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# A SELEUCID MINT AT DURA-EUROPOS

PAR

A.-R. BELLINGER ET E.-T. NEWELL

Among the Seleucid bronze coins found in the excavation of Dura-Europos are a number which seem to have been struck in the town itself and therefore to warrant separate study. There are three series, each of two denominations, all belonging to the reign of Antiochus I (B. C. 280-261).

The largest series consists of nine "doubles" and one "unit" <sup>(1)</sup>.

## 1. Bronze double.

Head of Seleucus, r., with diadem and bull's horns. — *Rev.* ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ Head of horned horse, r.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a) ↑ 4 gr. 71                             | b) ↖ 4 gr. 43.                            |
| c) ↖ 4 gr. 14 (Pl. XIV, 1, <i>rev.</i> ). | d) ↗ 3 gr. 59 (Pl. XIV, 2, <i>rev.</i> ). |
| e) ↗ 3 gr. 51 (Pl. XIV, 3).               | f) ↗ 3 gr. 42 (Pl. XIV, 4).               |
| g) ↖ 2 gr. 73 (Pl. XIV, 5, <i>obv.</i> ). | h) ↖ 2 gr. 03.                            |

## 2. Bronze double.

Similar. — *Rev.* Similar, but horse's head much smaller.

2 gr. 81 (Pl. XIV, 6).

## 3. Bronze unit.

Similar. — *Rev.* Inscription illegible. Anchor.

1 gr. 25 (Pl. XIV, 7).

The condition of all the foregoing is so bad that their weights are extremely unreliable. The most that can be said is that, making all due allowance for breakage, wear and corrosion, they seem to have been lighter than the norm for their denominations. The inscription is very obscure, traces appearing

<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. E. T. NEWELL, *The Coinages of the Eastern Seleucid Mints from Seleucus I to*

*Antiochus III*, New-York, 1938, pp. 270-274.

on 1 c), e) and g) from which the restoration in Fig. 1. is made<sup>(1)</sup>. There is, however, enough left on 1 c) to make it sure that the name is Antiochus and not Seleucus.

The horned head of Seleucus combined with the horned horse's head appears on staters and a tetradrachm with the name of Seleucus himself<sup>(2)</sup>, but on



FIG. 1 (1 1/2 : 1).

drachms with the name of Antiochus<sup>(3)</sup>. Although it is assumed by Babelon<sup>(4)</sup> that the coins with Seleucus' name were struck by him, all denominations are, in truth, to be attributed to the early years of Antiochus' reign and to the mint of Carrhae<sup>(5)</sup>. The gold and silver evidently furnish the models for our bronzes, which may be dated circ. 280-276. The fact that so many have turned up in the excavations though none were known before strongly suggests that Dura itself was their place of issue. Although no inscription can be read on the unit, the similarity of the obverse makes it certain that this belongs with the larger pieces. The anchor is so common a Seleucid type as to call for no comment (Fig. 2).

But there is reason to believe that this was not a regular and official coinage. Not only is the style inferior, and the inscription clumsy, strangely placed and incomplete, but the metal itself seems to be of poor quality. It is noticeable that, in general, early Seleucid coins from the excavations are in good condition and, though they may be much worn, are less likely to be corroded than the Roman coins. But this series is deeply pitted and eaten and the edges tend to be broken. There is no trace of a monogram on any of them, but, on the other hand,

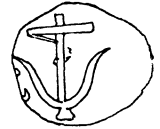


FIG. 2 (1 1/2 : 1).

(1) Professor C. B. WELLES has assisted in deciphering the inscriptions and Miss D. H. COX, has made the drawings and offered valuable suggestions.

(2) GARDNER, *The Seleucid Kings of Syria*, p. 3, n° 24, pl. I, 6 (here, Pl. XIV, 9); BABELON, *Les rois de Syrie*, Paris, 1890, p. 9, n° 54, pl. II, 8; *Cat. Museo numismatico Lavy*, Turin,

p. 239, n° 2528, fig. xxxi. The tetradrachm is unpublished.

(3) IMHOOF-BLUMER, *Monnaies grecques*, p. 424, n° 16, pl. H, 11.

(4) *Op. cit.*, xviii ff.

(5) The argument for the location of this mint will be given in E. T. NEWELL's forthcoming study, *Coinages of the Western Seleucid Mints*.



Atelier Séleucide de Doura-Europos

all the doubles except No. 2 and possibly 1 g) are countermarked as follows :

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| a) <i>Rev.</i> lyre ←, horse's head → ; | e) <i>Obv.</i> lyre ↗, <i>Rev.</i> horse's head ↗ ; |
| b) <i>Rev.</i> lyre → ;                 | f) <i>Obv.</i> lyre ↘, <i>Rev.</i> horse's head ↘ ; |
| c) <i>Rev.</i> lyre ← ;                 | g) <i>Rev.</i> uncertain ;                          |
| d) <i>Rev.</i> lyre ←, horse's head ↘ ; | h) <i>Obv.</i> lyre ↘, <i>Rev.</i> horse's head → . |

These countermarks (Fig. 3) are not otherwise known<sup>(1)</sup> and are most likely to have been stamped at Dura, for countermarks do not often wander far from their point of origin. Evidence that there was an official in the town authorized to countermark the coins is furnished by EY so marked on pieces of Antiochus I and II struck at Antioch (Pl. XIV, 8). This is not a mark found at Antioch itself, and outside of the excavations at Dura, where it is common, it has been recorded only on one piece in the Hunterian Collection<sup>(2)</sup> and on one in the Yale Collection from Mesopotamia. There are also other countermarks on later Seleucid pieces which seem to have been put on at Dura. In the case of our present series we cannot altogether dismiss the possibility that the coins were struck elsewhere and countermarked in Dura or even that both coin and countermark belong to some other Mesopotamian city not yet unearthed. But with due regard to the fact that finality must await the excavation of other Mesopotamian sites, we may say that the likeliest explanation is that these coins were struck at Dura to supply the needs of the young community in the first years of Antiochus I and that after a short time they were officially accepted by being countermarked with the lyre. Later still, those which were in circulation (1 a), d), e), f), h) were again validated by the proper official with the horse's head. Perhaps the small size of the unit, 3, kept it from being marked; perhaps it had been lost before the first stamp was used.



