

Engraved Gems and Propaganda in the Roman Republic and under Augustus

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Back cover image: Portrait of Pompey the Great, amethyst intaglio, c. 60-50 BC. The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, inv. no.: Ж 1468

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Foreword and acknowledgments

This book is based on my PhD dissertation defended in 2019 at the Institute of Archaeology, Jagiellonian University in Krakow. It deals with small, but highly captivating and stimulating artworks – engraved gemstones. For a long time they have fascinated collectors and scholars alike due to their preciousness and aesthetical beauty, their market value, the high artistic virtuosity of the scenes and symbols engraved upon their surfaces and their multiple applications as seals, jewellery or amulets among others. During research for my previous project devoted to ancient intaglios and cameos in the National Museum in Krakow (2017), I realised how difficult and sometimes even impossible it is to establish what kind of uses gems were put to in antiquity. As far as ancient Rome is concerned, it seemed that the political disturbances of the Late Roman Republic and its transformation to the empire under Augustus had a profound impact on the production and uses of intaglios and cameos, however, because of the many challenges inherent in their study, gems have seldom been studied as objects suitable for either self-presentation or even propaganda. While writing this book, I have attempted to satisfy the curiosity of those who are interested in the beautiful and ancient art of gem engraving as well as those who are fascinated by Roman Republican and Augustan politics, social life and propaganda. I do not claim to provide a comprehensive study of these matters. This would be impossible due to the peculiar nature of the objects under examination, the scarcity of unambiguous and objective data and sources as well as the complexity of the phenomena themselves. What I have tried to do is to supply the widest range of evidence for the many applications of gems that perhaps might be related in one way or another to an individual's self-representation and to political life in ancient Rome in the period in question. My thoughts and commentaries, which also include a critical evaluation of previous scholarship, are not definitive judgments and the reader should use them as a sort of aid that may help him form his own opinion on the general picture and particular issues. Some questions of course remain unanswered and I hope will lead to fruitful discussion in the future. There is a rich selection of objects provided in the catalogue and on plates for ease of reading and better exposure of the evidence or, in some cases, lack of it. This selection proved big enough to undertake some basic statistical analyses, although, many more examples, especially if glass gems are concerned, could have been included in the database if there had been no restrictions of time and print space. Nevertheless, it is expected that any further additions would not change the results significantly, as the basic trends are clear enough.

Warm words of acknowledgement are due to those who helped me to work on this book. First of all, I would like to thank Jarosław Bodzek (Jagiellonian University) for supervising the whole process of writing the book, for his encouragement and consultations, especially regarding the comparative numismatic material. Secondly, Martin Henig (University of Oxford) is acknowledged for his outstanding support, profound understanding, expertise, discussions and numerous suggestions that enabled me to improve this study considerably. I would like to thank Claudia Wagner (University of Oxford) for her kind help and hospitality as well as for fruitful discussions on the art of gem engraving during my research stay in the Beazley Archive in Oxford, where the final phase of the research was accomplished. Sir John Boardman (University of Oxford) is acknowledged for constructive discussions, especially touching the issue of the relationships between gems and coins as well as the production and distribution of gems. Alexander Bursche (University of Warsaw) is acknowledged for careful reviewing of my work and with providing many valuable remarks. I am indebted to Ittai Gradel for many fruitful discussions and for allowing me to read his forthcoming article on the unique small collection of bronze rings set with glass gems transmitting political messages. I am grateful to Frédérique Duyrat for an invitation and Mathilde Avisseau-Broustet (Bibliothèque nationale de France) for great hospitality in Paris and facilitating my study of the gem collection housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Similarly, I thank Alex Truscott (the British Museum) for organising my study of the gem collection kept in the British Museum in London. I am deeply indebted to Ute Wartenberg-Kagan (American Numismatic Society) for giving me an opportunity to present the results of my research in a seminar in New York. I am indebted for help, encouragement and support received from the following: Gabriella Tassinari (Università degli Studi di Milano), Hadrien J. Rambach (Brussels), Ulf R. Hansson (The University of Texas at Austin), Marianne Kleibrink (University of Groningen), Kamil Kopij (Jagiellonian University) and Agnieszka Fulińska (Jagiellonian University) who all kindly advised me during the writing of this book. I wish to thank all the people with whom I had the pleasure of discussing separate parts of my research which I presented at conferences and seminars in Krakow, Warsaw, Leiden and Prague. Last but not least, I thank David Davison and Rajka Makjanic, directors of Archaeopress for their courtesy and kind editorial support. Kate Adcock is acknowledged for improving my written English.

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Paweł Gołyźniak
Krakow/Oxford, March 2019

Acta est fabula, plaudite.
Suetonius, *Augustus*, 99

Part I

Introduction

1. Preface

This study aims to tackle the question of the use of engraved gems for self-presentation and propaganda purposes in the Roman Republic and under Augustus. Intaglios and cameos portray Roman society from various angles. They are snapshots of peoples' beliefs, ideologies, everyday life. Thus, they might cast some light on self-advertising and propaganda actions performed by Roman political leaders, their factions and people as a whole engaged in politics and social life in the past. It is plausible that gems show general trends as well as illustrate individual and private acts of those involved in politics and social affairs, since they were objects of strictly personal use. They often enable us to analyse and learn about Roman propaganda and various social behaviours from a completely different angle to coins, sculpture or literature. The miniaturism of ancient gems is often in inverse proportion to their cultural significance. Despite – or perhaps because of – their ubiquity, the motifs they bear are often highly sophisticated and captivating in their visual presentation of complex ideas. By effective artistry the image is, almost literally, impressed upon the mind of the user and the viewers. However, it is not easy to identify and correctly interpret propaganda messages encoded on gems and link specific objects with political and social events or behaviours. On the contrary, the richness of their iconography and forms often leads to overinterpretations. Therefore, the basis of this study is a database covering a wide range of categories, which have informed the structure of the presentation. It is a combination of numerous case studies discussing examples that might one way or another relate to politics and social changes under the Roman Republic and Augustus and a critical study of the previous scholarship. The aim is not only to present clear-cut

examples of what one may call 'propaganda gems', but also to discuss those problematical pieces and issues related to them and to offer a more complete analysis of a problem which has previously been largely neglected. The discussion is, naturally, full of interconnections with ancient literary sources, as well as other categories of Roman art and craftsmanship, notably coins, and also sculpture, relief, oil lamps, pottery (especially the Arretine bowls) and toreutics.

The specific characteristics of engraved gems, their strictly private character and the whole array of devices appearing on them are examined in this book with respect to their potential propagandistic value and usefulness in social life. The broad scope of this analysis provides the first comprehensive picture covering many aspects of Roman propaganda and a critical survey of overinterpretations of this term in regard to glyptic art. The ultimate purpose of the study is to incorporate this class of archaeological artefacts into the well-established studies of Roman propaganda as well as Roman society in general. Gems turn out to be not merely another channel used by propagandists but also a very sensitive barometer of social moods and behaviours. It remains disputable to what extent they were helpful in creating propaganda communications by Roman political leaders, but in some respects they certainly offered unique possibilities for propagandists to advertise themselves. It is clear that their role in the evolution of Roman propaganda should be taken into account in further studies of this phenomenon because intaglios and cameos like any other archaeological artefacts prove that all people were engaged in politics one way or another and that propaganda campaigns were largely successful in ancient Rome.

2. State of research

2.1. Roman Republican and Augustan engraved gems

Outlined below is a history of modern glyptic studies relevant to the Roman Republican and Augustan material. This short text does not attempt to be a comprehensive account of the subject but should be considered as showing the importance and value of this glyptic material for archaeology and ancient art history as scientific disciplines in general. Since the very early stages of glyptic studies, a clear division is observable: numerous publications of public and private collections are issued all along, whilst much less numerous are treatises devoted to specific problems and aspects of glyptics. It might seem strange that Roman Republican and Augustan gems have never been properly and exclusively analysed and described in detail as separate categories, while studies dealing with specific chronological and cultural classes of gems were published a long time ago.¹ Of course, it does not mean they were completely neglected. There are at least several most scholarly general studies of glyptic art including very good, but still inadequate accounts of Roman Republican and Augustan gems. There are also numerous short and mostly iconographic, studies. All these works are taken into account in the present study.

Since the Renaissance engraved gems have attracted attention mostly as collectors' items.² They were regarded as among the most precious and best-preserved examples of ancient art. This interest was due to several factors. Gems offered an array of devices related to every aspect of classical life and culture; from serious mythological and religious themes down to joyful and bucolic scenes presenting the everyday life of ordinary people. They were made of precious and semi-precious stones – highly desirable and, maybe most importantly, intrinsically valuable materials. Gems offered insights into peoples' beliefs and with their magical formulas and iconography added a bit of mystery to this ancient craft. Even now, many people believe in the magical and medical properties of specific gemstones. Gems were sources of inspiration for Renaissance and later artists. The best example of this is the young Pan cameo from

the Beverley collection that sparked the idea for the composition of one of the most famous paintings in the Sistine Chapel by Michelangelo.³ Like artists, scholars have also been attracted by the great potential hidden in those little artworks. Although the first evidence of scientific interest in gems was recorded as early as the 16th century,⁴ it was Philipp von Stosch (1691-1757) with his *Gemmæ antiquæ cælatæ*, a study of 70 gems bearing artists' signatures, who laid the foundations of modern glyptic studies.⁵ His pioneering work was a great success and Stosch himself was regarded as the greatest collector and connoisseur of gems of his times. His vast collection including gemstones and a number of glass gems was published in the most scholarly fashion to date by none other than Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768) in 1760.⁶ Stosch and Winckelmann were followed by others and literature on glyptics quickly expanded.⁷ The 18th and 19th centuries saw an extraordinary upsurge of interest in engraved gems. They were collected by many, notably by representatives of high social classes since the best pieces sometimes reached astronomical prices.⁸ They were reproduced in various forms as drawings or prints and most importantly as impressions and casts made of gesso, resin, sulphur, electrotype and other materials and assembled in the form of *dactyliothecæ*.⁹ These collections, sometimes amounting to thousands of objects, turned out to be attractive souvenirs obtained by grand tourists in Rome, Milan, Naples and other Italian cities, and played a significant role in the popularisation and reception of classical art and culture.¹⁰ Sometimes a combination of both existed in one person. A good example is the most prominent Polish collector of engraved gems – Constantine

³ Wagner, Boardman and Scarisbrick 2016a, no. 6.

⁴ For instance, see one of the earliest studies of some portrait gems published by Fulvio Orsini (1529-1600) in 1570. For a more detailed commentary to this issue, see: Furtwängler 1900, vol. III: 402-409 – for the earliest works and 409-426 for 18th and 19th century ones; Zwierlein-Diehl 2007: 279.

⁵ Stosch 1724. For some literature on Philipp von Stosch: Borroni Salvadori 1978: 565-614; Furtwängler 1900, vol. III: 409-410 and 415-417; Hansson 2014; Lewis 1967: 320-327; MacKay Quynn 1941; Rambach (forthcoming 1); Zazoff and Zazoff 1983: 3-67; Zwierlein-Diehl 2007: 274-275.

⁶ Winckelmann 1760.

⁷ For instance: Comte de Caylus 1752-1768; Gori 1731-1732, 1750 and 1767; Mariette 1750; Millin 1797 and 1817; Natter 1754. For a recent analysis of this issue, see: Lang 2017.

⁸ It is difficult even to propose a selection of the most important collections of engraved gems here but useful lists can be found in: Furtwängler 1900, vol. III: 426-435; Lang 2017: 199-201; Zwierlein-Diehl 2007: 264-279.

⁹ For more information about *dactyliothecæ*, see: Kockel and Graepler 2006; Knüppel 2009.

¹⁰ The most numerous and famous are the collections of Philipp Daniel Lippert (1702-1785) – published in three volumes in 1755, 1756 and 1767, James Tassie (1735-1799) – published by Rudolf Erich Raspe in 1791 and those produced by Tommaso Cades (1772-1840).

¹ For instance: Boardman 1970/2001 (Greek Gems - early Bronze Age to late Classical/early Hellenistic periods) and 2003 (Phoenician scarabs); Hansson 2005 (*A globolo* gems); Plantzos 1999 (Hellenistic gems); Spier 2007 (Late Antique and Early Christian gems); Zazoff 1968 (Etruscan scarabs).

