

# The double portrait coins of Alexander I Balas and Cleopatra Thea

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THE DOUBLE PORTRAIT COINS  
OF ALEXANDER I BALAS AND CLEOPATRA THEA

Then Alexander sent envoys to Ptolemy, king of Egypt, with this message . . . let us now establish friendly relations with one another, so give me your daughter to be my wife, and I will be your son-in-law, and give you and her gifts worthy of you . . . so Ptolemy came up from Egypt, with his daughter Cleopatra, and reached Ptolemais in the one hundred and sixty-second year. And King Alexander met him, and he gave him his daughter in marriage, and he celebrated her wedding at Ptolemais with great pomp, as kings do.

I Maccabees 10, 51-58

162 S. E. (Seleucid Era = 151/0 B.C.) was momentous for the Seleucid succession. It was a year of disaster for Demetrius I, son of Seleucus IV who, after facing near-insurrection at Antioch, was forced to battle with a Seleucid pretender, Alexander I Balas<sup>1</sup>. With the support of Attalus II of Pergamum, Ariarathes V of Cappadocia and the Roman Senate, and with crucial military assistance from Ptolemy VI Philometor, Alexander had arrived at Ake-Ptolemais to lay claim to the Seleucid throne, likely in the Spring of 150 B.C., and within months won a decisive military victory over Demetrius who was killed in battle. For Ptolemy, the moment marked a profound turning point. For fifty years Phoenicia and southern Syria had been a dominion of the Seleucids; even if it was not now a Ptolemaic possession, it was at least in the hands of an Egyptian ally.

Babelon	E. Babelon, <i>Les rois de Syrie, d'Arménie et de Commagène</i> (Paris 1890)
CSE	A. Houghton, <i>Coins of the Seleucid Empire</i> (New York 1983)
McDowell	<i>Coins from Seleucia on the Tigris</i> (Ann Arbor 1935)
Suse	G. Le Rider, <i>Suse sous les Séleucides et les Parthes</i> (Paris 1965)

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<sup>1</sup> The question of Alexander's origins and doubtful claim to the Seleucid throne is discussed, with full notation of the relevant sources, by E. Will, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique* 2, 2nd ed. (Nancy 1982), 373-6.

Alexander appears to have had considerable success in asserting control over the southern areas of the Seleucid empire. He made his capital at Ake<sup>2</sup>, whose garrison had gone over to him on his arrival and, as Maccabees testifies, there married Ptolemy's daughter, Cleopatra Thea<sup>3</sup>. He evidently soon proceeded northward. By the end of the summer of 150 B.C. he had taken all Phoenicia except for Aradus, which had held special status for some time<sup>4</sup>, but seems to have had more difficulty in asserting control over Syria Seleucis.

Seleucia Pieria issued bronze coinage for Alexander in S.E. 162, and in the same year Apamea struck a special bronze coinage with the portrait of Antiochus IV, a propaganda issue produced perhaps at Alexander's instance<sup>5</sup>. The great central mint at Antioch, however, appears to have been shut down after the death of Demetrius, and the evidence suggests that the Seleucid capital did not accept Alexander's authority until the following year<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The city was then, and probably until the visit of Julius Caesar in 47 B.C., known as Antioch in Ptolemais: A. Houghton and G. Le Rider, *Le deuxième fils d'Antiochos IV à Ptolemais*, SNR 64, 1985, 75; see also H. Seyrig, *Le monnayage de Ptolemais en Phénicie*, RN 1962, 26–33. Maccabees refers to the city only as Ptolemais.

<sup>3</sup> Maccabees 10 reports that the marriage was sought by Alexander; most historians concur that it was likely Ptolemy VI who suggested it: Will (above n. 1), 377; E. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, vol. 2 (London 1902), 212. Taken literally, the «one hundred and sixty-second year» of Maccabees would imply during S.E. 161; as the dated coins of Demetrius and Alexander make unambiguously clear, however, the text must mean during S.E. 162.

