

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
XIVth INTERNATIONAL NUMISMATIC CONGRESS
GLASGOW 2009

I

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
XIVth INTERNATIONAL NUMISMATIC CONGRESS

GLASGOW 2009

Edited by
Nicholas Holmes



GLASGOW 2011



International Numismatic Council



British Academy



University of Glasgow | The Hunterian

All rights reserved by
The International Numismatic Council

ISBN 978-1-907427-17-6

Distributed by Spink & Son Ltd, 69 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4ET
Printed and bound in Malta by Gutenberg Press Ltd.

THE ‘ROYAL ARCHER’ AND APOLLO IN THE EAST: GRECO-PERSIAN ICONOGRAPHY IN THE SELEUKID EMPIRE

KYLE ERICKSON AND NICHOLAS L. WRIGHT

The ‘Apollo seated on the omphalos’ coin type served as the dominant Seleukid silver reverse image from the reign of Antiochos I until that of Seleukos IV (**Pl. I, 1-2**). Furthermore, the mints among the Iranian populations east of the Tigris – Susa, Antioch-on-the-Persian Gulf, Ekbatana and a further as yet unidentified mint – maintained a strict continuation of the ‘Apollo on the omphalos’ type for their silver issues under Antiochos IV and V, Demetrios I and Alexander I. Apollo continued to dominate in this area until the Parthian conquest in the late 140s BC despite the iconographic reforms undertaken by both Antiochos IV and Demetrios I in the west.¹ Indeed, early Parthian issues adapted the seated Apollo type for their own use – modified only slightly to take the form of a bearded, diademed archer seated on the omphalos. The coinage of the first two Parthian kings, Arsakes I and Arsakes II (c.238-191 BC) depicted a royal archer seated on a throne or diphros. However, in the period following their renewed independence from the Seleukids – under Mithridates I (171-138 BC), Phraates II (138-127 BC), Artabanos I (127-124 BC) and Mithridates II (123-88 BC) – the archer on the reverse of Parthian silver coinage appropriated Apollo’s omphalos as his seat of choice.²

The Parthian adaption of the seated Apollo type may help to elucidate the continued use of Apollo as the sole Seleukid silver coin type in the east. There seems to have been a broad tradition in the east which saw a depiction of the ‘archer’ as the preferred iconography for coinage – from the sigloi and darics of the Achaemenids and Alexander, through the ‘Apollo on the omphalos’ of the Seleukids to the ‘bearded archer on the omphalos’ under the Parthians. Under the Achaemenids, a massive quantity of silver (sigloi) and gold (darics) was struck at the mint of Sardes bearing the royal Achaemenid type of the running archer wearing the tiara (**Pl. I, 3-4**). Compared to the extensive finds of sigloi hoards in Anatolia, finds east of the Taurus mountains are limited, and Carradice’s suggestion that Achaemenid regal coinage was orientated towards the coin-using populations of the Hellenised west is well founded.³ However, these coins did travel beyond Anatolia with a number of published hoards, including from Egypt, the Levant, Mesopotamia and even east of the Tigris.⁴ South of the Taurus, along the Mediterranean coast and as far inland as Manbog, semi-autonomous silver ‘satrapal’ issues were struck depicting a variety of themes, but these do not seem to have been produced in quantities comparable to sigloi, nor do they seem to have travelled as extensively.

Acknowledgements:

The authors wish to thank the following for their assistance in the completion of this paper: Vesta Curtis and Amelia Dowler of the British Museum, Ken Sheedy of the Australian Centre for Ancient Numismatic Studies (ACANS), Daniel Ogden of University of Exeter and Laura Wright. All errors remain our own. Images were kindly provided by ACANS, the British Museum, Classical Numismatic Group Inc. and Numismatik Lanz München.

¹ The continued use of the Apollo type in Iran may be connected with an understanding of Apollo as the Hellenised Mithras as shown at Nemrud Dağ (Sanders 1996, pp. 184-7, 197-9, 225-6, 237-40; Moormann and Versluys 2002, p. 87). However, there is no record of any earlier syncretic

association between Apollo and Mithras and it is unclear to what extent the Nemrud Dağ figures represented established deities and how much was the personal innovation of Antiochos I of Kommagene.

² Shore 1993, nos. 5-20, 24-7, 29 (Mithridates I), 40-55 (Phraates II), 57-65 (Artabanos I), 66-76 (Mithridates II).

³ Carradice 1987, pp. 92-3.

