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NEW SILVER COINS OF DEMETRIUS III AND ANTIOCHUS XII AT DAMASCUS

Arthur Houghton – Arnold Spaer

DEMETRIUS III (96–78 B.C.)

New Damascene issues of Demetrius III which have come to light since the publication of E.T. Newell's study of the Seleucid coins struck at this city include the following drachms and hemidrachms¹:

¹ E.T. Newell, Late Seleucid Mints in Ake-Ptolemais and Damascus, NNM 84 (New York 1939) hereafter LSM. Other issues of Demetrius are noted in A. Houghton, Coins of the Seleucid Empire, ACNAC 4 (New York 1983), hereafter CSE.

Obv. Diademed head of Demetrius III r.; fillet border.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ
Nike walking l., holding wreath in outstretched r. hand; to l., Α; beneath Nike, date;
dotted border.

Drachms

YEAR 217 S.E. (96/5 B.C.)

1. a1 p1 3.83 Private U.S. collection.
2. a1 p2 3.78 A. Spaer coll., Jerusalem. Acquired in Jerusalem.

UNCERTAIN YEAR, PERHAPS 217 S.E.

3. a1 p3 3.84 Rev. date off flan. Private U.S. collection. Spink 65, 5 Oct.
1988, 89.



1.



(1:1)



3.



Obv. As no. 1.

Rev. Inscription as no. 1; diadem knotted below, between ends of which, Α; dotted border. No date.

Hemidrachms

4. ai pi 1.81 A. Spaer coll., Jerusalem, Acquired in Jerusalem.
5. ai pi 1.73 A. Spaer coll., Jerusalem, Acquired in Jerusalem.
6. ai pi 1.41 A. Spaer coll., Jerusalem. Acquired in Jerusalem.



4. (1:1)

The drachms are attributable to Damascus for several reasons. Their reverse type is the same as that carried by certain of Demetrius' bronze issues of the city². In addition, their monogram, Α, appears at Damascus in the same stylized form on coins of Antiochus VIII as well as issues of Demetrius III, but not at Demetrius' other principal mint, Antioch, which continued to use the more orthodox form, Α³. Finally, the fact that they are dated points

² LSM 117, 120, 124; CSE 862.

³ See, for example, E.T. Newell, *The Seleucid Mint of Antioch*, *American Journal of Numismatics* 54 (New York 1917–18) no. 435 (b); CSE 390, 392, as well as generally contemporaneous issues of Antiochus X, XI and Philip I in the same publications.

unequivocally to Damascus as their issuing mint: the city's silver coinage had carried the Seleucid year since the mint opened under Antiochus VII while Antioch had issued no dated coinage since the reign of Tryphon.

The hemidrachms, too, are almost certainly Damascene in origin. Like the drachms, they carry the stylized Δ on their reverse. Their provenances point to a mint in the southern area of the much shrunken Seleucid empire, rather than one which might suggest their issuance at Antioch. A southern origin is also indicated by their reverse type. Although no other known Seleucid coinage carries a diadem as a type, one of the most common bronze issues of the Hasmonean king, Alexander Jannaeus, bears on its reverse the motif of a diadem surrounding encircled rays, between each of which Hebrew letters spell the name and title of the king (fig. A)⁴. Portraiture was forbidden by Jewish law, but the symbolism of Alexander's diadem accompanied by rays as indicating a radiate diadem would have been clear to his subjects.

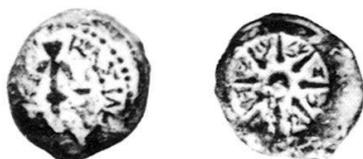


Fig. A (1:1)

Alexander's issue with the diadem were not his earliest, and are dated by Meshorer to c. 100–90 B.C.⁵ – raising the possibility that they may have borrowed their reverse type from Demetrius' hemidrachms. As is clear from the several instances where Hasmonean issues copied elements from the coins of Antiochus VII and VIII⁶, the Hasmoneans were not averse to adopting Seleucid types when they saw fit to do so. While relations between Demetrius III and Alexander Jannaeus were not necessarily friendly, they were close; and it is not too speculative to suggest that the coins of the former king with a reverse diadem served as the prototype for Alexander's bronze issues with a diadem surrounding the rays of a star.

ANTIOCHUS XII (87–84 B.C.)

Four tetradrachms of Antiochus XII have appeared since the publication by Newell of the three then known to him. The following silver issues are now known for this king:

Obv. Diademed head of Antiochus r.; fillet border.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΚΑΛΛΙΝΙΚΟΥ
 Statue of Hadad, capped and bearded, standing facing on two-tiered basis, holding barley stalk in l. hand; foreparts of two bulls to each side of legs; monogram to l. or in exergue; date in exergue; laurel wreath border.

⁴ SNG ANS Part 6, Palestine-South Arabia (New York 1981) nos. 55–76 (the coin illustrated is no. 57).

⁵ Antiochus VII: CSE 831–4, Jerusalem issues with lily and anchor; CSE 818–8, Ascalon issues with helmet, copied by John Hyrcanus II (63–40 B.C.) – Meshorer (above n. 4) p. 150, Type R. Antiochus VIII: the flower reverse type on E. Babelon, *Rois de Syrie*, etc., no. 1448 and Meshorer (above n. 4) Nos. 5 and 6, again copied by Alexander Jannaeus on his first issues with anchor and flower: Meshorer An 1 and p. 118.

YEAR 226 S.E. (87/6 B.C.)

1. A1 P1 15.90 Rev. in exergue, . Paris (Seyrig coll.). [Ill. plate p. 5]
2. A2 P2 15.44 Rev. in exergue, . London. LSM 132 (monogram is recorded as ). [Ill. plate p. 5]

YEAR 227 S.E. (86/5 B.C.)

3. A3 P3 15.70 Rev. to 1.,  (=  ?); in exergue, . H. Imhoof-Blumer, *Monnaies Grecques*, p. 437, no. 121. [Ill. plate p. 5]
4. A4 P4 15.22 Rev. to 1., ; in exergue, . Paris (Seyrig coll.). [Ill. plate p. 5]
5. A5 P5 15.82 Rev. to 1., ; in exergue, . Private U.S. collection. [Ill. plate p. 5]

YEAR 228 S.E. (85/4 B.C.)

6. A6 P6 13.10 Rev. to 1.,  or  above . Numismatic Fine Arts Sale 18, 31 March 1987, 401. CSE 864. [Ill. plate p. 5]

UNCERTAIN YEAR

7. A7 P7 15.19 Rev. to 1., ; exergue monogram and date off flan. Egger sale 45, Nov. 1913, 746. Jameson 2361. LSM 134. [Ill. plate p. 5]

There is little to add to Newell's commentary on these issues in LSM, except to note that the letter , which Newell noted as preceding the date in his catalogue entry of no. 3, is in fact a monogram, . With this minor correction of the record, it is interesting to note the change of monograms and their placement on Antiochus' tetradrachms: a single monogram in the exergue in S.E. 226, is replaced by two monograms, one to 1., one in the exergue in S.E. 227; in S.E. 228 two monograms appear to the left. On the assumption that the change of conventions was systematic, the Jameson coin, no 7, is likely to have been struck in S.E. 227; this can only be made certain, however, by the appearance of another tetradrachm, reverse die-linked to this coin and dated in the same year.

ANTIOCHUS XII



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



5

(all 1:1)