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A PTOLEMAIC MINT AT SOLI: A TALE OF TWO MAGISTRATES

Catharine C. Lorber and Frank L. Kovacs

Ptolemaic possessions outside the central provinces of the empire are difficult to track, due to scanty and sometimes contradictory source material. In his study of the administration of these possessions, Roger Bagnall ranked Cilicia last among the regions of Asia Minor for the quantity of information available¹. He observed: «Theocritus lists Cilicia as one of Philadelphos' possessions, but Euergetes claims it as his own conquest. In this Hieronymus supports him, including it among his conquests in the Third Syrian War... Euergetes' conquests seem to have lasted, at least in Rough Cilicia, for Hieronymus lists seven places taken by Antiochus III in 197 from Ptolemy V: Selinus, Anemurion, Zephyrion, Aphrodisias, Korykos, Soloi, and Mallos»². As further corroboration for Ptolemaic possession of Soli, Bagnall cited a late third century inscription recording the royal response to a formal complaint about the behavior of soldiers billeted in the city³. Bagnall adduced literary and epigraphic evidence for several other Ptolemaic strongholds in Cilicia Trachea (Rough Cilicia, the mountainous western district), most of them apparently new foundations: Pamphylian Charadros, evidently garrisoned under Ptolemy III; an Arsinoe between Nagidus and Celenderis; a Berenice with a harbor, between Pisourgia and Celenderis; and perhaps a Neapolis, again garrisoned under Ptolemy III⁴.

The sketchy information provided by Bagnall can be supplemented from numismatic sources. The Aydıncık hoard, comprising Ptolemaic gold of the Theoi Adelphoi and Arsinoe Philadelphus types, validates Theocritus. It indicates that Ptolemy II must have gained possession of Cilicia Trachea, or at least of Celenderis, perhaps during the First Syrian War (274–271), but have lost it again in the course of the Second Syrian War (260–253)⁵. The well-known series of tetradrachms struck at Tarsus with the portrait of Ptolemy III reflects a temporary Ptolemaic incursion into Cilicia Pedias, the fertile eastern plains, during the Third Syrian War (246–241)⁶. The large Meydancikkale hoard was unearthed in the course of archaeological excavation of a Ptolemaic fortress in Cilicia Trachea, some 20 kilometers inland between Celenderis and Aphrodisias. An inscription establishes that Ptolemy III was master of

¹ R.S. Bagnall, *The Administration of the Ptolemaic Possessions Outside Egypt* (Leiden 1976), p. 114.

² Bagnall (note 1) p. 114f.

³ Bagnall (note 1) p. 115, citing C. Bradford Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period* (New Haven 1934), pp. 136–140, no. 30.

⁴ T.B. Mitford, *AJA* 65, 1961, p. 134, no. 35; Strabo 14.5.3; Steph. Byz. s.v. Berenice, fifth entry; Stadiasmus 190, in Müller, *Geog. Graec. Min. I* (Paris 1855), p. 485; Mitford, art. cit., p. 136 (= SB VIII 10155 and SEG XX 315). For the probable location of Berenice, see A. Davesne and G. Le Rider, *Gülner II: Le Trésor de Meydancikkale (Cilicie Trachée 1980)* (Paris 1989), p. 345 n. 11.

⁵ A. Davesne, *Le trésor d'Aydincik*, in: *Trésors et circulation monétaire en Anatolie antique*, edd. M. Amandry and G. Le Rider (Paris 1994), pp. 37–43.

⁶ E.T. Newell, *Western Seleucid Mints (=WSM)*. ANSNS 4 (New York, 1977 reprint of 1941 original), pp. 222f., 224.

the site, at least temporarily⁷. Alain Davesne and Georges Le Rider dated closure of the hoard around 240/35 and related its abandonment to an emergency evacuation of the fortress, probably in response to a Seleucid military campaign⁸. Ulla Westermark has argued for a later date of abandonment around 220⁹, perhaps to be associated with the Fourth Syrian War (221–217).

