



# *Israel Numismatic Research*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

- AJC* Y. Meshorer *Ancient Jewish Coinage*. Dix Hills, NY 1982
- AJN* *American Journal of Numismatics*
- BMC* e.g., *BMC Arab.*: G.F. Hill. *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia*. London 1922
- BMCO* e.g., *BMCO 1*: S. Lane-Poole. *The Coins of the Eastern Khaleefehs in the British Museum. Catalogue of the Oriental Coins in the British Museum 1*. London 1875
- CH* *Coin Hoards*
- CIL* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
- CNP* e.g., L. Kadman. *The Coins of Akko Ptolemais* (Corpus Nummorum Palestinensium IV). Jerusalem 1961
- CRE* e.g., H. Mattingly. *The Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum I. Augustus to Vitellius*. London 1923
- DOC* e.g., P. Grierson. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection 3. Leo III to Nicephorus III 717–1081*. Washington, D.C. 1973
- IEJ* *Israel Exploration Journal*
- IG* *Inscriptiones Graecae*
- IGCH* M. Thompson, O. Mørkholm and C.M. Kraay. *An Inventory of Greek Coin Hoards*. New York 1973
- INJ* *Israel Numismatic Journal*
- INR* *Israel Numismatic Research*
- LA* *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Liber Annuus*
- LRBC* e.g., P.V. Hill and J.P.C. Kent. Part 1: The Bronze Coinage of the House of Constantine, A.D. 324–46. In *Late Roman Bronze Coinage (A.D. 324–498)*. London 1965. Pp. 4–40
- MIB* e.g., W. Hahn. *Von Anastasius I. bis Justinianus I (491–565)*. *Moneta Imperii Byzantini* 1. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-Historische Klasse Denkschriften 109. Veröffentlichungen der Numismatischen Kommission 1. Vienna 1973
- MIBE* e.g., W. Hahn. *Money of the Incipient Byzantine Empire (Anastasius I–Justinian I, 491–565)* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte der Universität Wien 6). Vienna 2000
- MN* *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes*
- NC* *Numismatic Chronicle*
- NCirc.* *Numismatic Circular*
- NNM* *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*
- NZ* *Numismatische Zeitschrift*
- RRC* M.H. Crawford. *Roman Republican Coinage*. Cambridge 1974
- RIC* e.g., C.H.V. Sutherland. *The Roman Imperial Coinage I. From 31 BC to AD 69*. London 1984
- RN* *Revue Numismatique*
- RPC* e.g., A. Burnett, M. Amandry and I. Carradice. *From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69–96). Roman Provincial Coinage 2*. London 1999
- SC* e.g., A. Houghton and C. Lorber. *Seleucid Coins. A Comprehensive Catalogue. Part I. Seleucus I through Antiochus III*. New York, Lancaster, PA and London 2002
- SICA* e.g., S. Album and T. Goodwin. *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean, Volume 1: The Pre-Reform Coinage of the Early Islamic Period*. Oxford 2002
- SNAT* e.g., L. Ilisch. *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen–Palästina IVa Bilād aš-Šām I*. Tübingen 1993
- SNG* *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* (with suffix as necessary, e.g. *SNG Cop.*)
- SNR* *Schweizerische Numismatische Rundschau*
- TINC* *Transactions of the International Numismatic Congress*
- TJC* Y. Meshorer. *A Treasury of Jewish Coins from the Persian Period to Bar Kochba*. Jerusalem and Nyack 2001
- ZfN* *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*

# A Hoard of Alexander the Great from the Region of Syria

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## *Abstract*

This article presents part of an allegedly Syrian hoard including 75 Alexander III, Philip III Arrhidaeus and Seleucus I *tetradrachms* and compares it with other contemporaneous regional hoards. The hoard was buried after 294 BCE. The author examines the possibility that some Alexander III coins attributed by Price to “Babylon” may have in fact been struck more locally.

Two lots amounting to 75 silver *tetradrachms* were recorded together at a Jerusalem antiquities dealer.<sup>1</sup> The dealer asserted that both were part of a much larger hoard discovered many years ago. He had purchased the coins together from a European dealer, and explained that many coins from this hoard were on the market at the time. The Jerusalem antiquities dealer reported the hoard’s provenance as Syria, but beyond that, could not point to a well-defined locale. Unfortunately, no further details were provided.

