

The double portrait coins of Antiochus XI and Philip I : a seleucid mint at Beroea?

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ARTHUR HOUGHTON*

THE DOUBLE PORTRAIT COINS
OF ANTIOCHUS XI AND PHILIP I:
A SELEUCID MINT AT BEROEA?

In 94 B.C. Seleucus VI, eldest son of Antiochus VIII Grypus, was driven from Antioch by his cousin Antiochus X Eusebes, and fled to Mopsus in Cilicia, where he was killed¹. Antiochus XI and Philip, Seleucus' younger twin brothers, immediately sought to avenge his death. They first sacked Mopsus then, early in 93 B.C., seized Antioch from Eusebes. Antiochus XI, now called Epiphanes, reigned alone at the Seleucid capital for some months, until Eusebes returned in the summer or autumn of the same year to reclaim the Seleucid capital². Following a disastrous defeat in a pitched fight with Eusebes, Antiochus Epiphanes was drowned in the Orontes River while fleeing the field of battle. Philip remained in northern Syria, first allying himself with yet another brother, Demetrius (III) Eucraerus, against Eusebes, and eventually seizing Antioch himself in 88 or 87 B.C.

At some point shortly after the death of Seleucus VI, Antiochus XI and Philip initiated a series of tetradrachms showing on the obverse the accolade portraits of both kings and a seated Zeus Nikephoros on the reverse. The number currently known is not large:

Catalogue

Group I (Beroea?)

Obv. conjoined, diademed heads of Antiochus XI and Philip I to r.; fillet border.
Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ Zeus seated l. on throne without back, holding Nike in outstretched r. hand and resting l. on long scepter; to l., vertically, **ϜΦΨΑ**; laurel wreath border.

* I am grateful to I. Carradice, M. Doyen, D. Gerin, S. Hurter, J. Lallemand, H.-D. Schultz, A. Spaer and N. Waggoner for their help to me during the preparation of this article, and to G. Le Rider for having read it in draft. I remain indebted to Francis Campbell for his continued thoughtful assistance to my many needs in the library of the American Numismatic Society.

- Babelon E. Babelon, *Les rois de Syrie, d'Arménie et de Commagène* (Paris, 1890)
Bellinger A.R. Bellinger, *The end of the Seleucids*, *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Science* 38, 1948
CSE A. Houghton, *Coins of the Seleucid empire* (New York, 1983)
LSM E.T. Newell, *Late Seleucid mints at Ake-Ptolemais and Damascus*, *NNM* 84, 1939
SMA E.T. Newell, *The Seleucid mint of Antioch*, *AJN* 57, 1917-1918
WSM E.T. Newell, *The coinage of the Western Seleucid mints, from Seleucus I to Antiochus III*, *ANSNS* 4, 1941

¹ Josephus, *Ant.* XIII, 13.4 (368); Appian, *Syr.* 69; Eusebius, 259-262. Bellinger, 74, attempts to reconcile the conflicting versions of Seleucus' death.

² Bellinger, 92, agrees with the chronology of Newell, SMA, pp. 115-7. D.B. Waage, *Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, Vol. 4, Part 2: Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Crusaders' coins (Princeton, 1952), p. 23, perhaps following Babelon, clxvii, prefers a date for the reign of Antiochus XI of 92 B.C. That Antiochus was able to hold Antioch for at least several months seems likely from the fact that at least three dies were used to strike his coins at the capital city: CSE p. 24; Bellinger 74, n. 72.

Tetradrachms

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|---|-------|---|
| 1 | A1 | P1 | ↑ | 15.59 | Rev. the initial letter is € . Berlin, Staatliche Museen. J. Friedländer, ZfN 7, 1880, 224 ff., pl. 4, 2. (<i>Fig. 1</i>) |
| Rev. as no. 1, but beneath throne, Λ . | | | | | |
| 2 | A1 | P2 | | 15.29 | Paris, BN; Babelon 1540 («15.40 g»). Ex Revil coll. (Paris, 1845). (<i>Fig. 2</i>) |
| 3 | A2 | P3 | ↑ | 14.53 | Rev. 1. field monograms off flan. Jerusalem, A. Spaer coll.; CSE 589. Said to come from Gaziantep, 1964. (<i>Fig. 3</i>) |
| 4 | A2 | P3 | ↑ | 13.40 | London, BM. British Museum Ocasional Paper no. 25, 1981: Coins and Medals. New Acquisitions, No. 1 (1976-77), 216. |
| 5 | A3 | P4 | ↑ | 14.15 | Palo Alto, W. Wahler coll. Leu 20, 1978, 166; Jameson, no. 1761; Hirsch 25, 1909 (Philipsen), 2942. (<i>Fig. 4</i>) |
| 6 | A3 | P5 | ↗ | 15.23 | New York, ANS. Hess-Leu, 24 Mar. 1959, 296. From or through Lebanon, 1958. (<i>Fig. 5</i>) |

Group II (Uncertain Mint in Cilicia?)