<sup>4</sup> In southern Phoenicia, Ake-Ptolemais was the only city which struck dated coins for Alexander in S.E. 162: see CSE 796, with reference to A.B. Brett, *Seleucid coins of Ake-Ptolemais in Phoenicia, Seleucus IV to Tryphon*, MN 1, 1945, 27, no. 19. Ascalon does not appear to have produced coinage for Alexander until S.E. 165, when it began a small bronze issue (A. B. Brett, *The mint of Ascalon under the Seleucids*, MN 4, 1950, 47, no. 5). In northern Phoenicia, Tyre, Sidon, Beirut and Byblus also struck coinage for Alexander during his first year of rule. Aradus, which was nominally independent during this period, continued to issue its own coinage with Ptolemaic types: O. Mørkholm, *The Ptolemaic coins of an uncertain era*, *Nordisk Num. Årsskrift* 1975–6, 55–6.

<sup>5</sup> Seleucia Pieria: BMCSeleucids 57, nos. 68–9. Apamea: O. Mørkholm, *A posthumous issue of Antiochus IV of Syria*, NC 1983, 57–63, esp. 60. Mørkholm suggests that such coins were produced during the final phase of Alexander's struggle with Demetrius I, although Demetrius may already have been dead by the time the coins of Apamea were struck: the historical and numismatic record of this critical year is very unclear. An alternative which Mørkholm does not explore is the possibility that these Apamean bronzes – very different in concept from Alexander's bronze coins of Seleucia of the same year, which show his portrait – may have been struck by the city's municipal authority during the period of indecision after Demetrius' death and before Alexander's own control was firmly established.

<sup>6</sup> A. Houghton, *A tetradrachm of Seleucia Pieria at the Getty Museum, an archaizing Zeus and the accession of Alexander Balas in northern Syria*, *GettyMusJ* 10, 1982, 153–8, esp. 157–8.

## The Coins

### Western Issues

#### 1. Seleucia Pieria

Seleucia struck two special coin issues commemorating the marriage at Ake of Alexander and Cleopatra:

Obv. Bust of Cleopatra, diademed and wearing *kalathos* and veil, to r.; dotted border.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ Double cornucopiae bound with diadem; dotted border.

### Gold stater

1. † 8.55 Numismatic Fine Arts 18, 1987, 355. CSE 408. FIG. 1

Obv. Accolate busts of Cleopatra, in foreground, diademed and wearing *kalathos* and veil, and Alexander, diademed, to r.; to l.,  $\blacktriangle$  above cornucopia; fillet border.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΘΕΟΠΑΤΟΡΟΣ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΟΥ

Zeus seated 1. on high-backed throne, holding in his extended r. hand a Nike who bears a thunderbolt; in his l. hand, Zeus grasps a long sceptre; no monograms or other symbol.

### Tetradrachms

2. A1 P1 † 17.04 J. Schulman FPL 226 (Oct. 1983), 122; Bonham's 7, 1982, 202.
3. A1 P1 17.30 MMAG 19, 1959, 544; Jameson I, 1715.
4. A1 P2 † 16.19 Leu 18, 1977, 249.
5. A1 P2 † 15.80 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts: M. Comstock and C. Vermeule, Greek Coins, 1950-1963 (Boston 1964), 280; Numismatica, Sept. 1961, 41; Sotheby's, 30 Apr. 1958 (Haughton), 210.
6. A1 P3 \ 14.91 London, BM: NC 1904, 307, no. 30. FIG. 2.
7. A1 P3 ? London Market, March, 1985.
8. A1 P4 16.31 Paris, BN: G. Le Rider and H. Seyrig, Objets de la collection Louis de Clercq, RN 1967, 26, no. 131.
9. A2 P5 † 16.74 Jerusalem, A. Spaer coll. FIG. 3.
10. A2 P5 † 16.21 MMAG FPL 492 (Sept. 1986), 20; MMAG 61, 1983, 201.
11. A2 P6 † 16.15 Johannesburg, D. Stephenson coll.

- |     |    |     |         |   |
|-----|----|-----|---------|---|
| 12. | A2 | P6  | ↘ 16.58 | Numismatic Fine Arts 20, 1988, 778 (16.46 g., cleaned). Tartous 1987 hoard.   |
| 13. | A2 | P6  | ↑ 16.05 | Tartous 1987 hoard.   |
| 14. | A2 | P7  | ?       | Ciani-Vinchon, 6 Feb. 1956 (Hindamian), 615; Florange, 16 Oct. 1923, 44.  |
| 15. | A2 | P8  | ↑ 16.61 | Tartous 1987 hoard.   |
| 16. | A3 | P7  | ↑ 17.01 | Numismatic Fine Arts 18, 1987, 354. CSE 407.  |
| 17. | A3 | P8  | ↑ 16.64 | Paris, BN (Seyrig coll. 1973.1.218). FIG. 4   |
| 18. | A3 | P8  | 16.19   | Giessener Münzhandlung 26, 1983, 1533; Numismatic Fine Arts 8, 1980, 340.   |
| 19. | A3 | P9  | ↑ 17.15 | Copenhagen, National Museum: SNG Cop. 267.  |
| 20. | A3 | P10 | 16.72   | Milan, Brera Museum. C. Kùthmann, Münzen als Denkmäler seleukidischer Geschichte des 2. Jahrhunderts vor Chr., Blätter für Münzfreunde und Münzforschung 112, Jan./Feb. 1954, 52; Babelon cxxx; F. Imhoof-Blumer, Monnaies grecques (Leipzig 1883), 433, no. 102. |

