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Front cover: Photo of the Alexander tetradrachm, no. 68 (see article of Lloyd Taylor Fig 1 page 52)



NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC

President's Report

With COVID-19 now endemic, the Association has not been able to hold a conference because of the upsurge this year of the virus Australia-wide, but nevertheless the NAA has continued to function with an upgraded website and the publication of this double volume JNAA31, which is available for free download at the NAA website. We plan to hold a conference next year in Adelaide, 19 – 20th October 2023, hosted by the Numismatic Society of South Australia.

I am delighted to announce the award of the Ray Jewell Silver Medal to our Managing Editor, Associate Professor Gillan Davis for his services to the NAA, and his numismatic work both in Australia and overseas for which he has an international reputation. Congratulations Gil from all of us.

The NAA continues to enjoy sponsorship at a sustainable level, with Noble Numismatics (Gold), Coinworks, Downies (Silver), Coins & Collectables Victoria, Drake Sterling, Mowbray Collectables, Sterling & Currency and Vintage Coins & Banknotes (Bronze) all contributing to ensure the Association's continued success. Membership is being maintained, and with the contributions by sponsors and members, the Association can function in these difficult times.

The NAA now has a new Secretary, Bridget McClean, and a new address in Nunawading, Victoria. This is convenient as the NAA is incorporated in Victoria. Much time has been spent changing bank signatories and updating Consumer Affairs Victoria; nothing happens quickly these days!

The Numismatic Association of Australia now has a functioning PayPal account linked to president@numismatics.org.au. This is very convenient for payments coming from overseas and avoids most international bank fees. Like with banking, setting up a PayPal account is not a five-minute exercise, but well worthwhile.

I am impressed with the considerable work our Managing Editor Gil Davis has put into this volume notwithstanding his being extraordinarily busy transferring between universities and setting up new programmes at the Australian Catholic University. Also, I am grateful to Barrie Newman for his on-going work in getting the journal set up and printed, taking on the tasks of both layout and copy editor.

Council continues to meet by ZOOM, hosted by David Galt at Mowbray Collectables.

Finally, the Association cannot function without the dedication of its secretary and its treasurer (Lyn Bloom); thank you both Bridget and Lyn.

Professor Walter R. Bloom

President, NAA

www.numismatics.org.au

3rd August 2022

Editor's note

This volume has been a long time in the making. Usually, an issue is based around the NAA annual conference, but COVID-19 made that impossible. More importantly, as the peak body for numismatics in the country, we are focussed on making each volume wide ranging, interesting and impactful. So, we waited on the completion of a couple of key contributions and have brought out a combined two-year issue which I have dubbed 'the professors' volume' on account of the academic attainment of most of the authors. I trust you will agree that the results justify the decision, because here we offer a splendid collection of eleven articles on an eclectic range of topics with some of the best numismatic analysis and writing I have read. Personally, I have learnt a lot, and I expect that you will too. The collection is rounded out by an obituary by NAA stalwart Peter Lane of the late Maurice B Keain, a real character on the Australian scene.

There are two articles on Australian topics. Vincent Verheyen offers a forensic scrutiny of 'proofs' and 'specimens' from the Melbourne and Perth mints issued in just two years, 1955 and 1956 and seeks to differentiate between them. Walter Bloom provides an interesting study of Western Australian numismatic medallions and badges with an emphasis on the Castellorizian Brotherhood which represented the émigrés from that Greek island.

Lloyd Taylor gives us a Hellenistic trilogy which is a tour de force in numismatic analysis. He starts with a brief but compelling argument correcting one of Hersh's additions to Price's Alexander typology showing that it was already in the corpus. Next, he reattributes Macedonian imperial coinage attributed to Berytos to Byblos. Finally, he shows that an issue of tetradrachms struck in the name of Philip III was in fact a posthumous issue of Seleukos.

There are four articles on a Roman theme:

- Bruce Marshall moves us into the turbulent period of the late Roman Republic with a study of 'labels' on a small number of denarii which he contends fed into the contemporary political discourse.
- Graeme Stephens and John McDonald offer us something unusual and valuable. They document and analyse an unpublished hoard of fourth and fifth centuries AD Roman coins and local imitations from Sri Lanka.
- Andrew Chugg explores the veracity of commemorative medallions of Antinous, paramour of the emperor Hadrian who was deified after his death in the Nile, arguing that there are ways of distinguishing between genuine and fake examples.
- John Melville-Jones offers us a magnificent work listing the names of Roman coins as used by the Romans themselves and sometimes just by modern numismatists.

Written in John's inimitable style, this is an invaluable reference for collectors, students and scholars.

The next article by Emy Kim and Cristiana Zaccagnino takes us into the fascinating world of a numismatic collection of some 600 Greek and Roman coins housed at Queen's University in Canada that is being used in teaching and research. They show just how valuable coins can be when treated as artefacts used to inform historical and scientific understanding. This represents a welcome trend in modern scholarship to integrate numismatics into cross-disciplinary studies.

Finally, we publish a long autobiographical article by Maria Caltabiano. This is justified by the profound impact which she has made on numismatics in a lifetime as professor of numismatics at the University of Messina in Sicily. Along the way, she describes many of her projects with a particularly fascinating exposition of an example of iconic programmatic minting in late fifth century BC Kamarina in the period of the 'signing masters' – some of the most exquisite ancient coinage ever struck. Sadly, we tend not to know enough about numismatics in early Europe, and this article goes some way towards filling the gap.

