

Quasi-municipal coinage in seleucid apamea : countermarks and counterrevolution

Autor(en): **Hoover, Oliver D.**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Schweizerische numismatische Rundschau = Revue suisse de numismatique = Rivista svizzera di numismatica**

Band (Jahr): **80 (2001)**

PDF erstellt am: **17.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-175753>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Inhalten der Zeitschriften. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern.

Die auf der Plattform e-periodica veröffentlichten Dokumente stehen für nicht-kommerzielle Zwecke in Lehre und Forschung sowie für die private Nutzung frei zur Verfügung. Einzelne Dateien oder Ausdrucke aus diesem Angebot können zusammen mit diesen Nutzungsbedingungen und den korrekten Herkunftsbezeichnungen weitergegeben werden.

Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. Die systematische Speicherung von Teilen des elektronischen Angebots auf anderen Servern bedarf ebenfalls des schriftlichen Einverständnisses der Rechteinhaber.

Haftungsausschluss

Alle Angaben erfolgen ohne Gewähr für Vollständigkeit oder Richtigkeit. Es wird keine Haftung übernommen für Schäden durch die Verwendung von Informationen aus diesem Online-Angebot oder durch das Fehlen von Informationen. Dies gilt auch für Inhalte Dritter, die über dieses Angebot zugänglich sind.

OLIVER D. HOOVER

QUASI-MUNICIPAL COINAGE IN SELEUCID APAMEA:
COUNTERMARKS AND COUNTERREVOLUTION*

PLATES 2-3

In 145 BC the relative peace that the cities of Syria Seleucis had enjoyed since the accession of Alexander I Balas in 150 BC came to a crashing halt. In that year the king lost his struggle with the young Demetrius II Nicator (first reign 145-139 BC) and was murdered by his own officers, leaving Demetrius as the sole ruler of the Seleucid realm.¹ Following his victory, Demetrius began an assault on the remaining partisans of Alexander in an attempt to avoid future treachery.² It is probably against this background of reaction to the government and policies of Alexander I Balas that we should understand an extensive countermarking of quasi-municipal bronze coins originally issued at Syrian Apamea.

Quasi-municipal coins of Apamea

These coins, with a diameter of 20-22 mm, bear the obverse type of Alexander's diademed portrait facing right and the reverse image of Zeus standing left holding a spear and a crested Corinthian helmet.³ The reverse also carries the ethnic legend ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ in the right field and the date, along with a control mark in

Additional literature

BABELON	E. BABELON, <i>Les Rois de Syrie, d'Armenie et de Commagene</i> (Paris 1890).
BMC	BMC <i>Seleucid Kings</i> , unless otherwise stated
CSE	A. HOUGHTON, <i>Coins of the Seleucid Empire from the Collection of Arthur Houghton</i> , ACNAC 4 (New York 1983).
WSM	E.T. NEWELL, <i>The Coinage of the Western Seleucid Mints from Seleucus I to Antiochus III</i> , ANSNS 4 (New York 1941).

* For their generous assistance in providing plaster casts and information on which this article is based, I wish to thank Carmen Arnold-Biucchi of the American Numismatic Society, New York and Dominique Gerin and Andrew Meadows, curators of the national collections in Paris and London. Special thanks are due to Arthur Houghton, Georges Le Rider, Brian Kritt and Ziad Sawaya for their encouragement and comments on the manuscript. All conclusions in this article are the sole responsibility of the author.

¹ Jos. *AJ* 13.112-117; App. *Syr.* 67; Justin 35.2.3-4; Strabo 16.2.8; Diod. 32.9d/10.1

² Diod. 33.4.2-4; Jos. *AJ* 13.5.3. 135-141; 1 Macc. 11.43-51.; E.R. BEVAN, *The House of Seleucus* vol. 2 (London 1902), p. 224.

³ Previous scholars identified the attribute held by Zeus as a scepter (CSE p. 31), but close inspection reveals the presence of a spear head when the shaft does not terminate off the flan.

the left field. The date on the reverse is invariably given as ΓΞΡ (163 SE=150/49 BC). Three magistrates (Α, Δ and Π) are known for the issue.

What appears to be a very rare variant of the reverse type is also known. Here, unlike in the more common series where Zeus stands on a ground line, the god is shown standing on a pile of arms.⁴ While the pose and general appearance of the god is almost identical to that of the Zeus on the common series, the god shown on this rare series was thought by Babelon to be Poseidon, rather than Zeus. He believed that the rod held by the god, which terminates off the coin flan, was actually the shaft of Poseidon's trident and not the spear held by the Zeus of the common series. One also suspects that the identification of Poseidon was also mistakenly informed by the pile of arms which is somewhat similar in appearance to the rock outcropping upon which Poseidon frequently stands or sits in the numismatic art of the Hellenistic age.⁵ The fact that the gods depicted on both the common and rare series of Apamean coins hold crested Corinthian helmets in their right hands seems to suggest that they are both meant to be the same divinity. Since the god on the common series is clearly Zeus it is reasonable to posit that the god of the rare series is also Zeus. Besides, a helmet would be a very peculiar attribute for Poseidon; an *aphlaston*, dolphin, or *patera* would be more likely if Poseidon was intended instead of Zeus.⁶

In addition to the question of the god's identity, the rare series is also notable because although it was struck for the same year as the common series, a different magistrate (ΤΙ) was involved in its production. Also, unlike the common series, which was extensively countermarked with a rectangular punch bearing the symbol of a palm branch, the few examples available from the rare series give no indication that they were subject to the same large scale countermarking. Nevertheless, because there are currently only three known specimens belonging to the rare series it is still possible that countermarked examples may yet come to light.

