denomination of Series I, attributing similar coins to Ptolemy VI (SVOR. 1407) and citing a single coin in Milan (SNG Milano 375) both as an issue of Ptolemy II (SVOR. 842α) and as an issue of Ptolemy VIII (SVOR. 1638α).

- I.1 c. 25–26 mm., 8.05–17.10 g., av. c. 16 g. (*Pl. 4, 1*)  
SVOR. 841, pl. xxiv, 18.  
Provenances: Curium excavations, COX 87 [1 specimen]; Nea Paphos excavations, Paphos II, 52–55.
- I.2 c. 20–21 mm., 6.95–8.61 g., av. c. 8 g. (*Pl. 4, 2*)  
SVOR. 842, pl. Γ, 5; SVOR. 1407α, pl. xlviii, 17; SVOR. 1638.  
Provenances: Curium excavations, COX 88 [2 specimens]; Nea Paphos excavations, Paphos II, 175–177; Gunther collection (ANS inv. 51.116.378).
- I.3 c. 17 mm, 2.91–5.00 g., av. c. 4 g. (*Pl. 4, 3*)  
SVOR. 843, pl. xxiv, 19.  
Provenances: Curium excavations, COX 89 [5 specimens]; 5 in Gunther collection (ANS inv. 51.116.380–382, 52.142.515 [lot of 2]).

Poole, followed by Cox, placed this series in Cyprus under Ptolemy V.<sup>13</sup> Svoronos proposed a reattribution to Ptolemy II, suggesting an uncertain Phoenician or Palestinian mint to be identified with the «Rose-bearing Ptolemais» (Πτολεμαῖς

<sup>13</sup> BMC p. lv, and pp. 70–71, cat. nos. 28–35; COX, pp. 102–103. POOLE based his attribution on comparison with a supposed Cypriote series of Ptolemy Philopator «of similar but better work,» comprising bronzes bearing regnal dates 3 and 4 and marked with the control ⲡ (SVOR. 1190–1191, 1193–1194). Its attribution to Cyprus is far from certain. Svoronos listed it as Cypriote in his catalogue, but resolution of the ⲕ monogram which appears on obverse suggested an alternate attribution to Crete in his text (*Nomismata...*, vol. I, col. τζ and vol. IV, col. 229). One specimen of the type was found in the Curium excavations (COX 86), and Cox, while admitting that a single example constitutes only slight evidence, gave the coin to Cyprus under Ptolemy IV, *Excavations at Curium*, p. 102. Mørholm associated the same series with the Fifth Syrian War coinage of Ptolemy V, because the control ⲡ (or its variants) appears on precious metal issues of several Phoenician cities, see O. MØRKHOLM, *The Portrait Coinage of Ptolemy V: The main series*, in: O. MØRKHOLM and N.M. WAGGONER, eds., *Greek Numismatics and Archaeology: Essays in Honor of Margaret Thompson* (Wetteren 1979), p. 207, n. 14. Davesne recently re-affirmed the Cypriote attribution, but under Ptolemy Philopator, see A. DAVESNE, *Centre d'Études Chypriotes*, Cahier 22, p. 15 with n. 17. The 1997 commercial lot of Ptolemaic bronzes from Egypt contained eight specimens of SVOR. 1193, a substantial number when compared to the total of twenty recorded by Svoronos.



Ροδοφόρος) of 3 *Maccabees* 7, 17.<sup>14</sup> Regling expressed skepticism about Svoronos' provenance information.<sup>15</sup> Apparently he was justified, for there is not a single bronze of this series in the Israel Museum, the Eretz Israel Museum, or the data base of the Israel Antiquities Authority, nor has any been discovered in archaeological excavations in Israel.<sup>16</sup>

The evidence of provenance points strongly to a Cypriote mint. Yet Nicolaou gave these bronzes to Alexandria, dating different modules to different reigns.<sup>17</sup> Remarkably, she reported three obverse die links in this ostensibly imported coinage. One die connects Paphos II, 54–55 and a second, Paphos II, 176–177. The third links Paphos II, 52 and two bronzes with Δ between the legs of the eagle (Paphos II, 45–46). Nicolaou catalogued these latter as Alexandrian issues (SVOR. 438); and the die link was her basis for attributing the bronzes with the lotus symbol to Alexandria as well. Yet die linkage between so many excavation coins must surely cast doubt on a foreign origin. It points instead to limited issues struck close to the place of discovery.