I sincerely thank the many diligent anonymous reviewers who have done so much to improve the papers. Likewise, I thank the members of the editorial board who stand ready and willing to help when called upon, and John Melville-Jones who happily proofreads the articles. Above all, I pay tribute to Barrie Newman without whose tireless efforts across the years, these volumes would not see the light of day.

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Articles must comprise original research on numismatic material including but not limited to Australasian numismatics (coins, tokens, medals, banknotes) or ancient or mediaeval numismatics. Manuscripts can be emailed to any member of the Editorial Board in your area of research, along with a copy to the Managing Editor.

The Antinous medallions from Tarsus: fake or fortune?

Andrew Michael Chugg¹

Abstract

Tarsus was one of the last places visited by Hadrian and Antinous prior to the drowning of the latter in the Nile in October AD130. The city seems subsequently to have enthusiastically participated in the founding of the cult of Antinous by the Emperor, which included the striking of commemorative medallions with the image of the new god in the mid-130s. Surviving examples are among the most celebrated of the Antinous issues. However, the desirability of Antinous types has engendered intensive forgery since the Renaissance, especially the production of numerous cast fakes called Paduans in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. But hammered fakes have also been struck and old fakes produced according to correct ancient techniques are especially hard to distinguish from originals. This article argues that there nevertheless exist telling discrepancies between genuine and fake medallions and, conversely, that there are validating features that should enhance our confidence in the authenticity of some medallions, when present.

Keywords

[Antinous] [Hadrian] [Tarsus] [Alexandria] [gilding] [Roman Provincial Coinage] [Dionysus] [panther] [Atef Crown] [ivy] [Paduan fake]

Introduction

In the late spring of AD129 Hadrian and his entourage including his favourite Antinous were based in Tarsus in Cilicia on the banks of the river Cydnus (Lambert 1984, p.110), where previously Alexander the Great had discovered the coin prototype for the reverses of his regular silver drachms, tetradrachms and decadrachms. The novel reverse for his standard silver coinage was a seated Zeus holding an eagle, and it is now generally accepted that Alexander borrowed the design from the depiction of Baal on coins issued by Tarsus (Troxell 1997, p.82). The king had also fallen gravely ill in Tarsus after bathing in the River Cydnus just prior to the Battle of Issus in 333BC. Eighteen months after

1 I would like to thank the editor of JNAA and the reviewers for their help in clarifying the complex, interwoven arguments aired in this paper and for their intelligent queries, which have prompted me to incorporate additional explanations and evidence to elucidate the contexts for the production and subsequent faking of these magnificent medallions. I would also like to thank K. R. Moore, the editor of *The Routledge Companion to the Reception of Ancient Greek and Roman Gender and Sexuality* (published August 2022) for his encouragement and support in my authorship of chapter 27 of this compendium on 'Graeco-Roman Worship of the Beloved: The Ancient and Modern Cults of Antinous.' That chapter references this paper and there has been some fruitful cross-pollination between the research for the two publications.

Hadrian's sojourn in Tarsus, Antinous perished by drowning in the River Nile. Cassius Dio and the *Historia Augusta* both speculate about a sacrificial drowning.² Sextus Aurelius Victor is even more explicit in discussing Hadrian's subsequent dedication of the city and statues of Antinoopolis at the site of the drowning to Antinous: 'Others see his motives as pious and religious: for when Hadrian was desiring to prolong his life by any means, the magicians proposed that someone should die voluntarily on his behalf; everyone refused, Antinous alone offered himself: from that all the homage rendered to his memory'.³ So, the sources, and especially Sextus Aurelius Victor, strongly endorse the view that Antinous had been persuaded at the behest of Egyptian magicians to submit voluntarily to ritual sacrifice in the river in exchange for a promise of deification. The objectives may have been to prolong the life of the emperor in the face of failing health and perhaps more generally to end a famine resulting from successive poor inundations in preceding years in the Nile Valley.⁴

This wonderful historical resonance formed part of the incentive for me to purchase a 37mm diameter bronze medallion struck with a profile portrait of Antinous in Tarsus (Figure 1), when it was auctioned by Naville Numismatics on 27th June 2021.⁵ The coin was probably minted in the mid-130s, since the main production of Antinous medallions, judging especially by the dated examples struck in Alexandria, seems to be associated with Hadrian's return to the east in AD134-135, during which visit he evidently sponsored the cult of Antinous as well as suppressing the Bar Kokhba revolt. Importantly, the listing provided an excellent provenance for this medallion starting with an article entitled 'Médailles Romaines Inédites' by J. Sabatier containing five pages on this very coin in the first issue of the French numismatic journal, *Annuaire de la Société Française de Numismatique*.⁶ Sabatier states that it was owned by H. Hoffmann. I was able to locate an online version of this journal volume prior to the auction and validate that the engraving of the medallion in the 1866 article (Figure 2) was a reasonable match to the lot being offered. I subsequently obtained an original copy of ASFN 1 and confirmed that the coin is engraved life-size in Plate 1 and exactly matches my medallion in its dimensions and in details of the formation of the letters in the inscriptions.

2 Cassius Dio 69, II, 2-4; [Aelius Spartianus] *Historia Augusta*, *Hadrianus* XIV.5-6.

3 Sextus Aurelius Victor, *Hadrian*, XIV; translation in Lambert 1984, p.131.

4 This famine is inferred from a complete interruption in the years 14 & 15 of Hadrian's reign (AD129 - 130) in the normal issue by the Alexandrian mint of coins celebrating the abundance of the Nile by depicting Nilus, the god of the river, bearing a cornucopia (Emmett 2001, pp. 48, 52, 54 & 57) – the Nile flood happened at the start of the Alexandrian year, so a poor flood would have made it tasteless to issue Nilus coins during that entire regnal year. This is supported by an ancient tradition of a youth being sacrificed to the river by drowning to propitiate the Nile (Lambert 1984, pp.135-136) and the similarity of this tradition to the particular sacrifice of Antinous in AD130.