Quasi-municipal coinages under Alexander I Balas

The reasons for the sudden issue of the two series of quasi-municipal coins at Apamea in 150/49 BC and at no other time in the reign of Alexander I Balas are difficult to ascertain with certainty, but it is clear that it was part of a larger numismatic phenomenon in Syria Seleucis. In the same year that the coins were issued in Apamea, a dated quasi-municipal issue also appears at Antioch-on-the-Orontes. The previous year saw a dated quasi-municipal coinage in Seleucia-in-Pieria and in

⁴ At the time of writing only three examples of the type were known to the author: Babelon 121; British Museum, (1931-4-6-318); A. Houghton collection, AHNS 275.

⁵ For example see E.T. NEWELL, *The Coinages of Demetrius Poliorcetes* (Oxford 1926), pl. VII, 5-8, 16-17.

⁶ Later depictions of Poseidon on the coins of Apamea show the god carrying a dolphin; see BMC Galatia, p. 233, 2.

149/8 BC quasi-municipal coins are struck at Cyrrhus.⁷ Much as at Apamea, each of these cities seem to have issued two series of quasi-municipal coins. While Cyrrhus issued two different denominations identifiable both by weight and reverse type, Seleucia and Antioch seem to have differentiated their two series by placing the date on one and leaving it off the other. An undated series of quasi-municipal coins is also known from Laodicea-ad-Mare, but its chronological relationship to the issues of the other four cities is unclear as no parallel dated series is known from there.⁸

The very existence of the quasi-municipal series begs the question of exactly who gave the authority for its issue. The use of the diademed royal portrait on the obverse might immediately suggest that Alexander I Balas explicitly gave the cities permission to strike the quasi-municipal coinages in the same way that he authorized cities to strike his usual royal bronze and silver issues. But if royal authority is directly behind the quasi-autonomous coinages it is very peculiar that Alexander's name in the genitive case does not appear on reverses to indicate that he is responsible for them. Instead, the ethnic of the city in which the coins were issued can be found where one might otherwise find the name and titles of the king. Because of the presence of the ethnic it seems difficult to see Alexander as the directing force behind the issues.

Previously under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BC) nineteen cities, including Antioch-on-the-Orontes, Seleucia-in-Pieria, Apamea and Laodicea-ad-Mare, struck bronze quasi-municipal coinages bearing the obverse portrait of that king and employing the city ethnic on the reverse.⁹ At first glance it would appear that these coins might provide a parallel for the issues under Alexander I Balas, but unfortunately several facts indicate that the purpose and motivation of the two series were very different. Otto Mørholm came to the conclusion that the quasi-municipal issues under Antiochus were struck under the guidance of the central authority. Without this sort of royal organization it is difficult to explain why the majority of the coins begin to be struck in the same year, 169/8 BC.¹⁰ Nevertheless the reverses are primarily dominated by types chosen by the issuing cities, indicating local input. The purpose of these peculiar issues was probably both to enrich the cities through a part of the profits from the token coinage and to promote civic pride.¹¹ Antiochus IV Epiphanes was well-known for his interest in civic institutions

⁷ Dated issue of Antioch: CSE 176. Undated issue of Antioch: BMC p.56, 63. Dated issue of Seleucia: BMC p. 57, 68-69. Undated issue of Seleucia: SNG Spaer 1484; CSE 410. Dated issues of Cyrrhus: SNG Spaer 1496-1497; BMC p. 56, 59-62; Babelon 905-908.

⁸ SNG Spaer 1495; CSE 447; BMC p.57 67; Babelon 924.

⁹ O. MØRKHOLM, The Municipal Coinages with Portrait of Antiochus IV of Syria, in: Congresso Internazionale di Numismatica, Roma, 1961, vol. 2 (Rome 1965), pp. 63-64; *id.*, Antiochus IV of Syria (Copenhagen 1966), p. 126.

¹⁰ MØRKHOLM 1966 (n. 9), p. 129.