The attribution of the tetradrachms to Seleucia was first made by Babelon, who pointed out that the thunderbolt carried by the small Nike must refer to the Zeus Keraunios, the deity worshipped at Seleucia Pieria, Antioch's port city founded by Seleucus I in 300 B.C.<sup>7</sup> Babelon's assignment is also supported by the fact that the tetradrachms do not conform by style, striking technique (they are generally well-centered on unusually large flans) and the absence of monograms with closely contemporary coinage, issued either under Demetrius I or by Alexander, of any other north Syrian city, including the coinage of Antioch itself. Babelon gave no date to the tetradrachms, but it is likely that they were struck soon after Alexander's and Cleopatra's arrival at Seleucia, in 162 S.E. There is no persuasive reason for them to have been produced later. On the other hand, there is good reason for them to have been issued at Seleucia as a propaganda coinage before Alexander's occupation of Antioch the following year<sup>8</sup>, and collateral evidence provided by the bronze coins of Seleucia on the Tigris – where a change in the obverse type seems to have occurred once the issues of Seleucia Pieria became known (below) – also suggests that they were struck at the beginning of Alexander's reign.

The internal chronology of the group is not fully clear. A3 must follow A2, as is indicated by the relative state of wear of the obverse dies of coins nos. 14 and 16, but there is at this time no linkage between A1 and either A2 or A3. A1 may just as well have been cut at the end of the series as at the beginning.

The size of the tetradrachm issue is difficult to judge. The nineteen examples do not constitute a random sample, since at least eight came from only two finds<sup>9</sup>. The

<sup>7</sup> Babelon, cxxix. The attribution has received no scholarly challenge.

<sup>8</sup> Houghton (above n. 6), 157–8. The thunderbolt-bearing Nike may have been intended as a visual metaphor for Alexander's seizure of the city of Seleucia Pieria itself.

<sup>9</sup> An unrecorded Syrian hoard, which first appeared on the market in 1981, included nos. 2, 7, 9, 10 and 11, and perhaps no. 18. Nos. 12, 13, and 15 are from a hoard of principally second century B.C. hellenistic silver issues found near Tartous in 1987, to be published in *Coin Hoards*.

number of recovered coins is, however, quite large, suggesting that they were intended for regular circulation at Seleucia and not as a presentation issue struck only to commemorate a particular event. Nevertheless, the fact that only three obverse dies appear to have been used for the entire group, and that the mint substituted newly cut dies before those in use were more than slightly worn, argues for a relatively short production span for the issue, perhaps of no more than a few months<sup>10</sup>.

The gold stater seems to have been struck at the same time as the tetradrachms, also at Seleucia. The appearance of the young queen, but for the absence of her *kalathos* and the fact that she wears a stephane in addition to the diadem, is exactly as it is on the tetradrachms, including the manner of her hair the details of her earring. Although one might normally suppose that an important gold issue would have come from the central mint of Antioch, the historical circumstances of Alexander's arrival in northern Syria tend to argue against the issuance there of a coin whose obverse and reverse types would have added insult to the injury of a Seleucid citizenry and court already reluctant to accept the authority of a Ptolemaic protégé.

In addition to the tetradrachms of Seleucia Pieria, a number of bronze issues with portraits of Cleopatra and Alexander are known. It is very unlikely that any were struck in the Syrian north, and they have been given to mints in other areas:

## 2. Phoenician or South Syrian Issues

Obv. as nos. 2-20, above, except that the border is dotted.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ Cornucopia, bound with a fillet; dotted border.