5 Naville Numismatics, Live Auction 66, Lot 437.

6 Sabatier 1866, pp.71-76.

The other side of the coin, so to speak, in the case of an Antinous medallion, is the so-called Paduan fake. The authentic Antinous types have been so sought after historically that they have been forged on a near industrial scale, famously, but far from exclusively, in the Italian city of Padua, since the Renaissance and right through until the present day. Consequently, provenance is a particularly vital issue for the intrepid purchasers of Antinous medallions.

Pursuit of the provenance

This medallion is recorded as having been sold through two major numismatic auctions in the last half century:

1. Jean Vinchon, Monnaies de Collection en Bronze, en Argent et en Or, Hotel Drouot, Paris, 15th November 1965, Lot 136
2. Monnaies et Médailles, Vente Publique 52, Basel, Switzerland, 19th-20th June 1975, Lot 655

I obtained original copies of the catalogues for both of these sales, and both had life-size photos of the medallion (Figure 3). The 1975 sale catalogue also helpfully confirmed that this is the same specimen described by J. Sabatier and cited its weight at 19.55g (Neville Numismatics gave a virtually identical 19.57g). The catalogue vendor also sent me a pdf with the 'Prices Realised' in the 1975 auction, Lot 655 being then sold under the hammer for 5400 Swiss Francs.

The Neville Numismatics listing also made reference to an entry for the Tarsus Antinous medallion in the *Roman Provincial Coins* (RPC) database, which exists as an actively updated entity online. I therefore additionally checked this entry, which has the reference RPC III, 3286.2 and can be found at <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/3/3286>.

The entry had exactly the information about the Sabatier article and the two previous sales that had appeared in the Neville Numismatics listing, implying that it had been the source of the information in that listing. Nevertheless, all this provenance information checked out perfectly in matching my medallion.

A spelling dichotomy

When I first checked the RPC entry, three specimens of the Antinous Medallion of Tarsus with a panther with its right forepaw resting on a *cantharus* (a large two-handled drinking vessel) on its reverse, type RPC III, 3286, were listed. However, only the third example, that is RPC III, 3286.3 shown in Figure 4, had a photo accompanying its listing. This example is very unusual in having a serrated edge and its reverse has a Chi-Rho Christian graffito as popularised by Constantine, which is, however, of no particular

significance in respect of the authenticity of this specimen. However, it was its reverse inscription that struck me as being particularly strange.

The inscriptions on my specimen are ΗΡΩC ANTINOOC (The hero Antinous) on the obverse and ΑΔΡΙΑΝΗC ΤΑΡΧΟΥ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΕΩC ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ (Of the Metropolis of Temple-Keeping Adriana-Tarsus) on the reverse. The city had added the prefix of Adriana to its name in order to honour the Emperor Hadrian (Lambert 1984, p.110). ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟC is a correct spelling of a standard classical Greek word, the primary meaning of which is the youth who swept clean a temple or shrine. But a secondary meaning, and the one used here, was as the title for a city in the Roman East in the imperial period which had established an imperial temple or shrine in its midst. This is demonstrated by the fact that ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ on this coin is the genitive form of the word, meaning that the coin was issued by the city (cf. *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* [TLG], s.v. νεωκόρος, see Table I).

The surprise was that specimen 3 (Figure 4) had ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ instead of ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ (omicron in lieu of omega). ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ (ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟC in the nominative) is a word which has no lexical authority. However, TLG offers several other alternative spellings of ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟC, and variant spellings were not unusual in antiquity, so an unusual spelling is not in itself a cause for concern. Nevertheless, even if ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ were an alternative spelling found locally in Tarsus, it would be very unusual for both spellings to be used on different specimens purporting to be of the same coin type. That is to say, it is the inconsistency that is disquieting.

One possible explanation is a modern retooling of the O to become Ω or vice versa. However, there is no sign of Ω having been tooled to O on specimen 3 (Figure 4) and on my own specimen, the Ω clearly already existed when the engraving of it in Figure 2 was made in 1866. In order to check for earlier tooling, I have taken high magnification views of the vicinity of the Ω as shown in Figure 5. There are some dark deposits around these letters, but no sign of the grooves expected from retooling.

I quickly discovered that the ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ versus ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ dichotomy is manifested across the entire corpus of Antinous medallions from Tarsus. Table II gives a basic inventory of specimens of the fourteen Tarsus types listed by *RPC* and also includes a few catalogue entries and recent auction-lots not in *RPC*. There are seven clear specimens with ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ and also six with ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ plus 3 specimens of type *RPC* III, 3292 with the abbreviation ΝΕΟΚ. Although there is no other type than 3286 where both spellings occur among the specimens, there are several very closely related types such as the *cista* reverses 3289 & 3289a and the tripod reverses of 3292 & 3293 and the Cydnus reverses of 3294 & 3296 where the opposite spelling occurs on the first type of each pairing relative to the second.

I contacted *RPC* on this matter and Andrew Burnett responded (personal communication): ‘They never seem to have decided on how to spell *neokoros*, and you can find it with both omega and omicron.’