¹¹ O. MØRKHOLM, The Monetary System in the Seleucid Empire after 187 B.C., in: W. HECKEL, R. SULLIVAN (eds.), Ancient Coins of the Graeco-Roman World: The Nickle Numismatic Papers (Waterloo 1984), pp.101-102; MØRKHOLM 1966 (above, n. 9), p. 130.

and took great care to fulfil his duties when in a bizarre turn of events he had himself elected as a city magistrate in Antioch.¹²

None of these important features seem to be readily apparent in the quasi-municipal coinages struck under Alexander I Balas. Unlike the issues under Antiochus, those struck under Alexander do not appear at the various cities in the same year, but rather in a progression of different years.¹³ In addition, they were only struck for single years, as if to commemorate some special occasion. The quasi-municipal coinages under Antiochus IV Epiphanes were series that stretched on for multiple years, rather than momentary issues. It is also difficult to link the issues under Alexander I Balas to some clear royal program of municipal revitalization, since Alexander would not have had much opportunity to formulate such a plan in the immediate aftermath of his victory over Demetrius I Soter in 150 BC. The consolidation of his power would have been a more critical issue for the new king. Likewise, the ancient literary sources imply that Alexander was less than enthusiastic in his concern for the plight of the cities.¹⁴ Thus the civic authorities seem to be the best candidates for the authorizing force behind the quasi-municipal coins with the portrait of Alexander I Balas.

However, although the purposes and motivation of the coinages under the two rulers seem to be dissimilar it is hard to overlook the probability that the cities under Alexander were looking back to the issues under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. By striking similar quasi-municipal coinages to honor Alexander I Balas at the beginning of his reign the cities may have been looking back to the benefits that they had enjoyed under Antiochus IV with the hope that Alexander would continue them. It was a common feature of Hellenistic diplomacy for cities faced with a new king to give evidence of their freedoms under previous rulers and ask for their maintenance.¹⁵ To this end, a link to Antiochus would have served the cities well, since Alexander claimed to be the long-lost son of that well-liked king.¹⁶ Thus

¹² Polyb. 26.1.; Diod. 29.32; Livy, 41.20.1

¹³ They occur at Seleucia-in-Pieria in 151/0, Antioch-on-the-Orontes and Apamea in 150/49 and at Cyrrhus in 149/8 BC.

¹⁴ It is unclear how seriously we should take the allegations of Alexander's debauchery and administrative laziness since the sources (Justin 35.2.2; Joseph, *AJ* 13.108, 112; BEVAN [above, n. 2], pp. 213-214) are so heavily biased against the king. However, it seems certain that he permitted dissolute officials, such as the hated Ammonius at Antioch, to oppress the cities unchecked.

¹⁵ C.B. WELLES, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Age* (New Haven 1934), no. 15; *OGIS* no. 234.

¹⁶ The literary sources generally indicate a widespread opinion that Alexander had appropriated Antiochus IV as his father to aid in his usurpation: App. *Syr.* 67; Livy *Peri.* 52; Justin 35.1.6-7; Diod. 31.32a. Nevertheless, it is possible that he may have been an illegitimate but authentic son of Antiochus IV: BEVAN (above, n. 2), pp. 300-301. He certainly advertised his relationship on royal bronze coins issued at Apamea in 151/0 BC: SNG Spaer 1485-1486; O. MØRKHOLM, *A Posthumous Issue of Antiochus IV of Syria*, NC 1983, pp. 57-63. It is possible that Alexander may also have claimed this association on silver and bronze issues of Antioch, see O. MØRKHOLM, *A Posthumous Issue of Antiochus IV of Syria*, NC 1960, pp. 25-30., although these might actually have been struck during the revolt of Tryphon: TH. FISCHER, *Zu Tryphon*, *Chiron* 2, 1972, p. 210.

it is perhaps no accident that almost all of the gods alluded to on the reverses of the quasi-municipal issues of the Tetrapolitan cities under Alexander are the same as those featured under Antiochus IV.¹⁷

The dates on the coins of the issuing cities under Alexander indicate that the quasi-municipal coinages were struck only for single years, suggesting that they were pieces designed to commemorate some special occasion that fell in the years of their respective issues. Although it is not possible to be certain what prompted the sudden and brief emission of the quasi-municipal coins it seems plausible that they may have been struck in response to an official visit of Alexander to Syria Seleucis, following his marriage to Cleopatra Thea at Ake-Ptolemaïs in 150 BC. Prior to this date Alexander had primarily operated in Coele-Syria where he could count on strong support from Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-145 BC) and the Jews under Jonathan Apphus. Until his death in 151/0 BC, Demetrius I Soter had attempted to maintain northern Syria as a base for waging war against the usurping Alexander I Balas. Thus the period in which the quasi-municipal coins were issued seems to coincide with a time when Alexander might have wished to visit the Syrian cities and reconcile them to their new king.

