New Light on Coin Production under Seleucus II in Northern Syria, Commagene, and Mesopotamia

The author relocates Uncertain Mint 42 from Mesopotamia to, probably, northern Syria; reattributes tetradrachms and related drachms previously given to Seleucus III to Seleucus II at a new mint (the “.coin”) that probably operated west of the Euphrates River; separates Mints 40A and 40, which were previously considered as a single facility; and attributes two tetradrachms to the so-called. Mint which likely operated in the general region of Commagene or Mesopotamia. The picture that the new material makes raises fundamental questions about the purpose of Seleucus’ mints in the upper Euphrates area.

Since the publication of Seleucid Coins (SC1, SC2), new coins of Seleucus II (245–late 225 BC) have appeared to improve our understanding of the complex production of money under this Seleucid ruler. Recently M. Andersen has published a tetradrachm that expands the coinage of Uncertain Mint 37 in Mesopotamia. New material now makes it clear that Uncertain Mint 42, originally considered to be a Mesopotamian facility, must be placed further to the west, probably in Syria. Tetradrachms previously given to Seleucus III (225/4–223 BC) should now be reattributed to Seleucus II, along with related drachms, at a mint that probably operated west of the Euphrates River; new issues now help identify a facility that was previously associated with Seleucia on the Tigris but which should be relocated to Mesopotamia or northern Syria; review of Mints 40A and 40 indicates these mints

1 The dates of Seleucus’ reign are discussed in SC1: 657–658.
2 Andersen 2011.
must be separated; and two tetradrachms should now be given to the so-called M Mint, which likely operated in the general region of Commagene or Mesopotamia. The picture that the new material makes raises fundamental questions about the purpose of Seleucus’ mints in the upper Euphrates area.

1. Uncertain Mint 42 Reconsidered

SC1: nos. 731.1–2, attributed two tetradrachms of Seleucus II to a mint that was probably located in Mesopotamia west of Nisibis, named for convenience Uncertain Mint 42, and associated a hybrid coinage of Seleucus III with the same facility. Two new tetradrachms (nos. 2 and 3, below) and two new drachms (nos. 9 and 10) have now appeared, suggesting the need for a reconsideration of the issues of Mint 42 overall.3

Tetradrachms

Obv.: Diademed head of Seleucus II r., with short curly sideburn, both diadem ends falling downward from the tie; dotted border.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ on r.; ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ on l. Apollo standing l., testing arrow and resting l. elbow on tall tripod; no border.

SC1: no. 731: In outer l. field, ¶ (no r. field control).

A1


Obv.: Diademed head of Seleucus II r. with the features of Seleucus III, with short curly sideburn; one diadem falls downward, the other rises behind the head; dotted border

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ on r.; ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ on l. Apollo standing l., testing arrow and resting l. elbow on tall tripod; no border.

SC1: no. 936.1: In outer l. field, ¶; in outer r. field, Σ.

A2


3 In this article, obverse dies are numbered sequentially; reverse dies are numbered sequentially within each group.
Coin Production under Seleucus II

SC 936.2: In outer l. field, Σ; in outer r. field, Κ.
5. A2 P1 15.50 g. SNG Lockett 3111. Pl. 3, 4.

SC 936.3b: In outer l. field, Κ; in outer r. field, Κ.

A3

Drachms

Obv.: Head of Athena in Corinthian helmet r.; dotted border.

Rev.: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ on r.; ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ on l.. Apollo standing l., holding arrow with r. hand and resting l. on bow; no border.

SC Not: In outer l. field, Κ (? partly off flan); in outer r. field, Κ.

a1

a2
10. a2 p2 13.45 g. Pavel Pavlou VCoins Store, Feb. 2011, item 3250.

Outer r. control partly off flan.

SC 684.1: In outer l. field, Κ; in outer r. field, Ω.

a3
11. a3 p1 13.58 g. CSE 1148; SNG Spaer 474. Pl. 3, 7.

SC 684.2: In outer l. field, Σ; in outer r. field, Ω.

12. a3 p2 13.96 g. Berlin, Münzkabinett. WSM 547b. Pl. 3, 8.