² Naturally intaglios and cameos were collected and re-used in the Medieval period in various ways, however, since here the focus is on studies of gems, which started in the Renaissance, the Medieval period has been omitted, but see: Zwierlein-Diehl 2008b (with further literature on the subject).

Schmidt-Ciążyński (1818-1889). He had been trading and collecting engraved gems all his life, but in 1886 he decided to present his cabinet alongside with two *dactylithecae* to the newly established National Museum in Krakow. He decided to do so because he believed the collections to be useful tools for the emerging circles of archaeologists and art historians from the Academy of Krakow (Jagiellonian University at present) as well as for artists and all enthusiasts of ancient art living in the city.¹¹

Even this brief overview clearly shows the high level of interest in engraved gems often declared by the most illustrious scholars. Nevertheless, while in the 18th and the first half of the 19th century more people were interested in collecting gems than studying them, by the end of the 19th century the situation had been reversed. This was due to the fading interest of the art market in engraved gems which was caused by many factors (repetitious copying and a considerable decrease in the quality of workmanship, the dispersal of important collections combined with an increase in the number of gems of doubtful authenticity). Gems thus became an unattractive investment.¹² At the same time, at the end of the century another key figure in the study of ancient art and archaeology published his works on engraved gems – Adolf Furtwängler (1853-1907). His catalogue of the enormous (12,000 objects) cabinet of gems housed in Berlin was his first major accomplishment.¹³ Later, he published important articles on gems signed by ancient engravers.¹⁴ However, in 1900 he published his *opus magnum* – *Die antiken Gemmen. Geschichte der Steinschneidekunst im klassischen Altertum* which was a milestone for modern glyptic research.¹⁵ The outstanding quality of Furtwängler's research is proved by the fact that his works are frequently cited by present-day scholars and the methodology he proposed, admittedly with slight changes, is still the basis for every serious analysis of glyptic material.¹⁶ Furtwängler analysed and neatly systematised gems produced from the Minoan to the Late Antique period. Regarding the material of most interest to us here, his greatest achievement was the separation of Roman Republican gems from Augustan and early imperial ones. One quickly realises that these two categories were maybe the most important for

him since one third of the book is devoted to them.¹⁷ Furtwängler calls gems produced in Italy during the 3rd-1st century BC 'Italic' basically distinguishing two groups: etruscanising – those greatly influenced by the Etruscan glyptic tradition which were produced in northern and central Italy (mainly Latium), and hellenising – those produced in southern Italy (mainly Campania) and Sicily under the influence of Greek artists. However, he was fully aware that Italic glyptics constitutes a much more complex picture and various local traditions should be taken into account as well.¹⁸ Noteworthy are his observations on glass gems so popular in Italy those days.¹⁹ He has also commented on the various subjects and problems of dating gems from that period, their geographical distribution, pointing at possible locations for gem workshops, and on various styles adopted by the artists and on iconography.²⁰ He did so without compromising the clarity of the overall framework of his work. Finally, Furtwängler observed the fusion of Roman and Greek traditions in glyptic art which happened in the 1st century BC and resulted in what we call today 'Augustan classicism'.²¹ In his book, he describes Augustan gems together with early imperial works, an approach that was totally appropriate for the time. For many years his classification was adequate and many of his observations remain valid today. Of course, extensive publication of public and private collections combined with more archaeological data, especially over last fifty years, now allows scholars to analyse Roman Republican and Augustan gems in even greater depth, but the foundations laid by Furtwängler still stay robust and his book is a point of reference for anyone pursuing any kind of glyptic studies as well as for the author of this work.²²

The greatness of Furtwängler's book *Die antiken Gemmen* was not only a result of his intellectual rigour, but also his methodology. Prior to this publication, he travelled across Europe studying all the major public and private collections of engraved gems. Having direct access to the material was not easy as very little of it was published.²³ This situation gradually

¹¹ Gołyński 2017: 31-61.

¹² The most recognisable example of that process is the famous scandal related to the Prince Stanislas Poniatowski (1754-1833) collection of engraved gems. Among the rich literature on the subject, see: Kolendo 1981; Laska 2001; Rambach 2016; Wagner 2008 and 2013. On the crisis in trade of engraved gems in the second half of the 19th century, see: Berges 2011: 151; Gołyński 2017: 57-58; Plantzos 1999: 3.

¹³ Furtwängler 1896.

¹⁴ Furtwängler 1888-1889.

¹⁵ Furtwängler 1900.

¹⁶ The importance and appreciation of Furtwängler's works has been expressed, for instance in: Hansson 2005: 24; Zazoff and Zazoff 1983: 203-230.

¹⁷ Furtwängler 1900, vol. III: 212-299 for Italic gems and 300-358 for Augustan and early imperial glyptics. These were the days when glyptic production was the most prolific, so it was also natural to write so much about it too.

¹⁸ Furtwängler 1900, vol. III: 212-218.

¹⁹ Furtwängler 1900, vol. III: 219-222.

²⁰ Furtwängler 1900, vol. III: 223-227.

²¹ Furtwängler 1900, vol. III: 300-303.

²² However, see some criticism of Furtwängler's and his contemporaries' works on glyptic art in Sagiv 2018: 3-4. My own commentaries on Furtwängler's observations regarding Roman Republican and Augustan gems are provided in specific chapters in the third part of the book.

²³ Actually, prior to Furtwängler, among the major public collections of engraved gems, only the ones from Paris had been published with a selection of gems illustrated at the end of the 19th century by Ernest Babelon: 1894, 1897 and 1899 (noteworthy is also the catalogue written by Anatole Chabouillet in 1858, but this work was unillustrated).

started to change after Furtwängler's publication.²⁴ In the 1920s, publishing on gems intensified when several collections, important in terms of quantity and quality, 'had come out of the museums' and thus became accessible to everyone wishing to study them. In 1920 Beazley published his extraordinary study of the Lewes House collection of gems, which will be of special interest to us in the following chapters.²⁵ In 1926 a catalogue with a selection of photographs of the vast cabinet of gems housed in the British Museum in London was released by Walters and three years later, the extensive collection of intaglios and cameos from the Thorvaldsen's Museum in Copenhagen was published by Fossing.²⁶ Both of them included great numbers of Roman Republican and Augustan gems which are of great interest to us here and often these books are still the only point of reference to those collections we have today. Furthermore, the authors were clearly inspired by Furtwängler's work classifying the material basically to the Etruscanising, Hellenising and Graeco-Roman groups (the last usually included Augustan gems). No less important is the catalogue of cameos preserved today in Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna by Eichler and Kris.²⁷ However, many objects from that collection have been discussed by later authors enabling them to be better understood, thus making them more accessible for this study.²⁸ Concerning less extensive collections, noteworthy is the publication of the Duval assemblage by Deonna.²⁹ Across the Atlantic, gems were published as well, mainly by Richter.³⁰ Although, these catalogues were necessary work that would have enabled scholars to approach more complex issues and problems related to glyptic art, there were almost no studies of this kind since Furtwängler.³¹

The period from 1930s to 1950s yielded relatively few publications including Roman Republican and Augustan engraved gems. Some exceptions are catalogues of two collections from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York by Richter and selections of gems from various museums located in Rome by Righetti.³² However, in the 1950s, one observes the first

signs of interest in Roman Republican and Augustan gems as valuable comparative material for studies of other branches of Roman art, as well as some reports of their archaeological context.³³ In the late 1950s two authorities in glyptic studies – Sena Chiesa and Vollenweider started to publish their works. Their contributions will be broadly discussed in due course since they played a significant role in the development of research on 'propaganda gems'.³⁴

A significant advancement in the studies of Roman Republican and Augustan engraved gems took place in the next period covering the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s. The year 1966 was special because two highly important books on gems appeared. First, Vollenweider published her thorough research on top-quality gem engraving in the Late Roman Republic and Augustan times.³⁵ She successfully analysed and described masterpieces of Roman gem engraving, mostly those signed by ancient artists. The signed work of each is discussed in her book and dated mainly through stylistic and comparative analyses to the coins. The study is accompanied by a catalogue and plates including wonderful photographs of these highly important pieces. Vollenweider approached the material with utmost care detecting some modern copies among objects traditionally taken as genuine. But most importantly for us, she analysed the glyptic material of that period as closely related to Roman politics and propaganda. For this reason, her work will be more extensively commented on in the next sub-chapters. The second work of a major significance was the study of engraved gems from Aquileia by Sena Chiesa.³⁶ This publication presents 1,523 engraved gems (including a number of Roman Republican and Augustan specimens) originating from one archaeological site. Even though their archaeological context is incomplete, the publication is very useful because it includes almost all the current subjects appearing in Roman glyptics (of all periods), excluding portrait gems and cameos.³⁷ It is a great source of reference material making it possible to identify hundreds of gems now found in museum collections as originating from this highly important centre of glyptic production.³⁸ Sena Chiesa's organisation of the selected material and her attempt to distinguish a number of larger and smaller studios operating at the site during a long period of

²⁴ Good examples are for instance: the famous Southesk collection published in 1908 (Carnegie and Carnegie 1908), Kibaltchitch's assemblage published in 1910 (Kibaltchitch 1910) and the highly important Clercq collection published in 1911 (Ridder 1911). Noteworthy are also books dealing with Roman finger rings including some Roman Republican and Augustan gems (Henkel 1913; Marshall 1908).

²⁵ Beazley's catalogue has recently been republished and provided with new notes, measurements that were previously lacking etc. by Boardman (2002).

²⁶ Fossing 1929; Walters 1926.

²⁷ Eichler and Kris 1927.

²⁸ Zwierlein-Diehl 2008a.

²⁹ Deonna 1925.

³⁰ Richter 1920.

³¹ Perhaps Lippold 1922 and Gebhardt 1925 might be considered exceptions.

³² Richter 1942 and 1956; Righetti 1954-1956, 1955a, 1955b and 1957-1959.

³³ For instance: Alföldi 1954; Gonzenbach 1952; Vermeule 1957 and 1958.

³⁴ Some of the early works of these authors include: Sena Chiesa 1957 and 1958; Vollenweider 1955 and 1958.

³⁵ Vollenweider 1966.

³⁶ Sena Chiesa 1966.

³⁷ See some reviews: Maaskant-Kleibrink 1969: 173-174.

³⁸ For instance, a number of gems housed in Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna or Civici Musei di Storia ed Arte in Trieste proved to originate from Aquileia, see: Ciliberto and Giovannini 2008; Sena Chiesa 2009a. The same is the case with about 140 Roman Republican, Augustan and Roman imperial gems from the National Museum in Krakow collection, see: Golyźniak 2017: 47.

time from the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD is interesting. Nevertheless, the book has received much criticism for the poor quality of the images and most importantly for the rather outdated methodology.³⁹ As Maaskant-Kleibrink points out, the biggest shame is that the gems have been organised first according to their iconography, into larger thematic groups such as heroes, gods, animals etc. and then ascribed to smaller categories like Zeus, Apollo etc.⁴⁰ Sena Chiesa has lost a great chance to present the overall development of Roman glyptic styles and techniques over four hundred years first, which could have been then followed by the identification of separate studios producing gems (iconography might have been just one of many criteria in distinguishing between the various studios). Basing the classification first on iconography and then on individual styles and techniques results in chaos well illustrated by Sena Chiesa's plates often including material that is not coherent in terms of chronology. Even though the plates offer a kind of graphical key to the whole study, the reader remains confused and if he is not a specialist on the subject, will quickly feel discouraged.⁴¹ About 7,000 gems are reported to have been found in Aquileia. There is a hope that they will be digitised and made available to everyone in the future so as to complete the selection presented by Sena Chiesa.⁴²