There is one place where the spelling NEOKOPOY occurs as an unambiguous error for NEΩKOPOY. The Sabatier article from 1866 in *ASFN* 1 correctly depicts my Antinous Medallion with the spelling NEΩKOPOY in plate 1 (Figure 2), but at the head of its text on page 71 it mistakenly gives the reverse inscription as reading NEOKOPOY. In the late 19th century, this article is virtually the only specific literature on the Antinous medallions of Tarsus. Sabatier was only looking at my specimen in writing his 1866 article, so his inconsistency in the spelling of NEΩKOPOY was probably an original mistake either by the typesetter or by Sabatier himself, although he states that he was aware that, ‘There exist scarcely more than seven or eight bronzes of Antinous struck in [Tarsus] with one of the following three reverse types: a serpent coiled around a tripod; a mystic chest; the River Cydnus.’ Sabatier’s error is a potential source of later imitation by forgers or alternatively his article accidentally reproduced the NEΩKOPOY - NEOKOPOY dichotomy independently of its existence among the ancient specimens or possibly he had in mind the inscription on another of the Antinous specimens from Tarsus when he wrote down the inscription on my specimen at the start of his article.

The NEΩ prefix may derive from NEΩC a variant of NAOC, meaning a shrine. Hence, the speculation in *TLG* (Table I) that NEΩKOPOC originally meant the sweeper (or more generally the purifier) of a shrine or temple and thereby came to mean a ‘temple servant’, and by extension a worshipper. Therefore, it is particularly interesting that we see a combination of NEOKOPOY with NEΩ IAKXΩ on the reverses of *RPC* III, 3289a & *RPC* III, 3291 and with NEΩ ΠΥΘΙΩ on the reverse of *RPC* III, 3292. The former refers to the shrine of IAKXOC (Iakchos), often identified with the god Dionysus and the design shows the mystical box (*cista*) and wands (*thyrsos*) that are symbols of Dionysus. The latter means the shrine of Apollo Pythios (the oracular Apollo of Delphi) and the reverse design has the tripod that is the symbol of Apollo’s prophetic powers. Note, however, that on *RPC* III, 3289, NEΩKOPOY is combined with NEΩ IAKXΩ and on *RPC* III, 3293, NEΩKOPOY is combined with NEΩ ΠΥΘΙΩ. This makes it transparent that the *RPC* III, 3289a, *RPC* III, 3291 and *RPC* III, 3292 specimens give two different spellings of the same word, normally NEΩ meaning a shrine, in their reverse inscriptions! The problem again is one of inconsistency: the inconsistency in mixing NEΩ IAKXΩ/ΠΥΘΙΩ with either NEΩKOPOY or NEOKOPOY compounded by an imbalance insofar as NEO IAKXΩ/ΠΥΘΙΩ never appears with either NEΩKOPOY or NEOKOPOY on any specimen.

Incongruities in the third specimen

Sabatier made some errors regarding *RPC* III, 3286.2. He thought that the object beneath the paw of the panther on the reverse was a hare, whereas it is actually a *cantharus*, he did not notice the slightly indistinct traces of a wreath of ivy around the head of Antinous and he misplaced the end of the panther's tail. These corrections are confirmed through comparison with other examples of this type such as *RPC* III, 3286.1 (Figure 7) from the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.⁷ I also discovered a fourth specimen of *RPC* III, 3286 sold as Lot 3048 in Hirsch Auction 303 in 2014 in the online archives and Andrew Burnett added this to the *RPC* database as III.3286.4, when I made him aware of it. Its reverse is strikingly similar to my coin, especially in the length of the panther's neck (Figure 8).

Available details of the four specimens have been collected in Table III. It is immediately clear that as well as differing from other examples in having a serrated edge and in its spelling of ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ, the third specimen is also anomalously heavy, being more than 30% above the standard weight of about 20g. Furthermore, its die axis is stated to be 12h in the *RPC* database, whereas specimen 1 is stated to be 6h, matching my specimen 2, and specimen 4 can also be seen to be 6h by virtue of a bump on its rim which defines the relative orientation of its obverse and reverse faces. Furthermore, specimen 3 appears to exhibit a horizontal band beneath the Atef or Hem-Hem Crown, which is not present in either specimen 1 or 2 (only vestiges of the Atef crown exist on specimen 2, possibly due to the strands of the crown having become clogged on the die before it was struck or possibly due to historical corrosion or cleaning). Specimen 3 also has a 'Star of Antinous' ahead of ΑΝΤΙΝΟΟC on its obverse, which is certainly not present in specimen 2. This new star was seen in the constellation of Aquila (the Eagle) at roughly the time that Antinous drowned. Hadrian associated this star with his cult of Antinous and it appears on some of the Antinous Medallions from other cities. Cassius Dio, (*Roman History, Epitome of Book 69*, 11) is the principal source: 'Hadrian declared that he had seen a star which he took to be that of Antinous, and gladly lent an ear to the fictitious tales woven by his associates to the effect that the star had really come into being from the spirit of Antinous and had then appeared for the first time.'

Additionally, specimens 2 and 4 have only the whole word ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ in the exergue. The same appears to be true of specimen 1, because the letters ΡΟΥ of ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ are just discernible and there is not enough room in the rest of the exergue for more letters than are required for ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ. However, specimen 3 has ΕΩCΝΕΟΚΟΡΟ in its exergue thus splitting ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΕΩC into ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛ and ΕΩC and splitting ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ into ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟ and Υ. Finally, the formation of the *cantharus* on specimen 3 is almost unrecognisable (it has more the appearance of a medieval helm on a helm-stand). The *cantharus* is also indistinct on specimens 2 and 4, but the

⁷ The accession date of *RPC* III, 3286.1 to the Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin is 1901.

explanation in these instances is clearly wear and corrosion. In the case of specimen 3, the hard lines of the body of the *cantharus* are unconvincing as such and its handles are altogether missing. It is dubious whether the engraver of the reverse die of specimen 3 understood that the object beneath the panther's forepaw is a *cantharus*.