21.                   ↑ 7.78   Athens, National Museum.  
 22.                   ↑ 5.31   Paris, BN. Babelon 928. FIG. 5<sup>11</sup>.  
 23.                   ↑ 6.54   London, BM. BMC, 57, no. 1.

Obv. as nos. 21-23.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ Nike striding  $\frac{3}{4}$  r., holding palm branch on l. shoulder and wreath in upraised r. hand; dotted border.

24.                   ↑ 3.20   Paris, BN. Babelon 928 bis<sup>11</sup>. FIG. 6.  
 25.                   ↑ 2.88   New York, ANS.

<sup>10</sup> The likelihood of a fourth obverse tetradrachm die is very low. W. McGovern, Missing die probabilities, expected die production and the index figure, *MN* 25, 1980, 209-223, esp. 214, calculates that given three existing obverse dies of a randomly assembled sample of nineteen coins, the probability that another die may be found is well below one percent. For added discussion of the missing die probabilities, see W. Malkmus, Note on a general solution to the missing die problem, *Journal of the Society for Ancient Numismatics* 17/1, 1986, 15-18.

<sup>11</sup> The weights and die axes of nos. 22 and 24 have been revised by D. Gerin of the Cabinet des Médailles, who has my thanks for the new information.

Nos. 21–23 and 24–25 are stylistically very close and appear to have been struck at the same mint as multiples (*dichalkoi* and *chalkoi*). Their obverses differ considerably from those of the tetradrachms, however. The portraits (or, more correctly, representations – see below) are executed in a dry, academic style, quite unlike the carefully modeled obverses of the tetradrachms; Cleopatra's *kalathos*, symbol of her deification as Tyche (below), is absent; and the veil is pulled forward and rests high on the head in the Egyptian manner and not as it appears on the coins of Seleucia Pieria, where it covers the rear of the head<sup>12</sup>. The weights of 21–23 generally conform to those of contemporaneous bronzes struck at Antioch, but their metrology is ambiguous as to their origin<sup>13</sup>. No provenances are known which might localize them. On the basis of the available evidence, they were likely struck in southern Syria or Phoenicia.

Obv. As 21–23.

Rev. [ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ] ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ Eagle, palm branch behind shoulder, standing l. on plain ground line; dotted border.

26. † 1.61 New York, ANS. FIG. 7.

The reverse type of no. 26 places it at a Phoenician or south Syrian mint, which is not evidently clear. The fact that the eagle stands on a simple ground line suggests that the coin may have been issued at Sidon, for other coastal mints in the area generally placed some symbolic object beneath the bird's talons (at Beirut, a palm branch; at Tyre, a ship's prow; and at Ake-Ptolemais, a fulmen).

Obv. As 21–23.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ Isis headdress; dotted border.

27. † 0.71 New York, ANS. FIG. 8.

<sup>12</sup> G. Le Rider, *L'Enfant-roi Antiochos et la reine Laodice*, BCH 110, 1986, 415, notes the difference between the manner of the veil on the coins of Laodice and Antiochus, son of Seleucus IV, and that of Cleopatra, presumably during her period of sole rule. Her portrait on the tetradrachms of Seleucia Pieria, however, show her veil pulled far back upon her head, in the manner of the Tyche figures of the Syrian north, including the Tyche of Antioch by Eutychedes and the turret-crowned Tyches on the autonomous tetradrachms of Aradus (where the type first appears on this city's tetradrachms of 138/7 B.C.), Seleucia Pieria and Laodicea ad Mare, and in Cilicia on the tetradrachms of Elaeusa Sebaste and Aegeae. As Le Rider notes, citing H. Seyrig, *Ant. Syr.* IV, 18, the Tyches on coins of Phoenicia and Palestine, by comparison, tend to have the veil forward in the Egyptian manner, sometimes caught in the turrets of their crowns.

<sup>13</sup> E. Schlösser, *Multiples and fractions of the Seleucid chalkous of Attic standard*, Proceedings of the 10th International Numismatic Congress, London 1986 (forthcoming), hypothesizing an «Attic» weight system for Antiochene bronzes linked to standard silver issues of that mint. The evidence amassed by J.-M. Doyen, *Les monnaies antiques du Tell Abou Danné et d'Oum al-Marra* (Brussels 1987), however, is clear that the weights of such bronzes do not accord with an Attic standard. See esp. Doyen, 50–54 for a catalogue and analysis of the approximately contemporary bronzes of Antiochus VII.