The fabric of these bronzes, with central cavities, fixes the date sometime after c. 261 B.C.<sup>18</sup> The style of the eagles, with bare legs topped by bristly feathers, cannot be later than Ptolemy V based on comparison with dated tetradrachms of Paphos, Salamis, and Citium. Some specimens of Series I can be associated with Series II and assigned a correspondingly early date (see below). It is entirely possible, however, that other examples may be later, perhaps representing smaller denominations that accompanied V.2 below. Cypriote bronze hoards could perhaps clarify the chronology, but the record of documented finds is still extremely meager.

<sup>14</sup> SVOR., vol. I, col. ρπ and vol. IV, col. 110.

<sup>15</sup> SVOR., vol. IV, «Urteile», col. 471.

<sup>16</sup> My sincere thanks to the following curators for their helpful responses: Haim Gitler, Israel Museum; Cecelia Meir, Eretz Israel Museum; Donald T. Ariel, Israel Antiquities Authority. Information about excavations was provided by Haim Gitler in a letter of 4 March 1997.

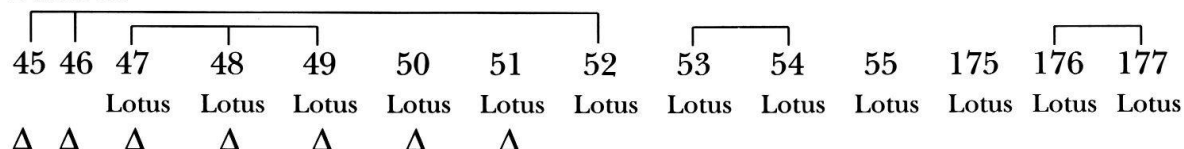
<sup>17</sup> Paphos II, pp. 109 and 111. Nicolaou described Paphos II, 175–177 without reference to Svoronos, but the excavation coins precisely resemble SVOR. 1407 as illustrated on pl. xlviii, 17.

<sup>18</sup> Bronzes without these central cavities are control linked to gold and silver of Ptolemy Soter and of the early reign of his successor. Bronzes with the central cavities are not so linked, and are believed to be contemporary with the precious metal coinage bearing Philadelphus' regnal dates, beginning with year 25 (261/0 BC.). On the technical method behind these central cavities, see (most recently) B. BOUYON, G. DEPEYROT, and J.-L. DESNIER, *Systèmes et technologie des monnaies de bronze* (4e s. avant J.-C.–3e s. après J.-C.), Collection Moneta 19 (Wetteren 2000), pp. 14–28, with extensive bibliography.

*Series II*, with Δ between the legs of eagle (Paphos II, 47–51)

- II.1      25–26 mm., 10.80–15.03 g.  
Provenance: Nea Paphos excavations, Paphos II, 47–49.
- II.2      19 mm., 2.64 g.  
Provenance: Nea Paphos excavations, Paphos II, 50.
- II.3      15 mm., 1.11 g.  
Provenance: Nea Paphos excavations, Paphos II, 51.

This series first came to light in the Nea Paphos excavations. Nicolaou associated it with Series I above and thus attributed it to Alexandria in the latter reign of Ptolemy II.<sup>19</sup> It seems preferable to assume a Cypriote origin for both series, with Paphos the presumptive mint. In addition to the obverse die links noted above, Nicolaou recorded a further link between three specimens of Series II (Paphos II, 47–49), so that die links connect seven of twelve Nea Paphos excavation coins of our Series I and II.



The linkage of Series I to Paphos II, 45–46, which appear to lack the lotus blossom, provokes a suspicion that the latter may originally have had a lotus in left field, obscured by wear or damage. Either these coins belong to Series II, or they are evidence for yet another Cypriote series marked only with the letter Δ.

The presumed die linkage between Series I and II associates them chronologically as well as geographically. Series II can be dated to the latter reign of Ptolemy II or the reign of Ptolemy III by the nearly upright position of the eagle's legs, despite the presence of a control letter between them. In Series III, datable to the early reign of Ptolemy IV, we already see a wider spread of the eagle's legs to accommodate a control.

*Series III*, with ΛI or ΔI between legs of eagle (SVOR. 1409, 1411)

- III.1      45 mm., 90.00 g. (*Pl. 4, 4*)  
SVOR. 1409.
- III.2      36–38 mm., 42.50–48.69 g. (*Pl. 4, 5*)  
SVOR. 1411, pl. xlviii, 16; SNG Milano 307 (= SVOR. 1404ε) (misdescribed in both cases).  
Provenance: Gunther collection (ANS inv. 51.116.356).

<sup>19</sup> Paphos II, p. 109.

*Series IV*, with  $\Sigma$  or  $\Sigma E$  between legs of eagle (SVOR. 1412–1414)

IV.1 45 mm., 91.55 g. (*Pl.* 4, 6)

SVOR. 1412, pl.  $\Delta$ , 7.