Overall there is no reason to doubt the integrity of the two lots. Most of the coins in both groups are in a uniform state of preservation, and are covered with similar patina, suggesting they were all buried together. Within the lots, the proportions of the three kings represented are consistent. The coins are generally in good condition, with details such as inscriptions and mintmarks easily seen. Some coins show signs of wear. A catalogue of this ‘Syria’ hoard follows.

## CATALOGUE

The catalogue is arranged according to ruler (Alexander III, Philip III Arrhidaeus and Seleucus I) and within that division, by the catalogue numbers of Price 1991. Illustrations are on Pls. 4–11.

### Legends:

A. ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ

B. ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ

C. ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Ben Eliezer made preliminary identifications of the smaller lot (36 coins). Scans of the coins by Robert Kool formed the basis for the plates. My thanks to both of them.


















D. ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ

E. ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΣ

F. ΣΕΛΕΥΚΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ

No. (lot)	Weight (g)	Cat. No. in Price 1991	Ruler (Legend)	Left field	Under Throne	Mint	Date (BCE)
1 (a)	16.92	83	Alex. III (A)	Ε		Macedonia	336–323
2 (a)	16.98	104	Alex. III (A)	Cornucopia		Macedonia	323–320
3 (a)	17.01	2646	Alex. III (A)	Γ	A (or $\overline{\Delta}$ )	Sardes	319–315
4 (a)	14.89	249b	Alex. III (A)	Boetian shield	snake	Pella	315–310
5 (b)	17.06	2664	Alex. III (A)	☼ star		Sardes	319–315
6 (b)	17.00	2680	Alex. III (A)	ΑΧ	Α	Sardes	319–315
7 (b)	17.02	2712	Alex. III (A)	⊗	Β	Uncertain in S. Asia Minor	323–280
8 (a)	17.09	2949	Alex. III (A)	Wreath	ΔΙ	Side	325–320
9 (b)	16.94	2949	Alex. III (A)	Wreath	ΔΙ	Side	325–320
10 (a)	17.00	3044	Alex. III (A)	Nike	Ε' + Σ	Tarsus	323–317
11 (b)	16.47	3069	Alex. III (B)		ΗΡ	Uncertain in S. Asia Minor	320–280
12 (a)	17.08	3110	Alex. III (B)	Κ		Kitium	325–320
13 (b)	17.13	3139	Alex. III (A)	Bow		Salamis	332–323
14 (a)	16.96	3151a	Alex. III (A)	Rudder		Salamis	323–315
15 (a)	16.79	3154	Alex. III (A)	Δ	Μ	Salamis	323–315
16 (a)	16.74	3212	Alex. III (A)	Forepart of ram	ΔΔ six globules	Damascus	330–320
17 (b)	17.20	3254	Alex. III (A)	Year?		Ake	325–324

No. (lot)	Weight (g)	Cat. No. in Price 1991	Ruler (Legend)	Left field	Under Throne	Mint	Date (BCE)
18 (a)	17.07	3285	Alex. III (A)	Year?		Ake	314/313
19 (a)	17.10	3286a	Alex. III (A)	Year 33		Ake	314/313
20 (a)	17.08	3286	Alex. III (A)	Year 33		Ake	314/313
21 (b)	17.01	3316	Alex. III (B)	Σ	Ⲁ	Aradus	328–320
22 (a)	16.96	3325	Alex. III (B)	I	Ⲁ	Aradus	328–320
23 (b)	17.05	3424	Alex. III (A)	Ⲡ		Byblos	330–320
24 (b)	17.16	3424	Alex. III (A)	Ⲡ		Byblos	330–320
25 (a)	16.91	3426a	Alex. III (A)	Ⲡ		Byblos	330–320
26 (b)	16.71	3440	Alex. III (B)	Ε <sup>p</sup> and anchor	Ε	Marathus(?)	323–300
27 (b)	16.78	3475	Alex. III (A)		ΣI	Sidon	undated
28 (b)	17.08	3508	Alex. III (A)	Υ	ΣI	Sidon	315/314
29 (b)	16.92	3575	Alex. III (A)	Boar head l.		Uncertain in Phoenicia or Syria	317–300
30 (a)	17.10	3613b	Alex. III (A)	Dolphin	ⲙ + ⲙ	“Babylon”	331–323
31 (a)	17.07	3618	Alex. III (A)	Leaf	ⲙ + ⲙ	“Babylon”	325–323
32 (a)	17.03	3619	Alex. III (A)	bee M	ⲙ	“Babylon”	325–323
33 (b)	17.06	3642	Alex. III (A)	[M]	ⲙ + ⲙ	“Babylon”	325–323
34 (a)	17.04	3654	Alex. III (A)	Kylix	ⲙ + ⲙ	“Babylon”	325–323
35 (b)	17.05	3655	Alex. III (B)	Wreath	ⲙ + ⲙ	“Babylon”	325–323
36 (a)	17.11	3670	Alex. III (B)	ladle with duck-headed finial	ⲙ + ⲙ	“Babylon”	325–323

