

Kings and their Coins, an introduction to Hellenistic Greek Numismatics.

Money ≠ Coinage



■ Money:

- a store of wealth
- medium of exchange
- a measure of value
- a means for making payment
- culturally biased

■ Coinage

- Particular kind of money
- a piece of metal
- stamped by issuing authority
- definite weight or value



Coinage Traditions

- Greek → spreads from India to Britain
- Chinese → East Asia
- Within a century of one another, but entirely separate traditions

- Electrum coinage in Ionia mid 7th C to the mid 6th C



- Last half (or last quarter) of 6th C introduction of Silver coinage

Function of Early Coinage

- Mercenary pay?
- State payments?



Electrum, Gold and Silver

- c. 547 most production of Electrum coins is abandoned in favour of Silver and Gold coinage
- Greek cities states prefer coinage in Silver

Spread of Coinage

- By 500 BC coinage was produced in Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Sicily and hellenized areas in the Persian empire

Coin value and Coin size

- Could these coins have been used in every day market transactions?
- Smallest electrum coin: $1/96^{\text{th}}$ of a stater weighs c. 0.15 g
- Smallest Athenian silver fraction: $1/16^{\text{th}}$ of an obol weighs .044g

Coin Names (based on a tetradrachm)

Metal	Denomination	Relational Value to Base Weight
AV	Distater	2
	Stater	(base weight)
	Hemistater	1/2
AR	Oktodrachm	2
	Tetradrachm	(base weight)
	Didrachm	1/2
	Tridrachm	1/3
	Drachm	1/4
	Tetrobol	1/6
	Hemidrachm (Triobol)	1/8
	Diobol	1/12
	Obol (Tetrartemorion)	1/24
	Tritartemorion	1/32
	Hemiobol	1/48
Æ	Tetrachalkon	4
	Dichalkon	2
	Chalkous	(base weight)
	Hemichalkon	1/2

Some Greek Coinage Weights

Unit	Greek name	Equivalent	Attic/Euboic Standard	Aeginetic Standard
obol	ὀβολός		0.72g	1.05g
drachma	δραχμή	6 obols	4.31g	6.3g
mina	μνᾶ	100 drachmae	431g	630g
talent	τάλαντον	60 minae	25.86 kg	37.8 kg

5th Century Athenian Prices

Ship	5 talents
Bread	1 obol
4 litres of Olive Oil	3 drachmae
Woollen cloak	5 – 20 drachmae
Jury duty pay	3 obols a day

Gold vs. Silver

■ Gold

- High value
- International Exchange
- Persian gold darics, Lampsacen and Cyzincene gold
- Macedonian under Philip II and Alexander III

■ Silver

- “local”
- “identity”
- Market economy

Why make coins?

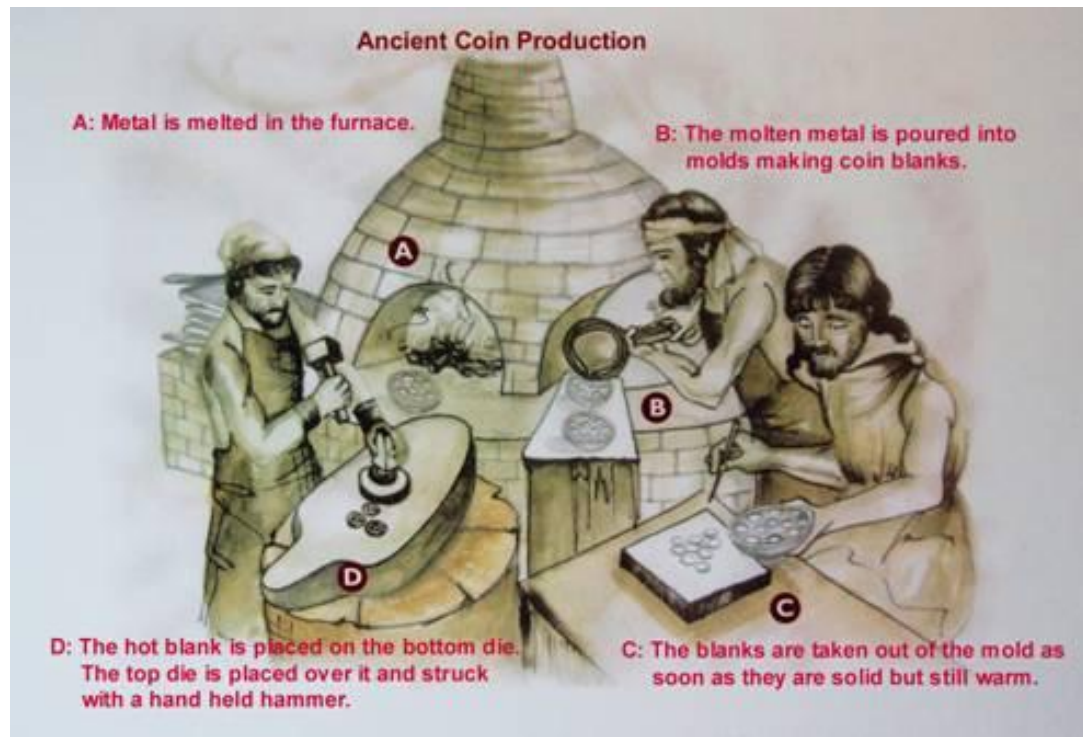
- State expenditure
- Individuals bringing money to a mint to have it turned into coinage
- Currency exchange (for places with a closed monetary system) (cf. Austin 1981: 410-11)
- Which denominations to mint?
 - Small change?