These differences are sufficient to make it doubtful whether specimen 3 should properly be recognised as of the same type as the other three specimens. But is specimen 3 just an ancient variant by another die engraver in Tarsus cut in another year, or is it a more modern concoction that is deliberately pretending to be a specimen of type *RPC III, 3286*?

A trick of the tail

One feature of specimen 3 of *RPC III, 3286* does make it look very much as though the engraver of its reverse die was deliberately and slavishly trying (yet ultimately failing) to copy the details of other specimens of this type.

In specimens 2 and 4 the panther's tail appears to curl up into the lower end of the final lunate sigma C of ΜΗΤΡΟΠΙΟΛΕΩC (upper images of Figure 9), thus cleverly using the last letter of this word as a final twist to the tail. However, specimen 3 executes a perfectly silly imitation of this feature where the full length of the tail is still present including this final twist with the effect of introducing a spurious C into the middle of ΜΗΤΡΟΠΙΟΛΕΩC such that it reads ΜΗΤΡΟΠΙΟΛC ΕΩC. Would anyone who understood the inscription or the intentions of the original designer have been at all likely to perpetrate this horrific pastiche? It would seem unlikely.

One reason why the imitator could have made such mistakes would be that this person was working from poorly preserved specimens in ignorance of the meaning of the Greek, which would in turn require the imitator to have been operating in the modern era, although perhaps before the 20th century. In truth, an ancient copyist of the prototype in Tarsus should at least have been aware of the nature of the *cantharus* and of the extension of the panther's tail to form the concluding sigma of ΜΗΤΡΟΠΙΟΛΕΩC, because such an individual would certainly have seen many specimens in excellent condition, and it is most unlikely that this engraver did not have access to the original designer. This type was only authentically struck for a few of Hadrian's later years at most.

The glint of gold

When I submitted a colour photo of my specimen 2 to Andrew Burnett for inclusion in the *RPC* database, he added in the *RPC*'s Notes section: 'Traces of gilding on obverse'. This prompted me to investigate whether similar traces of ancient gilding are to be found on other types of Antinous Medallions? The answer proved to be an emphatic yes, tending to confirm that such gilding was an original feature of these types. Some

instances are shown in Figure 10. Interestingly, the gold layer is typically preserved on the high points of the designs rather than in the crevices

Although only relatively well-preserved specimens have such traces surviving today, there are enough cases for it to appear likely that most of the medallions from mainland Greece and Anatolia were originally gilded. This was probably done by coating the medallions with a solution of gold in mercury, then heating them so that the mercury was evolved as vapour.⁸ This enhancement reflects their role as commemorative medallions and souvenirs rather than currency. Conversely, the bronze drachms, hemidrachms, diobols and (rare) dichalkons of Antinous from Alexandria were always part of the main currency types issued between the 18th and 21st regnal years of Hadrian (AD134 – AD137) and these do not appear to have been gilded (Emmett 2001, pp. 62 & 64) in common with the rest of the bronze coinage from the Alexandria mint.

I have not seen traces of gilding on any specimen that has been branded as a fake. Nor have I seen mention in the literature that the Antinous medallions from Greece and Anatolia were often gilded, whereas forgers generally prefer to reproduce acknowledged features of famous issues and only a very sophisticated forger would be likely to have taken the trouble of gilding a fake and then have removed almost all the gilding in a manner that credibly imitated real aging. Why would a forger not leave fake gilding largely intact for enhanced value instead? For these reasons, the preservation of mere traces of gilding is probably a good indication of authenticity on those extant specimens where it is evident.

A facsimile before the fax

The obverse of the most famous and well-preserved of all the Antinous medallions from Tarsus, *RPC* III, 3285.1, is a near facsimile of *RPC* III, 3286.1 with details of the hair, the ivy leaves and the surviving letters of the inscription being almost exactly reproduced. In particular, the two profiles are the same size within the limit of assessment accuracy (a few percent) and the beading on *RPC* III, 3285.1 closely follows the line of the actual edge of the *RPC* III, 3286.1 specimen. This can be judged in Figure 11 where the two obverses are shown on the same scale. However, they are not a die match due to the horizontal band and its end-rosettes underneath the Atef or Hem-Hem Crown in *RPC* III, 3285.1 being absent from *RPC* III, 3286.1. Plus, there are other tiny differences: notably that the lower left corner of the Atef Crown is more rounded in *RPC* III, 3286.1 and the gap between the lowest ivy leaf and the mantle is smaller in *RPC* III, 3286.1 and there are slight differences in the formation of the characters HP of the inscription.

It was unusual for an ancient die engraver to copy another die so precisely, because it was an arduous and slow process if done by eye without the aid of modern photographic

⁸ Pliny, *Natural History* 33.20; Vitruvius 8.8.4.

reproduction techniques. And there was no tangible value in preserving exact details of hair strands or ivy leaves when a perfectly satisfactory approximation could be achieved rapidly on the basis of the artistry of the engraver. The rather more obvious differences between the obverse die of *RPC III*, 3286.1 and that of my specimen *RPC III*, 3286.2 are far more typical of what should be expected. Clearly, it is strange that different dies of the same type were so different, when a pair of dies purporting to be different types were almost identical in the finest details.