Diodorus recounts that shortly after the defeat of Demetrius I Soter Alexander was publicly welcomed at Antioch-on-the-Orontes.¹⁸ It would make good chronological sense if this warm reception by the Antiochenes took place in 150/49 BC, the very same year that the quasi-municipal coinage of Antioch was issued. Thus the quasi-municipal coins at Antioch should probably be seen as pieces designed both to commemorate the king's visit and to exert subtle pressure on Alexander to respect the traditional status and rights of the city. If this view is correct then perhaps the other cities that issued quasi-municipal coinages, including Apamea, were also visited by Alexander I Balas as part of some royal tour of inspection. The date of each issue would then indicate the year in which the king visited each city. The similarity of this practice to the later civic custom of honoring visiting Roman emperors with special *adventus* coins is notable.¹⁹

Based on the dates it is possible to reconstruct the order in which the various cities were visited. The royal entourage probably sailed north along the Phoenician coast from Alexander's southern capital at Ake-Ptolemaïs and disembarked at Seleucia-in-Pieria in 151/0 BC, where Alexander may already have had loyal adherents.²⁰ It was perhaps at this point that the other cities of Syria Seleucis were

¹⁷ Under both rulers Poseidon appears at Laodicea-ad-Mare (SNG Spaer 1051-1053, 1495; CSE 447) and Zeus at Antioch and Apamea (SNG Spaer 1008-1015, 1045-1050, 1487-1494). Strangely, at Seleucia-in-Pieria the reverse type under Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a winged thunderbolt (SNG Spaer 1045-1046.) while under Alexander I Balas it was a tripod (SNG Spaer 1484).

¹⁸ Diod. 31.32a.

¹⁹ For *adventus* coins see K. BUTCHER, *Roman Provincial Coins* (London 1988), p. 46; K.W. HARL, *Civic Coins and Civic Politics in the Roman East, A.D. 180-275* (Berkeley 1987), pp. 52-54, 70.

²⁰ For the possibility of Seleucia-in-Pieria as a base already strongly loyal to Alexander I Balas in 151/0 BC see A. HOUGHTON, *A Tetradrachm of Seleucia Pieria at the Getty Museum*, *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal* 10, 1982, p. 157.

alerted to the king's physical presence, for in this year the mint of Antioch suddenly begins to strike tetradrachms in the name of Alexander after a minting hiatus of several months and Apamea issues a bronze coinage in the name of Alexander's supposed father.²¹ From Seleucia-in-Pieria the royal party could have made its way overland to inspect both Antioch-on-the-Orontes and Apamea. A tour of northern Syria Seleucis including Cyrrhus might have taken place in 149/8. Laodicea-ad-Mare could have been visited either on the way to Seleucia-in-Pieria or on the return trip to Ake-Ptolemaïs.

The theory of a special royal tour commemorated by the quasi-municipal coinages is also attractive because otherwise Alexander I Balas seems to have been rather disinterested in the cities of Syria Seleucis. The literary sources indicate that he much preferred to spend his time at his court in Ake-Ptolemaïs and rarely resided at the traditional royal capital of Antioch.²² Instead he left the government of that city and its environs in the hands of Hierax and the same Diodotus of Apamea who would later create himself king Tryphon (142-139 BC).²³

It is notable that in the year after the dated quasi-municipal series is struck at Antioch-on-the-Orontes proper municipal bronze coinages without the portrait of Alexander appear both there and at Seleucia-in-Pieria.²⁴ These somewhat controversial coins struck from 149/8 to 147/6 BC bearing various civic types and the inscription, ΑΔΕΛΦΩΝ ΔΗΜΩΝ, 'of the brother peoples',²⁵ may be seen as an outgrowth of the quasi-municipal series. While Alexander I Balas enjoyed his victory and made appearances in the various cities, he was honored on the quasi-municipal issues, but once he had retired to Ake-Ptolemaïs and had abandoned the north

²¹ A. Houghton earlier suggested that Antioch may not have begun to issue silver for Alexander I Balas until 150/49 BC: HOUGHTON (see previous note), pp. 157-158, but on the basis of die analysis of the Antioch mint (publication forthcoming), he now believes that Antioch in fact began to produce undated tetradrachms in 151/0 after a brief hiatus following the defeat of Demetrius I in the same year: Personal communication, January 10, 1999. For the coins of Apamea see MØRKHOLM 1983 (above, n. 17), pp. 58-63. One has the impression that in the period between the death of Demetrius and the arrival of Alexander in Syria Seleucis at least some of the Syrian cities tried their hand at independence. Apparently earlier in the same year (150/49 BC) that Apamea issued her quasi-municipal series to honor Alexander I Balas the city issued a true autonomous coinage with the types of Tyche and a phalangite (BMC Galatia, p. 233, 1).

²² 1 Macc. 10.67-68; Jos. *AJ* 13.87; BEVAN (above, n. 2), 218 n. 3; J.D. GRAINGER, *The Cities of Seleukid Syria* (Oxford 1990), 156-157.

²³ Diod. 32.9c, 33.3.

²⁴ The fact that the known control marks for this issue are all related to marks employed at the mint of Seleucia-in-Pieria, suggest that Seleucia may have been the sole issuer: G. MACDONALD, *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the Hunterian Collection*, vol. 3 (Glasgow 1905), pp. 141-142; HOUGHTON (above, n. 20), p. 158 n. 22.