⁴ Egypt: *IGCH* 1654, 1656; *CH* VIII 44*, 57. The Levant: *IGCH* 1481, 1482, 1483; *CH* I 14, 21; *CH* VI 4; *CH* VII 28*; *CH* VIII 45, 126, 143*, 153*; *CH* IX 363. Mesopotamia: *IGCH* 1747*, 1748; *CH* VIII 90*, 188. The upper satrapies: *IGCH* 1791*, 1792, 1822*, 1830*, 1831; *CH* IX 343. Only those entries marked with an asterisk contained more than five sigloi.

It is almost certain that the crowned archer depicted on sigloi and darics was intended to be understood as an image of the king.⁵ Following Alexander the Great's occupation of Babylon, he established a workshop that continued the output of darics and double darics with only a more naturalised style and the introduction of Greek letters or monograms to distinguish the Babylonian issues from their Sardiote forebears (**Pl. I, 5**).⁶ The Macedonian king was depicted on the darics in the guise of the royal Achaemenid archer, regardless of the fact that he did not physically conform to the image in reality. Alexander produced his own usual tetradrachms as an imperial series in parallel with the daric issues in Babylon and it may be in the eastern satrapies that we can also trace the initial misunderstanding of Alexander's favoured Herakles obverse type as a depiction of the king himself. The continuity of the Alexander type under Seleukos I and briefly under Antiochos I played into the traditions established under the Achaemenids of a constant 'royal' image as the main coin type. In this case, it was the continued usage of the Herakles head that was understood to be the 'portrait' of the king.⁷ From the reign of Antiochos I, the reverse Apollo/archer imagery provided a continuity of royal ideology through six generations of Seleukid rule in Iran.

While the Achaemenid royal coinage does not present an exact parallel to the 'Apollo on the omphalos' type, it may form a lens through which to view this image in Seleukid Iran. However, a series of satrapal coins produced in Kilikia during the period of the Satrap's Revolt (369-361 BC)⁸ provide a clear antecedent. While the obverse type conformed to the Kilikian satrapal type of the bearded Ba'alstars enthroned on a diphros, the reverse featured a bearded archer similarly enthroned to right. The figure wears typical Median/Persian dress with tiara, trousers, a sleeved-cloak and arm guards. The figure examines an arrow held in both hands. A bow stands in the lower right field while the upper field is filled with the winged disc of Ahura Mazda.⁹ The Aramaic reverse legend reads Trkmw or Tarkumuwa, a Luwian name of some antiquity (**Pl. I, 6**).¹⁰

As this coinage clearly draws on the Iranian elements of the winged-disk and the royal archer, it reflects and interprets Achaemenid propaganda to further the issuer's message.¹¹ The presence of Ahura Mazda precludes the identification of the archer as a deity and he must, therefore, represent Persian power in the form of the king or of a revolting satrap. In this instance, the latter is perhaps a more favourable conclusion owing to the accompanying legend which identifies the reverse figure just as the obverse legend identifies Ba'alstars. Moysey argues that the imagery attempts to legitimate Datames' [*sic*] revolt from the Persian King in terms of Persian iconography.¹² By usurping the image of the royal archer and associating himself with Ahura Mazda, Datames/Tarkumuwa could portray his part in the satraps' revolt (whatever it may have been) as legitimate activity. The established timeframe places the coins approximately eighty years before the introduction of the Seleukid Apollo type. Kilikia was a long distance from the Persian heartland and although the Tarkumua coins were clearly minted to demonstrate Persian royal power, it is difficult to determine how the iconography would have been received in Persia itself. Tarkumuwa's archer can be taken to represent a Persian king owing to the accompanying Zoroastrian sub-type, the common representation of the king as archer and the adoption of a similar type by the Parthian royal house after 238 BC. It seems likely that if the Seleukid court came across this imagery they would have

⁵ For comparative material see the king at prayer in the Persepolis reliefs and the many Achaemenid seals depicting the archer-hero/king in battle (eg. St Petersburg 19499, British Museum ANE129571 and ANE1932-10-8,192).

⁶ Carradice 1987, pp. 86-8.

⁷ Smith 1988, p. 1; Sheedy 2007, pp. 15-6.

⁸ Comparative obverse types issued by Pharnabazos in the 370s and Mazaïos sometime before 350 confirm a date within that timeframe (Harrison 1982, pp. 321-336).

⁹ SNG vol. 3, 3050 Lockett Collection; SNG vol. 1, 335 Newnham Davis Coins.