Unusually too, the reverse of the Tarsus Antinous Medallion *RPC III*, 3285.1 is a copy of the reverse of the Dionysus-riding-on-a-panther type *RPC III*, 1191 used by Tion in Bithynia (Figure 12).

Despite its excellent degree of preservation, there is no sign that *RPC III*, 3285.1 was ever gilded.

There are some commonalities between *RPC III*, 3285.1 and the dubious *RPC III*, 3286.3: the band beneath the Atef Crown, the Star of Antinous and the spelling variant of NEOKOPOY. But judging by its flan crack, *RPC III*, 3285.1 has the more usual die axis of 6h and at 33.26g it is significantly heavier than any of the *RPC III*, 3286 specimens. *RPC III*, 3285.1 also has a provenance going back to 1898, since its photograph appears in (Dressel 1898, p. 225 & pl. VI, 1 = Blum 1914, pl. IV, 5 = Backe 2005, p. 43, no. 30).⁹

However, the thing that is most suspicious about the *RPC III*, 3285.1 specimen is that there are some features in the much more poorly preserved *RPC III*, 3286.1 (from the same Berlin Museums *Münzkabinett* collection) that resemble the band and rosettes in *RPC III*, 3285.1, but on close examination they appear merely to be hairstyle features or surface damage. Note especially that *RPC III*, 3286.1 has a feature that appears to be surface damage in the same place and of the same size and shape as the right-hand rosette at the end of the band in *RPC III*, 3285.1. It is an overwhelming coincidence that worn hairstyle features and surface damage in *RPC III*, 3286.1 should combine to imitate the band with rosettes in *RPC III*, 3285.1, unless the latter were closely copied from the former after the former had reached its current worn and damaged state, but before the *terminus ante quem* for *RPC III*, 3285.1 in 1898. The scenario that fits these observations is that a 19th century forger worked from a low-quality photo of the obverse of *RPC III*, 3286.1 to concoct the obverse die used to strike *RPC III*, 3285.1.

Therefore, at least two of the Antinous medallions from Tarsus with the NEOKOPOY spelling variant exhibit independent suspicious features.

⁹ *RPC III*, 3285.1 has an accession date to the Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin of 1897.

Alternative histories

The Antinous medallions have been faked since at least the Renaissance (Sayles 2001). Enea Vico wrote about this activity at that time (Vico 1555, Ch. XXII). He listed the most famous ‘imitators’: Vettor Gambello (Camelio), Giovanni da Cavino of Padua and his young son, Alessandro Greco (Cesati), Leone Aretino (Leone Leoni), Jacopo da Trezzo, Federico Bonzagna of Parma and Giovan-Iacopo, Federico’s brother. The dies used by Cavino have survived and have made him the most famous of these imitators, so perhaps that is why these fakes and more particularly casts of them and casts of casts down to more recent times are collectively known as Paduans (Jones 1990, pp. 136-137). Cavino himself made dies for a fake Antinous medallion loosely based on a genuine Hostilius Marcellus issue from Corinth. It is inevitable, therefore, that hammered fakes exist among the extant specimens and indeed quite a few have been identified (including *RPC* III, 1057; *RPC* III, 1058). But old hammered fakes are potentially much more difficult to distinguish from genuine examples than cast coins, because they will exhibit evidence of correct manufacturing technique and by the present day will have acquired a convincing patina and potentially even realistic but nevertheless modern handling wear patterns. The question of whether a specimen ‘looks right’ as a standalone example is insufficient to address its authenticity in these circumstances. None of the oddities discussed here would have been evident from such a compartmentalised approach.

In these circumstances, numismatic scholarship needs to be vigilant in reviewing the extant specimens for anachronistic errors and other traces of modern interpretation of ancient features: especially, incongruities between specimens. Oddities in the inscriptions also merit careful consideration: apart from the NEΩKOPOY versus NEOKOPOY dichotomy addressed here, the established forgery *RPC* III, 1057 has ANTINOO where we should expect to see something more grammatical. It is especially important that a specimen of a type should fit well within the ensemble of other examples of its type and should have a credible relationship with related types. Any accrual of oddities is grounds for enhanced suspicion.

Specific to the Antinous medallions from Tarsus, there is a disquieting degree of inconsistency imputed to the mint by the inscription spellings NEΩKOPOY and NEOKOPOY being mixed in among parallel issues and even within individual issues of the same basic type. There is also an imbalance in that NEΩKOPOY and NEOKOPOY occur with NEΩ IAKXΩ/ITYΘIQ, but NEO IAKXΩ/ITYΘIQ never appears. A feasible modern source for the NEOKOPOY variant exists in the form of a mistake in the Sabatier article of 1866, since it does not appear at present that any of the NEOKOPOY types have a certain provenance that is older than 1866, whereas the NEΩKOPOY specimen *RPC* III, 3286.2 definitely existed before the Sabatier article, of which it is the subject.

Further to this issue, we have seen that two of the ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ specimens exhibit independent causes for suspicion:

- a. The die cutter of *RPC* III, 3286.3 incorporated a spurious sigma into its reverse inscription due to being unaware that the die engraver(s) of other specimens of the type had used an extension of the panther's tail to form the final sigma of ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΕΩΣ: however, it is incredible that a contemporaneous die cutter for a type that was only produced for a few years could have operated in such ignorance.
- b. *RPC* III, 3285.1 appears to have been diligently copied from *RPC* III, 3286.1 after the latter had reached its current worn and corroded condition, because a band with rosettes beneath the Atef Crown in *RPC* III, 3285.1 appears to copy wear and corrosion features in *RPC* III, 3286.1, for example, in forming the rosette at the right-hand end of the band.