Nos. 4–8, Tetradrachms of Seleucus II

The attribution of tetradrachms nos. 4–8 to Seleucus III in SC1 was based on the view that the portrait represented that ruler, and that at least one other mint (Smyrna) seemed to have issued coins of the types of Seleucus II during the reign of his successor. The attribution now must be revised. Not only are the tetradrachm

4 Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, obj. no. 18216314. I am grateful to Karsten Dahmen for the plate image and for confirming the left control, which corrects SC.

5 SC1: 266. Seyrig 1973: 20, noted the “singular” resemblance of the portrait on A1 to Seleucus III, speculating that the associated reverses may represent a survival of Seleucus II’s
reverses standard for Seleucus II, but the linking drachms carry obverse and reverse types that are known to have been struck only under the former king. The blocky features of the portrait can be attributed to an idiosyncratic die engraver, whose work also appears on a stater (below).

Sequence of Issues

The first tetradrachms of Mint 42 are die and control linked; their order is clear from the relative wear of the two coins. They are closely associated with the following issues, nos. 4–8 by their common control, which also has no reverse border; unfortunately, die links that would clearly establish the relationship are lacking. Tetradrachms 4–8 (Groups 2–4), now carry a second control in the right field. The single recorded coin of Group 2 is both die and control linked to those of Group 3, and is linked by to the tetradrachms of Group 4. The controls of the fourth tetradrachm issue appear on the previously unrecorded drachms, nos. 9–10, which are stylistically closely related to drachm 11 with . Drachm no. 11 is connected through both a die link (a2) and the right control to the final drachm, no. 12. The engraver who cut the two drachm dies was arguably, if not evidently, the artist who worked on the two tetradrachm dies of Groups 2–4.

Character of the Mint

From the evidence of the still relatively few known coins of Mint 42, the production of money at this facility appears to have been relatively orderly, beginning with the issuance of coins from a tetradrachm die that was replaced when it wore out. Then, later, in connection with the third and fourth tetradrachm issues, producing drachms of the Athena/Apollo type. The dies of the known tetradrachms and drachms of Mint 42 are vertically adjusted throughout.

Mint Location and Date

SC1 proposed that Mint 42 was probably located in Mesopotamia, west of Nisibis. This view must now be revised. The absence of any coins of Mint 42 in the known contents of the Seleucus III hoard, which included numerous issues that must have originated in Mesopotamia, suggests in itself that the mint’s area of diffusion was not in that region. At the same time, the fact that three coins of this mint—all tetradrachms—were found in a 1970 hoard that Henri Seyrig credibly identified as having come from Asia Minor or northern Syria, indicates that the mint should probably be located in the north Syria area—west of the Euphrates in any case. It should be noted that no coins of Mint 42 occurred in the Meydancikkale hoard, type into the reign of his successor, as occurred at Simyra. Chronological evidence provided by cuneiform documents now suggests that the Simyra issue was produced by Seleucus II rather than Seleucus III. See Hoover 2006: 45–46

6 The “Commerce (Seleucus III hoard), 2002” described in SC2.2: 142–150, is referred to as the “Seleucus III hoard” throughout this article.
which would then appear to exclude Cilicia or western Syria as the locus of the mint.

If the Group I tetradrachms were in fact the earliest of the series, the mint would appear to have opened after the initiation of Seleucus’ early coinage with his clean-shaven portrait. With the material known, it is not possible to accurately judge the duration of the mint.

A Related Stater?

The following stater, which appeared in a European sale of the 1950s, but was not listed in SC, is evidently the product of the same engraver who cut the dies of tetradrachm nos. 3–7:

*Obv.*: Diademed head of Seleucus II r., with horn (?) in front of ear and short curly sideburn; one diadem end falls downward, the other rises behind the head; dotted border

*Rev.*: ὉΛΙΟΣ ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ on r.; ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ ΛΙΟΣ on l. Apollo standing l., holding arrow with r. hand and resting l. on bow; in outer l. field, Γ (or Ρ or Ρ’); no border.