From the 1960s one observes a more sophisticated approach to publishing public and private gem collections, which has gathered pace in the 1970s. Many new catalogues include Roman Republican and Augustan material presented in varying degrees of detail. Among them, the German project *Antike Gemmen in Deutschen Sammlungen* stands out. The collections of gems from Berlin, Munich, Braunschweig, Göttingen, Kassel, Hannover and Hamburg provided scholars with thousands of objects.⁴³ A similar project was embarked on by Zwierlein-Diehl regarding the Vienna collection.⁴⁴ This stream of publications kept flowing from all countries. Neverov published a selection of highly important high-quality intaglios and cameos housed in St. Petersburg.⁴⁵ Apart from these, many other institutions catalogued their collections which even if not particularly extensive, should not be omitted due to the quality of the material they preserve.⁴⁶ Some

private cabinets were also made accessible to a wider audience.⁴⁷ Studies of specific groups of gems were also carried out and many articles dealing with smaller collections as well as individual objects were published by various authors.⁴⁸ This period also witnessed the first critical studies of the numerous books and articles recently published.⁴⁹

Thanks to this hard and often exhaustive work undertaken by numerous scholars, the number of gems accessible for study has sharply increased. This, in turn, has resulted in a desire for a new classification and thorough description of glyptic art as a whole as well as studies of specific problems. It was Richter who embarked on a project aiming to provide a comprehensive description of Greek, Etruscan and Roman engraved gems. Published in two volumes,⁵⁰ her study offered much previously unillustrated material, especially portraits, and the descriptions of specific subjects appearing on gems are of value, but her dating is often unacceptable and the books include many modern gems.⁵¹ In the years 1972-1974 Vollenweider, a well-known authority in glyptic studies, published her outstanding work – *Die Porträtgemmen der römischen Republik*.⁵² This in-depth analysis of about 500 portraits on Roman Republican gems is of great importance for us here due to the fact that Vollenweider's views on the use of gems for propaganda purposes are presented there too. This study, published in two volumes, is richly illustrated. It is well-organised and makes it possible to trace the art of portraiture on Roman gems from Etruscan scarabs down to Octavian's domination. It is worth highlighting Vollenweider's evolutionary approach to the subject (which is close to the one presented here). In the first part of her book, she comments mostly on the heads of various deities like Janus, Vulcan, the Dioscuri and Mars which appear on 4th-2nd century gems strongly influenced by Etruscan glyptics.⁵³ In the next section she deals with portraits of the Roman *princeps* dividing them into those belonging to old men, young men and boys.⁵⁴ She correctly observes that these early representations are characterisations rather than direct portraits. Moreover, women's

³⁹ Sagiv 2018: 27.

⁴⁰ Maaskant-Kleibrink 1969: 173-174.

⁴¹ Maaskant-Kleibrink 1969: p. 174.

⁴² According to personal communication with Dr Elisabetta Gagettti who is the head of a scientific project to catalogue all engraved gems found in Aquileia and its vicinity, now stored in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Aquileia.

⁴³ AGDS I.2; AGDS I.3; AGDS II; AGDS III; AGDS IV.

⁴⁴ Zwierlein-Diehl 1973a, 1979 and 1991 (the last devoted to the Roman Imperial gems, but with an appendix including some previously omitted works too).

⁴⁵ Neverov 1971, 1976 and 1988.

⁴⁶ For instance: Berry 1968; Dorigato 1974; Femmel and Heres 1977; Forbes 1981; Gramatopol 1974; Hamburger 1968; Henig 1975; Sena

Chiesa 1978.

⁴⁷ Regarding private collections, some truly spectacular assemblages were published those days like the Ionides collection (Boardman 1968) and the Harari cabinet (Boardman and Scarisbrick 1977).

⁴⁸ Concerning studies, among the most noteworthy are a book written by Martini on late Etruscan ringstones (1971) and a study devoted to the problem of copying famous statues by gem engravers on their works by Platz-Horster (1970). It is needless to mention here all the articles dealing with engraved gems published at that time, but one might find a good survey on them in Maaskant-Kleibrink 1969: 175-80; 1983: 143-77, in Zazoff 1983: 260 as well as in the bibliography of this book which does not claim to be exhaustive.

⁴⁹ Maaskant-Kleibrink 1969 and 1983.

⁵⁰ Richter 1968 and 1971.

⁵¹ Maaskant-Kleibrink 1983: 145.

⁵² Vollenweider 1972-1974.

⁵³ Vollenweider 1972-1974: 1-16.

⁵⁴ Vollenweider 1972-1974: 16-20.

heads appear c. 2nd century BC, first those of female deities, then of individuals.⁵⁵ An important section in her study concerns the influence of Hellenistic portraiture on the Italic and Roman heads. One of her very important conclusions is that gem portraits became more individualised through Hellenistic influence.⁵⁶ Vollenweider's ability to identify portraits, which is mostly based on the comparative analysis of gems and coins and incorporates in-depth stylistic study, is apparent in the further sections of her book. With the aid of coinage and iconographical analysis of the symbolism which often accompanies portraits of Romans on gems, she successfully identifies individuals and provides precise dates. However, one must be aware that Vollenweider sometimes goes too far in terms of both identification and dating. Her stylistic analysis is often difficult to follow and hence her conclusions can be rather unconvincing. Nevertheless, her outstanding work still stimulates debate over groups and individual pieces and will be more extensively commented on in the further sections of this study. Regarding Vollenweider, it is worth mentioning here also her volume presenting gems from Geneva,⁵⁷ a comprehensive, well-researched and fully-referenced volume. The quality of scholarship is outstanding and even though again, Vollenweider seems to go too far in her interpretations and suggestions of the origins of particular motifs, her work remains inspirational today.

Among the many catalogues of collections of engraved gems published at this time the one which stands out is that written by Maaskant-Kleibrink presenting intaglios from the Dutch assemblage once housed in The Hague (now transferred to Leiden).⁵⁸ This is due to the fact that the author attempts to classify regular and glass gems according to techniques of engraving rather than by style alone as was often the case in the past. This is a major contribution to the studies of glyptic art in general. Regarding Roman Republican and Augustan gems, she successfully distinguishes several classes, at the same time maintaining Furtwängler's framework, and dates gems more precisely than others.⁵⁹ Her observations also include archaeological 'hard data' as well as remarks on the influence of both Etruscan and Hellenistic traditions on Roman Republican gems which are reflected in her stylistic groups. These two traditions differed from one another not only as was traditionally thought in terms of iconography, but also in techniques of engraving and styles. Each class of gems distinguished by Maaskant-Kleibrink is followed by a compact but highly informative commentary. All

of that together makes her catalogue an extremely valuable publication for everyone pursuing studies in Roman glyptics.

Maaskant-Kleibrink's methods proved successful because her study was based on a relatively large sample (although this originated from only one collection). Further studies of Roman Republican and Augustan gems should combine analysis of archaeological and contextual data, analysis of various styles, techniques of engraving, iconography and comparisons made with other branches of Roman art and craftsmanship (notably coins). Some of these approaches were used by the next great authority in glyptic studies – Zazoff who published his handbook on ancient engraved gems in 1983.⁶⁰ Generally speaking, Zazoff's aim was to follow his great predecessor Furtwängler in compiling a history of ancient glyptics. His book constitutes a part of a greater series, *Handbuecher die Archäologie* which imposed some constraints. Yet, Zazoff like everyone else before him put the history of glyptic art into very clear categories. Each chapter of his book starts with an up-to-date bibliography and includes several sections helping to understand gems in their specific cultural and geographical contexts. However, unlike Furtwängler, he does not consider Augustan gems as a separate category. First, he writes a section on Italic and Roman Republican gems where some information about Late Republican material is discussed.⁶¹ Then he writes a chapter dealing with Roman Imperial gems where one finds information on the famous gem engravers working under Augustus, famous seals mentioned in the literary sources and so forth.⁶² It is, of course, impossible to employ clear-cut definitions and dating categories in glyptics, but to my mind, Augustan glyptics exhibits so many individual features that they should be treated as separate from Republican.⁶³ In fact, Augustan gems may be taken as belonging to a transitional period between Roman Republican and Imperial glyptics. Coming back to Zazoff's methodology, his idea of presenting the material from known archaeological contexts and the location of regional collections containing Roman Republican gems is sound. Even though he does not propose more workshops than Aquileia, his work suggests a few other places where gems could have been cut.⁶⁴ Then, Zazoff concentrates on gem-forms and rings as well as the production and meaning of glass gems so popular in this period.⁶⁵ This is helpful for dating gems since one may see which types of gems fit the rings fashionable at a particular period. Furthermore, he comments on

⁵⁵ Vollenweider 1972-1974: 21-22.

⁵⁶ Vollenweider 1972-1974: 25-26.

⁵⁷ Vollenweider 1979.

⁵⁸ Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978.

⁵⁹ Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978: 99-193 – for Roman Republican gems and 194-205 and 364-371 – for the Augustan ones.

⁶⁰ Zazoff 1983.

⁶¹ Zazoff 1983: 260-305.

⁶² Zazoff 1983: 306-348.

⁶³ Henig also distinguishes between Roman Republican and Augustan gems, see: 1994: 153.

⁶⁴ Zazoff 1983: 261-268.

⁶⁵ Zazoff 1983: 268-274.

various styles adopted by ancient gem engravers.⁶⁶ Then, he concentrates on establishing the dates, places of origin and attributions of gems to specific artists.⁶⁷ In this section he writes about the impact that politics had on the art of gem engraving, which is of special interest for us in the following chapters. Finally, Zazoff briefly describes basic thematic groups on Roman Republican gems.⁶⁸ A similar structure is applied to the section on Roman Imperial gems, which as mentioned includes valuable observations on 'Augustan' gems. The system used by Zazoff in his book established how gems should be described, analysed and interpreted. His contribution is important because he approached gems as fully archaeological artefacts. Zazoff set standards which have been willingly adhered to by others. He also made researchers aware of the need to put gems into their archaeological context and reconstruct their provenance. This approach remains valid today.

After Zazoff's handbook was published in 1983, scholars worked on several aspects of glyptic studies until another landmark appeared in 2007. Gems received more attention not only from specialists in the field but also from outside. They were frequently used to illustrate mythological subjects so popular in Classical art as collected and described in the series *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*.⁶⁹ Engraved gems were also considered as an important branch of Roman art in the series *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*.⁷⁰ In between 1983 and 2007, catalogues of public and private collections were published in great number. It is difficult to select the most important, but Italian collections might be treated as a separate category. These are of key importance for the provenance studies of Roman Republican and Augustan gems. As Sena Chiesa already showed by publication of gems found in Aquileia and in the Luni area, many Italian museums built their collections through gradual acquisition of material from local people as well as through archaeological excavations. The two volumes of gems from the Museo Archeologico in Naples published by Pannuti must be singled out here since the first of them deals with gems with a confirmed archaeological provenance including the area of Pompeii and Herculaneum, while in the second one the author assembled gems that are no less important but lack an archaeological context.⁷¹ Museums in cities such as Bari,⁷² Bologna,⁷³ Ferrara⁷⁴ and Udine⁷⁵ had their cabinets of gems published. The collections

in Florence have been only partially published and made accessible to a wider audience⁷⁶ and the most important collections in various institutions in Rome (the Villa Giulia Museum, the Biblioteca Apostolica and the Vatican Museums) still await proper publication.⁷⁷

Regarding other countries with larger assemblages of Roman Republican and Augustan gems, Germany has completed their *AGDS* publication programme by issuing books on gems from the Germanischen Nationalmuseum Nürnberg and the Heinrich Dressel collection now housed in Berlin Antikensammlung, both written by Weiß.⁷⁸ These two publications should be mentioned here for their thorough descriptions, outstanding interpretations and abundance of reference material which all prove their author to be another great authority on the subject of ancient engraved gems. The contribution of Weiß is particularly important for the studies of 'propaganda gems' because, like Vollenweider, she tends to present various points of view and very often explains iconography through political reasoning. Another great authority in the field, Zwierlein-Diehl, continues her works which apart from numerous articles resulted in two major publications. The first is the catalogue of glass impressions and casts made after various intaglios and cameos from the Martin-von-Wagner-Museum, Würzburg.⁷⁹ This book is important since it analyses many gems now lost which would not be otherwise known. The second is a catalogue of ancient engraved gems re-used as decoration on the shrine of the Three Magi in Cologne cathedral.⁸⁰ The works of Platz-Horster focusing on gems found in Xanten and the area of Bonn should be mentioned here as well since they include some Roman Republican and Augustan material and many useful observations as to their dating and stylistic classification.⁸¹ Also Krug is to be credited for her publications on gems found along the Rhine *limes*.⁸² The works of Platz-Horster and Krug are also important because they give us evidence for the distribution of 'propaganda gems' among soldiers. Some Roman Republican and Augustan gems can be found in the catalogue of the exhibition on gems found in Slovenia by Nestorović.⁸³ In England, aside from the British Museum, two other large collections are preserved in Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. The Oxford gems have been studied by Henig, another great authority in the field of ancient glyptics, and MacGregor.⁸⁴ The

⁶⁶ Zazoff 1983: 274-277.