²⁵ BMC Galatia pp. 151-152, 1-11. Because these coins are never found at Laodicea or Apamea the view that the coins were a 'league' coinage of all four cities of the Syrian Tetrapolis (BMC Galatia, lviii; Babelon, cvii) is difficult to accept: A.R. BELLINGER, *The End of the Seleucids*, *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences* 38 (June 1949), p. 60, 6; G. DOWNEY, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus I to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton 1961), p. 121.

to his ministers the cities were more likely to gain benefits from appeals to their 'brothers' rather than to the king.²⁶

In addition to these coinages issued by the cities of Syria Seleucis, the Phoenician cities of Byblos, Berytus, Sidon and Tripolis also struck the quasi-municipal bronze coins under Alexander I Balas.²⁷ Although here too cities again resurrected the local types that were popular in the days of Antiochus IV,²⁸ no doubt to impress their new king, it is doubtful that these issues were related to any specific occasion. Sidon had been issuing quasi-municipal coinage in the period between Antiochus IV Epiphanes and Alexander I Balas, as evidenced by the two series struck in that city under Demetrius I Soter.²⁹ Therefore it is clear that for the Sidonians no special impetus, such as the physical presence of the king, was needed to incite them to issue quasi-municipal pieces in the honor of Alexander and the city. An unbroken tradition of striking such coins for Seleucid overlords was already well established there. This custom is also evident at Tyre which issued quasi-municipal coins for both Antiochus IV and Demetrius I, but for unknown reasons appears not to have struck any for Alexander.³⁰

Unlike in Syria Seleucis, where a brief period of royal weakness seems to have resulted in the re-emergence of quasi-municipal issues, many of the Phoenician cities had for some time claimed a degree of autonomy for themselves. Despite the authority of Seleucid kings, cities like Sidon and Tyre continued to feud with one another.³¹ Likewise the old bitter dispute between Aradus and Marathus was permitted to continue unchecked. During the reign of Alexander I Balas, Aradus even

²⁶ For the change in political climate indicated by the ΑΔΕΛΦΩΝ ΔΗΜΩΝ coins see GRAINGER (above, n. 23), p. 157. While it is not impossible that the coins may have been issued by the royal authorities to encourage a league of cities loyal to Alexander (HOUGHTON, above, n. 20, p. 158, n. 22) the complete absence of any direct reference to the king himself makes this possibility seem tenuous. Rigsby's view that the coins do not refer to a proper political league but to a cultural and religious association between Antioch and Seleucia is reasonable although he does not see the failure of Alexander's authority in the north as the impetus for such issues: K.J. RIGSBY, *Seleucid Notes*, TAPA 110, 1980, pp. 242-248.

²⁷ Byblos: SNG Spaer 1500; CSE 701. Sidon: SNG Spaer 1525-1526. An apparently unique quasi-municipal coin bearing the types of Alexander's portrait and the Dioscuri on horseback with the ethnic, ΤΡΙΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ is in the British Museum (BM, inv. P205.N.22).

²⁸ The Dioscuri type at Tripolis and winged Kronos at Byblos under Alexander I Balas were previously employed in these cities under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (CSE 688, 694-696). The Sidonian quasi-municipal coins under Alexander depict a galley, a type obviously related to the images of the stern of a galley and a ship's rudder used on the quasi-municipal issues of Antiochus IV and Demetrius I, respectively (SNG Spaer 1079-1080, 1312).

²⁹ SNG Spaer 1312-1313.

³⁰ It is a peculiar situation since immediately after Alexander I Balas, the quasi-municipal series begins again at Tyre under Demetrius II Nikator in 146/5 BC and continues under Antiochus VII Sidetes. See SNG Spaer 1083-1095, 1314-1348, 1685-1695, 1705-1714, 1718-1725, 2035-2042.

³¹ MØRKHOLM 1966 (above, n. 9), p. 128. On the quasi-municipal coinages of these cities under Antiochus IV each claimed metropolitan status over the other.

tried to hire Seleucid royal troops in order to settle accounts with her neighbour.³² Such violent inter-city rivalry would have been unheard of in the more tightly controlled Syria Seleucis.

It has already been shown that the quasi-municipal coins of Sidon issued under Alexander I Balas were part of this Phoenician tradition of semi-autonomy. Thus it seems reasonable to suspect that the issues of Tripolis and Byblos were struck as part of this local milieu of relatively free cities rather than in association with the developments in Syria Seleucis. Although the coins of Byblos and Berytus are found bearing the dates SE 162 (=151/0 BC) and SE 163 (=150/49 BC) respectively, this should not be taken as evidence that they were intended as commemorative pieces of the same kind as the issues of the Syrian cities. The quasi-municipal coins of Byblos are relatively rare and the dated issue of Berytus is apparently unique,³³ making it impossible to know for certain whether or not they were part of a larger dated series.

*The palm countermark on Apamean quasi-municipal issues
and Demetrius II Nicator*

In 147 BC the young Demetrius II arrived in Syria Seleucis with a mercenary army and crushed both Alexander I Balas and Ptolemy VI Philometor near Antioch-on-the-Orontes.³⁴ Following this victory, Demetrius II, styling himself as Nicator, «the conqueror», embarked upon a purge of Alexander's old adherents. He, or the mercenary commanders who surrounded him, seem to have been concerned about the loyalty of the Syrian army to the new regime. Almost as soon as Demetrius was on the throne he took the ill-advised step of attempting to disband and disarm the troops who had served the Seleucid house for generations, which inevitably led to violence in the cities.