The comparison of the stater’s obverse with those of tetradrachms 3–7 (see Pl. 3, 4–5) is exact. The head has the same blocky features, the hair is rendered similarly, and the diadem is shown in the same manner, with one end falling downward, the other rising behind the head. The horn or lock of hair that appears to the right of the ear, which appears on no other issues of Seleucus II, is a characteristic only of the stater, not of the tetradrachms. The stater’s only control, Γ (or Ρ or Ρ’ — the form is not clear), does not appear on any of the coins listed above, and an attribution to Mint 42 is possible but not certain. The coin has no apparent link to any other mint at this time, and the best that can be said is that it, too, was probably the product of a mint located in Commagene, Mesopotamia, or possibly northern Syria. Despite the anomalous portrait, the stater’s workmanship is quite accomplished.

Seleucus II issued staters across the kingdom, but few have been recovered for the regions between Syria Seleucis and his Iranian mints.

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7 A similar horn appears on certain bronze issues of Antiochus III struck at Susa: SC1: nos. 1218–1219.
8 See as examples SC1: nos. 723 (Mint 39), 726 (Mint 40), and 729 (tentatively attributed to Mint 41). SC1: no. 720, with a portrait that has full proportions that echo those of the stater discussed here, was found in three uncirculated examples in a Persian hoard, and may also be from an eastern mint.
2. An Early Mint in Syria or Mesopotamia

On the basis of style and a linking control, \( \zeta \) (or \( \zeta_\lambda \)), SC1 attributed two tetradrachms of Seleucus III and one of Antiochus III (nos. 942 and 1195) to an Uncertain Mint 52 that was believed to have operated near and under the influence of Seleucia on the Tigris in Babylonia. SC2: Ad182–183 assigned three tetradrachms and two drachms of Seleucus II to the same mint, retaining the suggestion that the mint may have been a subsidiary of Seleucia. Review of the material, however, now indicates the coins of Seleucus II are likely to be products of a mint that operated in the area Commagene or Mesopotamia and was probably not associated with Mint 52. For convenience, the facility that issued these coins is here designated as the \( \zeta \) Mint. The known coins of the \( \zeta \) Mint include the following issues:

Series I, portrait without facial hair

Tetradrachms

*Obv.*: Diademed head of Seleucus II r., clean-shaven, both diadem ends fall, then rise behind the neck; dotted border.

*Rev.*: \( \text{ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ} \) on r.; \( \text{ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ} \) on l. Apollo standing l., testing arrow and resting l. elbow on tall tripod; dotted border.

\( SC2, \text{Ad182.2} \): Rev. In outer l. field, \( \zeta \); in outer r. field, \( \zeta \).

1. A1 P1 \( \uparrow17.04 \text{g.} \) CSE2: no. 194. Seleucus III 2002 hoard. Pl. 4, 10.

\( SC2, \text{Ad182.1b} \): Rev. In outer l. field, \( \zeta \); in outer r. field, \( \zeta \).

A2


4. A2 P1 \( \uparrow16.86 \text{g.} \) Sotheby’s, 30 Apr. 1958 (Haughton), lot 152.

5. A2 P2 \( \uparrow16.47 \text{g.} \) NAC 59, 4 Apr. 2011, lot 1681.

Drachms

*Obv.*: As above.

*Rev.*: As above.

\( SC2, \text{Ad183.1.} \) To outer l., \( \zeta \); to outer r. \( \zeta \).
Note: a1 of nos. 6–8 = a1 of nos. 9–10, below, with sideburn added.

6. a1 p1 ↑4.07 g. Argenor Numismatique, 3 May 2006, lot 162. Pl.4, 12.

7. a1 p1 ↑4.10 g. London. Naville 10, 15 June 1925, lot 917. WSM 210B.

8. a1 p1 ?? Commerce. Seleucus III hoard.

Series II, portrait with sideburns

A. With Two Controls

Drachms

Obv.: Diademed head of Seleucus II r., with short sideburn; dotted border.

Rev: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ on r.; ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ on l. Apollo standing l., testing arrow and resting l. elbow on tall tripod; dotted border.

SC2: Ad183.2: Rev. To outer l., Π; to outer r. ☐.

Note: a1 of nos. 9–10 = a1 of nos. 6–8, above, with clean-shaven portrait.