Other factors

- Profit
- Pride
- Politics
- Keep supply for exchange, payment of taxes and external trade

Making a coin

- Production of blanks
- Carving of dies
- Striking of coinage



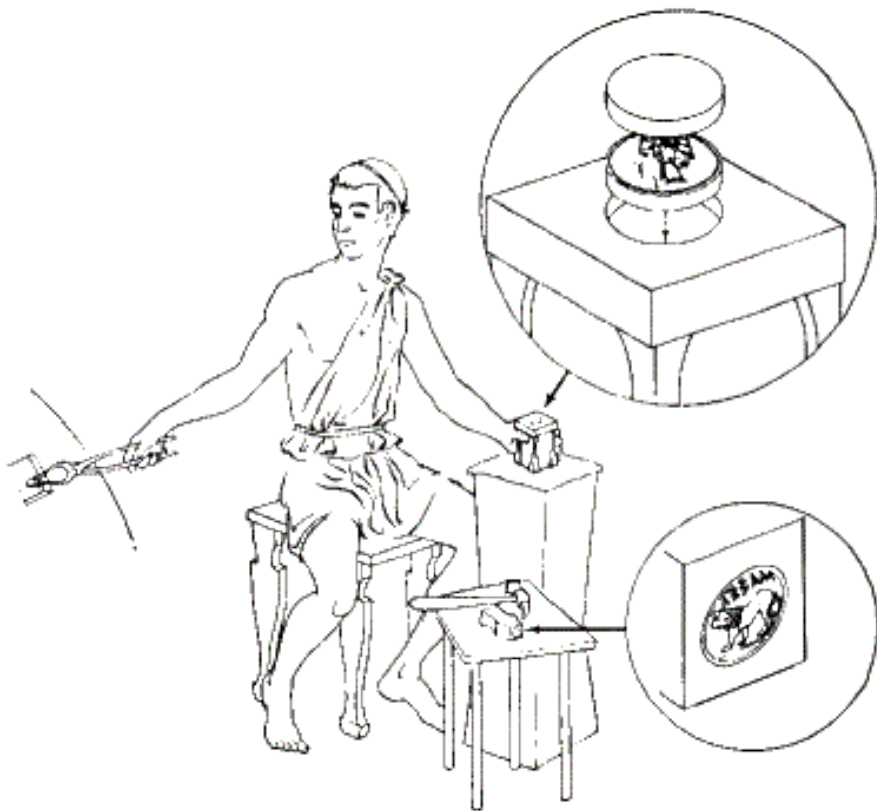
Production of blanks

- Various possible processes
 - Casting
 - Cutting

Die carving



Striking a coin



Making a mint

- http://www.1001images.com/filmogrf/MA10_frappemonnaie/frapper/monnaie.html

Profit

- Closed-monetary system exchange
 - e.g. Ptolemaic Egypt
- Exchange of coinage
- Devaluation



Religious Iconography on Seleukid coinage

Major themes

- Connection to Alexander (all successors)
- Legitimacy -> Alexander
- Legitimacy -> Gods
- Personal Symbols

Alexander and Seleucus

Connections to Alexander



Ptolemaic Satrap issue
(Ptolemy I)



Ptolemaic Gold issue
(Ptolemy II)



Silver Issue of Demetrios



Silver Issue of Lysimachus

Legitimacy through a Deity and Alexander

- Lysimachus:
 - Close personal claims to Alexander
 - Replication of Alexander Motifs
- Seleukos I:
 - Lacks close ties of Ptolemy and Lysimachus to Alexander
 - Repetition of Alexander Motifs
 - Move to Apollo

Alexander to Seleukos



Drachm of Seleukos



Tetradrachm of Seleukos I



Tetradrachm of Seleukos I



Seleucus and Apollo

Seleukos to Antiochos



Why Apollo?