Provenance: Curium excavations, COX 92 [1 specimen].

IV.2 36–38 mm., 38.72–48.35 g. (*Pl.* 4, 7)

With  $\Sigma$ : SVOR. 1413; with  $\Sigma E$ : SVOR. 1414, pl.  $\text{xlvi}$ , 15; with  $\Xi$ : Köln 64.

Provenances: Curium excavations, COX 93 [1 specimen]; Nea Paphos excavations, Paphos II, 174.

Series III and IV are rare coinages, assigned by both Poole and Svoronos to Egypt under Ptolemy VI (though Svoronos cited the earlier use of the same control letters in Egypt to support a possible attribution to Ptolemy IV or V).<sup>20</sup> Svoronos offered the tentative interpretation that the inscription  $\Delta I$  might be the signature(s) of the mercenary generals Diktys and Diasthenes on Cyprus, while  $\Sigma$  or  $\Sigma E$  might represent the signature of Seleucus, son of Bithys, an eminent Cypriote aristocrat under Ptolemy Philometor, later governor and high priest of Cyprus under Ptolemy VIII.<sup>21</sup> Although Regling dismissed these interpretations of the inscriptions as unfounded, Cox submitted that the discovery of two specimens from the  $\Sigma/\Sigma E$  series in the Curium excavations (COX 92–93) offered support for Svoronos' hypothesis about Seleucus, son of Bithys.<sup>22</sup> A third Cypriote specimen, from the Nea Paphos excavations (Paphos II, 174), was listed as Egyptian by Nicolaou.<sup>23</sup>

Attribution to the reign of Ptolemy IV seems especially convincing because that monarch employed related sequences of control letters at several major mints. The full sequence –  $\Delta I$ ,  $\Delta I$ ,  $\Sigma$ ,  $\Xi$ ,  $\Sigma E$ ,  $\Upsilon E$ ,  $\text{𐀓}$ , none,  $K$ ,  $\Omega$  – appears on Alexandrian bronzes, while the subset  $\Delta I$ ,  $\Sigma$ ,  $\Xi$ ,  $\Sigma E$  occurs at Tyre and another subset  $\Xi$ ,  $\Sigma E$ ,  $\Upsilon E$ ,  $\text{𐀓}$  can be identified at Cyrene.<sup>24</sup> Cyprus is the only major province missing from this list; the gap should be filled by Series III and IV.

<sup>20</sup> POOLE, BMC pp. lxiv–lxv and p. 87, cat. nos. 71–74; SVOR., vol. I, col.  $\tau\omicron$  and vol. IV, col. 285.

<sup>21</sup> Seleucus served as governor of Cyprus under Ptolemy VIII, 144–131 BC., and is the first *strategos* of Cyprus known to have held the additional post of nauarch or admiral of the Ptolemaic fleet (from 142), see R.S. BAGNALL, *The Administration of the Ptolemaic Possessions outside Egypt* (Leiden 1976), pp. 258–259, or, for fuller information, T.B. MITFORD, *Seleucus and Theodorus*, *Opuscula Atheniensia* I, 1953, pp. 130–171.

<sup>22</sup> SVOR., vol. IV,  $\langle$ Urteile $\rangle$ , col. 492; Cox, pp. 103–104.

<sup>23</sup> For her reasoning, see Paphos II, p. 111.

<sup>24</sup> Alexandria: with  $\Delta I$ , SVOR. 1126 and 1128; with  $\Delta I$ , SVOR. 1125 and 1127; with  $\Sigma$ , SVOR. 992 (for the specific form of the control, see NEWELL, NNM 68, 66–69); with  $\Xi$ , SVOR. 992 (for the specific form of the control, see NEWELL, NNM 68, 58–60), SVOR. 1145, SVOR. 1150, SVOR. 993–994; with  $\Sigma E$ , SVOR. 992 (for the specific form of the control, see NEWELL, NNM 68, 61–65), SVOR. 1148–1149, SVOR. 1151; with  $\Upsilon E$ , SVOR. 1140; with  $\text{𐀓}$ , SVOR. 1142; with none,  $K$ , and  $\Omega$ , Egyptian lot in commerce with Jonathan Kern, September 1997. Tyre: with  $\Delta I$ , SVOR. 1129–1130; with  $\Sigma$ , private coll., Union City, California; with  $\Xi$ , SVOR. 1152a, private coll., Union City, California; with  $\Sigma E$ , SVOR. 1153. Cyrenaica: with  $\Xi$ , SVOR. 1147; with  $\Sigma E$ , SVOR. 1152; with  $\Upsilon E$ , SVOR. 1141; with  $\text{𐀓}$ , SVOR. 1143.