⁶⁷ Zazoff 1983: 278-290.

⁶⁸ Zazoff 1983: 290-302.

⁶⁹ LIMC 1981-2009.

⁷⁰ Sena Chiesa and Facchini 1985.

⁷¹ Pannuti 1983 and 1994.

⁷² Tamma 1991.

⁷³ Mandrioli Bizzarri 1987.

⁷⁴ Agostini 1984.

⁷⁵ Tomaselli 1993.

⁷⁶ Gennaioli 2007; Giuliano and Micheli 1989; Tondo 1996; Tondo and Vanni 1990.

⁷⁷ The material is only partially accessible in the museums' exhibition galleries.

⁷⁸ Weiß 1996 and 2007.

⁷⁹ Zwierlein-Diehl 1986.

⁸⁰ Zwierlein-Diehl 1998.

⁸¹ Platz-Hortser 1984, 1987 and 1994.

⁸² Krug 1981 and 1995.

⁸³ Nestorović 2005.

⁸⁴ Henig and MacGregor 2004.

material in the Fitzwilliam Museum was published in the mid-1990s by Henig, Scarisbrick and Whiting. It is noteworthy that Henig separates Roman Republican gems from Augustan ones providing clear criteria for their classification.⁸⁵ In addition to these, the contribution of Middleton who brought together gems originating from Dalmatia in the collections of Sir John Gardner Wilkinson and Sir Arthur Evans, now in Harrow School, at Oxford and elsewhere, is important for the study of the provenance of gems.⁸⁶ The same author has also published gems in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter.⁸⁷ The French collections of the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Louvre Museum remain largely unpublished; however, Greek and Roman portraits from the former have been studied by Vollenweider and Avisseau-Broustet.⁸⁸ Furthermore, it is thanks to Guiraud that we now have a detailed picture of archaeological findspots of Roman engraved gems on French territory.⁸⁹ Her contribution is of supreme importance for studies of the provenance and distribution of gems (including many delivered to Roman soldiers). Following her study of gems from The Hague (now Leiden), Maaskant-Kleibrink published a collection of gems from Nijmegen.⁹⁰ Casal Garcia and Giner made objects from the main collections of gems in Madrid and Valencia respectively available to us.⁹¹ The Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg houses a vast collection of engraved gems including many examples of Roman Republican and Augustan glyptics. As mentioned, some highlights have been already published by Neverov, but in 2000 the same author with another great specialist in glyptics, Kagan, published another selection of 500 stones including some previously unknown pieces.⁹² Thanks to Finogenova, we were permitted access to the selection of gems from the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow.⁹³ Concerning the collections preserved in the United States of America, an important contribution to our understanding of Roman Republican and Augustan gems has been made by Spier with his catalogue of gems housed in the Jean Paul Getty Museum, Malibu.⁹⁴ In 1993 Tees published gems from the collection of the McGill University of Antiquities.⁹⁵ Finally, in 2002, Berges released his catalogue of ancient gems from the

Maxwell Sommerville collection, now housed in the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia.⁹⁶

The period between 1983 to 2007 saw the detailed publication of a surprisingly high number of private collections. Among the most significant contributions, one must list: the Leo Merz assemblage,⁹⁷ the Dr E. Pressmar collection,⁹⁸ the Sa'd collection of intaglios and cameos,⁹⁹ the extraordinary Content Family Collection of cameos,¹⁰⁰ the Yüksel Erimtan collection including pieces originating exclusively from Asia Minor, of great importance for the study of the provenance of gems,¹⁰¹ and of similar importance the Wright collection,¹⁰² the Calouste Gulbenkian Collection of gems,¹⁰³ a private collection originating from the eastern part of the Roman Empire published by Wagner and Boardman¹⁰⁴ and another from Germany published by Martin and Höhne,¹⁰⁵ and finally the Borowski collection of intaglios, cameos and rings.¹⁰⁶

Concerning studies devoted to specific problems relating to Roman Republican and Augustan gems, of great importance is the book on Roman cameos with imperial portraits sculpted from the age of Augustus down to the Severan period by Megow.¹⁰⁷ For the first time, these extraordinary works of art have been collected in one place, grouped into classes according to their styles with aid of complex comparative analysis with sculptural heads and busts and broadly commented on. Although, Megow's publication is not free from errors and his dating as well as identification of individual pieces is sometimes controversial, he managed to organise most of the material into a framework which among other things, facilitates interpretation of Augustan glyptics. In turn, Moret focused his research on one specific motif – the rape of Palladion by Diomedes.¹⁰⁸ Late Etruscan and early Italic gems of specific *a globolo* style have been studied by Hansson.¹⁰⁹ His contribution is of great importance for us because it includes chapters dealing with the production of gems and the identification of potential workshops that, as it will be shown, could have survived down to the late 1st century BC/early 1st century AD. Toso offers a detailed

⁸⁵ Henig, Scarisbrick and Whiting 1994: 75-90 – Roman Republican gems and 91-127 – Augustan ones. On the problem of distinction between Roman Republican and Augustan gems, see also: Henig 1994: 153. Regarding gems from Cambridge, a bit earlier, the gems from the Welcome collection, now housed in Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge has been published by Nicholls 1983.

⁸⁶ Middleton 1991.

⁸⁷ Middleton 1998.

⁸⁸ Vollenweider and Avisseau-Broustet 1995 and 2003.

⁸⁹ Guiraud 1988-2008.

⁹⁰ Maaskant-Kleibrink 1986.

⁹¹ Casal Garcia 1990; Giner 1996.

⁹² Kagan and Neverov 2000.

⁹³ Finogenova 1993.

⁹⁴ Spier 1992.

⁹⁵ Tees 1993.

⁹⁶ Berges 2002.

⁹⁷ Vollenweider 1984.

⁹⁸ Zahlhaas 1985.

⁹⁹ Henig and Whiting 1987.

¹⁰⁰ Henig 1990. Martin Henig together with Helen Molesworth have just republished the complete Content Family Collection (2018). This new contribution includes many previously unknown objects which entered the collection after the publication of the first volume.

¹⁰¹ Konuk and Arslan 2000.

¹⁰² Middleton 2001.

¹⁰³ Spier 2001.

¹⁰⁴ Wagner and Boardman 2003.

¹⁰⁵ Martin and Höhne 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Bernheimer 2007.

¹⁰⁷ Megow 1987.

¹⁰⁸ Moret 1997.

¹⁰⁹ Hansson 2005.

study of various mythological motifs appearing on gems in the 1st century BC.¹¹⁰ She interprets the myths on gems as a cultural phenomenon, often related to political activities, and her study will be commented on in the following chapters. In 1999, Plantzos published his monograph on Hellenistic engraved gems. Although the book is a comprehensive study of a class which does not primarily concern us here, the author presents valuable commentaries and remarks on late Hellenistic glyptics which is inextricably linked with Late Roman Republican and Augustan examples.¹¹¹ Particularly important from our perspective are his observations on the use of gems in political life and these will be treated more extensively in the following chapters. The study of little figurines cut out of precious and semi-precious stones undertaken by Gagetti should also be mentioned here. Like Megow, the author collected all the known examples of heads and busts as well as whole figurines of the same kind and thoroughly analysed them publishing new data concerning their dating and cultural significance.¹¹²

The year 2007 is another landmark in research into Roman Republican and Augustan gems. Zwierlein-Diehl, author of the afore-mentioned three-volume catalogue of engraved gems from Vienna and several other works, published her *opus magnum* entitled *Antike Gemmen und ihr Nachleben*.¹¹³ The book offers a fantastic survey of ancient glyptic art and goes beyond that since it includes very interesting chapters on the re-use and re-interpretation of gems in Medieval times as well as brief but informative accounts of gem collecting and studying from the Renaissance to the neo-classical period among others. Zwierlein-Diehl's work has an extensive up-to-date bibliography and is richly illustrated. She has successfully combined Furtwängler's tradition with Vollenweider's level of expertise and has upgraded Zazoff's and Maaskant-Kleibrink's methodology. Her analysis of Roman Republican and Augustan glyptics has been done systematically and in many aspects scrupulously even though the format of the book required abbreviations to be made and had many limitations. In her chapter about Roman Republican gems, like Furtwängler, Zwierlein-Diehl describes the influence of the Etruscan and Hellenistic traditions adding an Italic component to this mixture as well. All the styles are covered with a useful graphic presentation in the plates.¹¹⁴ However, the late Roman Republican gems are treated together with Augustan and early imperial ones.¹¹⁵ She concentrates on the material itself first (styles, forms and types of stones

used among other things), then takes iconography into account. Her analysis is very useful if one wish to date a gem from that long period of time. Zwierlein-Diehl provides many useful examples of all categories of gems and illustrates them in her plates. Her study also includes one of the strongest arguments for the political meaning of some gems (mainly Augustan cameos) and her text clearly demonstrates the need for thorough studies of the phenomenon of propaganda on gems.¹¹⁶ As a result, Zwierlein-Diehl's book is another highly important point of reference for my own studies presented in this book.

The last period presented in this sub-chapter is relatively short and spans from 2007 to the present day. It starts from two important articles by Tassinari. The first is an extensive study of the problems of production and distribution of Roman engraved gems.¹¹⁷ Most of the text concerns Roman Imperial glyptics, but earlier phases (Roman Republican and Augustan) are also taken into account by the author. The second work is in fact a critical survey of glyptic literature published between 2007 and 2011.¹¹⁸ The reader learns not only about the great number of new studies in various areas of glyptics but also benefits from Tassinari's remarks on the current problems and concerns of this particular branch of archaeology and art history. Tassinari even offers suggestions as to what is still to be done by future generations of researchers and how could we improve the discipline. Propaganda on gems is a one of the most important issues she lists.¹¹⁹

Over the last decade, as in previous periods, several new catalogues of both public and private collections have appeared. Many of them include sometimes hundreds of Roman Republican and Augustan gems. Among the most important are: the collection of Her Majesty the Queen of England,¹²⁰ the republished selection of the best cameos from Vienna,¹²¹ the reconstructed fabulous Marlborough collection,¹²² the collection of Museo Civico d'Arte Antica in Torino,¹²³ a part of the collection of Civici Musei d'Arte in Verona,¹²⁴ the collection of Museo Archeologico Nazionale dell'Umbria in Perugia,¹²⁵ the Helmut Hansmann collection,¹²⁶ the Santarelli collection now housed in the Musei Capitolini in Rome,¹²⁷ a small assemblage of gems from Augsburg, significant for its provenance,¹²⁸ the collection of

¹¹⁰ Toso 2007.

¹¹¹ Plantzos 1999: 83-85, 87-88, 92-97, 101-102 and 111-112.

¹¹² Gagetti 2006.

¹¹³ Zwierlein-Diehl 2007.

¹¹⁴ Zwierlein-Diehl 2007: 97-107.

¹¹⁵ Zwierlein-Diehl 2007: 108-122. But this is still a common practice, see, for instance: Wagner and Boardman 2017: 119.

¹¹⁶ Zwierlein-Diehl 2007: 126-132.

¹¹⁷ Tassinari 2008.

¹¹⁸ Tassinari 2011.

¹¹⁹ Tassinari 2011: 402-403.

¹²⁰ Boardman and Aschengreen Piacenti 2008.

¹²¹ Zwierlein-Diehl 2008a.

¹²² Boardman *et. al.* 2009.

¹²³ Bollati and Messina 2009.

¹²⁴ Sena Chiesa, Magni and Tassinari 2009.

¹²⁵ Vitellozzi 2010.

¹²⁶ Wünsche, Steinhart and Weiß 2010.

¹²⁷ Gallottini 2012.