Obv. as Group I

Rev. type as Group I, but throne has high back; to l., **✠** ; beneath throne, **Λ** .

Tetradrachm

- | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|---|-------|---|
| 7 | A4 | P6 | ↗ | 15.66 | Brussels, BN. P. Naster, La collection Lucien de Hirsch (Brussels, 1959), no. 1728. (<i>Fig. 6</i>) |
|---|----|----|---|-------|---|

Sequence of Coins and Chronology

The sequence of coins of Group I is indicated by the development of the facial hair on the portrait of Antiochus XI, from the sideburns of A1 and A2, to the light beard which covers the point of the chin on A3. A2 and A3 are linked by reverses which include, in addition to the letters in the left field, a small A beneath the throne. This letter is absent from the reverse of coin no. 1, which is almost certainly the earliest of the group, and its obverse die, A1, the first of the series. A1, moreover, which was evidently the work of a master artist, is qualitatively the finest of the group and conforms to what one might expect of the first die of an important propaganda issue. The later dies of Group I (A2 and A3) are more pedestrian by comparison, still fine examples of the same engraver's work but without the sense of life or character he gave his first and best product. The Brussels tetradrachm is quite different from the issues of Group I and was likely struck at a different mint (below).

The double portrait coins of Group I cannot be from Antioch³. Their issuance must have begun before Antiochus and Philip defeated Eusebes and seized the Seleucid capital, following the death of Seleucus VI in 94 B.C., while the two brothers prepared for their coming military campaign. Bellinger suggests that the coinage was not continued beyond the advent of Antiochus' reign at Antioch⁴. Yet the appearance on nos. 5 and 6 of a light

³ SMA, p. 117. To Newell's observation of the stylistic variance between these issues and coins of the regular Antiochene series, one may add other differences, including their monograms and striking technique.

⁴ Bellinger, 92.

beard on Philip's chin – a reasonable but unrealistic extension of his known features (it appears on no other known coin of Philip) – indicates that at least obverse die A3 was cut when the two brothers were no longer accessible to the engraver, almost certainly because they had left the issuing city for Antioch. It also raises the possibility that these coins were struck for some period after Antioch was taken, and perhaps even until Antiochus' death toward the latter part of 93 B.C.

Issuing Mint(s)

On the basis of the three coins known to him (the Berlin, Paris and Palo Alto examples), Bellinger believed that the double portrait tetradrachms of Antiochus and Philip were issued by a single mint in the Syrian north, perhaps at a coastal city, which Philip retained as his principal base when Antiochus installed himself at the Seleucid capital⁵. The material currently known, however, indicates that two mints were involved in their production. Despite their typological similarity, the differences between the Group I tetradrachms and the single example of Group II in Brussels are pronounced, by style, iconography (the throne back), and by the indicative letters or monograms carried on their reverses. Within the coinage produced under the Seleucid kings, one normally expects to find some common link between issues of a single mint struck over a brief period of time, in this instance perhaps somewhat more than a year. Yet except for typological similarity, there is no commonality between Groups I and II, and it seems almost certain that the Brussels tetradrachm, a copyist's product apparently based on the first coins of Group I, was struck at a location different from nos. 1–6.

A north Syrian city would be fully appropriate as the origin of the Group I coins. Bellinger's suggestion of a location on the coast is reasonable, but the very fragmentary history of the period may hold a more specific clue. Josephus records Philip as having ruled over at least part of Syria, following Antiochus XI Epiphanes' death⁶. Philip's younger brother, Demetrius III Eucærus, came to his assistance for a time, but after defeating Eusebes kept Philip from Antioch while he occupied the Seleucid capital himself. What Philip then did is not recorded, but it seems likely that he would have abandoned his alliance with Demetrius and sought refuge, or at least a base of support, probably in north Syria since the area from Antioch to Damascus was under Demetrius' control. About 88 B.C., after inflicting a major defeat at Shechem on the rebellious Jewish leader, Alexander Jannæus, Demetrius turned on Philip and confronted him with a large force at Beroea, modern Aleppo⁷. Philip prevailed with the aid of Beroea's ruler («τύραννος»), Straton, and the Parthian governor (of Mesopotamia?), Mithradates Sinakes. Demetrius was sent into captivity among the Parthians and is said to have died of illness. Philip moved to take Antioch for himself, and occupied the city late in 88 or early in 87 B.C.⁸.