However, we have also seen that there are some redeeming features which can be seen as enhancing the case for authenticity. In particular, my own specimen *RPC* III, 3286.2 has been designated as exhibiting traces of gilding by the *RPC* database and a survey of other well-preserved Antinous Medallions reveals enough with similar traces of gilding to suggest that this was a very common feature in the authentic 2nd century AD bronzes with the notable exception of the currency issues with representations of Antinous bearing dates from AD134 – 137 from Alexandria in Egypt.

Author

Andrew M. Chugg is a graduate of the University of Cambridge. He is the author of papers on Alexander's tomb published in Greece & Rome and The American Journal of Ancient History and a paper on Alexander's royal journal published in the Ancient History Bulletin. He is also the author of four books: The Lost Tomb of Alexander the Great, Alexander's Lovers, The Quest for the Tomb of Alexander the Great and Concerning Alexander the Great: A Reconstruction of Cleitarchus with another on The Pharos Lighthouse in Alexandria forthcoming. He has also appeared in several TV documentaries on Alexander the Great, including the Alexander's tomb episode of National Geographic's Secrets of Egypt series and the same channel's Mystery Files. Andrew is also the author of several articles on ancient coins associated with Alexander the Great in The Celator magazine and is a co-author of the article on The Porus medallions of Alexander in JNAA 29.

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Table I. Entry for ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΣ in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.

<p>νεωκόρ-ος, ό, Dor. νᾱοκόρος GDI 2116.14, al. (Delph., ii B.C.), Hsch.: contr. νᾱκόρος PMagd.35.7 (iii B.C., prob. Dor.), GDI1912.9, al. (Delph., ii B.C.), 5087 (Crete): as fem., IG42(1).393, al. (Epid., ii A.D.); ναυκόρος, ή, Buresch Aus Lydien p.58: poet. νηοκόρος AP9.22 (Phil.):—warden of a temple, as a sacred officer, τοῖς ἱεροῖς ν. γίγνεσθαι Pl.Lg.759a; ἱερέας τε καὶ ν. ib.953a; παρὰ Μεγαβύξω τῷ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ν. X.An.5.3.6, cf. Inscr.Prien.231 (iv B.C.); βωμοῖο ν. AP11.324 (Autom.); ν. τοῦ μεγάλου Σαράπιδος POxy.100.2 (ii A.D.).</p> <p>2. sacristan, Herod.4.41,45, Paus.10.12.5; ἐνβόλιον ἔχων ν. in a list of silver articles, IG7.3498.25 (Oropus).</p>
<p>II. title assumed by Asiatic cities in Imperial times, when they had built a temple in honour of their patron-god or the Emperor, as Ephesus, ν. Ἀρτέμιδος Act.Ap.19.35; also as Adj., τῷ ν. Ἐφεσίων δήμῳ OGI481.3 (ii A.D.), cf. BMus.Inscr.481*.4 (Ephesus, ii A.D.); δις ν. τῶν Σεβαστῶν, of Ephesus, OGI496.7 (ii A.D.); of Smyrna, IGRom.4.1419. (Prob. derived from κορέω, sweep, the orig. sense being prob. temple-sweeper, cf. E.Ion115, 121, 795 (where the word does not occur), νεωκορέω I.2, II, Ph.2.236, Hsch.; but Suid. expl. it ό τὸν νεῶν κοσμῶν . . , ἀλλ' οὐχ ό σαίρων.)</p>

Table II. Occurrences of ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ or ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ on specimens of the 14 types of Antinous Medallion from Tarsus in the *RPC* database.

Type	Reverse	Inscription spelling
<i>RPC</i> III, 3285	Dionysus riding a panther	1: ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ
<i>RPC</i> III, 3286	Panther pawing a cantharus	2: ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ, 3: ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ
<i>RPC</i> III, 3287	A panther pawing a thyrsos	ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ on Numphil Auction June 2014 Lot 101 and on coin 1336 (Sear 1982, p.123), but unclear on <i>RPC</i> specimens
<i>RPC</i> III, 3288	Temple containing an amphora	Unclear on <i>RPC</i> specimens
<i>RPC</i> III, 3289	Mystic chest with three thyrsos	1: ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ, ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ on NAC Auction 80 20/10/14 Lot 96; also ΝΕΩ ΙΑΚΧΩ
<i>RPC</i> III, 3289a	Mystic chest with three thyrsos	1: ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ, but also ΝΕΩ ΙΑΚΧΩ
<i>RPC</i> III, 3290	Mystic chest with three thyrsos	Unclear on <i>RPC</i> specimens
<i>RPC</i> III, 3291	Mystic chest with three thyrsos	1: ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ, but also ΝΕΩ ΙΑΚΧΩ
<i>RPC</i> III, 3292	Serpent coiled around a tripod	2: ΝΕΟΚ, 8: ΝΕΟΚ, 9: ΝΕΟΚ, but also ΝΕΩ ΠΥΘΙΩ
<i>RPC</i> III, 3293	Serpent coiled around a tripod	1: ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ; also ΝΕΩ ΠΥΘΙΩ
<i>RPC</i> III, 3294	River God Cydnus reclining	1: ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ, 2: ΝΕΟΚΟΡΟΥ
<i>RPC</i> III, 3295	River God Cydnus reclining	Unclear on <i>RPC</i> specimens
<i>RPC</i> III, 3296	River God Cydnus reclining	5: ΝΕΩΚΟΡΟΥ
<i>RPC</i> III, 3297	River God Cydnus reclining	Unclear on <i>RPC</i> specimens

Table III. Details of the four specimens of the Antinous medallion with a panther & *cantharus* reverse in the Roman Provincial Coins (RPC) online database.