- Apollo does not appear to make an appearance in Seleukid propaganda until around 288/7.
- Prior to 288, the coin images are mostly modifications of Alexander's coin issues, featuring mainly Zeus and Athena.

Questions Raised?

- Why does Apollo replace Zeus around 288?
 - If Zeus is the syncretistic god *par excellence* then in a polyglot kingdom do you choose an potentially complicated god?
- If Apollo is a syncretistic form, then to what gods is he connected and why are the important for the Seleukids?

Possible Solutions?

- Connections to Didyma?
- The Babylonian/North Syrian God Nabu?
- Apollo-Mithras?
- Archer as Persian King

Apollo Didymeus

Seleukos' Connection to Apollo

Justin 15.4.2-7

Seleukos' valour also was distinguished, and his origin was miraculous. His mother Laodike, it seems, after she had been married to Antiochos, a distinguished general of Philip's, dreamed that she conceived by sleeping with Apollo, and that, having been made pregnant, she was given a ring by the god as a reward for the sex. Its stone was engraved with an anchor. Apollo bade her give it to the son she was to bear. The discovery of a ring with the same engraving in the bed the next day made it clear that the vision had been miraculous, as did the appearance of the sign of the anchor on the thigh of the tiny Seleukos himself. Therefore Laodike gave the ring to Seleukos as he was setting out on the Persian campaign with Alexander the Great, and she told him about his origin. - *Ogden Translation*

Huius quoque virtus clara et origo admirabilis fuit; 3 siquidem mater eius Laodice, cum nupta esset Antiocho, claro inter Philippi duces viro, visa sibi est per quietem ex concubitu Apollinis concepisse, 4 gravidamque factam munus concubitus a deo anulum accepisse, in cuius gemma anchora sculpta esset; iussaque donum filio, quem peperisset, dare. 5 Admirabilem fecit hunc visum et anulus, qui postera die eiusdem sculpturae in lecto inventus est, et figura anchorae, quae in femore Seleuci nata cum ipso parvulo fuit. 6 Quamobrem Laodice anulum Seleuco eunti cum Alexandro Magno ad Persicam militiam, edocto de origine sua, dedit. 7 Ubi post mortem Alexandri occupato regno Orientis urbem condidit, ibi quoque geminae originis memoriam consecravit.

Seleukos, Apollo, and Didyma

- **Welles RC 5.1-7**

“King Seleukos to the council and people of Miletus greetings. We have sent to the sanctuary of Didymean Apollo, in the care of Polianthes, the great lamp and gold and silver cups which are inscribed, in dedication to the Saviour Gods.”

Βασιλεὺς Σέλευκος Μιλησίων τῇ βουλῇ/ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ χαίρεν· ἀφεστάλκαμεν εἰς/ τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος τοῦ ἐν Διδύμοις/ τὴν τε λυχνίαν τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ποτήρια/ χρυσᾶ καὶ ἀργυρᾶ εἰς ἀνάθεσιν τοῖς θεοῖς/ τοῖς Σωτήρσι κομίζοντα Πολιάνθην, ἐπι/ γραφὰς ἔχοντα.

- **Diodoros 19.90.3**

“for, when he had consulted the oracle in Branchidae, the god had greeted him as King Seleukos, and Alexander standing beside him in a dream had given him a clear sign of the future leadership that was destined to fall to him in the course of time.” *Loeb Translation*

ἐν μὲν Βραγχίδαις αὐτοῦ χρηστηριαζομένου τὸν θεὸν προσαγορεῦσαι Σέλευκον Βασιλέα, τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον καθ’ ὕπνον ἐπιστάντα φανερώς διασημᾶναι περὶ τῆς ἐσομένης ἡγεμονίας, ἧς δεῖ τυχεῖν αὐτὸν προϊόντος τοῦ χρόνου.

Babylonia

Antiochos I and Apollo

- Dedication to Nabu at Borsippa (Ezida)
(temple complex related to Babylon)
- Creation of “Seleukid” Apollo coin motif

Antiochos I Cylinder from Borsippa

(O) *Nabû*, (titles).... may the overthrow of the countries of my enemies, the achievement of my battle-wishes against my enemies, permanent victories, ***just kingship***, a happy reign, years of joy, children in satiety, ***be (your) gift for the kingship of Antiochus and Seleucus, the king, his son, for ever.***

Prince Nabû, (titles)... may my days be long, my years many, my throne firm, ***my reign long-lasting, under your lofty scepter which sets the boundary between heaven and earth.*** May my good fortune be in your pure mouth, may I conquer the countries from sunrise to sunset, may I gather their tribute with my hands and bring (it) for the perfection of Esagila and Ezida.

