

## Abstract of PhD dissertation

Paweł Gołyźniak, *Use of Engraved Gems for Self-Presentation and Propaganda Purposes in the Roman Republic and under Augustus*, supervisor: assistant professor Jarosław Bodzek, 27 February 2019.

The dissertation presents verification studies of the hypothesis of use of engraved gems (precious and semi-precious stones) for self-presentation and propaganda purposes within the areas controlled by the Romans in the period of time spanning from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC to the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. Usually mounted in rings, gems constituted an important channel of propaganda, through which both leading and less recognisable Roman politicians carried out their personal branding. Intaglios and cameos were important markers of high social status and fulfilled various pragmatic functions such as: sealing, image dissemination, commemoration of important political events and military victories, transfer of authority from an ancestor or promotion of successors. Due to their strictly personal character it is possible to analyse the mechanisms of self-promotion and Roman propaganda from various angles, not only in their public but also private sense, which makes gems a unique medium in comparison to coinage, sculpture or relief.

The dissertation is based on the interdisciplinary research combining archaeology with ancient history and the history of ancient art. Its substantial part concerns the discussion of the evolutionary model of the use of glyptics in ancient Rome and the areas controlled by the Romans. It starts from simple forms of self-presentation, dissemination of image and promotion of family origin in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC until it develops to complex propaganda messages emitted during the reign of emperor Augustus to integrate the Roman society around the ruler and ensure the continuation of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. The work presents all glyptic objects falling to the period studied, which can be linked to the aforementioned phenomena together with an attempt to decode and interpret propaganda messages encoded in them. It also contains a critical study of the cases when devices and images occurring on gems are overinterpreted and erroneously attributed to propaganda. The author tries to reconstruct the scale of gems use for self-presentation and propaganda purposes (statistical analyses). In addition, the dissertation offers a commentary to the capture of the geographical context of the studied phenomenon through original research on the reconstruction of provenance of the Roman gems belonging to the numerous museum collections in Europe and the USA. This is also based on the information extracted during numerous archival and library inquiries of the author of the thesis. Finally, the work contains an important from a wider point of view of classical archaeology comparison of glyptics' use for self-presentation and propaganda purposes with other branches of Roman art and craftsmanship.

The conclusion of the research is that glyptics indeed played a significant role in Roman propaganda machinery. In some respects, such as personal branding, transfer of authority from ancestors or comparisons and identifications with deities and mythological figures, it offered unique opportunities to Roman politicians. The phenomenon of using intaglios and cameos for these purposes culminated in the Civil War in the years 44-31 BC. Its territorial scope included primarily Rome and Central Italy, and to a lesser extent the other parts of the Italian Peninsula, while in the Roman provinces it played a rather marginal role. The evidence amassed suggests significant role of gems in integration propaganda, especially if Octavian's, later emperor Augustus, activities are concerned.