FIG. 3 (2 : 1).

It is impossible to be sure of the relation of the remaining double, 2 (Pl. XIV, 6), to the others. It is the least successful artistically of all and therefore may have been a first attempt, rejected when the others were produced. It is very badly corroded but there is no sign of a countermark.


<sup>(1)</sup> A horned horse's head is sometimes found but of totally different appearance: e.g. NEWELL, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXXIX, 1. It should be remarked

that the lyre sometimes has one string, sometimes, apparently, two. Pl. XIV, 3.

<sup>(2)</sup> Vol. III, p. 16, No. 37.

The next step in the development of the local currency is represented by our second series.

4. Bronze double.

Macedonian shield; on the boss, anchor. — *Rev.* ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩ ANTIOX. Horned elephant r. Above, to r. .

a)  $\swarrow$  7 gr. 38; b)  $\searrow$  5 gr. 63 (Pl. XIV, 10); c)  $\searrow$  4 gr. 22 (Pl. XIV, 11). — b) and c), have the same *obv.* die.

5. Bronze unit.

Similar. — *Rev.* Similar. Inscription and monogram illegible.

a)  $\swarrow$  1 gr. 56 (Pl. XIV, 12); b)  $\swarrow$  1 gr. 31 (Pl. XIV, 13).

These also are in very bad condition so that the weights are misleading and the inscription far from clear. Here again, however, there is no doubt about the name (Fig. 4).


The new types are imitated from a common issue of Antioch<sup>(1)</sup> (Pl. XIV, 14) but our specimens are distinguished from that issue by the clumsy workmanship, the bad fabric (note the cracked die of Pl. XIV, 10, 11), the abnormal inscription and the monogram. The presence of the monogram, however, shows that the coins were regulated by a competent official, and none of them has been counterstruck. It is evident, therefore, that these were intended to supplement or to supercede the irregular issue of the first series. Since the Antiochene models are to be dated circ. 278-270, a reasonable date for the pieces from Dura would be circ. 276-270.



Fig. 4 (1 1/2 : 1).

Apparently the inferior quality of both series troubled the citizens or the central government, for still a third appeared.

6. Bronze double.

Head of a horned horse, bridled, r. — *Rev.* ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ANTIOXOY. Strung bow. Below to r. .

a)  $\swarrow$  6 gr. 17 (Pl. XIV, 15); b)  $\searrow$  6 gr. 1 (Pl. XIV, 16); c) 4 gr. 17 (Pl. XIV, 17).

7. Bronze unit.

Similar. — *Rev.* Similar.

a)  $\searrow$  3 gr. 35 (Pl. XIV, 18); b)  $\swarrow$  2 gr. 4 (Pl. XIV, 19).


<sup>(1)</sup> GARDNER, *op. cit.*, p. 11, Nos 35-38.

This last attempt is much the most satisfactory. The style is attractive and the fabric excellent so that the coins are far better preserved than their predecessors. The weights, therefore, are more worthy of attention, and their variation is remarkable. Among the doubles it is c) which has suffered least from wear and corrosion. What looks like wear on the reverse is apparently the effect of weak striking, for the obverse shows almost no sign of circulation. And the hard brown oxide with which the coin is covered has protected it from corrosion and must actually add something to its weight. Yet it is the lightest of the three, whereas a), the heaviest, has certainly lost some of the original surface, particularly toward the edges. There can be no doubt that all three are intended for the same denomination, and we must therefore conclude that there was a variation of at least 2 grammes, which seems high considering the light weight<sup>(1)</sup> (The difference in the units is at least partly due to difference in condition). This may be added to the evidence of provenance and the fact that the bow is a new type for Antiochus to indicate that we are dealing with a local issue<sup>(2)</sup>.


This third series may be dated circ. 270-265, for from 265 to 261 Dura was supplied with bronze from the great mint of Antioch in the form of the common units showing an elderly head of Antiochus and Apollo seated left on an omphalos<sup>(3)</sup> (Pl. XIV, 20). Over forty of these have been found in the excavations of which seven at least are countermarked EY, as already mentioned. The fact that the same mark occurs on bronze of Antiochus II makes it likely that the stamping was done in the latter reign, though of course it might have been begun in the earlier and continued for a time. It is not found later than Antiochus II. Whatever was its purpose, it is apparent that Antiochus Soter's bronze from Antioch could circulate without it and was imported in sufficient quantity to make unnecessary any further minting at Dura itself.

ALFRED R. BELLINGER,  
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<sup>(1)</sup> Cf. NEWELL, *Eastern Seleucid Mints*, p. 272, Table II.

<sup>(2)</sup> The only other occurrence of  is

SYRIA. — XXI.

combined with  from Susa. Cf. NEWELL, *op. cit.*, No 349, Pl. XXVI, 8, 10.

<sup>(3)</sup> GARDNER, *op. cit.*, p. 10, Nos 26-28.