No. (lot)	Weight (g)	Cat. No. in Price 1991	Ruler (Legend)	Left field	Under Throne	Mint	Date (BCE)
37 (b)	16.73	3692	Alex. III (B)	M	ΛΥ	“Babylon”	323–317
38 (b)	17.00	3692	Alex. III (B)	M	ΛΥ	“Babylon”	323–317
39 (a)	17.07	3704	Alex. III (B)		H	“Babylon”	317–311
40 (a)	16.99	3704	Alex. III (B)		H	“Babylon”	317–311
41 (b)	17.08	3704	Alex. III (B)		H	“Babylon”	317–311
42 (b)	16.95	3704	Alex. III (A)		H	“Babylon”	317–311
43 (b)	16.98	3708	Alex. III (B)	H		“Babylon”	317–311
44 (b)	17.04	3713	Alex. III (B)	KΛ		“Babylon”	317–311
45 (a)	16.95	3719	Alex. III (B)		ΙΑ	“Babylon”	317–311
46 (a)	15.84	3740	Alex. III (A)	M		“Babylon”	317–311
47 (b)	17.06	3742	Alex. III (B)		M	“Babylon”	317–311
48 (b)	17.06	3746	Alex. III (A)		MI(?)	“Babylon”	311–305
49 (b)	17.07	3746	Alex. III (B)		MI	“Babylon”	311–305
50 (a)	17.04	3747	Alex. III (B)		MI	“Babylon”	311–305
51 (b)	17.03	3747	Alex. III (A)		MI	“Babylon”	311–305
52 (b)	17.02	3751	Alex. III (B)	MI		“Babylon”	311–305
53 (a)	16.84	3761	Alex. III (A)	MI Rudder		“Babylon”	311–305
54 (a)	16.92	3761	Alex. III (B)	MI Rudder		“Babylon”	311–305
55 (a)	16.97	3938	Alex. III (A)		ΣΩ	Ecbatana	311–295
56 (a)	17.09	3976a	Alex. III (A)	thunderbolt	ΔΙ	Memphis	323–316



No. (lot)	Weight (g)	Cat. No. in Price 1991	Ruler (Legend)	Left field	Under Throne	Mint	Date (BCE)
57 (a)	17.03	4037	Alex. III (A)	A		uncertain	323–300
58 (b)	17.11	4037	Alex. III (A)	A		uncertain	
59 (b)	17.13	3829 or 3186	Alex. III (B)	Ⲭⲑ	Ⲡ or Ⲡⲑ	Susa or Salamis	
60 (b)	17.13	Cf. 429, 817, 1988	Alex. III	Ⲡ	Ⲡ	Uncertain Greece or Macedonia, or Magnesia	
61 (b)	14.44	Cf. 3692, B32	Alex. III (B)	ΥΛ	ΥΛ	“Babylon”(?) (unpublished)	317–323
62 (a)	17.64	Cf. 3777, F87	Alex. III (A)	Wreath			
63 (b)	16.82		Alex. III (B)				
64 (b)	17.02		Alex. III (B)				
65 (b)	17.09		Alex. III (A)				
66 (b)	16.86	P165	Philip (C)	Shield	Ⲡ	Marathus	323–300
67 (a)	17.05	P181	Philip (D)	M	ΛΥ	“Babylon”	317–323
68 (a)	16.72	P208	Philip (C)		ΛΔ	Susa	320–316
69 (a)	17.05	P208	Philip (C)		ΛΑ	Susa	320–316
70 (a)	14.80	P208	Philip (C)		ΛΔ	Susa	320–316
71 (a)	17.14	Cf. 3846	Alex. III (B)	?	ΛΑ	Susa	320–316
72 (a)	17.05	Cf. 3846	Alex. III (B)	?	ΛΑ	Susa	320–316
73 (b)	15.77	P182	Philip (C)	M	B	“Babylon”	317–323
74 (b)	16.94	SC I:31, No. 50.3	Seleucus I (F)	Υ	ΔΙ	uncertain	294–281
75 (a)	17.05	SC I:32, No. 57	Seleucus I (F)		Ⲭ+ ΔΙ	uncertain	After 305

