

The Coins of the Tetrarch Philip and Bethsaida

THE TETRARCH PHILIP (4 BCE–34 CE), the son of Herod the Great, who ruled the territories in the north of the country, including Trachonitis, Auranitis, Batanaea, and Gaulanitis, issued a rather long series of coins, most of them *semis* of one particular design. On their obverses usually appears the portrait of the emperor (Augustus or Tiberius); on their reverses usually appears a depiction of the temple of Augustus which Philip's father Herod had erected in Pania before Philip made that city his capital. During the first years of his rule, Philip even issued a limited number of coins which bear his own portrait.¹

However, in the thirty-fourth year of his reign (30/31 CE), for the first time he issued a series of three coins, a series that differs from his former issues by two of its types and denominations: *semis*, *quadrans*, and half-*quadrans*. Here follows their descriptions.

1. AE.

Denomination: *semis*

Weight: 5.16–6.51 gr

Size: 17–20 mm

Obverse: Portrait of Tiberius to right
Olive spray in front to head.
Dotted border

Legend (around from left below); TIBEPIOY CEBACTOC KAICAP

Reverse: Tetrastyle temple with triangle-shaped pediment, within which is a dot

At base of the temple, three lines (stairs?)

Dotted border

Legend (around from left below, reading outwardly to the right): ΕΠΙ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΙΟΥ ΤΕΤΡΑΡΧΟΥ ΚΤΙC (ΤΖC) (= by Philip the tetrarch, the founder)

Between the columns of the temple, the date of issue: ΛΑΔ = year of Philip 34 (30/31 CE)²

The olive spray on the front of the emperor's portrait expresses an act of celebration. The legend on the obverse ends with the word ΚΤΙC(ΤΖC), "founder." To date, scholars have not offered any sound explanation for the appearance of this word on this coin.

2. AE.

Denomination: *quadrans*

Weight: 3.00 gr

Size: 15.4 mm

Obverse: Portrait of Livia to right, draped
Dotted border

Legend (around from left below): ΙΟΥΛΙΑ CEBACTH

Reverse: A hand to the left, holding three ears of barley
Dotted border

Legend (in semicircle from left to right, reading outwardly): ΚΑΡΠΟΦΟΡΟC

in field above, the date of issue: ΛΑΔ = year 34 (30/31 CE)³

This type has recently been connected to Philip.⁴ As a matter of fact, the legend of this coin does not directly refer to Philip or to the city of Panias. It was, however, related to Philip because of the date of issue (year 34), and to the city of Panias because of the Karpophoros type, represented by the hand holding the ears of barley. This type reappears twice: (a) on a coin struck for Kypros, the wife of Agrippa I⁵ and

(b) on the coins of Agrippa II struck in his eleventh year of reign,⁶ a year in which Pnias was doubtless Agrippa's capital. Another indication that this coin belongs to the series of coins of Philip is, besides the date of issue, the fact that the legend reads outwardly, a *modus* common on the coins of Philip. It is likely that the Karpophoros is meant to express the abundance of grain in the territories ruled by Philip.

3. AE.

Denomination: half-*quadrans*

Weight: 1.46–1.75 gr

Size: 10–12 mm

Obverse: Portrait of Philip to right, draped, bareheaded

Dotted border

Legend (around from left below): ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ

Reverse: Wreath, tied at bottom

Legend (within the wreath in one line is the date of issue): ΛΛΔ = year 34 (30/31 CE)⁷



A similar series was issued by Philip a second time in the thirty-seventh and last year of his reign, 33/34 CE. However, only in the thirty-fourth year of his rule does the title ΚΤΙC (τῆς), "founder," appear. This fact doubtless hints at an extraordinary event which occurred in that year (30/31 CE), in the tetrarchy of Philip. This event seems to have provided an impetus for him to leave his numismatic routine and issue a more complicated series, different from the monotonous series of coins he had issued during most of the other years of his reign.