¹⁰ Houwink Ten Cate 1965, pp. 126-8, 166-9; Moran 1987, EA 31. The identity of the issuer has proved controversial, see Nöldeke 1884, p. 298; Six 1884, pp. 114-7; Harrison 1982, pp. 321-36; Bing 1998, n.55; Casabonne 2001.

¹¹ Root 1979, pp. 116-118.

¹² Moysey 1986, p. 20.

understood it in a similar fashion and may have adapted it for their own purposes.

The similarities between the Tarkumuwa archer and the Seleukid 'Apollo on the omphalos' are striking and although there are significant differences between the coin types, these are not so great as to prevent a similar interpretation for both. The most important difference is that the Seleukid Apollo is either nude or lightly draped whereas the Tarkumuwa archer is dressed in Persian attire. The difference of dress in the two images poses a significant barrier in identifying their ideological messages in the same way. The nudity of Apollo might inhibit any Iranian from identifying the image as the Persian royal archer because of their negative views on nudity and its associations with Greece. However, if the Iranian audience understood that the archer image was a reflection of the abstract concept of royal power while accepting the rule of a 'Greek' king, it should have been possible to make the connection between the two image types. The 'Apollo on the omphalos' coins were issued by a Seleukid administration which consistently chose a Greek manner of representation, but this should not have precluded Iranians from viewing the iconography as the *interpretatio graeca* of an established royal type.

A second distinct difference is the object upon which the archer sits. The Seleukid Apollo generally sits on an omphalos while the Tarkumuwa archer sits on a diphros. The omphalos is important in reflecting Apollo's mantic qualities for the Greek audience. However, it seems to have lost this importance in the eastern interpretation of the image. In fact the Parthian coinage which at first featured the image of an archer seated on a diphros ultimately replaced the stool with the Seleukid omphalos. This suggests that the two images had become interchangeable in Iran by the Parthian period. That during the Parthian period the figure's seat was an insignificant factor in the iconography and could be replaced without changing the central meaning of the type is further evidence that the Seleukid Apollo is the likely antecedent for the Parthian archer type. Further significant differences between the coin types which might interfere with our hypothesis include the lack of the Zoroastrian winged disk sub-type and the position of the archer's bow. The winged-disk has clear significance as it identifies Ahura Mazda's support for the seated figure. As the Seleukids did not claim their right to rule from Ahura Mazda, it is not surprising that the winged-disk does not appear on any of their coinage.¹³ However, the lack of the winged-disk should not prevent the identification of the seated figure as royal. There is ample Parthian evidence that suggests that the seated archer can be identified with a king without the presence of the winged-disk. Where the bow of the Tarkumuwa archer appears to have been placed in the field at the foot of the figure, the Seleukid Apollo rests his left hand in a naturalistic manner on the bow which stands upright behind him. This manner is reminiscent of Persian iconographic traditions in which the king holds the bow by the end with the string turned towards him rather than away from him.¹⁴

The link between the 'Apollo on the omphalos' coinage and the Tarkumuwa archer coinage is reinforced by the appearance of comparative iconography on Parthian coinage from the reign of Arsakes I (c.238-211 BC). The Parthian kings established their legitimacy based on their perceived connection to the Achaemenids, and one method for advertising this claim was the recreation of Achaemenid satrapal type coinage. This is an interesting choice if the Tarkumuwa coinage was minted as an act of rebellion from the Achaemenid king. However, any original intention behind the production of this coinage as an expression of rebellion appears to have been lost by the Parthian period, perhaps through Seleukid interpretations of the coinage as representations of

¹³ This may also reflect a desire by the Seleukids not to encroach on the religious territory of the Zoroastrian priests, who appear to have been largely left alone to develop their religion without interference or state sponsorship, cf. Hjerrild 1990, pp. 144-147.

¹⁴ For a comparison between Persian and Assyrian bows, see Root 1979, pp. 167-168. Under Antiochos II a variant of the 'Apollo on the Omphalos' type appears in which Apollo holds a bow instead of an arrow see Pl. I, 2.

the reigning king. Therefore, it seems highly likely that the Parthian numismatic iconography was not directly descended from the Tarkumuwa type, issued briefly in Kilikia more than a hundred years previously, but rather that the image was filtered through a Seleukid lens of the Apollo on the omphalos iconography.