10. a1 p1 ↑4.03 g. CSE 2: no. 202.

B. With One Control

Tetradrachms

Obv.: As above (drachms).

Rev.: As above (drachms).

SC2, Ad182.1a: Rev. In outer l. field, ☐.

A3


12. A3 P1 ↑16.30 g. Beirut, American University. WSM 210Ca. Worn obverse die. Rev. above tripod, PARTIAL WREATH.
Sequence of Issues

The coins of the Mint fall into two series, one showing the king clean-shaven, the other with facial hair. That the clean-shaven portrait came first is indicated by the fact that on the single obverse die known for the drachms a sideburn was added to the portrait of nos. 9–10.

More coins are needed to clarify whether the catalogue’s hypothetical sequence of coins and dies is correct for each series, but the available evidence seems clear that during its earliest phase, the mint operated with two officials serving at the same time, and , or and (tetradrachms); and (drachms), and that was given sole authority for the production of coinage thereafter, to the end of mint operations.

Character of the Mint

The Mint gives every evidence of having been a regular facility. The mint’s production was measured and orderly. On the five known dies of the mint there are almost no die flaws. There is no evidence of recutting; as dies wore out, they were replaced by newer ones and not reworked. The transitions from one series to the next show no sign of haste, as was the case at certain other facilities (for example,
Mints 40, 42, and the  Mint, see below). The dies of the  Mint, like those of most facilities in the western and central areas of Seleucid kingdom, were vertically adjusted.

One engraver only, an individual who was in the continued employ of the mint from the beginning and who arguably lived in a fixed location, such as a city or permanent camp, was employed to cut all the dies for the series.9 The mark of the mint’s principal official, , does not appear at any other location. Both  and ﻪ appear on tetradrachms issued at Seleucia on the Tigris under Seleucus III (SC1: no. 939), while ﻪ appears on Seleucia issues of Antiochus III (SC1: nos. 1156–1159), which caused E. T. Newell to consider that the  Mint issues belonged there. The transfer of both officials, not the proximity of the two mints, is the most probable reason for these shared controls.

Mint Location and Date

The  Mint has some affinities with Seleucia on the Tigris. The coinages of both mints use related conventions—dotted borders on both obverse and reverse and the employment of two officials (supervising only the early emissions at the  Mint). In addition, the portraits of both mints show the king with ropy locks radiating from the crown of the head and diadem ends that loop behind the neck, falling and rising at the former, more often fluttering at Seleucia. At the same time, the coins differ in technique: tetradrachms of the  Mint are struck on flans that are slightly smaller and flatter than those at Seleucia, which have slightly cupped reverses; the coins of Seleucia, moreover, were struck from loose dies, while those of the  Mint were adjusted to the vertical, fitting more closely with the practice of mints operating further to the north and west.

Key evidence may be provided by the fact that all of those coins whose provenance is known—at least five tetradrachms and two drachms—came from the Seleucus III hoard of 2002.10 While the exact findspot of this hoard cannot be known, it was filled with rare or previously unrecorded issues that can only have been struck in the regions of Commagene or Mesopotamia, and was almost certainly discovered in the region of the upper Euphrates. Taken with the other evidence, the appearance of so many coins of the  Mint in the hoard (including in particular the two drachms) is indicative, if not conclusive, that this facility, too, was probably located in or near Mesopotamia or Commagene.

SC found no apparent significance in the variations of the king’s portrait,11 but the evidence provided by the coinage of the kingdom’s three most important

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9 Inexpertly, with a non-canonical royal portrait with slightly aquiline nose on A1, but who soon turned to an improved, more classicizing image of the king.
10 A tetradrachm of the  Mint appeared in a 2003 hoard with an unknown findspot (SC2.2: 121–122). Unfortunately, the late closure of the hoard (c. 210 BC) cannot and would not help localize the mint.
11 SC1.1: 232.
mints, Sardes, Antioch, and Seleucia—facilities with the longest and most prolific record of production—makes it clear that the ruler is shown clean-shaven on his earliest portraits, then took on a sideburn that often appears as light but occasionally runs down the side of the jaw.12 In this respect, the issues of the Mint closely parallel the coinages of Sardes, Antioch, and Seleucia, beginning with the issuance of coins showing Seleucus’ early clean-shaven image, then striking coins with sideburned portraits. Other mints of Seleucus generally show the ruler with sideburns, but none were produced at facilities with the same long history of production, and it can be argued that they did not open until some period after Seleucus’ accession—that is, after the new imagery of the sideburned king had been adopted for the royal portrait. By contrast to these, the Mint appears to have started issuing coinage very early in Seleucus’ reign.