We have only a Gunther provenance for Series III. But three of the ten published specimens of Series IV were unearthed in Cypriote excavations.

*Series V* (SVOR. 1636–1637)

The series assembled by Svoronos under his catalogue numbers 1636–1639 manifestly does not cohere. SVOR. 1636 and 1637 feature eagles with their legs almost entirely bare of feathers, except for a tuft at the top. SVOR. 1638 is a duplicative entry based on a single specimen (SNG Milano 375) more properly listed under SVOR. 842. SVOR. 1639 is, by Svoronos' own admission, subject to confusion with his cat. nos. 843 and 1408. The numerous specimens of SVOR. 1639 from the Nea Paphos excavations portray the eagle's legs fully covered by feathers, and most lack central cavities. Clearly these must be later than SVOR. 1636 and 1637.

- V.1 36–38 mm., 30.66–52.18 g., av. c. 39 g. Sceptre under eagle's wing. (*Pl.* 5, 8) SVOR. 1636, pl. liv, 9.  
Provenances: Curium excavations, Cox 106 [2 specimens]; Nea Paphos excavations, Paphos II, 197; 4 in Gunther collection (ANS inv. 51.116.350–351, 52.142.501–502).
- V.2 29–31 mm., 15.19–26.46 g., av. c. 21 g. Sceptre under eagle's wing. (*Pl.* 5, 9–10)  
SVOR. 1637; SVOR. 1406η, pl. Δ, 6; Köln 163.  
Provenance: Curium excavations, Cox 94;<sup>25</sup> 4 in Gunther collection (ANS inv. 51.116.357, 51.116.359, 51.116.364, 51.116.369).

Poole, followed by Cox, viewed the larger denomination as a continuation of the «Eulæus» coinage (Series VI below) and attributed it to Alexandria after 170 BC.<sup>26</sup> In his catalogue heading Svoronos assigned this series to Egypt under Ptolemy VIII, c. 134–129 B.C., but in his text he attributed it to Cyprus immediately after the end of the dated series, i.e. after 129 B.C.<sup>27</sup> The two specimens of V.1 from the Curium excavations (Cox 106) are listed under Paphos, c. 139–130 B.C. Cox assigned V.2 to Ptolemy VI.

The Cypriote excavation provenances are reinforced by four examples of V.1 from the Gunther collection, as well as four of V.2, all labelled as Cypriote in the ANS trays. Ammon's hair and beard are already beginning to exhibit a bit of the stringiness characteristic of the Cypriote bronzes of Ptolemy VIII. Nevertheless, the eagle's legs are still starkly bare along most of their length, requiring a date no later than the reign of Ptolemy V. His Egyptian coinage includes bronzes of the same

<sup>25</sup> Not illustrated, and possibly an example of SVOR. 1406 (Issue VII.3). Cox's comparison to SVOR. 1414 encourages the belief that the excavation coin exhibited early stylistic features.

<sup>26</sup> POOLE, BMC p. lxiv and p. 82, cat. nos. 25–27; NICOLAOU, Paphos II, p. 111f.

<sup>27</sup> SVOR., vol. I, cols. υβ–υγ and vol. IV, cols. 315–316.

weight as V.1, anomalous in terms of Ptolemaic bronze metrology both in Egypt and in Cyprus.<sup>28</sup> Alexandrian reduced-weight bronzes date from very early in Epiphanes' reign and may imply a similar date for V.1. V.2 appears to be its half denomination. Alternatively it may be a somewhat later issue of the same denomination as VI.2 below, struck to the traditional weight series 48:24:16:8:4.

*Series VI*, with EYA between legs of eagle (SVOR. 1396–1402)