¹²⁸ Platz-Horster 2012a.

cameos in the Antikensammlung Berlin,¹²⁹ a preliminary review of the James Loeb collection,¹³⁰ the collection of gems and rings formed by Guy Ladrière,¹³¹ the Beverley collection, which has recently been republished,¹³² a notable private collection including many masterpieces in miniature¹³³ and the cabinet of ancient engraved gems from the National Museum in Krakow.¹³⁴ All these publications include objects which form the core of the material database in use in this book.

Regarding studies devoted to specific problems, iconography and related issues, Lang's work on gems presenting Greek philosophers, thinkers and related figures stands out.¹³⁵ Intaglios and cameos were often regarded as one of the most valuable and luxurious objects of ancient art. They have been put forward as such in a book on *Luxus* in the ancient world written by Lapatin. The selection of objects in this publication is not only excellent in terms of quality, but it also shows how prestigious it was to possess and use engraved gems of various kinds. These objects could testify to a high social status in the best way possible and transfer political messages. Regarding representations of animals, fantastic creatures and their combinations, Sagiv has recently presented her study on the subject of animal representations on Greek and Roman engraved gems presenting nearly 70 objects from the Israel Museum Jerusalem collection and she observes that some of them served for political propaganda.¹³⁶ Finally, one should mention the proceedings of a symposium on engraved gems held in Aquileia on 19-20 June 2008, which shed much light on and boosted new interest in the studies of the provenance of gems and beyond.¹³⁷ Another important congress on engraved gems was organised in 2016 in Leiden and its proceedings deliver a fresh collection of gem studies among which the article presenting an in-depth iconological analysis of the motif of Cassandra on intaglios and cameos written by Maaskant-Kleibrink is very useful for the research presented here.¹³⁸

In the era of the Internet museums are undergoing profound changes as far as making their collections available to the audience is concerned. They continue to provide one-off exhibitions and the publication of catalogues but also now put images into Internet databases and make popular virtual tours available for everyone. It is good to observe that more and

more institutions put their collections online and it is hoped this example will be followed by the others.¹³⁹ The author of this book benefited greatly from being able to use images and data available online for the construction of his own database (see part II).

2.2. Studies of propaganda on Roman Republican and Augustan gems

The brief overview above has shown that literature on Roman Republican and Augustan gems is abundant. Nevertheless, catalogues of public and private collections dominate and while many of them include a tremendous amount of useful information for the studies of propaganda on gems, studies devoted to specific problems, including propaganda on gems, are scarce. I would here like to present and briefly comment on the books and articles treating or touching on the subject of 'propaganda gems' since they form a basis for the discussion presented in the next sections of this book. Here, I present only the works of scholars who deal primarily with glyptic art while the 'outsiders' are commented on in the next sub-chapter.

Studies of Roman propaganda on gems seem to have no obvious beginning and sometimes it is difficult to ascertain to what degree the author really treats gems as artefacts with some political meaning. However, it seems natural to start with Furtwängler – one of the greatest authorities in the world of gems. Although in his *Die antiken Gemmen* Furtwängler offers little information about the political significance of Roman Republican and Augustan gems, he clearly distinguished Augustan gems from Republican ones, citing, among other reasons, the political impact of Augustus on Roman art in general. Furtwängler noticed that Pliny the Elder provides us with much useful information regarding the seals used by the most prominent Roman politicians and he briefly commented on some general themes in glyptics under Augustus.¹⁴⁰ He does not go into detail, but the reason for this is that he focused his research on gems as archaeological artefacts and ancient artworks rather than their potential propagandistic or political value.

Significant progress was made in the 1950s and 1960s due to Vollenweider's studies. First, she published a

¹²⁹ Platz-Horster 2012b.

¹³⁰ Weiß 2012. Dr Carina Weiß kindly informed me that her complete catalogue of James Loeb collection is forthcoming.

¹³¹ Scarisbrick, Wagner and Boardman 2016a.

¹³² Scarisbrick, Wagner and Boardman 2016b.

¹³³ Wagner and Boardman 2017.

¹³⁴ Gołyźniak 2017.

¹³⁵ Lang 2012.

¹³⁶ Sagiv 2018, especially p. 164.

¹³⁷ Sena Chiesa and Gagetti (eds) 2009.

¹³⁸ Maaskant-Kleibrink 2017.

¹³⁹ Regarding engraved gems a number of public institutions have made their collections at least partially available online, for example: Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu (a selection), the British Museum in London (a selection), Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (a selection), the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden in Leiden, Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris (a selection), Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (very little), Antikensammlung in Berlin (very little), Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva, the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, the Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen and the National Museum in Krakow (a selection).

¹⁴⁰ Furtwängler 1900, vol. III: 303-306.

couple of papers on matters relating to propaganda on gems and the image of Scipio Africanus.¹⁴¹ The former article is of great importance and a point of reference for studies on the issue of personal branding through portraits engraved upon gems. Vollenweider was the first to propose that glass gems were cheap and mass-produced, aimed at ordinary people and soldiers and used to achieve political (propaganda) goals.¹⁴² Moreover, she observed that Sulla's personal seal exhibited a deep propaganda message which was intentionally put on his ring.¹⁴³ She was certainly aware of the problems inherent in the study of gems and the fact that only a tiny proportion of the original artworks might have survived to the present day.¹⁴⁴ Vollenweider continued her work in the 1960s publishing papers on portrait gems and the use of gems for propaganda. She investigated several specific intaglios and cameos, among others one showing a scene of *principes iuventutis* involving Gaius and Lucius Caesar, one representing a very special portrait of Julius Caesar and one with an episode from Pompey the Great's career.¹⁴⁵ But the comprehensive study of late Roman Republican and Augustan gem engravers was her greatest achievement to date. As mentioned above, the book published in 1966 was a wonderful analysis of all the most important gem engravers transferring their workshops from the Hellenistic east to Rome and elsewhere in Italy. Vollenweider also stressed that gems were frequently used for propaganda purposes.¹⁴⁶ Another, perhaps even greater achievement was her complete study of portraits on gems in the Roman Republic.¹⁴⁷ In this book, the reader finds out why portraits appear so frequently on gems and what was the political background for this. Vollenweider's commentaries on the symbolism accompanying portraits on gems and its political significance, especially in the 1st century BC, even though not always nowadays accepted, still stimulate discussion on this significant issue. Therefore, her chapters on Pompey the Great, Julius Caesar, Marcus Iunius Brutus and Quintus Cassius Longinus or Mark Antony and Octavian are all starting points for my own investigations in the in the third part of this book.¹⁴⁸ It can be said that nobody has done more than Vollenweider for the studies of propaganda on gems so far. Her contribution is all the more valuable since she based her research on a comparison of gems and coins which successfully established a trend which was followed by others. Furthermore, valuable commentaries regarding

various political events, symbolism, portraits etc. can be found in her more recent works; however, her two monographs constitute the absolute basis for research on propaganda on gems.¹⁴⁹

The next major contribution to the study of propaganda on gems was made by Zazoff.¹⁵⁰ In his 1983 handbook *Die antiken Gemmen*, he distinguished three main types of Roman glyptics by subject-matter: 1. aristocratic glyptics, 2. popular glyptics and 3. state glyptics.¹⁵¹ Even though his observations and categorisations mainly apply to Roman Imperial gems, I would like to comment on his classification in the last part of the study in a chapter devoted to the distribution of propaganda gems, since it seems applicable to the reign of Augustus if not earlier. Apart from this, Zazoff comments on subjects which could have had some political meaning, especially under Augustus, but he does not expand on some general examples.¹⁵² Concerning propaganda on gems, the remarks of Guiraud in her book on Roman glyptics are noteworthy.¹⁵³ She briefly comments on the use of gems with portraits for personal branding, highlighting the divine protection from gods sought by politicians and the production, distribution and possible propagandistic value of glass gems.¹⁵⁴ Guiraud is also of the opinion that the so-called State Cameos were publicly exhibited in imperial palaces or temples, thereby giving them political significance and impact on society.¹⁵⁵ In the recent general monograph on ancient engraved gems, Zwierlein-Diehl provides a highly informative and useful chapter covering questions of propaganda and panegyric on engraved gems. Her text, arranged in the form of several case studies showing some general trends, is mainly about Augustan glyptics and later Imperial gems.¹⁵⁶ However, one finds a lot of valuable observations in the chapters concerned with the use of gems as well as those describing Roman Republican, Augustan and early Imperial intaglios and cameos.¹⁵⁷ Finally, the significant contribution of Weiß should be singled out. In her catalogues of the Bergau collection in Nürnberg and Dressel in Berlin, she interprets several intaglios and cameos as having political significance.¹⁵⁸ In commentaries on individual objects one finds fruitful discussions of specific motifs

¹⁴¹ Vollenweider 1955 and 1958.

¹⁴² Vollenweider 1955: 99-101. Twenty years later a similar conclusion was drawn by Maaskant-Kleibrink (1978: 196).

¹⁴³ Vollenweider 1955: 102.

¹⁴⁴ Vollenweider 1955: 105-107.

¹⁴⁵ Vollenweider 1960, 1961, 1963-1964 and 1964.

¹⁴⁶ Vollenweider 1966: 17-22.

¹⁴⁷ Vollenweider 1972-1974.

¹⁴⁸ Vollenweider 1972-1974: 106-229.

¹⁴⁹ These are mainly catalogues: Vollenweider 1979 and Vollenweider and Avisseau-Broustet 1995 and 2003.

¹⁵⁰ Thanks to Elena Dmitrieva and Hadrien Rambach I recently learnt of the late Professor Oleg Neverov's unpublished PhD dissertation (Neverov 1969) on the role of portrait gems of the 1st century BC-AD in the dissemination of the Principate ideology, but unfortunately too late to fully acknowledge this work here before going to press.

¹⁵¹ Zazoff 1983: 329.

¹⁵² Zazoff 1983: 295-296 and 328-334.

¹⁵³ Guiraud 1996.

¹⁵⁴ Guiraud 1996: 121-124, 124-127 and 127-133 respectively.

¹⁵⁵ Guiraud 1996: 116-121.

¹⁵⁶ Zwierlein-Diehl 2007: 126-132.

¹⁵⁷ Zwierlein-Diehl 2007: 9-13 and 97-157.

¹⁵⁸ Weiß 1996 and 2007.

and those general types of gems which many times form the basis for my own research and are referred to in the third part of this book.

Apart from these studies, not much has been said about the use of gems for self-presentation and propaganda purposes except for some rather general statements.¹⁵⁹ There is a clear gap in research on the pre-Augustan phases of glyptic art. Augustan gems have received more attention. Henig is of the opinion that Augustan gems like other artworks of the era reflect Augustus' successful promotional and propaganda activities which aimed to make his ideology more approachable to the people of Rome.¹⁶⁰ There is one general study by Maderna-Lauter and several smaller contributions focusing mainly on specific motifs or individual objects. The study of Augustan propaganda on engraved gems by Maderna-Lauter is extremely important and formed the basis for my own investigations.¹⁶¹ The author offers a thorough overview on the subjects appearing on gems that to her mind are related to the propaganda actions of the first Roman emperor. Many of these gems are well known from earlier publications, where they were already considered to have been vehicles for propaganda, thus the study does not include much new data. The way they are presented is, however, attractive and, in many cases, more convincing than before. Nevertheless, the propagandistic value of some types of objects is controversial, for example, the gems Maderna-Lauter links with *aurea aetas* and *Pax Augusta* or the representations of the gigantomachy involving Mars and Minerva. Some of the motifs described by the author as propagandistic are clearly overinterpreted. The study is an iconographical survey and lacks extensive commentary explaining why specific motifs should be taken as propagandistic or not and what their actual impact on the viewers and users could have been. It also does not include even one or two portraits of Augustus' successors, who were clearly promoted on intaglios and cameos with a political agenda. These facts prompted me to expand the research Maderna-Lauter started in order to provide a comprehensive picture of Augustan propaganda practices attested on gems.