The preponderance of the evidence places the Ptolemies in Cilicia Trachea, rather than Cilicia Pedias. It suggests that the temporary success of Ptolemy II was followed by a new conquest under Ptolemy III, which resulted in a military presence of more than four decades' duration at many sites. Curiously, the only long-recognized Ptolemaic mint activity in Cilicia has been located in Cilicia Pedias, namely the brief episode at Tarsus under Ptolemy III. The early Seleucids too were satisfied with a single Cilician mint at Tarsus, except under Seleucus II when the Ptolemaic invasion may have occasioned the transfer of mint operations to another site or sites. We have now identified a short series of Serapis-Isis tetradrachms that must have been struck under Ptolemy V at Soli, on the border between Cilicia Pedias and Cilicia Trachea. This series marks the opening of a second permanent royal mint in Cilicia, the first in Cilicia Trachea.

A Seleucid mint was first located at Soli by Otto Mørkholm, who cited issues of Seleucus IV, Antiochus IV, Demetrius I, and Demetrius II¹⁰. The series has been greatly enlarged by the die study of Arthur Houghton¹¹. Our attribution to Soli of Ptolemaic tetradrachms with the Serapis and Isis obverse type rests on control links. The owl symbol, which appears on some issues of the Ptolemaic series (*cat. nos. 1–2*), subsequently serves as a Soli mintmark on coins struck by Antiochus III (*cat. nos. 12–17*) and Seleucus IV (*cat. nos. 20–25*). A second link consists of the signatures of two magistrates, who sign as AP (sometimes in monogrammatic form) and ON. They are never associated on the same coin, but sign as subordinates, almost invariably in identical positions, under Ptolemy V (*cat. nos. 1–3*), Antiochus III (*cat. nos. 12–17*), and Seleucus IV (*cat. nos. 20–25*, with AP abbreviated to A). Interestingly, the owl is only one of several mintmarks employed interchangeably at Seleucid Soli and appears to have a special association with the magistrates AP and ON; it occurs only with their signatures, and vice versa. The same signatures recur, still in parallel subordinate positions, on a series of undated Ptolemaic tetradrachms of the standard Soter/eagle type (*cat. nos. 27–31*) which Mørkholm and Kromann attributed to Paphos in the final decade of Ptolemy V¹². Their attribution seems quite secure, as it is based on a die link to the dated Paphos coinage of Ptolemy VI and further supported by stylistic comparisons with dies from Salamis and Citium.

⁷ Davesne and Le Rider (note 4) p. 345. The inscription is a dedication to Hermes and Heracles on behalf of King Ptolemy, Queen Berenice, and their children, by a certain Meas of Aspendus.

⁸ Davesne and Le Rider (note 4), pp. 344–348.

⁹ U. Westermark, review of Meydancikkale in SNR 70, 1991, pp. 97–101. Westermark criticized the revised chronologies proposed by Le Rider for both the Seleucid and Attalid series. In her view, the bulk of the hoard was formed before 240/35 but smaller lots were added at intervals down to c. 220.

¹⁰ O. Mørkholm, Seleucid coins from Cilicia ca. 220–150 B.C., ANSMN 11, 1964, pp. 58–62.

¹¹ A. Houghton, The royal Seleucid mint of Soli, NC 1989, pp. 15–32.

¹² O. Mørkholm and A. Kromann, The Ptolemaic silver coinage on Cyprus 192/1–164/3, Chiron 14, 1984, p. 152. Their stylistic comparison of Paphos dies to dies from the dated series of Salamis and Citium implies a date about (or after) 186 for the second Paphos die.

