

Zeitschrift: Schweizer Münzblätter = Gazette numismatique suisse = Gazzetta numismatica svizzera

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Numismatische Gesellschaft

Band: 53-55 (2003-2005)

Heft: 214

Artikel: Anomalous tetradrachms of Philip I Philadelphus struck by autonomous Antioch (64-58 BC)

Autor: Hoover, Oliver D.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-171879>

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Anomalous Tetradrachms of Philip I Philadelphus Struck by Autonomous Antioch (64–58 BC)

Oliver D. Hoover

While conducting a die study of the lifetime silver coinage of Philip I Philadelphus (93–84? BC)¹, the complete results of which will be published in *Seleucid Coins*, Part II, a rare and anomalous series of tetradrachms was differentiated from the usual issues of Antioch and those of other uncertain mints. The coins of this anomalous series, known from only six specimens as shown in Table 1, have the following description:

Obv. Diademed head of Philip I r.; fillet border.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ in two lines on r., ΕΠΙΦΑΝΟΥΣ ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ in two lines on l.; Zeus seated l. on high-backed throne, holding Nike and sceptre; fillet border.

Controls (inner l., under arm): ⋈ ⋈; ⋈ ⋈; or ⋈ ⋈.

Although the Hunter and Munich examples are both generally considered lifetime issues of Philip I struck at Antioch, Newell appears not to have been so sure about this attribution. This type was not listed as a proper Antiochene lifetime issue in his seminal work *The Seleucid Mint of Antioch*², and when the ANS acquired its specimen it was relegated to the limbo of the «Uncertain Western Seleucid Mints» tray, probably by Newell's own hand³.

Peculiarities of the obverse portraiture, reverse iconography, and the control marks tend to vindicate any concerns that Newell may have had about associating this series with the Antiochene coinage of Philip I Philadelphus. The somewhat schematic treatment of the portrait, with extremely pronounced hooked nose, set it apart from the array of portrait types used on lifetime issues of Philip I struck at Antioch⁴. Zeus is also poorly rendered on the reverse, and the usual controls of Antioch under Philip I are noticeably absent. The monogram Δ, which had appeared regularly on Philip's lifetime tetradrachms (fig. 7), as well as Seleucid silver struck at Antioch during the earlier reigns of Antiochus IX, Antiochus X, Antiochus XI (fig. 8), and Demetrius III cannot be found in its traditional location under Zeus' throne⁵. Similarly, no controls appear in the outer left field, such as

¹ Philip's reign is normally given as 95/93–83 (?) BC, with his control of Antioch beginning in 89 or 87/86 BC. However, the ancient historical sources are entirely silent about how and when his end came, while his massive coinage at Antioch tends to suggest that he managed to rule there for a longer period of time.

² E.T. NEWELL, *The Seleucid Mint of Antioch* (New York 1918), henceforward SMA.

³ Although the ANS did not acquire its example until 1928, a decade after Newell published his Antioch study, he cited other coins of Philip I from the Hunter catalogue (SMA no. 440–441, 444, 447–448, 450–452, 454, 456) and therefore must have known of the Hunter specimen (our no. 2) at the time of his writing.

⁴ For various examples of Antiochene portraits of Philip I, see SNG Spaer nos. 2799–2810;

A. HOUGHTON, *Coins of the Seleucid Empire from the Collection of Arthur Houghton*, ACNAC 4 (New York 1983), henceforward CSE, no. 393; SMA nos. 436–449.

⁵ SNG Spaer nos. 2709–2710 (Antiochus IX), 2787–2791 (Antiochus X), 2792 (Antiochus XI), 2823 (Demetrius III); CSE, nos. 352–355 (Antiochus IX), 379, 381–382 (Antiochus X), 387–389 (Antiochus XI), 390, 392 (Demetrius III).

I would like to thank Arthur Houghton and Richard McAlee for reading and commenting upon an earlier version of this paper. Special thanks are also due to Ruben Vardanyan and Arthur Houghton for providing images of several of the coins. All conclusions are the sole responsibility of the author.

the N above A, or Φ above A that normally mark Antiochene lifetime issues of Philip I⁶. Instead, two monogrammatic controls, otherwise unknown on lifetime tetradrachms, are located below the outstretched arm of Zeus. Rounding out the list of discrepancies is the replacement of the usual laurel wreath border with a fillet border and the inclusion of a thunderbolt (?) decoration in the exergue. Both of these features, the first of which is only clear on our nos. 4–6 may actually represent a reduction of the traditional wreath.