Given the relatively small number of coins and dies that have been recovered for the Mint and our limited understanding of die production data for Seleucid mints of the period, it would be speculative to suggest how long the facility may have remained in operation. Antioch employed only eight tetradrachm obverses over that mint’s (probably) twenty-year period of operation under Seleucus II; Sardes, which functioned as Seleucus’ principal mint in Asia Minor in a period of political and military crisis, issued tetradrachms from at least nine obverse dies in the eight or so years it was in operation.13 Using these data as guidelines and assuming total die obverse production at the minimum of the five obverses recorded at this time,14 the Mint may have operated for as much as ten years, perhaps more, before closing.

3. Uncertain Mint 40A

SC2 republished and expanded from five to thirteen issues the tetradrachm coinage of Uncertain Mint 40, added a coin, C728, that was suggested as a possible product of the same mint, and attributed three tetradrachm issues (SC1: no. 746 and SC2: Ad166) to a facility, Uncertain Mint 40A, that was suggested, with reservations, might have been the same as Uncertain Mint 40.

Two tetradrachms (nos. 5 and 8, below) add to the issues now known for Mint 40A:

12 SC1: nos. 652 and 763, correctly records the portrait on the earliest tetradrachms of Sardes and Seleucia as being without facial hair. Le Rider 1999: 62, indicates that all Seleucus’ Antioch portraits were sideburned, but his earliest die, A1, and perhaps A2, do not show this feature. An important discussion of bearded Seleucid portraits is to be found in Lorber and Iossif 2009: especially 95–96 with regard to bearded portraits of Seleucus II.

13 Antioch: Le Rider 1999: 58–69; Sardes: die study forthcoming by the author. The die data for Seleucia on the Tigris is not known, but is to be published by Panagiotis Iossif.

14 Statistical analysis (Esty 2006) shows the probability for the Mint of 6.9 obverse dies, with a low confidence of 4.3 and high confidence of 11.2, with thanks to Oliver Hoover for the calculation.
Tetradrachms

*Obv.*: Diademed head of Seleucus II r., with *short curly sideburn*; the diadem ends fall straight; border of widely spaced dots.

*Rev.*: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ on r.; ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ on l. Apollo standing l., testing arrow and resting l. elbow on tall tripod; no border.

Group 1: In inner l. field, ㅂA; in outer r. field, ㅂ (SC1: no. 746).


   Group 2: In inner l. field, Z (SC2: Ad166.1).


One other example appeared in the Seleucus III hoard.

   Group 3: In inner l. field, N or ᾽P (SC2: Ad166.2).


Group 4: In outer r. field, ᾽A or ᾽P (partly off flan); behind Apollo to r., wreath (to l. above, traces of wreath?).


   Group 5: In inner l. field, Ὅ; in outer r. field, ᾽K.


To the above may be added two issues that have been recorded as the products of “Perhaps Uncertain Mint 40”, which have a control (expressed as ᾽A) that is a ligature of Mint 40’s NA. There is no specific evidence (such as a die link) that certainly connects these coins and either Mint 40 or 40A, but either is possible.
Group 6: Rev. as above, but one diadem end falls straight, the other rises behind the head, then curls downward.


Group 7: In outer r. field, possibly cut over another (SC2: C728.1, the control here corrected).

11. A2 P7 16.77 g. Freeman and Sear 11, 23 Nov. 2004, lot 167. Obv. with flaws behind head and on face. Rev. control appears to have been recut over another. Seleucus III hoard. Pl. 5, 22.


One other example of Group 6 is reported to have appeared in the Seleucus III Hoard.