When all the soldiers stationed in Antioch were «sent away, each to his own place (ἴδιος τόπος)»³⁵ the Antiochene citizens announced their displeasure in their customary manner: by rioting.³⁶ Demetrius would have none of this sort of civic freedom and immediately crushed the rioters with mercenary archers firing into the streets from elevated positions.³⁷ In Laodicea-ad-Mare the life of the citizen was severely hampered by what Josephus loosely describes as «random outrages» perpetrated by Demetrius and his officials.³⁸ Unfortunately, there is little solid evidence for exactly what may have taken place in Apamea during this troubled period, but the speed with which the city joined the revolt of Diodotus Tryphon

³² Diod. 33.5; GRAINGER (above, n. 26), p. 159.

³³ At the time of writing the only dated example from Berytus known to the author was in the private collection of B. Kritt.

³⁴ Diod. 32.9d; 1 Macc. 11.17-18.

³⁵ 1 Macc. 11.38.

³⁶ Diod. 33.4.2-4; GRAINGER (above, n. 26), p. 156.

³⁷ Diod. 33.4.2-4; Jos. AJ 13.5.3. 135-141; 1 Macc. 11.43-51.

³⁸ Jos. AJ 13.7.1.

and Antiochus VI Dionysus seems to suggest that it did not remain untouched by Demetrius' heavy hand.³⁹ Because Apamea with its surrounding towns was the major Seleucid arsenal and military settlement in Syria,⁴⁰ it may very well have been the ἴδιος τόπος to which many of the disaffected soldiers had returned. Bearing these facts in mind, it seems plausible to suggest that the rectangular countermark with the symbol of a palm branch, which is applied to most examples of the common series of quasi-municipal coins at Apamea, may actually be related to a crack-down by officials of Demetrius that were concurrent with the disturbances in Antioch and Seleucia.

Although the palm branch was a common symbol denoting victory in the Hellenistic world it may also have been intended to represent the authority of the new king, who was himself, Nicator. Dated tetradrachms of 146/5 BC issued for Demetrius II Nicator at Antioch have a palm branch as an adjunct symbol, apparently referring to his victory over Alexander I Balas.⁴¹ However, when the symbol is applied to the quasi-municipal coins of Apamea, it is also highly suggestive of Demetrius' attack on the city's traditional freedoms and status.

While countermarks were commonly used in the Seleucid kingdom to signify a change in value or to indicate the acceptability of a foreign coin,⁴² the palm branch countermark that frequently appears on the common Apamean issue seems to make more of a political than an economic statement. The countermark is frequently found applied directly over the ethnic, ΑΠΑΜΕΩΝ, as if its main purpose was to obliterate the name of the citizen body on whose behalf the coins were originally issued. By countermarking in this fashion the local privileges and rights of the Apamean citizen body are symbolically erased.⁴³ It is notable that on occasions when the countermark is not applied on top of the ethnic it usually covers or is placed near to the helmet held by Zeus. As we have already mentioned, Apamea was the main Seleucid arsenal in Syria and contained a citizen body composed

³⁹ Apamea was already coining for the boy king and his keeper in the summer of 144 BC: A. HOUGHTON, *The Revolt of Tryphon and the Accession of Antiochus VI at Apamea*, SNR 71, 1992, p. 134.

⁴⁰ App. Syr. 57; Strabo 16.2.7-11.

⁴¹ SNG Spaer 1598-1600; CSE 214-215, 217-220. Although palm branch adjunct symbols appear on the bronze issues of Alexander I, Demetrius II and Tryphon at Antioch the fact that it also appears on the tetradrachms of Demetrius suggests a special significance for that king. Antioch did not commonly use symbols on tetradrachms as mint identifiers, see HOUGHTON (above, n. 39), p. 123, in this period and therefore it is most likely that the palm branch is a reference to Demetrius' victory. The tetradrachm series dated to 146/5 BC but without the palm branch must predate the victory and the series of 146/5 with the palm branch symbol.

⁴² WSM, p. 101; H. SEYRIG, *Antiquités Syriennes*, Syria 35, 1958, pp. 193-194; D. DRAGANOV, A. HOUGHTON, W. MOORE, *Four Seleucid Notes*, AJN 5-6, 1993-94, pp. 59-68.

⁴³ An earlier parallel for this sort of *damnatio memoriae* countermarking is the case of mint magistrate ΘΕΜ who operated in Antioch-on-the-Orontes between 278 and 268 BC. At some point he seems to have fallen into disrepute, for his monogram is frequently found obliterated by an anchor countermark: WSM, p. 111, 949-953.

largely of military personnel. Blotting out the helmet could be seen as nothing less than an affront to the proud military character of the city.⁴⁴

This pattern of political countermarking would seem to conform with the violently anti-Syrian military stance of Demetrius II Nicator. He wished to completely abolish the power of the military class in Syria and attempted to accomplish this dream by disbanding the army. It is not hard to believe that a king so desperate to rid himself of the army of his fathers might also have tried to disband the city that belonged to the soldiers, even if only symbolically. The military explanation also accounts for the fact that none of the quasi-municipal coinages issued by the other cities seem to have been countermarked in this manner. While Demetrius certainly treated Antioch and Laodicea harshly, his true fear was the army and the military capital. Thus only Apamea had the name and symbol of her citizens blotted out by Demetrius' palm branch.