- VI.1 c. 48 gm., 46.9 g. (*Pl. 5, 11*)  
Private collection. The royal name ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ has been effaced from the coin. A countermark □ in a square punch, placed in reverse right field, may reaffirm a Ptolemaic issuing authority.
- VI.2 27–30 mm., 20.50–25.10 g., av. c. 23 g. Sceptre under eagle's wing. (*Pl. 5, 12*)  
SVOR. 1396, pl. xlvii, 20–21; SNG Cop. 293 (= SVOR. 1396η); Köln 151.
- VI.3 25–27 mm., 10.43–17.36 g., av. c. 16 g. (*Pl. 15, 3*)  
SVOR. 1397, pl. xlvii, 22; with Seleucid anchor countermark, SVOR. 1398, pl. Δ, 5; SNG Cop. 294; Köln 152.  
Provenance: Antioch excavations (with countermark); D. WAAGE, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, VI. 4/2 (Princeton 1952), 982.
- VI.4 22–23 mm., 9.90–12.61 g., av. c. 11 g. (*Pl. 5, 14–15*)  
SVOR. 1401, pl. xlvii, 24 [specimen γ with Seleucid anchor countermark]; SNG Milano 373 (= SVOR. 1399ζ); SNG Cop. 295; Köln 153–154.  
Provenance: Antioch excavations [3 specimens, 2 with countermark]; WAAGE 983; specimen in commerce from Hama, Syria (with countermark).
- VI.5 18–20 mm., 5.42–8.26 g.  
SVOR. 1402, pl. xlvii, 25; SNG Milano 374 (= SVOR. 1402α).
- VI.6 16 mm., 3.5 g. (*Pl. 5, 16*)  
S. Huston collection, Union City, California.

This series is closely related to another with the letters EYA between the legs of the eagle, but lacking the lotus blossom in left field (SVOR. 1395, 1399–1400). Poole offered an interpretation that has not yet been questioned, namely that the letters EYA represent the signature of Eulaeus, regent for the young Ptolemy VI Philometor in Egypt, 173–170 B.C.<sup>29</sup> Cox cited the corroborating evidence that none of these «undoubtedly Egyptian» pieces turned up in the Curium excavations, despite

<sup>28</sup> See S. HUSTON, C. LORBER, *Hoard in commerce*, October 1992 (CH VIII, 413), NC 161, 2001 (forthcoming).

<sup>29</sup> POOLE, BMC p. lxiii. and p. 82, cat. nos. 16–22.

being more common than some varieties found there.<sup>30</sup> Weiser, in his catalogue of the Cologne University collection, made the novel suggestion that the series was struck at Salamis for Alexandria, but his reasoning was reserved for a future publication.<sup>31</sup>

The persistent association of this series with Eulaeus is rather surprising, since it is now generally accepted in scholarly circles that names appearing as controls on Greek coins are extremely unlikely to represent the signatures of leading political figures. Nevertheless Poole's dating, if not the direct involvement of Eulaeus, is strongly supported by the frequent occurrence of the Seleucid anchor countermark on the third and fourth denominations of these series (see SVOR. 1398, 1400, and 1401), and by the presence of specimens in the Antioch excavations. The countermarked coins must have been in circulation during the Seleucid invasions of 169 and 168 B.C.,<sup>32</sup> making Series VI one of only two lotus-bearing bronze series with a secure chronological anchor.

Poole's assertion that the countermarks were applied in Egypt requires examination.<sup>33</sup> Two series of Egyptian bronzes can be dated fairly shortly before the Seleucid invasions: SVOR. 1380–1382, inscribed on the obverse for Cleopatra I and thus attributable to her regency, 180–176 B.C.; and SVOR. 1383–1387, a series that shares the types of Cleopatra's coinage and its control  $\square$ , and which probably belongs to the period following her death. No coin of these series bears the Seleucid anchor countermark, even though an appropriate denomination (SVOR. 1384) is extremely common, with more than 100 specimens listed by Svoronos. Against this background, the occurrence of the anchor countermark on bronzes bearing the letters EYA argues that these latter circulated elsewhere than in Egypt. The Seleucid campaign of 168 targeted Cyprus as well as Egypt, resulting in a brief occupation of the island.<sup>34</sup> This would seem to provide the only other probable occasion for Seleucid contact with these particular Ptolemaic bronze coins. The countermarks could have been applied in Cyprus, but more likely Ptolemaic bronzes were carried to Syria as booty and countermarked at Antioch. The supporting evidence is somewhat thin, but includes the four examples of VI.3 and VI.4 from the Antioch excavations (three countermarked); two examples from the Newell collection (neither countermarked), one originally from the collection of Prof. Torrey;<sup>35</sup> and the occurrence of a yellow-brown patina typical of Syria on many

<sup>30</sup> COX, pp. 103–104.

<sup>31</sup> See under 'Köln' 151–154.

<sup>32</sup> The selective countermarking of just two denominations may reflect some monetary policy of the invaders. Alternatively it may point to a cyclical pattern of bronze production, with the implication that the invasions occurred in mid-cycle, after only the smaller denominations had been minted.

<sup>33</sup> POOLE, BMC p. lxiii.

<sup>34</sup> Livy 45.11.9; Polybius 29.27.10; 2 Macc. 10.13.