Sequence of Issues

SC1: no. 746 (SNG Spaer 458) shows the earliest state of the first obverse die employed at Mint 40A. Later obverses of A1 are more worn; on coin no. 9, A1 is very worn and has multiple die breaks. The earliest die orientations of Mint 40A are loose, but turn to the vertical before the end of the first issue. If they were issued at the same mint, the coins of Groups 6 and 7, struck from a new die (by a different engraver) and with vertical die orientations, would have followed.

Character of the Mint

The coinages of Mints 40 and 40A differ in a number of ways. Stylistically, the single obverse from which all known Mint 40A coins were struck is superior to the three used at Mint 40 (the first reverse of 40A, P1, is also finely rendered, with small, precise epigraphy). The initial die orientation of Mint 40A's coins was initially loose, then moved to the vertical, while the extended run of Mint 40 tetrads from the product of dies that were vertically adjusted from the beginning. The earliest obverse die of Mint 40A was used to the point of extinction but was not altered during its lifetime; at Mint 40, the first obverse die was recut at least twice to extend its useful life.

Close examination of the two groups also shows interesting similarities. Sideburns appear on the portraits of both. The earliest reverses of Mint 40 and 40A, are devoid of adornment, but on later issues of both mints a small wreath appears

15 SC2.1: 671 suggests that if the two were in fact different facilities, Mint 40A may have been situated in a more hellenized location than Mint 40.
16 SC2.1: 669–670, no. C727. Two other obverses were also employed, inexplicably for only one emission each.
behind the Apollo figure, to the upper right, then disappears. Three controls are shared by both mints. The conventions of both are disorganized, involving one or at times, two controls together, placed at differing positions on the flan, without adherence to structure or plan. Finally, there is a parsimoniousness—or urgency—to the production of each mint that can be seen in the cutting by a reasonably accomplished engraver of a first, relatively high quality group of dies, with obverses that in the case of Mint 40 were used until they were worn out or, in the case of Mint 40A were reworked and supplemented by new dies. The effect, in each case, is that of a facility that could not afford, or did not have the time, to make fresh dies when they were needed.

No drachms have been identified for Mints 40 and 40A at this time.

Identity and Location of the Mint.

SC: no. 671, suggests that Mint 40A may represent the earliest output of Uncertain Mint 40, and it is tempting to see in the shared controls the continued employment of the officials they represented at the same facility, over time. But can the two mints be identical? The appearance of the transient wreath suggests otherwise.

If Mints 40 and 40A were the same with the production of 40A preceding, one must hypothesize that the mint officials first issued coins without the wreath, then affixed it, then struck coins without it, then added it in before taking it out again. Such a sequence seems highly unlikely. The most reasonable explanation is that Mints 40A and 40 were separate facilities that opened at about the same time, issued undecorated coinage for Seleucus, added the wreath for some significant reason, then removed it—in the same manner as at other mints in Mesopotamia and, apparently, across the Seleucid kingdom as a whole (below). The shared controls (NA and its variants) indicate a sharing of mint officials, pointing to the likelihood that both facilities operated in the same general area, likely Commagene or Mesopotamia, given the appearance of many coins of each in the Seleucus III hoard.

4. ☭ Mint Tetradrachms

SC: 676, listed as unattributed issues two stylistically related tetradrachms of Seleucus II, Ad175 and Ad176, while suggesting that a linking control, Σ could indicate that the first was the product of a facility in Commagene or Mesopotamia to which a series of drachms had been assigned, the ☭ Mint. A new tetradrachm,

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17 See the illustrations of SC: C727.7 and no. 727.8. SC: no. 669: the laurel wreath is sometimes portrayed as two horizontal tufts of leaves attached to one of the verticals, and in one case a single tuft rising from the tip of the vertical.

18 No less than thirty-nine tetradrachms of Mint 40 and three of Mint 40A appeared in the Seleucus III hoard.

19 SC: 676. The obverse die of Ad176 is very close to that of Ad175, but the uncleaned state of the former coin, which has difference controls and conventions, makes it impossible to establish a clear relationship between the two.
now in Copenhagen, shares both obverse and reverse dies and a reverse control with Ad175, but was evidently struck later:

**Obv.**: Diademed head of Seleucus II r., with *short curly sideburn*; diadem ends fall straight; dotted border.

**Rev.**: ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ on r.; ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ on l. Apollo standing l., testing arrow and resting l. elbow on tall tripod; no border.