⁵ Bellinger, 93.

⁶ Josephus, Ant. XIII, 369, says that Philip «put on the diadem» after Antiochus was killed, but the coins are clear that he reigned jointly with Antiochus as king before Eusebes was forced from Antioch.

⁷ Josephus, Ant. XIII, 384.

⁸ Josephus, Ant. XIII, 386, says Philip marched on Antioch immediately after his battle with Demetrius, but it is unclear as to when he seized the city. Demetrius' known coins of Damascus, his own capital, end with a short issue of S.E. 225 (88–7 B.C.: LSM 130); the earliest recorded coin of Antiochus XII, who immediately succeeded Demetrius, is dated S.E. 226 (87–6 B.C.: LSM 132).

This historical fragment provided by Josephus, however small, indicates that at least at Beroea, Philip had friends and material assistance. It also leaves open the possibility that these may have been in place for some time, perhaps since the period when he and his brother had consolidated their political and military support against Eusebes.

Could Beroea have been their principal base of operations in 94–93 B.C.? If so, it would likely have been the location where the Group I issues were struck. The record is, unfortunately, circumstantial, as is all other evidence. There is no archaeology of Beroea which might be helpful, and the known provenances of the coins hold no particular clue. The indicative letters of the Group I coins do not link with those on other known series, moreover, and are therefore of no help in locating their originating mint⁹.

The issuing city of no. 7 is also unknown, but a general indication of origin may be provided by its left field monogram, **ΝΚ**. The monogram, the combination of N and K, probably represented a magistrate with *Niko-* or *Nike-* as a combining name. Despite its simplicity, it nevertheless appears only rarely on Seleucid coins. It occurs on issues of Tarsus; on coins of an unknown but related Cilician mint operating in the third and early second centuries B.C.; and on the earliest issues of Seleucia on the Calycadnus, struck under Antiochus III and Seleucus IV¹⁰. It appears later on certain issues of Demetrius I of Cilician origin¹¹; and on coins of Antiochus IX struck at Tarsus and another mint¹². Finally, the **ΝΚ** monogram occurs in combination with A and Δ, ▲ or ▲ beneath the throne of Zeus, on tetradrachms of Philip I likely struck at the same mint as the Brussels tetradrachm (no. 7), but certainly later¹³. Significantly, four Philips have appeared in a recently discovered small hoard now in the Adana Museum, Turkey, apparently unearthed in the vicinity of Adana itself. The findspot of the hoard, which is to be published separately, cannot be definitive as to the location of the originating mint of its coins; but all are in virtually unworn state, and it seems likely that they, too, were issued somewhere in Cilicia, perhaps near or at Tarsus itself. The available evidence, in short, indicates that the Brussels tetradrachm, no. 7, was struck at a Cilician mint.

The Portraits

The double portrait tetradrachms of Antiochus and Philip are among the last of a small group of such issues struck by the Seleucids. They are unusual in that they show two reign-

⁹ Bellinger, 92, notes Babelon's early misreading of the letters of the Group I coins which led the latter to suggest that they might have been struck in Sepphoris-Diocaesarea in Palestine.

¹⁰ Tarsus: WSM (reprinted 1977, with reattributions by O. Mørkholm, iii-ix) 1289–90 (Seleucus I); 1308 and 1309 (Antiochus II), and 1315 (Seleucus II); CSE 463–4 (Antiochus III). Uncertain mint in Cilicia: WSM 1431–3 («Sardes-Antiochus Hierax», reattributed to Antiochus III in CSE p. 44). Seleucia on the Calycadnus: A. Houghton, *The royal mint of Seleucia on the Calycadnus, Essays in Honor of Colin Kraay and Otto Mørkholm* (forthcoming).

¹¹ CSE 527 (Soli); 551 (uncertain mint in Cilicia).