<sup>35</sup> On the Torrey collection, see E.T. NEWELL, *The Coinage of the Western Seleucid Mints*, NS 4 (New York 1977, reprint of 1941 original), p. 51, n. 39.



extant specimens. A massive Seleucid seizure of EYA bronzes may explain the frustrating lack of recorded provenances from either Cyprus or Egypt.<sup>36</sup>

Flan characteristics, style, and perhaps iconography also argue against the attribution of Series VI to Egypt. These lotus-bearing bronzes exhibit relatively modest bevelling of the obverse on the smaller denominations and carefully finished edges on the two largest. The approximately contemporary Egyptian bronzes, SVOR. 1380–1387, show a strongly bevelled obverse and a flat reverse that is typically about 4 mm. larger than the obverse. There is little difference in obverse style: both Series VI and contemporary Egyptian issues bear the same small-featured Ammon with elaborately curled hair. But the eagles of Series VI have legs feathers indicated by short, nearly horizontal parallel strokes, whereas on the Egyptian issues the comparable lines are more flowing and closer to vertical. Finally, Issue VI.2 shows a sceptre under the eagle's wing, a feature that also occurs on V.2 and VII.3, earlier and later bronzes of the same weight and diameter, suggesting that the sceptre was a denomination marker recognized in Cyprus. The comparably sized bronze of Egypt – SVOR. 1380 and 1383 – has a double eagle reverse as its denomination marker.

The form of the lotus varies enormously within Series VI, including neat, three-petalled flowers resembling the *fleur-de-lys*; branchlike flowers with three petals; five-petalled blossoms; tulipiform flowers resembling inverted bells; and brushy bulges with four or five petals, easily read as grain ears or even murex shells rather than flowers. If these variations have chronological significance, it is not presently apparent.

### *Series VII* (SVOR. 1403–1408)

This series contains coins marked only by the lotus blossom in left field, its form fully as variable as in Series VI. One coin, SVOR. 1405, must be dropped from the series. Svoronos based his entry on a single coin in Athens which he also catalogued under SVOR. 1636. The Athens piece, with a bare-legged eagle, clearly belongs with SVOR. 1636 and not with the present series, whose eagles are depicted with their legs heavily feathered. SVOR. 1407 also includes some eagles of demonstrably earlier style, here collocated with Issue I.2.

<sup>36</sup> No EYA bronzes have been reported from the following Egyptian sites and hoards: Saqqâra, M.J. PRICE, Ch. 11. The Coins, in: D.G. JEFFRIES, H.S. SMITH, *The Anubieion at Saqqâra I* (London 1988), pp. 72–73, and PRICE, *Sacred Animal Necropolis*, pp. 158–162, which includes IGCH 1706; Egypt, 1922 hoard (IGCH 1703); Mirgissa hoard, 1968–69 (IGCH 1704); Tebtunis, 1900 hoard (IGCH 1705); Kom Truga, 1932 hoard (IGCH 1707). In addition the large Egyptian lot in U.S. commerce in autumn 1997 contained no EYA bronzes, though other coins probably attributable to Ptolemy VI, including SVOR. 1384 and 1424, were represented in great abundance.

- VII.1 43–45 mm., 74.27–99.84 g., av. c. 92 g. (*Pl. 6, 17*)  
SVOR. 1403, pl. xlvii, 18 [1 specimen duplicated under SVOR. 1412]; Köln 70.  
Provenance: Curium excavations, COX 91 [1 specimen]; 2 in Gunther collection (ANS inv. 51.116.352, 52.142.503).
- VII.2 38 mm., 41.84–49.59 g., av. c. 47 g. (*Pl. 6, 18*)  
SVOR. 1404, pl. xlvii, 19 [but at least one specimen, SVOR. 1414ε, bears a letter Δ between the eagle's legs and in fact belongs to Series II. see II.1].  
Provenances: Eretz Israel Museum; 4 in Gunther collection (ANS inv. 51.116.353–355, 52.142.504).
- VII.3 30 mm., 19.57–26.46 g., av. c. 21 g. Sceptre under eagle's wing. (*Pl. 6, 19*)  
SVOR. 1406, pl. xlvii, 20 [but at least 1 specimen, SVOR. 1406η, pl. Δ, 6, belongs instead under SVOR. 1637 on account of its bare-legged eagle].  
Provenances: Nea Paphos excavations, Paphos II, 196.
- VII.4 21 mm., 4.40–7.41 g. (*Pl. 6, 20*)  
SVOR. 1407, pl. xlviii, 17 [at least 1 specimen, SVOR. 1407α, is of earlier style and is here collocated with Issue I.2].  
Provenance: Curium excavations, COX 95 [6 specimens].
- VII.5 17 mm., 3.18–4.34 gm. (*Pl. 6, 21*)  
ANS.  
Provenance: Nea Paphos excavations, Paphos II, 180.
- VII.6 13–17 mm., 1.00–2.45 g., av. c. 2 g.  
SVOR. 1408, pl. xlviii, 18 and pl. xxiv, 19.  
Provenances: Curium excavations, COX 96 [18 specimens]; Nea Paphos excavations, Paphos II, 181–195.