Images of Apollo-Nabû?



Apollo/Nabû with
Cithara from
Dura Europas



Roman Apollo
playing the
Cithara



Bronze Coin of
Molon showing
Apollo with
Cithara

Assyrian King Worshipping Nabû



Images of Apollo-Nabû?



Seal from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris



Tetradrachm of Antiochos I
from Seleucia-on-the-Tigris

Archer King?

Datames Coinage



Arsaces I



PDC 10907

Mithradates I



Continuity and the end

Seleukid Coinage



Antiochos II



Seleukos II



Seleukos III

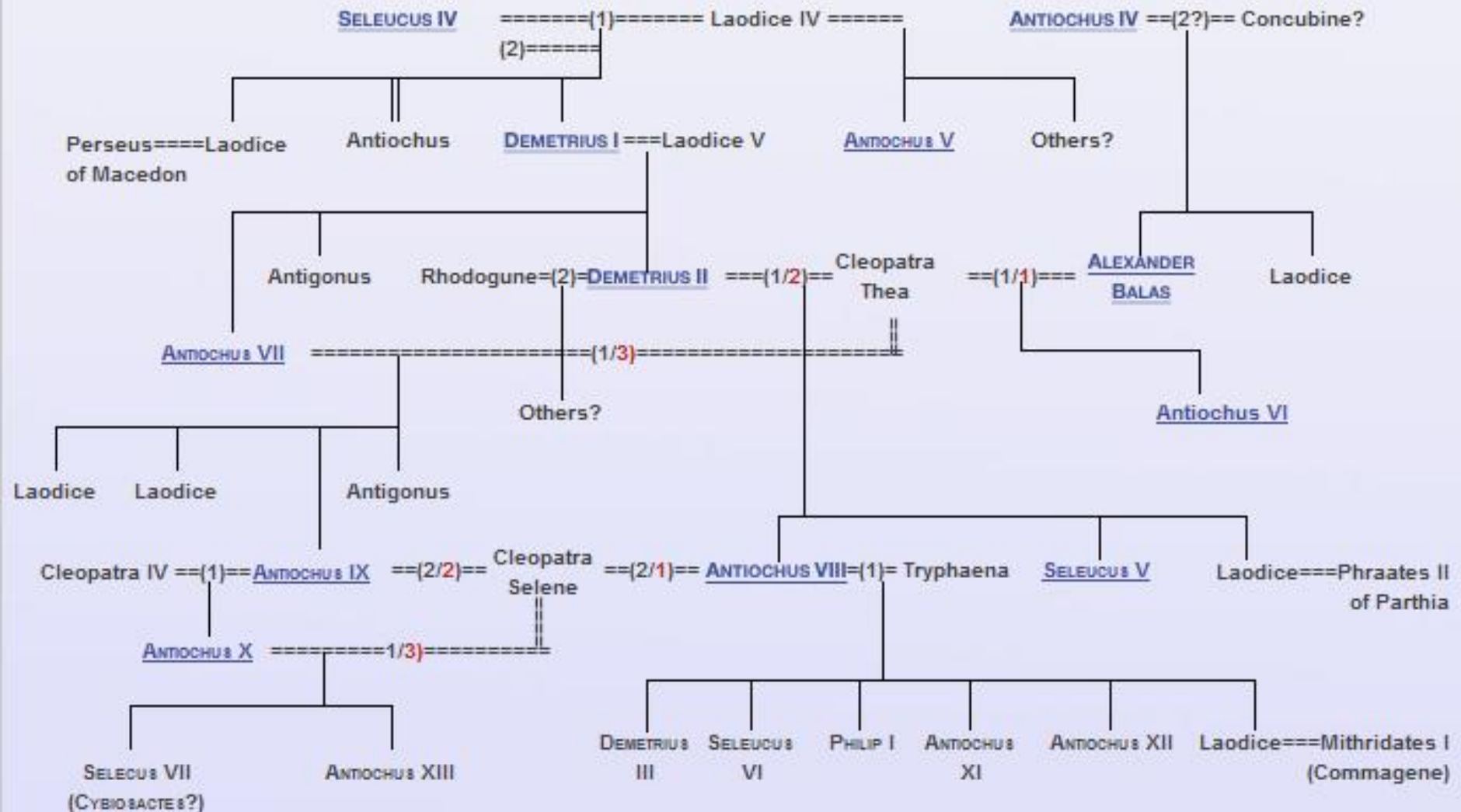


Antiochos III

Antiochos IV



The Later Seleukids



A family division



Alexander Balas



Demetrios I