Several other scholars have written articles on specific problems or motifs relating to Augustan gems as well as those from the slightly earlier period when Octavian rivalled with Mark Antony which could be interpreted as propagandistic. In a short paper, Cicu presents several gems from Sardinia which reflect the range of Octavian/Augustus' propaganda actions employed by his followers who gathered on the island during his rivalry, first, with Sextus Pompey and later, with Mark

Antony.¹⁶² In turn, Guiraud describes several examples of gems relating to the propaganda activity of Octavian/Augustus from archaeological excavations in France.¹⁶³ Gagetti wrote extensively on the motif of the so-called adoption ring appearing on a series of conventional and glass gems.¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, Sena Chiesa wrote three papers on various aspects of Octavian/Augustus' propaganda on gems: the Capricorn as his zodiacal and political sign and gems as luxurious objects, symbols of high social status and prestige.¹⁶⁵ Regarding Capricorn as a political sign, an important contribution has also been made by Weiß.¹⁶⁶ Recently, representations of animals and fantastic creatures have been discussed by Sagiv in her study of the subject of animal representations on Greek and Roman engraved gems in which she presents nearly 70 objects from the Israel Museum Jerusalem collection. She notices that some of them served as political propaganda.¹⁶⁷ Noteworthy are the recent works of Yarrow focusing on coinage but with many references to engraved gems and especially glass ones,¹⁶⁸ and Wagner also supports the view that many glass gems served for political propaganda in ancient Rome.¹⁶⁹

2.3. General studies of Roman propaganda and self-presentation referring to engraved gems

In this sub-chapter, I would like to refer to scholars who are not primarily specialists on glyptics but in other fields relevant to the studies of Roman propaganda, in order to show what interests people from outside the subject area as far as gems as means of propaganda is concerned. At first glance, there is a vast literature approaching the problem from different angles, but very few scholars consider gems as material worth studying or even taking into account in their studies of Roman propaganda. Most scholars focus on spectacular and less controversial examples of Roman propaganda activities attested in architecture, sculpture, paintings, literature and coinage.¹⁷⁰ For instance, in one of the most valuable and important general studies of Roman propaganda, Evans analyses various propaganda techniques and methods employed in the aforementioned categories of Roman art, but she does not mention any example of the use of gems for such purposes.¹⁷¹ Similarly, Ramage provides a thorough characterisation of Sulla's propaganda machinery reflected in various media, but

¹⁶² Cicu 2009.

¹⁶³ Guiraud 1986.

¹⁶⁴ Gagetti 2001.

¹⁶⁵ Sena Chiesa 1989, 2002 and 2012.

¹⁶⁶ Weiß 2010.

¹⁶⁷ Sagiv 2018, especially pp. 104-107, 126-133, 137-144 and 164.

¹⁶⁸ Yarrow 2017 and 2018.

¹⁶⁹ Wagner 2019: 40.

¹⁷⁰ Regarding general studies of Roman propaganda, see: Döbler 1999; Flaig 1995; Popławski 1935; Syme 1939 and 1989; Sauron 1994. The area which has received most of attention is coinage though, see: Alföldi 1956; Kunisz 1993; Kopij 2017; Morawiecki 1983, 1996 and 2014.

¹⁷¹ Evans 1992.

¹⁵⁹ Wagner and Boardman 2017: X; Zwierlein-Diehl 1979: 7.

¹⁶⁰ Henig 1994: 154-156.

¹⁶¹ Maderna-Lauter 1988.

he ignores Sulla's personal seal and its propagandistic value.¹⁷² Hannestad also completely ignores all kinds of engraved gems as vehicles for propaganda except for few State Cameos, even though gems are even more distinctive for propaganda studies than coins, especially for the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.¹⁷³

Of course, there are exceptions. Among them is one of the greatest authorities in matters concerned with Roman propaganda and Augustus - Alföldi. In his numerous studies, he refers to gems mostly as comparative material for coins, which were the focus of his scientific activities. Nevertheless he often exhibited appreciation of glyptic material and, especially where Augustan propaganda is concerned, he contributed with valuable remarks and comments, and drew attention to the difficult process of deciphering propaganda messages encoded on gems.¹⁷⁴ Also Kiss is worth mentioning for he figured out that apart from sculptural busts and heads, Julio-Claudian princes were promoted through gems as successors of Augustus, although, he uses gems only as comparanda rather than treating them as an independent mean of propaganda.¹⁷⁵ Another example is Zanker with his fabulous study of visual propaganda in the time of Augustus.¹⁷⁶ This author uses gems to describe various propagandistic actions and he succeeded in incorporating the material into Augustus' propaganda machinery as a whole. What is more, in another study, he notices that gems as tools of propaganda were closely related to the private sphere of propagandist and audience, indicating scope for future studies.¹⁷⁷ As far as the private sphere is concerned, Pollini should be mentioned here with his study on the *Gemma Augustea* and several other papers devoted to the question of Augustus' promotion, including divine support for him reflected on intaglios and cameos and mythological references which were widespread not only on official art, but in the private sphere too.¹⁷⁸

Some scholars should be singled out as they use gems as comparative material or worked on a specific problem and referred to gems in their studies. Even those who did not specifically focus on the problem of the use of engraved gems for propaganda purposes but noticed great potential in them and suggested further research that could be done on the subject are mentioned here as well. Since gems and coins are closely related to each other in terms of techniques, styles and iconography, it is not surprising that most of these scholars are numismatists. First is Vermeule, who paid

great attention to comparative studies between gems and coins and thus noticed that studying gems might significantly contribute to our understanding of Roman propaganda.¹⁷⁹ Authors of studies of the influence of Greek art on Roman sometimes also mention the political usefulness of gems first in the Hellenistic kingdoms and then in Rome.¹⁸⁰ If one includes studies of a specific motif used in Roman propaganda, for instance the Capricorn employed by Augustus, several authors have incorporated gems into their studies.¹⁸¹ Of course, Crawford, the author of the comprehensive study of Roman Republican coinage should be singled out here as well. He deserves recognition for his remarks on the technical and iconographical similarities between Roman Republican gems and coins as well as the view that gems, like coins, could have served as a medium of mass propaganda, especially those made of glass.¹⁸² He is another figure, who suggests that studies on the question of 'propaganda gems' should be urgently undertaken. Similarly, Morawiecki regarded research into engraved gems as desideratum in the studies of Roman propaganda. He pointed out that gems like coins should be thoroughly analysed and their propagandistic potential described in detail even though they might seem difficult to study.¹⁸³ Ritter in his study of Heracles' place in Roman culture, society and art often refers to gems as used for propaganda reasons by political leaders in Rome. He also suggests that the idea of collecting gems by the Roman aristocracy was a form of propaganda activity too.¹⁸⁴ Likewise, Kühnen, who researches *imitatio Alexandri*, uses gems to illustrate that sort of Roman political activity.¹⁸⁵

Criticism of the use of word 'propaganda' for interpretations of various artworks, including engraved gems, is highly desirable since the term is often clearly an overinterpretation. Hence, Hekster's paper about the propaganda war between Octavian and Mark Antony as portrayed on gems, among other media, is of great importance and serves as guidance for those too quick to read propaganda into everything which has no obvious other explanation.¹⁸⁶

Apart from these, many authors used gems for their studies to illustrate particular questions. For instance, Barcaro hypothesises that gems are significant in the consolidation of divine representations of the most influential Roman politicians.¹⁸⁷ Biedermann published an important article about the significance and possible

¹⁷² Ramage 1991.

¹⁷³ Hannestad 1988: 11 and 15. He does not refer to engraved gems in his chapter on the Roman Republic (pp. 15-38), but briefly presents some key State Cameos (pp. 77-82).

¹⁷⁴ See for instance: Alföldi 1950, 1951, 1954, 1956, 1970 and 1999.

¹⁷⁵ Kiss 1975.

¹⁷⁶ Zanker 1988.

¹⁷⁷ Zanker 2000.

¹⁷⁸ Pollini 1993 and 2012.

¹⁷⁹ Vermeule 1958.

¹⁸⁰ For instance: Möbius 1964.

¹⁸¹ For example: Dwyer 1973; Laubscher 1974; Simon 1986; Simonetta 2006.

¹⁸² *RRC*: 727-728.

¹⁸³ Morawiecki 1983: 13.

¹⁸⁴ Ritter 1995.

¹⁸⁵ Kühnen 2008.

¹⁸⁶ Hekster 2004.

¹⁸⁷ Barcaro 2008/2009.

meanings of the bearded portraits in the Late Roman Republic which includes analysis of many engraved gems.¹⁸⁸ The same problem has been approached by Piegdoń from a slightly different angle and he based his research partially on gems too.¹⁸⁹ The use of gems by Pompey the Great and his sons has attracted some scholarly attention. As far as portraits of Pompey the Great on gems and coins is concerned, the study of Trunk is of great importance.¹⁹⁰ Recently, Kopij in his book on propaganda actions performed by the members of *gens Pompeia Magna* wrote a chapter about the use of gems for such purposes by Pompey the Great and Sextus Pompey. His study deserves recognition because unlike the others, he focuses not only on personal branding through portraits engraved upon gems, but also writes about other possible propagandistic messages encoded on intaglios and cameos.¹⁹¹ Yet he barely goes beyond Vollenweider's observations.

2.4. Conclusions

As has become clear from the survey presented above, there is an urgent need to analyse engraved gems of the Roman Republican and Augustan periods as a means of propaganda. The majority of publications in which gems figure are catalogues of the collections kept in various public institutions and in private hands and comparatively little original research has been carried out on the propaganda aspect of glyptic art so far. Information on the possible use of gems for self-presentation and propaganda purposes is scattered among relatively few publications which do not often directly relate to each other. This does not make it easy to draw more general conclusions since the subject of analysis is usually only one or a few specific examples, while no comprehensive study has been undertaken until now. Furthermore, since no study devoted to Roman Republican and Augustan gems exists, one must first create a general image of the glyptics circulating in that periods.

The number of Roman Republican and Augustan gems made available through published catalogues and more recently online collections is vast. This material forms a good basis for detailed as well as synthetic research. Of course, new collections will appear in the future revealing new examples of 'propaganda gems',¹⁹² but the number of intaglios and cameos already published justifies and encourages us to carry out a synthetic analysis into Roman Republican and Augustan gems

as a means of propaganda. The fact that these groups have already been studied with reference to their styles, techniques of engraving and iconography by several scholars (Furtwängler; Richter; Maaskant-Kleibrink; Zazoff; Zwierlein-Diehl), facilitates the research. Naturally, some aspects require more attention (for instance, archaeological findspots and contexts of published gems, detailed iconological and iconographical studies and so on) and an exclusive work on Roman Republican and Augustan gems would be welcome, but this in itself does not preclude undertaking a research on the possible political significance of engraved gems.

Insufficient attention has been paid to the problem of propaganda on gems so far. Only Augustan glyptics has been investigated to any degree. All the studies mentioned above are important, shedding light on specific aspects of Augustan propaganda on gems and they form the basis for my own thoughts and conclusions. However, they touch only few issues (most concentrate on the Capricorn sign), while the full image is much more complex and needs to be explained in detail. Furthermore, Vollenweider's contribution has been singled out as the most significant and comprehensive for the studies of Roman propaganda on gems. Nevertheless, in many instances her hypotheses and interpretations of individual objects are far-fetched and require critical investigation and sometimes reconsideration. On the other hand, some issues like the possible use of engraved gems for propaganda by Sulla and his predecessors in the 3rd and 2nd century BC are not accounted for in sufficient detail. The same is the case with Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar. Generally speaking, even though the problem is touched on here and there, it is essential to collect all available data, interpretations and ideas and verify whether the term propaganda indeed applies to individual objects, subject-matters and so on or not. Vollenweider started an important discussion of the influence of politics on Roman gem engraving which has been taken onwards primarily by Weiß. It is hoped that this book will contribute to the overall discussion of the question and as a result, a more detailed picture will emerge.

Finally, as shown above, in more general studies of Roman propaganda practices engraved gems are often neglected if not completely ignored. Very few scholars notice the potential of gems in the studies of Roman propaganda. Such an attitude is not surprising since gems like other *minor arts* are often not considered to be significant propaganda tools. Exceptions are the so-called State Cameos like *Gemma Augustea* which receive much attention due to their outstanding artistic virtuosity and unusual size. Another reason why gems have been ignored is their complexity. For many scholars, glyptics is a minefield where artefacts

¹⁸⁸ Biedermann 2014.

¹⁸⁹ Piegdoń 2012.