The BMC lists only one specimen from this series, an example of the largest denomination (SVOR. 1403) assigned by Poole to Citium under Ptolemy VI or VIII on the grounds of provenance and style.<sup>37</sup> Svoronos considered the series Egyptian, and essentially contemporary with the «Eulaeus» series.<sup>38</sup> More than twenty specimens were found in the Curium excavations (COX 94–96), prompting Cox to attribute them to Paphos.<sup>39</sup> Additional discoveries from the Nea Paphos excavations (Paphos II, 180–196) would seem to clinch the mint attribution, though these coins were classified somewhat inconsistently by Nicolaou.

<sup>37</sup> BMC pp. lxiv–lxv and p. 85, 59, pl. xx, 3. POOLE cited similarities to the reverse of the dated lotus-bearing series, which consideration overrode his scruples against attributing so large a denomination to a mint outside Egypt.

<sup>38</sup> SVOR., vol. I, col. τξθ and vol. IV, cols. 284–285.

<sup>39</sup> COX, p. 104.

Attribution to Cyprus permits a certain precision in the dating. Hazzard documented an interruption in Cypriote mint activity corresponding to the Seleucid invasion and subsequent disorders<sup>40</sup>. Though he cited the evidence of dated silver coinage, the production of bronzes was almost certainly suspended during the same interval, and should not have resumed until 167/6 at the earliest. Inasmuch as Paphos produced a dated lotus-bearing coinage (SVOR. 1621–1632) during the first eleven years of the sole reign of Ptolemy VIII, Series VII might logically be assigned to the coregency after c. 167 and the second sole reign of Philometor. A fresh specimen of VII.5 (SVOR. 1407) was found in a hoard shipwrecked off the coast of Megadim, Israel, in association with eight other bronze coins including an Antioch issue of Antiochus VII dated S.E.177 (136/5 BC).<sup>41</sup> This context, though not conclusive, suggests that Series VII was in production late in the reign of Ptolemy VI.

### *Conclusions*

Of the ten lotus-bearing series reviewed or mentioned here, nine can be attributed to Cyprus on grounds of provenance, and several can plausibly be placed at Paphos. The evidence relating to Series VI is inconclusive, but points toward an area of circulation outside Egypt. Remarkably, the attribution of Series VI and VII to Cyprus leaves no coin larger than SVOR. 1424 circulating in Egypt after the reign of Ptolemy V.

Stylistic and other considerations have prompted the redating of several of our lotus-bearing series, which are listed below in approximate chronological order.

<i>Series</i>	<i>Mint</i>	<i>Reign or date</i>
Series I	Paphos	Ptolemy II, after c. 261 B.C.– Ptolemy III, some perhaps later
Series II	Paphos	Ptolemy II, after c. 261 B.C.– Ptolemy III
Series III	Cyprus	Ptolemy IV, early reign
Series IV	Cyprus	Ptolemy IV, early reign
Series V	Cyprus	Ptolemy V
Series VI	–	Ptolemy VI, shortly before 170/168 B.C.
Series VII	Paphos	After c. 167–145 B.C.

<sup>40</sup> R.A. HAZZARD, A Review of the Cyprus Hoard, 1982, NC 157, 1997, pp. 31-32.

<sup>41</sup> O. MISCH-BRANDL, E. GALILI, «From the Depths of the Sea (Psalm 68:23)»: Cargoes of Ancient Wrecks from the Carmel Coast, Israel Museum Catalogue no. 263 (Jerusalem 1985), p. 13, no. 9 (especially 9.1 and 9.3). Many thanks to Donald T. Ariel for drawing this find to my attention.

The lotus was a prominent feature of Cypriote bronze coinage for about a century and a half, but not all Cypriote bronzes of this period bear the lotus symbol. The well-known series of Ptolemy III with Aphrodite reverse has already been mentioned. A single obverse die links V.2 and a variety with a crested Corinthian helmet in left field (SVOR. 1635). And the most common of all Cypriote mintages consists of unmarked small bronzes with a bust of Aphrodite (traditionally described as Arsinoe III) and a cornucopiae reverse.