As indicated, the quantity of coins the original hoard contained is unknown. The sizes of silver coin hoards from this period can be as small as these 75 coins (e.g., the Tel Zippor hoard; Rahmani 1966) or very large, in the thousands, such as the Egyptian Demanhur hoard, found in 1905, or the Lebanese Saida hoard.

Chronologically, the hoard covers the reigns of Alexander III, Philip III Arrhidaeus and Seleucus I. Ten coins (Cat. Nos. 1, 11, 14, 30–36) definitely date from within the period of Alexander's rule. Nine other coins (Cat. Nos. 8–9, 13, 17, 21–25) name Alexander but were struck either later in his reign or posthumously. The 46 remaining Alexander coins all date after the king's death. All four dated coins in the hoard, Cat. Nos. 18–20 ('Akko, 314/3 BCE) and 28 (Sidon, 315/4 BCE), are posthumous Alexanders.

The six coins naming Philip III Arrhidaeus (Cat. Nos. 66–70, 73) are all lifetime issues. The latest coins in the hoard are two *tetradrachms* of Seleucus I (Cat. Nos. 74–75), providing minimal (between 324–284 BCE) and maximal (between 336–281 BCE) ranges for the striking of the coins in the hoard of 41 and 56 years respectively.

The *tetradrachms* were struck in at least 18 different mints from all over Alexander's empire (according to Price's order): Macedonia, Pella, Greece/Macedonia/Magnesia, Sardes, Side, Tarsus, 'Akko, Kitium, Salamis, Damascus, Aradus, Byblos, Marathus, Sidon, "Babylon," Susa, Ecbatana and Memphis. The distribution of the mints found in the regional hoards mentioned in Table 1 (below) is similar to that of the hoard published here.

Table 1. Mint distribution from Alexander III hoards in the region (percentages)

Hoard (qty.) % Mint	"Syria" (75)	Sidon [Saida] (36)	Lebanon (10)	Ashqelon (19)	Khirbet el-Kerak [Tel Bet Yerah] (53)	Galilee [Tarshiha] (22)	Tel Zippor (57)	Jericho (12)	Tel Mikhal (5)
"Babylon"	37.3		30.0		49.1	4.5	49.1	50.0	60.0
Susa	6.7								
'Akko	5.3	2.8	30.0	15.8	7.5	63.7	14.0	8.3	20.0
Salamis	5.3	8.3		5.3					
Byblos	4.0			15.8			5.3		
Sardis	4.0	19.4		10.6					

<b>Hoard (qty.) % Mint</b>	<b>“Syria” (75)</b>	<b>Sidon [Saida] (36)</b>	<b>Lebanon (10)</b>	<b>Ashqelon (19)</b>	<b>Khirbet el-Kerak [Tel Bet Yerah] (53)</b>	<b>Galilee [Tarshiha] (22)</b>	<b>Tel Zippor (57)</b>	<b>Jericho (12)</b>	<b>Tel Mikhel (5)</b>
<b>Macedonia</b>	2.7	22.2		5.3				8.3	
<b>Side</b>	2.7				1.9	4.5			
<b>Aradus</b>	2.7	5.6	10.0	10.6	3.8		3.5	8.3	20.0
<b>Marathus</b>	2.7							8.3	
<b>Sidon</b>	2.7	2.8	10.0	5.3	5.7	4.5	8.8		
<b>Pella</b>	1.3	2.8					1.8		
<b>Greece/ Macedonia/ Magnesia</b>	1.3	5.6							
<b>Tarsus</b>	1.3	5.6	20.0		7.5		1.8		
<b>Kitium</b>	1.3	2.8			1.9	9.0			
<b>Damascus</b>	1.3				1.9				
<b>Ecbatana</b>	1.3						1.8		
<b>Memphis</b>	1.3								
<b>Aegeae</b>		11.1							
<b>Amphipolis</b>				5.3	13.2	4.5	10.5		
<b>Sicyon</b>					1.9				
<b>Lampsacus</b>		2.8							
<b>Abydus</b>		2.8							
<b>Miletus</b>		2.8							
<b>Amathus</b>		2.8							
<b>Myriandros</b>					3.8				
<b>Tyre</b>				15.8		4.5			