As the Parthian empire emerged at the expense of Seleukid territory, it is certain that they were acquainted with Seleukid coin types in circulation during the mid-third through second centuries BC.¹⁵ The most prominent type during this period was the ‘Apollo on the omphalos’ image produced under Antiochos I and II. The first Parthian king, Arsakes I, began to issue coinage after he defeated the rebellious Seleukid satrap Andragoras around the beginning of the reign of Seleukos II. As discussed, the coins that Arsakes I minted were similar to both the Tarkumuwa coinage and the Seleukid ‘Apollo on the omphalos’ type.¹⁶ The similarities between the Parthian and Seleukid coin types is noteworthy given that the coinage of the independent Greco-Bactrian kings departed radically from the Seleukid model even during periods of vassalage.¹⁷ Perhaps, because during the reign of Seleukos II Apollo on the omphalos was replaced by a standing Apollo, the Parthians felt able to create a distinctive coinage that drew on Seleukid models and royal iconography without appearing too closely aligned to the coinage of the reigning Seleukid king. Moreover, the familiarity of type would have aided the acceptance of the new Parthian coinage by a wider audience. If the coinage was accepted among the Iranian populations as representative of a seated king then a Persianised version of this king would fit more neatly with Parthian royal ideology.

The reverse of the Arsakes I coinage featured a figure seated on a diphros wearing a tiara with cheek flaps, a long-sleeved cloak and trousers (**Pl. I, 7**). Curtis suggests that the closest parallel for the long-sleeved coat was the Tarkumuwa seated archer, as the cloak is not a typical feature of Parthian dress.¹⁸ She views the adoption of trousers as a significant departure from Hellenistic practice, specifically citing Alexander’s refusal to adopt Persian trousers in Plutarch’s *Vita Alexandri* (45.1-3).¹⁹ The royal tiara which is worn by both the Parthian king on the obverse and the archer on the reverse identifies the two figures as the same individual. The clothing on the figure emphasises its eastern attributes, clearly marking a difference between the Irano-Parthians and Greco-Seleukid nudity. The clothing on the Parthian figure marks a return to Iranian rule. An interesting development of the Parthian manifestation of this type was the replacement of the diphros with an omphalos during the reign of Mithridates I (c.171-138),²⁰ which suggests an awareness of the similarities between the Parthian and Seleukid counterpart types (**Pl. I, 8**). Another early Arsakid departure from the Tarkumuwa coinage saw the Parthian archer un-bearded. This feature may be related to the early Hellenistic preference for un-bearded royal imagery instigated by Alexander. Indeed Arsakes I himself is clean shaven on the obverse, which illustrates a significant inheritance from a Seleukid rather than Achaemenid prototype. A further similarity between the Parthian and Seleukid types is the positioning of the feet of the seated figure. On the Tarkumuwa coinage, the archer’s feet are parallel as if seated stiffly on the diphros. The Seleukid Apollo pulls his right leg back so that his foot rests against the omphalos in a more naturalistic fashion, a posture adopted by the Parthian archer whether on diphros or omphalos.

The seated archer on Parthian coinage is often interpreted as the image of the king or of royal power in the manner as the running archer on Achaemenid sigloi and darics and the seated archer produced by Tarkumuwa. It is plausible to interpret the Seleukid use of Apollo in the same man-

¹⁵ For example, see the use of the title Θεοπάτωρ on Parthian coinage as a deliberate echo of the coinage of Alexander I Balas, see: Gariboldi 2004.

¹⁶ Shaw 1993, nos. 1-3.

¹⁷ Holt 1999, pp. 94-106; Houghton and Lorber 2002, nos. 628-37.

¹⁸ Curtis 1998, p. 66.

¹⁹ Curtis 1998, pp. 66-67.

²⁰ Shore 1993, nos. 5-20, 24-7, 29.

ner. This suggestion demonstrates the broad potential for the understanding of the Seleukid Apollo outside of a restrictive Greek interpretation. Under Antiochos I the Seleukids created an image of royal authority that could be broadly recognised across the entire empire, thereby implying that the Seleukid court was aware of the various iconographic traditions of the empire's subjects. Furthermore, this shows that the 'Apollo on the omphalos' image was not part of an attempt to impose an entirely Greek image on the empire, but rather it presented a message that the subjects of the kingdom were under the rule of a Greek king who was aware of local traditions and ideologies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CH I-X = *Coin Hoards*, vols. 1-10 (1975-2008), London.

IGCH = Thompson, M. / Mørkholm, O / Kraay, C.M. (1973), *An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards*, New York.

Bing, J.D. (1998), 'Datames and Mazaeus: The iconography of revolt and restoration in Cilicia', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 47(1), pp. 41-76.