The Ptolemaic reverse type of the above coin, no. 27, also indicates that it was struck at a city in Phoenicia or southern Syria, perhaps at Ake, where the Isis head-dress appears later on coins of Cleopatra and her son Antiochus VIII<sup>14</sup>. Little more can be said about this very small issue in the absence of other evidence.

#### Eastern Issues: Seleucia on the Tigris

Two bronze issues with the portraits of Cleopatra and Alexander were unearthed in the excavations at Seleucia on the Tigris<sup>15</sup>. Others exist in a number of public collections:

Obv. as nos. 21–23, except that Alexander is in the foreground and heads only are shown.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ Nude Apollo standing l., holding arrow in r. hand and resting l. on bow.

- |     |      |   |
|-----|------|---|
| 28. | 4.33 | Ann Arbor, Kelsey Museum. McDowell, 25 no. 58; Suse, 148. |
| 29. | 2.65 | As 28.  |
| 30. |      | Berlin, Staatliche Museen. Suse, 149.                     |
| 31. | 3.28 | As 30. FIG. 9.  |
| 32. | 3.05 | London, BM.   |

Obv. as nos. 28–32.

Rev. ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ Nike standing l., holding wreath in outstretched r. hand; dotted border.

- |     |      |  |
|-----|------|--|
| 33. | 2.31 | Ann Arbor, Kelsey Museum. McDowell 24, no. 56; Suse, 148. FIG. 10. |
|-----|------|--|

Two coins of the type of nos. 28–33 were excavated at Seleucia. As Le Rider has noted, their fabric and striking technique conform to those used at this city under Demetrius I; their attribution to the province capital of Babylonia is thus likely, if not absolutely certain<sup>16</sup>. Only one example of the type of no. 33 has thus far appeared. While there is little else to sustain the attribution until other examples of known provenance come to light, it is not unreasonable to suggest that it, too, was struck at Seleucia on the Tigris<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> E. T. Newell, *Late Seleucid Mints in Ake-Ptolemais and Damascus*, NNM 84 (New York 1939), nos. 10, 11 and 17.

<sup>15</sup> McDowell, 24–5 and 41–2.

<sup>16</sup> Suse, 149.

<sup>17</sup> Suse, 148.



McDowell has dated nos. 28–33 to the opening years of Alexander's reign<sup>18</sup>, and this is consistent with other evidence. Alexander first appears in the Babylonian records on October 21, 150 B. C.<sup>19</sup>, and it seems clear from these and the coins, which show no discontinuity, that whatever difficulty he may have had in establishing himself at Antioch, his succession in the east was relatively untroubled. It would be consistent for his earliest issues at Seleucia on the Tigris to have been generally related to his first coinage of tetradrachms at Seleucia Pieria, showing as they do the accolade heads of Alexander and Cleopatra, albeit with Alexander in the foreground. These double portrait coins are stylistically very close to earlier bronze issues, also of Seleucia on the Tigris, which show the portraits of Demetrius with his mother, Laodice (see pl. 10, figs. 9 and A), and appear to have been copied directly from them<sup>20</sup>. They would therefore seem to have been produced toward the beginning of Alexander's reign at Seleucia on the Tigris, even before the issues of Seleucia Pieria were available to establish the intended canonical image of the two rulers. Once the preferred type – with Cleopatra in the foreground – became known, a change of obverse (to that shown on no. 33) was ordered.

### *The Portraits*

The coins with the images of Alexander and Cleopatra fall within a small group of such double portrait issues struck under the Seleucids, the larger part of which show representations of Seleucid queens and their sons<sup>21</sup>. The obverses of the tetradrachms of Seleucia Pieria are distinguished from most others by their quality: they are exceptionally fine examples of Hellenistic portraiture, all executed by a single master artist who may also have been employed some four years later to engrave the dies of another special issue of tetradrachms showing on their obverse the head of Zeus and, on their reverse, a thunderbolt<sup>22</sup>. Their first die (A1 here; but perhaps A2: a die link is needed to show which) was almost certainly cut with reference to the subjects themselves. For one matter, they comprise the first major coinage to have been struck under Alexander, and for this reason alone the earliest of their obverse portraits would likely have

<sup>18</sup> McDowell, 41–2.