It is notable that when Diodotus Tryphon proclaimed Antiochus VI as king and raised the disaffected soldiers in revolt against Demetrius, his numismatic badge was a Macedonian helmet.⁴⁵ Ultimately Demetrius II Nicator was not able to erase the Apameans from the coinage any more effectively than he was able to obliterate the old military class that made up the Syrian army of his forefathers.

⁴⁴ The proper municipal issues of Apamea in the second and first centuries BC frequently allude to the martial character of the city with images of phalangites, war elephants or the goddess Nike: BMC Galatia pp. 233-234, 1, 5, 7.

⁴⁵ H. SEYRIG, Notes on Syrian Coins, ANSNNM 119 (New York 1950), pp. 7-9. While it has been correctly pointed out that Tryphon's helmet does not resemble the Corinthian helmet held by Zeus, see A. HOUGHTON, The Seleucid Mint of Mallus and the Cult Figure of Athena Magarsia, in: Studies in Honor of Leo Mildenberg, A. HOUGHTON *et al.* (eds.), (Wetteren 1984), p. 99 n.18, there seems to be no good reason to think that Tryphon may not have had *both* local Apamean sensibilities in mind and those of the disturbed Graeco-Macedonian military class at large when he chose the emblem. Even the epithet that he created for Antiochus VI seems to have been given with a nod to Apamea. It can hardly be coincidence that the king proclaimed first in Apamea, a city which employed Bacchic symbols as civic emblems (Houghton, above, n. 39, pp. 123-124), should have the epithet, *Dionysus*.

Catalogue

Common Series of Apamea Quasi-Municipal Bronze Coinage under Alexander I Balas
(unless otherwise specified, all controls are Δ)

<i>Die</i>	<i>Axis</i>	<i>weight</i>	<i>Countermark</i>	<i>Location</i>
A1 P1	2.00	8.75	Countermark over ethnic	London: BMC 64.
A1 P1	12.00	7.94	Countermark over monogram	New York, ANS (1944-100-77045).
A1 P1	12.00	9.25	Countermark to l. of helmet	Paris: Babelon 917a.
A1 P2	2.00	8.45	No countermark	Copenhagen SNG 276.
A1 P3	12.00	7.66	Countermark in l. field	Paris, BN (Y28045a).
A1 P3	12.00	8.20	Countermark in r. field	London, BM (1931-4-6-297, L.A. Lawrence).
A1 P3	12.00	7.03	Countermark over ethnic	New York, ANS (1944-100-77046).
A1 P3	12.00	7.10	No countermark	New York, ANS (1948-19-2410).
A1 P3	2.00	8.34	Countermark over ethnic	Washington, D.C.: CSE 443.
A1 P5	12.00	8.40	No countermark (Δ)	Paris, Babelon 913.
A1 P5	12.00	7.26	No countermark (Δ)	Washington, D.C., CSE 442.
A2 P1	12.00	7.17	Countermark in upper l. field	London: (BM 1931-4-6-299, L.A. Lawrence).
A2 P1	12.00	8.63	Countermark over ethnic	New York: O. Hoover Collection.
A2 P6	12.00	8.01	No countermark (☞)	London, BM (1931-4-6-298, L.A. Lawrence).
A2 P6	12.00	7.56	Countermark to r. of helmet (☞)	Jerusalem, SNG Spaer 1493.
A2 P7	12.00	7.09	No countermark (☞)	New York, ANS (1992-54-1731).
A2 P7	12.00	6.80	2 countermarks over helmet (☞)	Paris, Babelon 920.
A2 P7	12.00	8.91	Countermark over helmet (☞)	Jerusalem, SNG Spaer 1494.
A3 P1	12.00	7.56	Countermark in l. field	Beirut, Banque du Liban (anc. coll. Nehmet Tabet).
A3 P1	2.00	8.54	No countermark	London, BMC 65.
A3 P1	2.00	6.60	Countermark over spear	Paris, Babelon 912.
A3 P1	12.00	7.35	Countermark over date	Paris, Babelon 915.
A3 P1	12.00	8.40	Countermark in r. field	Paris, Babelon 916.
A3 P1	12.00	7.89	Countermark in l. field	Paris, BN (Y28045b).

