

Zeitschrift:	Schweizer Münzblätter = Gazette numismatique suisse = Gazzetta numismatica svizzera
Herausgeber:	Schweizerische Numismatische Gesellschaft
Band:	43-47 (1993-1997)
Heft:	169
Artikel:	Bronze coins of Antiochus IV of Mallus
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DOI:	https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-171584

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BRONZE COINS OF ANTIOCHUS IV OF MALLUS¹

Arthur Houghton

It is a particular pleasure to revisit in this note the mint of Mallus in Cilicia Pedias, which was the subject of this author's first article in honor of Leo Mildenberg some ten years ago². Since that early article on Mallus' coinage, which listed a single tetradrachm of Demetrius I as this city's first Seleucid issue, several bronze units attributable to Mallus with the obverse type of a bearded male bust and reverses with the simple inscription ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ and a wreath-bearing Nike have been proposed as issues of an earlier, but uncertain, ruler³. They include the following:

Group I: Male Bust with Spear or Sceptre

Obv. Laureate, bearded male bust r., behind which spear or sceptre; to l., ΜΑΛ (no. 1) or no inscription (nos. 2–3); dotted border.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ Nike standing l., holding wreath in upraised r. hand; monograms as indicated; borders as indicated.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Bronze Units

1. 5.06 Rev.: the border is worn and obscured.
Lindgren and Kovacs, no. 1541 (fig. 1).

¹ Henry Clay Lindgren and Edoardo Levante have my gratitude for having made their coins available for inspection and photography. I owe special thanks to Wayne Moore for the photographs that appear with this article.

² A. Houghton, The Seleucid Mint of Mallus and the Cult Figure of Athena Magarsia, Studies in Honor of Leo Mildenberg (Wetteren 1984), pp. 92–110.

³ O. Mørkholm suggested Antiochus IV in SNG Cop Syria: Seleucid Kings, but in a later communication with this author proposed Antiochus III as the issuing authority. A. Houghton, Coins of the Seleucid Empire, ACNAC 4 (New York 1983), hereafter CSE, p. 46: «Antiochus III or IV»; H.C. Lindgren and F. Kovacs, Ancient Bronze Coins of Asia Minor and the Levant from the Lindgren Collection (San Mateo 1985), hereafter Lindgren and Kovacs, no. 1541: «Antiochus IV»; SNG Switzerland I: Levante-Cilicia, no. 1201: «Antiochus IV».

2. 4.19 Rev.: to l., **HP**; dotted border. CSE 548.

3. 3.31 Rev.: in exergue, **M**; wreath border.
SNG Cop Syria: Seleucid Kings, no. 208.

Group II: Male Bust without Attribute

Obv. Laureate, bearded male head to r.; fillet border; to l., **MA**.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ANTIOXOY Nike standing l., holding wreath; wreath border.



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Bronze Unit

4. 4.01 SNG Switzerland I: Levante-Cilicia, no. 1201 (*fig. 3*).

Despite some differences, the above three coins are closely related. They are, for one matter, quasi-municipal issues of the same denomination, struck with a unifying typology. The obverses of the Group I coins, for example, include in addition to the bearded male bust – perhaps, but not certainly Zeus⁴ – an attribute, either a sceptre or a spear. The obverse of no. 1 is inscribed with the letters **MAΛ** (*fig. 2*); nos. 2 and 3 have no obverse inscription, but carry monograms on their reverses. The Levante coin, no. 4, also has on its obverse a bearded male bust and the letters **MA** (the letter **Λ** may be off-flan), but no attribute (*fig. 4*). Finally, the reverse borders of Nos. 3 and 4 are both wreathed, a convention that unites the coins of both groups. The differences between the coins include, in addition to the presence or absence of inscription and attribute, the obverse border which is dotted on nos. 1–3, but filleted on no. 4. On balance, the evidence suggests that all four coins were the product of a single mint – very likely Mallus, as is indicated by the inscribed obverses of nos. 1 and 4.

With regard to which king Antiochus may have struck these bronze issues, the possibilities are narrowed by the fact that in Cilicia, only Tarsus seems to have produced bronze coinage prior to the reign of Antiochus III (223–187 B.C.). Tarsus produced no bronze issues for

⁴ The figure is described as Zeus by Mørkholm, followed by Lindgren and Kovacs; the author suggested Heracles in CSE.

Antiochus III, but Soli struck a large module coinage for this king with, *obv.* head of Apollo, *rev.* seated Athena; Mopsus may also have produced a limited issue for Antiochus III as well⁵. Five mints in Cilicia – Alexandria, Aegeae, Mopsus, Hierapolis/Castabala, and Adana – struck bronze coins for Antiochus IV (175–164 B.C.), but as a rule the coins of these cities bear on their obverses the king's portrait, generally radiate, and, on their reverses, local types and the name of the issuing city⁶.

While the differences between the known Cilician bronze issues of Antiochus IV and nos. 1–4, above, might argue for their attribution to Antiochus III, the wreathed reverse border of the Copenhagen coin and the border conventions of the Levante example – such as the encircling fillet on the obverse and the wreath border on the reverse – strengthen the likelihood that they were produced under the later king. On Seleucid coinages, the fillet was applied as a border device first on tetradrachms of Antiochus III at Antioch, but does not appear on the coins of Cilicia (Tarsus, Soli, Seleucia on the Calycadnus) until the reign of Seleucus IV (188–175 B.C.). The wreath reverse border, moreover, does not appear as a convention on Hellenistic coinage until after 180 B.C., and was first instituted on Seleucid silver only under Antiochus IV, on a limited issue of Seleucia Pieria that has been dated by Mørkholm to c. 175–173/2 B.C.⁷

The numismatic evidence, in sum, supports the attribution of the coins of both groups to a period after the reign of Antiochus III – therefore to the reign of Antiochus IV, when fillet and wreath had entered the vocabulary of operating Seleucid mints as enframing coin borders. Struck some ten years or so prior to the first Mallian tetradrachm issues of Demetrius I⁸, they now appear to be the earliest Seleucid coins that can be assigned to this mint.

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⁵ A. Houghton, The Royal Seleucid Mint of Soli, NC 1989, p. 25 and pl. 8, D. The appearance of coins of this type with the monogram Δ , links them to Antiochus III's Solian issues. The bronze coin of Mopsus in the ANS with, on its obverse, an indeterminate ruler portrait and the date 119 (S.E. = 194/3 B.C.?), and the reverse type of a tripod, is to be published in a forthcoming note.

⁶ O. Mørkholm, the Municipal Coins with Portraits of Antiochus IV of Syria, Congresso Internationale di Numismatica, Roma 11–16 settembre 1961, vol. 2: Atti (Rome 1965), p. 63.

⁷ O. Mørkholm, Some Western Seleucid Coins, INJ 3, 1965–1966, p. 9; CSE, no. 404. The date follows O. Mørkholm, «Chronology and Meaning of the Wreath Coinages of the Early 2nd Century B.C.», NAC 9, 1980, pp. 145–158. A recent summary of the literature, and arguments, surrounding the wreath coinage is given by J. Oakley, «The Autonomous Wreathed Tetradrachms of Kyme, Aeolis», MN 27, 1982, pp. 16–20.

⁸ In addition to the coin cited in Houghton (above n. 2), p. 94, no. 1, a second appeared in Giessener Münzhandlung 50, 24 September, 1990, 418.