Rev. In outer l. field, Σ above Ø.


Rev. As above but in outer l. field, above arrow, Μ; below arrow, Ø above R.

2. A1 P1 ↑ 16.94 g. Copenhagen, M. Andersen coll.; Helios EBay store, December 2010. Test cut on reverse. The obverse is double-struck from a worn and rusted die. The reverse die has been recut from P1. Pl. 5, 24.

**Sequence of Issues**

The sequence of coins is apparent from the deterioration of the single pair of dies employed to strike the above tetradrachms, and the recutting of the reverse die used for no. 2.

**Identity and Location of the Mint**

SC2 noted the relationship between the controls of Ad176 and early drachms of the Athena/standing Apollo type given to a facility called the Κ Mint, but came to no conclusion as to whether the coins were issued by the same facility.

The two tetradrachms discussed here were very likely struck by the Κ Mint in fact. The complex control below the arrow appears on no other recorded coins of Seleucus II, but the similarity of the encircled N on these to the Κ that appears on the mint’s drachms, the adjustment of both tetradrachm and drachm dies to the vertical, and the general sense of haste conveyed by the character of both coinages (below), tend to support the view that both were produced at the same facility. That this was almost certainly located in Commagene or northern Mesopotamia is attested by the appearance in the Seleucus III hoard of one of the above tetradrachms (perhaps both) and at least 22 drachms with the Κ control.

**Character of the Mint**

With only two tetradrachms recorded, it is difficult to make more than a few general observations about the Κ Mint. One is that the mint—much like Mints 40 and 40A—could not call on experienced engravers to cut new dies but was re-
quired to issue tetrads from worn, rusted and recut dies and drachms from obverse dies that were used to the point of total breakdown. Another is that like several other mints of the region, including Uncertain Mints 37 and 38, the钮 Mint, and Nisibis, the钮 Mint issued drachms as well as tetrads. Seleucid tetradrachm and drachm production at the same mint does not appear to have been routine, but the rate of recovery of small coins tends to be low, and the practice may have been more widespread than is now known. The fact that all known钮 drachms appeared in the Seleucus III hoard and in no other context illustrates the intended regional nature of drachm circulation.

The Wreath: Synchronic Iconography?

Of special interest is a wreath or partial wreath that appears immediately above the tripod or just behind the Apollo figure on the tetrads of the钮 Mint, Mints 40 and 40A, and the钮 Mint—as well as on issues of Sardes, Antioch, perhaps Seleucia, and in abridged form (a partial wreath, sometimes a sprig) on Seleucus’ tetradrachm coinage issued at many other cities, from the Hellespont to Babylonia, as well as at Susa and Ecbatana on the Iranian plateau. At Sardes and Antioch, the feature appears on tetradrachm reverses that are paired only with very early obverse dies with portraits that are clean-shaven (Sardes) or with sideburns (Antioch) and in a manner suggesting that it was affixed in connection with an event or occasion known to the Seleucid court, which ordered it placed on the king’s money before having it removed. The celebration of an early victory against Seleucus’ Ptolemaic adversaries in the Third Syrian War (246–241 BC) is possible. It is to be noted that the kingdom-wide appearance of a secondary iconographic element, as opposed to the repetition from mint to mint of a coin type, is otherwise unknown on Seleucid coinage.

Why the Commagenian and Mesopotamian Mints?

The number of mints that appear to have opened or operated under Seleucus II in the regions of Commagene and Mesopotamia is remarkable. They include Uncer-

20 The drachm dies of the钮 Mint are generally adjusted between 11h and 1h. I am grateful to Petr Veseley for demonstrating the die orientations of a number of these drachms, and to Russ Millson for verifying the vertical adjustment of a钮 drachm in his collection.

21 Special thanks to Panagiotis Iossif for a list of the locations involved. The absence of a full inventory of tetradrachm reverses issued under Seleucus II makes a comprehensive survey impossible.