¹² See CSE 498–9; 501. The tetradrachm of Antiochus IX: G. Hirsch sale 141, 1984, 376.

¹³ For example Naville 10, 1925, 1526, noted by Bellinger, 93, who assigns this coin the same mint as the Group I double portrait issues on the basis of style. Other examples of the **ΝΚ** series include G. Le Rider and H. Seyrig, *Objets de la collection Louis de Clercq*, RN 1967, p. 43, 259; CSE 304; Hess-Leu 31, 1966, 525. A number of different engravers were involved in producing an extensive issue of Philip's **ΝΚ** coins.

ing kings rather than the representations of queens and their sons or husbands, as is the case with all other Seleucid double portrait coins¹⁴.

They are also the first coins to represent either king, and the earliest die of the series, which is surely one of the finest portrait groups of the late Hellenistic period, was probably engraved with reference to the subjects themselves (*fig. 7* is a 2:1 enlargement of A1). Nevertheless, it would be an error to regard these coins to show likeness of the two kings in any more than a general sense. They possess, certainly, a number of individualizing elements: long, slightly hooked noses, small mouths and chins, and Antiochus' sideburns which initially fall to the line of the jaw, and which are later shown extending to the point of the chin itself (A3). Yet direct comparison of their obverses with the coins of Antioch struck by each king during their periods of individual rule at that city (Antiochus: 93 B.C.; Philip: c. 88–83 B.C.) reveals differences of profile, mouth and chin, which cannot be attributed only to the passage of time to be due entirely to differences of artistic quality or style.

The Antiochene portraits of Antiochus, for example, have heavier features, with longer noses, larger mouths, and a jaw which is almost prognathic (*fig. 8*)¹⁵. Philip's early coins of Antioch show the king running to corpulence, with a hooked or blunt nose, rounded features and a jowl which has begun to sag (*fig. 9*)¹⁶, quite unlike the youth who appears with his brother on their north Syrian coins. Within the context of their later Antiochene issues, the portraits of Antiochus and Philip on their joint coinage appear as rejuvenated images, perhaps not distant from the reality, but exhibiting as much the aspect of gods as they do of men. The resemblance may have been intended: the double portrait coins recall the autonomous tetradrachms of Tripolis, on which the accolade busts of the Dioscuri appear (*fig. 10*)¹⁷. The latter coins circulated in the Syrian north at exactly the time when the double portrait issues of Antiochus and Philip were being designed, and it is not unreasonable to believe that they served as models for the Seleucid series. There is no evidence that either king was assimilated with any deity of the Greek pantheon, but the visual metaphor of their idealizing portraits, twinned in the same manner as that of the Dioscuri on the coins of Tripolis, would have been fully convenient to their political goals.

The master engraver of the Group I coins appears to have cut dies only at Beroea (?) for Antiochus and Philip, and for Philip's first issue at the probably Cilician mint where the Σ series was continued; no other coinage can be attributed to his hand¹⁸.

¹⁴ G. Le Rider, *L'enfant-roi Antiochos et la reine Laodice*, BCH 110, 1986, 415, lists the coinages with portraits of Seleucid queens, most of which also show the features of their sons or husbands. The last such issue is a small bronze of Cleopatra Selene and her son, Antiochus XIII, which A.R. Bellinger, *Notes on some coins from Antioch in Syria*, MN 5, 1952, 53–55, suggests was struck in 92 B.C., either at Antioch in the interval immediately after the death of Eusebes and before the arrival of Demetrius III, or at a north Syrian mint where Cleopatra had sought refuge from Demetrius. The fabric, relief and inscription of the bronze do not appear to be typically Antiochene, however, and I am inclined to Bellinger's second alternative.

¹⁵ *Fig. 8*: CSE 389.

¹⁶ *Fig. 9*: Leu 38, 1986, 152 (= CSE 393). See also Newell, SMA, 436.

¹⁷ Noted by J.-P. Six, *L'ère de Tripolis*, Ann. Soc. Num. Fr. 1886, p. 232; Babelon clxvii; Bellinger 92; *Fig. 10*: Numismatic Fine Arts 18, 1987, 230.

¹⁸ The tetradrachm of Philip (above, n. 13), Naville 10, 1925, 1526, is the only other example of his work known to me.

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- 10 NFA 18, 1987, 230.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

Arthur Houghton, The double portrait coins of Antiochus XI and Philip I