<i>Die</i>	<i>Axis</i>	<i>weight</i>	<i>Countermark</i>	<i>Location</i>
A3 P1	12.00	7.54	Countermark to r. of helmet	Washington, D.C., CSE 441.
A4 P1	12.00	7.29	Countermark over ethnic	New York, ANS (1944-19-2411).
A4 P1	12.00	8.64	Countermark over helmet	New York, ANS (1954-203-342).
A4 P1	12.00	7.70	Countermark over ethnic	Paris, Babelon 914.
A4 P2	12.00	8.15	No countermark	New York, ANS (1944-100-77044).
A4 P2	12.00	7.55	Countermark to r. of helmet	Paris, Babelon 917.
A4 P3	12.00	7.81	No countermark	Jerusalem, SNG Spaer 1487.
A4 P3	12.00	7.39	No countermark	Jerusalem, SNG Spaer 1488.
A4 P3	12.00	9.05	Countermark to r. of helmet	Jerusalem, SNG Spaer 1489.
A4 P3	12.00	8.55	Countermark over ethnic	Jerusalem, SNG Spaer 1490.
A4 P3	12.00	8.26	Countermark over ethnic	Jerusalem, SNG Spaer 1491.
A4 P3	12.00	8.47	Countermark over ethnic	Jerusalem, SNG Spaer 1492.
A4 P3	12.00	8.00	No countermark	Paris: Babelon 918.
A4 P4	12.00	7.25	No countermark	London, BM (1874-7-15-364 Feuarent).
A5 P1	12.00	6.90	No countermark	Paris, Babelon 919.
A5 P3	12.00	7.41	No countermark	New York, ANS (1961-154-311).
<i>Uncertain dies</i>				
	12.00	7.57	Countermark in lower l. field	Maryland, B. Kritt Collection.
	2.00	8.30	No countermark	Maryland: B. Kritt Collection.
	12.00	9.15	No countermark	Washington, D.C.: AHNS 645.
	12.00	6.90	No countermark	Guy Clark Internet Sale GB 211 (Nov. 1999)
	12.00	7.79	Countermark	Guy Clark Internet Sale (Nov. 1999)

<i>Die</i>	<i>Axis</i>	<i>weight</i>	<i>Countermark</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>Rare Series of Apamea Quasi-Municipal Bronze Coinage under Alexander I Balas</i>				
A6 P1	2.00	8.49	No countermark	London, BM (1931-46-318, L.A. Lawrence)
A6 P2	12.00	6.80	No countermark	Paris, Babelon 921.
A6 P2	12.00	7.51	No countermark	Washington, D.C.: AHNS 275.

Zusammenfassung

Bei der Gottheit, die auf den quasi-städtischen Münzen Apameas unter Alexander I. Balas dargestellt ist, handelt es sich viel mehr um Zeus als um Poseidon. Die Gruppe, die nur mit dem Datum Jahr 163 (= 150/149 v.Chr.) vorkommt, stellt eine seleukidische *adventus*-Emission dar und bezieht sich auf Alexander Balas Einzug in die Stadt anlässlich der Rundreise des neuen Königs durch die Provinz Seleukis vom Jahr 150 v.Chr. Auf die gleiche königliche Rundreise beziehen sich auch die quasi-städtischen Emissionen anderer Städte dieses Reichsteils mit Daten 151, 150 und 149 v.Chr. Im Gegensatz zu den andern quasi-städtischen Bronzemünzen unter Balas sind diejenigen von Apamea häufig mit einem Gegenstempel in Form eines Palmzweigs versehen. Da diese Stempel oft den Stadtnamen überdecken, sind sie möglicherweise nach der Niederlage Alexanders von den Anhängern des Demetrios II. Nikator angebracht worden, als Teil der politischen und militärischen Repressionen, die Demetrios Apamea gegenüber anwandte.

Oliver D. Hoover
78 Ewen Road
L8S 3C5 Hamilton, Ontario
Canada

Key to Plates 2–3

Plate 2

Countermarked bronze coins from Apamea

Plate 3

- 1 Antioch. Demetrius I Soter. Tetradrachm (ANS 1944.100.75312)
- 2 Antioch. Quasi-municipal issue under Alexander I Balas (ANS 1959.187.12)
- 3 Cyrrhus. Quasi-municipal issue under Alexander I Balas (ANS 1944.100.78146) 9 Antioch. Antiochus VI. Dionysus
- 4 Antioch. Quasi-municipal issue under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (ANS 1961.173.1)
- 5 Apamea. Quasi-municipal issue under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (ANS 1944.100.77043)
- 6 Seleucia-in-Pieria. ΑΔΕΛΦΩΝ ΔΗΜΩΝ issue (ANS 1944.100.74986)
- 7 Sidon. Quasi-municipal issue under Alexander I Balas (ANS 1944.100.77305)
- 8 Antioch. Demetrius II Nicator. Tetradrachm showing palm branch (ANS 1944.100.76510)
- 9 Antioch. Antiochus VI. Tetradrachm (ANS 1951.98.11)
- 10 Antioch. Diodotus Tryphon. Drachm (ANS 1977.158.692)



A 1



P 1



A 1



P 3



A 2



P 6



A 2



P 7



A 3



P 1



A 4



P 2



A 5



P 1



A 6



P 5

Rare Series



A 4



P 4



A 6



P 2



Oliver Hoover, Quasi-Municipal Coinage in Seleucid Apamea