22 At Sardes, in connection with the second of nine obverse dies employed by the mint; at Antioch in connection with Le Rider’s A3 and A4 (Le Rider 1999: 63 and pl. 6, nos. 18–22); at possibly Seleucia on the Tigris (SC1: no. 764.2). Iossif’s forthcoming study of the Seleucia mint may include other reverses where the wreath is shown more clearly.

23 With thanks to Catharine Lorber for the suggestion. A relationship to events surrounding the supposed invasion and occupation of Mesopotamia by Ptolemy III as related in the Adulis inscription and the Gurob papyrus (Iossif 2012), is also possible.
tain Mints 37, 38, 40, 40A, 44 Mint 44A, the ⊗ Mint, and probably also the ⊕ Mint. While some of these undoubtedly helped serve the financing needs of state requirements at established cities (although which is not clear, and it is to be noted that Nisibis seems to have opened late, with a single clean-shaven portrait tetradrachm that segued into issues showing the ruler with a full beard), others were almost certainly set up to produce money in connection with local or regional military requirements. Some, such as Mints 40, 40A, and the ⊕ Mint show a sense of urgency that would not be unexpected at facilities established in the field to serve the exigencies of the Seleucid army.

The known history of Seleucus’ rule is not particularly revealing. The period is badly documented, and the chronology of events is uncertain. Soon after the end of the Third Syrian War, Seleucus faced an insurrection led by his brother Antiochus Hierax, who he had appointed governor of Asia Minor. Seleucus invaded Asia Minor, was defeated in an epic battle at Ancyra, and was forced to withdraw south of the Taurus Mountains, probably after 240 BC. The Babylonian records show that in the east, he faced a revolt by the king of Parthene and was further threatened by a military revolt (or revolts) in Babylon in and after 237. Probably sometime after 230, perhaps c. 228, he launched a military expedition to restore order to his eastern realms, where he was briefly successful but then had to deal with an invasion of Mesopotamia by Hierax and further incursions of the Parthians. Seleucus died in a riding accident, perhaps in November or December of 225.

Against this background, it is difficult to tell what may have motivated the establishment of new minting facilities in the Commagene-Mesopotamia region. If they were created to serve Seleucus’ expedition to Babylonia, they were set up very late in his reign, not long before 228 BC. But such a conclusion goes the evidence of the coins themselves, whose tetradrachm issues at Mints 40, 40A, 52, and other facilities in the region show the transient wreath that marked a very early phase of coinage at Sardes, Antioch and Seleucia.

One has to look to other explanations for the new facilities. Could unrest on the eastern frontiers of the kingdom have been considered a problem very early in Seleucus’ reign, not later? Could there have been a Parthian revolt long before the 230s, or an unrecorded, early eastern insurrection that needed to be met with an expanded military presence? Could Hierax’s revolt have cut off the normal sources of international currencies that normally circulated in the area, requiring the establishment of new minting facilities?

24 The clean-shaven portrait at Nisibis: SC1: Ad30.
25 A more detailed chronology is to be found in SC1, 229-30, with appropriate references.
26 The possibility that these major mints did not strike coinage for Seleucus until late in his career is to be rejected. The tetradrachm coinages of Sardes and Seleucia transition from issues of Antiochus II to Seleucus with the same controls that indicate little or no break in the continuity of production at these mints, although new mint officials were appointed under Seleucus at Antioch.
27 Le Rider 1986, citing 11 third-century hoards, notes that the largest proportion of cir-
The answer, unfortunately, is not at all clear, and the coins, as they are now known, tell a story that remains filled with ambiguities. The Seleucus III hoard of 2002 has cast new light on the coinages used in the region of the upper Euphrates in the mid-third century BC. At the same time, this extraordinary find has exposed how much remains to be known. It can only be hoped that new material, new finds, will provide answers to some of the questions that surround this especially obscure period of Seleucid history.

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culculating tetradrachms within the Seleucid kingdom involved Alexander issues, with lesser elements of Lysimachi, Attalid, and royal Seleucid coins, depending on the location of the find.
References


Plate 3

Coin Production under Seleucus II
Plate 4

Coin Production under Seleucus II
Plate 5

Coin Production under Seleucus II