¹⁹⁰ Trunk 2009: 143-151.

¹⁹¹ Kopij 2017: 253-264.

¹⁹² For instance, Zwierlein-Diehl is working on a large (5000 objects out of which about 500 are related to the field of Classical Archaeology) collection of gems formed by Prof. Dr Klaus Jürgen Müller, which since 2011 is housed in the Akademisches Kunstmuseum der Universität Bonn, see: Zwierlein-Diehl 2015.

may turn out to be 18th or 19th century copies rather than genuine antiquities. Moreover, gems are difficult to date and interpret since very few bear any kind of inscription and the vast majority have no archaeological context whatsoever. It is indeed difficult to detect and correctly interpret messages encoded on gems for their iconography is frequently ambiguous. The same motif might be interpreted in various ways depending on the cultural and social circle, territory and time it is set in. Therefore, it is much easier to focus research on Roman propaganda in sculpture, architecture or coins which are not affected so much by these inconveniences. In addition, current research tends to focus on the state and official propaganda rather than on the audience and target groups which also could induce propagandistic, 'bottom-up' actions either purposefully or unintentionally. Engraved gems are strictly related to the private sphere which has not yet been sufficiently investigated. All these factors contribute to the exclusion of gems from mainstream research. The need for a thorough study of the use of engraved gems for self-presentation and propaganda purposes is hence justified not only on a basic (glyptics) level but also a more general one (studies of Roman propaganda).

3. Aims, methodology and structure

3.1. Aims

The investigation embarked upon here has basically been designed to test the hypothesis that engraved gems were used for self-presentation and propaganda purposes in the Roman Republic and under Augustus. The chronological framework has been established as starting from the 3rd century BC, the moment when four elements (Etruscan, Italic, Roman and Hellenistic) started to fuse together into a single Graeco-Roman tradition and ending at the moment of Augustus' death in AD 14. One can observe the evolution of various propaganda practices on gems through this period from the incidental acts of self-presentation down to the complex propaganda machinery created by Augustus, which was further exploited by his successors. There seem to be no better circumstances for showing the dynamics in the use of engraved gems for propaganda in terms of time and cultural environment. On the other hand, the study aspires to show that a careful iconographical, iconological and semiotic analysis of gems combined with image studies and investigations of their historical, political and cultural settings might be helpful not only in demonstrating their political significance, but also in rejecting overinterpretations. It is also hoped that linking specific classes of gems with political events will help to date these miniature objects of art. In the absence of other reliable and objective data, this might also be our only opportunity to decode their true meaning and functions.

The main objective of my study is to analyse how politics could have influenced the art of gem engraving within the specified chronological framework and to what degree this process can be reconstructed basing the research on glyptic material preserved until the present day. I undertook the difficult task of detecting, deciphering and interpreting all possible propaganda communications encoded on gems in order to create an overall picture of the propaganda techniques used by Roman politicians to influence public opinion with the use of intaglios and cameos. One of the advantages of gems for the study of Roman propaganda is that they portray Roman society from various angles. Therefore, the material gathered in this study probably shows general trends in Roman propaganda as well as individual and private acts of being involved in politics. I would like to demonstrate that the miniaturism of ancient gems is often in inverse proportion to their cultural and political significance. Despite – or perhaps because of – their ubiquity, intaglios and cameos with the motifs they bear are often highly sophisticated and captivating in their visual presentation of complex ideas. This is especially true of cameos, while intaglios,

as much more popular form, were perfect for personal branding or manifestations of loyalty. By effective artistry the image carved upon the gems is, almost literally, impressed upon the mind of the viewer. Moreover, my research aims to show that propaganda gems reflect the contemporary situation within Roman society; the fact that propaganda actions/messages occur on them result from this highly political climate. In other words, many of them (especially those bearing complex symbolism) were not deliberately made on politicians' commissions, but ordinary people involved in politics purchased and carried rings with gems to demonstrate their political preferences, needs, wishes and even sometimes disagreements. In addition, it seems important to take into account the cultural, ethnic and even linguistic diversity of Roman society and hence, to ask if the messages encoded on gems were understandable for ordinary citizens of the Roman Empire or maybe only well-educated people could make use of them. In conclusion, the glyptic material offers the possibility of investigating Roman propaganda from a completely different angle which, as shown above, has been largely neglected in previous scholarship. Gems might be a unique barometer of social moods and indicate whether or not propaganda actions of various Roman politicians were successful.

As has already been shown, there is a clear absence of studies of 'propaganda gems' in literature concerned with glyptics as well as in the more general works tackling the problem of Roman propaganda. This situation encourages us to ask some more specific questions. Why is it legitimate for us to regard engraved gems as useful propaganda tools? Can we identify a time at which they actually started to be used for propaganda purposes and say why the popular view that it was Pompey the Great who popularised the use of gems in Rome is just a false impression? What contribution did Hellenistic culture make to Roman propaganda? What were the characteristics of propaganda actions reflected on engraved gems, especially as far as the Late Roman Republic and Augustan times are concerned? Were they similar to those known from other branches of Roman art and literature or not? If not, why were they different? What is the propagandistic value of gems as compared, for instance, to coins? Furthermore, one asks oneself who was responsible for producing and distributing 'propaganda gems'? What were the intentions of the propagandists? Who were the propagandists – only the political leaders or did the less influential politicians use gems for their own propaganda as well? Which types of objects could have been made on private commissions, which by politicians and finally which

by the engravers themselves to fulfill the needs of the market? Can we point to subjects suitable for Roman (national) propaganda that were intended to accelerate the romanisation of provinces? Regarding glass gems, is it true that they were mass-produced and distributed to many in order to steer public opinion? Would it be possible to categorise the target groups of propaganda gems of all types? What about the reception of some motifs used by political leaders like Pompey the Great or Julius Caesar and their later re-use by Octavian or Sextus Pompey? Concerning portraiture, is it possible to determine which gems were made during the life of the propagandist and which after his death in order to transfer his authority to a successor? What about counterpropaganda, is it reflected on gems or not? These and many more questions are addressed in this study. It is hoped they will stimulate discussion on the subject in general and help to determine the meaning of the individual pieces selected to illustrate the phenomenon as a whole.

It is also important to mention the limitations of this investigation. Taking into account all the problems related to engraved gems such as the frequent lack of any archaeological context, ambiguous iconography that cannot be ascribed to a specific politician or the problem of dating along with the possible existence of modern fakes among the material analysed, one raises the question whether such a research is justified and can it produce reliable results? I am fully aware of all the problems and take them into account. Furthermore, I try to bring together as many interpretations of the visible communications appearing on intaglios and cameos proposed by other scholars as possible. My study aims to be a critical survey of the ideas and iconographical interpretations that various scholars relate to propaganda. General analysis as well as individual case studies will show that overinterpretations are very common. I feel this approach to be as objective as possible in appraising the political value of gems while informing the reader about other possibilities too (mostly directly, but also in the form of cross-references). The first part of the book therefore includes some content designed to aid the correct interpretation of gems' iconography and indicate the reasons for false conclusions (cf. chapter 5.2). To tackle this problem, some more theoretical considerations of propaganda techniques and forms have been put forward as well. It is crucial first to establish what we understand by the term 'propaganda phenomenon' now and what it could have mean 2,000 years ago. It is also important to investigate to what degree one might use modern tools in the research of the phenomenon of propaganda because they might bring much more positive results than those used in the past (cf. chapter 4).

Finally, the research carried out in this project has been designed to show how engraved gems can be used in reconstructing more general aspects of Roman propaganda machinery. Glyptic material divides into three main propaganda categories: agitational, integrational and religious/state propaganda. It is debatable whether in the early stages (3rd-2nd century BC) one may distinguish a special kind of state propaganda which reappears during the reign of Augustus.

3.2. Methodology

The basis of the present study is the analysis, thorough description and interpretation of glyptic material dated from the 3rd century BC to AD 14 as well as a survey of modern scholarship and dealing with the subject as a whole and with specific problems relating to the issue of propaganda on gems. Regarding the geographical scope of my work, the analysed material originates from lands controlled by Rome from the 3rd century BC (primarily Italy) to the early 1st century AD and beyond, since some gems have been found in the Near East or on the frontiers of the Roman Empire. Because of the lack of information concerning provenance, conclusions about the geographical context is necessarily limited (cf. chapter 11). Intaglios and cameos have been selected primarily according to their possible propagandistic value, which has been determined according to the criteria described in chapter 4.5. These objects are treated as media or channels transferring the propaganda messages encoded on them. They have been grouped in several sections to illustrate the various aspects of the propaganda phenomenon, such as: the use of gems in triumphs, collecting, employment of gem engravers, personal seals, personal branding and self-presentation (mainly portraits), induction and manifestation of loyalty and support, use of heritage, promotion of the family and oneself through *origo*, promotion of the faction, commemoration of important events (military, social and cultural ones), promotion of abstract ideas (like *Pax Augusta* or *aurea aetas*), religious, divine and mythological references, political symbols, State Cameos, vessels and works in the round (luxury objects - if applicable), and other aspects (cf. chapter 5.1). Furthermore, the material is sorted according to chronology and ascribed to five periods: Beginnings (3rd-2nd century BC); Early 1st century BC (Sulla, Marius, Lucius Licinius Lucullus and others); Civil War (Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar); Post-caesarian and liberators' Civil War (factions of Pompeians, Republicans and Caesarians); Augustus (27 BC-AD 14) (cf. chapters 6-10). However, it should be stressed that in some cases (mainly chapter 6 and 10) I decided to include material which ultimately cannot be regarded as propagandistic but has been interpreted as such in the previous scholarship. The idea is first, to show why this material has been interpreted as propagandistic

and why this interpretation is incorrect. Even though including these cases might cause some distortion to the study, from the methodological point of view it was necessary to comment on them rather than ignore them completely. In consequence, each chapter and sub-chapter is furnished with objects illustrating various aspects of propaganda on gems, which are numbered separately in the catalogue part.

The gems, slightly more than 2,900 in total, have been studied mainly through photographs and illustrations published in catalogues, articles, reports etc. Much of the material was investigated using sources available online and a good portion of it was examined at first hand during many visits to various European museums.¹ All available information concerning archaeological proveniences and collection provenances for individual objects has been critically examined. This has been done primarily in order to determine where Roman Republican and Augustan, and thus ‘propaganda gems’ could have been produced and to chart their geographical distribution. The aim was also to identify the type of context in which the gems in question have been found and to date them by relating them to other datable objects ideally coming from the same closed contexts. Unfortunately, the majority of gems have no precise (full) archaeological context, but I apply (with slight modifications) the methodology first introduced by Rudolph for his studies on ancient jewellery.² According to him, there are three types of context: *controlled*, *generic* and *no context*. Since this issue is highly important for the final conclusions of the whole study, it has been treated at length in a separate chapter in the fourth part of the book (cf. chapter 11).

The material catalogued for each section has been described in the most comprehensive and compact way possible. Every entry includes basic information on the object such as its current whereabouts, any information about its provenance or provenience, type of stone used, date, subject-matter and literature. A basic description of the device engraved is given as well as the most recent bibliographical references because detailed descriptions and lists of literature are in most cases to be found in the collection catalogues each object is published in. Thanks to this, I avoid unnecessary repetition. This methodology is effective since no essential information is lost and repeating the same information would be pointless. It should be stressed that if the motif exists in the same form on numerous gems (in the case of glass ones frequently

mechanically repeated), it is presented in all the variants that I have collected but some specimens might have been unintentionally omitted. Concerning statistical analyses (cf. chapter 12), these are performed to show the range and significance of propaganda gems. Although the preserved material might constitute only a small part of that initially produced and it is impossible to estimate what was the overall production of engraved gems between the 3rd century BC and early 1st century AD in Rome specifically and Mediterranean world in general,³ it seems essential at least to try to establish how extensive the production of ‘propaganda gems’ might have been, which types of objects are the most numerous and whether their number could have any effect on the success of propaganda actions.