Hoard (qty.) % Mint	“Syria” (75)	Sidon [Saida] (36)	Lebanon (10)	Ashqelon (19)	Khirbet el-Kerak [Tel Bet Yerah] (53)	Galilee [Tarshiḥa] (22)	Tel Zippor (57)	Jericho (12)	Tel Mikhal (5)
Berytus				5.3					
Uncertain	14.7			5.3	1.9	4.5	3.5	16.7	

## DISCUSSION

Coins naming Alexander continued to be struck after his death in 323 BCE in mints throughout the empire. Like most of the Alexander hoards uncovered in the region, the bulk of the coins are dated to this posthumous period, known for Alexander’s generals, the Diadochoi, who were competing with each other for power. Of the eight hoards listed by Ariel (2006:80), seven were also found to have been buried during this period (Sidon [Saida], Lebanon, Khirbet el-Kerak [Tel Bet Yerah], Galilee [Tarshiḥa], Tel Zippor, Jericho and Tel Mikhal).

The hoard has many types in common with other contemporaneous hoards from the region. For example, the Tel Zippor hoard included large number of “Babylon” *tetradrachms* with  $\text{ML}$  and symbol found in Price 1991: Nos. 3745–3771 (Rahmani 1966:137–139, Nos. 27–56) similar to our Nos. 46–54 (Price 1991:56), the Tel Bet Yerah (Baramki 1944:89–90, Nos. 91–116.<sup>2</sup>

The eighth hoard listed by Ariel was found in Ashqelon and dated to 305–290 BCE (*CH* 8:25, No. 220). This hoard is closest in date to the hoard published here.

This hoard’s latest coins are two issues of Seleucus I (Cat. Nos. 74–75). They were both struck at an uncertain mint in Cappadocia, Eastern Syria or Northern Mesopotamia (*SC* I:30) It seems reasonable to assume that this is the latest coin in the hoard in question and provides its *terminus post quem*. The hoard’s deposition cannot have taken place earlier than 294 BCE. In the author’s opinion the hoard was sealed before the end of Seleucus I’s reign. Otherwise, one might think that more of this king’s coins would have appeared in the two lots.

<sup>2</sup> *CH* 10 appeared after this article was written and edited. There, hoards similar to the one published here were reported. One is No. 263 (p. 33), described as deriving from the environs of Antakya. Another, much larger hoard is No. 265 (p. 34). This ‘Syria’ hoard may in fact be part of one of those hoards.

The 27 or 28 coins ascribed to the mint of “Babylon” raises the question of the mint identification of those coins. Price’s long discussion of history of the ascriptions of coins to Babylon and his designation of a large part of them as “Babylon” (1991:453–457) highlights the fact that in 1991 no consensus had been reached on the subject. The ‘Syria’ hoard published here has a very high number of coins ascribed to the “Babylon” mint (37.3% of the coins with identified mints) and includes control marks in Price’s second (monogram and M; Cat. Nos. 30–36), third (M + ΛΥ; Cat. Nos. 37–38, 61?, 67, 73) and fourth (the monogram within wreath [⊗], Ml and the rudder; Cat Nos. 39–54) groups.

Price himself noted how “unfortunate” it was that the ascriptions to the mint of Babylon were “so fraught with difficulties” and that his arrangement was “not entirely satisfactory” (1991:456–457). His discussion focused on the Mesopotamian region. The large numbers of coins of “Babylon” in the ‘Syria’ hoard and elsewhere (Duyrat 2005:34) — as well as five of the eight other hoards summarized in Table 1 — suggest to me that future discussions of the location of the “Babylon” mint must also consider locales west of Mesopotamia; i.e., in or close to Syria. Price (1991:451) had noted that Newell identified Syria as the origin of prototypes used for coins that Price ascribed to the Babylon mint. It may be that Price placed too much weight on the stated provenance of the “Babylon 1973” hoard. In the future when the location of the mint of “Babylon” is readdressed, the newer hoards from the southern Levant, Syria and southern Turkey, with their high frequencies of “Babylon” coins, should also be taken into account.

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PLATE 4



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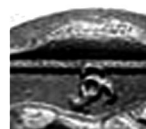
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