With all of these departures from the normal pattern of the Antioch mint or any other under Philip I it is not hard to see why Newell may have had reservations. However, a close analysis of some of these unusual features suggests that the discrepancies do not arise because the coins were produced at another mint during Philip's reign, but that they were struck at Antioch some years, if not decades, after his death.

Beginning with the Syrian proconsulship of Aulus Gabinius (57–55 BC), the mint of Antioch is known to have resurrected the types and inscription of Philip I for its silver coinage (fig. 9), with the single addition of a monogram identifying the current Roman magistrate. This Roman series was continued by the successors of Gabinius, M. Licinius Crassus (54–53 BC) and Gaius Cassius (53–51 BC)⁷, and survived a grant of autonomy by Julius Caesar in

6 SMA nos. 450–459 were considered to be Antiochene by Newell, but close study suggests that they may have originated at other mints. The Φ over A controls described for nos. 450–454 have not been observed by this author on any specimens. For the division among uncertain mints, see SNG Spaer nos. 2811–2822.

7 RPC I, nos. 4125–4126; M. PRIEUR, K. PRIEUR, A Type Corpus of the Syro-Phoenician Tetradrachms and their Fractions from 57 BC–AD 253 (London 2000), nos. 2–3.

8 For discussion of this hoard, see A. MOSHEGHIAN, G. DEPEYROT, *Moneta* 17 (*infra*, n. 3), pp. 103–117; L.A. SARAYAN, The Sarnakounk Hoard: Armenia in the 1st Century B.C., *The Numismatist* 105.4, April 1992, pp. 497–536.

9 KH. MOUSHEGHIAN, A. MOSHEGHIAN, G. DEPEYROT, History and Coin Finds in Armenia, *Moneta* 17 (Wetteren 2003).

	<i>Obv.</i>	<i>Rev.</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Axes</i>	
1	A1	P1	14.46 g	↑	Sarnakounk Hoard (IGCH 1746; CH 1, no. 105) ⁸ . KH. MOUSHEGHIAN, <i>Monetnye Klady Armenii</i> , vol. 1 (Yerevan 1973), no. 56; <i>Moneta</i> 17 ⁹ , no. 56.
2	A2	P2	14.84 g	↑	Glasgow, Hunter, vol. 3, no. 16.
3	A3	P3	14.90 g	↑	New York, ANS (1928.191.8).
4	A4	P4	16.08 g	↑	Munich.
5	A4	P5	13.73 g	↑	Sarnakounk Hoard (IGCH 1746; CH 1, no. 105). MOUSHEGHIAN (as no. 1), no. 58; <i>Moneta</i> 17 (as no. 1), no. 58.
6	A5	P6	13.90 g	↑	Sarnakounk Hoard (IGCH 1746; CH 1, no. 105). MOUSHEGHIAN (as no. 1), no. 57; <i>Moneta</i> 17 (as no. 1), no. 57.

Table 1: Known Specimens of Anomalous Philip I Tetradrachms.

- 7 Philippus Philadelphus. Hess-Leu 31, 1966, 525.
- 8 Antiochus XI. Leu 38, 1986, 150 ex CSE 389.
- 9 Aulus Gabinius. RPC 4124.
- 10 Autonomous Antioch. RPC 4134.

Table 2: Comparanda.



Anomalous Philip I Tetrachms (fig. 1–6), Comparanda (fig. 7–10).

47 BC until 17/16 or 14/13 BC when production ceased¹⁰. The only modifications made to the tetradrachms struck after 47 BC (fig. 10) were the replacement of the proconsular monogram with the monogram ANT , thought to represent the city ethnic (ANT[IO]X[EΩN]), or perhaps less likely, its autonomous status (AYT[ONOMA])¹¹, and the inclusion of an exergual date based on the Caesarean Era of 49/48 BC.

When we compare the anomalous Philip I tetradrachms to those produced under Roman rule, several of the differences that were found to separate them from the lifetime issues serve to link them to the posthumous coinage. The issues of the Roman period bear a similar schematic portrait with large hawkish nose, which suggests that the two were produced relatively close together in time and that they share the same model, if one was not actually imitating the other. Although the Roman tetradrachm reverses are more closely derived from the lifetime Antiochene issues of Philip I in that they retain the traditional monogram under the throne as well as the laurel wreath border, those issued after Caesar's grant of autonomy share their civic monogram with the first monogram (ANT) on coin no. 1 of the anomalous series. Thus, it seems likely that the ANT monogram of no. 6 and the ANT monograms of nos. 2–5 are all variants of the Antiochene ethnic monogram. If this is the correct interpretation, then the mint of the anomalous series must have been none other than Antioch. The monogram ANT that accompanies the apparently Antiochene initial monogram on coins of the anomalous series should probably be resolved as AYT[ONOMΩN], signifying the free status of the citizens of Antioch.