Type & Specimen	Weight (g)	Diameter (mm)	Die Axis	Inscription Spelling	Most Recent Whereabouts
RPC III, 3286.1	20.91	34	6h	?	Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
RPC III, 3286.2	19.57	37	6h	NEΩKOPOY	Collection of A. M. Chugg
RPC III, 3286.3	27.43	34.2	12h	NEOKOPOY	Künker 133 Lot 8856 12/10/2007
RPC III, 3286.4	?	?	6h	?	Hirsch Auction 303 Lot 3048 25/9/14



Figure 1. Antinous bronze medallion of Tarsus RPC III, 3286.2, 37mm, 19.55g (Collection of the author).



Figure 2. Engraving of RPC III, 3286.2 from Sabatier's article in *ASFN* Vol 1, Plate 1 No. 4 (1866).



Figure 3. Photos of *RPC* III, 3286.2 from the catalogues of the 1965 Vinchon sale (above) and the 1975 Monnaies et Médailles auction (below).



Figure 4. A serrated edge version of the Tarsus Antinous Medallion with the panther and *cantharus* and a Chi-Rho graffito highlighted within a circle (*RPC* III, 3286.3) – source: Classical Numismatic Group, LLC, <http://www.cngcoins.com>.



Figure 5. Close-up of NEΩKOPOY on RPC III, 3286.2.

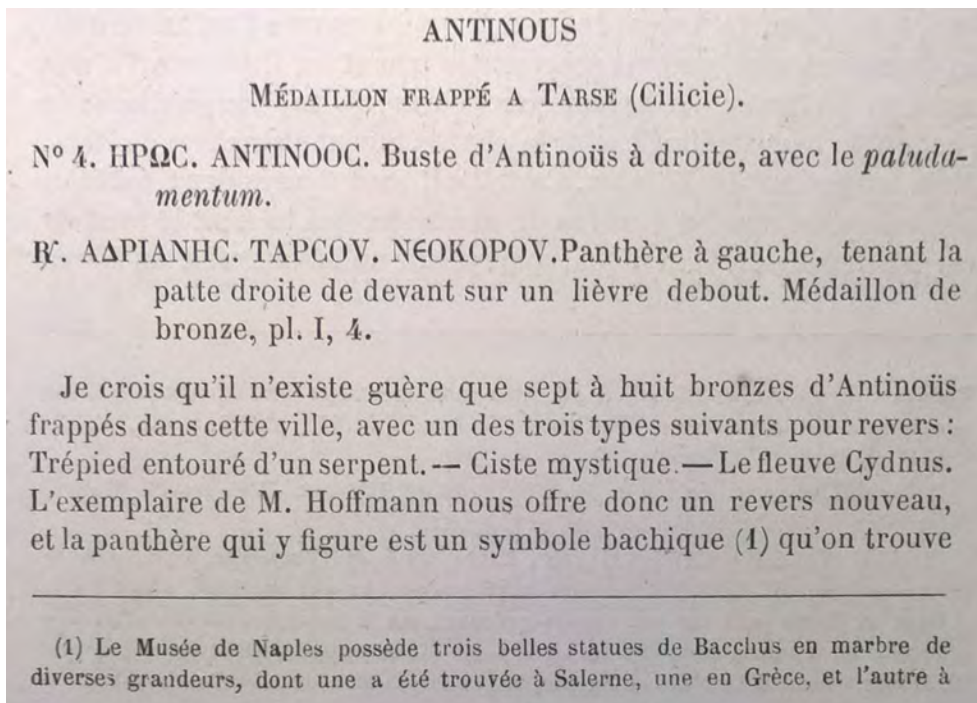


Figure 6. Heading of the Sabatier 1866 article with NEΩKOPOY mis-spelt and mis-identifying the *cantharus* as a hare (lièvre).



Figure 7. Specimen *RPC* III, 3286.1 in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18281771).



Figure 8. Specimen *RPC* III, 3286.4 from Gerhard Hirsch Nachfolger, 2014, Auction 303, lot 3048.



Figure 9. Formation of the panther's tail on specimens 2 and 4 of *RPC* III, 3286 compared to two images of specimen 3 (lower left photo courtesy of Fritz Rudolf Künker GmbH & Co. KG, Osnabrück and image owner Lübke & Wiedemann KG, Leonberg).



Figure 10. Specimens of Antinous Medallions with traces of gilding, top to bottom: Smyrna *RPC* III, 1980.14, 37.3mm, Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG, Auction 114, lot 690; Smyrna *RPC* III, 1982.1, 37mm, Source gallica.bnf.fr / BnF, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8554963j>; Tion *RPC* III, 1191.3, 38.1mm, Source gallica.bnf.fr / BnF, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8554795t>; Corinth *RPC* III, 260.1, Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG, Auction 64, lot 1176.



Figure 11. How the profile of Antinous on *RPC III*, 3285.1, 36.9mm (left: Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18200843) is almost a photographic copy of *RPC III*, 3286.1, 34mm (right: Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18281771).



Figure 12. How the reverse of *RPC III*, 3285.1 (right: Münzkabinett der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, 18200843) is a copy of the reverse of Antinous Medallions from Tion in Bithynia (left: courtesy of Stack's Bowers Galleries, The January 2013 N.Y.I.N.C. Auction Session I, lot 5412).

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