The Ptolemaic mint at Soli probably began its operations in the course of the Fifth Syrian War (202–195 B.C.), presumably to provide for the pay of garrisons in Cilicia. Although the Serapis-Isis obverse type was introduced by Ptolemy IV and is strongly associated with that king in the popular mind, it remained in use under the fifth Ptolemy not only at Soli but also for the dated tetradrachms of Ascalon¹³. The production of silver coinage during Philopator's reign had been concentrated at just a few sites, Alexandria, an uncertain mint (Pelusium?), and perhaps also Tyre and Sidon¹⁴. In contrast, the prosecution of the Fifth Syrian War was supported by a proliferation of provincial mints, among which Tripolis, Byblus, Berytus, Tyre, Sidon, Dora, Ptolemais, Joppa, and Ascalon clearly identified their emissions with well-known or easily interpreted mintmarks or even their abbreviated names¹⁵. The inauguration of mint operations at Soli thus fits into a well documented and historically plausible pattern, and its only real novelty lies in enlarging the geographical field beyond coastal Phoenicia and Palestine.

Soli and its mint fell to Antiochus III in 197, along with the rest of the Ptolemaic possessions along the Cilician coast. The Soli mint continued operations, now striking for the Seleucid king. The former Ptolemaic mint functionaries AP and ON signed a significant portion of this coinage, though their superior MO did not. Houghton's die sequence indicates that they became involved about half way through the series in the name of Antiochus III. They remained in place under Seleucus IV, signing all but the last of his issues. Their service at Soli under Seleucus IV and their subsequent activity at Paphos under Ptolemy Epiphanes must fall within the years 187–180. The roughly equal size of both series suggests that their repatriation to the Ptolemaic kingdom occurred about 184/3. At this point Seleucid prestige was at a low ebb, while Ptolemy V sought to repair Egypt's international standing and plotted the recovery of Coele-Syria.

¹³ These Ascalon tetradrachms bear regnal dates 1, 3, 4, and 5: Year 1, Poindessault sale, 29–30 May 1973, lot 96; year 3, Superior sale, 10–11 December 1993, lot 1773; year 4, Svoronos 1188; year 5, Leu 52, 15 May 1991, lot 135. The date of the earliest Ascalon issue, if read correctly, apparently indicates that this particular series began with the accession of Ptolemy V rather than the outbreak of the Fifth Syrian War. The regnal dates are preceded by the character L (signifying ἐΤΟΥΣ, «in the year»), a practice introduced to the coinage during the reign of Ptolemy V.

¹⁴ The Alexandrian issues, which are well documented, include Svoronos 1121, 1123–24, and 1139; and E.T. Newell, *Two recent Egyptian hoards*. NNM 33 (New York 1927) 4–6. The issues perhaps attributable to Pelusium were formerly attributed to Aradus by Mørkholm, *NNÅ* 1975–76, pp. 48–57; R.A. Hazzard, *Ptolemaic Coins* (Toronto 1995), p. 33 with n. 22 and 35, has slightly revised the dating and proposed reattribution to Pelusium. Issues of Tyre and Sidon which may belong to the reign of Philopator include Svoronos 1267; Collignon sale, lot 436; ANS 1944.100.77213; and MMAG XIX, lot 587.

¹⁵ Tripolis: Svoronos 1296. Byblus: Svoronos 1288. Berytus: Svoronos 1285, ANS 86'06. Tyre: Svoronos 1177–81, 1297–98. Sidon: Svoronos 1184–86, 1294. Dora: Svoronos 1262. Ptolemais: Svoronos 1187; ANS 1986.78.1050; Svoronos 787; O. Mørkholm, *The portrait coinage of Ptolemy V: The main series*, in: *Greek numismatics and archaeology. Essays in Honor of Margaret Thompson*, edd. O. Mørkholm, N.M. Waggoner (Wetteren 1979), pl. 23, 18; A. Brett, *ANSMN* 2, 1947, p. 8, 6, pl. ii. Joppa: Svoronos 1295, 1291; O. Mørkholm, *INJ* 5, 1981, p. 8, 3–4. Ascalon: see note 13 above.