If autonomous Antioch was indeed the mint responsible for producing the anomalous series of Philip I tetradrachms, as we have suggested above, the one question that remains to be asked is when could it have done so? Only two possibilities really exist: The first is that the anomalous series was struck to celebrate Caesar's recognition of the city's autonomy in 49 BC. Since earliest known issue of Antioch using the Caesarean Era is dated Year 3 (= 47/6 BC), there is a two-year window in which the autonomous series might have been struck. The second possibility is that the series was produced in the period between Pompey's removal of Antiochus XIII Asiaticus, the last Seleucid king, and his proclamation of Antiochene autonomy in 64 BC and the arrival of Aulus Gabinius in 57 BC¹². In this case the anomalous series would fit nicely into the seven-year gap between the end of Seleucid royal coinage at Antioch and the posthumous Philip issues of the Roman administration.

While both scenarios seem reasonable enough, the latter is perhaps most likely. It would be a little odd to find the anomalous series at the break between the Roman proconsular issues and the issues with Caesarean dates, since the use of

10 RPC I, nos. 4127–4134, 4136–4149; PRIEUR, PRIEUR (*supra*, n. 7), nos. 4–7, 10, 13–26. Both works only list dated posthumous Philip tetradrachms up to Year 33 (= 17/16 BC) of the Caesarean Era, but Year 36 (= 14/13 BC) has been read by

H.R. BALDUS, Syria, in: A.M. BURNETT, M.H. CRAWFORD (eds.), *The Coinage of the Roman World in the Late Republic* (Oxford 1987), p. 128.

11 RPC I, p. 606.

12 For the removal of Antiochus XIII and Antioch as an

autonomous city, see Just. 40.2.3–5; App. *Syr.* 49 and 70; App. *Mith.* 106; Eus. 1.40.26; A.R. BELLINGER, *The End of the Seleucids*, Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, June 1949, pp. 84–85.

the reverse laurel wreath and the Δ monogram below the throne links the two together, while the anomalous series lacks both of these features. The delicate treatment of the inscriptions on coins of the anomalous series also makes it difficult to see how it could fall in between the two main series of the Roman period, both of which typically employed very thick lettering. Although the spidery inscriptions are also somewhat of a surprise in the late 60s and early 50s BC, considering the relatively low quality of the epigraphy on the Antiochene coinage of Antiochus XIII and his immediate royal predecessors, the reverse typology with the Δ monogram conspicuously absent from under Zeus' throne seems to make sense following the tetradrachms of Antiochus XIII, which also lacked this ubiquitous control.

If we are correct to place the anomalous Philip I series at Antioch in the period 64–58 BC and to understand it as an autonomous issue of the city, it becomes easier to see why Aulus Gabinius and his successors decided to continue the coinage of this particular Seleucid king rather than that of another member of the dynasty. It is no longer necessary to explain the Roman revival of Philip's types by positing, with no supporting evidence, that the Romans recognized the line of Philip I Philadelphus as legitimate in contrast to that of Antiochus XIII¹³. Instead, we now have a much simpler explanation: The Romans copied the types because they were still current and being struck by the city when Gabinius took up his post as proconsul in 57 BC. Their importance must also have been clear to the Romans since the anomalous series of Antioch only served to supplement the lifetime Philip I tetradrachms that still made up a large portion of the circulating currency in the early days of the Roman province of Syria¹⁴.

Oliver D. Hoover
The American Numismatic Society
Broadway at 155th Street
New York, N.Y. 10032
USA

13 RPC I, p. 606. This view is demonstrably false since the Senate is known to have recognized Antiochus XIII, his brother, and their mother, Cleopatra Selene, as the legitimate rulers of Syria in 72 BC (Cic., *Verr.* 4.20) and L. Licinius Lucullus also recognized Antiochus XIII when he restored him to power in 69/8 BC (App. *Syr.* 49; Just. 40.2.2).

14 RPC I, p. 606; E.T. NEWELL, *The Pre-Imperial Coinage of Roman Antioch*, NC 1919, pp. 80–84.