In view of the indirect numismatic evidence provided by the three aforementioned coin types it is well to review the relevant evidence found in Josephus's *Antiquities*,⁸ according to which the village called Bethsaida was renamed Julias by Philip in honor of Julia, the daughter of Augustus. Almost by necessity, the renaming of Bethsaida would have had to occur before 2 BCE, for in that year Julia was exiled by her father to the island of Pandateria. Josephus does not give this information in chronological order. He reports first the liquidation of Archelaus's properties by Quirinius, the governor of Syria, during the thirty-seventh year of reign of Augustus (6 CE). Then he goes back ten years, to report that the two other sons of Herod, Antipas and Philip,

were given their tetrarchies; Antipas named Betharamphtha Julias after Livia, Augustus's wife; Philip named Bethsaida Julias after Julia, Augustus's daughter. The mention of the renaming of both these cities in one sentence is curious. The daughter of Augustus was, as mentioned above, banned in 2 BCE, while Livia, his wife, was given the name Julia only some sixteen years later, according to the will of Augustus. Josephus discusses the same matter in a different way in his *Bellum Judaicum*, and it seems that in this case he was more careful about chronology:

On the death of Augustus ... the empire of the Romans passed to Tiberius, the son of Julia. On his accession, Herod (Antipas) and Philip continued to hold their tetrarchies and respectively founded cities: Philip built Caesarea near the sources of the Jordan, in the district of Panias, and Julias in lower Gaulanitis; Herod built Tiberias in Galilee and a city which also took the name of Julias, in Peraea.⁹

The era of the coins of the city of Panias starts in 3 BCE, namely one year after Philip received his tetrarchy. It is unlikely that the foundation of Panias (which was also called Caesarea Philippi) should be mentioned on Philip's coins, arbitrarily, some thirty years later. Based on coin no. 2 on which Livia/Julia is depicted, I would suggest that the event of foundation mentioned on coin no. 1 refers to the foundation of Bethsaida as Julias. Livia, Augustus's wife, was adopted into the Julian *gens*, according to Augustus's will, in 14 CE and died in the year 29. Since these coins were issued in 30/31, it is appropriate that the two cities (Bethsaida and Betharamphtha) should be renamed in honor of the mother of Tiberius,¹⁰ rather than in honor of Augustus's daughter.

If this suggestion is accepted, it follows that Bethsaida was founded anew in the year 34 of Philip's rule, namely in 30/31 CE. Whether the Julias of Philip was renamed before Antipas gave the same name to Betharamphtha remains, for the time being, an open question. If, however, one can compare the relationship between the renaming of the two cities and the behavior of Antipas towards King Agrippa I (a behavior guided by the jealousy of his wife, Herodias), one may imagine that it was Antipas who followed after Philip, to please Emperor Tiberius. Thus it is likely that Betharamphtha was renamed Julias after 30/31 CE.

CHAPTER NOTES

1. Kindler (1971) 161–63, pl. 32.
2. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld (1989) p. 148, no. 119; p. 198. Meshorer (1982) p. 246, no. 11, pl. 8, no. 11. This coin type was also issued in the year 37 of Philip's rule, using the same portrait of Tiberius as depicted on the issue of year 34; cf. Meshorer (1982) pl. 8, no. 14.
3. Cf. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld (1982) p. 148, no. 190 and Rosenberger (1977) p. 38, no. 4; cf. also Meshorer (1982) supplement 3, p. 278, no. 1.
4. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld (1982) p. 148, no. 120.
5. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld (1982) p. 157, no. 143; Meshorer (1982) p. 250, no. 6, pl. II.6.
6. Maltiel-Gerstenfeld (1982) p. 149, no. 121; Meshorer (1982) p. 246, no. 12, pl. 8, no. 12.
7. Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.28.
8. Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 2.168.
9. Tacitus, *Annals* 1.8: "On the first day of the Senate he (Tiberius) allowed nothing to be discussed but the funeral of Augustus, whose will was brought by the Vestal Virgins. He named as his heirs Tiberius and Livia. The latter was admitted into the Julian gens with the name of Augusta."
10. And this in spite of the fact that Tiberius hesitated to perpetuate her memory; cf. Tacitus, *Annales*, 5.2.

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