Carradice, I. (1987), 'The "regal" coinage of the Persian empire', in: Carradice, I. (ed.), *Coinage and Administration in the Athenian and Persian Empires: the Ninth Oxford Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History*, Oxford, pp. 73-95.

Casabonne, O. (2001), 'De Tarse à Mazaka et de Tarkumuwa à Datâmes: D'une Cilicie à l'autre?', in: Jean, É. / Dinçol, A.M. / Durugönül, S. (eds.), *La Cilicie. Espaces et pouvoirs locaux (2^e millénaire av. J.-C. – 4^e siècle ap. J.-C.): Actes de la Table ronde internationale d'Istanbul, 2-5 novembre 1999*, Paris, pp. 243-63.

Curtis, V.S. (1998), 'The Parthian Costume and Headdress', in: Wiesehöfer, J. (ed.), *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse: Beiträge des internationalen Colloquiums, Eutin (27.- 30. Juni 1996)*, Stuttgart, pp. 61-74.

Gariboldi, A. (2004), 'Royal ideological patterns between Seleucid and Parthian coins: the case of Θεοπάτωρ', in: Rollinger, R. / Ulf, C. (eds.), *Commerce and Monetary Systems in the Ancient World: Means of Transmission and Cultural Interaction*, Munich, pp. 366-84.

Harrison, C.M. (1982), *Coins of the Persian Satraps*, PhD diss. University of Pennsylvania.

Hjerrild, B. (1990), 'The survival and modification of Zoroastrianism in Seleucid times', in: Bilde, P. / Engberg-Pedersen, T. / Hannestad, L. / Zahle, J. (eds.), *Religion and Religious Practice in the Seleucid Kingdom*, Aarhus, pp. 140-50.

Holt, F.L. (1999), *Thundering Zeus: the Making of Hellenistic Bactria*, Berkeley.

Houghton, A. / Lorber, C. (2002), *Seleucid Coins: a Comprehensive Catalogue: Part I: Seleucus I through Antiochus III*, New York.

Moormann, E.M. / Verslyus, M.J. (2002), 'The Nemrud Dağ Project: first interim report', *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 77, pp. 73-111.

Moysey, R.A. (1986), 'The silver stater issues of Pharnabazos and Datames from the mint of Tar-

sus in Cilica', *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes* 31, pp. 7-62, plates 1-5.

Nöldeke, T. (1884), 'Review of P. Krumbholz, *De Asiae minoris satrapis persicis*', *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeiger* 8, pp. 290-300.

Root, M.C. (1979), *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art: Essays on the Creation of an Iconography of Empire*, Leiden.

Sanders, D.H. (1996), *Nemrud Dağı: the Hierotheseion of Antiochos I of Commagene* (2 vols.), Winona Lake.

Sheedy, K.A. (2007), 'Magically back to life: some thoughts on ancient coins and the study of Hellenistic royal portraits', in: Sheedy, K.A. (ed.), *Alexander and the Hellenistic Kingdoms: Coins, Image and the Creation of Identity*, Sydney, pp. 11-16.

Shore, F.B. (1993), *Parthian Coins & History: Ten Dragons against Rome*, Quarryville.

Six, J.P. (1884), 'Le satrap Mazaios', *Numismatic Chronicle* 4, pp. 97-159.

Smith, R.R.R. (1988), *Hellenistic Royal Portraits*, Oxford.

PLATE I



1. Seleukid AR tetradrachm – Antiochos I, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris mint (CNG electronic auction 204, 11th Feb. 2009, lot 18).
2. Seleukid AR tetradrachm – Antiochos II, Magnesia-on-the-Meander mint (CNG MBS 79, 17th Sept. 2008, lot 415).



3. Achaemenid AR siglos, Sardes mint (Numismatik Lanz München Auction 144, 24th Nov. 2008, lot 327).
4. Achaemenid AV daric, Sardes mint (ACANS Westmorland coll. no.32).
5. Macedonian AV double daric, Babylon mint (ACANS Westmorland coll. no.26).



6. Kilikian AR stater – Tarkumuwa, Kilikian mint (British Museum 1888,1208.6).
7. Arsakid AR drachm – Arsakes I, Rhagai-Arsakeia or Nisa mint (CNG Electronic auction 113, 11th May 2005, lot 54).
8. Arsakid AR tetradrachm – Mithridates II, Seleukeia-on-the-Tigris mint, (CNG Triton XII, 6th Jan. 2009, lot 395).