It may be premature to identify the lotus symbol as a mintmark of Paphos specifically. Of the various adjunct symbols on Cypriote tetradrachms, the lotus appears only on tetradrachms of Salamis, under Ptolemies V, VIII, and X.<sup>42</sup> We must be cautious about the conclusions we draw from archaeological finds, because the pattern of sites excavated and not excavated may have created biases in the record. Cypriote bronzes, whether lotus-bearing or not, should be reassessed drawing on all available criteria, including fabric, style, and die links, as well as provenance.

### *Zusammenfassung*

Der Lotos, ein Symbol der Aphrodite Cypria, findet sich auf zahlreichen Bronzemünzen des Ammon/Adler-Typs, die aus der Zeit von der Mitte des 3. Jhts bis zum Ende der Regierungszeit des Ptolemaios VIII. stammen. Die späteren Varianten sind zyprisch, und Fundevidenz zeigt, dass auch andere Bronzemünzen mit einem Lotos auf Zypern im Umlauf waren, jedoch nicht in Aegypten selbst. Nur für eine Gruppe, mit dem Lotos links im Feld und den Buchstaben EYA zwischen den Beinen des Adlers, ist die zyprische Herkunft nicht gesichert. Hier ist die einzige gesicherte Fundevidenz Syrien, und viele der Exemplare tragen einen Gegenstempel mit einem seleukidischen Anker. Dieses Phänomen findet sich aber nicht auf Bronzen, die aus ägyptischen Münzstätten stammen und die ebenfalls in die Zeit kurz vor den seleukidischen Einfällen in Aegypten von 169 und 168 zu datieren sind. Die wahrscheinliche Erklärung ist, dass diese Bronzen mit Lotos-Symbol und EYA von den Seleukiden nach deren Invasion Zyperns vom Jahr 168 als Kriegsbeute nach Syrien transportiert und dort mit einem Gegenstempel versehen wurden. Die zyprische Herkunft der EYA und anderer Bronzen mit dem Lotos-Symbol des Ptolemaios VI. zeigt auch, dass in Aegypten selbst nach der Zeit um 180 v.Chr. keine Bronzen mehr umliefen, die grösser als ca. 28-30 mm und schwerer als ca. 24 g. waren.

Catharine C. Lorber  
5580 Fenwood Avenue  
Woodland Hills, CA 91367  
USA

<sup>42</sup> See SVOR. 1340, 1572, and 1774, and Paphos II, 395 and 430, all issues of Salamis.

## *Key to Plates 4-6*

### *Plate 4*

1	I.1	Glasgow, Hunter p. 372, 64
2	I.2	Glasgow, Hunter p. 372, 65
3	I.3	Glasgow, Hunter p. 372, 66
4	III.1	Excavations at Curium 91
5	III.2	New York (1951.116.356)
6	IV.1	Excavations at Curium 92
7	IV.2	Glasgow, Hunter p. 388, 14

### *Plate 5*

8	V.1	New York (1951.116.350, Gunther collection)
9	V.2	Glasgow, Hunter p. 393, 18
10	V.2	New York (1951.116.357, Gunther collection)
11	VI.1	Private collection
12	VI.2	Glasgow, Hunter p. 388, 8
13	VI.3	New York (1944.100.78700)
14	VI.4	New York (1944.100.78702)
15	VI.4	S. Huston collection (with countermark)
16	VI.6	S. Huston collection

### *Plate 6*

17	VII.1	New York (1952.142.503, Gunther collection)
18	VII.2	New York (1951.116.354, Gunther collection)
19	VII.3	New York (1951.116.359, Gunther collection)
20	VII.4	New York (1944.100.78967, Newell collection)
21	VII.5	Excavations at Curium 96
22		Ptolemy VIII, dated year 27. New York (1944.100.78954, Newell collection)
23		Ptolemy VIII, dated year 28. New York (1944.100.78963, Newell collection)

### *Photo Credits*

By permission of the American Numismatic Society: 4–6, 8, 10, 17–23  
Photos by Arthur Houghton: 1–3, 7, 9, 12  
Images by Steve Huston: 15–16





Catharine Lorber, *The Lotus of Aphrodite on Ptolemaic Bronzes* (1)







8



9



10



11



12



13



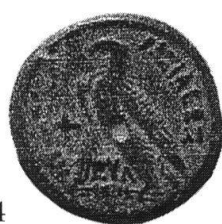
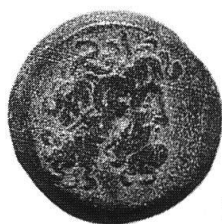
14



15



16







17



18



19



20



21



22



23