Mint personnel of the Hellenistic kingdoms often stayed in place after a violent change of regime, whether through usurpation or foreign conquest; Tarsus under Ptolemy III presents a spectacular example of the phenomenon¹⁶. The transfer of personnel within a system of royal mints is also well attested¹⁷.



cat. no. 1



cat. no. 2



cat. no. 3



A relocation from one kingdom to its rival is considerably more unusual, and has interesting implications. All observations about the behavior of mint personnel are really deductions from the behavior of monograms inscribed on the coins. These monograms are commonly interpreted as the signatures of mint magistrates. The term «magistrate» implies an executive position, political or honorary in nature, for which, in the Hellenistic world, no special training was required beyond a general literary education. Specific technical skills, on the other hand, resided in the lower levels of the civil service. Mint workers who remained in place after a violent change of regime, or who were permitted to change their allegiance repeatedly, are less likely to have been magistrates than technicians with scarce but needed skills. This perception – that monograms may represent production workers as well as magistrates – may be of some use in interpreting the complex control systems of Hellenistic coinages.

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¹⁶ For a discussion of the monogram links at Tarsus, see E.T. Newell, WSM, pp. 222–225.

¹⁷ See, for example, G. Le Rider, *Suse sous les Séleucides et les Parthes. Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique en Iran* 38 (Paris 1965), p. 25, 7, for the transfer of a mint magistrate from Antioch to Nisibis under Antiochus III.

CATALOGUE

Soli under Ptolemy V, to 197 B.C. Silver tetradrachms of Zeus Sarapis-Isis type

Silver tetradrachms: Jugate busts r. of Zeus Sarapis, laureate, wearing taenia and with flower over forehead, and Isis, wearing horned disc, dotted border/ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ on l., ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ on r., eagle with closed wings standing l. on thunderbolt, head reverted, holding FILLETED CORNUCOPIAE over shoulder, controls in fields, dotted border.

1. Silver tetradrachm (Sarapis and Isis): FILLETED DOUBLE CORNUCOPIAE over eagle's shoulder, ΜΟ| in l. field, OWL l. above ΑΡ in r. field.
Reference: Svoronos 1136, pl. xxxvi, 14 and 15 [4 listed].
2. Silver tetradrachm (Sarapis and Isis): FILLETED DOUBLE CORNUCOPIAE over eagle's shoulder, ΜΟ| in l. field, ΟΝ in r. field.
Reference: ANS 1944.100.77212, ex Wayte Raymond sale, 6 July 1938, lot 665; Morgenthau 342 (Burrage collection), lot 174. Same obverse die, in later state.
3. Silver tetradrachm (Sarapis and Isis): FILLETED DOUBLE CORNUCOPIAE over eagle's shoulder, ΜΟ| in l. field, OWL above ΟΝ in r. field.
Reference: Gerry Borrmann collection. Same obverse die, in yet later state.
4. Silver tetradrachm (Sarapis and Isis): FILLETED DOUBLE CORNUCOPIAE over eagle's shoulder, Μϸ in l. field.
Reference: Svoronos 1136a [1 listed, Dattari].

Soli under Antiochus III, 197–187 B.C. Silver tetradrachms and drachms of seleucid Apollo on omphalos type

Silver tetradrachms: Diademed head of Antiochus III r., sometimes with dotted or fillet border/ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ on r., ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ on l., Apollo seated l. on omphalos, testing arrow and resting l. hand on grounded bow.

Silver drachms: Types as preceding.

5. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): Α in outer l. field, Φ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 1–3 (A1); New York, WSM 1282 (Coele-Syria).
6. Silver drachm (Antiochus III): Α in outer l. field, Φ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 4–6 (A1); WSM 1283 (Coele-Syria).
7. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): Α above HELMETED ATHENA HEAD l. in outer l. field, Φ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 7–13 (A2, A3); WSM 1284–1285 (Coele-Syria). Obverse die link with cat. nos. 8–9 and 18 below.

8. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): \AA above HELMETED ATHENA HEAD l. in outer l. field, $\text{\text{X}}$ in outer r. field.
Reference: Peus 330, 24 April 1991, lot 167 = Houghton «New coins of Seleucid Cilicia» (forthcoming), 1 (A3). Obverse die link with cat. nos. 7 above and 9 and 18 below.
9. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): $\text{\text{X}}$ above HELMETED ATHENA HEAD l. in outer l. field, $\text{\text{X}}$ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 14–18 (A3); WSM 1286 (Coele-Syria). Obverse die link with cat. nos. 7–8 above and 18 below.
10. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): $\text{\text{X}}$ above HELMETED ATHENA HEAD l. in outer l. field, $\Delta|\text{O}$ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 19 (A4).
11. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): \AA above GRAPE CLUSTER in outer l. field, $\text{\text{X}}$ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 20 (A5); A. Houghton, *Coins of the Seleucid Empire from the collection of Arthur Houghton*. ACNAC 4 (New York 1983) (=CSE) 517. Obverse die links with cat. nos. 16 and 19 below, and with Seleucus IV, see cat. no. 21 below.
12. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): \AA above OWL r. in outer l. field, $\text{\text{R}}$ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 21 (A6); CSE 518. Obverse die link with cat. nos. 14 and 19 below, and with Seleucus IV, see cat. no. 21 below.
13. Silver drachm (Antiochus III): \AA above OWL r. in outer l. field, $\text{\text{R}}$ or $\text{\text{R}}$ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 22–25 (A2–A4); WSM 1281 (Ascalon); Brett, ANSMN 4, 1950, 1 (Ascalon). Obverse die link with cat. nos. 15 and 17 below, and with Seleucus IV, see cat. no. 20 below.
14. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): $\Delta|\text{O}$ above OWL r. in outer l. field, $\text{\text{R}}$ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 26 (A6). Obverse die links with cat. nos. 12 above and 19 below, and with Seleucus IV, see cat. no. 21 below.
15. Silver drachm (Antiochus III): $\Delta|\text{O}$ above OWL r. in outer l. field, $\text{\text{R}}$ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 27 (A4). Obverse die link with cat. nos. 13 above and 17 below, and with Seleucus IV, see cat. no. 20 below.
16. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): $\Delta|\text{O}$ above OWL r. in outer l. field, ON in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 28–30 (A5); CSE 519–520. Obverse die links with cat. nos. 11 above and 19 below, and with Seleucus IV, see cat. no. 21 below.
17. Silver drachm (Antiochus III): $\Delta|\text{O}$ above OWL r. in outer l. field, ON in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 31–34 (A4); CSE 521. Obverse die link with cat. nos. 13 and 15 above, and with Seleucus IV, see cat. no. 20 below.
18. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): $\text{\text{A}}$ in outer l. field, $\text{\text{R}}$ in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 35–37 (A3); London, WSM 1287 (Coele-Syria). Obverse die link with cat. nos. 7–9 above.
Despite the obverse die link with earlier issues, the sequence of controls shows this to be the final issue of the reign. Alternatively, the die may have been transferred to another mint.

19. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): Δ in outer l. field, A in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1989, 38–42 (A5, A6). Obverse die links with cat. nos. 11–12, 14, and 16 above, and with Seleucus IV, see cat. no. 21 below.
Die possibly transferred to another mint.

Soli under Seleucus IV, 187–175 B.C.
Silver tetradrachms and drachms of seleucid Apollo
on omphalos type 187–c. 184/3 B.C.

Silver tetradrachm: Diademed head of Antiochus III r., fillet border/ $\text{BA}\Sigma\text{I}\Lambda\text{E}\Omega\Sigma$ on r., $\Sigma\text{E}\Lambda\text{E}\Upsilon\text{K}\text{O}\Upsilon$ on l., Apollo seated l. on omphalos, testing arrow and resting hand on grounded bow.

Silver tetradrachms: As preceding, but with diademed head of Seleucus IV.

Silver drachms: Diademed head of Antiochus III r., fillet border/ $\text{BA}\Sigma\text{I}\Lambda\text{E}\Omega\Sigma$ on r., $\Sigma\text{E}\Lambda\text{E}\Upsilon\text{K}\text{O}\Upsilon$ on l., Apollo seated l. on omphalos, testing arrow and resting hand on grounded bow.