<sup>19</sup> A. T. Olmstead, *Cuneiform texts and Babylonian chronology*, *Classical Philology* 32, 1937, 12; R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.–A.D. 45* (Chicago 1942), 23–4; Suse, 149, n. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Here, Suse, pl. 27, O (Demetrius and Laodicea) and pl. 29, P (Alexander and Cleopatra), illustrated on pl. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Le Rider (above n. 12) lists the coinages with portraits of Seleucid queens; A. Houghton, *The double portrait coins of Antiochus XI and Philip I: a Seleucid mint at Beroea?* SNR 66, 1987, 79–85, discusses the issues with accolade heads of Antiochus and Philip.

<sup>22</sup> Houghton (above n. 6), 156, although there are certain differences of approach between Seleucia's artist of the double-portrait coins and that city's «Zeus master.»

been taken from life. In addition, the profile and features of Alexander closely accord with those shown on his first coins of the mint of Antioch<sup>23</sup> which generally, if not at all times, seems to have created «standard» coin images for Seleucid rulers, using early dies whose product was then disseminated and replicated elsewhere<sup>24</sup>. Finally, the images themselves – fully modeled examples of numismatic portraiture – have a freshness and vigor which even very good copies rarely show.

The portrait of Cleopatra is also exceptional in that it shows the new queen with the attributes of Tyche: surmounted by a *kalathos*, symbol of deification; with her veil drawn far back behind her face and held just above her hairknot at the rear, more in the manner of other north Syrian Tyches than in the Egyptian; and with, immediately behind her head, a small cornucopia. The metaphor would have been unmistakable: Cleopatra was to be seen as a new Tyche, communicant of fortune to Alexander as the same goddess had been to Alexander's own adversary and predecessor, Demetrius I<sup>25</sup>.

In contrast to the tetradrachms, the obverses of the bronze issues show only the generally recognizable features of a young female and male, with no specific formal relationship to Alexander or Cleopatra themselves (the divergence of Alexander's profile from that appearing on his standard coinages is particularly noticeable. On the Apollo-type bronzes of Seleucia on the Tigris, as has been noted, his features appear much like those of his predecessor, Demetrius I). The «portraits» in these coins are thus best seen as representations only, generic images rather than intended likenesses, evidently rendered without reference to their subjects or to the tetradrachms of Seleucia Pieria, which they do not copy.

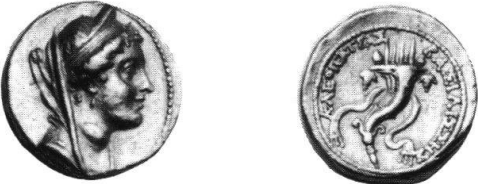
Arthur Houghton  
Washington D.C.

<sup>23</sup> For example, CSE 174–6.

<sup>24</sup> It seems fully reasonable that the great central mint of Antioch would attempt to establish a canonical portrait of the ruler by cutting at first dies with direct reference to the subject, and then copy these early images on subsequent coin dies for its own use while distributing some of its own coin production to other mints as a guide to their die engravers. That this did, in fact, happen can be inferred from the coins of many provincial Seleucid mints, which frequently show the influence of specific Antiochene coin prototypes. Yet the process was, if general, not consistent. During certain periods a major effort appears to have been made to ensure tight control over the ruler's portrait throughout the empire, when portraits on coins of different mints maintained close consistency with each other or were modified at the same time to reflect changes in the ruler's features. At other times, however, broad regional variations, and variations even within the production of a single mint, indicate a more loose, even inattentive, central authority. Although it was nominally the imperial capital, Antioch was not always the imperial center. This remained the Seleucid court, which accompanied the ruler as he travelled and which was, despite its sometimes great distance from the Seleucid heartland, a generative force on Seleucid numismatic portraiture and iconography.

<sup>25</sup> The suggestion that the image of Cleopatra as Tyche may have been intended to counter Demetrius' claim to be Fortune's favorite has been recently proposed by C. Lorber, in an extended discussion of Numismatic Fine Arts Sale 18, 1987, lot 354 f. See also the remarks of T. V. Buttrey, Jr., *Thea Neotera* on coins of Antony and Cleopatra, MN 6, 1954, 95–109, esp. 104, regarding Cleopatra Thea as the first of two «goddesses» of the Ptolemaic-Seleucid line. The form and interpretation of the Tyche figures which appear on the coins of Demetrius are discussed by R. Fleischer, *Die Tyche des Demetrios I. von Syrien*, AA 1986, 699–706.





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Arthur Houghton, The double portrait coins of Alexander I Balas and Cleopatra Thea