Analysis of the material presented in the catalogue part consists of two parts. First, I treat objects as archaeological artefacts, therefore, their forms, shapes, materials used, provenience and provenance information, techniques of engraving – all archaeological data are critically examined. Next, I examine their cultural, historical and political context.⁴ As regards the images engraved on the gem devices, these have all been individually examined. At this stage iconographical and iconological analysis are combined with semiotics and image studies and analysis comparing the gems with other archaeological artefacts (mainly coins) was performed as well. This is because gems, like any other artefacts, are here primarily treated as documents, objects that reflect cultural, political and historical phenomena.⁵ Iconology allows us to decode ‘propaganda gems’ within their own environment and to uncover their possible political significance when compared to other branches of Roman art. Semiotic analysis justifies research on ‘propaganda gems’ since it allows us to postulate that intaglios and cameos did indeed have political significance. By analysing the signs featured upon gems, it is possible to re-create the system of communication between a propagandist and the audience. Once this system has been defined, it is possible to identify evidence for it. Semiotics also investigates the creators of messages communicated through works of art, in this case, the propagandists, and allows us to identify historical events behind the signs they use.⁶ Finally, it analyses the process of coding and decoding the ideas behind the signs which

¹ The material housed in the National Museum in Krakow, the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, the Antikensammlung in Berlin, the Akademisches Kunstmuseum der Universität Bonn, the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, the British Museum in London, Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris and several private collections has been studied in original.

² Rudolph 1996.

³ The material selected for study purposes and assembled in the catalogue is technically a random sample based more on the iconographical criteria rather than on any relevant production estimation. Because it is unknown how many glass gems could have been produced from one matrix and how many gems were cut by one regular artist, even if we analyse careers of modern engravers, it is impossible to establish the exact or at least estimated production of intaglios and cameos in antiquity.

⁴ Basically, these procedures follow the methodology of Binachi Bandinelli (1988: 159-162).

⁵ On the clarification of this kind of methodology, see: Lorenz 2016: 24-36.

⁶ Lorenz 2016: 166.

is of crucial importance in this study.⁷ Image studies deal mostly with the physical process of viewing and allow us to concentrate on specific allegorical meanings of the signs and their combinations. This is particularly helpful in confirming or denying that a specific myth or its version was employed by propagandists in the communication of their ideas through the use of art in general. Even if a myth or any other motif is popular and has many variants, the details can tell us how it should be interpreted. The aesthetic value is not as much important here as is the content of the artwork and the functional application of the images used.⁸ Furthermore, image studies concentrate on the various functions of the objects, that is, the image's or images' meaning changes with the object's application for various purposes when it is exposed to different viewing points.⁹ Therefore, this work has naturally proceeded from description to interpretation, from form to content, and from the object to its environment according to the basic art-historical method. The material has been grouped into specific classes sharing one or more common features in terms of their propagandistic value. Of course, my iconographical and iconological analysis draws on studies of the glyptic tradition of the region the object could have come from (if such information is available). The potential influence of various external factors such as the influence of Etruscan, Italic or Hellenistic culture, physical properties of the stones used and so forth have been considered as well. The concept of *tradition* understood as a broad cultural environment the object is related to is of some importance here too. Last, but not least, the material has been analysed on stylistic grounds since many times this is still the only way to determine an object's chronology.

As the final step, the propagandistic value of each individual object has been examined. Depending on the object type, the result was confirmation of the previously established interpretation (sometimes only with slight modifications), change of the previously established interpretation for another one, complete rejection of the idea of linking the subject-matter and thus the object with propaganda practices of any kind or giving an object a new interpretation related to propaganda issues if it has not been recognised as such. This has allowed us to link specific gems with concrete political actions or persons and explain their propagandistic value in detail in the analytical part of the study (Part III). This study is always problematic and naturally highly speculative. The data we possess about any given object is incomplete, so any conclusions about them are necessarily tentative. The same object could have been used in many ways at the same time and

proving which use is 'correct' is sometimes impossible and undesirable. Nevertheless, interpretation is an essential part of every archaeological study process, and without it an image of the past cannot be successfully reconstructed or better recreated in any meaningful way. According to Vollenweider, who in fact started the whole discussion on the use of gems for propaganda purposes, my project should be abandoned on the grounds that the lack of hard data makes it pointless to attempt to draw any sensible conclusions. Nonetheless, it is hoped that the methodology applied here will reward us with a more comprehensive picture of the place gems occupied in Roman propaganda and will convince others to introduce gems into more general studies.

3.3. Structure

The present study is made up of thirteen chapters which are set into five main parts: 1. Introduction, 2. Theory, 3. Evidence, 4. Summary and conclusions, 5. Catalogue, indices, bibliography, list of figures, tables, charts, maps and plates, so that they move from theoretical aspects towards more contextual and finally cognitive issues concerned with functions, the intrinsic meaning and significance of 'propaganda gems'.

The first part of the book (Part I – Introduction) consists of three chapters: abstract (1), state of research (2) and aims, methodology and structure (3). They are designed to outline what has so far been done regarding the studies of self-presentation propaganda on engraved gems from various angles, the aims of this work as well as to describe the methodology used and structure of the study. The second part is about theoretical considerations (Part II – Theory) and should be treated as a background for the main, analytical part. It is further divided into two sections. The first (chapter 4) contains definitions of self-presentation and propaganda circulating in modern studies of semiotics and communications. Various approaches are briefly discussed, and the main characteristics of the phenomenon are presented as well. Propaganda is put forward here as a form of communication between the propagandist, who sends his signals and messages, and target groups, which he aims to reach and influence. The debate also includes accounts of propaganda and persuasion as well as propaganda and public opinion (which could also respond to propaganda actions and induce bottom-up initiatives of its own). Further on, the various forms of propaganda are presented as well as the basic tools and techniques it uses. In the final sub-chapters of this section the effectiveness of propaganda actions is discussed and finally, I briefly analyse how to investigate ancient propaganda with special consideration of engraved gems.

⁷ Lorenz 2016: 104-106 and 154.

⁸ Lorenz 2016: 170-171.

⁹ Lorenz 2016: 224-226.

In the second section (chapter 5), the emphasis has been put on the investigation of self-presentation and Roman propaganda on gems in general. Outlined there are potential spheres where one could presume that glyptics were used as a channel for self-presentation and propaganda on the basis of author's own suppositions and previous scholarship (chapter 5.1). These include most importantly personal branding which accounts for portraits produced and delivered to the audience in various direct and indirect ways. Another expected sphere is self-promotion through *origo* and self-presentation, understood here as promotion of somebody's special capabilities, high social status, wealth, power etc. Promotion of the family and its members is also a sphere frequently used by propagandists in ancient Rome and its reflections on gems will be sought. This means, among other things, the tendency to transfer *auctoritas* from famous predecessors onto the propagandists as well as the promotion of their successors. Also included here is promotion of the family as the whole to create and consolidate a positive image of the ruler and his family circle. However, usually a number of other people surrounded the propagandist, often called a faction (derived from Latin *factio*). On the most basic level, these people were bound together by the same political goals, but they often had leaders who tried to influence and control them. I will attempt to identify all the techniques relating to this issue and illustrate them by various examples. Also relevant to this matter is the manifestation of loyalty and support. This action was usually induced not by the propagandist himself but by his audience as people wanted to be included into the circle of his supporters in order to derive some profits from their connection with him. This is based on the patron – client relationship and it was a vital part of the social structure of ancient Rome. It is another sphere where gems are expected to be of some significance. Among others are the commemoration of important events such as military victories, marriage celebrations and acts of truce, promotion of abstract ideas like *Pax Augusta* or *aurea aetas*, glorification of oneself usually through divine and mythological references which transfer of some of their divine nature onto oneself. Sometimes the use of the past expressed by allusions to a great predecessor can be regarded as propagandistic actions and gems quite plausibly reflect this. The possession of luxury objects such as cameo vessels or figurines made of precious stones probably raised the owners' social status and thus should be regarded as a form of propaganda. The same applies to collecting art, though in the case of Roman politicians their donations in the temples for the common good were probably more useful. Exhibiting gems during one's triumph should also be seen as propaganda as well as the selection of politically inspired subject-matter for one's personal seal. The promotion of general ideas relating directly to the state rather than to the propagandist himself is

another sphere of propaganda that one expects to be reflected on gems. However, it should be pointed out that such actions always involved a hidden private goal and they were usually well-calculated to bring as much profit to the propagandist as possible. Finally, religion has always been connected with propaganda and it is treated here as a highly useful platform for propagandistic actions to be carried out.

Engraved gems are objects of ancient art bearing various images engraved upon their surfaces, therefore, it is crucial to approach them not only as archaeological artefacts but also as artworks and apply basic art-historical methodology to their study. In one of the sub-chapters of this section (chapter 5.2), I focus on the possible problems one must face if one pursues investigation of propaganda on intaglios and cameos. First, basic technical problems are addressed and then iconography and iconology are examined as the basic tools for the analysis of the visual images appearing on gems. The fundamental question here is if one really can understand what the iconography appearing on gems means and what are the limitations of our perception and interpretations. It is also crucial for the analyses carried out in this study to consider if the Romans themselves could decipher and understand the messages sent them by propagandists. I also investigate the purpose of each propaganda action undertaken by Roman political leaders and consider whether their goals were more or less the same (to gain as much power as possible). Finally, some considerations have been made to the limits we have in identifying the recipients of propaganda actions. Can we identify who was exposed to propaganda or not?

The third part of the study (Part III – Evidence) includes a thorough description of all propaganda and other political activities performed through or with the use of engraved gems in the Roman Republican and Augustan periods. To make the presentation as clear as possible, the discussions follow chronological order from the beginnings in the 3rd century BC when gems were mainly used for self-presentation down to the Augustus' reign. Regarding the beginnings, they are described in chapter 6 and cover such issues as Etruscan and Italic traditions, self-presentation through gems, self-advertisement through portraits, patronage over gem engravers, collecting, the use of gems in triumphs, family symbols on gems and state propaganda. The next chapter deals with gradual development of the use of gems for propaganda purposes in the early 1st century BC (chapter 7). It analyses several key figures, notably Lucius Cornelius Sulla, but also Gaius Marius, Lucius Licinius Lucullus and other less prominent Roman politicians. Chapter 8 deals with the propagandistic actions of Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar reflected on gems as well as are those of less influential Roman politicians. Chapter 9 is devoted to the fierce

rivalry between the three main political parties: the Pompeians, Republicans and Caesarians. Each of them is broadly discussed with numerous examples of gems illustrating key problems. This chapter also includes a brief commentary on the role of female representations in Roman propaganda on gems. Finally, the longest presentation is of propaganda gems produced under Augustus (chapter 10). As already noted above, each sub-chapter in this part of the study is cross-referenced to the catalogue of propaganda gems related to a specific politician or faction (cf. catalogue part).

The fourth part of the study (Part IV – Summary and conclusions) broadly discusses issues related to the production and distribution of Roman Republican and Augustan gems, and especially ‘propaganda gems.’ Chapter 11 starts with the presentation of information from ancient literary sources and further, some considerations of the way in which the archaeological findspots, provenance and contexts in which gems of these kinds have been found are presented. The study of provenance history is one of the most important issues raised in this chapter. I also briefly comment on the organisation of workshops producing engraved gems, their possible locations, the mass production of glass gems, imperial court workshops, politicians as commissioners of propaganda gems, private orders and finally the rules of the market within which gems circulated. Regarding the distribution of engraved gems, first, I try to define who the recipients of ‘propaganda gems’ could have been and later how ‘propaganda gems’ could have reached them. Chapter 12 is concerned with statistical analyses which show the range and significance of ‘propaganda gems’. Moreover, individual cases are also statistically compared to show which Roman politicians used engraved gems for propaganda purposes and which did not. Lastly, the propagandistic value of engraved gems is compared to other branches of Roman art so that it should be clear whether they played a significant or inferior role (chapter 13). Because for instance, engraved gems and coins of the Roman Republican and Augustan periods exhibit many similarities, a comparison of these propagandistic channels is made there including an estimation of the propagandistic value of gems and coins. However, cross-referencing is applied for gems as an artistic medium driven by the same propaganda mechanisms as sculpture, relief, toreutics, pottery and so on. This is a closing section containing a summary account of the conclusions from all the preceding parts of the study with some further ideas that will be discussed in the future.

The last part of the study (Part V) includes a catalogue, bibliography, list of figures, indices and plates illustrating the objects studied in the analytical part of the book.