Silver drachms: As preceding, but with diademed head of Seleucus IV.

20. Silver drachm (Antiochus III): Δ above OWL r. in outer l. field, ON in outer r. field.
Reference: A. Houghton, *The Royal Seleucid mint of Seleukeia on the Calycadnus*, in: *Kraay-Mørkholm Essays*, edd. G. Le Rider, K. Jenkins, N. Waggoner, U. Westermark. *Numismatica Lovanensia* 10 (Louvain-la-Neuve 1989), 43–46 (A1 = A4 of Antiochus III); CSE 523–524. Obverse die link with Antiochus III, see cat. nos. 13, 15, and 17 above.
21. Silver tetradrachm (Antiochus III): ΣA (reengraved over Δ) above OWL r. in outer l. field, ON in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1988, 47 (A1 = A5 of Antiochus III, A2). Obverse die link to Antiochus III, cat. nos. 11, 16, and 19 above.
22. Silver tetradrachm (Seleucus IV): ΣA above OWL r. in outer l. field, ON in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1988, 48 (A2); Washington, AHNS 404, ex Hirsch 170, 22 May 1991, lot 658.
23. Silver drachm (Antiochus III): ΣA above OWL r. in outer l. field, ON in outer r. field.
Reference: CSE 526; Houghton, *Kraay-Mørkholm Essays* (cat. no. 20), 49–50 (A2).
24. Silver tetradrachm (Seleucus IV): ΣA above OWL r. in outer l. field, Λ (for A) in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1988, 51 (A3).
25. Silver drachm (Seleucus IV): A above OWL r. in outer l. field, ΣA in outer r. field.
Reference: Houghton, NC 1988, 52 (A3).
26. Silver tetradrachm (Seleucus IV): HELMETED ATHENA HEAD l. in outer l. field, A ΣA in ex.
Reference: Glasgow, Hunter 9; Houghton, NC 1988, 53 (A4).

Paphos, c. 184/3–180
Undated silver tetradrachms of Ptolemy I type

Silver tetradrachms: Diademed head of Ptolemy I r., with aegis, dotted border/
ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ on l., ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ on r., eagle with closed wings standing l. on
thunderbolt, controls in fields, dotted border.

27. Silver tetradrachm: ☉Ε above ΟΝ in l. field, ΠΟ in r. field.
Reference: Svoronos 1302, pl. xliv, 1 [1 listed, Athens]; SNG Copenhagen 612 (with ΟΓ
above ΟΝ); Mørkholm-Kromann, *Chiron* 14, 1984, p. 162, 1–2, pl. vi.
28. Silver tetradrachm: ☉Ε above ΑΡ in l. field, ΠΟ in r. field.
Reference: Svoronos 1303, pl. xliv, 2 [2 listed]; Mørkholm-Kromann, *Chiron* 14, 1984, p. 162,
3–5, pl. vi.
29. Silver tetradrachm: ΠΥΡ above ΑΡ in l. field, ΠΟ in r. field.
Reference: Svoronos 1304, pl. xliv, 3 [4 listed, specimen α with ΛΙ for ΑΡ]; Mørkholm-
Kromann, *Chiron* 14, 1984, p. 162, 6–9, pl. vi. Obverse die link with cat. nos. 30–31 below.
30. Silver tetradrachm: ΑΠ in l. field, ΠΟ above ΑΡ in r. field.
Reference: Mørkholm-Kromann, *Chiron* 14, 1984, p. 162, 10–11. Obverse die link with
cat. nos. 29 above and 31 below.
31. Silver tetradrachm: ΠΟ above ΑΡ in l. field, ΑΠ in r. field.
Reference: Svoronos 1305, pl. xliv, 4 [6 listed]; Mørkholm-Kromann, *Chiron* 14, 1984,
p. 163, 12–18, pl. vi–vii. Obverse die link with cat. nos. 29–30 above.